EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

THE COMPLETE TARZAN COLLECTION

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TARZAN BOOKS (by Chronological release)

Book 1. Tarzan of the Apes (1912)

Book 2. The Return of Tarzan (1913)

Book 3. The Beasts of Tarzan (1914)

Book 4. The Son of Tarzan (1915)

Book 5. Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar (1916)

Book 6. Jungle Tales of Tarzan (1919)

Book 7. Tarzan the Untamed (1919)

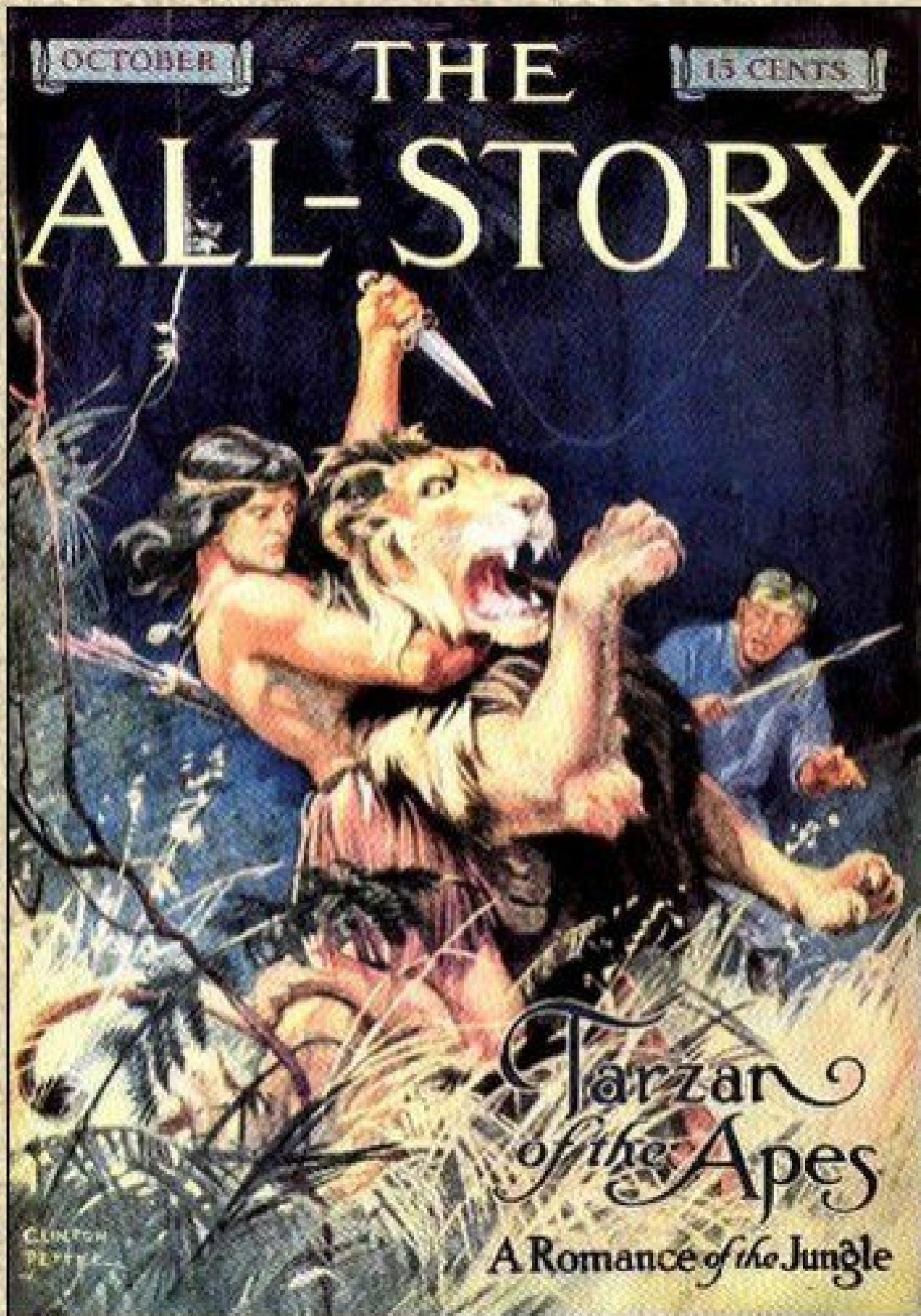
Book 8. Tarzan the Terrible (1921)

Book 9. Tarzan and the Golden Lion (1923)

Book 10. Tarzan and the Ant-Men

(1924)
Book 11. Tazan Lord of the Jungle (1927)
Book 12. Tarzan and the Lost Empire (1928)
Book 13. Tarzan at the Earth's Core (1930)
Book 14. Tarzan the Invincible (1931)
Book 15. Tarzan Triumphant (1931)
Book 16. Tarzan and the City of Gold (1932)
Book 17. Tarzan and the Lion Man (1933)
Book 18. Tarzan and the Leopard Men

(1933)
Book19. Tarzan's Quest (1935)
Book 20. Tarzan the Magnificent (1936)
Book 21. Tarzan and the Forbidden City (1938)
Book 22. Tarzan and the Castaways (1944)
Book 23. Tarzan and "The Foreign Legion" (1947)
Book 24. The Tarzan Twins (1927)
Book 25. Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins with Jad-Bal-Ja the Golden Lion (1936)


OCTOBER
THE
15 CENTS
ALL-STORY
Tarzan of the Apes
A Romance of the Jungle
CLINTON DEWITT

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
TARZAN OF THE APES
BOOK 1 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. OUT TO SEA

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

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

I do not say the story is true, for I did not witness the happenings which it portrays, but the fact that in the telling of it to you I have taken fictitious names for the principal characters quite sufficiently evidences the sincerity of my own belief that it **may** be true.

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

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

From the records of the Colonial Office and from the dead man's diary we learn that a certain young English nobleman, whom we shall call John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, was commissioned to make a peculiarly delicate investigation of conditions in a British West Coast African Colony from whose simple native inhabitants another European power was known to be recruiting soldiers for its native army, which it used solely for the forcible collection of rubber and ivory from the savage tribes along the Congo and the Aruwimi. The natives of the British Colony complained that many of their young men were enticed away through the medium of fair and glowing

promises, but that few if any ever returned to their families.

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

And so the Colonial Office appointed John Clayton to a new post in British West Africa, but his confidential instructions centered on a thorough investigation of the unfair treatment of black British subjects by the officers of a friendly European power. Why he was sent, is, however, of little moment to this story, for he never made an

investigation, nor, in fact, did he ever reach his destination.

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

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

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

the Queen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two months after they weighed anchor and cleared from the port of

Freetown a half dozen British war vessels were scouring the south Atlantic for trace of them or their little vessel, and it was almost immediately that the wreckage was found upon the shores of St. Helena which convinced the world that the Fuwalda had gone down with all on board, and hence the search was stopped ere it had scarce begun; though hope lingered in longing hearts for many years.

The Fuwalda, a barkentine of about one hundred tons, was a vessel of the type often seen in coastwise trade in the far southern Atlantic, their crews composed of the offscourings of the sea —unhanged murderers and cutthroats of every race and every nation.

The Fuwalda was no exception to the rule. Her officers were swarthy bullies, hating and hated by their crew. The captain, while a competent seaman, was a brute in his treatment of his men. He knew, or at least he used, but two arguments in his dealings with them—a belaying pin and a revolver—nor is it likely that the motley aggregation he signed would have understood aught else.

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

It was on the morning of the second

day that the first link was forged in what was destined to form a chain of circumstances ending in a life for one then unborn such as has never been paralleled in the history of man.

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

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

But just that instant the officer turned

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

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

The man was small and rather old, so that the brutality of the act was thus accentuated. The other seaman, however, was neither old nor small —a huge bear of a man, with fierce black mustachios, and a great bull neck set

between massive shoulders.

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

From scarlet the officer's face went white, for this was mutiny; and mutiny he had met and subdued before in his brutal career. Without waiting to rise he whipped a revolver from his pocket, firing point blank at the great mountain of muscle towering before him; but, quick as he was, John Clayton was almost as quick, so that the bullet which was intended for the sailor's heart lodged in the sailor's leg instead, for Lord Greystoke had struck down the captain's arm as he had seen the weapon

flash in the sun.

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

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

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

The two sailors picked themselves

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

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

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

They took their meals in his cabin, as

they had before the unfortunate occurrence; but the captain was careful to see that his duties never permitted him to eat at the same time.

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

This in itself accorded perfectly with their desires, but it also rather isolated them from the life of the little ship so that they were unable to keep in touch with the daily happenings which were to culminate so soon in bloody tragedy.

There was in the whole atmosphere of

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

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

Clayton asked no questions—he did not need to—and the following day, as

the great lines of a British battleship grew out of the distant horizon, he half determined to demand that he and Lady Alice be put aboard her, for his fears were steadily increasing that nothing but harm could result from remaining on the lowering, sullen Fuwalda.

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

What if he told them that two

insubordinate seamen had been roughly handled by their officers? They would but laugh in their sleeves and attribute his reason for wishing to leave the ship to but one thing - cowardice.

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

It was mid-afternoon that brought the little old sailor, who had been felled by

the captain a few days before, to where Clayton and his wife stood by the ship's side watching the ever diminishing outlines of the great battleship. The old fellow was polishing brasses, and as he came edging along until close to Clayton he said, in an undertone:

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

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

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

"Two busted 'eads yeste'day, an' three today. Black Michael's as good as new agin an' 'e's not the bully to stand fer it,

not 'e; an' mark my word for it, sir."

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

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

"When?"

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

"That's all, only keep a still tongue in yer 'ead, or they'll put a pill between yer ribs, an' mark my word for it, sir," and the old fellow went on with his

polishing, which carried him away from where the Claytons were standing.

"Deuced cheerful outlook, Alice," said Clayton.

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

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

"You have but one duty, John, and that lies in the interest of vested authority. If you do not warn the captain you are as

much a party to whatever follows as though you had helped to plot and carry it out with your own head and hands."

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

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

duty. I realize the danger which must follow, but I can face it with you."

"Have it as you will then, Alice," he answered, smiling. "Maybe we are borrowing trouble. While I do not like the looks of things on board this ship, they may not be so bad after all, for it is possible that the `Ancient Mariner' was but voicing the desires of his wicked old heart rather than speaking of real facts.

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

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

brute at all."

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

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

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

"Well?"

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

"It's a lie!" roared the captain. "And if

you have been interfering again with the discipline of this ship, or meddling in affairs that don't concern you you can take the consequences, and be damned. I don't care whether you are an English lord or not. I'm captain of this here ship, and from now on you keep your meddling nose out of my business."

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

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

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

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

So, whereas the captain might easily have been brought to regret his hasty speech had Clayton attempted to conciliate him, his temper was now irrevocably set in the mold in which Clayton had left it, and the last chance of their working together for their common good was gone.

"Well, Alice," said Clayton, as he rejoined his wife, "I might have saved my breath. The fellow proved most ungrateful. Fairly jumped at me like a mad dog.

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

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

torn to pieces.

"Evidently someone was more anxious about our belongings than we," said Clayton. "Let's have a look around, Alice, and see what's missing."

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

"Those are the very things I most wish they had left us," said Clayton, "and the fact that they wished for them and them alone is most sinister."

"What are we to do, John?" asked his wife. "Perhaps you were right in that our best chance lies in maintaining a neutral position.

"If the officers are able to prevent a

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

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

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

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

hand fell upon his wrist.

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

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

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

Translated, it was a warning to the Claytons to refrain from reporting the

loss of the revolvers, or from repeating what the old sailor had told them - to refrain on pain of death.

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

2. THE SAVAGE HOME

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

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

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

Two of their number had gone down

before the captain's revolver. They lay where they had fallen between the combatants. But then the first mate lunged forward upon his face, and at a cry of command from Black Michael the mutineers charged the remaining four. The crew had been able to muster but six firearms, so most of them were armed with boat hooks, axes, hatchets and crowbars.

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

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

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

Short and grisly had been the work of the mutineers of the Fuwalda, and through it all John Clayton had stood leaning carelessly beside the companionway puffing meditatively

upon his pipe as though he had been but watching an indifferent cricket match.

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

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

As he turned to descend the ladder he was surprised to see his wife standing on the steps almost at his side.

"How long have you been here, Alice?"

"Since the beginning," she replied. "How awful, John. Oh, how awful! What can we hope for at the hands of such as those?"

"Breakfast, I hope," he answered, smiling bravely in an attempt to allay her fears.

"At least," he added, "I'm going to ask them. Come with me, Alice. We must not let them think we expect any but courteous treatment."

The men had by this time surrounded the dead and wounded officers, and without either partiality or compassion proceeded to throw both living and dead over the sides of the vessel. With equal heartlessness they disposed of their own dead and dying.

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

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

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

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

"I'm captain of this ship now, an' what I says goes," he added, turning to Clayton. "Just keep to yourselves, and nobody'll harm ye," and he looked

threateningly on his fellows.

The Claytons heeded Black Michael's instructions so well that they saw but little of the crew and knew nothing of the plans the men were making.

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

On the fifth day following the murder of the ship's officers, land was sighted by the lookout. Whether island or mainland, Black Michael did not know, but he announced to Clayton that if

investigation showed that the place was habitable he and Lady Greystoke were to be put ashore with their belongings.

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

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

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

more savage men.

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

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

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

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

Before dark the barkentine lay peacefully at anchor upon the bosom of

the still, mirror-like surface of the harbor.

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

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

As darkness settled upon the earth,

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

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

Later in the evening Black Michael joined them long enough to instruct them to make their preparations for landing on the morrow. They tried to persuade him to take them to some more hospitable

coast near enough to civilization so that they might hope to fall into friendly hands. But no pleas, or threats, or promises of reward could move him.

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

"The men won't stand for any more, and if we don't get ye landed pretty quick they may even change their minds about giving ye that much show. I'll put all yer stuff ashore with ye as well as cookin' utensils an' some old sails for

tents, an' enough grub to last ye until ye can find fruit and game.

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

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

Clayton did not believe that Black Michael had the slightest intention of notifying the British government of their whereabouts, nor was he any too sure but that some treachery was

contemplated for the following day when they should be on shore with the sailors who would have to accompany them with their belongings.

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

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

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

The man shuddered as he meditated

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

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

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

Black Michael was determined that nothing belonging to the Claytons should

be left on board. Whether out of compassion for them, or in furtherance of his own self-interests, it would be difficult to say.

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

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

Into the small boats were also loaded salt meats and biscuit, with a small supply of potatoes and beans, matches, and cooking vessels, a chest of tools,

and the old sails which Black Michael had promised them.

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

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

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

shaggy brows.

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

Bravely had she faced the dangers of the mutiny; with heroic fortitude she had looked into the terrible future; but now that the horror of absolute solitude was upon them, her overwrought nerves gave way, and the reaction came.

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

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

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

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

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

but—"

"Yes, dear," he answered, gently, "I have been thinking of that, also; but we must face it, as we must face whatever comes, bravely and with the utmost confidence in our ability to cope with circumstances whatever they may be.

"Hundreds of thousands of years ago our ancestors of the dim and distant past faced the same problems which we must face, possibly in these same primeval forests. That we are here today evidences their victory.

"What they did may we not do? And even better, for are we not armed with ages of superior knowledge, and have we not the means of protection, defense, and sustenance which science has given

us, but of which they were totally ignorant? What they accomplished, Alice, with instruments and weapons of stone and bone, surely that may we accomplish also."

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

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

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

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

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

To this end Clayton selected four trees which formed a rectangle about eight feet square, and cutting long branches from other trees he constructed

a framework around them, about ten feet from the ground, fastening the ends of the branches securely to the trees by means of rope, a quantity of which Black Michael had furnished him from the hold of the Fuwalda.

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

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

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

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

All during the day the forest about them had been filled with excited birds of brilliant plumage, and dancing, chattering monkeys, who watched these new arrivals and their wonderful nest building operations with every mark of keenest interest and fascination.

Notwithstanding that both Clayton and his wife kept a sharp lookout they saw nothing of larger animals, though on two

occasions they had seen their little simian neighbors come screaming and chattering from the near-by ridge, casting frightened glances back over their little shoulders, and evincing as plainly as though by speech that they were fleeing some terrible thing which lay concealed there.

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

As it was quite warm, Clayton had left the side curtains thrown back over the roof, and as they sat, like Turks, upon their blankets, Lady Alice, straining her eyes into the darkening shadows of the

wood, suddenly reached out and grasped Clayton's arms.

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

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

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

"What is it, John?"

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

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

He gathered her in his arms, whispering words of courage and love into her ears.

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

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

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

Scarcely had they closed their eyes

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

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

stealthy moving of great bodies beneath them.

3. LIFE AND DEATH

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

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

The task was an arduous one and required the better part of a month, though he built but one small room. He constructed his cabin of small logs about six inches in diameter, stopping the

chinks with clay which he found at the depth of a few feet beneath the surface soil.

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

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

The A-shaped roof was thatched with

small branches laid close together and over these long jungle grass and palm fronds, with a final coating of clay.

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

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

easily.

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

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

At night great beasts snarled and roared about their tiny cabin, but, so accustomed may one become to oft

repeated noises, that soon they paid little attention to them, sleeping soundly the whole night through.

Thrice had they caught fleeting glimpses of great man-like figures like that of the first night, but never at sufficiently close range to know positively whether the half-seen forms were those of man or brute.

The brilliant birds and the little monkeys had become accustomed to their new acquaintances, and as they had evidently never seen human beings before they presently, after their first fright had worn off, approached closer and closer, impelled by that strange curiosity which dominates the wild creatures of the forest and the jungle and

the plain, so that within the first month several of the birds had gone so far as even to accept morsels of food from the friendly hands of the Claytons.

One afternoon, while Clayton was working upon an addition to their cabin, for he contemplated building several more rooms, a number of their grotesque little friends came shrieking and scolding through the trees from the direction of the ridge. Ever as they fled they cast fearful glances back of them, and finally they stopped near Clayton jabbering excitedly to him as though to warn him of approaching danger.

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

occasional fleeting glimpses.

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

Clayton was at some distance from the cabin, having come to fell a particularly perfect tree for his building operations. Grown careless from months of continued safety, during which time he had seen no dangerous animals during the daylight hours, he had left his rifles and revolvers all within the little cabin, and now that he saw the great ape crashing through the underbrush directly

toward him, and from a direction which practically cut him off from escape, he felt a vague little shiver play up and down his spine.

He knew that, armed only with an ax, his chances with this ferocious monster were small indeed—and Alice; O God, he thought, what will become of Alice?

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

Lady Greystoke had been sitting a little way from the cabin, and when she heard his cry she looked up to see the ape springing with almost incredible swiftness, for so large and awkward an

animal, in an effort to head off Clayton.

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

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

But he knew he was facing a horrible death, and so did she.

The ape was a great bull, weighing probably three hundred pounds. His nasty, close-set eyes gleamed hatred from beneath his shaggy brows, while

his great canine fangs were bared in a horrid snarl as he paused a moment before his prey.

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

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

"Back, Alice," shouted Clayton, "for God's sake, go back."

But she would not heed, and just then the ape charged, so that Clayton could

say no more.

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

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

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

empty cartridge.

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

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

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

Gently he lifted his wife's still unconscious form, and bore her to the little cabin, but it was fully two hours before she regained consciousness.

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

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

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

That night a little son was born in the tiny cabin beside the primeval forest, while a leopard screamed before the

door, and the deep notes of a lion's roar sounded from beyond the ridge.

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

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

In other ways she was quite rational, and the joy and happiness she took in the possession of her little son and the

constant attentions of her husband made that year a very happy one for her, the happiest of her young life.

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

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

Skins of lion and panther covered the floor. Cupboards and bookcases lined the walls. Odd vases made by his own hand from the clay of the region held

beautiful tropical flowers. Curtains of grass and bamboo covered the windows, and, most arduous task of all, with his meager assortment of tools he had fashioned lumber to neatly seal the walls and ceiling and lay a smooth floor within the cabin.

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

During the year that followed, Clayton was several times attacked by the great apes which now seemed to

continually infest the vicinity of the cabin; but as he never again ventured outside without both rifle and revolvers he had little fear of the huge beasts.

He had strengthened the window protections and fitted a unique wooden lock to the cabin door, so that when he hunted for game and fruits, as it was constantly necessary for him to do to insure sustenance, he had no fear that any animal could break into the little home.

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

In his leisure Clayton read, often aloud to his wife, from the store of

books he had brought for their new home. Among these were many for little children—picture books, primers, readers—for they had known that their little child would be old enough for such before they might hope to return to England.

At other times Clayton wrote in his diary, which he had always been accustomed to keep in French, and in which he recorded the details of their strange life. This book he kept locked in a little metal box.

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

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

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

My little son is crying for nourishment —O Alice, Alice, what shall I do?

And as John Clayton wrote the last

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

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

4. THE APES

In the forest of the table-land a mile back from the ocean old Kerchak the Ape was on a rampage of rage among his people.

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

The other males scattered in all directions, but not before the infuriated brute had felt the vertebra of one snap between his great, foaming jaws.

A luckless young female slipped from an insecure hold upon a high branch and came crashing to the ground almost at

Kerchak's feet.

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

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

But Kerchak was close upon her, so close that he had almost grasped her ankle had she not made a furious leap far into space from one tree to another —a perilous chance which apes seldom if

ever take, unless so closely pursued by danger that there is no alternative.

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

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

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

suddenly as it had seized him.

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

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

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

Old Tantor, the elephant, alone of all

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

The tribe of anthropoids over which Kerchak ruled with an iron hand and bared fangs, numbered some six or eight families, each family consisting of an adult male with his females and their young, numbering in all some sixty or seventy apes.

Kala was the youngest mate of a male called Tublat, meaning broken nose, and the child she had seen dashed to death was her first; for she was but nine or ten years old.

Notwithstanding her youth, she was

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

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

When the tribe saw that Kerchak's rage had ceased they came slowly down from their arboreal retreats and pursued again the various occupations which he had interrupted.

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

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

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

They traveled for the most part upon the ground, where it was open,

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

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

It was shortly after noon when they reached a ridge overlooking the beach where below them lay the tiny cottage

which was Kerchak's goal.

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

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

Of late they had quit attacking, or even showing themselves; for every time

they had done so in the past the little stick had roared out its terrible message of death to some member of the tribe.

Today there was no sign of the man about, and from where they watched they could see that the cabin door was open. Slowly, cautiously, and noiselessly they crept through the jungle toward the little cabin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As she took up the little live baby of Alice Clayton she dropped the dead body of her own into the empty cradle; for the wail of the living had answered the call of universal motherhood within her wild breast which the dead could not still.

High up among the branches of a mighty tree she hugged the shrieking

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cautiously he approached the thing,

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

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

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

Using his long arms as a man uses

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

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

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

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

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

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

During all these operations the apes who had entered sat huddled near the

door watching their chief, while those outside strained and crowded to catch a glimpse of what transpired within.

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

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

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

When Kerchak came to a halt a short distance from the cabin and discovered that he still held the rifle, he dropped it as he might have dropped a red hot iron, nor did he again attempt to recover it—the noise was too much for his brute nerves; but he was now quite convinced that the terrible stick was quite harmless by itself if left alone.

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

The cleverly constructed latch which Clayton had made for the door had

sprung as Kerchak passed out; nor could the apes find means of ingress through the heavily barred windows.

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

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

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

words of warning from Kala.

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

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

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

The other young rode upon their mothers' backs; their little arms tightly clasping the hairy necks before them,

while their legs were locked beneath their mothers' armpits.

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

5. THE WHITE APE

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

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

Had they known that the child had

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

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

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

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

our old age."

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

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

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

her.

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

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

Yet such a boy!

From early childhood he had used his hands to swing from branch to branch

after the manner of his giant mother, and as he grew older he spent hour upon hour daily speeding through the tree tops with his brothers and sisters.

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

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

Though but ten years old he was fully as strong as the average man of thirty, and far more agile than the most

practiced athlete ever becomes. And day by day his strength was increasing.

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

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

He attempted to obviate this by plastering himself from head to foot with

mud, but this dried and fell off. Besides it felt so uncomfortable that he quickly decided that he preferred the shame to the discomfort.

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

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

Tarzan was appalled. It had been bad enough to be hairless, but to own such a

countenance! He wondered that the other apes could look at him at all.

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

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

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

hideous eyes as he.

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

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

prey.

Now she was within ten feet of the two unsuspecting little playfellows - carefully she drew her hind feet well up beneath her body, the great muscles rolling under the beautiful skin.

So low she was crouching now that she seemed flattened to the earth except for the upward bend of the glossy back as it gathered for the spring.

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

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

Sabor, the lioness, was a wise hunter. To one less wise the wild alarm of her fierce cry as she sprang would have

seemed a foolish thing, for could she not more surely have fallen upon her victims had she but quietly leaped without that loud shriek?

But Sabor knew well the wondrous quickness of the jungle folk and their almost unbelievable powers of hearing. To them the sudden scraping of one blade of grass across another was as effectual a warning as her loudest cry, and Sabor knew that she could not make that mighty leap without a little noise.

Her wild scream was not a warning. It was voiced to freeze her poor victims in a paralysis of terror for the tiny fraction of an instant which would suffice for her mighty claws to sink into their soft flesh and hold them beyond

hope of escape.

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

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

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

Before him lay the deep waters of the little lake, behind him certain death; a

cruel death beneath tearing claws and rending fangs.

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

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

But of the two evils his quick mind chose the lesser ere the first note of Sabor's scream had scarce broken the

quiet of the jungle, and before the great beast had covered half her leap Tarzan felt the chill waters close above his head.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Almost immediately there came an

answer from the distance, and presently forty or fifty great apes swung rapidly and majestically through the trees toward the scene of tragedy.

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

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

Tarzan now swam to shore and clambered quickly upon dry land. The feeling of freshness and exhilaration which the cool waters had imparted to

him, filled his little being with grateful surprise, and ever after he lost no opportunity to take a daily plunge in lake or stream or ocean when it was possible to do so.

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

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

The tribe to which he belonged roamed a tract extending, roughly,

twenty-five miles along the seacoast and some fifty miles inland. This they traversed almost continually, occasionally remaining for months in one locality; but as they moved through the trees with great speed they often covered the territory in a very few days.

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

At night they slept where darkness overtook them, lying upon the ground, and sometimes covering their heads, and more seldom their bodies, with the great

leaves of the elephant's ear. Two or three might lie cuddled in each other's arms for additional warmth if the night were chill, and thus Tarzan had slept in Kala's arms nightly for all these years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

By constant playing and

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

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

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

Now, indeed, was the life of Tublat a living nightmare. In sleep, upon the march, night or day, he never knew when that quiet noose would slip about his neck and nearly choke the life out of him.

Kala punished, Tublat swore dire vengeance, and old Kerchak took notice and warned and threatened; but all to no avail.

Tarzan defied them all, and the thin, strong noose continued to settle about Tublat's neck whenever he least expected it.

The other apes derived unlimited amusement from Tublat's discomfiture, for Broken Nose was a disagreeable old fellow, whom no one liked, anyway.

In Tarzan's clever little mind many

thoughts revolved, and back of these was his divine power of reason.

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

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

But that came in later years.

6. JUNGLE BATTLES

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

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

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

He could clamber about the roof and windows for hours attempting to

discover means of ingress, but to the door he paid little attention, for this was apparently as solid as the walls.

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

He was alone, as was often the case when he visited the cabin, for the apes had no love for it; the story of the thunder-stick having lost nothing in the telling during these ten years had quite surrounded the white man's deserted

abode with an atmosphere of weirdness and terror for the simians.

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

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

On this day, then, he went directly to the door and spent hours examining it

and fussing with the hinges, the knob and the latch. Finally he stumbled upon the right combination, and the door swung creakingly open before his astonished eyes.

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

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

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

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

He opened chests and cupboards, such as did not baffle his small

experience, and in these he found the contents much better preserved.

Among other things he found a sharp hunting knife, on the keen blade of which he immediately proceeded to cut his finger. Undaunted he continued his experiments, finding that he could hack and hew splinters of wood from the table and chairs with this new toy.

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

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

The pictures interested him greatly.

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

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

The boats, and trains, and cows and horses were quite meaningless to him, but not quite so baffling as the odd little figures which appeared beneath and

between the colored pictures—some strange kind of bug he thought they might be, for many of them had legs though nowhere could he find one with eyes and a mouth. It was his first introduction to the letters of the alphabet, and he was over ten years old.

Of course he had never before seen print, or ever had spoken with any living thing which had the remotest idea that such a thing as a written language existed, nor ever had he seen anyone reading.

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

Near the middle of the book he found his old enemy, Sabor, the lioness, and

further on, coiled Histah, the snake.

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

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

his fellows.

He had taken scarce a dozen steps toward the jungle when a great form rose up before him from the shadows of a low bush. At first he thought it was one of his own people but in another instant he realized that it was Bolgani, the huge gorilla.

So close was he that there was no chance for flight and little Tarzan knew that he must stand and fight for his life; for these great beasts were the deadly enemies of his tribe, and neither one nor the other ever asked or gave quarter.

Had Tarzan been a full-grown bull ape of the species of his tribe he would have been more than a match for the gorilla, but being only a little English

boy, though enormously muscular for such, he stood no chance against his cruel antagonist. In his veins, though, flowed the blood of the best of a race of mighty fighters, and back of this was the training of his short lifetime among the fierce brutes of the jungle.

He knew no fear, as we know it; his little heart beat the faster but from the excitement and exhilaration of adventure. Had the opportunity presented itself he would have escaped, but solely because his judgment told him he was no match for the great thing which confronted him. And since reason showed him that successful flight was impossible he met the gorilla squarely and bravely without a tremor of a single

muscle, or any sign of panic.

In fact he met the brute midway in its charge, striking its huge body with his closed fists and as futilely as he had been a fly attacking an elephant. But in one hand he still clutched the knife he had found in the cabin of his father, and as the brute, striking and biting, closed upon him the boy accidentally turned the point toward the hairy breast. As the knife sank deep into its body the gorilla shrieked in pain and rage.

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

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

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

A mile back in the forest the tribe had heard the fierce challenge of the gorilla, and, as was his custom when any danger threatened, Kerchak called his people

together, partly for mutual protection against a common enemy, since this gorilla might be but one of a party of several, and also to see that all members of the tribe were accounted for.

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

But Kala was of a different mind; in fact, she had not waited but to learn that Tarzan was absent ere she was fairly flying through the matted branches toward the point from which the cries of

the gorilla were still plainly audible.

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

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

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

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

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

That her little Tarzan could destroy a great bull gorilla she knew to be improbable, and so, as she neared the spot from which the sounds of the struggle had come, she moved more warily and at last slowly and with

extreme caution she traversed the lowest branches, peering eagerly into the moon-splashed blackness for a sign of the combatants.

Presently she came upon them, lying in a little open space full under the brilliant light of the moon—little Tarzan's torn and bloody form, and beside it a great bull gorilla, stone dead.

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

Tenderly she bore him back through the inky jungle to where the tribe lay, and for many days and nights she sat

guard beside him, bringing him food and water, and brushing the flies and other insects from his cruel wounds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

misery before their eyes.

Kala, alone, he was glad to have with him, but now that he was better she was gone longer at a time, in search of food; for the devoted animal had scarcely eaten enough to support her own life while Tarzan had been so low, and was in consequence, reduced to a mere shadow of her former self.

7. THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE

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

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

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

So, early one morning, he set forth

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

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

In another moment he was at the cabin, and after a short time had again

thrown the latch and entered. His first concern was to learn the mechanism of the lock, and this he did by examining it closely while the door was open, so that he could learn precisely what caused it to hold the door, and by what means it released at his touch.

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

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

puzzle which their purpose presented to him.

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

Squatting upon his haunches on the table top in the cabin his father had built —his smooth, brown, naked little body bent over the book which rested in his strong slender hands, and his great shock of long, black hair falling about his well-shaped head and bright, intelligent eyes— Tarzan of the apes, little

primitive man, presented a picture filled, at once, with pathos and with promise—an allegorical figure of the primordial groping through the black night of ignorance toward the light of learning.

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

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

BOY

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

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

Slowly he turned the pages, scanning the pictures and the text for a repetition of the combination B-O-Y. Presently he found it beneath a picture of another little ape and a strange animal which went upon four legs like the jackal and resembled him not a little. Beneath this picture the bugs appeared as:

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

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

He did not accomplish it in a day, or in a week, or in a month, or in a year; but slowly, very slowly, he learned after he had grasped the possibilities which lay in those little bugs, so that by the time he was fifteen he knew the various

combinations of letters which stood for every pictured figure in the little primer and in one or two of the picture books.

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

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

He worked so assiduously with this new toy that the table top was soon a mass of scrawly loops and irregular lines and his pencil- point worn down to

the wood. Then he took another pencil, but this time he had a definite object in view.

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

It was a difficult task, for he held the pencil as one would grasp the hilt of a dagger, which does not add greatly to ease in writing or to the legibility of the results.

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

any of the little bugs.

Thus he made a beginning of writing.

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

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

His education progressed; but his greatest finds were in the inexhaustible

storehouse of the huge illustrated dictionary, for he learned more through the medium of pictures than text, even after he had grasped the significance of the bugs.

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

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

No longer did he feel shame for his hairless body or his human features, for

now his reason told him that he was of a different race from his wild and hairy companions. He was a M-A-N, they were A-P-E- S, and the little apes which scurried through the forest top were M-O- N-K-E-Y-S. He knew, too, that old Sabor was a L-I-O-N-E-S-S, and Histah a S-N-A-K-E, and Tantor an E-L-E-P-H-A-N-T. And so he learned to read. From then on his progress was rapid. With the help of the great dictionary and the active intelligence of a healthy mind endowed by inheritance with more than ordinary reasoning powers he shrewdly guessed at much which he could not really understand, and more often than not his guesses were close to the mark of truth.

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

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

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

He practiced with his rope and played with his sharp knife, which he had learned to keep keen by whetting

upon flat stones.

The tribe had grown larger since Tarzan had come among them, for under the leadership of Kerchak they had been able to frighten the other tribes from their part of the jungle so that they had plenty to eat and little or no loss from predatory incursions of neighbors.

Hence the younger males as they became adult found it more comfortable to take mates from their own tribe, or if they captured one of another tribe to bring her back to Kerchak's band and live in amity with him rather than attempt to set up new establishments of their own, or fight with the redoubtable Kerchak for supremacy at home.

Occasionally one more ferocious than

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

Tarzan held a peculiar position in the tribe. They seemed to consider him one of them and yet in some way different. The older males either ignored him entirely or else hated him so vindictively that but for his wondrous agility and speed and the fierce protection of the huge Kala he would have been dispatched at an early age.

Tublat was his most consistent enemy, but it was through Tublat that, when he was about thirteen, the persecution of his enemies suddenly ceased and he was left severely alone, except on the occasions

when one of them ran amuck in the throes of one of those strange, wild fits of insane rage which attacks the males of many of the fiercer animals of the jungle. Then none was safe.

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

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

trees.

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

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

From this primitive function has

arisen, unquestionably, all the forms and ceremonials of modern church and state, for through all the countless ages, back beyond the uttermost ramparts of a dawning humanity our fierce, hairy forebears danced out the rites of the Dum- Dum to the sound of their earthen drums, beneath the bright light of a tropical moon in the depth of a mighty jungle which stands unchanged today as it stood on that long forgotten night in the dim, unthinkable vistas of the long dead past when our first shaggy ancestor swung from a swaying bough and dropped lightly upon the soft turf of the first meeting place.

On the day that Tarzan won his emancipation from the persecution that

had followed him remorselessly for twelve of his thirteen years of life, the tribe, now a full hundred strong, trooped silently through the lower terrace of the jungle trees and dropped noiselessly upon the floor of the amphitheater.

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

Today it was the killing of a giant ape, a member of another tribe, and as the people of Kerchak entered the arena two mighty bulls were seen bearing the body of the vanquished between them.

They laid their burden before the earthen drum and then squatted there beside it as guards, while the other members of the community curled themselves in grassy nooks to sleep until the rising moon should give the signal for the commencement of their savage orgy.

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

At length as darkness settled upon the jungle the apes commenced to bestir themselves, and soon they formed a great circle about the earthen drum. The females and young squatted in a thin line at the outer periphery of the circle, while just in front of them ranged the adult males. Before the drum sat three old females, each armed with a knotted branch fifteen or eighteen inches in length.

Slowly and softly they began tapping upon the resounding surface of the drum as the first faint rays of the ascending moon silvered the encircling tree tops.

As the light in the amphitheater increased the females augmented the frequency and force of their blows until

presently a wild, rhythmic din pervaded the great jungle for miles in every direction. Huge, fierce brutes stopped in their hunting, with up- pricked ears and raised heads, to listen to the dull booming that betokened the Dum-Dum of the apes.

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

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

males and the drummers.

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

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

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

Another male then sprang into the arena, and, repeating the horrid cries of

his king, followed stealthily in his wake. Another and another followed in quick succession until the jungle reverberated with the now almost ceaseless notes of their bloodthirsty screams.

It was the challenge and the hunt.

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

Kerchak, seizing a huge club from the pile which lay at hand for the purpose, rushed furiously upon the dead ape, dealing the corpse a terrific blow, at the same time emitting the growls and snarls of combat. The din of the drum was now increased, as well as the frequency of the blows, and the warriors, as each approached the victim of the hunt and

delivered his bludgeon blow, joined in the mad whirl of the Death Dance.

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

None was more stealthy in the mimic hunt, none more ferocious than he in the wild ferocity of the attack, none who leaped so high into the air in the Dance of Death.

As the noise and rapidity of the drumbeats increased the dancers apparently became intoxicated with the wild rhythm and the savage yells. Their leaps and bounds increased, their bared

fangs dripped saliva, and their lips and breasts were flecked with foam.

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

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

Great fangs sunk into the carcass

tearing away huge hunks, the mightiest of the apes obtaining the choicest morsels, while the weaker circled the outer edge of the fighting, snarling pack awaiting their chance to dodge in and snatch a dropped tidbit or filch a remaining bone before all was gone.

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

At his side hung the hunting knife of

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

At last he reached the fast disappearing feast and with his sharp knife slashed off a more generous portion than he had hoped for, an entire hairy forearm, where it protruded from beneath the feet of the mighty Kerchak, who was so busily engaged in perpetuating the royal prerogative of gluttony that he failed to note the act of lese-majesty.

So little Tarzan wriggled out from beneath the struggling mass, clutching his grisly prize close to his breast.

Among those circling futilely the outskirts of the banqueters was old

Tublat. He had been among the first at the feast, but had retreated with a goodly share to eat in quiet, and was now forcing his way back for more.

So it was that he spied Tarzan as the boy emerged from the clawing, pushing throng with that hairy forearm hugged firmly to his body.

Tublat's little, close-set, bloodshot, pig-eyes shot wicked gleams of hate as they fell upon the object of his loathing. In them, too, was greed for the toothsome dainty the boy carried.

But Tarzan saw his arch enemy as quickly, and divining what the great beast would do he leaped nimbly away toward the females and the young, hoping to hide himself among them.

Tublat, however, was close upon his heels, so that he had no opportunity to seek a place of concealment, but saw that he would be put to it to escape at all.

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

Up, up he went to the waving pinnacle of a lofty monarch of the forest where his heavy pursuer dared not follow him. There he perched, hurling taunts and insults at the raging, foaming beast fifty feet below him.

And then Tublat went mad.

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

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

There was but one in the amphitheater beside Tublat, a belated female running swiftly toward the tree where Tarzan

perched, and close behind her came the awful Tublat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the body rolled to the ground Tarzan of the Apes placed his foot upon

the neck of his lifelong enemy and, raising his eyes to the full moon, threw back his fierce young head and voiced the wild and terrible cry of his people.

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

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

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

defiance.

8. THE TREE-TOP HUNTER

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

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

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

Once old Sabor, crossing their path, sent them scurrying to the safety of the

higher branches, for if she respected their number and their sharp fangs, they on their part held her cruel and mighty ferocity in equal esteem.

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

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

With back-laid ears she looked

straight into the eyes of Tarzan of the Apes and sounded her fierce, shrill challenge. And from the safety of his overhanging limb the ape-child sent back the fearsome answer of his kind.

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

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

At the bottom of his little English heart beat the great desire to cover his nakedness with CLOTHES for he had

learned from his picture books that all MEN were so covered, while MONKEYS and APES and every other living thing went naked.

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

Many moons ago, when he had been much smaller, he had desired the skin of Sabor, the lioness, or Numa, the lion, or Sheeta, the leopard to cover his hairless body that he might no longer resemble hideous Histah, the snake; but now he was proud of his sleek skin for it betokened his descent from a mighty

race, and the conflicting desires to go naked in prideful proof of his ancestry, or to conform to the customs of his own kind and wear hideous and uncomfortable apparel found first one and then the other in the ascendency.

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

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

Suddenly it became as midnight; the noises of the jungle ceased; the trees stood motionless as though in paralyzed

expectancy of some great and imminent disaster. All nature waited—but not for long.

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

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

Then, suddenly, the jungle giants whipped back, lashing their mighty tops in angry and deafening protest. A vivid and blinding light flashed from the whirling, inky clouds above. The deep

cannonade of roaring thunder belched forth its fearsome challenge. The deluge came—all hell broke loose upon the jungle.

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

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

Branches, great and small, torn away

by the ferocity of the tornado, hurtled through the wildly waving verdure, carrying death and destruction to countless unhappy denizens of the thickly peopled world below.

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

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

The dripping leaves and branches, and the moist petals of gorgeous flowers

glistened in the splendor of the returning day. And, so—as Nature forgot, her children forgot also. Busy life went on as it had been before the darkness and the fright.

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

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

the quick thrown noose.

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

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

Tarzan, happily, was uninjured by the fall, alighting catlike upon all fours far outspread to take up the shock. He was on his feet in an instant and, leaping with the agility of the monkey he was, he gained the safety of a low limb as Horta,

the boar, rushed futilely beneath.

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

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

It took him many days to braid a new rope, but when, finally, it was done he went forth purposely to hunt, and lie in wait among the dense foliage of a great branch right above the well-beaten trail that led to water.

Several small animals passed unharmed beneath him. He did not want

such insignificant game. It would take a strong animal to test the efficacy of his new scheme.

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

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

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

Like a thing of bronze, motionless as death, sat Tarzan. Sabor passed beneath.

One stride beyond she took—a second, a third, and then the silent coil shot out above her.

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

Sabor was trapped.

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

half her second bound when she felt the rope tighten about her neck; her body turned completely over in the air and she fell with a heavy crash upon her back. Tarzan had fastened the end of the rope securely to the trunk of the great tree on which he sat.

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

The weight of old Sabor was immense, and when she braced her huge paws nothing less than Tantor, the

elephant, himself, could have budged her.

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

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

Presently the beast dropped to the earth again and Tarzan came quickly to

seize the rope, but Sabor had now found that it was only a slender cord that held her, and grasping it in her huge jaws severed it before Tarzan could tighten the strangling noose a second time.

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

Sabor paced back and forth beneath the tree for hours; four times she crouched and sprang at the dancing sprite above her, but might as well have clutched at the illusive wind that murmured through the tree tops.

At last Tarzan tired of the sport, and with a parting roar of challenge and a well-aimed ripe fruit that spread soft

and sticky over the snarling face of his enemy, he swung rapidly through the trees, a hundred feet above the ground, and in a short time was among the members of his tribe.

Here he recounted the details of his adventure, with swelling chest and so considerable swagger that he quite impressed even his bitterest enemies, while Kala fairly danced for joy and pride.

9. MAN AND MAN

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

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

Often they hunted him, and more often he hunted them, but though they never quite reached him with those cruel,

sharp claws of theirs, yet there were times when one could scarce have passed a thick leaf between their talons and his smooth hide.

Quick was Sabor, the lioness, and quick were Numa and Sheeta, but Tarzan of the Apes was lightning.

With Tantor, the elephant, he made friends. How? Ask not. But this is known to the denizens of the jungle, that on many moonlight nights Tarzan of the Apes and Tantor, the elephant, walked together, and where the way was clear Tarzan rode, perched high upon Tantor's mighty back.

Many days during these years he spent in the cabin of his father, where still lay, untouched, the bones of his parents and

the skeleton of Kala's baby. At eighteen he read fluently and understood nearly all he read in the many and varied volumes on the shelves.

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

Thus, at eighteen, we find him, an English lordling, who could speak no English, and yet who could read and write his native language. Never had he seen a human being other than himself, for the little area traversed by his tribe

was watered by no greater river to bring down the savage natives of the interior.

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

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

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

In advance were fifty black warriors

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

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

Following them were several hundred women and children, the former bearing upon their heads great burdens of cooking pots, household utensils and

ivory. In the rear were a hundred warriors, similar in all respects to the advance guard.

That they more greatly feared an attack from the rear than whatever unknown enemies lurked in their advance was evidenced by the formation of the column; and such was the fact, for they were fleeing from the white man's soldiers who had so harassed them for rubber and ivory that they had turned upon their conquerors one day and massacred a white officer and a small detachment of his black troops.

For many days they had gorged themselves on meat, but eventually a stronger body of troops had come and fallen upon their village by night to

revenge the death of their comrades.

That night the black soldiers of the white man had had meat a- plenty, and this little remnant of a once powerful tribe had slunk off into the gloomy jungle toward the unknown, and freedom.

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

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

encountered.

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

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

from the safety of their palisades.

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

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

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

Three miles to the west slept the tribe

of Kerchak.

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

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

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

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

It was Kulonga.

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

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

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

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

A poor cast. It but grazed her side.

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

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

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

Roaring and shrieking the apes dashed toward Kulonga, but that wary savage was fleeing down the trail like a frightened antelope.

He knew something of the ferocity of these wild, hairy men, and his one desire was to put as many miles between himself and them as he possibly could.

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

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

On the far beach by the little cabin

Tarzan heard the faint echoes of the conflict and knowing that something was seriously amiss among the tribe he hastened rapidly toward the direction of the sound.

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

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

To lose the only creature in all his world who ever had manifested love and affection for him was the greatest

tragedy he had ever known.

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

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

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

It was enough, however, for his

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

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

At his side was the hunting knife of his unknown sire, and across his shoulders the coils of his own long rope. In an hour he struck the trail again, and

coming to earth examined the soil minutely.

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

There were two sets of imprints pointing in opposite directions. So his quarry had already passed on his return along the trail. As he examined the newer spoor a tiny particle of earth toppled from the outer edge of one of the footprints to the bottom of its shallow depression—ah, the trail was very fresh, his prey must have but scarcely passed.

Tarzan swung himself to the trees

once more, and with swift noiselessness sped along high above the trail.

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

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

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

As the man stood there with taut drawn bow Tarzan recognized him not so much the NEGRO as the ARCHER of his picture book -

A stands for Archer

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

But things were commencing to happen below him. The sinewy black arm had drawn the shaft far back; Horta, the boar, was charging, and then the black released the little poisoned arrow, and Tarzan saw it fly with the quickness of thought and lodge in the bristling neck of the boar.

Scarcely had the shaft left his bow ere Kulonga had fitted another to it, but

Horta, the boar, was upon him so quickly that he had no time to discharge it. With a bound the black leaped entirely over the rushing beast and turning with incredible swiftness planted a second arrow in Horta's back.

Then Kulonga sprang into a near-by tree.

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

Kulonga came down from his tree.

With a knife that hung at his side he cut several large pieces from the boar's body, and in the center of the trail he built a fire, cooking and eating as much

as he wanted. The rest he left where it had fallen.

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

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

He had seen fire, but only when Ara, the lightning, had destroyed some great

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

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

And then Lord Greystoke wiped his greasy fingers upon his naked thighs and took up the trail of Kulonga, the son of

Mbonga, the king; while in far-off London another Lord Greystoke, the younger brother of the real Lord Greystoke's father, sent back his chops to the club's chef because they were underdone, and when he had finished his repast he dipped his finger-ends into a silver bowl of scented water and dried them upon a piece of snowy damask.

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

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

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

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

When Kulonga awoke he found that

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

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

That he was not far from home he was certain, so he took the trail at a rapid trot.

From a great mass of impenetrable foliage a few yards away emerged Tarzan of the Apes to swing quietly in his wake.

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

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

The moment was delayed only

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

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

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

So it was that as Kulonga emerged

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

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

Here he fastened the rope securely to a stout branch, and then, descending,

plunged his hunting knife into Kulonga's heart. Kala was avenged.

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

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

How may we judge him, by what

standards, this ape-man with the heart and head and body of an English gentleman, and the training of a wild beast?

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

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

Suddenly, a strange doubt stayed his hand. Had not his books taught him that

he was a man? And was not The Archer a man, also?

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

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

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

10. THE FEAR-PHANTOM

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

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

His savage life among the fierce wild brutes of the jungle left no opening for any thought that these could be aught else than enemies. Similarity of form led him into no erroneous conception of the welcome that would be accorded him should he be discovered by these, the

first of his own kind he had ever seen.

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

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

His strange life had left him neither morose nor bloodthirsty. That he joyed in killing, and that he killed with a

joyous laugh upon his handsome lips betokened no innate cruelty. He killed for food most often, but, being a man, he sometimes killed for pleasure, a thing which no other animal does; for it has remained for man alone among all creatures to kill senselessly and wantonly for the mere pleasure of inflicting suffering and death.

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

So it was that now, as he cautiously approached the village of Mbonga, he was quite prepared either to kill or be killed should he be discovered. He proceeded with unwonted stealth, for

Kulonga had taught him great respect for the little sharp splinters of wood which dealt death so swiftly and unerringly.

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

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

gathering.

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

Tarzan of the Apes looked with growing wonder at these strange creatures. Dozing in the shade he saw several men, while at the extreme outskirts of the clearing he occasionally caught glimpses of armed warriors apparently guarding the village against surprise from an attacking enemy.

He noticed that the women alone worked. Nowhere was there evidence of

a man tilling the fields or performing any of the homely duties of the village.

Finally his eyes rested upon a woman directly beneath him.

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

Tarzan of the Apes was fascinated. Here was the secret of the terrible destructiveness of The Archer's tiny missiles. He noted the extreme care which the woman took that none of the matter should touch her hands, and once

when a particle spattered upon one of her fingers he saw her plunge the member into a vessel of water and quickly rub the tiny stain away with a handful of leaves.

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

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

As he was trying to think out some

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

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

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

Tarzan of the Apes knew that they had

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

Quickly and noiselessly he dropped to the ground beside the cauldron of poison. For a moment he stood motionless, his quick, bright eyes scanning the interior of the palisade.

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

For a moment he stood without, listening intently. There was no sound, and he glided into the semi-darkness of

the interior.

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

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

As he took each article from the

walls, he placed it in a pile in the center of the room. On top of all he placed the cooking pot, inverted, and on top of this he laid one of the grinning skulls, upon which he fastened the headdress of the dead Kulonga.

Then he stood back, surveyed his work, and grinned. Tarzan of the Apes enjoyed a joke.

But now he heard, outside, the sounds of many voices, and long mournful howls, and mighty wailing. He was startled. Had he remained too long? Quickly he reached the doorway and peered down the village street toward the village gate.

The natives were not yet in sight, though he could plainly hear them

approaching across the plantation. They must be very near.

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

The natives filed up the street, four of them bearing the dead body of Kulonga. Behind trailed the women, uttering strange cries and weird lamentation. On they came to the portals of Kulonga's hut,

the very one in which Tarzan had wrought his depredations.

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

Finally an old fellow with many ornaments of metal about his arms and legs, and a necklace of dried human hands depending upon his chest, entered the hut.

It was Mbonga, the king, father of Kulonga.

For a few moments all was silent. Then Mbonga emerged, a look of

mingled wrath and superstitious fear writ upon his hideous countenance. He spoke a few words to the assembled warriors, and in an instant the men were flying through the little village searching minutely every hut and corner within the palisades.

Scarcely had the search commenced than the overturned cauldron was discovered, and with it the theft of the poisoned arrows. Nothing more they found, and it was a thoroughly awed and frightened group of savages which huddled around their king a few moments later.

Mbonga could explain nothing of the strange events that had taken place. The finding of the still warm body of

Kulonga—on the very verge of their fields and within easy earshot of the village—knifed and stripped at the door of his father's home, was in itself sufficiently mysterious, but these last awesome discoveries within the village, within the dead Kulonga's own hut, filled their hearts with dismay, and conjured in their poor brains only the most frightful of superstitious explanations.

They stood in little groups, talking in low tones, and ever casting affrighted glances behind them from their great rolling eyes.

Tarzan of the Apes watched them for a while from his lofty perch in the great tree. There was much in their demeanor

which he could not understand, for of superstition he was ignorant, and of fear of any kind he had but a vague conception.

The sun was high in the heavens. Tarzan had not broken fast this day, and it was many miles to where lay the toothsome remains of Horta the boar.

So he turned his back upon the village of Mbonga and melted away into the leafy fastness of the forest.

11. "KING OF THE APES"

It was not yet dark when he reached the tribe, though he stopped to exhume and devour the remains of the wild boar he had cached the preceding day, and again to take Kulonga's bow and arrows from the tree top in which he had hidden them.

It was a well-laden Tarzan who dropped from the branches into the midst of the tribe of Kerchak.

With swelling chest he narrated the glories of his adventure and exhibited the spoils of conquest.

Kerchak grunted and turned away, for he was jealous of this strange member of his band. In his little evil brain he sought for some excuse to wreak his hatred upon Tarzan.

The next day Tarzan was practicing with his bow and arrows at the first gleam of dawn. At first he lost nearly every bolt he shot, but finally he learned to guide the little shafts with fair accuracy, and ere a month had passed he was no mean shot; but his proficiency had cost him nearly his entire supply of arrows.

The tribe continued to find the hunting good in the vicinity of the beach, and so Tarzan of the Apes varied his archery practice with further investigation of his father's choice though little store of books.

It was during this period that the young English lord found hidden in the back of one of the cupboards in the cabin

a small metal box. The key was in the lock, and a few moments of investigation and experimentation were rewarded with the successful opening of the receptacle.

In it he found a faded photograph of a smooth faced young man, a golden locket studded with diamonds, linked to a small gold chain, a few letters and a small book.

Tarzan examined these all minutely.

The photograph he liked most of all, for the eyes were smiling, and the face was open and frank. It was his father.

The locket, too, took his fancy, and he placed the chain about his neck in imitation of the ornamentation he had seen to be so common among the black

men he had visited. The brilliant stones gleamed strangely against his smooth, brown hide.

The letters he could scarcely decipher for he had learned little or nothing of script, so he put them back in the box with the photograph and turned his attention to the book.

This was almost entirely filled with fine script, but while the little bugs were all familiar to him, their arrangement and the combinations in which they occurred were strange, and entirely incomprehensible.

Tarzan had long since learned the use of the dictionary, but much to his sorrow and perplexity it proved of no avail to him in this emergency. Not a word of all

that was writ in the book could he find, and so he put it back in the metal box, but with a determination to work out the mysteries of it later on.

Little did he know that this book held between its covers the key to his origin—the answer to the strange riddle of his strange life. It was the diary of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke—kept in French, as had always been his custom.

Tarzan replaced the box in the cupboard, but always thereafter he carried the features of the strong, smiling face of his father in his heart, and in his head a fixed determination to solve the mystery of the strange words in the little black book.

At present he had more important

business in hand, for his supply of arrows was exhausted, and he must needs journey to the black men's village and renew it.

Early the following morning he set out, and, traveling rapidly, he came before midday to the clearing. Once more he took up his position in the great tree, and, as before, he saw the women in the fields and the village street, and the cauldron of bubbling poison directly beneath him.

For hours he lay awaiting his opportunity to drop down unseen and gather up the arrows for which he had come; but nothing now occurred to call the villagers away from their homes. The day wore on, and still Tarzan of the

Apes crouched above the unsuspecting woman at the cauldron.

Presently the workers in the fields returned. The hunting warriors emerged from the forest, and when all were within the palisade the gates were closed and barred.

Many cooking pots were now in evidence about the village. Before each hut a woman presided over a boiling stew, while little cakes of plantain, and cassava puddings were to be seen on every hand.

Suddenly there came a hail from the edge of the clearing.

Tarzan looked.

It was a party of belated hunters returning from the north, and among them

they half led, half carried a struggling animal.

As they approached the village the gates were thrown open to admit them, and then, as the people saw the victim of the chase, a savage cry rose to the heavens, for the quarry was a man.

As he was dragged, still resisting, into the village street, the women and children set upon him with sticks and stones, and Tarzan of the Apes, young and savage beast of the jungle, wondered at the cruel brutality of his own kind.

Sheeta, the leopard, alone of all the jungle folk, tortured his prey. The ethics of all the others meted a quick and merciful death to their victims.

Tarzan had learned from his books but scattered fragments of the ways of human beings.

When he had followed Kulonga through the forest he had expected to come to a city of strange houses on wheels, puffing clouds of black smoke from a huge tree stuck in the roof of one of them—or to a sea covered with mighty floating buildings which he had learned were called, variously, ships and boats and steamers and craft.

He had been sorely disappointed with the poor little village of the blacks, hidden away in his own jungle, and with not a single house as large as his own cabin upon the distant beach.

He saw that these people were more

wicked than his own apes, and as savage and cruel as Sabor, herself. Tarzan began to hold his own kind in low esteem.

Now they had tied their poor victim to a great post near the center of the village, directly before Mbonga's hut, and here they formed a dancing, yelling circle of warriors about him, alive with flashing knives and menacing spears.

In a larger circle squatted the women, yelling and beating upon drums. It reminded Tarzan of the Dum-Dum, and so he knew what to expect. He wondered if they would spring upon their meat while it was still alive. The Apes did not do such things as that.

The circle of warriors about the

cringing captive drew closer and closer to their prey as they danced in wild and savage abandon to the maddening music of the drums. Presently a spear reached out and pricked the victim. It was the signal for fifty others.

Eyes, ears, arms and legs were pierced; every inch of the poor writhing body that did not cover a vital organ became the target of the cruel lancers.

The women and children shrieked their delight.

The warriors licked their hideous lips in anticipation of the feast to come, and vied with one another in the savagery and loathsomeness of the cruel indignities with which they tortured the still conscious prisoner.

Then it was that Tarzan of the Apes saw his chance. All eyes were fixed upon the thrilling spectacle at the stake. The light of day had given place to the darkness of a moonless night, and only the fires in the immediate vicinity of the orgy had been kept alight to cast a restless glow upon the restless scene.

Gently the lithe boy dropped to the soft earth at the end of the village street. Quickly he gathered up the arrows—all of them this time, for he had brought a number of long fibers to bind them into a bundle.

Without haste he wrapped them securely, and then, ere he turned to leave, the devil of capriciousness entered his heart. He looked about for

some hint of a wild prank to play upon these strange, grotesque creatures that they might be again aware of his presence among them.

Dropping his bundle of arrows at the foot of the tree, Tarzan crept among the shadows at the side of the street until he came to the same hut he had entered on the occasion of his first visit.

Inside all was darkness, but his groping hands soon found the object for which he sought, and without further delay he turned again toward the door.

He had taken but a step, however, ere his quick ear caught the sound of approaching footsteps immediately without. In another instant the figure of a woman darkened the entrance of the hut.

Tarzan drew back silently to the far wall, and his hand sought the long, keen hunting knife of his father. The woman came quickly to the center of the hut. There she paused for an instant feeling about with her hands for the thing she sought. Evidently it was not in its accustomed place, for she explored ever nearer and nearer the wall where Tarzan stood.

So close was she now that the ape-man felt the animal warmth of her naked body. Up went the hunting knife, and then the woman turned to one side and soon a guttural "ah" proclaimed that her search had at last been successful.

Immediately she turned and left the hut, and as she passed through the

doorway Tarzan saw that she carried a cooking pot in her hand.

He followed closely after her, and as he reconnoitered from the shadows of the doorway he saw that all the women of the village were hastening to and from the various huts with pots and kettles. These they were filling with water and placing over a number of fires near the stake where the dying victim now hung, an inert and bloody mass of suffering.

Choosing a moment when none seemed near, Tarzan hastened to his bundle of arrows beneath the great tree at the end of the village street. As on the former occasion he overthrew the cauldron before leaping, sinuous and catlike, into the lower branches of the

forest giant.

Silently he climbed to a great height until he found a point where he could look through a leafy opening upon the scene beneath him.

The women were now preparing the prisoner for their cooking pots, while the men stood about resting after the fatigue of their mad revel. Comparative quiet reigned in the village.

Tarzan raised aloft the thing he had pilfered from the hut, and, with aim made true by years of fruit and coconut throwing, launched it toward the group of savages.

Squarely among them it fell, striking one of the warriors full upon the head and felling him to the ground. Then it

rolled among the women and stopped beside the half-butchered thing they were preparing to feast upon.

All gazed in consternation at it for an instant, and then, with one accord, broke and ran for their huts.

It was a grinning human skull which looked up at them from the ground. The dropping of the thing out of the open sky was a miracle well aimed to work upon their superstitious fears.

Thus Tarzan of the Apes left them filled with terror at this new manifestation of the presence of some unseen and unearthly evil power which lurked in the forest about their village.

Later, when they discovered the overturned cauldron, and that once more

their arrows had been pilfered, it commenced to dawn upon them that they had offended some great god by placing their village in this part of the jungle without propitiating him. From then on an offering of food was daily placed below the great tree from whence the arrows had disappeared in an effort to conciliate the mighty one.

But the seed of fear was deep sown, and had he but known it, Tarzan of the Apes had laid the foundation for much future misery for himself and his tribe.

That night he slept in the forest not far from the village, and early the next morning set out slowly on his homeward march, hunting as he traveled. Only a few berries and an occasional grub

worm rewarded his search, and he was half famished when, looking up from a log he had been rooting beneath, he saw Sabor, the lioness, standing in the center of the trail not twenty paces from him.

The great yellow eyes were fixed upon him with a wicked and baleful gleam, and the red tongue licked the longing lips as Sabor crouched, worming her stealthy way with belly flattened against the earth.

Tarzan did not attempt to escape. He welcomed the opportunity for which, in fact, he had been searching for days past, now that he was armed with something more than a rope of grass.

Quickly he unslung his bow and fitted a well-daubed arrow, and as Sabor

sprang, the tiny missile leaped to meet her in mid-air. At the same instant Tarzan of the Apes jumped to one side, and as the great cat struck the ground beyond him another death-tipped arrow sunk deep into Sabor's loin.

With a mighty roar the beast turned and charged once more, only to be met with a third arrow full in one eye; but this time she was too close to the ape-man for the latter to sidestep the onrushing body.

Tarzan of the Apes went down beneath the great body of his enemy, but with gleaming knife drawn and striking home. For a moment they lay there, and then Tarzan realized that the inert mass lying upon him was beyond power ever

again to injure man or ape.

With difficulty he wriggled from beneath the great weight, and as he stood erect and gazed down upon the trophy of his skill, a mighty wave of exultation swept over him.

With swelling breast, he placed a foot upon the body of his powerful enemy, and throwing back his fine young head, roared out the awful challenge of the victorious bull ape.

The forest echoed to the savage and triumphant paean. Birds fell still, and the larger animals and beasts of prey slunk stealthily away, for few there were of all the jungle who sought for trouble with the great anthropoids.

And in London another Lord

Greystoke was speaking to HIS kind in the House of Lords, but none trembled at the sound of his soft voice.

Sabor proved unsavory eating even to Tarzan of the Apes, but hunger served as a most efficacious disguise to toughness and rank taste, and ere long, with well-filled stomach, the ape-man was ready to sleep again. First, however, he must remove the hide, for it was as much for this as for any other purpose that he had desired to destroy Sabor.

Deftly he removed the great pelt, for he had practiced often on smaller animals. When the task was finished he carried his trophy to the fork of a high tree, and there, curling himself securely in a crotch, he fell into deep and

dreamless slumber.

What with loss of sleep, arduous exercise, and a full belly, Tarzan of the Apes slept the sun around, awakening about noon of the following day. He straightway repaired to the carcass of Sabor, but was angered to find the bones picked clean by other hungry denizens of the jungle.

Half an hour's leisurely progress through the forest brought to sight a young deer, and before the little creature knew that an enemy was near a tiny arrow had lodged in its neck.

So quickly the virus worked that at the end of a dozen leaps the deer plunged headlong into the undergrowth, dead. Again did Tarzan feast well, but

this time he did not sleep.

Instead, he hastened on toward the point where he had left the tribe, and when he had found them proudly exhibited the skin of Sabor, the lioness.

"Look!" he cried, "Apes of Kerchak. See what Tarzan, the mighty killer, has done. Who else among you has ever killed one of Numa's people? Tarzan is mightiest amongst you for Tarzan is no ape. Tarzan is—" But here he stopped, for in the language of the anthropoids there was no word for man, and Tarzan could only write the word in English; he could not pronounce it.

The tribe had gathered about to look upon the proof of his wondrous prowess, and to listen to his words.

Only Kerchak hung back, nursing his hatred and his rage.

Suddenly something snapped in the wicked little brain of the anthropoid. With a frightful roar the great beast sprang among the assemblage.

Biting, and striking with his huge hands, he killed and maimed a dozen ere the balance could escape to the upper terraces of the forest.

Frothing and shrieking in the insanity of his fury, Kerchak looked about for the object of his greatest hatred, and there, upon a near-by limb, he saw him sitting.

"Come down, Tarzan, great killer," cried Kerchak. "Come down and feel the fangs of a greater! Do mighty fighters fly to the trees at the first approach of

danger?" And then Kerchak emitted the volleying challenge of his kind.

Quietly Tarzan dropped to the ground. Breathlessly the tribe watched from their lofty perches as Kerchak, still roaring, charged the relatively puny figure.

Nearly seven feet stood Kerchak on his short legs. His enormous shoulders were bunched and rounded with huge muscles. The back of his short neck was as a single lump of iron sinew which bulged beyond the base of his skull, so that his head seemed like a small ball protruding from a huge mountain of flesh.

His back-drawn, snarling lips exposed his great fighting fangs, and his little, wicked, blood-shot eyes gleamed

in horrid reflection of his madness.

Awaiting him stood Tarzan, himself a mighty muscled animal, but his six feet of height and his great rolling sinews seemed pitifully inadequate to the ordeal which awaited them.

His bow and arrows lay some distance away where he had dropped them while showing Sabor's hide to his fellow apes, so that he confronted Kerchak now with only his hunting knife and his superior intellect to offset the ferocious strength of his enemy.

As his antagonist came roaring toward him, Lord Greystoke tore his long knife from its sheath, and with an answering challenge as horrid and bloodcurdling as that of the beast he

faced, rushed swiftly to meet the attack. He was too shrewd to allow those long hairy arms to encircle him, and just as their bodies were about to crash together, Tarzan of the Apes grasped one of the huge wrists of his assailant, and, springing lightly to one side, drove his knife to the hilt into Kerchak's body, below the heart.

Before he could wrench the blade free again, the bull's quick lunge to seize him in those awful arms had torn the weapon from Tarzan's grasp.

Kerchak aimed a terrific blow at the ape-man's head with the flat of his hand, a blow which, had it landed, might easily have crushed in the side of Tarzan's skull.

The man was too quick, and, ducking beneath it, himself delivered a mighty one, with clenched fist, in the pit of Kerchak's stomach.

The ape was staggered, and what with the mortal wound in his side had almost collapsed, when, with one mighty effort he rallied for an instant - just long enough to enable him to wrest his arm free from Tarzan's grasp and close in a terrific clinch with his wiry opponent.

Straining the ape-man close to him, his great jaws sought Tarzan's throat, but the young lord's sinewy fingers were at Kerchak's own before the cruel fangs could close on the sleek brown skin.

Thus they struggled, the one to crush out his opponent's life with those awful

teeth, the other to close forever the windpipe beneath his strong grasp while he held the snarling mouth from him.

The greater strength of the ape was slowly prevailing, and the teeth of the straining beast were scarce an inch from Tarzan's throat when, with a shuddering tremor, the great body stiffened for an instant and then sank limply to the ground.

Kerchak was dead.

Withdrawing the knife that had so often rendered him master of far mightier muscles than his own, Tarzan of the Apes placed his foot upon the neck of his vanquished enemy, and once again, loud through the forest rang the fierce, wild cry of the conqueror.

And thus came the young Lord Greystoke into the kingship of the Apes.

12. MAN'S REASON

There was one of the tribe of Tarzan who questioned his authority, and that was Terkoz, the son of Tublat, but he so feared the keen knife and the deadly arrows of his new lord that he confined the manifestation of his objections to petty disobediences and irritating mannerisms; Tarzan knew, however, that he but waited his opportunity to wrest the kingship from him by some sudden stroke of treachery, and so he was ever on his guard against surprise.

For months the life of the little band went on much as it had before, except that Tarzan's greater intelligence and his ability as a hunter were the means of providing for them more bountifully than

ever before. Most of them, therefore, were more than content with the change in rulers.

Tarzan led them by night to the fields of the black men, and there, warned by their chief's superior wisdom, they ate only what they required, nor ever did they destroy what they could not eat, as is the way of Manu, the monkey, and of most apes.

So, while the blacks were wroth at the continued pilfering of their fields, they were not discouraged in their efforts to cultivate the land, as would have been the case had Tarzan permitted his people to lay waste the plantation wantonly.

During this period Tarzan paid many

nocturnal visits to the village, where he often renewed his supply of arrows. He soon noticed the food always standing at the foot of the tree which was his avenue into the palisade, and after a little, he commenced to eat whatever the blacks put there.

When the awe-struck savages saw that the food disappeared overnight they were filled with consternation and dread, for it was one thing to put food out to propitiate a god or a devil, but quite another thing to have the spirit really come into the village and eat it. Such a thing was unheard of, and it clouded their superstitious minds with all manner of vague fears.

Nor was this all. The periodic

disappearance of their arrows, and the strange pranks perpetrated by unseen hands, had wrought them to such a state that life had become a veritable burden in their new home, and now it was that Mbonga and his head men began to talk of abandoning the village and seeking a site farther on in the jungle.

Presently the black warriors began to strike farther and farther south into the heart of the forest when they went to hunt, looking for a site for a new village.

More often was the tribe of Tarzan disturbed by these wandering huntsmen. Now was the quiet, fierce solitude of the primeval forest broken by new, strange cries. No longer was there safety for bird or beast. Man had come.

Other animals passed up and down the jungle by day and by night— fierce, cruel beasts—but their weaker neighbors only fled from their immediate vicinity to return again when the danger was past.

With man it is different. When he comes many of the larger animals instinctively leave the district entirely, seldom if ever to return; and thus it has always been with the great anthropoids. They flee man as man flees a pestilence.

For a short time the tribe of Tarzan lingered in the vicinity of the beach because their new chief hated the thought of leaving the treasured contents of the little cabin forever. But when one day a member of the tribe discovered the

blacks in great numbers on the banks of a little stream that had been their watering place for generations, and in the act of clearing a space in the jungle and erecting many huts, the apes would remain no longer; and so Tarzan led them inland for many marches to a spot as yet undefiled by the foot of a human being.

Once every moon Tarzan would go swinging rapidly back through the swaying branches to have a day with his books, and to replenish his supply of arrows. This latter task was becoming more and more difficult, for the blacks had taken to hiding their supply away at night in granaries and living huts.

This necessitated watching by day on

Tarzan's part to discover where the arrows were being concealed.

Twice had he entered huts at night while the inmates lay sleeping upon their mats, and stolen the arrows from the very sides of the warriors. But this method he realized to be too fraught with danger, and so he commenced picking up solitary hunters with his long, deadly noose, stripping them of weapons and ornaments and dropping their bodies from a high tree into the village street during the still watches of the night.

These various escapades again so terrorized the blacks that, had it not been for the monthly respite between Tarzan's visits, in which they had opportunity to renew hope that each fresh incursion

would prove the last, they soon would have abandoned their new village.

The blacks had not as yet come upon Tarzan's cabin on the distant beach, but the ape-man lived in constant dread that, while he was away with the tribe, they would discover and despoil his treasure. So it came that he spent more and more time in the vicinity of his father's last home, and less and less with the tribe. Presently the members of his little community began to suffer on account of his neglect, for disputes and quarrels constantly arose which only the king might settle peaceably.

At last some of the older apes spoke to Tarzan on the subject, and for a month thereafter he remained constantly with

the tribe.

The duties of kingship among the anthropoids are not many or arduous.

In the afternoon comes Thaka, possibly, to complain that old Mungo has stolen his new wife. Then must Tarzan summon all before him, and if he finds that the wife prefers her new lord he commands that matters remain as they are, or possibly that Mungo give Thaka one of his daughters in exchange.

Whatever his decision, the apes accept it as final, and return to their occupations satisfied.

Then comes Tana, shrieking and holding tight her side from which blood is streaming. Gunto, her husband, has cruelly bitten her! And Gunto,

summoned, says that Tana is lazy and will not bring him nuts and beetles, or scratch his back for him.

So Tarzan scolds them both and threatens Gunto with a taste of the death-bearing slivers if he abuses Tana further, and Tana, for her part, is compelled to promise better attention to her wifely duties.

And so it goes, little family differences for the most part, which, if left unsettled would result finally in greater factional strife, and the eventual dismemberment of the tribe.

But Tarzan tired of it, as he found that kingship meant the curtailment of his liberty. He longed for the little cabin and the sun-kissed sea— for the cool interior

of the well-built house, and for the never-ending wonders of the many books.

As he had grown older, he found that he had grown away from his people. Their interests and his were far removed. They had not kept pace with him, nor could they understand aught of the many strange and wonderful dreams that passed through the active brain of their human king. So limited was their vocabulary that Tarzan could not even talk with them of the many new truths, and the great fields of thought that his reading had opened up before his longing eyes, or make known ambitions which stirred his soul.

Among the tribe he no longer had

friends as of old. A little child may find companionship in many strange and simple creatures, but to a grown man there must be some semblance of equality in intellect as the basis for agreeable association.

Had Kala lived, Tarzan would have sacrificed all else to remain near her, but now that she was dead, and the playful friends of his childhood grown into fierce and surly brutes he felt that he much preferred the peace and solitude of his cabin to the irksome duties of leadership amongst a horde of wild beasts.

The hatred and jealousy of Terkoz, son of Tublat, did much to counteract the effect of Tarzan's desire to renounce his

kingship among the apes, for, stubborn young Englishman that he was, he could not bring himself to retreat in the face of so malignant an enemy.

That Terkoz would be chosen leader in his stead he knew full well, for time and again the ferocious brute had established his claim to physical supremacy over the few bull apes who had dared resent his savage bullying.

Tarzan would have liked to subdue the ugly beast without recourse to knife or arrows. So much had his great strength and agility increased in the period following his maturity that he had come to believe that he might master the redoubtable Terkoz in a hand to hand fight were it not for the terrible

advantage the anthropoid's huge fighting fangs gave him over the poorly armed Tarzan.

The entire matter was taken out of Tarzan's hands one day by force of circumstances, and his future left open to him, so that he might go or stay without any stain upon his savage escutcheon.

It happened thus:

The tribe was feeding quietly, spread over a considerable area, when a great screaming arose some distance east of where Tarzan lay upon his belly beside a limpid brook, attempting to catch an elusive fish in his quick, brown hands.

With one accord the tribe swung rapidly toward the frightened cries, and there found Terkoz holding an old

female by the hair and beating her unmercifully with his great hands.

As Tarzan approached he raised his hand aloft for Terkoz to desist, for the female was not his, but belonged to a poor old ape whose fighting days were long over, and who, therefore, could not protect his family.

Terkoz knew that it was against the laws of his kind to strike this woman of another, but being a bully, he had taken advantage of the weakness of the female's husband to chastise her because she had refused to give up to him a tender young rodent she had captured.

When Terkoz saw Tarzan approaching without his arrows, he continued to belabor the poor woman in

a studied effort to affront his hated chieftain.

Tarzan did not repeat his warning signal, but instead rushed bodily upon the waiting Terkoz.

Never had the ape-man fought so terrible a battle since that long-gone day when Bolgani, the great king gorilla had so horribly manhandled him ere the new-found knife had, by accident, pricked the savage heart.

Tarzan's knife on the present occasion but barely offset the gleaming fangs of Terkoz, and what little advantage the ape had over the man in brute strength was almost balanced by the latter's wonderful quickness and agility.

In the sum total of their points,

however, the anthropoid had a shade the better of the battle, and had there been no other personal attribute to influence the final outcome, Tarzan of the Apes, the young Lord Greystoke, would have died as he had lived—an unknown savage beast in equatorial Africa.

But there was that which had raised him far above his fellows of the jungle—that little spark which spells the whole vast difference between man and brute—Reason. This it was which saved him from death beneath the iron muscles and tearing fangs of Terkoz.

Scarcely had they fought a dozen seconds ere they were rolling upon the ground, striking, tearing and rending—two great savage beasts battling to the

death.

Terkoz had a dozen knife wounds on head and breast, and Tarzan was torn and bleeding—his scalp in one place half torn from his head so that a great piece hung down over one eye, obstructing his vision.

But so far the young Englishman had been able to keep those horrible fangs from his jugular and now, as they fought less fiercely for a moment, to regain their breath, Tarzan formed a cunning plan. He would work his way to the other's back and, clinging there with tooth and nail, drive his knife home until Terkoz was no more.

The maneuver was accomplished more easily than he had hoped, for the

stupid beast, not knowing what Tarzan was attempting, made no particular effort to prevent the accomplishment of the design.

But when, finally, he realized that his antagonist was fastened to him where his teeth and fists alike were useless against him, Terkoz hurled himself about upon the ground so violently that Tarzan could but cling desperately to the leaping, turning, twisting body, and ere he had struck a blow the knife was hurled from his hand by a heavy impact against the earth, and Tarzan found himself defenseless.

During the rollings and squirmings of the next few minutes, Tarzan's hold was loosened a dozen times until finally an

accidental circumstance of those swift and everchanging evolutions gave him a new hold with his right hand, which he realized was absolutely unassailable.

His arm was passed beneath Terkoz's arm from behind and his hand and forearm encircled the back of Terkoz's neck. It was the half- Nelson of modern wrestling which the untaught ape-man had stumbled upon, but superior reason showed him in an instant the value of the thing he had discovered. It was the difference to him between life and death.

And so he struggled to encompass a similar hold with the left hand, and in a few moments Terkoz's bull neck was creaking beneath a full-Nelson.

There was no more lunging about

now. The two lay perfectly still upon the ground, Tarzan upon Terkoz's back. Slowly the bullet head of the ape was being forced lower and lower upon his chest.

Tarzan knew what the result would be. In an instant the neck would break. Then there came to Terkoz's rescue the same thing that had put him in these sore straits—a man's reasoning power.

"If I kill him," thought Tarzan, "what advantage will it be to me? Will it not rob the tribe of a great fighter? And if Terkoz be dead, he will know nothing of my supremacy, while alive he will ever be an example to the other apes."

"KA-GODA?" hissed Tarzan in Terkoz's ear, which, in ape tongue,

means, freely translated: "Do you surrender?"

For a moment there was no reply, and Tarzan added a few more ounces of pressure, which elicited a horrified shriek of pain from the great beast.

"KA-GODA?" repeated Tarzan.

"KA-GODA!" cried Terkoz.

"Listen," said Tarzan, easing up a trifle, but not releasing his hold. "I am Tarzan, King of the Apes, mighty hunter, mighty fighter. In all the jungle there is none so great.

"You have said: `KA-GODA' to me. All the tribe have heard. Quarrel no more with your king or your people, for next time I shall kill you. Do you understand?"

"HUH," assented Terkoz.

"And you are satisfied?"

"HUH," said the ape.

Tarzan let him up, and in a few minutes all were back at their vocations, as though naught had occurred to mar the tranquility of their primeval forest haunts.

But deep in the minds of the apes was rooted the conviction that Tarzan was a mighty fighter and a strange creature. Strange because he had had it in his power to kill his enemy, but had allowed him to live— unharmed.

That afternoon as the tribe came together, as was their wont before darkness settled on the jungle, Tarzan, his wounds washed in the waters of the

stream, called the old males about him.

"You have seen again today that Tarzan of the Apes is the greatest among you," he said.

"HUH," they replied with one voice, "Tarzan is great."

"Tarzan," he continued, "is not an ape. He is not like his people. His ways are not their ways, and so Tarzan is going back to the lair of his own kind by the waters of the great lake which has no farther shore. You must choose another to rule you, for Tarzan will not return."

And thus young Lord Greystoke took the first step toward the goal which he had set—the finding of other white men like himself.

13. HIS OWN KIND

The following morning, Tarzan, lame and sore from the wounds of his battle with Terkoz, set out toward the west and the seacoast.

He traveled very slowly, sleeping in the jungle at night, and reaching his cabin late the following morning.

For several days he moved about but little, only enough to gather what fruits and nuts he required to satisfy the demands of hunger.

In ten days he was quite sound again, except for a terrible, half-healed scar, which, starting above his left eye ran across the top of his head, ending at the right ear. It was the mark left by Terkoz when he had torn the scalp away.

During his convalescence Tarzan tried to fashion a mantle from the skin of Sabor, which had lain all this time in the cabin. But he found the hide had dried as stiff as a board, and as he knew naught of tanning, he was forced to abandon his cherished plan.

Then he determined to filch what few garments he could from one of the black men of Mbonga's village, for Tarzan of the Apes had decided to mark his evolution from the lower orders in every possible manner, and nothing seemed to him a more distinguishing badge of manhood than ornaments and clothing.

To this end, therefore, he collected the various arm and leg ornaments he had taken from the black warriors who

had succumbed to his swift and silent noose, and donned them all after the way he had seen them worn.

About his neck hung the golden chain from which depended the diamond encrusted locket of his mother, the Lady Alice. At his back was a quiver of arrows slung from a leathern shoulder belt, another piece of loot from some vanquished black.

About his waist was a belt of tiny strips of rawhide fashioned by himself as a support for the home-made scabbard in which hung his father's hunting knife. The long bow which had been Kulonga's hung over his left shoulder.

The young Lord Greystoke was

indeed a strange and war-like figure, his mass of black hair falling to his shoulders behind and cut with his hunting knife to a rude bang upon his forehead, that it might not fall before his eyes.

His straight and perfect figure, muscled as the best of the ancient Roman gladiators must have been muscled, and yet with the soft and sinuous curves of a Greek god, told at a glance the wondrous combination of enormous strength with suppleness and speed.

A personification, was Tarzan of the Apes, of the primitive man, the hunter, the warrior.

With the noble poise of his handsome head upon those broad shoulders, and

the fire of life and intelligence in those fine, clear eyes, he might readily have typified some demigod of a wild and warlike bygone people of his ancient forest.

But of these things Tarzan did not think. He was worried because he had not clothing to indicate to all the jungle folks that he was a man and not an ape, and grave doubt often entered his mind as to whether he might not yet become an ape.

Was not hair commencing to grow upon his face? All the apes had hair upon theirs but the black men were entirely hairless, with very few exceptions.

True, he had seen pictures in his

books of men with great masses of hair upon lip and cheek and chin, but, nevertheless, Tarzan was afraid. Almost daily he whetted his keen knife and scraped and whittled at his young beard to eradicate this degrading emblem of apehood.

And so he learned to shave—rudely and painfully, it is true —but, nevertheless, effectively.

When he felt quite strong again, after his bloody battle with Terkoz, Tarzan set off one morning towards Mbonga's village. He was moving carelessly along a winding jungle trail, instead of making his progress through the trees, when suddenly he came face to face with a black warrior.

The look of surprise on the savage face was almost comical, and before Tarzan could unsling his bow the fellow had turned and fled down the path crying out in alarm as though to others before him.

Tarzan took to the trees in pursuit, and in a few moments came in view of the men desperately striving to escape.

There were three of them, and they were racing madly in single file through the dense undergrowth.

Tarzan easily distanced them, nor did they see his silent passage above their heads, nor note the crouching figure squatted upon a low branch ahead of them beneath which the trail led them.

Tarzan let the first two pass beneath

him, but as the third came swiftly on, the quiet noose dropped about the black throat. A quick jerk drew it taut.

There was an agonized scream from the victim, and his fellows turned to see his struggling body rise as by magic slowly into the dense foliage of the trees above.

With frightened shrieks they wheeled once more and plunged on in their efforts to escape.

Tarzan dispatched his prisoner quickly and silently; removed the weapons and ornaments, and—oh, the greatest joy of all—a handsome deerskin breechcloth, which he quickly transferred to his own person.

Now indeed was he dressed as a man

should be. None there was who could now doubt his high origin. How he should have liked to have returned to the tribe to parade before their envious gaze this wondrous finery.

Taking the body across his shoulder, he moved more slowly through the trees toward the little palisaded village, for he again needed arrows.

As he approached quite close to the enclosure he saw an excited group surrounding the two fugitives, who, trembling with fright and exhaustion, were scarce able to recount the uncanny details of their adventure.

Mirando, they said, who had been ahead of them a short distance, had suddenly come screaming toward them,

crying that a terrible white and naked warrior was pursuing him. The three of them had hurried toward the village as rapidly as their legs would carry them.

Again Mirando's shrill cry of mortal terror had caused them to look back, and there they had seen the most horrible sight—their companion's body flying upwards into the trees, his arms and legs beating the air and his tongue protruding from his open mouth. No other sound did he utter nor was there any creature in sight about him.

The villagers were worked up into a state of fear bordering on panic, but wise old Mbonga affected to feel considerable skepticism regarding the tale, and attributed the whole fabrication

to their fright in the face of some real danger.

"You tell us this great story," he said, "because you do not dare to speak the truth. You do not dare admit that when the lion sprang upon Mirando you ran away and left him. You are cowards."

Scarcely had Mbonga ceased speaking when a great crashing of branches in the trees above them caused the blacks to look up in renewed terror. The sight that met their eyes made even wise old Mbonga shudder, for there, turning and twisting in the air, came the dead body of Mirando, to sprawl with a sickening reverberation upon the ground at their feet.

With one accord the blacks took to

their heels; nor did they stop until the last of them was lost in the dense shadows of the surrounding jungle.

Again Tarzan came down into the village and renewed his supply of arrows and ate of the offering of food which the blacks had made to appease his wrath.

Before he left he carried the body of Mirando to the gate of the village, and propped it up against the palisade in such a way that the dead face seemed to be peering around the edge of the gatepost down the path which led to the jungle.

Then Tarzan returned, hunting, always hunting, to the cabin by the beach.

It took a dozen attempts on the part of

the thoroughly frightened blacks to reenter their village, past the horrible, grinning face of their dead fellow, and when they found the food and arrows gone they knew, what they had only too well feared, that Mirando had seen the evil spirit of the jungle.

That now seemed to them the logical explanation. Only those who saw this terrible god of the jungle died; for was it not true that none left alive in the village had ever seen him? Therefore, those who had died at his hands must have seen him and paid the penalty with their lives.

As long as they supplied him with arrows and food he would not harm them unless they looked upon him, so it was

ordered by Mbonga that in addition to the food offering there should also be laid out an offering of arrows for this Munan-go-Keewati, and this was done from then on.

If you ever chance to pass that far off African village you will still see before a tiny thatched hut, built just without the village, a little iron pot in which is a quantity of food, and beside it a quiver of well-daubed arrows.

When Tarzan came in sight of the beach where stood his cabin, a strange and unusual spectacle met his vision.

On the placid waters of the landlocked harbor floated a great ship, and on the beach a small boat was drawn up.

But, most wonderful of all, a number of white men like himself were moving about between the beach and his cabin.

Tarzan saw that in many ways they were like the men of his picture books. He crept closer through the trees until he was quite close above them.

There were ten men, swarthy, sun-tanned, villainous looking fellows. Now they had congregated by the boat and were talking in loud, angry tones, with much gesticulating and shaking of fists.

Presently one of them, a little, mean-faced, black-bearded fellow with a countenance which reminded Tarzan of Pamba, the rat, laid his hand upon the shoulder of a giant who stood next him, and with whom all the others had been

arguing and quarreling.

The little man pointed inland, so that the giant was forced to turn away from the others to look in the direction indicated. As he turned, the little, mean-faced man drew a revolver from his belt and shot the giant in the back.

The big fellow threw his hands above his head, his knees bent beneath him, and without a sound he tumbled forward upon the beach, dead.

The report of the weapon, the first that Tarzan had ever heard, filled him with wonderment, but even this unaccustomed sound could not startle his healthy nerves into even a semblance of panic.

The conduct of the white strangers it

was that caused him the greatest perturbation. He puckered his brows into a frown of deep thought. It was well, thought he, that he had not given way to his first impulse to rush forward and greet these white men as brothers.

They were evidently no different from the black men—no more civilized than the apes—no less cruel than Sabor.

For a moment the others stood looking at the little, mean-faced man and the giant lying dead upon the beach.

Then one of them laughed and slapped the little man upon the back. There was much more talk and gesticulating, but less quarreling.

Presently they launched the boat and all jumped into it and rowed away

toward the great ship, where Tarzan could see other figures moving about upon the deck.

When they had clambered aboard, Tarzan dropped to earth behind a great tree and crept to his cabin, keeping it always between himself and the ship.

Slipping in at the door he found that everything had been ransacked. His books and pencils strewed the floor. His weapons and shields and other little store of treasures were littered about.

As he saw what had been done a great wave of anger surged through him, and the new made scar upon his forehead stood suddenly out, a bar of inflamed crimson against his tawny hide.

Quickly he ran to the cupboard and

searched in the far recess of the lower shelf. Ah! He breathed a sigh of relief as he drew out the little tin box, and, opening it, found his greatest treasures undisturbed.

The photograph of the smiling, strong-faced young man, and the little black puzzle book were safe.

What was that?

His quick ear had caught a faint but unfamiliar sound.

Running to the window Tarzan looked toward the harbor, and there he saw that a boat was being lowered from the great ship beside the one already in the water. Soon he saw many people clambering over the sides of the larger vessel and dropping into the boats. They were

coming back in full force.

For a moment longer Tarzan watched while a number of boxes and bundles were lowered into the waiting boats, then, as they shoved off from the ship's side, the ape-man snatched up a piece of paper, and with a pencil printed on it for a few moments until it bore several lines of strong, well-made, almost letter-perfect characters.

This notice he stuck upon the door with a small sharp splinter of wood. Then gathering up his precious tin box, his arrows, and as many bows and spears as he could carry, he hastened through the door and disappeared into the forest.

When the two boats were beached

upon the silvery sand it was a strange assortment of humanity that clambered ashore.

Some twenty souls in all there were, fifteen of them rough and villainous appearing seamen.

The others of the party were of different stamp.

One was an elderly man, with white hair and large rimmed spectacles. His slightly stooped shoulders were draped in an ill- fitting, though immaculate, frock coat, and a shiny silk hat added to the incongruity of his garb in an African jungle.

The second member of the party to land was a tall young man in white ducks, while directly behind came

another elderly man with a very high forehead and a fussy, excitable manner.

After these came a huge Negress clothed like Solomon as to colors. Her great eyes rolled in evident terror, first toward the jungle and then toward the cursing band of sailors who were removing the bales and boxes from the boats.

The last member of the party to disembark was a girl of about nineteen, and it was the young man who stood at the boat's prow to lift her high and dry upon land. She gave him a brave and pretty smile of thanks, but no words passed between them.

In silence the party advanced toward the cabin. It was evident that whatever

their intentions, all had been decided upon before they left the ship; and so they came to the door, the sailors carrying the boxes and bales, followed by the five who were of so different a class. The men put down their burdens, and then one caught sight of the notice which Tarzan had posted.

"Ho, mates!" he cried. "What's here? This sign was not posted an hour ago or I'll eat the cook."

The others gathered about, craning their necks over the shoulders of those before them, but as few of them could read at all, and then only after the most laborious fashion, one finally turned to the little old man of the top hat and frock coat.

"Hi, perfesser," he called, "step for'rd and read the bloomin' notis."

Thus addressed, the old man came slowly to where the sailors stood, followed by the other members of his party. Adjusting his spectacles he looked for a moment at the placard and then, turning away, strolled off muttering to himself: "Most remarkable—most remarkable!"

"Hi, old fossil," cried the man who had first called on him for assistance, "did je think we wanted of you to read the bloomin' notis to yourself? Come back here and read it out loud, you old barnacle."

The old man stopped and, turning back, said: "Oh, yes, my dear sir, a

thousand pardons. It was quite thoughtless of me, yes—very thoughtless. Most remarkable—most remarkable!"

Again he faced the notice and read it through, and doubtless would have turned off again to ruminate upon it had not the sailor grasped him roughly by the collar and howled into his ear.

"Read it out loud, you blithering old idiot."

"Ah, yes indeed, yes indeed," replied the professor softly, and adjusting his spectacles once more he read aloud:

THIS IS THE HOUSE OF TARZAN, THE KILLER OF BEASTS AND MANY BLACK MEN. DO NOT HARM THE THINGS WHICH ARE

TARZAN'S. TARZAN WATCHES. TARZAN OF THE APES.

"Who the devil is Tarzan?" cried the sailor who had before spoken.

"He evidently speaks English," said the young man.

"But what does `Tarzan of the Apes' mean?" cried the girl.

"I do not know, Miss Porter," replied the young man, "unless we have discovered a runaway simian from the London Zoo who has brought back a European education to his jungle home. What do you make of it, Professor Porter?" he added, turning to the old man.

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter adjusted his spectacles.

"Ah, yes, indeed; yes indeed—most remarkable, most remarkable!" said the professor; "but I can add nothing further to what I have already remarked in elucidation of this truly momentous occurrence," and the professor turned slowly in the direction of the jungle.

"But, papa," cried the girl, "you haven't said anything about it yet."

"Tut, tut, child; tut, tut," responded Professor Porter, in a kindly and indulgent tone, "do not trouble your pretty head with such weighty and abstruse problems," and again he wandered slowly off in still another direction, his eyes bent upon the ground at his feet, his hands clasped behind him beneath the flowing tails of his coat.

"I reckon the daffy old bounder don't know no more'n we do about it," growled the rat-faced sailor.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head," cried the young man, his face paling in anger, at the insulting tone of the sailor. "You've murdered our officers and robbed us. We are absolutely in your power, but you'll treat Professor Porter and Miss Porter with respect or I'll break that vile neck of yours with my bare hands—guns or no guns," and the young fellow stepped so close to the rat-faced sailor that the latter, though he bore two revolvers and a villainous looking knife in his belt, slunk back abashed.

"You damned coward," cried the

young man. "You'd never dare shoot a man until his back was turned. You don't dare shoot me even then," and he deliberately turned his back full upon the sailor and walked nonchalantly away as if to put him to the test.

The sailor's hand crept slyly to the butt of one of his revolvers; his wicked eyes glared vengefully at the retreating form of the young Englishman. The gaze of his fellows was upon him, but still he hesitated. At heart he was even a greater coward than Mr. William Cecil Clayton had imagined.

Two keen eyes had watched every move of the party from the foliage of a nearby tree. Tarzan had seen the surprise caused by his notice, and while he could

understand nothing of the spoken language of these strange people their gestures and facial expressions told him much.

The act of the little rat-faced sailor in killing one of his comrades had aroused a strong dislike in Tarzan, and now that he saw him quarreling with the fine-looking young man his animosity was still further stirred.

Tarzan had never seen the effects of a firearm before, though his books had taught him something of them, but when he saw the rat- faced one fingering the butt of his revolver he thought of the scene he had witnessed so short a time before, and naturally expected to see the young man murdered as had been the

huge sailor earlier in the day.

So Tarzan fitted a poisoned arrow to his bow and drew a bead upon the rat-faced sailor, but the foliage was so thick that he soon saw the arrow would be deflected by the leaves or some small branch, and instead he launched a heavy spear from his lofty perch.

Clayton had taken but a dozen steps. The rat-faced sailor had half drawn his revolver; the other sailors stood watching the scene intently.

Professor Porter had already disappeared into the jungle, whither he was being followed by the fussy Samuel T. Philander, his secretary and assistant.

Esmeralda, the Negress, was busy sorting her mistress' baggage from the

pile of bales and boxes beside the cabin, and Miss Porter had turned away to follow Clayton, when something caused her to turn again toward the sailor.

And then three things happened almost simultaneously. The sailor jerked out his weapon and leveled it at Clayton's back, Miss Porter screamed a warning, and a long, metal-shod spear shot like a bolt from above and passed entirely through the right shoulder of the rat-faced man.

The revolver exploded harmlessly in the air, and the seaman crumpled up with a scream of pain and terror.

Clayton turned and rushed back toward the scene. The sailors stood in a frightened group, with drawn weapons,

peering into the jungle. The wounded man writhed and shrieked upon the ground.

Clayton, unseen by any, picked up the fallen revolver and slipped it inside his shirt, then he joined the sailors in gazing, mystified, into the jungle.

"Who could it have been?" whispered Jane Porter, and the young man turned to see her standing, wide-eyed and wondering, close beside him.

"I dare say Tarzan of the Apes is watching us all right," he answered, in a dubious tone. "I wonder, now, who that spear was intended for. If for Snipes, then our ape friend is a friend indeed.

"By Jove, where are your father and Mr. Philander? There's someone or

something in that jungle, and it's armed, whatever it is. Ho! Professor! Mr. Philander!" young Clayton shouted. There was no response.

"What's to be done, Miss Porter?" continued the young man, his face clouded by a frown of worry and indecision.

"I can't leave you here alone with these cutthroats, and you certainly can't venture into the jungle with me; yet someone must go in search of your father. He is more than apt to wandering off aimlessly, regardless of danger or direction, and Mr. Philander is only a trifle less impractical than he. You will pardon my bluntness, but our lives are all in jeopardy here, and when we get

your father back something must be done to impress upon him the dangers to which he exposes you as well as himself by his absent-mindedness."

"I quite agree with you," replied the girl, "and I am not offended at all. Dear old papa would sacrifice his life for me without an instant's hesitation, provided one could keep his mind on so frivolous a matter for an entire instant. There is only one way to keep him in safety, and that is to chain him to a tree. The poor dear is SO impractical."

"I have it!" suddenly exclaimed Clayton. "You can use a revolver, can't you?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I have one. With it you and

Esmeralda will be comparatively safe in this cabin while I am searching for your father and Mr. Philander. Come, call the woman and I will hurry on. They can't have gone far."

Jane did as he suggested and when he saw the door close safely behind them Clayton turned toward the jungle.

Some of the sailors were drawing the spear from their wounded comrade and, as Clayton approached, he asked if he could borrow a revolver from one of them while he searched the jungle for the professor.

The rat-faced one, finding he was not dead, had regained his composure, and with a volley of oaths directed at Clayton refused in the name of his

fellows to allow the young man any firearms.

This man, Snipes, had assumed the role of chief since he had killed their former leader, and so little time had elapsed that none of his companions had as yet questioned his authority.

Clayton's only response was a shrug of the shoulders, but as he left them he picked up the spear which had transfixed Snipes, and thus primitively armed, the son of the then Lord Greystoke strode into the dense jungle.

Every few moments he called aloud the names of the wanderers. The watchers in the cabin by the beach heard the sound of his voice growing ever fainter and fainter, until at last it was

swallowed up by the myriad noises of the primeval wood.

When Professor Archimedes Q. Porter and his assistant, Samuel T. Philander, after much insistence on the part of the latter, had finally turned their steps toward camp, they were as completely lost in the wild and tangled labyrinth of the matted jungle as two human beings well could be, though they did not know it.

It was by the merest caprice of fortune that they headed toward the west coast of Africa, instead of toward Zanzibar on the opposite side of the dark continent.

When in a short time they reached the beach, only to find no camp in sight,

Philander was positive that they were north of their proper destination, while, as a matter of fact they were about two hundred yards south of it.

It never occurred to either of these impractical theorists to call aloud on the chance of attracting their friends' attention. Instead, with all the assurance that deductive reasoning from a wrong premise induces in one, Mr. Samuel T. Philander grasped Professor Archimedes Q. Porter firmly by the arm and hurried the weakly protesting old gentleman off in the direction of Cape Town, fifteen hundred miles to the south.

When Jane and Esmeralda found themselves safely behind the cabin door the Negress's first thought was to

barricade the portal from the inside. With this idea in mind she turned to search for some means of putting it into execution; but her first view of the interior of the cabin brought a shriek of terror to her lips, and like a frightened child the huge woman ran to bury her face on her mistress' shoulder.

Jane, turning at the cry, saw the cause of it lying prone upon the floor before them—the whitened skeleton of a man. A further glance revealed a second skeleton upon the bed.

"What horrible place are we in?" murmured the awe-struck girl. But there was no panic in her fright.

At last, disengaging herself from the frantic clutch of the still shrieking

Esmeralda, Jane crossed the room to look into the little cradle, knowing what she should see there even before the tiny skeleton disclosed itself in all its pitiful and pathetic frailty.

What an awful tragedy these poor mute bones proclaimed! The girl shuddered at thought of the eventualities which might lie before herself and her friends in this ill-fated cabin, the haunt of mysterious, perhaps hostile, beings.

Quickly, with an impatient stamp of her little foot, she endeavored to shake off the gloomy forebodings, and turning to Esmeralda bade her cease her wailing.

"Stop, Esmeralda, stop it this minute!" she cried. "You are only making it

worse."

She ended lamely, a little quiver in her own voice as she thought of the three men, upon whom she depended for protection, wandering in the depth of that awful forest.

Soon the girl found that the door was equipped with a heavy wooden bar upon the inside, and after several efforts the combined strength of the two enabled them to slip it into place, the first time in twenty years.

Then they sat down upon a bench with their arms about one another, and waited.

14. AT THE MERCY OF THE JUNGLE

After Clayton had plunged into the jungle, the sailors—mutineers of the Arrow—fell into a discussion of their next step; but on one point all were agreed—that they should hasten to put off to the anchored Arrow, where they could at least be safe from the spears of their unseen foe. And so, while Jane Porter and Esmeralda were barricading themselves within the cabin, the cowardly crew of cutthroats were pulling rapidly for their ship in the two boats that had brought them ashore.

So much had Tarzan seen that day that his head was in a whirl of wonder. But the most wonderful sight of all, to him,

was the face of the beautiful white girl.

Here at last was one of his own kind; of that he was positive. And the young man and the two old men; they, too, were much as he had pictured his own people to be.

But doubtless they were as ferocious and cruel as other men he had seen. The fact that they alone of all the party were unarmed might account for the fact that they had killed no one. They might be very different if provided with weapons.

Tarzan had seen the young man pick up the fallen revolver of the wounded Snipes and hide it away in his breast; and he had also seen him slip it cautiously to the girl as she entered the cabin door.

He did not understand anything of the motives behind all that he had seen; but, somehow, intuitively he liked the young man and the two old men, and for the girl he had a strange longing which he scarcely understood. As for the big black woman, she was evidently connected in some way to the girl, and so he liked her, also.

For the sailors, and especially Snipes, he had developed a great hatred. He knew by their threatening gestures and by the expression upon their evil faces that they were enemies of the others of the party, and so he decided to watch closely.

Tarzan wondered why the men had gone into the jungle, nor did it ever

occur to him that one could become lost in that maze of undergrowth which to him was as simple as is the main street of your own home town to you.

When he saw the sailors row away toward the ship, and knew that the girl and her companion were safe in his cabin, Tarzan decided to follow the young man into the jungle and learn what his errand might be. He swung off rapidly in the direction taken by Clayton, and in a short time heard faintly in the distance the now only occasional calls of the Englishman to his friends.

Presently Tarzan came up with the white man, who, almost fagged, was leaning against a tree wiping the perspiration from his forehead. The ape-

man, hiding safe behind a screen of foliage, sat watching this new specimen of his own race intently.

At intervals Clayton called aloud and finally it came to Tarzan that he was searching for the old man.

Tarzan was on the point of going off to look for them himself, when he caught the yellow glint of a sleek hide moving cautiously through the jungle toward Clayton.

It was Sheeta, the leopard. Now, Tarzan heard the soft bending of grasses and wondered why the young white man was not warned. Could it be he had failed to note the loud warning? Never before had Tarzan known Sheeta to be so clumsy.

No, the white man did not hear. Sheeta was crouching for the spring, and then, shrill and horrible, there rose from the stillness of the jungle the awful cry of the challenging ape, and Sheeta turned, crashing into the underbrush.

Clayton came to his feet with a start. His blood ran cold. Never in all his life had so fearful a sound smote upon his ears. He was no coward; but if ever man felt the icy fingers of fear upon his heart, William Cecil Clayton, eldest son of Lord Greystoke of England, did that day in the fastness of the African jungle.

The noise of some great body crashing through the underbrush so close beside him, and the sound of that bloodcurdling shriek from above, tested

Clayton's courage to the limit; but he could not know that it was to that very voice he owed his life, nor that the creature who hurled it forth was his own cousin—the real Lord Greystoke.

The afternoon was drawing to a close, and Clayton, disheartened and discouraged, was in a terrible quandary as to the proper course to pursue; whether to keep on in search of Professor Porter, at the almost certain risk of his own death in the jungle by night, or to return to the cabin where he might at least serve to protect Jane from the perils which confronted her on all sides.

He did not wish to return to camp without her father; still more, he shrank

from the thought of leaving her alone and unprotected in the hands of the mutineers of the Arrow, or to the hundred unknown dangers of the jungle.

Possibly, too, he thought, the professor and Philander might have returned to camp. Yes, that was more than likely. At least he would return and see, before he continued what seemed to be a most fruitless quest. And so he started, stumbling back through the thick and matted underbrush in the direction that he thought the cabin lay.

To Tarzan's surprise the young man was heading further into the jungle in the general direction of Mbonga's village, and the shrewd young ape-man was convinced that he was lost.

To Tarzan this was scarcely incomprehensible; his judgment told him that no man would venture toward the village of the cruel blacks armed only with a spear which, from the awkward way in which he carried it, was evidently an unaccustomed weapon to this white man. Nor was he following the trail of the old men. That, they had crossed and left long since, though it had been fresh and plain before Tarzan's eyes.

Tarzan was perplexed. The fierce jungle would make easy prey of this unprotected stranger in a very short time if he were not guided quickly to the beach.

Yes, there was Numa, the lion, even

now, stalking the white man a dozen paces to the right.

Clayton heard the great body paralleling his course, and now there rose upon the evening air the beast's thunderous roar. The man stopped with upraised spear and faced the brush from which issued the awful sound. The shadows were deepening, darkness was settling in.

God! To die here alone, beneath the fangs of wild beasts; to be torn and rended; to feel the hot breath of the brute on his face as the great paw crushed down up his breast!

For a moment all was still. Clayton stood rigid, with raised spear. Presently a faint rustling of the bush apprised him

of the stealthy creeping of the thing behind. It was gathering for the spring. At last he saw it, not twenty feet away—the long, lithe, muscular body and tawny head of a huge black-maned lion.

The beast was upon its belly, moving forward very slowly. As its eyes met Clayton's it stopped, and deliberately, cautiously gathered its hind quarters behind it.

In agony the man watched, fearful to launch his spear, powerless to fly.

He heard a noise in the tree above him. Some new danger, he thought, but he dared not take his eyes from the yellow green orbs before him. There was a sharp twang as of a broken banjo-string, and at the same instant an arrow

appeared in the yellow hide of the crouching lion.

With a roar of pain and anger the beast sprang; but, somehow, Clayton stumbled to one side, and as he turned again to face the infuriated king of beasts, he was appalled at the sight which confronted him. Almost simultaneously with the lion's turning to renew the attack a half-naked giant dropped from the tree above squarely on the brute's back.

With lightning speed an arm that was banded layers of iron muscle encircled the huge neck, and the great beast was raised from behind, roaring and pawing the air—raised as easily as Clayton would have lifted a pet dog.

The scene he witnessed there in the twilight depths of the African jungle was burned forever into the Englishman's brain.

The man before him was the embodiment of physical perfection and giant strength; yet it was not upon these he depended in his battle with the great cat, for mighty as were his muscles, they were as nothing by comparison with Numa's. To his agility, to his brain and to his long keen knife he owed his supremacy.

His right arm encircled the lion's neck, while the left hand plunged the knife time and again into the unprotected side behind the left shoulder. The infuriated beast, pulled up and

backwards until he stood upon his hind legs, struggled impotently in this unnatural position.

Had the battle been of a few seconds' longer duration the outcome might have been different, but it was all accomplished so quickly that the lion had scarce time to recover from the confusion of its surprise ere it sank lifeless to the ground.

Then the strange figure which had vanquished it stood erect upon the carcass, and throwing back the wild and handsome head, gave out the fearsome cry which a few moments earlier had so startled Clayton.

Before him he saw the figure of a young man, naked except for a loin cloth

and a few barbaric ornaments about arms and legs; on the breast a priceless diamond locket gleaming against a smooth brown skin.

The hunting knife had been returned to its homely sheath, and the man was gathering up his bow and quiver from where he had tossed them when he leaped to attack the lion.

Clayton spoke to the stranger in English, thanking him for his brave rescue and complimenting him on the wondrous strength and dexterity he had displayed, but the only answer was a steady stare and a faint shrug of the mighty shoulders, which might betoken either disparagement of the service rendered, or ignorance of Clayton's

language.

When the bow and quiver had been slung to his back the wild man, for such Clayton now thought him, once more drew his knife and deftly carved a dozen large strips of meat from the lion's carcass. Then, squatting upon his haunches, he proceeded to eat, first motioning Clayton to join him.

The strong white teeth sank into the raw and dripping flesh in apparent relish of the meal, but Clayton could not bring himself to share the uncooked meat with his strange host; instead he watched him, and presently there dawned upon him the conviction that this was Tarzan of the Apes, whose notice he had seen posted upon the cabin door that morning.

If so he must speak English.

Again Clayton attempted speech with the ape-man; but the replies, now vocal, were in a strange tongue, which resembled the chattering of monkeys mingled with the growling of some wild beast.

No, this could not be Tarzan of the Apes, for it was very evident that he was an utter stranger to English.

When Tarzan had completed his repast he rose and, pointing a very different direction from that which Clayton had been pursuing, started off through the jungle toward the point he had indicated.

Clayton, bewildered and confused, hesitated to follow him, for he thought he

was but being led more deeply into the mazes of the forest; but the ape-man, seeing him disinclined to follow, returned, and, grasping him by the coat, dragged him along until he was convinced that Clayton understood what was required of him. Then he left him to follow voluntarily.

The Englishman, finally concluding that he was a prisoner, saw no alternative open but to accompany his captor, and thus they traveled slowly through the jungle while the sable mantle of the impenetrable forest night fell about them, and the stealthy footfalls of padded paws mingled with the breaking of twigs and the wild calls of the savage life that Clayton felt closing in upon him.

Suddenly Clayton heard the faint report of a firearm—a single shot, and then silence.

In the cabin by the beach two thoroughly terrified women clung to each other as they crouched upon the low bench in the gathering darkness.

The Negress sobbed hysterically, bemoaning the evil day that had witnessed her departure from her dear Maryland, while the white girl, dry eyed and outwardly calm, was torn by inward fears and forebodings. She feared not more for herself than for the three men whom she knew to be wandering in the abysmal depths of the savage jungle, from which she now heard issuing the almost incessant shrieks and roars,

barkings and growlings of its terrifying and fearsome denizens as they sought their prey.

And now there came the sound of a heavy body brushing against the side of the cabin. She could hear the great padded paws upon the ground outside. For an instant, all was silence; even the bedlam of the forest died to a faint murmur. Then she distinctly heard the beast outside sniffing at the door, not two feet from where she crouched. Instinctively the girl shuddered, and shrank closer to the black woman.

"Hush!" she whispered. "Hush, Esmeralda," for the woman's sobs and groans seemed to have attracted the thing that stalked there just beyond the thin

wall.

A gentle scratching sound was heard on the door. The brute tried to force an entrance; but presently this ceased, and again she heard the great pads creeping stealthily around the cabin. Again they stopped—beneath the window on which the terrified eyes of the girl now glued themselves.

"God!" she murmured, for now, silhouetted against the moonlit sky beyond, she saw framed in the tiny square of the latticed window the head of a huge lioness. The gleaming eyes were fixed upon her in intent ferocity.

"Look, Esmeralda!" she whispered. "For God's sake, what shall we do? Look! Quick! The window!"

Esmeralda, cowering still closer to her mistress, took one frightened glance toward the little square of moonlight, just as the lioness emitted a low, savage snarl.

The sight that met the poor woman's eyes was too much for the already overstrung nerves.

"Oh, Gaberelle!" she shrieked, and slid to the floor an inert and senseless mass.

For what seemed an eternity the great brute stood with its forepaws upon the sill, glaring into the little room. Presently it tried the strength of the lattice with its great talons.

The girl had almost ceased to breathe, when, to her relief, the head disappeared

and she heard the brute's footsteps leaving the window. But now they came to the door again, and once more the scratching commenced; this time with increasing force until the great beast was tearing at the massive panels in a perfect frenzy of eagerness to seize its defenseless victims.

Could Jane have known the immense strength of that door, built piece by piece, she would have felt less fear of the lioness reaching her by this avenue.

Little did John Clayton imagine when he fashioned that crude but mighty portal that one day, twenty years later, it would shield a fair American girl, then unborn, from the teeth and talons of a man- eater.

For fully twenty minutes the brute

alternately sniffed and tore at the door, occasionally giving voice to a wild, savage cry of baffled rage. At length, however, she gave up the attempt, and Jane heard her returning toward the window, beneath which she paused for an instant, and then launched her great weight against the timeworn lattice.

The girl heard the wooden rods groan beneath the impact; but they held, and the huge body dropped back to the ground below.

Again and again the lioness repeated these tactics, until finally the horrified prisoner within saw a portion of the lattice give way, and in an instant one great paw and the head of the animal were thrust within the room.

Slowly the powerful neck and shoulders spread the bars apart, and the lithe body protruded farther and farther into the room.

As in a trance, the girl rose, her hand upon her breast, wide eyes staring horror-stricken into the snarling face of the beast scarce ten feet from her. At her feet lay the prostrate form of the Negress. If she could but arouse her, their combined efforts might possibly avail to beat back the fierce and bloodthirsty intruder.

Jane stooped to grasp the black woman by the shoulder. Roughly she shook her.

"Esmeralda! Esmeralda!" she cried. "Help me, or we are lost."

Esmeralda opened her eyes. The first object they encountered was the dripping fangs of the hungry lioness.

With a horrified scream the poor woman rose to her hands and knees, and in this position scurried across the room, shrieking: "O Gaberelle! O Gaberelle!" at the top of her lungs.

Esmeralda weighed some two hundred and eighty pounds, and her extreme haste, added to her extreme corpulency, produced a most amazing result when Esmeralda elected to travel on all fours.

For a moment the lioness remained quiet with intense gaze directed upon the flitting Esmeralda, whose goal appeared to be the cupboard, into which she

attempted to propel her huge bulk; but as the shelves were but nine or ten inches apart, she only succeeded in getting her head in; whereupon, with a final screech, which paled the jungle noises into insignificance, she fainted once again.

With the subsidence of Esmeralda the lioness renewed her efforts to wriggle her huge bulk through the weakening lattice.

The girl, standing pale and rigid against the farther wall, sought with ever-increasing terror for some loophole of escape. Suddenly her hand, tight-pressed against her bosom, felt the hard outline of the revolver that Clayton had left with her earlier in the day.

Quickly she snatched it from its hiding-place, and, leveling it full at the lioness's face, pulled the trigger.

There was a flash of flame, the roar of the discharge, and an answering roar of pain and anger from the beast.

Jane Porter saw the great form disappear from the window, and then she, too, fainted, the revolver falling at her side.

But Sabor was not killed. The bullet had but inflicted a painful wound in one of the great shoulders. It was the surprise at the blinding flash and the deafening roar that had caused her hasty but temporary retreat.

In another instant she was back at the lattice, and with renewed fury was

clawing at the aperture, but with lessened effect, since the wounded member was almost useless.

She saw her prey—the two women—lying senseless upon the floor. There was no longer any resistance to be overcome. Her meat lay before her, and Sabor had only to worm her way through the lattice to claim it.

Slowly she forced her great bulk, inch by inch, through the opening. Now her head was through, now one great forearm and shoulder.

Carefully she drew up the wounded member to insinuate it gently beyond the tight pressing bars.

A moment more and both shoulders through, the long, sinuous body and the

narrow hips would glide quickly after.

It was on this sight that Jane Porter again opened her eyes.

15. THE FOREST GOD

When Clayton heard the report of the firearm he fell into an agony of fear and apprehension. He knew that one of the sailors might be the author of it; but the fact that he had left the revolver with Jane, together with the overwrought condition of his nerves, made him morbidly positive that she was threatened with some great danger. Perhaps even now she was attempting to defend herself against some savage man or beast.

What were the thoughts of his strange captor or guide Clayton could only vaguely conjecture; but that he had heard the shot, and was in some manner affected by it was quite evident, for he

quickened his pace so appreciably that Clayton, stumbling blindly in his wake, was down a dozen times in as many minutes in a vain effort to keep pace with him, and soon was left hopelessly behind.

Fearing that he would again be irretrievably lost, he called aloud to the wild man ahead of him, and in a moment had the satisfaction of seeing him drop lightly to his side from the branches above.

For a moment Tarzan looked at the young man closely, as though undecided as to just what was best to do; then, stooping down before Clayton, he motioned him to grasp him about the neck, and, with the white man upon his

back, Tarzan took to the trees.

The next few minutes the young Englishman never forgot. High into bending and swaying branches he was borne with what seemed to him incredible swiftness, while Tarzan chafed at the slowness of his progress.

From one lofty branch the agile creature swung with Clayton through a dizzy arc to a neighboring tree; then for a hundred yards maybe the sure feet threaded a maze of interwoven limbs, balancing like a tightrope walker high above the black depths of verdure beneath.

From the first sensation of chilling fear Clayton passed to one of keen admiration and envy of those giant

muscles and that wondrous instinct or knowledge which guided this forest god through the inky blackness of the night as easily and safely as Clayton would have strolled a London street at high noon.

Occasionally they would enter a spot where the foliage above was less dense, and the bright rays of the moon lit up before Clayton's wondering eyes the strange path they were traversing.

At such times the man fairly caught his breath at sight of the horrid depths below them, for Tarzan took the easiest way, which often led over a hundred feet above the earth.

And yet with all his seeming speed, Tarzan was in reality feeling his way with comparative slowness, searching

constantly for limbs of adequate strength for the maintenance of this double weight.

Presently they came to the clearing before the beach. Tarzan's quick ears had heard the strange sounds of Sabor's efforts to force her way through the lattice, and it seemed to Clayton that they dropped a straight hundred feet to earth, so quickly did Tarzan descend. Yet when they struck the ground it was with scarce a jar; and as Clayton released his hold on the ape-man he saw him dart like a squirrel for the opposite side of the cabin.

The Englishman sprang quickly after him just in time to see the hind quarters of some huge animal about to disappear

through the window of the cabin.

As Jane opened her eyes to a realization of the imminent peril which threatened her, her brave young heart gave up at last its final vestige of hope. But then to her surprise she saw the huge animal being slowly drawn back through the window, and in the moonlight beyond she saw the heads and shoulders of two men.

As Clayton rounded the corner of the cabin to behold the animal disappearing within, it was also to see the ape-man seize the long tail in both hands, and, bracing himself with his feet against the side of the cabin, throw all his mighty strength into the effort to draw the beast out of the interior.

Clayton was quick to lend a hand, but the ape-man jabbered to him in a commanding and peremptory tone something which Clayton knew to be orders, though he could not understand them.

At last, under their combined efforts, the great body was slowly dragged farther and farther outside the window, and then there came to Clayton's mind a dawning conception of the rash bravery of his companion's act.

For a naked man to drag a shrieking, clawing man-eater forth from a window by the tail to save a strange white girl, was indeed the last word in heroism.

Insofar as Clayton was concerned it was a very different matter, since the

girl was not only of his own kind and race, but was the one woman in all the world whom he loved.

Though he knew that the lioness would make short work of both of them, he pulled with a will to keep it from Jane Porter. And then he recalled the battle between this man and the great, black-maned lion which he had witnessed a short time before, and he commenced to feel more assurance.

Tarzan was still issuing orders which Clayton could not understand.

He was trying to tell the stupid white man to plunge his poisoned arrows into Sabor's back and sides, and to reach the savage heart with the long, thin hunting knife that hung at Tarzan's hip; but the

man would not understand, and Tarzan did not dare release his hold to do the things himself, for he knew that the puny white man never could hold mighty Sabor alone, for an instant.

Slowly the lioness was emerging from the window. At last her shoulders were out.

And then Clayton saw an incredible thing. Tarzan, racking his brains for some means to cope single-handed with the infuriated beast, had suddenly recalled his battle with Terkoz; and as the great shoulders came clear of the window, so that the lioness hung upon the sill only by her forepaws, Tarzan suddenly released his hold upon the brute.

With the quickness of a striking rattler he launched himself full upon Sabor's back, his strong young arms seeking and gaining a full-Nelson upon the beast, as he had learned it that other day during his bloody, wrestling victory over Terkoz.

With a roar the lioness turned completely over upon her back, falling full upon her enemy; but the black-haired giant only closed tighter his hold.

Pawing and tearing at earth and air, Sabor rolled and threw herself this way and that in an effort to dislodge this strange antagonist; but ever tighter and tighter drew the iron bands that were forcing her head lower and lower upon her tawny breast.

Higher crept the steel forearms of the ape-man about the back of Sabor's neck. Weaker and weaker became the lioness's efforts.

At last Clayton saw the immense muscles of Tarzan's shoulders and biceps leap into corded knots beneath the silver moonlight. There was a long sustained and supreme effort on the ape-man's part—and the vertebrae of Sabor's neck parted with a sharp snap.

In an instant Tarzan was upon his feet, and for the second time that day Clayton heard the bull ape's savage roar of victory. Then he heard Jane's agonized cry:

"Cecil—Mr. Clayton! Oh, what is it? What is it?"

Running quickly to the cabin door, Clayton called out that all was right, and shouted to her to open the door. As quickly as she could she raised the great bar and fairly dragged Clayton within.

"What was that awful noise?" she whispered, shrinking close to him.

"It was the cry of the kill from the throat of the man who has just saved your life, Miss Porter. Wait, I will fetch him so you may thank him."

The frightened girl would not be left alone, so she accompanied Clayton to the side of the cabin where lay the dead body of the lioness.

Tarzan of the Apes was gone.

Clayton called several times, but there was no reply, and so the two

returned to the greater safety of the interior.

"What a frightful sound!" cried Jane, "I shudder at the mere thought of it. Do not tell me that a human throat voiced that hideous and fearsome shriek."

"But it did, Miss Porter," replied Clayton; "or at least if not a human throat that of a forest god."

And then he told her of his experiences with this strange creature—of how twice the wild man had saved his life—of the wondrous strength, and agility, and bravery—of the brown skin and the handsome face.

"I cannot make it out at all," he concluded. "At first I thought he might be Tarzan of the Apes; but he neither speaks

nor understands English, so that theory is untenable."

"Well, whatever he may be," cried the girl, "we owe him our lives, and may God bless him and keep him in safety in his wild and savage jungle!"

"Amen," said Clayton, fervently.

"For the good Lord's sake, ain't I dead?"

The two turned to see Esmeralda sitting upright upon the floor, her great eyes rolling from side to side as though she could not believe their testimony as to her whereabouts.

And now, for Jane Porter, the reaction came, and she threw herself upon the bench, sobbing with hysterical laughter.

16. "MOST REMARKABLE"

Several miles south of the cabin, upon a strip of sandy beach, stood two old men, arguing.

Before them stretched the broad Atlantic. At their backs was the Dark Continent. Close around them loomed the impenetrable blackness of the jungle.

Savage beasts roared and growled; noises, hideous and weird, assailed their ears. They had wandered for miles in search of their camp, but always in the wrong direction. They were as hopelessly lost as though they suddenly had been transported to another world.

At such a time, indeed, every fiber of their combined intellects must have been concentrated upon the vital question of

the minute—the life-and-death question to them of retracing their steps to camp.

Samuel T. Philander was speaking.

"But, my dear professor," he was saying, "I still maintain that but for the victories of Ferdinand and Isabella over the fifteenth- century Moors in Spain the world would be today a thousand years in advance of where we now find ourselves. The Moors were essentially a tolerant, broad-minded, liberal race of agriculturists, artisans and merchants—the very type of people that has made possible such civilization as we find today in America and Europe - while the Spaniards—"

"Tut, tut, dear Mr. Philander," interrupted Professor Porter; "their

religion positively precluded the possibilities you suggest. Moslemism was, is, and always will be, a blight on that scientific progress which has marked —"

"Bless me! Professor," interjected Mr. Philander, who had turned his gaze toward the jungle, "there seems to be someone approaching."

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter turned in the direction indicated by the nearsighted Mr. Philander.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander," he chided. "How often must I urge you to seek that absolute concentration of your mental faculties which alone may permit you to bring to bear the highest powers of intellectuality upon the momentous

problems which naturally fall to the lot of great minds? And now I find you guilty of a most flagrant breach of courtesy in interrupting my learned discourse to call attention to a mere quadruped of the genus Felis. As I was saying, Mr.—"

"Heavens, Professor, a lion?" cried Mr. Philander, straining his weak eyes toward the dim figure outlined against the dark tropical underbrush.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Philander, if you insist upon employing slang in your discourse, a `lion.' But as I was saying—"

"Bless me, Professor," again interrupted Mr. Philander; "permit me to suggest that doubtless the Moors who were conquered in the fifteenth century

will continue in that most regrettable condition for the time being at least, even though we postpone discussion of that world calamity until we may attain the enchanting view of yon FELIS CARNIVORA which distance proverbially is credited with lending."

In the meantime the lion had approached with quiet dignity to within ten paces of the two men, where he stood curiously watching them.

The moonlight flooded the beach, and the strange group stood out in bold relief against the yellow sand.

"Most reprehensible, most reprehensible," exclaimed Professor Porter, with a faint trace of irritation in his voice. "Never, Mr. Philander, never

before in my life have I known one of these animals to be permitted to roam at large from its cage. I shall most certainly report this outrageous breach of ethics to the directors of the adjacent zoological garden."

"Quite right, Professor," agreed Mr. Philander, "and the sooner it is done the better. Let us start now."

Seizing the professor by the arm, Mr. Philander set off in the direction that would put the greatest distance between themselves and the lion.

They had proceeded but a short distance when a backward glance revealed to the horrified gaze of Mr. Philander that the lion was following them. He tightened his grip upon the

protesting professor and increased his speed.

"As I was saying, Mr. Philander," repeated Professor Porter.

Mr. Philander took another hasty glance rearward. The lion also had quickened his gait, and was doggedly maintaining an unvarying distance behind them.

"He is following us!" gasped Mr. Philander, breaking into a run.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander," remonstrated the professor, "this unseemly haste is most unbecoming to men of letters. What will our friends think of us, who may chance to be upon the street and witness our frivolous antics? Pray let us proceed with more

decorum."

Mr. Philander stole another observation astern.

The lion was bounding along in easy leaps scarce five paces behind.

Mr. Philander dropped the professor's arm, and broke into a mad orgy of speed that would have done credit to any varsity track team.

"As I was saying, Mr. Philander—" screamed Professor Porter, as, metaphorically speaking, he himself "threw her into high." He, too, had caught a fleeting backward glimpse of cruel yellow eyes and half open mouth within startling proximity of his person.

With streaming coat tails and shiny silk hat Professor Archimedes Q. Porter

fled through the moonlight close upon the heels of Mr. Samuel T. Philander.

Before them a point of the jungle ran out toward a narrow promontory, and it was for the heaven of the trees he saw there that Mr. Samuel T. Philander directed his prodigious leaps and bounds; while from the shadows of this same spot peered two keen eyes in interested appreciation of the race.

It was Tarzan of the Apes who watched, with face a-grin, this odd game of follow-the-leader.

He knew the two men were safe enough from attack in so far as the lion was concerned. The very fact that Numa had foregone such easy prey at all convinced the wise forest craft of Tarzan

that Numa's belly already was full.

The lion might stalk them until hungry again; but the chances were that if not angered he would soon tire of the sport, and slink away to his jungle lair.

Really, the one great danger was that one of the men might stumble and fall, and then the yellow devil would be upon him in a moment and the joy of the kill would be too great a temptation to withstand.

So Tarzan swung quickly to a lower limb in line with the approaching fugitives; and as Mr. Samuel T. Philander came panting and blowing beneath him, already too spent to struggle up to the safety of the limb, Tarzan reached down and, grasping him

by the collar of his coat, yanked him to the limb by his side.

Another moment brought the professor within the sphere of the friendly grip, and he, too, was drawn upward to safety just as the baffled Numa, with a roar, leaped to recover his vanishing quarry.

For a moment the two men clung panting to the great branch, while Tarzan squatted with his back to the stem of the tree, watching them with mingled curiosity and amusement.

It was the professor who first broke the silence.

"I am deeply pained, Mr. Philander, that you should have evinced such a paucity of manly courage in the presence of one of the lower orders, and by your

crass timidity have caused me to exert myself to such an unaccustomed degree in order that I might resume my discourse. As I was saying, Mr. Philander, when you interrupted me, the Moors—"

"Professor Archimedes Q. Porter," broke in Mr. Philander, in icy tones, "the time has arrived when patience becomes a crime and mayhem appears garbed in the mantle of virtue. You have accused me of cowardice. You have insinuated that you ran only to overtake me, not to escape the clutches of the lion. Have a care, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter! I am a desperate man. Goaded by long-suffering patience the worm will turn."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander, tut, tut!"

cautioned Professor Porter; "you forget yourself."

"I forget nothing as yet, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter; but, believe me, sir, I am tottering on the verge of forgetfulness as to your exalted position in the world of science, and your gray hairs."

The professor sat in silence for a few minutes, and the darkness hid the grim smile that wreathed his wrinkled countenance. Presently he spoke.

"Look here, Skinny Philander," he said, in belligerent tones, "if you are lookin' for a scrap, peel off your coat and come on down on the ground, and I'll punch your head just as I did sixty years ago in the alley back of Porky

Evans' barn."

"Ark!" gasped the astonished Mr. Philander. "Lordy, how good that sounds! When you're human, Ark, I love you; but somehow it seems as though you had forgotten how to be human for the last twenty years."

The professor reached out a thin, trembling old hand through the darkness until it found his old friend's shoulder.

"Forgive me, Skinny," he said, softly. "It hasn't been quite twenty years, and God alone knows how hard I have tried to be `human' for Jane's sake, and yours, too, since He took my other Jane away."

Another old hand stole up from Mr. Philander's side to clasp the one that lay upon his shoulder, and no other message

could better have translated the one heart to the other.

They did not speak for some minutes. The lion below them paced nervously back and forth. The third figure in the tree was hidden by the dense shadows near the stem. He, too, was silent—motionless as a graven image.

"You certainly pulled me up into this tree just in time," said the professor at last. "I want to thank you. You saved my life."

"But I didn't pull you up here, Professor," said Mr. Philander. "Bless me! The excitement of the moment quite caused me to forget that I myself was drawn up here by some outside agency—there must be someone or something

in this tree with us."

"Eh?" ejaculated Professor Porter. "Are you quite positive, Mr. Philander?"

"Most positive, Professor," replied Mr. Philander, "and," he added, "I think we should thank the party. He may be sitting right next to you now, Professor."

"Eh? What's that? Tut, tut, Mr. Philander, tut, tut!" said Professor Porter, edging cautiously nearer to Mr. Philander.

Just then it occurred to Tarzan of the Apes that Numa had loitered beneath the tree for a sufficient length of time, so he raised his young head toward the heavens, and there rang out upon the terrified ears of the two old men the awful warning challenge of the

anthropoid.

The two friends, huddled trembling in their precarious position on the limb, saw the great lion halt in his restless pacing as the blood-curdling cry smote his ears, and then slink quickly into the jungle, to be instantly lost to view.

"Even the lion trembles in fear," whispered Mr. Philander.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," murmured Professor Porter, clutching frantically at Mr. Philander to regain the balance which the sudden fright had so perilously endangered. Unfortunately for them both, Mr. Philander's center of equilibrium was at that very moment hanging upon the ragged edge of nothing, so that it needed but the gentle impetus

supplied by the additional weight of Professor Porter's body to topple the devoted secretary from the limb.

For a moment they swayed uncertainly, and then, with mingled and most unscholarly shrieks, they pitched headlong from the tree, locked in frenzied embrace.

It was quite some moments ere either moved, for both were positive that any such attempt would reveal so many breaks and fractures as to make further progress impossible.

At length Professor Porter made an attempt to move one leg. To his surprise, it responded to his will as in days gone by. He now drew up its mate and stretched it forth again.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," he murmured.

"Thank God, Professor," whispered Mr. Philander, fervently, "you are not dead, then?"

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander, tut, tut," cautioned Professor Porter, "I do not know with accuracy as yet."

With infinite solicitude Professor Porter wiggled his right arm— joy! It was intact. Breathlessly he waved his left arm above his prostrate body—it waved!

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," he said.

"To whom are you signaling, Professor?" asked Mr. Philander, in an excited tone.

Professor Porter deigned to make no response to this puerile inquiry. Instead he raised his head gently from the ground, nodding it back and forth a half dozen times.

"Most remarkable," he breathed. "It remains intact."

Mr. Philander had not moved from where he had fallen; he had not dared the attempt. How indeed could one move when one's arms and legs and back were broken?

One eye was buried in the soft loam; the other, rolling sidewise, was fixed in awe upon the strange gyrations of Professor Porter.

"How sad!" exclaimed Mr. Philander, half aloud. "Concussion of the brain,

superinducing total mental aberration. How very sad indeed! and for one still so young!"

Professor Porter rolled over upon his stomach; gingerly he bowed his back until he resembled a huge tom cat in proximity to a yelping dog. Then he sat up and felt of various portions of his anatomy.

"They are all here," he exclaimed. "Most remarkable!"

Whereupon he arose, and, bending a scathing glance upon the still prostrate form of Mr. Samuel T. Philander, he said:

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander; this is no time to indulge in slothful ease. We must be up and doing."

Mr. Philander lifted his other eye out of the mud and gazed in speechless rage at Professor Porter. Then he attempted to rise; nor could there have been any more surprised than he when his efforts were immediately crowned with marked success.

He was still bursting with rage, however, at the cruel injustice of Professor Porter's insinuation, and was on the point of rendering a tart rejoinder when his eyes fell upon a strange figure standing a few paces away, scrutinizing them intently.

Professor Porter had recovered his shiny silk hat, which he had brushed carefully upon the sleeve of his coat and replaced upon his head. When he saw

Mr. Philander pointing to something behind him he turned to behold a giant, naked but for a loin cloth and a few metal ornaments, standing motionless before him.

"Good evening, sir!" said the professor, lifting his hat.

For reply the giant motioned them to follow him, and set off up the beach in the direction from which they had recently come.

"I think it the better part of discretion to follow him," said Mr. Philander.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander," returned the professor. "A short time since you were advancing a most logical argument in substantiation of your theory that camp lay directly south of us. I was skeptical,

but you finally convinced me; so now I am positive that toward the south we must travel to reach our friends. Therefore I shall continue south."

"But, Professor Porter, this man may know better than either of us. He seems to be indigenous to this part of the world. Let us at least follow him for a short distance."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander," repeated the professor. "I am a difficult man to convince, but when once convinced my decision is unalterable. I shall continue in the proper direction, if I have to circumambulate the continent of Africa to reach my destination."

Further argument was interrupted by Tarzan, who, seeing that these strange

men were not following him, had returned to their side.

Again he beckoned to them; but still they stood in argument.

Presently the ape-man lost patience with their stupid ignorance. He grasped the frightened Mr. Philander by the shoulder, and before that worthy gentleman knew whether he was being killed or merely maimed for life, Tarzan had tied one end of his rope securely about Mr. Philander's neck.

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander," remonstrated Professor Porter; "it is most unbeseeming in you to submit to such indignities."

But scarcely were the words out of his mouth ere he, too, had been seized

and securely bound by the neck with the same rope. Then Tarzan set off toward the north, leading the now thoroughly frightened professor and his secretary.

In deathly silence they proceeded for what seemed hours to the two tired and hopeless old men; but presently as they topped a little rise of ground they were overjoyed to see the cabin lying before them, not a hundred yards distant.

Here Tarzan released them, and, pointing toward the little building, vanished into the jungle beside them.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable!" gasped the professor. "But you see, Mr. Philander, that I was quite right, as usual; and but for your stubborn willfulness we should have escaped a

series of most humiliating, not to say dangerous accidents. Pray allow yourself to be guided by a more mature and practical mind hereafter when in need of wise counsel."

Mr. Samuel T. Philander was too much relieved at the happy outcome to their adventure to take umbrage at the professor's cruel fling. Instead he grasped his friend's arm and hastened him forward in the direction of the cabin.

It was a much-relieved party of castaways that found itself once more united. Dawn discovered them still recounting their various adventures and speculating upon the identity of the strange guardian and protector they had

found on this savage shore.

Esmeralda was positive that it was none other than an angel of the Lord, sent down especially to watch over them.

"Had you seen him devour the raw meat of the lion, Esmeralda," laughed Clayton, "you would have thought him a very material angel."

"There was nothing heavenly about his voice," said Jane Porter, with a little shudder at recollection of the awful roar which had followed the killing of the lioness.

"Nor did it precisely comport with my preconceived ideas of the dignity of divine messengers," remarked Professor Porter, "when the—ah— gentleman tied two highly respectable and erudite

scholars neck to neck and dragged them through the jungle as though they had been cows."

17. BURIALS

As it was now quite light, the party, none of whom had eaten or slept since the previous morning, began to bestir themselves to prepare food.

The mutineers of the Arrow had landed a small supply of dried meats, canned soups and vegetables, crackers, flour, tea, and coffee for the five they had marooned, and these were hurriedly drawn upon to satisfy the craving of long-famished appetites.

The next task was to make the cabin habitable, and to this end it was decided to at once remove the gruesome relics of the tragedy which had taken place there on some bygone day.

Professor Porter and Mr. Philander

were deeply interested in examining the skeletons. The two larger, they stated, had belonged to a male and female of one of the higher white races.

The smallest skeleton was given but passing attention, as its location, in the crib, left no doubt as to its having been the infant offspring of this unhappy couple.

As they were preparing the skeleton of the man for burial, Clayton discovered a massive ring which had evidently encircled the man's finger at the time of his death, for one of the slender bones of the hand still lay within the golden bauble.

Picking it up to examine it, Clayton gave a cry of astonishment, for the ring

bore the crest of the house of Greystoke.

At the same time, Jane discovered the books in the cupboard, and on opening the fly-leaf of one of them saw the name, JOHN CLAYTON, LONDON. In a second book which she hurriedly examined was the single name, GREYSTOKE.

"Why, Mr. Clayton," she cried, "what does this mean? Here are the names of some of your own people in these books."

"And here," he replied gravely, "is the great ring of the house of Greystoke which has been lost since my uncle, John Clayton, the former Lord Greystoke, disappeared, presumably lost at sea."

"But how do you account for these

things being here, in this savage African jungle?" exclaimed the girl.

"There is but one way to account for it, Miss Porter," said Clayton. "The late Lord Greystoke was not drowned. He died here in this cabin and this poor thing upon the floor is all that is mortal of him."

"Then this must have been Lady Greystoke," said Jane reverently, indicating the poor mass of bones upon the bed.

"The beautiful Lady Alice," replied Clayton, "of whose many virtues and remarkable personal charms I often have heard my mother and father speak. Poor woman," he murmured sadly.

With deep reverence and solemnity

the bodies of the late Lord and Lady Greystoke were buried beside their little African cabin, and between them was placed the tiny skeleton of the baby of Kala, the ape.

As Mr. Philander was placing the frail bones of the infant in a bit of sail cloth, he examined the skull minutely. Then he called Professor Porter to his side, and the two argued in low tones for several minutes.

"Most remarkable, most remarkable," said Professor Porter.

"Bless me," said Mr. Philander, "we must acquaint Mr. Clayton with our discovery at once."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Philander, tut, tut!" remonstrated Professor Archimedes Q.

Porter. "`Let the dead past bury its dead.'"

And so the white-haired old man repeated the burial service over this strange grave, while his four companions stood with bowed and uncovered heads about him.

From the trees Tarzan of the Apes watched the solemn ceremony; but most of all he watched the sweet face and graceful figure of Jane Porter.

In his savage, untutored breast new emotions were stirring. He could not fathom them. He wondered why he felt so great an interest in these people - why he had gone to such pains to save the three men. But he did not wonder why he had torn Sabor from the tender flesh of

the strange girl.

Surely the men were stupid and ridiculous and cowardly. Even Manu, the monkey, was more intelligent than they. If these were creatures of his own kind he was doubtful if his past pride in blood was warranted.

But the girl, ah—that was a different matter. He did not reason here. He knew that she was created to be protected, and that he was created to protect her.

He wondered why they had dug a great hole in the ground merely to bury dry bones. Surely there was no sense in that; no one wanted to steal dry bones.

Had there been meat upon them he could have understood, for thus alone might one keep his meat from Dango, the

hyena, and the other robbers of the jungle.

When the grave had been filled with earth the little party turned back toward the cabin, and Esmeralda, still weeping copiously for the two she had never heard of before today, and who had been dead twenty years, chanced to glance toward the harbor. Instantly her tears ceased.

"Look at them low down white trash out there!" she shrilled, pointing toward the Arrow. "They-all's a desecrating us, right here on this here perverted island."

And, sure enough, the Arrow was being worked toward the open sea, slowly, through the harbor's entrance.

"They promised to leave us firearms

and ammunition," said Clayton. "The merciless beasts!"

"It is the work of that fellow they call Snipes, I am sure," said Jane. "King was a scoundrel, but he had a little sense of humanity. If they had not killed him I know that he would have seen that we were properly provided for before they left us to our fate."

"I regret that they did not visit us before sailing," said Professor Porter. "I had proposed requesting them to leave the treasure with us, as I shall be a ruined man if that is lost."

Jane looked at her father sadly.

"Never mind, dear," she said. "It wouldn't have done any good, because it is solely for the treasure that they killed

their officers and landed us upon this awful shore."

"Tut, tut, child, tut, tut!" replied Professor Porter. "You are a good child, but inexperienced in practical matters," and Professor Porter turned and walked slowly away toward the jungle, his hands clasped beneath his long coat tails and his eyes bent upon the ground.

His daughter watched him with a pathetic smile upon her lips, and then turning to Mr. Philander, she whispered:

"Please don't let him wander off again as he did yesterday. We depend upon you, you know, to keep a close watch upon him."

"He becomes more difficult to handle each day," replied Mr. Philander, with a

sigh and a shake of his head. "I presume he is now off to report to the directors of the Zoo that one of their lions was at large last night. Oh, Miss Jane, you don't know what I have to contend with."

"Yes, I do, Mr. Philander; but while we all love him, you alone are best fitted to manage him; for, regardless of what he may say to you, he respects your great learning, and, therefore, has immense confidence in your judgment. The poor dear cannot differentiate between erudition and wisdom."

Mr. Philander, with a mildly puzzled expression on his face, turned to pursue Professor Porter, and in his mind he was revolving the question of whether he should feel complimented or aggrieved

at Miss Porter's rather backhanded compliment.

Tarzan had seen the consternation depicted upon the faces of the little group as they witnessed the departure of the Arrow; so, as the ship was a wonderful novelty to him in addition, he determined to hasten out to the point of land at the north of the harbor's mouth and obtain a nearer view of the boat, as well as to learn, if possible, the direction of its flight.

Swinging through the trees with great speed, he reached the point only a moment after the ship had passed out of the harbor, so that he obtained an excellent view of the wonders of this strange, floating house.

There were some twenty men running hither and thither about the deck, pulling and hauling on ropes.

A light land breeze was blowing, and the ship had been worked through the harbor's mouth under scant sail, but now that they had cleared the point every available shred of canvas was being spread that she might stand out to sea as handily as possible.

Tarzan watched the graceful movements of the ship in rapt admiration, and longed to be aboard her. Presently his keen eyes caught the faintest suspicion of smoke on the far northern horizon, and he wondered over the cause of such a thing out on the great water.

About the same time the look-out on the Arrow must have discerned it, for in a few minutes Tarzan saw the sails being shifted and shortened. The ship came about, and presently he knew that she was beating back toward land.

A man at the bows was constantly heaving into the sea a rope to the end of which a small object was fastened. Tarzan wondered what the purpose of this action might be.

At last the ship came up directly into the wind; the anchor was lowered; down came the sails. There was great scurrying about on deck.

A boat was lowered, and in it a great chest was placed. Then a dozen sailors bent to the oars and pulled rapidly

toward the point where Tarzan crouched in the branches of a tree.

In the stern of the boat, as it drew nearer, Tarzan saw the rat- faced man.

It was but a few minutes later that the boat touched the beach. The men jumped out and lifted the great chest to the sand. They were on the north side of the point so that their presence was concealed from those at the cabin.

The men argued angrily for a moment. Then the rat-faced one, with several companions, ascended the low bluff on which stood the tree that concealed Tarzan. They looked about for several minutes.

"Here is a good place," said the rat-faced sailor, indicating a spot beneath

Tarzan's tree.

"It is as good as any," replied one of his companions. "If they catch us with the treasure aboard it will all be confiscated anyway. We might as well bury it here on the chance that some of us will escape the gallows to come back and enjoy it later."

The rat-faced one now called to the men who had remained at the boat, and they came slowly up the bank carrying picks and shovels.

"Hurry, you!" cried Snipes.

"Stow it!" retorted one of the men, in a surly tone. "You're no admiral, you damned shrimp."

"I'm Cap'n here, though, I'll have you to understand, you swab," shrieked

Snipes, with a volley of frightful oaths.

"Steady, boys," cautioned one of the men who had not spoken before. "It ain't goin' to get us nothing by fightin' amongst ourselves."

"Right enough," replied the sailor who had resented Snipes' autocratic tones; "but it ain't a-goin' to get nobody nothin' to put on airs in this bloomin' company neither."

"You fellows dig here," said Snipes, indicating a spot beneath the tree. "And while you're diggin', Peter kin be a-makin' of a map of the location so's we kin find it again. You, Tom, and Bill, take a couple more down and fetch up the chest."

"Wot are you a-goin' to do?" asked he

of the previous altercation. "Just boss?"

"Git busy there," growled Snipes. "You didn't think your Cap'n was a-goin' to dig with a shovel, did you?"

The men all looked up angrily. None of them liked Snipes, and this disagreeable show of authority since he had murdered King, the real head and ringleader of the mutineers, had only added fuel to the flames of their hatred.

"Do you mean to say that you don't intend to take a shovel, and lend a hand with this work? Your shoulder's not hurt so all-fired bad as that," said Tarrant, the sailor who had before spoken.

"Not by a damned sight," replied Snipes, fingering the butt of his revolver nervously.

"Then, by God," replied Tarrant, "if you won't take a shovel you'll take a pickax."

With the words he raised his pick above his head, and, with a mighty blow, he buried the point in Snipes' brain.

For a moment the men stood silently looking at the result of their fellow's grim humor. Then one of them spoke.

"Served the skunk jolly well right," he said.

One of the others commenced to ply his pick to the ground. The soil was soft and he threw aside the pick and grasped a shovel; then the others joined him. There was no further comment on the killing, but the men worked in a better frame of mind than they had since Snipes

had assumed command.

When they had a trench of ample size to bury the chest, Tarrant suggested that they enlarge it and inter Snipes' body on top of the chest.

"It might 'elp fool any as 'appened to be diggin' 'ereabouts," he explained.

The others saw the cunning of the suggestion, and so the trench was lengthened to accommodate the corpse, and in the center a deeper hole was excavated for the box, which was first wrapped in sailcloth and then lowered to its place, which brought its top about a foot below the bottom of the grave. Earth was shovelled in and tramped down about the chest until the bottom of the grave showed level and uniform.

Two of the men rolled the rat-faced corpse unceremoniously into the grave, after first stripping it of its weapons and various other articles which the several members of the party coveted for their own.

They then filled the grave with earth and tramped upon it until it would hold no more.

The balance of the loose earth was thrown far and wide, and a mass of dead undergrowth spread in as natural a manner as possible over the new-made grave to obliterate all signs of the ground having been disturbed.

Their work done the sailors returned to the small boat, and pulled off rapidly toward the Arrow.

The breeze had increased considerably, and as the smoke upon the horizon was now plainly discernible in considerable volume, the mutineers lost no time in getting under full sail and bearing away toward the southwest.

Tarzan, an interested spectator of all that had taken place, sat speculating on the strange actions of these peculiar creatures.

Men were indeed more foolish and more cruel than the beasts of the jungle! How fortunate was he who lived in the peace and security of the great forest!

Tarzan wondered what the chest they had buried contained. If they did not want it why did they not merely throw it into the water? That would have been

much easier.

Ah, he thought, but they do want it. They have hidden it here because they intend returning for it later.

Tarzan dropped to the ground and commenced to examine the earth about the excavation. He was looking to see if these creatures had dropped anything which he might like to own. Soon he discovered a spade hidden by the underbrush which they had laid upon the grave.

He seized it and attempted to use it as he had seen the sailors do. It was awkward work and hurt his bare feet, but he persevered until he had partially uncovered the body. This he dragged from the grave and laid to one side.

Then he continued digging until he had unearthed the chest. This also he dragged to the side of the corpse. Then he filled in the smaller hole below the grave, replaced the body and the earth around and above it, covered it over with underbrush, and returned to the chest.

Four sailors had sweated beneath the burden of its weight—Tarzan of the Apes picked it up as though it had been an empty packing case, and with the spade slung to his back by a piece of rope, carried it off into the densest part of the jungle.

He could not well negotiate the trees with his awkward burden, but he kept to the trails, and so made fairly good time.

For several hours he traveled a little north of east until he came to an impenetrable wall of matted and tangled vegetation. Then he took to the lower branches, and in another fifteen minutes he emerged into the amphitheater of the apes, where they met in council, or to celebrate the rites of the Dum-Dum.

Near the center of the clearing, and not far from the drum, or altar, he commenced to dig. This was harder work than turning up the freshly excavated earth at the grave, but Tarzan of the Apes was persevering and so he kept at his labor until he was rewarded by seeing a hole sufficiently deep to receive the chest and effectually hide it from view.

Why had he gone to all this labor without knowing the value of the contents of the chest?

Tarzan of the Apes had a man's figure and a man's brain, but he was an ape by training and environment. His brain told him that the chest contained something valuable, or the men would not have hidden it. His training had taught him to imitate whatever was new and unusual, and now the natural curiosity, which is as common to men as to apes, prompted him to open the chest and examine its contents.

But the heavy lock and massive iron bands baffled both his cunning and his immense strength, so that he was compelled to bury the chest without

having his curiosity satisfied.

By the time Tarzan had hunted his way back to the vicinity of the cabin, feeding as he went, it was quite dark.

Within the little building a light was burning, for Clayton had found an unopened tin of oil which had stood intact for twenty years, a part of the supplies left with the Claytons by Black Michael. The lamps also were still useable, and thus the interior of the cabin appeared as bright as day to the astonished Tarzan.

He had often wondered at the exact purpose of the lamps. His reading and the pictures had told him what they were, but he had no idea of how they could be made to produce the wondrous

sunlight that some of his pictures had portrayed them as diffusing upon all surrounding objects.

As he approached the window nearest the door he saw that the cabin had been divided into two rooms by a rough partition of boughs and sailcloth.

In the front room were the three men; the two older deep in argument, while the younger, tilted back against the wall on an improvised stool, was deeply engrossed in reading one of Tarzan's books.

Tarzan was not particularly interested in the men, however, so he sought the other window. There was the girl. How beautiful her features! How delicate her snowy skin!

She was writing at Tarzan's own table beneath the window. Upon a pile of grasses at the far side of the room lay the Negress asleep.

For an hour Tarzan feasted his eyes upon her while she wrote. How he longed to speak to her, but he dared not attempt it, for he was convinced that, like the young man, she would not understand him, and he feared, too, that he might frighten her away.

At length she arose, leaving her manuscript upon the table. She went to the bed upon which had been spread several layers of soft grasses. These she rearranged.

Then she loosened the soft mass of golden hair which crowned her head.

Like a shimmering waterfall turned to burnished metal by a dying sun it fell about her oval face; in waving lines, below her waist it tumbled.

Tarzan was spellbound. Then she extinguished the lamp and all within the cabin was wrapped in Cimmerian darkness.

Still Tarzan watched. Creeping close beneath the window he waited, listening, for half an hour. At last he was rewarded by the sounds of the regular breathing within which denotes sleep.

Cautiously he intruded his hand between the meshes of the lattice until his whole arm was within the cabin. Carefully he felt upon the desk. At last he grasped the manuscript upon which

Jane Porter had been writing, and as cautiously withdrew his arm and hand, holding the precious treasure.

Tarzan folded the sheets into a small parcel which he tucked into the quiver with his arrows. Then he melted away into the jungle as softly and as noiselessly as a shadow.

18. THE JUNGLE TOLL

Early the following morning Tarzan awoke, and his first thought of the new day, as the last of yesterday, was of the wonderful writing which lay hidden in his quiver.

Hurriedly he brought it forth, hoping against hope that he could read what the beautiful white girl had written there the preceding evening.

At the first glance he suffered a bitter disappointment; never before had he so yearned for anything as now he did for the ability to interpret a message from that golden-haired divinity who had come so suddenly and so unexpectedly into his life.

What did it matter if the message

were not intended for him? It was an expression of her thoughts, and that was sufficient for Tarzan of the Apes.

And now to be baffled by strange, uncouth characters the like of which he had never seen before! Why, they even tipped in the opposite direction from all that he had ever examined either in printed books or the difficult script of the few letters he had found.

Even the little bugs of the black book were familiar friends, though their arrangement meant nothing to him; but these bugs were new and unheard of.

For twenty minutes he pored over them, when suddenly they commenced to take familiar though distorted shapes. Ah, they were his old friends, but badly

crippled.

Then he began to make out a word here and a word there. His heart leaped for joy. He could read it, and he would.

In another half hour he was progressing rapidly, and, but for an exceptional word now and again, he found it very plain sailing.

Here is what he read:

WEST COAST OF AFRICA, ABOUT 10X DEGREES SOUTH LATITUDE. (So Mr. Clayton says.) February 3 (?), 1909.

DEAREST HAZEL:

It seems foolish to write you a letter that you may never see, but I simply must tell somebody of our awful experiences

since we sailed from Europe on the ill-fated Arrow.

If we never return to civilization, as now seems only too likely, this will at least prove a brief record of the events which led up to our final fate, whatever it may be.

As you know, we were supposed to have set out upon a scientific expedition to the Congo. Papa was presumed to entertain some wondrous theory of an unthinkably ancient civilization, the remains of which lay buried somewhere in the Congo valley. But after we were well under sail the truth came out.

It seems that an old bookworm who has a book and curio shop in Baltimore discovered between the leaves of a very

old Spanish manuscript a letter written in 1550 detailing the adventures of a crew of mutineers of a Spanish galleon bound from Spain to South America with a vast treasure of "doubloons" and "pieces of eight," I suppose, for they certainly sound weird and piraty.

The writer had been one of the crew, and the letter was to his son, who was, at the very time the letter was written, master of a Spanish merchantman.

Many years had elapsed since the events the letter narrated had transpired, and the old man had become a respected citizen of an obscure Spanish town, but the love of gold was still so strong upon him that he risked all to acquaint his son with the means of attaining fabulous

wealth for them both.

The writer told how when but a week out from Spain the crew had mutinied and murdered every officer and man who opposed them; but they defeated their own ends by this very act, for there was none left competent to navigate a ship at sea.

They were blown hither and thither for two months, until sick and dying of scurvy, starvation, and thirst, they had been wrecked on a small islet.

The galleon was washed high upon the beach where she went to pieces; but not before the survivors, who numbered but ten souls, had rescued one of the great chests of treasure.

This they buried well up on the

island, and for three years they lived there in constant hope of being rescued.

One by one they sickened and died, until only one man was left, the writer of the letter.

The men had built a boat from the wreckage of the galleon, but having no idea where the island was located they had not dared to put to sea.

When all were dead except himself, however, the awful loneliness so weighed upon the mind of the sole survivor that he could endure it no longer, and choosing to risk death upon the open sea rather than madness on the lonely isle, he set sail in his little boat after nearly a year of solitude.

Fortunately he sailed due north, and

within a week was in the track of the Spanish merchantmen plying between the West Indies and Spain, and was picked up by one of these vessels homeward bound.

The story he told was merely one of shipwreck in which all but a few had perished, the balance, except himself, dying after they reached the island. He did not mention the mutiny or the chest of buried treasure.

The master of the merchantman assured him that from the position at which they had picked him up, and the prevailing winds for the past week he could have been on no other island than one of the Cape Verde group, which lie off the West Coast of Africa in about

16x or 17x north latitude.

His letter described the island minutely, as well as the location of the treasure, and was accompanied by the crudest, funniest little old map you ever saw; with trees and rocks all marked by scrawly X's to show the exact spot where the treasure had been buried.

When papa explained the real nature of the expedition, my heart sank, for I know so well how visionary and impractical the poor dear has always been that I feared that he had again been duped; especially when he told me he had paid a thousand dollars for the letter and map.

To add to my distress, I learned that he had borrowed ten thousand dollars

more from Robert Canler, and had given his notes for the amount.

Mr. Canler had asked for no security, and you know, dearie, what that will mean for me if papa cannot meet them. Oh, how I detest that man!

We all tried to look on the bright side of things, but Mr. Philander, and Mr. Clayton—he joined us in London just for the adventure— both felt as skeptical as I.

Well, to make a long story short, we found the island and the treasure —a great iron-bound oak chest, wrapped in many layers of oiled sailcloth, and as strong and firm as when it had been buried nearly two hundred years ago.

It was SIMPLY FILLED with gold

coin, and was so heavy that four men bent underneath its weight.

The horrid thing seems to bring nothing but murder and misfortune to those who have anything to do with it, for three days after we sailed from the Cape Verde Islands our own crew mutinied and killed every one of their officers.

Oh, it was the most terrifying experience one could imagine—I cannot even write of it.

They were going to kill us too, but one of them, the leader, named King, would not let them, and so they sailed south along the coast to a lonely spot where they found a good harbor, and here they landed and have left us.

They sailed away with the treasure today, but Mr. Clayton says they will meet with a fate similar to the mutineers of the ancient galleon, because King, the only man aboard who knew aught of navigation, was murdered on the beach by one of the men the day we landed.

I wish you could know Mr. Clayton; he is the dearest fellow imaginable, and unless I am mistaken he has fallen very much in love with me.

He is the only son of Lord Greystoke, and some day will inherit the title and estates. In addition, he is wealthy in his own right, but the fact that he is going to be an English Lord makes me very sad—you know what my sentiments have always been relative to American girls

who married titled foreigners. Oh, if he were only a plain American gentleman!

But it isn't his fault, poor fellow, and in everything except birth he would do credit to my country, and that is the greatest compliment I know how to pay any man.

We have had the most weird experiences since we were landed here. Papa and Mr. Philander lost in the jungle, and chased by a real lion.

Mr. Clayton lost, and attacked twice by wild beasts. Esmeralda and I cornered in an old cabin by a perfectly awful man-eating lioness. Oh, it was simply "terrifical," as Esmeralda would say.

But the strangest part of it all is the

wonderful creature who rescued us. I have not seen him, but Mr. Clayton and papa and Mr. Philander have, and they say that he is a perfectly god-like white man tanned to a dusky brown, with the strength of a wild elephant, the agility of a monkey, and the bravery of a lion.

He speaks no English and vanishes as quickly and as mysteriously after he has performed some valorous deed, as though he were a disembodied spirit.

Then we have another weird neighbor, who printed a beautiful sign in English and tacked it on the door of his cabin, which we have preempted, warning us to destroy none of his belongings, and signing himself "Tarzan of the Apes."

We have never seen him, though we think he is about, for one of the sailors, who was going to shoot Mr. Clayton in the back, received a spear in his shoulder from some unseen hand in the jungle.

The sailors left us but a meager supply of food, so, as we have only a single revolver with but three cartridges left in it, we do not know how we can procure meat, though Mr. Philander says that we can exist indefinitely on the wild fruit and nuts which abound in the jungle.

I am very tired now, so I shall go to my funny bed of grasses which Mr. Clayton gathered for me, but will add to this from day to day as things happen. Lovingly, JANE PORTER.

TO HAZEL STRONG, BALTIMORE, MD.

Tarzan sat in a brown study for a long time after he finished reading the letter. It was filled with so many new and wonderful things that his brain was in a whirl as he attempted to digest them all.

So they did not know that he was Tarzan of the Apes. He would tell them.

In his tree he had constructed a rude shelter of leaves and boughs, beneath which, protected from the rain, he had placed the few treasures brought from the cabin. Among these were some pencils.

He took one, and beneath Jane Porter's signature he wrote:

I am Tarzan of the Apes

He thought that would be sufficient. Later he would return the letter to the cabin.

In the matter of food, thought Tarzan, they had no need to worry— he would provide, and he did.

The next morning Jane found her missing letter in the exact spot from which it had disappeared two nights before. She was mystified; but when she saw the printed words beneath her signature, she felt a cold, clammy chill run up her spine. She showed the letter, or rather the last sheet with the signature, to Clayton.

"And to think," she said, "that uncanny thing was probably watching me all the time that I was writing—oo! It makes me

shudder just to think of it."

"But he must be friendly," reassured Clayton, "for he has returned your letter, nor did he offer to harm you, and unless I am mistaken he left a very substantial memento of his friendship outside the cabin door last night, for I just found the carcass of a wild boar there as I came out."

From then on scarcely a day passed that did not bring its offering of game or other food. Sometimes it was a young deer, again a quantity of strange, cooked food—cassava cakes pilfered from the village of Mbonga— or a boar, or leopard, and once a lion.

Tarzan derived the greatest pleasure of his life in hunting meat for these

strangers. It seemed to him that no pleasure on earth could compare with laboring for the welfare and protection of the beautiful white girl.

Some day he would venture into the camp in daylight and talk with these people through the medium of the little bugs which were familiar to them and to Tarzan.

But he found it difficult to overcome the timidity of the wild thing of the forest, and so day followed day without seeing a fulfillment of his good intentions.

The party in the camp, emboldened by familiarity, wandered farther and yet farther into the jungle in search of nuts and fruit.

Scarcely a day passed that did not find Professor Porter straying in his preoccupied indifference toward the jaws of death. Mr. Samuel T. Philander, never what one might call robust, was worn to the shadow of a shadow through the ceaseless worry and mental distraction resultant from his Herculean efforts to safeguard the professor.

A month passed. Tarzan had finally determined to visit the camp by daylight.

It was early afternoon. Clayton had wandered to the point at the harbor's mouth to look for passing vessels. Here he kept a great mass of wood, high piled, ready to be ignited as a signal should a steamer or a sail top the far horizon.

Professor Porter was wandering

along the beach south of the camp with Mr. Philander at his elbow, urging him to turn his steps back before the two became again the sport of some savage beast.

The others gone, Jane and Esmeralda had wandered into the jungle to gather fruit, and in their search were led farther and farther from the cabin.

Tarzan waited in silence before the door of the little house until they should return. His thoughts were of the beautiful white girl. They were always of her now. He wondered if she would fear him, and the thought all but caused him to relinquish his plan.

He was rapidly becoming impatient for her return, that he might feast his eyes

upon her and be near her, perhaps touch her. The ape- man knew no god, but he was as near to worshipping his divinity as mortal man ever comes to worship. While he waited he passed the time printing a message to her; whether he intended giving it to her he himself could not have told, but he took infinite pleasure in seeing his thoughts expressed in print—in which he was not so uncivilized after all. He wrote:

I am Tarzan of the Apes. I want you. I am yours. You are mine. We live here together always in my house. I will bring you the best of fruits, the tenderest deer, the finest meats that roam the jungle. I will hunt for you. I am the greatest of the jungle fighters. I will fight for you. I am

the mightiest of the jungle fighters. You are Jane Porter, I saw it in your letter. When you see this you will know that it is for you and that Tarzan of the Apes loves you.

As he stood, straight as a young Indian, by the door, waiting after he had finished the message, there came to his keen ears a familiar sound. It was the passing of a great ape through the lower branches of the forest.

For an instant he listened intently, and then from the jungle came the agonized scream of a woman, and Tarzan of the Apes, dropping his first love letter upon the ground, shot like a panther into the forest.

Clayton, also, heard the scream, and

Professor Porter and Mr. Philander, and in a few minutes they came panting to the cabin, calling out to each other a volley of excited questions as they approached. A glance within confirmed their worst fears.

Jane and Esmeralda were not there.

Instantly, Clayton, followed by the two old men, plunged into the jungle, calling the girl's name aloud. For half an hour they stumbled on, until Clayton, by merest chance, came upon the prostrate form of Esmeralda.

He stopped beside her, feeling for her pulse and then listening for her heartbeats. She lived. He shook her.

"Esmeralda!" he shrieked in her ear. "Esmeralda! For God's sake, where is

Miss Porter? What has happened? Esmeralda!"

Slowly Esmeralda opened her eyes. She saw Clayton. She saw the jungle about her.

"Oh, Gaberelle!" she screamed, and fainted again.

By this time Professor Porter and Mr. Philander had come up.

"What shall we do, Mr. Clayton?" asked the old professor. "Where shall we look? God could not have been so cruel as to take my little girl away from me now."

"We must arouse Esmeralda first," replied Clayton. "She can tell us what has happened. Esmeralda!" he cried again, shaking the black woman roughly

by the shoulder.

"O Gaberelle, I want to die!" cried the poor woman, but with eyes fast closed. "Let me die, dear Lord, don't let me see that awful face again."

"Come, come, Esmeralda," cried Clayton.

"The Lord isn't here; it's Mr. Clayton. Open your eyes."

Esmeralda did as she was bade.

"O Gaberelle! Thank the Lord," she said.

"Where's Miss Porter? What happened?" questioned Clayton.

"Ain't Miss Jane here?" cried Esmeralda, sitting up with wonderful celerity for one of her bulk. "Oh, Lord,

now I remember! It must have took her away," and the Negress commenced to sob, and wail her lamentations.

"What took her away?" cried Professor Porter.

"A great big giant all covered with hair."

"A gorilla, Esmeralda?" questioned Mr. Philander, and the three men scarcely breathed as he voiced the horrible thought.

"I thought it was the devil; but I guess it must have been one of them gorilephants. Oh, my poor baby, my poor little honey," and again Esmeralda broke into uncontrollable sobbing.

Clayton immediately began to look about for tracks, but he could find

nothing save a confusion of trampled grasses in the close vicinity, and his woodcraft was too meager for the translation of what he did see.

All the balance of the day they sought through the jungle; but as night drew on they were forced to give up in despair and hopelessness, for they did not even know in what direction the thing had borne Jane.

It was long after dark ere they reached the cabin, and a sad and grief-stricken party it was that sat silently within the little structure.

Professor Porter finally broke the silence. His tones were no longer those of the erudite pedant theorizing upon the abstract and the unknowable; but those

of the man of action—determined, but tinged also by a note of indescribable hopelessness and grief which wrung an answering pang from Clayton's heart.

"I shall lie down now," said the old man, "and try to sleep. Early tomorrow, as soon as it is light, I shall take what food I can carry and continue the search until I have found Jane. I will not return without her."

His companions did not reply at once. Each was immersed in his own sorrowful thoughts, and each knew, as did the old professor, what the last words meant—Professor Porter would never return from the jungle.

At length Clayton arose and laid his hand gently upon Professor Porter's bent

old shoulder.

"I shall go with you, of course," he said.

"I knew that you would offer—that you would wish to go, Mr. Clayton; but you must not. Jane is beyond human assistance now. What was once my dear little girl shall not lie alone and friendless in the awful jungle.

"The same vines and leaves will cover us, the same rains beat upon us; and when the spirit of her mother is abroad, it will find us together in death, as it has always found us in life.

"No; it is I alone who may go, for she was my daughter—all that was left on earth for me to love."

"I shall go with you," said Clayton

simply.

The old man looked up, regarding the strong, handsome face of William Cecil Clayton intently. Perhaps he read there the love that lay in the heart beneath—the love for his daughter.

He had been too preoccupied with his own scholarly thoughts in the past to consider the little occurrences, the chance words, which would have indicated to a more practical man that these young people were being drawn more and more closely to one another. Now they came back to him, one by one.

"As you wish," he said.

"You may count on me, also," said Mr. Philander.

"No, my dear old friend," said

Professor Porter. "We may not all go. It would be cruelly wicked to leave poor Esmeralda here alone, and three of us would be no more successful than one.

"There be enough dead things in the cruel forest as it is. Come— let us try to sleep a little."

19. THE CALL OF THE PRIMITIVE

From the time Tarzan left the tribe of great anthropoids in which he had been raised, it was torn by continual strife and discord. Terkoz proved a cruel and capricious king, so that, one by one, many of the older and weaker apes, upon whom he was particularly prone to vent his brutish nature, took their families and sought the quiet and safety of the far interior.

But at last those who remained were driven to desperation by the continued truculence of Terkoz, and it so happened that one of them recalled the parting admonition of Tarzan:

"If you have a chief who is cruel, do not do as the other apes do, and attempt,

any one of you, to pit yourself against him alone. But, instead, let two or three or four of you attack him together. Then, if you will do this, no chief will dare to be other than he should be, for four of you can kill any chief who may ever be over you."

And the ape who recalled this wise counsel repeated it to several of his fellows, so that when Terkoz returned to the tribe that day he found a warm reception awaiting him.

There were no formalities. As Terkoz reached the group, five huge, hairy beasts sprang upon him.

At heart he was an arrant coward, which is the way with bullies among apes as well as among men; so he did

not remain to fight and die, but tore himself away from them as quickly as he could and fled into the sheltering boughs of the forest.

Two more attempts he made to rejoin the tribe, but on each occasion he was set upon and driven away. At last he gave it up, and turned, foaming with rage and hatred, into the jungle.

For several days he wandered aimlessly, nursing his spite and looking for some weak thing on which to vent his pent anger.

It was in this state of mind that the horrible, man-like beast, swinging from tree to tree, came suddenly upon two women in the jungle.

He was right above them when he

discovered them. The first intimation Jane Porter had of his presence was when the great hairy body dropped to the earth beside her, and she saw the awful face and the snarling, hideous mouth thrust within a foot of her.

One piercing scream escaped her lips as the brute hand clutched her arm. Then she was dragged toward those awful fangs which yawned at her throat. But ere they touched that fair skin another mood claimed the anthropoid.

The tribe had kept his women. He must find others to replace them. This hairless white ape would be the first of his new household, and so he threw her roughly across his broad, hairy shoulders and leaped back into the trees,

bearing Jane away.

Esmeralda's scream of terror had mingled once with that of Jane, and then, as was Esmeralda's manner under stress of emergency which required presence of mind, she swooned.

But Jane did not once lose consciousness. It is true that that awful face, pressing close to hers, and the stench of the foul breath beating upon her nostrils, paralyzed her with terror; but her brain was clear, and she comprehended all that transpired.

With what seemed to her marvelous rapidity the brute bore her through the forest, but still she did not cry out or struggle. The sudden advent of the ape had confused her to such an extent that

she thought now that he was bearing her toward the beach.

For this reason she conserved her energies and her voice until she could see that they had approached near enough to the camp to attract the succor she craved.

She could not have known it, but she was being borne farther and farther into the impenetrable jungle.

The scream that had brought Clayton and the two older men stumbling through the undergrowth had led Tarzan of the Apes straight to where Esmeralda lay, but it was not Esmeralda in whom his interest centered, though pausing over her he saw that she was unhurt.

For a moment he scrutinized the

ground below and the trees above, until the ape that was in him by virtue of training and environment, combined with the intelligence that was his by right of birth, told his wondrous woodcraft the whole story as plainly as though he had seen the thing happen with his own eyes.

And then he was gone again into the swaying trees, following the high-flung spoor which no other human eye could have detected, much less translated.

At boughs' ends, where the anthropoid swings from one tree to another, there is most to mark the trail, but least to point the direction of the quarry; for there the pressure is downward always, toward the small end of the branch, whether the ape be leaving or entering a tree. Nearer

the center of the tree, where the signs of passage are fainter, the direction is plainly marked.

Here, on this branch, a caterpillar has been crushed by the fugitive's great foot, and Tarzan knows instinctively where that same foot would touch in the next stride. Here he looks to find a tiny particle of the demolished larva, ofttimes not more than a speck of moisture.

Again, a minute bit of bark has been upturned by the scraping hand, and the direction of the break indicates the direction of the passage. Or some great limb, or the stem of the tree itself has been brushed by the hairy body, and a tiny shred of hair tells him by the

direction from which it is wedged beneath the bark that he is on the right trail.

Nor does he need to check his speed to catch these seemingly faint records of the fleeing beast.

To Tarzan they stand out boldly against all the myriad other scars and bruises and signs upon the leafy way. But strongest of all is the scent, for Tarzan is pursuing up the wind, and his trained nostrils are as sensitive as a hound's.

There are those who believe that the lower orders are specially endowed by nature with better olfactory nerves than man, but it is merely a matter of development.

Man's survival does not hinge so greatly upon the perfection of his senses. His power to reason has relieved them of many of their duties, and so they have, to some extent, atrophied, as have the muscles which move the ears and scalp, merely from disuse.

The muscles are there, about the ears and beneath the scalp, and so are the nerves which transmit sensations to the brain, but they are under-developed because they are not needed.

Not so with Tarzan of the Apes. From early infancy his survival had depended upon acuteness of eyesight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste far more than upon the more slowly developed organ of reason.

The least developed of all in Tarzan was the sense of taste, for he could eat luscious fruits, or raw flesh, long buried with almost equal appreciation; but in that he differed but slightly from more civilized epicures.

Almost silently the ape-man sped on in the track of Terkoz and his prey, but the sound of his approach reached the ears of the fleeing beast and spurred it on to greater speed.

Three miles were covered before Tarzan overtook them, and then Terkoz, seeing that further flight was futile, dropped to the ground in a small open glade, that he might turn and fight for his prize or be free to escape unhampered if he saw that the pursuer was more than a

match for him.

He still grasped Jane in one great arm as Tarzan bounded like a leopard into the arena which nature had provided for this primeval- like battle.

When Terkoz saw that it was Tarzan who pursued him, he jumped to the conclusion that this was Tarzan's woman, since they were of the same kind - white and hairless—and so he rejoiced at this opportunity for double revenge upon his hated enemy.

To Jane the strange apparition of this god-like man was as wine to sick nerves.

From the description which Clayton and her father and Mr. Philander had given her, she knew that it must be the

same wonderful creature who had saved them, and she saw in him only a protector and a friend.

But as Terkoz pushed her roughly aside to meet Tarzan's charge, and she saw the great proportions of the ape and the mighty muscles and the fierce fangs, her heart quailed. How could any vanquish such a mighty antagonist?

Like two charging bulls they came together, and like two wolves sought each other's throat. Against the long canines of the ape was pitted the thin blade of the man's knife.

Jane—her lithe, young form flattened against the trunk of a great tree, her hands tight pressed against her rising and falling bosom, and her eyes wide with

mingled horror, fascination, fear, and admiration— watched the primordial ape battle with the primeval man for possession of a woman—for her.

As the great muscles of the man's back and shoulders knotted beneath the tension of his efforts, and the huge biceps and forearm held at bay those mighty tusks, the veil of centuries of civilization and culture was swept from the blurred vision of the Baltimore girl.

When the long knife drank deep a dozen times of Terkoz' heart's blood, and the great carcass rolled lifeless upon the ground, it was a primeval woman who sprang forward with outstretched arms toward the primeval man who had fought for her and won her.

And Tarzan?

He did what no red-blooded man needs lessons in doing. He took his woman in his arms and smothered her upturned, panting lips with kisses.

For a moment Jane lay there with half-closed eyes. For a moment— the first in her young life—she knew the meaning of love.

But as suddenly as the veil had been withdrawn it dropped again, and an outraged conscience suffused her face with its scarlet mantle, and a mortified woman thrust Tarzan of the Apes from her and buried her face in her hands.

Tarzan had been surprised when he had found the girl he had learned to love after a vague and abstract manner a

willing prisoner in his arms. Now he was surprised that she repulsed him.

He came close to her once more and took hold of her arm. She turned upon him like a tigress, striking his great breast with her tiny hands.

Tarzan could not understand it.

A moment ago and it had been his intention to hasten Jane back to her people, but that little moment was lost now in the dim and distant past of things which were but can never be again, and with it the good intentions had gone to join the impossible.

Since then Tarzan of the Apes had felt a warm, lithe form close pressed to his. Hot, sweet breath against his cheek and mouth had fanned a new flame to life

within his breast, and perfect lips had clung to his in burning kisses that had seared a deep brand into his soul—a brand which marked a new Tarzan.

Again he laid his hand upon her arm. Again she repulsed him. And then Tarzan of the Apes did just what his first ancestor would have done.

He took his woman in his arms and carried her into the jungle.

Early the following morning the four within the little cabin by the beach were awakened by the booming of a cannon. Clayton was the first to rush out, and there, beyond the harbor's mouth, he saw two vessels lying at anchor.

One was the Arrow and the other a small French cruiser. The sides of the

latter were crowded with men gazing shoreward, and it was evident to Clayton, as to the others who had now joined him, that the gun which they had heard had been fired to attract their attention if they still remained at the cabin.

Both vessels lay at a considerable distance from shore, and it was doubtful if their glasses would locate the waving hats of the little party far in between the harbor's points.

Esmeralda had removed her red apron and was waving it frantically above her head; but Clayton, still fearing that even this might not be seen, hurried off toward the northern point where lay his signal pyre ready for the match.

It seemed an age to him, as to those who waited breathlessly behind, ere he reached the great pile of dry branches and underbrush.

As he broke from the dense wood and came in sight of the vessels again, he was filled with consternation to see that the Arrow was making sail and that the cruiser was already under way.

Quickly lighting the pyre in a dozen places, he hurried to the extreme point of the promontory, where he stripped off his shirt, and, tying it to a fallen branch, stood waving it back and forth above him.

But still the vessels continued to stand out; and he had given up all hope, when the great column of smoke, rising above

the forest in one dense vertical shaft, attracted the attention of a lookout aboard the cruiser, and instantly a dozen glasses were leveled on the beach.

Presently Clayton saw the two ships come about again; and while the Arrow lay drifting quietly on the ocean, the cruiser steamed slowly back toward shore.

At some distance away she stopped, and a boat was lowered and dispatched toward the beach.

As it was drawn up a young officer stepped out.

"Monsieur Clayton, I presume?" he asked.

"Thank God, you have come!" was Clayton's reply. "And it may be that it is

not too late even now."

"What do you mean, Monsieur?" asked the officer.

Clayton told of the abduction of Jane Porter and the need of armed men to aid in the search for her.

"MON DIEU!" exclaimed the officer, sadly. "Yesterday and it would not have been too late. Today and it may be better that the poor lady were never found. It is horrible, Monsieur. It is too horrible."

Other boats had now put off from the cruiser, and Clayton, having pointed out the harbor's entrance to the officer, entered the boat with him and its nose was turned toward the little landlocked bay, into which the other craft followed.

Soon the entire party had landed

where stood Professor Porter, Mr. Philander and the weeping Esmeralda.

Among the officers in the last boats to put off from the cruiser was the commander of the vessel; and when he had heard the story of Jane's abduction, he generously called for volunteers to accompany Professor Porter and Clayton in their search.

Not an officer or a man was there of those brave and sympathetic Frenchmen who did not quickly beg leave to be one of the expedition.

The commander selected twenty men and two officers, Lieutenant D'Arnot and Lieutenant Charpentier. A boat was dispatched to the cruiser for provisions, ammunition, and carbines; the men were

already armed with revolvers.

Then, to Clayton's inquiries as to how they had happened to anchor off shore and fire a signal gun, the commander, Captain Dufranne, explained that a month before they had sighted the Arrow bearing southwest under considerable canvas, and that when they had signaled her to come about she had but crowded on more sail.

They had kept her hull-up until sunset, firing several shots after her, but the next morning she was nowhere to be seen. They had then continued to cruise up and down the coast for several weeks, and had about forgotten the incident of the recent chase, when, early one morning a few days before the lookout had

described a vessel laboring in the trough of a heavy sea and evidently entirely out of control.

As they steamed nearer to the derelict they were surprised to note that it was the same vessel that had run from them a few weeks earlier. Her forestay-sail and mizzen spanker were set as though an effort had been made to hold her head up into the wind, but the sheets had parted, and the sails were tearing to ribbons in the half gale of wind.

In the high sea that was running it was a difficult and dangerous task to attempt to put a prize crew aboard her; and as no signs of life had been seen above deck, it was decided to stand by until the wind and sea abated; but just then a figure was

seen clinging to the rail and feebly waving a mute signal of despair toward them.

Immediately a boat's crew was ordered out and an attempt was successfully made to board the Arrow.

The sight that met the Frenchmen's eyes as they clambered over the ship's side was appalling.

A dozen dead and dying men rolled hither and thither upon the pitching deck, the living intermingled with the dead. Two of the corpses appeared to have been partially devoured as though by wolves.

The prize crew soon had the vessel under proper sail once more and the living members of the ill-starred

company carried below to their hammocks.

The dead were wrapped in tarpaulins and lashed on deck to be identified by their comrades before being consigned to the deep.

None of the living was conscious when the Frenchmen reached the Arrow's deck. Even the poor devil who had waved the single despairing signal of distress had lapsed into unconsciousness before he had learned whether it had availed or not.

It did not take the French officer long to learn what had caused the terrible condition aboard; for when water and brandy were sought to restore the men, it was found that there was none, nor even

food of any description.

He immediately signalled to the cruiser to send water, medicine, and provisions, and another boat made the perilous trip to the Arrow.

When restoratives had been applied several of the men regained consciousness, and then the whole story was told. That part of it we know up to the sailing of the Arrow after the murder of Snipes, and the burial of his body above the treasure chest.

It seems that the pursuit by the cruiser had so terrorized the mutineers that they had continued out across the Atlantic for several days after losing her; but on discovering the meager supply of water and provisions aboard, they had turned

back toward the east.

With no one on board who understood navigation, discussions soon arose as to their whereabouts; and as three days' sailing to the east did not raise land, they bore off to the north, fearing that the high north winds that had prevailed had driven them south of the southern extremity of Africa.

They kept on a north-northeasterly course for two days, when they were overtaken by a calm which lasted for nearly a week. Their water was gone, and in another day they would be without food.

Conditions changed rapidly from bad to worse. One man went mad and leaped overboard. Soon another opened his

veins and drank his own blood.

When he died they threw him overboard also, though there were those among them who wanted to keep the corpse on board. Hunger was changing them from human beasts to wild beasts.

Two days before they had been picked up by the cruiser they had become too weak to handle the vessel, and that same day three men died. On the following morning it was seen that one of the corpses had been partially devoured.

All that day the men lay glaring at each other like beasts of prey, and the following morning two of the corpses lay almost entirely stripped of flesh.

The men were but little stronger for

their ghoulish repast, for the want of water was by far the greatest agony with which they had to contend. And then the cruiser had come.

When those who could had recovered, the entire story had been told to the French commander; but the men were too ignorant to be able to tell him at just what point on the coast the professor and his party had been marooned, so the cruiser had steamed slowly along within sight of land, firing occasional signal guns and scanning every inch of the beach with glasses.

They had anchored by night so as not to neglect a particle of the shore line, and it had happened that the preceding night had brought them off the very beach

where lay the little camp they sought.

The signal guns of the afternoon before had not been heard by those on shore, it was presumed, because they had doubtless been in the thick of the jungle searching for Jane Porter, where the noise of their own crashing through the underbrush would have drowned the report of a far distant gun.

By the time the two parties had narrated their several adventures, the cruiser's boat had returned with supplies and arms for the expedition.

Within a few minutes the little body of sailors and the two French officers, together with Professor Porter and Clayton, set off upon their hopeless and ill-fated quest into the untracked jungle.

20. HEREDITY

When Jane realized that she was being borne away a captive by the strange forest creature who had rescued her from the clutches of the ape she struggled desperately to escape, but the strong arms that held her as easily as though she had been but a day-old babe only pressed a little more tightly.

So presently she gave up the futile effort and lay quietly, looking through half-closed lids at the faces of the man who strode easily through the tangled undergrowth with her.

The face above her was one of extraordinary beauty.

A perfect type of the strongly masculine, unmarred by dissipation, or

brutal or degrading passions. For, though Tarzan of the Apes was a killer of men and of beasts, he killed as the hunter kills, dispassionately, except on those rare occasions when he had killed for hate—though not the brooding, malevolent hate which marks the features of its own with hideous lines.

When Tarzan killed he more often smiled than scowled, and smiles are the foundation of beauty.

One thing the girl had noticed particularly when she had seen Tarzan rushing upon Terkoz—the vivid scarlet band upon his forehead, from above the left eye to the scalp; but now as she scanned his features she noticed that it was gone, and only a thin white line

marked the spot where it had been.

As she lay more quietly in his arms Tarzan slightly relaxed his grip upon her.

Once he looked down into her eyes and smiled, and the girl had to close her own to shut out the vision of that handsome, winning face.

Presently Tarzan took to the trees, and Jane, wondering that she felt no fear, began to realize that in many respects she had never felt more secure in her whole life than now as she lay in the arms of this strong, wild creature, being borne, God alone knew where or to what fate, deeper and deeper into the savage fastness of the untamed forest.

When, with closed eyes, she

commenced to speculate upon the future, and terrifying fears were conjured by a vivid imagination, she had but to raise her lids and look upon that noble face so close to hers to dissipate the last remnant of apprehension.

No, he could never harm her; of that she was convinced when she translated the fine features and the frank, brave eyes above her into the chivalry which they proclaimed.

On and on they went through what seemed to Jane a solid mass of verdure, yet ever there appeared to open before this forest god a passage, as by magic, which closed behind them as they passed.

Scarce a branch scraped against her,

yet above and below, before and behind, the view presented naught but a solid mass of inextricably interwoven branches and creepers.

As Tarzan moved steadily onward his mind was occupied with many strange and new thoughts. Here was a problem the like of which he had never encountered, and he felt rather than reasoned that he must meet it as a man and not as an ape.

The free movement through the middle terrace, which was the route he had followed for the most part, had helped to cool the ardor of the first fierce passion of his new found love.

Now he discovered himself speculating upon the fate which would

have fallen to the girl had he not rescued her from Terkoz.

He knew why the ape had not killed her, and he commenced to compare his intentions with those of Terkoz.

True, it was the order of the jungle for the male to take his mate by force; but could Tarzan be guided by the laws of the beasts? Was not Tarzan a Man? But what did men do? He was puzzled; for he did not know.

He wished that he might ask the girl, and then it came to him that she had already answered him in the futile struggle she had made to escape and to repulse him.

But now they had come to their destination, and Tarzan of the Apes with

Jane in his strong arms, swung lightly to the turf of the arena where the great apes held their councils and danced the wild orgy of the Dum-Dum.

Though they had come many miles, it was still but midafternoon, and the amphitheater was bathed in the half light which filtered through the maze of encircling foliage.

The green turf looked soft and cool and inviting. The myriad noises of the jungle seemed far distant and hushed to a mere echo of blurred sounds, rising and falling like the surf upon a remote shore.

A feeling of dreamy peacefulness stole over Jane as she sank down upon the grass where Tarzan had placed her, and as she looked up at his great figure

towering above her, there was added a strange sense of perfect security.

As she watched him from beneath half-closed lids, Tarzan crossed the little circular clearing toward the trees upon the further side. She noted the graceful majesty of his carriage, the perfect symmetry of his magnificent figure and the poise of his well- shaped head upon his broad shoulders.

What a perfect creature! There could be naught of cruelty or baseness beneath that godlike exterior. Never, she thought had such a man strode the earth since God created the first in his own image.

With a bound Tarzan sprang into the trees and disappeared. Jane wondered where he had gone. Had he left her there

to her fate in the lonely jungle?

She glanced nervously about. Every vine and bush seemed but the lurking-place of some huge and horrible beast waiting to bury gleaming fangs into her soft flesh. Every sound she magnified into the stealthy creeping of a sinuous and malignant body.

How different now that he had left her!

For a few minutes that seemed hours to the frightened girl, she sat with tense nerves waiting for the spring of the crouching thing that was to end her misery of apprehension.

She almost prayed for the cruel teeth that would give her unconsciousness and surcease from the agony of fear.

She heard a sudden, slight sound behind her. With a cry she sprang to her feet and turned to face her end.

There stood Tarzan, his arms filled with ripe and luscious fruit.

Jane reeled and would have fallen, had not Tarzan, dropping his burden, caught her in his arms. She did not lose consciousness, but she clung tightly to him, shuddering and trembling like a frightened deer.

Tarzan of the Apes stroked her soft hair and tried to comfort and quiet her as Kala had him, when, as a little ape, he had been frightened by Sabor, the lioness, or Histah, the snake.

Once he pressed his lips lightly upon her forehead, and she did not move, but

closed her eyes and sighed.

She could not analyze her feelings, nor did she wish to attempt it. She was satisfied to feel the safety of those strong arms, and to leave her future to fate; for the last few hours had taught her to trust this strange wild creature of the forest as she would have trusted but few of the men of her acquaintance.

As she thought of the strangeness of it, there commenced to dawn upon her the realization that she had, possibly, learned something else which she had never really known before—love. She wondered and then she smiled.

And still smiling, she pushed Tarzan gently away; and looking at him with a half-smiling, half-quizzical expression

that made her face wholly entrancing, she pointed to the fruit upon the ground, and seated herself upon the edge of the earthen drum of the anthropoids, for hunger was asserting itself.

Tarzan quickly gathered up the fruit, and, bringing it, laid it at her feet; and then he, too, sat upon the drum beside her, and with his knife opened and prepared the various fruits for her meal.

Together and in silence they ate, occasionally stealing sly glances at one another, until finally Jane broke into a merry laugh in which Tarzan joined.

"I wish you spoke English," said the girl.

Tarzan shook his head, and an expression of wistful and pathetic

longing sobered his laughing eyes.

Then Jane tried speaking to him in French, and then in German; but she had to laugh at her own blundering attempt at the latter tongue.

"Anyway," she said to him in English, "you understand my German as well as they did in Berlin."

Tarzan had long since reached a decision as to what his future procedure should be. He had had time to recollect all that he had read of the ways of men and women in the books at the cabin. He would act as he imagined the men in the books would have acted were they in his place.

Again he rose and went into the trees, but first he tried to explain by means of

signs that he would return shortly, and he did so well that Jane understood and was not afraid when he had gone.

Only a feeling of loneliness came over her and she watched the point where he had disappeared, with longing eyes, awaiting his return. As before, she was appraised of his presence by a soft sound behind her, and turned to see him coming across the turf with a great armful of branches.

Then he went back again into the jungle and in a few minutes reappeared with a quantity of soft grasses and ferns.

Two more trips he made until he had quite a pile of material at hand.

Then he spread the ferns and grasses upon the ground in a soft flat bed, and

above it leaned many branches together so that they met a few feet over its center. Upon these he spread layers of huge leaves of the great elephant's ear, and with more branches and more leaves he closed one end of the little shelter he had built.

Then they sat down together again upon the edge of the drum and tried to talk by signs.

The magnificent diamond locket which hung about Tarzan's neck, had been a source of much wonderment to Jane. She pointed to it now, and Tarzan removed it and handed the pretty bauble to her.

She saw that it was the work of a skilled artisan and that the diamonds

were of great brilliancy and superbly set, but the cutting of them denoted that they were of a former day. She noticed too that the locket opened, and, pressing the hidden clasp, she saw the two halves spring apart to reveal in either section an ivory miniature.

One was of a beautiful woman and the other might have been a likeness of the man who sat beside her, except for a subtle difference of expression that was scarcely definable.

She looked up at Tarzan to find him leaning toward her gazing on the miniatures with an expression of astonishment. He reached out his hand for the locket and took it away from her, examining the likenesses within with

unmistakable signs of surprise and new interest. His manner clearly denoted that he had never before seen them, nor imagined that the locket opened.

This fact caused Jane to indulge in further speculation, and it taxed her imagination to picture how this beautiful ornament came into the possession of a wild and savage creature of the unexplored jungles of Africa.

Still more wonderful was how it contained the likeness of one who might be a brother, or, more likely, the father of this woodland demi-god who was even ignorant of the fact that the locket opened.

Tarzan was still gazing with fixity at the two faces. Presently he removed the

quiver from his shoulder, and emptying the arrows upon the ground reached into the bottom of the bag-like receptacle and drew forth a flat object wrapped in many soft leaves and tied with bits of long grass.

Carefully he unwrapped it, removing layer after layer of leaves until at length he held a photograph in his hand.

Pointing to the miniature of the man within the locket he handed the photograph to Jane, holding the open locket beside it.

The photograph only served to puzzle the girl still more, for it was evidently another likeness of the same man whose picture rested in the locket beside that of the beautiful young woman.

Tarzan was looking at her with an expression of puzzled bewilderment in his eyes as she glanced up at him. He seemed to be framing a question with his lips.

The girl pointed to the photograph and then to the miniature and then to him, as though to indicate that she thought the likenesses were of him, but he only shook his head, and then shrugging his great shoulders, he took the photograph from her and having carefully rewrapped it, placed it again in the bottom of his quiver.

For a few moments he sat in silence, his eyes bent upon the ground, while Jane held the little locket in her hand, turning it over and over in an endeavor

to find some further clue that might lead to the identity of its original owner.

At length a simple explanation occurred to her.

The locket had belonged to Lord Greystoke, and the likenesses were of himself and Lady Alice.

This wild creature had simply found it in the cabin by the beach. How stupid of her not to have thought of that solution before.

But to account for the strange likeness between Lord Greystoke and this forest god—that was quite beyond her, and it is not strange that she could not imagine that this naked savage was indeed an English nobleman.

At length Tarzan looked up to watch

the girl as she examined the locket. He could not fathom the meaning of the faces within, but he could read the interest and fascination upon the face of the live young creature by his side.

She noticed that he was watching her and thinking that he wished his ornament again she held it out to him. He took it from her and taking the chain in his two hands he placed it about her neck, smiling at her expression of surprise at his unexpected gift.

Jane shook her head vehemently and would have removed the golden links from about her throat, but Tarzan would not let her. Taking her hands in his, when she insisted upon it, he held them tightly to prevent her.

At last she desisted and with a little laugh raised the locket to her lips.

Tarzan did not know precisely what she meant, but he guessed correctly that it was her way of acknowledging the gift, and so he rose, and taking the locket in his hand, stooped gravely like some courtier of old, and pressed his lips upon it where hers had rested.

It was a stately and gallant little compliment performed with the grace and dignity of utter unconsciousness of self. It was the hall-mark of his aristocratic birth, the natural outcropping of many generations of fine breeding, an hereditary instinct of graciousness which a lifetime of uncouth and savage training and environment could not eradicate.

It was growing dark now, and so they ate again of the fruit which was both food and drink for them; then Tarzan rose, and leading Jane to the little bower he had erected, motioned her to go within.

For the first time in hours a feeling of fear swept over her, and Tarzan felt her draw away as though shrinking from him.

Contact with this girl for half a day had left a very different Tarzan from the one on whom the morning's sun had risen.

Now, in every fiber of his being, heredity spoke louder than training.

He had not in one swift transition become a polished gentleman from a

savage ape-man, but at last the instincts of the former predominated, and over all was the desire to please the woman he loved, and to appear well in her eyes.

So Tarzan of the Apes did the only thing he knew to assure Jane of her safety. He removed his hunting knife from its sheath and handed it to her hilt first, again motioning her into the bower.

The girl understood, and taking the long knife she entered and lay down upon the soft grasses while Tarzan of the Apes stretched himself upon the ground across the entrance.

And thus the rising sun found them in the morning.

When Jane awoke, she did not at first recall the strange events of the preceding

day, and so she wondered at her odd surroundings—the little leafy bower, the soft grasses of her bed, the unfamiliar prospect from the opening at her feet.

Slowly the circumstances of her position crept one by one into her mind. And then a great wonderment arose in her heart—a mighty wave of thankfulness and gratitude that though she had been in such terrible danger, yet she was unharmed.

She moved to the entrance of the shelter to look for Tarzan. He was gone; but this time no fear assailed her for she knew that he would return.

In the grass at the entrance to her bower she saw the imprint of his body where he had lain all night to guard her.

She knew that the fact that he had been there was all that had permitted her to sleep in such peaceful security.

With him near, who could entertain fear? She wondered if there was another man on earth with whom a girl could feel so safe in the heart of this savage African jungle. Even the lions and panthers had no fears for her now.

She looked up to see his lithe form drop softly from a near-by tree. As he caught her eyes upon him his face lighted with that frank and radiant smile that had won her confidence the day before.

As he approached her Jane's heart beat faster and her eyes brightened as they had never done before at the approach of any man.

He had again been gathering fruit and this he laid at the entrance of her bower. Once more they sat down together to eat.

Jane commenced to wonder what his plans were. Would he take her back to the beach or would he keep her here? Suddenly she realized that the matter did not seem to give her much concern. Could it be that she did not care!

She began to comprehend, also, that she was entirely contented sitting here by the side of this smiling giant eating delicious fruit in a sylvan paradise far within the remote depths of an African jungle—that she was contented and very happy.

She could not understand it. Her reason told her that she should be torn by

wild anxieties, weighted by dread fears, cast down by gloomy forebodings; but instead, her heart was singing and she was smiling into the answering face of the man beside her.

When they had finished their breakfast Tarzan went to her bower and recovered his knife. The girl had entirely forgotten it. She realized that it was because she had forgotten the fear that prompted her to accept it.

Motioning her to follow, Tarzan walked toward the trees at the edge of the arena, and taking her in one strong arm swung to the branches above.

The girl knew that he was taking her back to her people, and she could not understand the sudden feeling of

loneliness and sorrow which crept over her.

For hours they swung slowly along.

Tarzan of the Apes did not hurry. He tried to draw out the sweet pleasure of that journey with those dear arms about his neck as long as possible, and so he went far south of the direct route to the beach.

Several times they halted for brief rests, which Tarzan did not need, and at noon they stopped for an hour at a little brook, where they quenched their thirst, and ate.

So it was nearly sunset when they came to the clearing, and Tarzan, dropping to the ground beside a great tree, parted the tall jungle grass and

pointed out the little cabin to her.

She took him by the hand to lead him to it, that she might tell her father that this man had saved her from death and worse than death, that he had watched over her as carefully as a mother might have done.

But again the timidity of the wild thing in the face of human habitation swept over Tarzan of the Apes. He drew back, shaking his head.

The girl came close to him, looking up with pleading eyes. Somehow she could not bear the thought of his going back into the terrible jungle alone.

Still he shook his head, and finally he drew her to him very gently and stooped to kiss her, but first he looked into her

eyes and waited to learn if she were pleased, or if she would repulse him.

Just an instant the girl hesitated, and then she realized the truth, and throwing her arms about his neck she drew his face to hers and kissed him - unashamed.

"I love you—I love you," she murmured.

From far in the distance came the faint sound of many guns. Tarzan and Jane raised their heads.

From the cabin came Mr. Philander and Esmeralda.

From where Tarzan and the girl stood they could not see the two vessels lying at anchor in the harbor.

Tarzan pointed toward the sounds,

touched his breast and pointed again. She understood. He was going, and something told her that it was because he thought her people were in danger.

Again he kissed her.

"Come back to me," she whispered. "I shall wait for you— always."

He was gone—and Jane turned to walk across the clearing to the cabin.

Mr. Philander was the first to see her. It was dusk and Mr. Philander was very near sighted.

"Quickly, Esmeralda!" he cried. "Let us seek safety within; it is a lioness. Bless me!"

Esmeralda did not bother to verify Mr. Philander's vision. His tone was

enough. She was within the cabin and had slammed and bolted the door before he had finished pronouncing her name. The "Bless me" was startled out of Mr. Philander by the discovery that Esmeralda, in the exuberance of her haste, had fastened him upon the same side of the door as was the close-approaching lioness.

He beat furiously upon the heavy portal.

"Esmeralda! Esmeralda!" he shrieked. "Let me in. I am being devoured by a lion."

Esmeralda thought that the noise upon the door was made by the lioness in her attempts to pursue her, so, after her custom, she fainted.

Mr. Philander cast a frightened glance behind him.

Horrors! The thing was quite close now. He tried to scramble up the side of the cabin, and succeeded in catching a fleeting hold upon the thatched roof.

For a moment he hung there, clawing with his feet like a cat on a clothesline, but presently a piece of the thatch came away, and Mr. Philander, preceding it, was precipitated upon his back.

At the instant he fell a remarkable item of natural history leaped to his mind. If one feigns death lions and lionesses are supposed to ignore one, according to Mr. Philander's faulty memory.

So Mr. Philander lay as he had fallen,

frozen into the horrid semblance of death. As his arms and legs had been extended stiffly upward as he came to earth upon his back the attitude of death was anything but impressive.

Jane had been watching his antics in mild-eyed surprise. Now she laughed - a little choking gurgle of a laugh; but it was enough. Mr. Philander rolled over upon his side and peered about. At length he discovered her.

"Jane!" he cried. "Jane Porter. Bless me!"

He scrambled to his feet and rushed toward her. He could not believe that it was she, and alive.

"Bless me!" Where did you come from? Where in the world have you

been? How —"

"Mercy, Mr. Philander," interrupted the girl, "I can never remember so many questions."

"Well, well," said Mr. Philander. "Bless me! I am so filled with surprise and exuberant delight at seeing you safe and well again that I scarcely know what I am saying, really. But come, tell me all that has happened to you."

21. THE VILLAGE OF TORTURE

As the little expedition of sailors toiled through the dense jungle searching for signs of Jane Porter, the futility of their venture became more and more apparent, but the grief of the old man and the hopeless eyes of the young Englishman prevented the kind hearted D'Arnot from turning back.

He thought that there might be a bare possibility of finding her body, or the remains of it, for he was positive that she had been devoured by some beast of prey. He deployed his men into a skirmish line from the point where Esmeralda had been found, and in this extended formation they pushed their way, sweating and panting, through the

tangled vines and creepers. It was slow work. Noon found them but a few miles inland. They halted for a brief rest then, and after pushing on for a short distance further one of the men discovered a well-marked trail.

It was an old elephant track, and D'Arnot after consulting with Professor Porter and Clayton decided to follow it.

The path wound through the jungle in a northeasterly direction, and along it the column moved in single file.

Lieutenant D'Arnot was in the lead and moving at a quick pace, for the trail was comparatively open. Immediately behind him came Professor Porter, but as he could not keep pace with the younger man D'Arnot was a hundred

yards in advance when suddenly a half dozen black warriors arose about him.

D'Arnot gave a warning shout to his column as the blacks closed on him, but before he could draw his revolver he had been pinioned and dragged into the jungle.

His cry had alarmed the sailors and a dozen of them sprang forward past Professor Porter, running up the trail to their officer's aid.

They did not know the cause of his outcry, only that it was a warning of danger ahead. They had rushed past the spot where D'Arnot had been seized when a spear hurled from the jungle transfixed one of the men, and then a volley of arrows fell among them.

Raising their rifles they fired into the underbrush in the direction from which the missiles had come.

By this time the balance of the party had come up, and volley after volley was fired toward the concealed foe. It was these shots that Tarzan and Jane Porter had heard.

Lieutenant Charpentier, who had been bringing up the rear of the column, now came running to the scene, and on hearing the details of the ambush ordered the men to follow him, and plunged into the tangled vegetation.

In an instant they were in a hand-to-hand fight with some fifty black warriors of Mbonga's village. Arrows and bullets flew thick and fast.

Queer African knives and French gun butts mingled for a moment in savage and bloody duels, but soon the natives fled into the jungle, leaving the Frenchmen to count their losses.

Four of the twenty were dead, a dozen others were wounded, and Lieutenant D'Arnot was missing. Night was falling rapidly, and their predicament was rendered doubly worse when they could not even find the elephant trail which they had been following.

There was but one thing to do, make camp where they were until daylight. Lieutenant Charpentier ordered a clearing made and a circular abatis of underbrush constructed about the camp.

This work was not completed until

long after dark, the men building a huge fire in the center of the clearing to give them light to work by.

When all was safe as possible against attack of wild beasts and savage men, Lieutenant Charpentier placed sentries about the little camp and the tired and hungry men threw themselves upon the ground to sleep.

The groans of the wounded, mingled with the roaring and growling of the great beasts which the noise and firelight had attracted, kept sleep, except in its most fitful form, from the tired eyes. It was a sad and hungry party that lay through the long night praying for dawn.

The blacks who had seized D'Arnot had not waited to participate in the fight

which followed, but instead had dragged their prisoner a little way through the jungle and then struck the trail further on beyond the scene of the fighting in which their fellows were engaged.

They hurried him along, the sounds of battle growing fainter and fainter as they drew away from the contestants until there suddenly broke upon D'Arnot's vision a good-sized clearing at one end of which stood a thatched and palisaded village.

It was now dusk, but the watchers at the gate saw the approaching trio and distinguished one as a prisoner ere they reached the portals.

A cry went up within the palisade. A great throng of women and children

rushed out to meet the party.

And then began for the French officer the most terrifying experience which man can encounter upon earth—the reception of a white prisoner into a village of African cannibals.

To add to the fiendishness of their cruel savagery was the poignant memory of still crueler barbarities practiced upon them and theirs by the white officers of that arch hypocrite, Leopold II of Belgium, because of whose atrocities they had fled the Congo Free State—a pitiful remnant of what once had been a mighty tribe.

They fell upon D'Arnot tooth and nail, beating him with sticks and stones and tearing at him with claw-like hands.

Every vestige of clothing was torn from him, and the merciless blows fell upon his bare and quivering flesh. But not once did the Frenchman cry out in pain. He breathed a silent prayer that he be quickly delivered from his torture.

But the death he prayed for was not to be so easily had. Soon the warriors beat the women away from their prisoner. He was to be saved for nobler sport than this, and the first wave of their passion having subsided they contented themselves with crying out taunts and insults and spitting upon him.

Presently they reached the center of the village. There D'Arnot was bound securely to the great post from which no live man had ever been released.

A number of the women scattered to their several huts to fetch pots and water, while others built a row of fires on which portions of the feast were to be boiled while the balance would be slowly dried in strips for future use, as they expected the other warriors to return with many prisoners. The festivities were delayed awaiting the return of the warriors who had remained to engage in the skirmish with the white men, so that it was quite late when all were in the village, and the dance of death commenced to circle around the doomed officer.

Half fainting from pain and exhaustion, D'Arnot watched from beneath half-closed lids what seemed

but the vagary of delirium, or some horrid nightmare from which he must soon awake.

The bestial faces, daubed with color—the huge mouths and flabby hanging lips—the yellow teeth, sharp filed—the rolling, demon eyes—the shining naked bodies—the cruel spears. Surely no such creatures really existed upon earth—he must indeed be dreaming.

The savage, whirling bodies circled nearer. Now a spear sprang forth and touched his arm. The sharp pain and the feel of hot, trickling blood assured him of the awful reality of his hopeless position.

Another spear and then another touched him. He closed his eyes and

held his teeth firm set—he would not cry out.

He was a soldier of France, and he would teach these beasts how an officer and a gentleman died.

Tarzan of the Apes needed no interpreter to translate the story of those distant shots. With Jane Porter's kisses still warm upon his lips he was swinging with incredible rapidity through the forest trees straight toward the village of Mbonga.

He was not interested in the location of the encounter, for he judged that that would soon be over. Those who were killed he could not aid, those who escaped would not need his assistance.

It was to those who had neither been

killed or escaped that he hastened. And he knew that he would find them by the great post in the center of Mbonga village.

Many times had Tarzan seen Mbonga's black raiding parties return from the northward with prisoners, and always were the same scenes enacted about that grim stake, beneath the flaring light of many fires.

He knew, too, that they seldom lost much time before consummating the fiendish purpose of their captures. He doubted that he would arrive in time to do more than avenge.

On he sped. Night had fallen and he traveled high along the upper terrace where the gorgeous tropic moon lighted

the dizzy pathway through the gently undulating branches of the tree tops.

Presently he caught the reflection of a distant blaze. It lay to the right of his path. It must be the light from the camp fire the two men had built before they were attacked—Tarzan knew nothing of the presence of the sailors.

So sure was Tarzan of his jungle knowledge that he did not turn from his course, but passed the glare at a distance of a half mile. It was the camp fire of the Frenchmen.

In a few minutes more Tarzan swung into the trees above Mbonga's village. Ah, he was not quite too late! Or, was he? He could not tell. The figure at the stake was very still, yet the black

warriors were but pricking it.

Tarzan knew their customs. The death blow had not been struck. He could tell almost to a minute how far the dance had gone.

In another instant Mbonga's knife would sever one of the victim's ears - that would mark the beginning of the end, for very shortly after only a writhing mass of mutilated flesh would remain.

There would still be life in it, but death then would be the only charity it craved.

The stake stood forty feet from the nearest tree. Tarzan coiled his rope. Then there rose suddenly above the fiendish cries of the dancing demons the awful challenge of the ape-man.

The dancers halted as though turned to stone.

The rope sped with singing whir high above the heads of the blacks. It was quite invisible in the flaring lights of the camp fires.

D'Arnot opened his eyes. A huge black, standing directly before him, lunged backward as though felled by an invisible hand.

Struggling and shrieking, his body, rolling from side to side, moved quickly toward the shadows beneath the trees.

The blacks, their eyes protruding in horror, watched spellbound.

Once beneath the trees, the body rose straight into the air, and as it disappeared into the foliage above, the

terrified negroes, screaming with fright, broke into a mad race for the village gate.

D'Arnot was left alone.

He was a brave man, but he had felt the short hairs bristle upon the nape of his neck when that uncanny cry rose upon the air.

As the writhing body of the black soared, as though by unearthly power, into the dense foliage of the forest, D'Arnot felt an icy shiver run along his spine, as though death had risen from a dark grave and laid a cold and clammy finger on his flesh.

As D'Arnot watched the spot where the body had entered the tree he heard the sounds of movement there.

The branches swayed as though under the weight of a man's body— there was a crash and the black came sprawling to earth again,—to lie very quietly where he had fallen.

Immediately after him came a white body, but this one alighted erect.

D'Arnot saw a clean-limbed young giant emerge from the shadows into the firelight and come quickly toward him.

What could it mean? Who could it be? Some new creature of torture and destruction, doubtless.

D'Arnot waited. His eyes never left the face of the advancing man. Nor did the other's frank, clear eyes waver beneath D'Arnot's fixed gaze.

D'Arnot was reassured, but still

without much hope, though he felt that that face could not mask a cruel heart.

Without a word Tarzan of the Apes cut the bonds which held the Frenchman. Weak from suffering and loss of blood, he would have fallen but for the strong arm that caught him.

He felt himself lifted from the ground. There was a sensation as of flying, and then he lost consciousness.

22. THE SEARCH PARTY

When dawn broke upon the little camp of Frenchmen in the heart of the jungle it found a sad and disheartened group.

As soon as it was light enough to see their surroundings Lieutenant Charpentier sent men in groups of three in several directions to locate the trail, and in ten minutes it was found and the expedition was hurrying back toward the beach.

It was slow work, for they bore the bodies of six dead men, two more having succumbed during the night, and several of those who were wounded required support to move even very slowly.

Charpentier had decided to return to

camp for reinforcements, and then make an attempt to track down the natives and rescue D'Arnot.

It was late in the afternoon when the exhausted men reached the clearing by the beach, but for two of them the return brought so great a happiness that all their suffering and heartbreaking grief was forgotten on the instant.

As the little party emerged from the jungle the first person that Professor Porter and Cecil Clayton saw was Jane, standing by the cabin door.

With a little cry of joy and relief she ran forward to greet them, throwing her arms about her father's neck and bursting into tears for the first time since they had been cast upon this hideous and

adventurous shore.

Professor Porter strove manfully to suppress his own emotions, but the strain upon his nerves and weakened vitality were too much for him, and at length, burying his old face in the girl's shoulder, he sobbed quietly like a tired child.

Jane led him toward the cabin, and the Frenchmen turned toward the beach from which several of their fellows were advancing to meet them.

Clayton, wishing to leave father and daughter alone, joined the sailors and remained talking with the officers until their boat pulled away toward the cruiser whither Lieutenant Charpentier was bound to report the unhappy

outcome of his adventure.

Then Clayton turned back slowly toward the cabin. His heart was filled with happiness. The woman he loved was safe.

He wondered by what manner of miracle she had been spared. To see her alive seemed almost unbelievable.

As he approached the cabin he saw Jane coming out. When she saw him she hurried forward to meet him.

"Jane!" he cried, "God has been good to us, indeed. Tell me how you escaped —what form Providence took to save you for—us."

He had never before called her by her given name. Forty-eight hours before it would have suffused Jane with a soft

glow of pleasure to have heard that name from Clayton's lips—now it frightened her.

"Mr. Clayton," she said quietly, extending her hand, "first let me thank you for your chivalrous loyalty to my dear father. He has told me how noble and self-sacrificing you have been. How can we repay you!"

Clayton noticed that she did not return his familiar salutation, but he felt no misgivings on that score. She had been through so much. This was no time to force his love upon her, he quickly realized.

"I am already repaid," he said. "Just to see you and Professor Porter both safe, well, and together again. I do not

think that I could much longer have endured the pathos of his quiet and uncomplaining grief.

"It was the saddest experience of my life, Miss Porter; and then, added to it, there was my own grief—the greatest I have ever known. But his was so hopeless—his was pitiful. It taught me that no love, not even that of a man for his wife may be so deep and terrible and self-sacrificing as the love of a father for his daughter."

The girl bowed her head. There was a question she wanted to ask, but it seemed almost sacrilegious in the face of the love of these two men and the terrible suffering they had endured while she sat laughing and happy beside a

godlike creature of the forest, eating delicious fruits and looking with eyes of love into answering eyes.

But love is a strange master, and human nature is still stranger, so she asked her question.

"Where is the forest man who went to rescue you? Why did he not return?"

"I do not understand," said Clayton. "Whom do you mean?"

"He who has saved each of us—who saved me from the gorilla."

"Oh," cried Clayton, in surprise. "It was he who rescued you? You have not told me anything of your adventure, you know."

"But the wood man," she urged.

"Have you not seen him? When we heard the shots in the jungle, very faint and far away, he left me. We had just reached the clearing, and he hurried off in the direction of the fighting. I know he went to aid you."

Her tone was almost pleading—her manner tense with suppressed emotion. Clayton could not but notice it, and he wondered, vaguely, why she was so deeply moved—so anxious to know the whereabouts of this strange creature.

Yet a feeling of apprehension of some impending sorrow haunted him, and in his breast, unknown to himself, was implanted the first germ of jealousy and suspicion of the ape-man, to whom he owed his life.

"We did not see him," he replied quietly. "He did not join us." And then after a moment of thoughtful pause: "Possibly he joined his own tribe— the men who attacked us." He did not know why he had said it, for he did not believe it.

The girl looked at him wide eyed for a moment.

"No!" she exclaimed vehemently, much too vehemently he thought. "It could not be. They were savages."

Clayton looked puzzled.

"He is a strange, half-savage creature of the jungle, Miss Porter. We know nothing of him. He neither speaks nor understands any European tongue— and his ornaments and weapons are those of

the West Coast savages."

Clayton was speaking rapidly.

"There are no other human beings than savages within hundreds of miles, Miss Porter. He must belong to the tribes which attacked us, or to some other equally savage—he may even be a cannibal."

Jane blanched.

"I will not believe it," she half whispered. "It is not true. You shall see," she said, addressing Clayton, "that he will come back and that he will prove that you are wrong. You do not know him as I do. I tell you that he is a gentleman."

Clayton was a generous and chivalrous man, but something in the

girl's breathless defense of the forest man stirred him to unreasoning jealousy, so that for the instant he forgot all that they owed to this wild demi-god, and he answered her with a half sneer upon his lip.

"Possibly you are right, Miss Porter," he said, "but I do not think that any of us need worry about our carrion-eating acquaintance. The chances are that he is some half-demented castaway who will forget us more quickly, but no more surely, than we shall forget him. He is only a beast of the jungle, Miss Porter."

The girl did not answer, but she felt her heart shrivel within her.

She knew that Clayton spoke merely what he thought, and for the first time she

began to analyze the structure which supported her newfound love, and to subject its object to a critical examination.

Slowly she turned and walked back to the cabin. She tried to imagine her wood-god by her side in the saloon of an ocean liner. She saw him eating with his hands, tearing his food like a beast of prey, and wiping his greasy fingers upon his thighs. She shuddered.

She saw him as she introduced him to her friends—uncouth, illiterate—a boor; and the girl winced.

She had reached her room now, and as she sat upon the edge of her bed of ferns and grasses, with one hand resting upon her rising and falling bosom, she

felt the hard outlines of the man's locket.

She drew it out, holding it in the palm of her hand for a moment with tear-blurred eyes bent upon it. Then she raised it to her lips, and crushing it there buried her face in the soft ferns, sobbing.

"Beast?" she murmured. "Then God make me a beast; for, man or beast, I am yours."

She did not see Clayton again that day. Esmeralda brought her supper to her, and she sent word to her father that she was suffering from the reaction following her adventure.

The next morning Clayton left early with the relief expedition in search of Lieutenant D'Arnot. There were two hundred armed men this time, with ten

officers and two surgeons, and provisions for a week.

They carried bedding and hammocks, the latter for transporting their sick and wounded.

It was a determined and angry company—a punitive expedition as well as one of relief. They reached the sight of the skirmish of the previous expedition shortly after noon, for they were now traveling a known trail and no time was lost in exploring.

From there on the elephant-track led straight to Mbonga's village. It was but two o'clock when the head of the column halted upon the edge of the clearing.

Lieutenant Charpentier, who was in command, immediately sent a portion of

his force through the jungle to the opposite side of the village. Another detachment was dispatched to a point before the village gate, while he remained with the balance upon the south side of the clearing.

It was arranged that the party which was to take its position to the north, and which would be the last to gain its station should commence the assault, and that their opening volley should be the signal for a concerted rush from all sides in an attempt to carry the village by storm at the first charge.

For half an hour the men with Lieutenant Charpentier crouched in the dense foliage of the jungle, waiting the signal. To them it seemed like hours.

They could see natives in the fields, and others moving in and out of the village gate.

At length the signal came—a sharp rattle of musketry, and like one man, an answering volley tore from the jungle to the west and to the south.

The natives in the field dropped their implements and broke madly for the palisade. The French bullets mowed them down, and the French sailors bounded over their prostrate bodies straight for the village gate.

So sudden and unexpected the assault had been that the whites reached the gates before the frightened natives could bar them, and in another minute the village street was filled with armed men

fighting hand to hand in an inextricable tangle.

For a few moments the blacks held their ground within the entrance to the street, but the revolvers, rifles and cutlasses of the Frenchmen crumpled the native spearmen and struck down the black archers with their bows halfdrawn.

Soon the battle turned to a wild rout, and then to a grim massacre; for the French sailors had seen bits of D'Arnot's uniform upon several of the black warriors who opposed them.

They spared the children and those of the women whom they were not forced to kill in self-defense, but when at length they stopped, parting, blood covered and

sweating, it was because there lived to oppose them no single warrior of all the savage village of Mbonga.

Carefully they ransacked every hut and corner of the village, but no sign of D'Arnot could they find. They questioned the prisoners by signs, and finally one of the sailors who had served in the French Congo found that he could make them understand the bastard tongue that passes for language between the whites and the more degraded tribes of the coast, but even then they could learn nothing definite regarding the fate of D'Arnot.

Only excited gestures and expressions of fear could they obtain in response to their inquiries concerning their fellow;

and at last they became convinced that these were but evidences of the guilt of these demons who had slaughtered and eaten their comrade two nights before.

At length all hope left them, and they prepared to camp for the night within the village. The prisoners were herded into three huts where they were heavily guarded. Sentries were posted at the barred gates, and finally the village was wrapped in the silence of slumber, except for the wailing of the native women for their dead.

The next morning they set out upon the return march. Their original intention had been to burn the village, but this idea was abandoned and the prisoners were left behind, weeping and moaning,

but with roofs to cover them and a palisade for refuge from the beasts of the jungle.

Slowly the expedition retraced its steps of the preceding day. Ten loaded hammocks retarded its pace. In eight of them lay the more seriously wounded, while two swung beneath the weight of the dead.

Clayton and Lieutenant Charpentier brought up the rear of the column; the Englishman silent in respect for the other's grief, for D'Arnot and Charpentier had been inseparable friends since boyhood.

Clayton could not but realize that the Frenchman felt his grief the more keenly because D'Arnot's sacrifice had been so

futile, since Jane had been rescued before D'Arnot had fallen into the hands of the savages, and again because the service in which he had lost his life had been outside his duty and for strangers and aliens; but when he spoke of it to Lieutenant Charpentier, the latter shook his head.

"No, Monsieur," he said, "D'Arnot would have chosen to die thus. I only grieve that I could not have died for him, or at least with him. I wish that you could have known him better, Monsieur. He was indeed an officer and a gentleman—a title conferred on many, but deserved by so few.

"He did not die futilely, for his death in the cause of a strange American girl

will make us, his comrades, face our ends the more bravely, however they may come to us."

Clayton did not reply, but within him rose a new respect for Frenchmen which remained undimmed ever after.

It was quite late when they reached the cabin by the beach. A single shot before they emerged from the jungle had announced to those in camp as well as on the ship that the expedition had been too late—for it had been prearranged that when they came within a mile or two of camp one shot was to be fired to denote failure, or three for success, while two would have indicated that they had found no sign of either D'Arnot or his black captors.

So it was a solemn party that awaited their coming, and few words were spoken as the dead and wounded men were tenderly placed in boats and rowed silently toward the cruiser.

Clayton, exhausted from his five days of laborious marching through the jungle and from the effects of his two battles with the blacks, turned toward the cabin to seek a mouthful of food and then the comparative ease of his bed of grasses after two nights in the jungle.

By the cabin door stood Jane.

"The poor lieutenant?" she asked. "Did you find no trace of him?"

"We were too late, Miss Porter," he replied sadly.

"Tell me. What had happened?" she

asked.

"I cannot, Miss Porter, it is too horrible."

"You do not mean that they had tortured him?" she whispered.

"We do not know what they did to him BEFORE they killed him," he answered, his face drawn with fatigue and the sorrow he felt for poor D'Arnot and he emphasized the word before.

"BEFORE they killed him! What do you mean? They are not -? They are not -?"

She was thinking of what Clayton had said of the forest man's probable relationship to this tribe and she could not frame the awful word.

"Yes, Miss Porter, they were—cannibals," he said, almost bitterly, for to him too had suddenly come the thought of the forest man, and the strange, unaccountable jealousy he had felt two days before swept over him once more.

And then in sudden brutality that was as unlike Clayton as courteous consideration is unlike an ape, he blurted out:

"When your forest god left you he was doubtless hurrying to the feast."

He was sorry ere the words were spoken though he did not know how cruelly they had cut the girl. His regret was for his baseless disloyalty to one who had saved the lives of every member of his party, and offered harm to

none.

The girl's head went high.

"There could be but one suitable reply to your assertion, Mr. Clayton," she said icily, "and I regret that I am not a man, that I might make it." She turned quickly and entered the cabin.

Clayton was an Englishman, so the girl had passed quite out of sight before he deduced what reply a man would have made.

"Upon my word," he said ruefully, "she called me a liar. And I fancy I jolly well deserved it," he added thoughtfully. "Clayton, my boy, I know you are tired out and unstrung, but that's no reason why you should make an ass of yourself. You'd better go to bed."

But before he did so he called gently to Jane upon the opposite side of the sailcloth partition, for he wished to apologize, but he might as well have addressed the Sphinx. Then he wrote upon a piece of paper and shoved it beneath the partition.

Jane saw the little note and ignored it, for she was very angry and hurt and mortified, but—she was a woman, and so eventually she picked it up and read it.

MY DEAR MISS PORTER:

I had no reason to insinuate what I did. My only excuse is that my nerves must be unstrung—which is no excuse at all.

Please try and think that I did not say

it. I am very sorry. I would not have hurt YOU, above all others in the world. Say that you forgive me. WM. CECIL CLAYTON.

"He did think it or he never would have said it," reasoned the girl, "but it cannot be true—oh, I know it is not true!"

One sentence in the letter frightened her: "I would not have hurt YOU above all others in the world."

A week ago that sentence would have filled her with delight, now it depressed her.

She wished she had never met Clayton. She was sorry that she had ever seen the forest god. No, she was glad. And there was that other note she had

found in the grass before the cabin the day after her return from the jungle, the love note signed by Tarzan of the Apes.

Who could be this new suitor? If he were another of the wild denizens of this terrible forest what might he not do to claim her?

"Esmeralda! Wake up," she cried.

"You make me so irritable, sleeping there peacefully when you know perfectly well that the world is filled with sorrow."

"Gaberelle!" screamed Esmeralda, sitting up. "What is it now? A hipponocerous? Where is he, Miss Jane?"

"Nonsense, Esmeralda, there is nothing. Go back to sleep. You are bad

enough asleep, but you are infinitely worse awake."

"Yes honey, but what's the matter with you, precious? You acts sort of disgranulated this evening."

"Oh, Esmeralda, I'm just plain ugly tonight," said the girl. "Don't pay any attention to me—that's a dear."

"Yes, honey; now you go right to sleep. Your nerves are all on edge. What with all these ripotamuses and man eating geniuses that Mister Philander been telling about—Lord, it ain't no wonder we all get nervous prosecution."

Jane crossed the little room, laughing, and kissing the faithful woman, bid Esmeralda good night.

23. BROTHER MEN

When D'Arnot regained consciousness, he found himself lying upon a bed of soft ferns and grasses beneath a little "A" shaped shelter of boughs.

At his feet an opening looked out upon a green sward, and at a little distance beyond was the dense wall of jungle and forest.

He was very lame and sore and weak, and as full consciousness returned he felt the sharp torture of many cruel wounds and the dull aching of every bone and muscle in his body as a result of the hideous beating he had received.

Even the turning of his head caused him such excruciating agony that he lay still with closed eyes for a long time.

He tried to piece out the details of his adventure prior to the time he lost consciousness to see if they would explain his present whereabouts —he wondered if he were among friends or foes.

At length he recollected the whole hideous scene at the stake, and finally recalled the strange white figure in whose arms he had sunk into oblivion.

D'Arnot wondered what fate lay in store for him now. He could neither see nor hear any signs of life about him.

The incessant hum of the jungle—the rustling of millions of leaves —the buzz of insects—the voices of the birds and monkeys seemed blended into a strangely soothing purr, as though he lay

apart, far from the myriad life whose sounds came to him only as a blurred echo.

At length he fell into a quiet slumber, nor did he awake again until afternoon.

Once more he experienced the strange sense of utter bewilderment that had marked his earlier awakening, but soon he recalled the recent past, and looking through the opening at his feet he saw the figure of a man squatting on his haunches.

The broad, muscular back was turned toward him, but, tanned though it was, D'Arnot saw that it was the back of a white man, and he thanked God.

The Frenchman called faintly. The man turned, and rising, came toward the

shelter. His face was very handsome—the handsomest, thought D'Arnot, that he had ever seen.

Stooping, he crawled into the shelter beside the wounded officer, and placed a cool hand upon his forehead.

D'Arnot spoke to him in French, but the man only shook his head— sadly, it seemed to the Frenchman.

Then D'Arnot tried English, but still the man shook his head. Italian, Spanish and German brought similar discouragement.

D'Arnot knew a few words of Norwegian, Russian, Greek, and also had a smattering of the language of one of the West Coast negro tribes—the man denied them all.

After examining D'Arnot's wounds the man left the shelter and disappeared. In half an hour he was back with fruit and a hollow gourd-like vegetable filled with water.

D'Arnot drank and ate a little. He was surprised that he had no fever. Again he tried to converse with his strange nurse, but the attempt was useless.

Suddenly the man hastened from the shelter only to return a few minutes later with several pieces of bark and—wonder of wonders—a lead pencil.

Squatting beside D'Arnot he wrote for a minute on the smooth inner surface of the bark; then he handed it to the Frenchman.

D'Arnot was astonished to see, in

plain print-like characters, a message in English:

I am Tarzan of the Apes. Who are you? Can you read this language?

D'Arnot seized the pencil—then he stopped. This strange man wrote English—evidently he was an Englishman.

"Yes," said D'Arnot, "I read English. I speak it also. Now we may talk. First let me thank you for all that you have done for me."

The man only shook his head and pointed to the pencil and the bark.

"MON DIEU!" cried D'Arnot. "If you are English why is it then that you cannot speak English?"

And then in a flash it came to him—

the man was a mute, possibly a deaf mute.

So D'Arnot wrote a message on the bark, in English.

I am Paul d'Arnot, Lieutenant in the navy of France. I thank you for what you have done for me. You have saved my life, and all that I have is yours. May I ask how it is that one who writes English does not speak it?

Tarzan's reply filled D'Arnot with still greater wonder:

I speak only the language of my tribe —the great apes who were Kerchak's; and a little of the languages of Tantor, the elephant, and Numa, the lion, and of the other folks of the jungle I understand. With a human being I have never spoken,

except once with Jane Porter, by signs. This is the first time I have spoken with another of my kind through written words.

D'Arnot was mystified. It seemed incredible that there lived upon earth a full-grown man who had never spoken with a fellow man, and still more preposterous that such a one could read and write.

He looked again at Tarzan's message —"except once, with Jane Porter." That was the American girl who had been carried into the jungle by a gorilla.

A sudden light commenced to dawn on D'Arnot—this then was the "gorilla." He seized the pencil and wrote:

Where is Jane Porter?

And Tarzan replied, below:

Back with her people in the cabin of Tarzan of the Apes.

She is not dead then? Where was she? What happened to her?

She is not dead. She was taken by Terkoz to be his wife; but Tarzan of the Apes took her away from Terkoz and killed him before he could harm her.

None in all the jungle may face Tarzan of the Apes in battle, and live. I am Tarzan of the Apes—mighty fighter.

D'Arnot wrote:

I am glad she is safe. It pains me to write, I will rest a while.

And then Tarzan:

Yes, rest. When you are well I shall

take you back to your people.

For many days D'Arnot lay upon his bed of soft ferns. The second day a fever had come and D'Arnot thought that it meant infection and he knew that he would die.

An idea came to him. He wondered why he had not thought of it before.

He called Tarzan and indicated by signs that he would write, and when Tarzan had fetched the bark and pencil, D'Arnot wrote:

Can you go to my people and lead them here? I will write a message that you may take to them, and they will follow you.

Tarzan shook his head and taking the bark, wrote:

I had thought of that—the first day; but I dared not. The great apes come often to this spot, and if they found you here, wounded and alone, they would kill you.

D'Arnot turned on his side and closed his eyes. He did not wish to die; but he felt that he was going, for the fever was mounting higher and higher. That night he lost consciousness.

For three days he was in delirium, and Tarzan sat beside him and bathed his head and hands and washed his wounds.

On the fourth day the fever broke as suddenly as it had come, but it left D'Arnot a shadow of his former self, and very weak. Tarzan had to lift him that he might drink from the gourd.

The fever had not been the result of

infection, as D'Arnot had thought, but one of those that commonly attack whites in the jungles of Africa, and either kill or leave them as suddenly as D'Arnot's had left him.

Two days later, D'Arnot was tottering about the amphitheater, Tarzan's strong arm about him to keep him from falling.

They sat beneath the shade of a great tree, and Tarzan found some smooth bark that they might converse.

D'Arnot wrote the first message:

What can I do to repay you for all that you have done for me?

And Tarzan, in reply:

Teach me to speak the language of men.

And so D'Arnot commenced at once, pointing out familiar objects and repeating their names in French, for he thought that it would be easier to teach this man his own language, since he understood it himself best of all.

It meant nothing to Tarzan, of course, for he could not tell one language from another, so when he pointed to the word man which he had printed upon a piece of bark he learned from D'Arnot that it was pronounced HOMME, and in the same way he was taught to pronounce ape, SINGE and tree, ARBRE.

He was a most eager student, and in two more days had mastered so much French that he could speak little sentences such as: "That is a tree," "this

is grass," "I am hungry," and the like, but D'Arnot found that it was difficult to teach him the French construction upon a foundation of English.

The Frenchman wrote little lessons for him in English and had Tarzan repeat them in French, but as a literal translation was usually very poor French Tarzan was often confused.

D'Arnot realized now that he had made a mistake, but it seemed too late to go back and do it all over again and force Tarzan to unlearn all that he had learned, especially as they were rapidly approaching a point where they would be able to converse.

On the third day after the fever broke Tarzan wrote a message asking D'Arnot

if he felt strong enough to be carried back to the cabin. Tarzan was as anxious to go as D'Arnot, for he longed to see Jane again.

It had been hard for him to remain with the Frenchman all these days for that very reason, and that he had unselfishly done so spoke more glowingly of his nobility of character than even did his rescuing the French officer from Mbonga's clutches.

D'Arnot, only too willing to attempt the journey, wrote:

But you cannot carry me all the distance through this tangled forest.

Tarzan laughed.

"MAIS OUI," he said, and D'Arnot laughed aloud to hear the phrase that he

used so often glide from Tarzan's tongue.

So they set out, D'Arnot marveling as had Clayton and Jane at the wondrous strength and agility of the apeman.

Mid-afternoon brought them to the clearing, and as Tarzan dropped to earth from the branches of the last tree his heart leaped and bounded against his ribs in anticipation of seeing Jane so soon again.

No one was in sight outside the cabin, and D'Arnot was perplexed to note that neither the cruiser nor the Arrow was at anchor in the bay.

An atmosphere of loneliness pervaded the spot, which caught suddenly at both men as they strode toward the cabin.

Neither spoke, yet both knew before they opened the closed door what they would find beyond.

Tarzan lifted the latch and pushed the great door in upon its wooden hinges. It was as they had feared. The cabin was deserted.

The men turned and looked at one another. D'Arnot knew that his people thought him dead; but Tarzan thought only of the woman who had kissed him in love and now had fled from him while he was serving one of her people.

A great bitterness rose in his heart. He would go away, far into the jungle and join his tribe. Never would he see one of his own kind again, nor could he bear the thought of returning to the cabin.

He would leave that forever behind him with the great hopes he had nursed there of finding his own race and becoming a man among men.

And the Frenchman? D'Arnot? What of him? He could get along as Tarzan had. Tarzan did not want to see him more. He wanted to get away from everything that might remind him of Jane.

As Tarzan stood upon the threshold brooding, D'Arnot had entered the cabin. Many comforts he saw that had been left behind. He recognized numerous articles from the cruiser—a camp oven, some kitchen utensils, a rifle and many rounds of ammunition, canned foods, blankets, two chairs and a cot —and several books and periodicals, mostly

American.

"They must intend returning," thought D'Arnot.

He walked over to the table that John Clayton had built so many years before to serve as a desk, and on it he saw two notes addressed to Tarzan of the Apes.

One was in a strong masculine hand and was unsealed. The other, in a woman's hand, was sealed.

"Here are two messages for you, Tarzan of the Apes," cried D'Arnot, turning toward the door; but his companion was not there.

D'Arnot walked to the door and looked out. Tarzan was nowhere in sight. He called aloud but there was no response.

"MON DIEU!" exclaimed D'Arnot, "he has left me. I feel it. He has gone back into his jungle and left me here alone."

And then he remembered the look on Tarzan's face when they had discovered that the cabin was empty—such a look as the hunter sees in the eyes of the wounded deer he has wantonly brought down.

The man had been hard hit—D'Arnot realized it now—but why? He could not understand.

The Frenchman looked about him. The loneliness and the horror of the place commenced to get on his nerves—already weakened by the ordeal of suffering and sickness he had passed

through.

To be left here alone beside this awful jungle—never to hear a human voice or see a human face—in constant dread of savage beasts and more terribly savage men—a prey to solitude and hopelessness. It was awful.

And far to the east Tarzan of the Apes was speeding through the middle terrace back to his tribe. Never had he traveled with such reckless speed. He felt that he was running away from himself—that by hurtling through the forest like a frightened squirrel he was escaping from his own thoughts. But no matter how fast he went he found them always with him.

He passed above the sinuous body of Sabor, the lioness, going in the opposite

direction—toward the cabin, thought Tarzan.

What could D'Arnot do against Sabor—or if Bolgani, the gorilla, should come upon him—or Numa, the lion, or cruel Sheeta?

Tarzan paused in his flight.

"What are you, Tarzan?" he asked aloud. "An ape or a man?"

"If you are an ape you will do as the apes would do—leave one of your kind to die in the jungle if it suited your whim to go elsewhere.

"If you are a man, you will return to protect your kind. You will not run away from one of your own people, because one of them has run away from you."

D'Arnot closed the cabin door. He was very nervous. Even brave men, and D'Arnot was a brave man, are sometimes frightened by solitude.

He loaded one of the rifles and placed it within easy reach. Then he went to the desk and took up the unsealed letter addressed to Tarzan.

Possibly it contained word that his people had but left the beach temporarily. He felt that it would be no breach of ethics to read this letter, so he took the enclosure from the envelope and read:

TO TARZAN OF THE APES:

We thank you for the use of your cabin, and are sorry that you did not permit us the pleasure of seeing and

thanking you in person.

We have harmed nothing, but have left many things for you which may add to your comfort and safety here in your lonely home.

If you know the strange white man who saved our lives so many times, and brought us food, and if you can converse with him, thank him, also, for his kindness.

We sail within the hour, never to return; but we wish you and that other jungle friend to know that we shall always thank you for what you did for strangers on your shore, and that we should have done infinitely more to reward you both had you given us the opportunity. Very respectfully, WM.

CECIL CLAYTON.

"`Never to return,'" muttered D'Arnot, and threw himself face downward upon the cot.

An hour later he started up listening. Something was at the door trying to enter.

D'Arnot reached for the loaded rifle and placed it to his shoulder.

Dusk was falling, and the interior of the cabin was very dark; but the man could see the latch moving from its place.

He felt his hair rising upon his scalp.

Gently the door opened until a thin crack showed something standing just beyond.

D'Arnot sighted along the blue barrel at the crack of the door—and then he pulled the trigger.

24. LOST TREASURE

When the expedition returned, following their fruitless endeavor to succor D'Arnot, Captain Dufranne was anxious to steam away as quickly as possible, and all save Jane had acquiesced.

"No," she said, determinedly, "I shall not go, nor should you, for there are two friends in that jungle who will come out of it some day expecting to find us awaiting them.

"Your officer, Captain Dufranne, is one of them, and the forest man who has saved the lives of every member of my father's party is the other.

"He left me at the edge of the jungle two days ago to hasten to the aid of my father and Mr. Clayton, as he thought,

and he has stayed to rescue Lieutenant D'Arnot; of that you may be sure.

"Had he been too late to be of service to the lieutenant he would have been back before now—the fact that he is not back is sufficient proof to me that he is delayed because Lieutenant D'Arnot is wounded, or he has had to follow his captors further than the village which your sailors attacked."

"But poor D'Arnot's uniform and all his belongings were found in that village, Miss Porter," argued the captain, "and the natives showed great excitement when questioned as to the white man's fate."

"Yes, Captain, but they did not admit that he was dead and as for his clothes

and accouterments being in their possession—why more civilized peoples than these poor savage negroes strip their prisoners of every article of value whether they intend killing them or not.

"Even the soldiers of my own dear South looted not only the living but the dead. It is strong circumstantial evidence, I will admit, but it is not positive proof."

"Possibly your forest man, himself was captured or killed by the savages," suggested Captain Dufranne.

The girl laughed.

"You do not know him," she replied, a little thrill of pride setting her nerves a-tingle at the thought that she spoke of

her own.

"I admit that he would be worth waiting for, this superman of yours," laughed the captain. "I most certainly should like to see him."

"Then wait for him, my dear captain," urged the girl, "for I intend doing so."

The Frenchman would have been a very much surprised man could he have interpreted the true meaning of the girl's words.

They had been walking from the beach toward the cabin as they talked, and now they joined a little group sitting on camp stools in the shade of a great tree beside the cabin.

Professor Porter was there, and Mr. Philander and Clayton, with Lieutenant

Charpentier and two of his brother officers, while Esmeralda hovered in the background, ever and anon venturing opinions and comments with the freedom of an old and much-indulged family servant.

The officers arose and saluted as their superior approached, and Clayton surrendered his camp stool to Jane.

"We were just discussing poor Paul's fate," said Captain Dufranne. "Miss Porter insists that we have no absolute proof of his death—nor have we. And on the other hand she maintains that the continued absence of your omnipotent jungle friend indicates that D'Arnot is still in need of his services, either because he is wounded, or still is a

prisoner in a more distant native village."

"It has been suggested," ventured Lieutenant Charpentier, "that the wild man may have been a member of the tribe of blacks who attacked our party - that he was hastening to aid THEM—his own people."

Jane shot a quick glance at Clayton.

"It seems vastly more reasonable," said Professor Porter.

"I do not agree with you," objected Mr. Philander. "He had ample opportunity to harm us himself, or to lead his people against us. Instead, during our long residence here, he has been uniformly consistent in his role of protector and provider."

"That is true," interjected Clayton, "yet we must not overlook the fact that except for himself the only human beings within hundreds of miles are savage cannibals. He was armed precisely as are they, which indicates that he has maintained relations of some nature with them, and the fact that he is but one against possibly thousands suggests that these relations could scarcely have been other than friendly."

"It seems improbable then that he is not connected with them," remarked the captain; "possibly a member of this tribe."

"Otherwise," added another of the officers, "how could he have lived a sufficient length of time among the

savage denizens of the jungle, brute and human, to have become proficient in woodcraft, or in the use of African weapons."

"You are judging him according to your own standards, gentlemen," said Jane. "An ordinary white man such as any of you—pardon me, I did not mean just that—rather, a white man above the ordinary in physique and intelligence could never, I grant you, have lived a year alone and naked in this tropical jungle; but this man not only surpasses the average white man in strength and agility, but as far transcends our trained athletes and `strong men' as they surpass a day-old babe; and his courage and ferocity in battle are those of the wild

beast."

"He has certainly won a loyal champion, Miss Porter," said Captain Dufranne, laughing. "I am sure that there be none of us here but would willingly face death a hundred times in its most terrifying forms to deserve the tributes of one even half so loyal—or so beautiful."

"You would not wonder that I defend him," said the girl, "could you have seen him as I saw him, battling in my behalf with that huge hairy brute.

"Could you have seen him charge the monster as a bull might charge a grizzly—absolutely without sign of fear or hesitation—you would have believed him more than human.

"Could you have seen those mighty

muscles knotting under the brown skin - could you have seen them force back those awful fangs—you too would have thought him invincible.

"And could you have seen the chivalrous treatment which he accorded a strange girl of a strange race, you would feel the same absolute confidence in him that I feel."

"You have won your suit, my fair pleader," cried the captain. "This court finds the defendant not guilty, and the cruiser shall wait a few days longer that he may have an opportunity to come and thank the divine Portia."

"For the Lord's sake honey," cried Esmeralda. "You all don't mean to tell ME that you're going to stay right here in

this here land of carnivable animals when you all got the opportunity to escapade on that boat? Don't you tell me THAT, honey."

"Why, Esmeralda! You should be ashamed of yourself," cried Jane. "Is this any way to show your gratitude to the man who saved your life twice?"

"Well, Miss Jane, that's all jest as you say; but that there forest man never did save us to stay here. He done save us so we all could get AWAY from here. I expect he be mighty peevish when he find we ain't got no more sense than to stay right here after he done give us the chance to get away.

"I hoped I'd never have to sleep in this here geological garden another night

and listen to all them lonesome noises that come out of that jumble after dark."

"I don't blame you a bit, Esmeralda," said Clayton, "and you certainly did hit it off right when you called them `lonesome' noises. I never have been able to find the right word for them but that's it, don't you know, lonesome noises."

"You and Esmeralda had better go and live on the cruiser," said Jane, in fine scorn. "What would you think if you HAD to live all of your life in that jungle as our forest man has done?"

"I'm afraid I'd be a blooming bounder as a wild man," laughed Clayton, ruefully. "Those noises at night make the hair on my head bristle. I suppose that I

should be ashamed to admit it, but it's the truth."

"I don't know about that," said Lieutenant Charpentier. "I never thought much about fear and that sort of thing—never tried to determine whether I was a coward or brave man; but the other night as we lay in the jungle there after poor D'Arnot was taken, and those jungle noises rose and fell around us I began to think that I was a coward indeed. It was not the roaring and growling of the big beasts that affected me so much as it was the stealthy noises—the ones that you heard suddenly close by and then listened vainly for a repetition of—the unaccountable sounds as of a great body moving almost noiselessly, and the

knowledge that you didn't KNOW how close it was, or whether it were creeping closer after you ceased to hear it? It was those noises—and the eyes.

"MON DIEU! I shall see them in the dark forever—the eyes that you see, and those that you don't see, but feel—ah, they are the worst."

All were silent for a moment, and then Jane spoke.

"And he is out there," she said, in an awe-hushed whisper. "Those eyes will be glaring at him tonight, and at your comrade Lieutenant D'Arnot. Can you leave them, gentlemen, without at least rendering them the passive succor which remaining here a few days longer might insure them?"

"Tut, tut, child," said Professor Porter. "Captain Dufranne is willing to remain, and for my part I am perfectly willing, perfectly willing—as I always have been to humor your childish whims."

"We can utilize the morrow in recovering the chest, Professor," suggested Mr. Philander.

"Quite so, quite so, Mr. Philander, I had almost forgotten the treasure," exclaimed Professor Porter. "Possibly we can borrow some men from Captain Dufranne to assist us, and one of the prisoners to point out the location of the chest."

"Most assuredly, my dear Professor, we are all yours to command," said the

captain.

And so it was arranged that on the next day Lieutenant Charpentier was to take a detail of ten men, and one of the mutineers of the Arrow as a guide, and unearth the treasure; and that the cruiser would remain for a full week in the little harbor. At the end of that time it was to be assumed that D'Arnot was truly dead, and that the forest man would not return while they remained. Then the two vessels were to leave with all the party.

Professor Porter did not accompany the treasure-seekers on the following day, but when he saw them returning empty-handed toward noon, he hastened forward to meet them—his usual preoccupied indifference entirely

vanished, and in its place a nervous and excited manner.

"Where is the treasure?" he cried to Clayton, while yet a hundred feet separated them.

Clayton shook his head.

"Gone," he said, as he neared the professor.

"Gone! It cannot be. Who could have taken it?" cried Professor Porter.

"God only knows, Professor," replied Clayton. "We might have thought the fellow who guided us was lying about the location, but his surprise and consternation on finding no chest beneath the body of the murdered Snipes were too real to be feigned. And then our spades showed us that SOMETHING

had been buried beneath the corpse, for a hole had been there and it had been filled with loose earth."

"But who could have taken it?" repeated Professor Porter.

"Suspicion might naturally fall on the men of the cruiser," said Lieutenant Charpentier, "but for the fact that sub-lieutenant Janviers here assures me that no men have had shore leave—that none has been on shore since we anchored here except under command of an officer. I do not know that you would suspect our men, but I am glad that there is now no chance for suspicion to fall on them," he concluded.

"It would never have occurred to me to suspect the men to whom we owe so

much," replied Professor Porter, graciously. "I would as soon suspect my dear Clayton here, or Mr. Philander."

The Frenchmen smiled, both officers and sailors. It was plain to see that a burden had been lifted from their minds.

"The treasure has been gone for some time," continued Clayton. "In fact the body fell apart as we lifted it, which indicates that whoever removed the treasure did so while the corpse was still fresh, for it was intact when we first uncovered it."

"There must have been several in the party," said Jane, who had joined them. "You remember that it took four men to carry it."

"By Jove!" cried Clayton. "That's

right. It must have been done by a party of blacks. Probably one of them saw the men bury the chest and then returned immediately after with a party of his friends, and carried it off."

"Speculation is futile," said Professor Porter sadly. "The chest is gone. We shall never see it again, nor the treasure that was in it."

Only Jane knew what the loss meant to her father, and none there knew what it meant to her.

Six days later Captain Dufranne announced that they would sail early on the morrow.

Jane would have begged for a further reprieve, had it not been that she too had begun to believe that her forest lover

would return no more.

In spite of herself she began to entertain doubts and fears. The reasonableness of the arguments of these disinterested French officers commenced to convince her against her will.

That he was a cannibal she would not believe, but that he was an adopted member of some savage tribe at length seemed possible to her.

She would not admit that he could be dead. It was impossible to believe that that perfect body, so filled with triumphant life, could ever cease to harbor the vital spark—as soon believe that immortality were dust.

As Jane permitted herself to harbor

these thoughts, others equally unwelcome forced themselves upon her.

If he belonged to some savage tribe he had a savage wife—a dozen of them perhaps—and wild, half-caste children. The girl shuddered, and when they told her that the cruiser would sail on the morrow she was almost glad.

It was she, though, who suggested that arms, ammunition, supplies and comforts be left behind in the cabin, ostensibly for that intangible personality who had signed himself Tarzan of the Apes, and for D'Arnot should he still be living, but really, she hoped, for her forest god—even though his feet should prove of clay.

And at the last minute she left a

message for him, to be transmitted by Tarzan of the Apes.

She was the last to leave the cabin, returning on some trivial pretext after the others had started for the boat.

She kneeled down beside the bed in which she had spent so many nights, and offered up a prayer for the safety of her primeval man, and crushing his locket to her lips she murmured:

"I love you, and because I love you I believe in you. But if I did not believe, still should I love. Had you come back for me, and had there been no other way, I would have gone into the jungle with you— forever."

25. THE OUTPOST OF THE WORLD

With the report of his gun D'Arnot saw the door fly open and the figure of a man pitch headlong within onto the cabin floor.

The Frenchman in his panic raised his gun to fire again into the prostrate form, but suddenly in the half dusk of the open door he saw that the man was white and in another instant realized that he had shot his friend and protector, Tarzan of the Apes.

With a cry of anguish D'Arnot sprang to the ape-man's side, and kneeling, lifted the latter's head in his arms—calling Tarzan's name aloud.

There was no response, and then

D'Arnot placed his ear above the man's heart. To his joy he heard its steady beating beneath.

Carefully he lifted Tarzan to the cot, and then, after closing and bolting the door, he lighted one of the lamps and examined the wound.

The bullet had struck a glancing blow upon the skull. There was an ugly flesh wound, but no signs of a fracture of the skull.

D'Arnot breathed a sigh of relief, and went about bathing the blood from Tarzan's face.

Soon the cool water revived him, and presently he opened his eyes to look in questioning surprise at D'Arnot.

The latter had bound the wound with

pieces of cloth, and as he saw that Tarzan had regained consciousness he arose and going to the table wrote a message, which he handed to the ape-man, explaining the terrible mistake he had made and how thankful he was that the wound was not more serious.

Tarzan, after reading the message, sat on the edge of the couch and laughed.

"It is nothing," he said in French, and then, his vocabulary failing him, he wrote:

You should have seen what Bolgani did to me, and Kerchak, and Terkoz, before I killed them—then you would laugh at such a little scratch.

D'Arnot handed Tarzan the two messages that had been left for him.

Tarzan read the first one through with a look of sorrow on his face. The second one he turned over and over, searching for an opening—he had never seen a sealed envelope before. At length he handed it to D'Arnot.

The Frenchman had been watching him, and knew that Tarzan was puzzled over the envelope. How strange it seemed that to a full-grown white man an envelope was a mystery. D'Arnot opened it and handed the letter back to Tarzan.

Sitting on a camp stool the ape-man spread the written sheet before him and read:

TO TARZAN OF THE APES:

Before I leave let me add my thanks

to those of Mr. Clayton for the kindness you have shown in permitting us the use of your cabin.

That you never came to make friends with us has been a great regret to us. We should have liked so much to have seen and thanked our host.

There is another I should like to thank also, but he did not come back, though I cannot believe that he is dead.

I do not know his name. He is the great white giant who wore the diamond locket upon his breast.

If you know him and can speak his language carry my thanks to him, and tell him that I waited seven days for him to return.

Tell him, also, that in my home in

America, in the city of Baltimore, there will always be a welcome for him if he cares to come.

I found a note you wrote me lying among the leaves beneath a tree near the cabin. I do not know how you learned to love me, who have never spoken to me, and I am very sorry if it is true, for I have already given my heart to another.

But know that I am always your friend, JANE PORTER.

Tarzan sat with gaze fixed upon the floor for nearly an hour. It was evident to him from the notes that they did not know that he and Tarzan of the Apes were one and the same.

"I have given my heart to another," he repeated over and over again to himself.

Then she did not love him! How could she have pretended love, and raised him to such a pinnacle of hope only to cast him down to such utter depths of despair!

Maybe her kisses were only signs of friendship. How did he know, who knew nothing of the customs of human beings?

Suddenly he arose, and, bidding D'Arnot good night as he had learned to do, threw himself upon the couch of ferns that had been Jane Porter's.

D'Arnot extinguished the lamp, and lay down upon the cot.

For a week they did little but rest, D'Arnot coaching Tarzan in French. At the end of that time the two men could converse quite easily.

One night, as they were sitting within the cabin before retiring, Tarzan turned to D'Arnot.

"Where is America?" he said.

D'Arnot pointed toward the northwest.

"Many thousands of miles across the ocean," he replied. "Why?"

"I am going there."

D'Arnot shook his head.

"It is impossible, my friend," he said.

Tarzan rose, and, going to one of the cupboards, returned with a well-thumbed geography.

Turning to a map of the world, he said:

"I have never quite understood all

this; explain it to me, please."

When D'Arnot had done so, showing him that the blue represented all the water on the earth, and the bits of other colors the continents and islands, Tarzan asked him to point out the spot where they now were.

D'Arnot did so.

"Now point out America," said Tarzan.

And as D'Arnot placed his finger upon North America, Tarzan smiled and laid his palm upon the page, spanning the great ocean that lay between the two continents.

"You see it is not so very far," he said; "scarce the width of my hand."

D'Arnot laughed. How could he make the man understand?

Then he took a pencil and made a tiny point upon the shore of Africa.

"This little mark," he said, "is many times larger upon this map than your cabin is upon the earth. Do you see now how very far it is?"

Tarzan thought for a long time.

"Do any white men live in Africa?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Where are the nearest?"

D'Arnot pointed out a spot on the shore just north of them.

"So close?" asked Tarzan, in surprise.

"Yes," said D'Arnot; "but it is not

close."

"Have they big boats to cross the ocean?"

"Yes."

"We shall go there tomorrow," announced Tarzan.

Again D'Arnot smiled and shook his head.

"It is too far. We should die long before we reached them."

"Do you wish to stay here then forever?" asked Tarzan.

"No," said D'Arnot.

"Then we shall start tomorrow. I do not like it here longer. I should rather die than remain here."

"Well," answered D'Arnot, with a

shrug, "I do not know, my friend, but that I also would rather die than remain here. If you go, I shall go with you."

"It is settled then," said Tarzan. "I shall start for America tomorrow."

"How will you get to America without money?" asked D'Arnot.

"What is money?" inquired Tarzan.

It took a long time to make him understand even imperfectly.

"How do men get money?" he asked at last.

"They work for it."

"Very well. I will work for it, then."

"No, my friend," returned D'Arnot, "you need not worry about money, nor need you work for it. I have enough

money for two—enough for twenty. Much more than is good for one man and you shall have all you need if ever we reach civilization."

So on the following day they started north along the shore. Each man carrying a rifle and ammunition, beside bedding and some food and cooking utensils.

The latter seemed to Tarzan a most useless encumbrance, so he threw his away.

"But you must learn to eat cooked food, my friend," remonstrated D'Arnot. "No civilized men eat raw flesh."

"There will be time enough when I reach civilization," said Tarzan. "I do not like the things and they only spoil the taste of good meat."

For a month they traveled north. Sometimes finding food in plenty and again going hungry for days.

They saw no signs of natives nor were they molested by wild beasts. Their journey was a miracle of ease.

Tarzan asked questions and learned rapidly. D'Arnot taught him many of the refinements of civilization—even to the use of knife and fork; but sometimes Tarzan would drop them in disgust and grasp his food in his strong brown hands, tearing it with his molars like a wild beast.

Then D'Arnot would expostulate with him, saying:

"You must not eat like a brute, Tarzan, while I am trying to make a

gentleman of you. MON DIEU! Gentlemen do not thus—it is terrible."

Tarzan would grin sheepishly and pick up his knife and fork again, but at heart he hated them.

On the journey he told D'Arnot about the great chest he had seen the sailors bury; of how he had dug it up and carried it to the gathering place of the apes and buried it there.

"It must be the treasure chest of Professor Porter," said D'Arnot. "It is too bad, but of course you did not know."

Then Tarzan recalled the letter written by Jane to her friend—the one he had stolen when they first came to his cabin, and now he knew what was in the

chest and what it meant to Jane.

"tomorrow we shall go back after it," he announced to D'Arnot.

"Go back?" exclaimed D'Arnot. "But, my dear fellow, we have now been three weeks upon the march. It would require three more to return to the treasure, and then, with that enormous weight which required, you say, four sailors to carry, it would be months before we had again reached this spot."

"It must be done, my friend," insisted Tarzan. "You may go on toward civilization, and I will return for the treasure. I can go very much faster alone."

"I have a better plan, Tarzan," exclaimed D'Arnot. "We shall go on

together to the nearest settlement, and there we will charter a boat and sail back down the coast for the treasure and so transport it easily. That will be safer and quicker and also not require us to be separated. What do you think of that plan?"

"Very well," said Tarzan. "The treasure will be there whenever we go for it; and while I could fetch it now, and catch up with you in a moon or two, I shall feel safer for you to know that you are not alone on the trail. When I see how helpless you are, D'Arnot, I often wonder how the human race has escaped annihilation all these ages which you tell me about. Why, Sabor, single handed, could exterminate a thousand of you."

D'Arnot laughed.

"You will think more highly of your genus when you have seen its armies and navies, its great cities, and its mighty engineering works. Then you will realize that it is mind, and not muscle, that makes the human animal greater than the mighty beasts of your jungle.

"Alone and unarmed, a single man is no match for any of the larger beasts; but if ten men were together, they would combine their wits and their muscles against their savage enemies, while the beasts, being unable to reason, would never think of combining against the men. Otherwise, Tarzan of the Apes, how long would you have lasted in the savage wilderness?"

"You are right, D'Arnot," replied Tarzan, "for if Kerchak had come to Tublat's aid that night at the Dum-Dum, there would have been an end of me. But Kerchak could never think far enough ahead to take advantage of any such opportunity. Even Kala, my mother, could never plan ahead. She simply ate what she needed when she needed it, and if the supply was very scarce, even though she found plenty for several meals, she would never gather any ahead.

"I remember that she used to think it very silly of me to burden myself with extra food upon the march, though she was quite glad to eat it with me, if the way chanced to be barren of

sustenance."

"Then you knew your mother, Tarzan?" asked D'Arnot, in surprise.

"Yes. She was a great, fine ape, larger than I, and weighing twice as much."

"And your father?" asked D'Arnot.

"I did not know him. Kala told me he was a white ape, and hairless like myself. I know now that he must have been a white man."

D'Arnot looked long and earnestly at his companion.

"Tarzan," he said at length, "it is impossible that the ape, Kala, was your mother. If such a thing can be, which I doubt, you would have inherited some of

the characteristics of the ape, but you have not—you are pure man, and, I should say, the offspring of highly bred and intelligent parents. Have you not the slightest clue to your past?"

"Not the slightest," replied Tarzan.

"No writings in the cabin that might have told something of the lives of its original inmates?"

"I have read everything that was in the cabin with the exception of one book which I know now to be written in a language other than English. Possibly you can read it."

Tarzan fished the little black diary from the bottom of his quiver, and handed it to his companion.

D'Arnot glanced at the title page.

"It is the diary of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, an English nobleman, and it is written in French," he said.

Then he proceeded to read the diary that had been written over twenty years before, and which recorded the details of the story which we already know—the story of adventure, hardships and sorrow of John Clayton and his wife Alice, from the day they left England until an hour before he was struck down by Kerchak.

D'Arnot read aloud. At times his voice broke, and he was forced to stop reading for the pitiful hopelessness that spoke between the lines.

Occasionally he glanced at Tarzan; but the ape-man sat upon his haunches,

like a carven image, his eyes fixed upon the ground.

Only when the little babe was mentioned did the tone of the diary alter from the habitual note of despair which had crept into it by degrees after the first two months upon the shore.

Then the passages were tinged with a subdued happiness that was even sadder than the rest.

One entry showed an almost hopeful spirit.

today our little boy is six months old. He is sitting in Alice's lap beside the table where I am writing—a happy, healthy, perfect child.

Somehow, even against all reason, I seem to see him a grown man, taking his

father's place in the world—the second John Clayton—and bringing added honors to the house of Greystoke.

There—as though to give my prophecy the weight of his endorsement—he has grabbed my pen in his chubby fists and with his ink-begrimed little fingers has placed the seal of his tiny finger prints upon the page.

And there, on the margin of the page, were the partially blurred imprints of four wee fingers and the outer half of the thumb.

When D'Arnot had finished the diary the two men sat in silence for some minutes.

"Well! Tarzan of the Apes, what think you?" asked D'Arnot. "Does not this

little book clear up the mystery of your parentage?

"Why man, you are Lord Greystoke."

"The book speaks of but one child," he replied. "Its little skeleton lay in the crib, where it died crying for nourishment, from the first time I entered the cabin until Professor Porter's party buried it, with its father and mother, beside the cabin.

"No, that was the babe the book speaks of—and the mystery of my origin is deeper than before, for I have thought much of late of the possibility of that cabin having been my birthplace. I am afraid that Kala spoke the truth," he concluded sadly.

D'Arnot shook his head. He was

unconvinced, and in his mind had sprung the determination to prove the correctness of his theory, for he had discovered the key which alone could unlock the mystery, or consign it forever to the realms of the unfathomable.

A week later the two men came suddenly upon a clearing in the forest.

In the distance were several buildings surrounded by a strong palisade. Between them and the enclosure stretched a cultivated field in which a number of negroes were working.

The two halted at the edge of the jungle.

Tarzan fitted his bow with a poisoned arrow, but D'Arnot placed a hand upon his arm.

"What would you do, Tarzan?" he asked.

"They will try to kill us if they see us," replied Tarzan. "I prefer to be the killer."

"Maybe they are friends," suggested D'Arnot.

"They are black," was Tarzan's only reply.

And again he drew back his shaft.

"You must not, Tarzan!" cried D'Arnot. "White men do not kill wantonly. MON DIEU! but you have much to learn.

"I pity the ruffian who crosses you, my wild man, when I take you to Paris. I will have my hands full keeping your

neck from beneath the guillotine."

Tarzan lowered his bow and smiled.

"I do not know why I should kill the blacks back there in my jungle, yet not kill them here. Suppose Numa, the lion, should spring out upon us, I should say, then, I presume: Good morning, Monsieur Numa, how is Madame Numa; eh?"

"Wait until the blacks spring upon you," replied D'Arnot, "then you may kill them. Do not assume that men are your enemies until they prove it."

"Come," said Tarzan, "let us go and present ourselves to be killed," and he started straight across the field, his head high held and the tropical sun beating upon his smooth, brown skin.

Behind him came D'Arnot, clothed in some garments which had been discarded at the cabin by Clayton when the officers of the French cruiser had fitted him out in more presentable fashion.

Presently one of the blacks looked up, and beholding Tarzan, turned, shrieking, toward the palisade.

In an instant the air was filled with cries of terror from the fleeing gardeners, but before any had reached the palisade a white man emerged from the enclosure, rifle in hand, to discover the cause of the commotion.

What he saw brought his rifle to his shoulder, and Tarzan of the Apes would have felt cold lead once again had not

D'Arnot cried loudly to the man with the leveled gun:

"Do not fire! We are friends!"

"Halt, then!" was the reply.

"Stop, Tarzan!" cried D'Arnot. "He thinks we are enemies."

Tarzan dropped into a walk, and together he and D'Arnot advanced toward the white man by the gate.

The latter eyed them in puzzled bewilderment.

"What manner of men are you?" he asked, in French.

"White men," replied D'Arnot. "We have been lost in the jungle for a long time."

The man had lowered his rifle and

now advanced with outstretched hand.

"I am Father Constantine of the French Mission here," he said, "and I am glad to welcome you."

"This is Monsieur Tarzan, Father Constantine," replied D'Arnot, indicating the ape-man; and as the priest extended his hand to Tarzan, D'Arnot added: "and I am Paul D'Arnot, of the French Navy."

Father Constantine took the hand which Tarzan extended in imitation of the priest's act, while the latter took in the superb physique and handsome face in one quick, keen glance.

And thus came Tarzan of the Apes to the first outpost of civilization.

For a week they remained there, and the ape-man, keenly observant, learned

much of the ways of men; meanwhile black women sewed white duck garments for himself and D'Arnot so that they might continue their journey properly clothed.

26. THE HEIGHT OF CIVILIZATION

Another month brought them to a little group of buildings at the mouth of a wide river, and there Tarzan saw many boats, and was filled with the timidity of the wild thing by the sight of many men.

Gradually he became accustomed to the strange noises and the odd ways of civilization, so that presently none might know that two short months before, this handsome Frenchman in immaculate white ducks, who laughed and chatted with the gayest of them, had been swinging naked through primeval forests to pounce upon some unwary victim, which, raw, was to fill his savage belly.

The knife and fork, so contemptuously

flung aside a month before, Tarzan now manipulated as exquisitely as did the polished D'Arnot.

So apt a pupil had he been that the young Frenchman had labored assiduously to make of Tarzan of the Apes a polished gentleman in so far as nicety of manners and speech were concerned.

"God made you a gentleman at heart, my friend," D'Arnot had said; "but we want His works to show upon the exterior also."

As soon as they had reached the little port, D'Arnot had cabled his government of his safety, and requested a three-months' leave, which had been granted.

He had also cabled his bankers for

funds, and the enforced wait of a month, under which both chafed, was due to their inability to charter a vessel for the return to Tarzan's jungle after the treasure.

During their stay at the coast town "Monsieur Tarzan" became the wonder of both whites and blacks because of several occurrences which to Tarzan seemed the merest of nothings.

Once a huge black, crazed by drink, had run amuck and terrorized the town, until his evil star had led him to where the black-haired French giant lolled upon the veranda of the hotel.

Mounting the broad steps, with brandished knife, the Negro made straight for a party of four men sitting at

a table sipping the inevitable absinthe.

Shouting in alarm, the four took to their heels, and then the black spied Tarzan.

With a roar he charged the ape-man, while half a hundred heads peered from sheltering windows and doorways to witness the butchering of the poor Frenchman by the giant black.

Tarzan met the rush with the fighting smile that the joy of battle always brought to his lips.

As the Negro closed upon him, steel muscles gripped the black wrist of the uplifted knife-hand, and a single swift wrench left the hand dangling below a broken bone.

With the pain and surprise, the

madness left the black man, and as Tarzan dropped back into his chair the fellow turned, crying with agony, and dashed wildly toward the native village.

On another occasion as Tarzan and D'Arnot sat at dinner with a number of other whites, the talk fell upon lions and lion hunting.

Opinion was divided as to the bravery of the king of beasts—some maintaining that he was an arrant coward, but all agreeing that it was with a feeling of greater security that they gripped their express rifles when the monarch of the jungle roared about a camp at night.

D'Arnot and Tarzan had agreed that his past be kept secret, and so none other

than the French officer knew of the ape-man's familiarity with the beasts of the jungle.

"Monsieur Tarzan has not expressed himself," said one of the party. "A man of his prowess who has spent some time in Africa, as I understand Monsieur Tarzan has, must have had experiences with lions—yes?"

"Some," replied Tarzan, dryly. "Enough to know that each of you are right in your judgment of the characteristics of the lions—you have met. But one might as well judge all blacks by the fellow who ran amuck last week, or decide that all whites are cowards because one has met a cowardly white.

"There is as much individuality among the lower orders, gentlemen, as there is among ourselves. Today we may go out and stumble upon a lion which is over-timid—he runs away from us. tomorrow we may meet his uncle or his twin brother, and our friends wonder why we do not return from the jungle. For myself, I always assume that a lion is ferocious, and so I am never caught off my guard."

"There would be little pleasure in hunting," retorted the first speaker, "if one is afraid of the thing he hunts."

D'Arnot smiled. Tarzan afraid!

"I do not exactly understand what you mean by fear," said Tarzan. "Like lions, fear is a different thing in different men,

but to me the only pleasure in the hunt is the knowledge that the hunted thing has power to harm me as much as I have to harm him. If I went out with a couple of rifles and a gun bearer, and twenty or thirty beaters, to hunt a lion, I should not feel that the lion had much chance, and so the pleasure of the hunt would be lessened in proportion to the increased safety which I felt."

"Then I am to take it that Monsieur Tarzan would prefer to go naked into the jungle, armed only with a jackknife, to kill the king of beasts," laughed the other, good naturedly, but with the merest touch of sarcasm in his tone.

"And a piece of rope," added Tarzan.

Just then the deep roar of a lion

sounded from the distant jungle, as though to challenge whoever dared enter the lists with him.

"There is your opportunity, Monsieur Tarzan," bantered the Frenchman.

"I am not hungry," said Tarzan simply.

The men laughed, all but D'Arnot. He alone knew that a savage beast had spoken its simple reason through the lips of the ape-man.

"But you are afraid, just as any of us would be, to go out there naked, armed only with a knife and a piece of rope," said the banterer. "Is it not so?"

"No," replied Tarzan. "Only a fool performs any act without reason."

"Five thousand francs is a reason,"

said the other. "I wager you that amount you cannot bring back a lion from the jungle under the conditions we have named—naked and armed only with a knife and a piece of rope."

Tarzan glanced toward D'Arnot and nodded his head.

"Make it ten thousand," said D'Arnot.

"Done," replied the other.

Tarzan arose.

"I shall have to leave my clothes at the edge of the settlement, so that if I do not return before daylight I shall have something to wear through the streets."

"You are not going now," exclaimed the wagerer—"at night?"

"Why not?" asked Tarzan. "Numa

walks abroad at night—it will be easier to find him."

"No," said the other, "I do not want your blood upon my hands. It will be foolhardy enough if you go forth by day."

"I shall go now," replied Tarzan, and went to his room for his knife and rope.

The men accompanied him to the edge of the jungle, where he left his clothes in a small storehouse.

But when he would have entered the blackness of the undergrowth they tried to dissuade him; and the wagerer was most insistent of all that he abandon his foolhardy venture.

"I will accede that you have won," he said, "and the ten thousand francs are yours if you will but give up this foolish

attempt, which can only end in your death."

Tarzan laughed, and in another moment the jungle had swallowed him.

The men stood silent for some moments and then slowly turned and walked back to the hotel veranda.

Tarzan had no sooner entered the jungle than he took to the trees, and it was with a feeling of exultant freedom that he swung once more through the forest branches.

This was life! Ah, how he loved it! Civilization held nothing like this in its narrow and circumscribed sphere, hemmed in by restrictions and conventionalities. Even clothes were a hindrance and a nuisance.

At last he was free. He had not realized what a prisoner he had been.

How easy it would be to circle back to the coast, and then make toward the south and his own jungle and cabin.

Now he caught the scent of Numa, for he was traveling up wind. Presently his quick ears detected the familiar sound of padded feet and the brushing of a huge, fur-clad body through the undergrowth.

Tarzan came quietly above the unsuspecting beast and silently stalked him until he came into a little patch of moonlight.

Then the quick noose settled and tightened about the tawny throat, and, as he had done it a hundred times in the past, Tarzan made fast the end to a

strong branch and, while the beast fought and clawed for freedom, dropped to the ground behind him, and leaping upon the great back, plunged his long thin blade a dozen times into the fierce heart.

Then with his foot upon the carcass of Numa, he raised his voice in the awesome victory cry of his savage tribe.

For a moment Tarzan stood irresolute, swayed by conflicting emotions of loyalty to D'Arnot and a mighty lust for the freedom of his own jungle. At last the vision of a beautiful face, and the memory of warm lips crushed to his dissolved the fascinating picture he had been drawing of his old life.

The ape-man threw the warm carcass of Numa across his shoulders and took

to the trees once more.

The men upon the veranda had sat for an hour, almost in silence.

They had tried ineffectually to converse on various subjects, and always the thing uppermost in the mind of each had caused the conversation to lapse.

"MON DIEU," said the wagerer at length, "I can endure it no longer. I am going into the jungle with my express and bring back that mad man."

"I will go with you," said one.

"And I"—"And I"—"And I," chorused the others.

As though the suggestion had broken the spell of some horrid nightmare they

hastened to their various quarters, and presently were headed toward the jungle—each one heavily armed.

"God! What was that?" suddenly cried one of the party, an Englishman, as Tarzan's savage cry came faintly to their ears.

"I heard the same thing once before," said a Belgian, "when I was in the gorilla country. My carriers said it was the cry of a great bull ape who has made a kill."

D'Arnot remembered Clayton's description of the awful roar with which Tarzan had announced his kills, and he half smiled in spite of the horror which filled him to think that the uncanny sound could have issued from a human throat—

from the lips of his friend.

As the party stood finally near the edge of the jungle, debating as to the best distribution of their forces, they were startled by a low laugh near them, and turning, beheld advancing toward them a giant figure bearing a dead lion upon its broad shoulders.

Even D'Arnot was thunderstruck, for it seemed impossible that the man could have so quickly dispatched a lion with the pitiful weapons he had taken, or that alone he could have borne the huge carcass through the tangled jungle.

The men crowded about Tarzan with many questions, but his only answer was a laughing depreciation of his feat.

To Tarzan it was as though one

should eulogize a butcher for his heroism in killing a cow, for Tarzan had killed so often for food and for self-preservation that the act seemed anything but remarkable to him. But he was indeed a hero in the eyes of these men—men accustomed to hunting big game.

Incidentally, he had won ten thousand francs, for D'Arnot insisted that he keep it all.

This was a very important item to Tarzan, who was just commencing to realize the power which lay beyond the little pieces of metal and paper which always changed hands when human beings rode, or ate, or slept, or clothed themselves, or drank, or worked, or played, or sheltered themselves from the

rain or cold or sun.

It had become evident to Tarzan that without money one must die. D'Arnot had told him not to worry, since he had more than enough for both, but the ape-man was learning many things and one of them was that people looked down upon one who accepted money from another without giving something of equal value in exchange.

Shortly after the episode of the lion hunt, D'Arnot succeeded in chartering an ancient tub for the coastwise trip to Tarzan's land- locked harbor.

It was a happy morning for them both when the little vessel weighed anchor and made for the open sea.

The trip to the beach was uneventful,

and the morning after they dropped anchor before the cabin, Tarzan, garbed once more in his jungle regalia and carrying a spade, set out alone for the amphitheater of the apes where lay the treasure.

Late the next day he returned, bearing the great chest upon his shoulder, and at sunrise the little vessel worked through the harbor's mouth and took up her northward journey.

Three weeks later Tarzan and D'Arnot were passengers on board a French steamer bound for Lyons, and after a few days in that city D'Arnot took Tarzan to Paris.

The ape-man was anxious to proceed to America, but D'Arnot insisted that he

must accompany him to Paris first, nor would he divulge the nature of the urgent necessity upon which he based his demand.

One of the first things which D'Arnot accomplished after their arrival was to arrange to visit a high official of the police department, an old friend; and to take Tarzan with him.

Adroitly D'Arnot led the conversation from point to point until the policeman had explained to the interested Tarzan many of the methods in vogue for apprehending and identifying criminals.

Not the least interesting to Tarzan was the part played by finger prints in this fascinating science.

"But of what value are these

imprints," asked Tarzan, "when, after a few years the lines upon the fingers are entirely changed by the wearing out of the old tissue and the growth of new?"

"The lines never change," replied the official. "From infancy to senility the fingerprints of an individual change only in size, except as injuries alter the loops and whorls. But if imprints have been taken of the thumb and four fingers of both hands one must needs lose all entirely to escape identification."

"It is marvelous," exclaimed D'Arnot. "I wonder what the lines upon my own fingers may resemble."

"We can soon see," replied the police officer, and ringing a bell he summoned an assistant to whom he issued a few

directions.

The man left the room, but presently returned with a little hardwood box which he placed on his superior's desk.

"Now," said the officer, "you shall have your fingerprints in a second."

He drew from the little case a square of plate glass, a little tube of thick ink, a rubber roller, and a few snowy white cards.

Squeezing a drop of ink onto the glass, he spread it back and forth with the rubber roller until the entire surface of the glass was covered to his satisfaction with a very thin and uniform layer of ink.

"Place the four fingers of your right hand upon the glass, thus," he said to

D'Arnot. "Now the thumb. That is right. Now place them in just the same position upon this card, here, no—a little to the right. We must leave room for the thumb and the fingers of the left hand. There, that's it. Now the same with the left."

"Come, Tarzan," cried D'Arnot, "let's see what your whorls look like."

Tarzan complied readily, asking many questions of the officer during the operation.

"Do fingerprints show racial characteristics?" he asked. "Could you determine, for example, solely from fingerprints whether the subject was Negro or Caucasian?"

"I think not," replied the officer.

"Could the finger prints of an ape be detected from those of a man?"

"Probably, because the ape's would be far simpler than those of the higher organism."

"But a cross between an ape and a man might show the characteristics of either progenitor?" continued Tarzan.

"Yes, I should think likely," responded the official; "but the science has not progressed sufficiently to render it exact enough in such matters. I should hate to trust its findings further than to differentiate between individuals. There it is absolute. No two people born into the world probably have ever had identical lines upon all their digits. It is very doubtful if any single fingerprint

will ever be exactly duplicated by any finger other than the one which originally made it."

"Does the comparison require much time or labor?" asked D'Arnot.

"Ordinarily but a few moments, if the impressions are distinct."

D'Arnot drew a little black book from his pocket and commenced turning the pages.

Tarzan looked at the book in surprise. How did D'Arnot come to have his book?

Presently D'Arnot stopped at a page on which were five tiny little smudges.

He handed the open book to the policeman.

"Are these imprints similar to mine or Monsieur Tarzan's or can you say that they are identical with either?" The officer drew a powerful glass from his desk and examined all three specimens carefully, making notations meanwhile upon a pad of paper.

Tarzan realized now what was the meaning of their visit to the police officer.

The answer to his life's riddle lay in these tiny marks.

With tense nerves he sat leaning forward in his chair, but suddenly he relaxed and dropped back, smiling.

D'Arnot looked at him in surprise.

"You forget that for twenty years the dead body of the child who made those

fingerprints lay in the cabin of his father, and that all my life I have seen it lying there," said Tarzan bitterly.

The policeman looked up in astonishment.

"Go ahead, captain, with your examination," said D'Arnot, "we will tell you the story later—provided Monsieur Tarzan is agreeable."

Tarzan nodded his head.

"But you are mad, my dear D'Arnot," he insisted. "Those little fingers are buried on the west coast of Africa."

"I do not know as to that, Tarzan," replied D'Arnot. "It is possible, but if you are not the son of John Clayton then how in heaven's name did you come into that God forsaken jungle where no white

man other than John Clayton had ever set foot?"

"You forget—Kala," said Tarzan.

"I do not even consider her," replied D'Arnot.

The friends had walked to the broad window overlooking the boulevard as they talked. For some time they stood there gazing out upon the busy throng beneath, each wrapped in his own thoughts.

"It takes some time to compare finger prints," thought D'Arnot, turning to look at the police officer.

To his astonishment he saw the official leaning back in his chair hastily scanning the contents of the little black diary.

D'Arnot coughed. The policeman looked up, and, catching his eye, raised his finger to admonish silence. D'Arnot turned back to the window, and presently the police officer spoke.

"Gentlemen," he said.

Both turned toward him.

"There is evidently a great deal at stake which must hinge to a greater or lesser extent upon the absolute correctness of this comparison. I therefore ask that you leave the entire matter in my hands until Monsieur Desquerc, our expert returns. It will be but a matter of a few days."

"I had hoped to know at once," said D'Arnot. "Monsieur Tarzan sails for America tomorrow."

"I will promise that you can cable him a report within two weeks," replied the officer; "but what it will be I dare not say. There are resemblances, yet —well, we had better leave it for Monsieur Desquerc to solve."

27. THE GIANT AGAIN

A taxicab drew up before an old-fashioned residence upon the outskirts of Baltimore.

A man of about forty, well built and with strong, regular features, stepped out, and paying the chauffeur dismissed him.

A moment later the passenger was entering the library of the old home.

"Ah, Mr. Canler!" exclaimed an old man, rising to greet him.

"Good evening, my dear Professor," cried the man, extending a cordial hand.

"Who admitted you?" asked the professor.

"Esmeralda."

"Then she will acquaint Jane with the fact that you are here," said the old man.

"No, Professor," replied Canler, "for I came primarily to see you."

"Ah, I am honored," said Professor Porter.

"Professor," continued Robert Canler, with great deliberation, as though carefully weighing his words, "I have come this evening to speak with you about Jane."

"You know my aspirations, and you have been generous enough to approve my suit."

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter fidgeted in his armchair. The subject always made him uncomfortable. He could not understand why. Canler was a

splendid match.

"But Jane," continued Canler, "I cannot understand her. She puts me off first on one ground and then another. I have always the feeling that she breathes a sigh of relief every time I bid her good- by."

"Tut, tut," said Professor Porter. "Tut, tut, Mr. Canler. Jane is a most obedient daughter. She will do precisely as I tell her."

"Then I can still count on your support?" asked Canler, a tone of relief marking his voice.

"Certainly, sir; certainly, sir," exclaimed Professor Porter. "How could you doubt it?"

"There is young Clayton, you know,"

suggested Canler. "He has been hanging about for months. I don't know that Jane cares for him; but beside his title they say he has inherited a very considerable estate from his father, and it might not be strange,—if he finally won her, unless—" and Canler paused.

"Tut—tut, Mr. Canler; unless—what?"

"Unless, you see fit to request that Jane and I be married at once," said Canler, slowly and distinctly.

"I have already suggested to Jane that it would be desirable," said Professor Porter sadly, "for we can no longer afford to keep up this house, and live as her associations demand."

"What was her reply?" asked Canler.

"She said she was not ready to marry anyone yet," replied Professor Porter, "and that we could go and live upon the farm in northern Wisconsin which her mother left her.

"It is a little more than self-supporting. The tenants have always made a living from it, and been able to send Jane a trifle beside, each year. She is planning on our going up there the first of the week. Philander and Mr. Clayton have already gone to get things in readiness for us."

"Clayton has gone there?" exclaimed Canler, visibly chagrined. "Why was I not told? I would gladly have gone and seen that every comfort was provided."

"Jane feels that we are already too

much in your debt, Mr. Canler," said Professor Porter.

Canler was about to reply, when the sound of footsteps came from the hall without, and Jane entered the room.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" she exclaimed, pausing on the threshold. "I thought you were alone, papa."

"It is only I, Jane," said Canler, who had risen, "won't you come in and join the family group? We were just speaking of you."

"Thank you," said Jane, entering and taking the chair Canler placed for her. "I only wanted to tell papa that Tobey is coming down from the college tomorrow to pack his books. I want you to be sure, papa, to indicate all that you can do

without until fall. Please don't carry this entire library to Wisconsin, as you would have carried it to Africa, if I had not put my foot down."

"Was Tobey here?" asked Professor Porter.

"Yes, I just left him. He and Esmeralda are exchanging religious experiences on the back porch now."

"Tut, tut, I must see him at once!" cried the professor. "Excuse me just a moment, children," and the old man hastened from the room.

As soon as he was out of earshot Canler turned to Jane.

"See here, Jane," he said bluntly. "How long is this thing going on like this? You haven't refused to marry me,

but you haven't promised either. I want to get the license tomorrow, so that we can be married quietly before you leave for Wisconsin. I don't care for any fuss or feathers, and I'm sure you don't either."

The girl turned cold, but she held her head bravely.

"Your father wishes it, you know," added Canler.

"Yes, I know."

She spoke scarcely above a whisper.

"Do you realize that you are buying me, Mr. Canler?" she said finally, and in a cold, level voice. "Buying me for a few paltry dollars? Of course you do, Robert Canler, and the hope of just such a contingency was in your mind when

you loaned papa the money for that hair-brained escapade, which but for a most mysterious circumstance would have been surprisingly successful.

"But you, Mr. Canler, would have been the most surprised. You had no idea that the venture would succeed. You are too good a businessman for that. And you are too good a businessman to loan money for buried treasure seeking, or to loan money without security—unless you had some special object in view.

"You knew that without security you had a greater hold on the honor of the Porters than with it. You knew the one best way to force me to marry you, without seeming to force me.

"You have never mentioned the loan. In any other man I should have thought that the prompting of a magnanimous and noble character. But you are deep, Mr. Robert Canler. I know you better than you think I know you.

"I shall certainly marry you if there is no other way, but let us understand each other once and for all."

While she spoke Robert Canler had alternately flushed and paled, and when she ceased speaking he arose, and with a cynical smile upon his strong face, said:

"You surprise me, Jane. I thought you had more self-control—more pride. Of course you are right. I am buying you, and I knew that you knew it, but I thought you would prefer to pretend that it was

otherwise. I should have thought your self respect and your Porter pride would have shrunk from admitting, even to yourself, that you were a bought woman. But have it your own way, dear girl," he added lightly. "I am going to have you, and that is all that interests me."

Without a word the girl turned and left the room.

Jane was not married before she left with her father and Esmeralda for her little Wisconsin farm, and as she coldly bid Robert Canler goodby as her train pulled out, he called to her that he would join them in a week or two.

At their destination they were met by Clayton and Mr. Philander in a huge touring car belonging to the former, and

quickly whirled away through the dense northern woods toward the little farm which the girl had not visited before since childhood.

The farmhouse, which stood on a little elevation some hundred yards from the tenant house, had undergone a complete transformation during the three weeks that Clayton and Mr. Philander had been there.

The former had imported a small army of carpenters and plasterers, plumbers and painters from a distant city, and what had been but a dilapidated shell when they reached it was now a cosy little two-story house filled with every modern convenience procurable in so short a time.

"Why, Mr. Clayton, what have you done?" cried Jane Porter, her heart sinking within her as she realized the probable size of the expenditure that had been made.

"S-sh," cautioned Clayton. "Don't let your father guess. If you don't tell him he will never notice, and I simply couldn't think of him living in the terrible squalor and sordidness which Mr. Philander and I found. It was so little when I would like to do so much, Jane. For his sake, please, never mention it."

"But you know that we can't repay you," cried the girl. "Why do you want to put me under such terrible obligations?"

"Don't, Jane," said Clayton sadly. "If it had been just you, believe me, I

wouldn't have done it, for I knew from the start that it would only hurt me in your eyes, but I couldn't think of that dear old man living in the hole we found here. Won't you please believe that I did it just for him and give me that little crumb of pleasure at least?"

"I do believe you, Mr. Clayton," said the girl, "because I know you are big enough and generous enough to have done it just for him—and, oh Cecil, I wish I might repay you as you deserve—as you would wish."

"Why can't you, Jane?"

"Because I love another."

"Canler?"

"No."

"But you are going to marry him. He told me as much before I left Baltimore."

The girl winced.

"I do not love him," she said, almost proudly.

"Is it because of the money, Jane?"

She nodded.

"Then am I so much less desirable than Canler? I have money enough, and far more, for every need," he said bitterly.

"I do not love you, Cecil," she said, "but I respect you. If I must disgrace myself by such a bargain with any man, I prefer that it be one I already despise. I should loathe the man to whom I sold myself without love, whomsoever he

might be. You will be happier," she concluded, "alone— with my respect and friendship, than with me and my contempt."

He did not press the matter further, but if ever a man had murder in his heart it was William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke, when, a week later, Robert Canler drew up before the farmhouse in his purring six cylinder.

A week passed; a tense, uneventful, but uncomfortable week for all the inmates of the little Wisconsin farmhouse.

Canler was insistent that Jane marry him at once.

At length she gave in from sheer loathing of the continued and hateful

importuning.

It was agreed that on the morrow Canler was to drive to town and bring back the license and a minister.

Clayton had wanted to leave as soon as the plan was announced, but the girl's tired, hopeless look kept him. He could not desert her.

Something might happen yet, he tried to console himself by thinking. And in his heart, he knew that it would require but a tiny spark to turn his hatred for Canler into the blood lust of the killer.

Early the next morning Canler set out for town.

In the east smoke could be seen lying low over the forest, for a fire had been raging for a week not far from them, but

the wind still lay in the west and no danger threatened them.

About noon Jane started off for a walk. She would not let Clayton accompany her. She wanted to be alone, she said, and he respected her wishes.

In the house Professor Porter and Mr. Philander were immersed in an absorbing discussion of some weighty scientific problem. Esmeralda dozed in the kitchen, and Clayton, heavy-eyed after a sleepless night, threw himself down upon the couch in the living room and soon dropped into a fitful slumber.

To the east the black smoke clouds rose higher into the heavens, suddenly they eddied, and then commenced to drift rapidly toward the west.

On and on they came. The inmates of the tenant house were gone, for it was market day, and none was there to see the rapid approach of the fiery demon.

Soon the flames had spanned the road to the south and cut off Canler's return. A little fluctuation of the wind now carried the path of the forest fire to the north, then blew back and the flames nearly stood still as though held in leash by some master hand.

Suddenly, out of the northeast, a great black car came careening down the road.

With a jolt it stopped before the cottage, and a black-haired giant leaped out to run up onto the porch. Without a pause he rushed into the house. On the couch lay Clayton. The man started in

surprise, but with a bound was at the side of the sleeping man.

Shaking him roughly by the shoulder, he cried:

"My God, Clayton, are you all mad here? Don't you know you are nearly surrounded by fire? Where is Miss Porter?"

Clayton sprang to his feet. He did not recognize the man, but he understood the words and was upon the veranda in a bound.

"Scott!" he cried, and then, dashing back into the house, "Jane! Jane! where are you?"

In an instant Esmeralda, Professor Porter and Mr. Philander had joined the two men.

"Where is Miss Jane?" cried Clayton, seizing Esmeralda by the shoulders and shaking her roughly.

"Oh, Gaberelle, Mister Clayton, she done gone for a walk."

"Hasn't she come back yet?" and, without waiting for a reply, Clayton dashed out into the yard, followed by the others. "Which way did she go?" cried the black-haired giant of Esmeralda.

"Down that road," cried the frightened woman, pointing toward the south where a mighty wall of roaring flames shut out the view.

"Put these people in the other car," shouted the stranger to Clayton. "I saw one as I drove up—and get them out of here by the north road.

"Leave my car here. If I find Miss Porter we shall need it. If I don't, no one will need it. Do as I say," as Clayton hesitated, and then they saw the lithe figure bound away cross the clearing toward the northwest where the forest still stood, untouched by flame.

In each rose the unaccountable feeling that a great responsibility had been raised from their shoulders; a kind of implicit confidence in the power of the stranger to save Jane if she could be saved.

"Who was that?" asked Professor Porter.

"I do not know," replied Clayton. "He called me by name and he knew Jane, for he asked for her. And he called

Esmeralda by name."

"There was something most startlingly familiar about him," exclaimed Mr. Philander, "And yet, bless me, I know I never saw him before."

"Tut, tut!" cried Professor Porter. "Most remarkable! Who could it have been, and why do I feel that Jane is safe, now that he has set out in search of her?"

"I can't tell you, Professor," said Clayton soberly, "but I know I have the same uncanny feeling."

"But come," he cried, "we must get out of here ourselves, or we shall be shut off," and the party hastened toward Clayton's car.

When Jane turned to retrace her steps homeward, she was alarmed to note how

near the smoke of the forest fire seemed, and as she hastened onward her alarm became almost a panic when she perceived that the rushing flames were rapidly forcing their way between herself and the cottage.

At length she was compelled to turn into the dense thicket and attempt to force her way to the west in an effort to circle around the flames and reach the house.

In a short time the futility of her attempt became apparent and then her one hope lay in retracing her steps to the road and flying for her life to the south toward the town.

The twenty minutes that it took her to regain the road was all that had been

needed to cut off her retreat as effectually as her advance had been cut off before.

A short run down the road brought her to a horrified stand, for there before her was another wall of flame. An arm of the main conflagration had shot out a half mile south of its parent to embrace this tiny strip of road in its implacable clutches.

Jane knew that it was useless again to attempt to force her way through the undergrowth.

She had tried it once, and failed. Now she realized that it would be but a matter of minutes ere the whole space between the north and the south would be a seething mass of billowing flames.

Calmly the girl kneeled down in the dust of the roadway and prayed for strength to meet her fate bravely, and for the delivery of her father and her friends from death.

Suddenly she heard her name being called aloud through the forest:

"Jane! Jane Porter!" It rang strong and clear, but in a strange voice.

"Here!" she called in reply. "Here! In the roadway!"

Then through the branches of the trees she saw a figure swinging with the speed of a squirrel.

A veering of the wind blew a cloud of smoke about them and she could no longer see the man who was speeding toward her, but suddenly she felt a great

arm about her. Then she was lifted up, and she felt the rushing of the wind and the occasional brush of a branch as she was borne along.

She opened her eyes.

Far below her lay the undergrowth and the hard earth.

About her was the waving foliage of the forest.

From tree to tree swung the giant figure which bore her, and it seemed to Jane that she was living over in a dream the experience that had been hers in that far African jungle.

Oh, if it were but the same man who had borne her so swiftly through the tangled verdure on that other day! but that was impossible! Yet who else in all

the world was there with the strength and agility to do what this man was now doing?

She stole a sudden glance at the face close to hers, and then she gave a little frightened gasp. It was he!

"My forest man!" she murmured, "No, I must be delirious!"

"Yes, your man, Jane Porter. Your savage, primeval man come out of the jungle to claim his mate—the woman who ran away from him," he added almost fiercely.

"I did not run away," she whispered. "I would only consent to leave when they had waited a week for you to return."

They had come to a point beyond the

fire now, and he had turned back to the clearing.

Side by side they were walking toward the cottage. The wind had changed once more and the fire was burning back upon itself—another hour like that and it would be burned out.

"Why did you not return?" she asked.

"I was nursing D'Arnot. He was badly wounded."

"Ah, I knew it!" she exclaimed.

"They said you had gone to join the blacks—that they were your people."

He laughed.

"But you did not believe them, Jane?"

"No;—what shall I call you?" she asked. "What is your name?"

"I was Tarzan of the Apes when you first knew me," he said.

"Tarzan of the Apes!" she cried —"and that was your note I answered when I left?"

"Yes, whose did you think it was?"

"I did not know; only that it could not be yours, for Tarzan of the Apes had written in English, and you could not understand a word of any language."

Again he laughed.

"It is a long story, but it was I who wrote what I could not speak— and now D'Arnot has made matters worse by teaching me to speak French instead of English.

"Come," he added, "jump into my car,

we must overtake your father, they are only a little way ahead."

As they drove along, he said:

"Then when you said in your note to Tarzan of the Apes that you loved another—you might have meant me?"

"I might have," she answered, simply.

"But in Baltimore—Oh, how I have searched for you—they told me you would possibly be married by now. That a man named Canler had come up here to wed you. Is that true?"

"Yes."

"Do you love him?"

"No."

"Do you love me?"

She buried her face in her hands.

"I am promised to another. I cannot answer you, Tarzan of the Apes," she cried.

"You have answered. Now, tell me why you would marry one you do not love."

"My father owes him money."

Suddenly there came back to Tarzan the memory of the letter he had read - and the name Robert Canler and the hinted trouble which he had been unable to understand then.

He smiled.

"If your father had not lost the treasure you would not feel forced to keep your promise to this man Canler?"

"I could ask him to release me."

"And if he refused?"

"I have given my promise."

He was silent for a moment. The car was plunging along the uneven road at a reckless pace, for the fire showed threateningly at their right, and another change of the wind might sweep it on with raging fury across this one avenue of escape.

Finally they passed the danger point, and Tarzan reduced their speed.

"Suppose I should ask him?" ventured Tarzan.

"He would scarcely accede to the demand of a stranger," said the girl. "Especially one who wanted me himself."

"Terkoz did," said Tarzan, grimly.

Jane shuddered and looked fearfully up at the giant figure beside her, for she knew that he meant the great anthropoid he had killed in her defense.

"This is not the African jungle," she said. "You are no longer a savage beast. You are a gentleman, and gentlemen do not kill in cold blood."

"I am still a wild beast at heart," he said, in a low voice, as though to himself.

Again they were silent for a time.

"Jane," said the man, at length, "if you were free, would you marry me?"

She did not reply at once, but he waited patiently.

The girl was trying to collect her thoughts.

What did she know of this strange creature at her side? What did he know of himself? Who was he? Who, his parents?

Why, his very name echoed his mysterious origin and his savage life.

He had no name. Could she be happy with this jungle waif? Could she find anything in common with a husband whose life had been spent in the tree tops of an African wilderness, frolicking and fighting with fierce anthropoids; tearing his food from the quivering flank of fresh-killed prey, sinking his strong teeth into raw flesh, and tearing away his portion while his mates growled and

fought about him for their share?

Could he ever rise to her social sphere? Could she bear to think of sinking to his? Would either be happy in such a horrible misalliance?

"You do not answer," he said. "Do you shrink from wounding me?"

"I do not know what answer to make," said Jane sadly. "I do not know my own mind."

"You do not love me, then?" he asked, in a level tone.

"Do not ask me. You will be happier without me. You were never meant for the formal restrictions and conventionalities of society—civilization would become irksome to you, and in a little while you would long

for the freedom of your old life—a life to which I am as totally unfitted as you to mine."

"I think I understand you," he replied quietly. "I shall not urge you, for I would rather see you happy than to be happy myself. I see now that you could not be happy with—an ape."

There was just the faintest tinge of bitterness in his voice.

"Don't," she remonstrated. "Don't say that. You do not understand."

But before she could go on a sudden turn in the road brought them into the midst of a little hamlet.

Before them stood Clayton's car surrounded by the party he had brought from the cottage.

28. CONCLUSION

At the sight of Jane, cries of relief and delight broke from every lip, and as Tarzan's car stopped beside the other, Professor Porter caught his daughter in his arms.

For a moment no one noticed Tarzan, sitting silently in his seat.

Clayton was the first to remember, and, turning, held out his hand.

"How can we ever thank you?" he exclaimed. "You have saved us all. You called me by name at the cottage, but I do not seem to recall yours, though there is something very familiar about you. It is as though I had known you well under very different conditions a long time ago."

Tarzan smiled as he took the proffered hand.

"You are quite right, Monsieur Clayton," he said, in French. "You will pardon me if I do not speak to you in English. I am just learning it, and while I understand it fairly well I speak it very poorly."

"But who are you?" insisted Clayton, speaking in French this time himself.

"Tarzan of the Apes."

Clayton started back in surprise.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "It is true."

And Professor Porter and Mr. Philander pressed forward to add their thanks to Clayton's, and to voice their surprise and pleasure at seeing their

jungle friend so far from his savage home.

The party now entered the modest little hostelry, where Clayton soon made arrangements for their entertainment.

They were sitting in the little, stuffy parlor when the distant chugging of an approaching automobile caught their attention.

Mr. Philander, who was sitting near the window, looked out as the car drew in sight, finally stopping beside the other automobiles.

"Bless me!" said Mr. Philander, a shade of annoyance in his tone. "It is Mr. Canler. I had hoped, er—I had thought or —er—how very happy we should be that he was not caught in the fire," he

ended lamely.

"Tut, tut! Mr. Philander," said Professor Porter. "Tut, tut! I have often admonished my pupils to count ten before speaking. Were I you, Mr. Philander, I should count at least a thousand, and then maintain a discreet silence."

"Bless me, yes!" acquiesced Mr. Philander. "But who is the clerical appearing gentleman with him?"

Jane blanched.

Clayton moved uneasily in his chair.

Professor Porter removed his spectacles nervously, and breathed upon them, but replaced them on his nose without wiping.

The ubiquitous Esmeralda grunted.

Only Tarzan did not comprehend.

Presently Robert Canler burst into the room.

"Thank God!" he cried. "I feared the worst, until I saw your car, Clayton. I was cut off on the south road and had to go away back to town, and then strike east to this road. I thought we'd never reach the cottage."

No one seemed to enthuse much. Tarzan eyed Robert Canler as Sabor eyes her prey.

Jane glanced at him and coughed nervously.

"Mr. Canler," she said, "this is Monsieur Tarzan, an old friend."

Canler turned and extended his hand. Tarzan rose and bowed as only D'Arnot could have taught a gentleman to do it, but he did not seem to see Canler's hand.

Nor did Canler appear to notice the oversight.

"This is the Reverend Mr. Tousley, Jane," said Canler, turning to the clerical party behind him. "Mr. Tousley, Miss Porter."

Mr. Tousley bowed and beamed.

Canler introduced him to the others.

"We can have the ceremony at once, Jane," said Canler. "Then you and I can catch the midnight train in town."

Tarzan understood the plan instantly. He glanced out of half- closed eyes at

Jane, but he did not move.

The girl hesitated. The room was tense with the silence of taut nerves.

All eyes turned toward Jane, awaiting her reply.

"Can't we wait a few days?" she asked. "I am all unstrung. I have been through so much today."

Canler felt the hostility that emanated from each member of the party. It made him angry.

"We have waited as long as I intend to wait," he said roughly. "You have promised to marry me. I shall be played with no longer. I have the license and here is the preacher. Come Mr. Tousley; come Jane. There are plenty of witnesses—more than enough," he added

with a disagreeable inflection; and taking Jane Porter by the arm, he started to lead her toward the waiting minister.

But scarcely had he taken a single step ere a heavy hand closed upon his arm with a grip of steel.

Another hand shot to his throat and in a moment he was being shaken high above the floor, as a cat might shake a mouse.

Jane turned in horrified surprise toward Tarzan.

And, as she looked into his face, she saw the crimson band upon his forehead that she had seen that other day in far distant Africa, when Tarzan of the Apes had closed in mortal combat with the great anthropoid - Terkoz.

She knew that murder lay in that savage heart, and with a little cry of horror she sprang forward to plead with the ape-man. But her fears were more for Tarzan than for Canler. She realized the stern retribution which justice metes to the murderer.

Before she could reach them, however, Clayton had jumped to Tarzan's side and attempted to drag Canler from his grasp.

With a single sweep of one mighty arm the Englishman was hurled across the room, and then Jane laid a firm white hand upon Tarzan's wrist, and looked up into his eyes.

"For my sake," she said.

The grasp upon Canler's throat

relaxed.

Tarzan looked down into the beautiful face before him.

"Do you wish this to live?" he asked in surprise.

"I do not wish him to die at your hands, my friend," she replied. "I do not wish you to become a murderer."

Tarzan removed his hand from Canler's throat.

"Do you release her from her promise?" he asked. "It is the price of your life."

Canler, gasping for breath, nodded.

"Will you go away and never molest her further?"

Again the man nodded his head, his

face distorted by fear of the death that had been so close.

Tarzan released him, and Canler staggered toward the door. In another moment he was gone, and the terror-stricken preacher with him.

Tarzan turned toward Jane.

"May I speak with you for a moment, alone," he asked.

The girl nodded and started toward the door leading to the narrow veranda of the little hotel. She passed out to await Tarzan and so did not hear the conversation which followed.

"Wait," cried Professor Porter, as Tarzan was about to follow.

The professor had been stricken dumb

with surprise by the rapid developments of the past few minutes.

"Before we go further, sir, I should like an explanation of the events which have just transpired. By what right, sir, did you interfere between my daughter and Mr. Canler? I had promised him her hand, sir, and regardless of our personal likes or dislikes, sir, that promise must be kept."

"I interfered, Professor Porter," replied Tarzan, "because your daughter does not love Mr. Canler—she does not wish to marry him. That is enough for me to know."

"You do not know what you have done," said Professor Porter. "Now he will doubtless refuse to marry her."

"He most certainly will," said Tarzan, emphatically.

"And further," added Tarzan, "you need not fear that your pride will suffer, Professor Porter, for you will be able to pay the Canler person what you owe him the moment you reach home."

"Tut, tut, sir!" exclaimed Professor Porter. "What do you mean, sir?"

"Your treasure has been found," said Tarzan.

"What—what is that you are saying?" cried the professor. "You are mad, man. It cannot be."

"It is, though. It was I who stole it, not knowing either its value or to whom it belonged. I saw the sailors bury it, and, ape- like, I had to dig it up and bury it

again elsewhere. When D'Arnot told me what it was and what it meant to you I returned to the jungle and recovered it. It had caused so much crime and suffering and sorrow that D'Arnot thought it best not to attempt to bring the treasure itself on here, as had been my intention, so I have brought a letter of credit instead.

"Here it is, Professor Porter," and Tarzan drew an envelope from his pocket and handed it to the astonished professor, "two hundred and forty-one thousand dollars. The treasure was most carefully appraised by experts, but lest there should be any question in your mind, D'Arnot himself bought it and is holding it for you, should you prefer the treasure to the credit."

"To the already great burden of the obligations we owe you, sir," said Professor Porter, with trembling voice, "is now added this greatest of all services. You have given me the means to save my honor."

Clayton, who had left the room a moment after Canler, now returned.

"Pardon me," he said. "I think we had better try to reach town before dark and take the first train out of this forest. A native just rode by from the north, who reports that the fire is moving slowly in this direction."

This announcement broke up further conversation, and the entire party went out to the waiting automobiles.

Clayton, with Jane, the professor and

Esmeralda occupied Clayton's car, while Tarzan took Mr. Philander in with him.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Philander, as the car moved off after Clayton. "Who would ever have thought it possible! The last time I saw you you were a veritable wild man, skipping about among the branches of a tropical African forest, and now you are driving me along a Wisconsin road in a French automobile. Bless me! But it is most remarkable."

"Yes," assented Tarzan, and then, after a pause, "Mr. Philander, do you recall any of the details of the finding and burying of three skeletons found in my cabin beside that African jungle?"

"Very distinctly, sir, very distinctly,"

replied Mr. Philander.

"Was there anything peculiar about any of those skeletons?"

Mr. Philander eyed Tarzan narrowly.

"Why do you ask?"

"It means a great deal to me to know," replied Tarzan. "Your answer may clear up a mystery. It can do no worse, at any rate, than to leave it still a mystery. I have been entertaining a theory concerning those skeletons for the past two months, and I want you to answer my question to the best of your knowledge—were the three skeletons you buried all human skeletons?"

"No," said Mr. Philander, "the smallest one, the one found in the crib, was the skeleton of an anthropoid ape."

"Thank you," said Tarzan.

In the car ahead, Jane was thinking fast and furiously. She had felt the purpose for which Tarzan had asked a few words with her, and she knew that she must be prepared to give him an answer in the very near future.

He was not the sort of person one could put off, and somehow that very thought made her wonder if she did not really fear him.

And could she love where she feared?

She realized the spell that had been upon her in the depths of that far-off jungle, but there was no spell of enchantment now in prosaic Wisconsin.

Nor did the immaculate young

Frenchman appeal to the primal woman in her, as had the stalwart forest god.

Did she love him? She did not know —now.

She glanced at Clayton out of the corner of her eye. Was not here a man trained in the same school of environment in which she had been trained —a man with social position and culture such as she had been taught to consider as the prime essentials to congenial association?

Did not her best judgment point to this young English nobleman, whose love she knew to be of the sort a civilized woman should crave, as the logical mate for such as herself?

Could she love Clayton? She could

see no reason why she could not. Jane was not coldly calculating by nature, but training, environment and heredity had all combined to teach her to reason even in matters of the heart.

That she had been carried off her feet by the strength of the young giant when his great arms were about her in the distant African forest, and again today, in the Wisconsin woods, seemed to her only attributable to a temporary mental reversion to type on her part—to the psychological appeal of the primeval man to the primeval woman in her nature.

If he should never touch her again, she reasoned, she would never feel attracted toward him. She had not loved him, then.

It had been nothing more than a passing hallucination, super-induced by excitement and by personal contact.

Excitement would not always mark their future relations, should she marry him, and the power of personal contact eventually would be dulled by familiarity.

Again she glanced at Clayton. He was very handsome and every inch a gentleman. She should be very proud of such a husband.

And then he spoke—a minute sooner or a minute later might have made all the difference in the world to three lives—but chance stepped in and pointed out to Clayton the psychological moment.

"You are free now, Jane," he said.

"Won't you say yes—I will devote my life to making you very happy."

"Yes," she whispered.

That evening in the little waiting room at the station Tarzan caught Jane alone for a moment.

"You are free now, Jane," he said, "and _I_ have come across the ages out of the dim and distant past from the lair of the primeval man to claim you - for your sake I have become a civilized man—for your sake I have crossed oceans and continents—for your sake I will be whatever you will me to be. I can make you happy, Jane, in the life you know and love best. Will you marry me?"

For the first time she realized the depths of the man's love—all that he had

accomplished in so short a time solely for love of her. Turning her head she buried her face in her arms.

What had she done? Because she had been afraid she might succumb to the pleas of this giant, she had burned her bridges behind her—in her groundless apprehension that she might make a terrible mistake, she had made a worse one.

And then she told him all—told him the truth word by word, without attempting to shield herself or condone her error.

"What can we do?" he asked. "You have admitted that you love me. You know that I love you; but I do not know the ethics of society by which you are

governed. I shall leave the decision to you, for you know best what will be for your eventual welfare."

"I cannot tell him, Tarzan," she said. "He too, loves me, and he is a good man. I could never face you nor any other honest person if I repudiated my promise to Mr. Clayton. I shall have to keep it—and you must help me bear the burden, though we may not see each other again after tonight."

The others were entering the room now and Tarzan turned toward the little window.

But he saw nothing outside—within he saw a patch of greensward surrounded by a matted mass of gorgeous tropical plants and flowers,

and, above, the waving foliage of mighty trees, and, over all, the blue of an equatorial sky.

In the center of the greensward a young woman sat upon a little mound of earth, and beside her sat a young giant. They ate pleasant fruit and looked into each other's eyes and smiled. They were very happy, and they were all alone.

His thoughts were broken in upon by the station agent who entered asking if there was a gentleman by the name of Tarzan in the party.

"I am Monsieur Tarzan," said the ape-man.

"Here is a message for you, forwarded from Baltimore; it is a cablegram from Paris."

Tarzan took the envelope and tore it open. The message was from D'Arnot.

It read:

Fingerprints prove you Greystoke. Congratulations. D'ARNOT.

As Tarzan finished reading, Clayton entered and came toward him with extended hand.

Here was the man who had Tarzan's title, and Tarzan's estates, and was going to marry the woman whom Tarzan loved —the woman who loved Tarzan. A single word from Tarzan would make a great difference in this man's life.

It would take away his title and his lands and his castles, and—it would take them away from Jane Porter also. "I say, old man," cried Clayton, "I haven't had a

chance to thank you for all you've done for us. It seems as though you had your hands full saving our lives in Africa and here.

"I'm awfully glad you came on here. We must get better acquainted. I often thought about you, you know, and the remarkable circumstances of your environment.

"If it's any of my business, how the devil did you ever get into that bally jungle?"

"I was born there," said Tarzan, quietly. "My mother was an Ape, and of course she couldn't tell me much about it. I never knew who my father was."

THE END

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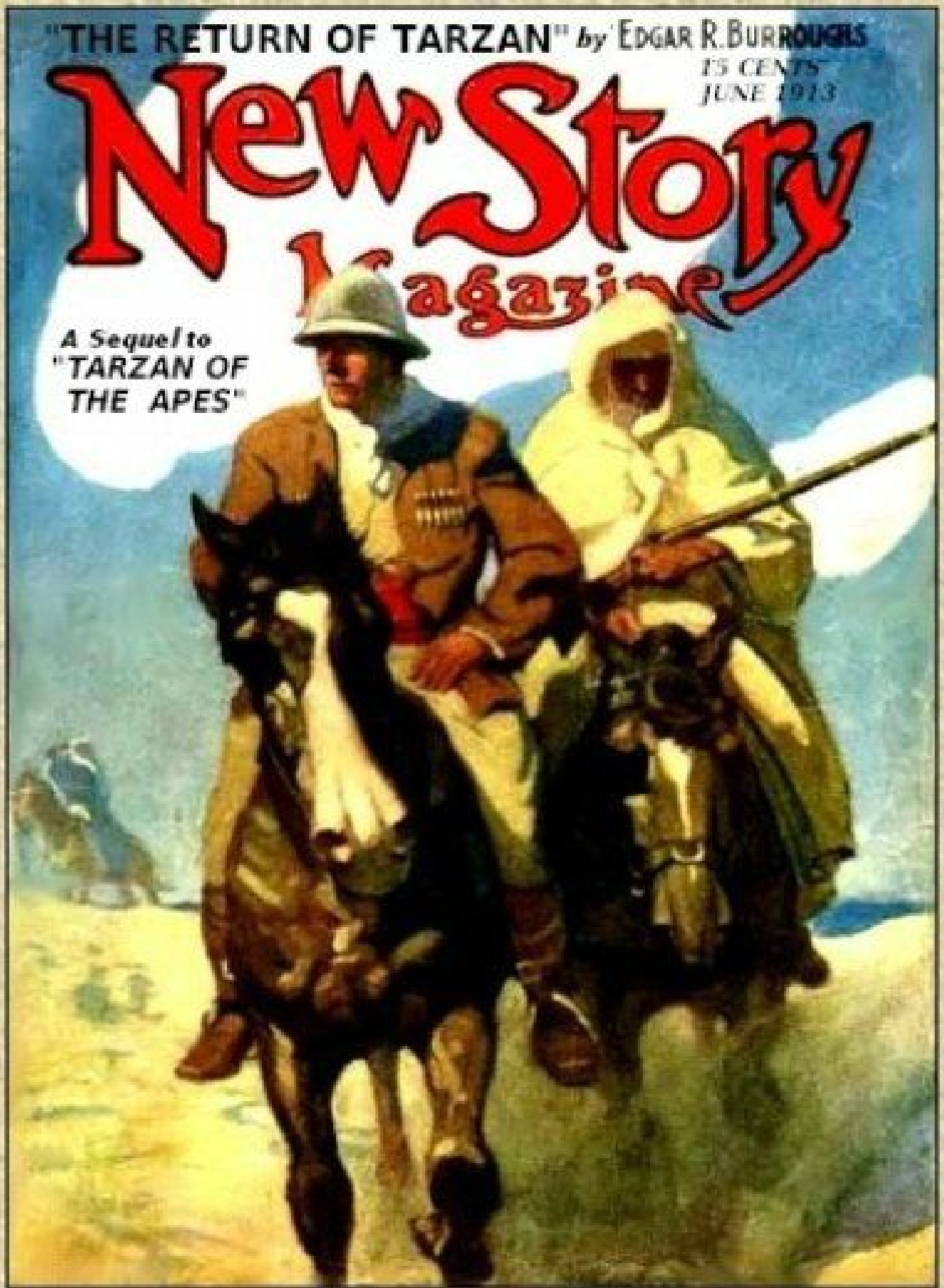

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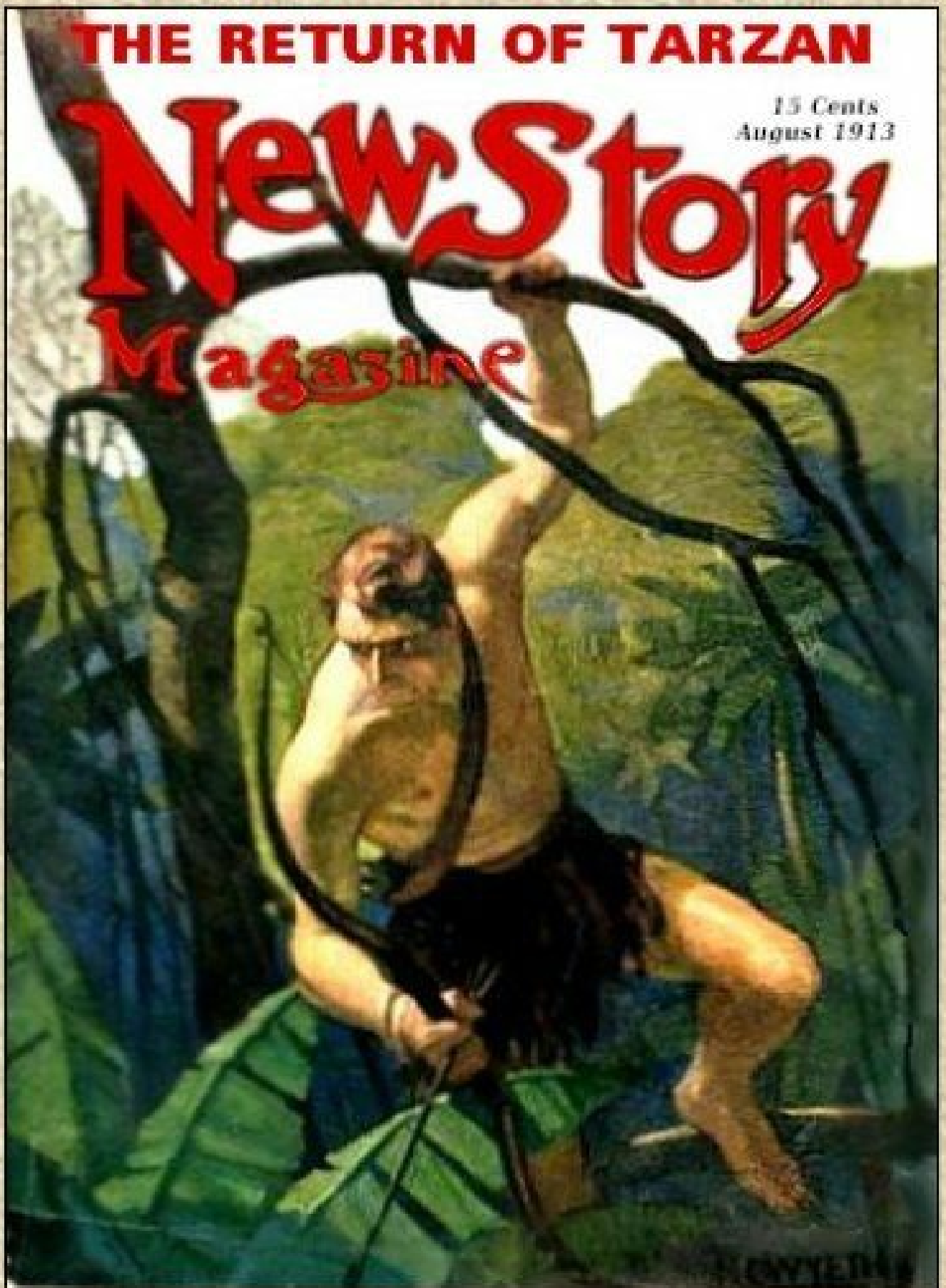

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
THE RETURN OF TARZAN
BOOK 2 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

Serialized in *New Story Magazine,* June—December 1913
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1. THE AFFAIR ON THE LINER

"Magnifique!" ejaculated the Countess de Coude, beneath her breath.

"Eh?" questioned the count, turning toward his young wife. "What is it that is magnificent?" and the count bent his eyes in various directions in quest of the object of her admiration.

"Oh, nothing at all, my dear," replied the countess, a slight flush momentarily coloring her already pink cheek. "I was but recalling with admiration those stupendous skyscrapers, as they call them, of New York," and the fair countess settled herself more comfortably in her steamer chair, and resumed the magazine which "nothing at all" had caused her to let fall upon her

lap.

Her husband again buried himself in his book, but not without a mild wonderment that three days out from New York his countess should suddenly have realized an admiration for the very buildings she had but recently characterized as horrid.

Presently the count put down his book. "It is very tiresome, Olga," he said. "I think that I shall hunt up some others who may be equally bored, and see if we cannot find enough for a game of cards."

"You are not very gallant, my husband," replied the young woman, smiling, "but as I am equally bored I can forgive you. Go and play at your

tiresome old cards, then, if you will." When he had gone she let her eyes wander slyly to the figure of a tall young man stretched lazily in a chair not far distant.

"Magnifique!" she breathed once more.

The Countess Olga de Coude was twenty. Her husband forty. She was a very faithful and loyal wife, but as she had had nothing whatever to do with the selection of a husband, it is not at all unlikely that she was not wildly and passionately in love with the one that fate and her titled Russian father had selected for her. However, simply because she was surprised into a tiny exclamation of approval at sight of a

splendid young stranger it must not be inferred therefrom that her thoughts were in any way disloyal to her spouse.

She merely admired, as she might have admired a particularly fine specimen of any species. Furthermore, the young man was unquestionably good to look at.

As her furtive glance rested upon his profile he rose to leave the deck. The Countess de Coude beckoned to a passing steward. "Who is that gentleman?" she asked.

"He is booked, madam, as Monsieur Tarzan, of Africa," replied the steward.

"Rather a large estate," thought the girl, but now her interest was still further aroused.

As Tarzan walked slowly toward the smoking-room he came unexpectedly upon two men whispering excitedly just without. He would have vouchsafed them not even a passing thought but for the strangely guilty glance that one of them shot in his direction. They reminded Tarzan of melodramatic villains he had seen at the theaters in Paris.

Both were very dark, and this, in connection with the shrugs and stealthy glances that accompanied their palpable intriguing, lent still greater force to the similarity.

Tarzan entered the smoking-room, and sought a chair a little apart from the others who were there. He felt in no

mood for conversation, and as he sipped his absinth he let his mind run rather sorrowfully over the past few weeks of his life. Time and again he had wondered if he had acted wisely in renouncing his birthright to a man to whom he owed nothing. It is true that he liked Clayton, but—ah, but that was not the question. It was not for William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke, that he had denied his birth. It was for the woman whom both he and Clayton had loved, and whom a strange freak of fate had given to Clayton instead of to him.

That she loved him made the thing doubly difficult to bear, yet he knew that he could have done nothing less than he did do that night within the little railway

station in the far Wisconsin woods.

To him her happiness was the first consideration of all, and his brief experience with civilization and civilized men had taught him that without money and position life to most of them was unendurable.

Jane Porter had been born to both, and had Tarzan taken them away from her future husband it would doubtless have plunged her into a life of misery and torture. That she would have spurned Clayton once he had been stripped of both his title and his estates never for once occurred to Tarzan, for he credited to others the same honest loyalty that was so inherent a quality in himself. Nor, in this instance, had he

erred. Could any one thing have further bound Jane Porter to her promise to Clayton it would have been in the nature of some such misfortune as this overtaking him.

Tarzan's thoughts drifted from the past to the future. He tried to look forward with pleasurable sensations to his return to the jungle of his birth and boyhood; the cruel, fierce jungle in which he had spent twenty of his twenty-two years. But who or what of all the myriad jungle life would there be to welcome his return? Not one. Only Tantor, the elephant, could he call friend. The others would hunt him or flee from him as had been their way in the past.

Not even the apes of his own tribe

would extend the hand of fellowship to him.

If civilization had done nothing else for Tarzan of the Apes, it had to some extent taught him to crave the society of his own kind, and to feel with genuine pleasure the congenial warmth of companionship. And in the same ratio had it made any other life distasteful to him. It was difficult to imagine a world without a friend—without a living thing who spoke the new tongues which Tarzan had learned to love so well. And so it was that Tarzan looked with little relish upon the future he had mapped out for himself.

As he sat musing over his cigarette his eyes fell upon a mirror before him,

and in it he saw reflected a table at which four men sat at cards. Presently one of them rose to leave, and then another approached, and Tarzan could see that he courteously offered to fill the vacant chair, that the game might not be interrupted. He was the smaller of the two whom Tarzan had seen whispering just outside the smoking-room.

It was this fact that aroused a faint spark of interest in Tarzan, and so as he speculated upon the future he watched in the mirror the reflection of the players at the table behind him. Aside from the man who had but just entered the game Tarzan knew the name of but one of the other players. It was he who sat opposite the new player, Count Raoul de Coude,

whom at over-attentive steward had pointed out as one of the celebrities of the passage, describing him as a man high in the official family of the French minister of war.

Suddenly Tarzan's attention was riveted upon the picture in the glass. The other swarthy plotter had entered, and was standing behind the count's chair. Tarzan saw him turn and glance furtively about the room, but his eyes did not rest for a sufficient time upon the mirror to note the reflection of Tarzan's watchful eyes.

Stealthily the man withdrew something from his pocket. Tarzan could not discern what the object was, for the man's hand covered it.

Slowly the hand approached the count, and then, very deftly, the thing that was in it was transferred to the count's pocket. The man remained standing where he could watch the Frenchman's cards.

Tarzan was puzzled, but he was all attention now, nor did he permit another detail of the incident to escape him.

The play went on for some ten minutes after this, until the count won a considerable wager from him who had last joined the game, and then Tarzan saw the fellow back of the count's chair nod his head to his confederate. Instantly the player arose and pointed a finger at the count.

"Had I known that monsieur was a

professional card sharp I had not been so ready to be drawn into the game," he said.

Instantly the count and the two other players were upon their feet.

De Coude's face went white.

"What do you mean, sir?" he cried. "Do you know to whom you speak?"

"I know that I speak, for the last time, to one who cheats at cards," replied the fellow.

The count leaned across the table, and struck the man full in the mouth with his open palm, and then the others closed in between them.

"There is some mistake, sir," cried one of the other players. "Why, this is

Count de Coude, of France."

"If I am mistaken," said the accuser, "I shall gladly apologize; but before I do so first let monsieur le count explain the extra cards which I saw him drop into his side pocket." And then the man whom Tarzan had seen drop them there turned to sneak from the room, but to his annoyance he found the exit barred by a tall, gray- eyed stranger.

"Pardon," said the man brusquely, attempting to pass to one side.

"Wait," said Tarzan.

"But why, monsieur?" exclaimed the other petulantly. "Permit me to pass, monsieur."

"Wait," said Tarzan. "I think that there is a matter in here that you may

doubtless be able to explain." The fellow had lost his temper by this time, and with a low oath seized Tarzan to push him to one side. The ape-man but smiled as he twisted the big fellow about and, grasping him by the collar of his coat, escorted him back to the table, struggling, cursing, and striking in futile remonstrance. It was Nikolas Rokoff's first experience with the muscles that had brought their savage owner victorious through encounters with Numa, the lion, and Terkoz, the great bull ape.

The man who had accused De Coude, and the two others who had been playing, stood looking expectantly at the count. Several other passengers had

drawn toward the scene of the altercation, and all awaited the denouement.

"The fellow is crazy," said the count. "Gentlemen, I implore that one of you search me."

"The accusation is ridiculous." This from one of the players.

"You have but to slip your hand in the count's coat pocket and you will see that the accusation is quite serious," insisted the accuser. And then, as the others still hesitated to do so: "Come, I shall do it myself if no other will," and he stepped forward toward the count.

"No, monsieur," said De Coude. "I will submit to a search only at the hands of a gentleman."

"It is unnecessary to search the count. The cards are in his pocket. I myself saw them placed there." All turned in surprise toward this new speaker, to behold a very well-built young man urging a resisting captive toward them by the scruff of his neck.

"It is a conspiracy," cried De Coude angrily. "There are no cards in my coat," and with that he ran his hand into his pocket. As he did so tense silence reigned in the little group. The count went dead white, and then very slowly he withdrew his hand, and in it were three cards.

He looked at them in mute and horrified surprise, and slowly the red of mortification suffused his face.

Expressions of pity and contempt tinged the features of those who looked on at the death of a man's honor.

"It is a conspiracy, monsieur." It was the gray-eyed stranger who spoke. "Gentlemen," he continued, "monsieur le count did not know that those cards were in his pocket. They were placed there without his knowledge as he sat at play. From where I sat in that chair yonder I saw the reflection of it all in the mirror before me. This person whom I just intercepted in an effort to escape placed the cards in the count's pocket." De Coude had glanced from Tarzan to the man in his grasp.

"MON DIEU, Nikolas!" he cried. "You?" Then he turned to his accuser,

and eyed him intently for a moment.

"And you, monsieur, I did not recognize you without your beard.

It quite disguises you, Paulvitch. I see it all now. It is quite clear, gentlemen."

"What shall we do with them, monsieur?" asked Tarzan. "Turn them over to the captain?"

"No, my friend," said the count hastily. "It is a personal matter, and I beg that you will let it drop. It is sufficient that I have been exonerated from the charge. The less we have to do with such fellows, the better. But, monsieur, how can I thank you for the great kindness you have done me? Permit me to offer you my card, and should the time come when I may serve you, remember

that I am yours to command." Tarzan had released Rokoff, who, with his confederate, Paulvitch, had hastened from the smoking-room. Just as he was leaving, Rokoff turned to Tarzan. "Monsieur will have ample opportunity to regret his interference in the affairs of others." Tarzan smiled, and then, bowing to the count, handed him his own card.

The count read: M. JEAN C. TARZAN

"Monsieur Tarzan," he said, "may indeed wish that he had never befriended me, for I can assure him that he has won the enmity of two of the most unmitigated scoundrels in all Europe. Avoid them, monsieur, by all means."

"I have had more awe-inspiring

enemies, my dear count," replied Tarzan with a quiet smile, "yet I am still alive and unworried. I think that neither of these two will ever find the means to harm me."

"Let us hope not, monsieur," said De Coude; "but yet it will do no harm to be on the alert, and to know that you have made at least one enemy today who never forgets and never forgives, and in whose malignant brain there are always hatching new atrocities to perpetrate upon those who have thwarted or offended him. To say that Nikolas Rokoff is a devil would be to place a wanton affront upon his satanic majesty."

That night as Tarzan entered his cabin he found a folded note upon the floor that

had evidently been pushed beneath the door. He opened it and read: M. TARZAN: Doubtless you did not realize the gravity of your offense, or you would not have done the thing you did today. I am willing to believe that you acted in ignorance and without any intention to offend a stranger. For this reason I shall gladly permit you to offer an apology, and on receiving your assurances that you will not again interfere in affairs that do not concern you, I shall drop the matter.

Otherwise—but I am sure that you will see the wisdom of adopting the course I suggest.

Very respectfully, NIKOLAS ROKOFF.

Tarzan permitted a grim smile to play about his lips for a moment, then he promptly dropped the matter from his mind, and went to bed.

In a nearby cabin the Countess de Coude was speaking to her husband.

"Why so grave, my dear Raoul?" she asked. "You have been as glum as could be all evening. What worries you?"

"Olga, Nikolas is on board. Did you know it?"

"Nikolas!" she exclaimed. "But it is impossible, Raoul. It cannot be. Nikolas is under arrest in Germany."

"So I thought myself until I saw him today—him and that other arch scoundrel, Paulvitch. Olga, I cannot endure his persecution much longer. No,

not even for you. Sooner or later I shall turn him over to the authorities. In fact, I am half minded to explain all to the captain before we land. On a French liner it were an easy matter, Olga, permanently to settle this Nemesis of ours."

"Oh, no, Raoul!" cried the countess, sinking to her knees before him as he sat with bowed head upon a divan. "Do not do that.

Remember your promise to me. Tell me, Raoul, that you will not do that. Do not even threaten him, Raoul." De Coude took his wife's hands in his, and gazed upon her pale and troubled countenance for some time before he spoke, as though he would wrest from those beautiful

eyes the real reason which prompted her to shield this man.

"Let it be as you wish, Olga," he said at length. "I cannot understand. He has forfeited all claim upon your love, loyalty, or respect. He is a menace to your life and honor, and the life and honor of your husband. I trust you may never regret championing him."

"I do not champion him, Raoul," she interrupted vehemently. "I believe that I hate him as much as you do, but—Oh, Raoul, blood is thicker than water."

"I should today have liked to sample the consistency of his," growled De Coude grimly. "The two deliberately attempted to besmirch my honor, Olga," and then he told her of all that had

happened in the smoking-room. "Had it not been for this utter stranger, they had succeeded, for who would have accepted my unsupported word against the damning evidence of those cards hidden on my person? I had almost begun to doubt myself when this Monsieur Tarzan dragged your precious Nikolas before us, and explained the whole cowardly transaction."

"Monsieur Tarzan?" asked the countess, in evident surprise.

"Yes. Do you know him, Olga?"

"I have seen him. A steward pointed him out to me."

"I did not know that he was a celebrity," said the count.

Olga de Coude changed the subject.

She discovered suddenly that she might find it difficult to explain just why the steward had pointed out the handsome Monsieur Tarzan to her. Perhaps she flushed the least little bit, for was not the count, her husband, gazing at her with a strangely quizzical expression. "Ah," she thought, "a guilty conscience is a most suspicious thing."

2. FORGING BONDS OF HATE AND—?

It was not until late the following afternoon that Tarzan saw anything more of the fellow passengers into the midst of whose affairs his love of fair play had thrust him. And then he came most unexpectedly upon Rokoff and Paulvitch at a moment when of all others the two might least appreciate his company.

They were standing on deck at a point which was temporarily deserted, and as Tarzan came upon them they were in heated argument with a woman. Tarzan noted that she was richly appareled, and that her slender, well-modeled figure denoted youth; but as she was heavily veiled he could not discern her features.

The men were standing on either side of her, and the backs of all were toward Tarzan, so that he was quite close to them without their being aware of his presence. He noticed that Rokoff seemed to be threatening, the woman pleading; but they spoke in a strange tongue, and he could only guess from appearances that the girl was afraid.

Rokoff's attitude was so distinctly filled with the threat of physical violence that the ape-man paused for an instant just behind the trio, instinctively sensing an atmosphere of danger. Scarcely had he hesitated ere the man seized the woman roughly by the wrist, twisting it as though to wring a promise from her through torture.

What would have happened next had Rokoff had his way we may only conjecture, since he did not have his way at all. Instead, steel fingers gripped his shoulder, and he was swung unceremoniously around, to meet the cold gray eyes of the stranger who had thwarted him on the previous day.

"Sapristi!" screamed the infuriated Rokoff. "What do you mean? Are you a fool that you thus again insult Nikolas Rokoff?"

"This is my answer to your note, monsieur," said Tarzan, in a low voice. And then he hurled the fellow from him with such force that Rokoff lunged sprawling against the rail.

"Name of a name!" shrieked Rokoff.

"Pig, but you shall die for this," and, springing to his feet, he rushed upon Tarzan, tugging the meanwhile to draw a revolver from his hip pocket. The girl shrank back in terror.

"Nikolas!" she cried. "Do not—oh, do not do that. Quick, monsieur, fly, or he will surely kill you!" But instead of flying Tarzan advanced to meet the fellow. "Do not make a fool of yourself, monsieur," he said.

Rokoff, who was in a perfect frenzy of rage at the humiliation the stranger had put upon him, had at last succeeded in drawing the revolver. He had stopped, and now he deliberately raised it to Tarzan's breast and pulled the trigger. The hammer fell with a futile

click on an empty chamber— the ape-man's hand shot out like the head of an angry python; there was a quick wrench, and the revolver sailed far out across the ship's rail, and dropped into the Atlantic.

For a moment the two men stood there facing one another. Rokoff had regained his self-possession. He was the first to speak.

"Twice now has monsieur seen fit to interfere in matters which do not concern him. Twice he has taken it upon himself to humiliate Nikolas Rokoff. The first offense was overlooked on the assumption that monsieur acted through ignorance, but this affair shall not be overlooked. If monsieur does not know who Nikolas Rokoff is, this last piece of

effrontery will insure that monsieur later has good reason to remember him."

"That you are a coward and a scoundrel, monsieur," replied Tarzan, "is all that I care to know of you," and he turned to ask the girl if the man had hurt her, but she had disappeared. Then, without even a glance toward Rokoff and his companion, he continued his stroll along the deck.

Tarzan could not but wonder what manner of conspiracy was on foot, or what the scheme of the two men might be. There had been something rather familiar about the appearance of the veiled woman to whose rescue he had just come, but as he had not seen her face he could not be sure that he had

ever seen her before. The only thing about her that he had particularly noticed was a ring of peculiar workmanship upon a finger of the hand that Rokoff had seized, and he determined to note the fingers of the women passengers he came upon thereafter, that he might discover the identity of her whom Rokoff was persecuting, and learn if the fellow had offered her further annoyance.

Tarzan had sought his deck chair, where he sat speculating on the numerous instances of human cruelty, selfishness, and spite that had fallen to his lot to witness since that day in the jungle four years since that his eyes had first fallen upon a human being other

than himself—the sleek, black Kulonga, whose swift spear had that day found the vitals of Kala, the great she-ape, and robbed the youth, Tarzan, of the only mother he had ever known.

He recalled the murder of King by the rat-faced Snipes; the abandonment of Professor Porter and his party by the mutineers of the ARROW; the cruelty of the black warriors and women of Mbonga to their captives; the petty jealousies of the civil and military officers of the West Coast colony that had afforded him his first introduction to the civilized world.

"MON DIEU!" he soliloquized, "but they are all alike. Cheating, murdering, lying, fighting, and all for things that the

beasts of the jungle would not deign to possess—money to purchase the effeminate pleasures of weaklings. And yet withal bound down by silly customs that make them slaves to their unhappy lot while firm in the belief that they be the lords of creation enjoying the only real pleasures of existence. In the jungle one would scarcely stand supinely aside while another took his mate. It is a silly world, an idiotic world, and Tarzan of the Apes was a fool to renounce the freedom and the happiness of his jungle to come into it." Presently, as he sat there, the sudden feeling came over him that eyes were watching from behind, and the old instinct of the wild beast broke through the thin veneer of

civilization, so that Tarzan wheeled about so quickly that the eyes of the young woman who had been surreptitiously regarding him had not even time to drop before the gray eyes of the ape-man shot an inquiring look straight into them. Then, as they fell, Tarzan saw a faint wave of crimson creep swiftly over the now half-averted face.

He smiled to himself at the result of his very uncivilized and ungallant action, for he had not lowered his own eyes when they met those of the young woman. She was very young, and equally good to look upon. Further, there was something rather familiar about her that set Tarzan to wondering where he

had seen her before. He resumed his former position, and presently he was aware that she had arisen and was leaving the deck. As she passed, Tarzan turned to watch her, in the hope that he might discover a clew to satisfy his mild curiosity as to her identity.

Nor was he disappointed entirely, for as she walked away she raised one hand to the black, waving mass at the nape of her neck—the peculiarly feminine gesture that admits cognizance of appraising eyes behind her— and Tarzan saw upon a finger of this hand the ring of strange workmanship that he had seen upon the finger of the veiled woman a short time before.

So it was this beautiful young woman

Rokoff had been persecuting.

Tarzan wondered in a lazy sort of way whom she might be, and what relations one so lovely could have with the surly, bearded Russian.

After dinner that evening Tarzan strolled forward, where he remained until after dark, in conversation with the second officer, and when that gentleman's duties called him elsewhere Tarzan lolled lazily by the rail watching the play of the moonlight upon the gently rolling waters. He was half hidden by a davit, so that two men who approached along the deck did not see him, and as they passed Tarzan caught enough of their conversation to cause him to fall in behind them, to follow and learn what

deviltry they were up to.

He had recognized the voice as that of Rokoff, and had seen that his companion was Paulvitch.

Tarzan had overheard but a few words: "And if she screams you may choke her until—" But those had been enough to arouse the spirit of adventure within him, and so he kept the two men in sight as they walked, briskly now, along the deck. To the smoking-room he followed them, but they merely halted at the doorway long enough, apparently, to assure themselves that one whose whereabouts they wished to establish was within.

Then they proceeded directly to the first-class cabins upon the promenade

deck. Here Tarzan found greater difficulty in escaping detection, but he managed to do so successfully. As they halted before one of the polished hardwood doors, Tarzan slipped into the shadow of a passageway not a dozen feet from them.

To their knock a woman's voice asked in French: "Who is it?"

"It is I, Olga—Nikolas," was the answer, in Rokoff's now familiar guttural. "May I come in?"

"Why do you not cease persecuting me, Nikolas?" came the voice of the woman from beyond the thin panel. "I have never harmed you."

"Come, come, Olga," urged the man, in propitiary tones; "I but ask a half

dozen words with you. I shall not harm you, nor shall I enter your cabin; but I cannot shout my message through the door." Tarzan heard the catch click as it was released from the inside. He stepped out from his hiding-place far enough to see what transpired when the door was opened, for he could not but recall the sinister words he had heard a few moments before upon the deck, "And if she screams you may choke her." Rokoff was standing directly in front of the door. Paulvitch had flattened himself against the paneled wall of the corridor beyond.

The door opened. Rokoff half entered the room, and stood with his back against the door, speaking in a low

whisper to the woman, whom Tarzan could not see. Then Tarzan heard the woman's voice, level, but loud enough to distinguish her words.

"No, Nikolas," she was saying, "it is useless. Threaten as you will, I shall never accede to your demands. Leave the room, please; you have no right here. You promised not to enter."

"Very well, Olga, I shall not enter; but before I am done with you, you shall wish a thousand times that you had done at once the favor I have asked. In the end I shall win anyway, so you might as well save trouble and time for me, and disgrace for yourself and your—" "Never, Nikolas!" interrupted the woman, and then Tarzan saw Rokoff turn

and nod to Paulvitch, who sprang quickly toward the doorway of the cabin, rushing in past Rokoff, who held the door open for him. Then the latter stepped quickly out. The door closed. Tarzan heard the click of the lock as Paulvitch turned it from the inside.

Rokoff remained standing before the door, with head bent, as though to catch the words of the two within. A nasty smile curled his bearded lip.

Tarzan could hear the woman's voice commanding the fellow to leave her cabin. "I shall send for my husband," she cried. "He will show you no mercy." Paulvitch's sneering laugh came through the polished panels.

"The purser will fetch your husband,

madame," said the man. "In fact, that officer has already been notified that you are entertaining a man other than your husband behind the locked door of your cabin."

"Bah!" cried the woman. "My husband will know!"

"Most assuredly your husband will know, but the purser will not; nor will the newspaper men who shall in some mysterious way hear of it on our landing. But they will think it a fine story, and so will all your friends when they read of it at breakfast on—let me see, this is Tuesday—yes, when they read of it at breakfast next Friday morning. Nor will it detract from the interest they will all feel when they learn that the man whom

madame entertained is a Russian servant —her brother's valet, to be quite exact."

"Alexis Paulvitch," came the woman's voice, cold and fearless, "you are a coward, and when I whisper a certain name in your ear you will think better of your demands upon me and your threats against me, and then you will leave my cabin quickly, nor do I think that ever again will you, at least, annoy me," and there came a moment's silence in which Tarzan could imagine the woman leaning toward the scoundrel and whispering the thing she had hinted at into his ear. Only a moment of silence, and then a startled oath from the man —the scuffling of feet —a woman's scream—and silence.

But scarcely had the cry ceased

before the ape-man had leaped from his hiding-place. Rokoff started to run, but Tarzan grasped him by the collar and dragged him back. Neither spoke, for both felt instinctively that murder was being done in that room, and Tarzan was confident that Rokoff had had no intention that his confederate should go that far—he felt that the man's aims were deeper than that—deeper and even more sinister than brutal, cold- blooded murder. Without hesitating to question those within, the ape- man threw his giant shoulder against the frail panel, and in a shower of splintered wood he entered the cabin, dragging Rokoff after him. Before him, on a couch, the woman lay, and on top of her was Paulvitch, his

fingers gripping the fair throat, while his victim's hands beat futilely at his face, tearing desperately at the cruel fingers that were forcing the life from her.

The noise of his entrance brought Paulvitch to his feet, where he stood glowering menacingly at Tarzan. The girl rose falteringly to a sitting posture upon the couch. One hand was at her throat, and her breath came in little gasps. Although disheveled and very pale, Tarzan recognized her as the young woman whom he had caught staring at him on deck earlier in the day.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Tarzan, turning to Rokoff, whom he intuitively singled out as the instigator of the outrage. The man remained silent,

scowling. "Touch the button, please," continued the ape-man; "we will have one of the ship's officers here—this affair has gone quite far enough."

"No, no," cried the girl, coming suddenly to her feet. "Please do not do that. I am sure that there was no real intention to harm me. I angered this person, and he lost control of himself, that is all. I would not care to have the matter go further, please, monsieur," and there was such a note of pleading in her voice that Tarzan could not press the matter, though his better judgment warned him that there was something afoot here of which the proper authorities should be made cognizant.

"You wish me to do nothing, then, in

the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing, please," she replied.

"You are content that these two scoundrels should continue persecuting you?" She did not seem to know what answer to make, and looked very troubled and unhappy. Tarzan saw a malicious grin of triumph curl Rokoff's lip. The girl evidently was in fear of these two—she dared not express her real desires before them.

"Then," said Tarzan, "I shall act on my own responsibility. To you," he continued, turning to Rokoff, "and this includes your accomplice, I may say that from now on to the end of the voyage I shall take it upon myself to keep an eye on you, and should there chance to come

to my notice any act of either one of you that might even remotely annoy this young woman you shall be called to account for it directly to me, nor shall the calling or the accounting be pleasant experiences for either of you.

"Now get out of here," and he grabbed Rokoff and Paulvitch each by the scruff of the neck and thrust them forcibly through the doorway, giving each an added impetus down the corridor with the toe of his boot. Then he turned back to the stateroom and the girl. She was looking at him in wide-eyed astonishment.

"And you, madame, will confer a great favor upon me if you will but let me know if either of those rascals

troubles you further."

"Ah, monsieur," she answered, "I hope that you will not suffer for the kind deed you attempted. You have made a very wicked and resourceful enemy, who will stop at nothing to satisfy his hatred. You must be very careful indeed, Monsieur—"

"Pardon me, madame, my name is Tarzan."

"Monsieur Tarzan. And because I would not consent to notify the officers, do not think that I am not sincerely grateful to you for the brave and chivalrous protection you rendered me. Good night, Monsieur Tarzan. I shall never forget the debt I owe you," and, with a most winsome smile that

displayed a row of perfect teeth, the girl curtsied to Tarzan, who bade her good night and made his way on deck.

It puzzled the man considerably that there should be two on board— this girl and Count de Coude—who suffered indignities at the hands of Rokoff and his companion, and yet would not permit the offenders to be brought to justice. Before he turned in that night his thoughts reverted many times to the beautiful young woman into the evidently tangled web of whose life fate had so strangely introduced him.

It occurred to him that he had not learned her name. That she was married had been evidenced by the narrow gold band that encircled the third finger of her

left hand. Involuntarily he wondered who the lucky man might be.

Tarzan saw nothing further of any of the actors in the little drama that he had caught a fleeting glimpse of until late in the afternoon of the last day of the voyage. Then he came suddenly face to face with the young woman as the two approached their deck chairs from opposite directions. She greeted him with a pleasant smile, speaking almost immediately of the affair he had witnessed in her cabin two nights before. It was as though she had been perturbed by a conviction that he might have construed her acquaintance with such men as Rokoff and Paulvitch as a personal reflection upon herself.

"I trust monsieur has not judged me," she said, "by the unfortunate occurrence of Tuesday evening. I have suffered much on account of it— this is the first time that I have ventured from my cabin since; I have been ashamed," she concluded simply.

"One does not judge the gazelle by the lions that attack it," replied Tarzan. "I had seen those two work before—in the smoking-room the day prior to their attack on you, if I recollect it correctly, and so, knowing their methods, I am convinced that their enmity is a sufficient guarantee of the integrity of its object. Men such as they must cleave only to the vile, hating all that is noblest and best."

"It is very kind of you to put it that

way," she replied, smiling.

"I have already heard of the matter of the card game. My husband told me the entire story. He spoke especially of the strength and bravery of Monsieur Tarzan, to whom he feels that he owes an immense debt of gratitude."

"Your husband?" repeated Tarzan questioningly.

"Yes. I am the Countess de Coude."

"I am already amply repaid, madame, in knowing that I have rendered a service to the wife of the Count de Coude." "Alas, monsieur, I already am so greatly indebted to you that I may never hope to settle my own account, so pray do not add further to my obligations," and she smiled so sweetly

upon him that Tarzan felt that a man might easily attempt much greater things than he had accomplished, solely for the pleasure of receiving the benediction of that smile.

He did not see her again that day, and in the rush of landing on the following morning he missed her entirely, but there had been something in the expression of her eyes as they parted on deck the previous day that haunted him. It had been almost wistful as they had spoken of the strangeness of the swift friendships of an ocean crossing, and of the equal ease with which they are broken forever.

Tarzan wondered if he should ever see her again.

3. WHAT HAPPENED IN THE RUE MAULE

On his arrival in Paris, Tarzan had gone directly to the apartments of his old friend, D'Arnot, where the naval lieutenant had scored him roundly for his decision to renounce the title and estates that were rightly his from his father, John Clayton, the late Lord Greystoke.

"You must be mad, my friend," said D'Arnot, "thus lightly to give up not alone wealth and position, but an opportunity to prove beyond doubt to all the world that in your veins flows the noble blood of two of England's most honored houses—instead of the blood of a savage she-ape. It is incredible that they could have believed you—Miss

Porter least of all.

"Why, I never did believe it, even back in the wilds of your African jungle, when you tore the raw meat of your kills with mighty jaws, like some wild beast, and wiped your greasy hands upon your thighs.

Even then, before there was the slightest proof to the contrary, I knew that you were mistaken in the belief that Kala was your mother.

"And now, with your father's diary of the terrible life led by him and your mother on that wild African shore; with the account of your birth, and, final and most convincing proof of all, your own baby finger prints upon the pages of it, it seems incredible to me that you are

willing to remain a nameless, penniless vagabond."

"I do not need any better name than Tarzan," replied the ape- man; "and as for remaining a penniless vagabond, I have no intention of so doing. In fact, the next, and let us hope the last, burden that I shall be forced to put upon your unselfish friendship will be the finding of employment for me."

"Pooh, pooh!" scoffed D'Arnot. "You know that I did not mean that.

Have I not told you a dozen times that I have enough for twenty men, and that half of what I have is yours? And if I gave it all to you, would it represent even the tenth part of the value I place upon your friendship, my Tarzan? Would

it repay the services you did me in Africa? I do not forget, my friend, that but for you and your wondrous bravery I had died at the stake in the village of Mbonga's cannibals. Nor do I forget that to your self-sacrificing devotion I owe the fact that I recovered from the terrible wounds I received at their hands—I discovered later something of what it meant to you to remain with me in the amphitheater of apes while your heart was urging you on to the coast.

"When we finally came there, and found that Miss Porter and her party had left, I commenced to realize something of what you had done for an utter stranger. Nor am I trying to repay you with money, Tarzan. It is that just at

present you need money; were it sacrifice that I might offer you it were the same—my friendship must always be yours, because our tastes are similar, and I admire you. That I cannot command, but the money I can and shall." "Well," laughed Tarzan, "we shall not quarrel over the money. I must live, and so I must have it; but I shall be more contented with something to do. You cannot show me your friendship in a more convincing manner than to find employment for me—I shall die of inactivity in a short while. As for my birthright—it is in good hands. Clayton is not guilty of robbing me of it. He truly believes that he is the real Lord Greystoke, and the chances are that he

will make a better English lord than a man who was born and raised in an African jungle. You know that I am but half civilized even now. Let me see red in anger but for a moment, and all the instincts of the savage beast that I really am, submerge what little I possess of the milder ways of culture and refinement.

"And then again, had I declared myself I should have robbed the woman I love of the wealth and position that her marriage to Clayton will now insure to her. I could not have done that—could I, Paul? "Nor is the matter of birth of great importance to me," he went on, without waiting for a reply. "Raised as I have been, I see no worth in man or beast that is not theirs by virtue of their own

mental or physical prowess. And so I am as happy to think of Kala as my mother as I would be to try to picture the poor, unhappy little English girl who passed away a year after she bore me. Kala was always kind to me in her fierce and savage way. I must have nursed at her hairy breast from the time that my own mother died.

She fought for me against the wild denizens of the forest, and against the savage members of our tribe, with the ferocity of real mother love.

"And I, on my part, loved her, Paul. I did not realize how much until after the cruel spear and the poisoned arrow of Mbonga's black warrior had stolen her away from me. I was still a child when

that occurred, and I threw myself upon her dead body and wept out my anguish as a child might for his own mother. To you, my friend, she would have appeared a hideous and ugly creature, but to me she was beautiful—so gloriously does love transfigure its object. And so I am perfectly content to remain forever the son of Kala, the she-ape."

"I do not admire you the less for your loyalty," said D'Arnot, "but the time will come when you will be glad to claim your own.

Remember what I say, and let us hope that it will be as easy then as it is now. You must bear in mind that Professor Porter and Mr.

Philander are the only people in the world who can swear that the little skeleton found in the cabin with those of your father and mother was that of an infant anthropoid ape, and not the offspring of Lord and Lady Greystoke. That evidence is most important. They are both old men. They may not live many years longer. And then, did it not occur to you that once Miss Porter knew the truth she would break her engagement with Clayton? You might easily have your title, your estates, and the woman you love, Tarzan. Had you not thought of that?" Tarzan shook his head. "You do not know her," he said. "Nothing could bind her closer to her bargain than some misfortune to Clayton.

She is from an old southern family in America, and southerners pride themselves upon their loyalty." Tarzan spent the two following weeks renewing his former brief acquaintance with Paris. In the daytime he haunted the libraries and picture galleries. He had become an omnivorous reader, and the world of possibilities that were opened to him in this seat of culture and learning fairly appalled him when he contemplated the very infinitesimal crumb of the sum total of human knowledge that a single individual might hope to acquire even after a lifetime of study and research; but he learned what he could by day, and threw himself into a search for relaxation and amusement at night. Nor

did he find Paris a whit less fertile field for his nocturnal avocation.

If he smoked too many cigarettes and drank too much absinth it was because he took civilization as he found it, and did the things that he found his civilized brothers doing. The life was a new and alluring one, and in addition he had a sorrow in his breast and a great longing which he knew could never be fulfilled, and so he sought in study and in dissipation —the two extremes—to forget the past and inhibit contemplation of the future.

He was sitting in a music hall one evening, sipping his absinth and admiring the art of a certain famous Russian dancer, when he caught a

passing glimpse of a pair of evil black eyes upon him.

The man turned and was lost in the crowd at the exit before Tarzan could catch a good look at him, but he was confident that he had seen those eyes before and that they had been fastened on him this evening through no passing accident. He had had the uncanny feeling for some time that he was being watched, and it was in response to this animal instinct that was strong within him that he had turned suddenly and surprised the eyes in the very act of watching him.

Before he left the music hall the matter had been forgotten, nor did he notice the swarthy individual who

stepped deeper into the shadows of an opposite doorway as Tarzan emerged from the brilliantly lighted amusement hall.

Had Tarzan but known it, he had been followed many times from this and other places of amusement, but seldom if ever had he been alone.

Tonight D'Arnot had had another engagement, and Tarzan had come by himself.

As he turned in the direction he was accustomed to taking from this part of Paris to his apartments, the watcher across the street ran from his hiding-place and hurried on ahead at a rapid pace.

Tarzan had been wont to traverse the

Rue Maule on his way home at night. Because it was very quiet and very dark it reminded him more of his beloved African jungle than did the noisy and garish streets surrounding it. If you are familiar with your Paris you will recall the narrow, forbidding precincts of the Rue Maule. If you are not, you need but ask the police about it to learn that in all Paris there is no street to which you should give a wider berth after dark.

On this night Tarzan had proceeded some two squares through the dense shadows of the squalid old tenements which line this dismal way when he was attracted by screams and cries for help from the third floor of an opposite building. The voice was a woman's.

Before the echoes of her first cries had died Tarzan was bounding up the stairs and through the dark corridors to her rescue.

At the end of the corridor on the third landing a door stood slightly ajar, and from within Tarzan heard again the same appeal that had lured him from the street. Another instant found him in the center of a dimly-lighted room. An oil lamp burned upon a high, old- fashioned mantel, casting its dim rays over a dozen repulsive figures. All but one were men. The other was a woman of about thirty. Her face, marked by low passions and dissipation, might once have been lovely. She stood with one hand at her throat, crouching against the farther wall.

"Help, monsieur," she cried in a low voice as Tarzan entered the room; "they were killing me." As Tarzan turned toward the men about him he saw the crafty, evil faces of habitual criminals. He wondered that they had made no effort to escape. A movement behind him caused him to turn. Two things his eyes saw, and one of them caused him considerable wonderment. A man was sneaking stealthily from the room, and in the brief glance that Tarzan had of him he saw that it was Rokoff.

But the other thing that he saw was of more immediate interest. It was a great brute of a fellow tiptoeing upon him from behind with a huge bludgeon in his hand, and then, as the man and his

confederates saw that he was discovered, there was a concerted rush upon Tarzan from all sides. Some of the men drew knives. Others picked up chairs, while the fellow with the bludgeon raised it high above his head in a mighty swing that would have crushed Tarzan's head had it ever descended upon it.

But the brain, and the agility, and the muscles that had coped with the mighty strength and cruel craftiness of Terkoz and Numa in the fastness of their savage jungle were not to be so easily subdued as these apaches of Paris had believed.

Selecting his most formidable antagonist, the fellow with the bludgeon, Tarzan charged full upon him, dodging

the falling weapon, and catching the man a terrific blow on the point of the chin that felled him in his tracks.

Then he turned upon the others. This was sport. He was reveling in the joy of battle and the lust of blood. As though it had been but a brittle shell, to break at the least rough usage, the thin veneer of his civilization fell from him, and the ten burly villains found themselves penned in a small room with a wild and savage beast, against whose steel muscles their puny strength was less than futile.

At the end of the corridor without stood Rokoff, waiting the outcome of the affair. He wished to be sure that Tarzan was dead before he left, but it was not a part of his plan to be one of those within

the room when the murder occurred.

The woman still stood where she had when Tarzan entered, but her face had undergone a number of changes with the few minutes which had elapsed. From the semblance of distress which it had worn when Tarzan first saw it, it had changed to one of craftiness as he had wheeled to meet the attack from behind; but the change Tarzan had not seen.

Later an expression of surprise and then one of horror superseded the others. And who may wonder. For the immaculate gentleman her cries had lured to what was to have been his death had been suddenly metamorphosed into a demon of revenge. Instead of soft muscles and a weak resistance, she was

looking upon a veritable Hercules gone mad.

"MON DIEU!" she cried; "he is a beast!" For the strong, white teeth of the ape-man had found the throat of one of his assailants, and Tarzan fought as he had learned to fight with the great bull apes of the tribe of Kerchak.

He was in a dozen places at once, leaping hither and thither about the room in sinuous bounds that reminded the woman of a panther she had seen at the zoo. Now a wrist-bone snapped in his iron grip, now a shoulder was wrenched from its socket as he forced a victim's arm backward and upward.

With shrieks of pain the men escaped into the hallway as quickly as they

could; but even before the first one staggered, bleeding and broken, from the room, Rokoff had seen enough to convince him that Tarzan would not be the one to lie dead in that house this night, and so the Russian had hastened to a nearby den and telephoned the police that a man was committing murder on the third floor of Rue Maule, 27. When the officers arrived they found three men groaning on the floor, a frightened woman lying upon a filthy bed, her face buried in her arms, and what appeared to be a well- dressed young gentleman standing in the center of the room awaiting the reinforcements which he had thought the footsteps of the officers hurrying up the stairway had announced

—but they were mistaken in the last; it was a wild beast that looked upon them through those narrowed lids and steel-gray eyes. With the smell of blood the last vestige of civilization had deserted Tarzan, and now he stood at bay, like a lion surrounded by hunters, awaiting the next overt act, and crouching to charge its author.

"What has happened here?" asked one of the policemen.

Tarzan explained briefly, but when he turned to the woman for confirmation of his statement he was appalled by her reply.

"He lies!" she screamed shrilly, addressing the policeman. "He came to my room while I was alone, and for no

good purpose. When I repulsed him he would have killed me had not my screams attracted these gentlemen, who were passing the house at the time. He is a devil, messieurs; alone he has all but killed ten men with his bare hands and his teeth." So shocked was Tarzan by her ingratitude that for a moment he was struck dumb. The police were inclined to be a little skeptical, for they had had other dealings with this same lady and her lovely coterie of gentlemen friends. However, they were policemen, not judges, so they decided to place all the inmates of the room under arrest, and let another, whose business it was, separate the innocent from the guilty.

But they found that it was one thing to

tell this well-dressed young man that he was under arrest, but quite another to enforce it.

"I am guilty of no offense," he said quietly. "I have but sought to defend myself. I do not know why the woman has told you what she has. She can have no enmity against me, for never until I came to this room in response to her cries for help had I seen her."

"Come, come," said one of the officers; "there are judges to listen to all that," and he advanced to lay his hand upon Tarzan's shoulder. An instant later he lay crumpled in a corner of the room, and then, as his comrades rushed in upon the ape-man, they experienced a taste of what the apaches had but recently gone

through. So quickly and so roughly did he handle them that they had not even an opportunity to draw their revolvers.

During the brief fight Tarzan had noted the open window and, beyond, the stem of a tree, or a telegraph pole—he could not tell which.

As the last officer went down, one of his fellows succeeded in drawing his revolver and, from where he lay on the floor, fired at Tarzan. The shot missed, and before the man could fire again Tarzan had swept the lamp from the mantel and plunged the room into darkness.

The next they saw was a lithe form spring to the sill of the open window and leap, panther-like, onto the pole across

the walk. When the police gathered themselves together and reached the street their prisoner was nowhere to be seen.

They did not handle the woman and the men who had not escaped any too gently when they took them to the station; they were a very sore and humiliated detail of police. It galled them to think that it would be necessary to report that a single unarmed man had wiped the floor with the whole lot of them, and then escaped them as easily as though they had not existed.

The officer who had remained in the street swore that no one had leaped from the window or left the building from the time they entered until they had come

out. His comrades thought that he lied, but they could not prove it.

When Tarzan found himself clinging to the pole outside the window, he followed his jungle instinct and looked below for enemies before he ventured down. It was well he did, for just beneath stood a policeman. Above, Tarzan saw no one, so he went up instead of down.

The top of the pole was opposite the roof of the building, so it was but the work of an instant for the muscles that had for years sent him hurtling through the treetops of his primeval forest to carry him across the little space between the pole and the roof.

From one building he went to another,

and so on, with much climbing, until at a cross street he discovered another pole, down which he ran to the ground.

For a square or two he ran swiftly; then he turned into a little all-night cafe and in the lavatory removed the evidences of his over-roof promenade from hands and clothes. When he emerged a few moments later it was to saunter slowly on toward his apartments.

Not far from them he came to a well-lighted boulevard which it was necessary to cross. As he stood directly beneath a brilliant arc light, waiting for a limousine that was approaching to pass him, he heard his name called in a sweet feminine voice. Looking up, he met the smiling eyes of Olga de Coude as she

leaned forward upon the back seat of the machine. He bowed very low in response to her friendly greeting. When he straightened up the machine had borne her away.

"Rokoff and the Countess de Coude both in the same evening," he soliloquized; "Paris is not so large, after all."

4. THE COUNTESS EXPLAINS

"Your Paris is more dangerous than my savage jungles, Paul," concluded Tarzan, after narrating his adventures to his friend the morning following his encounter with the apaches and police in the Rue Maule. "Why did they lure me there? Were they hungry?" D'Arnot feigned a horrified shudder, but he laughed at the quaint suggestion.

"It is difficult to rise above the jungle standards and reason by the light of civilized ways, is it not, my friend?" he queried banteringly.

"Civilized ways, forsooth," scoffed Tarzan. "Jungle standards do not countenance wanton atrocities. There we kill for food and for self-preservation,

or in the winning of mates and the protection of the young. Always, you see, in accordance with the dictates of some great natural law. But here! Faugh, your civilized man is more brutal than the brutes. He kills wantonly, and, worse than that, he utilizes a noble sentiment, the brotherhood of man, as a lure to entice his unwary victim to his doom. It was in answer to an appeal from a fellow being that I hastened to that room where the assassins lay in wait for me.

"I did not realize, I could not realize for a long time afterward, that any woman could sink to such moral depravity as that one must have to call a would-be rescuer to death. But it must have been so—the sight of Rokoff there

and the woman's later repudiation of me to the police make it impossible to place any other construction upon her acts. Rokoff must have known that I frequently passed through the Rue Maule. He lay in wait for me - his entire scheme worked out to the last detail, even to the woman's story in case a hitch should occur in the program such as really did happen. It is all perfectly plain to me."

"Well," said D'Arnot, "among other things, it has taught you what I have been unable to impress upon you—that the Rue Maule is a good place to avoid after dark."

"On the contrary," replied Tarzan, with a smile, "it has convinced me that it is the one worth-while street in all Paris.

Never again shall I miss an opportunity to traverse it, for it has given me the first real entertainment I have had since I left Africa."

"It may give you more than you will relish even without another visit," said D'Arnot. "You are not through with the police yet, remember. I know the Paris police well enough to assure you that they will not soon forget what you did to them. Sooner or later they will get you, my dear Tarzan, and then they will lock the wild man of the woods up behind iron bars. How will you like that?"

"They will never lock Tarzan of the Apes behind iron bars," replied he, grimly.

There was something in the man's

voice as he said it that caused D'Arnot to look up sharply at his friend. What he saw in the set jaw and the cold, gray eyes made the young Frenchman very apprehensive for this great child, who could recognize no law mightier than his own mighty physical prowess. He saw that something must be done to set Tarzan right with the police before another encounter was possible.

"You have much to learn, Tarzan," he said gravely. "The law of man must be respected, whether you relish it or no. Nothing but trouble can come to you and your friends should you persist in defying the police. I can explain it to them once for you, and that I shall do this very day, but hereafter you must obey the

law.

If its representatives say `Come,' you must come; if they say `Go,' you must go. Now we shall go to my great friend in the department and fix up this matter of the Rue Maule. Come!" Together they entered the office of the police official a half hour later. He was very cordial. He remembered Tarzan from the visit the two had made him several months prior in the matter of finger prints.

When D'Arnot had concluded the narration of the events which had transpired the previous evening, a grim smile was playing about the lips of the policeman. He touched a button near his hand, and as he waited for the clerk to respond to its summons he searched

through the papers on his desk for one which he finally located.

"Here, Joubon," he said as the clerk entered. "Summon these officers - have them come to me at once," and he handed the man the paper he had sought. Then he turned to Tarzan.

"You have committed a very grave offense, monsieur," he said, not unkindly, "and but for the explanation made by our good friend here I should be inclined to judge you harshly. I am, instead, about to do a rather unheard-of-thing. I have summoned the officers whom you maltreated last night. They shall hear Lieutenant D'Arnot's story, and then I shall leave it to their discretion to say whether you shall be

prosecuted or not.

"You have much to learn about the ways of civilization. Things that seem strange or unnecessary to you, you must learn to accept until you are able to judge the motives behind them. The officers whom you attacked were but doing their duty. They had no discretion in the matter. Every day they risk their lives in the protection of the lives or property of others. They would do the same for you. They are very brave men, and they are deeply mortified that a single unarmed man bested and beat them.

"Make it easy for them to overlook what you did. Unless I am gravely in error you are yourself a very brave man,

and brave men are proverbially magnanimous." Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the four policemen. As their eyes fell on Tarzan, surprise was writ large on each countenance.

"My children," said the official, "here is the gentleman whom you met in the Rue Maule last evening. He has come voluntarily to give himself up. I wish you to listen attentively to Lieutenant D'Arnot, who will tell you a part of the story of monsieur's life.

It may explain his attitude toward you of last night. Proceed, my dear lieutenant." D'Arnot spoke to the policemen for half an hour. He told them something of Tarzan's wild jungle life.

He explained the savage training that had taught him to battle like a wild beast in self-preservation. It became plain to them that the man had been guided by instinct rather than reason in his attack upon them. He had not understood their intentions. To him they had been little different from any of the various forms of life he had been accustomed to in his native jungle, where practically all were his enemies.

"Your pride has been wounded," said D'Arnot, in conclusion. "It is the fact that this man overcame you that hurts the most. But you need feel no shame. You would not make apologies for defeat had you been penned in that small room with an African lion, or with the great Gorilla

of the jungles.

"And yet you were battling with muscles that have time and time again been pitted, and always victoriously, against these terrors of the dark continent. It is no disgrace to fall beneath the superhuman strength of Tarzan of the Apes." And then, as the men stood looking first at Tarzan and then at their superior the ape-man did the one thing which was needed to erase the last remnant of animosity which they might have felt for him. With outstretched hand he advanced toward them.

"I am sorry for the mistake I made," he said simply. "Let us be friends." And that was the end of the whole matter,

except that Tarzan became a subject of much conversation in the barracks of the police, and increased the number of his friends by four brave men at least.

On their return to D'Arnot's apartments the lieutenant found a letter awaiting him from an English friend, William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke. The two had maintained a correspondence since the birth of their friendship on that ill-fated expedition in search of Jane Porter after her theft by Terkoz, the bull ape.

"They are to be married in London in about two months," said D'Arnot, as he completed his perusal of the letter. Tarzan did not need to be told who was meant by "they." He made no reply, but

he was very quiet and thoughtful during the balance of the day.

That evening they attended the opera. Tarzan's mind was still occupied by his gloomy thoughts. He paid little or no attention to what was transpiring upon the stage. Instead he saw only the lovely vision of a beautiful American girl, and heard naught but a sad, sweet voice acknowledging that his love was returned. And she was to marry another! He shook himself to be rid of his unwelcome thoughts, and at the same instant he felt eyes upon him. With the instinct that was his by virtue of training he looked up squarely into the eyes that were looking at him, to find that they were shining from the smiling face of

Olga, Countess de Coude. As Tarzan returned her bow he was positive that there was an invitation in her look, almost a plea.

The next intermission found him beside her in her box.

"I have so much wished to see you," she was saying. "It has troubled me not a little to think that after the service you rendered to both my husband and myself no adequate explanation was ever made you of what must have seemed ingratitude on our part in not taking the necessary steps to prevent a repetition of the attacks upon us by those two men."

"You wrong me," replied Tarzan. "My thoughts of you have been only the most pleasant. You must not feel that any

explanation is due me. Have they annoyed you further?"

"They never cease," she replied sadly. "I feel that I must tell some one, and I do not know another who so deserves an explanation as you. You must permit me to do so. It may be of service to you, for I know Nikolas Rokoff quite well enough to be positive that you have not seen the last of him. He will find some means to be revenged upon you. What I wish to tell you may be of aid to you in combating any scheme of revenge he may harbor. I cannot tell you here, but tomorrow I shall be at home to Monsieur Tarzan at five."

"It will be an eternity until tomorrow at five," he said, as he bade her good

night. From a corner of the theater Rokoff and Paulvitch saw Monsieur Tarzan in the box of the Countess de Coude, and both men smiled.

At four-thirty the following afternoon a swarthy, bearded man rang the bell at the servants' entrance of the palace of the Count de Coude. The footman who opened the door raised his eyebrows in recognition as he saw who stood without. A low conversation passed between the two.

At first the footman demurred from some proposition that the bearded one made, but an instant later something passed from the hand of the caller to the hand of the servant. Then the latter turned and led the visitor by a

roundabout way to a little curtained alcove off the apartment in which the countess was wont to serve tea of an afternoon.

A half hour later Tarzan was ushered into the room, and presently his hostess entered, smiling, and with outstretched hands.

"I am so glad that you came," she said.

"Nothing could have prevented," he replied.

For a few moments they spoke of the opera, of the topics that were then occupying the attention of Paris, of the pleasure of renewing their brief acquaintance which had had its inception under such odd circumstances, and this

brought them to the subject that was uppermost in the minds of both.

"You must have wondered," said the countess finally, "what the object of Rokoff's persecution could be. It is very simple. The count is intrusted with many of the vital secrets of the ministry of war. He often has in his possession papers that foreign powers would give a fortune to possess - secrets of state that their agents would commit murder and worse than murder to learn.

"There is such a matter now in his possession that would make the fame and fortune of any Russian who could divulge it to his government. Rokoff and Paulvitch are Russian spies. They will stop at nothing to procure this

information. The affair on the liner—I mean the matter of the card game—was for the purpose of blackmailing the knowledge they seek from my husband.

"Had he been convicted of cheating at cards, his career would have been blighted. He would have had to leave the war department. He would have been socially ostracized. They intended to hold this club over him—the price of an avowal on their part that the count was but the victim of the plot of enemies who wished to besmirch his name was to have been the papers they seek.

"You thwarted them in this. Then they concocted the scheme whereby my reputation was to be the price, instead of the count's. When Paulvitch entered my

cabin he explained it to me. If I would obtain the information for them he promised to go no farther, otherwise Rokoff, who stood without, was to notify the purser that I was entertaining a man other than my husband behind the locked doors of my cabin. He was to tell every one he met on the boat, and when we landed he was to have given the whole story to the newspaper men.

"Was it not too horrible? But I happened to know something of Monsieur Paulvitch that would send him to the gallows in Russia if it were known by the police of St. Petersburg. I dared him to carry out his plan, and then I leaned toward him and whispered a name in his ear. Like that"—and she

snapped her fingers—"he flew at my throat as a madman. He would have killed me had you not interfered."

"The brutes!" muttered Tarzan.

"They are worse than that, my friend," she said.

"They are devils. I fear for you because you have gained their hatred. I wish you to be on your guard constantly. Tell me that you will, for my sake, for I should never forgive myself should you suffer through the kindness you did me."

"I do not fear them," he replied. "I have survived grimmer enemies than Rokoff and Paulvitch." He saw that she knew nothing of the occurrence in the Rue Maule, nor did he mention it, fearing that it might distress her.

"For your own safety," he continued, "why do you not turn the scoundrels over to the authorities? They should make quick work of them." She hesitated for a moment before replying.

"There are two reasons," she said finally. "One of them it is that keeps the count from doing that very thing. The other, my real reason for fearing to expose them, I have never told—only Rokoff and I know it. I wonder," and then she paused, looking intently at him for a long time.

"And what do you wonder?" he asked, smiling.

"I was wondering why it is that I want to tell you the thing that I have not dared tell even to my husband. I believe that

you would understand, and that you could tell me the right course to follow.

I believe that you would not judge me too harshly."

"I fear that I should prove a very poor judge, madame," Tarzan replied, "for if you had been guilty of murder I should say that the victim should be grateful to have met so sweet a fate."

"Oh, dear, no," she expostulated; "it is not so terrible as that.

But first let me tell you the reason the count has for not prosecuting these men; then, if I can hold my courage, I shall tell you the real reason that I dare not. The first is that Nikolas Rokoff is my brother. We are Russians. Nikolas has been a bad man since I can remember.

He was cashiered from the Russian army, in which he held a captaincy. There was a scandal for a time, but after a while it was partially forgotten, and my father obtained a position for him in the secret service.

"There have been many terrible crimes laid at Nikolas' door, but he has always managed to escape punishment. Of late he has accomplished it by trumped-up evidence convicting his victims of treason against the czar, and the Russian police, who are always only too ready to fasten guilt of this nature upon any and all, have accepted his version and exonerated him."

"Have not his attempted crimes against you and your husband forfeited

whatever rights the bonds of kinship might have accorded him?" asked Tarzan. "The fact that you are his sister has not deterred him from seeking to besmirch your honor. You owe him no loyalty, madame."

"Ah, but there is that other reason. If I owe him no loyalty though he be my brother, I cannot so easily disavow the fear I hold him in because of a certain episode in my life of which he is cognizant.

"I might as well tell you all," she resumed after a pause, "for I see that it is in my heart to tell you sooner or later. I was educated in a convent. While there I met a man whom I supposed to be a gentleman. I knew little or nothing about

men and less about love. I got it into my foolish head that I loved this man, and at his urgent request I ran away with him. We were to have been married.

"I was with him just three hours. All in the daytime and in public places — railroad stations and upon a train. When we reached our destination where we were to have been married, two officers stepped up to my escort as we descended from the train, and placed him under arrest. They took me also, but when I had told my story they did not detain me, other than to send me back to the convent under the care of a matron. It seemed that the man who had wooed me was no gentleman at all, but a deserter from the army as well as a fugitive from

civil justice. He had a police record in nearly every country in Europe.

"The matter was hushed up by the authorities of the convent. Not even my parents knew of it. But Nikolas met the man afterward, and learned the whole story. Now he threatens to tell the count if I do not do just as he wishes me to." Tarzan laughed. "You are still but a little girl. The story that you have told me cannot reflect in any way upon your reputation, and were you not a little girl at heart you would know it. Go to your husband tonight, and tell him the whole story, just as you have told it to me. Unless I am much mistaken he will laugh at you for your fears, and take immediate steps to put that precious brother of

yours in prison where he belongs."

"I only wish that I dared," she said; "but I am afraid. I learned early to fear men. First my father, then Nikolas, then the fathers in the convent. Nearly all my friends fear their husbands—why should I not fear mine?"

"It does not seem right that women should fear men," said Tarzan, an expression of puzzlement on his face. "I am better acquainted with the jungle folk, and there it is more often the other way around, except among the black men, and they to my mind are in most ways lower in the scale than the beasts. No, I cannot understand why civilized women should fear men, the beings that are created to protect them. I should hate

to think that any woman feared me."

"I do not think that any woman would fear you, my friend," said Olga de Coude softly. "I have known you but a short while, yet though it may seem foolish to say it, you are the only man I have ever known whom I think that I should never fear—it is strange, too, for you are very strong. I wondered at the ease with which you handled Nikolas and Paulvitch that night in my cabin. It was marvelous." As Tarzan was leaving her a short time later he wondered a little at the clinging pressure of her hand at parting, and the firm insistence with which she exacted a promise from him that he would call again on the morrow.

The memory of her half-veiled eyes

and perfect lips as she had stood smiling up into his face as he bade her good-by remained with him for the balance of the day. Olga de Coude was a very beautiful woman, and Tarzan of the Apes a very lonely young man, with a heart in him that was in need of the doctoring that only a woman may provide.

As the countess turned back into the room after Tarzan's departure, she found herself face to face with Nikolas Rokoff.

"How long have you been here?" she cried, shrinking away from him.

"Since before your lover came," he answered, with a nasty leer.

"Stop!" she commanded. "How dare you say such a thing to me—your sister!"

"Well, my dear Olga, if he is not your

lover, accept my apologies; but it is no fault of yours that he is not. Had he one-tenth the knowledge of women that I have you would be in his arms this minute. He is a stupid fool, Olga. Why, your every word and act was an open invitation to him, and he had not the sense to see it." The woman put her hands to her ears.

"I will not listen. You are wicked to say such things as that.

No matter what you may threaten me with, you know that I am a good woman. After tonight you will not dare to annoy me, for I shall tell Raoul all. He will understand, and then, Monsieur Nikolas, beware!"

"You shall tell him nothing," said

Rokoff. "I have this affair now, and with the help of one of your servants whom I may trust it will lack nothing in the telling when the time comes that the details of the sworn evidence shall be poured into your husband's ears. The other affair served its purpose well—we now have something tangible to work on, Olga. A real AFFAIR —and you a trusted wife.

Shame, Olga," and the brute laughed.

So the countess told her count nothing, and matters were worse than they had been. From a vague fear her mind was transferred to a very tangible one. It may be, too, that conscience helped to enlarge it out of all proportion.

5. THE PLOT THAT FAILED

For a month Tarzan was a regular and very welcome devotee at the shrine of the beautiful Countess de Coude. Often he met other members of the select little coterie that dropped in for tea of an afternoon. More often Olga found devices that would give her an hour of Tarzan alone.

For a time she had been frightened by what Nikolas had insinuated.

She had not thought of this big, young man as anything more than friend, but with the suggestion implanted by the evil words of her brother she had grown to speculate much upon the strange force which seemed to attract her toward the gray-eyed stranger. She did not wish to

love him, nor did she wish his love.

She was much younger than her husband, and without having realized it she had been craving the haven of a friendship with one nearer her own age. Twenty is shy in exchanging confidences with forty.

Tarzan was but two years her senior. He could understand her, she felt. Then he was clean and honorable and chivalrous. She was not afraid of him. That she could trust him she had felt instinctively from the first.

From a distance Rokoff had watched this growing intimacy with malicious glee. Ever since he had learned that Tarzan knew that he was a Russian spy there had been added to his hatred for

the ape-man a great fear that he would expose him. He was but waiting now until the moment was propitious for a master stroke. He wanted to rid himself forever of Tarzan, and at the same time reap an ample revenge for the humiliations and defeats that he had suffered at his hands.

Tarzan was nearer to contentment than he had been since the peace and tranquility of his jungle had been broken in upon by the advent of the marooned Porter party. He enjoyed the pleasant social intercourse with Olga's friends, while the friendship which had sprung up between the fair countess and himself was a source of never- ending delight. It broke in upon and dispersed his gloomy

thoughts, and served as a balm to his lacerated heart.

Sometimes D'Arnot accompanied him on his visits to the De Coude home, for he had long known both Olga and the count. Occasionally De Coude dropped in, but the multitudinous affairs of his official position and the never-ending demands of politics kept him from home usually until late at night.

Rokoff spied upon Tarzan almost constantly, waiting for the time that he should call at the De Coude palace at night, but in this he was doomed to disappointment. On several occasions Tarzan accompanied the countess to her home after the opera, but he invariably left her at the entrance—much to the

disgust of the lady's devoted brother.

Finding that it seemed impossible to trap Tarzan through any voluntary act of his own, Rokoff and Paulvitch put their heads together to hatch a plan that would trap the ape-man in all the circumstantial evidence of a compromising position.

For days they watched the papers as well as the movements of De Coude and Tarzan. At length they were rewarded. A morning paper made brief mention of a smoker that was to be given on the following evening by the German minister. De Coude's name was among those of the invited guests. If he attended this meant that he would be absent from his home until after midnight.

On the night of the banquet Paulvitch

waited at the curb before the residence of the German minister, where he could scan the face of each guest that arrived. He had not long to wait before De Coude descended from his car and passed him. That was enough. Paulvitch hastened back to his quarters, where Rokoff awaited him. There they waited until after eleven, then Paulvitch took down the receiver of their telephone. He called a number.

"The apartments of Lieutenant D'Arnot?" he asked, when he had obtained his connection.

"A message for Monsieur Tarzan, if he will be so kind as to step to the telephone." For a minute there was silence.

"Monsieur Tarzan?"

"Ah, yes, monsieur, this is Fran—in the service of the Countess de Coude. Possibly monsieur does poor Franchise the honor to recall him— yes? "Yes, monsieur. I have a message, an urgent message from the countess.

She asks that you hasten to her at once —she is in trouble, monsieur.

"No, monsieur, poor Franchise does not know. Shall I tell madame that monsieur will be here shortly? "Thank you, monsieur. The good God will bless you." Paulvitch hung up the receiver and turned to grin at Rokoff.

"It will take him thirty minutes to get there. If you reach the German minister's in fifteen, De Coude should arrive at his

home in about forty-five minutes. It all depends upon whether the fool will remain fifteen minutes after he finds that a trick has been played upon him; but unless I am mistaken Olga will be loath to let him go in so short a time as that. Here is the note for De Coude.

Hasten!" Paulvitch lost no time in reaching the German minister's. At the door he handed the note to a footman. "This is for the Count de Coude. It is very urgent. You must see that it is placed in his hands at once," and he dropped a piece of silver into the willing hand of the servant. Then he returned to his quarters.

A moment later De Coude was apologizing to his host as he tore open

the envelope. What he read left his face white and his hand trembling.

MONSIEUR LE COUNT DE COUDE: One who wishes to save the honor of your name takes this means to warn you that the sanctity of your home is this minute in jeopardy.

A certain man who for months has been a constant visitor there during your absence is now with your wife. If you go at once to your countess' boudoir you will find them together.

A FRIEND.

Twenty minutes after Paulvitch had called Tarzan, Rokoff obtained a connection with Olga's private line. Her maid answered the telephone which was in the countess' boudoir.

"But madame has retired," said the maid, in answer to Rokoff's request to speak with her.

"This is a very urgent message for the countess' ears alone," replied Rokoff. "Tell her that she must arise and slip something about her and come to the telephone. I shall call up again in five minutes." Then he hung up his receiver. A moment later Paulvitch entered.

"The count has the message?" asked Rokoff.

"He should be on his way to his home by now," replied Paulvitch.

"Good! My lady will be sitting in her boudoir, very much in negligee, about now. In a minute the faithful Jacques will escort Monsieur Tarzan into her

presence without announcing him. It will take a few minutes for explanations. Olga will look very alluring in the filmy creation that is her night-dress, and the clinging robe which but half conceals the charms that the former does not conceal at all. Olga will be surprised, but not displeased.

"If there is a drop of red blood in the man the count will break in upon a very pretty love scene in about fifteen minutes from now.

I think we have planned marvelously, my dear Alexis. Let us go out and drink to the very good health of Monsieur Tarzan in some of old Plancon's unparalleled absinth; not forgetting that the Count de Coude is one of the best

swordsmen in Paris, and by far the best shot in all France." When Tarzan reached Olga's, Jacques was awaiting him at the entrance.

"This way, Monsieur," he said, and led the way up the broad, marble staircase. In another moment he had opened a door, and, drawing aside a heavy curtain, obsequiously bowed Tarzan into a dimly lighted apartment. Then Jacques vanished.

Across the room from him Tarzan saw Olga seated before a little desk on which stood her telephone. She was tapping impatiently upon the polished surface of the desk. She had not heard him enter.

"Olga," he said, "what is wrong?" She

turned toward him with a little cry of alarm.

"Jean!" she cried. "What are you doing here? Who admitted you? What does it mean?" Tarzan was thunderstruck, but in an instant he realized a part of the truth.

"Then you did not send for me, Olga?"

"Send for you at this time of night? Mon Dieu! Jean, do you think that I am quite mad?"

"François telephoned me to come at once; that you were in trouble and wanted me." "François? Who in the world is François?"

"He said that he was in your service. He spoke as though I should recall the

fact."

"There is no one by that name in my employ. Some one has played a joke upon you, Jean," and Olga laughed.

"I fear that it may be a most sinister 'joke,' Olga," he replied.

"There is more back of it than humor."

"What do you mean? You do not think that—" "Where is the count?" he interrupted.

"At the German ambassador's."

"This is another move by your estimable brother. Tomorrow the count will hear of it. He will question the servants. Everything will point to— to what Rokoff wishes the count to think."

"The scoundrel!" cried Olga. She had

arisen, and come close to Tarzan, where she stood looking up into his face. She was very frightened. In her eyes was an expression that the hunter sees in those of a poor, terrified doe —puzzled—questioning. She trembled, and to steady herself raised her hands to his broad shoulders. "What shall we do, Jean?" she whispered. "It is terrible. Tomorrow all Paris will read of it—he will see to that." Her look, her attitude, her words were eloquent of the age-old appeal of defenseless woman to her natural protector—man. Tarzan took one of the warm little hands that lay on his breast in his own strong one. The act was quite involuntary, and almost equally so was the instinct of protection that threw a

sheltering arm around the girl's shoulders.

The result was electrical. Never before had he been so close to her. In startled guilt they looked suddenly into each other's eyes, and where Olga de Coude should have been strong she was weak, for she crept closer into the man's arms, and clasped her own about his neck. And Tarzan of the Apes? He took the panting figure into his mighty arms, and covered the hot lips with kisses.

Raoul de Coude made hurried excuses to his host after he had read the note handed him by the ambassador's butler. Never afterward could he recall the nature of the excuses he made. Everything was quite a blur to him up to

the time that he stood on the threshold of his own home. Then he became very cool, moving quietly and with caution. For some inexplicable reason Jacques had the door open before he was halfway to the steps. It did not strike him at the time as being unusual, though afterward he remarked it.

Very softly he tiptoed up the stairs and along the gallery to the door of his wife's boudoir. In his hand was a heavy walking stick—in his heart, murder.

Olga was the first to see him. With a horrified shriek she tore herself from Tarzan's arms, and the ape-man turned just in time to ward with his arm a terrific blow that De Coude had aimed at his head. Once, twice, three times the

heavy stick fell with lightning rapidity, and each blow aided in the transition of the ape-man back to the primordial.

With the low, guttural snarl of the bull ape he sprang for the Frenchman. The great stick was torn from his grasp and broken in two as though it had been matchwood, to be flung aside as the now infuriated beast charged for his adversary's throat. Olga de Coude stood a horrified spectator of the terrible scene which ensued during the next brief moment, then she sprang to where Tarzan was murdering her husband— choking the life from him— shaking him as a terrier might shake a rat.

Frantically she tore at his great hands. "Mother of God!" she cried. "You are

killing him, you are killing him! Oh, Jean, you are killing my husband!" Tarzan was deaf with rage. Suddenly he hurled the body to the floor, and, placing his foot upon the upturned breast, raised his head.

Then through the palace of the Count de Coude rang the awesome challenge of the bull ape that has made a kill. From cellar to attic the horrid sound searched out the servants, and left them blanched and trembling. The woman in the room sank to her knees beside the body of her husband, and prayed.

Slowly the red mist faded from before Tarzan's eyes. Things began to take form —he was regaining the perspective of civilized man.

His eyes fell upon the figure of the kneeling woman. "Olga," he whispered. She looked up, expecting to see the maniacal light of murder in the eyes above her. Instead she saw sorrow and contrition.

"Oh, Jean!" she cried. "See what you have done. He was my husband.

I loved him, and you have killed him." Very gently Tarzan raised the limp form of the Count de Coude and bore it to a couch. Then he put his ear to the man's breast.

"Some brandy, Olga," he said.

She brought it, and together they forced it between his lips.

Presently a faint gasp came from the white lips. The head turned, and De

Coude groaned.

"He will not die," said Tarzan. "Thank God!"

"Why did you do it, Jean?" she asked.

"I do not know. He struck me, and I went mad. I have seen the apes of my tribe do the same thing. I have never told you my story, Olga. It would have been better had you known it—this might not have happened. I never saw my father. The only mother I knew was a ferocious she-ape. Until I was fifteen I had never seen a human being. I was twenty before I saw a white man. A little more than a year ago I was a naked beast of prey in an African jungle.

"Do not judge me too harshly. Two years is too short a time in which to

attempt to work the change in an individual that it has taken countless ages to accomplish in the white race."

"I do not judge at all, Jean. The fault is mine. You must go now— he must not find you here when he regains consciousness. Good-by." It was a sorrowful Tarzan who walked with bowed head from the palace of the Count de Coude.

Once outside his thoughts took definite shape, to the end that twenty minutes later he entered a police station not far from the Rue Maule. Here he soon found one of the officers with whom he had had the encounter several weeks previous. The policeman was genuinely glad to see again the man who

had so roughly handled him.

After a moment of conversation Tarzan asked if he had ever heard of Nikolas Rokoff or Alexis Paulvitch.

"Very often, indeed, monsieur. Each has a police record, and while there is nothing charged against them now, we make it a point to know pretty well where they may be found should the occasion demand. It is only the same precaution that we take with every known criminal. Why does monsieur ask?" "They are known to me," replied Tarzan. "I wish to see Monsieur Rokoff on a little matter of business. If you can direct me to his lodgings I shall appreciate it." A few minutes later he bade the policeman adieu, and, with a

slip of paper in his pocket bearing a certain address in a semirespectable quarter, he walked briskly toward the nearest taxi stand.

Rokoff and Paulvitch had returned to their rooms, and were sitting talking over the probable outcome of the evening's events. They had telephoned to the offices of two of the morning papers from which they momentarily expected representatives to hear the first report of the scandal that was to stir social Paris on the morrow.

A heavy step sounded on the stairway. "Ah, but these newspaper men are prompt," exclaimed Rokoff, and as a knock fell upon the door of their room: "Enter, monsieur." The smile of

welcome froze upon the Russian's face as he looked into the hard, gray eyes of his visitor.

"Name of a name!" he shouted, springing to his feet, "What brings you here!"

"Sit down!" said Tarzan, so low that the men could barely catch the words, but in a tone that brought Rokoff to his chair, and kept Paulvitch in his.

"You know what has brought me here," he continued, in the same low tone. "It should be to kill you, but because you are Olga de Coude's brother I shall not do that—now.

"I shall give you a chance for your lives. Paulvitch does not count much - he is merely a stupid, foolish little tool, and

so I shall not kill him so long as I permit you to live. Before I leave you two alive in this room you will have done two things. The first will be to write a full confession of your connection with tonight's plot—and sign it.

"The second will be to promise me upon pain of death that you will permit no word of this affair to get into the newspapers. If you do not do both, neither of you will be alive when I pass next through that doorway. Do you understand?" And, without waiting for a reply: "Make haste; there is ink before you, and paper and a pen." Rokoff assumed a truculent air, attempting by bravado to show how little he feared Tarzan's threats. An instant later he felt

the ape-man's steel fingers at his throat, and Paulvitch, who attempted to dodge them and reach the door, was lifted completely off the floor, and hurled senseless into a corner. When Rokoff commenced to blacken about the face Tarzan released his hold and shoved the fellow back into his chair. After a moment of coughing Rokoff sat sullenly glaring at the man standing opposite him. Presently Paulvitch came to himself, and limped painfully back to his chair at Tarzan's command.

"Now write," said the ape-man. "If it is necessary to handle you again I shall not be so lenient." Rokoff picked up a pen and commenced to write.

"See that you omit no detail, and that

you mention every name," cautioned Tarzan.

Presently there was a knock at the door. "Enter," said Tarzan.

A dapper young man came in. "I am from the Matin," he announced.

"I understand that Monsieur Rokoff has a story for me."

"Then you are mistaken, monsieur," replied Tarzan. "You have no story for publication, have you, my dear Nikolas." Rokoff looked up from his writing with an ugly scowl upon his face.

"No," he growled, "I have no story for publication—now."

"Nor ever, my dear Nikolas," and the reporter did not see the nasty light in the

ape- man's eye; but Nikolas Rokoff did.

"Nor ever," he repeated hastily.

"It is too bad that monsieur has been troubled," said Tarzan, turning to the newspaper man. "I bid monsieur good evening," and he bowed the dapper young man out of the room, and closed the door in his face.

An hour later Tarzan, with a rather bulky manuscript in his coat pocket, turned at the door leading from Rokoff's room.

"Were I you I should leave France," he said, "for sooner or later I shall find an excuse to kill you that will not in any way compromise your sister."

6. A DUEL

D'Arnot was asleep when Tarzan entered their apartments after leaving Rokoff's. Tarzan did not disturb him, but the following morning he narrated the happenings of the previous evening, omitting not a single detail.

"What a fool I have been," he concluded. "De Coude and his wife were both my friends. How have I returned their friendship? Barely did I escape murdering the count. I have cast a stigma on the name of a good woman. It is very probable that I have broken up a happy home."

"Do you love Olga de Coude?" asked D'Arnot.

"Were I not positive that she does not

love me I could not answer your question, Paul; but without disloyalty to her I tell you that I do not love her, nor does she love me. For an instant we were the victims of a sudden madness—it was not love—and it would have left us, unharmed, as suddenly as it had come upon us even though De Coude had not returned. As you know, I have had little experience of women. Olga de Coude is very beautiful; that, and the dim light and the seductive surroundings, and the appeal of the defenseless for protection, might have been resisted by a more civilized man, but my civilization is not even skin deep—it does not go deeper than my clothes.

"Paris is no place for me. I will but

continue to stumble into more and more serious pitfalls. The man-made restrictions are irksome.

I feel always that I am a prisoner. I cannot endure it, my friend, and so I think that I shall go back to my own jungle, and lead the life that God intended that I should lead when He put me there."

"Do not take it so to heart, Jean," responded D'Arnot. "You have acquitted yourself much better than most `civilized' men would have under similar circumstances. As to leaving Paris at this time, I rather think that Raoul de Coude may be expected to have something to say on that subject before long." Nor was D'Arnot mistaken.

A week later on Monsieur Flaubert was announced about eleven in the morning, as D'Arnot and Tarzan were breakfasting. Monsieur Flaubert was an impressively polite gentleman. With many low bows he delivered Monsieur le Count de Coude's challenge to Monsieur Tarzan. Would monsieur be so very kind as to arrange to have a friend meet Monsieur Flaubert at as early an hour as convenient, that the details might be arranged to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned? Certainly. Monsieur Tarzan would be delighted to place his interests unreservedly in the hands of his friend, Lieutenant D'Arnot. And so it was arranged that D'Arnot was to call on Monsieur Flaubert at two that afternoon,

and the polite Monsieur Flaubert, with many bows, left them.

When they were again alone D'Arnot looked quizzically at Tarzan.

"Well?" he said.

"Now to my sins I must add murder, or else myself be killed," said Tarzan. "I am progressing rapidly in the ways of my civilized brothers."

"What weapons shall you select?" asked D'Arnot. "De Coude is accredited with being a master with the sword, and a splendid shot."

"I might then choose poisoned arrows at twenty paces, or spears at the same distance," laughed Tarzan. "Make it pistols, Paul."

"He will kill you, Jean."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Tarzan. "I must die some day."

"We had better make it swords," said D'Arnot. "He will be satisfied with wounding you, and there is less danger of a mortal wound."

"Pistols," said Tarzan, with finality.

D'Arnot tried to argue him out of it, but without avail, so pistols it was.

D'Arnot returned from his conference with Monsieur Flaubert shortly after four.

"It is all arranged," he said. "Everything is satisfactory. Tomorrow morning at daylight—there is a secluded spot on the road not far from Étamps.

For some personal reason Monsieur Flaubert preferred it. I did not demur."

"Good!" was Tarzan's only comment. He did not refer to the matter again even indirectly. That night he wrote several letters before he retired. After sealing and addressing them he placed them all in an envelope addressed to D'Arnot. As he undressed D'Arnot heard him humming a music-hall ditty.

The Frenchman swore under his breath. He was very unhappy, for he was positive that when the sun rose the next morning it would look down upon a dead Tarzan. It grated upon him to see Tarzan so unconcerned.

"This is a most uncivilized hour for people to kill each other," remarked the

ape-man when he had been routed out of a comfortable bed in the blackness of the early morning hours. He had slept well, and so it seemed that his head scarcely touched the pillow ere his man deferentially aroused him. His remark was addressed to D'Arnot, who stood fully dressed in the doorway of Tarzan's bedroom.

D'Arnot had scarcely slept at all during the night. He was nervous, and therefore inclined to be irritable.

"I presume you slept like a baby all night," he said.

Tarzan laughed. "From your tone, Paul, I infer that you rather harbor the fact against me. I could not help it, really."

"No, Jean; it is not that," replied D'Arnot, himself smiling. "But you take the entire matter with such infernal indifference—it is exasperating. One would think that you were going out to shoot at a target, rather than to face one of the best shots in France." Tarzan shrugged his shoulders. "I am going out to expiate a great wrong, Paul. A very necessary feature of the expiation is the marksmanship of my opponent. Wherefore, then, should I be dissatisfied? Have you not yourself told me that Count de Coude is a splendid marksman?"

"You mean that you hope to be killed?" exclaimed D'Arnot, in horror.

"I cannot say that I hope to be; but you

must admit that there is little reason to believe that I shall not be killed." Had D'Arnot known the thing that was in the ape-man's mind—that had been in his mind almost from the first intimation that De Coude would call him to account on the field of honor—he would have been even more horrified than he was.

In silence they entered D'Arnot's great car, and in similar silence they sped over the dim road that leads to Étamps. Each man was occupied with his own thoughts. D'Arnot's were very mournful, for he was genuinely fond of Tarzan. The great friendship which had sprung up between these two men whose lives and training had been so widely different had but been strengthened by association, for

they were both men to whom the same high ideals of manhood, of personal courage, and of honor appealed with equal force. They could understand one another, and each could be proud of the friendship of the other.

Tarzan of the Apes was wrapped in thoughts of the past; pleasant memories of the happier occasions of his lost jungle life. He recalled the countless boyhood hours that he had spent cross-legged upon the table in his dead father's cabin, his little brown body bent over one of the fascinating picture books from which, unaided, he had gleaned the secret of the printed language long before the sounds of human speech fell upon his ears. A smile of contentment

softened his strong face as he thought of that day of days that he had had alone with Jane Porter in the heart of his primeval forest.

Presently his reminiscences were broken in upon by the stopping of the car—they were at their destination. Tarzan's mind returned to the affairs of the moment. He knew that he was about to die, but there was no fear of death in him. To a denizen of the cruel jungle death is a commonplace. The first law of nature compels them to cling tenaciously to life—to fight for it; but it does not teach them to fear death.

D'Arnot and Tarzan were first upon the field of honor. A moment later De Coude, Monsieur Flaubert, and a third

gentleman arrived.

The last was introduced to D'Arnot and Tarzan; he was a physician.

D'Arnot and Monsieur Flaubert spoke together in whispers for a brief time. The Count de Coude and Tarzan stood apart at opposite sides of the field. Presently the seconds summoned them. D'Arnot and Monsieur Flaubert had examined both pistols. The two men who were to face each other a moment later stood silently while Monsieur Flaubert recited the conditions they were to observe.

They were to stand back to back. At a signal from Monsieur Flaubert they were to walk in opposite directions, their pistols hanging by their sides. When

each had proceeded ten paces D'Arnot was to give the final signal —then they were to turn and fire at will until one fell, or each had expended the three shots allowed.

While Monsieur Flaubert spoke Tarzan selected a cigarette from his case, and lighted it. De Coude was the personification of coolness—was he not the best shot in France? Presently Monsieur Flaubert nodded to D'Arnot, and each man placed his principal in position.

"Are you quite ready, gentlemen?" asked Monsieur Flaubert.

"Quite," replied De Coude.

Tarzan nodded. Monsieur Flaubert gave the signal. He and D'Arnot stepped

back a few paces to be out of the line of fire as the men paced slowly apart. Six! Seven! Eight! There were tears in D'Arnot's eyes. He loved Tarzan very much. Nine! Another pace, and the poor lieutenant gave the signal he so hated to give. To him it sounded the doom of his best friend.

Quickly De Coude wheeled and fired. Tarzan gave a little start.

His pistol still dangled at his side. De Coude hesitated, as though waiting to see his antagonist crumple to the ground. The Frenchman was too experienced a marksman not to know that he had scored a hit. Still Tarzan made no move to raise his pistol. De Coude fired once more, but the attitude of the ape-man—the utter

indifference that was so apparent in every line of the nonchalant ease of his giant figure, and the even unruffled puffing of his cigarette—had disconcerted the best marksman in France. This time Tarzan did not start, but again De Coude knew that he had hit.

Suddenly the explanation leaped to his mind—his antagonist was coolly taking these terrible chances in the hope that he would receive no staggering wound from any of De Coude's three shots.

Then he would take his own time about shooting De Coude down deliberately, coolly, and in cold blood. A little shiver ran up the Frenchman's spine. It was fiendish—diabolical. What

manner of creature was this that could stand complacently with two bullets in him, waiting for the third? And so De Coude took careful aim this time, but his nerve was gone, and he made a clean miss. Not once had Tarzan raised his pistol hand from where it hung beside his leg.

For a moment the two stood looking straight into each other's eyes.

On Tarzan's face was a pathetic expression of disappointment. On De Coude's a rapidly growing expression of horror—yes, of terror.

He could endure it no longer.

"Mother of God! Monsieur—shoot!" he screamed.

But Tarzan did not raise his pistol.

Instead, he advanced toward De Coude, and when D'Arnot and Monsieur Flaubert, misinterpreting his intention, would have rushed between them, he raised his left hand in a sign of remonstrance.

"Do not fear," he said to them, "I shall not harm him." It was most unusual, but they halted. Tarzan advanced until he was quite close to De Coude.

"There must have been something wrong with monsieur's pistol," he said. "Or monsieur is unstrung. Take mine, monsieur, and try again," and Tarzan offered his pistol, butt foremost, to the astonished De Coude.

"MON DIEU, monsieur!" cried the latter. "Are you mad?"

"No, my friend," replied the ape-man; "but I deserve to die. It is the only way in which I may atone for the wrong I have done a very good woman. Take my pistol and do as I bid."

"It would be murder," replied De Coude. "But what wrong did you do my wife? She swore to me that—" "I do not mean that," said Tarzan quickly. "You saw all the wrong that passed between us. But that was enough to cast a shadow upon her name, and to ruin the happiness of a man against whom I had no enmity. The fault was all mine, and so I hoped to die for it this morning. I am disappointed that monsieur is not so wonderful a marksman as I had been led to believe."

"You say that the fault was all yours?"

asked De Coude eagerly.

"All mine, monsieur. Your wife is a very pure woman. She loves only you. The fault that you saw was all mine. The thing that brought me there was no fault of either the Countess de Coude or myself. Here is a paper which will quite positively demonstrate that," and Tarzan drew from his pocket the statement Rokoff had written and signed.

De Coude took it and read. D'Arnot and Monsieur Flaubert had drawn near. They were interested spectators of this strange ending of a strange duel. None spoke until De Coude had quite finished, then he looked up at Tarzan.

"You are a very brave and chivalrous gentleman," he said. "I thank God that I

did not kill you." De Coude was a Frenchman. Frenchmen are impulsive. He threw his arms about Tarzan and embraced him. Monsieur Flaubert embraced D'Arnot. There was no one to embrace the doctor. So possibly it was pique which prompted him to interfere, and demand that he be permitted to dress Tarzan's wounds.

"This gentleman was hit once at least," he said. "Possibly thrice." "Twice," said Tarzan. "Once in the left shoulder, and again in the left side — both flesh wounds, I think." But the doctor insisted upon stretching him upon the sward, and tinkering with him until the wounds were cleansed and the flow of blood checked.

One result of the duel was that they all rode back to Paris together in D'Arnot's car, the best of friends. De Coude was so relieved to have had this double assurance of his wife's loyalty that he felt no rancor at all toward Tarzan. It is true that the latter had assumed much more of the fault than was rightly his, but if he lied a little he may be excused, for he lied in the service of a woman, and he lied like a gentleman.

The ape-man was confined to his bed for several days. He felt that it was foolish and unnecessary, but the doctor and D'Arnot took the matter so to heart that he gave in to please them, though it made him laugh to think of it.

"It is droll," he said to D'Arnot. "To

lie abed because of a pin prick! Why, when Bolgani, the king gorilla, tore me almost to pieces, while I was still but a little boy, did I have a nice soft bed to lie on? No, only the damp, rotting vegetation of the jungle.

Hidden beneath some friendly bush I lay for days and weeks with only Kala to nurse me—poor, faithful Kala, who kept the insects from my wounds and warned off the beasts of prey.

"When I called for water she brought it to me in her own mouth—the only way she knew to carry it. There was no sterilized gauze, there was no antiseptic bandage—there was nothing that would not have driven our dear doctor mad to have seen. Yet I recovered—recovered

to lie in bed because of a tiny scratch that one of the jungle folk would scarce realize unless it were upon the end of his nose." But the time was soon over, and before he realized it Tarzan found himself abroad again. Several times De Coude had called, and when he found that Tarzan was anxious for employment of some nature he promised to see what could be done to find a berth for him.

It was the first day that Tarzan was permitted to go out that he received a message from De Coude requesting him to call at the count's office that afternoon.

He found De Coude awaiting him with a very pleasant welcome, and a sincere congratulation that he was once

more upon his feet. Neither had ever mentioned the duel or the cause of it since that morning upon the field of honor.

"I think that I have found just the thing for you, Monsieur Tarzan," said the count. "It is a position of much trust and responsibility, which also requires considerably physical courage and prowess. I cannot imagine a man better fitted than you, my dear Monsieur Tarzan, for this very position. It will necessitate travel, and later it may lead to a very much better post - possibly in the diplomatic service.

"At first, for a short time only, you will be a special agent in the service of the ministry of war. Come, I will take

you to the gentleman who will be your chief. He can explain the duties better than I, and then you will be in a position to judge if you wish to accept or no." De Coude himself escorted Tarzan to the office of General Rochère, the chief of the bureau to which Tarzan would be attached if he accepted the position. There the count left him, after a glowing description to the general of the many attributes possessed by the ape-man which should fit him for the work of the service.

A half hour later Tarzan walked out of the office the possessor of the first position he had ever held. On the morrow he was to return for further instructions, though General Rochère

had made it quite plain that Tarzan might prepare to leave Paris for an almost indefinite period, possibly on the morrow.

It was with feelings of the keenest elation that he hastened home to bear the good news to D'Arnot. At last he was to be of some value in the world. He was to earn money, and, best of all, to travel and see the world.

He could scarcely wait to get well inside D'Arnot's sitting room before he burst out with the glad tidings. D'Arnot was not so pleased.

"It seems to delight you to think that you are to leave Paris, and that we shall not see each other for months, perhaps. Tarzan, you are a most ungrateful beast!"

and D'Arnot laughed.

"No, Paul; I am a little child. I have a new toy, and I am tickled to death." And so it came that on the following day Tarzan left Paris en route for Marseilles and Oran.

7. THE DANCING GIRL OF SIDI AISSA

Tarzan's first mission did not bid fair to be either exciting or vastly important. There was a certain lieutenant of Spahis whom the government had reason to suspect of improper relations with a great European power. This Lieutenant Gernois, who was at present stationed at Sidibel-Abbes, had recently been attached to the general staff, where certain information of great military value had come into his possession in the ordinary routine of his duties. It was this information which the government suspected the great power was bartering for with the officer.

It was at most but a vague hint

dropped by a certain notorious Parisienne in a jealous mood that had caused suspicion to rest upon the lieutenant. But general staffs are jealous of their secrets, and treason so serious a thing that even a hint of it may not be safely neglected. And so it was that Tarzan had come to Algeria in the guise of an American hunter and traveler to keep a close eye upon Lieutenant Gernois.

He had looked forward with keen delight to again seeing his beloved Africa, but this northern aspect of it was so different from his tropical jungle home that he might as well have been back in Paris for all the heart thrills of homecoming that he experienced. At

Oran he spent a day wandering through the narrow, crooked alleys of the Arab quarter enjoying the strange, new sights. The next day found him at Sidi-bel-Abbes, where he presented his letters of introduction to both civil and military authorities— letters which gave no clew to the real significance of his mission.

Tarzan possessed a sufficient command of English to enable him to pass among Arabs and Frenchmen as an American, and that was all that was required of it. When he met an Englishman he spoke French in order that he might not betray himself, but occasionally talked in English to foreigners who understood that tongue, but could not note the slight

imperfections of accent and pronunciation that were his.

Here he became acquainted with many of the French officers, and soon became a favorite among them. He met Gernois, whom he found to be a taciturn, dyspeptic-looking man of about forty, having little or no social intercourse with his fellows.

For a month nothing of moment occurred. Gernois apparently had no visitors, nor did he on his occasional visits to the town hold communication with any who might even by the wildest flight of imagination be construed into secret agents of a foreign power.

Tarzan was beginning to hope that, after all, the rumor might have been

false, when suddenly Gernois was ordered to Bou Saada in the Petit Sahara far to the south.

A company of SPAHIS and three officers were to relieve another company already stationed there. Fortunately one of the officers, Captain Gérard, had become an excellent friend of Tarzan's, and so when the ape-man suggested that he should embrace the opportunity of accompanying him to Bou Saada, where he expected to find hunting, it caused not the slightest suspicion.

At Bouira the detachment detrained, and the balance of the journey was made in the saddle. As Tarzan was dickering at Bouira for a mount he caught a brief

glimpse of a man in European clothes eying him from the doorway of a native coffeehouse, but as Tarzan looked the man turned and entered the little, low-ceilinged mud hut, and but for a haunting impression that there had been something familiar about the face or figure of the fellow, Tarzan gave the matter no further thought.

The march to Aumale was fatiguing to Tarzan, whose equestrian experiences hitherto had been confined to a course of riding lessons in a Parisian academy, and so it was that he quickly sought the comforts of a bed in the Hotel Grossat, while the officers and troops took up their quarters at the military post.

Although Tarzan was called early the

following morning, the company of SPAHIS was on the march before he had finished his breakfast. He was hurrying through his meal that the soldiers might not get too far in advance of him when he glanced through the door connecting the dining room with the bar.

To his surprise, he saw Gernois standing there in conversation with the very stranger he had seen in the coffee-house at Bouira the day previous. He could not be mistaken, for there was the same strangely familiar attitude and figure, though the man's back was toward him.

As his eyes lingered on the two, Gernois looked up and caught the intent expression on Tarzan's face. The

stranger was talking in a low whisper at the time, but the French officer immediately interrupted him, and the two at once turned away and passed out of the range of Tarzan's vision.

This was the first suspicious occurrence that Tarzan had ever witnessed in connection with Gernois' actions, but he was positive that the men had left the barroom solely because Gernois had caught Tarzan's eyes upon them; then there was the persistent impression of familiarity about the stranger to further augment the ape-man's belief that here at length was something which would bear watching.

A moment later Tarzan entered the barroom, but the men had left, nor did he

see aught of them in the street beyond, though he found a pretext to ride to various shops before he set out after the column which had now considerable start of him. He did not overtake them until he reached Sidi Aissa shortly after noon, where the soldiers had halted for an hour's rest. Here he found Gernois with the column, but there was no sign of the stranger.

It was market day at Sidi Aissa, and the numberless caravans of camels coming in from the desert, and the crowds of bickering Arabs in the market place, filled Tarzan with a consuming desire to remain for a day that he might see more of these sons of the desert. Thus it was that the company of SPAHIS

marched on that afternoon toward Bou Saada without him. He spent the hours until dark wandering about the market in company with a youthful Arab, one Abdul, who had been recommended to him by the innkeeper as a trustworthy servant and interpreter.

Here Tarzan purchased a better mount than the one he had selected at Bouira, and, entering into conversation with the stately Arab to whom the animal had belonged, learned that the seller was Kadour ben Saden, sheik of a desert tribe far south of Djelfa. Through Abdul, Tarzan invited his new acquaintance to dine with him. As the three were making their way through the crowds of marketers, camels, donkeys, and horses

that filled the market place with a confusing babel of sounds, Abdul plucked at Tarzan's sleeve.

"Look, master, behind us," and he turned, pointing at a figure which disappeared behind a camel as Tarzan turned. "He has been following us about all afternoon," continued Abdul.

"I caught only a glimpse of an Arab in a dark-blue burnoose and white turban," replied Tarzan. "Is it he you mean?"

"Yes. I suspected him because he seems a stranger here, without other business than following us, which is not the way of the Arab who is honest, and also because he keeps the lower part of his face hidden, only his eyes showing. He must be a bad man, or he would have

honest business of his own to occupy his time."

"He is on the wrong scent then, Abdul," replied Tarzan, "for no one here can have any grievance against me. This is my first visit to your country, and none knows me. He will soon discover his error, and cease to follow us."

"Unless he be bent on robbery," returned Abdul.

"Then all we can do is wait until he is ready to try his hand upon us," laughed Tarzan, "and I warrant that he will get his bellyful of robbing now that we are prepared for him," and so he dismissed the subject from his mind, though he was destined to recall it before many hours through a most unlooked-for occurrence.

Kadour ben Saden, having dined well, prepared to take leave of his host. With dignified protestations of friendship, he invited Tarzan to visit him in his wild domain, where the antelope, the stag, the boar, the panther, and the lion might still be found in sufficient numbers to tempt an ardent huntsman.

On his departure the ape-man, with Abdul, wandered again into the streets of Sidi Aissa, where he was soon attracted by the wild din of sound coming from the open doorway of one of the numerous cafés maures. It was after eight, and the dancing was in full swing as Tarzan entered. The room was filled to repletion with Arabs. All were smoking, and drinking their thick, hot

coffee.

Tarzan and Abdul found seats near the center of the room, though the terrific noise produced by the musicians upon their Arab drums and pipes would have rendered a seat farther from them more acceptable to the quiet-loving ape-man. A rather good-looking Ouled- Nail was dancing, and, perceiving Tarzan's European clothes, and scenting a generous gratuity, she threw her silken handkerchief upon his shoulder, to be rewarded with a franc.

When her place upon the floor had been taken by another the bright-eyed Abdul saw her in conversation with two Arabs at the far side of the room, near a side door that let upon an inner court,

around the gallery of which were the rooms occupied by the girls who danced in this cafe.

At first he thought nothing of the matter, but presently he noticed from the corner of his eye one of the men nod in their direction, and the girl turn and shoot a furtive glance at Tarzan. Then the Arabs melted through the doorway into the darkness of the court.

When it came again the girl's turn to dance she hovered close to Tarzan, and for the ape-man alone were her sweetest smiles. Many an ugly scowl was cast upon the tall European by swarthy, dark-eyed sons of the desert, but neither smiles nor scowls produced any outwardly visible effect upon him. Again

the girl cast her handkerchief upon his shoulder, and again was she rewarded with a franc piece. As she was sticking it upon her forehead, after the custom of her kind, she bent low toward Tarzan, whispering a quick word in his ear.

"There are two without in the court," she said quickly, in broken French, "who would harm m'sieur. At first I promised to lure you to them, but you have been kind, and I cannot do it. Go quickly, before they find that I have failed them. I think that they are very bad men." Tarzan thanked the girl, assuring her that he would be careful, and, having finished her dance, she crossed to the little doorway and went out into the court. But Tarzan did not leave the cafe as she had

urged.

For another half hour nothing unusual occurred, then a surly- looking Arab entered the cafe from the street. He stood near Tarzan, where he deliberately made insulting remarks about the European, but as they were in his native tongue Tarzan was entirely innocent of their purport until Abdul took it upon himself to enlighten him.

"This fellow is looking for trouble," warned Abdul. "He is not alone. In fact, in case of a disturbance, nearly every man here would be against you. It would be better to leave quietly, master."

"Ask the fellow what he wants," commanded Tarzan.

"He says that `the dog of a Christian'

insulted the Ouled-Nail, who belongs to him. He means trouble, m'sieur."

"Tell him that I did not insult his or any other Ouled-Nail, that I wish him to go away and leave me alone. That I have no quarrel with him, nor has he any with me."

"He says," replied Abdul, after delivering this message to the Arab, "that besides being a dog yourself that you are the son of one, and that your grandmother was a hyena. Incidentally you are a liar." The attention of those near by had now been attracted by the altercation, and the sneering laughs that followed this torrent of invective easily indicated the trend of the sympathies of the majority of the audience.

Tarzan did not like being laughed at, neither did he relish the terms applied to him by the Arab, but he showed no sign of anger as he arose from his seat upon the bench. A half smile played about his lips, but of a sudden a mighty fist shot into the face of the scowling Arab, and back of it were the terrible muscles of the ape- man.

At the instant that the man fell a half dozen fierce plainsmen sprang into the room from where they had apparently been waiting for their cue in the street before the cafe. With cries of "Kill the unbeliever!" and "Down with the dog of a Christian!" they made straight for Tarzan. A number of the younger Arabs in the audience sprang to their feet to

join in the assault upon the unarmed white man. Tarzan and Abdul were rushed back toward the end of the room by the very force of numbers opposing them. The young Arab remained loyal to his master, and with drawn knife fought at his side.

With tremendous blows the ape-man felled all who came within reach of his powerful hands. He fought quietly and without a word, upon his lips the same half smile they had worn as he rose to strike down the man who had insulted him. It seemed impossible that either he or Abdul could survive the sea of wicked-looking swords and knives that surrounded them, but the very numbers of their assailants proved the best

bulwark of their safety. So closely packed was the howling, cursing mob that no weapon could be wielded to advantage, and none of the Arabs dared use a firearm for fear of wounding one of his compatriots.

Finally Tarzan succeeded in seizing one of the most persistent of his attackers. With a quick wrench he disarmed the fellow, and then, holding him before them as a shield, he backed slowly beside Abdul toward the little door which led into the inner courtyard. At the threshold he paused for an instant, and, lifting the struggling Arab above his head, hurled him, as though from a catapult, full in the faces of his on-pressing fellows.

Then Tarzan and Abdul stepped into the semidarkness of the court.

The frightened Ouled-Nails were crouching at the tops of the stairs which led to their respective rooms, the only light in the courtyard coming from the sickly candles which each girl had stuck with its own grease to the woodwork of her door-frame, the better to display her charms to those who might happen to traverse the dark inclosure.

Scarcely had Tarzan and Abdul emerged from the room ere a revolver spoke close at their backs from the shadows beneath one of the stairways, and as they turned to meet this new antagonist, two muffled figures sprang toward them, firing as they came. Tarzan

leaped to meet these two new assailants. The foremost lay, a second later, in the trampled dirt of the court, disarmed and groaning from a broken wrist. Abdul's knife found the vitals of the second in the instant that the fellow's revolver missed fire as he held it to the faithful Arab's forehead.

The maddened horde within the cafe were now rushing out in pursuit of their quarry. The Ouled-Nails had extinguished their candles at a cry from one of their number, and the only light within the yard came feebly from the open and half-blocked door of the cafe.

Tarzan had seized a sword from the man who had fallen before Abdul's knife, and now he stood waiting for the

rush of men that was coming in search of them through the darkness.

Suddenly he felt a light hand upon his shoulder from behind, and a woman's voice whispering, "Quick, m'sieur; this way. Follow me."

"Come, Abdul," said Tarzan, in a low tone, to the youth; "we can be no worse off elsewhere than we are here." The woman turned and led them up the narrow stairway that ended at the door of her quarters. Tarzan was close beside her. He saw the gold and silver bracelets upon her bare arms, the strings of gold coin that depended from her hair ornaments, and the gorgeous colors of her dress. He saw that she was a Ouled-Nail, and instinctively he knew that she

was the same who had whispered the warning in his ear earlier in the evening.

As they reached the top of the stairs they could hear the angry crowd searching the yard beneath.

"Soon they will search here," whispered the girl. "They must not find you, for, though you fight with the strength of many men, they will kill you in the end. Hasten; you can drop from the farther window of my room to the street beyond. Before they discover that you are no longer in the court of the buildings you will be safe within the hotel." But even as she spoke, several men had started up the stairway at the head of which they stood. There was a sudden cry from one of the searchers.

They had been discovered. Quickly the crowd rushed for the stairway. The foremost assailant leaped quickly upward, but at the top he met the sudden sword that he had not expected—the quarry had been unarmed before.

With a cry, the man toppled back upon those behind him. Like tenpins they rolled down the stairs. The ancient and rickety structure could not withstand the strain of this unwonted weight and jarring.

With a creaking and rending of breaking wood it collapsed beneath the Arabs, leaving Tarzan, Abdul, and the girl alone upon the frail platform at the top.

"Come!" cried the Ouled-Nail. "They

will reach us from another stairway through the room next to mine. We have not a moment to spare." Just as they were entering the room Abdul heard and translated a cry from the yard below for several to hasten to the street and cut off escape from that side.

"We are lost now," said the girl simply.

"We?" questioned Tarzan.

"Yes, m'sieur," she responded; "they will kill me as well. Have I not aided you?" This put a different aspect on the matter. Tarzan had rather been enjoying the excitement and danger of the encounter. He had not for an instant supposed that either Abdul or the girl could suffer except through accident, and

he had only retreated just enough to keep from being killed himself. He had had no intention of running away until he saw that he was hopelessly lost were he to remain.

Alone he could have sprung into the midst of that close-packed mob, and, laying about him after the fashion of Numa, the lion, have struck the Arabs with such consternation that escape would have been easy. Now he must think entirely of these two faithful friends.

He crossed to the window which overlooked the street. In a minute there would be enemies below. Already he could hear the mob clambering the stairway to the next quarters—they

would be at the door beside him in another instant. He put a foot upon the sill and leaned out, but he did not look down. Above him, within arm's reach, was the low roof of the building. He called to the girl.

She came and stood beside him. He put a great arm about her and lifted her across his shoulder.

"Wait here until I reach down for you from above," he said to Abdul. "In the meantime shove everything in the room against that door—it may delay them long enough." Then he stepped to the sill of the narrow window with the girl upon his shoulders. "Hold tight," he cautioned her. A moment later he had clambered to the roof above with the ease and

dexterity of an ape. Setting the girl down, he leaned far over the roof's edge, calling softly to Abdul.

The youth ran to the window.

"Your hand," whispered Tarzan. The men in the room beyond were battering at the door. With a sudden crash it fell splintering in, and at the same instant Abdul felt himself lifted like a feather onto the roof above. They were not a moment too soon, for as the men broke into the room which they had just quitted a dozen more rounded the corner in the street below and came running to a spot beneath the girl's window.

8. THE FIGHT IN THE DESERT

As the three squatted upon the roof above the quarters of the Ouled-Nails they heard the angry cursing of the Arabs in the room beneath. Abdul translated from time to time to Tarzan.

"They are berating those in the street below now," said Abdul, "for permitting us to escape so easily. Those in the street say that we did not come that way —that we are still within the building, and that those above, being too cowardly to attack us, are attempting to deceive them into believing that we have escaped. In a moment they will have fighting of their own to attend to if they continue their brawling." Presently those in the building gave up the search, and

returned to the cafe. A few remained in the street below, smoking and talking.

Tarzan spoke to the girl, thanking her for the sacrifice she had made for him, a total stranger.

"I liked you," she said simply. "You were unlike the others who come to the cafe. You did not speak coarsely to me —the manner in which you gave me money was not an insult."

"What shall you do after tonight?" he asked. "You cannot return to the cafe. Can you even remain with safety in Sidi Aissa?" "Tomorrow it will be forgotten," she replied. "But I should be glad if it might be that I need never return to this or another cafe.

I have not remained because I wished

to; I have been a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" ejaculated Tarzan incredulously.

"A slave would be the better word," she answered. "I was stolen in the night from my father's DOUAR by a band of marauders. They brought me here and sold me to the Arab who keeps this cafe. It has been nearly two years now since I saw the last of mine own people. They are very far to the south. They never come to Sidi Aissa."

"You would like to return to your people?" asked Tarzan. "Then I shall promise to see you safely so far as Bou Saada at least. There we can doubtless arrange with the commandant to send you the rest of the way."

"Oh, m'sieur," she cried, "how can I ever repay you! You cannot really mean that you will do so much for a poor Ouled-Nail. But my father can reward you, and he will, for is he not a great sheik? He is Kadour ben Saden."

"Kadour ben Saden!" ejaculated Tarzan. "Why, Kadour ben Saden is in Sidi Aissa this very night. He dined with me but a few hours since."

"My father in Sidi Aissa?" cried the amazed girl. "Allah be praised then, for I am indeed saved."

"Hssh!" cautioned Abdul. "Listen." From below came the sound of voices, quite distinguishable upon the still night air. Tarzan could not understand the words, but Abdul and the girl translated.

"They have gone now," said the latter. "It is you they want, m'sieur. One of them said that the stranger who had offered money for your slaying lay in the house of Akmed din Soulef with a broken wrist, but that he had offered a still greater reward if some would lay in wait for you upon the road to Bou Saada and kill you."

"It is he who followed m'sieur about the market today," exclaimed Abdul. "I saw him again within the cafe—him and another; and the two went out into the inner court after talking with this girl here. It was they who attacked and fired upon us, as we came out of the cafe. Why do they wish to kill you, m'sieur?"

"I do not know," replied Tarzan, and

then, after a pause: "Unless—" But he did not finish, for the thought that had come to his mind, while it seemed the only reasonable solution of the mystery, appeared at the same time quite improbable. Presently the men in the street went away. The courtyard and the cafe were deserted.

Cautiously Tarzan lowered himself to the sill of the girl's window.

The room was empty. He returned to the roof and let Abdul down, then he lowered the girl to the arms of the waiting Arab.

From the window Abdul dropped the short distance to the street below, while Tarzan took the girl in his arms and leaped down as he had done on so many

other occasions in his own forest with a burden in his arms. A little cry of alarm was startled from the girl's lips, but Tarzan landed in the street with but an imperceptible jar, and lowered her in safety to her feet.

She clung to him for a moment.

"How strong m'sieur is, and how active," she cried. "EL ADREA, the black lion, himself is not more so."

"I should like to meet this EL ADREA of yours," he said. "I have heard much about him."

"And you come to the DOUAR of my father you shall see him," said the girl. "He lives in a spur of the mountains north of us, and comes down from his lair at night to rob my father's DOUAR.

With a single blow of his mighty paw he crushes the skull of a bull, and woe betide the belated wayfarer who meets EL ADREA abroad at night." Without further mishap they reached the hotel. The sleepy landlord objected strenuously to instituting a search for Kadour ben Saden until the following morning, but a piece of gold put a different aspect on the matter, so that a few moments later a servant had started to make the rounds of the lesser native hostelries where it might be expected that a desert sheik would find congenial associations. Tarzan had felt it necessary to find the girl's father that night, for fear he might start on his homeward journey too early in the morning to be

intercepted.

They had waited perhaps half an hour when the messenger returned with Kadour ben Saden. The old sheik entered the room with a questioning expression upon his proud face.

"Monsieur has done me the honor to —" he commenced, and then his eyes fell upon the girl. With outstretched arms he crossed the room to meet her. "My daughter!" he cried. "Allah is merciful!" and tears dimmed the martial eyes of the old warrior.

When the story of her abduction and her final rescue had been told to Kadour ben Saden he extended his hand to Tarzan.

"All that is Kadour ben Saden's is

thine, my friend, even to his life," he said very simply, but Tarzan knew that those were no idle words.

It was decided that although three of them would have to ride after practically no sleep, it would be best to make an early start in the morning, and attempt to ride all the way to Bou Saada in one day. It would have been comparatively easy for the men, but for the girl it was sure to be a fatiguing journey.

She, however, was the most anxious to undertake it, for it seemed to her that she could not quickly enough reach the family and friends from whom she had been separated for two years.

It seemed to Tarzan that he had not closed his eyes before he was

awakened, and in another hour the party was on its way south toward Bou Saada. For a few miles the road was good, and they made rapid progress, but suddenly it became only a waste of sand, into which the horses sank fetlock deep at nearly every step. In addition to Tarzan, Abdul, the sheik, and his daughter were four of the wild plainsmen of the sheik's tribe who had accompanied him upon the trip to Sidi Aissa. Thus, seven guns strong, they entertained little fear of attack by day, and if all went well they should reach Bou Saada before nightfall.

A brisk wind enveloped them in the blowing sand of the desert, until Tarzan's lips were parched and cracked. What little he could see of the

surrounding country was far from alluring—a vast expanse of rough country, rolling in little, barren hillocks, and tufted here and there with clumps of dreary shrub. Far to the south rose the dim lines of the Saharan Atlas range. How different, thought Tarzan, from the gorgeous Africa of his boyhood! Abdul, always on the alert, looked backward quite as often as he did ahead. At the top of each hillock that they mounted he would draw in his horse and, turning, scan the country to the rear with utmost care. At last his scrutiny was rewarded.

"Look!" he cried. "There are six horsemen behind us."

"Your friends of last evening, no doubt, monsieur," remarked Kadour ben

Saden dryly to Tarzan.

"No doubt," replied the ape-man. "I am sorry that my society should endanger the safety of your journey. At the next village I shall remain and question these gentlemen, while you ride on. There is no necessity for my being at Bou Saada tonight, and less still why you should not ride in peace." "If you stop we shall stop," said Kadour ben Saden. "Until you are safe with your friends, or the enemy has left your trail, we shall remain with you. There is nothing more to say." Tarzan nodded his head. He was a man of few words, and possibly it was for this reason as much as any that Kadour ben Saden had taken to him, for if there be one thing that an

Arab despises it is a talkative man.

All the balance of the day Abdul caught glimpses of the horsemen in their rear. They remained always at about the same distance.

During the occasional halts for rest, and at the longer halt at noon, they approached no closer.

"They are waiting for darkness," said Kadour ben Saden.

And darkness came before they reached Bou Saada. The last glimpse that Abdul had of the grim, white-robed figures that trailed them, just before dusk made it impossible to distinguish them, had made it apparent that they were rapidly closing up the distance that intervened between them and their

intended quarry. He whispered this fact to Tarzan, for he did not wish to alarm the girl. The ape-man drew back beside him.

"You will ride ahead with the others, Abdul," said Tarzan. "This is my quarrel. I shall wait at the next convenient spot, and interview these fellows."

"Then Abdul shall wait at thy side," replied the young Arab, nor would any threats or commands move him from his decision.

"Very well, then," replied Tarzan. "Here is as good a place as we could wish. Here are rocks at the top of this hillock. We shall remain hidden here and give an account of ourselves to these

gentlemen when they appear." They drew in their horses and dismounted. The others riding ahead were already out of sight in the darkness. Beyond them shone the lights of Bou Saada. Tarzan removed his rifle from its boot and loosened his revolver in its holster. He ordered Abdul to withdraw behind the rocks with the horses, so that they should be shielded from the enemies' bullets should they fire. The young Arab pretended to do as he was bid, but when he had fastened the two animals securely to a low shrub he crept back to lie on his belly a few paces behind Tarzan.

The ape-man stood erect in the middle of the road, waiting. Nor did he have long to wait. The sound of

galloping horses came suddenly out of the darkness below him, and a moment later he discerned the moving blotches of lighter color against the solid background of the night.

"Halt," he cried, "or we fire!" The white figures came to a sudden stop, and for a moment there was silence. Then came the sound of a whispered council, and like ghosts the phantom riders dispersed in all directions. Again the desert lay still about him, yet it was an ominous stillness that foreboded evil.

Abdul raised himself to one knee. Tarzan cocked his jungle- trained ears, and presently there came to him the sound of horses walking quietly through the sand to the east of him, to the west, to

the north, and to the south. They had been surrounded. Then a shot came from the direction in which he was looking, a bullet whirred through the air above his head, and he fired at the flash of the enemy's gun.

Instantly the soundless waste was torn with the quick staccato of guns upon every hand. Abdul and Tarzan fired only at the flashes—they could not yet see their foemen. Presently it became evident that the attackers were circling their position, drawing closer and closer in as they began to realize the paltry numbers of the party which opposed them.

But one came too close, for Tarzan was accustomed to using his eyes in the

darkness of the jungle night, than which there is no more utter darkness this side the grave, and with a cry of pain a saddle was emptied.

"The odds are evening, Abdul," said Tarzan, with a low laugh.

But they were still far too one-sided, and when the five remaining horsemen whirled at a signal and charged full upon them it looked as if there would be a sudden ending of the battle. Both Tarzan and Abdul sprang to the shelter of the rocks, that they might keep the enemy in front of them. There was a mad clatter of galloping hoofs, a volley of shots from both sides, and the Arabs withdrew to repeat the maneuver; but there were now only four against the two.

For a few moments there came no sound from out of the surrounding blackness. Tarzan could not tell whether the Arabs, satisfied with their losses, had given up the fight, or were waiting farther along the road to waylay them as they proceeded on toward Bou Saada.

But he was not left long in doubt, for now all from one direction came the sound of a new charge. But scarcely had the first gun spoken ere a dozen shots rang out behind the Arabs. There came the wild shouts of a new party to the controversy, and the pounding of the feet of many horses from down the road to Bou Saada.

The Arabs did not wait to learn the identity of the oncomers. With a parting

volley as they dashed by the position which Tarzan and Abdul were holding, they plunged off along the road toward Sidi Aissa. A moment later Kadour ben Saden and his men dashed up.

The old sheik was much relieved to find that neither Tarzan nor Abdul had received a scratch. Not even had their horses been wounded.

They sought out the two men who had fallen before Tarzan's shots, and, finding that both were dead, left them where they lay.

"Why did you not tell me that you contemplated ambushing those fellows?" asked the sheik in a hurt tone. "We might have had them all if the seven of us had stopped to meet them."

"Then it would have been useless to stop at all," replied Tarzan, "for had we simply ridden on toward Bou Saada they would have been upon us presently, and all could have been engaged. It was to prevent the transfer of my own quarrel to another's shoulders that Abdul and I stopped off to question them. Then there is your daughter—I could not be the cause of exposing her needlessly to the marksmanship of six men." Kadour ben Saden shrugged his shoulders. He did not relish having been cheated out of a fight.

The little battle so close to Bou Saada had drawn out a company of soldiers. Tarzan and his party met them just outside the town.

The officer in charge halted them to learn the significance of the shots.

"A handful of marauders," replied Kadour ben Saden. "They attacked two of our number who had dropped behind, but when we returned to them the fellows soon dispersed. They left two dead. None of my party was injured." This seemed to satisfy the officer, and after taking the names of the party he marched his men on toward the scene of the skirmish to bring back the dead men for purposes of identification, if possible.

Two days later, Kadour ben Saden, with his daughter and followers, rode south through the pass below Bou Saada, bound for their home in the far

wilderness. The sheik had urged Tarzan to accompany him, and the girl had added her entreaties to those of her father; but, though he could not explain it to them, Tarzan's duties loomed particularly large after the happenings of the past few days, so that he could not think of leaving his post for an instant. But he promised to come later if it lay within his power to do so, and they had to content themselves with that assurance.

During these two days Tarzan had spent practically all his time with Kadour ben Saden and his daughter. He was keenly interested in this race of stern and dignified warriors, and embraced the opportunity which their

friendship offered to learn what he could of their lives and customs. He even commenced to acquire the rudiments of their language under the pleasant tutorage of the brown-eyed girl. It was with real regret that he saw them depart, and he sat his horse at the opening to the pass, as far as which he had accompanied them, gazing after the little party as long as he could catch a glimpse of them.

Here were people after his own heart! Their wild, rough lives, filled with danger and hardship, appealed to this half-savage man as nothing had appealed to him in the midst of the effeminate civilization of the great cities he had visited. Here was a life that excelled

even that of the jungle, for here he might have the society of men—real men whom he could honor and respect, and yet be near to the wild nature that he loved. In his head revolved an idea that when he had completed his mission he would resign and return to live for the remainder of his life with the tribe of Kadour ben Saden.

Then he turned his horse's head and rode slowly back to Bou Saada.

The front of the Hotel du Petit Sahara, where Tarzan stopped in Bou Saada, is taken up with the bar, two dining-rooms, and the kitchens. Both of the dining-rooms open directly off the bar, and one of them is reserved for the use of the officers of the garrison. As you stand in

the barroom you may look into either of the dining-rooms if you wish.

It was to the bar that Tarzan repaired after speeding Kadour ben Saden and his party on their way. It was yet early in the morning, for Kadour ben Saden had elected to ride far that day, so that it happened that when Tarzan returned there were guests still at breakfast.

As his casual glance wandered into the officers' dining-room, Tarzan saw something which brought a look of interest to his eyes. Lieutenant Gernois was sitting there, and as Tarzan looked a white- robed Arab approached and, bending, whispered a few words into the lieutenant's ear. Then he passed on out of the building through another door.

In itself the thing was nothing, but as the man had stooped to speak to the officer, Tarzan had caught sight of something which the accidental parting of the man's burnoose had revealed—he carried his left arm in a sling.

9. NUMA "EL ADREA"

On the same day that Kadour ben Saden rode south the diligence from the north brought Tarzan a letter from D'Arnot which had been forwarded from Sidi-bel-Abbes. It opened the old wound that Tarzan would have been glad to have forgotten; yet he was not sorry that D'Arnot had written, for one at least of his subjects could never cease to interest the ape-man. Here is the letter: MY DEAR JEAN: Since last I wrote you I have been across to London on a matter of business. I was there but three days. The very first day I came upon an old friend of yours—quite unexpectedly—in Henrietta Street. Now you never in the world would guess whom. None other

than Mr. Samuel T. Philander. But it is true. I can see your look of incredulity. Nor is this all. He insisted that I return to the hotel with him, and there I found the others—Professor Archimedes Q. Porter, Miss Porter, and that enormous black woman, Miss Porter's maid—Esmeralda, you will recall. While I was there Clayton came in. They are to be married soon, or rather sooner, for I rather suspect that we shall receive announcements almost any day. On account of his father's death it is to be a very quiet affair—only blood relatives.

While I was alone with Mr. Philander the old fellow became rather confidential. Said Miss Porter had already postponed the wedding on three

different occasions. He confided that it appeared to him that she was not particularly anxious to marry Clayton at all; but this time it seems that it is quite likely to go through.

Of course they all asked after you, but I respected your wishes in the matter of your true origin, and only spoke to them of your present affairs.

Miss Porter was especially interested in everything I had to say about you, and asked many questions. I am afraid I took a rather unchivalrous delight in picturing your desire and resolve to go back eventually to your native jungle. I was sorry afterward, for it did seem to cause her real anguish to contemplate the awful dangers to which you wished to return.

"And yet," she said, "I do not know. There are more unhappy fates than the grim and terrible jungle presents to Monsieur Tarzan. At least his conscience will be free from remorse. And there are moments of quiet and restfulness by day, and vistas of exquisite beauty. You may find it strange that I should say it, who experienced such terrifying experiences in that frightful forest, yet at times I long to return, for I cannot but feel that the happiest moments of my life were spent there." There was an expression of ineffable sadness on her face as she spoke, and I could not but feel that she knew that I knew her secret, and that this was her way of transmitting to you a last

tender message from a heart that might still enshrine your memory, though its possessor belonged to another.

Clayton appeared nervous and ill at ease while you were the subject of conversation. He wore a worried and harassed expression. Yet he was very kindly in his expressions of interest in you. I wonder if he suspects the truth about you? Tennington came in with Clayton. They are great friends, you know.

He is about to set out upon one of his interminable cruises in that yacht of his, and was urging the entire party to accompany him.

Tried to inveigle me into it, too. Is thinking of circumnavigating Africa this

time. I told him that his precious toy would take him and some of his friends to the bottom of the ocean one of these days if he didn't get it out of his head that she was a liner or a battleship.

I returned to Paris day before yesterday, and yesterday I met the Count and Countess de Coude at the races. They inquired after you. De Coude really seems quite fond of you. Doesn't appear to harbor the least ill will. Olga is as beautiful as ever, but a trifle subdued. I imagine that she learned a lesson through her acquaintance with you that will serve her in good stead during the balance of her life. It is fortunate for her, and for De Coude as well, that it was you and not another man more

sophisticated.

Had you really paid court to Olga's heart I am afraid that there would have been no hope for either of you.

She asked me to tell you that Nikolas had left France. She paid him twenty thousand francs to go away, and stay. She is congratulating herself that she got rid of him before he tried to carry out a threat he recently made her that he should kill you at the first opportunity. She said that she should hate to think that her brother's blood was on your hands, for she is very fond of you, and made no bones in saying so before the count. It never for a moment seemed to occur to her that there might be any possibility of any other outcome of a meeting between

you and Nikolas. The count quite agreed with her in that. He added that it would take a regiment of Rokoffs to kill you. He has a most healthy respect for your prowess.

Have been ordered back to my ship. She sails from Le Havre in two days under sealed orders. If you will address me in her care, the letters will find me eventually. I shall write you as soon as another opportunity presents.

Your sincere friend, PAUL D'ARNOT.

"I fear," mused Tarzan, half aloud, "that Olga has thrown away her twenty thousand francs." He read over that part of D'Arnot's letter several times in which he had quoted from his

conversation with Jane Porter. Tarzan derived a rather pathetic happiness from it, but it was better than no happiness at all.

The following three weeks were quite uneventful. On several occasions Tarzan saw the mysterious Arab, and once again he had been exchanging words with Lieutenant Gernois; but no amount of espionage or shadowing by Tarzan revealed the Arab's lodgings, the location of which Tarzan was anxious to ascertain.

Gernois, never cordial, had kept more than ever aloof from Tarzan since the episode in the dining-room of the hotel at Aumale. His attitude on the few occasions that they had been thrown

together had been distinctly hostile.

That he might keep up the appearance of the character he was playing, Tarzan spent considerable time hunting in the vicinity of Bou Saada. He would spend entire days in the foothills, ostensibly searching for gazelle, but on the few occasions that he came close enough to any of the beautiful little animals to harm them he invariably allowed them to escape without so much as taking his rifle from its boot. The ape-man could see no sport in slaughtering the most harmless and defenseless of God's creatures for the mere pleasure of killing.

In fact, Tarzan had never killed for "pleasure," nor to him was there

pleasure in killing. It was the joy of righteous battle that he loved— the ecstasy of victory. And the keen and successful hunt for food in which he pitted his skill and craftiness against the skill and craftiness of another; but to come out of a town filled with food to shoot down a soft-eyed, pretty gazelle— ah, that was crueller than the deliberate and cold-blooded murder of a fellow man. Tarzan would have none of it, and so he hunted alone that none might discover the sham that he was practicing.

And once, probably because of the fact that he rode alone, he was like to have lost his life. He was riding slowly through a little ravine when a shot

sounded close behind him, and a bullet passed through the cork helmet he wore. Although he turned at once and galloped rapidly to the top of the ravine, there was no sign of any enemy, nor did he see aught of another human being until he reached Bou Saada.

"Yes," he soliloquized, in recalling the occurrence, "Olga has indeed thrown away her twenty thousand francs." That night he was Captain Gérard's guest at a little dinner.

"Your hunting has not been very fortunate?" questioned the officer.

"No," replied Tarzan; "the game hereabout is timid, nor do I care particularly about hunting game birds or antelope. I think I shall move on farther

south, and have a try at some of your Algerian lions."

"Good!" exclaimed the captain. "We are marching toward Djelfa on the morrow. You shall have company that far at least. Lieutenant Gernois and I, with a hundred men, are ordered south to patrol a district in which the marauders are giving considerable trouble.

Possibly we may have the pleasure of hunting the lion together— what say you?" Tarzan was more than pleased, nor did he hesitate to say so; but the captain would have been astonished had he known the real reason of Tarzan's pleasure. Gernois was sitting opposite the ape-man.

He did not seem so pleased with his

captain's invitation.

"You will find lion hunting more exciting than gazelle shooting," remarked Captain Gérard, "and more dangerous."

"Even gazelle shooting has its dangers," replied Tarzan. "Especially when one goes alone. I found it so today. I also found that while the gazelle is the most timid of animals, it is not the most cowardly." He let his glance rest only casually upon Gernois after he had spoken, for he did not wish the man to know that he was under suspicion, or surveillance, no matter what he might think. The effect of his remark upon him, however, might tend to prove his connection with, or knowledge of, certain recent happenings. Tarzan saw a

dull red creep up from beneath Gernois' collar. He was satisfied, and quickly changed the subject.

When the column rode south from Bou Saada the next morning there were half a dozen Arabs bringing up the rear.

"They are not attached to the command," replied Gérard in response to Tarzan's query. "They merely accompany us on the road for companionship." Tarzan had learned enough about Arab character since he had been in Algeria to know that this was no real motive, for the Arab is never overfond of the companionship of strangers, and especially of French soldiers. So his suspicions were aroused, and he decided to keep a sharp

eye on the little party that trailed behind the column at a distance of about a quarter of a mile. But they did not come close enough even during the halts to enable him to obtain a close scrutiny of them.

He had long been convinced that there were hired assassins on his trail, nor was he in great doubt but that Rokoff was at the bottom of the plot. Whether it was to be revenge for the several occasions in the past that Tarzan had defeated the Russian's purposes and humiliated him, or was in some way connected with his mission in the Gernois affair, he could not determine. If the latter, and it seemed probable since the evidence he had had that Gernois

suspected him, then he had two rather powerful enemies to contend with, for there would be many opportunities in the wilds of Algeria, for which they were bound, to dispatch a suspected enemy quietly and without attracting suspicion.

After camping at Djelfa for two days the column moved to the southwest, from whence word had come that the marauders were operating against the tribes whose douars were situated at the foot of the mountains.

The little band of Arabs who had accompanied them from Bou Saada had disappeared suddenly the very night that orders had been given to prepare for the morrow's march from Djelfa. Tarzan made casual inquiries among the men,

but none could tell him why they had left, or in what direction they had gone. He did not like the looks of it, especially in view of the fact that he had seen Gernois in conversation with one of them some half hour after Captain Gérard had issued his instructions relative to the new move. Only Gernois and Tarzan knew the direction of the proposed march. All the soldiers knew was that they were to be prepared to break camp early the next morning. Tarzan wondered if Gernois could have revealed their destination to the Arabs.

Late that afternoon they went into camp at a little oasis in which was the DOUAR of a sheik whose flocks were being stolen, and whose herdsmen were

being killed. The Arabs came out of their goatskin tents, and surrounded the soldiers, asking many questions in the native tongue, for the soldiers were themselves natives. Tarzan, who, by this time, with the assistance of Abdul, had picked up quite a smattering of Arab, questioned one of the younger men who had accompanied the sheik while the latter paid his respects to Captain Gérard.

No, he had seen no party of six horsemen riding from the direction of Djelfa. There were other oases scattered about—possibly they had been journeying to one of these. Then there were the marauders in the mountains above—they often rode north to Bou

Saada in small parties, and even as far as Aumale and Bouira. It might indeed have been a few marauders returning to the band from a pleasure trip to one of these cities.

Early the next morning Captain Gérard split his command in two, giving Lieutenant Gernois command of one party, while he headed the other. They were to scour the mountains upon opposite sides of the plain.

"And with which detachment will Monsieur Tarzan ride?" asked the captain. "Or maybe it is that monsieur does not care to hunt marauders?"

"Oh, I shall be delighted to go," Tarzan hastened to explain. He was wondering what excuse he could make to

accompany Gernois.

His embarrassment was short-lived, and was relieved from a most unexpected source. It was Gernois himself who spoke.

"If my captain will forego the pleasure of Monsieur Tarzan's company for this once, I shall esteem it an honor indeed to have monsieur ride with me today," he said, nor was his tone lacking in cordiality.

In fact, Tarzan imagined that he had overdone it a trifle, but, even so, he was both astounded and pleased, hastening to express his delight at the arrangement.

And so it was that Lieutenant Gernois and Tarzan rode off side by side at the head of the little detachment of SPAHIS.

Gernois' cordiality was short-lived. No sooner had they ridden out of sight of Captain Gérard and his men than he lapsed once more into his accustomed taciturnity. As they advanced the ground became rougher.

Steadily it ascended toward the mountains, into which they filed through a narrow canon close to noon. By the side of a little rivulet Gernois called the midday halt. Here the men prepared and ate their frugal meal, and refilled their canteens.

After an hour's rest they advanced again along the canon, until they presently came to a little valley, from which several rocky gorges diverged. Here they halted, while Gernois

minutely examined the surrounding heights from the center of the depression.

"We shall separate here," he said, "several riding into each of these gorges," and then he commenced to detail his various squads and issue instructions to the non-commissioned officers who were to command them. When he had done he turned to Tarzan. "Monsieur will be so good as to remain here until we return." Tarzan demurred, but the officer cut him short. "There may be fighting for one of these sections," he said, "and troops cannot be embarrassed by civilian noncombatants during action."

"But, my dear lieutenant," expostulated Tarzan, "I am most ready

and willing to place myself under command of yourself or any of your sergeants or corporals, and to fight in the ranks as they direct.

It is what I came for."

"I should be glad to think so," retorted Gernois, with a sneer he made no attempt to disguise. Then shortly: "You are under my orders, and they are that you remain here until we return. Let that end the matter," and he turned and spurred away at the head of his men. A moment later Tarzan found himself alone in the midst of a desolate mountain fastness.

The sun was hot, so he sought the shelter of a nearby tree, where he tethered his horse, and sat down upon

the ground to smoke. Inwardly he swore at Gernois for the trick he had played upon him. A mean little revenge, thought Tarzan, and then suddenly it occurred to him that the man would not be such a fool as to antagonize him through a trivial annoyance of so petty a description. There must be something deeper than this behind it. With the thought he arose and removed his rifle from its boot. He looked to its loads and saw that the magazine was full. Then he inspected his revolver.

After this preliminary precaution he scanned the surrounding heights and the mouths of the several gorges—he was determined that he should not be caught napping.

The sun sank lower and lower, yet there was no sign of returning SPAHIS. At last the valley was submerged in shadow Tarzan was too proud to go back to camp until he had given the detachment ample time to return to the valley, which he thought was to have been their rendezvous. With the closing in of night he felt safer from attack, for he was at home in the dark. He knew that none might approach him so cautiously as to elude those alert and sensitive ears of his; then there were his eyes, too, for he could see well at night; and his nose, if they came toward him from up-wind, would apprise him of the approach of an enemy while they were still a great way off.

So he felt that he was in little danger, and thus lulled to a sense of security he fell asleep, with his back against the tree.

He must have slept for several hours, for when he was suddenly awakened by the frightened snorting and plunging of his horse the moon was shining full upon the little valley, and there, not ten paces before him, stood the grim cause of the terror of his mount.

Superb, majestic, his graceful tail extended and quivering, and his two eyes of fire riveted full upon his prey, stood Numa EL ADREA, the black lion. A little thrill of joy tingled through Tarzan's nerves. It was like meeting an old friend after years of separation.

For a moment he sat rigid to enjoy the magnificent spectacle of this lord of the wilderness.

But now Numa was crouching for the spring. Very slowly Tarzan raised his gun to his shoulder. He had never killed a large animal with a gun in all his life—heretofore he had depended upon his spear, his poisoned arrows, his rope, his knife, or his bare hands.

Instinctively he wished that he had his arrows and his knife—he would have felt surer with them.

Numa was lying quite flat upon the ground now, presenting only his head. Tarzan would have preferred to fire a little from one side, for he knew what terrific damage the lion could do if he

lived two minutes, or even a minute after he was hit. The horse stood trembling in terror at Tarzan's back. The ape-man took a cautious step to one side—Numa but followed him with his eyes. Another step he took, and then another. Numa had not moved. Now he could aim at a point between the eye and the ear.

His finger tightened upon the trigger, and as he fired Numa sprang.

At the same instant the terrified horse made a last frantic effort to escape—the tether parted, and he went careening down the canon toward the desert.

No ordinary man could have escaped those frightful claws when Numa sprang from so short a distance, but Tarzan was no ordinary man.

From earliest childhood his muscles had been trained by the fierce exigencies of his existence to act with the rapidity of thought.

As quick as was EL ADREA, Tarzan of the Apes was quicker, and so the great beast crashed against a tree where he had expected to feel the soft flesh of man, while Tarzan, a couple of paces to the right, pumped another bullet into him that brought him clawing and roaring to his side.

Twice more Tarzan fired in quick succession, and then EL ADREA lay still and roared no more. It was no longer Monsieur Jean Tarzan; it was Tarzan of the Apes that put a savage foot upon the body of his savage kill, and,

raising his face to the full moon, lifted his mighty voice in the weird and terrible challenge of his kind—a bull ape had made his kill. And the wild things in the wild mountains stopped in their hunting, and trembled at this new and awful voice, while down in the desert the children of the wilderness came out of their goatskin tents and looked toward the mountains, wondering what new and savage scourge had come to devastate their flocks.

A half mile from the valley in which Tarzan stood, a score of white-robed figures, bearing long, wicked-looking guns, halted at the sound, and looked at one another with questioning eyes. But presently, as it was not repeated, they

took up their silent, stealthy way toward the valley.

Tarzan was now confident that Gernois had no intention of returning for him, but he could not fathom the object that had prompted the officer to desert him, yet leave him free to return to camp. His horse gone, he decided that it would be foolish to remain longer in the mountains, so he set out toward the desert.

He had scarcely entered the confines of the canon when the first of the white-robed figures emerged into the valley upon the opposite side. For a moment they scanned the little depression from behind sheltering boulders, but when they had satisfied themselves that it was

empty they advanced across it. Beneath the tree at one side they came upon the body of EL ADREA. With muttered exclamations they crowded about it. Then, a moment later, they hurried down the canon which Tarzan was threading a brief distance in advance of them. They moved cautiously and in silence, taking advantage of shelter, as men do who are stalking man.

10. THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

As Tarzan walked down the wild canon beneath the brilliant African moon the call of the jungle was strong upon him. The solitude and the savage freedom filled his heart with life and buoyancy. Again he was Tarzan of the Apes—every sense alert against the chance of surprise by some jungle enemy—yet treading lightly and with head erect, in proud consciousness of his might.

The nocturnal sounds of the mountains were new to him, yet they fell upon his ears like the soft voice of a half-forgotten love.

Many he intuitively sensed—ah, there was one that was familiar indeed; the

distant coughing of Sheeta, the leopard; but there was a strange note in the final wail which made him doubt. It was a panther he heard.

Presently a new sound—a soft, stealthy sound—obtruded itself among the others. No human ears other than the ape- man's would have detected it. At first he did not translate it, but finally he realized that it came from the bare feet of a number of human beings. They were behind him, and they were coming toward him quietly. He was being stalked.

In a flash he knew why he had been left in that little valley by Gernois; but there had been a hitch in the arrangements—the men had come too

late. Closer and closer came the footsteps. Tarzan halted and faced them, his rifle ready in his hand. Now he caught a fleeting glimpse of a white burnoose. He called aloud in French, asking what they would of him. His reply was the flash of a long gun, and with the sound of the shot Tarzan of the Apes plunged forward upon his face.

The Arabs did not rush out immediately; instead, they waited to be sure that their victim did not rise. Then they came rapidly from their concealment, and bent over him. It was soon apparent that he was not dead. One of the men put the muzzle of his gun to the back of Tarzan's head to finish him, but another waved him aside.

"If we bring him alive the reward is to be greater," explained the latter. So they bound his hands and feet, and, picking him up, placed him on the shoulders of four of their number. Then the march was resumed toward the desert. When they had come out of the mountains they turned toward the south, and about daylight came to the spot where their horses stood in care of two of their number.

From here on their progress was more rapid. Tarzan, who had regained consciousness, was tied to a spare horse, which they evidently had brought for the purpose. His wound was but a slight scratch, which had furrowed the flesh across his temple. It had stopped

bleeding, but the dried and clotted blood smeared his face and clothing. He had said no word since he had fallen into the hands of these Arabs, nor had they addressed him other than to issue a few brief commands to him when the horses had been reached.

For six hours they rode rapidly across the burning desert, avoiding the oases near which their way led. About noon they came to a DOUAR of about twenty tents. Here they halted, and as one of the Arabs was releasing the alfa-grass ropes which bound him to his mount they were surrounded by a mob of men, women, and children.

Many of the tribe, and more especially the women, appeared to take

delight in heaping insults upon the prisoner, and some had even gone so far as to throw stones at him and strike him with sticks, when an old sheik appeared and drove them away.

"Ali-ben-Ahmed tells me," he said, "that this man sat alone in the mountains and slew EL ADREA. What the business of the stranger who sent us after him may be, I know not, and what he may do with this man when we turn him over to him, I care not; but the prisoner is a brave man, and while he is in our hands he shall be treated with the respect that be due one who hunts THE LORD WITH THE LARGE HEAD alone and by night—and slays him." Tarzan had heard of the respect in which Arabs held a lion-

killer, and he was not sorry that chance had played into his hands thus favorably to relieve him of the petty tortures of the tribe. Shortly after this he was taken to a goat-skin tent upon the upper side of the DOUAR. There he was fed, and then, securely bound, was left lying on a piece of native carpet, alone in the tent.

He could see a guard sitting before the door of his frail prison, but when he attempted to force the stout bonds that held him he realized that any extra precaution on the part of his captors was quite unnecessary; not even his giant muscles could part those numerous strands.

Just before dusk several men approached the tent where he lay, and

entered it. All were in Arab dress, but presently one of the number advanced to Tarzan's side, and as he let the folds of cloth that had hidden the lower half of his face fall away the ape-man saw the malevolent features of Nikolas Rokoff. There was a nasty smile on the bearded lips. "Ah, Monsieur Tarzan," he said, "this is indeed a pleasure. But why do you not rise and greet your guest?" Then, with an ugly oath, "Get up, you dog!" and, drawing back his booted foot, he kicked Tarzan heavily in the side. "And here is another, and another, and another," he continued, as he kicked Tarzan about the face and side. "One for each of the injuries you have done me." The ape-man made no reply—he did not

even deign to look upon the Russian again after the first glance of recognition. Finally the sheik, who had been standing a mute and frowning witness of the cowardly attack, intervened.

"Stop!" he commanded. "Kill him if you will, but I will see no brave man subjected to such indignities in my presence. I have half a mind to turn him loose, that I may see how long you would kick him then." This threat put a sudden end to Rokoff's brutality, for he had no craving to see Tarzan loosed from his bonds while he was within reach of those powerful hands.

"Very well," he replied to the Arab; "I shall kill him presently."

"Not within the precincts of my DOUAR," returned the sheik. "When he leaves here he leaves alive. What you do with him in the desert is none of my concern, but I shall not have the blood of a Frenchman on the hands of my tribe on account of another man's quarrel—they would send soldiers here and kill many of my people, and burn our tents and drive away our flocks."

"As you say," growled Rokoff. "I'll take him out into the desert below the DOUAR, and dispatch him."

"You will take him a day's ride from my country," said the sheik, firmly, "and some of my children shall follow you to see that you do not disobey me — otherwise there may be two dead

Frenchmen in the desert." Rokoff shrugged. "Then I shall have to wait until the morrow—it is already dark."

"As you will," said the sheik. "But by an hour after dawn you must be gone from my DOUAR. I have little liking for unbelievers, and none at all for a coward." Rokoff would have made some kind of retort, but he checked himself, for he realized that it would require but little excuse for the old man to turn upon him. Together they left the tent. At the door Rokoff could not resist the temptation to turn and fling a parting taunt at Tarzan. "Sleep well, monsieur," he said, "and do not forget to pray well, for when you die tomorrow it will be in such agony that you will be unable to

pray for blaspheming." No one had bothered to bring Tarzan either food or water since noon, and consequently he suffered considerably from thirst. He wondered if it would be worth while to ask his guard for water, but after making two or three requests without receiving any response, he decided that it would not.

Far up in the mountains he heard a lion roar. How much safer one was, he soliloquized, in the haunts of wild beasts than in the haunts of men. Never in all his jungle life had he been more relentlessly tracked down than in the past few months of his experience among civilized men. Never had he been any nearer death.

Again the lion roared. It sounded a little nearer. Tarzan felt the old, wild impulse to reply with the challenge of his kind. His kind? He had almost forgotten that he was a man and not an ape.

He tugged at his bonds. God, if he could but get them near those strong teeth of his. He felt a wild wave of madness sweep over him as his efforts to regain his liberty met with failure.

Numa was roaring almost continually now. It was quite evident that he was coming down into the desert to hunt. It was the roar of a hungry lion. Tarzan envied him, for he was free. No one would tie him with ropes and slaughter him like a sheep. It was that which

galled the ape-man. He did not fear to die, no—it was the humiliation of defeat before death, without even a chance to battle for his life.

It must be near midnight, thought Tarzan. He had several hours to live. Possibly he would yet find a way to take Rokoff with him on the long journey. He could hear the savage lord of the desert quite close by now. Possibly he sought his meat from among the penned animals within the DOUAR.

For a long time silence reigned, then Tarzan's trained ears caught the sound of a stealthily moving body. It came from the side of the tent nearest the mountains—the back. Nearer and nearer it came. He waited, listening intently, for it to

pass. For a time there was silence without, such a terrible silence that Tarzan was surprised that he did not hear the breathing of the animal he felt sure must be crouching close to the back wall of his tent.

There! It is moving again. Closer it creeps. Tarzan turns his head in the direction of the sound. It is very dark within the tent. Slowly the back rises from the ground, forced up by the head and shoulders of a body that looks all black in the semi-darkness.

Beyond is a faint glimpse of the dimly starlit desert. A grim smile plays about Tarzan's lips. At least Rokoff will be cheated. How mad he will be! And death will be more merciful than he could

have hoped for at the hands of the Russian.

Now the back of the tent drops into place, and all is darkness again - whatever it is is inside the tent with him. He hears it creeping close to him —now it is beside him. He closes his eyes and waits for the mighty paw. Upon his upturned face falls the gentle touch of a soft hand groping in the dark, and then a girl's voice in a scarcely audible whisper pronounces his name.

"Yes, it is I," he whispers in reply. "But in the name of Heaven who are you?"

"The Ouled-Nail of Sisi Aissa," came the answer. While she spoke Tarzan could feel her working about his bonds.

Occasionally the cold steel of a knife touched his flesh. A moment later he was free.

"Come!" she whispered.

On hands and knees he followed her out of the tent by the way she had come. She continued crawling thus flat to the ground until she reached a little patch of shrub. There she halted until he gained her side. For a moment he looked at her before he spoke.

"I cannot understand," he said at last. "Why are you here? How did you know that I was a prisoner in that tent? How does it happen that it is you who have saved me?" She smiled. "I have come a long way tonight," she said, "and we have a long way to go before we shall

be out of danger. Come; I shall tell you all about as we go." Together they rose and set off across the desert in the direction of the mountains.

"I was not quite sure that I should ever reach you," she said at last. "EL ADREA is abroad tonight, and after I left the horses I think he winded me and was following—I was terribly frightened."

"What a brave girl," he said. "And you ran all that risk for a stranger —an alien—an unbeliever?" She drew herself up very proudly.

"I am the daughter of the Sheik Kabour ben Saden," she answered.

"I should be no fit daughter of his if I would not risk my life to save that of the

man who saved mine while he yet thought that I was but a common Ouled-Nail."

"Nevertheless," he insisted, "you are a very brave girl. But how did you know that I was a prisoner back there?"

"Achmet-din-Taieb, who is my cousin on my father's side, was visiting some friends who belong to the tribe that captured you.

He was at the DOUAR when you were brought in. When he reached home he was telling us about the big Frenchman who had been captured by Ali-ben-Ahmed for another Frenchman who wished to kill him. From the description I knew that it must be you. My father was away.

I tried to persuade some of the men to come and save you, but they would not do it, saying: `Let the unbelievers kill one another if they wish. It is none of our affair, and if we go and interfere with Ali-ben-Ahmed's plans we shall only stir up a fight with our own people.' "So when it was dark I came alone, riding one horse and leading another for you. They are tethered not far from here. By morning we shall be within my father's DOUAR. He should be there himself by now—then let them come and try to take Kadour ben Saden's friend." For a few moments they walked on in silence.

"We should be near the horses," she said. "It is strange that I do not see them here." Then a moment later she stopped,

with a little cry of consternation.

"They are gone!" she exclaimed. "It is here that I tethered them." Tarzan stooped to examine the ground. He found that a large shrub had been torn up by the roots. Then he found something else. There was a wry smile on his face as he rose and turned toward the girl.

"EL ADREA has been here. From the signs, though, I rather think that his prey escaped him. With a little start they would be safe enough from him in the open." There was nothing to do but continue on foot. The way led them across a low spur of the mountains, but the girl knew the trail as well as she did her mother's face. They walked in easy, swinging strides, Tarzan keeping a

hand's breadth behind the girl's shoulder, that she might set the pace, and thus be less fatigued. As they walked they talked, occasionally stopping to listen for sounds of pursuit.

It was now a beautiful, moonlit night. The air was crisp and invigorating. Behind them lay the interminable vista of the desert, dotted here and there with an occasional oasis. The date palms of the little fertile spot they had just left, and the circle of goatskin tents, stood out in sharp relief against the yellow sand—a phantom paradise upon a phantom sea. Before them rose the grim and silent mountains. Tarzan's blood leaped in his veins.

This was life! He looked down upon

the girl beside him—a daughter of the desert walking across the face of a dead world with a son of the jungle. He smiled at the thought. He wished that he had had a sister, and that she had been like this girl. What a bully chum she would have been! They had entered the mountains now, and were progressing more slowly, for the trail was steeper and very rocky.

For a few minutes they had been silent. The girl was wondering if they would reach her father's DOUAR before the pursuit had overtaken them. Tarzan was wishing that they might walk on thus forever. If the girl were only a man they might. He longed for a friend who loved the same wild life that he loved. He had

learned to crave companionship, but it was his misfortune that most of the men he knew preferred immaculate linen and their clubs to nakedness and the jungle. It was, of course, difficult to understand, yet it was very evident that they did.

The two had just turned a projecting rock around which the trail ran when they were brought to a sudden stop. There, before them, directly in the middle of the path, stood Numa, EL ADREA, the black lion. His green eyes looked very wicked, and he bared his teeth, and lashed his bay-black sides with his angry tail. Then he roared—the fearsome, terror-inspiring roar of the hungry lion which is also angry.

"Your knife," said Tarzan to the girl,

extending his hand. She slipped the hilt of the weapon into his waiting palm. As his fingers closed upon it he drew her back and pushed her behind him. "Walk back to the desert as rapidly as you can. If you hear me call you will know that all is well, and you may return."

"It is useless," she replied, resignedly. "This is the end."

"Do as I tell you," he commanded. "Quickly! He is about to charge." The girl dropped back a few paces, where she stood watching for the terrible sight that she knew she should soon witness.

The lion was advancing slowly toward Tarzan, his nose to the ground, like a challenging bull, his tail extended now and quivering as though with

intense excitement.

The ape-man stood, half crouching, the long Arab knife glistening in the moonlight. Behind him the tense figure of the girl, motionless as a carven statue. She leaned slightly forward, her lips parted, her eyes wide. Her only conscious thought was wonder at the bravery of the man who dared face with a puny knife the lord with the large head. A man of her own blood would have knelt in prayer and gone down beneath those awful fangs without resistance. In either case the result would be the same—it was inevitable; but she could not repress a thrill of admiration as her eyes rested upon the heroic figure before her. Not a tremor in the whole giant frame—

his attitude as menacing and defiant as that of EL ADREA himself.

The lion was quite close to him now —but a few paces intervened —he crouched, and then, with a deafening roar, he sprang.

11. JOHN CALDWELL, LONDON

As Numa el Adrea launched himself with widespread paws and bared fangs he looked to find this puny man as easy prey as the score who had gone down beneath him in the past. To him man was a clumsy, slow-moving, defenseless creature—he had little respect for him.

But this time he found that he was pitted against a creature as agile and as quick as himself. When his mighty frame struck the spot where the man had been he was no longer there.

The watching girl was transfixed by astonishment at the ease with which the crouching man eluded the great paws. And now, O Allah! He had rushed in behind el Adrea's shoulder even before

the beast could turn, and had grasped him by the mane. The lion reared upon his hind legs like a horse— Tarzan had known that he would do this, and he was ready. A giant arm encircled the black-maned throat, and once, twice, a dozen times a sharp blade darted in and out of the bay-black side behind the left shoulder.

Frantic were the leaps of Numa— awful his roars of rage and pain; but the giant upon his back could not be dislodged or brought within reach of fangs or talons in the brief interval of life that remained to the lord with the large head. He was quite dead when Tarzan of the Apes released his hold and arose. Then the daughter of the desert

witnessed a thing that terrified her even more than had the presence of EL ADREA. The man placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill, and, with his handsome face raised toward the full moon, gave voice to the most frightful cry that ever had smote upon her ears.

With a little cry of fear she shrank away from him—she thought that the fearful strain of the encounter had driven him mad. As the last note of that fiendish challenge died out in the diminishing echoes of the distance the man dropped his eyes until they rested upon the girl.

Instantly his face was lighted by the kindly smile that was ample assurance of his sanity, and the girl breathed freely once again, smiling in response.

"What manner of man are you?" she asked. "The thing you have done is unheard of. Even now I cannot believe that it is possible for a lone man armed only with a knife to have fought hand to hand with EL ADREA and conquered him, unscathed—to have conquered him at all. And that cry —it was not human. Why did you do that?" Tarzan flushed. "It is because I forget," he said, "sometimes, that I am a civilized man. When I kill it must be that I am another creature." He did not try to explain further, for it always seemed to him that a woman must look with loathing upon one who was yet so nearly a beast.

Together they continued their journey. The sun was an hour high when they

came out into the desert again beyond the mountains.

Beside a little rivulet they found the girl's horses grazing. They had come this far on their way home, and with the cause of their fear no longer present had stopped to feed.

With little trouble Tarzan and the girl caught them, and, mounting, rode out into the desert toward the DOUAR of Sheik Kadour ben Saden.

No sign of pursuit developed, and they came in safety about nine o'clock to their destination. The sheik had but just returned.

He was frantic with grief at the absence of his daughter, whom he thought had been again abducted by the

marauders. With fifty men he was already mounted to go in search of her when the two rode into the DOUAR.

His joy at the safe return of his daughter was only equaled by his gratitude to Tarzan for bringing her safely to him through the dangers of the night, and his thankfulness that she had been in time to save the man who had once saved her.

No honor that Kadour ben Saden could heap upon the ape-man in acknowledgment of his esteem and friendship was neglected. When the girl had recited the story of the slaying of EL ADREA Tarzan was surrounded by a mob of worshiping Arabs—it was a sure road to their admiration and respect.

The old sheik insisted that Tarzan remain indefinitely as his guest. He even wished to adopt him as a member of the tribe, and there was for some time a half-formed resolution in the ape-man's mind to accept and remain forever with these wild people, whom he understood and who seemed to understand him. His friendship and liking for the girl were potent factors in urging him toward an affirmative decision.

Had she been a man, he argued, he should not have hesitated, for it would have meant a friend after his own heart, with whom he could ride and hunt at will; but as it was they would be hedged by the conventionalities that are even more strictly observed by the wild

nomads of the desert than by their more civilized brothers and sisters. And in a little while she would be married to one of these swarthy warriors, and there would be an end to their friendship.

So he decided against the sheik's proposal, though he remained a week as his guest.

When he left, Kadour ben Saden and fifty white-robed warriors rode with him to Bou Saada. While they were mounting in the DOUAR of Kadour ben Saden the morning of their departure, the girl came to bid farewell to Tarzan.

"I have prayed that you would remain with us," she said simply, as he leaned from his saddle to clasp her hand in farewell, "and now I shall pray that you

will return." There was an expression of wistfulness in her beautiful eyes, and a pathetic droop at the corners of her mouth. Tarzan was touched.

"Who knows?" and then he turned and rode after the departing Arabs.

Outside Bou Saada he bade Kadour ben Saden and his men good-by, for there were reasons which made him wish to make his entry into the town as secret as possible, and when he had explained them to the sheik the latter concurred in his decision. The Arabs were to enter Bou Saada ahead of him, saying nothing as to his presence with them. Later Tarzan would come in alone, and go directly to an obscure native inn.

Thus, making his entrance after dark,

as he did, he was not seen by any one who knew him, and reached the inn unobserved. After dining with Kadour ben Saden as his guest, he went to his former hotel by a roundabout way, and, coming in by a rear entrance, sought the proprietor, who seemed much surprised to see him alive.

Yes, there was mail for monsieur; he would fetch it. No, he would mention monsieur's return to no one. Presently he returned with a packet of letters. One was an order from his superior to lay off on his present work, and hasten to Cape Town by the first steamer he could get. His further instructions would be awaiting him there in the hands of another agent whose name and address

were given.

That was all—brief but explicit. Tarzan arranged to leave Bou Saada early the next morning. Then he started for the garrison to see Captain Gérard, whom the hotel man had told him had returned with his detachment the previous day.

He found the officer in his quarters. He was filled with surprise and pleasure at seeing Tarzan alive and well.

"When Lieutenant Gernois returned and reported that he had not found you at the spot that you had chosen to remain while the detachment was scouting, I was filled with alarm. We searched the mountain for days. Then came word that you had been killed and eaten by a lion.

As proof your gun was brought to us. Your horse had returned to camp the second day after your disappearance. We could not doubt.

Lieutenant Gernois was grief-stricken—he took all the blame upon himself. It was he who insisted on carrying on the search himself.

It was he who found the Arab with your gun. He will be delighted to know that you are safe."

"Doubtless," said Tarzan, with a grim smile.

"He is down in the town now, or I should send for him," continued Captain Gérard. "I shall tell him as soon as he returns." Tarzan let the officer think that he had been lost, wandering finally into

the DOUAR of Kadour ben Saden, who had escorted him back to Bou Saada. As soon as possible he bade the good officer adieu, and hastened back into the town. At the native inn he had learned through Kadour ben Saden a piece of interesting information.

It told of a black-bearded white man who went always disguised as an Arab. For a time he had nursed a broken wrist. More recently he had been away from Bou Saada, but now he was back, and Tarzan knew his place of concealment. It was for there he headed.

Through narrow, stinking alleys, black as Erebus, he groped, and then up a rickety stairway, at the end of which was a closed door and a tiny, unglazed

window. The window was high under the low eaves of the mud building. Tarzan could just reach the sill. He raised himself slowly until his eyes topped it. The room within was lighted, and at a table sat Rokoff and Gernois. Gernois was speaking.

"Rokoff, you are a devil!" he was saying. "You have hounded me until I have lost the last shred of my honor. You have driven me to murder, for the blood of that man Tarzan is on my hands. If it were not that that other devil's spawn, Paulvitch, still knew my secret, I should kill you here tonight with my bare hands." Rokoff laughed. "You would not do that, my dear lieutenant," he said.

"The moment I am reported dead by

assassination that dear Alexis will forward to the minister of war full proof of the affair you so ardently long to conceal; and, further, will charge you with my murder. Come, be sensible. I am your best friend. Have I not protected your honor as though it were my own?" Gernois sneered, and spat out an oath.

"Just one more little payment," continued Rokoff, "and the papers I wish, and you have my word of honor that I shall never ask another cent from you, or further information."

"And a good reason why," growled Gernois. "What you ask will take my last cent, and the only valuable military secret I hold. You ought to be paying me for the information, instead of taking

both it and money, too."

"I am paying you by keeping a still tongue in my head," retorted Rokoff. "But let's have done. Will you, or will you not? I give you three minutes to decide. If you are not agreeable I shall send a note to your commandant tonight that will end in the degradation that Dreyfus suffered—the only difference being that he did not deserve it." For a moment Gernois sat with bowed head. At length he arose. He drew two pieces of paper from his blouse.

"Here," he said hopelessly. "I had them ready, for I knew that there could be but one outcome." He held them toward the Russian.

Rokoff's cruel face lighted in

malignant gloating. He seized the bits of paper.

"You have done well, Gernois," he said. "I shall not trouble you again - unless you happen to accumulate some more money or information," and he grinned.

"You never shall again, you dog!" hissed Gernois. "The next time I shall kill you. I came near doing it tonight. For an hour I sat with these two pieces of paper on my table before me ere I came here—beside them lay my loaded revolver. I was trying to decide which I should bring. Next time the choice shall be easier, for I already have decided. You had a close call tonight, Rokoff; do not tempt fate a second time." Then

Gernois rose to leave. Tarzan barely had time to drop to the landing and shrink back into the shadows on the far side of the door. Even then he scarcely hoped to elude detection. The landing was very small, and though he flattened himself against the wall at its far edge he was scarcely more than a foot from the doorway.

Almost immediately it opened, and Gernois stepped out. Rokoff was behind him. Neither spoke. Gernois had taken perhaps three steps down the stairway when he halted and half turned, as though to retrace his steps.

Tarzan knew that discovery would be inevitable. Rokoff still stood on the threshold a foot from him, but he was

looking in the opposite direction, toward Gernois. Then the officer evidently reconsidered his decision, and resumed his downward course. Tarzan could hear Rokoff's sigh of relief. A moment later the Russian went back into the room and closed the door.

Tarzan waited until Gernois had had time to get well out of hearing, then he pushed open the door and stepped into the room. He was on top of Rokoff before the man could rise from the chair where he sat scanning the paper Gernois had given him. As his eyes turned and fell upon the ape-man's face his own went livid.

"You!" he gasped.

"I," replied Tarzan.

"What do you want?" whispered Rokoff, for the look in the ape- man's eyes frightened him. "Have you come to kill me? You do not dare.

They would guillotine you. You do not dare kill me."

"I dare kill you, Rokoff," replied Tarzan, "for no one knows that you are here or that I am here, and Paulvitch would tell them that it was Gernois. I heard you tell Gernois so. But that would not influence me, Rokoff. I would not care who knew that I had killed you; the pleasure of killing you would more than compensate for any punishment they might inflict upon me. You are the most despicable cur of a coward, Rokoff, I have ever heard of. You should be

killed. I should love to kill you," and Tarzan approached closer to the man.

Rokoff's nerves were keyed to the breaking point. With a shriek he sprang toward an adjoining room, but the ape-man was upon his back while his leap was yet but half completed. Iron fingers sought his throat—the great coward squealed like a stuck pig, until Tarzan had shut off his wind. Then the ape-man dragged him to his feet, still choking him. The Russian struggled futilely—he was like a babe in the mighty grasp of Tarzan of the Apes.

Tarzan sat him in a chair, and long before there was danger of the man's dying he released his hold upon his throat. When the Russian's coughing

spell had abated Tarzan spoke to him again.

"I have given you a taste of the suffering of death," he said.

"But I shall not kill—this time. I am sparing you solely for the sake of a very good woman whose great misfortune it was to have been born of the same woman who gave birth to you. But I shall spare you only this once on her account. Should I ever learn that you have again annoyed her or her husband—should you ever annoy me again—should I hear that you have returned to France or to any French possession, I shall make it my sole business to hunt you down and complete the choking I commenced tonight." Then he turned to

the table, on which the two pieces of paper still lay. As he picked them up Rokoff gasped in horror.

Tarzan examined both the check and the other. He was amazed at the information the latter contained. Rokoff had partially read it, but Tarzan knew that no one could remember the salient facts and figures it held which made it of real value to an enemy of France.

"These will interest the chief of staff," he said, as he slipped them into his pocket. Rokoff groaned. He did not dare curse aloud.

The next morning Tarzan rode north on his way to Bouira and Algiers.

As he had ridden past the hotel Lieutenant Gernois was standing on the

veranda. As his eyes discovered Tarzan he went white as chalk.

The ape-man would have been glad had the meeting not occurred, but he could not avoid it. He saluted the officer as he rode past.

Mechanically Gernois returned the salute, but those terrible, wide eyes followed the horseman, expressionless except for horror. It was as though a dead man looked upon a ghost.

At Sidi Aissa Tarzan met a French officer with whom he had become acquainted on the occasion of his recent sojourn in the town.

"You left Bou Saada early?" questioned the officer. "Then you have not heard about poor Gernois."

"He was the last man I saw as I rode away," replied Tarzan. "What about him?"

"He is dead. He shot himself about eight o'clock this morning." Two days later Tarzan reached Algiers. There he found that he would have a two days' wait before he could catch a ship bound for Cape Town. He occupied his time in writing out a full report of his mission. The secret papers he had taken from Rokoff he did not inclose, for he did not dare trust them out of his own possession until he had been authorized to turn them over to another agent, or himself return to Paris with them.

As Tarzan boarded his ship after what seemed a most tedious wait to him, two

men watched him from an upper deck. Both were fashionably dressed and smooth shaven. The taller of the two had sandy hair, but his eyebrows were very black. Later in the day they chanced to meet Tarzan on deck, but as one hurriedly called his companion's attention to something at sea their faces were turned from Tarzan as he passed, so that he did not notice their features. In fact, he had paid no attention to them at all.

Following the instructions of his chief, Tarzan had booked his passage under an assumed name—John Caldwell, London. He did not understand the necessity of this, and it caused him considerable speculation. He

wondered what role he was to play in Cape Town.

"Well," he thought, "thank Heaven that I am rid of Rokoff. He was commencing to annoy me. I wonder if I am really becoming so civilized that presently I shall develop a set of nerves. He would give them to me if any one could, for he does not fight fair. One never knows through what new agency he is going to strike. It is as though Numa, the lion, had induced Tantor, the elephant, and Histah, the snake, to join him in attempting to kill me. I would then never have known what minute, or by whom, I was to be attacked next. But the brutes are more chivalrous than man—they do not stoop to cowardly intrigue." At dinner that

night Tarzan sat next to a young woman whose place was at the captain's left. The officer introduced them.

Miss Strong! Where had he heard the name before? It was very familiar. And then the girl's mother gave him the clew, for when she addressed her daughter she called her Hazel.

Hazel Strong! What memories the name inspired. It had been a letter to this girl, penned by the fair hand of Jane Porter, that had carried to him the first message from the woman he loved. How vividly he recalled the night he had stolen it from the desk in the cabin of his long-dead father, where Jane Porter had sat writing it late into the night, while he crouched in the darkness without.

How terror-stricken she would have been that night had she known that the wild jungle beast squatted outside her window, watching her every move.

And this was Hazel Strong—Jane Porter's best friend!

12. SHIPS THAT PASS

Let us go back a few months to the little, windswept platform of a railway station in northern Wisconsin. The smoke of forest fires hangs low over the surrounding landscape, its acrid fumes smarting the eyes of a little party of six who stand waiting the coming of the train that is to bear them away toward the south.

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter, his hands clasped beneath the tails of his long coat, paces back and forth under the ever-watchful eye of his faithful secretary, Mr. Samuel T. Philander. Twice within the past few minutes he has started absent-mindedly across the tracks in the direction of a near-by

swamp, only to be rescued and dragged back by the tireless Mr. Philander.

Jane Porter, the professor's daughter, is in strained and lifeless conversation with William Cecil Clayton and Tarzan of the Apes.

Within the little waiting room, but a bare moment before, a confession of love and a renunciation had taken place that had blighted the lives and happiness of two of the party, but William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke, was not one of them.

Behind Miss Porter hovered the motherly Esmeralda. She, too, was happy, for was she not returning to her beloved Maryland? Already she could see dimly through the fog of smoke the

murky headlight of the oncoming engine. The men began to gather up the hand baggage.

Suddenly Clayton exclaimed.

"By Jove! I've left my ulster in the waiting-room," and hastened off to fetch it.

"Good-bye, Jane," said Tarzan, extending his hand. "God bless you!" "Good-bye," replied the girl faintly. "Try to forget me—no, not that —I could not bear to think that you had forgotten me."

"There is no danger of that, dear," he answered. "I wish to Heaven that I might forget. It would be so much easier than to go through life always remembering what might have been. You will be

happy, though; I am sure you shall—you must be. You may tell the others of my decision to drive my car on to New York—I don't feel equal to bidding Clayton good-bye. I want always to remember him kindly, but I fear that I am too much of a wild beast yet to be trusted too long with the man who stands between me and the one person in all the world I want." As Clayton stooped to pick up his coat in the waiting room his eyes fell on a telegraph blank lying face down upon the floor. He stooped to pick it up, thinking it might be a message of importance which some one had dropped. He glanced at it hastily, and then suddenly he forgot his coat, the approaching train—everything but that

terrible little piece of yellow paper in his hand. He read it twice before he could fully grasp the terrific weight of meaning that it bore to him.

When he had picked it up he had been an English nobleman, the proud and wealthy possessor of vast estates—a moment later he had read it, and he knew that he was an untitled and penniless beggar. It was D'Arnot's cablegram to Tarzan, and it read:

Finger prints prove you Greystoke. Congratulations. D'ARNOT.

He staggered as though he had received a mortal blow. Just then he heard the others calling to him to hurry—the train was coming to a stop at the little platform. Like a man dazed he

gathered up his ulster. He would tell them about the cablegram when they were all on board the train. Then he ran out upon the platform just as the engine whistled twice in the final warning that precedes the first rumbling jerk of coupling pins. The others were on board, leaning out from the platform of a Pullman, crying to him to hurry.

Quite five minutes elapsed before they were settled in their seats, nor was it until then that Clayton discovered that Tarzan was not with them.

"Where is Tarzan?" he asked Jane Porter. "In another car?"

"No," she replied; "at the last minute he determined to drive his machine back to New York. He is anxious to see more

of America than is possible from a car window. He is returning to France, you know." Clayton did not reply. He was trying to find the right words to explain to Jane Porter the calamity that had befallen him—and her. He wondered just what the effect of his knowledge would be on her. Would she still wish to marry him—to be plain Mrs. Clayton? Suddenly the awful sacrifice which one of them must make loomed large before his imagination. Then came the question: Will Tarzan claim his own? The ape-man had known the contents of the message before he calmly denied knowledge of his parentage! He had admitted that Kala, the ape, was his mother! Could it have been for love of

Jane Porter? There was no other explanation which seemed reasonable. Then, having ignored the evidence of the message, was it not reasonable to assume that he meant never to claim his birthright? If this were so, what right had he, William Cecil Clayton, to thwart the wishes, to balk the self-sacrifice of this strange man? If Tarzan of the Apes could do this thing to save Jane Porter from unhappiness, why should he, to whose care she was intrusting her whole future, do aught to jeopardize her interests? And so he reasoned until the first generous impulse to proclaim the truth and relinquish his titles and his estates to their rightful owner was forgotten beneath the mass of sophistries which

self-interest had advanced. But during the balance of the trip, and for many days thereafter, he was moody and distraught. Occasionally the thought obtruded itself that possibly at some later day Tarzan would regret his magnanimity, and claim his rights.

Several days after they reached Baltimore Clayton broached the subject of an early marriage to Jane.

"What do you mean by early?" she asked.

"Within the next few days. I must return to England at once—I want you to return with me, dear."

"I can't get ready so soon as that," replied Jane. "It will take a whole month, at least." She was glad, for she

hoped that whatever called him to England might still further delay the wedding. She had made a bad bargain, but she intended carrying her part loyally to the bitter end—if she could manage to secure a temporary reprieve, though, she felt that she was warranted in doing so. His reply disconcerted her.

"Very well, Jane," he said. "I am disappointed, but I shall let my trip to England wait a month; then we can go back together." But when the month was drawing to a close she found still another excuse upon which to hang a postponement, until at last, discouraged and doubting, Clayton was forced to go back to England alone.

The several letters that passed

between them brought Clayton no nearer to a consummation of his hopes than he had been before, and so it was that he wrote directly to Professor Porter, and enlisted his services. The old man had always favored the match. He liked Clayton, and, being of an old southern family, he put rather an exaggerated value on the advantages of a title, which meant little or nothing to his daughter.

Clayton urged that the professor accept his invitation to be his guest in London, an invitation which included the professor's entire little family - Mr. Philander, Esmeralda, and all. The Englishman argued that once Jane was there, and home ties had been broken, she would not so dread the step which

she had so long hesitated to take.

So the evening that he received Clayton's letter Professor Porter announced that they would leave for London the following week.

But once in London Jane Porter was no more tractable than she had been in Baltimore. She found one excuse after another, and when, finally, Lord Tennington invited the party to cruise around Africa in his yacht, she expressed the greatest delight in the idea, but absolutely refused to be married until they had returned to London.

As the cruise was to consume a year at least, for they were to stop for indefinite periods at various points of

interest, Clayton mentally anathematized Tennington for ever suggesting such a ridiculous trip.

It was Lord Tennington's plan to cruise through the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, and thus down the East Coast, putting in at every port that was worth the seeing.

And so it happened that on a certain day two vessels passed in the Strait of Gibraltar. The smaller, a trim white yacht, was speeding toward the east, and on her deck sat a young woman who gazed with sad eyes upon a diamond-studded locket which she idly fingered. Her thoughts were far away, in the dim, leafy fastness of a tropical jungle—and her heart was with her thoughts.

She wondered if the man who had given her the beautiful bauble, that had meant so much more to him than the intrinsic value which he had not even known could ever have meant to him, was back in his savage forest.

And upon the deck of the larger vessel, a passenger steamer passing toward the east, the man sat with another young woman, and the two idly speculated upon the identity of the dainty craft gliding so gracefully through the gentle swell of the lazy sea.

When the yacht had passed the man resumed the conversation that her appearance had broken off.

"Yes," he said, "I like America very much, and that means, of course, that I

like Americans, for a country is only what its people make it. I met some very delightful people while I was there. I recall one family from your own city, Miss Strong, whom I liked particularly—Professor Porter and his daughter."

"Jane Porter!" exclaimed the girl. "Do you mean to tell me that you know Jane Porter? Why, she is the very best friend I have in the world. We were little children together—we have known each other for ages." "Indeed!" he answered, smiling. "You would have difficulty in persuading any one of the fact who had seen either of you."

"I'll qualify the statement, then," she answered, with a laugh. "We have known each other for two ages—hers

and mine. But seriously we are as dear to each other as sisters, and now that I am going to lose her I am almost heartbroken."

"Going to lose her?" exclaimed Tarzan. "Why, what do you mean? Oh, yes, I understand. You mean that now that she is married and living in England, you will seldom if ever see her."

"Yes," replied she; "and the saddest part of it all is that she is not marrying the man she loves. Oh, it is terrible. Marrying from a sense of duty! I think it is perfectly wicked, and I told her so. I have felt so strongly on the subject that although I was the only person outside of blood relations who was to have been asked to the wedding I would not let her

invite me, for I should not have gone to witness the terrible mockery. But Jane Porter is peculiarly positive. She has convinced herself that she is doing the only honorable thing that she can do, and nothing in the world will ever prevent her from marrying Lord Greystoke except Greystoke himself, or death."

"I am sorry for her," said Tarzan.

"And I am sorry for the man she loves," said the girl, "for he loves her. I never met him, but from what Jane tells me he must be a very wonderful person. It seems that he was born in an African jungle, and brought up by fierce, anthropoid apes. He had never seen a white man or woman until Professor Porter and his party were marooned on

the coast right at the threshold of his tiny cabin.

He saved them from all manner of terrible beasts, and accomplished the most wonderful feats imaginable, and then to cap the climax he fell in love with Jane and she with him, though she never really knew it for sure until she had promised herself to Lord Greystoke."

"Most remarkable," murmured Tarzan, cudgeling his brain for some pretext upon which to turn the subject. He delighted in hearing Hazel Strong talk of Jane, but when he was the subject of the conversation he was bored and embarrassed. But he was soon given a respite, for the girl's mother joined them,

and the talk became general.

The next few days passed uneventfully. The sea was quiet. The sky was clear. The steamer plowed steadily on toward the south without pause. Tarzan spent quite a little time with Miss Strong and her mother. They whiled away their hours on deck reading, talking, or taking pictures with Miss Strong's camera. When the sun had set they walked.

One day Tarzan found Miss Strong in conversation with a stranger, a man he had not seen on board before. As he approached the couple the man bowed to the girl and turned to walk away.

"Wait, Monsieur Thuran," said Miss Strong; "you must meet Mr.

Caldwell. We are all fellow passengers, and should be acquainted." The two men shook hands. As Tarzan looked into the eyes of Monsieur Thuran he was struck by the strange familiarity of their expression.

"I have had the honor of monsieur's acquaintance in the past, I am sure," said Tarzan, "though I cannot recall the circumstances." Monsieur Thuran appeared ill at ease.

"I cannot say, monsieur," he replied. "It may be so. I have had that identical sensation myself when meeting a stranger."

"Monsieur Thuran has been explaining some of the mysteries of navigation to me," explained the girl.

Tarzan paid little heed to the conversation that ensued—he was attempting to recall where he had met Monsieur Thuran before. That it had been under peculiar circumstances he was positive. Presently the sun reached them, and the girl asked Monsieur Thuran to move her chair farther back into the shade. Tarzan happened to be watching the man at the time, and noticed the awkward manner in which he handled the chair—his left wrist was stiff. That clew was sufficient—a sudden train of associated ideas did the rest.

Monsieur Thuran had been trying to find an excuse to make a graceful departure. The lull in the conversation

following the moving of their position gave him an opportunity to make his excuses. Bowing low to Miss Strong, and inclining his head to Tarzan, he turned to leave them.

"Just a moment," said Tarzan. "If Miss Strong will pardon me I will accompany you. I shall return in a moment, Miss Strong." Monsieur Thuran looked uncomfortable. When the two men had passed out of the girl's sight, Tarzan stopped, laying a heavy hand on the other's shoulder.

"What is your game now, Rokoff?" he asked.

"I am leaving France as I promised you," replied the other, in a surly voice.

"I see you are," said Tarzan; "but I

know you so well that I can scarcely believe that your being on the same boat with me is purely a coincidence. If I could believe it the fact that you are in disguise would immediately disabuse my mind of any such idea."

"Well," growled Rokoff, with a shrug, "I cannot see what you are going to do about it. This vessel flies the English flag. I have as much right on board her as you, and from the fact that you are booked under an assumed name I imagine that I have more right."

"We will not discuss it, Rokoff. All I wanted to say to you is that you must keep away from Miss Strong—she is a decent woman." Rokoff turned scarlet.

"If you don't I shall pitch you

overboard," continued Tarzan. "Do not forget that I am just waiting for some excuse." Then he turned on his heel, and left Rokoff standing there trembling with suppressed rage.

He did not see the man again for days, but Rokoff was not idle. In his stateroom with Paulvitch he fumed and swore, threatening the most terrible of revenges.

"I would throw him overboard tonight," he cried, "were I sure that those papers were not on his person. I cannot chance pitching them into the ocean with him. If you were not such a stupid coward, Alexis, you would find a way to enter his stateroom and search for the documents." Paulvitch smiled. "You are supposed to be the brains of this

partnership, my dear Nikolas," he replied. "Why do you not find the means to search Monsieur Caldwell's stateroom—eh?" Two hours later fate was kind to them, for Paulvitch, who was ever on the watch, saw Tarzan leave his room without locking the door.

Five minutes later Rokoff was stationed where he could give the alarm in case Tarzan returned, and Paulvitch was deftly searching the contents of the ape-man's luggage.

He was about to give up in despair when he saw a coat which Tarzan had just removed. A moment later he grasped an official envelope in his hand. A quick glance at its contents brought a broad smile to the Russian's face.

When he left the stateroom Tarzan himself could not have told that an article in it had been touched since he left it—Paulvitch was a past master in his chosen field. When he handed the packet to Rokoff in the seclusion of their stateroom the larger man rang for a steward, and ordered a pint of champagne.

"We must celebrate, my dear Alexis," he said.

"It was luck, Nikolas," explained Paulvitch. "It is evident that he carries these papers always upon his person—just by chance he neglected to transfer them when he changed coats a few minutes since. But there will be the deuce to pay when he discovers his loss.

I am afraid that he will immediately connect you with it.

Now that he knows that you are on board he will suspect you at once."

"It will make no difference whom he suspects—after tonight," said Rokoff, with a nasty grin.

After Miss Strong had gone below that night Tarzan stood leaning over the rail looking far out to sea. Every night he had done this since he had come on board—sometimes he stood thus for an hour.

And the eyes that had been watching his every movement since he had boarded the ship at Algiers knew that this was his habit.

Even as he stood there this night those

eyes were on him. Presently the last straggler had left the deck. It was a clear night, but there was no moon —objects on deck were barely discernible.

From the shadows of the cabin two figures crept stealthily upon the ape-man from behind. The lapping of the waves against the ship's sides, the whirring of the propeller, the throbbing of the engines, drowned the almost soundless approach of the two.

They were quite close to him now, and crouching low, like tacklers on a gridiron. One of them raised his hand and lowered it, as though counting off seconds—one—two—three! As one man the two leaped for their victim. Each grasped a leg, and before Tarzan of the

Apes, lightning though he was, could turn to save himself he had been pitched over the low rail and was falling into the Atlantic.

Hazel Strong was looking from her darkened port across the dark sea. Suddenly a body shot past her eyes from the deck above. It dropped so quickly into the dark waters below that she could not be sure of what it was— it might have been a man, she could not say.

She listened for some outcry from above—for the always- fearsome call, "Man overboard!" but it did not come. All was silence on the ship above —all was silence in the sea below.

The girl decided that she had but seen

a bundle of refuse thrown overboard by one of the ship's crew, and a moment later sought her berth.

13. THE WRECK OF THE "LADY ALICE"

The next morning at breakfast Tarzan's place was vacant. Miss Strong was mildly curious, for Mr. Caldwell had always made it a point to wait that he might breakfast with her and her mother. As she was sitting on deck later Monsieur Thuran paused to exchange a half dozen pleasant words with her. He seemed in most excellent spirits—his manner was the extreme of affability. As he passed on Miss Strong thought what a very delightful man was Monsieur Thuran.

The day dragged heavily. She missed the quiet companionship of Mr. Caldwell—there had been something

about him that had made the girl like him from the first; he had talked so entertainingly of the places he had seen—the peoples and their customs—the wild beasts; and he had always had a droll way of drawing striking comparisons between savage animals and civilized men that showed a considerable knowledge of the former, and a keen, though somewhat cynical, estimate of the latter.

When Monsieur Thuran stopped again to chat with her in the afternoon she welcomed the break in the day's monotony. But she had begun to become seriously concerned in Mr. Caldwell's continued absence; somehow she constantly associated it with the start she

had had the night before, when the dark object fell past her port into the sea. Presently she broached the subject to Monsieur Thuran. Had he seen Mr. Caldwell today? He had not. Why? "He was not at breakfast as usual, nor have I seen him once since yesterday," explained the girl.

Monsieur Thuran was extremely solicitous.

"I did not have the pleasure of intimate acquaintance with Mr.

Caldwell," he said. "He seemed a most estimable gentleman, however.

Can it be that he is indisposed, and has remained in his stateroom? It would not be strange."

"No," replied the girl, "it would not

be strange, of course; but for some inexplicable reason I have one of those foolish feminine presentiments that all is not right with Mr. Caldwell. It is the strangest feeling—it is as though I knew that he was not on board the ship." Monsieur Thuran laughed pleasantly. "Mercy, my dear Miss Strong," he said; "where in the world could he be then? We have not been within sight of land for days." "Of course, it is ridiculous of me," she admitted. And then: "But I am not going to worry about it any longer; I am going to find out where Mr. Caldwell is," and she motioned to a passing steward.

"That may be more difficult than you imagine, my dear girl," thought Monsieur

Thuran, but aloud he said: "By all means."

"Find Mr. Caldwell, please," she said to the steward, "and tell him that his friends are much worried by his continued absence."

"You are very fond of Mr. Caldwell?" suggested Monsieur Thuran.

"I think he is splendid," replied the girl. "And mamma is perfectly infatuated with him. He is the sort of man with whom one has a feeling of perfect security—no one could help but have confidence in Mr. Caldwell." A moment later the steward returned to say that Mr. Caldwell was not in his stateroom. "I cannot find him, Miss Strong, and"—he hesitated—"I have learned that his berth

was not occupied last night. I think that I had better report the matter to the captain."

"Most assuredly," exclaimed Miss Strong. "I shall go with you to the captain myself. It is terrible! I know that something awful has happened. My presentiments were not false, after all." It was a very frightened young woman and an excited steward who presented themselves before the captain a few moments later. He listened to their stories in silence—a look of concern marking his expression as the steward assured him that he had sought for the missing passenger in every part of the ship that a passenger might be expected to frequent.

"And are you sure, Miss Strong, that you saw a body fall overboard last night?" he asked.

"There is not the slightest doubt about that," she answered. "I cannot say that it was a human body—there was no outcry. It might have been only what I thought it was—a bundle of refuse. But if Mr. Caldwell is not found on board I shall always be positive that it was he whom I saw fall past my port." The captain ordered an immediate and thorough search of the entire ship from stem to stern—no nook or cranny was to be overlooked.

Miss Strong remained in his cabin, waiting the outcome of the quest. The captain asked her many questions, but

she could tell him nothing about the missing man other than what she had herself seen during their brief acquaintance on shipboard. For the first time she suddenly realized how very little indeed Mr. Caldwell had told her about himself or his past life. That he had been born in Africa and educated in Paris was about all she knew, and this meager information had been the result of her surprise that an Englishman should speak English with such a marked French accent.

"Did he ever speak of any enemies?" asked the captain.

"Never."

"Was he acquainted with any of the other passengers?"

"Only as he had been with me—through the circumstance of casual meeting as fellow shipmates."

"Er—was he, in your opinion, Miss Strong, a man who drank to excess?"

"I do not know that he drank at all—he certainly had not been drinking up to half an hour before I saw that body fall overboard," she answered, "for I was with him on deck up to that time."

"It is very strange," said the captain. "He did not look to me like a man who was subject to fainting spells, or anything of that sort. And even had he been it is scarcely credible that he should have fallen completely over the rail had he been taken with an attack while leaning upon it—he would rather

have fallen inside, upon the deck. If he is not on board, Miss Strong, he was thrown overboard—and the fact that you heard no outcry would lead to the assumption that he was dead before he left the ship's deck —murdered." The girl shuddered.

It was a full hour later that the first officer returned to report the outcome of the search.

"Mr. Caldwell is not on board, sir," he said.

"I fear that there is something more serious than accident here, Mr. Brently," said the captain. "I wish that you would make a personal and very careful examination of Mr. Caldwell's effects, to ascertain if there is any clew to a motive

either for suicide or murder—sift the thing to the bottom."

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded Mr. Brently, and left to commence his investigation.

Hazel Strong was prostrated. For two days she did not leave her cabin, and when she finally ventured on deck she was very wan and white, with great, dark circles beneath her eyes. Waking or sleeping, it seemed that she constantly saw that dark body dropping, swift and silent, into the cold, grim sea.

Shortly after her first appearance on deck following the tragedy, Monsieur Thuran joined her with many expressions of kindly solicitude.

"Oh, but it is terrible, Miss Strong,"

he said. "I cannot rid my mind of it."

"Nor I," said the girl wearily. "I feel that he might have been saved had I but given the alarm."

"You must not reproach yourself, my dear Miss Strong," urged Monsieur Thuran. "It was in no way your fault. Another would have done as you did. Who would think that because something fell into the sea from a ship that it must necessarily be a man? Nor would the outcome have been different had you given an alarm. For a while they would have doubted your story, thinking it but the nervous hallucination of a woman—had you insisted it would have been too late to have rescued him by the time the ship could have been brought to a stop,

and the boats lowered and rowed back miles in search of the unknown spot where the tragedy had occurred. No, you must not censure yourself. You have done more than any other of us for poor Mr. Caldwell—you were the only one to miss him.

It was you who instituted the search." The girl could not help but feel grateful to him for his kind and encouraging words. He was with her often - almost constantly for the remainder of the voyage—and she grew to like him very much indeed. Monsieur Thuran had learned that the beautiful Miss Strong, of Baltimore, was an American heiress—a very wealthy girl in her own right, and with future prospects that quite took his

breath away when he contemplated them, and since he spent most of his time in that delectable pastime it is a wonder that he breathed at all.

It had been Monsieur Thuran's intention to leave the ship at the first port they touched after the disappearance of Tarzan. Did he not have in his coat pocket the thing he had taken passage upon this very boat to obtain? There was nothing more to detain him here. He could not return to the Continent fast enough, that he might board the first express for St. Petersburg.

But now another idea had obtruded itself, and was rapidly crowding his original intentions into the background. That American fortune was not to be

sneezed at, nor was its possessor a whit less attractive.

"SAPRISTI! but she would cause a sensation in St. Petersburg." And he would, too, with the assistance of her inheritance.

After Monsieur Thuran had squandered a few million dollars, he discovered that the vocation was so entirely to his liking that he would continue on down to Cape Town, where he suddenly decided that he had pressing engagements that might detain him there for some time.

Miss Strong had told him that she and her mother were to visit the latter's brother there—they had not decided upon the duration of their stay, and it

would probably run into months.

She was delighted when she found that Monsieur Thuran was to be there also.

"I hope that we shall be able to continue our acquaintance," she said. "You must call upon mamma and me as soon as we are settled." Monsieur Thuran was delighted at the prospect, and lost no time in saying so. Mrs. Strong was not quite so favorably impressed by him as her daughter.

"I do not know why I should distrust him," she said to Hazel one day as they were discussing him. "He seems a perfect gentleman in every respect, but sometimes there is something about his eyes—a fleeting expression which I

cannot describe, but which when I see it gives me a very uncanny feeling." The girl laughed. "You are a silly dear, mamma," she said.

"I suppose so, but I am sorry that we have not poor Mr. Caldwell for company instead."

"And I, too," replied her daughter.

Monsieur Thuran became a frequent visitor at the home of Hazel Strong's uncle in Cape Town. His attentions were very marked, but they were so punctiliously arranged to meet the girl's every wish that she came to depend upon him more and more. Did she or her mother or a cousin require an escort - was there a little friendly service to be rendered, the genial and ubiquitous

Monsieur Thuran was always available. Her uncle and his family grew to like him for his unfailing courtesy and willingness to be of service. Monsieur Thuran was becoming indispensable. At length, feeling the moment propitious, he proposed. Miss Strong was startled. She did not know what to say.

"I had never thought that you cared for me in any such way," she told him. "I have looked upon you always as a very dear friend.

I shall not give you my answer now. Forget that you have asked me to be your wife. Let us go on as we have been—then I can consider you from an entirely different angle for a time. It may be that I shall discover that my feeling for you is

more than friendship.

I certainly have not thought for a moment that I loved you." This arrangement was perfectly satisfactory to Monsieur Thuran. He deeply regretted that he had been hasty, but he had loved her for so long a time, and so devotedly, that he thought that every one must know it.

"From the first time I saw you, Hazel," he said, "I have loved you. I am willing to wait, for I am certain that so great and pure a love as mine will be rewarded. All that I care to know is that you do not love another. Will you tell me?"

"I have never been in love in my life," she replied, and he was quite satisfied.

On the way home that night he purchased a steam yacht, and built a million-dollar villa on the Black Sea.

The next day Hazel Strong enjoyed one of the happiest surprises of her life—she ran face to face upon Jane Porter as she was coming out of a jeweler's shop.

"Why, Jane Porter!" she exclaimed. "Where in the world did you drop from? Why, I can't believe my own eyes."

"Well, of all things!" cried the equally astonished Jane. "And here I have been wasting whole reams of perfectly good imagination picturing you in Baltimore—the very idea!" And she threw her arms about her friend once more, and kissed her a dozen times.

By the time mutual explanations had been made Hazel knew that Lord Tennington's yacht had put in at Cape Town for at least a week's stay, and at the end of that time was to continue on her voyage—this time up the West Coast—and so back to England. "Where," concluded Jane, "I am to be married."

"Then you are not married yet?" asked Hazel.

"Not yet," replied Jane, and then, quite irrelevantly, "I wish England were a million miles from here." Visits were exchanged between the yacht and Hazel's relatives.

Dinners were arranged, and trips into the surrounding country to entertain the visitors. Monsieur Thuran was a

welcome guest at every function. He gave a dinner himself to the men of the party, and managed to ingratiate himself in the good will of Lord Tennington by many little acts of hospitality.

Monsieur Thuran had heard dropped a hint of something which might result from this unexpected visit of Lord Tennington's yacht, and he wanted to be counted in on it. Once when he was alone with the Englishman he took occasion to make it quite plain that his engagement to Miss Strong was to be announced immediately upon their return to America. "But not a word of it, my dear Tennington—not a word of it."

"Certainly, I quite understand, my dear fellow," Tennington had replied.

"But you are to be congratulated— ripping girl, don't you know— really." The next day it came. Mrs. Strong, Hazel, and Monsieur Thuran were Lord Tennington's guests aboard his yacht. Mrs. Strong had been telling them how much she had enjoyed her visit at Cape Town, and that she regretted that a letter just received from her attorneys in Baltimore had necessitated her cutting her visit shorter than they had intended.

"When do you sail?" asked Tennington.

"The first of the week, I think," she replied. "Indeed?" exclaimed Monsieur Thuran. "I am very fortunate. I, too, have found that I must return at once, and now I shall have the honor of accompanying

and serving you." "That is nice of you, Monsieur Thuran," replied Mrs. Strong. "I am sure that we shall be glad to place ourselves under your protection." But in the bottom of her heart was the wish that they might escape him. Why, she could not have told.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Lord Tennington, a moment later. "Bully idea, by Jove!"

"Yes, Tennington, of course," ventured Clayton; "it must be a bully idea if you had it, but what the deuce is it? Goin' to steam to China via the south pole?"

"Oh, I say now, Clayton," returned Tennington, "you needn't be so rough on a fellow just because you didn't happen

to suggest this trip yourself— you've acted a regular bounder ever since we sailed.

"No, sir," he continued, "it's a bully idea, and you'll all say so. It's to take Mrs. Strong and Miss Strong, and Thuran, too, if he'll come, as far as England with us on the yacht. Now, isn't that a corker?"

"Forgive me, Tenny, old boy," cried Clayton. "It certainly IS a corking idea— I never should have suspected you of it. You're quite sure it's original, are you?" "And we'll sail the first of the week, or any other time that suits your convenience, Mrs. Strong," concluded the big-hearted Englishman, as though the thing were all arranged except the

sailing date.

"Mercy, Lord Tennington, you haven't even given us an opportunity to thank you, much less decide whether we shall be able to accept your generous invitation," said Mrs. Strong.

"Why, of course you'll come," responded Tennington. "We'll make as good time as any passenger boat, and you'll be fully as comfortable; and, anyway, we all want you, and won't take no for an answer." And so it was settled that they should sail the following Monday.

Two days out the girls were sitting in Hazel's cabin, looking at some prints she had had finished in Cape Town. They represented all the pictures she had

taken since she had left America, and the girls were both engrossed in them, Jane asking many questions, and Hazel keeping up a perfect torrent of comment and explanation of the various scenes and people.

"And here," she said suddenly, "here's a man you know. Poor fellow, I have so often intended asking you about him, but I never have been able to think of it when we were together." She was holding the little print so that Jane did not see the face of the man it portrayed.

"His name was John Caldwell," continued Hazel. "Do you recall him? He said that he met you in America. He is an Englishman."

"I do not recollect the name," replied

Jane. "Let me see the picture."

"The poor fellow was lost overboard on our trip down the coast," she said, as she handed the print to Jane.

"Lost over—Why, Hazel, Hazel—don't tell me that he is dead —drowned at sea! Hazel! Why don't you say that you are joking!" And before the astonished Miss Strong could catch her Jane Porter had slipped to the floor in a swoon.

After Hazel had restored her chum to consciousness she sat looking at her for a long time before either spoke.

"I did not know, Jane," said Hazel, in a constrained voice, "that you knew Mr. Caldwell so intimately that his death could prove such a shock to you." "John Caldwell?" questioned Miss Porter.

"You do not mean to tell me that you do not know who this man was, Hazel?"

"Why, yes, Jane; I know perfectly well who he was—his name was John Caldwell; he was from London."

"Oh, Hazel, I wish I could believe it," moaned the girl. "I wish I could believe it, but those features are burned so deep into my memory and my heart that I should recognize them anywhere in the world from among a thousand others, who might appear identical to any one but me."

"What do you mean, Jane?" cried Hazel, now thoroughly alarmed.

"Who do you think it is?"

"I don't think, Hazel. I know that that is a picture of Tarzan of the Apes."

"Jane!"

"I cannot be mistaken. Oh, Hazel, are you sure that he is dead? Can there be no mistake?"

"I am afraid not, dear," answered Hazel sadly. "I wish I could think that you are mistaken, but now a hundred and one little pieces of corroborative evidence occur to me that meant nothing to me while I thought that he was John Caldwell, of London. He said that he had been born in Africa, and educated in France."

"Yes, that would be true," murmured Jane Porter dully.

"The first officer, who searched his luggage, found nothing to identify John Caldwell, of London. Practically all his

belongings had been made, or purchased, in Paris. Everything that bore an initial was marked either with a `T' alone, or with `J. C. T.' We thought that he was traveling incognito under his first two names—the J. C. standing for John Caldwell."

"Tarzan of the Apes took the name Jean C. Tarzan," said Jane, in the same lifeless monotone. "And he is dead! Oh! Hazel, it is horrible! He died all alone in this terrible ocean! It is unbelievable that that brave heart should have ceased to beat—that those mighty muscles are quiet and cold forever! That he who was the personification of life and health and manly strength should be the prey of slimy, crawling things, that—" But she

could go no further, and with a little moan she buried her head in her arms, and sank sobbing to the floor.

For days Miss Porter was ill, and would see no one except Hazel and the faithful Esmeralda. When at last she came on deck all were struck by the sad change that had taken place in her. She was no longer the alert, vivacious American beauty who had charmed and delighted all who came in contact with her. Instead she was a very quiet and sad little girl—with an expression of hopeless wistfulness that none but Hazel Strong could interpret.

The entire party strove their utmost to cheer and amuse her, but all to no avail. Occasionally the jolly Lord Tennington

would wring a wan smile from her, but for the most part she sat with wide eyes looking out across the sea.

With Jane Porter's illness one misfortune after another seemed to attack the yacht. First an engine broke down, and they drifted for two days while temporary repairs were being made. Then a squall struck them unaware, that carried overboard nearly everything above deck that was portable. Later two of the seamen fell to fighting in the forecastle, with the result that one of them was badly wounded with a knife, and the other had to be put in irons. Then, to cap the climax, the mate fell overboard at night, and was drowned before help could reach him. The yacht

cruised about the spot for ten hours, but no sign of the man was seen after he disappeared from the deck into the sea.

Every member of the crew and guests was gloomy and depressed after these series of misfortunes. All were apprehensive of worse to come, and this was especially true of the seamen who recalled all sorts of terrible omens and warnings that had occurred during the early part of the voyage, and which they could now clearly translate into the precursors of some grim and terrible tragedy to come.

Nor did the croakers have long to wait. The second night after the drowning of the mate the little yacht was suddenly wracked from stem to stern.

About one o'clock in the morning there was a terrific impact that threw the slumbering guests and crew from berth and bunk. A mighty shudder ran through the frail craft; she lay far over to starboard; the engines stopped. For a moment she hung there with her decks at an angle of forty-five degrees—then, with a sullen, rending sound, she slipped back into the sea and righted.

Instantly the men rushed upon deck, followed closely by the women.

Though the night was cloudy, there was little wind or sea, nor was it so dark but that just off the port bow a black mass could be discerned floating low in the water.

"A derelict," was the terse

explanation of the officer of the watch.

Presently the engineer hurried on deck in search of the captain.

"That patch we put on the cylinder head's blown out, sir," he reported, "and she's makin' water fast for'ard on the port bow." An instant later a seaman rushed up from below.

"My Gawd!" he cried. "Her whole bleedin' bottom's ripped out. She can't float twenty minutes."

"Shut up!" roared Tennington. "Ladies, go below and get some of your things together. It may not be so bad as that, but we may have to take to the boats. It will be safer to be prepared. Go at once, please. And, Captain Jerrold, send some competent man below,

please, to ascertain the exact extent of the damage. In the meantime I might suggest that you have the boats provisioned." The calm, low voice of the owner did much to reassure the entire party, and a moment later all were occupied with the duties he had suggested. By the time the ladies had returned to the deck the rapid provisioning of the boats had been about completed, and a moment later the officer who had gone below had returned to report.

But his opinion was scarcely needed to assure the huddled group of men and women that the end of the LADY ALICE was at hand.

"Well, sir?" said the captain, as his

officer hesitated.

"I dislike to frighten the ladies, sir," he said, "but she can't float a dozen minutes, in my opinion. There's a hole in her you could drive a bally cow through, sir." For five minutes the LADY ALICE had been settling rapidly by the bow. Already her stern loomed high in the air, and foothold on the deck was of the most precarious nature. She carried four boats, and these were all filled and lowered away in safety. As they pulled rapidly from the stricken little vessel Jane Porter turned to have one last look at her. Just then there came a loud crash and an ominous rumbling and pounding from the heart of the ship—her machinery had broken loose, and was

dashing its way toward the bow, tearing out partitions and bulkheads as it went—the stern rose rapidly high above them; for a moment she seemed to pause there—a vertical shaft protruding from the bosom of the ocean, and then swiftly she dove headforemost beneath the waves.

In one of the boats the brave Lord Tennington wiped a tear from his eye - he had not seen a fortune in money go down forever into the sea, but a dear, beautiful friend whom he had loved.

At last the long night broke, and a tropical sun smote down upon the rolling water. Jane Porter had dropped into a fitful slumber—the fierce light of the sun upon her upturned face awoke her. She looked about her. In the boat with her

were three sailors, Clayton, and Monsieur Thuran. Then she looked for the other boats, but as far as the eye could reach there was nothing to break the fearful monotony of that waste of waters— they were alone in a small boat upon the broad Atlantic.

14. BACK TO THE PRIMITIVE

As Tarzan struck the water, his first impulse was to swim clear of the ship and possible danger from her propellers. He knew whom to thank for his present predicament, and as he lay in the sea, just supporting himself by a gentle movement of his hands, his chief emotion was one of chagrin that he had been so easily bested by Rokoff.

He lay thus for some time, watching the receding and rapidly diminishing lights of the steamer without it ever once occurring to him to call for help. He never had called for help in his life, and so it is not strange that he did not think of it now. Always had he depended upon his own prowess and resourcefulness,

nor had there ever been since the days of Kala any to answer an appeal for succor. When it did occur to him it was too late.

There was, thought Tarzan, a possible one chance in a hundred thousand that he might be picked up, and an even smaller chance that he would reach land, so he determined that to combine what slight chances there were, he would swim slowly in the direction of the coast—the ship might have been closer in than he had known.

His strokes were long and easy—it would be many hours before those giant muscles would commence to feel fatigue. As he swam, guided toward the east by the stars, he noticed that he felt the weight of his shoes, and so he

removed them. His trousers went next, and he would have removed his coat at the same time but for the precious papers in its pocket. To assure himself that he still had them he slipped his hand in to feel, but to his consternation they were gone.

Now he knew that something more than revenge had prompted Rokoff to pitch him overboard—the Russian had managed to obtain possession of the papers Tarzan had wrested from him at Bou Saada. The ape-man swore softly, and let his coat and shirt sink into the Atlantic.

Before many hours he had divested himself of his remaining garments, and was swimming easily and unencumbered

toward the east.

The first faint evidence of dawn was paling the stars ahead of him when the dim outlines of a low-lying black mass loomed up directly in his track. A few strong strokes brought him to its side—it was the bottom of a wave-washed derelict. Tarzan clambered upon it—he would rest there until daylight at least. He had no intention to remain there inactive— a prey to hunger and thirst. If he must die he preferred dying in action while making some semblance of an attempt to save himself.

The sea was quiet, so that the wreck had only a gently undulating motion, that was nothing to the swimmer who had had no sleep for twenty hours. Tarzan of

the Apes curled up upon the slimy timbers, and was soon asleep.

The heat of the sun awoke him early in the forenoon. His first conscious sensation was of thirst, which grew almost to the proportions of suffering with full returning consciousness; but a moment later it was forgotten in the joy of two almost simultaneous discoveries. The first was a mass of wreckage floating beside the derelict in the midst of which, bottom up, rose and fell an overturned lifeboat; the other was the faint, dim line of a far- distant shore showing on the horizon in the east.

Tarzan dove into the water, and swam around the wreck to the lifeboat. The cool ocean refreshed him almost as

much as would a draft of water, so that it was with renewed vigor that he brought the smaller boat alongside the derelict, and, after many herculean efforts, succeeded in dragging it onto the slimy ship's bottom.

There he righted and examined it—the boat was quite sound, and a moment later floated upright alongside the wreck. Then Tarzan selected several pieces of wreckage that might answer him as paddles, and presently was making good headway toward the far-off shore.

It was late in the afternoon by the time he came close enough to distinguish objects on land, or to make out the contour of the shore line. Before him lay

what appeared to be the entrance to a little, landlocked harbor. The wooded point to the north was strangely familiar. Could it be possible that fate had thrown him up at the very threshold of his own beloved jungle! But as the bow of his boat entered the mouth of the harbor the last shred of doubt was cleared away, for there before him upon the farther shore, under the shadows of his primeval forest, stood his own cabin—built before his birth by the hand of his long-dead father, John Clayton, Lord Greystoke.

With long sweeps of his giant muscles Tarzan sent the little craft speeding toward the beach. Its prow had scarcely touched when the ape-man leaped to

shore—his heart beat fast in joy and exultation as each long-familiar object came beneath his roving eyes—the cabin, the beach, the little brook, the dense jungle, the black, impenetrable forest. The myriad birds in their brilliant plumage—the gorgeous tropical blooms upon the festooned creepers falling in great loops from the giant trees.

Tarzan of the Apes had come into his own again, and that all the world might know it he threw back his young head, and gave voice to the fierce, wild challenge of his tribe. For a moment silence reigned upon the jungle, and then, low and weird, came an answering challenge—it was the deep roar of Numa, the lion; and from a great

distance, faintly, the fearsome answering bellow of a bull ape.

Tarzan went to the brook first, and slaked his thirst. Then he approached his cabin. The door was still closed and latched as he and D'Arnot had left it. He raised the latch and entered. Nothing had been disturbed; there were the table, the bed, and the little crib built by his father —the shelves and cupboards just as they had stood for ever twenty-three years — just as he had left them nearly two years before.

His eyes satisfied, Tarzan's stomach began to call aloud for attention - the pangs of hunger suggested a search for food. There was nothing in the cabin, nor had he any weapons; but upon a wall

hung one of his old grass ropes. It had been many times broken and spliced, so that he had discarded it for a better one long before.

Tarzan wished that he had a knife. Well, unless he was mistaken he should have that and a spear and bows and arrows before another sun had set— the rope would take care of that, and in the meantime it must be made to procure food for him. He coiled it carefully, and, throwing it about his shoulder, went out, closing the door behind him.

Close to the cabin the jungle commenced, and into it Tarzan of the Apes plunged, wary and noiseless— once more a savage beast hunting its food. For a time he kept to the ground,

but finally, discovering no spoor indicative of nearby meat, he took to the trees. With the first dizzy swing from tree to tree all the old joy of living swept over him. Vain regrets and dull heartache were forgotten.

Now was he living. Now, indeed, was the true happiness of perfect freedom his. Who would go back to the stifling, wicked cities of civilized man when the mighty reaches of the great jungle offered peace and liberty? Not he.

While it was yet light Tarzan came to a drinking place by the side of a jungle river. There was a ford there, and for countless ages the beasts of the forest had come down to drink at this spot. Here of a night might always be found

either Sabor or Numa crouching in the dense foliage of the surrounding jungle awaiting an antelope or a water buck for their meal. Here came Horta, the boar, to water, and here came Tarzan of the Apes to make a kill, for he was very empty.

On a low branch he squatted above the trail. For an hour he waited. It was growing dark. A little to one side of the ford in the densest thicket he heard the faint sound of padded feet, and the brushing of a huge body against tall grasses and tangled creepers. None other than Tarzan might have heard it, but the ape-man heard and translated—it was Numa, the lion, on the same errand as himself. Tarzan smiled.

Presently he heard an animal

approaching warily along the trail toward the drinking place. A moment more and it came in view—it was Horta, the boar. Here was delicious meat—and Tarzan's mouth watered. The grasses where Numa lay were very still now—ominously still. Horta passed beneath Tarzan—a few more steps and he would be within the radius of Numa's spring. Tarzan could imagine how old Numa's eyes were shining— how he was already sucking in his breath for the awful roar which would freeze his prey for the brief instant between the moment of the spring and the sinking of terrible fangs into splintering bones.

But as Numa gathered himself, a slender rope flew through the air from

the low branches of a near-by tree. A noose settled about Horta's neck. There was a frightened grunt, a squeal, and then Numa saw his quarry dragged backward up the trail, and, as he sprang, Horta, the boar, soared upward beyond his clutches into the tree above, and a mocking face looked down and laughed into his own.

Then indeed did Numa roar. Angry, threatening, hungry, he paced back and forth beneath the taunting ape-man. Now he stopped, and, rising on his hind legs against the stem of the tree that held his enemy, sharpened his huge claws upon the bark, tearing out great pieces that laid bare the white wood beneath.

And in the meantime Tarzan had

dragged the struggling Horta to the limb beside him. Sinewy fingers completed the work the choking noose had commenced. The ape-man had no knife, but nature had equipped him with the means of tearing his food from the quivering flank of his prey, and gleaming teeth sank into the succulent flesh while the raging lion looked on from below as another enjoyed the dinner that he had thought already his.

It was quite dark by the time Tarzan had gorged himself. Ah, but it had been delicious! Never had he quite accustomed himself to the ruined flesh that civilized men had served him, and in the bottom of his savage heart there had constantly been the craving for the warm

meat of the fresh kill, and the rich, red blood.

He wiped his bloody hands upon a bunch of leaves, slung the remains of his kill across his shoulder, and swung off through the middle terrace of the forest toward his cabin, and at the same instant Jane Porter and William Cecil Clayton arose from a sumptuous dinner upon the LADY ALICE, thousands of miles to the east, in the Indian Ocean.

Beneath Tarzan walked Numa, the lion, and when the ape-man deigned to glance downward he caught occasional glimpses of the baleful green eyes following through the darkness. Numa did not roar now—instead, he moved stealthily, like the shadow of a great cat;

but yet he took no step that did not reach the sensitive ears of the ape-man.

Tarzan wondered if he would stalk him to his cabin door. He hoped not, for that would mean a night's sleep curled in the crotch of a tree, and he much preferred the bed of grasses within his own abode. But he knew just the tree and the most comfortable crotch, if necessity demanded that he sleep out. A hundred times in the past some great jungle cat had followed him home, and compelled him to seek shelter in this same tree, until another mood or the rising sun had sent his enemy away.

But presently Numa gave up the chase and, with a series of blood-curdling moans and roars, turned angrily back in

search of another and an easier dinner. So Tarzan came to his cabin unattended, and a few moments later was curled up in the mildewed remnants of what had once been a bed of grasses. Thus easily did Monsieur Jean C. Tarzan slough the thin skin of his artificial civilization, and sink happy and contented into the deep sleep of the wild beast that has fed to repletion. Yet a woman's "yes" would have bound him to that other life forever, and made the thought of this savage existence repulsive.

Tarzan slept late into the following forenoon, for he had been very tired from the labors and exertion of the long night and day upon the ocean, and the jungle jaunt that had brought into play

muscles that he had scarce used for nearly two years. When he awoke he ran to the brook first to drink. Then he took a plunge into the sea, swimming about for a quarter of an hour. Afterward he returned to his cabin, and breakfasted off the flesh of Horta. This done, he buried the balance of the carcass in the soft earth outside the cabin, for his evening meal.

Once more he took his rope and vanished into the jungle. This time he hunted nobler quarry—man; although had you asked him his own opinion he could have named a dozen other denizens of the jungle which he considered far the superiors in nobility of the men he hunted.

Today Tarzan was in quest of weapons. He wondered if the women and children had remained in Mbonga's village after the punitive expedition from the French cruiser had massacred all the warriors in revenge for D'Arnot's supposed death. He hoped that he should find warriors there, for he knew not how long a quest he should have to make were the village deserted.

The ape-man traveled swiftly through the forest, and about noon came to the site of the village, but to his disappointment found that the jungle had overgrown the plantain fields and that the thatched huts had fallen in decay. There was no sign of man. He clambered about among the ruins for half an hour,

hoping that he might discover some forgotten weapon, but his search was without fruit, and so he took up his quest once more, following up the stream, which flowed from a southeasterly direction. He knew that near fresh water he would be most likely to find another settlement.

As he traveled he hunted as he had hunted with his ape people in the past, as Kala had taught him to hunt, turning over rotted logs to find some toothsome vermin, running high into the trees to rob a bird's nest, or pouncing upon a tiny rodent with the quickness of a cat. There were other things that he ate, too, but the less detailed the account of an ape's diet, the better—and Tarzan was again an

ape, the same fierce, brutal anthropoid that Kala had taught him to be, and that he had been for the first twenty years of his life.

Occasionally he smiled as he recalled some friend who might even at the moment be sitting placid and immaculate within the precincts of his select Parisian club—just as Tarzan had sat but a few months before; and then he would stop, as though turned suddenly to stone as the gentle breeze carried to his trained nostrils the scent of some new prey or a formidable enemy.

That night he slept far inland from his cabin, securely wedged into the crotch of a giant tree, swaying a hundred feet above the ground. He had eaten heartily

again—this time from the flesh of Bara, the deer, who had fallen prey to his quick noose.

Early the next morning he resumed his journey, always following the course of the stream. For three days he continued his quest, until he had come to a part of the jungle in which he never before had been. Occasionally upon the higher ground the forest was much thinner, and in the far distance through the trees he could see ranges of mighty mountains, with wide plains in the foreground.

Here, in the open spaces, were new game—countless antelope and vast herds of zebra. Tarzan was entranced—he would make a long visit to this new world.

On the morning of the fourth day his nostrils were suddenly surprised by a faint new scent. It was the scent of man, but yet a long way off. The ape-man thrilled with pleasure. Every sense was on the alert as with crafty stealth he moved quickly through the trees, up-wind, in the direction of his prey. Presently he came upon it—a lone warrior treading softly through the jungle.

Tarzan followed close above his quarry, waiting for a clearer space in which to hurl his rope. As he stalked the unconscious man, new thoughts presented themselves to the ape-man—thoughts born of the refining influences of civilization, and of its cruelties. It

came to him that seldom if ever did civilized man kill a fellow being without some pretext, however slight. It was true that Tarzan wished this man's weapons and ornaments, but was it necessary to take his life to obtain them? The longer he thought about it, the more repugnant became the thought of taking human life needlessly; and thus it happened that while he was trying to decide just what to do, they had come to a little clearing, at the far side of which lay a palisaded village of beehive huts.

As the warrior emerged from the forest, Tarzan caught a fleeting glimpse of a tawny hide worming its way through the matted jungle grasses in his wake — it was Numa, the lion. He, too, was

stalking the black man. With the instant that Tarzan realized the native's danger his attitude toward his erstwhile prey altered completely—now he was a fellow man threatened by a common enemy.

Numa was about to charge—there was little time in which to compare various methods or weigh the probable results of any. And then a number of things happened, almost simultaneously—the lion sprang from his ambush toward the retreating black—Tarzan cried out in warning —and the black turned just in time to see Numa halted in mid-flight by a slender strand of grass rope, the noosed end of which had fallen cleanly about his neck.

The ape-man had acted so quickly that he had been unable to prepare himself to withstand the strain and shock of Numa's great weight upon the rope, and so it was that though the rope stopped the beast before his mighty talons could fasten themselves in the flesh of the black, the strain overbalanced Tarzan, who came tumbling to the ground not six paces from the infuriated animal. Like lightning Numa turned upon this new enemy, and, defenseless as he was, Tarzan of the Apes was nearer to death that instant than he ever before had been. It was the black who saved him. The warrior realized in an instant that he owed his life to this strange white man, and he also saw that only a miracle could save

his preserver from those fierce yellow fangs that had been so near to his own flesh.

With the quickness of thought his spear arm flew back, and then shot forward with all the force of the sinewy muscles that rolled beneath the shimmering ebon hide. True to its mark the iron-shod weapon flew, transfixing Numa's sleek carcass from the right groin to beneath the left shoulder. With a hideous scream of rage and pain the brute turned again upon the black. A dozen paces he had gone when Tarzan's rope brought him to a stand once more - then he wheeled again upon the ape-man, only to feel the painful prick of a barbed arrow as it sank half its length in his

quivering flesh.

Again he stopped, and by this time Tarzan had run twice around the stem of a great tree with his rope, and made the end fast.

The black saw the trick, and grinned, but Tarzan knew that Numa must be quickly finished before those mighty teeth had found and parted the slender cord that held him. It was a matter of but an instant to reach the black's side and drag his long knife from its scabbard. Then he signed the warrior to continue to shoot arrows into the great beast while he attempted to close in upon him with the knife; so as one tantalized upon one side, the other sneaked cautiously in upon the other. Numa was furious. He

raised his voice in a perfect frenzy of shrieks, growls, and hideous moans, the while he reared upon his hind legs in futile attempt to reach first one and then the other of his tormentors.

But at length the agile ape-man saw his chance, and rushed in upon the beast's left side behind the mighty shoulder. A giant arm encircled the tawny throat, and a long blade sank once, true as a die, into the fierce heart. Then Tarzan arose, and the black man and the white looked into each other's eyes across the body of their kill—and the black made the sign of peace and friendship, and Tarzan of the Apes answered in kind.

15. FROM APE TO SAVAGE

The noise of their battle with Numa had drawn an excited horde of savages from the nearby village, and a moment after the lion's death the two men were surrounded by lithe, ebon warriors, gesticulating and jabbering—a thousand questions that drowned each ventured reply.

And then the women came, and the children—eager, curious, and, at sight of Tarzan, more questioning than ever. The ape- man's new friend finally succeeded in making himself heard, and when he had done talking the men and women of the village vied with one another in doing honor to the strange creature who had saved their fellow and battled

single-handed with fierce Numa.

At last they led him back to their village, where they brought him gifts of fowl, and goats, and cooked food. When he pointed to their weapons the warriors hastened to fetch spear, shield, arrows, and a bow. His friend of the encounter presented him with the knife with which he had killed Numa. There was nothing in all the village he could not have had for the asking.

How much easier this was, thought Tarzan, than murder and robbery to supply his wants. How close he had been to killing this man whom he never had seen before, and who now was manifesting by every primitive means at his command friendship and affection for

his would-be slayer. Tarzan of the Apes was ashamed. Hereafter he would at least wait until he knew men deserved it before he thought of killing them.

The idea recalled Rokoff to his mind. He wished that he might have the Russian to himself in the dark jungle for a few minutes.

There was a man who deserved killing if ever any one did. And if he could have seen Rokoff at that moment as he assiduously bent every endeavor to the pleasant task of ingratiating himself into the affections of the beautiful Miss Strong, he would have longed more than ever to mete out to the man the fate he deserved.

Tarzan's first night with the savages

was devoted to a wild orgy in his honor. There was feasting, for the hunters had brought in an antelope and a zebra as trophies of their skill, and gallons of the weak native beer were consumed. As the warriors danced in the firelight, Tarzan was again impressed by the symmetry of their figures and the regularity of their features— the flat noses and thick lips of the typical West Coast savage were entirely missing.

In repose the faces of the men were intelligent and dignified, those of the women ofttimes prepossessing.

It was during this dance that the ape-man first noticed that some of the men and many of the women wore ornaments of gold—principally anklets and armlets

of great weight, apparently beaten out of the solid metal. When he expressed a wish to examine one of these, the owner removed it from her person and insisted, through the medium of signs, that Tarzan accept it as a gift. A close scrutiny of the bauble convinced the ape-man that the article was of virgin gold, and he was surprised, for it was the first time that he had ever seen golden ornaments among the savages of Africa, other than the trifling baubles those near the coast had purchased or stolen from Europeans. He tried to ask them from whence the metal came, but he could not make them understand.

When the dance was done Tarzan signified his intention to leave them, but

they almost implored him to accept the hospitality of a great hut which the chief set apart for his sole use. He tried to explain that he would return in the morning, but they could not understand. When he finally walked away from them toward the side of the village opposite the gate, they were still further mystified as to his intentions.

Tarzan, however, knew just what he was about. In the past he had had experience with the rodents and vermin that infest every native village, and, while he was not overscrupulous about such matters, he much preferred the fresh air of the swaying trees to the fetid atmosphere of a hut.

The natives followed him to where a

great tree overhung the palisade, and as Tarzan leaped for a lower branch and disappeared into the foliage above, precisely after the manner of Manu, the monkey, there were loud exclamations of surprise and astonishment. For half an hour they called to him to return, but as he did not answer them they at last desisted, and sought the sleeping-mats within their huts.

Tarzan went back into the forest a short distance until he had found a tree suited to his primitive requirements, and then, curling himself in a great crotch, he fell immediately into a deep sleep.

The following morning he dropped into the village street as suddenly as he had disappeared the preceding night. For

a moment the natives were startled and afraid, but when they recognized their guest of the night before they welcomed him with shouts and laughter. That day he accompanied a party of warriors to the nearby plains on a great hunt, and so dexterous did they find this white man with their own crude weapons that another bond of respect and admiration was thereby wrought.

For weeks Tarzan lived with his savage friends, hunting buffalo, antelope, and zebra for meat, and elephant for ivory. Quickly he learned their simple speech, their native customs, and the ethics of their wild, primitive tribal life. He found that they were not cannibals—that they looked with loathing and

contempt upon men who ate men.

Busuli, the warrior whom he had stalked to the village, told him many of the tribal legends—how, many years before, his people had come many long marches from the north; how once they had been a great and powerful tribe; and how the slave raiders had wrought such havoc among them with their death-dealing guns that they had been reduced to a mere remnant of their former numbers and power.

"They hunted us down as one hunts a fierce beast," said Busuli.

"There was no mercy in them. When it was not slaves they sought it was ivory, but usually it was both. Our men were killed and our women driven away like

sheep. We fought against them for many years, but our arrows and spears could not prevail against the sticks which spit fire and lead and death to many times the distance that our mightiest warrior could place an arrow. At last, when my father was a young man, the Arabs came again, but our warriors saw them a long way off, and Chowambi, who was chief then, told his people to gather up their belongings and come away with him—that he would lead them far to the south until they found a spot to which the Arab raiders did not come.

"And they did as he bid, carrying all their belongings, including many tusks of ivory. For months they wandered, suffering untold hardships and

privations, for much of the way was through dense jungle, and across mighty mountains, but finally they came to this spot, and although they sent parties farther on to search for an even better location, none has ever been found." "And the raiders have never found you here?" asked Tarzan.

"About a year ago a small party of Arabs and Manyuema stumbled upon us, but we drove them off, killing many. For days we followed them, stalking them for the wild beasts they are, picking them off one by one, until but a handful remained, but these escaped us." As Busuli talked he fingered a heavy gold armlet that encircled the glossy hide of his left arm. Tarzan's eyes had been upon

the ornament, but his thoughts were elsewhere. Presently he recalled the question he had tried to ask when he first came to the tribe - the question he could not at that time make them understand. For weeks he had forgotten so trivial a thing as gold, for he had been for the time a truly primeval man with no thought beyond today. But of a sudden the sight of gold awakened the sleeping civilization that was in him, and with it came the lust for wealth. That lesson Tarzan had learned well in his brief experience of the ways of civilized man. He knew that gold meant power and pleasure. He pointed to the bauble.

"From whence came the yellow metal, Busuli?" he asked.

The black pointed toward the southeast.

"A moon's march away—maybe more," he replied.

"Have you been there?" asked Tarzan.

"No, but some of our people were there years ago, when my father was yet a young man. One of the parties that searched farther for a location for the tribe when first they settled here came upon a strange people who wore many ornaments of yellow metal. Their spears were tipped with it, as were their arrows, and they cooked in vessels made all of solid metal like my armlet.

"They lived in a great village in huts that were built of stone and surrounded by a great wall. They were very fierce,

rushing out and falling upon our warriors before ever they learned that their errand was a peaceful one. Our men were few in number, but they held their own at the top of a little rocky hill, until the fierce people went back at sunset into their wicked city. Then our warriors came down from their hill, and, after taking many ornaments of yellow metal from the bodies of those they had slain, they marched back out of the valley, nor have any of us ever returned.

"They are wicked people—neither white like you nor black like me, but covered with hair as is Bolgani, the gorilla. Yes, they are very bad people indeed, and Chowambi was glad to get out of their country."

"And are none of those alive who were with Chowambi, and saw these strange people and their wonderful city?" asked Tarzan.

"Waziri, our chief, was there," replied Busuli. "He was a very young man then, but he accompanied Chowambi, who was his father." So that night Tarzan asked Waziri about it, and Waziri, who was now an old man, said that it was a long march, but that the way was not difficult to follow. He remembered it well.

"For ten days we followed this river which runs beside our village.

Up toward its source we traveled until on the tenth day we came to a little spring far up upon the side of a lofty

mountain range.

In this little spring our river is born. The next day we crossed over the top of the mountain, and upon the other side we came to a tiny rivulet which we followed down into a great forest. For many days we traveled along the winding banks of the rivulet that had now become a river, until we came to a greater river, into which it emptied, and which ran down the center of a mighty valley.

"Then we followed this large river toward its source, hoping to come to more open land. After twenty days of marching from the time we had crossed the mountains and passed out of our own country we came again to another range

of mountains. Up their side we followed the great river, that had now dwindled to a tiny rivulet, until we came to a little cave near the mountain-top. In this cave was the mother of the river.

"I remember that we camped there that night, and that it was very cold, for the mountains were high. The next day we decided to ascend to the top of the mountains, and see what the country upon the other side looked like, and if it seemed no better than that which we had so far traversed we would return to our village and tell them that they had already found the best place in all the world to live.

"And so we clambered up the face of the rocky cliffs until we reached the

summit, and there from a flat mountain-top we saw, not far beneath us, a shallow valley, very narrow; and upon the far side of it was a great village of stone, much of which had fallen and crumbled into decay." The balance of Waziri's story was practically the same as that which Busuli had told.

"I should like to go there and see this strange city," said Tarzan, "and get some of their yellow metal from its fierce inhabitants."

"It is a long march," replied Waziri, "and I am an old man, but if you will wait until the rainy season is over and the rivers have gone down I will take some of my warriors and go with you." And Tarzan had to be contented with that

arrangement, though he would have liked it well enough to have set off the next morning—he was as impatient as a child. Really Tarzan of the Apes was but a child, or a primeval man, which is the same thing in a way.

The next day but one a small party of hunters returned to the village from the south to report a large herd of elephant some miles away.

By climbing trees they had had a fairly good view of the herd, which they described as numbering several large tuskers, a great many cows and calves, and full-grown bulls whose ivory would be worth having.

The balance of the day and evening was filled with preparation for a great

hunt—spears were overhauled, quivers were replenished, bows were restrung; and all the while the village witch doctor passed through the busy throngs disposing of various charms and amulets designed to protect the possessor from hurt, or bring him good fortune in the morrow's hunt.

At dawn the hunters were off. There were fifty sleek, black warriors, and in their midst, lithe and active as a young forest god, strode Tarzan of the Apes, his brown skin contrasting oddly with the ebony of his companions. Except for color he was one of them. His ornaments and weapons were the same as theirs—he spoke their language—he laughed and joked with them, and leaped and shouted

in the brief wild dance that preceded their departure from the village, to all intent and purpose a savage among savages.

Nor, had he questioned himself, is it to be doubted that he would have admitted that he was far more closely allied to these people and their life than to the Parisian friends whose ways, apelike, he had successfully mimicked for a few short months.

But he did think of D'Arnot, and a grin of amusement showed his strong white teeth as he pictured the immaculate Frenchman's expression could he by some means see Tarzan as he was that minute. Poor Paul, who had prided himself on having eradicated from his

friend the last traces of wild savagery. "How quickly have I fallen!" thought Tarzan; but in his heart he did not consider it a fall—rather, he pitied the poor creatures of Paris, penned up like prisoners in their silly clothes, and watched by policemen all their poor lives, that they might do nothing that was not entirely artificial and tiresome.

A two hours' march brought them close to the vicinity in which the elephants had been seen the previous day. From there on they moved very quietly indeed searching for the spoor of the great beasts. At length they found the well-marked trail along which the herd had passed not many hours before. In single file they followed it for about half

an hour. It was Tarzan who first raised his hand in signal that the quarry was at hand—his sensitive nose had warned him that the elephants were not far ahead of them.

The blacks were skeptical when he told them how he knew.

"Come with me," said Tarzan, "and we shall see." With the agility of a squirrel he sprang into a tree and ran nimbly to the top. One of the blacks followed more slowly and carefully.

When he had reached a lofty limb beside the ape-man the latter pointed to the south, and there, some few hundred yards away, the black saw a number of huge black backs swaying back and forth above the top of the lofty jungle grasses.

He pointed the direction to the watchers below, indicating with his fingers the number of beasts he could count.

Immediately the hunters started toward the elephants. The black in the tree hastened down, but Tarzan stalked, after his own fashion, along the leafy way of the middle terrace.

It is no child's play to hunt wild elephants with the crude weapons of primitive man. Tarzan knew that few native tribes ever attempted it, and the fact that his tribe did so gave him no little pride—already he was commencing to think of himself as a member of the little community. As Tarzan moved silently through the trees he saw the warriors below creeping in a

half circle upon the still unsuspecting elephants. Finally they were within sight of the great beasts.

Now they singled out two large tuskers, and at a signal the fifty men rose from the ground where they had lain concealed, and hurled their heavy war spears at the two marked beasts. There was not a single miss; twenty-five spears were embedded in the sides of each of the giant animals. One never moved from the spot where it stood when the avalanche of spears struck it, for two, perfectly aimed, had penetrated its heart, and it lunged forward upon its knees, rolling to the ground without a struggle.

The other, standing nearly head-on

toward the hunters, had not proved so good a mark, and though every spear struck not one entered the great heart. For a moment the huge bull stood trumpeting in rage and pain, casting about with its little eyes for the author of its hurt. The blacks had faded into the jungle before the weak eyes of the monster had fallen upon any of them, but now he caught the sound of their retreat, and, amid a terrific crashing of underbrush and branches, he charged in the direction of the noise.

It so happened that chance sent him in the direction of Busuli, whom he was overtaking so rapidly that it was as though the black were standing still instead of racing at full speed to escape

the certain death which pursued him. Tarzan had witnessed the entire performance from the branches of a nearby tree, and now that he saw his friend's peril he raced toward the infuriated beast with loud cries, hoping to distract him.

But it had been as well had he saved his breath, for the brute was deaf and blind to all else save the particular object of his rage that raced futilely before him. And now Tarzan saw that only a miracle could save Busuli, and with the same unconcern with which he had once hunted this very man he hurled himself into the path of the elephant to save the black warrior's life.

He still grasped his spear, and while

Tantor was yet six or eight paces behind his prey, a sinewy white warrior dropped as from the heavens, almost directly in his path. With a vicious lunge the elephant swerved to the right to dispose of this temerarious foeman who dared intervene between himself and his intended victim; but he had not reckoned on the lightning quickness that could galvanize those steel muscles into action so marvelously swift as to baffle even a keener eyesight than Tantor's.

And so it happened that before the elephant realized that his new enemy had leaped from his path Tarzan had driven his iron-shod spear from behind the massive shoulder straight into the fierce heart, and the colossal pachyderm had

toppled to his death at the feet of the ape-man.

Busuli had not beheld the manner of his deliverance, but Waziri, the old chief, had seen, and several of the other warriors, and they hailed Tarzan with delight as they swarmed about him and his great kill. When he leaped upon the mighty carcass, and gave voice to the weird challenge with which he announced a great victory, the blacks shrank back in fear, for to them it marked the brutal Bolgani, whom they feared fully as much as they feared Numa, the lion; but with a fear with which was mixed a certain uncanny awe of the manlike thing to which they attributed supernatural powers.

But when Tarzan lowered his raised head and smiled upon them they were reassured, though they did not understand. Nor did they ever fully understand this strange creature who ran through the trees as quickly as Manu, yet was even more at home upon the ground than themselves; who was except as to color like unto themselves, yet as powerful as ten of them, and singlehanded a match for the fiercest denizens of the fierce jungle.

When the remainder of the warriors had gathered, the hunt was again taken up and the stalking of the retreating herd once more begun; but they had covered a bare hundred yards when from behind them, at a great distance, sounded faintly

a strange popping.

For an instant they stood like a group of statuary, intently listening. Then Tarzan spoke.

"Guns!" he said. "The village is being attacked."

"Come!" cried Waziri. "The Arab raiders have returned with their cannibal slaves for our ivory and our women!"

16. THE IVORY RAIDERS

Waziri's warriors marched at a rapid trot through the jungle in the direction of the village. For a few minutes, the sharp cracking of guns ahead warned them to haste, but finally the reports dwindled to an occasional shot, presently ceasing altogether. Nor was this less ominous than the rattle of musketry, for it suggested but a single solution to the little band of rescuers—that the illy garrisoned village had already succumbed to the onslaught of a superior force.

The returning hunters had covered a little more than three miles of the five that had separated them from the village when they met the first of the fugitives

who had escaped the bullets and clutches of the foe. There were a dozen women, youths, and girls in the party, and so excited were they that they could scarce make themselves understood as they tried to relate to Waziri the calamity that had befallen his people.

"They are as many as the leaves of the forest," cried one of the women, in attempting to explain the enemy's force. "There are many Arabs and countless Manyuema, and they all have guns. They crept close to the village before we knew that they were about, and then, with many shouts, they rushed in upon us, shooting down men, and women, and children. Those of us who could fled in all directions into the jungle, but more

were killed. I do not know whether they took any prisoners or not—they seemed only bent upon killing us all. The Manyuema called us many names, saying that they would eat us all before they left our country—that this was our punishment for killing their friends last year. I did not hear much, for I ran away quickly." The march toward the village was now resumed, more slowly and with greater stealth, for Waziri knew that it was too late to rescue—their only mission could be one of revenge. Inside the next mile a hundred more fugitives were met. There were many men among these, and so the fighting strength of the party was augmented.

Now a dozen warriors were sent

creeping ahead to reconnoiter.

Waziri remained with the main body, which advanced in a thin line that spread in a great crescent through the forest. By the chief's side walked Tarzan.

Presently one of the scouts returned. He had come within sight of the village.

"They are all within the palisade," he whispered.

"Good!" said Waziri. "We shall rush in upon them and slay them all," and he made ready to send word along the line that they were to halt at the edge of the clearing until they saw him rush toward the village—then all were to follow.

"Wait!" cautioned Tarzan. "If there are even fifty guns within the palisade we shall be repulsed and slaughtered.

Let me go alone through the trees, so that I may look down upon them from above, and see just how many there be, and what chance we might have were we to charge. It were foolish to lose a single man needlessly if there be no hope of success. I have an idea that we can accomplish more by cunning than by force. Will you wait, Waziri?" "Yes," said the old chief. "Go!" So Tarzan sprang into the trees and disappeared in the direction of the village. He moved more cautiously than was his wont, for he knew that men with guns could reach him quite as easily in the treetops as on the ground. And when Tarzan of the Apes elected to adopt stealth, no creature in all the jungle could move so

silently or so completely efface himself from the sight of an enemy.

In five minutes he had wormed his way to the great tree that overhung the palisade at one end of the village, and from his point of vantage looked down upon the savage horde beneath. He counted fifty Arabs and estimated that there were five times as many Manyuema. The latter were gorging themselves upon food and, under the very noses of their white masters, preparing the gruesome feast which is the PIECE DE RESISTANCE that follows a victory in which the bodies of their slain enemies fall into their horrid hands.

The ape-man saw that to charge that

wild horde, armed as they were with guns, and barricaded behind the locked gates of the village, would be a futile task, and so he returned to Waziri and advised him to wait; that he, Tarzan, had a better plan.

But a moment before one of the fugitives had related to Waziri the story of the atrocious murder of the old chief's wife, and so crazed with rage was the old man that he cast discretion to the winds. Calling his warriors about him, he commanded them to charge, and, with brandishing spears and savage yells, the little force of scarcely more than a hundred dashed madly toward the village gates.

Before the clearing had been half

crossed the Arabs opened up a withering fire from behind the palisade.

With the first volley Waziri fell. The speed of the chargers slackened. Another volley brought down a half dozen more. A few reached the barred gates, only to be shot in their tracks, without the ghost of a chance to gain the inside of the palisade, and then the whole attack crumpled, and the remaining warriors scampered back into the forest. As they ran the raiders opened the gates, rushing after them, to complete the day's work with the utter extermination of the tribe. Tarzan had been among the last to turn back toward the forest, and now, as he ran slowly, he turned from time to time to speed a well-aimed arrow into the

body of a pursuer.

Once within the jungle, he found a little knot of determined blacks waiting to give battle to the oncoming horde, but Tarzan cried to them to scatter, keeping out of harm's way until they could gather in force after dark.

"Do as I tell you," he urged, "and I will lead you to victory over these enemies of yours. Scatter through the forest, picking up as many stragglers as you can find, and at night, if you think that you have been followed, come by roundabout ways to the spot where we killed the elephants today. Then I will explain my plan, and you will find that it is good. You cannot hope to pit your puny strength and simple weapons

against the numbers and the guns of the Arabs and the Manyuema." They finally assented. "When you scatter," explained Tarzan, in conclusion, "your foes will have to scatter to follow you, and so it may happen that if you are watchful you can drop many a Manyuema with your arrows from behind some great trees." They had barely time to hasten away farther into the forest before the first of the raiders had crossed the clearing and entered it in pursuit of them.

Tarzan ran a short distance along the ground before he took to the trees. Then he raced quickly to the upper terrace, there doubling on his tracks and making his way rapidly back toward the village.

Here he found that every Arab and

Manyuema had joined in the pursuit, leaving the village deserted except for the chained prisoners and a single guard.

The sentry stood at the open gate, looking in the direction of the forest, so that he did not see the agile giant that dropped to the ground at the far end of the village street. With drawn bow the ape-man crept stealthily toward his unsuspecting victim. The prisoners had already discovered him, and with wide eyes filled with wonder and with hope they watched their would-be rescuer. Now he halted not ten paces from the unconscious Manyuema. The shaft was drawn back its full length at the height of the keen gray eye that sighted along its polished surface. There was a sudden

twang as the brown fingers released their hold, and without a sound the raider sank forward upon his face, a wooden shaft transfixing his heart and protruding a foot from his black chest.

Then Tarzan turned his attention to the fifty women and youths chained neck to neck on the long slave chain. There was no releasing of the ancient padlocks in the time that was left him, so the ape-man called to them to follow him as they were, and, snatching the gun and cartridge belt from the dead sentry, he led the now happy band out through the village gate and into the forest upon the far side of the clearing.

It was a slow and arduous march, for the slave chain was new to these people,

and there were many delays as one of their number would stumble and fall, dragging others down with her. Then, too, Tarzan had been forced to make a wide detour to avoid any possibility of meeting with returning raiders. He was partially guided by occasional shots which indicated that the Arab horde was still in touch with the villagers; but he knew that if they would but follow his advice there would be but few casualties other than on the side of the marauders.

Toward dusk the firing ceased entirely, and Tarzan knew that the Arabs had all returned to the village. He could scarce repress a smile of triumph as he thought of their rage on discovering that their guard had been killed and their

prisoners taken away. Tarzan had wished that he might have taken some of the great store of ivory the village contained, solely for the purpose of still further augmenting the wrath of his enemies; but he knew that that was not necessary for its salvation, since he already had a plan mapped out which would effectually prevent the Arabs leaving the country with a single tusk. And it would have been cruel to have needlessly burdened these poor, overwrought women with the extra weight of the heavy ivory.

It was after midnight when Tarzan, with his slow-moving caravan, approached the spot where the elephants lay. Long before they reached it they had

been guided by the huge fire the natives had built in the center of a hastily improvised boma, partially for warmth and partially to keep off chance lions.

When they had come close to the encampment Tarzan called aloud to let them know that friends were coming. It was a joyous reception the little party received when the blacks within the BOMA saw the long file of fettered friends and relatives enter the firelight.

These had all been given up as lost forever, as had Tarzan as well, so that the happy blacks would have remained awake all night to feast on elephant meat and celebrate the return of their fellows, had not Tarzan insisted that they take what sleep they could, against the work

of the coming day.

At that, sleep was no easy matter, for the women who had lost their men or their children in the day's massacre and battle made night hideous with their continued wailing and howling. Finally, however, Tarzan succeeded in silencing them, on the plea that their noise would attract the Arabs to their hiding-place, when all would be slaughtered.

When dawn came Tarzan explained his plan of battle to the warriors, and without demur one and all agreed that it was the safest and surest way in which to rid themselves of their unwelcome visitors and be revenged for the murder of their fellows.

First the women and children, with a

guard of some twenty old warriors and youths, were started southward, to be entirely out of the zone of danger. They had instructions to erect temporary shelter and construct a protecting BOMA of thorn bush; for the plan of campaign which Tarzan had chosen was one which might stretch out over many days, or even weeks, during which time the warriors would not return to the new camp.

Two hours after daylight a thin circle of black warriors surrounded the village. At intervals one was perched high in the branches of a tree which could overlook the palisade. Presently a Manyuema within the village fell, pierced by a single arrow. There had

been no sound of attack—none of the hideous war-cries or vainglorious waving of menacing spears that ordinarily marks the attack of savages—just a silent messenger of death from out of the silent forest.

The Arabs and their followers were thrown into a fine rage at this unprecedented occurrence. They ran for the gates, to wreak dire vengeance upon the foolhardy perpetrator of the outrage; but they suddenly realized that they did not know which way to turn to find the foe. As they stood debating with many angry shouts and much gesticulating, one of the Arabs sank silently to the ground in their very midst—a thin arrow protruding from his heart.

Tarzan had placed the finest marksmen of the tribe in the surrounding trees, with directions never to reveal themselves while the enemy was faced in their direction. As a black released his messenger of death he would slink behind the sheltering stem of the tree he had selected, nor would he again aim until a watchful eye told him that none was looking toward his tree.

Three times the Arabs started across the clearing in the direction from which they thought the arrows came, but each time another arrow would come from behind to take its toll from among their number.

Then they would turn and charge in a new direction. Finally they set out upon

a determined search of the forest, but the blacks melted before them, so that they saw no sign of an enemy.

But above them lurked a grim figure in the dense foliage of the mighty trees—it was Tarzan of the Apes, hovering over them as if he had been the shadow of death. Presently a Manyuema forged ahead of his companions; there was none to see from what direction death came, and so it came quickly, and a moment later those behind stumbled over the dead body of their comrade —the inevitable arrow piercing the still heart.

It does not take a great deal of this manner of warfare to get upon the nerves of white men, and so it is little to be wondered at that the Manyuema were

soon panic-stricken. Did one forge ahead an arrow found his heart; did one lag behind he never again was seen alive; did one stumble to one side, even for a bare moment from the sight of his fellows, he did not return —and always when they came upon the bodies of their dead they found those terrible arrows driven with the accuracy of superhuman power straight through the victim's heart. But worse than all else was the hideous fact that not once during the morning had they seen or heard the slightest sign of an enemy other than the pitiless arrows.

When finally they returned to the village it was no better. Every now and then, at varying intervals that were maddening in the terrible suspense they

caused, a man would plunge forward dead.

The blacks besought their masters to leave this terrible place, but the Arabs feared to take up the march through the grim and hostile forest beset by this new and terrible enemy while laden with the great store of ivory they had found within the village; but, worse yet, they hated to leave the ivory behind.

Finally the entire expedition took refuge within the thatched huts— here, at least, they would be free from the arrows. Tarzan, from the tree above the village, had marked the hut into which the chief Arabs had gone, and, balancing himself upon an overhanging limb, he drove his heavy spear with all the force

of his giant muscles through the thatched roof. A howl of pain told him that it had found a mark. With this parting salute to convince them that there was no safety for them anywhere within the country, Tarzan returned to the forest, collected his warriors, and withdrew a mile to the south to rest and eat. He kept sentries in several trees that commanded a view of the trail toward the village, but there was no pursuit.

An inspection of his force showed not a single casualty—not even a minor wound; while rough estimates of the enemies' loss convinced the blacks that no fewer than twenty had fallen before their arrows.

They were wild with elation, and

were for finishing the day in one glorious rush upon the village, during which they would slaughter the last of their foemen. They were even picturing the various tortures they would inflict, and gloating over the suffering of the Manyuema, for whom they entertained a peculiar hatred, when Tarzan put his foot down flatly upon the plan.

"You are crazy!" he cried. "I have shown you the only way to fight these people. Already you have killed twenty of them without the loss of a single warrior, whereas, yesterday, following your own tactics, which you would now renew, you lost at least a dozen, and killed not a single Arab or Manyuema. You will fight just as I tell you to fight,

or I shall leave you and go back to my own country." They were frightened when he threatened this, and promised to obey him scrupulously if he would but promise not to desert them.

"Very well," he said. "We shall return to the elephant BOMA for the night. I have a plan to give the Arabs a little taste of what they may expect if they remain in our country, but I shall need no help. Come! If they suffer no more for the balance of the day they will feel reassured, and the relapse into fear will be even more nerve-racking than as though we continued to frighten them all afternoon." So they marched back to their camp of the previous night, and, lighting great fires, ate and recounted the

adventures of the day until long after dark. Tarzan slept until midnight, then he arose and crept into the Cimmerian blackness of the forest. An hour later he came to the edge of the clearing before the village. There was a camp-fire burning within the palisade. The ape-man crept across the clearing until he stood before the barred gates. Through the interstices he saw a lone sentry sitting before the fire.

Quietly Tarzan went to the tree at the end of the village street.

He climbed softly to his place, and fitted an arrow to his bow.

For several minutes he tried to sight fairly upon the sentry, but the waving branches and flickering firelight

convinced him that the danger of a miss was too great—he must touch the heart full in the center to bring the quiet and sudden death his plan required.

He had brought, besides, his bow, arrows, and rope, the gun he had taken the previous day from the other sentry he had killed. Caching all these in a convenient crotch of the tree, he dropped lightly to the ground within the palisade, armed only with his long knife.

The sentry's back was toward him. Like a cat Tarzan crept upon the dozing man. He was within two paces of him now—another instant and the knife would slide silently into the fellow's heart.

Tarzan crouched for a spring, for that

is ever the quickest and surest attack of the jungle beast—when the man, warned, by some subtle sense, sprang to his feet and faced the ape-man.

17. THE WHITE CHIEF OF THE WAZIRI

When the eyes of the black Manyuema savage fell upon the strange apparition that confronted him with menacing knife they went wide in horror. He forgot the gun within his hands; he even forgot to cry out —his one thought was to escape this fearsome-looking white savage, this giant of a man upon whose massive rolling muscles and mighty chest the flickering firelight played.

But before he could turn Tarzan was upon him, and then the sentry thought to scream for aid, but it was too late. A great hand was upon his windpipe, and he was being borne to the earth. He battled furiously but futilely —with the

grim tenacity of a bulldog those awful fingers were clinging to his throat. Swiftly and surely life was being choked from him. His eyes bulged, his tongue protruded, his face turned to a ghastly purplish hue —there was a convulsive tremor of the stiffening muscles, and the Manyuema sentry lay quite still.

The ape-man threw the body across one of his broad shoulders and, gathering up the fellow's gun, trotted silently up the sleeping village street toward the tree that gave him such easy ingress to the palisaded village. He bore the dead sentry into the midst of the leafy maze above.

First he stripped the body of cartridge belt and such ornaments as he craved,

wedging it into a convenient crotch while his nimble fingers ran over it in search of the loot he could not plainly see in the dark. When he had finished he took the gun that had belonged to the man, and walked far out upon a limb, from the end of which he could obtain a better view of the huts. Drawing a careful bead on the beehive structure in which he knew the chief Arabs to be, he pulled the trigger. Almost instantly there was an answering groan. Tarzan smiled. He had made another lucky hit.

Following the shot there was a moment's silence in the camp, and then Manyuema and Arab came pouring from the huts like a swarm of angry hornets; but if the truth were known they were

even more frightened than they were angry. The strain of the preceding day had wrought upon the fears of both black and white, and now this single shot in the night conjured all manner of terrible conjectures in their terrified minds.

When they discovered that their sentry had disappeared, their fears were in no way allayed, and as though to bolster their courage by warlike actions, they began to fire rapidly at the barred gates of the village, although no enemy was in sight. Tarzan took advantage of the deafening roar of this fusillade to fire into the mob beneath him.

No one heard his shot above the din of rattling musketry in the street, but some who were standing close saw one

of their number crumple suddenly to the earth. When they leaned over him he was dead. They were panic-stricken, and it took all the brutal authority of the Arabs to keep the Manyuema from rushing helter-skelter into the jungle—anywhere to escape from this terrible village.

After a time they commenced to quiet down, and as no further mysterious deaths occurred among them they took heart again. But it was a short-lived respite, for just as they had concluded that they would not be disturbed again Tarzan gave voice to a weird moan, and as the raiders looked up in the direction from which the sound seemed to come, the ape-man, who stood swinging the dead body of the sentry gently to and fro,

suddenly shot the corpse far out above their heads.

With howls of alarm the throng broke in all directions to escape this new and terrible creature who seemed to be springing upon them. To their fear-distorted imaginations the body of the sentry, falling with wide-sprawled arms and legs, assumed the likeness of a great beast of prey. In their anxiety to escape, many of the blacks scaled the palisade, while others tore down the bars from the gates and rushed madly across the clearing toward the jungle.

For a time no one turned back toward the thing that had frightened them, but Tarzan knew that they would in a moment, and when they discovered that

it was but the dead body of their sentry, while they would doubtless be still further terrified, he had a rather definite idea as to what they would do, and so he faded silently away toward the south, taking the moonlit upper terrace back toward the camp of the Waziri.

Presently one of the Arabs turned and saw that the thing that had leaped from the tree upon them lay still and quiet where it had fallen in the center of the village street. Cautiously he crept back toward it until he saw that it was but a man. A moment later he was beside the figure, and in another had recognized it as the corpse of the Manyuema who had stood on guard at the village gate.

His companions rapidly gathered

around at his call, and after a moment's excited conversation they did precisely what Tarzan had reasoned they would. Raising their guns to their shoulders, they poured volley after volley into the tree from which the corpse had been thrown—had Tarzan remained there he would have been riddled by a hundred bullets.

When the Arabs and Manyuema discovered that the only marks of violence upon the body of their dead comrade were giant finger prints upon his swollen throat they were again thrown into deeper apprehension and despair. That they were not even safe within a palisaded village at night came as a distinct shock to them. That an

enemy could enter into the midst of their camp and kill their sentry with bare hands seemed outside the bounds of reason, and so the superstitious Manyuema commenced to attribute their ill luck to supernatural causes; nor were the Arabs able to offer any better explanation.

With at least fifty of their number flying through the black jungle, and without the slightest knowledge of when their uncanny foemen might resume the cold-blooded slaughter they had commenced, it was a desperate band of cut-throats that waited sleeplessly for the dawn. Only on the promise of the Arabs that they would leave the village at daybreak, and hasten onward toward

their own land, would the remaining Manyuema consent to stay at the village a moment longer. Not even fear of their cruel masters was sufficient to overcome this new terror.

And so it was that when Tarzan and his warriors returned to the attack the next morning they found the raiders prepared to march out of the village. The Manyuema were laden with stolen ivory.

As Tarzan saw it he grinned, for he knew that they would not carry it far. Then he saw something which caused him anxiety—a number of the Manyuema were lighting torches in the remnant of the camp-fire.

They were about to fire the village.

Tarzan was perched in a tall tree

some hundred yards from the palisade. Making a trumpet of his hands, he called loudly in the Arab tongue: "Do not fire the huts, or we shall kill you all! Do not fire the huts, or we shall kill you all!" A dozen times he repeated it. The Manyuema hesitated, then one of them flung his torch into the campfire. The others were about to do the same when an Arab sprung upon them with a stick, beating them toward the huts. Tarzan could see that he was commanding them to fire the little thatched dwellings. Then he stood erect upon the swaying branch a hundred feet above the ground, and, raising one of the Arab guns to his shoulder, took careful aim and fired. With the report the Arab who was urging

on his men to burn the village fell in his tracks, and the Manyuema threw away their torches and fled from the village. The last Tarzan saw of them they were racing toward the jungle, while their former masters knelt upon the ground and fired at them.

But however angry the Arabs might have been at the insubordination of their slaves, they were at least convinced that it would be the better part of wisdom to forego the pleasure of firing the village that had given them two such nasty receptions. In their hearts, however, they swore to return again with such force as would enable them to sweep the entire country for miles around, until no vestige of human life remained.

They had looked in vain for the owner of the voice which had frightened off the men who had been detailed to put the torch to the huts, but not even the keenest eye among them had been able to locate him. They had seen the puff of smoke from the tree following the shot that brought down the Arab, but, though a volley had immediately been loosed into its foliage, there had been no indication that it had been effective.

Tarzan was too intelligent to be caught in any such trap, and so the report of his shot had scarcely died away before the ape-man was on the ground and racing for another tree a hundred yards away.

Here he again found a suitable perch

from which he could watch the preparations of the raiders. It occurred to him that he might have considerable more fun with them, so again he called to them through his improvised trumpet.

"Leave the ivory!" he cried. "Leave the ivory! Dead men have no use for ivory!" Some of the Manyuema started to lay down their loads, but this was altogether too much for the avaricious Arabs. With loud shouts and curses they aimed their guns full upon the bearers, threatening instant death to any who might lay down his load. They could give up firing the village, but the thought of abandoning this enormous fortune in ivory was quite beyond their conception —better death than that.

And so they marched out of the village of the Waziri, and on the shoulders of their slaves was the ivory ransom of a score of kings.

Toward the north they marched, back toward their savage settlement in the wild and unknown country which lies back from the Congo in the uttermost depths of The Great Forest, and on either side of them traveled an invisible and relentless foe.

Under Tarzan's guidance the black Waziri warriors stationed themselves along the trail on either side in the densest underbrush. They stood at far intervals, and, as the column passed, a single arrow or a heavy spear, well aimed, would pierce a Manyuema or an

Arab.

Then the Waziri would melt into the distance and run ahead to take his stand farther on. They did not strike unless success were sure and the danger of detection almost nothing, and so the arrows and the spears were few and far between, but so persistent and inevitable that the slow-moving column of heavy-laden raiders was in a constant state of panic—panic at the uncertainty of who the next would be to fall, and when.

It was with the greatest difficulty that the Arabs prevented their men a dozen times from throwing away their burdens and fleeing like frightened rabbits up the trail toward the north. And so the day wore on—a frightful nightmare of a day

for the raiders—a day of weary but well-repaid work for the Waziri. At night the Arabs constructed a rude BOMA in a little clearing by a river, and went into camp.

At intervals during the night a rifle would bark close above their heads, and one of the dozen sentries which they now had posted would tumble to the ground. Such a condition was insupportable, for they saw that by means of these hideous tactics they would be completely wiped out, one by one, without inflicting a single death upon their enemy. But yet, with the persistent avarice of the white man, the Arabs clung to their loot, and when morning came forced the demoralized Manyuema to take up their

burdens of death and stagger on into the jungle.

For three days the withering column kept up its frightful march.

Each hour was marked by its deadly arrow or cruel spear. The nights were made hideous by the barking of the invisible gun that made sentry duty equivalent to a death sentence.

On the morning of the fourth day the Arabs were compelled to shoot two of their blacks before they could compel the balance to take up the hated ivory, and as they did so a voice rang out, clear and strong, from the jungle: "Today you die, oh, Manyuema, unless you lay down the ivory. Fall upon your cruel masters and kill them! You have guns, why do

you not use them? Kill the Arabs, and we will not harm you. We will take you back to our village and feed you, and lead you out of our country in safety and in peace. Lay down the ivory, and fall upon your masters—we will help you. Else you die!" As the voice died down the raiders stood as though turned to stone.

The Arabs eyed their Manyuema slaves; the slaves looked first at one of their fellows, and then at another—they were but waiting for some one to take the initiative. There were some thirty Arabs left, and about one hundred and fifty blacks. All were armed—even those who were acting as porters had their rifles slung across their backs.

The Arabs drew together. The sheik ordered the Manyuema to take up the march, and as he spoke he cocked his rifle and raised it.

But at the same instant one of the blacks threw down his load, and, snatching his rifle from his back, fired point-black at the group of Arabs. In an instant the camp was a cursing, howling mass of demons, fighting with guns and knives and pistols. The Arabs stood together, and defended their lives valiantly, but with the rain of lead that poured upon them from their own slaves, and the shower of arrows and spears which now leaped from the surrounding jungle aimed solely at them, there was little question from the first what the

outcome would be. In ten minutes from the time the first porter had thrown down his load the last of the Arabs lay dead.

When the firing had ceased Tarzan spoke again to the Manyuema: "Take up our ivory, and return it to our village, from whence you stole it. We shall not harm you." For a moment the Manyuema hesitated. They had no stomach to retrace that difficult three days' trail. They talked together in low whispers, and one turned toward the jungle, calling aloud to the voice that had spoken to them from out of the foliage.

"How do we know that when you have us in your village you will not kill us all?" he asked.

"You do not know," replied Tarzan,

"other than that we have promised not to harm you if you will return our ivory to us. But this you do know, that it lies within our power to kill you all if you do not return as we direct, and are we not more likely to do so if you anger us than if you do as we bid?" "Who are you that speaks the tongue of our Arab masters?" cried the Manyuema spokesman. "Let us see you, and then we shall give you our answer." Tarzan stepped out of the jungle a dozen paces from them.

"Look!" he said. When they saw that he was white they were filled with awe, for never had they seen a white savage before, and at his great muscles and giant frame they were struck with wonder and admiration.

"You may trust me," said Tarzan. "So long as you do as I tell you, and harm none of my people, we shall do you no hurt. Will you take up our ivory and return in peace to our village, or shall we follow along your trail toward the north as we have followed for the past three days?" The recollection of the horrid days that had just passed was the thing that finally decided the Manyuema, and so, after a short conference, they took up their burdens and set off to retrace their steps toward the village of the Waziri. At the end of the third day they marched into the village gate, and were greeted by the survivors of the recent massacre, to whom Tarzan had sent a messenger in their temporary

camp to the south on the day that the raiders had quitted the village, telling them that they might return in safety.

It took all the mastery and persuasion that Tarzan possessed to prevent the Waziri falling on the Manyuema tooth and nail, and tearing them to pieces, but when he had explained that he had given his word that they would not be molested if they carried the ivory back to the spot from which they had stolen it, and had further impressed upon his people that they owed their entire victory to him, they finally acceded to his demands, and allowed the cannibals to rest in peace within their palisade.

That night the village warriors held a big palaver to celebrate their victories,

and to choose a new chief. Since old Waziri's death Tarzan had been directing the warriors in battle, and the temporary command had been tacitly conceded to him. There had been no time to choose a new chief from among their own number, and, in fact, so remarkably successful had they been under the ape-man's generalship that they had had no wish to delegate the supreme authority to another for fear that what they already had gained might be lost. They had so recently seen the results of running counter to this savage white man's advice in the disastrous charge ordered by Waziri, in which he himself had died, that it had not been difficult for them to accept Tarzan's authority as final.

The principal warriors sat in a circle about a small fire to discuss the relative merits of whomever might be suggested as old Waziri's successor. It was Busuli who spoke first: "Since Waziri is dead, leaving no son, there is but one among us whom we know from experience is fitted to make us a good king.

There is only one who has proved that he can successfully lead us against the guns of the white man, and bring us easy victory without the loss of a single life. There is only one, and that is the white man who has led us for the past few days," and Busuli sprang to his feet, and with uplifted spear and half-bent, crouching body commenced to dance slowly about Tarzan, chanting in time to

his steps: "Waziri, king of the Waziri; Waziri, killer of Arabs; Waziri, king of the Waziri." One by one the other warriors signified their acceptance of Tarzan as their king by joining in the solemn dance. The women came and squatted about the rim of the circle, beating upon tom-toms, clapping their hands in time to the steps of the dancers, and joining in the chant of the warriors. In the center of the circle sat Tarzan of the Apes - Waziri, king of the Waziri, for, like his predecessor, he was to take the name of his tribe as his own.

Faster and faster grew the pace of the dancers, louder and louder their wild and savage shouts. The women rose and fell in unison, shrieking now at the tops

of their voices. The spears were brandishing fiercely, and as the dancers stooped down and beat their shields upon the hard-tramped earth of the village street the whole sight was as terribly primeval and savage as though it were being staged in the dim dawn of humanity, countless ages in the past.

As the excitement waxed the ape-man sprang to his feet and joined in the wild ceremony. In the center of the circle of glittering black bodies he leaped and roared and shook his heavy spear in the same mad abandon that enthralled his fellow savages. The last remnant of his civilization was forgotten—he was a primitive man to the fullest now; reveling in the freedom of the fierce,

wild life he loved, gloating in his kingship among these wild blacks.

Ah, if Olga de Coude had but seen him then—could she have recognized the well-dressed, quiet young man whose well-bred face and irreproachable manners had so captivated her but a few short months ago? And Jane Porter! Would she have still loved this savage warrior chieftain, dancing naked among his naked savage subjects? And D'Arnot! Could D'Arnot have believed that this was the same man he had introduced into half a dozen of the most select clubs of Paris? What would his fellow peers in the House of Lords have said had one pointed to this dancing giant, with his barbaric headdress and his metal

ornaments, and said: "There, my lords, is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke." And so Tarzan of the Apes came into a real kingship among men—slowly but surely was he following the evolution of his ancestors, for had he not started at the very bottom?

18. THE LOTTERY OF DEATH

Jane Porter had been the first of those in the lifeboat to awaken the morning after the wreck of the LADY ALICE. The other members of the party were asleep upon the thwarts or huddled in cramped positions in the bottom of the boat.

When the girl realized that they had become separated from the other boats she was filled with alarm. The sense of utter loneliness and helplessness which the vast expanse of deserted ocean aroused in her was so depressing that, from the first, contemplation of the future held not the slightest ray of promise for her. She was confident that they were lost—lost beyond possibility of succor.

Presently Clayton awoke. It was

several minutes before he could gather his senses sufficiently to realize where he was, or recall the disaster of the previous night. Finally his bewildered eyes fell upon the girl.

"Jane!" he cried. "Thank God that we are together!"

"Look," said the girl dully, indicating the horizon with an apathetic gesture. "We are all alone." Clayton scanned the water in every direction.

"Where can they be?" he cried. "They cannot have gone down, for there has been no sea, and they were afloat after the yacht sank—I saw them all." He awoke the other members of the party, and explained their plight.

"It is just as well that the boats are

scattered, sir," said one of the sailors. "They are all provisioned, so that they do not need each other on that score, and should a storm blow up they could be of no service to one another even if they were together, but scattered about the ocean there is a much better chance that one at least will be picked up, and then a search will be at once started for the others. Were we together there would be but one chance of rescue, where now there may be four." They saw the wisdom of his philosophy, and were cheered by it, but their joy was short-lived, for when it was decided that they should row steadily toward the east and the continent, it was discovered that the sailors who had been at the only two

oars with which the boat had been provided had fallen asleep at their work, and allowed both to slip into the sea, nor were they in sight anywhere upon the water.

During the angry words and recriminations which followed the sailors nearly came to blows, but Clayton succeeded in quieting them; though a moment later Monsieur Thuran almost precipitated another row by making a nasty remark about the stupidity of all Englishmen, and especially English sailors.

"Come, come, mates," spoke up one of the men, Tompkins, who had taken no part in the altercation, "shootin' off our bloomin' mugs won't get us nothin'. As

Spider 'ere said afore, we'll all bloody well be picked up, anyway, sez 'e, so wot's the use o' squabblin'? Let's eat, sez I."

"That's not a bad idea," said Monsieur Thuran, and then, turning to the third sailor, Wilson, he said: "Pass one of those tins aft, my good man."

"Fetch it yerself," retorted Wilson sullenly. "I ain't a-takin' no orders from no—furriner—you ain't captain o' this ship yet." The result was that Clayton himself had to get the tin, and then another angry altercation ensued when one of the sailors accused Clayton and Monsieur Thuran of conspiring to control the provisions so that they could have the lion's share.

"Some one should take command of this boat," spoke up Jane Porter, thoroughly disgusted with the disgraceful wrangling that had marked the very opening of a forced companionship that might last for many days. "It is terrible enough to be alone in a frail boat on the Atlantic, without having the added misery and danger of constant bickering and brawling among the members of our party. You men should elect a leader, and then abide by his decisions in all matters. There is greater need for strict discipline here than there is upon a well-ordered ship." She had hoped before she voiced her sentiments that it would not be necessary for her to enter into the transaction at all, for she believed that

Clayton was amply able to cope with every emergency, but she had to admit that so far at least he had shown no greater promise of successfully handling the situation than any of the others, though he had at least refrained from adding in any way to the unpleasantness, even going so far as to give up the tin to the sailors when they objected to its being opened by him.

The girl's words temporarily quieted the men, and finally it was decided that the two kegs of water and the four tins of food should be divided into two parts, one-half going forward to the three sailors to do with as they saw best, and the balance aft to the three passengers.

Thus was the little company divided

into two camps, and when the provisions had been apportioned each immediately set to work to open and distribute food and water. The sailors were the first to get one of the tins of "food" open, and their curses of rage and disappointment caused Clayton to ask what the trouble might be.

"Trouble!" shrieked Spider. "Trouble! It's worse than trouble—it's death! This—-tin is full of coal oil!" Hastily now Clayton and Monsieur Thuran tore open one of theirs, only to learn the hideous truth that it also contained, not food, but coal oil. One after another the four tins on board were opened.

And as the contents of each became

known howls of anger announced the grim truth—there was not an ounce of food upon the boat.

"Well, thank Gawd it wasn't the water," cried Thompkins. "It's easier to get along without food than it is without water. We can eat our shoes if worse comes to worst, but we couldn't drink 'em." As he spoke Wilson had been boring a hole in one of the water kegs, and as Spider held a tin cup he tilted the keg to pour a draft of the precious fluid. A thin stream of blackish, dry particles filtered slowly through the tiny aperture into the bottom of the cup. With a groan Wilson dropped the keg, and sat staring at the dry stuff in the cup, speechless with horror.

"The kegs are filled with gunpowder," said Spider, in a low tone, turning to those aft. And so it proved when the last had been opened.

"Coal oil and gunpowder!" cried Monsieur Thuran. "SAPRISTI! What a diet for shipwrecked mariners!" With the full knowledge that there was neither food nor water on board, the pangs of hunger and thirst became immediately aggravated, and so on the first day of their tragic adventure real suffering commenced in grim earnest, and the full horrors of shipwreck were upon them.

As the days passed conditions became horrible. Aching eyes scanned the horizon day and night until the weak and weary watchers would sink

exhausted to the bottom of the boat, and there wrest in dream-disturbed slumber a moment's respite from the horrors of the waking reality.

The sailors, goaded by the remorseless pangs of hunger, had eaten their leather belts, their shoes, the sweatbands from their caps, although both Clayton and Monsieur Thuran had done their best to convince them that these would only add to the suffering they were enduring.

Weak and hopeless, the entire party lay beneath the pitiless tropic sun, with parched lips and swollen tongues, waiting for the death they were beginning to crave. The intense suffering of the first few days had become

deadened for the three passengers who had eaten nothing, but the agony of the sailors was pitiful, as their weak and impoverished stomachs attempted to cope with the bits of leather with which they had filled them. Tompkins was the first to succumb. Just a week from the day the LADY ALICE went down the sailor died horribly in frightful convulsions.

For hours his contorted and hideous features lay grinning back at those in the stern of the little boat, until Jane Porter could endure the sight no longer. "Can you not drop his body overboard, William?" she asked.

Clayton rose and staggered toward the corpse. The two remaining sailors

eyed him with a strange, baleful light in their sunken orbs.

Futilely the Englishman tried to lift the corpse over the side of the boat, but his strength was not equal to the task.

"Lend me a hand here, please," he said to Wilson, who lay nearest him.

"Wot do you want to throw 'im over for?" questioned the sailor, in a querulous voice.

"We've got to before we're too weak to do it," replied Clayton.

"He'd be awful by tomorrow, after a day under that broiling sun."

"Better leave well enough alone," grumbled Wilson. "We may need him before tomorrow." Slowly the meaning

of the man's words percolated into Clayton's understanding. At last he realized the fellow's reason for objecting to the disposal of the dead man.

"God!" whispered Clayton, in a horrified tone. "You don't mean—" "W'y not?" growled Wilson. "Ain't we gotta live? He's dead," he added, jerking his thumb in the direction of the corpse. "He won't care."

"Come here, Thuran," said Clayton, turning toward the Russian.

"We'll have something worse than death aboard us if we don't get rid of this body before dark." Wilson staggered up menacingly to prevent the contemplated act, but when his comrade, Spider, took

sides with Clayton and Monsieur Thuran he gave up, and sat eying the corpse hungrily as the three men, by combining their efforts, succeeded in rolling it overboard.

All the balance of the day Wilson sat glaring at Clayton, in his eyes the gleam of insanity. Toward evening, as the sun was sinking into the sea, he commenced to chuckle and mumble to himself, but his eyes never left Clayton.

After it became quite dark Clayton could still feel those terrible eyes upon him. He dared not sleep, and yet so exhausted was he that it was a constant fight to retain consciousness. After what seemed an eternity of suffering his head dropped upon a thwart, and he slept.

How long he was unconscious he did not know—he was awakened by a shuffling noise quite close to him. The moon had risen, and as he opened his startled eyes he saw Wilson creeping stealthily toward him, his mouth open and his swollen tongue hanging out.

The slight noise had awakened Jane Porter at the same time, and as she saw the hideous tableau she gave a shrill cry of alarm, and at the same instant the sailor lurched forward and fell upon Clayton.

Like a wild beast his teeth sought the throat of his intended prey, but Clayton, weak though he was, still found sufficient strength to hold the maniac's mouth from him.

At Jane Porter's scream Monsieur Thuran and Spider awoke. On seeing the cause of her alarm, both men crawled to Clayton's rescue, and between the three of them were able to subdue Wilson and hurl him to the bottom of the boat. For a few minutes he lay there chattering and laughing, and then, with an awful scream, and before any of his companions could prevent, he staggered to his feet and leaped overboard.

The reaction from the terrific strain of excitement left the weak survivors trembling and prostrated. Spider broke down and wept; Jane Porter prayed; Clayton swore softly to himself; Monsieur Thuran sat with his head in his hands, thinking. The result of his

cogitation developed the following morning in a proposition he made to Spider and Clayton.

"Gentlemen," said Monsieur Thuran, "you see the fate that awaits us all unless we are picked up within a day or two. That there is little hope of that is evidenced by the fact that during all the days we have drifted we have seen no sail, nor the faintest smudge of smoke upon the horizon.

"There might be a chance if we had food, but without food there is none. There remains for us, then, but one of two alternatives, and we must choose at once. Either we must all die together within a few days, or one must be sacrificed that the others may live.

Do you quite clearly grasp my meaning?" Jane Porter, who had overheard, was horrified. If the proposition had come from the poor, ignorant sailor, she might possibly have not been so surprised; but that it should come from one who posed as a man of culture and refinement, from a gentleman, she could scarcely credit.

"It is better that we die together, then," said Clayton.

"That is for the majority to decide," replied Monsieur Thuran.

"As only one of us three will be the object of sacrifice, we shall decide. Miss Porter is not interested, since she will be in no danger."

"How shall we know who is to be

first?" asked Spider.

"It may be fairly fixed by lot," replied Monsieur Thuran. "I have a number of franc pieces in my pocket. We can choose a certain date from among them - the one to draw this date first from beneath a piece of cloth will be the first."

"I shall have nothing to do with any such diabolical plan," muttered Clayton; "even yet land may be sighted or a ship appear—in time."

"You will do as the majority decide, or you will be `the first' without the formality of drawing lots," said Monsieur Thuran threateningly. "Come, let us vote on the plan; I for one am in favor of it. How about you, Spider?"

"And I," replied the sailor.

"It is the will of the majority," announced Monsieur Thuran, "and now let us lose no time in drawing lots. It is as fair for one as for another. That three may live, one of us must die perhaps a few hours sooner than otherwise." Then he began his preparation for the lottery of death, while Jane Porter sat wide-eyed and horrified at thought of the thing that she was about to witness. Monsieur Thuran spread his coat upon the bottom of the boat, and then from a handful of money he selected six franc pieces. The other two men bent close above him as he inspected them. Finally he handed them all to Clayton.

"Look at them carefully," he said.

"The oldest date is eighteen- seventy-five, and there is only one of that year." Clayton and the sailor inspected each coin. To them there seemed not the slightest difference that could be detected other than the dates. They were quite satisfied. Had they known that Monsieur Thuran's past experience as a card sharp had trained his sense of touch to so fine a point that he could almost differentiate between cards by the mere feel of them, they would scarcely have felt that the plan was so entirely fair. The 1875 piece was a hair thinner than the other coins, but neither Clayton nor Spider could have detected it without the aid of a micrometer.

"In what order shall we draw?" asked

Monsieur Thuran, knowing from past experience that the majority of men always prefer last chance in a lottery where the single prize is some distasteful thing—there is always the chance and the hope that another will draw it first.

Monsieur Thuran, for reasons of his own, preferred to draw first if the drawing should happen to require a second adventure beneath the coat.

And so when Spider elected to draw last he graciously offered to take the first chance himself. His hand was under the coat for but a moment, yet those quick, deft fingers had felt of each coin, and found and discarded the fatal piece. When he brought forth his hand it

contained an 1888 franc piece. Then Clayton drew. Jane Porter leaned forward with a tense and horrified expression on her face as the hand of the man she was to marry groped about beneath the coat. Presently he withdrew it, a franc piece lying in the palm. For an instant he dared not look, but Monsieur Thuran, who had leaned nearer to see the date, exclaimed that he was safe.

Jane Porter sank weak and trembling against the side of the boat.

She felt sick and dizzy. And now, if Spider should not draw the 1875 piece she must endure the whole horrid thing again.

The sailor already had his hand beneath the coat. Great beads of sweat

were standing upon his brow. He trembled as though with a fit of ague. Aloud he cursed himself for having taken the last draw, for now his chances for escape were but three to one, whereas Monsieur Thuran's had been five to one, and Clayton's four to one.

The Russian was very patient, and did not hurry the man, for he knew that he himself was quite safe whether the 1875 piece came out this time or not. When the sailor withdrew his hand and looked at the piece of money within, he dropped fainting to the bottom of the boat. Both Clayton and Monsieur Thuran hastened weakly to examine the coin, which had rolled from the man's hand and lay beside him.

It was not dated 1875. The reaction from the state of fear he had been in had overcome Spider quite as effectually as though he had drawn the fated piece.

But now the whole proceeding must be gone through again. Once more the Russian drew forth a harmless coin. Jane Porter closed her eyes as Clayton reached beneath the coat. Spider bent, wide-eyed, toward the hand that was to decide his fate, for whatever luck was Clayton's on this last draw, the opposite would be Spider's. Then William Cecil Clayton, Lord Greystoke, removed his hand from beneath the coat, and with a coin tight pressed within his palm where none might see it, he looked at Jane Porter. He did not dare open his hand.

"Quick!" hissed Spider. "My Gawd, let's see it." Clayton opened his fingers. Spider was the first to see the date, and ere any knew what his intention was he raised himself to his feet, and lunged over the side of the boat, to disappear forever into the green depths beneath—the coin had not been the 1875 piece.

The strain had exhausted those who remained to such an extent that they lay half unconscious for the balance of the day, nor was the subject referred to again for several days. Horrible days of increasing weakness and hopelessness. At length Monsieur Thuran crawled to where Clayton lay.

"We must draw once more before we are too weak even to eat," he whispered.

Clayton was in such a state that he was scarcely master of his own will. Jane Porter had not spoken for three days. He knew that she was dying. Horrible as the thought was, he hoped that the sacrifice of either Thuran or himself might be the means of giving her renewed strength, and so he immediately agreed to the Russian's proposal.

They drew under the same plan as before, but there could be but one result —Clayton drew the 1875 piece.

"When shall it be?" he asked Thuran.

The Russian had already drawn a pocketknife from his trousers, and was weakly attempting to open it.

"Now," he muttered, and his greedy eyes gloated upon the Englishman.

"Can't you wait until dark?" asked Clayton. "Miss Porter must not see this thing done. We were to have been married, you know." A look of disappointment came over Monsieur Thuran's face.

"Very well," he replied hesitatingly. "It will not be long until night. I have waited for many days—I can wait a few hours longer."

"Thank you, my friend," murmured Clayton. "Now I shall go to her side and remain with her until it is time. I would like to have an hour or two with her before I die." When Clayton reached the girl's side she was unconscious —he knew that she was dying, and he was glad that she should not have to see or

know the awful tragedy that was shortly to be enacted. He took her hand and raised it to his cracked and swollen lips. For a long time he lay caressing the emaciated, clawlike thing that had once been the beautiful, shapely white hand of the young Baltimore belle.

It was quite dark before he knew it, but he was recalled to himself by a voice out of the night. It was the Russian calling him to his doom.

"I am coming, Monsieur Thuran," he hastened to reply.

Thrice he attempted to turn himself upon his hands and knees, that he might crawl back to his death, but in the few hours that he had lain there he had become too weak to return to Thuran's

side.

"You will have to come to me, monsieur," he called weakly. "I have not sufficient strength to gain my hands and knees."

"SAPRISTI!" muttered Monsieur Thuran. "You are attempting to cheat me out of my winnings." Clayton heard the man shuffling about in the bottom of the boat.

Finally there was a despairing groan. "I cannot crawl," he heard the Russian wail. "It is too late. You have tricked me, you dirty English dog." "I have not tricked you, monsieur," replied Clayton. "I have done my best to rise, but I shall try again, and if you will try possibly each of us can crawl halfway, and then

you shall have your `winnings.'" Again Clayton exerted his remaining strength to the utmost, and he heard Thuran apparently doing the same. Nearly an hour later the Englishman succeeded in raising himself to his hands and knees, but at the first forward movement he pitched upon his face.

A moment later he heard an exclamation of relief from Monsieur Thuran.

"I am coming," whispered the Russian.

Again Clayton essayed to stagger on to meet his fate, but once more he pitched headlong to the boat's bottom, nor, try as he would, could he again rise. His last effort caused him to roll over on

his back, and there he lay looking up at the stars, while behind him, coming ever nearer and nearer, he could hear the laborious shuffling, and the stertorous breathing of the Russian.

It seemed that he must have lain thus an hour waiting for the thing to crawl out of the dark and end his misery. It was quite close now, but there were longer and longer pauses between its efforts to advance, and each forward movement seemed to the waiting Englishman to be almost imperceptible.

Finally he knew that Thuran was quite close beside him. He heard a cackling laugh, something touched his face, and he lost consciousness.

19. THE CITY OF GOLD

The very night that Tarzan of the Apes became chief of the Waziri the woman he loved lay dying in a tiny boat two hundred miles west of him upon the Atlantic. As he danced among his naked fellow savages, the firelight gleaming against his great, rolling muscles, the personification of physical perfection and strength, the woman who loved him lay thin and emaciated in the last coma that precedes death by thirst and starvation.

The week following the induction of Tarzan into the kingship of the Waziri was occupied in escorting the Manyuema of the Arab raiders to the northern boundary of Waziri in

accordance with the promise which Tarzan had made them. Before he left them he exacted a pledge from them that they would not lead any expeditions against the Waziri in the future, nor was it a difficult promise to obtain.

They had had sufficient experience with the fighting tactics of the new Waziri chief not to have the slightest desire to accompany another predatory force within the boundaries of his domain.

Almost immediately upon his return to the village Tarzan commenced making preparations for leading an expedition in search of the ruined city of gold which old Waziri had described to him. He selected fifty of the sturdiest warriors of

his tribe, choosing only men who seemed anxious to accompany him on the arduous march, and share the dangers of a new and hostile country.

The fabulous wealth of the fabled city had been almost constantly in his mind since Waziri had recounted the strange adventures of the former expedition which had stumbled upon the vast ruins by chance.

The lure of adventure may have been quite as powerful a factor in urging Tarzan of the Apes to undertake the journey as the lure of gold, but the lure of gold was there, too, for he had learned among civilized men something of the miracles that may be wrought by the possessor of the magic yellow metal.

What he would do with a golden fortune in the heart of savage Africa it had not occurred to him to consider—it would be enough to possess the power to work wonders, even though he never had an opportunity to employ it.

So one glorious tropical morning Waziri, chief of the Waziri, set out at the head of fifty clean-limbed ebon warriors in quest of adventure and of riches. They followed the course which old Waziri had described to Tarzan. For days they marched—up one river, across a low divide; down another river; up a third, until at the end of the twenty-fifth day they camped upon a mountainside, from the summit of which they hoped to catch their first view of the marvelous city of

treasure.

Early the next morning they were climbing the almost perpendicular crags which formed the last, but greatest, natural barrier between them and their destination. It was nearly noon before Tarzan, who headed the thin line of climbing warriors, scrambled over the top of the last cliff and stood upon the little flat table-land of the mountaintop.

On either hand towered mighty peaks thousands of feet higher than the pass through which they were entering the forbidden valley.

Behind him stretched the wooded valley across which they had marched for many days, and at the opposite side the low range which marked the

boundary of their own country.

But before him was the view that centered his attention. Here lay a desolate valley—a shallow, narrow valley dotted with stunted trees and covered with many great boulders. And on the far side of the valley lay what appeared to be a mighty city, its great walls, its lofty spires, its turrets, minarets, and domes showing red and yellow in the sunlight. Tarzan was yet too far away to note the marks of ruin—to him it appeared a wonderful city of magnificent beauty, and in imagination he peopled its broad avenues and its huge temples with a throng of happy, active people.

For an hour the little expedition

rested upon the mountain-top, and then Tarzan led them down into the valley below. There was no trail, but the way was less arduous than the ascent of the opposite face of the mountain had been. Once in the valley their progress was rapid, so that it was still light when they halted before the towering walls of the ancient city.

The outer wall was fifty feet in height where it had not fallen into ruin, but nowhere as far as they could see had more than ten or twenty feet of the upper courses fallen away. It was still a formidable defense. On several occasions Tarzan had thought that he discerned things moving behind the ruined portions of the wall near to them,

as though creatures were watching them from behind the bulwarks of the ancient pile. And often he felt the sensation of unseen eyes upon him, but not once could he be sure that it was more than imagination.

That night they camped outside the city. Once, at midnight, they were awakened by a shrill scream from beyond the great wall. It was very high at first, descending gradually until it ended in a series of dismal moans. It had a strange effect upon the blacks, almost paralyzing them with terror while it lasted, and it was an hour before the camp settled down to sleep once more. In the morning the effects of it were still visible in the fearful, sidelong glances

that the Waziri continually cast at the massive and forbidding structure which loomed above them.

It required considerable encouragement and urging on Tarzan's part to prevent the blacks from abandoning the venture on the spot and hastening back across the valley toward the cliffs they had scaled the day before. But at length, by dint of commands, and threats that he would enter the city alone, they agreed to accompany him.

For fifteen minutes they marched along the face of the wall before they discovered a means of ingress. Then they came to a narrow cleft about twenty inches wide. Within, a flight of concrete steps, worn hollow by centuries of use,

rose before them, to disappear at a sharp turning of the passage a few yards ahead.

Into this narrow alley Tarzan made his way, turning his giant shoulders sideways that they might enter at all. Behind him trailed his black warriors. At the turn in the cleft the stairs ended, and the path was level; but it wound and twisted in a serpentine fashion, until suddenly at a sharp angle it debouched upon a narrow court, across which loomed an inner wall equally as high as the outer. This inner wall was set with little round towers alternating along its entire summit with pointed monoliths. In places these had fallen, and the wall was ruined, but it was in a much better state of preservation than the outer wall.

Another narrow passage led through this wall, and at its end Tarzan and his warriors found themselves in a broad avenue, on the opposite side of which crumbling edifices of hewn granite loomed dark and forbidding. Upon the crumbling debris along the face of the buildings trees had grown, and vines wound in and out of the hollow, staring windows; but the building directly opposite them seemed less overgrown than the others, and in a much better state of preservation. It was a massive pile, surmounted by an enormous dome. At either side of its great entrance stood rows of tall pillars, each capped by a huge, grotesque bird carved from the solid rock of the monoliths.

As the ape-man and his companions stood gazing in varying degrees of wonderment at this ancient city in the midst of savage Africa, several of them became aware of movement within the structure at which they were looking. Dim, shadowy shapes appeared to be moving about in the semi-darkness of the interior. There was nothing tangible that the eye could grasp— only an uncanny suggestion of life where it seemed that there should be no life, for living things seemed out of place in this weird, dead city of the long-dead past.

Tarzan recalled something that he had read in the library at Paris of a lost race of white men that native legend described as living in the heart of

Africa. He wondered if he were not looking upon the ruins of the civilization that this strange people had wrought amid the savage surroundings of their strange and savage home. Could it be possible that even now a remnant of that lost race inhabited the ruined grandeur that had once been their progenitor? Again he became conscious of a stealthy movement within the great temple before him. "Come!" he said, to his Waziri. "Let us have a look at what lies behind those ruined walls." His men were loath to follow him, but when they saw that he was bravely entering the frowning portal they trailed a few paces behind in a huddled group that seemed the personification of nervous terror. A

single shriek such as they had heard the night before would have been sufficient to have sent them all racing madly for the narrow cleft that led through the great walls to the outer world.

As Tarzan entered the building he was distinctly aware of many eyes upon him. There was a rustling in the shadows of a near-by corridor, and he could have sworn that he saw a human hand withdrawn from an embrasure that opened above him into the domelike rotunda in which he found himself.

The floor of the chamber was of concrete, the walls of smooth granite, upon which strange figures of men and beasts were carved.

In places tablets of yellow metal had

been set in the solid masonry of the walls.

When he approached closer to one of these tablets he saw that it was of gold, and bore many hieroglyphics. Beyond this first chamber there were others, and back of them the building branched out into enormous wings. Tarzan passed through several of these chambers, finding many evidences of the fabulous wealth of the original builders. In one room were seven pillars of solid gold, and in another the floor itself was of the precious metal. And all the while that he explored, his blacks huddled close together at his back, and strange shapes hovered upon either hand and before them and behind, yet never close enough

that any might say that they were not alone.

The strain, however, was telling upon the nerves of the Waziri.

They begged Tarzan to return to the sunlight. They said that no good could come of such an expedition, for the ruins were haunted by the spirits of the dead who had once inhabited them.

"They are watching us, O king," whispered Busuli. "They are waiting until they have led us into the innermost recesses of their stronghold, and then they will fall upon us and tear us to pieces with their teeth. That is the way with spirits. My mother's uncle, who is a great witch doctor, has told me all about it many times." Tarzan laughed. "Run

back into the sunlight, my children," he said. "I will join you when I have searched this old ruin from top to bottom, and found the gold, or found that there is none. At least we may take the tablets from the walls, though the pillars are too heavy for us to handle; but there should be great storerooms filled with gold—gold that we can carry away upon our backs with ease. Run on now, out into the fresh air where you may breathe easier." Some of the warriors started to obey their chief with alacrity, but Busuli and several others hesitated to leave him—hesitated between love and loyalty for their king, and superstitious fear of the unknown. And then, quite unexpectedly, that occurred which decided the question

without the necessity for further discussion.

Out of the silence of the ruined temple there rang, close to their ears, the same hideous shriek they had heard the previous night, and with horrified cries the black warriors turned and fled through the empty halls of the age-old edifice.

Behind them stood Tarzan of the Apes where they had left him, a grim smile upon his lips—waiting for the enemy he fully expected was about to pounce upon him. But again silence reigned, except for the faint suggestion of the sound of naked feet moving stealthily in near-by places.

Then Tarzan wheeled and passed on

into the depths of the temple.

From room to room he went, until he came to one at which a rude, barred door still stood, and as he put his shoulder against it to push it in, again the shriek of warning rang out almost beside him.

It was evident that he was being warned to refrain from desecrating this particular room. Or could it be that within lay the secret to the treasure stores? At any rate, the very fact that the strange, invisible guardians of this weird place had some reason for wishing him not to enter this particular chamber was sufficient to treble Tarzan's desire to do so, and though the shrieking was repeated continuously, he kept his

shoulder to the door until it gave before his giant strength to swing open upon creaking wooden hinges.

Within all was black as the tomb. There was no window to let in the faintest ray of light, and as the corridor upon which it opened was itself in semi-darkness, even the open door shed no relieving rays within. Feeling before him upon the floor with the butt of his spear, Tarzan entered the Stygian gloom. Suddenly the door behind him closed, and at the same time hands clutched him from every direction out of the darkness.

The ape-man fought with all the savage fury of self- preservation backed by the herculean strength that was his. But though he felt his blows land, and

his teeth sink into soft flesh, there seemed always two new hands to take the place of those that he fought off. At last they dragged him down, and slowly, very slowly, they overcame him by the mere weight of their numbers. And then they bound him—his hands behind his back and his feet trussed up to meet them. He had heard no sound except the heavy breathing of his antagonists, and the noise of the battle. He knew not what manner of creatures had captured him, but that they were human seemed evident from the fact that they had bound him.

Presently they lifted him from the floor, and half dragging, half pushing him, they brought him out of the black chamber through another doorway into

an inner courtyard of the temple. Here he saw his captors. There must have been a hundred of them—short, stocky men, with great beards that covered their faces and fell upon their hairy breasts.

The thick, matted hair upon their heads grew low over their receding brows, and hung about their shoulders and their backs. Their crooked legs were short and heavy, their arms long and muscular.

About their loins they wore the skins of leopards and lions, and great necklaces of the claws of these same animals depended upon their breasts. Massive circlets of virgin gold adorned their arms and legs. For weapons they carried heavy, knotted bludgeons, and in

the belts that confined their single garments each had a long, wicked-looking knife.

But the feature of them that made the most startling impression upon their prisoner was their white skins—neither in color nor feature was there a trace of the negroid about them. Yet, with their receding foreheads, wicked little close-set eyes, and yellow fangs, they were far from prepossessing in appearance.

During the fight within the dark chamber, and while they had been dragging Tarzan to the inner court, no word had been spoken, but now several of them exchanged grunting, monosyllabic conversation in a language unfamiliar to the ape-man, and presently

they left him lying upon the concrete floor while they trooped off on their short legs into another part of the temple beyond the court.

As Tarzan lay there upon his back he saw that the temple entirely surrounded the little inclosure, and that on all sides its lofty walls rose high above him. At the top a little patch of blue sky was visible, and, in one direction, through an embrasure, he could see foliage, but whether it was beyond or within the temple he did not know.

About the court, from the ground to the top of the temple, were series of open galleries, and now and then the captive caught glimpses of bright eyes gleaming from beneath masses of

tumbling hair, peering down upon him from above.

The ape-man gently tested the strength of the bonds that held him, and while he could not be sure it seemed that they were of insufficient strength to withstand the strain of his mighty muscles when the time came to make a break for freedom; but he did not dare to put them to the crucial test until darkness had fallen, or he felt that no spying eyes were upon him.

He had lain within the court for several hours before the first rays of sunlight penetrated the vertical shaft; almost simultaneously he heard the pattering of bare feet in the corridors about him, and a moment later saw the

galleries above fill with crafty faces as a score or more entered the courtyard.

For a moment every eye was bent upon the noonday sun, and then in unison the people in the galleries and those in the court below took up the refrain of a low, weird chant. Presently those about Tarzan began to dance to the cadence of their solemn song. They circled him slowly, resembling in their manner of dancing a number of clumsy, shuffling bears; but as yet they did not look at him, keeping their little eyes fixed upon the sun.

For ten minutes or more they kept up their monotonous chant and steps, and then suddenly, and in perfect unison, they turned toward their victim with upraised

bludgeons and emitting fearful howls, the while they contorted their features into the most diabolical expressions, they rushed upon him.

At the same instant a female figure dashed into the midst of the bloodthirsty horde, and, with a bludgeon similar to their own, except that it was wrought from gold, beat back the advancing men.

20. LA

For a moment Tarzan thought that by some strange freak of fate a miracle had saved him, but when he realized the ease with which the girl had, single-handed, beaten off twenty gorilla-like males, and an instant later, as he saw them again take up their dance about him while she addressed them in a singsong monotone, which bore every evidence of rote, he came to the conclusion that it was all but a part of the ceremony of which he was the central figure.

After a moment or two the girl drew a knife from her girdle, and, leaning over Tarzan, cut the bonds from his legs. Then, as the men stopped their dance, and approached, she motioned to him to

rise.

Placing the rope that had been about his legs around his neck, she led him across the courtyard, the men following in twos.

Through winding corridors she led, farther and farther into the remoter precincts of the temple, until they came to a great chamber in the center of which stood an altar. Then it was that Tarzan translated the strange ceremony that had preceded his introduction into this holy of holies.

He had fallen into the hands of descendants of the ancient sun worshippers. His seeming rescue by a votaress of the high priestess of the sun had been but a part of the mimicry of

their heathen ceremony—the sun looking down upon him through the opening at the top of the court had claimed him as his own, and the priestess had come from the inner temple to save him from the polluting hands of worldlings—to save him as a human offering to their flaming deity.

And had he needed further assurance as to the correctness of his theory he had only to cast his eyes upon the brownish-red stains that caked the stone altar and covered the floor in its immediate vicinity, or to the human skulls which grinned from countless niches in the towering walls.

The priestess led the victim to the altar steps. Again the galleries above

filled with watchers, while from an arched doorway at the east end of the chamber a procession of females filed slowly into the room. They wore, like the men, only skins of wild animals caught about their waists with rawhide belts or chains of gold; but the black masses of their hair were encrusted with golden headgear composed of many circular and oval pieces of gold ingeniously held together to form a metal cap from which depended at each side of the head, long strings of oval pieces falling to the waist.

The females were more symmetrically proportioned than the males, their features were much more perfect, the shapes of their heads and

their large, soft, black eyes denoting far greater intelligence and humanity than was possessed by their lords and masters.

Each priestess bore two golden cups, and as they formed in line along one side of the altar the men formed opposite them, advancing and taking each a cup from the female opposite. Then the chant began once more, and presently from a dark passageway beyond the altar another female emerged from the cavernous depths beneath the chamber.

The high priestess, thought Tarzan. She was a young woman with a rather intelligent and shapely face. Her ornaments were similar to those worn by her votaries, but much more elaborate,

many being set with diamonds. Her bare arms and legs were almost concealed by the massive, bejeweled ornaments which covered them, while her single leopard skin was supported by a close-fitting girdle of golden rings set in strange designs with innumerable small diamonds. In the girdle she carried a long, jeweled knife, and in her hand a slender wand in lieu of a bludgeon.

As she advanced to the opposite side of the altar she halted, and the chanting ceased. The priests and priestesses knelt before her, while with wand extended above them she recited a long and tiresome prayer. Her voice was soft and musical—Tarzan could scarce realize that its possessor in a moment more

would be transformed by the fanatical ecstasy of religious zeal into a wild-eyed and bloodthirsty executioner, who, with dripping knife, would be the first to drink her victim's red, warm blood from the little golden cup that stood upon the altar.

As she finished her prayer she let her eyes rest for the first time upon Tarzan. With every indication of considerable curiosity she examined him from head to foot. Then she addressed him, and when she had finished stood waiting, as though she expected a reply.

"I do not understand your language," said Tarzan. "Possibly we may speak together in another tongue?" But she could not understand him, though he tried

French, English, Arab, Waziri, and, as a last resort, the mongrel tongue of the West Coast.

She shook her head, and it seemed that there was a note of weariness in her voice as she motioned to the priests to continue with the rites. These now circled in a repetition of their idiotic dance, which was terminated finally at a command from the priestess, who had stood throughout, still looking intently upon Tarzan.

At her signal the priests rushed upon the ape-man, and, lifting him bodily, laid him upon his back across the altar, his head hanging over one edge, his legs over the opposite. Then they and the priestesses formed in two lines, with

their little golden cups in readiness to capture a share of the victim's lifeblood after the sacrificial knife had accomplished its work.

In the line of priests an altercation arose as to who should have first place. A burly brute with all the refined intelligence of a gorilla stamped upon his bestial face was attempting to push a smaller man to second place, but the smaller one appealed to the high priestess, who in a cold peremptory voice sent the larger to the extreme end of the line. Tarzan could hear him growling and rumbling as he went slowly to the inferior station.

Then the priestess, standing above him, began reciting what Tarzan took to

be an invocation, the while she slowly raised her thin, sharp knife aloft. It seemed ages to the ape-man before her arm ceased its upward progress and the knife halted high above his unprotected breast.

Then it started downward, slowly at first, but as the incantation increased in rapidity, with greater speed. At the end of the line Tarzan could still hear the grumbling of the disgruntled priest.

The man's voice rose louder and louder. A priestess near him spoke in sharp tones of rebuke. The knife was quite near to Tarzan's breast now, but it halted for an instant as the high priestess raised her eyes to shoot her swift displeasure at the instigator of this

sacrilegious interruption.

There was a sudden commotion in the direction of the disputants, and Tarzan rolled his head in their direction in time to see the burly brute of a priest leap upon the woman opposite him, dashing out her brains with a single blow of his heavy cudgel. Then that happened which Tarzan had witnessed a hundred times before among the wild denizens of his own savage jungle. He had seen the thing fall upon Kerchak, and Tublat, and Terkoz; upon a dozen of the other mighty bull apes of his tribe; and upon Tantor, the elephant; there was scarce any of the males of the forest that did not at times fall prey to it. The priest went mad, and with his heavy bludgeon ran amuck

among his fellows.

His screams of rage were frightful as he dashed hither and thither, dealing terrific blows with his giant weapon, or sinking his yellow fangs into the flesh of some luckless victim. And during it the priestess stood with poised knife above Tarzan, her eyes fixed in horror upon the maniacal thing that was dealing out death and destruction to her votaries.

Presently the room was emptied except for the dead and dying on the floor, the victim upon the altar, the high priestess, and the madman. As the cunning eyes of the latter fell upon the woman they lighted with a new and sudden lust. Slowly he crept toward her, and now he spoke; but this time there fell

upon Tarzan's surprised ears a language he could understand; the last one that he would ever have thought of employing in attempting to converse with human beings—the low guttural barking of the tribe of great anthropoids—his own mother tongue. And the woman answered the man in the same language.

He was threatening—she attempting to reason with him, for it was quite evident that she saw that he was past her authority. The brute was quite close now—creeping with clawlike hands extended toward her around the end of the altar. Tarzan strained at the bonds which held his arms pinioned behind him. The woman did not see—she had forgotten her prey in the horror of the

danger that threatened herself. As the brute leaped past Tarzan to clutch his victim, the ape-man gave one superhuman wrench at the thongs that held him. The effort sent him rolling from the altar to the stone floor on the opposite side from that on which the priestess stood; but as he sprang to his feet the thongs dropped from his freed arms, and at the same time he realized that he was alone in the inner temple—the high priestess and the mad priest had disappeared.

And then a muffled scream came from the cavernous mouth of the dark hole beyond the sacrificial altar through which the priestess had entered the temple. Without even a thought for his

own safety, or the possibility for escape which this rapid series of fortuitous circumstances had thrust upon him, Tarzan of the Apes answered the call of the woman in danger. With a little bound he was at the gaping entrance to the subterranean chamber, and a moment later was running down a flight of age-old concrete steps that led he knew not where.

The faint light that filtered in from above showed him a large, low-ceiled vault from which several doorways led off into inky darkness, but there was no need to thread an unknown way, for there before him lay the objects of his search—the mad brute had the girl upon the floor, and gorilla-like fingers were

clutching frantically at her throat as she struggled to escape the fury of the awful thing upon her.

As Tarzan's heavy hand fell upon his shoulder the priest dropped his victim, and turned upon her would-be rescuer. With foam- flecked lips and bared fangs the mad sun-worshiper battled with the tenfold power of the maniac. In the blood lust of his fury the creature had undergone a sudden reversion to type, which left him a wild beast, forgetful of the dagger that projected from his belt—thinking only of nature's weapons with which his brute prototype had battled.

But if he could use his teeth and hands to advantage, he found one even better versed in the school of savage warfare

to which he had reverted, for Tarzan of the Apes closed with him, and they fell to the floor tearing and rending at one another like two bull apes; while the primitive priestess stood flattened against the wall, watching with wide, fear-fascinated eyes the growing, snapping beasts at her feet.

At last she saw the stranger close one mighty hand upon the throat of his antagonist, and as he forced the bruteman's head far back rain blow after blow upon the upturned face. A moment later he threw the still thing from him, and, arising, shook himself like a lion. He placed a foot upon the carcass before him, and raised his head to give the victory cry of his kind, but as his eyes

fell upon the opening above him leading into the temple of human sacrifice he thought better of his intended act.

The girl, who had been half paralyzed by fear as the two men fought, had just commenced to give thought to her probable fate now that, though released from the clutches of a madman, she had fallen into the hands of one whom but a moment before she had been upon the point of killing. She looked about for some means of escape. The black mouth of a diverging corridor was near at hand, but as she turned to dart into it the ape-man's eyes fell upon her, and with a quick leap he was at her side, and a restraining hand was laid upon her arm.

"Wait!" said Tarzan of the Apes, in

the language of the tribe of Kerchak.

The girl looked at him in astonishment.

"Who are you," she whispered, "who speaks the language of the first man?" "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he answered in the vernacular of the anthropoids.

"What do you want of me?" she continued. "For what purpose did you save me from Tha?"

"I could not see a woman murdered?" It was a half question that answered her.

"But what do you intend to do with me now?" she continued.

"Nothing," he replied, "but you can do something for me—you can lead me out of this place to freedom." He made the

suggestion without the slightest thought that she would accede. He felt quite sure that the sacrifice would go on from the point where it had been interrupted if the high priestess had her way, though he was equally positive that they would find Tarzan of the Apes unbound and with a long dagger in his hand a much less tractable victim than Tarzan disarmed and bound.

The girl stood looking at him for a long moment before she spoke.

"You are a very wonderful man," she said. "You are such a man as I have seen in my daydreams ever since I was a little girl. You are such a man as I imagine the forbears of my people must have been—the great race of people who built this

mighty city in the heart of a savage world that they might wrest from the bowels of the earth the fabulous wealth for which they had sacrificed their far-distant civilization.

"I cannot understand why you came to my rescue in the first place, and now I cannot understand why, having me within your power, you do not wish to be revenged upon me for having sentenced you to death—for having almost put you to death with my own hand."

"I presume," replied the ape-man, "that you but followed the teachings of your religion. I cannot blame YOU for that, no matter what I may think of your creed. But who are you—what people

have I fallen among?"

"I am La, high priestess of the Temple of the Sun, in the city of Opar. We are descendants of a people who came to this savage world more than ten thousand years ago in search of gold. Their cities stretched from a great sea under the rising sun to a great sea into which the sun descends at night to cool his flaming brow. They were very rich and very powerful, but they lived only a few months of the year in their magnificent palaces here; the rest of the time they spent in their native land, far, far to the north.

"Many ships went back and forth between this new world and the old. During the rainy season there were but

few of the inhabitants remained here, only those who superintended the working of the mines by the black slaves, and the merchants who had to stay to supply their wants, and the soldiers who guarded the cities and the mines.

"It was at one of these times that the great calamity occurred.

When the time came for the teeming thousands to return none came.

For weeks the people waited. Then they sent out a great galley to learn why no one came from the mother country, but though they sailed about for many months, they were unable to find any trace of the mighty land that had for countless ages borne their ancient

civilization—it had sunk into the sea.

"From that day dated the downfall of my people. Disheartened and unhappy, they soon became a prey to the black hordes of the north and the black hordes of the south. One by one the cities were deserted or overcome. The last remnant was finally forced to take shelter within this mighty mountain fortress. Slowly we have dwindled in power, in civilization, in intellect, in numbers, until now we are no more than a small tribe of savage apes.

"In fact, the apes live with us, and have for many ages. We call them the first men—we speak their language quite as much as we do our own; only in the rituals of the temple do we make any

attempt to retain our mother tongue. In time it will be forgotten, and we will speak only the language of the apes; in time we will no longer banish those of our people who mate with apes, and so in time we shall descend to the very beasts from which ages ago our progenitors may have sprung."

"But why are you more human than the others?" asked the man.

"For some reason the women have not reverted to savagery so rapidly as the men. It may be because only the lower types of men remained here at the time of the great catastrophe, while the temples were filled with the noblest daughters of the race. My strain has remained clearer than the rest because for countless ages

my foremothers were high priestesses—the sacred office descends from mother to daughter. Our husbands are chosen for us from the noblest in the land. The most perfect man, mentally and physically, is selected to be the husband of the high priestess."

"From what I saw of the gentlemen above," said Tarzan, with a grin, "there should be little trouble in choosing from among them." The girl looked at him quizzically for a moment.

"Do not be sacrilegious," she said. "They are very holy men—they are priests."

"Then there are others who are better to look upon?" he asked.

"The others are all more ugly than the

priests," she replied.

Tarzan shuddered at her fate, for even in the dim light of the vault he was impressed by her beauty.

"But how about myself?" he asked suddenly. "Are you going to lead me to liberty?"

"You have been chosen by The Flaming God as his own," she answered solemnly. "Not even I have the power to save you—should they find you again. But I do not intend that they shall find you. You risked your life to save mine. I may do no less for you. It will be no easy matter—it may require days; but in the end I think that I can lead you beyond the walls. Come, they will look here for me presently, and if they find us together

we shall both be lost—they would kill me did they think that I had proved false to my god."

"You must not take the risk, then," he said quickly. "I will return to the temple, and if I can fight my way to freedom there will be no suspicion thrown upon you." But she would not have it so, and finally persuaded him to follow her, saying that they had already remained in the vault too long to prevent suspicion from falling upon her even if they returned to the temple.

"I will hide you, and then return alone," she said, "telling them that I was long unconscious after you killed Tha, and that I do not know whither you escaped." And so she led him through

winding corridors of gloom, until finally they came to a small chamber into which a little light filtered through a stone grating in the ceiling.

"This is the Chamber of the Dead," she said. "None will think of searching here for you—they would not dare. I will return after it is dark. By that time I may have found a plan to effect your escape." She was gone, and Tarzan of the Apes was left alone in the Chamber of the Dead, beneath the long-dead city of Opar.

21. THE CASTAWAYS

Clayton dreamed that he was drinking his fill of water, pure, delightful drafts of fresh water. With a start he gained consciousness to find himself wet through by torrents of rain that were falling upon his body and his upturned face. A heavy tropical shower was beating down upon them. He opened his mouth and drank. Presently he was so revived and strengthened that he was enabled to raise himself upon his hands. Across his legs lay Monsieur Thuran. A few feet aft Jane Porter was huddled in a pitiful little heap in the bottom of the boat—she was quite still. Clayton knew that she was dead.

After infinite labor he released

himself from Thuran's pinioning body, and with renewed strength crawled toward the girl. He raised her head from the rough boards of the boat's bottom. There might be life in that poor, starved frame even yet. He could not quite abandon all hope, and so he seized a water-soaked rag and squeezed the precious drops between the swollen lips of the hideous thing that had but a few short days before glowed with the resplendent life of happy youth and glorious beauty.

For some time there was no sign of returning animation, but at last his efforts were rewarded by a slight tremor of the half-closed lids. He chafed the thin hands, and forced a few more drops of

water into the parched throat. The girl opened her eyes, looking up at him for a long time before she could recall her surroundings.

"Water?" she whispered. "Are we saved?"

"It is raining," he explained. "We may at least drink. Already it has revived us both."

"Monsieur Thuran?" she asked. "He did not kill you. Is he dead?"

"I do not know," replied Clayton. "If he lives and this rain revives him —" But he stopped there, remembering too late that he must not add further to the horrors which the girl already had endured.

But she guessed what he would have

said.

"Where is he?" she asked.

Clayton nodded his head toward the prostrate form of the Russian.

For a time neither spoke.

"I will see if I can revive him," said Clayton at length.

"No," she whispered, extending a detaining hand toward him. "Do not do that—he will kill you when the water has given him strength.

If he is dying, let him die. Do not leave me alone in this boat with that beast." Clayton hesitated. His honor demanded that he attempt to revive Thuran, and there was the possibility, too, that the Russian was beyond human

aid. It was not dishonorable to hope so. As he sat fighting out his battle he presently raised his eyes from the body of the man, and as they passed above the gunwale of the boat he staggered weakly to his feet with a little cry of joy.

"Land, Jane!" he almost shouted through his cracked lips. "Thank God, land!" The girl looked, too, and there, not a hundred yards away, she saw a yellow beach, and, beyond, the luxurious foliage of a tropical jungle.

"Now you may revive him," said Jane Porter, for she, too, had been haunted with the pangs of conscience which had resulted from her decision to prevent Clayton from offering succor to their companion.

It required the better part of half an hour before the Russian evinced sufficient symptoms of returning consciousness to open his eyes, and it was some time later before they could bring him to a realization of their good fortune. By this time the boat was scraping gently upon the sandy bottom.

Between the refreshing water that he had drunk and the stimulus of renewed hope, Clayton found strength to stagger through the shallow water to the shore with a line made fast to the boat's bow. This he fastened to a small tree which grew at the top of a low bank, for the tide was at flood, and he feared that the boat might carry them all out to sea again with the ebb, since it was quite likely

that it would be beyond his strength to get Jane Porter to the shore for several hours. Next he managed to stagger and crawl toward the near-by jungle, where he had seen evidences of profusion of tropical fruit. His former experience in the jungle of Tarzan of the Apes had taught him which of the many growing things were edible, and after nearly an hour of absence he returned to the beach with a little armful of food.

The rain had ceased, and the hot sun was beating down so mercilessly upon her that Jane Porter insisted on making an immediate attempt to gain the land. Still further invigorated by the food Clayton had brought, the three were able to reach the half shade of the small tree

to which their boat was moored. Here, thoroughly exhausted, they threw themselves down to rest, sleeping until dark.

For a month they lived upon the beach in comparative safety. As their strength returned the two men constructed a rude shelter in the branches of a tree, high enough from the ground to insure safety from the larger beasts of prey. By day they gathered fruits and trapped small rodents; at night they lay cowering within their frail shelter while savage denizens of the jungle made hideous the hours of darkness.

They slept upon litters of jungle grasses, and for covering at night Jane Porter had only an old ulster that

belonged to Clayton, the same garment that he had worn upon that memorable trip to the Wisconsin woods. Clayton had erected a frail partition of boughs to divide their arboreal shelter into two rooms—one for the girl and the other for Monsieur Thuran and himself.

From the first the Russian had exhibited every trait of his true character—selfishness, boorishness, arrogance, cowardice, and lust. Twice had he and Clayton come to blows because of Thuran's attitude toward the girl. Clayton dared not leave her alone with him for an instant. The existence of the Englishman and his fiancee was one continual nightmare of horror, and yet they lived on in hope of ultimate rescue.

Jane Porter's thoughts often reverted to her other experience on this savage shore. Ah, if the invincible forest god of that dead past were but with them now. No longer would there be aught to fear from prowling beasts, or from the bestial Russian. She could not well refrain from comparing the scant protection afforded her by Clayton with what she might have expected had Tarzan of the Apes been for a single instant confronted by the sinister and menacing attitude of Monsieur Thuran. Once, when Clayton had gone to the little stream for water, and Thuran had spoken coarsely to her, she voiced her thoughts.

"It is well for you, Monsieur Thuran," she said, "that the poor Monsieur Tarzan

who was lost from the ship that brought you and Miss Strong to Cape Town is not here now."

"You knew the pig?" asked Thuran, with a sneer.

"I knew the man," she replied. "The only real man, I think, that I have ever known." There was something in her tone of voice that led the Russian to attribute to her a deeper feeling for his enemy than friendship, and he grasped at the suggestion to be further revenged upon the man whom he supposed dead by besmirching his memory to the girl.

"He was worse than a pig," he cried. "He was a poltroon and a coward. To save himself from the righteous wrath of the husband of a woman he had

wronged, he perjured his soul in an attempt to place the blame entirely upon her. Not succeeding in this, he ran away from France to escape meeting the husband upon the field of honor. That is why he was on board the ship that bore Miss Strong and myself to Cape Town. I know whereof I speak, for the woman in the case is my sister. Something more I know that I have never told another—your brave Monsieur Tarzan leaped overboard in an agony of fear because I recognized him, and insisted that he make reparation to me the following morning—we could have fought with knives in my stateroom." Jane Porter laughed. "You do not for a moment imagine that one who has known both

Monsieur Tarzan and you could ever believe such an impossible tale?"

"Then why did he travel under an assumed name?" asked Monsieur Thuran.

"I do not believe you," she cried, but nevertheless the seed of suspicion was sown, for she knew that Hazel Strong had known her forest god only as John Caldwell, of London.

A scant five miles north of their rude shelter, all unknown to them, and practically as remote as though separated by thousands of miles of impenetrable jungle, lay the snug little cabin of Tarzan of the Apes. While farther up the coast, a few miles beyond the cabin, in crude but well-built

shelters, lived a little party of eighteen souls—the occupants of the three boats from the LADY ALICE from which Clayton's boat had become separated.

Over a smooth sea they had rowed to the mainland in less than three days. None of the horrors of shipwreck had been theirs, and though depressed by sorrow, and suffering from the shock of the catastrophe and the unaccustomed hardships of their new existence there was none much the worse for the experience.

All were buoyed by the hope that the fourth boat had been picked up, and that a thorough search of the coast would be quickly made.

As all the firearms and ammunition on

the yacht had been placed in Lord Tennington's boat, the party was well equipped for defense, and for hunting the larger game for food.

Professor Archimedes Q. Porter was their only immediate anxiety.

Fully assured in his own mind that his daughter had been picked up by a passing steamer, he gave over the last vestige of apprehension concerning her welfare, and devoted his giant intellect solely to the consideration of those momentous and abstruse scientific problems which he considered the only proper food for thought in one of his erudition. His mind appeared blank to the influence of all extraneous matters.

"Never," said the exhausted Mr.

Samuel T. Philander, to Lord Tennington, "never has Professor Porter been more difficult—er—I might say, impossible. Why, only this morning, after I had been forced to relinquish my surveillance for a brief half hour he was entirely missing upon my return. And, bless me, sir, where do you imagine I discovered him? A half mile out in the ocean, sir, in one of the lifeboats, rowing away for dear life. I do not know how he attained even that magnificent distance from shore, for he had but a single oar, with which he was blissfully rowing about in circles.

"When one of the sailors had taken me out to him in another boat the professor became quite indignant at my suggestion

that we return at once to land. `Why, Mr. Philander,' he said, `I am surprised that you, sir, a man of letters yourself, should have the temerity so to interrupt the progress of science. I had about deduced from certain astronomic phenomena I have had under minute observation during the past several tropic nights an entirely new nebular hypothesis which will unquestionably startle the scientific world.

I wish to consult a very excellent monograph on Laplace's hypothesis, which I understand is in a certain private collection in New York City. Your interference, Mr. Philander, will result in an irreparable delay, for I was just rowing over to obtain this pamphlet.'

And it was with the greatest difficulty that I persuaded him to return to shore, without resorting to force," concluded Mr. Philander.

Miss Strong and her mother were very brave under the strain of almost constant apprehension of the attacks of savage beasts. Nor were they quite able to accept so readily as the others the theory that Jane, Clayton, and Monsieur Thuran had been picked up safely.

Jane Porter's Esmeralda was in a constant state of tears at the cruel fate which had separated her from her "po, li'le honey." Lord Tennington's great-hearted good nature never deserted him for a moment. He was still the jovial host, seeking always for the comfort and

pleasure of his guests. With the men of his yacht he remained the just but firm commander—there was never any more question in the jungle than there had been on board the LADY ALICE as to who was the final authority in all questions of importance, and in all emergencies requiring cool and intelligent leadership.

Could this well-organized and comparatively secure party of castaways have seen the ragged, fear-haunted trio a few miles south of them they would scarcely have recognized in them the formerly immaculate members of the little company that had laughed and played upon the LADY ALICE. Clayton and Monsieur Thuran were almost naked, so torn had their clothes been by

the thorn bushes and tangled vegetation of the matted jungle through which they had been compelled to force their way in search of their ever more difficult food supply.

Jane Porter had of course not been subjected to these strenuous expeditions, but her apparel was, nevertheless, in a sad state of disrepair.

Clayton, for lack of any better occupation, had carefully saved the skin of every animal they had killed. By stretching them upon the stems of trees, and diligently scraping them, he had managed to save them in a fair condition, and now that his clothes were threatening to cover his nakedness no longer, he commenced to fashion a rude

garment of them, using a sharp thorn for a needle, and bits of tough grass and animal tendons in lieu of thread.

The result when completed was a sleeveless garment which fell nearly to his knees. As it was made up of numerous small pelts of different species of rodents, it presented a rather strange and wonderful appearance, which, together with the vile stench which permeated it, rendered it anything other than a desirable addition to a wardrobe. But the time came when for the sake of decency he was compelled to don it, and even the misery of their condition could not prevent Jane Porter from laughing heartily at sight of him.

Later, Thuran also found it necessary

to construct a similar primitive garment, so that, with their bare legs and heavily bearded faces, they looked not unlike reincarnations of two prehistoric progenitors of the human race. Thuran acted like one.

Nearly two months of this existence had passed when the first great calamity befell them. It was prefaced by an adventure which came near terminating abruptly the sufferings of two of them—terminating them in the grim and horrible manner of the jungle, forever.

Thuran, down with an attack of jungle fever, lay in the shelter among the branches of their tree of refuge. Clayton had been into the jungle a few hundred yards in search of food. As he returned

Jane Porter walked to meet him. Behind the man, cunning and crafty, crept an old and mangy lion. For three days his ancient thews and sinews had proved insufficient for the task of providing his cavernous belly with meat. For months he had eaten less and less frequently, and farther and farther had he roamed from his accustomed haunts in search of easier prey. At last he had found nature's weakest and most defenseless creature —in a moment more Numa would dine.

Clayton, all unconscious of the lurking death behind him, strode out into the open toward Jane. He had reached her side, a hundred feet from the tangled edge of jungle when past his shoulder the girl saw the tawny head and the

wicked yellow eyes as the grasses parted, and the huge beast, nose to ground, stepped softly into view.

So frozen with horror was she that she could utter no sound, but the fixed and terrified gaze of her fear-widened eyes spoke as plainly to Clayton as words. A quick glance behind him revealed the hopelessness of their situation. The lion was scarce thirty paces from them, and they were equally as far from the shelter. The man was armed with a stout stick—as efficacious against a hungry lion, he realized, as a toy pop-gun charged with a tethered cork.

Numa, ravenous with hunger, had long since learned the futility of roaring and

moaning as he searched for prey, but now that it was as surely his as though already he had felt the soft flesh beneath his still mighty paw, he opened his huge jaws, and gave vent to his long-pent rage in a series of deafening roars that made the air tremble.

"Run, Jane!" cried Clayton. "Quick! Run for the shelter!" But her paralyzed muscles refused to respond, and she stood mute and rigid, staring with ghastly countenance at the living death creeping toward them.

Thuran, at the sound of that awful roar, had come to the opening of the shelter, and as he saw the tableau below him he hopped up and down, shrieking to them in Russian.

"Run! Run!" he cried. "Run, or I shall be left all alone in this horrible place," and then he broke down and commenced to weep. For a moment this new voice distracted the attention of the lion, who halted to cast an inquiring glance in the direction of the tree.

Clayton could endure the strain no longer. Turning his back upon the beast, he buried his head in his arms and waited.

The girl looked at him in horror. Why did he not do something? If he must die, why not die like a man—bravely; beating at that terrible face with his puny stick, no matter how futile it might be. Would Tarzan of the Apes have done thus? Would he not at least have gone

down to his death fighting heroically to the last? Now the lion was crouching for the spring that would end their young lives beneath cruel, rending, yellow fangs. Jane Porter sank to her knees in prayer, closing her eyes to shut out the last hideous instant. Thuran, weak from fever, fainted.

Seconds dragged into minutes, long minutes into an eternity, and yet the beast did not spring. Clayton was almost unconscious from the prolonged agony of fright—his knees trembled—a moment more and he would collapse.

Jane Porter could endure it no longer. She opened her eyes. Could she be dreaming? "William," she whispered; "look!" Clayton mastered himself

sufficiently to raise his head and turn toward the lion. An ejaculation of surprise burst from his lips.

At their very feet the beast lay crumpled in death. A heavy war spear protruded from the tawny hide. It had entered the great back above the right shoulder, and, passing entirely through the body, had pierced the savage heart.

Jane Porter had risen to her feet; as Clayton turned back to her she staggered in weakness. He put out his arms to save her from falling, and then drew her close to him—pressing her head against his shoulder, he stooped to kiss her in thanksgiving.

Gently the girl pushed him away.

"Please do not do that, William," she

said. "I have lived a thousand years in the past brief moments. I have learned in the face of death how to live. I do not wish to hurt you more than is necessary; but I can no longer bear to live out the impossible position I have attempted because of a false sense of loyalty to an impulsive promise I made you.

"The last few seconds of my life have taught me that it would be hideous to attempt further to deceive myself and you, or to entertain for an instant longer the possibility of ever becoming your wife, should we regain civilization."

"Why, Jane," he cried, "what do you mean? What has our providential rescue to do with altering your feelings toward me? You are but unstrung— tomorrow

you will be yourself again."

"I am more nearly myself this minute than I have been for over a year," she replied. "The thing that has just happened has again forced to my memory the fact that the bravest man that ever lived honored me with his love. Until it was too late I did not realize that I returned it, and so I sent him away. He is dead now, and I shall never marry. I certainly could not wed another less brave than he without harboring constantly a feeling of contempt for the relative cowardice of my husband. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," he answered, with bowed head, his face mantling with the flush of shame.

And it was the next day that the great calamity befell.

22. THE TREASURE VAULTS OF OPAR

It was quite dark before La, the high priestess, returned to the Chamber of the Dead with food and drink for Tarzan. She bore no light, feeling with her hands along the crumbling walls until she gained the chamber. Through the stone grating above, a tropic moon served dimly to illuminate the interior.

Tarzan, crouching in the shadows at the far side of the room as the first sound of approaching footsteps reached him, came forth to meet the girl as he recognized that it was she.

"They are furious," were her first words. "Never before has a human sacrifice escaped the altar. Already fifty

have gone forth to track you down. They have searched the temple—all save this single room."

"Why do they fear to come here?" he asked.

"It is the Chamber of the Dead. Here the dead return to worship.

See this ancient altar? It is here that the dead sacrifice the living —if they find a victim here. That is the reason our people shun this chamber. Were one to enter he knows that the waiting dead would seize him for their sacrifice."

"But you?" he asked.

"I am high priestess—I alone am safe from the dead. It is I who at rare intervals bring them a human sacrifice from the world above.

I alone may enter here in safety."

"Why have they not seized me?" he asked, humoring her grotesque belief.

She looked at him quizzically for a moment. Then she replied: "It is the duty of a high priestess to instruct, to interpret—according to the creed that others, wiser than herself, have laid down; but there is nothing in the creed which says that she must believe.

The more one knows of one's religion the less one believes—no one living knows more of mine than I."

"Then your only fear in aiding me to escape is that your fellow mortals may discover your duplicity?"

"That is all—the dead are dead; they cannot harm—or help. We must

therefore depend entirely upon ourselves, and the sooner we act the better it will be. I had difficulty in eluding their vigilance but now in bringing you this morsel of food. To attempt to repeat the thing daily would be the height of folly. Come, let us see how far we may go toward liberty before I must return." She led him back to the chamber beneath the altar room. Here she turned into one of the several corridors leading from it. In the darkness Tarzan could not see which one. For ten minutes they groped slowly along a winding passage, until at length they came to a closed door. Here he heard her fumbling with a key, and presently came the sound of a metal bolt grating

against metal.

The door swung in on scraping hinges, and they entered.

"You will be safe here until tomorrow night," she said.

Then she went out, and, closing the door, locked it behind her.

Where Tarzan stood it was dark as Erebus. Not even his trained eyes could penetrate the utter blackness. Cautiously he moved forward until his out-stretched hand touched a wall, then very slowly he traveled around the four walls of the chamber.

Apparently it was about twenty feet square. The floor was of concrete, the walls of the dry masonry that marked the method of construction above ground.

Small pieces of granite of various sizes were ingeniously laid together without mortar to construct these ancient foundations.

The first time around the walls Tarzan thought he detected a strange phenomenon for a room with no windows but a single door. Again he crept carefully around close to the wall. No, he could not be mistaken! He paused before the center of the wall opposite the door. For a moment he stood quite motionless, then he moved a few feet to one side. Again he returned, only to move a few feet to the other side.

Once more he made the entire circuit of the room, feeling carefully every foot of the walls. Finally he stopped again

before the particular section that had aroused his curiosity. There was no doubt of it! A distinct draft of fresh air was blowing into the chamber through the intersection of the masonry at that particular point—and nowhere else.

Tarzan tested several pieces of the granite which made up the wall at this spot, and finally was rewarded by finding one which lifted out readily. It was about ten inches wide, with a face some three by six inches showing within the chamber. One by one the ape- man lifted out similarly shaped stones. The wall at this point was constructed entirely, it seemed, of these almost perfect slabs.

In a short time he had removed some

dozen, when he reached in to test the next layer of masonry. To his surprise, he felt nothing behind the masonry he had removed as far as his long arm could reach.

It was a matter of but a few minutes to remove enough of the wall to permit his body to pass through the aperture. Directly ahead of him he thought he discerned a faint glow—scarcely more than a less impenetrable darkness. Cautiously he moved forward on hands and knees, until at about fifteen feet, or the average thickness of the foundation walls, the floor ended abruptly in a sudden drop.

As far out as he could reach he felt nothing, nor could he find the bottom of

the black abyss that yawned before him, though, clinging to the edge of the floor, he lowered his body into the darkness to its full length.

Finally it occurred to him to look up, and there above him he saw through a round opening a tiny circular patch of starry sky.

Feeling up along the sides of the shaft as far as he could reach, the ape-man discovered that so much of the wall as he could feel converged toward the center of the shaft as it rose. This fact precluded possibility of escape in that direction.

As he sat speculating on the nature and uses of this strange passage and its terminal shaft, the moon topped the

opening above, letting a flood of soft, silvery light into the shadowy place. Instantly the nature of the shaft became apparent to Tarzan, for far below him he saw the shimmering surface of water. He had come upon an ancient well—but what was the purpose of the connection between the well and the dungeon in which he had been hidden? As the moon crossed the opening of the shaft its light flooded the whole interior, and then Tarzan saw directly across from him another opening in the opposite wall. He wondered if this might not be the mouth of a passage leading to possible escape. It would be worth investigating, at least, and this he determined to do.

Quickly returning to the wall he had

demolished to explore what lay beyond it, he carried the stones into the passageway and replaced them from that side. The deep deposit of dust which he had noticed upon the blocks as he had first removed them from the wall had convinced him that even if the present occupants of the ancient pile had knowledge of this hidden passage they had made no use of it for perhaps generations.

The wall replaced, Tarzan turned to the shaft, which was some fifteen feet wide at this point. To leap across the intervening space was a small matter to the ape-man, and a moment later he was proceeding along a narrow tunnel, moving cautiously for fear of being

precipitated into another shaft such as he had just crossed.

He had advanced some hundred feet when he came to a flight of steps leading downward into Stygian gloom. Some twenty feet below, the level floor of the tunnel recommenced, and shortly afterward his progress was stopped by a heavy wooden door which was secured by massive wooden bars upon the side of Tarzan's approach. This fact suggested to the ape-man that he might surely be in a passageway leading to the outer world, for the bolts, barring progress from the opposite side, tended to substantiate this hypothesis, unless it were merely a prison to which it led.

Along the tops of the bars were deep

layers of dust—a further indication that the passage had lain long unused. As he pushed the massive obstacle aside, its great hinges shrieked out in weird protest against this unaccustomed disturbance. For a moment Tarzan paused to listen for any responsive note which might indicate that the unusual night noise had alarmed the inmates of the temple; but as he heard nothing he advanced beyond the doorway.

Carefully feeling about, he found himself within a large chamber, along the walls of which, and down the length of the floor, were piled many tiers of metal ingots of an odd though uniform shape.

To his groping hands they felt not

unlike double-headed bootjacks.

The ingots were quite heavy, and but for the enormous number of them he would have been positive that they were gold; but the thought of the fabulous wealth these thousands of pounds of metal would have represented were they in reality gold, almost convinced him that they must be of some baser metal.

At the far end of the chamber he discovered another barred door, and again the bars upon the inside renewed the hope that he was traversing an ancient and forgotten passageway to liberty. Beyond the door the passage ran straight as a war spear, and it soon became evident to the ape-man that it had already led him beyond the outer

walls of the temple. If he but knew the direction it was leading him! If toward the west, then he must also be beyond the city's outer walls.

With increasing hopes he forged ahead as rapidly as he dared, until at the end of half an hour he came to another flight of steps leading upward. At the bottom this flight was of concrete, but as he ascended his naked feet felt a sudden change in the substance they were treading. The steps of concrete had given place to steps of granite. Feeling with his hands, the ape-man discovered that these latter were evidently hewed from rock, for there was no crack to indicate a joint.

For a hundred feet the steps wound

spirally up, until at a sudden turning Tarzan came into a narrow cleft between two rocky walls.

Above him shone the starry sky, and before him a steep incline replaced the steps that had terminated at its foot. Up this pathway Tarzan hastened, and at its upper end came out upon the rough top of a huge granite boulder.

A mile away lay the ruined city of Opar, its domes and turrets bathed in the soft light of the equatorial moon. Tarzan dropped his eyes to the ingot he had brought away with him. For a moment he examined it by the moon's bright rays, then he raised his head to look out upon the ancient piles of crumbling grandeur in the distance.

"Opar," he mused, "Opar, the enchanted city of a dead and forgotten past. The city of the beauties and the beasts. City of horrors and death; but - city of fabulous riches." The ingot was of virgin gold.

The boulder on which Tarzan found himself lay well out in the plain between the city and the distant cliffs he and his black warriors had scaled the morning previous. To descend its rough and precipitous face was a task of infinite labor and considerable peril even to the ape-man; but at last he felt the soft soil of the valley beneath his feet, and without a backward glance at Opar he turned his face toward the guardian cliffs, and at a rapid trot set off across

the valley.

The sun was just rising as he gained the summit of the flat mountain at the valley's western boundary. Far beneath him he saw smoke arising above the tree-tops of the forest at the base of the foothills.

"Man," he murmured. "And there were fifty who went forth to track me down. Can it be they?" Swiftly he descended the face of the cliff, and, dropping into a narrow ravine which led down to the far forest, he hastened onward in the direction of the smoke. Striking the forest's edge about a quarter of a mile from the point at which the slender column arose into the still air, he took to the trees. Cautiously he

approached until there suddenly burst upon his view a rude BOMA, in the center of which, squatted about their tiny fires, sat his fifty black Waziri. He called to them in their own tongue: "Arise, my children, and greet thy king!" With exclamations of surprise and fear the warriors leaped to their feet, scarcely knowing whether to flee or not. Then Tarzan dropped lightly from an overhanging branch into their midst. When they realized that it was indeed their chief in the flesh, and no materialized spirit, they went mad with joy.

"We were cowards, oh, Waziri," cried Busuli. "We ran away and left you to your fate; but when our panic was

over we swore to return and save you, or at least take revenge upon your murderers. We were but now preparing to scale the heights once more and cross the desolate valley to the terrible city." "Have you seen fifty frightful men pass down from the cliffs into this forest, my children?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes, Waziri," replied Busuli. "They passed us late yesterday, as we were about to turn back after you. They had no woodcraft. We heard them coming for a mile before we saw them, and as we had other business in hand we withdrew into the forest and let them pass. They were waddling rapidly along upon short legs, and now and then one would go upon all fours like Bolgani, the gorilla.

They were indeed fifty frightful men, Waziri." When Tarzan had related his adventures and told them of the yellow metal he had found, not one demurred when he outlined a plan to return by night and bring away what they could carry of the vast treasure; and so it was that as dusk fell across the desolate valley of Opar fifty ebon warriors trailed at a smart trot over the dry and dusty ground toward the giant boulder that loomed before the city.

If it had seemed a difficult task to descend the face of the boulder, Tarzan soon found that it would be next to impossible to get his fifty warriors to the summit. Finally the feat was accomplished by dint of herculean

efforts upon the part of the ape-man. Ten spears were fastened end to end, and with one end of this remarkable chain attached to his waist, Tarzan at last succeeded in reaching the summit.

Once there, he drew up one of his blacks, and in this way the entire party was finally landed in safety upon the boulder's top.

Immediately Tarzan led them to the treasure chamber, where to each was allotted a load of two ingots, for each about eighty pounds.

By midnight the entire party stood once more at the foot of the boulder, but with their heavy loads it was mid-forenoon ere they reached the summit of the cliffs. From there on the homeward

journey was slow, as these proud fighting men were unaccustomed to the duties of porters. But they bore their burdens uncomplainingly, and at the end of thirty days entered their own country.

Here, instead of continuing on toward the northwest and their village, Tarzan guided them almost directly west, until on the morning of the thirty-third day he bade them break camp and return to their own village, leaving the gold where they had stacked it the previous night.

"And you, Waziri?" they asked.

"I shall remain here for a few days, my children," he replied.

"Now hasten back to thy wives and children." When they had gone Tarzan gathered up two of the ingots and,

springing into a tree, ran lightly above the tangled and impenetrable mass of undergrowth for a couple of hundred yards, to emerge suddenly upon a circular clearing about which the giants of the jungle forest towered like a guardian host. In the center of this natural amphitheater, was a little flat-topped mound of hard earth.

Hundreds of times before had Tarzan been to this secluded spot, which was so densely surrounded by thorn bushes and tangled vines and creepers of huge girth that not even Sheeta, the leopard, could worm his sinuous way within, nor Tantor, with his giant strength, force the barriers which protected the council chamber of the great apes from all but

the harmless denizens of the savage jungle.

Fifty trips Tarzan made before he had deposited all the ingots within the precincts of the amphitheater. Then from the hollow of an ancient, lightning-blasted tree he produced the very spade with which he had uncovered the chest of Professor Archimedes Q. Porter which he had once, apelike, buried in this selfsame spot. With this he dug a long trench, into which he laid the fortune that his blacks had carried from the forgotten treasure vaults of the city of Opar.

That night he slept within the amphitheater, and early the next morning set out to revisit his cabin before

returning to his Waziri.

Finding things as he had left them, he went forth into the jungle to hunt, intending to bring his prey to the cabin where he might feast in comfort, spending the night upon a comfortable couch.

For five miles toward the south he roamed, toward the banks of a fair-sized river that flowed into the sea about six miles from his cabin. He had gone inland about half a mile when there came suddenly to his trained nostrils the one scent that sets the whole savage jungle aquiver— Tarzan smelled man.

The wind was blowing off the ocean, so Tarzan knew that the authors of the scent were west of him. Mixed with the

man scent was the scent of Numa. Man and lion. "I had better hasten," thought the ape-man, for he had recognized the scent of whites. "Numa may be a-hunting." When he came through the trees to the edge of the jungle he saw a woman kneeling in prayer, and before her stood a wild, primitive-looking white man, his face buried in his arms. Behind the man a mangy lion was advancing slowly toward this easy prey. The man's face was averted; the woman's bowed in prayer. He could not see the features of either.

Already Numa was about to spring. There was not a second to spare.

Tarzan could not even unsling his bow and fit an arrow in time to send one

of his deadly poisoned shafts into the yellow hide. He was too far away to reach the beast in time with his knife. There was but a single hope—a lone alternative. And with the quickness of thought the ape-man acted.

A brawny arm flew back—for the briefest fraction of an instant a huge spear poised above the giant's shoulder—and then the mighty arm shot out, and swift death tore through the intervening leaves to bury itself in the heart of the leaping lion. Without a sound he rolled over at the very feet of his intended victims—dead.

For a moment neither the man nor the woman moved. Then the latter opened her eyes to look with wonder upon the

dead beast behind her companion. As that beautiful head went up Tarzan of the Apes gave a gasp of incredulous astonishment. Was he mad? It could not be the woman he loved! But, indeed, it was none other.

And the woman rose, and the man took her in his arms to kiss her, and of a sudden the ape-man saw red through a bloody mist of murder, and the old scar upon his forehead burned scarlet against his brown hide.

There was a terrible expression upon his savage face as he fitted a poisoned shaft to his bow. An ugly light gleamed in those gray eyes as he sighted full at the back of the unsuspecting man beneath him.

For an instant he glanced along the polished shaft, drawing the bowstring far back, that the arrow might pierce through the heart for which it was aimed.

But he did not release the fatal messenger. Slowly the point of the arrow drooped; the scar upon the brown forehead faded; the bowstring relaxed; and Tarzan of the Apes, with bowed head, turned sadly into the jungle toward the village of the Waziri.

23. THE FIFTY FRIGHTFUL MEN

For several long minutes Jane Porter and William Cecil Clayton stood silently looking at the dead body of the beast whose prey they had so narrowly escaped becoming.

The girl was the first to speak again after her outbreak of impulsive avowal.

"Who could it have been?" she whispered.

"God knows!" was the man's only reply.

"If it is a friend, why does he not show himself?" continued Jane.

"Wouldn't it be well to call out to him, and at least thank him?" Mechanically Clayton did her bidding,

but there was no response.

Jane Porter shuddered. "The mysterious jungle," she murmured. "The terrible jungle. It renders even the manifestations of friendship terrifying."

"We had best return to the shelter," said Clayton. "You will be at least a little safer there. I am no protection whatever," he added bitterly.

"Do not say that, William," she hastened to urge, acutely sorry for the wound her words had caused. "You have done the best you could. You have been noble, and self-sacrificing, and brave. It is no fault of yours that you are not a superman. There is only one other man I have ever known who could have done more than you.

My words were ill chosen in the excitement of the reaction—I did not wish to wound you. All that I wish is that we may both understand once and for all that I can never marry you—that such a marriage would be wicked." "I think I understand," he replied. "Let us not speak of it again —at least until we are back in civilization." The next day Thuran was worse. Almost constantly he was in a state of delirium. They could do nothing to relieve him, nor was Clayton over-anxious to attempt anything. On the girl's account he feared the Russian—in the bottom of his heart he hoped the man would die. The thought that something might befall him that would leave her entirely at the mercy of this beast caused

him greater anxiety than the probability that almost certain death awaited her should she be left entirely alone upon the outskirts of the cruel forest.

The Englishman had extracted the heavy spear from the body of the lion, so that when he went into the forest to hunt that morning he had a feeling of much greater security than at any time since they had been cast upon the savage shore. The result was that he penetrated farther from the shelter than ever before.

To escape as far as possible from the mad ravings of the fever- stricken Russian, Jane Porter had descended from the shelter to the foot of the tree - she dared not venture farther. Here, beside the crude ladder Clayton had

constructed for her, she sat looking out to sea, in the always surviving hope that a vessel might be sighted.

Her back was toward the jungle, and so she did not see the grasses part, or the savage face that peered from between. Little, bloodshot, close-set eyes scanned her intently, roving from time to time about the open beach for indications of the presence of others than herself. Presently another head appeared, and then another and another. The man in the shelter commenced to rave again, and the heads disappeared as silently and as suddenly as they had come. But soon they were thrust forth once more, as the girl gave no sign of perturbation at the continued wailing of the man above.

One by one grotesque forms emerged from the jungle to creep stealthily upon the unsuspecting woman. A faint rustling of the grasses attracted her attention. She turned, and at the sight that confronted her staggered to her feet with a little shriek of fear. Then they closed upon her with a rush. Lifting her bodily in his long, gorilla-like arms, one of the creatures turned and bore her into the jungle. A filthy paw covered her mouth to stifle her screams. Added to the weeks of torture she had already undergone, the shock was more than she could withstand. Shattered nerves collapsed, and she lost consciousness. When she regained her senses she found herself in the thick of the primeval

forest. It was night. A huge fire burned brightly in the little clearing in which she lay. About it squatted fifty frightful men. Their heads and faces were covered with matted hair. Their long arms rested upon the bent knees of their short, crooked legs. They were gnawing, like beasts, upon unclean food. A pot boiled upon the edge of the fire, and out of it one of the creatures would occasionally drag a hunk of meat with a sharpened stick.

When they discovered that their captive had regained consciousness, a piece of this repulsive stew was tossed to her from the foul hand of a nearby feaster. It rolled close to her side, but she only closed her eyes as a qualm of

nausea surged through her.

For many days they traveled through the dense forest. The girl, footsore and exhausted, was half dragged, half pushed through the long, hot, tedious days. Occasionally, when she would stumble and fall, she was cuffed and kicked by the nearest of the frightful men. Long before they reached their journey's end her shoes had been discarded—the soles entirely gone. Her clothes were torn to mere shreds and tatters, and through the pitiful rags her once white and tender skin showed raw and bleeding from contact with the thousand pitiless thorns and brambles through which she had been dragged.

The last two days of the journey found

her in such utter exhaustion that no amount of kicking and abuse could force her to her poor, bleeding feet. Outraged nature had reached the limit of endurance, and the girl was physically powerless to raise herself even to her knees.

As the beasts surrounded her, chattering threateningly the while they goaded her with their cudgels and beat and kicked her with their fists and feet, she lay with closed eyes, praying for the merciful death that she knew alone could give her surcease from suffering; but it did not come, and presently the fifty frightful men realized that their victim was no longer able to walk, and so they picked her up and carried her the

balance of the journey.

Late one afternoon she saw the ruined walls of a mighty city looming before them, but so weak and sick was she that it inspired not the faintest shadow of interest. Wherever they were bearing her, there could be but one end to her captivity among these fierce half brutes.

At last they passed through two great walls and came to the ruined city within. Into a crumbling pile they bore her, and here she was surrounded by hundreds more of the same creatures that had brought her; but among them were females who looked less horrible. At sight of them the first faint hope that she had entertained came to mitigate her misery. But it was short-lived, for the

women offered her no sympathy, though, on the other hand, neither did they abuse her.

After she had been inspected to the entire satisfaction of the inmates of the building she was borne to a dark chamber in the vaults beneath, and here upon the bare floor she was left, with a metal bowl of water and another of food.

For a week she saw only some of the women whose duty it was to bring her food and water. Slowly her strength was returning—soon she would be in fit condition to offer as a sacrifice to The Flaming God. Fortunate indeed it was that she could not know the fate for which she was destined.

As Tarzan of the Apes moved slowly

through the jungle after casting the spear that saved Clayton and Jane Porter from the fangs of Numa, his mind was filled with all the sorrow that belongs to a freshly opened heart wound.

He was glad that he had stayed his hand in time to prevent the consummation of the thing that in the first mad wave of jealous wrath he had contemplated. Only the fraction of a second had stood between Clayton and death at the hands of the ape-man. In the short moment that had elapsed after he had recognized the girl and her companion and the relaxing of the taut muscles that held the poisoned shaft directed at the Englishman's heart, Tarzan had been swayed by the swift

and savage impulses of brute life.

He had seen the woman he craved—his woman—his mate— in the arms of another. There had been but one course open to him, according to the fierce jungle code that guided him in this other existence; but just before it had become too late the softer sentiments of his inherent chivalry had risen above the flaming fires of his passion and saved him. A thousand times he gave thanks that they had triumphed before his fingers had released that polished arrow.

As he contemplated his return to the Waziri the idea became repugnant. He did not wish to see a human being again. At least he would range alone through the jungle for a time, until the sharp edge

of his sorrow had become blunted. Like his fellow beasts, he preferred to suffer in silence and alone.

That night he slept again in the amphitheater of the apes, and for several days he hunted from there, returning at night. On the afternoon of the third day he returned early. He had lain stretched upon the soft grass of the circular clearing for but a few moments when he heard far to the south a familiar sound. It was the passing through the jungle of a band of great apes —he could not mistake that. For several minutes he lay listening. They were coming in the direction of the amphitheater.

Tarzan arose lazily and stretched himself. His keen ears followed every

movement of the advancing tribe. They were upwind, and presently he caught their scent, though he had not needed this added evidence to assure him that he was right.

As they came closer to the amphitheater Tarzan of the Apes melted into the branches upon the other side of the arena. There he waited to inspect the newcomers. Nor had he long to wait.

Presently a fierce, hairy face appeared among the lower branches opposite him. The cruel little eyes took in the clearing at a glance, then there was a chattered report returned to those behind.

Tarzan could hear the words. The scout was telling the other members of

the tribe that the coast was clear and that they might enter the amphitheater in safety.

First the leader dropped lightly upon the soft carpet of the grassy floor, and then, one by one, nearly a hundred anthropoids followed him. There were the huge adults and several young. A few nursing babes clung close to the shaggy necks of their savage mothers.

Tarzan recognized many members of the tribe. It was the same into which he had come as a tiny babe. Many of the adults had been little apes during his boyhood. He had frolicked and played about this very jungle with them during their brief childhood. He wondered if they would remember him—the memory

of some apes is not overlong, and two years may be an eternity to them.

From the talk which he overheard he learned that they had come to choose a new king—their late chief had fallen a hundred feet beneath a broken limb to an untimely end.

Tarzan walked to the end of an overhanging limb in plain view of them. The quick eyes of a female caught sight of him first. With a barking guttural she called the attention of the others. Several huge bulls stood erect to get a better view of the intruder. With bared fangs and bristling necks they advanced slowly toward him, with deep- throated, ominous growls.

"Karnath, I am Tarzan of the Apes,"

said the ape-man in the vernacular of the tribe. "You remember me. Together we teased Numa when we were still little apes, throwing sticks and nuts at him from the safety of high branches." The brute he had addressed stopped with a look of half-comprehending, dull wonderment upon his savage face.

"And Magor," continued Tarzan, addressing another, "do you not recall your former king—he who slew the mighty Kerchak? Look at me! Am I not the same Tarzan—mighty hunter—invincible fighter—that you all knew for many seasons?" The apes all crowded forward now, but more in curiosity than threatening. They muttered among themselves for a few moments.

"What do you want among us now?" asked Karnath.

"Only peace," answered the ape-man.

Again the apes conferred. At length Karnath spoke again.

"Come in peace, then, Tarzan of the Apes," he said.

And so Tarzan of the Apes dropped lightly to the turf into the midst of the fierce and hideous horde—he had completed the cycle of evolution, and had returned to be once again a brute among brutes.

There were no greetings such as would have taken place among men after a separation of two years. The majority of the apes went on about the little activities that the advent of the ape-man

had interrupted, paying no further attention to him than as though he had not been gone from the tribe at all.

One or two young bulls who had not been old enough to remember him sidled up on all fours to sniff at him, and one bared his fangs and growled threateningly—he wished to put Tarzan immediately into his proper place. Had Tarzan backed off, growling, the young bull would quite probably have been satisfied, but always after Tarzan's station among his fellow apes would have been beneath that of the bull which had made him step aside.

But Tarzan of the Apes did not back off. Instead, he swung his giant palm with all the force of his mighty muscles,

and, catching the young bull alongside the head, sent him sprawling across the turf. The ape was up and at him again in a second, and this time they closed with tearing fingers and rending fangs—or at least that had been the intention of the young bull; but scarcely had they gone down, growling and snapping, than the ape-man's fingers found the throat of his antagonist.

Presently the young bull ceased to struggle, and lay quite still.

Then Tarzan released his hold and arose—he did not wish to kill, only to teach the young ape, and others who might be watching, that Tarzan of the Apes was still master.

The lesson served its purpose—the

young apes kept out of his way, as young apes should when their betters were about, and the old bulls made no attempt to encroach upon his prerogatives. For several days the she-apes with young remained suspicious of him, and when he ventured too near rushed upon him with wide mouths and hideous roars. Then Tarzan discreetly skipped out of harm's way, for that also is a custom among the apes—only mad bulls will attack a mother. But after a while even they became accustomed to him.

He hunted with them as in days gone by, and when they found that his superior reason guided him to the best food sources, and that his cunning rope ensnared toothsome game that they

seldom if ever tasted, they came again to look up to him as they had in the past after he had become their king. And so it was that before they left the amphitheater to return to their wanderings they had once more chosen him as their leader.

The ape-man felt quite contented with his new lot. He was not happy —that he never could be again, but he was at least as far from everything that might remind him of his past misery as he could be. Long since he had given up every intention of returning to civilization, and now he had decided to see no more his black friends of the Waziri. He had foresworn humanity forever. He had started life an ape—as an ape he would die.

He could not, however, erase from his memory the fact that the woman he loved was within a short journey of the stamping-ground of his tribe; nor could he banish the haunting fear that she might be constantly in danger. That she was illy protected he had seen in the brief instant that had witnessed Clayton's inefficiency. The more Tarzan thought of it, the more keenly his conscience pricked him.

Finally he came to loathe himself for permitting his own selfish sorrow and jealousy to stand between Jane Porter and safety. As the days passed the thing preyed more and more upon his mind, and he had about determined to return to the coast and place himself on guard

over Jane Porter and Clayton, when news reached him that altered all his plans and sent him dashing madly toward the east in reckless disregard of accident and death.

Before Tarzan had returned to the tribe, a certain young bull, not being able to secure a mate from among his own people, had, according to custom, fared forth through the wild jungle, like some knight-errant of old, to win a fair lady from some neighboring community.

He had but just returned with his bride, and was narrating his adventures quickly before he should forget them. Among other things he told of seeing a great tribe of strange-looking apes.

"They were all hairy-faced bulls but

one," he said, "and that one was a she, lighter in color even than this stranger," and he chucked a thumb at Tarzan.

The ape-man was all attention in an instant. He asked questions as rapidly as the slow-witted anthropoid could answer them.

"Were the bulls short, with crooked legs?"

"They were."

"Did they wear the skins of Numa and Sheeta about their loins, and carry sticks and knives?" "They did."

"And were there many yellow rings about their arms and legs?" "Yes."

"And the she one—was she small and slender, and very white?"

"Yes." "Did she seem to be one of the tribe, or was she a prisoner?"

"They dragged her along—sometimes by an arm—sometimes by the long hair that grew upon her head; and always they kicked and beat her.

Oh, but it was great fun to watch them."

"God!" muttered Tarzan.

"Where were they when you saw them, and which way were they going?" continued the ape-man.

"They were beside the second water back there," and he pointed to the south. "When they passed me they were going toward the morning, upward along the edge of the water."

"When was this?" asked Tarzan.

"Half a moon since." Without another word the ape-man sprang into the trees and fled like a disembodied spirit eastward in the direction of the forgotten city of Opar.

24. HOW TARZAN CAME AGAIN TO OPAR

When Clayton returned to the shelter and found Jane Porter was missing, he became frantic with fear and grief. He found Monsieur Thuran quite rational, the fever having left him with the surprising suddenness which is one of its peculiarities. The Russian, weak and exhausted, still lay upon his bed of grasses within the shelter.

When Clayton asked him about the girl he seemed surprised to know that she was not there.

"I have heard nothing unusual," he said. "But then I have been unconscious much of the time." Had it not been for the man's very evident weakness, Clayton

should have suspected him of having sinister knowledge of the girl's whereabouts; but he could see that Thuran lacked sufficient vitality even to descend, unaided, from the shelter. He could not, in his present physical condition, have harmed the girl, nor could he have climbed the rude ladder back to the shelter.

Until dark the Englishman searched the nearby jungle for a trace of the missing one or a sign of the trail of her abductor. But though the spoor left by the fifty frightful men, unversed in woodcraft as they were, would have been as plain to the densest denizen of the jungle as a city street to the Englishman, yet he crossed and

recrossed it twenty times without observing the slightest indication that many men had passed that way but a few short hours since.

As he searched, Clayton continued to call the girl's name aloud, but the only result of this was to attract Numa, the lion. Fortunately the man saw the shadowy form worming its way toward him in time to climb into the branches of a tree before the beast was close enough to reach him. This put an end to his search for the balance of the afternoon, as the lion paced back and forth beneath him until dark.

Even after the beast had left, Clayton dared not descend into the awful blackness beneath him, and so he spent a

terrifying and hideous night in the tree. The next morning he returned to the beach, relinquishing the last hope of succoring Jane Porter.

During the week that followed, Monsieur Thuran rapidly regained his strength, lying in the shelter while Clayton hunted food for both. The men never spoke except as necessity demanded. Clayton now occupied the section of the shelter which had been reserved for Jane Porter, and only saw the Russian when he took food or water to him, or performed the other kindly offices which common humanity required.

When Thuran was again able to descend in search of food, Clayton was

stricken with fever. For days he lay tossing in delirium and suffering, but not once did the Russian come near him. Food the Englishman could not have eaten, but his craving for water amounted practically to torture. Between the recurrent attacks of delirium, weak though he was, he managed to reach the brook once a day and fill a tiny can that had been among the few appointments of the lifeboat.

Thuran watched him on these occasions with an expression of malignant pleasure—he seemed really to enjoy the suffering of the man who, despite the just contempt in which he held him, had ministered to him to the best of his ability while he lay suffering

the same agonies. At last Clayton became so weak that he was no longer able to descend from the shelter. For a day he suffered for water without appealing to the Russian, but finally, unable to endure it longer, he asked Thuran to fetch him a drink. The Russian came to the entrance to Clayton's room, a dish of water in his hand. A nasty grin contorted his features.

"Here is water," he said. "But first let me remind you that you maligned me before the girl—that you kept her to yourself, and would not share her with me—" Clayton interrupted him. "Stop!" he cried. Stop! What manner of cur are you that you traduce the character of a good woman whom we believe dead!

God! I was a fool ever to let you live—you are not fit to live even in this vile land."

"Here is your water," said the Russian. "All you will get," and he raised the basin to his lips and drank; what was left he threw out upon the ground below. Then he turned and left the sick man.

Clayton rolled over, and, burying his face in his arms, gave up the battle.

The next day Thuran determined to set out toward the north along the coast, for he knew that eventually he must come to the habitations of civilized men—at least he could be no worse off than he was here, and, furthermore, the ravings of the dying Englishman were getting on his

nerves. So he stole Clayton's spear and set off upon his journey. He would have killed the sick man before he left had it not occurred to him that it would really have been a kindness to do so.

That same day he came to a little cabin by the beach, and his heart filled with renewed hope as he saw this evidence of the proximity of civilization, for he thought it but the outpost of a nearby settlement. Had he known to whom it belonged, and that its owner was at that very moment but a few miles inland, Nikolas Rokoff would have fled the place as he would a pestilence. But he did not know, and so he remained for a few days to enjoy the security and comparative comforts of the cabin. Then

he took up his northward journey once more.

In Lord Tennington's camp preparations were going forward to build permanent quarters, and then to send out an expedition of a few men to the north in search of relief.

As the days had passed without bringing the longed-for succor, hope that Jane Porter, Clayton, and Monsieur Thuran had been rescued began to die. No one spoke of the matter longer to Professor Porter, and he was so immersed in his scientific dreaming that he was not aware of the elapse of time.

Occasionally he would remark that within a few days they should certainly see a steamer drop anchor off their

shore, and that then they should all be reunited happily. Sometimes he spoke of it as a train, and wondered if it were being delayed by snowstorms.

"If I didn't know the dear old fellow so well by now," Tennington remarked to Miss Strong, "I should be quite certain that he was—er—not quite right, don't you know."

"If it were not so pathetic it would be ridiculous," said the girl, sadly. "I, who have known him all my life, know how he worships Jane; but to others it must seem that he is perfectly callous to her fate. It is only that he is so absolutely impractical that he cannot conceive of so real a thing as death unless nearly certain proof of it is thrust upon him."

"You'd never guess what he was about yesterday," continued Tennington.

"I was coming in alone from a little hunt when I met him walking rapidly along the game trail that I was following back to camp.

His hands were clasped beneath the tails of his long black coat, and his top hat was set firmly down upon his head, as with eyes bent upon the ground he hastened on, probably to some sudden death had I not intercepted him.

"`Why, where in the world are you bound, professor?' I asked him.

`I am going into town, Lord Tennington,' he said, as seriously as possible, `to complain to the postmaster about the rural free delivery service we

are suffering from here. Why, sir, I haven't had a piece of mail in weeks. There should be several letters for me from Jane. The matter must be reported to Washington at once.' "And would you believe it, Miss Strong," continued Tennington, "I had the very deuce of a job to convince the old fellow that there was not only no rural free delivery, but no town, and that he was not even on the same continent as Washington, nor in the same hemisphere.

"When he did realize he commenced to worry about his daughter—I think it is the first time that he really has appreciated our position here, or the fact that Miss Porter may not have been rescued."

"I hate to think about it," said the girl, "and yet I can think of nothing else than the absent members of our party."

"Let us hope for the best," replied Tennington. "You yourself have set us each a splendid example of bravery, for in a way your loss has been the greatest."

"Yes," she replied; "I could have loved Jane Porter no more had she been my own sister." Tennington did not show the surprise he felt. That was not at all what he meant. He had been much with this fair daughter of Maryland since the wreck of the LADY ALICE, and it had recently come to him that he had grown much more fond of her than would prove good for the peace of his mind, for he

recalled almost constantly now the confidence which Monsieur Thuran had imparted to him that he and Miss Strong were engaged. He wondered if, after all, Thuran had been quite accurate in his statement. He had never seen the slightest indication on the girl's part of more than ordinary friendship.

"And then in Monsieur Thuran's loss, if they are lost, you would suffer a severe bereavement," he ventured.

She looked up at him quickly. "Monsieur Thuran had become a very dear friend," she said. "I liked him very much, though I have known him but a short time."

"Then you were not engaged to marry him?" he blurted out. "Heavens, nol!"

she cried. "I did not care for him at all in that way." There was something that Lord Tennington wanted to say to Hazel Strong—he wanted very badly to say it, and to say it at once; but somehow the words stuck in his throat. He started lamely a couple of times, cleared his throat, became red in the face, and finally ended by remarking that he hoped the cabins would be finished before the rainy season commenced.

But, though he did not know it, he had conveyed to the girl the very message he intended, and it left her happy—happier than she had ever before been in all her life.

Just then further conversation was interrupted by the sight of a strange and

terrible-looking figure which emerged from the jungle just south of the camp. Tennington and the girl saw it at the same time. The Englishman reached for his revolver, but when the half- naked, bearded creature called his name aloud and came running toward them he dropped his hand and advanced to meet it.

None would have recognized in the filthy, emaciated creature, covered by a single garment of small skins, the immaculate Monsieur Thuran the party had last seen upon the deck of the LADY ALICE.

Before the other members of the little community were apprised of his presence Tennington and Miss Strong

questioned him regarding the other occupants of the missing boat.

"They are all dead," replied Thuran. "The three sailors died before we made land. Miss Porter was carried off into the jungle by some wild animal while I was lying delirious with fever. Clayton died of the same fever but a few days since. And to think that all this time we have been separated by but a few miles —scarcely a day's march. It is terrible!"

How long Jane Porter lay in the darkness of the vault beneath the temple in the ancient city of Opar she did not know. For a time she was delirious with fever, but after this passed she commenced slowly to regain her strength. Every day the woman who

brought her food beckoned to her to arise, but for many days the girl could only shake her head to indicate that she was too weak.

But eventually she was able to gain her feet, and then to stagger a few steps by supporting herself with one hand upon the wall. Her captors now watched her with increasing interest. The day was approaching, and the victim was gaining in strength.

Presently the day came, and a young woman whom Jane Porter had not seen before came with several others to her dungeon. Here some sort of ceremony was performed—that it was of a religious nature the girl was sure, and so she took new heart, and rejoiced that she

had fallen among people upon whom the refining and softening influences of religion evidently had fallen. They would treat her humanely—of that she was now quite sure.

And so when they led her from her dungeon, through long, dark corridors, and up a flight of concrete steps to a brilliant courtyard, she went willingly, even gladly—for was she not among the servants of God? It might be, of course, that their interpretation of the supreme being differed from her own, but that they owned a god was sufficient evidence to her that they were kind and good.

But when she saw a stone altar in the center of the courtyard, and dark-brown

stains upon it and the nearby concrete of the floor, she began to wonder and to doubt. And as they stooped and bound her ankles, and secured her wrists behind her, her doubts were turned to fear. A moment later, as she was lifted and placed supine across the altar's top, hope left her entirely, and she trembled in an agony of fright.

During the grotesque dance of the votaries which followed, she lay frozen in horror, nor did she require the sight of the thin blade in the hands of the high priestess as it rose slowly above her to enlighten her further as to her doom.

As the hand began its descent, Jane Porter closed her eyes and sent up a silent prayer to the Maker she was so

soon to face—then she succumbed to the strain upon her tired nerves, and swooned.

Day and night Tarzan of the Apes raced through the primeval forest toward the ruined city in which he was positive the woman he loved lay either a prisoner or dead.

In a day and a night he covered the same distance that the fifty frightful men had taken the better part of a week to traverse, for Tarzan of the Apes traveled along the middle terrace high above the tangled obstacles that impede progress upon the ground.

The story the young bull ape had told made it clear to him that the girl captive had been Jane Porter, for there was not

another small white "she" in all the jungle. The "bulls" he had recognized from the ape's crude description as the grotesque parodies upon humanity who inhabit the ruins of Opar. And the girl's fate he could picture as plainly as though he were an eyewitness to it.

When they would lay her across that trim altar he could not guess, but that her dear, frail body would eventually find its way there he was confident.

But, finally, after what seemed long ages to the impatient ape- man, he topped the barrier cliffs that hemmed the desolate valley, and below him lay the grim and awful ruins of the now hideous city of Opar. At a rapid trot he started across the dry and dusty, boulder-

strewn ground toward the goal of his desires.

Would he be in time to rescue? He hoped against hope. At least he could be revenged, and in his wrath it seemed to him that he was equal to the task of wiping out the entire population of that terrible city. It was nearly noon when he reached the great boulder at the top of which terminated the secret passage to the pits beneath the city. Like a cat he scaled the precipitous sides of the frowning granite kopje. A moment later he was running through the darkness of the long, straight tunnel that led to the treasure vault. Through this he passed, then on and on until at last he came to the well-like shaft upon the opposite side of

which lay the dungeon with the false wall.

As he paused a moment upon the brink of the well a faint sound came to him through the opening above. His quick ears caught and translated it—it was the dance of death that preceded a sacrifice, and the singsong ritual of the high priestess. He could even recognize the woman's voice. Could it be that the ceremony marked the very thing he had so hastened to prevent? A wave of horror swept over him. Was he, after all, to be just a moment too late? Like a frightened deer he leaped across the narrow chasm to the continuation of the passage beyond. At the false wall he tore like one possessed to demolish the

barrier that confronted him—with giant muscles he forced the opening, thrusting his head and shoulders through the first small hole he made, and carrying the balance of the wall with him, to clatter resoundingly upon the cement floor of the dungeon.

With a single leap he cleared the length of the chamber and threw himself against the ancient door. But here he stopped. The mighty bars upon the other side were proof even against such muscles as his.

It needed but a moment's effort to convince him of the futility of endeavoring to force that impregnable barrier. There was but one other way, and that led back through the long tunnels

to the boulder a mile beyond the city's walls, and then back across the open as he had come to the city first with his Waziri.

He realized that to retrace his steps and enter the city from above ground would mean that he would be too late to save the girl, if it were indeed she who lay upon the sacrificial altar above him.

But there seemed no other way, and so he turned and ran swiftly back into the passageway beyond the broken wall. At the well he heard again the monotonous voice of the high priestess, and, as he glanced aloft, the opening, twenty feet above, seemed so near that he was tempted to leap for it in a mad endeavor to reach the inner courtyard that lay so

near.

If he could but get one end of his grass rope caught upon some projection at the top of that tantalizing aperture! In the instant's pause and thought an idea occurred to him. He would attempt it.

Turning back to the tumbled wall, he seized one of the large, flat slabs that had composed it. Hastily making one end of his rope fast to the piece of granite, he returned to the shaft, and, coiling the balance of the rope on the floor beside him, the ape-man took the heavy slab in both hands, and, swinging it several times to get the distance and the direction fixed, he let the weight fly up at a slight angle, so that, instead of falling straight back into the shaft again,

it grazed the far edge, tumbling over into the court beyond.

Tarzan dragged for a moment upon the slack end of the rope until he felt that the stone was lodged with fair security at the shaft's top, then he swung out over the black depths beneath. The moment his full weight came upon the rope he felt it slip from above. He waited there in awful suspense as it dropped in little jerks, inch by inch. The stone was being dragged up the outside of the masonry surrounding the top of the shaft—would it catch at the very edge, or would his weight drag it over to fall upon him as he hurtled into the unknown depths below?

25. THROUGH THE FOREST PRIMEVAL

For a brief, sickening moment Tarzan felt the slipping of the rope to which he clung, and heard the scraping of the block of stone against the masonry above.

Then of a sudden the rope was still—the stone had caught at the very edge. Gingerly the ape-man clambered up the frail rope. In a moment his head was above the edge of the shaft. The court was empty. The inhabitants of Opar were viewing the sacrifice. Tarzan could hear the voice of La from the nearby sacrificial court. The dance had ceased. It must be almost time for the knife to fall; but even as he thought these

things he was running rapidly toward the sound of the high priestess' voice.

Fate guided him to the very doorway of the great roofless chamber.

Between him and the altar was the long row of priests and priestesses, awaiting with their golden cups the spilling of the warm blood of their victim. La's hand was descending slowly toward the bosom of the frail, quiet figure that lay stretched upon the hard stone.

Tarzan gave a gasp that was almost a sob as he recognized the features of the girl he loved. And then the scar upon his forehead turned to a flaming band of scarlet, a red mist floated before his eyes, and, with the awful roar of the bull

ape gone mad, he sprang like a huge lion into the midst of the votaries.

Seizing a cudgel from the nearest priest, he laid about him like a veritable demon as he forged his rapid way toward the altar. The hand of La had paused at the first noise of interruption. When she saw who the author of it was she went white. She had never been able to fathom the secret of the strange white man's escape from the dungeon in which she had locked him. She had not intended that he should ever leave Opar, for she had looked upon his giant frame and handsome face with the eyes of a woman and not those of a priestess.

In her clever mind she had concocted a story of wonderful revelation from the

lips of the flaming god himself, in which she had been ordered to receive this white stranger as a messenger from him to his people on earth. That would satisfy the people of Opar, she knew. The man would be satisfied, she felt quite sure, to remain and be her husband rather than to return to the sacrificial altar.

But when she had gone to explain her plan to him he had disappeared, though the door had been tightly locked as she had left it. And now he had returned—materialized from thin air—and was killing her priests as though they had been sheep. For the moment she forgot her victim, and before she could gather her wits together again the huge white

man was standing before her, the woman who had lain upon the altar in his arms.

"One side, La," he cried. "You saved me once, and so I would not harm you; but do not interfere or attempt to follow, or I shall have to kill you also." As he spoke he stepped past her toward the entrance to the subterranean vaults.

"Who is she?" asked the high priestess, pointing at the unconscious woman.

"She is mine," said Tarzan of the Apes.

For a moment the girl of Opar stood wide-eyed and staring. Then a look of hopeless misery suffused her eyes—tears welled into them, and with a little cry she sank to the cold floor, just as a

swarm of frightful men dashed past her to leap upon the ape-man.

But Tarzan of the Apes was not there when they reached out to seize him. With a light bound he had disappeared into the passage leading to the pits below, and when his pursuers came more cautiously after they found the chamber empty, they but laughed and jabbered to one another, for they knew that there was no exit from the pits other than the one through which he had entered. If he came out at all he must come this way, and they would wait and watch for him above.

And so Tarzan of the Apes, carrying the unconscious Jane Porter, came through the pits of Opar beneath the temple of The Flaming God without

pursuit. But when the men of Opar had talked further about the matter, they recalled to mind that this very man had escaped once before into the pits, and, though they had watched the entrance he had not come forth; and yet today he had come upon them from the outside. They would again send fifty men out into the valley to find and capture this desecrater of their temple.

After Tarzan reached the shaft beyond the broken wall, he felt so positive of the successful issue of his flight that he stopped to replace the tumbled stones, for he was not anxious that any of the inmates should discover this forgotten passage, and through it come upon the treasure chamber. It was in his mind to

return again to Opar and bear away a still greater fortune than he had already buried in the amphitheater of the apes.

On through the passageways he trotted, past the first door and through the treasure vault; past the second door and into the long, straight tunnel that led to the lofty hidden exit beyond the city.

Jane Porter was still unconscious.

At the crest of the great boulder he halted to cast a backward glance toward the city. Coming across the plain he saw a band of the hideous men of Opar. For a moment he hesitated. Should he descend and make a race for the distant cliffs, or should he hide here until night? And then a glance at the girl's white face determined him. He could not keep her

here and permit her enemies to get between them and liberty. For aught he knew they might have been followed through the tunnels, and to have foes before and behind would result in almost certain capture, since he could not fight his way through the enemy burdened as he was with the unconscious girl.

To descend the steep face of the boulder with Jane Porter was no easy task, but by binding her across his shoulders with the grass rope he succeeded in reaching the ground in safety before the Oparians arrived at the great rock. As the descent had been made upon the side away from the city, the searching party saw nothing of it, nor did they dream that their prey was so

close before them.

By keeping the KOPJE between them and their pursuers, Tarzan of the Apes managed to cover nearly a mile before the men of Opar rounded the granite sentinel and saw the fugitive before them. With loud cries of savage delight, they broke into a mad run, thinking doubtless that they would soon overhaul the burdened runner; but they both underestimated the powers of the ape-man and overestimated the possibilities of their own short, crooked legs.

By maintaining an easy trot, Tarzan kept the distance between them always the same. Occasionally he would glance at the face so near his own. Had it not been for the faint beating of the heart

pressed so close against his own, he would not have known that she was alive, so white and drawn was the poor, tired face.

And thus they came to the flat-topped mountain and the barrier cliffs. During the last mile Tarzan had let himself out, running like a deer that he might have ample time to descend the face of the cliffs before the Oparians could reach the summit and hurl rocks down upon them. And so it was that he was half a mile down the mountainside ere the fierce little men came panting to the edge.

With cries of rage and disappointment they ranged along the cliff top shaking their cudgels, and dancing up and down

in a perfect passion of anger. But this time they did not pursue beyond the boundary of their own country. Whether it was because they recalled the futility of their former long and irksome search, or after witnessing the ease with which the ape-man swung along before them, and the last burst of speed, they realized the utter hopelessness of further pursuit, it is difficult to say; but as Tarzan reached the woods that began at the base of the foothills which skirted the barrier cliffs they turned their faces once more toward Opar.

Just within the forest's edge, where he could yet watch the cliff tops, Tarzan laid his burden upon the grass, and going to the near-by rivulet brought water with

which he bathed her face and hands; but even this did not revive her, and, greatly worried, he gathered the girl into his strong arms once more and hurried on toward the west.

Late in the afternoon Jane Porter regained consciousness. She did not open her eyes at once—she was trying to recall the scenes that she had last witnessed. Ah, she remembered now. The altar, the terrible priestess, the descending knife. She gave a little shudder, for she thought that either this was death or that the knife had buried itself in her heart and she was experiencing the brief delirium preceding death. And when finally she mustered courage to open her eyes, the

sight that met them confirmed her fears, for she saw that she was being borne through a leafy paradise in the arms of her dead love. "If this be death," she murmured, "thank God that I am dead."

"You spoke, Jane!" cried Tarzan. "You are regaining consciousness!" "Yes, Tarzan of the Apes," she replied, and for the first time in months a smile of peace and happiness lighted her face.

"Thank God!" cried the ape-man, coming to the ground in a little grassy clearing beside the stream. "I was in time, after all."

"In time? What do you mean?" she questioned.

"In time to save you from death upon the altar, dear," he replied.

"Do you not remember?"

"Save me from death?" she asked, in a puzzled tone. "Are we not both dead, my Tarzan?" He had placed her upon the grass by now, her back resting against the stem of a huge tree. At her question he stepped back where he could the better see her face.

"Dead!" he repeated, and then he laughed. "You are not, Jane; and if you will return to the city of Opar and ask them who dwell there they will tell you that I was not dead a few short hours ago.

No, dear, we are both very much alive."

"But both Hazel and Monsieur Thuran told me that you had fallen into the ocean

many miles from land," she urged, as though trying to convince him that he must indeed be dead. "They said that there was no question but that it must have been you, and less that you could have survived or been picked up."

"How can I convince you that I am no spirit?" he asked, with a laugh.

"It was I whom the delightful Monsieur Thuran pushed overboard, but I did not drown—I will tell you all about it after a while—and here I am very much the same wild man you first knew, Jane Porter." The girl rose slowly to her feet and came toward him.

"I cannot even yet believe it," she murmured. "It cannot be that such happiness can be true after all the

hideous things that I have passed through these awful months since the LADY ALICE went down." She came close to him and laid a hand, soft and trembling, upon his arm.

"It must be that I am dreaming, and that I shall awaken in a moment to see that awful knife descending toward my heart—kiss me, dear, just once before I lose my dream forever." Tarzan of the Apes needed no second invitation. He took the girl he loved in his strong arms, and kissed her not once, but a hundred times, until she lay there panting for breath; yet when he stopped she put her arms about his neck and drew his lips down to hers once more.

"Am I alive and a reality, or am I but

a dream?" he asked.

"If you are not alive, my man," she answered, "I pray that I may die thus before I awaken to the terrible realities of my last waking moments." For a while both were silent—gazing into each others' eyes as though each still questioned the reality of the wonderful happiness that had come to them. The past, with all its hideous disappointments and horrors, was forgotten—the future did not belong to them; but the present— ah, it was theirs; none could take it from them. It was the girl who first broke the sweet silence.

"Where are we going, dear?" she asked. "What are we going to do?"

"Where would you like best to go?"

he asked. "What would you like best to do?"

"To go where you go, my man; to do whatever seems best to you," she answered.

"But Clayton?" he asked. For a moment he had forgotten that there existed upon the earth other than they two. "We have forgotten your husband."

"I am not married, Tarzan of the Apes," she cried. "Nor am I longer promised in marriage. The day before those awful creatures captured me I spoke to Mr. Clayton of my love for you, and he understood then that I could not keep the wicked promise that I had made. It was after we had been miraculously saved from an attacking

lion." She paused suddenly and looked up at him, a questioning light in her eyes. "Tarzan of the Apes," she cried, "it was you who did that thing? It could have been no other." He dropped his eyes, for he was ashamed.

"How could you have gone away and left me?" she cried reproachfully.

"Don't, Jane!" he pleaded. "Please don't! You cannot know how I have suffered since for the cruelty of that act, or how I suffered then, first in jealous rage, and then in bitter resentment against the fate that I had not deserved. I went back to the apes after that, Jane, intending never again to see a human being." He told her then of his life since he had returned to the jungle—of how he

had dropped like a plummet from a civilized Parisian to a savage Waziri warrior, and from there back to the brute that he had been raised.

She asked him many questions, and at last fearfully of the things that Monsieur Thuran had told her—of the woman in Paris. He narrated every detail of his civilized life to her, omitting nothing, for he felt no shame, since his heart always had been true to her. When he had finished he sat looking at her, as though waiting for her judgment, and his sentence.

"I knew that he was not speaking the truth," she said. "Oh, what a horrible creature he is!"

"You are not angry with me, then?" he

asked.

And her reply, though apparently most irrelevant, was truly feminine.

"Is Olga de Coude very beautiful?" she asked.

And Tarzan laughed and kissed her again. "Not one-tenth so beautiful as you, dear," he said.

She gave a contented little sigh, and let her head rest against his shoulder. He knew that he was forgiven.

That night Tarzan built a snug little bower high among the swaying branches of a giant tree, and there the tired girl slept, while in a crotch beneath her the ape-man curled, ready, even in sleep, to protect her.

It took them many days to make the long journey to the coast.

Where the way was easy they walked hand in hand beneath the arching boughs of the mighty forest, as might in a far-gone past have walked their primeval forbears. When the underbrush was tangled he took her in his great arms, and bore her lightly through the trees, and the days were all too short, for they were very happy. Had it not been for their anxiety to reach and succor Clayton they would have drawn out the sweet pleasure of that wonderful journey indefinitely.

On the last day before they reached the coast Tarzan caught the scent of men ahead of them—the scent of black men.

He told the girl, and cautioned her to maintain silence. "There are few friends in the jungle," he remarked dryly.

In half an hour they came stealthily upon a small party of black warriors filing toward the west. As Tarzan saw them he gave a cry of delight— it was a band of his own Waziri. Busuli was there, and others who had accompanied him to Opar. At sight of him they danced and cried out in exuberant joy. For weeks they had been searching for him, they told him.

The blacks exhibited considerable wonderment at the presence of the white girl with him, and when they found that she was to be his woman they vied with one another to do her honor. With the

happy Waziri laughing and dancing about them they came to the rude shelter by the shore.

There was no sign of life, and no response to their calls. Tarzan clambered quickly to the interior of the little tree hut, only to emerge a moment later with an empty tin. Throwing it down to Busuli, he told him to fetch water, and then he beckoned Jane Porter to come up.

Together they leaned over the emaciated thing that once had been an English nobleman. Tears came to the girl's eyes as she saw the poor, sunken cheeks and hollow eyes, and the lines of suffering upon the once young and handsome face.

"He still lives," said Tarzan. "We will do all that can be done for him, but I fear that we are too late." When Busuli had brought the water Tarzan forced a few drops between the cracked and swollen lips. He wetted the hot forehead and bathed the pitiful limbs.

Presently Clayton opened his eyes. A faint, shadowy smile lighted his countenance as he saw the girl leaning over him. At sight of Tarzan the expression changed to one of wonderment.

"It's all right, old fellow," said the ape-man. "We've found you in time. Everything will be all right now, and we'll have you on your feet again before you know it." The Englishman shook his

head weakly. "It's too late," he whispered.

"But it's just as well. I'd rather die."

"Where is Monsieur Thuran?" asked the girl.

"He left me after the fever got bad. He is a devil. When I begged for the water that I was too weak to get he drank before me, threw the rest out, and laughed in my face." At the thought of it the man was suddenly animated by a spark of vitality. He raised himself upon one elbow. "Yes," he almost shouted; "I will live. I will live long enough to find and kill that beast!" But the brief effort left him weaker than before, and he sank back again upon the rotting grasses that, with his old ulster, had been the bed of

Jane Porter.

"Don't worry about Thuran," said Tarzan of the Apes, laying a reassuring hand on Clayton's forehead. "He belongs to me, and I shall get him in the end, never fear." For a long time Clayton lay very still. Several times Tarzan had to put his ear quite close to the sunken chest to catch the faint beating of the wornout heart. Toward evening he aroused again for a brief moment.

"Jane," he whispered. The girl bent her head closer to catch the faint message. "I have wronged you—and him," he nodded weakly toward the ape-man. "I loved you so—it is a poor excuse to offer for injuring you; but I could not bear to think of giving you up.

I do not ask your forgiveness. I only wish to do now the thing I should have done over a year ago." He fumbled in the pocket of the ulster beneath him for something that he had discovered there while he lay between the paroxysms of fever. Presently he found it—a crumpled bit of yellow paper. He handed it to the girl, and as she took it his arm fell limply across his chest, his head dropped back, and with a little gasp he stiffened and was still.

Then Tarzan of the Apes drew a fold of the ulster across the upturned face.

For a moment they remained kneeling there, the girl's lips moving in silent prayer, and as they rose and stood on either side of the now peaceful form,

tears came to the ape-man's eyes, for through the anguish that his own heart had suffered he had learned compassion for the suffering of others.

Through her own tears the girl read the message upon the bit of faded yellow paper, and as she read her eyes went very wide. Twice she read those startling words before she could fully comprehend their meaning.

Finger prints prove you Greystoke. Congratulations. D'ARNOT.

She handed the paper to Tarzan. "And he has known it all this time," she said, "and did not tell you?"

"I knew it first, Jane," replied the man. "I did not know that he knew it at all. I must have dropped this message

that night in the waiting room. It was there that I received it."

"And afterward you told us that your mother was a she-ape, and that you had never known your father?" she asked incredulously.

"The title and the estates meant nothing to me without you, dear," he replied. "And if I had taken them away from him I should have been robbing the woman I love—don't you understand, Jane?" It was as though he attempted to excuse a fault.

She extended her arms toward him across the body of the dead man, and took his hands in hers.

"And I would have thrown away a love like that!" she said.

26. THE PASSING OF THE APE-MAN

The next morning they set out upon the short journey to Tarzan's cabin. Four Waziri bore the body of the dead Englishman. It had been the ape-man's suggestion that Clayton be buried beside the former Lord Greystoke near the edge of the jungle against the cabin that the older man had built.

Jane Porter was glad that it was to be so, and in her heart of hearts she wondered at the marvelous fineness of character of this wondrous man, who, though raised by brutes and among brutes, had the true chivalry and tenderness which only associates with the refinements of the highest

civilization.

They had proceeded some three miles of the five that had separated them from Tarzan's own beach when the Waziri who were ahead stopped suddenly, pointing in amazement at a strange figure approaching them along the beach. It was a man with a shiny silk hat, who walked slowly with bent head, and hands clasped behind him underneath the tails of his long, black coat.

At sight of him Jane Porter uttered a little cry of surprise and joy, and ran quickly ahead to meet him. At the sound of her voice the old man looked up, and when he saw who it was confronting him he, too, cried out in relief and happiness. As Professor Archimedes Q. Porter

folded his daughter in his arms tears streamed down his seamed old face, and it was several minutes before he could control himself sufficiently to speak.

When a moment later he recognized Tarzan it was with difficulty that they could convince him that his sorrow had not unbalanced his mind, for with the other members of the party he had been so thoroughly convinced that the ape-man was dead it was a problem to reconcile the conviction with the very lifelike appearance of Jane's "forest god." The old man was deeply touched at the news of Clayton's death.

"I cannot understand it," he said. "Monsieur Thuran assured us that Clayton passed away many days ago."

"Thuran is with you?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes; he but recently found us and led us to your cabin. We were camped but a short distance north of it. Bless me, but he will be delighted to see you both."

"And surprised," commented Tarzan.

A short time later the strange party came to the clearing in which stood the ape-man's cabin. It was filled with people coming and going, and almost the first whom Tarzan saw was D'Arnot.

"Paul!" he cried. "In the name of sanity what are you doing here? Or are we all insane?" It was quickly explained, however, as were many other seemingly strange things. D'Arnot's ship had been cruising along the coast, on patrol duty, when at the lieutenant's

suggestion they had anchored off the little landlocked harbor to have another look at the cabin and the jungle in which many of the officers and men had taken part in exciting adventures two years before. On landing they had found Lord Tennington's party, and arrangements were being made to take them all on board the following morning, and carry them back to civilization.

Hazel Strong and her mother, Esmeralda, and Mr. Samuel T. Philander were almost overcome by happiness at Jane Porter's safe return.

Her escape seemed to them little short of miraculous, and it was the consensus of opinion that it could have been achieved by no other man than Tarzan of

the Apes. They loaded the uncomfortable ape- man with eulogies and attentions until he wished himself back in the amphitheater of the apes.

All were interested in his savage Waziri, and many were the gifts the black men received from these friends of their king, but when they learned that he might sail away from them upon the great canoe that lay at anchor a mile off shore they became very sad.

As yet the newcomers had seen nothing of Lord Tennington and Monsieur Thuran. They had gone out for fresh meat early in the day, and had not yet returned.

"How surprised this man, whose name you say is Rokoff, will be to see

you," said Jane Porter to Tarzan.

"His surprise will be short-lived," replied the ape-man grimly, and there was that in his tone that made her look up into his face in alarm. What she read there evidently confirmed her fears, for she put her hand upon his arm, and pleaded with him to leave the Russian to the laws of France.

"In the heart of the jungle, dear," she said, "with no other form of right or justice to appeal to other than your own mighty muscles, you would be warranted in executing upon this man the sentence he deserves; but with the strong arm of a civilized government at your disposal it would be murder to kill him now. Even your friends would have to submit to

your arrest, or if you resisted it would plunge us all into misery and unhappiness again. I cannot bear to lose you again, my Tarzan. Promise me that you will but turn him over to Captain Dufranne, and let the law take its course —the beast is not worth risking our happiness for." He saw the wisdom of her appeal, and promised. A half hour later Rokoff and Tennington emerged from the jungle. They were walking side by side. Tennington was the first to note the presence of strangers in the camp. He saw the black warriors palavering with the sailors from the cruiser, and then he saw a lithe, brown giant talking with Lieutenant D'Arnot and Captain Dufranne.

"Who is that, I wonder," said Tennington to Rokoff, and as the Russian raised his eyes and met those of the ape-man full upon him, he staggered and went white.

"SAPRISTI!" he cried, and before Tennington realized what he intended he had thrown his gun to his shoulder, and aiming point- blank at Tarzan pulled the trigger. But the Englishman was close to him—so close that his hand reached the leveled barrel a fraction of a second before the hammer fell upon the cartridge, and the bullet that was intended for Tarzan's heart whirred harmlessly above his head.

Before the Russian could fire again the ape-man was upon him and had

wrested the firearm from his grasp. Captain Dufranne, Lieutenant D'Arnot, and a dozen sailors had rushed up at the sound of the shot, and now Tarzan turned the Russian over to them without a word. He had explained the matter to the French commander before Rokoff arrived, and the officer gave immediate orders to place the Russian in irons and confine him on board the cruiser.

Just before the guard escorted the prisoner into the small boat that was to transport him to his temporary prison Tarzan asked permission to search him, and to his delight found the stolen papers concealed upon his person.

The shot had brought Jane Porter and the others from the cabin, and a moment

after the excitement had died down she greeted the surprised Lord Tennington. Tarzan joined them after he had taken the papers from Rokoff, and, as he approached, Jane Porter introduced him to Tennington.

"John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, my lord," she said.

The Englishman looked his astonishment in spite of his most herculean efforts to appear courteous, and it required many repetitions of the strange story of the ape-man as told by himself, Jane Porter, and Lieutenant D'Arnot to convince Lord Tennington that they were not all quite mad.

At sunset they buried William Cecil Clayton beside the jungle graves of his

uncle and his aunt, the former Lord and Lady Greystoke. And it was at Tarzan's request that three volleys were fired over the last resting place of "a brave man, who met his death bravely." Professor Porter, who in his younger days had been ordained a minister, conducted the simple services for the dead. About the grave, with bowed heads, stood as strange a company of mourners as the sun ever looked down upon. There were French officers and sailors, two English lords, Americans, and a score of savage African braves.

Following the funeral Tarzan asked Captain Dufranne to delay the sailing of the cruiser a couple of days while he went inland a few miles to fetch his

"belongings," and the officer gladly granted the favor.

Late the next afternoon Tarzan and his Waziri returned with the first load of "belongings," and when the party saw the ancient ingots of virgin gold they swarmed upon the ape-man with a thousand questions; but he was smilingly obdurate to their appeals—he declined to give them the slightest clew as to the source of his immense treasure. "There are a thousand that I left behind," he explained, "for every one that I brought away, and when these are spent I may wish to return for more." The next day he returned to camp with the balance of his ingots, and when they were stored on board the cruiser Captain Dufranne said

he felt like the commander of an old-time Spanish galleon returning from the treasure cities of the Aztecs. "I don't know what minute my crew will cut my throat, and take over the ship," he added.

The next morning, as they were preparing to embark upon the cruiser, Tarzan ventured a suggestion to Jane Porter.

"Wild beasts are supposed to be devoid of sentiment," he said, "but nevertheless I should like to be married in the cabin where I was born, beside the graves of my mother and my father, and surrounded by the savage jungle that always has been my home."

"Would it be quite regular, dear?" she asked. "For if it would I know of no

other place in which I should rather be married to my forest god than beneath the shade of his primeval forest." And when they spoke of it to the others they were assured that it would be quite regular, and a most splendid termination of a remarkable romance. So the entire party assembled within the little cabin and about the door to witness the second ceremony that Professor Porter was to solemnize within three days.

D'Arnot was to be best man, and Hazel Strong bridesmaid, until Tennington upset all the arrangements by another of his marvelous "ideas."

"If Mrs. Strong is agreeable," he said, taking the bridesmaid's hand in his, "Hazel and I think it would be ripping to

make it a double wedding." The next day they sailed, and as the cruiser steamed slowly out to sea a tall man, immaculate in white flannel, and a graceful girl leaned against her rail to watch the receding shore line upon which danced twenty naked, black warriors of the Waziri, waving their war spears above their savage heads, and shouting farewells to their departing king.

"I should hate to think that I am looking upon the jungle for the last time, dear," he said, "were it not that I know that I am going to a new world of happiness with you forever," and, bending down, Tarzan of the Apes kissed his mate upon her lips.

THE END

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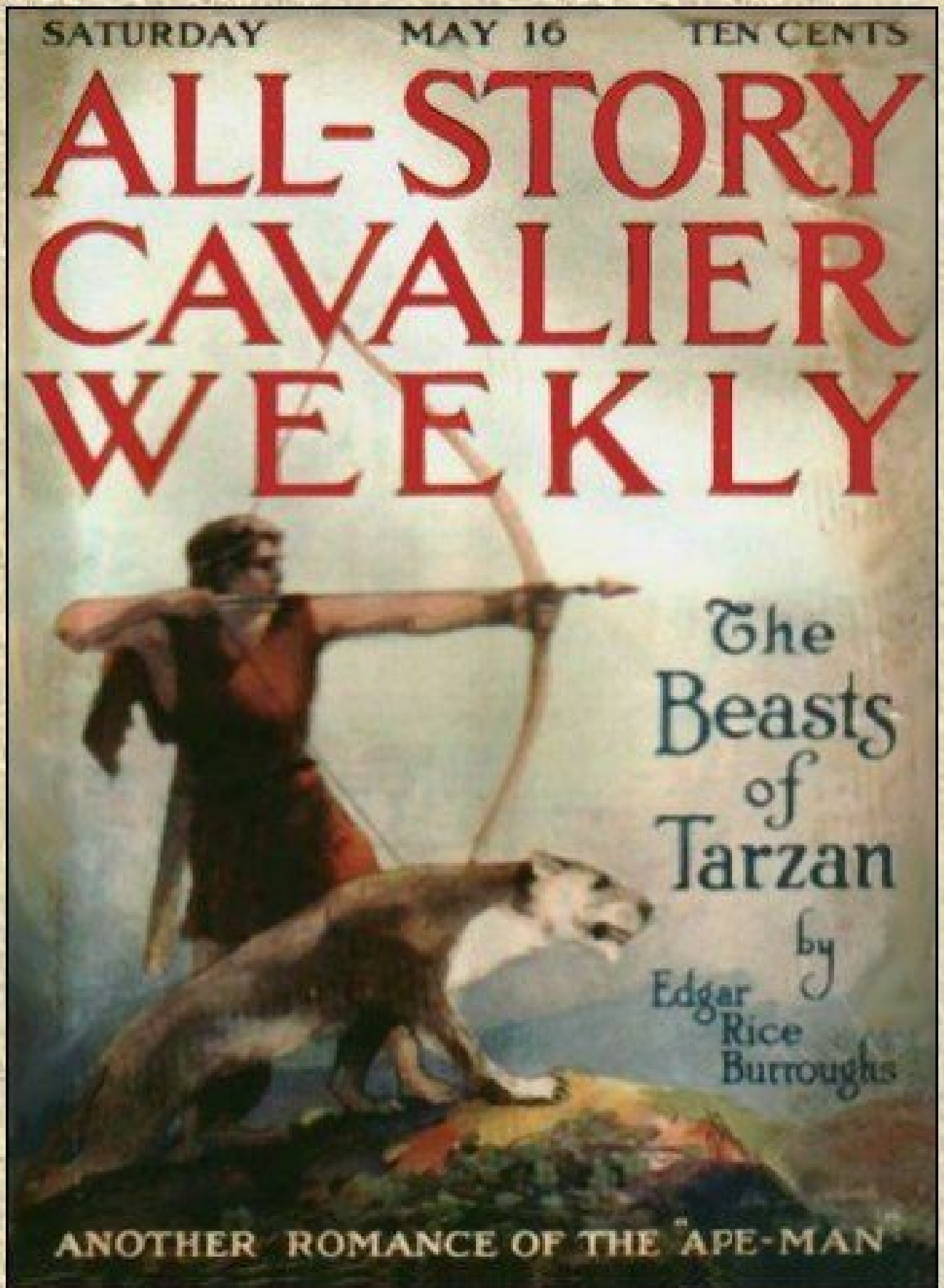

The Beasts of Tarzan

by Edgar Rice Burroughs

ANOTHER ROMANCE OF THE "APE-MAN"

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

THE BEASTS OF TARZAN

BOOK 3 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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DEDICATED TO JOAN BURROUGHS

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1. KIDNAPPED

"The entire affair is shrouded in mystery," said D'Arnot. "I have it on the best of authority that neither the police nor the special agents of the general staff have the faintest conception of how it was accomplished. All they know, all that anyone knows, is that Nikolas Rokoff has escaped."

John Clayton, Lord Greystoke—he who had been "Tarzan of the Apes" — sat in silence in the apartments of his friend, Lieutenant Paul D'Arnot, in Paris, gazing meditatively at the toe of his immaculate boot.

His mind revolved many memories, recalled by the escape of his arch-enemy from the French military prison to which

he had been sentenced for life upon the testimony of the ape-man.

He thought of the lengths to which Rokoff had once gone to compass his death, and he realized that what the man had already done would doubtless be as nothing by comparison with what he would wish and plot to do now that he was again free.

Tarzan had recently brought his wife and infant son to London to escape the discomforts and dangers of the rainy season upon their vast estate in Uziri—the land of the savage Waziri warriors whose broad African domains the ape-man had once ruled.

He had run across the Channel for a brief visit with his old friend, but the

news of the Russian's escape had already cast a shadow upon his outing, so that though he had but just arrived he was already contemplating an immediate return to London.

"It is not that I fear for myself, Paul," he said at last. "Many times in the past have I thwarted Rokoff's designs upon my life; but now there are others to consider. Unless I misjudge the man, he would more quickly strike at me through my wife or son than directly at me, for he doubtless realizes that in no other way could he inflict greater anguish upon me. I must go back to them at once, and remain with them until Rokoff is recaptured—or dead."

As these two talked in Paris, two

other men were talking together in a little cottage upon the outskirts of London. Both were dark, sinister-looking men.

One was bearded, but the other, whose face wore the pallor of long confinement within doors, had but a few days' growth of black beard upon his face. It was he who was speaking.

"You must needs shave off that beard of yours, Alexis," he said to his companion. "With it he would recognize you on the instant. We must separate here in the hour, and when we meet again upon the deck of the Kincaid, let us hope that we shall have with us two honoured guests who little anticipate the pleasant voyage we have planned for

them.

"In two hours I should be upon my way to Dover with one of them, and by tomorrow night, if you follow my instructions carefully, you should arrive with the other, provided, of course, that he returns to London as quickly as I presume he will.

"There should be both profit and pleasure as well as other good things to reward our efforts, my dear Alexis. Thanks to the stupidity of the French, they have gone to such lengths to conceal the fact of my escape for these many days that I have had ample opportunity to work out every detail of our little adventure so carefully that there is little chance of the slightest hitch occurring to

mar our prospects. And now good-bye, and good luck!"

Three hours later a messenger mounted the steps to the apartment of Lieutenant D'Arnot.

"A telegram for Lord Greystoke," he said to the servant who answered his summons. "Is he here?"

The man answered in the affirmative, and, signing for the message, carried it within to Tarzan, who was already preparing to depart for London.

Tarzan tore open the envelope, and as he read his face went white.

"Read it, Paul," he said, handing the slip of paper to D'Arnot. "It has come already."

The Frenchman took the telegram and read:

"Jack stolen from the garden through complicity of new servant. Come at once.—JANE."

As Tarzan leaped from the roadster that had met him at the station and ran up the steps to his London town house he was met at the door by a dry-eyed but almost frantic woman.

Quickly Jane Porter Clayton narrated all that she had been able to learn of the theft of the boy.

The baby's nurse had been wheeling him in the sunshine on the walk before the house when a closed taxicab drew up at the corner of the street. The woman had paid but passing attention to the

vehicle, merely noting that it discharged no passenger, but stood at the kerb with the motor running as though waiting for a fare from the residence before which it had stopped.

Almost immediately the new houseman, Carl, had come running from the Greystoke house, saying that the girl's mistress wished to speak with her for a moment, and that she was to leave little Jack in his care until she returned.

The woman said that she entertained not the slightest suspicion of the man's motives until she had reached the doorway of the house, when it occurred to her to warn him not to turn the carriage so as to permit the sun to shine in the baby's eyes.

As she turned about to call this to him she was somewhat surprised to see that he was wheeling the carriage rapidly toward the corner, and at the same time she saw the door of the taxicab open and a swarthy face framed for a moment in the aperture.

Intuitively, the danger to the child flashed upon her, and with a shriek she dashed down the steps and up the walk toward the taxicab, into which Carl was now handing the baby to the swarthy one within.

Just before she reached the vehicle, Carl leaped in beside his confederate, slamming the door behind him. At the same time the chauffeur attempted to start his machine, but it was evident that

something had gone wrong, as though the gears refused to mesh, and the delay caused by this, while he pushed the lever into reverse and backed the car a few inches before again attempting to go ahead, gave the nurse time to reach the side of the taxicab.

Leaping to the running-board, she had attempted to snatch the baby from the arms of the stranger, and here, screaming and fighting, she had clung to her position even after the taxicab had got under way; nor was it until the machine had passed the Greystoke residence at good speed that Carl, with a heavy blow to her face, had succeeded in knocking her to the pavement.

Her screams had attracted servants

and members of the families from residences near by, as well as from the Greystoke home. Lady Greystoke had witnessed the girl's brave battle, and had herself tried to reach the rapidly passing vehicle, but had been too late.

That was all that anyone knew, nor did Lady Greystoke dream of the possible identity of the man at the bottom of the plot until her husband told her of the escape of Nikolas Rokoff from the French prison where they had hoped he was permanently confined.

As Tarzan and his wife stood planning the wisest course to pursue, the telephone bell rang in the library at their right. Tarzan quickly answered the call in person.

"Lord Greystoke?" asked a man's voice at the other end of the line.

"Yes."

"Your son has been stolen," continued the voice, "and I alone may help you to recover him. I am conversant with the plot of those who took him. In fact, I was a party to it, and was to share in the reward, but now they are trying to ditch me, and to be quits with them I will aid you to recover him on condition that you will not prosecute me for my part in the crime. What do you say?"

"If you lead me to where my son is hidden," replied the ape- man, "you need fear nothing from me."

"Good," replied the other. "But you must come alone to meet me, for it is

enough that I must trust you. I cannot take the chance of permitting others to learn my identity."

"Where and when may I meet you?" asked Tarzan.

The other gave the name and location of a public-house on the water-front at Dover—a place frequented by sailors.

"Come," he concluded, "about ten o'clock tonight. It would do no good to arrive earlier. Your son will be safe enough in the meantime, and I can then lead you secretly to where he is hidden. But be sure to come alone, and under no circumstances notify Scotland Yard, for I know you well and shall be watching for you.

"Should any other accompany you, or

should I see suspicious characters who might be agents of the police, I shall not meet you, and your last chance of recovering your son will be gone."

Without more words the man rang off.

Tarzan repeated the gist of the conversation to his wife. She begged to be allowed to accompany him, but he insisted that it might result in the man's carrying out his threat of refusing to aid them if Tarzan did not come alone, and so they parted, he to hasten to Dover, and she, ostensibly to wait at home until he should notify her of the outcome of his mission.

Little did either dream of what both were destined to pass through before they should meet again, or the far-distant

—but why anticipate?

For ten minutes after the ape-man had left her Jane Clayton walked restlessly back and forth across the silken rugs of the library. Her mother heart ached, bereft of its firstborn. Her mind was in an anguish of hopes and fears.

Though her judgment told her that all would be well were her Tarzan to go alone in accordance with the mysterious stranger's summons, her intuition would not permit her to lay aside suspicion of the gravest dangers to both her husband and her son.

The more she thought of the matter, the more convinced she became that the recent telephone message might be but a ruse to keep them inactive until the boy

was safely hidden away or spirited out of England. Or it might be that it had been simply a bait to lure Tarzan into the hands of the implacable Rokoff.

With the lodgment of this thought she stopped in wide-eyed terror. Instantly it became a conviction. She glanced at the great clock ticking the minutes in the corner of the library.

It was too late to catch the Dover train that Tarzan was to take. There was another, later, however, that would bring her to the Channel port in time to reach the address the stranger had given her husband before the appointed hour.

Summoning her maid and chauffeur, she issued instructions rapidly. Ten minutes later she was being whisked

through the crowded streets toward the railway station.

It was nine-forty-five that night that Tarzan entered the squalid "pub" on the water-front in Dover. As he passed into the evil- smelling room a muffled figure brushed past him toward the street.

"Come, my lord!" whispered the stranger.

The ape-man wheeled about and followed the other into the ill- lit alley, which custom had dignified with the title of thoroughfare. Once outside, the fellow led the way into the darkness, nearer a wharf, where high-piled bales, boxes, and casks cast dense shadows. Here he halted.

"Where is the boy?" asked Greystoke.

"On that small steamer whose lights you can just see yonder," replied the other.

In the gloom Tarzan was trying to peer into the features of his companion, but he did not recognize the man as one whom he had ever before seen. Had he guessed that his guide was Alexis Paulvitch he would have realized that naught but treachery lay in the man's heart, and that danger lurked in the path of every move.

"He is unguarded now," continued the Russian. "Those who took him feel perfectly safe from detection, and with the exception of a couple of members of the crew, whom I have furnished with enough gin to silence them effectually for

hours, there is none aboard the Kincaid. We can go aboard, get the child, and return without the slightest fear."

Tarzan nodded.

"Let's be about it, then," he said.

His guide led him to a small boat moored alongside the wharf. The two men entered, and Paulvitch pulled rapidly toward the steamer. The black smoke issuing from her funnel did not at the time make any suggestion to Tarzan's mind. All his thoughts were occupied with the hope that in a few moments he would again have his little son in his arms.

At the steamer's side they found a monkey-ladder dangling close above them, and up this the two men crept

stealthily. Once on deck they hastened aft to where the Russian pointed to a hatch.

"The boy is hidden there," he said. "You had better go down after him, as there is less chance that he will cry in fright than should he find himself in the arms of a stranger. I will stand on guard here."

So anxious was Tarzan to rescue the child that he gave not the slightest thought to the strangeness of all the conditions surrounding the Kincaid. That her deck was deserted, though she had steam up, and from the volume of smoke pouring from her funnel was all ready to get under way made no impression upon him.

With the thought that in another instant he would fold that precious little bundle of humanity in his arms, the ape-man swung down into the darkness below. Scarcely had he released his hold upon the edge of the hatch than the heavy covering fell clattering above him.

Instantly he knew that he was the victim of a plot, and that far from rescuing his son he had himself fallen into the hands of his enemies. Though he immediately endeavoured to reach the hatch and lift the cover, he was unable to do so.

Striking a match, he explored his surroundings, finding that a little compartment had been partitioned off from the main hold, with the hatch above

his head the only means of ingress or egress. It was evident that the room had been prepared for the very purpose of serving as a cell for himself.

There was nothing in the compartment, and no other occupant. If the child was on board the Kincaid he was confined elsewhere.

For over twenty years, from infancy to manhood, the ape-man had roamed his savage jungle haunts without human companionship of any nature. He had learned at the most impressionable period of his life to take his pleasures and his sorrows as the beasts take theirs.

So it was that he neither raved nor stormed against fate, but instead waited patiently for what might next befall him,

though not by any means without an eye to doing the utmost to succour himself. To this end he examined his prison carefully, tested the heavy planking that formed its walls, and measured the distance of the hatch above him.

And while he was thus occupied there came suddenly to him the vibration of machinery and the throbbing of the propeller.

The ship was moving! Where to and to what fate was it carrying him?

And even as these thoughts passed through his mind there came to his ears above the din of the engines that which caused him to go cold with apprehension.

Clear and shrill from the deck above

him rang the scream of a frightened woman.

2. MAROONED

As Tarzan and his guide had disappeared into the shadows upon the dark wharf the figure of a heavily veiled woman had hurried down the narrow alley to the entrance of the drinking-place the two men had just quitted.

Here she paused and looked about, and then as though satisfied that she had at last reached the place she sought, she pushed bravely into the interior of the vile den.

A score of half-drunken sailors and wharf-rats looked up at the unaccustomed sight of a richly gowned woman in their midst. Rapidly she approached the slovenly barmaid who stared half in envy, half in hate, at her

more fortunate sister.

"Have you seen a tall, well-dressed man here, but a minute since," she asked, "who met another and went away with him?"

The girl answered in the affirmative, but could not tell which way the two had gone. A sailor who had approached to listen to the conversation vouchsafed the information that a moment before as he had been about to enter the "pub" he had seen two men leaving it who walked toward the wharf.

"Show me the direction they went," cried the woman, slipping a coin into the man's hand.

The fellow led her from the place, and together they walked quickly toward

the wharf and along it until across the water they saw a small boat just pulling into the shadows of a nearby steamer.

"There they be," whispered the man.

"Ten pounds if you will find a boat and row me to that steamer," cried the woman.

"Quick, then," he replied, "for we gotta go it if we're goin' to catch the Kincaid afore she sails. She's had steam up for three hours an' jest been a-waitin' fer that one passenger. I was a-talkin' to one of her crew 'arf an hour ago."

As he spoke he led the way to the end of the wharf where he knew another boat lay moored, and, lowering the woman into it, he jumped in after and pushed off. The two were soon scudding over the

water.

At the steamer's side the man demanded his pay and, without waiting to count out the exact amount, the woman thrust a handful of bank-notes into his outstretched hand. A single glance at them convinced the fellow that he had been more than well paid. Then he assisted her up the ladder, holding his skiff close to the ship's side against the chance that this profitable passenger might wish to be taken ashore later.

But presently the sound of the donkey engine and the rattle of a steel cable on the hoisting-drum proclaimed the fact that the Kincaid's anchor was being raised, and a moment later the waiter heard the propellers revolving, and

slowly the little steamer moved away from him out into the channel.

As he turned to row back to shore he heard a woman's shriek from the ship's deck.

"That's wot I calls rotten luck," he soliloquized. "I might jest as well of 'ad the whole bloomin' wad."

When Jane Clayton climbed to the deck of the Kincaid she found the ship apparently deserted. There was no sign of those she sought nor of any other aboard, and so she went about her search for her husband and the child she hoped against hope to find there without interruption.

Quickly she hastened to the cabin, which was half above and half below

deck. As she hurried down the short companion-ladder into the main cabin, on either side of which were the smaller rooms occupied by the officers, she failed to note the quick closing of one of the doors before her. She passed the full length of the main room, and then retracing her steps stopped before each door to listen, furtively trying each latch.

All was silence, utter silence there, in which the throbbing of her own frightened heart seemed to her overwrought imagination to fill the ship with its thunderous alarm.

One by one the doors opened before her touch, only to reveal empty interiors. In her absorption she did not note the sudden activity upon the vessel, the

purring of the engines, the throbbing of the propeller. She had reached the last door upon the right now, and as she pushed it open she was seized from within by a powerful, dark-visaged man, and drawn hastily into the stuffy, ill-smelling interior.

The sudden shock of fright which the unexpected attack had upon her drew a single piercing scream from her throat; then the man clapped a hand roughly over the mouth.

"Not until we are farther from land, my dear," he said. "Then you may yell your pretty head off."

Lady Greystoke turned to look into the leering, bearded face so close to hers. The man relaxed the pressure of his

fingers upon her lips, and with a little moan of terror as she recognized him the girl shrank away from her captor.

"Nikolas Rokoff! M. Thuran!" she exclaimed.

"Your devoted admirer," replied the Russian, with a low bow.

"My little boy," she said next, ignoring the terms of endearment—"where is he? Let me have him. How could you be so cruel—even as you — Nikolas Rokoff—cannot be entirely devoid of mercy and compassion? Tell me where he is. Is he aboard this ship? Oh, please, if such a thing as a heart beats within your breast, take me to my baby!"

"If you do as you are bid no harm will

befall him," replied Rokoff. "But remember that it is your own fault that you are here. You came aboard voluntarily, and you may take the consequences. I little thought," he added to himself, "that any such good luck as this would come to me."

He went on deck then, locking the cabin-door upon his prisoner, and for several days she did not see him. The truth of the matter being that Nikolas Rokoff was so poor a sailor that the heavy seas the Kincaid encountered from the very beginning of her voyage sent the Russian to his berth with a bad attack of sea-sickness.

During this time her only visitor was an uncouth Swede, the Kincaid's

unsavoury cook, who brought her meals to her. His name was Sven Anderssen, his one pride being that his patronymic was spelt with a double "s."

The man was tall and raw-boned, with a long yellow moustache, an unwholesome complexion, and filthy nails. The very sight of him with one grimy thumb buried deep in the lukewarm stew, that seemed, from the frequency of its repetition, to constitute the pride of his culinary art, was sufficient to take away the girl's appetite.

His small, blue, close-set eyes never met hers squarely. There was a shiftiness of his whole appearance that even found expression in the cat-like manner of his gait, and to it all a sinister

suggestion was added by the long slim knife that always rested at his waist, slipped through the greasy cord that supported his soiled apron. Ostensibly it was but an implement of his calling; but the girl could never free herself of the conviction that it would require less provocation to witness it put to other and less harmless uses.

His manner toward her was surly, yet she never failed to meet him with a pleasant smile and a word of thanks when he brought her food to her, though more often than not she hurled the bulk of it through the tiny cabin port the moment that the door closed behind him.

During the days of anguish that followed Jane Clayton's imprisonment,

but two questions were uppermost in her mind—the whereabouts of her husband and her son. She fully believed that the baby was aboard the Kincaid, provided that he still lived, but whether Tarzan had been permitted to live after having been lured aboard the evil craft she could not guess.

She knew, of course, the deep hatred that the Russian felt for the Englishman, and she could think of but one reason for having him brought aboard the ship—to dispatch him in comparative safety in revenge for his having thwarted Rokoff's pet schemes, and for having been at last the means of landing him in a French prison.

Tarzan, on his part, lay in the

darkness of his cell, ignorant of the fact that his wife was a prisoner in the cabin almost above his head.

The same Swede that served Jane brought his meals to him, but, though on several occasions Tarzan had tried to draw the man into conversation, he had been unsuccessful. He had hoped to learn through this fellow whether his little son was aboard the Kincaid, but to every question upon this or kindred subjects the fellow returned but one reply, "Ay tank it blow purty soon purty hard." So after several attempts Tarzan gave it up.

For weeks that seemed months to the two prisoners the little steamer forged on they knew not where. Once the

Kincaid stopped to coal, only immediately to take up the seemingly interminable voyage.

Rokoff had visited Jane Clayton but once since he had locked her in the tiny cabin. He had come gaunt and hollow-eyed from a long siege of sea-sickness. The object of his visit was to obtain from her her personal cheque for a large sum in return for a guarantee of her personal safety and return to England.

"When you set me down safely in any civilized port, together with my son and my husband," she replied, "I will pay you in gold twice the amount you ask; but until then you shall not have a cent, nor the promise of a cent under any other conditions."

"You will give me the cheque I ask," he replied with a snarl, "or neither you nor your child nor your husband will ever again set foot within any port, civilized or otherwise."

"I would not trust you," she replied. "What guarantee have I that you would not take my money and then do as you pleased with me and mine regardless of your promise?"

"I think you will do as I bid," he said, turning to leave the cabin. "Remember that I have your son—if you chance to hear the agonized wail of a tortured child it may console you to reflect that it is because of your stubbornness that the baby suffers—and that it is your baby."

"You would not do it!" cried the girl.

"You would not—could not be so fiendishly cruel!"

"It is not I that am cruel, but you," he returned, "for you permit a paltry sum of money to stand between your baby and immunity from suffering."

The end of it was that Jane Clayton wrote out a cheque of large denomination and handed it to Nikolas Rokoff, who left her cabin with a grin of satisfaction upon his lips.

The following day the hatch was removed from Tarzan's cell, and as he looked up he saw Paulvitch's head framed in the square of light above him.

"Come up," commanded the Russian. "But bear in mind that you will be shot if you make a single move to attack me or

any other aboard the ship."

The ape-man swung himself lightly to the deck. About him, but at a respectful distance, stood a half-dozen sailors armed with rifles and revolvers. Facing him was Paulvitch.

Tarzan looked about for Rokoff, who he felt sure must be aboard, but there was no sign of him.

"Lord Greystoke," commenced the Russian, "by your continued and wanton interference with M. Rokoff and his plans you have at last brought yourself and your family to this unfortunate extremity. You have only yourself to thank. As you may imagine, it has cost M. Rokoff a large amount of money to finance this expedition, and, as you are

the sole cause of it, he naturally looks to you for reimbursement.

"Further, I may say that only by meeting M. Rokoff's just demands may you avert the most unpleasant consequences to your wife and child, and at the same time retain your own life and regain your liberty."

"What is the amount?" asked Tarzan. "And what assurance have I that you will live up to your end of the agreement? I have little reason to trust two such scoundrels as you and Rokoff, you know."

The Russian flushed.

"You are in no position to deliver insults," he said. "You have no assurance that we will live up to our

agreement other than my word, but you have before you the assurance that we can make short work of you if you do not write out the cheque we demand.

"Unless you are a greater fool than I imagine, you should know that there is nothing that would give us greater pleasure than to order these men to fire. That we do not is because we have other plans for punishing you that would be entirely upset by your death."

"Answer one question," said Tarzan. "Is my son on board this ship?"

"No," replied Alexis Paulvitch, "your son is quite safe elsewhere; nor will he be killed until you refuse to accede to our fair demands. If it becomes necessary to kill you, there will be no

reason for not killing the child, since with you gone the one whom we wish to punish through the boy will be gone, and he will then be to us only a constant source of danger and embarrassment. You see, therefore, that you may only save the life of your son by saving your own, and you can only save your own by giving us the cheque we ask."

"Very well," replied Tarzan, for he knew that he could trust them to carry out any sinister threat that Paulvitch had made, and there was a bare chance that by conceding their demands he might save the boy.

That they would permit him to live after he had appended his name to the cheque never occurred to him as being

within the realms of probability. But he was determined to give them such a battle as they would never forget, and possibly to take Paulvitch with him into eternity. He was only sorry that it was not Rokoff.

He took his pocket cheque-book and fountain-pen from his pocket.

"What is the amount?" he asked.

Paulvitch named an enormous sum. Tarzan could scarce restrain a smile.

Their very cupidity was to prove the means of their undoing, in the matter of the ransom at least. Purposely he hesitated and haggled over the amount, but Paulvitch was obdurate. Finally the ape-man wrote out his cheque for a larger sum than stood to his credit at the

bank.

As he turned to hand the worthless slip of paper to the Russian his glance chanced to pass across the starboard bow of the Kincaid. To his surprise he saw that the ship lay within a few hundred yards of land. Almost down to the water's edge ran a dense tropical jungle, and behind was higher land clothed in forest.

Paulvitch noted the direction of his gaze.

"You are to be set at liberty here," he said.

Tarzan's plan for immediate physical revenge upon the Russian vanished. He thought the land before him the mainland of Africa, and he knew that should they

liberate him here he could doubtless find his way to civilization with comparative ease.

Paulvitch took the cheque.

"Remove your clothing," he said to the ape-man. "Here you will not need it."

Tarzan demurred.

Paulvitch pointed to the armed sailors. Then the Englishman slowly divested himself of his clothing.

A boat was lowered, and, still heavily guarded, the ape-man was rowed ashore. Half an hour later the sailors had returned to the Kincaid, and the steamer was slowly getting under way.

As Tarzan stood upon the narrow

strip of beach watching the departure of the vessel he saw a figure appear at the rail and call aloud to attract his attention.

The ape-man had been about to read a note that one of the sailors had handed him as the small boat that bore him to the shore was on the point of returning to the steamer, but at the hail from the vessel's deck he looked up.

He saw a black-bearded man who laughed at him in derision as he held high above his head the figure of a little child. Tarzan half started as though to rush through the surf and strike out for the already moving steamer; but realizing the futility of so rash an act he halted at the water's edge.

Thus he stood, his gaze riveted upon the Kincaid until it disappeared beyond a projecting promontory of the coast.

From the jungle at his back fierce bloodshot eyes glared from beneath shaggy overhanging brows upon him.

Little monkeys in the tree-tops chattered and scolded, and from the distance of the inland forest came the scream of a leopard.

But still John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, stood deaf and unseeing, suffering the pangs of keen regret for the opportunity that he had wasted because he had been so gullible as to place credence in a single statement of the first lieutenant of his arch-enemy.

"I have at least," he thought, "one

consolation—the knowledge that Jane is safe in London. Thank Heaven she, too, did not fall into the clutches of those villains."

Behind him the hairy thing whose evil eyes had been watching his as a cat watches a mouse was creeping stealthily toward him.

Where were the trained senses of the savage ape-man?

Where the acute hearing?

Where the uncanny sense of scent?

3. BEASTS AT BAY

Slowly Tarzan unfolded the note the sailor had thrust into his hand, and read it. At first it made little impression on his sorrow- numbed senses, but finally the full purport of the hideous plot of revenge unfolded itself before his imagination.

"This will explain to you" [the note read] "the exact nature of my intentions relative to your offspring and to you.

"You were born an ape. You lived naked in the jungles—to your own we have returned you; but your son shall rise a step above his sire. It is the immutable law of evolution.

"The father was a beast, but the son

shall be a man—he shall take the next ascending step in the scale of progress. He shall be no naked beast of the jungle, but shall wear a loincloth and copper anklets, and, perchance, a ring in his nose, for he is to be reared by men—a tribe of savage cannibals.

"I might have killed you, but that would have curtailed the full measure of the punishment you have earned at my hands.

"Dead, you could not have suffered in the knowledge of your son's plight; but living and in a place from which you may not escape to seek or succour your child, you shall suffer worse than death for all the years of your life in contemplation of the horrors of your

son's existence.

"This, then, is to be a part of your punishment for having dared to pit yourself against

N. R.

"P.S.—The balance of your punishment has to do with what shall presently befall your wife—that I shall leave to your imagination."

As he finished reading, a slight sound behind him brought him back with a start to the world of present realities.

Instantly his senses awoke, and he was again Tarzan of the Apes.

As he wheeled about, it was a beast at bay, vibrant with the instinct of self-preservation, that faced a huge bull-ape

that was already charging down upon him.

The two years that had elapsed since Tarzan had come out of the savage forest with his rescued mate had witnessed slight diminution of the mighty powers that had made him the invincible lord of the jungle. His great estates in Uziri had claimed much of his time and attention, and there he had found ample field for the practical use and retention of his almost superhuman powers; but naked and unarmed to do battle with the shaggy, bull-necked beast that now confronted him was a test that the ape-man would scarce have welcomed at any period of his wild existence.

But there was no alternative other

than to meet the rage- maddened creature with the weapons with which nature had endowed him.

Over the bull's shoulder Tarzan could see now the heads and shoulders of perhaps a dozen more of these mighty fore-runners of primitive man.

He knew, however, that there was little chance that they would attack him, since it is not within the reasoning powers of the anthropoid to be able to weigh or appreciate the value of concentrated action against an enemy - otherwise they would long since have become the dominant creatures of their haunts, so tremendous a power of destruction lies in their mighty thews and savage fangs.

With a low snarl the beast now hurled himself at Tarzan, but the ape-man had found, among other things in the haunts of civilized man, certain methods of scientific warfare that are unknown to the jungle folk.

Whereas, a few years since, he would have met the brute rush with brute force, he now sidestepped his antagonist's headlong charge, and as the brute hurtled past him swung a mighty right to the pit of the ape's stomach.

With a howl of mingled rage and anguish the great anthropoid bent double and sank to the ground, though almost instantly he was again struggling to his feet.

Before he could regain them,

however, his white-skinned foe had wheeled and pounced upon him, and in the act there dropped from the shoulders of the English lord the last shred of his superficial mantle of civilization.

Once again he was the jungle beast revelling in bloody conflict with his kind. Once again he was Tarzan, son of Kala the she-ape.

His strong, white teeth sank into the hairy throat of his enemy as he sought the pulsing jugular.

Powerful fingers held the mighty fangs from his own flesh, or clenched and beat with the power of a steam-hammer upon the snarling, foam-flecked face of his adversary.

In a circle about them the balance of

the tribe of apes stood watching and enjoying the struggle. They muttered low gutturals of approval as bits of white hide or hairy bloodstained skin were torn from one contestant or the other. But they were silent in amazement and expectation when they saw the mighty white ape wriggle upon the back of their king, and, with steel muscles tensed beneath the armpits of his antagonist, bear down mightily with his open palms upon the back of the thick bullneck, so that the king ape could but shriek in agony and flounder helplessly about upon the thick mat of jungle grass.

As Tarzan had overcome the huge Terkoz that time years before when he had been about to set out upon his quest

for human beings of his own kind and colour, so now he overcame this other great ape with the same wrestling hold upon which he had stumbled by accident during that other combat. The little audience of fierce anthropoids heard the creaking of their king's neck mingling with his agonized shrieks and hideous roaring.

Then there came a sudden crack, like the breaking of a stout limb before the fury of the wind. The bullet-head crumpled forward upon its flaccid neck against the great hairy chest—the roaring and the shrieking ceased.

The little pig-eyes of the onlookers wandered from the still form of their leader to that of the white ape that was

rising to its feet beside the vanquished, then back to their king as though in wonder that he did not arise and slay this presumptuous stranger.

They saw the new-comer place a foot upon the neck of the quiet figure at his feet and, throwing back his head, give vent to the wild, uncanny challenge of the bull-ape that has made a kill. Then they knew that their king was dead.

Across the jungle rolled the horrid notes of the victory cry. The little monkeys in the tree-tops ceased their chattering. The harsh-voiced, brilliant-plumed birds were still. From afar came the answering wail of a leopard and the deep roar of a lion.

It was the old Tarzan who turned

questioning eyes upon the little knot of apes before him. It was the old Tarzan who shook his head as though to toss back a heavy mane that had fallen before his face—an old habit dating from the days that his great shock of thick, black hair had fallen about his shoulders, and often tumbled before his eyes when it had meant life or death to him to have his vision unobstructed.

The ape-man knew that he might expect an immediate attack on the part of that particular surviving bull-ape who felt himself best fitted to contend for the kingship of the tribe. Among his own apes he knew that it was not unusual for an entire stranger to enter a community and, after having dispatched the king,

assume the leadership of the tribe himself, together with the fallen monarch's mates.

On the other hand, if he made no attempt to follow them, they might move slowly away from him, later to fight among themselves for the supremacy. That he could be king of them, if he so chose, he was confident; but he was not sure he cared to assume the sometimes irksome duties of that position, for he could see no particular advantage to be gained thereby.

One of the younger apes, a huge, splendidly muscled brute, was edging threateningly closer to the ape-man. Through his bared fighting fangs there issued a low, sullen growl.

Tarzan watched his every move, standing rigid as a statue. To have fallen back a step would have been to precipitate an immediate charge; to have rushed forward to meet the other might have had the same result, or it might have put the bellicose one to flight—it all depended upon the young bull's stock of courage.

To stand perfectly still, waiting, was the middle course. In this event the bull would, according to custom, approach quite close to the object of his attention, growling hideously and baring slavering fangs. Slowly he would circle about the other, as though with a chip upon his shoulder; and this he did, even as Tarzan had foreseen.

It might be a bluff royal, or, on the other hand, so unstable is the mind of an ape, a passing impulse might hurl the hairy mass, tearing and rending, upon the man without an instant's warning.

As the brute circled him Tarzan turned slowly, keeping his eyes ever upon the eyes of his antagonist. He had appraised the young bull as one who had never quite felt equal to the task of overthrowing his former king, but who one day would have done so. Tarzan saw that the beast was of wondrous proportions, standing over seven feet upon his short, bowed legs.

His great, hairy arms reached almost to the ground even when he stood erect, and his fighting fangs, now quite close to

Tarzan's face, were exceptionally long and sharp. Like the others of his tribe, he differed in several minor essentials from the apes of Tarzan's boyhood.

At first the ape-man had experienced a thrill of hope at sight of the shaggy bodies of the anthropoids—a hope that by some strange freak of fate he had been again returned to his own tribe; but a closer inspection had convinced him that these were another species.

As the threatening bull continued his stiff and jerky circling of the ape-man, much after the manner that you have noted among dogs when a strange canine comes among them, it occurred to Tarzan to discover if the language of his own tribe was identical with that of this other

family, and so he addressed the brute in the language of the tribe of Kerchak.

"Who are you," he asked, "who threatens Tarzan of the Apes?"

The hairy brute looked his surprise.

"I am Akut," replied the other in the same simple, primal tongue which is so low in the scale of spoken languages that, as Tarzan had surmised, it was identical with that of the tribe in which the first twenty years of his life had been spent.

"I am Akut," said the ape. "Molak is dead. I am king. Go away or I shall kill you!"

"You saw how easily I killed Molak," replied Tarzan. "So I could kill you if I cared to be king. But Tarzan of the Apes

would not be king of the tribe of Akut. All he wishes is to live in peace in this country. Let us be friends. Tarzan of the Apes can help you, and you can help Tarzan of the Apes."

"You cannot kill Akut," replied the other. "None is so great as Akut. Had you not killed Molak, Akut would have done so, for Akut was ready to be king."

For answer the ape-man hurled himself upon the great brute who during the conversation had slightly relaxed his vigilance.

In the twinkling of an eye the man had seized the wrist of the great ape, and before the other could grapple with him had whirled him about and leaped upon his broad back.

Down they went together, but so well had Tarzan's plan worked out that before ever they touched the ground he had gained the same hold upon Akut that had broken Molak's neck.

Slowly he brought the pressure to bear, and then as in days gone by he had given Kerchak the chance to surrender and live, so now he gave to Akut —in whom he saw a possible ally of great strength and resource— the option of living in amity with him or dying as he had just seen his savage and heretofore invincible king die.

"Ka-Goda?" whispered Tarzan to the ape beneath him.

It was the same question that he had whispered to Kerchak, and in the

language of the apes it means, broadly, "Do you surrender?"

Akut thought of the creaking sound he had heard just before Molak's thick neck had snapped, and he shuddered.

He hated to give up the kingship, though, so again he struggled to free himself; but a sudden torturing pressure upon his vertebra brought an agonized "ka-goda!" from his lips.

Tarzan relaxed his grip a trifle.

"You may still be king, Akut," he said. "Tarzan told you that he did not wish to be king. If any question your right, Tarzan of the Apes will help you in your battles."

The ape-man rose, and Akut came slowly to his feet. Shaking his bullet

head and growling angrily, he waddled toward his tribe, looking first at one and then at another of the larger bulls who might be expected to challenge his leadership.

But none did so; instead, they drew away as he approached, and presently the whole pack moved off into the jungle, and Tarzan was left alone once more upon the beach.

The ape-man was sore from the wounds that Molak had inflicted upon him, but he was inured to physical suffering and endured it with the calm and fortitude of the wild beasts that had taught him to lead the jungle life after the manner of all those that are born to it.

His first need, he realized, was for

weapons of offence and defence, for his encounter with the apes, and the distant notes of the savage voices of Numa the lion, and Sheeta, the panther, warned him that his was to be no life of indolent ease and security.

It was but a return to the old existence of constant bloodshed and danger —to the hunting and the being hunted. Grim beasts would stalk him, as they had stalked him in the past, and never would there be a moment, by savage day or by cruel night, that he might not have instant need of such crude weapons as he could fashion from the materials at hand.

Upon the shore he found an out-cropping of brittle, igneous rock. By dint of much labour he managed to chip off a

narrow sliver some twelve inches long by a quarter of an inch thick. One edge was quite thin for a few inches near the tip. It was the rudiment of a knife.

With it he went into the jungle, searching until he found a fallen tree of a certain species of hardwood with which he was familiar. From this he cut a small straight branch, which he pointed at one end.

Then he scooped a small, round hole in the surface of the prostrate trunk. Into this he crumbled a few bits of dry bark, minutely shredded, after which he inserted the tip of his pointed stick, and, sitting astride the bole of the tree, spun the slender rod rapidly between his palms.

After a time a thin smoke rose from the little mass of tinder, and a moment later the whole broke into flame. Heaping some larger twigs and sticks upon the tiny fire, Tarzan soon had quite a respectable blaze roaring in the enlarging cavity of the dead tree.

Into this he thrust the blade of his stone knife, and as it became superheated he would withdraw it, touching a spot near the thin edge with a drop of moisture. Beneath the wetted area a little flake of the glassy material would crack and scale away.

Thus, very slowly, the ape-man commenced the tedious operation of putting a thin edge upon his primitive hunting-knife.

He did not attempt to accomplish the feat all in one sitting. At first he was content to achieve a cutting edge of a couple of inches, with which he cut a long, pliable bow, a handle for his knife, a stout cudgel, and a goodly supply of arrows.

These he cached in a tall tree beside a little stream, and here also he constructed a platform with a roof of palm-leaves above it.

When all these things had been finished it was growing dusk, and Tarzan felt a strong desire to eat.

He had noted during the brief incursion he had made into the forest that a short distance up-stream from his tree there was a much- used watering place,

where, from the trampled mud of either bank, it was evident beasts of all sorts and in great numbers came to drink. To this spot the hungry ape-man made his silent way.

Through the upper terrace of the tree-tops he swung with the grace and ease of a monkey. But for the heavy burden upon his heart he would have been happy in this return to the old free life of his boyhood.

Yet even with that burden he fell into the little habits and manners of his early life that were in reality more a part of him than the thin veneer of civilization that the past three years of his association with the white men of the outer world had spread lightly over him

—a veneer that only hid the crudities of the beast that Tarzan of the Apes had been.

Could his fellow-peers of the House of Lords have seen him then they would have held up their noble hands in holy horror.

Silently he crouched in the lower branches of a great forest giant that overhung the trail, his keen eyes and sensitive ears strained into the distant jungle, from which he knew his dinner would presently emerge.

Nor had he long to wait.

Scarce had he settled himself to a comfortable position, his lithe, muscular legs drawn well up beneath him as the panther draws his hindquarters in

preparation for the spring, than Bara, the deer, came daintily down to drink.

But more than Bara was coming. Behind the graceful buck came another which the deer could neither see nor scent, but whose movements were apparent to Tarzan of the Apes because of the elevated position of the ape-man's ambush.

He knew not yet exactly the nature of the thing that moved so stealthily through the jungle a few hundred yards behind the deer; but he was convinced that it was some great beast of prey stalking Bara for the selfsame purpose as that which prompted him to await the fleet animal. Numa, perhaps, or Sheeta, the panther.

In any event, Tarzan could see his repast slipping from his grasp unless Bara moved more rapidly toward the ford than at present.

Even as these thoughts passed through his mind some noise of the stalker in his rear must have come to the buck, for with a sudden start he paused for an instant, trembling, in his tracks, and then with a swift bound dashed straight for the river and Tarzan. It was his intention to flee through the shallow ford and escape upon the opposite side of the river.

Not a hundred yards behind him came Numa.

Tarzan could see him quite plainly now. Below the ape-man Bara was

about to pass. Could he do it? But even as he asked himself the question the hungry man launched himself from his perch full upon the back of the startled buck.

In another instant Numa would be upon them both, so if the ape- man were to dine that night, or ever again, he must act quickly.

Scarcely had he touched the sleek hide of the deer with a momentum that sent the animal to its knees than he had grasped a horn in either hand, and with a single quick wrench twisted the animal's neck completely round, until he felt the vertebrae snap beneath his grip.

The lion was roaring in rage close behind him as he swung the deer across

his shoulder, and, grasping a foreleg between his strong teeth, leaped for the nearest of the lower branches that swung above his head.

With both hands he grasped the limb, and, at the instant that Numa sprang, drew himself and his prey out of reach of the animal's cruel talons.

There was a thud below him as the baffled cat fell back to earth, and then Tarzan of the Apes, drawing his dinner farther up to the safety of a higher limb, looked down with grinning face into the gleaming yellow eyes of the other wild beast that glared up at him from beneath, and with taunting insults flaunted the tender carcass of his kill in the face of him whom he had cheated of it.

With his crude stone knife he cut a juicy steak from the hindquarters, and while the great lion paced, growling, back and forth below him, Lord Greystoke filled his savage belly, nor ever in the choicest of his exclusive London clubs had a meal tasted more palatable.

The warm blood of his kill smeared his hands and face and filled his nostrils with the scent that the savage carnivora love best.

And when he had finished he left the balance of the carcass in a high fork of the tree where he had dined, and with Numa trailing below him, still keen for revenge, he made his way back to his tree- top shelter, where he slept until the

sun was high the following morning.

4. SHEETA

The next few days were occupied by Tarzan in completing his weapons and exploring the jungle. He strung his bow with tendons from the buck upon which he had dined his first evening upon the new shore, and though he would have preferred the gut of Sheeta for the purpose, he was content to wait until opportunity permitted him to kill one of the great cats.

He also braided a long grass rope—such a rope as he had used so many years before to tantalize the ill-natured Tublat, and which later had developed into a wondrous effective weapon in the practised hands of the little ape-boy.

A sheath and handle for his hunting-

knife he fashioned, and a quiver for arrows, and from the hide of Bara a belt and loin-cloth. Then he set out to learn something of the strange land in which he found himself. That it was not his old familiar west coast of the African continent he knew from the fact that it faced east—the rising sun came up out of the sea before the threshold of the jungle.

But that it was not the east coast of Africa he was equally positive, for he felt satisfied that the Kincaid had not passed through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea, nor had she had time to round the Cape of Good Hope. So he was quite at a loss to know where he might be.

Sometimes he wondered if the ship

had crossed the broad Atlantic to deposit him upon some wild South American shore; but the presence of Numa, the lion, decided him that such could not be the case.

As Tarzan made his lonely way through the jungle paralleling the shore, he felt strong upon him a desire for companionship, so that gradually he commenced to regret that he had not cast his lot with the apes. He had seen nothing of them since that first day, when the influences of civilization were still paramount within him.

Now he was more nearly returned to the Tarzan of old, and though he appreciated the fact that there could be little in common between himself and the

great anthropoids, still they were better than no company at all.

Moving leisurely, sometimes upon the ground and again among the lower branches of the trees, gathering an occasional fruit or turning over a fallen log in search of the larger bugs, which he still found as palatable as of old, Tarzan had covered a mile or more when his attention was attracted by the scent of Sheeta up-wind ahead of him.

Now Sheeta, the panther, was one of whom Tarzan was exceptionally glad to fall in with, for he had it in mind not only to utilize the great cat's strong gut for his bow, but also to fashion a new quiver and loin-cloth from pieces of his hide. So, whereas the ape-man had gone

carelessly before, he now became the personification of noiseless stealth.

Swiftly and silently he glided through the forest in the wake of the savage cat, nor was the pursuer, for all his noble birth, one whit less savage than the wild, fierce thing he stalked.

As he came closer to Sheeta he became aware that the panther on his part was stalking game of his own, and even as he realized this fact there came to his nostrils, wafted from his right by a vagrant breeze, the strong odour of a company of great apes.

The panther had taken to a large tree as Tarzan came within sight of him, and beyond and below him Tarzan saw the tribe of Akut lolling in a little, natural

clearing. Some of them were dozing against the boles of trees, while others roamed about turning over bits of bark from beneath which they transferred the luscious grubs and beetles to their mouths.

Akut was the closest to Sheeta.

The great cat lay crouched upon a thick limb, hidden from the ape's view by dense foliage, waiting patiently until the anthropoid should come within range of his spring.

Tarzan cautiously gained a position in the same tree with the panther and a little above him. In his left hand he grasped his slim stone blade. He would have preferred to use his noose, but the foliage surrounding the huge cat

precluded the possibility of an accurate throw with the rope.

Akut had now wandered quite close beneath the tree wherein lay the waiting death. Sheeta slowly edged his hind paws along the branch still further beneath him, and then with a hideous shriek he launched himself toward the great ape. The barest fraction of a second before his spring another beast of prey above him leaped, its weird and savage cry mingling with his.

As the startled Akut looked up he saw the panther almost above him, and already upon the panther's back the white ape that had bested him that day near the great water.

The teeth of the ape-man were buried

in the back of Sheeta's neck and his right arm was round the fierce throat, while the left hand, grasping a slender piece of stone, rose and fell in mighty blows upon the panther's side behind the left shoulder.

Akut had just time to leap to one side to avoid being pinioned beneath these battling monsters of the jungle.

With a crash they came to earth at his feet. Sheeta was screaming, snarling, and roaring horribly; but the white ape clung tenaciously and in silence to the thrashing body of his quarry.

Steadily and remorselessly the stone knife was driven home through the glossy hide—time and again it drank deep, until with a final agonized lunge

and shriek the great feline rolled over upon its side and, save for the spasmodic jerking of its muscles, lay quiet and still in death.

Then the ape-man raised his head, as he stood over the carcass of his kill, and once again through the jungle rang his wild and savage victory challenge.

Akut and the apes of Akut stood looking in startled wonder at the dead body of Sheeta and the lithe, straight figure of the man who had slain him.

Tarzan was the first to speak.

He had saved Akut's life for a purpose, and, knowing the limitations of the ape intellect, he also knew that he must make this purpose plain to the anthropoid if it were to serve him in the

way he hoped.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said, "Mighty hunter. Mighty fighter. By the great water I spared Akut's life when I might have taken it and become king of the tribe of Akut. Now I have saved Akut from death beneath the rending fangs of Sheeta.

"When Akut or the tribe of Akut is in danger, let them call to Tarzan thus"—and the ape-man raised the hideous cry with which the tribe of Kerchak had been wont to summon its absent members in times of peril.

"And," he continued, "when they hear Tarzan call to them, let them remember what he has done for Akut and come to him with great speed. Shall it be as

Tarzan says?"

"Huh!" assented Akut, and from the members of his tribe there rose a unanimous "Huh."

Then, presently, they went to feeding again as though nothing had happened, and with them fed John Clayton, Lord Greystoke.

He noticed, however, that Akut kept always close to him, and was often looking at him with a strange wonder in his little bloodshot eyes, and once he did a thing that Tarzan during all his long years among the apes had never before seen an ape do—he found a particularly tender morsel and handed it to Tarzan.

As the tribe hunted, the glistening body of the ape-man mingled with the

brown, shaggy hides of his companions. Oftentimes they brushed together in passing, but the apes had already taken his presence for granted, so that he was as much one of them as Akut himself.

If he came too close to a she with a young baby, the former would bare her great fighting fangs and growl ominously, and occasionally a truculent young bull would snarl a warning if Tarzan approached while the former was eating. But in those things the treatment was no different from that which they accorded any other member of the tribe.

Tarzan on his part felt very much at home with these fierce, hairy progenitors of primitive man. He skipped nimbly out

of reach of each threatening female—for such is the way of apes, if they be not in one of their occasional fits of bestial rage—and he growled back at the truculent young bulls, baring his canine teeth even as they. Thus easily he fell back into the way of his early life, nor did it seem that he had ever tasted association with creatures of his own kind.

For the better part of a week he roamed the jungle with his new friends, partly because of a desire for companionship and partially through a well-laid plan to impress himself indelibly upon their memories, which at best are none too long; for Tarzan from past experience knew that it might serve

him in good stead to have a tribe of these powerful and terrible beasts at his call.

When he was convinced that he had succeeded to some extent in fixing his identity upon them he decided to again take up his exploration. To this end he set out toward the north early one day, and, keeping parallel with the shore, travelled rapidly until almost nightfall.

When the sun rose the next morning he saw that it lay almost directly to his right as he stood upon the beach instead of straight out across the water as heretofore, and so he reasoned that the shore line had trended toward the west. All the second day he continued his rapid course, and when Tarzan of the Apes sought speed, he passed through

the middle terrace of the forest with the rapidity of a squirrel.

That night the sun set straight out across the water opposite the land, and then the ape-man guessed at last the truth that he had been suspecting.

Rokoff had set him ashore upon an island.

He might have known it! If there was any plan that would render his position more harrowing he should have known that such would be the one adopted by the Russian, and what could be more terrible than to leave him to a lifetime of suspense upon an uninhabited island?

Rokoff doubtless had sailed directly to the mainland, where it would be a comparatively easy thing for him to find

the means of delivering the infant Jack into the hands of the cruel and savage foster-parents, who, as his note had threatened, would have the upbringing of the child.

Tarzan shuddered as he thought of the cruel suffering the little one must endure in such a life, even though he might fall into the hands of individuals whose intentions toward him were of the kindest. The ape-man had had sufficient experience with the lower savages of Africa to know that even there may be found the cruder virtues of charity and humanity; but their lives were at best but a series of terrible privations, dangers, and sufferings.

Then there was the horrid after-fate

that awaited the child as he grew to manhood. The horrible practices that would form a part of his life-training would alone be sufficient to bar him forever from association with those of his own race and station in life.

A cannibal! His little boy a savage man-eater! It was too horrible to contemplate.

The filed teeth, the slit nose, the little face painted hideously. Tarzan groaned. Could he but feel the throat of the Russ fiend beneath his steel fingers!

And Jane!

What tortures of doubt and fear and uncertainty she must be suffering. He felt that his position was infinitely less terrible than hers, for he at least knew

that one of his loved ones was safe at home, while she had no idea of the whereabouts of either her husband or her son.

It is well for Tarzan that he did not guess the truth, for the knowledge would have but added a hundredfold to his suffering.

As he moved slowly through the jungle his mind absorbed by his gloomy thoughts, there presently came to his ears a strange scratching sound which he could not translate.

Cautiously he moved in the direction from which it emanated, presently coming upon a huge panther pinned beneath a fallen tree.

As Tarzan approached, the beast

turned, snarling, toward him, struggling to extricate itself; but one great limb across its back and the smaller entangling branches pinioning its legs prevented it from moving but a few inches in any direction.

The ape-man stood before the helpless cat fitting an arrow to his bow that he might dispatch the beast that otherwise must die of starvation; but even as he drew back the shaft a sudden whim stayed his hand.

Why rob the poor creature of life and liberty, when it would be so easy a thing to restore both to it! He was sure from the fact that the panther moved all its limbs in its futile struggle for freedom that its spine was uninjured, and for the

same reason he knew that none of its limbs were broken.

Relaxing his bowstring, he returned the arrow to the quiver and, throwing the bow about his shoulder, stepped closer to the pinioned beast.

On his lips was the soothing, purring sound that the great cats themselves made when contented and happy. It was the nearest approach to a friendly advance that Tarzan could make in the language of Sheeta.

The panther ceased his snarling and eyed the ape-man closely. To lift the tree's great weight from the animal it was necessary to come within reach of those long, strong talons, and when the tree had been removed the man would be

totally at the mercy of the savage beast; but to Tarzan of the Apes fear was a thing unknown.

Having decided, he acted promptly.

Unhesitatingly, he stepped into the tangle of branches close to the panther's side, still voicing his friendly and conciliatory purr. The cat turned his head toward the man, eyeing him steadily—questioningly. The long fangs were bared, but more in preparedness than threat.

Tarzan put a broad shoulder beneath the bole of the tree, and as he did so his bare leg pressed against the cat's silken side, so close was the man to the great beast.

Slowly Tarzan extended his giant

thews.

The great tree with its entangling branches rose gradually from the panther, who, feeling the encumbering weight diminish, quickly crawled from beneath. Tarzan let the tree fall back to earth, and the two beasts turned to look upon one another.

A grim smile lay upon the ape-man's lips, for he knew that he had taken his life in his hands to free this savage jungle fellow; nor would it have surprised him had the cat sprung upon him the instant that it had been released.

But it did not do so. Instead, it stood a few paces from the tree watching the ape-man clamber out of the maze of fallen branches.

Once outside, Tarzan was not three paces from the panther. He might have taken to the higher branches of the trees upon the opposite side, for Sheeta cannot climb to the heights to which the ape-man can go; but something, a spirit of bravado perhaps, prompted him to approach the panther as though to discover if any feeling of gratitude would prompt the beast to friendliness.

As he approached the mighty cat the creature stepped warily to one side, and the ape-man brushed past him within a foot of the dripping jaws, and as he continued on through the forest the panther followed on behind him, as a hound follows at heel.

For a long time Tarzan could not tell

whether the beast was following out of friendly feelings or merely stalking him against the time he should be hungry; but finally he was forced to believe that the former incentive it was that prompted the animal's action.

Later in the day the scent of a deer sent Tarzan into the trees, and when he had dropped his noose about the animal's neck he called to Sheeta, using a purr similar to that which he had utilized to pacify the brute's suspicions earlier in the day, but a trifle louder and more shrill.

It was similar to that which he had heard panthers use after a kill when they had been hunting in pairs.

Almost immediately there was a

crashing of the underbrush close at hand, and the long, lithe body of his strange companion broke into view.

At sight of the body of Bara and the smell of blood the panther gave forth a shrill scream, and a moment later two beasts were feeding side by side upon the tender meat of the deer.

For several days this strangely assorted pair roamed the jungle together.

When one made a kill he called the other, and thus they fed well and often.

On one occasion as they were dining upon the carcass of a boar that Sheeta had dispatched, Numa, the lion, grim and terrible, broke through the tangled grasses close beside them.

With an angry, warning roar he sprang

forward to chase them from their kill. Sheeta bounded into a near-by thicket, while Tarzan took to the low branches of an overhanging tree.

Here the ape-man unloosed his grass rope from about his neck, and as Numa stood above the body of the boar, challenging head erect, he dropped the sinuous noose about the maned neck, drawing the stout strands taut with a sudden jerk. At the same time he called shrilly to Sheeta, as he drew the struggling lion upward until only his hind feet touched the ground.

Quickly he made the rope fast to a stout branch, and as the panther, in answer to his summons, leaped into sight, Tarzan dropped to the earth beside

the struggling and infuriated Numa, and with a long sharp knife sprang upon him at one side even as Sheeta did upon the other.

The panther tore and rent Numa upon the right, while the ape- man struck home with his stone knife upon the other, so that before the mighty clawing of the king of beasts had succeeded in parting the rope he hung quite dead and harmless in the noose.

And then upon the jungle air there rose in unison from two savage throats the victory cry of the bull-ape and the panther, blended into one frightful and uncanny scream.

As the last notes died away in a long-drawn, fearsome wail, a score of

painted warriors, drawing their long war-canoe upon the beach, halted to stare in the direction of the jungle and to listen.

5. MUGAMBI

By the time that Tarzan had travelled entirely about the coast of the island, and made several trips inland from various points, he was sure that he was the only human being upon it.

Nowhere had he found any sign that men had stopped even temporarily upon this shore, though, of course, he knew that so quickly does the rank vegetation of the tropics erase all but the most permanent of human monuments that he might be in error in his deductions.

The day following the killing of Numa, Tarzan and Sheeta came upon the tribe of Akut. At sight of the panther the great apes took to flight, but after a time Tarzan succeeded in recalling them.

It had occurred to him that it would be at least an interesting experiment to attempt to reconcile these hereditary enemies. He welcomed anything that would occupy his time and his mind beyond the filling of his belly and the gloomy thoughts to which he fell prey the moment that he became idle.

To communicate his plan to the apes was not a particularly difficult matter, though their narrow and limited vocabulary was strained in the effort; but to impress upon the little, wicked brain of Sheeta that he was to hunt with and not for his legitimate prey proved a task almost beyond the powers of the ape-man.

Tarzan, among his other weapons,

possessed a long, stout cudgel, and after fastening his rope about the panther's neck he used this instrument freely upon the snarling beast, endeavouring in this way to impress upon its memory that it must not attack the great, shaggy manlike creatures that had approached more closely once they had seen the purpose of the rope about Sheeta's neck.

That the cat did not turn and rend Tarzan is something of a miracle which may possibly be accounted for by the fact that twice when it turned growling upon the ape-man he had rapped it sharply upon its sensitive nose, inculcating in its mind thereby a most wholesome fear of the cudgel and the ape-beasts behind it.

It is a question if the original cause of his attachment for Tarzan was still at all clear in the mind of the panther, though doubtless some subconscious suggestion, superinduced by this primary reason and aided and abetted by the habit of the past few days, did much to compel the beast to tolerate treatment at his hands that would have sent it at the throat of any other creature.

Then, too, there was the compelling force of the manmind exerting its powerful influence over this creature of a lower order, and, after all, it may have been this that proved the most potent factor in Tarzan's supremacy over Sheeta and the other beasts of the jungle that had from time to time fallen under

his domination.

Be that as it may, for days the man, the panther, and the great apes roamed their savage haunts side by side, making their kills together and sharing them with one another, and of all the fierce and savage band none was more terrible than the smooth-skinned, powerful beast that had been but a few short months before a familiar figure in many a London drawing room.

Sometimes the beasts separated to follow their own inclinations for an hour or a day, and it was upon one of these occasions when the ape-man had wandered through the tree-tops toward the beach, and was stretched in the hot sun upon the sand, that from the low

summit of a near-by promontory a pair of keen eyes discovered him.

For a moment the owner of the eyes looked in astonishment at the figure of the savage white man basking in the rays of that hot, tropic sun; then he turned, making a sign to some one behind him. Presently another pair of eyes were looking down upon the ape-man, and then another and another, until a full score of hideously trapped, savage warriors were lying upon their bellies along the crest of the ridge watching the white-skinned stranger.

They were down wind from Tarzan, and so their scent was not carried to him, and as his back was turned half toward them he did not see their cautious

advance over the edge of the promontory and down through the rank grass toward the sandy beach where he lay.

Big fellows they were, all of them, their barbaric headdresses and grotesquely painted faces, together with their many metal ornaments and gorgeously coloured feathers, adding to their wild, fierce appearance.

Once at the foot of the ridge, they came cautiously to their feet, and, bent half-double, advanced silently upon the unconscious white man, their heavy war-clubs swinging menacingly in their brawny hands.

The mental suffering that Tarzan's sorrowful thoughts induced had the effect of numbing his keen, perceptive

faculties, so that the advancing savages were almost upon him before he became aware that he was no longer alone upon the beach.

So quickly, though, were his mind and muscles wont to react in unison to the slightest alarm that he was upon his feet and facing his enemies, even as he realized that something was behind him. As he sprang to his feet the warriors leaped toward him with raised clubs and savage yells, but the foremost went down to sudden death beneath the long, stout stick of the ape-man, and then the lithe, sinewy figure was among them, striking right and left with a fury, power, and precision that brought panic to the ranks of the blacks.

For a moment they withdrew, those that were left of them, and consulted together at a short distance from the ape-man, who stood with folded arms, a half-smile upon his handsome face, watching them. Presently they advanced upon him once more, this time wielding their heavy war-spears. They were between Tarzan and the jungle, in a little semicircle that closed in upon him as they advanced.

There seemed to the ape-man but slight chance to escape the final charge when all the great spears should be hurled simultaneously at him; but if he had desired to escape there was no way other than through the ranks of the savages except the open sea behind him.

His predicament was indeed most serious when an idea occurred to him that altered his smile to a broad grin. The warriors were still some little distance away, advancing slowly, making, after the manner of their kind, a frightful din with their savage yells and the pounding of their naked feet upon the ground as they leaped up and down in a fantastic war dance.

Then it was that the ape-man lifted his voice in a series of wild, weird screams that brought the blacks to a sudden, perplexed halt. They looked at one another questioningly, for here was a sound so hideous that their own frightful din faded into insignificance beside it. No human throat could have formed

those bestial notes, they were sure, and yet with their own eyes they had seen this white man open his mouth to pour forth his awful cry.

But only for a moment they hesitated, and then with one accord they again took up their fantastic advance upon their prey; but even then a sudden crashing in the jungle behind them brought them once more to a halt, and as they turned to look in the direction of this new noise there broke upon their startled visions a sight that may well have frozen the blood of braver men than the Wagambi.

Leaping from the tangled vegetation of the jungle's rim came a huge panther, with blazing eyes and bared fangs, and in his wake a score of mighty, shaggy

apes lumbering rapidly toward them, half erect upon their short, bowed legs, and with their long arms reaching to the ground, where their horny knuckles bore the weight of their ponderous bodies as they lurched from side to side in their grotesque advance.

The beasts of Tarzan had come in answer to his call.

Before the Wagambi could recover from their astonishment the frightful horde was upon them from one side and Tarzan of the Apes from the other. Heavy spears were hurled and mighty war-clubs wielded, and though apes went down never to rise, so, too, went down the men of Ugambi.

Sheeta's cruel fangs and tearing talons

ripped and tore at the black hides. Akut's mighty yellow tusks found the jugular of more than one sleek-skinned savage, and Tarzan of the Apes was here and there and everywhere, urging on his fierce allies and taking a heavy toll with his long, slim knife.

In a moment the blacks had scattered for their lives, but of the score that had crept down the grassy sides of the promontory only a single warrior managed to escape the horde that had overwhelmed his people.

This one was Mugambi, chief of the Wagambi of Ugambi, and as he disappeared in the tangled luxuriousness of the rank growth upon the ridge's summit only the keen eyes of the ape-

man saw the direction of his flight.

Leaving his pack to eat their fill upon the flesh of their victims— flesh that he could not touch—Tarzan of the Apes pursued the single survivor of the bloody fray. Just beyond the ridge he came within sight of the fleeing black, making with headlong leaps for a long war-canoe that was drawn well up upon the beach above the high tide surf.

Noiseless as the fellow's shadow, the ape-man raced after the terror-stricken black. In the white man's mind was a new plan, awakened by sight of the war-canoe. If these men had come to his island from another, or from the mainland, why not utilize their craft to make his way to the country from which

they had come? Evidently it was an inhabited country, and no doubt had occasional intercourse with the mainland, if it were not itself upon the continent of Africa.

A heavy hand fell upon the shoulder of the escaping Mugambi before he was aware that he was being pursued, and as he turned to do battle with his assailant giant fingers closed about his wrists and he was hurled to earth with a giant astride him before he could strike a blow in his own defence.

In the language of the West Coast, Tarzan spoke to the prostrate man beneath him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Mugambi, chief of the Wagambi,"

replied the black.

"I will spare your life," said Tarzan, "if you will promise to help me to leave this island. What do you answer?"

"I will help you," replied Mugambi. "But now that you have killed all my warriors, I do not know that even I can leave your country, for there will be none to wield the paddles, and without paddlers we cannot cross the water."

Tarzan rose and allowed his prisoner to come to his feet. The fellow was a magnificent specimen of manhood—a black counterpart in physique of the splendid white man whom he faced.

"Come!" said the ape-man, and started back in the direction from which they could hear the snarling and

growling of the feasting pack. Mugambi drew back.

"They will kill us," he said.

"I think not," replied Tarzan. "They are mine."

Still the black hesitated, fearful of the consequences of approaching the terrible creatures that were dining upon the bodies of his warriors; but Tarzan forced him to accompany him, and presently the two emerged from the jungle in full view of the grisly spectacle upon the beach. At sight of the men the beasts looked up with menacing growls, but Tarzan strode in among them, dragging the trembling Wagambi with him.

As he had taught the apes to accept

Sheeta, so he taught them to adopt Mugambi as well, and much more easily; but Sheeta seemed quite unable to understand that though he had been called upon to devour Mugambi's warriors he was not to be allowed to proceed after the same fashion with Mugambi. However, being well filled, he contented himself with walking round the terror-stricken savage, emitting low, menacing growls the while he kept his flaming, baleful eyes riveted upon the black.

Mugambi, on his part, clung closely to Tarzan, so that the ape- man could scarce control his laughter at the pitiable condition to which the chief's fear had reduced him; but at length the white took

the great cat by the scruff of the neck and, dragging it quite close to the Wagambi, slapped it sharply upon the nose each time that it growled at the stranger.

At the sight of the thing—a man mauling with his bare hands one of the most relentless and fierce of the jungle carnivora—Mugambi's eyes bulged from their sockets, and from entertaining a sullen respect for the giant white man who had made him prisoner, the black felt an almost worshipping awe of Tarzan.

The education of Sheeta progressed so well that in a short time Mugambi ceased to be the object of his hungry attention, and the black felt a degree

more of safety in his society.

To say that Mugambi was entirely happy or at ease in his new environment would not be to adhere strictly to the truth. His eyes were constantly rolling apprehensively from side to side as now one and now another of the fierce pack chanced to wander near him, so that for the most of the time it was principally the whites that showed.

Together Tarzan and Mugambi, with Sheeta and Akut, lay in wait at the ford for a deer, and when at a word from the ape-man the four of them leaped out upon the affrighted animal the black was sure that the poor creature died of fright before ever one of the great beasts touched it.

Mugambi built a fire and cooked his portion of the kill; but Tarzan, Sheeta, and Akut tore theirs, raw, with their sharp teeth, growling among themselves when one ventured to encroach upon the share of another.

It was not, after all, strange that the white man's ways should have been so much more nearly related to those of the beasts than were the savage blacks. We are, all of us, creatures of habit, and when the seeming necessity for schooling ourselves in new ways ceases to exist, we fall naturally and easily into the manners and customs which long usage has implanted ineradicably within us.

Mugambi from childhood had eaten

no meat until it had been cooked, while Tarzan, on the other hand, had never tasted cooked food of any sort until he had grown almost to manhood, and only within the past three or four years had he eaten cooked meat. Not only did the habit of a lifetime prompt him to eat it raw, but the craving of his palate as well; for to him cooked flesh was spoiled flesh when compared with the rich and juicy meat of a fresh, hot kill.

That he could, with relish, eat raw meat that had been buried by himself weeks before, and enjoy small rodents and disgusting grubs, seems to us who have been always "civilized" a revolting fact; but had we learned in childhood to eat these things, and had we seen all

those about us eat them, they would seem no more sickening to us now than do many of our greatest dainties, at which a savage African cannibal would look with repugnance and turn up his nose.

For instance, there is a tribe in the vicinity of Lake Rudolph that will eat no sheep or cattle, though its next neighbors do so. Near by is another tribe that eats donkey-meat—a custom most revolting to the surrounding tribes that do not eat donkey. So who may say that it is nice to eat snails and frogs' legs and oysters, but disgusting to feed upon grubs and beetles, or that a raw oyster, hoof, horns, and tail, is less revolting than the sweet, clean meat of a fresh-killed buck?

The next few days Tarzan devoted to

the weaving of a barkcloth sail with which to equip the canoe, for he despaired of being able to teach the apes to wield the paddles, though he did manage to get several of them to embark in the frail craft which he and Mugambi paddled about inside the reef where the water was quite smooth.

During these trips he had placed paddles in their hands, when they attempted to imitate the movements of him and Mugambi, but so difficult is it for them long to concentrate upon a thing that he soon saw that it would require weeks of patient training before they would be able to make any effective use of these new implements, if, in fact, they should ever do so.

There was one exception, however, and he was Akut. Almost from the first he showed an interest in this new sport that revealed a much higher plane of intelligence than that attained by any of his tribe. He seemed to grasp the purpose of the paddles, and when Tarzan saw that this was so he took much pains to explain in the meager language of the anthropoid how they might be used to the best advantage.

From Mugambi Tarzan learned that the mainland lay but a short distance from the island. It seemed that the Wagambi warriors had ventured too far out in their frail craft, and when caught by a heavy tide and a high wind from offshore they had been driven out of

sight of land. After paddling for a whole night, thinking that they were headed for home, they had seen this land at sunrise, and, still taking it for the mainland, had hailed it with joy, nor had Mugambi been aware that it was an island until Tarzan had told him that this was the fact.

The Wagambi chief was quite dubious as to the sail, for he had never seen such a contrivance used. His country lay far up the broad Ugambi River, and this was the first occasion that any of his people had found their way to the ocean.

Tarzan, however, was confident that with a good west wind he could navigate the little craft to the mainland. At any

rate, he decided, it would be preferable to perish on the way than to remain indefinitely upon this evidently uncharted island to which no ships might ever be expected to come.

And so it was that when the first fair wind rose he embarked upon his cruise, and with him he took as strange and fearsome a crew as ever sailed under a savage master.

Mugambi and Akut went with him, and Sheeta, the panther, and a dozen great males of the tribe of Akut.

6. A HIDEOUS CREW

The war-canoe with its savage load moved slowly toward the break in the reef through which it must pass to gain the open sea. Tarzan, Mugambi, and Akut wielded the paddles, for the shore kept the west wind from the little sail.

Sheeta crouched in the bow at the ape-man's feet, for it had seemed best to Tarzan always to keep the wicked beast as far from the other members of the party as possible, since it would require little or no provocation to send him at the throat of any than the white man, whom he evidently now looked upon as his master.

In the stern was Mugambi, and just in front of him squatted Akut, while

between Akut and Tarzan the twelve hairy apes sat upon their haunches, blinking dubiously this way and that, and now and then turning their eyes longingly back toward shore.

All went well until the canoe had passed beyond the reef. Here the breeze struck the sail, sending the rude craft lunging among the waves that ran higher and higher as they drew away from the shore.

With the tossing of the boat the apes became panic-stricken. They first moved uneasily about, and then commenced grumbling and whining. With difficulty Akut kept them in hand for a time; but when a particularly large wave struck the dugout simultaneously with a little

squall of wind their terror broke all bounds, and, leaping to their feet, they all but overturned the boat before Akut and Tarzan together could quiet them. At last calm was restored, and eventually the apes became accustomed to the strange antics of their craft, after which no more trouble was experienced with them.

The trip was uneventful, the wind held, and after ten hours' steady sailing the black shadows of the coast loomed close before the straining eyes of the ape-man in the bow. It was far too dark to distinguish whether they had approached close to the mouth of the Ugambi or not, so Tarzan ran in through the surf at the closest point to await the

dawn.

The dugout turned broadside the instant that its nose touched the sand, and immediately it rolled over, with all its crew scrambling madly for the shore. The next breaker rolled them over and over, but eventually they all succeeded in crawling to safety, and in a moment more their ungainly craft had been washed up beside them.

The balance of the night the apes sat huddled close to one another for warmth; while Mugambi built a fire close to them over which he crouched. Tarzan and Sheeta, however, were of a different mind, for neither of them feared the jungle night, and the insistent craving of their hunger sent them off into the

Stygian blackness of the forest in search of prey.

Side by side they walked when there was room for two abreast. At other times in single file, first one and then the other in advance. It was Tarzan who first caught the scent of meat—a bull buffalo—and presently the two came stealthily upon the sleeping beast in the midst of a dense jungle of reeds close to a river.

Closer and closer they crept toward the unsuspecting beast, Sheeta upon his right side and Tarzan upon his left nearest the great heart. They had hunted together now for some time, so that they worked in unison, with only low, purring sounds as signals.

For a moment they lay quite silent

near their prey, and then at a sign from the ape-man Sheeta sprang upon the great back, burying his strong teeth in the bull's neck. Instantly the brute sprang to his feet with a bellow of pain and rage, and at the same instant Tarzan rushed in upon his left side with the stone knife, striking repeatedly behind the shoulder.

One of the ape-man's hands clutched the thick mane, and as the bull raced madly through the reeds the thing striking at his life was dragged beside him. Sheeta but clung tenaciously to his hold upon the neck and back, biting deep in an effort to reach the spine.

For several hundred yards the bellowing bull carried his two savage antagonists, until at last the blade found

his heart, when with a final bellow that was half-scream he plunged headlong to the earth. Then Tarzan and Sheeta feasted to repletion.

After the meal the two curled up together in a thicket, the man's black head pillowed upon the tawny side of the panther. Shortly after dawn they awoke and ate again, and then returned to the beach that Tarzan might lead the balance of the pack to the kill.

When the meal was done the brutes were for curling up to sleep, so Tarzan and Mugambi set off in search of the Ugambi River. They had proceeded scarce a hundred yards when they came suddenly upon a broad stream, which the Negro instantly recognized as that down

which he and his warriors had paddled to the sea upon their ill-starred expedition.

The two now followed the stream down to the ocean, finding that it emptied into a bay not over a mile from the point upon the beach at which the canoe had been thrown the night before.

Tarzan was much elated by the discovery, as he knew that in the vicinity of a large watercourse he should find natives, and from some of these he had little doubt but that he should obtain news of Rokoff and the child, for he felt reasonably certain that the Russian would rid himself of the baby as quickly as possible after having disposed of Tarzan.

He and Mugambi now righted and launched the dugout, though it was a most difficult feat in the face of the surf which rolled continuously in upon the beach; but at last they were successful, and soon after were paddling up the coast toward the mouth of the Ugambi. Here they experienced considerable difficulty in making an entrance against the combined current and ebb tide, but by taking advantage of eddies close in to shore they came about dusk to a point nearly opposite the spot where they had left the pack asleep.

Making the craft fast to an overhanging bough, the two made their way into the jungle, presently coming upon some of the apes feeding upon fruit

a little beyond the reeds where the buffalo had fallen. Sheeta was not anywhere to be seen, nor did he return that night, so that Tarzan came to believe that he had wandered away in search of his own kind.

Early the next morning the ape-man led his band down to the river, and as he walked he gave vent to a series of shrill cries. Presently from a great distance and faintly there came an answering scream, and a half-hour later the lithe form of Sheeta bounded into view where the others of the pack were clambering gingerly into the canoe.

The great beast, with arched back and purring like a contented tabby, rubbed his sides against the ape-man, and then at

a word from the latter sprang lightly to his former place in the bow of the dugout.

When all were in place it was discovered that two of the apes of Akut were missing, and though both the king ape and Tarzan called to them for the better part of an hour, there was no response, and finally the boat put off without them. As it happened that the two missing ones were the very same who had evinced the least desire to accompany the expedition from the island, and had suffered the most from fright during the voyage, Tarzan was quite sure that they had absented themselves purposely rather than again enter the canoe.

As the party were putting in for the shore shortly after noon to search for food a slender, naked savage watched them for a moment from behind the dense screen of verdure which lined the river's bank, then he melted away up-stream before any of those in the canoe discovered him.

Like a deer he bounded along the narrow trail until, filled with the excitement of his news, he burst into a native village several miles above the point at which Tarzan and his pack had stopped to hunt.

"Another white man is coming!" he cried to the chief who squatted before the entrance to his circular hut. "Another white man, and with him are many

warriors. They come in a great war-canoe to kill and rob as did the black-bearded one who has just left us."

Kaviri leaped to his feet. He had but recently had a taste of the white man's medicine, and his savage heart was filled with bitterness and hate. In another moment the rumble of the war-drums rose from the village, calling in the hunters from the forest and the tillers from the fields.

Seven war-canoes were launched and manned by paint-daubed, befeathered warriors. Long spears bristled from the rude battle- ships, as they slid noiselessly over the bosom of the water, propelled by giant muscles rolling beneath glistening, ebony hides.

There was no beating of tom-toms now, nor blare of native horn, for Kaviri was a crafty warrior, and it was in his mind to take no chances, if they could be avoided. He would swoop noiselessly down with his seven canoes upon the single one of the white man, and before the guns of the latter could inflict much damage upon his people he would have overwhelmed the enemy by force of numbers.

Kaviri's own canoe went in advance of the others a short distance, and as it rounded a sharp bend in the river where the swift current bore it rapidly on its way it came suddenly upon the thing that Kaviri sought.

So close were the two canoes to one

another that the black had only an opportunity to note the white face in the bow of the oncoming craft before the two touched and his own men were upon their feet, yelling like mad devils and thrusting their long spears at the occupants of the other canoe.

But a moment later, when Kaviri was able to realize the nature of the crew that manned the white man's dugout, he would have given all the beads and iron wire that he possessed to have been safely within his distant village. Scarcely had the two craft come together than the frightful apes of Akut rose, growling and barking, from the bottom of the canoe, and, with long, hairy arms far outstretched, grasped the menacing

spears from the hands of Kaviri's warriors.

The blacks were overcome with terror, but there was nothing to do other than to fight. Now came the other war-canoes rapidly down upon the two craft. Their occupants were eager to join the battle, for they thought that their foes were white men and their native porters.

They swarmed about Tarzan's craft; but when they saw the nature of the enemy all but one turned and paddled swiftly upriver. That one came too close to the ape-man's craft before its occupants realized that their fellows were pitted against demons instead of men. As it touched Tarzan spoke a few low words to Sheeta and Akut, so that

before the attacking warriors could draw away there sprang upon them with a blood-freezing scream a huge panther, and into the other end of their canoe clambered a great ape.

At one end the panther wrought fearful havoc with his mighty talons and long, sharp fangs, while Akut at the other buried his yellow canines in the necks of those that came within his reach, hurling the terror-stricken blacks overboard as he made his way toward the centre of the canoe.

Kaviri was so busily engaged with the demons that had entered his own craft that he could offer no assistance to his warriors in the other. A giant of a white devil had wrested his spear from

him as though he, the mighty Kaviri, had been but a new-born babe. Hairy monsters were overcoming his fighting men, and a black chieftain like himself was fighting shoulder to shoulder with the hideous pack that opposed him.

Kaviri battled bravely against his antagonist, for he felt that death had already claimed him, and so the least that he could do would be to sell his life as dearly as possible; but it was soon evident that his best was quite futile when pitted against the superhuman brawn and agility of the creature that at last found his throat and bent him back into the bottom of the canoe.

Presently Kaviri's head began to whirl—objects became confused and

dim before his eyes—there was a great pain in his chest as he struggled for the breath of life that the thing upon him was shutting off for ever. Then he lost consciousness.

When he opened his eyes once more he found, much to his surprise, that he was not dead. He lay, securely bound, in the bottom of his own canoe. A great panther sat upon its haunches, looking down upon him.

Kaviri shuddered and closed his eyes again, waiting for the ferocious creature to spring upon him and put him out of his misery of terror.

After a moment, no rending fangs having buried themselves in his trembling body, he again ventured to

open his eyes. Beyond the panther kneeled the white giant who had overcome him.

The man was wielding a paddle, while directly behind him Kaviri saw some of his own warriors similarly engaged. Back of them again squatted several of the hairy apes.

Tarzan, seeing that the chief had regained consciousness, addressed him.

"Your warriors tell me that you are the chief of a numerous people, and that your name is Kaviri," he said.

"Yes," replied the black.

"Why did you attack me? I came in peace."

"Another white man `came in peace'

three moons ago," replied Kaviri; "and after we had brought him presents of a goat and cassava and milk, he set upon us with his guns and killed many of my people, and then went on his way, taking all of our goats and many of our young men and women."

"I am not as this other white man," replied Tarzan. "I should not have harmed you had you not set upon me. Tell me, what was the face of this bad white man like? I am searching for one who has wronged me. Possibly this may be the very one."

"He was a man with a bad face, covered with a great, black beard, and he was very, very wicked—yes, very wicked indeed."

"Was there a little white child with him?" asked Tarzan, his heart almost stopped as he awaited the black's answer.

"No, bwana," replied Kaviri, "the white child was not with this man's party—it was with the other party."

"Other party!" exclaimed Tarzan. "What other party?"

"With the party that the very bad white man was pursuing. There was a white man, woman, and the child, with six Mosula porters. They passed up the river three days ahead of the very bad white man. I think that they were running away from him."

A white man, woman, and child! Tarzan was puzzled. The child must be

his little Jack; but who could the woman be—and the man? Was it possible that one of Rokoff's confederates had conspired with some woman—who had accompanied the Russian—to steal the baby from him?

If this was the case, they had doubtless purposed returning the child to civilization and there either claiming a reward or holding the little prisoner for ransom.

But now that Rokoff had succeeded in chasing them far inland, up the savage river, there could be little doubt but that he would eventually overhaul them, unless, as was still more probable, they should be captured and killed by the very cannibals farther up the Ugambi, to

whom, Tarzan was now convinced, it had been Rokoff's intention to deliver the baby.

As he talked to Kaviri the canoes had been moving steadily up- river toward the chief's village. Kaviri's warriors plied the paddles in the three canoes, casting sidelong, terrified glances at their hideous passengers. Three of the apes of Akut had been killed in the encounter, but there were, with Akut, eight of the frightful beasts remaining, and there was Sheeta, the panther, and Tarzan and Mugambi.

Kaviri's warriors thought that they had never seen so terrible a crew in all their lives. Momentarily they expected to be pounced upon and torn asunder by

some of their captors; and, in fact, it was all that Tarzan and Mugambi and Akut could do to keep the snarling, ill-natured brutes from snapping at the glistening, naked bodies that brushed against them now and then with the movements of the paddlers, whose very fear added incitement to the beasts.

At Kaviri's camp Tarzan paused only long enough to eat the food that the blacks furnished, and arrange with the chief for a dozen men to man the paddles of his canoe.

Kaviri was only too glad to comply with any demands that the ape-man might make if only such compliance would hasten the departure of the horrid pack; but it was easier, he discovered, to

promise men than to furnish them, for when his people learned his intentions those that had not already fled into the jungle proceeded to do so without loss of time, so that when Kaviri turned to point out those who were to accompany Tarzan, he discovered that he was the only member of his tribe left within the village.

Tarzan could not repress a smile.

"They do not seem anxious to accompany us," he said; "but just remain quietly here, Kaviri, and presently you shall see your people flocking to your side."

Then the ape-man rose, and, calling his pack about him, commanded that Mugambi remain with Kaviri, and

disappeared in the jungle with Sheeta and the apes at his heels.

For half an hour the silence of the grim forest was broken only by the ordinary sounds of the teeming life that but adds to its lowering loneliness. Kaviri and Mugambi sat alone in the palisaded village, waiting.

Presently from a great distance came a hideous sound. Mugambi recognized the weird challenge of the ape-man. Immediately from different points of the compass rose a horrid semicircle of similar shrieks and screams, punctuated now and again by the blood-curdling cry of a hungry panther.

7. BETRAYED

The two savages, Kaviri and Mugambi, squatting before the entrance to Kaviri's hut, looked at one another—Kaviri with ill-concealed alarm.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"It is Bwana Tarzan and his people," replied Mugambi. "But what they are doing I know not, unless it be that they are devouring your people who ran away."

Kaviri shuddered and rolled his eyes fearfully toward the jungle. In all his long life in the savage forest he had never heard such an awful, fearsome din.

Closer and closer came the sounds, and now with them were mingled the

terrified shrieks of women and children and of men. For twenty long minutes the blood-curdling cries continued, until they seemed but a stone's throw from the palisade. Kaviri rose to flee, but Mugambi seized and held him, for such had been the command of Tarzan.

A moment later a horde of terrified natives burst from the jungle, racing toward the shelter of their huts. Like frightened sheep they ran, and behind them, driving them as sheep might be driven, came Tarzan and Sheeta and the hideous apes of Akut.

Presently Tarzan stood before Kaviri, the old quiet smile upon his lips.

"Your people have returned, my brother," he said, "and now you may

select those who are to accompany me and paddle my canoe."

Tremblingly Kaviri tottered to his feet, calling to his people to come from their huts; but none responded to his summons.

"Tell them," suggested Tarzan, "that if they do not come I shall send my people in after them."

Kaviri did as he was bid, and in an instant the entire population of the village came forth, their wide and frightened eyes rolling from one to another of the savage creatures that wandered about the village street.

Quickly Kaviri designated a dozen warriors to accompany Tarzan. The poor fellows went almost white with terror at

the prospect of close contact with the panther and the apes in the narrow confines of the canoes; but when Kaviri explained to them that there was no escape—that Bwana Tarzan would pursue them with his grim horde should they attempt to run away from the duty—they finally went gloomily down to the river and took their places in the canoe.

It was with a sigh of relief that their chieftain saw the party disappear about a headland a short distance up-river.

For three days the strange company continued farther and farther into the heart of the savage country that lies on either side of the almost unexplored Ugambi. Three of the twelve warriors deserted during that time; but as several

of the apes had finally learned the secret of the paddles, Tarzan felt no dismay because of the loss.

As a matter of fact, he could have travelled much more rapidly on shore, but he believed that he could hold his own wild crew together to better advantage by keeping them to the boat as much as possible. Twice a day they landed to hunt and feed, and at night they slept upon the bank of the mainland or on one of the numerous little islands that dotted the river.

Before them the natives fled in alarm, so that they found only deserted villages in their path as they proceeded. Tarzan was anxious to get in touch with some of the savages who dwelt upon the river's

banks, but so far he had been unable to do so.

Finally he decided to take to the land himself, leaving his company to follow after him by boat. He explained to Mugambi the thing that he had in mind, and told Akut to follow the directions of the black.

"I will join you again in a few days," he said. "Now I go ahead to learn what has become of the very bad white man whom I seek."

At the next halt Tarzan took to the shore, and was soon lost to the view of his people.

The first few villages he came to were deserted, showing that news of the coming of his pack had travelled

rapidly; but toward evening he came upon a distant cluster of thatched huts surrounded by a rude palisade, within which were a couple of hundred natives.

The women were preparing the evening meal as Tarzan of the Apes poised above them in the branches of a giant tree which overhung the palisade at one point.

The ape-man was at a loss as to how he might enter into communication with these people without either frightening them or arousing their savage love of battle. He had no desire to fight now, for he was upon a much more important mission than that of battling with every chance tribe that he should happen to meet with.

At last he hit upon a plan, and after seeing that he was concealed from the view of those below, he gave a few hoarse grunts in imitation of a panther. All eyes immediately turned upward toward the foliage above.

It was growing dark, and they could not penetrate the leafy screen which shielded the ape-man from their view. The moment that he had won their attention he raised his voice to the shriller and more hideous scream of the beast he personated, and then, scarce stirring a leaf in his descent, dropped to the ground once again outside the palisade, and, with the speed of a deer, ran quickly round to the village gate.

Here he beat upon the fibre-bound

saplings of which the barrier was constructed, shouting to the natives in their own tongue that he was a friend who wished food and shelter for the night.

Tarzan knew well the nature of the black man. He was aware that the grunting and screaming of Sheeta in the tree above them would set their nerves on edge, and that his pounding upon their gate after dark would still further add to their terror.

That they did not reply to his hail was no surprise, for natives are fearful of any voice that comes out of the night from beyond their palisades, attributing it always to some demon or other ghostly visitor; but still he continued to call.

"Let me in, my friends!" he cried. "I am a white man pursuing the very bad white man who passed this way a few days ago. I follow to punish him for the sins he has committed against you and me.

"If you doubt my friendship, I will prove it to you by going into the tree above your village and driving Sheeta back into the jungle before he leaps among you. If you will not promise to take me in and treat me as a friend I shall let Sheeta stay and devour you."

For a moment there was silence. Then the voice of an old man came out of the quiet of the village street.

"If you are indeed a white man and a friend, we will let you come in; but first

you must drive Sheeta away."

"Very well," replied Tarzan. "Listen, and you shall hear Sheeta fleeing before me."

The ape-man returned quickly to the tree, and this time he made a great noise as he entered the branches, at the same time growling ominously after the manner of the panther, so that those below would believe that the great beast was still there.

When he reached a point well above the village street he made a great commotion, shaking the tree violently, crying aloud to the panther to flee or be killed, and punctuating his own voice with the screams and mouthings of an angry beast.

Presently he raced toward the opposite side of the tree and off into the jungle, pounding loudly against the boles of trees as he went, and voicing the panther's diminishing growls as he drew farther and farther away from the village.

A few minutes later he returned to the village gate, calling to the natives within.

"I have driven Sheeta away," he said. "Now come and admit me as you promised."

For a time there was the sound of excited discussion within the palisade, but at length a half-dozen warriors came and opened the gates, peering anxiously out in evident trepidation as to the nature

of the creature which they should find waiting there. They were not much relieved at sight of an almost naked white man; but when Tarzan had reassured them in quiet tones, protesting his friendship for them, they opened the barrier a trifle farther and admitted him.

When the gates had been once more secured the self-confidence of the savages returned, and as Tarzan walked up the village street toward the chief's hut he was surrounded by a host of curious men, women, and children.

From the chief he learned that Rokoff had passed up the river a week previous, and that he had horns growing from his forehead, and was accompanied by a thousand devils. Later the chief said that

the very bad white man had remained a month in his village.

Though none of these statements agreed with Kaviri's, that the Russian was but three days gone from the chieftain's village and that his following was much smaller than now stated, Tarzan was in no manner surprised at the discrepancies, for he was quite familiar with the savage mind's strange manner of functioning.

What he was most interested in knowing was that he was upon the right trail, and that it led toward the interior. In this circumstance he knew that Rokoff could never escape him.

After several hours of questioning and cross-questioning the ape-man learned

that another party had preceded the Russian by several days— three whites —a man, a woman, and a little man-child, with several Mosulas.

Tarzan explained to the chief that his people would follow him in a canoe, probably the next day, and that though he might go on ahead of them the chief was to receive them kindly and have no fear of them, for Mugambi would see that they did not harm the chief's people, if they were accorded a friendly reception.

"And now," he concluded, "I shall lie down beneath this tree and sleep. I am very tired. Permit no one to disturb me."

The chief offered him a hut, but Tarzan, from past experience of native dwellings, preferred the open air, and,

further, he had plans of his own that could be better carried out if he remained beneath the tree. He gave as his reason a desire to be close at hand should Sheeta return, and after this explanation the chief was very glad to permit him to sleep beneath the tree.

Tarzan had always found that it stood him in good stead to leave with natives the impression that he was to some extent possessed of more or less miraculous powers. He might easily have entered their village without recourse to the gates, but he believed that a sudden and unaccountable disappearance when he was ready to leave them would result in a more lasting impression upon their childlike

minds, and so as soon as the village was quiet in sleep he rose, and, leaping into the branches of the tree above him, faded silently into the black mystery of the jungle night.

All the balance of that night the ape-man swung rapidly through the upper and middle terraces of the forest. When the going was good there he preferred the upper branches of the giant trees, for then his way was better lighted by the moon; but so accustomed were all his senses to the grim world of his birth that it was possible for him, even in the dense, black shadows near the ground, to move with ease and rapidity. You or I walking beneath the arcs of Main Street, or Broadway, or State Street, could not

have moved more surely or with a tenth the speed of the agile ape-man through the gloomy mazes that would have baffled us entirely.

At dawn he stopped to feed, and then he slept for several hours, taking up the pursuit again toward noon.

Twice he came upon natives, and, though he had considerable difficulty in approaching them, he succeeded in each instance in quieting both their fears and bellicose intentions toward him, and learned from them that he was upon the trail of the Russian.

Two days later, still following up the Ugambi, he came upon a large village. The chief, a wicked-looking fellow with the sharp- filed teeth that often denote

the cannibal, received him with apparent friendliness.

The ape-man was now thoroughly fatigued, and had determined to rest for eight or ten hours that he might be fresh and strong when he caught up with Rokoff, as he was sure he must do within a very short time.

The chief told him that the bearded white man had left his village only the morning before, and that doubtless he would be able to overtake him in a short time. The other party the chief had not seen or heard of, so he said.

Tarzan did not like the appearance or manner of the fellow, who seemed, though friendly enough, to harbour a certain contempt for this half-naked

white man who came with no followers and offered no presents; but he needed the rest and food that the village would afford him with less effort than the jungle, and so, as he knew no fear of man, beast, or devil, he curled himself up in the shadow of a hut and was soon asleep.

Scarcely had he left the chief than the latter called two of his warriors, to whom he whispered a few instructions. A moment later the sleek, black bodies were racing along the river path, up-stream, toward the east.

In the village the chief maintained perfect quiet. He would permit no one to approach the sleeping visitor, nor any singing, nor loud talking. He was

remarkably solicitous lest his guest be disturbed.

Three hours later several canoes came silently into view from up the Ugambi. They were being pushed ahead rapidly by the brawny muscles of their black crews. Upon the bank before the river stood the chief, his spear raised in a horizontal position above his head, as though in some manner of predetermined signal to those within the boats.

And such indeed was the purpose of his attitude—which meant that the white stranger within his village still slept peacefully.

In the bows of two of the canoes were the runners that the chief had sent forth three hours earlier. It was evident that

they had been dispatched to follow and bring back this party, and that the signal from the bank was one that had been determined upon before they left the village.

In a few moments the dugouts drew up to the verdure-clad bank. The native warriors filed out, and with them a half-dozen white men. Sullen, ugly-looking customers they were, and none more so than the evil-faced, black-bearded man who commanded them.

"Where is the white man your messengers report to be with you?" he asked of the chief.

"This way, bwana," replied the native. "Carefully have I kept silence in the village that he might be still asleep

when you returned. I do not know that he is one who seeks you to do you harm, but he questioned me closely about your coming and your going, and his appearance is as that of the one you described, but whom you believed safe in the country which you called Jungle Island.

"Had you not told me this tale I should not have recognized him, and then he might have gone after and slain you. If he is a friend and no enemy, then no harm has been done, bwana; but if he proves to be an enemy, I should like very much to have a rifle and some ammunition."

"You have done well," replied the white man, "and you shall have the rifle

and ammunition whether he be a friend or enemy, provided that you stand with me."

"I shall stand with you, bwana," said the chief, "and now come and look upon the stranger, who sleeps within my village."

So saying, he turned and led the way toward the hut, in the shadow of which the unconscious Tarzan slept peacefully.

Behind the two men came the remaining whites and a score of warriors; but the raised forefingers of the chief and his companion held them all to perfect silence.

As they turned the corner of the hut, cautiously and upon tiptoe, an ugly smile touched the lips of the white as his eyes

fell upon the giant figure of the sleeping ape-man.

The chief looked at the other inquiringly. The latter nodded his head, to signify that the chief had made no mistake in his suspicions. Then he turned to those behind him and, pointing to the sleeping man, motioned for them to seize and bind him.

A moment later a dozen brutes had leaped upon the surprised Tarzan, and so quickly did they work that he was securely bound before he could make half an effort to escape.

Then they threw him down upon his back, and as his eyes turned toward the crowd that stood near, they fell upon the malign face of Nikolas Rokoff.

A sneer curled the Russian's lips. He stepped quite close to Tarzan.

"Pig!" he cried. "Have you not learned sufficient wisdom to keep away from Nikolas Rokoff?"

Then he kicked the prostrate man full in the face.

"That for your welcome," he said.

"Tonight, before my Ethiop friends eat you, I shall tell you what has already befallen your wife and child, and what further plans I have for their futures."

8. THE DANCE OF DEATH

Through the luxuriant, tangled vegetation of the Stygian jungle night a great lithe body made its way sinuously and in utter silence upon its soft padded feet. Only two blazing points of yellow-green flame shone occasionally with the reflected light of the equatorial moon that now and again pierced the softly sighing roof rustling in the night wind.

Occasionally the beast would stop with high-held nose, sniffing searchingly. At other times a quick, brief incursion into the branches above delayed it momentarily in its steady journey toward the east. To its sensitive nostrils came the subtle unseen spoor of many a tender four-footed creature,

bringing the slaver of hunger to the cruel, drooping jowl.

But steadfastly it kept on its way, strangely ignoring the cravings of appetite that at another time would have sent the rolling, fur-clad muscles flying at some soft throat.

All that night the creature pursued its lonely way, and the next day it halted only to make a single kill, which it tore to fragments and devoured with sullen, grumbling rumbles as though half famished for lack of food.

It was dusk when it approached the palisade that surrounded a large native village. Like the shadow of a swift and silent death it circled the village, nose to ground, halting at last close to the

palisade, where it almost touched the backs of several huts. Here the beast sniffed for a moment, and then, turning its head upon one side, listened with up-pricked ears.

What it heard was no sound by the standards of human ears, yet to the highly attuned and delicate organs of the beast a message seemed to be borne to the savage brain. A wondrous transformation was wrought in the motionless mass of statuesque bone and muscle that had an instant before stood as though carved out of the living bronze.

As if it had been poised upon steel springs, suddenly released, it rose quickly and silently to the top of the

palisade, disappearing, stealthily and catlike, into the dark space between the wall and the back of an adjacent hut.

In the village street beyond women were preparing many little fires and fetching cooking-pots filled with water, for a great feast was to be celebrated ere the night was many hours older. About a stout stake near the centre of the circling fires a little knot of black warriors stood conversing, their bodies smeared with white and blue and ochre in broad and grotesque bands. Great circles of colour were drawn about their eyes and lips, their breasts and abdomens, and from their clay-plastered coiffures rose gay feathers and bits of long, straight wire.

The village was preparing for the

feast, while in a hut at one side of the scene of the coming orgy the bound victim of their bestial appetites lay waiting for the end. And such an end!

Tarzan of the Apes, tensing his mighty muscles, strained at the bonds that pinioned him; but they had been re-enforced many times at the instigation of the Russian, so that not even the ape-man's giant brawn could budge them.

Death!

Tarzan had looked the Hideous Hunter in the face many a time, and smiled. And he would smile again tonight when he knew the end was coming quickly; but now his thoughts were not of himself, but of those others —the dear ones who must suffer most

because of his passing.

Jane would never know the manner of it. For that he thanked Heaven; and he was thankful also that she at least was safe in the heart of the world's greatest city. Safe among kind and loving friends who would do their best to lighten her misery.

But the boy!

Tarzan writhed at the thought of him. His son! And now he—the mighty Lord of the Jungle—he, Tarzan, King of the Apes, the only one in all the world fitted to find and save the child from the horrors that Rokoff's evil mind had planned—had been trapped like a silly, dumb creature. He was to die in a few hours, and with him would go the child's

last chance of succour.

Rokoff had been in to see and revile and abuse him several times during the afternoon; but he had been able to wring no word of remonstrance or murmur of pain from the lips of the giant captive.

So at last he had given up, reserving his particular bit of exquisite mental torture for the last moment, when, just before the savage spears of the cannibals should for ever make the object of his hatred immune to further suffering, the Russian planned to reveal to his enemy the true whereabouts of his wife whom he thought safe in England.

Dusk had fallen upon the village, and the ape-men could hear the preparations going forward for the torture and the

feast. The dance of death he could picture in his mind's eye—for he had seen the thing many times in the past. Now he was to be the central figure, bound to the stake.

The torture of the slow death as the circling warriors cut him to bits with the fiendish skill, that mutilated without bringing unconsciousness, had no terrors for him. He was inured to suffering and to the sight of blood and to cruel death; but the desire to live was no less strong within him, and until the last spark of life should flicker and go out, his whole being would remain quick with hope and determination. Let them relax their watchfulness but for an instant, he knew that his cunning mind and giant muscles

would find a way to escape—escape and revenge.

As he lay, thinking furiously on every possibility of self- salvation, there came to his sensitive nostrils a faint and a familiar scent. Instantly every faculty of his mind was upon the alert. Presently his trained ears caught the sound of the soundless presence without—behind the hut wherein he lay. His lips moved, and though no sound came forth that might have been appreciable to a human ear beyond the walls of his prison, yet he realized that the one beyond would hear. Already he knew who that one was, for his nostrils had told him as plainly as your eyes or mine tell us of the identity of an old friend whom we come upon in

broad daylight.

An instant later he heard the soft sound of a fur-clad body and padded feet scaling the outer wall behind the hut and then a tearing at the poles which formed the wall. Presently through the hole thus made slunk a great beast, pressing its cold muzzle close to his neck.

It was Sheeta, the panther.

The beast snuffed round the prostrate man, whining a little. There was a limit to the interchange of ideas which could take place between these two, and so Tarzan could not be sure that Sheeta understood all that he attempted to communicate to him. That the man was tied and helpless Sheeta could, of course, see; but that to the mind of the

panther this would carry any suggestion of harm in so far as his master was concerned, Tarzan could not guess.

What had brought the beast to him? The fact that he had come augured well for what he might accomplish; but when Tarzan tried to get Sheeta to gnaw his bonds asunder the great animal could not seem to understand what was expected of him, and, instead, but licked the wrists and arms of the prisoner.

Presently there came an interruption. Some one was approaching the hut. Sheeta gave a low growl and slunk into the blackness of a far corner. Evidently the visitor did not hear the warning sound, for almost immediately he entered the hut—a tall, naked, savage

warrior.

He came to Tarzan's side and pricked him with a spear. From the lips of the ape-man came a weird, uncanny sound, and in answer to it there leaped from the blackness of the hut's furthermost corner a bolt of fur-clad death. Full upon the breast of the painted savage the great beast struck, burying sharp talons in the black flesh and sinking great yellow fangs in the ebon throat.

There was a fearful scream of anguish and terror from the black, and mingled with it was the hideous challenge of the killing panther. Then came silence—silence except for the rending of bloody flesh and the crunching of human bones between mighty jaws.

The noise had brought sudden quiet to the village without. Then there came the sound of voices in consultation.

High-pitched, fear-filled voices, and deep, low tones of authority, as the chief spoke. Tarzan and the panther heard the approaching footsteps of many men, and then, to Tarzan's surprise, the great cat rose from across the body of its kill, and slunk noiselessly from the hut through the aperture through which it had entered.

The man heard the soft scraping of the body as it passed over the top of the palisade, and then silence. From the opposite side of the hut he heard the savages approaching to investigate.

He had little hope that Sheeta would return, for had the great cat intended to

defend him against all comers it would have remained by his side as it heard the approaching savages without.

Tarzan knew how strange were the workings of the brains of the mighty carnivora of the jungle—how fiendishly fearless they might be in the face of certain death, and again how timid upon the slightest provocation. There was doubt in his mind that some note of the approaching blacks vibrating with fear had struck an answering chord in the nervous system of the panther, sending him slinking through the jungle, his tail between his legs.

The man shrugged. Well, what of it? He had expected to die, and, after all, what might Sheeta have done for him

other than to maul a couple of his enemies before a rifle in the hands of one of the whites should have dispatched him!

If the cat could have released him! Ah! that would have resulted in a very different story; but it had proved beyond the understanding of Sheeta, and now the beast was gone and Tarzan must definitely abandon hope.

The natives were at the entrance to the hut now, peering fearfully into the dark interior. Two in advance held lighted torches in their left hands and ready spears in their right. They held back timorously against those behind, who were pushing them forward.

The shrieks of the panther's victim,

mingled with those of the great cat, had wrought mightily upon their poor nerves, and now the awful silence of the dark interior seemed even more terribly ominous than had the frightful screaming.

Presently one of those who was being forced unwillingly within hit upon a happy scheme for learning first the precise nature of the danger which menaced him from the silent interior. With a quick movement he flung his lighted torch into the centre of the hut. Instantly all within was illuminated for a brief second before the burning brand was dashed out against the earth floor.

There was the figure of the white prisoner still securely bound as they had last seen him, and in the centre of the hut

another figure equally as motionless, its throat and breasts horribly torn and mangled.

The sight that met the eyes of the foremost savages inspired more terror within their superstitious breasts than would the presence of Sheeta, for they saw only the result of a ferocious attack upon one of their fellows.

Not seeing the cause, their fear-ridden minds were free to attribute the ghastly work to supernatural causes, and with the thought they turned, screaming, from the hut, bowling over those who stood directly behind them in the exuberance of their terror.

For an hour Tarzan heard only the murmur of excited voices from the far

end of the village. Evidently the savages were once more attempting to work up their flickering courage to a point that would permit them to make another invasion of the hut, for now and then came a savage yell, such as the warriors give to bolster up their bravery upon the field of battle.

But in the end it was two of the whites who first entered, carrying torches and guns. Tarzan was not surprised to discover that neither of them was Rokoff. He would have wagered his soul that no power on earth could have tempted that great coward to face the unknown menace of the hut.

When the natives saw that the white men were not attacked they, too,

crowded into the interior, their voices hushed with terror as they looked upon the mutilated corpse of their comrade. The whites tried in vain to elicit an explanation from Tarzan; but to all their queries he but shook his head, a grim and knowing smile curving his lips.

At last Rokoff came.

His face grew very white as his eyes rested upon the bloody thing grinning up at him from the floor, the face set in a death mask of excruciating horror.

"Come!" he said to the chief. "Let us get to work and finish this demon before he has an opportunity to repeat this thing upon more of your people."

The chief gave orders that Tarzan should be lifted and carried to the stake;

but it was several minutes before he could prevail upon any of his men to touch the prisoner.

At last, however, four of the younger warriors dragged Tarzan roughly from the hut, and once outside the pall of terror seemed lifted from the savage hearts.

A score of howling blacks pushed and buffeted the prisoner down the village street and bound him to the post in the centre of the circle of little fires and boiling cooking-pots.

When at last he was made fast and seemed quite helpless and beyond the faintest hope of succour, Rokoff's shrivelled wart of courage swelled to its usual proportions when danger was not

present.

He stepped close to the ape-man, and, seizing a spear from the hands of one of the savages, was the first to prod the helpless victim. A little stream of blood trickled down the giant's smooth skin from the wound in his side; but no murmur of pain passed his lips.

The smile of contempt upon his face seemed to infuriate the Russian. With a volley of oaths he leaped at the helpless captive, beating him upon the face with his clenched fists and kicking him mercilessly about the legs.

Then he raised the heavy spear to drive it through the mighty heart, and still Tarzan of the Apes smiled contemptuously upon him.

Before Rokoff could drive the weapon home the chief sprang upon him and dragged him away from his intended victim.

"Stop, white man!" he cried. "Rob us of this prisoner and our death-dance, and you yourself may have to take his place."

The threat proved most effective in keeping the Russian from further assaults upon the prisoner, though he continued to stand a little apart and hurl taunts at his enemy. He told Tarzan that he himself was going to eat the ape-man's heart. He enlarged upon the horrors of the future life of Tarzan's son, and intimated that his vengeance would reach as well to Jane Clayton.

"You think your wife safe in

England," said Rokoff. "Poor fool! She is even now in the hands of one not even of decent birth, and far from the safety of London and the protection of her friends. I had not meant to tell you this until I could bring to you upon Jungle Island proof of her fate.

"Now that you are about to die the most unthinkably horrid death that it is given a white man to die—let this word of the plight of your wife add to the torments that you must suffer before the last savage spear-thrust releases you from your torture."

The dance had commenced now, and the yells of the circling warriors drowned Rokoff's further attempts to distress his victim.

The leaping savages, the flickering firelight playing upon their painted bodies, circled about the victim at the stake.

To Tarzan's memory came a similar scene, when he had rescued D'Arnot from a like predicament at the last moment before the final spear-thrust should have ended his sufferings. Who was there now to rescue him? In all the world there was none able to save him from the torture and the death.

The thought that these human fiends would devour him when the dance was done caused him not a single qualm of horror or disgust. It did not add to his sufferings as it would have to those of an ordinary white man, for all his life

Tarzan had seen the beasts of the jungle devour the flesh of their kills.

Had he not himself battled for the grisly forearm of a great ape at that long-gone Dum-Dum, when he had slain the fierce Tublat and won his niche in the respect of the Apes of Kerchak?

The dancers were leaping more closely to him now. The spears were commencing to find his body in the first torturing pricks that prefaced the more serious thrusts.

It would not be long now. The ape-man longed for the last savage lunge that would end his misery.

And then, far out in the mazes of the weird jungle, rose a shrill scream.

For an instant the dancers paused, and

in the silence of the interval there rose from the lips of the fast-bound white man an answering shriek, more fearsome and more terrible than that of the jungle-beast that had roused it.

For several minutes the blacks hesitated; then, at the urging of Rokoff and their chief, they leaped in to finish the dance and the victim; but ere ever another spear touched the brown hide a tawny streak of green-eyed hate and ferocity bounded from the door of the hut in which Tarzan had been imprisoned, and Sheeta, the panther, stood snarling beside his master.

For an instant the blacks and the whites stood transfixed with terror. Their eyes were riveted upon the bared

fangs of the jungle cat.

Only Tarzan of the Apes saw what else there was emerging from the dark interior of the hut.

9. CHIVALRY OR VILLAINY

From her cabin port upon the Kincaid, Jane Clayton had seen her husband rowed to the verdure-clad shore of Jungle Island, and then the ship once more proceeded upon its way.

For several days she saw no one other than Sven Anderssen, the Kincaid's taciturn and repellent cook. She asked him the name of the shore upon which her husband had been set.

"Ay tank it blow purty soon purty hard," replied the Swede, and that was all that she could get out of him.

She had come to the conclusion that he spoke no other English, and so she

ceased to importune him for information; but never did she forget to greet him pleasantly or to thank him for the hideous, nauseating meals he brought her.

Three days from the spot where Tarzan had been marooned the Kincaid came to anchor in the mouth of a great river, and presently Rokoff came to Jane Clayton's cabin.

"We have arrived, my dear," he said, with a sickening leer. "I have come to offer you safety, liberty, and ease. My heart has been softened toward you in your suffering, and I would make amends as best I may.

"Your husband was a brute—you know that best who found him naked in

his native jungle, roaming wild with the savage beasts that were his fellows. Now I am a gentleman, not only born of noble blood, but raised gently as befits a man of quality.

"To you, dear Jane, I offer the love of a cultured man and association with one of culture and refinement, which you must have sorely missed in your relations with the poor ape that through your girlish infatuation you married so thoughtlessly. I love you, Jane. You have but to say the word and no further sorrows shall afflict you—even your baby shall be returned to you unharmed."

Outside the door Sven Anderssen paused with the noonday meal he had been carrying to Lady Greystoke. Upon

the end of his long, stringy neck his little head was cocked to one side, his close-set eyes were half closed, his ears, so expressive was his whole attitude of stealthy eavesdropping, seemed truly to be cocked forward—even his long, yellow, straggly moustache appeared to assume a sly droop.

As Rokoff closed his appeal, awaiting the reply he invited, the look of surprise upon Jane Clayton's face turned to one of disgust. She fairly shuddered in the fellow's face.

"I would not have been surprised, M. Rokoff," she said, "had you attempted to force me to submit to your evil desires, but that you should be so fatuous as to believe that I, wife of John Clayton,

would come to you willingly, even to save my life, I should never have imagined. I have known you for a scoundrel, M. Rokoff; but until now I had not taken you for a fool."

Rokoff's eyes narrowed, and the red of mortification flushed out the pallor of his face. He took a step toward the girl, threateningly.

"We shall see who is the fool at last," he hissed, "when I have broken you to my will and your plebeian Yankee stubbornness has cost you all that you hold dear—even the life of your baby—for, by the bones of St. Peter, I'll forego all that I had planned for the brat and cut its heart out before your very eyes. You'll learn what it means to insult

Nikolas Rokoff."

Jane Clayton turned wearily away.

"What is the use," she said, "of expatiating upon the depths to which your vengeful nature can sink? You cannot move me either by threats or deeds. My baby cannot judge yet for himself, but I, his mother, can foresee that should it have been given him to survive to man's estate he would willingly sacrifice his life for the honour of his mother. Love him as I do, I would not purchase his life at such a price. Did I, he would execrate my memory to the day of his death."

Rokoff was now thoroughly angered because of his failure to reduce the girl to terror. He felt only hate for her, but it

had come to his diseased mind that if he could force her to accede to his demands as the price of her life and her child's, the cup of his revenge would be filled to brimming when he could flaunt the wife of Lord Greystoke in the capitals of Europe as his mistress.

Again he stepped closer to her. His evil face was convulsed with rage and desire. Like a wild beast he sprang upon her, and with his strong fingers at her throat forced her backward upon the berth.

At the same instant the door of the cabin opened noisily. Rokoff leaped to his feet, and, turning, faced the Swede cook.

Into the fellow's usually foxy eyes had

come an expression of utter stupidity. His lower jaw drooped in vacuous harmony. He busied himself in arranging Lady Greystoke's meal upon the tiny table at one side of her cabin.

The Russian glared at him.

"What do you mean," he cried, "by entering here without permission? Get out!"

The cook turned his watery blue eyes upon Rokoff and smiled vacuously.

"Ay tank it blow purty soon purty hard," he said, and then he began rearranging the few dishes upon the little table.

"Get out of here, or I'll throw you out, you miserable blockhead!" roared Rokoff, taking a threatening step toward

the Swede.

Anderssen continued to smile foolishly in his direction, but one ham-like paw slid stealthily to the handle of the long, slim knife that protruded from the greasy cord supporting his soiled apron.

Rokoff saw the move and stopped short in his advance. Then he turned toward Jane Clayton.

"I will give you until tomorrow," he said, "to reconsider your answer to my offer. All will be sent ashore upon one pretext or another except you and the child, Paulvitch and myself. Then without interruption you will be able to witness the death of the baby."

He spoke in French that the cook

might not understand the sinister portent of his words. When he had done he banged out of the cabin without another look at the man who had interrupted him in his sorry work.

When he had gone, Sven Anderssen turned toward Lady Greystoke—the idiotic expression that had masked his thoughts had fallen away, and in its place was one of craft and cunning.

"Hay tank Ay ban a fool," he said. "Hay ben the fool. Ay savvy Franch."

Jane Clayton looked at him in surprise.

"You understood all that he said, then?"

Anderssen grinned.

"You bat," he said.

"And you heard what was going on in here and came to protect me?"

"You bane good to me," explained the Swede. "Hay treat me like darty dog. Ay help you, lady. You yust vait—Ay help you. Ay ban Vast Coast lots times."

"But how can you help me, Sven," she asked, "when all these men will be against us?"

"Ay tank," said Sven Anderssen, "it blow purty soon purty hard," and then he turned and left the cabin.

Though Jane Clayton doubted the cook's ability to be of any material service to her, she was nevertheless deeply grateful to him for what he already had done. The feeling that among

these enemies she had one friend brought the first ray of comfort that had come to lighten the burden of her miserable apprehensions throughout the long voyage of the Kincaid.

She saw no more of Rokoff that day, nor of any other until Sven came with her evening meal. She tried to draw him into conversation relative to his plans to aid her, but all that she could get from him was his stereotyped prophecy as to the future state of the wind. He seemed suddenly to have relapsed into his wonted state of dense stupidity.

However, when he was leaving her cabin a little later with the empty dishes he whispered very low, "Leave on your clothes an' roll up your blankets. Ay

come back after you purty soon."

He would have slipped from the room at once, but Jane laid her hand upon his sleeve.

"My baby?" she asked. "I cannot go without him."

"You do wot Ay tal you," said Anderssen, scowling. "Ay ban halpin' you, so don't you gat too fonny."

When he had gone Jane Clayton sank down upon her berth in utter bewilderment. What was she to do? Suspicions as to the intentions of the Swede swarmed her brain. Might she not be infinitely worse off if she gave herself into his power than she already was?

No, she could be no worse off in

company with the devil himself than with Nikolas Rokoff, for the devil at least bore the reputation of being a gentleman.

She swore a dozen times that she would not leave the Kincaid without her baby, and yet she remained clothed long past her usual hour for retiring, and her blankets were neatly rolled and bound with stout cord, when about midnight there came a stealthy scratching upon the panels of her door.

Swiftly she crossed the room and drew the bolt. Softly the door swung open to admit the muffled figure of the Swede. On one arm he carried a bundle, evidently his blankets. His other hand was raised in a gesture commanding

silence, a grimy forefinger upon his lips.

He came quite close to her.

"Carry this," he said. "Do not make some noise when you see it. It ban you kid."

Quick hands snatched the bundle from the cook, and hungry mother arms folded the sleeping infant to her breast, while hot tears of joy ran down her cheeks and her whole frame shook with the emotion of the moment.

"Come!" said Anderssen. "We got no time to vaste."

He snatched up her bundle of blankets, and outside the cabin door his own as well. Then he led her to the ship's side, steadied her descent of the monkey-ladder, holding the child for her

as she climbed to the waiting boat below. A moment later he had cut the rope that held the small boat to the steamer's side, and, bending silently to the muffled oars, was pulling toward the black shadows up the Ugambi River.

Anderssen rowed on as though quite sure of his ground, and when after half an hour the moon broke through the clouds there was revealed upon their left the mouth of a tributary running into the Ugambi. Up this narrow channel the Swede turned the prow of the small boat.

Jane Clayton wondered if the man knew where he was bound. She did not know that in his capacity as cook he had that day been rowed up this very stream

to a little village where he had bartered with the natives for such provisions as they had for sale, and that he had there arranged the details of his plan for the adventure upon which they were now setting forth.

Even though the moon was full, the surface of the small river was quite dark. The giant trees overhung its narrow banks, meeting in a great arch above the centre of the river. Spanish moss dropped from the gracefully bending limbs, and enormous creepers clambered in riotous profusion from the ground to the loftiest branch, falling in curving loops almost to the water's placid breast.

Now and then the river's surface

would be suddenly broken ahead of them by a huge crocodile, startled by the splashing of the oars, or, snorting and blowing, a family of hippos would dive from a sandy bar to the cool, safe depths of the bottom.

From the dense jungles upon either side came the weird night cries of the carnivora—the maniacal voice of the hyena, the coughing grunt of the panther, the deep and awful roar of the lion. And with them strange, uncanny notes that the girl could not ascribe to any particular night prowler— more terrible because of their mystery.

Huddled in the stern of the boat she sat with her baby strained close to her bosom, and because of that little tender,

helpless thing she was happier tonight than she had been for many a sorrow-ridden day.

Even though she knew not to what fate she was going, or how soon that fate might overtake her, still was she happy and thankful for the moment, however brief, that she might press her baby tightly in her arms. She could scarce wait for the coming of the day that she might look again upon the bright face of her little, black-eyed Jack.

Again and again she tried to strain her eyes through the blackness of the jungle night to have but a tiny peep at those beloved features, but only the dim outline of the baby face rewarded her efforts. Then once more she would

cuddle the warm, little bundle close to her throbbing heart.

It must have been close to three o'clock in the morning that Anderssen brought the boat's nose to the shore before a clearing where could be dimly seen in the waning moonlight a cluster of native huts encircled by a thorn boma.

At the village gate they were admitted by a native woman, the wife of the chief whom Anderssen had paid to assist him. She took them to the chief's hut, but Anderssen said that they would sleep without upon the ground, and so, her duty having been completed, she left them to their own devices.

The Swede, after explaining in his gruff way that the huts were doubtless

filthy and vermin-ridden, spread Jane's blankets on the ground for her, and at a little distance unrolled his own and lay down to sleep.

It was some time before the girl could find a comfortable position upon the hard ground, but at last, the baby in the hollow of her arm, she dropped asleep from utter exhaustion. When she awoke it was broad daylight.

About her were clustered a score of curious natives—mostly men, for among the aborigines it is the male who owns this characteristic in its most exaggerated form. Instinctively Jane Clayton drew the baby more closely to her, though she soon saw that the blacks were far from intending her or the child

any harm.

In fact, one of them offered her a gourd of milk—a filthy, smoke-begrimed gourd, with the ancient rind of long-curdled milk caked in layers within its neck; but the spirit of the giver touched her deeply, and her face lightened for a moment with one of those almost forgotten smiles of radiance that had helped to make her beauty famous both in Baltimore and London.

She took the gourd in one hand, and rather than cause the giver pain raised it to her lips, though for the life of her she could scarce restrain the qualm of nausea that surged through her as the malodorous thing approached her nostrils.

It was Anderssen who came to her rescue, and taking the gourd from her, drank a portion himself, and then returned it to the native with a gift of blue beads.

The sun was shining brightly now, and though the baby still slept, Jane could scarce restrain her impatient desire to have at least a brief glance at the beloved face. The natives had withdrawn at a command from their chief, who now stood talking with Anderssen, a little apart from her.

As she debated the wisdom of risking disturbing the child's slumber by lifting the blanket that now protected its face from the sun, she noted that the cook conversed with the chief in the language

of the Negro.

What a remarkable man the fellow was, indeed! She had thought him ignorant and stupid but a short day before, and now, within the past twenty-four hours, she had learned that he spoke not only English but French as well, and the primitive dialect of the West Coast.

She had thought him shifty, cruel, and untrustworthy, yet in so far as she had reason to believe he had proved himself in every way the contrary since the day before. It scarce seemed credible that he could be serving her from motives purely chivalrous. There must be something deeper in his intentions and plans than he had yet disclosed.

She wondered, and when she looked

at him—at his close- set, shifty eyes and repulsive features, she shuddered, for she was convinced that no lofty characteristics could be hid behind so foul an exterior.

As she was thinking of these things the while she debated the wisdom of uncovering the baby's face, there came a little grunt from the wee bundle in her lap, and then a gurgling coo that set her heart in raptures.

The baby was awake! Now she might feast her eyes upon him.

Quickly she snatched the blanket from before the infant's face; Anderssen was looking at her as she did so.

He saw her stagger to her feet, holding the baby at arm's length from

her, her eyes glued in horror upon the little chubby face and twinkling eyes.

Then he heard her piteous cry as her knees gave beneath her, and she sank to the ground in a swoon.

10. THE SWEDE

As the warriors, clustered thick about Tarzan and Sheeta, realized that it was a flesh-and-blood panther that had interrupted their dance of death, they took heart a trifle, for in the face of all those circling spears even the mighty Sheeta would be doomed.

Rokoff was urging the chief to have his spearmen launch their missiles, and the black was upon the instant of issuing the command, when his eyes strayed beyond Tarzan, following the gaze of the ape- man.

With a yell of terror the chief turned and fled toward the village gate, and as his people looked to see the cause of his fright, they too took to their heels—for

there, lumbering down upon them, their huge forms exaggerated by the play of moonlight and camp fire, came the hideous apes of Akut.

The instant the natives turned to flee the ape-man's savage cry rang out above the shrieks of the blacks, and in answer to it Sheeta and the apes leaped growling after the fugitives. Some of the warriors turned to battle with their enraged antagonists, but before the fiendish ferocity of the fierce beasts they went down to bloody death.

Others were dragged down in their flight, and it was not until the village was empty and the last of the blacks had disappeared into the bush that Tarzan was able to recall his savage pack to his

side. Then it was that he discovered to his chagrin that he could not make one of them, not even the comparatively intelligent Akut, understand that he wished to be freed from the bonds that held him to the stake.

In time, of course, the idea would filter through their thick skulls, but in the meanwhile many things might happen—the blacks might return in force to regain their village; the whites might readily pick them all off with their rifles from the surrounding trees; he might even starve to death before the dull- witted apes realized that he wished them to gnaw through his bonds.

As for Sheeta—the great cat understood even less than the apes; but

yet Tarzan could not but marvel at the remarkable characteristics this beast had evidenced. That it felt real affection for him there seemed little doubt, for now that the blacks were disposed of it walked slowly back and forth about the stake, rubbing its sides against the ape-man's legs and purring like a contented tabby. That it had gone of its own volition to bring the balance of the pack to his rescue, Tarzan could not doubt. His Sheeta was indeed a jewel among beasts.

Mugambi's absence worried the ape-man not a little. He attempted to learn from Akut what had become of the black, fearing that the beasts, freed from the restraint of Tarzan's presence, might

have fallen upon the man and devoured him; but to all his questions the great ape but pointed back in the direction from which they had come out of the jungle.

The night passed with Tarzan still fast bound to the stake, and shortly after dawn his fears were realized in the discovery of naked black figures moving stealthily just within the edge of the jungle about the village. The blacks were returning.

With daylight their courage would be equal to the demands of a charge upon the handful of beasts that had routed them from their rightful abodes. The result of the encounter seemed foregone if the savages could curb their superstitious terror, for against their

overwhelming numbers, their long spears and poisoned arrows, the panther and the apes could not be expected to survive a really determined attack.

That the blacks were preparing for a charge became apparent a few moments later, when they commenced to show themselves in force upon the edge of the clearing, dancing and jumping about as they waved their spears and shouted taunts and fierce warcries toward the village.

These manoeuvres Tarzan knew would continue until the blacks had worked themselves into a state of hysterical courage sufficient to sustain them for a short charge toward the village, and even though he doubted that

they would reach it at the first attempt, he believed that at the second or the third they would swarm through the gateway, when the outcome could not be aught than the extermination of Tarzan's bold, but unarmed and undisciplined, defenders.

Even as he had guessed, the first charge carried the howling warriors but a short distance into the open—a shrill, weird challenge from the ape- man being all that was necessary to send them scurrying back to the bush. For half an hour they pranced and yelled their courage to the sticking-point, and again essayed a charge.

This time they came quite to the village gate, but when Sheeta and the

hideous apes leaped among them they turned screaming in terror, and again fled to the jungle.

Again was the dancing and shouting repeated. This time Tarzan felt no doubt they would enter the village and complete the work that a handful of determined white men would have carried to a successful conclusion at the first attempt.

To have rescue come so close only to be thwarted because he could not make his poor, savage friends understand precisely what he wanted of them was most irritating, but he could not find it in his heart to place blame upon them. They had done their best, and now he was sure they would doubtless remain to die

with him in a fruitless effort to defend him.

The blacks were already preparing for the charge. A few individuals had advanced a short distance toward the village and were exhorting the others to follow them. In a moment the whole savage horde would be racing across the clearing.

Tarzan thought only of the little child somewhere in this cruel, relentless wilderness. His heart ached for the son that he might no longer seek to save—that and the realization of Jane's suffering were all that weighed upon his brave spirit in these that he thought his last moments of life. Succour, all that he could hope for, had come to him in the

instant of his extremity—and failed. There was nothing further for which to hope.

The blacks were half-way across the clearing when Tarzan's attention was attracted by the actions of one of the apes. The beast was glaring toward one of the huts. Tarzan followed his gaze. To his infinite relief and delight he saw the stalwart form of Mugambi racing toward him.

The huge black was panting heavily as though from strenuous physical exertion and nervous excitement. He rushed to Tarzan's side, and as the first of the savages reached the village gate the native's knife severed the last of the cords that bound Tarzan to the stake.

In the street lay the corpses of the savages that had fallen before the pack the night before. From one of these Tarzan seized a spear and knob stick, and with Mugambi at his side and the snarling pack about him, he met the natives as they poured through the gate.

Fierce and terrible was the battle that ensued, but at last the savages were routed, more by terror, perhaps, at sight of a black man and a white fighting in company with a panther and the huge fierce apes of Akut, than because of their inability to overcome the relatively small force that opposed them.

One prisoner fell into the hands of Tarzan, and him the ape-man questioned in an effort to learn what had become of

Rokoff and his party. Promised his liberty in return for the information, the black told all he knew concerning the movements of the Russian.

It seemed that early in the morning their chief had attempted to prevail upon the whites to return with him to the village and with their guns destroy the ferocious pack that had taken possession of it, but Rokoff appeared to entertain even more fears of the giant white man and his strange companions than even the blacks themselves.

Upon no conditions would he consent to returning even within sight of the village. Instead, he took his party hurriedly to the river, where they stole a number of canoes the blacks had hidden

there. The last that had been seen of them they had been paddling strongly upstream, their porters from Kaviri's village wielding the blades.

So once more Tarzan of the Apes with his hideous pack took up his search for the ape-man's son and the pursuit of his abductor.

For weary days they followed through an almost uninhabited country, only to learn at last that they were upon the wrong trail. The little band had been reduced by three, for three of Akut's apes had fallen in the fighting at the village. Now, with Akut, there were five great apes, and Sheeta was there —and Mugambi and Tarzan.

The ape-man no longer heard rumors

even of the three who had preceded Rokoff—the white man and woman and the child. Who the man and woman were he could not guess, but that the child was his was enough to keep him hot upon the trail. He was sure that Rokoff would be following this trio, and so he felt confident that so long as he could keep upon the Russian's trail he would be winning so much nearer to the time he might snatch his son from the dangers and horrors that menaced him.

In retracing their way after losing Rokoff's trail Tarzan picked it up again at a point where the Russian had left the river and taken to the brush in a northerly direction. He could only account for this change on the ground

that the child had been carried away from the river by the two who now had possession of it.

Nowhere along the way, however, could he gain definite information that might assure him positively that the child was ahead of him. Not a single native they questioned had seen or heard of this other party, though nearly all had had direct experience with the Russian or had talked with others who had.

It was with difficulty that Tarzan could find means to communicate with the natives, as the moment their eyes fell upon his companions they fled precipitately into the bush. His only alternative was to go ahead of his pack and waylay an occasional warrior whom

he found alone in the jungle.

One day as he was thus engaged, tracking an unsuspecting savage, he came upon the fellow in the act of hurling a spear at a wounded white man who crouched in a clump of bush at the trail's side. The white was one whom Tarzan had often seen, and whom he recognized at once.

Deep in his memory was implanted those repulsive features—the close-set eyes, the shifty expression, the drooping yellow moustache.

Instantly it occurred to the ape-man that this fellow had not been among those who had accompanied Rokoff at the village where Tarzan had been a prisoner. He had seen them all, and this

fellow had not been there. There could be but one explanation—he it was who had fled ahead of the Russian with the woman and the child—and the woman had been Jane Clayton. He was sure now of the meaning of Rokoff's words.

The ape-man's face went white as he looked upon the pasty, vice- marked countenance of the Swede. Across Tarzan's forehead stood out the broad band of scarlet that marked the scar where, years before, Terkoz had torn a great strip of the ape-man's scalp from his skull in the fierce battle in which Tarzan had sustained his fitness to the kingship of the apes of Kerchak.

The man was his prey—the black should not have him, and with the

thought he leaped upon the warrior, striking down the spear before it could reach its mark. The black, whipping out his knife, turned to do battle with this new enemy, while the Swede, lying in the bush, witnessed a duel, the like of which he had never dreamed to see—a half-naked white man battling with a half-naked black, hand to hand with the crude weapons of primeval man at first, and then with hands and teeth like the primordial brutes from whose loins their forbears sprung.

For a time Anderssen did not recognize the white, and when at last it dawned upon him that he had seen this giant before, his eyes went wide in surprise that this growling, rending beast

could ever have been the well-groomed English gentleman who had been a prisoner aboard the Kincaid.

An English nobleman! He had learned the identity of the Kincaid's prisoners from Lady Greystoke during their flight up the Ugambi. Before, in common with the other members of the crew of the steamer, he had not known who the two might be.

The fight was over. Tarzan had been compelled to kill his antagonist, as the fellow would not surrender.

The Swede saw the white man leap to his feet beside the corpse of his foe, and placing one foot upon the broken neck lift his voice in the hideous challenge of the victorious bull-ape.

Anderssen shuddered. Then Tarzan turned toward him. His face was cold and cruel, and in the grey eyes the Swede read murder.

"Where is my wife?" growled the ape-man. "Where is the child?"

Anderssen tried to reply, but a sudden fit of coughing choked him. There was an arrow entirely through his chest, and as he coughed the blood from his wounded lung poured suddenly from his mouth and nostrils.

Tarzan stood waiting for the paroxysm to pass. Like a bronze image — cold, hard, and relentless—he stood over the helpless man, waiting to wring such information from him as he needed, and then to kill.

Presently the coughing and hemorrhage ceased, and again the wounded man tried to speak. Tarzan knelt near the faintly moving lips.

"The wife and child!" he repeated. "Where are they?"

Anderssen pointed up the trail.

"The Russian—he got them," he whispered.

"How did you come here?" continued Tarzan. "Why are you not with Rokoff?"

"They catch us," replied Anderssen, in a voice so low that the ape-man could just distinguish the words. "They catch us. Ay fight, but my men they all run away. Then they get me when Ay ban vounded. Rokoff he say leave me here for the hyenas. That vas vorse than to

kill. He tak your vife and kid."

"What were you doing with them—where were you taking them?" asked Tarzan, and then fiercely, leaping close to the fellow with fierce eyes blazing with the passion of hate and vengeance that he had with difficulty controlled, "What harm did you do to my wife or child? Speak quick before I kill you! Make your peace with God! Tell me the worst, or I will tear you to pieces with my hands and teeth. You have seen that I can do it!"

A look of wide-eyed surprise overspread Anderssen's face.

"Why," he whispered, "Ay did not hurt them. Ay tried to save them from that Russian. Your vife was kind to me

on the Kincaid, and Ay hear that little baby cry sometimes. Ay got a vife an' kid for my own by Christiania an' Ay couldn't bear for to see them separated an' in Rokoff's hands any more. That vas all. Do Ay look like Ay ban here to hurt them?" he continued after a pause, pointing to the arrow protruding from his breast.

There was something in the man's tone and expression that convinced Tarzan of the truth of his assertions. More weighty than anything else was the fact that Anderssen evidently seemed more hurt than frightened. He knew he was going to die, so Tarzan's threats had little effect upon him; but it was quite apparent that he wished the Englishman

to know the truth and not to wrong him by harbouring the belief that his words and manner indicated that he had entertained.

The ape-man instantly dropped to his knees beside the Swede.

"I am sorry," he said very simply. "I had looked for none but knaves in company with Rokoff. I see that I was wrong. That is past now, and we will drop it for the more important matter of getting you to a place of comfort and looking after your wounds. We must have you on your feet again as soon as possible."

The Swede, smiling, shook his head.

"You go on an' look for the vife an' kid," he said. "Ay ban as gude as dead

already; but"—he hesitated—"Ay hate to think of the hyenas. Von't you finish up this job?"

Tarzan shuddered. A moment ago he had been upon the point of killing this man. Now he could no more have taken his life than he could have taken the life of any of his best friends.

He lifted the Swede's head in his arms to change and ease his position.

Again came a fit of coughing and the terrible hemorrhage. After it was over Anderssen lay with closed eyes.

Tarzan thought that he was dead, until he suddenly raised his eyes to those of the ape-man, sighed, and spoke—in a very low, weak whisper.

"Ay tank it blow purty soon purty

hard!" he said, and died.

11. TAMBUDZA

Tarzan scooped a shallow grave for the Kincaid's cook, beneath whose repulsive exterior had beaten the heart of a chivalrous gentleman. That was all he could do in the cruel jungle for the man who had given his life in the service of his little son and his wife.

Then Tarzan took up again the pursuit of Rokoff. Now that he was positive that the woman ahead of him was indeed Jane, and that she had again fallen into the hands of the Russian, it seemed that with all the incredible speed of his fleet and agile muscles he moved at but a snail's pace.

It was with difficulty that he kept the trail, for there were many paths through

the jungle at this point—crossing and crisscrossing, forking and branching in all directions, and over them all had passed natives innumerable, coming and going. The spoor of the white men was obliterated by that of the native carriers who had followed them, and over all was the spoor of other natives and of wild beasts.

It was most perplexing; yet Tarzan kept on assiduously, checking his sense of sight against his sense of smell, that he might more surely keep to the right trail. But, with all his care, night found him at a point where he was positive that he was on the wrong trail entirely.

He knew that the pack would follow his spoor, and so he had been careful to

make it as distinct as possible, brushing often against the vines and creepers that walled the jungle-path, and in other ways leaving his scent-spoor plainly discernible.

As darkness settled a heavy rain set in, and there was nothing for the baffled ape-man to do but wait in the partial shelter of a huge tree until morning; but the coming of dawn brought no cessation of the torrential downpour.

For a week the sun was obscured by heavy clouds, while violent rain and wind storms obliterated the last remnants of the spoor Tarzan constantly though vainly sought.

During all this time he saw no signs of natives, nor of his own pack, the

members of which he feared had lost his trail during the terrific storm. As the country was strange to him, he had been unable to judge his course accurately, since he had had neither sun by day nor moon nor stars by night to guide him.

When the sun at last broke through the clouds in the fore-noon of the seventh day, it looked down upon an almost frantic ape-man.

For the first time in his life, Tarzan of the Apes had been lost in the jungle. That the experience should have befallen him at such a time seemed cruel beyond expression. Somewhere in this savage land his wife and son lay in the clutches of the arch-fiend Rokoff.

What hideous trials might they not

have undergone during those seven awful days that nature had thwarted him in his endeavours to locate them? Tarzan knew the Russian, in whose power they were, so well that he could not doubt but that the man, filled with rage that Jane had once escaped him, and knowing that Tarzan might be close upon his trail, would wreak without further loss of time whatever vengeance his polluted mind might be able to conceive.

But now that the sun shone once more, the ape-man was still at a loss as to what direction to take. He knew that Rokoff had left the river in pursuit of Anderssen, but whether he would continue inland or return to the Ugambi was a question.

The ape-man had seen that the river at the point he had left it was growing narrow and swift, so that he judged that it could not be navigable even for canoes to any great distance farther toward its source. However, if Rokoff had not returned to the river, in what direction had he proceeded?

From the direction of Anderssen's flight with Jane and the child Tarzan was convinced that the man had purposed attempting the tremendous feat of crossing the continent to Zanzibar; but whether Rokoff would dare so dangerous a journey or not was a question.

Fear might drive him to the attempt now that he knew the manner of horrible

pack that was upon his trail, and that Tarzan of the Apes was following him to wreak upon him the vengeance that he deserved.

At last the ape-man determined to continue toward the northeast in the general direction of German East Africa until he came upon natives from whom he might gain information as to Rokoff's whereabouts.

The second day following the cessation of the rain Tarzan came upon a native village the inhabitants of which fled into the bush the instant their eyes fell upon him. Tarzan, not to be thwarted in any such manner as this, pursued them, and after a brief chase caught up with a young warrior. The fellow was so badly

frightened that he was unable to defend himself, dropping his weapons and falling upon the ground, wide-eyed and screaming as he gazed on his captor.

It was with considerable difficulty that the ape-man quieted the fellow's fears sufficiently to obtain a coherent statement from him as to the cause of his uncalled-for terror.

From him Tarzan learned, by dint of much coaxing, that a party of whites had passed through the village several days before. These men had told them of a terrible white devil that pursued them, warning the natives against it and the frightful pack of demons that accompanied it.

The black had recognized Tarzan as

the white devil from the descriptions given by the whites and their black servants. Behind him he had expected to see a horde of demons disguised as apes and panthers.

In this Tarzan saw the cunning hand of Rokoff. The Russian was attempting to make travel as difficult as possible for him by turning the natives against him in superstitious fear.

The native further told Tarzan that the white man who had led the recent expedition had promised them a fabulous reward if they would kill the white devil. This they had fully intended doing should the opportunity present itself; but the moment they had seen Tarzan their blood had turned to water, as the porters

of the white men had told them would be the case.

Finding the ape-man made no attempt to harm him, the native at last recovered his grasp upon his courage, and, at Tarzan's suggestion, accompanied the white devil back to the village, calling as he went for his fellows to return also, as "the white devil has promised to do you no harm if you come back right away and answer his questions."

One by one the blacks straggled into the village, but that their fears were not entirely allayed was evident from the amount of white that showed about the eyes of the majority of them as they cast constant and apprehensive sidelong glances at the ape-man.

The chief was among the first to return to the village, and as it was he that Tarzan was most anxious to interview, he lost no time in entering into a palaver with the black.

The fellow was short and stout, with an unusually low and degraded countenance and apelike arms. His whole expression denoted deceitfulness.

Only the superstitious terror engendered in him by the stories poured into his ears by the whites and blacks of the Russian's party kept him from leaping upon Tarzan with his warriors and slaying him forthwith, for he and his people were inveterate maneaters. But the fear that he might indeed be a devil, and that out there in the jungle behind

him his fierce demons waited to do his bidding, kept M'ganwazam from putting his desires into action.

Tarzan questioned the fellow closely, and by comparing his statements with those of the young warrior he had first talked with he learned that Rokoff and his safari were in terror-stricken retreat in the direction of the far East Coast.

Many of the Russian's porters had already deserted him. In that very village he had hanged five for theft and attempted desertion. Judging, however, from what the Waganwazam had learned from those of the Russian's blacks who were not too far gone in terror of the brutal Rokoff to fear even to speak of their plans, it was apparent that he

would not travel any great distance before the last of his porters, cooks, tent-boys, gun-bearers, askari, and even his headman, would have turned back into the bush, leaving him to the mercy of the merciless jungle.

M'ganwazam denied that there had been any white woman or child with the party of whites; but even as he spoke Tarzan was convinced that he lied. Several times the ape-man approached the subject from different angles, but never was he successful in surprising the wily cannibal into a direct contradiction of his original statement that there had been no women or children with the party.

Tarzan demanded food of the chief,

and after considerable haggling on the part of the monarch succeeded in obtaining a meal. He then tried to draw out others of the tribe, especially the young man whom he had captured in the bush, but M'ganwazam's presence sealed their lips.

At last, convinced that these people knew a great deal more than they had told him concerning the whereabouts of the Russian and the fate of Jane and the child, Tarzan determined to remain overnight among them in the hope of discovering something further of importance.

When he had stated his decision to the chief he was rather surprised to note the sudden change in the fellow's attitude

toward him. From apparent dislike and suspicion M'ganwazam became a most eager and solicitous host.

Nothing would do but that the ape-man should occupy the best hut in the village, from which M'ganwazam's oldest wife was forthwith summarily ejected, while the chief took up his temporary abode in the hut of one of his younger consorts.

Had Tarzan chanced to recall the fact that a princely reward had been offered the blacks if they should succeed in killing him, he might have more quickly interpreted M'ganwazam's sudden change in front.

To have the white giant sleeping peacefully in one of his own huts would

greatly facilitate the matter of earning the reward, and so the chief was urgent in his suggestions that Tarzan, doubtless being very much fatigued after his travels, should retire early to the comforts of the anything but inviting palace.

As much as the ape-man detested the thought of sleeping within a native hut, he had determined to do so this night, on the chance that he might be able to induce one of the younger men to sit and chat with him before the fire that burned in the centre of the smoke- filled dwelling, and from him draw the truths he sought. So Tarzan accepted the invitation of old M'ganwazam, insisting, however, that he much preferred sharing

a hut with some of the younger men rather than driving the chief's old wife out in the cold.

The toothless old hag grinned her appreciation of this suggestion, and as the plan still better suited the chief's scheme, in that it would permit him to surround Tarzan with a gang of picked assassins, he readily assented, so that presently Tarzan had been installed in a hut close to the village gate.

As there was to be a dance that night in honour of a band of recently returned hunters, Tarzan was left alone in the hut, the young men, as M'ganwazam explained, having to take part in the festivities.

As soon as the ape-man was safely

installed in the trap, M'Ganwazam called about him the young warriors whom he had selected to spend the night with the white devil!

None of them was overly enthusiastic about the plan, since deep in their superstitious hearts lay an exaggerated fear of the strange white giant; but the word of M'ganwazam was law among his people, so not one dared refuse the duty he was called upon to perform.

As M'ganwazam unfolded his plan in whispers to the savages squatting about him the old, toothless hag, to whom Tarzan had saved her hut for the night, hovered about the conspirators ostensibly to replenish the supply of firewood for the blaze about which the

men sat, but really to drink in as much of their conversation as possible.

Tarzan had slept for perhaps an hour or two despite the savage din of the revellers when his keen senses came suddenly alert to a suspiciously stealthy movement in the hut in which he lay. The fire had died down to a little heap of glowing embers, which accentuated rather than relieved the darkness that shrouded the interior of the evil-smelling dwelling, yet the trained senses of the ape-man warned him of another presence creeping almost silently toward him through the gloom.

He doubted that it was one of his hut mates returning from the festivities, for he still heard the wild cries of the

dancers and the din of the tom-toms in the village street without. Who could it be that took such pains to conceal his approach?

As the presence came within reach of him the ape-man bounded lightly to the opposite side of the hut, his spear poised ready at his side.

"Who is it," he asked, "that creeps upon Tarzan of the Apes, like a hungry lion out of the darkness?"

"Silence, bwana!" replied an old cracked voice. "It is Tambudza— she whose hut you would not take, and thus drive an old woman out into the cold night."

"What does Tambudza want of Tarzan of the Apes?" asked the ape- man.

"You were kind to me to whom none is now kind, and I have come to warn you in payment of your kindness," answered the old hag.

"Warn me of what?"

"M'ganwazam has chosen the young men who are to sleep in the hut with you," replied Tambudza. "I was near as he talked with them, and heard him issuing his instructions to them. When the dance is run well into the morning they are to come to the hut.

"If you are awake they are to pretend that they have come to sleep, but if you sleep it is M'ganwazam's command that you be killed. If you are not then asleep they will wait quietly beside you until you do sleep, and then they will all fall

upon you together and slay you. M'ganwazam is determined to win the reward the white man has offered."

"I had forgotten the reward," said Tarzan, half to himself, and then he added, "How may M'ganwazam hope to collect the reward now that the white men who are my enemies have left his country and gone he knows not where?"

"Oh, they have not gone far," replied Tambudza. "M'ganwazam knows where they camp. His runners could quickly overtake them—they move slowly."

"Where are they?" asked Tarzan.

"Do you wish to come to them?" asked Tambudza in way of reply.

Tarzan nodded.

"I cannot tell you where they lie so that you could come to the place yourself, but I could lead you to them, bwana."

In their interest in the conversation neither of the speakers had noticed the little figure which crept into the darkness of the hut behind them, nor did they see it when it slunk noiselessly out again.

It was little Buulaoo, the chief's son by one of his younger wives— a vindictive, degenerate little rascal who hated Tambudza, and was ever seeking opportunities to spy upon her and report her slightest breach of custom to his father.

"Come, then," said Tarzan quickly, "let us be on our way."

This Buulaoo did not hear, for he was already legging it up the village street to where his hideous sire guzzled native beer, and watched the evolutions of the frantic dancers leaping high in the air and cavorting wildly in their hysterical capers.

So it happened that as Tarzan and Tambudza sneaked warily from the village and melted into the Stygian darkness of the jungle two lithe runners took their way in the same direction, though by another trail.

When they had come sufficiently far from the village to make it safe for them to speak above a whisper, Tarzan asked the old woman if she had seen aught of a white woman and a little child.

"Yes, bwana," replied Tambudza, "there was a woman with them and a little child—a little white piccaninny. It died here in our village of the fever and they buried it!"

12. A BLACK SCOUNDREL

When Jane Clayton regained consciousness she saw Anderssen standing over her, holding the baby in his arms. As her eyes rested upon them an expression of misery and horror overspread her countenance.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "You ban sick?"

"Where is my baby?" she cried, ignoring his questions.

Anderssen held out the chubby infant, but she shook her head.

"It is not mine," she said. "You knew that it was not mine. You are a devil like the Russian."

Anderssen's blue eyes stretched in surprise.

"Not yours!" he exclaimed. "You tole me the kid aboard the Kincaid ban your kid."

"Not this one," replied Jane dully. "The other. Where is the other? There must have been two. I did not know about this one."

"There vasn't no other kid. Ay tank this ban yours. Ay am very sorry."

Anderssen fidgeted about, standing first on one foot and then upon the other. It was perfectly evident to Jane that he was honest in his protestations of ignorance of the true identity of the child.

Presently the baby commenced to

crow, and bounce up and down in the Swede's arms, at the same time leaning forward with little hands out-reaching toward the young woman.

She could not withstand the appeal, and with a low cry she sprang to her feet and gathered the baby to her breast.

For a few minutes she wept silently, her face buried in the baby's soiled little dress. The first shock of disappointment that the tiny thing had not been her beloved Jack was giving way to a great hope that after all some miracle had occurred to snatch her baby from Rokoff's hands at the last instant before the Kincaid sailed from England.

Then, too, there was the mute appeal of this wee waif alone and unloved in

the midst of the horrors of the savage jungle. It was this thought more than any other that had sent her mother's heart out to the innocent babe, while still she suffered from disappointment that she had been deceived in its identity.

"Have you no idea whose child this is?" she asked Anderssen.

The man shook his head.

"Not now," he said. "If he ain't ban your kid, Ay don' know whose kid he do ban. Rokoff said it was yours. Ay tank he tank so, too.

"What do we do with it now? Ay can't go back to the Kincaid. Rokoff would have me shot; but you can go back. Ay take you to the sea, and then some of these black men they take you to the ship

—eh?"

"No! no!" cried Jane. "Not for the world. I would rather die than fall into the hands of that man again. No, let us go on and take this poor little creature with us. If God is willing we shall be saved in one way or another."

So they again took up their flight through the wilderness, taking with them a half-dozen of the Mosulas to carry provisions and the tents that Anderssen had smuggled aboard the small boat in preparation for the attempted escape.

The days and nights of torture that the young woman suffered were so merged into one long, unbroken nightmare of hideousness that she soon lost all track of time. Whether they had been

wandering for days or years she could not tell. The one bright spot in that eternity of fear and suffering was the little child whose tiny hands had long since fastened their softly groping fingers firmly about her heart.

In a way the little thing took the place and filled the aching void that the theft of her own baby had left. It could never be the same, of course, but yet, day by day, she found her mother-love, enveloping the waif more closely until she sometimes sat with closed eyes lost in the sweet imagining that the little bundle of humanity at her breast was truly her own.

For some time their progress inland was extremely slow. Word came to them

from time to time through natives passing from the coast on hunting excursions that Rokoff had not yet guessed the direction of their flight. This, and the desire to make the journey as light as possible for the gently bred woman, kept Anderssen to a slow advance of short and easy marches with many rests.

The Swede insisted upon carrying the child while they travelled, and in countless other ways did what he could to help Jane Clayton conserve her strength. He had been terribly chagrined on discovering the mistake he had made in the identity of the baby, but once the young woman became convinced that his motives were truly chivalrous she would not permit him longer to upbraid himself

for the error that he could not by any means have avoided.

At the close of each day's march Anderssen saw to the erection of a comfortable shelter for Jane and the child. Her tent was always pitched in the most favourable location. The thorn boma round it was the strongest and most impregnable that the Mosula could construct.

Her food was the best that their limited stores and the rifle of the Swede could provide, but the thing that touched her heart the closest was the gentle consideration and courtesy which the man always accorded her.

That such nobility of character could lie beneath so repulsive an exterior

never ceased to be a source of wonder and amazement to her, until at last the innate chivalry of the man, and his unfailing kindliness and sympathy transformed his appearance in so far as Jane was concerned until she saw only the sweetness of his character mirrored in his countenance.

They had commenced to make a little better progress when word reached them that Rokoff was but a few marches behind them, and that he had at last discovered the direction of their flight. It was then that Anderssen took to the river, purchasing a canoe from a chief whose village lay a short distance from the Ugambi upon the bank of a tributary.

Thereafter the little party of fugitives

fled up the broad Ugambi, and so rapid had their flight become that they no longer received word of their pursuers. At the end of canoe navigation upon the river, they abandoned their canoe and took to the jungle. Here progress became at once arduous, slow, and dangerous.

The second day after leaving the Ugambi the baby fell ill with fever. Anderssen knew what the outcome must be, but he had not the heart to tell Jane Clayton the truth, for he had seen that the young woman had come to love the child almost as passionately as though it had been her own flesh and blood.

As the baby's condition precluded farther advance, Anderssen withdrew a little from the main trail he had been

following and built a camp in a natural clearing on the bank of a little river.

Here Jane devoted her every moment to caring for the tiny sufferer, and as though her sorrow and anxiety were not all that she could bear, a further blow came with the sudden announcement of one of the Mosula porters who had been foraging in the jungle adjacent that Rokoff and his party were camped quite close to them, and were evidently upon their trail to this little nook which all had thought so excellent a hiding-place.

This information could mean but one thing, and that they must break camp and fly onward regardless of the baby's condition. Jane Clayton knew the traits of the Russian well enough to be

positive that he would separate her from the child the moment that he recaptured them, and she knew that separation would mean the immediate death of the baby.

As they stumbled forward through the tangled vegetation along an old and almost overgrown game trail the Mosula porters deserted them one by one.

The men had been staunch enough in their devotion and loyalty as long as they were in no danger of being overtaken by the Russian and his party. They had heard, however, so much of the atrocious disposition of Rokoff that they had grown to hold him in mortal terror, and now that they knew he was close upon them their timid hearts would

fortify them no longer, and as quickly as possible they deserted the three whites.

Yet on and on went Anderssen and the girl. The Swede went ahead, to hew a way through the brush where the path was entirely overgrown, so that on this march it was necessary that the young woman carry the child.

All day they marched. Late in the afternoon they realized that they had failed. Close behind them they heard the noise of a large safari advancing along the trail which they had cleared for their pursuers.

When it became quite evident that they must be overtaken in a short time Anderssen hid Jane behind a large tree, covering her and the child with brush.

"There is a village about a mile farther on," he said to her. "The Mosula told me its location before they deserted us. Ay try to lead the Russian off your trail, then you go on to the village. Ay tank the chief ban friendly to white men—the Mosula tal me he ban. Anyhow, that was all we can do.

"After while you get chief to tak you down by the Mosula village at the sea again, an' after a while a ship is sure to put into the mouth of the Ugambi. Then you be all right. Gude-by an' gude luck to you, lady!"

"But where are you going, Sven?" asked Jane. "Why can't you hide here and go back to the sea with me?"

"Ay gotta tal the Russian you ban

dead, so that he don't luke for you no more," and Anderssen grinned.

"Why can't you join me then after you have told him that?" insisted the girl.

Anderssen shook his head.

"Ay don't tank Ay join anybody any more after Ay tal the Russian you ban dead," he said.

"You don't mean that you think he will kill you?" asked Jane, and yet in her heart she knew that that was exactly what the great scoundrel would do in revenge for his having been thwarted by the Swede. Anderssen did not reply, other than to warn her to silence and point toward the path along which they had just come.

"I don't care," whispered Jane

Clayton. "I shall not let you die to save me if I can prevent it in any way. Give me your revolver. I can use that, and together we may be able to hold them off until we can find some means of escape."

"It won't work, lady," replied Anderssen. "They would only get us both, and then Ay couldn't do you no good at all. Think of the kid, lady, and what it would be for you both to fall into Rokoff's hands again. For his sake you must do what Ay say. Here, take my rifle and ammunition; you may need them."

He shoved the gun and bandoleer into the shelter beside Jane. Then he was gone.

She watched him as he returned along

the path to meet the oncoming safari of the Russian. Soon a turn in the trail hid him from view.

Her first impulse was to follow. With the rifle she might be of assistance to him, and, further, she could not bear the terrible thought of being left alone at the mercy of the fearful jungle without a single friend to aid her.

She started to crawl from her shelter with the intention of running after Anderssen as fast as she could. As she drew the baby close to her she glanced down into its little face.

How red it was! How unnatural the little thing looked. She raised the cheek to hers. It was fiery hot with fever!

With a little gasp of terror Jane

Clayton rose to her feet in the jungle path. The rifle and bandoleer lay forgotten in the shelter beside her. Anderssen was forgotten, and Rokoff, and her great peril.

All that rioted through her fear-mad brain was the fearful fact that this little, helpless child was stricken with the terrible jungle-fever, and that she was helpless to do aught to allay its sufferings—sufferings that were sure to coming during ensuing intervals of partial consciousness.

Her one thought was to find some one who could help her—some woman who had had children of her own—and with the thought came recollection of the friendly village of which Anderssen had

spoken. If she could but reach it - in time!

There was no time to be lost. Like a startled antelope she turned and fled up the trail in the direction Anderssen had indicated.

From far behind came the sudden shouting of men, the sound of shots, and then silence. She knew that Anderssen had met the Russian.

A half-hour later she stumbled, exhausted, into a little thatched village. Instantly she was surrounded by men, women, and children. Eager, curious, excited natives plied her with a hundred questions, no one of which she could understand or answer.

All that she could do was to point

tearfully at the baby, now wailing piteously in her arms, and repeat over and over, "Fever—fever— fever."

The blacks did not understand her words, but they saw the cause of her trouble, and soon a young woman had pulled her into a hut and with several others was doing her poor best to quiet the child and allay its agony.

The witch doctor came and built a little fire before the infant, upon which he boiled some strange concoction in a small earthen pot, making weird passes above it and mumbling strange, monotonous chants. Presently he dipped a zebra's tail into the brew, and with further mutterings and incantations sprinkled a few drops of the liquid over

the baby's face.

After he had gone the women sat about and moaned and wailed until Jane thought that she should go mad; but, knowing that they were doing it all out of the kindness of their hearts, she endured the frightful waking nightmare of those awful hours in dumb and patient suffering.

It must have been well toward midnight that she became conscious of a sudden commotion in the village. She heard the voices of the natives raised in controversy, but she could not understand the words.

Presently she heard footsteps approaching the hut in which she squatted before a bright fire with the

baby on her lap. The little thing lay very still now, its lids, half-raised, showed the pupils horribly upturned.

Jane Clayton looked into the little face with fear-haunted eyes. It was not her baby—not her flesh and blood—but how close, how dear the tiny, helpless thing had become to her. Her heart, bereft of its own, had gone out to this poor, little, nameless waif, and lavished upon it all the love that had been denied her during the long, bitter weeks of her captivity aboard the Kincaid.

She saw that the end was near, and though she was terrified at contemplation of her loss, still she hoped that it would come quickly now and end the sufferings of the little victim.

The footsteps she had heard without the hut now halted before the door. There was a whispered colloquy, and a moment later M'ganwazam, chief of the tribe, entered. She had seen but little of him, as the women had taken her in hand almost as soon as she had entered the village.

M'ganwazam, she now saw, was an evil-appearing savage with every mark of brutal degeneracy writ large upon his bestial countenance. To Jane Clayton he looked more gorilla than human. He tried to converse with her, but without success, and finally he called to some one without.

In answer to his summons another Negro entered—a man of very different

appearance from M'ganwazam—so different, in fact, that Jane Clayton immediately decided that he was of another tribe. This man acted as interpreter, and almost from the first question that M'ganwazam put to her, Jane felt an intuitive conviction that the savage was attempting to draw information from her for some ulterior motive.

She thought it strange that the fellow should so suddenly have become interested in her plans, and especially in her intended destination when her journey had been interrupted at his village.

Seeing no reason for withholding the information, she told him the truth; but

when he asked if she expected to meet her husband at the end of the trip, she shook her head negatively.

Then he told her the purpose of his visit, talking through the interpreter.

"I have just learned," he said, "from some men who live by the side of the great water, that your husband followed you up the Ugambi for several marches, when he was at last set upon by natives and killed. Therefore I have told you this that you might not waste your time in a long journey if you expected to meet your husband at the end of it; but instead could turn and retrace your steps to the coast."

Jane thanked M'ganwazam for his kindness, though her heart was numb

with suffering at this new blow. She who had suffered so much was at last beyond reach of the keenest of misery's pangs, for her senses were numbed and calloused.

With bowed head she sat staring with unseeing eyes upon the face of the baby in her lap. M'ganwazam had left the hut. Sometime later she heard a noise at the entrance—another had entered. One of the women sitting opposite her threw a faggot upon the dying embers of the fire between them.

With a sudden flare it burst into renewed flame, lighting up the hut's interior as though by magic.

The flame disclosed to Jane Clayton's horrified gaze that the baby was quite

dead. How long it had been so she could not guess.

A choking lump rose to her throat, her head drooped in silent misery upon the little bundle that she had caught suddenly to her breast.

For a moment the silence of the hut was unbroken. Then the native woman broke into a hideous wail.

A man coughed close before Jane Clayton and spoke her name.

With a start she raised her eyes to look into the sardonic countenance of Nikolas Rokoff.

13. ESCAPE

For a moment Rokoff stood sneering down upon Jane Clayton, then his eyes fell to the little bundle in her lap. Jane had drawn one corner of the blanket over the child's face, so that to one who did not know the truth it seemed but to be sleeping.

"You have gone to a great deal of unnecessary trouble," said Rokoff, "to bring the child to this village. If you had attended to your own affairs I should have brought it here myself.

"You would have been spared the dangers and fatigue of the journey. But I suppose I must thank you for relieving me of the inconvenience of having to care for a young infant on the march.

"This is the village to which the child was destined from the first. M'ganwazam will rear him carefully, making a good cannibal of him, and if you ever chance to return to civilization it will doubtless afford you much food for thought as you compare the luxuries and comforts of your life with the details of the life your son is living in the village of the Waganwazam.

"Again I thank you for bringing him here for me, and now I must ask you to surrender him to me, that I may turn him over to his foster parents." As he concluded Rokoff held out his hands for the child, a nasty grin of vindictiveness upon his lips.

To his surprise Jane Clayton rose

and, without a word of protest, laid the little bundle in his arms.

"Here is the child," she said. "Thank God he is beyond your power to harm."

Grasping the import of her words, Rokoff snatched the blanket from the child's face to seek confirmation of his fears. Jane Clayton watched his expression closely.

She had been puzzled for days for an answer to the question of Rokoff's knowledge of the child's identity. If she had been in doubt before the last shred of that doubt was wiped away as she witnessed the terrible anger of the Russian as he looked upon the dead face of the baby and realized that at the last moment his dearest wish for vengeance

had been thwarted by a higher power.

Almost throwing the body of the child back into Jane Clayton's arms, Rokoff stamped up and down the hut, pounding the air with his clenched fists and cursing terribly. At last he halted in front of the young woman, bringing his face down close to hers.

"You are laughing at me," he shrieked. "You think that you have beaten me —eh? I'll show you, as I have shown the miserable ape you call 'husband,' what it means to interfere with the plans of Nikolas Rokoff.

"You have robbed me of the child. I cannot make him the son of a cannibal chief, but"—and he paused as though to let the full meaning of his threat sink

deep—"I can make the mother the wife of a cannibal, and that I shall do—after I have finished with her myself."

If he had thought to wring from Jane Clayton any sign of terror he failed miserably. She was beyond that. Her brain and nerves were numb to suffering and shock.

To his surprise a faint, almost happy smile touched her lips. She was thinking with thankful heart that this poor little corpse was not that of her own wee Jack, and that—best of all—Rokoff evidently did not know the truth.

She would have liked to have flaunted the fact in his face, but she dared not. If he continued to believe that the child had been hers, so much safer would be the

real Jack wherever he might be. She had, of course, no knowledge of the whereabouts of her little son—she did not know, even, that he still lived, and yet there was the chance that he might.

It was more than possible that without Rokoff's knowledge this child had been substituted for hers by one of the Russian's confederates, and that even now her son might be safe with friends in London, where there were many, both able and willing, to have paid any ransom which the traitorous conspirator might have asked for the safe release of Lord Greystoke's son.

She had thought it all out a hundred times since she had discovered that the baby which Anderssen had placed in her

arms that night upon the Kincaid was not her own, and it had been a constant and gnawing source of happiness to her to dream the whole fantasy through in its every detail.

No, the Russian must never know that this was not her baby. She realized that her position was hopeless—with Anderssen and her husband dead there was no one in all the world with a desire to succour her who knew where she might be found.

Rokoff's threat, she realized, was no idle one. That he would do, or attempt to do, all that he had promised, she was perfectly sure; but at the worst it meant but a little earlier release from the hideous anguish that she had been

enduring. She must find some way to take her own life before the Russian could harm her further.

Just now she wanted time—time to think and prepare herself for the end. She felt that she could not take the last, awful step until she had exhausted every possibility of escape. She did not care to live unless she might find her way back to her own child, but slight as such a hope appeared she would not admit its impossibility until the last moment had come, and she faced the fearful reality of choosing between the final alternatives — Nikolas Rokoff on one hand and self-destruction upon the other.

"Go away!" she said to the Russian. "Go away and leave me in peace with

my dead. Have you not brought sufficient misery and anguish upon me without attempting to harm me further? What wrong have I ever done you that you should persist in persecuting me?"

"You are suffering for the sins of the monkey you chose when you might have had the love of a gentleman—of Nikolas Rokoff," he replied. "But where is the use in discussing the matter? We shall bury the child here, and you will return with me at once to my own camp. Tomorrow I shall bring you back and turn you over to your new husband—the lovely M'ganwazam. Come!"

He reached out for the child. Jane, who was on her feet now, turned away from him.

"I shall bury the body," she said. "Send some men to dig a grave outside the village."

Rokoff was anxious to have the thing over and get back to his camp with his victim. He thought he saw in her apathy a resignation to her fate. Stepping outside the hut, he motioned her to follow him, and a moment later, with his men, he escorted Jane beyond the village, where beneath a great tree the blacks scooped a shallow grave.

Wrapping the tiny body in a blanket, Jane laid it tenderly in the black hole, and, turning her head that she might not see the moldy earth falling upon the pitiful little bundle, she breathed a prayer beside the grave of the nameless

waif that had won its way to the innermost recesses of her heart.

Then, dry-eyed but suffering, she rose and followed the Russian through the Stygian blackness of the jungle, along the winding, leafy corridor that led from the village of M'ganwazam, the black cannibal, to the camp of Nikolas Rokoff, the white fiend.

Beside them, in the impenetrable thickets that fringed the path, rising to arch above it and shut out the moon, the girl could hear the stealthy, muffled footfalls of great beasts, and ever round about them rose the deafening roars of hunting lions, until the earth trembled to the mighty sound.

The porters lighted torches now and

waved them upon either hand to frighten off the beasts of prey. Rokoff urged them to greater speed, and from the quavering note in his voice Jane Clayton knew that he was weak from terror.

The sounds of the jungle night recalled most vividly the days and nights that she had spent in a similar jungle with her forest god—with the fearless and unconquerable Tarzan of the Apes. Then there had been no thoughts of terror, though the jungle noises were new to her, and the roar of a lion had seemed the most awe-inspiring sound upon the great earth.

How different would it be now if she knew that he was somewhere there in the wilderness, seeking her! Then, indeed,

would there be that for which to live, and every reason to believe that succour was close at hand—but he was dead! It was incredible that it should be so.

There seemed no place in death for that great body and those mighty thews. Had Rokoff been the one to tell her of her lord's passing she would have known that he lied. There could be no reason, she thought, why M'ganwazam should have deceived her. She did not know that the Russian had talked with the savage a few minutes before the chief had come to her with his tale.

At last they reached the rude boma that Rokoff's porters had thrown up round the Russian's camp. Here they found all in turmoil. She did not know

what it was all about, but she saw that Rokoff was very angry, and from bits of conversation which she could translate she gleaned that there had been further desertions while he had been absent, and that the deserters had taken the bulk of his food and ammunition.

When he had done venting his rage upon those who remained he returned to where Jane stood under guard of a couple of his white sailors. He grasped her roughly by the arm and started to drag her toward his tent. The girl struggled and fought to free herself, while the two sailors stood by, laughing at the rare treat.

Rokoff did not hesitate to use rough methods when he found that he was to

have difficulty in carrying out his designs. Repeatedly he struck Jane Clayton in the face, until at last, half-conscious, she was dragged within his tent.

Rokoff's boy had lighted the Russian's lamp, and now at a word from his master he made himself scarce. Jane had sunk to the floor in the middle of the enclosure. Slowly her numbed senses were returning to her and she was commencing to think very fast indeed. Quickly her eyes ran round the interior of the tent, taking in every detail of its equipment and contents.

Now the Russian was lifting her to her feet and attempting to drag her to the camp cot that stood at one side of the

tent. At his belt hung a heavy revolver. Jane Clayton's eyes riveted themselves upon it. Her palm itched to grasp the huge butt. She feigned again to swoon, but through her half-closed lids she waited her opportunity.

It came just as Rokoff was lifting her upon the cot. A noise at the tent door behind him brought his head quickly about and away from the girl. The butt of the gun was not an inch from her hand. With a single, lightning-like move she snatched the weapon from its holster, and at the same instant Rokoff turned back toward her, realizing his peril.

She did not dare fire for fear the shot would bring his people about him, and with Rokoff dead she would fall into

hands no better than his and to a fate probably even worse than he alone could have imagined. The memory of the two brutes who stood and laughed as Rokoff struck her was still vivid.

As the rage and fear-filled countenance of the Slav turned toward her Jane Clayton raised the heavy revolver high above the pasty face and with all her strength dealt the man a terrific blow between the eyes.

Without a sound he sank, limp and unconscious, to the ground. A moment later the girl stood beside him—for a moment at least free from the menace of his lust.

Outside the tent she again heard the noise that had distracted Rokoff's

attention. What it was she did not know, but, fearing the return of the servant and the discovery of her deed, she stepped quickly to the camp table upon which burned the oil lamp and extinguished the smudgy, evil-smelling flame.

In the total darkness of the interior she paused for a moment to collect her wits and plan for the next step in her venture for freedom.

About her was a camp of enemies. Beyond these foes a black wilderness of savage jungle peopled by hideous beasts of prey and still more hideous human beasts.

There was little or no chance that she could survive even a few days of the constant dangers that would confront her

there; but the knowledge that she had already passed through so many perils unscathed, and that somewhere out in the faraway world a little child was doubtless at that very moment crying for her, filled her with determination to make the effort to accomplish the seemingly impossible and cross that awful land of horror in search of the sea and the remote chance of succour she might find there.

Rokoff's tent stood almost exactly in the centre of the boma. Surrounding it were the tents and shelters of his white companions and the natives of his safari. To pass through these and find egress through the boma seemed a task too fraught with insurmountable obstacles to

warrant even the slightest consideration, and yet there was no other way.

To remain in the tent until she should be discovered would be to set at naught all that she had risked to gain her freedom, and so with stealthy step and every sense alert she approached the back of the tent to set out upon the first stage of her adventure.

Groping along the rear of the canvas wall, she found that there was no opening there. Quickly she returned to the side of the unconscious Russian. In his belt her groping fingers came upon the hilt of a long hunting-knife, and with this she cut a hole in the back wall of the tent.

Silently she stepped without. To her

immense relief she saw that the camp was apparently asleep. In the dim and flickering light of the dying fires she saw but a single sentry, and he was dozing upon his haunches at the opposite side of the enclosure.

Keeping the tent between him and herself, she crossed between the small shelters of the native porters to the boma wall beyond.

Outside, in the darkness of the tangled jungle, she could hear the roaring of lions, the laughing of hyenas, and the countless, nameless noises of the midnight jungle.

For a moment she hesitated, trembling. The thought of the prowling beasts out there in the darkness was

appalling. Then, with a sudden brave toss of her head, she attacked the thorny boma wall with her delicate hands. Torn and bleeding though they were, she worked on breathlessly until she had made an opening through which she could worm her body, and at last she stood outside the enclosure.

Behind her lay a fate worse than death, at the hands of human beings.

Before her lay an almost certain fate —but it was only death —sudden, merciful, and honourable death.

Without a tremor and without regret she darted away from the camp, and a moment later the mysterious jungle had closed about her.

14. ALONE IN THE JUNGLE

Tambudza, leading Tarzan of the Apes toward the camp of the Russian, moved very slowly along the winding jungle path, for she was old and her legs stiff with rheumatism.

So it was that the runners dispatched by M'ganwazam to warn Rokoff that the white giant was in his village and that he would be slain that night reached the Russian's camp before Tarzan and his ancient guide had covered half the distance.

The guides found the white man's camp in a turmoil. Rokoff had that morning been discovered stunned and

bleeding within his tent. When he had recovered his senses and realized that Jane Clayton had escaped, his rage was boundless.

Rushing about the camp with his rifle, he had sought to shoot down the native sentries who had allowed the young woman to elude their vigilance, but several of the other whites, realizing that they were already in a precarious position owing to the numerous desertions that Rokoff's cruelty had brought about, seized and disarmed him.

Then came the messengers from M'ganwazam, but scarce had they told their story and Rokoff was preparing to depart with them for their village when other runners, panting from the exertions

of their swift flight through the jungle, rushed breathless into the firelight, crying that the great white giant had escaped from M'ganwazam and was already on his way to wreak vengeance against his enemies.

Instantly confusion reigned within the encircling boma. The blacks belonging to Rokoff's safari were terror-stricken at the thought of the proximity of the white giant who hunted through the jungle with a fierce pack of apes and panthers at his heels.

Before the whites realized what had happened the superstitious fears of the natives had sent them scurrying into the bush—their own carriers as well as the messengers from M'ganwazam—but

even in their haste they had not neglected to take with them every article of value upon which they could lay their hands.

Thus Rokoff and the seven white sailors found themselves deserted and robbed in the midst of a wilderness.

The Russian, following his usual custom, berated his companions, laying all the blame upon their shoulders for the events which had led up to the almost hopeless condition in which they now found themselves; but the sailors were in no mood to brook his insults and his cursing.

In the midst of this tirade one of them drew a revolver and fired point-blank at the Russian. The fellow's aim was poor, but his act so terrified Rokoff that he

turned and fled for his tent.

As he ran his eyes chanced to pass beyond the boma to the edge of the forest, and there he caught a glimpse of that which sent his craven heart cold with a fear that almost expunged his terror of the seven men at his back, who by this time were all firing in hate and revenge at his retreating figure.

What he saw was the giant figure of an almost naked white man emerging from the bush.

Darting into his tent, the Russian did not halt in his flight, but kept right on through the rear wall, taking advantage of the long slit that Jane Clayton had made the night before.

The terror-stricken Muscovite

scurried like a hunted rabbit through the hole that still gaped in the boma's wall at the point where his own prey had escaped, and as Tarzan approached the camp upon the opposite side Rokoff disappeared into the jungle in the wake of Jane Clayton.

As the ape-man entered the boma with old Tambudza at his elbow the seven sailors, recognizing him, turned and fled in the opposite direction. Tarzan saw that Rokoff was not among them, and so he let them go their way— his business was with the Russian, whom he expected to find in his tent. As to the sailors, he was sure that the jungle would exact from them expiation for their villainies, nor, doubtless, was he wrong, for his

were the last white man's eyes to rest upon any of them.

Finding Rokoff's tent empty, Tarzan was about to set out in search of the Russian when Tambudza suggested to him that the departure of the white man could only have resulted from word reaching him from M'ganwazam that Tarzan was in his village.

"He has doubtless hastened there," argued the old woman. "If you would find him let us return at once."

Tarzan himself thought that this would probably prove to be the fact, so he did not waste time in an endeavour to locate the Russian's trail, but, instead, set out briskly for the village of M'ganwazam, leaving Tambudza to plod slowly in his

wake.

His one hope was that Jane was still safe and with Rokoff. If this was the case, it would be but a matter of an hour or more before he should be able to wrest her from the Russian.

He knew now that M'ganwazam was treacherous and that he might have to fight to regain possession of his wife. He wished that Mugambi, Sheeta, Akut, and the balance of the pack were with him, for he realized that single-handed it would be no child's play to bring Jane safely from the clutches of two such scoundrels as Rokoff and the wily M'ganwazam.

To his surprise he found no sign of either Rokoff or Jane in the village, and

as he could not trust the word of the chief, he wasted no time in futile inquiry. So sudden and unexpected had been his return, and so quickly had he vanished into the jungle after learning that those he sought were not among the Waganwazam, that old M'ganwazam had no time to prevent his going.

Swinging through the trees, he hastened back to the deserted camp he had so recently left, for here, he knew, was the logical place to take up the trail of Rokoff and Jane.

Arrived at the boma, he circled carefully about the outside of the enclosure until, opposite a break in the thorny wall, he came to indications that something had recently passed into the

jungle. His acute sense of smell told him that both of those he sought had fled from the camp in this direction, and a moment later he had taken up the trail and was following the faint spoor.

Far ahead of him a terror-stricken young woman was slinking along a narrow game-trail, fearful that the next moment would bring her face to face with some savage beast or equally savage man. As she ran on, hoping against hope that she had hit upon the direction that would lead her eventually to the great river, she came suddenly upon a familiar spot.

At one side of the trail, beneath a giant tree, lay a little heap of loosely piled brush—to her dying day that little

spot of jungle would be indelibly impressed upon her memory. It was where Anderssen had hidden her - where he had given up his life in the vain effort to save her from Rokoff.

At sight of it she recalled the rifle and ammunition that the man had thrust upon her at the last moment. Until now she had forgotten them entirely. Still clutched in her hand was the revolver she had snatched from Rokoff's belt, but that could contain at most not over six cartridges— not enough to furnish her with food and protection both on the long journey to the sea.

With bated breath she groped beneath the little mound, scarce daring to hope that the treasure remained where she had

left it; but, to her infinite relief and joy, her hand came at once upon the barrel of the heavy weapon and then upon the bandoleer of cartridges.

As she threw the latter about her shoulder and felt the weight of the big game-gun in her hand a sudden sense of security suffused her. It was with new hope and a feeling almost of assured success that she again set forward upon her journey.

That night she slept in the crotch of a tree, as Tarzan had so often told her that he was accustomed to doing, and early the next morning was upon her way again. Late in the afternoon, as she was about to cross a little clearing, she was startled at the sight of a huge ape coming

from the jungle upon the opposite side.

The wind was blowing directly across the clearing between them, and Jane lost no time in putting herself downwind from the huge creature. Then she hid in a clump of heavy bush and watched, holding the rifle ready for instant use.

To her consternation she saw that the apes were pausing in the centre of the clearing. They came together in a little knot, where they stood looking backward, as though in expectation of the coming of others of their tribe. Jane wished that they would go on, for she knew that at any moment some little, eddying gust of wind might carry her scent down to their nostrils, and then

what would the protection of her rifle amount to in the face of those gigantic muscles and mighty fangs?

Her eyes moved back and forth between the apes and the edge of the jungle toward which they were gazing until at last she perceived the object of their halt and the thing that they awaited. They were being stalked.

Of this she was positive, as she saw the lithe, sinewy form of a panther glide noiselessly from the jungle at the point at which the apes had emerged but a moment before.

Quickly the beast trotted across the clearing toward the anthropoids. Jane wondered at their apparent apathy, and a moment later her wonder turned to

amazement as she saw the great cat come quite close to the apes, who appeared entirely unconcerned by its presence, and, squatting down in their midst, fell assiduously to the business of preening, which occupies most of the waking hours of the cat family.

If the young woman was surprised by the sight of these natural enemies fraternizing, it was with emotions little short of fear for her own sanity that she presently saw a tall, muscular warrior enter the clearing and join the group of savage beasts assembled there.

At first sight of the man she had been positive that he would be torn to pieces, and she had half risen from her shelter, raising her rifle to her shoulder to do

what she could to avert the man's terrible fate.

Now she saw that he seemed actually conversing with the beasts— issuing orders to them.

Presently the entire company filed on across the clearing and disappeared in the jungle upon the opposite side.

With a gasp of mingled incredulity and relief Jane Clayton staggered to her feet and fled on away from the terrible horde that had just passed her, while a half-mile behind her another individual, following the same trail as she, lay frozen with terror behind an ant- hill as the hideous band passed quite close to him.

This one was Rokoff; but he had

recognized the members of the awful aggregation as allies of Tarzan of the Apes. No sooner, therefore, had the beasts passed him than he rose and raced through the jungle as fast as he could go, in order that he might put as much distance as possible between himself and these frightful beasts.

So it happened that as Jane Clayton came to the bank of the river, down which she hoped to float to the ocean and eventual rescue, Nikolas Rokoff was but a short distance in her rear.

Upon the bank the girl saw a great dugout drawn half-way from the water and tied securely to a near-by tree.

This, she felt, would solve the question of transportation to the sea

could she but launch the huge, unwieldy craft. Unfastening the rope that had moored it to the tree, Jane pushed frantically upon the bow of the heavy canoe, but for all the results that were apparent she might as well have been attempting to shove the earth out of its orbit.

She was about winded when it occurred to her to try working the dugout into the stream by loading the stern with ballast and then rocking the bow back and forth along the bank until the craft eventually worked itself into the river.

There were no stones or rocks available, but along the shore she found quantities of driftwood deposited by the river at a slightly higher stage. These she

gathered and piled far in the stern of the boat, until at last, to her immense relief, she saw the bow rise gently from the mud of the bank and the stern drift slowly with the current until it again lodged a few feet farther down-stream.

Jane found that by running back and forth between the bow and stern she could alternately raise and lower each end of the boat as she shifted her weight from one end to the other, with the result that each time she leaped to the stern the canoe moved a few inches farther into the river.

As the success of her plan approached more closely to fruition she became so wrapped in her efforts that she failed to note the figure of a man

standing beneath a huge tree at the edge of the jungle from which he had just emerged.

He watched her and her labours with a cruel and malicious grin upon his swarthy countenance.

The boat at last became so nearly free of the retarding mud and of the bank that Jane felt positive that she could pole it off into deeper water with one of the paddles which lay in the bottom of the rude craft. With this end in view she seized upon one of these implements and had just plunged it into the river bottom close to the shore when her eyes happened to rise to the edge of the jungle.

As her gaze fell upon the figure of the

man a little cry of terror rose to her lips. It was Rokoff.

He was running toward her now and shouting to her to wait or he would shoot —though he was entirely unarmed it was difficult to discover just how he intended making good his threat.

Jane Clayton knew nothing of the various misfortunes that had befallen the Russian since she had escaped from his tent, so she believed that his followers must be close at hand.

However, she had no intention of falling again into the man's clutches. She would rather die at once than that that should happen to her. Another minute and the boat would be free.

Once in the current of the river she

would be beyond Rokoff's power to stop her, for there was no other boat upon the shore, and no man, and certainly not the cowardly Rokoff, would dare to attempt to swim the crocodile-infested water in an effort to overtake her.

Rokoff, on his part, was bent more upon escape than aught else. He would gladly have forgone any designs he might have had upon Jane Clayton would she but permit him to share this means of escape that she had discovered. He would promise anything if she would let him come aboard the dugout, but he did not think that it was necessary to do so.

He saw that he could easily reach the bow of the boat before it cleared the shore, and then it would not be

necessary to make promises of any sort. Not that Rokoff would have felt the slightest compunction in ignoring any promises he might have made the girl, but he disliked the idea of having to sue for favour with one who had so recently assaulted and escaped him.

Already he was gloating over the days and nights of revenge that would be his while the heavy dugout drifted its slow way to the ocean.

Jane Clayton, working furiously to shove the boat beyond his reach, suddenly realized that she was to be successful, for with a little lurch the dugout swung quickly into the current, just as the Russian reached out to place his hand upon its bow.

His fingers did not miss their goal by a half-dozen inches. The girl almost collapsed with the reaction from the terrific mental, physical, and nervous strain under which she had been labouring for the past few minutes. But, thank Heaven, at last she was safe!

Even as she breathed a silent prayer of thanksgiving, she saw a sudden expression of triumph lighten the features of the cursing Russian, and at the same instant he dropped suddenly to the ground, grasping firmly upon something which wriggled through the mud toward the water.

Jane Clayton crouched, wide-eyed and horror-stricken, in the bottom of the boat as she realized that at the last

instant success had been turned to failure, and that she was indeed again in the power of the malignant Rokoff.

For the thing that the man had seen and grasped was the end of the trailing rope with which the dugout had been moored to the tree.

15. DOWN THE UGAMBI

Halfway between the Ugambi and the village of the Waganwazam, Tarzan came upon the pack moving slowly along his old spoor. Mugambi could scarce believe that the trail of the Russian and the mate of his savage master had passed so close to that of the pack.

It seemed incredible that two human beings should have come so close to them without having been detected by some of the marvellously keen and alert beasts; but Tarzan pointed out the spoor of the two he trailed, and at certain points the black could see that the man and the woman must have been in hiding as the pack passed them, watching every

move of the ferocious creatures.

It had been apparent to Tarzan from the first that Jane and Rokoff were not travelling together. The spoor showed distinctly that the young woman had been a considerable distance ahead of the Russian at first, though the farther the ape-man continued along the trail the more obvious it became that the man was rapidly overhauling his quarry.

At first there had been the spoor of wild beasts over the footprints of Jane Clayton, while upon the top of all Rokoff's spoor showed that he had passed over the trail after the animals had left their records upon the ground. But later there were fewer and fewer animal imprints occurring between those

of Jane's and the Russian's feet, until as he approached the river the ape-man became aware that Rokoff could not have been more than a few hundred yards behind the girl.

He felt they must be close ahead of him now, and, with a little thrill of expectation, he leaped rapidly forward ahead of the pack. Swinging swiftly through the trees, he came out upon the river-bank at the very point at which Rokoff had overhauled Jane as she endeavoured to launch the cumbersome dugout.

In the mud along the bank the ape-man saw the footprints of the two he sought, but there was neither boat nor people there when he arrived, nor, at first

glance, any sign of their whereabouts.

It was plain that they had shoved off a native canoe and embarked upon the bosom of the stream, and as the ape-man's eye ran swiftly down the course of the river beneath the shadows of the overarching trees he saw in the distance, just as it rounded a bend that shut it off from his view, a drifting dugout in the stern of which was the figure of a man.

Just as the pack came in sight of the river they saw their agile leader racing down the river's bank, leaping from hummock to hummock of the swampy ground that spread between them and a little promontory which rose just where the river curved inward from their sight.

To follow him it was necessary for

the heavy, cumbersome apes to make a wide detour, and Sheeta, too, who hated water. Mugambi followed after them as rapidly as he could in the wake of the great white master.

A half-hour of rapid travelling across the swampy neck of land and over the rising promontory brought Tarzan, by a short cut, to the inward bend of the winding river, and there before him upon the bosom of the stream he saw the dugout, and in its stern Nikolas Rokoff.

Jane was not with the Russian.

At sight of his enemy the broad scar upon the ape-man's brow burned scarlet, and there rose to his lips the hideous, bestial challenge of the bull-ape.

Rokoff shuddered as the weird and

terrible alarm fell upon his ears. Cowering in the bottom of the boat, his teeth chattering in terror, he watched the man he feared above all other creatures upon the face of the earth as he ran quickly to the edge of the water.

Even though the Russian knew that he was safe from his enemy, the very sight of him threw him into a frenzy of trembling cowardice, which became frantic hysteria as he saw the white giant dive fearlessly into the forbidding waters of the tropical river.

With steady, powerful strokes the ape-man forged out into the stream toward the drifting dugout. Now Rokoff seized one of the paddles lying in the bottom of the craft, and, with terror-

wide eyes still glued upon the living death that pursued him, struck out madly in an effort to augment the speed of the unwieldy canoe.

And from the opposite bank a sinister ripple, unseen by either man, moving steadily toward the half-naked swimmer.

Tarzan had reached the stern of the craft at last. One hand upstretched grasped the gunwale. Rokoff sat frozen with fear, unable to move a hand or foot, his eyes riveted upon the face of his Nemesis.

Then a sudden commotion in the water behind the swimmer caught his attention. He saw the ripple, and he knew what caused it.

At the same instant Tarzan felt mighty

jaws close upon his right leg. He tried to struggle free and raise himself over the side of the boat. His efforts would have succeeded had not this unexpected interruption galvanized the malign brain of the Russian into instant action with its sudden promise of deliverance and revenge.

Like a venomous snake the man leaped toward the stern of the boat, and with a single swift blow struck Tarzan across the head with the heavy paddle. The ape-man's fingers slipped from their hold upon the gunwale.

There was a short struggle at the surface, and then a swirl of waters, a little eddy, and a burst of bubbles soon smoothed out by the flowing current

marked for the instant the spot where Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle, disappeared from the sight of men beneath the gloomy waters of the dark and forbidding Ugambi.

Weak from terror, Rokoff sank shuddering into the bottom of the dugout. For a moment he could not realize the good fortune that had befallen him - all that he could see was the figure of a silent, struggling white man disappearing beneath the surface of the river to unthinkable death in the slimy mud of the bottom.

Slowly all that it meant to him filtered into the mind of the Russian, and then a cruel smile of relief and triumph touched his lips; but it was short-lived, for just

as he was congratulating himself that he was now comparatively safe to proceed upon his way to the coast unmolested, a mighty pandemonium rose from the river-bank close by.

As his eyes sought the authors of the frightful sound he saw standing upon the shore, glaring at him with hate-filled eyes, a devil-faced panther surrounded by the hideous apes of Akut, and in the forefront of them a giant black warrior who shook his fist at him, threatening him with terrible death.

The nightmare of that flight down the Ugambi with the hideous horde racing after him by day and by night, now abreast of him, now lost in the mazes of the jungle far behind for hours and once

for a whole day, only to reappear again upon his trail grim, relentless, and terrible, reduced the Russian from a strong and robust man to an emaciated, white-haired, fear-gibbering thing before ever the bay and the ocean broke upon his hopeless vision.

Past populous villages he had fled. Time and again warriors had put out in their canoes to intercept him, but each time the hideous horde had swept into view to send the terrified natives shrieking back to the shore to lose themselves in the jungle.

Nowhere in his flight had he seen aught of Jane Clayton. Not once had his eyes rested upon her since that moment at the river's brim his hand had closed

upon the rope attached to the bow of her dugout and he had believed her safely in his power again, only to be thwarted an instant later as the girl snatched up a heavy express rifle from the bottom of the craft and levelled it full at his breast.

Quickly he had dropped the rope then and seen her float away beyond his reach, but a moment later he had been racing up-stream toward a little tributary in the mouth of which was hidden the canoe in which he and his party had come thus far upon their journey in pursuit of the girl and Anderssen.

What had become of her?

There seemed little doubt in the Russian's mind, however, but that she had been captured by warriors from one

of the several villages she would have been compelled to pass on her way down to the sea. Well, he was at least rid of most of his human enemies.

But at that he would gladly have had them all back in the land of the living could he thus have been freed from the menace of the frightful creatures who pursued him with awful relentlessness, screaming and growling at him every time they came within sight of him. The one that filled him with the greatest terror was the panther—the flaming-eyed, devil-faced panther whose grinning jaws gaped wide at him by day, and whose fiery orbs gleamed wickedly out across the water from the Cimmerian blackness of the jungle nights.

The sight of the mouth of the Ugambi filled Rokoff with renewed hope, for there, upon the yellow waters of the bay, floated the Kincaid at anchor. He had sent the little steamer away to coal while he had gone up the river, leaving Paulvitch in charge of her, and he could have cried aloud in his relief as he saw that she had returned in time to save him.

Frantically he alternately paddled furiously toward her and rose to his feet waving his paddle and crying aloud in an attempt to attract the attention of those on board. But loud as he screamed his cries awakened no answering challenge from the deck of the silent craft.

Upon the shore behind him a hurried backward glance revealed the presence

of the snarling pack. Even now, he thought, these manlike devils might yet find a way to reach him even upon the deck of the steamer unless there were those there to repel them with firearms.

What could have happened to those he had left upon the Kincaid? Where was Paulvitch? Could it be that the vessel was deserted, and that, after all, he was doomed to be overtaken by the terrible fate that he had been flying from through all these hideous days and nights? He shivered as might one upon whose brow death has already laid his clammy finger.

Yet he did not cease to paddle frantically toward the steamer, and at last, after what seemed an eternity, the bow of the dugout bumped against the

timbers of the Kincaid. Over the ship's side hung a monkey-ladder, but as the Russian grasped it to ascend to the deck he heard a warning challenge from above, and, looking up, gazed into the cold, relentless muzzle of a rifle.

After Jane Clayton, with rifle levelled at the breast of Rokoff, had succeeded in holding him off until the dugout in which she had taken refuge had drifted out upon the bosom of the Ugambi beyond the man's reach, she had lost no time in paddling to the swiftest sweep of the channel, nor did she for long days and weary nights cease to hold her craft to the most rapidly moving part of the river, except when during the hottest hours of the day she had been wont to

drift as the current would take her, lying prone in the bottom of the canoe, her face sheltered from the sun with a great palm leaf.

Thus only did she gain rest upon the voyage; at other times she continually sought to augment the movement of the craft by wielding the heavy paddle.

Rokoff, on the other hand, had used little or no intelligence in his flight along the Ugambi, so that more often than not his craft had drifted in the slow-going eddies, for he habitually hugged the bank farthest from that along which the hideous horde pursued and menaced him.

Thus it was that, though he had put out upon the river but a short time

subsequent to the girl, yet she had reached the bay fully two hours ahead of him. When she had first seen the anchored ship upon the quiet water, Jane Clayton's heart had beat fast with hope and thanksgiving, but as she drew closer to the craft and saw that it was the Kincaid, her pleasure gave place to the gravest misgivings.

It was too late, however, to turn back, for the current that carried her toward the ship was much too strong for her muscles. She could not have forced the heavy dugout upstream against it, and all that was left her was to attempt either to make the shore without being seen by those upon the deck of the Kincaid, or to throw herself upon their mercy—

otherwise she must be swept out to sea.

She knew that the shore held little hope of life for her, as she had no knowledge of the location of the friendly Mosula village to which Anderssen had taken her through the darkness of the night of their escape from the Kincaid.

With Rokoff away from the steamer it might be possible that by offering those in charge a large reward they could be induced to carry her to the nearest civilized port. It was worth risking—if she could make the steamer at all.

The current was bearing her swiftly down the river, and she found that only by dint of the utmost exertion could she direct the awkward craft toward the vicinity of the Kincaid. Having reached

the decision to board the steamer, she now looked to it for aid, but to her surprise the decks appeared to be empty and she saw no sign of life aboard the ship.

The dugout was drawing closer and closer to the bow of the vessel, and yet no hail came over the side from any lookout aboard. In a moment more, Jane realized, she would be swept beyond the steamer, and then, unless they lowered a boat to rescue her, she would be carried far out to sea by the current and the swift ebb tide that was running.

The young woman called loudly for assistance, but there was no reply other than the shrill scream of some savage beast upon the jungle-shrouded shore.

Frantically Jane wielded the paddle in an effort to carry her craft close alongside the steamer.

For a moment it seemed that she should miss her goal by but a few feet, but at the last moment the canoe swung close beneath the steamer's bow and Jane barely managed to grasp the anchor chain.

Heroically she clung to the heavy iron links, almost dragged from the canoe by the strain of the current upon her craft. Beyond her she saw a monkey- ladder dangling over the steamer's side. To release her hold upon the chain and chance clambering to the ladder as her canoe was swept beneath it seemed beyond the pale of possibility, yet to

remain clinging to the anchor chain appeared equally as futile.

Finally her glance chanced to fall upon the rope in the bow of the dugout, and, making one end of this fast to the chain, she succeeded in drifting the canoe slowly down until it lay directly beneath the ladder. A moment later, her rifle slung about her shoulders, she had clambered safely to the deserted deck.

Her first task was to explore the ship, and this she did, her rifle ready for instant use should she meet with any human menace aboard the Kincaid. She was not long in discovering the cause of the apparently deserted condition of the steamer, for in the forecastle she found the sailors, who had evidently been left

to guard the ship, deep in drunken slumber.

With a shudder of disgust she clambered above, and to the best of her ability closed and made fast the hatch above the heads of the sleeping guard. Next she sought the galley and food, and, having appeased her hunger, she took her place on deck, determined that none should board the Kincaid without first having agreed to her demands.

For an hour or so nothing appeared upon the surface of the river to cause her alarm, but then, about a bend upstream, she saw a canoe appear in which sat a single figure. It had not proceeded far in her direction before she recognized the occupant as Rokoff, and when the fellow

attempted to board he found a rifle staring him in the face.

When the Russian discovered who it was that repelled his advance he became furious, cursing and threatening in a most horrible manner; but, finding that these tactics failed to frighten or move the girl, he at last fell to pleading and promising.

Jane had but a single reply for his every proposition, and that was that nothing would ever persuade her to permit Rokoff upon the same vessel with her. That she would put her threats into action and shoot him should he persist in his endeavour to board the ship he was convinced.

So, as there was no other alternative, the great coward dropped back into his

dugout and, at imminent risk of being swept to sea, finally succeeded in making the shore far down the bay and upon the opposite side from that on which the horde of beasts stood snarling and roaring.

Jane Clayton knew that the fellow could not alone and unaided bring his heavy craft back up-stream to the Kincaid, and so she had no further fear of an attack by him. The hideous crew upon the shore she thought she recognized as the same that had passed her in the jungle far up the Ugambi several days before, for it seemed quite beyond reason that there should be more than one such a strangely assorted pack; but what had brought them down-stream

to the mouth of the river she could not imagine.

Toward the day's close the girl was suddenly alarmed by the shouting of the Russian from the opposite bank of the stream, and a moment later, following the direction of his gaze, she was terrified to see a ship's boat approaching from up-stream, in which, she felt assured, there could be only members of the Kincaid's missing crew—only heartless ruffians and enemies.

16. IN THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT

When Tarzan of the Apes realized that he was in the grip of the great jaws of a crocodile he did not, as an ordinary man might have done, give up all hope and resign himself to his fate.

Instead, he filled his lungs with air before the huge reptile dragged him beneath the surface, and then, with all the might of his great muscles, fought bitterly for freedom. But out of his native element the ape-man was too greatly handicapped to do more than excite the monster to greater speed as it dragged its prey swiftly through the water.

Tarzan's lungs were bursting for a

breath of pure fresh air. He knew that he could survive but a moment more, and in the last paroxysm of his suffering he did what he could to avenge his own death.

His body trailed out beside the slimy carcass of his captor, and into the tough armour the ape-man attempted to plunge his stone knife as he was borne to the creature's horrid den.

His efforts but served to accelerate the speed of the crocodile, and just as the ape-man realized that he had reached the limit of his endurance he felt his body dragged to a muddy bed and his nostrils rise above the water's surface. All about him was the blackness of the pit—the silence of the grave.

For a moment Tarzan of the Apes lay

gasping for breath upon the slimy, evil-smelling bed to which the animal had borne him. Close at his side he could feel the cold, hard plates of the creatures coat rising and falling as though with spasmodic efforts to breathe.

For several minutes the two lay thus, and then a sudden convulsion of the giant carcass at the man's side, a tremor, and a stiffening brought Tarzan to his knees beside the crocodile. To his utter amazement he found that the beast was dead. The slim knife had found a vulnerable spot in the scaly armour.

Staggering to his feet, the ape-man groped about the reeking, oozy den. He found that he was imprisoned in a subterranean chamber amply large

enough to have accommodated a dozen or more of the huge animals such as the one that had dragged him thither.

He realized that he was in the creature's hidden nest far under the bank of the stream, and that doubtless the only means of ingress or egress lay through the submerged opening through which the crocodile had brought him.

His first thought, of course, was of escape, but that he could make his way to the surface of the river beyond and then to the shore seemed highly improbable. There might be turns and windings in the neck of the passage, or, most to be feared, he might meet another of the slimy inhabitants of the retreat upon his journey outward.

Even should he reach the river in safety, there was still the danger of his being again attacked before he could effect a safe landing. Still there was no alternative, and, filling his lungs with the close and reeking air of the chamber, Tarzan of the Apes dived into the dark and watery hole which he could not see but had felt out and found with his feet and legs.

The leg which had been held within the jaws of the crocodile was badly lacerated, but the bone had not been broken, nor were the muscles or tendons sufficiently injured to render it useless. It gave him excruciating pain, that was all.

But Tarzan of the Apes was

accustomed to pain, and gave it no further thought when he found that the use of his legs was not greatly impaired by the sharp teeth of the monster.

Rapidly he crawled and swam through the passage which inclined downward and finally upward to open at last into the river bottom but a few feet from the shore line. As the ape-man reached the surface he saw the heads of two great crocodiles but a short distance from him. They were making rapidly in his direction, and with a superhuman effort the man struck out for the overhanging branches of a near-by tree.

Nor was he a moment too soon, for scarcely had he drawn himself to the safety of the limb than two gaping

mouths snapped venomously below him. For a few minutes Tarzan rested in the tree that had proved the means of his salvation. His eyes scanned the river as far down-stream as the tortuous channel would permit, but there was no sign of the Russian or his dugout.

When he had rested and bound up his wounded leg he started on in pursuit of the drifting canoe. He found himself upon the opposite of the river to that at which he had entered the stream, but as his quarry was upon the bosom of the water it made little difference to the ape-man upon which side he took up the pursuit.

To his intense chagrin he soon found that his leg was more badly injured than

he had thought, and that its condition seriously impeded his progress. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he could proceed faster than a walk upon the ground, and in the trees he discovered that it not only impeded his progress, but rendered travelling distinctly dangerous.

From the old negress, Tambudza, Tarzan had gathered a suggestion that now filled his mind with doubts and misgivings. When the old woman had told him of the child's death she had also added that the white woman, though grief-stricken, had confided to her that the baby was not hers.

Tarzan could see no reason for believing that Jane could have found it

advisable to deny her identity or that of the child; the only explanation that he could put upon the matter was that, after all, the white woman who had accompanied his son and the Swede into the jungle fastness of the interior had not been Jane at all.

The more he gave thought to the problem, the more firmly convinced he became that his son was dead and his wife still safe in London, and in ignorance of the terrible fate that had overtaken her first-born.

After all, then, his interpretation of Rokoff's sinister taunt had been erroneous, and he had been bearing the burden of a double apprehension needlessly—at least so thought the ape-

man. From this belief he garnered some slight surcease from the numbing grief that the death of his little son had thrust upon him.

And such a death! Even the savage beast that was the real Tarzan, inured to the sufferings and horrors of the grim jungle, shuddered as he contemplated the hideous fate that had overtaken the innocent child.

As he made his way painfully towards the coast, he let his mind dwell so constantly upon the frightful crimes which the Russian had perpetrated against his loved ones that the great scar upon his forehead stood out almost continuously in the vivid scarlet that marked the man's most relentless and

bestial moods of rage. At times he startled even himself and sent the lesser creatures of the wild jungle scampering to their hiding places as involuntary roars and growls rumbled from his throat.

Could he but lay his hand upon the Russian!

Twice upon the way to the coast bellicose natives ran threateningly from their villages to bar his further progress, but when the awful cry of the bull-ape thundered upon their affrighted ears, and the great white giant charged bellowing upon them, they had turned and fled into the bush, nor ventured thence until he had safely passed.

Though his progress seemed

tantalizingly slow to the ape-man whose idea of speed had been gained by such standards as the lesser apes attain, he made, as a matter of fact, almost as rapid progress as the drifting canoe that bore Rokoff on ahead of him, so that he came to the bay and within sight of the ocean just after darkness had fallen upon the same day that Jane Clayton and the Russian ended their flights from the interior.

The darkness lowered so heavily upon the black river and the encircling jungle that Tarzan, even with eyes accustomed to much use after dark, could make out nothing a few yards from him. His idea was to search the shore that night for signs of the Russian and the

woman who he was certain must have preceded Rokoff down the Ugambi. That the Kincaid or other ship lay at anchor but a hundred yards from him he did not dream, for no light showed on board the steamer.

Even as he commenced his search his attention was suddenly attracted by a noise that he had not at first perceived—the stealthy dip of paddles in the water some distance from the shore, and about opposite the point at which he stood. Motionless as a statue he stood listening to the faint sound.

Presently it ceased, to be followed by a shuffling noise that the ape-man's trained ears could interpret as resulting from but a single cause - the scraping of

leather-shod feet upon the rounds of a ship's monkey-ladder. And yet, as far as he could see, there was no ship there—nor might there be one within a thousand miles.

As he stood thus, peering out into the darkness of the cloud- enshrouded night, there came to him from across the water, like a slap in the face, so sudden and unexpected was it, the sharp staccato of an exchange of shots and then the scream of a woman.

Wounded though he was, and with the memory of his recent horrible experience still strong upon him, Tarzan of the Apes did not hesitate as the notes of that frightened cry rose shrill and piercing upon the still night air. With a

bound he cleared the intervening bush—there was a splash as the water closed about him—and then, with powerful strokes, he swam out into the impenetrable night with no guide save the memory of an illusive cry, and for company the hideous denizens of an equatorial river.

The boat that had attracted Jane's attention as she stood guard upon the deck of the Kincaid had been perceived by Rokoff upon one bank and Mugambi and the horde upon the other. The cries of the Russian had brought the dugout first to him, and then, after a conference, it had been turned toward the Kincaid, but before ever it covered half the distance between the shore and the

steamer a rifle had spoken from the latter's deck and one of the sailors in the bow of the canoe had crumpled and fallen into the water.

After that they went more slowly, and presently, when Jane's rifle had found another member of the party, the canoe withdrew to the shore, where it lay as long as daylight lasted.

The savage, snarling pack upon the opposite shore had been directed in their pursuit by the black warrior, Mugambi, chief of the Wagambi. Only he knew which might be foe and which friend of their lost master.

Could they have reached either the canoe or the Kincaid they would have made short work of any whom they

found there, but the gulf of black water intervening shut them off from farther advance as effectually as though it had been the broad ocean that separated them from their prey.

Mugambi knew something of the occurrences which had led up to the landing of Tarzan upon Jungle Island and the pursuit of the whites up the Ugambi. He knew that his savage master sought his wife and child who had been stolen by the wicked white man whom they had followed far into the interior and now back to the sea.

He believed also that this same man had killed the great white giant whom he had come to respect and love as he had never loved the greatest chiefs of his

own people. And so in the wild breast of Mugambi burned an iron resolve to win to the side of the wicked one and wreak vengeance upon him for the murder of the ape-man.

But when he saw the canoe come down the river and take in Rokoff, when he saw it make for the Kincaid, he realized that only by possessing himself of a canoe could he hope to transport the beasts of the pack within striking distance of the enemy.

So it happened that even before Jane Clayton fired the first shot into Rokoff's canoe the beasts of Tarzan had disappeared into the jungle.

After the Russian and his party, which consisted of Paulvitch and the several

men he had left upon the Kincaid to attend to the matter of coaling, had retreated before her fire, Jane realized that it would be but a temporary respite from their attentions which she had gained, and with the conviction came a determination to make a bold and final stroke for freedom from the menacing threat of Rokoff's evil purpose.

With this idea in view she opened negotiations with the two sailors she had imprisoned in the forecastle, and having forced their consent to her plans, upon pain of death should they attempt disloyalty, she released them just as darkness closed about the ship.

With ready revolver to compel obedience, she let them up one by one,

searching them carefully for concealed weapons as they stood with hands elevated above their heads. Once satisfied that they were unarmed, she set them to work cutting the cable which held the Kincaid to her anchorage, for her bold plan was nothing less than to set the steamer adrift and float with her out into the open sea, there to trust to the mercy of the elements, which she was confident would be no more merciless than Nikolas Rokoff should he again capture her.

There was, too, the chance that the Kincaid might be sighted by some passing ship, and as she was well stocked with provisions and water— the men had assured her of this fact—and as

the season of storm was well over, she had every reason to hope for the eventual success of her plan.

The night was deeply overcast, heavy clouds riding low above the jungle and the water—only to the west, where the broad ocean spread beyond the river's mouth, was there a suggestion of lessening gloom.

It was a perfect night for the purposes of the work in hand.

Her enemies could not see the activity aboard the ship nor mark her course as the swift current bore her outward into the ocean. Before daylight broke the ebb-tide would have carried the Kincaid well into the Benguela current which flows northward along the coast of

Africa, and, as a south wind was prevailing, Jane hoped to be out of sight of the mouth of the Ugambi before Rokoff could become aware of the departure of the steamer.

Standing over the labouring seamen, the young woman breathed a sigh of relief as the last strand of the cable parted and she knew that the vessel was on its way out of the maw of the savage Ugambi.

With her two prisoners still beneath the coercing influence of her rifle, she ordered them upon deck with the intention of again imprisoning them in the forecastle; but at length she permitted herself to be influenced by their promises of loyalty and the arguments

which they put forth that they could be of service to her, and permitted them to remain above.

For a few minutes the Kincaid drifted rapidly with the current, and then, with a grinding jar, she stopped in midstream. The ship had run upon a low-lying bar that splits the channel about a quarter of a mile from the sea.

For a moment she hung there, and then, swinging round until her bow pointed toward the shore, she broke adrift once more.

At the same instant, just as Jane Clayton was congratulating herself that the ship was once more free, there fell upon her ears from a point up the river about where the Kincaid had been

anchored the rattle of musketry and a woman's scream—shrill, piercing, fear-laden.

The sailors heard the shots with certain conviction that they announced the coming of their employer, and as they had no relish for the plan that would consign them to the deck of a drifting derelict, they whispered together a hurried plan to overcome the young woman and hail Rokoff and their companions to their rescue.

It seemed that fate would play into their hands, for with the reports of the guns Jane Clayton's attention had been distracted from her unwilling assistants, and instead of keeping one eye upon them as she had intended doing, she ran

to the bow of the Kincaid to peer through the darkness toward the source of the disturbance upon the river's bosom.

Seeing that she was off her guard, the two sailors crept stealthily upon her from behind.

The scraping upon the deck of the shoes of one of them startled the girl to a sudden appreciation of her danger, but the warning had come too late.

As she turned, both men leaped upon her and bore her to the deck, and as she went down beneath them she saw, outlined against the lesser gloom of the ocean, the figure of another man clamber over the side of the Kincaid.

After all her pains her heroic struggle for freedom had failed. With a stifled

sob she gave up the unequal battle.

17. ON THE DECK OF THE "KINCAID"

When Mugambi had turned back into the jungle with the pack he had a definite purpose in view. It was to obtain a dugout wherewith to transport the beasts of Tarzan to the side of the Kincaid. Nor was he long in coming upon the object which he sought.

Just at dusk he found a canoe moored to the bank of a small tributary of the Ugambi at a point where he had felt certain that he should find one.

Without loss of time he piled his hideous fellows into the craft and shoved out into the stream. So quickly had they taken possession of the canoe

that the warrior had not noticed that it was already occupied. The huddled figure sleeping in the bottom had entirely escaped his observation in the darkness of the night that had now fallen.

But no sooner were they afloat than a savage growling from one of the apes directly ahead of him in the dugout attracted his attention to a shivering and cowering figure that trembled between him and the great anthropoid. To Mugambi's astonishment he saw that it was a native woman. With difficulty he kept the ape from her throat, and after a time succeeded in quelling her fears.

It seemed that she had been fleeing from marriage with an old man she loathed and had taken refuge for the night

in the canoe she had found upon the river's edge.

Mugambi did not wish her presence, but there she was, and rather than lose time by returning her to the shore the black permitted her to remain on board the canoe.

As quickly as his awkward companions could paddle the dugout down-stream toward the Ugambi and the Kincaid they moved through the darkness. It was with difficulty that Mugambi could make out the shadowy form of the steamer, but as he had it between himself and the ocean it was much more apparent than to one upon either shore of the river.

As he approached it he was amazed

to note that it seemed to be receding from him, and finally he was convinced that the vessel was moving downstream. Just as he was about to urge his creatures to renewed efforts to overtake the steamer the outline of another canoe burst suddenly into view not three yards from the bow of his own craft.

At the same instant the occupants of the stranger discovered the proximity of Mugambi's horde, but they did not at first recognize the nature of the fearful crew. A man in the bow of the oncoming boat challenged them just as the two dugouts were about to touch.

For answer came the menacing growl of a panther, and the fellow found himself gazing into the flaming eyes of

Sheeta, who had raised himself with his forepaws upon the bow of the boat, ready to leap in upon the occupants of the other craft.

Instantly Rokoff realized the peril that confronted him and his fellows. He gave a quick command to fire upon the occupants of the other canoe, and it was this volley and the scream of the terrified native woman in the canoe with Mugambi that both Tarzan and Jane had heard.

Before the slower and less skilled paddlers in Mugambi's canoe could press their advantage and effect a boarding of the enemy the latter had turned swiftly down-stream and were paddling for their lives in the direction

of the Kincaid, which was now visible to them.

The vessel after striking upon the bar had swung loose again into a slow-moving eddy, which returns up-stream close to the southern shore of the Ugambi only to circle out once more and join the downward flow a hundred yards or so farther up. Thus the Kincaid was returning Jane Clayton directly into the hands of her enemies.

It so happened that as Tarzan sprang into the river the vessel was not visible to him, and as he swam out into the night he had no idea that a ship drifted so close at hand. He was guided by the sounds which he could hear coming from the two canoes.

As he swam he had vivid recollections of the last occasion upon which he had swum in the waters of the Ugambi, and with them a sudden shudder shook the frame of the giant.

But, though he twice felt something brush his legs from the slimy depths below him, nothing seized him, and of a sudden he quite forgot about crocodiles in the astonishment of seeing a dark mass loom suddenly before him where he had still expected to find the open river.

So close was it that a few strokes brought him up to the thing, when to his amazement his outstretched hand came in contact with a ship's side.

As the agile ape-man clambered over the vessel's rail there came to his

sensitive ears the sound of a struggle at the opposite side of the deck.

Noiselessly he sped across the intervening space.

The moon had risen now, and, though the sky was still banked with clouds, a lesser darkness enveloped the scene than that which had blotted out all sight earlier in the night. His keen eyes, therefore, saw the figures of two men grappling with a woman.

That it was the woman who had accompanied Anderssen toward the interior he did not know, though he suspected as much, as he was now quite certain that this was the deck of the Kincaid upon which chance had led him.

But he wasted little time in idle

speculation. There was a woman in danger of harm from two ruffians, which was enough excuse for the ape-man to project his giant thews into the conflict without further investigation.

The first that either of the sailors knew that there was a new force at work upon the ship was the falling of a mighty hand upon a shoulder of each. As if they had been in the grip of a fly-wheel, they were jerked suddenly from their prey.

"What means this?" asked a low voice in their ears.

They were given no time to reply, however, for at the sound of that voice the young woman had sprung to her feet and with a little cry of joy leaped toward their assailant.

"Tarzan!" she cried.

The ape-man hurled the two sailors across the deck, where they rolled, stunned and terrified, into the scuppers upon the opposite side, and with an exclamation of incredulity gathered the girl into his arms.

Brief, however, were the moments for their greeting.

Scarcely had they recognized one another than the clouds above them parted to show the figures of a half-dozen men clambering over the side of the Kincaid to the steamer's deck.

Foremost among them was the Russian. As the brilliant rays of the equatorial moon lighted the deck, and he realized that the man before him was

Lord Greystoke, he screamed hysterical commands to his followers to fire upon the two.

Tarzan pushed Jane behind the cabin near which they had been standing, and with a quick bound started for Rokoff. The men behind the Russian, at least two of them, raised their rifles and fired at the charging ape-man; but those behind them were otherwise engaged—for up the monkey-ladder in their rear was thronging a hideous horde.

First came five snarling apes, huge, manlike beasts, with bared fangs and slavering jaws; and after them a giant black warrior, his long spear gleaming in the moonlight.

Behind him again scrambled another

creature, and of all the horrid horde it was this they most feared—Sheeta, the panther, with gleaming jaws agape and fiery eyes blazing at them in the mightiness of his hate and of his blood lust.

The shots that had been fired at Tarzan missed him, and he would have been upon Rokoff in another instant had not the great coward dodged backward between his two henchmen, and, screaming in hysterical terror, bolted forward toward the forecastle.

For the moment Tarzan's attention was distracted by the two men before him, so that he could not at the time pursue the Russian. About him the apes and Mugambi were battling with the

balance of the Russian's party.

Beneath the terrible ferocity of the beasts the men were soon scampering in all directions—those who still lived to scamper, for the great fangs of the apes of Akut and the tearing talons of Sheeta already had found more than a single victim.

Four, however, escaped and disappeared into the forecastle, where they hoped to barricade themselves against further assault. Here they found Rokoff, and, enraged at his desertion of them in their moment of peril, no less than at the uniformly brutal treatment it had been his wont to accord them, they gloated upon the opportunity now offered them to revenge themselves in

part upon their hated employer.

Despite his prayers and grovelling pleas, therefore, they hurled him bodily out upon the deck, delivering him to the mercy of the fearful things from which they had themselves just escaped.

Tarzan saw the man emerge from the forecastle—saw and recognized his enemy; but another saw him even as soon.

It was Sheeta, and with grinning jaws the mighty beast slunk silently toward the terror-stricken man.

When Rokoff saw what it was that stalked him his shrieks for help filled the air, as with trembling knees he stood, as one paralyzed, before the hideous death that was creeping upon him.

Tarzan took a step toward the Russian, his brain burning with a raging fire of vengeance. At last he had the murderer of his son at his mercy. His was the right to avenge.

Once Jane had stayed his hand that time that he sought to take the law into his own power and mete to Rokoff the death that he had so long merited; but this time none should stay him.

His fingers clenched and unclenched spasmodically as he approached the trembling Russ, beastlike and ominous as a brute of prey.

Presently he saw that Sheeta was about to forestall him, robbing him of the fruits of his great hate.

He called sharply to the panther, and

the words, as if they had broken a hideous spell that had held the Russian, galvanized him into sudden action. With a scream he turned and fled toward the bridge.

After him pounced Sheeta the panther, unmindful of his master's warning voice.

Tarzan was about to leap after the two when he felt a light touch upon his arm. Turning, he found Jane at his elbow.

"Do not leave me," she whispered. "I am afraid."

Tarzan glanced behind her.

All about were the hideous apes of Akut. Some, even, were approaching the young woman with bared fangs and menacing guttural warnings.

The ape-man warned them back. He had forgotten for the moment that these were but beasts, unable to differentiate his friends and his foes. Their savage natures were roused by their recent battle with the sailors, and now all flesh outside the pack was meat to them.

Tarzan turned again toward the Russian, chagrined that he should have to forgo the pleasure of personal revenge —unless the man should escape Sheeta. But as he looked he saw that there could be no hope of that. The fellow had retreated to the end of the bridge, where he now stood trembling and wide-eyed, facing the beast that moved slowly toward him.

The panther crawled with belly to the

planking, uttering uncanny mouthings. Rokoff stood as though petrified, his eyes protruding from their sockets, his mouth agape, and the cold sweat of terror clammy upon his brow.

Below him, upon the deck, he had seen the great anthropoids, and so had not dared to seek escape in that direction. In fact, even now one of the brutes was leaping to seize the bridge-rail and draw himself up to the Russian's side.

Before him was the panther, silent and crouched.

Rokoff could not move. His knees trembled. His voice broke in inarticulate shrieks. With a last piercing wail he sank to his knees—and then Sheeta

sprang.

Full upon the man's breast the tawny body hurtled, tumbling the Russian to his back.

As the great fangs tore at the throat and chest, Jane Clayton turned away in horror; but not so Tarzan of the Apes. A cold smile of satisfaction touched his lips. The scar upon his forehead that had burned scarlet faded to the normal hue of his tanned skin and disappeared.

Rokoff fought furiously but futilely against the growling, rending fate that had overtaken him. For all his countless crimes he was punished in the brief moment of the hideous death that claimed him at the last.

After his struggles ceased Tarzan

approached, at Jane's suggestion, to wrest the body from the panther and give what remained of it decent human burial; but the great cat rose snarling above its kill, threatening even the master it loved in its savage way, so that rather than kill his friend of the jungle, Tarzan was forced to relinquish his intentions.

All that night Sheeta, the panther, crouched upon the grisly thing that had been Nikolas Rokoff. The bridge of the Kincaid was slippery with blood. Beneath the brilliant tropic moon the great beast feasted until, when the sun rose the following morning, there remained of Tarzan's great enemy only gnawed and broken bones.

Of the Russian's party, all were

accounted for except Paulvitch. Four were prisoners in the Kincaid's forecastle. The rest were dead.

With these men Tarzan got up steam upon the vessel, and with the knowledge of the mate, who happened to be one of those surviving, he planned to set out in quest of Jungle Island; but as the morning dawned there came with it a heavy gale from the west which raised a sea into which the mate of the Kincaid dared not venture. All that day the ship lay within the shelter of the mouth of the river; for, though night witnessed a lessening of the wind, it was thought safer to wait for daylight before attempting the navigation of the winding channel to the sea.

Upon the deck of the steamer the pack

wandered without let or hindrance by day, for they had soon learned through Tarzan and Mugambi that they must harm no one upon the Kincaid; but at night they were confined below.

Tarzan's joy had been unbounded when he learned from his wife that the little child who had died in the village of M'ganwazam was not their son. Who the baby could have been, or what had become of their own, they could not imagine, and as both Rokoff and Paulvitch were gone, there was no way of discovering.

There was, however, a certain sense of relief in the knowledge that they might yet hope. Until positive proof of the baby's death reached them there was

always that to buoy them up.

It seemed quite evident that their little Jack had not been brought aboard the Kincaid. Anderssen would have known of it had such been the case, but he had assured Jane time and time again that the little one he had brought to her cabin the night he aided her to escape was the only one that had been aboard the Kincaid since she lay at Dover.

18. PAULVITCH PLOTS REVENGE

As Jane and Tarzan stood upon the vessel's deck recounting to one another the details of the various adventures through which each had passed since they had parted in their London home, there glared at them from beneath scowling brows a hidden watcher upon the shore.

Through the man's brain passed plan after plan whereby he might thwart the escape of the Englishman and his wife, for so long as the vital spark remained within the vindictive brain of Alexander Paulvitch none who had aroused the enmity of the Russian might be entirely

safe.

Plan after plan he formed only to discard each either as impracticable, or unworthy the vengeance his wrongs demanded. So warped by faulty reasoning was the criminal mind of Rokoff's lieutenant that he could not grasp the real truth of that which lay between himself and the ape-man and see that always the fault had been, not with the English lord, but with himself and his confederate.

And at the rejection of each new scheme Paulvitch arrived always at the same conclusion—that he could accomplish naught while half the breadth of the Ugambi separated him from the object of his hatred.

But how was he to span the crocodile-infested waters? There was no canoe nearer than the Mosula village, and Paulvitch was none too sure that the Kincaid would still be at anchor in the river when he returned should he take the time to traverse the jungle to the distant village and return with a canoe. Yet there was no other way, and so, convinced that thus alone might he hope to reach his prey, Paulvitch, with a parting scowl at the two figures upon the Kincaid's deck, turned away from the river.

Hastening through the dense jungle, his mind centred upon his one fetish - revenge—the Russian forgot even his terror of the savage world through which

he moved.

Baffled and beaten at every turn of Fortune's wheel, reacted upon time after time by his own malign plotting, the principal victim of his own criminality, Paulvitch was yet so blind as to imagine that his greatest happiness lay in a continuation of the plottings and schemings which had ever brought him and Rokoff to disaster, and the latter finally to a hideous death.

As the Russian stumbled on through the jungle toward the Mosula village there presently crystallized within his brain a plan which seemed more feasible than any that he had as yet considered.

He would come by night to the side of

the Kincaid, and once aboard, would search out the members of the ship's original crew who had survived the terrors of this frightful expedition, and enlist them in an attempt to wrest the vessel from Tarzan and his beasts.

In the cabin were arms and ammunition, and hidden in a secret receptacle in the cabin table was one of those infernal machines, the construction of which had occupied much of Paulvitch's spare time when he had stood high in the confidence of the Nihilists of his native land.

That was before he had sold them out for immunity and gold to the police of Petrograd. Paulvitch winced as he recalled the denunciation of him that had

fallen from the lips of one of his former comrades ere the poor devil expiated his political sins at the end of a hempen rope.

But the infernal machine was the thing to think of now. He could do much with that if he could but get his hands upon it. Within the little hardwood case hidden in the cabin table rested sufficient potential destructiveness to wipe out in the fraction of a second every enemy aboard the Kincaid.

Paulvitch licked his lips in anticipatory joy, and urged his tired legs to greater speed that he might not be too late to the ship's anchorage to carry out his designs.

All depended, of course, upon when

the Kincaid departed. The Russian realized that nothing could be accomplished beneath the light of day. Darkness must shroud his approach to the ship's side, for should he be sighted by Tarzan or Lady Greystoke he would have no chance to board the vessel.

The gale that was blowing was, he believed, the cause of the delay in getting the Kincaid under way, and if it continued to blow until night then the chances were all in his favour, for he knew that there was little likelihood of the ape-man attempting to navigate the tortuous channel of the Ugambi while darkness lay upon the surface of the water, hiding the many bars and the numerous small islands which are

scattered over the expanse of the river's mouth.

It was well after noon when Paulvitch came to the Mosula village upon the bank of the tributary of the Ugambi. Here he was received with suspicion and unfriendliness by the native chief, who, like all those who came in contact with Rokoff or Paulvitch, had suffered in some manner from the greed, the cruelty, or the lust of the two Muscovites.

When Paulvitch demanded the use of a canoe the chief grumbled a surly refusal and ordered the white man from the village. Surrounded by angry, muttering warriors who seemed to be but waiting some slight pretext to transfix him with their menacing spears the

Russian could do naught else than withdraw.

A dozen fighting men led him to the edge of the clearing, leaving him with a warning never to show himself again in the vicinity of their village.

Stifling his anger, Paulvitch slunk into the jungle; but once beyond the sight of the warriors he paused and listened intently. He could hear the voices of his escort as the men returned to the village, and when he was sure that they were not following him he wormed his way through the bushes to the edge of the river, still determined some way to obtain a canoe.

Life itself depended upon his reaching the Kincaid and enlisting the survivors

of the ship's crew in his service, for to be abandoned here amidst the dangers of the African jungle where he had won the enmity of the natives was, he well knew, practically equivalent to a sentence of death.

A desire for revenge acted as an almost equally powerful incentive to spur him into the face of danger to accomplish his design, so that it was a desperate man that lay hidden in the foliage beside the little river searching with eager eyes for some sign of a small canoe which might be easily handled by a single paddle.

Nor had the Russian long to wait before one of the awkward little skiffs which the Mosula fashion came in sight

upon the bosom of the river. A youth was paddling lazily out into midstream from a point beside the village. When he reached the channel he allowed the sluggish current to carry him slowly along while he lolled indolently in the bottom of his crude canoe.

All ignorant of the unseen enemy upon the river's bank the lad floated slowly down the stream while Paulvitch followed along the jungle path a few yards behind him.

A mile below the village the black boy dipped his paddle into the water and forced his skiff toward the bank. Paulvitch, elated by the chance which had drawn the youth to the same side of the river as that along which he followed

rather than to the opposite side where he would have been beyond the stalker's reach, hid in the brush close beside the point at which it was evident the skiff would touch the bank of the slow-moving stream, which seemed jealous of each fleeting instant which drew it nearer to the broad and muddy Ugambi where it must for ever lose its identity in the larger stream that would presently cast its waters into the great ocean.

Equally indolent were the motions of the Mosula youth as he drew his skiff beneath an overhanging limb of a great tree that leaned down to implant a farewell kiss upon the bosom of the departing water, caressing with green fronds the soft breast of its languorous

love.

And, snake-like, amidst the concealing foliage lay the malevolent Russ. Cruel, shifty eyes gloated upon the outlines of the coveted canoe, and measured the stature of its owner, while the crafty brain weighed the chances of the white man should physical encounter with the black become necessary.

Only direct necessity could drive Alexander Paulvitch to personal conflict; but it was indeed dire necessity which goaded him on to action now.

There was time, just time enough, to reach the Kincaid by nightfall. Would the black fool never quit his skiff? Paulvitch squirmed and fidgeted. The lad yawned and stretched. With

exasperating deliberateness he examined the arrows in his quiver, tested his bow, and looked to the edge upon the hunting-knife in his loin-cloth.

Again he stretched and yawned, glanced up at the river-bank, shrugged his shoulders, and lay down in the bottom of his canoe for a little nap before he plunged into the jungle after the prey he had come forth to hunt.

Paulvitch half rose, and with tensed muscles stood glaring down upon his unsuspecting victim. The boy's lids drooped and closed. Presently his breast rose and fell to the deep breaths of slumber. The time had come!

The Russian crept stealthily nearer. A branch rustled beneath his weight and

the lad stirred in his sleep. Paulvitch drew his revolver and levelled it upon the black. For a moment he remained in rigid quiet, and then again the youth relapsed into undisturbed slumber.

The white man crept closer. He could not chance a shot until there was no risk of missing. Presently he leaned close above the Mosula. The cold steel of the revolver in his hand insinuated itself nearer and nearer to the breast of the unconscious lad. Now it stopped but a few inches above the strongly beating heart.

But the pressure of a finger lay between the harmless boy and eternity. The soft bloom of youth still lay upon the brown cheek, a smile half parted the

beardless lips. Did any qualm of conscience point its disquieting finger of reproach at the murderer?

To all such was Alexander Paulvitch immune. A sneer curled his bearded lip as his forefinger closed upon the trigger of his revolver. There was a loud report. A little hole appeared above the heart of the sleeping boy, a little hole about which lay a blackened rim of powder-burned flesh.

The youthful body half rose to a sitting posture. The smiling lips tensed to the nervous shock of a momentary agony which the conscious mind never apprehended, and then the dead sank limply back into that deepest of slumbers from which there is no awakening.

The killer dropped quickly into the skiff beside the killed. Ruthless hands seized the dead boy heartlessly and raised him to the low gunwale. A little shove, a splash, some widening ripples broken by the sudden surge of a dark, hidden body from the slimy depths, and the coveted canoe was in the sole possession of the white man—more savage than the youth whose life he had taken.

Casting off the tie rope and seizing the paddle, Paulvitch bent feverishly to the task of driving the skiff downward toward the Ugambi at top speed.

Night had fallen when the prow of the bloodstained craft shot out into the current of the larger stream. Constantly

the Russian strained his eyes into the increasing darkness ahead in vain endeavour to pierce the black shadows which lay between him and the anchorage of the Kincaid.

Was the ship still riding there upon the waters of the Ugambi, or had the ape-man at last persuaded himself of the safety of venturing forth into the abating storm? As Paulvitch forged ahead with the current he asked himself these questions, and many more beside, not the least disquieting of which were those which related to his future should it chance that the Kincaid had already steamed away, leaving him to the merciless horrors of the savage wilderness.

In the darkness it seemed to the paddler that he was fairly flying over the water, and he had become convinced that the ship had left her moorings and that he had already passed the spot at which she had lain earlier in the day, when there appeared before him beyond a projecting point which he had but just rounded the flickering light from a ship's lantern.

Alexander Paulvitch could scarce restrain an exclamation of triumph. The Kincaid had not departed! Life and vengeance were not to elude him after all.

He stopped paddling the moment that he descried the gleaming beacon of hope ahead of him. Silently he drifted down

the muddy waters of the Ugambi, occasionally dipping his paddle's blade gently into the current that he might guide his primitive craft to the vessel's side.

As he approached more closely the dark bulk of a ship loomed before him out of the blackness of the night. No sound came from the vessel's deck. Paulvitch drifted, unseen, close to the Kincaid's side. Only the momentary scraping of his canoe's nose against the ship's planking broke the silence of the night.

Trembling with nervous excitement, the Russian remained motionless for several minutes; but there was no sound from the great bulk above him to indicate that his coming had been noted.

Stealthily he worked his craft forward until the stays of the bowsprit were directly above him. He could just reach them. To make his canoe fast there was the work of but a minute or two, and then the man raised himself quietly aloft.

A moment later he dropped softly to the deck. Thoughts of the hideous pack which tenanted the ship induced cold tremors along the spine of the cowardly prowler; but life itself depended upon the success of his venture, and so he was enabled to steel himself to the frightful chances which lay before him.

No sound or sign of watch appeared upon the ship's deck. Paulvitch crept stealthily toward the forecastle. All was silence. The hatch was raised, and as the

man peered downward he saw one of the Kincaid's crew reading by the light of the smoky lantern depending from the ceiling of the crew's quarters.

Paulvitch knew the man well, a surly cut-throat upon whom he figured strongly in the carrying out of the plan which he had conceived. Gently the Russ lowered himself through the aperture to the rounds of the ladder which led into the forecastle.

He kept his eyes turned upon the reading man, ready to warn him to silence the moment that the fellow discovered him; but so deeply immersed was the sailor in the magazine that the Russian came, unobserved, to the forecastle floor.

There he turned and whispered the reader's name. The man raised his eyes from the magazine—eyes that went wide for a moment as they fell upon the familiar countenance of Rokoff's lieutenant, only to narrow instantly in a scowl of disapproval.

"The devil!" he ejaculated. "Where did you come from? We all thought you were done for and gone where you ought to have gone a long time ago. His lordship will be mighty pleased to see you."

Paulvitch crossed to the sailor's side. A friendly smile lay on the Russian's lips, and his right hand was extended in greeting, as though the other might have been a dear and long lost friend. The

sailor ignored the proffered hand, nor did he return the other's smile.

"I've come to help you," explained Paulvitch. "I'm going to help you get rid of the Englishman and his beasts—then there will be no danger from the law when we get back to civilization. We can sneak in on them while they sleep—that is Greystoke, his wife, and that black scoundrel, Mugambi. Afterward it will be a simple matter to clean up the beasts. Where are they?"

"They're below," replied the sailor; "but just let me tell you something, Paulvitch. You haven't got no more show to turn us men against the Englishman than nothing. We had all we wanted of you and that other beast. He's dead, an' if

I don't miss my guess a whole lot you'll be dead too before long. You two treated us like dogs, and if you think we got any love for you you better forget it."

"You mean to say that you're going to turn against me?" demanded Paulvitch.

The other nodded, and then after a momentary pause, during which an idea seemed to have occurred to him, he spoke again.

"Unless," he said, "you can make it worth my while to let you go before the Englishman finds you here."

"You wouldn't turn me away in the jungle, would you?" asked Paulvitch. "Why, I'd die there in a week."

"You'd have a chance there," replied the sailor. "Here, you wouldn't have no

chance. Why, if I woke up my maties here they'd probably cut your heart out of you before the Englishman got a chance at you at all. It's mighty lucky for you that I'm the one to be awake now and not none of the others."

"You're crazy," cried Paulvitch. "Don't you know that the Englishman will have you all hanged when he gets you back where the law can get hold of you?"

"No, he won't do nothing of the kind," replied the sailor. "He's told us as much, for he says that there wasn't nobody to blame but you and Rokoff - the rest of us was just tools. See?"

For half an hour the Russian pleaded or threatened as the mood seized him.

Sometimes he was upon the verge of tears, and again he was promising his listener either fabulous rewards or condign punishment; but the other was obdurate. [condign: of equal value]

He made it plain to the Russian that there were but two plans open to him — either he must consent to being turned over immediately to Lord Greystoke, or he must pay to the sailor, as a price for permission to quit the Kincaid unmolested, every cent of money and article of value upon his person and in his cabin.

"And you'll have to make up your mind mighty quick," growled the man, "for I want to turn in. Come now, choose —his lordship or the jungle?"

"You'll be sorry for this," grumbled the Russian.

"Shut up," admonished the sailor. "If you get funny I may change my mind, and keep you here after all."

Now Paulvitch had no intention of permitting himself to fall into the hands of Tarzan of the Apes if he could possibly avoid it, and while the terrors of the jungle appalled him they were, to his mind, infinitely preferable to the certain death which he knew he merited and for which he might look at the hands of the ape-man.

"Is anyone sleeping in my cabin?" he asked.

The sailor shook his head. "No," he said; "Lord and Lady Greystoke have the

captain's cabin. The mate is in his own, and there ain't no one in yours."

"I'll go and get my valuables for you," said Paulvitch.

"I'll go with you to see that you don't try any funny business," said the sailor, and he followed the Russian up the ladder to the deck.

At the cabin entrance the sailor halted to watch, permitting Paulvitch to go alone to his cabin. Here he gathered together his few belongings that were to buy him the uncertain safety of escape, and as he stood for a moment beside the little table on which he had piled them he searched his brain for some feasible plan either to ensure his safety or to bring revenge upon his enemies.

And presently as he thought there recurred to his memory the little black box which lay hidden in a secret receptacle beneath a false top upon the table where his hand rested.

The Russian's face lighted to a sinister gleam of malevolent satisfaction as he stooped and felt beneath the table top. A moment later he withdrew from its hiding-place the thing he sought. He had lighted the lantern swinging from the beams overhead that he might see to collect his belongings, and now he held the black box well in the rays of the lamplight, while he fingered at the clasp that fastened its lid.

The lifted cover revealed two compartments within the box. In one was

a mechanism which resembled the works of a small clock. There also was a little battery of two dry cells. A wire ran from the clockwork to one of the poles of the battery, and from the other pole through the partition into the other compartment, a second wire returning directly to the clockwork.

Whatever lay within the second compartment was not visible, for a cover lay over it and appeared to be sealed in place by asphaltum. In the bottom of the box, beside the clockwork, lay a key, and this Paulvitch now withdrew and fitted to the winding stem.

Gently he turned the key, muffling the noise of the winding operation by throwing a couple of articles of clothing

over the box. All the time he listened intently for any sound which might indicate that the sailor or another were approaching his cabin; but none came to interrupt his work.

When the winding was completed the Russian set a pointer upon a small dial at the side of the clockwork, then he replaced the cover upon the black box, and returned the entire machine to its hiding- place in the table.

A sinister smile curled the man's bearded lips as he gathered up his valuables, blew out the lamp, and stepped from his cabin to the side of the waiting sailor.

"Here are my things," said the Russian; "now let me go."

"I'll first take a look in your pockets," replied the sailor. "You might have overlooked some trifling thing that won't be of no use to you in the jungle, but that'll come in mighty handy to a poor sailorman in London. Ah! just as I feared," he ejaculated an instant later as he withdrew a roll of bank-notes from Paulvitch's inside coat pocket.

The Russian scowled, muttering an imprecation; but nothing could be gained by argument, and so he did his best to reconcile himself to his loss in the knowledge that the sailor would never reach London to enjoy the fruits of his thievery.

It was with difficulty that Paulvitch restrained a consuming desire to taunt

the man with a suggestion of the fate that would presently overtake him and the other members of the Kincaid's company; but fearing to arouse the fellow's suspicions, he crossed the deck and lowered himself in silence into his canoe.

A minute or two later he was paddling toward the shore to be swallowed up in the darkness of the jungle night, and the terrors of a hideous existence from which, could he have had even a slight foreknowledge of what awaited him in the long years to come, he would have fled to the certain death of the open sea rather than endure it.

The sailor, having made sure that Paulvitch had departed, returned to the

forecastle, where he hid away his booty and turned into his bunk, while in the cabin that had belonged to the Russian there ticked on and on through the silences of the night the little mechanism in the small black box which held for the unconscious sleepers upon the ill-starred Kincaid the coming vengeance of the thwarted Russian.

19. THE LAST OF THE "KINCAID"

Shortly after the break of day Tarzan was on deck noting the condition of the weather. The wind had abated. The sky was cloudless. Every condition seemed ideal for the commencement of the return voyage to Jungle Island, where the beasts were to be left. And then— home!

The ape-man aroused the mate and gave instructions that the Kincaid sail at the earliest possible moment. The remaining members of the crew, safe in Lord Greystoke's assurance that they would not be prosecuted for their share in the villainies of the two Russians, hastened with cheerful alacrity to their

several duties.

The beasts, liberated from the confinement of the hold, wandered about the deck, not a little to the discomfiture of the crew in whose minds there remained a still vivid picture of the savagery of the beasts in conflict with those who had gone to their deaths beneath the fangs and talons which even now seemed itching for the soft flesh of further prey.

Beneath the watchful eyes of Tarzan and Mugambi, however, Sheeta and the apes of Akut curbed their desires, so that the men worked about the deck amongst them in far greater security than they imagined.

At last the Kincaid slipped down the

Ugambi and ran out upon the shimmering waters of the Atlantic. Tarzan and Jane Clayton watched the verdure-clad shore-line receding in the ship's wake, and for once the ape-man left his native soil without one single pang of regret.

No ship that sailed the seven seas could have borne him away from Africa to resume his search for his lost boy with half the speed that the Englishman would have desired, and the slow-moving Kincaid seemed scarce to move at all to the impatient mind of the bereaved father.

Yet the vessel made progress even when she seemed to be standing still, and presently the low hills of Jungle Island became distinctly visible upon the

western horizon ahead.

In the cabin of Alexander Paulvitch the thing within the black box ticked, ticked, ticked, with apparently unending monotony; but yet, second by second, a little arm which protruded from the periphery of one of its wheels came nearer and nearer to another little arm which projected from the hand which Paulvitch had set at a certain point upon the dial beside the clockwork. When those two arms touched one another the ticking of the mechanism would cease - for ever.

Jane and Tarzan stood upon the bridge looking out toward Jungle Island. The men were forward, also watching the land grow upward out of the ocean.

The beasts had sought the shade of the galley, where they were curled up in sleep. All was quiet and peace upon the ship, and upon the waters.

Suddenly, without warning, the cabin roof shot up into the air, a cloud of dense smoke puffed far above the Kincaid, there was a terrific explosion which shook the vessel from stem to stern.

Instantly pandemonium broke loose upon the deck. The apes of Akut, terrified by the sound, ran hither and thither, snarling and growling. Sheeta leaped here and there, screaming out his startled terror in hideous cries that sent the ice of fear straight to the hearts of the Kincaid's crew.

Mugambi, too, was trembling. Only

Tarzan of the Apes and his wife retained their composure. Scarce had the debris settled than the ape-man was among the beasts, quieting their fears, talking to them in low, pacific tones, stroking their shaggy bodies, and assuring them, as only he could, that the immediate danger was over.

An examination of the wreckage showed that their greatest danger, now, lay in fire, for the flames were licking hungrily at the splintered wood of the wrecked cabin, and had already found a foothold upon the lower deck through a great jagged hole which the explosion had opened.

By a miracle no member of the ship's company had been injured by the blast,

the origin of which remained for ever a total mystery to all but one - the sailor who knew that Paulvitch had been aboard the Kincaid and in his cabin the previous night. He guessed the truth; but discretion sealed his lips. It would, doubtless, fare none too well for the man who had permitted the arch enemy of them all aboard the ship in the watches of the night, where later he might set an infernal machine to blow them all to kingdom come. No, the man decided that he would keep this knowledge to himself.

As the flames gained headway it became apparent to Tarzan that whatever had caused the explosion had scattered some highly inflammable substance upon

the surrounding woodwork, for the water which they poured in from the pump seemed rather to spread than to extinguish the blaze.

Fifteen minutes after the explosion great, black clouds of smoke were rising from the hold of the doomed vessel. The flames had reached the engine-room, and the ship no longer moved toward the shore. Her fate was as certain as though the waters had already closed above her charred and smoking remains.

"It is useless to remain aboard her longer," remarked the ape- man to the mate. "There is no telling but there may be other explosions, and as we cannot hope to save her, the safest thing which we can do is to take to the boats without

further loss of time and make land."

Nor was there other alternative. Only the sailors could bring away any belongings, for the fire, which had not yet reached the forecastle, had consumed all in the vicinity of the cabin which the explosion had not destroyed.

Two boats were lowered, and as there was no sea the landing was made with infinite ease. Eager and anxious, the beasts of Tarzan sniffed the familiar air of their native island as the small boats drew in toward the beach, and scarce had their keels grated upon the sand than Sheeta and the apes of Akut were over the bows and racing swiftly toward the jungle. A half-sad smile curved the lips of the ape-man as he watched them go.

"Good-bye, my friends," he murmured. "You have been good and faithful allies, and I shall miss you."

"They will return, will they not, dear?" asked Jane Clayton, at his side.

"They may and they may not," replied the ape-man. "They have been ill at ease since they were forced to accept so many human beings into their confidence. Mugambi and I alone affected them less, for he and I are, at best, but half human. You, however, and the members of the crew are far too civilized for my beasts—it is you whom they are fleeing. Doubtless they feel that they cannot trust themselves in the close vicinity of so much perfectly good food without the danger that they may help

themselves to a mouthful some time by mistake."

Jane laughed. "I think they are just trying to escape you," she retorted. "You are always making them stop something which they see no reason why they should not do. Like little children they are doubtless delighted at this opportunity to flee from the zone of parental discipline. If they come back, though, I hope they won't come by night."

"Or come hungry, eh?" laughed Tarzan.

For two hours after landing the little party stood watching the burning ship which they had abandoned. Then there came faintly to them from across the water the sound of a second explosion.

The Kincaid settled rapidly almost immediately thereafter, and sank within a few minutes.

The cause of the second explosion was less a mystery than that of the first, the mate attributing it to the bursting of the boilers when the flames had finally reached them; but what had caused the first explosion was a subject of considerable speculation among the stranded company.

20. JUNGLE ISLAND AGAIN

The first consideration of the party was to locate fresh water and make camp, for all knew that their term of existence upon Jungle Island might be drawn out to months, or even years.

Tarzan knew the nearest water, and to this he immediately led the party. Here the men fell to work to construct shelters and rude furniture while Tarzan went into the jungle after meat, leaving the faithful Mugambi and the Mosula woman to guard Jane, whose safety he would never trust to any member of the Kincaid's cut-throat crew.

Lady Greystoke suffered far greater

anguish than any other of the castaways, for the blow to her hopes and her already cruelly lacerated mother-heart lay not in her own privations but in the knowledge that she might now never be able to learn the fate of her first-born or do aught to discover his whereabouts, or ameliorate his condition—a condition which imagination naturally pictured in the most frightful forms.

For two weeks the party divided the time amongst the various duties which had been allotted to each. A daylight watch was maintained from sunrise to sunset upon a bluff near the camp—a jutting shoulder of rock which overlooked the sea. Here, ready for instant lighting, was gathered a huge pile

of dry branches, while from a lofty pole which they had set in the ground there floated an improvised distress signal fashioned from a red undershirt which belonged to the mate of the Kincaid.

But never a speck upon the horizon that might be sail or smoke rewarded the tired eyes that in their endless, hopeless vigil strained daily out across the vast expanse of ocean.

It was Tarzan who suggested, finally, that they attempt to construct a vessel that would bear them back to the mainland. He alone could show them how to fashion rude tools, and when the idea had taken root in the minds of the men they were eager to commence their labours.

But as time went on and the Herculean nature of their task became more and more apparent they fell to grumbling, and to quarrelling among themselves, so that to the other dangers were now added dissension and suspicion.

More than before did Tarzan now fear to leave Jane among the half brutes of the Kincaid's crew; but hunting he must do, for none other could so surely go forth and return with meat as he. Sometimes Mugambi spelled him at the hunting; but the black's spear and arrows were never so sure of results as the rope and knife of the ape-man.

Finally the men shirked their work, going off into the jungle by twos to

explore and to hunt. All this time the camp had had no sight of Sheeta, or Akut and the other great apes, though Tarzan had sometimes met them in the jungle as he hunted.

And as matters tended from bad to worse in the camp of the castaways upon the east coast of Jungle Island, another camp came into being upon the north coast.

Here, in a little cove, lay a small schooner, the Cowrie, whose decks had but a few days since run red with the blood of her officers and the loyal members of her crew, for the Cowrie had fallen upon bad days when it had shipped such men as Gust and Momulla the Maori and that arch-fiend Kai Shang

of Fachan.

There were others, too, ten of them all told, the scum of the South Sea ports; but Gust and Momulla and Kai Shang were the brains and cunning of the company. It was they who had instigated the mutiny that they might seize and divide the catch of pearls which constituted the wealth of the Cowrie's cargo.

It was Kai Shang who had murdered the captain as he lay asleep in his berth, and it had been Momulla the Maori who had led the attack upon the officer of the watch.

Gust, after his own peculiar habit, had found means to delegate to the others the actual taking of life. Not that Gust entertained any scruples on the subject,

other than those which induced in him a rare regard for his own personal safety. There is always a certain element of risk to the assassin, for victims of deadly assault are seldom prone to die quietly and considerately. There is always a certain element of risk to go so far as to dispute the issue with the murderer. It was this chance of dispute which Gust preferred to forgo.

But now that the work was done the Swede aspired to the position of highest command among the mutineers. He had even gone so far as to appropriate and wear certain articles belonging to the murdered captain of the Cowrie—articles of apparel which bore upon them the badges and insignia of

authority.

Kai Shang was peeved. He had no love for authority, and certainly not the slightest intention of submitting to the domination of an ordinary Swede sailor.

The seeds of discontent were, therefore, already planted in the camp of the mutineers of the Cowrie at the north edge of Jungle Island. But Kai Shang realized that he must act with circumspection, for Gust alone of the motley horde possessed sufficient knowledge of navigation to get them out of the South Atlantic and around the cape into more congenial waters where they might find a market for their ill-gotten wealth, and no questions asked.

The day before they sighted Jungle

Island and discovered the little land-locked harbour upon the bosom of which the Cowrie now rode quietly at anchor, the watch had discovered the smoke and funnels of a warship upon the southern horizon.

The chance of being spoken and investigated by a man-of-war appealed not at all to any of them, so they put into hiding for a few days until the danger should have passed.

And now Gust did not wish to venture out to sea again. There was no telling, he insisted, but that the ship they had seen was actually searching for them. Kai Shang pointed out that such could not be the case since it was impossible for any human being other than themselves to

have knowledge of what had transpired aboard the Cowrie.

But Gust was not to be persuaded. In his wicked heart he nursed a scheme whereby he might increase his share of the booty by something like one hundred per cent. He alone could sail the Cowrie, therefore the others could not leave Jungle Island without him; but what was there to prevent Gust, with just sufficient men to man the schooner, slipping away from Kai Shang, Momulla the Maori, and some half of the crew when opportunity presented?

It was for this opportunity that Gust waited. Some day there would come a moment when Kai Shang, Momulla, and three or four of the others would be

absent from camp, exploring or hunting. The Swede racked his brain for some plan whereby he might successfully lure from the sight of the anchored ship those whom he had determined to abandon.

To this end he organized hunting party after hunting party, but always the devil of perversity seemed to enter the soul of Kai Shang, so that wily celestial would never hunt except in the company of Gust himself.

One day Kai Shang spoke secretly with Momulla the Maori, pouring into the brown ear of his companion the suspicions which he harboured concerning the Swede. Momulla was for going immediately and running a long knife through the heart of the traitor.

It is true that Kai Shang had no other evidence than the natural cunning of his own knavish soul—but he imagined in the intentions of Gust what he himself would have been glad to accomplish had the means lain at hand.

But he dared not let Momulla slay the Swede, upon whom they depended to guide them to their destination. They decided, however, that it would do no harm to attempt to frighten Gust into acceding to their demands, and with this purpose in mind the Maori sought out the self-constituted commander of the party.

When he broached the subject of immediate departure Gust again raised his former objection—that the warship might very probably be patrolling the

sea directly in their southern path, waiting for them to make the attempt to reach other waters.

Momulla scoffed at the fears of his fellow, pointing out that as no one aboard any warship knew of their mutiny there could be no reason why they should be suspected.

"Ah!" exclaimed Gust, "there is where you are wrong. There is where you are lucky that you have an educated man like me to tell you what to do. You are an ignorant savage, Momulla, and so you know nothing of wireless."

The Maori leaped to his feet and laid his hand upon the hilt of his knife.

"I am no savage," he shouted.

"I was only joking," the Swede

hastened to explain. "We are old friends, Momulla; we cannot afford to quarrel, at least not while old Kai Shang is plotting to steal all the pearls from us. If he could find a man to navigate the Cowrie he would leave us in a minute. All his talk about getting away from here is just because he has some scheme in his head to get rid of us."

"But the wireless," asked Momulla. "What has the wireless to do with our remaining here?"

"Oh yes," replied Gust, scratching his head. He was wondering if the Maori were really so ignorant as to believe the preposterous lie he was about to unload upon him. "Oh yes! You see every warship is equipped with what they call

a wireless apparatus. It lets them talk to other ships hundreds of miles away, and it lets them listen to all that is said on these other ships. Now, you see, when you fellows were shooting up the Cowrie you did a whole lot of loud talking, and there isn't any doubt but that that warship was a-lyin' off south of us listenin' to it all. Of course they might not have learned the name of the ship, but they heard enough to know that the crew of some ship was mutinying and killin' her officers. So you see they'll be waiting to search every ship they sight for a long time to come, and they may not be far away now."

When he had ceased speaking the Swede strove to assume an air of

composure that his listener might not have his suspicions aroused as to the truth of the statements that had just been made.

Momulla sat for some time in silence, eyeing Gust. At last he rose.

"You are a great liar," he said. "If you don't get us on our way by tomorrow you'll never have another chance to lie, for I heard two of the men saying that they'd like to run a knife into you and that if you kept them in this hole any longer they'd do it."

"Go and ask Kai Shang if there is not a wireless," replied Gust. "He will tell you that there is such a thing and that vessels can talk to one another across hundreds of miles of water. Then say to

the two men who wish to kill me that if they do so they will never live to spend their share of the swag, for only I can get you safely to any port."

So Momulla went to Kai Shang and asked him if there was such an apparatus as a wireless by means of which ships could talk with each other at great distances, and Kai Shang told him that there was.

Momulla was puzzled; but still he wished to leave the island, and was willing to take his chances on the open sea rather than to remain longer in the monotony of the camp.

"If we only had someone else who could navigate a ship!" wailed Kai Shang.

That afternoon Momulla went hunting with two other Maoris. They hunted toward the south, and had not gone far from camp when they were surprised by the sound of voices ahead of them in the jungle.

They knew that none of their own men had preceded them, and as all were convinced that the island was uninhabited, they were inclined to flee in terror on the hypothesis that the place was haunted—possibly by the ghosts of the murdered officers and men of the Cowrie.

But Momulla was even more curious than he was superstitious, and so he quelled his natural desire to flee from the supernatural. Motioning his

companions to follow his example, he dropped to his hands and knees, crawling forward stealthily and with quakings of heart through the jungle in the direction from which came the voices of the unseen speakers.

Presently, at the edge of a little clearing, he halted, and there he breathed a deep sigh of relief, for plainly before him he saw two flesh-and-blood men sitting upon a fallen log and talking earnestly together.

One was Schneider, mate of the Kincaid, and the other was a seaman named Schmidt.

"I think we can do it, Schmidt," Schneider was saying. "A good canoe wouldn't be hard to build, and three of us

could paddle it to the mainland in a day if the wind was right and the sea reasonably calm. There ain't no use waiting for the men to build a big enough boat to take the whole party, for they're sore now and sick of working like slaves all day long. It ain't none of our business anyway to save the Englishman. Let him look out for himself, says I." He paused for a moment, and then eyeing the other to note the effect of his next words, he continued, "But we might take the woman. It would be a shame to leave a nice-lookin' piece like she is in such a Gott-forsaken hole as this here island."

Schmidt looked up and grinned.

"So that's how she's blowin', is it?" he asked. "Why didn't you say so in the first

place? Wot's in it for me if I help you?"

"She ought to pay us well to get her back to civilization," explained Schneider, "an' I tell you what I'll do. I'll just whack up with the two men that helps me. I'll take half an' they can divide the other half—you an' whoever the other bloke is. I'm sick of this place, an' the sooner I get out of it the better I'll like it. What do you say?"

"Suits me," replied Schmidt. "I wouldn't know how to reach the mainland myself, an' know that none o' the other fellows would, so's you're the only one that knows anything of navigation you're the fellow I'll tie to."

Momulla the Maori pricked up his ears. He had a smattering of every

tongue that is spoken upon the seas, and more than a few times had he sailed on English ships, so that he understood fairly well all that had passed between Schneider and Schmidt since he had stumbled upon them.

He rose to his feet and stepped into the clearing. Schneider and his companion started as nervously as though a ghost had risen before them. Schneider reached for his revolver. Momulla raised his right hand, palm forward, as a sign of his pacific intentions.

"I am a friend," he said. "I heard you; but do not fear that I will reveal what you have said. I can help you, and you can help me." He was addressing

Schneider. "You can navigate a ship, but you have no ship. We have a ship, but no one to navigate it. If you will come with us and ask no questions we will let you take the ship where you will after you have landed us at a certain port, the name of which we will give you later. You can take the woman of whom you speak, and we will ask no questions either. Is it a bargain?"

Schneider desired more information, and got as much as Momulla thought best to give him. Then the Maori suggested that they speak with Kai Shang. The two members of the Kincaid's company followed Momulla and his fellows to a point in the jungle close by the camp of the mutineers. Here Momulla hid them

while he went in search of Kai Shang, first admonishing his Maori companions to stand guard over the two sailors lest they change their minds and attempt to escape. Schneider and Schmidt were virtually prisoners, though they did not know it.

Presently Momulla returned with Kai Shang, to whom he had briefly narrated the details of the stroke of good fortune that had come to them. The Chinaman spoke at length with Schneider, until, notwithstanding his natural suspicion of the sincerity of all men, he became quite convinced that Schneider was quite as much a rogue as himself and that the fellow was anxious to leave the island.

These two premises accepted there

could be little doubt that Schneider would prove trustworthy in so far as accepting the command of the Cowrie was concerned; after that Kai Shang knew that he could find means to coerce the man into submission to his further wishes.

When Schneider and Schmidt left them and set out in the direction of their own camp, it was with feelings of far greater relief than they had experienced in many a day. Now at last they saw a feasible plan for leaving the island upon a seaworthy craft. There would be no more hard labour at ship-building, and no risking their lives upon a crudely built makeshift that would be quite as likely to go to the bottom as it would to

reach the mainland.

Also, they were to have assistance in capturing the woman, or rather women, for when Momulla had learned that there was a black woman in the other camp he had insisted that she be brought along as well as the white woman.

As Kai Shang and Momulla entered their camp, it was with a realization that they no longer needed Gust. They marched straight to the tent in which they might expect to find him at that hour of the day, for though it would have been more comfortable for the entire party to remain aboard the ship, they had mutually decided that it would be safer for all concerned were they to pitch their camp ashore.

Each knew that in the heart of the others was sufficient treachery to make it unsafe for any member of the party to go ashore leaving the others in possession of the Cowrie, so not more than two or three men at a time were ever permitted aboard the vessel unless all the balance of the company was there too.

As the two crossed toward Gust's tent the Maori felt the edge of his long knife with one grimy, calloused thumb. The Swede would have felt far from comfortable could he have seen this significant action, or read what was passing amid the convolutions of the brown man's cruel brain.

Now it happened that Gust was at that moment in the tent occupied by the cook,

and this tent stood but a few feet from his own. So that he heard the approach of Kai Shang and Momulla, though he did not, of course, dream that it had any special significance for him.

Chance had it, though, that he glanced out of the doorway of the cook's tent at the very moment that Kai Shang and Momulla approached the entrance to his, and he thought that he noted a stealthiness in their movements that comported poorly with amicable or friendly intentions, and then, just as they two slunk within the interior, Gust caught a glimpse of the long knife which Momulla the Maori was then carrying behind his back.

The Swede's eyes opened wide, and a

funny little sensation assailed the roots of his hairs. Also he turned almost white beneath his tan. Quite precipitately he left the cook's tent. He was not one who required a detailed exposition of intentions that were quite all too obvious.

As surely as though he had heard them plotting, he knew that Kai Shang and Momulla had come to take his life. The knowledge that he alone could navigate the Cowrie had, up to now, been sufficient assurance of his safety; but quite evidently something had occurred of which he had no knowledge that would make it quite worth the while of his co-conspirators to eliminate him.

Without a pause Gust darted across

the beach and into the jungle. He was afraid of the jungle; uncanny noises that were indeed frightful came forth from its recesses—the tangled mazes of the mysterious country back of the beach.

But if Gust was afraid of the jungle he was far more afraid of Kai Shang and Momulla. The dangers of the jungle were more or less problematical, while the danger that menaced him at the hands of his companions was a perfectly well-known quantity, which might be expressed in terms of a few inches of cold steel, or the coil of a light rope. He had seen Kai Shang garrote a man at Pai-sha in a dark alleyway back of Loo Kotai's place. He feared the rope, therefore, more than he did the knife of

the Maori; but he feared them both too much to remain within reach of either. Therefore he chose the pitiless jungle.

21. THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

In Tarzan's camp, by dint of threats and promised rewards, the ape-man had finally succeeded in getting the hull of a large skiff almost completed. Much of the work he and Mugambi had done with their own hands in addition to furnishing the camp with meat.

Schneider, the mate, had been doing considerable grumbling, and had at last openly deserted the work and gone off into the jungle with Schmidt to hunt. He said that he wanted a rest, and Tarzan, rather than add to the unpleasantness which already made camp life almost unendurable, had permitted the two men

to depart without a remonstrance.

Upon the following day, however, Schneider affected a feeling of remorse for his action, and set to work with a will upon the skiff. Schmidt also worked good-naturedly, and Lord Greystoke congratulated himself that at last the men had awakened to the necessity for the labour which was being asked of them and to their obligations to the balance of the party.

It was with a feeling of greater relief than he had experienced for many a day that he set out that noon to hunt deep in the jungle for a herd of small deer which Schneider reported that he and Schmidt had seen there the day before.

The direction in which Schneider had

reported seeing the deer was toward the south-west, and to that point the ape-man swung easily through the tangled verdure of the forest.

And as he went there approached from the north a half-dozen ill- featured men who went stealthily through the jungle as go men bent upon the commission of a wicked act.

They thought that they travelled unseen; but behind them, almost from the moment they quitted their own camp, a tall man crept upon their trail. In the man's eyes were hate and fear, and a great curiosity. Why went Kai Shang and Momulla and the others thus stealthily toward the south? What did they expect to find there? Gust shook his low-

browed head in perplexity. But he would know. He would follow them and learn their plans, and then if he could thwart them he would—that went without question.

At first he had thought that they searched for him; but finally his better judgment assured him that such could not be the case, since they had accomplished all they really desired by chasing him out of camp. Never would Kai Shang or Momulla go to such pains to slay him or another unless it would put money into their pockets, and as Gust had no money it was evident that they were searching for someone else.

Presently the party he trailed came to a halt. Its members concealed

themselves in the foliage bordering the game trail along which they had come. Gust, that he might the better observe, clambered into the branches of a tree to the rear of them, being careful that the leafy fronds hid him from the view of his erstwhile mates.

He had not long to wait before he saw a strange white man approach carefully along the trail from the south.

At sight of the newcomer Momulla and Kai Shang arose from their places of concealment and greeted him. Gust could not overhear what passed between them. Then the man returned in the direction from which he had come.

He was Schneider. Nearing his camp he circled to the opposite side of it, and

presently came running in breathlessly. Excitedly he hastened to Mugambi.

"Quick!" he cried. "Those apes of yours have caught Schmidt and will kill him if we do not hasten to his aid. You alone can call them off. Take Jones and Sullivan—you may need help—and get to him as quick as you can. Follow the game trail south for about a mile. I will remain here. I am too spent with running to go back with you," and the mate of the Kincaid threw himself upon the ground, panting as though he was almost done for.

Mugambi hesitated. He had been left to guard the two women. He did not know what to do, and then Jane Clayton, who had heard Schneider's story, added

her pleas to those of the mate.

"Do not delay," she urged. "We shall be all right here. Mr. Schneider will remain with us. Go, Mugambi. The poor fellow must be saved."

Schmidt, who lay hidden in a bush at the edge of the camp, grinned. Mugambi, heeding the commands of his mistress, though still doubtful of the wisdom of his action, started off toward the south, with Jones and Sullivan at his heels.

No sooner had he disappeared than Schmidt rose and darted north into the jungle, and a few minutes later the face of Kai Shang of Fachan appeared at the edge of the clearing. Schneider saw the Chinaman, and motioned to him that the coast was clear.

Jane Clayton and the Mosula woman were sitting at the opening of the former's tent, their backs toward the approaching ruffians. The first intimation that either had of the presence of strangers in camp was the sudden appearance of a half-dozen ragged villains about them.

"Come!" said Kai Shang, motioning that the two arise and follow him.

Jane Clayton sprang to her feet and looked about for Schneider, only to see him standing behind the newcomers, a grin upon his face. At his side stood Schmidt. Instantly she saw that she had been made the victim of a plot.

"What is the meaning of this?" she asked, addressing the mate.

"It means that we have found a ship and that we can now escape from Jungle Island," replied the man.

"Why did you send Mugambi and the others into the jungle?" she inquired.

"They are not coming with us—only you and I, and the Mosula woman."

"Come!" repeated Kai Shang, and seized Jane Clayton's wrist.

One of the Maoris grasped the black woman by the arm, and when she would have screamed struck her across the mouth.

Mugambi raced through the jungle toward the south. Jones and Sullivan trailed far behind. For a mile he continued upon his way to the relief of Schmidt, but no signs saw he of the

missing man or of any of the apes of Akut.

At last he halted and called aloud the summons which he and Tarzan had used to hail the great anthropoids. There was no response. Jones and Sullivan came up with the black warrior as the latter stood voicing his weird call. For another half-mile the black searched, calling occasionally.

Finally the truth flashed upon him, and then, like a frightened deer, he wheeled and dashed back toward camp. Arriving there, it was but a moment before full confirmation of his fears was impressed upon him. Lady Greystoke and the Mosula woman were gone. So, likewise, was Schneider.

When Jones and Sullivan joined Mugambi he would have killed them in his anger, thinking them parties to the plot; but they finally succeeded in partially convincing him that they had known nothing of it.

As they stood speculating upon the probable whereabouts of the women and their abductor, and the purpose which Schneider had in mind in taking them from camp, Tarzan of the Apes swung from the branches of a tree and crossed the clearing toward them.

His keen eyes detected at once that something was radically wrong, and when he had heard Mugambi's story his jaws clicked angrily together as he knitted his brows in thought.

What could the mate hope to accomplish by taking Jane Clayton from a camp upon a small island from which there was no escape from the vengeance of Tarzan? The ape-man could not believe the fellow such a fool, and then a slight realization of the truth dawned upon him.

Schneider would not have committed such an act unless he had been reasonably sure that there was a way by which he could quit Jungle Island with his prisoners. But why had he taken the black woman as well? There must have been others, one of whom wanted the dusky female.

"Come," said Tarzan, "there is but one thing to do now, and that is to follow

the trail."

As he finished speaking a tall, ungainly figure emerged from the jungle north of the camp. He came straight toward the four men. He was an entire stranger to all of them, not one of whom had dreamed that another human being than those of their own camp dwelt upon the unfriendly shores of Jungle Island.

It was Gust. He came directly to the point.

"Your women were stolen," he said. "If you want ever to see them again, come quickly and follow me. If we do not hurry the Cowrie will be standing out to sea by the time we reach her anchorage."

"Who are you?" asked Tarzan. "What

do you know of the theft of my wife and the black woman?"

"I heard Kai Shang and Momulla the Maori plot with two men of your camp. They had chased me from our camp, and would have killed me. Now I will get even with them. Come!"

Gust led the four men of the Kincaid's camp at a rapid trot through the jungle toward the north. Would they come to the sea in time? But a few more minutes would answer the question.

And when at last the little party did break through the last of the screening foliage, and the harbour and the ocean lay before them, they realized that fate had been most cruelly unkind, for the Cowrie was already under sail and

moving slowly out of the mouth of the harbour into the open sea.

What were they to do? Tarzan's broad chest rose and fell to the force of his pent emotions. The last blow seemed to have fallen, and if ever in all his life Tarzan of the Apes had had occasion to abandon hope it was now that he saw the ship bearing his wife to some frightful fate moving gracefully over the rippling water, so very near and yet so hideously far away.

In silence he stood watching the vessel. He saw it turn toward the east and finally disappear around a headland on its way he knew not whither. Then he dropped upon his haunches and buried his face in his hands.

It was after dark that the five men returned to the camp on the east shore. The night was hot and sultry. No slightest breeze ruffled the foliage of the trees or rippled the mirror-like surface of the ocean. Only a gentle swell rolled softly in upon the beach.

Never had Tarzan seen the great Atlantic so ominously at peace. He was standing at the edge of the beach gazing out to sea in the direction of the mainland, his mind filled with sorrow and hopelessness, when from the jungle close behind the camp came the uncanny wail of a panther.

There was a familiar note in the weird cry, and almost mechanically Tarzan turned his head and answered. A

moment later the tawny figure of Sheeta slunk out into the half-light of the beach. There was no moon, but the sky was brilliant with stars. Silently the savage brute came to the side of the man. It had been long since Tarzan had seen his old fighting companion, but the soft purr was sufficient to assure him that the animal still recalled the bonds which had united them in the past.

The ape-man let his fingers fall upon the beast's coat, and as Sheeta pressed close against his leg he caressed and fondled the wicked head while his eyes continued to search the blackness of the waters.

Presently he started. What was that? He strained his eyes into the night. Then

he turned and called aloud to the men smoking upon their blankets in the camp. They came running to his side; but Gust hesitated when he saw the nature of Tarzan's companion.

"Look!" cried Tarzan. "A light! A ship's light! It must be the Cowrie. They are becalmed." And then with an exclamation of renewed hope, "We can reach them! The skiff will carry us easily."

Gust demurred. "They are well armed," he warned. "We could not take the ship—just five of us."

"There are six now," replied Tarzan, pointing to Sheeta, "and we can have more still in a half-hour. Sheeta is the equivalent of twenty men, and the few

others I can bring will add full a hundred to our fighting strength. You do not know them."

The ape-man turned and raised his head toward the jungle, while there pealed from his lips, time after time, the fearsome cry of the bull-ape who would summon his fellows.

Presently from the jungle came an answering cry, and then another and another. Gust shuddered. Among what sort of creatures had fate thrown him? Were not Kai Shang and Momulla to be preferred to this great white giant who stroked a panther and called to the beasts of the jungle?

In a few minutes the apes of Akut came crashing through the underbrush

and out upon the beach, while in the meantime the five men had been struggling with the unwieldy bulk of the skiff's hull.

By dint of Herculean efforts they had managed to get it to the water's edge. The oars from the two small boats of the Kincaid, which had been washed away by an off-shore wind the very night that the party had landed, had been in use to support the canvas of the sailcloth tents. These were hastily requisitioned, and by the time Akut and his followers came down to the water all was ready for embarkation.

Once again the hideous crew entered the service of their master, and without question took up their places in the skiff.

The four men, for Gust could not be prevailed upon to accompany the party, fell to the oars, using them paddle-wise, while some of the apes followed their example, and presently the ungainly skiff was moving quietly out to sea in the direction of the light which rose and fell gently with the swell.

A sleepy sailor kept a poor vigil upon the Cowrie's deck, while in the cabin below Schneider paced up and down arguing with Jane Clayton. The woman had found a revolver in a table drawer in the room in which she had been locked, and now she kept the mate of the Kincaid at bay with the weapon.

The Mosula woman kneeled behind her, while Schneider paced up and down

before the door, threatening and pleading and promising, but all to no avail. Presently from the deck above came a shout of warning and a shot. For an instant Jane Clayton relaxed her vigilance, and turned her eyes toward the cabin skylight. Simultaneously Schneider was upon her.

The first intimation the watch had that there was another craft within a thousand miles of the Cowrie came when he saw the head and shoulders of a man poked over the ship's side. Instantly the fellow sprang to his feet with a cry and levelled his revolver at the intruder. It was his cry and the subsequent report of the revolver which threw Jane Clayton off her guard.

Upon deck the quiet of fancied security soon gave place to the wildest pandemonium. The crew of the Cowrie rushed above armed with revolvers, cutlasses, and the long knives that many of them habitually wore; but the alarm had come too late. Already the beasts of Tarzan were upon the ship's deck, with Tarzan and the two men of the Kincaid's crew.

In the face of the frightful beasts the courage of the mutineers wavered and broke. Those with revolvers fired a few scattering shots and then raced for some place of supposed safety. Into the shrouds went some; but the apes of Akut were more at home there than they.

Screaming with terror the Maoris

were dragged from their lofty perches. The beasts, uncontrolled by Tarzan who had gone in search of Jane, loosed in the full fury of their savage natures upon the unhappy wretches who fell into their clutches.

Sheeta, in the meanwhile, had felt his great fangs sink into but a singular jugular. For a moment he mauled the corpse, and then he spied Kai Shang darting down the companionway toward his cabin.

With a shrill scream Sheeta was after him—a scream which awoke an almost equally uncanny cry in the throat of the terror- stricken Chinaman.

But Kai Shang reached his cabin a fraction of a second ahead of the

panther, and leaping within slammed the door—just too late. Sheeta's great body hurtled against it before the catch engaged, and a moment later Kai Shang was gibbering and shrieking in the back of an upper berth.

Lightly Sheeta sprang after his victim, and presently the wicked days of Kai Shang of Fachan were ended, and Sheeta was gorging himself upon tough and stringy flesh.

A moment scarcely had elapsed after Schneider leaped upon Jane Clayton and wrenched the revolver from her hand, when the door of the cabin opened and a tall and half-naked white man stood framed within the portal.

Silently he leaped across the cabin.

Schneider felt sinewy fingers at his throat. He turned his head to see who had attacked him, and his eyes went wide when he saw the face of the ape-man close above his own.

Grimly the fingers tightened upon the mate's throat. He tried to scream, to plead, but no sound came forth. His eyes protruded as he struggled for freedom, for breath, for life.

Jane Clayton seized her husband's hands and tried to drag them from the throat of the dying man; but Tarzan only shook his head.

"Not again," he said quietly. "Before have I permitted scoundrels to live, only to suffer and to have you suffer for my mercy. This time we shall make sure of

one scoundrel—sure that he will never again harm us or another," and with a sudden wrench he twisted the neck of the perfidious mate until there was a sharp crack, and the man's body lay limp and motionless in the ape- man's grasp. With a gesture of disgust Tarzan tossed the corpse aside. Then he returned to the deck, followed by Jane and the Mosula woman.

The battle there was over. Schmidt and Momulla and two others alone remained alive of all the company of the Cowrie, for they had found sanctuary in the forecastle. The others had died, horribly, and as they deserved, beneath the fangs and talons of the beasts of Tarzan, and in the morning the sun rose

on a grisly sight upon the deck of the unhappy Cowrie; but this time the blood which stained her white planking was the blood of the guilty and not of the innocent.

Tarzan brought forth the men who had hidden in the forecastle, and without promises of immunity from punishment forced them to help work the vessel - the only alternative was immediate death.

A stiff breeze had risen with the sun, and with canvas spread the Cowrie set in toward Jungle Island, where a few hours later, Tarzan picked up Gust and bid farewell to Sheeta and the apes of Akut, for here he set the beasts ashore to pursue the wild and natural life they loved so well; nor did they lose a

moment's time in disappearing into the cool depths of their beloved jungle.

That they knew that Tarzan was to leave them may be doubted—except possibly in the case of the more intelligent Akut, who alone of all the others remained upon the beach as the small boat drew away toward the schooner, carrying his savage lord and master from him.

And as long as their eyes could span the distance, Jane and Tarzan, standing upon the deck, saw the lonely figure of the shaggy anthropoid motionless upon the surf-beaten sands of Jungle Island.

It was three days later that the Cowrie fell in with H.M. sloop- of-war Shorewater, through whose wireless

Lord Greystoke soon got in communication with London. Thus he learned that which filled his and his wife's heart with joy and thanksgiving—little Jack was safe at Lord Greystoke's town house.

It was not until they reached London that they learned the details of the remarkable chain of circumstances that had preserved the infant unharmed.

It developed that Rokoff, fearing to take the child aboard the Kincaid by day, had hidden it in a low den where nameless infants were harboured, intending to carry it to the steamer after dark.

His confederate and chief lieutenant, Paulvitch, true to the long years of

teaching of his wily master, had at last succumbed to the treachery and greed that had always marked his superior, and, lured by the thoughts of the immense ransom that he might win by returning the child unharmed, had divulged the secret of its parentage to the woman who maintained the foundling asylum. Through her he had arranged for the substitution of another infant, knowing full well that never until it was too late would Rokoff suspect the trick that had been played upon him.

The woman had promised to keep the child until Paulvitch returned to England; but she, in turn, had been tempted to betray her trust by the lure of gold, and so had opened negotiations with Lord

Greystoke's solicitors for the return of the child.

Esmeralda, the old Negro nurse whose absence on a vacation in America at the time of the abduction of little Jack had been attributed by her as the cause of the calamity, had returned and positively identified the infant.

The ransom had been paid, and within ten days of the date of his kidnapping the future Lord Greystoke, none the worse for his experience, had been returned to his father's home.

And so that last and greatest of Nikolas Rokoff's many rascalities had not only miserably miscarried through the treachery he had taught his only friend, but it had resulted in the arch-

villain's death, and given to Lord and Lady Greystoke a peace of mind that neither could ever have felt so long as the vital spark remained in the body of the Russian and his malign mind was free to formulate new atrocities against them.

Rokoff was dead, and while the fate of Paulvitch was unknown, they had every reason to believe that he had succumbed to the dangers of the jungle where last they had seen him—the malicious tool of his master.

And thus, in so far as they might know, they were to be freed for ever from the menace of these two men—the only enemies which Tarzan of the Apes ever had had occasion to fear, because

they struck at him cowardly blows, through those he loved.

It was a happy family party that were reunited in Greystoke House the day that Lord Greystoke and his lady landed upon English soil from the deck of the Shorewater.

Accompanying them were Mugambi and the Mosula woman whom he had found in the bottom of the canoe that night upon the bank of the little tributary of the Ugambi.

The woman had preferred to cling to her new lord and master rather than return to the marriage she had tried to escape.

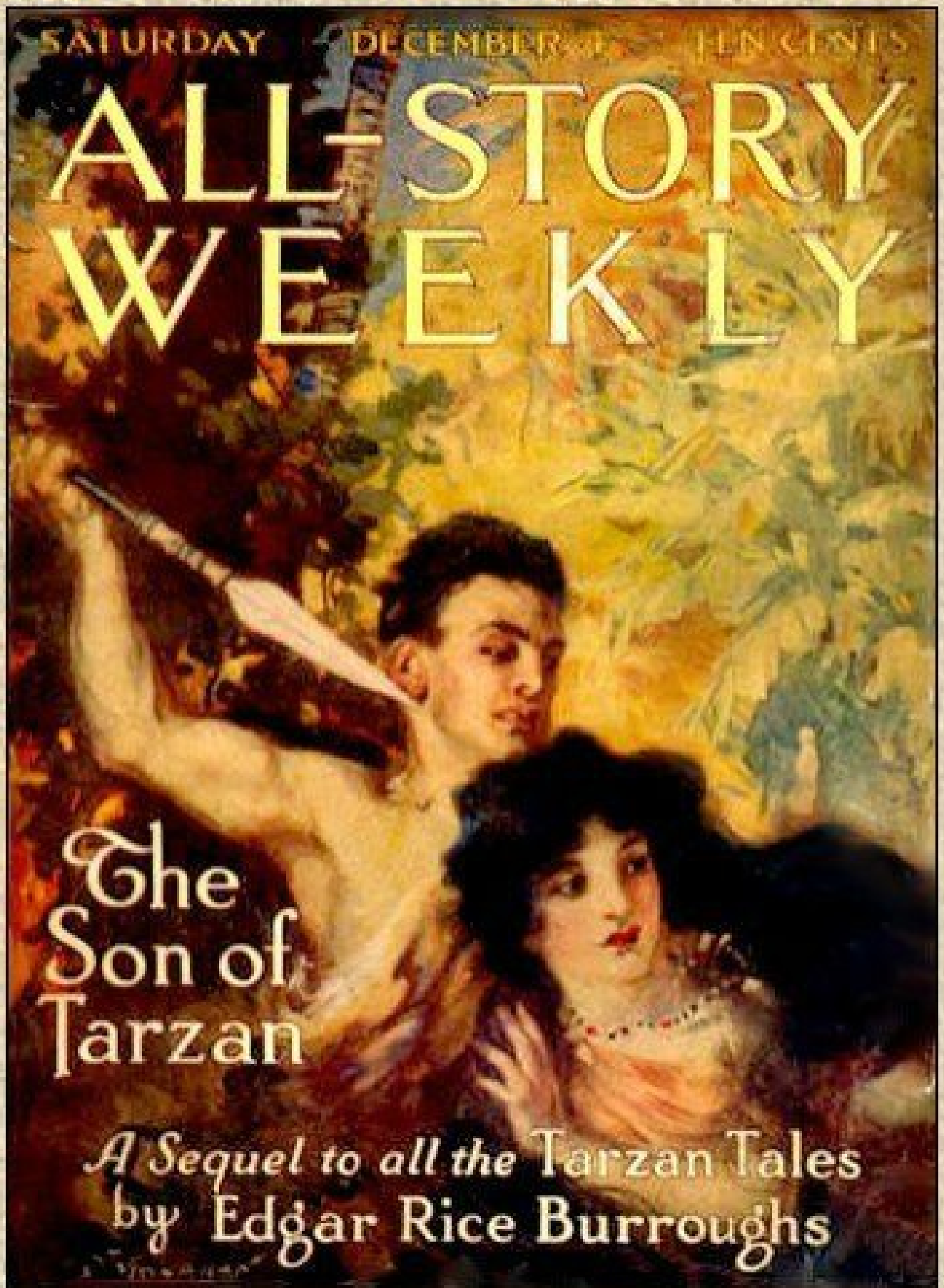
Tarzan had proposed to them that they might find a home upon his vast African

estates in the land of the Waziri, where they were to be sent as soon as opportunity presented itself.

Possibly we shall see them all there amid the savage romance of the grim jungle and the great plains where Tarzan of the Apes loves best to be.

Who knows?

THE END


SATURDAY
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ALL-STORY WEEKLY
The Son of Tarzan
A Sequel to all the Tarzan Tales
by Edgar Rice Burroughs

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

THE SON OF TARZAN

BOOK 4 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

DEDICATED TO HULBERT

BURROUGHS

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CHAPTER 1

The long boat of the Marjorie W. was floating down the broad Ugambi with ebb tide and current. Her crew were lazily enjoying this respite from the arduous labor of rowing up stream. Three miles below them lay the Marjorie W. herself, quite ready to sail so soon as they should have clambered aboard and swung the long boat to its davits. Presently the attention of every man was drawn from his dreaming or his gossiping to the northern bank of the river. There, screaming at them in a cracked falsetto and with skinny arms outstretched, stood a strange apparition of a man.

"Wot the 'ell?" ejaculated one of the

crew.

"A white man!" muttered the mate, and then: "Man the oars, boys, and we'll just pull over an' see what he wants."

When they came close to the shore they saw an emaciated creature with scant white locks tangled and matted. The thin, bent body was naked but for a loin cloth. Tears were rolling down the sunken pock-marked cheeks. The man jabbered at them in a strange tongue.

"Rooshun," hazarded the mate. "Savvy English?" he called to the man.

He did, and in that tongue, brokenly and haltingly, as though it had been many years since he had used it, he begged them to take him with them away from this awful country. Once on board the

Marjorie W. the stranger told his rescuers a pitiful tale of privation, hardships, and torture, extending over a period of ten years. How he happened to have come to Africa he did not tell them, leaving them to assume he had forgotten the incidents of his life prior to the frightful ordeals that had wrecked him mentally and physically. He did not even tell them his true name, and so they knew him only as Michael Sabrov, nor was there any resemblance between this sorry wreck and the virile, though unprincipled, Alexis Paulvitch of old.

It had been ten years since the Russian had escaped the fate of his friend, the arch-fiend Rokoff, and not once, but many times during those ten

years had Paulvitch cursed the fate that had given to Nicholas Rokoff death and immunity from suffering while it had meted to him the hideous terrors of an existence infinitely worse than the death that persistently refused to claim him.

Paulvitch had taken to the jungle when he had seen the beasts of Tarzan and their savage lord swarm the deck of the Kincaid, and in his terror lest Tarzan pursue and capture him he had stumbled on deep into the jungle, only to fall at last into the hands of one of the savage cannibal tribes that had felt the weight of Rokoff's evil temper and cruel brutality. Some strange whim of the chief of this tribe saved Paulvitch from death only to plunge him into a life of misery and

torture. For ten years he had been the butt of the village, beaten and stoned by the women and children, cut and slashed and disfigured by the warriors; a victim of often recurring fevers of the most malignant variety. Yet he did not die. Smallpox laid its hideous clutches upon him; leaving him unspeakably branded with its repulsive marks. Between it and the attentions of the tribe the countenance of Alexis Paulvitch was so altered that his own mother could not have recognized in the pitiful mask he called his face a single familiar feature. A few scraggly, yellow-white locks had supplanted the thick, dark hair that had covered his head. His limbs were bent and twisted, he walked with a shuffling,

unsteady gait, his body doubled forward. His teeth were gone—knocked out by his savage masters. Even his mentality was but a sorry mockery of what it once had been.

They took him aboard the Marjorie W., and there they fed and nursed him. He gained a little in strength; but his appearance never altered for the better—a human derelict, battered and wrecked, they had found him; a human derelict, battered and wrecked, he would remain until death claimed him. Though still in his thirties, Alexis Paulvitch could easily have passed for eighty. Inscrutable Nature had demanded of the accomplice a greater penalty than his principal had paid.

In the mind of Alexis Paulvitch there lingered no thoughts of revenge - only a dull hatred of the man whom he and Rokoff had tried to break, and failed. There was hatred, too, of the memory of Rokoff, for Rokoff had led him into the horrors he had undergone. There was hatred of the police of a score of cities from which he had had to flee. There was hatred of law, hatred of order, hatred of everything. Every moment of the man's waking life was filled with morbid thought of hatred—he had become mentally as he was physically in outward appearance, the personification of the blighting emotion of Hate. He had little or nothing to do with the men who had rescued him. He was too weak to

work and too morose for company, and so they quickly left him alone to his own devices.

The Marjorie W. had been chartered by a syndicate of wealthy manufacturers, equipped with a laboratory and a staff of scientists, and sent out to search for some natural product which the manufacturers who footed the bills had been importing from South America at an enormous cost. What the product was none on board the Marjorie W. knew except the scientists, nor is it of any moment to us, other than that it led the ship to a certain island off the coast of Africa after Alexis Paulvitch had been taken aboard.

The ship lay at anchor off the coast

for several weeks. The monotony of life aboard her became trying for the crew. They went often ashore, and finally Paulvitch asked to accompany them—he too was tiring of the blighting sameness of existence upon the ship.

The island was heavily timbered. Dense jungle ran down almost to the beach. The scientists were far inland, prosecuting their search for the valuable commodity that native rumor upon the mainland had led them to believe might be found here in marketable quantity. The ship's company fished, hunted, and explored. Paulvitch shuffled up and down the beach, or lay in the shade of the great trees that skirted it. One day, as the men were gathered at a little distance

inspecting the body of a panther that had fallen to the gun of one of them who had been hunting inland, Paulvitch lay sleeping beneath his tree. He was awakened by the touch of a hand upon his shoulder. With a start he sat up to see a huge, anthropoid ape squatting at his side, inspecting him intently. The Russian was thoroughly frightened. He glanced toward the sailors—they were a couple of hundred yards away. Again the ape plucked at his shoulder, jabbering plaintively. Paulvitch saw no menace in the inquiring gaze, or in the attitude of the beast. He got slowly to his feet. The ape rose at his side.

Half doubled, the man shuffled cautiously away toward the sailors. The

ape moved with him, taking one of his arms. They had come almost to the little knot of men before they were seen, and by this time Paulvitch had become assured that the beast meant no harm. The animal evidently was accustomed to the association of human beings. It occurred to the Russian that the ape represented a certain considerable money value, and before they reached the sailors he had decided he should be the one to profit by it.

When the men looked up and saw the oddly paired couple shuffling toward them they were filled with amazement, and started on a run toward the two. The ape showed no sign of fear. Instead he grasped each sailor by the shoulder and

peered long and earnestly into his face. Having inspected them all he returned to Paulvitch's side, disappointment written strongly upon his countenance and in his carriage.

The men were delighted with him. They gathered about, asking Paulvitch many questions, and examining his companion. The Russian told them that the ape was his—nothing further would he offer—but kept harping continually upon the same theme, "The ape is mine. The ape is mine." Tiring of Paulvitch, one of the men essayed a pleasantry. Circling about behind the ape he prodded the anthropoid in the back with a pin. Like a flash the beast wheeled upon its tormentor, and, in the briefest

instant of turning, the placid, friendly animal was metamorphosed to a frenzied demon of rage. The broad grin that had sat upon the sailor's face as he perpetrated his little joke froze to an expression of terror. He attempted to dodge the long arms that reached for him; but, failing, drew a long knife that hung at his belt. With a single wrench the ape tore the weapon from the man's grasp and flung it to one side, then his yellow fangs were buried in the sailor's shoulder.

With sticks and knives the man's companions fell upon the beast, while Paulvitch danced around the cursing snarling pack mumbling and screaming pleas and threats. He saw his visions of

wealth rapidly dissipating before the weapons of the sailors.

The ape, however, proved no easy victim to the superior numbers that seemed fated to overwhelm him. Rising from the sailor who had precipitated the battle he shook his giant shoulders, freeing himself from two of the men that were clinging to his back, and with mighty blows of his open palms felled one after another of his attackers, leaping hither and thither with the agility of a small monkey.

The fight had been witnessed by the captain and mate who were just landing from the Marjorie W., and Paulvitch saw these two now running forward with drawn revolvers while the two sailors

who had brought them ashore trailed at their heels. The ape stood looking about him at the havoc he had wrought, but whether he was awaiting a renewal of the attack or was deliberating which of his foes he should exterminate first Paulvitch could not guess. What he could guess, however, was that the moment the two officers came within firing distance of the beast they would put an end to him in short order unless something were done and done quickly to prevent. The ape had made no move to attack the Russian but even so the man was none too sure of what might happen were he to interfere with the savage beast, now thoroughly aroused to bestial rage, and with the smell of new spilled blood

fresh in its nostrils. For an instant he hesitated, and then again there rose before him the dreams of affluence which this great anthropoid would doubtless turn to realities once Paulvitch had landed him safely in some great metropolis like London.

The captain was shouting to him now to stand aside that he might have a shot at the animal; but instead Paulvitch shuffled to the ape's side, and though the man's hair quivered at its roots he mastered his fear and laid hold of the ape's arm.

"Come!" he commanded, and tugged to pull the beast from among the sailors, many of whom were now sitting up in wide eyed fright or crawling away from

their conqueror upon hands and knees.

Slowly the ape permitted itself to be led to one side, nor did it show the slightest indication of a desire to harm the Russian. The captain came to a halt a few paces from the odd pair.

"Get aside, Sabrov!" he commanded. "I'll put that brute where he won't chew up any more able seamen."

"It wasn't his fault, captain," pleaded Paulvitch. "Please don't shoot him. The men started it—they attacked him first. You see, he's perfectly gentle—and he's mine—he's mine—he's mine! I won't let you kill him," he concluded, as his half-wrecked mentality pictured anew the pleasure that money would buy in London—money that he could not hope

to possess without some such windfall as the ape represented.

The captain lowered his weapon. "The men started it, did they?" he repeated. "How about that?" and he turned toward the sailors who had by this time picked themselves from the ground, none of them much the worse for his experience except the fellow who had been the cause of it, and who would doubtless nurse a sore shoulder for a week or so.

"Simpson done it," said one of the men. "He stuck a pin into the monk from behind, and the monk got him—which served him bloomin' well right —an' he got the rest of us, too, for which I can't blame him, since we all jumped him to

once."

The captain looked at Simpson, who sheepishly admitted the truth of the allegation, then he stepped over to the ape as though to discover for himself the sort of temper the beast possessed, but it was noticeable that he kept his revolver cocked and leveled as he did so. However, he spoke soothingly to the animal who squatted at the Russian's side looking first at one and then another of the sailors. As the captain approached him the ape half rose and waddled forward to meet him. Upon his countenance was the same strange, searching expression that had marked his scrutiny of each of the sailors he had first encountered. He came quite close to

the officer and laid a paw upon one of the man's shoulders, studying his face intently for a long moment, then came the expression of disappointment accompanied by what was almost a human sigh, as he turned away to peer in the same curious fashion into the faces of the mate and the two sailors who had arrived with the officers. In each instance he sighed and passed on, returning at length to Paulvitch's side, where he squatted down once more; thereafter evincing little or no interest in any of the other men, and apparently forgetful of his recent battle with them.

When the party returned aboard the Marjorie W., Paulvitch was accompanied by the ape, who seemed

anxious to follow him. The captain interposed no obstacles to the arrangement, and so the great anthropoid was tacitly admitted to membership in the ship's company. Once aboard he examined each new face minutely, evincing the same disappointment in each instance that had marked his scrutiny of the others. The officers and scientists aboard often discussed the beast, but they were unable to account satisfactorily for the strange ceremony with which he greeted each new face. Had he been discovered upon the mainland, or any other place than the almost unknown island that had been his home, they would have concluded that he had formerly been a pet of man; but that

theory was not tenable in the face of the isolation of his uninhabited island. He seemed continually to be searching for someone, and during the first days of the return voyage from the island he was often discovered nosing about in various parts of the ship; but after he had seen and examined each face of the ship's company, and explored every corner of the vessel he lapsed into utter indifference of all about him. Even the Russian elicited only casual interest when he brought him food. At other times the ape appeared merely to tolerate him. He never showed affection for him, or for anyone else upon the Marjorie W., nor did he at any time evince any indication of the savage

temper that had marked his resentment of the attack of the sailors upon him at the time that he had come among them.

Most of his time was spent in the eye of the ship scanning the horizon ahead, as though he were endowed with sufficient reason to know that the vessel was bound for some port where there would be other human beings to undergo his searching scrutiny. All in all, Ajax, as he had been dubbed, was considered the most remarkable and intelligent ape that any one aboard the Marjorie W. ever had seen. Nor was his intelligence the only remarkable attribute he owned. His stature and physique were, for an ape, awe inspiring. That he was old was quite evident, but if his age had impaired

his physical or mental powers in the slightest it was not apparent.

And so at length the Marjorie W. came to England, and there the officers and the scientists, filled with compassion for the pitiful wreck of a man they had rescued from the jungles, furnished Paulvitch with funds and bid him and his Ajax Godspeed.

Upon the dock and all through the journey to London the Russian had his hands full with Ajax. Each new face of the thousands that came within the anthropoid's ken must be carefully scrutinized, much to the horror of many of his victims; but at last, failing, apparently, to discover whom he sought, the great ape relapsed into morbid

indifference, only occasionally evincing interest in a passing face.

In London, Paulvitch went directly with his prize to a certain famous animal trainer. This man was much impressed with Ajax with the result that he agreed to train him for a lion's share of the profits of exhibiting him, and in the meantime to provide for the keep of both the ape and his owner.

And so came Ajax to London, and there was forged another link in the chain of strange circumstances that were to affect the lives of many people.

CHAPTER 2

Mr. Harold Moore was a bilious-countenanced, studious young man. He took himself very seriously, and life, and his work, which latter was the tutoring of the young son of a British nobleman. He felt that his charge was not making the progress that his parents had a right to expect, and he was now conscientiously explaining this fact to the boy's mother.

"It's not that he isn't bright," he was saying; "if that were true I should have hopes of succeeding, for then I might bring to bear all my energies in overcoming his obtuseness; but the trouble is that he is exceptionally intelligent, and learns so quickly that I

can find no fault in the matter of the preparation of his lessons. What concerns me, however, is that fact that he evidently takes no interest whatever in the subjects we are studying. He merely accomplishes each lesson as a task to be rid of as quickly as possible and I am sure that no lesson ever again enters his mind until the hours of study and recitation once more arrive. His sole interests seem to be feats of physical prowess and the reading of everything that he can get hold of relative to savage beasts and the lives and customs of uncivilized peoples; but particularly do stories of animals appeal to him. He will sit for hours together poring over the work of some African

explorer, and upon two occasions I have found him setting up in bed at night reading Carl Hagenbeck's book on men and beasts."

The boy's mother tapped her foot nervously upon the hearth rug.

"You discourage this, of course?" she ventured.

Mr. Moore shuffled embarrassedly.

"I—ah—essayed to take the book from him," he replied, a slight flush mounting his sallow cheek; "but—ah—your son is quite muscular for one so young."

"He wouldn't let you take it?" asked the mother.

"He would not," confessed the tutor.

"He was perfectly good natured about it; but he insisted upon pretending that he was a gorilla and that I was a chimpanzee attempting to steal food from him. He leaped upon me with the most savage growls I ever heard, lifted me completely above his head, hurled me upon his bed, and after going through a pantomime indicative of choking me to death he stood upon my prostrate form and gave voice to a most fearsome shriek, which he explained was the victory cry of a bull ape. Then he carried me to the door, shoved me out into the hall and locked me from his room."

For several minutes neither spoke again. It was the boy's mother who

finally broke the silence.

"It is very necessary, Mr. Moore," she said, "that you do everything in your power to discourage this tendency in Jack, he—"; but she got no further. A loud "Whoop!" from the direction of the window brought them both to their feet. The room was upon the second floor of the house, and opposite the window to which their attention had been attracted was a large tree, a branch of which spread to within a few feet of the sill. Upon this branch now they both discovered the subject of their recent conversation, a tall, well-built boy, balancing with ease upon the bending limb and uttering loud shouts of glee as he noted the terrified expressions upon

the faces of his audience.

The mother and tutor both rushed toward the window but before they had crossed half the room the boy had leaped nimbly to the sill and entered the apartment with them.

"`The wild man from Borneo has just come to town,'" he sang, dancing a species of war dance about his terrified mother and scandalized tutor, and ending up by throwing his arms about the former's neck and kissing her upon either cheek.

"Oh, Mother," he cried, "there's a wonderful, educated ape being shown at one of the music halls. Willie Grimsby saw it last night. He says it can do everything but talk. It rides a bicycle,

eats with knife and fork, counts up to ten, and ever so many other wonderful things, and can I go and see it too? Oh, please, Mother—please let me."

Patting the boy's cheek affectionately, the mother shook her head negatively. "No, Jack," she said; "you know I do not approve of such exhibitions."

"I don't see why not, Mother," replied the boy. "All the other fellows go and they go to the Zoo, too, and you'll never let me do even that. Anybody'd think I was a girl—or a mollycoddle. Oh, Father," he exclaimed, as the door opened to admit a tall gray-eyed man. "Oh, Father, can't I go?"

"Go where, my son?" asked the newcomer.

"He wants to go to a music hall to see a trained ape," said the mother, looking warningly at her husband.

"Who, Ajax?" questioned the man.

The boy nodded.

"Well, I don't know that I blame you, my son," said the father, "I wouldn't mind seeing him myself. They say he is very wonderful, and that for an anthropoid he is unusually large. Let's all go, Jane—what do you say?" And he turned toward his wife, but that lady only shook her head in a most positive manner, and turning to Mr. Moore asked him if it was not time that he and Jack were in the study for the morning recitations. When the two had left she turned toward her husband.

"John," she said, "something must be done to discourage Jack's tendency toward anything that may excite the cravings for the savage life which I fear he has inherited from you. You know from your own experience how strong is the call of the wild at times. You know that often it has necessitated a stern struggle on your part to resist the almost insane desire which occasionally overwhelms you to plunge once again into the jungle life that claimed you for so many years, and at the same time you know, better than any other, how frightful a fate it would be for Jack, were the trail to the savage jungle made either alluring or easy to him."

"I doubt if there is any danger of his

inheriting a taste for jungle life from me," replied the man, "for I cannot conceive that such a thing may be transmitted from father to son. And sometimes, Jane, I think that in your solicitude for his future you go a bit too far in your restrictive measures. His love for animals—his desire, for example, to see this trained ape —is only natural in a healthy, normal boy of his age. Just because he wants to see Ajax is no indication that he would wish to marry an ape, and even should he, far be it from you Jane to have the right to cry `shame!'" and John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, put an arm about his wife, laughing good-naturedly down into her upturned face before he bent his head

and kissed her. Then, more seriously, he continued: "You have never told Jack anything concerning my early life, nor have you permitted me to, and in this I think that you have made a mistake. Had I been able to tell him of the experiences of Tarzan of the Apes I could doubtless have taken much of the glamour and romance from jungle life that naturally surrounds it in the minds of those who have had no experience of it. He might then have profited by my experience, but now, should the jungle lust ever claim him, he will have nothing to guide him but his own impulses, and I know how powerful these may be in the wrong direction at times."

But Lady Greystoke only shook her

head as she had a hundred other times when the subject had claimed her attention in the past.

"No, John," she insisted, "I shall never give my consent to the implanting in Jack's mind of any suggestion of the savage life which we both wish to preserve him from."

It was evening before the subject was again referred to and then it was raised by Jack himself. He had been sitting, curled in a large chair, reading, when he suddenly looked up and addressed his father.

"Why," he asked, coming directly to the point, "can't I go and see Ajax?"

"Your mother does not approve," replied his father.

"Do you?"

"That is not the question," evaded Lord Greystoke. "It is enough that your mother objects."

"I am going to see him," announced the boy, after a few moments of thoughtful silence. "I am not different from Willie Grimsby, or any other of the fellows who have been to see him. It did not harm them and it will not harm me. I could go without telling you; but I would not do that. So I tell you now, beforehand, that I am going to see Ajax."

There was nothing disrespectful or defiant in the boy's tone or manner. His was merely a dispassionate statement of facts. His father could scarce repress either a smile or a show of the

admiration he felt for the manly course his son had pursued.

"I admire your candor, Jack," he said. "Permit me to be candid, as well. If you go to see Ajax without permission, I shall punish you. I have never inflicted corporal punishment upon you, but I warn you that should you disobey your mother's wishes in this instance, I shall."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy; and then: "I shall tell you, sir, when I have been to see Ajax."

Mr. Moore's room was next to that of his youthful charge, and it was the tutor's custom to have a look into the boy's each evening as the former was about to retire. This evening he was particularly careful not to neglect his duty, for he had

just come from a conference with the boy's father and mother in which it had been impressed upon him that he must exercise the greatest care to prevent Jack visiting the music hall where Ajax was being shown. So, when he opened the boy's door at about half after nine, he was greatly excited, though not entirely surprised to find the future Lord Greystoke fully dressed for the street and about to crawl from his open bed room window.

Mr. Moore made a rapid spring across the apartment; but the waste of energy was unnecessary, for when the boy heard him within the chamber and realized that he had been discovered he turned back as though to relinquish his

planned adventure.

"Where were you going?" panted the excited Mr. Moore.

"I am going to see Ajax," replied the boy, quietly.

"I am astonished," cried Mr. Moore; but a moment later he was infinitely more astonished, for the boy, approaching close to him, suddenly seized him about the waist, lifted him from his feet and threw him face downward upon the bed, shoving his face deep into a soft pillow.

"Be quiet," admonished the victor, "or I'll choke you."

Mr. Moore struggled; but his efforts were in vain. Whatever else Tarzan of the Apes may or may not have handed

down to his son he had at least bequeathed him almost as marvelous a physique as he himself had possessed at the same age. The tutor was as putty in the boy's hands. Kneeling upon him, Jack tore strips from a sheet and bound the man's hands behind his back. Then he rolled him over and stuffed a gag of the same material between his teeth, securing it with a strip wound about the back of his victim's head. All the while he talked in a low, conversational tone.

"I am Waja, chief of the Waji," he explained, "and you are Mohammed Dubn, the Arab sheik, who would murder my people and steal my ivory," and he dexterously trussed Mr. Moore's hobbled ankles up behind to meet his

hobbled wrists. "Ah—ha! Villain! I have you in me power at last. I go; but I shall return!" And the son of Tarzan skipped across the room, slipped through the open window, and slid to liberty by way of the down spout from an eaves trough.

Mr. Moore wriggled and struggled about the bed. He was sure that he should suffocate unless aid came quickly. In his frenzy of terror he managed to roll off the bed. The pain and shock of the fall jolted him back to something like sane consideration of his plight. Where before he had been unable to think intelligently because of the hysterical fear that had claimed him he now lay quietly searching for some means of escape from his dilemma. It

finally occurred to him that the room in which Lord and Lady Greystoke had been sitting when he left them was directly beneath that in which he lay upon the floor. He knew that some time had elapsed since he had come up stairs and that they might be gone by this time, for it seemed to him that he had struggled about the bed, in his efforts to free himself, for an eternity. But the best that he could do was to attempt to attract attention from below, and so, after many failures, he managed to work himself into a position in which he could tap the toe of his boot against the floor. This he proceeded to do at short intervals, until, after what seemed a very long time, he was rewarded by hearing footsteps

ascending the stairs, and presently a knock upon the door. Mr. Moore tapped vigorously with his toe—he could not reply in any other way. The knock was repeated after a moment's silence. Again Mr. Moore tapped. Would they never open the door! Laboriously he rolled in the direction of succor. If he could get his back against the door he could then tap upon its base, when surely he must be heard. The knocking was repeated a little louder, and finally a voice called: "Mr. Jack!"

It was one of the house men—Mr. Moore recognized the fellow's voice. He came near to bursting a blood vessel in an endeavor to scream "come in" through the stifling gag. After a moment the man

knocked again, quite loudly and again called the boy's name. Receiving no reply he turned the knob, and at the same instant a sudden recollection filled the tutor anew with numbing terror—he had, himself, locked the door behind him when he had entered the room.

He heard the servant try the door several times and then depart. Upon which Mr. Moore swooned.

In the meantime Jack was enjoying to the full the stolen pleasures of the music hall. He had reached the temple of mirth just as Ajax's act was commencing, and having purchased a box seat was now leaning breathlessly over the rail watching every move of the great ape, his eyes wide in wonder. The trainer

was not slow to note the boy's handsome, eager face, and as one of Ajax's biggest hits consisted in an entry to one or more boxes during his performance, ostensibly in search of a long-lost relative, as the trainer explained, the man realized the effectiveness of sending him into the box with the handsome boy, who, doubtless, would be terror stricken by proximity to the shaggy, powerful beast.

When the time came, therefore, for the ape to return from the wings in reply to an encore the trainer directed its attention to the boy who chanced to be the sole occupant of the box in which he sat. With a spring the huge anthropoid leaped from the stage to the boy's side;

but if the trainer had looked for a laughable scene of fright he was mistaken. A broad smile lighted the boy's features as he laid his hand upon the shaggy arm of his visitor. The ape, grasping the boy by either shoulder, peered long and earnestly into his face, while the latter stroked his head and talked to him in a low voice.

Never had Ajax devoted so long a time to an examination of another as he did in this instance. He seemed troubled and not a little excited, jabbering and mumbling to the boy, and now caressing him, as the trainer had never seen him caress a human being before. Presently he clambered over into the box with him and snuggled down close to the boy's

side. The audience was delighted; but they were still more delighted when the trainer, the period of his act having elapsed, attempted to persuade Ajax to leave the box. The ape would not budge. The manager, becoming excited at the delay, urged the trainer to greater haste, but when the latter entered the box to drag away the reluctant Ajax he was met by bared fangs and menacing growls.

The audience was delirious with joy. They cheered the ape. They cheered the boy, and they hooted and jeered at the trainer and the manager, which luckless individual had inadvertently shown himself and attempted to assist the trainer.

Finally, reduced to desperation and

realizing that this show of mutiny upon the part of his valuable possession might render the animal worthless for exhibition purposes in the future if not immediately subdued, the trainer had hastened to his dressing room and procured a heavy whip. With this he now returned to the box; but when he had threatened Ajax with it but once he found himself facing two infuriated enemies instead of one, for the boy had leaped to his feet, and seizing a chair was standing ready at the ape's side to defend his new found friend. There was no longer a smile upon his handsome face. In his gray eyes was an expression which gave the trainer pause, and beside him stood the giant anthropoid growling and ready.

What might have happened, but for a timely interruption, may only be surmised; but that the trainer would have received a severe mauling, if nothing more, was clearly indicated by the attitudes of the two who faced him.

It was a pale-faced man who rushed into the Greystoke library to announce that he had found Jack's door locked and had been able to obtain no response to his repeated knocking and calling other than a strange tapping and the sound of what might have been a body moving about upon the floor.

Four steps at a time John Clayton took the stairs that led to the floor above. His wife and the servant hurried after him. Once he called his son's name in a loud

voice; but receiving no reply he launched his great weight, backed by all the undiminished power of his giant muscles, against the heavy door. With a snapping of iron butts and a splintering of wood the obstacle burst inward.

At its foot lay the body of the unconscious Mr. Moore, across whom it fell with a resounding thud. Through the opening leaped Tarzan, and a moment later the room was flooded with light from a dozen electric bulbs.

It was several minutes before the tutor was discovered, so completely had the door covered him; but finally he was dragged forth, his gag and bonds cut away, and a liberal application of cold water had hastened returning

consciousness.

"Where is Jack?" was John Clayton's first question, and then; "Who did this?" as the memory of Rokoff and the fear of a second abduction seized him.

Slowly Mr. Moore staggered to his feet. His gaze wandered about the room. Gradually he collected his scattered wits. The details of his recent harrowing experience returned to him.

"I tender my resignation, sir, to take effect at once," were his first words. "You do not need a tutor for your son—what he needs is a wild animal trainer."

"But where is he?" cried Lady Greystoke.

"He has gone to see Ajax."

It was with difficulty that Tarzan restrained a smile, and after satisfying himself that the tutor was more scared than injured, he ordered his closed car around and departed in the direction of a certain well-known music hall.

CHAPTER 3

As the trainer, with raised lash, hesitated an instant at the entrance to the box where the boy and the ape confronted him, a tall broad-shouldered man pushed past him and entered. As his eyes fell upon the newcomer a slight flush mounted the boy's cheeks.

"Father!" he exclaimed.

The ape gave one look at the English lord, and then leaped toward him, calling out in excited jabbering. The man, his eyes going wide in astonishment, stopped as though turned to stone.

"Akut!" he cried.

The boy looked, bewildered, from the

ape to his father, and from his father to the ape. The trainer's jaw dropped as he listened to what followed, for from the lips of the Englishman flowed the gutturals of an ape that were answered in kind by the huge anthropoid that now clung to him.

And from the wings a hideously bent and disfigured old man watched the tableau in the box, his pock-marked features working spasmodically in varying expressions that might have marked every sensation in the gamut from pleasure to terror.

"Long have I looked for you, Tarzan," said Akut. "Now that I have found you I shall come to your jungle and live there always."

The man stroked the beast's head. Through his mind there was running rapidly a train of recollection that carried him far into the depths of the primeval African forest where this huge, man-like beast had fought shoulder to shoulder with him years before. He saw the black Mugambi wielding his deadly knob-stick, and beside them, with bared fangs and bristling whiskers, Sheeta the terrible; and pressing close behind the savage and the savage panther, the hideous apes of Akut. The man sighed. Strong within him surged the jungle lust that he had thought dead. Ah! if he could go back even for a brief month of it, to feel again the brush of leafy branches against his naked hide; to smell the

musty rot of dead vegetation—frankincense and myrrh to the jungle born; to sense the noiseless coming of the great carnivora upon his trail; to hunt and to be hunted; to kill! The picture was alluring. And then came another picture—a sweet-faced woman, still young and beautiful; friends; a home; a son. He shrugged his giant shoulders.

"It cannot be, Akut," he said; "but if you would return, I shall see that it is done. You could not be happy here—I may not be happy there."

The trainer stepped forward. The ape bared his fangs, growling.

"Go with him, Akut," said Tarzan of the Apes. "I will come and see you tomorrow."

The beast moved sullenly to the trainer's side. The latter, at John Clayton's request, told where they might be found. Tarzan turned toward his son.

"Come!" he said, and the two left the theater. Neither spoke for several minutes after they had entered the limousine. It was the boy who broke the silence.

"The ape knew you," he said, "and you spoke together in the ape's tongue. How did the ape know you, and how did you learn his language?"

And then, briefly and for the first time, Tarzan of the Apes told his son of his early life—of the birth in the jungle, of the death of his parents, and of how Kala, the great she ape had suckled and

raised him from infancy almost to manhood. He told him, too, of the dangers and the horrors of the jungle; of the great beasts that stalked one by day and by night; of the periods of drought, and of the cataclysmic rains; of hunger; of cold; of intense heat; of nakedness and fear and suffering. He told him of all those things that seem most horrible to the creature of civilization in the hope that the knowledge of them might expunge from the lad's mind any inherent desire for the jungle. Yet they were the very things that made the memory of the jungle what it was to Tarzan—that made up the composite jungle life he loved. And in the telling he forgot one thing—the principal thing—that the boy at his

side, listening with eager ears, was the son of Tarzan of the Apes.

After the boy had been tucked away in bed—and without the threatened punishment—John Clayton told his wife of the events of the evening, and that he had at last acquainted the boy with the facts of his jungle life. The mother, who had long foreseen that her son must some time know of those frightful years during which his father had roamed the jungle, a naked, savage beast of prey, only shook her head, hoping against hope that the lure she knew was still strong in the father's breast had not been transmitted to his son.

Tarzan visited Akut the following day, but though Jack begged to be

allowed to accompany him he was refused. This time Tarzan saw the pock-marked old owner of the ape, whom he did not recognize as the wily Paulvitch of former days. Tarzan, influenced by Akut's pleadings, broached the question of the ape's purchase; but Paulvitch would not name any price, saying that he would consider the matter.

When Tarzan returned home Jack was all excitement to hear the details of his visit, and finally suggested that his father buy the ape and bring it home. Lady Greystoke was horrified at the suggestion. The boy was insistent. Tarzan explained that he had wished to purchase Akut and return him to his jungle home, and to this the mother

assented. Jack asked to be allowed to visit the ape, but again he was met with flat refusal. He had the address, however, which the trainer had given his father, and two days later he found the opportunity to elude his new tutor—who had replaced the terrified Mr. Moore—and after a considerable search through a section of London which he had never before visited, he found the smelly little quarters of the pock-marked old man. The old fellow himself replied to his knocking, and when he stated that he had come to see Ajax, opened the door and admitted him to the little room which he and the great ape occupied. In former years Paulvitch had been a fastidious scoundrel; but ten years of hideous life

among the cannibals of Africa had eradicated the last vestige of niceness from his habits. His apparel was wrinkled and soiled. His hands were unwashed, his few straggling locks uncombed. His room was a jumble of filthy disorder. As the boy entered he saw the great ape squatting upon the bed, the coverlets of which were a tangled wad of filthy blankets and ill-smelling quilts. At sight of the youth the ape leaped to the floor and shuffled forward. The man, not recognizing his visitor and fearing that the ape meant mischief, stepped between them, ordering the ape back to the bed.

"He will not hurt me," cried the boy. "We are friends, and before, he was my

father's friend. They knew one another in the jungle. My father is Lord Greystoke. He does not know that I have come here. My mother forbid my coming; but I wished to see Ajax, and I will pay you if you will let me come here often and see him."

At the mention of the boy's identity Paulvitch's eyes narrowed. Since he had first seen Tarzan again from the wings of the theater there had been forming in his deadened brain the beginnings of a desire for revenge. It is a characteristic of the weak and criminal to attribute to others the misfortunes that are the result of their own wickedness, and so now it was that Alexis Paulvitch was slowly recalling the events of his past life and

as he did so laying at the door of the man whom he and Rokoff had so assiduously attempted to ruin and murder all the misfortunes that had befallen him in the failure of their various schemes against their intended victim.

He saw at first no way in which he could, with safety to himself, wreak vengeance upon Tarzan through the medium of Tarzan's son; but that great possibilities for revenge lay in the boy was apparent to him, and so he determined to cultivate the lad in the hope that fate would play into his hands in some way in the future. He told the boy all that he knew of his father's past life in the jungle and when he found that the boy had been kept in ignorance of all

these things for so many years, and that he had been forbidden visiting the zoological gardens; that he had had to bind and gag his tutor to find an opportunity to come to the music hall and see Ajax, he guessed immediately the nature of the great fear that lay in the hearts of the boy's parents—that he might crave the jungle as his father had craved it.

And so Paulvitch encouraged the boy to come and see him often, and always he played upon the lad's craving for tales of the savage world with which Paulvitch was all too familiar. He left him alone with Akut much, and it was not long until he was surprised to learn that the boy could make the great beast

understand him—that he had actually learned many of the words of the primitive language of the anthropoids.

During this period Tarzan came several times to visit Paulvitch. He seemed anxious to purchase Ajax, and at last he told the man frankly that he was prompted not only by a desire upon his part to return the beast to the liberty of his native jungle; but also because his wife feared that in some way her son might learn the whereabouts of the ape and through his attachment for the beast become imbued with the roving instinct which, as Tarzan explained to Paulvitch, had so influenced his own life.

The Russian could scarce repress a smile as he listened to Lord Greystoke's

words, since scarce a half hour had passed since the time the future Lord Greystoke had been sitting upon the disordered bed jabbering away to Ajax with all the fluency of a born ape.

It was during this interview that a plan occurred to Paulvitch, and as a result of it he agreed to accept a certain fabulous sum for the ape, and upon receipt of the money to deliver the beast to a vessel that was sailing south from Dover for Africa two days later. He had a double purpose in accepting Clayton's offer. Primarily, the money consideration influenced him strongly, as the ape was no longer a source of revenue to him, having consistently refused to perform upon the stage after

having discovered Tarzan. It was as though the beast had suffered himself to be brought from his jungle home and exhibited before thousands of curious spectators for the sole purpose of searching out his long lost friend and master, and, having found him, considered further mingling with the common herd of humans unnecessary. However that may be, the fact remained that no amount of persuasion could influence him even to show himself upon the music hall stage, and upon the single occasion that the trainer attempted force the results were such that the unfortunate man considered himself lucky to have escaped with his life. All that saved him was the accidental presence of Jack

Clayton, who had been permitted to visit the animal in the dressing room reserved for him at the music hall, and had immediately interfered when he saw that the savage beast meant serious mischief.

And after the money consideration, strong in the heart of the Russian was the desire for revenge, which had been growing with constant brooding over the failures and miseries of his life, which he attributed to Tarzan; the latest, and by no means the least, of which was Ajax's refusal to longer earn money for him. The ape's refusal he traced directly to Tarzan, finally convincing himself that the ape man had instructed the great anthropoid to refuse to go upon the stage.

Paulvitch's naturally malign

disposition was aggravated by the weakening and warping of his mental and physical faculties through torture and privation. From cold, calculating, highly intelligent perversity it had deteriorated into the indiscriminating, dangerous menace of the mentally defective. His plan, however, was sufficiently cunning to at least cast a doubt upon the assertion that his mentality was wandering. It assured him first of the competence which Lord Greystoke had promised to pay him for the deportation of the ape, and then of revenge upon his benefactor through the son he idolized. That part of his scheme was crude and brutal—it lacked the refinement of torture that had marked the

master strokes of the Paulvitch of old, when he had worked with that virtuoso of villainy, Nikolas Rokoff—but it at least assured Paulvitch of immunity from responsibility, placing that upon the ape, who would thus also be punished for his refusal longer to support the Russian.

Everything played with fiendish unanimity into Paulvitch's hands. As chance would have it, Tarzan's son overheard his father relating to the boy's mother the steps he was taking to return Akut safely to his jungle home, and having overheard he begged them to bring the ape home that he might have him for a play-fellow. Tarzan would not have been averse to this plan; but Lady Greystoke was horrified at the very

thought of it. Jack pleaded with his mother; but all unavailingly. She was obdurate, and at last the lad appeared to acquiesce in his mother's decision that the ape must be returned to Africa and the boy to school, from which he had been absent on vacation.

He did not attempt to visit Paulvitch's room again that day, but instead busied himself in other ways. He had always been well supplied with money, so that when necessity demanded he had no difficulty in collecting several hundred pounds. Some of this money he invested in various strange purchases which he managed to smuggle into the house, undetected, when he returned late in the afternoon.

The next morning, after giving his father time to precede him and conclude his business with Paulvitch, the lad hastened to the Russian's room. Knowing nothing of the man's true character the boy dared not take him fully into his confidence for fear that the old fellow would not only refuse to aid him, but would report the whole affair to his father. Instead, he simply asked permission to take Ajax to Dover. He explained that it would relieve the old man of a tiresome journey, as well as placing a number of pounds in his pocket, for the lad purposed paying the Russian well.

"You see," he went on, "there will be no danger of detection since I am

supposed to be leaving on an afternoon train for school. Instead I will come here after they have left me on board the train. Then I can take Ajax to Dover, you see, and arrive at school only a day late. No one will be the wiser, no harm will be done, and I shall have had an extra day with Ajax before I lose him forever."

The plan fitted perfectly with that which Paulvitch had in mind. Had he known what further the boy contemplated he would doubtless have entirely abandoned his own scheme of revenge and aided the boy whole heartedly in the consummation of the lad's, which would have been better for Paulvitch, could he have but read the future but a few short hours ahead.

That afternoon Lord and Lady Greystoke bid their son good-bye and saw him safely settled in a first-class compartment of the railway carriage that would set him down at school in a few hours. No sooner had they left him, however, than he gathered his bags together, descended from the compartment and sought a cab stand outside the station. Here he engaged a cabby to take him to the Russian's address. It was dusk when he arrived. He found Paulvitch awaiting him. The man was pacing the floor nervously. The ape was tied with a stout cord to the bed. It was the first time that Jack had ever seen Ajax thus secured. He looked questioningly at Paulvitch. The man,

mumbling, explained that he believed the animal had guessed that he was to be sent away and he feared he would attempt to escape.

Paulvitch carried another piece of cord in his hand. There was a noose in one end of it which he was continually playing with. He walked back and forth, up and down the room. His pock-marked features were working horribly as he talked silent to himself. The boy had never seen him thus—it made him uneasy. At last Paulvitch stopped on the opposite side of the room, far from the ape.

"Come here," he said to the lad. "I will show you how to secure the ape should he show signs of rebellion during

the trip."

The lad laughed. "It will not be necessary," he replied. "Ajax will do whatever I tell him to do."

The old man stamped his foot angrily. "Come here, as I tell you," he repeated. "If you do not do as I say you shall not accompany the ape to Dover —I will take no chances upon his escaping."

Still smiling, the lad crossed the room and stood before the Russian.

"Turn around, with your back toward me," directed the latter, "that I may show you how to bind him quickly."

The boy did as he was bid, placing his hands behind him when Paulvitch told him to do so. Instantly the old man slipped the running noose over one of

the lad's wrists, took a couple of half hitches about his other wrist, and knotted the cord.

The moment that the boy was secured the attitude of the man changed. With an angry oath he wheeled his prisoner about, tripped him and hurled him violently to the floor, leaping upon his breast as he fell. From the bed the ape growled and struggled with his bonds. The boy did not cry out—a trait inherited from his savage sire whom long years in the jungle following the death of his foster mother, Kala the great ape, had taught that there was none to come to the succor of the fallen.

Paulvitch's fingers sought the lad's throat. He grinned down horribly into the

face of his victim.

"Your father ruined me," he mumbled. "This will pay him. He will think that the ape did it. I will tell him that the ape did it. That I left him alone for a few minutes, and that you sneaked in and the ape killed you. I will throw your body upon the bed after I have choked the life from you, and when I bring your father he will see the ape squatting over it," and the twisted fiend cackled in gloating laughter. His fingers closed upon the boy's throat.

Behind them the growling of the maddened beast reverberated against the walls of the little room. The boy paled, but no other sign of fear or panic showed upon his countenance. He was the son of

Tarzan. The fingers tightened their grip upon his throat. It was with difficulty that he breathed, gaspingly. The ape lunged against the stout cord that held him. Turning, he wrapped the cord about his hands, as a man might have done, and surged heavily backward. The great muscles stood out beneath his shaggy hide. There was a rending as of splintered wood—the cord held, but a portion of the footboard of the bed came away.

At the sound Paulvitch looked up. His hideous face went white with terror — the ape was free.

With a single bound the creature was upon him. The man shrieked. The brute wrenched him from the body of the boy.

Great fingers sunk into the man's flesh. Yellow fangs gaped close to his throat—he struggled, futilely —and when they closed, the soul of Alexis Paulvitch passed into the keeping of the demons who had long been awaiting it.

The boy struggled to his feet, assisted by Akut. For two hours under the instructions of the former the ape worked upon the knots that secured his friend's wrists. Finally they gave up their secret, and the boy was free. Then he opened one of his bags and drew forth some garments. His plans had been well made. He did not consult the beast, which did all that he directed. Together they slunk from the house, but no casual observer might have noted that one of

them was an ape.

CHAPTER 4

The killing of the friendless old Russian, Michael Sabrov, by his great trained ape, was a matter for newspaper comment for a few days. Lord Greystoke read of it, and while taking special precautions not to permit his name to become connected with the affair, kept himself well posted as to the police search for the anthropoid.

As was true of the general public, his chief interest in the matter centered about the mysterious disappearance of the slayer. Or at least this was true until he learned, several days subsequent to the tragedy, that his son Jack had not reported at the public school en route for which they had seen him safely

ensconced in a railway carriage. Even then the father did not connect the disappearance of his son with the mystery surrounding the whereabouts of the ape. Nor was it until a month later that careful investigation revealed the fact that the boy had left the train before it pulled out of the station at London, and the cab driver had been found who had driven him to the address of the old Russian, that Tarzan of the Apes realized that Akut had in some way been connected with the disappearance of the boy.

Beyond the moment that the cab driver had deposited his fare beside the curb in front of the house in which the Russian had been quartered there was no

clue. No one had seen either the boy or the ape from that instant— at least no one who still lived. The proprietor of the house identified the picture of the lad as that of one who had been a frequent visitor in the room of the old man. Aside from this he knew nothing. And there, at the door of a grimy, old building in the slums of London, the searchers came to a blank wall—baffled.

The day following the death of Alexis Paulvitch a youth accompanying his invalid grandmother, boarded a steamer at Dover. The old lady was heavily veiled, and so weakened by age and sickness that she had to be wheeled aboard the vessel in an invalid chair.

The boy would permit none but

himself to wheel her, and with his own hands assisted her from the chair to the interior of their stateroom—and that was the last that was seen of the old lady by the ship's company until the pair disembarked. The boy even insisted upon doing the work of their cabin steward, since, as he explained, his grandmother was suffering from a nervous disposition that made the presence of strangers extremely distasteful to her.

Outside the cabin—and none there was aboard who knew what he did in the cabin—the lad was just as any other healthy, normal English boy might have been. He mingled with his fellow passengers, became a prime favorite

with the officers, and struck up numerous friendships among the common sailors. He was generous and unaffected, yet carried an air of dignity and strength of character that inspired his many new friends with admiration as well as affection for him.

Among the passengers there was an American named Condon, a noted blackleg and crook who was "wanted" in a half dozen of the larger cities of the United States. He had paid little attention to the boy until on one occasion he had seen him accidentally display a roll of bank notes. From then on Condon cultivated the youthful Briton. He learned, easily, that the boy was traveling alone with his invalid

grandmother, and that their destination was a small port on the west coast of Africa, a little below the equator; that their name was Billings, and that they had no friends in the little settlement for which they were bound. Upon the point of their purpose in visiting the place Condon found the boy reticent, and so he did not push the matter—he had learned all that he cared to know as it was.

Several times Condon attempted to draw the lad into a card game; but his victim was not interested, and the black looks of several of the other men passengers decided the American to find other means of transferring the boy's bank roll to his own pocket.

At last came the day that the steamer

dropped anchor in the lee of a wooded promontory where a score or more of sheet-iron shacks making an unsightly blot upon the fair face of nature proclaimed the fact that civilization had set its heel. Straggling upon the outskirts were the thatched huts of natives, picturesque in their primeval savagery, harmonizing with the background of tropical jungle and accentuating the squalid hideousness of the white man's pioneer architecture.

The boy, leaning over the rail, was looking far beyond the man- made town deep into the God-made jungle. A little shiver of anticipation tingled his spine, and then, quite without volition, he found himself gazing into the loving eyes of his

mother and the strong face of the father which mirrored, beneath its masculine strength, a love no less than the mother's eyes proclaimed. He felt himself weakening in his resolve. Nearby one of the ship's officers was shouting orders to a flotilla of native boats that was approaching to lighter the consignment of the steamer's cargo destined for this tiny post.

"When does the next steamer for England touch here?" the boy asked.

"The Emanuel ought to be along most any time now," replied the officer. "I figgered we'd find her here," and he went on with his bellowing remarks to the dusty horde drawing close to the steamer's side.

The task of lowering the boy's grandmother over the side to a waiting canoe was rather difficult. The lad insisted on being always at her side, and when at last she was safely ensconced in the bottom of the craft that was to bear them shoreward her grandson dropped catlike after her. So interested was he in seeing her comfortably disposed that he failed to notice the little package that had worked from his pocket as he assisted in lowering the sling that contained the old woman over the steamer's side, nor did he notice it even as it slipped out entirely and dropped into the sea.

Scarcely had the boat containing the boy and the old woman started for the

shore than Condon hailed a canoe upon the other side of the ship, and after bargaining with its owner finally lowered his baggage and himself aboard. Once ashore he kept out of sight of the two-story atrocity that bore the legend "Hotel" to lure unsuspecting wayfarers to its multitudinous discomforts. It was quite dark before he ventured to enter and arrange for accommodations.

In a back room upon the second floor the lad was explaining, not without considerable difficulty, to his grandmother that he had decided to return to England upon the next steamer. He was endeavoring to make it plain to the old lady that she might remain in

Africa if she wished but that for his part his conscience demanded that he return to his father and mother, who doubtless were even now suffering untold sorrow because of his absence; from which it may be assumed that his parents had not been acquainted with the plans that he and the old lady had made for their adventure into African wilds.

Having come to a decision the lad felt a sense of relief from the worry that had haunted him for many sleepless nights. When he closed his eyes in sleep it was to dream of a happy reunion with those at home. And as he dreamed, Fate, cruel and inexorable, crept stealthily upon him through the dark corridor of the squalid building in which he slept—Fate in the

form of the American crook, Condon.

Cautiously the man approached the door of the lad's room. There he crouched listening until assured by the regular breathing of those within that both slept. Quietly he inserted a slim, skeleton key in the lock of the door. With deft fingers, long accustomed to the silent manipulation of the bars and bolts that guarded other men's property, Condon turned the key and the knob simultaneously. Gentle pressure upon the door swung it slowly inward upon its hinges. The man entered the room, closing the door behind him. The moon was temporarily overcast by heavy clouds. The interior of the apartment was shrouded in gloom. Condon groped

his way toward the bed. In the far corner of the room something moved—moved with a silent stealthiness which transcended even the trained silence of the burglar. Condon heard nothing. His attention was riveted upon the bed in which he thought to find a young boy and his helpless, invalid grandmother.

The American sought only the bank roll. If he could possess himself of this without detection, well and good; but were he to meet resistance he was prepared for that too. The lad's clothes lay across a chair beside the bed. The American's fingers felt swiftly through them—the pockets contained no roll of crisp, new notes. Doubtless they were beneath the pillows of the bed. He

stepped closer toward the sleeper; his hand was already half way beneath the pillow when the thick cloud that had obscured the moon rolled aside and the room was flooded with light. At the same instant the boy opened his eyes and looked straight into those of Condon. The man was suddenly conscious that the boy was alone in the bed. Then he clutched for his victim's throat. As the lad rose to meet him Condon heard a low growl at his back, then he felt his wrists seized by the boy, and realized that beneath those tapering, white fingers played muscles of steel.

He felt other hands at his throat, rough hairy hands that reached over his shoulders from behind. He cast a

terrified glance backward, and the hairs of his head stiffened at the sight his eyes revealed, for grasping him from the rear was a huge, man-like ape. The bared fighting fangs of the anthropoid were close to his throat. The lad pinioned his wrists. Neither uttered a sound. Where was the grandmother? Condon's eyes swept the room in a single all-inclusive glance. His eyes bulged in horror at the realization of the truth which that glance revealed. In the power of what creatures of hideous mystery had he placed himself! Frantically he fought to beat off the lad that he might turn upon the fearsome thing at his back. Freeing one hand he struck a savage blow at the lad's face. His act seemed to unloose a

thousand devils in the hairy creature clinging to his throat. Condon heard a low and savage snarl. It was the last thing that the American ever heard in this life. Then he was dragged backward upon the floor, a heavy body fell upon him, powerful teeth fastened themselves in his jugular, his head whirled in the sudden blackness which rims eternity—a moment later the ape rose from his prostrate form; but Condon did not know—he was quite dead.

The lad, horrified, sprang from the bed to lean over the body of the man. He knew that Akut had killed in his defense, as he had killed Michael Sabrov; but here, in savage Africa, far from home and friends what would they do to him

and his faithful ape? The lad knew that the penalty of murder was death. He even knew that an accomplice might suffer the death penalty with the principal. Who was there who would plead for them? All would be against them. It was little more than a half-civilized community, and the chances were that they would drag Akut and him forth in the morning and hang them both to the nearest tree—he had read of such things being done in America, and Africa was worse even and wilder than the great West of his mother's native land. Yes, they would both be hanged in the morning!

Was there no escape? He thought in silence for a few moments, and then,

with an exclamation of relief, he struck his palms together and turned toward his clothing upon the chair. Money would do anything! Money would save him and Akut! He felt for the bank roll in the pocket in which he had been accustomed to carry it. It was not there! Slowly at first and at last frantically he searched through the remaining pockets of his clothing. Then he dropped upon his hands and knees and examined the floor. Lighting the lamp he moved the bed to one side and, inch by inch, he felt over the entire floor. Beside the body of Condon he hesitated, but at last he nerved himself to touch it. Rolling it over he sought beneath it for the money. Nor was it there. He guessed that

Condon had entered their room to rob; but he did not believe that the man had had time to possess himself of the money; however, as it was nowhere else, it must be upon the body of the dead man. Again and again he went over the room, only to return each time to the corpse; but no where could he find the money.

He was half-frantic with despair. What were they to do? In the morning they would be discovered and killed. For all his inherited size and strength he was, after all, only a little boy—a frightened, homesick little boy - reasoning faultily from the meager experience of childhood. He could think of but a single glaring fact—they had

killed a fellow man, and they were among savage strangers, thirsting for the blood of the first victim whom fate cast into their clutches. This much he had gleaned from penny-dreadfuls.

And they must have money!

Again he approached the corpse. This time resolutely. The ape squatted in a corner watching his young companion. The youth commenced to remove the American's clothing piece by piece, and, piece by piece, he examined each garment minutely. Even to the shoes he searched with painstaking care, and when the last article had been removed and scrutinized he dropped back upon the bed with dilated eyes that saw nothing in the present—only a grim

tableau of the future in which two forms swung silently from the limb of a great tree.

How long he sat thus he did not know; but finally he was aroused by a noise coming from the floor below. Springing quickly to his feet he blew out the lamp, and crossing the floor silently locked the door. Then he turned toward the ape, his mind made up.

Last evening he had been determined to start for home at the first opportunity, to beg the forgiveness of his parents for this mad adventure. Now he knew that he might never return to them. The blood of a fellow man was upon his hands—in his morbid reflections he had long since ceased to attribute the death of Condon

to the ape. The hysteria of panic had fastened the guilt upon himself. With money he might have bought justice; but penniless!—ah, what hope could there be for strangers without money here?

But what had become of the money? He tried to recall when last he had seen it. He could not, nor, could he, would he have been able to account for its disappearance, for he had been entirely unconscious of the falling of the little package from his pocket into the sea as he clambered over the ship's side into the waiting canoe that bore him to shore.

Now he turned toward Akut. "Come!" he said, in the language of the great apes.

Forgetful of the fact that he wore only a thin pajama suit he led the way to the

open window. Thrusting his head out he listened attentively. A single tree grew a few feet from the window. Nimbly the lad sprang to its bole, clinging cat-like for an instant before he clambered quietly to the ground below. Close behind him came the great ape. Two hundred yards away a spur of the jungle ran close to the straggling town. Toward this the lad led the way. None saw them, and a moment later the jungle swallowed them, and John Clayton, future Lord Greystoke, passed from the eyes and the knowledge of men.

It was late the following morning that a native houseman knocked upon the door of the room that had been assigned to Mrs. Billings and her grandson.

Receiving no response he inserted his pass key in the lock, only to discover that another key was already there, but from the inside. He reported the fact to Herr Skopf, the proprietor, who at once made his way to the second floor where he, too, pounded vigorously upon the door. Receiving no reply he bent to the key hole in an attempt to look through into the room beyond. In so doing, being portly, he lost his balance, which necessitated putting a palm to the floor to maintain his equilibrium. As he did so he felt something soft and thick and wet beneath his fingers. He raised his open palm before his eyes in the dim light of the corridor and peered at it. Then he gave a little shudder, for even in the

semi- darkness he saw a dark red stain upon his hand. Leaping to his feet he hurled his shoulder against the door. Herr Skopf is a heavy man—or at least he was then—I have not seen him for several years. The frail door collapsed beneath his weight, and Herr Skopf stumbled precipitately into the room beyond.

Before him lay the greatest mystery of his life. Upon the floor at his feet was the dead body of a strange man. The neck was broken and the jugular severed as by the fangs of a wild beast. The body was entirely naked, the clothing being strewn about the corpse. The old lady and her grandson were gone. The window was open. They must have

disappeared through the window for the door had been locked from the inside.

But how could the boy have carried his invalid grandmother from a second story window to the ground? It was preposterous. Again Herr Skopf searched the small room. He noticed that the bed was pulled well away from the wall - why? He looked beneath it again for the third or fourth time. The two were gone, and yet his judgment told him that the old lady could not have gone without porters to carry her down as they had carried her up the previous day.

Further search deepened the mystery. All the clothing of the two was still in the room—if they had gone then they must have gone naked or in their night

clothes. Herr Skopf shook his head; then he scratched it. He was baffled. He had never heard of Sherlock Holmes or he would have lost no time in invoking the aid of that celebrated sleuth, for here was a real mystery: An old woman—an invalid who had to be carried from the ship to her room in the hotel—and a handsome lad, her grandson, had entered a room on the second floor of his hostelry the day before. They had had their evening meal served in their room—that was the last that had been seen of them. At nine the following morning the corpse of a strange man had been the sole occupant of that room. No boat had left the harbor in the meantime—there was not a railroad within hundreds of

miles— there was no other white settlement that the two could reach under several days of arduous marching accompanied by a well-equipped safari. They had simply vanished into thin air, for the native he had sent to inspect the ground beneath the open window had just returned to report that there was no sign of a footstep there, and what sort of creatures were they who could have dropped that distance to the soft turf without leaving spoor? Herr Skopf shuddered. Yes, it was a great mystery - there was something uncanny about the whole thing—he hated to think about it, and he dreaded the coming of night.

It was a great mystery to Herr Skopf —and, doubtless, still is.

CHAPTER 5

Captain Armand Jacot of the Foreign Legion sat upon an outspread saddle blanket at the foot of a stunted palm tree. His broad shoulders and his close-cropped head rested in luxurious ease against the rough bole of the palm. His long legs were stretched straight before him overlapping the meager blanket, his spurs buried in the sandy soil of the little desert oasis. The captain was taking his ease after a long day of weary riding across the shifting sands of the desert.

Lazily he puffed upon his cigarette and watched his orderly who was preparing his evening meal. Captain Armand Jacot was well satisfied with himself and the world. A little to his

right rose the noisy activity of his troop of sun-tanned veterans, released for the time from the irksome trammels of discipline, relaxing tired muscles, laughing, joking, and smoking as they, too, prepared to eat after a twelve-hour fast. Among them, silent and taciturn, squatted five white-robed Arabs, securely bound and under heavy guard.

It was the sight of these that filled Captain Armand Jacot with the pleasurable satisfaction of a duty well-performed. For a long, hot, gaunt month he and his little troop had scoured the places of the desert waste in search of a band of marauders to the sin-stained account of which were charged innumerable thefts of camels, horses,

and goats, as well as murders enough to have sent the whole unsavory gang to the guillotine several times over.

A week before, he had come upon them. In the ensuing battle he had lost two of his own men, but the punishment inflicted upon the marauders had been severe almost to extinction. A half dozen, perhaps, had escaped; but the balance, with the exception of the five prisoners, had expiated their crimes before the nickel jacketed bullets of the legionaries. And, best of all, the ring leader, Achmet ben Houdin, was among the prisoners.

From the prisoners Captain Jacot permitted his mind to traverse the remaining miles of sand to the little

garrison post where, upon the morrow, he should find awaiting him with eager welcome his wife and little daughter. His eyes softened to the memory of them, as they always did. Even now he could see the beauty of the mother reflected in the childish lines of little Jeanne's face, and both those faces would be smiling up into his as he swung from his tired mount late the following afternoon. Already he could feel a soft cheek pressed close to each of his—velvet against leather.

His reverie was broken in upon by the voice of a sentry summoning a non-commissioned officer. Captain Jacot raised his eyes. The sun had not yet set; but the shadows of the few trees huddled

about the water hole and of his men and their horses stretched far away into the east across the now golden sand. The sentry was pointing in this direction, and the corporal, through narrowed lids, was searching the distance. Captain Jacot rose to his feet. He was not a man content to see through the eyes of others. He must see for himself. Usually he saw things long before others were aware that there was anything to see—a trait that had won for him the sobriquet of Hawk. Now he saw, just beyond the long shadows, a dozen specks rising and falling among the sands. They disappeared and reappeared, but always they grew larger. Jacot recognized them immediately. They were horsemen—

horsemen of the desert. Already a sergeant was running toward him. The entire camp was straining its eyes into the distance. Jacot gave a few terse orders to the sergeant who saluted, turned upon his heel and returned to the men. Here he gathered a dozen who saddled their horses, mounted and rode out to meet the strangers. The remaining men disposed themselves in readiness for instant action. It was not entirely beyond the range of possibilities that the horsemen riding thus swiftly toward the camp might be friends of the prisoners bent upon the release of their kinsmen by a sudden attack. Jacot doubted this, however, since the strangers were evidently making no attempt to conceal

their presence. They were galloping rapidly toward the camp in plain view of all. There might be treachery lurking beneath their fair appearance; but none who knew The Hawk would be so gullible as to hope to trap him thus.

The sergeant with his detail met the Arabs two hundred yards from the camp. Jacot could see him in conversation with a tall, white- robed figure - evidently the leader of the band. Presently the sergeant and this Arab rode side by side toward camp. Jacot awaited them. The two reined in and dismounted before him.

"Sheik Amor ben Khatour," announced the sergeant by way of introduction.

Captain Jacot eyed the newcomer. He

was acquainted with nearly every principal Arab within a radius of several hundred miles. This man he never had seen. He was a tall, weather beaten, sour looking man of sixty or more. His eyes were narrow and evil. Captain Jacot did not relish his appearance.

"Well?" he asked, tentatively.

The Arab came directly to the point.

"Achmet ben Houdin is my sister's son," he said. "If you will give him into my keeping I will see that he sins no more against the laws of the French."

Jacot shook his head. "That cannot be," he replied. "I must take him back with me. He will be properly and fairly tried by a civil court. If he is innocent he

will be released."

"And if he is not innocent?" asked the Arab.

"He is charged with many murders. For any one of these, if he is proved guilty, he will have to die."

The Arab's left hand was hidden beneath his burnous. Now he withdrew it disclosing a large goatskin purse, bulging and heavy with coins. He opened the mouth of the purse and let a handful of the contents trickle into the palm of his right hand—all were pieces of good French gold. From the size of the purse and its bulging proportions Captain Jacot concluded that it must contain a small fortune. Sheik Amor ben Khatour dropped the spilled gold pieces

one by one back into the purse. Jacot was eyeing him narrowly. They were alone. The sergeant, having introduced the visitor, had withdrawn to some little distance—his back was toward them. Now the sheik, having returned all the gold pieces, held the bulging purse outward upon his open palm toward Captain Jacot.

"Achmet ben Houdin, my sister's son, MIGHT escape tonight," he said. "Eh?"

Captain Armand Jacot flushed to the roots of his close-cropped hair. Then he went very white and took a half-step toward the Arab. His fists were clenched. Suddenly he thought better of whatever impulse was moving him.

"Sergeant!" he called. The non-

commissioned officer hurried toward him, saluting as his heels clicked together before his superior.

"Take this black dog back to his people," he ordered. "See that they leave at once. Shoot the first man who comes within range of camp tonight."

Sheik Amor ben Khatour drew himself up to his full height. His evil eyes narrowed. He raised the bag of gold level with the eyes of the French officer.

"You will pay more than this for the life of Achmet ben Houdin, my sister's son," he said. "And as much again for the name that you have called me and a hundred fold in sorrow in the bargain."

"Get out of here!" growled Captain

Armand Jacot, "before I kick you out."

All of this happened some three years before the opening of this tale. The trail of Achmet ben Houdin and his accomplices is a matter of record— you may verify it if you care to. He met the death he deserved, and he met it with the stoicism of the Arab.

A month later little Jeanne Jacot, the seven-year-old daughter of Captain Armand Jacot, mysteriously disappeared. Neither the wealth of her father and mother, or all the powerful resources of the great republic were able to wrest the secret of her whereabouts from the inscrutable desert that had swallowed her and her abductor.

A reward of such enormous proportions was offered that many adventurers were attracted to the hunt. This was no case for the modern detective of civilization, yet several of these threw themselves into the search—the bones of some are already bleaching beneath the African sun upon the silent sands of the Sahara.

Two Swedes, Carl Jenssen and Sven Malbihn, after three years of following false leads at last gave up the search far to the south of the Sahara to turn their attention to the more profitable business of ivory poaching. In a great district they were already known for their relentless cruelty and their greed for ivory. The natives feared and hated them. The

European governments in whose possessions they worked had long sought them; but, working their way slowly out of the north they had learned many things in the no-man's-land south of the Sahara which gave them immunity from capture through easy avenues of escape that were unknown to those who pursued them. Their raids were sudden and swift. They seized ivory and retreated into the trackless wastes of the north before the guardians of the territory they raped could be made aware of their presence. Relentlessly they slaughtered elephants themselves as well as stealing ivory from the natives. Their following consisted of a hundred or more renegade Arabs and Negro slaves—a fierce,

relentless band of cut-throats. Remember them—Carl Jenssen and Sven Malbihn, yellow-bearded, Swedish giants—for you will meet them later.

In the heart of the jungle, hidden away upon the banks of a small unexplored tributary of a large river that empties into the Atlantic not so far from the equator, lay a small, heavily palisaded village. Twenty palm-thatched, beehive huts sheltered its black population, while a half-dozen goat skin tents in the center of the clearing housed the score of Arabs who found shelter here while, by trading and raiding, they collected the cargoes which their ships of the desert bore northward twice each year to the market of Timbuktu.

Playing before one of the Arab tents was a little girl of ten—a black-haired, black-eyed little girl who, with her nut-brown skin and graceful carriage looked every inch a daughter of the desert. Her little fingers were busily engaged in fashioning a skirt of grasses for a much-disheveled doll which a kindly disposed slave had made for her a year or two before. The head of the doll was rudely chipped from ivory, while the body was a rat skin stuffed with grass. The arms and legs were bits of wood, perforated at one end and sewn to the rat skin torso. The doll was quite hideous and altogether disreputable and soiled, but Meriem thought it the most beautiful and adorable thing in the whole world,

which is not so strange in view of the fact that it was the only object within that world upon which she might bestow her confidence and her love.

Everyone else with whom Meriem came in contact was, almost without exception, either indifferent to her or cruel. There was, for example, the old black hag who looked after her, Mabunu —toothless, filthy and ill tempered. She lost no opportunity to cuff the little girl, or even inflict minor tortures upon her, such as pinching, or, as she had twice done, searing the tender flesh with hot coals. And there was The Sheik, her father. She feared him more than she did Mabunu. He often scolded her for nothing, quite habitually terminating his

tirades by cruelly beating her, until her little body was black and blue.

But when she was alone she was happy, playing with Geeka, or decking her hair with wild flowers, or making ropes of grasses. She was always busy and always singing—when they left her alone. No amount of cruelty appeared sufficient to crush the innate happiness and sweetness from her full little heart. Only when The Sheik was near was she quiet and subdued. Him she feared with a fear that was at times almost hysterical terror. She feared the gloomy jungle too—the cruel jungle that surrounded the little village with chattering monkeys and screaming birds by day and the roaring and coughing and moaning of the

carnivora by night. Yes, she feared the jungle; but so much more did she fear The Sheik that many times it was in her childish head to run away, out into the terrible jungle forever rather than longer to face the ever present terror of her father.

As she sat there this day before The Sheik's goatskin tent, fashioning a skirt of grasses for Geeka, The Sheik appeared suddenly approaching. Instantly the look of happiness faded from the child's face. She shrunk aside in an attempt to scramble from the path of the leathern-faced old Arab; but she was not quick enough. With a brutal kick the man sent her sprawling upon her face, where she lay quite still, tearless but

trembling. Then, with an oath at her, the man passed into the tent. The old, black hag shook with appreciative laughter, disclosing an occasional and lonesome yellow fang.

When she was sure The Sheik had gone, the little girl crawled to the shady side of the tent, where she lay quite still, hugging Geeka close to her breast, her little form racked at long intervals with choking sobs. She dared not cry aloud, since that would have brought The Sheik upon her again. The anguish in her little heart was not alone the anguish of physical pain; but that infinitely more pathetic anguish—of love denied a childish heart that yearns for love.

Little Meriem could scarce recall any

other existence than that of the stern cruelty of The Sheik and Mabunu. Dimly, in the back of her childish memory there lurked a blurred recollection of a gentle mother; but Meriem was not sure but that even this was but a dream picture induced by her own desire for the caresses she never received, but which she lavished upon the much loved Geeka. Never was such a spoiled child as Geeka. Its little mother, far from fashioning her own conduct after the example set her by her father and nurse, went to the extreme of indulgence. Geeka was kissed a thousand times a day. There was play in which Geeka was naughty; but the little mother never punished. Instead, she

caressed and fondled; her attitude influenced solely by her own pathetic desire for love.

Now, as she pressed Geeka close to her, her sobs lessened gradually, until she was able to control her voice, and pour out her misery into the ivory ear of her only confidante.

"Geeka loves Meriem," she whispered. "Why does The Sheik, my father, not love me, too? Am I so naughty? I try to be good; but I never know why he strikes me, so I cannot tell what I have done which displeases him. Just now he kicked me and hurt me so, Geeka; but I was only sitting before the tent making a skirt for you. That must be wicked, or he would not have kicked me

for it. But why is it wicked, Geeka? Oh dear! I do not know, I do not know. I wish, Geeka, that I were dead. Yesterday the hunters brought in the body of El Adrea. El Adrea was quite dead. No more will he slink silently upon his unsuspecting prey. No more will his great head and his maned shoulders strike terror to the hearts of the grass eaters at the drinking ford by night. No more will his thundering roar shake the ground. El Adrea is dead. They beat his body terribly when it was brought into the village; but El Adrea did not mind. He did not feel the blows, for he was dead. When I am dead, Geeka, neither shall I feel the blows of Mabunu, or the kicks of The Sheik, my

father. Then shall I be happy. Oh, Geeka, how I wish that I were dead!"

If Geeka contemplated a remonstrance it was cut short by sounds of altercation beyond the village gates. Meriem listened. With the curiosity of childhood she would have liked to have run down there and learn what it was that caused the men to talk so loudly. Others of the village were already trooping in the direction of the noise. But Meriem did not dare. The Sheik would be there, doubtless, and if he saw her it would be but another opportunity to abuse her, so Meriem lay still and listened.

Presently she heard the crowd moving up the street toward The Sheik's tent. Cautiously she stuck her little head

around the edge of the tent. She could not resist the temptation, for the sameness of the village life was monotonous, and she craved diversion. What she saw was two strangers— white men. They were alone, but as they approached she learned from the talk of the natives that surrounded them that they possessed a considerable following that was camped outside the village. They were coming to palaver with The Sheik.

The old Arab met them at the entrance to his tent. His eyes narrowed wickedly when they had appraised the newcomers. They stopped before him, exchanging greetings. They had come to trade for ivory they said. The Sheik grunted. He had no ivory. Meriem gasped. She knew

that in a near-by hut the great tusks were piled almost to the roof. She poked her little head further forward to get a better view of the strangers. How white their skins! How yellow their great beards!

Suddenly one of them turned his eyes in her direction. She tried to dodge back out of sight, for she feared all men; but he saw her. Meriem noticed the look of almost shocked surprise that crossed his face. The Sheik saw it too, and guessed the cause of it.

"I have no ivory," he repeated. "I do not wish to trade. Go away. Go now."

He stepped from his tent and almost pushed the strangers about in the direction of the gates. They demurred, and then The Sheik threatened. It would

have been suicide to have disobeyed, so the two men turned and left the village, making their way immediately to their own camp.

The Sheik returned to his tent; but he did not enter it. Instead he walked to the side where little Meriem lay close to the goat skin wall, very frightened. The Sheik stooped and clutched her by the arm. Viciously he jerked her to her feet, dragged her to the entrance of the tent, and shoved her viciously within. Following her he again seized her, beating her ruthlessly.

"Stay within!" he growled. "Never let the strangers see thy face. Next time you show yourself to strangers I shall kill you!"

With a final vicious cuff he knocked the child into a far corner of the tent, where she lay stifling her moans, while The Sheik paced to and fro muttering to himself. At the entrance sat Mabunu, muttering and chuckling.

In the camp of the strangers one was speaking rapidly to the other.

"There is no doubt of it, Malbihn," he was saying. "Not the slightest; but why the old scoundrel hasn't claimed the reward long since is what puzzles me."

"There are some things dearer to an Arab, Jenssen, than money," returned the first speaker—"revenge is one of them."

"Anyhow it will not harm to try the power of gold," replied Jenssen.

Malbihn shrugged.

"Not on The Sheik," he said. "We might try it on one of his people; but The Sheik will not part with his revenge for gold. To offer it to him would only confirm his suspicions that we must have awakened when we were talking to him before his tent. If we got away with our lives, then, we should be fortunate."

"Well, try bribery, then," assented Jenssen.

But bribery failed—gruesomely. The tool they selected after a stay of several days in their camp outside the village was a tall, old headman of The Sheik's native contingent. He fell to the lure of the shining metal, for he had lived upon the coast and knew the power of gold. He promised to bring them what they

craved, late that night.

Immediately after dark the two white men commenced to make arrangements to break camp. By midnight all was prepared. The porters lay beside their loads, ready to swing them aloft at a moment's notice. The armed askaris loitered between the balance of the safari and the Arab village, ready to form a rear guard for the retreat that was to begin the moment that the head man brought that which the white masters awaited.

Presently there came the sound of footsteps along the path from the village. Instantly the askaris and the whites were on the alert. More than a single man was approaching. Jenssen stepped forward

and challenged the newcomers in a low whisper.

"Who comes?" he queried.

"Mbeeda," came the reply.

Mbeeda was the name of the traitorous head man. Jenssen was satisfied, though he wondered why Mbeeda had brought others with him. Presently he understood. The thing they fetched lay upon a litter borne by two men. Jenssen cursed beneath his breath. Could the fool be bringing them a corpse? They had paid for a living prize!

The bearers came to a halt before the white men.

"This has your gold purchased," said one of the two. They set the litter down, turned and vanished into the darkness

toward the village. Malbihn looked at Jenssen, a crooked smile twisting his lips. The thing upon the litter was covered with a piece of cloth.

"Well?" queried the latter. "Raise the covering and see what you have bought. Much money shall we realize on a corpse—especially after the six months beneath the burning sun that will be consumed in carrying it to its destination!"

"The fool should have known that we desired her alive," grumbled Malbihn, grasping a corner of the cloth and jerking the cover from the thing that lay upon the litter.

At sight of what lay beneath both men stepped back—involuntary oaths upon

their lips—for there before them lay the dead body of Mbeeda, the faithless head man.

Five minutes later the safari of Jenssen and Malbihn was forcing its way rapidly toward the west, nervous askaris guarding the rear from the attack they momentarily expected.

CHAPTER 6

His first night in the jungle was one which the son of Tarzan held longest in his memory. No savage carnivora menaced him. There was never a sign of hideous barbarian. Or, if there were, the boy's troubled mind took no cognizance of them. His conscience was harassed by the thought of his mother's suffering. Self-blame plunged him into the depths of misery. The killing of the American caused him little or no remorse. The fellow had earned his fate. Jack's regret on this score was due mainly to the effect which the death of Condon had had upon his own plans. Now he could not return directly to his parents as he had planned. Fear of the primitive,

borderland law, of which he had read highly colored, imaginary tales, had thrust him into the jungle a fugitive. He dared not return to the coast at this point - not that he was so greatly influenced through personal fear as from a desire to shield his father and mother from further sorrow and from the shame of having their honored name dragged through the sordid degradation of a murder trial.

With returning day the boy's spirits rose. With the rising sun rose new hope within his breast. He would return to civilization by another way. None would guess that he had been connected with the killing of the stranger in the little out-of-the-way trading post upon a remote shore.

Crouched close to the great ape in the crotch of a tree the boy had shivered through an almost sleepless night. His light pajamas had been but little protection from the chill dampness of the jungle, and only that side of him which was pressed against the warm body of his shaggy companion approximated to comfort. And so he welcomed the rising sun with its promise of warmth as well as light—the blessed sun, dispeller of physical and mental ills.

He shook Akut into wakefulness.

"Come," he said. "I am cold and hungry. We will search for food, out there in the sunlight," and he pointed to an open plain, dotted with stunted trees and strewn with jagged rock.

The boy slid to the ground as he spoke, but the ape first looked carefully about, sniffing the morning air. Then, satisfied that no danger lurked near, he descended slowly to the ground beside the boy."

"Numa, and Sabor his mate, feast upon those who descend first and look afterward, while those who look first and descend afterward live to feast themselves." Thus the old ape imparted to the son of Tarzan the boy's first lesson in jungle lore. Side by side they set off across the rough plain, for the boy wished first to be warm. The ape showed him the best places to dig for rodents and worms; but the lad only gagged at the thought of devouring the

repulsive things. Some eggs they found, and these he sucked raw, as also he ate roots and tubers which Akut unearthed. Beyond the plain and across a low bluff they came upon water—brackish, ill-smelling stuff in a shallow water hole, the sides and bottom of which were trampled by the feet of many beasts. A herd of zebra galloped away as they approached.

The lad was too thirsty by now to cavil at anything even remotely resembling water, so he drank his fill while Akut stood with raised head, alert for any danger. Before the ape drank he cautioned the boy to be watchful; but as he drank he raised his head from time to time to cast a quick glance toward a

clump of bushes a hundred yards away upon the opposite side of the water hole. When he had done he rose and spoke to the boy, in the language that was their common heritage—the tongue of the great apes.

"There is no danger near?" he asked.

"None," replied the boy. "I saw nothing move while you drank."

"Your eyes will help you but little in the jungle," said the ape.

"Here, if you would live, you must depend upon your ears and your nose but most upon your nose. When we came down to drink I knew that no danger lurked near upon this side of the water hole, for else the zebras would have discovered it and fled before we came;

but upon the other side toward which the wind blows danger might lie concealed. We could not smell it for its scent is being blown in the other direction, and so I bent my ears and eyes down wind where my nose cannot travel."

"And you found—nothing?" asked the lad, with a laugh.

"I found Numa crouching in that clump of bushes where the tall grasses grow," and Akut pointed.

"A lion?" exclaimed the boy. "How do you know? I can see nothing."

"Numa is there, though," replied the great ape. "First I heard him sigh. To you the sigh of Numa may sound no different from the other noises which the wind makes among the grasses and the trees;

but later you must learn to know the sigh of Numa. Then I watched and at last I saw the tall grasses moving at one point to a force other than the force of the wind. See, they are spread there upon either side of Numa's great body, and as he breathes - you see? You see the little motion at either side that is not caused by the wind—the motion that none of the other grasses have?"

The boy strained his eyes—better eyes than the ordinary boy inherits - and at last he gave a little exclamation of discovery.

"Yes," he said, "I see. He lies there," and he pointed. "His head is toward us. Is he watching us?"

"Numa is watching us," replied Akut,

"but we are in little danger, unless we approach too close, for he is lying upon his kill. His belly is almost full, or we should hear him crunching the bones. He is watching us in silence merely from curiosity. Presently he will resume his feeding or he will rise and come down to the water for a drink. As he neither fears or desires us he will not try to hide his presence from us; but now is an excellent time to learn to know Numa, for you must learn to know him well if you would live long in the jungle. Where the great apes are many Numa leaves us alone. Our fangs are long and strong, and we can fight; but when we are alone and he is hungry we are no match for him. Come, we will circle him and catch his

scent. The sooner you learn to know it the better; but keep close to the trees, as we go around him, for Numa often does that which he is least expected to do. And keep your ears and your eyes and your nose open. Remember always that there may be an enemy behind every bush, in every tree and amongst every clump of jungle grass. While you are avoiding Numa do not run into the jaws of Sabor, his mate. Follow me," and Akut set off in a wide circle about the water hole and the crouching lion.

The boy followed close upon his heels, his every sense upon the alert, his nerves keyed to the highest pitch of excitement. This was life! For the instant he forgot his resolutions of a few

minutes past to hasten to the coast at some other point than that at which he had landed and make his way immediately back to London. He thought now only of the savage joy of living, and of pitting one's wits and prowess against the wiles and might of the savage jungle brood which haunted the broad plains and the gloomy forest aisles of the great, untamed continent. He knew no fear. His father had had none to transmit to him; but honor and conscience he did have and these were to trouble him many times as they battled with his inherent love of freedom for possession of his soul.

They had passed but a short distance to the rear of Numa when the boy caught

the unpleasant odor of the carnivore. His face lighted with a smile. Something told him that he would have known that scent among a myriad of others even if Akut had not told him that a lion lay near. There was a strange familiarity—a weird familiarity in it that made the short hairs rise at the nape of his neck, and brought his upper lip into an involuntary snarl that bared his fighting fangs. There was a sense of stretching of the skin about his ears, for all the world as though those members were flattening back against his skull in preparation for deadly combat. His skin tingled. He was aglow with a pleasurable sensation that he never before had known. He was, upon the instant, another creature—

wary, alert, ready. Thus did the scent of Numa, the lion, transform the boy into a beast.

He had never seen a lion—his mother had gone to great pains to prevent it. But he had devoured countless pictures of them, and now he was ravenous to feast his eyes upon the king of beasts in the flesh. As he trailed Akut he kept an eye cocked over one shoulder, rearward, in the hope that Numa might rise from his kill and reveal himself. Thus it happened that he dropped some little way behind Akut, and the next he knew he was recalled suddenly to a contemplation of other matters than the hidden Numa by a shrill scream of warning from the Ape. Turning his eyes quickly in the direction

of his companion, the boy saw that, standing in the path directly before him, which sent tremors of excitement racing along every nerve of his body. With body half-merging from a clump of bushes in which she must have lain hidden stood a sleek and beautiful lioness. Her yellow-green eyes were round and staring, boring straight into the eyes of the boy. Not ten paces separated them. Twenty paces behind the lioness stood the great ape, bellowing instructions to the boy and hurling taunts at the lioness in an evident effort to attract her attention from the lad while he gained the shelter of a near-by tree.

But Sabor was not to be diverted. She had her eyes upon the lad. He stood

between her and her mate, between her and the kill. It was suspicious. Probably he had ulterior designs upon her lord and master or upon the fruits of their hunting. A lioness is short tempered. Akut's bellowing annoyed her. She uttered a little rumbling growl, taking a step toward the boy.

"The tree!" screamed Akut.

The boy turned and fled, and at the same instant the lioness charged. The tree was but a few paces away. A limb hung ten feet from the ground, and as the boy leaped for it the lioness leaped for him. Like a monkey he pulled himself up and to one side. A great forepaw caught him a glancing blow at the hips—just grazing him. One curved talon hooked

itself into the waist band of his pajama trousers, ripping them from him as the lioness sped by. Half-naked the lad drew himself to safety as the beast turned and leaped for him once more.

Akut, from a near-by tree, jabbered and scolded, calling the lioness all manner of foul names. The boy, patterning his conduct after that of his preceptor, unstoppered the vials of his invective upon the head of the enemy, until in realization of the futility of words as weapons he bethought himself of something heavier to hurl. There was nothing but dead twigs and branches at hand, but these he flung at the upturned, snarling face of Sabor just as his father had before him twenty years ago, when

as a boy he too had taunted and tantalized the great cats of the jungle.

The lioness fretted about the bole of the tree for a short time; but finally, either realizing the uselessness of her vigil, or prompted by the pangs of hunger, she stalked majestically away and disappeared in the brush that hid her lord, who had not once shown himself during the altercation.

Freed from their retreats Akut and the boy came to the ground, to take up their interrupted journey once more. The old ape scolded the lad for his carelessness.

"Had you not been so intent upon the lion behind you you might have discovered the lioness much sooner than you did,"

"But you passed right by her without seeing her," retorted the boy.

Akut was chagrined.

"It is thus," he said, "that jungle folk die. We go cautiously for a lifetime, and then, just for an instant, we forget, and —" he ground his teeth in mimicry of the crunching of great jaws in flesh. "It is a lesson," he resumed. "You have learned that you may not for too long keep your eyes and your ears and your nose all bent in the same direction."

That night the son of Tarzan was colder than he ever had been in all his life. The pajama trousers had not been heavy; but they had been much heavier than nothing. And the next day he roasted in the hot sun, for again their way led

much across wide and treeless plains.

It was still in the boy's mind to travel to the south, and circle back to the coast in search of another outpost of civilization. He had said nothing of this plan to Akut, for he knew that the old ape would look with displeasure upon any suggestion that savored of separation.

For a month the two wandered on, the boy learning rapidly the laws of the jungle; his muscles adapting themselves to the new mode of life that had been thrust upon them. The thews of the sire had been transmitted to the son —it needed only the hardening of use to develop them. The lad found that it came quite naturally to him to swing through

the trees. Even at great heights he never felt the slightest dizziness, and when he had caught the knack of the swing and the release, he could hurl himself through space from branch to branch with even greater agility than the heavier Akut.

And with exposure came a toughening and hardening of his smooth, white skin, browning now beneath the sun and wind. He had removed his pajama jacket one day to bathe in a little stream that was too small to harbor crocodiles, and while he and Akut had been disporting themselves in the cool waters a monkey had dropped down from the over hanging trees, snatched up the boy's single remaining article of civilized garmenture, and scampered away with it.

For a time Jack was angry; but when he had been without the jacket for a short while he began to realize that being half-clothed is infinitely more uncomfortable than being entirely naked. Soon he did not miss his clothing in the least, and from that he came to revel in the freedom of his unhampered state. Occasionally a smile would cross his face as he tried to imagine the surprise of his schoolmates could they but see him now. They would envy him. Yes, how they would envy him. He felt sorry for them at such times, and again as he thought of them amid luxuries and comforts of their English homes, happy with their fathers and mothers, a most uncomfortable lump would arise into the boy's throat, and he

would see a vision of his mother's face through a blur of mist that came unbidden to his eyes. Then it was that he urged Akut onward, for now they were headed westward toward the coast. The old ape thought that they were searching for a tribe of his own kind, nor did the boy disabuse his mind of this belief. It would do to tell Akut of his real plans when they had come within sight of civilization.

One day as they were moving slowly along beside a river they came unexpectedly upon a native village. Some children were playing beside the water. The boy's heart leaped within his breast at sight of them—for over a month he had seen no human being. What if

these were naked savages? What if their skins were black? Were they not creatures fashioned in the mold of their Maker, as was he? They were his brothers and sisters! He started toward them. With a low warning Akut laid a hand upon his arm to hold him back. The boy shook himself free, and with a shout of greeting ran forward toward the ebon players.

The sound of his voice brought every head erect. Wide eyes viewed him for an instant, and then, with screams of terror, the children turned and fled toward the village. At their heels ran their mothers, and from the village gate, in response to the alarm, came a score of warriors, hastily snatched spears and shields

ready in their hands.

At sight of the consternation he had wrought the boy halted. The glad smile faded from his face as with wild shouts and menacing gestures the warriors ran toward him. Akut was calling to him from behind to turn and flee, telling him that the blacks would kill him. For a moment he stood watching them coming, then he raised his hand with the palm toward them in signal for them to halt, calling out at the same time that he came as a friend—that he had only wanted to play with their children. Of course they did not understand a word that he addressed to them, and their answer was what any naked creature who had run suddenly out of the jungle upon their

women and children might have expected—a shower of spears. The missiles struck all about the boy, but none touched him. Again his spine tingled and the short hairs lifted at the nape of his neck and along the top of his scalp. His eyes narrowed. Sudden hatred flared in them to wither the expression of glad friendliness that had lighted them but an instant before. With a low snarl, quite similar to that of a baffled beast, he turned and ran into the jungle. There was Akut awaiting him in a tree. The ape urged him to hasten in flight, for the wise old anthropoid knew that they two, naked and unarmed, were no match for the sinewy black warriors who would doubtless make some sort of search for

them through the jungle.

But a new power moved the son of Tarzan. He had come with a boy's glad and open heart to offer his friendship to these people who were human beings like himself. He had been met with suspicion and spears. They had not even listened to him. Rage and hatred consumed him. When Akut urged speed he held back. He wanted to fight, yet his reason made it all too plain that it would be but a foolish sacrifice of his life to meet these armed men with his naked hands and his teeth—already the boy thought of his teeth, of his fighting fangs, when possibility of combat loomed close.

Moving slowly through the trees he

kept his eyes over his shoulder, though he no longer neglected the possibilities of other dangers which might lurk on either hand or ahead—his experience with the lioness did not need a repetition to insure the permanency of the lesson it had taught. Behind he could hear the savages advancing with shouts and cries. He lagged further behind until the pursuers were in sight. They did not see him, for they were not looking among the branches of the trees for human quarry. The lad kept just ahead of them. For a mile perhaps they continued the search, and then they turned back toward the village. Here was the boy's opportunity, that for which he had been waiting, while the hot blood of revenge coursed

through his veins until he saw his pursuers through a scarlet haze.

When they turned back he turned and followed them. Akut was no longer in sight. Thinking that the boy followed he had gone on further ahead. He had no wish to tempt fate within range of those deadly spears. Slinking silently from tree to tree the boy dogged the footsteps of the returning warriors. At last one dropped behind his fellows as they followed a narrow path toward the village. A grim smile lit the lad's face. Swiftly he hurried forward until he moved almost above the unconscious black—stalking him as Sheeta, the panther, stalked his prey, as the boy had seen Sheeta do on many occasions.

Suddenly and silently he leaped forward and downward upon the broad shoulders of his prey. In the instant of contact his fingers sought and found the man's throat. The weight of the boy's body hurled the black heavily to the ground, the knees in his back knocking the breath from him as he struck. Then a set of strong, white teeth fastened themselves in his neck, and muscular fingers closed tighter upon his wind-pipe. For a time the warrior struggled frantically, throwing himself about in an effort to dislodge his antagonist; but all the while he was weakening and all the while the grim and silent thing he could not see clung tenaciously to him, and dragged him slowly into the bush to one

side of the trail.

Hidden there at last, safe from the prying eyes of searchers, should they miss their fellow and return for him, the lad choked the life from the body of his victim. At last he knew by the sudden struggle, followed by limp relaxation, that the warrior was dead. Then a strange desire seized him. His whole being quivered and thrilled. Involuntarily he leaped to his feet and placed one foot upon the body of his kill. His chest expanded. He raised his face toward the heavens and opened his mouth to voice a strange, weird cry that seemed screaming within him for outward expression, but no sound passed his lips—he just stood there for a full

minute, his face turned toward the sky, his breast heaving to the pent emotion, like an animate statue of vengeance.

The silence which marked the first great kill of the son of Tarzan was to typify all his future kills, just as the hideous victory cry of the bull ape had marked the kills of his mighty sire.

CHAPTER 7

Akut, discovering that the boy was not close behind him, turned back to search for him. He had gone but a short distance in return when he was brought to a sudden and startled halt by sight of a strange figure moving through the trees toward him. It was the boy, yet could it be? In his hand was a long spear, down his back hung an oblong shield such as the black warriors who had attacked them had worn, and upon ankle and arm were bands of iron and brass, while a loin cloth was twisted about the youth's middle. A knife was thrust through its folds.

When the boy saw the ape he hastened forward to exhibit his trophies. Proudly

he called attention to each of his newly won possessions. Boastfully he recounted the details of his exploit.

"With my bare hands and my teeth I killed him," he said. "I would have made friends with them but they chose to be my enemies. And now that I have a spear I shall show Numa, too, what it means to have me for a foe. Only the white men and the great apes, Akut, are our friends. Them we shall seek, all others must we avoid or kill. This have I learned of the jungle."

They made a detour about the hostile village, and resumed their journey toward the coast. The boy took much pride in his new weapons and ornaments. He practiced continually

with the spear, throwing it at some object ahead hour by hour as they traveled their loitering way, until he gained a proficiency such as only youthful muscles may attain to speedily. All the while his training went on under the guidance of Akut. No longer was there a single jungle spoor but was an open book to the keen eyes of the lad, and those other indefinite spoor that elude the senses of civilized man and are only partially appreciable to his savage cousin came to be familiar friends of the eager boy. He could differentiate the innumerable species of the herbivora by scent, and he could tell, too, whether an animal was approaching or departing merely by the waxing or waning strength

of its effluvium. Nor did he need the evidence of his eyes to tell him whether there were two lions or four up wind,—a hundred yards away or half a mile.

Much of this had Akut taught him, but far more was instinctive knowledge - a species of strange intuition inherited from his father. He had come to love the jungle life. The constant battle of wits and senses against the many deadly foes that lurked by day and by night along the pathway of the wary and the unwary appealed to the spirit of adventure which breathes strong in the heart of every red-blooded son of primordial Adam. Yet, though he loved it, he had not let his selfish desires outweigh the sense of duty that had brought him to a realization

of the moral wrong which lay beneath the adventurous escapade that had brought him to Africa. His love of father and mother was strong within him, too strong to permit unalloyed happiness which was undoubtedly causing them days of sorrow. And so he held tight to his determination to find a port upon the coast where he might communicate with them and receive funds for his return to London. There he felt sure that he could now persuade his parents to let him spend at least a portion of his time upon those African estates which from little careless remarks dropped at home he knew his father possessed. That would be something, better at least than a lifetime of the cramped and cloying

restrictions of civilization.

And so he was rather contented than otherwise as he made his way in the direction of the coast, for while he enjoyed the liberty and the savage pleasures of the wild his conscience was at the same time clear, for he knew that he was doing all that lay in his power to return to his parents. He rather looked forward, too, to meeting white men again—creatures of his own kind—for there had been many occasions upon which he had longed for other companionship than that of the old ape. The affair with the blacks still rankled in his heart. He had approached them in such innocent good fellowship and with such childlike assurance of a hospitable welcome that

the reception which had been accorded him had proved a shock to his boyish ideals. He no longer looked upon the black man as his brother; but rather as only another of the innumerable foes of the bloodthirsty jungle —a beast of prey which walked upon two feet instead of four.

But if the blacks were his enemies there were those in the world who were not. There were those who always would welcome him with open arms; who would accept him as a friend and brother, and with whom he might find sanctuary from every enemy. Yes, there were always white men. Somewhere along the coast or even in the depths of the jungle itself there were white men.

To them he would be a welcome visitor. They would befriend him. And there were also the great apes—the friends of his father and of Akut. How glad they would be to receive the son of Tarzan of the Apes! He hoped that he could come upon them before he found a trading post upon the coast. He wanted to be able to tell his father that he had known his old friends of the jungle, that he had hunted with them, that he had joined with them in their savage life, and their fierce, primeval ceremonies—the strange ceremonies of which Akut had tried to tell him. It cheered him immensely to dwell upon these happy meetings. Often he rehearsed the long speech which he would make to the apes, in which he

would tell them of the life of their former king since he had left them.

At other times he would play at meeting with white men. Then he would enjoy their consternation at sight of a naked white boy trapped in the war togs of a black warrior and roaming the jungle with only a great ape as his companion.

And so the days passed, and with the traveling and the hunting and the climbing the boy's muscles developed and his agility increased until even phlegmatic Akut marvelled at the prowess of his pupil. And the boy, realizing his great strength and revelling in it, became careless. He strode through the jungle, his proud head erect, defying

danger. Where Akut took to the trees at the first scent of Numa, the lad laughed in the face of the king of beasts and walked boldly past him. Good fortune was with him for a long time. The lions he met were well-fed, perhaps, or the very boldness of the strange creature which invaded their domain so filled them with surprise that thoughts of attack were banished from their minds as they stood, round-eyed, watching his approach and his departure. Whatever the cause, however, the fact remains that on many occasions the boy passed within a few paces of some great lion without arousing more than a warning growl.

But no two lions are necessarily alike

in character or temper. They differ as greatly as do individuals of the human family. Because ten lions act similarly under similar conditions one cannot say that the eleventh lion will do likewise—the chances are that he will not. The lion is a creature of high nervous development. He thinks, therefore he reasons. Having a nervous system and brains he is the possessor of temperament, which is affected variously by extraneous causes. One day the boy met the eleventh lion. The former was walking across a small plain upon which grew little clumps of bushes. Akut was a few yards to the left of the lad who was the first to discover the presence of Numa.

"Run, Akut," called the boy, laughing. "Numa lies hid in the bushes to my right. Take to the trees. Akut! I, the son of Tarzan, will protect you," and the boy, laughing, kept straight along his way which led close beside the brush in which Numa lay concealed.

The ape shouted to him to come away, but the lad only flourished his spear and executed an improvised war dance to show his contempt for the king of beasts. Closer and closer to the dread destroyer he came, until, with a sudden, angry growl, the lion rose from his bed not ten paces from the youth. A huge fellow he was, this lord of the jungle and the desert. A shaggy mane clothed his shoulders. Cruel fangs armed his great

jaws. His yellow-green eyes blazed with hatred and challenge.

The boy, with his pitifully inadequate spear ready in his hand, realized quickly that this lion was different from the others he had met; but he had gone too far now to retreat. The nearest tree lay several yards to his left - the lion could be upon him before he had covered half the distance, and that the beast intended to charge none could doubt who looked upon him now. Beyond the lion was a thorn tree—only a few feet beyond him. It was the nearest sanctuary but Numa stood between it and his prey.

The feel of the long spear shaft in his hand and the sight of the tree beyond the lion gave the lad an idea—a

preposterous idea—a ridiculous, forlorn hope of an idea; but there was no time now to weigh chances—there was but a single chance, and that was the thorn tree. If the lion charged it would be too late—the lad must charge first, and to the astonishment of Akut and none the less of Numa, the boy leaped swiftly toward the beast. Just for a second was the lion motionless with surprise and in that second Jack Clayton put to the crucial test an accomplishment which he had practiced at school.

Straight for the savage brute he ran, his spear held butt foremost across his body. Akut shrieked in terror and amazement. The lion stood with wide, round eyes awaiting the attack, ready to

rear upon his hind feet and receive this rash creature with blows that could crush the skull of a buffalo.

Just in front of the lion the boy placed the butt of his spear upon the ground, gave a mighty spring, and, before the bewildered beast could guess the trick that had been played upon him, sailed over the lion's head into the rending embrace of the thorn tree—safe but lacerated.

Akut had never before seen a pole-vault. Now he leaped up and down within the safety of his own tree, screaming taunts and boasts at the discomfited Numa, while the boy, torn and bleeding, sought some position in his thorny retreat in which he might find

the least agony. He had saved his life; but at considerable cost in suffering. It seemed to him that the lion would never leave, and it was a full hour before the angry brute gave up his vigil and strode majestically away across the plain. When he was at a safe distance the boy extricated himself from the thorn tree; but not without inflicting new wounds upon his already tortured flesh.

It was many days before the outward evidence of the lesson he had learned had left him; while the impression upon his mind was one that was to remain with him for life. Never again did he uselessly tempt fate.

He took long chances often in his after life; but only when the taking of chances

might further the attainment of some cherished end—and, always thereafter, he practiced pole-vaulting.

For several days the boy and the ape lay up while the former recovered from the painful wounds inflicted by the sharp thorns. The great anthropoid licked the wounds of his human friend, nor, aside from this, did they receive other treatment, but they soon healed, for healthy flesh quickly replaces itself.

When the lad felt fit again the two continued their journey toward the coast, and once more the boy's mind was filled with pleasurable anticipation.

And at last the much dreamed of moment came. They were passing through a tangled forest when the boy's

sharp eyes discovered from the lower branches through which he was traveling an old but well- marked spoor—a spoor that set his heart to leaping—the spoor of man, of white men, for among the prints of naked feet were the well defined outlines of European made boots. The trail, which marked the passage of a good-sized company, pointed north at right angles to the course the boy and the ape were taking toward the coast.

Doubtless these white men knew the nearest coast settlement. They might even be headed for it now. At any rate it would be worth while overtaking them if even only for the pleasure of meeting again creatures of his own kind. The lad

was all excitement; palpitant with eagerness to be off in pursuit. Akut demurred. He wanted nothing of men. To him the lad was a fellow ape, for he was the son of the king of apes. He tried to dissuade the boy, telling him that soon they should come upon a tribe of their own folk where some day when he was older the boy should be king as his father had before him. But Jack was obdurate. He insisted that he wanted to see white men again. He wanted to send a message to his parents. Akut listened and as he listened the intuition of the beast suggested the truth to him—the boy was planning to return to his own kind.

The thought filled the old ape with sorrow. He loved the boy as he had

loved the father, with the loyalty and faithfulness of a hound for its master. In his ape brain and his ape heart he had nursed the hope that he and the lad would never be separated. He saw all his fondly cherished plans fading away, and yet he remained loyal to the lad and to his wishes. Though disconsolate he gave in to the boy's determination to pursue the safari of the white men, accompanying him upon what he believed would be their last journey together.

The spoor was but a couple of days old when the two discovered it, which meant that the slow-moving caravan was but a few hours distant from them whose trained and agile muscles could carry

their bodies swiftly through the branches above the tangled undergrowth which had impeded the progress of the laden carriers of the white men.

The boy was in the lead, excitement and anticipation carrying him ahead of his companion to whom the attainment of their goal meant only sorrow. And it was the boy who first saw the rear guard of the caravan and the white men he had been so anxious to overtake.

Stumbling along the tangled trail of those ahead a dozen heavily laden blacks who, from fatigue or sickness, had dropped behind were being prodded by the black soldiers of the rear guard, kicked when they fell, and then roughly jerked to their feet and hustled onward.

On either side walked a giant white man, heavy blonde beards almost obliterating their countenances. The boy's lips formed a glad cry of salutation as his eyes first discovered the whites—a cry that was never uttered, for almost immediately he witnessed that which turned his happiness to anger as he saw that both the white men were wielding heavy whips brutally upon the naked backs of the poor devils staggering along beneath loads that would have overtaxed the strength and endurance of strong men at the beginning of a new day.

Every now and then the rear guard and the white men cast apprehensive glances rearward as though momentarily expecting the materialization of some

long expected danger from that quarter. The boy had paused after his first sight of the caravan, and now was following slowly in the wake of the sordid, brutal spectacle. Presently Akut came up with him. To the beast there was less of horror in the sight than to the lad, yet even the great ape growled beneath his breath at useless torture being inflicted upon the helpless slaves. He looked at the boy. Now that he had caught up with the creatures of his own kind, why was it that he did not rush forward and greet them? He put the question to his companion.

"They are fiends," muttered the boy. "I would not travel with such as they, for if I did I should set upon them and kill

them the first time they beat their people as they are beating them now; but," he added, after a moment's thought, "I can ask them the whereabouts of the nearest port, and then, Akut, we can leave them."

The ape made no reply, and the boy swung to the ground and started at a brisk walk toward the safari. He was a hundred yards away, perhaps, when one of the whites caught sight of him. The man gave a shout of alarm, instantly levelling his rifle upon the boy and firing. The bullet struck just in front of its mark, scattering turf and fallen leaves against the lad's legs. A second later the other white and the black soldiers of the rear guard were firing hysterically at the boy.

Jack leaped behind a tree, unhit. Days of panic ridden flight through the jungle had filled Carl Jenssen and Sven Malbihn with jangling nerves and their native boys with unreasoning terror. Every new note from behind sounded to their frightened ears the coming of The Sheik and his bloodthirsty entourage. They were in a blue funk, and the sight of the naked white warrior stepping silently out of the jungle through which they had just passed had been sufficient shock to let loose in action all the pent nerve energy of Malbihn, who had been the first to see the strange apparition. And Malbihn's shout and shot had set the others going.

When their nervous energy had spent

itself and they came to take stock of what they had been fighting it developed that Malbihn alone had seen anything clearly. Several of the blacks averred that they too had obtained a good view of the creature but their descriptions of it varied so greatly that Jenssen, who had seen nothing himself, was inclined to be a trifle skeptical. One of the blacks insisted that the thing had been eleven feet tall, with a man's body and the head of an elephant. Another had seen THREE immense Arabs with huge, black beards; but when, after conquering their nervousness, the rear guard advanced upon the enemy's position to investigate they found nothing, for Akut and the boy had retreated out of range of

the unfriendly guns.

Jack was disheartened and sad. He had not entirely recovered from the depressing effect of the unfriendly reception he had received at the hands of the blacks, and now he had found an even more hostile one accorded him by men of his own color.

"The lesser beasts flee from me in terror," he murmured, half to himself, "the greater beasts are ready to tear me to pieces at sight. Black men would kill me with their spears or arrows. And now white men, men of my own kind, have fired upon me and driven me away. Are all the creatures of the world my enemies? Has the son of Tarzan no friend other than Akut?"

The old ape drew closer to the boy.

"There are the great apes," he said. "They only will be the friends of Akut's friend. Only the great apes will welcome the son of Tarzan. You have seen that men want nothing of you. Let us go now and continue our search for the great apes—our people."

The language of the great apes is a combination of monosyllabic gutturals, amplified by gestures and signs. It may not be literally translated into human speech; but as near as may be this is what Akut said to the boy.

The two proceeded in silence for some time after Akut had spoken. The boy was immersed in deep thought—bitter thoughts in which hatred and

revenge predominated. Finally he spoke: "Very well, Akut," he said, "we will find our friends, the great apes."

The anthropoid was overjoyed; but he gave no outward demonstration of his pleasure. A low grunt was his only response, and a moment later he had leaped nimbly upon a small and unwary rodent that had been surprised at a fatal distance from its burrow. Tearing the unhappy creature in two Akut handed the lion's share to the lad.

CHAPTER 8

A year had passed since the two Swedes had been driven in terror from the savage country where The Sheik held sway. Little Meriem still played with Geeka, lavishing all her childish love upon the now almost hopeless ruin of what had never, even in its palmiest days, possessed even a slight degree of loveliness. But to Meriem, Geeka was all that was sweet and adorable. She carried to the deaf ears of the battered ivory head all her sorrows all her hopes and all her ambitions, for even in the face of hopelessness, in the clutches of the dread authority from which there was no escape, little Meriem yet cherished hopes and ambitions. It is true that her

ambitions were rather nebulous in form, consisting chiefly of a desire to escape with Geeka to some remote and unknown spot where there were no Sheiks, no Mabunus—where El Adrea could find no entrance, and where she might play all day surrounded only by flowers and birds and the harmless little monkeys playing in the tree tops.

The Sheik had been away for a long time, conducting a caravan of ivory, skins, and rubber far into the north. The interim had been one of great peace for Meriem. It is true that Mabunu had still been with her, to pinch or beat her as the mood seized the villainous old hag; but Mabunu was only one. When The Sheik was there also there were two of them,

and The Sheik was stronger and more brutal even than Mabunu. Little Meriem often wondered why the grim old man hated her so. It is true that he was cruel and unjust to all with whom he came in contact, but to Meriem he reserved his greatest cruelties, his most studied injustices.

Today Meriem was squatting at the foot of a large tree which grew inside the palisade close to the edge of the village. She was fashioning a tent of leaves for Geeka. Before the tent were some pieces of wood and small leaves and a few stones. These were the household utensils. Geeka was cooking dinner. As the little girl played she prattled continuously to her companion,

propped in a sitting position with a couple of twigs. She was totally absorbed in the domestic duties of Geeka—so much so that she did not note the gentle swaying of the branches of the tree above her as they bent to the body of the creature that had entered them stealthily from the jungle.

In happy ignorance the little girl played on, while from above two steady eyes looked down upon her—unblinking, unwavering. There was none other than the little girl in this part of the village, which had been almost deserted since The Sheik had left long months before upon his journey toward the north.

And out in the jungle, an hour's march from the village, The Sheik was leading

his returning caravan homeward.

A year had passed since the white men had fired upon the lad and driven him back into the jungle to take up his search for the only remaining creatures to whom he might look for companionship—the great apes. For months the two had wandered eastward, deeper and deeper into the jungle. The year had done much for the boy—turning his already mighty muscles to thews of steel, developing his woodcraft to a point where it verged upon the uncanny, perfecting his arboreal instincts, and training him in the use of both natural and artificial weapons.

He had become at last a creature of marvelous physical powers and mental

cunning. He was still but a boy, yet so great was his strength that the powerful anthropoid with which he often engaged in mimic battle was no match for him. Akut had taught him to fight as the bull ape fights, nor ever was there a teacher better fitted to instruct in the savage warfare of primordial man, or a pupil better equipped to profit by the lessons of a master.

As the two searched for a band of the almost extinct species of ape to which Akut belonged they lived upon the best the jungle afforded. Antelope and zebra fell to the boy's spear, or were dragged down by the two powerful beasts of prey who leaped upon them from some overhanging limb or from the ambush of

the undergrowth beside the trail to the water hole or the ford.

The pelt of a leopard covered the nakedness of the youth; but the wearing of it had not been dictated by any prompting of modesty. With the rifle shots of the white men showering about him he had reverted to the savagery of the beast that is inherent in each of us, but that flamed more strongly in this boy whose father had been raised a beast of prey. He wore his leopard skin at first in response to a desire to parade a trophy of his prowess, for he had slain the leopard with his knife in a hand-to-hand combat. He saw that the skin was beautiful, which appealed to his barbaric sense of ornamentation, and

when it stiffened and later commenced to decompose because of his having no knowledge of how to cure or tan it was with sorrow and regret that he discarded it. Later, when he chanced upon a lone, black warrior wearing the counterpart of it, soft and clinging and beautiful from proper curing, it required but an instant to leap from above upon the shoulders of the unsuspecting black, sink a keen blade into his heart and possess the rightly preserved hide.

There were no after-qualms of conscience. In the jungle might is right, nor does it take long to inculcate this axiom in the mind of a jungle dweller, regardless of what his past training may have been. That the black would have

killed him had he had the chance the boy knew full well. Neither he nor the black were any more sacred than the lion, or the buffalo, the zebra or the deer, or any other of the countless creatures who roamed, or slunk, or flew, or wriggled through the dark mazes of the forest. Each had but a single life, which was sought by many. The greater number of enemies slain the better chance to prolong that life. So the boy smiled and donned the finery of the vanquished, and went his way with Akut, searching, always searching for the elusive anthropoids who were to welcome them with open arms. And at last they found them. Deep in the jungle, buried far from sight of man, they came upon such

another little natural arena as had witnessed the wild ceremony of the Dum-Dum in which the boy's father had taken part long years before.

First, at a great distance, they heard the beating of the drum of the great apes. They were sleeping in the safety of a huge tree when the booming sound smote upon their ears. Both awoke at once. Akut was the first to interpret the strange cadence.

"The great apes!" he growled. "They dance the Dum-Dum. Come, Korak, son of Tarzan, let us go to our people."

Months before Akut had given the boy a name of his own choosing, since he could not master the man given name of Jack. Korak is as near as it may be

interpreted into human speech. In the language of the apes it means Killer. Now The Killer rose upon the branch of the great tree where he had been sleeping with his back braced against the stem. He stretched his lithe young muscles, the moonlight filtering through the foliage from above dappling his brown skin with little patches of light.

The ape, too, stood up, half squatting after the manner of his kind. Low growls rumbled from the bottom of his deep chest—growls of excited anticipation. The boy growled in harmony with the ape. Then the anthropoid slid softly to the ground. Close by, in the direction of the booming drum, lay a clearing which they must cross. The moon flooded it

with silvery light. Half-erect, the great ape shuffled into the full glare of the moon. At his side, swinging gracefully along in marked contrast to the awkwardness of his companion, strode the boy, the dark, shaggy coat of the one brushing against the smooth, clear hide of the other. The lad was humming now, a music hall air that had found its way to the forms of the great English public school that was to see him no more. He was happy and expectant. The moment he had looked forward to for so long was about to be realized. He was coming into his own. He was coming home. As the months had dragged or flown along, retarded or spurred on as privation or adventure predominated,

thoughts of his own home, while oft recurring, had become less vivid. The old life had grown to seem more like a dream than a reality, and the balking of his determination to reach the coast and return to London had finally thrown the hope of realization so remotely into the future that it too now seemed little more than a pleasant but hopeless dream.

Now all thoughts of London and civilization were crowded so far into the background of his brain that they might as well have been non-existent. Except for form and mental development he was as much an ape as the great, fierce creature at his side.

In the exuberance of his joy he slapped his companion roughly on the

side of the head. Half in anger, half in play the anthropoid turned upon him, his fangs bared and glistening. Long, hairy arms reached out to seize him, and, as they had done a thousand times before, the two clinched in mimic battle, rolling upon the sward, striking, growling and biting, though never closing their teeth in more than a rough pinch. It was wondrous practice for them both. The boy brought into play wrestling tricks that he had learned at school, and many of these Akut learned to use and to foil. And from the ape the boy learned the methods that had been handed down to Akut from some common ancestor of them both, who had roamed the teeming earth when ferns were trees and

crocodiles were birds.

But there was one art the boy possessed which Akut could not master, though he did achieve fair proficiency in it for an ape—boxing. To have his bull-like charges stopped and crumpled with a suddenly planted fist upon the end of his snout, or a painful jolt in the short ribs, always surprised Akut. It angered him too, and at such times his mighty jaws came nearer to closing in the soft flesh of his friend than at any other, for he was still an ape, with an ape's short temper and brutal instincts; but the difficulty was in catching his tormentor while his rage lasted, for when he lost his head and rushed madly into close quarters with the boy he discovered that

the stinging hail of blows released upon him always found their mark and effectually stopped him—effectually and painfully. Then he would withdraw growling viciously, backing away with grinning jaws distended, to sulk for an hour or so.

Tonight they did not box. Just for a moment or two they wrestled playfully, until the scent of Sheeta, the panther, brought them to their feet, alert and wary. The great cat was passing through the jungle in front of them. For a moment it paused, listening. The boy and the ape growled menacingly in chorus and the carnivore moved on.

Then the two took up their journey toward the sound of the Dum- Dum.

Louder and louder came the beating of the drum. Now, at last, they could hear the growling of the dancing apes, and strong to their nostrils came the scent of their kind. The lad trembled with excitement. The hair down Akut's spine stiffened—the symptoms of happiness and anger are often similar.

Silently they crept through the jungle as they neared the meeting place of the apes. Now they were in the trees, worming their way forward, alert for sentinels. Presently through a break in the foliage the scene burst upon the eager eyes of the boy. To Akut it was a familiar one; but to Korak it was all new. His nerves tingled at the savage sight. The great bulls were dancing in

the moonlight, leaping in an irregular circle about the flat-topped earthen drum about which three old females sat beating its resounding top with sticks worn smooth by long years of use.

Akut, knowing the temper and customs of his kind, was too wise to make their presence known until the frenzy of the dance had passed. After the drum was quiet and the bellies of the tribe well- filled he would hail them. Then would come a parley, after which he and Korak would be accepted into membership by the community. There might be those who would object; but such could be overcome by brute force, of which he and the lad had an ample surplus. For weeks, possibly months,

their presence might cause ever decreasing suspicion among others of the tribe; but eventually they would become as born brothers to these strange apes.

He hoped that they had been among those who had known Tarzan, for that would help in the introduction of the lad and in the consummation of Akut's dearest wish, that Korak should become king of the apes. It was with difficulty, however, that Akut kept the boy from rushing into the midst of the dancing anthropoids—an act that would have meant the instant extermination of them both, since the hysterical frenzy into which the great apes work themselves during the performance of their strange rites is of such a nature that even the

most ferocious of the carnivora give them a wide berth at such times.

As the moon declined slowly toward the lofty, foliaged horizon of the amphitheater the booming of the drum decreased and lessened were the exertions of the dancers, until, at last, the final note was struck and the huge beasts turned to fall upon the feast they had dragged hither for the orgy.

From what he had seen and heard Akut was able to explain to Korak that the rites proclaimed the choosing of a new king, and he pointed out to the boy the massive figure of the shaggy monarch, come into his kingship, no doubt, as many human rulers have come into theirs—by the murder of his

predecessor.

When the apes had filled their bellies and many of them had sought the bases of the trees to curl up in sleep Akut plucked Korak by the arm.

"Come," he whispered. "Come slowly. Follow me. Do as Akut does."

Then he advanced slowly through the trees until he stood upon a bough overhanging one side of the amphitheater. Here he stood in silence for a moment. Then he uttered a low growl. Instantly a score of apes leaped to their feet. There savage little eyes sped quickly around the periphery of the clearing. The king ape was the first to see the two figures upon the branch. He gave voice to an ominous growl. Then

he took a few lumbering steps in the direction of the intruders. His hair was bristling. His legs were stiff, imparting a halting, jerky motion to his gait. Behind him pressed a number of bulls.

He stopped just a little before he came beneath the two—just far enough to be beyond their spring. Wary king! Here he stood rocking himself to and fro upon his short legs, baring his fangs in hideous grinnings, rumbling out an ever increasing volume of growls, which were slowly but steadily increasing to the proportions of roars. Akut knew that he was planning an attack upon them. The old ape did not wish to fight. He had come with the boy to cast his lot with the tribe.

"I am Akut," he said. "This is Korak. Korak is the son of Tarzan who was king of the apes. I, too, was king of the apes who dwelt in the midst of the great waters. We have come to hunt with you, to fight with you. We are great hunters. We are mighty fighters. Let us come in peace."

The king ceased his rocking. He eyed the pair from beneath his beetling brows. His bloodshot eyes were savage and crafty. His kingship was very new and he was jealous of it. He feared the encroachments of two strange apes. The sleek, brown, hairless body of the lad spelled "man," and man he feared and hated.

"Go away!" he growled. "Go away,

or I will kill you."

The eager lad, standing behind the great Akut, had been pulsing with anticipation and happiness. He wanted to leap down among these hairy monsters and show them that he was their friend, that he was one of them. He had expected that they would receive him with open arms, and now the words of the king ape filled him with indignation and sorrow. The blacks had set upon him and driven him away. Then he had turned to the white men—to those of his own kind—only to hear the ping of bullets where he had expected words of cordial welcome. The great apes had remained his final hope. To them he looked for the companionship man had

denied him. Suddenly rage overwhelmed him.

The king ape was almost directly beneath him. The others were formed in a half circle several yards behind the king. They were watching events interestedly. Before Akut could guess his intention, or prevent, the boy leaped to the ground directly in the path of the king, who had now succeeded in stimulating himself to a frenzy of fury.

"I am Korak!" shouted the boy. "I am The Killer. I came to live among you as a friend. You want to drive me away. Very well, then, I shall go; but before I go I shall show you that the son of Tarzan is your master, as his father was before him—that he is not afraid of your

king or you."

For an instant the king ape had stood motionless with surprise. He had expected no such rash action upon the part of either of the intruders. Akut was equally surprised. Now he shouted excitedly for Korak to come back, for he knew that in the sacred arena the other bulls might be expected to come to the assistance of their king against an outsider, though there was small likelihood that the king would need assistance. Once those mighty jaws closed upon the boy's soft neck the end would come quickly. To leap to his rescue would mean death for Akut, too; but the brave old ape never hesitated. Bristling and growling, he dropped to

the sward just as the king ape charged.

The beast's hands clutched for their hold as the animal sprang upon the lad. The fierce jaws were wide distended to bury the yellow fangs deeply in the brown hide. Korak, too, leaped forward to meet the attack; but leaped crouching, beneath the outstretched arms. At the instant of contact the lad pivoted on one foot, and with all the weight of his body and the strength of his trained muscles drove a clenched fist into the bull's stomach. With a gasping shriek the king ape collapsed, clutching futilely for the agile, naked creature nimbly sidestepping from his grasp.

Howls of rage and dismay broke from the bull apes behind the fallen king, as

with murder in their savage little hearts they rushed forward upon Korak and Akut; but the old ape was too wise to court any such unequal encounter. To have counseled the boy to retreat now would have been futile, and Akut knew it. To delay even a second in argument would have sealed the death warrants of them both. There was but a single hope and Akut seized it. Grasping the lad around the waist he lifted him bodily from the ground, and turning ran swiftly toward another tree which swung low branches above the arena. Close upon their heels swarmed the hideous mob; but Akut, old though he was and burdened by the weight of the struggling Korak, was still fleeter than his

pursuers.

With a bound he grasped a low limb, and with the agility of a little monkey swung himself and the boy to temporary safety. Nor did he hesitate even here; but raced on through the jungle night, bearing his burden to safety. For a time the bulls pursued; but presently, as the swifter outdistanced the slower and found themselves separated from their fellows they abandoned the chase, standing roaring and screaming until the jungle reverberated to their hideous noises. Then they turned and retraced their way to the amphitheater.

When Akut felt assured that they were no longer pursued he stopped and released Korak. The boy was furious.

"Why did you drag me away?" he cried. "I would have taught them! I would have taught them all! Now they will think that I am afraid of them."

"What they think cannot harm you," said Akut. "You are alive. If I had not brought you away you would be dead now and so would I. Do you not know that even Numa slinks from the path of the great apes when there are many of them and they are mad?"

CHAPTER 9

It was an unhappy Korak who wandered aimlessly through the jungle the day following his inhospitable reception by the great apes. His heart was heavy from disappointment. Unsatisfied vengeance smoldered in his breast. He looked with hatred upon the denizens of his jungle world, bearing his fighting fangs and growling at those that came within radius of his senses. The mark of his father's early life was strong upon him and enhanced by months of association with beasts, from whom the imitative faculty of youth had absorbed a countless number of little mannerisms of the predatory creatures of the wild.

He bared his fangs now as naturally

and upon as slight provocation as Sheeta, the panther, bared his. He growled as ferociously as Akut himself. When he came suddenly upon another beast his quick crouch bore a strange resemblance to the arching of a cat's back. Korak, The Killer, was looking for trouble. In his heart of hearts he hoped to meet the king ape who had driven him from the amphitheater. To this end he insisted upon remaining in the vicinity; but the exigencies of the perpetual search for food led them several miles further away during day.

They were moving slowly down wind, and warily because the advantage was with whatever beast might chance to be hunting ahead of them, where their

scent-spoor was being borne by the light breeze. Suddenly the two halted simultaneously. Two heads were cocked upon one side. Like creatures hewn from solid rock they stood immovable, listening. Not a muscle quivered. For several seconds they remained thus, then Korak advanced cautiously a few yards and leaped nimbly into a tree. Akut followed close upon his heels. Neither had made a noise that would have been appreciable to human ears at a dozen paces.

Stopping often to listen they crept forward through the trees. That both were greatly puzzled was apparent from the questioning looks they cast at one another from time to time. Finally the lad

caught a glimpse of a palisade a hundred yards ahead, and beyond it the tops of some goatskin tents and a number of thatched huts. His lip upcurled in a savage snarl. Blacks! How he hated them. He signed to Akut to remain where he was while he advanced to reconnoiter.

Woe betide the unfortunate villager whom The Killer came upon now. Slinking through the lower branches of the trees, leaping lightly from one jungle giant to its neighbor where the distance was not too great, or swinging from one hand hold to another Korak came silently toward the village. He heard a voice beyond the palisade and toward that he made his way. A great tree overhung the

enclosure at the very point from which the voice came. Into this Korak crept. His spear was ready in his hand. His ears told him of the proximity of a human being. All that his eyes required was a single glance to show him his target. Then, lightning like, the missile would fly to its goal. With raised spear he crept among the branches of the tree glaring narrowly downward in search of the owner of the voice which rose to him from below.

At last he saw a human back. The spear hand flew to the limit of the throwing position to gather the force that would send the iron shod missile completely through the body of the unconscious victim. And then The Killer

paused. He leaned forward a little to get a better view of the target. Was it to insure more perfect aim, or had there been that in the graceful lines and the childish curves of the little body below him that had held in check the spirit of murder running riot in his veins?

He lowered his spear cautiously that it might make no noise by scraping against foliage or branches. Quietly he crouched in a comfortable position along a great limb and there he lay with wide eyes looking down in wonder upon the creature he had crept upon to kill—looking down upon a little girl, a little nut brown maiden. The snarl had gone from his lip. His only expression was one of interested attention—he was

trying to discover what the girl was doing. Suddenly a broad grin overspread his face, for a turn of the girl's body had revealed Geeka of the ivory head and the rat skin torso - Geeka of the splinter limbs and the disreputable appearance. The little girl raised the marred face to hers and rocking herself backward and forward crooned a plaintive Arab lullaby to the doll. A softer light entered the eyes of The Killer. For a long hour that passed very quickly to him Korak lay with gaze riveted upon the playing child. Not once had he had a view of the girl's full face. For the most part he saw only a mass of wavy, black hair, one brown little shoulder exposed upon the side from where her single robe was

caught beneath her arm, and a shapely knee protruding from beneath her garment as she sat cross legged upon the ground. A tilt of the head as she emphasized some maternal admonition to the passive Geeka revealed occasionally a rounded cheek or a piquant little chin. Now she was shaking a slim finger at Geeka, reprovingly, and again she crushed to her heart this only object upon which she might lavish the untold wealth of her childish affections.

Korak, momentarily forgetful of his bloody mission, permitted the fingers of his spear hand to relax a little their grasp upon the shaft of his formidable weapon. It slipped, almost falling; but the occurrence recalled The Killer to

himself. It reminded him of his purpose in slinking stealthily upon the owner of the voice that had attracted his vengeful attention. He glanced at the spear, with its well-worn grip and cruel, barbed head. Then he let his eyes wander again to the dainty form below him. In imagination he saw the heavy weapon shooting downward. He saw it pierce the tender flesh, driving its way deep into the yielding body. He saw the ridiculous doll drop from its owner's arms to lie sprawled and pathetic beside the quivering body of the little girl. The Killer shuddered, scowling at the inanimate iron and wood of the spear as though they constituted a sentient being endowed with a malignant mind.

Korak wondered what the girl would do were he to drop suddenly from the tree to her side. Most likely she would scream and run away. Then would come the men of the village with spears and guns and set upon him. They would either kill him or drive him away. A lump rose in the boy's throat. He craved the companionship of his own kind, though he scarce realized how greatly. He would have liked to slip down beside the little girl and talk with her, though he knew from the words he had overheard that she spoke a language with which he was unfamiliar. They could have talked by signs a little. That would have been better than nothing. Too, he would have been glad to see her face.

What he had glimpsed assured him that she was pretty; but her strongest appeal to him lay in the affectionate nature revealed by her gentle mothering of the grotesque doll.

At last he hit upon a plan. He would attract her attention, and reassure her by a smiling greeting from a greater distance. Silently he wormed his way back into the tree. It was his intention to hail her from beyond the palisade, giving her the feeling of security which he imagined the stout barricade would afford.

He had scarcely left his position in the tree when his attention was attracted by a considerable noise upon the opposite side of the village. By moving

a little he could see the gate at the far end of the main street. A number of men, women and children were running toward it. It swung open, revealing the head of a caravan upon the opposite side. In trooped the motley organization —black slaves and dark hued Arabs of the northern deserts; cursing camel drivers urging on their vicious charges; overburdened donkeys, waving sadly pendulous ears while they endured with stoic patience the brutalities of their masters; goats, sheep and horses. Into the village they all trooped behind a tall, sour, old man, who rode without greetings to those who shrunk from his path directly to a large goatskin tent in the center of the village. Here he spoke

to a wrinkled hag.

Korak, from his vantage spot, could see it all. He saw the old man asking questions of the black woman, and then he saw the latter point toward a secluded corner of the village which was hidden from the main street by the tents of the Arabs and the huts of the natives in the direction of the tree beneath which the little girl played. This was doubtless her father, thought Korak. He had been away and his first thought upon returning was of his little daughter. How glad she would be to see him! How she would run and throw herself into his arms, to be crushed to his breast and covered with his kisses. Korak sighed. He thought of his own father and mother

far away in london.

He returned to his place in the tree above the girl. If he couldn't have happiness of this sort himself he wanted to enjoy the happiness of others. Possibly if he made himself known to the old man he might be permitted to come to the village occasionally as a friend. It would be worth trying. He would wait until the old Arab had greeted his daughter, then he would make his presence known with signs of peace.

The Arab was striding softly toward the girl. In a moment he would be beside her, and then how surprised and delighted she would be! Korak's eyes sparkled in anticipation—and now the old man stood behind the little girl. His

stern old face was still unrelaxed. The child was yet unconscious of his presence. She prattled on to the unresponsive Geeka. Then the old man coughed. With a start the child glanced quickly up over her shoulder. Korak could see her full face now. It was very beautiful in its sweet and innocent childishness—all soft and lovely curves. He could see her great, dark eyes. He looked for the happy love light that would follow recognition; but it did not come. Instead, terror, stark, paralyzing terror, was mirrored in her eyes, in the expression of her mouth, in the tense, cowering attitude of her body. A grim smile curved the thin, cruel lip of the Arab. The child essayed to crawl away;

but before she could get out of his reach the old man kicked her brutally, sending her sprawling upon the grass. Then he followed her up to seize and strike her as was his custom.

Above them, in the tree, a beast crouched where a moment before had been a boy—a beast with dilating nostrils and bared fangs—a beast that trembled with rage.

The Sheik was stooping to reach for the girl when The Killer dropped to the ground at his side. His spear was still in his left hand but he had forgotten it. Instead his right fist was clenched and as The Sheik took a backward step, astonished by the sudden materialization of this strange apparition apparently out

of clear air, the heavy fist landed full upon his mouth backed by the weight of the young giant and the terrific power of his more than human muscles.

Bleeding and senseless The Sheik sank to earth. Korak turned toward the child. She had regained her feet and stood wide eyed and frightened, looking first into his face and then, horror struck, at the recumbent figure of The Sheik. In an involuntary gesture of protection The Killer threw an arm about the girl's shoulders and stood waiting for the Arab to regain consciousness. For a moment they remained thus, when the girl spoke.

"When he regains his senses he will kill me," she said, in Arabic.

Korak could not understand her. He

shook his head, speaking to her first in English and then in the language of the great apes; but neither of these was intelligible to her. She leaned forward and touched the hilt of the long knife that the Arab wore. Then she raised her clasped hand above her head and drove an imaginary blade into her breast above her heart. Korak understood. The old man would kill her. The girl came to his side again and stood there trembling. She did not fear him. Why should she? He had saved her from a terrible beating at the hands of The Sheik. Never, in her memory, had another so befriended her. She looked up into his face. It was a boyish, handsome face, nut-brown like her own. She admired the spotted

leopard skin that circled his lithe body from one shoulder to his knees. The metal anklets and armlets adorning him aroused her envy. Always had she coveted something of the kind; but never had The Sheik permitted her more than the single cotton garment that barely sufficed to cover her nakedness. No furs or silks or jewelry had there ever been for little Meriem.

And Korak looked at the girl. He had always held girls in a species of contempt. Boys who associated with them were, in his estimation, mollycoddles. He wondered what he should do. Could he leave her here to be abused, possibly murdered, by the villainous old Arab? No! But, on the

other hand, could he take her into the jungle with him? What could he accomplish burdened by a weak and frightened girl? She would scream at her own shadow when the moon came out upon the jungle night and the great beasts roamed, moaning and roaring, through the darkness.

He stood for several minutes buried in thought. The girl watched his face, wondering what was passing in his mind. She, too, was thinking of the future. She feared to remain and suffer the vengeance of The Sheik. There was no one in all the world to whom she might turn, other than this half-naked stranger who had dropped miraculously from the clouds to save her from one of

The Sheik's accustomed beatings. Would her new friend leave her now? Wistfully she gazed at his intent face. She moved a little closer to him, laying a slim, brown hand upon his arm. The contact awakened the lad from his absorption. He looked down at her, and then his arm went about her shoulder once more, for he saw tears upon her lashes.

"Come," he said. "The jungle is kinder than man. You shall live in the jungle and Korak and Akut will protect you."

She did not understand his words, but the pressure of his arm drawing her away from the prostrate Arab and the tents was quite intelligible. One little arm crept about his waist and together

they walked toward the palisade. Beneath the great tree that had harbored Korak while he watched the girl at play he lifted her in his arms and throwing her lightly across his shoulder leaped nimbly into the lower branches. Her arms were about his neck and from one little hand Geeka dangled down his straight young back.

And so Meriem entered the jungle with Korak, trusting, in her childish innocence, the stranger who had befriended her, and perhaps influenced in her belief in him by that strange intuitive power possessed by woman. She had no conception of what the future might hold. She did not know, nor could she have guessed the manner of life led

by her protector. Possibly she pictured a distant village similar to that of The Sheik in which lived other white men like the stranger. That she was to be taken into the savage, primeval life of a jungle beast could not have occurred to her. Had it, her little heart would have palpitated with fear. Often had she wished to run away from the cruelties of The Sheik and Mabunu; but the dangers of the jungle always had deterred her.

The two had gone but a short distance from the village when the girl spied the huge proportions of the great Akut. With a half- stifled scream she clung more closely to Korak, and pointed fearfully toward the ape.

Akut, thinking that The Killer was

returning with a prisoner, came growling toward them—a little girl aroused no more sympathy in the beast's heart than would a full-grown bull ape. She was a stranger and therefore to be killed. He bared his yellow fangs as he approached, and to his surprise The Killer bared his likewise, but he bared them at Akut, and snarled menacingly.

"Ah," thought Akut, "The Killer has taken a mate," and so, obedient to the tribal laws of his kind, he left them alone, becoming suddenly absorbed in a fuzzy caterpillar of peculiarly succulent appearance. The larva disposed of, he glanced from the corner of an eye at Korak. The youth had deposited his burden upon a large limb, where she

clung desperately to keep from falling.

"She will accompany us," said Korak to Akut, jerking a thumb in the direction of the girl. "Do not harm her. We will protect her."

Akut shrugged. To be burdened by the young of man was in no way to his liking. He could see from her evident fright at her position on the branch, and from the terrified glances she cast in his direction that she was hopelessly unfit. By all the ethics of Akut's training and inheritance the unfit should be eliminated; but if The Killer wished this there was nothing to be done about it but to tolerate her. Akut certainly didn't want her —of that he was quite positive. Her skin was too smooth and hairless. Quite

snake- like, in fact, and her face was most unattractive. Not at all like that of a certain lovely she he had particularly noticed among the apes in the amphitheater the previous night. Ah, there was true feminine beauty for one! —a great, generous mouth; lovely, yellow fangs, and the cutest, softest side whiskers! Akut sighed. Then he rose, expanded his great chest and strutted back and forth along a substantial branch, for even a puny thing like this she of Korak's might admire his fine coat and his graceful carriage.

But poor little Meriem only shrank closer to Korak and almost wished that she were back in the village of The Sheik where the terrors of existence

were of human origin, and so more or less familiar. The hideous ape frightened her. He was so large and so ferocious in appearance. His actions she could only interpret as a menace, for how could she guess that he was parading to excite admiration? Nor could she know of the bond of fellowship which existed between this great brute and the godlike youth who had rescued her from the Sheik.

Meriem spent an evening and a night of unmitigated terror. Korak and Akut led her along dizzy ways as they searched for food. Once they hid her in the branches of a tree while they stalked a near- by buck. Even her natural terror of being left alone in the awful jungle

was submerged in a greater horror as she saw the man and the beast spring simultaneously upon their prey and drag it down, as she saw the handsome face of her preserver contorted in a bestial snarl; as she saw his strong, white teeth buried in the soft flesh of the kill.

When he came back to her blood smeared his face and hands and breast and she shrank from him as he offered her a huge hunk of hot, raw meat. He was evidently much disturbed by her refusal to eat, and when, a moment later, he scampered away into the forest to return with fruit for her she was once more forced to alter her estimation of him. This time she did not shrink, but acknowledged his gift with a smile that,

had she known it, was more than ample payment to the affection starved boy.

The sleeping problem vexed Korak. He knew that the girl could not balance herself in safety in a tree crotch while she slept, nor would it be safe to permit her to sleep upon the ground open to the attacks of prowling beasts of prey. There was but a single solution that presented itself—he must hold her in his arms all night. And that he did, with Akut braced upon one side of her and he upon the other, so that she was warmed by the bodies of them both.

She did not sleep much until the night was half spent; but at last Nature overcame her terrors of the black abyss beneath and the hairy body of the wild

beast at her side, and she fell into a deep slumber which outlasted the darkness. When she opened her eyes the sun was well up. At first she could not believe in the reality of her position. Her head had rolled from Korak's shoulder so that her eyes were directed upon the hairy back of the ape. At sight of it she shrank away. Then she realized that someone was holding her, and turning her head she saw the smiling eyes of the youth regarding her. When he smiled she could not fear him, and now she shrank closer against him in natural revulsion toward the rough coat of the brute upon her other side.

Korak spoke to her in the language of the apes; but she shook her head, and

spoke to him in the language of the Arab, which was as unintelligible to him as was ape speech to her. Akut sat up and looked at them. He could understand what Korak said but the girl made only foolish noises that were entirely unintelligible and ridiculous. Akut could not understand what Korak saw in her to attract him. He looked at her long and steadily, appraising her carefully, then he scratched his head, rose and shook himself.

His movement gave the girl a little start—she had forgotten Akut for the moment. Again she shrank from him. The beast saw that she feared him, and being a brute enjoyed the evidence of the terror his brutishness inspired.

Crouching, he extended his huge hand stealthily toward her, as though to seize her. She shrank still further away. Akut's eyes were busy drinking in the humor of the situation—he did not see the narrowing eyes of the boy upon him, nor the shortening neck as the broad shoulders rose in a characteristic attitude of preparation for attack. As the ape's fingers were about to close upon the girl's arm the youth rose suddenly with a short, vicious growl. A clenched fist flew before Meriem's eyes to land full upon the snout of the astonished Akut. With an explosive bellow the anthropoid reeled backward and tumbled from the tree.

Korak stood glaring down upon him

when a sudden swish in the bushes close by attracted his attention. The girl too was looking down; but she saw nothing but the angry ape scrambling to his feet. Then, like a bolt from a cross bow, a mass of spotted, yellow fur shot into view straight for Akut's back. It was Sheeta, the leopard.

CHAPTER 10

As the leopard leaped for the great ape Meriem gasped in surprise and horror—not for the impending fate of the anthropoid, but at the act of the youth who but for an instant before had angrily struck his strange companion; for scarce had the carnivore burst into view than with drawn knife the youth had leaped far out above him, so that as Sheeta was almost in the act of sinking fangs and talons in Akut's broad back The Killer landed full upon the leopard's shoulders.

The cat halted in mid air, missed the ape by but a hair's breadth, and with horrid snarlings rolled over upon its back, clutching and clawing in an effort to reach and dislodge the antagonist

biting at its neck and knifing it in the side.

Akut, startled by the sudden rush from his rear, and following hoary instinct, was in the tree beside the girl with an agility little short of marvelous in so heavy a beast. But the moment that he turned to see what was going on below him brought him as quickly to the ground again. Personal differences were quickly forgotten in the danger which menaced his human companion, nor was he a whit less eager to jeopardize his own safety in the service of his friend than Korak had been to succor him.

The result was that Sheeta presently found two ferocious creatures tearing him to ribbons. Shrieking, snarling and

growling, the three rolled hither and thither among the underbrush, while with staring eyes the sole spectator of the battle royal crouched trembling in the tree above them hugging Geeka frantically to her breast.

It was the boy's knife which eventually decided the battle, and as the fierce feline shuddered convulsively and rolled over upon its side the youth and the ape rose and faced one another across the prostrate carcass. Korak jerked his head in the direction of the little girl in the tree.

"Leave her alone," he said; "she is mine."

Akut grunted, blinked his blood-shot eyes, and turned toward the body of

Sheeta. Standing erect upon it he threw out his great chest, raised his face toward the heavens and gave voice to so horrid a scream that once again the little girl shuddered and shrank. It was the victory cry of the bull ape that has made a kill. The boy only looked on for a moment in silence; then he leaped into the tree again to the girl's side. Akut presently rejoined them. For a few minutes he busied himself licking his wounds, then he wandered off to hunt his breakfast.

For many months the strange life of the three went on unmarked by any unusual occurrences. At least without any occurrences that seemed unusual to the youth or the ape; but to the little girl

it was a constant nightmare of horrors for days and weeks, until she too became accustomed to gazing into the eyeless sockets of death and to the feel of the icy wind of his shroud-like mantle. Slowly she learned the rudiments of the only common medium of thought exchange which her companions possessed—the language of the great apes. More quickly she perfected herself in jungle craft, so that the time soon came when she was an important factor in the chase, watching while the others slept, or helping them to trace the spoor of whatever prey they might be stalking. Akut accepted her on a footing which bordered upon equality when it was necessary for them to come into close contact; but for the most part

he avoided her. The youth always was kind to her, and if there were many occasions upon which he felt the burden of her presence he hid it from her. Finding that the night damp and chill caused her discomfort and even suffering, Korak constructed a tight little shelter high among the swaying branches of a giant tree. Here little Meriem slept in comparative warmth and safety, while The Killer and the ape perched upon near-by branches, the former always before the entrance to the lofty domicile, where he best could guard its inmate from the dangers of arboreal enemies. They were too high to feel much fear of Sheeta; but there was always Histah, the snake, to strike terror to one's soul, and

the great baboons who lived near-by, and who, while never attacking always bared their fangs and barked at any of the trio when they passed near them.

After the construction of the shelter the activities of the three became localized. They ranged less widely, for there was always the necessity of returning to their own tree at nightfall. A river flowed near by. Game and fruit were plentiful, as were fish also. Existence had settled down to the daily humdrum of the wild—the search for food and the sleeping upon full bellies. They looked no further ahead than today. If the youth thought of his past and of those who longed for him in the distant metropolis it was in a detached and

impersonal sort of way as though that other life belonged to another creature than himself. He had given up hope of returning to civilization, for since his various rebuffs at the hands of those to whom he had looked for friendship he had wandered so far inland as to realize that he was completely lost in the mazes of the jungle.

Then, too, since the coming of Meriem he had found in her that one thing which he had most missed before in his savage, jungle life—human companionship. In his friendship for her there was appreciable no trace of sex influence of which he was cognizant. They were friends—companions - that was all. Both might have been boys,

except for the half tender and always masterful manifestation of the protective instinct which was apparent in Korak's attitude.

The little girl idolized him as she might have idolized an indulgent brother had she had one. Love was a thing unknown to either; but as the youth neared manhood it was inevitable that it should come to him as it did to every other savage, jungle male.

As Meriem became proficient in their common language the pleasures of their companionship grew correspondingly, for now they could converse and aided by the mental powers of their human heritage they amplified the restricted vocabulary of the apes until talking was

transformed from a task into an enjoyable pastime. When Korak hunted, Meriem usually accompanied him, for she had learned the fine art of silence, when silence was desirable. She could pass through the branches of the great trees now with all the agility and stealth of The Killer himself. Great heights no longer appalled her. She swung from limb to limb, or she raced through the mighty branches, surefooted, lithe, and fearless. Korak was very proud of her, and even old Akut grunted in approval where before he had growled in contempt.

A distant village of blacks had furnished her with a mantle of fur and feathers, with copper ornaments, and

weapons, for Korak would not permit her to go unarmed, or unversed in the use of the weapons he stole for her. A leather thong over one shoulder supported the ever present Geeka who was still the recipient of her most sacred confidences. A light spear and a long knife were her weapons of offense or defense. Her body, rounding into the fullness of an early maturity, followed the lines of a Greek goddess; but there the similarity ceased, for her face was beautiful.

As she grew more accustomed to the jungle and the ways of its wild denizens fear left her. As time wore on she even hunted alone when Korak and Akut were prowling at a great distance, as they

were sometimes forced to do when game was scarce in their immediate vicinity. Upon these occasions she usually confined her endeavors to the smaller animals though sometimes she brought down a deer, and once even Horta, the boar—a great tusker that even Sheeta might have thought twice before attacking.

In their stamping grounds in the jungle the three were familiar figures. The little monkeys knew them well, often coming close to chatter and frolic about them. When Akut was by, the small folk kept their distance, but with Korak they were less shy and when both the males were gone they would come close to Meriem, tugging at her ornaments or playing with

Geeka, who was a never ending source of amusement to them. The girl played with them and fed them, and when she was alone they helped her to pass the long hours until Korak's return.

Nor were they worthless as friends. In the hunt they helped her locate her quarry. Often they would come racing through the trees to her side to announce the near presence of antelope or giraffe, or with excited warnings of the proximity of Sheeta or Numa. Luscious, sun-kissed fruits which hung far out upon the frail bough of the jungle's waving crest were brought to her by these tiny, nimble allies. Sometimes they played tricks upon her; but she was always kind and gentle with them and in their wild,

half-human way they were kind to her and affectionate. Their language being similar to that of the great apes Meriem could converse with them though the poverty of their vocabulary rendered these exchanges anything but feasts of reason. For familiar objects they had names, as well as for those conditions which induced pain or pleasure, joy, sorrow, or rage. These root words were so similar to those in use among the great anthropoids as to suggest that the language of the Manus was the mother tongue. Dreams, aspirations, hopes, the past, the sordid exchange. Dreams, aspirations, hopes, the past, the future held no place in the conversation of Manu, the monkey. All was of the

present —particularly of filling his belly and catching lice.

Poor food was this to nourish the mental appetite of a girl just upon the brink of womanhood. And so, finding Manu only amusing as an occasional playfellow or pet, Meriem poured out her sweetest soul thoughts into the deaf ears of Geeka's ivory head. To Geeka she spoke in Arabic, knowing that Geeka, being but a doll, could not understand the language of Korak and Akut, and that the language of Korak and Akut being that of male apes contained nothing of interest to an Arab doll.

Geeka had undergone a transformation since her little mother had left the village of The Sheik. Her

garmenture now reflected in miniature that of Meriem. A tiny bit of leopard skin covered her ratskin torso from shoulder to splinter knee. A band of braided grasses about her brow held in place a few gaudy feathers from the parakeet, while other bits of grass were fashioned into imitations of arm and leg ornaments of metal. Geeka was a perfect little savage; but at heart she was unchanged, being the same omnivorous listener as of yore. An excellent trait in Geeka was that she never interrupted in order to talk about herself. Today was no exception. She had been listening attentively to Meriem for an hour, propped against the bole of a tree while her lithe, young mistress stretched

catlike and luxurious along a swaying branch before her.

"Little Geeka," said Meriem, "our Korak has been gone for a long time today. We miss him, little Geeka, do we not? It is dull and lonesome in the great jungle when our Korak is away. What will he bring us this time, eh? Another shining band of metal for Meriem's ankle? Or a soft, doeskin loin cloth from the body of a black she? He tells me that it is harder to get the possessions of the shes, for he will not kill them as he does the males, and they fight savagely when he leaps upon them to wrest their ornaments from them. Then come the males with spears and arrows and Korak takes to the trees. Sometimes he takes the

she with him and high among the branches divests her of the things he wishes to bring home to Meriem. He says that the blacks fear him now, and at first sight of him the women and children run shrieking to their huts; but he follows them within, and it is not often that he returns without arrows for himself and a present for Meriem. Korak is mighty among the jungle people—our Korak, Geeka—no, MY Korak!"

Meriem's conversation was interrupted by the sudden plunge of an excited little monkey that landed upon her shoulders in a flying leap from a neighboring tree.

"Climb!" he cried. "Climb! The Mangani are coming."

Meriem glanced lazily over her shoulder at the excited disturber of her peace.

"Climb, yourself, little Manu," she said. "The only Mangani in our jungle are Korak and Akut. It is they you have seen returning from the hunt. Some day you will see your own shadow, little Manu, and then you will be frightened to death."

But the monkey only screamed his warning more lustily before he raced upward toward the safety of the high terrace where Mangani, the great ape, could not follow. Presently Meriem heard the sound of approaching bodies swinging through the trees. She listened attentively. There were two and they

were great apes—Korak and Akut. To her Korak was an ape—a Mangani, for as such the three always described themselves. Man was an enemy, so they did not think of themselves as belonging any longer to the same genus. Tarmangani, or great white ape, which described the white man in their language, did not fit them all. Gomangani —great black ape, or Negro — described none of them so they called themselves plain Mangani.

Meriem decided that she would feign slumber and play a joke on Korak. So she lay very still with eyes tightly closed. She heard the two approaching closer and closer. They were in the adjoining tree now and must have

discovered her, for they had halted. Why were they so quiet? Why did not Korak call out his customary greeting? The quietness was ominous. It was followed presently by a very stealthy sound—one of them was creeping upon her. Was Korak planning a joke upon his own account? Well, she would fool him. Cautiously she opened her eyes the tiniest bit, and as she did so her heart stood still. Creeping silently toward her was a huge bull ape that she never before had seen. Behind him was another like him.

With the agility of a squirrel Meriem was upon her feet and at the same instant the great bull lunged for her. Leaping from limb to limb the girl fled through

the jungle while close behind her came the two great apes. Above them raced a bevy of screaming, chattering monkeys, hurling taunts and insults at the Mangani, and encouragement and advice to the girl.

From tree to tree swung Meriem working ever upward toward the smaller branches which would not bear the weight of her pursuers. Faster and faster came the bull apes after her. The clutching fingers of the foremost were almost upon her again and again, but she eluded them by sudden bursts of speed or reckless chances as she threw herself across dizzy spaces.

Slowly she was gaining her way to the greater heights where safety lay,

when, after a particularly daring leap, the swaying branch she grasped bent low beneath her weight, nor whipped upward again as it should have done. Even before the rending sound which followed Meriem knew that she had misjudged the strength of the limb. It gave slowly at first. Then there was a ripping as it parted from the trunk. Releasing her hold Meriem dropped among the foliage beneath, clutching for a new support. She found it a dozen feet below the broken limb. She had fallen thus many times before, so that she had no particular terror of a fall—it was the delay which appalled her most, and rightly, for scarce had she scrambled to a place of safety than the body of the

huge ape dropped at her side and a great, hairy arm went about her waist.

Almost at once the other ape reached his companion's side. He made a lunge at Meriem; but her captor swung her to one side, bared his fighting fangs and growled ominously. Meriem struggled to escape. She struck at the hairy breast and bearded cheek. She fastened her strong, white teeth in one shaggy forearm. The ape cuffed her viciously across the face, then he had to turn his attention to his fellow who quite evidently desired the prize for his own.

The captor could not fight to advantage upon the swaying bough, burdened as he was by a squirming, struggling captive, so he dropped

quickly to the ground beneath. The other followed him, and here they fought, occasionally abandoning their duel to pursue and recapture the girl who took every advantage of her captors' preoccupation in battle to break away in attempted escape; but always they overtook her, and first one and then the other possessed her as they struggled to tear one another to pieces for the prize.

Often the girl came in for many blows that were intended for a hairy foe, and once she was felled, lying unconscious while the apes, relieved of the distraction of detaining her by force, tore into one another in fierce and terrible combat.

Above them screamed the little

monkeys, racing hither and thither in a frenzy of hysterical excitement. Back and forth over the battle field flew countless birds of gorgeous plumage, squawking their hoarse cries of rage and defiance. In the distance a lion roared.

The larger bull was slowly tearing his antagonist to pieces. They rolled upon the ground biting and striking. Again, erect upon their hind legs they pulled and tugged like human wrestlers; but always the giant fangs found their bloody part to play until both combatants and the ground about them were red with gore.

Meriem, through it all, lay still and unconscious upon the ground. At last one found a permanent hold upon the jugular of the other and thus they went down for

the last time. For several minutes they lay with scarce a struggle. It was the larger bull who arose alone from the last embrace. He shook himself. A deep growl rumbled from his hairy throat. He waddled back and forth between the body of the girl and that of his vanquished foe. Then he stood upon the latter and gave tongue to his hideous challenge. The little monkeys broke, screaming, in all directions as the terrifying noise broke upon their ears. The gorgeous birds took wing and fled. Once again the lion roared, this time at a greater distance.

The great ape waddled once more to the girl's side. He turned her over upon her back, and stooping commenced to

sniff and listen about her face and breast. She lived. The monkeys were returning. They came in swarms, and from above hurled down insults upon the victor.

The ape showed his displeasure by baring his teeth and growling up at them. Then he stooped and lifting the girl to his shoulder waddled off through the jungle. In his wake followed the angry mob.

CHAPTER 11

Korak, returning from the hunt, heard the jabbering of the excited monkeys. He knew that something was seriously amiss. Histah, the snake, had doubtless coiled his slimy folds about some careless Manu. The youth hastened ahead. The monkeys were Meriem's friends. He would help them if he could. He traveled rapidly along the middle terrace. In the tree by Meriem's shelter he deposited his trophies of the hunt and called aloud to her. There was no answer. He dropped quickly to a lower level. She might be hiding from him.

Upon a great branch where Meriem often swung at indolent ease he saw Geeka propped against the tree's great

bole. What could it mean? Meriem had never left Geeka thus alone before. Korak picked up the doll and tucked it in his belt. He called again, more loudly; but no Meriem answered his summons. In the distance the jabbering of the excited Manus was growing less distinct.

Could their excitement be in any way connected with Meriem's disappearance? The bare thought was enough. Without waiting for Akut who was coming slowly along some distance in his rear, Korak swung rapidly in the direction of the chattering mob. But a few minutes sufficed to overtake the rearmost. At sight of him they fell to screaming and pointing downward ahead

of them, and a moment later Korak came within sight of the cause of their rage.

The youth's heart stood still in terror as he saw the limp body of the girl across the hairy shoulders of a great ape. That she was dead he did not doubt, and in that instant there arose within him a something which he did not try to interpret nor could have hade he tried; but all at once the whole world seemed centered in that tender, graceful body, that frail little body, hanging so pitifully limp and helpless across the bulging shoulders of the brute.

He knew then that little Meriem was his world—his sun, his moon, his stars—with her going had gone all light and warmth and happiness. A groan escaped

his lips, and after that a series of hideous roars, more bestial than the beasts', as he dropped plummet-like in mad descent toward the perpetrator of this hideous crime.

The bull ape turned at the first note of this new and menacing voice, and as he turned a new flame was added to the rage and hatred of The Killer, for he saw that the creature before him was none other than the king ape which had driven him away from the great anthropoids to whom he had looked for friendship and asylum.

Dropping the body of the girl to the ground the bull turned to battle anew for possession of his expensive prize; but this time he looked for an easy conquest.

He too recognized Korak. Had he not chased him away from the amphitheater without even having to lay a fang or paw upon him? With lowered head and bulging shoulders he rushed headlong for the smooth-skinned creature who was daring to question his right to his prey.

They met head on like two charging bulls, to go down together tearing and striking. Korak forgot his knife. Rage and bloodlust such as his could be satisfied only by the feel of hot flesh between rending fangs, by the gush of new life blood against his bare skin, for, though he did not realize it, Korak, The Killer, was fighting for something more compelling than hate or revenge—he was a great male fighting another male

for a she of his own kind.

So impetuous was the attack of the man-ape that he found his hold before the anthropoid could prevent him—a savage hold, with strong jaws closed upon a pulsing jugular, and there he clung, with closed eyes, while his fingers sought another hold upon the shaggy throat.

It was then that Meriem opened her eyes. At the sight before her they went wide.

"Korak!" she cried. "Korak! My Korak! I knew that you would come. Kill him, Korak! Kill him!" And with flashing eyes and heaving bosom the girl, coming to her feet, ran to Korak's side to encourage him. Nearby lay The

Killer's spear, where he had flung it as he charged the ape. The girl saw it and snatched it up. No faintness overcame her in the face of this battle primeval at her feet. For her there was no hysterical reaction from the nerve strain of her own personal encounter with the bull. She was excited; but cool and entirely unafraid. Her Korak was battling with another Mangani that would have stolen her; but she did not seek the safety of an overhanging bough there to watch the battle from afar, as would a she Mangani. Instead she placed the point of Korak's spear against the bull ape's side and plunged the sharp point deep into the savage heart. Korak had not needed her aid, for the great bull had been already

as good as dead, with the blood gushing from his torn jugular; but Korak rose smiling with a word of approbation for his helper.

How tall and fine she was! Had she changed suddenly within the few hours of his absence, or had his battle with the ape affected his vision? He might have been looking at Meriem through new eyes for the many startling and wonderful surprises his gaze revealed. How long it had been since he had found her in her father's village, a little Arab girl, he did not know, for time is of no import in the jungle and so he had kept no track of the passing days. But he realized, as he looked upon her now, that she was no longer such a little girl as he

had first seen playing with Geeka beneath the great tree just within the palisade. The change must have been very gradual to have eluded his notice until now. And what was it that had caused him to realize it so suddenly? His gaze wandered from the girl to the body of the dead bull. For the first time there flashed to his understanding the explanation of the reason for the girl's attempted abduction. Korak's eyes went wide and then they closed to narrow slits of rage as he stood glaring down upon the abysmal brute at his feet. When next his glance rose to Meriem's face a slow flush suffused his own. Now, indeed, was he looking upon her through new eyes —the eyes of a man looking

upon a maid.

Akut had come up just as Meriem had speared Korak's antagonist. The exultation of the old ape was keen. He strutted, stiff-legged and truculent about the body of the fallen enemy. He growled and upcurved his long, flexible lip. His hair bristled. He was paying no attention to Meriem and Korak. Back in the uttermost recesses of his little brain something was stirring—something which the sight and smell of the great bull had aroused. The outward manifestation of the germinating idea was one of bestial rage; but the inner sensations were pleasurable in the extreme. The scent of the great bull and the sight of his huge and hairy figure had

wakened in the heart of Akut a longing for the companionship of his own kind. So Korak was not alone undergoing a change.

And Meriem? She was a woman. It is woman's divine right to love. Always she had loved Korak. He was her big brother. Meriem alone underwent no change. She was still happy in the companionship of her Korak. She still loved him—as a sister loves an indulgent brother—and she was very, very proud of him. In all the jungle there was no other creature so strong, so handsome, or so brave.

Korak came close to her. There was a new light in his eyes as she looked up into them; but she did not understand it.

She did not realize how close they were to maturity, nor aught of all the difference in their lives the look in Korak's eyes might mean.

"Meriem," he whispered and his voice was husky as he laid a brown hand upon her bare shoulder. "Meriem!" Suddenly he crushed her to him. She looked up into his face, laughing, and then he bent and kissed her full upon the mouth. Even then she did not understand. She did not recall ever having been kissed before. It was very nice. Meriem liked it. She thought it was Korak's way of showing how glad he was that the great ape had not succeeded in running away with her. She was glad too, so she put her arms about The Killer's neck and

kissed him again and again. Then, discovering the doll in his belt she transferred it to her own possession, kissing it as she had kissed Korak.

Korak wanted her to say something. He wanted to tell her how he loved her; but the emotion of his love choked him and the vocabulary of the Mangani was limited.

There came a sudden interruption. It was from Akut—a sudden, low growl, no louder than those he had been giving vent to the while he pranced about the dead bull, nor half so loud in fact; but of a timbre that bore straight to the perceptive faculties of the jungle beast ingrained in Korak. It was a warning. Korak looked quickly up from the

glorious vision of the sweet face so close to his. Now his other faculties awoke. His ears, his nostrils were on the alert. Something was coming!

The Killer moved to Akut's side. Meriem was just behind them. The three stood like carved statues gazing into the leafy tangle of the jungle. The noise that had attracted their attention increased, and presently a great ape broke through the underbrush a few paces from where they stood. The beast halted at sight of them. He gave a warning grunt back over his shoulder, and a moment later coming cautiously another bull appeared. He was followed by others—both bulls and females with young, until two score hairy monsters stood glaring at the three.

It was the tribe of the dead king ape. Akut was the first to speak. He pointed to the body of the dead bull.

"Korak, mighty fighter, has killed your king," he grunted. "There is none greater in all the jungle than Korak, son of Tarzan. Now Korak is king. What bull is greater than Korak?" It was a challenge to any bull who might care to question Korak's right to the kingship. The apes jabbered and chattered and growled among themselves for a time. At last a young bull came slowly forward rocking upon his short legs, bristling, growling, terrible.

The beast was enormous, and in the full prime of his strength. He belonged to that almost extinct species for which

white men have long sought upon the information of the natives of the more inaccessible jungles. Even the natives seldom see these great, hairy, primordial men.

Korak advanced to meet the monster. He, too, was growling. In his mind a plan was revolving. To close with this powerful, untired brute after having just passed through a terrific battle with another of his kind would have been to tempt defeat. He must find an easier way to victory. Crouching, he prepared to meet the charge which he knew would soon come, nor did he have long to wait. His antagonist paused only for sufficient time to permit him to recount for the edification of the audience and the

confounding of Korak a brief resume of his former victories, of his prowess, and of what he was about to do to this puny Tarmangani. Then he charged.

With clutching fingers and wide opened jaws he came down upon the waiting Korak with the speed of an express train. Korak did not move until the great arms swung to embrace him, then he dropped low beneath them, swung a terrific right to the side of the beast's jaw as he side-stepped his rushing body, and swinging quickly about stood ready over the fallen ape where he sprawled upon the ground.

It was a surprised anthropoid that attempted to scramble to its feet. Froth flecked its hideous lips. Red were the

little eyes. Blood curdling roars tumbled from the deep chest. But it did not reach its feet. The Killer stood waiting above it, and the moment that the hairy chin came upon the proper level another blow that would have felled an ox sent the ape over backward.

Again and again the beast struggled to arise, but each time the mighty Tarmangani stood waiting with ready fist and pile driver blow to bowl him over. Weaker and weaker became the efforts of the bull. Blood smeared his face and breast. A red stream trickled from nose and mouth. The crowd that had cheered him on at first with savage yells, now jeered him—their approbation was for the Tarmangani.

"Kagoda?" inquired Korak, as he sent the bull down once more.

Again the stubborn bull essayed to scramble to his feet. Again The Killer struck him a terrific blow. Again he put the question, kagoda—have you had enough?

For a moment the bull lay motionless. Then from between battered lips came the single word: "Kagoda!"

"Then rise and go back among your people," said Korak. "I do not wish to be king among people who once drove me from them. Keep your own ways, and we will keep ours. When we meet we may be friends, but we shall not live together."

An old bull came slowly toward The

Killer.

"You have killed our king," he said. "You have defeated him who would have been king. You could have killed him had you wished. What shall we do for a king?"

Korak turned toward Akut.

"There is your king," he said. But Akut did not want to be separated from Korak, although he was anxious enough to remain with his own kind. He wanted Korak to remain, too. He said as much.

The youth was thinking of Meriem—of what would be best and safest for her. If Akut went away with the apes there would be but one to watch over and protect her. On the other hand were they to join the tribe he would never feel safe

to leave Meriem behind when he went out to hunt, for the passions of the ape-folk are not ever well controlled. Even a female might develop an insane hatred for the slender white girl and kill her during Korak's absence.

"We will live near you," he said, at last. "When you change your hunting ground we will change ours, Meriem and I, and so remain near you; but we shall not dwell among you."

Akut raised objections to this plan. He did not wish to be separated from Korak. At first he refused to leave his human friend for the companionship of his own kind; but when he saw the last of the tribe wandering off into the jungle again and his glance rested upon the lithe

figure of the dead king's young mate as she cast admiring glances at her lord's successor the call of blood would not be denied. With a farewell glance toward his beloved Korak he turned and followed the she ape into the labyrinthine mazes of the wood.

After Korak had left the village of the blacks following his last thieving expedition, the screams of his victim and those of the other women and children had brought the warriors in from the forest and the river. Great was the excitement and hot was the rage of the men when they learned that the white devil had again entered their homes, frightened their women and stolen arrows and ornaments and food.

Even their superstitious fear of this weird creature who hunted with a huge bull ape was overcome in their desire to wreak vengeance upon him and rid themselves for good and all of the menace of his presence in the jungle.

And so it was that a score of the fleetest and most doughty warriors of the tribe set out in pursuit of Korak and Akut but a few minutes after they had left the scene of The Killer's many depredations.

The youth and the ape had traveled slowly and with no precautions against a successful pursuit. Nor was their attitude of careless indifference to the blacks at all remarkable. So many similar raids had gone unpunished that the two had come to look upon the Negroes with

contempt. The return journey led them straight up wind. The result being that the scent of their pursuers was borne away from them, so they proceeded upon their way in total ignorance of the fact that tireless trackers but little less expert in the mysteries of woodcraft than themselves were dogging their trail with savage insistence.

The little party of warriors was led by Kovudoo, the chief; a middle-aged savage of exceptional cunning and bravery. It was he who first came within sight of the quarry which they had followed for hours by the mysterious methods of their almost uncanny powers of observation, intuition, and even scent.

Kovudoo and his men came upon

Korak, Akut and Meriem after the killing of the king ape, the noise of the combat having led them at last straight to their quarry. The sight of the slender white girl had amazed the savage chief and held him gazing at the trio for a moment before ordering his warriors to rush out upon their prey. In that moment it was that the great apes came and again the blacks remained awestruck witnesses to the palaver, and the battle between Korak and the young bull.

But now the apes had gone, and the white youth and the white maid stood alone in the jungle. One of Kovudoo's men leaned close to the ear of his chief. "Look!" he whispered, and pointed to something that dangled at the girl's side.

"When my brother and I were slaves in the village of The Sheik my brother made that thing for The Sheik's little daughter—she played with it always and called it after my brother, whose name is Geeka. Just before we escaped some one came and struck down The Sheik, stealing his daughter away. If this is she The Sheik will pay you well for her return."

Korak's arm had again gone around the shoulders of Meriem. Love raced hot through his young veins. Civilization was but a half- remembered state - London as remote as ancient Rome. In all the world there were but they two - Korak, The Killer, and Meriem, his mate. Again he drew her close to him

and covered her willing lips with his hot kisses. And then from behind him broke a hideous bedlam of savage war cries and a score of shrieking blacks were upon them.

Korak turned to give battle. Meriem with her own light spear stood by his side. An avalanche of barbed missiles flew about them. One pierced Korak's shoulder, another his leg, and he went down.

Meriem was unscathed for the blacks had intentionally spared her. Now they rushed forward to finish Korak and made good the girl's capture; but as they came there came also from another point in the jungle the great Akut and at his heels the huge bulls of his new kingdom.

Snarling and roaring they rushed upon the black warriors when they saw the mischief they had already wrought. Kovudoo, realizing the danger of coming to close quarters with these mighty ape-men, seized Meriem and called upon his warriors to retreat. For a time the apes followed them, and several of the blacks were badly mauled and one killed before they succeeded in escaping. Nor would they have gotten off thus easily had Akut not been more concerned with the condition of the wounded Korak than with the fate of the girl upon whom he had always looked as more or less of an interloper and an unquestioned burden.

Korak lay bleeding and unconscious when Akut reached his side. The great

ape tore the heavy spears from his flesh, licked the wounds and then carried his friend to the lofty shelter that Korak had constructed for Meriem. Further than this the brute could do nothing. Nature must accomplish the rest unaided or Korak must die.

He did not die, however. For days he lay helpless with fever, while Akut and the apes hunted close by that they might protect him from such birds and beasts as might reach his lofty retreat. Occasionally Akut brought him juicy fruits which helped to slake his thirst and allay his fever, and little by little his powerful constitution overcame the effects of the spear thrusts. The wounds healed and his strength returned. All

during his rational moments as he had lain upon the soft furs which lined Meriem's nest he had suffered more acutely from fears for Meriem than from the pain of his own wounds. For her he must live. For her he must regain his strength that he might set out in search of her. What had the blacks done to her? Did she still live, or had they sacrificed her to their lust for torture and human flesh? Korak almost trembled with terror as the most hideous possibilities of the girl's fate suggested themselves to him out of his knowledge of the customs of Kovudoo's tribe.

The days dragged their weary lengths along, but at last he had sufficiently regained his strength to crawl from the

shelter and make his way unaided to the ground. Now he lived more upon raw meat, for which he was entirely dependent on Akut's skill and generosity. With the meat diet his strength returned more rapidly, and at last he felt that he was fit to undertake the journey to the village of the blacks.

CHAPTER 12

Two tall, bearded white men moved cautiously through the jungle from their camp beside a wide river. They were Carl Jenssen and Sven Malbihn, but little altered in appearance since the day, years before, that they and their safari had been so badly frightened by Korak and Akut as the former sought haven with them.

Every year had they come into the jungle to trade with the natives, or to rob them; to hunt and trap; or to guide other white men in the land they knew so well. Always since their experience with The Sheik had they operated at a safe distance from his territory.

Now they were closer to his village

than they had been for years, yet safe enough from discovery owing to the uninhabited nature of the intervening jungle and the fear and enmity of Kovudoo's people for The Sheik, who, in time past, had raided and all but exterminated the tribe.

This year they had come to trap live specimens for a European zoological garden, and today they were approaching a trap which they had set in the hope of capturing a specimen of the large baboons that frequented the neighborhood. As they approached the trap they became aware from the noises emanating from its vicinity that their efforts had been crowned with success. The barking and screaming of hundreds

of baboons could mean naught else than that one or more of their number had fallen a victim to the allurements of the bait.

The extreme caution of the two men was prompted by former experiences with the intelligent and doglike creatures with which they had to deal. More than one trapper has lost his life in battle with enraged baboons who will hesitate to attack nothing upon one occasion, while upon another a single gun shot will disperse hundreds of them.

Heretofore the Swedes had always watched near-by their trap, for as a rule only the stronger bulls are thus caught, since in their greediness they prevent the weaker from approaching the covered

bait, and when once within the ordinary rude trap woven on the spot of interlaced branches they are able, with the aid of their friends upon the outside, to demolish their prison and escape. But in this instance the trappers had utilized a special steel cage which could withstand all the strength and cunning of a baboon. It was only necessary, therefore, to drive away the herd which they knew were surrounding the prison and wait for their boys who were even now following them to the trap.

As they came within sight of the spot they found conditions precisely as they had expected. A large male was battering frantically against the steel wires of the cage that held him captive.

Upon the outside several hundred other baboons were tearing and tugging in his aid, and all were roaring and jabbering and barking at the top of their lungs.

But what neither the Swedes nor the baboons saw was the half- naked figure of a youth hidden in the foliage of a nearby tree. He had come upon the scene at almost the same instant as Jenssen and Malbihn, and was watching the activities of the baboons with every mark of interest.

Korak's relations with the baboons had never been over friendly. A species of armed toleration had marked their occasional meetings. The baboons and Akut had walked stiff legged and growling past one another, while Korak

had maintained a bared fang neutrality. So now he was not greatly disturbed by the predicament of their king. Curiosity prompted him to tarry a moment, and in that moment his quick eyes caught the unfamiliar coloration of the clothing of the two Swedes behind a bush not far from him. Now he was all alertness. Who were these interlopers? What was their business in the jungle of the Mangani? Korak slunk noiselessly around them to a point where he might get their scent as well as a better view of them, and scarce had he done so when he recognized them—they were the men who had fired upon him years before. His eyes blazed. He could feel the hairs upon his scalp stiffen at the roots. He

watched them with the intentness of a panther about to spring upon its prey.

He saw them rise and, shouting, attempt to frighten away the baboons as they approached the cage. Then one of them raised his rifle and fired into the midst of the surprised and angry herd. For an instant Korak thought that the baboons were about to charge, but two more shots from the rifles of the white men sent them scampering into the trees. Then the two Europeans advanced upon the cage. Korak thought that they were going to kill the king. He cared nothing for the king but he cared less for the two white men. The king had never attempted to kill him—the white men had. The king was a denizen of his own beloved jungle

—the white men were aliens. His loyalty therefore was to the baboon against the human. He could speak the language of the baboon—it was identical to that of the great apes. Across the clearing he saw the jabbering horde watching.

Raising his voice he shouted to them. The white men turned at the sound of this new factor behind them. They thought it was another baboon that had circled them; but though they searched the trees with their eyes they saw nothing of the now silent figure hidden by the foliage. Again Korak shouted.

"I am The Killer," he cried. "These men are my enemies and yours. I will help you free your king. Run out upon the strangers when you see me do so, and

together we will drive them away and free your king."

And from the baboons came a great chorus: "We will do what you say, Korak."

Dropping from his tree Korak ran toward the two Swedes, and at the same instant three hundred baboons followed his example. At sight of the strange apparition of the half-naked white warrior rushing upon them with uplifted spear Jenssen and Malbihn raised their rifles and fired at Korak; but in the excitement both missed and a moment later the baboons were upon them. Now their only hope of safety lay in escape, and dodging here and there, fighting off the great beasts that leaped upon their

backs, they ran into the jungle. Even then they would have died but for the coming of their men whom they met a couple of hundred yards from the cage.

Once the white men had turned in flight Korak gave them no further attention, turning instead to the imprisoned baboon. The fastenings of the door that had eluded the mental powers of the baboons, yielded their secret immediately to the human intelligence of The Killer, and a moment later the king baboon stepped forth to liberty. He wasted no breath in thanks to Korak, nor did the young man expect thanks. He knew that none of the baboons would ever forget his service, though as a matter of fact he did not care

if they did. What he had done had been prompted by a desire to be revenged upon the two white men. The baboons could never be of service to him. Now they were racing in the direction of the battle that was being waged between their fellows and the followers of the two Swedes, and as the din of battle subsided in the distance, Korak turned and resumed his journey toward the village of Kovudoo.

On the way he came upon a herd of elephants standing in an open forest glade. Here the trees were too far apart to permit Korak to travel through the branches—a trail he much preferred not only because of its freedom from dense underbrush and the wider field of vision

it gave him but from pride in his arboreal ability. It was exhilarating to swing from tree to tree; to test the prowess of his mighty muscles; to reap the pleasurable fruits of his hard won agility. Korak joyed in the thrills of the highflung upper terraces of the great forest, where, unhampered and unhindered, he might laugh down upon the great brutes who must keep forever to the darkness and the gloom of the musty soil.

But here, in this open glade where Tantor flapped his giant ears and swayed his huge bulk from side to side, the ape-man must pass along the surface of the ground—a pygmy amongst giants. A great bull raised his trunk to rattle a

low warning as he sensed the coming of an intruder. His weak eyes roved hither and thither but it was his keen scent and acute hearing which first located the ape- man. The herd moved restlessly, prepared for fight, for the old bull had caught the scent of man.

"Peace, Tantor," called The Killer. "It is I, Korak, Tarmangani."

The bull lowered his trunk and the herd resumed their interrupted meditations. Korak passed within a foot of the great bull. A sinuous trunk undulated toward him, touching his brown hide in a half caress. Korak slapped the great shoulder affectionately as he went by. For years he had been upon good terms with Tantor and his

people. Of all the jungle folk he loved best the mighty pachyderm—the most peaceful and at the same time the most terrible of them all. The gentle gazelle feared him not, yet Numa, lord of the jungle, gave him a wide berth. Among the younger bulls, the cows and the calves Korak wound his way. Now and then another trunk would run out to touch him, and once a playful calf grasped his legs and upset him.

The afternoon was almost spent when Korak arrived at the village of Kovudoo. There were many natives lolling in shady spots beside the conical huts or beneath the branches of the several trees which had been left standing within the enclosure. Warriors were in evidence

upon hand. It was not a good time for a lone enemy to prosecute a search through the village. Korak determined to await the coming of darkness. He was a match for many warriors; but he could not, unaided, overcome an entire tribe—not even for his beloved Meriem. While he waited among the branches and foliage of a near-by tree he searched the village constantly with his keen eyes, and twice he circled it, sniffing the vagrant breezes which puffed erratically from first one point of the compass and then another. Among the various stenches peculiar to a native village the ape-man's sensitive nostrils were finally rewarded by cognizance of the delicate aroma which marked the presence of her he sought.

Meriem was there—in one of those huts! But which one he could not know without closer investigation, and so he waited, with the dogged patience of a beast of prey, until night had fallen.

The camp fires of the blacks dotted the gloom with little points of light, casting their feeble rays in tiny circles of luminosity that brought into glistening relief the naked bodies of those who lay or squatted about them. It was then that Korak slid silently from the tree that had hidden him and dropped lightly to the ground within the enclosure.

Keeping well in the shadows of the huts he commenced a systematic search of the village—ears, eyes and nose constantly upon the alert for the first

intimation of the near presence of Meriem. His progress must of necessity be slow since not even the keen-eared curs of the savages must guess the presence of a stranger within the gates. How close he came to a detection on several occasions The Killer well knew from the restless whining of several of them.

It was not until he reached the back of a hut at the head of the wide village street that Korak caught again, plainly, the scent of Meriem. With nose close to the thatched wall Korak sniffed eagerly about the structure - tense and palpitant as a hunting hound. Toward the front and the door he made his way when once his nose had assured him that Meriem lay

within; but as he rounded the side and came within view of the entrance he saw a burly Negro armed with a long spear squatting at the portal of the girl's prison. The fellow's back was toward him, his figure outlined against the glow of cooking fires further down the street. He was alone. The nearest of his fellows were beside a fire sixty or seventy feet beyond. To enter the hut Korak must either silence the sentry or pass him unnoticed. The danger in the accomplishment of the former alternative lay in the practical certainty of alarming the warriors near by and bringing them and the balance of the village down upon him. To achieve the latter appeared practically impossible. To you or me it

would have been impossible; but Korak, The Killer, was not as you or I.

There was a good twelve inches of space between the broad back of the black and the frame of the doorway. Could Korak pass through behind the savage warrior without detection? The light that fell upon the glistening ebony of the sentry's black skin fell also upon the light brown of Korak's. Should one of the many further down the street chance to look long in this direction they must surely note the tall, light-colored, moving figure; but Korak depended upon their interest in their own gossip to hold their attention fast where it already lay, and upon the firelight near them to prevent them seeing too plainly at a

distance into the darkness at the village end where his work lay.

Flattened against the side of the hut, yet not arousing a single warning rustle from its dried thatching, The Killer came closer and closer to the watcher. Now he was at his shoulder. Now he had wormed his sinuous way behind him. He could feel the heat of the naked body against his knees. He could hear the man breathe. He marveled that the dull-witted creature had not long since been alarmed; but the fellow sat there as ignorant of the presence of another as though that other had not existed.

Korak moved scarcely more than an inch at a time, then he would stand motionless for a moment. Thus was he

worming his way behind the guard when the latter straightened up, opened his cavernous mouth in a wide yawn, and stretched his arms above his head. Korak stood rigid as stone. Another step and he would be within the hut. The black lowered his arms and relaxed. Behind him was the frame work of the doorway. Often before had it supported his sleepy head, and now he leaned back to enjoy the forbidden pleasure of a cat nap.

But instead of the door frame his head and shoulders came in contact with the warm flesh of a pair of living legs. The exclamation of surprise that almost burst from his lips was throttled in his throat by steel-thewed fingers that closed about

his windpipe with the suddenness of thought. The black struggled to arise—to turn upon the creature that had seized him—to wriggle from its hold; but all to no purpose. As he had been held in a mighty vise of iron he could not move. He could not scream. Those awful fingers at his throat but closed more and more tightly. His eyes bulged from their sockets. His face turned an ashy blue. Presently he relaxed once more—this time in the final dissolution from which there is no quickening. Korak propped the dead body against the door frame. There it sat, lifelike in the gloom. Then the ape-man turned and glided into the Stygian darkness of the hut's interior.

"Meriem!" he whispered.

"Korak! My Korak!" came an answering cry, subdued by fear of alarming her captors, and half stifled by a sob of joyful welcome.

The youth knelt and cut the bonds that held the girl's wrists and ankles. A moment later he had lifted her to her feet, and grasping her by the hand led her towards the entrance. Outside the grim sentinel of death kept his grisly vigil. Sniffing at his dead feet whined a mangy native cur. At sight of the two emerging from the hut the beast gave an ugly snarl and an instant later as it caught the scent of the strange white man it raised a series of excited yelps. Instantly the warriors at the near-by fire were attracted. They turned their heads in the

direction of the commotion. It was impossible that they should fail to see the white skins of the fugitives.

Korak slunk quickly into the shadows at the hut's side, drawing Meriem with him; but he was too late. The blacks had seen enough to arouse their suspicions and a dozen of them were now running to investigate. The yapping cur was still at Korak's heels leading the searchers unerringly in pursuit. The youth struck viciously at the brute with his long spear; but, long accustomed to dodging blows, the wily creature made a most uncertain target.

Other blacks had been alarmed by the running and shouting of their companions and now the entire population of the

village was swarming up the street to assist in the search. Their first discovery was the dead body of the sentry, and a moment later one of the bravest of them had entered the hut and discovered the absence of the prisoner. These startling announcements filled the blacks with a combination of terror and rage; but, seeing no foe in evidence they were enabled to permit their rage to get the better of their terror, and so the leaders, pushed on by those behind them, ran rapidly around the hut in the direction of the yapping of the mangy cur. Here they found a single white warrior making away with their captive, and recognizing him as the author of numerous raids and indignities and believing that they had

him cornered and at a disadvantage, they charged savagely upon him.

Korak, seeing that they were discovered, lifted Meriem to his shoulders and ran for the tree which would give them egress from the village. He was handicapped in his flight by the weight of the girl whose legs would but scarce bear her weight, to say nothing of maintaining her in rapid flight, for the tightly drawn bonds that had been about her ankles for so long had stopped circulation and partially paralyzed her extremities.

Had this not been the case the escape of the two would have been a feat of little moment, since Meriem was scarcely a whit less agile than Korak,

and fully as much at home in the trees as he. But with the girl on his shoulder Korak could not both run and fight to advantage, and the result was that before he had covered half the distance to the tree a score of native curs attracted by the yelping of their mate and the yells and shouts of their masters had closed in upon the fleeing white man, snapping at his legs and at last succeeding in tripping him. As he went down the hyena-like brutes were upon him, and as he struggled to his feet the blacks closed in.

A couple of them seized the clawing, biting Meriem, and subdued her —a blow upon the head was sufficient. For the ape-man they found more drastic

measures would be necessary.

Weighted down as he was by dogs and warriors he still managed to struggle to his feet. To right and left he swung crushing blows to the faces of his human antagonists—to the dogs he paid not the slightest attention other than to seize the more persistent and wring their necks with a single quick movement of the wrist.

A knob stick aimed at him by an ebon Hercules he caught and wrested from his antagonist, and then the blacks experienced to the full the possibilities for punishment that lay within those smooth flowing muscles beneath the velvet brown skin of the strange, white giant. He rushed among them with all the

force and ferocity of a bull elephant gone mad. Hither and thither he charged striking down the few who had the temerity to stand against him, and it was evident that unless a chance spear thrust brought him down he would rout the entire village and regain his prize. But old Kovudoo was not to be so easily robbed of the ransom which the girl represented, and seeing that their attack which had up to now resulted in a series of individual combats with the white warrior, he called his tribesmen off, and forming them in a compact body about the girl and the two who watched over her bid them do nothing more than repel the assaults of the ape-man.

Again and again Korak rushed against

this human barricade bristling with spear points. Again and again he was repulsed, often with severe wounds to caution him to greater wariness. From head to foot he was red with his own blood, and at last, weakening from the loss of it, he came to the bitter realization that alone he could do no more to succor his Meriem.

Presently an idea flashed through his brain. He called aloud to the girl. She had regained consciousness now and replied.

"Korak goes," he shouted; "but he will return and take you from the Gomangani. Good-bye, my Meriem. Korak will come for you again."

"Good-bye!" cried the girl. "Meriem

will look for you until you come."

Like a flash, and before they could know his intention or prevent him, Korak wheeled, raced across the village and with a single leap disappeared into the foliage of the great tree that was his highroad to the village of Kovudoo. A shower of spears followed him, but their only harvest was a taunting laugh flung back from out the darkness of the jungle.

CHAPTER 13

Meriem, again bound and under heavy guard in Kovudoo's own hut, saw the night pass and the new day come without bringing the momentarily looked for return of Korak. She had no doubt but that he would come back and less still that he would easily free her from her captivity. To her Korak was little short of omnipotent. He embodied for her all that was finest and strongest and best in her savage world. She gloried in his prowess and worshipped him for the tender thoughtfulness that always had marked his treatment of her. No other within the ken of her memory had ever accorded her the love and gentleness that was his daily offering to her. Most of the

gentler attributes of his early childhood had long since been forgotten in the fierce battle for existence which the customs of the mysterious jungle had forced upon him. He was more often savage and bloodthirsty than tender and kindly. His other friends of the wild looked for no gentle tokens of his affection. That he would hunt with them and fight for them was sufficient. If he growled and showed his fighting fangs when they trespassed upon his inalienable rights to the fruits of his kills they felt no anger toward him—only greater respect for the efficient and the fit—for him who could not only kill but protect the flesh of his kill.

But toward Meriem he always had

shown more of his human side. He killed primarily for her. It was to the feet of Meriem that he brought the fruits of his labors. It was for Meriem more than for himself that he squatted beside his flesh and growled ominously at whosoever dared sniff too closely to it. When he was cold in the dark days of rain, or thirsty in a prolonged drought, his discomfort engendered first of all thoughts of Meriem's welfare— after she had been made warm, after her thirst had been slaked, then he turned to the affair of ministering to his own wants.

The softest skins fell gracefully from the graceful shoulders of his Meriem. The sweetest-scented grasses lined her bower where other soft, furry pelts made

hers the downiest couch in all the jungle.

What wonder then that Meriem loved her Korak? But she loved him as a little sister might love a big brother who was very good to her. As yet she knew naught of the love of a maid for a man.

So now as she lay waiting for him she dreamed of him and of all that he meant to her. She compared him with The Sheik, her father, and at thought of the stern, grizzled, old Arab she shuddered. Even the savage blacks had been less harsh to her than he. Not understanding their tongue she could not guess what purpose they had in keeping her a prisoner. She knew that man ate man, and she had expected to be eaten; but she had been with them for some time now

and no harm had befallen her. She did not know that a runner had been dispatched to the distant village of The Sheik to barter with him for a ransom. She did not know, nor did Kovudoo, that the runner had never reached his destination—that he had fallen in with the safari of Jenssen and Malbihn and with the talkativeness of a native to other natives had unfolded his whole mission to the black servants of the two Swedes. These had not been long in retailing the matter to their masters, and the result was that when the runner left their camp to continue his journey he had scarce passed from sight before there came the report of a rifle and he rolled lifeless into the underbrush with a bullet in his

back.

A few moments later Malbihn strolled back into the encampment, where he went to some pains to let it be known that he had had a shot at a fine buck and missed. The Swedes knew that their men hated them, and that an overt act against Kovudoo would quickly be carried to the chief at the first opportunity. Nor were they sufficiently strong in either guns or loyal followers to risk antagonizing the wily old chief.

Following this episode came the encounter with the baboons and the strange, white savage who had allied himself with the beasts against the humans. Only by dint of masterful maneuvering and the expenditure of

much power had the Swedes been able to repulse the infuriated apes, and even for hours afterward their camp was constantly besieged by hundreds of snarling, screaming devils.

The Swedes, rifles in hand, repelled numerous savage charges which lacked only efficient leadership to have rendered them as effective in results as they were terrifying in appearance. Time and time again the two men thought they saw the smooth-skinned body of the wild ape-man moving among the baboons in the forest, and the belief that he might head a charge upon them proved most disquieting. They would have given much for a clean shot at him, for to him they attributed the loss of their specimen

and the ugly attitude of the baboons toward them.

"The fellow must be the same we fired on several years ago," said Malbihn. "That time he was accompanied by a gorilla. Did you get a good look at him, Carl?"

"Yes," replied Jenssen. "He was not five paces from me when I fired at him. He appears to be an intelligent looking European—and not much more than a lad. There is nothing of the imbecile or degenerate in his features or expression, as is usually true in similar cases, where some lunatic escapes into the woods and by living in filth and nakedness wins the title of wild man among the peasants of the neighborhood. No, this fellow is of

different stuff—and so infinitely more to be feared. As much as I should like a shot at him I hope he stays away. Should he ever deliberately lead a charge against us I wouldn't give much for our chances if we happened to fail to bag him at the first rush."

But the white giant did not appear again to lead the baboons against them, and finally the angry brutes themselves wandered off into the jungle leaving the frightened safari in peace.

The next day the Swedes set out for Kovudoo's village bent on securing possession of the person of the white girl whom Kovudoo's runner had told them lay captive in the chief's village. How they were to accomplish their end

they did not know. Force was out of the question, though they would not have hesitated to use it had they possessed it. In former years they had marched rough shod over enormous areas, taking toll by brute force even when kindliness or diplomacy would have accomplished more; but now they were in bad straits—so bad that they had shown their true colors scarce twice in a year and then only when they came upon an isolated village, weak in numbers and poor in courage.

Kovudoo was not as these, and though his village was in a way remote from the more populous district to the north his power was such that he maintained an acknowledged suzerainty over the thin

thread of villages which connected him with the savage lords to the north. To have antagonized him would have spelled ruin for the Swedes. It would have meant that they might never reach civilization by the northern route. To the west, the village of The Sheik lay directly in their path, barring them effectually. To the east the trail was unknown to them, and to the south there was no trail. So the two Swedes approached the village of Kovudoo with friendly words upon their tongues and deep craft in their hearts.

Their plans were well made. There was no mention of the white prisoner - they chose to pretend that they were not aware that Kovudoo had a white

prisoner. They exchanged gifts with the old chief, haggling with his plenipotentiaries over the value of what they were to receive for what they gave, as is customary and proper when one has no ulterior motives. Unwarranted generosity would have aroused suspicion.

During the palaver which followed they retailed the gossip of the villages through which they had passed, receiving in exchange such news as Kovudoo possessed. The palaver was long and tiresome, as these native ceremonies always are to Europeans. Kovudoo made no mention of his prisoner and from his generous offers of guides and presents seemed anxious to

assure himself of the speedy departure of his guests. It was Malbihn who, quite casually, near the close of their talk, mentioned the fact that The Sheik was dead. Kovudoo evinced interest and surprise.

"You did not know it?" asked Malbihn. "That is strange. It was during the last moon. He fell from his horse when the beast stepped in a hole. The horse fell upon him. When his men came up The Sheik was quite dead."

Kovudoo scratched his head. He was much disappointed. No Sheik meant no ransom for the white girl. Now she was worthless, unless he utilized her for a feast or—a mate. The latter thought aroused him. He spat at a small beetle

crawling through the dust before him. He eyed Malbihn appraisingly. These white men were peculiar. They traveled far from their own villages without women. Yet he knew they cared for women. But how much did they care for them?—that was the question that disturbed Kovudoo.

"I know where there is a white girl," he said, unexpectedly. "If you wish to buy her she may be had cheap."

Malbihn shrugged. "We have troubles enough, Kovudoo," he said, "without burdening ourselves with an old she-hyena, and as for paying for one—" Malbihn snapped his fingers in derision.

"She is young," said Kovudoo, "and good looking."

The Swedes laughed. "There are no good looking white women in the jungle, Kovudoo," said Jenssen. "You should be ashamed to try to make fun of old friends."

Kovudoo sprang to his feet. "Come," he said, "I will show you that she is all I say."

Malbihn and Jenssen rose to follow him and as they did so their eyes met, and Malbihn slowly drooped one of his lids in a sly wink. Together they followed Kovudoo toward his hut. In the dim interior they discerned the figure of a woman lying bound upon a sleeping mat.

Malbihn took a single glance and turned away. "She must be a thousand

years old, Kovudoo," he said, as he left the hut.

"She is young," cried the savage. "It is dark in here. You cannot see. Wait, I will have her brought out into the sunlight," and he commanded the two warriors who watched the girl to cut the bonds from her ankles and lead her forth for inspection.

Malbihn and Jenssen evinced no eagerness, though both were fairly bursting with it—not to see the girl but to obtain possession of her. They cared not if she had the face of a marmoset, or the figure of pot-bellied Kovudoo himself. All that they wished to know was that she was the girl who had been stolen from The Sheik several years

before. They thought that they would recognize her for such if she was indeed the same, but even so the testimony of the runner Kovudoo had sent to The Sheik was such as to assure them that the girl was the one they had once before attempted to abduct.

As Meriem was brought forth from the darkness of the hut's interior the two men turned with every appearance of disinterestedness to glance at her. It was with difficulty that Malbihn suppressed an ejaculation of astonishment. The girl's beauty fairly took his breath from him; but instantly he recovered his poise and turned to Kovudoo.

"Well?" he said to the old chief.

"Is she not both young and good

looking?" asked Kovudoo.

"She is not old," replied Malbihn; "but even so she will be a burden. We did not come from the north after wives—there are more than enough there for us."

Meriem stood looking straight at the white men. She expected nothing from them—they were to her as much enemies as the black men. She hated and feared them all. Malbihn spoke to her in Arabic.

"We are friends," he said. "Would you like to have us take you away from here?"

Slowly and dimly as though from a great distance recollection of the once familiar tongue returned to her.

"I should like to go free," she said, "and go back to Korak."

"You would like to go with us?" persisted Malbihn.

"No," said Meriem.

Malbihn turned to Kovudoo. "She does not wish to go with us," he said.

"You are men," returned the black. "Can you not take her by force?"

"It would only add to our troubles," replied the Swede. "No, Kovudoo, we do not wish her; though, if you wish to be rid of her, we will take her away because of our friendship for you."

Now Kovudoo knew that he had made a sale. They wanted her. So he commenced to bargain, and in the end

the person of Meriem passed from the possession of the black chieftain into that of the two Swedes in consideration of six yards of Amerikan, three empty brass cartridge shells and a shiny, new jack knife from New Jersey. And all but Meriem were more than pleased with the bargain.

Kovudoo stipulated but a single condition and that was that the Europeans were to leave his village and take the girl with them as early the next morning as they could get started. After the sale was consummated he did not hesitate to explain his reasons for this demand. He told them of the strenuous attempt of the girl's savage mate to rescue her, and suggested that the sooner

they got her out of the country the more likely they were to retain possession of her.

Meriem was again bound and placed under guard, but this time in the tent of the Swedes. Malbihn talked to her, trying to persuade her to accompany them willingly. He told her that they would return her to her own village; but when he discovered that she would rather die than go back to the old sheik, he assured her that they would not take her there, nor, as a matter of fact, had they had an intention of so doing. As he talked with the girl the Swede feasted his eyes upon the beautiful lines of her face and figure. She had grown tall and straight and slender toward maturity

since he had seen her in The Sheik's village on that long gone day. For years she had represented to him a certain fabulous reward. In his thoughts she had been but the personification of the pleasures and luxuries that many francs would purchase. Now as she stood before him pulsing with life and loveliness she suggested other seductive and alluring possibilities. He came closer to her and laid his hand upon her. The girl shrank from him. He seized her and she struck him heavily in the mouth as he sought to kiss her. Then Jenssen entered the tent.

"Malbihn!" he almost shouted. "You fool!"

Sven Malbihn released his hold upon

the girl and turned toward his companion. His face was red with mortification.

"What the devil are you trying to do?" growled Jenssen. "Would you throw away every chance for the reward? If we maltreat her we not only couldn't collect a sou, but they'd send us to prison for our pains. I thought you had more sense, Malbihn."

"I'm not a wooden man," growled Malbihn.

"You'd better be," rejoined Jenssen, "at least until we have delivered her over in safety and collected what will be coming to us."

"Oh, hell," cried Malbihn. "What's the use? They'll be glad enough to have her

back, and by the time we get there with her she'll be only too glad to keep her mouth shut. Why not?"

"Because I say not," growled Jenssen. "I've always let you boss things, Sven; but here's a case where what I say has got to go—because I'm right and you're wrong, and we both know it."

"You're getting damned virtuous all of a sudden," growled Malbihn. "Perhaps you think I have forgotten about the inn keeper's daughter, and little Celella, and that nigger at—"

"Shut up!" snapped Jenssen. "It's not a matter of virtue and you are as well aware of that as I. I don't want to quarrel with you, but so help me God, Sven, you're not going to harm this girl if I

have to kill you to prevent it. I've suffered and slaved and been nearly killed forty times in the last nine or ten years trying to accomplish what luck has thrown at our feet at last, and now I'm not going to be robbed of the fruits of success because you happen to be more of a beast than a man. Again I warn you, Sven —" and he tapped the revolver that swung in its holster at his hip.

Malbihn gave his friend an ugly look, shrugged his shoulders, and left the tent. Jenssen turned to Meriem.

"If he bothers you again, call me," he said. "I shall always be near."

The girl had not understood the conversation that had been carried on by her two owners, for it had been in

Swedish; but what Jenssen had just said to her in Arabic she understood and from it grasped an excellent idea of what had passed between the two. The expressions upon their faces, their gestures, and Jenssen's final tapping of his revolver before Malbihn had left the tent had all been eloquent of the seriousness of their altercation. Now, toward Jenssen she looked for friendship, and with the innocence of youth she threw herself upon his mercy, begging him to set her free, that she might return to Korak and her jungle life; but she was doomed to another disappointment, for the man only laughed at her roughly and told her that if she tried to escape she would be punished

by the very thing that he had just saved her from.

All that night she lay listening for a signal from Korak. All about the jungle life moved through the darkness. To her sensitive ears came sounds that the others in the camp could not hear—sounds that she interpreted as we might interpret the speech of a friend, but not once came a single note that reflected the presence of Korak. But she knew that he would come. Nothing short of death itself could prevent her Korak from returning for her. What delayed him though?

When morning came again and the night had brought no succoring Korak, Meriem's faith and loyalty were still

unshaken though misgivings began to assail her as to the safety of her friend. It seemed unbelievable that serious mishap could have overtaken her wonderful Korak who daily passed unscathed through all the terrors of the jungle. Yet morning came, the morning meal was eaten, the camp broken and the disreputable safari of the Swedes was on the move northward with still no sign of the rescue the girl momentarily expected.

All that day they marched, and the next and the next, nor did Korak even so much as show himself to the patient little waiter moving, silently and stately, beside her hard captors.

Malbihn remained scowling and

angry. He replied to Jenssen's friendly advances in curt monosyllables. To Meriem he did not speak, but on several occasions she discovered him glaring at her from beneath half closed lids - greedily. The look sent a shudder through her. She hugged Geeka closer to her breast and doubly regretted the knife that they had taken from her when she was captured by Kovudoo.

It was on the fourth day that Meriem began definitely to give up hope. Something had happened to Korak. She knew it. He would never come now, and these men would take her far away. Presently they would kill her. She would never see her Korak again.

On this day the Swedes rested, for

they had marched rapidly and their men were tired. Malbihn and Jenssen had gone from camp to hunt, taking different directions. They had been gone about an hour when the door of Meriem's tent was lifted and Malbihn entered. The look of a beast was on his face.

CHAPTER 14

With wide eyes fixed upon him, like a trapped creature horrified beneath the mesmeric gaze of a great serpent, the girl watched the approach of the man. Her hands were free, the Swedes having secured her with a length of ancient slave chain fastened at one end to an iron collar padlocked about her neck and at the other to a long stake driven deep into the ground.

Slowly Meriem shrank inch by inch toward the opposite end of the tent. Malbihn followed her. His hands were extended and his fingers half-opened - claw-like—to seize her. His lips were parted, and his breath came quickly, pantingly.

The girl recalled Jenssen's instructions to call him should Malbihn molest her; but Jenssen had gone into the jungle to hunt. Malbihn had chosen his time well. Yet she screamed, loud and shrill, once, twice, a third time, before Malbihn could leap across the tent and throttle her alarming cries with his brute fingers. Then she fought him, as any jungle she might fight, with tooth and nail. The man found her no easy prey. In that slender, young body, beneath the rounded curves and the fine, soft skin, lay the muscles of a young lioness. But Malbihn was no weakling. His character and appearance were brutal, nor did they belie his brawn. He was of giant stature and of giant strength. Slowly he forced

the girl back upon the ground, striking her in the face when she hurt him badly either with teeth or nails. Meriem struck back, but she was growing weaker from the choking fingers at her throat.

Out in the jungle Jenssen had brought down two bucks. His hunting had not carried him far afield, nor was he prone to permit it to do so. He was suspicious of Malbihn. The very fact that his companion had refused to accompany him and elected instead to hunt alone in another direction would not, under ordinary circumstances, have seemed fraught with sinister suggestion; but Jenssen knew Malbihn well, and so, having secured meat, he turned immediately back toward camp, while

his boys brought in his kill.

He had covered about half the return journey when a scream came faintly to his ears from the direction of camp. He halted to listen. It was repeated twice. Then silence. With a muttered curse Jenssen broke into a rapid run. He wondered if he would be too late. What a fool Malbihn was indeed to thus chance jeopardizing a fortune!

Further away from camp than Jenssen and upon the opposite side another heard Meriem's screams—a stranger who was not even aware of the proximity of white men other than himself—a hunter with a handful of sleek, black warriors. He, too, listened intently for a moment. That the voice was that of a woman in

distress he could not doubt, and so he also hastened at a run in the direction of the affrighted voice; but he was much further away than Jenssen so that the latter reached the tent first. What the Swede found there roused no pity within his calloused heart, only anger against his fellow scoundrel. Meriem was still fighting off her attacker. Malbihn still was showering blows upon her. Jenssen, streaming foul curses upon his erstwhile friend, burst into the tent. Malbihn, interrupted, dropped his victim and turned to meet Jenssen's infuriated charge. He whipped a revolver from his hip. Jenssen, anticipating the lightning move of the other's hand, drew almost simultaneously, and both men fired at

once. Jenssen was still moving toward Malbihn at the time, but at the flash of the explosion he stopped. His revolver dropped from nerveless fingers. For a moment he staggered drunkenly. Deliberately Malbihn put two more bullets into his friend's body at close range. Even in the midst of the excitement and her terror Meriem found herself wondering at the tenacity of life which the hit man displayed. His eyes were closed, his head dropped forward upon his breast, his hands hung limply before him. Yet still he stood there upon his feet, though he reeled horribly. It was not until the third bullet had found its mark within his body that he lunged forward upon his face. Then Malbihn

approached him, and with an oath kicked him viciously. Then he returned once more to Meriem. Again he seized her, and at the same instant the flaps of the tent opened silently and a tall white man stood in the aperture. Neither Meriem or Malbihn saw the newcomer. The latter's back was toward him while his body hid the stranger from Meriem's eyes.

He crossed the tent quickly, stepping over Jenssen's body. The first intimation Malbihn had that he was not to carry out his design without further interruption was a heavy hand upon his shoulder. He wheeled to face an utter stranger—a tall, black-haired, gray- eyed stranger clad in khaki and pith helmet. Malbihn reached for his gun again, but another hand had

been quicker than his and he saw the weapon tossed to the ground at the side of the tent—out of reach.

"What is the meaning of this?" the stranger addressed his question to Meriem in a tongue she did not understand. She shook her head and spoke in Arabic. Instantly the man changed his question to that language.

"These men are taking me away from Korak," explained the girl. "This one would have harmed me. The other, whom he had just killed, tried to stop him. They were both very bad men; but this one is the worse. If my Korak were here he would kill him. I suppose you are like them, so you will not kill him."

The stranger smiled. "He deserves

killing?" he said. "There is no doubt of that. Once I should have killed him; but not now. I will see, though, that he does not bother you any more."

He was holding Malbihn in a grasp the giant Swede could not break, though he struggled to do so, and he was holding him as easily as Malbihn might have held a little child, yet Malbihn was a huge man, mightily thewed. The Swede began to rage and curse. He struck at his captor, only to be twisted about and held at arm's length. Then he shouted to his boys to come and kill the stranger. In response a dozen strange blacks entered the tent. They, too, were powerful, clean-limbed men, not at all like the mangy crew that followed the Swedes.

"We have had enough foolishness," said the stranger to Malbihn. "You deserve death, but I am not the law. I know now who you are. I have heard of you before. You and your friend here bear a most unsavory reputation. We do not want you in our country. I shall let you go this time; but should you ever return I shall take the law into my own hands. You understand?"

Malbihn blustered and threatened, finishing by applying a most uncomplimentary name to his captor. For this he received a shaking that rattled his teeth. Those who know say that the most painful punishment that can be inflicted upon an adult male, short of injuring him, is a good, old fashioned shaking.

Malbihn received such a shaking.

"Now get out," said the stranger, "and next time you see me remember who I am," and he spoke a name in the Swede's ear—a name that more effectually subdued the scoundrel than many beatings—then he gave him a push that carried him bodily through the tent doorway to sprawl upon the turf beyond.

"Now," he said, turning toward Meriem, "who has the key to this thing about your neck?"

The girl pointed to Jenssen's body. "He carried it always," she said.

The stranger searched the clothing on the corpse until he came upon the key. A moment more Meriem was free.

"Will you let me go back to my

Korak?" she asked.

"I will see that you are returned to your people," he replied. "Who are they and where is their village?"

He had been eyeing her strange, barbaric garmenture wonderingly. From her speech she was evidently an Arab girl; but he had never before seen one thus clothed.

"Who are your people? Who is Korak?" he asked again.

"Korak! Why Korak is an ape. I have no other people. Korak and I live in the jungle alone since A'ht went to be king of the apes." She had always thus pronounced Akut's name, for so it had sounded to her when first she came with Korak and the ape. "Korak could have

been kind, but he would not."

A questioning expression entered the stranger's eyes. He looked at the girl closely.

"So Korak is an ape?" he said. "And what, pray, are you?"

"I am Meriem. I, also, am an ape."

"M-m," was the stranger's only oral comment upon this startling announcement; but what he thought might have been partially interpreted through the pitying light that entered his eyes. He approached the girl and started to lay his hand upon her forehead. She drew back with a savage little growl. A smile touched his lips.

"You need not fear me," he said. "I shall not harm you. I only wish to

discover if you have fever—if you are entirely well. If you are we will set forth in search of Korak."

Meriem looked straight into the keen gray eyes. She must have found there an unquestionable assurance of the honorableness of their owner, for she permitted him to lay his palm upon her forehead and feel her pulse. Apparently she had no fever.

"How long have you been an ape?" asked the man.

"Since I was a little girl, many, many years ago, and Korak came and took me from my father who was beating me. Since then I have lived in the trees with Korak and A'ht."

"Where in the jungle lives Korak?"

asked the stranger.

Meriem pointed with a sweep of her hand that took in, generously, half the continent of Africa.

"Could you find your way back to him?"

"I do not know," she replied; "but he will find his way to me."

"Then I have a plan," said the stranger. "I live but a few marches from here. I shall take you home where my wife will look after you and care for you until we can find Korak or Korak finds us. If he could find you here he can find you at my village. Is it not so?"

Meriem thought that it was so; but she did not like the idea of not starting immediately back to meet Korak. On the

other hand the man had no intention of permitting this poor, insane child to wander further amidst the dangers of the jungle. From whence she had come, or what she had undergone he could not guess, but that her Korak and their life among the apes was but a figment of a disordered mind he could not doubt. He knew the jungle well, and he knew that men have lived alone and naked among the savage beasts for years; but a frail and slender girl! No, it was not possible.

Together they went outside. Malbihn's boys were striking camp in preparation for a hasty departure. The stranger's blacks were conversing with them. Malbihn stood at a distance, angry and glowering. The stranger approached one

of his own men.

"Find out where they got this girl," he commanded.

The Negro thus addressed questioned one of Malbihn's followers. Presently he returned to his master.

"They bought her from old Kovudoo," he said. "That is all that this fellow will tell me. He pretends that he knows nothing more, and I guess that he does not. These two white men were very bad men. They did many things that their boys knew not the meanings of. It would be well, Bwana, to kill the other."

"I wish that I might; but a new law is come into this part of the jungle. It is not as it was in the old days, Muviri," replied the master.

The stranger remained until Malbihn and his safari had disappeared into the jungle toward the north. Meriem, trustful now, stood at his side, Geeka clutched in one slim, brown hand. They talked together, the man wondering at the faltering Arabic of the girl, but attributing it finally to her defective mentality. Could he have known that years had elapsed since she had used it until she was taken by the Swedes he would not have wondered that she had half forgotten it. There was yet another reason why the language of The Sheik had thus readily eluded her; but of that reason she herself could not have guessed the truth any better than could the man.

He tried to persuade her to return with him to his "village" as he called it, or douar, in Arabic; but she was insistent upon searching immediately for Korak. As a last resort he determined to take her with him by force rather than sacrifice her life to the insane hallucination which haunted her; but, being a wise man, he determined to humor her first and then attempt to lead her as he would have her go. So when they took up their march it was in the direction of the south, though his own ranch lay almost due east.

By degrees he turned the direction of their way more and more eastward, and greatly was he pleased to note that the girl failed to discover that any change

was being made. Little by little she became more trusting. At first she had had but her intuition to guide her belief that this big Tarmangani meant her no harm, but as the days passed and she saw that his kindness and consideration never faltered she came to compare him with Korak, and to be very fond of him; but never did her loyalty to her apeman flag.

On the fifth day they came suddenly upon a great plain and from the edge of the forest the girl saw in the distance fenced fields and many buildings. At the sight she drew back in astonishment.

"Where are we?" she asked, pointing.

"We could not find Korak," replied the man, "and as our way led near my

douar I have brought you here to wait and rest with my wife until my men can find your ape, or he finds you. It is better thus, little one. You will be safer with us, and you will be happier."

"I am afraid, Bwana," said the girl. "In thy douar they will beat me as did The Sheik, my father. Let me go back into the jungle. There Korak will find me. He would not think to look for me in the douar of a white man."

"No one will beat you, child," replied the man. "I have not done so, have I? Well, here all belong to me. They will treat you well. Here no one is beaten. My wife will be very good to you, and at last Korak will come, for I shall send men to search for him."

The girl shook her head. "They could not bring him, for he would kill them, as all men have tried to kill him. I am afraid. Let me go, Bwana."

"You do not know the way to your own country. You would be lost. The leopards or the lions would get you the first night, and after all you would not find your Korak. It is better that you stay with us. Did I not save you from the bad man? Do you not owe me something for that? Well, then remain with us for a few weeks at least until we can determine what is best for you. You are only a little girl—it would be wicked to permit you to go alone into the jungle."

Meriem laughed. "The jungle," she said, "is my father and my mother. It has

been kinder to me than have men. I am not afraid of the jungle. Nor am I afraid of the leopard or the lion. When my time comes I shall die. It may be that a leopard or a lion shall kill me, or it may be a tiny bug no bigger than the end of my littlest finger. When the lion leaps upon me, or the little bug stings me I shall be afraid—oh, then I shall be terribly afraid, I know; but life would be very miserable indeed were I to spend it in terror of the thing that has not yet happened. If it be the lion my terror shall be short of life; but if it be the little bug I may suffer for days before I die. And so I fear the lion least of all. He is great and noisy. I can hear him, or see him, or smell him in time to escape; but any

moment I may place a hand or foot on the little bug, and never know that he is there until I feel his deadly sting. No, I do not fear the jungle. I love it. I should rather die than leave it forever; but your douar is close beside the jungle. You have been good to me. I will do as you wish, and remain here for a while to wait the coming of my Korak."

"Good!" said the man, and he led the way down toward the flower- covered bungalow behind which lay the barns and out-houses of a well- ordered African farm.

As they came nearer a dozen dogs ran barking toward them—gaunt wolf hounds, a huge great Dane, a nimble-footed collie and a number of yapping,

quarrelsome fox terriers. At first their appearance was savage and unfriendly in the extreme; but once they recognized the foremost black warriors, and the white man behind them their attitude underwent a remarkable change. The collie and the fox terriers became frantic with delirious joy, and while the wolf hounds and the great Dane were not a whit less delighted at the return of their master their greetings were of a more dignified nature. Each in turn sniffed at Meriem who displayed not the slightest fear of any of them.

The wolf hounds bristled and growled at the scent of wild beasts that clung to her garment; but when she laid her hand upon their heads and her soft

voice murmured caressingly they half-closed their eyes, lifting their upper lips in contented canine smiles. The man was watching them and he too smiled, for it was seldom that these savage brutes took thus kindly to strangers. It was as though in some subtle way the girl had breathed a message of kindred savagery to their savage hearts.

With her slim fingers grasping the collar of a wolf hound upon either side of her Meriem walked on toward the bungalow upon the porch of which a woman dressed in white waved a welcome to her returning lord. There was more fear in the girl's eyes now than there had been in the presence of strange men or savage beasts. She hesitated,

turning an appealing glance toward the man.

"This is my wife," he said. "She will be glad to welcome you."

The woman came down the path to meet them. The man kissed her, and turning toward Meriem introduced them, speaking in the Arab tongue the girl understood.

"This is Meriem, my dear," he said, and he told the story of the jungle waif in so far as he knew it.

Meriem saw that the woman was beautiful. She saw that sweetness and goodness were stamped indelibly upon her countenance. She no longer feared her, and when her brief story had been narrated and the woman came and put

her arms about her and kissed her and called her "poor little darling" something snapped in Meriem's little heart. She buried her face on the bosom of this new friend in whose voice was the mother tone that Meriem had not heard for so many years that she had forgotten its very existence. She buried her face on the kindly bosom and wept as she had not wept before in all her life —tears of relief and joy that she could not fathom.

And so came Meriem, the savage little Mangani, out of her beloved jungle into the midst of a home of culture and refinement. Already "Bwana" and "My Dear," as she first heard them called and continued to call them, were as father

and mother to her. Once her savage fears allayed, she went to the opposite extreme of trustfulness and love. Now she was willing to wait here until they found Korak, or Korak found her. She did not give up that thought —Korak, her Korak always was first.

CHAPTER 15

And out in the jungle, far away, Korak, covered with wounds, stiff with clotted blood, burning with rage and sorrow, swung back upon the trail of the great baboons. He had not found them where he had last seen them, nor in any of their usual haunts; but he sought them along the well-marked spoor they had left behind them, and at last he overtook them. When first he came upon them they were moving slowly but steadily southward in one of those periodic migrations the reasons for which the baboon himself is best able to explain. At sight of the white warrior who came upon them from down wind the herd halted in response to the warning cry of

the sentinel that had discovered him. There was much growling and muttering; much stiff- legged circling on the part of the bulls. The mothers, in nervous, high pitched tones, called their young to their sides, and with them moved to safety behind their lords and masters.

Korak called aloud to the king, who, at the familiar voice, advanced slowly, warily, and still stiff-legged. He must have the confirmatory evidence of his nose before venturing to rely too implicitly upon the testimony of his ears and eyes. Korak stood perfectly still. To have advanced then might have precipitated an immediate attack, or, as easily, a panic of flight. Wild beasts are creatures of nerves. It is a relatively

simple thing to throw them into a species of hysteria which may induce either a mania for murder, or symptoms of apparent abject cowardice—it is a question, however, if a wild animal ever is actually a coward.

The king baboon approached Korak. He walked around him in an ever decreasing circle—growling, grunting, sniffing. Korak spoke to him.

"I am Korak," he said. "I opened the cage that held you. I saved you from the Tarmangani. I am Korak, The Killer. I am your friend."

"Huh," grunted the king. "Yes, you are Korak. My ears told me that you were Korak. My eyes told you that you were Korak. Now my nose tells me that you

are Korak. My nose is never wrong. I am your friend. Come, we shall hunt together."

"Korak cannot hunt now," replied the ape-man. "The Gomangani have stolen Meriem. They have tied her in their village. They will not let her go. Korak, alone, was unable to set her free. Korak set you free. Now will you bring your people and set Korak's Meriem free?"

"The Gomangani have many sharp sticks which they throw. They pierce the bodies of my people. They kill us. The gomangani are bad people. They will kill us all if we enter their village."

"The Tarmangani have sticks that make a loud noise and kill at a great distance," replied Korak. "They had

these when Korak set you free from their trap. If Korak had run away from them you would now be a prisoner among the Tarmangani."

The baboon scratched his head. In a rough circle about him and the ape-man squatted the bulls of his herd. They blinked their eyes, shouldered one another about for more advantageous positions, scratched in the rotting vegetation upon the chance of unearthing a toothsome worm, or sat listlessly eyeing their king and the strange Mangani, who called himself thus but who more closely resembled the hated Tarmangani. The king looked at some of the older of his subjects, as though inviting suggestion.

"We are too few," grunted one.

"There are the baboons of the hill country," suggested another. "They are as many as the leaves of the forest. They, too, hate the Gomangani. They love to fight. They are very savage. Let us ask them to accompany us. Then can we kill all the Gomangani in the jungle." He rose and growled horribly, bristling his stiff hair.

"That is the way to talk," cried The Killer, "but we do not need the baboons of the hill country. We are enough. It will take a long time to fetch them. Meriem may be dead and eaten before we could free her. Let us set out at once for the village of the Gomangani. If we travel very fast it will not take long to

reach it. Then, all at the same time, we can charge into the village, growling and barking. The Gomangani will be very frightened and will run away. While they are gone we can seize Meriem and carry her off. We do not have to kill or be killed—all that Korak wishes is his Meriem."

"We are too few," croaked the old ape again.

"Yes, we are too few," echoed others.

Korak could not persuade them. They would help him, gladly; but they must do it in their own way and that meant enlisting the services of their kinsmen and allies of the hill country. So Korak was forced to give in. All he could do for the present was to urge them to haste,

and at his suggestion the king baboon with a dozen of his mightiest bulls agreed to go to the hill country with Korak, leaving the balance of the herd behind.

Once enlisted in the adventure the baboons became quite enthusiastic about it. The delegation set off immediately. They traveled swiftly; but the ape-man found no difficulty in keeping up with them. They made a tremendous racket as they passed through the trees in an endeavor to suggest to enemies in their front that a great herd was approaching, for when the baboons travel in large numbers there is no jungle creature who cares to molest them. When the nature of the country required much travel upon

the level, and the distance between trees was great, they moved silently, knowing that the lion and the leopard would not be fooled by noise when they could see plainly for themselves that only a handful of baboons were on the trail.

For two days the party raced through the savage country, passing out of the dense jungle into an open plain, and across this to timbered mountain slopes. Here Korak never before had been. It was a new country to him and the change from the monotony of the circumscribed view in the jungle was pleasing. But he had little desire to enjoy the beauties of nature at this time. Meriem, his Meriem was in danger. Until she was freed and returned to him he had little thought for

aught else.

Once in the forest that clothed the mountain slopes the baboons advanced more slowly. Constantly they gave tongue to a plaintive note of calling. Then would follow silence while they listened. At last, faintly from the distance straight ahead came an answer.

The baboons continued to travel in the direction of the voices that floated through the forest to them in the intervals of their own silence. Thus, calling and listening, they came closer to their kinsmen, who, it was evident to Korak, were coming to meet them in great numbers; but when, at last, the baboons of the hill country came in view the ape-man was staggered at the reality that

broke upon his vision.

What appeared a solid wall of huge baboons rose from the ground through the branches of the trees to the loftiest terrace to which they dared entrust their weight. Slowly they were approaching, voicing their weird, plaintive call, and behind them, as far as Korak's eyes could pierce the verdure, rose solid walls of their fellows treading close upon their heels. There were thousands of them. The ape-man could not but think of the fate of his little party should some untoward incident arouse even momentarily the rage of fear of a single one of all these thousands.

But nothing such befell. The two kings approached one another, as was their

custom, with much sniffing and bristling. They satisfied themselves of each other's identity. Then each scratched the other's back. After a moment they spoke together. Korak's friend explained the nature of their visit, and for the first time Korak showed himself. He had been hiding behind a bush. The excitement among the hill baboons was intense at sight of him. For a moment Korak feared that he should be torn to pieces; but his fear was for Meriem. Should he die there would be none to succor her.

The two kings, however, managed to quiet the multitude, and Korak was permitted to approach. Slowly the hill baboons came closer to him. They sniffed at him from every angle. When he

spoke to them in their own tongue they were filled with wonder and delight. They talked to him and listened while he spoke. He told them of Meriem, and of their life in the jungle where they were the friends of all the ape folk from little Manu to Mangani, the great ape.

"The Gomangani, who are keeping Meriem from me, are no friends of yours," he said. "They kill you. The baboons of the low country are too few to go against them. They tell me that you are very many and very brave—that your numbers are as the numbers of the grasses upon the plains or the leaves within the forest, and that even Tantor, the elephant, fears you, so brave you are. They told me that you would be happy to

accompany us to the village of the Gomangani and punish these bad people while I, Korak, The Killer, carry away my Meriem."

The king ape puffed out his chest and strutted about very stiff- legged indeed. So also did many of the other great bulls of his nation. They were pleased and flattered by the words of the strange Tarmangani, who called himself Mangani and spoke the language of the hairy progenitors of man.

"Yes," said one, "we of the hill country are mighty fighters. Tantor fears us. Numa fears us. Sheeta fears us. The Gomangani of the hill country are glad to pass us by in peace. I, for one, will come with you to the village of the

Gomangani of the low places. I am the king's first he-child. Alone can I kill all the Gomangani of the low country," and he swelled his chest and strutted proudly back and forth, until the itching back of a comrade commanded his industrious attention.

"I am Goob," cried another. "My fighting fangs are long. They are sharp. They are strong. Into the soft flesh of many a Gomangani have they been buried. Alone I slew the sister of Sheeta. Goob will go to the low country with you and kill so many of the Gomangani that there will be none left to count the dead," and then he, too, strutted and pranced before the admiring eyes of the shes and the young.

Korak looked at the king, questioningly.

"Your bulls are very brave," he said; "but braver than any is the king."

Thus addressed, the shaggy bull, still in his prime—else he had been no longer king—growled ferociously. The forest echoed to his lusty challenges. The little baboons clutched fearfully at their mothers' hairy necks. The bulls, electrified, leaped high in air and took up the roaring challenge of their king. The din was terrific.

Korak came close to the king and shouted in his ear, "Come." Then he started off through the forest toward the plain that they must cross on their long journey back to the village of Kovudoo,

the Gomangani. The king, still roaring and shrieking, wheeled and followed him. In their wake came the handful of low country baboons and the thousands of the hill clan— savage, wiry, dog-like creatures, athirst for blood.

And so they came, upon the second day, to the village of Kovudoo. It was mid-afternoon. The village was sunk in the quiet of the great equatorial sun-heat. The mighty herd traveled quietly now. Beneath the thousands of padded feet the forest gave forth no greater sound than might have been produced by the increased soughing of a stronger breeze through the leafy branches of the trees.

Korak and the two kings were in the lead. Close beside the village they

halted until the stragglers had closed up. Now utter silence reigned. Korak, creeping stealthily, entered the tree that overhung the palisade. He glanced behind him. The pack were close upon his heels. The time had come. He had warned them continuously during the long march that no harm must befall the white she who lay a prisoner within the village. All others were their legitimate prey. Then, raising his face toward the sky, he gave voice to a single cry. It was the signal.

In response three thousand hairy bulls leaped screaming and barking into the village of the terrified blacks. Warriors poured from every hut. Mothers gathered their babies in their arms and fled

toward the gates as they saw the horrid horde pouring into the village street. Kovudoo marshaled his fighting men about him and, leaping and yelling to arouse their courage, offered a bristling, spear tipped front to the charging horde.

Korak, as he had led the march, led the charge. The blacks were struck with horror and dismay at the sight of this white-skinned youth at the head of a pack of hideous baboons. For an instant they held their ground, hurling their spears once at the advancing multitude; but before they could fit arrows to their bows they wavered, gave, and turned in terrified rout. Into their ranks, upon their backs, sinking strong fangs into the muscles of their necks sprang the

baboons and first among them, most ferocious, most blood- thirsty, most terrible was Korak, The Killer.

At the village gates, through which the blacks poured in panic, Korak left them to the tender mercies of his allies and turned himself eagerly toward the hut in which Meriem had been a prisoner. It was empty. One after another the filthy interiors revealed the same disheartening fact—Meriem was in none of them. That she had not been taken by the blacks in their flight from the village Korak knew for he had watched carefully for a glimpse of her among the fugitives.

To the mind of the ape-man, knowing as he did the proclivities of the savages,

there was but a single explanation— Meriem had been killed and eaten. With the conviction that Meriem was dead there surged through Korak's brain a wave of blood red rage against those he believed to be her murderer. In the distance he could hear the snarling of the baboons mixed with the screams of their victims, and towards this he made his way. When he came upon them the baboons had commenced to tire of the sport of battle, and the blacks in a little knot were making a new stand, using their knob sticks effectively upon the few bulls who still persisted in attacking them.

Among these broke Korak from the branches of a tree above them— swift,

relentless, terrible, he hurled himself upon the savage warriors of Kovudoo. Blind fury possessed him. Too, it protected him by its very ferocity. Like a wounded lioness he was here, there, everywhere, striking terrific blows with hard fists and with the precision and timeliness of the trained fighter. Again and again he buried his teeth in the flesh of a foeman. He was upon one and gone again to another before an effective blow could be dealt him. Yet, though great was the weight of his execution in determining the result of the combat, it was outweighed by the terror which he inspired in the simple, superstitious minds of his foeman. To them this white warrior, who consorted with the great

apes and the fierce baboons, who growled and snarled and snapped like a beast, was not human. He was a demon of the forest—a fearsome god of evil whom they had offended, and who had come out of his lair deep in the jungle to punish them. And because of this belief there were many who offered but little defense, feeling as they did the futility of pitting their puny mortal strength against that of a deity.

Those who could fled, until at last there were no more to pay the penalty for a deed, which, while not beyond them, they were, nevertheless, not guilty of. Panting and bloody, Korak paused for want of further victims. The baboons gathered about him, sated themselves

with blood and battle. They lolled upon the ground, fagged.

In the distance Kovudoo was gathering his scattered tribesmen, and taking account of injuries and losses. His people were panic stricken. Nothing could prevail upon them to remain longer in this country. They would not even return to the village for their belongings. Instead they insisted upon continuing their flight until they had put many miles between themselves and the stamping ground of the demon who had so bitterly attacked them. And thus it befell that Korak drove from their homes the only people who might have aided him in a search for Meriem, and cut off the only connecting link between him

and her from whomsoever might come in search of him from the douar of the kindly Bwana who had befriended his little jungle sweetheart.

It was a sour and savage Korak who bade farewell to his baboon allies upon the following morning. They wished him to accompany him; but the ape-man had no heart for the society of any. Jungle life had encouraged taciturnity in him. His sorrow had deepened this to a sullen moroseness that could not brook even the savage companionship of the ill-natured baboons.

Brooding and despondent he took his solitary way into the deepest jungle. He moved along the ground when he knew that Numa was abroad and hungry. He

took to the same trees that harbored Sheeta, the panther. He courted death in a hundred ways and a hundred forms. His mind was ever occupied with reminiscences of Meriem and the happy years that they had spent together. He realized now to the full what she had meant to him. The sweet face, the tanned, supple, little body, the bright smile that always had welcomed his return from the hunt haunted him continually.

Inaction soon threatened him with madness. He must be on the go. He must fill his days with labor and excitement that he might forget—that night might find him so exhausted that he should sleep in blessed unconsciousness of his misery until a new day had come.

Had he guessed that by any possibility Meriem might still live he would at least have had hope. His days could have been devoted to searching for her; but he implicitly believed that she was dead.

For a long year he led his solitary, roaming life. Occasionally he fell in with Akut and his tribe, hunting with them for a day or two; or he might travel to the hill country where the baboons had come to accept him as a matter of course; but most of all was he with Tantor, the elephant— the great gray battle ship of the jungle—the super-dreadnought of his savage world.

The peaceful quiet of the monster bulls, the watchful solicitude of the mother cows, the awkward playfulness

of the calves rested, interested, and amused Korak. The life of the huge beasts took his mind, temporarily from his own grief. He came to love them as he loved not even the great apes, and there was one gigantic tusker in particular of which he was very fond—the lord of the herd—a savage beast that was wont to charge a stranger upon the slightest provocation, or upon no provocation whatsoever. And to Korak this mountain of destruction was docile and affectionate as a lap dog.

He came when Korak called. He wound his trunk about the ape- man's body and lifted him to his broad neck in response to a gesture, and there would Korak lie at full length kicking his toes

affectionately into the thick hide and brushing the flies from about the tender ears of his colossal chum with a leafy branch torn from a nearby tree by Tantor for the purpose.

And all the while Meriem was scarce a hundred miles away.

CHAPTER 16

To Meriem, in her new home, the days passed quickly. At first she was all anxiety to be off into the jungle searching for her Korak. Bwana, as she insisted upon calling her benefactor, dissuaded her from making the attempt at once by dispatching a head man with a party of blacks to Kovudoo's village with instructions to learn from the old savage how he came into possession of the white girl and as much of her antecedents as might be culled from the black chieftain. Bwana particularly charged his head man with the duty of questioning Kovudoo relative to the strange character whom the girl called Korak, and of searching for the ape-man

if he found the slightest evidence upon which to ground a belief in the existence of such an individual. Bwana was more than fully convinced that Korak was a creature of the girl's disordered imagination. He believed that the terrors and hardships she had undergone during captivity among the blacks and her frightful experience with the two Swedes had unbalanced her mind but as the days passed and he became better acquainted with her and able to observe her under the ordinary conditions of the quiet of his African home he was forced to admit that her strange tale puzzled him not a little, for there was no other evidence whatever that Meriem was not in full possession of her normal

faculties.

The white man's wife, whom Meriem had christened "My Dear" from having first heard her thus addressed by Bwana, took not only a deep interest in the little jungle waif because of her forlorn and friendless state, but grew to love her as well for her sunny disposition and natural charm of temperament. And Meriem, similarly impressed by little attributes in the gentle, cultured woman, reciprocated the other's regard and affection.

And so the days flew by while Meriem waited the return of the head man and his party from the country of Kovudoo. They were short days, for into them were crowded many hours of

insidious instruction of the unlettered child by the lonely woman. She commenced at once to teach the girl English without forcing it upon her as a task. She varied the instruction with lessons in sewing and deportment, nor once did she let Meriem guess that it was not all play. Nor was this difficult, since the girl was avid to learn. Then there were pretty dresses to be made to take the place of the single leopard skin and in this she found the child as responsive and enthusiastic as any civilized miss of her acquaintance.

A month passed before the head man returned—a month that had transformed the savage, half-naked little tarmangani into a daintily frocked girl of at least

outward civilization. Meriem had progressed rapidly with the intricacies of the English language, for Bwana and My Dear had persistently refused to speak Arabic from the time they had decided that Meriem must learn English, which had been a day or two after her introduction into their home.

The report of the head man plunged Meriem into a period of despondency, for he had found the village of Kovudoo deserted nor, search as he would, could he discover a single native anywhere in the vicinity. For some time he had camped near the village, spending the days in a systematic search of the environs for traces of Meriem's Korak; but in this quest, too, had he failed. He

had seen neither apes nor ape-man. Meriem at first insisted upon setting forth herself in search of Korak, but Bwana prevailed upon her to wait. He would go himself, he assured her, as soon as he could find the time, and at last Meriem consented to abide by his wishes; but it was months before she ceased to mourn almost hourly for her Korak.

My Dear grieved with the grieving girl and did her best to comfort and cheer her. She told her that if Korak lived he would find her; but all the time she believed that Korak had never existed beyond the child's dreams. She planned amusements to distract Meriem's attention from her sorrow, and

she instituted a well- designed campaign to impress upon the child the desirability of civilized life and customs. Nor was this difficult, as she was soon to learn, for it rapidly became evident that beneath the uncouth savagery of the girl was a bed rock of innate refinement—a nicety of taste and predilection that quite equaled that of her instructor.

My Dear was delighted. She was lonely and childless, and so she lavished upon this little stranger all the mother love that would have gone to her own had she had one. The result was that by the end of the first year none might have guessed that Meriem ever had existed beyond the lap of culture and luxury.

She was sixteen now, though she

easily might have passed for nineteen, and she was very good to look upon, with her black hair and her tanned skin and all the freshness and purity of health and innocence. Yet she still nursed her secret sorrow, though she no longer mentioned it to My Dear. Scarce an hour passed that did not bring its recollection of Korak, and its poignant yearning to see him again.

Meriem spoke English fluently now, and read and wrote it as well. One day My Dear spoke jokingly to her in French and to her surprise Meriem replied in the same tongue—slowly, it is true, and haltingly; but none the less in excellent French, such, though, as a little child might use. Thereafter they spoke a little

French each day, and My Dear often marveled that the girl learned this language with a facility that was at times almost uncanny. At first Meriem had puckered her narrow, arched, little eye brows as though trying to force recollection of something all but forgotten which the new words suggested, and then, to her own astonishment as well as to that of her teacher she had used other French words than those in the lessons— used them properly and with a pronunciation that the English woman knew was more perfect than her own; but Meriem could neither read nor write what she spoke so well, and as My Dear considered a knowledge of correct English of the first

importance, other than conversational French was postponed for a later day.

"You doubtless heard French spoken at times in your father's douar," suggested My Dear, as the most reasonable explanation.

Meriem shook her head.

"It may be," she said, "but I do not recall ever having seen a Frenchman in my father's company—he hated them and would have nothing whatever to do with them, and I am quite sure that I never heard any of these words before, yet at the same time I find them all familiar. I cannot understand it."

"Neither can I," agreed My Dear.

It was about this time that a runner brought a letter that, when she learned

the contents, filled Meriem with excitement. Visitors were coming! A number of English ladies and gentlemen had accepted My Dear's invitation to spend a month of hunting and exploring with them. Meriem was all expectancy. What would these strangers be like? Would they be as nice to her as had Bwana and My Dear, or would they be like the other white folk she had known — cruel and relentless. My Dear assured her that they all were gentle folk and that she would find them kind, considerate and honorable.

To My Dear's surprise there was none of the shyness of the wild creature in Meriem's anticipation of the visit of strangers.

She looked forward to their coming with curiosity and with a certain pleasurable anticipation when once she was assured that they would not bite her. In fact she appeared no different than would any pretty young miss who had learned of the expected coming of company.

Korak's image was still often in her thoughts, but it aroused now a less well-defined sense of bereavement. A quiet sadness pervaded Meriem when she thought of him; but the poignant grief of her loss when it was young no longer goaded her to desperation. Yet she was still loyal to him. She still hoped that some day he would find her, nor did she doubt for a moment but that he was

searching for her if he still lived. It was this last suggestion that caused her the greatest perturbation. Korak might be dead. It scarce seemed possible that one so well-equipped to meet the emergencies of jungle life should have succumbed so young; yet when she had last seen him he had been beset by a horde of armed warriors, and should he have returned to the village again, as she well knew he must have, he may have been killed. Even her Korak could not, single handed, slay an entire tribe.

At last the visitors arrived. There were three men and two women— the wives of the two older men. The youngest member of the party was Hon. Morison Baynes, a young man of

considerable wealth who, having exhausted all the possibilities for pleasure offered by the capitals of Europe, had gladly seized upon this opportunity to turn to another continent for excitement and adventure.

He looked upon all things un-European as rather more than less impossible, still he was not at all averse to enjoying the novelty of unaccustomed places, and making the most of strangers indigenous thereto, however unspeakable they might have seemed to him at home. In manner he was suave and courteous to all—if possible a trifle more punctilious toward those he considered of meaner clay than toward the few he mentally admitted to equality.

Nature had favored him with a splendid physique and a handsome face, and also with sufficient good judgment to appreciate that while he might enjoy the contemplation of his superiority to the masses, there was little likelihood of the masses being equally entranced by the same cause. And so he easily maintained the reputation of being a most democratic and likeable fellow, and indeed he was likable. Just a shade of his egotism was occasionally apparent —never sufficient to become a burden to his associates. And this, briefly, was the Hon. Morison Baynes of luxurious European civilization. What would be the Hon. Morison Baynes of central Africa it were difficult to guess.

Meriem, at first, was shy and reserved in the presence of the strangers. Her benefactors had seen fit to ignore mention of her strange past, and so she passed as their ward whose antecedents not having been mentioned were not to be inquired into. The guests found her sweet and unassuming, laughing, vivacious and a never exhausted storehouse of quaint and interesting jungle lore.

She had ridden much during her year with Bwana and My Dear. She knew each favorite clump of concealing reeds along the river that the buffalo loved best. She knew a dozen places where lions laired, and every drinking hole in the drier country twenty-five miles back

from the river. With unerring precision that was almost uncanny she could track the largest or the smallest beast to his hiding place. But the thing that baffled them all was her instant consciousness of the presence of carnivora that others, exerting their faculties to the utmost, could neither see nor hear.

The Hon. Morison Baynes found Meriem a most beautiful and charming companion. He was delighted with her from the first. Particularly so, it is possible, because he had not thought to find companionship of this sort upon the African estate of his London friends. They were together a great deal as they were the only unmarried couple in the little company. Meriem, entirely

unaccustomed to the companionship of such as Baynes, was fascinated by him. His tales of the great, gay cities with which he was familiar filled her with admiration and with wonder. If the Hon. Morison always shone to advantage in these narratives Meriem saw in that fact but a most natural consequence to his presence upon the scene of his story—wherever Morison might be he must be a hero; so thought the girl.

With the actual presence and companionship of the young Englishman the image of Korak became less real. Where before it had been an actuality to her she now realized that Korak was but a memory. To that memory she still was loyal; but what weight has a memory in

the presence of a fascinating reality?

Meriem had never accompanied the men upon a hunt since the arrival of the guests. She never had cared particularly for the sport of killing. The tracking she enjoyed; but the mere killing for the sake of killing she could not find pleasure in —little savage that she had been, and still, to some measure, was. When Bwana had gone forth to shoot for meat she had always been his enthusiastic companion; but with the coming of the London guests the hunting had deteriorated into mere killing. Slaughter the host would not permit; yet the purpose of the hunts were for heads and skins and not for food. So Meriem remained behind and spent her days

either with My Dear upon the shaded verandah, or riding her favorite pony across the plains or to the forest edge. Here she would leave him untethered while she took to the trees for the moment's unalloyed pleasures of a return to the wild, free existence of her earlier childhood.

Then would come again visions of Korak, and, tired at last of leaping and swinging through the trees, she would stretch herself comfortably upon a branch and dream. And presently, as today, she found the features of Korak slowly dissolve and merge into those of another, and the figure of a tanned, half-naked tarmangani become a khaki clothed Englishman astride a hunting

pony.

And while she dreamed there came to her ears from a distance, faintly, the terrified bleating of a kid. Meriem was instantly alert. You or I, even had we been able to hear the pitiful wail at so great distance, could not have interpreted it; but to Meriem it meant a species of terror that afflicts the ruminant when a carnivore is near and escape impossible.

It had been both a pleasure and a sport of Korak's to rob Numa of his prey whenever possible, and Meriem too had often enjoyed in the thrill of snatching some dainty morsel almost from the very jaws of the king of beasts. Now, at the sound of the kid's bleat, all the well

remembered thrills recurred. Instantly she was all excitement to play again the game of hide and seek with death.

Quickly she loosened her riding skirt and tossed it aside—it was a heavy handicap to successful travel in the trees. Her boots and stockings followed the skirt, for the bare sole of the human foot does not slip upon dry or even wet bark as does the hard leather of a boot. She would have liked to discard her riding breeches also, but the motherly admonitions of My Dear had convinced Meriem that it was not good form to go naked through the world.

At her hip hung a hunting knife. Her rifle was still in its boot at her pony's withers. Her revolver she had not

brought.

The kid was still bleating as Meriem started rapidly in its direction, which she knew was straight toward a certain water hole which had once been famous as a rendezvous for lions. Of late there had been no evidence of carnivora in the neighborhood of this drinking place; but Meriem was positive that the bleating of the kid was due to the presence of either lion or panther.

But she would soon know, for she was rapidly approaching the terrified animal. She wondered as she hastened onward that the sounds continued to come from the same point. Why did the kid not run away? And then she came in sight of the little animal and knew. The

kid was tethered to a stake beside the waterhole.

Meriem paused in the branches of a near-by tree and scanned the surrounding clearing with quick, penetrating eyes. Where was the hunter? Bwana and his people did not hunt thus. Who could have tethered this poor little beast as a lure to Numa? Bwana never countenanced such acts in his country and his word was law among those who hunted within a radius of many miles of his estate.

Some wandering savages, doubtless, thought Meriem; but where were they? Not even her keen eyes could discover them. And where was Numa? Why had he not long since sprung upon this

delicious and defenseless morsel? That he was close by was attested by the pitiful crying of the kid. Ah! Now she saw him. He was lying close in a clump of brush a few yards to her right. The kid was down wind from him and getting the full benefit of his terrorizing scent, which did not reach Meriem.

To circle to the opposite side of the clearing where the trees approached closer to the kid. To leap quickly to the little animal's side and cut the tether that held him would be the work of but a moment. In that moment Numa might charge, and then there would be scarce time to regain the safety of the trees, yet it might be done. Meriem had escaped from closer quarters than that many times

before.

The doubt that gave her momentary pause was caused by fear of the unseen hunters more than by fear of Numa. If they were stranger blacks the spears that they held in readiness for Numa might as readily be loosed upon whomever dared release their bait as upon the prey they sought thus to trap. Again the kid struggled to be free. Again his piteous wail touched the tender heart strings of the girl. Tossing discretion aside, she commenced to circle the clearing. Only from Numa did she attempt to conceal her presence. At last she reached the opposite trees. An instant she paused to look toward the great lion, and at the same moment she saw the huge beast

rise slowly to his full height. A low roar betokened that he was ready.

Meriem loosened her knife and leaped to the ground. A quick run brought her to the side of the kid. Numa saw her. He lashed his tail against his tawny sides. He roared terribly; but, for an instant, he remained where he stood —surprised into inaction, doubtless, by the strange apparition that had sprung so unexpectedly from the jungle.

Other eyes were upon Meriem, too— eyes in which were no less surprise than that reflected in the yellow-green orbs of the carnivore. A white man, hiding in a thorn boma, half rose as the young girl leaped into the clearing and dashed toward the kid. He saw Numa hesitate.

He raised his rifle and covered the beast's breast. The girl reached the kid's side. Her knife flashed, and the little prisoner was free. With a parting bleat it dashed off into the jungle. Then the girl turned to retreat toward the safety of the tree from which she had dropped so suddenly and unexpectedly into the surprised view of the lion, the kid and the man.

As she turned the girl's face was turned toward the hunter. His eyes went wide as he saw her features. He gave a little gasp of surprise; but now the lion demanded all his attention—the baffled, angry beast was charging. His breast was still covered by the motionless rifle. The man could have fired and stopped

the charge at once; but for some reason, since he had seen the girl's face, he hesitated. Could it be that he did not care to save her? Or, did he prefer, if possible, to remain unseen by her? It must have been the latter cause which kept the trigger finger of the steady hand from exerting the little pressure that would have brought the great beast to at least a temporary pause.

Like an eagle the man watched the race for life the girl was making. A second or two measured the time which the whole exciting event consumed from the moment that the lion broke into his charge. Nor once did the rifle sights fail to cover the broad breast of the tawny sire as the lion's course took him a little

to the man's left. Once, at the very last moment, when escape seemed impossible, the hunter's finger tightened ever so little upon the trigger, but almost coincidentally the girl leaped for an over hanging branch and seized it. The lion leaped too; but the nimble Meriem had swung herself beyond his reach without a second or an inch to spare.

The man breathed a sigh of relief as he lowered his rifle. He saw the girl fling a grimace at the angry, roaring, maneater beneath her, and then, laughing, speed away into the forest. For an hour the lion remained about the water hole. A hundred times could the hunter have bagged his prey. Why did he fail to do so? Was he afraid that the shot might

attract the girl and cause her to return?

At last Numa, still roaring angrily, strode majestically into the jungle. The hunter crawled from his boma, and half an hour later was entering a little camp snugly hidden in the forest. A handful of black followers greeted his return with sullen indifference. He was a great bearded man, a huge, yellow-bearded giant, when he entered his tent. Half an hour later he emerged smooth shaven.

His blacks looked at him in astonishment.

"Would you know me?" he asked.

"The hyena that bore you would not know you, Bwana," replied one.

The man aimed a heavy fist at the black's face; but long experience in

dodging similar blows saved the presumptuous one.

CHAPTER 17

Meriem returned slowly toward the tree in which she had left her skirt, her shoes and her stockings. She was singing blithely; but her song came to a sudden stop when she came within sight of the tree, for there, disporting themselves with glee and pulling and hauling upon her belongings, were a number of baboons. When they saw her they showed no signs of terror. Instead they bared their fangs and growled at her. What was there to fear in a single she-Tarmangani? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

In the open plain beyond the forest the hunters were returning from the day's sport. They were widely separated,

hoping to raise a wandering lion on the homeward journey across the plain. The Hon. Morison Baynes rode closest to the forest. As his eyes wandered back and forth across the undulating, shrub sprinkled ground they fell upon the form of a creature close beside the thick jungle where it terminated abruptly at the plain's edge.

He reined his mount in the direction of his discovery. It was yet too far away for his untrained eyes to recognize it; but as he came closer he saw that it was a horse, and was about to resume the original direction of his way when he thought that he discerned a saddle upon the beast's back. He rode a little closer. Yes, the animal was saddled. The Hon.

Morison approached yet nearer, and as he did so his eyes expressed a pleasurable emotion of anticipation, for they had now recognized the pony as the special favorite of Meriem.

He galloped to the animal's side. Meriem must be within the wood. The man shuddered a little at the thought of an unprotected girl alone in the jungle that was still, to him, a fearful place of terrors and stealthily stalking death. He dismounted and left his horse beside Meriem's. On foot he entered the jungle. He knew that she was probably safe enough and he wished to surprise her by coming suddenly upon her.

He had gone but a short distance into the wood when he heard a great

jabbering in a near-by tree. Coming closer he saw a band of baboons snarling over something. Looking intently he saw that one of them held a woman's riding skirt and that others had boots and stockings. His heart almost ceased to beat as he quite naturally placed the most direful explanation upon the scene. The baboons had killed Meriem and stripped this clothing from her body. Morison shuddered.

He was about to call aloud in the hope that after all the girl still lived when he saw her in a tree close beside that was occupied by the baboons, and now he saw that they were snarling and jabbering at her. To his amazement he saw the girl swing, ape-like, into the tree

below the huge beasts. He saw her pause upon a branch a few feet from the nearest baboon. He was about to raise his rifle and put a bullet through the hideous creature that seemed about to leap upon her when he heard the girl speak. He almost dropped his rifle from surprise as a strange jabbering, identical with that of the apes, broke from Meriem's lips.

The baboons stopped their snarling and listened. It was quite evident that they were as much surprised as the Hon. Morison Baynes. Slowly and one by one they approached the girl. She gave not the slightest evidence of fear of them. They quite surrounded her now so that Baynes could not have fired without

endangering the girl's life; but he no longer desired to fire. He was consumed with curiosity.

For several minutes the girl carried on what could be nothing less than a conversation with the baboons, and then with seeming alacrity every article of her apparel in their possession was handed over to her. The baboons still crowded eagerly about her as she donned them. They chattered to her and she chattered back. The Hon. Morison Baynes sat down at the foot of a tree and mopped his perspiring brow. Then he rose and made his way back to his mount.

When Meriem emerged from the forest a few minutes later she found him

there, and he eyed her with wide eyes in which were both wonder and a sort of terror.

"I saw your horse here," he explained, "and thought that I would wait and ride home with you—you do not mind?"

"Of course not," she replied. "It will be lovely."

As they made their way stirrup to stirrup across the plain the Hon. Morison caught himself many times watching the girl's regular profile and wondering if his eyes had deceived him or if, in truth, he really had seen this lovely creature consorting with grotesque baboons and conversing with them as fluently as she conversed with him. The thing was uncanny -

impossible; yet he had seen it with his own eyes.

And as he watched her another thought persisted in obtruding itself into his mind. She was most beautiful and very desirable; but what did he know of her? Was she not altogether impossible? Was the scene that he had but just witnessed not sufficient proof of her impossibility? A woman who climbed trees and conversed with the baboons of the jungle! It was quite horrible!

Again the Hon. Morison mopped his brow. Meriem glanced toward him.

"You are warm," she said. "Now that the sun is setting I find it quite cool. Why do you perspire now?"

He had not intended to let her know

that he had seen her with the baboons; but quite suddenly, before he realized what he was saying, he had blurted it out.

"I perspire from emotion," he said. "I went into the jungle when I discovered your pony. I wanted to surprise you; but it was I who was surprised. I saw you in the trees with the baboons."

"Yes?" she said quite unemotionally, as though it was a matter of little moment that a young girl should be upon intimate terms with savage jungle beasts.

"It was horrible!" ejaculated the Hon. Morison.

"Horrible?" repeated Meriem, puckering her brows in bewilderment. "What was horrible about it? They are

my friends. Is it horrible to talk with one's friends?"

"You were really talking with them, then?" cried the Hon. Morison. "You understood them and they understood you?"

"Certainly."

"But they are hideous creatures—degraded beasts of a lower order. How could you speak the language of beasts?"

"They are not hideous, and they are not degraded," replied Meriem. "Friends are never that. I lived among them for years before Bwana found me and brought me here. I scarce knew any other tongue than that of the mangani. Should I refuse to know them now simply because I happen, for the present, to live among

humans?"

"For the present!" ejaculated the Hon. Morison. "You cannot mean that you expect to return to live among them? Come, come, what foolishness are we talking! The very idea! You are spoofing me, Miss Meriem. You have been kind to these baboons here and they know you and do not molest you; but that you once lived among them—no, that is preposterous."

"But I did, though," insisted the girl, seeing the real horror that the man felt in the presence of such an idea reflected in his tone and manner, and rather enjoying baiting him still further. "Yes, I lived, almost naked, among the great apes and the lesser apes. I dwelt among the

branches of the trees. I pounced upon the smaller prey and devoured it—raw. With Korak and A'ht I hunted the antelope and the boar, and I sat upon a tree limb and made faces at Numa, the lion, and threw sticks at him and annoyed him until he roared so terribly in his rage that the earth shook.

"And Korak built me a lair high among the branches of a mighty tree. He brought me fruits and flesh. He fought for me and was kind to me— until I came to Bwana and My Dear I do not recall that any other than Korak was ever kind to me." There was a wistful note in the girl's voice now and she had forgotten that she was bantering the Hon. Morison. She was thinking of Korak. She had not

thought of him a great deal of late.

For a time both were silently absorbed in their own reflections as they rode on toward the bungalow of their host. The girl was thinking of a god-like figure, a leopard skin half concealing his smooth, brown hide as he leaped nimbly through the trees to lay an offering of food before her on his return from a successful hunt. Behind him, shaggy and powerful, swung a huge anthropoid ape, while she, Meriem, laughing and shouting her welcome, swung upon a swaying limb before the entrance to her sylvan bower. It was a pretty picture as she recalled it. The other side seldom obtruded itself upon her memory—the long, black nights—the chill, terrible

jungle nights—the cold and damp and discomfort of the rainy season— the hideous mouthings of the savage carnivora as they prowled through the Stygian darkness beneath - the constant menace of Sheeta, the panther, and Histah, the snake—the stinging insects—the loathesome vermin. For, in truth, all these had been outweighed by the happiness of the sunny days, the freedom of it all, and, most, the companionship of Korak.

The man's thoughts were rather jumbled. He had suddenly realized that he had come mighty near falling in love with this girl of whom he had known nothing up to the previous moment when she had voluntarily revealed a portion of

her past to him. The more he thought upon the matter the more evident it became to him that he had given her his love—that he had been upon the verge of offering her his honorable name. He trembled a little at the narrowness of his escape. Yet, he still loved her. There was no objection to that according to the ethics of the Hon. Morison Baynes and his kind. She was a meaner clay than he. He could no more have taken her in marriage than he could have taken one of her baboon friends, nor would she, of course, expect such an offer from him. To have his love would be sufficient honor for her - his name he would, naturally, bestow upon one in his own elevated social sphere.

A girl who had consorted with apes, who, according to her own admission, had lived almost naked among them, could have no considerable sense of the finer qualities of virtue. The love that he would offer her, then, would, far from offending her, probably cover all that she might desire or expect.

The more the Hon. Morison Baynes thought upon the subject the more fully convinced he became that he was contemplating a most chivalrous and unselfish act. Europeans will better understand his point of view than Americans, poor, benighted provincials, who are denied a true appreciation of caste and of the fact that "the king can do no wrong." He did not even have to

argue the point that she would be much happier amidst the luxuries of a London apartment, fortified as she would be by both his love and his bank account, than lawfully wed to such a one as her social position warranted. There was one question however, which he wished to have definitely answered before he committed himself even to the program he was considering.

"Who were Korak and A'ht?" he asked.

"A'ht was a Mangani," replied Meriem, "and Korak a Tarmangani."

"And what, pray, might a Mangani be, and a Tarmangani?"

The girl laughed.

"You are a Tarmangani," she replied.

"The Mangani are covered with hair - you would call them apes."

"Then Korak was a white man?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And he was—ah—your—er—your - ?" He paused, for he found it rather difficult to go on with that line of questioning while the girl's clear, beautiful eyes were looking straight into his.

"My what?" insisted Meriem, far too unsophisticated in her unspoiled innocence to guess what the Hon. Morison was driving at.

"Why—ah—your brother?" he stumbled.

"No, Korak was not my brother," she replied.

"Was he your husband, then?" he finally blurted.

Far from taking offense, Meriem broke into a merry laugh.

"My husband!" she cried. "Why how old do you think I am? I am too young to have a husband. I had never thought of such a thing. Korak was—why —," and now she hesitated, too, for she never before had attempted to analyze the relationship that existed between herself and Korak—"why, Korak was just Korak," and again she broke into a gay laugh as she realized the illuminating quality of her description.

Looking at her and listening to her the

man beside her could not believe that depravity of any sort or degree entered into the girl's nature, yet he wanted to believe that she had not been virtuous, for otherwise his task was less a sinecure—the Hon. Morison was not entirely without conscience.

For several days the Hon. Morison made no appreciable progress toward the consummation of his scheme. Sometimes he almost abandoned it for he found himself time and again wondering how slight might be the provocation necessary to trick him into making a bona-fide offer of marriage to Meriem if he permitted himself to fall more deeply in love with her, and it was difficult to see her daily and not love her. There

was a quality about her which, all unknown to the Hon. Morison, was making his task an extremely difficult one—it was that quality of innate goodness and cleanness which is a good girl's stoutest bulwark and protection—an impregnable barrier that only degeneracy has the effrontery to assail. The Hon. Morison Baynes would never be considered a degenerate.

He was sitting with Meriem upon the verandah one evening after the others had retired. Earlier they had been playing tennis—a game in which the Hon. Morison shone to advantage, as, in truth, he did in most all manly sports. He was telling Meriem stories of London and Paris, of balls and banquets, of the

wonderful women and their wonderful gowns, of the pleasures and pastimes of the rich and powerful. The Hon. Morison was a past master in the art of insidious boasting. His egotism was never flagrant or tiresome —he was never crude in it, for crudeness was a plebeianism that the Hon. Morison studiously avoided, yet the impression derived by a listener to the Hon. Morison was one that was not at all calculated to detract from the glory of the house of Baynes, or from that of its representative.

Meriem was entranced. His tales were like fairy stories to this little jungle maid. The Hon. Morison loomed large and wonderful and magnificent in her

mind's eye. He fascinated her, and when he drew closer to her after a short silence and took her hand she thrilled as one might thrill beneath the touch of a deity—a thrill of exaltation not unmixed with fear.

He bent his lips close to her ear.

"Meriem!" he whispered. "My little Meriem! May I hope to have the right to call you `my little Meriem'?"

The girl turned wide eyes upward to his face; but it was in shadow. She trembled but she did not draw away. The man put an arm about her and drew her closer.

"I love you!" he whispered.

She did not reply. She did not know what to say. She knew nothing of love.

She had never given it a thought; but she did know that it was very nice to be loved, whatever it meant. It was nice to have people kind to one. She had known so little of kindness or affection.

"Tell me," he said, "that you return my love."

His lips came steadily closer to hers. They had almost touched when a vision of Korak sprang like a miracle before her eyes. She saw Korak's face close to hers, she felt his lips hot against hers, and then for the first time in her life she guessed what love meant. She drew away, gently.

"I am not sure," she said, "that I love you. Let us wait. There is plenty of time. I am too young to marry yet, and I am not

sure that I should be happy in London or Paris—they rather frighten me."

How easily and naturally she had connected his avowal of love with the idea of marriage! The Hon. Morison was perfectly sure that he had not mentioned marriage—he had been particularly careful not to do so. And then she was not sure that she loved him! That, too, came rather in the nature of a shock to his vanity. It seemed incredible that this little barbarian should have any doubts whatever as to the desirability of the Hon. Morison Baynes.

The first flush of passion cooled, the Hon. Morison was enabled to reason more logically. The start had been all wrong. It would be better now to wait

and prepare her mind gradually for the only proposition which his exalted estate would permit him to offer her. He would go slow. He glanced down at the girl's profile. It was bathed in the silvery light of the great tropic moon. The Hon. Morison Baynes wondered if it were to be so easy a matter to "go slow." She was most alluring.

Meriem rose. The vision of Korak was still before her.

"Good night," she said. "It is almost too beautiful to leave," she waved her hand in a comprehensive gesture which took in the starry heavens, the great moon, the broad, silvered plain, and the dense shadows in the distance, that marked the jungle. "Oh, how I love it!"

"You would love London more," he said earnestly. "And London would love you. You would be a famous beauty in any capital of Europe. You would have the world at your feet, Meriem."

"Good night!" she repeated, and left him.

The Hon. Morison selected a cigarette from his crested case, lighted it, blew a thin line of blue smoke toward the moon, and smiled.

CHAPTER 18

Meriem and Bwana were sitting on the verandah together the following day when a horseman appeared in the distance riding across the plain toward the bungalow. Bwana shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed out toward the oncoming rider. He was puzzled. Strangers were few in Central Africa. Even the blacks for a distance of many miles in every direction were well known to him. No white man came within a hundred miles that word of his coming did not reach Bwana long before the stranger. His every move was reported to the big Bwana—just what animals he killed and how many of each species, how he killed them, too, for

Bwana would not permit the use of prussic acid or strychnine; and how he treated his "boys."

Several European sportsmen had been turned back to the coast by the big Englishman's orders because of unwarranted cruelty to their black followers, and one, whose name had long been heralded in civilized communities as that of a great sportsman, was driven from Africa with orders never to return when Bwana found that his big bag of fourteen lions had been made by the diligent use of poisoned bait.

The result was that all good sportsmen and all the natives loved and respected him. His word was law where

there had never been law before. There was scarce a head man from coast to coast who would not heed the big Bwana's commands in preference to those of the hunters who employed them, and so it was easy to turn back any undesirable stranger—Bwana had simply to threaten to order his boys to desert him.

But there was evidently one who had slipped into the country unheralded. Bwana could not imagine who the approaching horseman might be. After the manner of frontier hospitality the globe round he met the newcomer at the gate, welcoming him even before he had dismounted. He saw a tall, well knit man of thirty or over, blonde of hair and

smooth shaven. There was a tantalizing familiarity about him that convinced Bwana that he should be able to call the visitor by name, yet he was unable to do so. The newcomer was evidently of Scandinavian origin—both his appearance and accent denoted that. His manner was rough but open. He made a good impression upon the Englishman, who was wont to accept strangers in this wild and savage country at their own valuation, asking no questions and assuming the best of them until they proved themselves undeserving of his friendship and hospitality.

"It is rather unusual that a white man comes unheralded," he said, as they walked together toward the field into

which he had suggested that the traveler might turn his pony. "My friends, the natives, keep us rather well- posted."

"It is probably due to the fact that I came from the south," explained the stranger, "that you did not hear of my coming. I have seen no village for several marches."

"No, there are none to the south of us for many miles," replied Bwana. "Since Kovudoo deserted his country I rather doubt that one could find a native in that direction under two or three hundred miles."

Bwana was wondering how a lone white man could have made his way through the savage, inhospitable miles that lay toward the south. As though

guessing what must be passing through the other's mind, the stranger vouchsafed an explanation.

"I came down from the north to do a little trading and hunting," he said, "and got way off the beaten track. My head man, who was the only member of the safari who had ever before been in the country, took sick and died. We could find no natives to guide us, and so I simply swung back straight north. We have been living on the fruits of our guns for over a month. Didn't have an idea there was a white man within a thousand miles of us when we camped last night by a water hole at the edge of the plain. This morning I started out to hunt and saw the smoke from your chimney, so I

sent my gun bearer back to camp with the good news and rode straight over here myself. Of course I've heard of you—everybody who comes into Central Africa does—and I'd be mighty glad of permission to rest up and hunt around here for a couple of weeks."

"Certainly," replied Bwana. "Move your camp up close to the river below my boys' camp and make yourself at home."

They had reached the verandah now and Bwana was introducing the stranger to Meriem and My Dear, who had just come from the bungalow's interior.

"This is Mr. Hanson," he said, using the name the man had given him. "He is a trader who has lost his way in the jungle

to the south."

My Dear and Meriem bowed their acknowledgments of the introduction. The man seemed rather ill at ease in their presence. His host attributed this to the fact that his guest was unaccustomed to the society of cultured women, and so found a pretext to quickly extricate him from his seemingly unpleasant position and lead him away to his study and the brandy and soda which were evidently much less embarrassing to Mr. Hanson.

When the two had left them Meriem turned toward My Dear.

"It is odd," she said, "but I could almost swear that I had known Mr. Hanson in the past. It is odd, but quite impossible," and she gave the matter no

further thought.

Hanson did not accept Bwana's invitation to move his camp closer to the bungalow. He said his boys were inclined to be quarrelsome, and so were better off at a distance; and he, himself, was around but little, and then always avoided coming into contact with the ladies. A fact which naturally aroused only laughing comment on the rough trader's bashfulness. He accompanied the men on several hunting trips where they found him perfectly at home and well versed in all the finer points of big game hunting. Of an evening he often spent much time with the white foreman of the big farm, evidently finding in the society of this rougher man more

common interests than the cultured guests of Bwana possessed for him. So it came that his was a familiar figure about the premises by night. He came and went as he saw fit, often wandering along in the great flower garden that was the especial pride and joy of My Dear and Meriem. The first time that he had been surprised there he apologized gruffly, explaining that he had always been fond of the good old blooms of northern Europe which My Dear had so successfully transplanted in African soil.

Was it, though, the ever beautiful blossoms of hollyhocks and phlox that drew him to the perfumed air of the garden, or that other infinitely more beautiful flower who wandered often

among the blooms beneath the great moon - the black-haired, suntanned Meriem?

For three weeks Hanson had remained. During this time he said that his boys were resting and gaining strength after their terrible ordeals in the untracked jungle to the south; but he had not been as idle as he appeared to have been. He divided his small following into two parties, entrusting the leadership of each to men whom he believed that he could trust. To them he explained his plans and the rich reward that they would win from him if they carried his designs to a successful conclusion. One party he moved very slowly northward along the trail that

connects with the great caravan routes entering the Sahara from the south. The other he ordered straight westward with orders to halt and go into permanent camp just beyond the great river which marks the natural boundary of the country that the big Bwana rightfully considers almost his own.

To his host he explained that he was moving his safari slowly toward the north—he said nothing of the party moving westward. Then, one day, he announced that half his boys had deserted, for a hunting party from the bungalow had come across his northerly camp and he feared that they might have noticed the reduced numbers of his following.

And thus matters stood when, one hot night, Meriem, unable to sleep, rose and wandered out into the garden. The Hon. Morison had been urging his suit once more that evening, and the girl's mind was in such a turmoil that she had been unable to sleep.

The wide heavens about her seemed to promise a greater freedom from doubt and questioning. Baynes had urged her to tell him that she loved him. A dozen times she thought that she might honestly give him the answer that he demanded. Korak fast was becoming but a memory. That he was dead she had come to believe, since otherwise he would have sought her out. She did not know that he had even better reason to believe her

dead, and that it was because of that belief he had made no effort to find her after his raid upon the village of Kovudoo.

Behind a great flowering shrub Hanson lay gazing at the stars and waiting. He had lain thus and there many nights before. For what was he waiting, or for whom? He heard the girl approaching, and half raised himself to his elbow. A dozen paces away, the reins looped over a fence post, stood his pony.

Meriem, walking slowly, approached the bush behind which the waiter lay. Hanson drew a large bandanna handkerchief from his pocket and rose stealthily to his knees. A pony neighed

down at the corrals. Far out across the plain a lion roared. Hanson changed his position until he squatted upon both feet, ready to come erect quickly.

Again the pony neighed—this time closer. There was the sound of his body brushing against shrubbery. Hanson heard and wondered how the animal had gotten from the corral, for it was evident that he was already in the garden. The man turned his head in the direction of the beast. What he saw sent him to the ground, huddled close beneath the shrubbery—a man was coming, leading two ponies.

Meriem heard now and stopped to look and listen. A moment later the Hon. Morison Baynes drew near, the two

saddled mounts at his heels.

Meriem looked up at him in surprise. The Hon. Morison grinned sheepishly.

"I couldn't sleep," he explained, "and was going for a bit of a ride when I chanced to see you out here, and I thought you'd like to join me. Ripping good sport, you know, night riding. Come on."

Meriem laughed. The adventure appealed to her.

"All right," she said.

Hanson swore beneath his breath. The two led their horses from the garden to the gate and through it. There they discovered Hanson's mount.

"Why here's the trader's pony,"

remarked Baynes.

"He's probably down visiting with the foreman," said Meriem.

"Pretty late for him, isn't it?" remarked the Hon. Morison. "I'd hate to have to ride back through that jungle at night to his camp."

As though to give weight to his apprehensions the distant lion roared again. The Hon. Morison shivered and glanced at the girl to note the effect of the uncanny sound upon her. She appeared not to have noticed it.

A moment later the two had mounted and were moving slowly across the moon-bathed plain. The girl turned her pony's head straight toward the jungle. It was in the direction of the roaring of the

hungry lion.

"Hadn't we better steer clear of that fellow?" suggested the Hon. Morison. "I guess you didn't hear him."

"Yes, I heard him," laughed Meriem. "Let's ride over and call on him."

The Hon. Morison laughed uneasily. He didn't care to appear at a disadvantage before this girl, nor did he care, either, to approach a hungry lion too closely at night. He carried his rifle in his saddle boot; but moonlight is an uncertain light to shoot by, nor ever had he faced a lion alone—even by day. The thought gave him a distinct nausea. The beast ceased his roaring now. They heard him no more and the Hon. Morison gained courage accordingly. They were

riding down wind toward the jungle. The lion lay in a little swale to their right. He was old. For two nights he had not fed, for no longer was his charge as swift or his spring as mighty as in the days of his prime when he spread terror among the creatures of his wild domain. For two nights and days he had gone empty, and for long time before that he had fed only upon carrion. He was old; but he was yet a terrible engine of destruction.

At the edge of the forest the Hon. Morison drew rein. He had no desire to go further. Numa, silent upon his padded feet, crept into the jungle beyond them. The wind, now, was blowing gently between him and his intended prey. He had come a long way in search of man,

for even in his youth he had tasted human flesh and while it was poor stuff by comparison with eland and zebra it was less difficult to kill. In Numa's estimation man was a slow-witted, slow- footed creature which commanded no respect unless accompanied by the acrid odor which spelled to the monarch's sensitive nostrils the great noise and the blinding flash of an express rifle.

He caught the dangerous scent tonight; but he was ravenous to madness. He would face a dozen rifles, if necessary, to fill his empty belly. He circled about into the forest that he might again be down wind from his victims, for should they get his scent he could not hope to

overtake them. Numa was famished; but he was old and crafty.

Deep in the jungle another caught faintly the scent of man and of Numa both. He raised his head and sniffed. He cocked it upon one side and listened.

"Come on," said Meriem, "let's ride in a way—the forest is wonderful at night. It is open enough to permit us to ride."

The Hon. Morison hesitated. He shrank from revealing his fear in the presence of the girl. A braver man, sure of his own position, would have had the courage to have refused uselessly to expose the girl to danger. He would not have thought of himself at all; but the egotism of the Hon. Morison required

that he think always of self first. He had planned the ride to get Meriem away from the bungalow. He wanted to talk to her alone and far enough away so should she take offense at his purposed suggestion he would have time in which to attempt to right himself in her eyes before they reached home. He had little doubt, of course, but that he should succeed; but it is to his credit that he did have some slight doubts.

"You needn't be afraid of the lion," said Meriem, noting his slight hesitancy. "There hasn't been a man eater around here for two years, Bwana says, and the game is so plentiful that there is no necessity to drive Numa to human flesh. Then, he has been so often hunted that he

rather keeps out of man's way."

"Oh, I'm not afraid of lions," replied the Hon. Morison. "I was just thinking what a beastly uncomfortable place a forest is to ride in. What with the underbrush and the low branches and all that, you know, it's not exactly cut out for pleasure riding."

"Let's go a-foot then," suggested Meriem, and started to dismount.

"Oh, no," cried the Hon. Morison, aghast at this suggestion. "Let's ride," and he reined his pony into the dark shadows of the wood. Behind him came Meriem and in front, prowling ahead waiting a favorable opportunity, skulked Numa, the lion.

Out upon the plain a lone horseman

muttered a low curse as he saw the two disappear from sight. It was Hanson. He had followed them from the bungalow. Their way led in the direction of his camp, so he had a ready and plausible excuse should they discover him; but they had not seen him for they had not turned their eyes behind.

Now he turned directly toward the spot at which they had entered the jungle. He no longer cared whether he was observed or not. There were two reasons for his indifference. The first was that he saw in Baynes' act a counterpart of his own planned abduction of the girl. In some way he might turn the thing to his own purposes. At least he would keep in touch with

them and make sure that Baynes did not get her. His other reason was based on his knowledge of an event that had transpired at his camp the previous night—an event which he had not mentioned at the bungalow for fear of drawing undesired attention to his movements and bringing the blacks of the big Bwana into dangerous intercourse with his own boys. He had told at the bungalow that half his men had deserted. That story might be quickly disproved should his boys and Bwana's grow confidential.

The event that he had failed to mention and which now urged him hurriedly after the girl and her escort had occurred during his absence early the preceding evening. His men had been

sitting around their camp fire, entirely encircled by a high, thorn boma, when, without the slightest warning, a huge lion had leaped amongst them and seized one of their number. It had been solely due to the loyalty and courage of his comrades that his life had been saved, and then only after a battle royal with the hunger-enraged beast had they been able to drive him off with burning brands, spears, and rifles.

From this Hanson knew that a man eater had wandered into the district or been developed by the aging of one of the many lions who ranged the plains and hills by night, or lay up in the cool wood by day. He had heard the roaring of a hungry lion not half an hour before,

and there was little doubt in his mind but that the man eater was stalking Meriem and Baynes. He cursed the Englishman for a fool, and spurred rapidly after them.

Meriem and Baynes had drawn up in a small, natural clearing. A hundred yards beyond them Numa lay crouching in the underbrush, his yellow-green eyes fixed upon his prey, the tip of his sinuous tail jerking spasmodically. He was measuring the distance between him and them. He was wondering if he dared venture a charge, or should he wait yet a little longer in the hope that they might ride straight into his jaws. He was very hungry; but also was he very crafty. He could not chance losing his meat by a

hasty and ill-considered rush. Had he waited the night before until the blacks slept he would not have been forced to go hungry for another twenty-four hours.

Behind him the other that had caught his scent and that of man together came to a sitting posture upon the branch of a tree in which he had reposed himself for slumber. Beneath him a lumbering gray hulk swayed to and fro in the darkness. The beast in the tree uttered a low guttural and dropped to the back of the gray mass. He whispered a word in one of the great ears and Tantor, the elephant, raised his trunk aloft, swinging it high and low to catch the scent that the word had warned him of. There was another whispered word—was it a

command?—and the lumbering beast wheeled into an awkward, yet silent shuffle, in the direction of Numa, the lion, and the stranger Tarmangani his rider had scented.

Onward they went, the scent of the lion and his prey becoming stronger and stronger. Numa was becoming impatient. How much longer must he wait for his meat to come his way? He lashed his tail viciously now. He almost growled. All unconscious of their danger the man and the girl sat talking in the little clearing.

Their horses were pressed side by side. Baynes had found Meriem's hand and was pressing it as he poured words of love into her ear, and Meriem was listening.

"Come to London with me," urged the Hon. Morison. "I can gather a safari and we can be a whole day upon the way to the coast before they guess that we have gone."

"Why must we go that way?" asked the girl. "Bwana and My Dear would not object to our marriage."

"I cannot marry you just yet," explained the Hon. Morison, "there are some formalities to be attended to first—you do not understand. It will be all right. We will go to London. I cannot wait. If you love me you will come. What of the apes you lived with? Did they bother about marriage? They love as we love. Had you stayed among them you would have mated as they mate. It is

the law of nature—no man-made law can abrogate the laws of God. What difference does it make if we love one another? What do we care for anyone in the world besides ourselves? I would give my life for you—will you give nothing for me?"

"You love me?" she said. "You will marry me when we have reached London?"

"I swear it," he cried.

"I will go with you," she whispered, "though I do not understand why it is necessary." She leaned toward him and he took her in his arms and bent to press his lips to hers.

At the same instant the head of a huge tusker poked through the trees that

fringed the clearing. The Hon. Morison and Meriem, with eyes and ears for one another alone, did not see or hear; but Numa did. The man upon Tantor's broad head saw the girl in the man's arms. It was Korak; but in the trim figure of the neatly garbed girl he did not recognize his Meriem. He only saw a Tarmangani with his she. And then Numa charged.

With a frightful roar, fearful lest Tantor had come to frighten away his prey, the great beast leaped from his hiding place. The earth trembled to his mighty voice. The ponies stood for an instant transfixed with terror. The Hon. Morison Baynes went white and cold. The lion was charging toward them full in the brilliant light of the magnificent

moon. The muscles of the Hon. Morison no longer obeyed his will—they flexed to the urge of a greater power—the power of Nature's first law. They drove his spurred heels deep into his pony's flanks, they bore the rein against the brute's neck that wheeled him with an impetuous drive toward the plain and safety.

The girl's pony, squealing in terror, reared and plunged upon the heels of his mate. The lion was close upon him. Only the girl was cool—the girl and the half-naked savage who bestrode the neck of his mighty mount and grinned at the exciting spectacle chance had staked for his enjoyment.

To Korak here were but two strange

Tarmangani pursued by Numa, who was empty. It was Numa's right to prey; but one was a she. Korak felt an intuitive urge to rush to her protection. Why, he could not guess. All Tarmangani were enemies now. He had lived too long a beast to feel strongly the humanitarian impulses that were inherent in him—yet feel them he did, for the girl at least.

He urged Tantor forward. He raised his heavy spear and hurled it at the flying target of the lion's body. The girl's pony had reached the trees upon the opposite side of the clearing. Here he would become easy prey to the swiftly moving lion; but Numa, infuriated, preferred the woman upon his back. It was for her he leaped.

Korak gave an exclamation of astonishment and approval as Numa landed upon the pony's rump and at the same instant the girl swung free of her mount to the branches of a tree above her.

Korak's spear struck Numa in the shoulder, knocking him from his precarious hold upon the frantically plunging horse. Freed of the weight of both girl and lion the pony raced ahead toward safety. Numa tore and struck at the missile in his shoulder but could not dislodge it. Then he resumed the chase.

Korak guided Tantor into the seclusion of the jungle. He did not wish to be seen, nor had he.

Hanson had almost reached the wood

when he heard the lion's terrific roars, and knew that the charge had come. An instant later the Hon. Morison broke upon his vision, racing like mad for safety. The man lay flat upon his pony's back hugging the animal's neck tightly with both arms and digging the spurs into his sides. An instant later the second pony appeared - riderless.

Hanson groaned as he guessed what had happened out of sight in the jungle. With an oath he spurred on in the hope of driving the lion from his prey - his rifle was ready in his hand. And then the lion came into view behind the girl's pony. Hanson could not understand. He knew that if Numa had succeeded in seizing the girl he would not have continued in

pursuit of the others.

He drew in his own mount, took quick aim and fired. The lion stopped in his tracks, turned and bit at his side, then rolled over dead. Hanson rode on into the forest, calling aloud to the girl.

"Here I am," came a quick response from the foliage of the trees just ahead. "Did you hit him?"

"Yes," replied Hanson. "Where are you? You had a mighty narrow escape. It will teach you to keep out of the jungle at night."

Together they returned to the plain where they found the Hon. Morison riding slowly back toward them. He explained that his pony had bolted and that he had had hard work stopping him

at all. Hanson grinned, for he recalled the pounding heels that he had seen driving sharp spurs into the flanks of Baynes' mount; but he said nothing of what he had seen. He took Meriem up behind him and the three rode in silence toward the bungalow.

CHAPTER 19

Behind them Korak emerged from the jungle and recovered his spear from Numa's side. He still was smiling. He had enjoyed the spectacle exceedingly. There was one thing that troubled him—the agility with which the she had clambered from her pony's back into the safety of the tree ABOVE her. That was more like mangani—more like his lost Meriem. He sighed. His lost Meriem! His little, dead Meriem! He wondered if this she stranger resembled his Meriem in other ways. A great longing to see her overwhelmed him. He looked after the three figures moving steadily across the plain. He wondered where might lie their destination. A desire to follow

them came over him, but he only stood there watching until they had disappeared in the distance. The sight of the civilized girl and the dapper, khaki clad Englishman had aroused in Korak memories long dormant.

Once he had dreamed of returning to the world of such as these; but with the death of Meriem hope and ambition seemed to have deserted him. He cared now only to pass the remainder of his life in solitude, as far from man as possible. With a sigh he turned slowly back into the jungle.

Tantor, nervous by nature, had been far from reassured by close proximity to the three strange whites, and with the report of Hanson's rifle had turned and

ambled away at his long, swinging shuffle. He was nowhere in sight when Korak returned to look for him. The ape-man, however, was little concerned by the absence of his friend. Tantor had a habit of wandering off unexpectedly. For a month they might not see one another, for Korak seldom took the trouble to follow the great pachyderm, nor did he upon this occasion. Instead he found a comfortable perch in a large tree and was soon asleep.

At the bungalow Bwana had met the returning adventurers on the verandah. In a moment of wakefulness he had heard the report of Hanson's rifle far out across the plain, and wondered what it might mean. Presently it had occurred to

him that the man whom he considered in the light of a guest might have met with an accident on his way back to camp, so he had arisen and gone to his foreman's quarters where he had learned that Hanson had been there earlier in the evening but had departed several hours before. Returning from the foreman's quarters Bwana had noticed that the corral gate was open and further investigation revealed the fact that Meriem's pony was gone and also the one most often used by Baynes. Instantly Bwana assumed that the shot had been fired by Hon. Morison, and had again aroused his foreman and was making preparations to set forth in investigation when he had seen the party approaching

across the plain.

Explanation on the part of the Englishman met a rather chilly reception from his host. Meriem was silent. She saw that Bwana was angry with her. It was the first time and she was heart broken.

"Go to your room, Meriem," he said; "and Baynes, if you will step into my study, I'd like to have a word with you in a moment."

He stepped toward Hanson as the others turned to obey him. There was something about Bwana even in his gentlest moods that commanded instant obedience.

"How did you happen to be with them, Hanson?" he asked.

"I'd been sitting in the garden," replied the trader, "after leaving Jervis' quarters. I have a habit of doing that as your lady probably knows. Tonight I fell asleep behind a bush, and was awakened by them two spooning. I couldn't hear what they said, but presently Baynes brings two ponies and they ride off. I didn't like to interfere for it wasn't any of my business, but I knew they hadn't ought to be ridin' about that time of night, leastways not the girl—it wasn't right and it wasn't safe. So I follows them and it's just as well I did. Baynes was gettin' away from the lion as fast as he could, leavin' the girl to take care of herself, when I got a lucky shot into the beast's shoulder that fixed him."

Hanson paused. Both men were silent for a time. Presently the trader coughed in an embarrassed manner as though there was something on his mind he felt in duty bound to say, but hated to.

"What is it, Hanson?" asked Bwana. "You were about to say something weren't you?"

"Well, you see it's like this," ventured Hanson. "Bein' around here evenings a good deal I've seen them two together a lot, and, beggin' your pardon, sir, but I don't think Mr. Baynes means the girl any good. I've overheard enough to make me think he's tryin' to get her to run off with him." Hanson, to fit his own ends, hit nearer the truth than he knew. He was afraid that Baynes would interfere with

his own plans, and he had hit upon a scheme to both utilize the young Englishman and get rid of him at the same time.

"And I thought," continued the trader, "that inasmuch as I'm about due to move you might like to suggest to Mr. Baynes that he go with me. I'd be willin' to take him north to the caravan trails as a favor to you, sir."

Bwana stood in deep thought for a moment. Presently he looked up.

"Of course, Hanson, Mr. Baynes is my guest," he said, a grim twinkle in his eye. "Really I cannot accuse him of planning to run away with Meriem on the evidence that we have, and as he is my guest I should hate to be so discourteous

as to ask him to leave; but, if I recall his words correctly, it seems to me that he has spoken of returning home, and I am sure that nothing would delight him more than going north with you—you say you start tomorrow? I think Mr. Baynes will accompany you. Drop over in the morning, if you please, and now good night, and thank you for keeping a watchful eye on Meriem."

Hanson hid a grin as he turned and sought his saddle. Bwana stepped from the verandah to his study, where he found the Hon. Morison pacing back and forth, evidently very ill at ease.

"Baynes," said Bwana, coming directly to the point, "Hanson is leaving for the north tomorrow. He has taken a

great fancy to you, and just asked me to say to you that he'd be glad to have you accompany him. Good night, Baynes."

At Bwana's suggestion Meriem kept to her room the following morning until after the Hon. Morison Baynes had departed. Hanson had come for him early - in fact he had remained all night with the foreman, Jervis, that they might get an early start.

The farewell exchanges between the Hon. Morison and his host were of the most formal type, and when at last the guest rode away Bwana breathed a sigh of relief. It had been an unpleasant duty and he was glad that it was over; but he did not regret his action. He had not been blind to Baynes' infatuation for

Meriem, and knowing the young man's pride in caste he had never for a moment believed that his guest would offer his name to this nameless Arab girl, for, extremely light in color though she was for a full blood Arab, Bwana believed her to be such.

He did not mention the subject again to Meriem, and in this he made a mistake, for the young girl, while realizing the debt of gratitude she owed Bwana and My Dear, was both proud and sensitive, so that Bwana's action in sending Baynes away and giving her no opportunity to explain or defend hurt and mortified her. Also it did much toward making a martyr of Baynes in her eyes and arousing in her breast a keen feeling

of loyalty toward him.

What she had half-mistaken for love before, she now wholly mistook for love. Bwana and My Dear might have told her much of the social barriers that they only too well knew Baynes must feel existed between Meriem and himself, but they hesitated to wound her. It would have been better had they inflicted this lesser sorrow, and saved the child the misery that was to follow because of her ignorance.

As Hanson and Baynes rode toward the former's camp the Englishman maintained a morose silence. The other was attempting to formulate an opening that would lead naturally to the proposition he had in mind. He rode a

neck behind his companion, grinning as he noted the sullen scowl upon the other's patrician face.

"Rather rough on you, wasn't he?" he ventured at last, jerking his head back in the direction of the bungalow as Baynes turned his eyes upon him at the remark. "He thinks a lot of the girl," continued Hanson, "and don't want nobody to marry her and take her away; but it looks to me as though he was doin' her more harm than good in sendin' you away. She ought to marry some time, and she couldn't do better than a fine young gentleman like you."

Baynes, who had at first felt inclined to take offense at the mention of his private affairs by this common fellow,

was mollified by Hanson's final remark, and immediately commenced to see in him a man of fine discrimination.

"He's a darned bounder," grumbled the Hon. Morison; "but I'll get even with him. He may be the whole thing in Central Africa but I'm as big as he is in London, and he'll find it out when he comes home."

"If I was you," said Hanson, "I wouldn't let any man keep me from gettin' the girl I want. Between you and me I ain't got no use for him either, and if I can help you any way just call on me."

"It's mighty good of you, Hanson," replied Baynes, warming up a bit; "but what can a fellow do here in this God-forsaken hole?"

"I know what I'd do," said Hanson. "I'd take the girl along with me. If she loves you she'll go, all right."

"It can't be done," said Baynes. "He bosses this whole blooming country for miles around. He'd be sure to catch us."

"No, he wouldn't, not with me running things," said Hanson. "I've been trading and hunting here for ten years and I know as much about the country as he does. If you want to take the girl along I'll help you, and I'll guarantee that there won't nobody catch up with us before we reach the coast. I'll tell you what, you write her a note and I'll get it to her by my head man. Ask her to meet you to say goodbye —she won't refuse that. In the meantime we can be movin' camp a little further

north all the time and you can make arrangements with her to be all ready on a certain night. Tell her I'll meet her then while you wait for us in camp. That'll be better for I know the country well and can cover it quicker than you. You can take care of the safari and be movin' along slow toward the north and the girl and I'll catch up to you."

"But suppose she won't come?" suggested Baynes.

"Then make another date for a last good-bye," said Hanson, "and instead of you I'll be there and I'll bring her along anyway. She'll have to come, and after it's all over she won't feel so bad about it—especially after livin' with you for two months while we're makin' the

coast."

A shocked and angry protest rose to Baynes' lips; but he did not utter it, for almost simultaneously came the realization that this was practically the same thing he had been planning upon himself. It had sounded brutal and criminal from the lips of the rough trader; but nevertheless the young Englishman saw that with Hanson's help and his knowledge of African travel the possibilities of success would be much greater than as though the Hon. Morison were to attempt the thing single handed. And so he nodded a glum assent.

The balance of the long ride to Hanson's northerly camp was made in silence, for both men were occupied

with their own thoughts, most of which were far from being either complimentary or loyal to the other. As they rode through the wood the sounds of their careless passage came to the ears of another jungle wayfarer. The Killer had determined to come back to the place where he had seen the white girl who took to the trees with the ability of long habitude. There was a compelling something in the recollection of her that drew him irresistibly toward her. He wished to see her by the light of day, to see her features, to see the color of her eyes and hair. It seemed to him that she must bear a strong resemblance to his lost Meriem, and yet he knew that the chances were that she did not. The

fleeting glimpse that he had had of her in the moonlight as she swung from the back of her plunging pony into the branches of the tree above her had shown him a girl of about the same height as his Meriem; but of a more rounded and developed femininity.

Now he was moving lazily back in the direction of the spot where he had seen the girl when the sounds of the approaching horsemen came to his sharp ears. He moved stealthily through the branches until he came within sight of the riders. The younger man he instantly recognized as the same he had seen with his arms about the girl in the moonlit glade just the instant before Numa charged. The other he did not recognize

though there was a familiarity about his carriage and figure that puzzled Korak.

The ape-man decided that to find the girl again he would but have to keep in touch with the young Englishman, and so he fell in behind the pair, following them to Hanson's camp. Here the Hon. Morison penned a brief note, which Hanson gave into the keeping of one of his boys who started off forthwith toward the south.

Korak remained in the vicinity of the camp, keeping a careful watch upon the Englishman. He had half expected to find the girl at the destination of the two riders and had been disappointed when no sign of her materialized about the camp.

Baynes was restless, pacing back and forth beneath the trees when he should have been resting against the forced marches of the coming flight. Hanson lay in his hammock and smoked. They spoke but little. Korak lay stretched upon a branch among the dense foliage above them. Thus passed the balance of the afternoon. Korak became hungry and thirsty. He doubted that either of the men would leave camp now before morning, so he withdrew, but toward the south, for there it seemed most likely the girl still was.

In the garden beside the bungalow Meriem wandered thoughtfully in the moonlight. She still smarted from Bwana's, to her, unjust treatment of the

Hon. Morison Baynes. Nothing had been explained to her, for both Bwana and My Dear had wished to spare her the mortification and sorrow of the true explanation of Baynes' proposal. They knew, as Meriem did not, that the man had no intention of marrying her, else he would have come directly to Bwana, knowing full well that no objection would be interposed if Meriem really cared for him.

Meriem loved them both and was grateful to them for all that they had done for her; but deep in her little heart surged the savage love of liberty that her years of untrammeled freedom in the jungle had made part and parcel of her being. Now, for the first time since she had

come to them, Meriem felt like a prisoner in the bungalow of Bwana and My Dear.

Like a caged tigress the girl paced the length of the enclosure. Once she paused near the outer fence, her head upon one side—listening. What was it she had heard? The pad of naked human feet just beyond the garden. She listened for a moment. The sound was not repeated. Then she resumed her restless walking. Down to the opposite end of the garden she passed, turned and retraced her steps toward the upper end. Upon the sward near the bushes that hid the fence, full in the glare of the moonlight, lay a white envelope that had not been there when she had turned almost upon the very spot

a moment before.

Meriem stopped short in her tracks, listening again, and sniffing— more than ever the tigress; alert, ready. Beyond the bushes a naked black runner squatted, peering through the foliage. He saw her take a step closer to the letter. She had seen it. He rose quietly and following the shadows of the bushes that ran down to the corral was soon gone from sight.

Meriem's trained ears heard his every move. She made no attempt to seek closer knowledge of his identity. Already she had guessed that he was a messenger from the Hon. Morison. She stooped and picked up the envelope. Tearing it open she easily read the contents by the moon's brilliant light. It

was, as she had guessed, from Baynes.

"I cannot go without seeing you again," it read. "Come to the clearing early tomorrow morning and say good-bye to me. Come alone."

There was a little more—words that made her heart beat faster and a happy flush mount her cheek.

CHAPTER 20

It was still dark when the Hon. Morison Baynes set forth for the trysting place. He insisted upon having a guide, saying that he was not sure that he could find his way back to the little clearing. As a matter of fact the thought of that lonely ride through the darkness before the sun rose had been too much for his courage, and he craved company. A black, therefore, preceded him on foot. Behind and above him came Korak, whom the noise in the camp had awakened.

It was nine o'clock before Baynes drew rein in the clearing. Meriem had not yet arrived. The black lay down to rest. Baynes lolled in his saddle. Korak

stretched himself comfortably upon a lofty limb, where he could watch those beneath him without being seen.

An hour passed. Baynes gave evidence of nervousness. Korak had already guessed that the young Englishman had come here to meet another, nor was he at all in doubt as to the identity of that other. The Killer was perfectly satisfied that he was soon again to see the nimble she who had so forcefully reminded him of Meriem.

Presently the sound of an approaching horse came to Korak's ears. She was coming! She had almost reached the clearing before Baynes became aware of her presence, and then as he looked up, the foliage parted to the head and

shoulders of her mount and Meriem rode into view. Baynes spurred to meet her. Korak looked searchingly down upon her, mentally anathematizing the broad-brimmed hat that hid her features from his eyes. She was abreast the Englishman now. Korak saw the man take both her hands and draw her close to his breast. He saw the man's face concealed for a moment beneath the same broad brim that hid the girl's. He could imagine their lips meeting, and a twinge of sorrow and sweet recollection combined to close his eyes for an instant in that involuntary muscular act with which we attempt to shut out from the mind's eye harrowing reflections.

When he looked again they had drawn

apart and were conversing earnestly. Korak could see the man urging something. It was equally evident that the girl was holding back. There were many of her gestures, and the way in which she tossed her head up and to the right, tip-tilting her chin, that reminded Korak still more strongly of Meriem. And then the conversation was over and the man took the girl in his arms again to kiss her good-bye. She turned and rode toward the point from which she had come. The man sat on his horse watching her. At the edge of the jungle she turned to wave him a final farewell.

"Tonight!" she cried, throwing back her head as she called the words to him across the little distance which

separated them—throwing back her head and revealing her face for the first time to the eyes of The Killer in the tree above. Korak started as though pierced through the heart with an arrow. He trembled and shook like a leaf. He closed his eyes, pressing his palms across them, and then he opened them again and looked but the girl was gone - only the waving foliage of the jungle's rim marked where she had disappeared. It was impossible! It could not be true! And yet, with his own eyes he had seen his Meriem—older a little, with figure more rounded by nearer maturity, and subtly changed in other ways; more beautiful than ever, yet still his little Meriem. Yes, he had seen the dead alive

again; he had seen his Meriem in the flesh. She lived! She had not died! He had seen her—he had seen his Meriem—IN THE ARMS OF ANOTHER MAN! And that man sat below him now, within easy reach. Korak, The Killer, fondled his heavy spear. He played with the grass rope dangling from his gee-string. He stroked the hunting knife at his hip. And the man beneath him called to his drowsy guide, bent the rein to his pony's neck and moved off toward the north. Still sat Korak, The Killer, alone among the trees. Now his hands hung idly at his sides. His weapons and what he had intended were forgotten for the moment. Korak was thinking. He had noted that subtle change in Meriem.

When last he had seen her she had been his little, half-naked Mangani— wild, savage, and uncouth. She had not seemed uncouth to him then; but now, in the change that had come over her, he knew that such she had been; yet no more uncouth than he, and he was still uncouth.

In her had taken place the change. In her he had just seen a sweet and lovely flower of refinement and civilization, and he shuddered as he recalled the fate that he himself had planned for her—to be the mate of an ape-man, his mate, in the savage jungle. Then he had seen no wrong in it, for he had loved her, and the way he had planned had been the way of the jungle which they two had chosen as

their home; but now, after having seen the Meriem of civilized attire, he realized the hideousness of his once cherished plan, and he thanked God that chance and the blacks of Kovudoo had thwarted him.

Yet he still loved her, and jealousy seared his soul as he recalled the sight of her in the arms of the dapper young Englishman. What were his intentions toward her? Did he really love her? How could one not love her? And she loved him, of that Korak had had ample proof. Had she not loved him she would not have accepted his kisses. His Meriem loved another! For a long time he let that awful truth sink deep, and from it he tried to reason out his future

plan of action. In his heart was a great desire to follow the man and slay him; but ever there rose in his consciousness the thought: She loves him. Could he slay the creature Meriem loved? Sadly he shook his head. No, he could not. Then came a partial decision to follow Meriem and speak with her. He half started, and then glanced down at his nakedness and was ashamed. He, the son of a British peer, had thus thrown away his life, had thus degraded himself to the level of a beast that he was ashamed to go to the woman he loved and lay his love at her feet. He was ashamed to go to the little Arab maid who had been his jungle playmate, for what had he to offer her?

For years circumstances had prevented a return to his father and mother, and at last pride had stepped in and expunged from his mind the last vestige of any intention to return. In a spirit of boyish adventure he had cast his lot with the jungle ape. The killing of the crook in the coast inn had filled his childish mind with terror of the law, and driven him deeper into the wilds. The rebuffs that he had met at the hands of men, both black and white, had had their effect upon his mind while yet it was in a formative state, and easily influenced.

He had come to believe that the hand of man was against him, and then he had found in Meriem the only human association he required or craved. When

she had been snatched from him his sorrow had been so deep that the thought of ever mingling again with human beings grew still more unutterably distasteful. Finally and for all time, he thought, the die was cast. Of his own volition he had become a beast, a beast he had lived, a beast he would die.

Now that it was too late, he regretted it. For now Meriem, still living, had been revealed to him in a guise of progress and advancement that had carried her completely out of his life. Death itself could not have further removed her from him. In her new world she loved a man of her own kind. And Korak knew that it was right. She was not for him—not for the naked, savage

ape. No, she was not for him; but he still was hers. If he could not have her and happiness, he would at least do all that lay in his power to assure happiness to her. He would follow the young Englishman. In the first place he would know that he meant Meriem no harm, and after that, though jealously wrenched his heart, he would watch over the man Meriem loved, for Meriem's sake; but God help that man if he thought to wrong her!

Slowly he aroused himself. He stood erect and stretched his great frame, the muscles of his arms gliding sinuously beneath his tanned skin as he bent his clenched fists behind his head. A movement on the ground beneath caught

his eye. An antelope was entering the clearing. Immediately Korak became aware that he was empty—again he was a beast. For a moment love had lifted him to sublime heights of honor and renunciation.

The antelope was crossing the clearing. Korak dropped to the ground upon the opposite side of the tree, and so lightly that not even the sensitive ears of the antelope apprehended his presence. He uncoiled his grass rope - it was the latest addition to his armament, yet he was proficient with it. Often he traveled with nothing more than his knife and his rope—they were light and easy to carry. His spear and bow and arrows were cumbersome and he usually kept one or

all of them hidden away in a private cache.

Now he held a single coil of the long rope in his right hand, and the balance in his left. The antelope was but a few paces from him. Silently Korak leaped from his hiding place swinging the rope free from the entangling shrubbery. The antelope sprang away almost instantly; but instantly, too, the coiled rope, with its sliding noose, flew through the air above him. With unerring precision it settled about the creature's neck. There was a quick wrist movement of the thrower, the noose tightened. The Killer braced himself with the rope across his hip, and as the antelope tautened the singing strands in a last frantic bound for

liberty he was thrown over upon his back.

Then, instead of approaching the fallen animal as a roper of the western plains might do, Korak dragged his captive to himself, pulling him in hand over hand, and when he was within reach leaping upon him even as Sheeta the panther might have done, and burying his teeth in the animal's neck while he found its heart with the point of his hunting knife. Recoiling his rope, he cut a few generous strips from his kill and took to the trees again, where he ate in peace. Later he swung off in the direction of a nearby water hole, and then he slept.

In his mind, of course, was the

suggestion of another meeting between Meriem and the young Englishman that had been borne to him by the girl's parting: "Tonight!"

He had not followed Meriem because he knew from the direction from which she had come and in which she returned that wheresoever she had found an asylum it lay out across the plains and not wishing to be discovered by the girl he had not cared to venture into the open after her. It would do as well to keep in touch with the young man, and that was precisely what he intended doing.

To you or me the possibility of locating the Hon. Morison in the jungle after having permitted him to get such a considerable start might have seemed

remote; but to Korak it was not at all so. He guessed that the white man would return to his camp; but should he have done otherwise it would be a simple matter to The Killer to trail a mounted man accompanied by another on foot. Days might pass and still such a spoor would be sufficiently plain to lead Korak unfalteringly to its end; while a matter of a few hours only left it as clear to him as though the makers themselves were still in plain sight.

And so it came that a few minutes after the Hon. Morison Baynes entered the camp to be greeted by Hanson, Korak slipped noiselessly into a near-by tree. There he lay until late afternoon and still the young Englishman made no

move to leave camp. Korak wondered if Meriem were coming there. A little later Hanson and one of his black boys rode out of camp. Korak merely noted the fact. He was not particularly interested in what any other member of the company than the young Englishman did.

Darkness came and still the young man remained. He ate his evening meal, afterward smoking numerous cigarettes. Presently he began to pace back and forth before his tent. He kept his boy busy replenishing the fire. A lion coughed and he went into his tent to reappear with an express rifle. Again he admonished the boy to throw more brush upon the fire. Korak saw that he was nervous and afraid, and his lip curled in

a sneer of contempt.

Was this the creature who had supplanted him in the heart of his Meriem? Was this a man, who trembled when Numa coughed? How could such as he protect Meriem from the countless dangers of the jungle? Ah, but he would not have to. They would live in the safety of European civilization, where men in uniforms were hired to protect them. What need had a European of prowess to protect his mate? Again the sneer curled Korak's lip.

Hanson and his boy had ridden directly to the clearing. It was already dark when they arrived. Leaving the boy there Hanson rode to the edge of the plain, leading the boy's horse. There he

waited. It was nine o'clock before he saw a solitary figure galloping toward him from the direction of the bungalow. A few moments later Meriem drew in her mount beside him. She was nervous and flushed. When she recognized Hanson she drew back, startled.

"Mr. Baynes' horse fell on him and sprained his ankle," Hanson hastened to explain. "He couldn't very well come so he sent me to meet you and bring you to camp."

The girl could not see in the darkness the gloating, triumphant expression on the speaker's face.

"We had better hurry," continued Hanson, "for we'll have to move along pretty fast if we don't want to be

overtaken."

"Is he hurt badly?" asked Meriem.

"Only a little sprain," replied Hanson. "He can ride all right; but we both thought he'd better lie up tonight, and rest, for he'll have plenty hard riding in the next few weeks."

"Yes," agreed the girl.

Hanson swung his pony about and Meriem followed him. They rode north along the edge of the jungle for a mile and then turned straight into it toward the west. Meriem, following, payed little attention to directions. She did not know exactly where Hanson's camp lay and so she did not guess that he was not leading her toward it. All night they rode, straight toward the west. When morning

came, Hanson permitted a short halt for breakfast, which he had provided in well-filled saddle bags before leaving his camp. Then they pushed on again, nor did they halt a second time until in the heat of the day he stopped and motioned the girl to dismount.

"We will sleep here for a time and let the ponies graze," he said.

"I had no idea the camp was so far away," said Meriem.

"I left orders that they were to move on at day break," explained the trader, "so that we could get a good start. I knew that you and I could easily overtake a laden safari. It may not be until tomorrow that we'll catch up with them."

But though they traveled part of the night and all the following day no sign of the safari appeared ahead of them. Meriem, an adept in jungle craft, knew that none had passed ahead of them for many days. Occasionally she saw indications of an old spoor, a very old spoor, of many men. For the most part they followed this well- marked trail along elephant paths and through park-like groves. It was an ideal trail for rapid traveling.

Meriem at last became suspicious. Gradually the attitude of the man at her side had begun to change. Often she surprised him devouring her with his eyes. Steadily the former sensation of previous acquaintanceship urged itself

upon her. Somewhere, sometime before she had known this man. It was evident that he had not shaved for several days. A blonde stubble had commenced to cover his neck and cheeks and chin, and with it the assurance that he was no stranger continued to grow upon the girl.

It was not until the second day, however, that Meriem rebelled. She drew in her pony at last and voiced her doubts. Hanson assured her that the camp was but a few miles further on.

"We should have overtaken them yesterday," he said. "They must have marched much faster than I had believed possible."

"They have not marched here at all," said Meriem. "The spoor that we have

been following is weeks old."

Hanson laughed.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" he cried. "Why didn't you say so before? I could have easily explained. We are not coming by the same route; but we'll pick up their trail sometime today, even if we don't overtake them."

Now, at last, Meriem knew the man was lying to her. What a fool he must be to think that anyone could believe such a ridiculous explanation? Who was so stupid as to believe that they could have expected to overtake another party, and he had certainly assured her that momentarily he expected to do so, when that party's route was not to meet theirs for several miles yet?

She kept her own counsel however, planning to escape at the first opportunity when she might have a sufficient start of her captor, as she now considered him, to give her some assurance of outdistancing him. She watched his face continually when she could without being observed. Tantalizingly the placing of his familiar features persisted in eluding her. Where had she known him? Under what conditions had they met before she had seen him about the farm of Bwana? She ran over in her mind all the few white men she ever had known. There were some who had come to her father's douar in the jungle. Few it is true, but there had been some. Ah, now she had it! She had

seen him there! She almost seized upon his identity and then in an instant, it had slipped from her again.

It was mid afternoon when they suddenly broke out of the jungle upon the banks of a broad and placid river. Beyond, upon the opposite shore, Meriem described a camp surrounded by a high, thorn boma.

"Here we are at last," said Hanson. He drew his revolver and fired in the air. Instantly the camp across the river was astir. Black men ran down the river's bank. Hanson hailed them. But there was no sign of the Hon. Morison Baynes.

In accordance with their master's instructions the blacks manned a canoe

and rowed across. Hanson placed Meriem in the little craft and entered it himself, leaving two boys to watch the horses, which the canoe was to return for and swim across to the camp side of the river.

Once in the camp Meriem asked for Baynes. For the moment her fears had been allayed by the sight of the camp, which she had come to look upon as more or less a myth. Hanson pointed toward the single tent that stood in the center of the enclosure.

"There," he said, and preceded her toward it. At the entrance he held the flap aside and motioned her within. Meriem entered and looked about. The tent was empty. She turned toward

Hanson. There was a broad grin on his face.

"Where is Mr. Baynes?" she demanded.

"He ain't here," replied Hanson. "Leastwise I don't see him, do you? But I'm here, and I'm a damned sight better man than that thing ever was. You don't need him no more—you got me," and he laughed uproariously and reached for her.

Meriem struggled to free herself. Hanson encircled her arms and body in his powerful grip and bore her slowly backward toward the pile of blankets at the far end of the tent. His face was bent close to hers. His eyes were narrowed to two slits of heat and passion and

desire. Meriem was looking full into his face as she fought for freedom when there came over her a sudden recollection of a similar scene in which she had been a participant and with it full recognition of her assailant. He was the Swede Malbihn who had attacked her once before, who had shot his companion who would have saved her, and from whom she had been rescued by Bwana. His smooth face had deceived her; but now with the growing beard and the similarity of conditions recognition came swift and sure.

But today there would be no Bwana to save her.

CHAPTER 21

The black boy whom Malbihn had left awaiting him in the clearing with instructions to remain until he returned sat crouched at the foot of a tree for an hour when he was suddenly startled by the coughing grunt of a lion behind him. With celerity born of the fear of death the boy clambered into the branches of the tree, and a moment later the king of beasts entered the clearing and approached the carcass of an antelope which, until now, the boy had not seen.

Until daylight the beast fed, while the black clung, sleepless, to his perch, wondering what had become of his master and the two ponies. He had been with Malbihn for a year, and so was

fairly conversant with the character of the white. His knowledge presently led him to believe that he had been purposely abandoned. Like the balance of Malbihn's followers, this boy hated his master cordially—fear being the only bond that held him to the white man. His present uncomfortable predicament but added fuel to the fires of his hatred.

As the sun rose the lion withdrew into the jungle and the black descended from his tree and started upon his long journey back to camp. In his primitive brain revolved various fiendish plans for a revenge that he would not have the courage to put into effect when the test came and he stood face to face with one of the dominant race.

A mile from the clearing he came upon the spoor of two ponies crossing his path at right angles. A cunning look entered the black's eyes. He laughed uproariously and slapped his thighs.

Negroes are tireless gossipers, which, of course, is but a roundabout way of saying that they are human. Malbihn's boys had been no exception to the rule and as many of them had been with him at various times during the past ten years there was little about his acts and life in the African wilds that was not known directly or by hearsay to them all.

And so, knowing his master and many of his past deeds, knowing, too, a great deal about the plans of Malbihn and Baynes that had been overheard by

himself, or other servants; and knowing well from the gossip of the head-men that half of Malbihn's party lay in camp by the great river far to the west, it was not difficult for the boy to put two and two together and arrive at four as the sum—the four being represented by a firm conviction that his master had deceived the other white man and taken the latter's woman to his western camp, leaving the other to suffer capture and punishment at the hands of the Big Bwana whom all feared. Again the boy bared his rows of big, white teeth and laughed aloud. Then he resumed his northward way, traveling at a dogged trot that ate up the miles with marvelous rapidity.

In the Swede's camp the Hon. Morison had spent an almost sleepless night of nervous apprehension and doubts and fears. Toward morning he had slept, utterly exhausted. It was the headman who awoke him shortly after sun rise to remind him that they must at once take up their northward journey. Baynes hung back. He wanted to wait for "Hanson" and Meriem. The headman urged upon him the danger that lay in loitering. The fellow knew his master's plans sufficiently well to understand that he had done something to arouse the ire of the Big Bwana and that it would fare ill with them all if they were overtaken in Big Bwana's country. At the suggestion Baynes took alarm.

What if the Big Bwana, as the headman called him, had surprised "Hanson" in his nefarious work. Would he not guess the truth and possibly be already on the march to overtake and punish him? Baynes had heard much of his host's summary method of dealing out punishment to malefactors great and small who transgressed the laws or customs of his savage little world which lay beyond the outer ramparts of what men are pleased to call frontiers. In this savage world where there was no law the Big Bwana was law unto himself and all who dwelt about him. It was even rumored that he had extracted the death penalty from a white man who had maltreated a native girl.

Baynes shuddered at the recollection of this piece of gossip as he wondered what his host would exact of the man who had attempted to steal his young, white ward. The thought brought him to his feet.

"Yes," he said, nervously, "we must get away from here at once. Do you know the trail to the north?"

The head-man did, and he lost no time in getting the safari upon the march.

It was noon when a tired and sweat-covered runner overtook the trudging little column. The man was greeted with shouts of welcome from his fellows, to whom he imparted all that he knew and guessed of the actions of their master, so that the entire safari was aware of

matters before Baynes, who marched close to the head of the column, was reached and acquainted with the facts and the imaginings of the black boy whom Malbihn had deserted in the clearing the night before.

When the Hon. Morison had listened to all that the boy had to say and realized that the trader had used him as a tool whereby he himself might get Meriem into his possession, his blood ran hot with rage and he trembled with apprehension for the girl's safety.

That another contemplated no worse a deed than he had contemplated in no way palliated the hideousness of the other's offense. At first it did not occur to him that he would have wronged Meriem no

less than he believed "Hanson" contemplated wronging her. Now his rage was more the rage of a man beaten at his own game and robbed of the prize that he had thought already his.

"Do you know where your master has gone?" he asked the black.

"Yes, Bwana," replied the boy. "He has gone to the other camp beside the big afi that flows far toward the setting sun.

"Can you take me to him?" demanded Baynes.

The boy nodded affirmatively. Here he saw a method of revenging himself upon his hated Bwana and at the same time of escaping the wrath of the Big Bwana whom all were positive would first follow after the northerly safari.

"Can you and I, alone, reach his camp?" asked the Hon. Morison.

"Yes, Bwana," assured the black.

Baynes turned toward the head-man. He was conversant with "Hanson's" plans now. He understood why he had wished to move the northern camp as far as possible toward the northern boundary of the Big Bwana's country—it would give him far more time to make his escape toward the West Coast while the Big Bwana was chasing the northern contingent. Well, he would utilize the man's plans to his own end. He, too, must keep out of the clutches of his host.

"You may take the men north as fast as possible," he said to the head-man. "I shall return and attempt to lead the Big

Bwana to the west."

The Negro assented with a grunt. He had no desire to follow this strange white man who was afraid at night; he had less to remain at the tender mercies of the Big Bwana's lusty warriors, between whom and his people there was long-standing blood feud; and he was more than delighted, into the bargain, for a legitimate excuse for deserting his much hated Swede master. He knew a way to the north and his own country that the white men did not know—a short cut across an arid plateau where lay water holes of which the white hunters and explorers that had passed from time to time the fringe of the dry country had never dreamed. He might even elude the

Big Bwana should he follow them, and with this thought uppermost in his mind he gathered the remnants of Malbihn's safari into a semblance of order and moved off toward the north. And toward the southwest the black boy led the Hon. Morison Baynes into the jungles.

Korak had waited about the camp, watching the Hon. Morison until the safari had started north. Then, assured that the young Englishman was going in the wrong direction to meet Meriem he had abandoned him and returned slowly to the point where he had seen the girl, for whom his heart yearned, in the arms of another.

So great had been his happiness at seeing Meriem alive that, for the instant,

no thought of jealousy had entered his mind. Later these thoughts had come—dark, bloody thoughts that would have made the flesh of the Hon. Morison creep could he have guessed that they were revolving in the brain of a savage creature creeping stealthily among the branches of the forest giant beneath which he waited the coming of "Hanson" and the girl.

And with passing of the hours had come subdued reflection in which he had weighed himself against the trimly clad English gentleman and—found that he was wanting. What had he to offer her by comparison with that which the other man might offer? What was his "mess of pottage" to the birthright that the other

had preserved? How could he dare go, naked and unkempt, to that fair thing who had once been his jungle-fellow and propose the thing that had been in his mind when first the realization of his love had swept over him? He shuddered as he thought of the irreparable wrong that his love would have done the innocent child but for the chance that had snatched her from him before it was too late. Doubtless she knew now the horror that had been in his mind. Doubtless she hated and loathed him as he hated and loathed himself when he let his mind dwell upon it. He had lost her. No more surely had she been lost when he thought her dead than she was in reality now that he had seen her living—living in the

guise of a refinement that had transfigured and sanctified her.

He had loved her before, now he worshipped her. He knew that he might never possess her now, but at least he might see her. From a distance he might look upon her. Perhaps he might serve her; but never must she guess that he had found her or that he lived.

He wondered if she ever thought of him—if the happy days that they had spent together never recurred to her mind. It seemed unbelievable that such could be the case, and yet, too, it seemed almost equally unbelievable that this beautiful girl was the same disheveled, half naked, little sprite who skipped nimbly among the branches of the trees

as they ran and played in the lazy, happy days of the past. It could not be that her memory held more of the past than did her new appearance.

It was a sad Korak who ranged the jungle near the plain's edge waiting for the coming of his Meriem—the Meriem who never came.

But there came another—a tall, broad-shouldered man in khaki at the head of a swarthy crew of ebon warriors. The man's face was set in hard, stern lines and the marks of sorrow were writ deep about his mouth and eyes—so deep that the set expression of rage upon his features could not obliterate them.

Korak saw the man pass beneath him

where he hid in the great tree that had harbored him before upon the edge of that fateful little clearing. He saw him come and he set rigid and frozen and suffering above him. He saw him search the ground with his keen eyes, and he only sat there watching with eyes that glazed from the intensity of his gaze. He saw him sign to his men that he had come upon that which he sought and he saw him pass out of sight toward the north, and still Korak sat like a graven image, with a heart that bled in dumb misery. An hour later Korak moved slowly away, back into the jungle toward the west. He went listlessly, with bent head and stooped shoulders, like an old man who bore upon his back the

weight of a great sorrow.

Baynes, following his black guide, battled his way through the dense underbrush, riding stooped low over his horse's neck, or often he dismounted where the low branches swept too close to earth to permit him to remain in the saddle. The black was taking him the shortest way, which was no way at all for a horseman, and after the first day's march the young Englishman was forced to abandon his mount, and follow his nimble guide entirely on foot.

During the long hours of marching the Hon. Morison had much time to devote to thought, and as he pictured the probable fate of Meriem at the hands of the Swede his rage against the man

became the greater. But presently there came to him a realization of the fact that his own base plans had led the girl into this terrible predicament, and that even had she escaped "Hanson" she would have found but little better deserts awaiting her with him.

There came too, the realization that Meriem was infinitely more precious to him than he had imagined. For the first time he commenced to compare her with other women of his acquaintance—women of birth and position —and almost to his surprise—he discovered that the young Arab girl suffered less than they by the comparison. And then from hating "Hanson" he came to look upon himself with hate and loathing—to

see himself and his perfidious act in all their contemptible hideousness.

Thus, in the crucible of shame amidst the white heat of naked truths, the passion that the man had felt for the girl he had considered his social inferior was transmuted into love. And as he staggered on there burned within him beside his newborn love another great passion—the passion of hate urging him on to the consummation of revenge.

A creature of ease and luxury, he had never been subjected to the hardships and tortures which now were his constant companionship, yet, his clothing torn, his flesh scratched and bleeding, he urged the black to greater speed, though with every dozen steps he himself fell

from exhaustion.

It was revenge which kept him going—that and a feeling that in his suffering he was partially expiating the great wrong he had done the girl he loved—for hope of saving her from the fate into which he had trapped her had never existed. "Too late! Too late!" was the dismal accompaniment of thought to which he marched. "Too late! Too late to save; but not too late to avenge!" That kept him up.

Only when it became too dark to see would he permit of a halt. A dozen times in the afternoon he had threatened the black with instant death when the tired guide insisted upon resting. The fellow was terrified. He could not understand

the remarkable change that had so suddenly come over the white man who had been afraid in the dark the night before. He would have deserted this terrifying master had he had the opportunity; but Baynes guessed that some such thought might be in the other's mind, and so gave the fellow none. He kept close to him by day and slept touching him at night in the rude thorn boma they constructed as a slight protection against prowling carnivora.

That the Hon. Morison could sleep at all in the midst of the savage jungle was sufficient indication that he had changed considerably in the past twenty-four hours, and that he could lie close beside a none-too-fragrant black man spoke of

possibilities for democracy within him yet all undreamed of.

Morning found him stiff and lame and sore, but none the less determined to push on in pursuit of "Hanson" as rapidly as possible. With his rifle he brought down a buck at a ford in a small stream shortly after they broke camp, breakfastless. Begrudgingly he permitted a halt while they cooked and ate, and then on again through the wilderness of trees and vines and underbrush.

And in the meantime Korak wandered slowly westward, coming upon the trail of Tantor, the elephant, whom he overtook browsing in the deep shade of the jungle. The ape-man, lonely and sorrowing, was glad of the

companionship of his huge friend. Affectionately the sinuous trunk encircled him, and he was swung to the mighty back where so often before he had lolled and dreamed the long afternoon away.

Far to the north the Big Bwana and his black warriors clung tenaciously to the trail of the fleeing safari that was luring them further and further from the girl they sought to save, while back at the bungalow the woman who had loved Meriem as though she had been her own waited impatiently and in sorrow for the return of the rescuing party and the girl she was positive her invincible lord and master would bring back with him.

CHAPTER 22

As Meriem struggled with Malbihn, her hands pinioned to her sides by his brawny grip, hope died within her. She did not utter a sound for she knew that there was none to come to her assistance, and, too, the jungle training of her earlier life had taught her the futility of appeals for succor in the savage world of her up- bringing.

But as she fought to free herself one hand came in contact with the butt of Malbihn's revolver where it rested in the holster at his hip. Slowly he was dragging her toward the blankets, and slowly her fingers encircled the coveted prize and drew it from its resting place.

Then, as Malbihn stood at the edge of

the disordered pile of blankets, Meriem suddenly ceased to draw away from him, and as quickly hurled her weight against him with the result that he was thrown backward, his feet stumbled against the bedding and he was hurled to his back. Instinctively his hands flew out to save himself and at the same instant Meriem leveled the revolver at his breast and pulled the trigger.

But the hammer fell futilely upon an empty shell, and Malbihn was again upon his feet clutching at her. For a moment she eluded him, and ran toward the entrance to the tent, but at the very doorway his heavy hand fell upon her shoulder and dragged her back. Wheeling upon him with the fury of a

wounded lioness Meriem grasped the long revolver by the barrel, swung it high above her head and crashed it down full in Malbihn's face.

With an oath of pain and rage the man staggered backward, releasing his hold upon her and then sank unconscious to the ground. Without a backward look Meriem turned and fled into the open. Several of the blacks saw her and tried to intercept her flight, but the menace of the empty weapon kept them at a distance. And so she won beyond the encircling boma and disappeared into the jungle to the south.

Straight into the branches of a tree she went, true to the arboreal instincts of the little mangani she had been, and here she

stripped off her riding skirt, her shoes and her stockings, for she knew that she had before her a journey and a flight which would not brook the burden of these garments. Her riding breeches and jacket would have to serve as protection from cold and thorns, nor would they hamper her over much; but a skirt and shoes were impossible among the trees.

She had not gone far before she commenced to realize how slight were her chances for survival without means of defense or a weapon to bring down meat. Why had she not thought to strip the cartridge belt from Malbihn's waist before she had left his tent! With cartridges for the revolver she might hope to bag small game, and to protect

herself from all but the most ferocious of the enemies that would beset her way back to the beloved hearthstone of Bwana and My Dear.

With the thought came determination to return and obtain the coveted ammunition. She realized that she was taking great chances of recapture; but without means of defense and of obtaining meat she felt that she could never hope to reach safety. And so she turned her face back toward the camp from which she had but just escaped.

She thought Malbihn dead, so terrific a blow had she dealt him, and she hoped to find an opportunity after dark to enter the camp and search his tent for the cartridge belt; but scarcely had she

found a hiding place in a great tree at the edge of the boma where she could watch without danger of being discovered, when she saw the Swede emerge from his tent, wiping blood from his face, and hurling a volley of oaths and questions at his terrified followers.

Shortly after the entire camp set forth in search of her and when Meriem was positive that all were gone she descended from her hiding place and ran quickly across the clearing to Malbihn's tent. A hasty survey of the interior revealed no ammunition; but in one corner was a box in which were packed the Swede's personal belongings that he had sent along by his headman to this westerly camp.

Meriem seized the receptacle as the possible container of extra ammunition. Quickly she loosed the cords that held the canvas covering about the box, and a moment later had raised the lid and was rummaging through the heterogeneous accumulation of odds and ends within. There were letters and papers and cuttings from old newspapers, and among other things the photograph of a little girl upon the back of which was pasted a cutting from a Paris daily—a cutting that she could not read, yellowed and dimmed by age and handling—but something about the photograph of the little girl which was also reproduced in the newspaper cutting held her attention. Where had she seen that picture before?

And then, quite suddenly, it came to her that this was a picture of herself as she had been years and years before.

Where had it been taken? How had it come into the possession of this man? Why had it been reproduced in a newspaper? What was the story that the faded type told of it?

Meriem was baffled by the puzzle that her search for ammunition had revealed. She stood gazing at the faded photograph for a time and then bethought herself of the ammunition for which she had come. Turning again to the box she rummaged to the bottom and there in a corner she came upon a little box of cartridges. A single glance assured her that they were intended for the weapon she had thrust

inside the band of her riding breeches, and slipping them into her pocket she turned once more for an examination of the baffling likeness of herself that she held in her hand.

As she stood thus in vain endeavor to fathom this inexplicable mystery the sound of voices broke upon her ears. Instantly she was all alert. They were coming closer! A second later she recognized the lurid profanity of the Swede. Malbihn, her persecutor, was returning! Meriem ran quickly to the opening of the tent and looked out. It was too late! She was fairly cornered! The white man and three of his black henchmen were coming straight across the clearing toward the tent. What was

she to do? She slipped the photograph into her waist. Quickly she slipped a cartridge into each of the chambers of the revolver. Then she backed toward the end of the tent, keeping the entrance covered by her weapon. The man stopped outside, and Meriem could hear Malbihn profanely issuing instructions. He was a long time about it, and while he talked in his bellowing, brutish voice, the girl sought some avenue of escape. Stooping, she raised the bottom of the canvas and looked beneath and beyond. There was no one in sight upon that side. Throwing herself upon her stomach she wormed beneath the tent wall just as Malbihn, with a final word to his men, entered the tent.

Meriem heard him cross the floor, and then she rose and, stooping low, ran to a native hut directly behind. Once inside this she turned and glanced back. There was no one in sight. She had not been seen. And now from Malbihn's tent she heard a great cursing. The Swede had discovered the rifling of his box. He was shouting to his men, and as she heard them reply Meriem darted from the hut and ran toward the edge of the boma furthest from Malbihn's tent. Overhanging the boma at this point was a tree that had been too large, in the eyes of the rest-loving blacks, to cut down. So they had terminated the boma just short of it. Meriem was thankful for whatever circumstance had resulted in

the leaving of that particular tree where it was, since it gave her the much-needed avenue of escape which she might not otherwise have had.

From her hiding place she saw Malbihn again enter the jungle, this time leaving a guard of three of his boys in the camp. He went toward the south, and after he had disappeared, Meriem skirted the outside of the enclosure and made her way to the river. Here lay the canoes that had been used in bringing the party from the opposite shore. They were unwieldy things for a lone girl to handle, but there was no other way and she must cross the river.

The landing place was in full view of the guard at the camp. To risk the

crossing under their eyes would have meant undoubted capture. Her only hope lay in waiting until darkness had fallen, unless some fortuitous circumstance should arise before. For an hour she lay watching the guard, one of whom seemed always in a position where he would immediately discover her should she attempt to launch one of the canoes.

Presently Malbihn appeared, coming out of the jungle, hot and puffing. He ran immediately to the river where the canoes lay and counted them. It was evident that it had suddenly occurred to him that the girl must cross here if she wished to return to her protectors. The expression of relief on his face when he found that none of the canoes was gone

was ample evidence of what was passing in his mind. He turned and spoke hurriedly to the head man who had followed him out of the jungle and with whom were several other blacks.

Following Malbihn's instructions they launched all the canoes but one. Malbihn called to the guards in the camp and a moment later the entire party had entered the boats and were paddling up stream.

Meriem watched them until a bend in the river directly above the camp hid them from her sight. They were gone! She was alone, and they had left a canoe in which lay a paddle! She could scarce believe the good fortune that had come to her. To delay now would be suicidal to her hopes. Quickly she ran from her

hiding place and dropped to the ground. A dozen yards lay between her and the canoe.

Up stream, beyond the bend, Malbihn ordered his canoes in to shore. He landed with his head man and crossed the little point slowly in search of a spot where he might watch the canoe he had left at the landing place. He was smiling in anticipation of the almost certain success of his stratagem - sooner or later the girl would come back and attempt to cross the river in one of their canoes. It might be that the idea would not occur to her for some time. They might have to wait a day, or two days; but that she would come if she lived or was not captured by the men he had scouting the

jungle for her Malbihn was sure. That she would come so soon, however, he had not guessed, and so when he topped the point and came again within sight of the river he saw that which drew an angry oath from his lips—his quarry already was half way across the river.

Turning, he ran rapidly back to his boats, the head man at his heels. Throwing themselves in, Malbihn urged his paddlers to their most powerful efforts. The canoes shot out into the stream and down with the current toward the fleeing quarry. She had almost completed the crossing when they came in sight of her. At the same instant she saw them, and redoubled her efforts to reach the opposite shore before they

should overtake her. Two minutes' start of them was all Meriem cared for. Once in the trees she knew that she could outdistance and elude them. Her hopes were high—they could not overtake her now—she had had too good a start of them.

Malbihn, urging his men onward with a stream of hideous oaths and blows from his fists, realized that the girl was again slipping from his clutches. The leading canoe, in the bow of which he stood, was yet a hundred yards behind the fleeing Meriem when she ran the point of her craft beneath the overhanging trees on the shore of safety.

Malbihn screamed to her to halt. He seemed to have gone mad with rage at

the realization that he could not overtake her, and then he threw his rifle to his shoulder, aimed carefully at the slim figure scrambling into the trees, and fired.

Malbihn was an excellent shot. His misses at so short a distance were practically non-existent, nor would he have missed this time but for an accident occurring at the very instant that his finger tightened upon the trigger—an accident to which Meriem owed her life—the providential presence of a water-logged tree trunk, one end of which was embedded in the mud of the river bottom and the other end of which floated just beneath the surface where the prow of Malbihn's canoe ran upon it as he fired.

The slight deviation of the boat's direction was sufficient to throw the muzzle of the rifle out of aim. The bullet whizzed harmlessly by Meriem's head and an instant later she had disappeared into the foliage of the tree.

There was a smile on her lips as she dropped to the ground to cross a little clearing where once had stood a native village surrounded by its fields. The ruined huts still stood in crumbling decay. The rank vegetation of the jungle overgrew the cultivated ground. Small trees already had sprung up in what had been the village street; but desolation and loneliness hung like a pall above the scene. To Meriem, however, it presented but a place denuded of large

trees which she must cross quickly to regain the jungle upon the opposite side before Malbihn should have landed.

The deserted huts were, to her, all the better because they were deserted —she did not see the keen eyes watching her from a dozen points, from tumbling doorways, from behind tottering granaries. In utter unconsciousness of impending danger she started up the village street because it offered the clearest pathway to the jungle.

A mile away toward the east, fighting his way through the jungle along the trail taken by Malbihn when he had brought Meriem to his camp, a man in torn khaki —filthy, haggard, unkempt—came to a sudden stop as the report of Malbihn's

rifle resounded faintly through the tangled forest. The black man just ahead of him stopped, too.

"We are almost there, Bwana," he said. There was awe and respect in his tone and manner.

The white man nodded and motioned his ebon guide forward once more. It was the Hon. Morison Baynes—the fastidious—the exquisite. His face and hands were scratched and smeared with dried blood from the wounds he had come by in thorn and thicket. His clothes were tatters. But through the blood and the dirt and the rags a new Baynes shone forth—a handsomer Baynes than the dandy and the fop of yore.

In the heart and soul of every son of

woman lies the germ of manhood and honor. Remorse for a scurvy act, and an honorable desire to right the wrong he had done the woman he now knew he really loved had excited these germs to rapid growth in Morison Baynes—and the metamorphosis had taken place.

Onward the two stumbled toward the point from which the single rifle shot had come. The black was unarmed—Baynes, fearing his loyalty had not dared trust him even to carry the rifle which the white man would have been glad to be relieved of many times upon the long march; but now that they were approaching their goal, and knowing as he did that hatred of Malbihn burned hot in the black man's brain, Baynes handed

him the rifle, for he guessed that there would be fighting—he intended that there should, or he had come to avenge. Himself, an excellent revolver shot, would depend upon the smaller weapon at his side.

As the two forged ahead toward their goal they were startled by a volley of shots ahead of them. Then came a few scattering reports, some savage yells, and silence. Baynes was frantic in his endeavors to advance more rapidly, but there the jungle seemed a thousand times more tangled than before. A dozen times he tripped and fell. Twice the black followed a blind trail and they were forced to retrace their steps; but at last they came out into a little clearing near

the big afi—a clearing that once held a thriving village, but lay somber and desolate in decay and ruin.

In the jungle vegetation that overgrew what had once been the main village street lay the body of a black man, pierced through the heart with a bullet, and still warm. Baynes and his companion looked about in all directions; but no sign of living being could they discover. They stood in silence listening intently.

What was that! Voices and the dip of paddles out upon the river?

Baynes ran across the dead village toward the fringe of jungle upon the river's brim. The black was at his side. Together they forced their way through

the screening foliage until they could obtain a view of the river, and there, almost to the other shore, they saw Malbihn's canoes making rapidly for camp. The black recognized his companions immediately.

"How can we cross?" asked Baynes.

The black shook his head. There was no canoe and the crocodiles made it equivalent to suicide to enter the water in an attempt to swim across. Just then the fellow chanced to glance downward. Beneath him, wedged among the branches of a tree, lay the canoe in which Meriem had escaped. The Negro grasped Baynes' arm and pointed toward his find. The Hon. Morison could scarce repress a shout of exultation. Quickly the

two slid down the drooping branches into the boat. The black seized the paddle and Baynes shoved them out from beneath the tree. A second later the canoe shot out upon the bosom of the river and headed toward the opposite shore and the camp of the Swede. Baynes squatted in the bow, straining his eyes after the men pulling the other canoes upon the bank across from him. He saw Malbihn step from the bow of the foremost of the little craft. He saw him turn and glance back across the river. He could see his start of surprise as his eyes fell upon the pursuing canoe, and called the attention of his followers to it.

Then he stood waiting, for there was

but one canoe and two men— little danger to him and his followers in that. Malbihn was puzzled. Who was this white man? He did not recognize him though Baynes' canoe was now in mid stream and the features of both its occupants plainly discernible to those on shore. One of Malbihn's blacks it was who first recognized his fellow black in the person of Baynes' companion. Then Malbihn guessed who the white man must be, though he could scarce believe his own reasoning. It seemed beyond the pale of wildest conjecture to suppose that the Hon. Morison Baynes had followed him through the jungle with but a single companion—and yet it was true. Beneath the dirt and dishevelment he

recognized him at last, and in the necessity of admitting that it was he, Malbihn was forced to recognize the incentive that had driven Baynes, the weakling and coward, through the savage jungle upon his trail.

The man had come to demand an accounting and to avenge. It seemed incredible, and yet there could be no other explanation. Malbihn shrugged. Well, others had sought Malbihn for similar reasons in the course of a long and checkered career. He fingered his rifle, and waited.

Now the canoe was within easy speaking distance of the shore.

"What do you want?" yelled Malbihn, raising his weapon threateningly.

The Hon. Morison Baynes leaped to his feet.

"You, damn you!" he shouted, whipping out his revolver and firing almost simultaneously with the Swede.

As the two reports rang out Malbihn dropped his rifle, clutched frantically at his breast, staggered, fell first to his knees and then lunged upon his face. Baynes stiffened. His head flew back spasmodically. For an instant he stood thus, and then crumpled very gently into the bottom of the boat.

The black paddler was at a loss as to what to do. If Malbihn really were dead he could continue on to join his fellows without fear; but should the Swede only be wounded he would be safer upon the

far shore. Therefore he hesitated, holding the canoe in mid stream. He had come to have considerable respect for his new master and was not unmoved by his death. As he sat gazing at the crumpled body in the bow of the boat he saw it move. Very feebly the man essayed to turn over. He still lived. The black moved forward and lifted him to a sitting position. He was standing in front of him, his paddle in one hand, asking Baynes where he was hit when there was another shot from shore and the Negro pitched head long overboard, his paddle still clutched in his dead fingers —shot through the forehead.

Baynes turned weakly in the direction of the shore to see Malbihn drawn up

upon his elbows levelling his rifle at him. The Englishman slid to the bottom of the canoe as a bullet whizzed above him. Malbihn, sore hit, took longer in aiming, nor was his aim as sure as formerly. With difficulty Baynes turned himself over on his belly and grasping his revolver in his right hand drew himself up until he could look over the edge of the canoe.

Malbihn saw him instantly and fired; but Baynes did not flinch or duck. With painstaking care he aimed at the target upon the shore from which he now was drifting with the current. His finger closed upon the trigger— there was a flash and a report, and Malbihn's giant frame jerked to the impact of another

bullet.

But he was not yet dead. Again he aimed and fired, the bullet splintering the gunwale of the canoe close by Baynes' face. Baynes fired again as his canoe drifted further down stream and Malbihn answered from the shore where he lay in a pool of his own blood. And thus, doggedly, the two wounded men continued to carry on their weird duel until the winding African river had carried the Hon. Morison Baynes out of sight around a wooded point.

CHAPTER 23

Meriem had traversed half the length of the village street when a score of white-robed Negroes and half-castes leaped out upon her from the dark interiors of surrounding huts. She turned to flee, but heavy hands seized her, and when she turned at last to plead with them her eyes fell upon the face of a tall, grim, old man glaring down upon her from beneath the folds of his burnous.

At sight of him she staggered back in shocked and terrified surprise. It was The Sheik!

Instantly all the old fears and terrors of her childhood returned upon her. She stood trembling before this horrible old man, as a murderer before the judge

about to pass sentence of death upon him. She knew that The Sheik recognized her. The years and the changed raiment had not altered her so much but what one who had known her features so well in childhood would know her now.

"So you have come back to your people, eh?" snarled The Sheik. "Come back begging for food and protection, eh?"

"Let me go," cried the girl. "I ask nothing of you, but that you let me go back to the Big Bwana."

"The Big Bwana?" almost screamed The Sheik, and then followed a stream of profane, Arabic invective against the white man whom all the transgressors of the jungle feared and hated. "You would

go back to the Big Bwana, would you? So that is where you have been since you ran away from me, is it? And who comes now across the river after you—the Big Bwana?"

"The Swede whom you once chased away from your country when he and his companion conspired with Nbeeda to steal me from you," replied Meriem.

The Sheik's eyes blazed, and he called his men to approach the shore and hide among the bushes that they might ambush and annihilate Malbihn and his party; but Malbihn already had landed and crawling through the fringe of jungle was at that very moment looking with wide and incredulous eyes upon the scene being enacted in the street of the

deserted village. He recognized The Sheik the moment his eyes fell upon him. There were two men in the world that Malbihn feared as he feared the devil. One was the Big Bwana and the other The Sheik. A single glance he took at that gaunt, familiar figure and then he turned tail and scurried back to his canoe calling his followers after him. And so it happened that the party was well out in the stream before The Sheik reached the shore, and after a volley and a few parting shots that were returned from the canoes the Arab called his men off and securing his prisoner set off toward the South.

One of the bullets from Malbihn's force had struck a black standing in the

village street where he had been left with another to guard Meriem, and his companions had left him where he had fallen, after appropriating his apparel and belongings. His was the body that Baynes had discovered when he had entered the village.

The Sheik and his party had been marching southward along the river when one of them, dropping out of line to fetch water, had seen Meriem paddling desperately from the opposite shore. The fellow had called The Sheik's attention to the strange sight—a white woman alone in Central Africa and the old Arab had hidden his men in the deserted village to capture her when she landed, for thoughts of ransom were

always in the mind of The Sheik. More than once before had glittering gold filtered through his fingers from a similar source. It was easy money and The Sheik had none too much easy money since the Big Bwana had so circumscribed the limits of his ancient domain that he dared not even steal ivory from natives within two hundred miles of the Big Bwana's douar. And when at last the woman had walked into the trap he had set for her and he had recognized her as the same little girl he had brutalized and mal-treated years before his gratification had been huge. Now he lost no time in establishing the old relations of father and daughter that had existed between them in the past. At

the first opportunity he struck her a heavy blow across the face. He forced her to walk when he might have dismounted one of his men instead, or had her carried on a horse's rump. He seemed to revel in the discovery of new methods for torturing or humiliating her, and among all his followers she found no single one to offer her sympathy, or who dared defend her, even had they had the desire to do so.

A two days' march brought them at last to the familiar scenes of her childhood, and the first face upon which she set her eyes as she was driven through the gates into the strong stockade was that of the toothless, hideous Mabunu, her one time nurse. It was as

though all the years that had intervened were but a dream. Had it not been for her clothing and the fact that she had grown in stature she might well have believed it so. All was there as she had left it—the new faces which supplanted some of the old were of the same bestial, degraded type. There were a few young Arabs who had joined The Sheik since she had been away. Otherwise all was the same —all but one. Geeka was not there, and she found herself missing Geeka as though the ivory-headed one had been a flesh and blood intimate and friend. She missed her ragged little confidante, into whose deaf ears she had been wont to pour her many miseries and her occasional joys—Geeka, of the

splinter limbs and the ratskin torso—Geeka the disreputable —Geeka the beloved.

For a time the inhabitants of The Sheik's village who had not been upon the march with him amused themselves by inspecting the strangely clad white girl, whom some of them had known as a little child. Mabunu pretended great joy at her return, baring her toothless gums in a hideous grimace that was intended to be indicative of rejoicing. But Meriem could but shudder as she recalled the cruelties of this terrible old hag in the years gone by.

Among the Arabs who had come in her absence was a tall young fellow of twenty—a handsome, sinister looking

youth—who stared at her in open admiration until The Sheik came and ordered him away, and Abdul Kamak went, scowling.

At last, their curiosity satisfied, Meriem was alone. As of old, she was permitted the freedom of the village, for the stockade was high and strong and the only gates were well-guarded by day and by night; but as of old she cared not for the companionship of the cruel Arabs and the degraded blacks who formed the following of The Sheik, and so, as had been her wont in the sad days of her childhood, she slunk down to an unfrequented corner of the enclosure where she had often played at house-keeping with her beloved Geeka beneath

the spreading branches of the great tree that had overhung the palisade; but now the tree was gone, and Meriem guessed the reason. It was from this tree that Korak had descended and struck down The Sheik the day that he had rescued her from the life of misery and torture that had been her lot for so long that she could remember no other.

There were low bushes growing within the stockade, however, and in the shade of these Meriem sat down to think. A little glow of happiness warmed her heart as she recalled her first meeting with Korak and then the long years that he had cared for and protected her with the solicitude and purity of an elder brother. For months Korak had not so

occupied her thoughts as he did today. He seemed closer and dearer now than ever he had before, and she wondered that her heart had drifted so far from loyalty to his memory. And then came the image of the Hon. Morison, the exquisite, and Meriem was troubled. Did she really love the flawless young Englishman? She thought of the glories of London, of which he had told her in such glowing language. She tried to picture herself admired and honored in the midst of the gayest society of the great capital. The pictures she drew were the pictures that the Hon. Morison had drawn for her. They were alluring pictures, but through them all the brawny, half- naked figure of the giant

Adonis of the jungle persisted in obtruding itself.

Meriem pressed her hand above her heart as she stifled a sigh, and as she did so she felt the hard outlines of the photograph she had hidden there as she slunk from Malbihn's tent. Now she drew it forth and commenced to re-examine it more carefully than she had had time to do before. She was sure that the baby face was hers. She studied every detail of the picture. Half hidden in the lace of the dainty dress rested a chain and locket. Meriem puckered her brows. What tantalizing half-memories it awakened! Could this flower of evident civilization be the little Arab Meriem, daughter of The Sheik? It was

impossible, and yet that locket? Meriem knew it. She could not refute the conviction of her memory. She had seen that locket before and it had been hers. What strange mystery lay buried in her past?

As she sat gazing at the picture she suddenly became aware that she was not alone—that someone was standing close behind her—some one who had approached her noiselessly. Guiltily she thrust the picture back into her waist. A hand fell upon her shoulder. She was sure that it was The Sheik and she awaited in dumb terror the blow that she knew would follow.

No blow came and she looked upward over her shoulder—into the eyes

of Abdul Kamak, the young Arab.

"I saw," he said, "the picture that you have just hidden. It is you when you were a child—a very young child. May I see it again?"

Meriem drew away from him.

"I will give it back," he said. "I have heard of you and I know that you have no love for The Sheik, your father. Neither have I. I will not betray you. Let me see the picture."

Friendless among cruel enemies, Meriem clutched at the straw that Abdul Kamak held out to her. Perhaps in him she might find the friend she needed. Anyway he had seen the picture and if he was not a friend he could tell The Sheik about it and it would be taken away from

her. So she might as well grant his request and hope that he had spoken fairly, and would deal fairly. She drew the photograph from its hiding place and handed it to him.

Abdul Kamak examined it carefully, comparing it, feature by feature with the girl sitting on the ground looking up into his face. Slowly he nodded his head.

"Yes," he said, "it is you, but where was it taken? How does it happen that The Sheik's daughter is clothed in the garments of the unbeliever?"

"I do not know," replied Meriem. "I never saw the picture until a couple of days ago, when I found it in the tent of the Swede, Malbihn."

Abdul Kamak raised his eyebrows.

He turned the picture over and as his eyes fell upon the old newspaper cutting they went wide. He could read French, with difficulty, it is true; but he could read it. He had been to Paris. He had spent six months there with a troupe of his desert fellows, upon exhibition, and he had improved his time, learning many of the customs, some of the language, and most of the vices of his conquerors. Now he put his learning to use. Slowly, laboriously he read the yellowed cutting. His eyes were no longer wide. Instead they narrowed to two slits of cunning. When he had done he looked at the girl.

"You have read this?" he asked.

"It is French," she replied, "and I do not read French."

Abdul Kamak stood long in silence looking at the girl. She was very beautiful. He desired her, as had many other men who had seen her. At last he dropped to one knee beside her.

A wonderful idea had sprung to Abdul Kamak's mind. It was an idea that might be furthered if the girl were kept in ignorance of the contents of that newspaper cutting. It would certainly be doomed should she learn its contents.

"Meriem," he whispered, "never until today have my eyes beheld you, yet at once they told my heart that it must ever be your servant. You do not know me, but I ask that you trust me. I can help you. You hate The Sheik— so do I. Let me take you away from him. Come with

me, and we will go back to the great desert where my father is a sheik mightier than is yours. Will you come?"

Meriem sat in silence. She hated to wound the only one who had offered her protection and friendship; but she did not want Abdul Kamak's love. Deceived by her silence the man seized her and strained her to him; but Meriem struggled to free herself.

"I do not love you," she cried. "Oh, please do not make me hate you. You are the only one who has shown kindness toward me, and I want to like you, but I cannot love you."

Abdul Kamak drew himself to his full height.

"You will learn to love me," he said,

"for I shall take you whether you will or no. You hate The Sheik and so you will not tell him, for if you do I will tell him of the picture. I hate The Sheik, and—"

"You hate The Sheik?" came a grim voice from behind them.

Both turned to see The Sheik standing a few paces from them. Abdul still held the picture in his hand. Now he thrust it within his burnous.

"Yes," he said, "I hate the Sheik," and as he spoke he sprang toward the older man, felled him with a blow and dashed on across the village to the line where his horse was picketed, saddled and ready, for Abdul Kamak had been about to ride forth to hunt when he had seen the stranger girl alone by the bushes.

Leaping into the saddle Abdul Kamak dashed for the village gates. The Sheik, momentarily stunned by the blow that had felled him, now staggered to his feet, shouting lustily to his followers to stop the escaped Arab. A dozen blacks leaped forward to intercept the horseman, only to be ridden down or brushed aside by the muzzle of Abdul Kamak's long musket, which he lashed from side to side about him as he spurred on toward the gate. But here he must surely be intercepted. Already the two blacks stationed there were pushing the unwieldy portals to. Up flew the barrel of the fugitive's weapon. With reins flying loose and his horse at a mad gallop the son of the desert fired once—

twice; and both the keepers of the gate dropped in their tracks. With a wild whoop of exultation, twirling his musket high above his head and turning in his saddle to laugh back into the faces of his pursuers Abdul Kamak dashed out of the village of The Sheik and was swallowed up by the jungle.

Foaming with rage The Sheik ordered immediate pursuit, and then strode rapidly back to where Meriem sat huddled by the bushes where he had left her.

"The picture!" he cried. "What picture did the dog speak of? Where is it? Give it to me at once!"

"He took it," replied Meriem, dully.

"What was it?" again demanded The

Sheik, seizing the girl roughly by the hair and dragging her to her feet, where he shook her venomously. "What was it a picture of?"

"Of me," said Meriem, "when I was a little girl. I stole it from Malbihn, the Swede—it had printing on the back cut from an old newspaper."

The Sheik went white with rage.

"What said the printing?" he asked in a voice so low that she but barely caught his words.

"I do not know. It was in French and I cannot read French."

The Sheik seemed relieved. He almost smiled, nor did he again strike Meriem before he turned and strode away with the parting admonition that

she speak never again to any other than Mabunu and himself. And along the caravan trail galloped Abdul Kamak toward the north.

As his canoe drifted out of sight and range of the wounded Swede the Hon. Morison sank weakly to its bottom where he lay for long hours in partial stupor.

It was night before he fully regained consciousness. And then he lay for a long time looking up at the stars and trying to recollect where he was, what accounted for the gently rocking motion of the thing upon which he lay, and why the position of the stars changed so rapidly and miraculously. For a while he thought he was dreaming, but when he

would have moved to shake sleep from him the pain of his wound recalled to him the events that had led up to his present position. Then it was that he realized that he was floating down a great African river in a native canoe—alone, wounded, and lost.

Painfully he dragged himself to a sitting position. He noticed that the wound pained him less than he had imagined it would. He felt of it gingerly - it had ceased to bleed. Possibly it was but a flesh wound after all, and nothing serious. If it totally incapacitated him even for a few days it would mean death, for by that time he would be too weakened by hunger and pain to provide food for himself.

From his own troubles his mind turned to Meriem's. That she had been with the Swede at the time he had attempted to reach the fellow's camp he naturally believed; but he wondered what would become of her now. Even if Hanson died of his wounds would Meriem be any better off? She was in the power of equally villainous men—brutal savages of the lowest order. Baynes buried his face in his hands and rocked back and forth as the hideous picture of her fate burned itself into his consciousness. And it was he who had brought this fate upon her! His wicked desire had snatched a pure and innocent girl from the protection of those who loved her to hurl her into the clutches of

the bestial Swede and his outcast following! And not until it had become too late had he realized the magnitude of the crime he himself had planned and contemplated. Not until it had become too late had he realized that greater than his desire, greater than his lust, greater than any passion he had ever felt before was the newborn love that burned within his breast for the girl he would have ruined.

The Hon. Morison Baynes did not fully realize the change that had taken place within him. Had one suggested that he ever had been aught than the soul of honor and chivalry he would have taken umbrage forthwith. He knew that he had done a vile thing when he had plotted to

carry Meriem away to London, yet he excused it on the ground of his great passion for the girl having temporarily warped his moral standards by the intensity of its heat. But, as a matter of fact, a new Baynes had been born. Never again could this man be bent to dishonor by the intensity of a desire. His moral fiber had been strengthened by the mental suffering he had endured. His mind and his soul had been purged by sorrow and remorse.

His one thought now was to atone—win to Meriem's side and lay down his life, if necessary, in her protection. His eyes sought the length of the canoe in search of the paddle, for a determination had galvanized him to immediate action

despite his weakness and his wound. But the paddle was gone. He turned his eyes toward the shore. Dimly through the darkness of a moonless night he saw the awful blackness of the jungle, yet it touched no responsive chord of terror within him now as it had done in the past. He did not even wonder that he was unafraid, for his mind was entirely occupied with thoughts of another's danger.

Drawing himself to his knees he leaned over the edge of the canoe and commenced to paddle vigorously with his open palm. Though it tired and hurt him he kept assiduously at his self imposed labor for hours. Little by little the drifting canoe moved nearer and

nearer the shore. The Hon. Morison could hear a lion roaring directly opposite him and so close that he felt he must be almost to the shore. He drew his rifle closer to his side; but he did not cease to paddle.

After what seemed to the tired man an eternity of time he felt the brush of branches against the canoe and heard the swirl of the water about them. A moment later he reached out and clutched a leafy limb. Again the lion roared —very near it seemed now, and Baynes wondered if the brute could have been following along the shore waiting for him to land.

He tested the strength of the limb to which he clung. It seemed strong enough to support a dozen men. Then he reached

down and lifted his rifle from the bottom of the canoe, slipping the sling over his shoulder. Again he tested the branch, and then reaching upward as far as he could for a safe hold he drew himself painfully and slowly upward until his feet swung clear of the canoe, which, released, floated silently from beneath him to be lost forever in the blackness of the dark shadows down stream.

He had burned his bridges behind him. He must either climb aloft or drop back into the river; but there had been no other way. He struggled to raise one leg over the limb, but found himself scarce equal to the effort, for he was very weak. For a time he hung there feeling his strength ebbing. He knew that he

must gain the branch above at once or it would be too late.

Suddenly the lion roared almost in his ear. Baynes glanced up. He saw two spots of flame a short distance from and above him. The lion was standing on the bank of the river glaring at him, and—waiting for him. Well, thought the Hon. Morison, let him wait. Lions can't climb trees, and if I get into this one I shall be safe enough from him.

The young Englishman's feet hunt almost to the surface of the water - closer than he knew, for all was pitch dark below as above him. Presently he heard a slight commotion in the river beneath him and something banged against one of his feet, followed almost

instantly by a sound that he felt he could not have mistaken—the click of great jaws snapping together.

"By George!" exclaimed the Hon. Morison, aloud. "The beggar nearly got me," and immediately he struggled again to climb higher and to comparative safety; but with that final effort he knew that it was futile. Hope that had survived persistently until now began to wane. He felt his tired, numbed fingers slipping from their hold—he was dropping back into the river —into the jaws of the frightful death that awaited him there.

And then he heard the leaves above him rustle to the movement of a creature among them. The branch to which he clung bent beneath an added weight—

and no light weight, from the way it sagged; but still Baynes clung desperately—he would not give up voluntarily either to the death above or the death below.

He felt a soft, warm pad upon the fingers of one of his hands where they circled the branch to which he clung, and then something reached down out of the blackness above and dragged him up among the branches of the tree.

CHAPTER 24

Sometimes lolling upon Tantor's back, sometimes roaming the jungle in solitude, Korak made his way slowly toward the West and South. He made but a few miles a day, for he had a whole lifetime before him and no place in particular to go. Possibly he would have moved more rapidly but for the thought which continually haunted him that each mile he traversed carried him further and further away from Meriem—no longer his Meriem, as of yore, it is true! but still as dear to him as ever.

Thus he came upon the trail of The Sheik's band as it traveled down river from the point where The Sheik had captured Meriem to his own stockaded

village. Korak pretty well knew who it was that had passed, for there were few in the great jungle with whom he was not familiar, though it had been years since he had come this far north. He had no particular business, however, with the old Sheik and so he did not propose following him— the further from men he could stay the better pleased he would be—he wished that he might never see a human face again. Men always brought him sorrow and misery.

The river suggested fishing and so he waddled upon its shores, catching fish after a fashion of his own devising and eating them raw. When night came he curled up in a great tree beside the stream—the one from which he had been

fishing during the afternoon—and was soon asleep. Numa, roaring beneath him, awoke him. He was about to call out in anger to his noisy neighbor when something else caught his attention. He listened. Was there something in the tree beside himself? Yes, he heard the noise of something below him trying to clamber upward. Presently he heard the click of a crocodile's jaws in the waters beneath, and then, low but distinct: "By George! The beggar nearly got me." The voice was familiar.

Korak glanced downward toward the speaker. Outlined against the faint luminosity of the water he saw the figure of a man clinging to a lower branch of the tree. Silently and swiftly the ape-man

clambered downward. He felt a hand beneath his foot. He reached down and clutched the figure beneath him and dragged it up among the branches. It struggled weakly and struck at him; but Korak paid no more attention than Tantor to an ant. He lugged his burden to the higher safety and greater comfort of a broad crotch, and there he propped it in a sitting position against the bole of the tree. Numa still was roaring beneath them, doubtless in anger that he had been robbed of his prey. Korak shouted down at him, calling him, in the language of the great apes, "Old green-eyed eater of carrion," "Brother of Dango," the hyena, and other choice appellations of jungle opprobrium.

The Hon. Morison Baynes, listening, felt assured that a gorilla had seized upon him. He felt for his revolver, and as he was drawing it stealthily from its holster a voice asked in perfectly good English, "Who are you?"

Baynes started so that he nearly fell from the branch.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "Are you a man?"

"What did you think I was?" asked Korak.

"A gorilla," replied Baynes, honestly.

Korak laughed.

"Who are you?" he repeated.

"I'm an Englishman by the name of Baynes; but who the devil are you?"

asked the Hon. Morison.

"They call me The Killer," replied Korak, giving the English translation of the name that Akut had given him. And then after a pause during which the Hon. Morison attempted to pierce the darkness and catch a glimpse of the features of the strange being into whose hands he had fallen, "You are the same whom I saw kissing the girl at the edge of the great plain to the East, that time that the lion charged you?"

"Yes," replied Baynes.

"What are you doing here?"

"The girl was stolen—I am trying to rescue her."

"Stolen!" The word was shot out like a bullet from a gun. "Who stole her?"

"The Swede trader, Hanson," replied Baynes.

"Where is he?"

Baynes related to Korak all that had transpired since he had come upon Hanson's camp. Before he was done the first gray dawn had relieved the darkness. Korak made the Englishman comfortable in the tree. He filled his canteen from the river and fetched him fruits to eat. Then he bid him good-bye.

"I am going to the Swede's camp," he announced. "I will bring the girl back to you here."

"I shall go, too, then," insisted Baynes. "It is my right and my duty, for she was to have become my wife."

Korak winced. "You are wounded.

You could not make the trip," he said. "I can go much faster alone."

"Go, then," replied Baynes; "but I shall follow. It is my right and duty."

"As you will," replied Korak, with a shrug. If the man wanted to be killed it was none of his affair. He wanted to kill him himself, but for Meriem's sake he would not. If she loved him then he must do what he could to preserve him, but he could not prevent his following him, more than to advise him against it, and this he did, earnestly.

And so Korak set out rapidly toward the North, and limping slowly and painfully along, soon far to the rear, came the tired and wounded Baynes. Korak had reached the river bank

opposite Malbihn's camp before Baynes had covered two miles. Late in the afternoon the Englishman was still plodding wearily along, forced to stop often for rest when he heard the sound of the galloping feet of a horse behind him. Instinctively he drew into the concealing foliage of the underbrush and a moment later a white-robed Arab dashed by. Baynes did not hail the rider. He had heard of the nature of the Arabs who penetrate thus far to the South, and what he had heard had convinced him that a snake or a panther would as quickly befriend him as one of these villainous renegades from the Northland.

When Abdul Kamak had passed out of sight toward the North Baynes resumed

his weary march. A half hour later he was again surprised by the unmistakable sound of galloping horses. This time there were many. Once more he sought a hiding place; but it chanced that he was crossing a clearing which offered little opportunity for concealment. He broke into a slow trot—the best that he could do in his weakened condition; but it did not suffice to carry him to safety and before he reached the opposite side of the clearing a band of white-robed horsemen dashed into view behind him.

At sight of him they shouted in Arabic, which, of course, he could not understand, and then they closed about him, threatening and angry. Their questions were unintelligible to him, and

no more could they interpret his English. At last, evidently out of patience, the leader ordered two of his men to seize him, which they lost no time in doing. They disarmed him and ordered him to climb to the rump of one of the horses, and then the two who had been detailed to guard him turned and rode back toward the South, while the others continued their pursuit of Abdul Kamak.

As Korak came out upon the bank of the river across from which he could see the camp of Malbihn he was at a loss as to how he was to cross. He could see men moving about among the huts inside the boma—evidently Hanson was still there. Korak did not know the true identity of Meriem's abductor.

How was he to cross. Not even he would dare the perils of the river - almost certain death. For a moment he thought, then wheeled and sped away into the jungle, uttering a peculiar cry, shrill and piercing. Now and again he would halt to listen as though for an answer to his weird call, then on again, deeper and deeper into the wood.

At last his listening ears were rewarded by the sound they craved— the trumpeting of a bull elephant, and a few moments later Korak broke through the trees into the presence of Tantor, standing with upraised trunk, waving his great ears.

"Quick, Tantor!" shouted the ape-man, and the beast swung him to his head.

"Hurry!" and the mighty pachyderm lumbered off through the jungle, guided by kicking of naked heels against the sides of his head.

Toward the northwest Korak guided his huge mount, until they came out upon the river a mile or more above the Swede's camp, at a point where Korak knew that there was an elephant ford. Never pausing the ape-man urged the beast into the river, and with trunk held high Tantor forged steadily toward the opposite bank. Once an unwary crocodile attacked him but the sinuous trunk dove beneath the surface and grasping the amphibian about the middle dragged it to light and hurled it a hundred feet down stream. And so, in

safety, they made the opposite shore, Korak perched high and dry above the turgid flood.

Then back toward the South Tantor moved, steadily, relentlessly, and with a swinging gait which took no heed of any obstacle other than the larger jungle trees. At times Korak was forced to abandon the broad head and take to the trees above, so close the branches raked the back of the elephant; but at last they came to the edge of the clearing where lay the camp of the renegade Swede, nor even then did they hesitate or halt. The gate lay upon the east side of the camp, facing the river. Tantor and Korak approached from the north. There was no gate there; but what cared Tantor or

Korak for gates.

At a word from the ape man and raising his tender trunk high above the thorns Tantor breasted the boma, walking through it as though it had not existed. A dozen blacks squatted before their huts looked up at the noise of his approach. With sudden howls of terror and amazement they leaped to their feet and fled for the open gates. Tantor would have pursued. He hated man, and he thought that Korak had come to hunt these; but the ape man held him back, guiding him toward a large, canvas tent that rose in the center of the clearing—there should be the girl and her abductor.

Malbihn lay in a hammock beneath canopy before his tent. His wounds were

painful and he had lost much blood. He was very weak. He looked up in surprise as he heard the screams of his men and saw them running toward the gate. And then from around the corner of his tent loomed a huge bulk, and Tantor, the great tusker, towered above him. Malbihn's boy, feeling neither affection nor loyalty for his master, broke and ran at the first glimpse of the beast, and Malbihn was left alone and helpless.

The elephant stopped a couple of paces from the wounded man's hammock. Malbihn cowered, moaning. He was too weak to escape. He could only lie there with staring eyes gazing in horror into the blood rimmed, angry little orbs fixed upon him, and await his

death.

Then, to his astonishment, a man slid to the ground from the elephant's back. Almost at once Malbihn recognized the strange figure as that of the creature who consorted with apes and baboons—the white warrior of the jungle who had freed the king baboon and led the whole angry horde of hairy devils upon him and Jenssen. Malbihn cowered still lower.

"Where is the girl?" demanded Korak, in English.

"What girl?" asked Malbihn. "There is no girl here—only the women of my boys. Is it one of them you want?"

"The white girl," replied Korak. "Do not lie to me—you lured her from her friends. You have her. Where is she?"

"It was not I," cried Malbihn. "It was an Englishman who hired me to steal her. He wished to take her to London with him. She was willing to go. His name is Baynes. Go to him, if you want to know where the girl is."

"I have just come from him," said Korak. "He sent me to you. The girl is not with him. Now stop your lying and tell me the truth. Where is she?" Korak took a threatening step toward the Swede.

Malbihn shrank from the anger in the other's face.

"I will tell you," he cried. "Do not harm me and I will tell you all that I know. I had the girl here; but it was Baynes who persuaded her to leave her

friends—he had promised to marry her. He does not know who she is; but I do, and I know that there is a great reward for whoever takes her back to her people. It was the only reward I wanted. But she escaped and crossed the river in one of my canoes. I followed her, but The Sheik was there, God knows how, and he captured her and attacked me and drove me back. Then came Baynes, angry because he had lost the girl, and shot me. If you want her, go to The Sheik and ask him for her—she has passed as his daughter since childhood."

"She is not The Sheik's daughter?" asked Korak.

"She is not," replied Malbihn.

"Who is she then?" asked Korak.

Here Malbihn saw his chance. Possibly he could make use of his knowledge after all—it might even buy back his life for him. He was not so credulous as to believe that this savage ape-man would have any compunctions about slaying him.

"When you find her I will tell you," he said, "if you will promise to spare my life and divide the reward with me. If you kill me you will never know, for only The Sheik knows and he will never tell. The girl herself is ignorant of her origin."

"If you have told me the truth I will spare you," said Korak. "I shall go now to The Sheik's village and if the girl is not there I shall return and slay you. As

for the other information you have, if the girl wants it when we have found her we will find a way to purchase it from you."

The look in the Killer's eyes and his emphasis of the word "purchase" were none too reassuring to Malbihn. Evidently, unless he found means to escape, this devil would have both his secret and his life before he was done with him. He wished he would be gone and take his evil-eyed companion away with him. The swaying bulk towering high above him, and the ugly little eyes of the elephant watching his every move made Malbihn nervous.

Korak stepped into the Swede's tent to assure himself that Meriem was not hid there. As he disappeared from view

Tantor, his eyes still fixed upon Malbihn, took a step nearer the man. An elephant's eyesight is none too good; but the great tusker evidently had harbored suspicions of this yellow-bearded white man from the first. Now he advanced his snake-like trunk toward the Swede, who shrank still deeper into his hammock.

The sensitive member felt and smelled back and forth along the body of the terrified Malbihn. Tantor uttered a low, rumbling sound. His little eyes blazed. At last he had recognized the creature who had killed his mate long years before. Tantor, the elephant, never forgets and never forgives. Malbihn saw in the demoniacal visage above him the murderous purpose of the beast. He

shrieked aloud to Korak. "Help! Help! The devil is going to kill me!"

Korak ran from the tent just in time to see the enraged elephant's trunk encircle the beast's victim, and then hammock, canopy and man were swung high over Tantor's head. Korak leaped before the animal, commanding him to put down his prey unharmed; but as well might he have ordered the eternal river to reverse its course. Tantor wheeled around like a cat, hurled Malbihn to the earth and kneeled upon him with the quickness of a cat. Then he gored the prostrate thing through and through with his mighty tusks, trumpeting and roaring in his rage, and at last, convinced that no slightest spark of life remained in the crushed and

lacerated flesh, he lifted the shapeless clay that had been Sven Malbihn far aloft and hurled the bloody mass, still entangled in canopy and hammock, over the boma and out into the jungle.

Korak stood looking sorrowfully on at the tragedy he gladly would have averted. He had no love for the Swede, in fact only hatred; but he would have preserved the man for the sake of the secret he possessed. Now that secret was gone forever unless The Sheik could be made to divulge it; but in that possibility Korak placed little faith.

The ape-man, as unafraid of the mighty Tantor as though he had not just witnessed his shocking murder of a human being, signalled the beast to

approach and lift him to its head, and Tantor came as he was bid, docile as a kitten, and hoisted The Killer tenderly aloft.

From the safety of their hiding places in the jungle Malbihn's boys had witnessed the killing of their master, and now, with wide, frightened eyes, they saw the strange white warrior, mounted upon the head of his ferocious charger, disappear into the jungle at the point from which he had emerged upon their terrified vision.

CHAPTER 25

The Sheik glowered at the prisoner which his two men brought back to him from the North. He had sent the party after Abdul Kamak, and he was wroth that instead of his erstwhile lieutenant they had sent back a wounded and useless Englishman. Why had they not dispatched him where they had found him? He was some penniless beggar of a trader who had wandered from his own district and became lost. He was worthless. The Sheik scowled terribly upon him.

"Who are you?" he asked in French.

"I am the Hon. Morison Baynes of London," replied his prisoner.

The title sounded promising, and at once the wily old robber had visions of ransom. His intentions, if not his attitude toward the prisoner underwent a change—he would investigate further.

"What were you doing poaching in my country?" growled he.

"I was not aware that you owned Africa," replied the Hon. Morison. "I was searching for a young woman who had been abducted from the home of a friend. The abductor wounded me and I drifted down river in a canoe—I was on my back to his camp when your men seized me."

"A young woman?" asked The Sheik. "Is that she?" and he pointed to his left over toward a clump of bushes near the

stockade.

Baynes looked in the direction indicated and his eyes went wide, for there, sitting cross-legged upon the ground, her back toward them, was Meriem.

"Meriem!" he shouted, starting toward her; but one of his guards grasped his arm and jerked him back. The girl leaped to her feet and turned toward him as she heard her name.

"Morison!" she cried.

"Be still, and stay where you are," snapped The Sheik, and then to Baynes. "So you are the dog of a Christian who stole my daughter from me?"

"Your daughter?" ejaculated Baynes. "She is your daughter?"

"She is my daughter," growled the Arab, "and she is not for any unbeliever. You have earned death, Englishman, but if you can pay for your life I will give it to you."

Baynes' eyes were still wide at the unexpected sight of Meriem here in the camp of the Arab when he had thought her in Hanson's power. What had happened? How had she escaped the Swede? Had the Arab taken her by force from him, or had she escaped and come voluntarily back to the protection of the man who called her "daughter"? He would have given much for a word with her. If she was safe here he might only harm her by antagonizing the Arab in an attempt to take her away and return her

to her English friends. No longer did the Hon. Morison harbor thoughts of luring the girl to London.

"Well?" asked The Sheik.

"Oh," exclaimed Baynes; "I beg your pardon—I was thinking of something else. Why yes, of course, glad to pay, I'm sure. How much do you think I'm worth?"

The Sheik named a sum that was rather less exorbitant than the Hon. Morison had anticipated. The latter nodded his head in token of his entire willingness to pay. He would have promised a sum far beyond his resources just as readily, for he had no intention of paying anything—his one reason for seeming to comply with The Sheik's

demands was that the wait for the coming of the ransom money would give him the time and the opportunity to free Meriem if he found that she wished to be freed. The Arab's statement that he was her father naturally raised the question in the Hon. Morison's mind as to precisely what the girl's attitude toward escape might be. It seemed, of course, preposterous that this fair and beautiful young woman should prefer to remain in the filthy douar of an illiterate old Arab rather than return to the comforts, luxuries, and congenial associations of the hospitable African bungalow from which the Hon. Morison had tricked her. The man flushed at the thought of his duplicity which these recollections

aroused —thoughts which were interrupted by The Sheik, who instructed the Hon. Morison to write a letter to the British consul at Algiers, dictating the exact phraseology of it with a fluency that indicated to his captive that this was not the first time the old rascal had had occasion to negotiate with English relatives for the ransom of a kinsman. Baynes demurred when he saw that the letter was addressed to the consul at Algiers, saying that it would require the better part of a year to get the money back to him; but The Sheik would not listen to Baynes' plan to send a messenger directly to the nearest coast town, and from there communicate with the nearest cable state, sending the Hon.

Morison's request for funds straight to his own solicitors. No, The Sheik was cautious and wary. He knew his own plan had worked well in the past. In the other were too many untried elements. He was in no hurry for the money—he could wait a year, or two years if necessary; but it should not require over six months. He turned to one of the Arabs who had been standing behind him and gave the fellow instructions in relation to the prisoner.

Baynes could not understand the words, spoken in Arabic, but the jerk of the thumb toward him showed that he was the subject of conversation. The Arab addressed by The Sheik bowed to his master and beckoned Baynes to

follow him. The Englishman looked toward The Sheik for confirmation. The latter nodded impatiently, and the Hon. Morison rose and followed his guide toward a native hut which lay close beside one of the outside goatskin tents. In the dark, stifling interior his guard led him, then stepped to the doorway and called to a couple of black boys squatting before their own huts. They came promptly and in accordance with the Arab's instructions bound Baynes' wrists and ankles securely. The Englishman objected strenuously; but as neither the blacks nor the Arab could understand a word he said his pleas were wasted. Having bound him they left the hut. The Hon. Morison lay for a long

time contemplating the frightful future which awaited him during the long months which must intervene before his friends learned of his predicament and could get succor to him. Now he hoped that they would send the ransom—he would gladly pay all that he was worth to be out of this hole. At first it had been his intention to cable his solicitors to send no money but to communicate with the British West African authorities and have an expedition sent to his aid.

His patrician nose wrinkled in disgust as his nostrils were assailed by the awful stench of the hut. The nasty grasses upon which he lay exuded the effluvium of sweaty bodies, of decayed animal matter and of offal. But worse

was yet to come. He had lain in the uncomfortable position in which they had thrown him but for a few minutes when he became distinctly conscious of an acute itching sensation upon his hands, his neck and scalp. He wriggled to a sitting posture horrified and disgusted. The itching rapidly extended to other parts of his body—it was torture, and his hands were bound securely at his back!

He tugged and pulled at his bonds until he was exhausted; but not entirely without hope, for he was sure that he was working enough slack out of the knot to eventually permit of his withdrawing one of his hands. Night came. They brought him neither food nor

drink. He wondered if they expected him to live on nothing for a year. The bites of the vermin grew less annoying though not less numerous. The Hon. Morison saw a ray of hope in this indication of future immunity through inoculation. He still worked weakly at his bonds, and then the rats came. If the vermin were disgusting the rats were terrifying. They scurried over his body, squealing and fighting. Finally one commenced to chew at one of his ears. With an oath, the Hon. Morison struggled to a sitting posture. The rats retreated. He worked his legs beneath him and came to his knees, and then, by superhuman effort, rose to his feet. There he stood, reeling drunkenly, dripping with cold sweat.

"God!" he muttered, "what have I done to deserve—" He paused. What had he done? He thought of the girl in another tent in that accursed village. He was getting his deserts. He set his jaws firmly with the realization. He would never complain again! At that moment he became aware of voices raised angrily in the goatskin tent close beside the hut in which he lay. One of them was a woman's. Could it be Meriem's? The language was probably Arabic —he could not understand a word of it; but the tones were hers.

He tried to think of some way of attracting her attention to his near presence. If she could remove his bonds they might escape together—if she

wished to escape. That thought bothered him. He was not sure of her status in the village. If she were the petted child of the powerful Sheik then she would probably not care to escape. He must know, definitely.

At the bungalow he had often heard Meriem sing God Save the King, as My Dear accompanied her on the piano. Raising his voice he now hummed the tune. Immediately he heard Meriem's voice from the tent. She spoke rapidly.

"Good bye, Morison," she cried. "If God is good I shall be dead before morning, for if I still live I shall be worse than dead after tonight."

Then he heard an angry exclamation in a man's voice, followed by the sounds

of a scuffle. Baynes went white with horror. He struggled frantically again with his bonds. They were giving. A moment later one hand was free. It was but the work of an instant then to loose the other. Stooping, he untied the rope from his ankles, then he straightened and started for the hut doorway bent on reaching Meriem's side. As he stepped out into the night the figure of a huge black rose and barred his progress.

When speed was required of him Korak depended upon no other muscles than his own, and so it was that the moment Tantor had landed him safely upon the same side of the river as lay the village of The Sheik, the ape-man deserted his bulky comrade and took to

the trees in a rapid race toward the south and the spot where the Swede had told him Meriem might be. It was dark when he came to the palisade, strengthened considerably since the day that he had rescued Meriem from her pitiful life within its cruel confines. No longer did the giant tree spread its branches above the wooden rampart; but ordinary man-made defenses were scarce considered obstacles by Korak. Loosening the rope at his waist he tossed the noose over one of the sharpened posts that composed the palisade. A moment later his eyes were above the level of the obstacle taking in all within their range beyond. There was no one in sight close by, and Korak drew himself to the top and dropped lightly to

the ground within the enclosure.

Then he commenced his stealthy search of the village. First toward the Arab tents he made his way, sniffing and listening. He passed behind them searching for some sign of Meriem. Not even the wild Arab curs heard his passage, so silently he went—a shadow passing through shadows. The odor of tobacco told him that the Arabs were smoking before their tents. The sound of laughter fell upon his ears, and then from the opposite side of the village came the notes of a once familiar tune: God Save the King. Korak halted in perplexity. Who might it be—the tones were those of a man. He recalled the young Englishman he had left on the river trail

and who had disappeared before he returned. A moment later there came to him a woman's voice in reply—it was Meriem's, and The Killer, quickened into action, slunk rapidly in the direction of these two voices.

The evening meal over Meriem had gone to her pallet in the women's quarters of The Sheik's tent, a little corner screened off in the rear by a couple of priceless Persian rugs to form a partition. In these quarters she had dwelt with Mabunu alone, for The Sheik had no wives. Nor were conditions altered now after the years of her absence—she and Mabunu were alone in the women's quarters.

Presently The Sheik came and parted

the rugs. He glared through the dim light of the interior.

"Meriem!" he called. "Come hither."

The girl arose and came into the front of the tent. There the light of a fire illuminated the interior. She saw Ali ben Kadin, The Sheik's half brother, squatted upon a rug, smoking. The Sheik was standing. The Sheik and Ali ben Kadin had had the same father, but Ali ben Kadin's mother had been a slave—a West Coast Negress. Ali ben Kadin was old and hideous and almost black. His nose and part of one cheek were eaten away by disease. He looked up and grinned as Meriem entered.

The Sheik jerked his thumb toward Ali ben Kadin and addressed Meriem.

"I am getting old," he said, "I shall not live much longer. Therefore I have given you to Ali ben Kadin, my brother."

That was all. Ali ben Kadin rose and came toward her. Meriem shrank back, horrified. The man seized her wrist.

"Come!" he commanded, and dragged her from The Sheik's tent and to his own.

After they had gone The Sheik chuckled. "When I send her north in a few months," he soliloquized, "they will know the reward for slaying the son of the sister of Amor ben Khatour."

And in Ali ben Kadin's tent Meriem pleaded and threatened, but all to no avail. The hideous old halfcaste spoke soft words at first, but when Meriem loosed upon him the vials of her horror

and loathing he became enraged, and rushing upon her seized her in his arms. Twice she tore away from him, and in one of the intervals during which she managed to elude him she heard Baynes' voice humming the tune that she knew was meant for her ears. At her reply Ali ben Kadin rushed upon her once again. This time he dragged her back into the rear apartment of his tent where three Negresses looked up in stolid indifference to the tragedy being enacted before them.

As the Hon. Morison saw his way blocked by the huge frame of the giant black his disappointment and rage filled him with a bestial fury that transformed him into a savage beast. With an oath he

leaped upon the man before him, the momentum of his body hurling the black to the ground. There they fought, the black to draw his knife, the white to choke the life from the black.

Baynes' fingers shut off the cry for help that the other would have been glad to voice; but presently the Negro succeeded in drawing his weapon and an instant later Baynes felt the sharp steel in his shoulder. Again and again the weapon fell. The white man removed one hand from its choking grip upon the black throat. He felt around upon the ground beside him searching for some missile, and at last his fingers touched a stone and closed upon it. Raising it above his antagonist's head the Hon.

Morison drove home a terrific blow. Instantly the black relaxed—stunned. Twice more Baynes struck him. Then he leaped to his feet and ran for the goat skin tent from which he had heard the voice of Meriem in distress.

But before him was another. Naked but for his leopard skin and his loin cloth, Korak, The Killer, slunk into the shadows at the back of Ali ben Kadin's tent. The half-caste had just dragged Meriem into the rear chamber as Korak's sharp knife slit a six foot opening in the tent wall, and Korak, tall and mighty, sprang through upon the astonished visions of the inmates.

Meriem saw and recognized him the instant that he entered the apartment. Her

heart leaped in pride and joy at the sight of the noble figure for which it had hungered for so long.

"Korak!" she cried.

"Meriem!" He uttered the single word as he hurled himself upon the astonished Ali ben Kadin. The three Negresses leaped from their sleeping mats, screaming. Meriem tried to prevent them from escaping; but before she could succeed the terrified blacks had darted through the hole in the tent wall made by Korak's knife, and were gone screaming through the village.

The Killer's fingers closed once upon the throat of the hideous Ali. Once his knife plunged into the putrid heart—and Ali ben Kadin lay dead upon the floor of

his tent. Korak turned toward Meriem and at the same moment a bloody and disheveled apparition leaped into the apartment.

"Morison!" cried the girl.

Korak turned and looked at the new comer. He had been about to take Meriem in his arms, forgetful of all that might have transpired since last he had seen her. Then the coming of the young Englishman recalled the scene he had witnessed in the little clearing, and a wave of misery swept over the ape man.

Already from without came the sounds of the alarm that the three Negresses had started. Men were running toward the tent of Ali ben Kadin. There was no time to be lost.

"Quick!" cried Korak, turning toward Baynes, who had scarce yet realized whether he was facing a friend or foe. "Take her to the palisade, following the rear of the tents. Here is my rope. With it you can scale the wall and make your escape."

"But you, Korak?" cried Meriem.

"I will remain," replied the ape-man. "I have business with The Sheik."

Meriem would have demurred, but The Killer seized them both by the shoulders and hustled them through the slit wall and out into the shadows beyond.

"Now run for it," he admonished, and turned to meet and hold those who were pouring into the tent from the front.

The ape-man fought well—fought as he had never fought before; but the odds were too great for victory, though he won that which he most craved - time for the Englishman to escape with Meriem. Then he was overwhelmed by numbers, and a few minutes later, bound and guarded, he was carried to The Sheik's tent.

The old men eyed him in silence for a long time. He was trying to fix in his own mind some form of torture that would gratify his rage and hatred toward this creature who twice had been the means of his losing possession of Meriem. The killing of Ali ben Kadin caused him little anger—always had he hated the hideous son of his father's

hideous slave. The blow that this naked white warrior had once struck him added fuel to his rage. He could think of nothing adequate to the creature's offense.

And as he sat there looking upon Korak the silence was broken by the trumpeting of an elephant in the jungle beyond the palisade. A half smile touched Korak's lips. He turned his head a trifle in the direction from which the sound had come and then there broke from his lips, a low, weird call. One of the blacks guarding him struck him across the mouth with the haft of his spear; but none there knew the significance of his cry.

In the jungle Tantor cocked his ears

as the sound of Korak's voice fell upon them. He approached the palisade and lifting his trunk above it, sniffed. Then he placed his head against the wooden logs and pushed; but the palisade was strong and only gave a little to the pressure.

In The Sheik's tent The Sheik rose at last, and, pointing toward the bound captive, turned to one of his lieutenants.

"Burn him," he commanded. "At once. The stake is set."

The guard pushed Korak from The Sheik's presence. They dragged him to the open space in the center of the village, where a high stake was set in the ground. It had not been intended for burnings, but offered a convenient place

to tie up refractory slaves that they might be beaten—ofttimes until death relieved their agonies.

To this stake they bound Korak. Then they brought brush and piled about him, and The Sheik came and stood by that he might watch the agonies of his victim. But Korak did not wince even after they had fetched a brand and the flames had shot up among the dry tinder.

Once, then, he raised his voice in the low call that he had given in The Sheik's tent, and now, from beyond the palisade, came again the trumpeting of an elephant.

Old Tantor had been pushing at the palisade in vain. The sound of Korak's voice calling him, and the scent of man,

his enemy, filled the great beast with rage and resentment against the dumb barrier that held him back. He wheeled and shuffled back a dozen paces, then he turned, lifted his trunk and gave voice to a mighty roaring, trumpet-call of anger, lowered his head and charged like a huge battering ram of flesh and bone and muscle straight for the mighty barrier.

The palisade sagged and splintered to the impact, and through the breach rushed the infuriated bull. Korak heard the sounds that the others heard, and he interpreted them as the others did not. The flames were creeping closer to him when one of the blacks, hearing a noise behind him turned to see the enormous bulk of Tantor lumbering toward them.

The man screamed and fled, and then the bull elephant was among them tossing Negroes and Arabs to right and left as he tore through the flames he feared to the side of the comrade he loved.

The Sheik, calling orders to his followers, ran to his tent to get his rifle. Tantor wrapped his trunk about the body of Korak and the stake to which it was bound, and tore it from the ground. The flames were searing his sensitive hide—sensitive for all its thickness—so that in his frenzy to both rescue his friend and escape the hated fire he had all but crushed the life from the ape- man.

Lifting his burden high above his head the giant beast wheeled and raced for the breach that he had just made in the

palisade. The Sheik, rifle in hand, rushed from his tent directly into the path of the maddened brute. He raised his weapon and fired once, the bullet missed its mark, and Tantor was upon him, crushing him beneath those gigantic feet as he raced over him as you and I might crush out the life of an ant that chanced to be in our pathway.

And then, bearing his burden carefully, Tantor, the elephant, entered the blackness of the jungle.

CHAPTER 26

Meriem, dazed by the unexpected sight of Korak whom she had long given up as dead, permitted herself to be led away by Baynes. Among the tents he guided her safely to the palisade, and there, following Korak's instructions, the Englishman pitched a noose over the top of one of the upright logs that formed the barrier. With difficulty he reached the top and then lowered his hand to assist Meriem to his side.

"Come!" he whispered. "We must hurry." And then, as though she had awakened from a sleep, Meriem came to herself. Back there, fighting her enemies, alone, was Korak—her Korak. Her place was by his side, fighting with him

and for him. She glanced up at Baynes.

"Go!" she called. "Make your way back to Bwana and bring help. My place is here. You can do no good remaining. Get away while you can and bring the Big Bwana back with you."

Silently the Hon. Morison Baynes slid to the ground inside the palisade to Meriem's side.

"It was only for you that I left him," he said, nodding toward the tents they had just left. "I knew that he could hold them longer than I and give you a chance to escape that I might not be able to have given you. It was I though who should have remained. I heard you call him Korak and so I know now who he is. He befriended you. I would have wronged

you. No—don't interrupt. I'm going to tell you the truth now and let you know just what a beast I have been. I planned to take you to London, as you know; but I did not plan to marry you. Yes, shrink from me—I deserve it. I deserve your contempt and loathing; but I didn't know then what love was. Since I have learned that I have learned something else—what a cad and what a coward I have been all my life. I looked down upon those whom I considered my social inferiors. I did not think you good enough to bear my name. Since Hanson tricked me and took you for himself I have been through hell; but it has made a man of me, though too late. Now I can come to you with an offer of honest love,

which will realize the honor of having such as you share my name with me."

For a moment Meriem was silent, buried in thought. Her first question seemed irrelevant.

"How did you happen to be in this village?" she asked.

He told her all that had transpired since the black had told him of Hanson's duplicity.

"You say that you are a coward," she said, "and yet you have done all this to save me? The courage that it must have taken to tell me the things that you told me but a moment since, while courage of a different sort, proves that you are no moral coward, and the other proves that you are not a physical coward. I could

not love a coward."

"You mean that you love me?" he gasped in astonishment, taking a step toward her as though to gather her into his arms; but she placed her hand against him and pushed him gently away, as much as to say, not yet. What she did mean she scarcely knew. She thought that she loved him, of that there can be no question; nor did she think that love for this young Englishman was disloyalty to Korak, for her love for Korak was undiminished—the love of a sister for an indulgent brother. As they stood there for the moment of their conversation the sounds of tumult in the village subsided.

"They have killed him," whispered Meriem.

The statement brought Baynes to a realization of the cause of their return.

"Wait here," he said. "I will go and see. If he is dead we can do him no good. If he lives I will do my best to free him."

"We will go together," replied Meriem. "Come!" And she led the way back toward the tent in which they last had seen Korak. As they went they were often forced to throw themselves to the ground in the shadow of a tent or hut, for people were passing hurriedly to and fro now—the whole village was aroused and moving about. The return to the tent of Ali ben Kadin took much longer than had their swift flight to the palisade. Cautiously they crept to the slit that

Korak's knife had made in the rear wall. Meriem peered within - the rear apartment was empty. She crawled through the aperture, Baynes at her heels, and then silently crossed the space to the rugs that partitioned the tent into two rooms. Parting the hangings Meriem looked into the front room. It, too, was deserted. She crossed to the door of the tent and looked out. Then she gave a little gasp of horror. Baynes at her shoulder looked past her to the sight that had startled her, and he, too, exclaimed; but his was an oath of anger.

A hundred feet away they saw Korak bound to a stake—the brush piled about him already alight. The Englishman pushed Meriem to one side and started

to run for the doomed man. What he could do in the face of scores of hostile blacks and Arabs he did not stop to consider. At the same instant Tantor broke through the palisade and charged the group. In the face of the maddened beast the crowd turned and fled, carrying Baynes backward with them. In a moment it was all over, and the elephant had disappeared with his prize; but pandemonium reigned throughout the village. Men, women and children ran helter skelter for safety. Curs fled, yelping. The horses and camels and donkeys, terrorized by the trumpeting of the pachyderm, kicked and pulled at their tethers. A dozen or more broke loose, and it was the galloping of these

past him that brought a sudden idea into Baynes' head. He turned to search for Meriem only to find her at his elbow.

"The horses!" he cried. "If we can get a couple of them!"

Filled with the idea Meriem led him to the far end of the village.

"Loosen two of them," she said, "and lead them back into the shadows behind those huts. I know where there are saddles. I will bring them and the bridles," and before he could stop her she was gone.

Baynes quickly untied two of the restive animals and led them to the point designated by Meriem. Here he waited impatiently for what seemed an hour; but was, in reality, but a few minutes. Then

he saw the girl approaching beneath the burden of two saddles. Quickly they placed these upon the horses. They could see by the light of the torture fire that still burned that the blacks and Arabs were recovering from their panic. Men were running about gathering in the loose stock, and two or three were already leading their captives back to the end of the village where Meriem and Baynes were busy with the trappings of their mounts.

Now the girl flung herself into the saddle.

"Hurry!" she whispered. "We shall have to run for it. Ride through the gap that Tantor made," and as she saw Baynes swing his leg over the back of

his horse, she shook the reins free over her mount's neck. With a lunge, the nervous beast leaped forward. The shortest path led straight through the center of the village, and this Meriem took. Baynes was close behind her, their horses running at full speed.

So sudden and impetuous was their dash for escape that it carried them half-way across the village before the surprised inhabitants were aware of what was happening. Then an Arab recognized them, and, with a cry of alarm, raised his rifle and fired. The shot was a signal for a volley, and amid the rattle of musketry Meriem and Baynes leaped their flying mounts through the breach in the palisade and

were gone up the well-worn trail toward the north.

And Korak?

Tantor carried him deep into the jungle, nor paused until no sound from the distant village reached his keen ears. Then he laid his burden gently down. Korak struggled to free himself from his bonds, but even his great strength was unable to cope with the many strands of hard-knotted cord that bound him. While he lay there, working and resting by turns, the elephant stood guard above him, nor was there jungle enemy with the hardihood to tempt the sudden death that lay in that mighty bulk.

Dawn came, and still Korak was no nearer freedom than before. He

commenced to believe that he should die there of thirst and starvation with plenty all about him, for he knew that Tantor could not unloose the knots that held him.

And while he struggled through the night with his bonds, Baynes and Meriem were riding rapidly northward along the river. The girl had assured Baynes that Korak was safe in the jungle with Tantor. It had not occurred to her that the ape-man might not be able to burst his bonds. Baynes had been wounded by a shot from the rifle of one of the Arabs, and the girl wanted to get him back to Bwana's home, where he could be properly cared for.

"Then," she said, "I shall get Bwana

to come with me and search for Korak. He must come and live with us."

All night they rode, and the day was still young when they came suddenly upon a party hurrying southward. It was Bwana himself and his sleek, black warriors. At sight of Baynes the big Englishman's brows contracted in a scowl; but he waited to hear Meriem's story before giving vent to the long anger in his breast. When she had finished he seemed to have forgotten Baynes. His thoughts were occupied with another subject.

"You say that you found Korak?" he asked. "You really saw him?"

"Yes," replied Meriem; "as plainly as I see you, and I want you to come with

me, Bwana, and help me find him again."

"Did you see him?" He turned toward the Hon. Morison.

"Yes, sir," replied Baynes; "very plainly."

"What sort of appearing man is he?" continued Bwana. "About how old, should you say?"

"I should say he was an Englishman, about my own age," replied Baynes; "though he might be older. He is remarkably muscled, and exceedingly tanned."

"His eyes and hair, did you notice them?" Bwana spoke rapidly, almost excitedly. It was Meriem who answered him.

"Korak's hair is black and his eyes are gray," she said.

Bwana turned to his headman.

"Take Miss Meriem and Mr. Baynes home," he said. "I am going into the jungle."

"Let me go with you, Bwana," cried Meriem. "You are going to search for Korak. Let me go, too."

Bwana turned sadly but firmly upon the girl.

"Your place," he said, "is beside the man you love."

Then he motioned to his head-man to take his horse and commence the return journey to the farm. Meriem slowly mounted the tired Arab that had brought

her from the village of The Sheik. A litter was rigged for the now feverish Baynes, and the little cavalcade was soon slowly winding off along the river trail.

Bwana stood watching them until they were out of sight. Not once had Meriem turned her eyes backward. She rode with bowed head and drooping shoulders. Bwana sighed. He loved the little Arab girl as he might have loved an own daughter. He realized that Baynes had redeemed himself, and so he could interpose no objections now if Meriem really loved the man; but, somehow, some way, Bwana could not convince himself that the Hon. Morison was worthy of his little Meriem. Slowly he

turned toward a nearby tree. Leaping upward he caught a lower branch and drew himself up among the branches. His movements were cat-like and agile. High into the trees he made his way and there commenced to divest himself of his clothing. From the game bag slung across one shoulder he drew a long strip of doe-skin, a neatly coiled rope, and a wicked looking knife. The doe-skin, he fashioned into a loin cloth, the rope he looped over one shoulder, and the knife he thrust into the belt formed by his gee string.

When he stood erect, his head thrown back and his great chest expanded a grim smile touched his lips for a moment. His nostrils dilated as he sniffed the jungle

odors. His gray eyes narrowed. He crouched and leaped to a lower limb and was away through the trees toward the southeast, bearing away from the river. He moved swiftly, stopping only occasionally to raise his voice in a weird and piercing scream, and to listen for a moment after for a reply.

He had traveled thus for several hours when, ahead of him and a little to his left, he heard, far off in the jungle, a faint response—the cry of a bull ape answering his cry. His nerves tingled and his eyes lighted as the sound fell upon his ears. Again he voiced his hideous call, and sped forward in the new direction.

Korak, finally becoming convinced

that he must die if he remained where he was, waiting for the succor that could not come, spoke to Tantor in the strange tongue that the great beast understood. He commanded the elephant to lift him and carry him toward the northeast. There, recently, Korak had seen both white men and black. If he could come upon one of the latter it would be a simple matter to command Tantor to capture the fellow, and then Korak could get him to release him from the stake. It was worth trying at least— better than lying there in the jungle until he died. As Tantor bore him along through the forest Korak called aloud now and then in the hope of attracting Akut's band of anthropoids, whose wanderings often

brought them into their neighborhood. Akut, he thought, might possibly be able to negotiate the knots —he had done so upon that other occasion when the Russian had bound Korak years before; and Akut, to the south of him, heard his calls faintly, and came. There was another who heard them, too.

After Bwana had left his party, sending them back toward the farm, Meriem had ridden for a short distance with bowed head. What thoughts passed through that active brain who may say? Presently she seemed to come to a decision. She called the headman to her side.

"I am going back with Bwana," she announced.

The black shook his head. "No!" he announced. "Bwana says I take you home. So I take you home."

"You refuse to let me go?" asked the girl.

The black nodded, and fell to the rear where he might better watch her. Meriem half smiled. Presently her horse passed beneath a low-hanging branch, and the black headman found himself gazing at the girl's empty saddle. He ran forward to the tree into which she had disappeared. He could see nothing of her. He called; but there was no response, unless it might have been a low, taunting laugh far to the right. He sent his men into the jungle to search for her; but they came back empty handed.

After a while he resumed his march toward the farm, for Baynes, by this time, was delirious with fever.

Meriem raced straight back toward the point she imagined Tantor would make for—a point where she knew the elephants often gathered deep in the forest due east of The Sheik's village. She moved silently and swiftly. From her mind she had expunged all thoughts other than that she must reach Korak and bring him back with her. It was her place to do that. Then, too, had come the tantalizing fear that all might not be well with him. She upbraided herself for not thinking of that before—of letting her desire to get the wounded Morison back to the bungalow blind her to the

possibilities of Korak's need for her. She had been traveling rapidly for several hours without rest when she heard ahead of her the familiar cry of a great ape calling to his kind.

She did not reply, only increased her speed until she almost flew. Now there came to her sensitive nostrils the scent of Tantor and she knew that she was on the right trail and close to him she sought. She did not call out because she wished to surprise him, and presently she did, breaking into sight of them as the great elephant shuffled ahead balancing the man and the heavy stake upon his head, holding them there with his upcurled trunk.

"Korak!" cried Meriem from the

foliage above him.

Instantly the bull swung about, lowered his burden to the ground and, trumpeting savagely, prepared to defend his comrade. The ape-man, recognizing the girl's voice, felt a sudden lump in his throat.

"Meriem!" he called back to her.

Happily the girl clambered to the ground and ran forward to release Korak; but Tantor lowered his head ominously and trumpeted a warning.

"Go back! Go back!" cried Korak. "He will kill you."

Meriem paused. "Tantor!" she called to the huge brute. "Don't you remember me? I am little Meriem. I used to ride on your broad back;" but the bull only

rumbled in his throat and shook his tusks in angry defiance. Then Korak tried to placate him. Tried to order him away, that the girl might approach and release him; but Tantor would not go. He saw in every human being other than Korak an enemy. He thought the girl bent upon harming his friend and he would take no chances. For an hour the girl and the man tried to find some means whereby they might circumvent the beast's ill directed guardianship, but all to no avail; Tantor stood his ground in grim determination to let no one approach Korak.

Presently the man hit upon a scheme. "Pretend to go away," he called to the girl. "Keep down wind from us so that Tantor won't get your scent, then follow

us. After a while I'll have him put me down, and find some pretext for sending him away. While he is gone you can slip up and cut my bonds— have you a knife?"

"Yes, I have a knife," she replied. "I'll go now—I think we may be able to fool him; but don't be too sure—Tantor invented cunning."

Korak smiled, for he knew that the girl was right. Presently she had disappeared. The elephant listened, and raised his trunk to catch her scent. Korak commanded him to raise him to his head once more and proceed upon their way. After a moment's hesitation he did as he was bid. It was then that Korak heard the distant call of an ape.

"Akut!" he thought. "Good! Tantor knew Akut well. He would let him approach." Raising his voice Korak replied to the call of the ape; but he let Tantor move off with him through the jungle; it would do no harm to try the other plan. They had come to a clearing and plainly Korak smelled water. Here was a good place and a good excuse. He ordered Tantor to lay him down, and go and fetch him water in his trunk. The big beast deposited him upon the grass in the center of the clearing, then he stood with cocked ears and attentive trunk, searching for the slightest indication of danger—there seemed to be none and he moved away in the direction of the little brook that Korak knew was some two or

three hundred yards away. The ape-man could scarce help smiling as he thought how cleverly he had tricked his friend; but well as he knew Tantor he little guessed the guile of his cunning brain. The animal ambled off across the clearing and disappeared in the jungle beyond in the direction of the stream; but scarce had his great bulk been screened by the dense foliage than he wheeled about and came cautiously back to the edge of the clearing where he could see without being seen. Tantor, by nature, is suspicious. Now he still feared the return of the she Tarmangani who had attempted to attack his Korak. He would just stand there for a moment and assure himself that all was well before he

continued on toward the water. Ah! It was well that he did! There she was now dropping from the branches of a tree across the clearing and running swiftly toward the ape-man. Tantor waited. He would let her reach Korak before he charged—that would ensure that she had no chance of escape. His little eyes blazed savagely. His tail was elevated stiffly. He could scarce restrain a desire to trumpet forth his rage to the world. Meriem was almost at Korak's side when Tantor saw the long knife in her hand, and then he broke forth from the jungle, bellowing horribly, and charged down upon the frail girl.

CHAPTER 27

Korak screamed commands to his huge protector, in an effort to halt him; but all to no avail. Meriem raced toward the bordering trees with all the speed that lay in her swift, little feet; but Tantor, for all his huge bulk, drove down upon her with the rapidity of an express train.

Korak lay where he could see the whole frightful tragedy. The cold sweat broke out upon his body. His heart seemed to have stopped its beating. Meriem might reach the trees before Tantor overtook her, but even her agility would not carry her beyond the reach of that relentless trunk—she would be dragged down and tossed. Korak could

picture the whole frightful scene. Then Tantor would follow her up, goring the frail, little body with his relentless tusks, or trampling it into an unrecognizable mass beneath his ponderous feet.

He was almost upon her now. Korak wanted to close his eyes, but could not. His throat was dry and parched. Never in all his savage existence had he suffered such blighting terror—never before had he known what terror meant. A dozen more strides and the brute would seize her. What was that? Korak's eyes started from their sockets. A strange figure had leaped from the tree the shade of which Meriem already had reached—leaped beyond the girl straight into the path of the charging elephant. It

was a naked white giant. Across his shoulder a coil of rope was looped. In the band of his gee string was a hunting knife. Otherwise he was unarmed. With naked hands he faced the maddening Tantor. A sharp command broke from the stranger's lips —the great beast halted in his tracks—and Meriem swung herself upward into the tree to safety. Korak breathed a sigh of relief not unmixed with wonder. He fastened his eyes upon the face of Meriem's deliverer and as recognition slowly filtered into his understanding they went wide in incredulity and surprise.

Tantor, still rumbling angrily, stood swaying to and fro close before the giant white man. Then the latter stepped

straight beneath the upraised trunk and spoke a low word of command. The great beast ceased his muttering. The savage light died from his eyes, and as the stranger stepped forward toward Korak, Tantor trailed docilely at his heels.

Meriem was watching, too, and wondering. Suddenly the man turned toward her as though recollecting her presence after a moment of forgetfulness. "Come! Meriem," he called, and then she recognized him with a startled: "Bwana!" Quickly the girl dropped from the tree and ran to his side. Tantor cocked a questioning eye at the white giant, but receiving a warning word let Meriem approach. Together the two

walked to where Korak lay, his eyes wide with wonder and filled with a pathetic appeal for forgiveness, and, mayhap, a glad thankfulness for the miracle that had brought these two of all others to his side.

"Jack!" cried the white giant, kneeling at the ape-man's side.

"Father!" came chokingly from The Killer's lips. "Thank God that it was you. No one else in all the jungle could have stopped Tantor."

Quickly the man cut the bonds that held Korak, and as the youth leaped to his feet and threw his arms about his father, the older man turned toward Meriem.

"I thought," he said, sternly, "that I

told you to return to the farm."

Korak was looking at them wonderingly. In his heart was a great yearning to take the girl in his arms; but in time he remembered the other—the dapper young English gentleman—and that he was but a savage, uncouth ape-man.

Meriem looked up pleadingly into Bwana's eyes.

"You told me," she said, in a very small voice, "that my place was beside the man I loved," and she turned her eyes toward Korak all filled with the wonderful light that no other man had yet seen in them, and that none other ever would.

The Killer started toward her with

outstretched arms; but suddenly he fell upon one knee before her, instead, and lifting her hand to his lips kissed it more reverently than he could have kissed the hand of his country's queen.

A rumble from Tantor brought the three, all jungle bred, to instant alertness. Tantor was looking toward the trees behind them, and as their eyes followed his gaze the head and shoulders of a great ape appeared amidst the foliage. For a moment the creature eyed them, and then from its throat rose a loud scream of recognition and of joy, and a moment later the beast had leaped to the ground, followed by a score of bulls like himself, and was waddling toward them, shouting in the primordial

tongue of the anthropoid:

"Tarzan has returned! Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle!"

It was Akut, and instantly he commenced leaping and bounding about the trio, uttering hideous shrieks and mouthings that to any other human beings might have indicated the most ferocious rage; but these three knew that the king of the apes was doing homage to a king greater than himself. In his wake leaped his shaggy bulls, vying with one another as to which could spring the highest and which utter the most uncanny sounds.

Korak laid his hand affectionately upon his father's shoulder.

"There is but one Tarzan," he said. "There can never be another."

Two days later the three dropped from the trees on the edge of the plain across which they could see the smoke rising from the bungalow and the cook house chimneys. Tarzan of the Apes had regained his civilized clothing from the tree where he had hidden it, and as Korak refused to enter the presence of his mother in the savage half- raiment that he had worn so long and as Meriem would not leave him, for fear, as she explained, that he would change his mind and run off into the jungle again, the father went on ahead to the bungalow for horses and clothes.

My Dear met him at the gate, her eyes filled with questioning and sorrow, for she saw that Meriem was not with him.

"Where is she?" she asked, her voice trembling. "Muviri told me that she disobeyed your instructions and ran off into the jungle after you had left them. Oh, John, I cannot bear to lose her, too!" And Lady Greystoke broke down and wept, as she pillowed her head upon the broad breast where so often before she had found comfort in the great tragedies of her life.

Lord Greystoke raised her head and looked down into her eyes, his own smiling and filled with the light of happiness.

"What is it, John?" she cried. "You have good news—do not keep me waiting for it."

"I want to be quite sure that you can

stand hearing the best news that ever came to either of us," he said.

"Joy never kills," she cried. "You have found—her?" She could not bring herself to hope for the impossible.

"Yes, Jane," he said, and his voice was husky with emotion; "I have found her, and—HIM!"

"Where is he? Where are they?" she demanded.

"Out there at the edge of the jungle. He wouldn't come to you in his savage leopard skin and his nakedness—he sent me to fetch him civilized clothing."

She clapped her hands in ecstasy, and turned to run toward the bungalow. "Wait!" she cried over her shoulder. "I have all his little suits—I have saved

them all. I will bring one to you."

Tarzan laughed and called to her to stop.

"The only clothing on the place that will fit him," he said, "is mine —if it isn't too small for him—your little boy has grown, Jane."

She laughed, too; she felt like laughing at everything, or at nothing. The world was all love and happiness and joy once more—the world that had been shrouded in the gloom of her great sorrow for so many years. So great was her joy that for the moment she forgot the sad message that awaited Meriem. She called to Tarzan after he had ridden away to prepare her for it, but he did not hear and rode on without knowing

himself what the event was to which his wife referred.

And so, an hour later, Korak, The Killer, rode home to his mother— the mother whose image had never faded in his boyish heart—and found in her arms and her eyes the love and forgiveness that he plead for.

And then the mother turned toward Meriem, an expression of pitying sorrow erasing the happiness from her eyes.

"My little girl," she said, "in the midst of our happiness a great sorrow awaits you—Mr. Baynes did not survive his wound."

The expression of sorrow in Meriem's eyes expressed only what she sincerely felt; but it was not the sorrow

of a woman bereft of her best beloved.

"I am sorry," she said, quite simply. "He would have done me a great wrong; but he amply atoned before he died. Once I thought that I loved him. At first it was only fascination for a type that was new to me—then it was respect for a brave man who had the moral courage to admit a sin and the physical courage to face death to right the wrong he had committed. But it was not love. I did not know what love was until I knew that Korak lived," and she turned toward The Killer with a smile.

Lady Greystoke looked quickly up into the eyes of her son—the son who one day would be Lord Greystoke. No thought of the difference in the stations

of the girl and her boy entered her mind. To her Meriem was fit for a king. She only wanted to know that Jack loved the little Arab waif. The look in his eyes answered the question in her heart, and she threw her arms about them both and kissed them each a dozen times.

"Now," she cried, "I shall really have a daughter!"

It was several weary marches to the nearest mission; but they only waited at the farm a few days for rest and preparation for the great event before setting out upon the journey, and after the marriage ceremony had been performed they kept on to the coast to take passage for England. Those days were the most wonderful of Meriem's life. She had not

dreamed even vaguely of the marvels that civilization held in store for her. The great ocean and the commodious steamship filled her with awe. The noise, and bustle and confusion of the English railway station frightened her.

"If there was a good-sized tree at hand," she confided to Korak, "I know that I should run to the very top of it in terror of my life."

"And make faces and throw twigs at the engine?" he laughed back.

"Poor old Numa," sighed the girl. "What will he do without us?"

"Oh, there are others to tease him, my little Mangani," assured Korak.

The Greystoke town house quite took Meriem's breath away; but when

strangers were about none might guess that she had not been to the manner born.

They had been home but a week when Lord Greystoke received a message from his friend of many years, D'Arnot.

It was in the form of a letter of introduction brought by one General Armand Jacot. Lord Greystoke recalled the name, as who familiar with modern French history would not, for Jacot was in reality the Prince de Cadrenet - that intense republican who refused to use, even by courtesy, a title that had belonged to his family for four hundred years.

"There is no place for princes in a republic," he was wont to say.

Lord Greystoke received the hawk-

nosed, gray mustached soldier in his library, and after a dozen words the two men had formed a mutual esteem that was to endure through life.

"I have come to you," explained General Jacot, "because our dear Admiral tells me that there is no one in all the world who is more intimately acquainted with Central Africa than you.

"Let me tell you my story from the beginning. Many years ago my little daughter was stolen, presumably by Arabs, while I was serving with the Foreign Legion in Algeria. We did all that love and money and even government resources could do to discover her; but all to no avail. Her picture was published in the leading

papers of every large city in the world, yet never did we find a man or woman who ever had seen her since the day she mysteriously disappeared.

"A week since there came to me in Paris a swarthy Arab, who called himself Abdul Kamak. He said that he had found my daughter and could lead me to her. I took him at once to Admiral d'Arnot, whom I knew had traveled some in Central Africa. The man's story led the Admiral to believe that the place where the white girl the Arab supposed to be my daughter was held in captivity was not far from your African estates, and he advised that I come at once and call upon you—that you would know if such a girl were in your neighborhood."

"What proof did the Arab bring that she was your daughter?" asked Lord Greystoke.

"None," replied the other. "That is why we thought best to consult you before organizing an expedition. The fellow had only an old photograph of her on the back of which was pasted a newspaper cutting describing her and offering a reward. We feared that having found this somewhere it had aroused his cupidity and led him to believe that in some way he could obtain the reward, possibly by foisting upon us a white girl on the chance that so many years had elapsed that we would not be able to recognize an imposter as such."

"Have you the photograph with you?"

asked Lord Greystoke.

The General drew an envelope from his pocket, took a yellowed photograph from it and handed it to the Englishman.

Tears dimmed the old warrior's eyes as they fell again upon the pictured features of his lost daughter.

Lord Greystoke examined the photograph for a moment. A queer expression entered his eyes. He touched a bell at his elbow, and an instant later a footman entered.

"Ask my son's wife if she will be so good as to come to the library," he directed.

The two men sat in silence. General Jacot was too well bred to show in any way the chagrin and disappointment he

felt in the summary manner in which Lord Greystoke had dismissed the subject of his call. As soon as the young lady had come and he had been presented he would make his departure. A moment later Meriem entered.

Lord Greystoke and General Jacot rose and faced her. The Englishman spoke no word of introduction—he wanted to mark the effect of the first sight of the girl's face on the Frenchman, for he had a theory—a heaven-born theory that had leaped into his mind the moment his eyes had rested on the baby face of Jeanne Jacot.

General Jacot took one look at Meriem, then he turned toward Lord Greystoke.

"How long have you known it?" he asked, a trifle accusingly.

"Since you showed me that photograph a moment ago," replied the Englishman.

"It is she," said Jacot, shaking with suppressed emotion; "but she does not recognize me—of course she could not." Then he turned to Meriem. "My child," he said, "I am your—"

But she interrupted him with a quick, glad cry, as she ran toward him with outstretched arms.

"I know you! I know you!" she cried. "Oh, now I remember," and the old man folded her in his arms.

Jack Clayton and his mother were summoned, and when the story had been

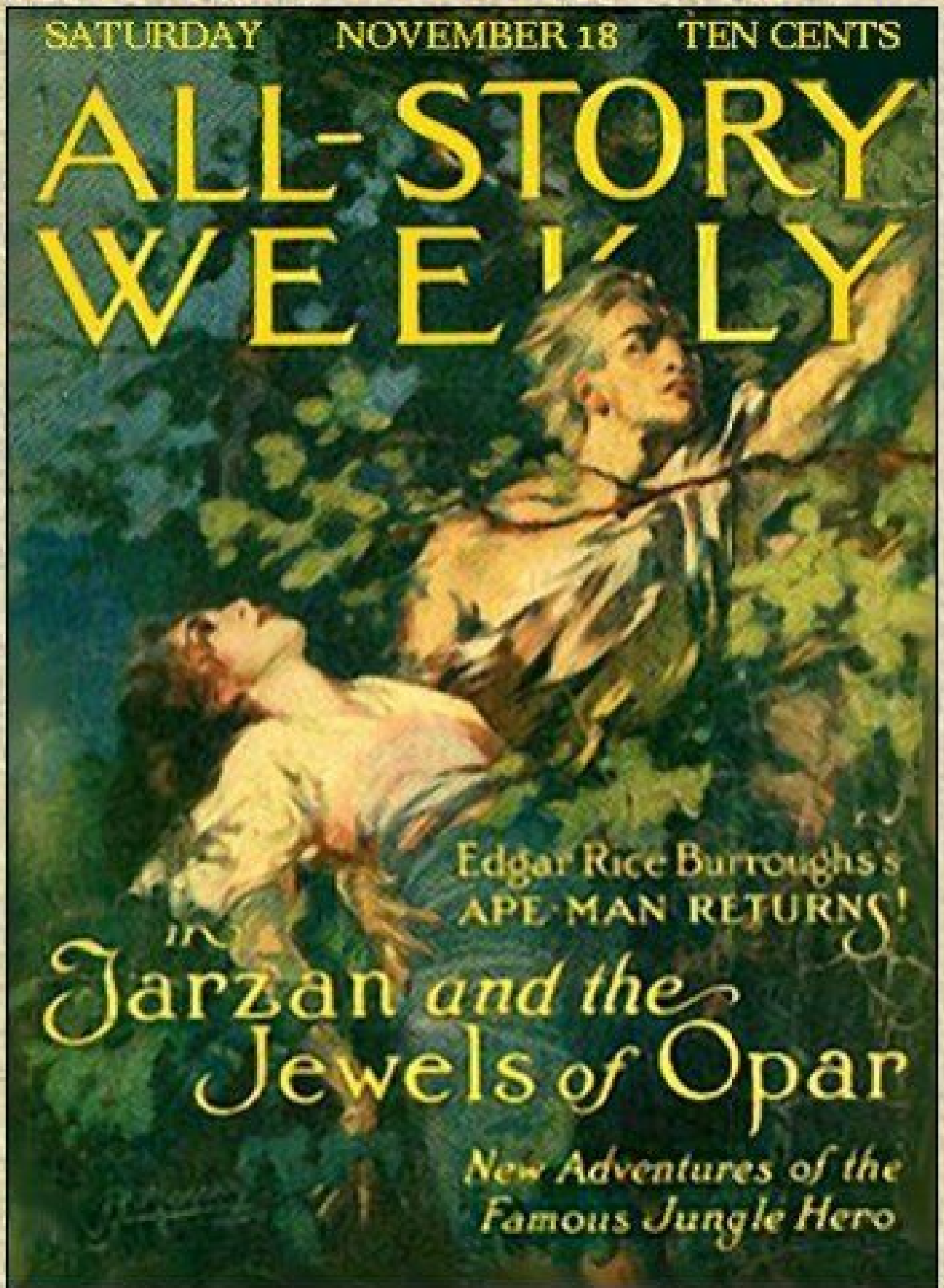
told them they were only glad that little Meriem had found a father and a mother.

"And really you didn't marry an Arab waif after all," said Meriem. "Isn't it fine!"

"You are fine," replied The Killer. "I married my little Meriem, and I don't care, for my part, whether she is an Arab, or just a little Tarmangani."

"She is neither, my son," said General Armand Jacot. "She is a princess in her own right."

THE END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TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR

BOOK 5 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. BELGIAN AND ARAB

Lieutenant Albert Werper had only the prestige of the name he had dishonored to thank for his narrow escape from being cashiered. At first he had been humbly thankful, too, that they had sent him to this godforsaken Congo post instead of court-martialing him, as he had so justly deserved; but now six months of the monotony, the frightful isolation and the loneliness had wrought a change. The young man brooded continually over his fate. His days were filled with morbid self-pity, which eventually engendered in his weak and vacillating mind a hatred for those who had sent him here—for the very men he had at first inwardly thanked for saving

him from the ignominy of degradation.

He regretted the gay life of Brussels as he never had regretted the sins which had snatched him from that gayest of capitals, and as the days passed he came to center his resentment upon the representative in Congo land of the authority which had exiled him—his captain and immediate superior.

This officer was a cold, taciturn man, inspiring little love in those directly beneath him, yet respected and feared by the black soldiers of his little command.

Werper was accustomed to sit for hours glaring at his superior as the two sat upon the veranda of their common quarters, smoking their evening cigarettes in a silence which neither

seemed desirous of breaking. The senseless hatred of the lieutenant grew at last into a form of mania. The captain's natural taciturnity he distorted into a studied attempt to insult him because of his past shortcomings. He imagined that his superior held him in contempt, and so he chafed and fumed inwardly until one evening his madness became suddenly homicidal. He fingered the butt of the revolver at his hip, his eyes narrowed and his brows contracted. At last he spoke.

"You have insulted me for the last time!" he cried, springing to his feet. "I am an officer and a gentleman, and I shall put up with it no longer without an accounting from you, you pig."

The captain, an expression of surprise upon his features, turned toward his junior. He had seen men before with the jungle madness upon them— the madness of solitude and unrestrained brooding, and perhaps a touch of fever.

He rose and extended his hand to lay it upon the other's shoulder. Quiet words of counsel were upon his lips; but they were never spoken. Werper construed his superior's action into an attempt to close with him. His revolver was on a level with the captain's heart, and the latter had taken but a step when Werper pulled the trigger. Without a moan the man sank to the rough planking of the veranda, and as he fell the mists that had clouded Werper's brain lifted, so that he

saw himself and the deed that he had done in the same light that those who must judge him would see them.

He heard excited exclamations from the quarters of the soldiers and he heard men running in his direction. They would seize him, and if they didn't kill him they would take him down the Congo to a point where a properly ordered military tribunal would do so just as effectively, though in a more regular manner.

Werper had no desire to die. Never before had he so yearned for life as in this moment that he had so effectively forfeited his right to live. The men were nearing him. What was he to do? He glanced about as though searching for the tangible form of a legitimate excuse for

his crime; but he could find only the body of the man he had so causelessly shot down.

In despair, he turned and fled from the oncoming soldiery. Across the compound he ran, his revolver still clutched tightly in his hand. At the gates a sentry halted him. Werper did not pause to parley or to exert the influence of his commission—he merely raised his weapon and shot down the innocent black. A moment later the fugitive had torn open the gates and vanished into the blackness of the jungle, but not before he had transferred the rifle and ammunition belts of the dead sentry to his own person.

All that night Werper fled farther and

farther into the heart of the wilderness. Now and again the voice of a lion brought him to a listening halt; but with cocked and ready rifle he pushed ahead again, more fearful of the human huntsmen in his rear than of the wild carnivora ahead.

Dawn came at last, but still the man plodded on. All sense of hunger and fatigue were lost in the terrors of contemplated capture. He could think only of escape. He dared not pause to rest or eat until there was no further danger from pursuit, and so he staggered on until at last he fell and could rise no more. How long he had fled he did not know, or try to know. When he could flee no longer the knowledge that he had

reached his limit was hidden from him in the unconsciousness of utter exhaustion.

And thus it was that Achmet Zek, the Arab, found him. Achmet's followers were for running a spear through the body of their hereditary enemy; but Achmet would have it otherwise. First he would question the Belgian. It were easier to question a man first and kill him afterward, than kill him first and then question him.

So he had Lieutenant Albert Werper carried to his own tent, and there slaves administered wine and food in small quantities until at last the prisoner regained consciousness. As he opened his eyes he saw the faces of strange black men about him, and just outside the

tent the figure of an Arab. Nowhere was the uniform of his soldiers to be seen.

The Arab turned and seeing the open eyes of the prisoner upon him, entered the tent.

"I am Achmet Zek," he announced. "Who are you, and what were you doing in my country? Where are your soldiers?"

Achmet Zek! Werper's eyes went wide, and his heart sank. He was in the clutches of the most notorious of cut-throats—a hater of all Europeans, especially those who wore the uniform of Belgium. For years the military forces of Belgian Congo had waged a fruitless war upon this man and his followers—a war in which quarter had never been

asked nor expected by either side.

But presently in the very hatred of the man for Belgians, Werper saw a faint ray of hope for himself. He, too, was an outcast and an outlaw. So far, at least, they possessed a common interest, and Werper decided to play upon it for all that it might yield.

"I have heard of you," he replied, "and was searching for you. My people have turned against me. I hate them. Even now their soldiers are searching for me, to kill me. I knew that you would protect me from them, for you, too, hate them. In return I will take service with you. I am a trained soldier. I can fight, and your enemies are my enemies."

Achmet Zek eyed the European in

silence. In his mind he revolved many thoughts, chief among which was that the unbeliever lied. Of course there was the chance that he did not lie, and if he told the truth then his proposition was one well worthy of consideration, since fighting men were never over plentiful—especially white men with the training and knowledge of military matters that a European officer must possess.

Achmet Zek scowled and Werper's heart sank; but Werper did not know Achmet Zek, who was quite apt to scowl where another would smile, and smile where another would scowl.

"And if you have lied to me," said Achmet Zek, "I will kill you at any time. What return, other than your life, do you

expect for your services?"

"My keep only, at first," replied Werper. "Later, if I am worth more, we can easily reach an understanding." Werper's only desire at the moment was to preserve his life. And so the agreement was reached and Lieutenant Albert Werper became a member of the ivory and slave raiding band of the notorious Achmet Zek.

For months the renegade Belgian rode with the savage raider. He fought with a savage abandon, and a vicious cruelty fully equal to that of his fellow desperadoes. Achmet Zek watched his recruit with eagle eye, and with a growing satisfaction which finally found expression in a greater confidence in the

man, and resulted in an increased independence of action for Werper.

Achmet Zek took the Belgian into his confidence to a great extent, and at last unfolded to him a pet scheme which the Arab had long fostered, but which he never had found an opportunity to effect. With the aid of a European, however, the thing might be easily accomplished. He sounded Werper.

"You have heard of the man men call Tarzan?" he asked.

Werper nodded. "I have heard of him; but I do not know him."

"But for him we might carry on our 'trading' in safety and with great profit," continued the Arab. "For years he has fought us, driving us from the richest part

of the country, harassing us, and arming the natives that they may repel us when we come to 'trade.' He is very rich. If we could find some way to make him pay us many pieces of gold we should not only be avenged upon him; but repaid for much that he has prevented us from winning from the natives under his protection."

Werper withdrew a cigarette from a jeweled case and lighted it.

"And you have a plan to make him pay?" he asked.

"He has a wife," replied Achmet Zek, "whom men say is very beautiful. She would bring a great price farther north, if we found it too difficult to collect ransom money from this Tarzan."

Werper bent his head in thought. Achmet Zek stood awaiting his reply. What good remained in Albert Werper revolted at the thought of selling a white woman into the slavery and degradation of a Moslem harem. He looked up at Achmet Zek. He saw the Arab's eyes narrow, and he guessed that the other had sensed his antagonism to the plan. What would it mean to Werper to refuse? His life lay in the hands of this semi-barbarian, who esteemed the life of an unbeliever less highly than that of a dog. Werper loved life. What was this woman to him, anyway? She was a European, doubtless, a member of organized society. He was an outcast. The hand of every white man was

against him. She was his natural enemy, and if he refused to lend himself to her undoing, Achmet Zek would have him killed.

"You hesitate," murmured the Arab.

"I was but weighing the chances of success," lied Werper, "and my reward. As a European I can gain admittance to their home and table. You have no other with you who could do so much. The risk will be great. I should be well paid, Achmet Zek."

A smile of relief passed over the raider's face.

"Well said, Werper," and Achmet Zek slapped his lieutenant upon the shoulder. "You should be well paid and you shall. Now let us sit together and plan how

best the thing may be done," and the two men squatted upon a soft rug beneath the faded silks of Achmet's once gorgeous tent, and talked together in low voices well into the night. Both were tall and bearded, and the exposure to sun and wind had given an almost Arab hue to the European's complexion. In every detail of dress, too, he copied the fashions of his chief, so that outwardly he was as much an Arab as the other. It was late when he arose and retired to his own tent.

The following day Werper spent in overhauling his Belgian uniform, removing from it every vestige of evidence that might indicate its military purposes. From a heterogeneous

collection of loot, Achmet Zek procured a pith helmet and a European saddle, and from his black slaves and followers a party of porters, askaris and tent boys to make up a modest safari for a big game hunter. At the head of this party Werper set out from camp.

2. ON THE ROAD TO OPAR

It was two weeks later that John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, riding in from a tour of inspection of his vast African estate, glimpsed the head of a column of men crossing the plain that lay between his bungalow and the forest to the north and west.

He reined in his horse and watched the little party as it emerged from a concealing swale. His keen eyes caught the reflection of the sun upon the white helmet of a mounted man, and with the conviction that a wandering European hunter was seeking his hospitality, he wheeled his mount and rode slowly forward to meet the newcomer.

A half hour later he was mounting the

steps leading to the veranda of his bungalow, and introducing M. Jules Frecoult to Lady Greystoke.

"I was completely lost," M. Frecoult was explaining. "My head man had never before been in this part of the country and the guides who were to have accompanied me from the last village we passed knew even less of the country than we. They finally deserted us two days since. I am very fortunate indeed to have stumbled so providentially upon succor. I do not know what I should have done, had I not found you."

It was decided that Frecoult and his party should remain several days, or until they were thoroughly rested, when Lord Greystoke would furnish guides to

lead them safely back into country with which Frecoult's head man was supposedly familiar.

In his guise of a French gentleman of leisure, Werper found little difficulty in deceiving his host and in ingratiating himself with both Tarzan and Jane Clayton; but the longer he remained the less hopeful he became of an easy accomplishment of his designs.

Lady Greystoke never rode alone at any great distance from the bungalow, and the savage loyalty of the ferocious Waziri warriors who formed a great part of Tarzan's followers seemed to preclude the possibility of a successful attempt at forcible abduction, or of the bribery of the Waziri themselves.

A week passed, and Werper was no nearer the fulfillment of his plan, in so far as he could judge, than upon the day of his arrival, but at that very moment something occurred which gave him renewed hope and set his mind upon an even greater reward than a woman's ransom.

A runner had arrived at the bungalow with the weekly mail, and Lord Greystoke had spent the afternoon in his study reading and answering letters. At dinner he seemed distraught, and early in the evening he excused himself and retired, Lady Greystoke following him very soon after. Werper, sitting upon the veranda, could hear their voices in earnest discussion, and having realized

that something of unusual moment was afoot, he quietly rose from his chair, and keeping well in the shadow of the shrubbery growing profusely about the bungalow, made his silent way to a point beneath the window of the room in which his host and hostess slept.

Here he listened, and not without result, for almost the first words he overheard filled him with excitement. Lady Greystoke was speaking as Werper came within hearing.

"I always feared for the stability of the company," she was saying; "but it seems incredible that they should have failed for so enormous a sum - unless there has been some dishonest manipulation."

"That is what I suspect," replied Tarzan; "but whatever the cause, the fact remains that I have lost everything, and there is nothing for it but to return to Opar and get more."

"Oh, John," cried Lady Greystoke, and Werper could feel the shudder through her voice, "is there no other way? I cannot bear to think of you returning to that frightful city. I would rather live in poverty always than to have you risk the hideous dangers of Opar."

"You need have no fear," replied Tarzan, laughing. "I am pretty well able to take care of myself, and were I not, the Waziri who will accompany me will see that no harm befalls me."

"They ran away from Opar once, and left you to your fate," she reminded him.

"They will not do it again," he answered. "They were very much ashamed of themselves, and were coming back when I met them."

"But there must be some other way," insisted the woman.

"There is no other way half so easy to obtain another fortune, as to go to the treasure vaults of Opar and bring it away," he replied. "I shall be very careful, Jane, and the chances are that the inhabitants of Opar will never know that I have been there again and despoiled them of another portion of the treasure, the very existence of which they are as ignorant of as they would be

of its value."

The finality in his tone seemed to assure Lady Greystoke that further argument was futile, and so she abandoned the subject.

Werper remained, listening, for a short time, and then, confident that he had overheard all that was necessary and fearing discovery, returned to the veranda, where he smoked numerous cigarettes in rapid succession before retiring.

The following morning at breakfast, Werper announced his intention of making an early departure, and asked Tarzan's permission to hunt big game in the Waziri country on his way out—permission which Lord Greystoke

readily granted.

The Belgian consumed two days in completing his preparations, but finally got away with his safari, accompanied by a single Waziri guide whom Lord Greystoke had loaned him. The party made but a single short march when Werper simulated illness, and announced his intention of remaining where he was until he had fully recovered. As they had gone but a short distance from the Greystoke bungalow, Werper dismissed the Waziri guide, telling the warrior that he would send for him when he was able to proceed. The Waziri gone, the Belgian summoned one of Achmet Zek's trusted blacks to his tent, and dispatched him to watch for the

departure of Tarzan, returning immediately to advise Werper of the event and the direction taken by the Englishman.

The Belgian did not have long to wait, for the following day his emissary returned with word that Tarzan and a party of fifty Waziri warriors had set out toward the southeast early in the morning.

Werper called his head man to him, after writing a long letter to Achmet Zek. This letter he handed to the head man.

"Send a runner at once to Achmet Zek with this," he instructed the head man. "Remain here in camp awaiting further instructions from him or from me. If any come from the bungalow of the

Englishman, tell them that I am very ill within my tent and can see no one. Now, give me six porters and six askaris - the strongest and bravest of the safari—and I will march after the Englishman and discover where his gold is hidden."

And so it was that as Tarzan, stripped to the loin cloth and armed after the primitive fashion he best loved, led his loyal Waziri toward the dead city of Opar, Werper, the renegade, haunted his trail through the long, hot days, and camped close behind him by night.

And as they marched, Achmet Zek rode with his entire following southward toward the Greystoke farm.

To Tarzan of the Apes the expedition was in the nature of a holiday outing. His

civilization was at best but an outward veneer which he gladly peeled off with his uncomfortable European clothes whenever any reasonable pretext presented itself. It was a woman's love which kept Tarzan even to the semblance of civilization—a condition for which familiarity had bred contempt. He hated the shams and the hypocrisies of it and with the clear vision of an unspoiled mind he had penetrated to the rotten core of the heart of the thing—the cowardly greed for peace and ease and the safe-guarding of property rights. That the fine things of life—art, music and literature - had thriven upon such enervating ideals he strenuously denied, insisting, rather, that they had endured in spite of

civilization.

"Show me the fat, opulent coward," he was wont to say, "who ever originated a beautiful ideal. In the clash of arms, in the battle for survival, amid hunger and death and danger, in the face of God as manifested in the display of Nature's most terrific forces, is born all that is finest and best in the human heart and mind."

And so Tarzan always came back to Nature in the spirit of a lover keeping a long deferred tryst after a period behind prison walls. His Waziri, at marrow, were more civilized than he. They cooked their meat before they ate it and they shunned many articles of food as unclean that Tarzan had eaten with gusto

all his life and so insidious is the virus of hypocrisy that even the stalwart ape-man hesitated to give rein to his natural longings before them. He ate burnt flesh when he would have preferred it raw and unspoiled, and he brought down game with arrow or spear when he would far rather have leaped upon it from ambush and sunk his strong teeth in its jugular; but at last the call of the milk of the savage mother that had suckled him in infancy rose to an insistent demand—he craved the hot blood of a fresh kill and his muscles yearned to pit themselves against the savage jungle in the battle for existence that had been his sole birthright for the first twenty years of his life.

3. THE CALL OF THE JUNGLE

Moved by these vague yet all-powerful urgings the ape-man lay awake one night in the little thorn boma that protected, in a way, his party from the depredations of the great carnivora of the jungle. A single warrior stood sleepy guard beside the fire that yellow eyes out of the darkness beyond the camp made imperative. The moans and the coughing of the big cats mingled with the myriad noises of the lesser denizens of the jungle to fan the savage flame in the breast of this savage English lord. He tossed upon his bed of grasses, sleepless, for an hour and then he rose, noiseless as a wraith, and while the Waziri's back was turned, vaulted the

boma wall in the face of the flaming eyes, swung silently into a great tree and was gone.

For a time in sheer exuberance of animal spirit he raced swiftly through the middle terrace, swinging perilously across wide spans from one jungle giant to the next, and then he clambered upward to the swaying, lesser boughs of the upper terrace where the moon shone full upon him and the air was stirred by little breezes and death lurked ready in each frail branch. Here he paused and raised his face to Goro, the moon. With uplifted arm he stood, the cry of the bull ape quivering upon his lips, yet he remained silent lest he arouse his faithful Waziri who were all too familiar with

the hideous challenge of their master.

And then he went on more slowly and with greater stealth and caution, for now Tarzan of the Apes was seeking a kill. Down to the ground he came in the utter blackness of the close-set boles and the overhanging verdure of the jungle. He stooped from time to time and put his nose close to earth. He sought and found a wide game trail and at last his nostrils were rewarded with the scent of the fresh spoor of Bara, the deer. Tarzan's mouth watered and a low growl escaped his patrician lips. Sloughed from him was the last vestige of artificial caste—once again he was the primeval hunter—the first man—the highest caste type of the human race. Up wind he followed

the elusive spoor with a sense of perception so transcending that of ordinary man as to be inconceivable to us. Through counter currents of the heavy stench of meat eaters he traced the trail of Bara; the sweet and cloying stink of Horta, the boar, could not drown his quarry's scent— the permeating, mellow musk of the deer's foot.

Presently the body scent of the deer told Tarzan that his prey was close at hand. It sent him into the trees again— into the lower terrace where he could watch the ground below and catch with ears and nose the first intimation of actual contact with his quarry. Nor was it long before the ape-man came upon Bara standing alert at the edge of a

moon-bathed clearing. Noiselessly Tarzan crept through the trees until he was directly over the deer. In the ape-man's right hand was the long hunting knife of his father and in his heart the blood lust of the carnivore. Just for an instant he poised above the unsuspecting Bara and then he launched himself downward upon the sleek back. The impact of his weight carried the deer to its knees and before the animal could regain its feet the knife had found its heart. As Tarzan rose upon the body of his kill to scream forth his hideous victory cry into the face of the moon the wind carried to his nostrils something which froze him to statuesque immobility and silence. His savage eyes

blazed into the direction from which the wind had borne down the warning to him and a moment later the grasses at one side of the clearing parted and Numa, the lion, strode majestically into view. His yellow-green eyes were fastened upon Tarzan as he halted just within the clearing and glared enviously at the successful hunter, for Numa had had no luck this night.

From the lips of the ape-man broke a rumbling growl of warning. Numa answered but he did not advance. Instead he stood waving his tail gently to and fro, and presently Tarzan squatted upon his kill and cut a generous portion from a hind quarter. Numa eyed him with growing resentment and rage as,

between mouthfuls, the ape-man growled out his savage warnings. Now this particular lion had never before come in contact with Tarzan of the Apes and he was much mystified. Here was the appearance and the scent of a man-thing and Numa had tasted of human flesh and learned that though not the most palatable it was certainly by far the easiest to secure, yet there was that in the bestial growls of the strange creature which reminded him of formidable antagonists and gave him pause, while his hunger and the odor of the hot flesh of Bara goaded him almost to madness. Always Tarzan watched him, guessing what was passing in the little brain of the carnivore and well it was that he did

watch him, for at last Numa could stand it no longer. His tail shot suddenly erect and at the same instant the wary ape-man, knowing all too well what the signal portended, grasped the remainder of the deer's hind quarter between his teeth and leaped into a nearby tree as Numa charged him with all the speed and a sufficient semblance of the weight of an express train.

Tarzan's retreat was no indication that he felt fear. Jungle life is ordered along different lines than ours and different standards prevail. Had Tarzan been famished he would, doubtless, have stood his ground and met the lion's charge. He had done the thing before upon more than one occasion, just as in

the past he had charged lions himself; but tonight he was far from famished and in the hind quarter he had carried off with him was more raw flesh than he could eat; yet it was with no equanimity that he looked down upon Numa rending the flesh of Tarzan's kill. The presumption of this strange Numa must be punished! And forthwith Tarzan set out to make life miserable for the big cat. Close by were many trees bearing large, hard fruits and to one of these the ape-man swung with the agility of a squirrel. Then commenced a bombardment which brought forth earthshaking roars from Numa. One after another as rapidly as he could gather and hurl them, Tarzan pelted the hard fruit

down upon the lion. It was impossible for the tawny cat to eat under that hail of missiles—he could but roar and growl and dodge and eventually he was driven away entirely from the carcass of Bara, the deer. He went roaring and resentful; but in the very center of the clearing his voice was suddenly hushed and Tarzan saw the great head lower and flatten out, the body crouch and the long tail quiver, as the beast slunk cautiously toward the trees upon the opposite side.

Immediately Tarzan was alert. He lifted his head and sniffed the slow, jungle breeze. What was it that had attracted Numa's attention and taken him soft-footed and silent away from the scene of his discomfiture? Just as the

lion disappeared among the trees beyond the clearing Tarzan caught upon the down-coming wind the explanation of his new interest—the scent spoor of man was wafted strongly to the sensitive nostrils. Caching the remainder of the deer's hind quarter in the crotch of a tree the ape-man wiped his greasy palms upon his naked thighs and swung off in pursuit of Numa. A broad, well-beaten elephant path led into the forest from the clearing. Parallel to this slunk Numa, while above him Tarzan moved through the trees, the shadow of a wraith. The savage cat and the savage man saw Numa's quarry almost simultaneously, though both had known before it came within the vision of their eyes that it was

a black man. Their sensitive nostrils had told them this much and Tarzan's had told him that the scent spoor was that of a stranger—old and a male, for race and sex and age each has its own distinctive scent. It was an old man that made his way alone through the gloomy jungle, a wrinkled, dried up, little old man hideously scarred and tattooed and strangely garbed, with the skin of a hyena about his shoulders and the dried head mounted upon his grey pate. Tarzan recognized the ear-marks of the witch-doctor and awaited Numa's charge with a feeling of pleasurable anticipation, for the ape- man had no love for witch-doctors; but in the instant that Numa did charge, the white man suddenly recalled

that the lion had stolen his kill a few minutes before and that revenge is sweet.

The first intimation the black man had that he was in danger was the crash of twigs as Numa charged through the bushes into the game trail not twenty yards behind him. Then he turned to see a huge, black-maned lion racing toward him and even as he turned, Numa seized him. At the same instant the ape-man dropped from an overhanging limb full upon the lion's back and as he alighted he plunged his knife into the tawny side behind the left shoulder, tangled the fingers of his right hand in the long mane, buried his teeth in Numa's neck and wound his powerful legs about the

beast's torso. With a roar of pain and rage, Numa reared up and fell backward upon the ape-man; but still the mighty man-thing clung to his hold and repeatedly the long knife plunged rapidly into his side. Over and over rolled Numa, the lion, clawing and biting at the air, roaring and growling horribly in savage attempt to reach the thing upon its back. More than once was Tarzan almost brushed from his hold. He was battered and bruised and covered with blood from Numa and dirt from the trail, yet not for an instant did he lessen the ferocity of his mad attack nor his grim hold upon the back of his antagonist. To have loosened for an instant his grip there, would have been to bring him

within reach of those tearing talons or rending fangs, and have ended forever the grim career of this jungle-bred English lord. Where he had fallen beneath the spring of the lion the witch-doctor lay, torn and bleeding, unable to drag himself away and watched the terrific battle between these two lords of the jungle. His sunken eyes glittered and his wrinkled lips moved over toothless gums as he mumbled weird incantations to the demons of his cult.

For a time he felt no doubt as to the outcome—the strange white man must certainly succumb to terrible Simba—whoever heard of a lone man armed only with a knife slaying so mighty a beast! Yet presently the old black man's eyes

went wider and he commenced to have his doubts and misgivings. What wonderful sort of creature was this that battled with Simba and held his own despite the mighty muscles of the king of beasts and slowly there dawned in those sunken eyes, gleaming so brightly from the scarred and wrinkled face, the light of a dawning recollection. Gropingly backward into the past reached the fingers of memory, until at last they seized upon a faint picture, faded and yellow with the passing years. It was the picture of a lithe, white-skinned youth swinging through the trees in company with a band of huge apes, and the old eyes blinked and a great fear came into them—the superstitious fear of one who

believes in ghosts and spirits and demons.

And came the time once more when the witch-doctor no longer doubted the outcome of the duel, yet his first judgment was reversed, for now he knew that the jungle god would slay Simba and the old black was even more terrified of his own impending fate at the hands of the victor than he had been by the sure and sudden death which the triumphant lion would have meted out to him. He saw the lion weaken from loss of blood. He saw the mighty limbs tremble and stagger and at last he saw the beast sink down to rise no more. He saw the forest god or demon rise from the vanquished foe, and placing a foot

upon the still quivering carcass, raise his face to the moon and bay out a hideous cry that froze the ebbing blood in the veins of the witch- doctor.

4. PROPHECY AND FULFILLMENT

Then Tarzan turned his attention to the man. He had not slain Numa to save the Negro—he had merely done it in revenge upon the lion; but now that he saw the old man lying helpless and dying before him something akin to pity touched his savage heart. In his youth he would have slain the witch-doctor without the slightest compunction; but civilization had had its softening effect upon him even as it does upon the nations and races which it touches, though it had not yet gone far enough with Tarzan to render him either cowardly or effeminate. He saw an old man suffering and dying, and he stooped and felt of his wounds and stanched the

flow of blood.

"Who are you?" asked the old man in a trembling voice.

"I am Tarzan—Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man and not without a greater touch of pride than he would have said, "I am John Clayton, Lord Greystoke."

The witch-doctor shook convulsively and closed his eyes. When he opened them again there was in them a resignation to whatever horrible fate awaited him at the hands of this feared demon of the woods. "Why do you not kill me?" he asked.

"Why should I kill you?" inquired Tarzan. "You have not harmed me, and anyway you are already dying. Numa,

the lion, has killed you."

"You would not kill me?" Surprise and incredulity were in the tones of the quavering old voice.

"I would save you if I could," replied Tarzan, "but that cannot be done. Why did you think I would kill you?"

For a moment the old man was silent. When he spoke it was evidently after some little effort to muster his courage. "I knew you of old," he said, "when you ranged the jungle in the country of Mbonga, the chief. I was already a witch-doctor when you slew Kulonga and the others, and when you robbed our huts and our poison pot. At first I did not remember you; but at last I did - the white-skinned ape that lived with the

hairy apes and made life miserable in the village of Mbonga, the chief—the forest god—the Munango-Keewati for whom we set food outside our gates and who came and ate it. Tell me before I die—are you man or devil?"

Tarzan laughed. "I am a man," he said.

The old fellow sighed and shook his head. "You have tried to save me from Simba," he said. "For that I shall reward you. I am a great witch-doctor. Listen to me, white man! I see bad days ahead of you. It is writ in my own blood which I have smeared upon my palm. A god greater even than you will rise up and strike you down. Turn back, Munango-Keewati! Turn back before it is too late.

Danger lies ahead of you and danger lurks behind; but greater is the danger before. I see—" He paused and drew a long, gasping breath. Then he crumpled into a little, wrinkled heap and died. Tarzan wondered what else he had seen.

It was very late when the ape-man re-entered the boma and lay down among his black warriors. None had seen him go and none saw him return. He thought about the warning of the old witch-doctor before he fell asleep and he thought of it again after he awoke; but he did not turn back for he was unafraid, though had he known what lay in store for one he loved most in all the world he would have flown through the trees to her side and allowed the gold of Opar to

remain forever hidden in its forgotten storehouse.

Behind him that morning another white man pondered something he had heard during the night and very nearly did he give up his project and turn back upon his trail. It was Werper, the murderer, who in the still of the night had heard far away upon the trail ahead of him a sound that had filled his cowardly soul with terror—a sound such as he never before had heard in all his life, nor dreamed that such a frightful thing could emanate from the lungs of a God-created creature. He had heard the victory cry of the bull ape as Tarzan had screamed it forth into the face of Goro, the moon, and he had trembled then and

hidden his face; and now in the broad light of a new day he trembled again as he recalled it, and would have turned back from the nameless danger the echo of that frightful sound seemed to portend, had he not stood in even greater fear of Achmet Zek, his master.

And so Tarzan of the Apes forged steadily ahead toward Opar's ruined ramparts and behind him slunk Werper, jackal-like, and only God knew what lay in store for each.

At the edge of the desolate valley, overlooking the golden domes and minarets of Opar, Tarzan halted. By night he would go alone to the treasure vault, reconnoitering, for he had determined that caution should mark his

every move upon this expedition.

With the coming of night he set forth, and Werper, who had scaled the cliffs alone behind the ape-man's party, and hidden through the day among the rough boulders of the mountain top, slunk stealthily after him. The boulder-strewn plain between the valley's edge and the mighty granite kopje, outside the city's walls, where lay the entrance to the passage-way leading to the treasure vault, gave the Belgian ample cover as he followed Tarzan toward Opar.

He saw the giant ape-man swing himself nimbly up the face of the great rock. Werper, clawing fearfully during the perilous ascent, sweating in terror, almost palsied by fear, but spurred on by

avarice, following upward, until at last he stood upon the summit of the rocky hill.

Tarzan was nowhere in sight. For a time Werper hid behind one of the lesser boulders that were scattered over the top of the hill, but, seeing or hearing nothing of the Englishman, he crept from his place of concealment to undertake a systematic search of his surroundings, in the hope that he might discover the location of the treasure in ample time to make his escape before Tarzan returned, for it was the Belgian's desire merely to locate the gold, that, after Tarzan had departed, he might come in safety with his followers and carry away as much as he could transport.

He found the narrow cleft leading downward into the heart of the kopje along well-worn, granite steps. He advanced quite to the dark mouth of the tunnel into which the runway disappeared; but here he halted, fearing to enter, lest he meet Tarzan returning.

The ape-man, far ahead of him, groped his way along the rocky passage, until he came to the ancient wooden door. A moment later he stood within the treasure chamber, where, ages since, long-dead hands had ranged the lofty rows of precious ingots for the rulers of that great continent which now lies submerged beneath the waters of the Atlantic.

No sound broke the stillness of the

subterranean vault. There was no evidence that another had discovered the forgotten wealth since last the ape-man had visited its hiding place.

Satisfied, Tarzan turned and retraced his steps toward the summit of the kopje. Werper, from the concealment of a jutting, granite shoulder, watched him pass up from the shadows of the stairway and advance toward the edge of the hill which faced the rim of the valley where the Waziri awaited the signal of their master. Then Werper, slipping stealthily from his hiding place, dropped into the somber darkness of the entrance and disappeared.

Tarzan, halting upon the kopje's edge, raised his voice in the thunderous roar of

a lion. Twice, at regular intervals, he repeated the call, standing in attentive silence for several minutes after the echoes of the third call had died away. And then, from far across the valley, faintly, came an answering roar—once, twice, thrice. Basuli, the Waziri chieftain, had heard and replied.

Tarzan again made his way toward the treasure vault, knowing that in a few hours his blacks would be with him, ready to bear away another fortune in the strangely shaped, golden ingots of Opar. In the meantime he would carry as much of the precious metal to the summit of the kopje as he could.

Six trips he made in the five hours before Basuli reached the kopje, and at

the end of that time he had transported forty-eight ingots to the edge of the great boulder, carrying upon each trip a load which might well have staggered two ordinary men, yet his giant frame showed no evidence of fatigue, as he helped to raise his ebon warriors to the hill top with the rope that had been brought for the purpose.

Six times he had returned to the treasure chamber, and six times Werper, the Belgian, had cowered in the black shadows at the far end of the long vault. Once again came the ape-man, and this time there came with him fifty fighting men, turning porters for love of the only creature in the world who might command of their fierce and haughty

natures such menial service. Fifty-two more ingots passed out of the vaults, making the total of one hundred which Tarzan intended taking away with him.

As the last of the Waziri filed from the chamber, Tarzan turned back for a last glimpse of the fabulous wealth upon which his two inroads had made no appreciable impression. Before he extinguished the single candle he had brought with him for the purpose, and the flickering light of which had cast the first alleviating rays into the impenetrable darkness of the buried chamber, that it had known for the countless ages since it had lain forgotten of man, Tarzan's mind reverted to that first occasion upon which he had entered

the treasure vault, coming upon it by chance as he fled from the pits beneath the temple, where he had been hidden by La, the High Priestess of the Sun Worshipers.

He recalled the scene within the temple when he had lain stretched upon the sacrificial altar, while La, with high-raised dagger, stood above him, and the rows of priests and priestesses awaited, in the ecstatic hysteria of fanaticism, the first gush of their victim's warm blood, that they might fill their golden goblets and drink to the glory of their Flaming God.

The brutal and bloody interruption by Tha, the mad priest, passed vividly before the ape-man's recollective eyes,

the flight of the votaries before the insane blood lust of the hideous creature, the brutal attack upon La, and his own part of the grim tragedy when he had battled with the infuriated Oparian and left him dead at the feet of the priestess he would have profaned.

This and much more passed through Tarzan's memory as he stood gazing at the long tiers of dull-yellow metal. He wondered if La still ruled the temples of the ruined city whose crumbling walls rose upon the very foundations about him. Had she finally been forced into a union with one of her grotesque priests? It seemed a hideous fate, indeed, for one so beautiful. With a shake of his head, Tarzan stepped to the flickering candle,

extinguished its feeble rays and turned toward the exit.

Behind him the spy waited for him to be gone. He had learned the secret for which he had come, and now he could return at his leisure to his waiting followers, bring them to the treasure vault and carry away all the gold that they could stagger under.

The Waziri had reached the outer end of the tunnel, and were winding upward toward the fresh air and the welcome starlight of the kopje's summit, before Tarzan shook off the detaining hand of reverie and started slowly after them.

Once again, and, he thought, for the last time, he closed the massive door of the treasure room. In the darkness behind

him Werper rose and stretched his cramped muscles. He stretched forth a hand and lovingly caressed a golden ingot on the nearest tier. He raised it from its immemorial resting place and weighed it in his hands. He clutched it to his bosom in an ecstasy of avarice.

Tarzan dreamed of the happy homecoming which lay before him, of dear arms about his neck, and a soft cheek pressed to his; but there rose to dispel that dream the memory of the old witch-doctor and his warning.

And then, in the span of a few brief seconds, the hopes of both these men were shattered. The one forgot even his greed in the panic of terror— the other was plunged into total forgetfulness of

the past by a jagged fragment of rock which gashed a deep cut upon his head.

5. THE ALTAR OF THE FLAMING GOD

It was at the moment that Tarzan turned from the closed door to pursue his way to the outer world. The thing came without warning. One instant all was quiet and stability—the next, and the world rocked, the tortured sides of the narrow passageway split and crumbled, great blocks of granite, dislodged from the ceiling, tumbled into the narrow way, choking it, and the walls bent inward upon the wreckage. Beneath the blow of a fragment of the roof, Tarzan staggered back against the door to the treasure room, his weight pushed it open and his body rolled inward upon the floor.

In the great apartment where the

treasure lay less damage was wrought by the earthquake. A few ingots toppled from the higher tiers, a single piece of the rocky ceiling splintered off and crashed downward to the floor, and the walls cracked, though they did not collapse.

There was but the single shock, no other followed to complete the damage undertaken by the first. Werper, thrown to his length by the suddenness and violence of the disturbance, staggered to his feet when he found himself unhurt. Groping his way toward the far end of the chamber, he sought the candle which Tarzan had left stuck in its own wax upon the protruding end of an ingot.

By striking numerous matches the

Belgian at last found what he sought, and when, a moment later, the sickly rays relieved the Stygian darkness about him, he breathed a nervous sigh of relief, for the impenetrable gloom had accentuated the terrors of his situation.

As they became accustomed to the light the man turned his eyes toward the door—his one thought now was of escape from this frightful tomb —and as he did so he saw the body of the naked giant lying stretched upon the floor just within the doorway. Werper drew back in sudden fear of detection; but a second glance convinced him that the Englishman was dead. From a great gash in the man's head a pool of blood had collected upon the concrete floor.

Quickly, the Belgian leaped over the prostrate form of his erstwhile host, and without a thought of succor for the man in whom, for aught he knew, life still remained, he bolted for the passageway and safety.

But his renewed hopes were soon dashed. Just beyond the doorway he found the passage completely clogged and choked by impenetrable masses of shattered rock. Once more he turned and re-entered the treasure vault. Taking the candle from its place he commenced a systematic search of the apartment, nor had he gone far before he discovered another door in the opposite end of the room, a door which gave upon creaking hinges to the weight of his body. Beyond

the door lay another narrow passageway. Along this Werper made his way, ascending a flight of stone steps to another corridor twenty feet above the level of the first. The flickering candle lighted the way before him, and a moment later he was thankful for the possession of this crude and antiquated luminant, which, a few hours before he might have looked upon with contempt, for it showed him, just in time, a yawning pit, apparently terminating the tunnel he was traversing.

Before him was a circular shaft. He held the candle above it and peered downward. Below him, at a great distance, he saw the light reflected back from the surface of a pool of water. He

had come upon a well. He raised the candle above his head and peered across the black void, and there upon the opposite side he saw the continuation of the tunnel; but how was he to span the gulf?

As he stood there measuring the distance to the opposite side and wondering if he dared venture so great a leap, there broke suddenly upon his startled ears a piercing scream which diminished gradually until it ended in a series of dismal moans. The voice seemed partly human, yet so hideous that it might well have emanated from the tortured throat of a lost soul, writhing in the fires of hell.

The Belgian shuddered and looked

fearfully upward, for the scream had seemed to come from above him. As he looked he saw an opening far overhead, and a patch of sky pinked with brilliant stars.

His half-formed intention to call for help was expunged by the terrifying cry—where such a voice lived, no human creatures could dwell. He dared not reveal himself to whatever inhabitants dwelt in the place above him. He cursed himself for a fool that he had ever embarked upon such a mission. He wished himself safely back in the camp of Achmet Zek, and would almost have embraced an opportunity to give himself up to the military authorities of the Congo if by so doing he might be

rescued from the frightful predicament in which he now was.

He listened fearfully, but the cry was not repeated, and at last spurred to desperate means, he gathered himself for the leap across the chasm. Going back twenty paces, he took a running start, and at the edge of the well, leaped upward and outward in an attempt to gain the opposite side.

In his hand he clutched the sputtering candle, and as he took the leap the rush of air extinguished it. In utter darkness he flew through space, clutching outward for a hold should his feet miss the invisible ledge.

He struck the edge of the door of the opposite terminus of the rocky tunnel

with his knees, slipped backward, clutched desperately for a moment, and at last hung half within and half without the opening; but he was safe. For several minutes he dared not move; but clung, weak and sweating, where he lay. At last, cautiously, he drew himself well within the tunnel, and again he lay at full length upon the floor, fighting to regain control of his shattered nerves.

When his knees struck the edge of the tunnel he had dropped the candle. Presently, hoping against hope that it had fallen upon the floor of the passageway, rather than back into the depths of the well, he rose upon all fours and commenced a diligent search for the little tallow cylinder, which now

seemed infinitely more precious to him than all the fabulous wealth of the hoarded ingots of Opar.

And when, at last, he found it, he clasped it to him and sank back sobbing and exhausted. For many minutes he lay trembling and broken; but finally he drew himself to a sitting posture, and taking a match from his pocket, lighted the stump of the candle which remained to him. With the light he found it easier to regain control of his nerves, and presently he was again making his way along the tunnel in search of an avenue of escape. The horrid cry that had come down to him from above through the ancient well-shaft still haunted him, so that he trembled in terror at even the

sounds of his own cautious advance.

He had gone forward but a short distance, when, to his chagrin, a wall of masonry barred his farther progress, closing the tunnel completely from top to bottom and from side to side. What could it mean? Werper was an educated and intelligent man. His military training had taught him to use his mind for the purpose for which it was intended. A blind tunnel such as this was senseless. It must continue beyond the wall. Someone, at some time in the past, had had it blocked for an unknown purpose of his own. The man fell to examining the masonry by the light of his candle. To his delight he discovered that the thin blocks of hewn stone of which it was

constructed were fitted in loosely without mortar or cement. He tugged upon one of them, and to his joy found that it was easily removable. One after another he pulled out the blocks until he had opened an aperture large enough to admit his body, then he crawled through into a large, low chamber. Across this another door barred his way; but this, too, gave before his efforts, for it was not barred. A long, dark corridor showed before him, but before he had followed it far, his candle burned down until it scorched his fingers. With an oath he dropped it to the floor, where it sputtered for a moment and went out.

Now he was in total darkness, and again terror rode heavily astride his

neck. What further pitfalls and dangers lay ahead he could not guess; but that he was as far as ever from liberty he was quite willing to believe, so depressing is utter absence of light to one in unfamiliar surroundings.

Slowly he groped his way along, feeling with his hands upon the tunnel's walls, and cautiously with his feet ahead of him upon the floor before he could take a single forward step. How long he crept on thus he could not guess; but at last, feeling that the tunnel's length was interminable, and exhausted by his efforts, by terror, and loss of sleep, he determined to lie down and rest before proceeding farther.

When he awoke there was no change

in the surrounding blackness. He might have slept a second or a day—he could not know; but that he had slept for some time was attested by the fact that he felt refreshed and hungry.

Again he commenced his groping advance; but this time he had gone but a short distance when he emerged into a room, which was lighted through an opening in the ceiling, from which a flight of concrete steps led downward to the floor of the chamber.

Above him, through the aperture, Werper could see sunlight glancing from massive columns, which were twined about by clinging vines. He listened; but he heard no sound other than the soughing of the wind through leafy

branches, the hoarse cries of birds, and the chattering of monkeys.

Boldly he ascended the stairway, to find himself in a circular court. Just before him stood a stone altar, stained with rusty-brown discolorations. At the time Werper gave no thought to an explanation of these stains— later their origin became all too hideously apparent to him.

Beside the opening in the floor, just behind the altar, through which he had entered the court from the subterranean chamber below, the Belgian discovered several doors leading from the enclosure upon the level of the floor. Above, and circling the courtyard, was a series of open balconies. Monkeys scampered

about the deserted ruins, and gaily plumaged birds flitted in and out among the columns and the galleries far above; but no sign of human presence was discernible. Werper felt relieved. He sighed, as though a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He took a step toward one of the exits, and then he halted, wide-eyed in astonishment and terror, for almost at the same instant a dozen doors opened in the courtyard wall and a horde of frightful men rushed in upon him.

They were the priests of the Flaming God of Opar—the same, shaggy, knotted, hideous little men who had dragged Jane Clayton to the sacrificial altar at this very spot years before. Their long arms,

their short and crooked legs, their close-set, evil eyes, and their low, receding foreheads gave them a bestial appearance that sent a qualm of paralyzing fright through the shaken nerves of the Belgian.

With a scream he turned to flee back into the lesser terrors of the gloomy corridors and apartments from which he had just emerged, but the frightful men anticipated his intentions. They blocked the way; they seized him, and though he fell, groveling upon his knees before them, begging for his life, they bound him and hurled him to the floor of the inner temple.

The rest was but a repetition of what Tarzan and Jane Clayton had passed

through. The priestesses came, and with them La, the High Priestess. Werper was raised and laid across the altar. Cold sweat exuded from his every pore as La raised the cruel, sacrificial knife above him. The death chant fell upon his tortured ears. His staring eyes wandered to the golden goblets from which the hideous votaries would soon quench their inhuman thirst in his own, warm life-blood.

He wished that he might be granted the brief respite of unconsciousness before the final plunge of the keen blade —and then there was a frightful roar that sounded almost in his ears. The High Priestess lowered her dagger. Her eyes went wide in horror. The priestesses,

her votaresses, screamed and fled madly toward the exits. The priests roared out their rage and terror according to the temper of their courage. Werper strained his neck about to catch a sight of the cause of their panic, and when, at last he saw it, he too went cold in dread, for what his eyes beheld was the figure of a huge lion standing in the center of the temple, and already a single victim lay mangled beneath his cruel paws.

Again the lord of the wilderness roared, turning his baleful gaze upon the altar. La staggered forward, reeled, and fell across Werper in a swoon.

6. THE ARAB RAID

After their first terror had subsided subsequent to the shock of the earthquake, Basuli and his warriors hastened back into the passageway in search of Tarzan and two of their own number who were also missing.

They found the way blocked by jammed and distorted rock. For two days they labored to tear a way through to their imprisoned friends; but when, after Herculean efforts, they had unearthed but a few yards of the choked passage, and discovered the mangled remains of one of their fellows they were forced to the conclusion that Tarzan and the second Waziri also lay dead beneath the rock mass farther in,

beyond human aid, and no longer susceptible of it.

Again and again as they labored they called aloud the names of their master and their comrade; but no answering call rewarded their listening ears. At last they gave up the search. Tearfully they cast a last look at the shattered tomb of their master, shouldered the heavy burden of gold that would at least furnish comfort, if not happiness, to their bereaved and beloved mistress, and made their mournful way back across the desolate valley of Opar, and downward through the forests beyond toward the distant bungalow.

And as they marched what sorry fate was already drawing down upon that

peaceful, happy home!

From the north came Achmet Zek, riding to the summons of his lieutenant's letter. With him came his horde of renegade Arabs, outlawed marauders, these, and equally degraded blacks, garnered from the more debased and ignorant tribes of savage cannibals through whose countries the raider passed to and fro with perfect impunity.

Mugambi, the ebon Hercules, who had shared the dangers and vicissitudes of his beloved Bwana, from Jungle Island, almost to the headwaters of the Ugambi, was the first to note the bold approach of the sinister caravan.

He it was whom Tarzan had left in charge of the warriors who remained to

guard Lady Greystoke, nor could a braver or more loyal guardian have been found in any clime or upon any soil. A giant in stature, a savage, fearless warrior, the huge black possessed also soul and judgment in proportion to his bulk and his ferocity.

Not once since his master had departed had he been beyond sight or sound of the bungalow, except when Lady Greystoke chose to canter across the broad plain, or relieve the monotony of her loneliness by a brief hunting excursion. On such occasions Mugambi, mounted upon a wiry Arab, had ridden close at her horse's heels.

The raiders were still a long way off when the warrior's keen eyes discovered

them. For a time he stood scrutinizing the advancing party in silence, then he turned and ran rapidly in the direction of the native huts which lay a few hundred yards below the bungalow.

Here he called out to the lolling warriors. He issued orders rapidly. In compliance with them the men seized upon their weapons and their shields. Some ran to call in the workers from the fields and to warn the tenders of the flocks and herds. The majority followed Mugambi back toward the bungalow.

The dust of the raiders was still a long distance away. Mugambi could not know positively that it hid an enemy; but he had spent a lifetime of savage life in savage Africa, and he had seen parties

before come thus unheralded. Sometimes they had come in peace and sometimes they had come in war— one could never tell. It was well to be prepared. Mugambi did not like the haste with which the strangers advanced.

The Greystoke bungalow was not well adapted for defense. No palisade surrounded it, for, situated as it was, in the heart of loyal Waziri, its master had anticipated no possibility of an attack in force by any enemy. Heavy, wooden shutters there were to close the window apertures against hostile arrows, and these Mugambi was engaged in lowering when Lady Greystoke appeared upon the veranda.

"Why, Mugambi!" she exclaimed.

"What has happened? Why are you lowering the shutters?"

Mugambi pointed out across the plain to where a white-robed force of mounted men was now distinctly visible.

"Arabs," he explained. "They come for no good purpose in the absence of the Great Bwana."

Beyond the neat lawn and the flowering shrubs, Jane Clayton saw the glistening bodies of her Waziri. The sun glanced from the tips of their metal-shod spears, picked out the gorgeous colors in the feathers of their war bonnets, and reflected the high-lights from the glossy skins of their broad shoulders and high cheek bones.

Jane Clayton surveyed them with

unmixed feelings of pride and affection. What harm could befall her with such as these to protect her?

The raiders had halted now, a hundred yards out upon the plain. Mugambi had hastened down to join his warriors. He advanced a few yards before them and raising his voice hailed the strangers. Achmet Zek sat straight in his saddle before his henchmen.

"Arab!" cried Mugambi. "What do you here?"

"We come in peace," Achmet Zek called back.

"Then turn and go in peace," replied Mugambi. "We do not want you here. There can be no peace between Arab and Waziri."

Mugambi, although not born in Waziri, had been adopted into the tribe, which now contained no member more jealous of its traditions and its prowess than he.

Achmet Zek drew to one side of his horde, speaking to his men in a low voice. A moment later, without warning, a ragged volley was poured into the ranks of the Waziri. A couple of warriors fell, the others were for charging the attackers; but Mugambi was a cautious as well as a brave leader. He knew the futility of charging mounted men armed with muskets. He withdrew his force behind the shrubbery of the garden. Some he dispatched to various other parts of the grounds surrounding

the bungalow. Half a dozen he sent to the bungalow itself with instructions to keep their mistress within doors, and to protect her with their lives.

Adopting the tactics of the desert fighters from which he had sprung, Achmet Zek led his followers at a gallop in a long, thin line, describing a great circle which drew closer and closer in toward the defenders.

At that part of the circle closest to the Waziri, a constant fusillade of shots was poured into the bushes behind which the black warriors had concealed themselves. The latter, on their part, loosed their slim shafts at the nearest of the enemy.

The Waziri, justly famed for their

archery, found no cause to blush for their performance that day. Time and again some swarthy horseman threw hands above his head and toppled from his saddle, pierced by a deadly arrow; but the contest was uneven. The Arabs outnumbered the Waziri; their bullets penetrated the shrubbery and found marks that the Arab riflemen had not even seen; and then Achmet Zek circled inward a half mile above the bungalow, tore down a section of the fence, and led his marauders within the grounds.

Across the fields they charged at a mad run. Not again did they pause to lower fences, instead, they drove their wild mounts straight for them, clearing the obstacles as lightly as winged gulls.

Mugambi saw them coming, and, calling those of his warriors who remained, ran for the bungalow and the last stand. Upon the veranda Lady Greystoke stood, rifle in hand. More than a single raider had accounted to her steady nerves and cool aim for his outlawry; more than a single pony raced, riderless, in the wake of the charging horde.

Mugambi pushed his mistress back into the greater security of the interior, and with his depleted force prepared to make a last stand against the foe.

On came the Arabs, shouting and waving their long guns above their heads. Past the veranda they raced, pouring a deadly fire into the kneeling

Waziri who discharged their volley of arrows from behind their long, oval shields - shields well adapted, perhaps, to stop a hostile arrow, or deflect a spear; but futile, quite, before the leaden missiles of the riflemen.

From beneath the half-raised shutters of the bungalow other bowmen did effective service in greater security, and after the first assault, Mugambi withdrew his entire force within the building.

Again and again the Arabs charged, at last forming a stationary circle about the little fortress, and outside the effective range of the defenders' arrows. From their new position they fired at will at the windows. One by one the Waziri

fell. Fewer and fewer were the arrows that replied to the guns of the raiders, and at last Achmet Zek felt safe in ordering an assault.

Firing as they ran, the bloodthirsty horde raced for the veranda. A dozen of them fell to the arrows of the defenders; but the majority reached the door. Heavy gun butts fell upon it. The crash of splintered wood mingled with the report of a rifle as Jane Clayton fired through the panels upon the relentless foe.

Upon both sides of the door men fell; but at last the frail barrier gave to the vicious assaults of the maddened attackers; it crumpled inward and a dozen swarthy murderers leaped into the living- room. At the far end stood Jane

Clayton surrounded by the remnant of her devoted guardians. The floor was covered by the bodies of those who already had given up their lives in her defense. In the forefront of her protectors stood the giant Mugambi. The Arabs raised their rifles to pour in the last volley that would effectually end all resistance; but Achmet Zek roared out a warning order that stayed their trigger fingers.

"Fire not upon the woman!" he cried. "Who harms her, dies. Take the woman alive!"

The Arabs rushed across the room; the Waziri met them with their heavy spears. Swords flashed, long-barreled pistols roared out their sullen death

dooms. Mugambi launched his spear at the nearest of the enemy with a force that drove the heavy shaft completely through the Arab's body, then he seized a pistol from another, and grasping it by the barrel brained all who forced their way too near his mistress.

Emulating his example the few warriors who remained to him fought like demons; but one by one they fell, until only Mugambi remained to defend the life and honor of the ape-man's mate.

From across the room Achmet Zek watched the unequal struggle and urged on his minions. In his hands was a jeweled musket. Slowly he raised it to his shoulder, waiting until another move should place Mugambi at his mercy

without endangering the lives of the woman or any of his own followers.

At last the moment came, and Achmet Zek pulled the trigger. Without a sound the brave Mugambi sank to the floor at the feet of Jane Clayton.

An instant later she was surrounded and disarmed. Without a word they dragged her from the bungalow. A giant Negro lifted her to the pommel of his saddle, and while the raiders searched the bungalow and outhouses for plunder he rode with her beyond the gates and waited the coming of his master.

Jane Clayton saw the raiders lead the horses from the corral, and drive the herds in from the fields. She saw her home plundered of all that represented

intrinsic worth in the eyes of the Arabs, and then she saw the torch applied, and the flames lick up what remained.

And at last, when the raiders assembled after glutting their fury and their avarice, and rode away with her toward the north, she saw the smoke and the flames rising far into the heavens until the winding of the trail into the thick forests hid the sad view from her eyes.

As the flames ate their way into the living-room, reaching out forked tongues to lick up the bodies of the dead, one of that gruesome company whose bloody welterings had long since been stilled, moved again. It was a huge black who rolled over upon his side and opened

blood-shot, suffering eyes. Mugambi, whom the Arabs had left for dead, still lived. The hot flames were almost upon him as he raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees and crawled slowly toward the doorway.

Again and again he sank weakly to the floor; but each time he rose again and continued his pitiful way toward safety. After what seemed to him an interminable time, during which the flames had become a veritable fiery furnace at the far side of the room, the great black managed to reach the veranda, roll down the steps, and crawl off into the cool safety of some nearby shrubbery.

All night he lay there, alternately

unconscious and painfully sentient; and in the latter state watching with savage hatred the lurid flames which still rose from burning crib and hay cock. A prowling lion roared close at hand; but the giant black was unafraid. There was place for but a single thought in his savage mind—revenge! revenge! revenge!

7. THE JEWEL-ROOM OF OPAR

For some time Tarzan lay where he had fallen upon the floor of the treasure chamber beneath the ruined walls of Opar. He lay as one dead; but he was not dead. At length he stirred. His eyes opened upon the utter darkness of the room. He raised his hand to his head and brought it away sticky with clotted blood. He sniffed at his fingers, as a wild beast might sniff at the life- blood upon a wounded paw.

Slowly he rose to a sitting posture—listening. No sound reached to the buried depths of his sepulcher. He staggered to his feet, and groped his way about among the tiers of ingots. What was he? Where was he? His head ached; but

otherwise he felt no ill effects from the blow that had felled him. The accident he did not recall, nor did he recall aught of what had led up to it.

He let his hands grope unfamiliarly over his limbs, his torso, and his head. He felt of the quiver at his back, the knife in his loin cloth. Something struggled for recognition within his brain. Ah! he had it. There was something missing. He crawled about upon the floor, feeling with his hands for the thing that instinct warned him was gone. At last he found it - the heavy war spear that in past years had formed so important a feature of his daily life, almost of his very existence, so inseparably had it been connected with

his every action since the long-gone day that he had wrested his first spear from the body of a black victim of his savage training.

Tarzan was sure that there was another and more lovely world than that which was confined to the darkness of the four stone walls surrounding him. He continued his search and at last found the doorway leading inward beneath the city and the temple. This he followed, most incautiously. He came to the stone steps leading upward to the higher level. He ascended them and continued onward toward the well.

Nothing spurred his hurt memory to a recollection of past familiarity with his surroundings. He blundered on through

the darkness as though he were traversing an open plain under the brilliance of a noonday sun, and suddenly there happened that which had to happen under the circumstances of his rash advance.

He reached the brink of the well, stepped outward into space, lunged forward, and shot downward into the inky depths below. Still clutching his spear, he struck the water, and sank beneath its surface, plumbing the depths.

The fall had not injured him, and when he rose to the surface, he shook the water from his eyes, and found that he could see. Daylight was filtering into the well from the orifice far above his head. It illumined the inner walls faintly.

Tarzan gazed about him. On the level with the surface of the water he saw a large opening in the dark and slimy wall. He swam to it, and drew himself out upon the wet floor of a tunnel.

Along this he passed; but now he went warily, for Tarzan of the Apes was learning. The unexpected pit had taught him care in the traversing of dark passageways—he needed no second lesson.

For a long distance the passage went straight as an arrow. The floor was slippery, as though at times the rising waters of the well overflowed and flooded it. This, in itself, retarded Tarzan's pace, for it was with difficulty that he kept his footing.

The foot of a stairway ended the passage. Up this he made his way. It turned back and forth many times, leading, at last, into a small, circular chamber, the gloom of which was relieved by a faint light which found ingress through a tubular shaft several feet in diameter which rose from the center of the room's ceiling, upward to a distance of a hundred feet or more, where it terminated in a stone grating through which Tarzan could see a blue and sun-lit sky.

Curiosity prompted the ape-man to investigate his surroundings. Several metal-bound, copper-studded chests constituted the sole furniture of the round room. Tarzan let his hands run over

these. He felt of the copper studs, he pulled upon the hinges, and at last, by chance, he raised the cover of one.

An exclamation of delight broke from his lips at sight of the pretty contents. Gleaming and glistening in the subdued light of the chamber, lay a great tray full of brilliant stones. Tarzan, reverted to the primitive by his accident, had no conception of the fabulous value of his find. To him they were but pretty pebbles. He plunged his hands into them and let the priceless gems filter through his fingers. He went to others of the chests, only to find still further stores of precious stones. Nearly all were cut, and from these he gathered a handful and filled the pouch which dangled at his

side - the uncut stones he tossed back into the chests.

Unwittingly, the ape-man had stumbled upon the forgotten jewel- room of Opar. For ages it had lain buried beneath the temple of the Flaming God, midway of one of the many inky passages which the superstitious descendants of the ancient Sun Worshipers had either dared not or cared not to explore.

Tiring at last of this diversion, Tarzan took up his way along the corridor which led upward from the jewel-room by a steep incline. Winding and twisting, but always tending upward, the tunnel led him nearer and nearer to the surface, ending finally in a low-ceiled room,

lighter than any that he had as yet discovered.

Above him an opening in the ceiling at the upper end of a flight of concrete steps revealed a brilliant sunlit scene. Tarzan viewed the vine-covered columns in mild wonderment. He puckered his brows in an attempt to recall some recollection of similar things. He was not sure of himself. There was a tantalizing suggestion always present in his mind that something was eluding him—that he should know many things which he did not know.

His earnest cogitation was rudely interrupted by a thunderous roar from the opening above him. Following the roar came the cries and screams of men and

women. Tarzan grasped his spear more firmly and ascended the steps. A strange sight met his eyes as he emerged from the semi-darkness of the cellar to the brilliant light of the temple.

The creatures he saw before him he recognized for what they were— men and women, and a huge lion. The men and women were scuttling for the safety of the exits. The lion stood upon the body of one who had been less fortunate than the others. He was in the center of the temple. Directly before Tarzan, a woman stood beside a block of stone. Upon the top of the stone lay stretched a man, and as the ape-man watched the scene, he saw the lion glare terribly at the two who remained within the temple.

Another thunderous roar broke from the savage throat, the woman screamed and swooned across the body of the man stretched prostrate upon the stone altar before her.

The lion advanced a few steps and crouched. The tip of his sinuous tail twitched nervously. He was upon the point of charging when his eyes were attracted toward the ape-man.

Werper, helpless upon the altar, saw the great carnivore preparing to leap upon him. He saw the sudden change in the beast's expression as his eyes wandered to something beyond the altar and out of the Belgian's view. He saw the formidable creature rise to a standing position. A figure darted past Werper.

He saw a mighty arm upraised, and a stout spear shoot forward toward the lion, to bury itself in the broad chest.

He saw the lion snapping and tearing at the weapon's shaft, and he saw, wonder of wonders, the naked giant who had hurled the missile charging upon the great beast, only a long knife ready to meet those ferocious fangs and talons.

The lion reared up to meet this new enemy. The beast was growling frightfully, and then upon the startled ears of the Belgian, broke a similar savage growl from the lips of the man rushing upon the beast.

By a quick side step, Tarzan eluded the first swinging clutch of the lion's paws. Darting to the beast's side, he

leaped upon the tawny back. His arms encircled the maned neck, his teeth sank deep into the brute's flesh. Roaring, leaping, rolling and struggling, the giant cat attempted to dislodge this savage enemy, and all the while one great, brown fist was driving a long keen blade repeatedly into the beast's side.

During the battle, La regained consciousness. Spellbound, she stood above her victim watching the spectacle. It seemed incredible that a human being could best the king of beasts in personal encounter and yet before her very eyes there was taking place just such an improbability.

At last Tarzan's knife found the great heart, and with a final, spasmodic

struggle the lion rolled over upon the marble floor, dead. Leaping to his feet the conqueror placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill, raised his face toward the heavens, and gave voice to so hideous a cry that both La and Werper trembled as it reverberated through the temple.

Then the ape-man turned, and Werper recognized him as the man he had left for dead in the treasure room.

8. THE ESCAPE FROM OPAR

Werper was astounded. Could this creature be the same dignified Englishman who had entertained him so graciously in his luxurious African home? Could this wild beast, with blazing eyes, and bloody countenance, be at the same time a man? Could the horrid, victory cry he had but just heard have been formed in human throat?

Tarzan was eyeing the man and the woman, a puzzled expression in his eyes, but there was no faintest tinge of recognition. It was as though he had discovered some new species of living creature and was marveling at his find.

La was studying the ape-man's features. Slowly her large eyes opened

very wide.

"Tarzan!" she exclaimed, and then, in the vernacular of the great apes which constant association with the anthropoids had rendered the common language of the Oparians: "You have come back to me! La has ignored the mandates of her religion, waiting, always waiting for Tarzan—for her Tarzan. She has taken no mate, for in all the world there was but one with whom La would mate. And now you have come back! Tell me, O Tarzan, that it is for me you have returned."

Werper listened to the unintelligible jargon. He looked from La to Tarzan. Would the latter understand this strange tongue? To the Belgian's surprise, the

Englishman answered in a language evidently identical to hers.

"Tarzan," he repeated, musingly. "Tarzan. The name sounds familiar."

"It is your name—you are Tarzan," cried La.

"I am Tarzan?" The ape-man shrugged. "Well, it is a good name—I know no other, so I will keep it; but I do not know you. I did not come hither for you. Why I came, I do not know at all; neither do I know from whence I came. Can you tell me?"

La shook her head. "I never knew," she replied.

Tarzan turned toward Werper and put the same question to him; but in the language of the great apes. The Belgian

shook his head.

"I do not understand that language," he said in French.

Without effort, and apparently without realizing that he made the change, Tarzan repeated his question in French. Werper suddenly came to a full realization of the magnitude of the injury of which Tarzan was a victim. The man had lost his memory—no longer could he recollect past events. The Belgian was upon the point of enlightening him, when it suddenly occurred to him that by keeping Tarzan in ignorance, for a time at least, of his true identity, it might be possible to turn the ape-man's misfortune to his own advantage.

"I cannot tell you from whence you

came," he said; "but this I can tell you—if we do not get out of this horrible place we shall both be slain upon this bloody altar. The woman was about to plunge her knife into my heart when the lion interrupted the fiendish ritual. Come! Before they recover from their fright and reassemble, let us find a way out of their damnable temple."

Tarzan turned again toward La.

"Why," he asked, "would you have killed this man? Are you hungry?"

The High Priestess cried out in disgust.

"Did he attempt to kill you?" continued Tarzan.

The woman shook her head.

"Then why should you have wished to kill him?" Tarzan was determined to get to the bottom of the thing.

La raised her slender arm and pointed toward the sun.

"We were offering up his soul as a gift to the Flaming God," she said.

Tarzan looked puzzled. He was again an ape, and apes do not understand such matters as souls and Flaming Gods.

"Do you wish to die?" he asked Werper.

The Belgian assured him, with tears in his eyes, that he did not wish to die.

"Very well then, you shall not," said Tarzan. "Come! We will go. This SHE would kill you and keep me for herself.

It is no place anyway for a Mangani. I should soon die, shut up behind these stone walls."

He turned toward La. "We are going now," he said.

The woman rushed forward and seized the ape-man's hands in hers.

"Do not leave me!" she cried. "Stay, and you shall be High Priest. La loves you. All Opar shall be yours. Slaves shall wait upon you. Stay, Tarzan of the Apes, and let love reward you."

The ape-man pushed the kneeling woman aside. "Tarzan does not desire you," he said, simply, and stepping to Werper's side he cut the Belgian's bonds and motioned him to follow.

Panting—her face convulsed with

rage, La sprang to her feet.

"Stay, you shall!" she screamed. "La will have you—if she cannot have you alive, she will have you dead," and raising her face to the sun she gave voice to the same hideous shriek that Werper had heard once before and Tarzan many times.

In answer to her cry a babel of voices broke from the surrounding chambers and corridors.

"Come, Guardian Priests!" she cried. "The infidels have profaned the holiest of the holies. Come! Strike terror to their hearts; defend La and her altar; wash clean the temple with the blood of the polluters."

Tarzan understood, though Werper

did not. The former glanced at the Belgian and saw that he was unarmed. Stepping quickly to La's side the ape-man seized her in his strong arms and though she fought with all the mad savagery of a demon, he soon disarmed her, handing her long, sacrificial knife to Werper.

"You will need this," he said, and then from each doorway a horde of the monstrous, little men of Opar streamed into the temple.

They were armed with bludgeons and knives, and fortified in their courage by fanatical hate and frenzy. Werper was terrified. Tarzan stood eyeing the foe in proud disdain. Slowly he advanced toward the exit he had chosen to utilize

in making his way from the temple. A burly priest barred his way. Behind the first was a score of others. Tarzan swung his heavy spear, clublike, down upon the skull of the priest. The fellow collapsed, his head crushed.

Again and again the weapon fell as Tarzan made his way slowly toward the doorway. Werper pressed close behind, casting backward glances toward the shrieking, dancing mob menacing their rear. He held the sacrificial knife ready to strike whoever might come within its reach; but none came. For a time he wondered that they should so bravely battle with the giant ape-man, yet hesitate to rush upon him, who was relatively so weak. Had they done so he

knew that he must have fallen at the first charge. Tarzan had reached the doorway over the corpses of all that had stood to dispute his way, before Werper guessed at the reason for his immunity. The priests feared the sacrificial knife! Willingly would they face death and welcome it if it came while they defended their High Priestess and her altar; but evidently there were deaths, and deaths. Some strange superstition must surround that polished blade, that no Oparian cared to chance a death thrust from it, yet gladly rushed to the slaughter of the ape- man's flaying spear.

Once outside the temple court, Werper communicated his discovery to Tarzan. The ape-man grinned, and let

Werper go before him, brandishing the jeweled and holy weapon. Like leaves before a gale, the Oparians scattered in all directions and Tarzan and the Belgian found a clear passage through the corridors and chambers of the ancient temple.

The Belgian's eyes went wide as they passed through the room of the seven pillars of solid gold. With ill-concealed avarice he looked upon the age-old, golden tablets set in the walls of nearly every room and down the sides of many of the corridors. To the ape-man all this wealth appeared to mean nothing.

On the two went, chance leading them toward the broad avenue which lay between the stately piles of the half-

ruined edifices and the inner wall of the city. Great apes jabbered at them and menaced them; but Tarzan answered them after their own kind, giving back taunt for taunt, insult for insult, challenge for challenge.

Werper saw a hairy bull swing down from a broken column and advance, stiff-legged and bristling, toward the naked giant. The yellow fangs were bared, angry snarls and barkings rumbled threateningly through the thick and hanging lips.

The Belgian watched his companion. To his horror, he saw the man stoop until his closed knuckles rested upon the ground as did those of the anthropoid. He saw him circle, stiff-legged about the

circling ape. He heard the same bestial barkings and growlings issue from the human throat that were coming from the mouth of the brute. Had his eyes been closed he could not have known but that two giant apes were bridling for combat.

But there was no battle. It ended as the majority of such jungle encounters end—one of the boasters loses his nerve, and becomes suddenly interested in a blowing leaf, a beetle, or the lice upon his hairy stomach.

In this instance it was the anthropoid that retired in stiff dignity to inspect an unhappy caterpillar, which he presently devoured. For a moment Tarzan seemed inclined to pursue the argument. He swaggered truculently, stuck out his

chest, roared and advanced closer to the bull. It was with difficulty that Werper finally persuaded him to leave well enough alone and continue his way from the ancient city of the Sun Worshipers.

The two searched for nearly an hour before they found the narrow exit through the inner wall. From there the well-worn trail led them beyond the outer fortification to the desolate valley of Opar.

Tarzan had no idea, in so far as Werper could discover, as to where he was or whence he came. He wandered aimlessly about, searching for food, which he discovered beneath small rocks, or hiding in the shade of the scant brush which dotted the ground.

The Belgian was horrified by the hideous menu of his companion. Beetles, rodents and caterpillars were devoured with seeming relish. Tarzan was indeed an ape again.

At last Werper succeeded in leading his companion toward the distant hills which mark the northwestern boundary of the valley, and together the two set out in the direction of the Greystoke bungalow.

What purpose prompted the Belgian in leading the victim of his treachery and greed back toward his former home it is difficult to guess, unless it was that without Tarzan there could be no ransom for Tarzan's wife.

That night they camped in the valley

beyond the hills, and as they sat before a little fire where cooked a wild pig that had fallen to one of Tarzan's arrows, the latter sat lost in speculation. He seemed continually to be trying to grasp some mental image which as constantly eluded him.

At last he opened the leathern pouch which hung at his side. From it he poured into the palm of his hand a quantity of glittering gems. The firelight playing upon them conjured a multitude of scintillating rays, and as the wide eyes of the Belgian looked on in rapt fascination, the man's expression at last acknowledged a tangible purpose in courting the society of the ape-man.

9. THE THEFT OF THE JEWELS

For two days Werper sought for the party that had accompanied him from the camp to the barrier cliffs; but not until late in the afternoon of the second day did he find clew to its whereabouts, and then in such gruesome form that he was totally unnerved by the sight.

In an open glade he came upon the bodies of three of the blacks, terribly mutilated, nor did it require considerable deductive power to explain their murder. Of the little party only these three had not been slaves. The others, evidently tempted to hope for freedom from their cruel Arab master, had taken advantage of their separation from the main camp, to slay the three

representatives of the hated power which held them in slavery, and vanish into the jungle.

Cold sweat exuded from Werper's forehead as he contemplated the fate which chance had permitted him to escape, for had he been present when the conspiracy bore fruit, he, too, must have been of the garnered.

Tarzan showed not the slightest surprise or interest in the discovery. Inherent in him was a calloused familiarity with violent death. The refinements of his recent civilization expunged by the force of the sad calamity which had befallen him, left only the primitive sensibilities which his childhood's training had imprinted

indelibly upon the fabric of his mind.

The training of Kala, the examples and precepts of Kerchak, of Tublat, and of Terkoz now formed the basis of his every thought and action. He retained a mechanical knowledge of French and English speech. Werper had spoken to him in French, and Tarzan had replied in the same tongue without conscious realization that he had departed from the anthropoidal speech in which he had addressed La. Had Werper used English, the result would have been the same.

Again, that night, as the two sat before their camp fire, Tarzan played with his shining baubles. Werper asked him what they were and where he had found them. The ape-man replied that they were gay-

colored stones, with which he purposed fashioning a necklace, and that he had found them far beneath the sacrificial court of the temple of the Flaming God.

Werper was relieved to find that Tarzan had no conception of the value of the gems. This would make it easier for the Belgian to obtain possession of them. Possibly the man would give them to him for the asking. Werper reached out his hand toward the little pile that Tarzan had arranged upon a piece of flat wood before him.

"Let me see them," said the Belgian.

Tarzan placed a large palm over his treasure. He bared his fighting fangs, and growled. Werper withdrew his hand more quickly than he had advanced it.

Tarzan resumed his playing with the gems, and his conversation with Werper as though nothing unusual had occurred. He had but exhibited the beast's jealous protective instinct for a possession. When he killed he shared the meat with Werper; but had Werper ever, by accident, laid a hand upon Tarzan's share, he would have aroused the same savage, and resentful warning.

From that occurrence dated the beginning of a great fear in the breast of the Belgian for his savage companion. He had never understood the transformation that had been wrought in Tarzan by the blow upon his head, other than to attribute it to a form of amnesia. That Tarzan had once been, in truth, a

savage, jungle beast, Werper had not known, and so, of course, he could not guess that the man had reverted to the state in which his childhood and young manhood had been spent.

Now Werper saw in the Englishman a dangerous maniac, whom the slightest untoward accident might turn upon him with rending fangs. Not for a moment did Werper attempt to delude himself into the belief that he could defend himself successfully against an attack by the ape-man. His one hope lay in eluding him, and making for the far distant camp of Achmet Zek as rapidly as he could; but armed only with the sacrificial knife, Werper shrank from attempting the journey through the jungle. Tarzan

constituted a protection that was by no means despicable, even in the face of the larger carnivora, as Werper had reason to acknowledge from the evidence he had witnessed in the Oparian temple.

Too, Werper had his covetous soul set upon the pouch of gems, and so he was torn between the various emotions of avarice and fear. But avarice it was that burned most strongly in his breast, to the end that he dared the dangers and suffered the terrors of constant association with him he thought a mad man, rather than give up the hope of obtaining possession of the fortune which the contents of the little pouch represented.

Achmet Zek should know nothing of

these—these would be for Werper alone, and so soon as he could encompass his design he would reach the coast and take passage for America, where he could conceal himself beneath the veil of a new identity and enjoy to some measure the fruits of his theft. He had it all planned out, did Lieutenant Albert Werper, living in anticipation the luxurious life of the idle rich. He even found himself regretting that America was so provincial, and that nowhere in the new world was a city that might compare with his beloved Brussels.

It was upon the third day of their progress from Opar that the keen ears of Tarzan caught the sound of men behind them. Werper heard nothing above the

humming of the jungle insects, and the chattering life of the lesser monkeys and the birds.

For a time Tarzan stood in statuesque silence, listening, his sensitive nostrils dilating as he assayed each passing breeze. Then he withdrew Werper into the concealment of thick brush, and waited. Presently, along the game trail that Werper and Tarzan had been following, there came in sight a sleek, black warrior, alert and watchful.

In single file behind him, there followed, one after another, near fifty others, each burdened with two dull-yellow ingots lashed upon his back. Werper recognized the party immediately as that which had

accompanied Tarzan on his journey to Opar. He glanced at the ape- man; but in the savage, watchful eyes he saw no recognition of Basuli and those other loyal Waziri.

When all had passed, Tarzan rose and emerged from concealment. He looked down the trail in the direction the party had gone. Then he turned to Werper.

"We will follow and slay them," he said.

"Why?" asked the Belgian.

"They are black," explained Tarzan. "It was a black who killed Kala. They are the enemies of the Manganis."

Werper did not relish the idea of engaging in a battle with Basuli and his fierce fighting men. And, again, he had

welcomed the sight of them returning toward the Greystoke bungalow, for he had begun to have doubts as to his ability to retrace his steps to the Waziri country. Tarzan, he knew, had not the remotest idea of whither they were going. By keeping at a safe distance behind the laden warriors, they would have no difficulty in following them home. Once at the bungalow, Werper knew the way to the camp of Achmet Zek. There was still another reason why he did not wish to interfere with the Waziri—they were bearing the great burden of treasure in the direction he wished it borne. The farther they took it, the less the distance that he and Achmet Zek would have to transport it.

He argued with the ape-man therefore, against the latter's desire to exterminate the blacks, and at last he prevailed upon Tarzan to follow them in peace, saying that he was sure they would lead them out of the forest into a rich country, teeming with game.

It was many marches from Opar to the Waziri country; but at last came the hour when Tarzan and the Belgian, following the trail of the warriors, topped the last rise, and saw before them the broad Waziri plain, the winding river, and the distant forests to the north and west.

A mile or more ahead of them, the line of warriors was creeping like a giant caterpillar through the tall grasses of the plain. Beyond, grazing herds of

zebra, hartebeest, and topi dotted the level landscape, while closer to the river a bull buffalo, his head and shoulders protruding from the reeds watched the advancing blacks for a moment, only to turn at last and disappear into the safety of his dank and gloomy retreat.

Tarzan looked out across the familiar vista with no faintest gleam of recognition in his eyes. He saw the game animals, and his mouth watered; but he did not look in the direction of his bungalow. Werper, however, did. A puzzled expression entered the Belgian's eyes. He shaded them with his palms and gazed long and earnestly toward the spot where the bungalow had stood. He could

not credit the testimony of his eyes—there was no bungalow —no barns—no out-houses. The corrals, the hay stacks—all were gone. What could it mean?

And then, slowly there filtered into Werper's consciousness an explanation of the havoc that had been wrought in that peaceful valley since last his eyes had rested upon it—Achmet Zek had been there!

Basuli and his warriors had noted the devastation the moment they had come in sight of the farm. Now they hastened on toward it talking excitedly among themselves in animated speculation upon the cause and meaning of the catastrophe.

When, at last they crossed the

trampled garden and stood before the charred ruins of their master's bungalow, their greatest fears became convictions in the light of the evidence about them.

Remnants of human dead, half devoured by prowling hyenas and others of the carnivora which infested the region, lay rotting upon the ground, and among the corpses remained sufficient remnants of their clothing and ornaments to make clear to Basuli the frightful story of the disaster that had befallen his master's house.

"The Arabs," he said, as his men clustered about him.

The Waziri gazed about in mute rage for several minutes. Everywhere they encountered only further evidence of the

ruthlessness of the cruel enemy that had come during the Great Bwana's absence and laid waste his property.

"What did they with 'Lady'?" asked one of the blacks.

They had always called Lady Greystoke thus.

"The women they would have taken with them," said Basuli. "Our women and his."

A giant black raised his spear above his head, and gave voice to a savage cry of rage and hate. The others followed his example. Basuli silenced them with a gesture.

"This is no time for useless noises of the mouth," he said. "The Great Bwana has taught us that it is acts by which

things are done, not words. Let us save our breath—we shall need it all to follow up the Arabs and slay them. If 'Lady' and our women live the greater the need of haste, and warriors cannot travel fast upon empty lungs."

From the shelter of the reeds along the river, Werper and Tarzan watched the blacks. They saw them dig a trench with their knives and fingers. They saw them lay their yellow burdens in it and scoop the overturned earth back over the tops of the ingots.

Tarzan seemed little interested, after Werper had assured him that that which they buried was not good to eat; but Werper was intensely interested. He would have given much had he had his

own followers with him, that he might take away the treasure as soon as the blacks left, for he was sure that they would leave this scene of desolation and death as soon as possible.

The treasure buried, the blacks removed themselves a short distance up wind from the fetid corpses, where they made camp, that they might rest before setting out in pursuit of the Arabs. It was already dusk. Werper and Tarzan sat devouring some pieces of meat they had brought from their last camp. The Belgian was occupied with his plans for the immediate future. He was positive that the Waziri would pursue Achmet Zek, for he knew enough of savage warfare, and of the characteristics of the

Arabs and their degraded followers to guess that they had carried the Waziri women off into slavery. This alone would assure immediate pursuit by so warlike a people as the Waziri.

Werper felt that he should find the means and the opportunity to push on ahead, that he might warn Achmet Zek of the coming of Basuli, and also of the location of the buried treasure. What the Arab would now do with Lady Greystoke, in view of the mental affliction of her husband, Werper neither knew nor cared. It was enough that the golden treasure buried upon the site of the burned bungalow was infinitely more valuable than any ransom that would have occurred even to the avaricious

mind of the Arab, and if Werper could persuade the raider to share even a portion of it with him he would be well satisfied.

But by far the most important consideration, to Werper, at least, was the incalculably valuable treasure in the little leathern pouch at Tarzan's side. If he could but obtain possession of this! He must! He would!

His eyes wandered to the object of his greed. They measured Tarzan's giant frame, and rested upon the rounded muscles of his arms. It was hopeless. What could he, Werper, hope to accomplish, other than his own death, by an attempt to wrest the gems from their savage owner?

Disconsolate, Werper threw himself upon his side. His head was pillowed on one arm, the other rested across his face in such a way that his eyes were hidden from the ape-man, though one of them was fastened upon him from beneath the shadow of the Belgian's forearm. For a time he lay thus, glowering at Tarzan, and originating schemes for plundering him of his treasure—schemes that were discarded as futile as rapidly as they were born.

Tarzan presently let his own eyes rest upon Werper. The Belgian saw that he was being watched, and lay very still. After a few moments he simulated the regular breathing of deep slumber.

Tarzan had been thinking. He had

seen the Waziri bury their belongings. Werper had told him that they were hiding them lest some one find them and take them away. This seemed to Tarzan a splendid plan for safeguarding valuables. Since Werper had evinced a desire to possess his glittering pebbles, Tarzan, with the suspicions of a savage, had guarded the baubles, of whose worth he was entirely ignorant, as zealously as though they spelled life or death to him.

For a long time the ape-man sat watching his companion. At last, convinced that he slept, Tarzan withdrew his hunting knife and commenced to dig a hole in the ground before him. With the blade he loosened up the earth, and with his hands he

scooped it out until he had excavated a little cavity a few inches in diameter, and five or six inches in depth. Into this he placed the pouch of jewels. Werper almost forgot to breathe after the fashion of a sleeper as he saw what the ape-man was doing—he scarce repressed an ejaculation of satisfaction.

Tarzan become suddenly rigid as his keen ears noted the cessation of the regular inspirations and expirations of his companion. His narrowed eyes bored straight down upon the Belgian. Werper felt that he was lost—he must risk all on his ability to carry on the deception. He sighed, threw both arms outward, and turned over on his back mumbling as though in the throes of a

bad dream. A moment later he resumed the regular breathing.

Now he could not watch Tarzan, but he was sure that the man sat for a long time looking at him. Then, faintly, Werper heard the other's hands scraping dirt, and later patting it down. He knew then that the jewels were buried.

It was an hour before Werper moved again, then he rolled over facing Tarzan and opened his eyes. The ape-man slept. By reaching out his hand Werper could touch the spot where the pouch was buried.

For a long time he lay watching and listening. He moved about, making more noise than necessary, yet Tarzan did not awaken. He drew the sacrificial knife

from his belt, and plunged it into the ground. Tarzan did not move. Cautiously the Belgian pushed the blade downward through the loose earth above the pouch. He felt the point touch the soft, tough fabric of the leather. Then he pried down upon the handle. Slowly the little mound of loose earth rose and parted. An instant later a corner of the pouch came into view. Werper pulled it from its hiding place, and tucked it in his shirt. Then he refilled the hole and pressed the dirt carefully down as it had been before.

Greed had prompted him to an act, the discovery of which by his companion could lead only to the most frightful consequences for Werper. Already he

could almost feel those strong, white fangs burying themselves in his neck. He shuddered. Far out across the plain a leopard screamed, and in the dense reeds behind him some great beast moved on padded feet.

Werper feared these prowlers of the night; but infinitely more he feared the just wrath of the human beast sleeping at his side. With utmost caution the Belgian arose. Tarzan did not move. Werper took a few steps toward the plain and the distant forest to the northwest, then he paused and fingered the hilt of the long knife in his belt. He turned and looked down upon the sleeper.

"Why not?" he mused. "Then I should be safe."

He returned and bent above the ape-man. Clutched tightly in his hand was the sacrificial knife of the High Priestess of the Flaming God!

10. ACHMET ZEK SEES THE JEWELS

Mugambi, weak and suffering, had dragged his painful way along the trail of the retreating raiders. He could move but slowly, resting often; but savage hatred and an equally savage desire for vengeance kept him to his task. As the days passed his wounds healed and his strength returned, until at last his giant frame had regained all of its former mighty powers. Now he went more rapidly; but the mounted Arabs had covered a great distance while the wounded black had been painfully crawling after them.

They had reached their fortified camp, and there Achmet Zek awaited the

return of his lieutenant, Albert Werper. During the long, rough journey, Jane Clayton had suffered more in anticipation of her impending fate than from the hardships of the road.

Achmet Zek had not deigned to acquaint her with his intentions regarding her future. She prayed that she had been captured in the hope of ransom, for if such should prove the case, no great harm would befall her at the hands of the Arabs; but there was the chance, the horrid chance, that another fate awaited her. She had heard of many women, among whom were white women, who had been sold by outlaws such as Achmet Zek into the slavery of black harems, or taken farther north into

the almost equally hideous existence of some Turkish seraglio.

Jane Clayton was of sterner stuff than that which bends in spineless terror before danger. Until hope proved futile she would not give it up; nor did she entertain thoughts of self-destruction only as a final escape from dishonor. So long as Tarzan lived there was every reason to expect succor. No man nor beast who roamed the savage continent could boast the cunning and the powers of her lord and master. To her, he was little short of omnipotent in his native world—this world of savage beasts and savage men. Tarzan would come, and she would be rescued and avenged, of that she was certain. She counted the

days that must elapse before he would return from Opar and discover what had transpired during his absence. After that it would be but a short time before he had surrounded the Arab stronghold and punished the motley crew of wrongdoers who inhabited it.

That he could find her she had no slightest doubt. No spoor, however faint, could elude the keen vigilance of his senses. To him, the trail of the raiders would be as plain as the printed page of an open book to her.

And while she hoped, there came through the dark jungle another. Terrified by night and by day, came Albert Werper. A dozen times he had escaped the claws and fangs of the giant

carnivora only by what seemed a miracle to him. Armed with nothing more than the knife he had brought with him from Opar, he had made his way through as savage a country as yet exists upon the face of the globe.

By night he had slept in trees. By day he had stumbled fearfully on, often taking refuge among the branches when sight or sound of some great cat warned him from danger. But at last he had come within sight of the palisade behind which were his fierce companions.

At almost the same time Mugambi came out of the jungle before the walled village. As he stood in the shadow of a great tree, reconnoitering, he saw a man, ragged and disheveled, emerge from the

jungle almost at his elbow. Instantly he recognized the newcomer as he who had been a guest of his master before the latter had departed for Opar.

The black was upon the point of hailing the Belgian when something stayed him. He saw the white man walking confidently across the clearing toward the village gate. No sane man thus approached a village in this part of Africa unless he was sure of a friendly welcome. Mugambi waited. His suspicions were aroused.

He heard Werper halloo; he saw the gates swing open, and he witnessed the surprised and friendly welcome that was accorded the erstwhile guest of Lord and Lady Greystoke. A light broke upon the

understanding of Mugambi. This white man had been a traitor and a spy. It was to him they owed the raid during the absence of the Great Bwana. To his hate for the Arabs, Mugambi added a still greater hate for the white spy.

Within the village Werper passed hurriedly toward the silken tent of Achmet Zek. The Arab arose as his lieutenant entered. His face showed surprise as he viewed the tattered apparel of the Belgian.

"What has happened?" he asked.

Werper narrated all, save the little matter of the pouch of gems which were now tightly strapped about his waist, beneath his clothing. The Arab's eyes narrowed greedily as his henchman

described the treasure that the Waziri had buried beside the ruins of the Greystoke bungalow.

"It will be a simple matter now to return and get it," said Achmet Zek. "First we will await the coming of the rash Waziri, and after we have slain them we may take our time to the treasure—none will disturb it where it lies, for we shall leave none alive who knows of its existence.

"And the woman?" asked Werper.

"I shall sell her in the north," replied the raider. "It is the only way, now. She should bring a good price."

The Belgian nodded. He was thinking rapidly. If he could persuade Achmet Zek to send him in command of the party

which took Lady Greystoke north it would give him the opportunity he craved to make his escape from his chief. He would forego a share of the gold, if he could but get away unscathed with the jewels.

He knew Achmet Zek well enough by this time to know that no member of his band ever was voluntarily released from the service of Achmet Zek. Most of the few who deserted were recaptured. More than once had Werper listened to their agonized screams as they were tortured before being put to death. The Belgian had no wish to take the slightest chance of recapture.

"Who will go north with the woman," he asked, "while we are returning for the

gold that the Waziri buried by the bungalow of the Englishman?"

Achmet Zek thought for a moment. The buried gold was of much greater value than the price the woman would bring. It was necessary to rid himself of her as quickly as possible and it was also well to obtain the gold with the least possible delay. Of all his followers, the Belgian was the most logical lieutenant to intrust with the command of one of the parties. An Arab, as familiar with the trails and tribes as Achmet Zek himself, might collect the woman's price and make good his escape into the far north. Werper, on the other hand, could scarce make his escape alone through a country hostile to

Europeans while the men he would send with the Belgian could be carefully selected with a view to preventing Werper from persuading any considerable portion of his command to accompany him should he contemplate desertion of his chief.

At last the Arab spoke: "It is not necessary that we both return for the gold. You shall go north with the woman, carrying a letter to a friend of mine who is always in touch with the best markets for such merchandise, while I return for the gold. We can meet again here when our business is concluded."

Werper could scarce disguise the joy with which he received this welcome

decision. And that he did entirely disguise it from the keen and suspicious eyes of Achmet Zek is open to question. However, the decision reached, the Arab and his lieutenant discussed the details of their forthcoming ventures for a short time further, when Werper made his excuses and returned to his own tent for the comforts and luxury of a long-desired bath and shave.

Having bathed, the Belgian tied a small hand mirror to a cord sewn to the rear wall of his tent, placed a rude chair beside an equally rude table that stood beside the glass, and proceeded to remove the rough stubble from his face.

In the catalog of masculine pleasures there is scarce one which imparts a

feeling of greater comfort and refreshment than follows a clean shave, and now, with weariness temporarily banished, Albert Werper sprawled in his rickety chair to enjoy a final cigarette before retiring. His thumbs, tucked in his belt in lazy support of the weight of his arms, touched the belt which held the jewel pouch about his waist. He tingled with excitement as he let his mind dwell upon the value of the treasure, which, unknown to all save himself, lay hidden beneath his clothing.

What would Achmet Zek say, if he knew? Werper grinned. How the old rascal's eyes would pop could he but have a glimpse of those scintillating beauties! Werper had never yet had an

opportunity to feast his eyes for any great length of time upon them. He had not even counted them—only roughly had he guessed at their value.

He unfastened the belt and drew the pouch from its hiding place. He was alone. The balance of the camp, save the sentries, had retired—none would enter the Belgian's tent. He fingered the pouch, feeling out the shapes and sizes of the precious, little nodules within. He hefted the bag, first in one palm, then in the other, and at last he wheeled his chair slowly around before the table, and in the rays of his small lamp let the glittering gems roll out upon the rough wood.

The refulgent rays transformed the

interior of the soiled and squalid canvas to the splendor of a palace in the eyes of the dreaming man. He saw the gilded halls of pleasure that would open their portals to the possessor of the wealth which lay scattered upon this stained and dented table top. He dreamed of joys and luxuries and power which always had been beyond his grasp, and as he dreamed his gaze lifted from the table, as the gaze of a dreamer will, to a far distant goal above the mean horizon of terrestrial commonplaceness.

Unseeing, his eyes rested upon the shaving mirror which still hung upon the tent wall above the table; but his sight was focused far beyond. And then a reflection moved within the polished

surface of the tiny glass, the man's eyes shot back out of space to the mirror's face, and in it he saw reflected the grim visage of Achmet Zek, framed in the flaps of the tent doorway behind him.

Werper stifled a gasp of dismay. With rare self-possession he let his gaze drop, without appearing to have halted upon the mirror until it rested again upon the gems. Without haste, he replaced them in the pouch, tucked the latter into his shirt, selected a cigarette from his case, lighted it and rose. Yawning, and stretching his arms above his head, he turned slowly toward the opposite end of the tent. The face of Achmet Zek had disappeared from the opening.

To say that Albert Werper was

terrified would be putting it mildly. He realized that he not only had sacrificed his treasure; but his life as well. Achmet Zek would never permit the wealth that he had discovered to slip through his fingers, nor would he forgive the duplicity of a lieutenant who had gained possession of such a treasure without offering to share it with his chief.

Slowly the Belgian prepared for bed. If he were being watched, he could not know; but if so the watcher saw no indication of the nervous excitement which the European strove to conceal. When ready for his blankets, the man crossed to the little table and extinguished the light.

It was two hours later that the flaps at

the front of the tent separated silently and gave entrance to a dark-robed figure, which passed noiselessly from the darkness without to the darkness within. Cautiously the prowler crossed the interior. In one hand was a long knife. He came at last to the pile of blankets spread upon several rugs close to one of the tent walls.

Lightly, his fingers sought and found the bulk beneath the blankets —the bulk that should be Albert Werper. They traced out the figure of a man, and then an arm shot upward, poised for an instant and descended. Again and again it rose and fell, and each time the long blade of the knife buried itself in the thing beneath the blankets. But there was

an initial lifelessness in the silent bulk that gave the assassin momentary wonder. Feverishly he threw back the coverlets, and searched with nervous hands for the pouch of jewels which he expected to find concealed upon his victim's body.

An instant later he rose with a curse upon his lips. It was Achmet Zek, and he cursed because he had discovered beneath the blankets of his lieutenant only a pile of discarded clothing arranged in the form and semblance of a sleeping man—Albert Werper had fled.

Out into the village ran the chief, calling in angry tones to the sleepy Arabs, who tumbled from their tents in answer to his voice. But though they

searched the village again and again they found no trace of the Belgian. Foaming with anger, Achmet Zek called his followers to horse, and though the night was pitchy black they set out to scour the adjoining forest for their quarry.

As they galloped from the open gates, Mugambi, hiding in a nearby bush, slipped, unseen, within the palisade. A score of blacks crowded about the entrance to watch the searchers depart, and as the last of them passed out of the village the blacks seized the portals and drew them to, and Mugambi lent a hand in the work as though the best of his life had been spent among the raiders.

In the darkness he passed, unchallenged, as one of their number,

and as they returned from the gates to their respective tents and huts, Mugambi melted into the shadows and disappeared.

For an hour he crept about in the rear of the various huts and tents in an effort to locate that in which his master's mate was imprisoned. One there was which he was reasonably assured contained her, for it was the only hut before the door of which a sentry had been posted. Mugambi was crouching in the shadow of this structure, just around the corner from the unsuspecting guard, when another approached to relieve his comrade.

"The prisoner is safe within?" asked the newcomer.

"She is," replied the other, "for none has passed this doorway since I came."

The new sentry squatted beside the door, while he whom he had relieved made his way to his own hut. Mugambi slunk closer to the corner of the building. In one powerful hand he gripped a heavy knob- stick. No sign of elation disturbed his phlegmatic calm, yet inwardly he was aroused to joy by the proof he had just heard that "Lady" really was within.

The sentry's back was toward the corner of the hut which hid the giant black. The fellow did not see the huge form which silently loomed behind him. The knob-stick swung upward in a curve, and downward again. There was the sound of a dull thud, the crushing of

heavy bone, and the sentry slumped into a silent, inanimate lump of clay.

A moment later Mugambi was searching the interior of the hut. At first slowly, calling, "Lady!" in a low whisper, and finally with almost frantic haste, until the truth presently dawned upon him—the hut was empty!

11. TARZAN BECOMES A BEAST AGAIN

For a moment Werper had stood above the sleeping ape-man, his murderous knife poised for the fatal thrust; but fear stayed his hand. What if the first blow should fail to drive the point to his victim's heart? Werper shuddered in contemplation of the disastrous consequences to himself. Awakened, and even with a few moments of life remaining, the giant could literally tear his assailant to pieces should he choose, and the Belgian had no doubt but that Tarzan would so choose.

Again came the soft sound of padded footsteps in the reeds—closer this time. Werper abandoned his design. Before

him stretched the wide plain and escape. The jewels were in his possession. To remain longer was to risk death at the hands of Tarzan, or the jaws of the hunter creeping ever nearer. Turning, he slunk away through the night, toward the distant forest.

Tarzan slept on. Where were those uncanny, guardian powers that had formerly rendered him immune from the dangers of surprise? Could this dull sleeper be the alert, sensitive Tarzan of old?

Perhaps the blow upon his head had numbed his senses, temporarily— who may say? Closer crept the stealthy creature through the reeds. The rustling curtain of vegetation parted a few paces

from where the sleeper lay, and the massive head of a lion appeared. The beast surveyed the ape-man intently for a moment, then he crouched, his hind feet drawn well beneath him, his tail lashing from side to side.

It was the beating of the beast's tail against the reeds which awakened Tarzan. Jungle folk do not awaken slowly—instantly, full consciousness and full command of their every faculty returns to them from the depth of profound slumber.

Even as Tarzan opened his eyes he was upon his feet, his spear grasped firmly in his hand and ready for attack. Again was he Tarzan of the Apes, sentient, vigilant, ready.

No two lions have identical characteristics, nor does the same lion invariably act similarly under like circumstances. Whether it was surprise, fear or caution which prompted the lion crouching ready to spring upon the man, is immaterial—the fact remains that he did not carry out his original design, he did not spring at the man at all, but, instead, wheeled and sprang back into the reeds as Tarzan arose and confronted him.

The ape-man shrugged his broad shoulders and looked about for his companion. Werper was nowhere to be seen. At first Tarzan suspected that the man had been seized and dragged off by another lion, but upon examination of the

ground he soon discovered that the Belgian had gone away alone out into the plain.

For a moment he was puzzled; but presently came to the conclusion that Werper had been frightened by the approach of the lion, and had sneaked off in terror. A sneer touched Tarzan's lips as he pondered the man's act— the desertion of a comrade in time of danger, and without warning. Well, if that was the sort of creature Werper was, Tarzan wished nothing more of him. He had gone, and for all the ape-man cared, he might remain away— Tarzan would not search for him.

A hundred yards from where he stood grew a large tree, alone upon the edge of

the reedy jungle. Tarzan made his way to it, clambered into it, and finding a comfortable crotch among its branches, reposed himself for uninterrupted sleep until morning.

And when morning came Tarzan slept on long after the sun had risen. His mind, reverted to the primitive, was untroubled by any more serious obligations than those of providing sustenance, and safeguarding his life. Therefore, there was nothing to awaken for until danger threatened, or the pangs of hunger assailed. It was the latter which eventually aroused him.

Opening his eyes, he stretched his giant thews, yawned, rose and gazed about him through the leafy foliage of his

retreat. Across the wasted meadowlands and fields of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, Tarzan of the Apes looked, as a stranger, upon the moving figures of Basuli and his braves as they prepared their morning meal and made ready to set out upon the expedition which Basuli had planned after discovering the havoc and disaster which had befallen the estate of his dead master.

The ape-man eyed the blacks with curiosity. In the back of his brain loitered a fleeting sense of familiarity with all that he saw, yet he could not connect any of the various forms of life, animate and inanimate, which had fallen within the range of his vision since he had emerged from the darkness of the

pits of Opar, with any particular event of the past.

Hazily he recalled a grim and hideous form, hairy, ferocious. A vague tenderness dominated his savage sentiments as this phantom memory struggled for recognition. His mind had reverted to his childhood days—it was the figure of the giant she-ape, Kala, that he saw; but only half recognized. He saw, too, other grotesque, manlike forms. They were of Terkoz, Tublat, Kerchak, and a smaller, less ferocious figure, that was Neeta, the little playmate of his boyhood.

Slowly, very slowly, as these visions of the past animated his lethargic memory, he came to recognize them.

They took definite shape and form, adjusting themselves nicely to the various incidents of his life with which they had been intimately connected. His boyhood among the apes spread itself in a slow panorama before him, and as it unfolded it induced within him a mighty longing for the companionship of the shaggy, low-browed brutes of his past.

He watched the blacks scatter their cook fire and depart; but though the face of each of them had but recently been as familiar to him as his own, they awakened within him no recollections whatsoever.

When they had gone, he descended from the tree and sought food. Out upon the plain grazed numerous herds of wild

ruminants. Toward a sleek, fat bunch of zebra he wormed his stealthy way. No intricate process of reasoning caused him to circle widely until he was down wind from his prey—he acted instinctively. He took advantage of every form of cover as he crawled upon all fours and often flat upon his stomach toward them.

A plump young mare and a fat stallion grazed nearest to him as he neared the herd. Again it was instinct which selected the former for his meat. A low bush grew but a few yards from the unsuspecting two. The ape-man reached its shelter. He gathered his spear firmly in his grasp. Cautiously he drew his feet beneath him. In a single swift move he

rose and cast his heavy weapon at the mare's side. Nor did he wait to note the effect of his assault, but leaped cat-like after his spear, his hunting knife in his hand.

For an instant the two animals stood motionless. The tearing of the cruel barb into her side brought a sudden scream of pain and fright from the mare, and then they both wheeled and broke for safety; but Tarzan of the Apes, for a distance of a few yards, could equal the speed of even these, and the first stride of the mare found her overhauled, with a savage beast at her shoulder. She turned, biting and kicking at her foe. Her mate hesitated for an instant, as though about to rush to her assistance; but a backward

glance revealed to him the flying heels of the balance of the herd, and with a snort and a shake of his head he wheeled and dashed away.

Clinging with one hand to the short mane of his quarry, Tarzan struck again and again with his knife at the unprotected heart. The result had, from the first, been inevitable. The mare fought bravely, but hopelessly, and presently sank to the earth, her heart pierced. The ape-man placed a foot upon her carcass and raised his voice in the victory call of the Mangani. In the distance, Basuli halted as the faint notes of the hideous scream broke upon his ears.

"The great apes," he said to his

companion. "It has been long since I have heard them in the country of the Waziri. What could have brought them back?"

Tarzan grasped his kill and dragged it to the partial seclusion of the bush which had hidden his own near approach, and there he squatted upon it, cut a huge hunk of flesh from the loin and proceeded to satisfy his hunger with the warm and dripping meat.

Attracted by the shrill screams of the mare, a pair of hyenas slunk presently into view. They trotted to a point a few yards from the gorging ape-man, and halted. Tarzan looked up, bared his fighting fangs and growled. The hyenas returned the compliment, and withdrew a

couple of paces. They made no move to attack; but continued to sit at a respectful distance until Tarzan had concluded his meal. After the ape-man had cut a few strips from the carcass to carry with him, he walked slowly off in the direction of the river to quench his thirst. His way lay directly toward the hyenas, nor did he alter his course because of them.

With all the lordly majesty of Numa, the lion, he strode straight toward the growling beasts. For a moment they held their ground, bristling and defiant; but only for a moment, and then slunk away to one side while the indifferent ape-man passed them on his lordly way. A moment later they were tearing at the remains of the zebra.

Back to the reeds went Tarzan, and through them toward the river. A herd of buffalo, startled by his approach, rose ready to charge or to fly. A great bull pawed the ground and bellowed as his bloodshot eyes discovered the intruder; but the ape-man passed across their front as though ignorant of their existence. The bull's bellowing lessened to a low rumbling, he turned and scraped a horde of flies from his side with his muzzle, cast a final glance at the ape-man and resumed his feeding. His numerous family either followed his example or stood gazing after Tarzan in mild-eyed curiosity, until the opposite reeds swallowed him from view.

At the river, Tarzan drank his fill and

bathed. During the heat of the day he lay up under the shade of a tree near the ruins of his burned barns. His eyes wandered out across the plain toward the forest, and a longing for the pleasures of its mysterious depths possessed his thoughts for a considerable time. With the next sun he would cross the open and enter the forest! There was no hurry—there lay before him an endless vista of tomorrows with naught to fill them but the satisfying of the appetites and caprices of the moment.

The ape-man's mind was untroubled by regret for the past, or aspiration for the future. He could lie at full length along a swaying branch, stretching his

giant limbs, and luxuriating in the blessed peace of utter thoughtlessness, without an apprehension or a worry to sap his nervous energy and rob him of his peace of mind. Recalling only dimly any other existence, the ape-man was happy. Lord Greystoke had ceased to exist.

For several hours Tarzan lolled upon his swaying, leafy couch until once again hunger and thirst suggested an excursion. Stretching lazily he dropped to the ground and moved slowly toward the river. The game trail down which he walked had become by ages of use a deep, narrow trench, its walls topped on either side by impenetrable thicket and dense-growing trees closely interwoven

with thick-stemmed creepers and lesser vines inextricably matted into two solid ramparts of vegetation. Tarzan had almost reached the point where the trail debouched upon the open river bottom when he saw a family of lions approaching along the path from the direction of the river. The ape- man counted seven—a male and two lionesses, full grown, and four young lions as large and quite as formidable as their parents. Tarzan halted, growling, and the lions paused, the great male in the lead baring his fangs and rumbling forth a warning roar. In his hand the ape-man held his heavy spear; but he had no intention of pitting his puny weapon against seven lions; yet he stood there

growling and roaring and the lions did likewise. It was purely an exhibition of jungle bluff. Each was trying to frighten off the other. Neither wished to turn back and give way, nor did either at first desire to precipitate an encounter. The lions were fed sufficiently so as not to be goaded by pangs of hunger and as for Tarzan he seldom ate the meat of the carnivores; but a point of ethics was at stake and neither side wished to back down. So they stood there facing one another, making all sorts of hideous noises the while they hurled jungle invective back and forth. How long this bloodless duel would have persisted it is difficult to say, though eventually Tarzan would have been forced to yield

to superior numbers.

There came, however, an interruption which put an end to the deadlock and it came from Tarzan's rear. He and the lions had been making so much noise that neither could hear anything above their concerted bedlam, and so it was that Tarzan did not hear the great bulk bearing down upon him from behind until an instant before it was upon him, and then he turned to see Buto, the rhinoceros, his little, pig eyes blazing, charging madly toward him and already so close that escape seemed impossible; yet so perfectly were mind and muscles coordinated in this unspoiled, primitive man that almost simultaneously with the sense perception of the threatened

danger he wheeled and hurled his spear at Buto's chest. It was a heavy spear shod with iron, and behind it were the giant muscles of the ape-man, while coming to meet it was the enormous weight of Buto and the momentum of his rapid rush. All that happened in the instant that Tarzan turned to meet the charge of the irascible rhinoceros might take long to tell, and yet would have taxed the swiftest lens to record. As his spear left his hand the ape-man was looking down upon the mighty horn lowered to toss him, so close was Buto to him. The spear entered the rhinoceros' neck at its junction with the left shoulder and passed almost entirely through the beast's body, and at the instant that he

launched it, Tarzan leaped straight into the air alighting upon Buto's back but escaping the mighty horn.

Then Buto espied the lions and bore madly down upon them while Tarzan of the Apes leaped nimbly into the tangled creepers at one side of the trail. The first lion met Buto's charge and was tossed high over the back of the maddened brute, torn and dying, and then the six remaining lions were upon the rhinoceros, rending and tearing the while they were being gored or trampled. From the safety of his perch Tarzan watched the royal battle with the keenest interest, for the more intelligent of the jungle folk are interested in such encounters. They are to them what the

racetrack and the prize ring, the theater and the movies are to us. They see them often; but always they enjoy them for no two are precisely alike.

For a time it seemed to Tarzan that Buto, the rhinoceros, would prove victor in the gory battle. Already had he accounted for four of the seven lions and badly wounded the three remaining when in a momentary lull in the encounter he sank limply to his knees and rolled over upon his side. Tarzan's spear had done its work. It was the man-made weapon which killed the great beast that might easily have survived the assault of seven mighty lions, for Tarzan's spear had pierced the great lungs, and Buto, with victory almost in sight, succumbed to

internal hemorrhage.

Then Tarzan came down from his sanctuary and as the wounded lions, growling, dragged themselves away, the ape-man cut his spear from the body of Buto, hacked off a steak and vanished into the jungle. The episode was over. It had been all in the day's work—something which you and I might talk about for a lifetime Tarzan dismissed from his mind the moment that the scene passed from his sight.

12. LA SEEKS VENGEANCE

Swinging back through the jungle in a wide circle the ape-man came to the river at another point, drank and took to the trees again and while he hunted, all oblivious of his past and careless of his future, there came through the dark jungles and the open, parklike places and across the wide meadows, where grazed the countless herbivora of the mysterious continent, a weird and terrible caravan in search of him. There were fifty frightful men with hairy bodies and gnarled and crooked legs. They were armed with knives and great bludgeons and at their head marched an almost naked woman, beautiful beyond compare. It was La of Opar, High

Priestess of the Flaming God, and fifty of her horrid priests searching for the purloiner of the sacred sacrificial knife.

Never before had La passed beyond the crumbling outer walls of Opar; but never before had need been so insistent. The sacred knife was gone! Handed down through countless ages it had come to her as a heritage and an insignia of her religious office and regal authority from some long-dead progenitor of lost and forgotten Atlantis. The loss of the crown jewels or the Great Seal of England could have brought no greater consternation to a British king than did the pilfering of the sacred knife bring to La, the Oparian, Queen and High Priestess of the degraded remnants of the

oldest civilization upon earth. When Atlantis, with all her mighty cities and her cultivated fields and her great commerce and culture and riches sank into the sea long ages since, she took with her all but a handful of her colonists working the vast gold mines of Central Africa. From these and their degraded slaves and a later intermixture of the blood of the anthropoids sprung the gnarled men of Opar; but by some queer freak of fate, aided by natural selection, the old Atlantean strain had remained pure and undegraded in the females descended from a single princess of the royal house of Atlantis who had been in Opar at the time of the great catastrophe. Such was La.

Burning with white-hot anger was the High Priestess, her heart a seething, molten mass of hatred for Tarzan of the Apes. The zeal of the religious fanatic whose altar has been desecrated was triply enhanced by the rage of a woman scorned. Twice had she thrown her heart at the feet of the godlike ape-man and twice had she been repulsed. La knew that she was beautiful —and she was beautiful, not by the standards of prehistoric Atlantis alone, but by those of modern times was La physically a creature of perfection. Before Tarzan came that first time to Opar, La had never seen a human male other than the grotesque and knotted men of her clan. With one of these she must mate sooner

or later that the direct line of high priestesses might not be broken, unless Fate should bring other men to Opar. Before Tarzan came upon his first visit, La had had no thought that such men as he existed, for she knew only her hideous little priests and the bulls of the tribe of great anthropoids that had dwelt from time immemorial in and about Opar, until they had come to be looked upon almost as equals by the Oparians. Among the legends of Opar were tales of godlike men of the olden time and of black men who had come more recently; but these latter had been enemies who killed and robbed. And, too, these legends always held forth the hope that some day that nameless continent from

which their race had sprung, would rise once more out of the sea and with slaves at the long sweeps would send her carven, gold-picked galleys forth to succor the long-exiled colonists.

The coming of Tarzan had aroused within La's breast the wild hope that at last the fulfillment of this ancient prophecy was at hand; but more strongly still had it aroused the hot fires of love in a heart that never otherwise would have known the meaning of that all-consuming passion, for such a wondrous creature as La could never have felt love for any of the repulsive priests of Opar. Custom, duty and religious zeal might have commanded the union; but there could have been no love on La's part.

She had grown to young womanhood a cold and heartless creature, daughter of a thousand other cold, heartless, beautiful women who had never known love. And so when love came to her it liberated all the pent passions of a thousand generations, transforming La into a pulsing, throbbing volcano of desire, and with desire thwarted this great force of love and gentleness and sacrifice was transmuted by its own fires into one of hatred and revenge.

It was in a state of mind superinduced by these conditions that La led forth her jabbering company to retrieve the sacred emblem of her high office and wreak vengeance upon the author of her wrongs. To Werper she gave little

thought. The fact that the knife had been in his hand when it departed from Opar brought down no thoughts of vengeance upon his head. Of course, he should be slain when captured; but his death would give La no pleasure —she looked for that in the contemplated death agonies of Tarzan. He should be tortured. His should be a slow and frightful death. His punishment should be adequate to the immensity of his crime. He had wrested the sacred knife from La; he had lain sacrilegious hands upon the High Priestess of the Flaming God; he had desecrated the altar and the temple. For these things he should die; but he had scorned the love of La, the woman, and for this he should die horribly with great

anguish.

The march of La and her priests was not without its adventures. Unused were these to the ways of the jungle, since seldom did any venture forth from behind Opar's crumbling walls, yet their very numbers protected them and so they came without fatalities far along the trail of Tarzan and Werper. Three great apes accompanied them and to these was delegated the business of tracking the quarry, a feat beyond the senses of the Oparians. La commanded. She arranged the order of march, she selected the camps, she set the hour for halting and the hour for resuming and though she was inexperienced in such matters, her native intelligence was so far above that

of the men or the apes that she did better than they could have done. She was a hard taskmaster, too, for she looked down with loathing and contempt upon the misshapen creatures amongst which cruel Fate had thrown her and to some extent vented upon them her dissatisfaction and her thwarted love. She made them build her a strong protection and shelter each night and keep a great fire burning before it from dusk to dawn. When she tired of walking they were forced to carry her upon an improvised litter, nor did one dare to question her authority or her right to such services. In fact they did not question either. To them she was a goddess and each loved her and each hoped that he

would be chosen as her mate, so they slaved for her and bore the stinging lash of her displeasure and the habitually haughty disdain of her manner without a murmur.

For many days they marched, the apes following the trail easily and going a little distance ahead of the body of the caravan that they might warn the others of impending danger. It was during a noonday halt while all were lying resting after a tiresome march that one of the apes rose suddenly and sniffed the breeze. In a low guttural he cautioned the others to silence and a moment later was swinging quietly up wind into the jungle. La and the priests gathered silently together, the hideous little men fingering

their knives and bludgeons, and awaited the return of the shaggy anthropoid.

Nor had they long to wait before they saw him emerge from a leafy thicket and approach them. Straight to La he came and in the language of the great apes which was also the language of decadent Opar he addressed her.

"The great Tarmangani lies asleep there," he said, pointing in the direction from which he had just come. "Come and we can kill him."

"Do not kill him," commanded La in cold tones. "Bring the great Tarmangani to me alive and unhurt. The vengeance is La's. Go; but make no sound!" and she waved her hands to include all her followers.

Cautiously the weird party crept through the jungle in the wake of the great ape until at last he halted them with a raised hand and pointed upward and a little ahead. There they saw the giant form of the ape-man stretched along a low bough and even in sleep one hand grasped a stout limb and one strong, brown leg reached out and overlapped another. At ease lay Tarzan of the Apes, sleeping heavily upon a full stomach and dreaming of Numa, the lion, and Horta, the boar, and other creatures of the jungle. No intimation of danger assailed the dormant faculties of the ape-man—he saw no crouching hairy figures upon the ground beneath him nor the three apes that swung quietly into the tree beside

him.

The first intimation of danger that came to Tarzan was the impact of three bodies as the three apes leaped upon him and hurled him to the ground, where he alighted half stunned beneath their combined weight and was immediately set upon by the fifty hairy men or as many of them as could swarm upon his person. Instantly the ape- man became the center of a whirling, striking, biting maelstrom of horror. He fought nobly but the odds against him were too great. Slowly they overcame him though there was scarce one of them that did not feel the weight of his mighty fist or the rending of his fangs.

13. CONDEMNED TO TORTURE AND DEATH

La had followed her company and when she saw them clawing and biting at Tarzan, she raised her voice and cautioned them not to kill him. She saw that he was weakening and that soon the greater numbers would prevail over him, nor had she long to wait before the mighty jungle creature lay helpless and bound at her feet.

"Bring him to the place at which we stopped," she commanded and they carried Tarzan back to the little clearing and threw him down beneath a tree.

"Build me a shelter!" ordered La. "We shall stop here tonight and tomorrow in the face of the Flaming

God, La will offer up the heart of this defiler of the temple. Where is the sacred knife? Who took it from him?"

But no one had seen it and each was positive in his assurance that the sacrificial weapon had not been upon Tarzan's person when they captured him. The ape-man looked upon the menacing creatures which surrounded him and snarled his defiance. He looked upon La and smiled. In the face of death he was unafraid.

"Where is the knife?" La asked him.

"I do not know," replied Tarzan. "The man took it with him when he slipped away during the night. Since you are so desirous for its return I would look for him and get it back for you, did you not

hold me prisoner; but now that I am to die I cannot get it back. Of what good was your knife, anyway? You can make another. Did you follow us all this way for nothing more than a knife? Let me go and find him and I will bring it back to you."

La laughed a bitter laugh, for in her heart she knew that Tarzan's sin was greater than the purloining of the sacrificial knife of Opar; yet as she looked at him lying bound and helpless before her, tears rose to her eyes so that she had to turn away to hide them; but she remained inflexible in her determination to make him pay in frightful suffering and in eventual death for daring to spurn the love of La.

When the shelter was completed La had Tarzan transferred to it. "All night I shall torture him," she muttered to her priests, "and at the first streak of dawn you may prepare the flaming altar upon which his heart shall be offered up to the Flaming God. Gather wood well filled with pitch, lay it in the form and size of the altar at Opar in the center of the clearing that the Flaming God may look down upon our handiwork and be pleased."

During the balance of the day the priests of Opar were busy erecting an altar in the center of the clearing, and while they worked they chanted weird hymns in the ancient tongue of that lost continent that lies at the bottom of the

Atlantic. They knew not the meanings of the words they mouthed; they but repeated the ritual that had been handed down from preceptor to neophyte since that long-gone day when the ancestors of the Piltdown man still swung by their tails in the humid jungles that are England now.

And in the shelter of the hut, La paced to and fro beside the stoic ape- man. Resigned to his fate was Tarzan. No hope of succor gleamed through the dead black of the death sentence hanging over him. He knew that his giant muscles could not part the many strands that bound his wrists and ankles, for he had strained often, but ineffectually for release. He had no hope of outside help

and only enemies surrounded him within the camp, and yet he smiled at La as she paced nervously back and forth the length of the shelter.

And La? She fingered her knife and looked down upon her captive. She glared and muttered but she did not strike. "Tonight!" she thought. "Tonight, when it is dark I will torture him." She looked upon his perfect, godlike figure and upon his handsome, smiling face and then she steeled her heart again by thoughts of her love spurned; by religious thoughts that damned the infidel who had desecrated the holy of holies; who had taken from the blood-stained altar of Opar the offering to the Flaming God—and not once but thrice. Three

times had Tarzan cheated the god of her fathers. At the thought La paused and knelt at his side. In her hand was a sharp knife. She placed its point against the ape-man's side and pressed upon the hilt; but Tarzan only smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

How beautiful he was! La bent low over him, looking into his eyes. How perfect was his figure. She compared it with those of the knurled and knotted men from whom she must choose a mate, and La shuddered at the thought. Dusk came and after dusk came night. A great fire blazed within the little thorn boma about the camp. The flames played upon the new altar erected in the center of the clearing, arousing in the mind of the

High Priestess of the Flaming God a picture of the event of the coming dawn. She saw this giant and perfect form writhing amid the flames of the burning pyre. She saw those smiling lips, burned and blackened, falling away from the strong, white teeth. She saw the shock of black hair tousled upon Tarzan's well-shaped head disappear in a spurt of flame. She saw these and many other frightful pictures as she stood with closed eyes and clenched fists above the object of her hate—ah! was it hate that La of Opar felt?

The darkness of the jungle night had settled down upon the camp, relieved only by the fitful flarings of the fire that was kept up to warn off the man-eaters.

Tarzan lay quietly in his bonds. He suffered from thirst and from the cutting of the tight strands about his wrists and ankles; but he made no complaint. A jungle beast was Tarzan with the stoicism of the beast and the intelligence of man. He knew that his doom was sealed—that no supplications would avail to temper the severity of his end and so he wasted no breath in pleadings; but waited patiently in the firm conviction that his sufferings could not endure forever.

In the darkness La stooped above him. In her hand was a sharp knife and in her mind the determination to initiate his torture without further delay. The knife was pressed against his side and La's

face was close to his when a sudden burst of flame from new branches thrown upon the fire without, lighted up the interior of the shelter. Close beneath her lips La saw the perfect features of the forest god and into her woman's heart welled all the great love she had felt for Tarzan since first she had seen him, and all the accumulated passion of the years that she had dreamed of him.

Dagger in hand, La, the High Priestess, towered above the helpless creature that had dared to violate the sanctuary of her deity. There should be no torture—there should be instant death. No longer should the defiler of the temple pollute the sight of the lord god almighty. A single stroke of the heavy

blade and then the corpse to the flaming pyre without. The knife arm stiffened ready for the downward plunge, and then La, the woman, collapsed weakly upon the body of the man she loved.

She ran her hands in mute caress over his naked flesh; she covered his forehead, his eyes, his lips with hot kisses; she covered him with her body as though to protect him from the hideous fate she had ordained for him, and in trembling, piteous tones she begged him for his love. For hours the frenzy of her passion possessed the burning hand-maiden of the Flaming God, until at last sleep overpowered her and she lapsed into unconsciousness beside the man she had sworn to torture and to slay. And

Tarzan, untroubled by thoughts of the future, slept peacefully in La's embrace.

At the first hint of dawn the chanting of the priests of Opar brought Tarzan to wakefulness. Initiated in low and subdued tones, the sound soon rose in volume to the open diapason of barbaric blood lust. La stirred. Her perfect arm pressed Tarzan closer to her—a smile parted her lips and then she awoke, and slowly the smile faded and her eyes went wide in horror as the significance of the death chant impinged upon her understanding.

"Love me, Tarzan!" she cried. "Love me, and you shall be saved."

Tarzan's bonds hurt him. He was suffering the tortures of long- restricted

circulation. With an angry growl he rolled over with his back toward La. That was her answer! The High Priestess leaped to her feet. A hot flush of shame mantled her cheek and then she went dead white and stepped to the shelter's entrance.

"Come, Priests of the Flaming God!" she cried, "and make ready the sacrifice."

The warped things advanced and entered the shelter. They laid hands upon Tarzan and bore him forth, and as they chanted they kept time with their crooked bodies, swaying to and fro to the rhythm of their song of blood and death. Behind them came La, swaying too; but not in unison with the chanted

cadence. White and drawn was the face of the High Priestess—white and drawn with unrequited love and hideous terror of the moments to come. Yet stern in her resolve was La. The infidel should die! The scorner of her love should pay the price upon the fiery altar. She saw them lay the perfect body there upon the rough branches. She saw the High Priest, he to whom custom would unite her—bent, crooked, gnarled, stunted, hideous—advance with the flaming torch and stand awaiting her command to apply it to the faggots surrounding the sacrificial pyre. His hairy, bestial face was distorted in a yellow-fanged grin of anticipatory enjoyment. His hands were cupped to receive the life blood of the victim—the

red nectar that at Opar would have filled the golden sacrificial goblets.

La approached with upraised knife, her face turned toward the rising sun and upon her lips a prayer to the burning deity of her people. The High Priest looked questioningly toward her—the brand was burning close to his hand and the faggots lay temptingly near. Tarzan closed his eyes and awaited the end. He knew that he would suffer, for he recalled the faint memories of past burns. He knew that he would suffer and die; but he did not flinch. Death is no great adventure to the jungle bred who walk hand-in-hand with the grim specter by day and lie down at his side by night through all the years of their lives. It is

doubtful that the ape-man even speculated upon what came after death. As a matter of fact as his end approached, his mind was occupied by thoughts of the pretty pebbles he had lost, yet his every faculty still was open to what passed around him.

He felt La lean over him and he opened his eyes. He saw her white, drawn face and he saw tears blinding her eyes. "Tarzan, my Tarzan!" she moaned, "tell me that you love me—that you will return to Opar with me —and you shall live. Even in the face of the anger of my people I will save you. This last chance I give you. What is your answer?"

At the last moment the woman in La

had triumphed over the High Priestess of a cruel cult. She saw upon the altar the only creature that ever had aroused the fires of love within her virgin breast; she saw the beast-faced fanatic who would one day be her mate, unless she found another less repulsive, standing with the burning torch ready to ignite the pyre; yet with all her mad passion for the ape-man she would give the word to apply the flame if Tarzan's final answer was unsatisfactory. With heaving bosom she leaned close above him. "Yes or no?" she whispered.

Through the jungle, out of the distance, came faintly a sound that brought a sudden light of hope to Tarzan's eyes. He raised his voice in a

weird scream that sent La back from him a step or two. The impatient priest grumbled and switched the torch from one hand to the other at the same time holding it closer to the tinder at the base of the pyre.

"Your answer!" insisted La. "What is your answer to the love of La of Opar?"

Closer came the sound that had attracted Tarzan's attention and now the others heard it—the shrill trumpeting of an elephant. As La looked wide-eyed into Tarzan's face, there to read her fate for happiness or heartbreak, she saw an expression of concern shadow his features. Now, for the first time, she guessed the meaning of Tarzan's shrill scream—he had summoned Tantor, the

elephant, to his rescue! La's brows contracted in a savage scowl. "You refuse La!" she cried. "Then die! The torch!" she commanded, turning toward the priest.

Tarzan looked up into her face. "Tantor is coming," he said. "I thought that he would rescue me; but I know now from his voice that he will slay me and you and all that fall in his path, searching out with the cunning of Sheeta, the panther, those who would hide from him, for Tantor is mad with the madness of love."

La knew only too well the insane ferocity of a bull elephant in MUST. She knew that Tarzan had not exaggerated. She knew that the devil in the cunning,

cruel brain of the great beast might send it hither and thither hunting through the forest for those who escaped its first charge, or the beast might pass on without returning—no one might guess which.

"I cannot love you, La," said Tarzan in a low voice. "I do not know why, for you are very beautiful. I could not go back and live in Opar—I who have the whole broad jungle for my range. No, I cannot love you but I cannot see you die beneath the goring tusks of mad Tantor. Cut my bonds before it is too late. Already he is almost upon us. Cut them and I may yet save you."

A little spiral of curling smoke rose from one corner of the pyre— the flames

licked upward, crackling. La stood there like a beautiful statue of despair gazing at Tarzan and at the spreading flames. In a moment they would reach out and grasp him. From the tangled forest came the sound of cracking limbs and crashing trunks—Tantor was coming down upon them, a huge Juggernaut of the jungle. The priests were becoming uneasy. They cast apprehensive glances in the direction of the approaching elephant and then back at La.

"Fly!" she commanded them and then she stooped and cut the bonds securing her prisoner's feet and hands. In an instant Tarzan was upon the ground. The priests screamed out their rage and disappointment. He with the torch took a

menacing step toward La and the ape-man. "Traitor!" He shrieked at the woman. "For this you too shall die!" Raising his bludgeon he rushed upon the High Priestess; but Tarzan was there before her. Leaping in to close quarters the ape- man seized the upraised weapon and wrenched it from the hands of the frenzied fanatic and then the priest closed upon him with tooth and nail. Seizing the stocky, stunted body in his mighty hands Tarzan raised the creature high above his head, hurling him at his fellows who were now gathered ready to bear down upon their erstwhile captive. La stood proudly with ready knife behind the ape-man. No faint sign of fear marked her perfect brow—only

haughty disdain for her priests and admiration for the man she loved so hopelessly filled her thoughts.

Suddenly upon this scene burst the mad bull—a huge tusker, his little eyes inflamed with insane rage. The priests stood for an instant paralyzed with terror; but Tarzan turned and gathering La in his arms raced for the nearest tree. Tantor bore down upon him trumpeting shrilly. La clung with both white arms about the ape-man's neck. She felt him leap into the air and marveled at his strength and his ability as, burdened with her weight, he swung nimbly into the lower branches of a large tree and quickly bore her upward beyond reach of the sinuous trunk of the pachyderm.

Momentarily baffled here, the huge elephant wheeled and bore down upon the hapless priests who had now scattered, terror-stricken, in every direction. The nearest he gored and threw high among the branches of a tree. One he seized in the coils of his trunk and broke upon a huge bole, dropping the mangled pulp to charge, trumpeting, after another. Two he trampled beneath his huge feet and by then the others had disappeared into the jungle. Now Tantor turned his attention once more to Tarzan for one of the symptoms of madness is a revulsion of affection—objects of sane love become the objects of insane hatred. Peculiar in the unwritten annals of the jungle was the proverbial love

that had existed between the ape-man and the tribe of Tantor. No elephant in all the jungle would harm the Tarmangani—the white-ape; but with the madness of MUST upon him the great bull sought to destroy his long-time play-fellow.

Back to the tree where La and Tarzan perched came Tantor, the elephant. He reared up with his forefeet against the bole and reached high toward them with his long trunk; but Tarzan had foreseen this and clambered beyond the bull's longest reach. Failure but tended to further enrage the mad creature. He bellowed and trumpeted and screamed until the earth shook to the mighty volume of his noise. He put his head

against the tree and pushed and the tree bent before his mighty strength; yet still it held.

The actions of Tarzan were peculiar in the extreme. Had Numa, or Sabor, or Sheeta, or any other beast of the jungle been seeking to destroy him, the ape-man would have danced about hurling missiles and invectives at his assailant. He would have insulted and taunted them, reviling in the jungle Billingsgate he knew so well; but now he sat silent out of Tantor's reach and upon his handsome face was an expression of deep sorrow and pity, for of all the jungle folk Tarzan loved Tantor the best. Could he have slain him he would not have thought of doing so. His one idea

was to escape, for he knew that with the passing of the MUST Tantor would be sane again and that once more he might stretch at full length upon that mighty back and make foolish speech into those great, flapping ears.

Finding that the tree would not fall to his pushing, Tantor was but enraged the more. He looked up at the two perched high above him, his red-rimmed eyes blazing with insane hatred, and then he wound his trunk about the bole of the tree, spread his giant feet wide apart and tugged to uproot the jungle giant. A huge creature was Tantor, an enormous bull in the full prime of all his stupendous strength. Mightily he strove until presently, to Tarzan's consternation, the

great tree gave slowly at the roots. The ground rose in little mounds and ridges about the base of the bole, the tree tilted —in another moment it would be uprooted and fall.

The ape-man whirled La to his back and just as the tree inclined slowly in its first movement out of the perpendicular, before the sudden rush of its final collapse, he swung to the branches of a lesser neighbor. It was a long and perilous leap. La closed her eyes and shuddered; but when she opened them again she found herself safe and Tarzan whirling onward through the forest. Behind them the uprooted tree crashed heavily to the ground, carrying with it the lesser trees in its path and then

Tantor, realizing that his prey had escaped him, set up once more his hideous trumpeting and followed at a rapid charge upon their trail.

14. A PRIESTESS BUT YET A WOMAN

At first La closed her eyes and clung to Tarzan in terror, though she made no outcry; but presently she gained sufficient courage to look about her, to look down at the ground beneath and even to keep her eyes open during the wide, perilous swings from tree to tree, and then there came over her a sense of safety because of her confidence in the perfect physical creature in whose strength and nerve and agility her fate lay. Once she raised her eyes to the burning sun and murmured a prayer of thanks to her pagan god that she had not been permitted to destroy this godlike man, and her long lashes were wet with

tears. A strange anomaly was La of Opar—a creature of circumstance torn by conflicting emotions. Now the cruel and bloodthirsty creature of a heartless god and again a melting woman filled with compassion and tenderness. Sometimes the incarnation of jealousy and revenge and sometimes a sobbing maiden, generous and forgiving; at once a virgin and a wanton; but always—a woman. Such was La.

She pressed her cheek close to Tarzan's shoulder. Slowly she turned her head until her hot lips were pressed against his flesh. She loved him and would gladly have died for him; yet within an hour she had been ready to plunge a knife into his heart and might

again within the coming hour.

A hapless priest seeking shelter in the jungle chanced to show himself to enraged Tantor. The great beast turned to one side, bore down upon the crooked, little man, snuffed him out and then, diverted from his course, blundered away toward the south. In a few minutes even the noise of his trumpeting was lost in the distance.

Tarzan dropped to the ground and La slipped to her feet from his back. "Call your people together," said Tarzan.

"They will kill me," replied La.

"They will not kill you," contradicted the ape-man. "No one will kill you while Tarzan of the Apes is here. Call them and we will talk with them."

La raised her voice in a weird, flutelike call that carried far into the jungle on every side. From near and far came answering shouts in the barking tones of the Oparian priests: "We come! We come!" Again and again, La repeated her summons until singly and in pairs the greater portion of her following approached and halted a short distance away from the High Priestess and her savior. They came with scowling brows and threatening mien. When all had come Tarzan addressed them.

"Your La is safe," said the ape-man. "Had she slain me she would now herself be dead and many more of you; but she spared me that I might save her. Go your way with her back to Opar, and

Tarzan will go his way into the jungle. Let there be peace always between Tarzan and La. What is your answer?"

The priests grumbled and shook their heads. They spoke together and La and Tarzan could see that they were not favorably inclined toward the proposition. They did not wish to take La back and they did wish to complete the sacrifice of Tarzan to the Flaming God. At last the ape-man became impatient.

"You will obey the commands of your queen," he said, "and go back to Opar with her or Tarzan of the Apes will call together the other creatures of the jungle and slay you all. La saved me that I might save you and her. I have served

you better alive than I could have dead. If you are not all fools you will let me go my way in peace and you will return to Opar with La. I know not where the sacred knife is; but you can fashion another. Had I not taken it from La you would have slain me and now your god must be glad that I took it since I have saved his priestess from love-mad Tantor. Will you go back to Opar with La, promising that no harm shall befall her?"

The priests gathered together in a little knot arguing and discussing. They pounded upon their breasts with their fists; they raised their hands and eyes to their fiery god; they growled and barked among themselves until it became

evident to Tarzan that one of their number was preventing the acceptance of his proposal. This was the High Priest whose heart was filled with jealous rage because La openly acknowledged her love for the stranger, when by the worldly customs of their cult she should have belonged to him. Seemingly there was to be no solution of the problem until another priest stepped forth and, raising his hand, addressed La.

"Cadj, the High Priest," he announced, "would sacrifice you both to the Flaming God; but all of us except Cadj would gladly return to Opar with our queen."

"You are many against one," spoke up Tarzan. "Why should you not have your

will? Go your way with La to Opar and if Cadj interferes slay him."

The priests of Opar welcomed this suggestion with loud cries of approval. To them it appeared nothing short of divine inspiration. The influence of ages of unquestioning obedience to high priests had made it seem impossible to them to question his authority; but when they realized that they could force him to their will they were as happy as children with new toys.

They rushed forward and seized Cadj. They talked in loud menacing tones into his ear. They threatened him with bludgeon and knife until at last he acquiesced in their demands, though sullenly, and then Tarzan stepped close

before Cadj.

"Priest," he said, "La goes back to her temple under the protection of her priests and the threat of Tarzan of the Apes that whoever harms her shall die. Tarzan will go again to Opar before the next rains and if harm has befallen La, woe betide Cadj, the High Priest."

Sullenly Cadj promised not to harm his queen.

"Protect her," cried Tarzan to the other Oparians. "Protect her so that when Tarzan comes again he will find La there to greet him."

"La will be there to greet thee," exclaimed the High Priestess, "and La will wait, longing, always longing, until you come again. Oh, tell me that you will

come!"

"Who knows?" asked the ape-man as he swung quickly into the trees and raced off toward the east.

For a moment La stood looking after him, then her head drooped, a sigh escaped her lips and like an old woman she took up the march toward distant Opar.

Through the trees raced Tarzan of the Apes until the darkness of night had settled upon the jungle, then he lay down and slept, with no thought beyond the morrow and with even La but the shadow of a memory within his consciousness.

But a few marches to the north Lady Greystoke looked forward to the day

when her mighty lord and master should discover the crime of Achmet Zek, and be speeding to rescue and avenge, and even as she pictured the coming of John Clayton, the object of her thoughts squatted almost naked, beside a fallen log, beneath which he was searching with grimy fingers for a chance beetle or a luscious grub.

Two days elapsed following the theft of the jewels before Tarzan gave them a thought. Then, as they chanced to enter his mind, he conceived a desire to play with them again, and, having nothing better to do than satisfy the first whim which possessed him, he rose and started across the plain from the forest in which he had spent the preceding day.

Though no mark showed where the gems had been buried, and though the spot resembled the balance of an unbroken stretch several miles in length, where the reeds terminated at the edge of the meadowland, yet the ape-man moved with unerring precision directly to the place where he had hid his treasure.

With his hunting knife he upturned the loose earth, beneath which the pouch should be; but, though he excavated to a greater distance than the depth of the original hole there was no sign of pouch or jewels. Tarzan's brow clouded as he discovered that he had been despoiled. Little or no reasoning was required to convince him of the identity of the guilty party, and with the same celerity that had

marked his decision to unearth the jewels, he set out upon the trail of the thief.

Though the spoor was two days old, and practically obliterated in many places, Tarzan followed it with comparative ease. A white man could not have followed it twenty paces twelve hours after it had been made, a black man would have lost it within the first mile; but Tarzan of the Apes had been forced in childhood to develop senses that an ordinary mortal scarce ever uses.

We may note the garlic and whisky on the breath of a fellow strap hanger, or the cheap perfume emanating from the person of the wondrous lady sitting in

front of us, and deplore the fact of our sensitive noses; but, as a matter of fact, we cannot smell at all, our olfactory organs are practically atrophied, by comparison with the development of the sense among the beasts of the wild.

Where a foot is placed an effluvium remains for a considerable time. It is beyond the range of our sensibilities; but to a creature of the lower orders, especially to the hunters and the hunted, as interesting and ofttimes more lucid than is the printed page to us.

Nor was Tarzan dependent alone upon his sense of smell. Vision and hearing had been brought to a marvelous state of development by the necessities of his early life, where survival itself

depended almost daily upon the exercise of the keenest vigilance and the constant use of all his faculties.

And so he followed the old trail of the Belgian through the forest and toward the north; but because of the age of the trail he was constrained to a far from rapid progress. The man he followed was two days ahead of him when Tarzan took up the pursuit, and each day he gained upon the ape-man. The latter, however, felt not the slightest doubt as to the outcome. Some day he would overhaul his quarry—he could bide his time in peace until that day dawned. Doggedly he followed the faint spoor, pausing by day only to kill and eat, and at night only to sleep and refresh

himself.

Occasionally he passed parties of savage warriors; but these he gave a wide berth, for he was hunting with a purpose that was not to be distracted by the minor accidents of the trail.

These parties were of the collecting hordes of the Waziri and their allies which Basuli had scattered his messengers broadcast to summon. They were marching to a common rendezvous in preparation for an assault upon the stronghold of Achmet Zek; but to Tarzan they were enemies—he retained no conscious memory of any friendship for the black men.

It was night when he halted outside the palisaded village of the Arab raider.

Perched in the branches of a great tree he gazed down upon the life within the enclosure. To this place had the spoor led him. His quarry must be within; but how was he to find him among so many huts? Tarzan, although cognizant of his mighty powers, realized also his limitations. He knew that he could not successfully cope with great numbers in open battle. He must resort to the stealth and trickery of the wild beast, if he were to succeed.

Sitting in the safety of his tree, munching upon the leg bone of Horta, the boar, Tarzan waited a favorable opportunity to enter the village. For awhile he gnawed at the bulging, round ends of the large bone, splintering off

small pieces between his strong jaws, and sucking at the delicious marrow within; but all the time he cast repeated glances into the village. He saw white-robed figures, and half-naked blacks; but not once did he see one who resembled the stealer of the gems.

Patiently he waited until the streets were deserted by all save the sentries at the gates, then he dropped lightly to the ground, circled to the opposite side of the village and approached the palisade.

At his side hung a long, rawhide rope —a natural and more dependable evolution from the grass rope of his childhood. Loosening this, he spread the noose upon the ground behind him, and with a quick movement of his wrist

tossed the coils over one of the sharpened projections of the summit of the palisade.

Drawing the noose taut, he tested the solidity of its hold. Satisfied, the ape-man ran nimbly up the vertical wall, aided by the rope which he clutched in both hands. Once at the top it required but a moment to gather the dangling rope once more into its coils, make it fast again at his waist, take a quick glance downward within the palisade, and, assured that no one lurked directly beneath him, drop softly to the ground.

Now he was within the village. Before him stretched a series of tents and native huts. The business of exploring each of them would be fraught

with danger; but danger was only a natural factor of each day's life—it never appalled Tarzan. The chances appealed to him—the chances of life and death, with his prowess and his faculties pitted against those of a worthy antagonist.

It was not necessary that he enter each habitation—through a door, a window or an open chink, his nose told him whether or not his prey lay within. For some time he found one disappointment following upon the heels of another in quick succession. No spoor of the Belgian was discernible. But at last he came to a tent where the smell of the thief was strong. Tarzan listened, his ear close to the canvas at the rear, but no sound came

from within.

At last he cut one of the pin ropes, raised the bottom of the canvas, and intruded his head within the interior. All was quiet and dark. Tarzan crawled cautiously within—the scent of the Belgian was strong; but it was not live scent. Even before he had examined the interior minutely, Tarzan knew that no one was within it.

In one corner he found a pile of blankets and clothing scattered about; but no pouch of pretty pebbles. A careful examination of the balance of the tent revealed nothing more, at least nothing to indicate the presence of the jewels; but at the side where the blankets and clothing lay, the ape-man discovered that

the tent wall had been loosened at the bottom, and presently he sensed that the Belgian had recently passed out of the tent by this avenue.

Tarzan was not long in following the way that his prey had fled. The spoor led always in the shadow and at the rear of the huts and tents of the village —it was quite evident to Tarzan that the Belgian had gone alone and secretly upon his mission. Evidently he feared the inhabitants of the village, or at least his work had been of such a nature that he dared not risk detection.

At the back of a native hut the spoor led through a small hole recently cut in the brush wall and into the dark interior beyond. Fearlessly, Tarzan followed the

trail. On hands and knees, he crawled through the small aperture. Within the hut his nostrils were assailed by many odors; but clear and distinct among them was one that half aroused a latent memory of the past —it was the faint and delicate odor of a woman. With the cognizance of it there rose in the breast of the ape-man a strange uneasiness—the result of an irresistible force which he was destined to become acquainted with anew - the instinct which draws the male to his mate.

In the same hut was the scent spoor of the Belgian, too, and as both these assailed the nostrils of the ape-man, mingling one with the other, a jealous rage leaped and burned within him,

though his memory held before the mirror of recollection no image of the she to which he had attached his desire.

Like the tent he had investigated, the hut, too, was empty, and after satisfying himself that his stolen pouch was secreted nowhere within, he left, as he had entered, by the hole in the rear wall.

Here he took up the spoor of the Belgian, followed it across the clearing, over the palisade, and out into the dark jungle beyond.

15. THE FLIGHT OF WERPER

After Werper had arranged the dummy in his bed, and sneaked out into the darkness of the village beneath the rear wall of his tent, he had gone directly to the hut in which Jane Clayton was held captive.

Before the doorway squatted a black sentry. Werper approached him boldly, spoke a few words in his ear, handed him a package of tobacco, and passed into the hut. The black grinned and winked as the European disappeared within the darkness of the interior.

The Belgian, being one of Achmet Zek's principal lieutenants, might naturally go where he wished within or without the village, and so the sentry had

not questioned his right to enter the hut with the white, woman prisoner.

Within, Werper called in French and in a low whisper: "Lady Greystoke! It is I, M. Frecoult. Where are you?" But there was no response. Hastily the man felt around the interior, groping blindly through the darkness with outstretched hands. There was no one within!

Werper's astonishment surpassed words. He was on the point of stepping without to question the sentry, when his eyes, becoming accustomed to the dark, discovered a blotch of lesser blackness near the base of the rear wall of the hut. Examination revealed the fact that the blotch was an opening cut in the wall. It was large enough to permit the passage

of his body, and assured as he was that Lady Greystoke had passed out through the aperture in an attempt to escape the village, he lost no time in availing himself of the same avenue; but neither did he lose time in a fruitless search for Jane Clayton.

His own life depended upon the chance of his eluding, or outdistancing Achmet Zek, when that worthy should have discovered that he had escaped. His original plan had contemplated connivance in the escape of Lady Greystoke for two very good and sufficient reasons. The first was that by saving her he would win the gratitude of the English, and thus lessen the chance of his extradition should his identity and his

crime against his superior officer be charged against him.

The second reason was based upon the fact that only one direction of escape was safely open to him. He could not travel to the west because of the Belgian possessions which lay between him and the Atlantic. The south was closed to him by the feared presence of the savage ape-man he had robbed. To the north lay the friends and allies of Achmet Zek. Only toward the east, through British East Africa, lay reasonable assurance of freedom.

Accompanied by a titled Englishwoman whom he had rescued from a frightful fate, and his identity vouched for by her as that of a

Frenchman by the name of Frecoult, he had looked forward, and not without reason, to the active assistance of the British from the moment that he came in contact with their first outpost.

But now that Lady Greystoke had disappeared, though he still looked toward the east for hope, his chances were lessened, and another, subsidiary design completely dashed. From the moment that he had first laid eyes upon Jane Clayton he had nursed within his breast a secret passion for the beautiful American wife of the English lord, and when Achmet Zek's discovery of the jewels had necessitated flight, the Belgian had dreamed, in his planning, of a future in which he might convince Lady

Greystoke that her husband was dead, and by playing upon her gratitude win her for himself.

At that part of the village farthest from the gates, Werper discovered that two or three long poles, taken from a nearby pile which had been collected for the construction of huts, had been leaned against the top of the palisade, forming a precarious, though not impossible avenue of escape.

Rightly, he inferred that thus had Lady Greystoke found the means to scale the wall, nor did he lose even a moment in following her lead. Once in the jungle he struck out directly eastward.

A few miles south of him, Jane Clayton lay panting among the branches

of a tree in which she had taken refuge from a prowling and hungry lioness.

Her escape from the village had been much easier than she had anticipated. The knife which she had used to cut her way through the brush wall of the hut to freedom she had found sticking in the wall of her prison, doubtless left there by accident when a former tenant had vacated the premises.

To cross the rear of the village, keeping always in the densest shadows, had required but a few moments, and the fortunate circumstance of the discovery of the hut poles lying so near the palisade had solved for her the problem of the passage of the high wall.

For an hour she had followed the old

game trail toward the south, until there fell upon her trained hearing the stealthy padding of a stalking beast behind her. The nearest tree gave her instant sanctuary, for she was too wise in the ways of the jungle to chance her safety for a moment after discovering that she was being hunted.

Werper, with better success, traveled slowly onward until dawn, when, to his chagrin, he discovered a mounted Arab upon his trail. It was one of Achmet Zek's minions, many of whom were scattered in all directions through the forest, searching for the fugitive Belgian.

Jane Clayton's escape had not yet been discovered when Achmet Zek and his searchers set forth to overhaul

Werper. The only man who had seen the Belgian after his departure from his tent was the black sentry before the doorway of Lady Greystoke's prison hut, and he had been silenced by the discovery of the dead body of the man who had relieved him, the sentry that Mugambi had dispatched.

The bribe taker naturally inferred that Werper had slain his fellow and dared not admit that he had permitted him to enter the hut, fearing as he did, the anger of Achmet Zek. So, as chance directed that he should be the one to discover the body of the sentry when the first alarm had been given following Achmet Zek's discovery that Werper had outwitted him, the crafty black had dragged the

dead body to the interior of a nearby tent, and himself resumed his station before the doorway of the hut in which he still believed the woman to be.

With the discovery of the Arab close behind him, the Belgian hid in the foliage of a leafy bush. Here the trail ran straight for a considerable distance, and down the shady forest aisle, beneath the overarching branches of the trees, rode the white-robed figure of the pursuer.

Nearer and nearer he came. Werper crouched closer to the ground behind the leaves of his hiding place. Across the trail a vine moved. Werper's eyes instantly centered upon the spot. There was no wind to stir the foliage in the depths of the jungle. Again the vine

moved. In the mind of the Belgian only the presence of a sinister and malevolent force could account for the phenomenon.

The man's eyes bored steadily into the screen of leaves upon the opposite side of the trail. Gradually a form took shape beyond them—a tawny form, grim and terrible, with yellow-green eyes glaring fearsomely across the narrow trail straight into his.

Werper could have screamed in fright, but up the trail was coming the messenger of another death, equally sure and no less terrible. He remained silent, almost paralyzed by fear. The Arab approached. Across the trail from Werper the lion crouched for the spring, when suddenly his attention was

attracted toward the horseman.

The Belgian saw the massive head turn in the direction of the raider and his heart all but ceased its beating as he awaited the result of this interruption. At a walk the horseman approached. Would the nervous animal he rode take fright at the odor of the carnivore, and, bolting, leave Werper still to the mercies of the king of beasts?

But he seemed unmindful of the near presence of the great cat. On he came, his neck arched, champing at the bit between his teeth. The Belgian turned his eyes again toward the lion. The beast's whole attention now seemed riveted upon the horseman. They were abreast the lion now, and still the brute

did not spring. Could he be but waiting for them to pass before returning his attention to the original prey? Werper shuddered and half rose. At the same instant the lion sprang from his place of concealment, full upon the mounted man. The horse, with a shrill neigh of terror, shrank sideways almost upon the Belgian, the lion dragged the helpless Arab from his saddle, and the horse leaped back into the trail and fled away toward the west.

But he did not flee alone. As the frightened beast had pressed in upon him, Werper had not been slow to note the quickly emptied saddle and the opportunity it presented. Scarcely had the lion dragged the Arab down from

one side, than the Belgian, seizing the pommel of the saddle and the horse's mane, leaped upon the horse's back from the other.

A half hour later a naked giant, swinging easily through the lower branches of the trees, paused, and with raised head, and dilating nostrils sniffed the morning air. The smell of blood fell strong upon his senses, and mingled with it was the scent of Numa, the lion. The giant cocked his head upon one side and listened.

From a short distance up the trail came the unmistakable noises of the greedy feeding of a lion. The crunching of bones, the gulping of great pieces, the contented growling, all attested the

nearness of the king at table.

Tarzan approached the spot, still keeping to the branches of the trees. He made no effort to conceal his approach, and presently he had evidence that Numa had heard him, from the ominous, rumbling warning that broke from a thicket beside the trail.

Halting upon a low branch just above the lion Tarzan looked down upon the grisly scene. Could this unrecognizable thing be the man he had been trailing? The ape-man wondered. From time to time he had descended to the trail and verified his judgment by the evidence of his scent that the Belgian had followed this game trail toward the east.

Now he proceeded beyond the lion

and his feast, again descended and examined the ground with his nose. There was no scent spoor here of the man he had been trailing. Tarzan returned to the tree. With keen eyes he searched the ground about the mutilated corpse for a sign of the missing pouch of pretty pebbles; but naught could he see of it.

He scolded Numa and tried to drive the great beast away; but only angry growls rewarded his efforts. He tore small branches from a nearby limb and hurled them at his ancient enemy. Numa looked up with bared fangs, grinning hideously, but he did not rise from his kill.

Then Tarzan fitted an arrow to his

bow, and drawing the slim shaft far back let drive with all the force of the tough wood that only he could bend. As the arrow sank deeply into his side, Numa leaped to his feet with a roar of mingled rage and pain. He leaped futilely at the grinning ape-man, tore at the protruding end of the shaft, and then, springing into the trail, paced back and forth beneath his tormentor. Again Tarzan loosed a swift bolt. This time the missile, aimed with care, lodged in the lion's spine. The great creature halted in its tracks, and lurched awkwardly forward upon its face, paralyzed.

Tarzan dropped to the trail, ran quickly to the beast's side, and drove his spear deep into the fierce heart, then

after recovering his arrows turned his attention to the mutilated remains of the animal's prey in the nearby thicket.

The face was gone. The Arab garments aroused no doubt as to the man's identity, since he had trailed him into the Arab camp and out again, where he might easily have acquired the apparel. So sure was Tarzan that the body was that of he who had robbed him that he made no effort to verify his deductions by scent among the conglomerate odors of the great carnivore and the fresh blood of the victim.

He confined his attentions to a careful search for the pouch, but nowhere upon or about the corpse was any sign of the

missing article or its contents. The ape-man was disappointed—possibly not so much because of the loss of the colored pebbles as with Numa for robbing him of the pleasures of revenge.

Wondering what could have become of his possessions, the ape- man turned slowly back along the trail in the direction from which he had come. In his mind he revolved a plan to enter and search the Arab camp, after darkness had again fallen. Taking to the trees, he moved directly south in search of prey, that he might satisfy his hunger before midday, and then lie up for the afternoon in some spot far from the camp, where he might sleep without fear of discovery until it came time to prosecute his

design.

Scarcely had he quitted the trail when a tall, black warrior, moving at a dogged trot, passed toward the east. It was Mugambi, searching for his mistress. He continued along the trail, halting to examine the body of the dead lion. An expression of puzzlement crossed his features as he bent to search for the wounds which had caused the death of the jungle lord. Tarzan had removed his arrows, but to Mugambi the proof of death was as strong as though both the lighter missiles and the spear still protruded from the carcass.

The black looked furtively about him. The body was still warm, and from this fact he reasoned that the killer was close

at hand, yet no sign of living man appeared. Mugambi shook his head, and continued along the trail, but with redoubled caution.

All day he traveled, stopping occasionally to call aloud the single word, "Lady," in the hope that at last she might hear and respond; but in the end his loyal devotion brought him to disaster.

From the northeast, for several months, Abdul Mourak, in command of a detachment of Abyssinian soldiers, had been assiduously searching for the Arab raider, Achmet Zek, who, six months previously, had affronted the majesty of Abdul Mourak's emperor by conducting a slave raid within the boundaries of

Menelek's domain.

And now it happened that Abdul Mourak had halted for a short rest at noon upon this very day and along the same trail that Werper and Mugambi were following toward the east.

It was shortly after the soldiers had dismounted that the Belgian, unaware of their presence, rode his tired mount almost into their midst, before he had discovered them. Instantly he was surrounded, and a volley of questions hurled at him, as he was pulled from his horse and led toward the presence of the commander.

Falling back upon his European nationality, Werper assured Abdul Mourak that he was a Frenchman,

hunting in Africa, and that he had been attacked by strangers, his safari killed or scattered, and himself escaping only by a miracle.

From a chance remark of the Abyssinian, Werper discovered the purpose of the expedition, and when he realized that these men were the enemies of Achmet Zek, he took heart, and immediately blamed his predicament upon the Arab.

Lest, however, he might again fall into the hands of the raider, he discouraged Abdul Mourak in the further prosecution of his pursuit, assuring the Abyssinian that Achmet Zek commanded a large and dangerous force, and also that he was marching rapidly toward the

south.

Convinced that it would take a long time to overhaul the raider, and that the chances of engagement made the outcome extremely questionable, Mourak, none too unwillingly, abandoned his plan and gave the necessary orders for his command to pitch camp where they were, preparatory to taking up the return march toward Abyssinia the following morning.

It was late in the afternoon that the attention of the camp was attracted toward the west by the sound of a powerful voice calling a single word, repeated several times: "Lady! Lady! Lady!"

True to their instincts of precaution, a number of Abyssinians, acting under orders from Abdul Mourak, advanced stealthily through the jungle toward the author of the call.

A half hour later they returned, dragging Mugambi among them. The first person the big black's eyes fell upon as he was hustled into the presence of the Abyssinian officer, was M. Jules Frecoult, the Frenchman who had been the guest of his master and whom he last had seen entering the village of Achmet Zek under circumstances which pointed to his familiarity and friendship for the raiders.

Between the disasters that had befallen his master and his master's

house, and the Frenchman, Mugambi saw a sinister relationship, which kept him from recalling to Werper's attention the identity which the latter evidently failed to recognize.

Pleading that he was but a harmless hunter from a tribe farther south, Mugambi begged to be allowed to go upon his way; but Abdul Mourak, admiring the warrior's splendid physique, decided to take him back to Adis Abeba and present him to Menelek. A few moments later Mugambi and Werper were marched away under guard, and the Belgian learned for the first time, that he too was a prisoner rather than a guest. In vain he protested against such treatment, until a strapping

soldier struck him across the mouth and threatened to shoot him if he did not desist.

Mugambi took the matter less to heart, for he had not the slightest doubt but that during the course of the journey he would find ample opportunity to elude the vigilance of his guards and make good his escape. With this idea always uppermost in his mind, he courted the good opinion of the Abyssinians, asked them many questions about their emperor and their country, and evinced a growing desire to reach their destination, that he might enjoy all the good things which they assured him the city of Adis Abeba contained. Thus he disarmed their suspicions, and each day found a slight

relaxation of their watchfulness over him.

By taking advantage of the fact that he and Werper always were kept together, Mugambi sought to learn what the other knew of the whereabouts of Tarzan, or the authorship of the raid upon the bungalow, as well as the fate of Lady Greystoke; but as he was confined to the accidents of conversation for this information, not daring to acquaint Werper with his true identity, and as Werper was equally anxious to conceal from the world his part in the destruction of his host's home and happiness, Mugambi learned nothing— at least in this way.

But there came a time when he

learned a very surprising thing, by accident.

The party had camped early in the afternoon of a sultry day, upon the banks of a clear and beautiful stream. The bottom of the river was gravelly, there was no indication of crocodiles, those menaces to promiscuous bathing in the rivers of certain portions of the dark continent, and so the Abyssinians took advantage of the opportunity to perform long-deferred, and much needed, ablutions.

As Werper, who, with Mugambi, had been given permission to enter the water, removed his clothing, the black noted the care with which he unfastened something which circled his waist, and

which he took off with his shirt, keeping the latter always around and concealing the object of his suspicious solicitude.

It was this very carefulness which attracted the black's attention to the thing, arousing a natural curiosity in the warrior's mind, and so it chanced that when the Belgian, in the nervousness of overcaution, fumbled the hidden article and dropped it, Mugambi saw it as it fell upon the ground, spilling a portion of its contents on the sward.

Now Mugambi had been to London with his master. He was not the unsophisticated savage that his apparel proclaimed him. He had mingled with the cosmopolitan hordes of the greatest city in the world; he had visited

museums and inspected shop windows; and, besides, he was a shrewd and intelligent man.

The instant that the jewels of Opar rolled, scintillating, before his astonished eyes, he recognized them for what they were; but he recognized something else, too, that interested him far more deeply than the value of the stones. A thousand times he had seen the leathern pouch which dangled at his master's side, when Tarzan of the Apes had, in a spirit of play and adventure, elected to return for a few hours to the primitive manners and customs of his boyhood, and surrounded by his naked warriors hunt the lion and the leopard, the buffalo and the elephant after the

manner he loved best.

Werper saw that Mugambi had seen the pouch and the stones. Hastily he gathered up the precious gems and returned them to their container, while Mugambi, assuming an air of indifference, strolled down to the river for his bath.

The following morning Abdul Mourak was enraged and chagrined to discover that this huge, black prisoner had escaped during the night, while Werper was terrified for the same reason, until his trembling fingers discovered the pouch still in its place beneath his shirt, and within it the hard outlines of its contents.

16. TARZAN AGAIN LEADS THE MANGANI

Achmet Zek with two of his followers had circled far to the south to intercept the flight of his deserting lieutenant, Werper. Others had spread out in various directions, so that a vast circle had been formed by them during the night, and now they were beating in toward the center.

Achmet and the two with him halted for a short rest just before noon. They squatted beneath the trees upon the southern edge of a clearing. The chief of the raiders was in ill humor. To have been outwitted by an unbeliever was bad enough; but to have, at the same time, lost the jewels upon which he had set his

avaricious heart was altogether too much —Allah must, indeed be angry with his servant.

Well, he still had the woman. She would bring a fair price in the north, and there was, too, the buried treasure beside the ruins of the Englishman's house.

A slight noise in the jungle upon the opposite side of the clearing brought Achmet Zek to immediate and alert attention. He gathered his rifle in readiness for instant use, at the same time motioning his followers to silence and concealment. Crouching behind the bushes the three waited, their eyes fastened upon the far side of the open space.

Presently the foliage parted and a woman's face appeared, glancing fearfully from side to side. A moment later, evidently satisfied that no immediate danger lurked before her, she stepped out into the clearing in full view of the Arab.

Achmet Zek caught his breath with a muttered exclamation of incredulity and an imprecation. The woman was the prisoner he had thought safely guarded at his camp!

Apparently she was alone, but Achmet Zek waited that he might make sure of it before seizing her. Slowly Jane Clayton started across the clearing. Twice already since she had quitted the village of the raiders had she barely

escaped the fangs of carnivora, and once she had almost stumbled into the path of one of the searchers. Though she was almost despairing of ever reaching safety she still was determined to fight on, until death or success terminated her endeavors.

As the Arabs watched her from the safety of their concealment, and Achmet Zek noted with satisfaction that she was walking directly into his clutches, another pair of eyes looked down upon the entire scene from the foliage of an adjacent tree.

Puzzled, troubled eyes they were, for all their gray and savage glint, for their owner was struggling with an intangible suggestion of the familiarity of the face

and figure of the woman below him.

A sudden crashing of the bushes at the point from which Jane Clayton had emerged into the clearing brought her to a sudden stop and attracted the attention of the Arabs and the watcher in the tree to the same point.

The woman wheeled about to see what new danger menaced her from behind, and as she did so a great, anthropoid ape waddled into view. Behind him came another and another; but Lady Greystoke did not wait to learn how many more of the hideous creatures were so close upon her trail.

With a smothered scream she rushed toward the opposite jungle, and as she reached the bushes there, Achmet Zek

and his two henchmen rose up and seized her. At the same instant a naked, brown giant dropped from the branches of a tree at the right of the clearing.

Turning toward the astonished apes he gave voice to a short volley of low gutturals, and without waiting to note the effect of his words upon them, wheeled and charged for the Arabs.

Achmet Zek was dragging Jane Clayton toward his tethered horse. His two men were hastily unfastening all three mounts. The woman, struggling to escape the Arab, turned and saw the ape-man running toward her. A glad light of hope illuminated her face.

"John!" she cried. "Thank God that you have come in time."

Behind Tarzan came the great apes, wondering, but obedient to his summons. The Arabs saw that they would not have time to mount and make their escape before the beasts and the man were upon them. Achmet Zek recognized the latter as the redoubtable enemy of such as he, and he saw, too, in the circumstance an opportunity to rid himself forever of the menace of the ape-man's presence.

Calling to his men to follow his example he raised his rifle and leveled it upon the charging giant. His followers, acting with no less alacrity than himself, fired almost simultaneously, and with the reports of the rifles, Tarzan of the Apes and two of his hairy henchmen pitched forward among the jungle grasses.

The noise of the rifle shots brought the balance of the apes to a wondering pause, and, taking advantage of their momentary distraction, Achmet Zek and his fellows leaped to their horses' backs and galloped away with the now hopeless and grief-stricken woman.

Back to the village they rode, and once again Lady Greystoke found herself incarcerated in the filthy, little hut from which she had thought to have escaped for good. But this time she was not only guarded by an additional sentry, but bound as well.

Singly and in twos the searchers who had ridden out with Achmet Zek upon the trail of the Belgian, returned empty handed. With the report of each the

raider's rage and chagrin increased, until he was in such a transport of ferocious anger that none dared approach him. Threatening and cursing, Achmet Zek paced up and down the floor of his silken tent; but his temper served him naught—Werper was gone and with him the fortune in scintillating gems which had aroused the cupidity of his chief and placed the sentence of death upon the head of the lieutenant.

With the escape of the Arabs the great apes had turned their attention to their fallen comrades. One was dead, but another and the great white ape still breathed. The hairy monsters gathered about these two, grumbling and muttering after the fashion of their kind.

Tarzan was the first to regain consciousness. Sitting up, he looked about him. Blood was flowing from a wound in his shoulder. The shock had thrown him down and dazed him; but he was far from dead. Rising slowly to his feet he let his eyes wander toward the spot where last he had seen the she, who had aroused within his savage breast such strange emotions.

"Where is she?" he asked.

"The Tarmangani took her away," replied one of the apes. "Who are you who speak the language of the Mangani?"

"I am Tarzan," replied the ape-man; "mighty hunter, greatest of fighters. When I roar, the jungle is silent and

trembles with terror. I am Tarzan of the Apes. I have been away; but now I have come back to my people."

"Yes," spoke up an old ape, "he is Tarzan. I know him. It is well that he has come back. Now we shall have good hunting."

The other apes came closer and sniffed at the ape-man. Tarzan stood very still, his fangs half bared, and his muscles tense and ready for action; but there was none there to question his right to be with them, and presently, the inspection satisfactorily concluded, the apes again returned their attention to the other survivor.

He too was but slightly wounded, a bullet, grazing his skull, having stunned

him, so that when he regained consciousness he was apparently as fit as ever.

The apes told Tarzan that they had been traveling toward the east when the scent spoor of the she had attracted them and they had stalked her. Now they wished to continue upon their interrupted march; but Tarzan preferred to follow the Arabs and take the woman from them. After a considerable argument it was decided that they should first hunt toward the east for a few days and then return and search for the Arabs, and as time is of little moment to the ape folk, Tarzan acceded to their demands, he, himself, having reverted to a mental state but little superior to their own.

Another circumstance which decided him to postpone pursuit of the Arabs was the painfulness of his wound. It would be better to wait until that had healed before he pitted himself again against the guns of the Tarmangani.

And so, as Jane Clayton was pushed into her prison hut and her hands and feet securely bound, her natural protector roamed off toward the east in company with a score of hairy monsters, with whom he rubbed shoulders as familiarly as a few months before he had mingled with his immaculate fellow-members of one of London's most select and exclusive clubs.

But all the time there lurked in the back of his injured brain a troublesome

conviction that he had no business where he was—that he should be, for some unaccountable reason, elsewhere and among another sort of creature. Also, there was the compelling urge to be upon the scent of the Arabs, undertaking the rescue of the woman who had appealed so strongly to his savage sentiments; though the thought- word which naturally occurred to him in the contemplation of the venture, was "capture," rather than "rescue."

To him she was as any other jungle she, and he had set his heart upon her as his mate. For an instant, as he had approached closer to her in the clearing where the Arabs had seized her, the subtle aroma which had first aroused his

desires in the hut that had imprisoned her had fallen upon his nostrils, and told him that he had found the creature for whom he had developed so sudden and inexplicable a passion.

The matter of the pouch of jewels also occupied his thoughts to some extent, so that he found a double urge for his return to the camp of the raiders. He would obtain possession of both his pretty pebbles and the she. Then he would return to the great apes with his new mate and his baubles, and leading his hairy companions into a far wilderness beyond the ken of man, live out his life, hunting and battling among the lower orders after the only manner which he now recollected.

He spoke to his fellow-apes upon the matter, in an attempt to persuade them to accompany him; but all except Taglat and Chulk refused. The latter was young and strong, endowed with a greater intelligence than his fellows, and therefore the possessor of better developed powers of imagination. To him the expedition savored of adventure, and so appealed, strongly. With Taglat there was another incentive—a secret and sinister incentive, which, had Tarzan of the Apes had knowledge of it, would have sent him at the other's throat in jealous rage.

Taglat was no longer young; but he was still a formidable beast, mightily muscled, cruel, and, because of his

greater experience, crafty and cunning. Too, he was of giant proportions, the very weight of his huge bulk serving ofttimes to discount in his favor the superior agility of a younger antagonist.

He was of a morose and sullen disposition that marked him even among his frowning fellows, where such characteristics are the rule rather than the exception, and, though Tarzan did not guess it, he hated the ape-man with a ferocity that he was able to hide only because the dominant spirit of the nobler creature had inspired within him a species of dread which was as powerful as it was inexplicable to him.

These two, then, were to be Tarzan's companions upon his return to the

village of Achmet Zek. As they set off, the balance of the tribe vouchsafed them but a parting stare, and then resumed the serious business of feeding.

Tarzan found difficulty in keeping the minds of his fellows set upon the purpose of their adventure, for the mind of an ape lacks the power of long-sustained concentration. To set out upon a long journey, with a definite destination in view, is one thing, to remember that purpose and keep it uppermost in one's mind continually is quite another. There are so many things to distract one's attention along the way.

Chulk was, at first, for rushing rapidly ahead as though the village of the raiders lay but an hour's march before them

instead of several days; but within a few minutes a fallen tree attracted his attention with its suggestion of rich and succulent forage beneath, and when Tarzan, missing him, returned in search, he found Chulk squatting beside the rotting bole, from beneath which he was assiduously engaged in digging out the grubs and beetles, whose kind form a considerable proportion of the diet of the apes.

Unless Tarzan desired to fight there was nothing to do but wait until Chulk had exhausted the storehouse, and this he did, only to discover that Taglat was now missing. After a considerable search, he found that worthy gentleman contemplating the sufferings of an

injured rodent he had pounced upon. He would sit in apparent indifference, gazing in another direction, while the crippled creature, wriggled slowly and painfully away from him, and then, just as his victim felt assured of escape, he would reach out a giant palm and slam it down upon the fugitive. Again and again he repeated this operation, until, tiring of the sport, he ended the sufferings of his plaything by devouring it.

Such were the exasperating causes of delay which retarded Tarzan's return journey toward the village of Achmet Zek; but the ape- man was patient, for in his mind was a plan which necessitated the presence of Chulk and Taglat when he should have arrived at his destination.

It was not always an easy thing to maintain in the vacillating minds of the anthropoids a sustained interest in their venture. Chulk was wearying of the continued marching and the infrequency and short duration of the rests. He would gladly have abandoned this search for adventure had not Tarzan continually filled his mind with alluring pictures of the great stores of food which were to be found in the village of Tarmangani.

Taglat nursed his secret purpose to better advantage than might have been expected of an ape, yet there were times when he, too, would have abandoned the adventure had not Tarzan cajoled him on.

It was mid-afternoon of a sultry,

tropical day when the keen senses of the three warned them of the proximity of the Arab camp. Stealthily they approached, keeping to the dense tangle of growing things which made concealment easy to their uncanny jungle craft.

First came the giant ape-man, his smooth, brown skin glistening with the sweat of exertion in the close, hot confines of the jungle. Behind him crept Chulk and Taglat, grotesque and shaggy caricatures of their godlike leader.

Silently they made their way to the edge of the clearing which surrounded the palisade, and here they clambered into the lower branches of a large tree overlooking the village occupied by the

enemy, the better to spy upon his goings and comings.

A horseman, white burnoosed, rode out through the gateway of the village. Tarzan, whispering to Chulk and Taglat to remain where they were, swung, monkey-like, through the trees in the direction of the trail the Arab was riding. From one jungle giant to the next he sped with the rapidity of a squirrel and the silence of a ghost.

The Arab rode slowly onward, unconscious of the danger hovering in the trees behind him. The ape-man made a slight detour and increased his speed until he had reached a point upon the trail in advance of the horseman. Here he halted upon a leafy bough which

overhung the narrow, jungle trail. On came the victim, humming a wild air of the great desert land of the north. Above him poised the savage brute that was today bent upon the destruction of a human life—the same creature who a few months before, had occupied his seat in the House of Lords at London, a respected and distinguished member of that august body.

The Arab passed beneath the overhanging bough, there was a slight rustling of the leaves above, the horse snorted and plunged as a brown-skinned creature dropped upon its rump. A pair of mighty arms encircled the Arab and he was dragged from his saddle to the trail.

Ten minutes later the ape-man, carrying the outer garments of an Arab bundled beneath an arm, rejoined his companions. He exhibited his trophies to them, explaining in low gutturals the details of his exploit. Chulk and Taglat fingered the fabrics, smelled of them, and, placing them to their ears, tried to listen to them.

Then Tarzan led them back through the jungle to the trail, where the three hid themselves and waited. Nor had they long to wait before two of Achmet Zek's blacks, clothed in habiliments similar to their master's, came down the trail on foot, returning to the camp.

One moment they were laughing and talking together—the next they lay

stretched in death upon the trail, three mighty engines of destruction bending over them. Tarzan removed their outer garments as he had removed those of his first victim, and again retired with Chulk and Taglat to the greater seclusion of the tree they had first selected.

Here the ape-man arranged the garments upon his shaggy fellows and himself, until, at a distance, it might have appeared that three white-robed Arabs squatted silently among the branches of the forest.

Until dark they remained where they were, for from his point of vantage, Tarzan could view the enclosure within the palisade. He marked the position of the hut in which he had first discovered

the scent spoor of the she he sought. He saw the two sentries standing before its doorway, and he located the habitation of Achmet Zek, where something told him he would most likely find the missing pouch and pebbles.

Chulk and Taglat were, at first, greatly interested in their wonderful raiment. They fingered the fabric, smelled of it, and regarded each other intently with every mark of satisfaction and pride. Chulk, a humorist in his way, stretched forth a long and hairy arm, and grasping the hood of Taglat's burnoose pulled it down over the latter's eyes, extinguishing him, snuffer-like, as it were.

The older ape, pessimistic by nature,

recognized no such thing as humor. Creatures laid their paws upon him for but two things—to search for fleas and to attack. The pulling of the Tarmangani-scented thing about his head and eyes could not be for the performance of the former act; therefore it must be the latter. He was attacked! Chulk had attacked him.

With a snarl he was at the other's throat, not even waiting to lift the woolen veil which obscured his vision. Tarzan leaped upon the two, and swaying and toppling upon their insecure perch the three great beasts tussled and snapped at one another until the ape-man finally succeeded in separating the enraged anthropoids.

An apology is unknown to these savage progenitors of man, and explanation a laborious and usually futile process, Tarzan bridged the dangerous gulf by distracting their attention from their altercation to a consideration of their plans for the immediate future. Accustomed to frequent arguments in which more hair than blood is wasted, the apes speedily forget such trivial encounters, and presently Chulk and Taglat were again squatting in close proximity to each other and peaceful repose, awaiting the moment when the ape-man should lead them into the village of the Tarmangani.

It was long after darkness had fallen, that Tarzan led his companions from

their hiding place in the tree to the ground and around the palisade to the far side of the village.

Gathering the skirts of his burnoose, beneath one arm, that his legs might have free action, the ape-man took a short running start, and scrambled to the top of the barrier. Fearing lest the apes should rend their garments to shreds in a similar attempt, he had directed them to wait below for him, and himself securely perched upon the summit of the palisade he unslung his spear and lowered one end of it to Chulk.

The ape seized it, and while Tarzan held tightly to the upper end, the anthropoid climbed quickly up the shaft until with one paw he grasped the top of

the wall. To scramble then to Tarzan's side was the work of but an instant. In like manner Taglat was conducted to their sides, and a moment later the three dropped silently within the enclosure.

Tarzan led them first to the rear of the hut in which Jane Clayton was confined, where, through the roughly repaired aperture in the wall, he sought with his sensitive nostrils for proof that the she he had come for was within.

Chulk and Taglat, their hairy faces pressed close to that of the patrician, sniffed with him. Each caught the scent spoor of the woman within, and each reacted according to his temperament and his habits of thought.

It left Chulk indifferent. The she was

for Tarzan—all that he desired was to bury his snout in the foodstuffs of the Tarmangani. He had come to eat his fill without labor—Tarzan had told him that that should be his reward, and he was satisfied.

But Taglat's wicked, bloodshot eyes, narrowed to the realization of the nearing fulfillment of his carefully nursed plan. It is true that sometimes during the several days that had elapsed since they had set out upon their expedition it had been difficult for Taglat to hold his idea uppermost in his mind, and on several occasions he had completely forgotten it, until Tarzan, by a chance word, had recalled it to him, but, for an ape, Taglat had done well.

Now, he licked his chops, and he made a sickening, sucking noise with his flabby lips as he drew in his breath.

Satisfied that the she was where he had hoped to find her, Tarzan led his apes toward the tent of Achmet Zek. A passing Arab and two slaves saw them, but the night was dark and the white burnooses hid the hairy limbs of the apes and the giant figure of their leader, so that the three, by squatting down as though in conversation, were passed by, unsuspected. To the rear of the tent they made their way. Within, Achmet Zek conversed with several of his lieutenants. Without, Tarzan listened.

17. THE DEADLY PERIL OF JANE CLAYTON

Lieutenant Albert Werper, terrified by contemplation of the fate which might await him at Adis Abeba, cast about for some scheme of escape, but after the black Mugambi had eluded their vigilance the Abyssinians redoubled their precautions to prevent Werper following the lead of the Negro.

For some time Werper entertained the idea of bribing Abdul Mourak with a portion of the contents of the pouch; but fearing that the man would demand all the gems as the price of liberty, the Belgian, influenced by avarice, sought another avenue from his dilemma.

It was then that there dawned upon

him the possibility of the success of a different course which would still leave him in possession of the jewels, while at the same time satisfying the greed of the Abyssinian with the conviction that he had obtained all that Werper had to offer.

And so it was that a day or so after Mugambi had disappeared, Werper asked for an audience with Abdul Mourak. As the Belgian entered the presence of his captor the scowl upon the features of the latter boded ill for any hope which Werper might entertain, still he fortified himself by recalling the common weakness of mankind, which permits the most inflexible of natures to bend to the consuming desire for wealth.

Abdul Mourak eyed him, frowningly. "What do you want now?" he asked.

"My liberty," replied Werper.

The Abyssinian sneered. "And you disturbed me thus to tell me what any fool might know," he said.

"I can pay for it," said Werper.

Abdul Mourak laughed loudly. "Pay for it?" he cried. "What with— the rags that you have upon your back? Or, perhaps you are concealing beneath your coat a thousand pounds of ivory. Get out! You are a fool. Do not bother me again or I shall have you whipped."

But Werper persisted. His liberty and perhaps his life depended upon his success.

"Listen to me," he pleaded. "If I can give you as much gold as ten men may carry will you promise that I shall be conducted in safety to the nearest English commissioner?"

"As much gold as ten men may carry!" repeated Abdul Mourak. "You are crazy. Where have you so much gold as that?"

"I know where it is hid," said Werper. "Promise, and I will lead you to it —if ten loads is enough?"

Abdul Mourak had ceased to laugh. He was eyeing the Belgian intently. The fellow seemed sane enough—yet ten loads of gold! It was preposterous. The Abyssinian thought in silence for a moment.

"Well, and if I promise," he said.

"How far is this gold?"

"A long week's march to the south," replied Werper.

"And if we do not find it where you say it is, do you realize what your punishment will be?"

"If it is not there I will forfeit my life," replied the Belgian. "I know it is there, for I saw it buried with my own eyes. And more—there are not only ten loads, but as many as fifty men may carry. It is all yours if you will promise to see me safely delivered into the protection of the English."

"You will stake your life against the finding of the gold?" asked Abdul.

Werper assented with a nod.

"Very well," said the Abyssinian, "I promise, and even if there be but five loads you shall have your freedom; but until the gold is in my possession you remain a prisoner."

"I am satisfied," said Werper. "Tomorrow we start?"

Abdul Mourak nodded, and the Belgian returned to his guards. The following day the Abyssinian soldiers were surprised to receive an order which turned their faces from the northeast to the south. And so it happened that upon the very night that Tarzan and the two apes entered the village of the raiders, the Abyssinians camped but a few miles to the east of the same spot.

While Werper dreamed of freedom and the unmolested enjoyment of the fortune in his stolen pouch, and Abdul Mourak lay awake in greedy contemplation of the fifty loads of gold which lay but a few days farther to the south of him, Achmet Zek gave orders to his lieutenants that they should prepare a force of fighting men and carriers to proceed to the ruins of the Englishman's DOUAR on the morrow and bring back the fabulous fortune which his renegade lieutenant had told him was buried there.

And as he delivered his instructions to those within, a silent listener crouched without his tent, waiting for the time when he might enter in safety and prosecute his search for the missing

pouch and the pretty pebbles that had caught his fancy.

At last the swarthy companions of Achmet Zek quitted his tent, and the leader went with them to smoke a pipe with one of their number, leaving his own silken habitation unguarded. Scarcely had they left the interior when a knife blade was thrust through the fabric of the rear wall, some six feet above the ground, and a swift downward stroke opened an entrance to those who waited beyond.

Through the opening stepped the ape-man, and close behind him came the huge Chulk; but Taglat did not follow them. Instead he turned and slunk through the darkness toward the hut where the

she who had arrested his brutish interest lay securely bound. Before the doorway the sentries sat upon their haunches, conversing in monotones. Within, the young woman lay upon a filthy sleeping mat, resigned, through utter hopelessness to whatever fate lay in store for her until the opportunity arrived which would permit her to free herself by the only means which now seemed even remotely possible —the hitherto detested act of self-destruction.

Creeping silently toward the sentries, a white-burnoosed figure approached the shadows at one end of the hut. The meager intellect of the creature denied it the advantage it might have taken of its disguise. Where it could have walked

boldly to the very sides of the sentries, it chose rather to sneak upon them, unseen, from the rear.

It came to the corner of the hut and peered around. The sentries were but a few paces away; but the ape did not dare expose himself, even for an instant, to those feared and hated thunder- sticks which the Tarmangani knew so well how to use, if there were another and safer method of attack.

Taglat wished that there was a tree nearby from the over- hanging branches of which he might spring upon his unsuspecting prey; but, though there was no tree, the idea gave birth to a plan. The eaves of the hut were just above the heads of the sentries—from them he

could leap upon the Tarmangani, unseen. A quick snap of those mighty jaws would dispose of one of them before the other realized that they were attacked, and the second would fall an easy prey to the strength, agility and ferocity of a second quick charge.

Taglat withdrew a few paces to the rear of the hut, gathered himself for the effort, ran quickly forward and leaped high into the air. He struck the roof directly above the rear wall of the hut, and the structure, reinforced by the wall beneath, held his enormous weight for an instant, then he moved forward a step, the roof sagged, the thatching parted and the great anthropoid shot through into the interior.

The sentries, hearing the crashing of the roof poles, leaped to their feet and rushed into the hut. Jane Clayton tried to roll aside as the great form lit upon the floor so close to her that one foot pinned her clothing to the ground.

The ape, feeling the movement beside him, reached down and gathered the girl in the hollow of one mighty arm. The burnoose covered the hairy body so that Jane Clayton believed that a human arm supported her, and from the extremity of hopelessness a great hope sprang into her breast that at last she was in the keeping of a rescuer.

The two sentries were now within the hut, but hesitating because of doubt as to the nature of the cause of the

disturbance. Their eyes, not yet accustomed to the darkness of the interior, told them nothing, nor did they hear any sound, for the ape stood silently awaiting their attack.

Seeing that they stood without advancing, and realizing that, handicapped as he was by the weight of the she, he could put up but a poor battle, Taglat elected to risk a sudden break for liberty. Lowering his head, he charged straight for the two sentries who blocked the doorway. The impact of his mighty shoulders bowled them over upon their backs, and before they could scramble to their feet, the ape was gone, darting in the shadows of the huts toward the palisade at the far end of the village.

The speed and strength of her rescuer filled Jane Clayton with wonder. Could it be that Tarzan had survived the bullet of the Arab? Who else in all the jungle could bear the weight of a grown woman as lightly as he who held her? She spoke his name; but there was no response. Still she did not give up hope.

At the palisade the beast did not even hesitate. A single mighty leap carried it to the top, where it poised but for an instant before dropping to the ground upon the opposite side. Now the girl was almost positive that she was safe in the arms of her husband, and when the ape took to the trees and bore her swiftly into the jungle, as Tarzan had done at other times in the past, belief became

conviction.

In a little moonlit glade, a mile or so from the camp of the raiders, her rescuer halted and dropped her to the ground. His roughness surprised her, but still she had no doubts. Again she called him by name, and at the same instant the ape, fretting under the restraints of the unaccustomed garments of the Tarmangani, tore the burnoose from him, revealing to the eyes of the horror-struck woman the hideous face and hairy form of a giant anthropoid.

With a piteous wail of terror, Jane Clayton swooned, while, from the concealment of a nearby bush, Numa, the lion, eyed the pair hungrily and licked his chops.

Tarzan, entering the tent of Achmet Zek, searched the interior thoroughly. He tore the bed to pieces and scattered the contents of box and bag about the floor. He investigated whatever his eyes discovered, nor did those keen organs overlook a single article within the habitation of the raider chief; but no pouch or pretty pebbles rewarded his thoroughness.

Satisfied at last that his belongings were not in the possession of Achmet Zek, unless they were on the person of the chief himself, Tarzan decided to secure the person of the she before further prosecuting his search for the pouch.

Motioning for Chulk to follow him, he

passed out of the tent by the same way that he had entered it, and walking boldly through the village, made directly for the hut where Jane Clayton had been imprisoned.

He noted with surprise the absence of Taglat, whom he had expected to find awaiting him outside the tent of Achmet Zek; but, accustomed as he was to the unreliability of apes, he gave no serious attention to the present defection of his surly companion. So long as Taglat did not cause interference with his plans, Tarzan was indifferent to his absence.

As he approached the hut, the ape-man noticed that a crowd had collected about the entrance. He could see that the men who composed it were much

excited, and fearing lest Chulk's disguise should prove inadequate to the concealment of his true identity in the face of so many observers, he commanded the ape to betake himself to the far end of the village, and there await him.

As Chulk waddled off, keeping to the shadows, Tarzan advanced boldly toward the excited group before the doorway of the hut. He mingled with the blacks and the Arabs in an endeavor to learn the cause of the commotion, in his interest forgetting that he alone of the assemblage carried a spear, a bow and arrows, and thus might become an object of suspicious attention.

Shouldering his way through the

crowd he approached the doorway, and had almost reached it when one of the Arabs laid a hand upon his shoulder, crying: "Who is this?" at the same time snatching back the hood from the ape-man's face.

Tarzan of the Apes in all his savage life had never been accustomed to pause in argument with an antagonist. The primitive instinct of self-preservation acknowledges many arts and wiles; but argument is not one of them, nor did he now waste precious time in an attempt to convince the raiders that he was not a wolf in sheep's clothing. Instead he had his unmasker by the throat ere the man's words had scarce quitted his lips, and hurling him from side to side brushed

away those who would have swarmed upon him.

Using the Arab as a weapon, Tarzan forced his way quickly to the doorway, and a moment later was within the hut. A hasty examination revealed the fact that it was empty, and his sense of smell discovered, too, the scent spoor of Taglat, the ape. Tarzan uttered a low, ominous growl. Those who were pressing forward at the doorway to seize him, fell back as the savage notes of the bestial challenge smote upon their ears. They looked at one another in surprise and consternation. A man had entered the hut alone, and yet with their own ears they had heard the voice of a wild beast within. What could it mean? Had a lion

or a leopard sought sanctuary in the interior, unbeknown to the sentries?

Tarzan's quick eyes discovered the opening in the roof, through which Taglat had fallen. He guessed that the ape had either come or gone by way of the break, and while the Arabs hesitated without, he sprang, catlike, for the opening, grasped the top of the wall and clambered out upon the roof, dropping instantly to the ground at the rear of the hut.

When the Arabs finally mustered courage to enter the hut, after firing several volleys through the walls, they found the interior deserted. At the same time Tarzan, at the far end of the village, sought for Chulk; but the ape was

nowhere to be found.

Robbed of his she, deserted by his companions, and as much in ignorance as ever as to the whereabouts of his pouch and pebbles, it was an angry Tarzan who climbed the palisade and vanished into the darkness of the jungle.

For the present he must give up the search for his pouch, since it would be paramount to self-destruction to enter the Arab camp now while all its inhabitants were aroused and upon the alert.

In his escape from the village, the ape-man had lost the spoor of the fleeing Taglat, and now he circled widely through the forest in an endeavor to again pick it up.

Chulk had remained at his post until

the cries and shots of the Arabs had filled his simple soul with terror, for above all things the ape folk fear the thunder-sticks of the Tarmangani; then he had clambered nimbly over the palisade, tearing his burnoose in the effort, and fled into the depths of the jungle, grumbling and scolding as he went.

Tarzan, roaming the jungle in search of the trail of Taglat and the she, traveled swiftly. In a little moonlit glade ahead of him the great ape was bending over the prostrate form of the woman Tarzan sought. The beast was tearing at the bonds that confined her ankles and wrists, pulling and gnawing upon the cords.

The course the ape-man was taking

would carry him but a short distance to the right of them, and though he could not have seen them the wind was bearing down from them to him, carrying their scent spoor strongly toward him.

A moment more and Jane Clayton's safety might have been assured, even though Numa, the lion, was already gathering himself in preparation for a charge; but Fate, already all too cruel, now outdid herself—the wind veered suddenly for a few moments, the scent spoor that would have led the ape-man to the girl's side was wafted in the opposite direction; Tarzan passed within fifty yards of the tragedy that was being enacted in the glade, and the opportunity was gone beyond recall.

18. THE FIGHT FOR THE TREASURE

It was morning before Tarzan could bring himself to a realization of the possibility of failure of his quest, and even then he would only admit that success was but delayed. He would eat and sleep, and then set forth again. The jungle was wide; but wide too were the experience and cunning of Tarzan. Taglat might travel far; but Tarzan would find him in the end, though he had to search every tree in the mighty forest.

Soliloquizing thus, the ape-man followed the spoor of Bara, the deer, the unfortunate upon which he had decided to satisfy his hunger. For half an hour the trail led the ape-man toward the east

along a well-marked game path, when suddenly, to the stalker's astonishment, the quarry broke into sight, racing madly back along the narrow way straight toward the hunter.

Tarzan, who had been following along the trail, leaped so quickly to the concealing verdure at the side that the deer was still unaware of the presence of an enemy in this direction, and while the animal was still some distance away, the ape-man swung into the lower branches of the tree which overhung the trail. There he crouched, a savage beast of prey, awaiting the coming of its victim.

What had frightened the deer into so frantic a retreat, Tarzan did not know—

Numa, the lion, perhaps, or Sheeta, the panther; but whatsoever it was mattered little to Tarzan of the Apes—he was ready and willing to defend his kill against any other denizen of the jungle. If he were unable to do it by means of physical prowess, he had at his command another and a greater power—his shrewd intelligence.

And so, on came the running deer, straight into the jaws of death. The ape-man turned so that his back was toward the approaching animal. He poised with bent knees upon the gently swaying limb above the trail, timing with keen ears the nearing hoof beats of frightened Bara.

In a moment the victim flashed beneath the limb and at the same instant

the ape-man above sprang out and down upon its back. The weight of the man's body carried the deer to the ground. It stumbled forward once in a futile effort to rise, and then mighty muscles dragged its head far back, gave the neck a vicious wrench, and Bara was dead.

Quick had been the killing, and equally quick were the ape- man's subsequent actions, for who might know what manner of killer pursued Bara, or how close at hand he might be? Scarce had the neck of the victim snapped than the carcass was hanging over one of Tarzan's broad shoulders, and an instant later the ape-man was perched once more among the lower branches of a tree above the trail, his keen, gray eyes

scanning the pathway down which the deer had fled.

Nor was it long before the cause of Bara's fright became evident to Tarzan, for presently came the unmistakable sounds of approaching horsemen. Dragging his kill after him the ape-man ascended to the middle terrace, and settling himself comfortably in the crotch of a tree where he could still view the trail beneath, cut a juicy steak from the deer's loin, and burying his strong, white teeth in the hot flesh proceeded to enjoy the fruits of his prowess and his cunning.

Nor did he neglect the trail beneath while he satisfied his hunger. His sharp eyes saw the muzzle of the leading horse as it came into view around a bend in the

tortuous trail, and one by one they scrutinized the riders as they passed beneath him in single file.

Among them came one whom Tarzan recognized, but so schooled was the ape-man in the control of his emotions that no slightest change of expression, much less any hysterical demonstration that might have revealed his presence, betrayed the fact of his inward excitement.

Beneath him, as unconscious of his presence as were the Abyssinians before and behind him, rode Albert Werper, while the ape- man scrutinized the Belgian for some sign of the pouch which he had stolen.

As the Abyssinians rode toward the

south, a giant figure hovered ever upon their trail—a huge, almost naked white man, who carried the bloody carcass of a deer upon his shoulders, for Tarzan knew that he might not have another opportunity to hunt for some time if he were to follow the Belgian.

To endeavor to snatch him from the midst of the armed horsemen, not even Tarzan would attempt other than in the last extremity, for the way of the wild is the way of caution and cunning, unless they be aroused to rashness by pain or anger.

So the Abyssinians and the Belgian marched southward and Tarzan of the Apes swung silently after them through the swaying branches of the middle

terrace.

A two days' march brought them to a level plain beyond which lay mountains—a plain which Tarzan remembered and which aroused within him vague half memories and strange longings. Out upon the plain the horsemen rode, and at a safe distance behind them crept the ape-man, taking advantage of such cover as the ground afforded.

Beside a charred pile of timbers the Abyssinians halted, and Tarzan, sneaking close and concealing himself in nearby shrubbery, watched them in wonderment. He saw them digging up the earth, and he wondered if they had hidden meat there in the past and now had come for it. Then he recalled how he

had buried his pretty pebbles, and the suggestion that had caused him to do it. They were digging for the things the blacks had buried here!

Presently he saw them uncover a dirty, yellow object, and he witnessed the joy of Werper and of Abdul Mourak as the grimy object was exposed to view. One by one they unearthed many similar pieces, all of the same uniform, dirty yellow, until a pile of them lay upon the ground, a pile which Abdul Mourak fondled and petted in an ecstasy of greed.

Something stirred in the ape-man's mind as he looked long upon the golden ingots. Where had he seen such before? What were they? Why did these

Tarmangani covet them so greatly? To whom did they belong?

He recalled the black men who had buried them. The things must be theirs. Werper was stealing them as he had stolen Tarzan's pouch of pebbles. The ape-man's eyes blazed in anger. He would like to find the black men and lead them against these thieves. He wondered where their village might be.

As all these things ran through the active mind, a party of men moved out of the forest at the edge of the plain and advanced toward the ruins of the burned bungalow.

Abdul Mourak, always watchful, was the first to see them, but already they were halfway across the open. He called

to his men to mount and hold themselves in readiness, for in the heart of Africa who may know whether a strange host be friend or foe?

Werper, swinging into his saddle, fastened his eyes upon the newcomers, then, white and trembling he turned toward Abdul Mourak.

"It is Achmet Zek and his raiders," he whispered. "They are come for the gold."

It must have been at about the same instant that Achmet Zek discovered the pile of yellow ingots and realized the actuality of what he had already feared since first his eyes had alighted upon the party beside the ruins of the Englishman's bungalow. Someone had

forestalled him—another had come for the treasure ahead of him.

The Arab was crazed by rage. Recently everything had gone against him. He had lost the jewels, the Belgian, and for the second time he had lost the Englishwoman. Now some one had come to rob him of this treasure which he had thought as safe from disturbance here as though it never had been mined.

He cared not whom the thieves might be. They would not give up the gold without a battle, of that he was certain, and with a wild whoop and a command to his followers, Achmet Zek put spurs to his horse and dashed down upon the Abyssinians, and after him, waving their long guns above their heads, yelling and

cursing, came his motley horde of cut-throat followers.

The men of Abdul Mourak met them with a volley which emptied a few saddles, and then the raiders were among them, and sword, pistol and musket, each was doing its most hideous and bloody work.

Achmet Zek, spying Werper at the first charge, bore down upon the Belgian, and the latter, terrified by contemplation of the fate he deserved, turned his horse's head and dashed madly away in an effort to escape. Shouting to a lieutenant to take command, and urging him upon pain of death to dispatch the Abyssinians and bring the gold back to his camp, Achmet

Zek set off across the plain in pursuit of the Belgian, his wicked nature unable to forego the pleasures of revenge, even at the risk of sacrificing the treasure.

As the pursued and the pursuer raced madly toward the distant forest the battle behind them raged with bloody savageness. No quarter was asked or given by either the ferocious Abyssinians or the murderous cut-throats of Achmet Zek.

From the concealment of the shrubbery Tarzan watched the sanguinary conflict which so effectually surrounded him that he found no loop-hole through which he might escape to follow Werper and the Arab chief.

The Abyssinians were formed in a

circle which included Tarzan's position, and around and into them galloped the yelling raiders, now darting away, now charging in to deliver thrusts and cuts with their curved swords.

Numerically the men of Achmet Zek were superior, and slowly but surely the soldiers of Menelek were being exterminated. To Tarzan the result was immaterial. He watched with but a single purpose—to escape the ring of blood-mad fighters and be away after the Belgian and his pouch.

When he had first discovered Werper upon the trail where he had slain Bara, he had thought that his eyes must be playing him false, so certain had he been that the thief had been slain and

devoured by Numa; but after following the detachment for two days, with his keen eyes always upon the Belgian, he no longer doubted the identity of the man, though he was put to it to explain the identity of the mutilated corpse he had supposed was the man he sought.

As he crouched in hiding among the unkempt shrubbery which so short a while since had been the delight and pride of the wife he no longer recalled, an Arab and an Abyssinian wheeled their mounts close to his position as they slashed at each other with their swords.

Step by step the Arab beat back his adversary until the latter's horse all but trod upon the ape-man, and then a vicious cut clove the black warrior's

skull, and the corpse toppled backward almost upon Tarzan.

As the Abyssinian tumbled from his saddle the possibility of escape which was represented by the riderless horse electrified the ape-man to instant action. Before the frightened beast could gather himself for flight a naked giant was astride his back. A strong hand had grasped his bridle rein, and the surprised Arab discovered a new foe in the saddle of him, whom he had slain.

But this enemy wielded no sword, and his spear and bow remained upon his back. The Arab, recovered from his first surprise, dashed in with raised sword to annihilate this presumptuous stranger. He aimed a mighty blow at the

ape-man's head, a blow which swung harmlessly through thin air as Tarzan ducked from its path, and then the Arab felt the other's horse brushing his leg, a great arm shot out and encircled his waist, and before he could recover himself he was dragged from his saddle, and forming a shield for his antagonist was borne at a mad run straight through the encircling ranks of his fellows.

Just beyond them he was tossed aside upon the ground, and the last he saw of his strange foeman the latter was galloping off across the plain in the direction of the forest at its farther edge.

For another hour the battle raged nor did it cease until the last of the Abyssinians lay dead upon the ground,

or had galloped off toward the north in flight. But a handful of men escaped, among them Abdul Mourak.

The victorious raiders collected about the pile of golden ingots which the Abyssinians had uncovered, and there awaited the return of their leader. Their exultation was slightly tempered by the glimpse they had had of the strange apparition of the naked white man galloping away upon the horse of one of their foemen and carrying a companion who was now among them expatiating upon the superhuman strength of the ape-man. None of them there but was familiar with the name and fame of Tarzan of the Apes, and the fact that they had recognized the white giant as the

ferocious enemy of the wrongdoers of the jungle, added to their terror, for they had been assured that Tarzan was dead.

Naturally superstitious, they fully believed that they had seen the disembodied spirit of the dead man, and now they cast fearful glances about them in expectation of the ghost's early return to the scene of the ruin they had inflicted upon him during their recent raid upon his home, and discussed in affrighted whispers the probable nature of the vengeance which the spirit would inflict upon them should he return to find them in possession of his gold.

As they conversed their terror grew, while from the concealment of the reeds along the river below them a small party

of naked, black warriors watched their every move. From the heights beyond the river these black men had heard the noise of the conflict, and creeping warily down to the stream had forded it and advanced through the reeds until they were in a position to watch every move of the combatants.

For a half hour the raiders awaited Achmet Zek's return, their fear of the earlier return of the ghost of Tarzan constantly undermining their loyalty to and fear of their chief. Finally one among them voiced the desires of all when he announced that he intended riding forth toward the forest in search of Achmet Zek. Instantly every man of them sprang to his mount.

"The gold will be safe here," cried one. "We have killed the Abyssinians and there are no others to carry it away. Let us ride in search of Achmet Zek!"

And a moment later, amidst a cloud of dust, the raiders were galloping madly across the plain, and out from the concealment of the reeds along the river, crept a party of black warriors toward the spot where the golden ingots of Opar lay piled on the ground.

Werper had still been in advance of Achmet Zek when he reached the forest; but the latter, better mounted, was gaining upon him. Riding with the reckless courage of desperation the Belgian urged his mount to greater speed even within the narrow confines of the

winding, game trail that the beast was following.

Behind him he could hear the voice of Achmet Zek crying to him to halt; but Werper only dug the spurs deeper into the bleeding sides of his panting mount. Two hundred yards within the forest a broken branch lay across the trail. It was a small thing that a horse might ordinarily take in his natural stride without noticing its presence; but Werper's horse was jaded, his feet were heavy with weariness, and as the branch caught between his front legs he stumbled, was unable to recover himself, and went down, sprawling in the trail.

Werper, going over his head, rolled a

few yards farther on, scrambled to his feet and ran back. Seizing the reins he tugged to drag the beast to his feet; but the animal would not or could not rise, and as the Belgian cursed and struck at him, Achmet Zek appeared in view.

Instantly the Belgian ceased his efforts with the dying animal at his feet, and seizing his rifle, dropped behind the horse and fired at the oncoming Arab.

His bullet, going low, struck Achmet Zek's horse in the breast, bringing him down a hundred yards from where Werper lay preparing to fire a second shot.

The Arab, who had gone down with his mount, was standing astride him, and seeing the Belgian's strategic position

behind his fallen horse, lost no time in taking up a similar one behind his own.

And there the two lay, alternately firing at and cursing each other, while from behind the Arab, Tarzan of the Apes approached to the edge of the forest. Here he heard the occasional shots of the duelists, and choosing the safer and swifter avenue of the forest branches to the uncertain transportation afforded by a half-broken Abyssinian pony, took to the trees.

Keeping to one side of the trail, the ape-man came presently to a point where he could look down in comparative safety upon the fighters. First one and then the other would partially raise himself above his breastwork of

horseflesh, fire his weapon and immediately drop flat behind his shelter, where he would reload and repeat the act a moment later.

Werper had but little ammunition, having been hastily armed by Abdul Mourak from the body of one of the first of the Abyssinians who had fallen in the fight about the pile of ingots, and now he realized that soon he would have used his last bullet, and be at the mercy of the Arab—a mercy with which he was well acquainted.

Facing both death and despoilment of his treasure, the Belgian cast about for some plan of escape, and the only one that appealed to him as containing even a remote possibility of success hinged

upon the chance of bribing Achmet Zek.

Werper had fired all but a single cartridge, when, during a lull in the fighting, he called aloud to his opponent.

"Achmet Zek," he cried, "Allah alone knows which one of us may leave our bones to rot where he lies upon this trail today if we keep up our foolish battle. You wish the contents of the pouch I wear about my waist, and I wish my life and my liberty even more than I do the jewels. Let us each, then, take that which he most desires and go our separate ways in peace. I will lay the pouch upon the carcass of my horse, where you may see it, and you, in turn, will lay your gun upon your horse, with butt toward me. Then I will go away, leaving the pouch

to you, and you will let me go in safety. I want only my life, and my freedom."

The Arab thought in silence for a moment. Then he spoke. His reply was influenced by the fact that he had expended his last shot.

"Go your way, then," he growled, "leaving the pouch in plain sight behind you. See, I lay my gun thus, with the butt toward you. Go."

Werper removed the pouch from about his waist. Sorrowfully and affectionately he let his fingers press the hard outlines of the contents. Ah, if he could extract a little handful of the precious stones! But Achmet Zek was standing now, his eagle eyes commanding a plain view of the Belgian

and his every act.

Regretfully Werper laid the pouch, its contents undisturbed, upon the body of his horse, rose, and taking his rifle with him, backed slowly down the trail until a turn hid him from the view of the watchful Arab.

Even then Achmet Zek did not advance, fearful as he was of some such treachery as he himself might have been guilty of under like circumstances; nor were his suspicions groundless, for the Belgian, no sooner had he passed out of the range of the Arab's vision, halted behind the bole of a tree, where he still commanded an unobstructed view of his dead horse and the pouch, and raising his rifle covered the spot where the

other's body must appear when he came forward to seize the treasure.

But Achmet Zek was no fool to expose himself to the blackened honor of a thief and a murderer. Taking his long gun with him, he left the trail, entering the rank and tangled vegetation which walled it, and crawling slowly forward on hands and knees he paralleled the trail; but never for an instant was his body exposed to the rifle of the hidden assassin.

Thus Achmet Zek advanced until he had come opposite the dead horse of his enemy. The pouch lay there in full view, while a short distance along the trail, Werper waited in growing impatience and nervousness, wondering why the

Arab did not come to claim his reward.

Presently he saw the muzzle of a rifle appear suddenly and mysteriously a few inches above the pouch, and before he could realize the cunning trick that the Arab had played upon him the sight of the weapon was adroitly hooked into the rawhide thong which formed the carrying strap of the pouch, and the latter was drawn quickly from his view into the dense foliage at the trail's side.

Not for an instant had the raider exposed a square inch of his body, and Werper dared not fire his one remaining shot unless every chance of a successful hit was in his favor.

Chuckling to himself, Achmet Zek withdrew a few paces farther into the

jungle, for he was as positive that Werper was waiting nearby for a chance to pot him as though his eyes had penetrated the jungle trees to the figure of the hiding Belgian, fingering his rifle behind the bole of the buttressed giant.

Werper did not dare advance—his cupidity would not permit him to depart, and so he stood there, his rifle ready in his hands, his eyes watching the trail before him with catlike intensity.

But there was another who had seen the pouch and recognized it, who did advance with Achmet Zek, hovering above him, as silent and as sure as death itself, and as the Arab, finding a little spot less overgrown with bushes than he had yet encountered, prepared to gloat

his eyes upon the contents of the pouch, Tarzan paused directly above him, intent upon the same object.

Wetting his thin lips with his tongue, Achmet Zek loosened the tie strings which closed the mouth of the pouch, and cupping one claw- like hand poured forth a portion of the contents into his palm.

A single look he took at the stones lying in his hand. His eyes narrowed, a curse broke from his lips, and he hurled the small objects upon the ground, disdainfully. Quickly he emptied the balance of the contents until he had scanned each separate stone, and as he dumped them all upon the ground and stamped upon them his rage grew until

the muscles of his face worked in demon-like fury, and his fingers clenched until his nails bit into the flesh.

Above, Tarzan watched in wonderment. He had been curious to discover what all the pow-wow about his pouch had meant. He wanted to see what the Arab would do after the other had gone away, leaving the pouch behind him, and, having satisfied his curiosity, he would then have pounced upon Achmet Zek and taken the pouch and his pretty pebbles away from him, for did they not belong to Tarzan?

He saw the Arab now throw aside the empty pouch, and grasping his long gun by the barrel, clublike, sneak stealthily through the jungle beside the trail along

which Werper had gone.

As the man disappeared from his view, Tarzan dropped to the ground and commenced gathering up the spilled contents of the pouch, and the moment that he obtained his first near view of the scattered pebbles he understood the rage of the Arab, for instead of the glittering and scintillating gems which had first caught and held the attention of the ape-man, the pouch now contained but a collection of ordinary river pebbles.

19. JANE CLAYTON AND THE BEASTS OF THE JUNGLE

Mugambi, after his successful break for liberty, had fallen upon hard times. His way had led him through a country with which he was unfamiliar, a jungle country in which he could find no water, and but little food, so that after several days of wandering he found himself so reduced in strength that he could barely drag himself along.

It was with growing difficulty that he found the strength necessary to construct a shelter by night wherein he might be reasonably safe from the large carnivora, and by day he still further exhausted his strength in digging for edible roots, and searching for water.

A few stagnant pools at considerable distances apart saved him from death by thirst; but his was a pitiable state when finally he stumbled by accident upon a large river in a country where fruit was abundant, and small game which he might bag by means of a combination of stealth, cunning, and a crude knob- stick which he had fashioned from a fallen limb.

Realizing that he still had a long march ahead of him before he could reach even the outskirts of the Waziri country, Mugambi wisely decided to remain where he was until he had recuperated his strength and health. A few days' rest would accomplish wonders for him, he knew, and he could

ill afford to sacrifice his chances for a safe return by setting forth handicapped by weakness.

And so it was that he constructed a substantial thorn boma, and rigged a thatched shelter within it, where he might sleep by night in security, and from which he sallied forth by day to hunt the flesh which alone could return to his giant thews their normal prowess.

One day, as he hunted, a pair of savage eyes discovered him from the concealment of the branches of a great tree beneath which the black warrior passed. Bloodshot, wicked eyes they were, set in a fierce and hairy face.

They watched Mugambi make his little kill of a small rodent, and they

followed him as he returned to his hut, their owner moving quietly through the trees upon the trail of the Negro.

The creature was Chulk, and he looked down upon the unconscious man more in curiosity than in hate. The wearing of the Arab burnoose which Tarzan had placed upon his person had aroused in the mind of the anthropoid a desire for similar mimicry of the Tarmangani. The burnoose, though, had obstructed his movements and proven such a nuisance that the ape had long since torn it from him and thrown it away.

Now, however, he saw a Gomangani arrayed in less cumbersome apparel —a loin cloth, a few copper ornaments and a

feather headdress. These were more in line with Chulk's desires than a flowing robe which was constantly getting between one's legs, and catching upon every limb and bush along the leafy trail.

Chulk eyed the pouch, which, suspended over Mugambi's shoulder, swung beside his black hip. This took his fancy, for it was ornamented with feathers and a fringe, and so the ape hung about Mugambi's boma, waiting an opportunity to seize either by stealth or might some object of the black's apparel.

Nor was it long before the opportunity came. Feeling safe within his thorny enclosure, Mugambi was wont to stretch himself in the shade of his shelter during the heat of the day, and

sleep in peaceful security until the declining sun carried with it the enervating temperature of midday.

Watching from above, Chulk saw the black warrior stretched thus in the unconsciousness of sleep one sultry afternoon. Creeping out upon an overhanging branch the anthropoid dropped to the ground within the boma. He approached the sleeper upon padded feet which gave forth no sound, and with an uncanny woodcraft that rustled not a leaf or a grass blade.

Pausing beside the man, the ape bent over and examined his belongings. Great as was the strength of Chulk there lay in the back of his little brain a something which deterred him from arousing the

man to combat—a sense that is inherent in all the lower orders, a strange fear of man, that rules even the most powerful of the jungle creatures at times.

To remove Mugambi's loin cloth without awakening him would be impossible, and the only detachable things were the knob-stick and the pouch, which had fallen from the black's shoulder as he rolled in sleep.

Seizing these two articles, as better than nothing at all, Chulk retreated with haste, and every indication of nervous terror, to the safety of the tree from which he had dropped, and, still haunted by that indefinable terror which the close proximity of man awakened in his breast, fled precipitately through the

jungle. Aroused by attack, or supported by the presence of another of his kind, Chulk could have braved the presence of a score of human beings, but alone—ah, that was a different matter—alone, and unenraged.

It was some time after Mugambi awoke that he missed the pouch. Instantly he was all excitement. What could have become of it? It had been at his side when he lay down to sleep—of that he was certain, for had he not pushed it from beneath him when its bulging bulk, pressing against his ribs, caused him discomfort? Yes, it had been there when he lay down to sleep. How then had it vanished?

Mugambi's savage imagination was

filled with visions of the spirits of departed friends and enemies, for only to the machinations of such as these could he attribute the disappearance of his pouch and knob-stick in the first excitement of the discovery of their loss; but later and more careful investigation, such as his woodcraft made possible, revealed indisputable evidence of a more material explanation than his excited fancy and superstition had at first led him to accept.

In the trampled turf beside him was the faint impress of huge, manlike feet. Mugambi raised his brows as the truth dawned upon him. Hastily leaving the boma he searched in all directions about the enclosure for some farther sign of the

tell-tale spoor. He climbed trees and sought for evidence of the direction of the thief's flight; but the faint signs left by a wary ape who elects to travel through the trees eluded the woodcraft of Mugambi. Tarzan might have followed them; but no ordinary mortal could perceive them, or perceiving, translate.

The black, now strengthened and refreshed by his rest, felt ready to set out again for Waziri, and finding himself another knob- stick, turned his back upon the river and plunged into the mazes of the jungle.

As Taglat struggled with the bonds which secured the ankles and wrists of his captive, the great lion that eyed the two from behind a nearby clump of

bushes wormed closer to his intended prey.

The ape's back was toward the lion. He did not see the broad head, fringed by its rough mane, protruding through the leafy wall. He could not know that the powerful hind paws were gathering close beneath the tawny belly preparatory to a sudden spring, and his first intimation of impending danger was the thunderous and triumphant roar which the charging lion could no longer suppress.

Scarce pausing for a backward glance, Taglat abandoned the unconscious woman and fled in the opposite direction from the horrid sound which had broken in so unexpected and

terrifying a manner upon his startled ears; but the warning had come too late to save him, and the lion, in his second bound, alighted full upon the broad shoulders of the anthropoid.

As the great bull went down there was awakened in him to the full all the cunning, all the ferocity, all the physical prowess which obey the mightiest of the fundamental laws of nature, the law of self-preservation, and turning upon his back he closed with the carnivore in a death struggle so fearless and abandoned, that for a moment the great Numa himself may have trembled for the outcome.

Seizing the lion by the mane, Taglat buried his yellowed fangs deep in the

monster's throat, growling hideously through the muffled gag of blood and hair. Mixed with the ape's voice the lion's roars of rage and pain reverberated through the jungle, till the lesser creatures of the wild, startled from their peaceful pursuits, scurried fearfully away.

Rolling over and over upon the turf the two battled with demoniac fury, until the colossal cat, by doubling his hind paws far up beneath his belly sank his talons deep into Taglat's chest, then, ripping downward with all his strength, Numa accomplished his design, and the disemboweled anthropoid, with a last spasmodic struggle, relaxed in limp and bloody dissolution beneath his titanic

adversary.

Scrambling to his feet, Numa looked about quickly in all directions, as though seeking to detect the possible presence of other foes; but only the still and unconscious form of the girl, lying a few paces from him met his gaze, and with an angry growl he placed a forepaw upon the body of his kill and raising his head gave voice to his savage victory cry.

For another moment he stood with fierce eyes roving to and fro about the clearing. At last they halted for a second time upon the girl. A low growl rumbled from the lion's throat. His lower jaw rose and fell, and the slaver drooled and dripped upon the dead face of Taglat.

Like two yellow-green augurs, wide

and unblinking, the terrible eyes remained fixed upon Jane Clayton. The erect and majestic pose of the great frame shrank suddenly into a sinister crouch as, slowly and gently as one who treads on eggs, the devil-faced cat crept forward toward the girl.

Beneficent Fate maintained her in happy unconsciousness of the dread presence sneaking stealthily upon her. She did not know when the lion paused at her side. She did not hear the sniffing of his nostrils as he smelled about her. She did not feel the heat of the fetid breath upon her face, nor the dripping of the saliva from the frightful jaws half opened so close above her.

Finally the lion lifted a forepaw and

turned the body of the girl half over, then he stood again eyeing her as though still undetermined whether life was extinct or not. Some noise or odor from the nearby jungle attracted his attention for a moment. His eyes did not again return to Jane Clayton, and presently he left her, walked over to the remains of Taglat, and crouching down upon his kill with his back toward the girl, proceeded to devour the ape.

It was upon this scene that Jane Clayton at last opened her eyes. Inured to danger, she maintained her self-possession in the face of the startling surprise which her new-found consciousness revealed to her. She neither cried out nor moved a muscle,

until she had taken in every detail of the scene which lay within the range of her vision.

She saw that the lion had killed the ape, and that he was devouring his prey less than fifty feet from where she lay; but what could she do? Her hands and feet were bound. She must wait then, in what patience she could command, until Numa had eaten and digested the ape, when, without doubt, he would return to feast upon her, unless, in the meantime, the dread hyenas should discover her, or some other of the numerous prowling carnivora of the jungle.

As she lay tormented by these frightful thoughts, she suddenly became conscious that the bonds at her wrists

and ankles no longer hurt her, and then of the fact that her hands were separated, one lying upon either side of her, instead of both being confined at her back.

Wonderingly she moved a hand. What miracle had been performed? It was not bound! Stealthily and noiselessly she moved her other limbs, only to discover that she was free. She could not know how the thing had happened, that Taglat, gnawing upon them for sinister purposes of his own, had cut them through but an instant before Numa had frightened him from his victim.

For a moment Jane Clayton was overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving; but only for a moment. What good was her new-found liberty in the face of the

frightful beast crouching so close beside her? If she could have had this chance under different conditions, how happily she would have taken advantage of it; but now it was given to her when escape was practically impossible.

The nearest tree was a hundred feet away, the lion less than fifty. To rise and attempt to reach the safety of those tantalizing branches would be but to invite instant destruction, for Numa would doubtless be too jealous of this future meal to permit it to escape with ease. And yet, too, there was another possibility—a chance which hinged entirely upon the unknown temper of the great beast.

His belly already partially filled, he

might watch with indifference the departure of the girl; yet could she afford to chance so improbable a contingency? She doubted it. Upon the other hand she was no more minded to allow this frail opportunity for life to entirely elude her without taking or attempting to take some advantage from it.

She watched the lion narrowly. He could not see her without turning his head more than halfway around. She would attempt a ruse. Silently she rolled over in the direction of the nearest tree, and away from the lion, until she lay again in the same position in which Numa had left her, but a few feet farther from him.

Here she lay breathless watching the

lion; but the beast gave no indication that he had heard aught to arouse his suspicions. Again she rolled over, gaining a few more feet and again she lay in rigid contemplation of the beast's back.

During what seemed hours to her tense nerves, Jane Clayton continued these tactics, and still the lion fed on in apparent unconsciousness that his second prey was escaping him. Already the girl was but a few paces from the tree—a moment more and she would be close enough to chance springing to her feet, throwing caution aside and making a sudden, bold dash for safety. She was halfway over in her turn, her face away from the lion, when he suddenly turned

his great head and fastened his eyes upon her. He saw her roll over upon her side away from him, and then her eyes were turned again toward him, and the cold sweat broke from the girl's every pore as she realized that with life almost within her grasp, death had found her out.

For a long time neither the girl nor the lion moved. The beast lay motionless, his head turned upon his shoulders and his glaring eyes fixed upon the rigid victim, now nearly fifty yards away. The girl stared back straight into those cruel orbs, daring not to move even a muscle.

The strain upon her nerves was becoming so unbearable that she could scarcely restrain a growing desire to scream, when Numa deliberately turned

back to the business of feeding; but his back- laid ears attested a sinister regard for the actions of the girl behind him.

Realizing that she could not again turn without attracting his immediate and perhaps fatal attention, Jane Clayton resolved to risk all in one last attempt to reach the tree and clamber to the lower branches.

Gathering herself stealthily for the effort, she leaped suddenly to her feet, but almost simultaneously the lion sprang up, wheeled and with wide-distended jaws and terrific roars, charged swiftly down upon her.

Those who have spent lifetimes hunting the big game of Africa will tell you that scarcely any other creature in

the world attains the speed of a charging lion. For the short distance that the great cat can maintain it, it resembles nothing more closely than the onrushing of a giant locomotive under full speed, and so, though the distance that Jane Clayton must cover was relatively small, the terrific speed of the lion rendered her hopes of escape almost negligible.

Yet fear can work wonders, and though the upward spring of the lion as he neared the tree into which she was scrambling brought his talons in contact with her boots she eluded his raking grasp, and as he hurtled against the bole of her sanctuary, the girl drew herself into the safety of the branches above his reach.

For some time the lion paced, growling and moaning, beneath the tree in which Jane Clayton crouched, panting and trembling. The girl was a prey to the nervous reaction from the frightful ordeal through which she had so recently passed, and in her overwrought state it seemed that never again should she dare descend to the ground among the fearsome dangers which infested the broad stretch of jungle that she knew must lie between herself and the nearest village of her faithful Waziri.

It was almost dark before the lion finally quit the clearing, and even had his place beside the remnants of the mangled ape not been immediately usurped by a pack of hyenas, Jane

Clayton would scarcely have dared venture from her refuge in the face of impending night, and so she composed herself as best she could for the long and tiresome wait, until daylight might offer some means of escape from the dread vicinity in which she had witnessed such terrifying adventures.

Tired nature at last overcame even her fears, and she dropped into a deep slumber, cradled in a comparatively safe, though rather uncomfortable, position against the bole of the tree, and supported by two large branches which grew outward, almost horizontally, but a few inches apart.

The sun was high in the heavens when she at last awoke, and beneath her was

no sign either of Numa or the hyenas. Only the clean- picked bones of the ape, scattered about the ground, attested the fact of what had transpired in this seemingly peaceful spot but a few hours before.

Both hunger and thirst assailed her now, and realizing that she must descend or die of starvation, she at last summoned courage to undertake the ordeal of continuing her journey through the jungle.

Descending from the tree, she set out in a southerly direction, toward the point where she believed the plains of Waziri lay, and though she knew that only ruin and desolation marked the spot where once her happy home had stood, she

hoped that by coming to the broad plain she might eventually reach one of the numerous Waziri villages that were scattered over the surrounding country, or chance upon a roving band of these indefatigable huntsmen.

The day was half spent when there broke unexpectedly upon her startled ears the sound of a rifle shot not far ahead of her. As she paused to listen, this first shot was followed by another and another and another. What could it mean? The first explanation which sprung to her mind attributed the firing to an encounter between the Arab raiders and a party of Waziri; but as she did not know upon which side victory might rest, or whether she were behind friend

or foe, she dared not advance nearer on the chance of revealing herself to an enemy.

After listening for several minutes she became convinced that no more than two or three rifles were engaged in the fight, since nothing approximating the sound of a volley reached her ears; but still she hesitated to approach, and at last, determining to take no chance, she climbed into the concealing foliage of a tree beside the trail she had been following and there fearfully awaited whatever might reveal itself.

As the firing became less rapid she caught the sound of men's voices, though she could distinguish no words, and at last the reports of the guns ceased, and

she heard two men calling to each other in loud tones. Then there was a long silence which was finally broken by the stealthy padding of footfalls on the trail ahead of her, and in another moment a man appeared in view backing toward her, a rifle ready in his hands, and his eyes directed in careful watchfulness along the way that he had come.

Almost instantly Jane Clayton recognized the man as M. Jules Frecoult, who so recently had been a guest in her home. She was upon the point of calling to him in glad relief when she saw him leap quickly to one side and hide himself in the thick verdure at the trail's side. It was evident that he was being followed by an enemy, and so Jane Clayton kept

silent, lest she distract Frecoult's attention, or guide his foe to his hiding place.

Scarcely had Frecoult hidden himself than the figure of a white- robed Arab crept silently along the trail in pursuit. From her hiding place, Jane Clayton could see both men plainly. She recognized Achmet Zek as the leader of the band of ruffians who had raided her home and made her a prisoner, and as she saw Frecoult, the supposed friend and ally, raise his gun and take careful aim at the Arab, her heart stood still and every power of her soul was directed upon a fervent prayer for the accuracy of his aim.

Achmet Zek paused in the middle of

the trail. His keen eyes scanned every bush and tree within the radius of his vision. His tall figure presented a perfect target to the perfidious assassin. There was a sharp report, and a little puff of smoke arose from the bush that hid the Belgian, as Achmet Zek stumbled forward and pitched, face down, upon the trail.

As Werper stepped back into the trail, he was startled by the sound of a glad cry from above him, and as he wheeled about to discover the author of this unexpected interruption, he saw Jane Clayton drop lightly from a nearby tree and run forward with outstretched hands to congratulate him upon his victory.

20. JANE CLAYTON AGAIN A PRISONER

Though her clothes were torn and her hair disheveled, Albert Werper realized that he never before had looked upon such a vision of loveliness as that which Lady Greystoke presented in the relief and joy which she felt in coming so unexpectedly upon a friend and rescuer when hope had seemed so far away.

If the Belgian had entertained any doubts as to the woman's knowledge of his part in the perfidious attack upon her home and herself, it was quickly dissipated by the genuine friendliness of her greeting. She told him quickly of all that had befallen her since he had departed from her home, and as she

spoke of the death of her husband her eyes were veiled by the tears which she could not repress.

"I am shocked," said Werper, in well-simulated sympathy; "but I am not surprised. That devil there," and he pointed toward the body of Achmet Zek, "has terrorized the entire country. Your Waziri are either exterminated, or have been driven out of their country, far to the south. The men of Achmet Zek occupy the plain about your former home—there is neither sanctuary nor escape in that direction. Our only hope lies in traveling northward as rapidly as we may, of coming to the camp of the raiders before the knowledge of Achmet Zek's death reaches those who were left

there, and of obtaining, through some ruse, an escort toward the north.

"I think that the thing can be accomplished, for I was a guest of the raider's before I knew the nature of the man, and those at the camp are not aware that I turned against him when I discovered his villainy.

"Come! We will make all possible haste to reach the camp before those who accompanied Achmet Zek upon his last raid have found his body and carried the news of his death to the cut-throats who remained behind. It is our only hope, Lady Greystoke, and you must place your entire faith in me if I am to succeed. Wait for me here a moment while I take from the Arab's body the

wallet that he stole from me," and Werper stepped quickly to the dead man's side, and, kneeling, sought with quick fingers the pouch of jewels. To his consternation, there was no sign of them in the garments of Achmet Zek. Rising, he walked back along the trail, searching for some trace of the missing pouch or its contents; but he found nothing, even though he searched carefully the vicinity of his dead horse, and for a few paces into the jungle on either side. Puzzled, disappointed and angry, he at last returned to the girl. "The wallet is gone," he explained, crisply, "and I dare not delay longer in search of it. We must reach the camp before the returning raiders."

Unsuspicious of the man's true character, Jane Clayton saw nothing peculiar in his plans, or in his specious explanation of his former friendship for the raider, and so she grasped with alacrity the seeming hope for safety which he proffered her, and turning about she set out with Albert Werper toward the hostile camp in which she so lately had been a prisoner.

It was late in the afternoon of the second day before they reached their destination, and as they paused upon the edge of the clearing before the gates of the walled village, Werper cautioned the girl to accede to whatever he might suggest by his conversation with the raiders.

"I shall tell them," he said, "that I apprehended you after you escaped from the camp, that I took you to Achmet Zek, and that as he was engaged in a stubborn battle with the Waziri, he directed me to return to camp with you, to obtain here a sufficient guard, and to ride north with you as rapidly as possible and dispose of you at the most advantageous terms to a certain slave broker whose name he gave me."

Again the girl was deceived by the apparent frankness of the Belgian. She realized that desperate situations required desperate handling, and though she trembled inwardly at the thought of again entering the vile and hideous village of the raiders she saw no better

course than that which her companion had suggested.

Calling aloud to those who tended the gates, Werper, grasping Jane Clayton by the arm, walked boldly across the clearing. Those who opened the gates to him permitted their surprise to show clearly in their expressions. That the discredited and hunted lieutenant should be thus returning fearlessly of his own volition, seemed to disarm them quite as effectually as his manner toward Lady Greystoke had deceived her.

The sentries at the gate returned Werper's salutations, and viewed with astonishment the prisoner whom he brought into the village with him.

Immediately the Belgian sought the

Arab who had been left in charge of the camp during Achmet Zek's absence, and again his boldness disarmed suspicion and won the acceptance of his false explanation of his return. The fact that he had brought back with him the woman prisoner who had escaped, added strength to his claims, and Mohammed Beyd soon found himself fraternizing good-naturedly with the very man whom he would have slain without compunction had he discovered him alone in the jungle a half hour before.

Jane Clayton was again confined to the prison hut she had formerly occupied, but as she realized that this was but a part of the deception which she and Frecoult were playing upon the

credulous raiders, it was with quite a different sensation that she again entered the vile and filthy interior, from that which she had previously experienced, when hope was so far away.

Once more she was bound and sentries placed before the door of her prison; but before Werper left her he whispered words of cheer into her ear. Then he left, and made his way back to the tent of Mohammed Beyd. He had been wondering how long it would be before the raiders who had ridden out with Achmet Zek would return with the murdered body of their chief, and the more he thought upon the matter the greater his fears became, that without accomplices his plan would fail.

What, even, if he got away from the camp in safety before any returned with the true story of his guilt—of what value would this advantage be other than to protract for a few days his mental torture and his life? These hard riders, familiar with every trail and bypath, would get him long before he could hope to reach the coast.

As these thoughts passed through his mind he entered the tent where Mohammed Beyd sat cross-legged upon a rug, smoking. The Arab looked up as the European came into his presence.

"Greetings, O Brother!" he said.

"Greetings!" replied Werper.

For a while neither spoke further. The Arab was the first to break the silence.

"And my master, Achmet Zek, was well when last you saw him?" he asked.

"Never was he safer from the sins and dangers of mortality," replied the Belgian.

"It is well," said Mohammed Beyd, blowing a little puff of blue smoke straight out before him.

Again there was silence for several minutes.

"And if he were dead?" asked the Belgian, determined to lead up to the truth, and attempt to bribe Mohammed Beyd into his service.

The Arab's eyes narrowed and he leaned forward, his gaze boring straight into the eyes of the Belgian.

"I have been thinking much, Werper, since you returned so unexpectedly to the camp of the man whom you had deceived, and who sought you with death in his heart. I have been with Achmet Zek for many years—his own mother never knew him so well as I. He never forgives—much less would he again trust a man who had once betrayed him; that I know.

"I have thought much, as I said, and the result of my thinking has assured me that Achmet Zek is dead—for otherwise you would never have dared return to his camp, unless you be either a braver man or a bigger fool than I have imagined. And, if this evidence of my judgment is not sufficient, I have but just now

received from your own lips even more confirmatory witness —for did you not say that Achmet Zek was never more safe from the sins and dangers of mortality?

"Achmet Zek is dead—you need not deny it. I was not his mother, or his mistress, so do not fear that my wailings shall disturb you. Tell me why you have come back here. Tell me what you want, and, Werper, if you still possess the jewels of which Achmet Zek told me, there is no reason why you and I should not ride north together and divide the ransom of the white woman and the contents of the pouch you wear about your person. Eh?"

The evil eyes narrowed, a vicious,

thin-lipped smile tortured the villainous face, as Mohammed Beyd grinned knowingly into the face of the Belgian.

Werper was both relieved and disturbed by the Arab's attitude. The complacency with which he accepted the death of his chief lifted a considerable burden of apprehension from the shoulders of Achmet Zek's assassin; but his demand for a share of the jewels boded ill for Werper when Mohammed Beyd should have learned that the precious stones were no longer in the Belgian's possession.

To acknowledge that he had lost the jewels might be to arouse the wrath or suspicion of the Arab to such an extent as would jeopardize his new-found

chances of escape. His one hope seemed, then, to lie in fostering Mohammed Beyd's belief that the jewels were still in his possession, and depend upon the accidents of the future to open an avenue of escape.

Could he contrive to tent with the Arab upon the march north, he might find opportunity in plenty to remove this menace to his life and liberty —it was worth trying, and, further, there seemed no other way out of his difficulty.

"Yes," he said, "Achmet Zek is dead. He fell in battle with a company of Abyssinian cavalry that held me captive. During the fighting I escaped; but I doubt if any of Achmet Zek's men live, and the gold they sought is in the possession of

the Abyssinians. Even now they are doubtless marching on this camp, for they were sent by Menelek to punish Achmet Zek and his followers for a raid upon an Abyssinian village. There are many of them, and if we do not make haste to escape we shall all suffer the same fate as Achmet Zek."

Mohammed Beyd listened in silence. How much of the unbeliever's story he might safely believe he did not know; but as it afforded him an excuse for deserting the village and making for the north he was not inclined to cross-question the Belgian too minutely.

"And if I ride north with you," he asked, "half the jewels and half the ransom of the woman shall be mine?"

"Yes," replied Werper.

"Good," said Mohammed Beyd. "I go now to give the order for the breaking of camp early on the morrow," and he rose to leave the tent.

Werper laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"Wait," he said, "let us determine how many shall accompany us. It is not well that we be burdened by the women and children, for then indeed we might be overtaken by the Abyssinians. It would be far better to select a small guard of your bravest men, and leave word behind that we are riding WEST. Then, when the Abyssinians come they will be put upon the wrong trail should they have it in their hearts to pursue us,

and if they do not they will at least ride north with less rapidity than as though they thought that we were ahead of them."

"The serpent is less wise than thou, Werper," said Mohammed Beyd with a smile. "It shall be done as you say. Twenty men shall accompany us, and we shall ride WEST—when we leave the village."

"Good," cried the Belgian, and so it was arranged.

Early the next morning Jane Clayton, after an almost sleepless night, was aroused by the sound of voices outside her prison, and a moment later, M. Frecoult, and two Arabs entered. The latter unbound her ankles and lifted her

to her feet. Then her wrists were loosed, she was given a handful of dry bread, and led out into the faint light of dawn.

She looked questioningly at Frecoult, and at a moment that the Arab's attention was attracted in another direction the man leaned toward her and whispered that all was working out as he had planned. Thus assured, the young woman felt a renewal of the hope which the long and miserable night of bondage had almost expunged.

Shortly after, she was lifted to the back of a horse, and surrounded by Arabs, was escorted through the gateway of the village and off into the jungle toward the west. Half an hour later the party turned north, and northerly was

their direction for the balance of the march.

M. Frecoult spoke with her but seldom, and she understood that in carrying out his deception he must maintain the semblance of her captor, rather than protector, and so she suspected nothing though she saw the friendly relations which seemed to exist between the European and the Arab leader of the band.

If Werper succeeded in keeping himself from conversation with the young woman, he failed signally to expel her from his thoughts. A hundred times a day he found his eyes wandering in her direction and feasting themselves upon her charms of face and figure. Each hour

his infatuation for her grew, until his desire to possess her gained almost the proportions of madness.

If either the girl or Mohammed Beyd could have guessed what passed in the mind of the man which each thought a friend and ally, the apparent harmony of the little company would have been rudely disturbed.

Werper had not succeeded in arranging to tent with Mohammed Beyd, and so he revolved many plans for the assassination of the Arab that would have been greatly simplified had he been permitted to share the other's nightly shelter.

Upon the second day out Mohammed Beyd reined his horse to the side of the

animal on which the captive was mounted. It was, apparently, the first notice which the Arab had taken of the girl; but many times during these two days had his cunning eyes peered greedily from beneath the hood of his burnoose to gloat upon the beauties of the prisoner.

Nor was this hidden infatuation of any recent origin. He had conceived it when first the wife of the Englishman had fallen into the hands of Achmet Zek; but while that austere chieftain lived, Mohammed Beyd had not even dared hope for a realization of his imaginings.

Now, though, it was different—only a despised dog of a Christian stood between himself and possession of the

girl. How easy it would be to slay the unbeliever, and take unto himself both the woman and the jewels! With the latter in his possession, the ransom which might be obtained for the captive would form no great inducement to her relinquishment in the face of the pleasures of sole ownership of her. Yes, he would kill Werper, retain all the jewels and keep the Englishwoman.

He turned his eyes upon her as she rode along at his side. How beautiful she was! His fingers opened and closed—skinny, brown talons itching to feel the soft flesh of the victim in their remorseless clutch.

"Do you know," he asked leaning toward her, "where this man would take

you?"

Jane Clayton nodded affirmatively.

"And you are willing to become the plaything of a black sultan?"

The girl drew herself up to her full height, and turned her head away; but she did not reply. She feared lest her knowledge of the ruse that M. Frecoult was playing upon the Arab might cause her to betray herself through an insufficient display of terror and aversion.

"You can escape this fate," continued the Arab; "Mohammed Beyd will save you," and he reached out a brown hand and seized the fingers of her right hand in a grasp so sudden and so fierce that this brutal passion was revealed as

clearly in the act as though his lips had confessed it in words. Jane Clayton wrenched herself from his grasp.

"You beast!" she cried. "Leave me or I shall call M. Frecoult."

Mohammed Beyd drew back with a scowl. His thin, upper lip curled upward, revealing his smooth, white teeth.

"M. Frecoult?" he jeered. "There is no such person. The man's name is Werper. He is a liar, a thief, and a murderer. He killed his captain in the Congo country and fled to the protection of Achmet Zek. He led Achmet Zek to the plunder of your home. He followed your husband, and planned to steal his gold from him. He has told me that you

think him your protector, and he has played upon this to win your confidence that it might be easier to carry you north and sell you into some black sultan's harem. Mohammed Beyd is your only hope," and with this assertion to provide the captive with food for thought, the Arab spurred forward toward the head of the column.

Jane Clayton could not know how much of Mohammed Beyd's indictment might be true, or how much false; but at least it had the effect of dampening her hopes and causing her to review with suspicion every past act of the man upon whom she had been looking as her sole protector in the midst of a world of enemies and dangers.

On the march a separate tent had been provided for the captive, and at night it was pitched between those of Mohammed Beyd and Werper. A sentry was posted at the front and another at the back, and with these precautions it had not been thought necessary to confine the prisoner to bonds. The evening following her interview with Mohammed Beyd, Jane Clayton sat for some time at the opening of her tent watching the rough activities of the camp. She had eaten the meal that had been brought her by Mohammed Beyd's Negro slave —a meal of cassava cakes and a nondescript stew in which a new-killed monkey, a couple of squirrels and the remains of a zebra, slain the previous

day, were impartially and unsavorily combined; but the one- time Baltimore belle had long since submerged in the stern battle for existence, an aestheticism which formerly revolted at much slighter provocation.

As the girl's eyes wandered across the trampled jungle clearing, already squalid from the presence of man, she no longer apprehended either the nearer objects of the foreground, the uncouth men laughing or quarreling among themselves, or the jungle beyond, which circumscribed the extreme range of her material vision. Her gaze passed through all these, unseeing, to center itself upon a distant bungalow and scenes of happy security which brought to her eyes tears

of mingled joy and sorrow. She saw a tall, broad- shouldered man riding in from distant fields; she saw herself waiting to greet him with an armful of fresh-cut roses from the bushes which flanked the little rustic gate before her. All this was gone, vanished into the past, wiped out by the torches and bullets and hatred of these hideous and degenerate men. With a stifled sob, and a little shudder, Jane Clayton turned back into her tent and sought the pile of unclean blankets which were her bed. Throwing herself face downward upon them she sobbed forth her misery until kindly sleep brought her, at least temporary, relief.

And while she slept a figure stole

from the tent that stood to the right of hers. It approached the sentry before the doorway and whispered a few words in the man's ear. The latter nodded, and strode off through the darkness in the direction of his own blankets. The figure passed to the rear of Jane Clayton's tent and spoke again to the sentry there, and this man also left, following in the trail of the first.

Then he who had sent them away stole silently to the tent flap and untying the fastenings entered with the noiselessness of a disembodied spirit.

21. THE FLIGHT TO THE JUNGLE

Sleepless upon his blankets, Albert Werper let his evil mind dwell upon the charms of the woman in the nearby tent. He had noted Mohammed Beyd's sudden interest in the girl, and judging the man by his own standards, had guessed at the basis of the Arab's sudden change of attitude toward the prisoner.

And as he let his imaginings run riot they aroused within him a bestial jealousy of Mohammed Beyd, and a great fear that the other might encompass his base designs upon the defenseless girl. By a strange process of reasoning, Werper, whose designs were identical with the Arab's, pictured himself as Jane Clayton's protector, and presently

convinced himself that the attentions which might seem hideous to her if proffered by Mohammed Beyd, would be welcomed from Albert Werper.

Her husband was dead, and Werper fancied that he could replace in the girl's heart the position which had been vacated by the act of the grim reaper. He could offer Jane Clayton marriage—a thing which Mohammed Beyd would not offer, and which the girl would spurn from him with as deep disgust as she would his unholy lust.

It was not long before the Belgian had succeeded in convincing himself that the captive not only had every reason for having conceived sentiments of love for him; but that she had by various feminine

methods acknowledged her new- born affection.

And then a sudden resolution possessed him. He threw the blankets from him and rose to his feet. Pulling on his boots and buckling his cartridge belt and revolver about his hips he stepped to the flap of his tent and looked out. There was no sentry before the entrance to the prisoner's tent! What could it mean? Fate was indeed playing into his hands.

Stepping outside he passed to the rear of the girl's tent. There was no sentry there, either! And now, boldly, he walked to the entrance and stepped within.

Dimly the moonlight illumined the

interior. Across the tent a figure bent above the blankets of a bed. There was a whispered word, and another figure rose from the blankets to a sitting position. Slowly Albert Werper's eyes were becoming accustomed to the half darkness of the tent. He saw that the figure leaning over the bed was that of a man, and he guessed at the truth of the nocturnal visitor's identity.

A sullen, jealous rage enveloped him. He took a step in the direction of the two. He heard a frightened cry break from the girl's lips as she recognized the features of the man above her, and he saw Mohammed Beyd seize her by the throat and bear her back upon the blankets.

Cheated passion cast a red blur before the eyes of the Belgian. No! The man should not have her. She was for him and him alone. He would not be robbed of his rights.

Quickly he ran across the tent and threw himself upon the back of Mohammed Beyd. The latter, though surprised by this sudden and unexpected attack, was not one to give up without a battle. The Belgian's fingers were feeling for his throat, but the Arab tore them away, and rising wheeled upon his adversary. As they faced each other Werper struck the Arab a heavy blow in the face, sending him staggering backward. If he had followed up his advantage he would have had

Mohammed Beyd at his mercy in another moment; but instead he tugged at his revolver to draw it from its holster, and Fate ordained that at that particular moment the weapon should stick in its leather scabbard.

Before he could disengage it, Mohammed Beyd had recovered himself and was dashing upon him. Again Werper struck the other in the face, and the Arab returned the blow. Striking at each other and ceaselessly attempting to clinch, the two battled about the small interior of the tent, while the girl, wide-eyed in terror and astonishment, watched the duel in frozen silence.

Again and again Werper struggled to draw his weapon. Mohammed Beyd,

anticipating no such opposition to his base desires, had come to the tent unarmed, except for a long knife which he now drew as he stood panting during the first brief rest of the encounter.

"Dog of a Christian," he whispered, "look upon this knife in the hands of Mohammed Beyd! Look well, unbeliever, for it is the last thing in life that you shall see or feel. With it Mohammed Beyd will cut out your black heart. If you have a God pray to him now —in a minute more you shall be dead," and with that he rushed viciously upon the Belgian, his knife raised high above his head.

Werper was still dragging futilely at his weapon. The Arab was almost upon

him. In desperation the European waited until Mohammed Beyd was all but against him, then he threw himself to one side to the floor of the tent, leaving a leg extended in the path of the Arab.

The trick succeeded. Mohammed Beyd, carried on by the momentum of his charge, stumbled over the projecting obstacle and crashed to the ground. Instantly he was up again and wheeling to renew the battle; but Werper was on foot ahead of him, and now his revolver, loosened from its holster, flashed in his hand.

The Arab dove headfirst to grapple with him, there was a sharp report, a lurid gleam of flame in the darkness, and Mohammed Beyd rolled over and over

upon the floor to come to a final rest beside the bed of the woman he had sought to dishonor.

Almost immediately following the report came the sound of excited voices in the camp without. Men were calling back and forth to one another asking the meaning of the shot. Werper could hear them running hither and thither, investigating.

Jane Clayton had risen to her feet as the Arab died, and now she came forward with outstretched hands toward Werper.

"How can I ever thank you, my friend?" she asked. "And to think that only today I had almost believed the infamous story which this beast told me

of your perfidy and of your past. Forgive me, M. Frecoult. I might have known that a white man and a gentleman could be naught else than the protector of a woman of his own race amid the dangers of this savage land."

Werper's hands dropped limply at his sides. He stood looking at the girl; but he could find no words to reply to her. Her innocent arraignment of his true purposes was unanswerable.

Outside, the Arabs were searching for the author of the disturbing shot. The two sentries who had been relieved and sent to their blankets by Mohammed Beyd were the first to suggest going to the tent of the prisoner. It occurred to them that possibly the woman had successfully

defended herself against their leader.

Werper heard the men approaching. To be apprehended as the slayer of Mohammed Beyd would be equivalent to a sentence of immediate death. The fierce and brutal raiders would tear to pieces a Christian who had dared spill the blood of their leader. He must find some excuse to delay the finding of Mohammed Beyd's dead body.

Returning his revolver to its holster, he walked quickly to the entrance of the tent. Parting the flaps he stepped out and confronted the men, who were rapidly approaching. Somehow he found within him the necessary bravado to force a smile to his lips, as he held up his hand to bar their farther progress.

"The woman resisted," he said, "and Mohammed Beyd was forced to shoot her. She is not dead—only slightly wounded. You may go back to your blankets. Mohammed Beyd and I will look after the prisoner;" then he turned and re-entered the tent, and the raiders, satisfied by this explanation, gladly returned to their broken slumbers.

As he again faced Jane Clayton, Werper found himself animated by quite different intentions than those which had lured him from his blankets but a few minutes before. The excitement of his encounter with Mohammed Beyd, as well as the dangers which he now faced at the hands of the raiders when morning must inevitably reveal the truth of what

had occurred in the tent of the prisoner that night, had naturally cooled the hot passion which had dominated him when he entered the tent.

But another and stronger force was exerting itself in the girl's favor. However low a man may sink, honor and chivalry, has he ever possessed them, are never entirely eradicated from his character, and though Albert Werper had long since ceased to evidence the slightest claim to either the one or the other, the spontaneous acknowledgment of them which the girl's speech had presumed had reawakened them both within him.

For the first time he realized the almost hopeless and frightful position of

the fair captive, and the depths of ignominy to which he had sunk, that had made it possible for him, a well-born, European gentleman, to have entertained even for a moment the part that he had taken in the ruin of her home, happiness, and herself.

Too much of baseness already lay at the threshold of his conscience for him ever to hope entirely to redeem himself; but in the first, sudden burst of contrition the man conceived an honest intention to undo, in so far as lay within his power, the evil that his criminal avarice had brought upon this sweet and unoffending woman.

As he stood apparently listening to the retreating footsteps—Jane Clayton

approached him.

"What are we to do now?" she asked. "Morning will bring discovery of this," and she pointed to the still body of Mohammed Beyd. "They will kill you when they find him."

For a time Werper did not reply, then he turned suddenly toward the woman.

"I have a plan," he cried. "It will require nerve and courage on your part; but you have already shown that you possess both. Can you endure still more?"

"I can endure anything," she replied with a brave smile, "that may offer us even a slight chance for escape."

"You must simulate death," he explained, "while I carry you from the

camp. I will explain to the sentries that Mohammed Beyd has ordered me to take your body into the jungle. This seemingly unnecessary act I shall explain upon the grounds that Mohammed Beyd had conceived a violent passion for you and that he so regretted the act by which he had become your slayer that he could not endure the silent reproach of your lifeless body."

The girl held up her hand to stop. A smile touched her lips.

"Are you quite mad?" she asked. "Do you imagine that the sentries will credit any such ridiculous tale?"

"You do not know them," he replied. "Beneath their rough exteriors, despite

their calloused and criminal natures, there exists in each a well-defined strain of romantic emotionalism—you will find it among such as these throughout the world. It is romance which lures men to lead wild lives of outlawry and crime. The ruse will succeed—never fear."

Jane Clayton shrugged. "We can but try it—and then what?"

"I shall hide you in the jungle," continued the Belgian, "coming for you alone and with two horses in the morning."

"But how will you explain Mohammed Beyd's death?" she asked. "It will be discovered before ever you can escape the camp in the morning."

"I shall not explain it," replied

Werper. "Mohammed Beyd shall explain it himself—we must leave that to him. Are you ready for the venture?"

"Yes."

"But wait, I must get you a weapon and ammunition," and Werper walked quickly from the tent.

Very shortly he returned with an extra revolver and ammunition belt strapped about his waist.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Quite ready," replied the girl.

"Then come and throw yourself limply across my left shoulder," and Werper knelt to receive her.

"There," he said, as he rose to his feet. "Now, let your arms, your legs and

your head hang limply. Remember that you are dead."

A moment later the man walked out into the camp, the body of the woman across his shoulder.

A thorn boma had been thrown up about the camp, to discourage the bolder of the hungry carnivora. A couple of sentries paced to and fro in the light of a fire which they kept burning brightly. The nearer of these looked up in surprise as he saw Werper approaching.

"Who are you?" he cried. "What have you there?"

Werper raised the hood of his burnoose that the fellow might see his face.

"This is the body of the woman," he

explained. "Mohammed Beyd has asked me to take it into the jungle, for he cannot bear to look upon the face of her whom he loved, and whom necessity compelled him to slay. He suffers greatly - he is inconsolable. It was with difficulty that I prevented him taking his own life."

Across the speaker's shoulder, limp and frightened, the girl waited for the Arab's reply. He would laugh at this preposterous story; of that she was sure. In an instant he would unmask the deception that M. Frecoult was attempting to practice upon him, and they would both be lost. She tried to plan how best she might aid her would-be rescuer in the fight which must most

certainly follow within a moment or two.

Then she heard the voice of the Arab as he replied to M. Frecoult.

"Are you going alone, or do you wish me to awaken someone to accompany you?" he asked, and his tone denoted not the least surprise that Mohammed Beyd had suddenly discovered such remarkably sensitive characteristics.

"I shall go alone," replied Werper, and he passed on and out through the narrow opening in the boma, by which the sentry stood.

A moment later he had entered among the boles of the trees with his burden, and when safely hidden from the sentry's view lowered the girl to her feet, with a

low, "sh-sh," when she would have spoken.

Then he led her a little farther into the forest, halted beneath a large tree with spreading branches, buckled a cartridge belt and revolver about her waist, and assisted her to clamber into the lower branches.

"Tomorrow," he whispered, "as soon as I can elude them, I will return for you. Be brave, Lady Greystoke—we may yet escape."

"Thank you," she replied in a low tone. "You have been very kind, and very brave."

Werper did not reply, and the darkness of the night hid the scarlet flush of shame which swept upward across

his face. Quickly he turned and made his way back to camp. The sentry, from his post, saw him enter his own tent; but he did not see him crawl under the canvas at the rear and sneak cautiously to the tent which the prisoner had occupied, where now lay the dead body of Mohammed Beyd.

Raising the lower edge of the rear wall, Werper crept within and approached the corpse. Without an instant's hesitation he seized the dead wrists and dragged the body upon its back to the point where he had just entered. On hands and knees he backed out as he had come in, drawing the corpse after him. Once outside the Belgian crept to the side of the tent and

surveyed as much of the camp as lay within his vision—no one was watching.

Returning to the body, he lifted it to his shoulder, and risking all on a quick sally, ran swiftly across the narrow opening which separated the prisoner's tent from that of the dead man. Behind the silken wall he halted and lowered his burden to the ground, and there he remained motionless for several minutes, listening.

Satisfied, at last, that no one had seen him, he stooped and raised the bottom of the tent wall, backed in and dragged the thing that had been Mohammed Beyd after him. To the sleeping rugs of the dead raider he drew the corpse, then he fumbled about in the darkness until he

had found Mohammed Beyd's revolver. With the weapon in his hand he returned to the side of the dead man, kneeled beside the bedding, and inserted his right hand with the weapon beneath the rugs, piled a number of thicknesses of the closely woven fabric over and about the revolver with his left hand. Then he pulled the trigger, and at the same time he coughed.

The muffled report could not have been heard above the sound of his cough by one directly outside the tent. Werper was satisfied. A grim smile touched his lips as he withdrew the weapon from the rugs and placed it carefully in the right hand of the dead man, fixing three of the fingers around the grip and the index

finger inside the trigger guard.

A moment longer he tarried to rearrange the disordered rugs, and then he left as he had entered, fastening down the rear wall of the tent as it had been before he had raised it.

Going to the tent of the prisoner he removed there also the evidence that someone might have come or gone beneath the rear wall. Then he returned to his own tent, entered, fastened down the canvas, and crawled into his blankets.

The following morning he was awakened by the excited voice of Mohammed Beyd's slave calling to him at the entrance of his tent.

"Quick! Quick!" cried the black in a

frightened tone. "Come! Mohammed Beyd is dead in his tent—dead by his own hand."

Werper sat up quickly in his blankets at the first alarm, a startled expression upon his countenance; but at the last words of the black a sigh of relief escaped his lips and a slight smile replaced the tense lines upon his face.

"I come," he called to the slave, and drawing on his boots, rose and went out of his tent.

Excited Arabs and blacks were running from all parts of the camp toward the silken tent of Mohammed Beyd, and when Werper entered he found a number of the raiders crowded about the corpse, now cold and stiff.

Shouldering his way among them, the Belgian halted beside the dead body of the raider. He looked down in silence for a moment upon the still face, then he wheeled upon the Arabs.

"Who has done this thing?" he cried. His tone was both menacing and accusing. "Who has murdered Mohammed Beyd?"

A sudden chorus of voices arose in tumultuous protest.

"Mohammed Beyd was not murdered," they cried. "He died by his own hand. This, and Allah, are our witnesses," and they pointed to a revolver in the dead man's hand.

For a time Werper pretended to be skeptical; but at last permitted himself to

be convinced that Mohammed Beyd had indeed killed himself in remorse for the death of the white woman he had, all unknown to his followers, loved so devotedly.

Werper himself wrapped the blankets of the dead man about the corpse, taking care to fold inward the scorched and bullet-torn fabric that had muffled the report of the weapon he had fired the night before. Then six husky blacks carried the body out into the clearing where the camp stood, and deposited it in a shallow grave. As the loose earth fell upon the silent form beneath the tell-tale blankets, Albert Werper heaved another sigh of relief - his plan had worked out even better than he had

dared hope.

With Achmet Zek and Mohammed Beyd both dead, the raiders were without a leader, and after a brief conference they decided to return into the north on visits to the various tribes to which they belonged, Werper, after learning the direction they intended taking, announced that for his part, he was going east to the coast, and as they knew of nothing he possessed which any of them coveted, they signified their willingness that he should go his way.

As they rode off, he sat his horse in the center of the clearing watching them disappear one by one into the jungle, and thanked his God that he had at last escaped their villainous clutches.

When he could no longer hear any sound of them, he turned to the right and rode into the forest toward the tree where he had hidden Lady Greystoke, and drawing rein beneath it, called up in a gay and hopeful voice a pleasant, "Good morning!"

There was no reply, and though his eyes searched the thick foliage above him, he could see no sign of the girl. Dismounting, he quickly climbed into the tree, where he could obtain a view of all its branches. The tree was empty—Jane Clayton had vanished during the silent watches of the jungle night.

22. TARZAN RECOVERS HIS REASON

As Tarzan let the pebbles from the recovered pouch run through his fingers, his thoughts returned to the pile of yellow ingots about which the Arabs and the Abyssinians had waged their relentless battle.

What was there in common between that pile of dirty metal and the beautiful, sparkling pebbles that had formerly been in his pouch? What was the metal? From whence had it come? What was that tantalizing half-conviction which seemed to demand the recognition of his memory that the yellow pile for which these men had fought and died had been intimately connected with his past—that it had been

his?

What had been his past? He shook his head. Vaguely the memory of his apish childhood passed slowly in review—then came a strangely tangled mass of faces, figures and events which seemed to have no relation to Tarzan of the Apes, and yet which were, even in their fragmentary form, familiar.

Slowly and painfully, recollection was attempting to reassert itself, the hurt brain was mending, as the cause of its recent failure to function was being slowly absorbed or removed by the healing processes of perfect circulation.

The people who now passed before his mind's eye for the first time in weeks wore familiar faces; but yet he could

neither place them in the niches they had once filled in his past life, nor call them by name. One was a fair she, and it was her face which most often moved through the tangled recollections of his convalescing brain. Who was she? What had she been to Tarzan of the Apes? He seemed to see her about the very spot upon which the pile of gold had been unearthed by the Abyssinians; but the surroundings were vastly different from those which now obtained.

There was a building—there were many buildings—and there were hedges, fences, and flowers. Tarzan puckered his brow in puzzled study of the wonderful problem. For an instant he seemed to grasp the whole of a true explanation,

and then, just as success was within his grasp, the picture faded into a jungle scene where a naked, white youth danced in company with a band of hairy, primordial ape-things.

Tarzan shook his head and sighed. Why was it that he could not recollect? At least he was sure that in some way the pile of gold, the place where it lay, the subtle aroma of the elusive she he had been pursuing, the memory figure of the white woman, and he himself, were inextricably connected by the ties of a forgotten past.

If the woman belonged there, what better place to search or await her than the very spot which his broken recollections seemed to assign to her? It

was worth trying. Tarzan slipped the thong of the empty pouch over his shoulder and started off through the trees in the direction of the plain.

At the outskirts of the forest he met the Arabs returning in search of Achmet Zek. Hiding, he let them pass, and then resumed his way toward the charred ruins of the home he had been almost upon the point of recalling to his memory.

His journey across the plain was interrupted by the discovery of a small herd of antelope in a little swale, where the cover and the wind were well combined to make stalking easy. A fat yearling rewarded a half hour of stealthy creeping and a sudden, savage rush, and

it was late in the afternoon when the ape-man settled himself upon his haunches beside his kill to enjoy the fruits of his skill, his cunning, and his prowess.

His hunger satisfied, thirst next claimed his attention. The river lured him by the shortest path toward its refreshing waters, and when he had drunk, night already had fallen and he was some half mile or more down stream from the point where he had seen the pile of yellow ingots, and where he hoped to meet the memory woman, or find some clew to her whereabouts or her identity.

To the jungle bred, time is usually a matter of small moment, and haste,

except when engendered by terror, by rage, or by hunger, is distasteful. Today was gone. Therefore tomorrow, of which there was an infinite procession, would answer admirably for Tarzan's further quest. And, besides, the ape-man was tired and would sleep.

A tree afforded him the safety, seclusion and comforts of a well-appointed bedchamber, and to the chorus of the hunters and the hunted of the wild river bank he soon dropped off into deep slumber.

Morning found him both hungry and thirsty again, and dropping from his tree he made his way to the drinking place at the river's edge. There he found Numa, the lion, ahead of him. The big fellow

was lapping the water greedily, and at the approach of Tarzan along the trail in his rear, he raised his head, and turning his gaze backward across his maned shoulders glared at the intruder. A low growl of warning rumbled from his throat; but Tarzan, guessing that the beast had but just quitted his kill and was well filled, merely made a slight detour and continued to the river, where he stopped a few yards above the tawny cat, and dropping upon his hands and knees plunged his face into the cool water. For a moment the lion continued to eye the man; then he resumed his drinking, and man and beast quenched their thirst side by side each apparently oblivious of the other's presence.

Numa was the first to finish. Raising his head, he gazed across the river for a few minutes with that stony fixity of attention which is a characteristic of his kind. But for the ruffling of his black mane to the touch of the passing breeze he might have been wrought from golden bronze, so motionless, so statuesque his pose.

A deep sigh from the cavernous lungs dispelled the illusion. The mighty head swung slowly around until the yellow eyes rested upon the man. The bristled lip curved upward, exposing yellow fangs. Another warning growl vibrated the heavy jowls, and the king of beasts turned majestically about and paced slowly up the trail into the dense reeds.

Tarzan of the Apes drank on, but from the corners of his gray eyes he watched the great brute's every move until he had disappeared from view, and, after, his keen ears marked the movements of the carnivore.

A plunge in the river was followed by a scant breakfast of eggs which chance discovered to him, and then he set off up river toward the ruins of the bungalow where the golden ingots had marked the center of yesterday's battle.

And when he came upon the spot, great was his surprise and consternation, for the yellow metal had disappeared. The earth, trampled by the feet of horses and men, gave no clew. It was as though the ingots had evaporated into thin air.

The ape-man was at a loss to know where to turn or what next to do. There was no sign of any spoor which might denote that the she had been here. The metal was gone, and if there was any connection between the she and the metal it seemed useless to wait for her now that the latter had been removed elsewhere.

Everything seemed to elude him—the pretty pebbles, the yellow metal, the she, his memory. Tarzan was disgusted. He would go back into the jungle and look for Chulk, and so he turned his steps once more toward the forest. He moved rapidly, swinging across the plain in a long, easy trot, and at the edge of the forest, taking to the trees with the agility

and speed of a small monkey.

His direction was aimless—he merely raced on and on through the jungle, the joy of unfettered action his principal urge, with the hope of stumbling upon some clew to Chulk or the she, a secondary incentive.

For two days he roamed about, killing, eating, drinking and sleeping wherever inclination and the means to indulge it occurred simultaneously. It was upon the morning of the third day that the scent spoor of horse and man were wafted faintly to his nostrils. Instantly he altered his course to glide silently through the branches in the direction from which the scent came.

It was not long before he came upon a

solitary horseman riding toward the east. Instantly his eyes confirmed what his nose had previously suspected - the rider was he who had stolen his pretty pebbles. The light of rage flared suddenly in the gray eyes as the ape-man dropped lower among the branches until he moved almost directly above the unconscious Werper.

There was a quick leap, and the Belgian felt a heavy body hurtle onto the rump of his terror-stricken mount. The horse, snorting, leaped forward. Giant arms encircled the rider, and in the twinkling of an eye he was dragged from his saddle to find himself lying in the narrow trail with a naked, white giant kneeling upon his breast.

Recognition came to Werper with the first glance at his captor's face, and a pallor of fear overspread his features. Strong fingers were at his throat, fingers of steel. He tried to cry out, to plead for his life; but the cruel fingers denied him speech, as they were as surely denying him life.

"The pretty pebbles?" cried the man upon his breast. "What did you with the pretty pebbles—with Tarzan's pretty pebbles?"

The fingers relaxed to permit a reply. For some time Werper could only choke and cough—at last he regained the powers of speech.

"Achmet Zek, the Arab, stole them from me," he cried; "he made me give up

the pouch and the pebbles."

"I saw all that," replied Tarzan; "but the pebbles in the pouch were not the pebbles of Tarzan—they were only such pebbles as fill the bottoms of the rivers, and the shelving banks beside them. Even the Arab would not have them, for he threw them away in anger when he had looked upon them. It is my pretty pebbles that I want—where are they?"

"I do not know, I do not know," cried Werper. "I gave them to Achmet Zek or he would have killed me. A few minutes later he followed me along the trail to slay me, although he had promised to molest me no further, and I shot and killed him; but the pouch was not upon his person and though I searched about

the jungle for some time I could not find it."

"I found it, I tell you," growled Tarzan, "and I also found the pebbles which Achmet Zek had thrown away in disgust. They were not Tarzan's pebbles. You have hidden them! Tell me where they are or I will kill you," and the brown fingers of the ape-man closed a little tighter upon the throat of his victim.

Werper struggled to free himself. "My God, Lord Greystoke," he managed to scream, "would you commit murder for a handful of stones?"

The fingers at his throat relaxed, a puzzled, far-away expression softened the gray eyes.

"Lord Greystoke!" repeated the ape-

man. "Lord Greystoke! Who is Lord Greystoke? Where have I heard that name before?"

"Why man, you are Lord Greystoke," cried the Belgian. "You were injured by a falling rock when the earthquake shattered the passage to the underground chamber to which you and your black Waziri had come to fetch golden ingots back to your bungalow. The blow shattered your memory. You are John Clayton, Lord Greystoke—don't you remember?"

"John Clayton, Lord Greystoke!" repeated Tarzan. Then for a moment he was silent. Presently his hand went falteringly to his forehead, an expression of wonderment filled his eyes—of

wonderment and sudden understanding. The forgotten name had reawakened the returning memory that had been struggling to reassert itself. The ape-man relinquished his grasp upon the throat of the Belgian, and leaped to his feet.

"God!" he cried, and then, "Jane!" Suddenly he turned toward Werper. "My wife?" he asked. "What has become of her? The farm is in ruins. You know. You have had something to do with all this. You followed me to Opar, you stole the jewels which I thought but pretty pebbles. You are a crook! Do not try to tell me that you are not."

"He is worse than a crook," said a quiet voice close behind them.

Tarzan turned in astonishment to see a

tall man in uniform standing in the trail a few paces from him. Back of the man were a number of black soldiers in the uniform of the Congo Free State.

"He is a murderer, Monsieur," continued the officer. "I have followed him for a long time to take him back to stand trial for the killing of his superior officer."

Werper was upon his feet now, gazing, white and trembling, at the fate which had overtaken him even in the fastness of the labyrinthine jungle. Instinctively he turned to flee; but Tarzan of the Apes reached out a strong hand and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Wait!" said the ape-man to his captive. "This gentleman wishes you,

and so do I. When I am through with you, he may have you. Tell me what has become of my wife."

The Belgian officer eyed the almost naked, white giant with curiosity. He noted the strange contrast of primitive weapons and apparel, and the easy, fluent French which the man spoke. The former denoted the lowest, the latter the highest type of culture. He could not quite determine the social status of this strange creature; but he knew that he did not relish the easy assurance with which the fellow presumed to dictate when he might take possession of the prisoner.

"Pardon me," he said, stepping forward and placing his hand on Werper's other shoulder; "but this

gentleman is my prisoner. He must come with me."

"When I am through with him," replied Tarzan, quietly.

The officer turned and beckoned to the soldiers standing in the trail behind him. A company of uniformed blacks stepped quickly forward and pushing past the three, surrounded the ape-man and his captive.

"Both the law and the power to enforce it are upon my side," announced the officer. "Let us have no trouble. If you have a grievance against this man you may return with me and enter your charge regularly before an authorized tribunal."

"Your legal rights are not above

suspicion, my friend," replied Tarzan, "and your power to enforce your commands are only apparent—not real. You have presumed to enter British territory with an armed force. Where is your authority for this invasion? Where are the extradition papers which warrant the arrest of this man? And what assurance have you that I cannot bring an armed force about you that will prevent your return to the Congo Free State?"

The Belgian lost his temper. "I have no disposition to argue with a naked savage," he cried. "Unless you wish to be hurt you will not interfere with me. Take the prisoner, Sergeant!"

Werper raised his lips close to Tarzan's ear. "Keep me from them, and I

can show you the very spot where I saw your wife last night," he whispered. "She cannot be far from here at this very minute."

The soldiers, following the signal from their sergeant, closed in to seize Werper. Tarzan grabbed the Belgian about the waist, and bearing him beneath his arm as he might have borne a sack of flour, leaped forward in an attempt to break through the cordon. His right fist caught the nearest soldier upon the jaw and sent him hurtling backward upon his fellows. Clubbed rifles were torn from the hands of those who barred his way, and right and left the black soldiers stumbled aside in the face of the ape-man's savage break for liberty.

So completely did the blacks surround the two that they dared not fire for fear of hitting one of their own number, and Tarzan was already through them and upon the point of dodging into the concealing mazes of the jungle when one who had sneaked upon him from behind struck him a heavy blow upon the head with a rifle.

In an instant the ape-man was down and a dozen black soldiers were upon his back. When he regained consciousness he found himself securely bound, as was Werper also. The Belgian officer, success having crowned his efforts, was in good humor, and inclined to chaff his prisoners about the ease with which they had been captured; but from

Tarzan of the Apes he elicited no response. Werper, however, was voluble in his protests. He explained that Tarzan was an English lord; but the officer only laughed at the assertion, and advised his prisoner to save his breath for his defense in court.

As soon as Tarzan regained his senses and it was found that he was not seriously injured, the prisoners were hastened into line and the return march toward the Congo Free State boundary commenced.

Toward evening the column halted beside a stream, made camp and prepared the evening meal. From the thick foliage of the nearby jungle a pair of fierce eyes watched the activities of

the uniformed blacks with silent intensity and curiosity. From beneath beetling brows the creature saw the boma constructed, the fires built, and the supper prepared.

Tarzan and Werper had been lying bound behind a small pile of knapsacks from the time that the company had halted; but with the preparation of the meal completed, their guard ordered them to rise and come forward to one of the fires where their hands would be unfettered that they might eat.

As the giant ape-man rose, a startled expression of recognition entered the eyes of the watcher in the jungle, and a low guttural broke from the savage lips. Instantly Tarzan was alert, but the

answering growl died upon his lips, suppressed by the fear that it might arouse the suspicions of the soldiers.

Suddenly an inspiration came to him. He turned toward Werper.

"I am going to speak to you in a loud voice and in a tongue which you do not understand. Appear to listen intently to what I say, and occasionally mumble something as though replying in the same language—our escape may hinge upon the success of your efforts."

Werper nodded in assent and understanding, and immediately there broke from the lips of his companion a strange jargon which might have been compared with equal propriety to the barking and growling of a dog and the

chattering of monkeys.

The nearer soldiers looked in surprise at the ape-man. Some of them laughed, while others drew away in evident superstitious fear. The officer approached the prisoners while Tarzan was still jabbering, and halted behind them, listening in perplexed interest. When Werper mumbled some ridiculous jargon in reply his curiosity broke bounds, and he stepped forward, demanding to know what language it was that they spoke.

Tarzan had gauged the measure of the man's culture from the nature and quality of his conversation during the march, and he rested the success of his reply upon the estimate he had made.

"Greek," he explained.

"Oh, I thought it was Greek," replied the officer; "but it has been so many years since I studied it that I was not sure. In future, however, I will thank you to speak in a language which I am more familiar with."

Werper turned his head to hide a grin, whispering to Tarzan: "It was Greek to him all right—and to me, too."

But one of the black soldiers mumbled in a low voice to a companion: "I have heard those sounds before—once at night when I was lost in the jungle, I heard the hairy men of the trees talking among themselves, and their words were like the words of this white man. I wish that we had not found him. He is not a

man at all—he is a bad spirit, and we shall have bad luck if we do not let him go," and the fellow rolled his eyes fearfully toward the jungle.

His companion laughed nervously, and moved away, to repeat the conversation, with variations and exaggerations, to others of the black soldiery, so that it was not long before a frightful tale of black magic and sudden death was woven about the giant prisoner, and had gone the rounds of the camp.

And deep in the gloomy jungle amidst the darkening shadows of the falling night a hairy, manlike creature swung swiftly southward upon some secret mission of his own.

23. A NIGHT OF TERROR

To Jane Clayton, waiting in the tree where Werper had placed her, it seemed that the long night would never end, yet end it did at last, and within an hour of the coming of dawn her spirits leaped with renewed hope at sight of a solitary horseman approaching along the trail.

The flowing burnoose, with its loose hood, hid both the face and the figure of the rider; but that it was M. Frecoult the girl well knew, since he had been garbed as an Arab, and he alone might be expected to seek her hiding place.

That which she saw relieved the strain of the long night vigil; but there was much that she did not see. She did not see the black face beneath the white

hood, nor the file of ebon horsemen beyond the trail's bend riding slowly in the wake of their leader. These things she did not see at first, and so she leaned downward toward the approaching rider, a cry of welcome forming in her throat.

At the first word the man looked up, reining in in surprise, and as she saw the black face of Abdul Mourak, the Abyssinian, she shrank back in terror among the branches; but it was too late. The man had seen her, and now he called to her to descend. At first she refused; but when a dozen black cavalrymen drew up behind their leader, and at Abdul Mourak's command one of them started to climb the tree after her

she realized that resistance was futile, and came slowly down to stand upon the ground before this new captor and plead her cause in the name of justice and humanity.

Angered by recent defeat, and by the loss of the gold, the jewels, and his prisoners, Abdul Mourak was in no mood to be influenced by any appeal to those softer sentiments to which, as a matter of fact, he was almost a stranger even under the most favorable conditions.

He looked for degradation and possible death in punishment for his failures and his misfortunes when he should have returned to his native land and made his report to Menelek; but an

acceptable gift might temper the wrath of the emperor, and surely this fair flower of another race should be gratefully received by the black ruler!

When Jane Clayton had concluded her appeal, Abdul Mourak replied briefly that he would promise her protection; but that he must take her to his emperor. The girl did not need ask him why, and once again hope died within her breast. Resignedly she permitted herself to be lifted to a seat behind one of the troopers, and again, under new masters, her journey was resumed toward what she now began to believe was her inevitable fate.

Abdul Mourak, bereft of his guides by the battle he had waged against the

raiders, and himself unfamiliar with the country, had wandered far from the trail he should have followed, and as a result had made but little progress toward the north since the beginning of his flight. Today he was beating toward the west in the hope of coming upon a village where he might obtain guides; but night found him still as far from a realization of his hopes as had the rising sun.

It was a dispirited company which went into camp, waterless and hungry, in the dense jungle. Attracted by the horses, lions roared about the boma, and to their hideous din was added the shrill neighs of the terror-stricken beasts they hunted. There was little sleep for man or beast, and the sentries were doubled that there

might be enough on duty both to guard against the sudden charge of an overbold, or overhungry lion, and to keep the fire blazing which was an even more effectual barrier against them than the thorny boma.

It was well past midnight, and as yet Jane Clayton, notwithstanding that she had passed a sleepless night the night before, had scarcely more than dozed. A sense of impending danger seemed to hang like a black pall over the camp. The veteran troopers of the black emperor were nervous and ill at ease. Abdul Mourak left his blankets a dozen times to pace restlessly back and forth between the tethered horses and the crackling fire. The girl could see his

great frame silhouetted against the lurid glare of the flames, and she guessed from the quick, nervous movements of the man that he was afraid.

The roaring of the lions rose in sudden fury until the earth trembled to the hideous chorus. The horses shrilled their neighs of terror as they lay back upon their halter ropes in their mad endeavors to break loose. A trooper, braver than his fellows, leaped among the kicking, plunging, fear-maddened beasts in a futile attempt to quiet them. A lion, large, and fierce, and courageous, leaped almost to the boma, full in the bright light from the fire. A sentry raised his piece and fired, and the little leaden pellet unstoppered the vials of hell upon

the terror-stricken camp.

The shot ploughed a deep and painful furrow in the lion's side, arousing all the bestial fury of the little brain; but abating not a whit the power and vigor of the great body.

Unwounded, the boma and the flames might have turned him back; but now the pain and the rage wiped caution from his mind, and with a loud, and angry roar he topped the barrier with an easy leap and was among the horses.

What had been pandemonium before became now an indescribable tumult of hideous sound. The stricken horse upon which the lion leaped shrieked out its terror and its agony. Several about it broke their tethers and plunged madly

about the camp. Men leaped from their blankets and with guns ready ran toward the picket line, and then from the jungle beyond the boma a dozen lions, emboldened by the example of their fellow charged fearlessly upon the camp.

Singly and in twos and threes they leaped the boma, until the little enclosure was filled with cursing men and screaming horses battling for their lives with the green-eyed devils of the jungle.

With the charge of the first lion, Jane Clayton had scrambled to her feet, and now she stood horror-struck at the scene of savage slaughter that swirled and eddied about her. Once a bolting horse

knocked her down, and a moment later a lion, leaping in pursuit of another terror-stricken animal, brushed her so closely that she was again thrown from her feet.

Amidst the cracking of the rifles and the growls of the carnivora rose the death screams of stricken men and horses as they were dragged down by the blood-mad cats. The leaping carnivora and the plunging horses, prevented any concerted action by the Abyssinians—it was every man for himself —and in the melee, the defenseless woman was either forgotten or ignored by her black captors. A score of times was her life menaced by charging lions, by plunging horses, or by the wildly fired bullets of the frightened

troopers, yet there was no chance of escape, for now with the fiendish cunning of their kind, the tawny hunters commenced to circle about their prey, hemming them within a ring of mighty, yellow fangs, and sharp, long talons. Again and again an individual lion would dash suddenly among the frightened men and horses, and occasionally a horse, goaded to frenzy by pain or terror, succeeded in racing safely through the circling lions, leaping the boma, and escaping into the jungle; but for the men and the woman no such escape was possible.

A horse, struck by a stray bullet, fell beside Jane Clayton, a lion leaped across the expiring beast full upon the

breast of a black trooper just beyond. The man clubbed his rifle and struck futilely at the broad head, and then he was down and the carnivore was standing above him.

Shrieking out his terror, the soldier clawed with puny fingers at the shaggy breast in vain endeavor to push away the grinning jaws. The lion lowered his head, the gaping fangs closed with a single sickening crunch upon the fear-distorted face, and turning strode back across the body of the dead horse dragging his limp and bloody burden with him.

Wide-eyed the girl stood watching. She saw the carnivore step upon the corpse, stumblingly, as the grisly thing

swung between its forepaws, and her eyes remained fixed in fascination while the beast passed within a few paces of her.

The interference of the body seemed to enrage the lion. He shook the inanimate clay venomously. He growled and roared hideously at the dead, insensate thing, and then he dropped it and raised his head to look about in search of some living victim upon which to wreak his ill temper. His yellow eyes fastened themselves balefully upon the figure of the girl, the bristling lips raised, disclosing the grinning fangs. A terrific roar broke from the savage throat, and the great beast crouched to spring upon this new and helpless

victim.

Quiet had fallen early upon the camp where Tarzan and Werper lay securely bound. Two nervous sentries paced their beats, their eyes rolling often toward the impenetrable shadows of the gloomy jungle. The others slept or tried to sleep —all but the ape- man. Silently and powerfully he strained at the bonds which fettered his wrists.

The muscles knotted beneath the smooth, brown skin of his arms and shoulders, the veins stood out upon his temples from the force of his exertions— a strand parted, another and another, and one hand was free. Then from the jungle came a low guttural, and the ape- man became suddenly a silent, rigid statue,

with ears and nostrils straining to span the black void where his eyesight could not reach.

Again came the uncanny sound from the thick verdure beyond the camp. A sentry halted abruptly, straining his eyes into the gloom. The kinky wool upon his head stiffened and raised. He called to his comrade in a hoarse whisper.

"Did you hear it?" he asked.

The other came closer, trembling.

"Hear what?"

Again was the weird sound repeated, followed almost immediately by a similar and answering sound from the camp. The sentries drew close together, watching the black spot from which the voice seemed to come.

Trees overhung the boma at this point which was upon the opposite side of the camp from them. They dared not approach. Their terror even prevented them from arousing their fellows—they could only stand in frozen fear and watch for the fearsome apparition they momentarily expected to see leap from the jungle.

Nor had they long to wait. A dim, bulky form dropped lightly from the branches of a tree into the camp. At sight of it one of the sentries recovered command of his muscles and his voice. Screaming loudly to awaken the sleeping camp, he leaped toward the flickering watch fire and threw a mass of brush upon it.

The white officer and the black soldiers sprang from their blankets. The flames leaped high upon the rejuvenated fire, lighting the entire camp, and the awakened men shrank back in superstitious terror from the sight that met their frightened and astonished vision.

A dozen huge and hairy forms loomed large beneath the trees at the far side of the enclosure. The white giant, one hand freed, had struggled to his knees and was calling to the frightful, nocturnal visitors in a hideous medley of bestial gutturals, barkings and growlings.

Werper had managed to sit up. He, too, saw the savage faces of the approaching anthropoids and scarcely

knew whether to be relieved or terror-stricken.

Growling, the great apes leaped forward toward Tarzan and Werper. Chulk led them. The Belgian officer called to his men to fire upon the intruders; but the Negroes held back, filled as they were with superstitious terror of the hairy treemen, and with the conviction that the white giant who could thus summon the beasts of the jungle to his aid was more than human.

Drawing his own weapon, the officer fired, and Tarzan fearing the effect of the noise upon his really timid friends called to them to hasten and fulfill his commands.

A couple of the apes turned and fled

at the sound of the firearm; but Chulk and a half dozen others waddled rapidly forward, and, following the ape-man's directions, seized both him and Werper and bore them off toward the jungle.

By dint of threats, reproaches and profanity the Belgian officer succeeded in persuading his trembling command to fire a volley after the retreating apes. A ragged, straggling volley it was, but at least one of its bullets found a mark, for as the jungle closed about the hairy rescuers, Chulk, who bore Werper across one broad shoulder, staggered and fell.

In an instant he was up again; but the Belgian guessed from his unsteady gait that he was hard hit. He lagged far

behind the others, and it was several minutes after they had halted at Tarzan's command before he came slowly up to them, reeling from side to side, and at last falling again beneath the weight of his burden and the shock of his wound.

As Chulk went down he dropped Werper, so that the latter fell face downward with the body of the ape lying half across him. In this position the Belgian felt something resting against his hands, which were still bound at his back—something that was not a part of the hairy body of the ape.

Mechanically the man's fingers felt of the object resting almost in their grasp—it was a soft pouch, filled with small, hard particles. Werper gasped in

wonderment as recognition filtered through the incredulity of his mind. It was impossible, and yet—it was true!

Feverishly he strove to remove the pouch from the ape and transfer it to his own possession; but the restricted radius to which his bonds held his hands prevented this, though he did succeed in tucking the pouch with its precious contents inside the waist band of his trousers.

Tarzan, sitting at a short distance, was busy with the remaining knots of the cords which bound him. Presently he flung aside the last of them and rose to his feet. Approaching Werper he knelt beside him. For a moment he examined the ape.

"Quite dead," he announced. "It is too bad—he was a splendid creature," and then he turned to the work of liberating the Belgian.

He freed his hands first, and then commenced upon the knots at his ankles.

"I can do the rest," said the Belgian. "I have a small pocketknife which they overlooked when they searched me," and in this way he succeeded in ridding himself of the ape-man's attentions that he might find and open his little knife and cut the thong which fastened the pouch about Chulk's shoulder, and transfer it from his waist band to the breast of his shirt. Then he rose and approached Tarzan.

Once again had avarice claimed him.

Forgotten were the good intentions which the confidence of Jane Clayton in his honor had awakened. What she had done, the little pouch had undone. How it had come upon the person of the great ape, Werper could not imagine, unless it had been that the anthropoid had witnessed his fight with Achmet Zek, seen the Arab with the pouch and taken it away from him; but that this pouch contained the jewels of Opar, Werper was positive, and that was all that interested him greatly.

"Now," said the ape-man, "keep your promise to me. Lead me to the spot where you last saw my wife."

It was slow work pushing through the jungle in the dead of night behind the

slow-moving Belgian. The ape-man chafed at the delay, but the European could not swing through the trees as could his more agile and muscular companions, and so the speed of all was limited to that of the slowest.

The apes trailed out behind the two white men for a matter of a few miles; but presently their interest lagged, the foremost of them halted in a little glade and the others stopped at his side. There they sat peering from beneath their shaggy brows at the figures of the two men forging steadily ahead, until the latter disappeared in the leafy trail beyond the clearing. Then an ape sought a comfortable couch beneath a tree, and one by one the others followed his

example, so that Werper and Tarzan continued their journey alone; nor was the latter either surprised or concerned.

The two had gone but a short distance beyond the glade where the apes had deserted them, when the roaring of distant lions fell upon their ears. The ape-man paid no attention to the familiar sounds until the crack of a rifle came faintly from the same direction, and when this was followed by the shrill neighing of horses, and an almost continuous fusillade of shots intermingled with increased and savage roaring of a large troop of lions, he became immediately concerned.

"Someone is having trouble over there," he said, turning toward Werper.

"I'll have to go to them—they may be friends."

"Your wife might be among them," suggested the Belgian, for since he had again come into possession of the pouch he had become fearful and suspicious of the ape-man, and in his mind had constantly revolved many plans for eluding this giant Englishman, who was at once his savior and his captor.

At the suggestion Tarzan started as though struck with a whip.

"God!" he cried, "she might be, and the lions are attacking them— they are in the camp. I can tell from the screams of the horses—and there! that was the cry of a man in his death agonies. Stay here man— I will come back for you. I must

go first to them," and swinging into a tree the lithe figure swung rapidly off into the night with the speed and silence of a disembodied spirit.

For a moment Werper stood where the ape-man had left him. Then a cunning smile crossed his lips. "Stay here?" he asked himself. "Stay here and wait until you return to find and take these jewels from me? Not I, my friend, not I," and turning abruptly eastward Albert Werper passed through the foliage of a hanging vine and out of the sight of his fellow-man— forever.

24. HOME

As Tarzan of the Apes hurtled through the trees the discordant sounds of the battle between the Abyssinians and the lions smote more and more distinctly upon his sensitive ears, redoubling his assurance that the plight of the human element of the conflict was critical indeed.

At last the glare of the camp fire shone plainly through the intervening trees, and a moment later the giant figure of the ape-man paused upon an overhanging bough to look down upon the bloody scene of carnage below.

His quick eye took in the whole scene with a single comprehending glance and stopped upon the figure of a woman

standing facing a great lion across the carcass of a horse.

The carnivore was crouching to spring as Tarzan discovered the tragic tableau. Numa was almost beneath the branch upon which the ape- man stood, naked and unarmed. There was not even an instant's hesitation upon the part of the latter—it was as though he had not even paused in his swift progress through the trees, so lightning-like his survey and comprehension of the scene below him—so instantaneous his consequent action.

So hopeless had seemed her situation to her that Jane Clayton but stood in lethargic apathy awaiting the impact of the huge body that would hurl her to the

ground—awaiting the momentary agony that cruel talons and grisly fangs may inflict before the coming of the merciful oblivion which would end her sorrow and her suffering.

What use to attempt escape? As well face the hideous end as to be dragged down from behind in futile flight. She did not even close her eyes to shut out the frightful aspect of that snarling face, and so it was that as she saw the lion preparing to charge she saw, too, a bronzed and mighty figure leap from an overhanging tree at the instant that Numa rose in his spring.

Wide went her eyes in wonder and incredulity, as she beheld this seeming apparition risen from the dead. The lion

was forgotten—her own peril - everything save the wondrous miracle of this strange recrudescence. With parted lips, with palms tight pressed against her heaving bosom, the girl leaned forward, large-eyed, enthralled by the vision of her dead mate.

She saw the sinewy form leap to the shoulder of the lion, hurtling against the leaping beast like a huge, animate battering ram. She saw the carnivore brushed aside as he was almost upon her, and in the instant she realized that no substanceless wraith could thus turn the charge of a maddened lion with brute force greater than the brute's.

Tarzan, her Tarzan, lived! A cry of unspeakable gladness broke from her

lips, only to die in terror as she saw the utter defenselessness of her mate, and realized that the lion had recovered himself and was turning upon Tarzan in mad lust for vengeance.

At the ape-man's feet lay the discarded rifle of the dead Abyssinian whose mutilated corpse sprawled where Numa had abandoned it. The quick glance which had swept the ground for some weapon of defense discovered it, and as the lion reared upon his hind legs to seize the rash man-thing who had dared interpose its puny strength between Numa and his prey, the heavy stock whirred through the air and splintered upon the broad forehead.

Not as an ordinary mortal might strike

a blow did Tarzan of the Apes strike; but with the maddened frenzy of a wild beast backed by the steel thews which his wild, arboreal boyhood had bequeathed him. When the blow ended the splintered stock was driven through the splintered skull into the savage brain, and the heavy iron barrel was bent into a rude V.

In the instant that the lion sank, lifeless, to the ground, Jane Clayton threw herself into the eager arms of her husband. For a brief instant he strained her dear form to his breast, and then a glance about him awakened the ape-man to the dangers which still surrounded them.

Upon every hand the lions were still

leaping upon new victims. Fear-maddened horses still menaced them with their erratic bolting from one side of the enclosure to the other. Bullets from the guns of the defenders who remained alive but added to the perils of their situation.

To remain was to court death. Tarzan seized Jane Clayton and lifted her to a broad shoulder. The blacks who had witnessed his advent looked on in amazement as they saw the naked giant leap easily into the branches of the tree from whence he had dropped so uncannily upon the scene, and vanish as he had come, bearing away their prisoner with him.

They were too well occupied in self-

defense to attempt to halt him, nor could they have done so other than by the wasting of a precious bullet which might be needed the next instant to turn the charge of a savage foe.

And so, unmolested, Tarzan passed from the camp of the Abyssinians, from which the din of conflict followed him deep into the jungle until distance gradually obliterated it entirely.

Back to the spot where he had left Werper went the ape-man, joy in his heart now, where fear and sorrow had so recently reigned; and in his mind a determination to forgive the Belgian and aid him in making good his escape. But when he came to the place, Werper was gone, and though Tarzan called aloud

many times he received no reply. Convinced that the man had purposely eluded him for reasons of his own, John Clayton felt that he was under no obligations to expose his wife to further danger and discomfort in the prosecution of a more thorough search for the missing Belgian.

"He has acknowledged his guilt by his flight, Jane," he said. "We will let him go to lie in the bed that he has made for himself."

Straight as homing pigeons, the two made their way toward the ruin and desolation that had once been the center of their happy lives, and which was soon to be restored by the willing black hands of laughing laborers, made happy again

by the return of the master and mistress whom they had mourned as dead.

Past the village of Achmet Zek their way led them, and there they found but the charred remains of the palisade and the native huts, still smoking, as mute evidence of the wrath and vengeance of a powerful enemy.

"The Waziri," commented Tarzan with a grim smile.

"God bless them!" cried Jane Clayton.

"They cannot be far ahead of us," said Tarzan, "Basuli and the others. The gold is gone and the jewels of Opar, Jane; but we have each other and the Waziri—and we have love and loyalty and friendship. And what are gold and jewels to these?"

"If only poor Mugambi lived," she

replied, "and those other brave fellows who sacrificed their lives in vain endeavor to protect me!"

In the silence of mingled joy and sorrow they passed along through the familiar jungle, and as the afternoon was waning there came faintly to the ears of the ape-man the murmuring cadence of distant voices.

"We are nearing the Waziri, Jane," he said. "I can hear them ahead of us. They are going into camp for the night, I imagine."

A half hour later the two came upon a horde of ebon warriors which Basuli had collected for his war of vengeance upon the raiders. With them were the captured women of the tribe whom they

had found in the village of Achmet Zek, and tall, even among the giant Waziri, loomed a familiar black form at the side of Basuli. It was Mugambi, whom Jane had thought dead amidst the charred ruins of the bungalow.

Ah, such a reunion! Long into the night the dancing and the singing and the laughter awoke the echoes of the somber wood. Again and again were the stories of their various adventures retold. Again and once again they fought their battles with savage beast and savage man, and dawn was already breaking when Basuli, for the fortieth time, narrated how he and a handful of his warriors had watched the battle for the golden ingots which the Abyssinians of Abdul Mourak

had waged against the Arab raiders of Achmet Zek, and how, when the victors had ridden away they had sneaked out of the river reeds and stolen away with the precious ingots to hide them where no robber eye ever could discover them.

Pieced out from the fragments of their various experiences with the Belgian the truth concerning the malign activities of Albert Werper became apparent. Only Lady Greystoke found aught to praise in the conduct of the man, and it was difficult even for her to reconcile his many heinous acts with this one evidence of chivalry and honor.

"Deep in the soul of every man," said Tarzan, "must lurk the germ of righteousness. It was your own virtue,

Jane, rather even than your helplessness which awakened for an instant the latent decency of this degraded man. In that one act he retrieved himself, and when he is called to face his Maker may it outweigh in the balance, all the sins he has committed."

And Jane Clayton breathed a fervent, "Amen!"

Months had passed. The labor of the Waziri and the gold of Opar had rebuilt and refurnished the wasted homestead of the Greystokes. Once more the simple life of the great African farm went on as it had before the coming of the Belgian and the Arab. Forgotten were the sorrows and dangers of yesterday.

For the first time in months Lord

Greystoke felt that he might indulge in a holiday, and so a great hunt was organized that the faithful laborers might feast in celebration of the completion of their work.

In itself the hunt was a success, and ten days after its inauguration, a well-laden safari took up its return march toward the Waziri plain. Lord and Lady Greystoke with Basuli and Mugambi rode together at the head of the column, laughing and talking together in that easy familiarity which common interests and mutual respect breed between honest and intelligent men of any races.

Jane Clayton's horse shied suddenly at an object half hidden in the long grasses of an open space in the jungle.

Tarzan's keen eyes sought quickly for an explanation of the animal's action.

"What have we here?" he cried, swinging from his saddle, and a moment later the four were grouped about a human skull and a little litter of whitened human bones.

Tarzan stooped and lifted a leathern pouch from the grisly relics of a man. The hard outlines of the contents brought an exclamation of surprise to his lips.

"The jewels of Opar!" he cried, holding the pouch aloft, "and," pointing to the bones at his feet, "all that remains of Werper, the Belgian."

Mugambi laughed. "Look within, Bwana," he cried, "and you will see what are the jewels of Opar—you will

see what the Belgian gave his life for," and the black laughed aloud.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Tarzan.

"Because," replied Mugambi, "I filled the Belgian's pouch with river gravel before I escaped the camp of the Abyssinians whose prisoners we were. I left the Belgian only worthless stones, while I brought away with me the jewels he had stolen from you. That they were afterward stolen from me while I slept in the jungle is my shame and my disgrace; but at least the Belgian lost them—open his pouch and you will see."

Tarzan untied the thong which held the mouth of the leathern bag closed, and permitted the contents to trickle slowly forth into his open palm. Mugambi's eyes

went wide at the sight, and the others uttered exclamations of surprise and incredulity, for from the rusty and weatherworn pouch ran a stream of brilliant, scintillating gems.

"The jewels of Opar!" cried Tarzan. "But how did Werper come by them again?"

None could answer, for both Chulk and Werper were dead, and no other knew.

"Poor devil!" said the ape-man, as he swung back into his saddle. "Even in death he has made restitution—let his sins lie with his bones."

THE END

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JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN
BOOK 6 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. TARZAN'S FIRST LOVE

Teeka, stretched at luxurious ease in the shade of the tropical forest, presented, unquestionably, a most alluring picture of young, feminine loveliness. Or at least so thought Tarzan of the Apes, who squatted upon a low- swinging branch in a near-by tree and looked down upon her.

Just to have seen him there, lolling upon the swaying bough of the jungle-forest giant, his brown skin mottled by the brilliant equatorial sunlight which percolated through the leafy canopy of green above him, his clean-limbed body relaxed in graceful ease, his shapely head partly turned in contemplative absorption and his intelligent, gray eyes

dreamily devouring the object of their devotion, you would have thought him the reincarnation of some demigod of old.

You would not have guessed that in infancy he had suckled at the breast of a hideous, hairy she-ape, nor that in all his conscious past since his parents had passed away in the little cabin by the landlocked harbor at the jungle's verge, he had known no other associates than the sullen bulls and the snarling cows of the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape.

Nor, could you have read the thoughts which passed through that active, healthy brain, the longings and desires and aspirations which the sight of Teeka inspired, would you have been any more

inclined to give credence to the reality of the origin of the ape-man. For, from his thoughts alone, you could never have gleaned the truth—that he had been born to a gentle English lady or that his sire had been an English nobleman of time-honored lineage.

Lost to Tarzan of the Apes was the truth of his origin. That he was John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, with a seat in the House of Lords, he did not know, nor, knowing, would have understood.

Yes, Teeka was indeed beautiful!

Of course Kala had been beautiful—one's mother is always that —but Teeka was beautiful in a way all her own, an indescribable sort of way which Tarzan was just beginning to sense in a rather

vague and hazy manner.

For years had Tarzan and Teeka been play-fellows, and Teeka still continued to be playful while the young bulls of her own age were rapidly becoming surly and morose. Tarzan, if he gave the matter much thought at all, probably reasoned that his growing attachment for the young female could be easily accounted for by the fact that of the former playmates she and he alone retained any desire to frolic as of old.

But today, as he sat gazing upon her, he found himself noting the beauties of Teeka's form and features—something he never had done before, since none of them had aught to do with Teeka's ability to race nimbly through the lower

terraces of the forest in the primitive games of tag and hide- and-go- seek which Tarzan's fertile brain evolved. Tarzan scratched his head, running his fingers deep into the shock of black hair which framed his shapely, boyish face—he scratched his head and sighed. Teeka's new-found beauty became as suddenly his despair. He envied her the handsome coat of hair which covered her body. His own smooth, brown hide he hated with a hatred born of disgust and contempt. Years back he had harbored a hope that some day he, too, would be clothed in hair as were all his brothers and sisters; but of late he had been forced to abandon the delectable dream.

Then there were Teeka's great teeth, not so large as the males, of course, but still mighty, handsome things by comparison with Tarzan's feeble white ones. And her beetling brows, and broad, flat nose, and her mouth! Tarzan had often practiced making his mouth into a little round circle and then puffing out his cheeks while he winked his eyes rapidly; but he felt that he could never do it in the same cute and irresistible way in which Teeka did it.

And as he watched her that afternoon, and wondered, a young bull ape who had been lazily foraging for food beneath the damp, matted carpet of decaying vegetation at the roots of a near-by tree lumbered awkwardly in Teeka's

direction. The other apes of the tribe of Kerchak moved listlessly about or lolled restfully in the midday heat of the equatorial jungle. From time to time one or another of them had passed close to Teeka, and Tarzan had been uninterested. Why was it then that his brows contracted and his muscles tensed as he saw Taug pause beside the young she and then squat down close to her?

Tarzan always had liked Taug. Since childhood they had romped together. Side by side they had squatted near the water, their quick, strong fingers ready to leap forth and seize Pisah, the fish, should that wary denizen of the cool depths dart surfaceward to the lure of the insects Tarzan tossed upon the face of

the pool.

Together they had baited Tublat and teased Numa, the lion. Why, then, should Tarzan feel the rise of the short hairs at the nape of his neck merely because Taug sat close to Teeka?

It is true that Taug was no longer the frolicsome ape of yesterday. When his snarling-muscles bared his giant fangs no one could longer imagine that Taug was in as playful a mood as when he and Tarzan had rolled upon the turf in mimic battle. The Taug of today was a huge, sullen bull ape, somber and forbidding. Yet he and Tarzan never had quarreled.

For a few minutes the young ape-man watched Taug press closer to Teeka. He saw the rough caress of the huge paw as

it stroked the sleek shoulder of the she, and then Tarzan of the Apes slipped catlike to the ground and approached the two.

As he came his upper lip curled into a snarl, exposing his fighting fangs, and a deep growl rumbled from his cavernous chest. Taug looked up, batting his blood-shot eyes. Teeka half raised herself and looked at Tarzan. Did she guess the cause of his perturbation? Who may say? At any rate, she was feminine, and so she reached up and scratched Taug behind one of his small, flat ears.

Tarzan saw, and in the instant that he saw, Teeka was no longer the little playmate of an hour ago; instead she was a wondrous thing—the most wondrous in

the world—and a possession for which Tarzan would fight to the death against Taug or any other who dared question his right of proprietorship.

Stooped, his muscles rigid and one great shoulder turned toward the young bull, Tarzan of the Apes sidled nearer and nearer. His face was partly averted, but his keen gray eyes never left those of Taug, and as he came, his growls increased in depth and volume.

Taug rose upon his short legs, bristling. His fighting fangs were bared. He, too, sidled, stiff-legged, and growled.

"Teeka is Tarzan's," said the ape-man, in the low gutturals of the great anthropoids.

"Teeka is Taug's," replied the bull ape.

Thaka and Numgo and Gunto, disturbed by the growlings of the two young bulls, looked up half apathetic, half interested. They were sleepy, but they sensed a fight. It would break the monotony of the humdrum jungle life they led.

Coiled about his shoulders was Tarzan's long grass rope, in his hand was the hunting knife of the long-dead father he had never known. In Taug's little brain lay a great respect for the shiny bit of sharp metal which the ape-boy knew so well how to use. With it had he slain Tublat, his fierce foster father, and Bolgani, the gorilla. Taug

knew these things, and so he came warily, circling about Tarzan in search of an opening. The latter, made cautious because of his lesser bulk and the inferiority of his natural armament, followed similar tactics.

For a time it seemed that the altercation would follow the way of the majority of such differences between members of the tribe and that one of them would finally lose interest and wander off to prosecute some other line of endeavor. Such might have been the end of it had the CASUS BELLI been other than it was; but Teeka was flattered at the attention that was being drawn to her and by the fact that these two young bulls were contemplating

battle on her account. Such a thing never before had occurred in Teeka's brief life. She had seen other bulls battling for other and older shes, and in the depth of her wild little heart she had longed for the day when the jungle grasses would be reddened with the blood of mortal combat for her fair sake.

So now she squatted upon her haunches and insulted both her admirers impartially. She hurled taunts at them for their cowardice, and called them vile names, such as Histah, the snake, and Dango, the hyena. She threatened to call Mumga to chastise them with a stick—Mumga, who was so old that she could no longer climb and so toothless that she was forced to confine her diet almost

exclusively to bananas and grub-worms.

The apes who were watching heard and laughed. Taug was infuriated. He made a sudden lunge for Tarzan, but the ape-boy leaped nimbly to one side, eluding him, and with the quickness of a cat wheeled and leaped back again to close quarters. His hunting knife was raised above his head as he came in, and he aimed a vicious blow at Taug's neck. The ape wheeled to dodge the weapon so that the keen blade struck him but a glancing blow upon the shoulder.

The spurt of red blood brought a shrill cry of delight from Teeka. Ah, but this was something worth while! She glanced about to see if others had witnessed this evidence of her

popularity. Helen of Troy was never one whit more proud than was Teeka at that moment.

If Teeka had not been so absorbed in her own vaingloriousness she might have noted the rustling of leaves in the tree above her—a rustling which was not caused by any movement of the wind, since there was no wind. And had she looked up she might have seen a sleek body crouching almost directly over her and wicked yellow eyes glaring hungrily down upon her, but Teeka did not look up.

With his wound Taug had backed off growling horribly. Tarzan had followed him, screaming insults at him, and menacing him with his brandishing

blade. Teeka moved from beneath the tree in an effort to keep close to the duelists.

The branch above Teeka bent and swayed a trifle with the movement of the body of the watcher stretched along it. Taug had halted now and was preparing to make a new stand. His lips were flecked with foam, and saliva drooled from his jowls. He stood with head lowered and arms outstretched, preparing for a sudden charge to close quarters. Could he but lay his mighty hands upon that soft, brown skin the battle would be his. Taug considered Tarzan's manner of fighting unfair. He would not close. Instead, he leaped nimbly just beyond the reach of Taug's

muscular fingers.

The ape-boy had as yet never come to a real trial of strength with a bull ape, other than in play, and so he was not at all sure that it would be safe to put his muscles to the test in a life and death struggle. Not that he was afraid, for Tarzan knew nothing of fear. The instinct of self-preservation gave him caution—that was all. He took risks only when it seemed necessary, and then he would hesitate at nothing.

His own method of fighting seemed best fitted to his build and to his armament. His teeth, while strong and sharp, were, as weapons of offense, pitifully inadequate by comparison with the mighty fighting fangs of the

anthropoids. By dancing about, just out of reach of an antagonist, Tarzan could do infinite injury with his long, sharp hunting knife, and at the same time escape many of the painful and dangerous wounds which would be sure to follow his falling into the clutches of a bull ape.

And so Taug charged and bellowed like a bull, and Tarzan of the Apes danced lightly to this side and that, hurling jungle billingsgate at his foe, the while he nicked him now and again with his knife.

There were lulls in the fighting when the two would stand panting for breath, facing each other, mustering their wits and their forces for a new onslaught. It

was during a pause such as this that Taug chanced to let his eyes rove beyond his foeman. Instantly the entire aspect of the ape altered. Rage left his countenance to be supplanted by an expression of fear.

With a cry that every ape there recognized, Taug turned and fled. No need to question him—his warning proclaimed the near presence of their ancient enemy.

Tarzan started to seek safety, as did the other members of the tribe, and as he did so he heard a panther's scream mingled with the frightened cry of a she-ape. Taug heard, too; but he did not pause in his flight.

With the ape-boy, however, it was different. He looked back to see if any

member of the tribe was close pressed by the beast of prey, and the sight that met his eyes filled them with an expression of horror.

Teeka it was who cried out in terror as she fled across a little clearing toward the trees upon the opposite side, for after her leaped Sheeta, the panther, in easy, graceful bounds. Sheeta appeared to be in no hurry. His meat was assured, since even though the ape reached the trees ahead of him she could not climb beyond his clutches before he could be upon her.

Tarzan saw that Teeka must die. He cried to Taug and the other bulls to hasten to Teeka's assistance, and at the same time he ran toward the pursuing

beast, taking down his rope as he came. Tarzan knew that once the great bulls were aroused none of the jungle, not even Numa, the lion, was anxious to measure fangs with them, and that if all those of the tribe who chanced to be present today would charge, Sheeta, the great cat, would doubtless turn tail and run for his life.

Taug heard, as did the others, but no one came to Tarzan's assistance or Teeka's rescue, and Sheeta was rapidly closing up the distance between himself and his prey.

The ape-boy, leaping after the panther, cried aloud to the beast in an effort to turn it from Teeka or otherwise distract its attention until the she- ape

could gain the safety of the higher branches where Sheeta dared not go. He called the panther every opprobrious name that fell to his tongue. He dared him to stop and do battle with him; but Sheeta only loped on after the luscious tidbit now almost within his reach.

Tarzan was not far behind and he was gaining, but the distance was so short that he scarce hoped to overhaul the carnivore before it had felled Teeka. In his right hand the boy swung his grass rope above his head as he ran. He hated to chance a miss, for the distance was much greater than he ever had cast before except in practice. It was the full length of his grass rope which separated him from Sheeta, and yet there was no

other thing to do. He could not reach the brute's side before it overhauled Teeka. He must chance a throw.

And just as Teeka sprang for the lower limb of a great tree, and Sheeta rose behind her in a long, sinuous leap, the coils of the ape-boy's grass rope shot swiftly through the air, straightening into a long thin line as the open noose hovered for an instant above the savage head and the snarling jaws. Then it settled—clean and true about the tawny neck it settled, and Tarzan, with a quick twist of his rope-hand, drew the noose taut, bracing himself for the shock when Sheeta should have taken up the slack.

Just short of Teeka's glossy rump the cruel talons raked the air as the rope

tightened and Sheeta was brought to a sudden stop—a stop that snapped the big beast over upon his back. Instantly Sheeta was up— with glaring eyes, and lashing tail, and gaping jaws, from which issued hideous cries of rage and disappointment.

He saw the ape-boy, the cause of his discomfiture, scarce forty feet before him, and Sheeta charged.

Teeka was safe now; Tarzan saw to that by a quick glance into the tree whose safety she had gained not an instant too soon, and Sheeta was charging. It was useless to risk his life in idle and unequal combat from which no good could come; but could he escape a battle with the enraged cat? And if he

was forced to fight, what chance had he to survive? Tarzan was constrained to admit that his position was aught but a desirable one. The trees were too far to hope to reach in time to elude the cat. Tarzan could but stand facing that hideous charge. In his right hand he grasped his hunting knife—a puny, futile thing indeed by comparison with the great rows of mighty teeth which lined Sheeta's powerful jaws, and the sharp talons encased within his padded paws; yet the young Lord Greystoke faced it with the same courageous resignation with which some fearless ancestor went down to defeat and death on Senlac Hill by Hastings.

From safety points in the trees the

great apes watched, screaming hatred at Sheeta and advice at Tarzan, for the progenitors of man have, naturally, many human traits. Teeka was frightened. She screamed at the bulls to hasten to Tarzan's assistance; but the bulls were otherwise engaged— principally in giving advice and making faces. Anyway, Tarzan was not a real Mangani, so why should they risk their lives in an effort to protect him?

And now Sheeta was almost upon the lithe, naked body, and—the body was not there. Quick as was the great cat, the ape-boy was quicker. He leaped to one side almost as the panther's talons were closing upon him, and as Sheeta went hurtling to the ground beyond, Tarzan

was racing for the safety of the nearest tree.

The panther recovered himself almost immediately and, wheeling, tore after his prey, the ape-boy's rope dragging along the ground behind him. In doubling back after Tarzan, Sheeta had passed around a low bush. It was a mere nothing in the path of any jungle creature of the size and weight of Sheeta—provided it had no trailing rope dangling behind. But Sheeta was handicapped by such a rope, and as he leaped once again after Tarzan of the Apes the rope encircled the small bush, became tangled in it and brought the panther to a sudden stop. An instant later Tarzan was safe among the higher branches of a small tree into which

Sheeta could not follow him.

Here he perched, hurling twigs and epithets at the raging feline beneath him. The other members of the tribe now took up the bombardment, using such hard-shelled fruits and dead branches as came within their reach, until Sheeta, goaded to frenzy and snapping at the grass rope, finally succeeded in severing its strands. For a moment the panther stood glaring first at one of his tormentors and then at another, until, with a final scream of rage, he turned and slunk off into the tangled mazes of the jungle.

A half hour later the tribe was again upon the ground, feeding as though naught had occurred to interrupt the somber dullness of their lives. Tarzan

had recovered the greater part of his rope and was busy fashioning a new noose, while Teeka squatted close behind him, in evident token that her choice was made.

Taug eyed them sullenly. Once when he came close, Teeka bared her fangs and growled at him, and Tarzan showed his canines in an ugly snarl; but Taug did not provoke a quarrel. He seemed to accept after the manner of his kind the decision of the she as an indication that he had been vanquished in his battle for her favors.

Later in the day, his rope repaired, Tarzan took to the trees in search of game. More than his fellows he required meat, and so, while they were satisfied

with fruits and herbs and beetles, which could be discovered without much effort upon their part, Tarzan spent considerable time hunting the game animals whose flesh alone satisfied the cravings of his stomach and furnished sustenance and strength to the mighty thews which, day by day, were building beneath the soft, smooth texture of his brown hide.

Taug saw him depart, and then, quite casually, the big beast hunted closer and closer to Teeka in his search for food. At last he was within a few feet of her, and when he shot a covert glance at her he saw that she was appraising him and that there was no evidence of anger upon her face.

Taug expanded his great chest and rolled about on his short legs, making strange growlings in his throat. He raised his lips, baring his fangs. My, but what great, beautiful fangs he had! Teeka could not but notice them. She also let her eyes rest in admiration upon Taug's beetling brows and his short, powerful neck. What a beautiful creature he was indeed!

Taug, flattered by the unconcealed admiration in her eyes, strutted about, as proud and as vain as a peacock. Presently he began to inventory his assets, mentally, and shortly he found himself comparing them with those of his rival.

Taug grunted, for there was no

comparison. How could one compare his beautiful coat with the smooth and naked hideousness of Tarzan's bare hide? Who could see beauty in the stingy nose of the Tarmangani after looking at Taug's broad nostrils? And Tarzan's eyes! Hideous things, showing white about them, and entirely unrimmed with red. Taug knew that his own blood-shot eyes were beautiful, for he had seen them reflected in the glassy surface of many a drinking pool.

The bull drew nearer to Teeka, finally squatting close against her. When Tarzan returned from his hunting a short time later it was to see Teeka contentedly scratching the back of his rival.

Tarzan was disgusted. Neither Taug

nor Teeka saw him as he swung through the trees into the glade. He paused a moment, looking at them; then, with a sorrowful grimace, he turned and faded away into the labyrinth of leafy boughs and festooned moss out of which he had come.

Tarzan wished to be as far away from the cause of his heartache as he could. He was suffering the first pangs of blighted love, and he didn't quite know what was the matter with him. He thought that he was angry with Taug, and so he couldn't understand why it was that he had run away instead of rushing into mortal combat with the destroyer of his happiness.

He also thought that he was angry

with Teeka, yet a vision of her many beauties persisted in haunting him, so that he could only see her in the light of love as the most desirable thing in the world.

The ape-boy craved affection. From babyhood until the time of her death, when the poisoned arrow of Kulonga had pierced her savage heart, Kala had represented to the English boy the sole object of love which he had known.

In her wild, fierce way Kala had loved her adopted son, and Tarzan had returned that love, though the outward demonstrations of it were no greater than might have been expected from any other beast of the jungle. It was not until he was bereft of her that the boy realized

how deep had been his attachment for his mother, for as such he looked upon her.

In Teeka he had seen within the past few hours a substitute for Kala - someone to fight for and to hunt for—someone to caress; but now his dream was shattered. Something hurt within his breast. He placed his hand over his heart and wondered what had happened to him. Vaguely he attributed his pain to Teeka. The more he thought of Teeka as he had last seen her, caressing Taug, the more the thing within his breast hurt him.

Tarzan shook his head and growled; then on and on through the jungle he swung, and the farther he traveled and the more he thought upon his wrongs, the

nearer he approached becoming an irreclaimable misogynist.

Two days later he was still hunting alone—very morose and very unhappy; but he was determined never to return to the tribe. He could not bear the thought of seeing Taug and Teeka always together. As he swung upon a great limb Numa, the lion, and Sabor, the lioness, passed beneath him, side by side, and Sabor leaned against the lion and bit playfully at his cheek. It was a half-caress. Tarzan sighed and hurled a nut at them.

Later he came upon several of Mbonga's black warriors. He was upon the point of dropping his noose about the neck of one of them, who was a little

distance from his companions, when he became interested in the thing which occupied the savages. They were building a cage in the trail and covering it with leafy branches. When they had completed their work the structure was scarcely visible.

Tarzan wondered what the purpose of the thing might be, and why, when they had built it, they turned away and started back along the trail in the direction of their village.

It had been some time since Tarzan had visited the blacks and looked down from the shelter of the great trees which overhung their palisade upon the activities of his enemies, from among whom had come the slayer of Kala.

Although he hated them, Tarzan derived considerable entertainment in watching them at their daily life within the village, and especially at their dances, when the fires glared against their naked bodies as they leaped and turned and twisted in mimic warfare. It was rather in the hope of witnessing something of the kind that he now followed the warriors back toward their village, but in this he was disappointed, for there was no dance that night.

Instead, from the safe concealment of his tree, Tarzan saw little groups seated about tiny fires discussing the events of the day, and in the darker corners of the village he descried isolated couples talking and laughing together, and

always one of each couple was a young man and the other a young woman.

Tarzan cocked his head upon one side and thought, and before he went to sleep that night, curled in the crotch of the great tree above the village, Teeka filled his mind, and afterward she filled his dreams—she and the young black men laughing and talking with the young black women.

Taug, hunting alone, had wandered some distance from the balance of the tribe. He was making his way slowly along an elephant path when he discovered that it was blocked with undergrowth. Now Taug, come into maturity, was an evil- natured brute of an exceeding short temper. When

something thwarted him, his sole idea was to overcome it by brute strength and ferocity, and so now when he found his way blocked, he tore angrily into the leafy screen and an instant later found himself within a strange lair, his progress effectually blocked, notwithstanding his most violent efforts to forge ahead.

Biting and striking at the barrier, Taug finally worked himself into a frightful rage, but all to no avail; and at last he became convinced that he must turn back. But when he would have done so, what was his chagrin to discover that another barrier had dropped behind him while he fought to break down the one before him! Taug was trapped. Until

exhaustion overcame him he fought frantically for his freedom; but all for naught.

In the morning a party of blacks set out from the village of Mbonga in the direction of the trap they had constructed the previous day, while among the branches of the trees above them hovered a naked young giant filled with the curiosity of the wild things. Manu, the monkey, chattered and scolded as Tarzan passed, and though he was not afraid of the familiar figure of the ape-boy, he hugged closer to him the little brown body of his life's companion. Tarzan laughed as he saw it; but the laugh was followed by a sudden clouding of his face and a deep sigh.

A little farther on, a gaily feathered bird strutted about before the admiring eyes of his somber-hued mate. It seemed to Tarzan that everything in the jungle was combining to remind him that he had lost Teeka; yet every day of his life he had seen these same things and thought nothing of them.

When the blacks reached the trap, Taug set up a great commotion. Seizing the bars of his prison, he shook them frantically, and all the while he roared and growled terrifically. The blacks were elated, for while they had not built their trap for this hairy tree man, they were delighted with their catch.

Tarzan pricked up his ears when he heard the voice of a great ape and,

circling quickly until he was down wind from the trap, he sniffed at the air in search of the scent spoor of the prisoner. Nor was it long before there came to those delicate nostrils the familiar odor that told Tarzan the identity of the captive as unerringly as though he had looked upon Taug with his eyes. Yes, it was Taug, and he was alone.

Tarzan grinned as he approached to discover what the blacks would do to their prisoner. Doubtless they would slay him at once. Again Tarzan grinned. Now he could have Teeka for his own, with none to dispute his right to her. As he watched, he saw the black warriors strip the screen from about the cage, fasten ropes to it and drag it away along

the trail in the direction of their village.

Tarzan watched until his rival passed out of sight, still beating upon the bars of his prison and growling out his anger and his threats. Then the ape- boy turned and swung rapidly off in search of the tribe, and Teeka.

Once, upon the journey, he surprised Sheeta and his family in a little overgrown clearing. The great cat lay stretched upon the ground, while his mate, one paw across her lord's savage face, licked at the soft white fur at his throat.

Tarzan increased his speed then until he fairly flew through the forest, nor was it long before he came upon the tribe. He saw them before they saw him, for of all

the jungle creatures, none passed more quietly than Tarzan of the Apes. He saw Kamma and her mate feeding side by side, their hairy bodies rubbing against each other. And he saw Teeka feeding by herself. Not for long would she feed thus in loneliness, thought Tarzan, as with a bound he landed amongst them.

There was a startled rush and a chorus of angry and frightened snarls, for Tarzan had surprised them; but there was more, too, than mere nervous shock to account for the bristling neck hair which remained standing long after the apes had discovered the identity of the newcomer.

Tarzan noticed this as he had noticed it many times in the past— that always

his sudden coming among them left them nervous and unstrung for a considerable time, and that they one and all found it necessary to satisfy themselves that he was indeed Tarzan by smelling about him a half dozen or more times before they calmed down.

Pushing through them, he made his way toward Teeka; but as he approached her the ape drew away.

"Teeka," he said, "it is Tarzan. You belong to Tarzan. I have come for you."

The ape drew closer, looking him over carefully. Finally she sniffed at him, as though to make assurance doubly sure.

"Where is Taug?" she asked.

"The Gomangani have him," replied

Tarzan. "They will kill him."

In the eyes of the she, Tarzan saw a wistful expression and a troubled look of sorrow as he told her of Taug's fate; but she came quite close and snuggled against him, and Tarzan, Lord Greystoke, put his arm about her.

As he did so he noticed, with a start, the strange incongruity of that smooth, brown arm against the black and hairy coat of his lady-love. He recalled the paw of Sheeta's mate across Sheeta's face—no incongruity there. He thought of little Manu hugging his she, and how the one seemed to belong to the other. Even the proud male bird, with his gay plumage, bore a close resemblance to his quieter spouse, while Numa, but for

his shaggy mane, was almost a counterpart of Sabor, the lioness. The males and the females differed, it was true; but not with such differences as existed between Tarzan and Teeka.

Tarzan was puzzled. There was something wrong. His arm dropped from the shoulder of Teeka. Very slowly he drew away from her. She looked at him with her head cocked upon one side. Tarzan rose to his full height and beat upon his breast with his fists. He raised his head toward the heavens and opened his mouth. From the depths of his lungs rose the fierce, weird challenge of the victorious bull ape. The tribe turned curiously to eye him. He had killed nothing, nor was there any antagonist to

be goaded to madness by the savage scream. No, there was no excuse for it, and they turned back to their feeding, but with an eye upon the ape-man lest he be preparing to suddenly run amuck.

As they watched him they saw him swing into a near-by tree and disappear from sight. Then they forgot him, even Teeka.

Mbonga's black warriors, sweating beneath their strenuous task, and resting often, made slow progress toward their village. Always the savage beast in the primitive cage growled and roared when they moved him. He beat upon the bars and slavered at the mouth. His noise was hideous.

They had almost completed their

journey and were making their final rest before forging ahead to gain the clearing in which lay their village. A few more minutes would have taken them out of the forest, and then, doubtless, the thing would not have happened which did happen.

A silent figure moved through the trees above them. Keen eyes inspected the cage and counted the number of warriors. An alert and daring brain figured upon the chances of success when a certain plan should be put to the test.

Tarzan watched the blacks lolling in the shade. They were exhausted. Already several of them slept. He crept closer, pausing just above them. Not a leaf

rustled before his stealthy advance. He waited in the infinite patience of the beast of prey. Presently but two of the warriors remained awake, and one of these was dozing.

Tarzan of the Apes gathered himself, and as he did so the black who did not sleep arose and passed around to the rear of the cage. The ape-boy followed just above his head. Taug was eyeing the warrior and emitting low growls. Tarzan feared that the anthropoid would awaken the sleepers.

In a whisper which was inaudible to the ears of the Negro, Tarzan whispered Taug's name, cautioning the ape to silence, and Taug's growling ceased.

The black approached the rear of the

cage and examined the fastenings of the door, and as he stood there the beast above him launched itself from the tree full upon his back. Steel fingers circled his throat, choking the cry which sprang to the lips of the terrified man. Strong teeth fastened themselves in his shoulder, and powerful legs wound themselves about his torso.

The black in a frenzy of terror tried to dislodge the silent thing which clung to him. He threw himself to the ground and rolled about; but still those mighty fingers closed more and more tightly their deadly grip.

The man's mouth gaped wide, his swollen tongue protruded, his eyes started from their sockets; but the

relentless fingers only increased their pressure.

Taug was a silent witness of the struggle. In his fierce little brain he doubtless wondered what purpose prompted Tarzan to attack the black. Taug had not forgotten his recent battle with the ape-boy, nor the cause of it. Now he saw the form of the Gomangani suddenly go limp. There was a convulsive shiver and the man lay still.

Tarzan sprang from his prey and ran to the door of the cage. With nimble fingers he worked rapidly at the thongs which held the door in place. Taug could only watch—he could not help. Presently Tarzan pushed the thing up a couple of feet and Taug crawled out.

The ape would have turned upon the sleeping blacks that he might wreak his pent vengeance; but Tarzan would not permit it.

Instead, the ape-boy dragged the body of the black within the cage and propped it against the side bars. Then he lowered the door and made fast the thongs as they had been before.

A happy smile lighted his features as he worked, for one of his principal diversions was the baiting of the blacks of Mbonga's village. He could imagine their terror when they awoke and found the dead body of their comrade fast in the cage where they had left the great ape safely secured but a few minutes before.

Tarzan and Taug took to the trees together, the shaggy coat of the fierce ape brushing the sleek skin of the English lordling as they passed through the primeval jungle side by side.

"Go back to Teeka," said Tarzan. "She is yours. Tarzan does not want her."

"Tarzan has found another she?" asked Taug.

The ape-boy shrugged.

"For the Gomangani there is another Gomangani," he said; "for Numa, the lion, there is Sabor, the lioness; for Sheeta there is a she of his own kind; for Bara, the deer; for Manu, the monkey; for all the beasts and the birds of the jungle is there a mate. Only for Tarzan of

the Apes is there none. Taug is an ape. Teeka is an ape. Go back to Teeka. Tarzan is a man. He will go alone."

2. THE CAPTURE OF TARZAN

The black warriors labored in the humid heat of the jungle's stifling shade. With war spears they loosened the thick, black loam and the deep layers of rotting vegetation. With heavy-nailed fingers they scooped away the disintegrated earth from the center of the age-old game trail. Often they ceased their labors to squat, resting and gossiping, with much laughter, at the edge of the pit they were digging.

Against the boles of near-by trees leaned their long, oval shields of thick buffalo hide, and the spears of those who were doing the scooping. Sweat glistened upon their smooth, ebon skins, beneath which rolled rounded muscles,

supple in the perfection of nature's uncontaminated health.

A reed buck, stepping warily along the trail toward water, halted as a burst of laughter broke upon his startled ears. For a moment he stood statuesque but for his sensitively dilating nostrils; then he wheeled and fled noiselessly from the terrifying presence of man.

A hundred yards away, deep in the tangle of impenetrable jungle, Numa, the lion, raised his massive head. Numa had dined well until almost daybreak and it had required much noise to awaken him. Now he lifted his muzzle and sniffed the air, caught the acrid scent spoor of the reed buck and the heavy scent of man. But Numa was well filled. With a low,

disgusted grunt he rose and slunk away.

Brilliantly plumaged birds with raucous voices darted from tree to tree. Little monkeys, chattering and scolding, swung through the swaying limbs above the black warriors. Yet they were alone, for the teeming jungle with all its myriad life, like the swarming streets of a great metropolis, is one of the loneliest spots in God's great universe.

But were they alone?

Above them, lightly balanced upon a leafy tree limb, a gray-eyed youth watched with eager intentness their every move. The fire of hate, restrained, smoldered beneath the lad's evident desire to know the purpose of the black men's labors. Such a one as these it was

who had slain his beloved Kala. For them there could be naught but enmity, yet he liked well to watch them, avid as he was for greater knowledge of the ways of man.

He saw the pit grow in depth until a great hole yawned the width of the trail —a hole which was amply large enough to hold at one time all of the six excavators. Tarzan could not guess the purpose of so great a labor. And when they cut long stakes, sharpened at their upper ends, and set them at intervals upright in the bottom of the pit, his wonderment but increased, nor was it satisfied with the placing of the light cross-poles over the pit, or the careful arrangement of leaves and earth which

completely hid from view the work the black men had performed.

When they were done they surveyed their handiwork with evident satisfaction, and Tarzan surveyed it, too. Even to his practiced eye there remained scarce a vestige of evidence that the ancient game trail had been tampered with in any way.

So absorbed was the ape-man in speculation as to the purpose of the covered pit that he permitted the blacks to depart in the direction of their village without the usual baiting which had rendered him the terror of Mbonga's people and had afforded Tarzan both a vehicle of revenge and a source of inexhaustible delight.

Puzzle as he would, however, he could not solve the mystery of the concealed pit, for the ways of the blacks were still strange ways to Tarzan. They had entered his jungle but a short time before—the first of their kind to encroach upon the age-old supremacy of the beasts which laired there. To Numa, the lion, to Tantor, the elephant, to the great apes and the lesser apes, to each and all of the myriad creatures of this savage wild, the ways of man were new. They had much to learn of these black, hairless creatures that walked erect upon their hind paws—and they were learning it slowly, and always to their sorrow.

Shortly after the blacks had departed, Tarzan swung easily to the trail. Sniffing

suspiciously, he circled the edge of the pit. Squatting upon his haunches, he scraped away a little earth to expose one of the cross-bars. He sniffed at this, touched it, cocked his head upon one side, and contemplated it gravely for several minutes. Then he carefully re-covered it, arranging the earth as neatly as had the blacks. This done, he swung himself back among the branches of the trees and moved off in search of his hairy fellows, the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak.

Once he crossed the trail of Numa, the lion, pausing for a moment to hurl a soft fruit at the snarling face of his enemy, and to taunt and insult him, calling him eater of carrion and brother of Dango,

the hyena. Numa, his yellow- green eyes round and burning with concentrated hate, glared up at the dancing figure above him. Low growls vibrated his heavy jowls and his great rage transmitted to his sinuous tail a sharp, whiplike motion; but realizing from past experience the futility of long distance argument with the ape-man, he turned presently and struck off into the tangled vegetation which hid him from the view of his tormentor. With a final scream of jungle invective and an apelike grimace at his departing foe, Tarzan continued along his way.

Another mile and a shifting wind brought to his keen nostrils a familiar, pungent odor close at hand, and a

moment later there loomed beneath him a huge, gray-black bulk forging steadily along the jungle trail. Tarzan seized and broke a small tree limb, and at the sudden cracking sound the ponderous figure halted. Great ears were thrown forward, and a long, supple trunk rose quickly to wave to and fro in search of the scent of an enemy, while two weak, little eyes peered suspiciously and futilely about in quest of the author of the noise which had disturbed his peaceful way.

Tarzan laughed aloud and came closer above the head of the pachyderm.

"Tantor! Tantor!" he cried. "Bara, the deer, is less fearful than you - you, Tantor, the elephant, greatest of the

jungle folk with the strength of as many Numas as I have toes upon my feet and fingers upon my hands. Tantor, who can uproot great trees, trembles with fear at the sound of a broken twig."

A rumbling noise, which might have been either a sign of contempt or a sigh of relief, was Tantor's only reply as the uplifted trunk and ears came down and the beast's tail dropped to normal; but his eyes still roved about in search of Tarzan. He was not long kept in suspense, however, as to the whereabouts of the ape-man, for a second later the youth dropped lightly to the broad head of his old friend. Then stretching himself at full length, he drummed with his bare toes upon the

thick hide, and as his fingers scratched the more tender surfaces beneath the great ears, he talked to Tantor of the gossip of the jungle as though the great beast understood every word that he said.

Much there was which Tarzan could make Tantor understand, and though the small talk of the wild was beyond the great, gray dreadnought of the jungle, he stood with blinking eyes and gently swaying trunk as though drinking in every word of it with keenest appreciation. As a matter of fact it was the pleasant, friendly voice and caressing hands behind his ears which he enjoyed, and the close proximity of him whom he had often borne upon his

back since Tarzan, as a little child, had once fearlessly approached the great bull, assuming upon the part of the pachyderm the same friendliness which filled his own heart.

In the years of their association Tarzan had discovered that he possessed an inexplicable power to govern and direct his mighty friend. At his bidding, Tantor would come from a great distance—as far as his keen ears could detect the shrill and piercing summons of the ape-man—and when Tarzan was squatted upon his head, Tantor would lumber through the jungle in any direction which his rider bade him go. It was the power of the man-mind over that of the brute and it was just as effective

as though both fully understood its origin, though neither did.

For half an hour Tarzan sprawled there upon Tantor's back. Time had no meaning for either of them. Life, as they saw it, consisted principally in keeping their stomachs filled. To Tarzan this was a less arduous labor than to Tantor, for Tarzan's stomach was smaller, and being omnivorous, food was less difficult to obtain. If one sort did not come readily to hand, there were always many others to satisfy his hunger. He was less particular as to his diet than Tantor, who would eat only the bark of certain trees, and the wood of others, while a third appealed to him only through its leaves, and these, perhaps, just at certain

seasons of the year.

Tantor must needs spend the better part of his life in filling his immense stomach against the needs of his mighty thews. It is thus with all the lower orders—their lives are so occupied either with searching for food or with the processes of digestion that they have little time for other considerations. Doubtless it is this handicap which has kept them from advancing as rapidly as man, who has more time to give to thought upon other matters.

However, these questions troubled Tarzan but little, and Tantor not at all. What the former knew was that he was happy in the companionship of the elephant. He did not know why. He did

not know that because he was a human being—a normal, healthy human being—he craved some living thing upon which to lavish his affection. His childhood playmates among the apes of Kerchak were now great, sullen brutes. They felt nor inspired but little affection. The younger apes Tarzan still played with occasionally. In his savage way he loved them; but they were far from satisfying or restful companions. Tantor was a great mountain of calm, of poise, of stability. It was restful and satisfying to sprawl upon his rough pate and pour one's vague hopes and aspirations into the great ears which flapped ponderously to and fro in apparent understanding. Of all the jungle folk,

Tantor commanded Tarzan's greatest love since Kala had been taken from him. Sometimes Tarzan wondered if Tantor reciprocated his affection. It was difficult to know.

It was the call of the stomach—the most compelling and insistent call which the jungle knows—that took Tarzan finally back to the trees and off in search of food, while Tantor continued his interrupted journey in the opposite direction.

For an hour the ape-man foraged. A lofty nest yielded its fresh, warm harvest. Fruits, berries, and tender plantain found a place upon his menu in the order that he happened upon them, for he did not seek such foods. Meat,

meat, meat! It was always meat that Tarzan of the Apes hunted; but sometimes meat eluded him, as today.

And as he roamed the jungle his active mind busied itself not alone with his hunting, but with many other subjects. He had a habit of recalling often the events of the preceding days and hours. He lived over his visit with Tantor; he cogitated upon the digging blacks and the strange, covered pit they had left behind them. He wondered again and again what its purpose might be. He compared perceptions and arrived at judgments. He compared judgments, reaching conclusions—not always correct ones, it is true, but at least he used his brain for the purpose God intended it, which was

the less difficult because he was not handicapped by the second-hand, and usually erroneous, judgment of others.

And as he puzzled over the covered pit, there loomed suddenly before his mental vision a huge, gray-black bulk which lumbered ponderously along a jungle trail. Instantly Tarzan tensed to the shock of a sudden fear. Decision and action usually occurred simultaneously in the life of the ape-man, and now he was away through the leafy branches ere the realization of the pit's purpose had scarce formed in his mind.

Swinging from swaying limb to swaying limb, he raced through the middle terraces where the trees grew close together. Again he dropped to the

ground and sped, silently and light of foot, over the carpet of decaying vegetation, only to leap again into the trees where the tangled undergrowth precluded rapid advance upon the surface.

In his anxiety he cast discretion to the winds. The caution of the beast was lost in the loyalty of the man, and so it came that he entered a large clearing, denuded of trees, without a thought of what might lie there or upon the farther edge to dispute the way with him.

He was half way across when directly in his path and but a few yards away there rose from a clump of tall grasses a half dozen chattering birds. Instantly Tarzan turned aside, for he

knew well enough what manner of creature the presence of these little sentinels proclaimed. Simultaneously Buto, the rhinoceros, scrambled to his short legs and charged furiously. Haphazard charges Buto, the rhinoceros. With his weak eyes he sees but poorly even at short distances, and whether his erratic rushes are due to the panic of fear as he attempts to escape, or to the irascible temper with which he is generally credited, it is difficult to determine. Nor is the matter of little moment to one whom Buto charges, for if he be caught and tossed, the chances are that naught will interest him thereafter.

And today it chanced that Buto bore

down straight upon Tarzan, across the few yards of knee-deep grass which separated them. Accident started him in the direction of the ape-man, and then his weak eyes discerned the enemy, and with a series of snorts he charged straight for him. The little rhino birds fluttered and circled about their giant ward. Among the branches of the trees at the edge of the clearing, a score or more monkeys chattered and scolded as the loud snorts of the angry beast sent them scurrying affrightedly to the upper terraces. Tarzan alone appeared indifferent and serene.

Directly in the path of the charge he stood. There had been no time to seek safety in the trees beyond the clearing,

nor had Tarzan any mind to delay his journey because of Buto. He had met the stupid beast before and held him in fine contempt.

And now Buto was upon him, the massive head lowered and the long, heavy horn inclined for the frightful work for which nature had designed it; but as he struck upward, his weapon raked only thin air, for the ape-man had sprung lightly aloft with a catlike leap that carried him above the threatening horn to the broad back of the rhinoceros. Another spring and he was on the ground behind the brute and racing like a deer for the trees.

Buto, angered and mystified by the strange disappearance of his prey,

wheeled and charged frantically in another direction, which chanced to be not the direction of Tarzan's flight, and so the ape-man came in safety to the trees and continued on his swift way through the forest.

Some distance ahead of him Tantor moved steadily along the well-worn elephant trail, and ahead of Tantor a crouching, black warrior listened intently in the middle of the path. Presently he heard the sound for which he had been hoping—the cracking, snapping sound which heralded the approach of an elephant.

To his right and left in other parts of the jungle other warriors were watching. A low signal, passed from one to

another, apprised the most distant that the quarry was afoot. Rapidly they converged toward the trail, taking positions in trees down wind from the point at which Tantor must pass them. Silently they waited and presently were rewarded by the sight of a mighty tusker carrying an amount of ivory in his long tusks that set their greedy hearts to palpitating.

No sooner had he passed their positions than the warriors clambered from their perches. No longer were they silent, but instead clapped their hands and shouted as they reached the ground. For an instant Tantor, the elephant, paused with upraised trunk and tail, with great ears up-pricked, and then he swung

on along the trail at a rapid, shuffling pace—straight toward the covered pit with its sharpened stakes upstanding in the ground.

Behind him came the yelling warriors, urging him on in the rapid flight which would not permit a careful examination of the ground before him. Tantor, the elephant, who could have turned and scattered his adversaries with a single charge, fled like a frightened deer—fled toward a hideous, torturing death.

And behind them all came Tarzan of the Apes, racing through the jungle forest with the speed and agility of a squirrel, for he had heard the shouts of the warriors and had interpreted them

correctly. Once he uttered a piercing call that reverberated through the jungle; but Tantor, in the panic of terror, either failed to hear, or hearing, dared not pause to heed.

Now the giant pachyderm was but a few yards from the hidden death lurking in his path, and the blacks, certain of success, were screaming and dancing in his wake, waving their war spears and celebrating in advance the acquisition of the splendid ivory carried by their prey and the surfeit of elephant meat which would be theirs this night.

So intent were they upon their gratulations that they entirely failed to note the silent passage of the man-beast above their heads, nor did Tantor, either,

see or hear him, even though Tarzan called to him to stop.

A few more steps would precipitate Tantor upon the sharpened stakes; Tarzan fairly flew through the trees until he had come abreast of the fleeing animal and then had passed him. At the pit's verge the ape-man dropped to the ground in the center of the trail. Tantor was almost upon him before his weak eyes permitted him to recognize his old friend.

"Stop!" cried Tarzan, and the great beast halted to the upraised hand.

Tarzan turned and kicked aside some of the brush which hid the pit. Instantly Tantor saw and understood.

"Fight!" growled Tarzan. "They are

coming behind you." But Tantor, the elephant, is a huge bunch of nerves, and now he was half panic-stricken by terror.

Before him yawned the pit, how far he did not know, but to right and left lay the primeval jungle untouched by man. With a squeal the great beast turned suddenly at right angles and burst his noisy way through the solid wall of matted vegetation that would have stopped any but him.

Tarzan, standing upon the edge of the pit, smiled as he watched Tantor's undignified flight. Soon the blacks would come. It was best that Tarzan of the Apes faded from the scene. He essayed a step from the pit's edge, and as

he threw the weight of his body upon his left foot, the earth crumbled away. Tarzan made a single Herculean effort to throw himself forward, but it was too late. Backward and downward he went toward the sharpened stakes in the bottom of the pit.

When, a moment later, the blacks came they saw even from a distance that Tantor had eluded them, for the size of the hole in the pit covering was too small to have accommodated the huge bulk of an elephant. At first they thought that their prey had put one great foot through the top and then, warned, drawn back; but when they had come to the pit's verge and peered over, their eyes went wide in astonishment, for, quiet and still,

at the bottom lay the naked figure of a white giant.

Some of them there had glimpsed this forest god before and they drew back in terror, awed by the presence which they had for some time believed to possess the miraculous powers of a demon; but others there were who pushed forward, thinking only of the capture of an enemy, and these leaped into the pit and lifted Tarzan out.

There was no scar upon his body. None of the sharpened stakes had pierced him—only a swollen spot at the base of the brain indicated the nature of his injury. In the falling backward his head had struck upon the side of one of the stakes, rendering him unconscious.

The blacks were quick to discover this, and equally quick to bind their prisoner's arms and legs before he should regain consciousness, for they had learned to harbor a wholesome respect for this strange man-beast that consorted with the hairy tree folk.

They had carried him but a short distance toward their village when the ape-man's eyelids quivered and raised. He looked about him wonderingly for a moment, and then full consciousness returned and he realized the seriousness of his predicament. Accustomed almost from birth to relying solely upon his own resources, he did not cast about for outside aid now, but devoted his mind to a consideration of the possibilities for

escape which lay within himself and his own powers.

He did not dare test the strength of his bonds while the blacks were carrying him, for fear they would become apprehensive and add to them. Presently his captors discovered that he was conscious, and as they had little stomach for carrying a heavy man through the jungle heat, they set him upon his feet and forced him forward among them, pricking him now and then with their spears, yet with every manifestation of the superstitious awe in which they held him.

When they discovered that their prodding brought no outward evidence of suffering, their awe increased, so that

they soon desisted, half believing that this strange white giant was a supernatural being and so was immune from pain.

As they approached their village, they shouted aloud the victorious cries of successful warriors, so that by the time they reached the gate, dancing and waving their spears, a great crowd of men, women, and children were gathered there to greet them and hear the story of their adventure.

As the eyes of the villagers fell upon the prisoner, they went wild, and heavy jaws fell open in astonishment and incredulity. For months they had lived in perpetual terror of a weird, white demon whom but few had ever glimpsed and

lived to describe. Warriors had disappeared from the paths almost within sight of the village and from the midst of their companions as mysteriously and completely as though they had been swallowed by the earth, and later, at night, their dead bodies had fallen, as from the heavens, into the village street.

This fearsome creature had appeared by night in the huts of the village, killed, and disappeared, leaving behind him in the huts with his dead, strange and terrifying evidences of an uncanny sense of humor.

But now he was in their power! No longer could he terrorize them. Slowly the realization of this dawned upon them.

A woman, screaming, ran forward and struck the ape-man across the face. Another and another followed her example, until Tarzan of the Apes was surrounded by a fighting, clawing, yelling mob of natives.

And then Mbonga, the chief, came, and laying his spear heavily across the shoulders of his people, drove them from their prey.

"We will save him until night," he said.

Far out in the jungle Tantor, the elephant, his first panic of fear allayed, stood with up-pricked ears and undulating trunk. What was passing through the convolutions of his savage brain? Could he be searching for

Tarzan? Could he recall and measure the service the ape-man had performed for him? Of that there can be no doubt. But did he feel gratitude? Would he have risked his own life to have saved Tarzan could he have known of the danger which confronted his friend? You will doubt it. Anyone at all familiar with elephants will doubt it. Englishmen who have hunted much with elephants in India will tell you that they never have heard of an instance in which one of these animals has gone to the aid of a man in danger, even though the man had often befriended it. And so it is to be doubted that Tantor would have attempted to overcome his instinctive fear of the black men in an effort to succor Tarzan.

The screams of the infuriated villagers came faintly to his sensitive ears, and he wheeled, as though in terror, contemplating flight; but something stayed him, and again he turned about, raised his trunk, and gave voice to a shrill cry.

Then he stood listening.

In the distant village where Mbonga had restored quiet and order, the voice of Tantor was scarcely audible to the blacks, but to the keen ears of Tarzan of the Apes it bore its message.

His captors were leading him to a hut where he might be confined and guarded against the coming of the nocturnal orgy that would mark his torture- laden death. He halted as he heard the notes of

Tantor's call, and raising his head, gave vent to a terrifying scream that sent cold chills through the superstitious blacks and caused the warriors who guarded him to leap back even though their prisoner's arms were securely bound behind him.

With raised spears they encircled him as for a moment longer he stood listening. Faintly from the distance came another, an answering cry, and Tarzan of the Apes, satisfied, turned and quietly pursued his way toward the hut where he was to be imprisoned.

The afternoon wore on. From the surrounding village the ape-man heard the bustle of preparation for the feast. Through the doorway of the hut he saw

the women laying the cooking fires and filling their earthen caldrons with water; but above it all his ears were bent across the jungle in eager listening for the coming of Tantor.

Even Tarzan but half believed that he would come. He knew Tantor even better than Tantor knew himself. He knew the timid heart which lay in the giant body. He knew the panic of terror which the scent of the Gomangani inspired within that savage breast, and as night drew on, hope died within his heart and in the stoic calm of the wild beast which he was, he resigned himself to meet the fate which awaited him.

All afternoon he had been working, working, working with the bonds that

held his wrists. Very slowly they were giving. He might free his hands before they came to lead him out to be butchered, and if he did—Tarzan licked his lips in anticipation, and smiled a cold, grim smile. He could imagine the feel of soft flesh beneath his fingers and the sinking of his white teeth into the throats of his foemen. He would let them taste his wrath before they overpowered him!

At last they came—painted, befeathered warriors—even more hideous than nature had intended them. They came and pushed him into the open, where his appearance was greeted by wild shouts from the assembled villagers.

To the stake they led him, and as they pushed him roughly against it preparatory to binding him there securely for the dance of death that would presently encircle him, Tarzan tensed his mighty thews and with a single, powerful wrench parted the loosened thongs which had secured his hands. Like thought, for quickness, he leaped forward among the warriors nearest him. A blow sent one to earth, as, growling and snarling, the beast-man leaped upon the breast of another. His fangs were buried instantly in the jugular of his adversary and then a half hundred black men had leaped upon him and borne him to earth.

Striking, clawing, and snapping, the

ape-man fought—fought as his foster people had taught him to fight—fought like a wild beast cornered. His strength, his agility, his courage, and his intelligence rendered him easily a match for half a dozen black men in a hand-to-hand struggle, but not even Tarzan of the Apes could hope to successfully cope with half a hundred.

Slowly they were overpowering him, though a score of them bled from ugly wounds, and two lay very still beneath the trampling feet, and the rolling bodies of the contestants.

Overpower him they might, but could they keep him overpowered while they bound him? A half hour of desperate endeavor convinced them that they could

not, and so Mbonga, who, like all good rulers, had circled in the safety of the background, called to one to work his way in and spear the victim. Gradually, through the milling, battling men, the warrior approached the object of his quest.

He stood with poised spear above his head waiting for the instant that would expose a vulnerable part of the ape-man's body and still not endanger one of the blacks. Closer and closer he edged about, following the movements of the twisting, scuffling combatants. The growls of the ape-man sent cold chills up the warrior's spine, causing him to go carefully lest he miss at the first cast and lay himself open to an attack from those

merciless teeth and mighty hands.

At last he found an opening. Higher he raised his spear, tensing his muscles, rolling beneath his glistening, ebon hide, and then from the jungle just beyond the palisade came a thunderous crashing. The spear-hand paused, the black cast a quick glance in the direction of the disturbance, as did the others of the blacks who were not occupied with the subjugation of the ape- man.

In the glare of the fires they saw a huge bulk topping the barrier. They saw the palisade belly and sway inward. They saw it burst as though built of straws, and an instant later Tantor, the elephant, thundered down upon them.

To right and left the blacks fled,

screaming in terror. Some who hovered upon the verge of the strife with Tarzan heard and made good their escape, but a half dozen there were so wrapped in the blood-madness of battle that they failed to note the approach of the giant tusker.

Upon these Tantor charged, trumpeting furiously. Above them he stopped, his sensitive trunk weaving among them, and there, at the bottom, he found Tarzan, bloody, but still battling.

A warrior turned his eyes upward from the melee. Above him towered the gigantic bulk of the pachyderm, the little eyes flashing with the reflected light of the fires—wicked, frightful, terrifying. The warrior screamed, and as he screamed, the sinuous trunk encircled

him, lifted him high above the ground, and hurled him far after the fleeing crowd.

Another and another Tantor wrenched from the body of the ape-man, throwing them to right and to left, where they lay either moaning or very quiet, as death came slowly or at once.

At a distance Mbonga rallied his warriors. His greedy eyes had noted the great ivory tusks of the bull. The first panic of terror relieved, he urged his men forward to attack with their heavy elephant spears; but as they came, Tantor swung Tarzan to his broad head, and, wheeling, lumbered off into the jungle through the great rent he had made in the palisade.

Elephant hunters may be right when they aver that this animal would not have rendered such service to a man, but to Tantor, Tarzan was not a man —he was but a fellow jungle beast.

And so it was that Tantor, the elephant, discharged an obligation to Tarzan of the Apes, cementing even more closely the friendship that had existed between them since Tarzan as a little, brown boy rode upon Tantor's huge back through the moonlit jungle beneath the equatorial stars.

3. THE FIGHT FOR THE BALU

Teeka had become a mother. Tarzan of the Apes was intensely interested, much more so, in fact, than Taug, the father. Tarzan was very fond of Teeka. Even the cares of prospective motherhood had not entirely quenched the fires of carefree youth, and Teeka had remained a good-natured playmate even at an age when other shes of the tribe of Kerchak had assumed the sullen dignity of maturity. She yet retained her childish delight in the primitive games of tag and hide-and-go-seek which Tarzan's fertile man-mind had evolved.

To play tag through the tree tops is an exciting and inspiring pastime. Tarzan delighted in it, but the bulls of his

childhood had long since abandoned such childish practices. Teeka, though, had been keen for it always until shortly before the baby came; but with the advent of her first-born, even Teeka changed.

The evidence of the change surprised and hurt Tarzan immeasurably. One morning he saw Teeka squatted upon a low branch hugging something very close to her hairy breast—a wee something which squirmed and wriggled. Tarzan approached filled with the curiosity which is common to all creatures endowed with brains which have progressed beyond the microscopic stage.

Teeka rolled her eyes in his direction

and strained the squirming mite still closer to her. Tarzan came nearer. Teeka drew away and bared her fangs. Tarzan was nonplussed. In all his experiences with Teeka, never before had she bared fangs at him other than in play; but today she did not look playful. Tarzan ran his brown fingers through his thick, black hair, cocked his head upon one side, and stared. Then he edged a bit nearer, craning his neck to have a better look at the thing which Teeka cuddled.

Again Teeka drew back her upper lip in a warning snarl. Tarzan reached forth a hand, cautiously, to touch the thing which Teeka held, and Teeka, with a hideous growl, turned suddenly upon him. Her teeth sank into the flesh of his

forearm before the ape-man could snatch it away, and she pursued him for a short distance as he retreated incontinently through the trees; but Teeka, carrying her baby, could not overtake him. At a safe distance Tarzan stopped and turned to regard his erstwhile play-fellow in unconcealed astonishment. What had happened to so alter the gentle Teeka? She had so covered the thing in her arms that Tarzan had not yet been able to recognize it for what it was; but now, as she turned from the pursuit of him, he saw it. Through his pain and chagrin he smiled, for Tarzan had seen young ape mothers before. In a few days she would be less suspicious. Still Tarzan was hurt; it was not right that Teeka, of all others,

should fear him. Why, not for the world would he harm her, or her balu, which is the ape word for baby.

And now, above the pain of his injured arm and the hurt to his pride, rose a still stronger desire to come close and inspect the new-born son of Taug. Possibly you will wonder that Tarzan of the Apes, mighty fighter that he was, should have fled before the irritable attack of a she, or that he should hesitate to return for the satisfaction of his curiosity when with ease he might have vanquished the weakened mother of the new-born cub; but you need not wonder. Were you an ape, you would know that only a bull in the throes of madness will turn upon a female other than to gently

chastise her, with the occasional exception of the individual whom we find exemplified among our own kind, and who delights in beating up his better half because she happens to be smaller and weaker than he.

Tarzan again came toward the young mother—warily and with his line of retreat safely open. Again Teeka growled ferociously. Tarzan expostulated.

"Tarzan of the Apes will not harm Teeka's balu," he said. "Let me see it."

"Go away!" commanded Teeka. "Go away, or I will kill you."

"Let me see it," urged Tarzan.

"Go away," reiterated the she-ape. "Here comes Taug. He will make you go

away. Taug will kill you. This is Taug's balu."

A savage growl close behind him apprised Tarzan of the nearness of Taug, and the fact that the bull had heard the warnings and threats of his mate and was coming to her succor.

Now Taug, as well as Teeka, had been Tarzan's play-fellow while the bull was still young enough to wish to play. Once Tarzan had saved Taug's life; but the memory of an ape is not overlong, nor would gratitude rise above the parental instinct. Tarzan and Taug had once measured strength, and Tarzan had been victorious. That fact Taug could be depended upon still to remember; but even so, he might readily face another

defeat for his first-born—if he chanced to be in the proper mood.

From his hideous growls, which now rose in strength and volume, he seemed to be in quite the mood. Now Tarzan felt no fear of Taug, nor did the unwritten law of the jungle demand that he should flee from battle with any male, unless he cared to from purely personal reasons. But Tarzan liked Taug. He had no grudge against him, and his man-mind told him what the mind of an ape would never have deduced—that Taug's attitude in no sense indicated hatred. It was but the instinctive urge of the male to protect its offspring and its mate.

Tarzan had no desire to battle with Taug, nor did the blood of his English

ancestors relish the thought of flight, yet when the bull charged, Tarzan leaped nimbly to one side, and thus encouraged, Taug wheeled and rushed again madly to the attack. Perhaps the memory of a past defeat at Tarzan's hands goaded him. Perhaps the fact that Teeka sat there watching him aroused a desire to vanquish the ape-man before her eyes, for in the breast of every jungle male lurks a vast egotism which finds expression in the performance of deeds of derring-do before an audience of the opposite sex.

At the ape-man's side swung his long grass rope—the play-thing of yesterday, the weapon of today—and as Taug charged the second time, Tarzan slipped

the coils over his head and deftly shook out the sliding noose as he again nimbly eluded the ungainly beast. Before the ape could turn again, Tarzan had fled far aloft among the branches of the upper terrace.

Taug, now wrought to a frenzy of real rage, followed him. Teeka peered upward at them. It was difficult to say whether she was interested. Taug could not climb as rapidly as Tarzan, so the latter reached the high levels to which the heavy ape dared not follow before the former overtook him. There he halted and looked down upon his pursuer, making faces at him and calling him such choice names as occurred to the fertile man-brain. Then, when he had worked

Taug to such a pitch of foaming rage that the great bull fairly danced upon the bending limb beneath him, Tarzan's hand shot suddenly outward, a widening noose dropped swiftly through the air, there was a quick jerk as it settled about Taug, falling to his knees, a jerk that tightened it securely about the hairy legs of the anthropoid.

Taug, slow of wit, realized too late the intention of his tormentor. He scrambled to escape, but the ape-man gave the rope a tremendous jerk that pulled Taug from his perch, and a moment later, growling hideously, the ape hung head downward thirty feet above the ground.

Tarzan secured the rope to a stout

limb and descended to a point close to Taug.

"Taug," he said, "you are as stupid as Buto, the rhinoceros. Now you may hang here until you get a little sense in your thick head. You may hang here and watch while I go and talk with Teeka."

Taug blustered and threatened, but Tarzan only grinned at him as he dropped lightly to the lower levels. Here he again approached Teeka only to be again greeted with bared fangs and menacing growls. He sought to placate her; he urged his friendly intentions, and craned his neck to have a look at Teeka's balu; but the she-ape was not to be persuaded that he meant other than harm to her little one. Her motherhood was

still so new that reason was yet subservient to instinct.

Realizing the futility of attempting to catch and chastise Tarzan, Teeka sought to escape him. She dropped to the ground and lumbered across the little clearing about which the apes of the tribe were disposed in rest or in the search of food, and presently Tarzan abandoned his attempts to persuade her to permit a close examination of the balu. The ape-man would have liked to handle the tiny thing. The very sight of it awakened in his breast a strange yearning. He wished to cuddle and fondle the grotesque little ape-thing. It was Teeka's balu and Tarzan had once lavished his young affections upon

Teeka.

But now his attention was diverted by the voice of Taug. The threats that had filled the ape's mouth had turned to pleas. The tightening noose was stopping the circulation of the blood in his legs—he was beginning to suffer. Several apes sat near him highly interested in his predicament. They made uncomplimentary remarks about him, for each of them had felt the weight of Taug's mighty hands and the strength of his great jaws. They were enjoying revenge.

Teeka, seeing that Tarzan had turned back toward the trees, had halted in the center of the clearing, and there she sat hugging her balu and casting suspicious

glances here and there. With the coming of the balu, Teeka's care- free world had suddenly become peopled with innumerable enemies. She saw an implacable foe in Tarzan, always heretofore her best friend. Even poor old Mumga, half blind and almost entirely toothless, searching patiently for grubworms beneath a fallen log, represented to her a malignant spirit thirsting for the blood of little balus.

And while Teeka guarded suspiciously against harm, where there was no harm, she failed to note two baleful, yellow-green eyes staring fixedly at her from behind a clump of bushes at the opposite side of the clearing.

Hollow from hunger, Sheeta, the panther, glared greedily at the tempting meat so close at hand, but the sight of the great bulls beyond gave him pause.

Ah, if the she-ape with her balu would but come just a trifle nearer! A quick spring and he would be upon them and away again with his meat before the bulls could prevent.

The tip of his tawny tail moved in spasmodic little jerks; his lower jaw hung low, exposing a red tongue and yellow fangs. But all this Teeka did not see, nor did any other of the apes who were feeding or resting about her. Nor did Tarzan or the apes in the trees.

Hearing the abuse which the bulls were pouring upon the helpless Taug,

Tarzan clambered quickly among them. One was edging closer and leaning far out in an effort to reach the dangling ape. He had worked himself into quite a fury through recollection of the last occasion upon which Taug had mauled him, and now he was bent upon revenge. Once he had grasped the swinging ape, he would quickly have drawn him within reach of his jaws. Tarzan saw and was wroth. He loved a fair fight, but the thing which this ape contemplated revolted him. Already a hairy hand had clutched the helpless Taug when, with an angry growl of protest, Tarzan leaped to the branch at the attacking ape's side, and with a single mighty cuff, swept him from his perch.

Surprised and enraged, the bull clutched madly for support as he toppled sidewise, and then with an agile movement succeeded in projecting himself toward another limb a few feet below. Here he found a hand-hold, quickly righted himself, and as quickly clambered upward to be revenged upon Tarzan, but the ape-man was otherwise engaged and did not wish to be interrupted. He was explaining again to Taug the depths of the latter's abysmal ignorance, and pointing out how much greater and mightier was Tarzan of the Apes than Taug or any other ape.

In the end he would release Taug, but not until Taug was fully acquainted with his own inferiority. And then the

maddened bull came from beneath, and instantly Tarzan was transformed from a good-natured, teasing youth into a snarling, savage beast. Along his scalp the hair bristled: his upper lip drew back that his fighting fangs might be uncovered and ready. He did not wait for the bull to reach him, for something in the appearance or the voice of the attacker aroused within the ape-man a feeling of belligerent antagonism that would not be denied. With a scream that carried no human note, Tarzan leaped straight at the throat of the attacker.

The impetuosity of this act and the weight and momentum of his body carried the bull backward, clutching and clawing for support, down through the

leafy branches of the tree. For fifteen feet the two fell, Tarzan's teeth buried in the jugular of his opponent, when a stout branch stopped their descent. The bull struck full upon the small of his back across the limb, hung there for a moment with the ape-man still upon his breast, and then toppled over toward the ground.

Tarzan had felt the instantaneous relaxation of the body beneath him after the heavy impact with the tree limb, and as the other turned completely over and started again upon its fall toward the ground, he reached forth a hand and caught the branch in time to stay his own descent, while the ape dropped like a plummet to the foot of the tree.

Tarzan looked downward for a moment upon the still form of his late antagonist, then he rose to his full height, swelled his deep chest, smote upon it with his clenched fist and roared out the uncanny challenge of the victorious bull ape.

Even Sheeta, the panther, crouched for a spring at the edge of the little clearing, moved uneasily as the mighty voice sent its weird cry reverberating through the jungle. To right and left, nervously, glanced Sheeta, as though assuring himself that the way of escape lay ready at hand.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," boasted the ape-man; "mighty hunter, mighty fighter! None in all the jungle so great as

Tarzan."

Then he made his way back in the direction of Taug. Teeka had watched the happenings in the tree. She had even placed her precious balu upon the soft grasses and come a little nearer that she might better witness all that was passing in the branches above her. In her heart of hearts did she still esteem the smooth-skinned Tarzan? Did her savage breast swell with pride as she witnessed his victory over the ape? You will have to ask Teeka.

And Sheeta, the panther, saw that the she-ape had left her cub alone among the grasses. He moved his tail again, as though this closest approximation of lashing in which he dared indulge might

stimulate his momentarily waned courage. The cry of the victorious ape-man still held his nerves beneath its spell. It would be several minutes before he again could bring himself to the point of charging into view of the giant anthropoids.

And as he regathered his forces, Tarzan reached Taug's side, and then clambering higher up to the point where the end of the grass rope was made fast, he unloosed it and lowered the ape slowly downward, swinging him in until the clutching hands fastened upon a limb.

Quickly Taug drew himself to a position of safety and shook off the noose. In his rage-maddened heart was no room for gratitude to the ape-man. He

recalled only the fact that Tarzan had laid this painful indignity upon him. He would be revenged, but just at present his legs were so numb and his head so dizzy that he must postpone the gratification of his vengeance.

Tarzan was coiling his rope the while he lectured Taug on the futility of pitting his poor powers, physical and intellectual, against those of his betters. Teeka had come close beneath the tree and was peering upward. Sheeta was worming his way stealthily forward, his belly close to the ground. In another moment he would be clear of the underbrush and ready for the rapid charge and the quick retreat that would end the brief existence of Teeka's balu.

Then Tarzan chanced to look up and across the clearing. Instantly his attitude of good-natured bantering and pompous boastfulness dropped from him. Silently and swiftly he shot downward toward the ground. Teeka, seeing him coming, and thinking that he was after her or her balu, bristled and prepared to fight. But Tarzan sped by her, and as he went, her eyes followed him and she saw the cause of his sudden descent and his rapid charge across the clearing. There in full sight now was Sheeta, the panther, stalking slowly toward the tiny, wriggling balu which lay among the grasses many yards away.

Teeka gave voice to a shrill scream of terror and of warning as she dashed

after the ape-man. Sheeta saw Tarzan coming. He saw the she-ape's cub before him, and he thought that this other was bent upon robbing him of his prey. With an angry growl, he charged.

Taug, warned by Teeka's cry, came lumbering down to her assistance. Several other bulls, growling and barking, closed in toward the clearing, but they were all much farther from the balu and the panther than was Tarzan of the Apes, so it was that Sheeta and the ape-man reached Teeka's little one almost simultaneously; and there they stood, one upon either side of it, baring their fangs and snarling at each other over the little creature.

Sheeta was afraid to seize the balu,

for thus he would give the ape-man an opening for attack; and for the same reason Tarzan hesitated to snatch the panther's prey out of harm's way, for had he stooped to accomplish this, the great beast would have been upon him in an instant. Thus they stood while Teeka came across the clearing, going more slowly as she neared the panther, for even her mother love could scarce overcome her instinctive terror of this natural enemy of her kind.

Behind her came Taug, warily and with many pauses and much bluster, and still behind him came other bulls, snarling ferociously and uttering their uncanny challenges. Sheeta's yellow-green eyes glared terribly at Tarzan, and

past Tarzan they shot brief glances at the apes of Kerchak advancing upon him. Discretion prompted him to turn and flee, but hunger and the close proximity of the tempting morsel in the grass before him urged him to remain. He reached forth a paw toward Teeka's balu, and as he did so, with a savage guttural, Tarzan of the Apes was upon him.

The panther reared to meet the ape-man's attack. He swung a frightful raking blow for Tarzan that would have wiped his face away had it landed, but it did not land, for Tarzan ducked beneath it and closed, his long knife ready in one strong hand—the knife of his dead father, of the father he never had known.

Instantly the balu was forgotten by Sheeta, the panther. He now thought only of tearing to ribbons with his powerful talons the flesh of his antagonist, of burying his long, yellow fangs in the soft, smooth hide of the ape-man, but Tarzan had fought before with clawed creatures of the jungle. Before now he had battled with fanged monsters, nor always had he come away unscathed. He knew the risk that he ran, but Tarzan of the Apes, inured to the sight of suffering and death, shrank from neither, for he feared neither.

The instant that he dodged beneath Sheeta's blow, he leaped to the beast's rear and then full upon the tawny back, burying his teeth in Sheeta's neck and the

fingers of one hand in the fur at the throat, and with the other hand he drove his blade into Sheeta's side.

Over and over upon the grass rolled Sheeta, growling and screaming, clawing and biting, in a mad effort to dislodge his antagonist or get some portion of his body within range of teeth or talons.

As Tarzan leaped to close quarters with the panther, Teeka had run quickly in and snatched up her balu. Now she sat upon a high branch, safe out of harm's way, cuddling the little thing close to her hairy breast, the while her savage little eyes bored down upon the contestants in the clearing, and her ferocious voice urged Taug and the other bulls to leap

into the melee.

Thus goaded the bulls came closer, redoubling their hideous clamor; but Sheeta was already sufficiently engaged —he did not even hear them. Once he succeeded in partially dislodging the ape-man from his back, so that Tarzan swung for an instant in front of those awful talons, and in the brief instant before he could regain his former hold, a raking blow from a hind paw laid open one leg from hip to knee.

It was the sight and smell of this blood, possibly, which wrought upon the encircling apes; but it was Taug who really was responsible for the thing they did.

Taug, but a moment before filled with

rage toward Tarzan of the Apes, stood close to the battling pair, his red-rimmed, wicked little eyes glaring at them. What was passing in his savage brain? Did he gloat over the unenviable position of his recent tormentor? Did he long to see Sheeta's great fangs sink into the soft throat of the ape-man? Or did he realize the courageous unselfishness that had prompted Tarzan to rush to the rescue and imperil his life for Teeka's balu—for Taug's little balu? Is gratitude a possession of man only, or do the lower orders know it also?

With the spilling of Tarzan's blood, Taug answered these questions. With all the weight of his great body he leaped, hideously growling, upon Sheeta. His

long fighting fangs buried themselves in the white throat. His powerful arms beat and clawed at the soft fur until it flew upward in the jungle breeze.

And with Taug's example before them the other bulls charged, burying Sheeta beneath rending fangs and filling all the forest with the wild din of their battle cries.

Ah! but it was a wondrous and inspiring sight—this battle of the primordial apes and the great, white ape-man with their ancestral foe, Sheeta, the panther.

In frenzied excitement, Teeka fairly danced upon the limb which swayed beneath her great weight as she urged on the males of her people, and Thaka, and

Mumga, and Kamma, with the other shes of the tribe of Kerchak, added their shrill cries or fierce barkings to the pandemonium which now reigned within the jungle.

Bitten and biting, tearing and torn, Sheeta battled for his life; but the odds were against him. Even Numa, the lion, would have hesitated to have attacked an equal number of the great bulls of the tribe of Kerchak, and now, a half mile away, hearing the sounds of the terrific battle, the king of beasts rose uneasily from his midday slumber and slunk off farther into the jungle.

Presently Sheeta's torn and bloody body ceased its titanic struggles. It stiffened spasmodically, twitched and

was still, yet the bulls continued to lacerate it until the beautiful coat was torn to shreds. At last they desisted from sheer physical weariness, and then from the tangle of bloody bodies rose a crimson giant, straight as an arrow.

He placed a foot upon the dead body of the panther, and lifting his blood-stained face to the blue of the equatorial heavens, gave voice to the horrid victory cry of the bull ape.

One by one his hairy fellows of the tribe of Kerchak followed his example. The shes came down from their perches of safety and struck and reviled the dead body of Sheeta. The young apes refought the battle in mimicry of their mighty elders.

Teeka was quite close to Tarzan. He turned and saw her with the balu hugged close to her hairy breast, and put out his hands to take the little one, expecting that Teeka would bare her fangs and spring upon him; but instead she placed the balu in his arms, and coming nearer, licked his frightful wounds.

And presently Taug, who had escaped with only a few scratches, came and squatted beside Tarzan and watched him as he played with the little balu, and at last he too leaned over and helped Teeka with the cleansing and the healing of the ape-man's hurts.

4. THE GOD OF TARZAN

Among the books of his dead father in the little cabin by the land-locked harbor, Tarzan of the Apes found many things to puzzle his young head. By much labor and through the medium of infinite patience as well, he had, without assistance, discovered the purpose of the little bugs which ran riot upon the printed pages. He had learned that in the many combinations in which he found them they spoke in a silent language, spoke in a strange tongue, spoke of wonderful things which a little ape-boy could not by any chance fully understand, arousing his curiosity, stimulating his imagination and filling his soul with a mighty longing for further

knowledge.

A dictionary had proven itself a wonderful storehouse of information, when, after several years of tireless endeavor, he had solved the mystery of its purpose and the manner of its use. He had learned to make a species of game out of it, following up the spoor of a new thought through the mazes of the many definitions which each new word required him to consult. It was like following a quarry through the jungle—it was hunting, and Tarzan of the Apes was an indefatigable huntsman.

There were, of course, certain words which aroused his curiosity to a greater extent than others, words which, for one reason or another, excited his

imagination. There was one, for example, the meaning of which was rather difficult to grasp. It was the word GOD. Tarzan first had been attracted to it by the fact that it was very short and that it commenced with a larger g-bug than those about it—a male g-bug it was to Tarzan, the lower-case letters being females. Another fact which attracted him to this word was the number of he-bugs which figured in its definition—Supreme Deity, Creator or Upholder of the Universe. This must be a very important word indeed, he would have to look into it, and he did, though it still baffled him after many months of thought and study.

However, Tarzan counted no time

wasted which he devoted to these strange hunting expeditions into the game preserves of knowledge, for each word and each definition led on and on into strange places, into new worlds where, with increasing frequency, he met old, familiar faces. And always he added to his store of knowledge.

But of the meaning of GOD he was yet in doubt. Once he thought he had grasped it—that God was a mighty chieftain, king of all the Mangani. He was not quite sure, however, since that would mean that God was mightier than Tarzan—a point which Tarzan of the Apes, who acknowledged no equal in the jungle, was loath to concede.

But in all the books he had there was

no picture of God, though he found much to confirm his belief that God was a great, an all-powerful individual. He saw pictures of places where God was worshiped; but never any sign of God. Finally he began to wonder if God were not of a different form than he, and at last he determined to set out in search of Him.

He commenced by questioning Mumga, who was very old and had seen many strange things in her long life; but Mumga, being an ape, had a faculty for recalling the trivial. That time when Gunto mistook a sting-bug for an edible beetle had made more impression upon Mumga than all the innumerable manifestations of the greatness of God

which she had witnessed, and which, of course, she had not understood.

Numgo, overhearing Tarzan's questions, managed to wrest his attention long enough from the diversion of flea hunting to advance the theory that the power which made the lightning and the rain and the thunder came from Goro, the moon. He knew this, he said, because the Dum-Dum always was danced in the light of Goro. This reasoning, though entirely satisfactory to Numgo and Mumga, failed fully to convince Tarzan. However, it gave him a basis for further investigation along a new line. He would investigate the moon.

That night he clambered to the loftiest pinnacle of the tallest jungle giant. The

moon was full, a great, glorious, equatorial moon. The ape-man, upright upon a slender, swaying limb, raised his bronzed face to the silver orb. Now that he had clambered to the highest point within his reach, he discovered, to his surprise, that Goro was as far away as when he viewed him from the ground. He thought that Goro was attempting to elude him.

"Come, Goro!" he cried, "Tarzan of the Apes will not harm you!" But still the moon held aloof.

"Tell me," he continued, "if you be the great king who sends Ara, the lightning; who makes the great noise and the mighty winds, and sends the waters down upon the jungle people when the

days are dark and it is cold. Tell me, Goro, are you God?"

Of course he did not pronounce God as you or I would pronounce His name, for Tarzan knew naught of the spoken language of his English forbears; but he had a name of his own invention for each of the little bugs which constituted the alphabet. Unlike the apes he was not satisfied merely to have a mental picture of the things he knew, he must have a word descriptive of each. In reading he grasped a word in its entirety; but when he spoke the words he had learned from the books of his father, he pronounced each according to the names he had given the various little bugs which occurred in it, usually giving the gender

prefix for each.

Thus it was an imposing word which Tarzan made of GOD. The masculine prefix of the apes is BU, the feminine MU; g Tarzan had named LA, o he pronounced TU, and d was MO. So the word God evolved itself into BULAMUTUMUMO, or, in English, he-g-she-o-she-d.

Similarly he had arrived at a strange and wonderful spelling of his own name. Tarzan is derived from the two ape words TAR and ZAN, meaning white skin. It was given him by his foster mother, Kala, the great she-ape. When Tarzan first put it into the written language of his own people he had not yet chanced upon either WHITE or

SKIN in the dictionary; but in a primer he had seen the picture of a little white boy and so he wrote his name BUMUDE-MUTOMURO, or he- boy.

To follow Tarzan's strange system of spelling would be laborious as well as futile, and so we shall in the future, as we have in the past, adhere to the more familiar forms of our grammar school copybooks. It would tire you to remember that DO meant b, TU o, and RO y, and that to say he-boy you must prefix the ape masculine gender sound BU before the entire word and the feminine gender sound MU before each of the lower-case letters which go to make up boy—it would tire you and it would bring me to the nineteenth hole

several strokes under par.

And so Tarzan harangued the moon, and when Goro did not reply, Tarzan of the Apes waxed wroth. He swelled his giant chest and bared his fighting fangs, and hurled into the teeth of the dead satellite the challenge of the bull ape.

"You are not Bulamutumumo," he cried. "You are not king of the jungle folk. You are not so great as Tarzan, mighty fighter, mighty hunter. None there is so great as Tarzan. If there be a Bulamutumumo, Tarzan can kill him. Come down, Goro, great coward, and fight with Tarzan. Tarzan will kill you. I am Tarzan, the killer."

But the moon made no answer to the boasting of the ape-man, and when a

cloud came and obscured her face, Tarzan thought that Goro was indeed afraid, and was hiding from him, so he came down out of the trees and awoke Numgo and told him how great was Tarzan—how he had frightened Goro out of the sky and made him tremble. Tarzan spoke of the moon as HE, for all things large or awe inspiring are male to the ape folk.

Numgo was not much impressed; but he was very sleepy, so he told Tarzan to go away and leave his betters alone.

"But where shall I find God?" insisted Tarzan. "You are very old; if there is a God you must have seen Him. What does He look like? Where does He live?"

"I am God," replied Numgo. "Now

sleep and disturb me no more."

Tarzan looked at Numgo steadily for several minutes, his shapely head sank just a trifle between his great shoulders, his square chin shot forward and his short upper lip drew back, exposing his white teeth. Then, with a low growl he leaped upon the ape and buried his fangs in the other's hairy shoulder, clutching the great neck in his mighty fingers. Twice he shook the old ape, then he released his tooth-hold.

"Are you God?" he demanded.

"No," wailed Numgo. "I am only a poor, old ape. Leave me alone. Go ask the Gomangani where God is. They are hairless like yourself and very wise, too. They should know."

Tarzan released Numgo and turned away. The suggestion that he consult the blacks appealed to him, and though his relations with the people of Mbonga, the chief, were the antithesis of friendly, he could at least spy upon his hated enemies and discover if they had intercourse with God.

So it was that Tarzan set forth through the trees toward the village of the blacks, all excitement at the prospect of discovering the Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. As he traveled he reviewed, mentally, his armament —the condition of his hunting knife, the number of his arrows, the newness of the gut which strung his bow—he hefted the war spear which had once been the

pride of some black warrior of Mbonga's tribe.

If he met God, Tarzan would be prepared. One could never tell whether a grass rope, a war spear, or a poisoned arrow would be most efficacious against an unfamiliar foe. Tarzan of the Apes was quite content—if God wished to fight, the ape-man had no doubt as to the outcome of the struggle. There were many questions Tarzan wished to put to the Creator of the Universe and so he hoped that God would not prove a belligerent God; but his experience of life and the ways of living things had taught him that any creature with the means for offense and defense was quite likely to provoke attack if in the proper

mood.

It was dark when Tarzan came to the village of Mbonga. As silently as the silent shadows of the night he sought his accustomed place among the branches of the great tree which overhung the palisade. Below him, in the village street, he saw men and women. The men were hideously painted—more hideously than usual. Among them moved a weird and grotesque figure, a tall figure that went upon the two legs of a man and yet had the head of a buffalo. A tail dangled to his ankles behind him, and in one hand he carried a zebra's tail while the other clutched a bunch of small arrows.

Tarzan was electrified. Could it be

that chance had given him thus early an opportunity to look upon God? Surely this thing was neither man nor beast, so what could it be then other than the Creator of the Universe! The ape-man watched the every move of the strange creature. He saw the black men and women fall back at its approach as though they stood in terror of its mysterious powers.

Presently he discovered that the deity was speaking and that all listened in silence to his words. Tarzan was sure that none other than God could inspire such awe in the hearts of the Gomangani, or stop their mouths so effectually without recourse to arrows or spears. Tarzan had come to look with contempt

upon the blacks, principally because of their garrulity. The small apes talked a great deal and ran away from an enemy. The big, old bulls of Kerchak talked but little and fought upon the slightest provocation. Numa, the lion, was not given to loquacity, yet of all the jungle folk there were few who fought more often than he.

Tarzan witnessed strange things that night, none of which he understood, and, perhaps because they were strange, he thought that they must have to do with the God he could not understand. He saw three youths receive their first war spears in a weird ceremony which the grotesque witch-doctor strove successfully to render uncanny and

awesome.

Hugely interested, he watched the slashing of the three brown arms and the exchange of blood with Mbonga, the chief, in the rites of the ceremony of blood brotherhood. He saw the zebra's tail dipped into a caldron of water above which the witch-doctor had made magical passes the while he danced and leaped about it, and he saw the breasts and foreheads of each of the three novitiates sprinkled with the charmed liquid. Could the ape-man have known the purpose of this act, that it was intended to render the recipient invulnerable to the attacks of his enemies and fearless in the face of any danger, he would doubtless have leaped

into the village street and appropriated the zebra's tail and a portion of the contents of the caldron.

But he did not know, and so he only wondered, not alone at what he saw but at the strange sensations which played up and down his naked spine, sensations induced, doubtless, by the same hypnotic influence which held the black spectators in tense awe upon the verge of a hysteric upheaval.

The longer Tarzan watched, the more convinced he became that his eyes were upon God, and with the conviction came determination to have word with the deity. With Tarzan of the Apes, to think was to act.

The people of Mbonga were keyed to

the highest pitch of hysterical excitement. They needed little to release the accumulated pressure of static nerve force which the terrorizing mummery of the witch-doctor had induced.

A lion roared, suddenly and loud, close without the palisade. The blacks started nervously, dropping into utter silence as they listened for a repetition of that all-too-familiar and always terrorizing voice. Even the witch-doctor paused in the midst of an intricate step, remaining momentarily rigid and statuesque as he plumbed his cunning mind for a suggestion as how best he might take advantage of the condition of his audience and the timely interruption.

Already the evening had been vastly

profitable to him. There would be three goats for the initiation of the three youths into full-fledged warriorship, and besides these he had received several gifts of grain and beads, together with a piece of copper wire from admiring and terrified members of his audience.

Numa's roar still reverberated along taut nerves when a woman's laugh, shrill and piercing, shattered the silence of the village. It was this moment that Tarzan chose to drop lightly from his tree into the village street. Fearless among his blood enemies he stood, taller by a full head than many of Mbonga's warriors, straight as their straightest arrow, muscled like Numa, the lion.

For a moment Tarzan stood looking

straight at the witch-doctor. Every eye was upon him, yet no one had moved—a paralysis of terror held them, to be broken a moment later as the ape-man, with a toss of head, stepped straight toward the hideous figure beneath the buffalo head.

Then the nerves of the blacks could stand no more. For months the terror of the strange, white, jungle god had been upon them. Their arrows had been stolen from the very center of the village; their warriors had been silently slain upon the jungle trails and their dead bodies dropped mysteriously and by night into the village street as from the heavens above.

One or two there were who had

glimpsed the strange figure of the new demon and it was from their oft-repeated descriptions that the entire village now recognized Tarzan as the author of many of their ills. Upon another occasion and by daylight, the warriors would doubtless have leaped to attack him, but at night, and this night of all others, when they were wrought to such a pitch of nervous dread by the uncanny artistry of their witch-doctor, they were helpless with terror. As one man they turned and fled, scattering for their huts, as Tarzan advanced. For a moment one and one only held his ground. It was the witch-doctor. More than half self-hypnotized into a belief in his own charlatanry he faced this new demon who threatened to

undermine his ancient and lucrative profession.

"Are you God?" asked Tarzan.

The witch-doctor, having no idea of the meaning of the other's words, danced a few strange steps, leaped high in the air, turning completely around and alighting in a stooping posture with feet far outspread and head thrust out toward the ape-man. Thus he remained for an instant before he uttered a loud "Boo!" which was evidently intended to frighten Tarzan away; but in reality had no such effect.

Tarzan did not pause. He had set out to approach and examine God and nothing upon earth might now stay his feet. Seeing that his antics had no

potency with the visitor, the witch-doctor tried some new medicine. Spitting upon the zebra's tail, which he still clutched in one hand, he made circles above it with the arrows in the other hand, meanwhile backing cautiously away from Tarzan and speaking confidentially to the bushy end of the tail.

This medicine must be short medicine, however, for the creature, god or demon, was steadily closing up the distance which had separated them. The circles therefore were few and rapid, and when they were completed, the witch- doctor struck an attitude which was intended to be awe inspiring and waving the zebra's tail before him, drew

an imaginary line between himself and Tarzan.

"Beyond this line you cannot pass, for my medicine is strong medicine," he cried. "Stop, or you will fall dead as your foot touches this spot. My mother was a voodoo, my father was a snake; I live upon lions' hearts and the entrails of the panther; I eat young babies for breakfast and the demons of the jungle are my slaves. I am the most powerful witch-doctor in the world; I fear nothing, for I cannot die. I—" But he got no further; instead he turned and fled as Tarzan of the Apes crossed the magical dead line and still lived.

As the witch-doctor ran, Tarzan almost lost his temper. This was no way

for God to act, at least not in accordance with the conception Tarzan had come to have of God.

"Come back!" he cried. "Come back, God, I will not harm you." But the witch-doctor was in full retreat by this time, stepping high as he leaped over cooking pots and the smoldering embers of small fires that had burned before the huts of villagers. Straight for his own hut ran the witch-doctor, terror- spurred to unwonted speed; but futile was his effort —the ape- man bore down upon him with the speed of Bara, the deer.

Just at the entrance to his hut the witch-doctor was overhauled. A heavy hand fell upon his shoulder to drag him back. It seized upon a portion of the

buffalo hide, dragging the disguise from him. It was a naked black man that Tarzan saw dodge into the darkness of the hut's interior.

So this was what he had thought was God! Tarzan's lip curled in an angry snarl as he leaped into the hut after the terror-stricken witch-doctor. In the blackness within he found the man huddled at the far side and dragged him forth into the comparative lightness of the moonlit night.

The witch-doctor bit and scratched in an attempt to escape; but a few cuffs across the head brought him to a better realization of the futility of resistance. Beneath the moon Tarzan held the cringing figure upon its shaking feet.

"So you are God!" he cried. "If you be God, then Tarzan is greater than God," and so the ape-man thought. "I am Tarzan," he shouted into the ear of the black. "In all the jungle, or above it, or upon the running waters, or the sleeping waters, or upon the big water, or the little water, there is none so great as Tarzan. Tarzan is greater than the Mangani; he is greater than the Gomangani. With his own hands he has slain Numa, the lion, and Sheeta, the panther; there is none so great as Tarzan. Tarzan is greater than God. See!" and with a sudden wrench he twisted the black's neck until the fellow shrieked in pain and then slumped to the earth in a swoon.

Placing his foot upon the neck of the fallen witch-doctor, the ape-man raised his face to the moon and uttered the long, shrill scream of the victorious bull ape. Then he stooped and snatched the zebra's tail from the nerveless fingers of the unconscious man and without a backward glance retraced his footsteps across the village.

From several hut doorways frightened eyes watched him. Mbonga, the chief, was one of those who had seen what passed before the hut of the witch-doctor. Mbonga was greatly concerned. Wise old patriarch that he was, he never had more than half believed in witch-doctors, at least not since greater wisdom had come with age; but as a

chief he was well convinced of the power of the witch-doctor as an arm of government, and often it was that Mbonga used the superstitious fears of his people to his own ends through the medium of the medicine-man.

Mbonga and the witch-doctor had worked together and divided the spoils, and now the "face" of the witch-doctor would be lost forever if any saw what Mbonga had seen; nor would this generation again have as much faith in any future witch-doctor.

Mbonga must do something to counteract the evil influence of the forest demon's victory over the witch-doctor. He raised his heavy spear and crept silently from his hut in the wake of the

retreating ape-man. Down the village street walked Tarzan, as unconcerned and as deliberate as though only the friendly apes of Kerchak surrounded him instead of a village full of armed enemies.

Seeming only was the indifference of Tarzan, for alert and watchful was every well-trained sense. Mbonga, wily stalker of keen-eared jungle creatures, moved now in utter silence. Not even Bara, the deer, with his great ears could have guessed from any sound that Mbonga was near; but the black was not stalking Bara; he was stalking man, and so he sought only to avoid noise.

Closer and closer to the slowly moving ape-man he came. Now he

raised his war spear, throwing his spear-hand far back above his right shoulder. Once and for all would Mbonga, the chief, rid himself and his people of the menace of this terrifying enemy. He would make no poor cast; he would take pains, and he would hurl his weapon with such great force as would finish the demon forever.

But Mbonga, sure as he thought himself, erred in his calculations. He might believe that he was stalking a man —he did not know, however, that it was a man with the delicate sense perception of the lower orders. Tarzan, when he had turned his back upon his enemies, had noted what Mbonga never would have thought of considering in the

hunting of man—the wind. It was blowing in the same direction that Tarzan was proceeding, carrying to his delicate nostrils the odors which arose behind him. Thus it was that Tarzan knew that he was being followed, for even among the many stenches of an African village, the ape-man's uncanny faculty was equal to the task of differentiating one stench from another and locating with remarkable precision the source from whence it came.

He knew that a man was following him and coming closer, and his judgment warned him of the purpose of the stalker. When Mbonga, therefore, came within spear range of the ape-man, the latter suddenly wheeled upon him, so suddenly

that the poised spear was shot a fraction of a second before Mbonga had intended. It went a trifle high and Tarzan stooped to let it pass over his head; then he sprang toward the chief. But Mbonga did not wait to receive him. Instead, he turned and fled for the dark doorway of the nearest hut, calling as he went for his warriors to fall upon the stranger and slay him.

Well indeed might Mbonga scream for help, for Tarzan, young and fleet-footed, covered the distance between them in great leaps, at the speed of a charging lion. He was growling, too, not at all unlike Numa himself. Mbonga heard and his blood ran cold. He could feel the wool stiffen upon his pate and a

prickly chill run up his spine, as though Death had come and run his cold finger along Mbonga's back.

Others heard, too, and saw, from the darkness of their huts—bold warriors, hideously painted, grasping heavy war spears in nerveless fingers. Against Numa, the lion, they would have charged fearlessly. Against many times their own number of black warriors would they have raced to the protection of their chief; but this weird jungle demon filled them with terror. There was nothing human in the bestial growls that rumbled up from his deep chest; there was nothing human in the bared fangs, or the catlike leaps.

Mbonga's warriors were terrified—

too terrified to leave the seeming security of their huts while they watched the beast-man spring full upon the back of their old chieftain.

Mbonga went down with a scream of terror. He was too frightened even to attempt to defend himself. He just lay beneath his antagonist in a paralysis of fear, screaming at the top of his lungs. Tarzan half rose and kneeled above the black. He turned Mbonga over and looked him in the face, exposing the man's throat, then he drew his long, keen knife, the knife that John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, had brought from England many years before. He raised it close above Mbonga's neck. The old black whimpered with terror. He pleaded for

his life in a tongue which Tarzan could not understand.

For the first time the ape-man had a close view of the chief. He saw an old man, a very old man with scrawny neck and wrinkled face—a dried, parchment-like face which resembled some of the little monkeys Tarzan knew so well. He saw the terror in the man's eyes—never before had Tarzan seen such terror in the eyes of any animal, or such a piteous appeal for mercy upon the face of any creature.

Something stayed the ape-man's hand for an instant. He wondered why it was that he hesitated to make the kill; never before had he thus delayed. The old man seemed to wither and shrink to a bag of

puny bones beneath his eyes. So weak and helpless and terror-stricken he appeared that the ape-man was filled with a great contempt; but another sensation also claimed him— something new to Tarzan of the Apes in relation to an enemy. It was pity —pity for a poor, frightened, old man.

Tarzan rose and turned away, leaving Mbonga, the chief, unharmed.

With head held high the ape-man walked through the village, swung himself into the branches of the tree which overhung the palisade and disappeared from the sight of the villagers.

All the way back to the stamping ground of the apes, Tarzan sought for an

explanation of the strange power which had stayed his hand and prevented him from slaying Mbonga. It was as though someone greater than he had commanded him to spare the life of the old man. Tarzan could not understand, for he could conceive of nothing, or no one, with the authority to dictate to him what he should do, or what he should refrain from doing.

It was late when Tarzan sought a swaying couch among the trees beneath which slept the apes of Kerchak, and he was still absorbed in the solution of his strange problem when he fell asleep.

The sun was well up in the heavens when he awoke. The apes were astir in search of food. Tarzan watched them

lazily from above as they scratched in the rotting loam for bugs and beetles and grubworms, or sought among the branches of the trees for eggs and young birds, or luscious caterpillars.

An orchid, dangling close beside his head, opened slowly, unfolding its delicate petals to the warmth and light of the sun which but recently had penetrated to its shady retreat. A thousand times had Tarzan of the Apes witnessed the beauteous miracle; but now it aroused a keener interest, for the ape-man was just commencing to ask himself questions about all the myriad wonders which heretofore he had but taken for granted.

What made the flower open? What

made it grow from a tiny bud to a full-blown bloom? Why was it at all? Why was he? Where did Numa, the lion, come from? Who planted the first tree? How did Goro get way up into the darkness of the night sky to cast his welcome light upon the fearsome nocturnal jungle? And the sun! Did the sun merely happen there?

Why were all the peoples of the jungle not trees? Why were the trees not something else? Why was Tarzan different from Taug, and Taug different from Bara, the deer, and Bara different from Sheeta, the panther, and why was not Sheeta like Buto, the rhinoceros? Where and how, anyway, did they all come from—the trees, the flowers, the

insects, the countless creatures of the jungle?

Quite unexpectedly an idea popped into Tarzan's head. In following out the many ramifications of the dictionary definition of GOD he had come upon the word CREATE—"to cause to come into existence; to form out of nothing."

Tarzan almost had arrived at something tangible when a distant wail startled him from his preoccupation into sensibility of the present and the real. The wail came from the jungle at some little distance from Tarzan's swaying couch. It was the wail of a tiny balu. Tarzan recognized it at once as the voice of Gazan, Teeka's baby. They had called it Gazan because its soft, baby hair had

been unusually red, and GAZAN in the language of the great apes, means red skin.

The wail was immediately followed by a real scream of terror from the small lungs. Tarzan was electrified into instant action. Like an arrow from a bow he shot through the trees in the direction of the sound. Ahead of him he heard the savage snarling of an adult she-ape. It was Teeka to the rescue. The danger must be very real. Tarzan could tell that by the note of rage mingled with fear in the voice of the she.

Running along bending limbs, swinging from one tree to another, the ape- man raced through the middle terraces toward the sounds which now

had risen in volume to deafening proportions. From all directions the apes of Kerchak were hurrying in response to the appeal in the tones of the balu and its mother, and as they came, their roars reverberated through the forest.

But Tarzan, swifter than his heavy fellows, distanced them all. It was he who was first upon the scene. What he saw sent a cold chill through his giant frame, for the enemy was the most hated and loathed of all the jungle creatures.

Twined in a great tree was Histah, the snake—huge, ponderous, slimy - and in the folds of its deadly embrace was Teeka's little balu, Gazan. Nothing in the jungle inspired within the breast of Tarzan so near a semblance to fear as

did the hideous Histah. The apes, too, loathed the terrifying reptile and feared him even more than they did Sheeta, the panther, or Numa, the lion. Of all their enemies there was none they gave a wider berth than they gave Histah, the snake.

Tarzan knew that Teeka was peculiarly fearful of this silent, repulsive foe, and as the scene broke upon his vision, it was the action of Teeka which filled him with the greatest wonder, for at the moment that he saw her, the she-ape leaped upon the glistening body of the snake, and as the mighty folds encircled her as well as her offspring, she made no effort to escape, but instead grasped the writhing body in a futile

effort to tear it from her screaming balu.

Tarzan knew all too well how deep-rooted was Teeka's terror of Histah. He scarce could believe the testimony of his own eyes then, when they told him that she had voluntarily rushed into that deadly embrace. Nor was Teeka's innate dread of the monster much greater than Tarzan's own. Never, willingly, had he touched a snake. Why, he could not say, for he would admit fear of nothing; nor was it fear, but rather an inherent repulsion bequeathed to him by many generations of civilized ancestors, and back of them, perhaps, by countless myriads of such as Teeka, in the breasts of each of which had lurked the same nameless terror of the slimy reptile.

Yet Tarzan did not hesitate more than had Teeka, but leaped upon Histah with all the speed and impetuosity that he would have shown had he been springing upon Bara, the deer, to make a kill for food. Thus beset the snake writhed and twisted horribly; but not for an instant did it loose its hold upon any of its intended victims, for it had included the ape-man in its cold embrace the minute that he had fallen upon it.

Still clinging to the tree, the mighty reptile held the three as though they had been without weight, the while it sought to crush the life from them. Tarzan had drawn his knife and this he now plunged rapidly into the body of the enemy; but

the encircling folds promised to sap his life before he had inflicted a death wound upon the snake. Yet on he fought, nor once did he seek to escape the horrid death that confronted him—his sole aim was to slay Histah and thus free Teeka and her balu.

The great, wide-gaping jaws of the snake turned and hovered above him. The elastic maw, which could accommodate a rabbit or a horned buck with equal facility, yawned for him; but Histah, in turning his attention upon the ape- man, brought his head within reach of Tarzan's blade. Instantly a brown hand leaped forth and seized the mottled neck, and another drove the heavy hunting knife to the hilt into the little

brain.

Convulsively Histah shuddered and relaxed, tensed and relaxed again, whipping and striking with his great body; but no longer sentient or sensible. Histah was dead, but in his death throes he might easily dispatch a dozen apes or men.

Quickly Tarzan seized Teeka and dragged her from the loosened embrace, dropping her to the ground beneath, then he extricated the balu and tossed it to its mother. Still Histah whipped about, clinging to the ape-man; but after a dozen efforts Tarzan succeeded in wriggling free and leaping to the ground out of range of the mighty battering of the dying snake.

A circle of apes surrounded the scene of the battle; but the moment that Tarzan broke safely from the enemy they turned silently away to resume their interrupted feeding, and Teeka turned with them, apparently forgetful of all but her balu and the fact that when the interruption had occurred she just had discovered an ingeniously hidden nest containing three perfectly good eggs.

Tarzan, equally indifferent to a battle that was over, merely cast a parting glance at the still writhing body of Histah and wandered off toward the little pool which served to water the tribe at this point. Strangely, he did not give the victory cry over the vanquished Histah. Why, he could not have told you,

other than that to him Histah was not an animal. He differed in some peculiar way from the other denizens of the jungle. Tarzan only knew that he hated him.

At the pool Tarzan drank his fill and lay stretched upon the soft grass beneath the shade of a tree. His mind reverted to the battle with Histah, the snake. It seemed strange to him that Teeka should have placed herself within the folds of the horrid monster. Why had she done it? Why, indeed, had he? Teeka did not belong to him, nor did Teeka's balu. They were both Taug's. Why then had he done this thing? Histah was not food for him when he was dead. There seemed to Tarzan, now that he gave the matter

thought, no reason in the world why he should have done the thing he did, and presently it occurred to him that he had acted almost involuntarily, just as he had acted when he had released the old Gomangani the previous evening.

What made him do such things? Somebody more powerful than he must force him to act at times. "All-powerful," thought Tarzan. "The little bugs say that God is all-powerful. It must be that God made me do these things, for I never did them by myself. It was God who made Teeka rush upon Histah. Teeka would never go near Histah of her own volition. It was God who held my knife from the throat of the old Gomangani. God accomplishes

strange things for he is 'all- powerful.' I cannot see Him; but I know that it must be God who does these things. No Mangani, no Gomangani, no Tarmangani could do them."

And the flowers—who made them grow? Ah, now it was all explained — the flowers, the trees, the moon, the sun, himself, every living creature in the jungle—they were all made by God out of nothing.

And what was God? What did God look like? Of that he had no conception; but he was sure that everything that was good came from God. His good act in refraining from slaying the poor, defenseless old Gomangani; Teeka's love that had hurled her into the embrace

of death; his own loyalty to Teeka which had jeopardized his life that she might live. The flowers and the trees were good and beautiful. God had made them. He made the other creatures, too, that each might have food upon which to live. He had made Sheeta, the panther, with his beautiful coat; and Numa, the lion, with his noble head and his shaggy mane. He had made Bara, the deer, lovely and graceful.

Yes, Tarzan had found God, and he spent the whole day in attributing to Him all of the good and beautiful things of nature; but there was one thing which troubled him. He could not quite reconcile it to his conception of his new-found God.

Who made Histah, the snake?

5. TARZAN AND THE BLACK BOY

Tarzan of the Apes sat at the foot of a great tree braiding a new grass rope. Beside him lay the frayed remnants of the old one, torn and severed by the fangs and talons of Sheeta, the panther. Only half the original rope was there, the balance having been carried off by the angry cat as he bounded away through the jungle with the noose still about his savage neck and the loose end dragging among the underbrush.

Tarzan smiled as he recalled Sheeta's great rage, his frantic efforts to free himself from the entangling strands, his uncanny screams that were part hate, part anger, part terror. He smiled in retrospection at the discomfiture of his

enemy, and in anticipation of another day as he added an extra strand to his new rope.

This would be the strongest, the heaviest rope that Tarzan of the Apes ever had fashioned. Visions of Numa, the lion, straining futilely in its embrace thrilled the ape-man. He was quite content, for his hands and his brain were busy. Content, too, were his fellows of the tribe of Kerchak, searching for food in the clearing and the surrounding trees about him. No perplexing thoughts of the future burdened their minds, and only occasionally, dimly arose recollections of the near past. They were stimulated to a species of brutal content by the delectable business of filling their

bellies. Afterward they would sleep—it was their life, and they enjoyed it as we enjoy ours, you and I—as Tarzan enjoyed his. Possibly they enjoyed theirs more than we enjoy ours, for who shall say that the beasts of the jungle do not better fulfill the purposes for which they are created than does man with his many excursions into strange fields and his contraventions of the laws of nature? And what gives greater content and greater happiness than the fulfilling of a destiny?

As Tarzan worked, Gazan, Teeka's little balu, played about him while Teeka sought food upon the opposite side of the clearing. No more did Teeka, the mother, or Taug, the sullen sire,

harbor suspicions of Tarzan's intentions toward their first-born. Had he not courted death to save their Gazan from the fangs and talons of Sheeta? Did he not fondle and cuddle the little one with even as great a show of affection as Teeka herself displayed? Their fears were allayed and Tarzan now found himself often in the role of nursemaid to a tiny anthropoid—an avocation which he found by no means irksome, since Gazan was a never-failing fount of surprises and entertainment.

Just now the apeling was developing those arboreal tendencies which were to stand him in such good stead during the years of his youth, when rapid flight into the upper terraces was of far more

importance and value than his undeveloped muscles and untried fighting fangs. Backing off fifteen or twenty feet from the bole of the tree beneath the branches of which Tarzan worked upon his rope, Gazan scampered quickly forward, scrambling nimbly upward to the lower limbs. Here he would squat for a moment or two, quite proud of his achievement, then clamber to the ground again and repeat. Sometimes, quite often in fact, for he was an ape, his attention was distracted by other things, a beetle, a caterpillar, a tiny field mouse, and off he would go in pursuit; the caterpillars he always caught, and sometimes the beetles; but the field mice, never.

Now he discovered the tail of the rope upon which Tarzan was working. Grasping it in one small hand he bounced away, for all the world like an animated rubber ball, snatching it from the ape-man's hand and running off across the clearing. Tarzan leaped to his feet and was in pursuit in an instant, no trace of anger on his face or in his voice as he called to the roguish little balu to drop his rope.

Straight toward his mother raced Gazan, and after him came Tarzan. Teeka looked up from her feeding, and in the first instant that she realized that Gazan was fleeing and that another was in pursuit, she bared her fangs and bristled; but when she saw that the

pursuer was Tarzan she turned back to the business that had been occupying her attention. At her very feet the ape-man overhauled the balu and, though the youngster squealed and fought when Tarzan seized him, Teeka only glanced casually in their direction. No longer did she fear harm to her first-born at the hands of the ape-man. Had he not saved Gazan on two occasions?

Rescuing his rope, Tarzan returned to his tree and resumed his labor; but thereafter it was necessary to watch carefully the playful balu, who was now possessed to steal it whenever he thought his great, smooth-skinned cousin was momentarily off his guard.

But even under this handicap Tarzan

finally completed the rope, a long, pliant weapon, stronger than any he ever had made before. The discarded piece of his former one he gave to Gazan for a plaything, for Tarzan had it in his mind to instruct Teeka's balu after ideas of his own when the youngster should be old and strong enough to profit by his precepts. At present the little ape's innate aptitude for mimicry would be sufficient to familiarize him with Tarzan's ways and weapons, and so the ape-man swung off into the jungle, his new rope coiled over one shoulder, while little Gazan hopped about the clearing dragging the old one after him in childish glee.

As Tarzan traveled, dividing his quest

for food with one for a sufficiently noble quarry whereupon to test his new weapon, his mind often was upon Gazan. The ape-man had realized a deep affection for Teeka's balu almost from the first, partly because the child belonged to Teeka, his first love, and partly for the little ape's own sake, and Tarzan's human longing for some sentient creature upon which to expend those natural affections of the soul which are inherent to all normal members of the GENUS HOMO. Tarzan envied Teeka. It was true that Gazan evidenced a considerable reciprocation of Tarzan's fondness for him, even preferring him to his own surly sire; but to Teeka the little one turned when in pain or terror, when

tired or hungry. Then it was that Tarzan felt quite alone in the world and longed desperately for one who should turn first to him for succor and protection.

Taug had Teeka; Teeka had Gazan; and nearly every other bull and cow of the tribe of Kerchak had one or more to love and by whom to be loved. Of course Tarzan could scarcely formulate the thought in precisely this way —he only knew that he craved something which was denied him; something which seemed to be represented by those relations which existed between Teeka and her balu, and so he envied Teeka and longed for a balu of his own.

He saw Sheeta and his mate with their little family of three; and deeper inland

toward the rocky hills, where one might lie up during the heat of the day, in the dense shade of a tangled thicket close under the cool face of an overhanging rock, Tarzan had found the lair of Numa, the lion, and of Sabor, the lioness. Here he had watched them with their little balus—playful creatures, spotted leopard-like. And he had seen the young fawn with Bara, the deer, and with Buto, the rhinoceros, its ungainly little one. Each of the creatures of the jungle had its own—except Tarzan. It made the ape-man sad to think upon this thing, sad and lonely; but presently the scent of game cleared his young mind of all other considerations, as catlike he crawled far out upon a bending limb above the game

trail which led down to the ancient watering place of the wild things of this wild world.

How many thousands of times had this great, old limb bent to the savage form of some blood-thirsty hunter in the long years that it had spread its leafy branches above the deep-worn jungle path! Tarzan, the ape-man, Sheeta, the panther, and Histah, the snake, it knew well. They had worn smooth the bark upon its upper surface.

Today it was Horta, the boar, which came down toward the watcher in the old tree—Horta, the boar, whose formidable tusks and diabolical temper preserved him from all but the most ferocious or most famished of the largest

carnivora.

But to Tarzan, meat was meat; naught that was edible or tasty might pass a hungry Tarzan unchallenged and unattacked. In hunger, as in battle, the ape- man out-savaged the dreariest denizens of the jungle. He knew neither fear nor mercy, except upon rare occasions when some strange, inexplicable force stayed his hand—a force inexplicable to him, perhaps, because of his ignorance of his own origin and of all the forces of humanitarianism and civilization that were his rightful heritage because of that origin.

So today, instead of staying his hand until a less formidable feast found its

way toward him, Tarzan dropped his new noose about the neck of Horta, the boar. It was an excellent test for the untried strands. The angered boar bolted this way and that; but each time the new rope held him where Tarzan had made it fast about the stem of the tree above the branch from which he had cast it.

As Horta grunted and charged, slashing the sturdy jungle patriarch with his mighty tusks until the bark flew in every direction, Tarzan dropped to the ground behind him. In the ape-man's hand was the long, keen blade that had been his constant companion since that distant day upon which chance had directed its point into the body of Bolgani, the gorilla, and saved the torn

and bleeding man-child from what else had been certain death.

Tarzan walked in toward Horta, who swung now to face his enemy. Mighty and muscled as was the young giant, it yet would have appeared but the maddest folly for him to face so formidable a creature as Horta, the boar, armed only with a slender hunting knife. So it would have seemed to one who knew Horta even slightly and Tarzan not at all.

For a moment Horta stood motionless facing the ape-man. His wicked, deep-set eyes flashed angrily. He shook his lowered head.

"Mud-eater!" jeered the ape-man. "Wallower in filth. Even your meat

stinks, but it is juicy and makes Tarzan strong. Today I shall eat your heart, O Lord of the Great Tusks, that it shall keep savage that which pounds against my own ribs."

Horta, understanding nothing of what Tarzan said, was none the less enraged because of that. He saw only a naked man-thing, hairless and futile, pitting his puny fangs and soft muscles against his own indomitable savagery, and he charged.

Tarzan of the Apes waited until the upcut of a wicked tusk would have laid open his thigh, then he moved—just the least bit to one side; but so quickly that lightning was a sluggard by comparison, and as he moved, he stooped low and

with all the great power of his right arm drove the long blade of his father's hunting knife straight into the heart of Horta, the boar. A quick leap carried him from the zone of the creature's death throes, and a moment later the hot and dripping heart of Horta was in his grasp.

His hunger satisfied, Tarzan did not seek a lying-up place for sleep, as was sometimes his way, but continued on through the jungle more in search of adventure than of food, for today he was restless. And so it came that he turned his footsteps toward the village of Mbonga, the black chief, whose people Tarzan had baited remorselessly since that day upon which Kulonga, the chief's son, had slain Kala.

A river winds close beside the village of the black men. Tarzan reached its side a little below the clearing where squat the thatched huts of the Negroes. The river life was ever fascinating to the ape-man. He found pleasure in watching the ungainly antics of Duro, the hippopotamus, and keen sport in tormenting the sluggish crocodile, Gimla, as he basked in the sun. Then, too, there were the shes and the balus of the black men of the Gomangani to frighten as they squatted by the river, the shes with their meager washing, the balus with their primitive toys.

This day he came upon a woman and her child farther down stream than usual. The former was searching for a species

of shellfish which was to be found in the mud close to the river bank. She was a young black woman of about thirty. Her teeth were filed to sharp points, for her people ate the flesh of man. Her under lip was slit that it might support a rude pendant of copper which she had worn for so many years that the lip had been dragged downward to prodigious lengths, exposing the teeth and gums of her lower jaw. Her nose, too, was slit, and through the slit was a wooden skewer. Metal ornaments dangled from her ears, and upon her forehead and cheeks; upon her chin and the bridge of her nose were tattooings in colors that were mellowed now by age. She was naked except for a girdle of grasses

about her waist. Altogether she was very beautiful in her own estimation and even in the estimation of the men of Mbonga's tribe, though she was of another people—a trophy of war seized in her maidenhood by one of Mbonga's fighting men.

Her child was a boy of ten, lithe, straight and, for a black, handsome. Tarzan looked upon the two from the concealing foliage of a near-by bush. He was about to leap forth before them with a terrifying scream, that he might enjoy the spectacle of their terror and their incontinent flight; but of a sudden a new whim seized him. Here was a balu fashioned as he himself was fashioned. Of course this one's skin was black; but

what of it? Tarzan had never seen a white man. In so far as he knew, he was the sole representative of that strange form of life upon the earth. The black boy should make an excellent balu for Tarzan, since he had none of his own. He would tend him carefully, feed him well, protect him as only Tarzan of the Apes could protect his own, and teach him out of his half human, half bestial lore the secrets of the jungle from its rotting surface vegetation to the high tossed pinnacles of the forest's upper terraces.

* * * * *

Tarzan uncoiled his rope, and shook out the noose. The two before him, all ignorant of the near presence of that

terrifying form, continued preoccupied in the search for shellfish, poking about in the mud with short sticks.

Tarzan stepped from the jungle behind them; his noose lay open upon the ground beside him. There was a quick movement of the right arm and the noose rose gracefully into the air, hovered an instant above the head of the unsuspecting youth, then settled. As it encompassed his body below the shoulders, Tarzan gave a quick jerk that tightened it about the boy's arms, pinioning them to his sides. A scream of terror broke from the lad's lips, and as his mother turned, affrighted at his cry, she saw him being dragged quickly toward a great white giant who stood

just beneath the shade of a near-by tree, scarcely a dozen long paces from her.

With a savage cry of terror and rage, the woman leaped fearlessly toward the ape-man. In her mien Tarzan saw determination and courage which would shrink not even from death itself. She was very hideous and frightful even when her face was in repose; but convulsed by passion, her expression became terrifyingly fiendish. Even the ape-man drew back, but more in revulsion than fear—fear he knew not.

Biting and kicking was the black she's balu as Tarzan tucked him beneath his arm and vanished into the branches hanging low above him, just as the infuriated mother dashed forward to

seize and do battle with him. And as he melted away into the depth of the jungle with his still struggling prize, he meditated upon the possibilities which might lie in the prowess of the Gomangani were the hes as formidable as the shes.

Once at a safe distance from the despoiled mother and out of earshot of her screams and menaces, Tarzan paused to inspect his prize, now so thoroughly terrorized that he had ceased his struggles and his outcries.

The frightened child rolled his eyes fearfully toward his captor, until the whites showed gleaming all about the irises.

"I am Tarzan," said the ape-man, in

the vernacular of the anthropoids. "I will not harm you. You are to be Tarzan's balu. Tarzan will protect you. He will feed you. The best in the jungle shall be for Tarzan's balu, for Tarzan is a mighty hunter. None need you fear, not even Numa, the lion, for Tarzan is a mighty fighter. None so great as Tarzan, son of Kala. Do not fear."

But the child only whimpered and trembled, for he did not understand the tongue of the great apes, and the voice of Tarzan sounded to him like the barking and growling of a beast. Then, too, he had heard stories of this bad, white forest god. It was he who had slain Kulonga and others of the warriors of Mbonga, the chief. It was he who

entered the village stealthily, by magic, in the darkness of the night, to steal arrows and poison, and frighten the women and the children and even the great warriors. Doubtless this wicked god fed upon little boys. Had his mother not said as much when he was naughty and she threatened to give him to the white god of the jungle if he were not good? Little black Tibo shook as with ague.

"Are you cold, Go-bu-balu?" asked Tarzan, using the simian equivalent of black he-baby in lieu of a better name. "The sun is hot; why do you shiver?"

Tibo could not understand; but he cried for his mamma and begged the great, white god to let him go, promising

always to be a good boy thereafter if his plea were granted. Tarzan shook his head. Not a word could he understand. This would never do! He must teach Go-bu-balu a language which sounded like talk. It was quite certain to Tarzan that Go-bu-balu's speech was not talk at all. It sounded quite as senseless as the chattering of the silly birds. It would be best, thought the ape-man, quickly to get him among the tribe of Kerchak where he would hear the Mangani talking among themselves. Thus he would soon learn an intelligible form of speech.

Tarzan rose to his feet upon the swaying branch where he had halted far above the ground, and motioned to the child to follow him; but Tibo only clung

tightly to the bole of the tree and wept. Being a boy, and a native African, he had, of course, climbed into trees many times before this; but the idea of racing off through the forest, leaping from one branch to another, as his captor, to his horror, had done when he had carried Tibo away from his mother, filled his childish heart with terror.

Tarzan sighed. His newly acquired balu had much indeed to learn. It was pitiful that a balu of his size and strength should be so backward. He tried to coax Tibo to follow him; but the child dared not, so Tarzan picked him up and carried him upon his back. Tibo no longer scratched or bit. Escape seemed impossible. Even now, were he set upon

the ground, the chance was remote, he knew, that he could find his way back to the village of Mbonga, the chief. Even if he could, there were the lions and the leopards and the hyenas, any one of which, as Tibo was well aware, was particularly fond of the meat of little black boys.

So far the terrible white god of the jungle had offered him no harm. He could not expect even this much consideration from the frightful, green-eyed man-eaters. It would be the lesser of two evils, then, to let the white god carry him away without scratching and biting, as he had done at first.

As Tarzan swung rapidly through the trees, little Tibo closed his eyes in terror

rather than look longer down into the frightful abysses beneath. Never before in all his life had Tibo been so frightened, yet as the white giant sped on with him through the forest there stole over the child an inexplicable sensation of security as he saw how true were the leaps of the ape-man, how unerring his grasp upon the swaying limbs which gave him hand-hold, and then, too, there was safety in the middle terraces of the forest, far above the reach of the dreaded lions.

And so Tarzan came to the clearing where the tribe fed, dropping among them with his new balu clinging tightly to his shoulders. He was fairly in the midst of them before Tibo spied a single

one of the great hairy forms, or before the apes realized that Tarzan was not alone. When they saw the little Gomangani perched upon his back some of them came forward in curiosity with upcurled lips and snarling mien.

An hour before little Tibo would have said that he knew the uttermost depths of fear; but now, as he saw these fearsome beasts surrounding him, he realized that all that had gone before was as nothing by comparison. Why did the great white giant stand there so unconcernedly? Why did he not flee before these horrid, hairy, tree men fell upon them both and tore them to pieces? And then there came to Tibo a numbing recollection. It was none other than the story he had heard passed

from mouth to mouth, fearfully, by the people of Mbonga, the chief, that this great white demon of the jungle was naught other than a hairless ape, for had not he been seen in company with these?

Tibo could only stare in wide-eyed horror at the approaching apes. He saw their beetling brows, their great fangs, their wicked eyes. He noted their mighty muscles rolling beneath their shaggy hides. Their every attitude and expression was a menace. Tarzan saw this, too. He drew Tibo around in front of him.

"This is Tarzan's Go-bu-balu," he said. "Do not harm him, or Tarzan will kill you," and he bared his own fangs in the teeth of the nearest ape.

"It is a Gomangani," replied the ape. "Let me kill it. It is a Gomangani. The Gomangani are our enemies. Let me kill it."

"Go away," snarled Tarzan. "I tell you, Gunto, it is Tarzan's balu. Go away or Tarzan will kill you," and the ape-man took a step toward the advancing ape.

The latter sidled off, quite stiff and haughty, after the manner of a dog which meets another and is too proud to fight and too fearful to turn his back and run.

Next came Teeka, prompted by curiosity. At her side skipped little Gazan. They were filled with wonder like the others; but Teeka did not bare her fangs. Tarzan saw this and motioned

that she approach.

"Tarzan has a balu now," he said. "He and Teeka's balu can play together."

"It is a Gomangani, " replied Teeka. "It will kill my balu. Take it away, Tarzan."

Tarzan laughed. "It could not harm Pamba, the rat," he said. "It is but a little balu and very frightened. Let Gazan play with it."

Teeka still was fearful, for with all their mighty ferocity the great anthropoids are timid; but at last, assured by her great confidence in Tarzan, she pushed Gazan forward toward the little black boy. The small ape, guided by instinct, drew back toward its mother, baring its small fangs

and screaming in mingled fear and rage.

Tibo, too, showed no signs of desiring a closer acquaintance with Gazan, so Tarzan gave up his efforts for the time.

During the week which followed, Tarzan found his time much occupied. His balu was a greater responsibility than he had counted upon. Not for a moment did he dare leave it, since of all the tribe, Teeka alone could have been depended upon to refrain from slaying the hapless black had it not been for Tarzan's constant watchfulness. When the ape-man hunted, he must carry Go-bu- balu about with him. It was irksome, and then the little black seemed so stupid and fearful to Tarzan. It was quite

helpless against even the lesser of the jungle creatures. Tarzan wondered how it had survived at all. He tried to teach it, and found a ray of hope in the fact that Go-bu-balu had mastered a few words of the language of the anthropoids, and that he could now cling to a high- tossed branch without screaming in fear; but there was something about the child which worried Tarzan. He often had watched the blacks within their village. He had seen the children playing, and always there had been much laughter; but little Go-bu-balu never laughed. It was true that Tarzan himself never laughed. Upon occasion he smiled, grimly, but to laughter he was a stranger. The black, however, should have laughed, reasoned

the ape-man. It was the way of the Gomangani.

Also, he saw that the little fellow often refused food and was growing thinner day by day. At times he surprised the boy sobbing softly to himself. Tarzan tried to comfort him, even as fierce Kala had comforted Tarzan when the ape-man was a balu, but all to no avail. Go-bu-balu merely no longer feared Tarzan—that was all. He feared every other living thing within the jungle. He feared the jungle days with their long excursions through the dizzy tree tops. He feared the jungle nights with their swaying, perilous couches far above the ground, and the grunting and coughing of the great carnivora prowling beneath

him.

Tarzan did not know what to do. His heritage of English blood rendered it a difficult thing even to consider a surrender of his project, though he was forced to admit to himself that his balu was not all that he had hoped. Though he was faithful to his self-imposed task, and even found that he had grown to like Go-bu-balu, he could not deceive himself into believing that he felt for it that fierce heat of passionate affection which Teeka revealed for Gazan, and which the black mother had shown for Go-bu-balu.

The little black boy from cringing terror at the sight of Tarzan passed by degrees into trustfulness and admiration. Only kindness had he ever received at

the hands of the great white devil-god, yet he had seen with what ferocity his kindly captor could deal with others. He had seen him leap upon a certain he-ape which persisted in attempting to seize and slay Go-bu-balu. He had seen the strong, white teeth of the ape-man fastened in the neck of his adversary, and the mighty muscles tensed in battle. He had heard the savage, bestial snarls and roars of combat, and he had realized with a shudder that he could not differentiate between those of his guardian and those of the hairy ape.

He had seen Tarzan bring down a buck, just as Numa, the lion, might have done, leaping upon its back and fastening his fangs in the creature's neck. Tibo had

shuddered at the sight, but he had thrilled, too, and for the first time there entered his dull, Negroid mind a vague desire to emulate his savage foster parent. But Tibo, the little black boy, lacked the divine spark which had permitted Tarzan, the white boy, to benefit by his training in the ways of the fierce jungle. In imagination he was wanting, and imagination is but another name for super-intelligence.

Imagination it is which builds bridges, and cities, and empires. The beasts know it not, the blacks only a little, while to one in a hundred thousand of earth's dominant race it is given as a gift from heaven that man may not perish from the earth.

While Tarzan pondered his problem concerning the future of his balu, Fate was arranging to take the matter out of his hands. Momaya, Tibo's mother, grief- stricken at the loss of her boy, had consulted the tribal witch-doctor, but to no avail. The medicine he made was not good medicine, for though Momaya paid him two goats for it, it did not bring back Tibo, nor even indicate where she might search for him with reasonable assurance of finding him. Momaya, being of a short temper and of another people, had little respect for the witch-doctor of her husband's tribe, and so, when he suggested that a further payment of two more fat goats would doubtless enable him to make stronger medicine, she

promptly loosed her shrewish tongue upon him, and with such good effect that he was glad to take himself off with his zebra's tail and his pot of magic.

When he had gone and Momaya had succeeded in partially subduing her anger, she gave herself over to thought, as she so often had done since the abduction of her Tibo, in the hope that she finally might discover some feasible means of locating him, or at least assuring herself as to whether he were alive or dead.

It was known to the blacks that Tarzan did not eat the flesh of man, for he had slain more than one of their number, yet never tasted the flesh of any. Too, the bodies always had been found,

sometimes dropping as though from the clouds to alight in the center of the village. As Tibo's body had not been found, Momaya argued that he still lived, but where?

Then it was that there came to her mind a recollection of Bukawai, the unclean, who dwelt in a cave in the hillside to the north, and who it was well known entertained devils in his evil lair. Few, if any, had the temerity to visit old Bukawai, firstly because of fear of his black magic and the two hyenas who dwelt with him and were commonly known to be devils masquerading, and secondly because of the loathsome disease which had caused Bukawai to be an outcast—a disease which was slowly

eating away his face.

Now it was that Momaya reasoned shrewdly that if any might know the whereabouts of her Tibo, it would be Bukawai, who was in friendly intercourse with gods and demons, since a demon or a god it was who had stolen her baby; but even her great mother love was sorely taxed to find the courage to send her forth into the black jungle toward the distant hills and the uncanny abode of Bukawai, the unclean, and his devils.

Mother love, however, is one of the human passions which closely approximates to the dignity of an irresistible force. It drives the frail flesh of weak women to deeds of heroic

measure. Momaya was neither frail nor weak, physically, but she was a woman, an ignorant, superstitious, African savage. She believed in devils, in black magic, and in witchcraft. To Momaya, the jungle was inhabited by far more terrifying things than lions and leopards—horrifying, nameless things which possessed the power of wreaking frightful harm under various innocent guises.

From one of the warriors of the village, whom she knew to have once stumbled upon the lair of Bukawai, the mother of Tibo learned how she might find it—near a spring of water which rose in a small rocky canon between two hills, the easternmost of which was

easily recognizable because of a huge granite boulder which rested upon its summit. The westerly hill was lower than its companion, and was quite bare of vegetation except for a single mimosa tree which grew just a little below its summit.

These two hills, the man assured her, could be seen for some distance before she reached them, and together formed an excellent guide to her destination. He warned her, however, to abandon so foolish and dangerous an adventure, emphasizing what she already quite well knew, that if she escaped harm at the hands of Bukawai and his demons, the chances were that she would not be so fortunate with the great carnivora of the

jungle through which she must pass going and returning.

The warrior even went to Momaya's husband, who, in turn, having little authority over the vixenish lady of his choice, went to Mbonga, the chief. The latter summoned Momaya, threatening her with the direst punishment should she venture forth upon so unholy an excursion. The old chief's interest in the matter was due solely to that age-old alliance which exists between church and state. The local witch-doctor, knowing his own medicine better than any other knew it, was jealous of all other pretenders to accomplishments in the black art. He long had heard of the power of Bukawai, and feared lest,

should he succeed in recovering Momaya's lost child, much of the tribal patronage and consequent fees would be diverted to the unclean one. As Mbonga received, as chief, a certain proportion of the witch-doctor's fees and could expect nothing from Bukawai, his heart and soul were, quite naturally, wrapped up in the orthodox church.

But if Momaya could view with intrepid heart an excursion into the jungle and a visit to the fear-haunted abode of Bukawai, she was not likely to be deterred by threats of future punishment at the hands of old Mbonga, whom she secretly despised. Yet she appeared to accede to his injunctions, returning to her hut in silence.

She would have preferred starting upon her quest by day-light, but this was now out of the question, since she must carry food and a weapon of some sort—things which she never could pass out of the village with by day without being subjected to curious questioning that surely would come immediately to the ears of Mbonga.

So Momaya bided her time until night, and just before the gates of the village were closed, she slipped through into the darkness and the jungle. She was much frightened, but she set her face resolutely toward the north, and though she paused often to listen, breathlessly, for the huge cats which, here, were her greatest terror, she nevertheless continued her

way staunchly for several hours, until a low moan a little to her right and behind her brought her to a sudden stop.

With palpitating heart the woman stood, scarce daring to breathe, and then, very faintly but unmistakable to her keen ears, came the stealthy crunching of twigs and grasses beneath padded feet.

All about Momaya grew the giant trees of the tropical jungle, festooned with hanging vines and mosses. She seized upon the nearest and started to clamber, apelike, to the branches above. As she did so, there was a sudden rush of a great body behind her, a menacing roar that caused the earth to tremble, and something crashed into the very creepers to which she was clinging—but below

her.

Momaya drew herself to safety among the leafy branches and thanked the foresight which had prompted her to bring along the dried human ear which hung from a cord about her neck. She always had known that that ear was good medicine. It had been given her, when a girl, by the witch-doctor of her town tribe, and was nothing like the poor, weak medicine of Mbonga's witch-doctor.

All night Momaya clung to her perch, for although the lion sought other prey after a short time, she dared not descend into the darkness again, for fear she might encounter him or another of his kind; but at daylight she clambered down

and resumed her way.

Tarzan of the Apes, finding that his balu never ceased to give evidence of terror in the presence of the apes of the tribe, and also that most of the adult apes were a constant menace to Go-bu-balu's life, so that Tarzan dared not leave him alone with them, took to hunting with the little black boy farther and farther from the stamping grounds of the anthropoids.

Little by little his absences from the tribe grew in length as he wandered farther away from them, until finally he found himself a greater distance to the north than he ever before had hunted, and with water and ample game and fruit, he felt not at all inclined to return to the tribe.

Little Go-bu-balu gave evidences of a greater interest in life, an interest which varied in direct proportion to the distance he was from the apes of Kerchak. He now trotted along behind Tarzan when the ape-man went upon the ground, and in the trees he even did his best to follow his mighty foster parent. The boy was still sad and lonely. His thin, little body had grown steadily thinner since he had come among the apes, for while, as a young cannibal, he was not overnice in the matter of diet, he found it not always to his taste to stomach the weird things which tickled the palates of epicures among the apes.

His large eyes were very large indeed now, his cheeks sunken, and every rib of

his emaciated body plainly discernible to whomsoever should care to count them. Constant terror, perhaps, had had as much to do with his physical condition as had improper food. Tarzan noticed the change and was worried. He had hoped to see his balu wax sturdy and strong. His disappointment was great. In only one respect did Go-bu-balu seem to progress—he readily was mastering the language of the apes. Even now he and Tarzan could converse in a fairly satisfactory manner by supplementing the meager ape speech with signs; but for the most part, Go-bu-balu was silent other than to answer questions put to him. His great sorrow was yet too new and too poignant to be laid aside even

momentarily. Always he pined for Momaya—shrewish, hideous, repulsive, perhaps, she would have been to you or me, but to Tibo she was mamma, the personification of that one great love which knows no selfishness and which does not consume itself in its own fires.

As the two hunted, or rather as Tarzan hunted and Go-bu-balu tagged along in his wake, the ape-man noticed many things and thought much. Once they came upon Sabor moaning in the tall grasses. About her romped and played two little balls of fur, but her eyes were for one which lay between her great forepaws and did not romp, one who never would romp again.

Tarzan read aright the anguish and the

suffering of the huge mother cat. He had been minded to bait her. It was to do this that he had sneaked silently through the trees until he had come almost above her, but something held the ape-man as he saw the lioness grieving over her dead cub. With the acquisition of Go-bu-balu, Tarzan had come to realize the responsibilities and sorrows of parentage, without its joys. His heart went out to Sabor as it might not have done a few weeks before. As he watched her, there rose quite unbidden before him a vision of Momaya, the skewer through the septum of her nose, her pendulous under lip sagging beneath the weight which dragged it down. Tarzan saw not her unloveliness; he saw

only the same anguish that was Sabor's, and he winced. That strange functioning of the mind which sometimes is called association of ideas snapped Teeka and Gazan before the ape-man's mental vision. What if one should come and take Gazan from Teeka. Tarzan uttered a low and ominous growl as though Gazan were his own. Go-bu-balu glanced here and there apprehensively, thinking that Tarzan had espied an enemy. Sabor sprang suddenly to her feet, her yellow-green eyes blazing, her tail lashing as she cocked her ears, and raising her muzzle, sniffed the air for possible danger. The two little cubs, which had been playing, scampered quickly to her, and standing beneath her, peered out

from between her forelegs, their big ears upstanding, their little heads cocked first upon one side and then upon the other.

With a shake of his black shock, Tarzan turned away and resumed his hunting in another direction; but all day there rose one after another, above the threshold of his objective mind, memory portraits of Sabor, of Momaya, and of Teeka—a lioness, a cannibal, and a she-ape, yet to the ape-man they were identical through motherhood.

It was noon of the third day when Momaya came within sight of the cave of Bukawai, the unclean. The old witch-doctor had rigged a framework of interlaced boughs to close the mouth of the cave from predatory beasts. This

was now set to one side, and the black cavern beyond yawned mysterious and repellent. Momaya shivered as from a cold wind of the rainy season. No sign of life appeared about the cave, yet Momaya experienced that uncanny sensation as of unseen eyes regarding her malevolently. Again she shuddered. She tried to force her unwilling feet onward toward the cave, when from its depths issued an uncanny sound that was neither brute nor human, a weird sound that was akin to mirthless laughter.

With a stifled scream, Momaya turned and fled into the jungle. For a hundred yards she ran before she could control her terror, and then she paused, listening. Was all her labor, were all the terrors

and dangers through which she had passed to go for naught? She tried to steel herself to return to the cave, but again fright overcame her.

Saddened, disheartened, she turned slowly upon the back trail toward the village of Mbonga. Her young shoulders now were drooped like those of an old woman who bears a great burden of many years with their accumulated pains and sorrows, and she walked with tired feet and a halting step. The spring of youth was gone from Momaya.

For another hundred yards she dragged her weary way, her brain half paralyzed from dumb terror and suffering, and then there came to her the memory of a little babe that suckled at

her breast, and of a slim boy who romped, laughing, about her, and they were both Tibo—her Tibo!

Her shoulders straightened. She shook her savage head, and she turned about and walked boldly back to the mouth of the cave of Bukawai, the unclean —of Bukawai, the witch-doctor.

Again, from the interior of the cave came the hideous laughter that was not laughter. This time Momaya recognized it for what it was, the strange cry of a hyena. No more did she shudder, but she held her spear ready and called aloud to Bukawai to come out.

Instead of Bukawai came the repulsive head of a hyena. Momaya poked at it with her spear, and the ugly,

sullen brute drew back with an angry growl. Again Momaya called Bukawai by name, and this time there came an answer in mumbling tones that were scarce more human than those of the beast.

"Who comes to Bukawai?" queried the voice.

"It is Momaya," replied the woman; "Momaya from the village of Mbonga, the chief.

"What do you want?"

"I want good medicine, better medicine than Mbonga's witch-doctor can make," replied Momaya. "The great, white, jungle god has stolen my Tibo, and I want medicine to bring him back, or to find where he is hidden that I may

go and get him."

"Who is Tibo?" asked Bukawai.

Momaya told him.

"Bukawai's medicine is very strong," said the voice. "Five goats and a new sleeping mat are scarce enough in exchange for Bukawai's medicine."

"Two goats are enough," said Momaya, for the spirit of barter is strong in the breasts of the blacks.

The pleasure of haggling over the price was a sufficiently potent lure to draw Bukawai to the mouth of the cave. Momaya was sorry when she saw him that he had not remained within. There are some things too horrible, too hideous, too repulsive for description—Bukawai's face was of these. When

Momaya saw him she understood why it was that he was almost inarticulate.

Beside him were two hyenas, which rumor had said were his only and constant companions. They made an excellent trio—the most repulsive of beasts with the most repulsive of humans.

"Five goats and a new sleeping mat," mumbled Bukawai.

"Two fat goats and a sleeping mat." Momaya raised her bid; but Bukawai was obdurate. He stuck for the five goats and the sleeping mat for a matter of half an hour, while the hyenas sniffed and growled and laughed hideously. Momaya was determined to give all that Bukawai asked if she could do no better,

but haggling is second nature to black barterers, and in the end it partly repaid her, for a compromise finally was reached which included three fat goats, a new sleeping mat, and a piece of copper wire.

"Come back tonight," said Bukawai, "when the moon is two hours in the sky. Then will I make the strong medicine which shall bring Tibo back to you. Bring with you the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the piece of copper wire the length of a large man's forearm."

"I cannot bring them," said Momaya. "You will have to come after them. When you have restored Tibo to me, you shall have them all at the village of

Mbonga.

Bukawai shook his head.

"I will make no medicine," he said, "until I have the goats and the mat and the copper wire."

Momaya pleaded and threatened, but all to no avail. Finally, she turned away and started off through the jungle toward the village of Mbonga. How she could get three goats and a sleeping mat out of the village and through the jungle to the cave of Bukawai, she did not know, but that she would do it somehow she was quite positive—she would do it or die. Tibo must be restored to her.

Tarzan coming lazily through the jungle with little Go-bu-balu, caught the scent of Bara, the deer. Tarzan hungered

for the flesh of Bara. Naught tickled his palate so greatly; but to stalk Bara with Go-bu-balu at his heels, was out of the question, so he hid the child in the crotch of a tree where the thick foliage screened him from view, and set off swiftly and silently upon the spoor of Bara.

Tibo alone was more terrified than Tibo even among the apes. Real and apparent dangers are less disconcerting than those which we imagine, and only the gods of his people knew how much Tibo imagined.

He had been but a short time in his hiding place when he heard something approaching through the jungle. He crouched closer to the limb upon which

he lay and prayed that Tarzan would return quickly. His wide eyes searched the jungle in the direction of the moving creature.

What if it was a leopard that had caught his scent! It would be upon him in a minute. Hot tears flowed from the large eyes of little Tibo. The curtain of jungle foliage rustled close at hand. The thing was but a few paces from his tree! His eyes fairly popped from his black face as he watched for the appearance of the dread creature which presently would thrust a snarling countenance from between the vines and creepers.

And then the curtain parted and a woman stepped into full view. With a gasping cry, Tibo tumbled from his

perch and raced toward her. Momaya suddenly started back and raised her spear, but a second later she cast it aside and caught the thin body in her strong arms.

Crushing it to her, she cried and laughed all at one and the same time, and hot tears of joy, mingled with the tears of Tibo, trickled down the crease between her naked breasts.

Disturbed by the noise so close at hand, there arose from his sleep in a near-by thicket Numa, the lion. He looked through the tangled underbrush and saw the black woman and her young. He licked his chops and measured the distance between them and himself. A short charge and a long leap would carry

him upon them. He flicked the end of his tail and sighed.

A vagrant breeze, swirling suddenly in the wrong direction, carried the scent of Tarzan to the sensitive nostrils of Bara, the deer. There was a startled tensing of muscles and cocking of ears, a sudden dash, and Tarzan's meat was gone. The ape-man angrily shook his head and turned back toward the spot where he had left Go-bu-balu. He came softly, as was his way. Before he reached the spot he heard strange sounds —the sound of a woman laughing and of a woman weeping, and the two which seemed to come from one throat were mingled with the convulsive sobbing of a child. Tarzan hastened, and when

Tarzan hastened, only the birds and the wind went faster.

And as Tarzan approached the sounds, he heard another, a deep sigh. Momaya did not hear it, nor did Tibo; but the ears of Tarzan were as the ears of Bara, the deer. He heard the sigh, and he knew, so he unloosed the heavy spear which dangled at his back. Even as he sped through the branches of the trees, with the same ease that you or I might take out a pocket handkerchief as we strolled nonchalantly down a lazy country lane, Tarzan of the Apes took the spear from its thong that it might be ready against any emergency.

Numa, the lion, did not rush madly to attack. He reasoned again, and reason

told him that already the prey was his, so he pushed his great bulk through the foliage and stood eyeing his meat with baleful, glaring eyes.

Momaya saw him and shrieked, drawing Tibo closer to her breast. To have found her child and to lose him, all in a moment! She raised her spear, throwing her hand far back of her shoulder. Numa roared and stepped slowly forward. Momaya cast her weapon. It grazed the tawny shoulder, inflicting a flesh wound which aroused all the terrific bestiality of the carnivore, and the lion charged.

Momaya tried to close her eyes, but could not. She saw the flashing swiftness of the huge, oncoming death, and then

she saw something else. She saw a mighty, naked white man drop as from the heavens into the path of the charging lion. She saw the muscles of a great arm flash in the light of the equatorial sun as it filtered, dappling, through the foliage above. She saw a heavy hunting spear hurtle through the air to meet the lion in midleap.

Numa brought up upon his haunches, roaring terribly and striking at the spear which protruded from his breast. His great blows bent and twisted the weapon. Tarzan, crouching and with hunting knife in hand, circled warily about the frenzied cat. Momaya, wide-eyed, stood rooted to the spot, watching, fascinated.

In sudden fury Numa hurled himself toward the ape-man, but the wiry creature eluded the blundering charge, side-stepping quickly only to rush in upon his foe. Twice the hunting blade flashed in the air. Twice it fell upon the back of Numa, already weakening from the spear point so near his heart. The second stroke of the blade pierced far into the beast's spine, and with a last convulsive sweep of the fore-paws, in a vain attempt to reach his tormentor, Numa sprawled upon the ground, paralyzed and dying.

Bukawai, fearful lest he should lose any recompense, followed Momaya with the intention of persuading her to part with her ornaments of copper and iron

against her return with the price of the medicine—to pay, as it were, for an option on his services as one pays a retaining fee to an attorney, for, like an attorney, Bukawai knew the value of his medicine and that it was well to collect as much as possible in advance.

The witch-doctor came upon the scene as Tarzan leaped to meet the lion's charge. He saw it all and marveled, guessing immediately that this must be the strange white demon concerning whom he had heard vague rumors before Momaya came to him.

Momaya, now that the lion was past harming her or hers, gazed with new terror upon Tarzan. It was he who had stolen her Tibo. Doubtless he would

attempt to steal him again. Momaya hugged the boy close to her. She was determined to die this time rather than suffer Tibo to be taken from her again.

Tarzan eyed them in silence. The sight of the boy clinging, sobbing, to his mother aroused within his savage breast a melancholy loneliness. There was none thus to cling to Tarzan, who yearned so for the love of someone, of something.

At last Tibo looked up, because of the quiet that had fallen upon the jungle, and saw Tarzan. He did not shrink.

"Tarzan," he said, in the speech of the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak, "do not take me from Momaya, my mother. Do not take me again to the lair of the

hairy, tree men, for I fear Taug and Gunto and the others. Let me stay with Momaya, O Tarzan, God of the Jungle! Let me stay with Momaya, my mother, and to the end of our days we will bless you and put food before the gates of the village of Mbonga that you may never hunger."

Tarzan sighed.

"Go," he said, "back to the village of Mbonga, and Tarzan will follow to see that no harm befalls you."

Tibo translated the words to his mother, and the two turned their backs upon the ape-man and started off toward home. In the heart of Momaya was a great fear and a great exultation, for never before had she walked with God,

and never had she been so happy. She strained little Tibo to her, stroking his thin cheek. Tarzan saw and sighed again.

"For Teeka there is Teeka's balu," he soliloquized; "for Sabor there are balus, and for the she-Gomangani, and for Bara, and for Manu, and even for Pamba, the rat; but for Tarzan there can be none—neither a she nor a balu. Tarzan of the Apes is a man, and it must be that man walks alone."

Bukawai saw them go, and he mumbled through his rotting face, swearing a great oath that he would yet have the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the bit of copper wire.

6. THE WITCH-DOCTOR SEEKS VENGEANCE

Lord Greystoke was hunting, or, to be more accurate, he was shooting pheasants at Chamston-Hedding. Lord Greystoke was immaculately and appropriately garbed—to the minutest detail he was vogue. To be sure, he was among the forward guns, not being considered a sporting shot, but what he lacked in skill he more than made up in appearance. At the end of the day he would, doubtless, have many birds to his credit, since he had two guns and a smart loader—many more birds than he could eat in a year, even had he been hungry, which he was not, having but just arisen from the breakfast table.

The beaters—there were twenty-three of them, in white smocks —had but just driven the birds into a patch of gorse, and were now circling to the opposite side that they might drive down toward the guns. Lord Greystoke was quite as excited as he ever permitted himself to become. There was an exhilaration in the sport that would not be denied. He felt his blood tingling through his veins as the beaters approached closer and closer to the birds. In a vague and stupid sort of way Lord Greystoke felt, as he always felt upon such occasions, that he was experiencing a sensation somewhat akin to a reversion to a prehistoric type —that the blood of an ancient forbear was coursing hot through him, a hairy,

half-naked forbear who had lived by the hunt.

And far away in a matted equatorial jungle another Lord Greystoke, the real Lord Greystoke, hunted. By the standards which he knew, he, too, was vogue—utterly vogue, as was the primal ancestor before the first eviction. The day being sultry, the leopard skin had been left behind. The real Lord Greystoke had not two guns, to be sure, nor even one, neither did he have a smart loader; but he possessed something infinitely more efficacious than guns, or loaders, or even twenty-three beaters in white smocks—he possessed an appetite, an uncanny woodcraft, and muscles that were as steel springs.

Later that day, in England, a Lord Greystoke ate bountifully of things he had not killed, and he drank other things which were uncorked to the accompaniment of much noise. He patted his lips with snowy linen to remove the faint traces of his repast, quite ignorant of the fact that he was an impostor and that the rightful owner of his noble title was even then finishing his own dinner in far-off Africa. He was not using snowy linen, though. Instead he drew the back of a brown forearm and hand across his mouth and wiped his bloody fingers upon his thighs. Then he moved slowly through the jungle to the drinking place, where, upon all fours, he drank as drank his fellows, the other beasts of the

jungle.

As he quenched his thirst, another denizen of the gloomy forest approached the stream along the path behind him. It was Numa, the lion, tawny of body and black of mane, scowling and sinister, rumbling out low, coughing roars. Tarzan of the Apes heard him long before he came within sight, but the ape-man went on with his drinking until he had had his fill; then he arose, slowly, with the easy grace of a creature of the wilds and all the quiet dignity that was his birthright.

Numa halted as he saw the man standing at the very spot where the king would drink. His jaws were parted, and his cruel eyes gleamed. He growled and

advanced slowly. The man growled, too, backing slowly to one side, and watching, not the lion's face, but its tail. Should that commence to move from side to side in quick, nervous jerks, it would be well to be upon the alert, and should it rise suddenly erect, straight and stiff, then one might prepare to fight or flee; but it did neither, so Tarzan merely backed away and the lion came down and drank scarce fifty feet from where the man stood.

Tomorrow they might be at one another's throats, but today there existed one of those strange and inexplicable truces which so often are seen among the savage ones of the jungle. Before Numa had finished drinking, Tarzan had

returned into the forest, and was swinging away in the direction of the village of Mbonga, the black chief.

It had been at least a moon since the ape-man had called upon the Gomangani. Not since he had restored little Tibo to his grief-stricken mother had the whim seized him to do so. The incident of the adopted balu was a closed one to Tarzan. He had sought to find something upon which to lavish such an affection as Teeka lavished upon her balu, but a short experience of the little black boy had made it quite plain to the ape-man that no such sentiment could exist between them.

The fact that he had for a time treated the little black as he might have treated a

real balu of his own had in no way altered the vengeful sentiments with which he considered the murderers of Kala. The Gomangani were his deadly enemies, nor could they ever be aught else. Today he looked forward to some slight relief from the monotony of his existence in such excitement as he might derive from baiting the blacks.

It was not yet dark when he reached the village and took his place in the great tree overhanging the palisade. From beneath came a great wailing out of the depths of a near-by hut. The noise fell disagreeably upon Tarzan's ears - it jarred and grated. He did not like it, so he decided to go away for a while in the hopes that it might cease; but though he

was gone for a couple of hours the wailing still continued when he returned.

With the intention of putting a violent termination to the annoying sound, Tarzan slipped silently from the tree into the shadows beneath. Creeping stealthily and keeping well in the cover of other huts, he approached that from which rose the sounds of lamentation. A fire burned brightly before the doorway as it did before other doorways in the village. A few females squatted about, occasionally adding their own mournful howlings to those of the master artist within.

The ape-man smiled a slow smile as he thought of the consternation which would follow the quick leap that would

carry him among the females and into the full light of the fire. Then he would dart into the hut during the excitement, throttle the chief screamer, and be gone into the jungle before the blacks could gather their scattered nerves for an assault.

Many times had Tarzan behaved similarly in the village of Mbonga, the chief. His mysterious and unexpected appearances always filled the breasts of the poor, superstitious blacks with the panic of terror; never, it seemed, could they accustom themselves to the sight of him. It was this terror which lent to the adventures the spice of interest and amusement which the human mind of the ape-man craved. Merely to kill was not

in itself sufficient. Accustomed to the sight of death, Tarzan found no great pleasure in it. Long since had he avenged the death of Kala, but in the accomplishment of it, he had learned the excitement and the pleasure to be derived from the baiting of the blacks. Of this he never tired.

It was just as he was about to spring forward with a savage roar that a figure appeared in the doorway of the hut. It was the figure of the wailer whom he had come to still, the figure of a young woman with a wooden skewer through the split septum of her nose, with a heavy metal ornament depending from her lower lip, which it had dragged down to hideous and repulsive

deformity, with strange tattooing upon forehead, cheeks, and breasts, and a wonderful coiffure built up with mud and wire.

A sudden flare of the fire threw the grotesque figure into high relief, and Tarzan recognized her as Momaya, the mother of Tibo. The fire also threw out a fitful flame which carried to the shadows where Tarzan lurked, picking out his light brown body from the surrounding darkness. Momaya saw him and knew him. With a cry, she leaped forward and Tarzan came to meet her. The other women, turning, saw him, too; but they did not come toward him. Instead they rose as one, shrieked as one, fled as one.

Momaya threw herself at Tarzan's feet, raising supplicating hands toward him and pouring forth from her mutilated lips a perfect cataract of words, not one of which the ape-man comprehended. For a moment he looked down upon the upturned, frightful face of the woman. He had come to slay, but that overwhelming torrent of speech filled him with consternation and with awe. He glanced about him apprehensively, then back at the woman. A revulsion of feeling seized him. He could not kill little Tibo's mother, nor could he stand and face this verbal geyser. With a quick gesture of impatience at the spoiling of his evening's entertainment, he wheeled and leaped away into the darkness. A

moment later he was swinging through the black jungle night, the cries and lamentations of Momaya growing fainter in the distance.

It was with a sigh of relief that he finally reached a point from which he could no longer hear them, and finding a comfortable crotch high among the trees, composed himself for a night of dreamless slumber, while a prowling lion moaned and coughed beneath him, and in far-off England the other Lord Greystoke, with the assistance of a valet, disrobed and crawled between spotless sheets, swearing irritably as a cat meowed beneath his window.

As Tarzan followed the fresh spoor of Horta, the boar, the following morning,

he came upon the tracks of two Gomangani, a large one and a small one. The ape-man, accustomed as he was to questioning closely all that fell to his perceptions, paused to read the story written in the soft mud of the game trail. You or I would have seen little of interest there, even if, by chance, we could have seen aught. Perhaps had one been there to point them out to us, we might have noted indentations in the mud, but there were countless indentations, one overlapping another into a confusion that would have been entirely meaningless to us. To Tarzan each told its own story. Tantor, the elephant, had passed that way as recently as three suns since. Numa had

hunted here the night just gone, and Horta, the boar, had walked slowly along the trail within an hour; but what held Tarzan's attention was the spoor tale of the Gomangani. It told him that the day before an old man had gone toward the north in company with a little boy, and that with them had been two hyenas.

Tarzan scratched his head in puzzled incredulity. He could see by the overlapping of the footprints that the beasts had not been following the two, for sometimes one was ahead of them and one behind, and again both were in advance, or both were in the rear. It was very strange and quite inexplicable, especially where the spoor showed

where the hyenas in the wider portions of the path had walked one on either side of the human pair, quite close to them. Then Tarzan read in the spoor of the smaller Gomangani a shrinking terror of the beast that brushed his side, but in that of the old man was no sign of fear.

At first Tarzan had been solely occupied by the remarkable juxtaposition of the spoor of Dango and Gomangani, but now his keen eyes caught something in the spoor of the little Gomangani which brought him to a sudden stop. It was as though, finding a letter in the road, you suddenly had discovered in it the familiar handwriting of a friend.

"Go-bu-balu!" exclaimed the ape-

man, and at once memory flashed upon the screen of recollection the supplicating attitude of Momaya as she had hurled herself before him in the village of Mbonga the night before. Instantly all was explained—the wailing and lamentation, the pleading of the black mother, the sympathetic howling of the shes about the fire. Little Go-bu-balu had been stolen again, and this time by another than Tarzan. Doubtless the mother had thought that he was again in the power of Tarzan of the Apes, and she had been beseeching him to return her balu to her.

Yes, it was all quite plain now; but who could have stolen Go-bu-balu this time? Tarzan wondered, and he

wondered, too, about the presence of Dango. He would investigate. The spoor was a day old and it ran toward the north. Tarzan set out to follow it. In places it was totally obliterated by the passage of many beasts, and where the way was rocky, even Tarzan of the Apes was almost baffled; but there was still the faint effluvium which clung to the human spoor, appreciable only to such highly trained perceptive powers as were Tarzan's.

It had all happened to little Tibo very suddenly and unexpectedly within the brief span of two suns. First had come Bukawai, the witch-doctor - Bukawai, the unclean—with the ragged bit of flesh which still clung to his rotting face. He

had come alone and by day to the place at the river where Momaya went daily to wash her body and that of Tibo, her little boy. He had stepped out from behind a great bush quite close to Momaya, frightening little Tibo so that he ran screaming to his mother's protecting arms.

But Momaya, though startled, had wheeled to face the fearsome thing with all the savage ferocity of a she-tiger at bay. When she saw who it was, she breathed a sigh of partial relief, though she still clung tightly to Tibo.

"I have come," said Bukawai without preliminary, "for the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the bit of copper wire as long as a tall man's arm."

"I have no goats for you," snapped Momaya, "nor a sleeping mat, nor any wire. Your medicine was never made. The white jungle god gave me back my Tibo. You had nothing to do with it."

"But I did," mumbled Bukawai through his fleshless jaws. "It was I who commanded the white jungle god to give back your Tibo."

Momaya laughed in his face. "Speaker of lies," she cried, "go back to your foul den and your hyenas. Go back and hide your stinking face in the belly of the mountain, lest the sun, seeing it, cover his face with a black cloud."

"I have come," reiterated Bukawai, "for the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the bit of copper wire the length

of a tall man's arm, which you were to pay me for the return of your Tibo."

"It was to be the length of a man's forearm," corrected Momaya, "but you shall have nothing, old thief. You would not make medicine until I had brought the payment in advance, and when I was returning to my village the great, white jungle god gave me back my Tibo—gave him to me out of the jaws of Numa. His medicine is true medicine—yours is the weak medicine of an old man with a hole in his face."

"I have come," repeated Bukawai patiently, "for the three fat—" But Momaya had not waited to hear more of what she already knew by heart. Clasping Tibo close to her side, she was

hurrying away toward the palisaded village of Mbonga, the chief.

And the next day, when Momaya was working in the plantain field with others of the women of the tribe, and little Tibo had been playing at the edge of the jungle, casting a small spear in anticipation of the distant day when he should be a full-fledged warrior, Bukawai had come again.

Tibo had seen a squirrel scampering up the bole of a great tree. His childish mind had transformed it into the menacing figure of a hostile warrior. Little Tibo had raised his tiny spear, his heart filled with the savage blood lust of his race, as he pictured the night's orgy when he should dance about the corpse

of his human kill as the women of his tribe prepared the meat for the feast to follow.

But when he cast the spear, he missed both squirrel and tree, losing his missile far among the tangled undergrowth of the jungle. However, it could be but a few steps within the forbidden labyrinth. The women were all about in the field. There were warriors on guard within easy hail, and so little Tibo boldly ventured into the dark place.

Just behind the screen of creepers and matted foliage lurked three horrid figures—an old, old man, black as the pit, with a face half eaten away by leprosy, his sharp-filed teeth, the teeth of a cannibal, showing yellow and

repulsive through the great gaping hole where his mouth and nose had been. And beside him, equally hideous, stood two powerful hyenas— carrion-eaters consorting with carrion.

Tibo did not see them until, head down, he had forced his way through the thickly growing vines in search of his little spear, and then it was too late. As he looked up into the face of Bukawai, the old witch-doctor seized him, muffling his screams with a palm across his mouth. Tibo struggled futilely.

A moment later he was being hustled away through the dark and terrible jungle, the frightful old man still muffling his screams, and the two hideous hyenas pacing now on either side, now before,

now behind, always prowling, always growling, snapping, snarling, or, worst of all, laughing hideously.

To little Tibo, who within his brief existence had passed through such experiences as are given to few to pass through in a lifetime, the northward journey was a nightmare of terror. He thought now of the time that he had been with the great, white jungle god, and he prayed with all his little soul that he might be back again with the white-skinned giant who consorted with the hairy tree men. Terror-stricken he had been then, but his surroundings had been nothing by comparison with those which he now endured.

The old man seldom addressed Tibo,

though he kept up an almost continuous mumbling throughout the long day. Tibo caught repeated references to fat goats, sleeping mats, and pieces of copper wire. "Ten fat goats, ten fat goats," the old Negro would croon over and over again. By this little Tibo guessed that the price of his ransom had risen. Ten fat goats? Where would his mother get ten fat goats, or thin ones, either, for that matter, to buy back just a poor little boy? Mbonga would never let her have them, and Tibo knew that his father never had owned more than three goats at the same time in all his life. Ten fat goats! Tibo sniffled. The putrid old man would kill him and eat him, for the goats would never be forthcoming. Bukawai would

throw his bones to the hyenas. The little black boy shuddered and became so weak that he almost fell in his tracks. Bukawai cuffed him on an ear and jerked him along.

After what seemed an eternity to Tibo, they arrived at the mouth of a cave between two rocky hills. The opening was low and narrow. A few saplings bound together with strips of rawhide closed it against stray beasts. Bukawai removed the primitive door and pushed Tibo within. The hyenas, snarling, rushed past him and were lost to view in the blackness of the interior. Bukawai replaced the saplings and seizing Tibo roughly by the arm, dragged him along a narrow, rocky passage. The floor was

comparatively smooth, for the dirt which lay thick upon it had been trodden and tramped by many feet until few inequalities remained.

The passage was tortuous, and as it was very dark and the walls rough and rocky, Tibo was scratched and bruised from the many bumps he received. Bukawai walked as rapidly through the winding gallery as one would traverse a familiar lane by daylight. He knew every twist and turn as a mother knows the face of her child, and he seemed to be in a hurry. He jerked poor little Tibo possibly a trifle more ruthlessly than necessary even at the pace Bukawai set; but the old witch-doctor, an outcast from the society of man, diseased, shunned,

hated, feared, was far from possessing an angelic temper. Nature had given him few of the kindlier characteristics of man, and these few Fate had eradicated entirely. Shrewd, cunning, cruel, vindictive, was Bukawai, the witch-doctor.

Frightful tales were whispered of the cruel tortures he inflicted upon his victims. Children were frightened into obedience by the threat of his name. Often had Tibo been thus frightened, and now he was reaping a grisly harvest of terror from the seeds his mother had innocently sown. The darkness, the presence of the dreaded witch-doctor, the pain of the contusions, with a haunting premonition of the future, and

the fear of the hyenas combined to almost paralyze the child. He stumbled and reeled until Bukawai was dragging rather than leading him.

Presently Tibo saw a faint lightness ahead of them, and a moment later they emerged into a roughly circular chamber to which a little daylight filtered through a rift in the rocky ceiling. The hyenas were there ahead of them, waiting. As Bukawai entered with Tibo, the beasts slunk toward them, baring yellow fangs. They were hungry. Toward Tibo they came, and one snapped at his naked legs. Bukawai seized a stick from the floor of the chamber and struck a vicious blow at the beast, at the same time mumbling forth a volley of execrations. The hyena

dodged and ran to the side of the chamber, where he stood growling. Bukawai took a step toward the creature, which bristled with rage at his approach. Fear and hatred shot from its evil eyes, but, fortunately for Bukawai, fear predominated.

Seeing that he was unnoticed, the second beast made a short, quick rush for Tibo. The child screamed and darted after the witch-doctor, who now turned his attention to the second hyena. This one he reached with his heavy stick, striking it repeatedly and driving it to the wall. There the two carrion- eaters commenced to circle the chamber while the human carrion, their master, now in a perfect frenzy of demoniacal rage, ran to

and fro in an effort to intercept them, striking out with his cudgel and lashing them with his tongue, calling down upon them the curses of whatever gods and demons he could summon to memory, and describing in lurid figures the ignominy of their ancestors.

Several times one or the other of the beasts would turn to make a stand against the witch-doctor, and then Tibo would hold his breath in agonized terror, for never in his brief life had he seen such frightful hatred depicted upon the countenance of man or beast; but always fear overcame the rage of the savage creatures, so that they resumed their flight, snarling and bare-fanged, just at the moment that Tibo was certain they

would spring at Bukawai's throat.

At last the witch-doctor tired of the futile chase. With a snarl quite as bestial as those of the beast, he turned toward Tibo. "I go to collect the ten fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the two pieces of copper wire that your mother will pay for the medicine I shall make to bring you back to her," he said. "You will stay here. There," and he pointed toward the passage which they had followed to the chamber, "I will leave the hyenas. If you try to escape, they will eat you."

He cast aside the stick and called to the beasts. They came, snarling and slinking, their tails between their legs. Bukawai led them to the passage and drove them into it. Then he dragged a

rude lattice into place before the opening after he, himself, had left the chamber. "This will keep them from you," he said. "If I do not get the ten fat goats and the other things, they shall at least have a few bones after I am through." And he left the boy to think over the meaning of his all-too-suggestive words.

When he was gone, Tibo threw himself upon the earth floor and broke into childish sobs of terror and loneliness. He knew that his mother had no ten fat goats to give and that when Bukawai returned, little Tibo would be killed and eaten. How long he lay there he did not know, but presently he was aroused by the growling of the hyenas. They had returned through the passage

and were glaring at him from beyond the lattice. He could see their yellow eyes blazing through the darkness. They reared up and clawed at the barrier. Tibo shivered and withdrew to the opposite side of the chamber. He saw the lattice sag and sway to the attacks of the beasts. Momentarily he expected that it would fall inward, letting the creatures upon him.

Wearily the horror-ridden hours dragged their slow way. Night came, and for a time Tibo slept, but it seemed that the hungry beasts never slept. Always they stood just beyond the lattice growling their hideous growls or laughing their hideous laughs. Through the narrow rift in the rocky roof above

him, Tibo could see a few stars, and once the moon crossed. At last daylight came again. Tibo was very hungry and thirsty, for he had not eaten since the morning before, and only once upon the long march had he been permitted to drink, but even hunger and thirst were almost forgotten in the terror of his position.

It was after daylight that the child discovered a second opening in the walls of the subterranean chamber, almost opposite that at which the hyenas still stood glaring hungrily at him. It was only a narrow slit in the rocky wall. It might lead in but a few feet, or it might lead to freedom! Tibo approached it and looked within. He could see nothing. He

extended his arm into the blackness, but he dared not venture farther. Bukawai never would have left open a way of escape, Tibo reasoned, so this passage must lead either nowhere or to some still more hideous danger.

To the boy's fear of the actual dangers which menaced him—Bukawai and the two hyenas—his superstition added countless others quite too horrible even to name, for in the lives of the blacks, through the shadows of the jungle day and the black horrors of the jungle night, flit strange, fantastic shapes peopling the already hideously peopled forests with menacing figures, as though the lion and the leopard, the snake and the hyena, and the countless poisonous insects were not

quite sufficient to strike terror to the hearts of the poor, simple creatures whose lot is cast in earth's most fearsome spot.

And so it was that little Tibo cringed not only from real menaces but from imaginary ones. He was afraid even to venture upon a road that might lead to escape, lest Bukawai had set to watch it some frightful demon of the jungle.

But the real menaces suddenly drove the imaginary ones from the boy's mind, for with the coming of daylight the half-famished hyenas renewed their efforts to break down the frail barrier which kept them from their prey. Rearing upon their hind feet they clawed and struck at the lattice. With wide eyes Tibo saw it sag

and rock. Not for long, he knew, could it withstand the assaults of these two powerful and determined brutes. Already one corner had been forced past the rocky protuberance of the entrance way which had held it in place. A shaggy forearm protruded into the chamber. Tibo trembled as with ague, for he knew that the end was near.

Backing against the farther wall he stood flattened out as far from the beasts as he could get. He saw the lattice give still more. He saw a savage, snarling head forced past it, and grinning jaws snapping and gaping toward him. In another instant the pitiful fabric would fall inward, and the two would be upon him, rending his flesh from his bones,

gnawing the bones themselves, fighting for possession of his entrails.

* * * * *

Bukawai came upon Momaya outside the palisade of Mbonga, the chief. At sight of him the woman drew back in revulsion, then she flew at him, tooth and nail; but Bukawai threatening her with a spear held her at a safe distance.

"Where is my baby?" she cried. "Where is my little Tibo?"

Bukawai opened his eyes in well-simulated amazement. "Your baby!" he exclaimed. "What should I know of him, other than that I rescued him from the white god of the jungle and have not yet received my pay. I come for the goats and the sleeping mat and the piece of

copper wire the length of a tall man's arm from the shoulder to the tips of his fingers." "Offal of a hyena!" shrieked Momaya. "My child has been stolen, and you, rotting fragment of a man, have taken him. Return him to me or I shall tear your eyes from your head and feed your heart to the wild hogs."

Bukawai shrugged his shoulders. "What do I know about your child?" he asked. "I have not taken him. If he is stolen again, what should Bukawai know of the matter? Did Bukawai steal him before? No, the white jungle god stole him, and if he stole him once he would steal him again. It is nothing to me. I returned him to you before and I have come for my pay. If he is gone and you

would have him returned, Bukawai will return him—for ten fat goats, a new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of a tall man's arm from the shoulder to the tips of his fingers, and Bukawai will say nothing more about the goats and the sleeping mat and the copper wire which you were to pay for the first medicine."

"Ten fat goats!" screamed Momaya. "I could not pay you ten fat goats in as many years. Ten fat goats, indeed!"

"Ten fat goats," repeated Bukawai. "Ten fat goats, the new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of __"

Momaya stopped him with an impatient gesture. "Wait! she cried. "I

have no goats. You waste your breath. Stay here while I go to my man. He has but three goats, yet something may be done. Wait!"

Bukawai sat down beneath a tree. He felt quite content, for he knew that he should have either payment or revenge. He did not fear harm at the hands of these people of another tribe, although he well knew that they must fear and hate him. His leprosy alone would prevent their laying hands upon him, while his reputation as a witch-doctor rendered him doubly immune from attack. He was planning upon compelling them to drive the ten goats to the mouth of his cave when Momaya returned. With her were three warriors - Mbonga, the chief,

Rabba Kega, the village witch-doctor, and Ibeto, Tibo's father. They were not pretty men even under ordinary circumstances, and now, with their faces marked by anger, they well might have inspired terror in the heart of anyone; but if Bukawai felt any fear, he did not betray it. Instead he greeted them with an insolent stare, intended to awe them, as they came and squatted in a semi- circle before him.

"Where is Ibeto's son?" asked Mbonga.

"How should I know?" returned Bukawai. "Doubtless the white devil-god has him. If I am paid I will make strong medicine and then we shall know where is Ibeto's son, and shall get him

back again. It was my medicine which got him back the last time, for which I got no pay."

"I have my own witch-doctor to make medicine," replied Mbonga with dignity.

Bukawai sneered and rose to his feet. "Very well," he said, "let him make his medicine and see if he can bring Ibeto's son back." He took a few steps away from them, and then he turned angrily back. "His medicine will not bring the child back—that I know, and I also know that when you find him it will be too late for any medicine to bring him back, for he will be dead. This have I just found out, the ghost of my father's sister but now came to me and told me."

Now Mbonga and Rabba Kega might

not take much stock in their own magic, and they might even be skeptical as to the magic of another; but there was always a chance of SOMETHING being in it, especially if it were not their own. Was it not well known that old Bukawai had speech with the demons themselves and that two even lived with him in the forms of hyenas! Still they must not accede too hastily. There was the price to be considered, and Mbonga had no intention of parting lightly with ten goats to obtain the return of a single little boy who might die of smallpox long before he reached a warrior's estate.

"Wait," said Mbonga. "Let us see some of your magic, that we may know if it be good magic. Then we can talk about

payment. Rabba Kega will make some magic, too. We will see who makes the best magic. Sit down, Bukawai."

"The payment will be ten goats—fat goats—a new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of a tall man's arm from the shoulder to the ends of his fingers, and it will be made in advance, the goats being driven to my cave. Then will I make the medicine, and on the second day the boy will be returned to his mother. It cannot be done more quickly than that because it takes time to make such strong medicine."

"Make us some medicine now," said Mbonga. "Let us see what sort of medicine you make."

"Bring me fire," replied Bukawai,

"and I will make you a little magic."

Momaya was dispatched for the fire, and while she was away Mbonga dickered with Bukawai about the price. Ten goats, he said, was a high price for an able-bodied warrior. He also called Bukawai's attention to the fact that he, Mbonga, was very poor, that his people were very poor, and that ten goats were at least eight too many, to say nothing of a new sleeping mat and the copper wire; but Bukawai was adamant. His medicine was very expensive and he would have to give at least five goats to the gods who helped him make it. They were still arguing when Momaya returned with the fire.

Bukawai placed a little on the ground

before him, took a pinch of powder from a pouch at his side and sprinkled it on the embers. A cloud of smoke rose with a puff. Bukawai closed his eyes and rocked back and forth. Then he made a few passes in the air and pretended to swoon. Mbonga and the others were much impressed. Rabba Kega grew nervous. He saw his reputation waning. There was some fire left in the vessel which Momaya had brought. He seized the vessel, dropped a handful of dry leaves into it while no one was watching and then uttered a frightful scream which drew the attention of Bukawai's audience to him. It also brought Bukawai quite miraculously out of his swoon, but when the old witch-doctor saw the

reason for the disturbance he quickly relapsed into unconsciousness before anyone discovered his FAUX PAS.

Rabba Kega, seeing that he had the attention of Mbonga, Ibeto, and Momaya, blew suddenly into the vessel, with the result that the leaves commenced to smolder, and smoke issued from the mouth of the receptacle. Rabba Kega was careful to hold it so that none might see the dry leaves. Their eyes opened wide at this remarkable demonstration of the village witch-doctor's powers. The latter, greatly elated, let himself out. He shouted, jumped up and down, and made frightful grimaces; then he put his face close over the mouth of the vessel and appeared to be communing with the

spirits within.

It was while he was thus engaged that Bukawai came out of his trance, his curiosity finally having gotten the better of him. No one was paying him the slightest attention. He blinked his one eye angrily, then he, too, let out a loud roar, and when he was sure that Mbonga had turned toward him, he stiffened rigidly and made spasmodic movements with his arms and legs.

"I see him!" he cried. "He is far away. The white devil-god did not get him. He is alone and in great danger; but," he added, "if the ten fat goats and the other things are paid to me quickly there is yet time to save him."

Rabba Kega had paused to listen.

Mbonga looked toward him. The chief was in a quandary. He did not know which medicine was the better. "What does your magic tell you?" he asked of Rabba Kega.

"I, too, see him," screamed Rabba Kega; "but he is not where Bukawai says he is. He is dead at the bottom of the river."

At this Momaya commenced to howl loudly.

Tarzan had followed the spoor of the old man, the two hyenas, and the little black boy to the mouth of the cave in the rocky canon between the two hills. Here he paused a moment before the sapling barrier which Bukawai had set up, listening to the snarls and growls which

came faintly from the far recesses of the cavern.

Presently, mingled with the beastly cries, there came faintly to the keen ears of the ape-man, the agonized moan of a child. No longer did Tarzan hesitate. Hurling the door aside, he sprang into the dark opening. Narrow and black was the corridor; but long use of his eyes in the Stygian blackness of the jungle nights had given to the ape-man something of the nocturnal visionary powers of the wild things with which he had consorted since babyhood.

He moved rapidly and yet with caution, for the place was dark, unfamiliar and winding. As he advanced, he heard more and more loudly the

savage snarls of the two hyenas, mingled with the scraping and scratching of their paws upon wood. The moans of a child grew in volume, and Tarzan recognized in them the voice of the little black boy he once had sought to adopt as his balu.

There was no hysteria in the ape-man's advance. Too accustomed was he to the passing of life in the jungle to be greatly wrought even by the death of one whom he knew; but the lust for battle spurred him on. He was only a wild beast at heart and his wild beast's heart beat high in anticipation of conflict.

In the rocky chamber of the hill's center, little Tibo crouched low against the wall as far from the hunger-crazed beasts as he could drag himself. He saw

the lattice giving to the frantic clawing of the hyenas. He knew that in a few minutes his little life would flicker out horribly beneath the rending, yellow fangs of these loathsome creatures.

Beneath the buffetings of the powerful bodies, the lattice sagged inward, until, with a crash it gave way, letting the carnivora in upon the boy. Tibo cast one affrighted glance toward them, then closed his eyes and buried his face in his arms, sobbing piteously.

For a moment the hyenas paused, caution and cowardice holding them from their prey. They stood thus glaring at the lad, then slowly, stealthily, crouching, they crept toward him. It was thus that Tarzan came upon them,

bursting into the chamber swiftly and silently; but not so silently that the keen-eared beasts did not note his coming. With angry growls they turned from Tibo upon the ape-man, as, with a smile upon his lips, he ran toward them. For an instant one of the animals stood its ground; but the ape-man did not deign even to draw his hunting knife against despised Dango. Rushing in upon the brute he grasped it by the scruff of the neck, just as it attempted to dodge past him, and hurled it across the cavern after its fellow which already was slinking into the corridor, bent upon escape.

Then Tarzan picked Tibo from the floor, and when the child felt human hands upon him instead of the paws and

fangs of the hyenas, he rolled his eyes upward in surprise and incredulity, and as they fell upon Tarzan, sobs of relief broke from the childish lips and his hands clutched at his deliverer as though the white devil-god was not the most feared of jungle creatures.

When Tarzan came to the cave mouth the hyenas were nowhere in sight, and after permitting Tibo to quench his thirst in the spring which rose near by, he lifted the boy to his shoulders and set off toward the jungle at a rapid trot, determined to still the annoying howlings of Momaya as quickly as possible, for he shrewdly had guessed that the absence of her balu was the cause of her lamentation.

"He is not dead at the bottom of the river," cried Bukawai. "What does this fellow know about making magic? Who is he, anyway, that he dare say Bukawai's magic is not good magic? Bukawai sees Momaya's son. He is far away and alone and in great danger. Hasten then with the ten fat goats, the __"

But he got no further. There was a sudden interruption from above, from the branches of the very tree beneath which they squatted, and as the five blacks looked up they almost swooned in fright as they saw the great, white devil-god looking down upon them; but before they could flee they saw another face, that of the lost little Tibo, and his face was

laughing and very happy.

And then Tarzan dropped fearlessly among them, the boy still upon his back, and deposited him before his mother. Momaya, Ibeto, Rabba Kega, and Mbonga were all crowding around the lad trying to question him at the same time. Suddenly Momaya turned ferociously to fall upon Bukawai, for the boy had told her all that he had suffered at the hands of the cruel old man; but Bukawai was no longer there—he had required no recourse to black art to assure him that the vicinity of Momaya would be no healthful place for him after Tibo had told his story, and now he was running through the jungle as fast as his old legs would carry him toward the

distant lair where he knew no black would dare pursue him.

Tarzan, too, had vanished, as he had a way of doing, to the mystification of the blacks. Then Momaya's eyes lighted upon Rabba Kega. The village witch-doctor saw something in those eyes of hers which boded no good to him, and backed away.

"So my Tibo is dead at the bottom of the river, is he?" the woman shrieked. "And he's far away and alone and in great danger, is he? Magic!" The scorn which Momaya crowded into that single word would have done credit to a Thespian of the first magnitude. "Magic, indeed!" she screamed. "Momaya will show you some magic of her own," and

with that she seized upon a broken limb and struck Rabba Kega across the head. With a howl of pain, the man turned and fled, Momaya pursuing him and beating him across the shoulders, through the gateway and up the length of the village street, to the intense amusement of the warriors, the women, and the children who were so fortunate as to witness the spectacle, for one and all feared Rabba Kega, and to fear is to hate.

Thus it was that to his host of passive enemies, Tarzan of the Apes added that day two active foes, both of whom remained awake long into the night planning means of revenge upon the white devil-god who had brought them into ridicule and disrepute, but with their

most malevolent schemings was mingled a vein of real fear and awe that would not down.

Young Lord Greystoke did not know that they planned against him, nor, knowing, would have cared. He slept as well that night as he did on any other night, and though there was no roof above him, and no doors to lock against intruders, he slept much better than his noble relative in England, who had eaten altogether too much lobster and drank too much wine at dinner that night.

7. THE END OF BUKAWAI

When Tarzan of the Apes was still but a boy he had learned, among other things, to fashion pliant ropes of fibrous jungle grass. Strong and tough were the ropes of Tarzan, the little Tarmangani. Tublat, his foster father, would have told you this much and more. Had you tempted him with a handful of fat caterpillars he even might have sufficiently unbended to narrate to you a few stories of the many indignities which Tarzan had heaped upon him by means of his hated rope; but then Tublat always worked himself into such a frightful rage when he devoted any considerable thought either to the rope or to Tarzan, that it might not have proved comfortable for you to have

remained close enough to him to hear what he had to say.

So often had that snakelike noose settled unexpectedly over Tublat's head, so often had he been jerked ridiculously and painfully from his feet when he was least looking for such an occurrence, that there is little wonder he found scant space in his savage heart for love of his white-skinned foster child, or the inventions thereof. There had been other times, too, when Tublat had swung helplessly in midair, the noose tightening about his neck, death staring him in the face, and little Tarzan dancing upon a near-by limb, taunting him and making unseemly grimaces.

Then there had been another occasion

in which the rope had figured prominently—an occasion, and the only one connected with the rope, which Tublat recalled with pleasure. Tarzan, as active in brain as he was in body, was always inventing new ways in which to play. It was through the medium of play that he learned much during his childhood. This day he learned something, and that he did not lose his life in the learning of it, was a matter of great surprise to Tarzan, and the fly in the ointment, to Tublat.

The man-child had, in throwing his noose at a playmate in a tree above him, caught a projecting branch instead. When he tried to shake it loose it but drew the tighter. Then Tarzan started to climb the

rope to remove it from the branch. When he was part way up a frolicsome playmate seized that part of the rope which lay upon the ground and ran off with it as far as he could go. When Tarzan screamed at him to desist, the young ape released the rope a little and then drew it tight again. The result was to impart a swinging motion to Tarzan's body which the ape-boy suddenly realized was a new and pleasurable form of play. He urged the ape to continue until Tarzan was swinging to and fro as far as the short length of rope would permit, but the distance was not great enough, and, too, he was not far enough above the ground to give the necessary thrills which add so greatly to

the pastimes of the young.

So he clambered to the branch where the noose was caught and after removing it carried the rope far aloft and out upon a long and powerful branch. Here he again made it fast, and taking the loose end in his hand, clambered quickly down among the branches as far as the rope would permit him to go; then he swung out upon the end of it, his lithe, young body turning and twisting—a human bob upon a pendulum of grass—thirty feet above the ground.

Ah, how delectable! This was indeed a new play of the first magnitude. Tarzan was entranced. Soon he discovered that by wriggling his body in just the right way at the proper time he could diminish

or accelerate his oscillation, and, being a boy, he chose, naturally, to accelerate. Presently he was swinging far and wide, while below him, the apes of the tribe of Kerchak looked on in mild amaze.

Had it been you or I swinging there at the end of that grass rope, the thing which presently happened would not have happened, for we could not have hung on so long as to have made it possible; but Tarzan was quite as much at home swinging by his hands as he was standing upon his feet, or, at least, almost. At any rate he felt no fatigue long after the time that an ordinary mortal would have been numb with the strain of the physical exertion. And this was his undoing.

Tublat was watching him as were others of the tribe. Of all the creatures of the wild, there was none Tublat so cordially hated as he did this hideous, hairless, white-skinned, caricature of an ape. But for Tarzan's nimbleness, and the zealous watchfulness of savage Kala's mother love, Tublat would long since have rid himself of this stain upon his family escutcheon. So long had it been since Tarzan became a member of the tribe, that Tublat had forgotten the circumstances surrounding the entrance of the jungle waif into his family, with the result that he now imagined that Tarzan was his own offspring, adding greatly to his chagrin.

Wide and far swung Tarzan of the

Apes, until at last, as he reached the highest point of the arc the rope, which rapidly had frayed on the rough bark of the tree limb, parted suddenly. The watching apes saw the smooth, brown body shoot outward, and down, plummet-like. Tublat leaped high in the air, emitting what in a human being would have been an exclamation of delight. This would be the end of Tarzan and most of Tublat's troubles. From now on he could lead his life in peace and security.

Tarzan fell quite forty feet, alighting on his back in a thick bush. Kala was the first to reach his side—ferocious, hideous, loving Kala. She had seen the life crushed from her own balu in just

such a fall years before. Was she to lose this one too in the same way? Tarzan was lying quite still when she found him, embedded deeply in the bush. It took Kala several minutes to disentangle him and drag him forth; but he was not killed. He was not even badly injured. The bush had broken the force of the fall. A cut upon the back of his head showed where he had struck the tough stem of the shrub and explained his unconsciousness.

In a few minutes he was as active as ever. Tublat was furious. In his rage he snapped at a fellow-ape without first discovering the identity of his victim, and was badly mauled for his ill temper, having chosen to vent his spite upon a husky and belligerent young bull in the

full prime of his vigor.

But Tarzan had learned something new. He had learned that continued friction would wear through the strands of his rope, though it was many years before this knowledge did more for him than merely to keep him from swinging too long at a time, or too far above the ground at the end of his rope.

The day came, however, when the very thing that had once all but killed him proved the means of saving his life.

He was no longer a child, but a mighty jungle male. There was none now to watch over him, solicitously, nor did he need such. Kala was dead. Dead, too, was Tublat, and though with Kala passed the one creature that ever really

had loved him, there were still many who hated him after Tublat departed unto the arms of his fathers. It was not that he was more cruel or more savage than they that they hated him, for though he was both cruel and savage as were the beasts, his fellows, yet too was he often tender, which they never were. No, the thing which brought Tarzan most into disrepute with those who did not like him, was the possession and practice of a characteristic which they had not and could not understand—the human sense of humor. In Tarzan it was a trifle broad, perhaps, manifesting itself in rough and painful practical jokes upon his friends and cruel baiting of his enemies.

But to neither of these did he owe the

enmity of Bukawai, the witch- doctor, who dwelt in the cave between the two hills far to the north of the village of Mbonga, the chief. Bukawai was jealous of Tarzan, and Bukawai it was who came near proving the undoing of the ape-man. For months Bukawai had nursed his hatred while revenge seemed remote indeed, since Tarzan of the Apes frequented another part of the jungle, miles away from the lair of Bukawai. Only once had the black witch-doctor seen the devil-god, as he was most often called among the blacks, and upon that occasion Tarzan had robbed him of a fat fee, at the same time putting the lie in the mouth of Bukawai, and making his medicine seem poor medicine. All this

Bukawai never could forgive, though it seemed unlikely that the opportunity would come to be revenged.

Yet it did come, and quite unexpectedly. Tarzan was hunting far to the north. He had wandered away from the tribe, as he did more and more often as he approached maturity, to hunt alone for a few days. As a child he had enjoyed romping and playing with the young apes, his companions; but now these play- fellows of his had grown to surly, lowering bulls, or to touchy, suspicious mothers, jealously guarding helpless balus. So Tarzan found in his own man-mind a greater and a truer companionship than any or all of the apes of Kerchak could afford him.

This day, as Tarzan hunted, the sky slowly became overcast. Torn clouds, whipped to ragged streamers, fled low above the tree tops. They reminded Tarzan of frightened antelope fleeing the charge of a hungry lion. But though the light clouds raced so swiftly, the jungle was motionless. Not a leaf quivered and the silence was a great, dead weight—insupportable. Even the insects seemed stilled by apprehension of some frightful thing impending, and the larger things were soundless. Such a forest, such a jungle might have stood there in the beginning of that unthinkably far-gone age before God peopled the world with life, when there were no sounds because there were no ears to hear.

And over all lay a sickly, pallid ocher light through which the scourged clouds raced. Tarzan had seen all these conditions many times before, yet he never could escape a strange feeling at each recurrence of them. He knew no fear, but in the face of Nature's manifestations of her cruel, immeasurable powers, he felt very small —very small and very lonely.

Now he heard a low moaning, far away. "The lions seek their prey," he murmured to himself, looking up once again at the swift-flying clouds. The moaning rose to a great volume of sound. "They come!" said Tarzan of the Apes, and sought the shelter of a thickly foliaged tree. Quite suddenly the trees

bent their tops simultaneously as though God had stretched a hand from the heavens and pressed His flat palm down upon the world. "They pass!" whispered Tarzan. "The lions pass." Then came a vivid flash of lightning, followed by deafening thunder. "The lions have sprung," cried Tarzan, "and now they roar above the bodies of their kills."

The trees were waving wildly in all directions now, a perfectly demoniacal wind threshed the jungle pitilessly. In the midst of it the rain came— not as it comes upon us of the northlands, but in a sudden, choking, blinding deluge. "The blood of the kill," thought Tarzan, huddling himself closer to the bole of the great tree beneath which he stood.

He was close to the edge of the jungle, and at a little distance he had seen two hills before the storm broke; but now he could see nothing. It amused him to look out into the beating rain, searching for the two hills and imagining that the torrents from above had washed them away, yet he knew that presently the rain would cease, the sun come out again and all be as it was before, except where a few branches had fallen and here and there some old and rotted patriarch had crashed back to enrich the soil upon which he had fatted for, maybe, centuries. All about him branches and leaves filled the air or fell to earth, torn away by the strength of the tornado and the weight of the water upon

them. A gaunt corpse toppled and fell a few yards away; but Tarzan was protected from all these dangers by the wide-spreading branches of the sturdy young giant beneath which his jungle craft had guided him. Here there was but a single danger, and that a remote one. Yet it came. Without warning the tree above him was riven by lightning, and when the rain ceased and the sun came out Tarzan lay stretched as he had fallen, upon his face amidst the wreckage of the jungle giant that should have shielded him.

Bukawai came to the entrance of his cave after the rain and the storm had passed and looked out upon the scene. From his one eye Bukawai could see;

but had he had a dozen eyes he could have found no beauty in the fresh sweetness of the revivified jungle, for to such things, in the chemistry of temperament, his brain failed to react; nor, even had he had a nose, which he had not for years, could he have found enjoyment or sweetness in the clean-washed air.

At either side of the leper stood his sole and constant companions, the two hyenas, sniffing the air. Presently one of them uttered a low growl and with flattened head started, sneaking and wary, toward the jungle. The other followed. Bukawai, his curiosity aroused, trailed after them, in his hand a heavy knob-stick.

The hyenas halted a few yards from the prostrate Tarzan, sniffing and growling. Then came Bukawai, and at first he could not believe the witness of his own eyes; but when he did and saw that it was indeed the devil-god his rage knew no bounds, for he thought him dead and himself cheated of the revenge he had so long dreamed upon.

The hyenas approached the ape-man with bared fangs. Bukawai, with an inarticulate scream, rushed upon them, striking cruel and heavy blows with his knob-stick, for there might still be life in the apparently lifeless form. The beasts, snapping and snarling, half turned upon their master and their tormentor, but long fear still held them from his putrid

throat. They slunk away a few yards and squatted upon their haunches, hatred and baffled hunger gleaming from their savage eyes.

Bukawai stooped and placed his ear above the ape-man's heart. It still beat. As well as his sloughed features could register pleasure they did so; but it was not a pretty sight. At the ape-man's side lay his long, grass rope. Quickly Bukawai bound the limp arms behind his prisoner's back, then he raised him to one of his shoulders, for, though Bukawai was old and diseased, he was still a strong man. The hyenas fell in behind as the witch-doctor set off toward the cave, and through the long black corridors they followed as

Bukawai bore his victim into the bowels of the hills. Through subterranean chambers, connected by winding passageways, Bukawai staggered with his load. At a sudden turning of the corridor, daylight flooded them and Bukawai stepped out into a small, circular basin in the hill, apparently the crater of an ancient volcano, one of those which never reached the dignity of a mountain and are little more than lava-rimmed pits closed to the earth's surface.

Steep walls rimmed the cavity. The only exit was through the passageway by which Bukawai had entered. A few stunted trees grew upon the rocky floor. A hundred feet above could be seen the ragged lips of this cold, dead mouth of

hell.

Bukawai propped Tarzan against a tree and bound him there with his own grass rope, leaving his hands free but securing the knots in such a way that the ape-man could not reach them. The hyenas slunk to and fro, growling. Bukawai hated them and they hated him. He knew that they but waited for the time when he should be helpless, or when their hatred should rise to such a height as to submerge their cringing fear of him.

In his own heart was not a little fear of these repulsive creatures, and because of that fear, Bukawai always kept the beasts well fed, often hunting for them when their own forages for food failed, but ever was he cruel to them with the

cruelty of a little brain, diseased, bestial, primitive.

He had had them since they were puppies. They had known no other life than that with him, and though they went abroad to hunt, always they returned. Of late Bukawai had come to believe that they returned not so much from habit as from a fiendish patience which would submit to every indignity and pain rather than forego the final vengeance, and Bukawai needed but little imagination to picture what that vengeance would be. Today he would see for himself what his end would be; but another should impersonate Bukawai.

When he had trussed Tarzan securely, Bukawai went back into the corridor,

driving the hyenas ahead of him, and pulling across the opening a lattice of laced branches, which shut the pit from the cave during the night that Bukawai might sleep in security, for then the hyenas were penned in the crater that they might not sneak upon a sleeping Bukawai in the darkness.

Bukawai returned to the outer cave mouth, filled a vessel with water at the spring which rose in the little canon close at hand and returned toward the pit. The hyenas stood before the lattice looking hungrily toward Tarzan. They had been fed in this manner before.

With his water, the witch-doctor approached Tarzan and threw a portion of the contents of the vessel in the ape-

man's face. There was fluttering of the eyelids, and at the second application Tarzan opened his eyes and looked about.

"Devil-god," cried Bukawai, "I am the great witch-doctor. My medicine is strong. Yours is weak. If it is not, why do you stay tied here like a goat that is bait for lions?"

Tarzan understood nothing the witch-doctor said, therefore he did not reply, but only stared straight at Bukawai with cold and level gaze. The hyenas crept up behind him. He heard them growl; but he did not even turn his head. He was a beast with a man's brain. The beast in him refused to show fear in the face of a death which the man-mind already

admitted to be inevitable.

Bukawai, not yet ready to give his victim to the beasts, rushed upon the hyenas with his knob-stick. There was a short scrimmage in which the brutes came off second best, as they always did. Tarzan watched it. He saw and realized the hatred which existed between the two animals and the hideous semblance of a man.

With the hyenas subdued, Bukawai returned to the baiting of Tarzan; but finding that the ape-man understood nothing he said, the witch-doctor finally desisted. Then he withdrew into the corridor and pulled the latticework barrier across the opening. He went back into the cave and got a sleeping

mat, which he brought to the opening, that he might lie down and watch the spectacle of his revenge in comfort.

The hyenas were sneaking furtively around the ape-man. Tarzan strained at his bonds for a moment, but soon realized that the rope he had braided to hold Numa, the lion, would hold him quite as successfully. He did not wish to die; but he could look death in the face now as he had many times before without a quaver.

As he pulled upon the rope he felt it rub against the small tree about which it was passed. Like a flash of the cinematograph upon the screen, a picture was flashed before his mind's eye from the storehouse of his memory. He saw a

lithe, boyish figure swinging high above the ground at the end of a rope. He saw many apes watching from below, and then he saw the rope part and the boy hurtle downward toward the ground. Tarzan smiled. Immediately he commenced to draw the rope rapidly back and forth across the tree trunk.

The hyenas, gaining courage, came closer. They sniffed at his legs; but when he struck at them with his free arms they slunk off. He knew that with the growth of hunger they would attack. Coolly, methodically, without haste, Tarzan drew the rope back and forth against the rough trunk of the small tree.

In the entrance to the cavern Bukawai fell asleep. He thought it would be some

time before the beasts gained sufficient courage or hunger to attack the captive. Their growls and the cries of the victim would awaken him. In the meantime he might as well rest, and he did.

Thus the day wore on, for the hyenas were not famished, and the rope with which Tarzan was bound was a stronger one than that of his boyhood, which had parted so quickly to the chafing of the rough tree bark. Yet, all the while hunger was growing upon the beasts and the strands of the grass rope were wearing thinner and thinner. Bukawai slept.

It was late afternoon before one of the beasts, irritated by the gnawing of appetite, made a quick, growling dash at the ape-man. The noise awoke Bukawai.

He sat up quickly and watched what went on within the crater. He saw the hungry hyena charge the man, leaping for the unprotected throat. He saw Tarzan reach out and seize the growling animal, and then he saw the second beast spring for the devil-god's shoulder. There was a mighty heave of the great, smooth-skinned body. Rounded muscles shot into great, tensed piles beneath the brown hide—the ape-man surged forward with all his weight and all his great strength—the bonds parted, and the three were rolling upon the floor of the crater snarling, snapping, and rending.

Bukawai leaped to his feet. Could it be that the devil-god was to prevail against his servants? Impossible! The

creature was unarmed, and he was down with two hyenas on top of him; but Bukawai did not know Tarzan.

The ape-man fastened his fingers upon the throat of one of the hyenas and rose to one knee, though the other beast tore at him frantically in an effort to pull him down. With a single hand Tarzan held the one, and with the other hand he reached forth and pulled toward him the second beast.

And then Bukawai, seeing the battle going against his forces, rushed forward from the cavern brandishing his knob-stick. Tarzan saw him coming, and rising now to both feet, a hyena in each hand, he hurled one of the foaming beasts straight at the witch-doctor's head.

Down went the two in a snarling, biting heap. Tarzan tossed the second hyena across the crater, while the first gnawed at the rotting face of its master; but this did not suit the ape-man. With a kick he sent the beast howling after its companion, and springing to the side of the prostrate witch-doctor, dragged him to his feet.

Bukawai, still conscious, saw death, immediate and terrible, in the cold eyes of his captor, so he turned upon Tarzan with teeth and nails. The ape-man shuddered at the proximity of that raw face to his. The hyenas had had enough and disappeared through the small aperture leading into the cave. Tarzan had little difficulty in overpowering and

binding Bukawai. Then he led him to the very tree to which he had been bound; but in binding Bukawai, Tarzan saw to it that escape after the same fashion that he had escaped would be out of the question; then he left him.

As he passed through the winding corridors and the subterranean apartments, Tarzan saw nothing of the hyenas.

"They will return," he said to himself.

In the crater between the towering walls Bukawai, cold with terror, trembled, trembled as with ague.

"They will return!" he cried, his voice rising to a fright-filled shriek.

And they did.

8. THE LION

Numa, the lion, crouched behind a thorn bush close beside the drinking pool where the river eddied just below the bend. There was a ford there and on either bank a well-worn trail, broadened far out at the river's brim, where, for countless centuries, the wild things of the jungle and of the plains beyond had come down to drink, the carnivora with bold and fearless majesty, the herbivora timorous, hesitating, fearful.

Numa, the lion, was hungry, he was very hungry, and so he was quite silent now. On his way to the drinking place he had moaned often and roared not a little; but as he neared the spot where he would lie in wait for Bara, the deer, or

Horta, the boar, or some other of the many luscious-fleshed creatures who came hither to drink, he was silent. It was a grim, a terrible silence, shot through with yellow-green light of ferocious eyes, punctuated with undulating tremors of sinuous tail.

It was Pacco, the zebra, who came first, and Numa, the lion, could scarce restrain a roar of anger, for of all the plains people, none are more wary than Pacco, the zebra. Behind the black-striped stallion came a herd of thirty or forty of the plump and vicious little horselike beasts. As he neared the river, the leader paused often, cocking his ears and raising his muzzle to sniff the gentle breeze for the tell-tale scent spoor of the

dread flesh-eaters.

Numa shifted uneasily, drawing his hind quarters far beneath his tawny body, gathering himself for the sudden charge and the savage assault. His eyes shot hungry fire. His great muscles quivered to the excitement of the moment.

Pacco came a little nearer, halted, snorted, and wheeled. There was a pattering of scurrying hoofs and the herd was gone; but Numa, the lion, moved not. He was familiar with the ways of Pacco, the zebra. He knew that he would return, though many times he might wheel and fly before he summoned the courage to lead his harem and his offspring to the water. There was the

chance that Pacco might be frightened off entirely. Numa had seen this happen before, and so he became almost rigid lest he be the one to send them galloping, waterless, back to the plain.

Again and again came Pacco and his family, and again and again did they turn and flee; but each time they came closer to the river, until at last the plump stallion dipped his velvet muzzle daintily into the water. The others, stepping warily, approached their leader. Numa selected a sleek, fat filly and his flaming eyes burned greedily as they feasted upon her, for Numa, the lion, loves scarce anything better than the meat of Pacco, perhaps because Pacco is, of all the grass-eaters, the most

difficult to catch.

Slowly the lion rose, and as he rose, a twig snapped beneath one of his great, padded paws. Like a shot from a rifle he charged upon the filly; but the snapped twig had been enough to startle the timorous quarry, so that they were in instant flight simultaneously with Numa's charge.

The stallion was last, and with a prodigious leap, the lion catapulted through the air to seize him; but the snapping twig had robbed Numa of his dinner, though his mighty talons raked the zebra's glossy rump, leaving four crimson bars across the beautiful coat.

It was an angry Numa that quitted the river and prowled, fierce, dangerous,

and hungry, into the jungle. Far from particular now was his appetite. Even Dango, the hyena, would have seemed a tidbit to that ravenous maw. And in this temper it was that the lion came upon the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape.

One does not look for Numa, the lion, this late in the morning. He should be lying up asleep beside his last night's kill by now; but Numa had made no kill last night. He was still hunting, hungrier than ever.

The anthropoids were idling about the clearing, the first keen desire of the morning's hunger having been satisfied. Numa scented them long before he saw them. Ordinarily he would have turned away in search of other game, for even

Numa respected the mighty muscles and the sharp fangs of the great bulls of the tribe of Kerchak, but today he kept on steadily toward them, his bristled snout wrinkled into a savage snarl.

Without an instant's hesitation, Numa charged the moment he reached a point from where the apes were visible to him. There were a dozen or more of the hairy, manlike creatures upon the ground in a little glade. In a tree at one side sat a brown-skinned youth. He saw Numa's swift charge; he saw the apes turn and flee, huge bulls trampling upon little balus; only a single she held her ground to meet the charge, a young she inspired by new motherhood to the great sacrifice that her balu might escape.

Tarzan leaped from his perch, screaming at the flying bulls beneath and at those who squatted in the safety of surrounding trees. Had the bulls stood their ground, Numa would not have carried through that charge unless goaded by great rage or the gnawing pangs of starvation. Even then he would not have come off unscathed.

If the bulls heard, they were too slow in responding, for Numa had seized the mother ape and dragged her into the jungle before the males had sufficiently collected their wits and their courage to rally in defense of their fellow. Tarzan's angry voice aroused similar anger in the breasts of the apes. Snarling and barking they followed Numa into the dense

labyrinth of foliage wherein he sought to hide himself from them. The ape-man was in the lead, moving rapidly and yet with caution, depending even more upon his ears and nose than upon his eyes for information of the lion's whereabouts.

The spoor was easy to follow, for the dragged body of the victim left a plain trail, blood-spattered and scentful. Even such dull creatures as you or I might easily have followed it. To Tarzan and the apes of Kerchak it was as obvious as a cement sidewalk.

Tarzan knew that they were nearing the great cat even before he heard an angry growl of warning just ahead. Calling to the apes to follow his example, he swung into a tree and a

moment later Numa was surrounded by a ring of growling beasts, well out of reach of his fangs and talons but within plain sight of him. The carnivore crouched with his fore-quarters upon the she-ape. Tarzan could see that the latter was already dead; but something within him made it seem quite necessary to rescue the useless body from the clutches of the enemy and to punish him.

He shrieked taunts and insults at Numa, and tearing dead branches from the tree in which he danced, hurled them at the lion. The apes followed his example. Numa roared out in rage and vexation. He was hungry, but under such conditions he could not feed.

The apes, if they had been left to

themselves, would doubtless soon have left the lion to peaceful enjoyment of his feast, for was not the she dead? They could not restore her to life by throwing sticks at Numa, and they might even now be feeding in quiet themselves; but Tarzan was of a different mind. Numa must be punished and driven away. He must be taught that even though he killed a Mangani, he would not be permitted to feed upon his kill. The man- mind looked into the future, while the apes perceived only the immediate present. They would be content to escape today the menace of Numa, while Tarzan saw the necessity, and the means as well, of safeguarding the days to come.

So he urged the great anthropoids on

until Numa was showered with missiles that kept his head dodging and his voice pealing forth its savage protest; but still he clung desperately to his kill.

The twigs and branches hurled at Numa, Tarzan soon realized, did not hurt him greatly even when they struck him, and did not injure him at all, so the ape-man looked about for more effective missiles, nor did he have to look long. An out-cropping of decomposed granite not far from Numa suggested ammunition of a much more painful nature. Calling to the apes to watch him, Tarzan slipped to the ground and gathered a handful of small fragments. He knew that when once they had seen him carry out his idea they would be much quicker to follow

his lead than to obey his instructions, were he to command them to procure pieces of rock and hurl them at Numa, for Tarzan was not then king of the apes of the tribe of Kerchak. That came in later years. Now he was but a youth, though one who already had wrested for himself a place in the councils of the savage beasts among whom a strange fate had cast him. The sullen bulls of the older generation still hated him as beasts hate those of whom they are suspicious, whose scent characteristic is the scent characteristic of an alien order and, therefore, of an enemy order. The younger bulls, those who had grown up through childhood as his playmates, were as accustomed to Tarzan's scent as

to that of any other member of the tribe. They felt no greater suspicion of him than of any other bull of their acquaintance; yet they did not love him, for they loved none outside the mating season, and the animosities aroused by other bulls during that season lasted well over until the next. They were a morose and peevish band at best, though here and there were those among them in whom germinated the primal seeds of humanity—reversions to type, these, doubtless; reversions to the ancient progenitor who took the first step out of ape-hood toward humanness, when he walked more often upon his hind feet and discovered other things for idle hands to do.

So now Tarzan led where he could not yet command. He had long since discovered the apish propensity for mimicry and learned to make use of it. Having filled his arms with fragments of rotted granite, he clambered again into a tree, and it pleased him to see that the apes had followed his example.

During the brief respite while they were gathering their ammunition, Numa had settled himself to feed; but scarce had he arranged himself and his kill when a sharp piece of rock hurled by the practiced hand of the ape-man struck him upon the cheek. His sudden roar of pain and rage was smothered by a volley from the apes, who had seen Tarzan's act. Numa shook his massive head and

glared upward at his tormentors. For a half hour they pursued him with rocks and broken branches, and though he dragged his kill into densest thickets, yet they always found a way to reach him with their missiles, giving him no opportunity to feed, and driving him on and on.

The hairless ape-thing with the man scent was worst of all, for he had even the temerity to advance upon the ground to within a few yards of the Lord of the Jungle, that he might with greater accuracy and force hurl the sharp bits of granite and the heavy sticks at him. Time and again did Numa charge—sudden, vicious charges—but the lithe, active tormentor always managed to elude him

and with such insolent ease that the lion forgot even his great hunger in the consuming passion of his rage, leaving his meat for considerable spaces of time in vain efforts to catch his enemy.

The apes and Tarzan pursued the great beast to a natural clearing, where Numa evidently determined to make a last stand, taking up his position in the center of the open space, which was far enough from any tree to render him practically immune from the rather erratic throwing of the apes, though Tarzan still found him with most persistent and aggravating frequency.

This, however, did not suit the ape-man, since Numa now suffered an occasional missile with no more than a

snarl, while he settled himself to partake of his delayed feast. Tarzan scratched his head, pondering some more effective method of offense, for he had determined to prevent Numa from profiting in any way through his attack upon the tribe. The man-mind reasoned against the future, while the shaggy apes thought only of their present hatred of this ancestral enemy. Tarzan guessed that should Numa find it an easy thing to snatch a meal from the tribe of Kerchak, it would be but a short time before their existence would be one living nightmare of hideous watchfulness and dread. Numa must be taught that the killing of an ape brought immediate punishment and no rewards. It would take but a few

lessons to insure the former safety of the tribe. This must be some old lion whose failing strength and agility had forced him to any prey that he could catch; but even a single lion, undisputed, could exterminate the tribe, or at least make its existence so precarious and so terrifying that life would no longer be a pleasant condition.

"Let him hunt among the Gomangani," thought Tarzan. "He will find them easier prey. I will teach ferocious Numa that he may not hunt the Mangani."

But how to wrest the body of his victim from the feeding lion was the first question to be solved. At last Tarzan hit upon a plan. To anyone but Tarzan of the Apes it might have seemed rather a risky

plan, and perhaps it did even to him; but Tarzan rather liked things that contained a considerable element of danger. At any rate, I rather doubt that you or I would have chosen a similar plan for foiling an angry and a hungry lion.

Tarzan required assistance in the scheme he had hit upon and his assistant must be equally as brave and almost as active as he. The ape-man's eyes fell upon Taug, the playmate of his childhood, the rival in his first love and now, of all the bulls of the tribe, the only one that might be thought to hold in his savage brain any such feeling toward Tarzan as we describe among ourselves as friendship. At least, Tarzan knew, Taug was courageous, and he was young

and agile and wonderfully muscled.

"Taug!" cried the ape-man. The great ape looked up from a dead limb he was attempting to tear from a lightning-blasted tree. "Go close to Numa and worry him," said Tarzan. "Worry him until he charges. Lead him away from the body of Mamka. Keep him away as long as you can."

Taug nodded. He was across the clearing from Tarzan. Wresting the limb at last from the tree he dropped to the ground and advanced toward Numa, growling and barking out his insults. The worried lion looked up and rose to his feet. His tail went stiffly erect and Taug turned in flight, for he knew that warming signal of the charge.

From behind the lion, Tarzan ran quickly toward the center of the clearing and the body of Mamka. Numa, all his eyes for Taug, did not see the ape-man. Instead he shot forward after the fleeing bull, who had turned in flight not an instant too soon, since he reached the nearest tree but a yard or two ahead of the pursuing demon. Like a cat the heavy anthropoid scampered up the bole of his sanctuary. Numa's talons missed him by little more than inches.

For a moment the lion paused beneath the tree, glaring up at the ape and roaring until the earth trembled, then he turned back again toward his kill, and as he did so, his tail shot once more to rigid erectness and he charged back even

more ferociously than he had come, for what he saw was the naked man- thing running toward the farther trees with the bloody carcass of his prey across a giant shoulder.

The apes, watching the grim race from the safety of the trees, screamed taunts at Numa and warnings to Tarzan. The high sun, hot and brilliant, fell like a spotlight upon the actors in the little clearing, portraying them in glaring relief to the audience in the leafy shadows of the surrounding trees. The light-brown body of the naked youth, all but hidden by the shaggy carcass of the killed ape, the red blood streaking his smooth hide, his muscles rolling, velvety, beneath. Behind him the black-

maned lion, head flattened, tail extended, racing, a jungle thoroughbred, across the sunlit clearing.

Ah, but this was life! With death at his heels, Tarzan thrilled with the joy of such living as this; but would he reach the trees ahead of the rampant death so close behind?

Gunto swung from a limb in a tree before him. Gunto was screaming warnings and advice.

"Catch me!" cried Tarzan, and with his heavy burden leaped straight for the big bull hanging there by his hind feet and one forepaw. And Gunto caught them—the big ape-man and the dead weight of the slain she-ape— caught them with one great, hairy paw and

whirled them upward until Tarzan's fingers closed upon a near-by branch.

Beneath, Numa leaped; but Gunto, heavy and awkward as he may have appeared, was as quick as Manu, the monkey, so that the lion's talons but barely grazed him, scratching a bloody streak beneath one hairy arm.

Tarzan carried Mamka's corpse to a high crotch, where even Sheeta, the panther, could not get it. Numa paced angrily back and forth beneath the tree, roaring frightfully. He had been robbed of his kill and his revenge also. He was very savage indeed; but his despoilers were well out of his reach, and after hurling a few taunts and missiles at him they swung away through the trees,

fiercely reviling him.

Tarzan thought much upon the little adventure of that day. He foresaw what might happen should the great carnivora of the jungle turn their serious attention upon the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape, but equally he thought upon the wild scramble of the apes for safety when Numa first charged among them. There is little humor in the jungle that is not grim and awful. The beasts have little or no conception of humor; but the young Englishman saw humor in many things which presented no humorous angle to his associates.

Since earliest childhood he had been a searcher after fun, much to the sorrow of his fellow-apes, and now he saw the

humor of the frightened panic of the apes and the baffled rage of Numa even in this grim jungle adventure which had robbed Mamka of life, and jeopardized that of many members of the tribe.

It was but a few weeks later that Sheeta, the panther, made a sudden rush among the tribe and snatched a little balu from a tree where it had been hidden while its mother sought food. Sheeta got away with his small prize unmolested. Tarzan was very wroth. He spoke to the bulls of the ease with which Numa and Sheeta, in a single moon, had slain two members of the tribe.

"They will take us all for food," he cried. "We hunt as we will through the jungle, paying no heed to approaching

enemies. Even Manu, the monkey, does not so. He keeps two or three always watching for enemies. Pacco, the zebra, and Wappi, the antelope, have those about the herd who keep watch while the others feed, while we, the great Mangani, let Numa, and Sabor, and Sheeta come when they will and carry us off to feed their balus.

"Gr-r-rmph," said Numgo.

"What are we to do?" asked Taug.

"We, too, should have two or three always watching for the approach of Numa, and Sabor, and Sheeta," replied Tarzan. "No others need we fear, except Histah, the snake, and if we watch for the others we will see Histah if he comes, though gliding ever so silently."

And so it was that the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak posted sentries thereafter, who watched upon three sides while the tribe hunted, scattered less than had been their wont.

But Tarzan went abroad alone, for Tarzan was a man-thing and sought amusement and adventure and such humor as the grim and terrible jungle offers to those who know it and do not fear it—a weird humor shot with blazing eyes and dappled with the crimson of lifeblood. While others sought only food and love, Tarzan of the Apes sought food and joy.

One day he hovered above the palisaded village of Mbonga, the chief, the jet cannibal of the jungle primeval.

He saw, as he had seen many times before, the witch-doctor, Rabba Kega, decked out in the head and hide of Gorgo, the buffalo. It amused Tarzan to see a Gomangani parading as Gorgo; but it suggested nothing in particular to him until he chanced to see stretched against the side of Mbonga's hut the skin of a lion with the head still on. Then a broad grin widened the handsome face of the savage beast-youth.

Back into the jungle he went until chance, agility, strength, and cunning backed by his marvelous powers of perception, gave him an easy meal. If Tarzan felt that the world owed him a living he also realized that it was for him to collect it, nor was there ever a

better collector than this son of an English lord, who knew even less of the ways of his forbears than he did of the forbears themselves, which was nothing.

It was quite dark when Tarzan returned to the village of Mbonga and took his now polished perch in the tree which overhangs the palisade upon one side of the walled enclosure. As there was nothing in particular to feast upon in the village there was little life in the single street, for only an orgy of flesh and native beer could draw out the people of Mbonga. Tonight they sat gossiping about their cooking fires, the older members of the tribe; or, if they were young, paired off in the shadows cast by the palm-thatched huts.

Tarzan dropped lightly into the village, and sneaking stealthily in the concealment of the denser shadows, approached the hut of the chief, Mbonga. Here he found that which he sought. There were warriors all about him; but they did not know that the feared devil-god slunk noiselessly so near them, nor did they see him possess himself of that which he coveted and depart from their village as noiselessly as he had come.

Later that night, as Tarzan curled himself for sleep, he lay for a long time looking up at the burning planets and the twinkling stars and at Goro the moon, and he smiled. He recalled how ludicrous the great bulls had appeared in their mad scramble for safety that day

when Numa had charged among them and seized Mamka, and yet he knew them to be fierce and courageous. It was the sudden shock of surprise that always sent them into a panic; but of this Tarzan was not as yet fully aware. That was something he was to learn in the near future.

He fell asleep with a broad grin upon his face.

Manu, the monkey, awoke him in the morning by dropping discarded bean pods upon his upturned face from a branch a short distance above him. Tarzan looked up and smiled. He had been awakened thus before many times. He and Manu were fairly good friends, their friendship operating upon a

reciprocal basis. Sometimes Manu would come running early in the morning to awaken Tarzan and tell him that Bara, the deer, was feeding close at hand, or that Horta, the boar, was asleep in a mudhole hard by, and in return Tarzan broke open the shells of the harder nuts and fruits for Manu, or frightened away Histah, the snake, and Sheeta, the panther.

The sun had been up for some time, and the tribe had already wandered off in search of food. Manu indicated the direction they had taken with a wave of his hand and a few piping notes of his squeaky little voice.

"Come, Manu," said Tarzan, "and you will see that which shall make you dance

for joy and squeal your wrinkled little head off. Come, follow Tarzan of the Apes."

With that he set off in the direction Manu had indicated and above him, chattering, scolding and squealing, skipped Manu, the monkey. Across Tarzan's shoulders was the thing he had stolen from the village of Mbonga, the chief, the evening before.

The tribe was feeding in the forest beside the clearing where Gunto, and Taug, and Tarzan had so harassed Numa and finally taken away from him the fruit of his kill. Some of them were in the clearing itself. In peace and content they fed, for were there not three sentries, each watching upon a different side of

the herd? Tarzan had taught them this, and though he had been away for several days hunting alone, as he often did, or visiting at the cabin by the sea, they had not as yet forgotten his admonitions, and if they continued for a short time longer to post sentries, it would become a habit of their tribal life and thus be perpetuated indefinitely.

But Tarzan, who knew them better than they knew themselves, was confident that they had ceased to place the watchers about them the moment that he had left them, and now he planned not only to have a little fun at their expense but to teach them a lesson in preparedness, which, by the way, is even a more vital issue in the jungle than

in civilized places. That you and I exist today must be due to the preparedness of some shaggy anthropoid of the Oligocene. Of course the apes of Kerchak were always prepared, after their own way—Tarzan had merely suggested a new and additional safeguard.

Gunto was posted today to the north of the clearing. He squatted in the fork of a tree from where he might view the jungle for quite a distance about him. It was he who first discovered the enemy. A rustling in the undergrowth attracted his attention, and a moment later he had a partial view of a shaggy mane and tawny yellow back. Just a glimpse it was through the matted foliage beneath him;

but it brought from Gunto's leathern lungs a shrill "Kreeg-ah!" which is the ape for beware, or danger.

Instantly the tribe took up the cry until "Kreeg-ahs!" rang through the jungle about the clearing as apes swung quickly to places of safety among the lower branches of the trees and the great bulls hastened in the direction of Gunto.

And then into the clearing strode Numa, the lion—majestic and mighty, and from a deep chest issued the moan and the cough and the rumbling roar that set stiff hairs to bristling from shaggy craniums down the length of mighty spines.

Inside the clearing, Numa paused and on the instant there fell upon him from

the trees near by a shower of broken rock and dead limbs torn from age-old trees. A dozen times he was hit, and then the apes ran down and gathered other rocks, pelting him unmercifully.

Numa turned to flee, but his way was barred by a fusillade of sharp- cornered missiles, and then, upon the edge of the clearing, great Taug met him with a huge fragment of rock as large as a man's head, and down went the Lord of the Jungle beneath the stunning blow.

With shrieks and roars and loud barkings the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak rushed upon the fallen lion. Sticks and stones and yellow fangs menaced the still form. In another moment, before he could regain

consciousness, Numa would be battered and torn until only a bloody mass of broken bones and matted hair remained of what had once been the most dreaded of jungle creatures.

But even as the sticks and stones were raised above him and the great fangs bared to tear him, there descended like a plummet from the trees above a diminutive figure with long, white whiskers and a wrinkled face. Square upon the body of Numa it alighted and there it danced and screamed and shrieked out its challenge against the bulls of Kerchak.

For an instant they paused, paralyzed by the wonder of the thing. It was Manu, the monkey, Manu, the little coward, and

here he was daring the ferocity of the great Mangani, hopping about upon the carcass of Numa, the lion, and crying out that they must not strike it again.

And when the bulls paused, Manu reached down and seized a tawny ear. With all his little might he tugged upon the heavy head until slowly it turned back, revealing the tousled, black head and clean-cut profile of Tarzan of the Apes.

Some of the older apes were for finishing what they had commenced; but Taug, sullen, mighty Taug, sprang quickly to the ape-man's side and straddling the unconscious form warned back those who would have struck his childhood playmate. And Teeka, his

mate, came too, taking her place with bared fangs at Taug's side. others followed their example, until at last Tarzan was surrounded by a ring of hairy champions who would permit no enemy to approach him.

It was a surprised and chastened Tarzan who opened his eyes to consciousness a few minutes later. He looked about him at the surrounding apes and slowly there returned to him a realization of what had occurred.

Gradually a broad grin illuminated his features. His bruises were many and they hurt; but the good that had come from his adventure was worth all that it had cost. He had learned, for instance, that the apes of Kerchak had heeded his

teaching, and he had learned that he had good friends among the sullen beasts whom he had thought without sentiment. He had discovered that Manu, the monkey—even little, cowardly Manu—had risked his life in his defense.

It made Tarzan very glad to know these things; but at the other lesson he had been taught he reddened. He had always been a joker, the only joker in the grim and terrible company; but now as he lay there half dead from his hurts, he almost swore a solemn oath forever to forego practical joking - almost; but not quite.

9. THE NIGHTMARE

The blacks of the village of Mbonga, the chief, were feasting, while above them in a large tree sat Tarzan of the Apes—grim, terrible, empty, and envious. Hunting had proved poor that day, for there are lean days as well as fat ones for even the greatest of the jungle hunters. Oftentimes Tarzan went empty for more than a full sun, and he had passed through entire moons during which he had been but barely able to stave off starvation; but such times were infrequent.

There once had been a period of sickness among the grass-eaters which had left the plains almost bare of game for several years, and again the great

cats had increased so rapidly and so overrun the country that their prey, which was also Tarzan's, had been frightened off for a considerable time.

But for the most part Tarzan had fed well always. Today, though, he had gone empty, one misfortune following another as rapidly as he raised new quarry, so that now, as he sat perched in the tree above the feasting blacks, he experienced all the pangs of famine and his hatred for his lifelong enemies waxed strong in his breast. It was tantalizing, indeed, to sit there hungry while these Gomangani filled themselves so full of food that their stomachs seemed almost upon the point of bursting, and with elephant steaks at

that!

It was true that Tarzan and Tantor were the best of friends, and that Tarzan never yet had tasted of the flesh of the elephant; but the Gomangani evidently had slain one, and as they were eating of the flesh of their kill, Tarzan was assailed by no doubts as to the ethics of his doing likewise, should he have the opportunity. Had he known that the elephant had died of sickness several days before the blacks discovered the carcass, he might not have been so keen to partake of the feast, for Tarzan of the Apes was no carrion-eater. Hunger, however, may blunt the most epicurean taste, and Tarzan was not exactly an epicure.

What he was at this moment was a very hungry wild beast whom caution was holding in leash, for the great cooking pot in the center of the village was surrounded by black warriors, through whom not even Tarzan of the Apes might hope to pass unharmed. It would be necessary, therefore, for the watcher to remain there hungry until the blacks had gorged themselves to stupor, and then, if they had left any scraps, to make the best meal he could from such; but to the impatient Tarzan it seemed that the greedy Gomangani would rather burst than leave the feast before the last morsel had been devoured. For a time they broke the monotony of eating by executing portions of a hunting dance, a

maneuver which sufficiently stimulated digestion to permit them to fall to once more with renewed vigor; but with the consumption of appalling quantities of elephant meat and native beer they presently became too logy for physical exertion of any sort, some reaching a stage where they no longer could rise from the ground, but lay conveniently close to the great cooking pot, stuffing themselves into unconsciousness.

It was well past midnight before Tarzan even could begin to see the end of the orgy. The blacks were now falling asleep rapidly; but a few still persisted. From before their condition Tarzan had no doubt but that he easily could enter the village and snatch a handful of meat

from before their noses; but a handful was not what he wanted. Nothing less than a stomachful would allay the gnawing craving of that great emptiness. He must therefore have ample time to forage in peace.

At last but a single warrior remained true to his ideals—an old fellow whose once wrinkled belly was now as smooth and as tight as the head of a drum. With evidences of great discomfort, and even pain, he would crawl toward the pot and drag himself slowly to his knees, from which position he could reach into the receptacle and seize a piece of meat. Then he would roll over on his back with a loud groan and lie there while he slowly forced the food between his teeth

and down into his gorged stomach.

It was evident to Tarzan that the old fellow would eat until he died, or until there was no more meat. The ape-man shook his head in disgust. What foul creatures were these Gomangani? Yet of all the jungle folk they alone resembled Tarzan closely in form. Tarzan was a man, and they, too, must be some manner of men, just as the little monkeys, and the great apes, and Bolgani, the gorilla, were quite evidently of one great family, though differing in size and appearance and customs. Tarzan was ashamed, for of all the beasts of the jungle, then, man was the most disgusting—man and Dango, the hyena. Only man and Dango ate until they swelled up like a dead rat.

Tarzan had seen Dango eat his way into the carcass of a dead elephant and then continue to eat so much that he had been unable to get out of the hole through which he had entered. Now he could readily believe that man, given the opportunity, would do the same. Man, too, was the most unlovely of creatures —with his skinny legs and his big stomach, his filed teeth, and his thick, red lips. Man was disgusting. Tarzan's gaze was riveted upon the hideous old warrior wallowing in filth beneath him.

There! the thing was struggling to its knees to reach for another morsel of flesh. It groaned aloud in pain and yet it persisted in eating, eating, ever eating. Tarzan could endure it no longer—

neither his hunger nor his disgust. Silently he slipped to the ground with the bole of the great tree between himself and the feaster.

The man was still kneeling, bent almost double in agony, before the cooking pot. His back was toward the ape-man. Swiftly and noiselessly Tarzan approached him. There was no sound as steel fingers closed about the black throat. The struggle was short, for the man was old and already half stupefied from the effects of the gorging and the beer.

Tarzan dropped the inert mass and scooped several large pieces of meat from the cooking pot—enough to satisfy even his great hunger— then he raised

the body of the feaster and shoved it into the vessel. When the other blacks awoke they would have something to think about! Tarzan grinned. As he turned toward the tree with his meat, he picked up a vessel containing beer and raised it to his lips, but at the first taste he spat the stuff from his mouth and tossed the primitive tankard aside. He was quite sure that even Dango would draw the line at such filthy tasting drink as that, and his contempt for man increased with the conviction.

Tarzan swung off into the jungle some half mile or so before he paused to partake of his stolen food. He noticed that it gave forth a strange and unpleasant odor, but assumed that this

was due to the fact that it had stood in a vessel of water above a fire. Tarzan was, of course, unaccustomed to cooked food. He did not like it; but he was very hungry and had eaten a considerable portion of his haul before it was really borne in upon him that the stuff was nauseating. It required far less than he had imagined it would to satisfy his appetite.

Throwing the balance to the ground he curled up in a convenient crotch and sought slumber; but slumber seemed difficult to woo. Ordinarily Tarzan of the Apes was asleep as quickly as a dog after it curls itself upon a hearthrug before a roaring blaze; but tonight he squirmed and twisted, for at the pit of

his stomach was a peculiar feeling that resembled nothing more closely than an attempt upon the part of the fragments of elephant meat reposing there to come out into the night and search for their elephant; but Tarzan was adamant. He gritted his teeth and held them back. He was not to be robbed of his meal after waiting so long to obtain it.

He had succeeded in dozing when the roaring of a lion awoke him. He sat up to discover that it was broad daylight. Tarzan rubbed his eyes. Could it be that he had really slept? He did not feel particularly refreshed as he should have after a good sleep. A noise attracted his attention, and he looked down to see a lion standing at the foot of the tree gazing

hungrily at him. Tarzan made a face at the king of beasts, whereat Numa, greatly to the ape-man's surprise, started to climb up into the branches toward him. Now, never before had Tarzan seen a lion climb a tree, yet, for some unaccountable reason, he was not greatly surprised that this particular lion should do so.

As the lion climbed slowly toward him, Tarzan sought higher branches; but to his chagrin, he discovered that it was with the utmost difficulty that he could climb at all. Again and again he slipped back, losing all that he had gained, while the lion kept steadily at his climbing, coming ever closer and closer to the ape-man. Tarzan could see the hungry

light in the yellow-green eyes. He could see the slaver on the drooping jowls, and the great fangs agape to seize and destroy him. Clawing desperately, the ape-man at last succeeded in gaining a little upon his pursuer. He reached the more slender branches far aloft where he well knew no lion could follow; yet on and on came devil-faced Numa. It was incredible; but it was true. Yet what most amazed Tarzan was that though he realized the incredibility of it all, he at the same time accepted it as a matter of course, first that a lion should climb at all and second that he should enter the upper terraces where even Sheeta, the panther, dared not venture.

To the very top of a tall tree the ape-

man clawed his awkward way and after him came Numa, the lion, moaning dismally. At last Tarzan stood balanced upon the very utmost pinnacle of a swaying branch, high above the forest. He could go no farther. Below him the lion came steadily upward, and Tarzan of the Apes realized that at last the end had come. He could not do battle upon a tiny branch with Numa, the lion, especially with such a Numa, to which swaying branches two hundred feet above the ground provided as substantial footing as the ground itself.

Nearer and nearer came the lion. Another moment and he could reach up with one great paw and drag the ape-man downward to those awful jaws. A

whirring noise above his head caused Tarzan to glance apprehensively upward. A great bird was circling close above him. He never had seen so large a bird in all his life, yet he recognized it immediately, for had he not seen it hundreds of times in one of the books in the little cabin by the land-locked bay — the moss-grown cabin that with its contents was the sole heritage left by his dead and unknown father to the young Lord Greystoke?

In the picture-book the great bird was shown flying far above the ground with a small child in its talons while, beneath, a distracted mother stood with uplifted hands. The lion was already reaching forth a taloned paw to seize him when

the bird swooped and buried no less formidable talons in Tarzan's back. The pain was numbing; but it was with a sense of relief that the ape-man felt himself snatched from the clutches of Numa.

With a great whirring of wings the bird rose rapidly until the forest lay far below. It made Tarzan sick and dizzy to look down upon it from so great a height, so he closed his eyes tight and held his breath. Higher and higher climbed the huge bird. Tarzan opened his eyes. The jungle was so far away that he could see only a dim, green blur below him, but just above and quite close was the sun. Tarzan reached out his hands and warmed them, for they were very cold.

Then a sudden madness seized him. Where was the bird taking him? Was he to submit thus passively to a feathered creature however enormous? Was he, Tarzan of the Apes, mighty fighter, to die without striking a blow in his own defense? Never!

He snatched the hunting blade from his gee-string and thrusting upward drove it once, twice, thrice into the breast above him. The mighty wings fluttered a few more times, spasmodically, the talons relaxed their hold, and Tarzan of the Apes fell hurtling downward toward the distant jungle.

It seemed to the ape-man that he fell for many minutes before he crashed

through the leafy verdure of the tree tops. The smaller branches broke his fall, so that he came to rest for an instant upon the very branch upon which he had sought slumber the previous night. For an instant he toppled there in a frantic attempt to regain his equilibrium; but at last he rolled off, yet, clutching wildly, he succeeded in grasping the branch and hanging on.

Once more he opened his eyes, which he had closed during the fall. Again it was night. With all his old agility he clambered back to the crotch from which he had toppled. Below him a lion roared, and, looking downward, Tarzan could see the yellow-green eyes shining in the moonlight as they bored hungrily

upward through the darkness of the jungle night toward him.

The ape-man gasped for breath. Cold sweat stood out from every pore, there was a great sickness at the pit of Tarzan's stomach. Tarzan of the Apes had dreamed his first dream.

For a long time he sat watching for Numa to climb into the tree after him, and listening for the sound of the great wings from above, for to Tarzan of the Apes his dream was a reality.

He could not believe what he had seen and yet, having seen even these incredible things, he could not disbelieve the evidence of his own perceptions. Never in all his life had Tarzan's senses deceived him badly, and

so, naturally, he had great faith in them. Each perception which ever had been transmitted to Tarzan's brain had been, with varying accuracy, a true perception. He could not conceive of the possibility of apparently having passed through such a weird adventure in which there was no grain of truth. That a stomach, disordered by decayed elephant flesh, a lion roaring in the jungle, a picture-book, and sleep could have so truly portrayed all the clear- cut details of what he had seemingly experienced was quite beyond his knowledge; yet he knew that Numa could not climb a tree, he knew that there existed in the jungle no such bird as he had seen, and he knew, too, that he could not have fallen a tiny

fraction of the distance he had hurtled downward, and lived.

To say the least, he was a very puzzled Tarzan as he tried to compose himself once more for slumber—a very puzzled and a very nauseated Tarzan.

As he thought deeply upon the strange occurrences of the night, he witnessed another remarkable happening. It was indeed quite preposterous, yet he saw it all with his own eyes—it was nothing less than Histah, the snake, wreathing his sinuous and slimy way up the bole of the tree below him - Histah, with the head of the old man Tarzan had shoved into the cooking pot - the head and the round, tight, black, distended stomach. As the old man's frightful face, with upturned

eyes, set and glassy, came close to Tarzan, the jaws opened to seize him. The ape-man struck furiously at the hideous face, and as he struck the apparition disappeared.

Tarzan sat straight up upon his branch trembling in every limb, wide-eyed and panting. He looked all around him with his keen, jungle-trained eyes, but he saw naught of the old man with the body of Histah, the snake, but on his naked thigh the ape-man saw a caterpillar, dropped from a branch above him. With a grimace he flicked it off into the darkness beneath.

And so the night wore on, dream following dream, nightmare following nightmare, until the distracted ape-man

started like a frightened deer at the rustling of the wind in the trees about him, or leaped to his feet as the uncanny laugh of a hyena burst suddenly upon a momentary jungle silence. But at last the tardy morning broke and a sick and feverish Tarzan wound sluggishly through the dank and gloomy mazes of the forest in search of water. His whole body seemed on fire, a great sickness surged upward to his throat. He saw a tangle of almost impenetrable thicket, and, like the wild beast he was, he crawled into it to die alone and unseen, safe from the attacks of predatory carnivora.

But he did not die. For a long time he wanted to; but presently nature and an

outraged stomach relieved themselves in their own therapeutic manner, the ape-man broke into a violent perspiration and then fell into a normal and untroubled sleep which persisted well into the afternoon. When he awoke he found himself weak but no longer sick.

Once more he sought water, and after drinking deeply, took his way slowly toward the cabin by the sea. In times of loneliness and trouble it had long been his custom to seek there the quiet and restfulness which he could find nowhere else.

As he approached the cabin and raised the crude latch which his father had fashioned so many years before, two small, blood-shot eyes watched him

from the concealing foliage of the jungle close by. From beneath shaggy, beetling brows they glared maliciously upon him, maliciously and with a keen curiosity; then Tarzan entered the cabin and closed the door after him. Here, with all the world shut out from him, he could dream without fear of interruption. He could curl up and look at the pictures in the strange things which were books, he could puzzle out the printed word he had learned to read without knowledge of the spoken language it represented, he could live in a wonderful world of which he had no knowledge beyond the covers of his beloved books. Numa and Sabor might prowl about close to him, the elements might rage in all their fury; but

here at least, Tarzan might be entirely off his guard in a delightful relaxation which gave him all his faculties for the uninterrupted pursuit of this greatest of all his pleasures.

Today he turned to the picture of the huge bird which bore off the little Tarmangani in its talons. Tarzan puckered his brows as he examined the colored print. Yes, this was the very bird that had carried him off the day before, for to Tarzan the dream had been so great a reality that he still thought another day and a night had passed since he had lain down in the tree to sleep.

But the more he thought upon the matter the less positive he was as to the verity of the seeming adventure through

which he had passed, yet where the real had ceased and the unreal commenced he was quite unable to determine. Had he really then been to the village of the blacks at all, had he killed the old Gomangani, had he eaten of the elephant meat, had he been sick? Tarzan scratched his tousled black head and wondered. It was all very strange, yet he knew that he never had seen Numa climb a tree, or Histah with the head and belly of an old black man whom Tarzan already had slain.

Finally, with a sigh he gave up trying to fathom the unfathomable, yet in his heart of hearts he knew that something had come into his life that he never before had experienced, another life

which existed when he slept and the consciousness of which was carried over into his waking hours.

Then he commenced to wonder if some of these strange creatures which he met in his sleep might not slay him, for at such times Tarzan of the Apes seemed to be a different Tarzan, sluggish, helpless and timid—wishing to flee his enemies as fled Bara, the deer, most fearful of creatures.

Thus, with a dream, came the first faint tinge of a knowledge of fear, a knowledge which Tarzan, awake, had never experienced, and perhaps he was experiencing what his early forbears passed through and transmitted to posterity in the form of superstition first

and religion later; for they, as Tarzan, had seen things at night which they could not explain by the daylight standards of sense perception or of reason, and so had built for themselves a weird explanation which included grotesque shapes, possessed of strange and uncanny powers, to whom they finally came to attribute all those inexplicable phenomena of nature which with each recurrence filled them with awe, with wonder, or with terror.

And as Tarzan concentrated his mind on the little bugs upon the printed page before him, the active recollection of the strange adventures presently merged into the text of that which he was reading—a story of Bolgani, the gorilla, in captivity.

There was a more or less lifelike illustration of Bolgani in colors and in a cage, with many remarkable looking Tarmangani standing against a rail and peering curiously at the snarling brute. Tarzan wondered not a little, as he always did, at the odd and seemingly useless array of colored plumage which covered the bodies of the Tarmangani. It always caused him to grin a trifle when he looked at these strange creatures. He wondered if they so covered their bodies from shame of their hairlessness or because they thought the odd things they wore added any to the beauty of their appearance. Particularly was Tarzan amused by the grotesque headdresses of the pictured people. He

wondered how some of the shes succeeded in balancing theirs in an upright position, and he came as near to laughing aloud as he ever had, as he contemplated the funny little round things upon the heads of the hes.

Slowly the ape-man picked out the meaning of the various combinations of letters on the printed page, and as he read, the little bugs, for as such he always thought of the letters, commenced to run about in a most confusing manner, blurring his vision and befuddling his thoughts. Twice he brushed the back of a hand smartly across his eyes; but only for a moment could he bring the bugs back to coherent and intelligible form. He had slept ill the night before and now

he was exhausted from loss of sleep, from sickness, and from the slight fever he had had, so that it became more and more difficult to fix his attention, or to keep his eyes open.

Tarzan realized that he was falling asleep, and just as the realization was borne in upon him and he had decided to relinquish himself to an inclination which had assumed almost the proportions of a physical pain, he was aroused by the opening of the cabin door. Turning quickly toward the interruption Tarzan was amazed, for a moment, to see bulking large in the doorway the huge and hairy form of Bolgani, the gorilla.

Now there was scarcely a denizen of

the great jungle with whom Tarzan would rather not have been cooped up inside the small cabin than Bolgani, the gorilla, yet he felt no fear, even though his quick eye noted that Bolgani was in the throes of that jungle madness which seizes upon so many of the fiercer males. Ordinarily the huge gorillas avoid conflict, hide themselves from the other jungle folk, and are generally the best of neighbors; but when they are attacked, or the madness seizes them, there is no jungle denizen so bold and fierce as to deliberately seek a quarrel with them.

But for Tarzan there was no escape. Bolgani was glowering at him from red-rimmed, wicked eyes. In a moment he would rush in and seize the ape-man.

Tarzan reached for the hunting knife where he had lain it on the table beside him; but as his fingers did not immediately locate the weapon, he turned a quick glance in search of it. As he did so his eyes fell upon the book he had been looking at which still lay open at the picture of Bolgani. Tarzan found his knife, but he merely fingered it idly and grinned in the direction of the advancing gorilla.

Not again would he be fooled by empty things which came while he slept! In a moment, no doubt, Bolgani would turn into Pamba, the rat, with the head of Tantor, the elephant. Tarzan had seen enough of such strange happenings recently to have some idea as to what he

might expect; but this time Bolgani did not alter his form as he came slowly toward the young ape-man.

Tarzan was a bit puzzled, too, that he felt no desire to rush frantically to some place of safety, as had been the sensation most conspicuous in the other of his new and remarkable adventures. He was just himself now, ready to fight, if necessary; but still sure that no flesh and blood gorilla stood before him.

The thing should be fading away into thin air by now, thought Tarzan, or changing into something else; yet it did not. Instead it loomed clear-cut and real as Bolgani himself, the magnificent dark coat glistening with life and health in a bar of sunlight which shot across the

cabin through the high window behind the young Lord Greystoke. This was quite the most realistic of his sleep adventures, thought Tarzan, as he passively awaited the next amusing incident.

And then the gorilla charged. Two mighty, calloused hands seized upon the ape-man, great fangs were bared close to his face, a hideous growl burst from the cavernous throat and hot breath fanned Tarzan's cheek, and still he sat grinning at the apparition. Tarzan might be fooled once or twice, but not for so many times in succession! He knew that this Bolgani was no real Bolgani, for had he been he never could have gained entrance to the cabin, since only Tarzan

knew how to operate the latch.

The gorilla seemed puzzled by the strange passivity of the hairless ape. He paused an instant with his jaws snarling close to the other's throat, then he seemed suddenly to come to some decision. Whirling the ape-man across a hairy shoulder, as easily as you or I might lift a babe in arms, Bolgani turned and dashed out into the open, racing toward the great trees.

Now, indeed, was Tarzan sure that this was a sleep adventure, and so grinned largely as the giant gorilla bore him, unresisting, away. Presently, reasoned Tarzan, he would awaken and find himself back in the cabin where he had fallen asleep. He glanced back at the

thought and saw the cabin door standing wide open. This would never do! Always had he been careful to close and latch it against wild intruders. Manu, the monkey, would make sad havoc there among Tarzan's treasures should he have access to the interior for even a few minutes. The question which arose in Tarzan's mind was a baffling one. Where did sleep adventures end and reality commence? How was he to be sure that the cabin door was not really open? Everything about him appeared quite normal—there were none of the grotesque exaggerations of his former sleep adventures. It would be better then to be upon the safe side and make sure that the cabin door was closed—it

would do no harm even if all that seemed to be happening were not happening at all.

Tarzan essayed to slip from Bolgani's shoulder; but the great beast only growled ominously and gripped him tighter. With a mighty effort the ape-man wrenched himself loose, and as he slid to the ground, the dream gorilla turned ferociously upon him, seized him once more and buried great fangs in a sleek, brown shoulder.

The grin of derision faded from Tarzan's lips as the pain and the hot blood aroused his fighting instincts. Asleep or awake, this thing was no longer a joke! Biting, tearing, and snarling, the two rolled over upon the

ground. The gorilla now was frantic with insane rage. Again and again he loosed his hold upon the ape-man's shoulder in an attempt to seize the jugular; but Tarzan of the Apes had fought before with creatures who struck first for the vital vein, and each time he wriggled out of harm's way as he strove to get his fingers upon his adversary's throat. At last he succeeded - his great muscles tensed and knotted beneath his smooth hide as he forced with every ounce of his mighty strength to push the hairy torso from him. And as he choked Bolgani and strained him away, his other hand crept slowly upward between them until the point of the hunting knife rested over the savage heart—there was a

quick movement of the steel-thewed wrist and the blade plunged to its goal.

Bolgani, the gorilla, voiced a single frightful shriek, tore himself loose from the grasp of the ape-man, rose to his feet, staggered a few steps and then plunged to earth. There were a few spasmodic movements of the limbs and the brute was still.

Tarzan of the Apes stood looking down upon his kill, and as he stood there he ran his fingers through his thick, black shock of hair. Presently he stooped and touched the dead body. Some of the red life-blood of the gorilla crimsoned his fingers. He raised them to his nose and sniffed. Then he shook his head and turned toward the cabin. The door was

still open. He closed it and fastened the latch. Returning toward the body of his kill he again paused and scratched his head.

If this was a sleep adventure, what then was reality? How was he to know the one from the other? How much of all that had happened in his life had been real and how much unreal?

He placed a foot upon the prostrate form and raising his face to the heavens gave voice to the kill cry of the bull ape. Far in the distance a lion answered. It was very real and, yet, he did not know. Puzzled, he turned away into the jungle.

No, he did not know what was real and what was not; but there was one thing that he did know—never again

would he eat of the flesh of Tantor, the elephant.

10. THE BATTLE FOR TEEKA

The day was perfect. A cool breeze tempered the heat of the equatorial sun. Peace had reigned within the tribe for weeks and no alien enemy had trespassed upon its preserves from without. To the ape-mind all this was sufficient evidence that the future would be identical with the immediate past—that Utopia would persist.

The sentinels, now from habit become a fixed tribal custom, either relaxed their vigilance or entirely deserted their posts, as the whim seized them. The tribe was far scattered in search of food. Thus may peace and prosperity undermine the safety of the most primitive community even as it does that

of the most cultured.

Even the individuals became less watchful and alert, so that one might have thought Numa and Sabor and Sheeta entirely deleted from the scheme of things. The shes and the balus roamed unguarded through the sullen jungle, while the greedy males foraged far afield, and thus it was that Teeka and Gazan, her balu, hunted upon the extreme southern edge of the tribe with no great male near them.

Still farther south there moved through the forest a sinister figure —a huge bull ape, maddened by solitude and defeat. A week before he had contended for the kingship of a tribe far distant, and now battered, and still sore, he roamed

the wilderness an outcast. Later he might return to his own tribe and submit to the will of the hairy brute he had attempted to dethrone; but for the time being he dared not do so, since he had sought not only the crown but the wives, as well, of his lord and master. It would require an entire moon at least to bring forgetfulness to him he had wronged, and so Toog wandered a strange jungle, grim, terrible, hate-filled.

It was in this mental state that Toog came unexpectedly upon a young she feeding alone in the jungle—a stranger she, lithe and strong and beautiful beyond compare. Toog caught his breath and slunk quickly to one side of the trail where the dense foliage of the tropical

underbrush concealed him from Teeka while permitting him to feast his eyes upon her loveliness.

But not alone were they concerned with Teeka—they roved the surrounding jungle in search of the bulls and cows and balus of her tribe, though principally for the bulls. When one covets a she of an alien tribe one must take into consideration the great, fierce, hairy guardians who seldom wander far from their wards and who will fight a stranger to the death in protection of the mate or offspring of a fellow, precisely as they would fight for their own.

Toog could see no sign of any ape other than the strange she and a young balu playing near by. His wicked,

blood-shot eyes half closed as they rested upon the charms of the former—as for the balu, one snap of those great jaws upon the back of its little neck would prevent it from raising any unnecessary alarm.

Toog was a fine, big male, resembling in many ways Teeka's mate, Taug. Each was in his prime, and each was wonderfully muscled, perfectly fanged and as horrifyingly ferocious as the most exacting and particular she could wish. Had Toog been of her own tribe, Teeka might as readily have yielded to him as to Taug when her mating time arrived; but now she was Taug's and no other male could claim her without first defeating Taug in

personal combat. And even then Teeka retained some rights in the matter. If she did not favor a correspondent, she could enter the lists with her rightful mate and do her part toward discouraging his advances, a part, too, which would prove no mean assistance to her lord and master, for Teeka, even though her fangs were smaller than a male's, could use them to excellent effect.

Just now Teeka was occupied in a fascinating search for beetles, to the exclusion of all else. She did not realize how far she and Gazan had become separated from the balance of the tribe, nor were her defensive senses upon the alert as they should have been. Months of immunity from danger under the

protecting watchfulness of the sentries, which Tarzan had taught the tribe to post, had lulled them all into a sense of peaceful security based on that fallacy which has wrecked many enlightened communities in the past and will continue to wreck others in the future—that because they have not been attacked they never will be.

Toog, having satisfied himself that only the she and her balu were in the immediate vicinity, crept stealthily forward. Teeka's back was toward him when he finally rushed upon her; but her senses were at last awakened to the presence of danger and she wheeled to face the strange bull just before he reached her. Toog halted a few paces

from her. His anger had fled before the seductive feminine charms of the stranger. He made conciliatory noises — a species of clucking sound with his broad, flat lips—that were, too, not greatly dissimilar to that which might be produced in an osculatory solo.

But Teeka only bared her fangs and growled. Little Gazan started to run toward his mother, but she warned him away with a quick "Kreeg-ah!" telling him to run high into a tall tree. Evidently Teeka was not favorably impressed by her new suitor. Toog realized this and altered his methods accordingly. He swelled his giant chest, beat upon it with his calloused knuckles and swaggered to and fro before her.

"I am Toog," he boasted. "Look at my fighting fangs. Look at my great arms and my mighty legs. With one bite I can slay your biggest bull. Alone have I slain Sheeta. I am Toog. Toog wants you." Then he waited for the effect, nor did he have long to wait. Teeka turned with a swiftness which belied her great weight and bolted in the opposite direction. Toog, with an angry growl, leaped in pursuit; but the smaller, lighter female was too fleet for him. He chased her for a few yards and then, foaming and barking, he halted and beat upon the ground with his hard fists.

From the tree above him little Gazan looked down and witnessed the stranger bull's discomfiture. Being young, and

thinking himself safe above the reach of the heavy male, Gazan screamed an ill-timed insult at their tormentor. Toog looked up. Teeka had halted at a little distance—she would not go far from her balu; that Toog quickly realized and as quickly determined to take advantage of. He saw that the tree in which the young ape squatted was isolated and that Gazan could not reach another without coming to earth. He would obtain the mother through her love for her young.

He swung himself into the lower branches of the tree. Little Gazan ceased to insult him; his expression of deviltry changed to one of apprehension, which was quickly followed by fear as Toog commenced to ascend toward him.

Teeka screamed to Gazan to climb higher, and the little fellow scampered upward among the tiny branches which would not support the weight of the great bull; but nevertheless Toog kept on climbing. Teeka was not fearful. She knew that he could not ascend far enough to reach Gazan, so she sat at a little distance from the tree and applied jungle opprobrium to him. Being a female, she was a past master of the art.

But she did not know the malevolent cunning of Toog's little brain. She took it for granted that the bull would climb as high as he could toward Gazan and then, finding that he could not reach him, resume his pursuit of her, which she knew would prove equally fruitless. So

sure was she of the safety of her balu and her own ability to take care of herself that she did not voice the cry for help which would soon have brought the other members of the tribe flocking to her side.

Toog slowly reached the limit to which he dared risk his great weight to the slender branches. Gazan was still fifteen feet above him. The bull braced himself and seized the main branch in his powerful hands, then he commenced shaking it vigorously. Teeka was appalled. Instantly she realized what the bull purposed. Gazan clung far out upon a swaying limb. At the first shake he lost his balance, though he did not quite fall, clinging still with his four hands; but

Toog redoubled his efforts; the shaking produced a violent snapping of the limb to which the young ape clung. Teeka saw all too plainly what the outcome must be and forgetting her own danger in the depth of her mother love, rushed forward to ascend the tree and give battle to the fearsome creature that menaced the life of her little one.

But before ever she reached the bole, Toog had succeeded, by violent shaking of the branch, to loosen Gazan's hold. With a cry the little fellow plunged down through the foliage, clutching futilely for a new hold, and alighted with a sickening thud at his mother's feet, where he lay silent and motionless. Moaning, Teeka stooped to lift the still

form in her arms; but at the same instant Toog was upon her.

Struggling and biting she fought to free herself; but the giant muscles of the great bull were too much for her lesser strength. Toog struck and choked her repeatedly until finally, half unconscious, she lapsed into quasi submission. Then the bull lifted her to his shoulder and turned back to the trail toward the south from whence he had come.

Upon the ground lay the quiet form of little Gazan. He did not moan. He did not move. The sun rose slowly toward meridian. A mangy thing, lifting its nose to scent the jungle breeze, crept through the underbrush. It was Dango, the hyena.

Presently its ugly muzzle broke through some near-by foliage and its cruel eyes fastened upon Gazan.

Early that morning, Tarzan of the Apes had gone to the cabin by the sea, where he passed many an hour at such times as the tribe was ranging in the vicinity. On the floor lay the skeleton of a man—all that remained of the former Lord Greystoke—lay as it had fallen some twenty years before when Kerchak, the great ape, had thrown it, lifeless, there. Long since had the termites and the small rodents picked clean the sturdy English bones. For years Tarzan had seen it lying there, giving it no more attention than he gave the countless thousand bones that strewed

his jungle haunts. On the bed another, smaller, skeleton reposed and the youth ignored it as he ignored the other. How could he know that the one had been his father, the other his mother? The little pile of bones in the rude cradle, fashioned with such loving care by the former Lord Greystoke, meant nothing to him— that one day that little skull was to help prove his right to a proud title was as far beyond his ken as the satellites of the suns of Orion. To Tarzan they were bones—just bones. He did not need them, for there was no meat left upon them, and they were not in his way, for he knew no necessity for a bed, and the skeleton upon the floor he easily could step over.

Today he was restless. He turned the pages first of one book and then of another. He glanced at pictures which he knew by heart, and tossed the books aside. He rummaged for the thousandth time in the cupboard. He took out a bag which contained several small, round pieces of metal. He had played with them many times in the years gone by; but always he replaced them carefully in the bag, and the bag in the cupboard, upon the very shelf where first he had discovered it. In strange ways did heredity manifest itself in the ape-man. Come of an orderly race, he himself was orderly without knowing why. The apes dropped things wherever their interest in them waned—in the tall grass or from

the high-flung branches of the trees. What they dropped they sometimes found again, by accident; but not so the ways of Tarzan. For his few belongings he had a place and scrupulously he returned each thing to its proper place when he was done with it. The round pieces of metal in the little bag always interested him. Raised pictures were upon either side, the meaning of which he did not quite understand. The pieces were bright and shiny. It amused him to arrange them in various figures upon the table. Hundreds of times had he played thus. Today, while so engaged, he dropped a lovely yellow piece—an English sovereign—which rolled beneath the bed where lay all that was mortal of the once beautiful

Lady Alice.

True to form, Tarzan at once dropped to his hands and knees and searched beneath the bed for the lost gold piece. Strange as it might appear, he had never before looked beneath the bed. He found the gold piece, and something else he found, too—a small wooden box with a loose cover. Bringing them both out he returned the sovereign to its bag and the bag to its shelf within the cupboard; then he investigated the box. It contained a quantity of cylindrical bits of metal, cone-shaped at one end and flat at the other, with a projecting rim. They were all quite green and dull, coated with years of verdigris.

Tarzan removed a handful of them

from the box and examined them. He rubbed one upon another and discovered that the green came off, leaving a shiny surface for two-thirds of their length and a dull gray over the cone-shaped end. Finding a bit of wood he rubbed one of the cylinders rapidly and was rewarded by a lustrous sheen which pleased him.

At his side hung a pocket pouch taken from the body of one of the numerous black warriors he had slain. Into this pouch he put a handful of the new playthings, thinking to polish them at his leisure; then he replaced the box beneath the bed, and finding nothing more to amuse him, left the cabin and started back in the direction of the tribe.

Shortly before he reached them he

heard a great commotion ahead of him - the loud screams of shes and balus, the savage, angry barking and growling of the great bulls. Instantly he increased his speed, for the "Kreeg-ahs" that came to his ears warned him that something was amiss with his fellows.

While Tarzan had been occupied with his own devices in the cabin of his dead sire, Taug, Teeka's mighty mate, had been hunting a mile to the north of the tribe. At last, his belly filled, he had turned lazily back toward the clearing where he had last seen the tribe and presently commenced passing its members scattered alone or in twos or threes. Nowhere did he see Teeka or Gazan, and soon he began inquiring of

the other apes where they might be; but none had seen them recently.

Now the lower orders are not highly imaginative. They do not, as you and I, paint vivid mental pictures of things which might have occurred, and so Taug did not now apprehend that any misfortune had overtaken his mate and their off- spring—he merely knew that he wished to find Teeka that he might lie down in the shade and have her scratch his back while his breakfast digested; but though he called to her and searched for her and asked each whom he met, he could find no trace of Teeka, nor of Gazan either.

He was beginning to become peeved and had about made up his mind to

chastise Teeka for wandering so far afield when he wanted her. He was moving south along a game trail, his calloused soles and knuckles giving forth no sound, when he came upon Dango at the opposite side of a small clearing. The eater of carrion did not see Taug, for all his eyes were for something which lay in the grass beneath a tree—something upon which he was sneaking with the cautious stealth of his breed.

Taug, always cautious himself, as it behooves one to be who fares up and down the jungle and desires to survive, swung noiselessly into a tree, where he could have a better view of the clearing. He did not fear Dango; but he wanted to see what it was that Dango stalked. In a

way, possibly, he was actuated as much by curiosity as by caution.

And when Taug reached a place in the branches from which he could have an unobstructed view of the clearing he saw Dango already sniffing at something directly beneath him—something which Taug instantly recognized as the lifeless form of his little Gazan.

With a cry so frightful, so bestial, that it momentarily paralyzed the startled Dango, the great ape launched his mighty bulk upon the surprised hyena. With a cry and a snarl, Dango, crushed to earth, turned to tear at his assailant; but as effectively might a sparrow turn upon a hawk. Taug's great, gnarled fingers closed upon the hyena's throat and back,

his jaws snapped once on the mangy neck, crushing the vertebrae, and then he hurled the dead body contemptuously aside.

Again he raised his voice in the call of the bull ape to its mate, but there was no reply; then he leaned down to sniff at the body of Gazan. In the breast of this savage, hideous beast there beat a heart which was moved, however slightly, by the same emotions of paternal love which affect us. Even had we no actual evidence of this, we must know it still, since only thus might be explained the survival of the human race in which the jealousy and selfishness of the bulls would, in the earliest stages of the race, have wiped out the young as rapidly as

they were brought into the world had not God implanted in the savage bosom that paternal love which evidences itself most strongly in the protective instinct of the male.

In Taug the protective instinct was not alone highly developed; but affection for his offspring as well, for Taug was an unusually intelligent specimen of these great, manlike apes which the natives of the Gobi speak of in whispers; but which no white man ever had seen, or, if seeing, lived to tell of until Tarzan of the Apes came among them.

And so Taug felt sorrow as any other father might feel sorrow at the loss of a little child. To you little Gazan might have seemed a hideous and repulsive

creature, but to Taug and Teeka he was as beautiful and as cute as is your little Mary or Johnnie or Elizabeth Ann to you, and he was their firstborn, their only balu, and a he—three things which might make a young ape the apple of any fond father's eye.

For a moment Taug sniffed at the quiet little form. With his muzzle and his tongue he smoothed and caressed the rumpled coat. From his savage lips broke a low moan; but quickly upon the heels of sorrow came the overmastering desire for revenge.

Leaping to his feet he screamed out a volley of "Kreegahs," punctuated from time to time by the blood-freezing cry of an angry, challenging bull —a rage-mad

bull with the blood lust strong upon him.

Answering his cries came the cries of the tribe as they swung through the trees toward him. It was these that Tarzan heard on his return from his cabin, and in reply to them he raised his own voice and hurried forward with increased speed until he fairly flew through the middle terraces of the forest.

When at last he came upon the tribe he saw their members gathered about Taug and something which lay quietly upon the ground. Dropping among them, Tarzan approached the center of the group. Taug was stiff roaring out his challenges; but when he saw Tarzan he ceased and stooping picked up Gazan in his arms and held him out for Tarzan to

see. Of all the bulls of the tribe, Taug held affection for Tarzan only. Tarzan he trusted and looked up to as one wiser and more cunning. To Tarzan he came now—to the playmate of his balu days, the companion of innumerable battles of his maturity.

When Tarzan saw the still form in Taug's arms, a low growl broke from his lips, for he too loved Teeka's little balu.

"Who did it?" he asked. "Where is Teeka?"

"I do not know," replied Taug. "I found him lying here with Dango about to feed upon him; but it was not Dango that did it—there are no fang marks upon him."

Tarzan came closer and placed an ear

against Gazan's breast. "He is not dead," he said. "Maybe he will not die." He pressed through the crowd of apes and circled once about them, examining the ground step by step. Suddenly he stopped and placing his nose close to the earth sniffed. Then he sprang to his feet, giving a peculiar cry. Taug and the others pressed forward, for the sound told them that the hunter had found the spoor of his quarry.

"A stranger bull has been here," said Tarzan. "It was he that hurt Gazan. He has carried off Teeka."

Taug and the other bulls commenced to roar and threaten; but they did nothing. Had the stranger bull been within sight they would have torn him to pieces; but

it did not occur to them to follow him.

"If the three bulls had been watching around the tribe this would not have happened," said Tarzan. "Such things will happen as long as you do not keep the three bulls watching for an enemy. The jungle is full of enemies, and yet you let your shes and your balus feed where they will, alone and unprotected. Tarzan goes now—he goes to find Teeka and bring her back to the tribe."

The idea appealed to the other bulls. "We will all go," they cried.

"No," said Tarzan, "you will not all go. We cannot take shes and balus when we go out to hunt and fight. You must remain to guard them or you will lose them all."

They scratched their heads. The wisdom of his advice was dawning upon them, but at first they had been carried away by the new idea—the idea of following up an enemy offender to wrest his prize from him and punish him. The community instinct was ingrained in their characters through ages of custom. They did not know why they had not thought to pursue and punish the offender—they could not know that it was because they had as yet not reached a mental plane which would permit them to work as individuals. In times of stress, the community instinct sent them huddling into a compact herd where the great bulls, by the weight of their combined strength and ferocity, could

best protect them from an enemy. The idea of separating to do battle with a foe had not yet occurred to them—it was too foreign to custom, too inimical to community interests; but to Tarzan it was the first and most natural thought. His senses told him that there was but a single bull connected with the attack upon Teeka and Gazan. A single enemy did not require the entire tribe for his punishment. Two swift bulls could quickly overhaul him and rescue Teeka.

In the past no one ever had thought to go forth in search of the shes that were occasionally stolen from the tribe. If Numa, Sabor, Sheeta or a wandering bull ape from another tribe chanced to carry off a maid or a matron while no

one was looking, that was the end of it—she was gone, that was all. The bereaved husband, if the victim chanced to have been mated, growled around for a day or two and then, if he were strong enough, took another mate within the tribe, and if not, wandered far into the jungle on the chance of stealing one from another community.

In the past Tarzan of the Apes had condoned this practice for the reason that he had had no interest in those who had been stolen; but Teeka had been his first love and Teeka's balu held a place in his heart such as a balu of his own would have held. Just once before had Tarzan wished to follow and revenge. That had been years before when

Kulonga, the son of Mbonga, the chief, had slain Kala. Then, single-handed, Tarzan had pursued and avenged. Now, though to a lesser degree, he was moved by the same passion.

He turned toward Taug. "Leave Gazan with Mumga," he said. "She is old and her fangs are broken and she is no good; but she can take care of Gazan until we return with Teeka, and if Gazan is dead when we come back," he turned to address Mumga, "I will kill you, too."

"Where are we going?" asked Taug.

"We are going to get Teeka," replied the ape-man, "and kill the bull who has stolen her. Come!"

He turned again to the spoor of the stranger bull, which showed plainly to

his trained senses, nor did he glance back to note if Taug followed. The latter laid Gazan in Mumga's arms with a parting: "If he dies Tarzan will kill you," and he followed after the brown-skinned figure that already was moving at a slow trot along the jungle trail.

No other bull of the tribe of Kerchak was so good a trailer as Tarzan, for his trained senses were aided by a high order of intelligence. His judgment told him the natural trail for a quarry to follow, so that he need but note the most apparent marks upon the way, and today the trail of Toog was as plain to him as type upon a printed page to you or me.

Following close behind the lithe figure of the ape-man came the huge and

shaggy bull ape. No words passed between them. They moved as silently as two shadows among the myriad shadows of the forest. Alert as his eyes and ears, was Tarzan's patrician nose. The spoor was fresh, and now that they had passed from the range of the strong ape odor of the tribe he had little difficulty in following Toog and Teeka by scent alone. Teeka's familiar scent spoor told both Tarzan and Taug that they were upon her trail, and soon the scent of Toog became as familiar as the other.

They were progressing rapidly when suddenly dense clouds overcast the sun. Tarzan accelerated his pace. Now he fairly flew along the jungle trail, or, where Toog had taken to the trees,

followed nimbly as a squirrel along the bending, undulating pathway of the foliage branches, swinging from tree to tree as Toog had swung before them; but more rapidly because they were not handicapped by a burden such as Toog's.

Tarzan felt that they must be almost upon the quarry, for the scent spoor was becoming stronger and stronger, when the jungle was suddenly shot by livid lightning, and a deafening roar of thunder reverberated through the heavens and the forest until the earth trembled and shook. Then came the rain —not as it comes to us of the temperate zones, but as a mighty avalanche of water—a deluge which spills tons instead of drops upon the bending forest giants and the terrified

creatures which haunt their shade.

And the rain did what Tarzan knew that it would do—it wiped the spoor of the quarry from the face of the earth. For a half hour the torrents fell - then the sun burst forth, jeweling the forest with a million scintillant gems; but today the ape-man, usually alert to the changing wonders of the jungle, saw them not. Only the fact that the spoor of Teeka and her abductor was obliterated found lodgment in his thoughts.

Even among the branches of the trees there are well-worn trails, just as there are trails upon the surface of the ground; but in the trees they branch and cross more often, since the way is more open than among the dense undergrowth at the

surface. Along one of these well-marked trails Tarzan and Taug continued after the rain had ceased, because the ape-man knew that this was the most logical path for the thief to follow; but when they came to a fork, they were at a loss. Here they halted, while Tarzan examined every branch and leaf which might have been touched by the fleeing ape.

He sniffed the bole of the tree, and with his keen eyes he sought to find upon the bark some sign of the way the quarry had taken. It was slow work and all the time, Tarzan knew, the bull of the alien tribe was forging steadily away from them—gaining precious minutes that might carry him to safety before they could catch up with him.

First along one fork he went, and then another, applying every test that his wonderful junglecraft was cognizant of; but again and again he was baffled, for the scent had been washed away by the heavy downpour, in every exposed place. For a half hour Tarzan and Taug searched, until at last, upon the bottom of a broad leaf, Tarzan's keen nose caught the faint trace of the scent spoor of Toog, where the leaf had brushed a hairy shoulder as the great ape passed through the foliage.

Once again the two took up the trail, but it was slow work now and there were many discouraging delays when the spoor seemed lost beyond recovery. To you or me there would have been no

spoor, even before the coming of the rain, except, possibly, where Toog had come to earth and followed a game trail. In such places the imprint of a huge handlike foot and the knuckles of one great hand were sometimes plain enough for an ordinary mortal to read. Tarzan knew from these and other indications that the ape was yet carrying Teeka. The depth of the imprint of his feet indicated a much greater weight than that of any of the larger bulls, for they were made under the combined weight of Toog and Teeka, while the fact that the knuckles of but one hand touched the ground at any time showed that the other hand was occupied in some other business—the business of holding the prisoner to a

hairy shoulder. Tarzan could follow, in sheltered places, the changing of the burden from one shoulder to another, as indicated by the deepening of the foot imprint upon the side of the load, and the changing of the knuckle imprints from one side of the trail to the other.

There were stretches along the surface paths where the ape had gone for considerable distances entirely erect upon his hind feet—walking as a man walks; but the same might have been true of any of the great anthropoids of the same species, for, unlike the chimpanzee and the gorilla, they walk without the aid of their hands quite as readily as with. It was such things, however, which helped to identify to Tarzan and to Taug the

appearance of the abductor, and with his individual scent characteristic already indelibly impressed upon their memories, they were in a far better position to know him when they came upon him, even should he have disposed of Teeka before, than is a modern sleuth with his photographs and Bertillon measurements, equipped to recognize a fugitive from civilized justice.

But with all their high-strung and delicately attuned perceptive faculties the two bulls of the tribe of Kerchak were often sore pressed to follow the trail at all, and at best were so delayed that in the afternoon of the second day, they still had not overhauled the fugitive. The scent was now strong, for it had

been made since the rain, and Tarzan knew that it would not be long before they came upon the thief and his loot. Above them, as they crept stealthily forward, chattered Manu, the monkey, and his thousand fellows; squawked and screamed the brazen-throated birds of plumage; buzzed and hummed the countless insects amid the rustling of the forest leaves, and, as they passed, a little gray-beard, squeaking and scolding upon a swaying branch, looked down and saw them. Instantly the scolding and squeaking ceased, and off tore the long-tailed mite as though Sheeta, the panther, had been endowed with wings and was in close pursuit of him. To all appearances he was only a very much

frightened little monkey, fleeing for his life—there seemed nothing sinister about him.

And what of Teeka during all this time? Was she at last resigned to her fate and accompanying her new mate in the proper humility of a loving and tractable spouse? A single glance at the pair would have answered these questions to the utter satisfaction of the most captious. She was torn and bleeding from many wounds, inflicted by the sullen Toog in his vain efforts to subdue her to his will, and Toog too was disfigured and mutilated; but with stubborn ferocity, he still clung to his now useless prize.

On through the jungle he forced his

way in the direction of the stamping ground of his tribe. He hoped that his king would have forgotten his treason; but if not he was still resigned to his fate —any fate would be better than suffering longer the sole companionship of this frightful she, and then, too, he wished to exhibit his captive to his fellows. Maybe he could wish her on the king—it is possible that such a thought urged him on.

At last they came upon two bulls feeding in a parklike grove—a beautiful grove dotted with huge boulders half embedded in the rich loam —mute monuments, possibly, to a forgotten age when mighty glaciers rolled their slow course where now a torrid sun beats

down upon a tropic jungle.

The two bulls looked up, baring long fighting fangs, as Toog appeared in the distance. The latter recognized the two as friends. "It is Toog," he growled. "Toog has come back with a new she."

The apes waited his nearer approach. Teeka turned a snarling, fanged face toward them. She was not pretty to look upon, yet through the blood and hatred upon her countenance they realized that she was beautiful, and they envied Toog —alas! they did not know Teeka.

As they squatted looking at one another there raced through the trees toward them a long-tailed little monkey with gray whiskers. He was a very excited little monkey when he came to a

halt upon the limb of a tree directly overhead. "Two strange bulls come," he cried. One is a Mangani, the other a hideous ape without hair upon his body. They follow the spoor of Toog. I saw them."

The four apes turned their eyes backward along the trail Toog had just come; then they looked at one another for a minute. "Come," said the larger of Toog's two friends, "we will wait for the strangers in the thick bushes beyond the clearing."

He turned and waddled away across the open place, the others following him. The little monkey danced about, all excitement. His chief diversion in life was to bring about bloody encounters

between the larger denizens of the forest, that he might sit in the safety of the trees and witness the spectacles. He was a glutton for gore, was this little, whiskered, gray monkey, so long as it was the gore of others—a typical fight fan was the graybeard.

The apes hid themselves in the shrubbery beside the trail along which the two stranger bulls would pass. Teeka trembled with excitement. She had heard the words of Manu, and she knew that the hairless ape must be Tarzan, while the other was, doubtless, Taug. Never, in her wildest hopes, had she expected succor of this sort. Her one thought had been to escape and find her way back to the tribe of Kerchak; but even this had

appeared to her practically impossible, so closely did Toog watch her.

As Taug and Tarzan reached the grove where Toog had come upon his friends, the ape scent became so strong that both knew the quarry was but a short distance ahead. And so they went even more cautiously, for they wished to come upon the thief from behind if they could and charge him before he was aware of their presence. That a little gray-whiskered monkey had forestalled them they did not know, nor that three pairs of savage eyes were already watching their every move and waiting for them to come within reach of itching paws and slavering jowls.

On they came across the grove, and as

they entered the path leading into the dense jungle beyond, a sudden "Kreeg-ah!" shrilled out close before them —a "Kreeg-ah" in the familiar voice of Teeka. The small brains of Toog and his companions had not been able to foresee that Teeka might betray them, and now that she had, they went wild with rage. Toog struck the she a mighty blow that felled her, and then the three rushed forth to do battle with Tarzan and Taug. The little monkey danced upon his perch and screamed with delight.

And indeed he might well be delighted, for it was a lovely fight. There were no preliminaries, no formalities, no introductions—the five bulls merely charged and clinched. They

rolled in the narrow trail and into the thick verdure beside it. They bit and clawed and scratched and struck, and all the while they kept up the most frightful chorus of growlings and barkings and roarings. In five minutes they were torn and bleeding, and the little graybeard leaped high, shrilling his primitive bravos; but always his attitude was "thumbs down." He wanted to see something killed. He did not care whether it were friend or foe. It was blood he wanted—blood and death.

Taug had been set upon by Toog and another of the apes, while Tarzan had the third—a huge brute with the strength of a buffalo. Never before had Tarzan's assailant beheld so strange a creature as

this slippery, hairless bull with which he battled. Sweat and blood covered Tarzan's sleek, brown hide. Again and again he slipped from the clutches of the great bull, and all the while he struggled to free his hunting knife from the scabbard in which it had stuck.

At length he succeeded—a brown hand shot out and clutched a hairy throat, another flew upward clutching the sharp blade. Three swift, powerful strokes and the bull relaxed with a groan, falling limp beneath his antagonist. Instantly Tarzan broke from the clutches of the dying bull and sprang to Taug's assistance. Toog saw him coming and wheeled to meet him. In the impact of the charge, Tarzan's knife was wrenched

from his hand and then Toog closed with him. Now was the battle even—two against two— while on the verge, Teeka, now recovered from the blow that had felled her, slunk waiting for an opportunity to aid. She saw Tarzan's knife and picked it up. She never had used it, but knew how Tarzan used it. Always had she been afraid of the thing which dealt death to the mightiest of the jungle people with the ease that Tantor's great tusks deal death to Tantor's enemies.

She saw Tarzan's pocket pouch torn from his side, and with the curiosity of an ape, that even danger and excitement cannot entirely dispel, she picked this up, too.

Now the bulls were standing—the clinches had been broken. Blood streamed down their sides—their faces were crimsoned with it. Little graybeard was so fascinated that at last he had even forgotten to scream and dance; but sat rigid with delight in the enjoyment of the spectacle.

Back across the grove Tarzan and Taug forced their adversaries. Teeka followed slowly. She scarce knew what to do. She was lame and sore and exhausted from the frightful ordeal through which she had passed, and she had the confidence of her sex in the prowess of her mate and the other bull of her tribe—they would not need the help of a she in their battle with these two

strangers.

The roars and screams of the fighters reverberated through the jungle, awakening the echoes in the distant hills. From the throat of Tarzan's antagonist had come a score of "Kreeg-ahs!" and now from behind came the reply he had awaited. Into the grove, barking and growling, came a score of huge bull apes —the fighting men of Toog's tribe.

Teeka saw them first and screamed a warning to Tarzan and Taug. Then she fled past the fighters toward the opposite side of the clearing, fear for a moment claiming her. Nor can one censure her after the frightful ordeal from which she was still suffering.

Down upon them came the great apes.

In a moment Tarzan and Taug would be torn to shreds that would later form the PIECE DE RESISTANCE of the savage orgy of a Dum-Dum. Teeka turned to glance back. She saw the impending fate of her defenders and there sprung to life in her savage bosom the spark of martyrdom, that some common forbear had transmitted alike to Teeka, the wild ape, and the glorious women of a higher order who have invited death for their men. With a shrill scream she ran toward the battlers who were rolling in a great mass at the foot of one of the huge boulders which dotted the grove; but what could she do? The knife she held she could not use to advantage because of her lesser strength. She had

seen Tarzan throw missiles, and she had learned this with many other things from her childhood playmate. She sought for something to throw and at last her fingers touched upon the hard objects in the pouch that had been torn from the ape-man. Tearing the receptacle open, she gathered a handful of shiny cylinders —heavy for their size, they seemed to her, and good missiles. With all her strength she hurled them at the apes battling in front of the granite boulder.

The result surprised Teeka quite as much as it did the apes. There was a loud explosion, which deafened the fighters, and a puff of acrid smoke. Never before had one there heard such a frightful noise. Screaming with terror,

the stranger bulls leaped to their feet and fled back toward the stamping ground of their tribe, while Taug and Tarzan slowly gathered themselves together and arose, lame and bleeding, to their feet. They, too, would have fled had they not seen Teeka standing there before them, the knife and the pocket pouch in her hands.

"What was it?" asked Tarzan.

Teeka shook her head. "I hurled these at the stranger bulls," and she held forth another handful of the shiny metal cylinders with the dull gray, cone-shaped ends.

Tarzan looked at them and scratched his head.

"What are they?" asked Taug.

"I do not know," said Tarzan. "I found them."

The little monkey with the gray beard halted among the trees a mile away and huddled, terrified, against a branch. He did not know that the dead father of Tarzan of the Apes, reaching back out of the past across a span of twenty years, had saved his son's life.

Nor did Tarzan, Lord Greystoke, know it either.

11. A JUNGLE JOKE

Time seldom hung heavily upon Tarzan's hands. Even where there is sameness there cannot be monotony if most of the sameness consists in dodging death first in one form and then in another; or in inflicting death upon others. There is a spice to such an existence; but even this Tarzan of the Apes varied in activities of his own invention.

He was full grown now, with the grace of a Greek god and the thews of a bull, and, by all the tenets of apedom, should have been sullen, morose, and brooding; but he was not. His spirits seemed not to age at all—he was still a playful child, much to the discomfiture of his fellow-apes. They could not

understand him or his ways, for with maturity they quickly forgot their youth and its pastimes.

Nor could Tarzan quite understand them. It seemed strange to him that a few moons since, he had roped Taug about an ankle and dragged him screaming through the tall jungle grasses, and then rolled and tumbled in good-natured mimic battle when the young ape had freed himself, and that today when he had come up behind the same Taug and pulled him over backward upon the turf, instead of the playful young ape, a great, snarling beast had whirled and leaped for his throat.

Easily Tarzan eluded the charge and quickly Taug's anger vanished, though it

was not replaced with playfulness; yet the ape-man realized that Taug was not amused nor was he amusing. The big bull ape seemed to have lost whatever sense of humor he once may have possessed. With a grunt of disappointment, young Lord Greystoke turned to other fields of endeavor. A strand of black hair fell across one eye. He brushed it aside with the palm of a hand and a toss of his head. It suggested something to do, so he sought his quiver which lay cached in the hollow bole of a lightning-riven tree. Removing the arrows he turned the quiver upside down, emptying upon the ground the contents of its bottom—his few treasures. Among them was a flat bit of

stone and a shell which he had picked up from the beach near his father's cabin.

With great care he rubbed the edge of the shell back and forth upon the flat stone until the soft edge was quite fine and sharp. He worked much as a barber does who hones a razor, and with every evidence of similar practice; but his proficiency was the result of years of painstaking effort. Unaided he had worked out a method of his own for putting an edge upon the shell— he even tested it with the ball of his thumb—and when it met with his approval he grasped a wisp of hair which fell across his eyes, grasped it between the thumb and first finger of his left hand and sawed upon it with the sharpened shell

until it was severed. All around his head he went until his black shock was rudely bobbed with a ragged bang in front. For the appearance of it he cared nothing; but in the matter of safety and comfort it meant everything. A lock of hair falling in one's eyes at the wrong moment might mean all the difference between life and death, while straggly strands, hanging down one's back were most uncomfortable, especially when wet with dew or rain or perspiration.

As Tarzan labored at his tonsorial task, his active mind was busy with many things. He recalled his recent battle with Bolgani, the gorilla, the wounds of which were but just healed. He pondered the strange sleep

adventures of his first dreams, and he smiled at the painful outcome of his last practical joke upon the tribe, when, dressed in the hide of Numa, the lion, he had come roaring upon them, only to be leaped upon and almost killed by the great bulls whom he had taught how to defend themselves from an attack of their ancient enemy.

His hair lopped off to his entire satisfaction, and seeing no possibility of pleasure in the company of the tribe, Tarzan swung leisurely into the trees and set off in the direction of his cabin; but when part way there his attention was attracted by a strong scent spoor coming from the north. It was the scent of the Gomangani.

Curiosity, that best-developed, common heritage of man and ape, always prompted Tarzan to investigate where the Gomangani were concerned. There was that about them which aroused his imagination. Possibly it was because of the diversity of their activities and interests. The apes lived to eat and sleep and propagate. The same was true of all the other denizens of the jungle, save the Gomangani.

These black fellows danced and sang, scratched around in the earth from which they had cleared the trees and underbrush; they watched things grow, and when they had ripened, they cut them down and put them in straw-thatched huts. They made bows and spears and

arrows, poison, cooking pots, things of metal to wear around their arms and legs. If it hadn't been for their black faces, their hideously disfigured features, and the fact that one of them had slain Kala, Tarzan might have wished to be one of them. At least he sometimes thought so, but always at the thought there rose within him a strange revulsion of feeling, which he could not interpret or understand—he simply knew that he hated the Gomangani, and that he would rather be Histah, the snake, than one of these.

But their ways were interesting, and Tarzan never tired of spying upon them. and from them he learned much more than he realized, though always his

principal thought was of some new way in which he could render their lives miserable. The baiting of the blacks was Tarzan's chief divertissement.

Tarzan realized now that the blacks were very near and that there were many of them, so he went silently and with great caution. Noiselessly he moved through the lush grasses of the open spaces, and where the forest was dense, swung from one swaying branch to another, or leaped lightly over tangled masses of fallen trees where there was no way through the lower terraces, and the ground was choked and impassable.

And so presently he came within sight of the black warriors of Mbonga, the chief. They were engaged in a pursuit

with which Tarzan was more or less familiar, having watched them at it upon other occasions. They were placing and baiting a trap for Numa, the lion. In a cage upon wheels they were tying a kid, so fastening it that when Numa seized the unfortunate creature, the door of the cage would drop behind him, making him a prisoner.

These things the blacks had learned in their old home, before they escaped through the untracked jungle to their new village. Formerly they had dwelt in the Belgian Congo until the cruelties of their heartless oppressors had driven them to seek the safety of unexplored solitudes beyond the boundaries of Leopold's domain.

In their old life they often had trapped animals for the agents of European dealers, and had learned from them certain tricks, such as this one, which permitted them to capture even Numa without injuring him, and to transport him in safety and with comparative ease to their village.

No longer was there a white market for their savage wares; but there was still a sufficient incentive for the taking of Numa—alive. First was the necessity for ridding the jungle of man-eaters, and it was only after depredations by these grim and terrible scourges that a lion hunt was organized. Secondarily was the excuse for an orgy of celebration was the hunt successful, and the fact that such

fetes were rendered doubly pleasurable by the presence of a live creature that might be put to death by torture.

Tarzan had witnessed these cruel rites in the past. Being himself more savage than the savage warriors of the Gomangani, he was not so shocked by the cruelty of them as he should have been, yet they did shock him. He could not understand the strange feeling of revulsion which possessed him at such times. He had no love for Numa, the lion, yet he bristled with rage when the blacks inflicted upon his enemy such indignities and cruelties as only the mind of the one creature molded in the image of God can conceive.

Upon two occasions he had freed

Numa from the trap before the blacks had returned to discover the success or failure of their venture. He would do the same today—that he decided immediately he realized the nature of their intentions.

Leaving the trap in the center of a broad elephant trail near the drinking hole, the warriors turned back toward their village. On the morrow they would come again. Tarzan looked after them, upon his lips an unconscious sneer - the heritage of unguessed caste. He saw them file along the broad trail, beneath the overhanging verdure of leafy branch and looped and festooned creepers, brushing ebon shoulders against gorgeous blooms which inscrutable

Nature has seen fit to lavish most profusely farthest from the eye of man.

As Tarzan watched, through narrowed lids, the last of the warriors disappear beyond a turn in the trail, his expression altered to the urge of a newborn thought. A slow, grim smile touched his lips. He looked down upon the frightened, bleating kid, advertising, in its fear and its innocence, its presence and its helplessness.

Dropping to the ground, Tarzan approached the trap and entered. Without disturbing the fiber cord, which was adjusted to drop the door at the proper time, he loosened the living bait, tucked it under an arm and stepped out of the cage.

With his hunting knife he quieted the frightened animal, severing its jugular; then he dragged it, bleeding, along the trail down to the drinking hole, the half smile persisting upon his ordinarily grave face. At the water's edge the ape-man stooped and with hunting knife and quick strong fingers deftly removed the dead kid's viscera. Scraping a hole in the mud, he buried these parts which he did not eat, and swinging the body to his shoulder took to the trees.

For a short distance he pursued his way in the wake of the black warriors, coming down presently to bury the meat of his kill where it would be safe from the depredations of Dango, the hyena, or the other meat-eating beasts and birds of

the jungle. He was hungry. Had he been all beast he would have eaten; but his man-mind could entertain urges even more potent than those of the belly, and now he was concerned with an idea which kept a smile upon his lips and his eyes sparkling in anticipation. An idea, it was, which permitted him to forget that he was hungry.

The meat safely cached, Tarzan trotted along the elephant trail after the Gomangani. Two or three miles from the cage he overtook them and then he swung into the trees and followed above and behind them—waiting his chance.

Among the blacks was Rabba Kega, the witch-doctor. Tarzan hated them all; but Rabba Kega he especially hated. As

the blacks filed along the winding path, Rabba Kega, being lazy, dropped behind. This Tarzan noted, and it filled him with satisfaction—his being radiated a grim and terrible content. Like an angel of death he hovered above the unsuspecting black.

Rabba Kega, knowing that the village was but a short distance ahead, sat down to rest. Rest well, O Rabba Kega! It is thy last opportunity.

Tarzan crept stealthily among the branches of the tree above the well- fed, self-satisfied witch-doctor. He made no noise that the dull ears of man could hear above the soughing of the gentle jungle breeze among the undulating foliage of the upper terraces, and when he came

close above the black man he halted, well concealed by leafy branch and heavy creeper.

Rabba Kega sat with his back against the bole of a tree, facing Tarzan. The position was not such as the waiting beast of prey desired, and so, with the infinite patience of the wild hunter, the ape-man crouched motionless and silent as a graven image until the fruit should be ripe for the plucking. A poisonous insect buzzed angrily out of space. It loitered, circling, close to Tarzan's face. The ape-man saw and recognized it. The virus of its sting spelled death for lesser things than he—for him it would mean days of anguish. He did not move. His glittering eyes remained fixed upon

Rabba Kega after acknowledging the presence of the winged torture by a single glance. He heard and followed the movements of the insect with his keen ears, and then he felt it alight upon his forehead. No muscle twitched, for the muscles of such as he are the servants of the brain. Down across his face crept the horrid thing—over nose and lips and chin. Upon his throat it paused, and turning, retraced its steps. Tarzan watched Rabba Kega. Now not even his eyes moved. So motionless he crouched that only death might counterpart his movelessness. The insect crawled upward over the nut-brown cheek and stopped with its antennae brushing the lashes of his lower lid. You or I would

have started back, closing our eyes and striking at the thing; but you and I are the slaves, not the masters of our nerves. Had the thing crawled upon the eyeball of the ape-man, it is believable that he could yet have remained wide-eyed and rigid; but it did not. For a moment it loitered there close to the lower lid, then it rose and buzzed away.

Down toward Rabba Kega it buzzed and the black man heard it, saw it, struck at it, and was stung upon the cheek before he killed it. Then he rose with a howl of pain and anger, and as he turned up the trail toward the village of Mbonga, the chief, his broad, black back was exposed to the silent thing waiting above him.

And as Rabba Kega turned, a lithe figure shot outward and downward from the tree above upon his broad shoulders. The impact of the springing creature carried Rabba Kega to the ground. He felt strong jaws close upon his neck, and when he tried to scream, steel fingers throttled his throat. The powerful black warrior struggled to free himself; but he was as a child in the grip of his adversary.

Presently Tarzan released his grip upon the other's throat; but each time that Rabba Kega essayed a scream, the cruel fingers choked him painfully. At last the warrior desisted. Then Tarzan half rose and kneeled upon his victim's back, and when Rabba Kega struggled to arise, the

ape-man pushed his face down into the dirt of the trail. With a bit of the rope that had secured the kid, Tarzan made Rabba Kega's wrists secure behind his back, then he rose and jerked his prisoner to his feet, faced him back along the trail and pushed him on ahead.

Not until he came to his feet did Rabba Kega obtain a square look at his assailant. When he saw that it was the white devil-god his heart sank within him and his knees trembled; but as he walked along the trail ahead of his captor and was neither injured nor molested his spirits slowly rose, so that he took heart again. Possibly the devil-god did not intend to kill him after all. Had he not had little Tibo in his power

for days without harming him, and had he not spared Momaya, Tibo's mother, when he easily might have slain her?

And then they came upon the cage which Rabba Kega, with the other black warriors of the village of Mbonga, the chief, had placed and baited for Numa. Rabba Kega saw that the bait was gone, though there was no lion within the cage, nor was the door dropped. He saw and he was filled with wonder not unmixed with apprehension. It entered his dull brain that in some way this combination of circumstances had a connection with his presence there as the prisoner of the white devil-god.

Nor was he wrong. Tarzan pushed him roughly into the cage, and in another

moment Rabba Kega understood. Cold sweat broke from every pore of his body - he trembled as with ague—for the ape-man was binding him securely in the very spot the kid had previously occupied. The witch-doctor pleaded, first for his life, and then for a death less cruel; but he might as well have saved his pleas for Numa, since already they were directed toward a wild beast who understood no word of what he said.

But his constant jabbering not only annoyed Tarzan, who worked in silence, but suggested that later the black might raise his voice in cries for succor, so he stepped out of the cage, gathered a handful of grass and a small stick and returning, jammed the grass into Rabba

Kega's mouth, laid the stick crosswise between his teeth and fastened it there with the thong from Rabba Kega's loin cloth. Now could the witch-doctor but roll his eyes and sweat. Thus Tarzan left him.

The ape-man went first to the spot where he had cached the body of the kid. Digging it up, he ascended into a tree and proceeded to satisfy his hunger. What remained he again buried; then he swung away through the trees to the water hole, and going to the spot where fresh, cold water bubbled from between two rocks, he drank deeply. The other beasts might wade in and drink stagnant water; but not Tarzan of the Apes. In such matters he was fastidious. From his

hands he washed every trace of the repugnant scent of the Gomangani, and from his face the blood of the kid. Rising, he stretched himself not unlike some huge, lazy cat, climbed into a near-by tree and fell asleep.

When he awoke it was dark, though a faint luminosity still tinged the western heavens. A lion moaned and coughed as it strode through the jungle toward water. It was approaching the drinking hole. Tarzan grinned sleepily, changed his position and fell asleep again.

When the blacks of Mbonga, the chief, reached their village they discovered that Rabba Kega was not among them. When several hours had elapsed they decided that something had happened to

him, and it was the hope of the majority of the tribe that whatever had happened to him might prove fatal. They did not love the witch-doctor. Love and fear seldom are playmates; but a warrior is a warrior, and so Mbonga organized a searching party. That his own grief was not unassuagable might have been gathered from the fact that he remained at home and went to sleep. The young warriors whom he sent out remained steadfast to their purpose for fully half an hour, when, unfortunately for Rabba Kega—upon so slight a thing may the fate of a man rest—a honey bird attracted the attention of the searchers and led them off for the delicious store it previously had marked down for

betrayal, and Rabba Kega's doom was sealed.

When the searchers returned empty handed, Mbonga was wroth; but when he saw the great store of honey they brought with them his rage subsided. Already Tubuto, young, agile and evil-minded, with face hideously painted, was practicing the black art upon a sick infant in the fond hope of succeeding to the office and perquisites of Rabba Kega. Tonight the women of the old witch- doctor would moan and howl. Tomorrow he would be forgotten. Such is life, such is fame, such is power—in the center of the world's highest civilization, or in the depths of the black, primeval jungle. Always, everywhere,

man is man, nor has he altered greatly beneath his veneer since he scurried into a hole between two rocks to escape the Tyrannosaurus six million years ago.

The morning following the disappearance of Rabba Kega, the warriors set out with Mbonga, the chief, to examine the trap they had set for Numa. Long before they reached the cage, they heard the roaring of a great lion and guessed that they had made a successful bag, so it was with shouts of joy that they approached the spot where they should find their captive.

Yes! There he was, a great, magnificent specimen—a huge, black-maned lion. The warriors were frantic with delight. They leaped into the air

and uttered savage cries—hoarse victory cries, and then they came closer, and the cries died upon their lips, and their eyes went wide so that the whites showed all around their irises, and their pendulous lower lips drooped with their drooping jaws. They drew back in terror at the sight within the cage - the mauled and mutilated corpse of what had, yesterday, been Rabba Kega, the witch-doctor.

The captured lion had been too angry and frightened to feed upon the body of his kill; but he had vented upon it much of his rage, until it was a frightful thing to behold.

From his perch in a near-by tree Tarzan of the Apes, Lord Greystoke, looked down upon the black warriors

and grinned. Once again his self-pride in his ability as a practical joker asserted itself. It had lain dormant for some time following the painful mauling he had received that time he leaped among the apes of Kerchak clothed in the skin of Numa; but this joke was a decided success.

After a few moments of terror, the blacks came closer to the cage, rage taking the place of fear—rage and curiosity. How had Rabba Kega happened to be in the cage? Where was the kid? There was no sign nor remnant of the original bait. They looked closely and they saw, to their horror, that the corpse of their erstwhile fellow was bound with the very cord with which

they had secured the kid. Who could have done this thing? They looked at one another.

Tubuto was the first to speak. He had come hopefully out with the expedition that morning. Somewhere he might find evidence of the death of Rabba Kega. Now he had found it, and he was the first to find an explanation.

"The white devil-god," he whispered. "It is the work of the white devil- god!"

No one contradicted Tubuto, for, indeed, who else could it have been but the great, hairless ape they all so feared? And so their hatred of Tarzan increased again with an increased fear of him. And Tarzan sat in his tree and hugged himself.

No one there felt sorrow because of the death of Rabba Kega; but each of the blacks experienced a personal fear of the ingenious mind which might discover for any of them a death equally horrible to that which the witch- doctor had suffered. It was a subdued and thoughtful company which dragged the captive lion along the broad elephant path back to the village of Mbonga, the chief.

And it was with a sigh of relief that they finally rolled it into the village and closed the gates behind them. Each had experienced the sensation of being spied upon from the moment they left the spot where the trap had been set, though none had seen or heard aught to give tangible food to his fears.

At the sight of the body within the cage with the lion, the women and children of the village set up a most frightful lamentation, working themselves into a joyous hysteria which far transcended the happy misery derived by their more civilized prototypes who make a business of dividing their time between the movies and the neighborhood funerals of friends and strangers—especially strangers.

From a tree overhanging the palisade, Tarzan watched all that passed within the village. He saw the frenzied women tantalizing the great lion with sticks and stones. The cruelty of the blacks toward a captive always induced in Tarzan a feeling of angry contempt for the

Gomangani. Had he attempted to analyze this feeling he would have found it difficult, for during all his life he had been accustomed to sights of suffering and cruelty. He, himself, was cruel. All the beasts of the jungle were cruel; but the cruelty of the blacks was of a different order. It was the cruelty of wanton torture of the helpless, while the cruelty of Tarzan and the other beasts was the cruelty of necessity or of passion.

Perhaps, had he known it, he might have credited this feeling of repugnance at the sight of unnecessary suffering to heredity—to the germ of British love of fair play which had been bequeathed to him by his father and his mother; but, of

course, he did not know, since he still believed that his mother had been Kala, the great ape.

And just in proportion as his anger rose against the Gomangani his savage sympathy went out to Numa, the lion, for, though Numa was his lifetime enemy, there was neither bitterness nor contempt in Tarzan's sentiments toward him. In the ape-man's mind, therefore, the determination formed to thwart the blacks and liberate the lion; but he must accomplish this in some way which would cause the Gomangani the greatest chagrin and discomfiture.

As he squatted there watching the proceeding beneath him, he saw the warriors seize upon the cage once more

and drag it between two huts. Tarzan knew that it would remain there now until evening, and that the blacks were planning a feast and orgy in celebration of their capture. When he saw that two warriors were placed beside the cage, and that these drove off the women and children and young men who would have eventually tortured Numa to death, he knew that the lion would be safe until he was needed for the evening's entertainment, when he would be more cruelly and scientifically tortured for the edification of the entire tribe.

Now Tarzan preferred to bait the blacks in as theatrical a manner as his fertile imagination could evolve. He had some half-formed conception of their

superstitious fears and of their especial dread of night, and so he decided to wait until darkness fell and the blacks partially worked to hysteria by their dancing and religious rites before he took any steps toward the freeing of Numa. In the meantime, he hoped, an idea adequate to the possibilities of the various factors at hand would occur to him. Nor was it long before one did.

He had swung off through the jungle to search for food when the plan came to him. At first it made him smile a little and then look dubious, for he still retained a vivid memory of the dire results that had followed the carrying out of a very wonderful idea along almost identical lines, yet he did not abandon

his intention, and a moment later, food temporarily forgotten, he was swinging through the middle terraces in rapid flight toward the stamping ground of the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape.

As was his wont, he alighted in the midst of the little band without announcing his approach save by a hideous scream just as he sprang from a branch above them. Fortunate are the apes of Kerchak that their kind is not subject to heart failure, for the methods of Tarzan subjected them to one severe shock after another, nor could they ever accustom themselves to the ape- man's peculiar style of humor.

Now, when they saw who it was they merely snarled and grumbled angrily for

a moment and then resumed their feeding or their napping which he had interrupted, and he, having had his little joke, made his way to the hollow tree where he kept his treasures hid from the inquisitive eyes and fingers of his fellows and the mischievous little manus. Here he withdrew a closely rolled hide—the hide of Numa with the head on; a clever bit of primitive curing and mounting, which had once been the property of the witch-doctor, Rabba Kega, until Tarzan had stolen it from the village.

With this he made his way back through the jungle toward the village of the blacks, stopping to hunt and feed upon the way, and, in the afternoon, even

napping for an hour, so that it was already dusk when he entered the great tree which overhung the palisade and gave him a view of the entire village. He saw that Numa was still alive and that the guards were even dozing beside the cage. A lion is no great novelty to a black man in the lion country, and the first keen edge of their desire to worry the brute having worn off, the villagers paid little or no attention to the great cat, preferring now to await the grand event of the night.

Nor was it long after dark before the festivities commenced. To the beating of tom-toms, a lone warrior, crouched half doubled, leaped into the firelight in the center of a great circle of other warriors,

behind whom stood or squatted the women and the children. The dancer was painted and armed for the hunt and his movements and gestures suggested the search for the spoor of game. Bending low, sometimes resting for a moment on one knee, he searched the ground for signs of the quarry; again he poised, statuesque, listening. The warrior was young and lithe and graceful; he was full-muscled and arrow- straight. The firelight glistened upon his ebon body and brought out into bold relief the grotesque designs painted upon his face, breasts, and abdomen.

Presently he bent low to the earth, then leaped high in air. Every line of face and body showed that he had struck

the scent. Immediately he leaped toward the circle of warriors about him, telling them of his find and summoning them to the hunt. It was all in pantomime; but so truly done that even Tarzan could follow it all to the least detail.

He saw the other warriors grasp their hunting spears and leap to their feet to join in the graceful, stealthy "stalking dance." It was very interesting; but Tarzan realized that if he was to carry his design to a successful conclusion he must act quickly. He had seen these dances before and knew that after the stalk would come the game at bay and then the kill, during which Numa would be surrounded by warriors, and unapproachable.

With the lion's skin under one arm the ape-man dropped to the ground in the dense shadows beneath the tree and then circled behind the huts until he came out directly in the rear of the cage, in which Numa paced nervously to and fro. The cage was now unguarded, the two warriors having left it to take their places among the other dancers.

Behind the cage Tarzan adjusted the lion's skin about him, just as he had upon that memorable occasion when the apes of Kerchak, failing to pierce his disguise, had all but slain him. Then, on hands and knees, he crept forward, emerged from between the two huts and stood a few paces back of the dusky audience, whose whole attention was

centered upon the dancers before them.

Tarzan saw that the blacks had now worked themselves to a proper pitch of nervous excitement to be ripe for the lion. In a moment the ring of spectators would break at a point nearest the caged lion and the victim would be rolled into the center of the circle. It was for this moment that Tarzan waited.

At last it came. A signal was given by Mbonga, the chief, at which the women and children immediately in front of Tarzan rose and moved to one side, leaving a broad path opening toward the caged lion. At the same instant Tarzan gave voice to the low, couching roar of an angry lion and slunk slowly forward through the open lane toward the

frenzied dancers.

A woman saw him first and screamed. Instantly there was a panic in the immediate vicinity of the ape-man. The strong light from the fire fell full upon the lion head and the blacks leaped to the conclusion, as Tarzan had known they would, that their captive had escaped his cage.

With another roar, Tarzan moved forward. The dancing warriors paused but an instant. They had been hunting a lion securely housed within a strong cage, and now that he was at liberty among them, an entirely different aspect was placed upon the matter. Their nerves were not attuned to this emergency. The women and children

already had fled to the questionable safety of the nearest huts, and the warriors were not long in following their example, so that presently Tarzan was left in sole possession of the village street.

But not for long. Nor did he wish to be left thus long alone. It would not comport with his scheme. Presently a head peered forth from a near-by hut, and then another and another until a score or more of warriors were looking out upon him, waiting for his next move —waiting for the lion to charge or to attempt to escape from the village.

Their spears were ready in their hands against either a charge or a bolt for freedom, and then the lion rose erect

upon its hind legs, the tawny skin dropped from it and there stood revealed before them in the firelight the straight young figure of the white devil-god.

For an instant the blacks were too astonished to act. They feared this apparition fully as much as they did Numa, yet they would gladly have slain the thing could they quickly enough have gathered together their wits; but fear and superstition and a natural mental density held them paralyzed while the ape-man stooped and gathered up the lion skin. They saw him turn then and walk back into the shadows at the far end of the village. Not until then did they gain courage to pursue him, and when they had come in force, with brandished

spears and loud war cries, the quarry was gone.

Not an instant did Tarzan pause in the tree. Throwing the skin over a branch he leaped again into the village upon the opposite side of the great bole, and diving into the shadow of a hut, ran quickly to where lay the caged lion. Springing to the top of the cage he pulled upon the cord which raised the door, and a moment later a great lion in the prime of his strength and vigor leaped out into the village.

The warriors, returning from a futile search for Tarzan, saw him step into the firelight. Ah! there was the devil-god again, up to his old trick. Did he think he could twice fool the men of Mbonga, the

chief, the same way in so short a time? They would show him! For long they had waited for such an opportunity to rid themselves forever of this fearsome jungle demon. As one they rushed forward with raised spears.

The women and the children came from the huts to witness the slaying of the devil-god. The lion turned blazing eyes upon them and then swung about toward the advancing warriors.

With shouts of savage joy and triumph they came toward him, menacing him with their spears. The devil-god was theirs!

And then, with a frightful roar, Numa, the lion, charged.

The men of Mbonga, the chief, met

Numa with ready spears and screams of raillery. In a solid mass of muscled ebony they waited the coming of the devil- god; yet beneath their brave exteriors lurked a haunting fear that all might not be quite well with them—that this strange creature could yet prove invulnerable to their weapons and inflict upon them full punishment for their effrontery. The charging lion was all too lifelike—they saw that in the brief instant of the charge; but beneath the tawny hide they knew was hid the soft flesh of the white man, and how could that withstand the assault of many war spears?

In their forefront stood a huge young warrior in the full arrogance of his might

and his youth. Afraid? Not he! He laughed as Numa bore down upon him; he laughed and couched his spear, setting the point for the broad breast. And then the lion was upon him. A great paw swept away the heavy war spear, splintering it as the hand of man might splinter a dry twig.

Down went the black, his skull crushed by another blow. And then the lion was in the midst of the warriors, clawing and tearing to right and left. Not for long did they stand their ground; but a dozen men were mauled before the others made good their escape from those frightful talons and gleaming fangs.

In terror the villagers fled hither and thither. No hut seemed a sufficiently

secure asylum with Numa ranging within the palisade. From one to another fled the frightened blacks, while in the center of the village Numa stood glaring and growling above his kills.

At last a tribesman flung wide the gates of the village and sought safety amid the branches of the forest trees beyond. Like sheep his fellows followed him, until the lion and his dead remained alone in the village.

From the nearer trees the men of Mbonga saw the lion lower his great head and seize one of his victims by the shoulder and then with slow and stately tread move down the village street past the open gates and on into the jungle. They saw and shuddered, and from

another tree Tarzan of the Apes saw and smiled.

A full hour elapsed after the lion had disappeared with his feast before the blacks ventured down from the trees and returned to their village. Wide eyes rolled from side to side, and naked flesh contracted more to the chill of fear than to the chill of the jungle night.

"It was he all the time," murmured one. "It was the devil-god."

"He changed himself from a lion to a man, and back again into a lion," whispered another.

"And he dragged Mweeza into the forest and is eating him," said a third, shuddering.

"We are no longer safe here," wailed

a fourth. "Let us take our belongings and search for another village site far from the haunts of the wicked devil-god."

But with morning came renewed courage, so that the experiences of the preceding evening had little other effect than to increase their fear of Tarzan and strengthen their belief in his supernatural origin.

And thus waxed the fame and the power of the ape-man in the mysterious haunts of the savage jungle where he ranged, mightiest of beasts because of the man-mind which directed his giant muscles and his flawless courage.

12. TARZAN RESCUES THE MOON

The moon shone down out of a cloudless sky—a huge, swollen moon that seemed so close to earth that one might wonder that she did not brush the crooning tree tops. It was night, and Tarzan was abroad in the jungle - Tarzan, the ape-man; mighty fighter, mighty hunter. Why he swung through the dark shadows of the somber forest he could not have told you. It was not that he was hungry—he had fed well this day, and in a safe cache were the remains of his kill, ready against the coming of a new appetite. Perhaps it was the very joy of living that urged him from his arboreal couch to pit his muscles and his senses against the jungle night, and then, too, Tarzan

always was goaded by an intense desire to know.

The jungle which is presided over by Kudu, the sun, is a very different jungle from that of Goro, the moon. The diurnal jungle has its own aspect - its own lights and shades, its own birds, its own blooms, its own beasts; its noises are the noises of the day. The lights and shades of the nocturnal jungle are as different as one might imagine the lights and shades of another world to differ from those of our world; its beasts, its blooms, and its birds are not those of the jungle of Kudu, the sun.

Because of these differences Tarzan loved to investigate the jungle by night. Not only was the life another life; but it

was richer in numbers and in romance; it was richer in dangers, too, and to Tarzan of the Apes danger was the spice of life. And the noises of the jungle night—the roar of the lion, the scream of the leopard, the hideous laughter of Dango, the hyena, were music to the ears of the ape-man.

The soft padding of unseen feet, the rustling of leaves and grasses to the passage of fierce beasts, the sheen of opalesque eyes flaming through the dark, the million sounds which proclaimed the teeming life that one might hear and scent, though seldom see, constituted the appeal of the nocturnal jungle to Tarzan.

Tonight he had swung a wide circle—toward the east first and then toward the

south, and now he was rounding back again into the north. His eyes, his ears and his keen nostrils were ever on the alert. Mingled with the sounds he knew, there were strange sounds—weird sounds which he never heard until after Kudu had sought his lair below the far edge of the big water- sounds which belonged to Goro, the moon—and to the mysterious period of Goro's supremacy. These sounds often caused Tarzan profound speculation. They baffled him because he thought that he knew his jungle so well that there could be nothing within it unfamiliar to him. Sometimes he thought that as colors and forms appeared to differ by night from their familiar daylight aspects, so sounds

altered with the passage of Kudu and the coming of Goro, and these thoughts roused within his brain a vague conjecture that perhaps Goro and Kudu influenced these changes. And what more natural that eventually he came to attribute to the sun and the moon personalities as real as his own? The sun was a living creature and ruled the day. The moon, endowed with brains and miraculous powers, ruled the night.

Thus functioned the untrained man-mind groping through the dark night of ignorance for an explanation of the things he could not touch or smell or hear and of the great, unknown powers of nature which he could not see.

As Tarzan swung north again upon his

wide circle the scent of the Gomangani came to his nostrils, mixed with the acrid odor of wood smoke. The ape-man moved quickly in the direction from which the scent was borne down to him upon the gentle night wind. Presently the ruddy sheen of a great fire filtered through the foliage to him ahead, and when Tarzan came to a halt in the trees near it, he saw a party of half a dozen black warriors huddled close to the blaze. It was evidently a hunting party from the village of Mbonga, the chief, caught out in the jungle after dark. In a rude circle about them they had constructed a thorn boma which, with the aid of the fire, they apparently hoped would discourage the advances of the

larger carnivora.

That hope was not conviction was evidenced by the very palpable terror in which they crouched, wide-eyed and trembling, for already Numa and Sabor were moaning through the jungle toward them. There were other creatures, too, in the shadows beyond the firelight. Tarzan could see their yellow eyes flaming there. The blacks saw them and shivered. Then one arose and grasping a burning branch from the fire hurled it at the eyes, which immediately disappeared. The black sat down again. Tarzan watched and saw that it was several minutes before the eyes began to reappear in twos and fours.

Then came Numa, the lion, and Sabor,

his mate. The other eyes scattered to right and left before the menacing growls of the great cats, and then the huge orbs of the man-eaters flamed alone out of the darkness. Some of the blacks threw themselves upon their faces and moaned; but he who before had hurled the burning branch now hurled another straight at the faces of the hungry lions, and they, too, disappeared as had the lesser lights before them. Tarzan was much interested. He saw a new reason for the nightly fires maintained by the blacks—a reason in addition to those connected with warmth and light and cooking. The beasts of the jungle feared fire, and so fire was, in a measure, a protection from them. Tarzan himself knew a certain awe

of fire. Once he had, in investigating an abandoned fire in the village of the blacks, picked up a live coal. Since then he had maintained a respectful distance from such fires as he had seen. One experience had sufficed.

For a few minutes after the black hurled the firebrand no eyes appeared, though Tarzan could hear the soft padding of feet all about him. Then flashed once more the twin fire spots that marked the return of the lord of the jungle and a moment later, upon a slightly lower level, there appeared those of Sabor, his mate.

For some time they remained fixed and unwavering—a constellation of fierce stars in the jungle night—then the

male lion advanced slowly toward the boma, where all but a single black still crouched in trembling terror. When this lone guardian saw that Numa was again approaching, he threw another firebrand, and, as before, Numa retreated and with him Sabor, the lioness; but not so far, this time, nor for so long. Almost instantly they turned and began circling the boma, their eyes turning constantly toward the firelight, while low, throaty growls evidenced their increasing displeasure. Beyond the lions glowed the flaming eyes of the lesser satellites, until the black jungle was shot all around the black men's camp with little spots of fire.

Again and again the black warrior

hurled his puny brands at the two big cats; but Tarzan noticed that Numa paid little or no attention to them after the first few retreats. The ape-man knew by Numa's voice that the lion was hungry and surmised that he had made up his mind to feed upon a Gomangani; but would he dare a closer approach to the dreaded flames?

Even as the thought was passing in Tarzan's mind, Numa stopped his restless pacing and faced the boma. For a moment he stood motionless, except for the quick, nervous upcurving of his tail, then he walked deliberately forward, while Sabor moved restlessly to and fro where he had left her. The black man called to his comrades that

the lion was coming, but they were too far gone in fear to do more than huddle closer together and moan more loudly than before.

Seizing a blazing branch the man cast it straight into the face of the lion. There was an angry roar, followed by a swift charge. With a single bound the savage beast cleared the boma wall as, with almost equal agility, the warrior cleared it upon the opposite side and, chancing the dangers lurking in the darkness, bolted for the nearest tree.

Numa was out of the boma almost as soon as he was inside it; but as he went back over the low thorn wall, he took a screaming negro with him. Dragging his victim along the ground he walked back

toward Sabor, the lioness, who joined him, and the two continued into the blackness, their savage growls mingling with the piercing shrieks of the doomed and terrified man.

At a little distance from the blaze the lions halted, there ensued a short succession of unusually vicious growls and roars, during which the cries and moans of the black man ceased—forever.

Presently Numa reappeared in the firelight. He made a second trip into the boma and the former grisly tragedy was reenacted with another howling victim.

Tarzan rose and stretched lazily. The entertainment was beginning to bore him. He yawned and turned upon his way

toward the clearing where the tribe would be sleeping in the encircling trees.

Yet even when he had found his familiar crotch and curled himself for slumber, he felt no desire to sleep. For a long time he lay awake thinking and dreaming. He looked up into the heavens and watched the moon and the stars. He wondered what they were and what power kept them from falling. His was an inquisitive mind. Always he had been full of questions concerning all that passed around him; but there never had been one to answer his questions. In childhood he had wanted to KNOW, and, denied almost all knowledge, he still, in manhood, was filled with the

great, unsatisfied curiosity of a child.

He was never quite content merely to perceive that things happened— he desired to know WHY they happened. He wanted to know what made things go. The secret of life interested him immensely. The miracle of death he could not quite fathom. Upon innumerable occasions he had investigated the internal mechanism of his kills, and once or twice he had opened the chest cavity of victims in time to see the heart still pumping.

He had learned from experience that a knife thrust through this organ brought immediate death nine times out of ten, while he might stab an antagonist innumerable times in other places

without even disabling him. And so he had come to think of the heart, or, as he called it, "the red thing that breathes," as the seat and origin of life.

The brain and its functionings he did not comprehend at all. That his sense perceptions were transmitted to his brain and there translated, classified, and labeled was something quite beyond him. He thought that his fingers knew when they touched something, that his eyes knew when they saw, his ears when they heard, his nose when it scented.

He considered his throat, epidermis, and the hairs of his head as the three principal seats of emotion. When Kala had been slain a peculiar choking sensation had possessed his throat;

contact with Histah, the snake, imparted an unpleasant sensation to the skin of his whole body; while the approach of an enemy made the hairs on his scalp stand erect.

Imagine, if you can, a child filled with the wonders of nature, bursting with queries and surrounded only by beasts of the jungle to whom his questionings were as strange as Sanskrit would have been. If he asked Gunto what made it rain, the big old ape would but gaze at him in dumb astonishment for an instant and then return to his interesting and edifying search for fleas; and when he questioned Mumga, who was very old and should have been very wise, but wasn't, as to the reason for the closing of

certain flowers after Kudu had deserted the sky, and the opening of others during the night, he was surprised to discover that Mumga had never noticed these interesting facts, though she could tell to an inch just where the fattest grubworm should be hiding.

To Tarzan these things were wonders. They appealed to his intellect and to his imagination. He saw the flowers close and open; he saw certain blooms which turned their faces always toward the sun; he saw leaves which moved when there was no breeze; he saw vines crawl like living things up the boles and over the branches of great trees; and to Tarzan of the Apes the flowers and the vines and the trees were living creatures. He often

talked to them, as he talked to Goro, the moon, and Kudu, the sun, and always was he disappointed that they did not reply. He asked them questions; but they could not answer, though he knew that the whispering of the leaves was the language of the leaves—they talked with one another.

The wind he attributed to the trees and grasses. He thought that they swayed themselves to and fro, creating the wind. In no other way could he account for this phenomenon. The rain he finally attributed to the stars, the moon, and the sun; but his hypothesis was entirely unlovely and unpoetical.

Tonight as Tarzan lay thinking, there sprang to his fertile imagination an

explanation of the stars and the moon. He became quite excited about it. Taug was sleeping in a nearby crotch. Tarzan swung over beside him.

"Taug!" he cried. Instantly the great bull was awake and bristling, sensing danger from the nocturnal summons. "Look, Taug!" exclaimed Tarzan, pointing toward the stars. "See the eyes of Numa and Sabor, of Sheeta and Dango. They wait around Goro to leap in upon him for their kill. See the eyes and the nose and the mouth of Goro. And the light that shines upon his face is the light of the great fire he has built to frighten away Numa and Sabor and Dango and Sheeta.

"All about him are the eyes, Taug, you

can see them! But they do not come very close to the fire—there are few eyes close to Goro. They fear the fire! It is the fire that saves Goro from Numa. Do you see them, Taug? Some night Numa will be very hungry and very angry—then he will leap over the thorn bushes which encircle Goro and we will have no more light after Kudu seeks his lair—the night will be black with the blackness that comes when Goro is lazy and sleeps late into the night, or when he wanders through the skies by day, forgetting the jungle and its people."

Taug looked stupidly at the heavens and then at Tarzan. A meteor fell, blazing a flaming way through the sky.

"Look!" cried Tarzan. "Goro has

thrown a burning branch at Numa."

Taug grumbled. "Numa is down below," he said. "Numa does not hunt above the trees." But he looked curiously and a little fearfully at the bright stars above him, as though he saw them for the first time, and doubtless it was the first time that Taug ever had seen the stars, though they had been in the sky above him every night of his life. To Taug they were as the gorgeous jungle blooms—he could not eat them and so he ignored them.

Taug fidgeted and was nervous. For a long time he lay sleepless, watching the stars—the flaming eyes of the beasts of prey surrounding Goro, the moon—Goro, by whose light the apes danced to

the beating of their earthen drums. If Goro should be eaten by Numa there could be no more Dum- Dums. Taug was overwhelmed by the thought. He glanced at Tarzan half fearfully. Why was his friend so different from the others of the tribe? No one else whom Taug ever had known had had such queer thoughts as Tarzan. The ape scratched his head and wondered, dimly, if Tarzan was a safe companion, and then he recalled slowly, and by a laborious mental process, that Tarzan had served him better than any other of the apes, even the strong and wise bulls of the tribe.

Tarzan it was who had freed him from the blacks at the very time that Taug had thought Tarzan wanted Teeka. It was

Tarzan who had saved Taug's little balu from death. It was Tarzan who had conceived and carried out the plan to pursue Teeka's abductor and rescue the stolen one. Tarzan had fought and bled in Taug's service so many times that Taug, although only a brutal ape, had had impressed upon his mind a fierce loyalty which nothing now could swerve - his friendship for Tarzan had become a habit, a tradition almost, which would endure while Taug endured. He never showed any outward demonstration of affection—he growled at Tarzan as he growled at the other bulls who came too close while he was feeding—but he would have died for Tarzan. He knew it and Tarzan knew it; but of such things

apes do not speak —their vocabulary, for the finer instincts, consisting more of actions than words. But now Taug was worried, and he fell asleep again still thinking of the strange words of his fellow.

The following day he thought of them again, and without any intention of disloyalty he mentioned to Gunto what Tarzan had suggested about the eyes surrounding Goro, and the possibility that sooner or later Numa would charge the moon and devour him. To the apes all large things in nature are male, and so Goro, being the largest creature in the heavens by night, was, to them, a bull.

Gunto bit a sliver from a horny finger and recalled the fact that Tarzan had

once said that the trees talked to one another, and Gozan recounted having seen the ape-man dancing alone in the moonlight with Sheeta, the panther. They did not know that Tarzan had roped the savage beast and tied him to a tree before he came to earth and leaped about before the rearing cat, to tantalize him.

Others told of seeing Tarzan ride upon the back of Tantor, the elephant; of his bringing the black boy, Tibo, to the tribe, and of mysterious things with which he communed in the strange lair by the sea. They had never understood his books, and after he had shown them to one or two of the tribe and discovered that even the pictures carried no impression to their brains, he had

desisted.

"Tarzan is not an ape," said Gunto. "He will bring Numa to eat us, as he is bringing him to eat Goro. We should kill him."

Immediately Taug bristled. Kill Tarzan! "First you will kill Taug," he said, and lumbered away to search for food.

But others joined the plotters. They thought of many things which Tarzan had done—things which apes did not do and could not understand. Again Gunto voiced the opinion that the Tarmangani, the white ape, should be slain, and the others, filled with terror about the stories they had heard, and thinking Tarzan was planning to slay Goro,

greeted the proposal with growls of accord.

Among them was Teeka, listening with all her ears; but her voice was not raised in furtherance of the plan. Instead she bristled, showing her fangs, and afterward she went away in search of Tarzan; but she could not find him, as he was roaming far afield in search of meat. She found Taug, though, and told him what the others were planning, and the great bull stamped upon the ground and roared. His bloodshot eyes blazed with wrath, his upper lip curled up to expose his fighting fangs, and the hair upon his spine stood erect, and then a rodent scurried across the open and Taug sprang to seize it. In an instant he

seemed to have forgotten his rage against the enemies of his friend; but such is the mind of an ape.

Several miles away Tarzan of the Apes lolled upon the broad head of Tantor, the elephant. He scratched beneath the great ears with the point of a sharp stick, and he talked to the huge pachyderm of everything which filled his black-thatched head. Little, or nothing, of what he said did Tantor understand; but Tantor is a good listener. Swaying from side to side he stood there enjoying the companionship of his friend, the friend he loved, and absorbing the delicious sensations of the scratching.

Numa, the lion, caught the scent of man, and warily stalked it until he came

within sight of his prey upon the head of the mighty tusker; then he turned, growling and muttering, away in search of more propitious hunting grounds.

The elephant caught the scent of the lion, borne to him by an eddying breeze, and lifting his trunk trumpeted loudly. Tarzan stretched back luxuriously, lying supine at full length along the rough hide. Flies swarmed about his face; but with a leafy branch torn from a tree he lazily brushed them away.

"Tantor," he said, "it is good to be alive. It is good to lie in the cool shadows. It is good to look upon the green trees and the bright colors of the flowers—upon everything which Bulamutumumo has put here for us. He is

very good to us, Tantor; He has given you tender leaves and bark, and rich grasses to eat; to me He has given Bara and Horta and Pisah, the fruits and the nuts and the roots. He provides for each the food that each likes best. All that He asks is that we be strong enough or cunning enough to go forth and take it. Yes, Tantor, it is good to live. I should hate to die."

Tantor made a little sound in his throat and curled his trunk upward that he might caress the ape-man's cheek with the finger at its tip.

"Tantor," said Tarzan presently, "turn and feed in the direction of the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape, that Tarzan may ride home upon your head without

walking."

The tusker turned and moved slowly off along a broad, tree-arched trail, pausing occasionally to pluck a tender branch, or strip the edible bark from an adjacent tree. Tarzan sprawled face downward upon the beast's head and back, his legs hanging on either side, his head supported by his open palms, his elbows resting on the broad cranium. And thus they made their leisurely way toward the gathering place of the tribe.

Just before they arrived at the clearing from the north there reached it from the south another figure—that of a well-knit black warrior, who stepped cautiously through the jungle, every sense upon the alert against the many

dangers which might lurk anywhere along the way. Yet he passed beneath the southernmost sentry that was posted in a great tree commanding the trail from the south. The ape permitted the Gomangani to pass unmolested, for he saw that he was alone; but the moment that the warrior had entered the clearing a loud "Kreeg-ah!" rang out from behind him, immediately followed by a chorus of replies from different directions, as the great bulls crashed through the trees in answer to the summons of their fellow.

The black man halted at the first cry and looked about him. He could see nothing, but he knew the voice of the hairy tree men whom he and his kind feared, not alone because of the strength

and ferocity of the savage beings, but as well through a superstitious terror engendered by the manlike appearance of the apes.

But Bulabantu was no coward. He heard the apes all about him; he knew that escape was probably impossible, so he stood his ground, his spear ready in his hand and a war cry trembling on his lips. He would sell his life dearly, would Bulabantu, under-chief of the village of Mbonga, the chief.

Tarzan and Tantor were but a short distance away when the first cry of the sentry rang out through the quiet jungle. Like a flash the ape-man leaped from the elephant's back to a near-by tree and was swinging rapidly in the direction of

the clearing before the echoes of the first "Kreeg-ah" had died away. When he arrived he saw a dozen bulls circling a single Gomangani. With a blood-curdling scream Tarzan sprang to the attack. He hated the blacks even more than did the apes, and here was an opportunity for a kill in the open. What had the Gomangani done? Had he slain one of the tribe?

Tarzan asked the nearest ape. No, the Gomangani had harmed none. Gozan, being on watch, had seen him coming through the forest and had warned the tribe—that was all. The ape-man pushed through the circle of bulls, none of which as yet had worked himself into sufficient frenzy for a charge, and came where he

had a full and close view of the black. He recognized the man instantly. Only the night before he had seen him facing the eyes in the dark, while his fellows groveled in the dirt at his feet, too terrified even to defend themselves. Here was a brave man, and Tarzan had deep admiration for bravery. Even his hatred of the blacks was not so strong a passion as his love of courage. He would have joyed in battling with a black warrior at almost any time; but this one he did not wish to kill—he felt, vaguely, that the man had earned his life by his brave defense of it on the preceding night, nor did he fancy the odds that were pitted against the lone warrior.

He turned to the apes. "Go back to your feeding," he said, "and let this Gomangani go his way in peace. He has not harmed us, and last night I saw him fighting Numa and Sabor with fire, alone in the jungle. He is brave. Why should we kill one who is brave and who has not attacked us? Let him go."

The apes growled. They were displeased. "Kill the Gomangani!" cried one.

"Yes." roared another, "kill the Gomangani and the Tarmangani as well."

"Kill the white ape!" screamed Gozan, "he is no ape at all; but a Gomangani with his skin off."

"Kill Tarzan!" bellowed Gunto. "Kill!

Kill! Kill!"

The bulls were now indeed working themselves into the frenzy of slaughter; but against Tarzan rather than the black man. A shaggy form charged through them, hurling those it came in contact with to one side as a strong man might scatter children. It was Taug—great, savage Taug.

"Who says 'kill Tarzan'?" he demanded. "Who kills Tarzan must kill Taug, too. Who can kill Taug? Taug will tear your insides from you and feed them to Dango."

"We can kill you all," replied Gunto. "There are many of us and few of you," and he was right. Tarzan knew that he was right. Taug knew it; but neither

would admit such a possibility. It is not the way of bull apes.

"I am Tarzan," cried the ape-man. "I am Tarzan. Mighty hunter; mighty fighter. In all the jungle none so great as Tarzan."

Then, one by one, the opposing bulls recounted their virtues and their prowess. And all the time the combatants came closer and closer to one another. Thus do the bulls work themselves to the proper pitch before engaging in battle.

Gunto came, stiff-legged, close to Tarzan and sniffed at him, with bared fangs. Tarzan rumbled forth a low, menacing growl. They might repeat these tactics a dozen times; but sooner or later

one bull would close with another and then the whole hideous pack would be tearing and rending at their prey.

Bulabantu, the black man, had stood wide-eyed in wonder from the moment he had seen Tarzan approaching through the apes. He had heard much of this devil-god who ran with the hairy tree people; but never before had he seen him in full daylight. He knew him well enough from the description of those who had seen him and from the glimpses he had had of the marauder upon several occasions when the ape-man had entered the village of Mbonga, the chief, by night, in the perpetration of one of his numerous ghastly jokes.

Bulabantu could not, of course,

understand anything which passed between Tarzan and the apes; but he saw that the ape-man and one of the larger bulls were in argument with the others. He saw that these two were standing with their back toward him and between him and the balance of the tribe, and he guessed, though it seemed improbable, that they might be defending him. He knew that Tarzan had once spared the life of Mbonga, the chief, and that he had succored Tibo, and Tibo's mother, Momaya. So it was not impossible that he would help Bulabantu; but how he could accomplish it Bulabantu could not guess; nor as a matter of fact could Tarzan, for the odds against him were too great.

Gunto and the others were slowly forcing Tarzan and Taug back toward Bulabantu. The ape-man thought of his words with Tantor just a short time before: "Yes, Tantor, it is good to live. I should hate to die." And now he knew that he was about to die, for the temper of the great bulls was mounting rapidly against him. Always had many of them hated him, and all were suspicious of him. They knew he was different. Tarzan knew it too; but he was glad that he was —he was a MAN; that he had learned from his picture-books, and he was very proud of the distinction. Presently, though, he would be a dead man.

Gunto was preparing to charge. Tarzan knew the signs. He knew that the

balance of the bulls would charge with Gunto. Then it would soon be over. Something moved among the verdure at the opposite side of the clearing. Tarzan saw it just as Gunto, with the terrifying cry of a challenging ape, sprang forward. Tarzan voiced a peculiar call and then crouched to meet the assault. Taug crouched, too, and Bulabantu, assured now that these two were fighting upon his side, couched his spear and sprang between them to receive the first charge of the enemy.

Simultaneously a huge bulk broke into the clearing from the jungle behind the charging bulls. The trumpeting of a mad tusker rose shrill above the cries of the anthropoids, as Tantor, the elephant,

dashed swiftly across the clearing to the aid of his friend.

Gunto never closed upon the ape-man, nor did a fang enter flesh upon either side. The terrific reverberation of Tantor's challenge sent the bulls scurrying to the trees, jabbering and scolding. Taug raced off with them. Only Tarzan and Bulabantu remained. The latter stood his ground because he saw that the devil-god did not run, and because the black had the courage to face a certain and horrible death beside one who had quite evidently dared death for him.

But it was a surprised Gomangani who saw the mighty elephant come to a sudden halt in front of the ape-man and

caress him with his long, sinuous trunk.

Tarzan turned toward the black man. "Go!" he said in the language of the apes, and pointed in the direction of the village of Mbonga. Bulabantu understood the gesture, if not the word, nor did he lose time in obeying. Tarzan stood watching him until he had disappeared. He knew that the apes would not follow. Then he said to the elephant: "Pick me up!" and the tusker swung him lightly to his head.

"Tarzan goes to his lair by the big water," shouted the ape-man to the apes in the trees. "All of you are more foolish than Manu, except Taug and Teeka. Taug and Teeka may come to see Tarzan; but the others must keep away. Tarzan is

done with the tribe of Kerchak."

He prodded Tantor with a calloused toe and the big beast swung off across the clearing, the apes watching them until they were swallowed up by the jungle.

Before the night fell Taug killed Gunto, picking a quarrel with him over his attack upon Tarzan.

For a moon the tribe saw nothing of Tarzan of the Apes. Many of them probably never gave him a thought; but there were those who missed him more than Tarzan imagined. Taug and Teeka often wished that he was back, and Taug determined a dozen times to go and visit Tarzan in his seaside lair; but first one thing and then another interfered.

One night when Taug lay sleepless looking up at the starry heavens he recalled the strange things that Tarzan once had suggested to him— that the bright spots were the eyes of the meat-eaters waiting in the dark of the jungle sky to leap upon Goro, the moon, and devour him. The more he thought about this matter the more perturbed he became.

And then a strange thing happened. Even as Taug looked at Goro, he saw a portion of one edge disappear, precisely as though something was gnawing upon it. Larger and larger became the hole in the side of Goro. With a scream, Taug leaped to his feet. His frenzied "Kreeg-ahs!" brought the terrified tribe

screaming and chattering toward him.

"Look!" cried Taug, pointing at the moon. "Look! It is as Tarzan said. Numa has sprung through the fires and is devouring Goro. You called Tarzan names and drove him from the tribe; now see how wise he was. Let one of you who hated Tarzan go to Goro's aid. See the eyes in the dark jungle all about Goro. He is in danger and none can help him—none except Tarzan. Soon Goro will be devoured by Numa and we shall have no more light after Kudu seeks his lair. How shall we dance the Dum-Dum without the light of Goro?"

The apes trembled and whimpered. Any manifestation of the powers of nature always filled them with terror, for

they could not understand.

"Go and bring Tarzan," cried one, and then they all took up the cry of "Tarzan!" "Bring Tarzan!" "He will save Goro." But who was to travel the dark jungle by night to fetch him?

"I will go," volunteered Taug, and an instant later he was off through the Stygian gloom toward the little land-locked harbor by the sea.

And as the tribe waited they watched the slow devouring of the moon. Already Numa had eaten out a great semicircular piece. At that rate Goro would be entirely gone before Kudu came again. The apes trembled at the thought of perpetual darkness by night. They could not sleep. Restlessly they moved here

and there among the branches of trees, watching Numa of the skies at his deadly feast, and listening for the coming of Taug with Tarzan.

Goro was nearly gone when the apes heard the sounds of the approach through the trees of the two they awaited, and presently Tarzan, followed by Taug, swung into a nearby tree.

The ape-man wasted no time in idle words. In his hand was his long bow and at his back hung a quiver full of arrows, poisoned arrows that he had stolen from the village of the blacks; just as he had stolen the bow. Up into a great tree he clambered, higher and higher until he stood swaying upon a small limb which bent low beneath his weight. Here he

had a clear and unobstructed view of the heavens. He saw Goro and the inroads which the hungry Numa had made into his shining surface.

Raising his face to the moon, Tarzan shrilled forth his hideous challenge. Faintly and from afar came the roar of an answering lion. The apes shivered. Numa of the skies had answered Tarzan.

Then the ape-man fitted an arrow to his bow, and drawing the shaft far back, aimed its point at the heart of Numa where he lay in the heavens devouring Goro. There was a loud twang as the released bolt shot into the dark heavens. Again and again did Tarzan of the Apes launch his arrows at Numa, and all the while the apes of the tribe of Kerchak

huddled together in terror.

At last came a cry from Taug. "Look! Look!" he screamed. "Numa is killed. Tarzan has killed Numa. See! Goro is emerging from the belly of Numa," and, sure enough, the moon was gradually emerging from whatever had devoured her, whether it was Numa, the lion, or the shadow of the earth; but were you to try to convince an ape of the tribe of Kerchak that it was aught but Numa who so nearly devoured Goro that night, or that another than Tarzan preserved the brilliant god of their savage and mysterious rites from a frightful death, you would have difficulty—and a fight on your hands.

And so Tarzan of the Apes came back

to the tribe of Kerchak, and in his coming he took a long stride toward the kingship, which he ultimately won, for now the apes looked up to him as a superior being.

In all the tribe there was but one who was at all skeptical about the plausibility of Tarzan's remarkable rescue of Goro, and that one, strange as it may seem, was Tarzan of the Apes.

THE END

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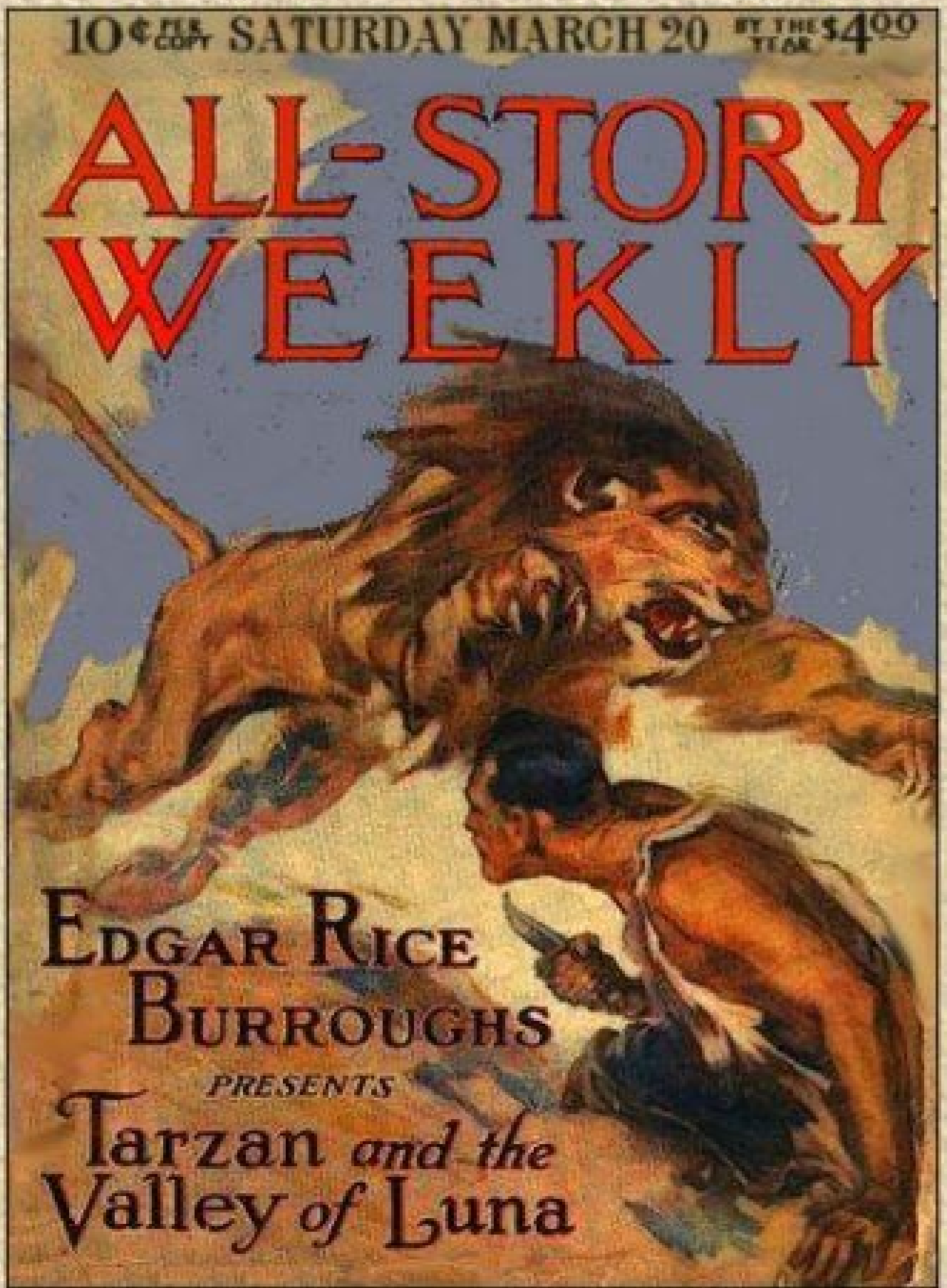
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1. MURDER AND PILLAGE

Hauptmann Fritz Schneider trudged wearily through the somber aisles of the dark forest. Sweat rolled down his bullet head and stood upon his heavy jowls and bull neck. His lieutenant marched beside him while Underlieutenant von Goss brought up the rear, following with a handful of askaris the tired and all but exhausted porters whom the black soldiers, following the example of their white officer, encouraged with the sharp points of bayonets and the metal- shod butts of rifles.

There were no porters within reach of Hauptmann Schneider so he vented his Prussian spleen upon the askaris nearest

at hand, yet with greater circumspection since these men bore loaded rifles—and the three white men were alone with them in the heart of Africa.

Ahead of the Hauptmann marched half his company, behind him the other half—thus were the dangers of the savage jungle minimized for the German captain. At the forefront of the column staggered two naked savages fastened to each other by a neck chain. These were the native guides impressed into the service of Kultur and upon their poor, bruised bodies Kultur's brand was revealed in divers cruel wounds and bruises.

Thus even in darkest Africa was the light of German civilization commencing

to reflect itself upon the undeserving natives just as at the same period, the fall of 1914, it was shedding its glorious effulgence upon benighted Belgium.

It is true that the guides had led the party astray; but this is the way of most African guides. Nor did it matter that ignorance rather than evil intent had been the cause of their failure. It was enough for Hauptmann Fritz Schneider to know that he was lost in the African wilderness and that he had at hand human beings less powerful than he who could be made to suffer by torture. That he did not kill them outright was partially due to a faint hope that they might eventually prove the means of extricating him from his difficulties and

partially that so long as they lived they might still be made to suffer.

The poor creatures, hoping that chance might lead them at last upon the right trail, insisted that they knew the way and so led on through a dismal forest along a winding game trail trodden deep by the feet of countless generations of the savage denizens of the jungle.

Here Tantor, the elephant, took his long way from dust wallow to water. Here Buto, the rhinoceros, blundered blindly in his solitary majesty, while by night the great cats paced silently upon their padded feet beneath the dense canopy of overreaching trees toward the broad plain beyond, where they found

their best hunting.

It was at the edge of this plain which came suddenly and unexpectedly before the eyes of the guides that their sad hearts beat with renewed hope. Here the Hauptmann drew a deep sigh of relief, for after days of hopeless wandering through almost impenetrable jungle the broad vista of waving grasses dotted here and there with open park like woods and in the far distance the winding line of green shrubbery that denoted a river appeared to the European a veritable heaven.

The Hun smiled in his relief, passed a cheery word with his lieutenant, and then scanned the broad plain with his field glasses. Back and forth they swept

across the rolling land until at last they came to rest upon a point near the center of the landscape and close to the green-fringed contours of the river.

"We are in luck," said Schneider to his companions. "Do you see it?"

The lieutenant, who was also gazing through his own glasses, finally brought them to rest upon the same spot that had held the attention of his superior.

"Yes," he said, "an English farm. It must be Greystoke's, for there is none other in this part of British East Africa. God is with us, Herr Captain."

"We have come upon the English Schweinehund long before he can have learned that his country is at war with ours," replied Schneider. "Let him be the

first to feel the iron hand of Germany."

"Let us hope that he is at home," said the lieutenant, "that we may take him with us when we report to Kraut at Nairobi. It will go well indeed with Herr Hauptmann Fritz Schneider if he brings in the famous Tarzan of the Apes as a prisoner of war."

Schneider smiled and puffed out his chest. "You are right, my friend," he said, "it will go well with both of us; but I shall have to travel far to catch General Kraut before he reaches Mombasa. These English pigs with their contemptible army will make good time to the Indian Ocean."

It was in a better frame of mind that the small force set out across the open

country toward the trim and well-kept farm buildings of John Clayton, Lord Greystoke; but disappointment was to be their lot since neither Tarzan of the Apes nor his son was at home.

Lady Jane, ignorant of the fact that a state of war existed between Great Britain and Germany, welcomed the officers most hospitably and gave orders through her trusted Waziri to prepare a feast for the black soldiers of the enemy.

Far to the east, Tarzan of the Apes was traveling rapidly from Nairobi toward the farm. At Nairobi he had received news of the World War that had already started, and, anticipating an immediate invasion of British East Africa by the Germans, was hurrying

homeward to fetch his wife to a place of greater security. With him were a score of his ebon warriors, but far too slow for the ape-man was the progress of these trained and hardened woodsmen.

When necessity demanded, Tarzan of the Apes sloughed the thin veneer of his civilization and with it the hampering apparel that was its badge. In a moment the polished English gentleman reverted to the naked ape man.

His mate was in danger. For the time, that single thought dominated. He did not think of her as Lady Jane Greystoke, but rather as the she he had won by the might of his steel thews, and that he must hold and protect by virtue of the same offensive armament.

It was no member of the House of Lords who swung swiftly and grimly through the tangled forest or trod with untiring muscles the wide stretches of open plain—it was a great he ape filled with a single purpose that excluded all thoughts of fatigue or danger.

Little Manu, the monkey, scolding and chattering in the upper terraces of the forest, saw him pass. Long had it been since he had thus beheld the great Tarmangani naked and alone hurtling through the jungle. Bearded and gray was Manu, the monkey, and to his dim old eyes came the fire of recollection of those days when Tarzan of the Apes had ruled supreme, Lord of the Jungle, over all the myriad life that trod the matted

vegetation between the boles of the great trees, or flew or swung or climbed in the leafy fastness upward to the very apex of the loftiest terraces.

And Numa, the lion, lying up for the day close beside last night's successful kill, blinked his yellow-green eyes and twitched his tawny tail as he caught the scent spoor of his ancient enemy.

Nor was Tarzan senseless to the presence of Numa or Manu or any of the many jungle beasts he passed in his rapid flight towards the west. No particle had his shallow probing of English society dulled his marvelous sense faculties. His nose had picked out the presence of Numa, the lion, even before the majestic king of beasts was

aware of his passing.

He had heard noisy little Manu, and even the soft rustling of the parting shrubbery where Sheeta passed before either of these alert animals sensed his presence.

But however keen the senses of the ape-man, however swift his progress through the wild country of his adoption, however mighty the muscles that bore him, he was still mortal. Time and space placed their inexorable limits upon him; nor was there another who realized this truth more keenly than Tarzan. He chafed and fretted that he could not travel with the swiftness of thought and that the long tedious miles stretching far ahead of him must require hours and hours of tireless

effort upon his part before he would swing at last from the final bough of the fringing forest into the open plain and in sight of his goal.

Days it took, even though he lay up at night for but a few hours and left to chance the finding of meat directly on his trail. If Wappi, the antelope, or Horta, the boar, chanced in his way when he was hungry, he ate, pausing but long enough to make the kill and cut himself a steak.

Then at last the long journey drew to its close and he was passing through the last stretch of heavy forest that bounded his estate upon the east, and then this was traversed and he stood upon the plain's edge looking out across his broad

lands towards his home.

At the first glance his eyes narrowed and his muscles tensed. Even at that distance he could see that something was amiss. A thin spiral of smoke arose at the right of the bungalow where the barns had stood, but there were no barns there now, and from the bungalow chimney from which smoke should have arisen, there arose nothing.

Once again Tarzan of the Apes was speeding onward, this time even more swiftly than before, for he was goaded now by a nameless fear, more product of intuition than of reason. Even as the beasts, Tarzan of the Apes seemed to possess a sixth sense. Long before he reached the bungalow, he had almost

pictured the scene that finally broke upon his view.

Silent and deserted was the vine-covered cottage. Smoldering embers marked the site of his great barns. Gone were the thatched huts of his sturdy retainers, empty the fields, the pastures, and corrals. Here and there vultures rose and circled above the carcasses of men and beasts.

It was with a feeling as nearly akin to terror as he ever had experienced that the ape-man finally forced himself to enter his home. The first sight that met his eyes set the red haze of hate and bloodlust across his vision, for there, crucified against the wall of the living-room, was Wasimbu, giant son of the

faithful Muviro and for over a year the personal bodyguard of Lady Jane.

The overturned and shattered furniture of the room, the brown pools of dried blood upon the floor, and prints of bloody hands on walls and woodwork evidenced something of the frightfulness of the battle that had been waged within the narrow confines of the apartment. Across the baby grand piano lay the corpse of another black warrior, while before the door of Lady Jane's boudoir were the dead bodies of three more of the faithful Greystoke servants.

The door of this room was closed. With drooping shoulders and dull eyes Tarzan stood gazing dumbly at the insensate panel which hid from him what

horrid secret he dared not even guess.

Slowly, with leaden feet, he moved toward the door. Gropingly his hand reached for the knob. Thus he stood for another long minute, and then with a sudden gesture he straightened his giant frame, threw back his mighty shoulders and, with fearless head held high, swung back the door and stepped across the threshold into the room which held for him the dearest memories and associations of his life. No change of expression crossed his grim and stern-set features as he strode across the room and stood beside the little couch and the inanimate form which lay face downward upon it; the still, silent thing that had pulsed with life and youth and

love.

No tear dimmed the eye of the ape-man, but the God who made him alone could know the thoughts that passed through that still half- savage brain. For a long time he stood there just looking down upon the dead body, charred beyond recognition, and then he stooped and lifted it in his arms. As he turned the body over and saw how horribly death had been meted he plumbed, in that instant, the uttermost depths of grief and horror and hatred.

Nor did he require the evidence of the broken German rifle in the outer room, or the torn and blood-stained service cap upon the floor, to tell him who had been the perpetrators of this horrid and

useless crime.

For a moment he had hoped against hope that the blackened corpse was not that of his mate, but when his eyes discovered and recognized the rings upon her fingers the last faint ray of hope forsook him.

In silence, in love, and in reverence he buried, in the little rose garden that had been Jane Clayton's pride and love, the poor, charred form and beside it the great black warriors who had given their lives so futilely in their mistress' protection.

At one side of the house Tarzan found other newly made graves and in these he sought final evidence of the identity of the real perpetrators of the atrocities that

had been committed there in his absence.

Here he disinterred the bodies of a dozen German askaris and found upon their uniforms the insignia of the company and regiment to which they had belonged. This was enough for the ape-man. White officers had commanded these men, nor would it be a difficult task to discover who they were.

Returning to the rose garden, he stood among the Hun trampled blooms and bushes above the grave of his dead-with bowed head he stood there in a last mute farewell. As the sun sank slowly behind the towering forests of the west, he turned slowly away upon the still-distinct trail of Hauptmann Fritz Schneider and his blood- stained

company.

His was the suffering of the dumb brute—mute; but though voiceless no less poignant. At first his vast sorrow numbed his other faculties of thought—his brain was overwhelmed by the calamity to such an extent that it reacted to but a single objective suggestion: She is dead! She is dead! She is dead! Again and again this phrase beat monotonously upon his brain—a dull, throbbing pain, yet mechanically his feet followed the trail of her slayer while, subconsciously, his every sense was upon the alert for the ever-present perils of the jungle.

Gradually the labor of his great grief brought forth another emotion so real, so tangible, that it seemed a companion

walking at his side. It was Hate—and it brought to him a measure of solace and of comfort, for it was a sublime hate that ennobled him as it has ennobled countless thousands since-hatred for Germany and Germans. It centered about the slayer of his mate, of course; but it included everything German, animate or inanimate. As the thought took firm hold upon him he paused and raising his face to Goro, the moon, cursed with upraised hand the authors of the hideous crime that had been perpetrated in that once peaceful bungalow behind him; and he cursed their progenitors, their progeny, and all their kind the while he took silent oath to war upon them relentlessly until death overtook him.

There followed almost immediately a feeling of content, for, where before his future at best seemed but a void, now it was filled with possibilities the contemplation of which brought him, if not happiness, at least a surcease of absolute grief, for before him lay a great work that would occupy his time.

Stripped not only of all the outward symbols of civilization, Tarzan had also reverted morally and mentally to the status of the savage beast he had been reared. Never had his civilization been more than a veneer put on for the sake of her he loved because he thought it made her happier to see him thus. In reality he had always held the outward evidences of so-called culture in deep contempt.

Civilization meant to Tarzan of the Apes a curtailment of freedom in all its aspects—freedom of action, freedom of thought, freedom of love, freedom of hate. Clothes he abhorred - uncomfortable, hideous, confining things that reminded him somehow of bonds securing him to the life he had seen the poor creatures of London and Paris living. Clothes were the emblems of that hypocrisy for which civilization stood—a pretense that the wearers were ashamed of what the clothes covered, of the human form made in the semblance of God. Tarzan knew how silly and pathetic the lower orders of animals appeared in the clothing of civilization, for he had seen several poor creatures

thus appareled in various traveling shows in Europe, and he knew, too, how silly and pathetic man appears in them since the only men he had seen in the first twenty years of his life had been, like himself, naked savages. The ape-man had a keen admiration for a well-muscled, well-proportioned body, whether lion, or antelope, or man, and it had ever been beyond him to understand how clothes could be considered more beautiful than a clear, firm, healthy skin, or coat and trousers more graceful than the gentle curves of rounded muscles playing beneath a flexible hide.

In civilization Tarzan had found greed and selfishness and cruelty far beyond that which he had known in his familiar,

savage jungle, and though civilization had given him his mate and several friends whom he loved and admired, he never had come to accept it as you and I who have known little or nothing else; so it was with a sense of relief that he now definitely abandoned it and all that it stood for, and went forth into the jungle once again stripped to his loin cloth and weapons.

The hunting knife of his father hung at his left hip, his bow and his quiver of arrows were slung across his shoulders, while around his chest over one shoulder and beneath the opposite arm was coiled the long grass rope without which Tarzan would have felt quite as naked as would you should you be

suddenly thrust upon a busy highway clad only in a union suit. A heavy war spear which he sometimes carried in one hand and again slung by a thong about his neck so that it hung down his back completed his armament and his apparel. The diamond-studded locket with the pictures of his mother and father that he had worn always until he had given it as a token of his highest devotion to Jane Clayton before their marriage was missing. She always had worn it since, but it had not been upon her body when he found her slain in her boudoir, so that now his quest for vengeance included also a quest for the stolen trinket.

Toward midnight Tarzan commenced to feel the physical strain of his long

hours of travel and to realize that even muscles such as his had their limitations. His pursuit of the murderers had not been characterized by excessive speed; but rather more in keeping with his mental attitude, which was marked by a dogged determination to require from the Germans more than an eye for an eye and more than a tooth for a tooth, the element of time entering but slightly into his calculations.

Inwardly as well as outwardly Tarzan had reverted to beast and in the lives of beasts, time, as a measurable aspect of duration, has no meaning. The beast is actively interested only in NOW, and as it is always NOW and always shall be, there is an eternity of time for the

accomplishment of objects. The ape-man, naturally, had a slightly more comprehensive realization of the limitations of time; but, like the beasts, he moved with majestic deliberation when no emergency prompted him to swift action.

Having dedicated his life to vengeance, vengeance became his natural state and, therefore, no emergency, so he took his time in pursuit. That he had not rested earlier was due to the fact that he had felt no fatigue, his mind being occupied by thoughts of sorrow and revenge; but now he realized that he was tired, and so he sought a jungle giant that had harbored him upon more than a single other jungle

night.

Dark clouds moving swiftly across the heavens now and again eclipsed the bright face of Goro, the moon, and forewarned the ape- man of impending storm. In the depth of the jungle the cloud shadows produced a thick blackness that might almost be felt—a blackness that to you and me might have proven terrifying with its accompaniment of rustling leaves and cracking twigs, and its even more suggestive intervals of utter silence in which the crudest of imaginations might have conjured crouching beasts of prey tensed for the fatal charge; but through it Tarzan passed unconcerned, yet always alert. Now he swung lightly to the lower

terraces of the overarching trees when some subtle sense warned him that Numa lay upon a kill directly in his path, or again he sprang lightly to one side as Buto, the rhinoceros, lumbered toward him along the narrow, deep-worn trail, for the ape-man, ready to fight upon necessity's slightest pretext, avoided unnecessary quarrels.

When he swung himself at last into the tree he sought, the moon was obscured by a heavy cloud, and the tree tops were waving wildly in a steadily increasing wind whose soughing drowned the lesser noises of the jungle. Upward went Tarzan toward a sturdy crotch across which he long since had laid and secured a little platform of branches. It

was very dark now, darker even than it had been before, for almost the entire sky was overcast by thick, black clouds.

Presently the man-beast paused, his sensitive nostrils dilating as he sniffed the air about him. Then, with the swiftness and agility of a cat, he leaped far outward upon a swaying branch, sprang upward through the darkness, caught another, swung himself upon it and then to one still higher. What could have so suddenly transformed his matter-of-fact ascent of the giant bole to the swift and wary action of his detour among the branches? You or I could have seen nothing- not even the little platform that an instant before had been just above him and which now was

immediately below—but as he swung above it we should have heard an ominous growl; and then as the moon was momentarily uncovered, we should have seen both the platform, dimly, and a dark mass that lay stretched upon it—a dark mass that presently, as our eyes became accustomed to the lesser darkness, would take the form of Sheeta, the panther.

In answer to the cat's growl, a low and equally ferocious growl rumbled upward from the ape-man's deep chest—a growl of warning that told the panther he was trespassing upon the other's lair; but Sheeta was in no mood to be dispossessed. With upturned, snarling face he glared at the brown-skinned

Tarmangani above him. Very slowly the ape-man moved inward along the branch until he was directly above the panther. In the man's hand was the hunting knife of his long-dead father—the weapon that had first given him his real ascendancy over the beasts of the jungle; but he hoped not to be forced to use it, knowing as he did that more jungle battles were settled by hideous growling than by actual combat, the law of bluff holding quite as good in the jungle as elsewhere—only in matters of love and food did the great beasts ordinarily close with fangs and talons.

Tarzan braced himself against the bole of the tree and leaned closer toward Sheeta.

"Stealer of balus!" he cried. The panther rose to a sitting position, his bared fangs but a few feet from the ape-man's taunting face. Tarzan growled hideously and struck at the cat's face with his knife. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he roared. "This is Tarzan's lair. Go, or I will kill you."

Though he spoke in the language of the great apes of the jungle, it is doubtful that Sheeta understood the words, though he knew well enough that the hairless ape wished to frighten him from his well-chosen station past which edible creatures might be expected to wander sometime during the watches of the night.

Like lightning the cat reared and

struck a vicious blow at his tormentor with great, bared talons that might well have torn away the ape-man's face had the blow landed; but it did not land—Tarzan was even quicker than Sheeta. As the panther came to all fours again upon the little platform, Tarzan un-slung his heavy spear and prodded at the snarling face, and as Sheeta warded off the blows, the two continued their horrid duet of blood-curdling roars and growls.

Goaded to frenzy the cat presently determined to come up after this disturber of his peace; but when he essayed to leap to the branch that held Tarzan he found the sharp spear point always in his face, and each time as he dropped back he was prodded viciously

in some tender part; but at length, rage having conquered his better judgment, he leaped up the rough bole to the very branch upon which Tarzan stood. Now the two faced each other upon even footing and Sheeta saw a quick revenge and a supper all in one. The hairless ape- thing with the tiny fangs and the puny talons would be helpless before him.

The heavy limb bent beneath the weight of the two beasts as Sheeta crept cautiously out upon it and Tarzan backed slowly away, growling. The wind had risen to the proportions of a gale so that even the greatest giants of the forest swayed, groaning, to its force and the branch upon which the two faced each

other rose and fell like the deck of a storm-tossed ship. Goro was now entirely obscured, but vivid flashes of lightning lit up the jungle at brief intervals, revealing the grim tableau of primitive passion upon the swaying limb.

Tarzan backed away, drawing Sheeta farther from the stem of the tree and out upon the tapering branch, where his footing became ever more precarious. The cat, infuriated by the pain of spear wounds, was overstepping the bounds of caution. Already he had reached a point where he could do little more than maintain a secure footing, and it was this moment that Tarzan chose to charge. With a roar that mingled with the

booming thunder from above he leaped toward the panther, who could only claw futilely with one huge paw while he clung to the branch with the other; but the ape-man did not come within that parabola of destruction. Instead he leaped above menacing claws and snapping fangs, turning in mid-air and alighting upon Sheeta's back, and at the instant of impact his knife struck deep into the tawny side. Then Sheeta, impelled by pain and hate and rage and the first law of Nature, went mad. Screaming and clawing he attempted to turn upon the ape-thing clinging to his back. For an instant he toppled upon the now wildly gyrating limb, clutched frantically to save himself, and then

plunged downward into the darkness with Tarzan still clinging to him. Crashing through splintering branches the two fell. Not for an instant did the ape-man consider relinquishing his death-hold upon his adversary. He had entered the lists in mortal combat and true to the primitive instincts of the wild—the unwritten law of the jungle—one or both must die before the battle ended.

Sheeta, catlike, alighted upon four out-sprawled feet, the weight of the ape-man crushing him to earth, the long knife again imbedded in his side. Once the panther struggled to rise; but only to sink to earth again. Tarzan felt the giant muscles relax beneath him. Sheeta was dead. Rising, the ape-man placed a foot

upon the body of his vanquished foe, raised his face toward the thundering heavens, and as the lightning flashed and the torrential rain broke upon him, screamed forth the wild victory cry of the bull ape.

Having accomplished his aim and driven the enemy from his lair, Tarzan gathered an armful of large fronds and climbed to his dripping couch. Laying a few of the fronds upon the poles he lay down and covered himself against the rain with the others, and despite the wailing of the wind and the crashing of the thunder, immediately fell asleep.

2. THE LION'S CAVE

The rain lasted for twenty-four hours and much of the time it fell in torrents so that when it ceased, the trail he had been following was entirely obliterated. Cold and uncomfortable—it was a savage Tarzan who threaded the mazes of the soggy jungle. Manu, the monkey, shivering and chattering in the dank trees, scolded and fled at his approach. Even the panthers and the lions let the growling Tarmangani pass unmolested.

When the sun shone again upon the second day and a wide, open plain let the full heat of Kudu flood the chilled, brown body, Tarzan's spirits rose; but it was still a sullen, surly brute that moved steadily onward into the south where he

hoped again to pick up the trail of the Germans. He was now in German East Africa and it was his intention to skirt the mountains west of Kilimanjaro, whose rugged peaks he was quite willing to give a wide berth, and then swing eastward along the south side of the range to the railway that led to Tanga, for his experience among men suggested that it was toward this railroad that German troops would be likely to converge.

Two days later, from the southern slopes of Kilimanjaro, he heard the boom of cannon far away to the east. The afternoon had been dull and cloudy and now as he was passing through a narrow gorge a few great drops of rain began to

splatter upon his naked shoulders. Tarzan shook his head and growled his disapproval; then he cast his eyes about for shelter, for he had had quite enough of the cold and drenching. He wanted to hasten on in the direction of the booming noise, for he knew that there would be Germans fighting against the English. For an instant his bosom swelled with pride at the thought that he was English and then he shook his head again viciously. "No!" he muttered, "Tarzan of the Apes is not English, for the English are men and Tarzan is Tarmangani;" but he could not hide even from his sorrow or from his sullen hatred of mankind in general that his heart warmed at the thought it was Englishmen who fought

the Germans. His regret was that the English were human and not great white apes as he again considered himself.

"Tomorrow," he thought, "I will travel that way and find the Germans," and then he set himself to the immediate task of discovering some shelter from the storm. Presently he espied the low and narrow entrance to what appeared to be a cave at the base of the cliffs which formed the northern side of the gorge. With drawn knife he approached the spot warily, for he knew that if it were a cave it was doubtless the lair of some other beast. Before the entrance lay many large fragments of rock of different sizes, similar to others scattered along the entire base of the cliff, and it was in

Tarzan's mind that if he found the cave unoccupied he would barricade the door and insure himself a quiet and peaceful night's repose within the sheltered interior. Let the storm rage without-Tarzan would remain within until it ceased, comfortable and dry. A tiny rivulet of cold water trickled outward from the opening.

Close to the cave Tarzan kneeled and sniffed the ground. A low growl escaped him and his upper lip curved to expose his fighting fangs. "Numa!" he muttered; but he did not stop. Numa might not be at home—he would investigate. The entrance was so low that the ape-man was compelled to drop to all fours before he could poke his head within the

aperture; but first he looked, listened, and sniffed in each direction at his rear—he would not be taken by surprise from that quarter.

His first glance within the cave revealed a narrow tunnel with daylight at its farther end. The interior of the tunnel was not so dark but that the ape-man could readily see that it was untenanted at present. Advancing cautiously he crawled toward the opposite end imbued with a full realization of what it would mean if Numa should suddenly enter the tunnel in front of him; but Numa did not appear and the ape-man emerged at length into the open and stood erect, finding himself in a rocky cleft whose precipitous walls

rose almost sheer on every hand, the tunnel from the gorge passing through the cliff and forming a passageway from the outer world into a large pocket or gulch entirely enclosed by steep walls of rock. Except for the small passageway from the gorge, there was no other entrance to the gulch which was some hundred feet in length and about fifty in width and appeared to have been worn from the rocky cliff by the falling of water during long ages. A tiny stream from Kilimanjaro's eternal snow cap still trickled over the edge of the rocky wall at the upper end of the gulch, forming a little pool at the bottom of the cliff from which a small rivulet wound downward to the tunnel through which it passed to

the gorge beyond. A single great tree flourished near the center of the gulch, while tufts of wiry grass were scattered here and there among the rocks of the gravelly floor.

The bones of many large animals lay about and among them were several human skulls. Tarzan raised his eyebrows. "A man-eater," he murmured, "and from appearances he has held sway here for a long time. Tonight Tarzan will take the lair of the man-eater and Numa may roar and grumble upon the outside."

The ape-man had advanced well into the gulch as he investigated his surroundings and now as he stood near the tree, satisfied that the tunnel would prove a dry and quiet retreat for the

night, he turned to retrace his way to the outer end of the entrance that he might block it with boulders against Numa's return, but even with the thought there came something to his sensitive ears that froze him into statuesque immobility with eyes glued upon the tunnel's mouth. A moment later the head of a huge lion framed in a great black mane appeared in the opening. The yellow-green eyes glared, round and unblinking, straight at the trespassing Tarmangani, a low growl rumbled from the deep chest, and lips curled back to expose the mighty fangs.

"Brother of Dango!" shouted Tarzan, angered that Numa's return should have been so timed as to frustrate his plans for a comfortable night's repose. "I am

Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle. Tonight I lair here— go!"

But Numa did not go. Instead he rumbled forth a menacing roar and took a few steps in Tarzan's direction. The ape-man picked up a rock and hurled it at the snarling face. One can never be sure of a lion. This one might turn tail and run at the first intimation of attack—Tarzan had bluffed many in his time—but not now. The missile struck Numa full upon the snout—a tender part of a cat's anatomy—and instead of causing him to flee it transformed him into an infuriated engine of wrath and destruction.

Up went his tail, stiff and erect, and with a series of frightful roars he bore

down upon the Tarmangani at the speed of an express train. Not an instant too soon did Tarzan reach the tree and swing himself into its branches and there he squatted, hurling insults at the king of beasts while Numa paced a circle beneath him, growling and roaring in rage.

It was raining now in earnest adding to the ape-man's discomfort and disappointment. He was very angry; but as only direct necessity had ever led him to close in mortal combat with a lion, knowing as he did that he had only luck and agility to pit against the frightful odds of muscle, weight, fangs, and talons, he did not now even consider descending and engaging in so unequal

and useless a duel for the mere reward of a little added creature comfort. And so he sat perched in the tree while the rain fell steadily and the lion padded round and round beneath, casting a baleful eye upward after every few steps.

Tarzan scanned the precipitous walls for an avenue of escape. They would have baffled an ordinary man; but the ape-man, accustomed to climbing, saw several places where he might gain a foothold, precarious possibly; but enough to give him reasonable assurance of escape if Numa would but betake himself to the far end of the gulch for a moment. Numa, however, notwithstanding the rain, gave no

evidence of quitting his post so that at last Tarzan really began to consider seriously if it might not be as well to take the chance of a battle with him rather than remain longer cold and wet and humiliated in the tree.

But even as he turned the matter over in his mind Numa turned suddenly and walked majestically toward the tunnel without even a backward glance. The instant that he disappeared, Tarzan dropped lightly to the ground upon the far side of the tree and was away at top speed for the cliff. The lion had no sooner entered the tunnel than he backed immediately out again and, pivoting like a flash, was off across the gulch in full charge after the flying ape- man; but

Tarzan's lead was too great—if he could find finger or foothold upon the sheer wall he would be safe; but should he slip from the wet rocks his doom was already sealed as he would fall directly into Numa's clutches where even the Great Tarmangani would be helpless.

With the agility of a cat Tarzan ran up the cliff for thirty feet before he paused, and there finding a secure foothold, he stopped and looked down upon Numa who was leaping upward in a wild and futile attempt to scale the rocky wall to his prey. Fifteen or twenty feet from the ground the lion would scramble only to fall backward again defeated. Tarzan eyed him for a moment and then commenced a slow and cautious ascent

toward the summit. Several times he had difficulty in finding holds but at last he drew himself over the edge, rose, picked up a bit of loose rock, hurled it at Numa and strode away.

Finding an easy descent to the gorge, he was about to pursue his journey in the direction of the still-booming guns when a sudden thought caused him to halt and a half-smile to play about his lips. Turning, he trotted quickly back to the outer opening of Numa's tunnel. Close beside it he listened for a moment and then rapidly began to gather large rocks and pile them within the entrance. He had almost closed the aperture when the lion appeared upon the inside—a very ferocious and angry lion that pawed and

clawed at the rocks and uttered mighty roars that caused the earth to tremble; but roars did not frighten Tarzan of the Apes. At Kala's shaggy breast he had closed his infant eyes in sleep upon countless nights in years gone by to the savage chorus of similar roars. Scarcely a day or night of his jungle life— and practically all his life had been spent in the jungle—had he not heard the roaring of hungry lions, or angry lions, or love-sick lions. Such sounds affected Tarzan as the tooting of an automobile horn may affect you —if you are in front of the automobile it warns you out of the way, if you are not in front of it you scarcely notice it. Figuratively Tarzan was not in front of the automobile - Numa could not

reach him and Tarzan knew it, so he continued deliberately to choke the entrance until there was no possibility of Numa's getting out again. When he was quite through he made a grimace at the hidden lion beyond the barrier and resumed his way toward the east. "A man- eater who will eat no more men," he soliloquized.

That night Tarzan lay up under an overhanging shelf of rock. The next morning he resumed his journey, stopping only long enough to make a kill and satisfy his hunger. The other beasts of the wild eat and lie up; but Tarzan never let his belly interfere with his plans. In this lay one of the greatest differences between the ape-man and his

fellows of the jungles and forests. The firing ahead rose and fell during the day. He had noticed that it was highest at dawn and immediately after dusk and that during the night it almost ceased. In the middle of the afternoon of the second day he came upon troops moving up toward the front. They appeared to be raiding parties, for they drove goats and cows along with them and there were native porters laden with grain and other foodstuffs. He saw that these natives were all secured by neck chains and he also saw that the troops were composed of native soldiers in German uniforms. The officers were white men. No one saw Tarzan, yet he was here and there about and among them for two hours. He

inspected the insignia upon their uniforms and saw that they were not the same as that which he had taken from one of the dead soldiers at the bungalow and then he passed on ahead of them, unseen in the dense bush. He had come upon Germans and had not killed them; but it was because the killing of Germans at large was not yet the prime motive of his existence—now it was to discover the individual who slew his mate.

After he had accounted for him he would take up the little matter of slaying ALL Germans who crossed his path, and he meant that many should cross it, for he would hunt them precisely as professional hunters hunt the man-eaters.

As he neared the front lines the troops became more numerous. There were motor trucks and ox teams and all the impedimenta of a small army and always there were wounded men walking or being carried toward the rear. He had crossed the railroad some distance back and judged that the wounded were being taken to it for transportation to a base hospital and possibly as far away as Tanga on the coast.

It was dusk when he reached a large camp hidden in the foothills of the Pare Mountains. As he was approaching from the rear he found it but lightly guarded and what sentinels there were, were not upon the alert, and so it was an easy thing for him to enter after darkness had

fallen and prowl about listening at the backs of tents, searching for some clew to the slayer of his mate.

As he paused at the side of a tent before which sat a number of native soldiers he caught a few words spoken in native dialect that riveted his attention instantly: "The Waziri fought like devils; but we are greater fighters and we killed them all. When we were through the captain came and killed the woman. He stayed outside and yelled in a very loud voice until all the men were killed. Underlieutenant von Goss is braver—he came in and stood beside the door shouting at us, also in a very loud voice, and bade us nail one of the Waziri who was wounded to the wall, and then he

laughed loudly because the man suffered. We all laughed. It was very funny."

Like a beast of prey, grim and terrible, Tarzan crouched in the shadows beside the tent. What thoughts passed through that savage mind? Who may say? No outward sign of passion was revealed by the expression of the handsome face; the cold, gray eyes denoted only intense watchfulness. Presently the soldier Tarzan had heard first rose and with a parting word turned away. He passed within ten feet of the ape-man and continued on toward the rear of the camp. Tarzan followed and in the shadows of a clump of bushes overtook his quarry. There was no sound as the man beast sprang upon the back of

his prey and bore it to the ground for steel fingers closed simultaneously upon the soldier's throat, effectually stifling any outcry. By the neck Tarzan dragged his victim well into the concealment of the bushes.

"Make no sound," he cautioned in the man's own tribal dialect as he released his hold upon the other's throat.

The fellow gasped for breath, rolling frightened eyes upward to see what manner of creature it might be in whose power he was. In the darkness he saw only a naked brown body bending above him; but he still remembered the terrific strength of the mighty muscles that had closed upon his wind and dragged him into the bushes as though he had been but

a little child. If any thought of resistance had crossed his mind he must have discarded it at once, as he made no move to escape.

"What is the name of the officer who killed the woman at the bungalow where you fought with the Waziri?" asked Tarzan.

"Hauptmann Schneider," replied the black when he could again command his voice.

"Where is he?" demanded the ape-man.

"He is here. It may be that he is at headquarters. Many of the officers go there in the evening to receive orders."

"Lead me there," commanded Tarzan, "and if I am discovered I will kill you

immediately. Get up!"

The black rose and led the way by a roundabout route back through the camp. Several times they were forced to hide while soldiers passed; but at last they reached a great pile of baled hay from about the corner of which the black pointed out a two-story building in the distance.

"Headquarters," he said. "You can go no farther unseen. There are many soldiers about."

Tarzan realized that he could not proceed farther in company with the black. He turned and looked at the fellow for a moment as though pondering what disposition to make of him.

"You helped to crucify Wasimbu, the

Waziri," he accused in a low yet none the less terrible tone.

The black trembled, his knees giving beneath him. "He ordered us to do it," he plead.

"Who ordered it done?" demanded Tarzan.

"Underlieutenant von Goss," replied the soldier. "He, too, is here."

"I shall find him," returned Tarzan, grimly. "You helped to crucify Wasimbu, the Waziri, and, while he suffered, you laughed."

The fellow reeled. It was as though in the accusation he read also his death sentence. With no other word Tarzan seized the man again by the neck. As before there was no outcry. The giant

muscles tensed. The arms swung quickly upward and with them the body of the black soldier who had helped to crucify Wasimbu, the Waziri, described a circle in the air—once, twice, three times, and then it was flung aside and the ape-man turned in the direction of General Kraut's headquarters.

A single sentinel in the rear of the building barred the way. Tarzan crawled, belly to the ground, toward him, taking advantage of cover as only the jungle-bred beast of prey can do. When the sentinel's eyes were toward him, Tarzan hugged the ground, motionless as stone; when they were turned away, he moved swiftly forward. Presently he was within charging

distance. He waited until the man had turned his back once more and then he rose and sped noiselessly down upon him. Again there was no sound as he carried the dead body with him toward the building.

The lower floor was lighted, the upper dark. Through the windows Tarzan saw a large front room and a smaller room in rear of it. In the former were many officers. Some moved about talking to one another, others sat at field tables writing. The windows were open and Tarzan could hear much of the conversation; but nothing that interested him. It was mostly about the German successes in Africa and conjectures as to when the German army in Europe would

reach Paris. Some said the Kaiser was doubtlessly already there, and there was a great deal of damning Belgium.

In the smaller back room a large, red-faced man sat behind a table. Some other officers were also sitting a little in rear of him, while two stood at attention before the general, who was questioning them. As he talked, the general toyed with an oil lamp that stood upon the table before him. Presently there came a knock upon the door and an aide entered the room. He saluted and reported: "Fraulein Kircher has arrived, sir."

"Bid her enter," commanded the general, and then nodded to the two officers before him in sign of dismissal.

The Fraulein, entering, passed them at

the door. The officers in the little room rose and saluted, the Fraulein acknowledging the courtesy with a bow and a slight smile. She was a very pretty girl. Even the rough, soiled riding habit and the caked dust upon her face could not conceal the fact, and she was young. She could not have been over nineteen.

She advanced to the table behind which the general stood and, taking a folded paper from an inside pocket of her coat, handed it to him.

"Be seated, Fraulein," he said, and another officer brought her a chair. No one spoke while the general read the contents of the paper.

Tarzan appraised the various people in the room. He wondered if one might

not be Hauptmann Schneider, for two of them were captains. The girl he judged to be of the intelligence department—a spy. Her beauty held no appeal for him—without a glimmer of compunction he could have wrung that fair, young neck. She was German and that was enough; but he had other and more important work before him. He wanted Hauptmann Schneider.

Finally the general looked up from the paper.

"Good," he said to the girl, and then to one of his aides, "Send for Major Schneider."

Major Schneider! Tarzan felt the short hairs at the back of his neck rise. Already they had promoted the beast

who had murdered his mate— doubtless they had promoted him for that very crime.

The aide left the room and the others fell into a general conversation from which it became apparent to Tarzan that the German East African forces greatly outnumbered the British and that the latter were suffering heavily. The ape-man stood so concealed in a clump of bushes that he could watch the interior of the room without being seen from within, while he was at the same time hidden from the view of anyone who might chance to pass along the post of the sentinel he had slain. Momentarily he was expecting a patrol or a relief to appear and discover that the sentinel

was missing, when he knew an immediate and thorough search would be made.

Impatiently he awaited the coming of the man he sought and at last he was rewarded by the reappearance of the aide who had been dispatched to fetch him accompanied by an officer of medium size with fierce, upstanding mustaches. The newcomer strode to the table, halted and saluted, reporting. The general acknowledged the salute and turned toward the girl.

"Fraulein Kircher," he said, "allow me to present Major Schneider —"

Tarzan waited to hear no more. Placing a palm upon the sill of the window he vaulted into the room into the

midst of an astounded company of the Kaiser's officers. With a stride he was at the table and with a sweep of his hand sent the lamp crashing into the fat belly of the general who, in his mad effort to escape cremation, fell over backward, chair and all, upon the floor. Two of the aides sprang for the ape-man who picked up the first and flung him in the face of the other. The girl had leaped from her chair and stood flattened against the wall. The other officers were calling aloud for the guard and for help. Tarzan's purpose centered upon but a single individual and him he never lost sight of. Freed from attack for an instant he seized Major Schneider, threw him over his shoulder and was out of the

window so quickly that the astonished assemblage could scarce realize what had occurred.

A single glance showed him that the sentinel's post was still vacant and a moment later he and his burden were in the shadows of the hay dump. Major Schneider had made no outcry for the very excellent reason that his wind was shut off. Now Tarzan released his grasp enough to permit the man to breathe.

"If you make a sound you will be choked again," he said.

Cautiously and after infinite patience Tarzan passed the final outpost. Forcing his captive to walk before him he pushed on toward the west until, late into the night, he re-crossed the railway where

he felt reasonably safe from discovery. The German had cursed and grumbled and threatened and asked questions; but his only reply was another prod from Tarzan's sharp war spear. The ape-man herded him along as he would have driven a hog with the difference that he would have had more respect and therefore more consideration for a hog.

Until now Tarzan had given little thought to the details of revenge. Now he pondered what form the punishment should take. Of only one thing was he certain—it must end in death. Like all brave men and courageous beasts Tarzan had little natural inclination to torture—none, in fact; but this case was unique in his experience. An inherent sense of

justice called for an eye for an eye and his recent oath demanded even more. Yes, the creature must suffer even as he had caused Jane Clayton to suffer. Tarzan could not hope to make the man suffer as he had suffered, since physical pain may never approach the exquisiteness of mental torture.

All through the long night the ape-man goaded on the exhausted and now terrified Hun. The awful silence of his captor wrought upon the German's nerves. If he would only speak! Again and again Schneider tried to force or coax a word from him; but always the result was the same—continued silence and a vicious and painful prod from the spear point. Schneider was bleeding and

sore. He was so exhausted that he staggered at every step, and often he fell only to be prodded to his feet again by that terrifying and remorseless spear.

It was not until morning that Tarzan reached a decision and it came to him then like an inspiration from above. A slow smile touched his lips and he immediately sought a place to lie up and rest—he wished his prisoner to be fit now for what lay in store for him. Ahead was a stream which Tarzan had crossed the day before. He knew the ford for a drinking place and a likely spot to make an easy kill. Cautioning the German to utter silence with a gesture the two approached the stream quietly. Down the game trail Tarzan saw some deer about

to leave the water. He shoved Schneider into the brush at one side and, squatting next him, waited. The German watched the silent giant with puzzled, frightened eyes. In the new dawn he, for the first time, was able to obtain a good look at his captor, and, if he had been puzzled and frightened before, those sensations were nothing to what he experienced now.

Who and what could this almost naked, white savage be? He had heard him speak but once—when he had cautioned him to silence—and then in excellent German and the well-modulated tones of culture. He watched him now as the fascinated toad watches the snake that is about to devour it. He

saw the graceful limbs and symmetrical body motionless as a marble statue as the creature crouched in the concealment of the leafy foliage. Not a muscle, not a nerve moved. He saw the deer coming slowly along the trail, down wind and unsuspecting. He saw a buck pass—an old buck—and then a young and plump one came opposite the giant in ambush, and Schneider's eyes went wide and a scream of terror almost broke from his lips as he saw the agile beast at his side spring straight for the throat of the young buck and heard from those human lips the hunting roar of a wild beast. Down went the buck and Tarzan and his captive had meat. The ape-man ate his raw, but he permitted the German to

build a fire and cook his portion.

The two lay up until late in the afternoon and then took up the journey once again—a journey that was so frightful to Schneider because of his ignorance of its destination that he at times groveled at Tarzan's feet begging for an explanation and for mercy; but on and on in silence the ape-man went, prodding the failing Hun whenever the latter faltered.

It was noon of the third day before they reached their destination. After a steep climb and a short walk they halted at the edge of a precipitous cliff and Schneider looked down into a narrow gulch where a single tree grew beside a tiny rivulet and sparse grass broke from

a rock-strewn soil. Tarzan motioned him over the edge; but the German drew back in terror. The Ape-man seized him and pushed him roughly toward the brink. "Descend," he said. It was the second time he had spoken in three days and perhaps his very silence, ominous in itself, had done more to arouse terror in the breast of the Boche than even the spear point, ever ready as it always was.

Schneider looked fearfully over the edge; but was about to essay the attempt when Tarzan halted him. "I am Lord Greystoke," he said. "It was my wife you murdered in the Waziri country. You will understand now why I came for you. Descend."

The German fell upon his knees. "I

did not murder your wife," he cried. "Have mercy! I did not murder your wife. I do not know anything about —"

"Descend!" snapped Tarzan, raising the point of his spear. He knew that the man lied and was not surprised that he did. A man who would murder for no cause would lie for less. Schneider still hesitated and pled. The ape-man jabbed him with the spear and Schneider slid fearfully over the top and began the perilous descent. Tarzan accompanied and assisted him over the worst places until at last they were within a few feet of the bottom.

"Be quiet now," cautioned the ape-man. He pointed at the entrance to what appeared to be a cave at the far end of

the gulch. "There is a hungry lion in there. If you can reach that tree before he discovers you, you will have several days longer in which to enjoy life and then—when you are too weak to cling longer to the branches of the tree Numa, the man-eater, will feed again for the last time." He pushed Schneider from his foothold to the ground below. "Now run," he said.

The German trembling in terror started for the tree. He had almost reached it when a horrid roar broke from the mouth of the cave and almost simultaneously a gaunt, hunger mad lion leaped into the daylight of the gulch. Schneider had but a few yards to cover; but the lion flew over the ground to

circumvent him while Tarzan watched the race with a slight smile upon his lips.

Schneider won by a slender margin, and as Tarzan scaled the cliff to the summit, he heard behind him mingled with the roaring of the baffled cat, the gibbering of a human voice that was at the same time more bestial than the beast's.

Upon the brink of the cliff the ape-man turned and looked back into the gulch. High in the tree the German clung frantically to a branch across which his body lay. Beneath him was Numa—waiting.

The ape-man raised his face to Kudu, the sun, and from his mighty chest rose the savage victory cry of the bull ape.

3. IN THE GERMAN LINES

Tarzan was not yet fully revenged. There were many millions of Germans yet alive—enough to keep Tarzan pleasantly occupied the balance of his life, and yet not enough, should he kill them all, to recompense him for the great loss he had suffered—nor could the death of all those million Germans bring back his loved one.

While in the German camp in the Pare Mountains, which lie just east of the boundary line between German and British East Africa, Tarzan had overheard enough to suggest that the British were getting the worst of the fighting in Africa. At first he had given the matter but little thought, since, after

the death of his wife, the one strong tie that had held him to civilization, he had renounced all mankind, considering himself no longer man, but ape.

After accounting for Schneider as satisfactorily as lay within his power he circled Kilimanjaro and hunted in the foothills to the north of that mightiest of mountains as he had discovered that in the neighborhood of the armies there was no hunting at all. Some pleasure he derived through conjuring mental pictures from time to time of the German he had left in the branches of the lone tree at the bottom of the high-walled gulch in which was penned the starving lion. He could imagine the man's mental anguish as he became weakened from

hunger and maddened by thirst, knowing that sooner or later he must slip exhausted to the ground where waited the gaunt man-eater. Tarzan wondered if Schneider would have the courage to descend to the little rivulet for water should Numa leave the gulch and enter the cave, and then he pictured the mad race for the tree again when the lion charged out to seize his prey as he was certain to do, since the clumsy German could not descend to the rivulet without making at least some slight noise that would attract Numa's attention.

But even this pleasure palled, and more and more the ape-man found himself thinking of the English soldiers fighting against heavy odds and

especially of the fact that it was Germans who were beating them. The thought made him lower his head and growl and it worried him not a little—a bit, perhaps, because he was finding it difficult to forget that he was an Englishman when he wanted only to be an ape. And at last the time came when he could not longer endure the thought of Germans killing Englishmen while he hunted in safety a bare march away.

His decision made, he set out in the direction of the German camp, no well-defined plan formulated; but with the general idea that once near the field of operations he might find an opportunity to harass the German command as he so well knew how to do. His way took him

along the gorge close to the gulch in which he had left Schneider, and, yielding to a natural curiosity, he scaled the cliffs and made his way to the edge of the gulch. The tree was empty, nor was there sign of Numa, the lion. Picking up a rock he hurled it into the gulch, where it rolled to the very entrance to the cave. Instantly the lion appeared in the aperture; but such a different-looking lion from the great sleek brute that Tarzan had trapped there two weeks before. Now he was gaunt and emaciated, and when he walked he staggered.

"Where is the German?" shouted Tarzan. "Was he good eating, or only a bag of bones when he slipped and fell

from the tree?"

Numa growled. "You look hungry, Numa," continued the ape-man. "You must have been very hungry to eat all the grass from your lair and even the bark from the tree as far up as you can reach. Would you like another German?" and smiling he turned away.

A few minutes later he came suddenly upon Bara, the deer, asleep beneath a tree, and as Tarzan was hungry he made a quick kill, and squatting beside his prey proceeded to eat his fill. As he was gnawing the last morsel from a bone his quick ears caught the padding of stealthy feet behind him, and turning he confronted Dango, the hyena, sneaking upon him. With a growl the ape-man

picked up a fallen branch and hurled it at the skulking brute. "Go away, eater of carrion!" he cried; but Dango was hungry and being large and powerful he only snarled and circled slowly about as though watching for an opportunity to charge. Tarzan of the Apes knew Dango even better than Dango knew himself. He knew that the brute, made savage by hunger, was mustering its courage for an attack, that it was probably accustomed to man and therefore more or less fearless of him and so he un-slung his heavy spear and laid it ready at his side while he continued his meal, all the time keeping a watchful eye upon the hyena.

He felt no fear, for long familiarity with the dangers of his wild world had

so accustomed him to them that he took whatever came as a part of each day's existence as you accept the homely though no less real dangers of the farm, the range, or the crowded metropolis. Being jungle bred he was ready to protect his kill from all comers within ordinary limitations of caution. Under favorable conditions Tarzan would face even Numa himself and, if forced to seek safety by flight, he could do so without any feeling of shame. There was no braver creature roamed those savage wilds and at the same time there was none more wise—the two factors that had permitted him to survive.

Dango might have charged sooner but for the savage growls of the ape-man -

growls which, coming from human lips, raised a question and a fear in the hyena's heart. He had attacked women and children in the native fields and he had frightened their men about their fires at night; but he never had seen a man-thing who made this sound that reminded him more of Numa angry than of a man afraid.

When Tarzan had completed his repast he was about to rise and hurl a clean-picked bone at the beast before he went his way, leaving the remains of his kill to Dango; but a sudden thought stayed him and instead he picked up the carcass of the deer, threw it over his shoulder, and set off in the direction of the gulch. For a few yards Dango

followed, growling, and then realizing that he was being robbed of even a taste of the luscious flesh he cast discretion to the winds and charged. Instantly, as though Nature had given him eyes in the back of his head, Tarzan sensed the impending danger and, dropping Bara to the ground, turned with raised spear. Far back went the brown, right hand and then forward, lightning-like, backed by the power of giant muscles and the weight of his brawn and bone. The spear, released at the right instant, drove straight for Dango, caught him in the neck where it joined the shoulders and passed through the body.

When he had withdrawn the shaft from the hyena Tarzan shouldered both

carcasses and continued on toward the gulch. Below lay Numa beneath the shade of the lone tree and at the ape-man's call he staggered slowly to his feet, yet weak as he was, he still growled savagely, even essaying a roar at the sight of his enemy. Tarzan let the two bodies slide over the rim of the cliff. "Eat, Numa!" he cried. "It may be that I shall need you again." He saw the lion, quickened to new life at the sight of food, spring upon the body of the deer and then he left him rending and tearing the flesh as he bolted great pieces into his empty maw.

The following day Tarzan came within sight of the German lines. From a wooded spur of the hills he looked down

upon the enemy's left flank and beyond to the British lines. His position gave him a bird's- eye view of the field of battle, and his keen eyesight picked out many details that would not have been apparent to a man whose every sense was not trained to the highest point of perfection as were the ape-man's. He noted machine-gun emplacements cunningly hidden from the view of the British and listening posts placed well out in No Man's Land.

As his interested gaze moved hither and thither from one point of interest to another he heard from a point upon the hillside below him, above the roar of cannon and the crack of rifle fire, a single rifle spit. Immediately his

attention was centered upon the spot where he knew a sniper must be hid. Patiently he awaited the next shot that would tell him more surely the exact location of the rifleman, and when it came he moved down the steep hillside with the stealth and quietness of a panther. Apparently he took no cognizance of where he stepped, yet never a loose stone was disturbed nor a twig broken —it was as though his feet saw.

Presently, as he passed through a clump of bushes, he came to the edge of a low cliff and saw upon a ledge some fifteen feet below him a German soldier prone behind an embankment of loose rock and leafy boughs that hid him from

the view of the British lines. The man must have been an excellent shot, for he was well back of the German lines, firing over the heads of his fellows. His high-powered rifle was equipped with telescope sights and he also carried binoculars which he was in the act of using as Tarzan discovered him, either to note the effect of his last shot or to discover a new target. Tarzan let his eye move quickly toward that part of the British line the German seemed to be scanning, his keen sight revealing many excellent targets for a rifle placed so high above the trenches.

The Hun, evidently satisfied with his observations, laid aside his binoculars and again took up his rifle, placed its

butt in the hollow of his shoulder and took careful aim. At the same instant a brown body sprang outward from the cliff above him. There was no sound and it is doubtful that the German ever knew what manner of creature it was that alighted heavily upon his back, for at the instant of impact the sinewy fingers of the ape-man circled the hairy throat of the Boche. There was a moment of futile struggling followed by the sudden realization of dissolution—the sniper was dead.

Lying behind the rampart of rocks and boughs, Tarzan looked down upon the scene below. Near at hand were the trenches of the Germans. He could see officers and men moving about in them

and almost in front of him a well-hidden machine gun was traversing No Man's Land in an oblique direction, striking the British at such an angle as to make it difficult for them to locate it.

Tarzan watched, toying idly with the rifle of the dead German. Presently he fell to examining the mechanism of the piece. He glanced again toward the German trenches and changed the adjustment of the sights, then he placed the rifle to his shoulder and took aim. Tarzan was an excellent shot. With his civilized friends he had hunted big game with the weapons of civilization and though he never had killed except for food or in self-defense he had amused himself firing at inanimate targets thrown

into the air and had perfected himself in the use of firearms without realizing that he had done so. Now indeed would he hunt big game. A slow smile touched his lips as his finger closed gradually upon the trigger. The rifle spoke and a German machine gunner collapsed behind his weapon. In three minutes Tarzan picked off the crew of that gun. Then he spotted a German officer emerging from a dugout and the three men in the bay with him. Tarzan was careful to leave no one in the immediate vicinity to question how Germans could be shot in German trenches when they were entirely concealed from enemy view.

Again adjusting his sights he took a

long-range shot at a distant machine-gun crew to his right. With calm deliberation he wiped them out to a man. Two guns were silenced. He saw men running through the trenches and he picked off several of them. By this time the Germans were aware that something was amiss—that an uncanny sniper had discovered a point of vantage from which this sector of the trenches was plainly visible to him. At first they sought to discover his location in No Man's Land; but when an officer looking over the parapet through a periscope was struck full in the back of the head with a rifle bullet which passed through his skull and fell to the bottom of the trench they realized that it was beyond

the parados rather than the parapet that they should search.

One of the soldiers picked up the bullet that had killed his officer, and then it was that real excitement prevailed in that particular bay, for the bullet was obviously of German make. Hugging the parados, messengers carried the word in both directions and presently periscopes were leveled above the parados and keen eyes were searching out the traitor. It did not take them long to locate the position of the hidden sniper and then Tarzan saw a machine gun being trained upon him. Before it had gotten into action its crew lay dead about it; but there were other men to take their places, reluctantly perhaps; but driven

on by their officers they were forced to it and at the same time two other machine guns were swung around toward the ape-man and put into operation.

Realizing that the game was about up Tarzan with a farewell shot laid aside the rifle and melted into the hills behind him. For many minutes he could hear the sputter of machine-gun fire concentrated upon the spot he had just quit and smiled as he contemplated the waste of German ammunition.

"They have paid heavily for Wasimbu, the Waziri, whom they crucified, and for his slain fellows," he mused; "but for Jane they can never pay — no, not if I killed them all."

After dark that night he circled the flanks of both armies and passed through the British out-guards and into the British lines. No man saw him come. No man knew that he was there.

Headquarters of the Second Rhodesians occupied a sheltered position far enough back of the lines to be comparatively safe from enemy observation. Even lights were permitted, and Colonel Capell sat before a field table, on which was spread a military map, talking with several of his officers. A large tree spread above them, a lantern sputtered dimly upon the table, while a small fire burned upon the ground close at hand. The enemy had no planes and no other observers could

have seen the lights from the German lines.

The officers were discussing the advantage in numbers possessed by the enemy and the inability of the British to more than hold their present position. They could not advance. Already they had sustained severe losses in every attack and had always been driven back by overwhelming numbers. There were hidden machine guns, too, that bothered the colonel considerably. It was evidenced by the fact that he often reverted to them during the conversation.

"Something silenced them for a while this afternoon," said one of the younger officers. "I was observing at the time and I couldn't make out what the fuss

was about; but they seemed to be having a devil of a time in a section of trench on their left. At one time I could have sworn they were attacked in the rear—I reported it to you at the time, sir, you'll recall - for the blighters were pepperin' away at the side of that bluff behind them. I could see the dirt fly. I don't know what it could have been."

There was a slight rustling among the branches of the tree above them and simultaneously a lithe, brown body dropped in their midst. Hands moved quickly to the butts of pistols; but otherwise there was no movement among the officers. First they looked wonderingly at the almost naked white man standing there with the firelight

playing upon rounded muscles, took in the primitive attire and the equally primitive armament and then all eyes turned toward the colonel.

"Who the devil are you, sir?" snapped that officer.

"Tarzan of the Apes," replied the newcomer.

"Oh, Greystoke!" cried a major, and stepped forward with outstretched hand.

"Preswick," acknowledged Tarzan as he took the proffered hand.

"I didn't recognize you at first," apologized the major. "The last time I saw you you were in London in evening dress. Quite a difference—'pon my word, man, you'll have to admit it."

Tarzan smiled and turned toward the colonel. "I overheard your conversation," he said. "I have just come from behind the German lines. Possibly I can help you."

The colonel looked questioningly toward Major Preswick who quickly rose to the occasion and presented the ape-man to his commanding officer and fellows. Briefly Tarzan told them what it was that brought him out alone in pursuit of the Germans.

"And now you have come to join us?" asked the colonel.

Tarzan shook his head. "Not regularly," he replied. "I must fight in my own way; but I can help you. Whenever I wish I can enter the German lines."

Capell smiled and shook his head. "It's not so easy as you think," he said; "I've lost two good officers in the last week trying it—and they were experienced men; none better in the Intelligence Department."

"Is it more difficult than entering the British lines?" asked Tarzan.

The colonel was about to reply when a new thought appeared to occur to him and he looked quizzically at the ape-man. "Who brought you here?" he asked. "Who passed you through our out-guards?"

"I have just come through the German lines and yours and passed through your camp," he replied. "Send word to ascertain if anyone saw me."

"But who accompanied you?" insisted Capell.

"I came alone," replied Tarzan and then, drawing himself to his full height, "You men of civilization, when you come into the jungle, are as dead among the quick. Manu, the monkey, is a sage by comparison. I marvel that you exist at all—only your numbers, your weapons, and your power of reasoning save you. Had I a few hundred great apes with your reasoning power I could drive the Germans into the ocean as quickly as the remnant of them could reach the coast. Fortunate it is for you that the dumb brutes cannot combine. Could they, Africa would remain forever free of men. But come, can I help you? Would

you like to know where several machine- gun emplacements are hidden?"

The colonel assured him that they would, and a moment later Tarzan had traced upon the map the location of three that had been bothering the English. "There is a weak spot here," he said, placing a finger upon the map. "It is held by blacks; but the machine guns out in front are manned by whites. If—wait! I have a plan. You can fill that trench with your own men and enfilade the trenches to its right with their own machine guns."

Colonel Capell smiled and shook his head. "It sounds very easy," he said.

"It IS easy—for me," replied the ape-man. "I can empty that section of trench

without a shot. I was raised in the jungle —I know the jungle folk - the Gomangani as well as the others. Look for me again on the second night," and he turned to leave.

"Wait," said the colonel. "I will send an officer to pass you through the lines."

Tarzan smiled and moved away. As he was leaving the little group about headquarters he passed a small figure wrapped in an officer's heavy overcoat. The collar was turned up and the visor of the military cap pulled well down over the eyes; but, as the ape-man passed, the light from the fire illuminated the features of the newcomer for an instant, revealing to Tarzan a vaguely familiar face. Some officer he

had known in London, doubtless, he surmised, and went his way through the British camp and the British lines all unknown to the watchful sentinels of the out-guard.

Nearly all night he moved across Kilimanjaro's foothills, tracking by instinct an unknown way, for he guessed that what he sought would be found on some wooded slope higher up than he had come upon his other recent journeys in this, to him, little known country. Three hours before dawn his keen nostrils apprised him that somewhere in the vicinity he would find what he wanted, and so he climbed into a tall tree and settled himself for a few hours' sleep.

4. WHEN THE LION FED

Kudu, the sun, was well up in the heavens when Tarzan awoke. The ape-man stretched his giant limbs, ran his fingers through his thick hair, and swung lightly down to earth. Immediately he took up the trail he had come in search of, following it by scent down into a deep ravine. Cautiously he went now, for his nose told him that the quarry was close at hand, and presently from an overhanging bough he looked down upon Horta, the boar, and many of his kinsmen. Un- slinging his bow and selecting an arrow, Tarzan fitted the shaft and, drawing it far back, took careful aim at the largest of the great pigs. In the ape-man's teeth were other

arrows, and no sooner had the first one sped, than he had fitted and shot another bolt. Instantly the pigs were in turmoil, not knowing from whence the danger threatened. They stood stupidly at first and then commenced milling around until six of their number lay dead or dying about them; then with a chorus of grunts and squeals they started off at a wild run, disappearing quickly in the dense underbrush.

Tarzan then descended from the tree, dispatched those that were not already dead and proceeded to skin the carcasses. As he worked, rapidly and with great skill, he neither hummed nor whistled as does the average man of civilization. It was in numerous little

ways such as these that he differed from other men, due, probably, to his early jungle training. The beasts of the jungle that he had been reared among were playful to maturity but seldom thereafter. His fellow- apes, especially the bulls, became fierce and surly as they grew older. Life was a serious matter during lean seasons—one had to fight to secure one's share of food then, and the habit once formed became lifelong. Hunting for food was the life labor of the jungle bred, and a life labor is a thing not to be approached with levity nor prosecuted lightly. So all work found Tarzan serious, though he still retained what the other beasts lost as they grew older—a sense of humor, which he gave play to

when the mood suited him. It was a grim humor and sometimes ghastly; but it satisfied Tarzan.

Then, too, were one to sing and whistle while working on the ground, concentration would be impossible. Tarzan possessed the ability to concentrate each of his five senses upon its particular business. Now he worked at skinning the six pigs and his eyes and his fingers worked as though there was naught else in all the world than these six carcasses; but his ears and his nose were as busily engaged elsewhere—the former ranging the forest all about and the latter assaying each passing zephyr. It was his nose that first discovered the approach of Sabor, the lioness, when the

wind shifted for a moment.

As clearly as though he had seen her with his eyes, Tarzan knew that the lioness had caught the scent of the freshly killed pigs and immediately had moved down wind in their direction. He knew from the strength of the scent spoor and the rate of the wind about how far away she was and that she was approaching from behind him. He was finishing the last pig and he did not hurry. The five pelts lay close at hand-he had been careful to keep them thus together and near him—an ample tree waved its low branches above him.

He did not even turn his head for he knew she was not yet in sight; but he bent his ears just a bit more sharply for

the first sound of her nearer approach. When the final skin had been removed he rose. Now he heard Sabor in the bushes to his rear, but not yet too close. Leisurely he gathered up the six pelts and one of the carcasses, and as the lioness appeared between the boles of two trees he swung upward into the branches above him. Here he hung the hides over a limb, seated himself comfortably upon another with his back against the bole of the tree, cut a hind quarter from the carcass he had carried with him and proceeded to satisfy his hunger. Sabor slunk, growling, from the brush, cast a wary eye upward toward the ape-man and then fell upon the nearest carcass.

Tarzan looked down upon her and grinned, recalling an argument he had once had with a famous big-game hunter who had declared that the king of beasts ate only what he himself had killed. Tarzan knew better for he had seen Numa and Sabor stoop even to carrion.

Having filled his belly, the ape-man fell to work upon the hides— all large and strong. First he cut strips from them about half an inch wide. When he had sufficient number of these strips he sewed two of the hides together, afterwards piercing holes every three or four inches around the edges. Running another strip through these holes gave him a large bag with a drawstring. In similar fashion he produced four other

like bags, but smaller, from the four remaining hides and had several strips left over.

All this done he threw a large, juicy fruit at Sabor, cached the remainder of the pig in a crotch of the tree and swung off toward the southwest through the middle terraces of the forest, carrying his five bags with him. Straight he went to the rim of the gulch where he had imprisoned Numa, the lion. Very stealthily he approached the edge and peered over. Numa was not in sight. Tarzan sniffed and listened. He could hear nothing, yet he knew that Numa must be within the cave. He hoped that he slept—much depended upon Numa not discovering him.

Cautiously he lowered himself over the edge of the cliff, and with utter noiselessness commenced the descent toward the bottom of the gulch. He stopped often and turned his keen eyes and ears in the direction of the cave's mouth at the far end of the gulch, some hundred feet away. As he neared the foot of the cliff his danger increased greatly. If he could reach the bottom and cover half the distance to the tree that stood in the center of the gulch he would feel comparatively safe for then, even if Numa appeared, he felt that he could beat him either to the cliff or to the tree, but to scale the first thirty feet of the cliff rapidly enough to elude the leaping beast would require a running start of at least

twenty feet as there were no very good hand- or footholds close to the bottom—he had had to run up the first twenty feet like a squirrel running up a tree that other time he had beaten an infuriated Numa to it. He had no desire to attempt it again unless the conditions were equally favorable at least, for he had escaped Numa's raking talons by only a matter of inches on the former occasion.

At last he stood upon the floor of the gulch. Silent as a disembodied spirit he advanced toward the tree. He was half way there and no sign of Numa. He reached the scarred bole from which the famished lion had devoured the bark and even torn pieces of the wood itself and yet Numa had not appeared. As he drew

himself up to the lower branches he commenced to wonder if Numa were in the cave after all. Could it be possible that he had forced the barrier of rocks with which Tarzan had plugged the other end of the passage where it opened into the outer world of freedom? Or was Numa dead? The ape-man doubted the verity of the latter suggestion as he had fed the lion the entire carcasses of a deer and a hyena only a few days since— he could not have starved in so short a time, while the little rivulet running across the gulch furnished him with water a- plenty.

Tarzan started to descend and investigate the cavern when it occurred to him that it would save effort were he to lure Numa out instead. Acting upon

the thought he uttered a low growl. Immediately he was rewarded by the sound of a movement within the cave and an instant later a wild-eyed, haggard lion rushed forth ready to face the devil himself were he edible. When Numa saw Tarzan, fat and sleek, perched in the tree he became suddenly the embodiment of frightful rage. His eyes and his nose told him that this was the creature responsible for his predicament and also that this creature was good to eat. Frantically the lion sought to scramble up the bole of the tree. Twice he leaped high enough to catch the lowest branches with his paws, but both times he fell backward to the earth. Each time he became more furious. His growls and

roars were incessant and horrible and all the time Tarzan sat grinning down upon him, taunting him in jungle billingsgate for his inability to reach him and mentally exulting that always Numa was wasting his already waning strength.

Finally the ape-man rose and un-slung his rope. He arranged the coils carefully in his left hand and the noose in his right, and then he took a position with each foot on one of two branches that lay in about the same horizontal plane and with his back pressed firmly against the stem of the tree. There he stood hurling insults at Numa until the beast was again goaded into leaping upward at him, and as Numa rose the noose dropped quickly over his head and about his neck. A

quick movement of Tarzan's rope hand tightened the coil and when Numa slipped backward to the ground only his hind feet touched, for the ape-man held him swinging by the neck.

Moving slowly outward upon the two branches Tarzan swung Numa out so that he could not reach the bole of the tree with his raking talons, then he made the rope fast after drawing the lion clear of the ground, dropped his five pigskin sacks to earth and leaped down himself. Numa was striking frantically at the grass rope with his fore claws. At any moment he might sever it and Tarzan must, therefore, work rapidly.

First he drew the larger bag over Numa's head and secured it about his

neck with the draw string, then he managed, after considerable effort, during which he barely escaped being torn to ribbons by the mighty talons, to hog-tie Numa—drawing his four legs together and securing them in that position with the strips trimmed from the pigskins.

By this time the lion's efforts had almost ceased—it was evident that he was being rapidly strangled and as that did not at all suit the purpose of the Tarmangani the latter swung again into the tree, unfastened the rope from above and lowered the lion to the ground where he immediately followed it and loosed the noose about Numa's neck. Then he drew his hunting knife and cut

two round holes in the front of the head bag opposite the lion's eyes for the double purpose of permitting him to see and giving him sufficient air to breathe.

This done Tarzan busied himself fitting the other bags, one over each of Numa's formidably armed paws. Those on the hind feet he secured not only by tightening the draw strings but also rigged garters that fastened tightly around the legs above the hocks. He secured the front-feet bags in place similarly above the great knees. Now, indeed, was Numa, the lion, reduced to the harmlessness of Bara, the deer.

By now Numa was showing signs of returning life. He gasped for breath and struggled; but the strips of pigskin that

held his four legs together were numerous and tough. Tarzan watched and was sure that they would hold, yet Numa is mightily muscled and there was the chance, always, that he might struggle free of his bonds after which all would depend upon the efficacy of Tarzan's bags and draw strings.

After Numa had again breathed normally and was able to roar out his protests and his rage, his struggles increased to Titanic proportions for a short time; but as a lion's powers of endurance are in no way proportionate to his size and strength he soon tired and lay quietly. Amid renewed growling and another futile attempt to free himself, Numa was finally forced to submit to the

further indignity of having a rope secured about his neck; but this time it was no noose that might tighten and strangle him; but a bowline knot, which does not tighten or slip under strain.

The other end of the rope Tarzan fastened to the stem of the tree, then he quickly cut the bonds securing Numa's legs and leaped aside as the beast sprang to his feet. For a moment the lion stood with legs far outspread, then he raised first one paw and then another, shaking them energetically in an effort to dislodge the strange footgear that Tarzan had fastened upon them. Finally he began to paw at the bag upon his head. The ape-man, standing with ready spear, watched Numa's efforts intently. Would

the bags hold? He sincerely hoped so. Or would all his labor prove fruitless?

As the clinging things upon his feet and face resisted his every effort to dislodge them, Numa became frantic. He rolled upon the ground, fighting, biting, scratching, and roaring; he leaped to his feet and sprang into the air; he charged Tarzan, only to be brought to a sudden stop as the rope securing him to the tree tautened. Then Tarzan stepped in and rapped him smartly on the head with the shaft of his spear. Numa reared upon his hind feet and struck at the are-man and in return received a cuff on one ear that sent him reeling sideways. When he returned to the attack he was again sent sprawling. After the fourth effort it

appeared to dawn upon the king of beasts that he had met his master, his head and tail dropped and when Tarzan advanced upon him he backed away, though still growling.

Leaving Numa tied to the tree Tarzan entered the tunnel and removed the barricade from the opposite end, after which he returned to the gulch and strode straight for the tree. Numa lay in his path and as Tarzan approached growled menacingly. The ape-man cuffed him aside and unfastened the rope from the tree. Then ensued a half-hour of stubbornly fought battle while Tarzan endeavored to drive Numa through the tunnel ahead of him and Numa persistently refused to be driven. At last,

however, by dint of the unrestricted use of his spear point, the ape-man succeeded in forcing the lion to move ahead of him and eventually guided him into the passageway. Once inside, the problem became simpler since Tarzan followed closely in the rear with his sharp spear point, an unremitting incentive to forward movement on the part of the lion. If Numa hesitated he was prodded. If he backed up the result was extremely painful and so, being a wise lion who was learning rapidly, he decided to keep on going and at the end of the tunnel, emerging into the outer world, he sensed freedom, raised his head and tail and started off at a run.

Tarzan, still on his hands and knees

just inside the entrance, was taken unaware with the result that he was sprawled forward upon his face and dragged a hundred yards across the rocky ground before Numa was brought to a stand. It was a scratched and angry Tarzan who scrambled to his feet. At first he was tempted to chastise Numa; but, as the ape-man seldom permitted his temper to guide him in any direction not countenanced by reason, he quickly abandoned the idea.

Having taught Numa the rudiments of being driven, he now urged him forward and there commenced as strange a journey as the unrecorded history of the jungle contains. The balance of that day was eventful both for Tarzan and for

Numa. From open rebellion at first the lion passed through stages of stubborn resistance and grudging obedience to final surrender. He was a very tired, hungry, and thirsty lion when night overtook them; but there was to be no food for him that day or the next—Tarzan did not dare risk removing the head bag, though he did cut another hole which permitted Numa to quench his thirst shortly after dark. Then he tied him to a tree, sought food for himself, and stretched out among the branches above his captive for a few hours' sleep.

Early the following morning they resumed their journey, winding over the low foothills south of Kilimanjaro, toward the east. The beasts of the jungle

who saw them took one look and fled. The scent spoor of Numa, alone, might have been enough to have provoked flight in many of the lesser animals, but the sight of this strange apparition that smelled like a lion, but looked like nothing they ever had seen before, being led through the jungles by a giant Tarmangani was too much for even the more formidable denizens of the wild.

Sabor, the lioness, recognizing from a distance the scent of her lord and master intermingled with that of a Tarmangani and the hide of Horta, the boar, trotted through the aisles of the forest to investigate. Tarzan and Numa heard her coming, for she voiced a plaintive and questioning whine as the baffling mixture

of odors aroused her curiosity and her fears, for lions, however terrible they may appear, are often timid animals and Sabor, being of the gentler sex, was, naturally, habitually inquisitive as well.

Tarzan un-slung his spear for he knew that he might now easily have to fight to retain his prize. Numa halted and turned his outraged head in the direction of the coming she. He voiced a throaty growl that was almost a purr. Tarzan was upon the point of prodding him on again when Sabor broke into view, and behind her the ape-man saw that which gave him instant pause - four full-grown lions trailing the lioness.

To have goaded Numa then into active resistance might have brought the

whole herd down upon him and so Tarzan waited to learn first what their attitude would be. He had no idea of relinquishing his lion without a battle; but knowing lions as he did, he knew that there was no assurance as to just what the newcomers would do.

The lioness was young and sleek, and the four males were in their prime - as handsome lions as he ever had seen. Three of the males were scantily maned but one, the foremost, carried a splendid, black mane that rippled in the breeze as he trotted majestically forward. The lioness halted a hundred feet from Tarzan, while the lions came on past her and stopped a few feet nearer. Their ears were upstanding and their eyes

filled with curiosity. Tarzan could not even guess what they might do. The lion at his side faced them fully, standing silent now and watchful.

Suddenly the lioness gave vent to another little whine, at which Tarzan's lion voiced a terrific roar and leaped forward straight toward the beast of the black mane. The sight of this awesome creature with the strange face was too much for the lion toward which he leaped, dragging Tarzan after him, and with a growl the lion turned and fled, followed by his companions and the she.

Numa attempted to follow them; Tarzan held him in leash and when he turned upon him in rage, beat him unmercifully across the head with his

spear. Shaking his head and growling, the lion at last moved off again in the direction they had been traveling; but it was an hour before he ceased to sulk. He was very hungry—half famished in fact—and consequently of an ugly temper, yet so thoroughly subdued by Tarzan's heroic methods of lion taming that he was presently pacing along at the ape-man's side like some huge St. Bernard.

It was dark when the two approached the British right, after a slight delay farther back because of a German patrol it had been necessary to elude. A short distance from the British line of out-guard sentinels Tarzan tied Numa to a tree and continued on alone. He evaded a sentinel, passed the out-guard and

support, and by devious ways came again to Colonel Capell's headquarters, where he appeared before the officers gathered there as a disembodied spirit materializing out of thin air.

When they saw who it was that came thus unannounced they smiled and the colonel scratched his head in perplexity.

"Someone should be shot for this," he said. "I might just as well not establish an out-post if a man can filter through whenever he pleases."

Tarzan smiled. "Do not blame them," he said, "for I am not a man. I am Tarmangani. Any Mangani who wished to, could enter your camp almost at will; but if you have them for sentinels no one could enter without their knowledge."

"What are the Mangani?" asked the colonel. "Perhaps we might enlist a bunch of the beggars."

Tarzan shook his head. "They are the great apes," he explained; "my people; but you could not use them. They cannot concentrate long enough upon a single idea. If I told them of this they would be much interested for a short time-I might even hold the interest of a few long enough to get them here and explain their duties to them; but soon they would lose interest and when you needed them most they might be off in the forest searching for beetles instead of watching their posts. They have the minds of little children—that is why they remain what they are."

"You call them Mangani and yourself Tarmangani—what is the difference?" asked Major Preswick.

"Tar means white," replied Tarzan, "and Mangani, great ape. My name —the name they gave me in the tribe of Kerchak—means White-skin. When I was a little balu my skin, I presume, looked very white indeed against the beautiful, black coat of Kala, my foster mother and so they called me Tarzan, the Tarmangani. They call you, too, Tarmangani," he concluded, smiling.

Capell smiled. "It is no reproach, Greystoke," he said; "and, by Jove, it would be a mark of distinction if a fellow could act the part. And now how about your plan? Do you still think you

can empty the trench opposite our sector?"

"Is it still held by Gomangani?" asked Tarzan.

"What are Gomangani?" inquired the colonel. "It is still held by native troops, if that is what you mean."

"Yes," replied the ape-man, "the Gomangani are the great black apes — the Negroes."

"What do you intend doing and what do you want us to do?" asked Capell.

Tarzan approached the table and placed a finger on the map. "Here is a listening post," he said; "they have a machine gun in it. A tunnel connects it with this trench at this point." His finger moved from place to place on the map as

he talked. "Give me a bomb and when you hear it burst in this listening post let your men start across No Man's Land slowly. Presently they will hear a commotion in the enemy trench; but they need not hurry, and, whatever they do, have them come quietly. You might also warn them that I may be in the trench and that I do not care to be shot or bayoneted."

"And that is all?" queried Capell, after directing an officer to give Tarzan a hand grenade; "you will empty the trench alone?"

"Not exactly alone," replied Tarzan with a grim smile; "but I shall empty it, and, by the way, your men may come in through the tunnel from the listening post

if you prefer. In about half an hour, Colonel," and he turned and left them.

As he passed through the camp there flashed suddenly upon the screen of recollection, conjured there by some reminder of his previous visit to headquarters, doubtless, the image of the officer he had passed as he quit the colonel that other time and simultaneously recognition of the face that had been revealed by the light from the fire. He shook his head dubiously. No, it could not be and yet the features of the young officer were identical with those of Fraulein Kircher, the German spy he had seen at German headquarters the night he took Major Schneider from under the nose of the Hun general and his

staff.

Beyond the last line of sentinels Tarzan moved quickly in the direction of Numa, the lion. The beast was lying down as Tarzan approached, but he rose as the ape-man reached his side. A low whine escaped his muzzled lips. Tarzan smiled for he recognized in the new note almost a supplication—it was more like the whine of a hungry dog begging for food than the voice of the proud king of beasts.

"Soon you will kill—and feed," he murmured in the vernacular of the great apes.

He unfastened the rope from about the tree and, with Numa close at his side, slunk into No Man's Land. There was

little rifle fire and only an occasional shell vouched for the presence of artillery behind the opposing lines. As the shells from both sides were falling well back of the trenches, they constituted no menace to Tarzan; but the noise of them and that of the rifle fire had a marked effect upon Numa who crouched, trembling, close to the Tarmangani as though seeking protection.

Cautiously the two beasts moved forward toward the listening post of the Germans. In one hand Tarzan carried the bomb the English had given him, in the other was the coiled rope attached to the lion. At last Tarzan could see the position a few yards ahead. His keen

eyes picked out the head and shoulders of the sentinel on watch. The ape-man grasped the bomb firmly in his right hand. He measured the distance with his eye and gathered his feet beneath him, then in a single motion he rose and threw the missile, immediately flattening himself prone upon the ground.

Five seconds later there was a terrific explosion in the center of the listening post. Numa gave a nervous start and attempted to break away; but Tarzan held him and, leaping to his feet, ran forward, dragging Numa after him. At the edge of the post he saw below him but slight evidence that the position had been occupied at all, for only a few shreds of torn flesh remained. About the

only thing that had not been demolished was a machine gun which had been protected by sand bags.

There was not an instant to lose. Already a relief might be crawling through the communication tunnel, for it must have been evident to the sentinels in the Hun trenches that the listening post had been demolished. Numa hesitated to follow Tarzan into the excavation; but the ape-man, who was in no mood to temporize, jerked him roughly to the bottom. Before them lay the mouth of the tunnel that led back from No Man's Land to the German trenches. Tarzan pushed Numa forward until his head was almost in the aperture, then as though it were an afterthought, he turned quickly and,

taking the machine gun from the parapet, placed it in the bottom of the hole close at hand, after which he turned again to Numa, and with his knife quickly cut the garters that held the bags upon his front paws. Before the lion could know that a part of his formidable armament was again released for action, Tarzan had cut the rope from his neck and the head bag from his face, and grabbing the lion from the rear had thrust him partially into the mouth of the tunnel.

Then Numa balked, only to feel the sharp prick of Tarzan's knife point in his hind quarters. Goading him on the ape-man finally succeeded in getting the lion sufficiently far into the tunnel so that there was no chance of his escaping

other than by going forward or deliberately backing into the sharp blade at his rear. Then Tarzan cut the bags from the great hind feet, placed his shoulder and his knife point against Numa's seat, dug his toes into the loose earth that had been broken up by the explosion of the bomb, and shoved.

Inch by inch at first Numa advanced. He was growling now and presently he commenced to roar. Suddenly he leaped forward and Tarzan knew that he had caught the scent of meat ahead. Dragging the machine gun beside him the ape- man followed quickly after the lion whose roars he could plainly hear ahead mingled with the unmistakable screams of frightened men. Once again a grim

smile touched the lips of this man-beast.

"They murdered my Waziri," he muttered; "they crucified Wasimbu, son of Muviro."

When Tarzan reached the trench and emerged into it there was no one in sight in that particular bay, nor in the next, nor the next as he hurried forward in the direction of the German center; but in the fourth bay he saw a dozen men jammed in the angle of the traverse at the end while leaping upon them and rending with talons and fangs was Numa, a terrific incarnation of ferocity and ravenous hunger.

Whatever held the men at last gave way as they fought madly with one another in their efforts to escape this

dread creature that from their infancy had filled them with terror, and again they were retreating. Some clambered over the parados and some even over the parapet preferring the dangers of No Man's Land to this other soul- searing menace.

As the British advanced slowly toward the German trenches, they first met terrified blacks who ran into their arms only too willing to surrender. That pandemonium had broken loose in the Hun trench was apparent to the Rhodesians not only from the appearance of the deserters, but from the sounds of screaming, cursing men which came clearly to their ears; but there was one that baffled them for it resembled

nothing more closely than the infuriated growling of an angry lion.

And when at last they reached the trench, those farthest on the left of the advancing Britishers heard a machine gun sputter suddenly before them and saw a huge lion leap over the German parados with the body of a screaming Hun soldier between his jaws and vanish into the shadows of the night, while squatting upon a traverse to their left was Tarzan of the Apes with a machine gun before him with which he was raking the length of the German trenches.

The foremost Rhodesians saw something else—they saw a huge German officer emerge from a dugout

just in rear of the ape-man. They saw him snatch up a discarded rifle with bayonet fixed and creep upon the apparently unconscious Tarzan. They ran forward, shouting warnings; but above the pandemonium of the trenches and the machine gun their voices could not reach him. The German leaped upon the parapet behind him—the fat hands raised the rifle butt aloft for the cowardly downward thrust into the naked back and then, as moves Ara, the lightning, moved Tarzan of the Apes.

It was no man who leaped forward upon that Boche officer, striking aside the sharp bayonet as one might strike aside a straw in a baby's hand— it was a wild beast and the roar of a wild beast

was upon those savage lips, for as that strange sense that Tarzan owned in common with the other jungle-bred creatures of his wild domain warned him of the presence behind him and he had whirled to meet the attack, his eyes had seen the corps and regimental insignia upon the other's blouse—it was the same as that worn by the murderers of his wife and his people, by the despoilers of his home and his happiness.

It was a wild beast whose teeth fastened upon the shoulder of the Hun — it was a wild beast whose talons sought that fat neck. And then the boys of the Second Rhodesian Regiment saw that which will live forever in their

memories. They saw the giant ape-man pick the heavy German from the ground and shake him as a terrier might shake a rat—as Sabor, the lioness, sometimes shakes her prey. They saw the eyes of the Hun bulge in horror as he vainly struck with his futile hands against the massive chest and head of his assailant. They saw Tarzan suddenly spin the man about and placing a knee in the middle of his back and an arm about his neck bend his shoulders slowly backward. The German's knees gave and he sank upon them, but still that irresistible force bent him further and further. He screamed in agony for a moment-then something snapped and Tarzan cast him aside, a limp and lifeless thing.

The Rhodesians started forward, a cheer upon their lips-a cheer that never was uttered—a cheer that froze in their throats, for at that moment Tarzan placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and, raising his face to the heavens, gave voice to the weird and terrifying victory cry of the bull ape.

Underlieutenant von Goss was dead.

Without a backward glance at the awe-struck soldiers Tarzan leaped the trench and was gone.

5. THE GOLDEN LOCKET

The little British army in East Africa, after suffering severe reverses at the hands of a numerically much superior force, was at last coming into its own. The German offensive had been broken and the Huns were now slowly and doggedly retreating along the railway to Tanga. The break in the German lines had followed the clearing of a section of their left-flank trenches of native soldiers by Tarzan and Numa, the lion, upon that memorable night that the ape-man had loosed a famishing man-eater among the superstitious and terror-stricken blacks. The Second Rhodesian Regiment had immediately taken possession of the abandoned trench and

from this position their flanking fire had raked contiguous sections of the German line, the diversion rendering possible a successful night attack on the part of the balance of the British forces.

Weeks had elapsed. The Germans were contesting stubbornly every mile of waterless, thorn-covered ground and clinging desperately to their positions along the railway. The officers of the Second Rhodesians had seen nothing more of Tarzan of the Apes since he had slain Underlieutenant von Goss and disappeared toward the very heart of the German position, and there were those among them who believed that he had been killed within the enemy lines.

"They may have killed him," assented

Colonel Capell; "but I fancy they never captured the beggar alive."

Nor had they, nor killed him either. Tarzan had spent those intervening weeks pleasantly and profitably. He had amassed a considerable fund of knowledge concerning the disposition and strength of German troops, their methods of warfare, and the various ways in which a lone Tarmangani might annoy an army and lower its morale.

At present he was prompted by a specific desire. There was a certain German spy whom he wished to capture alive and take back to the British When he had made his first visit to German headquarters, he had seen a young woman deliver a paper to the German

general, and later he had seen that same young woman within the British lines in the uniform of a British officer. The conclusions were obvious—she was a spy.

And so Tarzan haunted German headquarters upon many nights hoping to see her again or to pick up some clew as to her whereabouts, and at the same time he utilized many an artifice whereby he might bring terror to the hearts of the Germans. That he was successful was often demonstrated by the snatches of conversation he overheard as he prowled through the German camps. One night as he lay concealed in the bushes close beside a regimental headquarters he listened to the conversation of several

Boche officers. One of the men reverted to the stories told by the native troops in connection with their rout by a lion several weeks before and the simultaneous appearance in their trenches of a naked, white giant whom they were perfectly assured was some demon of the jungle.

"The fellow must have been the same as he who leaped into the general's headquarters and carried off Schneider," asserted one. "I wonder how he happened to single out the poor major. They say the creature seemed interested in no one but Schneider. He had von Kelter in his grasp, and he might easily have taken the general himself; but he ignored them all except Schneider. Him

he pursued about the room, seized and carried off into the night. Gott knows what his fate was."

"Captain Fritz Schneider has some sort of theory," said another. "He told me only a week or two ago that he thinks he knows why his brother was taken - that it was a case of mistaken identity. He was not so sure about it until von Goss was killed, apparently by the same creature, the night the lion entered the trenches. Von Goss was attached to Schneider's company. One of Schneider's men was found with his neck wrung the same night that the major was carried off and Schneider thinks that this devil is after him and his command—that it came for him that night and got his

brother by mistake. He says Kraut told him that in presenting the major to Fraulein Kircher the former's name was no sooner spoken than this wild man leaped through the window and made for him."

Suddenly the little group became rigid—listening. "What was that?" snapped one, eyeing the bushes from which a smothered snarl had issued as Tarzan of the Apes realized that through his mistake the perpetrator of the horrid crime at his bungalow still lived—that the murderer of his wife went yet unpunished.

For a long minute the officers stood with tensed nerves, every eye riveted upon the bushes from whence the

ominous sound had issued. Each recalled recent mysterious disappearances from the heart of camps as well as from lonely out-guards. Each thought of the silent dead he had seen, slain almost within sight of their fellows by some unseen creature. They thought of the marks upon dead throats-made by talons or by giant fingers, they could not tell which—and those upon shoulders and jugulars where powerful teeth had fastened and they waited with drawn pistols.

Once the bushes moved almost imperceptibly and an instant later one of the officers, without warning, fired into them; but Tarzan of the Apes was not there. In the interval between the moving

of the bushes and the firing of the shot he had melted into the night. Ten minutes later he was hovering on the outskirts of that part of camp where were bivouacked for the night the black soldiers of a native company commanded by one Hauptmann Fritz Schneider. The men were stretched upon the ground without tents; but there were tents pitched for the officers. Toward these Tarzan crept. It was slow and perilous work, as the Germans were now upon the alert for the uncanny foe that crept into their camps to take his toll by night, yet the ape-man passed their sentinels, eluded the vigilance of the interior guard, and crept at last to the rear of the officers' line.

Here he flattened himself against the ground close behind the nearest tent and listened. From within came the regular breathing of a sleeping man —one only. Tarzan was satisfied. With his knife he cut the tie strings of the rear flap and entered. He made no noise. The shadow of a falling leaf, floating gently to earth upon a still day, could have been no more soundless. He moved to the side of the sleeping man and bent low over him. He could not know, of course, whether it was Schneider or another, as he had never seen Schneider; but he meant to know and to know even more. Gently he shook the man by the shoulder. The fellow turned heavily and grunted in a thick guttural.

"Silence!" admonished the ape-man in a low whisper. "Silence—I kill."

The Hun opened his eyes. In the dim light he saw a giant figure bending over him. Now a mighty hand grasped his shoulder and another closed lightly about his throat.

"Make no outcry," commanded Tarzan; "but answer in a whisper my questions. What is your name?"

"Luberg," replied the officer. He was trembling. The weird presence of this naked giant filled him with dread. He, too, recalled the men mysteriously murdered in the still watches of the night camps. "What do you want?"

"Where is Hauptmann Fritz Schneider?" asked Tarzan, "Which is his

tent?"

"He is not here," replied Luberg. "He was sent to Wilhelmstal yesterday."

"I shall not kill you—now," said the ape-man. "First I shall go and learn if you have lied to me and if you have your death shall be the more terrible. Do you know how Major Schneider died?"

Luberg shook his head negatively.

"I do," continued Tarzan, "and it was not a nice way to die—even for an accursed German. Turn over with your face down and cover your eyes. Do not move or make any sound."

The man did as he was bid and the instant that his eyes were turned away, Tarzan slipped from the tent. An hour later he was outside the German camp

and headed for the little hill town of Wilhelmstal, the summer seat of government of German East Africa.

Fraulein Bertha Kircher was lost. She was humiliated and angry—it was long before she would admit it, that she, who prided herself upon her woodcraft, was lost in this little patch of country between the Pangani and the Tanga railway. She knew that Wilhelmstal lay southeast of her about fifty miles; but, through a combination of untoward circumstances, she found herself unable to determine which was southeast.

In the first place she had set out from German headquarters on a well- marked road that was being traveled by troops and with every reason to believe that she

would follow that road to Wilhelmstal. Later she had been warned from this road by word that a strong British patrol had come down the west bank of the Pangani, effected a crossing south of her, and was even then marching on the railway at Tonda.

After leaving the road she found herself in thick bush and as the sky was heavily overcast she presently had recourse to her compass and it was not until then that she discovered to her dismay that she did not have it with her. So sure was she of her woodcraft, however, that she continued on in the direction she thought west until she had covered sufficient distance to warrant her in feeling assured that, by now

turning south, she could pass safely in rear of the British patrol.

Nor did she commence to feel any doubts until long after she had again turned toward the east well south, as she thought, of the patrol. It was late afternoon—she should long since have struck the road again south of Tonda; but she had found no road and now she began to feel real anxiety.

Her horse had traveled all day without food or water, night was approaching and with it a realization that she was hopelessly lost in a wild and trackless country notorious principally for its tsetse flies and savage beasts. It was maddening to know that she had absolutely no knowledge of the direction

she was traveling—that she might be forging steadily further from the railway, deeper into the gloomy and forbidding country toward the Pangani; yet it was impossible to stop-she must go on.

Bertha Kircher was no coward, whatever else she may have been, but as night began to close down around her she could not shut out from her mind entirely contemplation of the terrors of the long hours ahead before the rising sun should dissipate the Stygian gloom —the horrid jungle night - that lures forth all the prowling, preying creatures of destruction.

She found, just before dark, an open meadow-like break in the almost interminable bush. There was a small

clump of trees near the center and here she decided to camp. The grass was high and thick, affording feed for her horse and a bed for herself, and there was more than enough dead wood lying about the trees to furnish a good fire well through the night. Removing the saddle and bridle from her mount she placed them at the foot of a tree and then picketed the animal close by. Then she busied herself collecting firewood and by the time darkness had fallen she had a good fire and enough wood to last until morning.

From her saddlebags she took cold food and from her canteen a swallow of water. She could not afford more than a small swallow for she could not know

how long a time it might be before she should find more. It filled her with sorrow that her poor horse must go waterless, for even German spies may have hearts and this one was very young and very feminine.

It was now dark. There was neither moon nor stars and the light from her fire only accentuated the blackness beyond. She could see the grass about her and the boles of the trees which stood out in brilliant relief against the solid background of impenetrable night, and beyond the firelight there was nothing.

The jungle seemed ominously quiet. Far away in the distance she heard faintly the boom of big guns; but she could not locate their direction. She

strained her ears until her nerves were on the point of breaking; but she could not tell from whence the sound came. And it meant so much to her to know, for the battle-lines were north of her and if she could but locate the direction of the firing she would know which way to go in the morning.

In the morning! Would she live to see another morning? She squared her shoulders and shook herself together. Such thoughts must be banished— they would never do. Bravely she hummed an air as she arranged her saddle near the fire and pulled a quantity of long grass to make a comfortable seat over which she spread her saddle blanket. Then she unstrapped a heavy, military coat from the

cantle of her saddle and donned it, for the air was already chill.

Seating herself where she could lean against the saddle she prepared to maintain a sleepless vigil throughout the night. For an hour the silence was broken only by the distant booming of the guns and the low noises of the feeding horse and then, from possibly a mile away, came the rumbling thunder of a lion's roar. The girl started and laid her hand upon the rifle at her side. A little shudder ran through her slight frame and she could feel the goose flesh rise upon her body.

Again and again was the awful sound repeated and each time she was certain that it came nearer. She could locate the

direction of this sound although she could not that of the guns, for the origin of the former was much closer. The lion was up wind and so could not have caught her scent as yet, though he might be approaching to investigate the light of the fire which could doubtless be seen for a considerable distance.

For another fear-filled hour the girl sat straining her eyes and ears out into the black void beyond her little island of light. During all that time the lion did not roar again; but there was constantly the sensation that it was creeping upon her. Again and again she would start and turn to peer into the blackness beyond the trees behind her as her overwrought nerves conjured the stealthy fall of

padded feet. She held the rifle across her knees at the ready now and she was trembling from head to foot.

Suddenly her horse raised his head and snorted, and with a little cry of terror the girl sprang to her feet. The animal turned and trotted back toward her until the picket rope brought him to a stand, and then he wheeled about and with ears up-pricked gazed out into the night; but the girl could neither see nor hear aught.

Still another hour of terror passed during which the horse often raised his head to peer long and searchingly into the dark. The girl replenished the fire from time to time. She found herself becoming very sleepy. Her heavy lids

persisted in drooping; but she dared not sleep. Fearful lest she might be overcome by the drowsiness that was stealing through her she rose and walked briskly to and fro, then she threw some more wood on the fire, walked over and stroked her horse's muzzle and returned to her seat.

Leaning against the saddle she tried to occupy her mind with plans for the morrow; but she must have dozed. With a start she awoke. It was broad daylight. The hideous night with its indescribable terrors was gone.

She could scarce believe the testimony of her senses. She had slept for hours, the fire was out and yet she and the horse were safe and alive, nor

was there sign of savage beast about. And, best of all, the sun was shining, pointing the straight road to the east. Hastily she ate a few mouthfuls of her precious rations, which with a swallow of water constituted her breakfast. Then she saddled her horse and mounted. Already she felt that she was as good as safe in Wilhelmstal.

Possibly, however, she might have revised her conclusions could she have seen the two pairs of eyes watching her every move intently from different points in the bush.

Light-hearted and unsuspecting, the girl rode across the clearing toward the bush while directly before her two yellow-green eyes glared round and

terrible, a tawny tail twitched nervously and great, padded paws gathered beneath a sleek barrel for a mighty spring. The horse was almost at the edge of the bush when Numa, the lion, launched himself through the air. He struck the animal's right shoulder at the instant that it reared, terrified, to wheel in flight. The force of the impact hurled the horse backward to the ground and so quickly that the girl had no opportunity to extricate herself; but fell to the earth with her mount, her left leg pinned beneath its body.

Horror-stricken, she saw the king of beasts open his mighty jaws and seize the screaming creature by the back of its neck. The great jaws closed, there was

an instant's struggle as Numa shook his prey. She could hear the vertebrae crack as the mighty fangs crunched through them, and then the muscles of her faithful friend relaxed in death.

Numa crouched upon his kill. His terrifying eyes riveted themselves upon the girl's face—she could feel his hot breath upon her cheek and the odor of the fetid vapor nauseated her. For what seemed an eternity to the girl the two lay staring at each other and then the lion uttered a menacing growl.

Never before had Bertha Kircher been so terrified—never before had she had such cause for terror. At her hip was a pistol—a formidable weapon with which to face a man; but a puny thing

indeed with which to menace the great beast before her. She knew that at best it could but enrage him and yet she meant to sell her life dearly, for she felt that she must die. No human succor could have availed her even had it been there to offer itself. For a moment she tore her gaze from the hypnotic fascination of that awful face and breathed a last prayer to her God. She did not ask for aid, for she felt that she was beyond even divine succor—she only asked that the end might come quickly and with as little pain as possible.

No one can prophesy what a lion will do in any given emergency. This one glared and growled at the girl for a moment and then fell to feeding upon the

dead horse. Fraulein Kircher wondered for an instant and then attempted to draw her leg cautiously from beneath the body of her mount; but she could not budge it. She increased the force of her efforts and Numa looked up from his feeding to growl again. The girl desisted. She hoped that he might satisfy his hunger and then depart to lie up, but she could not believe that he would leave her there alive. Doubtless he would drag the remains of his kill into the bush for hiding and, as there could be no doubt that he considered her part of his prey, he would certainly come back for her, or possibly drag her in first and kill her.

Again Numa fell to feeding. The girl's nerves were at the breaking point. She

wondered that she had not fainted under the strain of terror and shock. She recalled that she often had wished she might see a lion, close to, make a kill and feed upon it. God! how realistically her wish had been granted.

Again she bethought herself of her pistol. As she had fallen, the holster had slipped around so that the weapon now lay beneath her. Very slowly she reached for it; but in so doing she was forced to raise her body from the ground. Instantly the lion was aroused. With the swiftness of a cat he reached across the carcass of the horse and placed a heavy, taloned paw upon her breast, crushing her back to earth, and all the time he growled and snarled horribly. His face

was a picture of frightful rage incarnate. For a moment neither moved and then from behind her the girl heard a human voice uttering bestial sounds.

Numa suddenly looked up from the girl's face at the thing beyond her. His growls increased to roars as he drew back, ripping the front of the girl's waist almost from her body with his long talons, exposing her white bosom, which through some miracle of chance the great claws did not touch.

Tarzan of the Apes had witnessed the entire encounter from the moment that Numa had leaped upon his prey. For some time before, he had been watching the girl, and after the lion attacked her he had at first been minded to let Numa

have his way with her. What was she but a hated German and a spy besides? He had seen her at General Kraut's headquarters, in conference with the German staff and again he had seen her within the British lines masquerading as a British officer. It was the latter thought that prompted him to interfere. Doubtless General Jan Smuts would be glad to meet and question her. She might be forced to divulge information of value to the British commander before Smuts had her shot.

Tarzan had recognized not only the girl, but the lion as well. All lions may look alike to you and me; but not so to their intimates of the jungle. Each has his individual characteristics of face and

form and gait as well defined as those that differentiate members of the human family, and besides these the creatures of the jungle have a still more positive test-that of scent. Each of us, man or beast, has his own peculiar odor, and it is mostly by this that the beasts of the jungle, endowed with miraculous powers of scent, recognize individuals.

It is the final proof. You have seen it demonstrated a thousand times —a dog recognizes your voice and looks at you. He knows your face and figure. Good, there can be no doubt in his mind but that it is you; but is he satisfied? No, sir-he must come up and smell of you. All his other senses may be fallible, but not his sense of smell, and so he makes

assurance positive by the final test.

Tarzan recognized Numa as he whom he had muzzled with the hide of Horta, the boar—as he whom he handled by a rope for two days and finally loosed in a German front-line trench, and he knew that Numa would recognize him—that he would remember the sharp spear that had goaded him into submission and obedience and Tarzan hoped that the lesson he had learned still remained with the lion.

Now he came forward calling to Numa in the language of the great apes - warning him away from the girl. It is open to question that Numa, the lion, understood him; but he did understand the menace of the heavy spear that the

Tarmangani carried so ready in his brown, right hand, and so he drew back, growling, trying to decide in his little brain whether to charge or flee.

On came the ape-man with never a pause, straight for the lion. "Go away, Numa," he cried, "or Tarzan will tie you up again and lead you through the jungle without food. See Arad, my spear! Do you recall how his point stuck into you and how with his haft I beat you over the head? Go, Numa! I am Tarzan of the Apes!"

Numa wrinkled the skin of his face into great folds, until his eyes almost disappeared and he growled and roared and snarled and growled again, and when the spear point came at last quite

close to him he struck at it viciously with his armed paw; but he drew back. Tarzan stepped over the dead horse and the girl lying behind him gazed in wide-eyed astonishment at the handsome figure driving an angry lion deliberately from its kill.

When Numa had retreated a few yards, the ape-man called back to the girl in perfect German, "Are you badly hurt?"

"I think not," she replied; "but I cannot extricate my foot from beneath my horse."

"Try again," commanded Tarzan. "I do not know how long I can hold Numa thus."

The girl struggled frantically; but at

last she sank back upon an elbow.

"It is impossible," she called to him.

He backed slowly until he was again beside the horse, when he reached down and grasped the cinch, which was still intact. Then with one hand he raised the carcass from the ground. The girl freed herself and rose to her feet.

"You can walk?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," she said; "my leg is numb; but it does not seem to be injured."

"Good," commented the ape-man. "Back slowly away behind me—make no sudden movements. I think he will not charge."

With utmost deliberation the two backed toward the bush. Numa stood for

a moment, growling, then he followed them, slowly. Tarzan wondered if he would come beyond his kill or if he would stop there. If he followed them beyond, then they could look for a charge, and if Numa charged it was very likely that he would get one of them. When the lion reached the carcass of the horse Tarzan stopped and so did Numa, as Tarzan had thought that he would and the ape-man waited to see what the lion would do next. He eyed them for a moment, snarled angrily and then looked down at the tempting meat. Presently he crouched upon his kill and resumed feeding.

The girl breathed a deep sigh of relief as she and the ape-man resumed their

slow retreat with only an occasional glance from the lion, and when at last they reached the bush and had turned and entered it, she felt a sudden giddiness overwhelm her so that she staggered and would have fallen had Tarzan not caught her. It was only a moment before she regained control of herself.

"I could not help it," she said, in half apology. "I was so close to death —such a horrible death—it unnerved me for an instant; but I am all right now. How can I ever thank you? It was so wonderful—you did not seem to fear the frightful creature in the least; yet he was afraid of you. Who are you?"

"He knows me," replied Tarzan, grimly—"that is why he fears me."

He was standing facing the girl now and for the first time he had a chance to look at her squarely and closely. She was very beautiful—that was undeniable; but Tarzan realized her beauty only in a subconscious way. It was superficial—it did not color her soul which must be black as sin. She was German—a German spy. He hated her and desired only to compass her destruction; but he would choose the manner so that it would work most grievously against the enemy cause.

He saw her naked breasts where Numa had torn her clothing from her and dangling there against the soft, white flesh he saw that which brought a sudden scowl of surprise and anger to his face

—the diamond-studded, golden locket of his youth—the love token that had been stolen from the breast of his mate by Schneider, the Hun. The girl saw the scowl but did not interpret it correctly. Tarzan grasped her roughly by the arm.

"Where did you get this?" he demanded, as he tore the bauble from her.

The girl drew herself to her full height. "Take your hand from me," she demanded, but the ape-man paid no attention to her words, only seizing her more forcibly.

"Answer me!" he snapped. "Where did you get this?"

"What is it to you?" she countered.

"It is mine," he replied. "Tell me who

gave it to you or I will throw you back to Numa."

"You would do that?" she asked.

"Why not?" he queried. "You are a spy and spies must die if they are caught."

"You were going to kill me, then?"

"I was going to take you to headquarters. They would dispose of you there; but Numa can do it quite as effectively. Which do you prefer?"

"Hauptmann Fritz Schneider gave it to me," she said.

"Headquarters it will be then," said Tarzan. "Come!" The girl moved at his side through the bush and all the time her mind worked quickly. They were

moving east, which suited her, and as long as they continued to move east she was glad to have the protection of the great, white savage. She speculated much upon the fact that her pistol still swung at her hip. The man must be mad not to take it from her.

"What makes you think I am a spy?" she asked after a long silence.

"I saw you at German headquarters," he replied, "and then again inside the British lines."

She could not let him take her back to them. She must reach Wilhelmstal at once and she was determined to do so even if she must have recourse to her pistol. She cast a side glance at the tall figure. What a magnificent creature! But

yet he was a brute who would kill her or have her killed if she did not slay him. And the locket! She must have that back—it must not fail to reach Wilhelmstal. Tarzan was now a foot or two ahead of her as the path was very narrow. Cautiously she drew her pistol. A single shot would suffice and he was so close that she could not miss. As she figured it all out her eyes rested on the brown skin with the graceful muscles rolling beneath it and the perfect limbs and head and the carriage that a proud king of old might have envied. A wave of revulsion for her contemplated act surged through her. No, she could not do it—yet, she must be free and she must regain possession of the locket. And then, almost blindly, she

swung the weapon up and struck Tarzan heavily upon the back of the head with its butt. Like a felled ox he dropped in his tracks.

6. VENGEANCE AND MERCY

It was an hour later that Sheeta, the panther, hunting, chanced to glance upward into the blue sky where his attention was attracted by Ska, the vulture, circling slowly above the bush a mile away and downwind. For a long minute the yellow eyes stared intently at the gruesome bird. They saw Ska dive and rise again to continue his ominous circling and in these movements their woodcraft read that which, while obvious to Sheeta, would doubtless have meant nothing to you or me.

The hunting cat guessed that on the ground beneath Ska was some living thing of flesh—either a beast feeding upon its kill or a dying animal that Ska

did not yet dare attack. In either event it might prove meat for Sheeta, and so the wary feline stalked by a circuitous route, upon soft, padded feet that gave forth no sound, until the circling aasvogel and his intended prey were upwind. Then, sniffing each vagrant zephyr, Sheeta, the panther, crept cautiously forward, nor had he advanced any considerable distance before his keen nostrils were rewarded with the scent of man— a Tarmangani.

Sheeta paused. He was not a hunter of men. He was young and in his prime; but always before he had avoided this hated presence. Of late he had become more accustomed to it with the passing of many soldiers through his ancient hunting

ground, and as the soldiers had frightened away a great part of the game Sheeta had been wont to feed upon, the days had been lean, and Sheeta was hungry.

The circling Ska suggested that this Tarmangani might be helpless and upon the point of dying, else Ska would not have been interested in him, and so easy prey for Sheeta. With this thought in mind the cat resumed his stalking. Presently he pushed through the thick bush and his yellow-green eyes rested gloatingly upon the body of an almost naked Tarmangani lying face down in a narrow game trail.

Numa, sated, rose from the carcass of Bertha Kircher's horse and seized the

partially devoured body by the neck and dragged it into the bush; then he started east toward the lair where he had left his mate. Being uncomfortably full he was inclined to be sleepy and far from belligerent. He moved slowly and majestically with no effort at silence or concealment. The king walked abroad, unafraid.

With an occasional regal glance to right or left he moved along a narrow game trail until at a turn he came to a sudden stop at what lay revealed before him—Sheeta, the panther, creeping stealthily upon the almost naked body of a Tarmangani lying face down in the deep dust of the pathway. Numa glared intently at the quiet body in the dust.

Recognition came. It was his Tarmangani. A low growl of warning rumbled from his throat and Sheeta halted with one paw upon Tarzan's back and turned suddenly to eye the intruder.

What passed within those savage brains? Who may say? The panther seemed debating the wisdom of defending his find, for he growled horribly as though warning Numa away from the prey. And Numa? Was the idea of property rights dominating his thoughts? The Tarmangani was his, or he was the Tarmangani's. Had not the Great White Ape mastered and subdued him and, too, had he not fed him? Numa recalled the fear that he had felt of this man-thing and his cruel spear; but in

savage brains fear is more likely to engender respect than hatred and so Numa found that he respected the creature who had subdued and mastered him. He saw Sheeta, upon whom he looked with contempt, daring to molest the master of the lion. Jealousy and greed alone might have been sufficient to prompt Numa to drive Sheeta away, even though the lion was not sufficiently hungry to devour the flesh that he thus wrested from the lesser cat; but then, too, there was in the little brain within the massive head a sense of loyalty, and perhaps this it was that sent Numa quickly forward, growling, toward the spitting Sheeta.

For a moment the latter stood his

ground with arched back and snarling face, for all the world like a great, spotted tabby.

Numa had not felt like fighting; but the sight of Sheeta daring to dispute his rights kindled his ferocious brain to sudden fire. His rounded eyes glared with rage, his undulating tail snapped to stiff erectness as, with a frightful roar, he charged this presuming vassal.

It came so suddenly and from so short a distance that Sheeta had no chance to turn and flee the rush, and so he met it with raking talons and snapping jaws; but the odds were all against him. To the larger fangs and the more powerful jaws of his adversary were added huge talons and the preponderance of the lion's great

weight. At the first clash Sheeta was crushed and, though he deliberately fell upon his back and drew up his powerful hind legs beneath Numa with the intention of disemboweling him, the lion forestalled him and at the same time closed his awful jaws upon Sheeta's throat.

It was soon over. Numa rose, shaking himself, and stood above the torn and mutilated body of his foe. His own sleek coat was cut and the red blood trickled down his flank; though it was but a minor injury, it angered him. He glared down at the dead panther and then, in a fit of rage, he seized and mauled the body only to drop it in a moment, lower his head, voice a single terrific roar, and

turn toward the ape-man.

Approaching the still form he sniffed it over from head to foot. Then he placed a huge paw upon it and turned it over with its face up. Again he smelled about the body and at last with his rough tongue licked Tarzan's face. It was then that Tarzan opened his eyes.

Above him towered the huge lion, its hot breath upon his face, its rough tongue upon his cheek. The ape-man had often been close to death; but never before so close as this, he thought, for he was convinced that death was but a matter of seconds. His brain was still numb from the effects of the blow that had felled him, and so he did not, for a moment, recognize the lion that stood over him as

the one he had so recently encountered.

Presently, however, recognition dawned upon him and with it a realization of the astounding fact that Numa did not seem bent on devouring him— at least not immediately. His position was a delicate one. The lion stood astraddle Tarzan with his front paws. The ape-man could not rise, therefore, without pushing the lion away and whether Numa would tolerate being pushed was an open question. Too, the beast might consider him already dead and any movement that indicated the contrary was true would, in all likelihood, arouse the killing instinct of the man-eater.

But Tarzan was tiring of the situation.

He was in no mood to lie there forever, especially when he contemplated the fact that the girl spy who had tried to brain him was undoubtedly escaping as rapidly as possible.

Numa was looking right into his eyes now evidently aware that he was alive. Presently the lion cocked his head on one side and whined. Tarzan knew the note, and he knew that it spelled neither rage nor hunger, and then he risked all on a single throw, encouraged by that low whine.

"Move, Numa!" he commanded and placing a palm against the tawny shoulder he pushed the lion aside. Then he rose and with a hand on his hunting knife awaited that which might follow. It

was then that his eyes fell for the first time on the torn body of Sheeta. He looked from the dead cat to the live one and saw the marks of conflict upon the latter, too, and in an instant realized something of what had happened—Numa had saved him from the panther!

It seemed incredible and yet the evidence pointed clearly to the fact. He turned toward the lion and without fear approached and examined his wounds which he found superficial, and as Tarzan knelt beside him Numa rubbed an itching ear against the naked, brown shoulder. Then the ape-man stroked the great head, picked up his spear, and looked about for the trail of the girl. This he soon found leading toward the east,

and as he set out upon it something prompted him to feel for the locket he had hung about his neck. It was gone!

No trace of anger was apparent upon the ape-man's face unless it was a slight tightening of the jaws; but he put his hand ruefully to the back of his head where a bump marked the place where the girl had struck him and a moment later a half-smile played across his lips. He could not help but admit that she had tricked him neatly, and that it must have taken nerve to do the thing she did and to set out armed only with a pistol through the trackless waste that lay between them and the railway and beyond into the hills where Wilhelmstal lies.

Tarzan admired courage. He was big

enough to admit it and admire it even in a German spy, but he saw that in this case it only added to her resourcefulness and made her all the more dangerous and the necessity for putting her out of the way paramount. He hoped to overtake her before she reached Wilhelmstal and so he set out at the swinging trot that he could hold for hours at a stretch without apparent fatigue.

That the girl could hope to reach the town on foot in less than two days seemed improbable, for it was a good thirty miles and part of it hilly. Even as the thought crossed his mind he heard the whistle of a locomotive to the east and knew that the railway was in operation again after a shutdown of several days.

If the train was going south the girl would signal it if she had reached the right of way. His keen ears caught the whining of brake shoes on wheels and a few minutes later the signal blast for brakes off. The train had stopped and started again and, as it gained headway and greater distance, Tarzan could tell from the direction of the sound that it was moving south.

The ape-man followed the trail to the railway where it ended abruptly on the west side of the track, showing that the girl had boarded the train, just as he thought. There was nothing now but to follow on to Wilhelmstal, where he hoped to find Captain Fritz Schneider, as well as the girl, and to recover his

diamond-studded locket.

It was dark when Tarzan reached the little hill town of Wilhelmstal. He loitered on the outskirts, getting his bearings and trying to determine how an almost naked white man might explore the village without arousing suspicion. There were many soldiers about and the town was under guard, for he could see a lone sentinel walking his post scarce a hundred yards from him. To elude this one would not be difficult; but to enter the village and search it would be practically impossible, garbed, or un-garbed, as he was.

Creeping forward, taking advantage of every cover, lying flat and motionless when the sentry's face was toward him,

the ape-man at last reached the sheltering shadows of an outhouse just inside the lines. From there he moved stealthily from building to building until at last he was discovered by a large dog in the rear of one of the bungalows. The brute came slowly toward him, growling. Tarzan stood motionless beside a tree. He could see a light in the bungalow and uniformed men moving about and he hoped that the dog would not bark. He did not; but he growled more savagely and, just at the moment that the rear door of the bungalow opened and a man stepped out, the animal charged.

He was a large dog, as large as Dango, the hyena, and he charged with

all the vicious impetuosity of Numa, the lion. As he came Tarzan knelt and the dog shot through the air for his throat; but he was dealing with no man now and he found his quickness more than matched by the quickness of the Tarmangani. His teeth never reached the soft flesh—strong fingers, fingers of steel, seized his neck. He voiced a single startled yelp and clawed at the naked breast before him with his talons; but he was powerless. The mighty fingers closed upon his throat; the man rose, snapped the clawing body once, and cast it aside. At the same time a voice from the open bungalow door called: "Simba!"

There was no response. Repeating the

call the man descended the steps and advanced toward the tree. In the light from the doorway Tarzan could see that he was a tall, broad-shouldered man in the uniform of a German officer. The ape-man withdrew into the shadow of the tree's stem. The man came closer, still calling the dog—he did not see the savage beast, crouching now in the shadow, awaiting him. When he had approached within ten feet of the Tarmangani, Tarzan leaped upon him—as Sabor springs to the kill, so sprang the ape-man. The momentum and weight of his body hurled the German to the ground, powerful fingers prevented an outcry and, though the officer struggled, he had no chance and a moment later lay

dead beside the body of the dog.

As Tarzan stood for a moment looking down upon his kill and regretting that he could not risk voicing his beloved victory cry, the sight of the uniform suggested a means whereby he might pass to and fro through Wilhelmstal with the minimum chance of detection. Ten minutes later a tall, broad-shouldered officer stepped from the yard of the bungalow leaving behind him the corpses of a dog and a naked man.

He walked boldly along the little street and those who passed him could not guess that beneath Imperial Germany's uniform beat a savage heart that pulsed with implacable hatred for the Hun. Tarzan's first concern was to

locate the hotel, for here he guessed he would find the girl, and where the girl was doubtless would be Hauptmann Fritz Schneider, who was either her confederate, her sweetheart, or both, and there, too, would be Tarzan's precious locket.

He found the hotel at last, a low, two-storied building with a veranda. There were lights on both floors and people, mostly officers, could be seen within. The ape-man considered entering and inquiring for those he sought; but his better judgment finally prompted him to reconnoiter first. Passing around the building he looked into all the lighted rooms on the first floor and, seeing neither of those for whom he had come,

he swung lightly to the roof of the veranda and continued his investigations through windows of the second story.

At one corner of the hotel in a rear room the blinds were drawn; but he heard voices within and once he saw a figure silhouetted momentarily against the blind. It appeared to be the figure of a woman; but it was gone so quickly that he could not be sure. Tarzan crept close to the window and listened. Yes, there was a woman there and a man—he heard distinctly the tones of their voices although he could overhear no words, as they seemed to be whispering.

The adjoining room was dark. Tarzan tried the window and found it unlatched. All was quiet within. He raised the sash

and listened again - still silence. Placing a leg over the sill he slipped within and hurriedly glanced about. The room was vacant. Crossing to the door he opened it and looked out into the hall. There was no one there, either, and he stepped out and approached the door of the adjoining room where the man and woman were.

Pressing close to the door he listened. Now he distinguished words, for the two had raised their voices as though in argument. The woman was speaking.

"I have brought the locket," she said, "as was agreed upon between you and General Kraut, as my identification. I carry no other credentials. This was to be enough. You have nothing to do but give me the papers and let me go."

The man replied in so low a tone that Tarzan could not catch the words and then the woman spoke again—a note of scorn and perhaps a little of fear in her voice.

"You would not dare, Hauptmann Schneider," she said, and then: "Do not touch me! Take your hands from me!"

It was then that Tarzan of the Apes opened the door and stepped into the room. What he saw was a huge, bull-necked German officer with one arm about the waist of Fraulein Bertha Kircher and a hand upon her forehead pushing her head back as he tried to kiss her on the mouth. The girl was struggling against the great brute; but her efforts were futile. Slowly the man's lips were

coming closer to hers and slowly, step by step, she was being carried backward.

Schneider heard the noise of the opening and closing door behind him and turned. At sight of this strange officer he dropped the girl and straightened up.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion, Lieutenant?" he demanded, noting the other's epaulettes. "Leave the room at once."

Tarzan made no articulate reply; but the two there with him heard a low growl break from those firm lips—a growl that sent a shudder through the frame of the girl and brought a pallor to the red face of the Hun and his hand to

his pistol but even as he drew his weapon it was wrested from him and hurled through the blind and window to the yard beyond. Then Tarzan backed against the door and slowly removed the uniform coat.

"You are Hauptmann Schneider," he said to the German.

"What of it?" growled the latter.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man. "Now you know why I intrude."

The two before him saw that he was naked beneath the coat which he threw upon the floor and then he slipped quickly from the trousers and stood there clothed only in his loin cloth. The girl had recognized him by this time, too.

"Take your hand off that pistol," Tarzan admonished her. Her hand dropped at her side. "Now come here!"

She approached and Tarzan removed the weapon and hurled it after the other. At the mention of his name Tarzan had noted the sickly pallor that overspread the features of the Hun. At last he had found the right man. At last his mate would be partially avenged—never could she be entirely avenged. Life was too short and there were too many Germans.

"What do you want of me?" demanded Schneider.

"You are going to pay the price for the thing you did at the little bungalow in the Waziri country," replied the ape-

man.

Schneider commenced to bluster and threaten. Tarzan turned the key in the lock of the door and hurled the former through the window after the pistols. Then he turned to the girl. "Keep out of the way," he said in a low voice. "Tarzan of the Apes is going to kill."

The Hun ceased blustering and began to plead. "I have a wife and children at home," he cried. "I have done nothing," I __"

"You are going to die as befits your kind," said Tarzan, "with blood on your hands and a lie on your lips." He started across the room toward the burly Hauptmann. Schneider was a large and powerful man—about the height of the

ape-man but much heavier. He saw that neither threats nor pleas would avail him and so he prepared to fight as a cornered rat fights for its life with all the maniacal rage, cunning, and ferocity that the first law of nature imparts to many beasts.

Lowering his bull head he charged for the ape-man and in the center of the floor the two clinched. There they stood locked and swaying for a moment until Tarzan succeeded in forcing his antagonist backward over a table which crashed to the floor, splintered by the weight of the two heavy bodies.

The girl stood watching the battle with wide eyes. She saw the two men rolling hither and thither across the floor and she heard with horror the low

growls that came from the lips of the naked giant. Schneider was trying to reach his foe's throat with his fingers while, horror of horrors, Bertha Kircher could see that the other was searching for the German's jugular with his teeth!

Schneider seemed to realize this too, for he redoubled his efforts to escape and finally succeeded in rolling over on top of the ape-man and breaking away. Leaping to his feet he ran for the window; but the ape-man was too quick for him and before he could leap through the sash a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder and he was jerked back and hurled across the room to the opposite wall. There Tarzan followed him, and once again they locked, dealing each

other terrific blows, until Schneider in a piercing voice screamed, "Kamerad! Kamerad!"

Tarzan grasped the man by the throat and drew his hunting knife. Schneider's back was against the wall so that though his knees wobbled he was held erect by the ape-man. Tarzan brought the sharp point to the lower part of the German's abdomen.

"Thus you slew my mate," he hissed in a terrible voice. "Thus shall you die!"

The girl staggered forward. "Oh, God, no!" she cried. "Not that. You are too brave—you cannot be such a beast as that!"

Tarzan turned at her. "No," he said, "you are right, I cannot do it —I am no

German," and he raised the point of his blade and sunk it deep into the putrid heart of Hauptmann Fritz Schneider, putting a bloody period to the Hun's last gasping cry: "I did not do it! She is not __"

Then Tarzan turned toward the girl and held out his hand. "Give me my locket," he said.

She pointed toward the dead officer. "He has it." Tarzan searched him and found the trinket. "Now you may give me the papers," he said to the girl, and without a word she handed him a folded document.

For a long time he stood looking at her before ho spoke again.

"I came for you, too," he said. "It

would be difficult to take you back from here and so I was going to kill you, as I have sworn to kill all your kind; but you were right when you said that I was not such a beast as that slayer of women. I could not slay him as he slew mine, nor can I slay you, who are a woman."

He crossed to the window, raised the sash and an instant later he had stepped out and disappeared into the night. And then Fraulein Bertha Kircher stepped quickly to the corpse upon the floor, slipped her hand inside the blouse and drew forth a little sheaf of papers which she tucked into her waist before she went to the window and called for help.

7. WHEN BLOOD TOLD

Tarzan of the Apes was disgusted. He had had the German spy, Bertha Kircher, in his power and had left her unscathed. It is true that he had slain Hauptmann Fritz Schneider, that Underlieutenant von Goss had died at his hands, and that he had otherwise wreaked vengeance upon the men of the German company who had murdered, pillaged, and raped at Tarzan's bungalow in the Waziri country. There was still another officer to be accounted for, but him he could not find. It was Lieutenant Obergatz he still sought, though vainly, for at last he learned that the man had been sent upon some special mission, whether in Africa or back to Europe Tarzan's informant

either did not know or would not divulge.

But the fact that he had permitted sentiment to stay his hand when he might so easily have put Bertha Kircher out of the way in the hotel at Wilhelmstal that night rankled in the ape-man's bosom. He was shamed by his weakness, and when he had handed the paper she had given him to the British chief of staff, even though the information it contained permitted the British to frustrate a German flank attack, he was still much dissatisfied with himself. And possibly the root of this dissatisfaction lay in the fact that he realized that were he again to have the same opportunity he would still find it as impossible to slay a woman as

it had been in Wilhelmstal that night.

Tarzan blamed this weakness, as he considered it, upon his association with the effeminizing influences of civilization, for in the bottom of his savage heart he held in contempt both civilization and its representatives - the men and women of the civilized countries of the world. Always was he comparing their weaknesses, their vices, their hypocrisies, and their little vanities with the open, primitive ways of his ferocious jungle mates, and all the while there battled in that same big heart with these forces another mighty force—Tarzan's love and loyalty for his friends of the civilized world.

The ape-man, reared as he had been

by savage beasts amid savage beasts, was slow to make friends. Acquaintances he numbered by the hundreds; but of friends he had few. These few he would have died for as, doubtless, they would have died for him; but there were none of these fighting with the British forces in East Africa, and so, sickened and disgusted by the sight of man waging his cruel and inhuman warfare, Tarzan determined to heed the insistent call of the remote jungle of his youth, for the Germans were now on the run and the war in East Africa was so nearly over that he realized that his further services would be of negligible value.

Never regularly sworn into the

service of the King, he was under no obligation to remain now that the moral obligation had been removed, and so it was that he disappeared from the British camp as mysteriously as he had appeared a few months before.

More than once had Tarzan reverted to the primitive only to return again to civilization through love for his mate; but now that she was gone he felt that this time he had definitely departed forever from the haunts of man, and that he should live and die a beast among beasts even as he had been from infancy to maturity.

Between him and destination lay a trackless wilderness of untouched primeval savagery where, doubtless in

many spots, his would be the first human foot to touch the virgin turf. Nor did this prospect dismay the Tarmangani—rather was it an urge and an inducement, for rich in his veins flowed that noble strain of blood that has made most of the earth's surface habitable for man.

The question of food and water that would have risen paramount in the mind of an ordinary man contemplating such an excursion gave Tarzan little concern. The wilderness was his natural habitat and woodcraft as inherent to him as breathing. Like other jungle animals he could scent water from a great distance and, where you or I might die of thirst, the ape-man would unerringly select the exact spot at which to dig and find

water.

For several days Tarzan traversed a country rich in game and watercourses. He moved slowly, hunting and fishing, or again fraternizing or quarreling with the other savage denizens of the jungle. Now it was little Manu, the monkey, who chattered and scolded at the mighty Tarmangani and in the next breath warned him that Histah, the snake, lay coiled in the long grass just ahead. Of Manu Tarzan inquired concerning the great apes—the Mangani —and was told that few inhabited this part of the jungle, and that even these were hunting farther to the north this season of the year.

"But there is Bolgani," said Manu. "Would you like to see Bolgani?"

Manu's tone was sneering, and Tarzan knew that it was because little Manu thought all creatures feared mighty Bolgani, the gorilla. Tarzan arched his great chest and struck it with a clinched fist. "I am Tarzan," he cried. "While Tarzan was yet a balu he slew a Bolgani. Tarzan seeks the Mangani, who are his brothers, but Bolgani he does not seek, so let Bolgani keep from the path of Tarzan."

Little Manu, the monkey, was much impressed, for the way of the jungle is to boast and to believe. It was then that he condescended to tell Tarzan more of the Mangani.

"They go there and there and there," he said, making a wide sweep with a

brown hand first toward the north, then west, and then south again. "For there," and he pointed due west, "is much hunting; but between lies a great place where there is no food and no water, so they must go that way," and again he swung his hand through the half-circle that explained to Tarzan the great detour the apes made to come to their hunting ground to the west.

That was all right for the Mangani, who are lazy and do not care to move rapidly; but for Tarzan the straight road would be the best. He would cross the dry country and come to the good hunting in a third of the time that it would take to go far to the north and circle back again. And so it was that he continued on

toward the west, and crossing a range of low mountains came in sight of a broad plateau, rock strewn and desolate. Far in the distance he saw another range of mountains beyond which he felt must lie the hunting ground of the Mangani. There he would join them and remain for a while before continuing on toward the coast and the little cabin that his father had built beside the land-locked harbor at the jungle's edge.

Tarzan was full of plans. He would rebuild and enlarge the cabin of his birth, constructing storage houses where he would make the apes lay away food when it was plenty against the times that were lean—a thing no ape ever had dreamed of doing. And the tribe would

remain always in the locality and he would be king again as he had in the past. He would try to teach them some of the better things that he had learned from man, yet knowing the ape-mind as only Tarzan could, he feared that his labors would be for naught.

The ape-man found the country he was crossing rough in the extreme, the roughest he ever had encountered. The plateau was cut by frequent canyons the passage of which often entailed hours of wearing effort. The vegetation was sparse and of a faded brown color that lent to the whole landscape a most depressing aspect. Great rocks were strewn in every direction as far as the eye could see, lying partially embedded

in an impalpable dust that rose in clouds about him at every step. The sun beat down mercilessly out of a cloudless sky.

For a day Tarzan toiled across this now hateful land and at the going down of the sun the distant mountains to the west seemed no nearer than at morn. Never a sign of living thing had the ape-man seen, other than Ska, that bird of ill omen, that had followed him tirelessly since he had entered this parched waste.

No littlest beetle that he might eat had given evidence that life of any sort existed here, and it was a hungry and thirsty Tarzan who lay down to rest in the evening. He decided now to push on during the cool of the night, for he realized that even mighty Tarzan had his

limitations and that where there was no food one could not eat and where there was no water the greatest woodcraft in the world could find none. It was a totally new experience to Tarzan to find so barren and terrible a country in his beloved Africa. Even the Sahara had its oases; but this frightful world gave no indication of containing a square foot of hospitable ground.

However, he had no misgivings but that he would fare forth into the wonder country of which little Manu had told him, though it was certain that he would do it with a dry skin and an empty belly. And so he fought on until daylight, when he again felt the need of rest. He was at the edge of another of those terrible

canyons, the eighth he had crossed, whose precipitous sides would have taxed to the uttermost the strength of an untired man well fortified by food and water, and for the first time, as he looked down into the abyss and then at the opposite side that he must scale, misgivings began to assail his mind.

He did not fear death—with the memory of his murdered mate still fresh in his mind he almost courted it, yet strong within him was that primal instinct of self-preservation—the battling force of life that would keep him an active contender against the Great Reaper until, fighting to the very last, he should be overcome by a superior power.

A shadow swung slowly across the ground beside him, and looking up, the ape-man saw Ska, the vulture, wheeling a wide circle above him. The grim and persistent harbinger of evil aroused the man to renewed determination. He arose and approached the edge of the canyon, and then, wheeling, with his face turned upward toward the circling bird of prey, he bellowed forth the challenge of the bull ape.

"I am Tarzan," he shouted, "Lord of the Jungle. Tarzan of the Apes is not for Ska, eater of carrion. Go back to the lair of Dango and feed off the leavings of the hyenas, for Tarzan will leave no bones for Ska to pick in this empty wilderness of death."

But before he reached the bottom of the canyon he again was forced to the realization that his great strength was waning, and when he dropped exhausted at the foot of the cliff and saw before him the opposite wall that must be scaled, he bared his fighting fangs and growled. For an hour he lay resting in the cool shade at the foot of the cliff. All about him reigned utter silence—the silence of the tomb. No fluttering birds, no humming insects, no scurrying reptiles relieved the deathlike stillness. This indeed was the valley of death. He felt the depressing influence of the horrible place setting down upon him; but he staggered to his feet, shaking himself like a great lion, for was he not

still Tarzan, mighty Tarzan of the Apes? Yes, and Tarzan the mighty he would be until the last throb of that savage heart!

As he crossed the floor of the canyon he saw something lying close to the base of the side wall he was approaching-something that stood out in startling contrast to all the surroundings and yet seemed so much a part and parcel of the somber scene as to suggest an actor amid the settings of a well-appointed stage, and, as though to carry out the allegory, the pitiless rays of flaming Kudu topped the eastern cliff, picking out the thing lying at the foot of the western wall like a giant spotlight.

And as Tarzan came nearer he saw the bleached skull and bones of a human

being about which were remnants of clothing and articles of equipment that, as he examined them, filled the ape-man with curiosity to such an extent that for a time he forgot his own predicament in contemplation of the remarkable story suggested by these mute evidences of a tragedy of a time long past.

The bones were in a fair state of preservation and indicated by their intactness that the flesh had probably been picked from them by vultures as none was broken; but the pieces of equipment bore out the suggestion of their great age. In this protected spot where there were no frosts and evidently but little rainfall, the bones might have lain for ages without disintegrating, for

there were here no other forces to scatter or disturb them.

Near the skeleton lay a helmet of hammered brass and a corroded breastplate of steel while at one side was a long, straight sword in its scabbard and an ancient harquebus. The bones were those of a large man —a man of wondrous strength and vitality Tarzan knew he must have been to have penetrated thus far through the dangers of Africa with such a ponderous yet at the same time futile armament.

The ape-man felt a sense of deep admiration for this nameless adventurer of a bygone day. What a brute of a man he must have been and what a glorious tale of battle and kaleidoscopic

vicissitudes of fortune must once have been locked within that whitened skull! Tarzan stooped to examine the shreds of clothing that still lay about the bones. Every particle of leather had disappeared, doubtless eaten by Ska. No boots remained, if the man had worn boots, but there were several buckles scattered about suggesting that a great part of his trappings had been of leather, while just beneath the bones of one hand lay a metal cylinder about eight inches long and two inches in diameter. As Tarzan picked it up he saw that it had been heavily lacquered and had withstood the slight ravages of time so well as to be in as perfect a state of preservation today as it had been when

its owner dropped into his last, long sleep perhaps centuries ago.

As he examined it he discovered that one end was closed with a friction cover which a little twisting force soon loosened and removed, revealing within a roll of parchment which the ape-man removed and opened, disclosing a number of age-yellowed sheets closely written upon in a fine hand in a language which he guessed to be Spanish but which he could not decipher. Upon the last sheet was a roughly drawn map with numerous reference points marked upon it, all unintelligible to Tarzan, who, after a brief examination of the papers, returned them to their metal case, replaced the top and was about to toss

the little cylinder to the ground beside the mute remains of its former possessor when some whim of curiosity unsatisfied prompted him to slip it into the quiver with his arrows, though as he did so it was with the grim thought that possibly centuries hence it might again come to the sight of man beside his own bleached bones.

And then, with a parting glance at the ancient skeleton, he turned to the task of ascending the western wall of the canyon. Slowly and with many rests he dragged his weakening body upwards. Again and again he slipped back from sheer exhaustion and would have fallen to the floor of the canyon but for merest chance. How long it took him to scale

that frightful wall he could not have told, and when at last he dragged himself over the top it was to lie weak and gasping, too spent to rise or even to move a few inches farther from the perilous edge of the chasm.

At last he arose, very slowly and with evident effort gaining his knees first and then staggering to his feet, yet his indomitable will was evidenced by a sudden straightening of his shoulders and a determined shake of his head as he lurched forward on unsteady legs to take up his valiant fight for survival. Ahead he scanned the rough landscape for sign of another canyon which he knew would spell inevitable doom. The western hills rose closer now though weirdly unreal

as they seemed to dance in the sunlight as though mocking him with their nearness at the moment that exhaustion was about to render them forever unattainable.

Beyond them he knew must be the fertile hunting grounds of which Manu had told. Even if no canyon intervened, his chances of surmounting even low hills seemed remote should he have the fortune to reach their base; but with another canyon hope was dead. Above them Ska still circled, and it seemed to the ape-man that the ill- omened bird hovered ever lower and lower as though reading in that failing gait the nearing of the end, and through cracked lips Tarzan growled out his defiance.

Mile after mile Tarzan of the Apes put slowly behind him, borne up by sheer force of will where a lesser man would have lain down to die and rest forever tired muscles whose every move was an agony of effort; but at last his progress became practically mechanical—he staggered on with a dazed mind that reacted numbly to a single urge—on, on, on! The hills were now but a dim, ill- defined blur ahead. Sometimes he forgot that they were hills, and again he wondered vaguely why he must go on forever through all this torture endeavoring to overtake them—the fleeing, elusive hills. Presently he began to hate them and there formed within his half-delirious brain the hallucination that

the hills were German hills, that they had slain someone dear to him, whom he could never quite recall, and that he was pursuing to slay them.

This idea, growing, appeared to give him strength—a new and revivifying purpose—so that for a time he no longer staggered; but went forward steadily with head erect. Once he stumbled and fell, and when he tried to rise he found that he could not—that his strength was so far gone that he could only crawl forward on his hands and knees for a few yards and then sink down again to rest.

It was during one of these frequent periods of utter exhaustion that he heard the flap of dismal wings close above

him. With his remaining strength he turned himself over on his back to see Ska wheel quickly upward. With the sight Tarzan's mind cleared for a while.

"Is the end so near as that?" he thought. "Does Ska know that I am so near gone that he dares come down and perch upon my carcass?" And even then a grim smile touched those swollen lips as into the savage mind came a sudden thought-the cunning of the wild beast at bay. Closing his eyes he threw a forearm across them to protect them from Ska's powerful beak and then he lay very still and waited.

It was restful lying there, for the sun was now obscured by clouds and Tarzan was very tired. He feared that he might

sleep and something told him that if he did he would never awaken, and so he concentrated all his remaining powers upon the one thought of remaining awake. Not a muscle moved-to Ska, circling above, it became evident that the end had come— that at last he should be rewarded for his long vigil

Circling slowly he dropped closer and closer to the dying man. Why did not Tarzan move? Had he indeed been overcome by the sleep of exhaustion, or was Ska right—had death at last claimed that mighty body? Was that great, savage heart stilled forever? It is unthinkable.

Ska, filled with suspicions, circled warily. Twice he almost alighted upon the great, naked breast only to wheel

suddenly away; but the third time his talons touched the brown skin. It was as though the contact closed an electric circuit that instantaneously vitalized the quiet clod that had lain motionless so long. A brown hand swept downward from the brown forehead and before Ska could raise a wing in flight he was in the clutches of his intended victim.

Ska fought, but he was no match for even a dying Tarzan, and a moment later the ape-man's teeth closed upon the carrion-eater. The flesh was coarse and tough and gave off an unpleasant odor and a worse taste; but it was food and the blood was drink and Tarzan only an ape at heart and a dying ape into the bargain—dying of starvation and thirst.

Even mentally weakened as he was the ape-man was still master of his appetite and so he ate but sparingly, saving the rest, and then, feeling that he now could do so safely, he turned upon his side and slept.

Rain, beating heavily upon his body, awakened him and sitting up he cupped his hands and caught the precious drops which he transferred to his parched throat. Only a little he got at a time; but that was best. The few mouthfuls of Ska that he had eaten, together with the blood and rain water and the sleep had refreshed him greatly and put new strength into his tired muscles.

Now he could see the hills again and they were close and, though there was no

sun, the world looked bright and cheerful, for Tarzan knew that he was saved. The bird that would have devoured him, and the providential rain, had saved him at the very moment that death seemed inevitable.

Again partaking of a few mouthfuls of the unsavory flesh of Ska, the vulture, the ape-man arose with something of his old force and set out with steady gait toward the hills of promise rising alluringly ahead. Darkness fell before he reached them; but he kept on until he felt the steeply rising ground that proclaimed his arrival at the base of the hills proper, and then he lay down and waited until morning should reveal the easiest passage to the land beyond. The rain had

ceased, but the sky still was overcast so that even his keen eyes could not penetrate the darkness farther than a few feet. And there he slept, after eating again of what remained of Ska, until the morning sun awakened him with a new sense of strength and well-being.

And so at last he came through the hills out of the valley of death into a land of park-like beauty, rich in game. Below him lay a deep valley through the center of which dense jungle vegetation marked the course of a river beyond which a primeval forest extended for miles to terminate at last at the foot of lofty, snow-capped mountains. It was a land that Tarzan never had looked upon before, nor was it likely that the foot of

another white man ever had touched it unless, possibly, in some long-gone day the adventurer whose skeleton he had found bleaching in the canyon had traversed it.

8. TARZAN AND THE GREAT APES

Three days the ape-man spent in resting and recuperating, eating fruits and nuts and the smaller animals that were most easily bagged, and upon the fourth he set out to explore the valley and search for the great apes. Time was a negligible factor in the equation of life—it was all the same to Tarzan if he reached the west coast in a month or a year or three years. All time was his and all Africa. His was absolute freedom—the last tie that had bound him to civilization and custom had been severed. He was alone but he was not exactly lonely. The greater part of his life had been spent thus, and though there was no other of

his kind, he was at all times surrounded by the jungle peoples for whom familiarity had bred no contempt within his breast. The least of them interested him, and, too, there were those with whom he always made friends easily, and there were his hereditary enemies whose presence gave a spice to life that might otherwise have become humdrum and monotonous.

And so it was that on the fourth day he set out to explore the valley and search for his fellow-apes. He had proceeded southward for a short distance when his nostrils were assailed by the scent of man, of Gomangani, the black man. There were many of them, and mixed with their scent was another-that of a she

Tarmangani.

Swinging through the trees Tarzan approached the authors of these disturbing scents. He came warily from the flank, but paying no attention to the wind, for he knew that man with his dull senses could apprehend him only through his eyes or ears and then only when comparatively close. Had he been stalking Numa or Sheeta he would have circled about until his quarry was upwind from him, thus taking practically all the advantage up to the very moment that he came within sight or hearing; but in the stalking of the dull clod, man, he approached with almost contemptuous indifference, so that all the jungle about him knew that he was passing—all but

the men he stalked.

From the dense foliage of a great tree he watched them pass—a disreputable mob of blacks, some garbed in the uniform of German East African native troops, others wearing a single garment of the same uniform, while many had reverted to the simple dress of their forbears—approximating nudity. There were many black women with them, laughing and talking as they kept pace with the men, all of whom were armed with German rifles and equipped with German belts and ammunition.

There were no white officers there, but it was none the less apparent to Tarzan that these men were from some German native command, and he guessed

that they had slain their officers and taken to the jungle with their women, or had stolen some from native villages through which they must have passed. It was evident that they were putting as much ground between themselves and the coast as possible and doubtless were seeking some impenetrable fastness of the vast interior where they might inaugurate a reign of terror among the primitively armed inhabitants and by raiding, looting, and rape grow rich in goods and women at the expense of the district upon which they settled themselves.

Between two of the black women marched a slender white girl. She was hatless and with torn and disheveled

clothing that had evidently once been a trim riding habit. Her coat was gone and her waist half torn from her body. Occasionally and without apparent provocation one or the other of the Negresses struck or pushed her roughly. Tarzan watched through half-closed eyes. His first impulse was to leap among them and bear the girl from their cruel clutches. He had recognized her immediately and it was because of this fact that he hesitated.

What was it to Tarzan of the Apes what fate befell this enemy spy? He had been unable to kill her himself because of an inherent weakness that would not permit him to lay hands upon a woman, all of which of course had no bearing

upon what others might do to her. That her fate would now be infinitely more horrible than the quick and painless death that the ape-man would have meted to her only interested Tarzan to the extent that the more frightful the end of a German the more in keeping it would be with what they all deserved.

And so he let the blacks pass with Fraulein Bertha Kircher in their midst, or at least until the last straggling warrior suggested to his mind the pleasures of black-baiting—an amusement and a sport in which he had grown ever more proficient since that long-gone day when Kulonga, the son of Mbonga, the chief, had cast his unfortunate spear at Kala, the ape-man's

foster mother.

The last man, who must have stopped for some purpose, was fully a quarter of a mile in rear of the party. He was hurrying to catch up when Tarzan saw him, and as he passed beneath the tree in which the ape-man perched above the trail, a silent noose dropped deftly about his neck. The main body still was in plain sight, and as the frightened man voiced a piercing shriek of terror, they looked back to see his body rise as though by magic straight into the air and disappear amidst the leafy foliage above.

For a moment the blacks stood paralyzed by astonishment and fear; but presently the burly sergeant, Usanga,

who led them, started back along the trail at a run, calling to the others to follow him. Loading their guns as they came the blacks ran to succor their fellow, and at Usanga's command they spread into a thin line that presently entirely surrounded the tree into which their comrade had vanished.

Usanga called but received no reply; then he advanced slowly with rifle at the ready, peering up into the tree. He could see no one—nothing. The circle closed in until fifty blacks were searching among the branches with their keen eyes. What had become of their fellow? They had seen him rise into the tree and since then many eyes had been fastened upon the spot, yet there was no sign of him.

One, more venturesome than his fellows, volunteered to climb into the tree and investigate. He was gone but a minute or two and when he dropped to earth again he swore that there was no sign of a creature there.

Perplexed, and by this time a bit awed, the blacks drew slowly away from the spot and with many backward glances and less laughing continued upon their journey until, when about a mile beyond the spot at which their fellow had disappeared, those in the lead saw him peering from behind a tree at one side of the trail just in front of them. With shouts to their companions that he had been found they ran forwards; but those who were first to reach the tree

stopped suddenly and shrank back, their eyes rolling fearfully first in one direction and then in another as though they expected some nameless horror to leap out upon them.

Nor was their terror without foundation. Impaled upon the end of a broken branch the head of their companion was propped behind the tree so that it appeared to be looking out at them from the opposite side of the bole.

It was then that many wished to turn back, arguing that they had offended some demon of the wood upon whose preserve they had trespassed; but Usanga refused to listen to them, assuring them that inevitable torture and death awaited them should they return and fall again

into the hands of their cruel German masters. At last his reasoning prevailed to the end that a much-subdued and terrified band moved in a compact mass, like a drove of sheep, forward through the valley and there were no stragglers.

It is a happy characteristic of the Negro race, which they hold in common with little children, that their spirits seldom remain depressed for a considerable length of time after the immediate cause of depression is removed, and so it was that in half an hour Usanga's band was again beginning to take on to some extent its former appearance of carefree lightheartedness. Thus were the heavy clouds of fear slowly dissipating when a turn in the

trail brought them suddenly upon the headless body of their erstwhile companion lying directly in their path, and they were again plunged into the depth of fear and gloomy forebodings.

So utterly inexplicable and uncanny had the entire occurrence been that there was not a one of them who could find a ray of comfort penetrating the dead blackness of its ominous portent. What had happened to one of their number each conceived as being a wholly possible fate for himself—in fact quite his probable fate. If such a thing could happen in broad daylight what frightful thing might not fall to their lot when night had enshrouded them in her mantle of darkness. They trembled in

anticipation.

The white girl in their midst was no less mystified than they; but far less moved, since sudden death was the most merciful fate to which she might now look forward. So far she had been subjected to nothing worse than the petty cruelties of the women, while, on the other hand, it had alone been the presence of the women that had saved her from worse treatment at the hands of some of the men—notably the brutal, black sergeant, Usanga. His own woman was of the party—a veritable giantess, a virago of the first magnitude - and she was evidently the only thing in the world of which Usanga stood in awe. Even though she was particularly cruel to the

young woman, the latter believed that she was her sole protection from the degraded black tyrant.

Late in the afternoon the band came upon a small palisaded village of thatched huts set in a clearing in the jungle close beside a placid river. At their approach the villagers came pouring out, and Usanga advanced with two of his warriors to palaver with the chief. The experiences of the day had so shaken the nerves of the black sergeant that he was ready to treat with these people rather than take their village by force of arms, as would ordinarily have been his preference; but now a vague conviction influenced him that there watched over this part of the jungle a

powerful demon who wielded miraculous power for evil against those who offended him. First Usanga would learn how these villagers stood with this savage god and if they had his good will Usanga would be most careful to treat them with kindness and respect.

At the palaver it developed that the village chief had food, goats, and fowl which he would be glad to dispose of for a proper consideration; but as the consideration would have meant parting with precious rifles and ammunition, or the very clothing from their backs, Usanga began to see that after all it might be forced upon him to wage war to obtain food.

A happy solution was arrived at by a

suggestion of one of his men— that the soldiers go forth the following day and hunt for the villagers, bringing them in so much fresh meat in return for their hospitality. This the chief agreed to, stipulating the kind and quantity of game to be paid in return for flour, goats, and fowl, and a certain number of huts that were to be turned over to the visitors. The details having been settled after an hour or more of that bickering argument of which the native African is so fond, the newcomers entered the village where they were assigned to huts.

Bertha Kircher found herself alone in a small hut to the palisade at the far end of the village street, and though she was neither bound nor guarded, she was

assured by Usanga that she could not escape the village without running into almost certain death in the jungle, which the villagers assured them was infested by lions of great size and ferocity. "Be good to Usanga," he concluded, "and no harm will befall you. I will come again to see you after the others are asleep. Let us be friends."

As the brute left her the girl's frame was racked by a convulsive shudder as she sank to the floor of the hut and covered her face with her hands. She realized now why the women had not been left to guard her. It was the work of the cunning Usanga, but would not his woman suspect something of his intentions? She was no fool and, further,

being imbued with insane jealousy she was ever looking for some overt act upon the part of her ebon lord. Bertha Kircher felt that only she might save her and that she would save her if word could be but gotten to her. But how?

Left alone and away from the eyes of her captors for the first time since the previous night, the girl immediately took advantage of the opportunity to assure herself that the papers she had taken from the body of Hauptmann Fritz Schneider were still safely sewn inside one of her undergarments.

Alas! Of what value could they now ever be to her beloved country? But habit and loyalty were so strong within her that she still clung to the determined

hope of eventually delivering the little packet to her chief.

The natives seemed to have forgotten her existence—no one came near the hut, not even to bring her food. She could hear them at the other end of the village laughing and yelling and knew that they were celebrating with food and native beer—knowledge which only increased her apprehension. To be prisoner in a native village in the very heart of an unexplored region of Central Africa—the only white woman among a band of drunken Negroes! The very thought appalled her. Yet there was a slight promise in the fact that she had so far been unmolested—the promise that they might, indeed, have forgotten her and

that soon they might become so hopelessly drunk as to be harmless.

Darkness had fallen and still no one came. The girl wondered if she dared venture forth in search of Naratu, Usanga's woman, for Usanga might not forget that he had promised to return. No one was near as she stepped out of the hut and made her way toward the part of the village where the revelers were making merry about a fire. As she approached she saw the villagers and their guests squatting in a large circle about the blaze before which a half-dozen naked warriors leaped and bent and stamped in some grotesque dance. Pots of food and gourds of drink were being passed about among the audience.

Dirty hands were plunged into the food pots and the captured portions devoured so greedily that one might have thought the entire community had been upon the point of starvation. The gourds they held to their lips until the beer ran down their chins and the vessels were wrested from them by greedy neighbors. The drink had now begun to take noticeable effect upon most of them, with the result that they were beginning to give themselves up to utter and licentious abandon.

As the girl came nearer, keeping in the shadow of the huts, looking for Naratu she was suddenly discovered by one upon the edge of the crowd— a huge woman, who rose, shrieking, and came toward her. From her aspect the white

girl thought that the woman meant literally to tear her to pieces. So utterly wanton and uncalled- for was the attack that it found the girl entirely unprepared, and what would have happened had not a warrior interfered may only be guessed. And then Usanga, noting the interruption, came lurching forward to question her.

"What do you want," he cried, "food and drink? Come with me!" and he threw an arm about her and dragged her toward the circle.

"No!" she cried, "I want Naratu. Where is Naratu?"

This seemed to sober the black for a moment as though he had temporarily forgotten his better half. He cast quick,

fearful glances about, and then, evidently assured that Naratu had noticed nothing, he ordered the warrior who was still holding the infuriated black woman from the white girl to take the latter back to her hut and to remain there on guard over her.

First appropriating a gourd of beer for himself the warrior motioned the girl to precede him, and thus guarded she returned to her hut, the fellow squatting down just outside the doorway, where he confined his attentions for some time to the gourd.

Bertha Kircher sat down at the far side of the hut awaiting she knew not what impending fate. She could not sleep so filled was her mind with wild

schemes of escape though each new one must always be discarded as impractical. Half an hour after the warrior had returned her to her prison he rose and entered the hut, where he tried to engage in conversation with her. Groping across the interior he leaned his short spear against the wall and sat down beside her, and as he talked he edged closer and closer until at last he could reach out and touch her. Shrinking, she drew away.

"Do not touch me!" she cried. "I will tell Usanga if you do not leave me alone, and you know what he will do to you."

The man only laughed drunkenly, and, reaching out his hand, grabbed her arm and dragged her toward him. She fought

and cried aloud for Usanga and at the same instant the entrance to the hut was darkened by the form of a man.

"What is the matter?" shouted the newcomer in the deep tones that the girl recognized as belonging to the black sergeant. He had come, but would she be any better off? She knew that she would not unless she could play upon Usanga's fear of his woman.

When Usanga found what had happened he kicked the warrior out of the hut and bade him begone, and when the fellow had disappeared, muttering and grumbling, the sergeant approached the white girl. He was very drunk, so drunk that several times she succeeded in eluding him and twice she pushed him

so violently away that he stumbled and fell.

Finally he became enraged and rushing upon her, seized her in his long, apelike arms. Striking at his face with clenched fists she tried to protect herself and drive him away. She threatened him with the wrath of Naratu, and at that he changed his tactics and began to plead, and as he argued with her, promising her safety and eventual freedom, the warrior he had kicked out of the hut made his staggering way to the hut occupied by Naratu.

Usanga finding that pleas and promises were as unavailing as threats, at last lost both his patience and his head, seizing the girl roughly, and

simultaneously there burst into the hut a raging demon of jealousy. Naratu had come. Kicking, scratching, striking, biting, she routed the terrified Usanga in short order, and so obsessed was she by her desire to inflict punishment upon her unfaithful lord and master that she quite forgot the object of his infatuation.

Bertha Kircher heard her screaming down the village street at Usanga's heels and trembled at the thought of what lay in store for her at the hands of these two, for she knew that tomorrow at the latest Naratu would take out upon her the full measure of her jealous hatred after she had spent her first wrath upon Usanga.

The two had departed but a few minutes when the warrior guard

returned. He looked into the hut and then entered. "No one will stop me now, white woman," he growled as he stepped quickly across the hut toward her.

Tarzan of the Apes, feasting well upon a juicy haunch from Bara, the deer, was vaguely conscious of a troubled mind. He should have been at peace with himself and all the world, for was he not in his native element surrounded by game in plenty and rapidly filling his belly with the flesh he loved best? But Tarzan of the Apes was haunted by the picture of a slight, young girl being shoved and struck by brutal Negresses, and in imagination could see her now camped in this savage country a prisoner

among degraded blacks.

Why was it so difficult to remember that she was only a hated German and a spy? Why would the fact that she was a woman and white always obtrude itself upon his consciousness? He hated her as he hated all her kind, and the fate that was sure to be hers was no more terrible than she in common with all her people deserved. The matter was settled and Tarzan composed himself to think of other things, yet the picture would not die—it rose in all its details and annoyed him. He began to wonder what they were doing to her and where they were taking her. He was very much ashamed of himself as he had been after the episode in Wilhelmstal when his

weakness had permitted him to spare this spy's life. Was he to be thus weak again? No!

Night came and he settled himself in an ample tree to rest until morning; but sleep would not come. Instead came the vision of a white girl being beaten by black women, and again of the same girl at the mercy of the warriors somewhere in that dark and forbidding jungle.

With a growl of anger and self-contempt Tarzan arose, shook himself, and swung from his tree to that adjoining, and thus, through the lower terraces, he followed the trail that Usanga's party had taken earlier in the afternoon. He had little difficulty as the band had followed a well-beaten path

and when toward midnight the stench of a native village assailed his delicate nostrils he guessed that his goal was near and that presently he should find her whom he sought.

Prowling stealthily as prowls Numa, the lion, stalking a wary prey, Tarzan moved noiselessly about the palisade, listening and sniffing. At the rear of the village he discovered a tree whose branches extended over the top of the palisade and a moment later he had dropped quietly into the village.

From hut to hut he went searching with keen ears and nostrils some confirming evidence of the presence of the girl, and at last, faint and almost obliterated by the odor of the

Gomangani, he found it hanging like a delicate vapor about a small hut. The village was quiet now, for the last of the beer and the food had been disposed of and the blacks lay in their huts overcome by stupor, yet Tarzan made no noise that even a sober man keenly alert might have heard.

He passed around to the entrance of the hut and listened. From within came no sound, not even the low breathing of one awake; yet he was sure that the girl had been here and perhaps was even now, and so he entered, slipping in as silently as a disembodied spirit. For a moment he stood motionless just within the entranceway, listening. No, there was no one here, of that he was sure, but

he would investigate. As his eyes became accustomed to the greater darkness within the hut an object began to take form that presently outlined itself in a human form supine upon the floor.

Tarzan stepped closer and leaned over to examine it—it was the dead body of a naked warrior from whose chest protruded a short spear. Then he searched carefully every square foot of the remaining floor space and at last returned to the body again where he stooped and smelled of the haft of the weapon that had slain the black. A slow smile touched his lips— that and a slight movement of his head betokened that he understood.

A rapid search of the balance of the

village assured him that the girl had escaped and a feeling of relief came over him that no harm had befallen her. That her life was equally in jeopardy in the savage jungle to which she must have flown did not impress him as it would have you or me, since to Tarzan the jungle was not a dangerous place—he considered one safer there than in Paris or London by night.

He had entered the trees again and was outside the palisade when there came faintly to his ears from far beyond the village an old, familiar sound. Balancing lightly upon a swaying branch he stood, a graceful statue of a forest god, listening intently. For a minute he stood thus and then there broke from his

lips the long, weird cry of ape calling to ape and he was away through the jungle toward the sound of the booming drum of the anthropoids leaving behind him an awakened and terrified village of cringing blacks, who would forever after connect that eerie cry with the disappearance of their white prisoner and the death of their fellow-warrior.

Bertha Kircher, hurrying through the jungle along a well-beaten game trail, thought only of putting as much distance as possible between herself and the village before daylight could permit pursuit of her. Whither she was going she did not know, nor was it a matter of great moment since death must be her lot sooner or later.

Fortune favored her that night, for she passed unscathed through as savage and lion-ridden an area as there is in all Africa—a natural hunting ground which the white man has not yet discovered, where deer and antelope and zebra, giraffe and elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, and the other herbivorous animals of central Africa abound unmolested by none but their natural enemies, the great cats which, lured here by easy prey and immunity from the rifles of big-game hunters, swarm the district.

She had fled for an hour or two, perhaps, when her attention was arrested by the sound of animals moving about, muttering and growling close ahead. Assured that she had covered a sufficient

distance to insure her a good start in the morning before the blacks could take to her trail, and fearful of what the creatures might be, she climbed into a large tree with the intention of spending the balance of the night there.

She had no sooner reached a safe and comfortable branch when she discovered that the tree stood upon the edge of a small clearing that had been hidden from her by the heavy undergrowth upon the ground below, and simultaneously she discovered the identity of the beasts she had heard.

In the center of the clearing below her, clearly visible in the bright moonlight, she saw fully twenty huge, manlike apes—great, shaggy fellows

who went upon their hind feet with only slight assistance from the knuckles of their hands. The moonlight glanced from their glossy coats, the numerous gray-tipped hairs imparting a sheen that made the hideous creatures almost magnificent in their appearance.

The girl had watched them but a minute or two when the little band was joined by others, coming singly and in groups until there were fully fifty of the great brutes gathered there in the moonlight. Among them were young apes and several little ones clinging tightly to their mothers' shaggy shoulders. Presently the group parted to form a circle about what appeared to be a small, flat-topped mound of earth in the

center of the clearing. Squatting close about this mound were three old females armed with short, heavy clubs with which they presently began to pound upon the flat top of the earth mound which gave forth a dull, booming sound, and almost immediately the other apes commenced to move about restlessly, weaving in and out aimlessly until they carried the impression of a moving mass of great, black maggots.

The beating of the drum was in a slow, ponderous cadence, at first without time but presently settling into a heavy rhythm to which the apes kept time with measured tread and swaying bodies. Slowly the mass separated into two rings, the outer of which was

composed of shes and the very young, the inner of mature bulls. The former ceased to move and squatted upon their haunches, while the bulls now moved slowly about in a circle the center of which was the drum and all now in the same direction.

It was then that there came faintly to the ears of the girl from the direction of the village she had recently quitted a weird and high-pitched cry. The effect upon the apes was electrical—they stopped their movements and stood in attitudes of intent listening for a moment, and then one fellow, huger than his companions, raised his face to the heavens and in a voice that sent the cold shudders through the girl's slight frame

answered the far- off cry.

Once again the beaters took up their drumming and the slow dance went on. There was a certain fascination in the savage ceremony that held the girl spellbound, and as there seemed little likelihood of her being discovered, she felt that she might as well remain the balance of the night in her tree and resume her flight by the comparatively greater safety of daylight.

Assuring herself that her packet of papers was safe she sought as comfortable a position as possible among the branches, and settled herself to watch the weird proceedings in the clearing below her.

A half-hour passed, during which the

cadence of the drum increased gradually. Now the great bull that had replied to the distant call leaped from the inner circle to dance alone between the drummers and the other bulls. He leaped and crouched and leaped again, now growling and barking, again stopping to raise his hideous face to Goro, the moon, and, beating upon his shaggy breast, uttered a piercing scream-the challenge of the bull ape, had the girl but known it.

He stood thus in the full glare of the great moon, motionless after screaming forth his weird challenge, in the setting of the primeval jungle and the circling apes a picture of primitive savagery and power—a mightily muscled Hercules out of the dawn of life—when from

close behind her the girl heard an answering scream, and an instant later saw an almost naked white man drop from a near-by tree into the clearing.

Instantly the apes became a roaring, snarling pack of angry beasts. Bertha Kircher held her breath. What maniac was this who dared approach these frightful creatures in their own haunts, alone against fifty? She saw the brown-skinned figure bathed in moonlight walk straight toward the snarling pack. She saw the symmetry and the beauty of that perfect body—its grace, its strength, its wondrous proportioning, and then she recognized him. It was the same creature whom she had seen carry Major Schneider from General Kraut's

headquarters, the same who had rescued her from Numa, the lion; the same whom she had struck down with the butt of her pistol and escaped when he would have returned her to her enemies, the same who had slain Hauptmann Fritz Schneider and spared her life that night in Wilhelmstal.

Fear-filled and fascinated she watched him as he neared the apes. She heard sounds issue from his throat—sounds identical with those uttered by the apes—and though she could scarce believe the testimony of her own ears, she knew that this godlike creature was conversing with the brutes in their own tongue.

Tarzan halted just before he reached

the shes of the outer circle. "I am Tarzan of the Apes!" he cried. "You do not know me because I am of another tribe, but Tarzan comes in peace or he comes to fight—which shall it be? Tarzan will talk with your king," and so saying he pushed straight forward through the shes and the young who now gave way before him, making a narrow lane through which he passed toward the inner circle.

Shes and balus growled and bristled as he passed closer, but none hindered him and thus he came to the inner circle of bulls. Here bared fangs menaced him and growling faces hideously contorted. "I am Tarzan," he repeated. "Tarzan comes to dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers. Where is your king?" Again he

pressed forward and the girl in the tree clapped her palms to her cheeks as she watched, wide- eyed, this madman going to a frightful death. In another instant they would be upon him, rending and tearing until that perfect form had been ripped to shreds; but again the ring parted, and though the apes roared and menaced him they did not attack, and at last he stood in the inner circle close to the drum and faced the great king ape.

Again he spoke. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he cried. "Tarzan comes to live with his brothers. He will come in peace and live in peace or he will kill; but he has come and he will stay. Which—shall Tarzan dance the Dum-Dum in peace with his brothers, or shall Tarzan kill

first?"

"I am Go-lat, King of the Apes," screamed the great bull. "I kill! I kill! I kill!" and with a sullen roar he charged the Tarmangani.

The ape-man, as the girl watched him, seemed entirely unprepared for the charge and she looked to see him borne down and slain at the first rush. The great bull was almost upon him with huge hands outstretched to seize him before Tarzan made a move, but when he did move his quickness would have put Ara, the lightning, to shame. As darts forward the head of Histah, the snake, so darted forward the left hand of the man-beast as he seized the left wrist of his antagonist. A quick turn and the bull's

right arm was locked beneath the right arm of his foe in a jujitsu hold that Tarzan had learned among civilized men—a hold with which he might easily break the great bones, a hold that left the ape helpless.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes!" screamed the ape-man. "Shall Tarzan dance in peace or shall Tarzan kill?"

"I kill! I kill! I kill!" shrieked Go-lat.

With the quickness of a cat Tarzan swung the king ape over one hip and sent him sprawling to the ground. "I am Tarzan, King of all the Apes!" he shouted. "Shall it be peace?"

Go-lat, infuriated, leaped to his feet and charged again, shouting his war cry: "I kill! I kill! I kill!" and again Tarzan

met him with a sudden hold that the stupid bull, being ignorant of, could not possibly avert—a hold and a throw that brought a scream of delight from the interested audience and suddenly filled the girl with doubts as to the man's madness —evidently he was quite safe among the apes, for she saw him swing Go-lat to his back and then catapult him over his shoulder. The king ape fell upon his head and lay very still.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes!" cried the ape-man. "I come to dance the Dum-Dum with my brothers," and he made a motion to the drummers, who immediately took up the cadence of the dance where they had dropped it to watch their king slay the foolish Tarmangani.

It was then that Go-lat raised his head and slowly crawled to his feet. Tarzan approached him. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he cried. "Shall Tarzan dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers now, or shall he kill first?"

Go-lat raised his bloodshot eyes to the face of the Tarmangani. "Kagoda!" he cried "Tarzan of the Apes will dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers and Go-lat will dance with him!"

And then the girl in the tree saw the savage man leaping, bending, and stamping with the savage apes in the ancient rite of the Dum-Dum. His roars and growls were more beastly than the beasts. His handsome face was distorted with savage ferocity. He beat upon his

great breast and screamed forth his challenge as his smooth, brown hide brushed the shaggy coats of his fellows. It was weird; it was wonderful; and in its primitive savagery it was not without beauty—the strange scene she looked upon, such a scene as no other human being, probably, ever had witnessed—and yet, withal, it was horrible.

As she gazed, spell-bound, a stealthy movement in the tree behind her caused her to turn her head, and there, back of her, blazing in the reflected moonlight, shone two great, yellow-green eyes. Sheeta, the panther, had found her out.

The beast was so close that it might have reached out and touched her with a great, taloned paw. There was no time to

think, no time to weigh chances or to choose alternatives. Terror-inspired impulse was her guide as, with a loud scream, she leaped from the tree into the clearing.

Instantly the apes, now maddened by the effects of the dancing and the moonlight, turned to note the cause of the interruption. They saw this she Tarmangani, helpless and alone and they started for her. Sheeta, the panther, knowing that not even Numa, the lion, unless maddened by starvation, dares meddle with the great apes at their Dum-Dum, had silently vanished into the night, seeking his supper elsewhere.

Tarzan, turning with the other apes toward the cause of the interruption, saw

the girl, recognized her and also her peril. Here again might she die at the hands of others; but why consider it! He knew that he could not permit it, and though the acknowledgment shamed him, it had to be admitted.

The leading shes were almost upon the girl when Tarzan leaped among them, and with heavy blows scattered them to right and left; and then as the bulls came to share in the kill they thought this new ape-thing was about to make that he might steal all the flesh for himself, they found him facing them with an arm thrown about the creature as though to protect her.

"This is Tarzan's she," he said. "Do not harm her." It was the only way he

could make them understand that they must not slay her. He was glad that she could not interpret the words. It was humiliating enough to make such a statement to wild apes about this hated enemy.

So once again Tarzan of the Apes was forced to protect a Hun. Growling, he muttered to himself in extenuation:

"She is a woman and I am not a German, so it could not be otherwise!"

9. DROPPED FROM THE SKY

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick, Royal Air Service, was on reconnaissance. A report, or it would be better to say a rumor, had come to the British headquarters in German East Africa that the enemy had landed in force on the west coast and was marching across the dark continent to reinforce their colonial troops. In fact the new army was supposed to be no more than ten or twelve days' march to the west. Of course the thing was ridiculous—preposterous—but preposterous things often happen in war; and anyway no good general permits the least rumor of enemy activity to go uninvestigated.

Therefore Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick flew low toward the west, searching with keen eyes for signs of a Hun army. Vast forests unrolled beneath him in which a German army corps might have lain concealed, so dense was the overhanging foliage of the great trees. Mountain, meadowland, and desert passed in lovely panorama; but never a sight of man had the young lieutenant.

Always hoping that he might discover some sign of their passage—a discarded lorry, a broken limber, or an old camp site—he continued farther and farther into the west until well into the afternoon. Above a tree-dotted plain through the center of which flowed a

winding river he determined to turn about and start for camp. It would take straight flying at top speed to cover the distance before dark; but as he had ample gasoline and a trustworthy machine there was no doubt in his mind but that he could accomplish his aim. It was then that his engine stalled.

He was too low to do anything but land, and that immediately, while he had the more open country accessible, for directly east of him was a vast forest into which a stalled engine could only have plunged him to certain injury and probable death; and so he came down in the meadowland near the winding river and there started to tinker with his motor.

As he worked he hummed a tune, some music-hall air that had been popular in London the year before, so that one might have thought him working in the security of an English flying field surrounded by innumerable comrades rather than alone in the heart of an unexplored African wilderness. It was typical of the man that he should be wholly indifferent to his surroundings, although his looks entirely belied any assumption that he was of particularly heroic strain.

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick was fair-hatred, blue- eyed, and slender, with a rosy, boyish face that might have been molded more by an environment of luxury, indolence, and

ease than the more strenuous exigencies of life's sterner requirements.

And not only was the young lieutenant outwardly careless of the immediate future and of his surroundings, but actually so. That the district might be infested by countless enemies seemed not to have occurred to him in the remotest degree. He bent assiduously to the work of correcting the adjustment that had caused his motor to stall without so much as an upward glance at the surrounding country. The forest to the east of him, and the more distant jungle that bordered the winding river, might have harbored an army of bloodthirsty savages, but neither could elicit even a passing show of interest on the part of

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick

And even had he looked, it is doubtful if he would have seen the score of figures crouching in the concealment of the undergrowth at the forest's edge. There are those who are reputed to be endowed with that which is sometimes, for want of a better appellation, known as the sixth sense—a species of intuition which apprises them of the presence of an unseen danger. The concentrated gaze of a hidden observer provokes a warning sensation of nervous unrest in such as these, but though twenty pairs of savage eyes were gazing fixedly at Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick, the fact aroused no responsive sensation of impending danger in his placid breast.

He hummed peacefully and, his adjustment completed, tried out his motor for a minute or two, then shut it off and descended to the ground with the intention of stretching his legs and taking a smoke before continuing his return flight to camp. Now for the first time he took note of his surroundings, to be immediately impressed by both the wildness and the beauty of the scene. In some respects the tree- dotted meadowland reminded him of a park-like English forest, and that wild beasts and savage men could ever be a part of so quiet a scene seemed the remotest of contingencies.

Some gorgeous blooms upon a flowering shrub at a little distance from

his machine caught the attention of his aesthetic eye, and as he puffed upon his cigarette, he walked over to examine the flowers more closely. As he bent above them he was probably some hundred yards from his plane and it was at this instant that Numabo, chief of the Wamabo, chose to leap from his ambush and lead his warriors in a sudden rush upon the white man.

The young Englishman's first intimation of danger was a chorus of savage yells from the forest behind him. Turning, he saw a score of naked, black warriors advancing rapidly toward him. They moved in a compact mass and as they approached more closely their rate of speed noticeably diminished.

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick realized in a quick glance that the direction of their approach and their proximity had cut off all chances of retreating to his plane, and he also understood that their attitude was entirely warlike and menacing. He saw that they were armed with spears and with bows and arrows, and he felt quite confident that notwithstanding the fact that he was armed with a pistol they could overcome him with the first rush. What he did not know about their tactics was that at any show of resistance they would fall back, which is the nature of the native Negroes, but that after numerous advances and retreats, during which they would work themselves into a frenzy of rage by much shrieking,

leaping, and dancing, they would eventually come to the point of a determined and final assault.

Numabo was in the forefront, a fact which taken in connection with his considerably greater size and more warlike appearance, indicated him as the natural target and it was at Numabo that the Englishman aimed his first shot. Unfortunately for him it missed its target, as the killing of the chief might have permanently dispersed the others. The bullet passed Numabo to lodge in the breast of a warrior behind him and as the fellow lunged forward with a scream the others turned and retreated, but to the lieutenant's chagrin they ran in the direction of the plane instead of back

toward the forest so that he was still cut off from reaching his machine.

Presently they stopped and faced him again. They were talking loudly and gesticulating, and after a moment one of them leaped into the air, brandishing his spear and uttering savage war cries, which soon had their effect upon his fellows so that it was not long ere all of them were taking part in the wild show of savagery, which would bolster their waning courage and presently spur them on to another attack.

The second charge brought them closer to the Englishman, and though he dropped another with his pistol, it was not before two or three spears had been launched at him. He now had five shots

remaining and there were still eighteen warriors to be accounted for, so that unless he could frighten them off, it was evident that his fate was sealed.

That they must pay the price of one life for every attempt to take his had its effect upon them and they were longer now in initiating a new rush and when they did so it was more skillfully ordered than those that had preceded it, for they scattered into three bands which, partially surrounding him, came simultaneously toward him from different directions, and though he emptied his pistol with good effect, they reached him at last. They seemed to know that his ammunition was exhausted, for they circled close about

him now with the evident intention of taking him alive, since they might easily have riddled him with their sharp spears with perfect safety to themselves.

For two or three minutes they circled about him until, at a word from Numabo, they closed in simultaneously, and though the slender young lieutenant struck out to right and left, he was soon overwhelmed by superior numbers and beaten down by the hafts of spears in brawny hands.

He was all but unconscious when they finally dragged him to his feet, and after securing his hands behind his back, pushed him roughly along ahead of them toward the jungle.

As the guard prodded him along the

narrow trail, Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick could not but wonder why they had wished to take him alive. He knew that he was too far inland for his uniform to have any significance to this native tribe to whom no inkling of the World War probably ever had come, and he could only assume that he had fallen into the hands of the warriors of some savage potentate upon whose royal caprice his fate would hinge.

They had marched for perhaps half an hour when the Englishman saw ahead of them, in a little clearing upon the bank of the river, the thatched roofs of native huts showing above a crude but strong palisade; and presently he was ushered into a village street where he was

immediately surrounded by a throng of women and children and warriors. Here he was soon the center of an excited mob whose intent seemed to be to dispatch him as quickly as possible. The women were more venomous than the men, striking and scratching him whenever they could reach him, until at last Numabo, the chief, was obliged to interfere to save his prisoner for whatever purpose he was destined.

As the warriors pushed the crowd back, opening a space through which the white man was led toward a hut, Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick saw coming from the opposite end of the village a number of Negroes wearing odds and ends of German uniforms. He was not a

little surprised at this, and his first thought was that he had at last come in contact with some portion of the army which was rumored to be crossing from the west coast and for signs of which he had been searching.

A rueful smile touched his lips as he contemplated the unhappy circumstances which surrounded the accession of this knowledge for though he was far from being without hope, he realized that only by the merest chance could he escape these people and regain his machine.

Among the partially uniformed blacks was a huge fellow in the tunic of a sergeant and as this man's eyes fell upon the British officer, a loud cry of exultation broke from his lips, and

immediately his followers took up the cry and pressed forward to bait the prisoner.

"Where did you get the Englishman?" asked Usanga, the black sergeant, of the chief Numabo. "Are there many more with him?"

"He came down from the sky," replied the native chief "in a strange thing which flies like a bird and which frightened us very much at first; but we watched for a long time and saw that it did not seem to be alive, and when this white man left it we attacked him and though he killed some of my warriors, we took him, for we Wamabos are brave men and great warriors."

Usanga's eyes went wide. "He flew

here through the sky?" he asked.

"Yes," said Numabo. "In a great thing which resembled a bird he flew down out of the sky. The thing is still there where it came down close to the four trees near the second bend in the river. We left it there because, not knowing what it was, we were afraid to touch it and it is still there if it has not flown away again."

"It cannot fly," said Usanga, "without this man in it. It is a terrible thing which filled the hearts of our soldiers with terror, for it flew over our camps at night and dropped bombs upon us. It is well that you captured this white man, Numabo, for with his great bird he would have flown over your village

tonight and killed all your people. These Englishman are very wicked white men."

"He will fly no more," said Numabo "It is not intended that a man should fly through the air; only wicked demons do such things as that and Numabo, the chief, will see that this white man does not do it again," and with the words he pushed the young officer roughly toward a hut in the center of the village, where he was left under guard of two stalwart warriors.

For an hour or more the prisoner was left to his own devices, which consisted in vain and unremitting attempts to loosen the strands which fettered his wrists, and then he was interrupted by the appearance of the black sergeant

Usanga, who entered his hut and approached him.

"What are they going to do with me?" asked the Englishman. "My country is not at war with these people. You speak their language. Tell them that I am not an enemy, that my people are the friends of the black people and that they must let me go in peace."

Usanga laughed. "They do not know an Englishman from a German," he replied. "It is nothing to them what you are, except that you are a white man and an enemy."

"Then why did they take me alive?" asked the lieutenant.

"Come," said Usanga and he led the Englishman to the doorway of the hut.

"Look," he said, and pointed a black forefinger toward the end of the village street where a wider space between the huts left a sort of plaza.

Here Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick saw a number of Negresses engaged in laying fagots around a stake and in preparing fires beneath a number of large cooking vessels. The sinister suggestion was only too obvious.

Usanga was eyeing the white man closely, but if he expected to be rewarded by any signs of fear, he was doomed to disappointment and the young lieutenant merely turned toward him with a shrug: "Really now, do you beggars intend eating me?"

"Not my people," replied Usanga.

"We do not eat human flesh, but the Wamabos do. It is they who will eat you, but we will kill you for the feast, Englishman."

The Englishman remained standing in the doorway of the hut, an interested spectator of the preparations for the coming orgy that was so horribly to terminate his earthly existence. It can hardly be assumed that he felt no fear; yet, if he did, he hid it perfectly beneath an imperturbable mask of coolness. Even the brutal Usanga must have been impressed by the bravery of his victim since, though he had come to abuse and possibly to torture the helpless prisoner, he now did neither, contenting himself merely with berating whites as a race

and Englishmen especially, because of the terror the British aviators had caused Germany's native troops in East Africa.

"No more," he concluded, "will your great bird fly over our people dropping death among them from the skies—Usanga will see to that," and he walked abruptly away toward a group of his own fighting men who were congregated near the stake where they were laughing and joking with the women.

A few minutes later the Englishman saw them pass out of the village gate, and once again his thoughts reverted to various futile plans for escape.

Several miles north of the village on a little rise of ground close to the river where the jungle, halting at the base of a

knoll, had left a few acres of grassy land sparsely wooded, a man and a girl were busily engaged in constructing a small boma, in the center of which a thatched hut already had been erected.

They worked almost in silence with only an occasional word of direction or interrogation between them.

Except for a loin cloth, the man was naked, his smooth skin tanned to a deep brown by the action of sun and wind. He moved with the graceful ease of a jungle cat and when he lifted heavy weights, the action seemed as effortless as the raising of empty hands.

When he was not looking at her, and it was seldom that he did, the girl found her eyes wandering toward him, and at

such times there was always a puzzled expression upon her face as though she found in him an enigma which she could not solve. As a matter of fact, her feelings toward him were not un-tinged with awe, since in the brief period of their association she had discovered in this handsome, godlike giant the attributes of the superman and the savage beast closely intermingled. At first she had felt only that unreasoning feminine terror which her unhappy position naturally induced.

To be alone in the heart of an unexplored wilderness of Central Africa with a savage wild man was in itself sufficiently appalling, but to feel also that this man was a blood enemy, that he

hated her and her kind and that in addition thereto he owed her a personal grudge for an attack she had made upon him in the past, left no loophole for any hope that he might accord her even the minutest measure of consideration.

She had seen him first months since when he had entered the headquarters of the German high command in East Africa and carried off the luckless Major Schneider, of whose fate no hint had ever reached the German officers; and she had seen him again upon that occasion when he had rescued her from the clutches of the lion and, after explaining to her that he had recognized her in the British camp, had made her prisoner. It was then that she had struck

him down with the butt of her pistol and escaped. That he might seek no personal revenge for her act had been evidenced in Wilhelmstal the night that he had killed Hauptmann Fritz Schneider and left without molesting her.

No, she could not fathom him. He hated her and at the same time he had protected her as had been evidenced again when he had kept the great apes from tearing her to pieces after she had escaped from the Wamabo village to which Usanga, the black sergeant, had brought her a captive; but why was he saving her? For what sinister purpose could this savage enemy be protecting her from the other denizens of his cruel jungle? She tried to put from her mind

the probable fate which awaited her, yet it persisted in obtruding itself upon her thoughts, though always she was forced to admit that there was nothing in the demeanor of the man to indicate that her fears were well grounded. She judged him perhaps by the standards other men had taught her and because she looked upon him as a savage creature, she felt that she could not expect more of chivalry from him than was to be found in the breasts of the civilized men of her acquaintance.

Fraulein Bertha Kircher was by nature a companionable and cheerful character. She was not given to morbid forebodings, and above all things she craved the society of her kind and that

interchange of thought which is one of the marked distinctions between man and the lower animals. Tarzan, on the other hand, was sufficient unto himself. Long years of semi-solitude among creatures whose powers of oral expression are extremely limited had thrown him almost entirely upon his own resources for entertainment.

His active mind was never idle, but because his jungle mates could neither follow nor grasp the vivid train of imaginings that his man-mind wrought, he had long since learned to keep them to himself; and so now he found no need for confiding them in others. This fact, linked with that of his dislike for the girl, was sufficient to seal his lips for

other than necessary conversation, and so they worked on together in comparative silence. Bertha Kircher, however, was nothing if not feminine and she soon found that having someone to talk to who would not talk was extremely irksome. Her fear of the man was gradually departing, and she was full of a thousand unsatisfied curiosities as to his plans for the future in so far as they related to her, as well as more personal questions regarding himself, since she could not but wonder as to his antecedents and his strange and solitary life in the jungle, as well as his friendly intercourse with the savage apes among which she had found him.

With the waning of her fears she

became sufficiently emboldened to question him, and so she asked him what he intended doing after the hut and boma were completed.

"I am going to the west coast where I was born," replied Tarzan. "I do not know when. I have all my life before me and in the jungle there is no reason for haste. We are not forever running as fast as we can from one place to another as are you of the outer world. When I have been here long enough I will go on toward the west, but first I must see that you have a safe place in which to sleep, and that you have learned how to provide yourself with necessaries. That will take time."

"You are going to leave me here

alone?" cried the girl; her tones marked the fear which the prospect induced. "You are going to leave me here alone in this terrible jungle, a prey to wild beasts and savage men, hundreds of miles from a white settlement and in a country which gives every evidence of never having been touched by the foot of civilized men?"

"Why not?" asked Tarzan. "I did not bring you here. Would one of your men accord any better treatment to an enemy woman?"

"Yes," she exclaimed. "They certainly would. No man of my race would leave a defenseless white woman alone in this horrible place."

Tarzan shrugged his broad shoulders.

The conversation seemed profitless and it was further distasteful to him for the reason that it was carried on in German, a tongue which he detested as much as he did the people who spoke it. He wished that the girl spoke English and then it occurred to him that as he had seen her in disguise in the British camp carrying on her nefarious work as a German spy, she probably did speak English and so he asked her.

"Of course I speak English," she exclaimed, "but I did not know that you did."

Tarzan looked his wonderment but made no comment. He only wondered why the girl should have any doubts as to the ability of an Englishman to speak

English, and then suddenly it occurred to him that she probably looked upon him merely as a beast of the jungle who by accident had learned to speak German through frequenting the district which Germany had colonized. It was there only that she had seen him and so she might not know that he was an Englishman by birth, and that he had had a home in British East Africa. It was as well, he thought, that she knew little of him, as the less she knew the more he might learn from her as to her activities in behalf of the Germans and of the German spy system of which she was a representative; and so it occurred to him to let her continue to think that he was only what he appeared to be—a savage

denizen of his savage jungle, a man of no race and no country, hating all white men impartially; and this in truth, was what she did think of him. It explained perfectly his attacks upon Major Schneider and the Major's brother, Hauptmann Fritz.

Again they worked on in silence upon the boma which was now nearly completed, the girl helping the man to the best of her small ability. Tarzan could not but note with grudging approval the spirit of helpfulness she manifested in the oft-times painful labor of gathering and arranging the thorn bushes which constituted the temporary protection against roaming carnivores. Her hands and arms gave bloody token

of the sharpness of the numerous points that had lacerated her soft flesh, and even though she were an enemy Tarzan could not but feel compunction that he had permitted her to do this work, and at last he bade her stop.

"Why?" she asked. "It is no more painful to me than it must be to you, and, as it is solely for my protection that you are building this boma, there is no reason why I should not do my share."

"You are a woman," replied Tarzan. "This is not a woman's work. If you wish to do something, take those gourds I brought this morning and fill them with water at the river. You may need it while I am away."

"While you are away—" she said.

"You are going away?"

"When the boma is built I am going out after meat," he replied. "Tomorrow I will go again and take you and show you how you may make your own kills after I am gone."

Without a word she took the gourds and walked toward the river. As she filled them, her mind was occupied with painful forebodings of the future. She knew that Tarzan had passed a death sentence upon her, and that the moment that he left her, her doom was sealed, for it could be but a question of time—a very short time—before the grim jungle would claim her, for how could a lone woman hope successfully to combat the savage forces of destruction which

constituted so large a part of existence in the jungle?

So occupied was she with the gloomy prophecies that she had neither ears nor eyes for what went on about her. Mechanically she filled the gourds and, taking them up, turned slowly to retrace her steps to the boma only to voice immediately a half-stifled scream and shrank back from the menacing figure looming before her and blocking her way to the hut.

Go-lat, the king ape, hunting a little apart from his tribe, had seen the woman go to the river for water, and it was he who confronted her when she turned back with her filled gourds. Go-lat was not a pretty creature when judged by

standards of civilized humanity, though the shes of his tribe and even Go-lat himself, considered his glossy black coat shot with silver, his huge arms dangling to his knees, his bullet head sunk between his mighty shoulders, marks of great personal beauty. His wicked, bloodshot eyes and broad nose, his ample mouth and great fighting fangs only enhanced the claim of this Adonis of the forest upon the affections of his shes.

Doubtless in the little, savage brain there was a well-formed conviction that this strange she belonging to the Tarmangani must look with admiration upon so handsome a creature as Go-lat, for there could be no doubt in the mind

of any that his beauty entirely eclipsed such as the hairless white ape might lay claim to.

But Bertha Kircher saw only a hideous beast, a fierce and terrible caricature of man. Could Go-lat have known what passed through her mind, he must have been terribly chagrined, though the chances are that he would have attributed it to a lack of discernment on her part. Tarzan heard the girl's cry and looking up saw at a glance the cause of her terror. Leaping lightly over the boma, he ran swiftly toward her as Go-lat lumbered closer to the girl the while he voiced his emotions in low gutturals which, while in reality the most amicable of advances, sounded

to the girl like the growling of an enraged beast. As Tarzan drew nearer he called aloud to the ape and the girl heard from the human lips the same sounds that had fallen from those of the anthropoid.

"I will not harm your she," Go-lat called to Tarzan.

"I know it," replied the ape-man, "but she does not. She is like Numa and Sheeta, who do not understand our talk. She thinks you come to harm her."

By this time Tarzan was beside the girl. "He will not harm you," he said to her. "You need not be afraid. This ape has learned his lesson. He has learned that Tarzan is lord of the jungle. He will not harm that which is Tarzan's."

The girl cast a quick glance at the

man's face. It was evident to her that the words he had spoken meant nothing to him and that the assumed proprietorship over her was, like the boma, only another means for her protection.

"But I am afraid of him," she said.

"You must not show your fear. You will be often surrounded by these apes. At such times you will be safest. Before I leave you I will give you the means of protecting yourself against them should one of them chance to turn upon you. If I were you I would seek their society. Few are the animals of the jungle that dare attack the great apes when there are several of them together. If you let them know that you are afraid of them, they will take advantage of it and your life

will be constantly menaced. The shes especially would attack you. I will let them know that you have the means of protecting yourself and of killing them. If necessary, I will show you how and then they will respect and fear you."

"I will try," said the girl, "but I am afraid that it will be difficult. He is the most frightful creature I ever have seen." Tarzan smiled. "Doubtless he thinks the same of you," he said.

By this time other apes had entered the clearing and they were now the center of a considerable group, among which were several bulls, some young shes, and some older ones with their little balus clinging to their backs or frolicking around at their feet. Though

they had seen the girl the night of the Dum-Dum when Sheeta had forced her to leap from her concealment into the arena where the apes were dancing, they still evinced a great curiosity regarding her. Some of the shes came very close and plucked at her garments, commenting upon them to one another in their strange tongue. The girl, by the exercise of all the will power she could command, succeeded in passing through the ordeal without evincing any of the terror and revulsion that she felt. Tarzan watched her closely, a half-smile upon his face. He was not so far removed from recent contact with civilized people that he could not realize the torture that she was undergoing, but he felt no pity for this

woman of a cruel enemy who doubtless deserved the worst suffering that could be meted to her. Yet, notwithstanding his sentiments toward her, he was forced to admire her fine display of courage. Suddenly he turned to the apes.

"Tarzan goes to hunt for himself and his she," he said. "The she will remain there," and he pointed toward the hut. "See that no member of the tribe harms her. Do you understand?"

The apes nodded. "We will not harm her," said Go-lat.

"No," said Tarzan. "You will not. For if you do, Tarzan will kill you," and then turning to the girl, "Come," he said, "I am going to hunt now. You had better remain at the hut. The apes have

promised not to harm you. I will leave my spear with you. It will be the best weapon you could have in case you should need to protect yourself, but I doubt if you will be in any danger for the short time that I am away."

He walked with her as far as the boma and when she had entered he closed the gap with thorn bushes and turned away toward the forest. She watched him moving across the clearing, noting the easy, catlike tread and the grace of every movement that harmonized so well with the symmetry and perfection of his figure. At the forest's edge she saw him swing lightly into a tree and disappear from view, and then, being a woman, she entered the hut

and, throwing herself upon the ground, burst into tears.

10. IN THE HANDS OF SAVAGES

Tarzan sought Bara, the deer, or Horta, the boar, for of all the jungle animals he doubted if any would prove more palatable to the white woman, but though his keen nostrils were ever on the alert, he traveled far without being rewarded with even the faintest scent spoor of the game he sought. Keeping close to the river where he hoped to find Bara or Horta approaching or leaving a drinking place he came at last upon the strong odor of the Wamabo village and being ever ready to pay his hereditary enemies, the Gomangani, an undesired visit, he swung into a detour and came up in the rear of the village. From a tree which overhung the palisade he looked

down into the street where he saw the preparations going on which his experience told him indicated the approach of one of those frightful feasts the piece de resistance of which is human flesh.

One of Tarzan's chief divertissements was the baiting of the blacks. He realized more keen enjoyment through annoying and terrifying them than from any other source of amusement the grim jungle offered. To rob them of their feast in some way that would strike terror to their hearts would give him the keenest of pleasure, and so he searched the village with his eyes for some indication of the whereabouts of the prisoner. His view was circumscribed by the dense

foliage of the tree in which he sat, and, so that he might obtain a better view, he climbed further aloft and moved cautiously out upon a slender branch.

Tarzan of the Apes possessed a woodcraft scarcely short of the marvelous but even Tarzan's wondrous senses were not infallible. The branch upon which he made his way outward from the bole was no smaller than many that had borne his weight upon countless other occasions. Outwardly it appeared strong and healthy and was in full foliage, nor could Tarzan know that close to the stem a burrowing insect had eaten away half the heart of the solid wood beneath the bark.

And so when he reached a point far

out upon the limb, it snapped close to the bole of the tree without warning. Below him were no larger branches that he might clutch and as he lunged downward his foot caught in a looped creeper so that he turned completely over and alighted on the flat of his back in the center of the village street.

At the sound of the breaking limb and the crashing body falling through the branches the startled blacks scurried to their huts for weapons, and when the braver of them emerged, they saw the still form of an almost naked white man lying where he had fallen. Emboldened by the fact that he did not move they approached more closely, and when their eyes discovered no signs of others

of his kind in the tree, they rushed forward until a dozen warriors stood about him with ready spears. At first they thought that the falling had killed him, but upon closer examination they discovered that the man was only stunned. One of the warriors was for thrusting a spear through his heart, but Numabo, the chief, would not permit it.

"Bind him," he said. "We will feed well tonight."

And so they bound his hands and feet with thongs of gut and carried him into the hut where Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick awaited his fate. The Englishman had also been bound hand and foot by this time for fear that at the last moment he might escape and rob

them of their feast. A great crowd of natives were gathered about the hut attempting to get a glimpse of the new prisoner, but Numabo doubled the guard before the entrance for fear that some of his people, in the exuberance of their savage joy, might rob the others of the pleasures of the death dance which would precede the killing of the victims.

The young Englishman had heard the sound of Tarzan's body crashing through the tree to the ground and the commotion in the village which immediately followed, and now, as he stood with his back against the wall of the hut, he looked upon the fellow-prisoner that the blacks carried in and laid upon the floor with mixed feelings of surprise and

compassion. He realized that he never had seen a more perfect specimen of manhood than that of the unconscious figure before him, and he wondered to what sad circumstances the man owed his capture. It was evident that the new prisoner was himself as much a savage as his captors if apparel and weapons were any criterion by which to judge; yet it was also equally evident that he was a white man and from his well-shaped head and clean-cut features that he was not one of those unhappy halfwits who so often revert to savagery even in the heart of civilized communities.

As he watched the man, he presently noticed that his eyelids were moving. Slowly they opened and a pair of gray

eyes looked blankly about. With returning consciousness the eyes assumed their natural expression of keen intelligence, and a moment later, with an effort, the prisoner rolled over upon his side and drew himself to a sitting position. He was facing the Englishman, and as his eyes took in the bound ankles and the arms drawn tightly behind the other's back, a slow smile lighted his features.

"They will fill their bellies tonight," he said.

The Englishman grinned. "From the fuss they made," he said, "the beggars must be awfully hungry. They like to have eaten me alive when they brought me in. How did they get you?"

Tarzan shrugged his head ruefully. "It was my own fault," he replied. "I deserve to be eaten. I crawled out upon a branch that would not bear my weight and when it broke, instead of alighting on my feet, I caught my foot in a trailer and came down on my head. Otherwise they would not have taken me —alive."

"Is there no escape?" asked the Englishman.

"I have escaped them before," replied Tarzan, "and I have seen others escape them. I have seen a man taken away from the stake after a dozen spear thrusts had pierced his body and the fire had been lighted about his feet."

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick shuddered. "God!" he exclaimed, "I hope I don't

have to face that. I believe I could stand anything but the thought of the fire. I should hate like the devil to go into a funk before the devils at the last moment."

"Don't worry," said Tarzan. "It doesn't last long and you won't funk. It is really not half as bad as it sounds. There is only a brief period of pain before you lose consciousness. I have seen it many times before. It is as good a way to go as another. We must die sometime. What difference whether it be tonight, tomorrow night, or a year hence, just so that we have lived —and I have lived!"

"Your philosophy may be all right, old top," said the young lieutenant, "but I can't say that it is exactly satisfying."

Tarzan laughed. "Roll over here," he said, "where I can get at your bonds with my teeth." The Englishman did as he was bid and presently Tarzan was working at the thongs with his strong white teeth. He felt them giving slowly beneath his efforts. In another moment they would part, and then it would be a comparatively simple thing for the Englishman to remove the remaining bonds from Tarzan and himself.

It was then that one of the guards entered the hut. In an instant he saw what the new prisoner was doing and raising his spear, struck the ape-man a vicious blow across the head with its shaft. Then he called in the other guards and together they fell upon the luckless men, kicking

and beating them unmercifully, after which they bound the Englishman more securely than before and tied both men fast on opposite sides of the hut. When they had gone Tarzan looked across at his companion in misery.

"While there is life," he said, "there is hope," but he grinned as he voiced the ancient truism.

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick returned the other's smile. "I fancy," he said, "that we are getting short on both. It must be close to supper time now."

Zu-tag hunted alone far from the balance of the tribe of Go- lat, the great ape. Zu-tag (Big-neck) was a young bull but recently arrived at maturity. He was

large, powerful, and ferocious and at the same time far above the average of his kind in intelligence as was denoted by a fuller and less receding forehead. Already Go-lat saw in this young ape a possible contender for the laurels of his kingship and consequently the old bull looked upon Zu-tag with jealousy and disfavor. It was for this reason, possibly, as much as another that Zu-tag hunted so often alone; but it was his utter fearlessness that permitted him to wander far afield away from the protection which numbers gave the great apes. One of the results of this habit was a greatly increased resourcefulness which found him constantly growing in intelligence and powers of observation.

Today he had been hunting toward the south and was returning along the river upon a path he often followed because it led by the village of the Gomangani whose strange and almost apelike actions and peculiar manners of living had aroused his interest and curiosity. As he had done upon other occasions he took up his position in a tree from which he could overlook the interior of the village and watch the blacks at their vocations in the street below.

Zu-tag had scarcely more than established himself in his tree when, with the blacks, he was startled by the crashing of Tarzan's body from the branches of another jungle giant to the ground within the palisade. He saw the

Negroes gather about the prostrate form and later carry it into the hut; and once he rose to his full height upon the limb where he had been squatting and raised his face to the heavens to scream out a savage protest and a challenge, for he had recognized in the brown-skinned Tarmangani the strange white ape who had come among them a night or two before in the midst of their Dum- Dum, and who by so easily mastering the greatest among them, had won the savage respect and admiration of this fierce young bull.

But Zu-tag's ferocity was tempered by a certain native cunning and caution. Before he had voiced his protest there formed in his mind the thought that he

would like to save this wonderful white ape from the common enemy, the Gomangani, and so he screamed forth no challenge, wisely determined that more could be accomplished by secrecy and stealth than by force of muscle and fang.

At first he thought to enter the village alone and carry off the Tarmangani; but when he saw how numerous were the warriors and that several sat directly before the entrance to the lair into which the prisoner had been carried, it occurred to him that this was work for many rather than one, and so, as silently as he had come, he slipped away though the foliage toward the north.

The tribe was still loitering about the clearing where stood the hut that Tarzan

and Bertha Kircher had built. Some were idly searching for food just within the forest's edge, while others squatted beneath the shade of trees within the clearing.

The girl had emerged from the hut, her tears dried and was gazing anxiously toward the south into the jungle where Tarzan had disappeared. Occasionally she cast suspicious glances in the direction of the huge shaggy anthropoids about her. How easy it would be for one of those great beasts to enter the boma and slay her. How helpless she was, even with the spear that the white man had left her, she realized as she noted for the thousandth time the massive shoulders, the bull necks, and the great

muscles gliding so easily beneath the glossy coats. Never, she thought, had she seen such personifications of brute power as were represented by these mighty bulls. Those huge hands would snap her futile spear as she might snap a match in two, while their lightest blow could crush her into insensibility and death.

It was while she was occupied with these depressing thoughts that there dropped suddenly into the clearing from the trees upon the south the figure of a mighty young bull. At that time all of the apes looked much alike to Bertha Kircher, nor was it until some time later that she realized that each differed from the others in individual characteristics of

face and figure as do individuals of the human races. Yet even then she could not help but note the wondrous strength and agility of this great beast, and as he approached she even found herself admiring the sheen of his heavy, black, silver- shot coat.

It was evident that the newcomer was filled with suppressed excitement. His demeanor and bearing proclaimed this even from afar, nor was the girl the only one to note it. For as they saw him coming many of the apes arose and advanced to meet him, bristling and growling as is their way. Go-lat was among these latter, and he advanced stiffly with the hairs upon his neck and down his spine erect, uttering low

growls and baring his fighting fangs, for who might say whether Zu-tag came in peace or otherwise? The old king had seen other young apes come thus in his day filled with a sudden resolution to wrest the kingship from their chief. He had seen bulls about to run amuck burst thus suddenly from the jungle upon the members of the tribe, and so Go-lat took no chances.

Had Zu-tag come indolently, feeding as he came, he might have entered the tribe without arousing notice or suspicion, but when one comes thus precipitately, evidently bursting with some emotion out of the ordinary, let all apes beware. There was a certain amount of preliminary circling,

growling, and sniffing, stiff-legged and stiff- haired, before each side discovered that the other had no intention of initiating an attack and then Zu-tag told Go-lat what he had seen among the lairs of the Gomangani.

Go-lat grunted in disgust and turned away. "Let the white ape take care of himself," he said.

"He is a great ape," said Zu-tag. "He came to live in peace with the tribe of Go-lat. Let us save him from the Gomangani."

Go-lat grunted again and continued to move away.

"Zu-tag will go alone and get him," cried the young ape, "if Go- lat is afraid of the Gomangani."

The king ape wheeled in anger, growling loudly and beating upon his breast. "Go-lat is not afraid," he screamed, "but he will not go, for the white ape is not of his tribe. Go yourself and take the Tarmangani's she with you if you wish so much to save the white ape."

"Zu-tag will go," replied the younger bull, "and he will take the Tarmangani's she and all the bulls of Go-lat who are not cowards," and so saying he cast his eyes inquiringly about at the other apes. "Who will go with Zu-tag to fight the Gomangani and bring away our brother," he demanded.

Eight young bulls in the full prime of their vigor pressed forward to Zu-tag's

side, but the old bulls with the conservatism and caution of many years upon their gray shoulders, shook their heads and waddled away after Go-lat.

"Good," cried Zu-tag. "We want no old shes to go with us to fight the Gomangani for that is work for the fighters of the tribe."

The old bulls paid no attention to his boastful words, but the eight who had volunteered to accompany him were filled with self- pride so that they stood around vaingloriously beating upon their breasts, baring their fangs and screaming their hideous challenge until the jungle reverberated to the horrid sound.

All this time Bertha Kircher was a wide-eyed and terrified spectator to

what, as she thought, could end only in a terrific battle between these frightful beasts, and when Zu-tag and his followers began screaming forth their fearsome challenge, the girl found herself trembling in terror, for of all the sounds of the jungle there is none more awe inspiring than that of the great bull ape when he issues his challenge or shrieks forth his victory cry.

If she had been terrified before she was almost paralyzed with fear now as she saw Zu-tag and his apes turn toward the boma and approach her. With the agility of a cat Zu-tag leaped completely over the protecting wall and stood before her. Valiantly she held her spear before her, pointing it at his breast. He

commenced to jabber and gesticulate, and even with her scant acquaintance with the ways of the anthropoids, she realized that he was not menacing her, for there was little or no baring of fighting fangs and his whole expression and attitude was of one attempting to explain a knotty problem or plead a worthy cause. At last he became evidently impatient, for with a sweep of one great paw he struck the spear from her hand and coming close, seized her by the arm, but not roughly. She shrank away in terror and yet some sense within her seemed to be trying to assure her that she was in no danger from this great beast. Zu-tag jabbered loudly, ever and again pointing into the jungle toward the

south and moving toward the boma, pulling the girl with him. He seemed almost frantic in his efforts to explain something to her. He pointed toward the boma, herself, and then to the forest, and then, at last, as though by a sudden inspiration, he reached down and, seizing the spear, repeatedly touched it with his forefinger and again pointed toward the south. Suddenly it dawned upon the girl that what the ape was trying to explain to her was related in some way to the white man whose property they thought she was. Possibly her grim protector was in trouble and with this thought firmly established, she no longer held back, but started forward as though to accompany the young bull. At the

point in the boma where Tarzan had blocked the entrance, she started to pull away the thorn bushes, and, when Zu-tag saw what she was doing, he fell to and assisted her so that presently they had an opening through the boma through which she passed with the great ape.

Immediately Zu-tag and his eight apes started off rapidly toward the jungle, so rapidly that Bertha Kircher would have had to run at top speed to keep up with them. This she realized she could not do, and so she was forced to lag behind, much to the chagrin of Zu-tag, who constantly kept running back and urging her to greater speed. Once he took her by the arm and tried to draw her along. Her protests were of no avail since the beast

could not know that they were protests, nor did he desist until she caught her foot in some tangled grass and fell to the ground. Then indeed was Zu-tag furious and growled hideously. His apes were waiting at the edge of the forest for him to lead them. He suddenly realized that this poor weak she could not keep up with them and that if they traveled at her slow rate they might be too late to render assistance to the Tarmangani, and so without more ado, the giant anthropoid picked Bertha Kircher bodily from the ground and swung her to his back. Her arms were about his neck and in this position he seized her wrists in one great paw so that she could not fall off and started at a rapid rate to join his

companions.

Dressed as she was in riding breeches with no entangling skirts to hinder or catch upon passing shrubbery, she soon found that she could cling tightly to the back of the mighty bull and when a moment later he took to the lower branches of the trees, she closed her eyes and clung to him in terror lest she be precipitated to the ground below.

That journey through the primeval forest with the nine great apes will live in the memory of Bertha Kircher for the balance of her life, as clearly delineated as at the moment of its enactment.

The first overwhelming wave of fear having passed, she was at last able to open her eyes and view her surroundings

with increased interest and presently the sensation of terror slowly left her to be replaced by one of comparative security when she saw the ease and surety with which these great beasts traveled through the trees; and later her admiration for the young bull increased as it became evident that even burdened with her additional weight, he moved more rapidly and with no greater signs of fatigue than his unburdened fellows.

Not once did Zu-tag pause until he came to a stop among the branches of a tree no great distance from the native village. They could hear the noises of the life within the palisade, the laughing and shouting of the Negroes, and the barking of dogs, and through the foliage

the girl caught glimpses of the village from which she had so recently escaped. She shuddered to think of the possibility of having to return to it and of possible recapture, and she wondered why Zu-tag had brought her here.

Now the apes advanced slowly once more and with great caution, moving as noiselessly through the trees as the squirrels themselves until they had reached a point where they could easily overlook the palisade and the village street below.

Zu-tag squatted upon a great branch close to the bole of the tree and by loosening the girl's arms from about his neck, indicated that she was to find a footing for herself and when she had

done so, he turned toward her and pointed repeatedly at the open doorway of a hut upon the opposite side of the street below them. By various gestures he seemed to be trying to explain something to her and at last she caught at the germ of his idea—that her white man was a prisoner there.

Beneath them was the roof of a hut onto which she saw that she could easily drop, but what she could do after she had entered the village was beyond her.

Darkness was already falling and the fires beneath the cooking pots had been lighted. The girl saw the stake in the village street and the piles of fagots about it and in terror she suddenly realized the portent of these grisly

preparations. Oh, if she but only had some sort of a weapon that might give her even a faint hope, some slight advantage against the blacks. Then she would not hesitate to venture into the village in an attempt to save the man who had upon three different occasions saved her. She knew that he hated her and yet strong within her breast burned the sense of her obligation to him. She could not fathom him. Never in her life had she seen a man at once so paradoxical and dependable. In many of his ways he was more savage than the beasts with which he associated and yet, on the other hand, he was as chivalrous as a knight of old. For several days she had been lost with him in the jungle

absolutely at his mercy, yet she had come to trust so implicitly in his honor that any fear she had had of him was rapidly disappearing.

On the other hand, that he might be hideously cruel was evidenced to her by the fact that he was planning to leave her alone in the midst of the frightful dangers which menaced her by night and by day.

Zu-tag was evidently waiting for darkness to fall before carrying out whatever plans had matured in his savage little brain, for he and his fellows sat quietly in the tree about her, watching the preparations of the blacks. Presently it became apparent that some altercation had arisen among the Negroes, for a score or more of them

were gathered around one who appeared to be their chief, and all were talking and gesticulating heatedly. The argument lasted for some five or ten minutes when suddenly the little knot broke and two warriors ran to the opposite side of the village from whence they presently returned with a large stake which they soon set up beside the one already in place. The girl wondered what the purpose of the second stake might be, nor did she have long to wait for an explanation.

It was quite dark by this time, the village being lighted by the fitful glare of many fires, and now she saw a number of warriors approach and enter the hut Zu-tag had been watching. A moment

later they reappeared, dragging between them two captives, one of whom the girl immediately recognized as her protector and the other as an Englishman in the uniform of an aviator. This, then, was the reason for the two stakes.

Arising quickly she placed a hand upon Zu-tag's shoulder and pointed down into the village. "Come," she said, as if she had been talking to one of her own kind, and with the word she swung lightly to the roof of the hut below. From there to the ground was but a short drop and a moment later she was circling the hut upon the side farthest from the fires, keeping in the dense shadows where there was little likelihood of being discovered. She turned once to see that

Zu- tag was directly behind her and could see his huge bulk looming up in the dark, while beyond was another one of his eight. Doubtless they had all followed her and this fact gave her a greater sense of security and hope than she had before experienced.

Pausing beside the hut next to the street, she peered cautiously about the corner. A few inches from her was the open doorway of the structure, and beyond, farther down the village street, the blacks were congregating about the prisoners, who were already being bound to the stakes. All eyes were centered upon the victims, and there was only the remotest chance that she and her companions would be discovered until

they were close upon the blacks. She wished, however, that she might have some sort of a weapon with which to lead the attack, for she could not know, of course, for a certainty whether the great apes would follow her or not. Hoping that she might find something within the hut, she slipped quickly around the corner and into the doorway and after her, one by one, came the nine bulls. Searching quickly about the interior, she presently discovered a spear, and, armed with this, she again approached the entrance.

Tarzan of the Apes and Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick were bound securely to their respective stakes. Neither had spoken for some

time. The Englishman turned his head so that he could see his companion in misery. Tarzan stood straight against his stake. His face was entirely expressionless in so far as either fear or anger were concerned. His countenance portrayed bored indifference though both men knew that they were about to be tortured.

"Good-bye, old top," whispered the young lieutenant.

Tarzan turned his eyes in the direction of the other and smiled. "Good- bye," he said. "If you want to get it over in a hurry, inhale the smoke and flames as rapidly as you can."

"Thanks," replied the aviator and though he made a wry face, he drew

himself up very straight and squared his shoulders.

The women and children had seated themselves in a wide circle about the victims while the warriors, hideously painted, were forming slowly to commence the dance of death. Again Tarzan turned to his companion. "If you'd like to spoil their fun," he said, "don't make any fuss no matter how much you suffer. If you can carry on to the end without changing the expression upon your face or uttering a single word, you will deprive them of all the pleasures of this part of the entertainment. Good-bye again and good luck."

The young Englishman made no reply but it was evident from the set of his

jaws that the Negroes would get little enjoyment out of him.

The warriors were circling now. Presently Numabo would draw first blood with his sharp spear which would be the signal for the beginning of the torture after a little of which the fagots would be lighted around the feet of the victims.

Closer and closer danced the hideous chief, his yellow, sharp- filed teeth showing in the firelight between his thick, red lips. Now bending double, now stamping furiously upon the ground, now leaping into the air, he danced step by step in the narrowing circle that would presently bring him within spear reach of the intended feast.

At last the spear reached out and touched the ape-man on the breast and when it came away, a little trickle of blood ran down the smooth, brown hide and almost simultaneously there broke from the outer periphery of the expectant audience a woman's shriek which seemed a signal for a series of hideous screamings, growlings and barkings, and a great commotion upon that side of the circle. The victims could not see the cause of the disturbance, but Tarzan did not have to see, for he knew by the voices of the apes the identity of the disturbers. He only wondered what had brought them and what the purpose of the attack, for he could not believe that they had come to rescue him.

Numabo and his warriors broke quickly from the circle of their dance to see pushing toward them through the ranks of their screaming and terrified people the very white girl who had escaped them a few nights before, and at her back what appeared to their surprised eyes a veritable horde of the huge and hairy forest men upon whom they looked with considerable fear and awe.

Striking to right and left with his heavy fists, tearing with his great fangs, came Zu-tag, the young bull, while at his heels, emulating his example, surged his hideous apes. Quickly they came through the old men and the women and children, for straight toward Numabo and his

warriors the girl led them. It was then that they came within range of Tarzan's vision and he saw with unmixed surprise who it was that led the apes to his rescue.

To Zu-tag he shouted: "Go for the big bulls while the she unbinds me," and to Bertha Kircher: "Quick! Cut these bonds. The apes will take care of the blacks."

Turning from her advance the girl ran to his side. She had no knife and the bonds were tied tightly but she worked quickly and coolly and as Zu-tag and his apes closed with the warriors, she succeeded in loosening Tarzan's bonds sufficiently to permit him to extricate his own hands so that in another minute he

had freed himself.

"Now unbind the Englishman," he cried, and, leaping forward, ran to join Zu-tag and his fellows in their battle against the blacks. Numabo and his warriors, realizing now the relatively small numbers of the apes against them, had made a determined stand and with spears and other weapons were endeavoring to overcome the invaders. Three of the apes were already down, killed or mortally wounded, when Tarzan, realizing that the battle must eventually go against the apes unless some means could be found to break the morale of the Negroes, cast about him for some means of bringing about the desired end. And suddenly his eye

lighted upon a number of weapons which he knew would accomplish the result. A grim smile touched his lips as he snatched a vessel of boiling water from one of the fires and hurled it full in the faces of the warriors. Screaming with terror and pain they fell back though Numabo urged them to rush forward.

Scarcely had the first cauldron of boiling water spilled its contents upon them ere Tarzan deluged them with a second, nor was there any third needed to send them shrieking in every direction to the security of their huts.

By the time Tarzan had recovered his own weapons the girl had released the young Englishman, and, with the six remaining apes, the three Europeans

moved slowly toward the village gate, the aviator arming himself with a spear discarded by one of the scalded warriors, as they eagerly advanced toward the outer darkness.

Numabo was unable to rally the now thoroughly terrified and painfully burned warriors so that rescued and rescuers passed out of the village into the blackness of the jungle without further interference.

Tarzan strode through the jungle in silence. Beside him walked Zu-tag, the great ape, and behind them strung the surviving anthropoids followed by Fraulein Bertha Kircher and Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick, the latter a thoroughly astonished and mystified

Englishman.

In all his life Tarzan of the Apes had been obliged to acknowledge but few obligations. He won his way through his savage world by the might of his own muscle, the superior keenness of his five senses and his God-given power to reason. Tonight the greatest of all obligations had been placed upon him - his life had been saved by another and Tarzan shook his head and growled, for it had been saved by one whom he hated above all others.

11. FINDING THE AIRPLANE

Tarzan of the Apes, returning from a successful hunt, with the body of Bara, the deer, across one sleek, brown shoulder, paused in the branches of a great tree at the edge of a clearing and gazed ruefully at two figures walking from the river to the boma-encircled hut a short distance away.

The ape-man shook his tousled head and sighed. His eyes wandered toward the west and his thoughts to the far-away cabin by the land-locked harbor of the great water that washed the beach of his boyhood home—to the cabin of his long-dead father to which the memories and treasures of a happy childhood lured him. Since the loss of his mate, a great

longing had possessed him to return to the haunts of his youth—to the untracked jungle wilderness where he had lived the life he loved best long before man had invaded the precincts of his wild stamping grounds. There he hoped in a renewal of the old life under the old conditions to win surcease from sorrow and perhaps some measure of forgetfulness.

But the little cabin and the land-locked harbor were many long, weary marches away, and he was handicapped by the duty which he felt he owed to the two figures walking in the clearing before him. One was a young man in a worn and ragged uniform of the British Royal Air Forces, the other, a young

woman in the even more disreputable remnants of what once had been trim riding togs.

A freak of fate had thrown these three radically different types together. One was a savage, almost naked beast-man, one an English army officer, and the woman, she whom the ape-man knew and hated as a German spy.

How he was to get rid of them Tarzan could not imagine unless he accompanied them upon the weary march back to the east coast, a march that would necessitate his once more retracing the long, weary way he already had covered towards his goal, yet what else could be done? These two had neither the strength, endurance, nor

jungle-craft to accompany him through the unknown country to the west, nor did he wish them with him. The man he might have tolerated, but he could not even consider the presence of the girl in the far-off cabin, which had in a way become sacred to him through its memories, without a growl or anger rising to his lips. There remained, then, but the one way, since he could not desert them. He must move by slow and irksome marches back to the east coast, or at least to the first white settlement in that direction.

He had, it is true, contemplated leaving the girl to her fate but that was before she had been instrumental in saving him from torture and death at the

hands of the black Wamabos. He chafed under the obligation she had put upon him, but no less did he acknowledge it and as he watched the two, the rueful expression upon his face was lightened by a smile as he thought of the helplessness of them. What a puny thing, indeed, was man! How ill equipped to combat the savage forces of nature and of nature's jungle. Why, even the tiny balu of the tribe of Go-lat, the great ape, was better fitted to survive than these, for a balu could at least escape the numerous creatures that menaced its existence, while with the possible exception of Kota, the tortoise, none moved so slowly as did helpless and feeble man.

Without him these two doubtless would starve in the midst of plenty, should they by some miracle escape the other forces of destruction which constantly threatened them. That morning Tarzan had brought them fruit, nuts, and plantain, and now he was bringing them the flesh of his kill, while the best that they might do was to fetch water from the river. Even now, as they walked across the clearing toward the boma, they were in utter ignorance of the presence of Tarzan near them. They did not know that his sharp eyes were watching them, nor that other eyes less friendly were glaring at them from a clump of bushes close beside the boma entrance. They did not know these

things, but Tarzan did. No more than they could he see the creature crouching in the concealment of the foliage, yet he knew that it was there and what it was and what its intentions, precisely as well as though it had been lying in the open.

A slight movement of the leaves at the top of a single stem had apprised him of the presence of a creature there, for the movement was not that imparted by the wind. It came from pressure at the bottom of the stem which communicates a different movement to the leaves than does the wind passing among them, as anyone who has lived his lifetime in the jungle well knows, and the same wind that passed through the foliage of the bush brought to the ape-man's sensitive

nostrils indisputable evidence of the fact that Sheeta, the panther, waited there for the two returning from the river.

They had covered half the distance to the boma entrance when Tarzan called to them to stop. They looked in surprise in the direction from which his voice had come to see him drop lightly to the ground and advance toward them.

"Come slowly toward me," he called to them. "Do not run for if you run Sheeta will charge."

They did as he bid, their faces filled with questioning wonderment.

"What do you mean?" asked the young Englishman. "Who is Sheeta?" but for answer the ape-man suddenly hurled the carcass of Bara, the deer, to the ground

and leaped quickly toward them, his eyes upon something in their rear; and then it was that the two turned and learned the identity of Sheeta, for behind them was a devil-faced cat charging rapidly toward them.

Sheeta with rising anger and suspicion had seen the ape-man leap from the tree and approach the quarry. His life's experiences backed by instinct told him that the Tarmangani was about to rob him of his prey and as Sheeta was hungry, he had no intention of being thus easily deprived of the flesh he already considered his own.

The girl stifled an involuntary scream as she saw the proximity of the fanged fury bearing down upon them. She

shrank close to the man and clung to him and all unarmed and defenseless as he was, the Englishman pushed her behind him and shielding her with his body, stood squarely in the face of the panther's charge. Tarzan noted the act, and though accustomed as he was to acts of courage, he experienced a thrill from the hopeless and futile bravery of the man.

The charging panther moved rapidly, and the distance which separated the bush in which he had concealed himself from the objects of his desire was not great. In the time that one might understandingly read a dozen words the strong-limbed cat could have covered the entire distance and made his kill, yet

if Sheeta was quick, quick too was Tarzan. The English lieutenant saw the ape-man flash by him like the wind. He saw the great cat veer in his charge as though to elude the naked savage rushing to meet him, as it was evidently Sheeta's intention to make good his kill before attempting to protect it from Tarzan.

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick saw these things and then with increasing wonder he saw the ape-man swerve, too, and leap for the spotted cat as a football player leaps for a runner. He saw the strong, brown arms encircling the body of the carnivore, the left arm in front of the beast's left shoulder and the right arm behind his right foreleg, and with the impact the two together rolling over and

over upon the turf. He heard the snarls and growls of bestial combat, and it was with a feeling of no little horror that he realized that the sounds coming from the human throat of the battling man could scarce be distinguished from those of the panther.

The first momentary shock of terror over, the girl released her grasp upon the Englishman's arm. "Cannot we do something?" she asked. "Cannot we help him before the beast kills him?"

The Englishman looked upon the ground for some missile with which to attack the panther and then the girl uttered an exclamation and started at a run toward the hut. "Wait there," she called over her shoulder. "I will fetch

the spear that he left me."

Smith-Oldwick saw the raking talons of the panther searching for the flesh of the man and the man on his part straining every muscle and using every artifice to keep his body out of range of them. The muscles of his arms knotted under the brown hide. The veins stood out upon his neck and forehead as with ever-increasing power he strove to crush the life from the great cat. The ape-man's teeth were fastened in the back of Sheeta's neck and now he succeeded in encircling the beast's torso with his legs which he crossed and locked beneath the cat's belly. Leaping and snarling, Sheeta sought to dislodge the ape-man's hold upon him. He hurled himself upon the

ground and rolled over and over. He reared upon his hind legs and threw himself backwards but always the savage creature upon his back clung tenaciously to him, and always the mighty brown arms crushed tighter and tighter about his chest.

And then the girl, panting from her quick run, returned with the short spear Tarzan had left her as her sole weapon of protection. She did not wait to hand it to the Englishman who ran forward to receive it, but brushed past him and leaped into close quarters beside the growling, tumbling mass of yellow fur and smooth brown hide. Several times she attempted to press the point home into the cat's body, but on both occasions

the fear of endangering the ape-man caused her to desist, but at last the two lay motionless for a moment as the carnivore sought a moment's rest from the strenuous exertions of battle, and then it was that Bertha Kircher pressed the point of the spear to the tawny side and drove it deep into the savage heart.

Tarzan rose from the dead body of Sheeta and shook himself after the manner of beasts that are entirely clothed with hair. Like many other of his traits and mannerisms this was the result of environment rather than heredity or reversion, and even though he was outwardly a man, the Englishman and the girl were both impressed with the naturalness of the act. It was as though

Numa, emerging from a fight, had shaken himself to straighten his rumpled mane and coat, and yet, too, there was something uncanny about it as there had been when the savage growls and hideous snarls issued from those clean-cut lips.

Tarzan looked at the girl, a quizzical expression upon his face. Again had she placed him under obligations to her, and Tarzan of the Apes did not wish to be obligated to a German spy; yet in his honest heart he could not but admit a certain admiration for her courage, a trait which always greatly impressed the ape-man, he himself the personification of courage.

"Here is the kill," he said, picking the

carcass of Bara from the ground. "You will want to cook your portion, I presume, but Tarzan does not spoil his meat with fire."

They followed him to the boma where he cut several pieces of meat from the carcass for them, retaining a joint for himself. The young lieutenant prepared a fire, and the girl presided over the primitive culinary rights of their simple meal. As she worked some little way apart from them, the lieutenant and the ape-man watched her.

"She is wonderful. Is she not?" murmured Smith-Oldwick.

"She is a German and a spy," replied Tarzan.

The Englishman turned quickly upon

him. "What do you mean?" he cried.

"I mean what I say," replied the ape-man. "She is a German and a spy."

"I do not believe it!" exclaimed the aviator.

"You do not have to," Tarzan assured him. "It is nothing to me what you believe. I saw her in conference with the Boche general and his staff at the camp near Taveta. They all knew her and called her by name and she handed him a paper. The next time I saw her she was inside the British lines in disguise, and again I saw her bearing word to a German officer at Wilhelmstal. She is a German and a spy, but she is a woman and therefore I cannot destroy her."

"You really believe that what you say

is true?" asked the young lieutenant. "My God! I cannot believe it. She is so sweet and brave and good."

The ape-man shrugged his shoulders. "She is brave," he said, "but even Pamba, the rat, must have some good quality, but she is what I have told you and therefore I hate her and you should hate her."

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick buried his face in his hands. "God forgive me," he said at last. "I cannot hate her."

The ape-man cast a contemptuous look at his companion and arose. "Tarzan goes again to hunt," he said. "You have enough food for two days. By that time he will return."

The two watched him until he had disappeared in the foliage of the trees at the further side of the clearing.

When he had gone the girl felt a vague sense of apprehension that she never experienced when Tarzan was present. The invisible menaces lurking in the grim jungle seemed more real and much more imminent now that the ape-man was no longer near. While he had been there talking with them, the little thatched hut and its surrounding thorn boma had seemed as safe a place as the world might afford. She wished that he had remained—two days seemed an eternity in contemplation-two days of constant fear, two days, every moment of which would be fraught with danger. She

turned toward her companion.

"I wish that he had remained," she said. "I always feel so much safer when he is near. He is very grim and very terrible, and yet I feel safer with him than with any man I ever have known. He seems to dislike me and yet I know that he would let no harm befall me. I cannot understand him."

"Neither do I understand him," replied the Englishman; "but I know this much—our presence here is interfering with his plans. He would like to be rid of us, and I half imagine that he rather hopes to find when he returns that we have succumbed to one of the dangers which must always confront us in this savage land.

"I think that we should try to return to the white settlements. This man does not want us here, nor is it reasonable to assume that we could long survive in such a savage wilderness. I have traveled and hunted in several parts of Africa, but never have I seen or heard of any single locality so overrun with savage beasts and dangerous natives. If we set out for the east coast at once we would be in but little more danger than we are here, and if we could survive a day's march, I believe that we will find the means of reaching the coast in a few hours, for my plane must still be in the same place that I landed just before the blacks captured me. Of course there is no one here who could operate it nor is

there any reason why they should have destroyed it. As a matter of fact, the natives would be so fearful and suspicious of so strange and incomprehensible a thing that the chances are they would not dare approach it. Yes, it must be where I left it and all ready to carry us safely to the settlements."

"But we cannot leave," said the girl, "until he returns. We could not go away like that without thanking him or bidding him farewell. We are under too great obligations to him."

The man looked at her in silence for a moment. He wondered if she knew how Tarzan felt toward her and then he himself began to speculate upon the truth

of the ape-man's charges. The longer he looked at the girl, the less easy was it to entertain the thought that she was an enemy spy. He was upon the point of asking her point- blank but he could not bring himself to do so, finally determining to wait until time and longer acquaintance should reveal the truth or falsity of the accusation.

"I believe," he said as though there had been no pause in their conversation, "that the man would be more than glad to find us gone when he returns. It is not necessary to jeopardize our lives for two more days in order that we may thank him, however much we may appreciate his services to us. You have more than balanced your obligations to

him and from what he told me I feel that you especially should not remain here longer."

The girl looked up at him in astonishment. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"I do not like to tell," said the Englishman, digging nervously at the turf with the point of a stick, "but you have my word that he would rather you were not here."

"Tell me what he said," she insisted, "I have a right to know."

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick squared his shoulders and raised his eyes to those of the girl. "He said that he hated you," he blurted. "He has only aided you at all from a sense of duty because you

are a woman."

The girl paled and then flushed. "I will be ready to go," she said, "in just a moment. We had better take some of this meat with us. There is no telling when we will be able to get more."

And so the two set out down the river toward the south. The man carried the short spear that Tarzan had left with the girl, while she was entirely unarmed except for a stick she had picked up from among those left after the building of the hut. Before departing she had insisted that the man leave a note for Tarzan thanking him for his care of them and bidding him goodbye. This they left pinned to the inside wall of the hut with a little sliver of wood.

It was necessary that they be constantly on the alert since they never knew what might confront them at the next turn of the winding jungle trail or what might lie concealed in the tangled bushes at either side. There was also the ever-present danger of meeting some of Numabo's black warriors and as the village lay directly in their line of march, there was the necessity for making a wide detour before they reached it in order to pass around it without being discovered.

"I am not so much afraid of the native blacks," said the girl, "as I am of Usanga and his people. He and his men were all attached to a German native regiment. They brought me along with them when

they deserted, either with the intention of holding me ransom or selling me into the harem of one of the black sultans of the north. Usanga is much more to be feared than Numabo for he has had the advantage of European military training and is armed with more or less modern weapons and ammunition."

"It is lucky for me," remarked the Englishman, "that it was the ignorant Numabo who discovered and captured me rather than the worldly wise Usanga. He would have felt less fear of the giant flying machine and would have known only too well how to wreck it."

"Let us pray that the black sergeant has not discovered it," said the girl.

They made their way to a point which

they guessed was about a mile above the village, then they turned into the trackless tangle of undergrowth to the east. So dense was the verdure at many points that it was with the utmost difficulty they wormed their way through, sometimes on hands and knees and again by clambering over numerous fallen tree trunks. Interwoven with dead limbs and living branches were the tough and ropelike creepers which formed a tangled network across their path.

South of them in an open meadowland a number of black warriors were gathered about an object which elicited much wondering comment. The blacks were clothed in fragments of what had once been uniforms of a native German

command. They were a most unlovely band and chief among them in authority and repulsiveness was the black sergeant Usanga. The object of their interest was a British aeroplane.

Immediately after the Englishman had been brought to Numabo's village Usanga had gone out in search of the plane, prompted partially by curiosity and partially by an intention to destroy it, but when he had found it, some new thought had deterred him from carrying out his design. The thing represented considerable value as he well knew and it had occurred to him that in some way he might turn his prize to profit. Every day he had returned to it, and while at first it had filled him with considerable

awe, he eventually came to look upon it with the accustomed eye of a proprietor, so that he now clambered into the fuselage and even advanced so far as to wish that he might learn to operate it.

What a feat it would be indeed to fly like a bird far above the highest tree top! How it would fill his less favored companions with awe and admiration! If Usanga could but fly, so great would be the respect of all the tribesmen throughout the scattered villages of the great interior, they would look upon him as little less than a god.

Usanga rubbed his palms together and smacked his thick lips. Then indeed, would he be very rich, for all the villages would pay tribute to him and he

could even have as many as a dozen wives. With that thought, however, came a mental picture of Naratu, the black termagant, who ruled him with an iron hand. Usanga made a wry face and tried to forget the extra dozen wives, but the lure of the idea remained and appealed so strongly to him that he presently found himself reasoning most logically that a god would not be much of a god with less than twenty-four wives.

He fingered the instruments and the control, half hoping and half fearing that he would alight upon the combination that would put the machine in flight. Often had he watched the British air-men soaring above the German lines and it looked so simple he was quite sure that

he could do it himself if there was somebody who could but once show him how. There was, of course, always the hope that the white man who came in the machine and who had escaped from Numabo's village might fall into Usanga's hands and then indeed would he be able to learn how to fly. It was in this hope that Usanga spent so much time in the vicinity of the plane, reasoning as he did that eventually the white man would return in search of it.

And at last he was rewarded, for upon this very day after he had quit the machine and entered the jungle with his warriors, he heard voices to the north and when he and his men had hidden in the dense foliage upon either side of the

trail, Usanga was presently filled with elation by the appearance of the British officer and the white girl whom the black sergeant had coveted and who had escaped him.

The Negro could scarce restrain a shout of elation, for he had not hoped that fate would be so kind as to throw these two whom he most desired into his power at the same time.

As the two came down the trail all unconscious of impending danger, the man was explaining that they must be very close to the point at which the plane had landed. Their entire attention was centered on the trail directly ahead of them, as they momentarily expected it to break into the meadowland where they

were sure they would see the plane that would spell life and liberty for them.

The trail was broad, and they were walking side by side so that at a sharp turn the park-like clearing was revealed to them simultaneously with the outlines of the machine they sought.

Exclamations of relief and delight broke from their lips, and at the same instant Usanga and his black warriors rose from the bushes all about them.

12. THE BLACK FLIER

The girl was almost crushed by terror and disappointment. To have been thus close to safety and then to have all hope snatched away by a cruel stroke of fate seemed unendurable. The man was disappointed, too, but more was he angry. He noted the remnants of the uniforms upon the blacks and immediately he demanded to know where were their officers.

"They cannot understand you," said the girl and so in the bastard tongue that is the medium of communication between the Germans and the blacks of their colony, she repeated the white man's question.

Usanga grinned. "You know where

they are, white woman," he replied. "They are dead, and if this white man does not do as I tell him, he, too, will be dead."

"What do you want of him?" asked the girl.

"I want him to teach me how to fly like a bird," replied Usanga.

Bertha Kircher looked her astonishment, but repeated the demand to the lieutenant.

The Englishman meditated for a moment. "He wants to learn to fly, does he?" he repeated. "Ask him if he will give us our freedom if I teach him to fly."

The girl put the question to Usanga, who, degraded, cunning, and entirely

unprincipled, was always perfectly willing to promise anything whether he had any intentions of fulfilling his promises or not, and so immediately assented to the proposition.

"Let the white man teach me to fly," he said, "and I will take you back close to the settlements of your people, but in return for this I shall keep the great bird," and he waved a black hand in the direction of the aeroplane.

When Bertha Kircher had repeated Usanga's proposition to the aviator, the latter shrugged his shoulders and with a wry face finally agreed. "I fancy there is no other way out of it," he said. "In any event the plane is lost to the British government. If I refuse the black

scoundrel's request, there is no doubt but what he will make short work of me with the result that the machine will lie here until it rots. If I accept his offer it will at least be the means of assuring your safe return to civilization and that" he added, "is worth more to me than all the planes in the British Air Service."

The girl cast a quick glance at him. These were the first words he had addressed to her that might indicate that his sentiments toward her were more than those of a companion in distress. She regretted that he had spoken as he had and he, too, regretted it almost instantly as he saw the shadow cross her face and realized that he had unwittingly added to the difficulties of her already

almost unbearable situation.

"Forgive me," he said quickly. "Please forget what that remark implied. I promise you that I will not offend again, if it does offend you, until after we are both safely out of this mess."

She smiled and thanked him, but the thing had been said and could never be unsaid, and Bertha Kircher knew even more surely than as though he had fallen upon his knees and protested undying devotion that the young English officer loved her.

Usanga was for taking his first lesson in aviation immediately. The Englishman attempted to dissuade him, but immediately the black became threatening and abusive, since, like all

those who are ignorant, he was suspicious that the intentions of others were always ulterior unless they perfectly coincided with his wishes.

"All right, old top," muttered the Englishman, "I will give you the lesson of your life," and then turning to the girl: "Persuade him to let you accompany us. I shall be afraid to leave you here with these devilish scoundrels." But when she put the suggestion to Usanga the black immediately suspected some plan to thwart him—possibly to carry him against his will back to the German masters he had traitorously deserted, and glowering at her savagely, he obstinately refused to entertain the suggestion.

"The white woman will remain here

with my people," he said. "They will not harm her unless you fail to bring me back safely."

"Tell him," said the Englishman, "that if you are not standing in plain sight in this meadow when I return, I will not land, but will carry Usanga back to the British camp and have him hanged."

Usanga promised that the girl would be in evidence upon their return, and took immediate steps to impress upon his warriors that under penalty of death they must not harm her. Then, followed by the other members of his party, he crossed the clearing toward the plane with the Englishman. Once seated within what he already considered his new possession, the black's courage began to

wane and when the motor was started and the great propeller commenced to whir, he screamed to the Englishman to stop the thing and permit him to alight, but the aviator could neither hear nor understand the black above the noise of the propeller and exhaust. By this time the plane was moving along the ground and even then Usanga was upon the verge of leaping out, and would have done so had he been able to unfasten the strap from about his waist. Then the plane rose from the ground and in a moment soared gracefully in a wide circle until it topped the trees. The black sergeant was in a veritable collapse of terror. He saw the earth dropping rapidly from beneath him. He saw the

trees and river and at a distance the little clearing with the thatched huts of Numabo's village. He tried hard not to think of the results of a sudden fall to the rapidly receding ground below. He attempted to concentrate his mind upon the twenty-four wives which this great bird most assuredly would permit him to command. Higher and higher rose the plane, swinging in a wide circle above the forest, river, and meadowland and presently, much to his surprise, Usanga discovered that his terror was rapidly waning, so that it was not long before there was forced upon him a consciousness of utter security, and then it was that he began to take notice of the manner in which the white man guided

and manipulated the plane.

After half an hour of skillful maneuvering, the Englishman rose rapidly to a considerable altitude, and then, suddenly, without warning, he looped and flew with the plane inverted for a few seconds.

"I said I'd give this beggar the lesson of his life," he murmured as he heard, even above the whir of the propeller, the shriek of the terrified Negro. A moment later Smith-Oldwick had righted the machine and was dropping rapidly toward the earth. He circled slowly a few times above the meadow until he had assured himself that Bertha Kircher was there and apparently unharmed, then he dropped gently to the ground so that

the machine came to a stop a short distance from where the girl and the warriors awaited them.

It was a trembling and ashen-hued Usanga who tumbled out of the fuselage, for his nerves were still on edge as a result of the harrowing experience of the loop, yet with terra firma once more under foot, he quickly regained his composure. Strutting about with great show and braggadocio, he strove to impress his followers with the mere nothingness of so trivial a feat as flying birdlike thousands of yards above the jungle, though it was long until he had thoroughly convinced himself by the force of autosuggestion that he had enjoyed every instant of the flight and

was already far advanced in the art of aviation.

So jealous was the black of his new-found toy that he would not return to the village of Numabo, but insisted on making camp close beside the plane, lest in some inconceivable fashion it should be stolen from him. For two days they camped there, and constantly during daylight hours Usanga compelled the Englishman to instruct him in the art of flying.

Smith-Oldwick, in recalling the long months of arduous training he had undergone himself before he had been considered sufficiently adept to be considered a finished flier, smiled at the conceit of the ignorant African who was

already demanding that he be permitted to make a flight alone.

"If it was not for losing the machine," the Englishman explained to the girl, "I'd let the bounder take it up and break his fool neck as he would do inside of two minutes."

However, he finally persuaded Usanga to bide his time for a few more days of instruction, but in the suspicious mind of the Negro there was a growing conviction that the white man's advice was prompted by some ulterior motive; that it was in the hope of escaping with the machine himself by night that he refused to admit that Usanga was entirely capable of handling it alone and therefore in no further need of help or

instruction, and so in the mind of the black there formed a determination to outwit the white man. The lure of the twenty-four seductive wives proved in itself a sufficient incentive and there, too, was added his desire for the white girl whom he had long since determined to possess.

It was with these thoughts in mind that Usanga lay down to sleep in the evening of the second day. Constantly, however, the thought of Naratu and her temper arose to take the keen edge from his pleasant imaginings. If he could but rid himself of her! The thought having taken form persisted, but always it was more than outweighed by the fact that the black sergeant was actually afraid of his

woman, so much afraid of her in fact that he would not have dared to attempt to put her out of the way unless he could do so secretly while she slept. However, as one plan after another was conjured by the strength of his desires, he at last hit upon one which came to him almost with the force of a blow and brought him sitting upright among his sleeping companions.

When morning dawned Usanga could scarce wait for an opportunity to put his scheme into execution, and the moment that he had eaten, he called several of his warriors aside and talked with them for some moments.

The Englishman, who usually kept an eye upon his black captor, saw now that

the latter was explaining something in detail to his warriors, and from his gestures and his manner it was apparent that he was persuading them to some new plan as well as giving them instructions as to what they were to do. Several times, too, he saw the eyes of the Negroes turned upon him and once they flashed simultaneously toward the white girl.

Everything about the occurrence, which in itself seemed trivial enough, aroused in the mind of the Englishman a well-defined apprehension that something was afoot that boded ill for him and for the girl. He could not free himself of the idea and so he kept a still closer watch over the black although, as

he was forced to admit to himself, he was quite powerless to avert any fate that lay in store for them. Even the spear that he had had when captured had been taken away from him, so that now he was unarmed and absolutely at the mercy of the black sergeant and his followers.

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick did not have long to wait before discovering something of Usanga's plan, for almost immediately after the sergeant finished giving his instructions, a number of warriors approached the Englishman, while three went directly to the girl.

Without a word of explanation the warriors seized the young officer and threw him to the ground upon his face.

For a moment he struggled to free himself and succeeded in landing a few heavy blows among his assailants, but he was too greatly outnumbered to hope to more than delay them in the accomplishment of their object which he soon discovered was to bind him securely hand and foot. When they had finally secured him to their satisfaction, they rolled him over on his side and then it was he saw Bertha Kircher had been similarly trussed.

Smith-Oldwick lay in such a position that he could see nearly the entire expanse of meadow and the aeroplane a short distance away. Usanga was talking to the girl who was shaking her head in vehement negatives.

"What is he saying?" called the Englishman.

"He is going to take me away in the plane," the girl called back. "He is going to take me farther inland to another country where he says that he will be king and I am to be one of his wives," and then to the Englishman's surprise she turned a smiling face toward him, "but there is no danger," she continued, "for we shall both be dead within a few minutes—just give him time enough to get the machine under way, and if he can rise a hundred feet from the ground I shall never need fear him more."

"God!" cried the man. "Is there no way that you can dissuade him? Promise him anything. Anything that you want. I

have money, more money than that poor fool could imagine there was in the whole world. With it he can buy anything that money will purchase, fine clothes and food and women, all the women he wants. Tell him this and tell him that if he will spare you I give him my word that I will fetch it all to him."

The girl shook her head. "It is useless," she said. "He would not understand and if he did understand, he would not trust you. The blacks are so unprincipled themselves that they can imagine no such thing as principle or honor in others, and especially do these blacks distrust an Englishman whom the Germans have taught them to believe are the most treacherous and degraded of

people. No, it is better thus. I am sorry that you cannot go with us, for if he goes high enough my death will be much easier than that which probably awaits you."

Usanga had been continually interrupting their brief conversation in an attempt to compel the girl to translate it to him, for he feared that they were concocting some plan to thwart him, and to quiet and appease him, she told him that the Englishman was merely bidding her farewell and wishing her good luck. Suddenly she turned to the black. "Will you do something for me?" she asked. "If I go willingly with you?"

"What is it you want?" he inquired.

"Tell your men to free the white man

after we are gone. He can never catch us. That is all I ask of you. If you will grant him his freedom and his life, I will go willingly with you.

"You will go with me anyway," growled Usanga. "It is nothing to me whether you go willingly or not. I am going to be a great king and you will do whatever I tell you to do."

He had in mind that he would start properly with this woman. There should be no repetition of his harrowing experience with Naratu. This wife and the twenty-four others should be carefully selected and well trained. Hereafter Usanga would be master in his own house.

Bertha Kircher saw that it was

useless to appeal to the brute and so she held her peace though she was filled with sorrow in contemplating the fate that awaited the young officer, scarce more than a boy, who had impulsively revealed his love for her.

At Usanga's order one of the blacks lifted her from the ground and carried her to the machine, and after Usanga had clambered aboard, they lifted her up and he reached down and drew her into the fuselage where he removed the thongs from her wrists and strapped her into her seat and then took his own directly ahead of her.

The girl turned her eyes toward the Englishman. She was very pale but her lips smiled bravely.

"Good-bye!" she cried.

"Good-bye, and God bless you!" he called back—his voice the least bit husky—and then: "The thing I wanted to say-may I say it now, we are so very near the end?"

Her lips moved but whether they voiced consent or refusal he did not know, for the words were drowned in the whir of the propeller.

The black had learned his lesson sufficiently well so that the motor was started without bungling and the machine was soon under way across the meadowland. A groan escaped the lips of the distracted Englishman as he watched the woman he loved being carried to almost certain death. He saw

the plane tilt and the machine rise from the ground. It was a good take-off —as good as Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick could make himself but he realized that it was only so by chance. At any instant the machine might plunge to earth and even if, by some miracle of chance, the black could succeed in rising above the tree tops and make a successful flight, there was not one chance in one hundred thousand that he could ever land again without killing his fair captive and himself.

But what was that? His heart stood still.

13. USANGA'S REWARD

For two days Tarzan of the Apes had been hunting leisurely to the north, and swinging in a wide circle, he had returned to within a short distance of the clearing where he had left Bertha Kircher and the young lieutenant. He had spent the night in a large tree that overhung the river only a short distance from the clearing, and now in the early morning hours he was crouching at the water's edge waiting for an opportunity to capture Pisah, the fish, thinking that he would take it back with him to the hut where the girl could cook it for herself and her companion.

Motionless as a bronze statue was the wily ape-man, for well he knew how

wary is Pisah, the fish. The slightest movement would frighten him away and only by infinite patience might he be captured at all. Tarzan depended upon his own quickness and the suddenness of his attack, for he had no bait or hook. His knowledge of the ways of the denizens of the water told him where to wait for Pisah. It might be a minute or it might be an hour before the fish would swim into the little pool above which he crouched, but sooner or later one would come. That the ape-man knew, so with the patience of the beast of prey he waited for his quarry.

At last there was a glint of shiny scales. Pisah was coming. In a moment he would be within reach and then with

the swiftness of light two strong, brown hands would plunge into the pool and seize him, but, just at the moment that the fish was about to come within reach, there was a great crashing in the underbrush behind the ape- man. Instantly Pisah was gone and Tarzan, growling, had wheeled about to face whatever creature might be menacing him. The moment that he turned he saw that the author of the disturbance was Zu-tag.

"What does Zu-tag want?" asked the ape-man.

"Zu-tag comes to the water to drink," replied the ape.

"Where is the tribe?" asked Tarzan.

"They are hunting for pisangs and

scimatines farther back in the forest," replied Zu-tag.

"And the Tarmangani she and bull—" asked Tarzan, "are they safe?"

"They have gone away," replied Zu-tag. "Kudu has come out of his lair twice since they left."

"Did the tribe chase them away?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied the ape. "We did not see them go. We do not know why they left."

Tarzan swung quickly through the trees toward the clearing. The hut and boma were as he had left them, but there was no sign of either the man or the woman. Crossing the clearing, he entered the boma and then the hut. Both

were empty, and his trained nostrils told him that they had been gone for at least two days. As he was about to leave the hut he saw a paper pinned upon the wall with a sliver of wood and taking it down, he read:

After what you told me about Miss Kircher, and knowing that you dislike her, I feel that it is not fair to her and to you that we should impose longer upon you. I know that our presence is keeping you from continuing your journey to the west coast, and so I have decided that it is better for us to try and reach the white settlements immediately without imposing further upon you. We both thank you for your kindness and protection. If there was any way that I

might repay the obligation I feel, I should be only too glad to do so.

It was signed by Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick.

Tarzan shrugged his shoulders, crumpled the note in his hand and tossed it aside. He felt a certain sense of relief from responsibility and was glad that they had taken the matter out of his hands. They were gone and would forget, but somehow he could not forget. He walked out across the boma and into the clearing. He felt uneasy and restless. Once he started toward the north in response to a sudden determination to continue his way to the west coast. He would follow the winding river toward the north a few miles where its course

turned to the west and then on toward its source across a wooded plateau and up into the foothills and the mountains. Upon the other side of the range he would search for a stream running downward toward the west coast, and thus following the rivers he would be sure of game and water in plenty.

But he did not go far. A dozen steps, perhaps, and he came to a sudden stop. "He is an Englishman," he muttered, "and the other is a woman. They can never reach the settlements without my help. I could not kill her with my own hands when I tried, and if I let them go on alone, I will have killed her just as surely as though I had run my knife into her heart. No," and again he shook his

head. "Tarzan of the Apes is a fool and a weak, old woman," and he turned back toward the south.

Manu, the monkey, had seen the two Tarmangani pass two days before. Chattering and scolding, he told Tarzan all about it. They had gone in the direction of the village of the Gomangani, that much had Manu seen with his own eyes, so the ape-man swung on through the jungle in a southerly direction and though with no concentrated effort to follow the spoor of those he trailed, he passed numerous evidences that they had gone this way—faint suggestions of their scent spoor clung lightly to leaf or branch or bole that one or the other had touched, or in

the earth of the trail their feet had trod, and where the way wound through the gloomy depth of dank forest, the impress of their shoes still showed occasionally in the damp mass of decaying vegetation that floored the way.

An inexplicable urge spurred Tarzan to increasing, speed. The same still, small voice that chided him for having neglected them seemed constantly whispering that they were in dire need of him now. Tarzan's conscience was troubling him, which accounted for the fact that he compared himself to a weak, old woman, for the ape-man, reared in savagery and inured to hardships and cruelty, disliked to admit any of the gentler traits that in reality were his

birthright.

The trail made a detour to the east of the village of the Wamabos, and then returned to the wide elephant path nearer to the river, where it continued in a southerly direction for several miles. At last there came to the ears of the ape-man a peculiar whirring, throbbing sound. For an instant he paused, listening intently, "An aeroplane!" he muttered, and hastened forward at greatly increased speed.

When Tarzan of the Apes finally reached the edge of the meadowland where Smith-Oldwick's plane had landed, he took in the entire scene in one quick glance and grasped the situation, although he could scarce give credence

to the things he saw. Bound and helpless, the English officer lay upon the ground at one side of the meadow, while around him stood a number of the black deserters from the German command. Tarzan had seen these men before and knew who they were. Coming toward him down the meadow was an aeroplane piloted by the black Usanga and in the seat behind the pilot was the white girl, Bertha Kircher. How it befell that the ignorant savage could operate the plane, Tarzan could not guess nor had he time in which to speculate upon the subject. His knowledge of Usanga, together with the position of the white man, told him that the black sergeant was attempting to carry off the white girl. Why he should

be doing this when he had her in his power and had also captured and secured the only creature in the jungle who might wish to defend her in so far as the black could know, Tarzan could not guess, for he knew nothing of Usanga's twenty-four dream wives nor of the black's fear of the horrid temper of Naratu, his present mate. He did not know, then, that Usanga had determined to fly away with the white girl never to return, and to put so great a distance between himself and Naratu that the latter never could find him again; but it was this very thing that was in the black's mind although not even his own warriors guessed it. He had told them that he would take the captive to a sultan

of the north and there obtain a great price for her and that when he returned they should have some of the spoils.

These things Tarzan did not know. All he knew was what he saw—a Negro attempting to fly away with a white girl. Already the machine was slowly leaving the ground. In a moment more it would rise swiftly out of reach. At first Tarzan thought of fitting an arrow to his bow and slaying Usanga, but as quickly he abandoned the idea because he knew that the moment the pilot was slain the machine, running wild, would dash the girl to death among the trees.

There was but one way in which he might hope to succor her—a way which if it failed must send him to instant death

and yet he did not hesitate in an attempt to put it into execution.

Usanga did not see him, being too intent upon the unaccustomed duties of a pilot, but the blacks across the meadow saw him and they ran forward with loud and savage cries and menacing rifles to intercept him. They saw a giant white man leap from the branches of a tree to the turf and race rapidly toward the plane. They saw him take a long grass rope from about his shoulders as he ran. They saw the noose swinging in an undulating circle above his head. They saw the white girl in the machine glance down and discover him.

Twenty feet above the running ape-man soared the huge plane. The open

noose shot up to meet it, and the girl, half guessing the ape-man's intentions, reached out and caught the noose and, bracing herself, clung tightly to it with both hands. Simultaneously Tarzan was dragged from his feet and the plane lurched sideways in response to the new strain. Usanga clutched wildly at the control and the machine shot upward at a steep angle. Dangling at the end of the rope the ape-man swung pendulum-like in space. The Englishman, lying bound upon the ground, had been a witness of all these happenings. His heart stood still as he saw Tarzan's body hurtling through the air toward the tree tops among which it seemed he must inevitably crash; but the plane was rising

rapidly, so that the beast-man cleared the top-most branches. Then slowly, hand over hand, he climbed toward the fuselage. The girl, clinging desperately to the noose, strained every muscle to hold the great weight dangling at the lower end of the rope.

Usanga, all unconscious of what was going on behind him, drove the plane higher and higher into the air.

Tarzan glanced downward. Below him the tree tops and the river passed rapidly to the rear and only a slender grass rope and the muscles of a frail girl stood between him and the death yawning there thousands of feet below.

It seemed to Bertha Kircher that the fingers of her hands were dead. The

numbness was running up her arms to her elbows. How much longer she could cling to the straining strands she could not guess. It seemed to her that those lifeless fingers must relax at any instant and then, when she had about given up hope, she saw a strong brown hand reach up and grasp the side of the fuselage. Instantly the weight upon the rope was removed and a moment later Tarzan of the Apes raised his body above the side and threw a leg over the edge. He glanced forward at Usanga and then, placing his mouth close to the girl's ear he cried: "Have you ever piloted a plane?" The girl nodded a quick affirmative.

"Have you the courage to climb up

there beside the black and seize the control while I take care of him?"

The girl looked toward Usanga and shuddered. "Yes," she replied, "but my feet are bound."

Tarzan drew his hunting knife from its sheath and reaching down, severed the thongs that bound her ankles. Then the girl unsnapped the strap that held her to her seat. With one hand Tarzan grasped the girl's arm and steadied her as the two crawled slowly across the few feet which intervened between the two seats. A single slight tip of the plane would have cast them both into eternity. Tarzan realized that only through a miracle of chance could they reach Usanga and effect the change in pilots and yet he

knew that that chance must be taken, for in the brief moments since he had first seen the plane, he had realized that the black was almost without experience as a pilot and that death surely awaited them in any event should the black sergeant remain at the control.

The first intimation Usanga had that all was not well with him was when the girl slipped suddenly to his side and grasped the control and at the same instant steel-like fingers seized his throat. A brown hand shot down with a keen blade and severed the strap about his waist and giant muscles lifted him bodily from his seat. Usanga clawed the air and shrieked but he was helpless as a babe. Far below the watchers in the

meadow could see the aeroplane careening in the sky, for with the change of control it had taken a sudden dive. They saw it right itself and, turning in a short circle, return in their direction, but it was so far above them and the light of the sun so strong that they could see nothing of what was going on within the fuselage; but presently Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick gave a gasp of dismay as he saw a human body plunge downward from the plane. Turning and twisting in mid-air it fell with ever-increasing velocity and the Englishman held his breath as the thing hurtled toward them.

With a muffled thud it flattened upon the turf near the center of the meadow, and when at last the Englishman could

gain the courage to again turn his eyes upon it, he breathed a fervent prayer of thanks, for the shapeless mass that lay upon the blood-stained turf was covered with an ebon hide. Usanga had reaped his reward.

Again and again the plane circled above the meadow. The blacks, at first dismayed at the death of their leader, were now worked to a frenzy of rage and a determination to be avenged. The girl and the ape-man saw them gather in a knot about the body of their fallen chief. They saw as they circled above the meadow the black fists shaken at them, and the rifles brandishing a menace toward them. Tarzan still clung to the fuselage directly behind the pilot's

seat. His face was close beside Bertha Kircher's, and at the top of his voice, above the noise of propeller, engine and exhaust, he screamed a few words of instruction into her ear.

As the girl grasped the significance of his words she paled, but her lips set in a hard line and her eyes shone with a sudden fire of determination as she dropped the plane to within a few feet of the ground and at the opposite end of the meadow from the blacks and then at full speed bore down upon the savages. So quickly the plane came that Usanga's men had no time to escape it after they realized its menace. It touched the ground just as it struck among them and mowed through them, a veritable

juggernaut of destruction. When it came to rest at the edge of the forest the ape-man leaped quickly to the ground and ran toward the young lieutenant, and as he went he glanced at the spot where the warriors had stood, ready to defend himself if necessary, but there was none there to oppose him. Dead and dying they lay strewn for fifty feet along the turf.

By the time Tarzan had freed the Englishman the girl joined them. She tried to voice her thanks to the ape-man but he silenced her with a gesture.

"You saved yourself," he insisted, "for had you been unable to pilot the plane, I could not have helped you, and now," he said, "you two have the means

of returning to the settlements. The day is still young. You can easily cover the distance in a few hours if you have sufficient petrol." He looked inquiringly toward the aviator.

Smith-Oldwick nodded his head affirmatively. "I have plenty," he replied.

"Then go at once," said the ape-man. "Neither of you belong in the jungle." A slight smile touched his lips as he spoke.

The girl and the Englishman smiled too. "This jungle is no place for us at least," said Smith-Oldwick, "and it is no place for any other white man. Why don't you come back to civilization with us?"

Tarzan shook his head. "I prefer the jungle," he said.

The aviator dug his toe into the ground and still looking down, blurted something which he evidently hated to say. "If it is a matter of living, old top," he said, "er—money, er—you know—"

Tarzan laughed. "No," he said. "I know what you are trying to say. It is not that. I was born in the jungle. I have lived all my life in the jungle, and I shall die in the jungle. I do not wish to live or die elsewhere."

The others shook their heads. They could not understand him.

"Go," said the ape-man. "The quicker you go, the quicker you will reach safety."

They walked to the plane together. Smith-Oldwick pressed the ape-man's

hand and clambered into the pilot's seat. "Good-bye," said the girl as she extended her hand to Tarzan. "Before I go won't you tell me you don't hate me any more?" Tarzan's face clouded. Without a word he picked her up and lifted her to her place behind the Englishman. An expression of pain crossed Bertha Kircher's face. The motor started and a moment later the two were being borne rapidly toward the east.

In the center of the meadow stood the ape-man watching them. "It is too bad that she is a German and a spy," he said, "for she is very hard to hate."

14. THE BLACK LION

Numa, the lion, was hungry. He had come out of the desert country to the east into a land of plenty but though he was young and strong, the wary grass-eaters had managed to elude his mighty talons each time he had thought to make a kill.

Numa, the lion, was hungry and very savage. For two days he had not eaten and now he hunted in the ugliest of humors. No more did Numa roar forth a rumbling challenge to the world but rather he moved silent and grim, stepping softly that no cracking twig might betray his presence to the keen-eared quarry he sought.

Fresh was the spoor of Bara, the deer, that Numa picked up in the well-beaten

game trail he was following. No hour had passed since Bara had come this way; the time could be measured in minutes and so the great lion redoubled the cautiousness of his advance as he crept stealthily in pursuit of his quarry.

A light wind was moving through the jungle aisles, and it wafted down now to the nostrils of the eager carnivore the strong scent spoor of the deer, exciting his already avid appetite to a point where it became a gnawing pain. Yet Numa did not permit himself to be carried away by his desires into any premature charge such as had recently lost him the juicy meat of Pacco, the zebra. Increasing his gait but slightly he followed the tortuous windings of the

trail until suddenly just before him, where the trail wound about the bole of a huge tree, he saw a young buck moving slowly ahead of him.

Numa judged the distance with his keen eyes, glowing now like two terrible spots of yellow fire in his wrinkled, snarling face. He could do it— this time he was sure. One terrific roar that would paralyze the poor creature ahead of him into momentary inaction, and a simultaneous charge of lightning-like rapidity and Numa, the lion, would feed. The sinuous tail, undulating slowly at its tufted extremity, whipped suddenly erect. It was the signal for the charge and the vocal organs were shaped for the thunderous roar when, as lightning out of

a clear sky, Sheeta, the panther, leaped suddenly into the trail between Numa and the deer.

A blundering charge made Sheeta, for with the first crash of his spotted body through the foliage verging the trail, Bara gave a single startled backward glance and was gone.

The roar that was intended to paralyze the deer broke horribly from the deep throat of the great cat—an angry roar of rage against the meddling Sheeta who had robbed him of his kill, and the charge that was intended for Bara was launched against the panther; but here too Numa was doomed to disappointment, for with the first notes of his fearsome roar Sheeta, considering

well the better part of valor, leaped into a near-by tree.

A half-hour later it was a thoroughly furious Numa who came unexpectedly upon the scent of man. Heretofore the lord of the jungle had disdained the unpalatable flesh of the despised man-thing. Such meat was only for the old, the toothless, and the decrepit who no longer could make their kills among the fleet-footed grass-eaters. Bara, the deer, Horta, the boar, and, best and wariest, Pacco, the zebra, were for the young, the strong, and the agile, but Numa was hungry-hungrier than he ever had been in the five short years of his life.

What if he was a young, powerful, cunning, and ferocious beast? In the face

of hunger, the great leveler, he was as the old, the toothless, and the decrepit. His belly cried aloud in anguish and his jowls slavered for flesh. Zebra or deer or man, what mattered it so that it was warm flesh, red with the hot juices of life? Even Dango, the hyena, eater of offal, would, at the moment, have seemed a tidbit to Numa.

The great lion knew the habits and frailties of man, though he never before had hunted man for food. He knew the despised Gomangani as the slowest, the most stupid, and the most defenseless of creatures. No woodcraft, no cunning, no stealth was necessary in the hunting of man, nor had Numa any stomach for either delay or silence.

His rage had become an almost equally consuming passion with his hunger, so that now, as his delicate nostrils apprised him of the recent passage of man, he lowered his head and rumbled forth a thunderous roar, and at a swift walk, careless of the noise he made, set forth upon the trail of his intended quarry.

Majestic and terrible, regally careless of his surroundings, the king of beasts strode down the beaten trail. The natural caution that is inherent to all creatures of the wild had deserted him. What had he, lord of the jungle, to fear and, with only man to hunt, what need of caution? And so he did not see or scent what a more wary Numa might readily have

discovered until, with the cracking of twigs and a tumbling of earth, he was precipitated into a cunningly devised pit that the wily Wamabos had excavated for just this purpose in the center of the game trail.

Tarzan of the Apes stood in the center of the clearing watching the plane shrinking to diminutive toy-like proportions in the eastern sky. He had breathed a sigh of relief as he saw it rise safely with the British flier and Fraulein Bertha Kircher. For weeks he had felt the hampering responsibility of their welfare in this savage wilderness where their utter helplessness would have rendered them easy prey for the savage carnivores or the cruel Wamabos.

Tarzan of the Apes loved unfettered freedom, and now that these two were safely off his hands, he felt that he could continue upon his journey toward the west coast and the long-untenanted cabin of his dead father.

And yet, as he stood there watching the tiny speck in the east, another sigh heaved his broad chest, nor was it a sigh of relief, but rather a sensation which Tarzan had never expected to feel again and which he now disliked to admit even to himself. It could not be possible that he, the jungle bred, who had renounced forever the society of man to return to his beloved beasts of the wilds, could be feeling anything akin to regret at the departure of these two, or any slightest

loneliness now that they were gone. Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick Tarzan had liked, but the woman whom he had known as a German spy he had hated, though he never had found it in his heart to slay her as he had sworn to slay all Huns. He had attributed this weakness to the fact that she was a woman, although he had been rather troubled by the apparent inconsistency of his hatred for her and his repeated protection of her when danger threatened.

With an irritable toss of his head he wheeled suddenly toward the west as though by turning his back upon the fast disappearing plane he might expunge thoughts of its passengers from his

memory. At the edge of the clearing he paused; a giant tree loomed directly ahead of him and, as though actuated by sudden and irresistible impulse, he leaped into the branches and swung himself with apelike agility to the topmost limbs that would sustain his weight. There, balancing lightly upon a swaying bough, he sought in the direction of the eastern horizon for the tiny speck that would be the British plane bearing away from him the last of his own race and kind that he expected ever again to see.

At last his keen eyes picked up the ship flying at a considerable altitude far in the east. For a few seconds he watched it speeding evenly eastward,

when, to his horror, he saw the speck dive suddenly downward. The fall seemed interminable to the watcher and he realized how great must have been the altitude of the plane before the drop commenced. Just before it disappeared from sight its downward momentum appeared to abate suddenly, but it was still moving rapidly at a steep angle when it finally disappeared from view behind the far hills.

For half a minute the ape-man stood noting distant landmarks that he judged might be in the vicinity of the fallen plane, for no sooner had he realized that these people were again in trouble than his inherent sense of duty to his own kind impelled him once more to forego

his plans and seek to aid them.

The ape-man feared from what he judged of the location of the machine that it had fallen among the almost impassable gorges of the arid country just beyond the fertile basin that was bounded by the hills to the east of him. He had crossed that parched and desolate country of the dead himself and he knew from his own experience and the narrow escape he had had from succumbing to its relentless cruelty no lesser man could hope to win his way to safety from any considerable distance within its borders. Vividly he recalled the bleached bones of the long-dead warrior in the bottom of the precipitous gorge that had all but proved a trap for

him as well. He saw the helmet of hammered brass and the corroded breastplate of steel and the long straight sword in its scabbard and the ancient harquebus—mute testimonials to the mighty physique and the warlike spirit of him who had somehow won, thus illy caparisoned and pitifully armed, to the center of savage, ancient Africa; and he saw the slender English youth and the slight figure of the girl cast into the same fateful trap from which this giant of old had been unable to escape—cast there wounded and broken perhaps, if not killed.

His judgment told him that the latter possibility was probably the fact, and yet there was a chance that they might

have landed without fatal injuries, and so upon this slim chance he started out upon what he knew would be an arduous journey, fraught with many hardships and unspeakable peril, that he might attempt to save them if they still lived.

He had covered a mile perhaps when his quick ears caught the sound of rapid movement along the game trail ahead of him. The sound, increasing in volume, proclaimed the fact that whatever caused it was moving in his direction and moving rapidly. Nor was it long before his trained senses convinced him that the footfalls were those of Bara, the deer, in rapid flight. Inextricably confused in Tarzan's character were the attributes of man and of beasts. Long experience had

taught him that he fights best or travels fastest who is best nourished, and so, with few exceptions, Tarzan could delay his most urgent business to take advantage of an opportunity to kill and feed. This perhaps was the predominant beast trait in him. The transformation from an English gentleman, impelled by the most humanitarian motives, to that of a wild beast crouching in the concealment of a dense bush ready to spring upon its approaching prey, was instantaneous.

And so, when Bara came, escaping the clutches of Numa and Sheeta, his terror and his haste precluded the possibility of his sensing that other equally formidable foe lying in ambush

for him. Abreast of the ape-man came the deer; a light-brown body shot from the concealing verdure of the bush, strong arms encircled the sleek neck of the young buck and powerful teeth fastened themselves in the soft flesh. Together the two rolled over in the trail and a moment later the ape-man rose, and, with one foot upon the carcass of his kill, raised his voice in the victory cry of the bull ape.

Like an answering challenge came suddenly to the ears of the ape-man the thunderous roar of a lion, a hideous angry roar in which Tarzan thought that he discerned a note of surprise and terror. In the breast of the wild things of the jungle, as in the breasts of their more

enlightened brothers and sisters of the human race, the characteristic of curiosity is well developed. Nor was Tarzan far from innocent of it. The peculiar note in the roar of his hereditary enemy aroused a desire to investigate, and so, throwing the carcass of Bara, the deer, across his shoulder, the ape-man took to the lower terraces of the forest and moved quickly in the direction from which the sound had come, which was in line with the trail he had set out upon.

As the distance lessened, the sounds increased in volume, which indicated that he was approaching a very angry lion and presently, where a jungle giant overspread the broad game trail that countless thousands of hoofed and

padded feet had worn and trampled into a deep furrow during perhaps countless ages, he saw beneath him the lion pit of the Wamabos and in it, leaping futilely for freedom such a lion as even Tarzan of the Apes never before had beheld. A mighty beast it was that glared up at the ape-man—large, powerful and young, with a huge black mane and a coat so much darker than any Tarzan ever had seen that in the depths of the pit it looked almost black—a black lion!

Tarzan who had been upon the point of taunting and reviling his captive foe was suddenly turned to open admiration for the beauty of the splendid beast. What a creature! How by comparison the ordinary forest lion was dwarfed into

insignificance! Here indeed was one worthy to be called king of beasts. With his first sight of the great cat the ape-man knew that he had heard no note of terror in that initial roar; surprise doubtless, but the vocal chords of that mighty throat never had reacted to fear.

With growing admiration came a feeling of quick pity for the hapless situation of the great brute rendered futile and helpless by the wiles of the Gomangani. Enemy though the beast was, he was less an enemy to the ape-man than those blacks who had trapped him, for though Tarzan of the Apes claimed many fast and loyal friends among certain tribes of African natives, there were others of degraded character

and bestial habits that he looked upon with utter loathing, and of such were the human flesh-eaters of Numabo the chief. For a moment Numa, the lion, glared ferociously at the naked man-thing upon the tree limb above him. Steadily those yellow-green eyes bored into the clear eyes of the ape-man, and then the sensitive nostrils caught the scent of the fresh blood of Bara and the eyes moved to the carcass lying across the brown shoulder, and there came from the cavernous depths of the savage throat a low whine.

Tarzan of the Apes smiled. As unmistakably as though a human voice had spoken, the lion had said to him "I am hungry, even more than hungry. I am

starving," and the ape-man looked down upon the lion beneath him and smiled, a slow quizzical smile, and then he shifted the carcass from his shoulder to the branch before him and, drawing the long blade that had been his father's, deftly cut off a hind quarter and, wiping the bloody blade upon Bara's smooth coat, he returned it to its scabbard. Numa, with watering jaws, looked up at the tempting meat and whined again and the ape-man smiled down upon him his slow smile and, raising the hind quarter in his strong brown hands buried his teeth in the tender, juicy flesh.

For the third time Numa, the lion, uttered that low pleading whine and then, with a rueful and disgusted shake

of his head, Tarzan of the Apes raised the balance of the carcass of Bara, the deer, and hurled it to the famished beast below.

"Old woman," muttered the ape-man. "Tarzan has become a weak old woman. Presently he would shed tears because he has killed Bara, the deer. He cannot see Numa, his enemy, go hungry, because Tarzan's heart is turning to water by contact with the soft, weak creatures of civilization." But yet he smiled, nor was he sorry that he had given way to the dictates of a kindly impulse.

As Tarzan tore the flesh from that portion of the kill he had retained for himself his eyes were taking in each

detail of the scene below. He saw the avidity with which Numa devoured the carcass; he noted with growing admiration the finer points of the beast, and also the cunning construction of the trap. The ordinary lion pit with which Tarzan was familiar had stakes imbedded in the bottom, upon whose sharpened points the hapless lion would be impaled, but this pit was not so made. Here the short stakes were set at intervals of about a foot around the walls near the top, their sharpened points inclining downward so that the lion had fallen unhurt into the trap but could not leap out because each time he essayed it his head came in contact with the sharp end of a stake above him.

Evidently, then, the purpose of the Wamabos was to capture a lion alive. As this tribe had no contact whatsoever with white men in so far as Tarzan knew, their motive was doubtless due to a desire to torture the beast to death that they might enjoy to the utmost his dying agonies.

Having fed the lion, it presently occurred to Tarzan that his act would be futile were he to leave the beast to the mercies of the blacks, and then too it occurred to him that he could derive more pleasure through causing the blacks discomfiture than by leaving Numa to his fate. But how was he to release him? By removing two stakes there would be left plenty of room for the lion to leap from

the pit, which was not of any great depth. However, what assurance had Tarzan that Numa would not leap out instantly the way to freedom was open, and before the ape-man could gain the safety of the trees? Regardless of the fact that Tarzan felt no such fear of the lion as you and I might experience under like circumstances, he yet was imbued with the sense of caution that is necessary to all creatures of the wild if they are to survive. Should necessity require, Tarzan could face Numa in battle, although he was not so egotistical as to think that he could best a full-grown lion in mortal combat other than through accident or the utilization of the cunning of his superior man-mind. To lay himself

liable to death futilely, he would have considered as reprehensible as to have shunned danger in time of necessity; but when Tarzan elected to do a thing he usually found the means to accomplish it.

He had now fully determined to liberate Numa, and having so determined, he would accomplish it even though it entailed considerable personal risk. He knew that the lion would be occupied with his feeding for some time, but he also knew that while feeding he would be doubly resentful of any fancied interference. Therefore Tarzan must work with caution.

Coming to the ground at the side of the pit, he examined the stakes and as he did so was rather surprised to note that

Numa gave no evidence of anger at his approach. Once he turned a searching gaze upon the ape-man for a moment and then returned to the flesh of Bara. Tarzan felt of the stakes and tested them with his weight. He pulled upon them with the muscles of his strong arms, presently discovering that by working them back and forth he could loosen them: and then a new plan was suggested to him so that he fell to work excavating with his knife at a point above where one of the stakes was imbedded. The loam was soft and easily removed, and it was not long until Tarzan had exposed that part of one of the stakes which was imbedded in the wall of the pit to almost its entire length, leaving only enough imbedded to

prevent the stake from falling into the excavation. Then he turned his attention to an adjoining stake and soon had it similarly exposed, after which he threw the noose of his grass rope over the two and swung quickly to the branch of the tree above. Here he gathered in the slack of the rope and, bracing himself against the bole of the tree, pulled steadily upward. Slowly the stakes rose from the trench in which they were imbedded and with them rose Numa's suspicion and growling.

Was this some new encroachment upon his rights and his liberties? He was puzzled and, like all lions, being short of temper, he was irritated. He had not minded it when the Tarmangani squatted

upon the verge of the pit and looked down upon him, for had not this Tarmangani fed him? But now something else was afoot and the suspicion of the wild beast was aroused. As he watched, however, Numa saw the stakes rise slowly to an erect position, tumble against each other and then fall backwards out of his sight upon the surface of the ground above. Instantly the lion grasped the possibilities of the situation, and, too, perhaps he sensed the fact that the man-thing had deliberately opened a way for his escape. Seizing the remains of Bara in his great jaws, Numa, the lion, leaped agilely from the pit of the Wamabos and Tarzan of the Apes melted into the jungles to the east.

On the surface of the ground or through the swaying branches of the trees the spoor of man or beast was an open book to the ape-man, but even his acute senses were baffled by the spoorless trail of the airship. Of what good were eyes, or ears, or the sense of smell in following a thing whose path had lain through the shifting air thousands of feet above the tree tops? Only upon his sense of direction could Tarzan depend in his search for the fallen plane. He could not even judge accurately as to the distance it might lie from him, and he knew that from the moment that it disappeared beyond the hills it might have traveled a considerable distance at right angles to its original course before it crashed to

earth. If its occupants were killed or badly injured the ape-man might search futilely in their immediate vicinity for some time before finding them.

There was but one thing to do and that was to travel to a point as close as possible to where he judged the plane had landed, and then to follow in ever-widening circles until he picked up their scent spoor. And this he did.

Before he left the valley of plenty he made several kills and carried the choicest cuts of meat with him, leaving all the dead weight of bones behind. The dense vegetation of the jungle terminated at the foot of the western slope, growing less and less abundant as he neared the summit beyond which was a sparse

growth of sickly scrub and sunburned grasses, with here and there a gnarled and hardy tree that had withstood the vicissitudes of an almost waterless existence.

From the summit of the hills Tarzan's keen eyes searched the arid landscape before him. In the distance he discerned the ragged tortuous lines that marked the winding course of the hideous gorges which scored the broad plain at intervals —the terrible gorges that had so nearly claimed his life in punishment for his temerity in attempting to invade the sanctity of their ancient solitude.

For two days Tarzan sought futilely for some clew to the whereabouts of the machine or its occupants. He cached

portions of his kills at different points, building cairns of rock to mark their locations. He crossed the first deep gorge and circled far beyond it. Occasionally he stopped and called aloud, listening for some response but only silence rewarded him-a sinister silence that his cries only accentuated.

Late in the evening of the second day he came to the well- remembered gorge in which lay the clean-picked bones of the ancient adventurer, and here, for the first time, Ska, the vulture, picked up his trail. "Not this time, Ska," cried the ape-man in a taunting voice, "for now indeed is Tarzan Tarzan. Before, you stalked the grim skeleton of a Tarmangani and even then you lost. Waste not your time upon

Tarzan of the Apes in the full of his strength." But still Ska, the vulture, circled and soared above him, and the ape-man, notwithstanding his boasts, felt a shudder of apprehension. Through his brain ran a persistent and doleful chant to which he involuntarily set two words, repeated over and over again in horrible monotony: "Ska knows! Ska knows!" until, shaking himself in anger, he picked up a rock and hurled it at the grim scavenger.

Lowering himself over the precipitous side of the gorge Tarzan half clambered and half slid to the sandy floor beneath. He had come upon the rift at almost the exact spot at which he had clambered from it weeks before, and

there he saw, just as he had left it, just, doubtless, as it had lain for centuries, the mighty skeleton and its mighty armor.

As he stood looking down upon this grim reminder that another man of might had succumbed to the cruel powers of the desert, he was brought to startled attention by the report of a firearm, the sound of which came from the depths of the gorge to the south of him, and reverberated along the steep walls of the narrow rift.

15. MYSTERIOUS FOOTPRINTS

As the British plane piloted by Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith- Oldwick rose above the jungle wilderness where Bertha Kircher's life had so often been upon the point of extinction, and sped toward the east, the girl felt a sudden contraction of the muscles of her throat. She tried very hard to swallow something that was not there. It seemed strange to her that she should feel regret in leaving behind her such hideous perils, and yet it was plain to her that such was the fact, for she was also leaving behind something beside the dangers that had menaced her—a unique figure that had entered her life, and for which she felt an unaccountable

attraction.

Before her in the pilot's seat sat an English officer and gentleman whom, she knew, loved her, and yet she dared to feel regret in his company at leaving the stamping ground of a wild beast!

Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick, on his part, was in the seventh heaven of elation. He was in possession again of his beloved ship, he was flying swiftly in the direction of his comrades and his duty, and with him was the woman he loved. The fly in the ointment, however, was the accusation Tarzan had made against this woman. He had said that she was a German, and a spy, and from the heights of bliss the English officer was occasionally plunged to the depths of

despair in contemplation of the inevitable, were the ape-man's charges to prove true. He found himself torn between sentiments of love and honor. On the one hand he could not surrender the woman he loved to the certain fate that must be meted out to her if she were in truth an enemy spy, while on the other it would be equally impossible for him as an Englishman and an officer to give her aid or protection.

The young man contented himself therefore with repeated mental denials of her guilt. He tried to convince himself that Tarzan was mistaken, and when he conjured upon the screen of recollection the face of the girl behind him, he was doubly reassured that those lines of

sweet femininity and character, those clear and honest eyes, could not belong to one of the hated alien race.

And so they sped toward the east, each wrapped in his own thoughts. Below them they saw the dense vegetation of the jungle give place to the scantier growth upon the hillside, and then before them there spread the wide expanse of arid wastelands marked by the deep scarring of the narrow gorges that long- gone rivers had cut there in some forgotten age.

Shortly after they passed the summit of the ridge which formed the boundary between the desert and the fertile country, Ska, the vulture, winging his way at a high altitude toward his aerie,

caught sight of a strange new bird of gigantic proportions encroaching upon the preserves of his aerial domain. Whether with intent to give battle to the interloper or merely impelled by curiosity, Ska rose suddenly upward to meet the plane. Doubtless he misjudged the speed of the newcomer, but be that as it may, the tip of the propeller blade touched him and simultaneously many things happened. The lifeless body of Ska, torn and bleeding, dropped plummet-like toward the ground; a bit of splintered spruce drove backward to strike the pilot on the forehead; the plane shuddered and trembled and as Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick sank forward in momentary

unconsciousness the ship dived headlong toward the earth.

Only for an instant was the pilot unconscious, but that instant almost proved their undoing. When he awoke to a realization of their peril it was also to discover that his motor had stalled. The plane had attained frightful momentum, and the ground seemed too close for him to hope to flatten out in time to make a safe landing. Directly beneath him was a deep rift in the plateau, a narrow gorge, the bottom of which appeared comparatively level and sand covered.

In the brief instant in which he must reach a decision, the safest plan seemed to attempt a landing in the gorge, and this he did, but not without considerable

damage to the plane and a severe shaking-up for himself and his passenger.

Fortunately neither of them was injured but their condition seemed indeed a hopeless one. It was a grave question as to whether the man could repair his plane and continue the journey, and it seemed equally questionable as to their ability either to proceed on foot to the coast or retrace their way to the country they had just left. The man was confident that they could not hope to cross the desert country to the east in the face of thirst and hunger, while behind them in the valley of plenty lay almost equal danger in the form of carnivores and the warlike

natives.

After the plane came to its sudden and disastrous stop, Smith- Oldwick turned quickly to see what the effect of the accident had been on the girl. He found her pale but smiling, and for several seconds the two sat looking at each other in silence.

"This is the end?" the girl asked.

The Englishman shook his head. "It is the end of the first leg, anyway," he replied.

"But you can't hope to make repairs here," she said dubiously.

"No," he said, "not if they amount to anything, but I may be able to patch it up. I will have to look her over a bit first. Let us hope there is nothing serious. It's

a long, long way to the Tanga railway."

"We would not get far," said the girl, a slight note of hopelessness in her tone. "Entirely unarmed as we are, it would be little less than a miracle if we covered even a small fraction of the distance."

"But we are not unarmed," replied the man. "I have an extra pistol here, that the beggars didn't discover," and, removing the cover of a compartment, he drew forth an automatic.

Bertha Kircher leaned back in her seat and laughed aloud, a mirthless, half-hysterical laugh. "That popgun!" she exclaimed. "What earthly good would it do other than to infuriate any beast of prey you might happen to hit with it?"

Smith-Oldwick looked rather crestfallen. "But it is a weapon," he said. "You will have to admit that, and certainly I could kill a man with it."

"You could if you happened to hit him," said the girl, "or the thing didn't jam. Really, I haven't much faith in an automatic. I have used them myself."

"Oh, of course," he said ironically, "an express rifle would be better, for who knows but we might meet an elephant here in the desert."

The girl saw that he was hurt, and she was sorry, for she realized that there was nothing he would not do in her service or protection, and that it was through no fault of his that he was so illy armed. Doubtless, too, he realized as

well as she the futility of his weapon, and that he had only called attention to it in the hope of reassuring her and lessening her anxiety.

"Forgive me," she said. "I did not mean to be nasty, but this accident is the proverbial last straw. It seems to me that I have borne all that I can. Though I was willing to give my life in the service of my country, I did not imagine that my death agonies would be so long drawn out, for I realize now that I have been dying for many weeks."

"What do you mean!" he exclaimed; "what do you mean by that! You are not dying. There is nothing the matter with you."

"Oh, not that," she said, "I did not

mean that. What I mean is that at the moment the black sergeant, Usanga, and his renegade German native troops captured me and brought me inland, my death warrant was signed. Sometimes I have imagined that a reprieve has been granted. Sometimes I have hoped that I might be upon the verge of winning a full pardon, but really in the depths of my heart I have known that I should never live to regain civilization. I have done my bit for my country, and though it was not much I can at least go with the realization that it was the best I was able to offer. All that I can hope for now, all that I ask for, is a speedy fulfillment of the death sentence. I do not wish to linger any more to face constant terror

and apprehension. Even physical torture would be preferable to what I have passed through. I have no doubt that you consider me a brave woman, but really my terror has been boundless. The cries of the carnivores at night fill me with a dread so tangible that I am in actual pain. I feel the rending talons in my flesh and the cruel fangs munching upon my bones—it is as real to me as though I were actually enduring the horrors of such a death. I doubt if you can understand it—men are so different."

"Yes," he said, "I think I can understand it, and because I understand I can appreciate more than you imagine the heroism you have shown in your endurance of all that you have passed

through. There can be no bravery where there is no fear. A child might walk into a lion's den, but it would take a very brave man to go to its rescue."

"Thank you," she said, "but I am not brave at all, and now I am very much ashamed of my thoughtlessness for your own feelings. I will try and take a new grip upon myself and we will both hope for the best. I will help you all I can if you will tell me what I may do."

"The first thing," he replied, "is to find out just how serious our damage is, and then to see what we can do in the way of repairs."

For two days Smith-Oldwick worked upon the damaged plane—worked in the face of the fact that from the first he

realized the case was hopeless. And at last he told her.

'I knew it," she said, "but I believe that I felt much as you must have; that however futile our efforts here might be, it would be infinitely as fatal to attempt to retrace our way to the jungle we just left or to go on toward the coast. You know and I know that we could not reach the Tanga railway on foot. We should die of thirst and starvation before we had covered half the distance, and if we return to the jungle, even were we able to reach it, it would be but to court an equally certain, though different, fate."

"So we might as well sit here and wait for death as to uselessly waste our energies in what we know would be a

futile attempt at escape?" he asked.

"No," she replied, "I shall never give up like that. What I meant was that it was useless to attempt to reach either of the places where we know that there is food and water in abundance, so we must strike out in a new direction. Somewhere there may be water in this wilderness and if there is, the best chance of our finding it would be to follow this gorge downward. We have enough food and water left, if we are careful of it, for a couple of days and in that time we might stumble upon a spring or possibly even reach the fertile country which I know lies to the south. When Usanga brought me to the Wamabo country from the coast he took a

southerly route along which there was usually water and game in plenty. It was not until we neared our destination that the country became overrun with carnivores. So there is hope if we can reach the fertile country south of us that we can manage to pull through to the coast."

The man shook his head dubiously. "We can try it," he said. "Personally, I do not fancy sitting here waiting for death."

Smith-Oldwick was leaning against the ship, his dejected gaze directed upon the ground at his feet. The girl was looking south down the gorge in the direction of their one slender chance of life. Suddenly she touched him on the

arm.

"Look," she whispered.

The man raised his eyes quickly in the direction of her gaze to see the massive head of a great lion who was regarding them from beyond a rocky projection at the first turning of the gorge.

"Phew!" he exclaimed, "the beggars are everywhere."

"They do not go far from water do they," asked the girl hopefully.

"I should imagine not," he replied; "a lion is not particularly strong on endurance."

"Then he is a harbinger of hope," she exclaimed.

The man laughed. "Cute little

harbinger of hope!" he said. "Reminds me of Cock Robin heralding spring."

The girl cast a quick glance at him. "Don't be silly, and I don't care if you do laugh. He fills me with hope."

"It is probably mutual," replied Smith-Oldwick, "as we doubtless fill him with hope."

The lion evidently having satisfied himself as to the nature of the creatures before him advanced slowly now in their direction.

"Come," said the man, 'let's climb aboard," and he helped the girl over the side of the ship.

"Can't he get in here?" she asked.

"I think he can," said the man.

"You are reassuring," she returned.

"I don't feel so." He drew his pistol.

"For heaven's sake," she cried, "don't shoot at him with that thing. You might hit him."

"I don't intend to shoot at him but I might succeed in frightening him away if he attempts to reach us here. Haven't you ever seen a trainer work with lions? He carries a silly little pop- gun loaded with blank cartridges. With that and a kitchen chair he subdues the most ferocious of beasts."

"But you haven't a kitchen chair," she reminded him.

"No," he said, "Government is always muddling things. I have always maintained that airplanes should be

equipped with kitchen chairs."

Bertha Kircher laughed as evenly and with as little hysteria as though she were moved by the small talk of an afternoon tea.

Numa, the lion, came steadily toward them; his attitude seemed more that of curiosity than of belligerency. Close to the side of the ship he stopped and stood gazing up at them.

"Magnificent, isn't he?" exclaimed the man.

"I never saw a more beautiful creature," she replied, "nor one with such a dark coat. Why, he is almost black."

The sound of their voices seemed not to please the lord of the jungle, for he

suddenly wrinkled his great face into deep furrows as he bared his fangs beneath snarling lips and gave vent to an angry growl. Almost simultaneously he crouched for a spring and immediately Smith-Oldwick discharged his pistol into the ground in front of the lion. The effect of the noise upon Numa seemed but to enrage him further, and with a horrid roar he sprang for the author of the new and disquieting sound that had outraged his ears.

Simultaneously Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick vaulted nimbly out of the cockpit on the opposite side of his plane, calling to the girl to follow his example. The girl, realizing the futility of leaping to the ground, chose the

remaining alternative and clambered to the top of the upper plane.

Numa, unaccustomed to the idiosyncrasies of construction of an airship and having gained the forward cockpit, watched the girl clamber out of his reach without at first endeavoring to prevent her. Having taken possession of the plane his anger seemed suddenly to leave him and he made no immediate move toward following Smith- Oldwick. The girl, realizing the comparative safety of her position, had crawled to the outer edge of the wing and was calling to the man to try and reach the opposite end of the upper plane.

It was this scene upon which Tarzan of the Apes looked as he rounded the

bend of the gorge above the plane after the pistol shot had attracted his attention. The girl was so intent upon watching the efforts of the Englishman to reach a place of safety, and the latter was so busily occupied in attempting to do so that neither at once noticed the silent approach of the ape-man.

It was Numa who first noticed the intruder. The lion immediately evinced his displeasure by directing toward him a snarling countenance and a series of warning growls. His action called the attention of the two upon the upper plane to the newcomer, eliciting a stifled "Thank God!" from the girl, even though she could scarce credit the evidence of her own eyes that it was indeed the

savage man, whose presence always assured her safety, who had come so providentially in the nick of time.

Almost immediately both were horrified to see Numa leap from the cockpit and advance upon Tarzan. The ape-man, carrying his stout spear in readiness, moved deliberately onward to meet the carnivore, which he had recognized as the lion of the Wamabos' pit. He knew from the manner of Numa's approach what neither Bertha Kircher nor Smith- Oldwick knew—that there was more of curiosity than belligerency in it, and he wondered if in that great head there might not be a semblance of gratitude for the kindness that Tarzan had done him.

There was no question in Tarzan's mind but that Numa recognized him, for he knew his fellows of the jungle well enough to know that while they oft-times forgot certain sensations more quickly than man there are others which remain in their memories for years. A well-defined scent spoor might never be forgotten by a beast if it had first been sensed under unusual circumstances, and so Tarzan was confident that Numa's nose had already reminded him of all the circumstances of their brief connection.

Love of the sporting chance is inherent in the Anglo-Saxon race and it was not now Tarzan of the Apes but rather John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, who smilingly welcomed the sporting

chance which he must take to discover how far-reaching was Numa's gratitude.

Smith-Oldwick and the girl saw the two nearing each other. The former swore softly beneath his breath while he nervously fingered the pitiful weapon at his hip. The girl pressed her open palms to her cheeks as she leaned forward in stony-eyed, horror-stricken silence. While she had every confidence in the prowess of the godlike creature who thus dared brazenly to face the king of beasts, she had no false conception of what must certainly happen when they met. She had seen Tarzan battle with Sheeta, the panther, and she had realized then that powerful as the man was, it was only agility, cunning, and chance

that placed him upon anywhere near an equal footing with his savage adversary, and that of the three factors upon his side chance was the greatest.

She saw the man and the lion stop simultaneously, not more than a yard apart. She saw the beast's tail whipping from side to side and she could hear his deep-throated growls rumbling from his cavernous breast, but she could read correctly neither the movement of the lashing tail nor the notes of the growl.

To her they seemed to indicate nothing but bestial rage while to Tarzan of the Apes they were conciliatory and reassuring in the extreme. And then she saw Numa move forward again until his nose touched the man's naked leg and she

closed her eyes and covered them with her palms. For what seemed an eternity she waited for the horrid sound of the conflict which she knew must come, but all she heard was an explosive sigh of relief from Smith-Oldwick and a half-hysterical "By Jove! Just fancy it!"

She looked up to see the great lion rubbing his shaggy head against the man's hip, and Tarzan's free hand entangled in the black mane as he scratched Numa, the lion, behind a back-laid ear.

Strange friendships are often formed between the lower animals of different species, but less often between man and the savage felidae, because of the former's inherent fear of the great cats.

And so after all, therefore, the friendship so suddenly developed between the savage lion and the savage man was not inexplicable.

As Tarzan approached the plane Numa walked at his side, and when Tarzan stopped and looked up at the girl and the man Numa stopped also.

"I had about given up hope of finding you," said the ape-man, "and it is evident that I found you just in time."

"But how did you know we were in trouble?" asked the English officer.

"I saw your plane fall," replied Tarzan. "I was watching you from a tree beside the clearing where you took off. I didn't have much to locate you by other than the general direction, but it seems

that you volplaned a considerable distance toward the south after you disappeared from my view behind the hills. I have been looking for you further toward the north. I was just about to turn back when I heard your pistol shot. Is your ship beyond repair?"

"Yes," replied Smith-Oldwick, "it is hopeless."

"What are your plans, then? What do you wish to do?" Tarzan directed his question to the girl.

"We want to reach the coast," she said, "but it seems impossible now."

"I should have thought so a little while ago," replied the ape- man, "but if Numa is here there must be water within a reasonable distance. I ran across this

lion two days ago in the Wamabo country. I liberated him from one of their pits. To have reached this spot he must have come by some trail unknown to me—at least I crossed no game trail and no spoor of any animal after I came over the hills out of the fertile country. From which direction did he come upon you?"

"It was from the south," replied the girl. "We thought, too, that there must be water in that direction."

"Let's find out then," said Tarzan.

"But how about the lion?" asked Smith-Oldwick.

"That we will have to discover," replied the ape-man, "and we can only do so if you will come down from your perch."

The officer shrugged his shoulders. The girl turned her gaze upon him to note the effect of Tarzan's proposal. The Englishman grew suddenly very white, but there was a smile upon his lips as without a word he slipped over the edge of the plane and clambered to the ground behind Tarzan.

Bertha Kircher realized that the man was afraid nor did she blame him, and she also realized the remarkable courage that he had shown in thus facing a danger that was very real to him.

Numa standing close to Tarzan's side raised his head and glared at the young Englishman, growled once, and looked up at the ape-man. Tarzan retained a hold upon the beast's mane and spoke to

him in the language of the great apes. To the girl and Smith-Oldwick the growling gutturals falling from human lips sounded uncanny in the extreme, but whether Numa understood them or not they appeared to have the desired effect upon him, as he ceased growling, and as Tarzan walked to Smith-Oldwick's side Numa accompanied him, nor did he offer to molest the officer.

"What did you say to him?" asked the girl.

Tarzan smiled. "I told him," he replied, "that I am Tarzan of the Apes, mighty hunter, killer of beasts, lord of the jungle, and that you are my friends. I have never been sure that all of the other beasts understand the language of the

Mangani. I know that Manu, the monkey, speaks nearly the same tongue and I am sure that Tantor, the elephant, understands all that I say to him. We of the jungle are great boasters. In our speech, in our carriage, in every detail of our demeanor we must impress others with our physical power and our ferocity. That is why we growl at our enemies. We are telling them to beware or we shall fall upon them and tear them to pieces. Perhaps Numa does not understand the words that I use but I believe that my tones and my manner carry the impression that I wish them to convey. Now you may come down and be introduced."

It required all the courage that Bertha

Kircher possessed to lower herself to the ground within reach of the talons and fangs of this untamed forest beast, but she did it. Nor did Numa do more than bare his teeth and growl a little as she came close to the ape-man.

"I think you are safe from him as long as I am present," said the ape-man. "The best thing to do is simply to ignore him. Make no advances, but be sure to give no indication of fear and, if possible always keep me between you and him. He will go away presently I am sure and the chances are that we shall not see him again."

At Tarzan's suggestion Smith-Oldwick removed the remaining water and provisions from the plane and,

distributing the burden among them, they set off toward the south. Numa did not follow them, but stood by the plane watching until they finally disappeared from view around a bend in the gorge.

Tarzan had picked up Numa's trail with the intention of following it southward in the belief that it would lead to water. In the sand that floored the bottom of the gorge tracks were plain and easily followed. At first only the fresh tracks of Numa were visible, but later in the day the ape-man discovered the older tracks of other lions and just before dark he stopped suddenly in evident surprise. His two companions looked at him questioningly, and in answer to their implied interrogations he

pointed at the ground directly in front of him.

"Look at those," he exclaimed.

At first neither Smith-Oldwick nor the girl saw anything but a confusion of intermingled prints of padded feet in the sand, but presently the girl discovered what Tarzan had seen, and an exclamation of surprise broke from her lips.

"The imprint of human feet!" she cried.

Tarzan nodded.

"But there are no toes," the girl pointed out.

"The feet were shod with a soft sandal," explained Tarzan.

"Then there must be a native village somewhere in the vicinity," said Smith-Oldwick.

"Yes," replied the ape-man, "but not the sort of natives which we would expect to find here in this part of Africa where others all go unshod with the exception of a few of Usanga's renegade German native troops who wear German army shoes. I don't know that you can notice it, but it is evident to me that the foot inside the sandal that made these imprints were not the foot of a Negro. If you will examine them carefully you will notice that the impression of the heel and ball of the foot are well marked even through the sole of the sandal. The weight comes more nearly in the center

of a Negro's footprint.

"Then you think these were made by a white person?"

"It looks that way," replied Tarzan, and suddenly, to the surprise of both the girl and Smith-Oldwick, he dropped to his hands and knees and sniffed at the tracks—again a beast utilizing the senses and woodcraft of a beast. Over an area of several square yards his keen nostrils sought the identity of the makers of the tracks. At length he rose to his feet.

"It is not the spoor of the Gomangani," he said, "nor is it exactly like that of white men. There were three who came this way. They were men, but of what race I do not know."

There was no apparent change in the

nature of the gorge except that it had steadily grown deeper as they followed it downward until now the rocky and precipitous sides rose far above them. At different points natural caves, which appeared to have been eroded by the action of water in some forgotten age, pitted the side walls at various heights. Near them was such a cavity at the ground's level—an arched cavern floored with white sand. Tarzan indicated it with a gesture of his hand.

"We will lair here tonight," he said, and then with one of his rare, slow smiles: "We will CAMP here tonight."

Having eaten their meager supper Tarzan bade the girl enter the cavern.

"You will sleep inside," he said. "The

lieutenant and I will lie outside at the entrance."

16. THE NIGHT ATTACK

As the girl turned to bid them good night, she thought that she saw a shadowy form moving in the darkness beyond them, and almost simultaneously she was sure that she heard the sounds of stealthy movement in the same direction.

"What is that?" she whispered. "There is something out there in the darkness."

"Yes," replied Tarzan, "it is a lion. It has been there for some time. Hadn't you noticed it before?"

"Oh!" cried the girl, breathing a sigh of relief, "is it our lion?"

"No," said Tarzan, "it is not our lion; it is another lion and he is hunting."

"He is stalking us?" asked the girl.

"He is," replied the ape-man. Smith-Oldwick fingered the grip of his pistol.

Tarzan saw the involuntary movement and shook his head.

"Leave that thing where it is, Lieutenant," he said.

The officer laughed nervously. "I couldn't help it, you know, old man," he said; "instinct of self-preservation and all that."

"It would prove an instinct of self-destruction," said Tarzan. "There are at least three hunting lions out there watching us. If we had a fire or the moon were up you would see their eyes plainly. Presently they may come after us but the chances are that they will not. If you are very anxious that they should,

fire your pistol and hit one of them."

"What if they do charge?" asked the girl; "there is no means of escape."

"Why, we should have to fight them," replied Tarzan.

"What chance would we three have against them?" asked the girl.

The ape-man shrugged his shoulders. "One must die sometime," he said. "To you doubtless it may seem terrible—such a death; but Tarzan of the Apes has always expected to go out in some such way. Few of us die of old age in the jungle, nor should I care to die thus. Some day Numa will get me, or Sheeta, or a black warrior. These or some of the others. What difference does it make which it is, or whether it comes tonight

or next year or in ten years? After it is over it will be all the same."

The girl shuddered. "Yes," she said in a dull, hopeless voice, "after it is over it will be all the same."

Then she went into the cavern and lay down upon the sand. Smith- Oldwick sat in the entrance and leaned against the cliff. Tarzan squatted on the opposite side.

"May I smoke?" questioned the officer of Tarzan. "I have been hoarding a few cigarettes and if it won't attract those bouncers out there I would like to have one last smoke before I cash in. Will you join me?" and he proffered the ape-man a cigarette.

"No, thanks," said Tarzan, "but it will

be all right if you smoke. No wild animal is particularly fond of the fumes of tobacco so it certainly won't entice them any closer."

Smith-Oldwick lighted his cigarette and sat puffing slowly upon it. He had proffered one to the girl but she had refused, and thus they sat in silence for some time, the silence of the night ruffled occasionally by the faint crunching of padded feet upon the soft sands of the gorge's floor.

It was Smith-Oldwick who broke the silence. "Aren't they unusually quiet for lions?" he asked.

"No," replied the ape-man; "the lion that goes roaring around the jungle does not do it to attract prey. They are very

quiet when they are stalking their quarry."

"I wish they would roar," said the officer. "I wish they would do anything, even charge. Just knowing that they are there and occasionally seeing something like a shadow in the darkness and the faint sounds that come to us from them are getting on my nerves. But I hope," he said, "that all three don't charge at once."

"Three?" said Tarzan. "There are seven of them out there now."

"Good Lord! exclaimed Smith-Oldwick.

"Couldn't we build a fire," asked the girl, "and frighten them away?"

"I don't know that it would do any good," said Tarzan, "as I have an idea

that these lions are a little different from any that we are familiar with and possibly for the same reason which at first puzzled me a little—I refer to the apparent docility in the presence of a man of the lion who was with us today. A man is out there now with those lions."

"It is impossible!" exclaimed Smith-Oldwick. "They would tear him to pieces."

"What makes you think there is a man there?" asked the girl.

Tarzan smiled and shook his head. "I am afraid you would not understand," he replied. "It is difficult for us to understand anything that is beyond our own powers."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the officer.

"Well," said Tarzan, "if you had been born without eyes you could not understand sense impressions that the eyes of others transmit to their brains, and as you have both been born without any sense of smell I am afraid you cannot understand how I can know that there is a man there."

"You mean that you scent a man?" asked the girl.

Tarzan nodded affirmatively.

"And in the same way you know the number of lions?" asked the man.

"Yes," said Tarzan. "No two lions look alike, no two have the same scent."

The young Englishman shook his head. "No," he said, "I cannot understand."

"I doubt if the lions or the man are here necessarily for the purpose of harming us," said Tarzan, "because there has been nothing to prevent their doing so long before had they wished to. I have a theory, but it is utterly preposterous."

"What is it?" asked the girl.

"I think they are here," replied Tarzan, "to prevent us from going some place that they do not wish us to go; in other words we are under surveillance, and possibly as long as we don't go where we are not wanted we shall not be bothered."

"But how are we to know where they

don't want us to go?" asked Smith-Oldwick.

"We can't know," replied Tarzan, "and the chances are that the very place we are seeking is the place they don't wish us to trespass on."

"You mean the water?" asked the girl.

"Yes," replied Tarzan.

For some time they sat in silence which was broken only by an occasional sound of movement from the outer darkness. It must have been an hour later that the ape-man rose quietly and drew his long blade from its sheath. Smith-Oldwick was dozing against the rocky wall of the cavern entrance, while the girl, exhausted by the excitement and fatigue of the day, had fallen into deep

slumber. An instant after Tarzan arose, Smith-Oldwick and the girl were aroused by a volley of thunderous roars and the noise of many padded feet rushing toward them.

Tarzan of the Apes stood directly before the entrance to the cavern, his knife in his hand, awaiting the charge. The ape-man had not expected any such concerted action as he now realized had been taken by those watching them. He had known for some time that other men had joined those who were with the lions earlier in the evening, and when he arose to his feet it was because he knew that the lions and the men were moving cautiously closer to him and his party. He might easily have eluded them, for he

had seen that the face of the cliff rising above the mouth of the cavern might be scaled by as good a climber as himself. It might have been wiser had he tried to escape, for he knew that in the face of such odds even he was helpless, but he stood his ground though I doubt if he could have told why.

He owed nothing either of duty or friendship to the girl sleeping in the cavern, nor could he longer be of any protection to her or her companion. Yet something held him there in futile self-sacrifice.

The great Tarmangani had not even the satisfaction of striking a blow in self-defense. A veritable avalanche of savage beasts rolled over him and threw

him heavily to the ground. In falling his head struck the rocky surface of the cliff, stunning him.

It was daylight when he regained consciousness. The first dim impression borne to his awakening mind was a confusion of savage sounds which gradually resolved themselves into the growling of lions, and then, little by little, there came back to him the recollections of what had preceded the blow that had felled him.

Strong in his nostrils was the scent of Numa, the lion, and against one naked leg he could feel the coat of some animal. Slowly Tarzan opened his eyes. He was lying on his side and as he looked down his body, he saw that a

great lion stood straddling him—a great lion who growled hideously at something which Tarzan could not see.

With the full return of his senses Tarzan's nose told him that the beast above him was Numa of the Wamabo pit.

Thus reassured, the ape-man spoke to the lion and at the same time made a motion as though he would arise. Immediately Numa stepped from above him. As Tarzan raised his head, he saw that he still lay where he had fallen before the opening of the cliff where the girl had been sleeping and that Numa, backed against the cliffside, was apparently defending him from two other lions who paced to and fro a short

distance from their intended victim.

And then Tarzan turned his eyes into the cave and saw that the girl and Smith-Oldwick were gone.

His efforts had been for naught. With an angry toss of his head, the ape- man turned upon the two lions who had continued to pace back and forth a few yards from him. Numa of the lion pit turned a friendly glance in Tarzan's direction, rubbed his head against the ape-man's side, and then directed his snarling countenance toward the two hunters.

"I think," said Tarzan to Numa, "that you and I together can make these beasts very unhappy." He spoke in English, which, of course, Numa did not

understand at all, but there must have been something reassuring in the tone, for Numa whined pleadingly and moved impatiently to and fro parallel with their antagonists.

"Come," said Tarzan suddenly and grasping the lion's mane with his left hand he moved toward the other lions, his companion pacing at his side. As the two advanced the others drew slowly back and, finally separating, moved off to either side. Tarzan and Numa passed between them but neither the great black-maned lion nor the man failed to keep an eye upon the beast nearer him so that they were not caught unawares when, as though at some preconcerted signal, the two cats charged simultaneously from

opposite directions.

The ape-man met the charge of his antagonist after the same fashion of fighting that he had been accustomed to employing in previous encounters with Numa and Sheeta. To have attempted to meet the full shock of a lion's charge would have been suicidal even for the giant Tarmangani. Instead he resorted to methods of agility and cunning, for quick as are the great cats, even quicker is Tarzan of the Apes.

With outspread, raking talons and bared fangs Numa sprang for the naked chest of the ape-man. Throwing up his left arm as a boxer might ward off a blow, Tarzan struck upward beneath the left forearm of the lion, at the same time

rushing in with his shoulder beneath the animal's body and simultaneously drove his blade into the tawny hide behind the shoulder. With a roar of pain Numa wheeled again, the personification of bestial rage. Now indeed would he exterminate this presumptuous man-thing who dared even to think that he could thwart the king of beasts in his desires. But as he wheeled, his intended quarry wheeled with him, brown fingers locked in the heavy mane on the powerful neck and again the blade struck deep into the lion's side.

Then it was that Numa went mad with hate and pain and at the same instant the ape-man leaped full upon his back. Easily before had Tarzan locked his legs

beneath the belly of a lion while he clung to its long mane and stabbed it until his point reached its heart. So easy it had seemed before that he experienced a sharp feeling of resentment that he was unable to do so now, for the quick movements of the lion prevented him, and presently, to his dismay, as the lion leaped and threw him about, the ape-man realized that he was swinging inevitably beneath those frightful talons.

With a final effort he threw himself from Numa's back and sought, by his quickness, to elude the frenzied beast for the fraction of an instant that would permit him to regain his feet and meet the animal again upon a more even footing. But this time Numa was too

quick for him and he was but partially up when a great paw struck him on the side of the head and bowled him over.

As he fell he saw a black streak shoot above him and another lion close upon his antagonist. Rolling from beneath the two battling lions Tarzan regained his feet, though he was half dazed and staggering from the impact of the terrible blow he had received. Behind him he saw a lifeless lion lying torn and bleeding upon the sand, and before him Numa of the pit was savagely mauling the second lion.

He of the black coat tremendously outclassed his adversary in point of size and strength as well as in ferocity. The battling beasts made a few feints and

passes at each other before the larger succeeded in fastening his fangs in the other's throat, and then, as a cat shakes a mouse, the larger lion shook the lesser, and when his dying foe sought to roll beneath and rake his conqueror with his hind claws, the other met him halfway at his own game, and as the great talons buried themselves in the lower part of the other's chest and then were raked downward with all the terrific strength of the mighty hind legs, the battle was ended.

As Numa rose from his second victim and shook himself, Tarzan could not but again note the wondrous proportions and symmetry of the beast. The lions they had bested were splendid specimens

themselves and in their coats Tarzan noted a suggestion of the black which was such a strongly marked characteristic of Numa of the pit. Their manes were just a trifle darker than an ordinary black-maned lion but the tawny shade on the balance of their coats predominated. However, the ape-man realized that they were a distinct species from any he had seen as though they had sprung originally from a cross between the forest lion of his acquaintance and a breed of which Numa of the pit might be typical.

The immediate obstruction in his way having been removed, Tarzan was for setting out in search of the spoor of the girl and Smith-Oldwick, that he might

discover their fate. He suddenly found himself tremendously hungry and as he circled about over the sandy bottom searching among the tangled network of innumerable tracks for those of his proteges, there broke from his lips involuntarily the whine of a hungry beast. Immediately Numa of the pit pricked up his ears and, regarding the ape-man steadily for a moment, he answered the call of hunger and started briskly off toward the south, stopping occasionally to see if Tarzan was following.

The ape-man realized that the beast was leading him to food, and so he followed and as he followed his keen eyes and sensitive nostrils sought for

some indication of the direction taken by the man and the girl. Presently out of the mass of lion tracks, Tarzan picked up those of many sandaled feet and the scent spoor of the members of the strange race such as had been with the lions the night before, and then faintly he caught the scent spoor of the girl and a little later that of Smith-Oldwick. Presently the tracks thinned and here those of the girl and the Englishman became well marked.

They had been walking side by side and there had been men and lions to the right and left of them, and men and lions in front and behind. The ape-man was puzzled by the possibilities suggested by the tracks, but in the light of any

previous experience he could not explain satisfactorily to himself what his perceptions indicated.

There was little change in the formation of the gorge; it still wound its erratic course between precipitous cliffs. In places it widened out and again it became very narrow and always deeper the further south they traveled. Presently the bottom of the gorge began to slope more rapidly. Here and there were indications of ancient rapids and waterfalls. The trail became more difficult but was well marked and showed indications of great antiquity, and, in places, the handiwork of man. They had proceeded for a half or three-quarters of a mile when, at a turning of

the gorge, Tarzan saw before him a narrow valley cut deep into the living rock of the earth's crust, with lofty mountain ranges bounding it upon the south. How far it extended east and west he could not see, but apparently it was no more than three or four miles across from north to south.

That it was a well-watered valley was indicated by the wealth of vegetation that carpeted its floor from the rocky cliffs upon the north to the mountains on the south.

Over the edge of the cliffs from which the ape-man viewed the valley a trail had been hewn that led downward to the base. Preceded by the lion Tarzan descended into the valley, which, at this

point, was forested with large trees. Before him the trail wound onward toward the center of the valley. Raucous-voiced birds of brilliant plumage screamed among the branches while innumerable monkeys chattered and scolded above him.

The forest teemed with life, and yet there was borne in upon the ape-man a sense of unutterable loneliness, a sensation that he never before had felt in his beloved jungles. There was unreality in everything about him—in the valley itself, lying hidden and forgotten in what was supposed to be an arid waste. The birds and the monkeys, while similar in type to many with which he was familiar, were identical with none, nor

was the vegetation without its idiosyncrasies. It was as though he had been suddenly transported to another world and he felt a strange restlessness that might easily have been a premonition of danger.

Fruits were growing among the trees and some of these he saw that Manu, the monkey, ate. Being hungry he swung to the lower branches and, amidst a great chattering of the monkeys, proceeded to eat such of the fruit as he saw the monkeys ate in safety. When he had partially satisfied his hunger, for meat alone could fully do so, he looked about him for Numa of the pit to discover that the lion had gone.

17. THE WALLED CITY

Dropping to the ground once more he picked up the trail of the girl and her captors, which he followed easily along what appeared to be a well-beaten trail. It was not long before he came to a small stream, where he quenched his thirst, and thereafter he saw that the trail followed in the general direction of the stream, which ran southwesterly. Here and there were cross trails and others which joined the main avenue, and always upon each of them were the tracks and scent of the great cats, of Numa, the lion, and Sheeta, the panther.

With the exception of a few small rodents there appeared to be no other wild life on the surface of the valley.

There was no indication of Bara, the deer, or Horta, the boar, or of Gorgo, the buffalo, Buto, Tantor, or Duro. Histah, the snake, was there. He saw him in the trees in greater numbers than he ever had seen Histah before; and once beside a reedy pool he caught a scent that could have belonged to none other than Gimla the crocodile, but upon none of these did the Tarmangani care to feed.

And so, as he craved meat, he turned his attention to the birds above him. His assailants of the night before had not disarmed him. Either in the darkness and the rush of the charging lions the human foe had overlooked him or else they had considered him dead; but whatever the reason he still retained his weapons—

his spear and his long knife, his bow and arrows, and his grass rope.

Fitting a shaft to his bow Tarzan awaited an opportunity to bring down one of the larger birds, and when the opportunity finally presented itself he drove the arrow straight to its mark. As the gaily plumaged creature fluttered to earth its companions and the little monkeys set up a most terrific chorus of wails and screaming protests. The whole forest became suddenly a babel of hoarse screams and shrill shrieks.

Tarzan would not have been surprised had one or two birds in the immediate vicinity given voice to terror as they fled, but that the whole life of the jungle should set up so weird a protest filled

him with disgust. It was an angry face that he turned up toward the monkeys and the birds as there suddenly stirred within him a savage inclination to voice his displeasure and his answer to what he considered their challenge. And so it was that there broke upon this jungle for the first time Tarzan's hideous scream of victory and challenge.

The effect upon the creatures above him was instantaneous. Where before the air had trembled to the din of their voices, now utter silence reigned and a moment later the ape-man was alone with his puny kill.

The silence following so closely the previous tumult carried a sinister impression to the ape-man, which still

further aroused his anger. Picking the bird from where it had fallen he withdrew his arrow from the body and returned it to his quiver. Then with his knife he quickly and deftly removed the skin and feathers together. He ate angrily, growling as though actually menaced by a near-by foe, and perhaps, too, his growls were partially induced by the fact that he did not care for the flesh of birds. Better this, however, than nothing and from what his senses had told him there was no flesh in the vicinity such as he was accustomed to and cared most for. How he would have enjoyed a juicy haunch from Pacco, the zebra, or a steak from the loin of Gorgo, the buffalo! The very thought made his

mouth water and increased his resentment against this unnatural forest that harbored no such delicious quarry.

He had but partially consumed his kill when he suddenly became aware of a movement in the brush at no great distance from him and downwind, and a moment later his nostrils picked up the scent of Numa from the opposite direction, and then upon either side he caught the fall of padded feet and the brushing of bodies against leafy branches. The ape-man smiled. What stupid creature did they think him, to be surprised by such clumsy stalkers? Gradually the sounds and scents indicated that lions were moving upon him from all directions, that he was in

the center of a steadily converging circle of beasts. Evidently they were so sure of their prey that they were making no effort toward stealth, for he heard twigs crack beneath their feet, and the brushing of their bodies against the vegetation through which they forced their way.

He wondered what could have brought them. It seemed unreasonable to believe that the cries of the birds and the monkeys should have summoned them, and yet, if not, it was indeed a remarkable coincidence. His judgment told him that the death of a single bird in this forest which teemed with birds could scarce be of sufficient moment to warrant that which followed. Yet even in the face of reason and past experience

he found that the whole affair perplexed him.

He stood in the center of the trail awaiting the coming of the lions and wondering what would be the method of their attack or if they would indeed attack. Presently a maned lion came into view along the trail below him. At sight of him the lion halted. The beast was similar to those that had attacked him earlier in the day, a trifle larger and a trifle darker than the lions of his native jungles, but neither so large nor so black as Numa of the pit.

Presently he distinguished the outlines of other lions in the surrounding brush and among the trees. Each of them halted as it came within sight of the ape-man

and there they stood regarding him in silence. Tarzan wondered how long it would be before they charged and while he waited he resumed his feeding, though with every sense constantly alert.

One by one the lions lay down, but always their faces were toward him and their eyes upon him. There had been no growling and no roaring—just the quiet drawing of the silent circle about him. It was all so entirely foreign to anything that Tarzan ever before had seen lions do that it irritated him so that presently, having finished his repast, he fell to making insulting remarks to first one and then another of the lions, after the habit he had learned from the apes of his childhood.

"Dango, eater of carrion," he called them, and he compared them most unfavorably with Histah, the snake, the most loathed and repulsive creature of the jungle. Finally he threw handfuls of earth at them and bits of broken twigs, and then the lions growled and bared their fangs, but none of them advanced.

"Cowards," Tarzan taunted them. "Numa with a heart of Bara, the deer." He told them who he was, and after the manner of the jungle folk he boasted as to the horrible things he would do to them, but the lions only lay and watched him.

It must have been a half hour after their coming that Tarzan caught in the distance along the trail the sound of

footsteps approaching. They were the footsteps of a creature who walked upon two legs, and though Tarzan could catch no scent spoor from that direction he knew that a man was approaching. Nor had he long to wait before his judgment was confirmed by the appearance of a man who halted in the trail directly behind the first lion that Tarzan had seen.

At sight of the newcomer the ape-man realized that here was one similar to those who had given off the unfamiliar scent spoor that he had detected the previous night, and he saw that not only in the matter of scent did the man differ from other human beings with whom Tarzan was familiar.

The fellow was strongly built with skin of a leathery appearance, like parchment yellowed with age. His hair, which was coal black and three or four inches in length, grew out stiffly at right angles to his scalp. His eyes were close set and the irises densely black and very small, so that the white of the eyeball showed around them. The man's face was smooth except for a few straggly hairs on his chin and upper lip. The nose was aquiline and fine, but the hair grew so far down on the forehead as to suggest a very low and brutal type. The upper lip was short and fine while the lower lip was rather heavy and inclined to be pendulous, the chin being equally weak. Altogether the face carried the

suggestion of a once strong and handsome countenance entirely altered by physical violence or by degraded habits and thoughts. The man's arms were long, though not abnormally so, while his legs were short, though straight.

He was clothed in tight-fitting nether garments and a loose, sleeveless tunic that fell just below his hips, while his feet were shod in soft-soled sandals, the wrappings of which extended halfway to his knees, closely resembling a modern spiral military legging. He carried a short, heavy spear, and at his side swung a weapon that at first so astonished the ape-man that he could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses—a heavy

saber in a leather-covered scabbard. The man's tunic appeared to have been fabricated upon a loom—it was certainly not made of skins, while the garments that covered his legs were quite as evidently made from the hides of rodents.

Tarzan noted the utter unconcern with which the man approached the lions, and the equal indifference of Numa to him. The fellow paused for a moment as though appraising the ape-man and then pushed on past the lions, brushing against the tawny hide as he passed him in the trail.

About twenty feet from Tarzan the man stopped, addressing the former in a strange jargon, no syllable of which was

intelligible to the Tarmangani. His gestures indicated numerous references to the lions surrounding them, and once he touched his spear with the forefinger of his left hand and twice he struck the saber at his hip.

While he spoke Tarzan studied the fellow closely, with the result that there fastened itself upon his mind a strange conviction—that the man who addressed him was what might only be described as a rational maniac. As the thought came to the ape-man he could not but smile, so paradoxical the description seemed. Yet a closer study of the man's features, carriage, and the contour of his head carried almost incontrovertibly the assurance that he was insane, while the

tones of his voice and his gestures resembled those of a sane and intelligent mortal.

Presently the man had concluded his speech and appeared to be waiting questioningly Tarzan's reply. The ape-man spoke to the other first in the language of the great apes, but he soon saw that the words carried no conviction to his listener. Then with equal futility he tried several native dialects but to none of these did the man respond.

By this time Tarzan began to lose patience. He had wasted sufficient time by the road, and as he had never depended much upon speech in the accomplishment of his ends, he now raised his spear and advanced toward

the other. This, evidently, was a language common to both, for instantly the fellow raised his own weapon and at the same time a low call broke from his lips, a call which instantly brought to action every lion in the hitherto silent circle. A volley of roars shattered the silence of the forest and simultaneously lions sprang into view upon all sides as they closed in rapidly upon their quarry. The man who had called them stepped back, his teeth bared in a mirthless grin.

It was then that Tarzan first noticed that the fellow's upper canines were unusually long and exceedingly sharp. It was just a flashing glimpse he got of them as he leaped agilely from the ground and, to the consternation of both

the lions and their master, disappeared in the foliage of the lower terrace, flinging back over his shoulder as he swung rapidly away: "I am Tarzan of the Apes; mighty hunter; mighty fighter! None in the jungle more powerful, none more cunning than Tarzan!"

A short distance beyond the point at which they had surrounded him, Tarzan came to the trail again and sought for the spoor of Bertha Kircher and Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick. He found them quickly and continued upon his search for the two. The spoor lay directly along the trail for another half-mile when the way suddenly debouched from the forest into open land and there broke upon the astonished view of the ape-man the

domes and minarets of a walled city.

Directly before him in the wall nearest him Tarzan saw a low- arched gateway to which a well-beaten trail led from that which he had been following. In the open space between the forest and the city walls, quantities of garden stuff was growing, while before him at his feet, in an open man-made ditch, ran a stream of water! The plants in the garden were laid out in well-spaced, symmetrical rows and appeared to have been given excellent attention and cultivation. Tiny streams were trickling between the rows from the main ditch before him and at some distance to his right he could see people at work among the plants.

The city wall appeared to be about thirty feet in height, its plastered expanse unbroken except by occasional embrasures. Beyond the wall rose the domes of several structures and numerous minarets dotted the sky line of the city. The largest and central dome appeared to be gilded, while others were red, or blue, or yellow. The architecture of the wall itself was of uncompromising simplicity. It was of a cream shade and appeared to be plastered and painted. At its base was a line of well-tended shrubs and at some distance towards its eastern extremity it was vine covered to the top.

As he stood in the shadow of the trail, his keen eyes taking in every detail of

the picture before him, he became aware of the approach of a party in his rear and there was borne to him the scent of the man and the lions whom he had so readily escaped. Taking to the trees Tarzan moved a short distance to the west and, finding a comfortable crotch at the edge of the forest where he could watch the trail leading through the gardens to the city gate, he awaited the return of his would-be captors. And soon they came —the strange man followed by the pack of great lions. Like dogs they moved along behind him down the trail among the gardens to the gate.

Here the man struck upon the panels of the door with the butt of his spear, and when it opened in response to his signal

he passed in with his lions. Beyond the open door Tarzan, from his distant perch, caught but a fleeting glimpse of life within the city, just enough to indicate that there were other human creatures who abode there, and then the door closed.

Through that door he knew that the girl and the man whom he sought to succor had been taken into the city. What fate lay in store for them or whether already it had been meted out to them he could not even guess, nor where, within that forbidding wall, they were incarcerated he could not know. But of one thing he was assured: that if he were to aid them he could not do it from outside the wall. He must gain entrance

to the city first, nor did he doubt, that once within, his keen senses would eventually reveal the whereabouts of those whom he sought.

The low sun was casting long shadows across the gardens when Tarzan saw the workers returning from the eastern field. A man came first, and as he came he lowered little gates along the large ditch of running water, shutting off the streams that had run between the rows of growing plants; and behind him came other men carrying burdens of fresh vegetables in great woven baskets upon their shoulders. Tarzan had not realized that there had been so many men working in the field, but now as he sat there at the close of the day he saw a

procession filing in from the east, bearing the tools and the produce back into the city.

And then, to gain a better view, the ape-man ascended to the topmost branches of a tall tree where he overlooked the nearer wall. From this point of vantage he saw that the city was long and narrow, and that while the outer walls formed a perfect rectangle, the streets within were winding. Toward the center of the city there appeared to be a low, white building around which the larger edifices of the city had been built, and here, in the fast-waning light, Tarzan thought that between two buildings he caught the glint of water, but of that he was not sure. His experience of the

centers of civilization naturally inclined him to believe that this central area was a plaza about which the larger buildings were grouped and that there would be the most logical place to search first for Bertha Kircher and her companion.

And then the sun went down and darkness quickly enveloped the city— a darkness that was accentuated for the ape-man rather than relieved by the artificial lights which immediately appeared in many of the windows visible to him.

Tarzan had noticed that the roofs of most of the buildings were flat, the few exceptions being those of what he imagined to be the more pretentious public structures. How this city had

come to exist in this forgotten part of unexplored Africa the ape-man could not conceive. Better than another, he realized something of the unsolved secrets of the Great Dark Continent, enormous areas of which have as yet been untouched by the foot of civilized man. Yet he could scarce believe that a city of this size and apparently thus well constructed could have existed for the generations that it must have been there, without intercourse with the outer world. Even though it was surrounded by a trackless desert waste, as he knew it to be, he could not conceive that generation after generation of men could be born and die there without attempting to solve the mysteries of the world beyond the

confines of their little valley.

And yet, here was the city surrounded by tilled land and filled with people!

With the coming of night there arose throughout the jungle the cries of the great cats, the voice of Numa blended with that of Sheeta, and the thunderous roars of the great males reverberated through the forest until the earth trembled, and from within the city came the answering roars of other lions.

A simple plan for gaining entrance to the city had occurred to Tarzan, and now that darkness had fallen he set about to put it into effect. Its success hinged entirely upon the strength of the vines he had seen surmounting the wall toward the east. In this direction he made his

way, while from out of the forest about him the cries of the flesh-eaters increased in volume and ferocity. A quarter of a mile intervened between the forest and the city wall —a quarter of a mile of cultivated land unrelieved by a single tree. Tarzan of the Apes realized his limitations and so he knew that it would undoubtedly spell death for him to be caught in the open space by one of the great black lions of the forest if, as he had already surmised, Numa of the pit was a specimen of the forest lion of the valley.

He must, therefore, depend entirely upon his cunning and his speed, and upon the chance that the vine would sustain his weight.

He moved through the middle terrace, where the way is always easiest, until he reached a point opposite the vine-clad portion of the wall, and there he waited, listening and scenting, until he might assure himself that there was no Numa within his immediate vicinity, or, at least, none that sought him. And when he was quite sure that there was no lion close by in the forest, and none in the clearing between himself and the wall, he dropped lightly to the ground and moved stealthily out into the open.

The rising moon, just topping the eastern cliffs, cast its bright rays upon the long stretch of open garden beneath the wall. And, too, it picked out in clear relief for any curious eyes that chanced

to be cast in that direction, the figure of the giant ape-man moving across the clearing. It was only chance, of course, that a great lion hunting at the edge of the forest saw the figure of the man halfway between the forest and the wall. Suddenly there broke upon Tarzan's ears a menacing sound. It was not the roar of a hungry lion, but the roar of a lion in rage, and, as he glanced back in the direction from which the sound came, he saw a huge beast moving out from the shadow of the forest toward him.

Even in the moonlight and at a distance Tarzan saw that the lion was huge; that it was indeed another of the black-maned monsters similar to Numa of the pit. For an instant he was impelled

to turn and fight, but at the same time the thought of the helpless girl imprisoned in the city flashed through his brain and, without an instant's hesitation, Tarzan of the Apes wheeled and ran for the wall. Then it was that Numa charged.

Numa, the lion, can run swiftly for a short distance, but he lacks endurance. For the period of an ordinary charge he can cover the ground with greater rapidity possibly than any other creature in the world. Tarzan, on the other hand, could run at great speed for long distances, though never as rapidly as Numa when the latter charged.

The question of his fate, then, rested upon whether, with his start he could elude Numa for a few seconds; and, if

so, if the lion would then have sufficient stamina remaining to pursue him at a reduced gait for the balance of the distance to the wall.

Never before, perhaps, was staged a more thrilling race, and yet it was run with only the moon and stars to see. Alone and in silence the two beasts sped across the moonlit clearing. Numa gained with appalling rapidity upon the fleeing man, yet at every bound Tarzan was nearer to the vine-clad wall. Once the ape-man glanced back. Numa was so close upon him that it seemed inevitable that at the next bound he should drag him down; so close was he that the ape- man drew his knife as he ran, that he might at least give a good account of himself in

the last moments of his life.

But Numa had reached the limit of his speed and endurance. Gradually he dropped behind but he did not give up the pursuit, and now Tarzan realized how much hinged upon the strength of the untested vines.

If, at the inception of the race, only Goro and the stars had looked down upon the contestants, such was not the case at its finish, since from an embrasure near the summit of the wall two close- set black eyes peered down upon the two. Tarzan was a dozen yards ahead of Numa when he reached the wall. There was no time to stop and institute a search for sturdy stems and safe handholds. His fate was in the

hands of chance and with the realization he gave a final spurt and running catlike up the side of the wall among the vines, sought with his hands for something that would sustain his weight. Below him Numa leaped also.

18. AMONG THE MANIACS

As the lions swarmed over her protectors, Bertha Kircher shrank back in the cave in a momentary paralysis of fright super-induced, perhaps, by the long days of terrific nerve strain which she had undergone.

Mingled with the roars of the lions had been the voices of men, and presently out of the confusion and turmoil she felt the near presence of a human being, and then hands reached forth and seized her. It was dark and she could see but little, nor any sign of the English officer or the ape-man. The man who seized her kept the lions from her with what appeared to be a stout spear, the haft of which he used to beat off the

beasts. The fellow dragged her from the cavern the while he shouted what appeared to be commands and warnings to the lions.

Once out upon the light sands of the bottom of the gorge objects became more distinguishable, and then she saw that there were other men in the party and that two half led and half carried the stumbling figure of a third, whom she guessed must be Smith- Oldwick.

For a time the lions made frenzied efforts to reach the two captives but always the men with them succeeded in beating them off. The fellows seemed utterly unafraid of the great beasts leaping and snarling about them, handling them much the same as one

might handle a pack of obstreperous dogs. Along the bed of the old watercourse that once ran through the gorge they made their way, and as the first faint lightening of the eastern horizon presaged the coming dawn, they paused for a moment upon the edge of a declivity, which appeared to the girl in the strange light of the waning night as a vast, bottomless pit; but, as their captors resumed their way and the light of the new day became stronger, she saw that they were moving downward toward a dense forest.

Once beneath the over-arching trees all was again Cimmerian darkness, nor was the gloom relieved until the sun finally arose beyond the eastern cliffs,

when she saw that they were following what appeared to be a broad and well-beaten game trail through a forest of great trees. The ground was unusually dry for an African forest and the underbrush, while heavily foliaged, was not nearly so rank and impenetrable as that which she had been accustomed to find in similar woods. It was as though the trees and the bushes grew in a waterless country, nor was there the musty odor of decaying vegetation or the myriads of tiny insects such as are bred in damp places.

As they proceeded and the sun rose higher, the voices of the arboreal jungle life rose in discordant notes and loud chattering about them. Innumerable

monkeys scolded and screamed in the branches overhead, while harsh-voiced birds of brilliant plumage darted hither and thither. She noticed presently that their captors often cast apprehensive glances in the direction of the birds and on numerous occasions seemed to be addressing the winged denizens of the forest.

One incident made a marked impression on her. The man who immediately preceded her was a fellow of powerful build, yet, when a brilliantly colored parrot swooped downward toward him, he dropped upon his knees and covering his face with his arms bent forward until his head touched the ground. Some of the others looked at him

and laughed nervously. Presently the man glanced upward and seeing that the bird had gone, rose to his feet and continued along the trail.

It was at this brief halt that Smith-Oldwick was brought to her side by the men who had been supporting him. He had been rather badly mauled by one of the lions; but was now able to walk alone, though he was extremely weak from shock and loss of blood.

"Pretty mess, what?" he remarked with a wry smile, indicating his bloody and disheveled state.

"It is terrible," said the girl. "I hope you are not suffering."

"Not as much as I should have expected," he replied, "but I feel as

weak as a fool. What sort of creatures are these beggars, anyway?"

"I don't know," she replied, "there is something terribly uncanny about their appearance."

The man regarded one of their captors closely for a moment and then, turning to the girl asked, "Did you ever visit a madhouse?"

She looked up at him in quick understanding and with a horrified expression in her eyes. "That's it!" she cried.

"They have all the earmarks," he said. "Whites of the eyes showing all around the irises, hair growing stiffly erect from the scalp and low down upon the forehead—even their mannerisms and

their carriage are those of maniacs."

The girl shuddered.

"Another thing about them," continued the Englishman, "that doesn't appear normal is that they are afraid of parrots and utterly fearless of lions."

"Yes," said the girl; "and did you notice that the birds seem utterly fearless of them—really seem to hold them in contempt? Have you any idea what language they speak?"

'No," said the man, "I have been trying to figure that out. It's not like any of the few native dialects of which I have any knowledge."

"It doesn't sound at all like the native language," said the girl, "but there is something familiar about it. You know,

every now and then I feel that I am just on the verge of understanding what they are saying, or at least that somewhere I have heard their tongue before, but final recognition always eludes me."

"I doubt if you ever heard their language spoken," said the man. "These people must have lived in this out-of-the-way valley for ages and even if they had retained the original language of their ancestors without change, which is doubtful, it must be some tongue that is no longer spoken in the outer world."

At one point where a stream of water crossed the trail the party halted while the lions and the men drank. They motioned to their captors to drink too, and as Bertha Kircher and Smith-

Oldwick, lying prone upon the ground drank from the clear, cool water of the rivulet, they were suddenly startled by the thunderous roar of a lion a short distance ahead of them. Instantly the lions with them set up a hideous response, moving restlessly to and fro with their eyes always either turned in the direction from which the roar had come or toward their masters, against whom the tawny beasts slunk. The men loosened the sabers in their scabbards, the weapons that had aroused Smith-Oldwick's curiosity as they had Tarzan's, and grasped their spears more firmly.

Evidently there were lions and lions, and while they evinced no fear of the beasts which accompanied them, it was

quite evident that the voice of the newcomer had an entirely different effect upon them, although the men seemed less terrified than the lions. Neither, however, showed any indication of an inclination to flee; on the contrary the entire party advanced along the trail in the direction of the menacing roars, and presently there appeared in the center of the path a black lion of gigantic proportions. To Smith-Oldwick and the girl he appeared to be the same lion that they had encountered at the plane and from which Tarzan had rescued them. But it was not Numa of the pit, although he resembled him closely.

The black beast stood directly in the center of the trail lashing his tail and

growling menacingly at the advancing party. The men urged on their own beasts, who growled and whined but hesitated to charge. Evidently becoming impatient, and in full consciousness of his might the intruder raised his tail stiffly erect and shot forward. Several of the defending lions made a half-hearted attempt to obstruct his passage, but they might as well have placed themselves in the path of an express train, as hurling them aside the great beast leaped straight for one of the men. A dozen spears were launched at him and a dozen sabers leaped from their scabbards; gleaming, razor-edged weapons they were, but for the instant rendered futile by the terrific speed of the charging beast.

Two of the spears entering his body but served to further enrage him as, with demoniacal roars, he sprang upon the hapless man he had singled out for his prey. Scarcely pausing in his charge he seized the fellow by the shoulder and, turning quickly at right angles, leaped into the concealing foliage that flanked the trail, and was gone, bearing his victim with him.

So quickly had the whole occurrence transpired that the formation of the little party was scarcely altered. There had been no opportunity for flight, even if it had been contemplated; and now that the lion was gone with his prey the men made no move to pursue him. They paused only long enough to recall the

two or three of their lions that had scattered and then resumed the march along the trail.

"Might be an everyday occurrence from all the effect it has on them," remarked Smith-Oldwick to the girl.

"Yes," she said. "They seem to be neither surprised nor disconcerted, and evidently they are quite sure that the lion, having got what he came for, will not molest them further."

"I had thought," said the Englishman, "that the lions of the Wamabo country were about the most ferocious in existence, but they are regular tabby cats by comparison with these big black fellows. Did you ever see anything more utterly fearless or more terribly

irresistible than that charge?"

For a while, as they walked side by side, their thoughts and conversation centered upon this latest experience, until the trail emerging from the forest opened to their view a walled city and an area of cultivated land. Neither could suppress an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, that wall is a regular engineering job," exclaimed Smith-Oldwick

"And look at the domes and minarets of the city beyond," cried the girl. "There must be a civilized people beyond that wall. Possibly we are fortunate to have fallen into their hands."

Smith-Oldwick shrugged his shoulders. "I hope so," he said, "though I

am not at all sure about people who travel about with lions and are afraid of parrots. There must be something wrong with them."

The party followed the trail across the field to an arched gateway which opened at the summons of one of their captors, who beat upon the heavy wooden panels with his spear. Beyond, the gate opened into a narrow street which seemed but a continuation of the jungle trail leading from the forest. Buildings on either hand adjoined the wall and fronted the narrow, winding street, which was only visible for a short distance ahead. The houses were practically all two- storied structures, the upper stories flush with the street

while the walls of the first story were set back some ten feet, a series of simple columns and arches supporting the front of the second story and forming an arcade on either side of the narrow thoroughfare.

The pathway in the center of the street was unpaved, but the floors of the arcades were cut stone of various shapes and sizes but all carefully fitted and laid without mortar. These floors gave evidence of great antiquity, there being a distinct depression down the center as though the stone had been worn away by the passage of countless sandaled feet during the ages that it had lain there.

There were few people astir at this early hour, and these were of the same

type as their captors. At first those whom they saw were only men, but as they went deeper into the city they came upon a few naked children playing in the soft dust of the roadway. Many they passed showed the greatest surprise and curiosity in the prisoners, and often made inquiries of the guards, which the two assumed must have been in relation to themselves, while others appeared not to notice them at all.

"I wish we could understand their bally language," exclaimed Smith-Oldwick.

"Yes," said the girl, "I would like to ask them what they are going to do with us."

"That would be interesting," said the

man. "I have been doing considerable wondering along that line myself."

"I don't like the way their canine teeth are filed," said the girl. "It's too suggestive of some of the cannibals I have seen."

"You don't really believe they are cannibals, do you?" asked the man. "You don't think white people are ever cannibals, do you?"

"Are these people white?" asked the girl.

"They're not Negroes, that's certain," rejoined the man. "Their skin is yellow, but yet it doesn't resemble the Chinese exactly, nor are any of their features Chinese."

It was at this juncture that they caught

their first glimpse of a native woman. She was similar in most respects to the men though her stature was smaller and her figure more symmetrical. Her face was more repulsive than that of the men, possibly because of the fact that she was a woman, which rather accentuated the idiosyncrasies of eyes, pendulous lip, pointed tusks and stiff, low-growing hair. The latter was longer than that of the men and much heavier. It hung about her shoulders and was confined by a colored bit of some lacy fabric. Her single garment appeared to be nothing more than a filmy scarf which was wound tightly around her body from below her naked breasts, being caught up some way at the bottom near her

ankles. Bits of shiny metal resembling gold, ornamented both the headdress and the skirt. Otherwise the woman was entirely without jewelry. Her bare arms were slender and shapely and her hands and feet well proportioned and symmetrical.

She came close to the party as they passed her, jabbering to the guards who paid no attention to her. The prisoners had an opportunity to observe her closely as she followed at their side for a short distance.

"The figure of a houri," remarked Smith-Oldwick, "with the face of an imbecile."

The street they followed was intersected at irregular intervals by

crossroads which, as they glanced down them, proved to be equally as tortuous as that through which they were being conducted. The houses varied but little in design. Occasionally there were bits of color, or some attempt at other architectural ornamentation. Through open windows and doors they could see that the walls of the houses were very thick and that all apertures were quite small, as though the people had built against extreme heat, which they realized must have been necessary in this valley buried deep in an African desert.

Ahead they occasionally caught glimpses of larger structures, and as they approached them, came upon what was evidently a part of the business section

of the city. There were numerous small shops and bazaars interspersed among the residences, and over the doors of these were signs painted in characters strongly suggesting Greek origin and yet it was not Greek as both the Englishman and the girl knew.

Smith-Oldwick was by this time beginning to feel more acutely the pain of his wounds and the consequent weakness that was greatly aggravated by loss of blood. He staggered now occasionally and the girl, seeing his plight, offered him her arm.

"No," he expostulated, "you have passed through too much yourself to have any extra burden imposed upon you." But though he made a valiant effort

to keep up with their captors he occasionally lagged, and upon one such occasion the guards for the first time showed any disposition toward brutality.

It was a big fellow who walked at Smith-Oldwick's left. Several times he took hold of the Englishman's arm and pushed him forward not ungently, but when the captive lagged again and again the fellow suddenly, and certainly with no just provocation, flew into a perfect frenzy of rage. He leaped upon the wounded man, striking him viciously with his fists and, bearing him to the ground, grasped his throat in his left hand while with his right he drew his long sharp saber. Screaming terribly he waved the blade above his head.

The others stopped and turned to look upon the encounter with no particular show of interest. It was as though one of the party had paused to readjust a sandal and the others merely waited until he was ready to march on again.

But if their captors were indifferent, Bertha Kircher was not. The close- set blazing eyes, the snarling fanged face, and the frightful screams filled her with horror, while the brutal and wanton attack upon the wounded man aroused within her the spirit of protection for the weak that is inherent in all women. Forgetful of everything other than that a weak and defenseless man was being brutally murdered before her eyes, the girl cast aside discretion and, rushing to

Smith-Oldwick's assistance, seized the uplifted sword arm of the shrieking creature upon the prostrate Englishman.

Clinging desperately to the fellow she surged backward with all her weight and strength with the result that she overbalanced him and sent him sprawling to the pavement upon his back. In his efforts to save himself he relaxed his grasp upon the grip of his saber which had no sooner fallen to the ground than it was seized upon by the girl. Standing erect beside the prostrate form of the English officer Bertha Kircher, the razor-edged weapon grasped firmly in her hand, faced their captors.

She was a brave figure; even her

soiled and torn riding togs and disheveled hair detracted nothing from her appearance. The creature she had felled scrambled quickly to his feet and in the instant his whole demeanor changed. From demoniacal rage he became suddenly convulsed with hysterical laughter although it was a question in the girl's mind as to which was the more terrifying. His companions stood looking on with vacuous grins upon their countenances, while he from whom the girl had wrested the weapon leaped up and down shrieking with laughter. If Bertha Kircher had needed further evidence to assure her that they were in the hands of a mentally deranged people the man's present actions would

have been sufficient to convince her. The sudden uncontrolled rage and now the equally uncontrolled and mirthless laughter but emphasized the facial attributes of idiocy.

Suddenly realizing how helpless she was in the event any one of the men should seek to overpower her, and moved by a sudden revulsion of feeling that brought on almost a nausea of disgust, the girl hurled the weapon upon the ground at the feet of the laughing maniac and, turning, kneeled beside the Englishman.

"It was wonderful of you," he said, "but you shouldn't have done it. Don't antagonize them: I believe that they are all mad and you know they say that one

should always humor a madman."

She shook her head. "I couldn't see him kill you," she said.

A sudden light sprang to the man's eyes as he reached out a hand and grasped the girl's fingers. "Do you care a little now?" he asked. "Can't you tell me that you do—just a bit?"

She did not withdraw her hand from his but she shook her head sadly. "Please don't," she said. "I am sorry that I can only like you very much."

The light died from his eyes and his fingers relaxed their grasp on hers. "Please forgive me," he murmured. "I intended waiting until we got out of this mess and you were safe among your own people. It must have been the shock or

something like that, and seeing you defending me as you did. Anyway, I couldn't help it and really it doesn't make much difference what I say now, does it?"

"What do you mean?" she asked quickly.

He shrugged and smiled ruefully. "I will never leave this city alive," he said. "I wouldn't mention it except that I realize that you must know it as well as I. I was pretty badly torn up by the lion and this fellow here has about finished me. There might be some hope if we were among civilized people, but here with these frightful creatures what care could we get even if they were friendly?"

Bertha Kircher knew that he spoke the truth, and yet she could not bring herself to an admission that Smith-Oldwick would die. She was very fond of him, in fact her great regret was that she did not love him, but she knew that she did not.

It seemed to her that it could be such an easy thing for any girl to love Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick —an English officer and a gentleman, the scion of an old family and himself a man of ample means, young, good-looking and affable. What more could a girl ask for than to have such a man love her and that she possessed Smith-Oldwick's love there was no doubt in Bertha Kircher's mind.

She sighed, and then, laying her hand

impulsively on his forehead, she whispered, "Do not give up hope, though. Try to live for my sake and for your sake I will try to love you."

It was as though new life had suddenly been injected into the man's veins. His face lightened instantly and with strength that he himself did not know he possessed he rose slowly to his feet, albeit somewhat unsteadily. The girl helped him and supported him after he had arisen.

For the moment they had been entirely unconscious of their surroundings and now as she looked at their captors she saw that they had fallen again into their almost habitual manner of stolid indifference, and at a gesture from one of

them the march was resumed as though no untoward incident had occurred.

Bertha Kircher experienced a sudden reaction from the momentary exaltation of her recent promise to the Englishman. She knew that she had spoken more for him than for herself but now that it was over she realized, as she had realized the moment before she had spoken, that it was unlikely she would ever care for him the way he wished. But what had she promised? Only that she would try to love him. "And now?" she asked herself.

She realized that there might be little hope of their ever returning to civilization. Even if these people should prove friendly and willing to let them depart in peace, how were they to find

their way back to the coast? With Tarzan dead, as she fully believed him after having seen his body lying lifeless at the mouth of the cave when she had been dragged forth by her captor, there seemed no power at their command which could guide them safely.

The two had scarcely mentioned the ape-man since their capture, for each realized fully what his loss meant to them. They had compared notes relative to those few exciting moments of the final attack and capture and had found that they agreed perfectly upon all that had occurred. Smith-Oldwick had even seen the lion leap upon Tarzan at the instant that the former was awakened by the roars of the charging beasts, and

though the night had been dark, he had been able to see that the body of the savage ape-man had never moved from the instant that it had come down beneath the beast.

And so, if at other times within the past few weeks Bertha Kircher had felt that her situation was particularly hopeless, she was now ready to admit that hope was absolutely extinct.

The streets were beginning to fill with the strange men and women of this strange city. Sometimes individuals would notice them and seem to take a great interest in them, and again others would pass with vacant stares, seemingly unconscious of their immediate surroundings and paying no

attention whatsoever to the prisoners. Once they heard hideous screams up a side street, and looking they saw a man in the throes of a demoniacal outburst of rage, similar to that which they had witnessed in the recent attack upon Smith- Oldwick. This creature was venting his insane rage upon a child which he repeatedly struck and bit, pausing only long enough to shriek at frequent intervals. Finally, just before they passed out of sight the creature raised the limp body of the child high above his head and cast it down with all his strength upon the pavement, and then, wheeling and screaming madly at the top of his lungs, he dashed headlong up the winding street.

Two women and several men had stood looking on at the cruel attack. They were at too great a distance for the Europeans to know whether their facial expressions portrayed pity or rage, but be that as it may, none offered to interfere.

A few yards farther on a hideous hag leaned from a second story window where she laughed and gibbered and made horrid grimaces at all who passed her. Others went their ways apparently attending to whatever duties called them, as soberly as the inhabitants of any civilized community.

"God," muttered Smith-Oldwick, "what an awful place!"

The girl turned suddenly toward him.

"You still have your pistol?" she asked him.

"Yes," he replied. "I tucked it inside my shirt. They did not search me and it was too dark for them to see whether I carried any weapons or not. So I hid it in the hope that I might get through with it."

She moved closer to him and took hold of his hand. "Save one cartridge for me, please?" she begged.

Smith-Oldwick looked down at her and blinked his eyes very rapidly. An unfamiliar and disconcerting moisture had come into them. He had realized, of course, how bad a plight was theirs but somehow it had seemed to affect him only: it did not seem possible that anyone could harm this sweet and

beautiful girl.

And that she should have to be destroyed—destroyed by him! It was too hideous: it was unbelievable, unthinkable! If he had been filled with apprehension before, he was doubly perturbed now.

"I don't believe I could do it, Bertha," he said.

"Not even to save me from something worse?" she asked.

He shook his head dismally. "I could never do it," he replied.

The street that they were following suddenly opened upon a wide avenue, and before them spread a broad and beautiful lagoon, the quiet surface of which mirrored the clear cerulean of the

sky. Here the aspect of all their surroundings changed. The buildings were higher and much more pretentious in design and ornamentation. The street itself was paved in mosaics of barbaric but stunningly beautiful design. In the ornamentation of the buildings there was considerable color and a great deal of what appeared to be gold leaf. In all the decorations there was utilized in various ways the conventional figure of the parrot, and, to a lesser extent, that of the lion and the monkey.

Their captors led them along the pavement beside the lagoon for a short distance and then through an arched doorway into one of the buildings facing the avenue. Here, directly within the

entrance was a large room furnished with massive benches and tables, many of which were elaborately hand carved with the figures of the inevitable parrot, the lion, or the monkey, the parrot always predominating.

Behind one of the tables sat a man who differed in no way that the captives could discover from those who accompanied them. Before this person the party halted, and one of the men who had brought them made what seemed to be an oral report. Whether they were before a judge, a military officer, or a civil dignitary they could not know, but evidently he was a man of authority, for, after listening to whatever recital was being made to him the while he closely

scrutinized the two captives, he made a single futile attempt to converse with them and then issued some curt orders to him who had made the report.

Almost immediately two of the men approached Bertha Kircher and signaled her to accompany them. Smith-Oldwick started to follow her but was intercepted by one of their guards. The girl stopped then and turned back, at the same time looking at the man at the table and making signs with her hands, indicating, as best she could, that she wished Smith-Oldwick to remain with her, but the fellow only shook his head negatively and motioned to the guards to remove her. The Englishman again attempted to follow but was restrained. He was too

weak and helpless even to make an attempt to enforce his wishes. He thought of the pistol inside his shirt and then of the futility of attempting to overcome an entire city with the few rounds of ammunition left to him.

So far, with the single exception of the attack made upon him, they had no reason to believe that they might not receive fair treatment from their captors, and so he reasoned that it might be wiser to avoid antagonizing them until such a time as he became thoroughly convinced that their intentions were entirely hostile. He saw the girl led from the building and just before she disappeared from his view she turned and waved her hand to him:

"Good luck!" she cried, and was gone.

The lions that had entered the building with the party had, during their examination by the man at the table, been driven from the apartment through a doorway behind him. Toward this same doorway two of the men now led Smith-Oldwick. He found himself in a long corridor from the sides of which other doorways opened, presumably into other apartments of the building. At the far end of the corridor he saw a heavy grating beyond which appeared an open courtyard. Into this courtyard the prisoner was conducted, and as he entered it with the two guards he found himself in an opening which was

bounded by the inner walls of the building. It was in the nature of a garden in which a number of trees and flowering shrubs grew. Beneath several of the trees were benches and there was a bench along the south wall, but what aroused his most immediate attention was the fact that the lions who had assisted in their capture and who had accompanied them upon the return to the city, lay sprawled about upon the ground or wandered restlessly to and fro.

Just inside the gate his guard halted. The two men exchanged a few words and then turned and reentered the corridor. The Englishman was horror-stricken as the full realization of his terrible plight forced itself upon his tired

brain. He turned and seized the grating in an attempt to open it and gain the safety of the corridor, but he found it securely locked against his every effort, and then he called aloud to the retreating figure of the men within. The only reply he received was a high-pitched, mirthless laugh, and then the two passed through the doorway at the far end of the corridor and he was alone with the lions.

19. THE QUEEN'S STORY

In the meantime Bertha Kircher was conducted the length of the plaza toward the largest and most pretentious of the buildings surrounding it. This edifice covered the entire width of one end of the plaza. It was several stories in height, the main entrance being approached by a wide flight of stone steps, the bottom of which was guarded by enormous stone lions, while at the top there were two pedestals flanking the entrance and of the same height, upon each of which was the stone image of a large parrot. As the girl neared these latter images she saw that the capital of each column was hewn into the semblance of a human skull upon which

the parrots perched. Above the arched doorway and upon the walls of the building were the figures of other parrots, of lions, and of monkeys. Some of these were carved in bas-relief; others were delineated in mosaics, while still others appeared to have been painted upon the surface of the wall.

The colorings of the last were apparently much subdued by age with the result that the general effect was soft and beautiful. The sculpturing and mosaic work were both finely executed, giving evidence of a high degree of artistic skill. Unlike the first building into which she had been conducted, the entrance to which had been doorless, massive doors closed the entrance which she now

approached. In the niches formed by the columns which supported the door's arch, and about the base of the pedestals of the stone parrots, as well as in various other places on the broad stairway, lolled some score of armed men. The tunics of these were all of a vivid yellow and upon the breast and back of each was embroidered the figure of a parrot.

As she was conducted up the stairway one of these yellow-coated warriors approached and halted her guides at the top of the steps. Here they exchanged a few words and while they were talking the girl noticed that he who had halted them, as well as those whom she could see of his companions, appeared to be, if

possible, of a lower mentality than her original captors.

Their coarse, bristling hair grew so low upon their foreheads as, in some instances, to almost join their eyebrows, while the irises were smaller, exposing more of the white of the eyeball.

After a short parley the man in charge of the doorway, for such he seemed to be, turned and struck upon one of the panels with the butt of his spear, at the same time calling to several of his companions, who rose and came forward at his command. Soon the great doors commenced slowly to swing creakingly open, and presently, as they separated, the girl saw behind them the motive force which operated the

massive doors—to each door a half-dozen naked Negroes.

At the doorway her two guards were turned back and their places taken by a half dozen of the yellow-coated soldiery. These conducted her through the doorway which the blacks, pulling upon heavy chains, closed behind them. And as the girl watched them she noted with horror that the poor creatures were chained by the neck to the doors.

Before her led a broad hallway in the center of which was a little pool of clear water. Here again in floor and walls was repeated in new and ever-changing combinations and designs, the parrots, the monkeys, and the lions, but now many of the figures were of what the girl

was convinced must be gold. The walls of the corridor consisted of a series of open archways through which, upon either side, other spacious apartments were visible. The hallway was entirely unfurnished, but the rooms on either side contained benches and tables. Glimpses of some of the walls revealed the fact that they were covered with hangings of some colored fabric, while upon the floors were thick rugs of barbaric design and the skins of black lions and beautifully marked leopards.

The room directly to the right of the entrance was filled with men wearing the yellow tunics of her new guard while the walls were hung with numerous spears and sabers. At the far end of the

corridor a low flight of steps led to another closed doorway. Here the guard was again halted. One of the guards at this doorway, after receiving the report of one of those who accompanied her, passed through the door, leaving them standing outside. It was fully fifteen minutes before he returned, when the guard was again changed and the girl conducted into the chamber beyond.

Through three other chambers and past three more massive doors, at each of which her guard was changed, the girl was conducted before she was ushered into a comparatively small room, back and forth across the floor of which paced a man in a scarlet tunic, upon the front and back of which was

embroidered an enormous parrot and upon whose head was a barbaric headdress surmounted by a stuffed parrot.

The walls of this room were entirely hidden by hangings upon which hundreds, even thousands, of parrots were embroidered. Inlaid in the floor were golden parrots, while, as thickly as they could be painted, upon the ceiling were brilliant-hued parrots with wings outspread as though in the act of flying.

The man himself was larger of stature than any she had yet seen within the city. His parchment-like skin was wrinkled with age and he was much fatter than any other of his kind that she had seen. His bared arms, however, gave evidence of

great strength and his gait was not that of an old man. His facial expression denoted almost utter imbecility and he was quite the most repulsive creature that ever Bertha Kircher had looked upon.

For several minutes after she was conducted into his presence he appeared not to be aware that she was there but continued his restless pacing to and fro. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, and while he was at the far end of the room from her with his back toward her, he wheeled and rushed madly at her. Involuntarily the girl shrank back, extending her open palms toward the frightful creature as though to hold him aloof but a man upon either side of her,

the two who had conducted her into the apartment, seized and held her.

Although he rushed violently toward her the man stopped without touching her. For a moment his horrid white-rimmed eyes glared searchingly into her face, immediately following which he burst into maniacal laughter. For two or three minutes the creature gave himself over to merriment and then, stopping as suddenly as he had commenced to laugh, he fell to examining the prisoner. He felt of her hair, her skin, the texture of the garment she wore and by means of signs made her understand she was to open her mouth. In the latter he seemed much interested, calling the attention of one of the guards to her canine teeth and then

baring his own sharp fangs for the prisoner to see.

Presently he resumed pacing to and fro across the floor, and it was fully fifteen minutes before he again noticed the prisoner, and then it was to issue a curt order to her guards, who immediately conducted her from the apartment.

The guards now led the girl through a series of corridors and apartments to a narrow stone stairway which led to the floor above, finally stopping before a small door where stood a naked Negro armed with a spear. At a word from one of her guards the Negro opened the door and the party passed into a low-ceiled apartment, the windows of which

immediately caught the girl's attention through the fact that they were heavily barred. The room was furnished similarly to those that she had seen in other parts of the building, the same carved tables and benches, the rugs upon the floor, the decorations upon the walls, although in every respect it was simpler than anything she had seen on the floor below. In one corner was a low couch covered with a rug similar to those on the floor except that it was of a lighter texture, and upon this sat a woman.

As Bertha Kircher's eyes alighted upon the occupant of the room the girl gave a little gasp of astonishment, for she recognized immediately that here was a creature more nearly of her own

kind than any she had seen within the city's walls. An old woman it was who looked at her through faded blue eyes, sunken deep in a wrinkled and toothless face. But the eyes were those of a sane and intelligent creature, and the wrinkled face was the face of a white woman.

At sight of the girl the woman rose and came forward, her gait so feeble and unsteady that she was forced to support herself with a long staff which she grasped in both her hands. One of the guards spoke a few words to her and then the men turned and left the apartment. The girl stood just within the door waiting in silence for what might next befall her.

The old woman crossed the room and

stopped before her, raising her weak and watery eyes to the fresh young face of the newcomer. Then she scanned her from head to foot and once again the old eyes returned to the girl's face. Bertha Kircher on her part was not less frank in her survey of the little old woman. It was the latter who spoke first. In a thin, cracked voice she spoke, hesitatingly, falteringly, as though she were using unfamiliar words and speaking a strange tongue.

"You are from the outer world?" she asked in English. "God grant that you may speak and understand this tongue."

"English?" the girl exclaimed, "Yes, of course, I speak English."

"Thank God!" cried the little old

woman. "I did not know whether I myself might speak it so that another could understand. For sixty years I have spoken only their accursed gibberish. For sixty years I have not heard a word in my native language. Poor creature! Poor creature!" she mumbled. "What accursed misfortune threw you into their hands?"

"You are an English woman?" asked Bertha Kircher. "Did I understand you aright that you are an English woman and have been here for sixty years?"

The old woman nodded her head affirmatively. "For sixty years I have never been outside of this palace. Come," she said, stretching forth a bony hand. "I am very old and cannot stand

long. Come and sit with me on my couch."

The girl took the proffered hand and assisted the old lady back to the opposite side of the room and when she was seated the girl sat down beside her.

"Poor child! Poor child!" moaned the old woman. "Far better to have died than to have let them bring you here. At first I might have destroyed myself but there was always the hope that someone would come who would take me away, but none ever comes. Tell me how they got you."

Very briefly the girl narrated the principal incidents which led up to her capture by some of the creatures of the city.

"Then there is a man with you in the city?" asked the old woman.

"Yes," said the girl, "but I do not know where he is nor what are their intentions in regard to him. In fact, I do not know what their intentions toward me are."

"No one might even guess," said the old woman. "They do not know themselves from one minute to the next what their intentions are, but I think you can rest assured, my poor child, that you will never see your friend again."

"But they haven't slain you," the girl reminded her, "and you have been their prisoner, you say, for sixty years."

"No," replied her companion, "they have not killed me, nor will they kill

you, though God knows before you have lived long in this horrible place you will beg them to kill you."

"Who are they—" asked Bertha Kircher, "what kind of people? They differ from any that I ever have seen. And tell me, too, how you came here."

"It was long ago," said the old woman, rocking back and forth on the couch. "It was long ago. Oh, how long it was! I was only twenty then. Think of it, child! Look at me. I have no mirror other than my bath, I cannot see what I look like for my eyes are old, but with my fingers I can feel my old and wrinkled face, my sunken eyes, and these flabby lips drawn in over toothless gums. I am old and bent and hideous, but then I was

young and they said that I was beautiful. No, I will not be a hypocrite; I was beautiful. My glass told me that.

"My father was a missionary in the interior and one day there came a band of Arabian slave raiders. They took the men and women of the little native village where my father labored, and they took me, too. They did not know much about our part of the country so they were compelled to rely upon the men of our village whom they had captured to guide them. They told me that they never before had been so far south and that they had heard there was a country rich in ivory and slaves west of us. They wanted to go there and from there they would take us north, where I

was to be sold into the harem of some black sultan.

"They often discussed the price I would bring, and that that price might not lessen, they guarded me jealously from one another so the journeys were made as little fatiguing for me as possible. I was given the best food at their command and I was not harmed.

"But after a short time, when we had reached the confines of the country with which the men of our village were familiar and had entered upon a desolate and arid desert waste, the Arabs realized at last that we were lost. But they still kept on, ever toward the west, crossing hideous gorges and marching across the face of a burning land beneath

the pitiless sun. The poor slaves they had captured were, of course, compelled to carry all the camp equipage and loot and thus heavily burdened, half starved and without water, they soon commenced to die like flies.

"We had not been in the desert land long before the Arabs were forced to kill their horses for food, and when we reached the first gorge, across which it would have been impossible to transport the animals, the balance of them were slaughtered and the meat loaded upon the poor staggering blacks who still survived.

"Thus we continued for two more days and now all but a handful of blacks were dead, and the Arabs themselves

had commenced to succumb to hunger and thirst and the intense heat of the desert. As far as the eye could reach back toward the land of plenty from whence we had come, our route was marked by circling vultures in the sky and by the bodies of the dead who lay down in the trackless waste for the last time. The ivory had been abandoned tusk by tusk as the blacks gave out, and along the trail of death was strewn the camp equipage and the horse trappings of a hundred men.

"For some reason the Arab chief favored me to the last, possibly with the idea that of all his other treasures I could be most easily transported, for I was young and strong and after the horses

were killed I had walked and kept up with the best of the men. We English, you know, are great walkers, while these Arabians had never walked since they were old enough to ride a horse.

"I cannot tell you how much longer we kept on but at last, with our strength almost gone, a handful of us reached the bottom of a deep gorge. To scale the opposite side was out of the question and so we kept on down along the sands of what must have been the bed of an ancient river, until finally we came to a point where we looked out upon what appeared to be a beautiful valley in which we felt assured that we would find game in plenty.

"By then there were only two of us

left—the chief and myself. I do not need to tell you what the valley was, for you found it in much the same way as I did. So quickly were we captured that it seemed they must have been waiting for us, and I learned later that such was the case, just as they were waiting for you.

"As you came through the forest you must have seen the monkeys and parrots and since you have entered the palace, how constantly these animals, and the lions, are used in the decorations. At home we were all familiar with talking parrots who repeated the things that they were taught to say, but these parrots are different in that they all talk in the same language that the people of the city use, and they say that the monkeys talk to the

parrots and the parrots fly to the city and tell the people what the monkeys say. And, although it is hard to believe, I have learned that this is so, for I have lived here among them for sixty years in the palace of their king.

"They brought me, as they brought you, directly to the palace. The Arabian chief was taken elsewhere. I never knew what became of him. Ago XXV was king then. I have seen many kings since that day. He was a terrible man; but then, they are all terrible."

"What is the matter with them?" asked the girl.

"They are a race of maniacs," replied the old woman. "Had you not guessed it? Among them are excellent craftsmen and

good farmers and a certain amount of law and order, such as it is.

"They reverence all birds, but the parrot is their chief deity. There is one who is held here in the palace in a very beautiful apartment. He is their god of gods. He is a very old bird. If what Ago told me when I came is true, he must be nearly three hundred years old by now. Their religious rites are revolting in the extreme, and I believe that it may be the practice of these rites through ages that has brought the race to its present condition of imbecility.

"And yet, as I said, they are not without some redeeming qualities. If legend may be credited, their forebears —a little handful of men and women

who came from somewhere out of the north and became lost in the wilderness of central Africa—found here only a barren desert valley. To my own knowledge rain seldom, if ever, falls here, and yet you have seen a great forest and luxuriant vegetation outside of the city as well as within. This miracle is accomplished by the utilization of natural springs which their ancestors developed, and upon which they have improved to such an extent that the entire valley receives an adequate amount of moisture at all times.

"Ago told me that many generations before his time the forest was irrigated by changing the course of the streams which carried the spring water to the

city but that when the trees had sent their roots down to the natural moisture of the soil and required no further irrigation, the course of the stream was changed and other trees were planted. And so the forest grew until today it covers almost the entire floor of the valley except for the open space where the city stands. I do not know that this is true. It may be that the forest has always been here, but it is one of their legends and it is borne out by the fact that there is not sufficient rainfall here to support vegetation.

"They are peculiar people in many respects, not only in their form of worship and religious rites but also in that they breed lions as other people breed cattle. You have seen how they

use some of these lions but the majority of them they fatten and eat. At first, I imagine, they ate lion meat as a part of their religious ceremony but after many generations they came to crave it so that now it is practically the only flesh they eat. They would, of course, rather die than eat the flesh of a bird, nor will they eat monkey's meat, while the herbivorous animals they raise only for milk, hides, and flesh for the lions. Upon the south side of the city are the corrals and pastures where the herbivorous animals are raised. Boar, deer, and antelope are used principally for the lions, while goats are kept for milk for the human inhabitants of the city."

"And you have lived here all these

years," exclaimed the girl, "without ever seeing one of your own kind?"

The old woman nodded affirmatively.

"For sixty years you have lived here," continued Bertha Kircher, "and they have not harmed you!"

"I did not say they had not harmed me," said the old woman, "they did not kill me, that is all."

"What"—the girl hesitated—"what," she continued at last, "was your position among them? Pardon me," she added quickly, "I think I know but I should like to hear from your own lips, for whatever your position was, mine will doubtless be the same."

The old woman nodded. "Yes," she said, "doubtless; if they can keep you

away from the women."

"What do you mean?" asked the girl.

"For sixty years I have never been allowed near a woman. They would kill me, even now, if they could reach me. The men are frightful, God knows they are frightful! But heaven keep you from the women!"

"You mean," asked the girl, "that the men will not harm me?"

"Ago XXV made me his queen," said the old woman. "But he had many other queens, nor were they all human. He was not murdered for ten years after I came here. Then the next king took me, and so it has been always. I am the oldest queen now. Very few of their women live to a great age. Not only are they constantly

liable to assassination but, owing to their subnormal mentalities, they are subject to periods of depression during which they are very likely to destroy themselves."

She turned suddenly and pointed to the barred windows. "You see this room," she said, "with the black eunuch outside? Wherever you see these you will know that there are women, for with very few exceptions they are never allowed out of captivity. They are considered and really are more violent than the men."

For several minutes the two sat in silence, and then the younger woman turned to the older.

"Is there no way to escape?" she

asked.

The old woman pointed again to the barred windows and then to the door, saying: "And there is the armed eunuch. And if you should pass him, how could you reach the street? And if you reached the street, how could you pass through the city to the outer wall? And even if, by some miracle, you should gain the outer wall, and, by another miracle, you should be permitted to pass through the gate, could you ever hope to traverse the forest where the great black lions roam and feed upon men? No!" she exclaimed, answering her own question, "there is no escape, for after one had escaped from the palace and the city and the forest it would be but to invite death in the

frightful desert land beyond.

"In sixty years you are the first to find this buried city. In a thousand no denizen of this valley has ever left it, and within the memory of man, or even in their legends, none had found them prior to my coming other than a single warlike giant, the story of whom has been handed down from father to son.

"I think from the description that he must have been a Spaniard, a giant of a man in buckler and helmet, who fought his way through the terrible forest to the city gate, who fell upon those who were sent out to capture him and slew them with his mighty sword. And when he had eaten of the vegetables from the gardens, and the fruit from the trees and drank of

the water from the stream, he turned about and fought his way back through the forest to the mouth of the gorge. But though he escaped the city and the forest he did not escape the desert. For a legend runs that the king, fearful that he would bring others to attack them, sent a party after him to slay him.

"For three weeks they did not find him, for they went in the wrong direction, but at last they came upon his bones picked clean by the vultures, lying a day's march up the same gorge through which you and I entered the valley. I do not know," continued the old woman, "that this is true. It is just one of their many legends."

"Yes," said the girl, "it is true. I am

sure it is true, for I have seen the skeleton and the corroded armor of this great giant."

At this juncture the door was thrown open without ceremony and a Negro entered bearing two flat vessels in which were several smaller ones. These he set down on one of the tables near the women, and, without a word, turned and left. With the entrance of the man with the vessels, a delightful odor of cooked food had aroused the realization in the girl's mind that she was very hungry, and at a word from the old woman she walked to the table to examine the viands. The larger vessels which contained the smaller ones were of pottery while those within them were

quite evidently of hammered gold. To her intense surprise she found lying between the smaller vessels a spoon and a fork, which, while of quaint design, were quite as serviceable as any she had seen in more civilized communities. The tines of the fork were quite evidently of iron or steel, the girl did not know which, while the handle and the spoon were of the same material as the smaller vessels.

There was a highly seasoned stew with meat and vegetables, a dish of fresh fruit, and a bowl of milk beside which was a little jug containing something which resembled marmalade. So ravenous was she that she did not even wait for her companion to reach the

table, and as she ate she could have sworn that never before had she tasted more palatable food. The old woman came slowly and sat down on one of the benches opposite her.

As she removed the smaller vessels from the larger and arranged them before her on the table a crooked smile twisted her lips as she watched the younger woman eat.

"Hunger is a great leveler," she said with a laugh.

"What do you mean?" asked the girl.

"I venture to say that a few weeks ago you would have been nauseated at the idea of eating cat."

"Cat?" exclaimed the girl.

"Yes," said the old woman. "What is the difference—a lion is a cat."

"You mean I am eating lion now?"

"Yes," said the old woman, "and as they prepare it, it is very palatable. You will grow very fond of it."

Bertha Kircher smiled a trifle dubiously. "I could not tell it," she said, "from lamb or veal."

"No," said the woman, "it tastes as good to me. But these lions are very carefully kept and very carefully fed and their flesh is so seasoned and prepared that it might be anything so far as taste is concerned."

And so Bertha Kircher broke her long fast upon strange fruits, lion meat, and goat's milk.

Scarcely had she finished when again the door opened and there entered a yellow-coated soldier. He spoke to the old woman.

"The king," she said, "has commanded that you be prepared and brought to him. You are to share these apartments with me. The king knows that I am not like his other women. He never would have dared to put you with them. Herog XVI has occasional lucid intervals. You must have been brought to him during one of these. Like the rest of them he thinks that he alone of all the community is sane, but more than once I have thought that the various men with whom I have come in contact here, including the kings themselves, looked upon me as, at least,

less mad than the others. Yet how I have retained my senses all these years is beyond me."

"What do you mean by prepare?" asked Bertha Kircher. "You said that the king had commanded I be prepared and brought to him."

"You will be bathed and furnished with a robe similar to that which I wear."

"Is there no escape?" asked the girl. "Is there no way even in which I can kill myself?"

The woman handed her the fork. "This is the only way," she said, "and you will notice that the tines are very short and blunt."

The girl shuddered and the old

woman laid a hand gently upon her shoulder. "He may only look at you and send you away," she said. "Ago XXV sent for me once, tried to talk with me, discovered that I could not understand him and that he could not understand me, ordered that I be taught the language of his people, and then apparently forgot me for a year. Sometimes I do not see the king for a long period. There was one king who ruled for five years whom I never saw. There is always hope; even I whose very memory has doubtless been forgotten beyond these palace walls still hope, though none knows better how futilely."

The old woman led Bertha Kircher to an adjoining apartment in the floor of

which was a pool of water. Here the girl bathed and afterward her companion brought her one of the clinging garments of the native women and adjusted it about her figure. The material of the robe was of a gauzy fabric which accentuated the rounded beauty of the girlish form.

"There," said the old woman, as she gave a final pat to one of the folds of the garment, "you are a queen indeed!"

The girl looked down at her naked breasts and but half- concealed limbs in horror. "They are going to lead me into the presence of men in this half-nude condition!" she exclaimed.

The old woman smiled her crooked smile. "It is nothing," she said. "You

will become accustomed to it as did I who was brought up in the home of a minister of the gospel, where it was considered little short of a crime for a woman to expose her stockinged ankle. By comparison with what you will doubtless see and the things that you may be called upon to undergo, this is but a trifle."

For what seemed hours to the distraught girl she paced the floor of her apartment, awaiting the final summons to the presence of the mad king. Darkness had fallen and the oil flares within the palace had been lighted long before two messengers appeared with instructions that Herog demanded her immediate presence and that the old woman, whom

they called Xanila, was to accompany her. The girl felt some slight relief when she discovered that she was to have at least one friend with her, however powerless to assist her the old woman might be.

The messengers conducted the two to a small apartment on the floor below. Xanila explained that this was one of the anterooms off the main throneroom in which the king was accustomed to hold court with his entire retinue. A number of yellow-tunicked warriors sat about upon the benches within the room. For the most part their eyes were bent upon the floor and their attitudes that of moody dejection. As the two women entered several glanced indifferently at

them, but for the most part no attention was paid to them.

While they were waiting in the anteroom there entered from another apartment a young man uniformed similarly to the others with the exception that upon his head was a fillet of gold, in the front of which a single parrot feather rose erectly above his forehead. As he entered, the other soldiers in the room rose to their feet.

"That is Metak, one of the king's sons," Xanila whispered to the girl.

The prince was crossing the room toward the audience chamber when his glance happened to fall upon Bertha Kircher. He halted in his tracks and stood looking at her for a full minute

without speaking. The girl, embarrassed by his bold stare and her scant attire, flushed and, dropping her gaze to the floor, turned away. Metak suddenly commenced to tremble from head to foot and then, without warning other than a loud, hoarse scream he sprang forward and seized the girl in his arms.

Instantly pandemonium ensued. The two messengers who had been charged with the duty of conducting the girl to the king's presence danced, shrieking, about the prince, waving their arms and gesticulating wildly as though they would force him to relinquish her, the while they dared not lay hands upon royalty. The other guardsmen, as though suffering in sympathy the madness of

their prince, ran forward screaming and brandishing their sabers.

The girl fought to release herself from the horrid embrace of the maniac, but with his left arm about her he held her as easily as though she had been but a babe, while with his free hand he drew his saber and struck viciously at those nearest him.

One of the messengers was the first to feel the keen edge of Metak's blade. With a single fierce cut the prince drove through the fellow's collar bone and downward to the center of his chest. With a shrill shriek that rose above the screaming of the other guardsmen the man dropped to the floor, and as the blood gushed from the frightful wound

he struggled to rise once more to his feet and then sank back again and died in a great pool of his own blood.

In the meantime Metak, still clinging desperately to the girl, had backed toward the opposite door. At the sight of the blood two of the guardsmen, as though suddenly aroused to maniacal frenzy, dropped their sabers to the floor and fell upon each other with nails and teeth, while some sought to reach the prince and some to defend him. In a corner of the room sat one of the guardsmen laughing uproariously and just as Metak succeeded in reaching the door and taking the girl through, she thought that she saw another of the men spring upon the corpse of the dead

messenger and bury his teeth in its flesh.

During the orgy of madness Xanila had kept closely at the girl's side but at the door of the room Metak had seen her and, wheeling suddenly, cut viciously at her. Fortunately for Xanila she was halfway through the door at the time, so that Metak's blade but dented itself upon the stone arch of the portal, and then Xanila, guided doubtless by the wisdom of sixty years of similar experiences, fled down the corridor as fast as her old and tottering legs would carry her.

Metak, once outside the door, returned his saber to its scabbard and lifting the girl bodily from the ground carried her off in the opposite direction from that taken by Xanila.

20. CAME TARZAN

Just before dark that evening, an almost exhausted flier entered the headquarters of Colonel Capell of the Second Rhodesians and saluted.

"Well, Thompson," asked the superior, "what luck? The others have all returned. Never saw a thing of Oldwick or his plane. I guess we shall have to give it up unless you were more successful."

"I was," replied the young officer. "I found the plane."

"No!" ejaculated Colonel Capell. "Where was it? Any sign of Oldwick?"

"It is in the rottenest hole in the ground you ever saw, quite a bit inland. Narrow gorge. Saw the plane all right

but can't reach it. There was a regular devil of a lion wandering around it. I landed near the edge of the cliff and was going to climb down and take a look at the plane. But this fellow hung around for an hour or more and I finally had to give it up."

"Do you think the lions got Oldwick?" asked the colonel.

"I doubt it," replied Lieutenant Thompson, "from the fact that there was no indication that the lion had fed anywhere about the plane. I arose after I found it was impossible to get down around the plane and reconnoitered up and down the gorge. Several miles to the south I found a small, wooded valley in the center of which—please don't think

me crazy, sir—is a regular city - streets, buildings, a central plaza with a lagoon, good-sized buildings with domes and minarets and all that sort of stuff."

The elder officer looked at the younger compassionately. "You're all wrought up, Thompson," he said. "Go and take a good sleep. You have been on this job now for a long while and it must have gotten on your nerves."

The young man shook his head a bit irritably. "Pardon me, sir," he said, "but I am telling you the truth. I am not mistaken. I circled over the place several times. It may be that Oldwick has found his way there—or has been captured by these people."

"Were there people in the city?"

asked the colonel.

"Yes, I saw them in the streets."

"Do you think cavalry could reach the valley?" asked the colonel.

"No," replied Thompson, "the country is all cut up with these deep gorges. Even infantry would have a devil of a time of it, and there is absolutely no water that I could discover for at least a two days' march."

It was at this juncture that a big Vauxhall drew up in front of the headquarters of the Second Rhodesians and a moment later General Smuts alighted and entered. Colonel Capell arose from his chair and saluted his superior, and the young lieutenant saluted and stood at attention.

"I was passing," said the general, "and I thought I would stop for a chat. By the way, how is the search for Lieutenant Smith- Oldwick progressing? I see Thompson here and I believe he was one of those detailed to the search."

"Yes," said Capell, "he was. He is the last to come in. He found the lieutenant's ship," and then he repeated what Lieutenant Thompson had reported to him. The general sat down at the table with Colonel Capell, and together the two officers, with the assistance of the flier, marked the approximate location of the city which Thompson had reported he'd discovered.

"It's a mighty rough country," remarked Smuts, "but we can't leave a

stone unturned until we have exhausted every resource to find that boy. We will send out a small force; a small one will be more likely to succeed than a large one. About one company, Colonel, or say two, with sufficient motor lorries for transport of rations and water. Put a good man in command and let him establish a base as far to the west as the motors can travel. You can leave one company there and send the other forward. I am inclined to believe you can establish your base within a day's march of the city and if such is the case the force you send ahead should have no trouble on the score of lack of water as there certainly must be water in the valley where the city lies. Detail a

couple of planes for reconnaissance and messenger service so that the base can keep in touch at all times with the advance party. When can your force move out?"

"We can load the lorries tonight," replied Capell, "and march about one o'clock tomorrow morning."

"Good," said the general, "keep me advised," and returning the others' salutes he departed.

As Tarzan leaped for the vines he realized that the lion was close upon him and that his life depended upon the strength of the creepers clinging to the city walls; but to his intense relief he found the stems as large around as a man's arm, and the tendrils which had

fastened themselves to the wall so firmly fixed, that his weight upon the stem appeared to have no appreciable effect upon them.

He heard Numa's baffled roar as the lion slipped downward clawing futilely at the leafy creepers, and then with the agility of the apes who had reared him, Tarzan bounded nimbly aloft to the summit of the wall.

A few feet below him was the flat roof of the adjoining building and as he dropped to it his back was toward the niche from which an embrasure looked out upon the gardens and the forest beyond, so that he did not see the figure crouching there in the dark shadow. But if he did not see he was not long in

ignorance of the fact that he was not alone, for scarcely had his feet touched the roof when a heavy body leaped upon him from behind and brawny arms encircled him about the waist.

Taken at a disadvantage and lifted from his feet, the ape-man was, for the time being, helpless. Whatever the creature was that had seized him, it apparently had a well-defined purpose in mind, for it walked directly toward the edge of the roof so that it was soon apparent to Tarzan that he was to be hurled to the pavement below—a most efficacious manner of disposing of an intruder. That he would be either maimed or killed the ape-man was confident; but he had no intention of

permitting his assailant to carry out the plan.

Tarzan's arms and legs were free but he was in such a disadvantageous position that he could not use them to any good effect. His only hope lay in throwing the creature off its balance, and to this end Tarzan straightened his body and leaned as far back against his captor as he could, and then suddenly lunged forward. The result was as satisfactory as he could possibly have hoped. The great weight of the ape-man thrown suddenly out from an erect position caused the other also to lunge violently forward with the result that to save himself he involuntarily released his grasp. Catlike in his movements, the

ape-man had no sooner touched the roof than he was upon his feet again, facing his adversary, a man almost as large as himself and armed with a saber which he now whipped from its scabbard. Tarzan, however, had no mind to allow the use of this formidable weapon and so he dove for the other's legs beneath the vicious cut that was directed at him from the side, and as a football player tackles an opposing runner, Tarzan tackled his antagonist, carrying him backward several yards and throwing him heavily to the roof upon his back.

No sooner had the man touched the roof than the ape-man was upon his chest, one brawny hand sought and found the sword wrist and the other the throat

of the yellow-tunicked guardsman. Until then the fellow had fought in silence but just as Tarzan's fingers touched his throat he emitted a single piercing shriek that the brown fingers cut off almost instantly. The fellow struggled to escape the clutch of the naked creature upon his breast but equally as well might he have fought to escape the talons of Numa, the lion.

Gradually his struggles lessened, his pin-point eyes popped from their sockets, rolling horribly upward, while from his foam- flecked lips his swollen tongue protruded. As his struggles ceased Tarzan arose, and placing a foot upon the carcass of his kill, was upon the point of screaming forth his victory

cry when the thought that the work before him required the utmost caution sealed his lips.

Walking to the edge of the roof he looked down into the narrow, winding street below. At intervals, apparently at each street intersection, an oil flare sputtered dimly from brackets set in the walls a trifle higher than a man's head. For the most part the winding alleys were in dense shadow and even in the immediate vicinity of the flares the illumination was far from brilliant. In the restricted area of his vision he could see that there were still a few of the strange inhabitants moving about the narrow thoroughfares.

To prosecute his search for the young

officer and the girl he must be able to move about the city as freely as possible, but to pass beneath one of the corner flares, naked as he was except for a loin cloth, and in every other respect markedly different from the inhabitants of the city, would be but to court almost immediate discovery. As these thoughts flashed through his mind and he cast about for some feasible plan of action, his eyes fell upon the corpse upon the roof near him, and immediately there occurred to him the possibility of disguising himself in the raiment of his conquered adversary.

It required but a few moments for the ape-man to clothe himself in the tights, sandals, and parrot emblazoned yellow

tunic of the dead soldier. Around his waist he buckled the saber belt but beneath the tunic he retained the hunting knife of his dead father. His other weapons he could not lightly discard, and so, in the hope that he might eventually recover them, he carried them to the edge of the wall and dropped them among the foliage at its base. At the last moment he found it difficult to part with his rope, which, with his knife, was his most accustomed weapon, and one which he had used for the greatest length of time. He found that by removing the saber belt he could wind the rope about his waist beneath his tunic, and then replacing the belt still retain it entirely concealed from chance observation.

At last, satisfactorily disguised, and with even his shock of black hair adding to the verisimilitude of his likeness to the natives of the city, he sought for some means of reaching the street below. While he might have risked a drop from the eaves of the roof he feared to do so lest he attract the attention of passers-by, and probable discovery. The roofs of the buildings varied in height but as the ceilings were all low he found that he could easily travel along the roof tops and this he did for some little distance, until he suddenly discovered just ahead of him several figures reclining upon the roof of a near-by building.

He had noticed openings in each roof,

evidently giving ingress to the apartments below, and now, his advance cut off by those ahead of him, he decided to risk the chance of reaching the street through the interior of one of the buildings. Approaching one of the openings he leaned over the black hole and, listened for sounds of life in the apartment below. Neither his ears nor his nose registered evidence of the presence of any living creature in the immediate vicinity, and so without further hesitation the ape-man lowered his body through the aperture and was about to drop when his foot came in contact with the rung of a ladder, which he immediately took advantage of to descend to the floor of the room below.

Here, all was almost total darkness until his eyes became accustomed to the interior, the darkness of which was slightly alleviated by the reflected light from a distant street flare which shone intermittently through the narrow windows fronting the thoroughfare. Finally, assured that the apartment was unoccupied, Tarzan sought for a stairway to the ground floor. This he found in a dark hallway upon which the room opened—a flight of narrow stone steps leading downward toward the street. Chance favored him so that he reached the shadows of the arcade without encountering any of the inmates of the house.

Once on the street he was not at a loss

as to the direction in which he wished to go, for he had tracked the two Europeans practically to the gate, which he felt assured must have given them entry to the city. His keen sense of direction and location made it possible for him to judge with considerable accuracy the point within the city where he might hope to pick up the spoor of those whom he sought.

The first need, however, was to discover a street paralleling the northern wall along which he could make his way in the direction of the gate he had seen from the forest. Realizing that his greatest hope of success lay in the boldness of his operations he moved off in the direction of the nearest street flare

without making any other attempt at concealment than keeping in the shadows of the arcade, which he judged would draw no particular attention to him in that he saw other pedestrians doing likewise. The few he passed gave him no heed, and he had almost reached the nearest intersection when he saw several men wearing yellow tunics identical to that which he had taken from his prisoner.

They were coming directly toward him and the ape-man saw that should he continue on he would meet them directly at the intersection of the two streets in the full light of the flare. His first inclination was to go steadily on, for personally he had no objection to

chancing a scrimmage with them; but a sudden recollection of the girl, possibly a helpless prisoner in the hands of these people, caused him to seek some other and less hazardous plan of action.

He had almost emerged from the shadow of the arcade into the full light of the flare and the approaching men were but a few yards from him, when he suddenly kneeled and pretended to adjust the wrappings of his sandals - wrappings, which, by the way, he was not at all sure that he had adjusted as their makers had intended them to be adjusted. He was still kneeling when the soldiers came abreast of him. Like the others he had passed they paid no attention to him and the moment they

were behind him he continued upon his way, turning to the right at the intersection of the two streets.

The street he now took was, at this point, so extremely winding that, for the most part, it received no benefit from the flares at either corner, so that he was forced practically to grope his way in the dense shadows of the arcade. The street became a little straighter just before he reached the next flare, and as he came within sight of it he saw silhouetted against a patch of light the figure of a lion. The beast was coming slowly down the street in Tarzan's direction.

A woman crossed the way directly in front of it and the lion paid no attention

to her, nor she to the lion. An instant later a little child ran after the woman and so close did he run before the lion that the beast was forced to turn out of its way a step to avoid colliding with the little one. The ape-man grinned and crossed quickly to the opposite side of the street, for his delicate senses indicated that at this point the breeze stirring through the city streets and deflected by the opposite wall would now blow from the lion toward him as the beast passed, whereas if he remained upon the side of the street upon which he had been walking when he discovered the carnivore, his scent would have been borne to the nostrils of the animal, and Tarzan was sufficiently jungle-wise to

realize that while he might deceive the eyes of man and beast he could not so easily disguise from the nostrils of one of the great cats that he was a creature of a different species from the inhabitants of the city, the only human beings, possibly, that Numa was familiar with. In him the cat would recognize a stranger, and, therefore, an enemy, and Tarzan had no desire to be delayed by an encounter with a savage lion. His ruse worked successfully, the lion passing him with not more than a side glance in his direction.

He had proceeded for some little distance and had about reached a point where he judged he would find the street which led up from the city gate when, at

an intersection of two streets, his nostrils caught the scent spoor of the girl. Out of a maze of other scent spoors the ape-man picked the familiar odor of the girl and, a second later, that of Smith-Oldwick. He had been forced to accomplish it, however, by bending very low at each street intersection in repeated attention to his sandal wrappings, bringing his nostrils as close to the pavement as possible.

As he advanced along the street through which the two had been conducted earlier in the day he noted, as had they, the change in the type of buildings as he passed from a residence district into that portion occupied by shops and bazaars. Here the number of

flares was increased so that they appeared not only at street intersections but midway between as well, and there were many more people abroad. The shops were open and lighted, for with the setting of the sun the intense heat of the day had given place to a pleasant coolness. Here also the number of lions, roaming loose through the thoroughfares, increased, and also for the first time Tarzan noted the idiosyncrasies of the people.

Once he was nearly upset by a naked man running rapidly through the street screaming at the top of his voice. And again he nearly stumbled over a woman who was making her way in the shadows of one of the arcades upon all fours. At

first the ape-man thought she was hunting for something she had dropped, but as he drew to one side to watch her, he saw that she was doing nothing of the kind—that she had merely elected to walk upon her hands and knees rather than erect upon her feet. In another block he saw two creatures struggling upon the roof of an adjacent building until finally one of them, wrenching himself free from the grasp of the other, gave his adversary a mighty push which hurled him to the pavement below, where he lay motionless upon the dusty road. For an instant a wild shriek re-echoed through the city from the lungs of the victor and then, without an instant's hesitation, the fellow leaped headfirst to the street

beside the body of his victim. A lion moved out from the dense shadows of a doorway and approached the two bloody and lifeless things before him. Tarzan wondered what effect the odor of blood would have upon the beast and was surprised to see that the animal only sniffed at the corpses and the hot red blood and then lay down beside the two dead men.

He had passed the lion but a short distance when his attention was called to the figure of a man lowering himself laboriously from the roof of a building upon the east side of the thoroughfare. Tarzan's curiosity was aroused.

21. IN THE ALCOVE

As Smith-Oldwick realized that he was alone and practically defenseless in an enclosure filled with great lions he was, in his weakened condition, almost in a state verging upon hysterical terror. Clinging to the grating for support he dared not turn his head in the direction of the beasts behind him. He felt his knees giving weakly beneath him. Something within his head spun rapidly around. He became very dizzy and nauseated and then suddenly all went black before his eyes as his limp body collapsed at the foot of the grating.

How long he lay there unconscious he never knew; but as reason slowly reasserted itself in his semi-conscious

state he was aware that he lay in a cool bed upon the whitest of linen in a bright and cheery room, and that upon one side close to him was an open window, the delicate hangings of which were fluttering in a soft summer breeze which blew in from a sun-kissed orchard of ripening fruit which he could see without—an old orchard in which soft, green grass grew between the laden trees, and where the sun filtered through the foliage; and upon the dappled greensward a little child was playing with a frolicsome puppy.

"God," thought the man, "what a horrible nightmare I have passed through!" and then he felt a hand stroking his brow and cheek—a cool and gentle

hand that smoothed away his troubled recollections. For a long minute Smith-Oldwick lay in utter peace and content until gradually there was forced upon his sensibilities the fact that the hand had become rough, and that it was no longer cool but hot and moist; and suddenly he opened his eyes and looked up into the face of a huge lion.

Lieutenant Harold Percy Smith-Oldwick was not only an English gentleman and an officer in name, he was also what these implied—a brave man; but when he realized that the sweet picture he had looked upon was but the figment of a dream, and that in reality he still lay where he had fallen at the foot of the grating with a lion standing over

him licking his face, the tears sprang to his eyes and ran down his cheeks. Never, he thought, had an unkind fate played so cruel a joke upon a human being.

For some time he lay feigning death while the lion, having ceased to lick him, sniffed about his body. There are some things than which death is to be preferred; and there came at last to the Englishman the realization that it would be better to die swiftly than to lie in this horrible predicament until his mind broke beneath the strain and he went mad.

And so, deliberately and without haste, he rose, clinging to the grating for support. At his first move the lion

growled, but after that he paid no further attention to the man, and when at last Smith-Oldwick had regained his feet the lion moved indifferently away. Then it was that the man turned and looked about the enclosure.

Sprawled beneath the shade of the trees and lying upon the long bench beside the south wall the great beasts rested, with the exception of two or three who moved restlessly about. It was these that the man feared and yet when two more of them had passed him by he began to feel reassured, recalling the fact that they were accustomed to the presence of man.

And yet he dared not move from the grating. As the man examined his

surroundings he noted that the branches of one of the trees near the further wall spread close beneath an open window. If he could reach that tree and had strength to do so, he could easily climb out upon the branch and escape, at least, from the enclosure of the lions. But in order to reach the tree he must pass the full length of the enclosure, and at the very bole of the tree itself two lions lay sprawled out in slumber.

For half an hour the man stood gazing longingly at this seeming avenue of escape, and at last, with a muttered oath, he straightened up and throwing back his shoulders in a gesture of defiance, he walked slowly and deliberately down the center of the courtyard. One of the

prowling lions turned from the side wall and moved toward the center directly in the man's path, but Smith-Oldwick was committed to what he considered his one chance, for even temporary safety, and so he kept on, ignoring the presence of the beast. The lion slouched to his side and sniffed him and then, growling, he bared his teeth.

Smith-Oldwick drew the pistol from his shirt. "If he has made up his mind to kill me," he thought. "I can't see that it will make any difference in the long run whether I infuriate him or not. The beggar can't kill me any deader in one mood than another."

But with the man's movement in withdrawing the weapon from his shirt

the lion's attitude suddenly altered and though he still growled he turned and sprang away, and then at last the Englishman stood almost at the foot of the tree that was his goal, and between him and safety sprawled a sleeping lion.

Above him was a limb that ordinarily he could have leaped for and reached with ease; but weak from his wounds and loss of blood he doubted his ability to do so now. There was even a question as to whether he would be able to ascend the tree at all. There was just one chance: the lowest branch left the bole within easy reach of a man standing on the ground close to the tree's stem, but to reach a position where the branch would be accessible he must step over the body

of a lion. Taking a deep breath he placed one foot between the sprawled legs of the beast and gingerly raised the other to plant it upon the opposite side of the tawny body. "What," he thought, "if the beggar should happen to wake now?" The suggestion sent a shudder through his frame but he did not hesitate or withdraw his foot. Gingerly he planted it beyond the lion, threw his weight forward upon it and cautiously brought his other foot to the side of the first. He had passed and the lion had not awakened.

Smith-Oldwick was weak from loss of blood and the hardships he had undergone, but the realization of his situation impelled him to a show of

agility and energy which he probably could scarcely have equaled when in possession of his normal strength. With his life depending upon the success of his efforts, he swung himself quickly to the lower branches of the tree and scrambled upward out of reach of possible harm from the lions below - though the sudden movement in the branches above them awakened both the sleeping beasts. The animals raised their heads and looked questioningly up for a moment and then lay back again to resume their broken slumber.

So easily had the Englishman succeeded thus far that he suddenly began to question as to whether he had at any time been in real danger. The lions,

as he knew, were accustomed to the presence of men, but yet they were still lions and he was free to admit that he breathed more easily now that he was safe above their clutches.

Before him lay the open window he had seen from the ground. He was now on a level with it and could see an apparently unoccupied chamber beyond, and toward this he made his way along a stout branch that swung beneath the opening. It was not a difficult feat to reach the window, and a moment later he drew himself over the sill and dropped into the room.

He found himself in a rather spacious apartment, the floor of which was covered with rugs of barbaric design,

while the few pieces of furniture were of a similar type to that which he had seen in the room on the first floor into which he and Bertha Kircher had been ushered at the conclusion of their journey. At one end of the room was what appeared to be a curtained alcove, the heavy hangings of which completely hid the interior. In the wall opposite the window and near the alcove was a closed door, apparently the only exit from the room.

He could see, in the waning light without, that the close of the day was fast approaching, and he hesitated while he deliberated the advisability of waiting until darkness had fallen, or of immediately searching for some means

of escape from the building and the city. He at last decided that it would do no harm to investigate beyond the room, that he might have some idea as how best to plan his escape after dark. To this end he crossed the room toward the door but he had taken only a few steps when the hangings before the alcove separated and the figure of a woman appeared in the opening.

She was young and beautifully formed; the single drapery wound around her body from below her breasts left no detail of her symmetrical proportions unrevealed, but her face was the face of an imbecile. At sight of her Smith-Oldwick halted, momentarily expecting that his presence would elicit

screams for help from her. On the contrary she came toward him smiling, and when she was close her slender, shapely fingers touched the sleeve of his torn blouse as a curious child might handle a new toy, and still with the same smile she examined him from head to foot, taking in, in childish wonderment, every detail of his apparel.

Presently she spoke to him in a soft, well-modulated voice which contrasted sharply with her facial appearance. The voice and the girlish figure harmonized perfectly and seemed to belong to each other, while the head and face were those of another creature. Smith-Oldwick could understand no word of what she said, but nevertheless he spoke

to her in his own cultured tone, the effect of which upon her was evidently most gratifying, for before he realized her intentions or could prevent her she had thrown both arms about his neck and was kissing him with the utmost abandon.

The man tried to free himself from her rather surprising attentions, but she only clung more tightly to him, and suddenly, as he recalled that he had always heard that one must humor the mentally deficient, and at the same time seeing in her a possible agency of escape, he dosed his eyes and returned her embraces.

It was at this juncture that the door opened and a man entered. With the

sound from the first movement of the latch, Smith-Oldwick opened his eyes, but though he endeavored to disengage himself from the girl he realized that the newcomer had seen their rather compromising position. The girl, whose back was toward the door, seemed at first not to realize that someone had entered, but when she did she turned quickly and as her eyes fell upon the man whose terrible face was now distorted with an expression of hideous rage she turned, screaming, and fled toward the alcove. The Englishman, flushed and embarrassed, stood where she had left him. With the sudden realization of the futility of attempting an explanation, came that of the menacing appearance of

the man, whom he now recognized as the official who had received them in the room below. The fellow's face, livid with insane rage and, possibly, jealousy, was twitching violently, accentuating the maniacal expression that it habitually wore.

For a moment he seemed paralyzed by anger, and then with a loud shriek that rose into an uncanny wail, he drew his curved saber and sprang toward the Englishman. To Smith-Oldwick there seemed no possible hope of escaping the keen-edged weapon in the hands of the infuriated man, and though he felt assured that it would draw down upon him an equally sudden and possibly more terrible death, he did the only thing

that remained for him to do— drew his pistol and fired straight for the heart of the oncoming man. Without even so much as a groan the fellow lunged forward upon the floor at Smith-Oldwick's feet—killed instantly with a bullet through the heart. For several seconds the silence of the tomb reigned in the apartment.

The Englishman, standing over the prostrate figure of the dead man, watched the door with drawn weapon, expecting momentarily to hear the rush of feet of those whom he was sure would immediately investigate the report of the pistol. But no sounds came from below to indicate that anyone there had heard the explosion, and presently the man's

attention was distracted from the door to the alcove, between the hangings of which the face of the girl appeared. The eyes were widely dilated and the lower jaw dropped in an expression of surprise and awe.

The girl's gaze was riveted upon the figure upon the floor, and presently she crept stealthily into the room and tiptoed toward the corpse. She appeared as though constantly poised for flight, and when she had come to within two or three feet of the body she stopped and, looking up at Smith-Oldwick, voiced some interrogation which he could not, of course, understand. Then she came close to the side of the dead man and kneeling upon the floor felt gingerly of

the body.

Presently she shook the corpse by the shoulder, and then with a show of strength which her tenderly girlish form belied, she turned the body over on its back. If she had been in doubt before, one glance at the hideous features set in death must have convinced her that life was extinct, and with the realization there broke from her lips peal after peal of mad, maniacal laughter as with her little hands she beat upon the upturned face and breast of the dead man. It was a gruesome sight from which the Englishman involuntarily drew back-a gruesome, disgusting sight such as, he realized, might never be witnessed outside a madhouse or this frightful city.

In the midst of her frenzied rejoicing at the death of the man, and Smith-Oldwick could attribute her actions to no other cause, she suddenly desisted from her futile attacks upon the insensate flesh and, leaping to her feet, ran quickly to the door, where she shot a wooden bolt into its socket, thus securing them from interference from without. Then she returned to the center of the room and spoke rapidly to the Englishman, gesturing occasionally toward the body of the slain man. When he could not understand, she presently became provoked and in a sudden hysteria of madness she rushed forward as though to strike the Englishman. Smith-Oldwick dropped back a few steps and leveled

his pistol upon her. Mad though she must have been, she evidently was not so mad but what she had connected the loud report, the diminutive weapon, and the sudden death of the man in whose house she dwelt, for she instantly desisted and quite as suddenly as it had come upon her, her homicidal mood departed.

Again the vacuous, imbecile smile took possession of her features, and her voice, dropping its harshness, resumed the soft, well-modulated tones with which she had first addressed him. Now she attempted by signs to indicate her wishes, and motioning Smith- Oldwick to follow her she went to the hangings and opening them disclosed the alcove. It was rather more than an alcove, being

a fair- sized room heavy with rugs and hangings and soft, pillowed couches. Turning at the entrance she pointed to the corpse upon the floor of the outer room, and then crossing the alcove she raised some draperies which covered a couch and fell to the floor upon all sides, disclosing an opening beneath the furniture.

To this opening she pointed and then again to the corpse, indicating plainly to the Englishman that it was her desire that the body be hidden here. But if he had been in doubt, she essayed to dispel it by grasping his sleeve and urging him in the direction of the body which the two of them then lifted and half carried and half dragged into the alcove. At first they

encountered some difficulty when they endeavored to force the body of the man into the small space she had selected for it, but eventually they succeeded in doing so. Smith-Oldwick was again impressed by the fiendish brutality of the girl. In the center of the room lay a blood-stained rug which the girl quickly gathered up and draped over a piece of furniture in such a way that the stain was hidden. By rearranging the other rugs and by bringing one from the alcove she restored the room to order so no outward indication of the tragedy so recently enacted there was apparent.

These things attended to, and the hangings draped once more about the couch that they might hide the gruesome

thing beneath, the girl once more threw her arms about the Englishman's neck and dragged him toward the soft and luxurious pillows above the dead man. Acutely conscious of the horror of his position, filled with loathing, disgust, and an outraged sense of decency, Smith-Oldwick was also acutely alive to the demands of self-preservation. He felt that he was warranted in buying his life at almost any price; but there was a point at which his finer nature rebelled.

It was at this juncture that a loud knock sounded upon the door of the outer room. Springing from the couch, the girl seized the man by the arm and dragged him after her to the wall close by the head of the couch. Here she drew back

one of the hangings, revealing a little niche behind, into which she shoved the Englishman and dropped the hangings before him, effectually hiding him from observation from the rooms beyond.

He heard her cross the alcove to the door of the outer room, and heard the bolt withdrawn followed by the voice of a man mingled with that of the girl. The tones of both seemed rational so that he might have been listening to an ordinary conversation in some foreign tongue. Yet with the gruesome experiences of the day behind him, he could not but momentarily expect some insane outbreak from beyond the hangings.

He was aware from the sounds that the two had entered the alcove, and,

prompted by a desire to know what manner of man he might next have to contend with, he slightly parted the heavy folds that hid the two from his view and looking out saw them sitting on the couch with their arms about each other, the girl with the same expressionless smile upon her face that she had vouchsafed him. He found he could so arrange the hangings that a very narrow slit between two of them permitted him to watch the actions of those in the alcove without revealing himself or increasing his liability of detection.

He saw the girl lavishing her kisses upon the newcomer, a much younger man than he whom Smith-Oldwick had

dispatched. Presently the girl disengaged herself from the embrace of her lover as though struck by a sudden memory. Her brows puckered as in labored thought and then with a startled expression, she threw a glance backward toward the hidden niche where the Englishman stood, after which she whispered rapidly to her companion, occasionally jerking her head in the direction of the niche and on several occasions making a move with one hand and forefinger, which Smith-Oldwick could not mistake as other than an attempt to describe his pistol and its use.

It was evident then to him that she was betraying him, and without further loss of time he turned his back toward

the hangings and commenced a rapid examination of his hiding place. In the alcove the man and the girl whispered, and then cautiously and with great stealth, the man rose and drew his curved saber. On tiptoe he approached the hangings, the girl creeping at his side. Neither spoke now, nor was there any sound in the room as the girl sprang forward and with outstretched arm and pointing finger indicated a point upon the curtain at the height of a man's breast. Then she stepped to one side, and her companion, raising his blade to a horizontal position, lunged suddenly forward and with the full weight of his body and his right arm, drove the sharp point through the hangings and into the

niche behind for its full length.

Bertha Kircher, finding her struggles futile and realizing that she must conserve her strength for some chance opportunity of escape, desisted from her efforts to break from the grasp of Prince Metak as the fellow fled with her through the dimly lighted corridors of the palace. Through many chambers the prince fled, bearing his prize. It was evident to the girl that, though her captor was the king's son, he was not above capture and punishment for his deeds, as otherwise he would not have shown such evident anxiety to escape with her, as well as from the results of his act.

From the fact that he was constantly turning affrighted eyes behind them, and

glancing suspiciously into every nook and corner that they passed, she guessed that the prince's punishment might be both speedy and terrible were he caught.

She knew from their route that they must have doubled back several times although she had quite lost all sense of direction; but she did not know that the prince was as equally confused as she, and that really he was running in an aimless, erratic manner, hoping that he might stumble eventually upon a place of refuge.

Nor is it to be wondered at that this offspring of maniacs should have difficulty in orienting himself in the winding mazes of a palace designed by maniacs for a maniac king. Now a

corridor turned gradually and almost imperceptibly in a new direction, again one doubled back upon and crossed itself; here the floor rose gradually to the level of another story, or again there might be a spiral stairway down which the mad prince rushed dizzily with his burden. Upon what floor they were or in what part of the palace even Metak had no idea until, halting abruptly at a closed door, he pushed it open to step into a brilliantly lighted chamber filled with warriors, at one end of which sat the king upon a great throne; beside this, to the girl's surprise, she saw another throne where was seated a huge lioness, recalling to her the words of Xanila which, at the time, had made no

impression on her: "But he had many other queens, nor were they all human."

At sight of Metak and the girl, the king rose from his throne and started across the chamber, all semblance of royalty vanishing in the maniac's uncontrollable passion. And as he came he shrieked orders and commands at the top of his voice. No sooner had Metak so unwarily opened the door to this hornets' nest than he immediately withdrew and, turning, fled again in a new direction. But now a hundred men were close upon his heels, laughing, shrieking, and possibly cursing. He dodged hither and thither, distancing them for several minutes until, at the bottom of a long runway that inclined steeply downward from a

higher level, he burst into a subterranean apartment lighted by many flares.

In the center of the room was a pool of considerable size, the level of the water being but a few inches below the floor. Those behind the fleeing prince and his captive entered the chamber in time to see Metak leap into the water with the girl and disappear beneath the surface taking his captive with him, nor, though they waited excitedly around the rim of the pool, did either of the two again emerge.

When Smith-Oldwick turned to investigate his hiding place, his hands, groping upon the rear wall, immediately came in contact with the wooden panels of a door and a bolt such as that which

secured the door of the outer room. Cautiously and silently drawing the wooden bar he pushed gently against the panel to find that the door swung easily and noiselessly outward into utter darkness. Moving carefully and feeling forward for each step he passed out of the niche, closing the door behind him.

Peeling about, he discovered that he was in a narrow corridor which he followed cautiously for a few yards to be brought up suddenly by what appeared to be a ladder across the passageway. He felt of the obstruction carefully with his hands until he was assured that it was indeed a ladder and that a solid wall was just beyond it, ending the corridor. Therefore, as he

could not go forward and as the ladder ended at the floor upon which he stood, and as he did not care to retrace his steps, there was no alternative but to climb upward, and this he did, his pistol ready in a side pocket of his blouse.

He had ascended but two or three rungs when his head came suddenly and painfully in contact with a hard surface above him. Groping about with one hand over his head he discovered that the obstacle seemed to be the covering to a trap door in the ceiling which, with a little effort, he succeeded in raising a couple of inches, revealing through the cracks the stars of a clear African night.

With a sigh of relief, but with unabated caution, he gently slid the

trapdoor to one side far enough to permit him to raise his eyes above the level of the roof. A quick glance assured him that there was none near enough to observe his movements, nor, in fact, as far as he could see, was anyone in sight.

Drawing himself quickly through the aperture he replaced the cover and endeavored to regain his bearings. Directly to the south of him the low roof he stood upon adjoined a much loftier portion of the building, which rose several stories above his head. A few yards to the west he could see the flickering light of the flares of a winding street, and toward this he made his way.

From the edge of the roof he looked down upon the night life of the mad city.

He saw men and women and children and lions, and of all that he saw it was quite evident to him that only the lions were sane. With the aid of the stars he easily picked out the points of the compass, and following carefully in his memory the steps that had led him into the city and to the roof upon which he now stood, he knew that the thoroughfare upon which he looked was the same along which he and Bertha Kircher had been led as prisoners earlier in the day.

If he could reach this he might be able to pass undetected in the shadows of the arcade to the city gate. He had already given up as futile the thought of seeking out the girl and attempting to succor her, for he knew that alone and with the few

remaining rounds of ammunition he possessed, he could do nothing against this city- full of armed men. That he could live to cross the lion-infested forest beyond the city was doubtful, and having, by some miracle, won to the desert beyond, his fate would be certainly sealed; but yet he was consumed with but one desire—to leave behind him as far as possible this horrid city of maniacs.

He saw that the roofs rose to the same level as that upon which he stood unbroken to the north to the next street intersection. Directly below him was a flare. To reach the pavement in safety it was necessary that he find as dark a portion of the avenue as possible. And

so he sought along the edge of the roofs for a place where he might descend in comparative concealment.

He had proceeded some little way beyond a point where the street curved abruptly to the east before he discovered a location sufficiently to his liking. But even here he was compelled to wait a considerable time for a satisfactory moment for his descent, which he had decided to make down one of the pillars of the arcade. Each time he prepared to lower himself over the edge of the roofs, footsteps approaching in one direction or another deterred him until at last he had almost come to the conclusion that he would have to wait for the entire city to sleep before continuing his flight.

But finally came a moment which he felt propitious and though with inward qualms, it was with outward calm that he commenced the descent to the street below.

When at last he stood beneath the arcade he was congratulating himself upon the success that had attended his efforts up to this point when, at a slight sound behind him, he turned to see a tall figure in the yellow tunic of a warrior confronting him.

22. OUT OF THE NICHE

Numa, the lion, growled futilely in baffled rage as he slipped back to the ground at the foot of the wall after his unsuccessful attempt to drag down the fleeing ape-man. He poised to make a second effort to follow his escaping quarry when his nose picked up a hitherto unnoticed quality in the scent spoor of his intended prey. Sniffing at the ground that Tarzan's feet had barely touched, Numa's growl changed to a low whine, for he had recognized the scent spoor of the man-thing that had rescued him from the pit of the Wamabos.

What thoughts passed through that massive head? Who may say? But now there was no indication of baffled rage

as the great lion turned and moved majestically eastward along the wall. At the eastern end of the city he turned toward the south, continuing his way to the south side of the wall along which were the pens and corrals where the herbivorous flocks were fattened for the herds of domesticated lions within the city. The great black lions of the forest fed with almost equal impartiality upon the flesh of the grass-eaters and man. Like Numa of the pit they occasionally made excursions across the desert to the fertile valley of the Wamabos, but principally they took their toll of meat from the herds of the walled city of Herog, the mad king, or seized upon some of his luckless subjects.

Numa of the pit was in some respect an exception to the rule which guided his fellows of the forest in that as a cub he had been trapped and carried into the city, where he was kept for breeding purposes, only to escape in his second year. They had tried to teach him in the city of maniacs that he must not eat the flesh of man, and the result of their schooling was that only when aroused to anger or upon that one occasion that he had been impelled by the pangs of hunger, did he ever attack man.

The animal corrals of the maniacs are protected by an outer wall or palisade of upright logs, the lower ends of which are imbedded in the ground, the logs themselves being placed as close

together as possible and further reinforced and bound together by withes. At intervals there are gates through which the flocks are turned on to the grazing land south of the city during the daytime. It is at such times that the black lions of the forest take their greatest toll from the herds, and it is infrequent that a lion attempts to enter the corrals at night. But Numa of the pit, having scented the spoor of his benefactor, was minded again to pass into the walled city, and with that idea in his cunning brain he crept stealthily along the outer side of the palisade, testing each gateway with a padded foot until at last he discovered one which seemed insecurely fastened. Lowering his great head he pressed

against the gate, surging forward with all the weight of his huge body and the strength of his giant sinews—one mighty effort and Numa was within the corral.

The enclosure contained a herd of goats which immediately upon the advent of the carnivore started a mad stampede to the opposite end of the corral which was bounded by the south wall of the city. Numa had been within such a corral as this before, so that he knew that somewhere in the wall was a small door through which the goatherd might pass from the city to his flock; toward this door he made his way, whether by plan or accident it is difficult to say, though in the light of ensuing events it seems possible that the former

was the case.

To reach the gate he must pass directly through the herd which had huddled affrightedly close to the opening so that once again there was a furious rush of hoofs as Numa strode quickly to the side of the portal. If Numa had planned, he had planned well, for scarcely had he reached his position when the door opened and a herder's head was projected into the enclosure, the fellow evidently seeking an explanation of the disturbance among his flock. Possibly he discovered the cause of the commotion, but it is doubtful, for it was dark and the great, taloned paw that reached up and struck downward a mighty blow that almost severed his

head from his body, moved so quickly and silently that the man was dead within a fraction of a second from the moment that he opened the door, and then Numa, knowing now his way, passed through the wall into the dimly lighted streets of the city beyond.

Smith-Oldwick's first thought when he was accosted by the figure in the yellow tunic of a soldier was to shoot the man dead and trust to his legs and the dimly lighted, winding streets to permit his escape, for he knew that to be accosted was equivalent to recapture since no inhabitant of this weird city but would recognize him as an alien. It would be a simple thing to shoot the man from the pocket where the pistol lay without

drawing the weapon, and with this purpose in mind the Englishman slipped his hands into the side pocket of his blouse, but simultaneously with this action his wrist was seized in a powerful grasp and a low voice whispered in English: "Lieutenant, it is I, Tarzan of the Apes."

The relief from the nervous strain under which he had been laboring for so long, left Smith-Oldwick suddenly as weak as a babe, so that he was forced to grasp the ape-man's arm for support—and when he found his voice all he could do was to repeat: "You? You? I thought you were dead!"

"No, not dead," replied Tarzan, "and I see that you are not either. But how

about the girl?"

"I haven't seen her," replied the Englishman, "since we were brought here. We were taken into a building on the plaza close by and there we were separated. She was led away by guards and I was put into a den of lions. I haven't seen her since."

"How did you escape?" asked the ape-man.

"The lions didn't seem to pay much attention to me and I climbed out of the place by way of a tree and through a window into a room on the second floor. Had a little scrimmage there with a fellow and was hidden by one of their women in a hole in the wall. The loony thing then betrayed me to another

bounder who happened in, but I found a way out and up onto the roof where I have been for quite some time now waiting for a chance to get down into the street without being seen. That's all I know, but I haven't the slightest idea in the world where to look for Miss Kircher."

"Where were you going now?" asked Tarzan.

Smith-Oldwick hesitated. "I—well, I couldn't do anything here alone and I was going to try to get out of the city and in some way reach the British forces east and bring help."

"You couldn't do it," said Tarzan. "Even if you got through the forest alive you could never cross the desert country

without food or water."

"What shall we do, then?" asked the Englishman.

"We will see if we can find the girl," replied the ape-man, and then, as though he had forgotten the presence of the Englishman and was arguing to convince himself, "She may be a German and a spy, but she is a woman— a white woman—I can't leave her here."

"But how are we going to find her?" asked the Englishman.

"I have followed her this far," replied Tarzan, "and unless I am greatly mistaken I can follow her still farther."

"But I cannot accompany you in these clothes without exposing us both to detection and arrest," argued Smith-

Oldwick.

"We will get you other clothes, then," said Tarzan.

"How?" asked the Englishman.

"Go back to the roof beside the city wall where I entered," replied the ape-man with a grim smile, "and ask the naked dead man there how I got my disguise."

Smith-Oldwick looked quickly up at his companion. "I have it," he exclaimed. "I know where there is a fellow who doesn't need his clothes anymore, and if we can get back on this roof I think we can find him and get his apparel without much resistance. Only a girl and a young fellow whom we could easily surprise and overcome."

"What do you mean?" asked Tarzan. "How do you know that the man doesn't need his clothes any more."

"I know he doesn't need them," replied the Englishman, "because I killed him."

"Oh!" exclaimed the ape-man, "I see. I guess it might be easier that way than to tackle one of these fellows in the street where there is more chance of our being interrupted."

"But how are we going to reach the roof again, after all?" queried Smith-Oldwick.

"The same way you came down," replied Tarzan. "This roof is low and there is a little ledge formed by the capital of each column; I noticed that

when you descended. Some of the buildings wouldn't have been so easy to negotiate."

Smith-Oldwick looked up toward the eaves of the low roof. "It's not very high," he said, "but I am afraid I can't make it. I'll try—I've been pretty weak since a lion mauled me and the guards beat me up, and too, I haven't eaten since yesterday."

Tarzan thought a moment. "You've got to go with me," he said at last. "I can't leave you here. The only chance you have of escape is through me and I can't go with you now until we have found the girl."

"I want to go with you," replied Smith-Oldwick. "I'm not much good now

but at that two of us may be better than one."

"All right," said Tarzan, "come on," and before the Englishman realized what the other contemplated Tarzan had picked him up and thrown him across his shoulder. "Now, hang on," whispered the ape- man, and with a short run he clambered apelike up the front of the low arcade. So quickly and easily was it done that the Englishman scarcely had time to realize what was happening before he was deposited safely upon the roof.

"There," remarked Tarzan. "Now, lead me to the place you speak of."

Smith-Oldwick had no difficulty in locating the trap in the roof through

which he had escaped. Removing the cover the ape-man bent low, listening and sniffing. "Come," he said after a moment's investigation and lowered himself to the floor beneath. Smith-Oldwick followed him, and together the two crept through the darkness toward the door in the back wall of the niche in which the Englishman had been hidden by the girl. They found the door ajar and opening it Tarzan saw a streak of light showing through the hangings that separated it from the alcove.

Placing his eye close to the aperture he saw the girl and the young man of which the Englishman had spoken seated on opposite sides of a low table upon which food was spread. Serving them

was a giant Negro and it was he whom the ape-man watched most closely. Familiar with the tribal idiosyncrasies of a great number of African tribes over a considerable proportion of the Dark Continent, the Tarmangani at last felt reasonably assured that he knew from what part of Africa this slave had come, and the dialect of his people. There was, however, the chance that the fellow had been captured in childhood and that through long years of non-use his native language had become lost to him, but then there always had been an element of chance connected with nearly every event of Tarzan's life, so he waited patiently until in the performance of his duties the black man approached a little

table which stood near the niche in which Tarzan and the Englishman hid.

As the slave bent over some dish which stood upon the table his ear was not far from the aperture through which Tarzan looked. Apparently from a solid wall, for the Negro had no knowledge of the existence of the niche, came to him in the tongue of his own people, the whispered words: "If you would return to the land of the Wamabo say nothing, but do as I bid you."

The black rolled terrified eyes toward the hangings at his side. The ape-man could see him tremble and for a moment was fearful that in his terror he would betray them. "Fear not," he whispered, "we are your friends."

At last the Negro spoke in a low whisper, scarcely audible even to the keen ears of the ape-man. "What," he asked, "can poor Otobu do for the god who speaks to him out of the solid wall?"

"This," replied Tarzan. "Two of us are coming into this room. Help us prevent this man and woman from escaping or raising an outcry that will bring others to their aid."

"I will help you," replied the Negro, "to keep them within this room, but do not fear that their outcries will bring others. These walls are built so that no sound may pass through, and even if it did what difference would it make in this village which is constantly filled

with the screams of its mad people. Do not fear their cries. No one will notice them. I go to do your bidding."

Tarzan saw the black cross the room to the table upon which he placed another dish of food before the feasters. Then he stepped to a place behind the man and as he did so raised his eyes to the point in the wall from which the ape-man's voice had come to him, as much as to say, "Master, I am ready."

Without more delay Tarzan threw aside the hangings and stepped into the room. As he did so the young man rose from the table to be instantly seized from behind by the black slave. The girl, whose back was toward the ape-man and his companion, was not at first

aware of their presence but saw only the attack of the slave upon her lover, and with a loud scream she leaped forward to assist the latter. Tarzan sprang to her side and laid a heavy hand upon her arm before she could interfere with Otobu's attentions to the young man. At first, as she turned toward the ape-man, her face reflected only mad rage, but almost instantly this changed into the vapid smile with which Smith-Oldwick was already familiar and her slim fingers commenced their soft appraisement of the newcomer.

Almost immediately she discovered Smith-Oldwick but there was neither surprise nor anger upon her countenance. Evidently the poor mad creature knew

but two principal moods, from one to the other of which she changed with lightning-like rapidity.

"Watch her a moment," said Tarzan to the Englishman, "while I disarm that fellow," and stepping to the side of the young man whom Otobu was having difficulty in subduing Tarzan relieved him of his saber. "Tell them," he said to the Negro, "if you speak their language, that we will not harm them if they leave us alone and let us depart in peace."

The black had been looking at Tarzan with wide eyes, evidently not comprehending how this god could appear in so material a form, and with the voice of a white bwana and the uniform of a warrior of this city to which

he quite evidently did not belong. But nevertheless his first confidence in the voice that offered him freedom was not lessened and he did as Tarzan bid him.

"They want to know what you want," said Otobu, after he had spoken to the man and the girl.

"Tell them that we want food for one thing," said Tarzan, "and something else that we know where to find in this room. Take the man's spear, Otobu; I see it leaning against the wall in the corner of the room. And you, Lieutenant, take his saber," and then again to Otobu, "I will watch the man while you go and bring forth that which is beneath the couch over against this wall," and Tarzan indicated the location of the piece of

furniture.

Otobu, trained to obey, did as he was bid. The eyes of the man and the girl followed him, and as he drew back the hangings and dragged forth the corpse of the man Smith-Oldwick had slain, the girl's lover voiced a loud scream and attempted to leap forward to the side of the corpse. Tarzan, however, seized him and then the fellow turned upon him with teeth and nails. It was with no little difficulty that Tarzan finally subdued the man, and while Otobu was removing the outer clothing from the corpse, Tarzan asked the black to question the young man as to his evident excitement at the sight of the body.

"I can tell you Bwana," replied

Otobu. "This man was his father."

"What is he saying to the girl?" asked Tarzan.

"He is asking her if she knew that the body of his father was under the couch. And she is saying that she did not know it."

Tarzan repeated the conversation to Smith-Oldwick, who smiled. "If the chap could have seen her removing all evidence of the crime and arranging the hangings of the couch so that the body was concealed after she had helped me drag it across the room, he wouldn't have very much doubt as to her knowledge of the affair. The rug you see draped over the bench in the corner was arranged to hide the blood stain—in

some ways they are not so loony after all."

The black man had now removed the outer garments from the dead man, and Smith-Oldwick was hastily drawing them on over his own clothing. "And now," said Tarzan, "we will sit down and eat. One accomplishes little on an empty stomach." As they ate the ape-man attempted to carry on a conversation with the two natives through Otobu. He learned that they were in the palace which had belonged to the dead man lying upon the floor beside them. He had held an official position of some nature, and he and his family were of the ruling class but were not members of the court.

When Tarzan questioned them about

Bertha Kircher, the young man said that she had been taken to the king's palace; and when asked why replied: "For the king, of course."

During the conversation both the man and the girl appeared quite rational, even asking some questions as to the country from which their uninvited guests had come, and evidencing much surprise when informed that there was anything but waterless wastes beyond their own valley.

When Otobu asked the man, at Tarzan's suggestion, if he was familiar with the interior of the king's palace, he replied that he was; that he was a friend of Prince Metak, one of the king's sons, and that he often visited the palace and

that Metak also came here to his father's palace frequently. As Tarzan ate he racked his brain for some plan whereby he might utilize the knowledge of the young man to gain entrance to the palace, but he had arrived at nothing which he considered feasible when there came a loud knocking upon the door of the outer room.

For a moment no one spoke and then the young man raised his voice and cried aloud to those without. Immediately Otobu sprang for the fellow and attempted to smother his words by clapping a palm over his mouth.

"What is he saying?" asked Tarzan.

"He is telling them to break down the door and rescue him and the girl from

two strangers who entered and made them prisoners. If they enter they will kill us all."

"Tell him," said Tarzan, "to hold his peace or I will slay him."

Otobu did as he was instructed and the young maniac lapsed into scowling silence. Tarzan crossed the alcove and entered the outer room to note the effect of the assaults upon the door. Smith-Oldwick followed him a few steps, leaving Otobu to guard the two prisoners. The ape-man saw that the door could not long withstand the heavy blows being dealt the panels from without. "I wanted to use that fellow in the other room," he said to Smith-Oldwick, "but I am afraid we will have

to get out of here the way we came. We can't accomplish anything by waiting here and meeting these fellows. From the noise out there there must be a dozen of them. Come," he said, "you go first and I will follow."

As the two turned back from the alcove they witnessed an entirely different scene from that upon which they had turned their backs but a moment or two before. Stretched on the floor and apparently lifeless lay the body of the black slave, while the two prisoners had vanished completely.

23. THE FLIGHT FROM XUJA

As Metak bore Bertha Kircher toward the edge of the pool, the girl at first had no conception of the deed he contemplated but when, as they approached the edge, he did not lessen his speed she guessed the frightful truth. As he leaped head foremost with her into the water, she closed her eyes and breathed a silent prayer, for she was confident that the maniac had no other purpose than to drown himself and her. And yet, so potent is the first law of nature that even in the face of certain death, as she surely believed herself, she clung tenaciously to life, and while she struggled to free herself from the powerful clutches of the madman, she

held her breath against the final moment when the asphyxiating waters must inevitably flood her lungs.

Through the frightful ordeal she maintained absolute control of her senses so that, after the first plunge, she was aware that the man was swimming with her beneath the surface. He took perhaps not more than a dozen strokes directly toward the end wall of the pool and then he arose; and once again she knew that her head was above the surface. She opened her eyes to see that they were in a corridor dimly lighted by gratings set in its roof—a winding corridor, water filled from wall to wall.

Along this the man was swimming with easy powerful strokes, at the same

time holding her chin above the water. For ten minutes he swam thus without stopping and the girl heard him speak to her, though she could not understand what he said, as he evidently immediately realized, for, half floating, he shifted his hold upon her so that he could touch her nose and mouth with the fingers of one hand. She grasped what he meant and immediately took a deep breath, whereat he dove quickly beneath the surface pulling her down with him and again for a dozen strokes or more he swam thus wholly submerged.

When they again came to the surface, Bertha Kircher saw that they were in a large lagoon and that the bright stars were shining high above them, while on

either hand domed and minareted buildings were silhouetted sharply against the starlit sky. Metak swam swiftly to the north side of the lagoon where, by means of a ladder, the two climbed out upon the embankment. There were others in the plaza but they paid but little if any attention to the two bedraggled figures. As Metak walked quickly across the pavement with the girl at his side, Bertha Kircher could only guess at the man's intentions. She could see no way in which to escape and so she went docilely with him, hoping against hope that some fortuitous circumstance might eventually arise that would give her the coveted chance for freedom and life.

Metak led her toward a building which, as she entered, she recognized as the same to which she and Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick had been led when they were brought into the city. There was no man sitting behind the carved desk now, but about the room were a dozen or more warriors in the tunics of the house to which they were attached, in this case white with a small lion in the form of a crest or badge upon the breast and back of each.

As Metak entered and the men recognized him they arose, and in answer to a query he put, they pointed to an arched doorway at the rear of the room. Toward this Metak led the girl, and then, as though filled with a sudden

suspicion, his eyes narrowed cunningly and turning toward the soldiery he issued an order which resulted in their all preceding him through the small doorway and up a flight of stairs a short distance beyond.

The stairway and the corridor above were lighted by small flares which revealed several doors in the walls of the upper passageway. To one of these the men led the prince. Bertha Kircher saw them knock upon the door and heard a voice reply faintly through the thick door to the summons. The effect upon those about her was electrical. Instantly excitement reigned, and in response to orders from the king's son the soldiers commenced to beat heavily upon the

door, to throw their bodies against it and to attempt to hew away the panels with their sabers. The girl wondered at the cause of the evident excitement of her captors.

She saw the door giving to each renewed assault, but what she did not see just before it crashed inward was the figures of the two men who alone, in all the world, might have saved her, pass between the heavy hangings in an adjoining alcove and disappear into a dark corridor.

As the door gave and the warriors rushed into the apartment followed by the prince, the latter became immediately filled with baffled rage, for the rooms were deserted except for the

dead body of the owner of the palace, and the still form of the black slave, Otobu, where they lay stretched upon the floor of the alcove.

The prince rushed to the windows and looked out, but as the suite overlooked the barred den of lions from which, the prince thought, there could be no escape, his puzzlement was only increased. Though he searched about the room for some clue to the whereabouts of its former occupants he did not discover the niche behind the hangings. With the fickleness of insanity he quickly tired of the search, and, turning to the soldiers who had accompanied him from the floor below, dismissed them.

After setting up the broken door as

best they could, the men left the apartment and when they were again alone Metak turned toward the girl. As he approached her, his face distorted by a hideous leer, his features worked rapidly in spasmodic twitches. The girl, who was standing at the entrance of the alcove, shrank back, her horror reflected in her face. Step by step she backed across the room, while the crouching maniac crept stealthily after her with claw-like fingers poised in anticipation of the moment they should leap forth and seize her.

As she passed the body of the Negro, her foot touched some obstacle at her side, and glancing down she saw the spear with which Otobu had been

supposed to hold the prisoners. Instantly she leaned forward and snatched it from the floor with its sharp point directed at the body of the madman. The effect upon Metak was electrical. From stealthy silence he broke into harsh peals of laughter, and drawing his saber danced to and fro before the girl, but whichever way he went the point of the spear still threatened him.

Gradually the girl noticed a change in the tone of the creature's screams that was also reflected in the changing expression upon his hideous countenance. His hysterical laughter was slowly changing into cries of rage while the silly leer upon his face was supplanted by a ferocious scowl and up-

curled lips, which revealed the sharpened fangs beneath.

He now ran rapidly in almost to the spear's point, only to jump away, run a few steps to one side and again attempt to make an entrance, the while he slashed and hewed at the spear with such violence that it was with difficulty the girl maintained her guard, and all the time was forced to give ground step by step. She had reached the point where she was standing squarely against the couch at the side of the room when, with an incredibly swift movement, Metak stooped and grasping a low stool hurled it directly at her head.

She raised the spear to fend off the heavy missile, but she was not entirely

successful, and the impact of the blow carried her backward upon the couch, and instantly Metak was upon her.

Tarzan and Smith-Oldwick gave little thought as to what had become of the other two occupants of the room. They were gone, and so far as these two were concerned they might never return. Tarzan's one desire was to reach the street again, where, now that both of them were in some sort of disguise, they should be able to proceed with comparative safety to the palace and continue their search for the girl.

Smith-Oldwick preceded Tarzan along the corridor and as they reached the ladder he climbed aloft to remove the trap. He worked for a moment and

then, turning, addressed Tarzan.

"Did we replace the cover on this trap when we came down? I don't recall that we did."

"No," said Tarzan, "it was left open."

"So I thought," said Smith-Oldwick, "but it's closed now and locked. I cannot move it. Possibly you can," and he descended the ladder.

Even Tarzan's immense strength, however, had no effect other than to break one of the rungs of the ladder against which he was pushing, nearly precipitating him to the floor below. After the rung broke he rested for a moment before renewing his efforts, and as he stood with his head near the cover of the trap, he distinctly heard voices on

the roof above him.

Dropping down to Oldwick's side he told him what he had heard. "We had better find some other way out," he said, and the two started to retrace their steps toward the alcove. Tarzan was again in the lead, and as he opened the door in the back of the niche, he was suddenly startled to hear, in tones of terror and in a woman's voice, the words: "O God, be merciful" from just beyond the hangings.

Here was no time for cautious investigation and, not even waiting to find the aperture and part the hangings, but with one sweep of a brawny hand dragging them from their support, the ape-man leaped from the niche into the alcove.

At the sound of his entry the maniac looked up, and as he saw at first only a man in the uniform of his father's soldiers, he shrieked forth an angry order, but at the second glance, which revealed the face of the newcomer, the madman leaped from the prostrate form of his victim and, apparently forgetful of the saber which he had dropped upon the floor beside the couch as he leaped to grapple with the girl, closed with bare hands upon his antagonist, his sharp-filed teeth searching for the other's throat.

Metak, the son of Herog, was no weakling. Powerful by nature and rendered still more so in the throes of one of his maniacal fits of fury he was

no mean antagonist, even for the mighty ape-man, and to this a distinct advantage for him was added by the fact that almost at the outset of their battle Tarzan, in stepping backward, struck his heel against the corpse of the man whom Smith-Oldwick had killed, and fell heavily backward to the floor with Metak upon his breast.

With the quickness of a cat the maniac made an attempt to fasten his teeth in Tarzan's jugular, but a quick movement of the latter resulted in his finding a hold only upon the Tarmangani's shoulder. Here he clung while his fingers sought Tarzan's throat, and it was then that the ape-man, realizing the possibility of defeat, called to Smith-Oldwick to take

the girl and seek to escape.

The Englishman looked questioningly at Bertha Kircher, who had now risen from the couch, shaking and trembling. She saw the question in his eyes and with an effort she drew herself to her full height. "No," she cried, "if he dies here I shall die with him. Go if you wish to. You can do nothing here, but I—I cannot go."

Tarzan had now regained his feet, but the maniac still clung to him tenaciously. The girl turned suddenly to Smith-Oldwick. "Your pistol!" she cried. "Why don't you shoot him?"

The man drew the weapon from his pocket and approached the two antagonists, but by this time they were

moving so rapidly that there was no opportunity for shooting one without the danger of hitting the other. At the same time Bertha Kircher circled about them with the prince's saber, but neither could she find an opening. Again and again the two men fell to the floor, until presently Tarzan found a hold upon the other's throat, against which contingency Metak had been constantly battling, and slowly, as the giant fingers closed, the other's mad eyes protruded from his livid face, his jaws gaped and released their hold upon Tarzan's shoulder, and then in a sudden excess of disgust and rage the ape-man lifted the body of the prince high above his head and with all the strength of his great arms hurled it

across the room and through the window where it fell with a sickening thud into the pit of lions beneath.

As Tarzan turned again toward his companions, the girl was standing with the saber still in her hand and an expression upon her face that he never had seen there before. Her eyes were wide and misty with unshed tears, while her sensitive lips trembled as though she were upon the point of giving way to some pent emotion which her rapidly rising and falling bosom plainly indicated she was fighting to control.

"If we are going to get out of here," said the ape-man, "we can't lose any time. We are together at last and nothing can be gained by delay. The question

now is the safest way. The couple who escaped us evidently departed through the passageway to the roof and secured the trap against us so that we are cut off in that direction. What chance have we below? You came that way," and he turned toward the girl.

"At the foot of the stairs," she said, "is a room full of armed men. I doubt if we could pass that way."

It was then that Otobu raised himself to a sitting posture. "So you are not dead after all," exclaimed the ape-man. "Come, how badly are you hurt?"

The Negro rose gingerly to his feet, moved his arms and legs and felt of his head.

"Otobu does not seem to be hurt at all,

Bwana," he replied, "only for a great ache in his head."

"Good," said the ape-man. "You want to return to the Wamabo country?"

"Yes, Bwana."

"Then lead us from the city by the safest way."

"There is no safe way," replied the black, "and even if we reach the gates we shall have to fight. I can lead you from this building to a side street with little danger of meeting anyone on the way. Beyond that we must take our chance of discovery. You are all dressed as are the people of this wicked city so perhaps we may pass unnoticed, but at the gate it will be a different matter, for none is permitted to leave the city at

night."

"Very well," replied the ape-man, "let us be on our way."

Otobu led them through the broken door of the outer room, and part way down the corridor he turned into another apartment at the right. This they crossed to a passageway beyond, and, finally, traversing several rooms and corridors, he led them down a flight of steps to a door which opened directly upon a side street in rear of the palace.

Two men, a woman, and a black slave were not so extraordinary a sight upon the streets of the city as to arouse comment. When passing beneath the flares the three Europeans were careful to choose a moment when no chance

pedestrian might happen to get a view of their features, but in the shadow of the arcades there seemed little danger of detection. They had covered a good portion of the distance to the gate without mishap when there came to their ears from the central portion of the city sounds of a great commotion.

"What does that mean?" Tarzan asked of Otobu, who was now trembling violently.

"Master," he replied, "they have discovered that which has happened in the palace of Veza, mayor of the city. His son and the girl escaped and summoned soldiers who have now doubtless discovered the body of Veza."

"I wonder," said Tarzan, "if they have

discovered the party I threw through the window."

Bertha Kircher, who understood enough of the dialect to follow their conversation, asked Tarzan if he knew that the man he had thrown from the window was the king's son. The ape-man laughed. "No," he said, "I did not. That rather complicates matters—at least if they have found him."

Suddenly there broke above the turmoil behind them the clear strains of a bugle. Otobu increased his pace. "Hurry, Master," he cried, "it is worse than I had thought."

"What do you mean?" asked Tarzan.

"For some reason the king's guard and the king's lions are being called out. I

fear, O Bwana, that we cannot escape them. But why they should be called out for us I do not know."

But if Otobu did not know, Tarzan at least guessed that they had found the body of the king's son. Once again the notes of the bugle rose high and clear upon the night air. "Calling more lions?" asked Tarzan.

"No, Master," replied Otobu. "It is the parrots they are calling."

They moved on rapidly in silence for a few minutes when their attention was attracted by the flapping of the wings of a bird above them. They looked up to discover a parrot circling about over their heads.

"Here are the parrots, Otobu," said

Tarzan with a grin. "Do they expect to kill us with parrots?"

The Negro moaned as the bird darted suddenly ahead of them toward the city wall. "Now indeed are we lost, Master," cried the black. "The bird that found us has flown to the gate to warn the guard."

"Come, Otobu, what are you talking about?" exclaimed Tarzan irritably. "Have you lived among these lunatics so long that you are yourself mad?"

"No, Master," replied Otobu. "I am not mad. You do not know them. These terrible birds are like human beings without hearts or souls. They speak the language of the people of this city of Xuja. They are demons, Master, and when in sufficient numbers they might

even attack and kill us."

"How far are we from the gate?" asked Tarzan.

"We are not very far," replied the Negro. "Beyond this next turn we will see it a few paces ahead of us. But the bird has reached it before us and by now they are summoning the guard," the truth of which statement was almost immediately indicated by sounds of many voices raised evidently in commands just ahead of them, while from behind came increased evidence of approaching pursuit—loud screams and the roars of lions.

A few steps ahead a narrow alley opened from the east into the thoroughfare they were following and as

they approached it there emerged from its dark shadows the figure of a mighty lion. Otobu halted in his tracks and shrank back against Tarzan. "Look, Master," he whimpered, "a great black lion of the forest!"

Tarzan drew the saber which still hung at his side. "We cannot go back," he said. "Lions, parrots, or men, it must be all the same," and he moved steadily forward in the direction of the gate. What wind was stirring in the city street moved from Tarzan toward the lion and when the ape-man had approached to within a few yards of the beast, who had stood silently eyeing them up to this time, instead of the expected roar, a whine broke from the beast's throat. The

ape-man was conscious of a very decided feeling of relief. "It's Numa of the pit," he called back to his companions, and to Otobu, "Do not fear, this lion will not harm us."

Numa moved forward to the ape-man's side and then turning, paced beside him along the narrow street. At the next turn they came in sight of the gate, where, beneath several flares, they saw a group of at least twenty warriors prepared to seize them, while from the opposite direction the roars of the pursuing lions sounded close upon them, mingling with the screams of numerous parrots which now circled about their heads. Tarzan halted and turned to the young aviator. "How many rounds of

ammunition have you left?" he asked.

"I have seven in the pistol," replied Smith-Oldwick, "and perhaps a dozen more cartridges in my blouse pocket."

"I'm going to rush them," said Tarzan. "Otobu, you stay at the side of the woman. Oldwick, you and I will go ahead, you upon my left. I think we need not try to tell Numa what to do," for even then the great lion was baring his fangs and growling ferociously at the guardsmen, who appeared uneasy in the face of this creature which, above all others, they feared.

"As we advance, Oldwick," said the ape-man, "fire one shot. It may frighten them, and after that fire only when necessary. All ready? Let's go!" and he

moved forward toward the gate. At the same time, Smith-Oldwick discharged his weapon and a yellow-coated warrior screamed and crumpled forward upon his face. For a minute the others showed symptoms of panic but one, who seemed to be an officer, rallied them. "Now," said Tarzan, "all together!" and he started at a run for the gate. Simultaneously the lion, evidently scenting the purpose of the Tarmangani, broke into a full charge toward the guard.

Shaken by the report of the unfamiliar weapon, the ranks of the guardsmen broke before the furious assault of the great beast. The officer screamed forth a volley of commands in a mad fury of

uncontrolled rage but the guardsmen, obeying the first law of nature as well as actuated by their inherent fear of the black denizen of the forest scattered to right and left to elude the monster. With ferocious growls Numa wheeled to the right, and with raking talons struck right and left among a little handful of terrified guardsmen who were endeavoring to elude him, and then Tarzan and Smith-Oldwick closed with the others.

For a moment their most formidable antagonist was the officer in command. He wielded his curved saber as only an adept might as he faced Tarzan, to whom the similar weapon in his own hand was most unfamiliar. Smith-Oldwick could

not fire for fear of hitting the ape- man when suddenly to his dismay he saw Tarzan's weapon fly from his grasp as the Xujan warrior neatly disarmed his opponent. With a scream the fellow raised his saber for the final cut that would terminate the earthly career of Tarzan of the Apes when, to the astonishment of both the ape-man and Smith-Oldwick, the fellow stiffened rigidly, his weapon dropped from the nerveless fingers of his upraised hand, his mad eyes rolled upward and foam flecked his bared lip. Gasping as though in the throes of strangulation the fellow pitched forward at Tarzan's feet.

Tarzan stooped and picked up the dead man's weapon, a smile upon his

face as he turned and glanced toward the young Englishman.

"The fellow is an epileptic," said Smith-Oldwick. "I suppose many of them are. Their nervous condition is not without its good points—a normal man would have gotten you."

The other guardsmen seemed utterly demoralized at the loss of their leader. They were huddled upon the opposite side of the street at the left of the gate, screaming at the tops of their voices and looking in the direction from which sounds of reinforcements were coming, as though urging on the men and lions that were already too close for the comfort of the fugitives. Six guardsmen still stood with their backs against the

gate, their weapons flashing in the light of the flares and their parchment-like faces distorted in horrid grimaces of rage and terror.

Numa had pursued two fleeing warriors down the street which paralleled the wall for a short distance at this point. The ape-man turned to Smith-Oldwick. "You will have to use your pistol now," he said, "and we must get by these fellows at once;" and as the young Englishman fired, Tarzan rushed in to close quarters as though he had not already discovered that with the saber he was no match for these trained swordsmen. Two men fell to Smith-Oldwick's first two shots and then he missed, while the four remaining

divided, two leaping for the aviator and two for Tarzan.

The ape-man rushed in in an effort to close with one of his antagonists where the other's saber would be comparatively useless. Smith-Oldwick dropped one of his assailants with a bullet through the chest and pulled his trigger on the second, only to have the hammer fall futilely upon an empty chamber. The cartridges in his weapon were exhausted and the warrior with his razor-edged, gleaming saber was upon him.

Tarzan raised his own weapon but once and that to divert a vicious cut for his head. Then he was upon one of his assailants and before the fellow could

regain his equilibrium and leap back after delivering his cut, the ape-man had seized him by the neck and crotch. Tarzan's other antagonist was edging around to one side where he might use his weapon, and as he raised the blade to strike at the back of the Tarmangani's neck, the latter swung the body of his comrade upward so that it received the full force of the blow. The blade sank deep into the body of the warrior, eliciting a single frightful scream, and then Tarzan hurled the dying man in the face of his final adversary.

Smith-Oldwick, hard pressed and now utterly defenseless, had given up all hope in the instant that he realized his weapon was empty, when, from his left,

a living bolt of black-maned ferocity shot past him to the breast of his opponent. Down went the Xujan, his face bitten away by one snap of the powerful jaws of Numa of the pit.

In the few seconds that had been required for the consummation of these rapidly ensuing events, Otobu had dragged Bertha Kircher to the gate which he had unbarred and thrown open, and with the vanquishing of the last of the active guardsmen, the party passed out of the maniac city of Xuja into the outer darkness beyond. At the same moment a half dozen lions rounded the last turn in the road leading back toward the plaza, and at sight of them Numa of the pit wheeled and charged. For a

moment the lions of the city stood their ground, but only for a moment, and then before the black beast was upon them, they turned and fled, while Tarzan and his party moved rapidly toward the blackness of the forest beyond the garden.

"Will they follow us out of the city?" Tarzan asked Otobu.

"Not at night," replied the black. "I have been a slave here for five years but never have I known these people to leave the city by night. If they go beyond the forest in the daytime they usually wait until the dawn of another day before they return, as they fear to pass through the country of the black lions after dark. No, I think, Master, that they

will not follow us tonight, but tomorrow they will come, and, O Bwana, then will they surely get us, or those that are left of us, for at least one among us must be the toll of the black lions as we pass through their forest."

As they crossed the garden, Smith-Oldwick refilled the magazine of his pistol and inserted a cartridge in the chamber. The girl moved silently at Tarzan's left, between him and the aviator. Suddenly the ape-man stopped and turned toward the city, his mighty frame, clothed in the yellow tunic of Herog's soldiery, plainly visible to the others beneath the light of the stars. They saw him raise his head and they heard break from his lips the plaintive note of

a lion calling to his fellows. Smith-Oldwick felt a distinct shudder pass through his frame, while Otobu, rolling the whites of his eyes in terrified surprise, sank tremblingly to his knees. But the girl thrilled and she felt her heart beat in a strange exultation, and then she drew nearer to the beast-man until her shoulder touched his arm. The act was involuntary and for a moment she scarce realized what she had done, and then she stepped silently back, thankful that the light of the stars was not sufficient to reveal to the eyes of her companions the flush which she felt mantling her cheek. Yet she was not ashamed of the impulse that had prompted her, but rather of the act itself which she knew, had Tarzan

noticed it, would have been repulsive to him.

From the open gate of the city of maniacs came the answering cry of a lion. The little group waited where they stood until presently they saw the majestic proportions of the black lion as he approached them along the trail. When he had rejoined them Tarzan fastened the fingers of one hand in the black mane and started on once more toward the forest. Behind them, from the city, rose a bedlam of horrid sounds, the roaring of lions mingling with the raucous voices of the screaming parrots and the mad shrieks of the maniacs. As they entered the Stygian darkness of the forest the girl once again involuntarily

shrank closer to the ape-man, and this time Tarzan was aware of the contact.

Himself without fear, he yet instinctively appreciated how terrified the girl must be. Actuated by a sudden kindly impulse he found her hand and took it in his own and thus they continued upon their way, groping through the blackness of the trail. Twice they were approached by forest lions, but upon both occasions the deep growls of Numa of the pit drove off their assailants. Several times they were compelled to rest, for Smith-Oldwick was constantly upon the verge of exhaustion, and toward morning Tarzan was forced to carry him on the steep ascent from the bed of the valley.

24. THE TOMMIES

Daylight overtook them after they had entered the gorge, but, tired as they all were with the exception of Tarzan, they realized that they must keep on at all costs until they found a spot where they might ascend the precipitous side of the gorge to the floor of the plateau above. Tarzan and Otobu were both equally confident that the Xujans would not follow them beyond the gorge, but though they scanned every inch of the frowning cliffs upon either hand noon came and there was still no indication of any avenue of escape to right or left. There were places where the ape-man alone might have negotiated the ascent but none where the others could hope

successfully to reach the plateau, nor where Tarzan, powerful and agile as he was, could have ventured safely to carry them aloft.

For half a day the ape-man had been either carrying or supporting Smith-Oldwick and now, to his chagrin, he saw that the girl was faltering. He had realized well how much she had undergone and how greatly the hardships and dangers and the fatigue of the past weeks must have told upon her vitality. He saw how bravely she attempted to keep up, yet how often she stumbled and staggered as she labored through the sand and gravel of the gorge. Nor could he help but admire her fortitude and the uncomplaining effort she was making to

push on.

The Englishman must have noticed her condition too, for some time after noon, he stopped suddenly and sat down in the sand. "It's no use," he said to Tarzan. "I can go no farther. Miss Kircher is rapidly weakening. You will have to go on without me."

"No," said the girl, "we cannot do that. We have all been through so much together and the chances of our escape are still so remote that whatever comes, let us remain together, unless," and she looked up at Tarzan, "you, who have done so much for us to whom you are under no obligations, will go on without us. I for one wish that you would. It must be as evident to you as it is to me that

you cannot save us, for though you succeeded in dragging us from the path of our pursuers, even your great strength and endurance could never take one of us across the desert waste which lies between here and the nearest fertile country."

The ape-man returned her serious look with a smile. "You are not dead," he said to her, "nor is the lieutenant, nor Otobu, nor myself. One is either dead or alive, and until we are dead we should plan only upon continuing to live. Because we remain here and rest is no indication that we shall die here. I cannot carry you both to the country of the Wamabos, which is the nearest spot at which we may expect to find game

and water, but we shall not give up on that account. So far we have found a way. Let us take things as they come. Let us rest now because you and Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick need the rest, and when you are stronger we will go on again."

"But the Xujans -?" she asked, "may they not follow us here?"

"Yes," he said, "they probably will. But we need not be concerned with them until they come."

"I wish," said the girl, "that I possessed your philosophy but I am afraid it is beyond me."

"You were not born and reared in the jungle by wild beasts and among wild beasts, or you would possess, as I do, the fatalism of the jungle."

And so they moved to the side of the gorge beneath the shade of an overhanging rock and lay down in the hot sand to rest. Numa wandered restlessly to and fro and finally, after sprawling for a moment close beside the ape-man, rose and moved off up the gorge to be lost to view a moment later beyond the nearest turn.

For an hour the little party rested and then Tarzan suddenly rose and, motioning the others to silence, listened. For a minute he stood motionless, his keen ears acutely receptive to sounds so faint and distant that none of the other three could detect the slightest break in the utter and deathlike quiet of the gorge. Finally the ape- man relaxed and turned

toward them. "What is it?" asked the girl.

"They are coming," he replied. "They are yet some distance away, though not far, for the sandaled feet of the men and the pads of the lions make little noise upon the soft sands."

"What shall we do—try to go on?" asked Smith-Oldwick. "I believe I could make a go of it now for a short way. I am much rested. How about you Miss Kircher?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "I am much stronger. Yes, surely I can go on."

Tarzan knew that neither of them quite spoke the truth, that people do not recover so quickly from utter exhaustion, but he saw no other way and there was

always the hope that just beyond the next turn would be a way out of the gorge.

"You help the lieutenant, Otobu," he said, turning to the black, "and I will carry Miss Kircher," and though the girl objected, saying that he must not waste his strength, he lifted her lightly in his arms and moved off up the canyon, followed by Otobu and the Englishman. They had gone no great distance when the others of the party became aware of the sounds of pursuit, for now the lions were whining as though the fresh scent spoor of their quarry had reached their nostrils.

"I wish that your Numa would return," said the girl.

"Yes," said Tarzan, "but we shall

have to do the best we can without him. I should like to find some place where we can barricade ourselves against attack from all sides. Possibly then we might hold them off. Smith-Oldwick is a good shot and if there are not too many men he might be able to dispose of them provided they can only come at him one at a time. The lions don't bother me so much. Sometimes they are stupid animals, and I am sure that these that pursue us, and who are so dependent upon the masters that have raised and trained them, will be easily handled after the warriors are disposed of."

"You think there is some hope, then?" she asked.

"We are still alive," was his only

answer.

"There," he said presently, "I thought I recalled this very spot." He pointed toward a fragment that had evidently fallen from the summit of the cliff and which now lay imbedded in the sand a few feet from the base. It was a jagged fragment of rock which rose some ten feet above the surface of the sand, leaving a narrow aperture between it and the cliff behind. Toward this they directed their steps and when finally they reached their goal they found a space about two feet wide and ten feet long between the rock and the cliff. To be sure it was open at both ends but at least they could not be attacked upon all sides at once.

They had scarcely concealed themselves before Tarzan's quick ears caught a sound upon the face of the cliff above them, and looking up he saw a diminutive monkey perched upon a slight projection—an ugly-faced little monkey who looked down upon them for a moment and then scampered away toward the south in the direction from which their pursuers were coming. Otobu had seen the monkey too. "He will tell the parrots," said the black, "and the parrots will tell the madmen."

"It is all the same," replied Tarzan; "the lions would have found us here. We could not hope to hide from them."

He placed Smith-Oldwick, with his pistol, at the north opening of their haven

and told Otobu to stand with his spear at the Englishman's shoulder, while he himself prepared to guard the southern approach. Between them he had the girl lie down in the sand. "You will be safe there in the event that they use their spears," he said.

The minutes that dragged by seemed veritable eternities to Bertha Kircher and then at last, and almost with relief, she knew that the pursuers were upon them. She heard the angry roaring of the lions and the cries of the madmen. For several minutes the men seemed to be investigating the stronghold which their quarry had discovered. She could hear them both to the north and south and then from where she lay she saw a lion

charging for the ape-man before her. She saw the giant arm swing back with the curved saber and she saw it fall with terrific velocity and meet the lion as he rose to grapple with the man, cleaving his skull as cleanly as a butcher opens up a sheep.

Then she heard footsteps running rapidly toward Smith-Oldwick and, as his pistol spoke, there was a scream and the sound of a falling body. Evidently disheartened by the failure of their first attempt the assaulters drew off, but only for a short time. Again they came, this time a man opposing Tarzan and a lion seeking to overcome Smith-Oldwick. Tarzan had cautioned the young Englishman not to waste his cartridges

upon the lions and it was Otobu with the Xujan spear who met the beast, which was not subdued until both he and Smith-Oldwick had been mauled, and the latter had succeeded in running the point of the saber the girl had carried, into the beast's heart. The man who opposed Tarzan inadvertently came too close in an attempt to cut at the ape-man's head, with the result that an instant later his corpse lay with the neck broken upon the body of the lion.

Once again the enemy withdrew, but again only for a short time, and now they came in full force, the lions and the men, possibly a half dozen of each, the men casting their spears and the lions waiting just behind, evidently for the signal to

charge.

"Is this the end?" asked the girl.

"No," cried the ape-man, "for we still live!"

The words had scarcely passed his lips when the remaining warriors, rushing in, cast their spears simultaneously from both sides. In attempting to shield the girl, Tarzan received one of the shafts in the shoulder, and so heavily had the weapon been hurled that it bore him backward to the ground. Smith-Oldwick fired his pistol twice when he too was struck down, the weapon entering his right leg midway between hip and knee. Only Otobu remained to face the enemy, for the Englishman, already weak from his

wounds and from the latest mauling he had received at the claws of the lion, had lost consciousness as he sank to the ground with this new hurt.

As he fell his pistol dropped from his fingers, and the girl, seeing, snatched it up. As Tarzan struggled to rise, one of the warriors leaped full upon his breast and bore him back as, with fiendish shrieks, he raised the point of his saber above the other's heart. Before he could drive it home the girl leveled Smith-Oldwick's pistol and fired point-blank at the fiend's face.

Simultaneously there broke upon the astonished ears of both attackers and attacked a volley of shots from the gorge. With the sweetness of the voice

of an angel from heaven the Europeans heard the sharp-barked commands of an English noncom. Even above the roars of the lions and the screams of the maniacs, those beloved tones reached the ears of Tarzan and the girl at the very moment that even the ape-man had given up the last vestige of hope.

Rolling the body of the warrior to one side Tarzan struggled to his feet, the spear still protruding from his shoulder. The girl rose too, and as Tarzan wrenched the weapon from his flesh and stepped out from behind the concealment of their refuge, she followed at his side. The skirmish that had resulted in their rescue was soon over. Most of the lions escaped but all of the pursuing Xujans

had been slain. As Tarzan and the girl came into full view of the group, a British Tommy leveled his rifle at the ape-man. Seeing the fellow's actions and realizing instantly the natural error that Tarzan's yellow tunic had occasioned the girl sprang between him and the soldier. "Don't shoot," she cried to the latter, "we are both friends."

"Hold up your hands, you, then," he commanded Tarzan. "I ain't taking no chances with any duffer with a yellow shirt."

At this juncture the British sergeant who had been in command of the advance guard approached and when Tarzan and the girl spoke to him in English, explaining their disguises, he

accepted their word, since they were evidently not of the same race as the creatures which lay dead about them. Ten minutes later the main body of the expedition came into view. Smith-Oldwick's wounds were dressed, as well as were those of the ape-man, and in half an hour they were on their way to the camp of their rescuers.

That night it was arranged that the following day Smith-Oldwick and Bertha Kircher should be transported to British headquarters near the coast by aeroplane, the two planes attached to the expeditionary force being requisitioned for the purpose. Tarzan and Otobu declined the offers of the British captain to accompany his force overland on the

return march as Tarzan explained that his country lay to the west, as did Otobu's, and that they would travel together as far as the country of the Wamabos.

"You are not going back with us, then?" asked the girl.

"No," replied the ape-man. "My home is upon the west coast. I will continue my journey in that direction."

She cast appealing eyes toward him. "You will go back into that terrible jungle?" she asked. "We shall never see you again?"

He looked at her a moment in silence. "Never," he said, and without another word turned and walked away.

In the morning Colonel Capell came from the base camp in one of the planes

that was to carry Smith-Oldwick and the girl to the east. Tarzan was standing some distance away as the ship landed and the officer descended to the ground. He saw the colonel greet his junior in command of the advance detachment, and then he saw him turn toward Bertha Kircher who was standing a few paces behind the captain. Tarzan wondered how the German spy felt in this situation, especially when she must know that there was one there who knew her real status. He saw Colonel Capell walk toward her with outstretched hands and smiling face and, although he could not hear the words of his greeting, he saw that it was friendly and cordial to a degree.

Tarzan turned away scowling, and if any had been close by they might have heard a low growl rumble from his chest. He knew that his country was at war with Germany and that not only his duty to the land of his fathers, but also his personal grievance against the enemy people and his hatred of them, demanded that he expose the girl's perfidy, and yet he hesitated, and because he hesitated he growled—not at the German spy but at himself for his weakness.

He did not see her again before she entered a plane and was borne away toward the east. He bid farewell to Smith-Oldwick and received again the oft-repeated thanks of the young Englishman. And then he saw him too

borne aloft in the high circling plane and watched until the ship became a speck far above the eastern horizon to disappear at last high in air.

The Tommies, their packs and accouterments slung, were waiting the summons to continue their return march. Colonel Capell had, through a desire to personally observe the stretch of country between the camp of the advance detachment and the base, decided to march back his troops. Now that all was in readiness for departure he turned to Tarzan. "I wish you would come back with us, Greystoke," he said, "and if my appeal carries no inducement possibly that of Smith- Oldwick 'and the young lady who just left us may. They asked me

to urge you to return to civilization."

"No;" said Tarzan, "I shall go my own way. Miss Kircher and Lieutenant Smith-Oldwick were only prompted by a sense of gratitude in considering my welfare."

"Miss Kircher?" exclaimed Capell and then he laughed, "You know her then as Bertha Kircher, the German spy?"

Tarzan looked at the other a moment in silence. It was beyond him to conceive that a British officer should thus laconically speak of an enemy spy whom he had had within his power and permitted to escape. "Yes," he replied, "I knew that she was Bertha Kircher, the German spy?"

"Is that all you knew?" asked Capell.

"That is all," said the ape-man.

"She is the Honorable Patricia Canby," said Capell, "one of the most valuable members of the British Intelligence Service attached to the East African forces. Her father and I served in India together and I have known her ever since she was born.

"Why, here's a packet of papers she took from a German officer and has been carrying it through all her vicissitudes-single-minded in the performance of her duty. Look! I haven't yet had time to examine them but as you see here is a military sketch map, a bundle of reports, and the diary of one Hauptmann Fritz Schneider."

"The diary of Hauptmann Fritz

Schneider!" repeated Tarzan in a constrained voice. "May I see it, Capell? He is the man who murdered Lady Greystoke."

The Englishman handed the little volume over to the other without a word. Tarzan ran through the pages quickly looking for a certain date—the date that the horror had been committed—and when he found it he read rapidly. Suddenly a gasp of incredulity burst from his lips. Capell looked at him questioningly.

"God!" exclaimed the ape-man. "Can this be true? Listen!" and he read an excerpt from the closely written page:

"'Played a little joke on the English pig. When he comes home he will find

the burned body of his wife in her boudoir-but he will only think it is his wife. Had von Goss substitute the body of a dead Negress and char it after putting Lady Greystoke's rings on it—Lady G will be of more value to the High Command alive than dead.'"

"She lives!" cried Tarzan.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Capell. "And now?"

"I will return with you, of course. How terribly I have wronged Miss Canby, but how could I know? I even told Smith-Oldwick, who loves her, that she was a German spy.

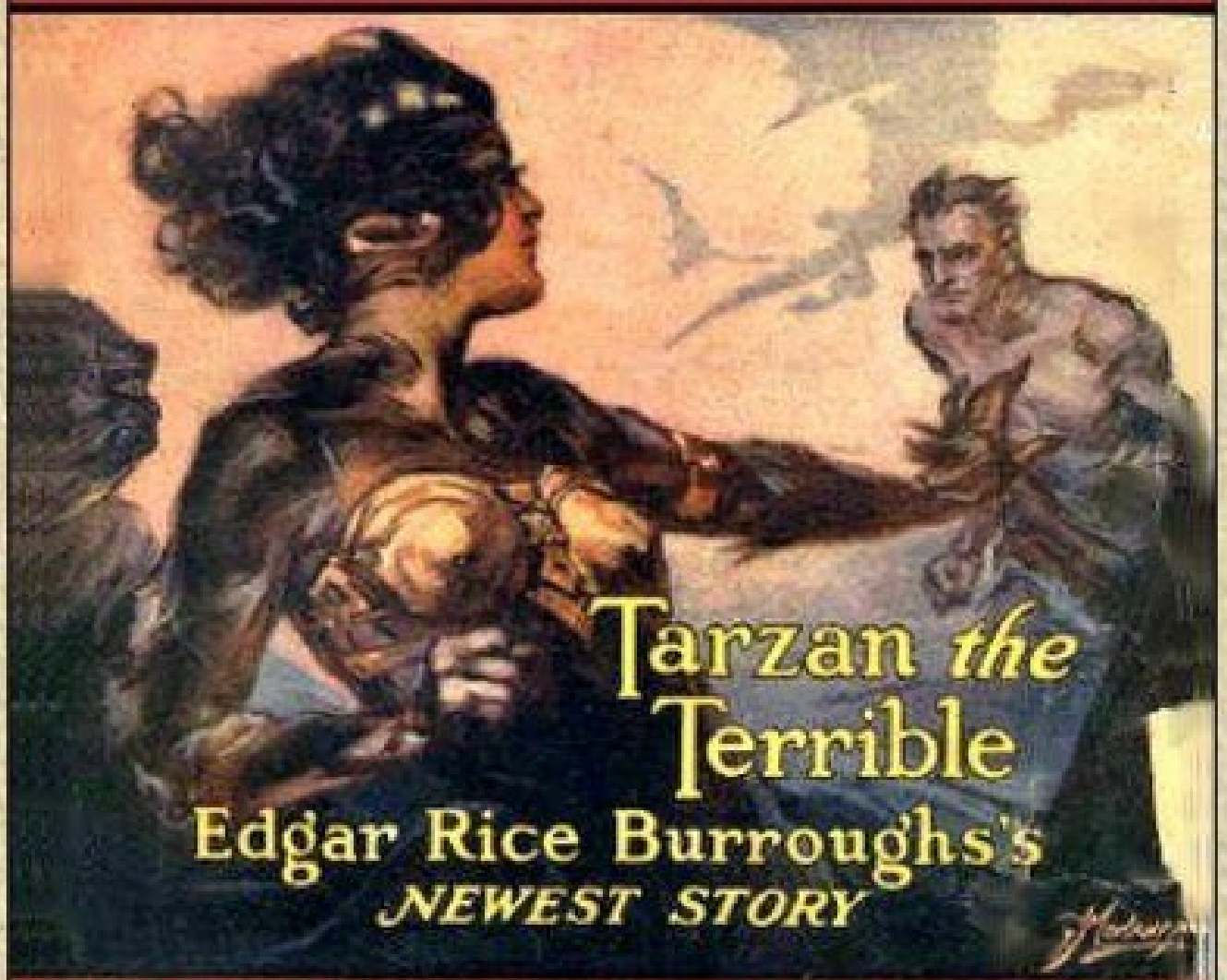
"Not only must I return to find my wife but I must right this wrong."

"Don't worry about that," said Capell,

"she must have convinced him that she is no enemy spy, for just before they left this morning he told me she had promised to marry him."

THE END

ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY



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EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN THE TERRIBLE

BOOK 8 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. THE PITHECANTHROPUS

Silent as the shadows through which he moved, the great beast slunk through the midnight jungle, his yellow-green eyes round and staring, his sinewy tail undulating behind him, his head lowered and flattened, and every muscle vibrant to the thrill of the hunt. The jungle moon dappled an occasional clearing which the great cat was always careful to avoid. Though he moved through thick verdure across a carpet of innumerable twigs, broken branches, and leaves, his passing gave forth no sound that might have been apprehended by dull human ears.

Apparently less cautious was the hunted thing moving even as silently as the lion a hundred paces ahead of the tawny carnivore, for instead of skirting the moon-splashed natural clearings it passed directly across them, and by the tortuous record of its spoor it might indeed be guessed that it sought these avenues of least resistance, as well it might, since, unlike its grim stalker, it walked erect upon two feet—it walked upon two feet and was hairless except for a black thatch upon its head; its arms were well shaped and muscular; its hands powerful and slender with long tapering fingers and thumbs reaching almost to the first joint of the index fingers. Its legs too were shapely but its

feet departed from the standards of all races of men, except possibly a few of the lowest races, in that the great toes protruded at right angles from the foot.

Pausing momentarily in the full light of the gorgeous African moon the creature turned an attentive ear to the rear and then, his head lifted, his features might readily have been discerned in the moonlight. They were strong, clean cut, and regular—features that would have attracted attention for their masculine beauty in any of the great capitals of the world. But was this thing a man? It would have been hard for a watcher in the trees to have decided as the lion's prey resumed its way across the silver tapestry that Luna had laid

upon the floor of the dismal jungle, for from beneath the loin cloth of black fur that girdled its thighs there depended a long hairless, white tail.

In one hand the creature carried a stout club, and suspended at its left side from a shoulder belt was a short, sheathed knife, while a cross belt supported a pouch at its right hip. Confining these straps to the body and also apparently supporting the loin cloth was a broad girdle which glittered in the moonlight as though encrusted with virgin gold, and was clasped in the center of the belly with a huge buckle of ornate design that scintillated as with precious stones.

Closer and closer crept Numa, the

lion, to his intended victim, and that the latter was not entirely unaware of his danger was evidenced by the increasing frequency with which he turned his ear and his sharp black eyes in the direction of the cat upon his trail. He did not greatly increase his speed, a long swinging walk where the open places permitted, but he loosened the knife in its scabbard and at all times kept his club in readiness for instant action.

Forging at last through a narrow strip of dense jungle vegetation the man-thing broke through into an almost treeless area of considerable extent. For an instant he hesitated, glancing quickly behind him and then up at the security of the branches of the great trees waving

overhead, but some greater urge than fear or caution influenced his decision apparently, for he moved off again across the little plain leaving the safety of the trees behind him. At greater or less intervals leafy sanctuaries dotted the grassy expanse ahead of him and the route he took, leading from one to another, indicated that he had not entirely cast discretion to the winds. But after the second tree had been left behind the distance to the next was considerable, and it was then that Numa walked from the concealing cover of the jungle and, seeing his quarry apparently helpless before him, raised his tail stiffly erect and charged.

Two months—two long, weary

months filled with hunger, with thirst, with hardships, with disappointment, and, greater than all, with gnawing pain - had passed since Tarzan of the Apes learned from the diary of the dead German captain that his wife still lived. A brief investigation in which he was enthusiastically aided by the Intelligence Department of the British East African Expedition revealed the fact that an attempt had been made to keep Lady Jane in hiding in the interior, for reasons of which only the German High Command might be cognizant.

In charge of Lieutenant Obergatz and a detachment of native German troops she had been sent across the border into the Congo Free State.

Starting out alone in search of her, Tarzan had succeeded in finding the village in which she had been incarcerated only to learn that she had escaped months before, and that the German officer had disappeared at the same time. From there on the stories of the chiefs and the warriors whom he quizzed, were vague and often contradictory. Even the direction that the fugitives had taken Tarzan could only guess at by piecing together bits of fragmentary evidence gleaned from various sources.

Sinister conjectures were forced upon him by various observations which he made in the village. One was incontrovertible proof that these people

were man-eaters; the other, the presence in the village of various articles of native German uniforms and equipment. At great risk and in the face of surly objection on the part of the chief, the ape-man made a careful inspection of every hut in the village from which at least a little ray of hope resulted from the fact that he found no article that might have belonged to his wife.

Leaving the village he had made his way toward the southwest, crossing, after the most appalling hardships, a vast waterless steppe covered for the most part with dense thorn, coming at last into a district that had probably never been previously entered by any white man and which was known only in the legends of

the tribes whose country bordered it. Here were precipitous mountains, well-watered plateaus, wide plains, and vast swampy morasses, but neither the plains, nor the plateaus, nor the mountains were accessible to him until after weeks of arduous effort he succeeded in finding a spot where he might cross the morasses—a hideous stretch infested by venomous snakes and other larger dangerous reptiles. On several occasions he glimpsed at distances or by night what might have been titanic reptilian monsters, but as there were hippopotami, rhinoceri, and elephants in great numbers in and about the marsh he was never positive that the forms he saw were not of these.

When at last he stood upon firm ground after crossing the morasses he realized why it was that for perhaps countless ages this territory had defied the courage and hardihood of the heroic races of the outer world that had, after innumerable reverses and unbelievable suffering penetrated to practically every other region, from pole to pole.

From the abundance and diversity of the game it might have appeared that every known species of bird and beast and reptile had sought here a refuge wherein they might take their last stand against the encroaching multitudes of men that had steadily spread themselves over the surface of the earth, wresting the hunting grounds from the lower

orders, from the moment that the first ape shed his hair and ceased to walk upon his knuckles. Even the species with which Tarzan was familiar showed here either the results of a divergent line of evolution or an unaltered form that had been transmitted without variation for countless ages.

Too, there were many hybrid strains, not the least interesting of which to Tarzan was a yellow and black striped lion. Smaller than the species with which Tarzan was familiar, but still a most formidable beast, since it possessed in addition to sharp saber-like canines the disposition of a devil. To Tarzan it presented evidence that tigers had once roamed the jungles of Africa,

possibly giant saber-tooths of another epoch, and these apparently had crossed with lions with the resultant terrors that he occasionally encountered at the present day.

The true lions of this new, Old World differed but little from those with which he was familiar; in size and conformation they were almost identical, but instead of shedding the leopard spots of cubhood, they retained them through life as definitely marked as those of the leopard.

Two months of effort had revealed no slightest evidence that she he sought had entered this beautiful yet forbidding land. His investigation, however, of the cannibal village and his questioning of

other tribes in the neighborhood had convinced him that if Lady Jane still lived it must be in this direction that he seek her, since by a process of elimination he had reduced the direction of her flight to only this possibility. How she had crossed the morass he could not guess and yet something within seemed to urge upon him belief that she had crossed it, and that if she still lived it was here that she must be sought. But this unknown, untraversed wild was of vast extent; grim, forbidding mountains blocked his way, torrents tumbling from rocky fastnesses impeded his progress, and at every turn he was forced to match wits and muscles with the great carnivora that he might procure

sustenance.

Time and again Tarzan and Numa stalked the same quarry and now one, now the other bore off the prize. Seldom however did the ape-man go hungry for the country was rich in game animals and birds and fish, in fruit and the countless other forms of vegetable life upon which the jungle-bred man may subsist.

Tarzan often wondered why in so rich a country he found no evidences of man and had at last come to the conclusion that the parched, thorn-covered steppe and the hideous morasses had formed a sufficient barrier to protect this country effectively from the inroads of mankind.

After days of searching he had

succeeded finally in discovering a pass through the mountains and, coming down upon the opposite side, had found himself in a country practically identical with that which he had left. The hunting was good and at a water hole in the mouth of a canon where it debouched upon a tree-covered plain Bara, the deer, fell an easy victim to the ape-man's cunning.

It was just at dusk. The voices of great four-footed hunters rose now and again from various directions, and as the canon afforded among its trees no comfortable retreat the ape-man shouldered the carcass of the deer and started downward onto the plain. At its opposite side rose lofty trees —a great

forest which suggested to his practiced eye a mighty jungle. Toward this the ape-man bent his step, but when midway of the plain he discovered standing alone such a tree as best suited him for a night's abode, swung lightly to its branches and, presently, a comfortable resting place.

Here he ate the flesh of Bara and when satisfied carried the balance of the carcass to the opposite side of the tree where he deposited it far above the ground in a secure place. Returning to his crotch he settled himself for sleep and in another moment the roars of the lions and the howlings of the lesser cats fell upon deaf ears.

The usual noises of the jungle

composed rather than disturbed the ape-man but an unusual sound, however imperceptible to the awakened ear of civilized man, seldom failed to impinge upon the consciousness of Tarzan, however deep his slumber, and so it was that when the moon was high a sudden rush of feet across the grassy carpet in the vicinity of his tree brought him to alert and ready activity. Tarzan does not awaken as you and I with the weight of slumber still upon his eyes and brain, for did the creatures of the wild awaken thus, their awakenings would be few. As his eyes snapped open, clear and bright, so, clear and bright upon the nerve centers of his brain, were registered the various perceptions of all his senses.

Almost beneath him, racing toward his tree was what at first glance appeared to be an almost naked white man, yet even at the first instant of discovery the long, white tail projecting rearward did not escape the ape-man. Behind the fleeing figure, escaping, came Numa, the lion, in full charge. Voiceless the prey, voiceless the killer; as two spirits in a dead world the two moved in silent swiftness toward the culminating tragedy of this grim race.

Even as his eyes opened and took in the scene beneath him—even in that brief instant of perception, followed reason, judgment, and decision, so rapidly one upon the heels of the other that almost simultaneously the ape-man

was in mid-air, for he had seen a white-skinned creature cast in a mold similar to his own, pursued by Tarzan's hereditary enemy. So close was the lion to the fleeing man-thing that Tarzan had no time carefully to choose the method of his attack. As a diver leaps from the springboard headforemost into the waters beneath, so Tarzan of the Apes dove straight for Numa, the lion; naked in his right hand the blade of his father that so many times before had tasted the blood of lions.

A raking talon caught Tarzan on the side, inflicting a long, deep wound and then the ape-man was on Numa's back and the blade was sinking again and again into the savage side. Nor was the

man-thing either longer fleeing, or idle. He too, creature of the wild, had sensed on the instant the truth of the miracle of his saving, and turning in his tracks, had leaped forward with raised bludgeon to Tarzan's assistance and Numa's undoing. A single terrific blow upon the flattened skull of the beast laid him insensible and then as Tarzan's knife found the wild heart a few convulsive shudders and a sudden relaxation marked the passing of the carnivore.

Leaping to his feet the ape-man placed his foot upon the carcass of his kill and, raising his face to Goro, the moon, voiced the savage victory cry that had so often awakened the echoes of his native jungle.

As the hideous scream burst from the ape-man's lips the man- thing stepped quickly back as in sudden awe, but when Tarzan returned his hunting knife to its sheath and turned toward him the other saw in the quiet dignity of his demeanor no cause for apprehension.

For a moment the two stood appraising each other, and then the man-thing spoke. Tarzan realized that the creature before him was uttering articulate sounds which expressed in speech, though in a language with which Tarzan was unfamiliar, the thoughts of a man possessing to a greater or less extent the same powers of reason that he possessed. In other words, that though the creature before him had the tail and

thumbs and great toes of a monkey, it was, in all other respects, quite evidently a man.

The blood, which was now flowing down Tarzan's side, caught the creature's attention. From the pocket-pouch at his side he took a small bag and approaching Tarzan indicated by signs that he wished the ape-man to lie down that he might treat the wound, whereupon, spreading the edges of the cut apart, he sprinkled the raw flesh with powder from the little bag. The pain of the wound was as nothing to the exquisite torture of the remedy but, accustomed to physical suffering, the ape-man withstood it stoically and in a few moments not only had the bleeding

ceased but the pain as well.

In reply to the soft and far from unpleasant modulations of the other's voice, Tarzan spoke in various tribal dialects of the interior as well as in the language of the great apes, but it was evident that the man understood none of these. Seeing that they could not make each other understood, the pithecanthropus advanced toward Tarzan and placing his left hand over his own heart laid the palm of his right hand over the heart of the ape-man. To the latter the action appeared as a form of friendly greeting and, being versed in the ways of uncivilized races, he responded in kind as he realized it was doubtless intended that he should. His action

seemed to satisfy and please his new-found acquaintance, who immediately fell to talking again and finally, with his head tipped back, sniffed the air in the direction of the tree above them and then suddenly pointing toward the carcass of Bara, the deer, he touched his stomach in a sign language which even the densest might interpret. With a wave of his hand Tarzan invited his guest to partake of the remains of his savage repast, and the other, leaping nimbly as a little monkey to the lower branches of the tree, made his way quickly to the flesh, assisted always by his long, strong sinuous tail.

The pithecanthropus ate in silence, cutting small strips from the deer's loin with his keen knife. From his crotch in

the tree Tarzan watched his companion, noting the preponderance of human attributes which were doubtless accentuated by the paradoxical thumbs, great toes, and tail.

He wondered if this creature was representative of some strange race or if, what seemed more likely, but an atavism. Either supposition would have seemed preposterous enough did he not have before him the evidence of the creature's existence. There he was, however, a tailed man with distinctly arboreal hands and feet. His trappings, gold encrusted and jewel studded, could have been wrought only by skilled artisans; but whether they were the work of this individual or of others like him,

or of an entirely different race, Tarzan could not, of course, determine.

His meal finished, the guest wiped his fingers and lips with leaves broken from a nearby branch, looked up at Tarzan with a pleasant smile that revealed a row of strong white teeth, the canines of which were no longer than Tarzan's own, spoke a few words which Tarzan judged were a polite expression of thanks and then sought a comfortable place in the tree for the night.

The earth was shadowed in the darkness which precedes the dawn when Tarzan was awakened by a violent shaking of the tree in which he had found shelter. As he opened his eyes he saw that his companion was also astir, and

glancing around quickly to apprehend the cause of the disturbance, the ape-man was astounded at the sight which met his eyes.

The dim shadow of a colossal form reared close beside the tree and he saw that it was the scraping of the giant body against the branches that had awakened him. That such a tremendous creature could have approached so closely without disturbing him filled Tarzan with both wonderment and chagrin. In the gloom the ape-man at first conceived the intruder to be an elephant; yet, if so, one of greater proportions than any he had ever before seen, but as the dim outlines became less indistinct he saw on a line with his eyes and twenty feet

above the ground the dim silhouette of a grotesquely serrated back that gave the impression of a creature whose each and every spinal vertebra grew a thick, heavy horn. Only a portion of the back was visible to the ape-man, the rest of the body being lost in the dense shadows beneath the tree, from whence there now arose the sound of giant jaws powerfully crunching flesh and bones. From the odors that rose to the ape-man's sensitive nostrils he presently realized that beneath him was some huge reptile feeding upon the carcass of the lion that had been slain there earlier in the night.

As Tarzan's eyes, straining with curiosity, bored futilely into the dark shadows he felt a light touch upon his

shoulder, and, turning, saw that his companion was attempting to attract his attention. The creature, pressing a forefinger to his own lips as to enjoin silence, attempted by pulling on Tarzan's arm to indicate that they should leave at once.

Realizing that he was in a strange country, evidently infested by creatures of titanic size, with the habits and powers of which he was entirely unfamiliar, the ape-man permitted himself to be drawn away. With the utmost caution the pithecanthropus descended the tree upon the opposite side from the great nocturnal prowler, and, closely followed by Tarzan, moved silently away through the night across the

plain.

The ape-man was rather loath thus to relinquish an opportunity to inspect a creature which he realized was probably entirely different from anything in his past experience; yet he was wise enough to know when discretion was the better part of valor and now, as in the past, he yielded to that law which dominates the kindred of the wild, preventing them from courting danger uselessly, whose lives are sufficiently filled with danger in their ordinary routine of feeding and mating.

As the rising sun dispelled the shadows of the night, Tarzan found himself again upon the verge of a great forest into which his guide plunged,

taking nimbly to the branches of the trees through which he made his way with the celerity of long habitude and hereditary instinct, but though aided by a prehensile tail, fingers, and toes, the man-thing moved through the forest with no greater ease or surety than did the giant ape-man.

It was during this journey that Tarzan recalled the wound in his side inflicted upon him the previous night by the raking talons of Numa, the lion, and examining it was surprised to discover that not only was it painless but along its edges were no indications of inflammation, the results doubtless of the antiseptic powder his strange companion had sprinkled upon it.

They had proceeded for a mile or two when Tarzan's companion came to earth upon a grassy slope beneath a great tree whose branches overhung a clear brook. Here they drank and Tarzan discovered the water to be not only deliciously pure and fresh but of an icy temperature that indicated its rapid descent from the lofty mountains of its origin.

Casting aside his loin cloth and weapons Tarzan entered the little pool beneath the tree and after a moment emerged, greatly refreshed and filled with a keen desire to breakfast. As he came out of the pool he noticed his companion examining him with a puzzled expression upon his face. Taking the ape-man by the shoulder he turned

him around so that Tarzan's back was toward him and then, touching the end of Tarzan's spine with his forefinger, he curled his own tail up over his shoulder and, wheeling the ape-man about again, pointed first at Tarzan and then at his own caudal appendage, a look of puzzlement upon his face, the while he jabbered excitedly in his strange tongue.

The ape-man realized that probably for the first time his companion had discovered that he was tailless by nature rather than by accident, and so he called attention to his own great toes and thumbs to further impress upon the creature that they were of different species.

The fellow shook his head dubiously

as though entirely unable to comprehend why Tarzan should differ so from him but at last, apparently giving the problem up with a shrug, he laid aside his own harness, skin, and weapons and entered the pool.

His ablutions completed and his meager apparel redonned he seated himself at the foot of the tree and motioning Tarzan to a place beside him, opened the pouch that hung at his right side taking from it strips of dried flesh and a couple of handfuls of thin- shelled nuts with which Tarzan was unfamiliar. Seeing the other break them with his teeth and eat the kernel, Tarzan followed the example thus set him, discovering the meat to be rich and well flavored. The

dried flesh also was far from unpalatable, though it had evidently been jerked without salt, a commodity which Tarzan imagined might be rather difficult to obtain in this locality.

As they ate Tarzan's companion pointed to the nuts, the dried meat, and various other nearby objects, in each instance repeating what Tarzan readily discovered must be the names of these things in the creature's native language. The ape-man could but smile at this evident desire upon the part of his new-found acquaintance to impart to him instructions that eventually might lead to an exchange of thoughts between them. Having already mastered several languages and a multitude of dialects the

ape-man felt that he could readily assimilate another even though this appeared one entirely unrelated to any with which he was familiar.

So occupied were they with their breakfast and the lesson that neither was aware of the beady eyes glittering down upon them from above; nor was Tarzan cognizant of any impending danger until the instant that a huge, hairy body leaped full upon his companion from the branches above them.

2. "TO THE DEATH!"

In the moment of discovery Tarzan saw that the creature was almost a counterpart of his companion in size and conformation, with the exception that his body was entirely clothed with a coat of shaggy black hair which almost concealed his features, while his harness and weapons were similar to those of the creature he had attacked. Ere Tarzan could prevent the creature had struck the ape- man's companion a blow upon the head with his knotted club that felled him, unconscious, to the earth; but before he could inflict further injury upon his defenseless prey the ape-man had closed with him.

Instantly Tarzan realized that he was

locked with a creature of almost superhuman strength. The sinewy fingers of a powerful hand sought his throat while the other lifted the bludgeon above his head. But if the strength of the hairy attacker was great, great too was that of his smooth-skinned antagonist. Swinging a single terrific blow with clenched fist to the point of the other's chin, Tarzan momentarily staggered his assailant and then his own fingers closed upon the shaggy throat, as with the other hand he seized the wrist of the arm that swung the club. With equal celerity he shot his right leg behind the shaggy brute and throwing his weight forward hurled the thing over his hip heavily to the ground, at the same time precipitating his own

body upon the other's chest.

With the shock of the impact the club fell from the brute's hand and Tarzan's hold was wrenched from its throat. Instantly the two were locked in a deathlike embrace. Though the creature bit at Tarzan the latter was quickly aware that this was not a particularly formidable method of offense or defense, since its canines were scarcely more developed than his own. The thing that he had principally to guard against was the sinuous tail which sought steadily to wrap itself about his throat and against which experience had afforded him no defense.

Struggling and snarling the two rolled growling about the sward at the foot of

the tree, first one on top and then the other but each more occupied at present in defending his throat from the other's choking grasp than in aggressive, offensive tactics. But presently the ape-man saw his opportunity and as they rolled about he forced the creature closer and closer to the pool, upon the banks of which the battle was progressing. At last they lay upon the very verge of the water and now it remained for Tarzan to precipitate them both beneath the surface but in such a way that he might remain on top.

At the same instant there came within range of Tarzan's vision, just behind the prostrate form of his companion, the crouching, devil- faced figure of the

striped saber-tooth hybrid, eyeing him with snarling, malevolent face.

Almost simultaneously Tarzan's shaggy antagonist discovered the menacing figure of the great cat. Immediately he ceased his belligerent activities against Tarzan and, jabbering and chattering to the ape-man, he tried to disengage himself from Tarzan's hold but in such a way that indicated that as far as he was concerned their battle was over. Appreciating the danger to his unconscious companion and being anxious to protect him from the saber-tooth the ape-man relinquished his hold upon his adversary and together the two rose to their feet.

Drawing his knife Tarzan moved

slowly toward the body of his companion, expecting that his recent antagonist would grasp the opportunity for escape. To his surprise, however, the beast, after regaining its club, advanced at his side.

The great cat, flattened upon its belly, remained motionless except for twitching tail and snarling lips where it lay perhaps fifty feet beyond the body of the pithecanthropus. As Tarzan stepped over the body of the latter he saw the eyelids quiver and open, and in his heart he felt a strange sense of relief that the creature was not dead and a realization that without his suspecting it there had arisen within his savage bosom a bond of attachment for this strange new friend.

Tarzan continued to approach the saber-tooth, nor did the shaggy beast at his right lag behind. Closer and closer they came until at a distance of about twenty feet the hybrid charged. Its rush was directed toward the shaggy manlike ape who halted in his tracks with upraised bludgeon to meet the assault. Tarzan, on the contrary, leaped forward and with a celerity second not even to that of the swift-moving cat, he threw himself headlong upon him as might a Rugby tackler on an American gridiron. His right arm circled the beast's neck in front of the right shoulder, his left behind the left foreleg, and so great was the force of the impact that the two rolled over and over several times upon the

ground, the cat screaming and clawing to liberate itself that it might turn upon its attacker, the man clinging desperately to his hold.

Seemingly the attack was one of mad, senseless ferocity unguided by either reason or skill. Nothing, however, could have been farther from the truth than such an assumption since every muscle in the ape-man's giant frame obeyed the dictates of the cunning mind that long experience had trained to meet every exigency of such an encounter. The long, powerful legs, though seemingly inextricably entangled with the hind feet of the clawing cat, ever as by a miracle, escaped the raking talons and yet at just the proper instant in the midst of all the

rolling and tossing they were where they should be to carry out the ape-man's plan of offense. So that on the instant that the cat believed it had won the mastery of its antagonist it was jerked suddenly upward as the ape-man rose to his feet, holding the striped back close against his body as he rose and forcing it backward until it could but claw the air helplessly.

Instantly the shaggy black rushed in with drawn knife which it buried in the beast's heart. For a few moments Tarzan retained his hold but when the body had relaxed in final dissolution he pushed it from him and the two who had formerly been locked in mortal combat stood facing each other across the body of the

common foe.

Tarzan waited, ready either for peace or war. Presently two shaggy black hands were raised; the left was laid upon its own heart and the right extended until the palm touched Tarzan's breast. It was the same form of friendly salutation with which the pithecanthropus had sealed his alliance with the ape-man and Tarzan, glad of every ally he could win in this strange and savage world, quickly accepted the proffered friendship.

At the conclusion of the brief ceremony Tarzan, glancing in the direction of the hairless pithecanthropus, discovered that the latter had recovered consciousness and was sitting erect watching them intently. He now rose

slowly and at the same time the shaggy black turned in his direction and addressed him in what evidently was their common language. The hairless one replied and the two approached each other slowly. Tarzan watched interestedly the outcome of their meeting. They halted a few paces apart, first one and then the other speaking rapidly but without apparent excitement, each occasionally glancing or nodding toward Tarzan, indicating that he was to some extent the subject of their conversation.

Presently they advanced again until they met, whereupon was repeated the brief ceremony of alliance which had previously marked the cessation of

hostilities between Tarzan and the black. They then advanced toward the ape- man addressing him earnestly as though endeavoring to convey to him some important information. Presently, however, they gave it up as an unprofitable job and, resorting to sign language, conveyed to Tarzan that they were proceeding upon their way together and were urging him to accompany them.

As the direction they indicated was a route which Tarzan had not previously traversed he was extremely willing to accede to their request, as he had determined thoroughly to explore this unknown land before definitely abandoning search for Lady Jane therein.

For several days their way led

through the foothills parallel to the lofty range towering above. Often were they menaced by the savage denizens of this remote fastness, and occasionally Tarzan glimpsed weird forms of gigantic proportions amidst the shadows of the nights.

On the third day they came upon a large natural cave in the face of a low cliff at the foot of which tumbled one of the numerous mountain brooks that watered the plain below and fed the morasses in the lowlands at the country's edge. Here the three took up their temporary abode where Tarzan's instruction in the language of his companions progressed more rapidly than while on the march.

The cave gave evidence of having harbored other manlike forms in the past. Remnants of a crude, rock fireplace remained and the walls and ceiling were blackened with the smoke of many fires. Scratched in the soot, and sometimes deeply into the rock beneath, were strange hieroglyphics and the outlines of beasts and birds and reptiles, some of the latter of weird form suggesting the extinct creatures of Jurassic times. Some of the more recently made hieroglyphics Tarzan's companions read with interest and commented upon, and then with the points of their knives they too added to the possibly age-old record of the blackened walls.

Tarzan's curiosity was aroused, but

the only explanation at which he could arrive was that he was looking upon possibly the world's most primitive hotel register. At least it gave him a further insight into the development of the strange creatures with which Fate had thrown him. Here were men with the tails of monkeys, one of them as hair covered as any fur-bearing brute of the lower orders, and yet it was evident that they possessed not only a spoken, but a written language. The former he was slowly mastering and at this new evidence of unlooked-for civilization in creatures possessing so many of the physical attributes of beasts, Tarzan's curiosity was still further piqued and his desire quickly to master their tongue

strengthened, with the result that he fell to with even greater assiduity to the task he had set himself. Already he knew the names of his companions and the common names of the fauna and flora with which they had most often come in contact.

Ta-den, he of the hairless, white skin, having assumed the role of tutor, prosecuted his task with a singleness of purpose that was reflected in his pupil's rapid mastery of Ta-den's mother tongue. Om- at, the hairy black, also seemed to feel that there rested upon his broad shoulders a portion of the burden of responsibility for Tarzan's education, with the result that either one or the other of them was almost constantly coaching

the ape-man during his waking hours. The result was only what might have been expected —a rapid assimilation of the teachings to the end that before any of them realized it, communication by word of mouth became an accomplished fact.

Tarzan explained to his companions the purpose of his mission but neither could give him any slightest thread of hope to weave into the fabric of his longing. Never had there been in their country a woman such as he described, nor any tailless man other than himself that they ever had seen.

"I have been gone from A-lur while Bu, the moon, has eaten seven times," said Ta-den. "Many things may happen

in seven times twenty-eight days; but I doubt that your woman could have entered our country across the terrible morasses which even you found an almost insurmountable obstacle, and if she had, could she have survived the perils that you already have encountered beside those of which you have yet to learn? Not even our own women venture into the savage lands beyond the cities."

"'A-lur,' Light-city, City of Light," mused Tarzan, translating the word into his own tongue. "And where is A-lur?" he asked. "Is it your city, Ta-den, and Om-at's?"

"It is mine," replied the hairless one; "but not Om-at's. The Waz-don have no cities—they live in the trees of the

forests and the caves of the hills—is it not so, black man?" he concluded, turning toward the hairy giant beside him.

"Yes," replied Om-at, "We Waz-don are free—only the Hodon imprison themselves in cities. I would not be a white man!"

Tarzan smiled. Even here was the racial distinction between white man and black man—Ho-don and Waz-don. Not even the fact that they appeared to be equals in the matter of intelligence made any difference—one was white and one was black, and it was easy to see that the white considered himself superior to the other—one could see it in his quiet smile.

"Where is A-lur?" Tarzan asked again. "You are returning to it?"

"It is beyond the mountains," replied Ta-den. "I do not return to it —not yet. Not until Ko-tan is no more."

"Ko-tan?" queried Tarzan.

"Ko-tan is king," explained the pithecanthropus. "He rules this land. I was one of his warriors. I lived in the palace of Ko-tan and there I met O-lo-a, his daughter. We loved, Likestar-light, and I; but Ko-tan would have none of me. He sent me away to fight with the men of the village of Dak-at, who had refused to pay his tribute to the king, thinking that I would be killed, for Dak-at is famous for his many fine warriors. And I was not killed. Instead I returned

victorious with the tribute and with Dak-at himself my prisoner; but Ko-tan was not pleased because he saw that O-lo-a loved me even more than before, her love being strengthened and fortified by pride in my achievement.

"Powerful is my father, Ja-don, the Lion-man, chief of the largest village outside of A-lur. Him Ko-tan hesitated to affront and so he could not but praise me for my success, though he did it with half a smile. But you do not understand! It is what we call a smile that moves only the muscles of the face and affects not the light of the eyes—it means hypocrisy and duplicity. I must be praised and rewarded. What better than that he reward me with the hand of O-

lo-a, his daughter? But no, he saves O-lo-a for Bu-lot, son of Mo- sar, the chief whose great-grandfather was king and who thinks that he should be king. Thus would Ko-tan appease the wrath of Mo-sar and win the friendship of those who think with Mo-sar that Mo-sar should be king.

"But what reward shall repay the faithful Ta-den? Greatly do we honor our priests. Within the temples even the chiefs and the king himself bow down to them. No greater honor could Ko-tan confer upon a subject—who wished to be a priest, but I did not so wish. Priests other than the high priest must become eunuchs for they may never marry.

"It was O-lo-a herself who brought

word to me that her father had given the commands that would set in motion the machinery of the temple. A messenger was on his way in search of me to summon me to Ko- tan's presence. To have refused the priesthood once it was offered me by the king would have been to have affronted the temple and the gods —that would have meant death; but if I did not appear before Ko-tan I would not have to refuse anything. O-lo-a and I decided that I must not appear. It was better to fly, carrying in my bosom a shred of hope, than to remain and, with my priesthood, abandon hope forever.

"Beneath the shadows of the great trees that grow within the palace grounds I pressed her to me for, perhaps,

the last time and then, lest by ill-fate I meet the messenger, I scaled the great wall that guards the palace and passed through the darkened city. My name and rank carried me beyond the city gate. Since then I have wandered far from the haunts of the Ho-don but strong within me is the urge to return if even but to look from without her walls upon the city that holds her most dear to me and again to visit the village of my birth, to see again my father and my mother."

"But the risk is too great?" asked Tarzan.

"It is great, but not too great," replied Ta-den. "I shall go."

"And I shall go with you, if I may," said the ape-man, "for I must see this

City of Light, this A-lur of yours, and search there for my lost mate even though you believe that there is little chance that I find her. And you, Om- at, do you come with us?"

"Why not?" asked the hairy one. "The lairs of my tribe lie in the crags above A-lur and though Es-sat, our chief, drove me out I should like to return again, for there is a she there upon whom I should be glad to look once more and who would be glad to look upon me. Yes, I will go with you. Es-sat feared that I might become chief and who knows but that Es-sat was right. But Pan-at-lee! it is she I seek first even before a chieftainship."

"We three, then, shall travel together,"

said Tarzan.

"And fight together," added Ta-den; "the three as one," and as he spoke he drew his knife and held it above his head.

"The three as one," repeated Om-at, drawing his weapon and duplicating Ta-den's act. "It is spoken!"

"The three as one!" cried Tarzan of the Apes. "To the death!" and his blade flashed in the sunlight.

"Let us go, then," said Om-at; "my knife is dry and cries aloud for the blood of Es-sat."

The trail over which Ta-den and Om-at led and which scarcely could be dignified even by the name of trail was suited more to mountain sheep, monkeys,

or birds than to man; but the three that followed it were trained to ways which no ordinary man might essay. Now, upon the lower slopes, it led through dense forests where the ground was so matted with fallen trees and over-rioting vines and brush that the way held always to the swaying branches high above the tangle; again it skirted yawning gorges whose slippery-faced rocks gave but momentary foothold even to the bare feet that lightly touched them as the three leaped chamois-like from one precarious foothold to the next. Dizzy and terrifying was the way that Om-at chose across the summit as he led them around the shoulder of a towering crag that rose a sheer two thousand feet of

perpendicular rock above a tumbling river. And when at last they stood upon comparatively level ground again Om-at turned and looked at them both intently and especially at Tarzan of the Apes.

"You will both do," he said. "You are fit companions for Om-at, the Waz-don."

"What do you mean?" asked Tarzan.

"I brought you this way," replied the black, "to learn if either lacked the courage to follow where Om-at led. It is here that the young warriors of Es- sat come to prove their courage. And yet, though we are born and raised upon cliff sides, it is considered no disgrace to admit that Pastar-ul-ved, the Father of Mountains, has defeated us, for of those who try it only a few succeed—the

bones of the others lie at the feet of Pastar-ul-ved."

Ta-den laughed. "I would not care to come this way often," he said.

"No," replied Om-at; "but it has shortened our journey by at least a full day. So much the sooner shall Tarzan look upon the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho. Come!" and he led the way upward along the shoulder of Pastar-ul-ved until there lay spread below them a scene of mystery and of beauty—a green valley girt by towering cliffs of marble whiteness—a green valley dotted by deep blue lakes and crossed by the blue trail of a winding river. In the center a city of the whiteness of the marble cliffs—a city which even at so great a

distance evidenced a strange, yet artistic architecture. Outside the city there were visible about the valley isolated groups of buildings—sometimes one, again two and three and four in a cluster—but always of the same glaring whiteness, and always in some fantastic form.

About the valley the cliffs were occasionally cleft by deep gorges, verdure filled, giving the appearance of green rivers rioting downward toward a central sea of green.

"Jad Pele ul Jad-ben-Otho," murmured Tarzan in the tongue of the pithecanthropi; "The Valley of the Great God—it is beautiful!"

"Here, in A-lur, lives Ko-tan, the king, ruler over all Pal-ul- don," said

Ta-den.

"And here in these gorges live the Waz-don," exclaimed Om-at, "who do not acknowledge that Ko-tan is the ruler over all the Land-of- man."

Ta-den smiled and shrugged. "We will not quarrel, you and I," he said to Om-at, "over that which all the ages have not proved sufficient time in which to reconcile the Ho-don and Waz-don; but let me whisper to you a secret, Om-at. The Ho-don live together in greater or less peace under one ruler so that when danger threatens them they face the enemy with many warriors, for every fighting Ho- don of Pal-ul-don is there. But you Waz-don, how is it with you? You have a dozen kings who fight not

only with the Ho-don but with one another. When one of your tribes goes forth upon the fighting trail, even against the Ho-don, it must leave behind sufficient warriors to protect its women and its children from the neighbors upon either hand. When we want eunuchs for the temples or servants for the fields or the homes we march forth in great numbers upon one of your villages. You cannot even flee, for upon either side of you are enemies and though you fight bravely we come back with those who will presently be eunuchs in the temples and servants in our fields and homes. So long as the Waz-don are thus foolish the Ho-don will dominate and their king will be king of Pal-ul-don."

"Perhaps you are right," admitted Om-at. "It is because our neighbors are fools, each thinking that his tribe is the greatest and should rule among the Waz-don. They will not admit that the warriors of my tribe are the bravest and our shes the most beautiful."

Ta-den grinned. "Each of the others presents precisely the same arguments that you present, Om-at," he said, "which, my friend, is the strongest bulwark of defense possessed by the Ho-don."

"Come!" exclaimed Tarzan; "such discussions often lead to quarrels and we three must have no quarrels. I, of course, am interested in learning what I can of the political and economic

conditions of your land; I should like to know something of your religion; but not at the expense of bitterness between my only friends in Pal-ul-don. Possibly, however, you hold to the same god?"

"There indeed we do differ," cried Om-at, somewhat bitterly and with a trace of excitement in his voice.

"Differ!" almost shouted Ta-den; "and why should we not differ? Who could agree with the preposterous—"

"Stop!" cried Tarzan. "Now, indeed, have I stirred up a hornets' nest. Let us speak no more of matters political or religious."

"That is wiser," agreed Om-at; "but I might mention, for your information, that the one and only god has a long tail."

"It is sacrilege," cried Ta-den, laying his hand upon his knife; "Jad-ben-Otho has no tail!"

"Stop!" shrieked Om-at, springing forward; but instantly Tarzan interposed himself between them.

"Enough!" he snapped. "Let us be true to our oaths of friendship that we may be honorable in the sight of God in whatever form we conceive Him."

"You are right, Tailless One," said Ta-den. "Come, Om-at, let us look after our friendship and ourselves, secure in the conviction that Jad-ben-Otho is sufficiently powerful to look after himself."

"Done!" agreed Om-at, "but—"

"No 'buts,' Om-at," admonished

Tarzan.

The shaggy black shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "Shall we make our way down toward the valley?" he asked. "The gorge below us is uninhabited; that to the left contains the caves of my people. I would see Pan-at-lee once more. Ta-den would visit his father in the valley below and Tarzan seeks entrance to A-lur in search of the mate that would be better dead than in the clutches of the Ho-don priests of Jad-ben-Otho. How shall we proceed?"

"Let us remain together as long as possible," urged Ta-den. "You, Om-at, must seek Pan-at-lee by night and by stealth, for three, even we three, may not hope to overcome Es-sat and all his

warriors. At any time may we go to the village where my father is chief, for Ja-don always will welcome the friends of his son. But for Tarzan to enter A-lur is another matter, though there is a way and he has the courage to put it to the test—listen, come close for Jad-ben- Otho has keen ears and this he must not hear," and with his lips close to the ears of his companions Ta-den, the Tall-tree, son of Ja- don, the Lion-man, unfolded his daring plan.

And at the same moment, a hundred miles away, a lithe figure, naked but for a loin cloth and weapons, moved silently across a thorn- covered, waterless steppe, searching always along the ground before him with keen eyes and

sensitive nostrils.

3. PAN-AT-LEE

Night had fallen upon unchartered Pal-ul-don. A slender moon, low in the west, bathed the white faces of the chalk cliffs presented to her, in a mellow, unearthly glow. Black were the shadows in Kor-ul- ja, Gorge-of-lions, where dwelt the tribe of the same name under Es- sat, their chief. From an aperture near the summit of the lofty escarpment a hairy figure emerged—the head and shoulders first—and fierce eyes scanned the cliff side in every direction.

It was Es-sat, the chief. To right and left and below he looked as though to assure himself that he was unobserved, but no other figure moved upon the cliff face, nor did another hairy body

protrude from any of the numerous cave mouths from the high-flung abode of the chief to the habitations of the more lowly members of the tribe nearer the cliff's base. Then he moved outward upon the sheer face of the white chalk wall. In the half-light of the baby moon it appeared that the heavy, shaggy black figure moved across the face of the perpendicular wall in some miraculous manner, but closer examination would have revealed stout pegs, as large around as a man's wrist protruding from holes in the cliff into which they were driven. Es- sat's four handlike members and his long, sinuous tail permitted him to move with consummate ease whither he chose—a gigantic rat upon a mighty

wall. As he progressed upon his way he avoided the cave mouths, passing either above or below those that lay in his path.

The outward appearance of these caves was similar. An opening from eight to as much as twenty feet long by eight high and four to six feet deep was cut into the chalklike rock of the cliff, in the back of this large opening, which formed what might be described as the front veranda of the home, was an opening about three feet wide and six feet high, evidently forming the doorway to the interior apartment or apartments. On either side of this doorway were smaller openings which it were easy to assume were windows through which

light and air might find their way to the inhabitants. Similar windows were also dotted over the cliff face between the entrance porches, suggesting that the entire face of the cliff was honeycombed with apartments. From many of these smaller apertures small streams of water trickled down the escarpment, and the walls above others was blackened as by smoke. Where the water ran the wall was eroded to a depth of from a few inches to as much as a foot, suggesting that some of the tiny streams had been trickling downward to the green carpet of vegetation below for ages.

In this primeval setting the great pithecanthropus aroused no jarring discord for he was as much a part of it

as the trees that grew upon the summit of the cliff or those that hid their feet among the dank ferns in the bottom of the gorge.

Now he paused before an entrance-way and listened and then, noiselessly as the moonlight upon the trickling waters, he merged with the shadows of the outer porch. At the doorway leading into the interior he paused again, listening, and then quietly pushing aside the heavy skin that covered the aperture he passed within a large chamber hewn from the living rock. From the far end, through another doorway, shone a light, dimly. Toward this he crept with utmost stealth, his naked feet giving forth no sound. The knotted club that had been hanging at his back from a thong about his neck he now

removed and carried in his left hand.

Beyond the second doorway was a corridor running parallel with the cliff face. In this corridor were three more doorways, one at each end and a third almost opposite that in which Es-sat stood. The light was coming from an apartment at the end of the corridor at his left. A sputtering flame rose and fell in a small stone receptacle that stood upon a table or bench of the same material, a monolithic bench fashioned at the time the room was excavated, rising massively from the floor, of which it was a part.

In one corner of the room beyond the table had been left a dais of stone about four feet wide and eight feet long. Upon

this were piled a foot or so of softly tanned pelts from which the fur had not been removed. Upon the edge of this dais sat a young female Waz-don. In one hand she held a thin piece of metal, apparently of hammered gold, with serrated edges, and in the other a short, stiff brush. With these she was occupied in going over her smooth, glossy coat which bore a remarkable resemblance to plucked sealskin. Her loin cloth of yellow and black striped jato-skin lay on the couch beside her with the circular breastplates of beaten gold, revealing the symmetrical lines of her nude figure in all its beauty and harmony of contour, for even though the creature was jet black and entirely covered with hair yet

she was undeniably beautiful.

That she was beautiful in the eyes of Es-sat, the chief, was evidenced by the gloating expression upon his fierce countenance and the increased rapidity of his breathing. Moving quickly forward he entered the room and as he did so the young she looked up. Instantly her eyes filled with terror and as quickly she seized the loin cloth and with a few deft movements adjusted it about her. As she gathered up her breastplates Es-sat rounded the table and moved quickly toward her.

"What do you want?" she whispered, though she knew full well.

"Pan-at-lee," he said, "your chief has come for you."

"It was for this that you sent away my father and my brothers to spy upon the Kor-ul-lul? I will not have you. Leave the cave of my ancestors!"

Es-sat smiled. It was the smile of a strong and wicked man who knows his power—not a pleasant smile at all. "I will leave, Pan-at-lee," he said; "but you shall go with me—to the cave of Es-sat, the chief, to be the envied of the shes of Kor-ul-ja. Come!"

"Never!" cried Pan-at-lee. "I hate you. Sooner would I mate with a Ho-don than with you, beater of women, murderer of babes."

A frightful scowl distorted the features of the chief. "She- jato!" he cried. "I will tame you! I will break you!

Es-sat, the chief, takes what he will and who dares question his right, or combat his least purpose, will first serve that purpose and then be broken as I break this," and he picked a stone platter from the table and broke it in his powerful hands. "You might have been first and most favored in the cave of the ancestors of Es-sat; but now shall you be last and least and when I am done with you you shall belong to all of the men of Es-sat's cave. Thus for those who spurn the love of their chief!"

He advanced quickly to seize her and as he laid a rough hand upon her she struck him heavily upon the side of his head with her golden breastplates. Without a sound Es-sat, the chief, sank to

the floor of the apartment. For a moment Pan-at-lee bent over him, her improvised weapon raised to strike again should he show signs of returning consciousness, her glossy breasts rising and falling with her quickened breathing. Suddenly she stooped and removed Es-sat's knife with its scabbard and shoulder belt. Slipping it over her own shoulder she quickly adjusted her breastplates and keeping a watchful glance upon the figure of the fallen chief, backed from the room.

In a niche in the outer room, just beside the doorway leading to the balcony, were neatly piled a number of rounded pegs from eighteen to twenty inches in length. Selecting five of these

she made them into a little bundle about which she twined the lower extremity of her sinuous tail and thus carrying them made her way to the outer edge of the balcony. Assuring herself that there was none about to see, or hinder her, she took quickly to the pegs already set in the face of the cliff and with the celerity of a monkey clambered swiftly aloft to the highest row of pegs which she followed in the direction of the lower end of the gorge for a matter of some hundred yards. Here, above her head, were a series of small round holes placed one above another in three parallel rows. Clinging only with her toes she removed two of the pegs from the bundle carried in her tail and taking one in either hand

she inserted them in two opposite holes of the outer rows as far above her as she could reach. Hanging by these new holds she now took one of the three remaining pegs in each of her feet, leaving the fifth grasped securely in her tail. Reaching above her with this member she inserted the fifth peg in one of the holes of the center row and then, alternately hanging by her tail, her feet, or her hands, she moved the pegs upward to new holes, thus carrying her stairway with her as she ascended.

At the summit of the cliff a gnarled tree exposed its time-worn roots above the topmost holes forming the last step from the sheer face of the precipice to level footing. This was the last avenue

of escape for members of the tribe hard pressed by enemies from below. There were three such emergency exits from the village and it were death to use them in other than an emergency. This Pan-at-lee well knew; but she knew, too, that it were worse than death to remain where the angered Es-sat might lay hands upon her.

When she had gained the summit, the girl moved quickly through the darkness in the direction of the next gorge which cut the mountain-side a mile beyond Kor-ul-ja. It was the Gorge-of-water, Kor- ul-lul, to which her father and two brothers had been sent by Es-sat ostensibly to spy upon the neighboring tribe. There was a chance, a slender

chance, that she might find them; if not there was the deserted Kor-ul-gryf several miles beyond, where she might hide indefinitely from man if she could elude the frightful monster from which the gorge derived its name and whose presence there had rendered its caves uninhabitable for generations.

Pan-at-lee crept stealthily along the rim of the Kor-ul-lul. Just where her father and brothers would watch she did not know. Sometimes their spies remained upon the rim, sometimes they watched from the gorge's bottom. Pan-at-lee was at a loss to know what to do or where to go. She felt very small and helpless alone in the vast darkness of the night. Strange noises fell upon her ears.

They came from the lonely reaches of the towering mountains above her, from far away in the invisible valley and from the nearer foothills and once, in the distance, she heard what she thought was the bellow of a bull gryf. It came from the direction of the Kor-ul-gryf. She shuddered.

Presently there came to her keen ears another sound. Something approached her along the rim of the gorge. It was coming from above. She halted, listening. Perhaps it was her father, or a brother. It was coming closer. She strained her eyes through the darkness. She did not move—she scarcely breathed. And then, of a sudden, quite close it seemed, there blazed through the

black night two yellow-green spots of fire.

Pan-at-lee was brave, but as always with the primitive, the darkness held infinite terrors for her. Not alone the terrors of the known but more frightful ones as well—those of the unknown. She had passed through much this night and her nerves were keyed to the highest pitch—raw, taut nerves, they were, ready to react in an exaggerated form to the slightest shock.

But this was no slight shock. To hope for a father and a brother and to see death instead glaring out of the darkness! Yes, Pan-at-lee was brave, but she was not of iron. With a shriek that reverberated among the hills she turned

and fled along the rim of Kor- ul-lul and behind her, swiftly, came the devil-eyed lion of the mountains of Pal-ul-don.

Pan-at-lee was lost. Death was inevitable. Of this there could be no doubt, but to die beneath the rending fangs of the carnivore, congenital terror of her kind—it was unthinkable. But there was an alternative. The lion was almost upon her—another instant and he would seize her. Pan-at-lee turned sharply to her left. Just a few steps she took in the new direction before she disappeared over the rim of Kor-ul-lul. The baffled lion, planting all four feet, barely stopped upon the verge of the abyss. Glaring down into the black shadows beneath he mounted an angry

roar.

Through the darkness at the bottom of Kor-ul-ja, Om-at led the way toward the caves of his people. Behind him came Tarzan and Ta- den. Presently they halted beneath a great tree that grew close to the cliff.

"First," whispered Om-at, "I will go to the cave of Pan-at-lee. Then will I seek the cave of my ancestors to have speech with my own blood. It will not take long. Wait here—I shall return soon. Afterward shall we go together to Ta-den's people."

He moved silently toward the foot of the cliff up which Tarzan could presently see him ascending like a great fly on a wall. In the dim light the ape-man could

not see the pegs set in the face of the cliff. Om-at moved warily. In the lower tier of caves there should be a sentry. His knowledge of his people and their customs told him, however, that in all probability the sentry was asleep. In this he was not mistaken, yet he did not in any way abate his wariness. Smoothly and swiftly he ascended toward the cave of Pan-at-lee while from below Tarzan and Ta-den watched him.

"How does he do it?" asked Tarzan. "I can see no foothold upon that vertical surface and yet he appears to be climbing with the utmost ease."

Ta-den explained the stairway of pegs. "You could ascend easily," he said, "although a tail would be of great

assistance."

They watched until Om-at was about to enter the cave of Pan-at- lee without seeing any indication that he had been observed and then, simultaneously, both saw a head appear in the mouth of one of the lower caves. It was quickly evident that its owner had discovered Om- at for immediately he started upward in pursuit. Without a word Tarzan and Ta-den sprang forward toward the foot of the cliff. The pithecanthropus was the first to reach it and the ape-man saw him spring upward for a handhold on the lowest peg above him. Now Tarzan saw other pegs roughly paralleling each other in zigzag rows up the cliff face. He sprang and caught one of these, pulled

himself upward by one hand until he could reach a second with his other hand; and when he had ascended far enough to use his feet, discovered that he could make rapid progress. Ta-den was outstripping him, however, for these precarious ladders were no novelty to him and, further, he had an advantage in possessing a tail.

Nevertheless, the ape-man gave a good account of himself, being presently urged to redoubled efforts by the fact that the Waz-don above Ta-den glanced down and discovered his pursuers just before the Ho-don overtook him. Instantly a wild cry shattered the silence of the gorge—a cry that was immediately answered by hundreds of

savage throats as warrior after warrior emerged from the entrance to his cave.

The creature who had raised the alarm had now reached the recess before Pan-at-lee's cave and here he halted and turned to give battle to Ta-den. Unslinging his club which had hung down his back from a thong about his neck he stood upon the level floor of the entrance-way effectually blocking Ta-den's ascent. From all directions the warriors of Kor-ul-ja were swarming toward the interlopers. Tarzan, who had reached a point on the same level with Ta-den but a little to the latter's left, saw that nothing short of a miracle could save them. Just at the ape-man's left was the entrance to a cave that either was

deserted or whose occupants had not as yet been aroused, for the level recess remained unoccupied. Resourceful was the alert mind of Tarzan of the Apes and quick to respond were the trained muscles. In the time that you or I might give to debating an action he would accomplish it and now, though only seconds separated his nearest antagonist from him, in the brief span of time at his disposal he had stepped into the recess, unslung his long rope and leaning far out shot the sinuous noose, with the precision of long habitude, toward the menacing figure wielding its heavy club above Ta-den. There was a momentary pause of the rope-hand as the noose sped toward its goal, a quick movement of the

right wrist that closed it upon its victim as it settled over his head and then a surging tug as, seizing the rope in both hands, Tarzan threw back upon it all the weight of his great frame.

Voicing a terrified shriek, the Waz-don lunged headforemost from the recess above Ta-den. Tarzan braced himself for the coming shock when the creature's body should have fallen the full length of the rope and as it did there was a snap of the vertebrae that rose sickeningly in the momentary silence that had followed the doomed man's departing scream. Unshaken by the stress of the suddenly arrested weight at the end of the rope, Tarzan quickly pulled the body to his side that he might remove the noose from

about its neck, for he could not afford to lose so priceless a weapon.

During the several seconds that had elapsed since he cast the rope the Waz-don warriors had remained inert as though paralyzed by wonder or by terror. Now, again, one of them found his voice and his head and straightway, shrieking invectives at the strange intruder, started upward for the ape-man, urging his fellows to attack. This man was the closest to Tarzan. But for him the ape-man could easily have reached Ta-den's side as the latter was urging him to do. Tarzan raised the body of the dead Waz-don above his head, held it poised there for a moment as with face raised to the heavens he screamed forth the horrid

challenge of the bull apes of the tribe of Kerchak, and with all the strength of his giant sinews he hurled the corpse heavily upon the ascending warrior. So great was the force of the impact that not only was the Waz-don torn from his hold but two of the pegs to which he clung were broken short in their sockets.

As the two bodies, the living and the dead, hurtled downward toward the foot of the cliff a great cry arose from the Waz-don. "Jad- guru-don! Jad-guru-don!" they screamed, and then: "Kill him! Kill him!"

And now Tarzan stood in the recess beside Ta-den. Jad-guru- don!" repeated the latter, smiling—"The terrible man! Tarzan the Terrible! They may kill you,

but they will never forget you."

"They shall not ki—What have we here?" Tarzan's statement as to what "they" should not do was interrupted by a sudden ejaculation as two figures, locked in deathlike embrace, stumbled through the doorway of the cave to the outer porch. One was Om-at, the other a creature of his own kind but with a rough coat, the hairs of which seemed to grow straight outward from the skin, stiffly, unlike Om-at's sleek covering. The two were quite evidently well matched and equally evident was the fact that each was bent upon murder. They fought almost in silence except for an occasional low growl as one or the other acknowledged thus some new hurt.

Tarzan, following a natural impulse to aid his ally, leaped forward to enter the dispute only to be checked by a grunted admonition from Om-at. "Back!" he said. "This fight is mine, alone."

The ape-man understood and stepped aside.

"It is a gund-bar," explained Ta-den, "a chief-battle. This fellow must be Es-sat, the chief. If Om-at kills him without assistance Om-at may become chief."

Tarzan smiled. It was the law of his own jungle—the law of the tribe of Kerchak, the bull ape—the ancient law of primitive man that needed but the refining influences of civilization to introduce the hired dagger and the poison cup. Then his attention was

drawn to the outer edge of the vestibule. Above it appeared the shaggy face of one of Es-sat's warriors. Tarzan sprang to intercept the man; but Ta-den was there ahead of him. "Back!" cried the Ho-don to the newcomer. "It is gund-bar." The fellow looked scrutinizingly at the two fighters, then turned his face downward toward his fellows. "Back!" he cried, "it is gund-bar between Es-sat and Om-at." Then he looked back at Ta-den and Tarzan. "Who are you?" he asked.

"We are Om-at's friends," replied Ta-den.

The fellow nodded. "We will attend to you later," he said and disappeared below the edge of the recess.

The battle upon the ledge continued with unabated ferocity, Tarzan and Ta-den having difficulty in keeping out of the way of the contestants who tore and beat at each other with hands and feet and lashing tails. Es-sat was unarmed—Pan-at-lee had seen to that—but at Om-at's side swung a sheathed knife which he made no effort to draw. That would have been contrary to their savage and primitive code for the chief-battle must be fought with nature's weapons.

Sometimes they separated for an instant only to rush upon each other again with all the ferocity and nearly the strength of mad bulls. Presently one of them tripped the other but in that viselike embrace one could not fall alone —Es-

sat dragged Om-at with him, toppling upon the brink of the niche. Even Tarzan held his breath. There they surged to and fro perilously for a moment and then the inevitable happened—the two, locked in murderous embrace, rolled over the edge and disappeared from the ape-man's view.

Tarzan voiced a suppressed sigh for he had liked Om-at and then, with Ta-den, approached the edge and looked over. Far below, in the dim light of the coming dawn, two inert forms should be lying stark in death; but, to Tarzan's amazement, such was far from the sight that met his eyes. Instead, there were the two figures still vibrant with life and still battling only a few feet below him.

Clinging always to the pegs with two holds—a hand and a foot, or a foot and a tail, they seemed as much at home upon the perpendicular wall as upon the level surface of the vestibule; but now their tactics were slightly altered, for each seemed particularly bent upon dislodging his antagonist from his holds and precipitating him to certain death below. It was soon evident that Om-at, younger and with greater powers of endurance than Es-sat, was gaining an advantage. Now was the chief almost wholly on the defensive. Holding him by the cross belt with one mighty hand Om-at was forcing his foeman straight out from the cliff, and with the other hand and one foot was rapidly breaking first

one of Es-sat's holds and then another, alternating his efforts, or rather punctuating them, with vicious blows to the pit of his adversary's stomach. Rapidly was Es- sat weakening and with the knowledge of impending death there came, as there comes to every coward and bully under similar circumstances, a crumbling of the veneer of bravado which had long masqueraded as courage and with it crumbled his code of ethics. Now was Es-sat no longer chief of Kor-ul-ja—instead he was a whimpering craven battling for life. Clutching at Om-at, clutching at the nearest pegs he sought any support that would save him from that awful fall, and as he strove to push aside the hand of death, whose cold

fingers he already felt upon his heart, his tail sought Om-at's side and the handle of the knife that hung there.

Tarzan saw and even as Es-sat drew the blade from its sheath he dropped catlike to the pegs beside the battling men. Es-sat's tail had drawn back for the cowardly fatal thrust. Now many others saw the perfidious act and a great cry of rage and disgust arose from savage throats; but as the blade sped toward its goal, the ape-man seized the hairy member that wielded it, and at the same instant Om-at thrust the body of Es-sat from him with such force that its weakened holds were broken and it hurtled downward, a brief meteor of screaming fear, to death.

4. TARZAN-JAD-GURU

As Tarzan and Om-at clambered back to the vestibule of Pan-at- lee's cave and took their stand beside Ta-den in readiness for whatever eventuality might follow the death of Es-sat, the sun that topped the eastern hills touched also the figure of a sleeper upon a distant, thorn-covered steppe awakening him to another day of tireless tracking along a faint and rapidly disappearing spoor.

For a time silence reigned in the Kor-ul-ja. The tribesmen waited, looking now down upon the dead thing that had been their chief, now at one another, and now at Om-at and the two who stood upon his either side. Presently Om-at spoke. "I am Om-at," he cried. "Who

will say that Om-at is not gund of Kor-ul- ja?"

He waited for a taker of his challenge. One or two of the larger young bucks fidgeted restlessly and eyed him; but there was no reply.

"Then Om-at is gund," he said with finality. "Now tell me, where are Pan-at-lee, her father, and her brothers?"

An old warrior spoke. "Pan-at-lee should be in her cave. Who should know that better than you who are there now? Her father and her brothers were sent to watch Kor-ul-lul; but neither of these questions arouse any tumult in our breasts. There is one that does: Can Om-at be chief of Kor-ul-ja and yet stand at bay against his own people with a Ho-

don and that terrible man at his side—that terrible man who has no tail? Hand the strangers over to your people to be slain as is the way of the Waz-don and then may Om-at be gund."

Neither Tarzan nor Ta-den spoke then, they but stood watching Om-at and waiting for his decision, the ghost of a smile upon the lips of the ape-man. Ta-den, at least, knew that the old warrior had spoken the truth—the Waz-don entertain no strangers and take no prisoners of an alien race.

Then spoke Om-at. "Always there is change," he said. "Even the old hills of Pal-ul-don appear never twice alike—the brilliant sun, a passing cloud, the moon, a mist, the changing seasons, the

sharp clearness following a storm; these things bring each a new change in our hills. From birth to death, day by day, there is constant change in each of us. Change, then, is one of Jad- ben-Otho's laws.

"And now I, Om-at, your gund, bring another change. Strangers who are brave men and good friends shall no longer be slain by the Waz-don of Kor-ul- ja!"

There were growls and murmurings and a restless moving among the warriors as each eyed the others to see who would take the initiative against Om-at, the iconoclast.

"Cease your mutterings," admonished the new gund. "I am your chief. My word is your law. You had no part in making

me chief. Some of you helped Es-sat to drive me from the cave of my ancestors; the rest of you permitted it. I owe you nothing. Only these two, whom you would have me kill, were loyal to me. I am gund and if there be any who doubts it let him speak —he cannot die younger."

Tarzan was pleased. Here was a man after his own heart. He admired the fearlessness of Om-at's challenge and he was a sufficiently good judge of men to know that he had listened to no idle bluff —Om-at would back up his words to the death, if necessary, and the chances were that he would not be the one to die. Evidently the majority of the Kor-ul-jaians entertained the same conviction.

"I will make you a good gund," said Om-at, seeing that no one appeared inclined to dispute his rights. "Your wives and daughters will be safe —they were not safe while Es-sat ruled. Go now to your crops and your hunting. I leave to search for Pan-at-lee. Ab-on will be gund while I am away —look to him for guidance and to me for an accounting when I return —and may Jad-ben-Otho smile upon you."

He turned toward Tarzan and the Ho-don. "And you, my friends," he said, "are free to go among my people; the cave of my ancestors is yours, do what you will."

"I," said Tarzan, "will go with Om-at to search for Pan-at- lee."

"And I," said Ta-den.

Om-at smiled. "Good!" he exclaimed. "And when we have found her we shall go together upon Tarzan's business and Ta-den's. Where first shall we search?" He turned toward his warriors. "Who knows where she may be?"

None knew other than that Pan-at-lee had gone to her cave with the others the previous evening—there was no clew, no suggestion as to her whereabouts.

"Show me where she sleeps," said Tarzan; "let me see something that belongs to her—an article of her apparel—then, doubtless, I can help you."

Two young warriors climbed closer to the ledge upon which Om-at stood. They were In-sad and O-dan. It was the

latter who spoke.

"Gund of Kor-ul-ja," he said, "we would go with you to search for Pan-at-lee."

It was the first acknowledgment of Om-at's chieftainship and immediately following it the tenseness that had prevailed seemed to relax—the warriors spoke aloud instead of in whispers, and the women appeared from the mouths of caves as with the passing of a sudden storm. In-sad and O-dan had taken the lead and now all seemed glad to follow. Some came to talk with Om-at and to look more closely at Tarzan; others, heads of caves, gathered their hunters and discussed the business of the day. The women and children prepared to

descend to the fields with the youths and the old men, whose duty it was to guard them.

"O-dan and In-sad shall go with us," announced Om-at, "we shall not need more. Tarzan, come with me and I shall show you where Pan-at- lee sleeps, though why you should wish to know I cannot guess—she is not there. I have looked for myself."

The two entered the cave where Om-at led the way to the apartment in which Es-sat had surprised Pan-at-lee the previous night.

"All here are hers," said Om-at, "except the war club lying on the floor - that was Es-sat's."

The ape-man moved silently about the

apartment, the quivering of his sensitive nostrils scarcely apparent to his companion who only wondered what good purpose could be served here and chafed at the delay.

"Come!" said the ape-man, presently, and led the way toward the outer recess.

Here their three companions were awaiting them. Tarzan passed to the left side of the niche and examined the pegs that lay within reach. He looked at them but it was not his eyes that were examining them. Keener than his keen eyes was that marvelously trained sense of scent that had first been developed in him during infancy under the tutorage of his foster mother, Kala, the she-ape, and further sharpened in the grim jungles by

that master teacher—the instinct of self-preservation.

From the left side of the niche he turned to the right. Om-at was becoming impatient.

"Let us be off," he said. "We must search for Pan-at-lee if we would ever find her."

"Where shall we search?" asked Tarzan.

Om-at scratched his head. "Where?" he repeated. "Why all Pal-ul- don, if necessary."

"A large job," said Tarzan. "Come," he added, "she went this way," and he took to the pegs that led aloft toward the summit of the cliff. Here he followed the scent easily since none had passed that

way since Pan-at-lee had fled. At the point at which she had left the permanent pegs and resorted to those carried with her Tarzan came to an abrupt halt. "She went this way to the summit," he called back to Om-at who was directly behind him; "but there are no pegs here."

"I do not know how you know that she went this way," said Om- at; "but we will get pegs. In-sad, return and fetch climbing pegs for five."

The young warrior was soon back and the pegs distributed. Om-at handed five to Tarzan and explained their use. The ape-man returned one. "I need but four," he said.

Om-at smiled. "What a wonderful creature you would be if you were not

deformed," he said, glancing with pride at his own strong tail.

"I admit that I am handicapped," replied Tarzan. "You others go ahead and leave the pegs in place for me. I am afraid that otherwise it will be slow work as I cannot hold the pegs in my toes as you do."

"All right," agreed Om-at; "Ta-den, In-sad, and I will go first, you follow and O-dan bring up the rear and collect the pegs—we cannot leave them here for our enemies."

"Can't your enemies bring their own pegs?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes; but it delays them and makes easier our defense and—they do not know which of all the holes you see are

deep enough for pegs—the others are made to confuse our enemies and are too shallow to hold a peg."

At the top of the cliff beside the gnarled tree Tarzan again took up the trail. Here the scent was fully as strong as upon the pegs and the ape-man moved rapidly across the ridge in the direction of the Kor-ul-lul.

Presently he paused and turned toward Om-at. "Here she moved swiftly, running at top speed, and, Om-at, she was pursued by a lion."

"You can read that in the grass?" asked O-dan as the others gathered about the ape-man.

Tarzan nodded. "I do not think the lion got her," he added; "but that we

shall determine quickly. No, he did not get her—look!" and he pointed toward the southwest, down the ridge.

Following the direction indicated by his finger, the others presently detected a movement in some bushes a couple of hundred yards away.

"What is it?" asked Om-at. "It is she?" and he started toward the spot.

"Wait," advised Tarzan. "It is the lion which pursued her."

"You can see him?" asked Ta-den.

"No, I can smell him."

The others looked their astonishment and incredulity; but of the fact that it was indeed a lion they were not left long in doubt. Presently the bushes parted and

the creature stepped out in full view, facing them. It was a magnificent beast, large and beautifully maned, with the brilliant leopard spots of its kind well marked and symmetrical. For a moment it eyed them and then, still chafing at the loss of its prey earlier in the morning, it charged.

The Pal-ul-donians unslung their clubs and stood waiting the onrushing beast. Tarzan of the Apes drew his hunting knife and crouched in the path of the fanged fury. It was almost upon him when it swerved to the right and leaped for Om-at only to be sent to earth with a staggering blow upon the head. Almost instantly it was up and though the men rushed fearlessly in, it managed to

sweep aside their weapons with its mighty paws. A single blow wrenched O-dan's club from his hand and sent it hurtling against Ta-den, knocking him from his feet. Taking advantage of its opportunity the lion rose to throw itself upon O-dan and at the same instant Tarzan flung himself upon its back. Strong, white teeth buried themselves in the spotted neck, mighty arms encircled the savage throat and the sinewy legs of the ape-man locked themselves about the gaunt belly.

The others, powerless to aid, stood breathlessly about as the great lion lunged hither and thither, clawing and biting fearfully and futilely at the savage creature that had fastened itself upon

him. Over and over they rolled and now the onlookers saw a brown hand raised above the lion's side—a brown hand grasping a keen blade. They saw it fall and rise and fall again —each time with terrific force and in its wake they saw a crimson stream trickling down ja's gorgeous coat.

Now from the lion's throat rose hideous screams of hate and rage and pain as he redoubled his efforts to dislodge and punish his tormentor; but always the tousled black head remained half buried in the dark brown mane and the mighty arm rose and fell to plunge the knife again and again into the dying beast.

The Pal-ul-donians stood in mute

wonder and admiration. Brave men and mighty hunters they were and as such the first to accord honor to a mightier.

"And you would have had me slay him!" cried Om-at, glancing at In-sad and O-dan.

"Jad-ben-Otho reward you that you did not," breathed In-sad.

And now the lion lunged suddenly to earth and with a few spasmodic quiverings lay still. The ape-man rose and shook himself, even as might ja, the leopard-coated lion of Pal-ul-don, had he been the one to survive.

O-dan advanced quickly toward Tarzan. Placing a palm upon his own breast and the other on Tarzan's, "Tarzan the Terrible," he said, "I ask no greater

honor than your friendship."

"And I no more than the friendship of Om-at's friends," replied the ape-man simply, returning the other's salute.

"Do you think," asked Om-at, coming close to Tarzan and laying a hand upon the other's shoulder, "that he got her?"

"No, my friend; it was a hungry lion that charged us."

"You seem to know much of lions," said In-sad.

"Had I a brother I could not know him better," replied Tarzan.

"Then where can she be?" continued Om-at.

"We can but follow while the spoor is fresh," answered the ape- man and again

taking up his interrupted tracking he led them down the ridge and at a sharp turning of the trail to the left brought them to the verge of the cliff that dropped into the Kor-ul-lul. For a moment Tarzan examined the ground to the right and to the left, then he stood erect and looking at Om-at pointed into the gorge.

For a moment the Waz-don gazed down into the green rift at the bottom of which a tumultuous river tumbled downward along its rocky bed, then he closed his eyes as to a sudden spasm of pain and turned away.

"You—mean—she jumped?" he asked.

"To escape the lion," replied Tarzan.

"He was right behind her— look, you can see where his four paws left their impress in the turf as he checked his charge upon the very verge of the abyss."

"Is there any chance—" commenced Om-at, to be suddenly silenced by a warning gesture from Tarzan.

"Down!" whispered the ape-man, "many men are coming. They are running - from down the ridge." He flattened himself upon his belly in the grass, the others following his example.

For some minutes they waited thus and then the others, too, heard the sound of running feet and now a hoarse shout followed by many more.

"It is the war cry of the Kor-ul-lul," whispered Om-at—"the hunting cry of

men who hunt men. Presently shall we see them and if Jad-ben-Otho is pleased with us they shall not too greatly outnumber us."

"They are many," said Tarzan, "forty or fifty, I should say; but how many are the pursued and how many the pursuers we cannot even guess, except that the latter must greatly outnumber the former, else these would not run so fast."

"Here they come," said Ta-den.

"It is An-un, father of Pan-at-lee, and his two sons," exclaimed O-dan. "They will pass without seeing us if we do not hurry," he added looking at Om-at, the chief, for a sign.

"Come!" cried the latter, springing to his feet and running rapidly to intercept

the three fugitives. The others followed him.

"Five friends!" shouted Om-at as An-un and his sons discovered them.

"Adenen yo!" echoed O-dan and In-sad.

The fugitives scarcely paused as these unexpected reinforcements joined them but they eyed Ta-den and Tarzan with puzzled glances.

"The Kor-ul-lul are many," shouted An-un. "Would that we might pause and fight; but first we must warn Es-sat and our people."

"Yes," said Om-at, "we must warn our people."

"Es-sat is dead," said In-sad.

"Who is chief?" asked one of An-un's sons.

"Om-at," replied O-dan.

"It is well," cried An-un. "Pan-at-lee said that you would come back and slay Es-sat."

Now the enemy broke into sight behind them.

"Come!" cried Tarzan," let us turn and charge them, raising a great cry. They pursued but three and when they see eight charging upon them they will think that many men have come to do battle. They will believe that there are more even than they see and then one who is swift will have time to reach the gorge and warn your people."

"It is well," said Om-at. "Id-an, you

are swift—carry word to the warriors of Kor-ul-ja that we fight the Kor-ul-lul upon the ridge and that Ab-on shall send a hundred men."

Id-an, the son of An-un, sped swiftly toward the cliff- dwellings of the Kor-ul-ja while the others charged the oncoming Kor- ul-lul, the war cries of the two tribes rising and falling in a certain grim harmony. The leaders of the Kor-ul-lul paused at sight of the reinforcements, waiting apparently for those behind to catch up with them and, possibly, also to learn how great a force confronted them. The leaders, swifter runners than their fellows, perhaps, were far in advance while the balance of their number had not yet emerged from the

brush; and now as Om-at and his companions fell upon them with a ferocity born of necessity they fell back, so that when their companions at last came in sight of them they appeared to be in full rout. The natural result was that the others turned and fled.

Encouraged by this first success Om-at followed them into the brush, his little company charging valiantly upon his either side, and loud and terrifying were the savage yells with which they pursued the fleeing enemy. The brush, while not growing so closely together as to impede progress, was of such height as to hide the members of the party from one another when they became separated by even a few yards. The result was that

Tarzan, always swift and always keen for battle, was soon pursuing the enemy far in the lead of the others—a lack of prudence which was to prove his undoing.

The warriors of Kor-ul-lul, doubtless as valorous as their foemen, retreated only to a more strategic position in the brush, nor were they long in guessing that the number of their pursuers was fewer than their own. They made a stand then where the brush was densest—an ambush it was, and into this ran Tarzan of the Apes. They tricked him neatly. Yes, sad as is the narration of it, they tricked the wily jungle lord. But then they were fighting on their own ground, every foot of which they knew as you

know your front parlor, and they were following their own tactics, of which Tarzan knew nothing.

A single black warrior appeared to Tarzan a laggard in the rear of the retreating enemy and thus retreating he lured Tarzan on. At last he turned at bay confronting the ape-man with bludgeon and drawn knife and as Tarzan charged him a score of burly Waz-don leaped from the surrounding brush. Instantly, but too late, the giant Tarmangani realized his peril. There flashed before him a vision of his lost mate and a great and sickening regret surged through him with the realization that if she still lived she might no longer hope, for though she might never know of the passing of her

lord the fact of it must inevitably seal her doom.

And consequent to this thought there enveloped him a blind frenzy of hatred for these creatures who dared thwart his purpose and menace the welfare of his wife. With a savage growl he threw himself upon the warrior before him twisting the heavy club from the creature's hand as if he had been a little child, and with his left fist backed by the weight and sinew of his giant frame, he crashed a shattering blow to the center of the Waz-don's face —a blow that crushed the bones and dropped the fellow in his tracks. Then he swung upon the others with their fallen comrade's bludgeon striking to right and left mighty,

unmerciful blows that drove down their own weapons until that wielded by the ape-man was splintered and shattered. On either hand they fell before his cudgel; so rapid the delivery of his blows, so catlike his recovery that in the first few moments of the battle he seemed invulnerable to their attack; but it could not last—he was outnumbered twenty to one and his undoing came from a thrown club. It struck him upon the back of the head. For a moment he stood swaying and then like a great pine beneath the woodsman's ax he crashed to earth.

Others of the Kor-ul-lul had rushed to engage the balance of Om- at's party. They could be heard fighting at a short

distance and it was evident that the Kor-ul-ja were falling slowly back and as they fell Om-at called to the missing one: "Tarzan the Terrible! Tarzan the Terrible!"

"Jad-guru, indeed," repeated one of the Kor-ul-lul rising from where Tarzan had dropped him. "Tarzan-jad-guru! He was worse than that."

5. IN THE KOR-UL-GRYF

As Tarzan fell among his enemies a man halted many miles away upon the outer verge of the morass that encircles Pal-ul-don. Naked he was except for a loin cloth and three belts of cartridges, two of which passed over his shoulders, crossing upon his chest and back, while the third encircled his waist. Slung to his back by its leathern sling-strap was an Enfield, and he carried too a long knife, a bow and a quiver of arrows. He had come far, through wild and savage lands, menaced by fierce beasts and fiercer men, yet intact to the last cartridge was the ammunition that had filled his belts the day that he set out.

The bow and the arrows and the long

knife had brought him thus far safely, yet often in the face of great risks that could have been minimized by a single shot from the well-kept rifle at his back. What purpose might he have for conserving this precious ammunition? in risking his life to bring the last bright shining missile to his unknown goal? For what, for whom were these death-dealing bits of metal preserved? In all the world only he knew.

When Pan-at-lee stepped over the edge of the cliff above Kor-ul- lul she expected to be dashed to instant death upon the rocks below; but she had chosen this in preference to the rending fangs of ja. Instead, chance had ordained that she make the frightful plunge at a

point where the tumbling river swung close beneath the overhanging cliff to eddy for a slow moment in a deep pool before plunging madly downward again in a cataract of boiling foam, and water thundering against rocks.

Into this icy pool the girl shot, and down and down beneath the watery surface until, half choked, yet fighting bravely, she battled her way once more to air. Swimming strongly she made the opposite shore and there dragged herself out upon the bank to lie panting and spent until the approaching dawn warned her to seek concealment, for she was in the country of her people's enemies.

Rising, she moved into the concealment of the rank vegetation that

grows so riotously in the well-watered kors(1) of Pal-ul-don.

(1) I have used the Pal-ul-don word for gorge with the English plural, which is not the correct native plural form. The latter, it seems to me, is awkward for us and so I have generally ignored it throughout my manuscript, permitting, for example, Kor-ul-ja to answer for both singular and plural. However, for the benefit of those who may be interested in such things I may say that the plurals are formed simply for all words in the Pal-ul-don language by doubling the initial letter of the word, as k'kor, gorges, pronounced as though written kakor, the a having the sound of a

in sofa. Lions, d' don.

Hidden amidst the plant life from the sight of any who might chance to pass along the well-beaten trail that skirted the river Pan- at-lee sought rest and food, the latter growing in abundance all about her in the form of fruits and berries and succulent tubers which she scooped from the earth with the knife of the dead Es-sat.

Ah! if she had but known that he was dead! What trials and risks and terrors she might have been saved; but she thought that he still lived and so she dared not return to Kor-ul-ja. At least not yet while his rage was at white heat. Later, perhaps, her father and brothers

returned to their cave, she might risk it; but not now—not now. Nor could she for long remain here in the neighborhood of the hostile Kor-ul-lul and somewhere she must find safety from beasts before the night set in.

As she sat upon the bole of a fallen tree seeking some solution of the problem of existence that confronted her, there broke upon her ears from up the gorge the voices of shouting men—a sound that she recognized all too well. It was the war cry of the Kor-ul- lul. Closer and closer it approached her hiding place. Then, through the veil of foliage she caught glimpses of three figures fleeing along the trail, and behind them the shouting of the pursuers rose

louder and louder as they neared her. Again she caught sight of the fugitives crossing the river below the cataract and again they were lost to sight. And now the pursuers came into view—shouting Kor-ul-lul warriors, fierce and implacable. Forty, perhaps fifty of them. She waited breathless; but they did not swerve from the trail and passed her, unguessing that an enemy she lay hid within a few yards of them.

Once again she caught sight of the pursued—three Waz- don warriors clambering the cliff face at a point where portions of the summit had fallen away presenting a steep slope that might be ascended by such as these. Suddenly her attention was riveted upon the three.

Could it be? O Jad-ben-Otho! had she but known a moment before. When they passed she might have joined them, for they were her father and two brothers. Now it was too late. With bated breath and tense muscles she watched the race. Would they reach the summit? Would the Kor-ul-lul overhaul them? They climbed well, but, oh, so slowly. Now one lost his footing in the loose shale and slipped back! The Kor-ul-lul were ascending—one hurled his club at the nearest fugitive. The Great God was pleased with the brother of Pan- at-lee, for he caused the club to fall short of its target, and to fall, rolling and bounding, back upon its owner carrying him from his feet and precipitating him to the bottom

of the gorge.

Standing now, her hands pressed tight above her golden breastplates, Pan-at-lee watched the race for life. Now one, her older brother, reached the summit and clinging there to something that she could not see he lowered his body and his long tail to the father beneath him. The latter, seizing this support, extended his own tail to the son below—the one who had slipped back—and thus, upon a living ladder of their own making, the three reached the summit and disappeared from view before the Kor-ul-lul overtook them. But the latter did not abandon the chase. On they went until they too had disappeared from sight and only a faint shouting came down to

Pan-at-lee to tell her that the pursuit continued.

The girl knew that she must move on. At any moment now might come a hunting party, combing the gorge for the smaller animals that fed or bedded there.

Behind her were Es-sat and the returning party of Kor-ul-lul that had pursued her kin; before her, across the next ridge, was the Kor-ul-gryf, the lair of the terrifying monsters that brought the chill of fear to every inhabitant of Pal-ul-don; below her, in the valley, was the country of the Ho-don, where she could look for only slavery, or death; here were the Kor-ul-lul, the ancient enemies of her people and everywhere were the wild beasts that eat the flesh of man.

For but a moment she debated and then turning her face toward the southeast she set out across the gorge of water toward the Kor-ul- gryf —at least there were no men there. As it is now, so it was in the beginning, back to the primitive progenitor of man which is typified by Pan-at-lee and her kind today, of all the hunters that woman fears, man is the most relentless, the most terrible. To the dangers of man she preferred the dangers of the gryf.

Moving cautiously she reached the foot of the cliff at the far side of Kor-ul-lul and here, toward noon, she found a comparatively easy ascent. Crossing the ridge she stood at last upon the brink of Kor-ul-gryf— the horror place of the

folklore of her race. Dank and mysterious grew the vegetation below; giant trees waved their plumed tops almost level with the summit of the cliff; and over all brooded an ominous silence.

Pan-at-lee lay upon her belly and stretching over the edge scanned the cliff face below her. She could see caves there and the stone pegs which the ancients had fashioned so laboriously by hand. She had heard of these in the firelight tales of her childhood and of how the gryfs had come from the morasses across the mountains and of how at last the people had fled after many had been seized and devoured by the hideous creatures, leaving their

caves untenanted for no man living knew how long. Some said that Jad-ben-Otho, who has lived forever, was still a little boy. Pan-at-lee shuddered; but there were caves and in them she would be safe even from the gryfs.

She found a place where the stone pegs reached to the very summit of the cliff, left there no doubt in the final exodus of the tribe when there was no longer need of safeguarding the deserted caves against invasion. Pan-at-lee clambered slowly down toward the uppermost cave. She found the recess in front of the doorway almost identical with those of her own tribe. The floor of it, though, was littered with twigs and old nests and the droppings of birds,

until it was half choked. She moved along to another recess and still another, but all were alike in the accumulated filth. Evidently there was no need in looking further. This one seemed large and commodious. With her knife she fell to work cleaning away the debris by the simple expedient of pushing it over the edge, and always her eyes turned constantly toward the silent gorge where lurked the fearsome creatures of Pal-ul-don. And other eyes there were, eyes she did not see, but that saw her and watched her every move - fierce eyes, greedy eyes, cunning and cruel. They watched her, and a red tongue licked flabby, pendulous lips. They watched her, and a half-human brain laboriously

evolved a brutish design.

As in her own Kor-ul-ja, the natural springs in the cliff had been developed by the long-dead builders of the caves so that fresh, pure water trickled now, as it had for ages, within easy access to the cave entrances. Her only difficulty would be in procuring food and for that she must take the risk at least once in two days, for she was sure that she could find fruits and tubers and perhaps small animals, birds, and eggs near the foot of the cliff, the last two, possibly, in the caves themselves. Thus might she live on here indefinitely. She felt now a certain sense of security imparted doubtless by the impregnability of her high-flung sanctuary that she knew to be

safe from all the more dangerous beasts, and this one from men, too, since it lay in the abjured Kor-ul-gryf.

Now she determined to inspect the interior of her new home. The sun still in the south, lighted the interior of the first apartment. It was similar to those of her experience—the same beasts and men were depicted in the same crude fashion in the carvings on the walls—evidently there had been little progress in the race of Waz-don during the generations that had come and departed since Kor- ul-gryf had been abandoned by men. Of course Pan-at-lee thought no such thoughts, for evolution and progress existed not for her, or her kind. Things were as they had always been and would

always be as they were.

That these strange creatures have existed thus for incalculable ages it can scarce be doubted, so marked are the indications of antiquity about their dwellings—deep furrows worn by naked feet in living rock; the hollow in the jamb of a stone doorway where many arms have touched in passing; the endless carvings that cover, ofttimes, the entire face of a great cliff and all the walls and ceilings of every cave and each carving wrought by a different hand, for each is the coat of arms, one might say, of the adult male who traced it.

And so Pan-at-lee found this ancient cave homelike and familiar. There was

less litter within than she had found without and what there was was mostly an accumulation of dust. Beside the doorway was the niche in which wood and tinder were kept, but there remained nothing now other than mere dust. She had however saved a little pile of twigs from the debris on the porch. In a short time she had made a light by firing a bundle of twigs and lighting others from this fire she explored some of the inner rooms. Nor here did she find aught that was new or strange nor any relic of the departed owners other than a few broken stone dishes. She had been looking for something soft to sleep upon, but was doomed to disappointment as the former owners had evidently made a leisurely

departure, carrying all their belongings with them. Below, in the gorge were leaves and grasses and fragrant branches, but Pan-at-lee felt no stomach for descending into that horrid abyss for the gratification of mere creature comfort—only the necessity for food would drive her there.

And so, as the shadows lengthened and night approached she prepared to make as comfortable a bed as she could by gathering the dust of ages into a little pile and spreading it between her soft body and the hard floor— at best it was only better than nothing. But Pan-at-lee was very tired. She had not slept since two nights before and in the interval she had experienced many dangers and

hardships. What wonder then that despite the hard bed, she was asleep almost immediately she had composed herself for rest.

She slept and the moon rose, casting its silver light upon the cliff's white face and lessening the gloom of the dark forest and the dismal gorge. In the distance a lion roared. There was a long silence. From the upper reaches of the gorge came a deep bellow. There was a movement in the trees at the cliff's foot. Again the bellow, low and ominous. It was answered from below the deserted village. Something dropped from the foliage of a tree directly below the cave in which Pan-at-lee slept—it dropped to the ground among the dense shadows.

Now it moved, cautiously. It moved toward the foot of the cliff, taking form and shape in the moonlight. It moved like the creature of a bad dream—slowly, sluggishly. It might have been a huge sloth—it might have been a man, with so grotesque a brush does the moon paint - master cubist.

Slowly it moved up the face of the cliff—like a great grubworm it moved, but now the moon-brush touched it again and it had hands and feet and with them it clung to the stone pegs and raised itself laboriously aloft toward the cave where Pan-at-lee slept. From the lower reaches of the gorge came again the sound of bellowing, and it was answered from above the village.

Tarzan of the Apes opened his eyes. He was conscious of a pain in his head, and at first that was about all. A moment later grotesque shadows, rising and falling, focused his arousing perceptions. Presently he saw that he was in a cave. A dozen Waz-don warriors squatted about, talking. A rude stone cresset containing burning oil lighted the interior and as the flame rose and fell the exaggerated shadows of the warriors danced upon the walls behind them.

"We brought him to you alive, Gund," he heard one of them saying, "because never before was Ho-don like him seen. He has no tail—he was born without one, for there is no scar to mark where a

tail had been cut off. The thumbs upon his hands and feet are unlike those of the races of Pal-ul-don. He is more powerful than many men put together and he attacks with the fearlessness of ja. We brought him alive, that you might see him before he is slain."

The chief rose and approached the ape-man, who closed his eyes and feigned unconsciousness. He felt hairy hands upon him as he was turned over, none too gently. The gund examined him from head to foot, making comments, especially upon the shape and size of his thumbs and great toes.

"With these and with no tail," he said, "it cannot climb."

"No," agreed one of the warriors, "it

would surely fall even from the cliff pegs."

"I have never seen a thing like it," said the chief. "It is neither Waz-don nor Ho-don. I wonder from whence it came and what it is called."

"The Kor-ul-ja shouted aloud, 'Tarzan-jad-guru!' and we thought that they might be calling this one," said a warrior. "Shall we kill it now?"

"No," replied the chief, "we will wait until it's life returns into its head that I may question it. Remain here, In-tan, and watch it. When it can again hear and speak call me."

He turned and departed from the cave, the others, except In- tan, following him. As they moved past him and out of the

chamber Tarzan caught snatches of their conversation which indicated that the Kor-ul-ja reinforcements had fallen upon their little party in great numbers and driven them away. Evidently the swift feet of Id-an had saved the day for the warriors of Om-at. The ape-man smiled, then he partially opened an eye and cast it upon In-tan. The warrior stood at the entrance to the cave looking out—his back was toward his prisoner. Tarzan tested the bonds that secured his wrists. They seemed none too stout and they had tied his hands in front of him! Evidence indeed that the Waz-don took few prisoners—if any.

Cautiously he raised his wrists until he could examine the thongs that

confined them. A grim smile lighted his features. Instantly he was at work upon the bonds with his strong teeth, but ever a wary eye was upon In-tan, the warrior of Kor-ul-lul. The last knot had been loosened and Tarzan's hands were free when In-tan turned to cast an appraising eye upon his ward. He saw that the prisoner's position was changed—he no longer lay upon his back as they had left him, but upon his side and his hands were drawn up against his face. In-tan came closer and bent down. The bonds seemed very loose upon the prisoner's wrists. He extended his hand to examine them with his fingers and instantly the two hands leaped from their bonds—one to seize his own wrist, the other his

throat. So unexpected the catlike attack that In-tan had not even time to cry out before steel fingers silenced him. The creature pulled him suddenly forward so that he lost his balance and rolled over upon the prisoner and to the floor beyond to stop with Tarzan upon his breast. In-tan struggled to release himself—struggled to draw his knife; but Tarzan found it before him. The Waz-don's tail leaped to the other's throat, encircling it—he too could choke; but his own knife, in the hands of his antagonist, severed the beloved member close to its root.

The Waz-don's struggles became weaker—a film was obscuring his vision. He knew that he was dying and

he was right. A moment later he was dead. Tarzan rose to his feet and placed one foot upon the breast of his dead foe. How the urge seized him to roar forth the victory cry of his kind! But he dared not. He discovered that they had not removed his rope from his shoulders and that they had replaced his knife in its sheath. It had been in his hand when he was felled. Strange creatures! He did not know that they held a superstitious fear of the weapons of a dead enemy, believing that if buried without them he would forever haunt his slayers in search of them and that when he found them he would kill the man who killed him. Against the wall leaned his bow and quiver of arrows.

Tarzan stepped toward the doorway

of the cave and looked out. Night had just fallen. He could hear voices from the nearer caves and there floated to his nostrils the odor of cooking food. He looked down and experienced a sensation of relief. The cave in which he had been held was in the lowest tier—scarce thirty feet from the base of the cliff. He was about to chance an immediate descent when there occurred to him a thought that brought a grin to his savage lips—a thought that was born of the name the Waz-don had given him Tarzan-jad-guru—Tarzan the Terrible—and a recollection of the days when he had delighted in baiting the blacks of the distant jungle of his birth. He turned back into the cave where lay the dead

body of In-tan. With his knife he severed the warrior's head and carrying it to the outer edge of the recess tossed it to the ground below, then he dropped swiftly and silently down the ladder of pegs in a way that would have surprised the Kor-ul-lul who had been so sure that he could not climb.

At the bottom he picked up the head of In-tan and disappeared among the shadows of the trees carrying the grisly trophy by its shock of shaggy hair. Horrible? But you are judging a wild beast by the standards of civilization. You may teach a lion tricks, but he is still a lion. Tarzan looked well in a Tuxedo, but he was still a Tarmangani and beneath his pleated shirt beat a wild

and savage heart.

Nor was his madness lacking in method. He knew that the hearts of the Kor-ul-lul would be filled with rage when they discovered the thing that he had done and he knew too, that mixed with the rage would be a leaven of fear and it was fear of him that had made Tarzan master of many jungles— one does not win the respect of the killers with bonbons.

Below the village Tarzan returned to the foot of the cliff searching for a point where he could make the ascent to the ridge and thus back to the village of Om-at, the Kor-ul-ja. He came at last to a place where the river ran so close to the rocky wall that he was forced to swim it

in search of a trail upon the opposite side and here it was that his keen nostrils detected a familiar spoor. It was the scent of Pan-at-lee at the spot where she had emerged from the pool and taken to the safety of the jungle.

Immediately the ape-man's plans were changed. Pan-at-lee lived, or at least she had lived after the leap from the cliff's summit. He had started in search of her for Om-at, his friend, and for Om-at he would continue upon the trail he had picked up thus fortuitously by accident. It led him into the jungle and across the gorge and then to the point at which Pan-at-lee had commenced the ascent of the opposite cliffs. Here Tarzan abandoned the head of In-tan, tying it to the lower

branch of a tree, for he knew that it would handicap him in his ascent of the steep escarpment. Apelike he ascended, following easily the scent spoor of Pan-at-lee. Over the summit and across the ridge the trail lay, plain as a printed page to the delicate senses of the jungle-bred tracker.

Tarzan knew naught of the Kor-ul-gryf. He had seen, dimly in the shadows of the night, strange, monstrous forms and Ta-den and Om- at had spoken of great creatures that all men feared; but always, everywhere, by night and by day, there were dangers. From infancy death had stalked, grim and terrible, at his heels. He knew little of any other existence. To cope with danger was his

life and he lived his life as simply and as naturally as you live yours amidst the dangers of the crowded city streets. The black man who goes abroad in the jungle by night is afraid, for he has spent his life since infancy surrounded by numbers of his own kind and safeguarded, especially at night, by such crude means as lie within his powers. But Tarzan had lived as the lion lives and the panther and the elephant and the ape—a true jungle creature dependent solely upon his prowess and his wits, playing a lone hand against creation. Therefore he was surprised at nothing and feared nothing and so he walked through the strange night as undisturbed and unapprehensive as the farmer to the cow lot in the

darkness before the dawn.

Once more Pan-at-lee's trail ended at the verge of a cliff; but this time there was no indication that she had leaped over the edge and a moment's search revealed to Tarzan the stone pegs upon which she had made her descent. As he lay upon his belly leaning over the top of the cliff examining the pegs his attention was suddenly attracted by something at the foot of the cliff. He could not distinguish its identity, but he saw that it moved and presently that it was ascending slowly, apparently by means of pegs similar to those directly below him. He watched it intently as it rose higher and higher until he was able to distinguish its form more clearly, with

the result that he became convinced that it more nearly resembled some form of great ape than a lower order. It had a tail, though, and in other respects it did not seem a true ape.

Slowly it ascended to the upper tier of caves, into one of which it disappeared. Then Tarzan took up again the trail of Pan-at- lee. He followed it down the stone pegs to the nearest cave and then further along the upper tier. The ape-man raised his eyebrows when he saw the direction in which it led, and quickened his pace. He had almost reached the third cave when the echoes of Kor-ul-gryf were awakened by a shrill scream of terror.

6. THE TOR-O-DON

Pan-at-lee slept—the troubled sleep, of physical and nervous exhaustion, filled with weird dreamings. She dreamed that she slept beneath a great tree in the bottom of the Kor-ul-gryf and that one of the fearsome beasts was creeping upon her but she could not open her eyes nor move. She tried to scream but no sound issued from her lips. She felt the thing touch her throat, her breast, her arm, and there it closed and seemed to be dragging her toward it. With a super-human effort of will she opened her eyes. In the instant she knew that she was dreaming and that quickly the hallucination of the dream would fade—it had happened to her many times

before. But it persisted. In the dim light that filtered into the dark chamber she saw a form beside her, she felt hairy fingers upon her and a hairy breast against which she was being drawn. Jad-ben-Otho! this was no dream. And then she screamed and tried to fight the thing from her; but her scream was answered by a low growl and another hairy hand seized her by the hair of the head. The beast rose now upon its hind legs and dragged her from the cave to the moonlit recess without and at the same instant she saw the figure of what she took to be a Ho-don rise above the outer edge of the niche.

The beast that held her saw it too and growled ominously but it did not

relinquish its hold upon her hair. It crouched as though waiting an attack, and it increased the volume and frequency of its growls until the horrid sounds reverberated through the gorge, drowning even the deep bellowings of the beasts below, whose mighty thunderings had broken out anew with the sudden commotion from the high-flung cave. The beast that held her crouched and the creature that faced it crouched also, and growled—as hideously as the other. Pan-at-lee trembled. This was no Ho-don and though she feared the Ho-don she feared this thing more, with its catlike crouch and its beastly growls. She was lost—that Pan-at-lee knew. The two things

might fight for her, but whichever won she was lost. Perhaps, during the battle, if it came to that, she might find the opportunity to throw herself over into the Kor-ul-gryf.

The thing that held her she had recognized now as a Tor-o-don, but the other thing she could not place, though in the moonlight she could see it very distinctly. It had no tail. She could see its hands and its feet, and they were not the hands and feet of the races of Pal-ul-don. It was slowly closing upon the Tor-o-don and in one hand it held a gleaming knife. Now it spoke and to Pan-at-lee's terror was added an equal weight of consternation.

"When it leaves go of you," it said,

"as it will presently to defend itself, run quickly behind me, Pan-at-lee, and go to the cave nearest the pegs you descended from the cliff top. Watch from there. If I am defeated you will have time to escape this slow thing; if I am not I will come to you there. I am Om-at's friend and yours."

The last words took the keen edge from Pan-at-lee's terror; but she did not understand. How did this strange creature know her name? How did it know that she had descended the pegs by a certain cave? It must, then, have been here when she came. Pan-at-lee was puzzled.

"Who are you?" she asked, "and from whence do you come?"

"I am Tarzan," he replied, "and just now I came from Om-at, of Kor-ul-ja, in search of you."

Om-at, gund of Kor-ul-ja! What wild talk was this? She would have questioned him further, but now he was approaching the Tor-o-don and the latter was screaming and growling so loudly as to drown the sound of her voice. And then it did what the strange creature had said that it would do - it released its hold upon her hair as it prepared to charge. Charge it did and in those close quarters there was no room to fence for openings. Instantly the two beasts locked in deadly embrace, each seeking the other's throat. Pan-at-lee watched, taking no advantage of the opportunity to

escape which their preoccupation gave her. She watched and waited, for into her savage little brain had come the resolve to pin her faith to this strange creature who had unlocked her heart with those four words—"I am Om-at's friend!" And so she waited, with drawn knife, the opportunity to do her bit in the vanquishing of the Tor-o-don. That the newcomer could do it unaided she well knew to be beyond the realms of possibility, for she knew well the prowess of the beastlike man with whom it fought. There were not many of them in Pal-ul-don, but what few there were were a terror to the women of the Waz-don and the Ho-don, for the old Tor-o-don bulls roamed the mountains and the

valleys of Pal-ul-don between rutting seasons and woe betide the women who fell in their paths.

With his tail the Tor-o-don sought one of Tarzan's ankles, and finding it, tripped him. The two fell heavily, but so agile was the ape-man and so quick his powerful muscles that even in falling he twisted the beast beneath him, so that Tarzan fell on top and now the tail that had tripped him sought his throat as had the tail of In- tan, the Kor-ul-lul. In the effort of turning his antagonist's body during the fall Tarzan had had to relinquish his knife that he might seize the shaggy body with both hands and now the weapon lay out of reach at the very edge of the recess. Both hands were

occupied for the moment in fending off the clutching fingers that sought to seize him and drag his throat within reach of his foe's formidable fangs and now the tail was seeking its deadly hold with a formidable persistence that would not be denied.

Pan-at-lee hovered about, breathless, her dagger ready, but there was no opening that did not also endanger Tarzan, so constantly were the two duelists changing their positions. Tarzan felt the tail slowly but surely insinuating itself about his neck though he had drawn his head down between the muscles of his shoulders in an effort to protect this vulnerable part. The battle seemed to be going against him for the

giant beast against which he strove would have been a fair match in weight and strength for Bolgani, the gorilla. And knowing this he suddenly exerted a single super-human effort, thrust far apart the giant hands and with the swiftness of a striking snake buried his fangs in the jugular of the Tor-o-don. At the same instant the creature's tail coiled about his own throat and then commenced a battle royal of turning and twisting bodies as each sought to dislodge the fatal hold of the other, but the acts of the ape-man were guided by a human brain and thus it was that the rolling bodies rolled in the direction that Tarzan wished—toward the edge of the recess.

The choking tail had shut the air from his lungs, he knew that his gasping lips were parted and his tongue protruding; and now his brain reeled and his sight grew dim; but not before he reached his goal and a quick hand shot out to seize the knife that now lay within reach as the two bodies tottered perilously upon the brink of the chasm.

With all his remaining strength the ape-man drove home the blade— once, twice, thrice, and then all went black before him as he felt himself, still in the clutches of the Tor-o-don, topple from the recess.

Fortunate it was for Tarzan that Pan-at-lee had not obeyed his injunction to make good her escape while he engaged

the Tor-o-don, for it was to this fact that he owed his life. Close beside the struggling forms during the brief moments of the terrific climax she had realized every detail of the danger to Tarzan with which the emergency was fraught and as she saw the two rolling over the outer edge of the niche she seized the ape-man by an ankle at the same time throwing herself prone upon the rocky floor. The muscles of the Tor-o- don relaxed in death with the last thrust of Tarzan's knife and with its hold upon the ape-man released it shot from sight into the gorge below.

It was with infinite difficulty that Pan-at-lee retained her hold upon the ankle of her protector, but she did so and then,

slowly, she sought to drag the dead weight back to the safety of the niche. This, however, was beyond her strength and she could but hold on tightly, hoping that some plan would suggest itself before her powers of endurance failed. She wondered if, after all, the creature was already dead, but that she could not bring herself to believe—and if not dead how long it would be before he regained consciousness. If he did not regain it soon he never would regain it, that she knew, for she felt her fingers numbing to the strain upon them and slipping, slowly, slowly, from their hold. It was then that Tarzan regained consciousness. He could not know what power upheld him, but he felt that whatever it was it

was slowly releasing its hold upon his ankle. Within easy reach of his hands were two pegs and these he seized upon just as Pan-at-lee's fingers slipped from their hold.

As it was he came near to being precipitated into the gorge—only his great strength saved him. He was upright now and his feet found other pegs. His first thought was of his foe. Where was he? Waiting above there to finish him? Tarzan looked up just as the frightened face of Pan-at-lee appeared over the threshold of the recess.

"You live?" she cried.

"Yes," replied Tarzan. "Where is the shaggy one?"

Pan-at-lee pointed downward.

"There," she said, "dead."

"Good!" exclaimed the ape-man, clambering to her side. "You are unharmed?" he asked.

"You came just in time," replied Pan-at-lee; "but who are you and how did you know that I was here and what do you know of Om-at and where did you come from and what did you mean by calling Om-at, gund?"

"Wait, wait," cried Tarzan; "one at a time. My, but you are all alike - the shes of the tribe of Kerchak, the ladies of England, and their sisters of Pal-ul-don. Have patience and I will try to tell you all that you wish to know. Four of us set out with Om-at from Kor-ul- ja to search for you. We were attacked by the Kor-

ul-lul and separated. I was taken prisoner, but escaped. Again I stumbled upon your trail and followed it, reaching the summit of this cliff just as the hairy one was climbing up after you. I was coming to investigate when I heard your scream—the rest you know."

"But you called Om-at, gund of Kor-ul-ja," she insisted. "Es- sat is gund."

"Es-sat is dead," explained the ape-man. "Om-at slew him and now Om-at is gund. Om-at came back seeking you. He found Es-sat in your cave and killed him."

"Yes," said the girl, "Es-sat came to my cave and I struck him down with my golden breastplates and escaped."

"And a lion pursued you," continued

Tarzan, "and you leaped from the cliff into Kor-ul-lul, but why you were not killed is beyond me."

"Is there anything beyond you?" exclaimed Pan-at-lee. "How could you know that a lion pursued me and that I leaped from the cliff and not know that it was the pool of deep water below that saved me?"

"I would have known that, too, had not the Kor-ul-lul come then and prevented me continuing upon your trail. But now I would ask you a question - by what name do you call the thing with which I just fought?"

"It was a Tor-o-don," she replied. "I have seen but one before. They are terrible creatures with the cunning of

man and the ferocity of a beast. Great indeed must be the warrior who slays one single- handed." She gazed at him in open admiration.

"And now," said Tarzan, "you must sleep, for tomorrow we shall return to Kor-ul-ja and Om-at, and I doubt that you have had much rest these two nights."

Pan-at-lee, lulled by a feeling of security, slept peacefully into the morning while Tarzan stretched himself upon the hard floor of the recess just outside her cave.

The sun was high in the heavens when he awoke; for two hours it had looked down upon another heroic figure miles away—the figure of a godlike man

fighting his way through the hideous morass that lies like a filthy moat defending Pal-ul-don from the creatures of the outer world. Now waist deep in the sucking ooze, now menaced by loathsome reptiles, the man advanced only by virtue of Herculean efforts gaining laboriously by inches along the devious way that he was forced to choose in selecting the least precarious footing. Near the center of the morass was open water—slimy, green-hued water. He reached it at last after more than two hours of such effort as would have left an ordinary man spent and dying in the sticky mud, yet he was less than halfway across the marsh. Greasy with slime and mud was his smooth,

brown hide, and greasy with slime and mud was his beloved Enfield that had shone so brightly in the first rays of the rising sun.

He paused a moment upon the edge of the open water and then throwing himself forward struck out to swim across. He swam with long, easy, powerful strokes calculated less for speed than for endurance, for his was, primarily, a test of the latter, since beyond the open water was another two hours or more of gruelling effort between it and solid ground. He was, perhaps, halfway across and congratulating himself upon the ease of the achievement of this portion of his task when there arose from the depths

directly in his path a hideous reptile, which, with wide-distended jaws, bore down upon him, hissing shrilly.

Tarzan arose and stretched, expanded his great chest and drank in deep draughts of the fresh morning air. His clear eyes scanned the wondrous beauties of the landscape spread out before them. Directly below lay Kor-ul-gryf, a dense, somber green of gently moving tree tops. To Tarzan it was neither grim, nor forbidding—it was jungle, beloved jungle. To his right there spread a panorama of the lower reaches of the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho, with its winding streams and its blue lakes. Gleaming whitely in the sunlight were scattered groups of dwellings—the

feudal strongholds of the lesser chiefs of the Ho-don. A-lur, the City of Light, he could not see as it was hidden by the shoulder of the cliff in which the deserted village lay.

For a moment Tarzan gave himself over to that spiritual enjoyment of beauty that only the man-mind may attain and then Nature asserted herself and the belly of the beast called aloud that it was hungry. Again Tarzan looked down at Kor-ul-gryf. There was the jungle! Grew there a jungle that would not feed Tarzan? The ape-man smiled and commenced the descent to the gorge. Was there danger there? Of course. Who knew it better than Tarzan? In all jungles lies death, for life and death go hand in

hand and where life teems death reaps his fullest harvest. Never had Tarzan met a creature of the jungle with which he could not cope—sometimes by virtue of brute strength alone, again by a combination of brute strength and the cunning of the man-mind; but Tarzan had never met a gryf.

He had heard the bellowings in the gorge the night before after he had lain down to sleep and he had meant to ask Pan-at-lee this morning what manner of beast so disturbed the slumbers of its betters. He reached the foot of the cliff and strode into the jungle and here he halted, his keen eyes and ears watchful and alert, his sensitive nostrils searching each shifting air current for the scent

spoor of game. Again he advanced deeper into the wood, his light step giving forth no sound, his bow and arrows in readiness. A light morning breeze was blowing from up the gorge and in this direction he bent his steps. Many odors impinged upon his organs of scent. Some of these he classified without effort, but others were strange—the odors of beasts and of birds, of trees and shrubs and flowers with which he was unfamiliar. He sensed faintly the reptilian odor that he had learned to connect with the strange, nocturnal forms that had loomed dim and bulky on several occasions since his introduction to Pal-ul-don.

And then, suddenly he caught plainly

the strong, sweet odor of Bara, the deer. Were the belly vocal, Tarzan's would have given a little cry of joy, for it loved the flesh of Bara. The ape-man moved rapidly, but cautiously forward. The prey was not far distant and as the hunter approached it, he took silently to the trees and still in his nostrils was the faint reptilian odor that spoke of a great creature which he had never yet seen except as a denser shadow among the dense shadows of the night; but the odor was of such a faintness as suggests to the jungle bred the distance of absolute safety.

And now, moving noiselessly, Tarzan came within sight of Bara drinking at a pool where the stream that waters Kor-

ul-gryf crosses an open place in the jungle. The deer was too far from the nearest tree to risk a charge, so the ape-man must depend upon the accuracy and force of his first arrow, which must drop the deer in its tracks or forfeit both deer and shaft. Far back came the right hand and the bow, that you or I might not move, bent easily beneath the muscles of the forest god. There was a singing twang and Bara, leaping high in air, collapsed upon the ground, an arrow through his heart. Tarzan dropped to earth and ran to his kill, lest the animal might even yet rise and escape; but Bara was safely dead. As Tarzan stooped to lift it to his shoulder there fell upon his ears a thunderous bellow that seemed

almost at his right elbow, and as his eyes shot in the direction of the sound, there broke upon his vision such a creature as paleontologists have dreamed as having possibly existed in the dimmest vistas of Earth's infancy—a gigantic creature, vibrant with mad rage, that charged, bellowing, upon him.

When Pan-at-lee awoke she looked out upon the niche in search of Tarzan. He was not there. She sprang to her feet and rushed out, looking down into Kor-ul-gryf guessing that he had gone down in search of food and there she caught a glimpse of him disappearing into the forest. For an instant she was panic-stricken. She knew that he was a stranger in Pal-ul-don and that, so, he might not

realize the dangers that lay in that gorge of terror. Why did she not call to him to return? You or I might have done so, but no Pal-ul-don, for they know the ways of the gryf—they know the weak eyes and the keen ears, and that at the sound of a human voice they come. To have called to Tarzan, then, would but have been to invite disaster and so she did not call. Instead, afraid though she was, she descended into the gorge for the purpose of overhauling Tarzan and warning him in whispers of his danger. It was a brave act, since it was performed in the face of countless ages of inherited fear of the creatures that she might be called upon to face. Men have been decorated for less.

Pan-at-lee, descended from a long line of hunters, assumed that Tarzan would move up wind and in this direction she sought his tracks, which she soon found well marked, since he had made no effort to conceal them. She moved rapidly until she reached the point at which Tarzan had taken to the trees. Of course she knew what had happened; since her own people were semi-arboreal; but she could not track him through the trees, having no such well-developed sense of scent as he.

She could but hope that he had continued on up wind and in this direction she moved, her heart pounding in terror against her ribs, her eyes glancing first in one direction and then

another. She had reached the edge of a clearing when two things happened—she caught sight of Tarzan bending over a dead deer and at the same instant a deafening roar sounded almost beside her. It terrified her beyond description, but it brought no paralysis of fear. Instead it galvanized her into instant action with the result that Pan-at-lee swarmed up the nearest tree to the very loftiest branch that would sustain her weight. Then she looked down.

The thing that Tarzan saw charging him when the warning bellow attracted his surprised eyes loomed terrifically monstrous before him—monstrous and awe-inspiring; but it did not terrify Tarzan, it only angered him, for he saw

that it was beyond even his powers to combat and that meant that it might cause him to lose his kill, and Tarzan was hungry. There was but a single alternative to remaining for annihilation and that was flight—swift and immediate. And Tarzan fled, but he carried the carcass of Bara, the deer, with him. He had not more than a dozen paces start, but on the other hand the nearest tree was almost as close. His greatest danger lay, he imagined, in the great, towering height of the creature pursuing him, for even though he reached the tree he would have to climb high in an incredibly short time as, unless appearances were deceiving, the thing could reach up and pluck him down from

any branch under thirty feet above the ground, and possibly from those up to fifty feet, if it reared up on its hind legs.

But Tarzan was no sluggard and though the gryf was incredibly fast despite its great bulk, it was no match for Tarzan, and when it comes to climbing, the little monkeys gaze with envy upon the feats of the ape-man. And so it was that the bellowing gryf came to a baffled stop at the foot of the tree and even though he reared up and sought to seize his prey among the branches, as Tarzan had guessed he might, he failed in this also. And then, well out of reach, Tarzan came to a stop and there, just above him, he saw Pan-at-lee sitting, wide-eyed and trembling.

"How came you here?" he asked.

She told him. "You came to warn me!" he said. "It was very brave and unselfish of you. I am chagrined that I should have been thus surprised. The creature was up wind from me and yet I did not sense its near presence until it charged. I cannot understand it."

"It is not strange," said Pan-at-lee. "That is one of the peculiarities of the gryf—it is said that man never knows of its presence until it is upon him—so silently does it move despite its great size."

"But I should have smelled it," cried Tarzan, disgustedly.

"Smelled it!" ejaculated Pan-at-lee. "Smelled it?"

"Certainly. How do you suppose I found this deer so quickly? And I sensed the gryf, too, but faintly as at a great distance." Tarzan suddenly ceased speaking and looked down at the bellowing creature below them—his nostrils quivered as though searching for a scent. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "I have it!"

"What?" asked Pan-at-lee.

"I was deceived because the creature gives off practically no odor," explained the ape-man. "What I smelled was the faint aroma that doubtless permeates the entire jungle because of the long presence of many of the creatures—it is the sort of odor that would remain for a long time, faint as it is.

"Pan-at-lee, did you ever hear of a

triceratops? No? Well this thing that you call a gryf is a triceratops and it has been extinct for hundreds of thousands of years. I have seen its skeleton in the museum in London and a figure of one restored. I always thought that the scientists who did such work depended principally upon an overwrought imagination, but I see that I was wrong. This living thing is not an exact counterpart of the restoration that I saw; but it is so similar as to be easily recognizable, and then, too, we must remember that during the ages that have elapsed since the paleontologist's specimen lived many changes might have been wrought by evolution in the living line that has quite evidently persisted in

Pal-ul-don."

"Triceratops, London, paleo—I don't know what you are talking about," cried Pan-at-lee.

Tarzan smiled and threw a piece of dead wood at the face of the angry creature below them. Instantly the great bony hood over the neck was erected and a mad bellow rolled upward from the gigantic body. Full twenty feet at the shoulder the thing stood, a dirty slate-blue in color except for its yellow face with the blue bands encircling the eyes, the red hood with the yellow lining and the yellow belly. The three parallel lines of bony protuberances down the back gave a further touch of color to the body, those following the line of the spine

being red, while those on either side are yellow. The five- and three-toed hoofs of the ancient horned dinosaurs had become talons in the gryf, but the three horns, two large ones above the eyes and a median horn on the nose, had persisted through all the ages. Weird and terrible as was its appearance Tarzan could not but admire the mighty creature looming big below him, its seventy-five feet of length majestically typifying those things which all his life the ape-man had admired— courage and strength. In that massive tail alone was the strength of an elephant.

The wicked little eyes looked up at him and the horny beak opened to disclose a full set of powerful teeth.

"Herbivorous!" murmured the ape-man. "Your ancestors may have been, but not you," and then to Pan-at-lee: "Let us go now. At the cave we will have deer meat and then—back to Kor-ul-ja and Om- at."

The girl shuddered. "Go?" she repeated. "We will never go from here."

"Why not?" asked Tarzan.

For answer she but pointed to the gryf.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the man. "It cannot climb. We can reach the cliff through the trees and be back in the cave before it knows what has become of us."

"You do not know the gryf," replied Pan-at-lee gloomily.

"Wherever we go it will follow and always it will be ready at the foot of each tree when we would descend. It will never give us up."

"We can live in the trees for a long time if necessary," replied Tarzan, "and sometime the thing will leave."

The girl shook her head. "Never," she said, "and then there are the Tor-o-don. They will come and kill us and after eating a little will throw the balance to the gryf—the gryf and Tor-o-don are friends, because the Tor-o-don shares his food with the gryf."

"You may be right," said Tarzan; "but even so I don't intend waiting here for someone to come along and eat part of me and then feed the balance to that

beast below. If I don't get out of this place whole it won't be my fault. Come along now and we'll make a try at it," and so saying he moved off through the tree tops with Pan-at- lee close behind. Below them, on the ground, moved the horned dinosaur and when they reached the edge of the forest where there lay fifty yards of open ground to cross to the foot of the cliff he was there with them, at the bottom of the tree, waiting.

Tarzan looked ruefully down and scratched his head.

7. JUNGLE CRAFT

Presently he looked up and at Pan-at-lee. "Can you cross the gorge through the trees very rapidly?" he questioned.

"Alone?" she asked.

"No," replied Tarzan.

"I can follow wherever you can lead," she said then.

"Across and back again?"

"Yes."

"Then come, and do exactly as I bid." He started back again through the trees, swiftly, swinging monkey-like from limb to limb, following a zigzag course that he tried to select with an eye for the difficulties of the trail beneath. Where the underbrush was heaviest, where

fallen trees blocked the way, he led the footsteps of the creature below them; but all to no avail. When they reached the opposite side of the gorge the gryf was with them.

"Back again," said Tarzan, and, turning, the two retraced their high-flung way through the upper terraces of the ancient forest of Kor-ul-gryf. But the result was the same—no, not quite; it was worse, for another gryf had joined the first and now two waited beneath the tree in which they stopped.

The cliff looming high above them with its innumerable cave mouths seemed to beckon and to taunt them. It was so near, yet eternity yawned between. The body of the Tor-o-don lay

at the cliff's foot where it had fallen. It was in plain view of the two in the tree. One of the gryfs walked over and sniffed about it, but did not offer to devour it. Tarzan had examined it casually as he had passed earlier in the morning. He guessed that it represented either a very high order of ape or a very low order of man—something akin to the Java man, perhaps; a truer example of the pithecanthropi than either the Ho-don or the Waz-don; possibly the precursor of them both. As his eyes wandered idly over the scene below his active brain was working out the details of the plan that he had made to permit Pan-at-lee's escape from the gorge. His thoughts were interrupted by a strange cry from

above them in the gorge.

"Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" it sounded, coming closer.

The gryfs below raised their heads and looked in the direction of the interruption. One of them made a low, rumbling sound in its throat. It was not a bellow and it did not indicate anger. Immediately the "Whee-oo!" responded. The gryfs repeated the rumbling and at intervals the "Whee-oo!" was repeated, coming ever closer.

Tarzan looked at Pan-at-lee. "What is it?" he asked.

"I do not know," she replied. "Perhaps a strange bird, or another horrid beast that dwells in this frightful place."

"Ah," exclaimed Tarzan; "there it is. Look!"

Pan-at-lee voiced a cry of despair. "A Tor-o-don!"

The creature, walking erect and carrying a stick in one hand, advanced at a slow, lumbering gait. It walked directly toward the gryfs who moved aside, as though afraid. Tarzan watched intently. The Tor-o-don was now quite close to one of the triceratops. It swung its head and snapped at him viciously. Instantly the Tor-o-don sprang in and commenced to belabor the huge beast across the face with his stick. To the ape-man's amazement the gryf, that might have annihilated the comparatively puny Tor-o-don instantly in any of a dozen

ways, cringed like a whipped cur.

"Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" shouted the Tor-o-don and the gryf came slowly toward him. A whack on the median horn brought it to a stop. Then the Tor-o-don walked around behind it, clambered up its tail and seated himself astraddle of the huge back. "Whee-oo!" he shouted and prodded the beast with a sharp point of his stick. The gryf commenced to move off.

So rapt had Tarzan been in the scene below him that he had given no thought to escape, for he realized that for him and Pan-at- lee time had in these brief moments turned back countless ages to spread before their eyes a page of the dim and distant past. They two had

looked upon the first man and his primitive beasts of burden.

And now the ridden gryf halted and looked up at them, bellowing. It was sufficient. The creature had warned its master of their presence. Instantly the Tor-o-don urged the beast close beneath the tree which held them, at the same time leaping to his feet upon the horny back. Tarzan saw the bestial face, the great fangs, the mighty muscles. From the loins of such had sprung the human race—and only from such could it have sprung, for only such as this might have survived the horrid dangers of the age that was theirs.

The Tor-o-don beat upon his breast and growled horribly—hideous,

uncouth, beastly. Tarzan rose to his full height upon a swaying branch - straight and beautiful as a demigod—unspoiled by the taint of civilization—a perfect specimen of what the human race might have been had the laws of man not interfered with the laws of nature.

The Present fitted an arrow to his bow and drew the shaft far back. The Past basing its claims upon brute strength sought to reach the other and drag him down; but the loosed arrow sank deep into the savage heart and the Past sank back into the oblivion that had claimed his kind.

"Tarzan-jad-guru!" murmured Pan-at-lee, unknowingly giving him out of the fullness of her admiration the same title

that the warriors of her tribe had bestowed upon him.

The ape-man turned to her. "Pan-at-lee," he said, "these beasts may keep us treed here indefinitely. I doubt if we can escape together, but I have a plan. You remain here, hiding yourself in the foliage, while I start back across the gorge in sight of them and yelling to attract their attention. Unless they have more brains than I suspect they will follow me. When they are gone you make for the cliff. Wait for me in the cave not longer than today. If I do not come by tomorrow's sun you will have to start back for Kor-ul-ja alone. Here is a joint of deer meat for you." He had severed one of the deer's hind legs and

this he passed up to her.

"I cannot desert you," she said simply; "it is not the way of my people to desert a friend and ally. Om-at would never forgive me."

"Tell Om-at that I commanded you to go," replied Tarzan.

"It is a command?" she asked.

"It is! Good-bye, Pan-at-lee. Hasten back to Om-at—you are a fitting mate for the chief of Kor-ul-ja." He moved off slowly through the trees.

"Good-bye, Tarzan-jad-guru!" she called after him. "Fortunate are my Om-at and his Pan-at-lee in owning such a friend."

Tarzan, shouting aloud, continued

upon his way and the great gryfs, lured by his voice, followed beneath. His ruse was evidently proving successful and he was filled with elation as he led the bellowing beasts farther and farther from Pan-at-lee. He hoped that she would take advantage of the opportunity afforded her for escape, yet at the same time he was filled with concern as to her ability to survive the dangers which lay between Kor-ul-gryf and Kor-ul-ja. There were lions and Tor-o-dons and the unfriendly tribe of Kor-ul- lul to hinder her progress, though the distance in itself to the cliffs of her people was not great.

He realized her bravery and understood the resourcefulness that she

must share in common with all primitive people who, day by day, must contend face to face with nature's law of the survival of the fittest, unaided by any of the numerous artificial protections that civilization has thrown around its brood of weaklings.

Several times during this crossing of the gorge Tarzan endeavored to outwit his keen pursuers, but all to no avail. Double as he would he could not throw them off his track and ever as he changed his course they changed theirs to conform. Along the verge of the forest upon the southeastern side of the gorge he sought some point at which the trees touched some negotiable portion of the cliff, but though he traveled far both up

and down the gorge he discovered no such easy avenue of escape. The ape-man finally commenced to entertain an idea of the hopelessness of his case and to realize to the full why the Kor-ul-gryf had been religiously abjured by the races of Pal-ul-don for all these many ages.

Night was falling and though since early morning he had sought diligently a way out of this cul-de-sac he was no nearer to liberty than at the moment the first bellowing gryf had charged him as he stooped over the carcass of his kill: but with the falling of night came renewed hope for, in common with the great cats, Tarzan was, to a greater or lesser extent, a nocturnal beast. It is true

he could not see by night as well as they, but that lack was largely recompensed for by the keenness of his scent and the highly developed sensitiveness of his other organs of perception. As the blind follow and interpret their Braille characters with deft fingers, so Tarzan reads the book of the jungle with feet and hands and eyes and ears and nose; each contributing its share to the quick and accurate translation of the text.

But again he was doomed to be thwarted by one vital weakness—he did not know the gryf, and before the night was over he wondered if the things never slept, for wheresoever he moved they moved also, and always they barred his road to liberty. Finally, just before

dawn, he relinquished his immediate effort and sought rest in a friendly tree crotch in the safety of the middle terrace.

Once again was the sun high when Tarzan awoke, rested and refreshed. Keen to the necessities of the moment he made no effort to locate his jailers lest in the act he might apprise them of his movements. Instead he sought cautiously and silently to melt away among the foliage of the trees. His first move, however, was heralded by a deep bellow from below.

Among the numerous refinements of civilization that Tarzan had failed to acquire was that of profanity, and possibly it is to be regretted since there are circumstances under which it is at

least a relief to pent emotion. And it may be that in effect Tarzan resorted to profanity if there can be physical as well as vocal swearing, since immediately the bellow announced that his hopes had been again frustrated, he turned quickly and seeing the hideous face of the gryf below him seized a large fruit from a nearby branch and hurled it viciously at the horned snout. The missile struck full between the creature's eyes, resulting in a reaction that surprised the ape-man; it did not arouse the beast to a show of revengeful rage as Tarzan had expected and hoped; instead the creature gave a single vicious side snap at the fruit as it bounded from his skull and then turned sulkily away, walking off a few steps.

There was that in the act that recalled immediately to Tarzan's mind similar action on the preceding day when the Tor-o-don had struck one of the creatures across the face with his staff, and instantly there sprung to the cunning and courageous brain a plan of escape from his predicament that might have blanched the cheek of the most heroic.

The gambling instinct is not strong among creatures of the wild; the chances of their daily life are sufficient stimuli for the beneficial excitement of their nerve centers. It has remained for civilized man, protected in a measure from the natural dangers of existence, to invent artificial stimulants in the form of cards and dice and roulette wheels. Yet

when necessity bids there are no greater gamblers than the savage denizens of the jungle, the forest, and the hills, for as lightly as you roll the ivory cubes upon the green cloth they will gamble with death—their own lives the stake.

And so Tarzan would gamble now, pitting the seemingly wild deductions of his shrewd brain against all the proofs of the bestial ferocity of his antagonists that his experience of them had adduced—against all the age-old folklore and legend that had been handed down for countless generations and passed on to him through the lips of Pan-at-lee.

Yet as he worked in preparation for the greatest play that man can make in the game of life, he smiled; nor was

there any indication of haste or excitement or nervousness in his demeanor.

First he selected a long, straight branch about two inches in diameter at its base. This he cut from the tree with his knife, removed the smaller branches and twigs until he had fashioned a pole about ten feet in length. This he sharpened at the smaller end. The staff finished to his satisfaction he looked down upon the triceratops.

"Whee-oo!" he cried.

Instantly the beasts raised their heads and looked at him. From the throat of one of them came faintly a low rumbling sound.

"Whee-oo!" repeated Tarzan and

hurled the balance of the carcass of the deer to them.

Instantly the gryfs fell upon it with much bellowing, one of them attempting to seize it and keep it from the other: but finally the second obtained a hold and an instant later it had been torn asunder and greedily devoured. Once again they looked up at the ape- man and this time they saw him descending to the ground.

One of them started toward him. Again Tarzan repeated the weird cry of the Tor-o-don. The gryf halted in his track, apparently puzzled, while Tarzan slipped lightly to the earth and advanced toward the nearer beast, his staff raised menacingly and the call of the first-man upon his lips.

Would the cry be answered by the low rumbling of the beast of burden or the horrid bellow of the man-eater? Upon the answer to this question hung the fate of the ape-man.

Pan-at-lee was listening intently to the sounds of the departing gryfs as Tarzan led them cunningly from her, and when she was sure that they were far enough away to insure her safe retreat she dropped swiftly from the branches to the ground and sped like a frightened deer across the open space to the foot of the cliff, stepped over the body of the Tor-o-don who had attacked her the night before and was soon climbing rapidly up the ancient stone pegs of the deserted cliff village. In the mouth of the cave

near that which she had occupied she kindled a fire and cooked the haunch of venison that Tarzan had left her, and from one of the trickling streams that ran down the face of the escarpment she obtained water to satisfy her thirst.

All day she waited, hearing in the distance, and sometimes close at hand, the bellowing of the gryfs which pursued the strange creature that had dropped so miraculously into her life. For him she felt the same keen, almost fanatical loyalty that many another had experienced for Tarzan of the Apes. Beast and human, he had held them to him with bonds that were stronger than steel—those of them that were clean and courageous, and the weak and the

helpless; but never could Tarzan claim among his admirers the coward, the ingrate or the scoundrel; from such, both man and beast, he had won fear and hatred.

To Pan-at-lee he was all that was brave and noble and heroic and, too, he was Om-at's friend—the friend of the man she loved. For any one of these reasons Pan-at-lee would have died for Tarzan, for such is the loyalty of the simple-minded children of nature. It has remained for civilization to teach us to weigh the relative rewards of loyalty and its antithesis. The loyalty of the primitive is spontaneous, unreasoning, unselfish and such was the loyalty of Pan-at-lee for the Tarmangani.

And so it was that she waited that day and night, hoping that he would return that she might accompany him back to Om-at, for her experience had taught her that in the face of danger two have a better chance than one. But Tarzan-jad-guru had not come, and so upon the following morning Pan-at-lee set out upon her return to Kor-ul- ja.

She knew the dangers and yet she faced them with the stolid indifference of her race. When they directly confronted and menaced her would be time enough to experience fear or excitement or confidence. In the meantime it was unnecessary to waste nerve energy by anticipating them. She moved therefore through her savage land

with no greater show of concern than might mark your sauntering to a corner drug-store for a sundae. But this is your life and that is Pan- at-lee's and even now as you read this Pan-at-lee may be sitting upon the edge of the recess of Om-at's cave while the ja and jato roar from the gorge below and from the ridge above, and the Kor-ul-lul threaten upon the south and the Ho-don from the Valley of Jad-ben- Otho far below, for Pan-at-lee still lives and preens her silky coat of jet beneath the tropical moonlight of Pal-ul-don.

But she was not to reach Kor-ul-ja this day, nor the next, nor for many days after though the danger that threatened her was neither Waz-don enemy nor

savage beast.

She came without misadventure to the Kor-ul-lul and after descending its rocky southern wall without catching the slightest glimpse of the hereditary enemies of her people, she experienced a renewal of confidence that was little short of practical assurance that she would successfully terminate her venture and be restored once more to her own people and the lover she had not seen for so many long and weary moons.

She was almost across the gorge now and moving with an extreme caution abated no wit by her confidence, for wariness is an instinctive trait of the primitive, something which cannot be laid aside even momentarily if one

would survive. And so she came to the trail that follows the windings of Kor-ul-lul from its uppermost reaches down into the broad and fertile Valley of Jad-ben-Otho.

And as she stepped into the trail there arose on either side of her from out of the bushes that border the path, as though materialized from thin air, a score of tall, white warriors of the Ho- don. Like a frightened deer Pan-at-lee cast a single startled look at these menacers of her freedom and leaped quickly toward the bushes in an effort to escape; but the warriors were too close at hand. They closed upon her from every side and then, drawing her knife she turned at bay, metamorphosed by the fires of fear and

hate from a startled deer to a raging tiger-cat. They did not try to kill her, but only to subdue and capture her; and so it was that more than a single Ho-don warrior felt the keen edge of her blade in his flesh before they had succeeded in overpowering her by numbers. And still she fought and scratched and bit after they had taken the knife from her until it was necessary to tie her hands and fasten a piece of wood between her teeth by means of thongs passed behind her head.

At first she refused to walk when they started off in the direction of the valley but after two of them had seized her by the hair and dragged her for a number of yards she thought better of her original decision and came along with them,

though still as defiant as her bound wrists and gagged mouth would permit.

Near the entrance to Kor-ul-lul they came upon another body of their warriors with which were several Waz-don prisoners from the tribe of Kor-ul-lul. It was a raiding party come up from a Ho-don city of the valley after slaves. This Pan-at-lee knew for the occurrence was by no means unusual. During her lifetime the tribe to which she belonged had been sufficiently fortunate, or powerful, to withstand successfully the majority of such raids made upon them, but yet Pan-at-lee had known of friends and relatives who had been carried into slavery by the Ho-don and she knew, too, another thing which gave her hope,

as doubtless it did to each of the other captives—that occasionally the prisoners escaped from the cities of the hairless whites.

After they had joined the other party the entire band set forth into the valley and presently, from the conversation of her captors, Pan-at-lee knew that she was headed for A-lur, the City of Light; while in the cave of his ancestors, Om-at, chief of the Kor-ul-ja, bemoaned the loss of both his friend and she that was to have been his mate.

8. A-LUR

As the hissing reptile bore down upon the stranger swimming in the open water near the center of the morass on the frontier of Pal- ul-don it seemed to the man that this indeed must be the futile termination of an arduous and danger-filled journey. It seemed, too, equally futile to pit his puny knife against this frightful creature. Had he been attacked on land it is possible that he might as a last resort have used his Enfield, though he had come thus far through all these weary, danger-ridden miles without recourse to it, though again and again had his life hung in the balance in the face of the savage denizens of forest, jungle, and steppe. For whatever it may

have been for which he was preserving his precious ammunition he evidently held it more sacred even than his life, for as yet he had not used a single round and now the decision was not required of him, since it would have been impossible for him to have unslung his Enfield, loaded and fired with the necessary celerity while swimming.

Though his chance for survival seemed slender, and hope at its lowest ebb, he was not minded therefore to give up without a struggle. Instead he drew his blade and awaited the oncoming reptile. The creature was like no living thing he ever before had seen although possibly it resembled a crocodile in some respects more than it did anything

with which he was familiar.

As this frightful survivor of some extinct progenitor charged upon him with distended jaws there came to the man quickly a full consciousness of the futility of endeavoring to stay the mad rush or pierce the armor-coated hide with his little knife. The thing was almost upon him now and whatever form of defense he chose must be made quickly. There seemed but a single alternative to instant death, and this he took at almost the instant the great reptile towered directly above him.

With the celerity of a seal he dove headforemost beneath the oncoming body and at the same instant, turning upon his back, he plunged his blade into

the soft, cold surface of the slimy belly as the momentum of the hurtling reptile carried it swiftly over him; and then with powerful strokes he swam on beneath the surface for a dozen yards before he rose. A glance showed him the stricken monster plunging madly in pain and rage upon the surface of the water behind him. That it was writhing in its death agonies was evidenced by the fact that it made no effort to pursue him, and so, to the accompaniment of the shrill screaming of the dying monster, the man won at last to the farther edge of the open water to take up once more the almost superhuman effort of crossing the last stretch of clinging mud which separated him from the solid ground of

Pal-ul- don.

A good two hours it took him to drag his now weary body through the clinging, stinking muck, but at last, mud covered and spent, he dragged himself out upon the soft grasses of the bank. A hundred yards away a stream, winding its way down from the distant mountains, emptied into the morass, and, after a short rest, he made his way to this and seeking a quiet pool, bathed himself and washed the mud and slime from his weapons, accouterments, and loin cloth. Another hour was spent beneath the rays of the hot sun in wiping, polishing, and oiling his Enfield though the means at hand for drying it consisted principally of dry grasses. It was afternoon before

he had satisfied himself that his precious weapon was safe from any harm by dirt, or dampness, and then he arose and took up the search for the spoor he had followed to the opposite side of the swamp.

Would he find again the trail that had led into the opposite side of the morass, to be lost there, even to his trained senses? If he found it not again upon this side of the almost impassable barrier he might assume that his long journey had ended in failure. And so he sought up and down the verge of the stagnant water for traces of an old spoor that would have been invisible to your eyes or mine, even had we followed directly in the tracks of its maker.

As Tarzan advanced upon the gryfs he imitated as closely as he could recall them the methods and mannerisms of the Tor-o-don, but up to the instant that he stood close beside one of the huge creatures he realized that his fate still hung in the balance, for the thing gave forth no sign, either menacing or otherwise. It only stood there, watching him out of its cold, reptilian eyes and then Tarzan raised his staff and with a menacing "Whee-oo!" struck the gryf a vicious blow across the face.

The creature made a sudden side snap in his direction, a snap that did not reach him, and then turned sullenly away, precisely as it had when the Tor-o-don commanded it. Walking around to its

rear as he had seen the shaggy first-man do, Tarzan ran up the broad tail and seated himself upon the creature's back, and then again imitating the acts of the Tor-o-don he prodded it with the sharpened point of his staff, and thus goading it forward and guiding it with blows, first upon one side and then upon the other, he started it down the gorge in the direction of the valley.

At first it had been in his mind only to determine if he could successfully assert any authority over the great monsters, realizing that in this possibility lay his only hope of immediate escape from his jailers. But once seated upon the back of his titanic mount the ape-man experienced the sensation of a new thrill

that recalled to him the day in his boyhood that he had first clambered to the broad head of Tantor, the elephant, and this, together with the sense of mastery that was always meat and drink to the lord of the jungle, decided him to put his newly acquired power to some utilitarian purpose.

Pan-at-lee he judged must either have already reached safety or met with death. At least, no longer could he be of service to her, while below Kor-ul-gryf, in the soft green valley, lay A-lur, the City of Light, which, since he had gazed upon it from the shoulder of Pastar-ul-ved, had been his ambition and his goal.

Whether or not its gleaming walls held the secret of his lost mate he could

not even guess but if she lived at all within the precincts of Pal-ul-don it must be among the Ho-don, since the hairy black men of this forgotten world took no prisoners. And so to A-lur he would go, and how more effectively than upon the back of this grim and terrible creature that the races of Pal-ul-don held in such awe?

A little mountain stream tumbles down from Kor-ul-gryf to be joined in the foothills with that which empties the waters of Kor-ul- lul into the valley, forming a small river which runs southwest, eventually entering the valley's largest lake at the City of A-lur, through the center of which the stream passes. An ancient trail, well marked by

countless generations of naked feet of man and beast, leads down toward A-lur beside the river, and along this Tarzan guided the gryf. Once clear of the forest which ran below the mouth of the gorge, Tarzan caught occasional glimpses of the city gleaming in the distance far below him.

The country through which he passed was resplendent with the riotous beauties of tropical verdure. Thick, lush grasses grew waist high upon either side of the trail and the way was broken now and again by patches of open park-like forest, or perhaps a little patch of dense jungle where the trees overarched the way and trailing creepers depended in graceful loops from branch to branch.

At times the ape-man had difficulty in commanding obedience upon the part of his unruly beast, but always in the end its fear of the relatively puny goad urged it on to obedience. Late in the afternoon as they approached the confluence of the stream they were skirting and another which appeared to come from the direction of Kor- ul-ja the ape-man, emerging from one of the jungle patches, discovered a considerable party of Ho-don upon the opposite bank. Simultaneously they saw him and the mighty creature he bestrode. For a moment they stood in wide-eyed amazement and then, in answer to the command of their leader, they turned and bolted for the shelter of the nearby

wood.

The ape-man had but a brief glimpse of them but it was sufficient indication that there were Waz-don with them, doubtless prisoners taken in one of the raids upon the Waz-don villages of which Ta-den and Om-at had told him.

At the sound of their voices the gryf had bellowed terrifically and started in pursuit even though a river intervened, but by dint of much prodding and beating, Tarzan had succeeded in heading the animal back into the path though thereafter for a long time it was sullen and more intractable than ever.

As the sun dropped nearer the summit of the western hills Tarzan became aware that his plan to enter A-lur upon

the back of a gryf was likely doomed to failure, since the stubbornness of the great beast was increasing momentarily, doubtless due to the fact that its huge belly was crying out for food. The ape-man wondered if the Tor-o-dons had any means of picketing their beasts for the night, but as he did not know and as no plan suggested itself, he determined that he should have to trust to the chance of finding it again in the morning.

There now arose in his mind a question as to what would be their relationship when Tarzan had dismounted. Would it again revert to that of hunter and quarry or would fear of the goad continue to hold its supremacy over the natural instinct of the hunting flesh-

eater? Tarzan wondered but as he could not remain upon the gryf forever, and as he preferred dismounting and putting the matter to a final test while it was still light, he decided to act at once.

How to stop the creature he did not know, as up to this time his sole desire had been to urge it forward. By experimenting with his staff, however, he found that he could bring it to a halt by reaching forward and striking the thing upon its beaklike snout. Close by grew a number of leafy trees, in any one of which the ape- man could have found sanctuary, but it had occurred to him that should he immediately take to the trees it might suggest to the mind of the gryf that the creature that had been commanding

him all day feared him, with the result that Tarzan would once again be held a prisoner by the triceratops.

And so, when the gryf halted, Tarzan slid to the ground, struck the creature a careless blow across the flank as though in dismissal and walked indifferently away. From the throat of the beast came a low rumbling sound and without even a glance at Tarzan it turned and entered the river where it stood drinking for a long time.

Convinced that the gryf no longer constituted a menace to him the ape-man, spurred on himself by the gnawing of hunger, unslung his bow and selecting a handful of arrows set forth cautiously in search of food, evidence of the near

presence of which was being borne up to him by a breeze from down river.

Ten minutes later he had made his kill, again one of the Pal-ul- don specimens of antelope, all species of which Tarzan had known since childhood as Bara, the deer, since in the little primer that had been the basis of his education the picture of a deer had been the nearest approach to the likeness of the antelope, from the giant eland to the smaller bushbuck of the hunting grounds of his youth.

Cutting off a haunch he cached it in a nearby tree, and throwing the balance of the carcass across his shoulder trotted back toward the spot at which he had left the gryf. The great beast was just

emerging from the river when Tarzan, seeing it, issued the weird cry of the Tor-o-don. The creature looked in the direction of the sound voicing at the same time the low rumble with which it answered the call of its master. Twice Tarzan repeated his cry before the beast moved slowly toward him, and when it had come within a few paces he tossed the carcass of the deer to it, upon which it fell with greedy jaws.

"If anything will keep it within call," mused the ape-man as he returned to the tree in which he had cached his own portion of his kill, "it is the knowledge that I will feed it." But as he finished his repast and settled himself comfortably for the night high among the swaying

branches of his eyrie he had little confidence that he would ride into A-lur the following day upon his prehistoric steed.

When Tarzan awoke early the following morning he dropped lightly to the ground and made his way to the stream. Removing his weapons and loin cloth he entered the cold waters of the little pool, and after his refreshing bath returned to the tree to breakfast upon another portion of Bara, the deer, adding to his repast some fruits and berries which grew in abundance nearby.

His meal over he sought the ground again and raising his voice in the weird cry that he had learned, he called aloud on the chance of attracting the gryf, but

though he waited for some time and continued calling there was no response, and he was finally forced to the conclusion that he had seen the last of his great mount of the preceding day.

And so he set his face toward A-lur, pinning his faith upon his knowledge of the Ho-don tongue, his great strength and his native wit.

Refreshed by food and rest, the journey toward A-lur, made in the cool of the morning along the bank of the joyous river, he found delightful in the extreme. Differentiating him from his fellows of the savage jungle were many characteristics other than those physical and mental. Not the least of these were in a measure spiritual, and one that had

doubtless been as strong as another in influencing Tarzan's love of the jungle had been his appreciation of the beauties of nature. The apes cared more for a grubworm in a rotten log than for all the majestic grandeur of the forest giants waving above them. The only beauties that Numa acknowledged were those of his own person as he paraded them before the admiring eyes of his mate, but in all the manifestations of the creative power of nature of which Tarzan was cognizant he appreciated the beauties.

As Tarzan neared the city his interest became centered upon the architecture of the outlying buildings which were hewn from the chalklike limestone of what had once been a group of low hills, similar

to the many grass-covered hillocks that dotted the valley in every direction. Ta-den's explanation of the Ho-don methods of house construction accounted for the ofttimes remarkable shapes and proportions of the buildings which, during the ages that must have been required for their construction, had been hewn from the limestone hills, the exteriors chiseled to such architectural forms as appealed to the eyes of the builders while at the same time following roughly the original outlines of the hills in an evident desire to economize both labor and space. The excavation of the apartments within had been similarly governed by necessity.

As he came nearer Tarzan saw that

the waste material from these building operations had been utilized in the construction of outer walls about each building or group of buildings resulting from a single hillock, and later he was to learn that it had also been used for the filling of inequalities between the hills and the forming of paved streets throughout the city, the result, possibly, more of the adoption of an easy method of disposing of the quantities of broken limestone than by any real necessity for pavements.

There were people moving about within the city and upon the narrow ledges and terraces that broke the lines of the buildings and which seemed to be a peculiarity of Ho-don architecture, a

concession, no doubt, to some inherent instinct that might be traced back to their early cliff-dwelling progenitors.

Tarzan was not surprised that at a short distance he aroused no suspicion or curiosity in the minds of those who saw him, since, until closer scrutiny was possible, there was little to distinguish him from a native either in his general conformation or his color. He had, of course, formulated a plan of action and, having decided, he did not hesitate in the carrying out his plan.

With the same assurance that you might venture upon the main street of a neighboring city Tarzan strode into the Ho-don city of A- lur. The first person to detect his spuriousness was a little child

playing in the arched gateway of one of the walled buildings. "No tail! no tail!" it shouted, throwing a stone at him, and then it suddenly grew dumb and its eyes wide as it sensed that this creature was something other than a mere Ho-don warrior who had lost his tail. With a gasp the child turned and fled screaming into the courtyard of its home.

Tarzan continued on his way, fully realizing that the moment was imminent when the fate of his plan would be decided. Nor had he long to wait since at the next turning of the winding street he came face to face with a Ho-don warrior. He saw the sudden surprise in the latter's eyes, followed instantly by one of suspicion, but before the fellow

could speak Tarzan addressed him.

"I am a stranger from another land," he said; "I would speak with Ko-tan, your king."

The fellow stepped back, laying his hand upon his knife. "There are no strangers that come to the gates of A-lur," he said, "other than as enemies or slaves."

"I come neither as a slave nor an enemy," replied Tarzan. "I come directly from Jad-ben-Otho. Look!" and he held out his hands that the Ho-don might see how greatly they differed from his own, and then wheeled about that the other might see that he was tailless, for it was upon this fact that his plan had been based, due to his recollection of the

quarrel between Ta-den and Om-at, in which the Waz-don had claimed that Jad-ben-Otho had a long tail while the Ho- don had been equally willing to fight for his faith in the taillessness of his god.

The warrior's eyes widened and an expression of awe crept into them, though it was still tinged with suspicion. "Jad-ben-Otho!" he murmured, and then, "It is true that you are neither Ho-don nor Waz- don, and it is also true that Jad-ben-Otho has no tail. Come," he said, "I will take you to Ko-tan, for this is a matter in which no common warrior may interfere. Follow me," and still clutching the handle of his knife and keeping a wary side glance upon the

ape-man he led the way through A-lur.

The city covered a large area. Sometimes there was a considerable distance between groups of buildings, and again they were quite close together. There were numerous imposing groups, evidently hewn from the larger hills, often rising to a height of a hundred feet or more. As they advanced they met numerous warriors and women, all of whom showed great curiosity in the stranger, but there was no attempt to menace him when it was found that he was being conducted to the palace of the king.

They came at last to a great pile that sprawled over a considerable area, its western front facing upon a large blue

lake and evidently hewn from what had once been a natural cliff. This group of buildings was surrounded by a wall of considerably greater height than any that Tarzan had before seen. His guide led him to a gateway before which waited a dozen or more warriors who had risen to their feet and formed a barrier across the entrance-way as Tarzan and his party appeared around the corner of the palace wall, for by this time he had accumulated such a following of the curious as presented to the guards the appearance of a formidable mob.

The guide's story told, Tarzan was conducted into the courtyard where he was held while one of the warriors entered the palace, evidently with the

intention of notifying Ko-tan. Fifteen minutes later a large warrior appeared, followed by several others, all of whom examined Tarzan with every sign of curiosity as they approached.

The leader of the party halted before the ape-man. "Who are you?" he asked, "and what do you want of Ko-tan, the king?"

"I am a friend," replied the ape-man, "and I have come from the country of Jad-ben-Otho to visit Ko-tan of Pal-ul-don."

The warrior and his followers seemed impressed. Tarzan could see the latter whispering among themselves.

"How come you here," asked the spokesman, "and what do you want of

Ko-tan?"

Tarzan drew himself to his full height. "Enough!" he cried. "Must the messenger of Jad-ben-Otho be subjected to the treatment that might be accorded to a wandering Waz-don? Take me to the king at once lest the wrath of Jad-ben-Otho fall upon you."

There was some question in the mind of the ape-man as to how far he might carry his unwarranted show of assurance, and he waited therefore with amused interest the result of his demand. He did not, however, have long to wait for almost immediately the attitude of his questioner changed. He whitened, cast an apprehensive glance toward the eastern sky and then extended his right

palm toward Tarzan, placing his left over his own heart in the sign of amity that was common among the peoples of Pal-ul-don.

Tarzan stepped quickly back as though from a profaning hand, a feigned expression of horror and disgust upon his face.

"Stop!" he cried, "who would dare touch the sacred person of the messenger of Jad-ben-Otho? Only as a special mark of favor from Jad-ben-Otho may even Ko-tan himself receive this honor from me. Hasten! Already now have I waited too long! What manner of reception the Ho-don of A-lur would extend to the son of my father!"

At first Tarzan had been inclined to

adopt the role of Jad-ben- Otho himself but it occurred to him that it might prove embarrassing and considerable of a bore to be compelled constantly to portray the character of a god, but with the growing success of his scheme it had suddenly occurred to him that the authority of the son of Jad-ben- Otho would be far greater than that of an ordinary messenger of a god, while at the same time giving him some leeway in the matter of his acts and demeanor, the ape-man reasoning that a young god would not be held so strictly accountable in the matter of his dignity and bearing as an older and greater god.

This time the effect of his words was immediately and painfully noticeable

upon all those near him. With one accord they shrank back, the spokesman almost collapsing in evident terror. His apologies, when finally the paralysis of his fear would permit him to voice them, were so abject that the ape-man could scarce repress a smile of amused contempt.

"Have mercy, O Dor-ul-Otho," he pleaded, "on poor old Dak-lot. Precede me and I will show you to where Ko-tan, the king, awaits you, trembling. Aside, snakes and vermin," he cried pushing his warriors to right and left for the purpose of forming an avenue for Tarzan.

"Come!" cried the ape-man peremptorily, "lead the way, and let these others follow."

The now thoroughly frightened Dak-lot did as he was bid, and Tarzan of the Apes was ushered into the palace of Kotan, King of Pal- ul-don.

9. BLOOD-STAINED ALTARS

The entrance through which he caught his first glimpse of the interior was rather beautifully carved in geometric designs, and within the walls were similarly treated, though as he proceeded from one apartment to another he found also the figures of animals, birds, and men taking their places among the more formal figures of the mural decorator's art. Stone vessels were much in evidence as well as ornaments of gold and the skins of many animals, but nowhere did he see an indication of any woven fabric, indicating that in that respect at least the Ho-don were still low in the scale of

evolution, and yet the proportions and symmetry of the corridors and apartments bespoke a degree of civilization.

The way led through several apartments and long corridors, up at least three flights of stone stairs and finally out upon a ledge upon the western side of the building overlooking the blue lake. Along this ledge, or arcade, his guide led him for a hundred yards, to stop at last before a wide entrance-way leading into another apartment of the palace.

Here Tarzan beheld a considerable concourse of warriors in an enormous apartment, the domed ceiling of which was fully fifty feet above the floor.

Almost filling the chamber was a great pyramid ascending in broad steps well up under the dome in which were a number of round apertures which let in the light. The steps of the pyramid were occupied by warriors to the very pinnacle, upon which sat a large, imposing figure of a man whose golden trappings shone brightly in the light of the afternoon sun, a shaft of which poured through one of the tiny apertures of the dome.

"Ko-tan!" cried Dak-lot, addressing the resplendent figure at the pinnacle of the pyramid. "Ko-tan and warriors of Pal-ul-don! Behold the honor that Jad-ben-Otho has done you in sending as his messenger his own son," and Dak-lot,

stepping aside, indicated Tarzan with a dramatic sweep of his hand.

Ko-tan rose to his feet and every warrior within sight craned his neck to have a better view of the newcomer. Those upon the opposite side of the pyramid crowded to the front as the words of the old warrior reached them. Skeptical were the expressions on most of the faces; but theirs was a skepticism marked with caution. No matter which way fortune jumped they wished to be upon the right side of the fence. For a moment all eyes were centered upon Tarzan and then gradually they drifted to Ko-tan, for from his attitude would they receive the cue that would determine theirs. But Ko-tan was evidently in the

same quandary as they—the very attitude of his body indicated it—it was one of indecision and of doubt.

The ape-man stood erect, his arms folded upon his broad breast, an expression of haughty disdain upon his handsome face; but to Dak- lot there seemed to be indications also of growing anger. The situation was becoming strained. Dak-lot fidgeted, casting apprehensive glances at Tarzan and appealing ones at Ko-tan. The silence of the tomb wrapped the great chamber of the throneroom of Pal-ul-don.

At last Ko-tan spoke. "Who says that he is Dor-ul-Otho?" he asked, casting a terrible look at Dak-lot.

"He does!" almost shouted that terrified noble.

"And so it must be true?" queried Ko-tan.

Could it be that there was a trace of irony in the chief's tone? Otho forbid! Dak-lot cast a side glance at Tarzan—a glance that he intended should carry the assurance of his own faith; but that succeeded only in impressing the ape-man with the other's pitiable terror.

"O Ko-tan!" pleaded Dak-lot, "your own eyes must convince you that indeed he is the son of Otho. Behold his godlike figure, his hands, and his feet, that are not as ours, and that he is entirely tailless as is his mighty father."

Ko-tan appeared to be perceiving

these facts for the first time and there was an indication that his skepticism was faltering. At that moment a young warrior who had pushed his way forward from the opposite side of the pyramid to where he could obtain a good look at Tarzan raised his voice.

"Ko-tan," he cried, "it must be even as Dak-lot says, for I am sure now that I have seen Dor-ul-Otho before. Yesterday as we were returning with the Kor-ul-lul prisoners we beheld him seated upon the back of a great gryf. We hid in the woods before he came too near, but I saw enough to make sure that he who rode upon the great beast was none other than the messenger who stands here now."

This evidence seemed to be quite enough to convince the majority of the warriors that they indeed stood in the presence of deity—their faces showed it only too plainly, and a sudden modesty that caused them to shrink behind their neighbors. As their neighbors were attempting to do the same thing, the result was a sudden melting away of those who stood nearest the ape-man, until the steps of the pyramid directly before him lay vacant to the very apex and to Ko-tan. The latter, possibly influenced as much by the fearful attitude of his followers as by the evidence adduced, now altered his tone and his manner in such a degree as might comport with the requirements if the

stranger was indeed the Dor-ul-Otho while leaving his dignity a loophole of escape should it appear that he had entertained an impostor.

"If indeed you are the Dor-ul-Otho," he said, addressing Tarzan, "you will know that our doubts were but natural since we have received no sign from Jad-ben-Otho that he intended honoring us so greatly, nor how could we know, even, that the Great God had a son? If you are he, all Pal-ul-don rejoices to honor you; if you are not he, swift and terrible shall be the punishment of your temerity. I, Ko-tan, King of Pal-ul-don, have spoken."

"And spoken well, as a king should speak," said Tarzan, breaking his long

silence, "who fears and honors the god of his people. It is well that you insist that I indeed be the Dor-ul-Otho before you accord me the homage that is my due. Jad-ben-Otho charged me specially to ascertain if you were fit to rule his people. My first experience of you indicates that Jad-ben-Otho chose well when he breathed the spirit of a king into the babe at your mother's breast."

The effect of this statement, made so casually, was marked in the expressions and excited whispers of the now awe-struck assemblage. At last they knew how kings were made! It was decided by Jad-ben-Otho while the candidate was still a suckling babe! Wonderful! A miracle! and this divine creature in

whose presence they stood knew all about it. Doubtless he even discussed such matters with their god daily. If there had been an atheist among them before, or an agnostic, there was none now, for had they not looked with their own eyes upon the son of god?

"It is well then," continued the ape-man, "that you should assure yourself that I am no impostor. Come closer that you may see that I am not as are men. Furthermore it is not meet that you stand upon a higher level than the son of your god." There was a sudden scramble to reach the floor of the throne-room, nor was Ko-tan far behind his warriors, though he managed to maintain a certain majestic dignity as he descended the

broad stairs that countless naked feet had polished to a gleaming smoothness through the ages. "And now," said Tarzan as the king stood before him, "you can have no doubt that I am not of the same race as you. Your priests have told you that Jad- ben-Otho is tailless. Tailless, therefore, must be the race of gods that spring from his loins. But enough of such proofs as these! You know the power of Jad-ben-Otho; how his lightnings gleaming out of the sky carry death as he wills it; how the rains come at his bidding, and the fruits and the berries and the grains, the grasses, the trees and the flowers spring to life at his divine direction; you have witnessed birth and death, and those who honor

their god honor him because he controls these things. How would it fare then with an impostor who claimed to be the son of this all-powerful god? This then is all the proof that you require, for as he would strike you down should you deny me, so would he strike down one who wrongfully claimed kinship with him."

This line of argument being unanswerable must needs be convincing. There could be no questioning of this creature's statements without the tacit admission of lack of faith in the omnipotence of Jad-ben-Otho. Ko-tan was satisfied that he was entertaining deity, but as to just what form his entertainment should take he was rather at a loss to know. His conception of god

had been rather a vague and hazy affair, though in common with all primitive people his god was a personal one as were his devils and demons. The pleasures of Jad-ben-Otho he had assumed to be the excesses which he himself enjoyed, but devoid of any unpleasant reaction. It therefore occurred to him that the Dor-ul-Otho would be greatly entertained by eating—eating large quantities of everything that Ko-tan liked best and that he had found most injurious; and there was also a drink that the women of the Ho-don made by allowing corn to soak in the juices of succulent fruits, to which they had added certain other ingredients best known to themselves. Ko-tan knew by

experience that a single draught of this potent liquor would bring happiness and surcease from worry, while several would cause even a king to do things and enjoy things that he would never even think of doing or enjoying while not under the magical influence of the potion, but unfortunately the next morning brought suffering in direct ratio to the joy of the preceding day. A god, Ko-tan reasoned, could experience all the pleasure without the headache, but for the immediate present he must think of the necessary dignities and honors to be accorded his immortal guest.

No foot other than a king's had touched the surface of the apex of the pyramid in the throneroom at A-lur

during all the forgotten ages through which the kings of Pal-ul-don had ruled from its high eminence. So what higher honor could Ko-tan offer than to give place beside him to the Dor-ul-Otho? And so he invited Tarzan to ascend the pyramid and take his place upon the stone bench that topped it. As they reached the step below the sacred pinnacle Ko-tan continued as though to mount to his throne, but Tarzan laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"None may sit upon a level with the gods," he admonished, stepping confidently up and seating himself upon the throne. The abashed Ko-tan showed his embarrassment, an embarrassment he feared to voice lest he incur the wrath of

the king of kings.

"But," added Tarzan, "a god may honor his faithful servant by inviting him to a place at his side. Come, Ko-tan; thus would I honor you in the name of Jad-ben-Otho."

The ape-man's policy had for its basis an attempt not only to arouse the fearful respect of Ko-tan but to do it without making of him an enemy at heart, for he did not know how strong a hold the religion of the Ho-don had upon them, for since the time that he had prevented Ta-den and Om-at from quarreling over a religious difference the subject had been utterly taboo among them. He was therefore quick to note the evident though wordless resentment of Ko- tan at

the suggestion that he entirely relinquish his throne to his guest. On the whole, however, the effect had been satisfactory as he could see from the renewed evidence of awe upon the faces of the warriors.

At Tarzan's direction the business of the court continued where it had been interrupted by his advent. It consisted principally in the settling of disputes between warriors. There was present one who stood upon the step just below the throne and which Tarzan was to learn was the place reserved for the higher chiefs of the allied tribes which made up Ko-tan's kingdom. The one who attracted Tarzan's attention was a stalwart warrior of powerful physique

and massive, lion-like features. He was addressing Ko-tan on a question that is as old as government and that will continue in unabated importance until man ceases to exist. It had to do with a boundary dispute with one of his neighbors.

The matter itself held little or no interest for Tarzan, but he was impressed by the appearance of the speaker and when Ko-tan addressed him as Ja-don the ape-man's interest was permanently crystallized, for Ja-don was the father of Ta-den. That the knowledge would benefit him in any way seemed rather a remote possibility since he could not reveal to Ja-don his friendly relations with his son without admitting

the falsity of his claims to godship.

When the affairs of the audience were concluded Ko-tan suggested that the son of Jad-ben-Otho might wish to visit the temple in which were performed the religious rites coincident to the worship of the Great God. And so the ape-man was conducted by the king himself, followed by the warriors of his court, through the corridors of the palace toward the northern end of the group of buildings within the royal enclosure.

The temple itself was really a part of the palace and similar in architecture. There were several ceremonial places of varying sizes, the purposes of which Tarzan could only conjecture. Each had an altar in the west end and another in

the east and were oval in shape, their longest diameter lying due east and west. Each was excavated from the summit of a small hillock and all were without roofs. The western altars invariably were a single block of stone the top of which was hollowed into an oblong basin. Those at the eastern ends were similar blocks of stone with flat tops and these latter, unlike those at the opposite ends of the ovals were invariably stained or painted a reddish brown, nor did Tarzan need to examine them closely to be assured of what his keen nostrils already had told him— that the brown stains were dried and drying human blood.

Below these temple courts were

corridors and apartments reaching far into the bowels of the hills, dim, gloomy passages that Tarzan glimpsed as he was led from place to place on his tour of inspection of the temple. A messenger had been dispatched by Ko-tan to announce the coming visit of the son of Jad-ben-Otho with the result that they were accompanied through the temple by a considerable procession of priests whose distinguishing mark of profession seemed to consist in grotesque headdresses; sometimes hideous faces carved from wood and entirely concealing the countenances of their wearers, or again, the head of a wild beast cunningly fitted over the head of a man. The high priest alone wore no such

head-dress. He was an old man with close-set, cunning eyes and a cruel, thin-lipped mouth.

At first sight of him Tarzan realized that here lay the greatest danger to his ruse, for he saw at a glance that the man was antagonistic toward him and his pretensions, and he knew too that doubtless of all the people of Pal-ul-don the high priest was most likely to harbor the truest estimate of Jad-ben-Otho, and, therefore, would look with suspicion on one who claimed to be the son of a fabulous god.

No matter what suspicion lurked within his crafty mind, Lu-don, the high priest of A-lur, did not openly question Tarzan's right to the title of Dor-ul-Otho,

and it may be that he was restrained by the same doubts which had originally restrained Ko-tan and his warriors—the doubt that is at the bottom of the minds of all blasphemers even and which is based upon the fear that after all there may be a god. So, for the time being at least Lu-don played safe. Yet Tarzan knew as well as though the man had spoken aloud his inmost thoughts that it was in the heart of the high priest to tear the veil from his imposture.

At the entrance to the temple Ko-tan had relinquished the guidance of the guest to Lu-don and now the latter led Tarzan through those portions of the temple that he wished him to see. He showed him the great room where the

votive offerings were kept, gifts from the barbaric chiefs of Pal-ul-don and from their followers. These things ranged in value from presents of dried fruits to massive vessels of beaten gold, so that in the great main storeroom and its connecting chambers and corridors was an accumulation of wealth that amazed even the eyes of the owner of the secret of the treasure vaults of Opar.

Moving to and fro throughout the temple were sleek black Waz- don slaves, fruits of the Ho-don raids upon the villages of their less civilized neighbors. As they passed the barred entrance to a dim corridor, Tarzan saw within a great company of pithecanthropi of all ages and of both sexes, Ho-don as

well as Waz-don, the majority of them squatted upon the stone floor in attitudes of utter dejection while some paced back and forth, their features stamped with the despair of utter hopelessness.

"And who are these who lie here thus unhappily?" he asked of Lu- don. It was the first question that he had put to the high priest since entering the temple, and instantly he regretted that he had asked it, for Lu-don turned upon him a face upon which the expression of suspicion was but thinly veiled.

"Who should know better than the son of Jad-ben-Otho?" he retorted.

"The questions of Dor-ul-Otho are not with impunity answered with other questions," said the ape-man quietly,

"and it may interest Lu-don, the high priest, to know that the blood of a false priest upon the altar of his temple is not displeasing in the eyes of Jad- ben-Otho."

Lu-don paled as he answered Tarzan's question. "They are the offerings whose blood must refresh the eastern altars as the sun returns to your father at the day's end."

"And who told you," asked Tarzan, "that Jad-ben-Otho was pleased that his people were slain upon his altars? What if you were mistaken?"

"Then countless thousands have died in vain," replied Lu-don.

Ko-tan and the surrounding warriors and priests were listening attentively to

the dialogue. Some of the poor victims behind the barred gateway had heard and rising, pressed close to the barrier through which one was conducted just before sunset each day, never to return.

"Liberate them!" cried Tarzan with a wave of his hand toward the imprisoned victims of a cruel superstition, "for I can tell you in the name of Jad-ben-Otho that you are mistaken."

10. THE FORBIDDEN GARDEN

Lu-don paled. "It is sacrilege," he cried; "for countless ages have the priests of the Great God offered each night a life to the spirit of Jad-ben-Otho as it returned below the western horizon to its master, and never has the Great God given sign that he was displeased."

"Stop!" commanded Tarzan. "It is the blindness of the priesthood that has failed to read the messages of their god. Your warriors die beneath the knives and clubs of the Wazdon; your hunters are taken by ja and jato; no day goes by but witnesses the deaths of few or many in the villages of the Ho-don, and one

death each day of those that die are the toll which Jad-ben-Otho has exacted for the lives you take upon the eastern altar. What greater sign of his displeasure could you require, O stupid priest?"

Lu-don was silent. There was raging within him a great conflict between his fear that this indeed might be the son of god and his hope that it was not, but at last his fear won and he bowed his head. "The son of Jad-ben-Otho has spoken," he said, and turning to one of the lesser priests: "Remove the bars and return these people from whence they came."

He thus addressed did as he was bid and as the bars came down the prisoners, now all fully aware of the miracle that had saved them, crowded

forward and throwing themselves upon their knees before Tarzan raised their voices in thanksgiving.

Ko-tan was almost as staggered as the high priest by this ruthless overturning of an age-old religious rite. "But what," he cried, "may we do that will be pleasing in the eyes of Jad-ben-Otho?" turning a look of puzzled apprehension toward the ape-man.

"If you seek to please your god," he replied, "place upon your altars such gifts of food and apparel as are most welcome in the city of your people. These things will Jad-ben-Otho bless, when you may distribute them among those of the city who need them most. With such things are your storerooms

filled as I have seen with mine own eyes, and other gifts will be brought when the priests tell the people that in this way they find favor before their god," and Tarzan turned and signified that he would leave the temple.

As they were leaving the precincts devoted to the worship of their deity, the ape-man noticed a small but rather ornate building that stood entirely detached from the others as though it had been cut from a little pinnacle of limestone which had stood out from its fellows. As his interested glance passed over it he noticed that its door and windows were barred.

"To what purpose is that building dedicated?" he asked of Lu- don. "Who

do you keep imprisoned there?"

"It is nothing," replied the high priest nervously, "there is no one there. The place is vacant. Once it was used but not now for many years," and he moved on toward the gateway which led back into the palace. Here he and the priests halted while Tarzan with Ko-tan and his warriors passed out from the sacred precincts of the temple grounds.

The one question which Tarzan would have asked he had feared to ask for he knew that in the hearts of many lay a suspicion as to his genuineness, but he determined that before he slept he would put the question to Ko-tan, either directly or indirectly—as to whether there was, or had been recently within the city of

A-lur a female of the same race as his.

As their evening meal was being served to them in the banquet hall of Ko-tan's palace by a part of the army of black slaves upon whose shoulders fell the burden of all the heavy and menial tasks of the city, Tarzan noticed that there came to the eyes of one of the slaves what was apparently an expression of startled recognition, as he looked upon the ape-man for the first time in the banquet hall of Ko-tan. And again later he saw the fellow whisper to another slave and nod his head in his direction. The ape-man did not recall ever having seen this Waz-don before and he was at a loss to account for an explanation of the fellow's interest in

him, and presently the incident was all but forgotten.

Ko-tan was surprised and inwardly disgusted to discover that his godly guest had no desire to gorge himself upon rich foods and that he would not even so much as taste the villainous brew of the Ho- don. To Tarzan the banquet was a dismal and tiresome affair, since so great was the interest of the guests in gorging themselves with food and drink that they had no time for conversation, the only vocal sounds being confined to a continuous grunting which, together with their table manners reminded Tarzan of a visit he had once made to the famous Berkshire herd of His Grace, the Duke of Westminster at Woodhouse,

Chester.

One by one the diners succumbed to the stupefying effects of the liquor with the result that the grunting gave place to snores, so presently Tarzan and the slaves were the only conscious creatures in the banquet hall.

Rising, the ape-man turned to a tall black who stood behind him. "I would sleep," he said, "show me to my apartment."

As the fellow conducted him from the chamber the slave who had shown surprise earlier in the evening at sight of him, spoke again at length to one of his fellows. The latter cast a half-frightened look in the direction of the departing ape-man. "If you are right," he said,

"they should reward us with our liberty, but if you are wrong, O Jad-ben-Otho, what will be our fate?"

"But I am not wrong!" cried the other.

"Then there is but one to tell this to, for I have heard that he looked sour when this Dor-ul-Otho was brought to the temple and that while the so-called son of Jad-ben-Otho was there he gave this one every cause to fear and hate him. I mean Lu-don, the high priest."

"You know him?" asked the other slave.

"I have worked in the temple," replied his companion.

"Then go to him at once and tell him, but be sure to exact the promise of our freedom for the proof."

And so a black Waz-don came to the temple gate and asked to see Lu-don, the high priest, on a matter of great importance, and though the hour was late Lu-don saw him, and when he had heard his story he promised him and his friend not only their freedom but many gifts if they could prove the correctness of their claims.

And as the slave talked with the high priest in the temple at A- lur the figure of a man groped its way around the shoulder of Pastar- ul-ved and the moonlight glistened from the shiny barrel of an Enfield that was strapped to the naked back, and brass cartridges shed tiny rays of reflected light from their polished cases where they hung in the

bandoliers across the broad brown shoulders and the lean waist.

Tarzan's guide conducted him to a chamber overlooking the blue lake where he found a bed similar to that which he had seen in the villages of the Waz-don, merely a raised dais of stone upon which was piled great quantities of furry pelts. And so he lay down to sleep, the question that he most wished to put still unasked and unanswered.

With the coming of a new day he was awake and wandering about the palace and the palace grounds before there was sign of any of the inmates of the palace other than slaves, or at least he saw no others at first, though presently he stumbled upon an enclosure which lay

almost within the center of the palace grounds surrounded by a wall that piqued the ape-man's curiosity, since he had determined to investigate as fully as possible every part of the palace and its environs.

This place, whatever it might be, was apparently without doors or windows but that it was at least partially roofless was evidenced by the sight of the waving branches of a tree which spread above the top of the wall near him. Finding no other method of access, the ape- man uncoiled his rope and throwing it over the branch of the tree where it projected beyond the wall, was soon climbing with the ease of a monkey to the summit.

There he found that the wall surrounded an enclosed garden in which grew trees and shrubs and flowers in riotous profusion. Without waiting to ascertain whether the garden was empty or contained Ho- don, Waz-don, or wild beasts, Tarzan dropped lightly to the sward on the inside and without further loss of time commenced a systematic investigation of the enclosure.

His curiosity was aroused by the very evident fact that the place was not for general use, even by those who had free access to other parts of the palace grounds and so there was added to its natural beauties an absence of mortals which rendered its exploration all the more alluring to Tarzan since it

suggested that in such a place might he hope to come upon the object of his long and difficult search.

In the garden were tiny artificial streams and little pools of water, flanked by flowering bushes, as though it all had been designed by the cunning hand of some master gardener, so faithfully did it carry out the beauties and contours of nature upon a miniature scale.

The interior surface of the wall was fashioned to represent the white cliffs of Pal-ul-don, broken occasionally by small replicas of the verdure-filled gorges of the original.

Filled with admiration and thoroughly enjoying each new surprise which the scene offered, Tarzan moved slowly

around the garden, and as always he moved silently. Passing through a miniature forest he came presently upon a tiny area of flowerstudded sward and at the same time beheld before him the first Ho-don female he had seen since entering the palace. A young and beautiful woman stood in the center of the little open space, stroking the head of a bird which she held against her golden breastplate with one hand. Her profile was presented to the ape-man and he saw that by the standards of any land she would have been accounted more than lovely.

Seated in the grass at her feet, with her back toward him, was a female Waz-don slave. Seeing that she he sought was

not there and apprehensive that an alarm be raised were he discovered by the two women, Tarzan moved back to hide himself in the foliage, but before he had succeeded the Ho-don girl turned quickly toward him as though apprised of his presence by that unnamed sense, the manifestations of which are more or less familiar to us all.

At sight of him her eyes registered only her surprise though there was no expression of terror reflected in them, nor did she scream or even raise her well-modulated voice as she addressed him.

"Who are you," she asked, "who enters thus boldly the Forbidden Garden?"

At sound of her mistress' voice the slave maiden turned quickly, rising to her feet. "Tarzan-jad-guru!" she exclaimed in tones of mingled astonishment and relief.

"You know him?" cried her mistress turning toward the slave and affording Tarzan an opportunity to raise a cautioning finger to his lips lest Pan-at-lee further betray him, for it was Pan-at-lee indeed who stood before him, no less a source of surprise to him than had his presence been to her.

Thus questioned by her mistress and simultaneously admonished to silence by Tarzan, Pan-at-lee was momentarily silenced and then haltingly she groped for a way to extricate herself from her

dilemma. "I thought—" she faltered, "but no, I am mistaken—I thought that he was one whom I had seen before near the Kor-ul- gryf."

The Ho-don looked first at one and then at the other an expression of doubt and questioning in her eyes. "But you have not answered me," she continued presently; "who are you?"

"You have not heard then," asked Tarzan, "of the visitor who arrived at your king's court yesterday?"

"You mean," she exclaimed, "that you are the Dor-ul-Otho?" And now the erstwhile doubting eyes reflected naught but awe.

"I am he," replied Tarzan; "and you?"

"I am O-lo-a, daughter of Ko-tan, the

king," she replied.

So this was O-lo-a, for love of whom Ta-den had chosen exile rather than priesthood. Tarzan had approached more closely the dainty barbarian princess. "Daughter of Ko-tan," he said, "Jad-ben-Otho is pleased with you and as a mark of his favor he has preserved for you through many dangers him whom you love."

"I do not understand," replied the girl but the flush that mounted to her cheek belied her words. "Bu-lat is a guest in the palace of Ko-tan, my father. I do not know that he has faced any danger. It is to Bu-lat that I am betrothed."

"But it is not Bu-lat whom you love," said Tarzan.

Again the flush and the girl half turned her face away. "Have I then displeased the Great God?" she asked.

"No," replied Tarzan; "as I told you he is well satisfied and for your sake he has saved Ta-den for you."

"Jad-ben-Otho knows all," whispered the girl, "and his son shares his great knowledge."

"No," Tarzan hastened to correct her lest a reputation for omniscience might prove embarrassing. "I know only what Jad-ben-Otho wishes me to know."

"But tell me," she said, "I shall be reunited with Ta-den? Surely the son of god can read the future."

The ape-man was glad that he had left himself an avenue of escape. "I know

nothing of the future," he replied, "other than what Jad-ben-Otho tells me. But I think you need have no fear for the future if you remain faithful to Ta-den and Ta-den's friends."

"You have seen him?" asked O-lo-a. "Tell me, where is he?"

"Yes," replied Tarzan, "I have seen him. He was with Om-at, the gund of Kor-ul-ja."

"A prisoner of the Waz-don?" interrupted the girl.

"Not a prisoner but an honored guest," replied the ape-man.

"Wait," he exclaimed, raising his face toward the heavens; "do not speak. I am receiving a message from Jad-ben-Otho, my father."

The two women dropped to their knees, covering their faces with their hands, stricken with awe at the thought of the awful nearness of the Great God. Presently Tarzan touched O-lo-a on the shoulder.

"Rise," he said. "Jad-ben-Otho has spoken. He has told me that this slave girl is from the tribe of Kor-ul-ja, where Ta-den is, and that she is betrothed to Om-at, their chief. Her name is Pan-at-lee."

O-lo-a turned questioningly toward Pan-at-lee. The latter nodded, her simple mind unable to determine whether or not she and her mistress were the victims of a colossal hoax. "It is even as he says," she whispered.

O-lo-a fell upon her knees and touched her forehead to Tarzan's feet. "Great is the honor that Jad-ben-Otho has done his poor servant," she cried. "Carry to him my poor thanks for the happiness that he has brought to O-lo-a."

"It would please my father," said Tarzan, "if you were to cause Pan-at-lee to be returned in safety to the village of her people."

"What cares Jad-ben-Otho for such as she?" asked O-lo-a, a slight trace of hauteur in her tone.

"There is but one god," replied Tarzan, "and he is the god of the Waz-don as well as of the Ho-don; of the birds and the beasts and the flowers and of everything that grows upon the earth

or beneath the waters. If Pan-at-lee does right she is greater in the eyes of Jad-ben-Otho than would be the daughter of Ko-tan should she do wrong."

It was evident that O-lo-a did not quite understand this interpretation of divine favor, so contrary was it to the teachings of the priesthood of her people. In one respect only did Tarzan's teachings coincide with her belief - that there was but one god. For the rest she had always been taught that he was solely the god of the Ho-don in every sense, other than that other creatures were created by Jad-ben-Otho to serve some useful purpose for the benefit of the Ho-don race. And now to be told by the son of god that she stood no higher in

divine esteem than the black handmaiden at her side was indeed a shock to her pride, her vanity, and her faith. But who could question the word of Dor-ul-Otho, especially when she had with her own eyes seen him in actual communion with god in heaven?

"The will of Jad-ben-Otho be done," said O-lo-a meekly, "if it lies within my power. But it would be best, O Dor-ul-Otho, to communicate your father's wish directly to the king."

"Then keep her with you," said Tarzan, "and see that no harm befalls her."

O-lo-a looked ruefully at Pan-at-lee. "She was brought to me but yesterday," she said, "and never have I had slave

woman who pleased me better. I shall hate to part with her."

"But there are others," said Tarzan.

"Yes," replied O-lo-a, "there are others, but there is only one Pan-at-lee."

"Many slaves are brought to the city?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," she replied.

"And many strangers come from other lands?" he asked.

She shook her head negatively. "Only the Ho-don from the other side of the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho," she replied, "and they are not strangers."

"Am I then the first stranger to enter the gates of A-lur?" he asked.

"Can it be," she parried, "that the son

of Jad-ben-Otho need question a poor ignorant mortal like O-lo-a?"

"As I told you before," replied Tarzan, "Jad-ben-Otho alone is all-knowing."

"Then if he wished you to know this thing," retorted O-lo-a quickly, "you would know it."

Inwardly the ape-man smiled that this little heathen's astuteness should beat him at his own game, yet in a measure her evasion of the question might be an answer to it. "There have been other strangers here then recently?" he persisted.

"I cannot tell you what I do not know," she replied. "Always is the palace of Ko-tan filled with rumors, but

how much fact and how much fancy how may a woman of the palace know?"

"There has been such a rumor then?" he asked.

"It was only rumor that reached the Forbidden Garden," she replied.

"It described, perhaps, a woman of another race?" As he put the question and awaited her answer he thought that his heart ceased to beat, so grave to him was the issue at stake.

The girl hesitated before replying, and then. "No," she said, "I cannot speak of this thing, for if it be of sufficient importance to elicit the interest of the gods then indeed would I be subject to the wrath of my father should I discuss it."

"In the name of Jad-ben-Otho I command you to speak," said Tarzan. "In the name of Jad-ben-Otho in whose hands lies the fate of Ta-den!"

The girl paled. "Have mercy!" she cried, "and for the sake of Ta-den I will tell you all that I know."

"Tell what?" demanded a stern voice from the shrubbery behind them. The three turned to see the figure of Ko-tan emerging from the foliage. An angry scowl distorted his kingly features but at sight of Tarzan it gave place to an expression of surprise not unmixed with fear. "Dor-ul-Otho!" he exclaimed, "I did not know that it was you," and then, raising his head and squaring his shoulders he said, "but there are places

where even the son of the Great God may not walk and this, the Forbidden Garden of Ko-tan, is one."

It was a challenge but despite the king's bold front there was a note of apology in it, indicating that in his superstitious mind there flourished the inherent fear of man for his Maker. "Come, Dor- ul-Otho," he continued, "I do not know all this foolish child has said to you but whatever you would know Ko-tan, the king, will tell you. O-lo-a, go to your quarters immediately," and he pointed with stern finger toward the opposite end of the garden.

The princess, followed by Pan-at-lee, turned at once and left them.

"We will go this way," said Ko-tan

and preceding, led Tarzan in another direction. Close to that part of the wall which they approached Tarzan perceived a grotto in the miniature cliff into the interior of which Ko-tan led him, and down a rocky stairway to a gloomy corridor the opposite end of which opened into the palace proper. Two armed warriors stood at this entrance to the Forbidden Garden, evidencing how jealously were the sacred precincts of the place guarded.

In silence Ko-tan led the way back to his own quarters in the palace. A large chamber just outside the room toward which Ko-tan was leading his guest was filled with chiefs and warriors awaiting the pleasure of their ruler. As the two

entered, an aisle was formed for them the length of the chamber, down which they passed in silence.

Close to the farther door and half hidden by the warriors who stood before him was Lu-don, the high priest. Tarzan glimpsed him but briefly but in that short period he was aware of a cunning and malevolent expression upon the cruel countenance that he was subconsciously aware boded him no good, and then with Ko-tan he passed into the adjoining room and the hangings dropped.

At the same moment the hideous headdress of an under priest appeared in the entrance of the outer chamber. Its owner, pausing for a moment, glanced quickly around the interior and then

having located him whom he sought moved rapidly in the direction of Lu-don. There was a whispered conversation which was terminated by the high priest.

"Return immediately to the quarters of the princess," he said, "and see that the slave is sent to me at the temple at once." The under priest turned and departed upon his mission while Lu-don also left the apartment and directed his footsteps toward the sacred enclosure over which he ruled.

A half-hour later a warrior was ushered into the presence of Ko- tan. "Lu-don, the high priest, desires the presence of Ko-tan, the king, in the temple," he announced, "and it is his

wish that he come alone."

Ko-tan nodded to indicate that he accepted the command which even the king must obey. "I will return presently, Dor-ul-Otho," he said to Tarzan, "and in the meantime my warriors and my slaves are yours to command."

11. THE SENTENCE OF DEATH

But it was an hour before the king re-entered the apartment and in the meantime the ape-man had occupied himself in examining the carvings upon the walls and the numerous specimens of the handicraft of Pal-ul-donian artisans which combined to impart an atmosphere of richness and luxury to the apartment.

The limestone of the country, close-grained and of marble whiteness yet worked with comparative ease with crude implements, had been wrought by cunning craftsmen into bowls and urns and vases of considerable grace and

beauty. Into the carved designs of many of these virgin gold had been hammered, presenting the effect of a rich and magnificent cloisonne. A barbarian himself the art of barbarians had always appealed to the ape-man to whom they represented a natural expression of man's love of the beautiful to even a greater extent than the studied and artificial efforts of civilization. Here was the real art of old masters, the other the cheap imitation of the chromo.

It was while he was thus pleasurably engaged that Ko-tan returned. As Tarzan, attracted by the movement of the hangings through which the king entered, turned and faced him he was almost shocked by the remarkable alteration of

the king's appearance. His face was livid; his hands trembled as with palsy, and his eyes were wide as with fright. His appearance was one apparently of a combination of consuming anger and withering fear. Tarzan looked at him questioningly.

"You have had bad news, Ko-tan?" he asked.

The king mumbled an unintelligible reply. Behind there thronged into the apartment so great a number of warriors that they choked the entrance-way. The king looked apprehensively to right and left. He cast terrified glances at the ape-man and then raising his face and turning his eyes upward he cried: "Jad-ben-Otho be my witness that I do not this thing of

my own accord." There was a moment's silence which was again broken by Ko-tan. "Seize him," he cried to the warriors about him, "for Lu-don, the high priest, swears that he is an impostor."

To have offered armed resistance to this great concourse of warriors in the very heart of the palace of their king would have been worse than fatal. Already Tarzan had come far by his wits and now that within a few hours he had had his hopes and his suspicions partially verified by the vague admissions of O-lo-a he was impressed with the necessity of inviting no mortal risk that he could avoid.

"Stop!" he cried, raising his palm against them. "What is the meaning of

this?"

"Lu-don claims he has proof that you are not the son of Jad-ben- Otho," replied Ko-tan. "He demands that you be brought to the throneroom to face your accusers. If you are what you claim to be none knows better than you that you need have no fear in acquiescing to his demands, but remember always that in such matters the high priest commands the king and that I am only the bearer of these commands, not their author."

Tarzan saw that Ko-tan was not entirely convinced of his duplicity as was evidenced by his palpable design to play safe.

"Let not your warriors seize me," he said to Ko-tan, "lest Jad- ben-Otho,

mistaking their intention, strike them dead." The effect of his words was immediate upon the men in the front rank of those who faced him, each seeming suddenly to acquire a new modesty that compelled him to self-effacement behind those directly in his rear—a modesty that became rapidly contagious.

The ape-man smiled. "Fear not," he said, "I will go willingly to the audience chamber to face the blasphemers who accuse me."

Arrived at the great throneroom a new complication arose. Ko- tan would not acknowledge the right of Lu-don to occupy the apex of the pyramid and Lu-don would not consent to occupying an inferior position while Tarzan, to remain

consistent with his high claims, insisted that no one should stand above him, but only to the ape-man was the humor of the situation apparent.

To relieve the situation Ja-don suggested that all three of them occupy the throne, but this suggestion was repudiated by Ko-tan who argued that no mortal other than a king of Pal-ul-don had ever sat upon the high eminence, and that furthermore there was not room for three there.

"But who," said Tarzan, "is my accuser and who is my judge?"

"Lu-don is your accuser," explained Ko-tan.

"And Lu-don is your judge," cried the high priest.

"I am to be judged by him who accuses me then," said Tarzan. "It were better to dispense then with any formalities and ask Lu-don to sentence me." His tone was ironical and his sneering face, looking straight into that of the high priest, but caused the latter's hatred to rise to still greater proportions.

It was evident that Ko-tan and his warriors saw the justice of Tarzan's implied objection to this unfair method of dispensing justice. "Only Ko-tan can judge in the throneroom of his palace," said Ja-don, "let him hear Lu-don's charges and the testimony of his witnesses, and then let Ko-tan's judgment be final."

Ko-tan, however, was not particularly

enthusiastic over the prospect of sitting in trial upon one who might after all very possibly be the son of his god, and so he temporized, seeking for an avenue of escape. "It is purely a religious matter," he said, "and it is traditional that the kings of Pal-ul- don interfere not in questions of the church."

"Then let the trial be held in the temple," cried one of the chiefs, for the warriors were as anxious as their king to be relieved of all responsibility in the matter. This suggestion was more than satisfactory to the high priest who inwardly condemned himself for not having thought of it before.

"It is true," he said, "this man's sin is against the temple. Let him be dragged

thither then for trial."

"The son of Jad-ben-Otho will be dragged nowhere," cried Tarzan. "But when this trial is over it is possible that the corpse of Lu-don, the high priest, will be dragged from the temple of the god he would desecrate. Think well, then, Lu-don before you commit this folly."

His words, intended to frighten the high priest from his position failed utterly in consummating their purpose. Lu-don showed no terror at the suggestion the ape-man's words implied.

"Here is one," thought Tarzan, "who, knowing more of his religion than any of his fellows, realizes fully the falsity of my claims as he does the falsity of the

faith he preaches."

He realized, however, that his only hope lay in seeming indifference to the charges. Ko-tan and the warriors were still under the spell of their belief in him and upon this fact must he depend in the final act of the drama that Lu- don was staging for his rescue from the jealous priest whom he knew had already passed sentence upon him in his own heart.

With a shrug he descended the steps of the pyramid. "It matters not to Dor-ul-Otho," he said, "where Lu-don enrages his god, for Jad- ben-Otho can reach as easily into the chambers of the temple as into the throneroom of Ko-tan."

Immeasurably relieved by this easy

solution of their problem the king and the warriors thronged from the throneroom toward the temple grounds, their faith in Tarzan increased by his apparent indifference to the charges against him. Lu-don led them to the largest of the altar courts.

Taking his place behind the western altar he motioned Ko-tan to a place upon the platform at the left hand of the altar and directed Tarzan to a similar place at the right.

As Tarzan ascended the platform his eyes narrowed angrily at the sight which met them. The basin hollowed in the top of the altar was filled with water in which floated the naked corpse of a new-born babe. "What means this?" he

cried angrily, turning upon Lu-don.

The latter smiled malevolently. "That you do not know," he replied, "is but added evidence of the falsity of your claim. He who poses as the son of god did not know that as the last rays of the setting sun flood the eastern altar of the temple the lifeblood of an adult reddens the white stone for the edification of Jad-ben-Otho, and that when the sun rises again from the body of its maker it looks first upon this western altar and rejoices in the death of a new-born babe each day, the ghost of which accompanies it across the heavens by day as the ghost of the adult returns with it to Jad-ben-Otho at night.

"Even the little children of the Ho-

don know these things, while he who claims to be the son of Jad-ben-Otho knows them not; and if this proof be not enough, there is more. Come, Waz-don," he cried, pointing to a tall slave who stood with a group of other blacks and priests on the temple floor at the left of the altar.

The fellow came forward fearfully. "Tell us what you know of this creature," cried Lu-don, pointing to Tarzan.

"I have seen him before," said the Waz-don. "I am of the tribe of Kor-ul-lul, and one day recently a party of which I was one encountered a few of the warriors of the Kor-ul-ja upon the ridge which separates our villages. Among the enemy was this strange

creature whom they called Tarzan-jad-guru; and terrible indeed was he for he fought with the strength of many men so that it required twenty of us to subdue him. But he did not fight as a god fights, and when a club struck him upon the head he sank unconscious as might an ordinary mortal.

"We carried him with us to our village as a prisoner but he escaped after cutting off the head of the warrior we left to guard him and carrying it down into the gorge and tying it to the branch of a tree upon the opposite side."

"The word of a slave against that of a god!" cried Ja-don, who had shown previously a friendly interest in the pseudo godling.

"It is only a step in the progress toward truth," interjected Lu-don. "Possibly the evidence of the only princess of the house of Ko-tan will have greater weight with the great chief from the north, though the father of a son who fled the holy offer of the priesthood may not receive with willing ears any testimony against another blasphemer."

Ja-don's hand leaped to his knife, but the warriors next him laid detaining fingers upon his arms. "You are in the temple of Jad- ben-Otho, Ja-don," they cautioned and the great chief was forced to swallow Lu-don's affront though it left in his heart bitter hatred of the high priest.

And now Ko-tan turned toward Lu-

don. "What knoweth my daughter of this matter?" he asked. "You would not bring a princess of my house to testify thus publicly?"

"No," replied Lu-don, "not in person, but I have here one who will testify for her." He beckoned to an under priest. "Fetch the slave of the princess," he said.

His grotesque headdress adding a touch of the hideous to the scene, the priest stepped forward dragging the reluctant Pan-at-lee by the wrist.

"The Princess O-lo-a was alone in the Forbidden Garden with but this one slave," explained the priest, "when there suddenly appeared from the foliage nearby this creature who claims to be the

Dor-ul- Otho. When the slave saw him the princess says that she cried aloud in startled recognition and called the creature by name—Tarzan-jad-guru—the same name that the slave from Kor-ul-lul gave him. This woman is not from Kor-ul-lul but from Kor-ul- ja, the very tribe with which the Kor-ul-lul says the creature was associating when he first saw him. And further the princess said that when this woman, whose name is Pan-at-lee, was brought to her yesterday she told a strange story of having been rescued from a Tor- o-don in the Kor-ul-gryf by a creature such as this, whom she spoke of then as Tarzan-jad-guru; and of how the two were pursued in the bottom of the gorge by two monster gryfs, and of

how the man led them away while Pan-at-lee escaped, only to be taken prisoner in the Kor- ul-lul as she was seeking to return to her own tribe.

"Is it not plain now," cried Lu-don, "that this creature is no god. Did he tell you that he was the son of god?" he almost shouted, turning suddenly upon Pan-at-lee.

The girl shrank back terrified. "Answer me, slave!" cried the high priest.

"He seemed more than mortal," parried Pan-at-lee.

"Did he tell you that he was the son of god? Answer my question," insisted Lu-don.

"No," she admitted in a low voice,

casting an appealing look of forgiveness at Tarzan who returned a smile of encouragement and friendship.

"That is no proof that he is not the son of god," cried Ja-don. "Dost think Jad-ben-Otho goes about crying 'I am god! I am god!' Hast ever heard him Lu-don? No, you have not. Why should his son do that which the father does not do?"

"Enough," cried Lu-don. "The evidence is clear. The creature is an impostor and I, the head priest of Jad-ben-Otho in the city of A- lur, do condemn him to die." There was a moment's silence during which Lu-don evidently paused for the dramatic effect of his climax. "And if I am wrong may Jad-ben-Otho pierce my heart with his

lightnings as I stand here before you all."

The lapping of the wavelets of the lake against the foot of the palace wall was distinctly audible in the utter and almost breathless silence which ensued. Lu-don stood with his face turned toward the heavens and his arms outstretched in the attitude of one who bares his breast to the dagger of an executioner. The warriors and the priests and the slaves gathered in the sacred court awaited the consuming vengeance of their god.

It was Tarzan who broke the silence. "Your god ignores you Lu- don," he taunted, with a sneer that he meant to still further anger the high priest, "he ignores you and I can prove it before the

eyes of your priests and your people."

"Prove it, blasphemer! How can you prove it?"

"You have called me a blasphemer," replied Tarzan, "you have proved to your own satisfaction that I am an impostor, that I, an ordinary mortal, have posed as the son of god. Demand then that Jad- ben-Otho uphold his godship and the dignity of his priesthood by directing his consuming fires through my own bosom."

Again there ensued a brief silence while the onlookers waited for Lu-don to thus consummate the destruction of this presumptuous impostor.

"You dare not," taunted Tarzan, "for you know that I would be struck dead no

quicker than were you."

"You lie," cried Lu-don, "and I would do it had I not but just received a message from Jad-ben-Otho directing that your fate be different."

A chorus of admiring and reverential "Ahs" arose from the priesthood. Ko- tan and his warriors were in a state of mental confusion. Secretly they hated and feared Lu-don, but so ingrained was their sense of reverence for the office of the high priest that none dared raise a voice against him.

None? Well, there was Ja-don, fearless old Lion-man of the north. "The proposition was a fair one," he cried. "Invoke the lightnings of Jad-ben-Otho upon this man if you would ever

convince us of his guilt."

"Enough of this," snapped Lu-don. "Since when was Ja-don created high priest? Seize the prisoner," he cried to the priests and warriors, "and on the morrow he shall die in the manner that Jad-ben- Otho has willed."

There was no immediate movement on the part of any of the warriors to obey the high priest's command, but the lesser priests on the other hand, imbued with the courage of fanaticism leaped eagerly forward like a flock of hideous harpies to seize upon their prey.

The game was up. That Tarzan knew. No longer could cunning and diplomacy usurp the functions of the weapons of defense he best loved. And so the first

hideous priest who leaped to the platform was confronted by no suave ambassador from heaven, but rather a grim and ferocious beast whose temper savored more of hell.

The altar stood close to the western wall of the enclosure. There was just room between the two for the high priest to stand during the performance of the sacrificial ceremonies and only Lu-don stood there now behind Tarzan, while before him were perhaps two hundred warriors and priests.

The presumptuous one who would have had the glory of first laying arresting hands upon the blasphemous impersonator rushed forward with outstretched hand to seize the ape-man.

Instead it was he who was seized; seized by steel fingers that snapped him up as though he had been a dummy of straw, grasped him by one leg and the harness at his back and raised him with giant arms high above the altar. Close at his heels were others ready to seize the ape-man and drag him down, and beyond the altar was Lu-don with drawn knife advancing toward him.

There was no instant to waste, nor was it the way of the ape- man to fritter away precious moments in the uncertainty of belated decision. Before Lu-don or any other could guess what was in the mind of the condemned, Tarzan with all the force of his great muscles dashed the screaming

hierophant in the face of the high priest, and, as though the two actions were one, so quickly did he move, he had leaped to the top of the altar and from there to a handhold upon the summit of the temple wall. As he gained a footing there he turned and looked down upon those beneath. For a moment he stood in silence and then he spoke.

"Who dare believe," he cried, "that Jad-ben-Otho would forsake his son?" and then he dropped from their sight upon the other side.

There were two at least left within the enclosure whose hearts leaped with involuntary elation at the success of the ape-man's maneuver, and one of them smiled openly. This was Ja-don, and the

other, Pan-at-lee.

The brains of the priest that Tarzan had thrown at the head of Lu-don had been dashed out against the temple wall while the high priest himself had escaped with only a few bruises, sustained in his fall to the hard pavement. Quickly scrambling to his feet he looked around in fear, in terror and finally in bewilderment, for he had not been a witness to the ape-man's escape. "Seize him," he cried; "seize the blasphemer," and he continued to look around in search of his victim with such a ridiculous expression of bewilderment that more than a single warrior was compelled to hide his smiles beneath his palm.

The priests were rushing around wildly, exhorting the warriors to pursue the fugitive but these awaited now stolidly the command of their king or high priest. Ko-tan, more or less secretly pleased by the discomfiture of Lu-don, waited for that worthy to give the necessary directions which he presently did when one of his acolytes excitedly explained to him the manner of Tarzan's escape.

Instantly the necessary orders were issued and priests and warriors sought the temple exit in pursuit of the ape-man. His departing words, hurled at them from the summit of the temple wall, had had little effect in impressing the majority that his claims had not been

disproven by Lu-don, but in the hearts of the warriors was admiration for a brave man and in many the same unholy gratification that had risen in that of their ruler at the discomfiture of Lu- don.

A careful search of the temple grounds revealed no trace of the quarry. The secret recesses of the subterranean chambers, familiar only to the priesthood, were examined by these while the warriors scattered through the palace and the palace grounds without the temple. Swift runners were dispatched to the city to arouse the people there that all might be upon the lookout for Tarzan the Terrible. The story of his imposture and of his escape, and the tales that the Waz-don slaves had

brought into the city concerning him were soon spread throughout A-lur, nor did they lose aught in the spreading, so that before an hour had passed the women and children were hiding behind barred doorways while the warriors crept apprehensively through the streets expecting momentarily to be pounced upon by a ferocious demon who, bare-handed, did victorious battle with huge gryfs and whose lightest pastime consisted in tearing strong men limb from limb.

12. THE GIANT STRANGER

And while the warriors and the priests of A-lur searched the temple and the palace and the city for the vanished ape-man there entered the head of Kor-ul-ja down the precipitous trail from the mountains, a naked stranger bearing an Enfield upon his back. Silently he moved downward toward the bottom of the gorge and there where the ancient trail unfolded more levelly before him he swung along with easy strides, though always with the utmost alertness against possible dangers. A gentle breeze came down from the mountains behind him so that only his ears and his eyes were of

value in detecting the presence of danger ahead. Generally the trail followed along the banks of the winding brooklet at the bottom of the gorge, but in some places where the waters tumbled over a precipitous ledge the trail made a detour along the side of the gorge, and again it wound in and out among rocky outcroppings, and presently where it rounded sharply the projecting shoulder of a cliff the stranger came suddenly face to face with one who was ascending the gorge.

Separated by a hundred paces the two halted simultaneously. Before him the stranger saw a tall white warrior, naked but for a loin cloth, cross belts, and a girdle. The man was armed with a

heavy, knotted club and a short knife, the latter hanging in its sheath at his left hip from the end of one of his cross belts, the opposite belt supporting a leathern pouch at his right side. It was Ta-den hunting alone in the gorge of his friend, the chief of Kor-ul- ja. He contemplated the stranger with surprise but no wonder, since he recognized in him a member of the race with which his experience of Tarzan the Terrible had made him familiar and also, thanks to his friendship for the ape-man, he looked upon the newcomer without hostility.

The latter was the first to make outward sign of his intentions, raising his palm toward Ta-den in that gesture which has been a symbol of peace from

pole to pole since man ceased to walk upon his knuckles. Simultaneously he advanced a few paces and halted.

Ta-den, assuming that one so like Tarzan the Terrible must be a fellow-tribesman of his lost friend, was more than glad to accept this overture of peace, the sign of which he returned in kind as he ascended the trail to where the other stood. "Who are you?" he asked, but the newcomer only shook his head to indicate that he did not understand.

By signs he tried to carry to the Ho-don the fact that he was following a trail that had led him over a period of many days from some place beyond the mountains and Ta-den was convinced

that the newcomer sought Tarzan-jad-guru. He wished, however, that he might discover whether as friend or foe.

The stranger perceived the Ho-don's prehensile thumbs and great toes and his long tail with an astonishment which he sought to conceal, but greater than all was the sense of relief that the first inhabitant of this strange country whom he had met had proven friendly, so greatly would he have been handicapped by the necessity for forcing his way through a hostile land.

Ta-den, who had been hunting for some of the smaller mammals, the meat of which is especially relished by the Ho-don, forgot his intended sport in the greater interest of his new discovery. He

would take the stranger to Om-at and possibly together the two would find some way of discovering the true intentions of the newcomer. And so again through signs he apprised the other that he would accompany him and together they descended toward the cliffs of Om-at's people.

As they approached these they came upon the women and children working under guard of the old men and the youths—gathering the wild fruits and herbs which constitute a part of their diet, as well as tending the small acres of growing crops which they cultivate. The fields lay in small level patches that had been cleared of trees and brush. Their farm implements consisted of

metal- shod poles which bore a closer resemblance to spears than to tools of peaceful agriculture. Supplementing these were others with flattened blades that were neither hoes nor spades, but instead possessed the appearance of an unhappy attempt to combine the two implements in one.

At first sight of these people the stranger halted and unslung his bow for these creatures were black as night, their bodies entirely covered with hair. But Ta-den, interpreting the doubt in the other's mind, reassured him with a gesture and a smile. The Waz-don, however, gathered around excitedly jabbering questions in a language which the stranger discovered his guide

understood though it was entirely unintelligible to the former. They made no attempt to molest him and he was now sure that he had fallen among a peaceful and friendly people.

It was but a short distance now to the caves and when they reached these Ta-den led the way aloft upon the wooden pegs, assured that this creature whom he had discovered would have no more difficulty in following him than had Tarzan the Terrible. Nor was he mistaken for the other mounted with ease until presently the two stood within the recess before the cave of Om-at, the chief.

The latter was not there and it was mid-afternoon before he returned, but in

the meantime many warriors came to look upon the visitor and in each instance the latter was more thoroughly impressed with the friendly and peaceable spirit of his hosts, little guessing that he was being entertained by a ferocious and warlike tribe who never before the coming of Ta-den and Tarzan had suffered a stranger among them.

At last Om-at returned and the guest sensed intuitively that he was in the presence of a great man among these people, possibly a chief or king, for not only did the attitude of the other black warriors indicate this but it was written also in the mien and bearing of the splendid creature who stood looking at

him while Ta- den explained the circumstances of their meeting. "And I believe, Om- at," concluded the Ho-don, "that he seeks Tarzan the Terrible."

At the sound of that name, the first intelligible word that had fallen upon the ears of the stranger since he had come among them, his face lightened. "Tarzan!" he cried, "Tarzan of the Apes!" and by signs he tried to tell them that it was he whom he sought.

They understood, and also they guessed from the expression of his face that he sought Tarzan from motives of affection rather than the reverse, but of this Om-at wished to make sure. He pointed to the stranger's knife, and repeating Tarzan's name, seized Ta-den

and pretended to stab him, immediately turning questioningly toward the stranger.

The latter shook his head vehemently and then first placing a hand above his heart he raised his palm in the symbol of peace.

"He is a friend of Tarzan-jad-guru," exclaimed Ta-den.

"Either a friend or a great liar," replied Om-at.

"Tarzan," continued the stranger, "you know him? He lives? O God, if I could only speak your language." And again reverting to sign language he sought to ascertain where Tarzan was. He would pronounce the name and point in different directions, in the cave, down

into the gorge, back toward the mountains, or out upon the valley below, and each time he would raise his brows questioningly and voice the universal "eh?" of interrogation which they could not fail to understand. But always Om-at shook his head and spread his palms in a gesture which indicated that while he understood the question he was ignorant as to the whereabouts of the ape-man, and then the black chief attempted as best he might to explain to the stranger what he knew of the whereabouts of Tarzan.

He called the newcomer Jar-don, which in the language of Pal-ul- don means "stranger," and he pointed to the sun and said as. This he repeated several

times and then he held up one hand with the fingers outspread and touching them one by one, including the thumb, repeated the word adenen until the stranger understood that he meant five. Again he pointed to the sun and describing an arc with his forefinger starting at the eastern horizon and terminating at the western, he repeated again the words as adenen. It was plain to the stranger that the words meant that the sun had crossed the heavens five times. In other words, five days had passed. Om-at then pointed to the cave where they stood, pronouncing Tarzan's name and imitating a walking man with the first and second fingers of his right hand upon the floor of the recess, sought

to show that Tarzan had walked out of the cave and climbed upward on the pegs five days before, but this was as far as the sign language would permit him to go.

This far the stranger followed him and, indicating that he understood he pointed to himself and then indicating the pegs leading above announced that he would follow Tarzan.

"Let us go with him," said Om-at, "for as yet we have not punished the Kor-ul-lul for killing our friend and ally."

"Persuade him to wait until morning," said Ta-den, "that you may take with you many warriors and make a great raid upon the Kor-ul- lul, and this time, Om-at, do not kill your prisoners. Take as

many as you can alive and from some of them we may learn the fate of Tarzan-jad-guru."

"Great is the wisdom of the Ho-don," replied Om-at. "It shall be as you say, and having made prisoners of all the Kor-ul-lul we shall make them tell us what we wish to know. And then we shall march them to the rim of Kor-ul-gryf and push them over the edge of the cliff."

Ta-den smiled. He knew that they would not take prisoner all the Kor-ul-lul warriors—that they would be fortunate if they took one and it was also possible that they might even be driven back in defeat, but he knew too that Om-at would not hesitate to carry out his

threat if he had the opportunity, so implacable was the hatred of these neighbors for each other.

It was not difficult to explain Om-at's plan to the stranger or to win his consent since he was aware, when the great black had made it plain that they would be accompanied by many warriors, that their venture would probably lead them into a hostile country and every safeguard that he could employ he was glad to avail himself of, since the furtherance of his quest was the paramount issue.

He slept that night upon a pile of furs in one of the compartments of Om-at's ancestral cave, and early the next day following the morning meal they sallied

forth, a hundred savage warriors swarming up the face of the sheer cliff and out upon the summit of the ridge, the main body preceded by two warriors whose duties coincided with those of the point of modern military maneuvers, safeguarding the column against the danger of too sudden contact with the enemy.

Across the ridge they went and down into the Kor-ul-lul and there almost immediately they came upon a lone and unarmed Waz-don who was making his way fearfully up the gorge toward the village of his tribe. Him they took prisoner which, strangely, only added to his terror since from the moment that he had seen them and realized that escape

was impossible, he had expected to be slain immediately.

"Take him back to Kor-ul-ja," said Om-at, to one of his warriors, "and hold him there unharmed until I return."

And so the puzzled Kor-ul-lul was led away while the savage company moved stealthily from tree to tree in its closer advance upon the village. Fortune smiled upon Om-at in that it gave him quickly what he sought—a battle royal, for they had not yet come in sight of the caves of the Kor-ul-lul when they encountered a considerable band of warriors headed down the gorge upon some expedition.

Like shadows the Kor-ul-ja melted into the concealment of the foliage upon

either side of the trail. Ignorant of impending danger, safe in the knowledge that they trod their own domain where each rock and stone was as familiar as the features of their mates, the Kor-ul-lul walked innocently into the ambush. Suddenly the quiet of that seeming peace was shattered by a savage cry and a hurled club felled a Kor-ul-lul.

The cry was a signal for a savage chorus from a hundred Kor-ul- ja throats with which were soon mingled the war cries of their enemies. The air was filled with flying clubs and then as the two forces mingled, the battle resolved itself into a number of individual encounters as each warrior singled out a foe and closed upon him. Knives gleamed and

flashed in the mottling sunlight that filtered through the foliage of the trees above. Sleek black coats were streaked with crimson stains.

In the thick of the fight the smooth brown skin of the stranger mingled with the black bodies of friend and foe. Only his keen eyes and his quick wit had shown him how to differentiate between Kor-ul- lul and Kor-ul-ja since with the single exception of apparel they were identical, but at the first rush of the enemy he had noticed that their loin cloths were not of the leopard-matted hides such as were worn by his allies.

Om-at, after dispatching his first antagonist, glanced at Jar- don. "He fights with the ferocity of jato," mused

the chief. "Powerful indeed must be the tribe from which he and Tarzan-jad-guru come," and then his whole attention was occupied by a new assailant.

The fighters surged to and fro through the forest until those who survived were spent with exhaustion. All but the stranger who seemed not to know the sense of fatigue. He fought on when each new antagonist would have gladly quit, and when there were no more Kor-ul-lul who were not engaged, he leaped upon those who stood pantingly facing the exhausted Kor-ul-ja.

And always he carried upon his back the peculiar thing which Om- at had thought was some manner of strange weapon but the purpose of which he

could not now account for in view of the fact that Jar-don never used it, and that for the most part it seemed but a nuisance and needless encumbrance since it banged and smashed against its owner as he leaped, catlike, hither and thither in the course of his victorious duels. The bow and arrows he had tossed aside at the beginning of the fight but the Enfield he would not discard, for where he went he meant that it should go until its mission had been fulfilled.

Presently the Kor-ul-ja, seemingly shamed by the example of Jar- don closed once more with the enemy, but the latter, moved no doubt to terror by the presence of the stranger, a tireless demon who appeared invulnerable to

their attacks, lost heart and sought to flee. And then it was that at Om-at's command his warriors surrounded a half-dozen of the most exhausted and made them prisoners.

It was a tired, bloody, and elated company that returned victorious to the Kor-ul-ja. Twenty of their number were carried back and six of these were dead men. It was the most glorious and successful raid that the Kor-ul-ja had made upon the Kor-ul-lul in the memory of man, and it marked Om-at as the greatest of chiefs, but that fierce warrior knew that advantage had lain upon his side largely because of the presence of his strange ally. Nor did he hesitate to give credit where credit belonged, with

the result that Jar-don and his exploits were upon the tongue of every member of the tribe of Kor-ul-ja and great was the fame of the race that could produce two such as he and Tarzan-jad-guru.

And in the gorge of Kor-ul-lul beyond the ridge the survivors spoke in bated breath of this second demon that had joined forces with their ancient enemy.

Returned to his cave Om-at caused the Kor-ul-lul prisoners to be brought into his presence singly, and each he questioned as to the fate of Tarzan. Without exception they told him the same story—that Tarzan had been taken prisoner by them five days before but that he had slain the warrior left to guard him and escaped, carrying the head of

the unfortunate sentry to the opposite side of Kor-ul-lul where he had left it suspended by its hair from the branch of a tree. But what had become of him after, they did not know; not one of them, until the last prisoner was examined, he whom they had taken first—the unarmed Kor-ul-lul making his way from the direction of the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho toward the caves of his people.

This one, when he discovered the purpose of their questioning, bartered with them for the lives and liberty of himself and his fellows. "I can tell you much of this terrible man of whom you ask, Kor-ul-ja," he said. "I saw him yesterday and I know where he is, and if you will promise to let me and my

fellows return in safety to the caves of our ancestors I will tell you all, and truthfully, that which I know."

"You will tell us anyway," replied Om-at, "or we shall kill you."

"You will kill me anyway," retorted the prisoner, "unless you make me this promise; so if I am to be killed the thing I know shall go with me."

"He is right, Om-at," said Ta-den, "promise him that they shall have their liberty."

"Very well," said Om-at. "Speak Kor-ul-lul, and when you have told me all, you and your fellows may return unharmed to your tribe."

"It was thus," commenced the prisoner. "Three days since I was

hunting with a party of my fellows near the mouth of Kor-ul-lul not far from where you captured me this morning, when we were surprised and set upon by a large number of Ho-don who took us prisoners and carried us to A-lur where a few were chosen to be slaves and the rest were cast into a chamber beneath the temple where are held for sacrifice the victims that are offered by the Ho-don to Jad-ben-Otho upon the sacrificial altars of the temple at A-lur.

"It seemed then that indeed was my fate sealed and that lucky were those who had been selected for slaves among the Ho-don, for they at least might hope to escape—those in the chamber with me must be without hope.

"But yesterday a strange thing happened. There came to the temple, accompanied by all the priests and by the king and many of his warriors, one whom all did great reverence, and when he came to the barred gateway leading to the chamber in which we wretched ones awaited our fate, I saw to my surprise that it was none other than that terrible man who had so recently been a prisoner in the village of Kor-ul-lul—he whom you call Tarzan-jad-guru but whom they addressed as Dor-ul-Otho. And he looked upon us and questioned the high priest and when he was told of the purpose for which we were imprisoned there he grew angry and cried that it was not the will of Jad-ben-Otho that his

people be thus sacrificed, and he commanded the high priest to liberate us, and this was done.

"The Ho-don prisoners were permitted to return to their homes and we were led beyond the City of A-lur and set upon our way toward Kor-ul-lul. There were three of us, but many are the dangers that lie between A-lur and Kor-ul-lul and we were only three and unarmed. Therefore none of us reached the village of our people and only one of us lives. I have spoken."

"That is all you know concerning Tarzan-jad-guru?" asked Om- at.

"That is all I know," replied the prisoner, "other than that he whom they call Lu-don, the high priest at A-lur, was

very angry, and that one of the two priests who guided us out of the city said to the other that the stranger was not Dor-ul-Otho at all; that Lu-don had said so and that he had also said that he would expose him and that he should be punished with death for his presumption. That is all they said within my hearing.

"And now, chief of Kor-ul-ja, let us depart."

Om-at nodded. "Go your way," he said, "and Ab-on, send warriors to guard them until they are safely within the Kor-ul-lul.

"Jar-don," he said beckoning to the stranger, "come with me," and rising he led the way toward the summit of the cliff, and when they stood upon the ridge

Om-at pointed down into the valley toward the City of A-lur gleaming in the light of the western sun.

"There is Tarzan-jad-guru," he said, and Jar-don understood.

13. THE MASQUERADER

As Tarzan dropped to the ground beyond the temple wall there was in his mind no intention to escape from the City of A-lur until he had satisfied himself that his mate was not a prisoner there, but how, in this strange city in which every man's hand must be now against him, he was to live and prosecute his search was far from clear to him.

There was only one place of which he knew that he might find even temporary sanctuary and that was the Forbidden Garden of the king. There was thick shrubbery in which a man might hide, and water and fruits. A cunning jungle creature, if he could reach the spot unsuspected, might remain concealed

there for a considerable time, but how he was to traverse the distance between the temple grounds and the garden unseen was a question the seriousness of which he fully appreciated.

"Mighty is Tarzan," he soliloquized, "in his native jungle, but in the cities of man he is little better than they."

Depending upon his keen observation and sense of location he felt safe in assuming that he could reach the palace grounds by means of the subterranean corridors and chambers of the temple through which he had been conducted the day before, nor any slightest detail of which had escaped his keen eyes. That would be better, he reasoned, than crossing the open grounds above where

his pursuers would naturally immediately follow him from the temple and quickly discover him.

And so a dozen paces from the temple wall he disappeared from sight of any chance observer above, down one of the stone stairways that led to the apartments beneath. The way that he had been conducted the previous day had followed the windings and turnings of numerous corridors and apartments, but Tarzan, sure of himself in such matters, retraced the route accurately without hesitation.

He had little fear of immediate apprehension here since he believed that all the priests of the temple had assembled in the court above to witness

his trial and his humiliation and his death, and with this idea firmly implanted in his mind he rounded the turn of the corridor and came face to face with an under priest, his grotesque headdress concealing whatever emotion the sight of Tarzan may have aroused.

However, Tarzan had one advantage over the masked votary of Jad- ben-Otho in that the moment he saw the priest he knew his intention concerning him, and therefore was not compelled to delay action. And so it was that before the priest could determine on any suitable line of conduct in the premises a long, keen knife had been slipped into his heart.

As the body lunged toward the floor

Tarzan caught it and snatched the headdress from its shoulders, for the first sight of the creature had suggested to his ever-alert mind a bold scheme for deceiving his enemies.

The headdress saved from such possible damage as it must have sustained had it fallen to the floor with the body of its owner, Tarzan relinquished his hold upon the corpse, set the headdress carefully upon the floor and stooping down severed the tail of the Ho- don close to its root. Near by at his right was a small chamber from which the priest had evidently just emerged and into this Tarzan dragged the corpse, the headdress, and the tail.

Quickly cutting a thin strip of hide

from the loin cloth of the priest, Tarzan tied it securely about the upper end of the severed member and then tucking the tail under his loin cloth behind him, secured it in place as best he could. Then he fitted the headdress over his shoulders and stepped from the apartment, to all appearances a priest of the temple of Jad-ben-Otho unless one examined too closely his thumbs and his great toes.

He had noticed that among both the Ho-don and the Waz-don it was not at all unusual that the end of the tail be carried in one hand, and so he caught his own tail up thus lest the lifeless appearance of it dragging along behind him should arouse suspicion.

Passing along the corridor and through the various chambers he emerged at last into the palace grounds beyond the temple. The pursuit had not yet reached this point though he was conscious of a commotion not far behind him. He met now both warriors and slaves but none gave him more than a passing glance, a priest being too common a sight about the palace.

And so, passing the guards unchallenged, he came at last to the inner entrance to the Forbidden Garden and there he paused and scanned quickly that portion of the beautiful spot that lay before his eyes. To his relief it seemed unoccupied and congratulating himself upon the ease with which he had so far

outwitted the high powers of A-lur he moved rapidly to the opposite end of the enclosure. Here he found a patch of flowering shrubbery that might safely have concealed a dozen men.

Crawling well within he removed the uncomfortable headdress and sat down to await whatever eventualities fate might have in store for him the while he formulated plans for the future. The one night that he had spent in A-lur had kept him up to a late hour, apprising him of the fact that while there were few abroad in the temple grounds at night, there were yet enough to make it possible for him to fare forth under cover of his disguise without attracting the unpleasant attention of the guards,

and, too, he had noticed that the priesthood constituted a privileged class that seemed to come and go at will and unchallenged throughout the palace as well as the temple. Altogether then, he decided, night furnished the most propitious hours for his investigation—by day he could lie up in the shrubbery of the Forbidden Garden, reasonably free from detection. From beyond the garden he heard the voices of men calling to one another both far and near, and he guessed that diligent was the search that was being prosecuted for him.

The idle moments afforded him an opportunity to evolve a more satisfactory scheme for attaching his

stolen caudal appendage. He arranged it in such a way that it might be quickly assumed or discarded, and this done he fell to examining the weird mask that had so effectively hidden his features.

The thing had been very cunningly wrought from a single block of wood, very probably a section of a tree, upon which the features had been carved and afterward the interior hollowed out until only a comparatively thin shell remained. Two-semicircular notches had been rounded out from opposite sides of the lower edge. These fitted snugly over his shoulders, aprons of wood extending downward a few inches upon his chest and back. From these aprons hung long tassels or switches of hair tapering from

the outer edges toward the center which reached below the bottom of his torso. It required but the most cursory examination to indicate to the ape-man that these ornaments consisted of human scalps, taken, doubtless, from the heads of the sacrifices upon the eastern altars. The headdress itself had been carved to depict in formal design a hideous face that suggested both man and gryf. There were the three white horns, the yellow face with the blue bands encircling the eyes and the red hood which took the form of the posterior and anterior aprons.

As Tarzan sat within the concealing foliage of the shrubbery meditating upon the hideous priest-mask which he held in

his hands he became aware that he was not alone in the garden. He sensed another presence and presently his trained ears detected the slow approach of naked feet across the sward. At first he suspected that it might be one stealthily searching the Forbidden Garden for him but a little later the figure came within the limited area of his vision which was circumscribed by stems and foliage and flowers. He saw then that it was the princess O-lo-a and that she was alone and walking with bowed head as though in meditation—sorrowful meditation for there were traces of tears upon her lids.

Shortly after his ears warned him that others had entered the garden —men

they were and their footsteps proclaimed that they walked neither slowly nor meditatively. They came directly toward the princess and when Tarzan could see them he discovered that both were priests.

"O-lo-a, Princess of Pal-ul-don," said one, addressing her, "the stranger who told us that he was the son of Jad-ben-Otho has but just fled from the wrath of Lu-don, the high priest, who exposed him and all his wicked blasphemy. The temple, and the palace, and the city are being searched and we have been sent to search the Forbidden Garden, since Ko-tan, the king, said that only this morning he found him here, though how he passed the guards he could not guess."

"He is not here," said O-lo-a. "I have been in the garden for some time and have seen nor heard no other than myself. However, search it if you will."

"No," said the priest who had before spoken, "it is not necessary since he could not have entered without your knowledge and the connivance of the guards, and even had he, the priest who preceded us must have seen him."

"What priest?" asked O-lo-a.

"One passed the guards shortly before us," explained the man.

"I did not see him," said O-lo-a.

"Doubtless he left by another exit," remarked the second priest.

"Yes, doubtless," acquiesced O-lo-a,

"but it is strange that I did not see him." The two priests made their obeisance and turned to depart.

"Stupid as Buto, the rhinoceros," soliloquized Tarzan, who considered Buto a very stupid creature indeed. "It should be easy to outwit such as these."

The priests had scarce departed when there came the sound of feet running rapidly across the garden in the direction of the princess to an accompaniment of rapid breathing as of one almost spent, either from fatigue or excitement.

"Pan-at-lee," exclaimed O-lo-a, "what has happened? You look as terrified as the doe for which you were named!"

"O Princess of Pal-ul-don," cried

Pan-at-lee, "they would have killed him in the temple. They would have killed the wondrous stranger who claimed to be the Dor-ul-Otho."

"But he escaped," said O-lo-a. "You were there. Tell me about it."

"The head priest would have had him seized and slain, but when they rushed upon him he hurled one in the face of Lu-don with the same ease that you might cast your breastplates at me, and then he leaped upon the altar and from there to the top of the temple wall and disappeared below. They are searching for him, but, O Princess, I pray that they do not find him."

"And why do you pray that?" asked O-lo-a. "Has not one who has so

blasphemed earned death?"

"Ah, but you do not know him," replied Pan-at-lee.

"And you do, then?" retorted O-lo-a quickly. "This morning you betrayed yourself and then attempted to deceive me. The slaves of O- lo-a do not such things with impunity. He is then the same Tarzan-jad- guru of whom you told me? Speak woman and speak only the truth."

Pan-at-lee drew herself up very erect, her little chin held high, for was not she too among her own people already as good as a princess? "Pan-at-lee, the Kor-ul-ja does not lie," she said, "to protect herself."

"Then tell me what you know of this Tarzan-jad-guru," insisted O-lo-a.

"I know that he is a wondrous man and very brave," said Pan-at- lee, "and that he saved me from the Tor-o-don and the gryf as I told you, and that he is indeed the same who came into the garden this morning; and even now I do not know that he is not the son of Jad-ben- Otho for his courage and his strength are more than those of mortal man, as are also his kindness and his honor: for when he might have harmed me he protected me, and when he might have saved himself he thought only of me. And all this he did because of his friendship for Om-at, who is gund of Kor-ul-ja and with whom I should have mated had the Ho-don not captured me."

"He was indeed a wonderful man to

look upon," mused O-lo-a, "and he was not as are other men, not alone in the conformation of his hands and feet or the fact that he was tailless, but there was that about him which made him seem different in ways more important than these."

"And," supplemented Pan-at-lee, her savage little heart loyal to the man who had befriended her and hoping to win for him the consideration of the princess even though it might not avail him; "and," she said, "did he not know all about Ta-den and even his whereabouts. Tell me, O Princess, could mortal know such things as these?"

"Perhaps he saw Ta-den," suggested O-lo-a.

"But how would he know that you loved Ta-den," parried Pan-at- lee. "I tell you, my Princess, that if he is not a god he is at least more than Ho-don or Waz-don. He followed me from the cave of Es-sat in Kor-ul-ja across Kor-ul-lul and two wide ridges to the very cave in Kor-ul-gryf where I hid, though many hours had passed since I had come that way and my bare feet left no impress upon the ground. What mortal man could do such things as these? And where in all Pal-ul-don would virgin maid find friend and protector in a strange male other than he?"

"Perhaps Lu-don may be mistaken—perhaps he is a god," said O-lo-a, influenced by her slave's enthusiastic

championing of the stranger."

"But whether god or man he is too wonderful to die," cried Pan- at-lee. "Would that I might save him. If he lived he might even find a way to give you your Ta-den, Princess."

"Ah, if he only could," sighed O-lo-a, "but alas it is too late for tomorrow I am to be given to Bu-lot."

"He who came to your quarters yesterday with your father?" asked Pan-at-lee.

"Yes; the one with the awful round face and the big belly," exclaimed the Princess disgustedly. "He is so lazy he will neither hunt nor fight. To eat and to drink is all that Bu-lot is fit for, and he thinks of naught else except these things

and his slave women. But come, Pan-at-lee, gather for me some of these beautiful blossoms. I would have them spread around my couch tonight that I may carry away with me in the morning the memory of the fragrance that I love best and which I know that I shall not find in the village of Mo-sar, the father of Bu-lot. I will help you, Pan-at-lee, and we will gather armfuls of them, for I love to gather them as I love nothing else—they were Ta-den's favorite flowers."

The two approached the flowering shrubbery where Tarzan hid, but as the blooms grew plentifully upon every bush the ape-man guessed there would be no necessity for them to enter the patch far enough to discover him. With little

exclamations of pleasure as they found particularly large or perfect blooms the two moved from place to place upon the outskirts of Tarzan's retreat.

"Oh, look, Pan-at-lee," cried O-lo-a presently; "there is the king of them all. Never did I see so wonderful a flower—No! I will get it myself —it is so large and wonderful no other hand shall touch it," and the princess wound in among the bushes toward the point where the great flower bloomed upon a bush above the ape- man's head.

So sudden and unexpected her approach that there was no opportunity to escape and Tarzan sat silently trusting that fate might be kind to him and lead Ko-tan's daughter away before her eyes

dropped from the high-growing bloom to him. But as the girl cut the long stem with her knife she looked down straight into the smiling face of Tarzan-jad-guru.

With a stifled scream she drew back and the ape-man rose and faced her.

"Have no fear, Princess," he assured her. "It is the friend of Ta-den who salutes you," raising her fingers to his lips.

Pan-at-lee came now excitedly forward. "O Jad-ben-Otho, it is he!"

"And now that you have found me," queried Tarzan, "will you give me up to Lu-don, the high priest?"

Pan-at-lee threw herself upon her knees at O-lo-a's feet. "Princess! Princess!" she beseeched, "do not

discover him to his enemies."

"But Ko-tan, my father," whispered O-lo-a fearfully, "if he knew of my perfidy his rage would be beyond naming. Even though I am a princess Lu-don might demand that I be sacrificed to appease the wrath of Jad-ben-Otho, and between the two of them I should be lost."

"But they need never know," cried Pan-at-lee, "that you have seen him unless you tell them yourself for as Jad-ben-Otho is my witness I will never betray you."

"Oh, tell me, stranger," implored O-lo-a, "are you indeed a god?"

"Jad-ben-Otho is not more so," replied Tarzan truthfully.

"But why do you seek to escape then from the hands of mortals if you are a god?" she asked.

"When gods mingle with mortals," replied Tarzan, "they are no less vulnerable than mortals. Even Jad-ben-Otho, should he appear before you in the flesh, might be slain."

"You have seen Ta-den and spoken with him?" she asked with apparent irrelevancy.

"Yes, I have seen him and spoken with him," replied the ape- man. "For the duration of a moon I was with him constantly."

"And—" she hesitated—"he—" she cast her eyes toward the ground and a flush mantled her cheek—"he still loves

me?" and Tarzan knew that she had been won over.

"Yes," he said, "Ta-den speaks only of O-lo-a and he waits and hopes for the day when he can claim her."

"But tomorrow they give me to Bu-lot," she said sadly.

"May it be always tomorrow," replied Tarzan, "for tomorrow never comes."

"Ah, but this unhappiness will come, and for all the tomorrows of my life I must pine in misery for the Ta-den who will never be mine."

"But for Lu-don I might have helped you," said the ape-man. "And who knows that I may not help you yet?"

"Ah, if you only could, Dor-ul-Otho," cried the girl, "and I know that you would if it were possible for Pan-at-lee has told me how brave you are, and at the same time how kind."

"Only Jad-ben-Otho knows what the future may bring," said Tarzan. "And now you two go your way lest someone should discover you and become suspicious."

"We will go," said O-lo-a, "but Pan-at-lee will return with food. I hope that you escape and that Jad-ben-Otho is pleased with what I have done." She turned and walked away and Pan-at-lee followed while the ape-man again resumed his hiding.

At dusk Pan-at-lee came with food

and having her alone Tarzan put the question that he had been anxious to put since his conversation earlier in the day with O-lo-a.

"Tell me," he said, "what you know of the rumors of which O-lo- a spoke of the mysterious stranger which is supposed to be hidden in A-lur. Have you too heard of this during the short time that you have been here?"

"Yes," said Pan-at-lee, "I have heard it spoken of among the other slaves. It is something of which all whisper among themselves but of which none dares to speak aloud. They say that there is a strange she hidden in the temple and that Lu-don wants her for a priestess and that Ko-tan wants her for a wife and that

neither as yet dares take her for fear of the other."

"Do you know where she is hidden in the temple?" asked Tarzan.

"No," said Pan-at-lee. "How should I know? I do not even know that it is more than a story and I but tell you that which I have heard others say."

"There was only one," asked Tarzan, "whom they spoke of?"

"No, they speak of another who came with her but none seems to know what became of this one."

Tarzan nodded. "Thank you Pan-at-lee," he said. "You may have helped me more than either of us guess."

"I hope that I have helped you," said

the girl as she turned back toward the palace.

"And I hope so too," exclaimed Tarzan emphatically.

14. THE TEMPLE OF THE GRYF

When night had fallen Tarzan donned the mask and the dead tail of the priest he had slain in the vaults beneath the temple. He judged that it would not do to attempt again to pass the guard, especially so late at night as it would be likely to arouse comment and suspicion, and so he swung into the tree that overhung the garden wall and from its branches dropped to the ground beyond.

Avoiding too grave risk of apprehension the ape-man passed through the grounds to the court of the palace, approaching the temple from the side opposite to that at which he had left

it at the time of his escape. He came thus it is true through a portion of the grounds with which he was unfamiliar but he preferred this to the danger of following the beaten track between the palace apartments and those of the temple. Having a definite goal in mind and endowed as he was with an almost miraculous sense of location he moved with great assurance through the shadows of the temple yard.

Taking advantage of the denser shadows close to the walls and of what shrubs and trees there were he came without mishap at last to the ornate building concerning the purpose of which he had asked Lu- don only to be put off with the assertion that it was

forgotten—nothing strange in itself but given possible importance by the apparent hesitancy of the priest to discuss its use and the impression the ape-man had gained at the time that Ludon lied.

And now he stood at last alone before the structure which was three stories in height and detached from all the other temple buildings. It had a single barred entrance which was carved from the living rock in representation of the head of a gryf, whose wide-open mouth constituted the doorway. The head, hood, and front paws of the creature were depicted as though it lay crouching with its lower jaw on the ground between its outspread paws. Small oval

windows, which were likewise barred, flanked the doorway.

Seeing that the coast was clear, Tarzan stepped into the darkened entrance where he tried the bars only to discover that they were ingeniously locked in place by some device with which he was unfamiliar and that they also were probably too strong to be broken even if he could have risked the noise which would have resulted. Nothing was visible within the darkened interior and so, momentarily baffled, he sought the windows. Here also the bars refused to yield up their secret, but again Tarzan was not dismayed since he had counted upon nothing different.

If the bars would not yield to his

cunning they would yield to his giant strength if there proved no other means of ingress, but first he would assure himself that this latter was the case. Moving entirely around the building he examined it carefully. There were other windows but they were similarly barred. He stopped often to look and listen but he saw no one and the sounds that he heard were too far away to cause him any apprehension.

He glanced above him at the wall of the building. Like so many of the other walls of the city, palace, and temple, it was ornately carved and there were too the peculiar ledges that ran sometimes in a horizontal plane and again were tilted at an angle, giving ofttimes an

impression of irregularity and even crookedness to the buildings. It was not a difficult wall to climb, at least not difficult for the ape-man.

But he found the bulky and awkward headdress a considerable handicap and so he laid it aside upon the ground at the foot of the wall. Nimbly he ascended to find the windows of the second floor not only barred but curtained within. He did not delay long at the second floor since he had in mind an idea that he would find the easiest entrance through the roof which he had noticed was roughly dome shaped like the throneroom of Ko-tan. Here there were apertures. He had seen them from the ground, and if the construction of the interior resembled

even slightly that of the throneroom, bars would not be necessary upon these apertures, since no one could reach them from the floor of the room.

There was but a single question: would they be large enough to admit the broad shoulders of the ape-man.

He paused again at the third floor, and here, in spite of the hangings, he saw that the interior was lighted and simultaneously there came to his nostrils from within a scent that stripped from him temporarily any remnant of civilization that might have remained and left him a fierce and terrible bull of the jungles of Kerchak. So sudden and complete was the metamorphosis that there almost broke from the savage lips

the hideous challenge of his kind, but the cunning brute-mind saved him this blunder.

And now he heard voices within—the voice of Lu-don he could have sworn, demanding. And haughty and disdainful came the answering words though utter hopelessness spoke in the tones of this other voice which brought Tarzan to the pinnacle of frenzy.

The dome with its possible apertures was forgotten. Every consideration of stealth and quiet was cast aside as the ape-man drew back his mighty fist and struck a single terrific blow upon the bars of the small window before him, a blow that sent the bars and the casing that held them clattering to the floor of

the apartment within.

Instantly Tarzan dove headforemost through the aperture carrying the hangings of antelope hide with him to the floor below. Leaping to his feet he tore the entangling pelt from about his head only to find himself in utter darkness and in silence. He called aloud a name that had not passed his lips for many weary months. "Jane, Jane," he cried, "where are you?" But there was only silence in reply.

Again and again he called, groping with outstretched hands through the Stygian blackness of the room, his nostrils assailed and his brain tantalized by the delicate effluvia that had first assured him that his mate had been

within this very room. And he had heard her dear voice combatting the base demands of the vile priest. Ah, if he had but acted with greater caution! If he had but continued to move with quiet and stealth he might even at this moment be holding her in his arms while the body of Lu-don, beneath his foot, spoke eloquently of vengeance achieved. But there was no time now for idle self-reproaches.

He stumbled blindly forward, groping for he knew not what till suddenly the floor beneath him tilted and he shot downward into a darkness even more utter than that above. He felt his body strike a smooth surface and he realized that he was hurtling downward as

through a polished chute while from above there came the mocking tones of a taunting laugh and the voice of Lu-don screamed after him: "Return to thy father, O Dor-ul-Otho!"

The ape-man came to a sudden and painful stop upon a rocky floor. Directly before him was an oval window crossed by many bars, and beyond he saw the moonlight playing on the waters of the blue lake below. Simultaneously he was conscious of a familiar odor in the air of the chamber, which a quick glance revealed in the semidarkness as of considerable proportion.

It was the faint, but unmistakable odor of the gryf, and now Tarzan stood silently listening. At first he detected no

sounds other than those of the city that came to him through the window overlooking the lake; but presently, faintly, as though from a distance he heard the shuffling of padded feet along a stone pavement, and as he listened he was aware that the sound approached.

Nearer and nearer it came, and now even the breathing of the beast was audible. Evidently attracted by the noise of his descent into its cavernous retreat it was approaching to investigate. He could not see it but he knew that it was not far distant, and then, deafeningly there reverberated through those gloomy corridors the mad bellow of the gryf.

Aware of the poor eyesight of the beast, and his own eyes now grown

accustomed to the darkness of the cavern, the ape-man sought to elude the infuriated charge which he well knew no living creature could withstand. Neither did he dare risk the chance of experimenting upon this strange gryf with the tactics of the Tor-o-don that he had found so efficacious upon that other occasion when his life and liberty had been the stakes for which he cast. In many respects the conditions were dissimilar. Before, in broad daylight, he had been able to approach the gryf under normal conditions in its natural state, and the gryf itself was one that he had seen subjected to the authority of man, or at least of a manlike creature; but here he was confronted by an imprisoned beast

in the full swing of a furious charge and he had every reason to suspect that this gryf might never have felt the restraining influence of authority, confined as it was in this gloomy pit to serve likely but the single purpose that Tarzan had already seen so graphically portrayed in his own experience of the past few moments.

To elude the creature, then, upon the possibility of discovering some loophole of escape from his predicament seemed to the ape-man the wisest course to pursue. Too much was at stake to risk an encounter that might be avoided—an encounter the outcome of which there was every reason to apprehend would seal the fate of the mate that he had just found, only to lose again so harrowingly.

Yet high as his disappointment and chagrin ran, hopeless as his present estate now appeared, there tingled in the veins of the savage lord a warm glow of thanksgiving and elation. She lived! After all these weary months of hopelessness and fear he had found her. She lived!

To the opposite side of the chamber, silently as the wraith of a disembodied soul, the swift jungle creature moved from the path of the charging Titan that, guided solely in the semi-darkness by its keen ears, bore down upon the spot toward which Tarzan's noisy entrance into its lair had attracted it. Along the further wall the ape-man hurried. Before him now appeared the black opening of

the corridor from which the beast had emerged into the larger chamber. Without hesitation Tarzan plunged into it. Even here his eyes, long accustomed to darkness that would have seemed total to you or to me, saw dimly the floor and the walls within a radius of a few feet - enough at least to prevent him plunging into any unguessed abyss, or dashing himself upon solid rock at a sudden turning.

The corridor was both wide and lofty, which indeed it must be to accommodate the colossal proportions of the creature whose habitat it was, and so Tarzan encountered no difficulty in moving with reasonable speed along its winding trail. He was aware as he proceeded that the

trend of the passage was downward, though not steeply, but it seemed interminable and he wondered to what distant subterranean lair it might lead. There was a feeling that perhaps after all he might better have remained in the larger chamber and risked all on the chance of subduing the gryf where there was at least sufficient room and light to lend to the experiment some slight chance of success. To be overtaken here in the narrow confines of the black corridor where he was assured the gryf could not see him at all would spell almost certain death and now he heard the thing approaching from behind. Its thunderous bellows fairly shook the cliff from which the cavernous chambers

were excavated. To halt and meet this monstrous incarnation of fury with a futile whee-oo! seemed to Tarzan the height of insanity and so he continued along the corridor, increasing his pace as he realized that the gryf was overhauling him.

Presently the darkness lessened and at the final turning of the passage he saw before him an area of moonlight. With renewed hope he sprang rapidly forward and emerged from the mouth of the corridor to find himself in a large circular enclosure the towering white walls of which rose high upon every side—smooth perpendicular walls upon the sheer face of which was no slightest foothold. To his left lay a pool of water,

one side of which lapped the foot of the wall at this point. It was, doubtless, the wallow and the drinking pool of the gryf.

And now the creature emerged from the corridor and Tarzan retreated to the edge of the pool to make his last stand. There was no staff with which to enforce the authority of his voice, but yet he made his stand for there seemed naught else to do. Just beyond the entrance to the corridor the gryf paused, turning its weak eyes in all directions as though searching for its prey. This then seemed the psychological moment for his attempt and raising his voice in peremptory command the ape-man voiced the weird whee-oo! of the Tor-o- don. Its effect upon the gryf was instantaneous and

complete— with a terrific bellow it lowered its three horns and dashed madly in the direction of the sound.

To right nor to left was any avenue of escape, for behind him lay the placid waters of the pool, while down upon him from before thundered annihilation. The mighty body seemed already to tower above him as the ape-man turned and dove into the dark waters.

Dead in her breast lay hope. Battling for life during harrowing months of imprisonment and danger and hardship it had fitfully flickered and flamed only to sink after each renewal to smaller proportions than before and now it had died out entirely leaving only cold, charred embers that Jane Clayton knew

would never again be rekindled. Hope was dead as she faced Lu-don, the high priest, in her prison quarters in the Temple of the Gryf at A-lur. Both time and hardship had failed to leave their impress upon her physical beauty —the contours of her perfect form, the glory of her radiant loveliness had defied them, yet to these very attributes she owed the danger which now confronted her, for Lu-don desired her. From the lesser priests she had been safe, but from Lu-don, she was not safe, for Lu-don was not as they, since the high priesthood of Pal-ul-don may descend from father to son.

Ko-tan, the king, had wanted her and all that had so far saved her from either

was the fear of each for the other, but at last Lu- don had cast aside discretion and had come in the silent watches of the night to claim her. Haughtily had she repulsed him, seeking ever to gain time, though what time might bring her of relief or renewed hope she could not even remotely conjecture. A leer of lust and greed shone hungrily upon his cruel countenance as he advanced across the room to seize her. She did not shrink nor cower, but stood there very erect, her chin up, her level gaze freighted with the loathing and contempt she felt for him. He read her expression and while it angered him, it but increased his desire for possession. Here indeed was a queen, perhaps a goddess; fit mate for

the high priest.

"You shall not!" she said as he would have touched her. "One of us shall die before ever your purpose is accomplished."

He was close beside her now. His laugh grated upon her ears. "Love does not kill," he replied mockingly.

He reached for her arm and at the same instant something clashed against the bars of one of the windows, crashing them inward to the floor, to be followed almost simultaneously by a human figure which dove headforemost into the room, its head enveloped in the skin window hangings which it carried with it in its impetuous entry.

Jane Clayton saw surprise and

something of terror too leap to the countenance of the high priest and then she saw him spring forward and jerk upon a leather thong that depended from the ceiling of the apartment. Instantly there dropped from above a cunningly contrived partition that fell between them and the intruder, effectively barring him from them and at the same time leaving him to grope upon its opposite side in darkness, since the only cresset the room contained was upon their side of the partition.

Faintly from beyond the wall Jane heard a voice calling, but whose it was and what the words she could not distinguish. Then she saw Lu-don jerk upon another thong and wait in evident

expectancy of some consequent happening. He did not have long to wait. She saw the thong move suddenly as though jerked from above and then Lu-don smiled and with another signal put in motion whatever machinery it was that raised the partition again to its place in the ceiling.

Advancing into that portion of the room that the partition had shut off from them, the high priest knelt upon the floor, and down tilting a section of it, revealed the dark mouth of a shaft leading below. Laughing loudly he shouted into the hole: "Return to thy father, O Dor-ul-Otho!"

Making fast the catch that prevented the trapdoor from opening beneath the feet of the unwary until such time as Lu-

don chose the high priest rose again to his feet.

"Now, Beautiful One!" he cried, and then, "Ja-don! what do you here?"

Jane Clayton turned to follow the direction of Lu-don's eyes and there she saw framed in the entrance-way to the apartment the mighty figure of a warrior, upon whose massive features sat an expression of stern and uncompromising authority.

"I come from Ko-tan, the king," replied Ja-don, "to remove the beautiful stranger to the Forbidden Garden."

"The king defies me, the high priest of Jad-ben-Otho?" cried Lu- don.

"It is the king's command—I have spoken," snapped Ja- don, in whose

manner was no sign of either fear or respect for the priest.

Lu-don well knew why the king had chosen this messenger whose heresy was notorious, but whose power had as yet protected him from the machinations of the priest. Lu-don cast a surreptitious glance at the thongs hanging from the ceiling. Why not? If he could but maneuver to entice Ja-don to the opposite side of the chamber!

"Come," he said in a conciliatory tone, "let us discuss the matter," and moved toward the spot where he would have Ja-don follow him.

"There is nothing to discuss," replied Ja-don, yet he followed the priest, fearing treachery.

Jane watched them. In the face and figure of the warrior she found reflected those admirable traits of courage and honor that the profession of arms best develops. In the hypocritical priest there was no redeeming quality. Of the two then she might best choose the warrior. With him there was a chance—with Lu-don, none. Even the very process of exchange from one prison to another might offer some possibility of escape. She weighed all these things and decided, for Lu-don's quick glance at the thongs had not gone unnoticed nor uninterpreted by her.

"Warrior," she said, addressing Ja-don, "if you would live enter not that portion of the room."

Lu-don cast an angry glance upon her. "Silence, slave!" he cried.

"And where lies the danger?" Ja-don asked of Jane, ignoring Lu- don.

The woman pointed to the thongs. "Look," she said, and before the high priest could prevent she had seized that which controlled the partition which shot downward separating Lu-don from the warrior and herself.

Ja-don looked inquiringly at her. "He would have tricked me neatly but for you," he said; "kept me imprisoned there while he secreted you elsewhere in the mazes of his temple."

"He would have done more than that," replied Jane, as she pulled upon the other thong. "This releases the fastenings

of a trapdoor in the floor beyond the partition. When you stepped on that you would have been precipitated into a pit beneath the temple. Lu- don has threatened me with this fate often. I do not know that he speaks the truth, but he says that a demon of the temple is imprisoned there—a huge gryf."

"There is a gryf within the temple," said Ja-don. "What with it and the sacrifices, the priests keep us busy supplying them with prisoners, though the victims are sometimes those for whom Lu-don has conceived hatred among our own people. He has had his eyes upon me for a long time. This would have been his chance but for you. Tell me, woman, why you warned me.

Are we not all equally your jailers and your enemies?"

"None could be more horrible than Lu-don," she replied; "and you have the appearance of a brave and honorable warrior. I could not hope, for hope has died and yet there is the possibility that among so many fighting men, even though they be of another race than mine, there is one who would accord honorable treatment to a stranger within his gates—even though she be a woman."

Ja-don looked at her for a long minute. "Ko-tan would make you his queen," he said. "That he told me himself and surely that were honorable treatment from one who might make you a slave."

"Why, then, would he make me queen?" she asked.

Ja-don came closer as though in fear his words might be overheard. "He believes, although he did not tell me so in fact, that you are of the race of gods. And why not? Jad-ben-Otho is tailless, therefore it is not strange that Ko-tan should suspect that only the gods are thus. His queen is dead leaving only a single daughter. He craves a son and what more desirable than that he should found a line of rulers for Pal-ul-don descended from the gods?"

"But I am already wed," cried Jane. "I cannot wed another. I do not want him or his throne."

"Ko-tan is king," replied Ja-don

simply as though that explained and simplified everything.

"You will not save me then?" she asked.

"If you were in Ja-lur," he replied, "I might protect you, even against the king."

"What and where is Ja-lur?" she asked, grasping at any straw.

"It is the city where I rule," he answered. "I am chief there and of all the valley beyond."

"Where is it?" she insisted, and "is it far?"

"No," he replied, smiling, "it is not far, but do not think of that —you could never reach it. There are too many to pursue and capture you. If you wish to

know, however, it lies up the river that empties into Jad-ben-lul whose waters kiss the walls of A-lur—up the western fork it lies with water upon three sides. Impregnable city of Pal-ul-don— alone of all the cities it has never been entered by a foeman since it was built there while Jad-ben- Otho was a boy."

"And there I would be safe?" she asked.

"Perhaps," he replied.

Ah, dead Hope; upon what slender provocation would you seek to glow again! She sighed and shook her head, realizing the inutility of Hope—yet the tempting bait dangled before her mind's eye—Ja-lur!

"You are wise," commented Ja-don

interpreting her sigh. "Come now, we will go to the quarters of the princess beside the Forbidden Garden. There you will remain with O-lo-a, the king's daughter. It will be better than this prison you have occupied."

"And Ko-tan?" she asked, a shudder passing through her slender frame.

"There are ceremonies," explained Ja-don, "that may occupy several days before you become queen, and one of them may be difficult of arrangement." He laughed, then.

"What?" she asked.

"Only the high priest may perform the marriage ceremony for a king," he explained.

"Delay!" she murmured; "blessed

delay!" Tenacious indeed of life is Hope even though it be reduced to cold and lifeless char—a veritable phoenix.

15. "THE KING IS DEAD!"

As they conversed Ja-don had led her down the stone stairway that leads from the upper floors of the Temple of the Gryf to the chambers and the corridors that honeycomb the rocky hills from which the temple and the palace are hewn and now they passed from one to the other through a doorway upon one side of which two priests stood guard and upon the other two warriors. The former would have halted Ja-don when they saw who it was that accompanied him for well known throughout the temple was the quarrel between king and high priest for possession of this beautiful stranger.

"Only by order of Lu-don may she

pass," said one, placing himself directly in front of Jane Clayton, barring her progress. Through the hollow eyes of the hideous mask the woman could see those of the priest beneath gleaming with the fires of fanaticism. Ja-don placed an arm about her shoulders and laid his hand upon his knife.

"She passes by order of Ko-tan, the king," he said, "and by virtue of the fact that Ja-don, the chief, is her guide. Stand aside!"

The two warriors upon the palace side pressed forward. "We are here, gund of Ja-lur," said one, addressing Ja-don, "to receive and obey your commands."

The second priest now interposed.

"Let them pass," he admonished his companion. "We have received no direct commands from Lu-don to the contrary and it is a law of the temple and the palace that chiefs and priests may come and go without interference."

"But I know Lu-don's wishes," insisted the other.

"He told you then that Ja-don must not pass with the stranger?"

"No—but—"

"Then let them pass, for they are three to two and will pass anyway —we have done our best."

Grumbling, the priest stepped aside. "Lu-don will exact an accounting," he cried angrily.

Ja-don turned upon him. "And get it when and where he will," he snapped.

They came at last to the quarters of the Princess O-lo-a where, in the main entrance-way, loitered a small guard of palace warriors and several stalwart black eunuchs belonging to the princess, or her women. To one of the latter Ja-don relinquished his charge.

"Take her to the princess," he commanded, "and see that she does not escape."

Through a number of corridors and apartments lighted by stone cressets the eunuch led Lady Greystoke halting at last before a doorway concealed by hangings of jato skin, where the guide beat with his staff upon the wall beside the door.

"O-lo-a, Princess of Pal-ul-don," he called, "here is the stranger woman, the prisoner from the temple."

"Bid her enter," Jane heard a sweet voice from within command.

The eunuch drew aside the hangings and Lady Greystoke stepped within. Before her was a low-ceiled room of moderate size. In each of the four corners a kneeling figure of stone seemed to be bearing its portion of the weight of the ceiling upon its shoulders. These figures were evidently intended to represent Waz-don slaves and were not without bold artistic beauty. The ceiling itself was slightly arched to a central dome which was pierced to admit light by day, and air. Upon one side of the

room were many windows, the other three walls being blank except for a doorway in each. The princess lay upon a pile of furs which were arranged over a low stone dais in one corner of the apartment and was alone except for a single Waz-don slave girl who sat upon the edge of the dais near her feet.

As Jane entered O-lo-a beckoned her to approach and when she stood beside the couch the girl half rose upon an elbow and surveyed her critically.

"How beautiful you are," she said simply.

Jane smiled, sadly; for she had found that beauty may be a curse.

"That is indeed a compliment," she replied quickly, "from one so radiant as

the Princess O-lo-a."

"Ah!" exclaimed the princess delightedly; "you speak my language! I was told that you were of another race and from some far land of which we of Pal-ul-don have never heard."

"Lu-don saw to it that the priests instructed me," explained Jane; "but I am from a far country, Princess; one to which I long to return—and I am very unhappy."

"But Ko-tan, my father, would make you his queen," cried the girl; "that should make you very happy."

"But it does not," replied the prisoner; "I love another to whom I am already wed. Ah, Princess, if you had known what it was to love and to be forced into

marriage with another you would sympathize with me."

The Princess O-lo-a was silent for a long moment. "I know," she said at last, "and I am very sorry for you; but if the king's daughter cannot save herself from such a fate who may save a slave woman? for such in fact you are."

The drinking in the great banquet hall of the palace of Ko-tan, king of Pal-ul-don had commenced earlier this night than was usual, for the king was celebrating the morrow's betrothal of his only daughter to Bu-lot, son of Mo-sar, the chief, whose great-grandfather had been king of Pal-ul-don and who thought that he should be king, and Mo-sar was drunk and so was Bu-lot, his son. For

that matter nearly all of the warriors, including the king himself, were drunk. In the heart of Ko-tan was no love either for Mo-sar, or Bu-lot, nor did either of these love the king. Ko-tan was giving his daughter to Bu- lot in the hope that the alliance would prevent Mo-sar from insisting upon his claims to the throne, for, next to Ja-don, Mo-sar was the most powerful of the chiefs and while Ko-tan looked with fear upon Ja-don, too, he had no fear that the old Lion-man would attempt to seize the throne, though which way he would throw his influence and his warriors in the event that Mo-sar declare war upon Ko-tan, the king could not guess.

Primitive people who are also

warlike are seldom inclined toward either tact or diplomacy even when sober; but drunk they know not the words, if aroused. It was really Bu-lot who started it.

"This," he said, "I drink to O-lo-a," and he emptied his tankard at a single gulp. "And this," seizing a full one from a neighbor, "to her son and mine who will bring back the throne of Pal- ul-don to its rightful owners!"

"The king is not yet dead!" cried Ko-tan, rising to his feet; "nor is Bu- lot yet married to his daughter—and there is yet time to save Pal-ul-don from the spawn of the rabbit breed."

The king's angry tone and his insulting reference to Bu-lot's well-known

cowardice brought a sudden, sobering silence upon the roistering company. Every eye turned upon Bu-lot and Mo-sar, who sat together directly opposite the king. The first was very drunk though suddenly he seemed quite sober. He was so drunk that for an instant he forgot to be a coward, since his reasoning powers were so effectually paralyzed by the fumes of liquor that he could not intelligently weigh the consequences of his acts. It is reasonably conceivable that a drunk and angry rabbit might commit a rash deed. Upon no other hypothesis is the thing that Bu-lot now did explicable. He rose suddenly from the seat to which he had sunk after delivering his toast and seizing the knife

from the sheath of the warrior upon his right hurled it with terrific force at Ko-tan. Skilled in the art of throwing both their knives and their clubs are the warriors of Pal- ul-don and at this short distance and coming as it did without warning there was no defense and but one possible result—Ko- tan, the king, lunged forward across the table, the blade buried in his heart.

A brief silence followed the assassin's cowardly act. White with terror, now, Bu-lot fell slowly back toward the doorway at his rear, when suddenly angry warriors leaped with drawn knives to prevent his escape and to avenge their king. But Mo-sar now took his stand beside his son.

"Ko-tan is dead!" he cried. "Mo-sar is king! Let the loyal warriors of Pal-ul-don protect their ruler!"

Mo-sar commanded a goodly following and these quickly surrounded him and Bu-lot, but there were many knives against them and now Ja-don pressed forward through those who confronted the pretender.

"Take them both!" he shouted. "The warriors of Pal-ul-don will choose their own king after the assassin of Ko-tan has paid the penalty of his treachery."

Directed now by a leader whom they both respected and admired those who had been loyal to Ko-tan rushed forward upon the faction that had surrounded Mo-sar. Fierce and terrible was the fighting,

devoid, apparently, of all else than the ferocious lust to kill and while it was at its height Mo-sar and Bu-lot slipped unnoticed from the banquet hall.

To that part of the palace assigned to them during their visit to A-lur they hastened. Here were their servants and the lesser warriors of their party who had not been bidden to the feast of Ko-tan. These were directed quickly to gather together their belongings for immediate departure. When all was ready, and it did not take long, since the warriors of Pal-ul-don require but little impedimenta on the march, they moved toward the palace gate.

Suddenly Mo-sar approached his son. "The princess," he whispered. "We must

not leave the city without her—she is half the battle for the throne."

Bu-lot, now entirely sober, demurred. He had had enough of fighting and of risk. "Let us get out of A-lur quickly," he urged, "or we shall have the whole city upon us. She would not come without a struggle and that would delay us too long."

"There is plenty of time," insisted Mo-sar. "They are still fighting in the pal-e-don-so. It will be long before they miss us and, with Ko-tan dead, long before any will think to look to the safety of the princess. Our time is now—it was made for us by Jad-ben-Otho. Come!"

Reluctantly Bu-lot followed his father, who first instructed the warriors

to await them just inside the gateway of the palace. Rapidly the two approached the quarters of the princess. Within the entrance-way only a handful of warriors were on guard. The eunuchs had retired.

"There is fighting in the pal-e-don-so," Mo-sar announced in feigned excitement as they entered the presence of the guards. "The king desires you to come at once and has sent us to guard the apartments of the princess. Make haste!" he commanded as the men hesitated.

The warriors knew him and that on the morrow the princess was to be betrothed to Bu-lot, his son. If there was trouble what more natural than that Mo-sar and Bu-lot should be intrusted with the safety of the princess. And then, too,

was not Mo-sar a powerful chief to whose orders disobedience might prove a dangerous thing? They were but common fighting men disciplined in the rough school of tribal warfare, but they had learned to obey a superior and so they departed for the banquet hall—the place-where-men-eat.

Barely waiting until they had disappeared Mo-sar crossed to the hangings at the opposite end of the entrance-hall and followed by Bu- lot made his way toward the sleeping apartment of O-lo-a and a moment later, without warning, the two men burst in upon the three occupants of the room. At sight of them O-lo-a sprang to her feet.

"What is the meaning of this?" she

demanded angrily.

Mo-sar advanced and halted before her. Into his cunning mind had entered a plan to trick her. If it succeeded it would prove easier than taking her by force, and then his eyes fell upon Jane Clayton and he almost gasped in astonishment and admiration, but he caught himself and returned to the business of the moment.

"O-lo-a," he cried, "when you know the urgency of our mission you will forgive us. We have sad news for you. There has been an uprising in the palace and Ko-tan, the king, has been slain. The rebels are drunk with liquor and now on their way here. We must get you out of A-lur at once—there is not a moment to

lose. Come, and quickly!"

"My father dead?" cried O-lo-a, and suddenly her eyes went wide. "Then my place is here with my people," she cried. "If Ko-tan is dead I am queen until the warriors choose a new ruler—that is the law of Pal-ul-don. And if I am queen none can make me wed whom I do not wish to wed—and Jad-ben-Otho knows I never wished to wed thy cowardly son. Go!" She pointed a slim forefinger imperiously toward the doorway.

Mo-sar saw that neither trickery nor persuasion would avail now and every precious minute counted. He looked again at the beautiful woman who stood beside O-lo-a. He had never before seen her but he well knew from palace gossip

that she could be no other than the godlike stranger whom Ko-tan had planned to make his queen.

"Bu-lot," he cried to his son, "take you your own woman and I will take - mine!" and with that he sprang suddenly forward and seizing Jane about the waist lifted her in his arms, so that before O-lo-a or Pan-at-lee might even guess his purpose he had disappeared through the hangings near the foot of the dais and was gone with the stranger woman struggling and fighting in his grasp.

And then Bu-lot sought to seize O-lo-a, but O-lo-a had her Pan- at-lee - fierce little tiger-girl of the savage Kor-ul-ja—Pan- at-lee whose name belied her—and Bu-lot found that with the two of them

his hands were full. When he would have lifted O-lo-a and borne her away Pan-at- lee seized him around the legs and strove to drag him down. Viciously he kicked her, but she would not desist, and finally, realizing that he might not only lose his princess but be so delayed as to invite capture if he did not rid himself of this clawing, scratching she-jato, he hurled O-lo-a to the floor and seizing Pan-at-lee by the hair drew his knife and -

The curtains behind him suddenly parted. In two swift bounds a lithe figure crossed the room and before ever the knife of Bu-lot reached its goal his wrist was seized from behind and a terrific blow crashing to the base of his brain

dropped him, lifeless, to the floor. Bu-lot, coward, traitor, and assassin, died without knowing who struck him down.

As Tarzan of the Apes leaped into the pool in the gryf pit of the temple at A-lur one might have accounted for his act on the hypothesis that it was the last blind urge of self-preservation to delay, even for a moment, the inevitable tragedy in which each some day must play the leading role upon his little stage; but no —those cool, gray eyes had caught the sole possibility for escape that the surroundings and the circumstances offered —a tiny, moonlit patch of water glimmering through a small aperture in the cliff at the surface of the pool upon its farther side. With swift, bold strokes

he swam for speed alone knowing that the water would in no way deter his pursuer. Nor did it. Tarzan heard the great splash as the huge creature plunged into the pool behind him; he heard the churning waters as it forged rapidly onward in his wake. He was nearing the opening—would it be large enough to permit the passage of his body? That portion of it which showed above the surface of the water most certainly would not. His life, then, depended upon how much of the aperture was submerged. And now it was directly before him and the gryf directly behind. There was no alternative —there was no other hope. The ape-man threw all the resources of his great strength into the

last few strokes, extended his hands before him as a cutwater, submerged to the water's level and shot forward toward the hole.

Frothing with rage was the baffled Lu-don as he realized how neatly the stranger she had turned his own tables upon him. He could of course escape the Temple of the Gryf in which her quick wit had temporarily imprisoned him; but during the delay, however brief, Ja- don would find time to steal her from the temple and deliver her to Ko-tan. But he would have her yet— that the high priest swore in the names of Jad-ben-Otho and all the demons of his faith. He hated Ko-tan. Secretly he had espoused the cause of Mo-sar, in whom he would have a

willing tool. Perhaps, then, this would give him the opportunity he had long awaited—a pretext for inciting the revolt that would dethrone Ko-tan and place Mo-sar in power—with Lu-don the real ruler of Pal-ul-don. He licked his thin lips as he sought the window through which Tarzan had entered and now Lu-don's only avenue of escape. Cautiously he made his way across the floor, feeling before him with his hands, and when they discovered that the trap was set for him an ugly snarl broke from the priest's lips. "The she-devil!" he muttered; "but she shall pay, she shall pay—ah, Jad-ben-Otho; how she shall pay for the trick she has played upon Lu-don!"

He crawled through the window and

climbed easily downward to the ground. Should he pursue Ja-don and the woman, chancing an encounter with the fierce chief, or bide his time until treachery and intrigue should accomplish his design? He chose the latter solution, as might have been expected of such as he.

Going to his quarters he summoned several of his priests—those who were most in his confidence and who shared his ambitions for absolute power of the temple over the palace—all men who hated Ko-tan.

"The time has come," he told them, "when the authority of the temple must be placed definitely above that of the palace. Ko-tan must make way for Mo-sar, for Ko-tan has defied your high

priest. Go then, Pan-sat, and summon Mo-sar secretly to the temple, and you others go to the city and prepare the faithful warriors that they may be in readiness when the time comes."

For another hour they discussed the details of the coup d'état that was to overthrow the government of Pal-ul-don. One knew a slave who, as the signal sounded from the temple gong, would thrust a knife into the heart of Ko-tan, for the price of liberty. Another held personal knowledge of an officer of the palace that he could use to compel the latter to admit a number of Lu-don's warriors to various parts of the palace. With Mo-sar as the cat's paw, the plan seemed scarce possible of failure and so

they separated, going upon their immediate errands to palace and to city.

As Pan-sat entered the palace grounds he was aware of a sudden commotion in the direction of the pal-e-don-so and a few minutes later Lu-don was surprised to see him return to the apartments of the high priest, breathless and excited.

"What now, Pan-sat?" cried Lu-don. "Are you pursued by demons?"

"O master, our time has come and gone while we sat here planning. Ko-tan is already dead and Mo-sar fled. His friends are fighting with the warriors of the palace but they have no head, while Ja-don leads the others. I could learn but little from frightened slaves who had fled at the outburst of the quarrel. One

told me that Bu-lot had slain the king and that he had seen Mo-sar and the assassin hurrying from the palace."

"Ja-don," muttered the high priest. "The fools will make him king if we do not act and act quickly. Get into the city, Pan-sat—let your feet fly and raise the cry that Ja-don has killed the king and is seeking to wrest the throne from O-lo-a. Spread the word as you know best how to spread it that Ja-don has threatened to destroy the priests and hurl the altars of the temple into Jad-ben- lul. Rouse the warriors of the city and urge them to attack at once. Lead them into the temple by the secret way that only the priests know and from here we may spew them out upon the palace before they learn the

truth. Go, Pan-sat, immediately—delay not an instant."

"But stay," he called as the under priest turned to leave the apartment; "saw or heard you anything of the strange white woman that Ja-don stole from the Temple of the Gryf where we have had her imprisoned?"

"Only that Ja-don took her into the palace where he threatened the priests with violence if they did not permit him to pass," replied Pan-sat. "This they told me, but where within the palace she is hidden I know not."

"Ko-tan ordered her to the Forbidden Garden," said Lu-don, "doubtless we shall find her there. And now, Pan-sat, be upon your errand."

In a corridor by Lu-don's chamber a hideously masked priest leaned close to the curtained aperture that led within. Were he listening he must have heard all that passed between Pan-sat and the high priest, and that he had listened was evidenced by his hasty withdrawal to the shadows of a nearby passage as the lesser priest moved across the chamber toward the doorway. Pan-sat went his way in ignorance of the near presence that he almost brushed against as he hurried toward the secret passage that leads from the temple of Jad- ben-Otho, far beneath the palace, to the city beyond, nor did he sense the silent creature following in his footsteps.

16. THE SECRET WAY

It was a baffled gryf that bellowed in angry rage as Tarzan's sleek brown body cutting the moonlit waters shot through the aperture in the wall of the gryf pool and out into the lake beyond. The ape-man smiled as he thought of the comparative ease with which he had defeated the purpose of the high priest but his face clouded again at the ensuing remembrance of the grave danger that threatened his mate. His sole object now must be to return as quickly as he might to the chamber where he had last seen her on the third floor of the Temple of the Gryf, but how he was to find his way again into the temple grounds was a question not easy of solution.

In the moonlight he could see the sheer cliff rising from the water for a great distance along the shore—far beyond the precincts of the temple and the palace—towering high above him, a seemingly impregnable barrier against his return. Swimming close in, he skirted the wall searching diligently for some foothold, however slight, upon its smooth, forbidding surface. Above him and quite out of reach were numerous apertures, but there were no means at hand by which he could reach them. Presently, however, his hopes were raised by the sight of an opening level with the surface of the water. It lay just ahead and a few strokes brought him to it—cautious strokes that brought forth no

sound from the yielding waters. At the nearer side of the opening he stopped and reconnoitered. There was no one in sight. Carefully he raised his body to the threshold of the entrance-way, his smooth brown hide glistening in the moonlight as it shed the water in tiny sparkling rivulets.

Before him stretched a gloomy corridor, unlighted save for the faint illumination of the diffused moonlight that penetrated it for but a short distance from the opening. Moving as rapidly as reasonable caution warranted, Tarzan followed the corridor into the bowels of the cave. There was an abrupt turn and then a flight of steps at the top of which lay another corridor running parallel

with the face of the cliff. This passage was dimly lighted by flickering cressets set in niches in the walls at considerable distances apart. A quick survey showed the ape-man numerous openings upon each side of the corridor and his quick ears caught sounds that indicated that there were other beings not far distant—priests, he concluded, in some of the apartments letting upon the passageway.

To pass undetected through this hive of enemies appeared quite beyond the range of possibility. He must again seek disguise and knowing from experience how best to secure such he crept stealthily along the corridor toward the nearest doorway. Like Numa, the lion, stalking a wary prey he crept with

quivering nostrils to the hangings that shut off his view from the interior of the apartment beyond. A moment later his head disappeared within; then his shoulders, and his lithe body, and the hangings dropped quietly into place again. A moment later there filtered to the vacant corridor without a brief, gasping gurgle and again silence. A minute passed; a second, and a third, and then the hangings were thrust aside and a grimly masked priest of the temple of Jad-ben-Otho strode into the passageway.

With bold steps he moved along and was about to turn into a diverging gallery when his attention was aroused by voices coming from a room upon his

left. Instantly the figure halted and crossing the corridor stood with an ear close to the skins that concealed the occupants of the room from him, and him from them. Presently he leaped back into the concealing shadows of the diverging gallery and immediately thereafter the hangings by which he had been listening parted and a priest emerged to turn quickly down the main corridor. The eavesdropper waited until the other had gained a little distance and then stepping from his place of concealment followed silently behind.

The way led along the corridor which ran parallel with the face of the cliff for some little distance and then Pan-sat, taking a cresset from one of the wall

niches, turned abruptly into a small apartment at his left. The tracker followed cautiously in time to see the rays of the flickering light dimly visible from an aperture in the floor before him. Here he found a series of steps, similar to those used by the Waz-don in scaling the cliff to their caves, leading to a lower level.

First satisfying himself that his guide was continuing upon his way unsuspecting, the other descended after him and continued his stealthy stalking. The passageway was now both narrow and low, giving but bare headroom to a tall man, and it was broken often by flights of steps leading always downward. The steps in each unit

seldom numbered more than six and sometimes there was only one or two but in the aggregate the tracker imagined that they had descended between fifty and seventy-five feet from the level of the upper corridor when the passageway terminated in a small apartment at one side of which was a little pile of rubble.

Setting his cresset upon the ground, Pan-sat commenced hurriedly to toss the bits of broken stone aside, presently revealing a small aperture at the base of the wall upon the opposite side of which there appeared to be a further accumulation of rubble. This he also removed until he had a hole of sufficient size to permit the passage of his body, and leaving the cresset still burning upon

the floor the priest crawled through the opening he had made and disappeared from the sight of the watcher hiding in the shadows of the narrow passageway behind him.

No sooner, however, was he safely gone than the other followed, finding himself, after passing through the hole, on a little ledge about halfway between the surface of the lake and the top of the cliff above. The ledge inclined steeply upward, ending at the rear of a building which stood upon the edge of the cliff and which the second priest entered just in time to see Pan-sat pass out into the city beyond.

As the latter turned a nearby corner the other emerged from the doorway and

quickly surveyed his surroundings. He was satisfied the priest who had led him hither had served his purpose in so far as the tracker was concerned. Above him, and perhaps a hundred yards away, the white walls of the palace gleamed against the northern sky. The time that it had taken him to acquire definite knowledge concerning the secret passageway between the temple and the city he did not count as lost, though he begrudged every instant that kept him from the prosecution of his main objective. It had seemed to him, however, necessary to the success of a bold plan that he had formulated upon overhearing the conversation between Lu-don and Pan-sat as he stood without

the hangings of the apartment of the high priest.

Alone against a nation of suspicious and half-savage enemies he could scarce hope for a successful outcome to the one great issue upon which hung the life and happiness of the creature he loved best. For her sake he must win allies and it was for this purpose that he had sacrificed these precious moments, but now he lost no further time in seeking to regain entrance to the palace grounds that he might search out whatever new prison they had found in which to incarcerate his lost love.

He found no difficulty in passing the guards at the entrance to the palace for, as he had guessed, his priestly disguise

disarmed all suspicion. As he approached the warriors he kept his hands behind him and trusted to fate that the sickly light of the single torch which stood beside the doorway would not reveal his un-Pal-ul-donian feet. As a matter of fact so accustomed were they to the comings and goings of the priesthood that they paid scant attention to him and he passed on into the palace grounds without even a moment's delay.

His goal now was the Forbidden Garden and this he had little difficulty in reaching though he elected to enter it over the wall rather than to chance arousing any suspicion on the part of the guards at the inner entrance, since he could imagine no reason why a priest

should seek entrance there thus late at night.

He found the garden deserted, nor any sign of her he sought. That she had been brought hither he had learned from the conversation he had overheard between Lu-don and Pan-sat, and he was sure that there had been no time or opportunity for the high priest to remove her from the palace grounds. The garden he knew to be devoted exclusively to the uses of the princess and her women and it was only reasonable to assume therefore that if Jane had been brought to the garden it could only have been upon an order from Ko-tan. This being the case the natural assumption would follow that he would find her in some other portion of O-lo-

a's quarters.

Just where these lay he could only conjecture, but it seemed reasonable to believe that they must be adjacent to the garden, so once more he scaled the wall and passing around its end directed his steps toward an entrance-way which he judged must lead to that portion of the palace nearest the Forbidden Garden.

To his surprise he found the place unguarded and then there fell upon his ear from an interior apartment the sound of voices raised in anger and excitement. Guided by the sound he quickly traversed several corridors and chambers until he stood before the hangings which separated him from the chamber from which issued the sounds

of altercation. Raising the skins slightly he looked within. There were two women battling with a Ho-don warrior. One was the daughter of Ko-tan and the other Pan-at-lee, the Kor-ul-ja.

At the moment that Tarzan lifted the hangings, the warrior threw O-lo-a viciously to the ground and seizing Pan-at-lee by the hair drew his knife and raised it above her head. Casting the encumbering headdress of the dead priest from his shoulders the ape- man leaped across the intervening space and seizing the brute from behind struck him a single terrible blow.

As the man fell forward dead, the two women recognized Tarzan simultaneously. Pan-at-lee fell upon her

knees and would have bowed her head upon his feet had he not, with an impatient gesture, commanded her to rise. He had no time to listen to their protestations of gratitude or answer the numerous questions which he knew would soon be flowing from those two feminine tongues.

"Tell me," he cried, "where is the woman of my own race whom Ja- don brought here from the temple?"

"She is but this moment gone," cried O-lo-a. "Mo-sar, the father of this thing here," and she indicated the body of Bu-lot with a scornful finger, "seized her and carried her away."

"Which way?" he cried. "Tell me quickly, in what direction he took her."

"That way," cried Pan-at-lee, pointing to the doorway through which Mo-sar had passed. "They would have taken the princess and the stranger woman to Tu-lur, Mo-sar's city by the Dark Lake."

"I go to find her," he said to Pan-at-lee, "she is my mate. And if I survive I shall find means to liberate you too and return you to Om-at."

Before the girl could reply he had disappeared behind the hangings of the door near the foot of the dais. The corridor through which he ran was illy lighted and like nearly all its kind in the Ho- don city wound in and out and up and down, but at last it terminated at a sudden turn which brought him into a courtyard filled with warriors, a portion

of the palace guard that had just been summoned by one of the lesser palace chiefs to join the warriors of Ko- tan in the battle that was raging in the banquet hall.

At sight of Tarzan, who in his haste had forgotten to recover his disguising headdress, a great shout arose. "Blasphemer!" "Defiler of the temple!" burst hoarsely from savage throats, and mingling with these were a few who cried, "Dor-ul-Otho!" evidencing the fact that there were among them still some who clung to their belief in his divinity.

To cross the courtyard armed only with a knife, in the face of this great throng of savage fighting men seemed

even to the giant ape- man a thing impossible of achievement. He must use his wits now and quickly too, for they were closing upon him. He might have turned and fled back through the corridor but flight now even in the face of dire necessity would but delay him in his pursuit of Mo-sar and his mate.

"Stop!" he cried, raising his palm against them. "I am the Dor- ul-Otho and I come to you with a word from Ja-don, who it is my father's will shall be your king now that Ko-tan is slain. Lu-don, the high priest, has planned to seize the palace and destroy the loyal warriors that Mo-sar may be made king—Mo-sar who will be the tool and creature of Lu-don. Follow me. There is no time to lose

if you would prevent the traitors whom Lu-don has organized in the city from entering the palace by a secret way and overpowering Ja- don and the faithful band within."

For a moment they hesitated. At last one spoke. "What guarantee have we," he demanded, "that it is not you who would betray us and by leading us now away from the fighting in the banquet hall cause those who fight at Ja-don's side to be defeated?"

"My life will be your guarantee," replied Tarzan. "If you find that I have not spoken the truth you are sufficient in numbers to execute whatever penalty you choose. But come, there is not time to lose. Already are the lesser priests

gathering their warriors in the city below," and without waiting for any further parley he strode directly toward them in the direction of the gate upon the opposite side of the courtyard which led toward the principal entrance to the palace ground.

Slower in wit than he, they were swept away by his greater initiative and that compelling power which is inherent to all natural leaders. And so they followed him, the giant ape-man with a dead tail dragging the ground behind him —a demi-god where another would have been ridiculous. Out into the city he led them and down toward the unpretentious building that hid Lu-don's secret passageway from the city to the temple,

and as they rounded the last turn they saw before them a gathering of warriors which was being rapidly augmented from all directions as the traitors of A-lur mobilized at the call of the priesthood.

"You spoke the truth, stranger," said the chief who marched at Tarzan's side, "for there are the warriors with the priests among them, even as you told us."

"And now," replied the ape-man, "that I have fulfilled my promise I will go my way after Mo-sar, who has done me a great wrong. Tell Ja-don that Jad-ben-Otho is upon his side, nor do you forget to tell him also that it was the Dor-ul-Otho who thwarted Lu-don's plan to

seize the palace."

"I will not forget," replied the chief. "Go your way. We are enough to overpower the traitors."

"Tell me," asked Tarzan, "how I may know this city of Tu- lur?"

"It lies upon the south shore of the second lake below A-lur," replied the chief, "the lake that is called Jad-in-lul."

They were now approaching the band of traitors, who evidently thought that this was another contingent of their own party since they made no effort either toward defense or retreat. Suddenly the chief raised his voice in a savage war cry that was immediately taken up by his followers, and simultaneously, as though the cry were a command, the entire party

broke into a mad charge upon the surprised rebels.

Satisfied with the outcome of his suddenly conceived plan and sure that it would work to the disadvantage of Lu-don, Tarzan turned into a side street and pointed his steps toward the outskirts of the city in search of the trail that led southward toward Tu-lur.

17. BY JAD-BAL-LUL

As Mo-sar carried Jane Clayton from the palace of Ko-tan, the king, the woman struggled incessantly to regain her freedom. He tried to compel her to walk, but despite his threats and his abuse she would not voluntarily take a single step in the direction in which he wished her to go. Instead she threw herself to the ground each time he sought to place her upon her feet, and so of necessity he was compelled to carry her though at last he tied her hands and gagged her to save himself from further lacerations, for the beauty and slenderness of the woman belied her strength and courage. When he came at last to where his men had gathered he was glad indeed to turn her

over to a couple of stalwart warriors, but these too were forced to carry her since Mo-sar's fear of the vengeance of Ko-tan's retainers would brook no delays.

And thus they came down out of the hills from which A-lur is carved, to the meadows that skirt the lower end of Jad-ben-lul, with Jane Clayton carried between two of Mo-sar's men. At the edge of the lake lay a fleet of strong canoes, hollowed from the trunks of trees, their bows and sterns carved in the semblance of grotesque beasts or birds and vividly colored by some master in that primitive school of art, which fortunately is not without its devotees today.

Into the stern of one of these canoes the warriors tossed their captive at a sign from Mo-sar, who came and stood beside her as the warriors were finding their places in the canoes and selecting their paddles.

"Come, Beautiful One," he said, "let us be friends and you shall not be harmed. You will find Mo-sar a kind master if you do his bidding," and thinking to make a good impression on her he removed the gag from her mouth and the thongs from her wrists, knowing well that she could not escape surrounded as she was by his warriors, and presently, when they were out on the lake, she would be as safely imprisoned as though he held her behind bars.

And so the fleet moved off to the accompaniment of the gentle splashing of a hundred paddles, to follow the windings of the rivers and lakes through which the waters of the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho empty into the great morass to the south. The warriors, resting upon one knee, faced the bow and in the last canoe Mo-sar tiring of his fruitless attempts to win responses from his sullen captive, squatted in the bottom of the canoe with his back toward her and resting his head upon the gunwale sought sleep.

Thus they moved in silence between the verdure-clad banks of the little river through which the waters of Jad-ben-lul emptied—now in the moonlight, now in dense shadow where great trees

overhung the stream, and at last out upon the waters of another lake, the black shores of which seemed far away under the weird influence of a moonlight night.

Jane Clayton sat alert in the stern of the last canoe. For months she had been under constant surveillance, the prisoner first of one ruthless race and now the prisoner of another. Since the long- gone day that Hauptmann Fritz Schneider and his band of native German troops had treacherously wrought the Kaiser's work of rapine and destruction on the Greystoke bungalow and carried her away to captivity she had not drawn a free breath. That she had survived unharmed the countless dangers through which she had passed she attributed

solely to the beneficence of a kind and watchful Providence.

At first she had been held on the orders of the German High Command with a view of her ultimate value as a hostage and during these months she had been subjected to neither hardship nor oppression, but when the Germans had become hard pressed toward the close of their unsuccessful campaign in East Africa it had been determined to take her further into the interior and now there was an element of revenge in their motives, since it must have been apparent that she could no longer be of any possible military value.

Bitter indeed were the Germans against that half-savage mate of hers

who had cunningly annoyed and harassed them with a fiendishness of persistence and ingenuity that had resulted in a noticeable loss in morale in the sector he had chosen for his operations. They had to charge against him the lives of certain officers that he had deliberately taken with his own hands, and one entire section of trench that had made possible a disastrous turning movement by the British. Tarzan had out-generaled them at every point. He had met cunning with cunning and cruelty with cruelties until they feared and loathed his very name. The cunning trick that they had played upon him in destroying his home, murdering his retainers, and covering the abduction of

his wife in such a way as to lead him to believe that she had been killed, they had regretted a thousand times, for a thousandfold had they paid the price for their senseless ruthlessness, and now, unable to wreak their vengeance directly upon him, they had conceived the idea of inflicting further suffering upon his mate.

In sending her into the interior to avoid the path of the victorious British, they had chosen as her escort Lieutenant Erich Obergatz who had been second in command of Schneider's company, and who alone of its officers had escaped the consuming vengeance of the ape-man. For a long time Obergatz had held her in a native village, the chief of which was still under the domination of his fear of

the ruthless German oppressors. While here only hardships and discomforts assailed her, Obergatz himself being held in leash by the orders of his distant superior but as time went on the life in the village grew to be a veritable hell of cruelties and oppressions practiced by the arrogant Prussian upon the villagers and the members of his native command —for time hung heavily upon the hands of the lieutenant and with idleness combining with the personal discomforts he was compelled to endure, his none too agreeable temper found an outlet first in petty interference with the chiefs and later in the practice of absolute cruelties upon them.

What the self-sufficient German could

not see was plain to Jane Clayton - that the sympathies of Obergatz' native soldiers lay with the villagers and that all were so heartily sickened by his abuse that it needed now but the slightest spark to detonate the mine of revenge and hatred that the pig-headed Hun had been assiduously fabricating beneath his own person.

And at last it came, but from an unexpected source in the form of a German native deserter from the theater of war. Footsore, weary, and spent, he dragged himself into the village late one afternoon, and before Obergatz was even aware of his presence the whole village knew that the power of Germany in Africa was at an end. It did not take long

for the lieutenant's native soldiers to realize that the authority that held them in service no longer existed and that with it had gone the power to pay them their miserable wage. Or at least, so they reasoned. To them Obergatz no longer represented aught else than a powerless and hated foreigner, and short indeed would have been his shrift had not a native woman who had conceived a doglike affection for Jane Clayton hurried to her with word of the murderous plan, for the fate of the innocent white woman lay in the balance beside that of the guilty Teuton.

"Already they are quarreling as to which one shall possess you," she told Jane.

"When will they come for us?" asked Jane. "Did you hear them say?"

"Tonight," replied the woman, "for even now that he has none to fight for him they still fear the white man. And so they will come at night and kill him while he sleeps."

Jane thanked the woman and sent her away lest the suspicion of her fellows be aroused against her when they discovered that the two whites had learned of their intentions. The woman went at once to the hut occupied by Obergatz. She had never gone there before and the German looked up in surprise as he saw who his visitor was.

Briefly she told him what she had heard. At first he was inclined to bluster

arrogantly, with a great display of bravado but she silenced him peremptorily.

"Such talk is useless," she said shortly. "You have brought upon yourself the just hatred of these people. Regardless of the truth or falsity of the report which has been brought to them, they believe in it and there is nothing now between you and your Maker other than flight. We shall both be dead before morning if we are unable to escape from the village unseen. If you go to them now with your silly protestations of authority you will be dead a little sooner, that is all."

"You think it is as bad as that?" he said, a noticeable alteration in his tone

and manner.

"It is precisely as I have told you," she replied. "They will come tonight and kill you while you sleep. Find me pistols and a rifle and ammunition and we will pretend that we go into the jungle to hunt. That you have done often. Perhaps it will arouse suspicion that I accompany you but that we must chance. And be sure my dear Herr Lieutenant to bluster and curse and abuse your servants unless they note a change in your manner and realizing your fear know that you suspect their intention. If all goes well then we can go out into the jungle to hunt and we need not return.

"But first and now you must swear never to harm me, or otherwise it would

be better that I called the chief and turned you over to him and then put a bullet into my own head, for unless you swear as I have asked I were no better alone in the jungle with you than here at the mercies of these degraded blacks."

"I swear," he replied solemnly, "in the names of my God and my Kaiser that no harm shall befall you at my hands, Lady Greystoke."

"Very well," she said, "we will make this pact to assist each other to return to civilization, but let it be understood that there is and never can be any semblance even of respect for you upon my part. I am drowning and you are the straw. Carry that always in your mind, German."

If Obergatz had held any doubt as to the sincerity of her word it would have been wholly dissipated by the scathing contempt of her tone. And so Obergatz, without further parley, got pistols and an extra rifle for Jane, as well as bandoleers of cartridges. In his usual arrogant and disagreeable manner he called his servants, telling them that he and the white kali were going out into the brush to hunt. The beaters would go north as far as the little hill and then circle back to the east and in toward the village. The gun carriers he directed to take the extra pieces and precede himself and Jane slowly toward the east, waiting for them at the ford about half a mile distant. The blacks responded with

greater alacrity than usual and it was noticeable to both Jane and Obergatz that they left the village whispering and laughing.

"The swine think it is a great joke," growled Obergatz, "that the afternoon before I die I go out and hunt meat for them."

As soon as the gun bearers disappeared in the jungle beyond the village the two Europeans followed along the same trail, nor was there any attempt upon the part of Obergatz' native soldiers, or the warriors of the chief to detain them, for they too doubtless were more than willing that the whites should bring them in one more mess of meat before they killed them.

A quarter of a mile from the village, Obergatz turned toward the south from the trail that led to the ford and hurrying onward the two put as great a distance as possible between them and the village before night fell. They knew from the habits of their erstwhile hosts that there was little danger of pursuit by night since the villagers held Numa, the lion, in too great respect to venture needlessly beyond their stockade during the hours that the king of beasts was prone to choose for hunting.

And thus began a seemingly endless sequence of frightful days and horror-laden nights as the two fought their way toward the south in the face of almost inconceivable hardships, privations, and

dangers. The east coast was nearer but Obergatz positively refused to chance throwing himself into the hands of the British by returning to the territory which they now controlled, insisting instead upon attempting to make his way through an unknown wilderness to South Africa where, among the Boers, he was convinced he would find willing sympathizers who would find some way to return him in safety to Germany, and the woman was perforce compelled to accompany him.

And so they had crossed the great thorny, waterless steppe and come at last to the edge of the morass before Pal-ul-don. They had reached this point just before the rainy season when the waters

of the morass were at their lowest ebb. At this time a hard crust is baked upon the dried surface of the marsh and there is only the open water at the center to materially impede progress. It is a condition that exists perhaps not more than a few weeks, or even days at the termination of long periods of drought, and so the two crossed the otherwise almost impassable barrier without realizing its latent terrors. Even the open water in the center chanced to be deserted at the time by its frightful denizens which the drought and the receding waters had driven southward toward the mouth of Pal-ul-don's largest river which carries the waters out of the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho.

Their wanderings carried them across the mountains and into the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho at the source of one of the larger streams which bears the mountain waters down into the valley to empty them into the main river just below The Great Lake on whose northern shore lies A-lur. As they had come down out of the mountains they had been surprised by a party of Ho-don hunters. Obergatz had escaped while Jane had been taken prisoner and brought to A-lur. She had neither seen nor heard aught of the German since that time and she did not know whether he had perished in this strange land, or succeeded in successfully eluding its savage denizens and making his way at last into South

Africa.

For her part, she had been incarcerated alternately in the palace and the temple as either Ko-tan or Lu-don succeeded in wresting her temporarily from the other by various strokes of cunning and intrigue. And now at last she was in the power of a new captor, one whom she knew from the gossip of the temple and the palace to be cruel and degraded. And she was in the stern of the last canoe, and every enemy back was toward her, while almost at her feet Mo-sar's loud snores gave ample evidence of his unconsciousness to his immediate surroundings.

The dark shore loomed closer to the south as Jane Clayton, Lady Greystoke,

slid quietly over the stern of the canoe into the chill waters of the lake. She scarcely moved other than to keep her nostrils above the surface while the canoe was yet discernible in the last rays of the declining moon. Then she struck out toward the southern shore.

Alone, unarmed, all but naked, in a country overrun by savage beasts and hostile men, she yet felt for the first time in many months a sensation of elation and relief. She was free! What if the next moment brought death, she knew again, at least a brief instant of absolute freedom. Her blood tingled to the almost forgotten sensation and it was with difficulty that she restrained a glad triumphant cry as she clambered from

the quiet waters and stood upon the silent beach.

Before her loomed a forest, darkly, and from its depths came those nameless sounds that are a part of the night life of the jungle—the rustling of leaves in the wind, the rubbing together of contiguous branches, the scurrying of a rodent, all magnified by the darkness to sinister and awe-inspiring proportions; the hoot of an owl, the distant scream of a great cat, the barking of wild dogs, attested the presence of the myriad life she could not see—the savage life, the free life of which she was now a part. And then there came to her, possibly for the first time since the giant ape- man had come into her life, a fuller realization of what

the jungle meant to him, for though alone and unprotected from its hideous dangers she yet felt its lure upon her and an exaltation that she had not dared hope to feel again.

Ah, if that mighty mate of hers were but by her side! What utter joy and bliss would be hers! She longed for no more than this. The parade of cities, the comforts and luxuries of civilization held forth no allure half as insistent as the glorious freedom of the jungle.

A lion moaned in the blackness to her right, eliciting delicious thrills that crept along her spine. The hair at the back of her head seemed to stand erect—yet she was unafraid. The muscles bequeathed her by some primordial ancestor reacted

instinctively to the presence of an ancient enemy —that was all. The woman moved slowly and deliberately toward the wood. Again the lion moaned; this time nearer. She sought a low-hanging branch and finding it swung easily into the friendly shelter of the tree. The long and perilous journey with Obergatz had trained her muscles and her nerves to such unaccustomed habits. She found a safe resting place such as Tarzan had taught her was best and there she curled herself, thirty feet above the ground, for a night's rest. She was cold and uncomfortable and yet she slept, for her heart was warm with renewed hope and her tired brain had found temporary surcease from worry.

She slept until the heat of the sun, high in the heavens, awakened her. She was rested and now her body was well as her heart was warm. A sensation of ease and comfort and happiness pervaded her being. She rose upon her gently swaying couch and stretched luxuriously, her naked limbs and lithe body mottled by the sunlight filtering through the foliage above combined with the lazy gesture to impart to her appearance something of the leopard. With careful eye she scrutinized the ground below and with attentive ear she listened for any warning sound that might suggest the near presence of enemies, either man or beast. Satisfied at last that there was nothing close of which she need have

fear she clambered to the ground. She wished to bathe but the lake was too exposed and just a bit too far from the safety of the trees for her to risk it until she became more familiar with her surroundings. She wandered aimlessly through the forest searching for food which she found in abundance. She ate and rested, for she had no objective as yet. Her freedom was too new to be spoiled by plannings for the future. The haunts of civilized man seemed to her now as vague and unattainable as the half- forgotten substance of a dream. If she could but live on here in peace, waiting, waiting for—him. It was the old hope revived. She knew that he would come some day, if he lived. She had

always known that, though recently she had believed that he would come too late. If he lived! Yes, he would come if he lived, and if he did not live she were as well off here as elsewhere, for then nothing mattered, only to wait for the end as patiently as might be.

Her wanderings brought her to a crystal brook and there she drank and bathed beneath an overhanging tree that offered her quick asylum in the event of danger. It was a quiet and beautiful spot and she loved it from the first. The bottom of the brook was paved with pretty stones and bits of glassy obsidian. As she gathered a handful of the pebbles and held them up to look at them she noticed that one of her fingers was

bleeding from a clean, straight cut. She fell to searching for the cause and presently discovered it in one of the fragments of volcanic glass which revealed an edge that was almost razor-like. Jane Clayton was elated. Here, God-given to her hands, was the first beginning with which she might eventually arrive at both weapons and tools—a cutting edge. Everything was possible to him who possessed it - nothing without.

She sought until she had collected many of the precious bits of stone - until the pouch that hung at her right side was almost filled. Then she climbed into the great tree to examine them at leisure. There were some that looked like knife

blades, and some that could easily be fashioned into spear heads, and many smaller ones that nature seemed to have intended for the tips of savage arrows.

The spear she would essay first—that would be easiest. There was a hollow in the bole of the tree in a great crotch high above the ground. Here she cached all of her treasure except a single knifelike sliver. With this she descended to the ground and searching out a slender sapling that grew arrow-straight she hacked and sawed until she could break it off without splitting the wood. It was just the right diameter for the shaft of a spear - a hunting spear such as her beloved Waziri had liked best. How often had she watched them fashioning

them, and they had taught her how to use them, too - them and the heavy war spears—laughing and clapping their hands as her proficiency increased.

She knew the arborescent grasses that yielded the longest and toughest fibers and these she sought and carried to her tree with the spear shaft that was to be. Clambering to her crotch she bent to her work, humming softly a little tune. She caught herself and smiled—it was the first time in all these bitter months that song had passed her lips or such a smile.

"I feel," she sighed, "I almost feel that John is near—my John —my Tarzan!"

She cut the spear shaft to the proper length and removed the twigs and branches and the bark, whittling and

scraping at the nubs until the surface was all smooth and straight. Then she split one end and inserted a spear point, shaping the wood until it fitted perfectly. This done she laid the shaft aside and fell to splitting the thick grass stems and pounding and twisting them until she had separated and partially cleaned the fibers. These she took down to the brook and washed and brought back again and wound tightly around the cleft end of the shaft, which she had notched to receive them, and the upper part of the spear head which she had also notched slightly with a bit of stone. It was a crude spear but the best that she could attain in so short a time. Later, she promised herself, she should have others—many of them—

and they would be spears of which even the greatest of the Waziri spear-men might be proud.

18. THE LION PIT OF TU-LUR

Though Tarzan searched the outskirts of the city until nearly dawn he discovered nowhere the spoor of his mate. The breeze coming down from the mountains brought to his nostrils a diversity of scents but there was not among them the slightest suggestion of her whom he sought. The natural deduction was therefore that she had been taken in some other direction. In his search he had many times crossed the fresh tracks of many men leading toward the lake and these he concluded had probably been made by Jane Clayton's abductors. It had only been to minimize the chance of

error by the process of elimination that he had carefully reconnoitered every other avenue leading from A-lur toward the southeast where lay Mo-sar's city of Tu- lur, and now he followed the trail to the shores of Jad-ben-lul where the party had embarked upon the quiet waters in their sturdy canoes.

He found many other craft of the same description moored along the shore and one of these he commandeered for the purpose of pursuit. It was daylight when he passed through the lake which lies next below Jad-ben-lul and paddling strongly passed within sight of the very tree in which his lost mate lay sleeping.

Had the gentle wind that caressed the bosom of the lake been blowing from a

southerly direction the giant ape-man and Jane Clayton would have been reunited then, but an unkind fate had willed otherwise and the opportunity passed with the passing of his canoe which presently his powerful strokes carried out of sight into the stream at the lower end of the lake.

Following the winding river which bore a considerable distance to the north before doubling back to empty into the Jad-in-lul, the ape-man missed a portage that would have saved him hours of paddling.

It was at the upper end of this portage where Mo-sar and his warriors had debarked that the chief discovered the absence of his captive. As Mo-sar had

been asleep since shortly after their departure from A-lur, and as none of the warriors recalled when she had last been seen, it was impossible to conjecture with any degree of accuracy the place where she had escaped. The consensus of opinion was, however, that it had been in the narrow river connecting Jad-ben- lul with the lake next below it, which is called Jad-bal-lul, which freely translated means the lake of gold. Mo-sar had been very wroth and having himself been the only one at fault he naturally sought with great diligence to fix the blame upon another.

He would have returned in search of her had he not feared to meet a pursuing company dispatched either by Ja-don or

the high priest, both of whom, he knew, had just grievances against him. He would not even spare a boatload of his warriors from his own protection to return in quest of the fugitive but hastened onward with as little delay as possible across the portage and out upon the waters of Jad-in-lul.

The morning sun was just touching the white domes of Tu-lur when Mo-sar's paddlers brought their canoes against the shore at the city's edge. Safe once more behind his own walls and protected by many warriors, the courage of the chief returned sufficiently at least to permit him to dispatch three canoes in search of Jane Clayton, and also to go as far as A-lur if possible to learn what had delayed

Bu-lot, whose failure to reach the canoes with the balance of the party at the time of the flight from the northern city had in no way delayed Mo-sar's departure, his own safety being of far greater moment than that of his son.

As the three canoes reached the portage on their return journey the warriors who were dragging them from the water were suddenly startled by the appearance of two priests, carrying a light canoe in the direction of Jad-in-lul. At first they thought them the advance guard of a larger force of Lu-don's followers, although the correctness of such a theory was belied by their knowledge that priests never accepted the risks or perils of a warrior's

vocation, nor even fought until driven into a corner and forced to do so. Secretly the warriors of Pal-ul-don held the emasculated priesthood in contempt and so instead of immediately taking up the offensive as they would have had the two men been warriors from A-lur instead of priests, they waited to question them.

At sight of the warriors the priests made the sign of peace and upon being asked if they were alone they answered in the affirmative.

The leader of Mo-sar's warriors permitted them to approach. "What do you here," he asked, "in the country of Mo-sar, so far from your own city?"

"We carry a message from Lu-don,

the high priest, to Mo-sar," explained one.

"Is it a message of peace or of war?" asked the warrior.

"It is an offer of peace," replied the priest.

"And Lu-don is sending no warriors behind you?" queried the fighting man.

"We are alone," the priest assured him. "None in A-lur save Lu- don knows that we have come upon this errand."

"Then go your way," said the warrior.

"Who is that?" asked one of the priests suddenly, pointing toward the upper end of the lake at the point where the river from Jad-bal-lul entered it.

All eyes turned in the direction that he

had indicated to see a lone warrior paddling rapidly into Jad-in-lul, the prow of his canoe pointing toward Tu-lur. The warriors and the priests drew into the concealment of the bushes on either side of the portage.

"It is the terrible man who called himself the Dor-ul-Otho," whispered one of the priests. "I would know that figure among a great multitude as far as I could see it."

"You are right, priest," cried one of the warriors who had seen Tarzan the day that he had first entered Ko-tan's palace. "It is indeed he who has been rightly called Tarzan-jad-guru."

"Hasten priests," cried the leader of the party. "You are two paddles in a

light canoe. Easily can you reach Tu-lur ahead of him and warn Mo-sar of his coming, for he has but only entered the lake."

For a moment the priests demurred for they had no stomach for an encounter with this terrible man, but the warrior insisted and even went so far as to threaten them. Their canoe was taken from them and pushed into the lake and they were all but lifted bodily from their feet and put aboard it. Still protesting they were shoved out upon the water where they were immediately in full view of the lone paddler above them. Now there was no alternative. The city of Tu-lur offered the only safety and bending to their paddles the two priests

sent their craft swiftly in the direction of the city.

The warriors withdrew again to the concealment of the foliage. If Tarzan had seen them and should come hither to investigate there were thirty of them against one and naturally they had no fear of the outcome, but they did not consider it necessary to go out upon the lake to meet him since they had been sent to look for the escaped prisoner and not to intercept the strange warrior, the stories of whose ferocity and prowess doubtless helped them to arrive at their decision to provoke no uncalled-for quarrel with him.

If he had seen them he gave no sign, but continued paddling steadily and

strongly toward the city, nor did he increase his speed as the two priests shot out in full view. The moment the priests' canoe touched the shore by the city its occupants leaped out and hurried swiftly toward the palace gate, casting affrighted glances behind them. They sought immediate audience with Mo-sar, after warning the warriors on guard that Tarzan was approaching.

They were conducted at once to the chief, whose court was a smaller replica of that of the king of A-lur. "We come from Lu-don, the high priest," explained the spokesman. "He wishes the friendship of Mo-sar, who has always been his friend. Ja-don is gathering warriors to make himself king.

Throughout the villages of the Ho-don are thousands who will obey the commands of Lu-don, the high priest. Only with Lu-don's assistance can Mo-sar become king, and the message from Lu-don is that if Mo-sar would retain the friendship of Lu-don he must return immediately the woman he took from the quarters of the Princess O-lo-a."

At this juncture a warrior entered. His excitement was evident. "The Dor-ul-Otho has come to Tu-lur and demands to see Mo-sar at once," he said.

"The Dor-ul-Otho!" exclaimed Mo-sar.

"That is the message he sent," replied the warrior, "and indeed he is not as are the people of Pal-ul-don. He is, we

think, the same of whom the warriors that returned from A-lur today told us and whom some call Tarzan-jad-guru and some Dor-ul-Otho. But indeed only the son of god would dare come thus alone to a strange city, so it must be that he speaks the truth."

Mo-sar, his heart filled with terror and indecision, turned questioningly toward the priests.

"Receive him graciously, Mo-sar," counseled he who had spoken before, his advice prompted by the petty shrewdness of his defective brain which, under the added influence of Lu-don's tutorage leaned always toward duplicity. "Receive him graciously and when he is quite convinced of your friendship he

will be off his guard, and then you may do with him as you will. But if possible, Mo-sar, and you would win the undying gratitude of Lu-don, the high-priest, save him alive for my master."

Mo-sar nodded understandingly and turning to the warrior commanded that he conduct the visitor to him.

"We must not be seen by the creature," said one of the priests. "Give us your answer to Lu-don, Mo-sar, and we will go our way."

"Tell Lu-don," replied the chief, "that the woman would have been lost to him entirely had it not been for me. I sought to bring her to Tu-lur that I might save her for him from the clutches of Ja- don, but during the night she escaped. Tell

Lu-don that I have sent thirty warriors to search for her. It is strange you did not see them as you came."

"We did," replied the priests, "but they told us nothing of the purpose of their journey."

"It is as I have told you," said Mo-sar, "and if they find her, assure your master that she will be kept unharmed in Tu-lur for him. Also tell him that I will send my warriors to join with his against Ja-don whenever he sends word that he wants them. Now go, for Tarzan- jad-guru will soon be here."

He signaled to a slave. "Lead the priests to the temple," he commanded, "and ask the high priest of Tu-lur to see that they are fed and permitted to return

to A-lur when they will."

The two priests were conducted from the apartment by the slave through a doorway other than that at which they had entered, and a moment later Tarzan-jad-guru strode into the presence of Mo-sar, ahead of the warrior whose duty it had been to conduct and announce him. The ape-man made no sign of greeting or of peace but strode directly toward the chief who, only by the exertion of his utmost powers of will, hid the terror that was in his heart at sight of the giant figure and the scowling face.

"I am the Dor-ul-Otho," said the ape-man in level tones that carried to the mind of Mo-sar a suggestion of cold steel; "I am Dor- ul-Otho, and I come to

Tu-lur for the woman you stole from the apartments of O-lo-a, the princess."

The very boldness of Tarzan's entry into this hostile city had had the effect of giving him a great moral advantage over Mo-sar and the savage warriors who stood upon either side of the chief. Truly it seemed to them that no other than the son of Jad-ben-Otho would dare so heroic an act. Would any mortal warrior act thus boldly, and alone enter the presence of a powerful chief and, in the midst of a score of warriors, arrogantly demand an accounting? No, it was beyond reason. Mo-sar was faltering in his decision to betray the stranger by seeming friendliness. He even paled to a sudden thought—Jad-ben-Otho knew

everything, even our inmost thoughts. Was it not therefore possible that this creature, if after all it should prove true that he was the Dor-ul-Otho, might even now be reading the wicked design that the priests had implanted in the brain of Mo-sar and which he had entertained so favorably? The chief squirmed and fidgeted upon the bench of hewn rock that was his throne.

"Quick," snapped the ape-man, "Where is she?"

"She is not here," cried Mo-sar.

"You lie," replied Tarzan.

"As Jad-ben-Otho is my witness, she is not in Tu-lur," insisted the chief. "You may search the palace and the temple and the entire city but you will not find

her, for she is not here."

"Where is she, then?" demanded the ape-man. "You took her from the palace at A-lur. If she is not here, where is she? Tell me not that harm has befallen her," and he took a sudden threatening step toward Mo-sar, that sent the chief shrinking back in terror.

"Wait," he cried, "if you are indeed the Dor-ul-Otho you will know that I speak the truth. I took her from the palace of Ko-tan to save her for Lu-don, the high priest, lest with Ko-tan dead Ja-don seize her. But during the night she escaped from me between here and A-lur, and I have but just sent three canoes full-manned in search of her."

Something in the chief's tone and

manner assured the ape-man that he spoke in part the truth, and that once again he had braved incalculable dangers and suffered loss of time futilely.

"What wanted the priests of Lu-don that preceded me here?" demanded Tarzan chancing a shrewd guess that the two he had seen paddling so frantically to avoid a meeting with him had indeed come from the high priest at A-lur.

"They came upon an errand similar to yours," replied Mo-sar; "to demand the return of the woman whom Lu-don thought I had stolen from him, thus wronging me as deeply, O Dor-ul-Otho, as have you."

"I would question the priests," said

Tarzan. "Bring them hither." His peremptory and arrogant manner left Mo-sar in doubt as to whether to be more incensed, or terrified, but ever as is the way with such as he, he concluded that the first consideration was his own safety. If he could transfer the attention and the wrath of this terrible man from himself to Lu-don's priests it would more than satisfy him and if they should conspire to harm him, then Mo-sar would be safe in the eyes of Jad-ben-Otho if it finally developed that the stranger was in reality the son of god. He felt uncomfortable in Tarzan's presence and this fact rather accentuated his doubt, for thus indeed would mortal feel in the presence of a god. Now he

saw a way to escape, at least temporarily.

"I will fetch them myself, Dor-ul-Otho," he said, and turning, left the apartment. His hurried steps brought him quickly to the temple, for the palace grounds of Tu-lur, which also included the temple as in all of the Ho-don cities, covered a much smaller area than those of the larger city of A-lur. He found Lu-don's messengers with the high priest of his own temple and quickly transmitted to them the commands of the ape-man.

"What do you intend to do with him?" asked one of the priests.

"I have no quarrel with him," replied Mo-sar. "He came in peace and he may depart in peace, for who knows but that

he is indeed the Dor-ul-Otho?"

"We know that he is not," replied Lu-don's emissary. "We have every proof that he is only mortal, a strange creature from another country. Already has Lu-don offered his life to Jad-ben-Otho if he is wrong in his belief that this creature is not the son of god. If the high priest of A-lur, who is the highest priest of all the high priests of Pal-ul-don is thus so sure that the creature in an impostor as to stake his life upon his judgment then who are we to give credence to the claims of this stranger? No, Mo-sar, you need not fear him. He is only a warrior who may be overcome with the same weapons that subdue your own fighting men. Were it not for Lu-don's command that he be

taken alive I would urge you to set your warriors upon him and slay him, but the commands of Lu-don are the commands of Jad-ben-Otho himself, and those we may not disobey."

But still the remnant of a doubt stirred within the cowardly breast of Mo-sar, urging him to let another take the initiative against the stranger.

"He is yours then," he replied, "to do with as you will. I have no quarrel with him. What you may command shall be the command of Lu- don, the high priest, and further than that I shall have nothing to do in the matter."

The priests turned to him who guided the destinies of the temple at Tu-lur. "Have you no plan?" they asked. "High

indeed will he stand in the counsels of Lu-don and in the eyes of Jad-ben-Otho who finds the means to capture this impostor alive."

"There is the lion pit," whispered the high priest. "It is now vacant and what will hold ja and jato will hold this stranger if he is not the Dor-ul-Otho."

"It will hold him," said Mo-sar; "doubtless too it would hold a gryf, but first you would have to get the gryf into it."

The priests pondered this bit of wisdom thoughtfully and then one of those from A-lur spoke. "It should not be difficult," he said, "if we use the wits that Jad-ben-Otho gave us instead of the worldly muscles which were handed

down to us from our fathers and our mothers and which have not even the power possessed by those of the beasts that run about on four feet."

"Lu-don matched his wits with the stranger and lost," suggested Mo-sar. "But this is your own affair. Carry it out as you see best."

"At A-lur, Ko-tan made much of this Dor-ul-Otho and the priests conducted him through the temple. It would arouse in his mind no suspicion were you to do the same, and let the high priest of Tu-lur invite him to the temple and gathering all the priests make a great show of belief in his kinship to Jad-ben-Otho. And what more natural then than that the high priest should wish to show him through the

temple as did Lu-don at A-lur when Ko-tan commanded it, and if by chance he should be led through the lion pit it would be a simple matter for those who bear the torches to extinguish them suddenly and before the stranger was aware of what had happened, the stone gates could be dropped, thus safely securing him."

"But there are windows in the pit that let in light," interposed the high priest, "and even though the torches were extinguished he could still see and might escape before the stone door could be lowered."

"Send one who will cover the windows tightly with hides," said the priest from A-lur.

"The plan is a good one," said Mo-sar, seeing an opportunity for entirely eliminating himself from any suspicion of complicity, "for it will require the presence of no warriors, and thus with only priests about him his mind will entertain no suspicion of harm."

They were interrupted at this point by a messenger from the palace who brought word that the Dor-ul-Otho was becoming impatient and if the priests from A-lur were not brought to him at once he would come himself to the temple and get them. Mo-sar shook his head. He could not conceive of such brazen courage in mortal breast and glad he was that the plan evolved for Tarzan's undoing did not necessitate his active

participation.

And so, while Mo-sar left for a secret corner of the palace by a roundabout way, three priests were dispatched to Tarzan and with whining words that did not entirely deceive him, they acknowledged his kinship to Jad-ben-Otho and begged him in the name of the high priest to honor the temple with a visit, when the priests from A-lur would be brought to him and would answer any questions that he put to them.

Confident that a continuation of his bravado would best serve his purpose, and also that if suspicion against him should crystallize into conviction on the part of Mo-sar and his followers that he would be no worse off in the temple than

in the palace, the ape-man haughtily accepted the invitation of the high priest.

And so he came into the temple and was received in a manner befitting his high claims. He questioned the two priests of A-lur from whom he obtained only a repetition of the story that Mo-sar had told him, and then the high priest invited him to inspect the temple.

They took him first to the altar court, of which there was only one in Tu-lur. It was almost identical in every respect with those at A-lur. There was a bloody altar at the east end and the drowning basin at the west, and the grizzly fringes upon the headdresses of the priests attested the fact that the eastern altar was an active force in the rites of the temple.

Through the chambers and corridors beneath they led him, and finally, with torch bearers to light their steps, into a damp and gloomy labyrinth at a low level and here in a large chamber, the air of which was still heavy with the odor of lions, the crafty priests of Tu-lur encompassed their shrewd design.

The torches were suddenly extinguished. There was a hurried confusion of bare feet moving rapidly across the stone floor. There was a loud crash as of a heavy weight of stone falling upon stone, and then surrounding the ape-man naught but the darkness and the silence of the tomb.

19. DIANA OF THE JUNGLE

Jane had made her first kill and she was very proud of it. It was not a very formidable animal—only a hare; but it marked an epoch in her existence. Just as in the dim past the first hunter had shaped the destinies of mankind so it seemed that this event might shape hers in some new mold. No longer was she dependent upon the wild fruits and vegetables for sustenance. Now she might command meat, the giver of the strength and endurance she would require successfully to cope with the necessities of her primitive existence.

The next step was fire. She might

learn to eat raw flesh as had her lord and master; but she shrank from that. The thought even was repulsive. She had, however, a plan for fire. She had given the matter thought, but had been too busy to put it into execution so long as fire could be of no immediate use to her. Now it was different—she had something to cook and her mouth watered for the flesh of her kill. She would grill it above glowing embers. Jane hastened to her tree. Among the treasures she had gathered in the bed of the stream were several pieces of volcanic glass, clear as crystal. She sought until she had found the one in mind, which was convex. Then she hurried to the ground and gathered a

little pile of powdered bark that was very dry, and some dead leaves and grasses that had lain long in the hot sun. Near at hand she arranged a supply of dead twigs and branches —small and large.

Vibrant with suppressed excitement she held the bit of glass above the tinder, moving it slowly until she had focused the sun's rays upon a tiny spot. She waited breathlessly. How slow it was! Were her high hopes to be dashed in spite of all her clever planning? No! A thin thread of smoke rose gracefully into the quiet air. Presently the tinder glowed and broke suddenly into flame. Jane clasped her hands beneath her chin with a little gurgling exclamation of delight.

She had achieved fire!

She piled on twigs and then larger branches and at last dragged a small log to the flames and pushed an end of it into the fire which was crackling merrily. It was the sweetest sound that she had heard for many a month. But she could not wait for the mass of embers that would be required to cook her hare. As quickly as might be she skinned and cleaned her kill, burying the hide and entrails. That she had learned from Tarzan. It served two purposes. One was the necessity for keeping a sanitary camp and the other the obliteration of the scent that most quickly attracts the man-eaters.

Then she ran a stick through the carcass and held it above the flames. By

turning it often she prevented burning and at the same time permitted the meat to cook thoroughly all the way through. When it was done she scampered high into the safety of her tree to enjoy her meal in quiet and peace. Never, thought Lady Greystoke, had aught more delicious passed her lips. She patted her spear affectionately. It had brought her this toothsome dainty and with it a feeling of greater confidence and safety than she had enjoyed since that frightful day that she and Obergatz had spent their last cartridge. She would never forget that day—it had seemed one hideous succession of frightful beast after frightful beast. They had not been long in this strange country, yet they thought that

they were hardened to dangers, for daily they had had encounters with ferocious creatures; but this day—she shuddered when she thought of it. And with her last cartridge she had killed a black and yellow striped lion-thing with great saber teeth just as it was about to spring upon Obergatz who had futilely emptied his rifle into it —the last shot—his final cartridge. For another day they had carried the now useless rifles; but at last they had discarded them and thrown away the cumbersome bandoleers, as well. How they had managed to survive during the ensuing week she could never quite understand, and then the Ho-don had come upon them and captured her. Obergatz had escaped— she was living

it all over again. Doubtless he was dead unless he had been able to reach this side of the valley which was quite evidently less overrun with savage beasts.

Jane's days were very full ones now, and the daylight hours seemed all too short in which to accomplish the many things she had determined upon, since she had concluded that this spot presented as ideal a place as she could find to live until she could fashion the weapons she considered necessary for the obtaining of meat and for self-defense.

She felt that she must have, in addition to a good spear, a knife, and bow and arrows. Possibly when these

had been achieved she might seriously consider an attempt to fight her way to one of civilization's nearest outposts. In the meantime it was necessary to construct some sort of protective shelter in which she might feel a greater sense of security by night, for she knew that there was a possibility that any night she might receive a visit from a prowling panther, although she had as yet seen none upon this side of the valley. Aside from this danger she felt comparatively safe in her aerial retreat.

The cutting of the long poles for her home occupied all of the daylight hours that were not engaged in the search for food. These poles she carried high into her tree and with them constructed a

flooring across two stout branches binding the poles together and also to the branches with fibers from the tough arboraceous grasses that grew in profusion near the stream. Similarly she built walls and a roof, the latter thatched with many layers of great leaves. The fashioning of the barred windows and the door were matters of great importance and consuming interest. The windows, there were two of them, were large and the bars permanently fixed; but the door was small, the opening just large enough to permit her to pass through easily on hands and knees, which made it easier to barricade. She lost count of the days that the house cost her; but time was a cheap commodity—

she had more of it than of anything else. It meant so little to her that she had not even any desire to keep account of it. How long since she and Obergatz had fled from the wrath of the Negro villagers she did not know and she could only roughly guess at the seasons. She worked hard for two reasons; one was to hasten the completion of her little place of refuge, and the other a desire for such physical exhaustion at night that she would sleep through those dreaded hours to a new day. As a matter of fact the house was finished in less than a week —that is, it was made as safe as it ever would be, though regardless of how long she might occupy it she would keep on adding touches and refinements here and

there.

Her daily life was filled with her house building and her hunting, to which was added an occasional spice of excitement contributed by roving lions. To the woodcraft that she had learned from Tarzan, that master of the art, was added a considerable store of practical experience derived from her own past adventures in the jungle and the long months with Obergatz, nor was any day now lacking in some added store of useful knowledge. To these facts was attributable her apparent immunity from harm, since they told her when ja was approaching before he crept close enough for a successful charge and, too, they kept her close to those never-failing

havens of retreat—the trees.

The nights, filled with their weird noises, were lonely and depressing. Only her ability to sleep quickly and soundly made them endurable. The first night that she spent in her completed house behind barred windows and barricaded door was one of almost undiluted peace and happiness. The night noises seemed far removed and impersonal and the soughing of the wind in the trees was gently soothing. Before, it had carried a mournful note and was sinister in that it might hide the approach of some real danger. That night she slept indeed.

She went further afield now in search of food. So far nothing but rodents had

fallen to her spear—her ambition was an antelope, since beside the flesh it would give her, and the gut for her bow, the hide would prove invaluable during the colder weather that she knew would accompany the rainy season. She had caught glimpses of these wary animals and was sure that they always crossed the stream at a certain spot above her camp. It was to this place that she went to hunt them. With the stealth and cunning of a panther she crept through the forest, circling about to get up wind from the ford, pausing often to look and listen for aught that might menace her—herself the personification of a hunted deer. Now she moved silently down upon the chosen spot. What luck! A

beautiful buck stood drinking in the stream. The woman wormed her way closer. Now she lay upon her belly behind a small bush within throwing distance of the quarry. She must rise to her full height and throw her spear almost in the same instant and she must throw it with great force and perfect accuracy. She thrilled with the excitement of the minute, yet cool and steady were her swift muscles as she rose and cast her missile. Scarce by the width of a finger did the point strike from the spot at which it had been directed. The buck leaped high, landed upon the bank of the stream, and fell dead. Jane Clayton sprang quickly forward toward her kill.

"Bravo!" A man's voice spoke in English from the shrubbery upon the opposite side of the stream. Jane Clayton halted in her tracks— stunned, almost, by surprise. And then a strange, unkempt figure of a man stepped into view. At first she did not recognize him, but when she did, instinctively she stepped back.

"Lieutenant Obergatz!" she cried. "Can it be you?"

"It can. It is," replied the German. "I am a strange sight, no doubt; but still it is I, Erich Obergatz. And you? You have changed too, is it not?"

He was looking at her naked limbs and her golden breastplates, the loin cloth of jato-hide, the harness and ornaments that constitute the apparel of a

Ho-don woman—the things that Lu- don had dressed her in as his passion for her grew. Not Ko-tan's daughter, even, had finer trappings.

"But why are you here?" Jane insisted. "I had thought you safely among civilized men by this time, if you still lived."

"Gott!" he exclaimed. "I do not know why I continue to live. I have prayed to die and yet I cling to life. There is no hope. We are doomed to remain in this horrible land until we die. The bog! The frightful bog! I have searched its shores for a place to cross until I have entirely circled the hideous country. Easily enough we entered; but the rains have come since and now no living man could

pass that slough of slimy mud and hungry reptiles. Have I not tried it! And the beasts that roam this accursed land. They hunt me by day and by night."

"But how have you escaped them?" she asked.

"I do not know," he replied gloomily. "I have fled and fled and fled. I have remained hungry and thirsty in tree tops for days at a time. I have fashioned weapons—clubs and spears—and I have learned to use them. I have slain a lion with my club. So even will a cornered rat fight. And we are no better than rats in this land of stupendous dangers, you and I. But tell me about yourself. If it is surprising that I live, how much more so that you still survive."

Briefly she told him and all the while she was wondering what she might do to rid herself of him. She could not conceive of a prolonged existence with him as her sole companion. Better, a thousand times better, to be alone. Never had her hatred and contempt for him lessened through the long weeks and months of their constant companionship, and now that he could be of no service in returning her to civilization, she shrank from the thought of seeing him daily. And, too, she feared him. Never had she trusted him; but now there was a strange light in his eye that had not been there when last she saw him. She could not interpret it—all she knew was that it gave her a feeling of apprehension—a

nameless dread.

"You lived long then in the city of A-lur?" he said, speaking in the language of Pal-ul-don.

"You have learned this tongue?" she asked. "How?"

"I fell in with a band of half-breeds," he replied, "members of a proscribed race that dwells in the rock-bound gut through which the principal river of the valley empties into the morass. They are called Waz-ho-don and their village is partly made up of cave dwellings and partly of houses carved from the soft rock at the foot of the cliff. They are very ignorant and superstitious and when they first saw me and realized that I had no tail and that my hands and feet were

not like theirs they were afraid of me. They thought that I was either god or demon. Being in a position where I could neither escape them nor defend myself, I made a bold front and succeeded in impressing them to such an extent that they conducted me to their city, which they call Bu-lur, and there they fed me and treated me with kindness. As I learned their language I sought to impress them more and more with the idea that I was a god, and I succeeded, too, until an old fellow who was something of a priest among them, or medicine-man, became jealous of my growing power. That was the beginning of the end and came near to being the end in fact. He told them that if I was a

god I would not bleed if a knife was stuck into me —if I did bleed it would prove conclusively that I was not a god. Without my knowledge he arranged to stage the ordeal before the whole village upon a certain night—it was upon one of those numerous occasions when they eat and drink to Jad-ben-Otho, their pagan deity. Under the influence of their vile liquor they would be ripe for any bloodthirsty scheme the medicine-man might evolve. One of the women told me about the plan— not with any intent to warn me of danger, but prompted merely by feminine curiosity as to whether or not I would bleed if stuck with a dagger. She could not wait, it seemed, for the orderly procedure of the ordeal— she

wanted to know at once, and when I caught her trying to slip a knife into my side and questioned her she explained the whole thing with the utmost naivete. The warriors already had commenced drinking—it would have been futile to make any sort of appeal either to their intellects or their superstitions. There was but one alternative to death and that was flight. I told the woman that I was very much outraged and offended at this reflection upon my godhood and that as a mark of my disfavor I should abandon them to their fate.

"'I shall return to heaven at once!' I exclaimed.

"She wanted to hang around and see me go, but I told her that her eyes would

be blasted by the fire surrounding my departure and that she must leave at once and not return to the spot for at least an hour. I also impressed upon her the fact that should any other approach this part of the village within that time not only they, but she as well, would burst into flames and be consumed.

"She was very much impressed and lost no time in leaving, calling back as she departed that if I were indeed gone in an hour she and all the village would know that I was no less than Jad-ben-Otho himself, and so they must thank me, for I can assure you that I was gone in much less than an hour, nor have I ventured close to the neighborhood of the city of Bu-lur since," and he fell to

laughing in harsh, cackling notes that sent a shiver through the woman's frame.

As Obergatz talked Jane had recovered her spear from the carcass of the antelope and commenced busying herself with the removal of the hide. The man made no attempt to assist her, but stood by talking and watching her, the while he continually ran his filthy fingers through his matted hair and beard. His face and body were caked with dirt and he was naked except for a torn greasy hide about his loins. His weapons consisted of a club and knife of Waz-don pattern, that he had stolen from the city of Bu-lur; but what more greatly concerned the woman than his filth or his armament were his cackling laughter and

the strange expression in his eyes.

She went on with her work, however, removing those parts of the buck she wanted, taking only as much meat as she might consume before it spoiled, as she was not sufficiently a true jungle creature to relish it beyond that stage, and then she straightened up and faced the man.

"Lieutenant Obergatz," she said, "by a chance of accident we have met again. Certainly you would not have sought the meeting any more than I. We have nothing in common other than those sentiments which may have been engendered by my natural dislike and suspicion of you, one of the authors of all the misery and sorrow that I have

endured for endless months. This little corner of the world is mine by right of discovery and occupation. Go away and leave me to enjoy here what peace I may. It is the least that you can do to amend the wrong that you have done me and mine."

The man stared at her through his fishy eyes for a moment in silence, then there broke from his lips a peal of mirthless, uncanny laughter.

"Go away! Leave you alone!" he cried. "I have found you. We are going to be good friends. There is no one else in the world but us. No one will ever know what we do or what becomes of us and now you ask me to go away and live alone in this hellish solitude." Again he

laughed, though neither the muscles of his eyes or his mouth reflected any mirth —it was just a hollow sound that imitated laughter.

"Remember your promise," she said.

"Promise! Promise! What are promises? They are made to be broken — we taught the world that at Liege and Louvain. No, no! I will not go away. I shall stay and protect you."

"I do not need your protection," she insisted. "You have already seen that I can use a spear."

"Yes," he said; "but it would not be right to leave you here alone— you are but a woman. No, no; I am an officer of the Kaiser and I cannot abandon you."

Once more he laughed. "We could be

very happy here together," he added.

The woman could not repress a shudder, nor, in fact, did she attempt to hide her aversion.

"You do not like me?" he asked. "Ah, well; it is too sad. But some day you will love me," and again the hideous laughter.

The woman had wrapped the pieces of the buck in the hide and this she now raised and threw across her shoulder. In her other hand she held her spear and faced the German.

"Go!" she commanded. "We have wasted enough words. This is my country and I shall defend it. If I see you about again I shall kill you. Do you understand?"

An expression of rage contorted Obergatz' features. He raised his club and started toward her.

"Stop!" she commanded, throwing her spear-hand backward for a cast. "You saw me kill this buck and you have said truthfully that no one will ever know what we do here. Put these two facts together, German, and draw your own conclusions before you take another step in my direction."

The man halted and his club-hand dropped to his side. "Come," he begged in what he intended as a conciliatory tone. "Let us be friends, Lady Greystoke. We can be of great assistance to each other and I promise not to harm you."

"Remember Liege and Louvain," she

reminded him with a sneer. "I am going now—be sure that you do not follow me. As far as you can walk in a day from this spot in any direction you may consider the limits of my domain. If ever again I see you within these limits I shall kill you."

There could be no question that she meant what she said and the man seemed convinced for he but stood sullenly eyeing her as she backed from sight beyond a turn in the game trail that crossed the ford where they had met, and disappeared in the forest.

20. SILENTLY IN THE NIGHT

In A-lur the fortunes of the city had been tossed from hand to hand. The party of Ko-tan's loyal warriors that Tarzan had led to the rendezvous at the entrance to the secret passage below the palace gates had met with disaster. Their first rush had been met with soft words from the priests. They had been exhorted to defend the faith of their fathers from blasphemers. Ja-don was painted to them as a defiler of temples, and the wrath of Jad-ben-Otho was prophesied for those who embraced his cause. The priests insisted that Lu- don's only wish was to prevent the seizure of the throne

by Ja-don until a new king could be chosen according to the laws of the Ho-don.

The result was that many of the palace warriors joined their fellows of the city, and when the priests saw that those whom they could influence outnumbered those who remained loyal to the palace, they caused the former to fall upon the latter with the result that many were killed and only a handful succeeded in reaching the safety of the palace gates, which they quickly barred.

The priests led their own forces through the secret passageway into the temple, while some of the loyal ones sought out Ja-don and told him all that had happened. The fight in the banquet

hall had spread over a considerable portion of the palace grounds and had at last resulted in the temporary defeat of those who had opposed Ja- don. This force, counseled by under priests sent for the purpose by Lu-don, had withdrawn within the temple grounds so that now the issue was plainly marked as between Ja-don on the one side and Lu-don on the other.

The former had been told of all that had occurred in the apartments of O-lo-a to whose safety he had attended at the first opportunity and he had also learned of Tarzan's part in leading his men to the gathering of Lu-don's warriors.

These things had naturally increased the old warrior's former inclinations of

friendliness toward the ape-man, and now he regretted that the other had departed from the city.

The testimony of O-lo-a and Pan-at-lee was such as to strengthen whatever belief in the godliness of the stranger Ja-don and others of the warriors had previously entertained, until presently there appeared a strong tendency upon the part of this palace faction to make the Dor-ul-otho an issue of their original quarrel with Lu-don. Whether this occurred as the natural sequence to repeated narrations of the ape-man's exploits, which lost nothing by repetition, in conjunction with Lu-don's enmity toward him, or whether it was the shrewd design of some wily old warrior

such as Ja- don, who realized the value of adding a religious cause to their temporal one, it were difficult to determine; but the fact remained that Ja-don's followers developed bitter hatred for the followers of Lu-don because of the high priest's antagonism to Tarzan.

Unfortunately however Tarzan was not there to inspire the followers of Ja-don with the holy zeal that might have quickly settled the dispute in the old chieftain's favor. Instead, he was miles away and because their repeated prayers for his presence were unanswered, the weaker spirits among them commenced to suspect that their cause did not have divine favor. There was also another and a potent cause for defection from the

ranks of Ja-don. It emanated from the city where the friends and relatives of the palace warriors, who were largely also the friends and relatives of Lu-don's forces, found the means, urged on by the priesthood, to circulate throughout the palace pernicious propaganda aimed at Ja-don's cause.

The result was that Lu-don's power increased while that of Ja- don waned. Then followed a sortie from the temple which resulted in the defeat of the palace forces, and though they were able to withdraw in decent order withdraw they did, leaving the palace to Lu- don, who was now virtually ruler of Pal-ul-don.

Ja-don, taking with him the princess, her women, and their slaves, including

Pan-at-lee, as well as the women and children of his faithful followers, retreated not only from the palace but from the city of A-lur as well and fell back upon his own city of Ja-lur. Here he remained, recruiting his forces from the surrounding villages of the north which, being far removed from the influence of the priesthood of A-lur, were enthusiastic partisans in any cause that the old chieftain espoused, since for years he had been revered as their friend and protector.

And while these events were transpiring in the north, Tarzan- jad-guru lay in the lion pit at Tu-lur while messengers passed back and forth between Mo-sar and Lu-don as the two

dickered for the throne of Pal-ul-don. Mo-sar was cunning enough to guess that should an open breach occur between himself and the high priest he might use his prisoner to his own advantage, for he had heard whisperings among even his own people that suggested that there were those who were more than a trifle inclined to belief in the divinity of the stranger and that he might indeed be the Dor-ul-Otho. Lu-don wanted Tarzan himself. He wanted to sacrifice him upon the eastern altar with his own hands before a multitude of people, since he was not without evidence that his own standing and authority had been lessened by the claims of the bold and heroic figure of the stranger.

The method that the high priest of Tu-lur had employed to trap Tarzan had left the ape-man in possession of his weapons though there seemed little likelihood of their being of any service to him. He also had his pouch, in which were the various odds and ends which are the natural accumulation of all receptacles from a gold meshbag to an attic. There were bits of obsidian and choice feathers for arrows, some pieces of flint and a couple of steel, an old knife, a heavy bone needle, and strips of dried gut. Nothing very useful to you or me, perhaps; but nothing useless to the savage life of the ape-man.

When Tarzan realized the trick that had been so neatly played upon him he

had awaited expectantly the coming of the lion, for though the scent of ja was old he was sure that sooner or later they would let one of the beasts in upon him. His first consideration was a thorough exploration of his prison. He had noticed the hide-covered windows and these he immediately uncovered, letting in the light, and revealing the fact that though the chamber was far below the level of the temple courts it was yet many feet above the base of the hill from which the temple was hewn. The windows were so closely barred that he could not see over the edge of the thick wall in which they were cut to determine what lay close in below him. At a little distance were the blue waters of Jad-in-lul and beyond, the

verdure- clad farther shore, and beyond that the mountains. It was a beautiful picture upon which he looked—a picture of peace and harmony and quiet. Nor anywhere a slightest suggestion of the savage men and beasts that claimed this lovely landscape as their own. What a paradise! And some day civilized man would come and—spoil it! Ruthless axes would raze that age-old wood; black, sticky smoke would rise from ugly chimneys against that azure sky; grimy little boats with wheels behind or upon either side would churn the mud from the bottom of Jad-in-lul, turning its blue waters to a dirty brown; hideous piers would project into the lake from squalid buildings of corrugated iron,

doubtless, for of such are the pioneer cities of the world.

But would civilized man come? Tarzan hoped not. For countless generations civilization had ramped about the globe; it had dispatched its emissaries to the North Pole and the South; it had circled Pal-ul-don once, perhaps many times, but it had never touched her. God grant that it never would. Perhaps He was saving this little spot to be always just as He had made it, for the scratching of the Ho-don and the Waz-don upon His rocks had not altered the fair face of Nature.

Through the windows came sufficient light to reveal the whole interior to Tarzan. The room was fairly large and

there was a door at each end—a large door for men and a smaller one for lions. Both were closed with heavy masses of stone that had been lowered in grooves running to the floor. The two windows were small and closely barred with the first iron that Tarzan had seen in Pal-ul-don. The bars were let into holes in the casing, and the whole so strongly and neatly contrived that escape seemed impossible. Yet within a few minutes of his incarceration Tarzan had commenced to undertake his escape. The old knife in his pouch was brought into requisition and slowly the ape-man began to scrape and chip away the stone from about the bars of one of the windows. It was slow work but Tarzan had the patience of

absolute health.

Each day food and water were brought him and slipped quickly beneath the smaller door which was raised just sufficiently to allow the stone receptacles to pass in. The prisoner began to believe that he was being preserved for something beside lions. However that was immaterial. If they would but hold off for a few more days they might select what fate they would —he would not be there when they arrived to announce it.

And then one day came Pan-sat, Lu-don's chief tool, to the city of Tu-lur. He came ostensibly with a fair message for Mo-sar from the high priest at A-lur. Lu-don had decided that Mo-sar should be

king and he invited Mo-sar to come at once to A-lur and then Pan-sat, having delivered the message, asked that he might go to the temple of Tu-lur and pray, and there he sought the high priest of Tu-lur to whom was the true message that Lu-don had sent. The two were closeted alone in a little chamber and Pan-sat whispered into the ear of the high priest.

"Mo-sar wishes to be king," he said, "and Lu-don wishes to be king. Mo-sar wishes to retain the stranger who claims to be the Dor- ul-Otho and Lu-don wishes to kill him, and now," he leaned even closer to the ear of the high priest of Tu-lur, "if you would be high priest at A-lur it is within your power."

Pan-sat ceased speaking and waited for the other's reply. The high priest was visibly affected. To be high priest at A-lur! That was almost as good as being king of all Pal-ul-don, for great were the powers of him who conducted the sacrifices upon the altars of A- lur.

"How?" whispered the high priest. "How may I become high priest at A-lur?"

Again Pan-sat leaned close: "By killing the one and bringing the other to A-lur," replied he. Then he rose and departed knowing chat the other had swallowed the bait and could be depended upon to do whatever was required to win him the great prize.

Nor was Pan-sat mistaken other than

in one trivial consideration. This high priest would indeed commit murder and treason to attain the high office at A-lur; but he had misunderstood which of his victims was to be killed and which to be delivered to Lu- don. Pan-sat, knowing himself all the details of the plannings of Lu- don, had made the quite natural error of assuming that the ocher was perfectly aware that only by publicly sacrificing the false Dor-ul- Otho could the high priest at A-lur bolster his waning power and that the assassination of Mo-sar, the pretender, would remove from Lu- don's camp the only obstacle to his combining the offices of high priest and king. The high priest at Tu-lur thought that he had been commissioned to kill Tarzan and

bring Mo-sar to A-lur. He also thought that when he had done these things he would be made high priest at A-lur; but he did not know that already the priest had been selected who was to murder him within the hour that he arrived at A-lur, nor did he know that a secret grave had been prepared for him in the floor of a subterranean chamber in the very temple he dreamed of controlling.

And so when he should have been arranging the assassination of his chief he was leading a dozen heavily bribed warriors through the dark corridors beneath the temple to slay Tarzan in the lion pit. Night had fallen. A single torch guided the footsteps of the murderers as they crept stealthily upon their evil way,

for they knew that they were doing the thing that their chief did not want done and their guilty consciences warned them to stealth.

In the dark of his cell the ape-man worked at his seemingly endless chipping and scraping. His keen ears detected the coming of footsteps along the corridor without—footsteps that approached the larger door. Always before had they come to the smaller door—the footsteps of a single slave who brought his food. This time there were many more than one and their coming at this time of night carried a sinister suggestion. Tarzan continued to work at his scraping and chipping. He heard them stop beyond the door. All was

silence broken only by the scrape, scrape, scrape of the ape-man's tireless blade.

Those without heard it and listening sought to explain it. They whispered in low tones making their plans. Two would raise the door quickly and the others would rush in and hurl their clubs at the prisoner. They would take no chances, for the stories that had circulated in A-lur had been brought to Tu-lur—stories of the great strength and wonderful prowess of Tarzan-jad-guru that caused the sweat to stand upon the brows of the warriors, though it was cool in the damp corridor and they were twelve to one.

And then the high priest gave the

signal—the door shot upward and ten warriors leaped into the chamber with poised clubs. Three of the heavy weapons flew across the room toward a darker shadow that lay in the shadow of the opposite wall, then the flare of the torch in the priest's hand lighted the interior and they saw that the thing at which they had flung their clubs was a pile of skins torn from the windows and that except for themselves the chamber was vacant.

One of them hastened to a window. All but a single bar was gone and to this was tied one end of a braided rope fashioned from strips cut from the leather window hangings.

To the ordinary dangers of Jane

Clayton's existence was now added the menace of Obergatz' knowledge of her whereabouts. The lion and the panther had given her less cause for anxiety than did the return of the unscrupulous Hun, whom she had always distrusted and feared, and whose repulsiveness was now immeasurably augmented by his unkempt and filthy appearance, his strange and mirthless laughter, and his unnatural demeanor. She feared him now with a new fear as though he had suddenly become the personification of some nameless horror. The wholesome, outdoor life that she had been leading had strengthened and rebuilt her nervous system yet it seemed to her as she thought of him that if this man should

ever touch her she should scream, and, possibly, even faint. Again and again during the day following their unexpected meeting the woman reproached herself for not having killed him as she would ja or jato or any other predatory beast that menaced her existence or her safety. There was no attempt at self-justification for these sinister reflections—they needed no justification. The standards by which the acts of such as you or I may be judged could not apply to hers. We have recourse to the protection of friends and relatives and the civil soldiery that upholds the majesty of the law and which may be invoked to protect the righteous weak against the unrighteous

strong; but Jane Clayton comprised within herself not only the righteous weak but all the various agencies for the protection of the weak. To her, then, Lieutenant Erich Obergatz presented no different problem than did ja, the lion, other than that she considered the former the more dangerous animal. And so she determined that should he ignore her warning there would be no temporizing upon the occasion of their next meeting —the same swift spear that would meet ja's advances would meet his.

That night her snug little nest perched high in the great tree seemed less the sanctuary that it had before. What might resist the sanguinary intentions of a prowling panther would prove no great

barrier to man, and influenced by this thought she slept less well than before. The slightest noise that broke the monotonous hum of the nocturnal jungle startled her into alert wakefulness to lie with straining ears in an attempt to classify the origin of the disturbance, and once she was awakened thus by a sound that seemed to come from something moving in her own tree. She listened intently— scarce breathing. Yes, there it was again. A scuffing of something soft against the hard bark of the tree. The woman reached out in the darkness and grasped her spear. Now she felt a slight sagging of one of the limbs that supported her shelter as though the thing, whatever it was, was

slowly raising its weight to the branch. It came nearer. Now she thought that she could detect its breathing. It was at the door. She could hear it fumbling with the frail barrier. What could it be? It made no sound by which she might identify it. She raised herself upon her hands and knees and crept stealthily the little distance to the doorway, her spear clutched tightly in her hand. Whatever the thing was, it was evidently attempting to gain entrance without awakening her. It was just beyond the pitiful little contraption of slender boughs that she had bound together with grasses and called a door— only a few inches lay between the thing and her. Rising to her knees she reached out with

her left hand and felt until she found a place where a crooked branch had left an opening a couple of inches wide near the center of the barrier. Into this she inserted the point of her spear. The thing must have heard her move within for suddenly it abandoned its efforts for stealth and tore angrily at the obstacle. At the same moment Jane thrust her spear forward with all her strength. She felt it enter flesh. There was a scream and a curse from without, followed by the crashing of a body through limbs and foliage. Her spear was almost dragged from her grasp, but she held to it until it broke free from the thing it had pierced.

It was Obergatz; the curse had told her that. From below came no further

sound. Had she, then, killed him? She prayed so—with all her heart she prayed it. To be freed from the menace of this loathsome creature were relief indeed. During all the balance of the night she lay there awake, listening. Below her, she imagined, she could see the dead man with his hideous face bathed in the cold light of the moon—lying there upon his back staring up at her.

She prayed that ja might come and drag it away, but all during the remainder of the night she heard never another sound above the drowsy hum of the jungle. She was glad that he was dead, but she dreaded the gruesome ordeal that awaited her on the morrow, for she must bury the thing that had been

Erich Obergatz and live on there above the shallow grave of the man she had slain.

She reproached herself for her weakness, repeating over and over that she had killed in self-defense, that her act was justified; but she was still a woman of today, and strong upon her were the iron mandates of the social order from which she had sprung, its interdictions and its superstitions.

At last came the tardy dawn. Slowly the sun topped the distant mountains beyond Jad-in-lul. And yet she hesitated to loosen the fastenings of her door and look out upon the thing below. But it must be done. She steeled herself and untied the rawhide thong that secured the

barrier. She looked down and only the grass and the flowers looked up at her. She came from her shelter and examined the ground upon the opposite side of the tree—there was no dead man there, nor anywhere as far as she could see. Slowly she descended, keeping a wary eye and an alert ear ready for the first intimation of danger.

At the foot of the tree was a pool of blood and a little trail of crimson drops upon the grass, leading away parallel with the shore of Jad-ben-lul. Then she had not slain him! She was vaguely aware of a peculiar, double sensation of relief and regret. Now she would be always in doubt. He might return; but at least she would not have to live above

his grave.

She thought some of following the bloody spoor on the chance that he might have crawled away to die later, but she gave up the idea for fear that she might find him dead nearby, or, worse yet badly wounded. What then could she do? She could not finish him with her spear—no, she knew that she could not do that, nor could she bring him back and nurse him, nor could she leave him there to die of hunger or of thirst, or to become the prey of some prowling beast. It were better then not to search for him for fear that she might find him.

That day was one of nervous starting to every sudden sound. The day before she would have said that her nerves

were of iron; but not today. She knew now the shock that she had suffered and that this was the reaction. Tomorrow it might be different, but something told her that never again would her little shelter and the patch of forest and jungle that she called her own be the same. There would hang over them always the menace of this man. No longer would she pass restful nights of deep slumber. The peace of her little world was shattered forever.

That night she made her door doubly secure with additional thongs of rawhide cut from the pelt of the buck she had slain the day that she met Obergatz. She was very tired for she had lost much sleep the night before; but for a long time

she lay with wide-open eyes staring into the darkness. What saw she there? Visions that brought tears to those brave and beautiful eyes—visions of a rambling bungalow that had been home to her and that was no more, destroyed by the same cruel force that haunted her even now in this remote, uncharted corner of the earth; visions of a strong man whose protecting arm would never press her close again; visions of a tall, straight son who looked at her adoringly out of brave, smiling eyes that were like his father's. Always the vision of the crude simple bungalow rather than of the stately halls that had been as much a part of her life as the other. But he had loved the bungalow and the broad, free acres

best and so she had come to love them best, too.

At last she slept, the sleep of utter exhaustion. How long it lasted she did not know; but suddenly she was wide awake and once again she heard the scuffing of a body against the bark of her tree and again the limb bent to a heavy weight. He had returned! She went cold, trembling as with ague. Was it he, or, O God! had she killed him then and was this -? She tried to drive the horrid thought from her mind, for this way, she knew, lay madness.

And once again she crept to the door, for the thing was outside just as it had been last night. Her hands trembled as she placed the point of her weapon to the

opening. She wondered if it would scream as it fell.

21. THE MANIAC

The last bar that would make the opening large enough to permit his body to pass had been removed as Tarzan heard the warriors whispering beyond the stone door of his prison. Long since had the rope of hide been braided. To secure one end to the remaining bar that he had left for this purpose was the work of but a moment, and while the warriors whispered without, the brown body of the ape-man slipped through the small aperture and disappeared below the sill.

Tarzan's escape from the cell left him still within the walled area that comprised the palace and temple grounds and buildings. He had reconnoitered as best he might from the

window after he had removed enough bars to permit him to pass his head through the opening, so that he knew what lay immediately before him—a winding and usually deserted alleyway leading in the direction of the outer gate that opened from the palace grounds into the city.

The darkness would facilitate his escape. He might even pass out of the palace and the city without detection. If he could elude the guard at the palace gate the rest would be easy. He strode along confidently, exhibiting no fear of detection, for he reasoned that thus would he disarm suspicion. In the darkness he easily could pass for a Ho-don and in truth, though he passed

several after leaving the deserted alley, no one accosted or detained him, and thus he came at last to the guard of a half-dozen warriors before the palace gate. These he attempted to pass in the same unconcerned fashion and he might have succeeded had it not been for one who came running rapidly from the direction of the temple shouting: "Let no one pass the gates! The prisoner has escaped from the pal-ul-ja!"

Instantly a warrior barred his way and simultaneously the fellow recognized him. "Xot tor!" he exclaimed: "Here he is now. Fall upon him! Fall upon him! Back! Back before I kill you."

The others came forward. It cannot be said that they rushed forward. If it was

their wish to fall upon him there was a noticeable lack of enthusiasm other than that which directed their efforts to persuade someone else to fall upon him. His fame as a fighter had been too long a topic of conversation for the good of the morale of Mo-sar's warriors. It were safer to stand at a distance and hurl their clubs and this they did, but the ape-man had learned something of the use of this weapon since he had arrived in Pal-ul-don. And as he learned great had grown his respect for this most primitive of arms. He had come to realize that the black savages he had known had never appreciated the possibilities of their knob sticks, nor had he, and he had discovered, too, why the Pal-ul-donians

had turned their ancient spears into plowshares and pinned their faith to the heavy- ended club alone. In deadly execution it was far more effective than a spear and it answered, too, every purpose of a shield, combining the two in one and thus reducing the burden of the warrior. Thrown as they throw it, after the manner of the hammer-throwers of the Olympian games, an ordinary shield would prove more a weakness than a strength while one that would be strong enough to prove a protection would be too heavy to carry. Only another club, deftly wielded to deflect the course of an enemy missile, is in any way effective against these formidable weapons and, too, the war club of Pal-

ul-don can be thrown with accuracy a far greater distance than any spear.

And now was put to the test that which Tarzan had learned from Om-at and Ta-den. His eyes and his muscles trained by a lifetime of necessity moved with the rapidity of light and his brain functioned with an uncanny celerity that suggested nothing less than prescience, and these things more than compensated for his lack of experience with the war club he handled so dexterously. Weapon after weapon he warded off and always he moved with a single idea in mind—to place himself within reach of one of his antagonists. But they were wary for they feared this strange creature to whom the superstitious fears of many of them

attributed the miraculous powers of deity. They managed to keep between Tarzan and the gateway and all the time they bawled lustily for reinforcements. Should these come before he had made his escape the ape-man realized that the odds against him would be unsurmountable, and so he redoubled his efforts to carry out his design.

Following their usual tactics two or three of the warriors were always circling behind him collecting the thrown clubs when Tarzan's attention was directed elsewhere. He himself retrieved several of them which he hurled with such deadly effect as to dispose of two of his antagonists, but now he heard the approach of hurrying

warriors, the patter of their bare feet upon the stone pavement and then the savage cries which were to bolster the courage of their fellows and fill the enemy with fear.

There was no time to lose. Tarzan held a club in either hand and, swinging one he hurled it at a warrior before him and as the man dodged he rushed in and seized him, at the same time casting his second club at another of his opponents. The Ho-don with whom he grappled reached instantly for his knife but the ape-man grasped his wrist. There was a sudden twist, the snapping of a bone and an agonized scream, then the warrior was lifted bodily from his feet and held as a shield between his fellows and the

fugitive as the latter backed through the gateway. Beside Tarzan stood the single torch that lighted the entrance to the palace grounds. The warriors were advancing to the succor of their fellow when the ape-man raised his captive high above his head and flung him full in the face of the foremost attacker. The fellow went down and two directly behind him sprawled headlong over their companion as the ape-man seized the torch and cast it back into the palace grounds to be extinguished as it struck the bodies of those who led the charging reinforcements.

In the ensuing darkness Tarzan disappeared in the streets of Tu- lur beyond the palace gate. For a time he

was aware of sounds of pursuit but the fact that they trailed away and died in the direction of Jad-in-lul informed him that they were searching in the wrong direction, for he had turned south out of Tu-lur purposely to throw them off his track. Beyond the outskirts of the city he turned directly toward the northwest, in which direction lay A-lur.

In his path he knew lay Jad-bal-lul, the shore of which he was compelled to skirt, and there would be a river to cross at the lower end of the great lake upon the shores of which lay A-lur. What other obstacles lay in his way he did not know but he believed that he could make better time on foot than by attempting to steal a canoe and force his way up

stream with a single paddle. It was his intention to put as much distance as possible between himself and Tu- lur before he slept for he was sure that Mo- sar would not lightly accept his loss, but that with the coming of day, or possibly even before, he would dispatch warriors in search of him.

A mile or two from the city he entered a forest and here at last he felt such a measure of safety as he never knew in open spaces or in cities. The forest and the jungle were his birthright. No creature that went upon the ground upon four feet, or climbed among the trees, or crawled upon its belly had any advantage over the ape- man in his native heath. As myrrh and frankincense

were the dank odors of rotting vegetation in the nostrils of the great Tarmangani. He squared his broad shoulders and lifting his head filled his lungs with the air that he loved best. The heavy fragrance of tropical blooms, the commingled odors of the myriad-scented life of the jungle went to his head with a pleasurable intoxication far more potent than aught contained in the oldest vintages of civilization.

He took to the trees now, not from necessity but from pure love of the wild freedom that had been denied him so long. Though it was dark and the forest strange yet he moved with a surety and ease that bespoke more a strange uncanny sense than wondrous skill. He

heard ja moaning somewhere ahead and an owl hooted mournfully to the right of him—long familiar sounds that imparted to him no sense of loneliness as they might to you or to me, but on the contrary one of companionship for they betokened the presence of his fellows of the jungle, and whether friend or foe it was all the same to the ape- man.

He came at last to a little stream at a spot where the trees did not meet above it so he was forced to descend to the ground and wade through the water and upon the opposite shore he stopped as though suddenly his godlike figure had been transmuted from flesh to marble. Only his dilating nostrils bespoke his pulsing vitality. For a long moment he

stood there thus and then swiftly, but with a caution and silence that were inherent in him he moved forward again, but now his whole attitude bespoke a new urge. There was a definite and masterful purpose in every movement of those steel muscles rolling softly beneath the smooth brown hide. He moved now toward a certain goal that quite evidently filled him with far greater enthusiasm than had the possible event of his return to A-lur.

And so he came at last to the foot of a great tree and there he stopped and looked up above him among the foliage where the dim outlines of a roughly rectangular bulk loomed darkly. There was a choking sensation in Tarzan's

throat as he raised himself gently into the branches. It was as though his heart were swelling either to a great happiness or a great fear.

Before the rude shelter built among the branches he paused listening. From within there came to his sensitive nostrils the same delicate aroma that had arrested his eager attention at the little stream a mile away. He crouched upon the branch close to the little door.

"Jane," he called, "heart of my heart, it is I."

The only answer from within was as the sudden indrawing of a breath that was half gasp and half sigh, and the sound of a body falling to the floor. Hurriedly Tarzan sought to release the

thongs which held the door but they were fastened from the inside, and at last, impatient with further delay, he seized the frail barrier in one giant hand and with a single effort tore it completely away. And then he entered to find the seemingly lifeless body of his mate stretched upon the floor.

He gathered her in his arms; her heart beat; she still breathed, and presently he realized that she had but swooned.

When Jane Clayton regained consciousness it was to find herself held tightly in two strong arms, her head pillowed upon the broad shoulder where so often before her fears had been soothed and her sorrows comforted. At first she was not sure but that it was all a

dream. Timidly her hand stole to his cheek.

"John," she murmured, "tell me, is it really you?"

In reply he drew her more closely to him. "It is I," he replied. "But there is something in my throat," he said haltingly, "that makes it hard for me to speak."

She smiled and snuggled closer to him. "God has been good to us, Tarzan of the Apes," she said.

For some time neither spoke. It was enough that they were reunited and that each knew that the other was alive and safe. But at last they found their voices and when the sun rose they were still talking, so much had each to tell the

other; so many questions there were to be asked and answered.

"And Jack," she asked, "where is he?"

"I do not know," replied Tarzan. "The last I heard of him he was on the Argonne Front."

"Ah, then our happiness is not quite complete," she said, a little note of sadness creeping into her voice.

"No," he replied, "but the same is true in countless other English homes today, and pride is learning to take the place of happiness in these."

She shook her head, "I want my boy," she said.

"And I too," replied Tarzan, "and we may have him yet. He was safe and

unwounded the last word I had. And now," he said, "we must plan upon our return. Would you like to rebuild the bungalow and gather together the remnants of our Waziri or would you rather return to London?"

"Only to find Jack," she said. "I dream always of the bungalow and never of the city, but John, we can only dream, for Obergatz told me that he had circled this whole country and found no place where he might cross the morass."

"I am not Obergatz," Tarzan reminded her, smiling. "We will rest today and tomorrow we will set out toward the north. It is a savage country, but we have crossed it once and we can cross it again."

And so, upon the following morning, the Tarmangani and his mate went forth upon their journey across the Valley of Jad-ben-Otho, and ahead of them were fierce men and savage beasts, and the lofty mountains of Pal-ul-don; and beyond the mountains the reptiles and the morass, and beyond that the arid, thorn-covered steppe, and other savage beasts and men and weary, hostile miles of untracked wilderness between them and the charred ruins of their home.

Lieutenant Erich Obergatz crawled through the grass upon all fours, leaving a trail of blood behind him after Jane's spear had sent him crashing to the ground beneath her tree. He made no sound after the one piercing scream that

had acknowledged the severity of his wound. He was quiet because of a great fear that had crept into his warped brain that the devil woman would pursue and slay him. And so he crawled away like some filthy beast of prey, seeking a thicket where he might lie down and hide.

He thought that he was going to die, but he did not, and with the coming of the new day he discovered that his wound was superficial. The rough obsidian-shod spear had entered the muscles of his side beneath his right arm inflicting a painful, but not a fatal wound. With the realization of this fact came a renewed desire to put as much distance as possible between himself

and Jane Clayton. And so he moved on, still going upon all fours because of a persistent hallucination that in this way he might escape observation. Yet though he fled his mind still revolved muddily about a central desire—while he fled from her he still planned to pursue her, and to his lust of possession was added a desire for revenge. She should pay for the suffering she had inflicted upon him. She should pay for rebuffing him, but for some reason which he did not try to explain to himself he would crawl away and hide. He would come back though. He would come back and when he had finished with her, he would take that smooth throat in his two hands and crush the life from her.

He kept repeating this over and over to himself and then he fell to laughing out loud, the cackling, hideous laughter that had terrified Jane. Presently he realized his knees were bleeding and that they hurt him. He looked cautiously behind. No one was in sight. He listened. He could hear no indications of pursuit and so he rose to his feet and continued upon his way a sorry sight—covered with filth and blood, his beard and hair tangled and matted and filled with burrs and dried mud and unspeakable filth. He kept no track of time. He ate fruits and berries and tubers that he dug from the earth with his fingers. He followed the shore of the lake and the river that he might be near water, and when ja roared

or moaned he climbed a tree and hid there, shivering.

And so after a time he came up the southern shore of Jad-ben- lul until a wide river stopped his progress. Across the blue water a white city glimmered in the sun. He looked at it for a long time, blinking his eyes like an owl. Slowly a recollection forced itself through his tangled brain. This was A-lur, the City of Light. The association of ideas recalled Bu-lur and the Waz-ho- don. They had called him Jad-ben-Otho. He commenced to laugh aloud and stood up very straight and strode back and forth along the shore. "I am Jad- ben-Otho," he cried, "I am the Great God. In A-lur is my temple and my high priests. What

is Jad-ben-Otho doing here alone in the jungle?"

He stepped out into the water and raising his voice shrieked loudly across toward A-lur. "I am Jad-ben-Otho!" he screamed. "Come hither slaves and take your god to his temple." But the distance was great and they did not hear him and no one came, and the feeble mind was distracted by other things—a bird flying in the air, a school of minnows swimming around his feet. He lunged at them trying to catch them, and falling upon his hands and knees he crawled through the water grasping futilely at the elusive fish.

Presently it occurred to him that he was a sea lion and he forgot the fish and

lay down and tried to swim by wriggling his feet in the water as though they were a tail. The hardships, the privations, the terrors, and for the past few weeks the lack of proper nourishment had reduced Erich Obergatz to little more than a gibbering idiot.

A water snake swam out upon the surface of the lake and the man pursued it, crawling upon his hands and knees. The snake swam toward the shore just within the mouth of the river where tall reeds grew thickly and Obergatz followed, making grunting noises like a pig. He lost the snake within the reeds but he came upon something else—a canoe hidden there close to the bank. He examined it with cackling laughter.

There were two paddles within it which he took and threw out into the current of the river. He watched them for a while and then he sat down beside the canoe and commenced to splash his hands up and down upon the water. He liked to hear the noise and see the little splashes of spray. He rubbed his left forearm with his right palm and the dirt came off and left a white spot that drew his attention. He rubbed again upon the now thoroughly soaked blood and grime that covered his body. He was not attempting to wash himself; he was merely amused by the strange results. "I am turning white," he cried. His glance wandered from his body now that the grime and blood were all removed and caught

again the white city shimmering beneath the hot sun.

"A-lur—City of Light!" he shrieked and that reminded him again of Tu-lur and by the same process of associated ideas that had before suggested it, he recalled that the Waz-ho-don had thought him Jad-ben-Otho.

"I am Jad-ben-Otho!" he screamed and then his eyes fell again upon the canoe. A new idea came and persisted. He looked down at himself, examining his body, and seeing the filthy loin cloth, now water soaked and more bedraggled than before, he tore it from him and flung it into the lake. "Gods do not wear dirty rags," he said aloud. "They do not wear anything but wreaths and garlands of

flowers and I am a god—I am Jad-ben-Otho —and I go in state to my sacred city of A-lur."

He ran his fingers through his matted hair and beard. The water had softened the burrs but had not removed them. The man shook his head. His hair and beard failed to harmonize with his other godly attributes. He was commencing to think more clearly now, for the great idea had taken hold of his scattered wits and concentrated them upon a single purpose, but he was still a maniac. The only difference being that he was now a maniac with a fixed intent. He went out on the shore and gathered flowers and ferns and wove them in his beard and hair—blazing blooms of different colors

—green ferns that trailed about his ears or rose bravely upward like the plumes in a lady's hat.

When he was satisfied that his appearance would impress the most casual observer with his evident deity he returned to the canoe, pushed it from shore and jumped in. The impetus carried it into the river's current and the current bore it out upon the lake. The naked man stood erect in the center of the little craft, his arms folded upon his chest. He screamed aloud his message to the city: "I am Jad- ben-Otho! Let the high priest and the under priests attend upon me!"

As the current of the river was dissipated by the waters of the lake the

wind caught him and his craft and carried them bravely forward. Sometimes he drifted with his back toward A-lur and sometimes with his face toward it, and at intervals he shrieked his message and his commands. He was still in the middle of the lake when someone discovered him from the palace wall, and as he drew nearer, a crowd of warriors and women and children were congregated there watching him and along the temple walls were many priests and among them Lu-don, the high priest. When the boat had drifted close enough for them to distinguish the bizarre figure standing in it and for them to catch the meaning of his words Lu-don's cunning eyes

narrowed. The high priest had learned of the escape of Tarzan and he feared that should he join Ja-don's forces, as seemed likely, he would attract many recruits who might still believe in him, and the Dor-ul-Otho, even if a false one, upon the side of the enemy might easily work havoc with Lu-don's plans.

The man was drifting close in. His canoe would soon be caught in the current that ran close to shore here and carried toward the river that emptied the waters of Jad-ben-lul into Jad-bal-lul. The under priests were looking toward Lu-don for instructions.

"Fetch him hither!" he commanded. "If he is Jad-ben-Otho I shall know him."

The priests hurried to the palace

grounds and summoned warriors. "Go, bring the stranger to Lu-don. If he is Jad-ben-Otho we shall know him."

And so Lieutenant Erich Obergatz was brought before the high priest at A-lur. Lu-don looked closely at the naked man with the fantastic headdress.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"I am Jad-ben-Otho," cried the German. "I came from heaven. Where is my high priest?"

"I am the high priest," replied Lu-don.

Obergatz clapped his hands. "Have my feet bathed and food brought to me," he commanded.

Lu-don's eyes narrowed to mere slits

of crafty cunning. He bowed low until his forehead touched the feet of the stranger. Before the eyes of many priests, and warriors from the palace he did it.

"Ho, slaves," he cried, rising; "fetch water and food for the Great God," and thus the high priest acknowledged before his people the godhood of Lieutenant Erich Obergatz, nor was it long before the story ran like wildfire through the palace and out into the city and beyond that to the lesser villages all the way from A-lur to Tu- lur.

The real god had come—Jad-ben-Otho himself, and he had espoused the cause of Lu-don, the high priest. Mo-sar lost no time in placing himself at the

disposal of Lu-don, nor did he mention aught about his claims to the throne. It was Mo-sar's opinion that he might consider himself fortunate were he allowed to remain in peaceful occupation of his chieftainship at Tu-lur, nor was Mo-sar wrong in his deductions.

But Lu-don could still use him and so he let him live and sent word to him to come to A-lur with all his warriors, for it was rumored that Ja-don was raising a great army in the north and might soon march upon the City of Light.

Obergatz thoroughly enjoyed being a god. Plenty of food and peace of mind and rest partially brought back to him the reason that had been so rapidly slipping

from him; but in one respect he was madder than ever, since now no power on earth would ever be able to convince him that he was not a god. Slaves were put at his disposal and these he ordered about in godly fashion. The same portion of his naturally cruel mind met upon common ground the mind of Lu-don, so that the two seemed always in accord. The high priest saw in the stranger a mighty force wherewith to hold forever his power over all Pal-ul-don and thus the future of Obergatz was assured so long as he cared to play god to Lu-don's high priest.

A throne was erected in the main temple court before the eastern altar where Jad-ben-Otho might sit in person

and behold the sacrifices that were offered up to him there each day at sunset. So much did the cruel, half-crazed mind enjoy these spectacles that at times he even insisted upon wielding the sacrificial knife himself and upon such occasions the priests and the people fell upon their faces in awe of the dread deity.

If Obergatz taught them not to love their god more he taught them to fear him as they never had before, so that the name of Jad- ben-Otho was whispered in the city and little children were frightened into obedience by the mere mention of it. Lu-don, through his priests and slaves, circulated the information that Jad-ben-Otho had commanded all

his faithful followers to flock to the standard of the high priest at A-lur and that all others were cursed, especially Ja-don and the base impostor who had posed as the Dor-ul-Otho. The curse was to take the form of early death following terrible suffering, and Lu-don caused it to be published abroad that the name of any warrior who complained of a pain should be brought to him, for such might be deemed to be under suspicion, since the first effects of the curse would result in slight pains attacking the unholy. He counseled those who felt pains to look carefully to their loyalty. The result was remarkable and immediate—half a nation without a pain, and recruits pouring into A-lur to offer

their services to Lu- don while secretly hoping that the little pains they had felt in arm or leg or belly would not recur in aggravated form.

22. A JOURNEY ON A GRYF

Tarzan and Jane skirted the shore of Jad-bal-lul and crossed the river at the head of the lake. They moved in leisurely fashion with an eye to comfort and safety, for the ape-man, now that he had found his mate, was determined to court no chance that might again separate them, or delay or prevent their escape from Pal-ul-don. How they were to recross the morass was a matter of little concern to him as yet—it would be time enough to consider that matter when it became of more immediate moment. Their hours were filled with the happiness and content of reunion after

long separation; they had much to talk of, for each had passed through many trials and vicissitudes and strange adventures, and no important hour might go unaccounted for since last they met.

It was Tarzan's intention to choose a way above A-lur and the scattered Ho-don villages below it, passing about midway between them and the mountains, thus avoiding, in so far as possible, both the Ho- don and Waz-don, for in this area lay the neutral territory that was uninhabited by either. Thus he would travel northwest until opposite the Kor-ul-ja where he planned to stop to pay his respects to Om-at and give the gund word of Pan-at-lee, and a plan Tarzan had for insuring her safe return to

her people. It was upon the third day of their journey and they had almost reached the river that passes through A-lur when Jane suddenly clutched Tarzan's arm and pointed ahead toward the edge of a forest that they were approaching. Beneath the shadows of the trees loomed a great bulk that the ape-man instantly recognized.

"What is it?" whispered Jane.

"A gryf," replied the ape-man, "and we have met him in the worst place that we could possibly have found. There is not a large tree within a quarter of a mile, other than those among which he stands. Come, we shall have to go back, Jane; I cannot risk it with you along. The best we can do is to pray that he does

not discover us."

"And if he does?"

"Then I shall have to risk it."

"Risk what?"

"The chance that I can subdue him as I subdued one of his fellows," replied Tarzan. "I told you—you recall?"

"Yes, but I did not picture so huge a creature. Why, John, he is as big as a battleship."

The ape-man laughed. "Not quite, though I'll admit he looks quite as formidable as one when he charges."

They were moving away slowly so as not to attract the attention of the beast.

"I believe we're going to make it," whispered the woman, her voice tense

with suppressed excitement. A low rumble rolled like distant thunder from the wood. Tarzan shook his head.

"'The big show is about to commence in the main tent,'" he quoted, grinning. He caught the woman suddenly to his breast and kissed her. "One can never tell, Jane," he said. "We'll do our best—that is all we can do. Give me your spear, and—don't run. The only hope we have lies in that little brain more than in us. If I can control it—well, let us see."

The beast had emerged from the forest and was looking about through his weak eyes, evidently in search of them. Tarzan raised his voice in the weird notes of the Tor-o-don's cry, "Whee-oo! Whee-oo! Whee-oo!" For a moment the great beast

stood motionless, his attention riveted by the call. The ape-man advanced straight toward him, Jane Clayton at his elbow. "Whee-oo!" he cried again peremptorily. A low rumble rolled from the gryf's cavernous chest in answer to the call, and the beast moved slowly toward them.

"Fine!" exclaimed Tarzan. "The odds are in our favor now. You can keep your nerve?—but I do not need to ask."

"I know no fear when I am with Tarzan of the Apes," she replied softly, and he felt the pressure of her soft fingers on his arm.

And thus the two approached the giant monster of a forgotten epoch until they stood close in the shadow of a mighty

shoulder. "Whee-oo!" shouted Tarzan and struck the hideous snout with the shaft of the spear. The vicious side snap that did not reach its mark—that evidently was not intended to reach its mark—was the hoped-for answer.

"Come," said Tarzan, and taking Jane by the hand he led her around behind the monster and up the broad tail to the great, horned back. "Now will we ride in the state that our forebears knew, before which the pomp of modern kings pales into cheap and tawdry insignificance. How would you like to canter through Hyde Park on a mount like this?"

"I am afraid the Bobbies would be shocked by our riding habits, John," she

cried, laughingly.

Tarzan guided the gryf in the direction that they wished to go. Steep embankments and rivers proved no slightest obstacle to the ponderous creature.

"A prehistoric tank, this," Jane assured him, and laughing and talking they continued on their way. Once they came unexpectedly upon a dozen Ho-don warriors as the gryf emerged suddenly into a small clearing. The fellows were lying about in the shade of a single tree that grew alone. When they saw the beast they leaped to their feet in consternation and at their shouts the gryf issued his hideous, challenging bellow and charged them. The warriors fled in

all directions while Tarzan belabored the beast across the snout with his spear in an effort to control him, and at last he succeeded, just as the gryf was almost upon one poor devil that it seemed to have singled out for its special prey. With an angry grunt the gryf stopped and the man, with a single backward glance that showed a face white with terror, disappeared in the jungle he had been seeking to reach.

The ape-man was elated. He had doubted that he could control the beast should it take it into its head to charge a victim and had intended abandoning it before they reached the Kor-ul-ja. Now he altered his plans - they would ride to the very village of Om-at upon the gryf,

and the Kor-ul-ja would have food for conversation for many generations to come. Nor was it the theatrical instinct of the ape- man alone that gave favor to this plan. The element of Jane's safety entered into the matter for he knew that she would be safe from man and beast alike so long as she rode upon the back of Pal-ul- don's most formidable creature.

As they proceeded slowly in the direction of the Kor-ul-ja, for the natural gait of the gryf is far from rapid, a handful of terrified warriors came panting into A-lur, spreading a weird story of the Dor-ul-Otho, only none dared call him the Dor-ul-Otho aloud. Instead they spoke of him as Tarzan-jad-

guru and they told of meeting him mounted upon a mighty gryf beside the beautiful stranger woman whom Ko-tan would have made queen of Pal-ul-don. This story was brought to Lu-don who caused the warriors to be hailed to his presence, when he questioned them closely until finally he was convinced that they spoke the truth and when they had told him the direction in which the two were traveling, Lu-don guessed that they were on their way to Ja-lur to join Ja-don, a contingency that he felt must be prevented at any cost. As was his wont in the stress of emergency, he called Pan-sat into consultation and for long the two sat in close conference. When they arose a plan had been developed. Pan-

sat went immediately to his own quarters where he removed the headdress and trappings of a priest to don in their stead the harness and weapons of a warrior. Then he returned to Lu-don.

"Good!" cried the latter, when he saw him. "Not even your fellow-priests or the slaves that wait upon you daily would know you now. Lose no time, Pan-sat, for all depends upon the speed with which you strike and— remember! Kill the man if you can; but in any event bring the woman to me here, alive. You understand?"

"Yes, master," replied the priest, and so it was that a lone warrior set out from A-lur and made his way northwest in the direction of Ja-lur.

The gorge next above Kor-ul-ja is uninhabited and here the wily Ja-don had chosen to mobilize his army for its descent upon A-lur. Two considerations influenced him—one being the fact that could he keep his plans a secret from the enemy he would have the advantage of delivering a surprise attack upon the forces of Lu-don from a direction that they would not expect attack, and in the meantime he would be able to keep his men from the gossip of the cities where strange tales were already circulating relative to the coming of Jad-ben-Otho in person to aid the high priest in his war against Ja-don. It took stout hearts and loyal ones to ignore the implied threats of divine vengeance that these tales

suggested. Already there had been desertions and the cause of Ja-don seemed tottering to destruction.

Such was the state of affairs when a sentry posted on the knoll in the mouth of the gorge sent word that he had observed in the valley below what appeared at a distance to be nothing less than two people mounted upon the back of a gryf. He said that he had caught glimpses of them, as they passed open spaces, and they seemed to be traveling up the river in the direction of the Kor-ul-ja.

At first Ja-don was inclined to doubt the veracity of his informant; but, like all good generals, he could not permit even palpably false information to go uninvestigated and so he determined to

visit the knoll himself and learn precisely what it was that the sentry had observed through the distorting spectacles of fear. He had scarce taken his place beside the man ere the fellow touched his arm and pointed. "They are closer now," he whispered, "you can see them plainly." And sure enough, not a quarter of a mile away Ja-don saw that which in his long experience in Pal-ul-don he had never before seen—two humans riding upon the broad back of a gryf.

At first he could scarce credit even this testimony of his own eyes, but soon he realized that the creatures below could be naught else than they appeared, and then he recognized the man and rose

to his feet with a loud cry.

"It is he!" he shouted to those about him. "It is the Dor-ul- Otho himself."

The gryf and his riders heard the shout though not the words. The former bellowed terrifically and started in the direction of the knoll, and Ja-don, followed by a few of his more intrepid warriors, ran to meet him. Tarzan, loath to enter an unnecessary quarrel, tried to turn the animal, but as the beast was far from tractable it always took a few minutes to force the will of its master upon it; and so the two parties were quite close before the ape-man succeeded in stopping the mad charge of his furious mount.

Ja-don and his warriors, however,

had come to the realization that this bellowing creature was bearing down upon them with evil intent and they had assumed the better part of valor and taken to trees, accordingly. It was beneath these trees that Tarzan finally stopped the gryf. Ja-don called down to him.

"We are friends," he cried. "I am Ja-don, Chief of Ja-lur. I and my warriors lay our foreheads upon the feet of Dor-ul-Otho and pray that he will aid us in our righteous fight with Lu-don, the high priest."

"You have not defeated him yet?" asked Tarzan. "Why I thought you would be king of Pal-ul-don long before this."

"No," replied Ja-don. "The people

fear the high priest and now that he has in the temple one whom he claims to be Jad-ben-Otho many of my warriors are afraid. If they but knew that the Dor-ul-Otho had returned and that he had blessed the cause of Ja-don I am sure that victory would be ours."

Tarzan thought for a long minute and then he spoke. "Ja-don," he said, "was one of the few who believed in me and who wished to accord me fair treatment. I have a debt to pay to Ja-don and an account to settle with Lu-don, not alone on my own behalf, but principally upon that of my mate. I will go with you Ja-don to mete to Lu-don the punishment he deserves. Tell me, chief, how may the Dor- ul-Otho best serve his father's

people?"

"By coming with me to Ja-lur and the villages between," replied Ja-don quickly, "that the people may see that it is indeed the Dor-ul- Otho and that he smiles upon the cause of Ja-don."

"You think that they will believe in me more now than before?" asked the ape-man.

"Who will dare doubt that he who rides upon the great gryf is less than a god?" returned the old chief.

"And if I go with you to the battle at A-lur," asked Tarzan, "can you assure the safety of my mate while I am gone from her?"

"She shall remain in Ja-lur with the Princess O-lo-a and my own women,"

replied Ja-don. "There she will be safe for there I shall leave trusted warriors to protect them. Say that you will come, O Dor- ul-Otho, and my cup of happiness will be full, for even now Ta-den, my son, marches toward A-lur with a force from the northwest and if we can attack, with the Dor-ul-Otho at our head, from the northeast our arms should be victorious."

"It shall be as you wish, Ja-don," replied the ape-man; "but first you must have meat fetched for my gryf."

"There are many carcasses in the camp above," replied Ja-don, "for my men have little else to do than hunt."

"Good," exclaimed Tarzan. "Have them brought at once."

And when the meat was-brought and laid at a distance the ape- man slipped from the back of his fierce charger and fed him with his own hand. "See that there is always plenty of flesh for him," he said to Ja-don, for he guessed that his mastery might be short-lived should the vicious beast become over-hungry.

It was morning before they could leave for Ja-lur, but Tarzan found the gryf lying where he had left him the night before beside the carcasses of two antelope and a lion; but now there was nothing but the gryf.

"The paleontologists say that he was herbivorous," said Tarzan as he and Jane approached the beast.

The journey to Ja-lur was made

through the scattered villages where Ja-don hoped to arouse a keener enthusiasm for his cause. A party of warriors preceded Tarzan that the people might properly be prepared, not only for the sight of the gryf but to receive the Dor-ul-Otho as became his high station. The results were all that Ja-don could have hoped and in no village through which they passed was there one who doubted the deity of the ape-man.

As they approached Ja-lur a strange warrior joined them, one whom none of Ja-don's following knew. He said he came from one of the villages to the south and that he had been treated unfairly by one of Lu-don's chiefs. For this reason he had deserted the cause of

the high priest and come north in the hope of finding a home in Ja-lur. As every addition to his forces was welcome to the old chief he permitted the stranger to accompany them, and so he came into Ja-lur with them.

There arose now the question as to what was to be done with the gryf while they remained in the city. It was with difficulty that Tarzan had prevented the savage beast from attacking all who came near it when they had first entered the camp of Ja-don in the uninhabited gorge next to the Kor-ul-ja, but during the march to Ja- lur the creature had seemed to become accustomed to the presence of the Ho-don. The latter, however, gave him no cause for

annoyance since they kept as far from him as possible and when he passed through the streets of the city he was viewed from the safety of lofty windows and roofs. However tractable he appeared to have become there would have been no enthusiastic seconding of a suggestion to turn him loose within the city. It was finally suggested that he be turned into a walled enclosure within the palace grounds and this was done, Tarzan driving him in after Jane had dismounted. More meat was thrown to him and he was left to his own devices, the awe-struck inhabitants of the palace not even venturing to climb upon the walls to look at him.

Ja-don led Tarzan and Jane to the

quarters of the Princess O-lo- a who, the moment that she beheld the ape-man, threw herself to the ground and touched her forehead to his feet. Pan-at-lee was there with her and she too seemed happy to see Tarzan-jad-guru again. When they found that Jane was his mate they looked with almost equal awe upon her, since even the most skeptical of the warriors of Ja-don were now convinced that they were entertaining a god and a goddess within the city of Ja-lur, and that with the assistance of the power of these two, the cause of Ja-don would soon be victorious and the old Lion-man set upon the throne of Pal-ul-don.

From O-lo-a Tarzan learned that Ta-den had returned and that they were to be

united in marriage with the weird rites of their religion and in accordance with the custom of their people as soon as Ta-den came home from the battle that was to be fought at A-lur.

The recruits were now gathering at the city and it was decided that the next day Ja-don and Tarzan would return to the main body in the hidden camp and immediately under cover of night the attack should be made in force upon Lu-don's forces at A-lur. Word of this was sent to Ta-den where he awaited with his warriors upon the north side of Jad-ben-lul, only a few miles from A-lur.

In the carrying out of these plans it was necessary to leave Jane behind in Ja-don's palace at Ja-lur, but O-lo-a and

her women were with her and there were many warriors to guard them, so Tarzan bid his mate good-bye with no feelings of apprehension as to her safety, and again seated upon the gryf made his way out of the city with Ja-don and his warriors.

At the mouth of the gorge the ape-man abandoned his huge mount since it had served its purpose and could be of no further value to him in their attack upon A-lur, which was to be made just before dawn the following day when, as he could not have been seen by the enemy, the effect of his entry to the city upon the gryf would have been totally lost. A couple of sharp blows with the spear sent the big animal rumbling and

growling in the direction of the Kor-ul-gryf nor was the ape-man sorry to see it depart since he had never known at what instant its short temper and insatiable appetite for flesh might turn it upon some of his companions.

Immediately upon their arrival at the gorge the march on A-lur was commenced.

23. TAKEN ALIVE

As night fell a warrior from the palace of Ja-lur slipped into the temple grounds. He made his way to where the lesser priests were quartered. His presence aroused no suspicion as it was not unusual for warriors to have business within the temple. He came at last to a chamber where several priests were congregated after the evening meal. The rites and ceremonies of the sacrifice had been concluded and there was nothing more of a religious nature to make call upon their time until the rites at sunrise.

Now the warrior knew, as in fact nearly all Pal-ul-don knew, that there was no strong bond between the temple

and the palace at Ja- lur and that Ja-don only suffered the presence of the priests and permitted their cruel and abhorrent acts because of the fact that these things had been the custom of the Ho-don of Pal-ul-don for countless ages, and rash indeed must have been the man who would have attempted to interfere with the priests or their ceremonies. That Ja-don never entered the temple was well known, and that his high priest never entered the palace, but the people came to the temple with their votive offerings and the sacrifices were made night and morning as in every other temple in Pal-ul-don.

The warriors knew these things, knew them better perhaps than a simple

warrior should have known them. And so it was here in the temple that he looked for the aid that he sought in the carrying out of whatever design he had.

As he entered the apartment where the priests were he greeted them after the manner which was customary in Pal-ul-don, but at the same time he made a sign with his finger that might have attracted little attention or scarcely been noticed at all by one who knew not its meaning. That there were those within the room who noticed it and interpreted it was quickly apparent, through the fact that two of the priests rose and came close to him as he stood just within the doorway and each of them, as he came, returned the signal that the warrior had made.

The three talked for but a moment and then the warrior turned and left the apartment. A little later one of the priests who had talked with him left also and shortly after that the other.

In the corridor they found the warrior waiting, and led him to a little chamber which opened upon a smaller corridor just beyond where it joined the larger. Here the three remained in whispered conversation for some little time and then the warrior returned to the palace and the two priests to their quarters.

The apartments of the women of the palace at Ja-lur are all upon the same side of a long, straight corridor. Each has a single door leading into the corridor and at the opposite end several

windows overlooking a garden. It was in one of these rooms that Jane slept alone. At each end of the corridor was a sentinel, the main body of the guard being stationed in a room near the outer entrance to the women's quarters.

The palace slept for they kept early hours there where Ja-don ruled. The pal-e-don-so of the great chieftain of the north knew no such wild orgies as had resounded through the palace of the king at A- lur. Ja-lur was a quiet city by comparison with the capital, yet there was always a guard kept at every entrance to the chambers of Ja- don and his immediate family as well as at the gate leading into the temple and that which opened upon the city.

These guards, however, were small, consisting usually of not more than five or six warriors, one of whom remained awake while the others slept. Such were the conditions then when two warriors presented themselves, one at either end of the corridor, to the sentries who watched over the safety of Jane Clayton and the Princess O-lo-a, and each of the newcomers repeated to the sentinels the stereotyped words which announced that they were relieved and these others sent to watch in their stead. Never is a warrior loath to be relieved of sentry duty. Where, under different circumstances he might ask numerous questions he is now too well satisfied to escape the monotonies of that

universally hated duty. And so these two men accepted their relief without question and hastened away to their pallets.

And then a third warrior entered the corridor and all of the newcomers came together before the door of the ape-man's slumbering mate. And one was the strange warrior who had met Ja-don and Tarzan outside the city of Ja-lur as they had approached it the previous day; and he was the same warrior who had entered the temple a short hour before, but the faces of his fellows were unfamiliar, even to one another, since it is seldom that a priest removes his hideous headdress in the presence even of his associates.

Silently they lifted the hangings that hid the interior of the room from the view of those who passed through the corridor, and stealthily slunk within. Upon a pile of furs in a far corner lay the sleeping form of Lady Greystoke. The bare feet of the intruders gave forth no sound as they crossed the stone floor toward her. A ray of moonlight entering through a window near her couch shone full upon her, revealing the beautiful contours of an arm and shoulder in cameo- distinctness against the dark furry pelt beneath which she slept, and the perfect profile that was turned toward the skulking three.

But neither the beauty nor the helplessness of the sleeper aroused such

sentiments of passion or pity as might stir in the breasts of normal men. To the three priests she was but a lump of clay, nor could they conceive aught of that passion which had aroused men to intrigue and to murder for possession of this beautiful American girl, and which even now was influencing the destiny of undiscovered Pal-ul-don.

Upon the floor of the chamber were numerous pelts and as the leader of the trio came close to the sleeping woman he stooped and gathered up one of the smaller of these. Standing close to her head he held the rug outspread above her face. "Now," he whispered and simultaneously he threw the rug over the woman's head and his two fellows

leaped upon her, seizing her arms and pinioning her body while their leader stifled her cries with the furry pelt. Quickly and silently they bound her wrists and gagged her and during the brief time that their work required there was no sound that might have been heard by occupants of the adjoining apartments.

Jerking her roughly to her feet they forced her toward a window but she refused to walk, throwing herself instead upon the floor. They were very angry and would have resorted to cruelties to compel her obedience but dared not, since the wrath of Lu-don might fall heavily upon whoever mutilated his fair prize.

And so they were forced to lift and carry her bodily. Nor was the task any sinecure since the captive kicked and struggled as best she might, making their labor as arduous as possible. But finally they succeeded in getting her through the window and into the garden beyond where one of the two priests from the Ja-lur temple directed their steps toward a small barred gateway in the south wall of the enclosure.

Immediately beyond this a flight of stone stairs led downward toward the river and at the foot of the stairs were moored several canoes. Pan-sat had indeed been fortunate in enlisting aid from those who knew the temple and the palace so well, or otherwise he might

never have escaped from Ja-lur with his captive. Placing the woman in the bottom of a light canoe Pan-sat entered it and took up the paddle. His companions unfastened the moorings and shoved the little craft out into the current of the stream. Their traitorous work completed they turned and retraced their steps toward the temple, while Pan-sat, paddling strongly with the current, moved rapidly down the river that would carry him to the Jad-ben-lul and A-lur.

The moon had set and the eastern horizon still gave no hint of approaching day as a long file of warriors wound stealthily through the darkness into the city of A-lur. Their plans were all laid

and there seemed no likelihood of their miscarriage. A messenger had been dispatched to Ta-den whose forces lay northwest of the city. Tarzan, with a small contingent, was to enter the temple through the secret passageway, the location of which he alone knew, while Ja-don, with the greater proportion of the warriors, was to attack the palace gates.

The ape-man, leading his little band, moved stealthily through the winding alleys of A-lur, arriving undetected at the building which hid the entrance to the secret passageway. This spot being best protected by the fact that its existence was unknown to others than the priests, was unguarded. To facilitate the passage

of his little company through the narrow winding, uneven tunnel, Tarzan lighted a torch which had been brought for the purpose and preceding his warriors led the way toward the temple.

That he could accomplish much once he reached the inner chambers of the temple with his little band of picked warriors the ape-man was confident since an attack at this point would bring confusion and consternation to the easily overpowered priests, and permit Tarzan to attack the palace forces in the rear at the same time that Ja-don engaged them at the palace gates, while Ta-den and his forces swarmed the northern walls. Great value had been placed by Ja-don on the moral effect of the Dor-ul-Otho's

mysterious appearance in the heart of the temple and he had urged Tarzan to take every advantage of the old chieftain's belief that many of Lu-don's warriors still wavered in their allegiance between the high priest and the Dor-ul-Otho, being held to the former more by the fear which he engendered in the breasts of all his followers than by any love or loyalty they might feel toward him.

There is a Pal-ul-donian proverb setting forth a truth similar to that contained in the old Scotch adage that "The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley." Freely translated it might read, "He who follows the right trail sometimes reaches the wrong destination," and such apparently was

the fate that lay in the footsteps of the great chieftain of the north and his godlike ally.

Tarzan, more familiar with the windings of the corridors than his fellows and having the advantage of the full light of the torch, which at best was but a dim and flickering affair, was some distance ahead of the others, and in his keen anxiety to close with the enemy he gave too little thought to those who were to support him. Nor is this strange, since from childhood the ape-man had been accustomed to fight the battles of life single-handed so that it had become habitual for him to depend solely upon his own cunning and prowess.

And so it was that he came into the

upper corridor from which opened the chambers of Lu-don and the lesser priests far in advance of his warriors, and as he turned into this corridor with its dim cressets flickering somberly, he saw another enter it from a corridor before him—a warrior half carrying, half dragging the figure of a woman. Instantly Tarzan recognized the gagged and fettered captive whom he had thought safe in the palace of Ja-don at Ja-lur.

The warrior with the woman had seen Tarzan at the same instant that the latter had discovered him. He heard the low beastlike growl that broke from the ape-man's lips as he sprang forward to wrest his mate from her captor and wreak upon

him the vengeance that was in the Tarmangani's savage heart. Across the corridor from Pan-sat was the entrance to a smaller chamber. Into this he leaped carrying the woman with him.

Close behind came Tarzan of the Apes. He had cast aside his torch and drawn the long knife that had been his father's. With the impetuosity of a charging bull he rushed into the chamber in pursuit of Pan-sat to find himself, when the hangings dropped behind him, in utter darkness. Almost immediately there was a crash of stone on stone before him followed a moment later by a similar crash behind. No other evidence was necessary to announce to the ape-man that he was again a prisoner in Lu-

don's temple.

He stood perfectly still where he had halted at the first sound of the descending stone door. Not again would he easily be precipitated to the gryf pit, or some similar danger, as had occurred when Lu-don had trapped him in the Temple of the Gryf. As he stood there his eyes slowly grew accustomed to the darkness and he became aware that a dim light was entering the chamber through some opening, though it was several minutes before he discovered its source. In the roof of the chamber he finally discerned a small aperture, possibly three feet in diameter and it was through this that what was really only a lesser darkness rather than a light

was penetrating its Stygian blackness of the chamber in which he was imprisoned.

Since the doors had fallen he had heard no sound though his keen ears were constantly strained in an effort to discover a clue to the direction taken by the abductor of his mate. Presently he could discern the outlines of his prison cell. It was a small room, not over fifteen feet across. On hands and knees, with the utmost caution, he examined the entire area of the floor. In the exact center, directly beneath the opening in the roof, was a trap, but otherwise the floor was solid. With this knowledge it was only necessary to avoid this spot in so far as the floor was concerned. The

walls next received his attention. There were only two openings. One the doorway through which he had entered, and upon the opposite side that through which the warrior had borne Jane Clayton. These were both closed by the slabs of stone which the fleeing warrior had released as he departed.

Lu-don, the high priest, licked his thin lips and rubbed his bony white hands together in gratification as Pan-sat bore Jane Clayton into his presence and laid her on the floor of the chamber before him.

"Good, Pan-sat!" he exclaimed. "You shall be well rewarded for this service. Now, if we but had the false Dor-ul-Otho in our power all Pal-ul-don would

be at our feet."

"Master, I have him!" cried Pan-sat.

"What!" exclaimed Lu-don, "you have Tarzan-jad-guru? You have slain him perhaps. Tell me, my wonderful Pan-sat, tell me quickly. My breast is bursting with a desire to know."

"I have taken him alive, Lu-don, my master," replied Pan-sat. "He is in the little chamber that the ancients built to trap those who were too powerful to take alive in personal encounter."

"You have done well, Pan-sat, I—"

A frightened priest burst into the apartment. "Quick, master, quick," he cried, "the corridors are filled with the warriors of Ja- don."

"You are mad," cried the high priest. "My warriors hold the palace and the temple."

"I speak the truth, master," replied the priest, "there are warriors in the corridor approaching this very chamber, and they come from the direction of the secret passage which leads hither from the city."

"It may be even as he says," exclaimed Pan-sat. "It was from that direction that Tarzan-jad-guru was coming when I discovered and trapped him. He was leading his warriors to the very holy of holies."

Lu-don ran quickly to the doorway and looked out into the corridor. At a glance he saw that the fears of the

frightened priest were well founded. A dozen warriors were moving along the corridor toward him but they seemed confused and far from sure of themselves. The high priest guessed that deprived of the leadership of Tarzan they were little better than lost in the unknown mazes of the subterranean precincts of the temple.

Stepping back into the apartment he seized a leathern thong that depended from the ceiling. He pulled upon it sharply and through the temple boomed the deep tones of a metal gong. Five times the clanging notes rang through the corridors, then he turned toward the two priests. "Bring the woman and follow me," he directed.

Crossing the chamber he passed through a small doorway, the others lifting Jane Clayton from the floor and following him. Through a narrow corridor and up a flight of steps they went, turning to right and left and doubling back through a maze of winding passageways which terminated in a spiral staircase that gave forth at the surface of the ground within the largest of the inner altar courts close beside the eastern altar.

From all directions now, in the corridors below and the grounds above, came the sound of hurrying footsteps. The five strokes of the great gong had summoned the faithful to the defense of Lu-don in his private chambers. The

priests who knew the way led the less familiar warriors to the spot and presently those who had accompanied Tarzan found themselves not only leaderless but facing a vastly superior force. They were brave men but under the circumstances they were helpless and so they fell back the way they had come, and when they reached the narrow confines of the smaller passageway their safety was assured since only one foeman could attack them at a time. But their plans were frustrated and possibly also their entire cause lost, so heavily had Ja-don banked upon the success of their venture.

With the clanging of the temple gong Ja-don assumed that Tarzan and his party

had struck their initial blow and so he launched his attack upon the palace gate. To the ears of Lu-don in the inner temple court came the savage war cries that announced the beginning of the battle. Leaving Pan-sat and the other priest to guard the woman he hastened toward the palace personally to direct his force and as he passed through the temple grounds he dispatched a messenger to learn the outcome of the fight in the corridors below, and other messengers to spread the news among his followers that the false Dor- ul-Otho was a prisoner in the temple.

As the din of battle rose above A-lur, Lieutenant Erich Obergatz turned upon his bed of soft hides and sat up. He

rubbed his eyes and looked about him. It was still dark without.

"I am Jad-ben-Otho," he cried, "who dares disturb my slumber?"

A slave squatting upon the floor at the foot of his couch shuddered and touched her forehead to the floor. "It must be that the enemy have come, O Jad-ben-Otho." She spoke soothingly for she had reason to know the terrors of the mad frenzy into which trivial things sometimes threw the Great God.

A priest burst suddenly through the hangings of the doorway and falling upon his hands and knees rubbed his forehead against the stone flagging. "O Jad-ben-Otho," he cried, "the warriors of Ja-don have attacked the palace and

the temple. Even now they are fighting in the corridors near the quarters of Lu-don, and the high priest begs that you come to the palace and encourage your faithful warriors by your presence."

Obergatz sprang to his feet. "I am Jad-ben-Otho," he screamed. "With lightning I will blast the blasphemers who dare attack the holy city of A-lur."

For a moment he rushed aimlessly and madly about the room, while the priest and the slave remained upon hands and knees with their foreheads against the floor.

"Come," cried Obergatz, planting a vicious kick in the side of the slave girl. "Come! Would you wait here all day while the forces of darkness overwhelm

the City of Light?"

Thoroughly frightened as were all those who were forced to serve the Great God, the two arose and followed Obergatz towards the palace.

Above the shouting of the warriors rose constantly the cries of the temple priests: "Jad-ben-Otho is here and the false Dor-ul-Otho is a prisoner in the temple." The persistent cries reached even to the ears of the enemy as it was intended that they should.

24. THE MESSENGER OF DEATH

The sun rose to see the forces of Ja-don still held at the palace gate. The old warrior had seized the tall structure that stood just beyond the palace and at the summit of this he kept a warrior stationed to look toward the northern wall of the palace where Ta-den was to make his attack; but as the minutes wore into hours no sign of the other force appeared, and now in the full light of the new sun upon the roof of one of the palace buildings appeared Lu-don, the high priest, Mo-sar, the pretender, and the strange, naked figure of a man, into whose long hair and beard were woven

fresh ferns and flowers. Behind them were banked a score of lesser priests who chanted in unison: "This is Jad-ben-Otho. Lay down your arms and surrender." This they repeated again and again, alternating it with the cry: "The false Dor-ul-Otho is a prisoner."

In one of those lulls which are common in battles between forces armed with weapons that require great physical effort in their use, a voice suddenly arose from among the followers of Ja-don: "Show us the Dor-ul-Otho. We do not believe you!"

"Wait," cried Lu-don. "If I do not produce him before the sun has moved his own width, the gates of the palace shall be opened to you and my warriors

will lay down their arms."

He turned to one of his priests and issued brief instructions.

The ape-man paced the confines of his narrow cell. Bitterly he reproached himself for the stupidity which had led him into this trap, and yet was it stupidity? What else might he have done other than rush to the succor of his mate? He wondered how they had stolen her from Ja-lur, and then suddenly there flashed to his mind the features of the warrior whom he had just seen with her. They were strangely familiar. He racked his brain to recall where he had seen the man before and then it came to him. He was the strange warrior who had joined Ja-don's forces outside of Ja-lur the day

that Tarzan had ridden upon the great gryf from the uninhabited gorge next to the Kor-ul-ja down to the capital city of the chieftain of the north. But who could the man be? Tarzan knew that never before that other day had he seen him.

Presently he heard the clanging of a gong from the corridor without and very faintly the rush of feet, and shouts. He guessed that his warriors had been discovered and a fight was in progress. He fretted and chafed at the chance that had denied him participation in it.

Again and again he tried the doors of his prison and the trap in the center of the floor, but none would give to his utmost endeavors. He strained his eyes toward the aperture above but he could

see nothing, and then he continued his futile pacing to and fro like a caged lion behind its bars.

The minutes dragged slowly into hours. Faintly sounds came to him as of shouting men at a great distance. The battle was in progress. He wondered if Ja-don would be victorious and should he be, would his friends ever discover him in this hidden chamber in the bowels of the hill? He doubted it.

And now as he looked again toward the aperture in the roof there appeared to be something depending through its center. He came closer and strained his eyes to see. Yes, there was something there. It appeared to be a rope. Tarzan wondered if it had been there all the

time. It must have, he reasoned, since he had heard no sound from above and it was so dark within the chamber that he might easily have overlooked it.

He raised his hand toward it. The end of it was just within his reach. He bore his weight upon it to see if it would hold him. Then he released it and backed away, still watching it, as you have seen an animal do after investigating some unfamiliar object, one of the little traits that differentiated Tarzan from other men, accentuating his similarity to the savage beasts of his native jungle. Again and again he touched and tested the braided leather rope, and always he listened for any warning sound from above.

He was very careful not to step upon the trap at any time and when finally he bore all his weight upon the rope and took his feet from the floor he spread them wide apart so that if he fell he would fall astride the trap. The rope held him. There was no sound from above, nor any from the trap below.

Slowly and cautiously he drew himself upward, hand over hand. Nearer and nearer the roof he came. In a moment his eyes would be above the level of the floor above. Already his extended arms projected into the upper chamber and then something closed suddenly upon both his forearms, pinioning them tightly and leaving him hanging in mid-air unable to advance or retreat.

Immediately a light appeared in the room above him and presently he saw the hideous mask of a priest peering down upon him. In the priest's hands were leathern thongs and these he tied about Tarzan's wrists and forearms until they were completely bound together from his elbows almost to his fingers. Behind this priest Tarzan presently saw others and soon several lay hold of him and pulled him up through the hole.

Almost instantly his eyes were above the level of the floor he understood how they had trapped him. Two nooses had lain encircling the aperture into the cell below. A priest had waited at the end of each of these ropes and at opposite sides of the chamber. When he had climbed to

a sufficient height upon the rope that had dangled into his prison below and his arms were well within the encircling snares the two priests had pulled quickly upon their ropes and he had been made an easy captive without any opportunity of defending himself or inflicting injury upon his captors.

And now they bound his legs from his ankles to his knees and picking him up carried him from the chamber. No word did they speak to him as they bore him upward to the temple yard.

The din of battle had risen again as Ja-don had urged his forces to renewed efforts. Ta-den had not arrived and the forces of the old chieftain were revealing in their lessened efforts their

increasing demoralization, and then it was that the priests carried Tarzan-jad-guru to the roof of the palace and exhibited him in the sight of the warriors of both factions.

"Here is the false Dor-ul-Otho," screamed Lu-don.

Obergatz, his shattered mentality having never grasped fully the meaning of much that was going on about him, cast a casual glance at the bound and helpless prisoner, and as his eyes fell upon the noble features of the ape- man, they went wide in astonishment and fright, and his pasty countenance turned a sickly blue. Once before had he seen Tarzan of the Apes, but many times had he dreamed that he had seen him and

always was the giant ape-man avenging the wrongs that had been committed upon him and his by the ruthless hands of the three German officers who had led their native troops in the ravishing of Tarzan's peaceful home. Hauptmann Fritz Schneider had paid the penalty of his needless cruelties; Under-lieutenant von Goss, too, had paid; and now Obergatz, the last of the three, stood face to face with the Nemesis that had trailed him through his dreams for long, weary months. That he was bound and helpless lessened not the German's terror—he seemed not to realize that the man could not harm him. He but stood cringing and gibbering and Lu-don saw and was filled with apprehension that others

might see and seeing realize that this bewhiskered idiot was no god—that of the two Tarzan-jad-guru was the more godly figure. Already the high priest noted that some of the palace warriors standing near were whispering together and pointing. He stepped closer to Obergatz. "You are Jad-ben-Otho," he whispered, "denounce him!"

The German shook himself. His mind cleared of all but his great terror and the words of the high priest gave him the clue to safety.

"I am Jad-ben-Otho!" he screamed.

Tarzan looked him straight in the eye. "You are Lieutenant Obergatz of the German Army," he said in excellent German. "You are the last of the three I

have sought so long and in your putrid heart you know that God has not brought us together at last for nothing."

The mind of Lieutenant Obergatz was functioning clearly and rapidly at last. He too saw the questioning looks upon the faces of some of those around them. He saw the opposing warriors of both cities standing by the gate inactive, every eye turned upon him, and the trussed figure of the ape-man. He realized that indecision now meant ruin, and ruin, death. He raised his voice in the sharp barking tones of a Prussian officer, so unlike his former maniacal screaming as to quickly arouse the attention of every ear and to cause an expression of puzzlement to cross the

crafty face of Lu-don.

"I am Jad-ben-Otho," snapped Obergatz. "This creature is no son of mine. As a lesson to all blasphemers he shall die upon the altar at the hand of the god he has profaned. Take him from my sight, and when the sun stands at zenith let the faithful congregate in the temple court and witness the wrath of this divine hand," and he held aloft his right palm.

Those who had brought Tarzan took him away then as Obergatz had directed, and the German turned once more to the warriors by the gate. "Throw down your arms, warriors of Ja-don," he cried, "lest I call down my lightnings to blast you where you stand. Those who do as I

bid shall be forgiven. Come! Throw down your arms."

The warriors of Ja-don moved uneasily, casting looks of appeal at their leader and of apprehension toward the figures upon the palace roof. Ja-don sprang forward among his men. "Let the cowards and knaves throw down their arms and enter the palace," he cried, "but never will Ja-don and the warriors of Ja-lur touch their foreheads to the feet of Lu-don and his false god. Make your decision now," he cried to his followers.

A few threw down their arms and with sheepish looks passed through the gateway into the palace, and with the example of these to bolster their courage others joined in the desertion from the

old chieftain of the north, but staunch and true around him stood the majority of his warriors and when the last weakling had left their ranks Ja-don voiced the savage cry with which he led his followers to the attack, and once again the battle raged about the palace gate.

At times Ja-don's forces pushed the defenders far into the palace ground and then the wave of combat would recede and pass out into the city again. And still Ta-den and the reinforcements did not come. It was drawing close to noon. Lu-don had mustered every available man that was not actually needed for the defense of the gate within the temple, and these he sent, under the leadership of Pan-sat, out into the city through the

secret passageway and there they fell upon Ja-don's forces from the rear while those at the gate hammered them in front.

Attacked on two sides by a vastly superior force the result was inevitable and finally the last remnant of Ja-don's little army capitulated and the old chief was taken a prisoner before Lu-don. "Take him to the temple court," cried the high priest. "He shall witness the death of his accomplice and perhaps Jad-ben-Otho shall pass a similar sentence upon him as well."

The inner temple court was packed with humanity. At either end of the western altar stood Tarzan and his mate, bound and helpless. The sounds of battle had ceased and presently the ape-man

saw Ja-don being led into the inner court, his wrists bound tightly together before him. Tarzan turned his eyes toward Jane and nodded in the direction of Ja-don. "This looks like the end," he said quietly. "He was our last and only hope."

"We have at least found each other, John," she replied, "and our last days have been spent together. My only prayer now is that if they take you they do not leave me."

Tarzan made no reply for in his heart was the same bitter thought that her own contained—not the fear that they would kill him but the fear that they would not kill her. The ape-man strained at his bonds but they were too many and too

strong. A priest near him saw and with a jeering laugh struck the defenseless ape-man in the face.

"The brute!" cried Jane Clayton.

Tarzan smiled. "I have been struck thus before, Jane," he said, "and always has the striker died."

"You still have hope?" she asked.

"I am still alive," he said as though that were sufficient answer. She was a woman and she did not have the courage of this man who knew no fear. In her heart of hearts she knew that he would die upon the altar at high noon for he had told her, after he had been brought to the inner court, of the sentence of death that Obergatz had pronounced upon him, and she knew too that Tarzan knew that he

would die, but that he was too courageous to admit it even to himself.

As she looked upon him standing there so straight and wonderful and brave among his savage captors her heart cried out against the cruelty of the fate that had overtaken him. It seemed a gross and hideous wrong that that wonderful creature, now so quick with exuberant life and strength and purpose should be presently naught but a bleeding lump of clay—and all so uselessly and wantonly. Gladly would she have offered her life for his but she knew that it was a waste of words since their captors would work upon them whatever it was their will to do—for him, death; for her— she shuddered at

the thought.

And now came Lu-don and the naked Obergatz, and the high priest led the German to his place behind the altar, himself standing upon the other's left. Lu-don whispered a word to Obergatz, at the same time nodding in the direction of Ja-don. The Hun cast a scowling look upon the old warrior.

"And after the false god," he cried, "the false prophet," and he pointed an accusing finger at Ja-don. Then his eyes wandered to the form of Jane Clayton.

"And the woman, too?" asked Lu-don.

"The case of the woman I will attend to later," replied Obergatz. "I will talk with her tonight after she has had a chance to meditate upon the

consequences of arousing the wrath of Jad-ben- Otho."

He cast his eyes upward at the sun. "The time approaches," he said to Lu-don. "Prepare the sacrifice."

Lu-don nodded to the priests who were gathered about Tarzan. They seized the ape-man and lifted him bodily to the altar where they laid him upon his back with his head at the south end of the monolith, but a few feet from where Jane Clayton stood. Impulsively and before they could restrain her the woman rushed forward and bending quickly kissed her mate upon the forehead. "Good-bye, John," she whispered.

"Good-bye," he answered, smiling.

The priests seized her and dragged

her away. Lu-don handed the sacrificial knife to Obergatz. "I am the Great God," cried the German, "thus falleth the divine wrath upon all my enemies!" He looked up at the sun and then raised the knife high above his head.

"Thus die the blasphemers of God!" he screamed, and at the same instant a sharp staccato note rang out above the silent, spell-bound multitude. There was a screaming whistle in the air and Jad-ben-Otho crumpled forward across the body of his intended victim. Again the same alarming noise and Lu-don fell, a third and Mo-sar crumpled to the ground. And now the warriors and the people, locating the direction of this new and unknown sound turned toward the

western end of the court.

Upon the summit of the temple wall they saw two figures—a Ho-don warrior and beside him an almost naked creature of the race of Tarzan-jad- guru, across his shoulders and about his hips were strange broad belts studded with beautiful cylinders that glinted in the mid-day sun, and in his hands a shining thing of wood and metal from the end of which rose a thin wreath of blue-gray smoke.

And then the voice of the Ho-don warrior rang clear upon the ears of the silent throng. "Thus speaks the true Jad-ben-Otho," he cried, "through this his Messenger of Death. Cut the bonds of the prisoners. Cut the bonds of the Dor-ul-

Otho and of Ja-don, King of Pal-ul-don, and of the woman who is the mate of the son of god."

Pan-sat, filled with the frenzy of fanaticism saw the power and the glory of the regime he had served crumpled and gone. To one and only one did he attribute the blame for the disaster that had but just overwhelmed him. It was the creature who lay upon the sacrificial altar who had brought Lu-don to his death and toppled the dreams of power that day by day had been growing in the brain of the under priest.

The sacrificial knife lay upon the altar where it had fallen from the dead fingers of Obergatz. Pan-sat crept closer and then with a sudden lunge he reached

forth to seize the handle of the blade, and even as his clutching fingers were poised above it, the strange thing in the hands of the strange creature upon the temple wall cried out its crashing word of doom and Pan-sat the under priest, screaming, fell back upon the dead body of his master.

"Seize all the priests," cried Ta-den to the warriors, "and let none hesitate lest Jad-ben-Otho's messenger send forth still other bolts of lightning."

The warriors and the people had now witnessed such an exhibition of divine power as might have convinced an even less superstitious and more enlightened people, and since many of them had but lately wavered between the Jad-ben-

Otho of Lu-don and the Dor-ul- Otho of Ja-don it was not difficult for them to swing quickly back to the latter, especially in view of the unanswerable argument in the hands of him whom Ta-den had described as the Messenger of the Great God.

And so the warriors sprang forward now with alacrity and surrounded the priests, and when they looked again at the western wall of the temple court they saw pouring over it a great force of warriors. And the thing that startled and appalled them was the fact that many of these were black and hairy Waz-don.

At their head came the stranger with the shiny weapon and on his right was Ta-den, the Ho-don, and on his left Om-

at, the black gund of Kor-ul-ja.

A warrior near the altar had seized the sacrificial knife and cut Tarzan's bonds and also those of Ja-don and Jane Clayton, and now the three stood together beside the altar and as the newcomers from the western end of the temple court pushed their way toward them the eyes of the woman went wide in mingled astonishment, incredulity, and hope. And the stranger, slinging his weapon across his back by a leather strap, rushed forward and took her in his arms.

"Jack!" she cried, sobbing on his shoulder. "Jack, my son!"

And Tarzan of the Apes came then and put his arms around them both, and

the King of Pal-ul-don and the warriors and the people kneeled in the temple court and placed their foreheads to the ground before the altar where the three stood.

25. HOME

Within an hour of the fall of Lu-don and Mo-sar, the chiefs and principal warriors of Pal-ul-don gathered in the great throneroom of the palace at A-lur upon the steps of the lofty pyramid and placing Ja-don at the apex proclaimed him king. Upon one side of the old chieftain stood Tarzan of the Apes, and upon the other Korak, the Killer, worthy son of the mighty ape-man.

And when the brief ceremony was over and the warriors with upraised clubs had sworn fealty to their new ruler, Ja-don dispatched a trusted company to fetch O-lo-a and Pan-at-lee and the women of his own household from Ja- lur.

And then the warriors discussed the future of Pal-ul-don and the question arose as to the administration of the temples and the fate of the priests, who practically without exception had been disloyal to the government of the king, seeking always only their own power and comfort and aggrandizement. And then it was that Ja-don turned to Tarzan. "Let the Dor-ul-Otho transmit to his people the wishes of his father," he said.

"Your problem is a simple one," said the ape-man, "if you but wish to do that which shall be pleasing in the eyes of God. Your priests, to increase their power, have taught you that Jad-ben-Otho is a cruel god, that his eyes love to dwell upon blood and upon suffering.

But the falsity of their teachings has been demonstrated to you today in the utter defeat of the priesthood.

"Take then the temples from the men and give them instead to the women that they may be administered in kindness and charity and love. Wash the blood from your eastern altar and drain forever the water from the western.

"Once I gave Lu-don the opportunity to do these things but he ignored my commands, and again is the corridor of sacrifice filled with its victims. Liberate these from every temple in Pal-ul-don. Bring offerings of such gifts as your people like and place them upon the altars of your god. And there he will bless them and the priestesses of Jad-

ben-Otho can distribute them among those who need them most."

As he ceased speaking a murmur of evident approval ran through the throng. Long had they been weary of the avarice and cruelty of the priests and now that authority had come from a high source with a feasible plan for ridding themselves of the old religious order without necessitating any change in the faith of the people they welcomed it.

"And the priests," cried one. "We shall put them to death upon their own altars if it pleases the Dor-ul-Otho to give the word."

"No," cried Tarzan. "Let no more blood be spilled. Give them their freedom and the right to take up such

occupations as they choose."

That night a great feast was spread in the pal-e-don-so and for the first time in the history of ancient Pal-ul-don black warriors sat in peace and friendship with white. And a pact was sealed between Ja-don and Om-at that would ever make his tribe and the Ho-don allies and friends.

It was here that Tarzan learned the cause of Ta-den's failure to attack at the stipulated time. A messenger had come from Ja-don carrying instructions to delay the attack until noon, nor had they discovered until almost too late that the messenger was a disguised priest of Lu-don. And they had put him to death and scaled the walls and come to the inner

temple court with not a moment to spare.

The following day O-lo-a and Pan-at-lee and the women of Ja- don's family arrived at the palace at A-lur and in the great throneroom Ta-den and O-lo-a were wed, and Om-at and Pan-at-lee.

For a week Tarzan and Jane and Korak remained the guests of Ja- don, as did Om-at and his black warriors. And then the ape-man announced that he would depart from Pal-ul-don. Hazy in the minds of their hosts was the location of heaven and equally so the means by which the gods traveled between their celestial homes and the haunts of men and so no questionings arose when it was found that the Dor-ul- Otho with his mate and son would travel overland

across the mountains and out of Pal-ul-don toward the north.

They went by way of the Kor-ul-ja accompanied by the warriors of that tribe and a great contingent of Ho-don warriors under Ta-den. The king and many warriors and a multitude of people accompanied them beyond the limits of A-lur and after they had bid them good-bye and Tarzan had invoked the blessings of God upon them the three Europeans saw their simple, loyal friends prostrate in the dust behind them until the cavalcade had wound out of the city and disappeared among the trees of the nearby forest.

They rested for a day among the Kor-ul-ja while Jane investigated the ancient

caves of these strange people and then they moved on, avoiding the rugged shoulder of Pastar-ul-ved and winding down the opposite slope toward the great morass. They moved in comfort and in safety, surrounded by their escort of Ho-don and Waz- don.

In the minds of many there was doubtless a question as to how the three would cross the great morass but least of all was Tarzan worried by the problem. In the course of his life he had been confronted by many obstacles only to learn that he who will may always pass. In his mind lurked an easy solution of the passage but it was one which depended wholly upon chance.

It was the morning of the last day that,

as they were breaking camp to take up the march, a deep bellow thundered from a nearby grove. The ape-man smiled. The chance had come. Fittingly then would the Dor-ul-Otho and his mate and their son depart from unmapped Pal- ul-don.

He still carried the spear that Jane had made, which he had prized so highly because it was her handiwork that he had caused a search to be made for it through the temple in A-lur after his release, and it had been found and brought to him. He had told her laughingly that it should have the place of honor above their hearth as the ancient flintlock of her Puritan grandsire had held a similar place of honor above

the fireplace of Professor Porter, her father.

At the sound of the bellowing the Ho-don warriors, some of whom had accompanied Tarzan from Ja-don's camp to Ja-lur, looked questioningly at the ape-man while Om-at's Waz-don looked for trees, since the gryf was the one creature of Pal-ul-don which might not be safely encountered even by a great multitude of warriors. Its tough, armored hide was impregnable to their knife thrusts while their thrown clubs rattled from it as futilely as if hurled at the rocky shoulder of Pastar-ul-ved.

"Wait," said the ape-man, and with his spear in hand he advanced toward the gryf, voicing the weird cry of the

Tor-o-don. The bellowing ceased and turned to low rumblings and presently the huge beast appeared. What followed was but a repetition of the ape-man's previous experience with these huge and ferocious creatures.

And so it was that Jane and Korak and Tarzan rode through the morass that hems Pa-ul-don, upon the back of a prehistoric triceratops while the lesser reptiles of the swamp fled hissing in terror. Upon the opposite shore they turned and called back their farewells to Ta-den and Om-at and the brave warriors they had learned to admire and respect. And then Tarzan urged their titanic mount onward toward the north, abandoning him only when he was

assured that the Waz-don and the Ho-don had had time to reach a point of comparative safety among the craggy ravines of the foothills.

Turning the beast's head again toward Pal-ul-don the three dismounted and a sharp blow upon the thick hide sent the creature lumbering majestically back in the direction of its native haunts. For a time they stood looking back upon the land they had just quit—the land of Tor-o-don and gryf; of ja and jato; of Waz-don and Ho-don; a primitive land of terror and sudden death and peace and beauty; a land that they all had learned to love.

And then they turned once more toward the north and with light hearts

and brave hearts took up their long journey toward the land that is best of all - home.

THE END

GLOSSARY

From conversations with Lord Greystoke and from his notes, there have been gleaned a number of interesting items relative to the language and customs of the inhabitants of Pal-ul-don that are not brought out in the story. For the benefit of those who may care to delve into the derivation of the proper names used in the text, and thus obtain some slight insight into the language of the race, there is appended an incomplete glossary taken from some of Lord Greystoke's notes.

A point of particular interest hinges upon the fact that the names of all male hairless pithecanthropi begin with a consonant, have an even number of

syllables, and end with a consonant, while the names of the females of the same species begin with a vowel, have an odd number of syllables, and end with a vowel. On the contrary, the names of the male hairy black pithecanthropi while having an even number of syllables begin with a vowel and end with a consonant; while the females of this species have an odd number of syllables in their names which begin always with a consonant and end with a vowel.

A
Ab
Ab-on
Ad

Adad
Adadad
Adaden
Aden
Adenaden
Adenen
A-lur
An
An-un
As
At
Bal
Bar
Ben

Bu
Bu-lot (moon face)
Bu-lur (moon city)
Dak
Dak-at (fat tail)
Dak-lot (fat face)
Dan
Den
Don
Dor
Dor-ul-Otho (son of god)
E
Ed
En

Enen
Es
Es-sat (rough skin)
Et
Fur
Ged
Go

Gryf

Gund

Guru

Het

Ho

Ho-don

Id

Id-an

In

In-sad
In-tan
Ja
Jad
Jad-bal-lul
Jad-ben-Otho
Jad-guru-don
Jad-in-lul
Ja-don (lion-man)
Jad Pele ul Jad-ben-Otho
Ja-lur (lion city)
Jar
Jar-don

Ja-to
Ko
Kor
Kor-ul-gryf
Kor-ul-ja
Kor-ul-lul
Ko-tan
Lav
Lee
Lo
Lot
Lu
Lu-don (fierce man)
Lul

Lur

Ma

Mo

Mo-sar (short nose)

Mu

No

O

Od

O-dan

Og

O-lo-a (like-star-light)

Om

Om-at (long tail)

On

Otho
Pal
Pal-e-don-so (place where men eat)
Pal-ul-don (land of man)
Pal-ul-ja
Pan
Pan-at-lee
Pan-sat (soft skin)
Pastar
Pastar-ul-ved
Pele
Ro
Sad

San

Sar

Sat

So

Sod

Sog

Son

Ta

Ta-den (tall tree)

Tan

Tarzan-jad-guru

To

Ton

Tor

Tor-o-don

Tu
Tu-lur (bright city)
Ul
Un
Ut
Ved
Was
Waz-don
Waz-ho-don (black white men)
Xot
Yo

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TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION

BOOK 9 IN THE TARZAN

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1. THE GOLDEN LION

Sabor, the lioness, suckled her young—a single fuzzy ball, spotted like Sheeta, the leopard. She lay in the warm sunshine before the rocky cavern that was her lair, stretched out upon her side with half closed eyes, yet Sabor was alert. There had been three of these little, fuzzy balls at first - two daughters and a son—and Sabor and Numa, their sire, had been proud of them; proud and happy. But kills had not been plentiful, and Sabor, undernourished, had been unable to produce sufficient milk to nourish properly three lusty cubs, and then a cold rain had come, and the little ones had sickened. Only the strongest survived —the two daughters had died.

Sabor had mourned, pacing to and fro beside the pitiful bits of bedraggled fur, whining moaning. Now and again she would nose them with her muzzle as though she would awaken them from the long sleep that knows no waking.

At last, however, she abandoned her efforts, and now her whole savage heart was filled with concern for the little male cub that remained to her. That was why Sabor was more alert than usual.

Numa, the lion, was away. Two nights before he had made a kill and dragged it to their lair and last night he had fared forth again, but he had not returned. Sabor was thinking, as she half dozed, of Wappi, the plump antelope, that her splendid mate might this very

minute be dragging through the tangled jungle to her. Or perhaps it would be Pacco, the zebra, whose flesh was the best beloved of her kind—juicy, succulent Pacco. Sabor's mouth watered.

Ah, what was that? The shadow of a sound had come to those keen ears. She raised her head, cocking it first upon one side and then the other, as with up-pricked ears she sought to catch the faintest repetition of that which had disturbed her.

Her nose sniffed the air. There was but the suggestion of a breeze, but what there was moved toward her from the direction of the sound she had heard, and which she still heard in a slightly increasing volume that told her that

whatever was making it was approaching her. As it drew closer the beast's nervousness increased and she rolled over on her belly, shutting off the milk supply from the cub, which vented its disapproval in miniature growls until a low, querulous whine from the lioness silenced him, then he stood at her side, looking first at her and then in the direction toward which she looked, cocking his little head first on one side and then on the other.

Evidently there was a disturbing quality in the sound that Sabor heard-something that inspired a certain restlessness, if not actual apprehension—though she could not be sure as yet that it boded ill. It might be her great

lord returning, but it did not sound like the movement of a lion, certainly not like a lion dragging a heavy kill. She glanced at her cub, breathing as she did so a plaintive whine. There was always the fear that some danger menaced him— this last of her little family— but she, Sabor the lioness, was there to defend him.

Presently the breeze brought to her nostrils the scent-spoor of the thing that moved toward her through the jungle. Instantly the troubled mother-face was metamorphosed into a bare-fanged, glittering- eyed mask of savage rage, for the scent that had come up to her through the jungle was the hated man-scent. She rose to her feet, her head flattened, her

sinuous tail twitching nervously. Through that strange medium by which animals communicate with one another she cautioned her cub to lie down and remain where he was until she returned, then she moved rapidly and. silently to meet the intruder.

The cub had heard what its mother heard and now he caught the smell of man —an unfamiliar smell that had never impinged upon his nostrils before, yet a smell that he knew at once for that of an enemy—a smell that brought a reaction as typical as that which marked the attitude of the grown lioness, bringing the hairs along his little spine erect and baring his tiny fangs. As the adult moved quickly and stealthily into

the underbrush the small cub, ignoring her injunction, followed after her, his hind quarters wobbling from side to side, after the manner of the very young of his kind, the ridiculous gait comporting ill with the dignified bearing of his fore quarters; but the lioness, intent upon that which lay before her, did not know that he followed her.

There was dense jungle before the two for a hundred yards, but through it the lions had worn a tunnel-like path to their lair; and then there was a small clearing through which ran a well-worn jungle trail, out of the jungle at one end of the clearing and into the jungle again at the other. As Sabor reached the clearing she saw the object of her fear

and hatred well within it. What if the man-thing were not hunting her or hers? What if he even dreamed not of their presence? These facts were as nothing to Sabor, the lioness, today. Ordinarily she would have let him pass unmolested, so long as he did not come close enough to threaten the safety of her cub; or, cubless, she would have slunk away at the first intimation of his approach. But today the lioness was nervous and fearful—fearful because of the single cub that remained to her—her maternal instincts centered threefold, perhaps, upon this lone and triply loved survivor—and so she did not wait for the man to threaten the safety of her little one; but instead she moved to meet him and to

stop him. From the soft mother she had become a terrifying creature of destruction, her brain obsessed by a single thought —to kill.

She did not hesitate an instant at the edge of the clearing, nor did she give the slightest warning. The first intimation that the black warrior had that there was a lion within twenty miles of him, was the terrifying apparition of this devil-faced cat charging across the clearing toward him with the speed of an arrow. The black was not searching for lions. Had he known that there was one near he would have given it a wide berth. He would have fled now had there been anywhere to flee. The nearest tree was farther from him than was the lioness.

She could overhaul him before he would have covered a quarter of the distance. There was no hope and there was only one thing to do. The beast was almost upon him and behind her he saw a tiny cub. The man bore a heavy spear. He carried it far back with his right hand and hurled it at the very instant that Sabor rose to seize him. The spear passed through the savage heart and almost simultaneously the giant jaws closed upon the face and skull of the warrior. The momentum of the lioness carried the two heavily to the ground, dead except for a few spasmodic twitchings of their muscles.

The orphaned cub stopped twenty feet away and surveyed the first great

catastrophe of his life with questioning eyes. He wanted to approach his dam but a natural fear of the man-scent held him away. Presently he commenced to whine in a tone that always brought his mother to him hurriedly; but this time she did not come—she did not even rise and look toward him. He was puzzled—he could not understand it. He continued to cry, feeling all the while more sad and more lonely. Gradually he crept closer to his mother. He saw that the strange creature she had killed did not move and after a while he felt less terror of it, so that at last he found the courage to come quite close to his mother and sniff at her. He still whined to her, but she did not answer. It dawned on him at last that

there was something wrong—that his great, beautiful mother was not as she had been —a change had come over her; yet still he clung to her, crying much until at last he fell asleep, cuddled close to her dead body.

It was thus that Tarzan found him—Tarzan and Jane, his wife, and their son, Korak the Killer, returning from the mysterious land of Pal-ul-don from which the two men had rescued Jane Clayton. At the sound of their approach the cub opened his eyes and rising, flattened his ears and snarled at them, backing close against his dead mother. At sight of him the ape-man smiled.

"Plucky little devil," he commented, taking in the story of the tragedy at a

single glance. He approached the spitting cub, expecting it to turn and run away; but it did nothing of the sort. Instead it snarled more ferociously and struck at his extended hand as he stooped and reached for it.

"What a brave little fellow," cried Jane. "Poor little orphan!"

"He's going to make a great lion, or he would have if his dam had lived," said Korak. "Look at that back—as straight and strong as a spear. Too bad the rascal has got to die."

"He doesn't have to die," returned Tarzan.

"There's not much chance for him—he'll need milk for a couple of months more, and who's going to get it for him?"

"I am," replied Tarzan.

"You're going to adopt him?"

Tarzan nodded.

Korak and Jane laughed. "That'll be fine," commented the former.

"Lord Greystoke, foster mother to the son of Numa," laughed Jane.

Tarzan smiled with them, but he did not cease his attentions toward the cub. Reaching out suddenly he caught the little lion by the scruff of its neck and then stroking it gently he talked to it in a low, crooning tone. I do not know what he said; but perhaps the cub did, for presently it ceased its struggles and no longer sought to scratch or bite the caressing hand. After that he picked it up and held it against his breast. It did not

seem afraid now, nor did it even bare its fangs against this close proximity to the erstwhile hated man-scent.

"How do you do it?" 'exclaimed Jane Clayton.

Tarzan shrugged his broad shoulders. "Your kind are not afraid of you - these are really my kind, try to civilize me as you will, and perhaps that is why they are not afraid of me when I give them the signs of friendship. Even this little rascal seems to know it, doesn't he?"

"I can never understand it," commented Korak. "I think I am rather familiar with African animals, yet I haven't the power over them or the understanding that you have. Why is it?"

"There is but one Tarzan," said Lady

Greystoke, smiling at her son teasingly, and yet her tone was not without a note of pride.

"Remember that I was born among beasts and raised by beasts," Tarzan reminded him. "Perhaps after all my father was an ape—you know Kala always insisted that he was."

"John! How can you?" exclaimed Jane. "You know perfectly well who your father and mother were."

Tarzan looked solemnly at his son and closed one eye. "Your mother never can learn to appreciate the fine qualities of the anthropoids. One might almost think that she objected to the suggestion that she had mated with one of them."

"John Clayton, I shall never speak to

you again if you don't stop saying such hideous things. I am ashamed of you. It is bad enough that you are an unregenerate wild-man, without trying to suggest that you may be an ape into the bargain."

The long journey from Pal-ul-don was almost completed—inside the week they should be again at the site of their former home. Whether anything now remained of the ruins the Germans had left was problematical. The barns and outhouses had all been burned and the interior of the bungalow partially wrecked. Those of the Waziri, the faithful native retainers of the Greystokes, who had not been killed by Hauptmann Fritz Schneider's soldiers, had rallied to the beat of the war-drum and gone to place

themselves at the disposal of the English in whatever capacity they might be found useful to the great cause of humanity. This much Tarzan had known before he set out in search of Lady Jane; but how many of his war-like Waziri had survived the war and what further had befallen his vast estates he did not know. Wandering tribes of natives, or raiding bands of Arab slavers might have completed the demolition inaugurated by the Hun, and it was likely, too, that the jungle had swept up and reclaimed its own, covering his clearings and burying amidst its riot of lush verdure every sign of man's brief trespass upon its world-old preserves.

Following the adoption of the tiny

Numa, Tarzan was compelled to an immediate consideration of the needs of his protege in planning his marches and his halts, for the cub must have sustenance and that sustenance could be naught but milk.

Lion's milk was out of the question, but fortunately they were now in a comparatively well peopled country where villages were not infrequent and where the great Lord of the Jungle was known, feared, and respected, and so it was that upon the afternoon of the day he had found the young lion Tarzan approached a village for the purpose of obtaining milk for the cub.

At first the natives appeared sullen and indifferent, looking with contempt

upon whites who traveled without a large safari—with contempt and without fear. With no safari these strangers could carry no presents for them, nor anything wherewith to repay for the food they would doubtless desire, and with no askaris they could not demand food, or rather they could not enforce an order, nor could they protect themselves should it seem worth while to molest them. Sullen and indifferent the natives seemed, yet they were scarce unconcerned, their curiosity being aroused by the unusual apparel and ornamentation of these whites. They saw them almost as naked as themselves and armed similarly except that one, the younger man, carried a rifle. All three

wore the trappings of Pal-ul-don, primitive and barbaric, and entirely strange to the eyes of the simple blacks.

"Where is your chief?" asked Tarzan as he strode into the village amongst the women, the children, and the yapping dogs.

A few dozing warriors rose from the shadows of the huts where they had been lying and approached the newcomers.

"The chief sleeps," replied one. "Who are you to awaken him? What do you want?"

"I wish to speak to your chief. Go and fetch him!"

The warrior looked at him in wide-eyed amaze, and then broke into a loud laugh.

"The chief must be brought to him," he cried, addressing his fellows, and then, laughing loudly, he slapped his thigh and nudged those nearest him with his elbows.

"Tell him," continued the ape-man, "that Tarzan would speak with him."

Instantly the attitude of his auditors underwent a remarkable transformation —they fell back from him and they ceased laughing —their eyes very wide and round. He who had laughed loudest became suddenly solemn. "Bring mats," he cried, "for Tarzan and his people to sit upon, while I fetch Umanga the chief," and off he ran as fast as he could as though glad of the excuse to escape the presence of the mighty one he feared

he had offended.

It made no difference now that they had no safari, no askaris, nor any presents. The villagers were vying with one another to do them honor. Even before the chief came many had already brought presents of food and ornaments. Presently Umanga appeared. He was an old man who had been a chief even before Tarzan of the Apes was born. His manner was patriarchal and dignified and he greeted his guest as one great man might greet another, yet he was undeniably pleased that the Lord of the Jungle had honored his village with a visit.

When Tarzan explained his wishes and exhibited the lion cub Umanga

assured him that there would be milk a-plenty so long as Tarzan honored them with his presence—warm milk, fresh from the chief's own goats. As they palavered the ape-man's keen eyes took in every detail of the village and its people, and presently they alighted upon a large bitch among the numerous curs that overran the huts and the street. Her udder was swollen with milk and the sight of it suggested a plan to Tarzan. He jerked a thumb in the direction of the animal. "I would buy her," he said to Umanga.

"She is yours, Bwana, without payment," replied the chief. "She whelped two days since and last night her pups were all stolen from her nest,

doubtless by a great snake; but if you will accept them I will give you instead as many younger and fatter dogs as you wish, for I am sure that this one would prove poor eating."

"I do not wish to eat her," replied Tarzan. "I will take her along with me to furnish milk for the cub. Have her brought to me."

Some boys then caught the animal and tying a thong about its neck dragged it to the ape-man. Like the lion, the dog was at first afraid, for the scent of the Tarmangani was not as the scent of the blacks, and it snarled and snapped at its new master; but at length he won the animal's confidence so that it lay quietly beside him while he stroked its head. To

get the lion close to it was, however, another matter, for here both were terrified by the enemy scent of the other —the lion snarling and spitting arid the dog bare- fanged and growling. It required patience—infinite patience — but at last the thing was an accomplished fact and the cur bitch suckled the son of Numa. Hunger had succeeded in overcoming the natural suspicion of the lion, while the firm yet kindly attitude of the ape-man had won the confidence of the canine, which had been accustomed through life to more of cuffs and kicks than kindness.

That night Tarzan had the dog tied ill the hut he occupied, and twice before morning he made her lie while the cub

fed. The next day they took leave of Umanga and his people and with the dog still upon a leash trotting beside them they set off once more toward home, the young lion cuddled in the hollow of one of Tarzan's arms or carried in a sack slung across his shoulder.

They named the lion Jad-bal-ja, which in the language of the pithecanthropi of Pal-ul-don, means the Golden Lion, because of his color. Every day he became more accustomed to them and to his foster mother, who finally came to accept him as flesh of her flesh. The bitch they called Za, meaning girl. The second day they removed her leash and she followed them willingly through the jungle, nor ever after did she

seek to leave them, nor was happy unless she was near one of the three.

As the moment approached when the trail should break from the jungle onto the edge of the rolling plain where their home had been, the three were filled with suppressed excitement, though none uttered a syllable of the hope and fear that was in the heart of each. What would they find? What could they find other than the same tangled mass of vegetation that the ape-man had cleared away to build his home when first he had come there with his bride?

At last they stepped from the concealing verdure of the forest to look out across the plain where, in the distance, the outlines of the bungalow

had once been clearly discernible nestled amidst the trees and shrubs that had been retained or imported to beautify the grounds.

"Look!" cried Lady Jane. "It is there—it is still there!"

"But what are those other things to the left, beyond it?" asked Korak.

"They are the huts of natives," replied Tarzan.

"The fields are being cultivated!" exclaimed the woman.

"And some of the outbuildings have been rebuilt," said Tarzan. "It can mean but one thing—the Waziri have come back from the war—my faithful Waziri. They have restored what the Hun destroyed and are watching over our

home until we return."

2. THE TRAINING OF JAD-BAL-JA

And so Tarzan of the Apes, and Jane Clayton, and Korak came home after a long absence and with them came Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, and Za, the bitch. Among the first to meet them and to welcome them home was old Muviro, father of Wasimbu, who had given his life in defense of the home and wife of the ape-man.

"Ah, Bwana," cried the faithful black, "my old eyes are made young again by the sight of you. It has been long that you have been gone, but though many doubted that you would return, old Muviro knew that the great world held

nothing that might overcome his master. And so he knew, too, that his master would return to the home of his love and the land where his faithful Waziri awaited him; but that she, whom we have mourned as dead, should have returned is beyond belief, and great shall be the rejoicing in the huts of the Waziri tonight. And the earth shall tremble to the dancing feet of the warriors and the heavens ring with the glad cries of their women, since the three they love most on earth have come back to them."

And in truth, great indeed was the rejoicing in the huts of the Waziri. And not for one night alone, but for many nights did the dancing and the rejoicing continue until Tarzan was compelled to

put a stop to the festivities that he and his family might gain a few hours of unbroken slumber. The ape-man found that not only had his faithful Waziri, under the equally faithful guidance of his English foreman, Jervis, completely rehabilitated his stables, corrals, and outbuildings as well as the native huts, but had restored the interior of the bungalow, so that in all outward appearances the place was precisely as it had been before the raid of the Germans.

Jervis was at Nairobi on the business of the estate, and it was some days after their arrival that he returned to the ranch. His surprise and happiness were no less genuine than those of the Waziri. With

the chief and warriors he sat for hours at the feet of the Big Bwana, listening to an account of the strange land of Pal-ul-don and the adventures that had befallen the three during Lady Greystoke's captivity there, and with the Waziri he marveled at the queer pets the ape-man had brought back with him. That Tarzan might have fancied a mongrel native cur was strange enough, but that he should have adopted a cub of his hereditary enemies, Numa and Sabor, seemed beyond all belief. And equally surprising to them all was the manner of Tarzan's education of the cub.

The golden lion and his foster mother occupied a corner of the ape-man's bedroom, and many was the hour each

day that he spent in training and educating the little spotted, yellow ball —all playfulness and affection now, but one day to grow into a great, savage beast of prey.

As the days passed and the golden lion grew, Tarzan taught it many tricks —to fetch and carry, to lie motionless in hiding at his almost inaudible word of command, to move from point to point as he indicated, to hunt for hidden things by scent and to retrieve them, and when meat was added to its diet he fed it always in a way that brought grim smiles to the savage lips of the Waziri warriors, for Tarzan had built for him a dummy in the semblance of a man and the meat that the lion was to eat was

fastened always at the throat of the dummy. Never did the manner of feeding vary. At a word from the ape-man the golden lion would crouch, belly to the ground, and then Tarzan would point at the dummy and whisper the single word "kill." However hungry he might be, the lion learned never to move toward his meat until that single word had been uttered by its master; and then with a rush and a savage growl it drove straight for the flesh. While it was little it had difficulty at first in clambering up the dummy to the savory morsel fastened at the figure's throat, but as it grew older and larger it gained the objective more easily, and finally a single leap would carry it to its goal and down would go

the dummy upon its back with the young lion tearing at its throat.

There was one lesson that, of all the others, was most difficult to learn and it is doubtful that any other than Tarzan of the Apes, reared by beasts, among beasts, could have overcome the savage blood-lust of the carnivore and rendered his natural instinct subservient to the will of his master. It took weeks and months of patient endeavor to accomplish this single item of the lion's education, which consisted in teaching him that at the word "fetch" he must find any indicated object and return with it to his master, even the dummy with raw meat tied at its throat, and that he must not touch the meat nor harm the dummy

nor any other article that he was fetching, but place them carefully at the ape-man's feet. Afterward he learned always to be sure of his reward, which usually consisted in a double portion of the meat that he loved best.

Lady Greystoke and Korak were often interested spectators of the education of the golden lion, though the former expressed mystification as to the purpose of such elaborate training of the young cub and some misgivings as to the wisdom of the ape-man's program.

"What in the world can you do with such a brute after he is grown?" she asked. "He bids fair to be a mighty Numa. Being accustomed to men he will be utterly fearless of them, and having

fed always at the throat of a dummy he will look there at the throat of living men for his food hereafter."

"He will feed only upon what I tell him to feed," replied the ape-man.

"But you do not expect him to feed always upon men?" she interrogated, laughingly.

"He will never feed upon men."

"But how can you prevent it, having taught him from cubhood always to feed upon men?"

"I am afraid, Jane, that you under-estimate the intelligence of a lion, or else I very much over-estimate it. If your theory is correct the hardest part of my work is yet before me, but if I am right it is practically complete now. However,

we will experiment a bit and see which is right. We shall take Jad-bal-ja out upon the plain with us this afternoon. Game is plentiful and we shall have no difficulty in ascertaining just how much control I have over young Numa after all."

"I'll wager a hundred pounds," said Korak, laughing, "that he does just what he jolly well pleases after he gets a taste of live blood."

"You're on, my son," said the ape-man. I think I am going to show you and your mother this afternoon what you or anyone else never dreamed could be accomplished."

"Lord Greystoke, the world's premier animal trainer!" cried Lady Greystoke,

and Tarzan joined them in their laughter.

"It is not animal training," said the ape-man. "The plan upon which I work would be impossible to anyone but Tarzan of the Apes. Let us take a hypothetical case to illustrate what I mean. There comes to you some creature whom you hate, whom by instinct and heredity you consider a deadly enemy. You are afraid of him. You understand no word that he speaks. Finally, by means sometimes brutal he impresses upon your mind his wishes. You may do the thing he wants, but do you do it with a spirit of unselfish loyalty? You do not - you do it under compulsion, hating the creature that forces his will upon you. At any moment that you felt it was in your

power to do so, you would disobey him. You would even go further—you would turn upon him and destroy him. On the other hand, there comes to you one with whom you are familiar; he is a friend, a protector. He understands and speaks the language that you understand and speak. He has fed you, he has gained your confidence by kindness and protection, he asks you to do something for him. Do you refuse? No, you obey willingly. It is thus that the golden lion will obey me."

"As long as it suits his purpose to do so," commented Korak.

"Let me go a step farther then," said the ape-man. "Suppose that this creature, whom you love and obey, has the power to punish, even to kill you, if it is

necessary so to do to enforce his commands. How then about your obedience?"

"We'll see," said Korak, "how easily the golden lion will make one hundred pounds for me."

That afternoon they set out across the plain, Jad-bal-ja following Tarzan's horse's heels. They dismounted at a little clump of trees some distance from the bungalow and from there proceeded onward warily toward a swale in which antelopes were usually to be found, moving up which they came cautiously to the heavy brush that bordered the swale upon their side. There was Tarzan, Jane, and Korak, and close beside Tarzan the golden lion— four jungle hunters—and

of the four Jad-bal-ja, the lion, was the least accomplished. Stealthily they crawled through the brush, scarce a leaf rustling to their passage, until at last they looked down into the swale upon a small herd of antelope grazing peacefully below. Closest to them was an old buck, and him Tarzan pointed out in some mysterious manner to Jad-bal-ja.

"Fetch him," he whispered, and the golden lion rumbled a scarce audible acknowledgment of the command.

Stealthily he worked his way through the brush. The antelopes fed on, unsuspecting. The distance separating the lion from his prey was over great for a successful charge, and so Jad-bal-ja waited, hiding in the brush, until the

antelope should either graze closer to him or turn its back toward him. No sound came from the four watching the grazing herbivora, nor did the latter give any indication of a suspicion of the nearness of danger. The old buck moved slowly closer to Jad-bal-ja. Almost imperceptibly the lion was gathering for the charge. The only noticeable movement was the twitching of his tail's tip, and then, as lightning from the sky, as an arrow from a bow, he shot from immobility to tremendous speed in an instant. He was almost upon the buck before the latter realized the proximity of danger, and then it was too late, for scarcely had the antelope wheeled than the lion rose upon its hind legs and

seized it, while the balance of the herd broke into precipitate flight.

"Now," said Korak, "we shall see."

"He will bring the antelope to me," said Tarzan confidently.

The golden lion hesitated a moment, growling over the carcass of his kill. Then he seized it by the back and with his head turned to one side dragged it along the ground beside him, as he made his way slowly back toward Tarzan. Through the brush he dragged the slain antelope until he had dropped it at the feet of his master, where he stood, looking up at the face of the ape-man with an expression that could not have been construed into aught but pride in his achievement and a plea for

commendation.

Tarzan stroked his head and spoke to him in a low voice, praising him, and then, drawing his hunting knife, he cut the jugular of the antelope and let the blood from the carcass. Jane and Korak stood close, watching Jad-bal-ja - what would the lion do with the smell of fresh, hot blood in his nostrils? He sniffed at it and growled, and with bared fangs he eyed the three wickedly. The ape-man pushed him away with his open palm and the lion growled again angrily and snapped at him.

Quick is Numa, quick is Bara, the deer, but Tarzan of the Apes is lightning. So swiftly did he strike, and so heavily, that Jad-bal- ja was falling on his back

almost in the very instant that he had growled at his master. Swiftly he came to his feet again and the two stood facing one another.

"Down!" commanded the ape-man. "Lie down, Jad-bal-ja!" His voice was low and firm. The lion hesitated but for an instant, and then lay down as Tarzan of the Apes had taught him to do at the word of command. Tarzan turned and lifted the carcass of the antelope to his shoulder.

"Come," he said to Jad-bal-ja. "Heel!" and without another glance at the carnivore he moved off toward the horses.

"I might have known it," said Korak, with a laugh, "and saved my hundred

pounds."

"Of course you might have known it," said his mother.

3. A MEETING OF MYSTERY

A rather attractive-looking, though over-dressed, young woman was dining in a second-rate chop-house in London. She was noticeable, not so much for her fine figure and coarsely beautiful face as for the size and appearance of her companion, a large, well-proportioned man in the mid-twenties, with such a tremendous beard that it gave him the appearance of hiding in ambush. He stood fully three inches over six feet. His shoulders were broad, his chest deep, and his hips narrow. His physique, his carriage, everything about him, suggested indubitably the trained athlete.

The two were in close conversation, a conversation that occasionally gave every evidence of bordering upon heated argument.

"I tell you," said the man, "that I do not see what we need of the others. Why should they share with us—why divide into six portions that which you and I might have alone?"

"It takes money to carry the plan through," she replied, "and neither you nor I have any money. They have it and they will back us with it—me for my knowledge and you for your appearance and your strength. They searched for you, Esteban, for two years, and, now that they have found you, I should not care to be in your shoes if you betrayed

them. They would just as soon slit your throat as not, Esteban, if they no more than thought they couldn't use you, now that you have all the details of their plan. But if you should try to take all the profit from them—"

She paused, shrugging her shoulders. "No, my dear, I love life too well to join you in any such conspiracy as that."

But I tell you, Flora, we ought to get more out of it than they want to give. You furnish all the knowledge and I take all the risk—why shouldn't we have more than a sixth apiece?"

"Talk to them yourself, then, Esteban," said the girl, with a shrug, "but if you will take my advice you will be satisfied with what you are offered. Not

only have I the information, without which they can do nothing, but I found you into the bargain, yet I do not ask it all—I shall be perfectly satisfied with one-sixth, and I can assure you that if you do not muddle the thing, one-sixth of what you bring out will be enough for any one of us for the rest of his natural life."

The man did not seem convinced, and the young woman had a feeling that he would bear watching. Really, she knew very little about him, and had seen him in person only a few times since her first discovery of him some two months before. upon the screen of a London cinema house in a spectacular feature in which he bad played the role of a Roman

soldier of the Praetorian Guard.

Here his heroic size and perfect physique had alone entitled him to consideration, for his part was a minor one, and doubtless of all the thousands who saw him upon the silver sheet Flora Hawkes was the only one who took more than a passing interest in him, and her interest was aroused, not by his histrionic ability, but rather because for some two years she and her confederates had been searching for such a type as Esteban Miranda so admirably represented. To find him in the flesh bade fair to prove difficult of accomplishment, but after a month of seemingly fruitless searching she finally discovered him among a score of extra

men at the studio of one of London's lesser producing companies. She needed no other credentials than her good looks to form his acquaintance, and while that was ripening into intimacy she made no mention to him of the real purpose of her association with him.

That he was a Spaniard and apparently of good family was evident to her, and that he was unscrupulous was to be guessed by the celerity with which he agreed to take part in the shady transaction that had been conceived in the mind of Flora Hawkes, and the details of which had been perfected by her and her four confederates. So, therefore, knowing that he was unscrupulous, she was aware that every

precaution must be taken to prevent him taking advantage of the knowledge of their plan that he must one day have in detail, the key to which she, Up to the present moment, had kept entirely to herself, not even confiding it to any one of her four other confederates.

They sat for a moment in silence, toying with the empty glasses from which they had been drinking. Presently she looked up to find his gaze fixed upon her and an expression in his eyes that even a less sophisticated Woman than Flora Hawkes might readily have interpreted.

"You can make me do anything you want, Flora," he said, "for when I am with you I forget the gold, and think only

of that other reward which you continually deny me, but which one day I shall win."

"Love and business do not mix well," replied the girl. "Wait until you have succeeded in this work, Esteban, and then we may talk of love."

"You do not love me," he whispered, hoarsely. "I know—I have seen —that each of the others loves you. That is why I could hate them. And if I thought that you loved one of them, I could cut his heart out. Sometimes I have thought that you did—first one of them and then another. You are too familiar with them, Flora. I have seen John Peebles squeeze your hand when he thought no one was looking, and when you dance with Dick

Throck he holds you too close and you dance cheek to cheek. I tell you I do not like it, Flora, and one of these days I shall forget all about the gold and think only of you, and then something will happen and there will not be so many to divide the ingots that I shall bring back from Africa. And Bluber and Kraski are almost as bad; perhaps Kraski is the worst of all, for he is a good-looking devil and I do not like the way in which you cast sheep's eyes at him."

The fire of growing anger was leaping to the girl's eyes. With an angry gesture she silenced him.

"What business is it of yours, Señor Miranda, who I choose for my friends, or how I treat them or how they treat

me? I will have you understand that I have known these men for years, while I have known you for but a few weeks, and if any has a right to dictate my behavior, which, thank God, none has, it would be one of them rather than you."

His eyes blazed angrily.

"It is as I thought!" he cried. "You love one of them." He half rose from the table and leaned across it toward her, menacingly. "Just let me find out which one it is and I will cut him into pieces!"

He ran his fingers through his long, black hair until it stood up on end like the mane of an angry lion. His eyes were blazing with a light that sent a chill of dread through the girl's heart. He appeared a man temporarily bereft of

reason—if he were not a maniac he most certainly looked one, and the 'girl was afraid and realized that she must placate him.

"Come, come, Esteban," she whispered softly, there is no need for working yourself into a towering rage over nothing. I have not said that I loved one of these, nor have I said that I do not love you, but I am not used to being wooed in such fashion. Perhaps your Spanish señoritas like it, but I am an English girl and if you love me treat me as an English lover would treat me.

"You have not said that you loved one of these others—no, but on the other hand you have not said that you do not love one of them— tell me, Flora, which

one of them is it that you love?"

His eyes were still blazing, and his great frame trembling with suppressed passion.

"I do not love any of them, Esteban," she replied, "nor, as yet, do I love you. But I could, Esteban, that much I will tell you. I could love you, Esteban, as I could never love another, but I shall not permit myself to do so until after you have returned and we are free to live where and how we like. Then, maybe—but, even so, I do not promise."

"You had better promise," he said, sullenly, though evidently somewhat mollified. "You had better promise, Flora, for I care nothing for the gold if I may not have you also."

"Hush," she cautioned, "here they come now, and it is about time; they are fully a half-hour late."

The man turned his eyes in the direction of her gaze, and the two sat watching the approach of four men who had just entered the chop-house. Two of them were evidently Englishmen—big, meaty fellows of the middle class, who looked what they really were, former pugilists; the third, Adolph Bluber, was a short, fat German, with a round, red face and a bull neck; the other, the youngest of the four, was by far the best looking. His smooth face, clear complexion, and large dark eyes might of themselves have proven sufficient grounds for Miranda's jealousy, but

supplementing these were a mop of wavy, brown hair, the figure of a Greek god and the grace of a Russian dancer, which, in truth, was what Carl Kraski was when he chose to be other than a rogue.

The girl greeted the four pleasantly, while the Spaniard vouchsafed them but a single, surly nod, as they found chairs and seated themselves at the table.

"Hale!" cried Peebles, pounding the table to attract the attention of a waiter, "let us 'ave hale."

The suggestion met with unanimous approval, and as they waited for their drink they spoke casually of unimportant things; the heat, the circumstance that had delayed them, the trivial occurrences

since they had last met; throughout which Esteban sat in sullen silence, but after the waiter had returned and they drank to Flora, with which ceremony it had long been their custom to signalize each gathering, they got down to business.

"Now," cried Peebles, pounding the table with his meaty fist, "'ere we are, and that's that! We 'ave everything, Flora—the plans, the money, Señor Miranda—and are jolly well ready, old dear, for your part of it.

"How much money have you?" asked Flora. "It is going to take a lot of money, and there is no use starting unless you have plenty to carry on with."

Peebles turned to Bluber. "There," he said, pointing a pudgy finger at him, "is

the bloomin' treasurer. 'E can tell you 'ow much we 'ave, the fat rascal of a Dutchman."

Bluber smiled an oily smile and rubbed his fat palms together. "Vell," he said, "how much you t'ink, Miss Flora, ve should have?"

"Not less than two thousand pounds to be on the safe side," she replied quickly.

"Oi! Oi!" exclaimed Bluber. "But dot is a lot of money—two t'ousand pounds. Oi! Oi!"

The girl made a gesture of disgust. "I told you in the first place that I wouldn't have anything to do with a bunch of cheap screws, and that until you had enough money to carry the thing out properly I would not give you the maps

and directions, without which you cannot hope to reach the vaults, where there is stored enough gold to buy this whole, tight, little island if half that what I have heard them say about it is true. You can go along and spend your own money, but you've got to show me that you have at least two thousand pounds to spend before I give up the information that will make you the richest men in the world."

"The blighter's got the money," growled Throck. "Blime if I know what he's beefin' about."

"He can't help it," growled the Russian, "it's a racial characteristic; Bluber would try to jew down the marriage license clerk if he were going to get married."

"Oh, vell," sighed Bluber, "for vy should we spend more money than is necessary? If ve can do it for vone t'ousand pounds so much the better."

"Certainly," snapped the girl, "and if it don't take but one thousand, that is all that you will have to spend, but you've got to have the two thousand in case of emergencies, and from what I have seen of that country you are likely to run up against more emergencies than anything else."

"Oi! Oi!" cried Bluber.

"'E's got the money all right," said Peebles, "now let's get busy."

"He may have it, but I want to see it first," replied the girl.

"Vat you t'ink; I carry all dot money

around in my pocket?" cried Bluber.

"Can't you take our word for it?" grumbled Throck.

"You're a nice bunch of crooks to ask me that," she replied, laughing in the face of the burly ruffians. "I'll take Carl's word for it, though; if he tells me that you have it, and that it is in such shape that it can, and will, be used to pay all the necessary expenses of our expedition, I will believe him."

Peebles and Throck scowled angrily, and Miranda's eyes closed to two narrow, nasty slits, as he directed his gaze upon the Russian. Bluber, on the contrary, was affected not at all; the more he was insulted, the better, apparently, he liked it. Toward one who

treated him with consideration. or respect he would have become arrogant, while he fawned upon the hand that struck him. Kraski, alone, smiled a self-satisfied smile that set the blood of the Spaniard boiling.

"Bluber has the money, Flora," he said; "each of us has contributed his share. We'll make Bluber treasurer, because we know that he will squeeze the last farthing until it shrieks before he will let it escape him. It is our plan now to set out from London in pairs."

He drew a map from his pocket, and unfolding it, spread it out upon the table before them. With his finger he indicated a point marked X. "Here we will meet and here we will equip our expedition.

Bluber and Miranda will go first; then Peebles and Throck. By the time that you and I arrive everything will be in shape for moving immediately into the interior, where we shall establish a permanent camp, off the beaten track and as near our objective as possible. Miranda will disport himself behind his whiskers until he is ready to set out upon the final stage of his long journey. I understand that he is well schooled in the part that he is to play and that he can depict the character to perfection. As he will have only ignorant natives and wild beasts to deceive it should not tax his histrionic ability too greatly." There was a veiled note of sarcasm in the soft, drawling tone that caused the black eyes of the

Spaniard to gleam wickedly.

"Do I understand," asked Miranda, his soft tone belying his angry scowl, "that you and Miss Hawkes travel alone to X?"

"You do, unless your understanding is poor," replied the Russian.

The Spaniard half rose from the table and leaned across it menacingly toward Kraski. The girl, who was sitting next to him, seized his coat.

"None of that!" she said, dragging him back into his chair. "There has been too much of it among you already, and if there is any more I shall cut you all and seek more congenial companions for my expedition."

"Yes, cut it out; 'ere we are, and that's

that!" exclaimed Peebles belligerently.

"John's right," rumbled Throck, in his deep bass, "and I'm here to back him up. Flora's right, and I'm here to back her up. And if there is any more of it, blime if I don't bash a couple of you pretty 'uns," and he looked first at Miranda and then at Kraski.

"Now," soothed Bluber, "let's all shake hands and be good friends."

"Right-o," cried Peebles, "that's the talk. Give 'im your 'and, Esteban. Come, Carl, bury the 'atchet. We can't start in on this thing with no hanimosities, and 'ere we are, and that's that."

The Russian, feeling secure in his position with Flora, and therefore in a magnanimous mood, extended his hand

across the table toward the Spaniard. For a moment Esteban hesitated.

"Come, man, shake!" growled Throck, "or you can go back to your job as an extra man, blime, and we'll find someone else to do your work and divvy the swag with."

Suddenly the dark countenance of the Spaniard was lighted by a pleasant smile. He extended his hand quickly and clasped Kraski's. "Forgive me," he said, "I am hot-tempered, but I mean nothing. Miss Hawkes is right, we must all be friends, and here's my hand on it, Kraski, as far as I am concerned."

"Good," said Kraski, "and I am sorry if I offended you;" but he forgot that the other was an actor, and if he could have

seen into the depths of that dark soul he would have shuddered.

"Und now, dot ve are all good friends," said Bluber, rubbing his hands together unctuously, vy not arrange for vhen ve shall commence starting to finish up everyt'ings? Miss Flora, she gives me the map und der directions und we start commencing immediately."

"Loan me a pencil, Carl," said the girl, and when the man had handed her one she searched out a spot upon the map some distance into the interior from X, where she drew a tiny circle. "This is O," she said. "When we all reach here you shall have the final directions and not before."

Bluber threw up his hands. "Oi! Miss

Flora, vhat you t'ink, ve spend two t'ousand pounds to buy a pig in a poke? Oi! Oi! you vouldn't ask us to do dot? Ve must see everyt'ing, ve must know everyt'ing, before ve spend vun farthing."

"Yes, and 'ere we are, and that's that!" roared John Peebles, striking the table with his fist.

The girl rose leisurely from her seat. "Oh, very well," she said with a shrug. "If you feel that way about it we might as well call it all off."

"Oh, vait, vait, Miss Flora," cried Bluber, rising hurriedly. "Don't be ogcited. But can't you see vere ve are? Two t'ousand pounds is a lot of money, and ve are good business men. Ve

shouldn't be spending it all vit'out getting not'ings for it."

"I am not asking you to spend it and get nothing for it," replied the girl, tartly; "but if anyone has got to trust anyone else in this outfit, it is you who are going to trust me. If I give you all the information I have, there is nothing in the world that could prevent you from going ahead and leaving me out in the cold, and I don't intend that that shall happen."

"But we are not gonoffs, Miss Flora," insisted the Jew. "Ve vould not t'ink for vun minute of cheating you."

"You're not angels, either, Bluber, any of you, retorted the girl. "If you want to go ahead with this you've got to do it in my way, and I am going to be there at the

finish to see that I get what is coming to me. You've taken my word for it, up to the present time, that I had the dope, and now you've got to take it the rest of the way or all bets are off. What good would it do me to go over into a bally jungle and suffer all the hardships that we are bound to suffer, dragging you along with me, if I were not going to be able to deliver the goods when I got there? And I am not such a softy as to think I could get away with it with a bunch of bandits like you if I tried to put anything of that kind over on you. And as long as I do play straight I feel perfectly safe, for I know that either Esteban or Carl will look after me, and I don't know but what the rest of you would, too. Is it

a go or isn't it?"

"Vell, John, vot do you und Dick t'ink?" asked Bluber, addressing the two ex-prize-fighters. "Carl, I know he vill t'ink vhatever Flora t'inks. Hey? V'at?"

"Blime," said Throck, "I never was much of a hand at trusting nobody unless I had to, but it looks now as though we had to trust Flora."

"Same 'ere," said John Peebles. "If you try any funny work, Flora—" He made a significant movement with his finger across his throat.

"I understand, John," said the girl with a smile, "and I know that you would do it as quickly for two pounds as you would for two thousand. But you are all agreed, then, to carry on according to my

plans? You too, Carl?"

The Russian nodded. "Whatever the rest say goes with me," he remarked.

And so the gentle little coterie discussed their plans in so far as they could—each minutest detail that would be necessary to place them all at the 0 which the girl had drawn upon the map.

4. WHAT THE FOOTPRINTS TOLD

When Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, was two years old, he was as magnificent a specimen of his kind as the Greystokes had ever looked upon. In size he was far above the average of that attained by mature males; in conformation he was superb, his noble head and his great black mane giving him the appearance of a full-grown male, while in intelligence he far outranked his savage brothers of the forest.

Jad-bal-ja was a never-ending source of pride and delight to the ape-man who had trained him so carefully, and nourished him cunningly for the purpose

of developing to the full all the latent powers within him. The lion no longer slept at the foot of his master's bed, but occupied a strong cage that Tarzan had had constructed for him at the rear of the bungalow, for who knew better than the ape-man that a lion, wherever he may be or however he may have been raised, is yet a lion—a savage flesh-eater. For the first year he had roamed at will about the house and grounds; after that he went abroad only in the company of Tarzan. Often the two roamed the plain and the jungle hunting together. In a way the lion was almost equally as familiar with Jane and Korak, and neither of them feared or mistrusted him, but toward Tarzan of the Apes did he show the greatest affection.

The blacks of Tarzan's household he tolerated, nor did he ever offer to molest any of the domestic animals or fowl, after Tarzan had impressed upon him in his early cubhood that appropriate punishment followed immediately upon any predatory excursion into the corrals or henhouses. The fact that he was never permitted to become ravenously hungry was doubtless the deciding factor in safeguarding the live stock of the farm.

The man and the beast seemed to understand one another perfectly. It is doubtful that the lion understood all that Tarzan said to him, but be that as it may the ease with which he communicated his wishes to the lion bordered upon the uncanny. The obedience that a

combination of sternness and affection had elicited from the cub had become largely habit in the grown lion. At Tarzan's command he would go to great distances and bring back antelope or zebra, laying his kill at his master's feet without offering to taste the flesh himself, and he had even retrieved living animals without harming them. Such, then, was the golden lion that roamed the primeval forest with his godlike master.

It was at about this time that there commenced to drift in to the ape-man rumors of a predatory band to the west and south of his estate; ugly stories of ivory-raiding, slave-running and torture, such as had not disturbed the quiet of the ape-man's savage jungle since the days

of Sheik Amor Ben Khatour, and there came other tales, too, that caused Tarzan of the Apes to pucker his brows in puzzlement and thought, and then a month elapsed during which Tarzan heard no more of the rumors from the west.

* * * * *

The war had reduced the resources of the Greystokes to but a meager income. They had given practically all to the cause of the Allies, and now what little had remained to them had been all but exhausted in the rehabilitation of Tarzan's African estate.

"It looks very much, Jane," he said to his wife one night, "as though another trip to Opar were on the books."

"I dread to think of it. I do not want

you to go," she said. "You have come away from that awful city twice, but barely with your life. The third time you may not be so fortunate. We have enough, John, to permit us to live here in comfort and in happiness. Why jeopardize those two things which are greater than all wealth in another attempt to raid the treasure vaults?"

"There is no danger, Jane," he assured her. "The last time Werper dogged my footsteps, and between him and the earthquake I was nearly done for. But there is no chance of any such combination of circumstances thwarting me again.

"You will not go alone, John?" she asked. "You will take Korak with you?"

"No," he said, "I shall not take him. He must remain here with you, for really my long absences are more dangerous to you than to me. I shall take fifty of the Waziri, as porters, to carry the gold, and thus we should be able to bring out enough to last us for a long time.

"And Jad-bal-ja," she asked, "shall you take him?"

"No, he had better remain here; Korak can look after him and take him out for a hunt occasionally. I am going to travel light and fast and it would be too hard a trip for him—lions don't care to move around much in the hot sun, and as we shall travel mostly by day I doubt if Jad-bal-ja would last long."

And so it befell that Tarzan of the

Apes set out once more upon the long trail that leads to Opar. Behind him marched fifty giant Waziri, the pick of the warlike tribe that had adopted Tarzan as its Chief. Upon the veranda of the bungalow stood Jane and Korak waving their adieux, while from the rear of the building there came to the ape-man's ears the rumbling roar of Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion. And as they marched away the voice of Numa accompanied them out upon the rolling plain, until at last it trailed off to nothingness in the distance.

His speed determined by that of the slowest of the blacks, Tarzan made but comparatively rapid progress. Opar lay a good twenty- five days' trek from the

farm for men traveling light, as were these, but upon the return journey, laden as they would be with the ingots of gold, their progress would be slower. And because of this the ape- man had allotted two months for the venture. His safari, consisting of seasoned warriors only, permitted of really rapid progress. They carried no supplies, for they were all hunters and were moving through a country in which game was abundant—no need then for burdening themselves with the cumbersome impedimenta of white huntsmen.

A thorn boma and a few leaves furnished their shelter for the night, while spears and arrows and the powers of their great white chief insured that

their bellies would never go empty. With the picked men that he had brought with him, Tarzan expected to make the trip to Opar in twenty-one days, though had he been traveling alone he would have moved two or three times as fast, since, when Tarzan elected to travel with speed, he fairly flew through the jungle, equally at home in it by day or by night and practically tireless.

It was a mid-afternoon the third week of the march that Tarzan, ranging far ahead of his blacks in search of game, came suddenly upon the carcass of Bara, the deer, a feathered arrow protruding from its flank. It was evident that Bara had been wounded at some little distance from where it had lain down to

die, for the location of the missile indicated that the wound could not have caused immediate death. But what particularly caught the attention of the ape-man, even before he had come close enough to make a minute examination, was the design of the arrow, and immediately he withdrew it from the body of the deer he knew it for what it was, and was filled with such wonderment as might come to you or to me were we to see a native Swazi headdress upon Broadway or the Strand, for the arrow was precisely such as one may purchase in most any sporting-goods house in any large city of the world—such an arrow as is sold and used for archery practice in the parks

and suburbs. Nothing could have been more incongruous than this silly toy in the heart of savage Africa, and yet that it had done its work effectively was evident by the dead body of Bara, though the ape-man guessed that the shaft had been sped by no practiced, savage hand.

Tarzan's curiosity was aroused and also his inherent jungle caution. One must know his jungle well to survive long the jungle, and if one would know it well he must let no unusual occurrence or circumstance go unexplained. And so it was that Tarzan set out upon the back track of Bara for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, the nature of Bara's slayer. The bloody spoor was easily followed and the ape-man

wondered why it was that the hunter had not tracked and overtaken his quarry, which had evidently been dead since the previous day. He found that Bara had traveled far, and the sun was already low in the west before Tarzan came upon the first indications of the slayer of the animal. These were in the nature of footprints that filled him with quite as much surprise as had the arrow. He examined them carefully, and, stooping low, even sniffed at them with his sensitive nostrils. Improbable, nay impossible though it seemed, the naked footprints were those of a white man—a large man, probably as large as Tarzan himself. As the foster-son of Kala stood gazing upon the spoor of the mysterious

stranger he ran the fingers of one hand through his thick, black hair in a characteristic gesture indicative of deep puzzlement.

What naked white man could there be in Tarzan's jungle who slew Tarzan's game with the pretty arrow of an archery club? It was incredible that there should be such a one, and yet there recurred to the ape-man's mind the vague rumors that he had heard weeks before. Determined to solve the mystery he set out now upon the trail of the stranger—an erratic trail which wound about through the jungle, apparently aimlessly, prompted, Tarzan guessed, by the ignorance of an inexperienced hunter. But night fell before he had arrived at a solution of the

riddle, and it was pitch dark as the ape-man turned his steps toward camp.

He knew that his Waziri would be expecting meat and it was not Tarzan's intention to disappoint them, though he then discovered that he was not the only carnivore hunting the district that night. The coughing grunt of a lion close by apprised him of it first, and then, from the distance, the deep roar of another. But of what moment was it to the ape-man that others hunted? It would not be the first time that he had pitted his cunning, his strength, and his agility against the other hunters of his savage world—both man and beast.

And so it was that Tarzan made his kill at last, snatching it almost from

under the nose of a disappointed and infuriated lion—a fat antelope that the latter had marked as his own. Throwing his kill to his shoulder almost in the path of the charging Numa, the ape-man swung lightly to the lower terraces and with a taunting laugh for the infuriated cat, vanished noiselessly into the night.

He found the camp and his hungry Waziri without trouble, and so great was their faith in him that they not for a moment doubted but that he would return with meat for them.

Early the following morning Tarzan set out again toward Opar, and directing his Waziri to continue the march in the most direct way, he left them that he might pursue further his investigations of

the mysterious presence in his jungle that the arrow and the footsteps had apprised him of.

Coming again to the spot at which darkness had forced him to abandon his investigations, he took up the spoor of the stranger. Nor had he followed it far before he came upon further evidence of the presence of this new and malign personality—stretched before him in the trail was the body of a giant ape, one of the tribe of great anthropoids among whom Tarzan had been raised. Protruding from the hairy abdomen of the Mangani was another of the machine-made arrows of civilization. The ape-man's eyes narrowed and a scowl darkened his brow. Who was this who

dared invade his sacred preserves and slaughter thus ruthlessly Tarzan's people?

A low growl rumbled in the throat of the ape-man. Sloughed with the habiliments of civilization was the thin veneer of civilization that Tarzan wore among white men. No English lord was this who looked upon the corpse of his hairy cousin, but another jungle beast in whose breast raged the unquenchable fire of suspicion and hatred for the man-thing that is the heritage of the jungle-bred. A beast of prey viewed the bloody work of ruthless man. Nor was there in the consciousness of Tarzan any acknowledgment of his blood relationship to the killer.

Realizing that the trail had been made upon the second day before, Tarzan hastened on in pursuit of the slayer. There was no doubt in his mind but that plain murder had been committed, for he was sufficiently familiar with the traits of the Mangani to know that none of them would provoke assault unless driven to it.

Tarzan was traveling up wind, and some half-hour after he had discovered the body of the ape his keen nostrils caught the scent- spoor of others of its kind. Knowing the timidity of these fierce denizens of the jungle he moved forward now with great wariness, lest, warned of his approach, they take flight before they were aware of his identity.

He did not see them often, yet he knew that there were always those among them who recalled him, and that through these he could always establish amicable relations with the balance of the tribe.

Owing to the denseness of the undergrowth Tarzan chose the middle terraces for his advance, and here, swinging freely and swiftly among the leafy boughs, he came presently upon the giant anthropoids. There were about twenty of them in the band, and they were engaged, in a little natural clearing, in their never-ending search for caterpillars and beetles, which formed important items in the diet of the Mangani.

A faint smile overspread the ape-

man's face as he paused upon a great branch, himself hidden by the leafy foliage about him, and watched the little band below him. Every action, every movement of the great apes, recalled vividly to Tarzan's mind the long years of his childhood, when, protected by the fierce mother-love of Kala, the she-ape, he had ranged the jungle with the tribe of Kerchak. In the romping young, he saw again Neeta and his other childhood playmates and in the adults all the great, savage brutes he had feared in youth and conquered in manhood. The ways of man may change but the ways of the ape are the same, yesterday, today and forever.

He watched them in silence for some minutes. How glad they would be to see

him when they discovered his identity! For Tarzan of the Apes was known the length and the breadth of the great jungle as the friend and protector of the Mangani. At first they would growl at him and threaten him, for they would not depend solely on either their eyes or their ears for confirmation of his identity. Not until he had entered the clearing, and bristling bulls with bared fighting fangs had circled him stiffly until they had come close enough for their nostrils to verify the evidence of their eyes and ears, would they finally accept him. Then doubtless there would be great excitement for a few minutes, until, following the instincts of the ape mind, their attention was weaned from

him by a blowing leaf, a caterpillar, or a bird's egg, and then they would move about their business, taking no further notice of him more than of any other member of the tribe. But this would not come until after each individual had smelled of him, and perhaps, pawed his flesh with calloused hands.

Now it was that Tarzan made a friendly sound of greeting, and as the apes looked up stepped from his concealment into plain view of them. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said, "mighty fighter, friend of the Mangani. Tarzan comes in friendship to his people," and with these words he dropped lightly to the lush grass of the clearing.

Instantly pandemonium reigned.

Screaming warnings, the shes raced with the young for the opposite side of the clearing, while the bulls, bristling and growling, faced the intruder.

"Come," cried Tarzan, "do you not know me? I am Tarzan of the Apes, friend of the Mangani, son of Kala, and king of the tribe of Kerchak."

"We know you," growled one of the old bulls; "yesterday we saw you when you killed Gobu. Go away or we shall kill you."

"I did not kill Gobu," replied the ape-man. "I found his dead body yesterday and I was following the spoor of his slayer, when I came upon you."

"We saw you," repeated the old bull; "go away or we shall kill you. You are

no longer the friend of the Mangani."

The ape-man stood with brows contracted in thought. It was evident that these apes really believed that they had seen him kill their fellow. What was the explanation? How could it be accounted for? Did the naked footprints of the great white man whom he had been following mean more, then, than he had guessed? Tarzan wondered. He raised his eyes and again addressed the bulls.

"It was not I who killed Gobu," he insisted. "Many of you have known me all your lives. You know that only in fair fight, as one bull fights another, have I ever killed a Mangani. You know that, of all the jungle people, the Mangani are my best friends, and that Tarzan of the

Apes is the best friend the Mangani have. How, then, could I slay one of my own people?"

"We only know," replied the old bull, "that we saw you kill Gobu. With our own eyes we saw you kill him. Go away quickly, therefore, or we shall kill you. Mighty fighter is Tarzan of the Apes, but mightier even than he are all the great bulls of Pagth. I am Pagth, king of the tribe of Pagth. Go away before we kill you."

Tarzan tried to reason with them but they would not listen, so confident were they that it was he who had slain their fellow, the bull Gobu. Finally, rather than chance a quarrel in which some of them must inevitably be killed, he turned

sorrowfully away. But more than ever, now, was he determined to seek out the slayer of Gobu that he might demand an accounting of one who dared thus invade his lifelong domain.

Tarzan trailed the spoor until it mingled with the tracks of many men - barefooted blacks, mostly, but among them the footprints of booted white men, and once he saw the footprints of a woman or a child, which, he could not tell. The trail led apparently toward the rocky hills which protected the barren valley of Opar.

Forgetful now of his original mission and imbued only with a savage desire to wrest from the interlopers a full accounting for their presence in the

jungle, and to mete out to the slayer of Gobu his just deserts, Tarzan forged ahead upon the now broad and well-marked trail of the considerable party which could not now be much more than a half-day's march ahead of him, which meant that they were doubtless now already upon the rim of the valley of Opar, if this was their ultimate destination. And what other they could have in view Tarzan could not imagine.

He had always kept closely to himself the location of Opar. In so far as he knew no white person other than Jane, and their son, Korak, knew of the location of the forgotten city of the ancient Atlantians. Yet what else could have drawn these white men, with so

large a party, into the savage, unexplored wilderness which hemmed Opar upon all sides?

Such were the thoughts that occupied Tarzan's mind as he followed swiftly the trail that led toward Opar. Darkness fell, but so fresh was the spoor that the ape-man could follow it by scent even when he could not see the imprints upon the ground, and presently, in the distance, he saw the light of a camp ahead of him.

5. THE FATAL DROPS

At home, the life in the bungalow and at the farm followed its usual routine as it had before the departure of Tarzan. Korak, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horseback, followed the activities of the farm hands and the herders, sometimes alone, but more often in company with the white foreman, Jervis, and often, especially when they rode, Jane accompanied them.

The golden lion Korak exercised upon a leash, since he was not at all confident of his powers of control over the beast, and feared lest, in the absence of his master, Jad-bal-ja might take to the forest and revert to his natural savage state. Such a lion, abroad in the

jungle, would be a distinct menace to human life, for Jad-bal-ja, reared among men, lacked that natural timidity of men that is so marked a trait of all wild beasts. Trained as he had been to make his kill at the throat of a human effigy, it required no considerable powers of imagination upon the part of Korak to visualize what might occur should the golden lion, loosed from all restraint, be thrown upon his own resources in the surrounding jungle.

It was during the first week of Tarzan's absence that a runner from Nairobi brought a cable message to Lady Greystoke, announcing the serious illness of her father in London. Mother and son discussed the situation. It would

be five or six weeks before Tarzan could return, even if they sent a runner after him, and, were Jane to await him, there would be little likelihood of her reaching her father in time. Even should she depart at once, there seemed only a faint hope that she would arrive early enough to see him alive. It was decided, therefore, that she should set out immediately, Korak accompanying her as far as Nairobi, and then returning to the ranch and resuming its general supervision until his father's return.

It is a long trek from the Greystoke estate to Nairobi, and Korak had not yet returned when, about three weeks after Tarzan's departure, a black, whose duty it was to feed and care for Jad-bal- ja,

carelessly left the door of the cage unfastened while he was cleaning it. The golden lion paced back and forth while the black wielded his broom within the cage. They were old friends, and the Waziri felt no fear of the great lion, with the result that his back was as often turned to him as not. The black was working in the far corner of the cage when Jad-bal-ja paused a moment at the door at the opposite end. The beast saw that the gate hung slightly ajar upon its hinges. Silently he raised a great padded paw and inserted it in the opening— a slight pull and the gate swung in.

Instantly the golden lion inserted his snout in the widened aperture, and as he swung the barrier aside the horrified

black looked up to see his charge drop softly to the ground outside.

"Stop! Jad-bal-ja! Stop!" screamed the frightened black, leaping after him. But the golden lion only increased his pace, and leaping the fence, loped off in the direction of the forest.

The black pursued him with brandishing broom, emitting loud yells that brought the inmates of the Waziri huts into the open, where they joined their fellow in pursuit of the lion. Across the rolling plains they followed him, but as well have sought to snare the elusive will-o'-the-wisp as this swift and wary fugitive, who heeded neither their blandishments nor their threats. And so it was that they saw the golden lion

disappear into the primeval forest and, though they searched diligently until almost dark, they were forced at length to give up their quest and return crestfallen to the farm.

Ah," cried the unhappy black, who had been responsible for the escape of Jad-bal-ja, "what will the Big Bwana say to me, what will he do to me when he finds that I have permitted the golden lion to get away!"

"You will be banished from the bungalow for a long time, Keewazi," old Muviro assured him. "And doubtless you will be sent to the grazing ground far to the east to guard the herd there, where. you will have plenty of lions for company, though they will not be as

friendly as was Jad-bal-ja. It is not half what you deserve, and were the heart of the Big Bwana not filled with love for his black children—were he like other white Bwanas old Muviro has seen—you would be lashed until you could not stand, perhaps until you died."

"I am a man," replied Keewazi. "I am a warrior and a Waziri. Whatever punishment the Big Bwana inflicts I will accept as a man should."

It was that same night that Tarzan approached the camp-fires of the strange party he had been tracking. Unseen by them, he halted in the foliage of a tree directly in the center of their camp, which was surrounded by an enormous thorn boma, and brilliantly lighted by

numerous fires which blacks were diligently feeding with branches from an enormous pile of firewood that they had evidently gathered earlier in the day for this purpose. Near the center of the camp were several tents, and before one, in the light of a fire, sat four white men. Two of them were great, bull-necked, red-faced fellows, apparently Englishmen of the lower class, the third appeared to be a short, fat, German Jew, while the fourth was a tall, slender, handsome fellow, with dark, wavy brown hair and regular features. He and the German were most meticulously garbed for Central African traveling, after the highly idealized standard of motion pictures, in fact either one of

them might have stepped directly from a screening of the latest jungle thriller. The young man was evidently not of English descent and Tarzan mentally cataloged him, almost immediately, as a Slav. Shortly after Tarzan's arrival this one arose and entered one of the nearby tents, from which Tarzan immediately heard the sound of voices in low conversation. He could not distinguish the words, but the tones of one seemed quite distinctly feminine. The three remaining at the fire were carrying on a desultory conversation, when suddenly from near at hand beyond the boma wall, a lion's roar broke the silence of the jungle.

With a startled shriek the Jew leaped

to his feet, so suddenly that he cleared the ground a good foot, and then, stepping backward, he lost his balance, tripped over his camp-stool, and sprawled upon his back.

"My Gord, Adolph!" roared one of his companions. "If you do that again, damn me if I don't break your neck. 'Ere we are, and that's that."

"Blime if 'e aint worse' n a bloomin' lion," growled the other.

The Jew crawled to his feet. "Mein Gott!" he cried, his voice quavering, "I t'ought sure he vas coming over the fence. S'elp me if I ever get out of diss, neffer again—not for all der gold in Africa vould I go t'rough vat I haf been t'rough dese past t'ree mont's. Oi! Oi!

ven I t'ink of it, Oi! Oi! Lions, und leopards, und rhinoceroses und hippopotamuses, Oi! Oi!"

His companions laughed. "Dick and I tells you right along from the beginning that you 'adn't oughter come into the interior," said one of them.

"But for vy I buy all dese do's?" wailed the German. "Mein Gott, dis suit, it stands me tventy guineas, vot I stand in. Ach, had I know somet'ing, vun guinea vould have bought me my whole wardrobe—tventy guineas for dis und no vun to see it but niggers und lions."

"And you look like 'ell in it, besides," commented one of his friends.

"Und look at it, it's all dirty and torn. How should I know it I spoil dis suit?

Mit mine own eyes I see it at der Princess Teayter, how der hero spend t'ree mont's in Africa hunting lions und killing cannibals, und ven he comes ouid he hasn't even got a grease spot on his pants—how should I know it Africa was so dirty und full of thorns?"

It was at this point that Tarzan of the Apes elected to drop quietly into the circle of firelight before them. The two Englishmen leaped to their feet, quite evidently startled, and the Jew turned and took a half step as though in flight, but immediately his eyes rested upon the ape-man he halted, a look of relief supplanting that of terror which had overspread his countenance, as Tarzan had dropped upon them apparently from

the heavens.

"Mein Gott, Esteban," shrilled the German, "vy you come back so soon, and for vy you come back like dot, sudden—don't you suppose ve got nerves?"

Tarzan was angry, angry at these raw intruders, who dared enter without his permission, the wide, domain in which he kept peace and order. When Tarzan was angry there flamed upon his forehead the scar that Bolgani, the gorilla, had placed there upon that long-gone day when the boy Tarzan had met the great beast in mortal combat, and first learned the true value of his father's hunting knife—the knife that had placed him, the comparatively weak little

Tarmangani, upon an even footing with the great beasts of the jungle.

His gray eyes were narrowed, his voice came cold and level as he addressed them. "Who are you," he demanded, "who dare thus invade the country of the Waziri, the land of Tarzan, without permission from the Lord of the Jungle?"

"Where do you get that stuff, Esteban," demanded one of the Englishmen, "and wat in 'ell are you doin' back 'ere alone and so soon? Where are your porters, where is the bloomin' gold?"

The ape-man eyed the speaker in silence for a moment. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said. "I do not know what

you are talking about. I only know that I come in search of him who slew Gobu, the great ape; him who slew Bara, the deer, without my permission."

"Oh, 'ell," exploded the other Englishman, "stow the guff, Esteban— if you're tryin' for to be funny we don't see the joke, 'ere we are, and that's that."

Inside the tent, which the fourth white man had entered while Tarzan was watching the camp from his hiding place in the tree above, a woman, evidently suddenly stirred by terror, touched the arm of her companion frantically, and pointed toward the tall, almost naked figure of the ape-man as he stood revealed in the full light of the beast fires. "God, Carl," she whispered, in

trembling tones, "look!"

"What's wrong, Flora?" inquired her companion. "I see only Esteban."

"It is not Esteban," hissed the girl. "It is Lord Greystoke himself —it is Tarzan of the Apes!"

"You are mad, Flora," replied the man, "it cannot be he."

"It is he, though," she insisted. "Do you suppose that I do not know him? Did I not work in his town house for years? Did I not see him nearly every day? Do you suppose that I do not know Tarzan of the Apes? Look at that red scar flaming on his forehead—I have heard the story of that scar and I have seen it burn scarlet when he was aroused to anger. It is scarlet now, and Tarzan of the Apes is

angry."

"Well, suppose it is Tarzan of the Apes, what can he do?"

"You do not know him," replied the girl. "You do not guess the tremendous power he wields here—the power of life and death over man and beast. If he knew our mission here not one of us would ever reach the coast alive. The very fact that he is here now makes me believe that he may have discovered our purpose, and if he has, God help us—unless— unless—"

"Unless what?" demanded the man.

The girl was silent in thought for a moment. "There is only one way," she said finally. "We dare not kill him. His savage blacks would learn of it, and no

power on earth could save us then. There is a way, though, if we act quickly." She turned and searched for a moment in one of her bags, and presently she handed the man a small bottle, containing liquid. "Go out and talk to him," she said, "make friends with him. Lie to him. Tell him anything. Promise anything. But get on friendly enough terms with him so that you can offer him coffee. He does not drink wine or anything with alcohol in it, but I know that he likes coffee. I have often served it to him in his room late at night upon his return from the theater or a ball. Get him to drink coffee and then you will know what to do with this." And she indicated the bottle which the man still

held in his hand.

Kraski nodded. "I understand," he said, and, turning, left the tent.

He had taken but a step when the girl recalled him. "Do not let him see me. Do not let him guess that I am here or that you know me."

The man nodded and left her. Approaching the tense figures before the fire he greeted Tarzan with a pleasant smile and a cheery word.

"Welcome," he said, "we are always glad to see a stranger in our camp. Sit down. Hand the gentleman a stool, John," he said to Peebles.

The ape-man eyed Kraski as he had eyed the others. There was no answering friendly light in his eyes responding to

the Russian's greeting.

"I have been trying to find out what your party is doing here," he said sharply to the Russian, "but they still insist that I am someone whom I am not. They are either fools or knaves, and I intend to find out which, and deal with them accordingly."

"Come, come," cried Kraski, soothingly. "There must be some mistake, I am sure. But tell me, who are you?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man. "No hunters enter this part of Africa without my permission. That fact is so well known that there is no chance of your having passed the coast without having been so advised. I seek an

explanation, and that quickly."

"Ah, you are Tarzan of the Apes," exclaimed Kraski. "Fortunate indeed are we, for now may we be set straight upon our way, and escape from our frightful dilemma is assured. We are lost, sir, inextricably lost, due to the ignorance or knavery of our guide, who deserted us several weeks ago. Surely we knew of you; who does not know of Tarzan of the Apes? But it was not our intention to cross the boundaries of your territory. We were searching farther south for specimens of the fauna of the district, which our good friend and employer, here, Mr. Adolph Bluber, is collecting at great expense for presentation to a museum in his home city in America.

Now I am sure that you can tell us where we are and direct us upon our proper course."

Peebles, Throck, and Bluber stood fascinated by Kraski's glib lies, but it was the German Jew who first rose to the occasion. Too thick were the skulls of the English pugs to grasp quickly the clever ruse of the Russian.

"Vy yes," said the oily Bluber, rubbing his palms together, "dot iss it, yust vot I vas going to tell you."

Tarzan turned sharply upon him. "Then what was all this talk about Esteban?" he asked. "Was it not by that name that these others addressed me?"

"Ah," cried Bluber, "John will haf his leetle joke. He iss ignorant of Africa; he

has neffer been here before. He t'ought perhaps dat you vere a native John he calls all der natives Esteban, und he has great jokes by himself mit dem, because he knows dey cannot onderstand vot he says. Hey John, iss it not so, vot it iss I say?" But the shrewd Bluber did not wait for John to reply. "You see," he went on, "ve are lost, und you take us ouid mit dis jungle, ve pay you anyt'ing —you name your own price."

The ape-man only half believed him, yet he was somewhat mollified by their evidently friendly intentions. Perhaps after all they were telling him a half-truth and had, really, wandered into his territory unwittingly. That, however, he would find out definitely from their

native carriers, from whom his own Waziri would wean the truth. But the matter of his having been mistaken for Esteban still piqued his curiosity, also he was still desirous of learning the identity of the slayer of Gobu, the great ape.

"Please sit down," urged Kraski. "We were about to have coffee and we should be delighted to have you join us. We meant no wrong in coming here, and I can assure you that we will gladly and willingly make full amends to you, or to whomever else we may have unintentionally wronged."

To take coffee with these men would do no harm. Perhaps he had wronged them, but however that might be a cup of

their coffee would place no great obligation upon him. Flora had been right in her assertion that if Tarzan of the Apes had any weakness whatsoever it was for an occasional cup of black coffee late at night. He did not accept the proffered camp stool, but squatted, ape-fashion, before them, the flickering light of the beast fires playing upon his bronzed hide and bringing into relief the gracefully contoured muscles of his godlike frame. Not as the muscles of the blacksmith or the professional strong man were the muscles of Tarzan of the Apes, but rather those of Mercury or Apollo, so symmetrically balanced were their proportions, suggesting only the great strength that lay in them. Trained to

speed and agility were they as well as to strength, and thus, clothing as they did his giant frame, they imparted to him the appearance of a demi-god.

Throck, Peebles, and Bluber sat watching him in spellbound fascination, while Kraski walked over to the cook fire to arrange for the coffee. The two Englishmen were as yet only half awakened to the fact that they had mistaken this newcomer for another, and as it was, Peebles still scratched his head and grumbled to himself in inarticulate half-denial of Kraski's assumption of the new identity of Tarzan. Bluber was inwardly terror-stricken. His keener intelligence had quickly grasped the truth of Kraski's

recognition of the man for what he was rather than for what Peebles and Throck thought him to be, and, as Bluber knew nothing of Flora's plan, he was in quite a state of funk as he tried to visualize the outcome of Tarzan's discovery of them at the very threshold of Opar. He did not realize, as did Flora, that their very lives were in danger—that it was Tarzan of the Apes, a beast of the jungle, with whom they had to deal, and not John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, an English peer. Rather was Bluber considering the two thousand pounds that they stood to lose through this deplorable termination of their expedition, for he was sufficiently familiar with the reputation of the ape-man to know that they would

never be permitted to take with them the gold that Esteban was very likely, at this moment, pilfering from the vaults of Opar. Really Bluber was almost upon the verge of tears when Kraski returned with the coffee, which he brought himself.

From the dark shadows of the tent's interior Flora Hawkes looked nervously out upon the scene before her. She was terrified at the possibility of discovery by her former employer, for she had been a maid in the Greystokes' London town house as well as at the African bungalow and knew that Lord Greystoke would recognize her instantly should he chance to see her. She entertained for him, now, in his jungle haunts, a fear that

was possibly greater than Tarzan's true character warranted, but none the less real was it to the girl whose guilty conscience conjured all sorts of possible punishments for her disloyalty to those who had always treated her with uniform kindliness and consideration.

Constant dreaming of the fabulous wealth of the treasure vaults of Opar, concerning which she had heard so much in detail from the conversations of the Greystokes, had aroused within her naturally crafty and unscrupulous mind a desire for possession, and in consequence thereof she had slowly visualized a scheme whereby she might loot the treasure vaults of a sufficient number of the golden ingots to make her

independently wealthy for life. The entire plan had been hers. She had at first interested Kraski, who had in turn enlisted the cooperation of the two Englishmen and Bluber, and these four had raised the necessary money to defray the cost of the expedition. It had been Flora who had searched for a type of man who might successfully impersonate Tarzan in his own jungle, and she had found Esteban Miranda, a handsome, powerful, and unscrupulous Spaniard, whose histrionic ability aided by the art of make-up, of which he was a past master, permitted him to al most faultlessly impersonate the character they desired him to portray, in so far, as least, as outward appearances were

concerned.

The Spaniard was not only powerful and active, but physically courageous as well, and since he had shaved his beard and donned the jungle habiliments of a Tarzan, he had lost no opportunity for emulating the ape-man in every way that lay within his ability. Of jungle craft he had none of course, and personal combats with the more savage jungle beasts caution prompted him to eschew, but he hunted the lesser game with spear and with arrow and practiced continually with the grass rope that was a part of his make-up.

And now Flora Hawkes saw all her well-laid plans upon the verge of destruction. She trembled as she

watched the men before the fire, for her fear of Tarzan was very real, and then she became tense with nervous anticipation as she saw Kraski approaching the group with the coffee pot in one hand and cups in the other. Kraski set the pot and the cups upon the ground a little in the rear of Tarzan, and, as he filled the latter, she saw him pour a portion of the contents of the bottle she had given him into one of the cups. A cold sweat broke out upon her forehead as Kraski lifted this cup and offered it to the ape- man. Would he take it? Would he suspect? If he did suspect what horrible punishment would be meted to them all for their temerity? She saw Kraski hand another cup to Peebles,

Throck, and Bluber, then return to the circle with the last one for himself. As the Russian raised it before his face and bowed politely to the ape-man, she saw the five men drink. The reaction which ensued left her weak and spent. Turning she collapsed upon her cot, and lay there trembling, her face buried in her arm. And, outside, Tarzan of the Apes drained his cup to the last drop.

6. DEATH STEALS BEHIND

During the afternoon of the day that Tarzan discovered the camp of the conspirators, a watcher upon the crumbling outer wall of the ruined city of Opar descried a party of men moving downward into the valley from the summit of the encircling cliff. Tarzan, Jane Clayton, and their black Waziri were the only strangers that the denizens of Opar had ever seen within their valley during the lifetime of the oldest among them, and only in half-forgotten legends of a by-gone past was there any suggestion that strangers other than these had ever visited Opar. Yet from time

immemorial a guard had always remained upon the summit of the outer wall. Now a single knurled and crippled man-like creature was all that recalled the numerous, lithe warriors of lost Atlantis. For down through the long ages the race had deteriorated and finally, through occasional mating with the great apes, the men had become the beast-like things of modern Opar. Strange and inexplicable had been the providence of nature that had confined this deterioration almost solely to the males, leaving the females straight, well-formed, often of comely and even beautiful features, a condition that might be largely attributable to the fact that female infants possessing ape-like

characteristics were immediately destroyed, while, on the other hand, boy babies who possessed purely human attributes were also done away with.

Typical indeed of the male inhabitants of Opar was the lone watcher upon the outer city wall, a short, stocky man with matted hair and beard, his tangled locks growing low upon a low, receding forehead; small, close-set eyes and fang-like teeth bore evidence of his simian ancestry, as did his short, crooked legs and long, muscular ape-like arms, all scantily hair-covered as was his torso.

As his wicked, blood-rimmed eyes watched the progress of the party across the valley toward Opar, evidences of his growing excitement were manifested in

the increased rapidity of his breathing, and low, almost inaudible growls that issued from his throat. The strangers were too far distant to be recognizable only as human beings, and their number to be roughly approximated as between two and three score. Having assured himself of these two facts the watcher descended from the outer wall, crossed the space between it and the inner wall, through which he passed, and at a rapid trot crossed the broad avenue beyond and disappeared within the crumbling but still magnificent temple beyond.

Cadj, the High Priest of Opar, squatted beneath the shade of the giant trees which now overgrew what had once been one of the gardens of the

ancient temple. With him were a dozen members of the lesser priesthood, the intimate cronies of the High Priest, who were star tied by the sudden advent of one of the inferior members of the clan of Opar. The fellow hurried breathlessly to Cadj.

"Cadj," he cried, "strange men descend upon Opar! From the northwest they have come into the valley from beyond the barrier cliffs—fifty of them at least, perhaps half again that number. I saw them as I watched from the summit of the outer wall, but further than they are men I cannot say, for they are still a great distance away. Not since the great Tarmangani came among us last have there been strangers within Opar."

"It has been many moons since the great Tarmangani who called himself Tarzan of the Apes was among us," said Cadj. "He promised us to return before the rain to see that no harm had befallen La, but he did not come back and La has always insisted that he is dead. Have you told any other of what you have seen?" he demanded, turning suddenly upon the messenger.

"No," replied the latter.

"Good!" exclaimed Cadj. "Come, we will all go to the outer wall and see who it is who dares enter forbidden Opar, and let no one breathe a word of what Blagh has told us until I give permission."

"The word of Cadj is law until La

speaks," murmured one of the priests.

Cadj turned a scowling face upon the speaker. "I am High Priest of Opar," he growled. "Who dares disobey me?"

"But La is High Priestess," said one, "and the High Priestess is the queen of Opar."

"But the High Priest can offer whom he will as sacrifice in the Chamber of the Dead or to the Flaming God," Cadj reminded the other meaningly.

"We shall keep silence, Cadj," replied the priest, cringing.

"Good!" growled the High Priest and led the way from the garden through the corridors of the temple back toward the outer wall of Opar. From here they watched the approaching party that was

in plain view of them, far out across the valley. The watchers conversed in low gutturals in the language of the great apes, interspersed with which were occasional words and phrases of a strange tongue that were doubtless corrupted forms of the ancient language of Atlantis handed down through countless generations from their human progenitors—that now extinct race whose cities and civilization lie buried deep beneath the tossing waves of the Atlantic, and whose adventurous spirit had, in remote ages, caused them to penetrate into the heart of Africa in search of gold and to build there, in duplication of their far home cities, the magnificent city of Opar.

As Cadj and his followers watched from beneath shaggy brows the strangers plodding laboriously beneath the now declining equatorial sun across the rocky, barren valley, a gray little monkey eyed them from amidst the foliage of one of the giant trees that had forced its way through the pavement of the ancient avenue behind them. A solemn, sad-faced little monkey it was, but like all his kind overcome by curiosity, and finally to such an extent that his fear of the fierce males of Opar was so considerably overcome that he at last swung lightly from the tree to the pavement, made his way through the inner wall and up the inside of the outer wall to a position in their rear where he

could hide behind one of the massive granite blocks of the crumbling wall in comparative safety from detection, the while he might overhear the conversation of the Oparians, all of which that was carried on in the language of the great apes he could understand perfectly.

The afternoon was drawing to a close before the slowly moving company approaching Opar was close enough for individuals to be recognizable in any way, and then presently one of the younger priests exclaimed excitedly. It is he, Cadj. It is the great Tarmangani who calls himself Tarzan of the Apes. I can see him plainly; the others are all black men. He is urging them on prodding them

with his spear. They act as though they were afraid and very tired, but he is forcing them forward."

"You are sure," demanded Cadj, "you are sure that it is Tarzan of the Apes?"

"I am positive," replied the speaker, and then another of the priests joined his assurances to that of his fellow. At last they were close enough so that Cadj himself, whose eyesight was not as good as that of the younger members of the company, realized that it was indeed Tarzan of the Apes who was returning to Opar. The High Priest scowled angrily in thought. Suddenly he turned upon the others.

"He must not come," he cried; "he must not enter Opar. Hasten and fetch a

hundred fighting men. We will meet them as they come through the outer wall and slay them One by One." But La," cried he who had aroused Cadj's anger in the garden, "I distinctly recall that La offered the friendship of Opar to Tarzan of the Apes upon that time, many moons ago, that he saved her from the tusks of infuriated Tantor."

"Silence," growled Cadj, "he shall not enter; we shall slay them all, though we need not know their identity until it is too late. Do you understand? And know, too, that whosoever attempts to thwart my purpose shall die—and he die not as a sacrifice, he shall die at my hands, but die he shall. You hear me?" And he pointed an unclean finger at the

trembling priest.

Manu, the monkey, hearing this, was almost bursting with excitement. He knew Tarzan of the Apes—as all the migratory monkeys the length and breadth of Africa knew him—he knew him for friend and protector. To Manu the males of Opar were neither beast, nor man, nor friend. He knew them as cruel and surly creatures who ate the flesh of his kind, and he hated them accordingly. He was therefore greatly exercised at the plot that he had heard discussed which was aimed at the life of the great Tarmangani. He scratched his little gray head, and the root of his tail, and his belly, as he attempted to mentally digest what he had heard, and

bring forth from the dim recesses of his little brain a plan to foil the priests and save Tarzan of the Apes. He made grotesque grimaces that were aimed at the unsuspecting Cadj and his followers, but which failed to perturb them, possibly because a huge granite block hid the little monkey from them. This was quite the most momentous thing that had occurred in the life of Manu. He wanted to jump up and down and dance and screech and jabber—to scold and threaten the hated Oparians, but something told him that nothing would be gained by this, other than, perhaps, to launch in his direction a shower of granite missiles, which the priests knew only too well how to throw with

accuracy. Now Manu is not a deep thinker, but upon this occasion he quite outdid himself, and managed to concentrate his mind upon the thing at hand rather than permit its being distracted by each falling leaf or buzzing insect. He even permitted a succulent caterpillar to crawl within his reach and out again with impunity.

Just before darkness fell, Cadj saw a little gray monkey disappear over the summit of the outer wall fifty paces from where he crouched with his fellows, waiting for the coming of the fighting men. But so numerous were the monkeys about the ruins of Opar that the occurrence left Cadj's mind almost as quickly as the monkey disappeared from

his view, and in the gathering gloom he did not see the little gray figure scampering off across the valley toward the band of intruders who now appeared to have stopped to rest at the foot of a large kopje that stood alone out in the valley, about a mile from the city.

Little Manu was very much afraid out there alone in the growing dusk, and he scampered very fast with his tail bowed up and out behind him. All the time he cast affrighted glances to the right and left. The moment he reached the kopje he scampered up its face as fast as he could. It was really a huge, precipitous granite rock with almost perpendicular sides, but sufficiently weather-worn to make its ascent easy to little Manu. He

paused a moment at the summit to get his breath and still the beatings of his frightened little heart, and then he made his way around to a point where he could look down upon the party beneath.

There, indeed, was the great Tarmangani Tarzan, and with him were some fifty Gomangani. The latter were splicing together a number of long, straight poles, which they had laid upon the ground in two parallel lines. Across these two, at intervals of a foot or more, they were lashing smaller straight branches about eighteen inches in length, the whole forming a crude but substantial ladder. The purpose of all this Manu, of course, did not understand, nor did he know that it had been evolved

from the fertile brain of Flora Hawkes as a means of scaling the precipitous kopje, at the summit of which lay the outer entrance to the treasure vaults of Opar. Nor did Manu know that the party had no intention of entering the city of Opar and were therefore in no danger of becoming victims of Cadj's hidden assassins. To him, the danger to Tarzan of the Apes was very real, and so, having regained his breath, he lost no time in delivering his warning to the friend of his people.

"Tarzan," he cried, in the language that was common to both. The white man and the blacks looked up at the sound of his chattering voice.

"It is Manu, Tarzan," continued the

little monkey, "who has come to tell you not to go to Opar. Cadj and his people await within the outer wall to slay you."

The blacks, having discovered that the author of the disturbance was nothing but a little gray monkey, returned immediately to their work, while the white man similarly ignored his words of warning. Manu was not surprised at the lack of interest displayed by the blacks, for he knew that they did not understand his language, but he could not comprehend why Tarzan failed to pay any attention whatsoever to him. Again and again he called Tarzan by name. Again and again he shrieked his warning to the ape-man, but without eliciting any reply or any information that the great

Tarmangani had either heard or understood him. Manu was mystified. What had occurred to render Tarzan of the Apes so indifferent to the warnings of his old friend?

At last the little monkey gave it up and looked longingly back in the direction of the trees within the walled city of Opar. It was now very dark and he trembled at the thought of recrossing the valley, where he knew enemies might prowl by night. He scratched his head and he hugged his knees, then sat there whimpering, a very forlorn and unhappy little ball of a monkey. But however uncomfortable he was upon the high kopje, he was comparatively safe, and so he decided to remain there during the

night rather than venture the terrifying return trip through the darkness. Thus it was that he saw the ladder completed and erected against the side of the kopje; and when the moon rose at last and lighted the scene, he saw Tarzan of the Apes urging his men to mount the ladder. He had never seen Tarzan thus rough and cruel with the blacks who accompanied him. Manu knew how ferocious the great Tarmangani could be with an enemy, whether man or beast, but he had never seen him accord such treatment to the blacks who were his friends.

One by one and with evident reluctance the blacks ascended the ladder, continually urged forward to greater speed by the sharp spear of the

white man; when they had all ascended Tarzan followed, and Manu saw them disappear apparently into the heart of the great rock.

It was only a short time later that they commenced to reappear, and now each was burdened by two heavy objects which appeared to Manu to be very similar to some of the smaller stone blocks that had been used in the construction of the buildings in Opar. He saw them take the blocks to the edge of the kopje and cast them over to the ground beneath, and when the last of the blacks had emerged with his load and cast it to the valley below, one by one the party descended the ladder to the foot of the kopje. But this time Tarzan of

the Apes went first. Then they lowered the ladder and took it apart and laid its pieces close to the foot of the cliff, after which they took up the blocks which they had brought from the heart of the kopje, and following Tarzan, who set out in the lead, they commenced to retrace their steps toward the rim of the valley.

Manu would have been very much mystified had he been a man, but being only a monkey he saw only what he saw without attempting to reason very much about it. He knew that the ways of men were peculiar, and oftentimes unaccountable. For example, the Gomangani who could not travel through the jungle and the forest with the ease of any other of the animals which

frequented them, added to their difficulties by loading themselves down with additional weights in the form of metal anklets and armlets, with necklaces and girdles, and with skins of animals, which did nothing more than impede their progress and render life much more complicated than that which the untrammeled beasts enjoyed. Manu, whenever he gave the matter a thought, congratulated himself that he was not a man—he pitied the foolish, unreasonable creatures.

Manu must have slept. He thought that he had only closed his eyes a moment, but when he opened them the rosy light of dawn had overspread the desolate valley. Just disappearing over the cliffs

to the northeast he could see the last of Tarzan's party commencing the descent of the barrier, then Manu turned his face toward Opar and prepared to descend from the kopje, and scamper back to the safety of his trees within the walls of Opar.

But first he would reconnoiter—Sheeta, the panther, might be still abroad, and so he scampered around the edge of the kopje to a point where he could see the entire valley floor between himself and Opar. And there it was that he saw again that which filled him with greatest excitement. For, debouching from the ruined outer wall of Opar was a large company of Opar's frightful men—fully a hundred of them Manu could have

counted had Manu been able to count.

They seemed to be coming toward the kopje, and he sat and watched them as they approached, to defer his return to the city until after the path was cleared of hated Oparians. It occurred to him that they were coming after him, for the egotism of the lower animals is inordinate. Because he was a monkey, the idea did not seem at all ridiculous and so he hid behind a jutting rock, with only one little, bright eye exposed to the enemy. He saw them come closer and he grew very much excited, though he was not at all afraid, for he knew that if they ascended one side of the kopje he could descend the other and be half-way to Opar before they could possibly locate

him again.

On and on they came, but they did not stop at the kopje—as a matter of fact they did not come very close to it, but continued on beyond it. Then it was that the truth of the matter flashed into the little brain of the monkey—Cadj and his people were pursuing Tarzan of the Apes to slay him. If Manu had been offended by Tarzan's indifference to him upon the night before, he had evidently forgotten it, for now he was quite as excited about the danger which he saw menace the ape-man as he had been upon the afternoon previous. At first he thought of running ahead, and again warning Tarzan, but he feared to venture so far from the trees of Opar, even if the

thought of having to pass the hated Oparians had not been sufficient to deter him from carrying out this plan. For a few minutes he sat watching them, until they had all passed the kopje, and then it became quite clear to him that they were heading directly for the spot at which the last of Tarzan's party had disappeared from the valley—there could be no doubt that they were in pursuit of the ape-man.

Manu scanned the valley once more toward Opar. There was nothing in sight to deter him from an attempted return, and so, with the agility of his kind, he scampered down the vertical face of the kopje and was off at great speed toward the city's wall. Just when he formulated

the plan that he eventually followed it is difficult to say. Perhaps he thought it all out as he sat upon the kopje, watching Cadj and his people upon the trail of the ape-man, or perhaps it occurred to him while he was scampering across the barren waste toward Opar. It may just have popped into his mind from a clear sky after he had regained the leafy sanctuary of his own trees. Be that, however as it may, the fact remains, that as La, High Priestess and princess of Opar, in company with several of her priestesses, was bathing in a pool in one of the temple gardens, she was startled by the screaming of a monkey, swinging frantically by his tail from the branch of a great tree which overspread the pool

—it was a little gray monkey with a face so wise and serious that one might easily have imagined that the fate of nations lay constantly upon the shoulders of its owner.

"La, La," it screamed, "they have gone to kill Tarzan. They have gone to kill Tarzan."

At the sound of that name La was instantly all attention. Standing waist deep in the pool she looked up at the little monkey questioningly. What do you mean, Manu?" she asked. "It has been many moons since Tarzan was at Opar. He is not here now. What are you talking about?"

"I saw him," screamed Manu, "I saw him last night with many Gomangani. He

came to the great rock that lies in the valley before Opar; with all his men he climbed to the top of it, went into the heart of it, and came out with stones which they threw down into the valley. Afterward they descended from the rock, and picked up the stones again and left the valley there," and Manu pointed toward the northeast with one of his hairy little fingers.

"How do you know it was Tarzan of the Apes?" asked La.

"Does Manu not know his cousin and his friend?" demanded the monkey. "With my eyes I saw him—it was Tarzan of the Apes."

La of Opar puckered her brows in thought. Deep in her heart smoldered the

tires of her great love for Tarzan. Fires that had been quenched by the necessity that had compelled her marriage with Cadj since last she had seen the ape-man. For it is written among the laws of Opar that the High Priestess of the Flaming God must take a mate within a certain number of years after her consecration. For many moons had La longed to make Tarzan that mate. The ape-man had not loved her, and finally she had come to a realization that he could never love her. Afterward she had bowed to the frightful fate that had placed her in the arms of Cadj.

As month after month had passed and Tarzan bad not returned to Opar, as he had promised he would do, to see that no

harm befell La, she had come to accept the opinion of Cadj that the ape-man was dead, and though she hated the repulsive Cadj none the less, her love for Tarzan had gradually become little more than a sorrowful memory. Now to learn that he was alive and had been so near was like re-opening an old wound. At first she comprehended little else than that Tarzan had been close to Opar, but presently the cries of Manu aroused her to a realization that the ape-man was in danger— just what the danger was, she did not know.

"Who has gone to kill Tarzan of the Apes? she demanded suddenly.

"Cadj, Cadj!" shrieked Manu. "He has gone with many, many men, and is

following upon the spoor of Tarzan."

La sprang quickly from the pool, seized her girdle and ornaments from her attendant and adjusting them hurriedly, sped through the garden and into the temple.

7. "YOU MUST SACRIFICE HIM"

Warily Cadj and his hundred frightful followers, armed with their bludgeons and knives, crept stealthily down the face of the barrier into the valley below, upon the trail of the white man and his black companions. They made no haste, for they had noted from the summit of Opar's outer wall, that the party they were pursuing moved very slowly, though why, they did not know, for they had been at too great a distance to see the burden that each of the blacks carried. Nor was it Cadj's desire to overtake his quarry by daylight, his plans contemplating a stealthy night

attack, the suddenness of which, together with the great number of his followers, might easily confuse and overwhelm a sleeping camp.

The spoor they followed was well marked. There could be no mistaking it, and they moved slowly down the now gentle declivity, toward the bottom of the valley. It was close to noon that they were brought to a sudden halt by the discovery of a thorn boma recently constructed in a small clearing just ahead of them. From the center of the boma arose the thin smoke of a dying fire. Here, then, was the camp of the ape-man.

Cadj drew his followers into the concealment of the thick bushes that

ordered the trail, and from there he sent ahead a single man to reconnoiter. It was but a few moments later that the latter returned to say that the camp was deserted, and once again Cadj moved forward with his men. Entering the boma they examined it in an effort to estimate the size of the party that accompanied Tarzan. As they were thus occupied Cadj saw something lying half concealed by bushes at the far end of the boma. Very warily he approached it, for there was that about it which not only aroused his curiosity but prompted him to caution, for it resembled indistinctly the figure of a man, lying huddled upon the ground.

With ready bludgeons a dozen of them

approached the thing that had aroused Cadj's curiosity, and when they had come close to it they saw lying before them the lifeless figure of Tarzan of the Apes.

"The Flaming God has reached forth to avenge his desecrated altar," cried the High Priest, his eyes glowing with the maniacal fires of fanaticism. But another priest, more practical, perhaps, or at least more cautious, kneeled beside the figure of the ape-man and placed his ear against the latter's heart.

"He is not dead," he whispered; "perhaps he only sleeps."

"Seize him, then, quickly," cried Cadj, and an instant later Tarzan's body was covered by the hairy forms of as

many of the frightful men as could pile upon him. He offered no resistance—he did not even open his eyes, and presently his arms were securely bound behind him.

"Drag him forth where the eye of the Flaming God may rest upon him," cried Cadj. They dragged Tarzan out into the center of the boma into the full light of the sun, and Cadj, the High Priest, drawing his knife from his loin cloth, raised it above his head and stood over the prostrate form of his intended victim. Cadj's followers formed a rough circle about the ape-man and some of them pressed close behind their leader. They appeared uneasy, looking alternately at Tarzan and their High Priest, and then

casting furtive glances at the sun, riding high in a cloud-mottled sky. But whatever the thoughts that troubled their half-savage brains, there was only one who dared voice his, and he was the same priest who, upon the preceding day, had questioned Cadj's proposal to slay the ape-man.

"Cadj," he said now, "who are you to offer up a sacrifice to the Flaming God? It is the privilege alone of La, our High Priestess and our queen, and indeed will she be angry when she learns what you have done."

"Silence, Dooth!" cried Cadj; "I, Cadj, am the High Priest of Opar. I, Cadj, am the mate of La, the queen. My word, too, is law in Opar. And you

would remain a priest, and you would remain alive, keep silence."

"Your word is not law," replied Dooth, angrily, "and if you anger La, the High Priestess, or if you anger the Flaming God, you may be punished as another. If you make this sacrifice both will be angry.

"Enough," cried Cadj; "the Flaming God has spoken to me and has demanded that I offer up as sacrifice this defiler of his temple."

He knelt beside the ape-man and touched his breast above the heart with the point of his sharp blade, and then he raised the weapon high above him, preparatory to the fatal plunge into the living heart. At that instant a cloud

passed before the face of the sun and a shadow rested upon them. A murmur rose from the surrounding priests.

"Look," cried Dooth, "the Flaming God is angry. He has hidden his face from the people of Opar."

Cadj paused. He cast a half-defiant, half-frightened look at the cloud obscuring the face of the sun. Then he rose slowly to his feet, and extending his arms upward toward the hidden god of day, he remained for a moment silent in apparently attentive and listening attitude. Then, suddenly, he turned upon his followers.

"Priests of Opar," he cried, "the Flaming God has spoken to his High Priest, Cadj. He is not angered. He but

wishes to speak to me alone, and he directs that you go away into the jungle and wait until he has come and spoken to Cadj, after which I shall call you to return. Go!"

For the most part they seemed to accept the word of Cadj as law, but Dooth and a few others, doubtless prompted by a certain skepticism, hesitated.

"Be gone!" commanded Cadj. And so powerful is the habit of obedience that the doubters finally turned away and melted into the jungle with the others. A crafty smile lighted the cruel face of the High Priest as the last of them disappeared from sight, and then he once again turned his attention to the ape-man.

That, deep within his breast however, lurked an inherent fear of his deity, was evidenced by the fact that he turned questioning glances toward the sky. He had determined to slay the ape-man while Dooth and the others were absent, yet the fear of his god restrained his hand until the light of his deity should shine forth upon him once more and assure him that the thing he contemplated might meet with favor.

It was a large cloud that overcast the sun, and while Cadj waited his nervousness increased. Six times he raised his knife for the fatal blow, yet in each instance his superstition prevented the consummation of the act. Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and still the sun

remained obscured. But now at last Cadj could see that it was nearing the edge of the cloud, and once again he took his position kneeling beside the ape-man with his blade ready for the moment that the sunlight should flood again, for the last time, the living Tarzan. He saw it sweeping slowly across the boma toward him, and as it came a look of demoniacal hatred shone in his close-set, wicked eyes. Another instant and the Flaming God would have set the seal of his approval upon the sacrifice. Cadj trembled in anticipation. He raised the knife a trifle higher, his muscles tensed for the downward plunge, and then the silence of the jungle was broken by a woman's voice, raised almost to a

scream.

"Cadj" came the single word, but with all the suddenness and all the surprising effect of lightning from a clear sky.

His knife still poised on high, the High Priest turned in the direction of the interruption to see at the clearing's edge the figure of La, the High Priestess, and behind her Dooth and a score of the lesser priests.

"What means this, Cadj?" demanded La, angrily, approaching rapidly toward him across the clearing. Sullenly the High Priest rose.

"The Flaming God demanded the life of this unbeliever," he cried.

"Speaker of lies," retorted La, "the Flaming God communicates with men

through the lips of his High Priestess only. Too often already have you attempted to thwart the will of your queen. Know, then, Cadj, that the power of life and death which your queen holds is as potent over you as another. During the long ages that Opar has endured, our legends tell us that more than one High Priest has been offered upon the altar to the Flaming God. And it is not unlikely that yet another may go the way of the presumptuous. Curb, therefore, your vanity and your lust for power, lest they prove your undoing."

Cadj sheathed his knife and turned sullenly away, casting a venomous look at Dooth, to whom he evidently attributed his undoing. That he was

temporarily abashed by the presence of his queen was evident, but to those who knew Cadj there was little doubt that he still harbored his intention to despatch the ape-man, and if the opportunity ever presented itself that he would do so, for Cadj had a strong following among the people and priests of Opar. There were many who doubted that La would ever dare to incur the displeasure and anger of so important a portion of her followers as to cause the death or degradation of their high priest, who occupied his office by virtue of laws and customs so old that their origin had been long lost in antiquity.

For years she had found first one excuse and then another to 'delay the

ceremonies that would unite her in marriage to the High Priest. She had further aroused the antagonism of her people by palpable proofs of her infatuation for the ape-man, and even though at last she had been compelled to mate with Cadj, she had made no effort whatsoever to conceal her hatred and loathing for the man. How much further she could go with impunity was a question that often troubled those whose position in Opar depended upon her favor, and, knowing all these conditions as he did, it was not strange that Cadj should entertain treasonable thoughts toward his queen. Leagued with him in his treachery was Oah, a priestess who aspired to the power and offices of La. If

La could he done away with, then Cadj had the influence to see that Oah became High Priestess. He also had Oah's promise to mate with him and permit him to rule as king, but as yet both were bound by the superstitious fear of their flaming deity, and because of this fact was the life of La temporarily made safe. It required, however, but the slightest spark to ignite the flames of treason that were smoldering about her.

So far, she was well within her rights in' forbidding the sacrifice of Tarzan by the High Priest. But her fate, her very life, perhaps, depended upon her future treatment of the prisoner. Should she spare him, should she evidence in any way a return of the great love she had

once almost publicly avowed for him, it was likely that her doom would be sealed. It was even questionable whether or not she might with impunity spare his life and set him at liberty.

Cadj and the others watched her closely now as she crossed to the side of Tarzan. Standing there silently for several moments she looked down upon him.

"He is already dead?" she asked.

"He was not dead when Cadj sent us away," volunteered Dooth. "If he is dead now it is because Cadj killed him while we were away."

"I did not kill him," said Cadj. "That remains, as La, our queen, has told you, for her to do. The eye of the Flaming

God looks down upon you, High Priestess of Opar. The knife is at your hip, the sacrifice lies before you."

La ignored the man's words and turned toward Dooth. "If he still lives," she said, "construct a litter and bear him back to Opar."

Thus, once more, came Tarzan of the Apes into the ancient colonial city of the Atlantians. The effects of the narcotic that Kraski had administered to him did not wear off for many hours. It was night when he opened his eyes, and for a moment he was bewildered by the darkness and the silence that surrounded him. All that he could scent at first was that he lay upon a pile of furs and that he was uninjured; for he felt no pain.

Slowly there broke through the fog of his drugged brain recollection of the last moment before unconsciousness had overcome him, and presently he realized the trick that had been played upon him. For how long he had been unconscious and where he then was he could not imagine. Slowly he arose to his feet, finding that except for a slight 'dizziness he was quite himself. Cautiously he felt around in the darkness, moving with care, a hand out-stretched, and always feeling carefully with his feet for a secure footing. Almost immediately a stone wall stopped his progress, and this he followed around four sides of what he soon realized was a small room in which there were but two openings, a

door upon each of the opposite sides. Only his senses of touch and smell were of value to him here. These told him only at first that he was imprisoned in a subterranean chamber, but as the effects of the narcotic diminished, the keenness of the latter returned, and with its return there was borne in upon Tarzan's brain an insistent impression of familiarity in certain fragrant odors that impinged upon his olfactory organs—a haunting suggestion that he had known them before under similar circumstances. Presently from above, through earth and masonry, came the shadow of an uncanny scream—just the faintest suggestion of it reached the keen ears of the ape-man, but it was sufficient to flood his mind

with vivid recollections, and, by association of ideas, to fix the identity of the familiar odors about him. He knew at last that he was in the dark pit beneath Opar.

Above him, in her chamber in the temple, La, the High Priestess, tossed upon a sleepless couch. She knew all too well the temper of her people and the treachery of the High Priest, Cadj. She knew the religious fanaticism which prompted the ofttimes maniacal actions of her bestial and ignorant followers, and she guessed truly that Cadj would inflame them against her should she fail this time in sacrificing the ape-man to the Flaming God. And it was the effort to find an escape from her dilemma that left

her sleepless, for it was not in the heart of La to sacrifice Tarzan of the Apes. High Priestess of a horrid cult, though she was, and queen of a race of half-beasts, yet she was a woman, too, a woman who had loved but once and given that love to the godlike ape-man who was again within her power. Twice before had he escaped her sacrificial knife; in the final instance love had at last triumphed over jealousy and fanaticism, and La, the woman, had realized that never again could she place in jeopardy the life of the man she loved, however hopeless she knew that love to be.

Tonight she was faced with a problem that she felt almost beyond her powers

of solution. The fact that she was mated with Cadj removed the last vestige of hope that she had ever had of becoming the wife of the ape-man. Yet she was no less determined to save Tarzan if it were possible. Twice had he saved her life, once from a mad priest, and once from Tantor in must. Then, too, she had given her word that when Tarzan came again to Opar he came in friendship and would be received in friendship. But the influence of Cadj was great, and she knew that that influence had been directed unremittingly against the ape-man—she had seen it in the attitude of her followers from the very moment that they had placed Tarzan upon a litter to bear him back to Opar—she had seen it

in the evil glances that had been cast at her. Sooner or later they would dare denounce her—all that they needed was some slight, new excuse, that, she knew, they eagerly awaited in her forthcoming attitude toward Tarzan. It was well after midnight when there came to her one of the priestesses who remained always upon guard outside her chamber door.

"Dooth would speak with you," whispered the hand-maiden.

"It is late," replied La, "and men are not permitted in this part of the temple. How came he here, and why?"

"He says that he comes in the service of La, who is in great danger," replied the girl.

"Fetch him here then," said La, "and

as you value your life see that you tell no one."

"I shall be as voiceless as the stones of the altar," replied the girl, as she turned and left the chamber.

A moment later she returned, bringing Dooth, who halted a few feet from the High Priestess and saluted her. La signaled to the girl who had brought him, to depart, and then she turned questioningly to the man.

"Speak, Dooth!" she commanded.

"We all know," he said, "of La's love for the strange ape-man, and it is not for me, a lesser priest, to question the thoughts or acts of my High Priestess. It is only for me to serve, as those would do better to serve who now plot against

you."

"What do you mean, Dooth? Who plots against me?"

"Even at this minute are Cadj and Oah and several of the priests and priestesses carrying out a plan for your undoing. They are setting spies to watch you, knowing that you would liberate the ape-man, because there will come to you one who will tell you that to permit him to escape will be the easiest solution of your problem. This one will be sent by Cadj, and then those who watch you will report to the people and to the priests that they have seen you lead the sacrifice to liberty. But even that will avail you nothing, for Cadj and Oah and the others have placed upon the trail from Opar

many men in hiding, who will fall upon the ape-man and slay him before the Flaming God has descended twice into the western forest. In but one way only may you save yourself, La of Opar."

"And what is that way?" she asked.

"You must, with your own hands, upon the altar of our temple, sacrifice the ape-man to the Flaming God."

8. MYSTERY OF THE PAST

La had breakfasted the following morning, and had sent Dooth with food for Tarzan, when there came to her a young priestess, who was the sister of Oah. Even before the girl had spoken La knew that she was an emissary from Cadj, and that the treachery of which Dooth had warned her was already under way. The girl was ill at ease and quite evidently frightened, for she was young and held in high revere the queen whom she had good reason to know was all-powerful, and who might even inflict death upon her if she so wished. La, who had already determined upon a plan of

action that she knew would be most embarrassing to Cadj and his conspirators, waited in silence for the girl to speak. But it was some time before the girl could muster up her courage or find a proper opening. Instead, she spoke of many things that had no bearing whatsoever upon her subject, and La, the High Priestess, was amused at her discomfiture.

"It is not often," said La, "that the sister of Oah comes to the apartments of her queen unless she is bidden. I am glad to see that she at last realizes the service that she owes to the High Priestess of the Flaming God."

"I come," said the girl, at last, speaking almost as one who has learned

a part, "to tell you that I have overheard that which may be of interest to you, and which I am sure that you will be glad to hear."

"Yes?" interrogated La, raising her arched eyebrows.

"I overheard Cadj speaking with the lesser priests," the girl continued, "and I distinctly heard him say that he would be glad if the ape-man escaped, as that would relieve you, and Cadj as well, of much embarrassment. I thought that La, the queen, would be glad to know this, for it is known by all of us that La has promised friendship to the ape-man, and therefore does not wish to sacrifice him upon the altar of the Flaming God."

"My duty is plain to me," replied La,

in a haughty voice, "and I do not need Cadj nor any hand-maiden to interpret it to me. I also know the prerogatives of a High Priestess, and that the right of sacrifice is one of them. For this reason I prevented Cadj from sacrificing the stranger. No other hand than mine may offer his heart's blood to the Flaming God, and upon the third day he shall die beneath my knife upon the altar of our temple."

The effect of these words upon the girl were precisely what La had anticipated. She saw disappointment and chagrin written upon the face of Cadj's messenger, who now had no answer, for her instructions had not foreseen this attitude upon the part of La. Presently the

girl found some lame pretext upon which to withdraw, and when she had left the presence of the High Priestess, La could scarcely restrain a smile. She had no intention of sacrificing Tarzan, but this, of course, the sister of Oah did not know. So she returned to Cadj and repeated as nearly as she could recall it, all that La had said to her. The High Priest was much chagrined, for his plan had been now, not so much to encompass the destruction of Tarzan as to lead La into the commission of an act that would bring upon her the wrath of the priests and people of Opar, who, properly instigated, would demand her life in expiation. Oah, who was present when her sister returned, bit her lips, for great

was her disappointment. Never before had she seen so close at hand the longed-for possibility of becoming High Priestess. For several minutes she paced to and fro in deep thought, and then, suddenly, she halted before Cadj.

"La loves this ape-man," she said, "and even though she may sacrifice him, it is only because of fear of her people. She loves him still—loves him better, Cadj, than she has ever loved you. The ape-man knows it, and trusts her, and because he knows it there is a way. Listen, Cadj, to Oah. We will send one to the ape-man who shall tell him that she comes from La, and that La has instructed her to lead him out of Opar and set him free. This one shall lead him

into our ambush and when he is killed we shall go, many of us, before La, and accuse her of treachery. The one who led the ape-man from Opar shall say that La ordered her to do it, and the priests and the people will be very angry, and then you shall demand the life of La. It will be very easy and we shall be rid of both of them."

"Good!" exclaimed Cadj. "We shall do this thing at dawn upon the morrow, and before the Flaming God goes to his rest at night he shall look upon a new High Priestess in Opar."

That night Tarzan was aroused from his sleep by a sound at one of the doors of his prison cell. He heard the bolt slipped back and the door creak slowly

open upon its ancient hinges. In the inky darkness he could discern no presence, but he heard the stealthy movement of sandaled feet upon the concrete floor, and then, out of the darkness, his name was whispered, in a woman's voice.

"I am here," he replied. "Who are you and what do you want of Tarzan of the Apes?"

"Your life is in danger," replied the voice. "Come, follow me."

"Who sent you?" demanded the ape-man, his sensitive nostrils searching for a clue to the identity of the nocturnal visitor, but so heavily was the air laden with the pungent odor of some heavy perfume with which the body of the woman seemed to have been anointed,

that there was no distinguishing clue by which he might judge as to whether she was one of the priestesses he had known upon the occasion of his former visits to Opar, or an entire stranger to him.

"La sent me," she said, "to lead you from the pits of Opar to the freedom of the outside world beyond the city's walls." Groping in the darkness she finally found him. "Here are your weapons," she said, handing them to him, and then she took his hand, turned and led him from the dungeon, through a long, winding, and equally black corridor, down flights of age-old concrete steps, through passages and corridors, opening and closing door after door that creaked and groaned upon

rusty hinges. How far they traveled thus, and in what direction, Tarzan could not guess. He had gleaned enough from Dooth, when the latter brought him his food, to believe that in La he had a friend who would aid him, for Dooth had told him that she had saved him from Cadj when the latter had discovered him unconscious in the deserted boma of the Europeans who had drugged and left him. And so, the woman having said that she came from La, Tarzan followed her willingly. He could not but recall Jane's prophecy of the evils that he might expect to befall him should he persist in undertaking this third trip to Opar, and he wondered if, after all, his wife was right, that he should never again escape

from the toils of the fanatical priests of the Flaming God. He had not, of course, expected to enter Opar, but there seemed to hang over the accursed city a guardian demon that threatened the life of whosoever dared approach the forbidden spot or wrest from the forgotten treasure vaults a portion of their great hoard.

For more than an hour his guide led him through the Stygian darkness of underground passages, until, ascending a flight of steps they emerged into the center of a clump of bushes, through which the pale light of the moon was barely discernible. The fresh air, however, told him that they had reached the surface of the ground, and now the

woman, who had not spoken a word since she had led him from his cell, continued on in silence, following a devious trail that wound hither and thither in an erratic fashion through a heavy forest choked with undergrowth, and always upward.

From the location of the stars and moon, and from the upward trend of the trail, Tarzan knew that he was being led into the mountains that lie behind Opar—a place he had never thought of visiting, since the country appeared rough and uninviting, and not likely to harbor game such as Tarzan cared most to hunt. He was already surprised by the nature of the vegetation, for he had thought the hills barren except for

stunted trees and scraggy bush. As they continued upon their way, climbing ever upward, the moon rose higher in the heavens, until its soft light revealed more clearly to the keen eyes of the ape-man the topography of the country they were traversing, and then it was that he saw they were ascending a narrow, thickly wooded gorge, and he understood why the heavy vegetation had been invisible from the plain before Opar. Himself naturally uncommunicative, the woman's silence made no particular impression upon Tarzan. Had he had anything to say he should have said it, and likewise he assumed that there was no necessity for her speaking unless there was some

good reason for speaking, for those who travel far and fast have no breath to waste upon conversation.

The eastern stars were fading at the first hint of coming dawn when the two scrambled up a precipitous bank that formed the upper end of the ravine, and came out upon comparatively level ground. As they advanced the sky lightened, and presently the woman halted at the edge of a declivity, and as the day broke Tarzan saw below him a wooded basin in the heart of the mountain, and, showing through the trees at what appeared to be some two or three miles distant, the outlines of a building that glistened and sparkled and scintillated in the light of the new sun.

Then he turned and looked at his companion, and surprise and consternation were writ upon his face, for standing before him was La, the High Priestess of Opar.

"You?" he exclaimed. "Now indeed will Cadj have the excuse that Dooth said he sought to put you out of the way."

"He will never have the opportunity to put me out of the way," replied La, "for I shall never return to Opar."

"Never return to Opar!" he exclaimed, "then where are you going? Where can you go?"

"I am going with you," she replied. "I do not ask that you love me. I only ask that you take me away from Opar and from the enemies who would slay me.

There was no other way. Manu, the monkey, overheard them plotting, and he came to me and told me all that they would do. Whether I saved you or sacrificed you, it had all been the same with me. They were determined to do away with me, that Oah might be High Priestess and Cadj king of Opar. But I should not have sacrificed you, Tarzan, under any circumstances, and this, then, seemed the only way in which we might both be saved. We could not go to the north or the west across the plain of Opar for there Cadj has placed warriors in ambush to waylay you, and though you be Tarzan and a mighty fighter, they would overwhelm you by their very numbers and slay you."

"But where are you leading me?" asked Tarzan.

"I have chosen the lesser of two evils; in this direction lies an unknown country, filled for us Oparians with legends of grim monsters and strange people. Never has an Oparian ventured here and returned again to Opar. But if there lives in all the world a creature who could win through this unknown valley, it be you, Tarzan of the Apes."

"But if you know nothing of this country, or its inhabitants," demanded Tarzan, "how is it that you so well know the trail that leads to it?"

"We well know the trail to the summit, but that is as far as I have ever been before. The great apes and the lions

use this trail when they come down into Opar. The lions, of course, cannot tell us where it leads, and the great apes will not, for usually we are at war with them. Along this trail they come down into Opar to steal our people, and upon this trail we await to capture them, for often we offer a great ape in sacrifice to the Flaming God, or rather that was our former custom, but for many years they have been too wary for us, the toll being upon the other side, though we do not know for what purpose they steal our people, unless it be that they eat them. They are a very powerful race, standing higher than Bolgani, the gorilla, and infinitely more cunning, for, as there is ape blood in our veins, so is there human

blood in the veins of these great apes that dwell in the valley above Opar."

"Why is it, La, that we must pass through this valley in order to escape from Opar? There must be some other way.

"There is no other way, Tarzan of the Apes," she replied. "The avenues across the valley are guarded by Cadj's people. Our only chance of escape lies in this direction, and I have brought you along the only trail that pierces the precipitous cliffs that guard Opar upon the south. Across or around this valley we must go in an attempt to find an avenue across the mountain and down upon the other side."

The ape-man stood gazing down into the wooded basin below them, his mind

occupied with the problems of the moment. Had he been alone he would not have come this way, for he was sufficiently confident of his own prowess to believe that he might easily have crossed the valley of Opar in comparative safety, regardless of Cadj's plans to the contrary. But he was not alone. He had now to think of La, and he realized that in her efforts to save him she had placed him under a moral obligation which he might not disregard.

To skirt the basin, keeping as far as possible from the building, which he could see in the distance, seemed the wisest course to pursue, since, of course, his sole purpose was to find a way across the mountain and out of this

inhospitable country. But the glimpses he caught of the edifice, half concealed as it was amid the foliage of great trees, piqued his curiosity to such an extent that he felt an almost irresistible urge to investigate. He did not believe that the basin was inhabited by other than wild beasts, and he attributed the building which he saw to the handiwork of an extinct or departed people, either contemporaneous with the ancient Atlantians who had built Opar or, perhaps, built by the original Oparians themselves, but now forgotten by their descendants. The glimpses which he caught of the building suggested such size and magnificence as might belong to a palace.

The ape-man knew no fear, though he possessed to a reasonable extent that caution which is inherent in all wild beasts. He would not have hesitated to pit his cunning and his prowess against the lower orders, however ferocious they might be, for, unlike man, they could not band together to his undoing. But should men elect to hunt him in numbers he knew that a real danger would confront him, and that, in the face of their combined strength and intelligence, his own might not avail him. There was little likelihood, however, he reasoned, that the basin was inhabited by human beings. Doubtless closer investigation of the building he saw would reveal that it was but a deserted ruin, and that the

most formidable foes he would encounter would be the great apes and the lions. Of neither of these had he any fear; with the former it was even reasonable to imagine that he might establish amicable relations. Believing as he did that he must look for egress from the basin upon its opposite side, it was only natural that he should wish to choose the most direct route across the basin. Therefore his inclinations to explore the valley were seconded by considerations of speed and expediency.

"Come," he said to La, and started down the declivity which led into the basin in the direction of the building ahead of them.

"You are not going that way?" she

cried in astonishment.

"Why not?" he said. "It is the shortest way across the valley, and in so far as I can judge our trail over the mountains is more likely to lie in that direction than elsewhere."

"But I am afraid," she said. "The Flaming God alone knows what hideous dangers lurk in the depths of that forest below us.

"Only Numa and the Mangani," he said. "Of these we need have no fear."

"You fear nothing," she said, "but I am only a woman."

"We can die but once," replied Tarzan, "and that once we must die. To be always fearing, then, would not avert it, and would make life miserable. We

shall go the short way, then, and perhaps we shall see enough to make the risk well worth while."

They followed a well-worn trail downward among the brush, the trees increasing in both size and number as they approached the floor of the basin, until at last they were walking beneath the foliage of a great forest. What wind there was was at their back, and the ape-man, though he moved at a swinging walk, was constantly on the alert. Upon the hard-packed earth of the trail there were few signs to indicate the nature of the animals that had passed to and fro, but here and there the spoor of a lion was in evidence. Several times Tarzan stopped and listened, often he raised his

head and his sensitive nostrils dilated as he sought for whatever the surrounding air might hold for him.

"I think there are men in this valley," he said presently. "For some time I have been almost positive that we are being watched. But whoever is stalking us is clever beyond words, for it is only the barest suggestion of another presence that I can scent."

La looked about apprehensively and drew close to his side. "I see no one," she said, in a low voice.

"Nor I," he replied. "Nor can I catch any well-defined scent spoor, yet I am positive that someone is following us. Someone or something that trails by scent, and is clever enough to keep its

scent from us. It is more than likely that, whatever it is, it is passing through the trees, at a sufficient height to keep its scent spoor always above us. The air is right for that, and even if he were up wind from us we might not catch his scent at. all. Wait here, I will make sure," and he swung lightly into the branches of a nearby tree and swarmed upward with the agility of Manu, the monkey. A moment later he descended to the girl's side.

"I was right," he said, "there is someone, or something, not far off. But whether it is man or Mangani I cannot say, for the odor is a strange one to me, suggesting neither, yet both. But two can play at that game. Come!" And he swung

the girl to his shoulder and a moment later had carried her high into the trees. "Unless he is close enough to watch us, which I doubt," he said, "our spoor will be carried over his head and it will be some time before he can pick it up again, unless he is wise enough to rise to a higher level."

La marveled at the strength of the ape-man as he carried her easily from tree to tree, and at the speed with which he traversed the swaying, leafy trail. For half an hour he continued onward, and then quite suddenly he stopped, poised high upon a swaying bough.

"Look!" he said, pointing ahead and below them. Looking in the direction that he indicated the girl saw through the

leafy foliage a small, heavily stockaded compound, in which were some dozen huts that immediately riveted her surprised attention, nor no less was the ape- man's curiosity piqued by what he glimpsed vaguely through the foliage. Huts they evidently were, but they seemed to be moving to and fro in the air, some moving gently backward and forward, while others jumped up and down in more or less violent agitation. Tarzan swung to a nearer tree and descended to a sturdy branch, to which he lowered La from his shoulder. Then he crept forward stealthily, the girl following, for she was, in common with the other Oparians, slightly arboreal. Presently they reached a point where

they could see plainly the village below them, and immediately the seeming mystery of the dancing huts was explained.

They were of the bee-hive type, common to many African tribes, and were about seven feet in diameter by six or seven in height, but instead of resting on the ground, each hut was suspended by a heavy hawser-like grass rope to a branch of one of the several giant trees that grew within the stockade. From the center of the bottom of each hut trailed another lighter rope. From his position above them Tarzan saw no openings in any of the huts large enough to admit the body of a man, though there were several openings four or five inches in

diameter in the sides of each hut about three feet above the floor. Upon the ground, inside the compound, were several of the inhabitants of the village, if the little collection of swinging houses could be dignified by such a name. Nor were the people any less strange to Tarzan than their peculiar domiciles. That they were negroes was evident, but of a type entirely unfamiliar to the ape-man. All were naked, and without any ornamentation whatsoever other than a few daubs of color, placed apparently at random upon their bodies. They were tall, and very muscular appearing, though their legs seemed much too short and their arms too long for perfect symmetry, while their faces were almost

bestial in contour, their jaws being exaggeratedly prognathous while above their beetling brows there was no forehead, the skull running back in an almost horizontal plane to a point.

As Tarzan stood looking at them he saw another descend one of the ropes that dangled from the bottom of a hut, and immediately he understood the purpose of the ropes and the location of the entrances to the dwellings. The creatures squatting about upon their haunches were engaged in feeding. Several had bones from which they were tearing the uncooked flesh with their great teeth, while others ate fruit and tubers. There were individuals of both sexes and of various ages, from

childhood to maturity, but there was none that seemed very old. They were practically hairless, except for scraggy, reddish brown locks upon their heads. They spoke but seldom and then in tones which resembled the growling of beasts, nor once, while Tarzan watched them, did he see one laugh or even smile, which, of all their traits, rendered them most unlike the average native of Africa. Though Tarzan's eyes searched the compound carefully he saw no indication of cooking utensils or of any fire. Upon the ground about them lay their weapons, short javelin-like spears and a sort of battle-ax with a sharpened, metal blade. Tarzan of the Apes was glad that he had come this way, for it had

permitted him to see such a type of native as he had not dreamed existed—a type so low that it bordered closely upon the brute. Even the Waz-dons and Ho-dons of Pal-ul-don were far advanced in the scale of evolution compared to these.

As he looked at them he could not but wonder that they were sufficiently intelligent to manufacture the weapons they possessed, which he could see, even at a distance, were of fine workmanship and design. Their huts, too, seemed well and ingeniously made, while the stockade which surrounded the little compound was tall, strong, and well-built, evidently for the purpose of safeguarding them against the lions which infested the basin.

As Tarzan and La watched these people they became presently aware of the approach of some creature from their left, and a moment later they saw a man similar to those of the compound swing from a tree that overhung the stockade and drop within. The others acknowledged his coming with scarce more than indifferent glances. He came forward and, squatting among them, appeared to be telling them of something, and though Tarzan could not hear his words he judged from his gestures and the sign language which he used to supplement his meager speech, that he was telling his fellows of the strange creatures he had seen in the forest a short time before, and the ape-

man immediately judged that this was the same whom he had been aware was following them and whom he had successfully put off the scent. The narration evidently excited them, for some of them arose, and leaping up and down with bent knees, slapped their arms against their sides grotesquely. The expressions upon their faces scarcely changed, however, and after a moment each squatted down again as he had been before. It was while they were thus engaged that there echoed through the forest a loud scream that awakened in the mind of the ape-man many savage memories.

"Bolgani," he whispered to La.

"It is one of the great apes," she said,

and shuddered.

Presently they saw him, swinging down the jungle trail toward the compound. A huge gorilla, but such a gorilla as Tarzan of the Apes had never looked on before. Of almost gigantic stature, the creature was walking erect with the stride of a man, not ever once touching his knuckles to the ground. His head and face were almost those of a gorilla, and yet there was a difference, as Tarzan could note as the creature came nearer—it was Bolgani, with the soul and brain of a man—nor was this all that rendered the creature startling and unique. Stranger perhaps than aught else was the fact that it wore ornaments—and such ornaments! Gold and

diamonds sparkled against its shaggy coat, above its elbows were numerous armlets and there were anklets upon its legs, while from a girdle about its middle there depended before and behind a long narrow strip that almost touched the ground and which seemed to be entirely constructed of golden spangles set with small diamonds. Never before had John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, seen such a display of barbaric finery, nor even amidst the jewels of Opar such a wealth of priceless stones.

Immediately after the hideous scream had first broken the comparative silence of the forest, Tarzan had noticed its effects upon the inmates of the

compound. Instantly they had arisen to their feet. The women and children scurried behind the boles of the trees or clambered up the ropes into their swinging cages, while some of the men advanced to what Tarzan now saw was the gate of the compound. Outside this gate the gorilla halted and again raised his voice, but this time in speech rather than his hideous scream.

9. THE SHAFT OF DEATH

As the huge, man-like gorilla entered the compound the warriors closed the gate, and fell back respectfully as he advanced to the center of the village where he stood for a moment, looking about.

"Where are the shes and the balus?" he asked, tersely. "Call them."

The women and the children must have heard the command, but they did not emerge from their hiding places. The warriors moved about uneasily, evidently torn by the conflicting emotions of fear of the creature who had issued the order, and reluctance to fulfil his commands.

"Call them," he repeated, "or go and fetch them." But at last one of the warriors mustered the courage to address him.

"This village has already furnished one woman within the moon," he said. "It is the turn of another village."

"Silence!" roared the gorilla-man, advancing threateningly toward him. "You are a rash Gomangani to threaten the will of a Bolgani I speak with the voice of Numa, the Emperor; obey or die."

Trembling, the black turned and called the women and children, but none responded to his summons. The Bolgani gestured impatiently.

"Go and fetch them," he demanded.

And the blacks, cringing, moved sullenly across the compound toward the hiding places of their women and children. Presently they returned, dragging them with them, by the arms sometimes, but usually by the hair. Although they had seemed loath to give them up, they showed no gentleness toward them, nor any indication of affection. Their attitude toward them, however, was presently explained to Tarzan by the next words of the warrior who had spoken previously.

"Great Bolgani," he said, addressing the gorilla. man, "if Numa takes always from this village, there will soon be not enough women for the warriors here, and there will be too few children, and in a little time there will be none of us

left."

"What of that?" growled the gorilla-man. "There are already too many Gomangani in the world. For what other purpose were you created than to serve Numa, the Emperor, and his chosen people, the Bolgani?" As he spoke he was examining the women and children, pinching their flesh and pounding upon their chests and backs. Presently he returned to a comparatively young woman, straddling whose hip was a small child.

"This one will do," he said, snatching the child from its mother ana hurling it roughly across the compound, where it lay against the face of the palisade, moaning pitifully, and perchance broken

and dying. The poor, stupid mother, apparently more beast than human, stood for a moment trembling in dumb anguish, and then she started to rush forward to her child. But the gorilla-man seized her with one of his great hands and hurled her to the ground. Simultaneously there arose from the silent foliage above them the fierce and terrible scream of the challenging bull ape. In terror the simple blacks cast affrighted glances upward, while the gorilla-man raised his hideous face in snarling anger toward the author of the bestial cry.

Swaying upon a leafy bough they beheld such a creature as none of them had ever looked upon before—a white man, a Tarmangani, with hide as hairless

as the body of Histah, the snake. In the instant that they looked they saw the spear hand of the stranger drive forward, and the shaft, speeding with the swiftness of thought, bury itself in the breast of the Bolgani. With a single scream of rage and pain, the gorilla-man crumbled to the earth, where he struggled spasmodically for a moment and then lay still, in death.

The ape-man held no great love for the Gomangani as a race, but inherent in his English brain and heart was the spirit of fair play, which prompted him to spontaneous espousal of the cause of the weak. On the other hand Bolgani was his hereditary enemy. His first battle had been with Bolgani and his first kill.

The poor blacks were still standing in stupefied wonderment when he dropped from the tree to the ground among them. They stepped back in terror, and simultaneously they raised their spears menacingly against him.

"I am a friend," he said. "I am Tarzan of the Apes. Lower your spears." And then he turned and withdrew his own weapon from the carcass of Bolgani. "Who is this creature, that may come into your village and slay your balus and steal your shes? Who is he, that you dare not drive your spears through him?"

"He is one of the great Bolgani," said the warrior, who seemed to be spokesman, and the leader in the village. "He is one of the chosen people of

Numa, the Emperor, and when Numa learns that he has been killed in our village we shall all die for what you have done."

"Who is Numa?" demanded the ape-man, to whom Numa, in the language of the great apes, meant only lion.

"Numa is the Emperor," replied the black, "who lives with the Bolgani in the Palace of Diamonds."

He did not express himself in just these words, for the meager language of the great apes, even though amplified by the higher intelligence and greater development of the Oparians, is still primitive in the extreme. What he had really said was more nearly "Numa, the king of kings, who lives in the king's hut

of glittering stones," which carried to the ape-man's mind the faithful impression of the fact. Numa, evidently, was the name adopted by the king of the Bolgani, and the title emperor, indicated merely his preeminence among the chiefs.

The instant that Bolgani had fallen the bereaved mother rushed forward and gathered her injured infant into her arms. She squatted now against the palisade, cuddling it to her breast, and crooning softly to pacify its cries, which Tarzan suddenly discovered were more the result of fright than injury. At first the mother had been frightened when he had attempted to examine the child, drawing away and baring her fighting fangs, much after the manner of a wild beast. But

presently there had seemed to come to her dull brain a realization that this creature had saved her from Bolgani, that he had permitted her to recover her infant and that he was making no effort to harm either of them. Convinced at last that the child was only bruised, Tarzan turned again toward the warriors, who were talking together in an excited little group a few paces away. As they saw him advancing, they spread into a semi-circle and stood facing him.

"The Bolgani will send and slay us all," they said, "when they learn what has happened in our village, unless we can take to them the creature that cast the spear. Therefore, Tarmangani, you shall go with us to the Palace of Diamonds,

and there we shall give you over to the Bolgani and perhaps Numa will forgive us."

The ape-man smiled. What kind of creature did the simple blacks think him, to believe that he would permit himself to be easily led into the avenging hands of Numa, the Emperor of the Bolgani. Although he was fully aware of the risk that he had taken in entering the village, he knew too that because he was Tarzan of the Apes there was a greater chance that he would be able to escape than that they could hold him. He had faced savage spearmen before and knew precisely what to expect in the event of hostilities. He preferred, however, to make peace with these people, for it had

been in his mind to find some means of questioning them the moment that he had discovered their village hidden away in this wild forest.

"Wait," he said, therefore. "Would you betray a friend who enters your village to protect you from an enemy?"

"We will not slay you, Tarmangani. We will take you to the Bolgani for Numa, the Emperor."

"But that would amount to the same thing," returned Tarzan, "for you well know that Numa, the Emperor, will have me slain."

"That we cannot help," replied the spokesman. "If we could save you we would, but when the Bolgani discover what has happened in our village, it is

we who must suffer, unless, perhaps, they are satisfied to punish you instead."

"But why need they know that the Bolgani has been slain in your village?" asked Tarzan.

"Will they not see his body next time they come?" asked the spokesman.

"Not if you remove his body," replied Tarzan.

The blacks scratched their heads. Into their dull, ignorant minds had crept no such suggestion of a solution of their problem. What the stranger said was true. None but they and he knew that Bolgani had been slain within their palisade. To remove the body, then, would be to remove all suspicion from their village. But where were they to

take it? They put the question to Tarzan.

"I will dispose of him for you," replied the Tarmangani. "Answer my questions truthfully and I will promise to take him away and dispose of him in such a manner that no one will know how he died, or where."

"What are your questions?" asked the spokesman.

"I am a stranger in your country. I am lost here," replied the ape-man. "And I would find a way out of the valley in that direction." And he pointed toward the southeast.

The black shook his head. "There may be a way out of the valley in that direction," he said, "but what lies beyond no man knows; nor do I know

whether there be a way out or whether there be anything beyond. It is said that all is fire beyond the mountain, and no one dares to go and see. As for myself, I have never been far from my village—at most only a day's march to hunt for game for the Bolgani, and to gather fruit and nuts and plantains for them. If there is a way out I do not know, nor would any man dare take it if there were."

"Does no one ever leave the valley?" asked Tarzan.

"I know not what others do," replied the spokesman, "but those of this village never leave the valley."

"What lies in that direction?" asked Tarzan, pointing toward Opar.

"I do not know," replied the black,

"only that sometimes the Bolgani come from that way, bringing with them strange creatures; little men with white skins and much hair, with short, crooked legs and long arms, and sometimes white shes, who do not look at all like the strange little Tarmangani. But where they get them I do not know, nor do they ever tell us. Are these all the questions that you wish to ask?"

"Yes, that is all," replied Tarzan, seeing that he could gain no information whatsoever from these ignorant villagers. Realizing that he must find his own way out of the valley, and knowing that he could do so much more quickly and safely if he was alone, he decided to sound the blacks in relation to a plan that

had entered his mind.

"If I take the Bolgani away, so that the others will not know that he was slain in your village, will you treat me as a friend?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the spokesman.

"Then," said Tarzan, "will you keep here for me my white she until I return again to your village? You can hide her in one of your huts if a Bolgani comes, and no one need ever know that she is among you. What do you say?"

The blacks looked around. "We do not see her," said the spokesman. "Where is she?"

"If you will promise to protect her and hide her, I will bring her here," replied the ape-man.

"I will not harm her," said the head man, "but I do not know about the others."

Tarzan turned toward the others who were clustered about, listening. "I am going to bring my mate into your village," he said, "and you are going to hide her, and feed her, and protect her until I return. I shall take away the body of Bolgani, so that no suspicion shall fall upon you, and when I come back I shall expect to find my mate safe and unharmed."

He had thought it best to describe La as his mate, since thus they might understand that she was under his protection, and if they felt either gratitude or fear toward him, La would

be safer. Raising his face toward the tree where she was hidden, he called to La to descend, and a moment later she clambered down to the lower branches of one of the trees in the compound and dropped into Tarzan's arms.

"This is she," he said to the assembled blacks, "guard her well and hide her from the Bolgani. If, upon my return, I find that any harm has befallen her, I shall take word to the Bolgani that it was you who did this," and he pointed to the corpse of the gorilla-man.

La turned appealingly toward him, fear showing in her eyes. "You are not going to leave me here?" she asked.

"Temporarily only," replied Tarzan. "These poor people are afraid that if the

death of this creature is traced to their village they shall all suffer the wrath of his fellows, and so I have promised that I will remove the evidence in such a way as to direct suspicion elsewhere. If they are sufficiently high in the scale of evolution to harbor sentiments of gratitude, which I doubt, they will feel obligated to me for having slain this beast, as well as for preventing suspicion falling upon them. For these reasons they should protect you, but to make assurance doubly sure I have appealed also to their fear of the Bolgani—a characteristic which I know they possess. I am sure that you will be as safe here as with me until I return, otherwise I would not leave you. But

alone I can travel much faster, and while I am gone I intend to find a way out of this valley, then I shall return for you and together we may make our escape easily, or at least with greater assurance of success than were we to blunder slowly about together."

"You will come back?" she asked, a note of fear, longing, and appeal in her voice.

"I will come back," he replied, and then turning to the blacks: "Clear out one of these huts for my mate, and see that she is not molested, and that she is furnished with food and water. And remember what I said, upon her safety your lives depend."

Stooping, Tarzan lifted the dead

gorilla-man to his shoulder, and the simple blacks marveled at his prowess. Of great physical strength themselves, there was not one of them but would have staggered under the weight of Bolgani, yet this strange Tarmangani walked easily beneath his burden, and when they had opened the gate in the palisade he trotted down the jungle trail as though he carried nothing but his own frame. A moment later he disappeared at a turn and was swallowed by the forest.

La turned to the blacks: "Prepare my hut," she said, for she was very tired and longed to rest. They eyed her askance and whispered among themselves. It was evident to her that there was a difference of opinion among them, and presently

from snatches of conversation which she overheard she realized that while some of the blacks were in favor of obeying Tarzan's injunctions implicitly, there were others who objected strenuously and who wished to rid their village of her, lest she be discovered there by the Bolgani, and the villagers be punished accordingly.

"It would be better," she heard one of the blacks say, "to turn her over to the Bolgani at once and tell them that we saw her mate slay the messenger of Numa. We will say that we tried to capture the Tarmangani but that he escaped, and that we were only able to seize his mate. Thus will we win the favor of Numa, and perhaps then he will

not take so many of our women and children."

"But the Tarmangani is great," replied one of the others. "He is more powerful even than Bolgani. He would make a terrible enemy, and, as the chances are that the Bolgani would not believe us we should then have not only them but the Tarmangani to fear."

"You are right," cried La, "the Tarmangani is great. Far better will it be for you to have him for friend than enemy. Single-handed he grapples with Numa, the lion, and slays him. You saw with what ease he lifted the body of the mighty Bolgani to his shoulder. You saw him trot lightly down the jungle trail beneath his burden. With equal ease will

he carry the corpse through the trees of the forest, far above the ground. In all the world there is no other like him, no other like Tarzan of the Apes. If you are wise, Gomangani, you will have Tarzan for a friend."

The blacks listened to her, their dull faces revealing nothing of what was passing in their stupid brains. For a few moments they stood thus in silence, the hulking, ignorant blacks upon one side, the slender, beautiful white woman upon the other. Then La spoke.

"Go," she cried imperiously, "and prepare my hut." It was the High Priestess of the Flaming God; La, the queen of Opar, addressing slaves. Her regal mien, her commanding tones,

wrought an instant change in the villagers, and La knew then that Tarzan was right in his assumption that they could be moved only through fear, for now they turned quickly, cowering like whipped dogs, and hastened to a nearby hut, which they quickly prepared for her, fetching fresh leaves and grasses for its floor, and fruit and nuts and plantains for her meal.

When all was ready, La clambered up the rope and through the circular opening in the floor of the hanging hut, which she found large and airy, and now reasonably clean. She drew the rope up after her and threw herself upon the soft bed they had prepared for her, and soon the gentle swaying of the swinging hut,

the soft murmur of the leaves above her, the voices of the birds and insects combined with her own physical exhaustion to lull her into deep slumber.

10. MAD TREACHERY

To the northwest of the valley of Opar the smoke rose from the cook fires of a camp in which some hundred blacks and six whites were eating their evening meal. The negroes squatted sullen and morose, mumbling together in low tones over their meager fare, the whites, scowling and apprehensive, kept their firearms close at hand. One of them, a girl, and the only member of her sex in the party, was addressing her fellows:

"We have Adolph's stinginess and Esteban's braggadocio to thank for the condition in which we are," she said.

The fat Bluber shrugged his shoulder, the big Spaniard scowled.

"For vy," asked Adolph, "am I to blame?"

"You were too stingy to employ enough carriers. I told you at the time that we ought to have had two hundred blacks in our party, but you wanted to save a little money, and now what is the result? Fifty men carrying eighty pounds of gold apiece and the other carriers are overburdened with camp equipment, while there are scarce enough left for askaris to guard us properly. We have to drive them like beasts to make any progress and to keep them from throwing away their loads, and they are fagged out and angry. They don't require much of an excuse to kill us all on the 'spot. On top of all this they are underfed. If we could

keep their bellies filled we could probably keep them happy and reasonably contented, but I have learned enough about natives to know that if they are hungry they are neither happy nor contented, even in idleness. If Esteban had not bragged so much about his prowess as a hunter we should have brought enough provisions to last us through, but now, though we are barely started upon our return journey, we are upon less than half rations."

"I can't kill game when there isn't any game," growled the Spaniard.

"There is plenty of game," said Kraski, the Russian. "We see the tracks of it every day."

The Spaniard eyed him venomously.

"If there is so much game," he said, "go out and get it yourself."

"I never claimed to be a hunter," replied Kraski, "though I could go out with a sling shot and a pea shooter and do as well as you have."

The Spaniard leaped to his feet menacingly, and instantly the Russian covered him with a heavy service revolver.

"Cut that business," cried the girl, sharply, leaping between them.

"Let the blighters fight," growled John Peebles. "If one of 'em kills the hother there'll be fewer to split the swag, and 'ere we are 'n that's that."

"For vy should ve quarrel?" demanded Bluber. "Dere is enough for

all - over forty-tree t'ousand pounds apiece. Ven you get mad at me you call me a dirty Jew und say dat I am stingy, but Mein Gott! you Christians are vorser. You vould kill vun of your friends to get more money. Oi! Oi! tank Gott dat I am not a Christian."

"Shut up," growled Throck, "or we'll have forty-three thousand pounds more to divide."

Bluber eyed the big Englishman fearfully. "Come, come, Dick," he oozed, in his oiliest tones, "you vouldn't get mad at a leedle choke vould you, und me your best friend?"

"I'm sick of all this grousin'," said Throck. "I h'ain't no high-brow, I h'ain't nothin' but a pug. But I got sense enough

to know that Flora's the only one in the bloomin' bunch whose brains wouldn't rattle around in a peanut shell. John, Bluber, Kraski and me, we're here because we could raise the money to carry out Flora's plan. The dago there"—and he indicated Esteban—"because his face and his figure filled the bill. There don't any of us need no brains for this work, and there ain't any of us got any more brains than we need. Flora's the brains of this outfit, and the sooner everyone understands that and takes orders from her, the better off we'll all be. She's been to Africa with this Lord Greystoke feller before—you wuz his wife's maid, wasn't you, Flora? And she knows somethin' about the country

and the natives and the animals, and there don't none of us know nuttin'."

"Throck is right," said Kraski, quickly, "we've been muddling long enough. We haven't had a boss, and the thing to do is to make Flora boss from now on. If anyone can get us out of this, she can, and from the way those fellows over there are acting," and he nodded toward the blacks, "we'll be lucky if we ever get out with our skins, let alone taking any of the gold with us."

"Oi! Oi! You don't mean to leave the gold?" almost shrieked Bluber.

"I mean that we do whatever Flora thinks best," replied Kraski. "If she says to leave the gold, we'll leave it.

"That we do," seconded Throck.

"I'm for it," said Peebles. "Whatever Flora says goes."

The Spaniard nodded his assent sullenly.

"The rest of us are all for it, Bluber. How about you?" asked Kraski.

"0 vell—sure—if you say so," said Bluber, "und as John says 'und here ve ain't und vat's dat.'"

"And now, Flora," said Peebles, "you're the big 'un. What you say goes. What'll we do next?"

"Very well," said the girl; "we shall camp here until these men are rested, and early tomorrow we'll start out intelligently and systematically, and get meat for them. With their help we can do it. When they are rested and well fed we

will start on again for the coast, moving very slowly, so as not to tire them too much. This is my first plan, but it all hinges upon our ability to get meat. If we do not find it I shall bury the gold here, and we will do our best to reach the coast as quickly as possible. There we shall recruit new porters—twice as many as we have now—and purchase enough provisions to carry us in and out again. As we come back in, we will cache provisions at every camping place for our return trip, thus saving the necessity of carrying heavy loads all the way in and out again. In this way we can come out light, with twice as many porters as we actually need. And by working them in shifts we will travel

much faster and there will be no grumbling. These are my two plans. I am not asking you what you think of them, because I do not care. You have made me chief, and I am going to run this from now on as I think best."

"Bully for you," roared Peebles; "that's the kind of talk I likes to hear."

"Tell the head man I want to see him, Carl," said the girl, turning to Kraski, and a moment later the Russian returned with a burly negro.

"Owaza," said the girl, as the black halted before her, "we are short of food and the men are burdened with loads twice as heavy as they should carry. Tell them that we shall wait here until they are rested and that tomorrow we shall

all go out and hunt for meat. You will send your boys out under three good men, and they will act as beaters and drive the game in to us. In this way we should get plenty of meat, and when the men are rested and well fed we will move on slowly. Where game is plentiful we will hunt and rest. Tell them that if they do this and we reach the coast in safety and with all our loads, I shall pay them twice what they agreed to come for."

"Oi! Oi!" spluttered Bluber, "twice vat dey agreed to come for! Oh, Flora, vy not offer dem ten per cent? Dot vould be fine interest on their money.

"Shut up, you fool," snapped Kraski, and Bluber subsided, though he rocked

back and forth, shaking his head in disapproval.

The black, who had presented himself for the interview with sullen and scowling demeanor, brightened visibly now. "I will tell them," he said, "and I think that you will have no more trouble."

"Good," said Flora, "go and tell them now," and the black turned and left.

"There," said the girl, with a sigh of relief, "I believe that we can see light ahead at last."

"Tvice vat ve promised to pay them!" bawled Bluber, "Oil Oil"

Early the following morning they prepared to set out upon the hunt. The blacks were now smiling and happy in

anticipation of plenty of meat, and as they tramped off into the jungle they were singing gayly. Flora had divided them into three parties, each under a head man with explicit directions for the position each party was to take in the line of beaters. Others had been detailed to the whites as gun- bearers, while a small party of the askaris were left behind to guard the camp. The whites, with the exception of Esteban, were armed with rifles. He alone seemed inclined to question Flora's authority, insisting that he preferred to hunt with spear and arrows in keeping with the part he was playing. The fact that, though he had hunted assiduously for weeks, yet had never brought in a single kill, was

not sufficient to dampen his egotism. So genuinely had he entered his part that he really thought he was Tarzan of the Apes, and with such fidelity had he equipped himself in every detail, and such a master of the art of make-up was he, that, in conjunction with his splendid figure and his handsome face that were almost a counterpart of Tarzan's, it was scarcely to be wondered at that he almost fooled himself as successfully as he had fooled others, for there were men among the carriers who had known the great ape-man, and even these were deceived, though they wondered at the change in him, since in little things he did not deport himself as Tarzan, and in the matter of kills he was disappointing.

Flora Hawkes, who was endowed with more than a fair share of intelligence, realized that it would not be well to cross any of her companions unnecessarily, and so she permitted Esteban to hunt that morning in his own way, though some of the others grumbled a little at her decision.

"What is the difference?" she asked them, after the Spaniard had set out alone. "The chances are that he could use a rifle no better than he uses his spear and arrows. Carl and Dick are really the only shots among us, and it is upon them we depend principally for the success of our hunt today. Esteban's egotism has been so badly bumped that it is possible that he will go to the last

extremity to make a kill today—let us hope that he is successful."

"I hope he breaks his fool neck," said Kraski. "He has served our purpose and we would be better off if we were rid of him."

The girl shook her head negatively. "No," she said, "we must not think or speak of anything of that kind. We went into this thing together, let us stick together until the end. If you are wishing that one of us is dead, how do you know that others are not wishing that you were dead?"

"I haven't any doubt but that Miranda wishes I were dead," replied Kraski. "I never go to bed at night without thinking that the damned greaser may try to stick

a knife into me before morning. And it don't make me feel any kinder toward him to hear you defending him, Flora. You've been a bit soft on him from the start."

"If I have, it's none of your business," retorted the girl.

And so they started out upon their hunt, the Russian scowling and angry, harboring thoughts of vengeance or worse against Esteban, and Esteban, hunting through the jungle, was occupied with his hatred and his jealousy. His dark mind was open to every chance suggestion of a means for putting the other men of the party out of the way, and taking the woman and the gold for himself. He hated them all; in each he

saw a possible rival for the affections of Flora, and in the death of each he saw not only one less suitor for the girl's affections, but forty-three thousand additional pounds to be divided among fewer people. His mind was thus occupied to the exclusion of the business of hunting, which should have occupied him solely, when he came through a patch of heavy underbrush, and stepped into the glaring sunlight of a large clearing, face to face with a party of some fifty magnificent ebon warriors. For just an instant Esteban stood frozen in a paralysis of terror, forgetting momentarily the part he was playing—thinking of himself only as a lone white man in the heart of savage Africa facing

a large band of war like natives—cannibals, perhaps. It was that moment of utter silence and inaction that saved him, for, as he stood thus before them, the Waziri saw in the silent, majestic figure their beloved lord in a characteristic pose.

"0 Bwana, Bwana," cried one of the warriors, rushing forward, "it is indeed you, Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle, whom we had given up as lost. We, your faithful Waziri, have been searching for you, and even now we were about to dare the dangers of 0par, fearing that you might have ventured there without us and had been captured."

The black, who had at one time accompanied Tarzan to London as a

body servant, spoke broken English, an accomplishment of which he was inordinately proud, losing no opportunity to air his attainment before his less fortunate fellows. The fact that it had been he whom fate had chosen to act as spokesman was indeed a fortunate circumstance to Miranda. Although the latter had applied himself assiduously to mastering the dialect of the west coast carriers, he would have been hard put to it to carry on a conversation with one of them, while he understood nothing of the Waziri tongue. Flora had schooled him carefully and well in the lore of Tarzan, so that he realized now that he was in the presence of a band of the ape-man's faithful Waziri. Never before had he

seen such magnificent blacks—clean-cut, powerful men, with intelligent faces and well molded features, appearing as much higher in the scale of evolution as were the west coast blacks above the apes.

Lucky indeed was Esteban Miranda that he was quick witted and a consummate actor. Otherwise must he have betrayed his terror and his chagrin upon learning that this band of Tarzan's fierce and faithful followers was in this part of the country. For a moment longer he stood in silence before them, gathering his wits, and then he spoke, realizing that his very life depended upon his plausibility. And as he thought a great light broke upon the shrewd brain

of the unscrupulous Spaniard.

"Since I last saw you," he said, "I discovered that a party of white men had entered the country for the purpose of robbing the treasure vaults of Opar. I followed them until I found their camp, and then I came in search of you, for there are many of them and they have many ingots of gold, for they have already been to Opar. Follow me, and we will raid their camp and take the gold from them. Come!" and he turned back toward the camp that he had just quitted.

As they made their way along the jungle trail, Usula, the Waziri who had spoken English to him, walked at Esteban's side. Behind them the

Spaniard could hear the other warriors speaking in their native tongue, no word of which he understood, and it occurred to him that his position would be most embarrassing should he be addressed in the Waziri language, which, of course, Tarzan must have understood perfectly. As he listened to the chatter of Usula his mind was working rapidly, and presently, as though it were an inspiration, there recurred to him the memory of an accident that had befallen Tarzan, which had been narrated to him by Flora—the story of the injury he had received in the treasure vaults of Opar upon the occasion that he had lost his memory because of a blow upon the head. Esteban wondered if he had

committed himself too deeply at first to attribute to amnesia any shortcomings in the portrayal of the role he was acting. At its worst, however, it seemed to him the best that he could do. He turned suddenly upon Usula.

"Do you remember," he asked, "the accident that befell me in the treasure vaults of Opar, depriving me of my memory?"

"Yes, Bwana, I remember it well," replied the black.

"A similar accident has befallen me," said Esteban. "A great tree fell in my path, and in falling a branch struck me upon the head. It has not caused me to lose my memory entirely, but since then it is with difficulty that I recall many

things, and there are others which I must have forgotten entirely, for I do not know your name, nor do I understand the words that my other Waziri are speaking about me."

Usula looked at him compassionately. "Ah, Bwana, sad indeed is the heart of Usula to hear that this accident has befallen you. Doubtless it will soon pass away as did the other, and in the meantime I, Usula, will be your memory for you." "Good," said Esteban, "tell the others that they may understand, and tell them also that I have lost the memory of other things besides. I could not now find my way home without you, and my other senses are dull as well. But as you say, Usula, it will soon pass off, and I

shall be myself again."

"Your faithful Waziri will rejoice indeed with the coming of that moment," said Usula.

As they approached the camp, Miranda cautioned Usula to warn his followers to silence, and presently he halted them at the outskirts of the clearing where they could attain a view of the boma and the tents, guarding which was a little band of a half-dozen askaris.

"When they see our greater numbers they will make no resistance," said Esteban. "Let us surround the camp, therefore, and at a signal from me we will advance together, when you shall address them, saying that Tarzan of the

Apes comes with his Waziri for the gold they have stolen, but that he will spare them if they will leave the country at once and never return."

Had it fulfilled his purpose as well, the Spaniard would have willingly ordered his Waziri to fall upon the men guarding the camp and destroy them all, but to his cunning brain had been born a cleverer scheme. He wanted these men to see him with the Waziri and to live to tell the others that they had seen him, and to repeat to Flora and her followers the thing that Esteban had in his mind to tell one of the askaris, while the Waziri were gathering up the gold ingots from the camp.

In directing Usula to station his men

about the camp, Esteban had him warn them that they were not to show themselves until he had crept out into the clearing and attracted the attention of the askaris on guard. Fifteen minutes, perhaps, were consumed in stationing his men, and then Usula returned to Esteban to report that all was ready.

When I raise my hand then you will know that they have recognized me and that you are to advance," Esteban cautioned him, and stepped forward slowly into the clearing. One of the askaris saw him and recognized him as Esteban. The Spaniard took a few steps closer to the boma and then halted.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said; "your camp is entirely surrounded by my

warriors. Make no move against us and we shall not hurt you."

He waved his hand. Fifty stalwart Waziri stepped into view from the concealing verdure of the surrounding jungle. The askaris eyed them in ill-concealed terror, fingering their rifles nervously.

"Do not shoot," cautioned Esteban, "or we shall slay you all." He approached more closely and his Waziri closed in about him, entirely surrounding the boma.

"Speak to them, Usula," said Esteban. The black stepped forward.

"We are the Waziri," he cried, "and this is Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle, our master. We have come to

recover the gold of Tarzan that you have stolen from the treasure vaults of Opar. This time we shall spare you on condition that you leave the country and never return. Tell this word to your masters; tell them that Tarzan watches, and that his Waziri watch with him. Lay down your rifles."

The askaris, glad to escape so easily, complied with the demands of Usula, and a moment later the Waziri had entered the boma, and at Esteban's direction were gathering up the golden ingots. As they worked, Esteban approached one of the askaris, whom he knew spoke broken English.

"Tell your master," he said, "to give thanks for the mercy of Tarzan who has

exacted a toll of but one life for this invasion of his country and theft of his treasure. The creature who presumes to pose as Tarzan I have slain, and his body I shall take away with me and feed to the lions. Tell them that Tarzan forgives even their attempt to poison him upon the occasion that he visited their camp, but only upon the condition that they never return to Africa, and that they divulge the secret of Opar to no others. Tarzan watches and his Waziri watch, and no man may enter Africa without Tarzan's knowledge. Even before they left London I knew that they were coming. Tell them that."

It took but a few minutes for the Waziri to gather up the golden ingots,

and before the askaris had recovered from the surprise of their appearance, they had gone again into the jungle, with Tarzan, their master.

It was late in the afternoon before Flora and the four white men returned from their hunt, surrounded by happy, laughing blacks, bearing the fruits of a successful chase.

"Now that you are in charge, Flora," Kraski was saying, "fortune is smiling upon us indeed. We have enough meat here for several days, and with plenty of meat in their bellies they ought to make good progress."

"I vill say it myself dot t'ings look brighter," said Bluber.

"Blime, they do that," said Throck.

"I'm tellin' yu Flora's a bright one."

"What the devil is this?" demanded Peebles, "what's wrong with them beggars." And he pointed toward the boma which was now in sight, and from which the askaris were issuing at a run, jabbering excitedly as they raced toward them.

"Tarzan of the Apes has been here," they cried excitedly. "He has been here with all his Waziri—a thousand great warriors—and though we fought, they overcame us, and taking the gold they went away. Tarzan of the Apes spoke strange words to me before they left. He said that he had killed one of your number who had dared to call himself Tarzan of the Apes. We do not

understand it. He went away alone to hunt when you went in the morning, and he came back shortly with a thousand warriors, and he took all the gold and he threatened to kill us and you if you ever return to this country again.

"Vot, vot?" cried Bluber, "der gold iss gone? Oi! Oi!" And then they all commenced to ask questions at once until Flora silenced them.

"Come," she said to the leader of the askaris, "we will return to the boma and then you shall tell me slowly and carefully all that has happened since we left."

She listened intently to his narrative, and then questioned him carefully upon various points several times. At last she

dismissed him. Then she turned to her confederates.

"It is all clear to me, she said. "Tarzan recovered from the effects of the drug we administered. Then he followed us with his Waziri, caught Esteban and killed him and, finding the camp, has taken the gold away. We shall be fortunate indeed if we escape from Africa with our lives."

"Oi! Oi!" almost shrieked Bluber, "der dirty crook. He steals all our gold, und ve lose our two t'ousand pounds into the bargain. Oi! Oi!"

"Shut up, you dirty Jew," growled Throck. "If it hadn't a' been for you and the dago this 'ere thing would never a 'appened. With 'im abraggin' about 'is

'unting and not bein' able to kill anything, and you a-squeezin' every bloomin' ha'penny, we're in a rotten mess—that we are. This 'ere Tarzan bounder he bumped off Esteban, which is the best work what 'e ever done. Too bloody bad you weren't 'ere to get it too, and what I got a good mind to do is to slit your throat meself."

"Stow the guff, Dick," roared Peebles; "it wasn't nobody's fault, as far as I can see. Instead of talkin' what we oughter do is to go after this 'ere Tarzan feller and take the bloomin' gold away from 'im."

Flora Hawkes laughed. "We haven't a chance in the world," she' said. "I know this Tarzan bloke. If he was all alone we

wouldn't be a match for him, but he's got a bunch of his Waziri with him, and there are no finer warriors in Africa than they. And they'd fight for him to the last man. You just tell Owaza that you're thinking of going after Tarzan of the Apes and his Waziri to take the gold away from them, and see how long it'd be before we wouldn't have a single nigger with us. The very name of Tarzan scares these west coast blacks out of a year's growth. They would sooner face the devil. No, sir, we've lost, and all we can do is to get out of the country, and thank our lucky stars if we manage to get out alive. The ape-man will watch us. I should not be surprised if he were watching us this minute." Her

companions looked around apprehensively at this, casting nervous glances toward the jungle. "And he'd never let us get back to Opar for another load, even if we could prevail upon our blacks to return there."

"Two t'ousand pounds, two t'ousand pounds!" wailed Bluber. "Und all dis suit, vot it cost me tventy guineas vot I can't vear it again in England unless I go to a fancy dress ball, vich I never do."

Kraski had not spoken, but had sat with eyes upon the ground, listening to the others. Now he raised his head. "We have lost our gold," he said, and before we get back to England we stand to spend the balance of our two thousand pounds—in other words our expedition

is a total loss. The rest of you may be satisfied to go back broke, but I am not. There are other things in Africa besides the gold of Opar, and when we leave the country there is no reason why we shouldn't take something with us that will repay us for our time and investment."

"What do you mean?" asked Peebles.

"I have spent a lot of time talking with Owaza," replied Kraski, "trying to learn their crazy language, and I have come to find out a lot about the old villain. He's as crooked as they make 'em, and if he were to be hanged for all his murders, he'd have to have more lives than a cat, but notwithstanding all that, he's a shrewd old fellow, and I've learned a lot

more from him than just his monkey talk—I have learned enough, in fact, so that I feel safe in saying that if we stick together we can go out of Africa with a pretty good sized stake. Personally, I haven't given up the gold of Opar yet. What we've lost, we've lost, but there's plenty left where that came from, and some day, after this blows over, I'm coming back to get my share."

"But how about this other thing?" asked Flora. "How can Owaza help us?"

"There's a little bunch of Arabs down here," explained Kraski, "stealing slaves and ivory. Owaza knows where they are working and where their main camp is. There are only a few of them, and their blacks are nearly all slaves who would

turn on them in a minute. Now the idea is this: we have a big enough party to overpower them and take their ivory away from them if we can get their slaves to take our side. We don't want the slaves; we couldn't do anything with them if we had them, so we can promise them their freedom for their help, and give Owaza and his gang a share in the ivory."

"How do you know Owaza will help us?" asked Flora.

"The idea is his; that's the reason I know," replied Kraski.

"It sounds good to me," said Peebles; "I ain't fer goin' 'ome empty 'anded." And in turn the others signified their approval of the scheme.

11. STRANGE INCENSE BURNS

As Tarzan carried the dead Bolgani from the village of the Gomangani, he set his steps in the direction of the building he had seen from the rim of the valley, the curiosity of the man overcoming the natural caution of the beast. He was traveling up wind and the odors wafted down to his nostrils told him that he was approaching the habitat of the Bolgani. Intermingled with the scent spoor of the gorilla-men was that of Gomangani and the odor of cooked food, and the suggestion of a heavily sweet scent, which the ape-man could connect only with burning incense, though it seemed

impossible that such a fragrance could emanate from the dwellings of the Bolgani. Perhaps it came from the great edifice he had seen—a building which must have been constructed by human beings, and in which human beings might still dwell, though never among the multitudinous odors that assailed his nostrils did he once catch the faintest suggestion of the man scent of whites.

When he perceived from the increasing strength of their odor, that he was approaching close to the Bolgani, Tarzan took to the trees with his burden, that he might thus stand a better chance of avoiding discovery, and presently, through the foliage ahead, he saw a lofty wall, and, beyond, the outlines of the

weird architecture of a strange and mysterious pile-outlines that suggested a building of another world, so unearthly were they, and from beyond the wall came the odor of the Bolgani and the fragrance of the incense, intermingled with the scent spoor of Numa, the lion. The jungle was cleared away for fifty feet outside the wall surrounding the building, so that there was no tree overhanging the wall, but Tarzan approached as closely as he could, while still remaining reasonably well concealed by the foliage. He had chosen a point at a sufficient height above the ground to permit him to see over the top of the wall.

The building within the enclosure was

of great size, its different parts appearing to have been constructed at various periods, and each with utter disregard to uniformity, resulting in a conglomeration of connecting buildings and towers, no two of which were alike, though the whole presented a rather pleasing, if somewhat bizarre appearance. The building stood upon an artificial elevation about ten feet high, surrounded by a retaining wall of granite, a wide staircase leading to the ground level below. About the building were shrubbery and trees, some of the latter appearing to be of great antiquity, while one enormous tower was almost entirely covered by ivy. By far the most remarkable feature of the building,

however, lay in its rich and barbaric ornamentation. Set into the polished granite of which it was composed was an intricate mosaic of gold and diamonds; glittering stones in countless thousands scintillated from facades, minarets, domes, and towers.

The enclosure, which comprised some fifteen or twenty acres, was occupied for the most part by the building. The terrace upon which it stood was devoted to walks, flowers, shrubs, and ornamental trees, while that part of the area below, which was within the range of Tarzan's vision, seemed to be given over to the raising of garden truck. In the garden and upon the terrace were naked blacks, such as he

had seen in the village where he had left La. There were both men and women, and these were occupied with the care of growing things within the enclosure. Among them were several of the gorilla-like creatures such as Tarzan had slain in the village, but these performed no labor, devoting themselves, rather, it seemed, to directing the work of the blacks, toward whom their manner was haughty and domineering, sometimes even brutal. These gorilla-men were trapped in rich ornaments, similar to those upon the body which now rested in a crotch of the tree behind the ape-man.

As Tarzan watched with interest the scene below him, two Bolgani emerged from the main entrance, a huge portal,

some thirty feet in width, and perhaps fifteen feet high. The two wore head-bands, supporting tall, white feathers. As they emerged they took post on either side of the entrance, and cupping their hands before their mouths gave voice to a series of shrill cries that bore a marked resemblance to trumpet calls. Immediately the blacks ceased work and hastened to the foot of the stairs descending from the terrace to the garden. Here they formed lines on either side of the stairway, and similarly the Bolgani formed two lines upon the terrace from the main portal to the stairway, forming a living aisle from one to the other. Presently from the interior of the building came other trumpet-like

calls, and a moment later Tarzan saw the head of a procession emerging. First came four Bolgani abreast, each bedecked with an ornate feather headdress, and each carrying a huge bludgeon erect before him. Behind these came two trumpeters, and twenty feet behind the trumpeters paced a huge, black-maned lion, held in leash by four sturdy blacks, two upon either side, holding what appeared to be golden chains that ran to a scintillant diamond collar about the beast's neck. Behind the lion marched twenty more Bolgani, four abreast. These carried spears, but whether they were for the purpose of protecting the lion from the people or the people from the lion Tarzan was at a

loss to know.

The attitude of the Bolgani lining either side of the way between the portal and the stairway indicated extreme deference, for they bent their bodies from their waists in a profound bow while Numa was passing between their lines. When the beast reached the top of the stairway the procession halted, and immediately the Gomangani ranged below prostrated themselves and placed their foreheads on the ground. Numa, who was evidently an old lion, stood with lordly mien surveying the prostrate humans before him. His evil eyes glared glassily, the while he bared his tusks in a savage grimace, and from his deep lungs rumbled forth an ominous roar, at the

sound of which the Gomangani trembled in unfeigned terror. The ape-man knit his brows in thought. Never before had he been called upon to witness so remarkable a scene of the abasement of man before a beast. Presently the procession continued upon its way descending the staircase and turning to the right along a path through the garden, and when it had passed them the Gomangani and the Bolgani arose and resumed their interrupted duties.

Tarzan remained in his concealment watching them, trying to discover some explanation for the strange, paradoxical conditions that he had witnessed. The lion, with his retinue, had turned the far corner of the palace and disappeared

from sight. What was he to these people, to these strange creatures? What did he represent? Why this topsy-turvy arrangement of species? Here man ranked lower than the half-beast, and above all, from the deference that had been accorded him, stood a true beast-a savage carnivore.

He had been occupied with his thoughts and his observations for some fifteen minutes following the disappearance of Numa around the eastern end of the palace, when his attention was attracted to the opposite end of the structure by the sound of other shrill trumpet calls. Turning his eyes in that direction, he saw the procession emerging again into view, and

proceeding toward the staircase down which they had entered the garden. Immediately the notes of the shrill call sounded upon their ears the Gomangani and the Bolgani resumed their original positions from below the foot of the staircase to the entrance to the palace, and once again was homage paid to Numa as he made his triumphal entry into the building.

Tarzan of the Apes ran his fingers through his mass of tousled hair, but finally he was forced to shake his head in defeat he could find no explanation whatsoever for all that he had witnessed. His curiosity, however, was so keenly piqued that he determined to investigate the palace and surrounding grounds

further before continuing on his way in search of a trail out of the valley.

Leaving the body of Bolgani where he had cached it, he started slowly to circle the building that he might examine it from all sides from the concealing foliage of the surrounding forest. He found the architecture equally unique upon all sides, and that the garden extended entirely around the building, though a portion upon the south side of the palace was given over to corrals and pens in which were kept numerous goats and a considerable flock of chickens. Upon this side, also, were several hundred swinging, beehive huts, such as he had seen in the native village of the Gomangani. These he took to be the

quarters of the black slaves, who performed all the arduous and menial labor connected with the palace.

The lofty granite wall which surrounded the entire enclosure was pierced by but a single gate which opened opposite the east end of the palace. This gate was large and of massive construction, appearing to have been built to withstand the assault of numerous and well-armed forces. So strong did it appear that the ape-man could not but harbor the opinion that it had been constructed to protect the interior against forces equipped with heavy battering rams. That such a force had ever existed within the vicinity in historic times seemed most unlikely, and

Tarzan conjectured, therefore, that the wall and the gate were of almost unthinkable antiquity, dating, doubtless, from the forgotten age of the Atlantians, and constructed, perhaps, to protect the builders of the Palace of Diamonds from the well-armed forces that had come from Atlantis to work the gold mines of Opar and to colonize central Africa.

While the wall, the gate, and the palace itself, suggested in many ways almost unbelievable age, yet they were in such an excellent state of repair that it was evident that they were still inhabited by rational and intelligent creatures; while upon the south side Tarzan had seen a new tower in process of construction, where a number of

blacks working under the direction of Bolgani were cutting and shaping granite blocks and putting them in place.

Tarzan had halted in a tree near the east gate to watch the life passing in and out of the palace grounds beneath the ancient portal, and as he watched, a long cavalcade of powerful Gomangani emerged from the forest and entered the enclosure. Swung in hides between two poles, this party was carrying rough-hewn blocks of granite, four men to a block. Two or three Bolgani accompanied the long line of carriers, which was preceded and followed by a detachment of black warriors, armed with battle-axes and spears. The demeanor and attitude of the black

porters, as well as of the Bolgani, suggested to the ape-man nothing more nor less than a caravan of donkeys, plodding their stupid way at the behest of their drivers. If one lagged he was prodded with the point of a spear or struck with its haft. There was no greater brutality shown than in the ordinary handling of beasts of burden the world around, nor in the demeanor of the blacks was there any more indication of objection or revolt than you see depicted upon the faces of a long line of burden-bearing mules; to all intents and purposes they were dumb, driven cattle. Slowly they filed through the gate way and disappeared from sight.

A few moments later another party

came out of the forest and passed into the palace grounds. This consisted of fully fifty armed Bolgani and twice as many black warriors with spears and axes. Entirely surrounded by these armed creatures were four brawny porters, carrying a small litter, upon which was fastened an ornate chest about two feet wide by four feet long, with a depth of approximately two feet. The chest itself was of some dark, weather- worn wood, and was reinforced by bands and corners of what appeared to be virgin gold in which were set many diamonds. What the chest contained Tarzan could not, of course, conceive, but that it was considered of great value was evidenced by the

precautions for safety with which it had been surrounded. The chest was borne directly into the huge, ivy-covered tower at the northeast corner of the palace, the entrance to which, Tarzan now first observed, was secured by doors as large and heavy as the east gate itself.

At the first opportunity that he could seize to accomplish it undiscovered, Tarzan swung across the jungle trail and continued through the trees to that one in which he had left the body of the Bolgani. Throwing this across his shoulder he returned to a point close above the trail near the east gate, and seizing upon a moment when there was a lull in the traffic he hurled the body as close to the portal as possible.

"Now," thought the ape-man, "let them guess who slew their fellow if they can."

Making his way toward the southeast, Tarzan approached the mountains which lie back of the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds. He had often to make detours to avoid native villages and to keep out of sight of the numerous parties of Bolgani that seemed to be moving in all directions through the forest. Late in the afternoon he came out of the hills into full view of the mountains beyond—rough, granite hills they were, whose precipitous peaks arose far above the timber line. Directly before him a well-marked trail led into a canyon, which he could see wound far upward toward the summit. This, then, would be as good a

place to commence his investigations as another. And so, seeing that the coast was clear, the ape-man descended from the trees, and taking advantage of the underbrush bordering the trail, made his way silently, yet swiftly, into the hills. For the most part he was compelled to worm his way through thickets, for the trail was in constant use by Gomangani and Bolgani, parties passing up it empty-handed and, returning, bearing blocks of granite. As he advanced more deeply into the hills the heavy underbrush gave way to a lighter growth of scrub, through which he could pass with far greater ease though with considerable more risk of discovery. However, the instinct of the beast that dominated Tarzan's jungle

craft permitted him to find cover where another would have been in full view of every enemy. Half way up the mountain the trail passed through a narrow gorge, not more than twenty feet wide and eroded from solid granite cliffs. Here there was no concealment whatsoever, and the ape-man realized that to enter it would mean almost immediate discovery. Glancing about, he saw that by making a slight detour he could reach the summit of the gorge, where, amid tumbled, granite boulders and stunted trees and shrubs, he knew that he could find sufficient concealment, and perhaps a plainer view of the trail beyond.

Nor was he mistaken, for, when he had reached a vantage point far above

the trail, he saw ahead an open pocket in the mountain, the cliffs surrounding which were honeycombed with numerous openings, which, it seemed to Tarzan, could be naught else than the mouths of tunnels. Rough wooden ladders reached to some of them, closer to the base of the cliffs, while from others knotted ropes dangled to the ground below. Out of these tunnels emerged men carrying little sacks of earth, which they dumped in a common pile beside a rivulet which ran through the gorge. Here other blacks, supervised by Bolgani, were engaged in washing the dirt, but what they hoped to find or what they did find, Tarzan could not guess.

Along one side of the rocky basin

many other blacks were engaged in quarrying the granite from the cliffs, which had been cut away through similar operations into a series of terraces running from the floor of the basin to the summit of the cliff. Here naked blacks toiled with primitive tools under the supervision of savage Bolgani. The activities of the quarrymen were obvious enough, but what the others were bringing from the mouths of the tunnels Tarzan could not be positive, though the natural assumption was that it was gold. Where, then, did they obtain their diamonds? Certainly not from these solid granite cliffs.

A few minutes' observation convinced Tarzan that the trail he had

followed from the forest ended in this little cul-de-sac, and so he sought a way upward and around it, in search of a pass across the range.

The balance of that day and nearly all the next he devoted to his efforts in this direction, only in the end to be forced to admit that there was no egress from the valley upon this side. To points far above the timber line he made his way, but there, always, he came face to face with sheer, perpendicular cliffs of granite towering high above him, upon the face of which not even the ape-man could find foothold. Along the southern and eastern sides of the basin he carried his investigation, but with similar disappointing results, and then at last he

turned his steps back toward the forest with the intention of seeking a way out through the valley of Opar with La, after darkness had fallen.

The sun had just risen when Tarzan arrived at the native village in which he had left La, and no sooner did his eyes rest upon it than he became apprehensive that something was amiss, for, not only was the gate wide open but there was no sign of life within the palisade, nor was there any movement of the swinging huts that would indicate that they were occupied. Always wary of ambush, Tarzan reconnoitered carefully before descending into the village. To his trained observation it became evident that the village had been deserted for at

least twenty-four hours. Running to the hut in which La had been hidden he hastily ascended the rope and examined the interior—it was vacant, nor was there any sign of the High Priestess. Descending to the ground, the ape-man started to make a thorough investigation of the village in search of news to the fate of its inhabitants and of La. He had examined the interiors of several huts when his keen eyes noted a slight movement of one of the swinging, cage-like habitations some distance from him. Quickly he crossed the intervening space, and as he approached the hut he saw that no rope trailed from its doorway. Halting beneath, Tarzan raised his face to the aperture, through which

nothing but the roof of the hut was visible.

"Gomangani," he cried, "it is I, Tarzan of the Apes. Come to the opening and tell me what has become of your fellows and of my mate, whom I left here under the protection of your warriors."

There was no answer, and again Tarzan called, for he was positive that someone was hiding in the hut.

"Come down," he called again, "or I will come up after you."

Still there was no reply. A grim smile touched the ape-man's lips as he drew his hunting knife from its sheath and placed it between his teeth, and then, with a cat-like spring, leaped for the opening, and catching its sides, drew his

body up into the interior of the hut.

If he had expected opposition, he met with none, nor in the dimly lighted interior could he at first distinguish any presence, though, when his eyes became accustomed to the semi-darkness, he descried a bundle of leaves and grasses lying against the opposite wall of the structure. Crossing to these he tore them aside revealing the huddled form of a terrified woman. Seizing her by a shoulder he drew her to a sitting position.

"What has happened?" he demanded. "Where are the villagers? Where is my mate?"

"Do not kill me! Do not kill me!" she cried. "It was not I. It was not my fault."

"I do not intend to kill you," replied Tarzan. "Tell me the truth and you shall be safe."

"The Bolgani have taken them away," cried the woman. "They came when the sun was low upon the day that you arrived, and they were very angry, for they had found the body of their fellow outside the gate of the Palace of Diamonds. They knew that he had come here to our village, and no one had seen him alive since he had departed from the palace. They came, then, and threatened and tortured our people, until at last the warriors told them all. I hid. I do not know why they did not find me. But at last they went away, taking all the others with them; taking your mate, too. They

will never come back."

"You think that the Bolgani will kill them?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," she replied, "they kill all who displease them."

Alone, now, and relieved of the responsibility of La, Tarzan might easily make his way by night through the valley of Opar and to safety beyond the barrier. But perhaps such a thought never entered his head. Gratitude and loyalty were marked characteristics of the ape-man. La had saved him from the fanaticism and intrigue of her people. She had saved him at a cost of all that was most dear to her, power and position, peace, and safety. She had jeopardized her life for him, and become an exile from her

own country. The mere fact then that the Bolgani had taken her with the possible intention of slaying her, was not sufficient for the ape-man. He must know whether or not she lived, and if she lived he must devote his every energy to winning her release and her eventual escape from the dangers of this valley.

Tarzan spent the day reconnoitering outside the palace grounds, seeking an opportunity of gaining entrance without detection, but this he found impossible inasmuch as there was never a moment that there were not Gomangani or Bolgani in the outer garden. But with the approach of darkness the great east gate was closed, and the inmates of the huts and palace withdrew within their walls,

leaving not even a single sentinel without—a fact that indicated clearly that the Bolgani had no reason to apprehend an attack. The subjugation of the Gomangani, then, was apparently complete, and so the towering wall surrounding their palace, which was more than sufficient to protect them from the inroads of lions, was but the reminder of an ancient day when a once powerful, but now vanished, enemy threatened their peace and safety.

When darkness had finally settled Tarzan approached the gate, and throwing the noose of his grass rope over one of the carved lions that capped the gate posts, ascended quickly to the summit of the wall, from where he

dropped lightly into the garden below. To insure an avenue for quick escape in the event that he found La, he unlatched the heavy gates and swung them open. Then he crept stealthily toward the ivy-covered east tower, which he had chosen after a day of investigation as offering easiest ingress to the palace. The success of his plan hinged largely upon the age and strength of the ivy which grew almost to the summit of the tower, and, to his immense relief, he found that it would easily support his weight.

Far above the ground, near the summit of the tower, he had seen from the trees surrounding the palace an open window, which, unlike the balance of those in this

part of the palace, was without bars. Dim lights shone from several of the tower windows, as from those of other parts of the palace. Avoiding these lighted apertures, Tarzan ascended quickly, though carefully, toward the unbarred window above, and as he reached it and cautiously raised his eyes above the level of the sill, he was delighted to find that it opened into an unlighted chamber, the interior of which, however, was so shrouded in darkness that he could discern nothing within. Drawing himself carefully to the level of the sill he crept quietly into the apartment beyond. Groping through the blackness, he cautiously made the rounds of the room, which he found to contain a

carved bedstead of peculiar design, a table, and a couple of benches. Upon the bedstead were stuffs of woven material, thrown over the softly tanned pelts of antelopes and leopards.

Opposite the window through which he had entered was a closed door. This he opened slowly and silently, until, through a tiny aperture he could look out upon a dimly lighted corridor or circular hallway, in the center of which was an opening about four feet in diameter, passing through which and disappearing beyond a similar opening in the ceiling directly above was a straight pole with short crosspieces fastened to it at intervals of about a foot—quite evidently the primitive staircase which

gave communication between the various floors of the tower. Three upright columns, set at equal intervals about the circumference of the circular opening in the center of the floor helped to support the ceiling above. Around the outside of this circular hallway there were other doors, similar to that opening into the apartment in which he was.

Hearing no noise and seeing no evidence of another than himself, Tarzan opened the door and stepped into the hallway. His nostrils were now assailed strongly by the same heavy fragrance of incense that had first greeted him upon his approach to the palace several days before. In the interior of the tower, however, it was much more powerful,

practically obliterating all other odors, and placing upon the ape-man an almost prohibitive handicap in his search for La. In fact as he viewed the doors upon this single stage of the tower, he was filled with consternation at the prospect of the well- nigh impossible task that confronted him. To search this great tower alone, without any assistance whatever from his keen sense of scent, seemed impossible of accomplishment, if he were to take even the most ordinary precautions against detection.

The ape-man's self-confidence was in no measure blundering egotism. Knowing his limitations, he knew that he would have little or no chance against even a few Bolgani were he to be

discovered within their palace, where all was familiar to them and strange to him. Behind him was the open window, and the silent jungle night, and freedom. Ahead danger, predestined failure; and, quite likely, death. Which should he choose? For a moment he stood in silent thought, and then, raising his head and squaring his great shoulders, he shook his black locks defiantly and stepped boldly toward the nearest door. Room after room he had investigated until he had made the entire circle of the landing, but in so far as La or any clew to her were concerned his search was fruitless. He found quaint furniture and rugs and tapestries, and ornaments of gold and diamonds, and in one dimly lighted

chamber he came upon a sleeping Bolgani, but so silent were the movements of the ape-man that the sleeper slept on undisturbed, even though Tarzan passed entirely around his bed, which was set in the center of the chamber, and investigated a curtained alcove beyond.

Having completed the rounds of this floor, Tarzan determined to work upward first and then, returning, investigate the lower stages later. Pursuant to this plan, therefore, he ascended the strange stairway. Three landings he passed before he reached the upper floor of the tower. Circling each floor was a ring of doors, all of which were closed, while dimly lighting each

landing were feebly burning cressets—shallow, golden bowls - containing what appeared to be tallow, in which floated a tow-like wick.

Upon the upper landing there were but three doors, all of which were closed. The ceiling of this hallway was the dome-like roof of the tower, in the center of which was another circular opening, through which the stairway protruded into the darkness of the night above.

As Tarzan opened the door nearest him it creaked upon its hinges, giving forth the first audible sound that had resulted from his investigations up to this point. The interior of the apartment before him was unlighted, and as Tarzan

stood there in the entrance in statuesque silence for a few seconds following the creaking of the hinge, he was suddenly aware of movement —of the faintest shadow of a sound—behind him. Wheeling quickly he saw the figure of a man standing in an open doorway upon the opposite side of the landing.

12. THE GOLDEN INGOTS

Esteban Miranda had played the role of Tarzan of the Apes with the Waziri as his audience for less than twenty-four hours when he began to realize that, even with the lee-way that his supposedly injured brain gave him, it was going to be a very difficult thing to carry on the deception indefinitely. In the first place Usula did not seem at all pleased at the idea of merely taking the gold away from the intruders and then running from them. Nor did his fellow warriors seem any more enthusiastic over the plan than he. As a matter of fact they could not conceive that any number of bumps upon the head could render their Tarzan of the Apes a coward, and to run away from

these west coast blacks and a handful of inexperienced whites seemed nothing less than cowardly.

Following all this, there had occurred in the afternoon that which finally decided the Spaniard that he was building for himself anything other than a bed of roses, and that the sooner he found an excuse for quitting the company of the Waziri the greater would be his life expectancy.

They were passing through rather open jungle at the time. The brush was not particularly heavy and the trees were at considerable distances apart, when suddenly, without warning, a rhinoceros charged them. To the consternation of the Waziri, Tarzan of the Apes turned and

fled for the nearest tree the instant his eyes alighted upon charging Buto. In his haste Esteban tripped and fell, and when at last he reached the tree instead of leaping agilely into the lower branches, he attempted to shin up the huge bole as a schoolboy shins up a telegraph pole, only to slip and fall back again to the ground.

In the meantime Buto, who charges either by scent or hearing, rather than by eyesight, his powers of which are extremely poor, had been distracted from his original direction by one of the Waziri, and after missing the fellow had gone blundering on to disappear in the underbrush beyond.

When Esteban finally arose and

discovered that the rhinoceros was gone, he saw surrounding him a semi-circle of huge blacks, upon whose faces were written expressions of pity and sorrow, not unmingled, in some instances, with a tinge of contempt. The Spaniard saw that he had been terrified into a practically irreparable blunder, yet he seized despairingly upon the only excuse he could conjure up.

"My poor head," he cried, pressing both palms to his temples.

"The blow was upon your head, Bwana," said Usula, "and your faithful Waziri thought that it was the heart of their master that knew no fear."

Esteban made no reply, and in silence they resumed their march. In silence they

continued until they made camp before dark upon the bank of the river just above a waterfall. During the afternoon Esteban had evolved a plan of escape from his dilemma, and no sooner had he made camp than he ordered the Waziri to bury the treasure.

"We shall leave it here," he said, "and tomorrow we shall set forth in search of the thieves, for I have decided to punish them. They must be taught that they may not come into the jungle of Tarzan with impunity. It was only the injury to my head that prevented me from slaying them immediately I discovered their perfidy."

This attitude pleased the Waziri better. They commenced to see a ray of

hope. Once again was Tarzan of the Apes becoming Tarzan. And so it was that with lighter hearts and a new cheerfulness they set forth the next morning in search of the camp of the Englishmen, and by shrewd guessing on Usula's part they cut across the jungle to intercept the probable line of march of the Europeans to such advantage that they came upon them just as they were making camp that night. Long before they reached them they smelled the smoke of their fires and heard the songs and chatter of the west coast carriers.

Then it was that Esteban gathered the Waziri about him. "My children," he said, addressing Usula in English, "these strangers have come here to wrong

Tarzan. To Tarzan, then, belongs the vengeance. Go, therefore, and leave me to punish my enemies alone and in my own way. Return home, leave the gold where it is, for it will be a long time before I shall need it."

The Waziri were disappointed, for this new plan did not at all accord with their desires, which contemplated a cheerful massacre of the west coast blacks. But as yet the man before them was Tarzan, their big Bwana, to whom they had never failed in implicit obedience. For a few moments following Esteban's declaration of his intention, they stood in silence shifting uneasily, and then at last they commenced to speak to one another in

Waziri. What they said the Spaniard did not know, but evidently they were urging something upon Usula, who presently turned toward him.

"Oh, Bwana," cried the black. "How can we return home to the Lady Jane and tell her that we left you injured and alone to face the rifles of the white men and their askaris? Do not ask us to do it, Bwana. If you were yourself we should not fear for your safety, but since the injury to your head you have not been the same, and we fear to leave you alone in the jungle. Let us, then, your faithful Waziri, punish these people, after which we will take you home in safety, where you may be cured of the evils that have fallen upon you."

The Spaniard laughed. "I am entirely recovered," he said, "and I am in no more danger alone than I would be with you," which he knew, even better than they, was but a mild statement of the facts. "You will obey my wishes," he continued sternly. "Go back at once the way that we have come. After you have gone at least two miles you may make camp for the night, and in the morning start out again for home. Make no noise, I do not want them to know that I am here. Do not worry about me. I am all right, and I shall probably overtake you before you reach home. Go!"

Sorrowfully the Waziri turned back upon the trail they had just covered and a moment later the last of them

disappeared from the sight of the Spaniard.

With a sigh of relief Esteban Miranda turned toward the camp of his own people. Fearing that to surprise them suddenly might invite a volley of shots from the askaris he whistled, and then called aloud as he approached.

"It is Tarzan!" cried the first of the blacks who saw him. "Now indeed shall we all be killed."

Esteban saw the growing excitement among the carriers and askaris— he saw the latter seize their rifles and that they were fingering the triggers nervously.

"It is I, Esteban Miranda," he called aloud. "Flora! Flora, tell those fools to lay aside their rifles."

The whites, too, were standing watching him, and at the sound of his voice Flora turned toward the blacks. "It is all right," she said, "that is not Tarzan. Lay aside your rifles."

Esteban entered the camp, smiling. "Here I am," he said.

"We thought that you were dead," said Kraski. "Some of these fellows said that Tarzan said that he had killed you."

"He captured me," said Esteban, "but as you see he did not kill me. I thought that he was going to, but he did not, and finally he turned me loose in the jungle. He may have thought that I could not survive and that he would accomplish his end just as surely without having my blood upon his hands."

"'E must have knowed you," said Peebles. "You'd die, all right, if you were left alone very long in the jungle—you'd starve to death."

Esteban made no reply to the sally but turned toward Flora. "Are you not glad to see me, Flora?" he asked.

The girl shrugged her shoulders. "What is the difference?" she asked. "Our expedition is a failure. Some of them think you were largely to blame." She nodded her head in the general direction of the other whites.

The Spaniard scowled. None of them cared very much to see him. He did not care about the others, but he had hoped that Flora would show some enthusiasm about his return. Well, if she had known

what he had in his mind, she might have been happier to see him, and only too glad to show some kind of affection. But she did not know. She did not know that Esteban Miranda had hidden the golden ingots where he might go another day and get them. It had been his intention to persuade her to desert the others, and then, later, the two would return and recover the treasure, but now he was piqued and offended —none of them should have a shilling of it—he would wait until they left Africa and then he would return and take it all for himself. The only fly in the ointment was the thought that the Waziri knew the location of the treasure, and that, sooner or later, they would return with Tarzan and get it.

This weak spot in his calculations must be strengthened, and to strengthen it he must have assistance which would mean sharing his secret with another, but whom?

Outwardly oblivious of the sullen glances of his companions he took his place among them. It was evident to him that they were far from being glad to see him, but just why he did not know, for he had not heard of the plan that Kraski and Owaza had hatched to steal the loot of the ivory raiders, and that their main objection to his presence was the fear that they would be compelled to share the loot with him. It was Kraski who first voiced the thought that was in the minds of all but Esteban.

"Miranda," he said, "it is the consensus of opinion that you and Bluber are largely responsible for the failure of our venture. We are not finding fault. I just mention it as a fact. But since you have been away we have struck upon a plan to take something out of Africa that will partially recompense us for the loss of the gold. We have worked the thing all out carefully and made our plans. We don't need you to carry them out. We have no objection to your coming along with us, if you want to, for company, but we want to have it understood from the beginning that you are not to share in anything that we get out of this."

The Spaniard smiled and waved a gesture of unconcern. "It is perfectly all

right," he said. "I shall ask for nothing. I would not wish to take anything from any of you." And he grinned inwardly as he thought of the more than quarter of a million pounds in gold which he would one day take out of Africa for himself, alone. At this unexpected attitude of acquiescence upon Esteban's part the others were greatly relieved, and immediately the entire atmosphere of constraint was removed.

"You're a good fellow, Esteban," said Peebles. "I've been sayin' right along that you'd want to do the right thing, and I want to say that I'm mighty glad to see you back here safe an' sound. I felt terrible when I 'eard you was croaked, that I did."

"Yes," said Bluber, "John he feel so bad he cry himself to sleep every night, ain't it, John?"

"Don't try to start nothin', Bluber," growled Peebles, glaring at the Jew.

"I vasn't commencing to start nodding," replied Adolph, seeing that the big Englishman was angry; "of course ve vere all sorry dat ve t'ought Esteban was killed und ve is all glad dot he is back."

"And that he don't want any of the swag," added Throck.

"Don't worry," said Esteban, "If I get back to London I'll be happy enough — I've had enough of Africa to last me all the rest of my life."

Before he could get to sleep that night, the Spaniard spent a wakeful hour

or two trying to 'evolve a plan whereby he might secure the gold absolutely to himself, without fear of its being removed by the Waziri later. He knew that he could easily find the spot where he had buried it and remove it to another close by, provided that he could return immediately over the trail along which Usula had led them that day, and he could do this alone, insuring that no one but himself would know the new location of the hiding place of the gold, but he was equally positive that he could never again return later from the coast and find where he had hidden it. This meant that he must share his secret with another—one familiar with the country who could find the spot again at any time

and from any direction. But who was there whom he might trust! In his mind he went carefully over the entire personnel of their safari, and continually his mind reverted to a single individual— Owaza. He had no confidence in the wily old scoundrel's integrity, but there was no other who suited his purpose as well, and finally he was forced to the conclusion that he must share his secret with this black, and depend upon avarice rather than honor for his protection. He could repay the fellow well —make him rich beyond his wildest dreams, and this the Spaniard could well afford to do in view of the tremendous fortune at stake. And so he fell asleep dreaming of what gold, to the value of over a quarter of a

million pounds sterling, would accomplish in the gay capitals of the world.

The following morning while they were breakfasting Esteban mentioned casually that he had passed a large herd of antelope not far from their camp the previous day, and suggested that he take four or five men and do a little hunting, joining the balance of the party at camp that night. No one raised any objection, possibly for the reason that they assumed that the more he hunted and the further from the safari he went the greater the chances of his being killed, a contingency that none of them would have regretted, since at heart they had neither liking nor trust for him.

"I will take Owaza," he said. "He is the cleverest hunter of them all, and five or six men of his choosing." But later, when he approached Owaza, the black interposed objections to the hunt.

"We have plenty of meat for two days," he said. "Let us go on as fast as we can, away from the land of the Waziri and Tarzan. I can find plenty of game anywhere between here and the coast. March for two days, and then I will hunt with you."

"Listen," said Esteban, in a whisper. "It is more than antelope that I would hunt. I cannot tell you here in camp, but when we have left the others I will explain. It will pay you better to come with me today than all the ivory you can

hope to get from the raiders." Owaza cocked an attentive ear and scratched his woolly head.

"It is a good day to hunt, Bwana," he said. "I will come with you and bring five boys."

After Owaza had planned the march for the main party and arranged for the camping place for the night, so that he and the Spaniard could find them again, the hunting party set out upon the trail that Usula had followed from the buried treasure the preceding day. They had not gone far before Owaza discovered the fresh spoor of the Waziri.

"Many men passed here late yesterday," he said to Esteban, eyeing the Spaniard quizzically.

"I saw nothing of them," replied the latter. "They must have come this way after I passed."

"They came almost to our camp, and then they turned about and went away again," said Owaza. "Listen, Bwana, I carry a rifle and you shall march ahead of me. If these tracks were made by your people, and you are leading me into ambush, you shall be the first to die."

"Listen, Owaza," said Esteban, "we are far enough from camp now so that I may tell you all. These tracks were made by the Waziri of Tarzan of the Apes, who buried the gold for me a day's march from here. I have sent them home, and I wish you to go back with me and move the gold to another hiding place.

After these others have gotten their ivory and returned to England, you and I will come back and get the gold, and then, indeed, shall you be well rewarded."

"Who are you, then?" asked Owaza. "Often have I doubted that you are Tarzan of the Apes. The day that we left the camp outside of Opar one of my men told me that you had been poisoned by your own people and left in the camp. He said that he saw it with his own eyes—your body lying hidden behind some bushes—and yet you were with us upon the march that day. I thought that he lied to me, but I saw the consternation in his face when he saw you, and so I have often wondered if there were two Tarzans of the Apes."

"I am not Tarzan of the Apes," said Esteban. "It was Tarzan of the Apes who was poisoned in our camp by the others. But they only gave him something that would put him to sleep for a long time, possibly with the hope that he would be killed by wild animals before he awoke. Whether or not he stilt lives we do not know. Therefore you have nothing to fear from the Waziri or Tarzan on my account, Owaza, for I want to keep out of their way even more than you."

The black nodded. "Perhaps you speak the truth," he said, but still he walked behind, with his rifle always ready in his hand.

They went warily, for fear of overtaking the Waziri, but shortly after

passing the spot where the latter had camped they saw that they had taken another route and that there was now no danger of coming in contact with them.

When they had reached a point within about a mile of the spot where the gold had been buried, Esteban told Owaza to have his boys remain there while they went ahead alone to effect the transfer of the ingots.

"The fewer who know of this," he said to the black, "the safer we shall be."

"The Bwana speaks words of wisdom," replied the wily black.

Esteban found the spot near the waterfall without difficulty, and upon questioning Owaza he discovered that the latter knew the location perfectly,

and would have no difficulty in coming directly to it again from the coast. They transferred the gold but a short distance, concealing it in a heavy thicket near the edge of the river, knowing that it would be as safe from discovery there as though they had transported it a hundred miles, for the chances were extremely slight that the Waziri or anyone else who should learn of its original hiding place would imagine that anyone would go to the trouble of removing it but a matter of a hundred yards.

When they had finished Owaza looked at the sun.

"We will never reach camp tonight," he said, "and we will have to travel fast to overtake them even tomorrow."

"I did not expect to," replied Esteban, "but I could not tell them that. If we never find them again I shall be satisfied." Owaza grinned. In his crafty mind an idea was formed.

"Why," he thought, "risk death in a battle with the Arab ivory raiders on the chance of securing a few tusks, when all this gold awaits only transportation to the coast to be ours?"

13. A STRANGE, FLAT TOWER

Tarzan, turning, discovered the man standing behind him on the top level of the ivy covered east tower of the Palace of Diamonds. His knife leaped from its sheath at the touch of his quick fingers. But almost simultaneously his hand dropped to his side, and he stood contemplating the other, with an expression of incredulity upon his face that but reflected a similar emotion registered upon the countenance of the stranger. For what Tarzan saw was no Bolgani, nor a Gomangani, but a white man, bald and old and shriveled, with a long, white beard—a white man, naked

but for barbaric ornaments of gold spangles and diamonds.

"God!" exclaimed the strange apparition.

Tarzan eyed the other quizzically. That single English word opened up such tremendous possibilities for conjecture as baffled the mind of the ape- man.

"What are you? Who are you?" continued the old man, but this time in the dialect of the great apes.

"You used an English word a moment ago," said Tarzan. "Do you speak that language?" Tarzan himself spoke in English.

"Ah, dear God!" cried the old man, "that I should have lived to hear that

sweet tongue again." And he, too, now spoke in English, halting English, as might one who was long unaccustomed to voicing the language.

"Who are you?" asked Tarzan, "and what are you doing here?"

"It is the same question that I asked you," replied the old man. "Do not be afraid to answer me. You are evidently an Englishman, and you have nothing to fear from me."

"I am here after a woman, captured by the Bolgani," replied Tarzan.

The other nodded. "Yes," he said, "I know. She is here."

"Is she safe?" asked Tarzan.

"She has not been harmed. She will

be safe until tomorrow or the next day," replied the old man. "But who are you, and how did you find your way here from the outer world?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man. "I came into this valley looking for a way out of the valley of Opar where the life of my companion was in danger. And you?"

"I am an old man," replied the other, "and I have been here ever since I was a boy. I was a stowaway on the ship that brought Stanley to Africa after the establishment of the station on Stanley Pool, and I came into the interior with him. I went out from camp to hunt, alone, one day. I lost my way and later was captured by unfriendly natives. They

took me farther into the interior to their village from which I finally escaped, but so utterly confused and lost that I had no idea what direction to take to find a trail to the coast. I wandered thus for months, until finally, upon an accursed day I found an entrance to this valley. I do not know why they did not put me to death at once, but they did not, and later they discovered that my knowledge could be turned to advantage to them. Since then I have helped them in their quarrying and mining and in their diamond cutting. I have given them iron drills with hardened points and drills tipped with diamonds. Now I am practically one of them, but always in my heart has been the hope that some day I might escape

from the valley—a hopeless hope, though, I may assure you."

"There is no way out?" asked Tarzan.

"There is a way, but it is always guarded."

"Where is it?" queried Tarzan.

"It is a continuation of one of the mine tunnels, passing entirely through the mountain to the valley beyond. The mines have been worked by the ancestors of this race for an almost incalculable length of time. The mountains are honeycombed with their shafts and tunnels. Back of the gold-bearing quartz lies an enormous deposit of altered peridotite, which contains diamonds, in the search for which it evidently became necessary to extend

one of the shafts to the opposite side of the mountain, possibly for purposes of ventilation. This tunnel and the trail leading down into Opar are the only means of ingress to the valley. From time immemorial they have kept the tunnel guarded, more particularly, I imagine, to prevent the escape of slaves than to thwart the inroads of an enemy, since they believe that there is no fear of the latter emergency. The trail to Opar they do not guard, because they no longer fear the Oparians, and know quite well that none of their Gomangani slaves would dare enter the valley of the sun-worshipers. For the same reason, then, that the slaves cannot escape, we, too, must remain prisoners here forever."

"How is the tunnel guarded?" asked Tarzan.

"Two Bolgani and a dozen or more Gomangani warriors are always upon duty there," replied the old man.

The Gomangani would like to escape?"

"They have tried it many times in the past, I am told," replied the old man, "though never since I have lived here, and always they were caught and tortured. And all their race was punished and worked the harder because of these attempts upon the part of a few."

"They are numerous—the Gomangani?"

"There are probably five thousand of them in the valley," replied the old man.

"And how many Bolgani?" the ape-man asked.

"Between ten and eleven hundred."

"Five to one," murmured Tarzan, "and yet they are afraid to attempt to escape."

"But you must remember," said the old man, "that the Bolgani are the dominant and intelligent race—the others are intellectually little above the beasts of the forest."

"Yet they are men," Tarzan reminded him.

"In figure only," replied the old man. "They cannot band together as men do. They have not as yet reached the community plane of evolution. It is true that families reside in a single village, but that idea, together with their

weapons, was given to them by the Bolgani that they might not be entirely exterminated by the lions and panthers.

"Formerly, I am told, each individual Gomangani, when he became old enough to hunt for himself, constructed a hut apart from others and took up his solitary life, there being at that time no slightest semblance of family life. Then the Bolgani taught them how to build palisaded villages and compelled the men and women to remain in them and rear their children to maturity, after which the children were required to remain in the village, so that now some of the communities can claim as many as forty or fifty people. But the death rate is high among them, and they cannot

multiply as rapidly as people living under normal conditions of peace and security. The brutalities of the Bolgani kill many; the carnivora take a considerable toll."

"Five to one, and still they remain in slavery—what cowards they must be," said the ape-man.

"On the contrary, they are far from cowardly," replied the old man. "They will face a lion with the utmost bravery. But for so many ages have they been subservient to the will of the Bolgani, that it has become a fixed habit in them—as the fear of God is inherent in us, so is the fear of the Bolgani inherent in the minds of the Gomangani from birth."

"It is interesting," said Tarzan. "But

tell me now where the woman is of whom I have come in search."

"She is your mate?" asked the old man.

"No," replied Tarzan. "I told the Gomangani that she was, so that they would protect her. She is La, queen of Opar, High Priestess of the Flaming God."

The old man looked his incredulity. "Impossible!" he cried. "It cannot be that the queen of Opar has risked her life by coming to the home of her hereditary enemies."

"She was forced to it," replied Tarzan, "her life being threatened by a part of her people because she had refused to sacrifice me to their god."

"If the Bolgani knew this there would be great rejoicing, replied the old man.

"Tell me where she is," demanded Tarzan. "She preserved me from her people, and I must save her from whatever fate the Bolgani contemplate for her."

"It is hopeless," said the old man. "I can tell you where she is, but you cannot rescue her."

"I can try," replied the ape-man.

"But you will fail and die."

"If what you tell me is true, that there is absolutely no chance of my escaping from the valley, I might as well die," replied the ape-man. "However, I do not agree with you."

The old man shrugged. "You do not know the Bolgani," he said.

"Tell me where the woman is," said Tarzan.

"Look" replied the old man, motioning Tarzan to follow him into his apartment, and approaching a window which faced toward the west, he pointed towards a strange flat tower which rose above the roof of the main building near the west end of the palace. "She is probably somewhere in the interior of that tower," said the old man to Tarzan, "but as far as you are concerned, she might as well be at the north pole."

Tarzan stood in silence for a moment, his keen eyes taking in every salient detail of the prospect before him. He

saw the strange, flat-topped tower, which it seemed to him might be reached from the roof of the main building. He saw, too, branches of the ancient trees that sometimes topped the roof itself, and except for the dim light shining through some of the palace windows he saw no signs of life. He turned suddenly upon the old man.

"I do not know you," he said, "but I believe that I may trust you, since after all blood ties are strong, and we are the only men of our race in this valley. You might gain something in favor by betraying me, but I cannot believe that you will do it."

"Do not fear," said the old man, "I hate them. If I could help you I would,

but I know that there is no hope of success for whatever plan you may have in mind—the woman will never be rescued; you will never leave the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds—you will never leave the palace itself unless the Bolgani wish it."

The ape-man grinned. "You have been here so long," he said, "that you are beginning to assume the attitude of mind that keeps the Gomangani in perpetual slavery. If you want to escape, come with me. We may not succeed, but at least you will have a better chance if you try than as if you remained forever in this tower."

The old man shook his head. "No," he said, "it is hopeless. If escape had been

possible I should have been away from here long ago."

"Good-bye then," said Tarzan, and swinging out of the window he clambered toward the roof below, along the stout stem of the old ivy.

The old man watched him for a moment until he saw him make his way carefully across the roof toward the flat-topped tower where he hoped to find and liberate La. Then the old fellow turned and hurried rapidly down the crude stairway that rose ladder-like to the center of the tower.

Tarzan made his way across the uneven roof of the main building, clambering up the sides of its higher elevations and dropping again to its

lower levels as he covered a considerable distance between the east tower and that flat-topped structure of peculiar design in which La was supposed to be incarcerated. His progress was slow, for he moved with the caution of a beast of prey, stopping often in dense shadows to listen.

When at last he reached the tower, he found that it had many openings letting upon the roof-openings which were closed only with hangings of the heavy tapestried stuff which he had seen in the tower. Drawing one of these slightly aside he looked within upon a large chamber, bare of furnishings, from the center of which there protruded through a circular aperture the top of a stairway

similar to that he had ascended in the east tower. There was no one in sight within the chamber, and Tarzan crossed immediately to the stairway. Peering cautiously into the opening Tarzan saw that the stairway descended for a great distance, passing many floors. How far it went he could not judge, except it seemed likely that it pierced subterranean chambers beneath the palace. Sounds of life came up to him through the shaft, and odors, too, but the latter largely nullified, in so far as the scent impressions which they offered Tarzan were concerned, by the heavy incense which pervaded the entire palace.

It was this perfume that was to prove

the ape-man's undoing, for otherwise his keen nostrils would have detected the scent of a near-by Gomangani. The fellow lay behind one of the hangings at an aperture in the tower wall. He had been lying in such a position that he had seen Tarzan enter the chamber, and he was watching him now as the ape-man stood looking down the shaft of the stairway. The eyes of the black had at first gone wide in terror at sight of this strange apparition, the like of which he had never seen before. Had the creature been of sufficient intelligence to harbor superstition, he would have thought Tarzan a god descended from above. But being of too low an order to possess any imagination whatsoever, he merely knew

that he saw a strange creature, and that all strange creatures must be enemies, he was convinced. His duty was to apprise his masters of this presence in the palace, but he did not dare to move until the apparition had reached a sufficient distance from him to ensure that the movements of the Gomangani would not be noticed by the intruder—he did not care to call attention to himself, for he had found that the more one effaced oneself in the presence of the Bolgani, the less one was likely to suffer.

For a long time the stranger peered down the shaft of the stairway, and for a long time the Gomangani lay quietly watching him. But at last the former descended the stairs and passed out of

sight of the watcher, who immediately leaped to his feet and scurried away across the roof of the palace toward a large tower arising at its western end.

As Tarzan descended the ladder the fumes of the incense became more and more annoying. Where otherwise he might have investigated quickly by scent he was now compelled to listen for every sound, and in many cases to investigate the chambers opening upon the central corridor by entering them. Where the doors were locked, he lay flat and listened close to the aperture at their base. On several occasions he risked calling La by name, but in no case did he receive any reply.

He had investigated four landings and

was descending to the fifth when he saw standing in one of the doorways upon this level an evidently much excited and possibly terrified black. The fellow was of giant proportions and entirely unarmed. He stood looking at the ape-man with wide eyes as the latter jumped lightly from the stairway and stood facing him upon the same level.

"What do you want?" finally stammered the black. "Are you looking for the white she, your mate, whom the Bolgani took?"

"Yes," replied Tarzan. "What do you know of her?"

"I know where she is hidden," replied the black, "and if you will follow me I will lead you to her."

"Why do you offer to do this for me?" asked Tarzan, immediately suspicious. "Why is it that you do not go at once to your masters and tell them that I am here that they may send men to capture me?"

"I do not know the reason that I was sent to tell you this," replied the black. "The Bolgani sent me. I did not wish to come for I was afraid."

"Where did they tell you to lead me?" asked Tarzan.

"I am to lead you into a chamber, the door of, which will be immediately bolted upon us. You will then be a prisoner."

"And you?" inquired Tarzan.

"I, too, shall be a prisoner with you. The Bolgani do not care what becomes

of me. Perhaps you will kill me, but they do not care."

"If you lead me into a trap I shall kill you," replied Tarzan. "But if you lead me to the woman perhaps we shall all escape. You would like to escape, would you not?"

"I should like to escape, but I cannot."

"Have you ever tried?"

"No, I have not. Why should I try to do something that cannot be done?"

"If you lead me into the trap I shall surely kill you. If you lead me to the woman, you at least have the chance that I do to live. Which will you do?"

The black scratched his head in thought, the idea slowly filtering through

his stupid mind. At last he spoke.

"You are very wise," he said. "I will lead you to the woman."

"Go ahead, then," said Tarzan, "and I will follow you."

The black descended to the next level and opening the door, entered a long, straight corridor. As the ape-man followed his guide he had leisure to reflect upon the means through which the Bolgani had learned of his presence in the tower, and the only conclusion he could arrive at was that the old man had betrayed him, since in so far as Tarzan was aware he alone knew that the ape-man was in the palace. The corridor along which the black was leading him was very dark, receiving a dim and

inadequate illumination from the dimly lighted corridor they had just left, the door into which remained open behind them. Presently the black stopped before a closed door.

"The woman is in there," said the black, pointing to the door.

"She is alone?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied the black. "Look," and he opened the door, revealing a heavy hanging, which he gently separated, revealing to Tarzan the interior of the chamber beyond.

Seizing the black by the wrist, that he might not escape, Tarzan stepped forward and put his eyes to the aperture. Before him lay a large chamber, at one end of which was a raised dais, the base

of which was of a dark, ornately carved wood. The central figure upon this dais was a huge, black-maned lion - the same that Tarzan had seen escorted through the gardens of the palace. His golden chains were now fastened to rings in the floor, while the four blacks stood in statuesque rigidity, two upon either side of the beast. Upon golden thrones behind the lion sat three magnificently ornamented Bolgani. At the foot of the steps leading to the stair stood La, between two Gomangani guards. Upon either side of a central aisle were carved benches facing the dais, and occupying the front section of these were some fifty Bolgani, among whom Tarzan almost immediately espied the little, old man that he had met in the

tower, the sight of whom instantly crystallized the ape-man's conviction of the source of his betrayal.

The chamber was lighted by hundreds of cressets, burning a substance which gave forth both light and the heavy incense that had assailed Tarzan's nostrils since first he entered the domain of the Bolgani. The long, cathedralesque windows upon one side of the apartment were thrown wide, admitting the soft air of the jungle summer night. Through them Tarzan could see the palace grounds and that this chamber was upon the same level as the terrace upon which the palace stood. Beyond those windows was an open gate-way to the jungle and freedom, but interposed between him

and the windows were fifty armed gorilla-men. Perhaps, then, strategy would be a better weapon than force with which to carve his way to freedom with La. Yet to the forefront of his mind was evidently a belief in the probability that in the end it would be force rather than strategy upon which he must depend. He turned to the black at his side.

"Would the Gomangani guarding the lion like to escape from the Bolgani?" he asked.

"The Gomangani would all escape if they could," replied the black.

"If it is necessary for me to enter the room, then," said Tarzan to the black, "will you accompany me and tell the

other Gomangani that if they will fight for me I will take them out of the valley?"

"I will tell them, but they will not believe," replied the black.

"Tell them that they will die if they do not help me, then," said Tarzan.

"I will tell them."

As Tarzan turned his attention again to the chamber before him he saw that the Bolgani occupying the central golden throne was speaking.

"Nobles of Numa, King of Beasts, Emperor of All Created Things," he said in deep, growling tones, "Numa has heard the words that this she has spoken, and it is the will of Numa that she die. The Great Emperor is hungry. He,

himself, will devour her here in the presence of his Nobles and the Imperial Council of Three. It is the will of Numa."

A growl of approval arose from the beast-like audience, while the great lion bared his hideous fangs and roared until the palace trembled, his wicked, yellow-green eyes fixed terribly upon the woman before him, evidencing the fact that these ceremonies were of sufficient frequency to have accustomed the lion to what he might expect as the logical termination of them.

"Day after tomorrow," continued the speaker, "the mate of this creature, who is by this time safely imprisoned in the Tower of the Emperors, will be brought

before Numa for judgment. Slaves," he cried suddenly in a loud voice, rising to his feet and glaring at the guards holding La, "drag the woman to your emperor."

Instantly the lion became frantic, lashing its tail and straining at its stout chains, roaring and snarling as it reared upon its hind feet and sought to leap upon La, who was now being forcibly conducted up the steps of the dais toward the bejeweled man-eater so impatiently awaiting her.

She did not cry out in terror, but she sought to twist herself free from the detaining hands of the powerful Gomangani—all futilely, however.

They had reached the last step, and were about to push La into the claws of

the lion, when they were arrested by a loud cry from one side of the chamber—a cry that halted the Gomangani and brought the assembled Bolgani to their feet in astonishment and anger, for the sight that met their eyes was well qualified to arouse the latter within them. Leaping into the room with raised spear was the almost naked white man of whom they had heard, but whom none of them had as yet seen. And so quick was he that in the very instant of entry—even before they could rise to their feet—he had launched his spear.

14. THE CHAMBER OF HORRORS

A black-maned lion moved through the jungle night. With majestic unconcern for all other created things he took his lordly way through the primeval forest. He was not hunting, for he made no efforts toward stealth, nor, on the other hand, did he utter any vocal sound. He moved swiftly, though sometimes stopping with uplifted nose to scent the air and to listen. And thus at last he came to a high wall, along the face of which he sniffed, until the wall was broken by a half-opened gateway, through which he passed into the enclosure.

Before him loomed a great building,

and presently as he stood watching it and listening, there broke from the interior the thunderous roar of an angry lion.

He of the black mane cocked his head upon one side and moved stealthily forward.

At the very instant that La was about to be thrust into the clutches of Numa, Tarzan of the Apes leaped into the apartment with a loud cry that brought to momentary pause the Gomangani that were dragging her to her doom, and in that brief instant of respite which the ape-man knew would follow his interruption the swift spear was launched. To the rage and consternation of the Bolgani they saw it bury itself in the heart of their Emperor—the great,

black- maned lion.

At Tarzan's side stood the Gomangani whom he had terrified into service, and as Tarzan rushed forward toward La the black accompanied him, crying to his fellows that if they would help this stranger they might be free and escape from the Bolgani forever.

"You have permitted the great Emperor to be slain," he cried to the poor Gomangani who guarded Numa. "For this the Bolgani will kill you. Help to save the strange Tarmangani and his mate and you have at least a chance for life and freedom. And you," he added, addressing the two who had been guarding La, "they will hold you responsible also—your only hope lies

with us."

Tarzan had reached La's side and was dragging her up the steps of the dais where he hoped that he might make a momentary stand against the fifty Bolgani who were now rushing forward from their seats toward him.

"Slay the three who sit upon the dais," cried Tarzan to the Gomangani, who were now evidently hesitating as to which side they would cast their lot with. "Slay them if you wish your freedom! Slay them if you wish to live!"

The authoritative tones of his voice, the magnetic appeal of his personality, his natural leadership won them to him for the brief instant that was necessary to turn them upon the hated authority that

the three Bolgani upon the dais represented, and as they drove their spears into the shaggy black bodies of their masters they became then and forever the creatures of Tarzan of the Apes, for there could be no future hope for them in the land of the Bolgani.

With one arm around La's waist the ape-man carried her to the summit of the dais, where he seized his spear and drew it from the body of the dead lion. Then, turning about, and facing the advancing Bolgani, he placed one foot upon the carcass of his kill and raised his voice in the terrifying victory cry of the apes of Kerchak.

Before him the Bolgani paused, behind him the Gomangani quailed in

terror.

"Stop!" cried Tarzan, raising a palm toward the Bolgani. "Listen! I am Tarzan of the Apes. I sought no quarrel with your people. I but look for a passage through your country to my own. Let me go my way in peace with this woman, taking these Gomangani with me."

For answer a chorus of savage growls arose from the Bolgani as they started forward again toward the dais. From their ranks there suddenly leaped the old man of the east tower, who ran swiftly toward Tarzan.

"Ah, traitor," cried the ape-man, "you would be the first, then, to taste the wrath of Tarzan?"

He spoke in English and the old man

replied in the same tongue.

"Traitor?" he exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, traitor," thundered Tarzan. "Did you not hurry here to tell the Bolgani that I was in the palace, that they might send the Gomangani to lure me to a trap?"

"I did nothing of the kind," replied the other. "I came here to place myself near the white woman, with the thought that I might be of service to her or you if I were needed. I come now, Englishman, to stand at your side and die at your side, for die you shall, as sure as there is a God in heaven. Nothing can save you now from the wrath of the Bolgani whose Emperor you have killed."

"Come, then," cried Tarzan, "and prove your loyalty. It were better to die

now than to live in slavery forever."

The six Gomangani had ranged themselves, three upon either side of Tarzan and La, while the seventh, who had entered the chamber with Tarzan unarmed, was taking weapons from the body of one of the three Bolgani who had been slain upon the dais.

Before this array of force so new to them, the Bolgani paused at the foot of the steps leading to the dais. But only for a moment they paused, for there were but nine against fifty, and as they surged up the steps, Tarzan and his Gomangani met them with battle ax, and spear, and bludgeon. For a moment they pressed them back, but the numbers against them were too great, and once again a wave

swept up that seemed likely to overwhelm them, when there broke upon the ears of the contestants a frightful roar, which, coming from almost at their side, brought a sudden, momentary cessation of the battle.

Turning their eyes in the direction of the sound they saw a huge, black-maned lion standing upon the floor of the apartment, just within one of the windows. For an instant he stood like a statue of golden bronze, and then again the building trembled to the reverberations of his mighty roar.

Towering above them all Tarzan of the Apes looked down from the dais upon the great beast below him, and then in quick elation he raised his voice

above the growlings of the Bolgani.

"Jad-bal-ja," he cried, and pointing toward the Bolgani, "Kill! Kill!"

Scarcely had the words been uttered ere the huge monster, a veritable devil incarnate, was upon the hairy gorilla-men. And simultaneously there occurred to the mind of the ape-man a daring plan of salvation for himself and the others who were dependent upon him.

"Quick," he cried to the Gomangani, "fall upon the Bolgani. Here at last is the true Numa, King of Beasts, and ruler of all creation. He slays his enemies but he will protect Tarzan of the Apes and the Gomangani, who are his friends."

Seeing their hated masters falling back before the terrific onslaughts of the

lion, the Gomangani rushed in with battle axes and clubs, while Tarzan, casting aside his spear, took his place among them with drawn knife, and, keeping close to Jad-bal-ja, directed the lion from one victim to another, lest he fall by mistake upon the Gomangani or the little, old, white man, or even La, herself. Twenty of the Bolgani lay dead upon the floor before the balance managed to escape from the chamber, and then Tarzan, turning to Jad-bal-ja, called him to heel.

"Go!" he said, turning toward the Gomangani, "and drag the body of the false Numa from the dais. Remove it from the room, for the true Emperor has come to claim his throne."

The old man and La were eyeing Tarzan and the lion in amazement.

"Who are you," asked the former, "that you can work such miracles with a savage beast of the jungle? Who are you, and what do you intend to do?"

"Wait and see," said Tarzan with a grim smile. "I think that we shall all be safe now, and that the Gomangani may live in comfort for a long time hereafter."

When the blacks had removed the carcass of the lion from the dais and thrown it from one of the windows of the chamber, Tarzan sent Jad-bal-ja to sit in the place upon the dais that had formerly been occupied by the lion, Numa.

"There," he said, turning to the

Gomangani, "you see the true Emperor, who does not have to be chained to his throne. Three of you will go to the huts of your people behind the palace and summon them to the throne room, that they, too, may see what has transpired. Hurry, that we may have many warriors here before the Bolgani return in force."

Filled with an excitement which almost shook their dull minds into a semblance of intelligence three of the Gomangani hastened to do Tarzan's bidding, while the others stood gazing at Tarzan with expressions of such awe that might only be engendered by the sight of deity. La came then and stood beside Tarzan, looking up into his face with eyes that reflected a reverence fully

as deep as that held by the blacks.

"I have not thanked you, Tarzan of the Apes," she said, "for what you have risked and done for me. I know that you must have come here in search of me, to save me from these creatures, and I know that it was not love that impelled you to this heroic and well-nigh hopeless act. That you have succeeded thus far is little short of miraculous, but I, in the legends of whose people are recounted the exploits of the Bolgani, know that there can be no hope of eventual escape for us all, and so I beseech that you go at once and make good your escape alone, if possible, for you alone of us have any possible chance of escape."

"I do not agree with you that we have no chance to escape, La," replied the ape-man. "It seems to me that now we not only have every reason to believe that we are practically assured of escape, but that we may ensure also to these poor Gomangani freedom from slavery and from the tyranny of the Bolgani. But this is not all. With this I shall not be satisfied. Not only must these people who show no hospitality to strangers be punished, but your own disloyal priests as well. To this latter end I intend to march out of the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds, down upon the city of Opar with a force of Gomangani sufficient to compel Cadj to relinquish the power he has usurped and replace

you upon the throne of Opar. Nothing less than this shall satisfy me, and nothing less than this shall I accomplish before I leave."

"You are a brave man," said the old man, "and you have succeeded beyond what I thought could be possible, but La is right, you do not know the ferocity or the resources of the Bolgani, or the power which they wield over the Gomangani. Could you raise from the stupid minds of the blacks the incubus of fear that rests so heavily upon them you might win over a sufficient number to make good your escape from the valley, but that, I fear, is beyond even you. Our only hope, therefore, is to escape from the palace while they are momentarily

disorganized, and trust to fleetness and to luck to carry us beyond the limits of the valley before we are apprehended."

"See," cried La, pointing; "even now it is too late—they return."

Tarzan looked in the direction that she indicated and saw through the open doorway at the far end of the chamber a large number of gorilla-men approaching. His eyes moved swiftly to the windows in the other wall. "But wait," he said, "behold another factor in the equation!"

The others looked toward the windows which opened upon the terrace, and they saw beyond them what appeared to be a crowd of several hundred blacks running rapidly toward

the windows. The other blacks upon the dais cried out excitedly: "They come! They come! We shall be free, and no longer shall the Bolgani be able to make us work until we drop from exhaustion, or beat us, or torture us, or feed us to Numa."

As the first of the Bolgani reached the doorway leading into the chamber, the Gomangani commenced to, pour through the several windows in the opposite wall. They were led by the three who had been sent to fetch them, and to such good effect had these carried their message that the blacks already seemed like a new people, so transfigured were they by the thought of immediate freedom. At sight of them the leader of

the Bolgani cried aloud for them to seize the intruders upon the dais, but his answer was a spear hurled by the nearest black, and as he lunged forward, dead, the battle was on.

The Bolgani in the palace greatly outnumbered the blacks, but the latter had the advantage of holding the interior of the throne room in sufficient numbers to prevent the entry of many Bolgani simultaneously. Tarzan, immediately he recognized the temper of the blacks, called Jad-bal-ja to follow him, and, descending from the dais, he took command of the Gomangani. At each opening he placed sufficient men to guard it, and at the center of the room he held the balance in reserve. Then he

called the old man into consultation.

"The gate in the east wall is open," he said. "I left it so when I entered. Would it be possible for twenty or thirty blacks to reach it in safety and, entering the forest, carry word to the villagers of what is transpiring here in the palace, and prevail upon them to send all of their warriors immediately to complete the work of emancipation that we have begun?"

"It is an excellent plan," replied the old man. "The Bolgani are not upon that side of the palace between us and the gate, and if it may ever be accomplished, now is the time. I will pick your men for you. They must be head-men, whose words will carry some weight with the

villagers outside the palace walls."

"Good!" exclaimed Tarzan. "Select them immediately; tell them what we want and urge upon them the necessity for haste."

One by one the old man chose thirty warriors, whose duty he carefully explained to each. They were delighted with the plan and assured Tarzan that in less than an hour the first of the reinforcements would come.

"As you leave the enclosure," said the ape-man, destroy the lock if you can, so that the Bolgani may not lock it again and bar out our reinforcements. Carry also the word that the first who come are to remain outside the wall until a sufficient number have arrived to make

entry into the palace grounds reasonably safe—at least as many as are within this room now.

The blacks signified their understanding, and a moment later passed out of the room through one of the windows and disappeared into the darkness of the night beyond.

Shortly after the blacks had left the Bolgani made a determined rush upon the Gomangani guarding the main entrance to the throne room, with the result that a score or more of the gorilla-men succeeded in cutting their way into the room. At this first indication of reversal the blacks showed signs of faltering, the fear of the Bolgani that was inherent in them showing in their

wavering attitude and seeming reluctance to force a counter attack. As Tarzan leaped forward to assist in checking the rush of the Bolgani into the throne room he called to Jad-bal-ja, and as the great lion leaped from the dais the ape-man, pointing to the nearest Bolgani, cried: "Kill! Kill!"

Straight for the throat of the nearest leaped Jad-bal-ja. The great jaws closed upon the snarling face of the frightened gorilla- man but once, and then, at the command of his master the golden lion dropped the carcass after a single shake and leaped upon another. Three had died thus in quick succession when the balance of the Bolgani turned to flee this chamber of horrors; but the Gomangani,

their confidence restored by the ease with which this fierce ally brought death and terror to the tyrants, interposed themselves between the Bolgani and the doorway, shutting off their retreat.

"Hold them! Hold them!" cried Tarzan. "Do not kill them!" And then to the Bolgani: "Surrender and you will not be harmed!"

Jad-bal-ja clung close to the side of his master, glaring and growling at the Bolgani, and casting an occasional beseeching look at the ape-man which said plainer than words, "Send me among them."

Fifteen of the Bolgani who had entered the room survived. For a moment they hesitated, and then one of

them threw his weapons upon the floor. Immediately the others followed suit.

Tarzan turned toward Jad-bal-ja. "Back!" he said, pointing toward the dais, and as the lion wheeled and slunk away toward the platform, Tarzan turned again toward the Bolgani.

"Let one of your number go," he said, "and announce to your fellows that I demand their immediate surrender."

The Bolgani whispered among themselves for a few moments and finally one of them announced that he would go and see the others. After he had left the room the old man approached Tarzan.

"They will never surrender," he said. "Look out for treachery."

"It is all right," said Tarzan. "I am expecting that, but I am gaining time, and that is what we need most. If there were a place near where I might confine these others I should feel better, for it would cut down our antagonists by at least that many."

"There is a room there," said the old man, pointing toward one of the doorways in the throne room, "where you can confine them—there are many such rooms in the Tower of the Emperors."

"Good," said Tarzan, and a moment later, following his instructions the Bolgani were safely locked in a room adjoining the throne room. In the corridors without they could hear the

main body of the gorilla-men in argument. It was evident that they were discussing the message sent to them by Tarzan. Fifteen minutes passed, and finally thirty, with no word from the Bolgani and no resumption of hostilities, and then there came to the main entrance of the throne room the fellow whom Tarzan had despatched with his demand for surrender.

"Well," asked the ape-man, "what is their answer?"

"They will not surrender," replied the Bolgani, "but they will permit you to leave the valley provided that you will release those whom you have taken prisoner and harm no others."

The ape-man shook his head. "That

will not do," he replied. "I hold the power to crush the Bolgani of the Valley of Diamonds. Look," and he pointed toward Jad-bal-ja, "here is the true Numa. The creature you had upon your throne was but a wild beast, but this is Numa, King of Beasts, Emperor of All Created Things. Look at him. Must he be held in leash by golden chains like some prisoner or slave? No! He is indeed an Emperor. But there is one yet greater than he, one from whom he takes commands. And that one is I, Tarzan of the Apes. Anger me and you shall feel not only the wrath of Numa, but the wrath of Tarzan, as well. The Gomangani are my people, the Bolgani shall be my slaves. Go and tell your

fellows that, and that if they would live at all they had best come soon and sue for mercy. Go!"

When the messenger had again departed Tarzan looked at the old man, who was eyeing him with an expression which might have denoted either awe or reverence, were it not for the vaguest hint of a twinkle in the corners of the eyes. The ape-man breathed a deep sigh of relief. "That will give us at least another half hour," he said.

"We shall need it, and more, too," replied the old man, "though, at that, you have accomplished more than I had thought possible, for at least you have put a doubt in the minds of the Bolgani, who never before have had cause to

question their own power."

Presently from the outer corridors the sounds of argument and discussion gave place to that of movement among the Bolgani. A company, comprising some fifty of the gorilla-men, took post directly outside the main entrance of the throne room where they stood in silence, their weapons ready, as though for the purpose of disputing any effort upon the part of the inmates of the room to escape. Beyond them the balance of the gorilla-men could be seen moving away and disappearing through doorways and corridors leading from the main hallway of the palace. The Gomangani, together with La and the old man, watched impatiently for the coming of the black

reinforcements, while Tarzan sat upon the edge of the dais half-reclining, with an arm about the neck of Jad-bal-ja.

"They are up to something," said the old man. "We must watch carefully against a surprise. It the blacks would but come now, while the doorway is held by only fifty, we should overcome them easily, and have, I do verily believe, some slight chance of escaping from the palace grounds."

"Your long residence here," said Tarzan, "has filled you with the same senseless fear of the Bolgani that the Gomangani hold. From the attitude of mind which you hold toward them one would think them some manner of supermen —they are only beasts, my

friend, and if we remain loyal to cur cause we shall overcome them."

"Beasts they may be," replied the old man, "but they are beasts with the brains of men—their cunning and their cruelty are diabolical."

A long silence ensued, broken only by the nervous whisperings of the Gomangani, whose morale, it was evident, was slowly disintegrating under the nervous strain of the enforced wait, and the failure of their fellows of the forest to come quickly to their aid. To this was added the demoralizing effect of speculation upon what the Bolgani were planning or what plan they already were putting into effect. The very silence of the gorilla-men was more terrible

than the din of actual assault. La was the first of the whites to break the silence.

"If thirty of the Gomangani could leave the palace so easily, why might not we leave also?" she asked.

"There were two reasons," replied Tarzan. "One was that should we have left simultaneously the Bolgani, greatly outnumbering us as they did, could have harassed us and detained us for a sufficient length of time to have permitted their messengers to reach the villagers ahead of us, with the result that in a short time we should have been surrounded by thousands of hostile warriors. The second reason is that I desire to punish the creatures, so that in future a stranger may be safe in the

Valley of the Palace of Diamonds." He paused. "And now I shall give you a third reason why we may not seek to escape at this moment." He pointed toward the windows overlooking the terrace. "Look," he said, "the terrace and the gardens are filled with Bolgani. Whatever their plan I think its success depends upon our attempt to escape from this room through the windows, for, unless I am mistaken, the Bolgani upon the terrace and in the gardens are making an attempt to hide themselves from us."

The old man walked to a part of the room from which he could see the greater part of the terrace and gardens upon which the windows of the throne room looked.

"You are right," he said when he returned to the ape-man's side; "the Bolgani are all massed outside these windows with the exception of those who guard the entrance, and possibly some others at the doorways at other portions of the throne room. That, however, we must determine." He walked quickly to the opposite side of the chamber and drew back the hangings before one of the apertures, disclosing beyond a small band of Bolgani. They stood there motionless, not making any effort to seize or harm him. To another exit, and another, he went, and beyond each discovered to the occupants of the chamber the same silent gorilla guardians. He made the circle of the

room, passing over the dais behind the three thrones, and then he came back to Tarzan and La.

"It is as I suspected," he said, "we are entirely surrounded. Unless help comes soon we are lost."

"But their force is divided," Tarzan reminded him.

"Even so, it is sufficient to account for us," replied the old man.

"Perhaps you are right," said Tarzan, "but at least we shall have a bully fight."

"What is that!" exclaimed La, and simultaneously, attracted by the same noise, the inmates of the throne room raised their eyes to the ceiling above them, where they saw that traps had been lifted from a dozen openings, revealing

the scowling faces of several score of gorilla-men.

"What are they up to now!" exclaimed Tarzan, and as though in answer to the query the Bolgani above began hurling bundles of burning, oil-soaked rags, tied in goat skins, into the throne room, which immediately commenced to fill it with a thick, suffocating smoke, accompanied by the stench of burning hide and hair.

15. THE MAP OF BLOOD

After esteban and Owaza had buried the gold they returned to the spot where they had left their five boys, and proceeding with them to the river made camp for the night. Here they discussed their plans, deciding to abandon the balance of the party to reach the coast as best they might, while they returned to another section of the coast where they could recruit sufficient porters to carry out the gold.

"Instead of going way back to the coast for porters," asked Esteban, "why could we not just as well recruit them from the nearest village?"

"Such men would not go with us way to the coast," replied Owaza. "They are

not porters. At best they would but carry our gold to the next village."

"Why not that, then?" inquired the Spaniard. "And at the next village we could employ porters to carry us on still farther, until we could employ other men to continue on with us."

Owaza shook his head. "It is a good plan, Bwana, but we cannot do it, because we have nothing with which to pay our porters."

Esteban scratched his head. "You are right," he said, "but it would save us that damnable trip to the coast and return." They sat for some moments in silence, thinking. "I have it!" at last exclaimed the Spaniard. "Even if we had the porters now we could not go directly to

the coast for fear of meeting Flora Hawkes's party—we must let them get out of Africa before we take the gold to the coast. Two months will be none too long to wait, for they are going to have a devil of a time getting to the coast at all with that bunch of mutinous porters. While we are waiting, therefore, let us take one of the ingots of gold to the nearest point at which we can dispose of it for trade goods. Then we can return and hire porters to carry it from village to village."

"The Bwana speaks words of wisdom," replied Owaza. "It is not as far to the nearest trading post as it is back to the coast, and thus we shall not only save time, but also many long, hard

marches."

"In the morning, then, we shall return and unearth one of the ingots, but we must be sure that none of your men accompanies us, for no one must know until it is absolutely necessary where the gold is buried. When we return for it, of course, then others must know, too, but inasmuch as we shall be with it constantly thereafter there will be little danger of its being taken from us."

And so upon the following morning the Spaniard and Owaza returned to the buried treasure, where they unearthed a single ingot.

Before he left the spot the Spaniard drew upon the inner surface of the leopard skin that he wore across his

shoulder an accurate map of the location of the treasure, making the drawing with a sharpened stick, dipped in the blood of a small rodent he had killed for the purpose. From Owaza he obtained the native names of the river and of such landmarks as were visible from the spot at which the treasure was buried, together with as explicit directions as possible for reaching the place from the coast. This information, too, he wrote below the map, and when he had finished he felt much relieved from the fear that should aught befall Owaza he might never be able to locate the gold.

When Jane Clayton reached the coast to take passage for London she found awaiting her a wire stating that her father

was entirely out of danger, and that there was no necessity for her coming to him. She, therefore, after a few days of rest, turned her face again toward home, and commenced to retrace the steps of the long, hot, weary journey that she had just completed. When, finally, she arrived at the bungalow she learned, to her consternation, that Tarzan of the Apes had not yet returned from his expedition to the city of Opar after the gold from the treasure vaults. She found Korak, evidently much exercised, but unwilling to voice a doubt as to the ability of his father to care for himself. She learned of the escape of the golden lion with regret, for she knew that Tarzan had become much attached to the noble beast.

It was the second day after her return that the Waziri who had accompanied Tarzan returned without him. Then, indeed, was her heart filled with fear for her lord and master. She questioned the men carefully, and when she learned from them that Tarzan had suffered another accident that had again affected his memory, she immediately announced that she would set out on the following day in search of him, commanding the Waziri who had just returned to accompany her.

Korak attempted to dissuade her, but failing in that insisted upon accompanying her.

"We must not all be away at once," she said. "You remain here, my son. If I

fail I shall return and let you go.

"I cannot let you go alone, Mother," replied Korak.

"I am not alone when the Waziri are with me," she laughed. "And you know perfectly well, boy, that I am as safe anywhere in the heart of Africa with them as I am here at the ranch."

"Yes, yes, I suppose so," he replied, "but I wish I might go, or that Meriem were here."

"Yes, I, too, wish that Meriem were here;" replied Lady Greystoke. "However, do not worry. You know that my jungle-craft, while not equal to that of Tarzan or Korak, is by no means a poor asset, and that, surrounded by the loyalty and bravery of the Waziri, I shall

be safe."

"I suppose you are right," replied Korak, "but I do not like to see you go without me."

And so, notwithstanding his objections, Jane Clayton set out the next morning with fifty Waziri warriors in search of her savage mate.

When Esteban and Owaza had not returned to camp as they had promised, the other members of the party were at first inclined to anger, which was later replaced by concern, not so much for the safety of the Spaniard but for fear that Owaza might have met with an accident and would not return to take them in safety to the coast, for of all the blacks he alone seemed competent to handle the

surly and mutinous carriers. The negroes scouted the idea that Owaza had become lost and were more inclined to the opinion that he and Esteban had deliberately deserted them. Luvini, who acted as head-man in Owaza's absence, had a theory of his own.

"Owaza and the Bwana have gone after the ivory raiders alone. By trickery they may accomplish as much as we could have accomplished by force, and there will only be two among whom to divide the ivory."

"But how may two men overcome a band of raiders?" inquired Flora, skeptically.

"You do not know Owaza," answered Luvini. "If he can gain the ears of their

slaves he will win them over, and when the Arabs see that he who accompanies Owaza and who fights at the head of the mutinous slaves is Tarzan of the Apes, they will flee in terror."

"I believe he is right," muttered Kraski, "it sounds just like the Spaniard," and then suddenly he turned upon Luvini. "Can you lead us to the raiders' camp?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied the negro.

"Good," exclaimed Kraski; "and now, Flora, what do you think of this plan? Let us send a swift runner to the raiders, warning them against Owaza and the Spaniard, and telling them that the latter is not Tarzan of the Apes, but an impostor. We can ask them to capture

and hold the two until we come, and after we arrive we can make such further plans as the circumstances permit. Very possibly we can carry out our original design after we have once entered their camp as friends."

"Yes, that sounds good," replied Flora, "and it is certainly crooked enough—just like you, yourself."

The Russian blushed. "'Birds of a feather'"—he quoted.

The girl shrugged her shoulders indifferently, but Bluber, who, with Peebles and Throck, had been silent listeners to the conversation, blustered.

"Vot do you mean birds vit fedders?" he demanded. "Who vas a crook? I tell you, Mister Carl Kraski, I am an honest

man, dot is von t'ing dot no man don't say about Adolph Bluber, he is a crook."

"0 shut up," snapped Kraski, "if there's anything in it you'll be for it - if there's no risk. These fellows stole the ivory themselves, and killed a lot of people, probably, to do it. In addition they have taken slaves, which we will free."

"0 vell," said Bluber, "if it is fair und eqvitable, vy, all right, but just remember, Mister Kraski, dot I am an honest man.

"Blime!" exclaimed Throck, "we're all honest; I've never seen such a downy bunch of parsons in all me life."

"Sure we're honest," roared John Peebles, "and anyone 'at says we ain't

gets 'is bally 'cad knocked off, and 'ere we are, 'n that's that."

The girl smiled wearily. "You can always tell honest men," she said. "They go around telling the world how honest they are. But never mind that; the thing now is to decide whether we want to follow Kraski's suggestion or not. It's something we've got all pretty well to agree upon before we undertake it. There are five of us. Let's leave it to a vote. Do we, or don't we?"

"Will the men accompany us?" asked Kraski, turning to Luvini.

"If they are promised a share of the ivory they will," replied the black.

"How many are in favor of Carl's plan?" asked Flora.

They were unanimously for it, and so it was decided that they would undertake the venture, and a half hour later a runner was despatched on the trail to the raiders' camp with a message for the raider chief. Shortly after, the party broke camp and took up its march in the same direction.

A week later, when they reached the camp of the raiders they found that their messenger had arrived safely and that they were expected. Esteban and Owaza had not put in an appearance nor had anything been seen or heard of them in the vicinity. The result was that the Arabs were inclined to be suspicious and surly, fearing that the message brought to them had been but a ruse to

permit this considerable body of whites and armed blacks to enter their stockade in safety.

Jane Clayton and her Waziri moving rapidly, picked up the spoor of Flora Hawkes's safari at the camp where the Waziri had last seen Esteban, whom they still thought to have been Tarzan of the Apes. Following the plainly marked trail, and moving much more rapidly than the Hawkes safari, Jane and the Waziri made camp within a mile of the ivory raiders only about a week after the Hawkes party had arrived and where they still remained, waiting either for the coming of Owaza and Esteban, or for a propitious moment in which they could launch their traitorous assault upon the

Arabs. In the meantime, Luvini and some of the other blacks had succeeded in secretly spreading the propaganda of revolt among the slaves of the Arabs. Though he reported his progress daily to Flora Hawkes, he did not report the steady growth and development of a little private plan of his own, which contemplated, in addition to the revolt of the slaves, and the slaying of the Arabs, the murder of all the whites in the camp, with the exception of Flora Hawkes, whom Luvini wished to preserve either for himself or for sale to some black sultan of the north. It was Luvini's shrewd plan to first slay the Arabs, with the assistance of the whites, and then to fall upon the whites and slay them, after

their body servants had stolen their weapons from them.

That Luvini would have been able to carry out his plan with ease there is little doubt, had it not been for the loyalty and affection of a young black boy attached to Flora Hawkes for her personal service.

The young white woman, notwithstanding the length to which she would go in the satisfaction of her greed and avarice, was a kind and indulgent mistress. The kindnesses she had shown this ignorant little black boy were presently to return her dividends far beyond her investment.

Luvini had been to her upon a certain afternoon to advise her that all was

ready, and that the revolt of the slaves and the murder of the Arabs should take place that evening, immediately after dark. The cupidity of the whites had long been aroused by the store of ivory possessed by the raiders, with the result that all were more than eager for the final step in the conspiracy that would put them in possession of considerable wealth.

It was just before the evening meal that the little negro boy crept into Flora Hawkes's tent. He was very wide-eyed, and terribly frightened.

"What is the matter?" she demanded.

"S-sh!" he cautioned. "Do not let them hear you speak to me, but put your ear close to me while I tell you in a low

voice what Luvini is planning."

The girl bent her head close to the lips of the little black. "You have been kind to me," he whispered, "and now that Luvini would harm you I have come to tell you."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Flora, in a low voice.

"I mean that Luvini, after the Arabs are killed, has given orders that the black boys kill all the white men and take you prisoner. He intends to either keep you for himself or to sell you in the north for a great sum of money."

"But how do you know all this?" demanded the girl.

"All the blacks in camp know it," replied the boy. "I was to have stolen

your rifle and your pistol, as each of the boys will steal the weapons of his white master."

The girl sprang to her feet. "I'll teach that nigger a lesson," she cried, seizing her pistol and striding toward the flap of the tent.

The boy seized her about the knees and held her. "No! no!" he cried. "Do not do it. Do not say anything. It will only mean that they will kill the white men sooner and take you prisoner just the same. Every black boy in the camp is against you. Luvini has promised that the ivory shall be divided equally among them all. They are ready now, and if you should threaten Luvini, or if in any other way they should learn that you were

aware of the plot, they would fall upon you immediately."

"What do you expect me to do then?" she asked.

"There is but one hope, and that is in flight. You and the white men must escape into the jungle. Not even I may accompany you."

The girl stood looking at the little boy in silence for a moment, and then finally she said, "Very well, I will do as you say. You have saved my life. Perhaps I may never be able to repay you, and perhaps, again, I may. Go, now, before suspicion alights upon you."

The black withdrew from the tent, crawling beneath the back wall to avoid being seen by any of his fellows who

were in the center of the camp from which the front of the tent was in plain view. Immediately he was gone Flora walked casually into the open and went to Kraski's tent, which the Russian occupied in common with Bluber. She found the two men and in low whispers apprised them of what the black had told her. Kraski then called Peebles and Throck, it being decided that they should give no outward sign of holding any suspicion that aught was wrong. The Englishmen were for jumping in upon the blacks and annihilating them, but Flora Hawkes dissuaded them from any such rash act by pointing out how greatly they were outnumbered by the natives, and how hopeless it would be to attempt to

overpower them.

Bluber, with his usual cunning and shrewdness which inclined always to double dealing where there was the slightest possibility for it, suggested that they secretly advise the Arabs of what they had learned, and joining forces with them take up as strong a position in the camp as possible and commence to fire into the blacks without waiting for their attack.

Again Flora Hawkes vetoed the suggestion. "It will not do," she said, "for the Arabs are at heart as much our enemies as the blacks. If we were successful in subduing the niggers it would be but a question of minutes before the Arabs knew every detail of

the plot that we had laid against them, after which our lives would not be worth that," and she snapped her fingers.

"I guess Flora is right, as usual," growled Peebles, "but what in 'ell are we goin' to do wanderin' around in this 'ere jungle without no niggers to hunt for us, or cook for us, or carry things for us, or find our way for us, that's wot I'd like to know, and 'ere we are, 'n that's that."

"No, I guess there ain't nothin' else to do," said Throck; "but blime if I likes to run away, says I, leastwise not for no dirty niggers."

There came then to the ears of the whites, rumbling from the far distance in the jungle, the roar of a lion.

"Oi! Oi!" cried Bluber. "Ve go out all

alone in dot jungle? Mein Gott! I just as soon stay here und get killed like a vite man."

"They won't kill you like a white man," said Kraski. "They'll torture you if you stay."

Bluber wrung his hands, and the sweat of fear rolled down his oily face. "Oi! vy did I done it? Vy did I done it?" he wailed. "Vy didn't I stay home in London vere I belong?"

"Shut up!" snapped Flora. "Don't you know that if you do anything to arouse the suspicion of these fellows they will be on us at once? There is only one thing for us to do and that is to wait until they precipitate the attack upon the Arabs. We will still have our weapons, for they

do not plan to steal them from us until after the Arabs are killed. In the confusion of the fight, we must make our escape into the jungle, and after that—God knows—and God help us."

"Yes," blubbered Bluber, who was in a blue funk, "Gott help us!"

A moment later Luvini came to them. "All is ready, Bwanas," he said. "As soon as the evening meal has been eaten, be in readiness. You will hear a shot, that will be the signal. Then open fire upon the Arabs."

"Good," said Kraski; "we have just been talking about it and we have decided that we will take our stand near the gate to prevent their escape."

"It is well," said Luvini, "but you

must remain here." He was addressing Flora. "It would not be safe for you to be where there is to be fighting. Remain here in your tent, and we will confine the fighting to the other side of the village and possibly to the gate, if any of them makes a break for escape."

"All right," said Flora, "I will remain here where it is safe."

Satisfied that things could not have worked into his hands to better advantage the black left them, and presently the entire camp was occupied with the evening meal. There was an atmosphere of restraint, and high, nervous tension throughout the entire camp that must have been noticeable, even to the Arabs, though they, alone of

the entire company, were ignorant as to its cause. Bluber was so terrified that he could not eat, but sat white and trembling with his eyes roving wildly about the camp—first to the blacks, then to the Arabs, and then to the gate, the distance to which he must have measured a hundred times as he sat there waiting for the shot that was to be the signal for the massacre that was to send him out into the jungle to be, he surely thought, the immediate prey of the first hunting lion that passed.

Peebles and Throck ate their meal stolidly, much to Bluber's disgust. Kraski, being of a highly nervous temperament, ate but little, but he showed no signs of fear. Nor did Flora

Hawkes, though at heart she realized the hopelessness of their situation.

Darkness had fallen. Some of the blacks and Arabs were still eating, when suddenly the silence was shattered by the sharp staccato report of a rifle. An Arab sank silently to the earth. Kraski rose and grasped Flora by the arm. "Come!" he cried.

Followed by Peebles and Throck, and preceded by Bluber, to whose feet fright had lent wings, they hurried toward the gate of the palisade.

By now the air was filled with the hoarse cries of fighting men and the report of rifles. The Arabs, who had numbered but about a dozen, were putting up a game fight, and being far

better marksmen than the blacks, the issue of the battle was still in doubt when Kraski opened the gate and the five whites fled into the darkness of the jungle.

The outcome of the fight within the camp could not have been other than it was, for so greatly did the blacks outnumber the Arabs, that eventually, notwithstanding their poor marksmanship, they succeeded in shooting down the last of the nomads of the north. Then it was that Luvini turned his attention to the other whites only to discover that they had fled the village. The black realized two things instantly. One was that someone had betrayed him, and the other, that the whites couldn't

have gone far in the short time since they had left the camp.

Calling his warriors about him he explained to them what had happened, and impressing upon them that the whites, if permitted to escape, would eventually return with reinforcements to punish the blacks, he aroused his followers, who now numbered over two hundred warriors, to the necessity of setting out immediately upon the trail of the fugitives and overtaking them before they could carry word even to a neighboring village, the nearest of which was not more than a day's march distant.

16. THE DIAMOND HOARD

The primitive smoke bombs filled the throne room of the Tower of the Emperors with their suffocating fumes, the Gomangani clustered about Tarzan begging him to save them, for they, too, had seen the massed Bolgani before every entrance and the great body of them that awaited in the gardens and upon the terrace without.

Wait a minute," said Tarzan, "until the smoke is thick enough to hide our movements from the Bolgani, and then we will rush the windows overlooking the terrace, for they are nearer the east gate than any other exit, and thus some of

us will have a better chance for escape."

"I have a better plan," said the old man. "When the smoke conceals us, follow me. There is one exit that is unguarded, probably because they do not dream that we would use it. When I passed over the dais behind the throne I took occasion to note that there were no Bolgani guarding it."

"Where does it lead?" asked Tarzan.

"Into the basement of the Tower of Diamonds—the tower in which I discovered you. That portion of the palace is nearest to the east gate, and if we can reach it before they suspect our purpose there will be little doubt that we can reach the forest at least."

"Splendid!" ejaculated the ape-man.

"It will not be long now before the smoke hides us from the Bolgani."

In fact it was so thick by this time that the occupants of the throne room were finding difficulty in breathing. Many of them were coughing and choking and the eyes of all were watering from the effects of the acrid smoke. And yet they were not entirely hidden from the observation of the watchers all about them.

"I don't know how much more of this we can stand," said Tarzan. "I have about all I care for, now."

"It is thickening up a bit," said the old man. "Just a moment more and I think we can make it unseen."

"I can stand it no longer," cried La. "I

am suffocating and I am half-blinded."

"Very well," said the old man; "I doubt if they can see us now. It is pretty thick. Come, follow me;" and he led the way up the steps of the dais and through an aperture behind the thrones—a small opening hidden by hangings. The old man went first, and then La, followed by Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja, who had about reached the limit of his endurance and patience, so that it had been with difficulty that Tarzan had restrained him, and who now was voicing his anger in deep growls which might have apprised the Bolgani of their avenue of escape. Behind Tarzan and the lion crowded the coughing Gomangani; but because Jad-bal-ja was just in front of them they did

not crowd as closely upon the party ahead of them as they probably would have done otherwise.

The aperture opened into a dark corridor which led down a flight of rough steps to a lower level, and then straight through utter darkness for the rather considerable distance which separated the Tower of Diamonds from the Tower of the Emperors. So great was their relief at escaping the dense smoke of the throne room that none of the party minded the darkness of the corridor, but followed patiently the lead of the old man who had explained that the first stairs down which they had passed were the only obstacles to be encountered in the tunnel.

At the corridor's end the old man halted before a heavy door, which after considerable difficulty he managed to open.

"Wait a moment," he said, "until I find a cresset and make a light."

They heard him moving about beyond the doorway for a moment and then a dim light flared, and presently the wick in a cresset flickered. In the dim rays Tarzan saw before them a large rectangular chamber, the great size of which was only partially suggested in the wavering light of the cresset.

"Get them all in," said the old man, "and close the door;" and when that had been done he called to Tarzan. "Come!" he said. "Before we leave this chamber I

want to show you such a sight as no other human eyes have ever rested upon."

He led him to the far side of the chamber where, in the light of the cresset, Tarzan saw tier after tier of shelves, upon which were stacked small sacks made of skins. The old man set the cresset upon one of the shelves and taking a sack opened it and spilled a portion of the contents into the palm of his hand. "Diamonds," he said. "Each of these packages weighs five pounds and each contains diamonds. They have been accumulating them for countless ages, for they mine far more than they can use themselves. In their legends is the belief that some day the Atlantians will return

and they can sell the diamonds to them. And so they continue to mine them and store them as though there was a constant and ready market for them. Here, take one of the bags with you," he said. He handed one to Tarzan and another to La.

"I do not believe that we shall ever leave the valley alive, but we might;" and he took a third bag for himself.

From the diamond vault the old man led them up a primitive ladder to the floor above, and quickly to the main entrance of the Tower. Only two heavy doors, bolted upon the inside, now lay between them and the terrace, a short distance beyond which the east gate swung open. The old man was about to open the doors when Tarzan stopped

him.

"Wait a moment," he said, "until the rest of the Gomangani come. It takes them some time to ascend the ladder. When they are all here behind us, swing the doors open, and you and La, with this ten or a dozen Gomangani that are immediately around us, make a break for the gate. The rest of us will bring up the rear and hold the Bolgani off in case they attack us. Get ready," he added a moment later, "I think they are all up."

Carefully Tarzan explained to the Gomangani the plan he had in mind, and then, turning to the old man, he commanded "Now!" The bolt slipped, the doors swung open, and simultaneously the entire party started at

a run toward the east gate.

The Bolgani, who were still massed about the throne room, were not aware that their victims had eluded them until Tarzan, bringing up the rear with Jad-bal-ja was passing through the east gate. Then the Bolgani discovered him, and immediately set up a hue and cry that brought several hundred of them on a mad run in pursuit.

"Here they come," cried Tarzan to the other, "make a run of it— straight down the valley toward Opar, La."

"And you?" demanded the young woman.

"I shall remain a moment with the Gomangani, and attempt to punish these fellows."

La stopped in her tracks. "I shall not go a step without you, Tarzan of the Apes," she said. "Too great already are the risks you have taken for me. No; I shall not go without you."

The ape-man shrugged. "As you will," he said. "Here they come"

With great difficulty he rallied a portion of the Gomangani who, once through the gate, seemed imbued but with a single purpose, and that to put as much distance between the Palace of Diamonds and themselves as possible. Perhaps fifty warriors rallied to his call, and with these he stood in the gateway toward which several hundred Bolgani were now charging.

The old man came and touched

Tarzan on the arm. "You had better fly," he said. "The Gomangani will break and run at the first assault."

"We will gain nothing by flying," said Tarzan, "for we should only lose what we have gained with the Gomangani, and then we should have the whole valley about us like hornets."

He had scarcely finished speaking when one of the Gomangani cried: "Look! Look! They come;" and pointed along the trail into the forest.

"And just in time, too," remarked Tarzan, as he saw the first of a swarm of Gomangani pouring out of the forest toward the east gate. "Come!" he cried to the advancing blacks, "the Bolgani are upon us. Come, and avenge your

wrongs!" Then he turned, and calling to the blacks around him, leaped forward to meet the onrushing gorilla-men. Behind them wave after wave of Gomangani rolled through the east gate of the Palace of Diamonds, carrying everything before them to break at last like surf upon the wavering wall of Bolgani that was being relentlessly hurled back against the palace walls.

The shouting and the fighting and the blood worked Jad-bal-ja into such a frenzy of excitement that Tarzan with difficulty restrained him from springing upon friend and foe alike, with the result that it required so much of the ape-man's time to hold in leash his ferocious ally that he was able to take but little part in

the battle, yet he saw that it was going his way, and that, but for the occurrence of some untoward event, the complete defeat of the Bolgani was assured.

Nor were his deductions erroneous. So frantic were the Gomangani with the blood-lust of revenge and so enthused by the first fruits of victory, that they went fully as mad as Jad-bal-ja himself. They neither gave nor asked quarter, and the fighting ended only when they could find no more Bolgani to slay.

The fighting over, Tarzan, with La and the old man, returned to the throne room, from which the fumes of the smoke bombs had now disappeared. To them they summoned the head-man of each village, and when they had

assembled before the dais, above which stood the three whites, with the great, black-maned lion Jad-bal-ja, Tarzan addressed them.

"Gomangani of the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds," he said, you have this night won your freedom from the tyrannical masters that have oppressed you since far beyond the time the oldest of you may remember. For so many countless ages have you been oppressed that there has never developed among you a leader capable of ruling you wisely and justly. Therefore you must select a ruler from another race than your own."

"You! You!" cried voice after voice as the head-men clamored to make

Tarzan of the Apes their king.

"No," cried the ape-man, holding up his hand for silence, "but there is one here who has lived long among you, and who knows your habits and your customs, your hopes and your needs better than any other. If he will stay with you and rule you he will, I am sure, make you a good king," and Tarzan pointed to the old man.

The old man looked at Tarzan in bewilderment. "But I want to go away from here," he said; "I want to get back into the world of civilization, from which I have been buried all these years."

"You do not know what you are talking about," replied the ape- man.

"You have been gone very long. You will find no friends left back there from whence you came. You will find deceit, and hypocrisy, and greed, and avarice, and cruelty. You will find that no one will be interested in you and that you will be interested in no one there. I, Tarzan of the Apes, have left my jungle and gone to the cities built by men, but always I have been disgusted and been glad to return to my jungle—to the noble beasts that are honest in their loves and in their hates—to the freedom and genuineness of nature.

"If you return you will be disappointed, and you will realize that you have thrown away an opportunity of accomplishing a work well worth your

while. These poor creatures need you. I cannot remain to guide them out Of darkness, but you may, and you may so mold them that they will be an industrious, virtuous, and kindly people, not untrained, however, in the arts of warfare, for when we have that which is good, there will always be those who are envious and who, if they are more powerful than we, Will attempt to come and take what we have by force. Therefore, you must train your people to protect their country and their rights, and to protect them they must have the ability and the knowledge to fight successfully, and the weapons wherewith to wage their Wars."

"You speak the truth, Tarzan of the

Apes," replied the old man. "There is nothing for me in that other world, so, if the Gomangani wish me to be their chief I will remain here."

The head-men, when he questioned them, assured Tarzan that if they could not have him for chief they would be very glad to have the old man, whom they all knew, either by sight or reputation, as one who had never perpetrated any cruelties upon the Gomangani.

The few surviving Bolgani who had taken refuge in various parts of the palace were sought out and brought to the throne room. Here they were given the option of remaining in the valley as slaves, or leaving the country entirely.

The Gomangani would have fallen upon them and slain them, but that their new king would not permit.

"But where shall we go if we leave the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds?" asked one of the Bolgani. "Beyond the city of Opar we know not what exists, and in Opar may we find only enemies."

Tarzan sat eyeing them quizzically, and in silence. For a long time he did not speak, while several of the Gomangani head-men, and others of the Bolgani, made suggestions for the future of the gorilla- men. Finally the ape-man arose and nodded toward the Bolgani.

"There are about a hundred of you," he said. "You are powerful creatures and should be ferocious fighters. Beside

me sits La, the High Priestess and queen of Opar. A wicked priest, usurping her power, has driven her from her throne, but tomorrow we march upon Opar with the bravest Gomangani of the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds, and there we punish Cadj, the High Priest, who has proven a traitor to his queen; and La, once more, ascends the throne of Opar. But where the seeds of treason have once been broadcast the plant may spring up at any time and where least expected. It will be long, therefore, before La of Opar may have full confidence in the loyalty of her people—a fact which offers you an opportunity and a country. Accompany us, therefore, to Opar, and fight with us to replace La

upon her throne, and then, when the fighting is over, remain there as La's bodyguard to protect her, not only from enemies without, but from enemies within."

The Bolgani discussed the matter for several minutes, and then one of them came to Tarzan. "We will do as you suggest," he said.

"And you will be loyal to La?" asked the ape-man.

"A Bolgani is never a traitor," replied the gorilla-man.

"Good!" exclaimed Tarzan, "and you, La, are you satisfied with this arrangement?"

"I accept them in my service," replied she.

Early the next morning Tarzan and La set out with three thousand Gomangani and a hundred Bolgani to punish the traitorous Cadj. There was little or no attempt at strategy or deception. They simply marched down through the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds, descended the rocky ravine into the valley of Opar, and made straight for the rear of the palace of La.

A little gray monkey, sitting among the vines and creepers upon the top of the temple walls, saw them coming. He cocked his head, first upon one side and then upon the other, and became so interested and excited that for a moment he forgot to scratch his belly—an occupation he had been assiduously

pursuing for some time. The closer the column approached the more excited became Manu, the monkey, and when he realized vaguely the great numbers of the Gomangani he was fairly beside himself, but the last straw that sent him scampering madly back to the palace of Opar was the sight of the Bolgani - the ogres of his little world.

Cadj was in the courtyard of the inner temple, where at sunrise he had performed a sacrifice to the Flaming God. With Cadj were a number of the lesser priests, and Oah and her priestesses. That there was dissension among them was evident by the scowling faces fully as much as by the words which Oah directed at Cadj.

"Once again have you gone too far, Cadj," she cried bitterly. "Only may the High Priestess of the Flaming God perform the act of sacrifice. Yet again and again do you persist in defiling the sacred knife with your unworthy hand."

"Silence, woman," growled the High Priest. "I am Cadj, King of Opar, High Priest of the Flaming God. You are what you are only because of the favor of Cadj. Try not my patience too far or you shall indeed know the feel of the sacred knife." There could be no mistaking the sinister menace in his words. Several of those about him could ill conceal the shocked surprise they felt at his sacrilegious attitude toward their High Priestess. However little they thought of

Oah, the fact remained that she had been elevated to the highest place among them, and those that believed that La was dead, as Cadj had taken great pains to lead them all to believe, gave in full to Oah the reverence which her high office entitled her to.

"Have a care, Cadj," warned one of the older priests. "There is a limit beyond which not even you may pass."

"You dare threaten me?" cried Cadj, the maniacal fury of fanaticism gleaming in his eyes. "You dare threaten me, Cadj, the High Priest of the Flaming God?" And as he spoke he leaped toward the offending man, the sacrificial knife raised menacingly above his head, and just at that moment a little gray monkey

came chattering and screaming through an embrasure in the wall overlooking the court of the temple.

"The Bolgani! The Bolgani!" he shrieked. "They come! They come!"

Cadj stopped and wheeled toward Manu, the hand that held the knife dropping at his side. "You saw them, Manu?" he asked. "You are speaking the truth? If this is another of your tricks you will not live to play another joke upon Cadj."

"I speak the truth," chattered the little monkey. "I saw them with my own eyes."

"How many of them are there?" asked Cadj. "And how near to Opar have they come?"

"They are as many as the leaves upon

the trees," replied Manu, "and they are already close to the temple wall—the Bolgani and the Gomangani, they come as the grasses that grow in the ravines where it is cool and damp."

Cadj turned and raised his face toward the sun, and throwing back his head gave voice to a long-drawn scream that ended in a piercing shriek. Three times he voiced the hideous cry, and then with a command to the others in the court to follow him he started at a brisk trot toward the palace proper. As Cadj directed his steps toward the ancient avenue, upon which the palace of Opar faced, there issued from every corridor and doorway groups of the knurled and hairy men of Opar, armed with their

heavy bludgeons and their knives. Screaming and chattering in the trees above them were a score or more of little gray monkeys.

"Not here," they cried, "not here," and pointed toward the south side of the city.

Like an undisciplined mob the horde of priests and warriors reentered the palace at Cadj's heels, and retraced their steps toward the opposite side of the edifice. Here they scrambled to the summit of the lofty wall which guards the palace, just as Tarzan's forces came to a halt outside.

"Rocks! Rocks!" screamed Cadj, and in answer to his commands the women in the courtyard below commenced to gather the loose fragments of stone that

had crumbled from the wall and from the palace, and to toss them up to the warriors above.

"Go away!" screamed Cadj to the army outside his gates. "Go away! I am Cadj, High Priest of the Flaming God, and this is his temple. Defile not the temple of the Flaming God or you shall know his wrath."

Tarzan stepped forward a little ahead of the others, and raised his hand for silence.

"La, your High Priestess and your queen, is here," he cried to the Oparians upon the wall. "Cadj is a traitor and an impostor. Open your gates and receive your queen. Give up the traitors to justice, and no harm will befall you; but

refuse La entry to her city and we shall take by force and with bloodshed that which belongs to La rightfully."

As he ceased speaking La stepped to his side that all her people might see her, and immediately there were scattering cries for La and a voice or two raised against Cadj. Evidently realizing that it would not take much to turn the scale against him, Cadj shrieked to his men to attack, and simultaneously launched a stone at Tarzan. Only the wondrous agility that he possessed saved the ape-man, and the missile passed by, and striking a Gomangani over the heart, felled him. Instantly a shower of missiles fell upon them, and then Tarzan called to his followers to charge.

Roaring and growling, the Bolgani and the Gomangani leaped forward to the attack. Cat-like they ran up the rough wall in the face of the menacing bludgeons above. Tarzan, who had chosen Cadj as his objective, was among the first to reach the summit. A hairy, crooked warrior struck at him with a bludgeon, and hanging to the summit of the wall with one hand, Tarzan caught the weapon in the other and wrested it from his assailant. At the same time he saw Cadj turn and disappear into the courtyard beyond. Then Tarzan drew himself to the top where he was immediately engaged by two other warriors of Opar. With the weapon he had wrested from their

fellow he knocked them to right and left, so great an advantage his great height and strength gave him over them, and then, remembering only that Cadj, who was the ring-leader of the revolt against La, must not be permitted to escape Tarzan leaped to the pavement below just as the High Priest disappeared through an archway at the opposite end of the courtyard.

Some priests and priestesses sought to impede his progress. Seizing one of the former by the ankles he swung the body in circles about him, clearing his own pathway as he ran for the opposite end of the courtyard, and there he halted and wheeled and putting all the strength of his great muscles into the effort, he

swung the body of the priest once more and hurled it back into the faces of his pursuers.

Without waiting to note the effect of his act he turned again and continued in pursuit of Cadj. The fellow kept always just ahead of him, because Cadj knew his way through the labyrinthine mazes of the palace and temple and courtyards better than Tarzan. That the trail was leading toward the inner courts of the temple Tarzan was convinced. There Cadj would find easy ingress to the pits beneath the palace and a hiding place from which it would be difficult to dislodge him, so numerous and winding were the dark subterranean tunnels. And so Tarzan put forth every effort to reach

the sacrificial court in time to prevent Cadj from gaining the comparative safety of the underground passages; but as he finally leaped through the doorway into the court, a noose, cunningly laid, closed about one of his ankles and he was hurled heavily to the ground. Almost instantly a number of the crooked little men of Opar leaped upon him, where he lay, half-stunned by the fall, and before he had fully regained his faculties they had trussed him securely.

Only about half conscious, he felt them raise him from the ground and carry him, and presently he was deposited upon a cold stone surface. Then it was that full consciousness returned to him, and he realized that he lay outstretched

once more upon the sacrificial altar of the inner court of the Temple of the Flaming God and above him stood Cadj, the High Priest, his cruel face contorted in a grimace of hate and the anticipation of revenge long deferred.

"At last!" gloated the creature of hate. "This time, Tarzan of the Apes, you shall know the fury not of the Flaming God, but of Cadj, the man; nor shall there be any wait nor any interference."

He swung the sacrificial knife high above his head. Beyond the point of the knife Tarzan of the Apes saw the summit of the courtyard wall, and just surmounting it the head and shoulders of a mighty, black-maned lion.

"Jad-bal-ja!" he cried. "Kill! Kill!"

Cadj hesitated, his knife poised on high. He saw the direction of the ape-man's eyes and followed them, and in that instant the golden lion leaped to the pavement, and with two mighty bounds was upon the High Priest of Opar. The knife clattered to the floor and the great jaws closed upon the horrid face.

The lesser priests who had seized Tarzan, and who had remained to witness his death at the hands of Cadj, had fled screaming from the court the instant that the golden lion had leaped upon their master, and now Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja and the corpse of Cadj were the sole occupants of the sacrificial courtyard of the temple.

"Come, Jad-bal-ja," commanded

Tarzan; "let no one harm Tarzan of the Apes."

An hour later the victorious forces of La were overrunning the ancient palace and temples of Opar. The priests and warriors who had not been killed had quickly surrendered and acknowledged La as their queen and High Priestess, and now at La's command the city was being searched for Tarzan and Cadj. It was thus that La, herself, leading a searching party, entered the sacrificial courtyard.

The sight that met her eyes brought her to a sudden halt, for there, bound upon the altar, lay Tarzan of the Apes, and standing above him, his snarling face and gleaming eyes glaring directly

at her was Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion.

"Tarzan!" shrieked La, taking a step toward the altar. "Cadj has had his way at last. God of my fathers have pity on me—Tarzan is dead."

"No," cried the ape-man; "far from dead. Come and release me. I am only bound, but had it not been for Jad-bal-ja I had been dead beneath your sacrificial knife."

"Thank God," cried La, and started to approach the altar, but paused before the menacing attitude of the growling lion.

"Down!" cried Tarzan, "let her approach;" and Jad-bal-ja lay down beside his master and stretched his whiskered chin across the ape-man's breast.

La came then, and picking up the sacrificial knife, cut the bonds that held the lord of the jungle captive, and then she saw beyond the altar the corpse of Cadj.

"Your worst enemy is dead," said Tarzan, "and for his death you may thank Jad-bal-ja, as I thank him for my life. You should rule now in peace and happiness and in friendship with the people of the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds."

That night Tarzan and the Bolgani and the head-men of the Gomangani, and the priests and priestesses of Opar, sat in the great banquet hall of the Palace of Opar, as the guests of La, the queen, and ate from the golden platters of the

ancient Atlantians—platters that had been fashioned on a Continent that exists today only in the legends of antiquity. And the following morning Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja set forth upon their return journey to the land of the Waziri and home.

17. THE TORTURE OF FIRE

Flora Hawkes and her four confederates, pursued by Luvini and his two hundred warriors, stumbled through the darkness of the jungle night. They had no objective, for, guided entirely as they had been by the blacks, they knew not where they were and were completely lost. The sole idea dominating the mind of each was to put as much distance between themselves and the camp of the ivory raiders as possible, for no matter what the outcome of the battle there might have been, their fate would be the same should the victorious party capture them. They had stumbled on for perhaps

half an hour when, during a momentary rest, they heard plainly behind them the sound of pursuit, and again they plunged on in their aimless flight of terror.

Presently, to their surprise, they 'discerned the glow of a light ahead. What could it be? Had they made a complete circle, and was this again the camp they had been fleeing? They pushed on to reconnoiter, until at last they saw before them the outlines of a camp surrounded by a thorn boma, in the center of which was burning a small camp-fire. About the fire were congregated half-a-hundred black warriors, and as the fugitives crept closer they saw among the blacks a figure standing out clearly in the light of

the camp-fire—a white woman—and behind them rose louder and louder the sound of pursuit.

From the gestures and gesticulations of the blacks around the camp-fire it was evident that they were discussing the sounds of the battle they had recently heard in the direction of the raiders' camp, for they often pointed in that direction, and now the woman raised her hand for silence and they all listened, and it was evident that they, too, heard the coming of the warriors who were pursuing Flora Hawkes and her confederates.

"There is a white woman there," said Flora to the others. "We do not know who she is, but she is our only hope, for

those who are pursuing us will overtake us quickly. Perhaps this woman will protect us. Come, I am going to find out;" and without waiting for an answer she walked boldly toward the boma.

They had come but a short distance when the keen eyes of the Waziri discovered them, and instantly the boma wall was ringed with bristling spears.

"Stop!" cried one of the warriors. "We are the Waziri of Tarzan. Who are you?"

"I am an Englishwoman," called Flora in reply. "I and my companions are lost in the jungle. We have been betrayed by our safari—our head-man is pursuing us now with warriors. There are but five of us and we ask your protection."

"Let them come," said Jane to the Waziri.

As Flora Hawkes and the four men entered the boma beneath the scrutiny of Jane Clayton and the Waziri, another pair of eyes watched from the foliage of the great tree that overhung the camp upon the opposite side—gray eyes to which a strange light came as they recognized the girl and her companions.

As the newcomers approached Lady Greystoke the latter gave an exclamation of surprise. "Flora!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "Flora Hawkes, what in the world are you doing here?"

The girl, startled too, came to a full stop. "Lady Greystoke!" she ejaculated.

"I do not understand," continued Lady

Greystoke. "I did not know that you were in Africa."

For a moment the glib Flora was overcome by consternation, but presently her native wit came to her assistance. "I am here with Mr. Bluber and his friends," she said, "who came to make scientific researches, and brought me along because I had been to Africa with you and Lord Greystoke, and knew something of the manners and customs of the country, and now our boys have turned against us and unless you can help us we are lost."

"Are they west coast boys?" asked Jane.

"Yes," replied Flora.

"I think my Waziri can handle them.

How many of them are there?"

"About two hundred," said Kraski.

Lady Greystoke shook her head. "The odds are pretty heavy," she commented, and then she called to Usula, who was in charge. "There are two hundred west coast boys coming after these people," she said; "we shall have to fight to defend them."

"We are Waziri," replied Usula, simply, and a moment later the van of Luvini's forces broke into view at the outer rim of the camp- fire's reach.

At sight of the glistening warriors ready to receive them the west coast boys halted. Luvini, taking in the inferior numbers of the enemy at a glance, stepped forward a few paces ahead of

his men and commenced to shout taunts and insults, demanding the return of the whites to him. He accompanied his words with fantastic and grotesque steps, at the same time waving his rifle and shaking his fist. Presently his followers took up the refrain until the whole band of two hundred was shrieking and yelling and threatening, the while they leaped up and down as they worked themselves into a frenzy of excitement that would Impart to them the courage necessary for the initiating of a charge.

The Waziri, behind the boma wall, schooled and disciplined by Tarzan of the Apes, had long since discarded the fantastic overture to battle so dear to the

hearts of other warlike tribes and, instead, stood stolid and grim awaiting the coming of the foe.

"They have a number of rifles," commented Lady Greystoke; that looks rather bad for us."

"There are not over half-a-dozen who can hit anything with their rifles," said Kraski.

"You men are all armed. Take your places among my Waziri. Warn your men to go away and leave us alone. Do not fire until they attack, but at the first overt act, commence firing, and keep it up—there is nothing that so discourages a west coast black as the rifle fire of white men. Flora and I will remain at the back of the camp, near that large tree."

She spoke authoritatively, as one who is accustomed to command and knows whereof she speaks. The men obeyed her; even Bluber, though he trembled pitiably as he moved forward to take his place in the front ranks among the Waziri.

Their movements, in the light of the camp-fire, were all plainly discernible to Luvini, and also to that other who watched from the foliage of the tree beneath which Jane Clayton and Flora Hawkes took refuge. Luvini had not come to fight. He had come to capture Flora Hawkes. He turned to his men. "There are only fifty of them," he said. "We can kill them easily, but we did not come to make war. We came to get the

white girl back again. Stay here and make a great show against those sons of jackals. Keep them always looking at you. Advance a little and then fall back again, and while you are thus keeping their attention attracted in this direction I will take fifty men and go to the rear of their camp and get the white girl, and when I have her I will send word to you and immediately you can return to the village, where, behind the palisade, we shall be safe against attack."

Now this plan well suited the west coast blacks, who had no stomach for the battle looming so imminent, and so they danced and yelled and menaced more vociferously than before, for they felt they were doing it all with perfect

impunity, since presently they should retire, after a bloodless victory—to the safety of their palisade.

As Luvini, making a detour, crept through the concealment of the dense jungles to the rear of the camp while the din of the west coast blacks arose to almost deafening proportions, there dropped suddenly to the ground before the two white women from the tree above them, the figure of a white giant, naked except for loin cloth and leopard skin—his godlike contour picked out by the flickering light of the beast fire.

"John!" exclaimed Lady Greystoke. "Thank God it is you."

"Sssh!" cautioned the white giant, placing a forefinger to his lips, and then

suddenly he wheeled upon Flora Hawkes. "It is you I want," he cried, and seizing the girl he threw her lightly across his shoulders, and before Lady Greystoke could interfere—before she half-realized what had occurred —he had lightly leaped the protecting boma in the rear of the camp and disappeared into the jungle beyond. For a moment Jane Clayton stood reeling as one stunned by an unexpected blow, and then, with a stifled moan, she sank sobbing to the ground, her face buried in her arms.

It was thus that Luvini and his warriors found her as they crept stealthily over the boma and into the camp in the rear of the defenders upon

the opposite side of the beast fire. They had come for a white woman and they had found one, and roughly dragging her to her feet, smothering her cries with rough and filthy palms, they bore her out into the jungle toward the palisaded village of the ivory raiders.

Ten minutes later the white men and the Waziri saw the west coast blacks retire slowly into the jungle, still yelling and threatening, as though bent on the total annihilation of their enemies—the battle was over without a shot fired or a spear hurled.

"Blime," said Throck, "what was all the bloomin' fuss about anyhow?"

"Hi thought they was goin' to heat hus hup, an' the blighters never done nothin'

but yell, an' 'ere we are, 'n that's that."

The Jew swelled out his chest. "It takes more as a bunch of niggers to bluff Adolph Bluber," he said pompously.

Kraski looked after the departing blacks, and then, scratching his head, turned back toward the camp-fire. "I can't understand it," he said, and then, suddenly, "Where are Flora and Lady Greystoke?"

It was then that they discovered that the women were missing.

The Waziri were frantic. They called the name of their mistress aloud, but there was no reply. "Come!" cried Usula, "we, the Waziri shall fight, after all," and running to the boma he leaped it, and, followed by his fifty blacks, set

out in pursuit of the west coast boys.

It was but a moment or two before they overtook them, and that which ensued resembled more a rout than a battle. Fleeing in terror toward their palisade with the Waziri at their heels the west coast blacks threw away their rifles that they might run the faster, but Luvini and his party had had sufficient start so that they were able to reach the village and gain the safety of the palisade before pursued and pursuers reached it. Once inside the gate the defenders made a stand for they realized that if the Waziri entered they should all be massacred, and so they fought as a cornered rat will fight, with the result that they managed to hold off the

attackers until they could close and bar the gate. Built as it had been as a defense against far greater numbers the village was easy to defend, for there were less than fifty Waziri now, and nearly two hundred fighting men within the village to defend it against them.

Realizing the futility of blind attack Usula withdrew his forces a short distance from the palisade, and there they squatted, their fierce, scowling faces glaring at the gateway while Usula pondered schemes for outwitting the enemy, which he realized he could not overcome by force alone.

"It is only Lady Greystoke that we want," he said; "vengeance can wait until another day."

"But we do not even know that she is within the village," reminded one of his men.

"Where else could she be, then?" asked Usula.

"It is true that you may be right—she may not be within the village, but that I intend to find out. I have a plan. See; the wind is from the opposite side of the village. Ten of you will accompany me, the others will advance again before the gate and make much noise, and pretend that you are about to attack. After awhile the gate will open they will come out. That I promise you. I will try to be here before that happens, but if I am not, divide into two parties and stand upon either side of the gateway and let the

west coast blacks escape; we do not care for them. Watch only for Lady Greystoke, and when you see her take her away from those who guard her. Do you understand?" His companions nodded. "Then come", he said, and selecting ten men disappeared into the jungle.

Luvini had carried Jane Clayton to a hut not far from the gateway to the village. Here he had bound her securely and tied her to a stake, still believing that she was Flora Hawkes, and then he had left her to hurry back toward the gate that he might take command of his forces in defense of the village.

So rapidly had the events of the past hour transpired that Jane Clayton was

still half dazed from the series of shocks that she had been called upon to endure. Dwarfing to nothingness the menace her present position was the remembrance that her Tarzan had deserted her in her hour of need, and carried off into the jungle another woman. Not even the remembrance of what Usula had told her concerning the accident that Tarzan had sustained, and which had supposedly again affected his memory, could reconcile her to the brutality of his desertion, and now she lay, face down, in the filth of the Arab hut, sobbing as she had not for many years.

As she lay there torn by grief, Usula and his ten crept stealthily and silently around the outside of the palisade to the

rear of the village. Here they found great quantities of dead brush left from the clearing which the Arabs had made when constructing their village. This they brought and piled along the palisade, close against it, until nearly three-quarters of the palisade upon that side of the village was banked high with it. Finding that it was difficult to prosecute their work in silence, Usula despatched one of his men to the main body upon the opposite side of the village, with instructions that they were to keep up a continuous din of shouting to drown the sound of the operations of their fellows. The plan worked to perfection, yet even though it permitted Usula and his companions to labor with

redoubled efforts, it was more than an hour before the brush pile was disposed to his satisfaction.

Luvini, from an aperture in the palisade, watched the main body of the Waziri who were now revealed by the rising of the moon, and finally he came to the conclusion that they did not intend to attack that night, and therefore he might relax his watchfulness and utilize the time in another and more agreeable manner. Instructing the bulk of his warriors to remain near the gate and ever upon the alert, with orders that he be summoned the moment that the Waziri showed any change in attitude, Luvini repaired to the hut in which he had left Lady Greystoke.

The black was a huge fellow, with low, receding forehead and prognathous jaw—a type of the lowest form of African negro. As he entered the hut with a lighted torch which he stuck in the floor, his bloodshot eyes gazed greedily at the still form of the woman lying prone before him. He licked his thick lips and, coming closer, reached out and touched her. Jane Clayton looked up, and recoiling in revulsion shrunk away. At sight of the woman's face the black looked his surprise.

"Who are you?" he demanded in the pigdin English of the coast.

"I am Lady Greystoke, wife of Tarzan of the Apes," replied Jane Clayton. "If you are wise you will release me at

once."

Surprise and terror showed in the eyes of Luvini, and another emotion as well, but which would dominate the muddy brain it was difficult, then, to tell. For a long time he sat gazing at her, and slowly the greedy, gloating expression upon face dominated and expunged the fear that had at; first been written there, and in the change Jane Clayton read her doom.

With fumbling fingers Luvini untied the knots of the bonds that held Jane Clayton's wrists and ankles. She felt his hot breath upon her and his bloodshot eyes and the red tongue that momentarily licked the thick lips. The instant that she felt the last thong with which she was

tied fall away she leaped to her feet and sprang for the entrance to the hut, but a great hand reached forth and seized her, and as Luvini dragged her back toward him, she wheeled like a mad tigress and struck repeatedly at his grinning, ugly face. By brute force, ruthless and indomitable, he beat down her weak resistance and slowly and surely dragged her closer to him. Oblivious to aught else, deaf to the cries of the Waziri before the gate and to the sudden new commotion that arose in the village, the two struggled on, the woman, from the first, foredoomed to defeat.

Against the rear palisade Usula had already put burning torches to his brush pile at half-a-dozen different places. The

flames, fanned by a gentle jungle breeze, had leaped almost immediately into a roaring conflagration, before which the dry wood of the palisade crumbled in a shower of ruddy sparks which the wind carried to the thatched roofs the huts beyond, until in an incredibly short period of time the village was a roaring inferno of flames. And even as Usula had predicted the gate swung open and the west coast blacks swarmed forth in terror toward the jungle. Upon either of the gateway the Waziri stood, looking for their mistress, but though they waited and watched silence until no more came from the gateway of village, and until the interior of the palisade a seething hell of fire, they saw nothing of her.

Long after they were convinced that no human being could remain alive in the village they still waited and hoped; but at last Usula gave up the vigil.

"She was never there," he said, "and now we pursue the blacks and capture some of them, from whom we may learn the whereabouts of Lady Greystoke."

It was daylight before they came upon a small of stragglers, who were in camp a few miles of the west. These they quickly surrounded, winning their immediate surrender by promises of immunity in the event that they would answer truthfully the questions that Usula should propound.

"Where is Luvini?" demanded Usula, who had learned the name of the leader

of the west coast boys from the Europeans the evening before.

"We do not know; we have not seen him since we left the village," replied one of the blacks. "We were some of the slaves of the Arabs, and when we escaped the palisade last night we ran away from the others, for we thought that we should be safer alone than with Luvini, who is even crueller than the Arabs."

"Did you see the white women that he brought to the camp last night?" demanded Usula.

"He brought but one white woman," replied the other.

"What did he do with her? Where is she now?" asked Usula.

"I do not know. When he brought her he bound her hand and foot and put her in the hut which he occupied near the village gate. We have not seen her since."

Usula turned and looked at his companions. A great fear was in his eyes, a fear that was reflected in the countenances of the others.

"Come!" he said, "we shall return to the village. And you will go with us," he added, addressing the west coast blacks, "and if you have lied to us —" he made a significant movement with his forefinger across his throat.

"We have not lied to you," replied the others. Quickly they retraced their steps toward the ruins of the Arab village,

nothing of which was left save a few piles of smoldering embers.

"Where was the hut in which the white woman was confined?" demanded Usula, as they entered the smoking ruins.

"Here," said one of the blacks, and walked quickly a few paces beyond what had been the village gateway. Suddenly he halted and pointed at something which lay upon the ground. "There," he said, "is the white woman you seek."

Usula and the others pressed forward. Rage and grief contended for mastery of them as they beheld, lying before them, the charred remnants of a human body.

"It is she," said Usula, turning away to hide his grief as the tears rolled down

his ebon cheeks. The other Waziri were equally affected, for they all had loved the mate of the big Bwana.

"Perhaps it is not she," suggested one of them; "perhaps it is another."

"We can tell quickly," cried a third. "If her rings are among the ashes it is indeed she," and he knelt and searched for the rings which Lady Greystoke habitually wore.

Usula shook his head despairingly. "It is she," he said, "there is the very stake to which she was fastened"—he pointed to the blackened stub of a stake close beside the body—"and as for the rings, even if they are not there it will mean nothing, for Luvini would have taken them away from her as soon as he

captured her. There was time for everyone else to leave the village except she, who was bound and could not leave —no, it cannot be another."

The Waziri scooped a shallow grave and reverently deposited the ashes there, marking the spot with a little cairn of stones.

18. THE SPOOR OF REVENGE

As Tarzan of the Apes, adapting his speed to that of Jad-bal- ja, made his comparatively slow way toward home, he reviewed with varying emotions the experiences of the past week. While he had been unsuccessful in raiding the treasure vaults of Opar, the sack of diamonds which he carried compensated several-fold for this miscarriage of his plans. His only concern now was for the safety of his Waziri, and, perhaps, a troublesome desire to seek out the whites who had drugged him and mete out to them the punishment they deserved. In view, however, of his

greater desire to return home he decided to make no effort at apprehending them for the time being at least.

Hunting together, feeding together, and sleeping together, the man and the great lion trod the savage jungle trails toward home. Yesterday they shared the meat of Bara, the deer, today they feasted upon the carcass of Horta, the boar, and between them there was little chance that either would go hungry.

They had come within a day's march of the bungalow when Tarzan discovered the spoor of a considerable body of warriors. As some men devour the latest stock-market quotations as though their very existence depended upon an accurate knowledge of them, so

Tarzan of the Apes devoured every scrap of information that the jungle held for him, for, in truth, an accurate knowledge of all that this information could impart to him had been during his lifetime a sine qua non to his existence. So now he carefully examined the spoor that lay before him, several days old though it was and partially obliterated by the passage of beasts since it had been made, but yet legible enough to the keen eyes and nostrils of the ape-man. His partial indifference suddenly gave way to keen interest, for among the footprints of the great warriors he saw now and again the smaller one of a white woman—a loved footprint that he knew as well as you know your mother's face.

"The Waziri returned and told her that I was missing," he soliloquized, "and now she has set out with them to search for me." He turned to the lion. "Well, Jad-bal-ja, once again we turn away from home—but no, where she is is home."

The direction that the trail led rather mystified Tarzan of the Apes, as it was not along the direct route toward Opar, but in a rather more southerly direction. On the sixth day his keen ears caught the sound of approaching men, and presently there was wafted to his nostrils the spoor of blacks. Sending Jad-bal-ja into a thicket to hide, Tarzan took to the trees and moved rapidly in the direction of the approaching negroes. As the distance

between them lessened the scent became stronger, until, even before he saw them, Tarzan knew that they were Waziri, but the one effluvium that would have filled his soul with happiness was lacking.

It was a surprised Usula who, at the head of the sad and dejected Waziri, came at the turning of the trail suddenly face to face with his master.

"Tarzan of the Apes!" cried Usula. "Is it indeed you?"

"It is none other," replied the ape-man, "but where is Lady Greystoke?"

"Ah, master, how can we tell you!" cried Usula.

"You do not mean—" cried Tarzan. "It cannot be. Nothing could happen to her while she was guarded by my

Waziri!"

The warriors hung their heads in shame and sorrow. "We offer our lives for hers," said Usula, simply. He threw down his spear and shield and, stretching his arms wide apart, bared his great breast to Tarzan. "Strike, Bwana," he said.

The ape-man turned away with bowed head. Presently he looked at Usula again. "Tell me how it happened," he said, "and forget your foolish speech as I have forgotten the suggestion which prompted it."

Briefly Usula narrated the events which had led up to the death of Jane, and when he was done Tarzan of the Apes spoke but three words, voicing a

question which was typical of him.

"Where is Luvini?" he asked.

"Ah, that we do not know," replied Usula.

"But I shall know," said Tarzan of the Apes. "Go upon your way, my children, back to your huts, and your women and your children, and when next you see Tarzan of the Apes you will know that Luvini is dead."

They begged permission to accompany him, but he would not listen to them.

"You are needed at home at this time of year," he said. "Already have you been gone too long from the herds and fields. Return, then, and carry word to Korak, but tell him that it is my wish that

he, too, remains at home— if I fail, then may he come and take up my unfinished work if he wishes to do so." As he ceased speaking he turned back in the direction from which he had come, and whistled once a single, low, long-drawn note, and a moment later Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, bounded into view along the jungle trail.

"The golden lion!" cried Usula. "When he escaped from Keewazi it was to search for his beloved Bwana."

Tarzan nodded. "He followed many marches to a strange country until he found me," he said, and then he bid the Waziri good-bye and bent his steps once more away from home in search of Luvini and revenge.

John Peebles, wedged in the crotch of a tree, greeted the coming dawn with weary eyes. Near him was Dick Throck, similarly braced another crotch, while Kraski, more intelligent or therefore possessing more inventive genius, rigged a small platform of branches across two parallel boughs, upon which he lay in comparative comfort. Ten feet above him Bluber swung, half exhausted and wholly terrified, to a smaller branch, supported in something that approximated safety by a fork of the branch to which he clung.

"Gord," groaned Peebles, "hi'll let the bloody lions 'ave me before hi'll spend another such a night as this, an' 'ere we are, 'n that's that!"

"And blime, too," said Throck, "hi sleeps on the ground hafter this, lions or no lions."

"If the combined intelligence of the three of you was equal to that of a walrus," remarked Kraski, "we might have slept in comparative safety and comfort last night on the ground."

"Hey there, Bluber, Mister Kraski is spikin' to yer," called Peebles in fine sarcasm, accenting the Mister.

"Oi! Oi! I don't care vot nobody says," moaned Bluber.

"'E wants us to build a 'ouse for 'im hevery night," continued Peebles, "while 'e stands abaht and tells us bloomin' well 'ow to do it, and 'im, bein' a fine gentleman, don't do no work."

"Why should I do any work with my hands when you two big beasts haven't got anything else work with?" asked Kraski. "You would all have starved by this time if I hadn't found food for you. And you'll be lion meat in the end, or of exhaustion if you don't listen to me—not that it would be much loss."

The others paid no attention to his last sally. As a matter of fact they had all been quarreling much for such a long time that they really paid little attention to one another. With the exception of Peebles and Throck they all hated one another cordially, and only clung together because they were afraid to separate. Slowly Peebles lowered his bulk to the ground. Throck followed and

then came Kraski, and then, finally, Bluber who stood for a moment in silence, looking down at his disreputable clothing.

"Mein Gott!" he exclaimed at last. "Look at me! Dis suit, vot it cost me tventy guineas, look at it. Ruined. Ruined. It vouldn't bring vun penny in der pound."

"The hell with your clothes!" exclaimed Kraski. "Here we are, lost, half starved, constantly menaced by wild animals, and maybe, for all we know, by cannibals, with Flora missing in the jungle, and you can stand there and talk about your 'tventy guinea' suit. You make me tired, Bluber. But come on, we might as well be moving."

"Which way?" asked Throck.

"Why, to the west, of course," replied Kraski. "The coast is there, and there is nothing else for us to do but try to reach it."

"We can't reach it by goin' east," roared Peebles, "an' ere we are, 'n that's that."

"Who said we could?" demanded Kraski.

"Well, we was travelin' east all day yesterday," said Peebles. "I knew all the time that there was somethin' wrong, and I just got it figured out."

Throck looked at his partner in stupid surprise. "What do you mean?" he growled. "What makes you think we was travelin' east?"

"It's easy enough," replied Peebles, "and I can prove it to you. Because this party here knows so much more than the rest of us we have been travelin' straight toward the interior ever since the niggers deserted us." He nodded toward the Russian, who stood with his hands on his hips, eyeing the other quizzically.

"If you think I'm taking you in the wrong direction, Peebles," said Kraski, "you just turn around and go the other way; but I'm going to keep on the way we've been going, which is the right way."

"It ain't the right way," retorted Peebles, "and I'll show yer. Listen here. When you travel west the sun is at your left side, isn't it— that is, all durin' the

middle of the day. Well, ever since we ve been travelin' without the niggers the sun has been on our right. I thought all the time there was somethin' wrong, but I could never figure it out until just now. It's plain as the face on your nose. We've been travelin' due east right along."

"Blime," cried Throck, "that we have, due east, and this blighter thinks as 'ow 'e knows it all."

"Oi!" groaned Bluber, "und ve got to valk it all back again yet, once more?"

Kraski laughed and turned away to resume the march in the direction he had chosen. "You fellows go on your own way if you want to," he said, "and while you're traveling, just ponder the fact that you're south of the equator and that

therefore the sun is always in the north, which, however, doesn't change its old-fashioned habit of setting in the west."

Bluber was the first to grasp the truth of Kraski's statement. "Come on, boys," he said, "Carl vas right," and he turned and followed the Russian.

Peebles stood scratching his head, entirely baffled by the puzzling problem, which Throck, also, was pondering deeply. Presently the latter turned after Bluber and Kraski. "Come on, John," he said to Peebles, "hi don't hunderstand it, but hi guess they're right. They are headin' right toward where the sun set last night, and that sure must be west."

His theory tottering, Peebles followed Throck, though he remained

unconvinced.

The four men, hungry and footsore, had dragged their weary way along the jungle trail toward the west for several hours in vain search for game. Unschooled in jungle craft they blundered on. There might have been on every hand fierce carnivore or savage warriors, but so dull are the perceptive faculties of civilized man, the most blatant foe might have stalked them unperceived.

And so it was that shortly after noon, as they were crossing a small clearing, the zip of an arrow that barely missed Bluber's head, brought them to a sudden, terrified halt. With a shrill scream of terror the Jew crumpled to the ground.

Kraski threw his rifle to his shoulder and fired.

"There!" he cried, "behind those bushes," and then another arrow, from another direction, pierced his forearm. Peebles and Throck, beefy and cumbersome, got into action with less celerity than the Russian, but, like him, they showed no indication of fear.

"Down," cried Kraski, suiting the action to the word. "Lie down and let them have it."

Scarcely had the three men dropped among the long grass when a score of pygmy hunters came into the open, and a volley of arrows whizzed above the prone men, while from a nearby tree two steel-gray eyes looked down upon the

ambush.

Bluber lay upon his belly with his face buried in his arms, his useless rifle lying at his side, but Kraski, Peebles, and Throck, fighting for their lives, pumped lead into the band of yelling pygmies.

Kraski and Peebles each dropped a native with his rifle and then the foe withdrew into the concealing safety of the surrounding jungle. For a moment there was a cessation of hostilities. Bitter silence reigned, and then a voice broke the quiet from the verdure of a nearby forest giant.

"Do not fire until I tell you to," it said, in English, "and I will save you."

Bluber raised his head. "Come qvick!

Come qvick!" he cried, "ve vill not shoot. Safe me, safe me, und I giff you five pounds."

From the tree from which the voice had issued there came a single, low, long-drawn, whistled note, and then silence for a time.

The pygmies, momentarily surprised by the mysterious voice emanating from the foliage of a tree, ceased their activities, but presently, hearing nothing to arouse their fear, they emerged from the cover of the bushes and launched another volley of arrows toward the four men lying among the grasses in the clearing. Simultaneously the figure of a giant white leaped from the lower branches of a patriarch of the jungle, as

a great black-maned lion sprang from the thicket below.

"Oi!" shrieked Bluber, and again buried his face in his arms.

For an instant the pygmies stood terrified, and then their leader cried: "It is Tarzan!" and turned and fled into the jungle.

"Yes, it is Tarzan—Tarzan of the Apes," cried Lord Greystoke. "It is Tarzan and the golden lion," but he spoke in the dialect of the pygmies, and the whites understood no word of what he said. Then he turned to them. "The Gomangani have gone," he said; "get up."

The four men crawled to their feet. "Who are you, and what are you doing

here?" demanded Tarzan of the Apes. "But I do not need to ask who you are. You are the men who drugged me, and left me helpless in your camp, a prey to the first passing lion or savage native."

Bluber stumbled forward, rubbing his palms together and cringing and smiling. "Oi! Oi! Mr. Tarzan, ve did not know you. Neffer vould ve did vat ve done, had ve known it vas Tarzan of the Apes. Safe me! Ten pounds— tventy pounds— anyt'ing. Name your own price. Safe me, und it is yours."

Tarzan ignored the Jew and turned toward the others. "I am looking for one of your men," he said; "a black named Luvini. He killed my wife. Where is he?"

"We know nothing of that," said Kraski. "Luvini betrayed us and deserted us. Your wife and another white woman were in our camp at the time. None of us knows what became of them. They were behind us when we took our post to defend the camp from our men and the slaves of the Arabs. Your Waziri were there. After the enemy had withdrawn we found that the two women had disappeared. We do not know what became of them. We are looking for them now."

"My Waziri told me as much," said Tarzan, "but have you seen aught of Luvini since?"

"No, we have not," replied Kraski.

"What are you doing here?"

demanded Tarzan.

"We came with Mr. Bluber on a scientific expedition," replied the Russian. "We have had a great deal of trouble. Our head-men, askaris, and porters have mutinied and deserted. We are absolutely alone and helpless."

"Oi! Oi!" cried Bluber. "Safe us! Safe us! But keep dot lion avay. He makes me nerfous."

"He will not hurt you—unless I tell him to," said Tarzan.

"Den please don't tell him to," cried Bluber.

"Where do you want to go?" asked Tarzan.

"We are trying to get back to the

coast," replied Kraski, "and from there to London."

"Come with me," said Tarzan, "possibly I can help you. You do not deserve it, but I cannot see white men perish here in the jungle."

They followed him toward the west, and that night they made camp beside a small jungle stream. It was difficult for the four Londoners to accustom themselves to the presence of the great lion, and Bluber was in a state of palpable terror.

As they squatted around the fire after the evening meal, which Tarzan had provided, Kraski suggested that they set to and build some sort of a shelter against the wild beasts.

"It will not be necessary," said Tarzan. "Jad-bal-ja will guard you. He will sleep here beside Tarzan of the Apes, and what one of us does not hear the other will."

Bluber sighed. "Mein Gottl" he cried. "I should giff ten pounds for vun night's sleep."

"You may have it tonight for less than that," replied Tarzan, "for nothing shall befall you while Jad-bal-ja and I are here."

"Vell, den I t'ink I say good night," said the Jew, and moving a few paces away from the fire he curled up and was soon asleep. Throck and Peebles followed suit, and shortly after Kraski, too.

As the Russian lay, half dozing, his eyes partially open, he saw the ape- man rise from the squatting position he had maintained before the fire, and turn toward a nearby tree. As he did so something fell from beneath his loin cloth—a little sack made of hides—a little sack, bulging with its contents.

Kraski, thoroughly awakened now, watched it as the ape-man moved off a short distance, accompanied by Jad-bal-ja, and lay down to sleep.

The great lion curled beside the prostrate man, and presently the Russian was assured that both slept. Immediately he commenced crawling, stealthily and slowly toward the little package lying beside the fire. With each forward move

that he made he paused and looked at the recumbent figures of the two ferocious beasts before him, but both slept on peacefully. At last the Russian could reach out and grasp the sack, and drawing it toward him he stuffed it quickly inside his shirt. Then he turned and crawled slowly and carefully back to his place beyond the fire. There, lying with his head upon one arm as though in profound slumber, he felt carefully of the sack with the fingers of his left hand.

"They feel like pebbles," he muttered to himself, "and doubtless that is what they are, for the barbaric ornamentation of this savage barbarian who is a peer of England. It does not seem possible that this wild beast has sat in the House of

Lords."

Noiselessly Kraski undid the knot which held the mouth of the sack closed, and a moment later he let a portion of the contents trickle forth into his open palm.

"My God!" he cried, "diamonds!"

Greedily he poured them all out and gloated over them—great scintillating stones of the first water—five pounds of pure, white diamonds, representing so fabulous a fortune that the very contemplation of it staggered the Russian.

"My God!" he repeated, "the wealth of Croesus in my own hand."

Quickly he gathered up the stones and replaced them in the sack, always with one eye upon Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja; but

neither stirred, and presently he had returned them all to the pouch and slipped the package inside his shirt.

"Tomorrow," he muttered, "tomorrow —would to God that I had the nerve to attempt it tonight."

In the middle of the following morning Tarzan, with the four Londoners, approached a good sized, stockaded village, containing many huts. He was received not only graciously, but with the deference due an emperor.

The whites were awed by the attitude of the black chief and his warriors as Tarzan was conducted into their presence.

After the usual ceremony had been gone through, Tarzan turned and waved

his hand toward the four Europeans. "These are my friends," he said to the black chief, "and they wish to reach the coast in safety. Send with them, then, sufficient warriors to feed and guard them during the journey. It is I, Tarzan of the Apes, who requests this favor."

"Tarzan of the Apes, the great chief, Lord of the Jungle, has but to command," replied the black.

"Good!" exclaimed Tarzan, "feed them well and treat them well. I have other business to attend to and may not remain."

"Their bellies shall be filled, and they shall reach the coast unscathed," replied the chief.

Without a word of farewell, without

even a sign that he realized their existence, Tarzan of the Apes passed from the sight of the four Europeans, while at his heels paced Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion.

19. A BARBED SHAFT KILLS

Kraski spent a sleepless night. He could not help but realize that sooner or later Tarzan would discover the loss of his pouch of diamonds, and that he would return and demand an accounting of the four Londoners he had befriended. And so it was that as the first streak of dawn lighted the eastern horizon, the Russian arose from his pallet of dried grasses within the hut that had been assigned him and Bluber by the chief, and crept stealthily out into the village street.

"God!" he muttered to himself. "There is only one chance in a thousand that I can reach the coast alone, but this," and

he pressed his hand over the bag of diamonds that lay within his shirt—"but this, this is worth every effort, even to the sacrifice of life—the fortune of a thousand kings—my God, what could I not do with it in London, and Paris, and New York!"

Stealthily he slunk from the village, and presently the verdure of the jungle beyond closed about Carl Kraski, the Russian, as he disappeared forever from the lives of his companions.

Bluber was the first to discover the absence of Kraski, for although there was no love between the two, they had been thrown together owing to the friendship of Peebles and Throck.

"Have you seen Carl this morning?"

he asked Peebles as the three men gathered around the pot containing the unsavory stew that had been brought to them for their breakfast.

"No," said Peebles. "He must be asleep yet."

"He is not in the hut," replied Bluber. "He vas not dere ven I woke up."

"He can take care of himself," growled Throck, resuming his breakfast. "You'll likely find him with some of the ladies," and he grinned in appreciation of his little joke on Kraski's well-known weakness.

They had finished their breakfast and were attempting to communicate with some of the warriors, in an effort to learn when the chief proposed that they

should set forth for the coast, and still Kraski had not made an appearance. By this time Bluber was considerably concerned, not at all for Kraski's safety, but for his own, since, if something could happen to Kraski in this friendly village in the still watches of the night, a similar fate might overtake him, and when he made this suggestion to the others it gave them food for thought, too, so that there were three rather apprehensive men who sought an audience with the chief.

By means of signs and pidgin English, and distorted native dialect, a word or two of which each of the three understood, they managed to convey to the chief the information that Kraski had

disappeared, and that they wanted to know what had become of him.

The chief was, of course, as much puzzled as they, and immediately instituted a thorough search of the village, with the result that it was soon found that Kraski was not within the palisade, and shortly afterward footprints were discovered leading through the village gateway into the jungle.

"Mein Gott!" exclaimed Bluber, "he vent out dere, und he vent alone, in der middle of der night. He must have been crazy."

"Gord!" cried Trock, "what did he want to do that for?"

"You ain't missed nothin', have you?"

asked Peebles of the other two. "'E might 'ave stolen somethin'."

"Oi! Oi! Vot have ve got to steal?" cried Bluber. "Our guns, our ammunition—dey are here beside us. He did not take them. Beside dose ve have nothing of value except my tventy guinea suit."

"But what did 'e do it for?" demanded Peebles.

"'E must 'ave been walkin' in 'is bloomin' sleep," said Throck. And that was as near to an explanation of Kraski's mysterious disappearance as the three could reach. An hour later they set out toward the coast under the protection of a company of the chief's warriors.

Kraski, his rifle slung over his shoulder, moved doggedly along the

jungle trail, a heavy automatic pistol grasped in his right hand. His ears constantly strained for the first intimation of pursuit as well as for whatever other dangers lurk before or upon either side. Alone in the mysterious jungle he was experiencing a nightmare of terror, and with each mile that he traveled the value of the diamonds became less and less by comparison with the frightful ordeal that realized he must pass through before he could hope to reach the coast.

Once Histah, the snake, swinging from a hung branch across the trail, barred his way, and the man dared not fire at him for fear of attracting the attention of possible pursuers to his

position. He was forced, therefore, to make a detour through the tangled mass of underbrush which grew closely upon either side of the narrow trail. When he reached it again, beyond the snake, his clothing was more torn and tattered than before and his flesh was scratched and cut and bleeding from the innumerable thorns past which he had been compelled to force his way. He was soaked with perspiration and panting from exhaustion and his clothing was filled with ants whose vicious attacks upon his flesh rendered him half mad with pain.

Once again in the clear he tore his clothing from him and sought frantically to rid himself of the torturing pests.

So thick were the myriad ants upon his clothing that he dared not attempt to reclaim it. Only the sack of diamonds, his ammunition and his weapons did he snatch from the ravening horde whose numbers were rapidly increasing, apparently by the millions, as they sought to again lay hold upon him and devour him.

Shaking the bulk of the ants from the articles he had retrieved, Kraski dashed madly along the trail as naked as the day he was born, and when, hour later, stumbling and at last falling exhausted, he lay panting upon the damp jungle earth, he realized the utter futility of his mad attempt to reach the coast alone, even more fully than he ever could have

under any other circumstances, since there is nothing that so paralyzes the courage and self-confidence of a civilized man as to be deprived of his clothing.

However scant the protection that might have been afforded by the torn and tattered garments he discarded, he could not have felt more helpless had he lost his weapons and ammunition instead, for, to such an extent are we the creatures of habit and environment. It was, therefore, a terrified Kraski, already foredoomed to failure, who crawled fearfully along the jungle trail.

That night, hungry and cold, he slept in the crotch of a great tree while the hunting carnivore roared, and coughed,

and growled through the blackness of the jungle about him. Shivering with terror he started momentarily to fearful wakefulness, and when, from exhaustion, he would doze again it was not to rest but to dream of horrors that a sudden roar would merge into reality. Thus the long hours of a frightful night dragged out their tedious length, until it seemed that dawn would never come. But come it did, and once again he took up his stumbling way toward the west.

Reduced by fear and fatigue and pain to a state bordering upon half consciousness, he blundered on, with each passing hour becoming perceptibly weaker, for he had been without food or water since he had deserted his

companions more than thirty hours before.

Noon was approaching. Kraski was moving but slowly now with frequent rests, and it was during one of these that there came to his numbed sensibilities an insistent suggestion of the voices of human beings not far distant. Quickly he shook himself and attempted to concentrate his waning faculties. He listened intently, and presently with a renewal of strength he arose to his feet.

There was no doubt about it. He heard voices but a short distance away and they sounded not like the tones of natives, but rather those of Europeans. Yet he was still careful, and so he crawled cautiously forward, until at a

turning of the trail he saw before him a clearing dotted with trees which bordered the banks of a muddy stream. Near the edge of the river was a small hut thatched with grasses and surrounded by a rude palisade and further protected by an outer boma of thorn bushes.

It was from the direction of the hut that the voices were coming, and now he clearly discerned a woman's voice raised in protest and in anger, and replying to it the deep voice of a man.

Slowly the eyes of Carl Kraski went wide in incredulity, not unmixed with terror, for the tones of the voice of the man he heard were the tones of the dead Esteban Miranda, and the voice of the woman was that of the missing Flora

Hawkes, whom he had long since given up as dead also. But Carl Kraski was no great believer in the supernatural. Disembodied spirits need no huts or palisades, or bomas of thorns. The owners of those voices were as live - as material—as he.

He started forward toward the hut, his hatred of Esteban and his jealousy almost forgotten in the relief he felt in the realization that he was to again have the companionship of creatures of his own kind. He had moved, however, but a few steps from the edge of the jungle when the woman's voice came again to his ear, and with it the sudden realization of his nakedness. He paused in thought, looking about him, and

presently he was busily engaged gathering the long, broadleaved jungle grasses, from which he fabricated a rude but serviceable skirt, which he fastened about his waist with a twisted rope of the same material. Then with a feeling of renewed confidence he moved forward toward the hut. Fearing that they might not recognize him at first, and, taking him for an enemy, attack him, Kraski, before he reached the entrance to the palisade, called Esteban by name. Immediately the Spaniard came from the hut, followed by the girl. Had Kraski not heard his voice and recognized him by it, he would have thought him Tarzan of the Apes, so close was the remarkable resemblance.

For a moment the two stood looking at the strange apparition before them.

"Don't you know me?" asked Kraski. "I am Carl—Carl Kraski. You know me, Flora."

"Carl!" exclaimed the girl, and started to leap forward, but Esteban grasped her by the wrist and held her back.

"What are you doing here, Kraski?" asked the Spaniard in a surly tone.

"I am trying to make my way to the coast," replied the Russian. "I am nearly dead from starvation and exposure."

"The way to the coast is there," said the Spaniard, and pointed down the trail toward the west. "Keep moving, Kraski, it is not healthy for you here."

"You mean to say that you will send me on without food or water?" demanded the Russian.

"There is water," said Esteban, pointing at the river, "and the jungle is full of food for one with sufficient courage and intelligence to gather it."

"You cannot send him away," cried the girl. "I did not think it possible that even you could be so cruel," and then, turning to the Russian, "0 Carl," she cried "do not go. Save me! Save me from this beast!"

"Then stand aside," cried Kraski, and as the girl wrenched herself free from the grasp of Miranda the Russian leveled his automatic and fired point-blank at the Spaniard. The bullet missed its target;

the empty shell jammed in the breach and as Kraski pulled the trigger again with no result he glanced at his weapon and, discovering its uselessness, hurled it from him with an oath. As he strove frantically to bring his rifle into action Esteban threw back his spear hand with the short, heavy spear that he had learned by now so well to use, and before the other could press the trigger of his rifle the barbed shaft tore through his chest and heart. Without a sound Carl Kraski sank dead at the foot of his enemy and his rival, while the woman both had loved, each in his own selfish or brutal way, sank sobbing to the ground in the last and deepest depths of despair.

Seeing that the other was dead,

Esteban stepped forward and wrenched his spear from Kraski's body and also relieved his dead enemy of his ammunition and weapons. As he did so his eyes fell upon a little bag made of skins which Kraski had fastened to his waist by the grass rope he had recently fashioned to uphold his primitive skirt.

The Spaniard felt of the bag and tried to figure out the nature of its contents, coming to the conclusion that it was ammunition, but he did not examine it closely until he had carried the dead man's weapons into his hut, where he had also taken the girl, who crouched in a corner, sobbing.

"Poor Carl! Poor Carl!" she moaned, and then to the man facing her: "You

beast!"

"Yes," he cried, with a laugh, "I am a beast. I am Tarzan of the Apes, and that dirty Russian dared to call me Esteban. I am Tarzan! I am Tarzan of the Apes!" he repeated in a loud scream. "Who dares call me otherwise dies. I will show them. I will show them," he mumbled.

The girl looked at him with wide and flaming eyes and shuddered.

"Mad," she muttered. "Mad! My God —alone in the jungle with a maniac!" And, in truth, in one respect was Esteban Miranda mad—mad with the madness of the artist who lives the part he plays. And for so long, now, had Esteban Miranda played the part, and so really proficient had he become in his

interpretation of the noble character, that he believed himself Tarzan, and in outward appearance he might have deceived the ape-man's best friend. But within that godlike form was the heart of a cur and the soul of a craven.

"He would have stolen Tarzan's mate," muttered Esteban. "Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle! Did you see how I slew him, with a single shaft? You could love a weakling, could you, when you could have the love of the great Tarzan!"

"I loathe you," said the girl. "You are indeed a beast. You are lower than the beasts."

"You are mine, though," said the Spaniard, "and you shall never be another's—first I would kill you—but let

us see what the Russian had in his little bag of hides, it feels like ammunition enough to kill a regiment," and he untied the thongs that held the mouth of the bag closed and let some of the contents spill out upon the floor of the hut. As the sparkling stones rolled scintillant before their astonished eyes, the girl gasped in incredulity.

"Holy Mary!" exclaimed the Spaniard, "they are diamonds."

"Hundreds of them," murmured the girl.

"Where could he have gotten them?"

"I do not know and I do not care," said Esteban. "They are mine. They are all mine—I am rich, Flora. I am rich, and if you are a good girl you shall share

my wealth with me."

Flora Hawkes's eyes narrowed. Awakened within her breast was the always-present greed that dominated her being, and beside it, and equally as powerful now to dominate her, her hatred for the Spaniard. Could he have known it, possession of those gleaming baubles had crystallized at last in the mind of the woman a determination she had long fostered to slay the Spaniard while he slept. Heretofore she had been afraid of being left alone in the jungle, but now the desire to possess this great wealth overcame her terror.

Tarzan, ranging the jungle, picked up the trail of the various bands of west coast boys and the fleeing slaves of the

dead Arabs, and overhauling each in turn he prosecuted his search for Luvini, awing the blacks into truthfulness and leaving them in a state of terror when he departed. Each and every one, they told him the same story. There was none who had seen Luvini since the night of the battle and the fire, and each was positive that he must have escaped with some other band.

So thoroughly occupied had the ape-man's mind been during the past few days with his sorrow and his search that lesser considerations had gone neglected, with the result that he had not noted that the bag containing the diamonds was missing. In fact, he had practically forgotten the diamonds when,

by the merest vagary of chance his mind happened to revert to them, and then it was that he suddenly realized that they were missing, but when he had lost them, or the circumstances surrounding the loss, he could not recall.

"Those rascally Europeans," he muttered to Jad-bal-ja, "they must have taken them," and suddenly with the thought the scarlet scar flamed brilliantly upon his forehead, as just anger welled within him against the perfidy and ingratitude of the men he had succored. "Come," he said to Jad-bal-ja, "as we search for Luvini we shall search for these others also." And so it was that Peebles and Throck and Bluber had traveled but a short distance toward the

coast when, during a noon-day halt, they were surprised to see the figure of the ape-man moving majestically toward them while, at his side, paced the great, black-maned lion.

Tarzan made no acknowledgment of their exuberant greeting, but came forward in silence to stand at last with folded arms before them. There was a grim, accusing expression upon his countenance that brought the chill of fear to Bluber's cowardly heart, and blanched the faces of the two hardened English pugs.

"What is it?" they chorused. "What is wrong? What has happened?"

"I have come for the bag of stones you took from me," said Tarzan simply.

Each of the three eyed his companion suspiciously.

"I do not understand vot you mean, Mr. Tarzan," purred Bluber, rubbing his palms together. "I am sure dere is some mistake, unless—" he cast a furtive and suspicious glance in the direction of Peebles and Throck.

"I don't know nothin' about no bag of stones," said Peebles, "but I will say as 'ow you can't trust no Jew."

"I don't trust any of you," said Tarzan. "I will give you five seconds to hand over the hag of stones, and if you don't produce it in that time I shall have you thoroughly searched."

"Sure," cried Bluber, "search me, search me, by all means. Vy, Mr. Tarzan,

I vouldn't take notting from you for notting."

"There's something wrong here," growled Throck. "I ain't got nothin' of yours and I'm sure these two haven't neither."

"Where is the other?" asked Tarzan.

"Oh, Kraski? He disappeared the same night you brought us to that village. We hain't seen him since—that's it; I got it now—we wondered why he left, and now I see it as plain as the face on me nose. It was him that stole that bag of stones. That's what he done. We've been tryin' to figure out ever since he left what he stole, and now I see it plain enough."

"Sure," exclaimed Peebles. "That's it, and 'ere we are, 'n that's that."

"Ve might have knowed it, ve might have knowed it," agreed Bluber.

"But nevertheless I'm going to have you all searched," said Tarzan, and when the head-man came and Tarzan had explained what he desired, the three whites were quickly stripped and searched. Even their few belongings were thoroughly gone through, but no bag of stones was revealed.

Without a word Tarzan turned back toward the jungle, and in another moment the blacks and the three Europeans saw the leafy sea of foliage swallow the ape-man and the golden lion.

"Gord help Kraski!" exclaimed Peebles.

"Wot do yer suppose he wants with a bag 0' stones?" inquired Throck. "'E must be a bit balmy, I'll say."

"Balmy nudding," exclaimed Bluber. "Dere is but vun kind of stones in Africa vot Kraski would steal and run off into der jungle alone mit - diamonds."

Peebles and Throck opened their eyes in surprise. "The damned Russian!" exclaimed the former. "He double-crossed us, that's what e' did."

"He likely as not saved our lives, says hi," said Throck. "If this ape feller had found Kraski and the diamonds with us we'd of all suffered alike - you couldn't 'a' made 'im believe we didn't 'ave a 'and in it. And Kraski wouldn't 'a' done nothin' to help us out."

"I 'opes 'e catches the beggar!" exclaimed Peebles, fervently.

They were startled into silence a moment later by the sight of Tarzan returning to the camp, but he paid no attention to the whites, going instead directly to the head-man, with whom he conferred for several minutes. Then, once more, he turned and left.

Acting on information gained from the head-man, Tarzan struck off through the jungle in the general direction of the village where he had left the four whites in charge of the chief, and from which Kraski had later escaped alone. He moved rapidly, leaving Jad-bal-ja to follow behind, covering the distance to the village in a comparatively short time,

since he moved almost in an air line through the trees, where there was no matted undergrowth to impede his progress.

Outside the village gate he took up Kraski's spoor, now almost obliterated, it is true, but still legible to the keen perceptive faculties of the ape-man. This he followed swiftly, since Kraski had hung tenaciously to the open trail that wound in a general westward direction.

The sun had dropped almost to the western tree-tops, when Tarzan came suddenly upon a clearing beside a sluggish stream, near the banks of which stood a small, rude hut, surrounded by a palisade and a thorn boma.

The ape-man paused and listened,

sniffing the air with his sensitive nostrils, and then on noiseless feet he crossed the clearing toward the hut. In the grass outside the palisade lay the dead body of a white man, and a single glance told the ape-man that it was the fugitive whom he sought. Instantly he realized the futility of searching the corpse for the bag of diamonds, since it was a foregone conclusion that they were now in the possession of whoever had slain the Russian. A perfunctory examination revealed the fact that he was right in so far as the absence of the diamonds was concerned.

Both inside the hut and outside the palisade were indications of the recent presence of a man and woman, the spoor

of the former tallying with that of the creature who had killed Gobu, the great ape, and hunted Bara, the deer, upon the preserves of the ape-man. But the woman—who was she? It was evident that she had been walking upon sore, tired feet, and that in lieu of shoes she wore bandages of cloth.

Tarzan followed the spoor of the man and the woman where it led from the hut into the jungle.

As it progressed it became apparent that the woman had been lagging behind, and that she had commenced to limp more and more painfully. Her progress was very slow, and Tarzan could see that the man had not waited for her, but that he had been, in some places, a

considerable distance ahead of her.

And so it was that Esteban had forged far ahead of Flora Hawkes, whose bruised and bleeding feet would scarce support her.

"Wait for me, Esteban," she had pleaded. "Do not desert me. Do not leave me alone here in this terrible jungle."

"Then keep up with me," growled the Spaniard. "Do you think that with this fortune in my possession I am going to wait here forever in the middle of the jungle for someone to come and take it away from me? No, I am going on to the coast as fast as I can. If you can keep up, well and good. If you cannot, that is your own lookout."

"But you could not desert me. Even you, Esteban, could not be such a beast after all that you have forced me to do for you."

The Spaniard laughed. "You are nothing more to me," he said, "than an old glove. With this," and he held the sack of diamonds before him, "I can purchase the finest gloves in the capitals of the world—new gloves," and he laughed grimly at his little joke.

"Esteban, Esteban," she cried, "come back; come back. I can go no farther. Do not leave me. Please come back and save me." But he only laughed at her, and as a turn of the trail shut him from her sight, she sank helpless and exhausted to the ground.

20. THE DEAD RETURN

That night Esteban made his lonely camp beside a jungle trail that wound through the dry wash of an old river bed, along which a tiny rivulet still trickled, according the Spaniard the water which he craved.

The obsession which possessed him that he was in truth Tarzan of the Apes, imparted to him a false courage, so that he could camp alone upon the ground without recourse to artificial protection of any kind, and fortune had favored him in this respect in that it had sent no prowling beasts of prey to find him upon those occasions that he had dared too much. During the period that Flora Hawkes had been with him he had built

shelters for her, but now that he had deserted her and was again alone, he could not, in the role that he had assumed, consider so effeminate an act as the building of even a thorn boma for protection during the darkness of the night.

He did, however, build a fire, for he had made a kill and had not yet reached a point of primitive savagery which permitted him even to imagine that he enjoyed raw meat.

Having devoured what meat he wanted and filled himself at the little rivulet, Esteban came back and squatted before his fire, where he drew the pouch of diamonds from his loin cloth and, opening it, spilled a handful of the

precious gems into his palm. The flickering firelight playing upon them sent scintillant gleams shooting into the dark of the surrounding jungle night as the Spaniard let a tiny stream of the sparkling stones trickle from one hand to the other, and in the pretty play of light the Spaniard saw visions of the future—power, luxury, beautiful women—all that great wealth might purchase for a man. With half closed eyes he dreamed of the ideal that he should search the world over to obtain—the dream-woman for whom he had always searched—the dream-woman he had never found, the fit companion for such as Esteban Miranda imagined himself to be. Presently through the dark lashes that

veiled his narrowed lids the Spaniard seemed to see before him in the flickering light of his camp fire a vague materialization of the figure of his dream —a woman's figure, clothed in flowing diaphanous white which appeared to hover just above him at the outer rim of his firelight at the summit of the ancient river bank.

It was strange how the vision persisted. Esteban closed his eyes tightly, and then opened them ever so little, and there, as it had been before he closed them, the vision remained. And then he opened his eyes wide, and still the figure of the woman in white floated above him.

Esteban Miranda went suddenly pale.

"Mother of God!" he cried. "It is Flora. She is dead and has come back to haunt me."

With staring eyes he slowly rose to his feet to confront the apparition, when in soft and gentle tones it spoke.

"Heart of my heart," it cried, "it is really you!"

Instantly Esteban realized that this was no disembodied spirit, nor was it Flora—but who was it? Who was this vision of beauty, alone in the savage African wilderness?

Very slowly now it was descending the embankment and coming toward him. Esteban returned the diamonds to the pouch and replaced it inside his loin cloth.

With outstretched arms the girl came toward him. "My love, my love," she cried, "do not tell me that you do not know me." She was close enough now for the Spaniard to see her rapidly rising and falling breasts and her lips trembling with love and passion. A sudden wave of hot desire swept over him, so with outstretched arms he sprang forward to meet her and crush her to his breast.

Tarzan, following the spoor of the man and the woman, moved in a leisurely manner along the jungle trail, for he realized that no haste was essential to overtake these two. Nor was he at all surprised when he came suddenly upon the huddled figure of a woman, lying in the center of the

pathway. He knelt beside her and laid a hand upon her shoulder, eliciting a startled scream.

"God!" she cried, "this is the end!"

"You are in no danger," said the ape-man. "I will not harm you."

She turned her eyes and looked up at him. At first she thought he was Esteban. "You have come back to save me, Esteban?" she asked.

"Esteban!" he exclaimed. "I am not Esteban. That is not my name." And then she recognized him.

"Lord Greystoke!" she cried. "It is really you?"

"Yes," he said, "and who are you?"

"I am Flora Hawkes. I was Lady

Greystoke's maid."

"I remember you," he said. "What are you doing here?"

"I am afraid to tell you," she said. "I am afraid of your anger."

"Tell me," he commanded. "You should know, Flora, that I do not harm women."

"We came to get gold from the vaults of Opar," she said. "But that you know."

"I know nothing of it," he replied. "Do you mean that you were with those Europeans who drugged me and left me in their camp?"

"Yes," she said, "we got the gold, but you came with your Waziri and took it from us."

"I came with no Waziri and took nothing from you," said Tarzan. "I do not understand you."

She raised her eyebrows in surprise, for she knew that Tarzan of the Apes did not lie.

"We became separated," she said, "after our men turned against us. Esteban stole me from the others, and then, after a while Kraski found us. He was the Russian. He came with a bagful of diamonds and then Esteban killed him and took the diamonds."

It was now Tarzan's turn to experience surprise.

"And Esteban is the man who is with you?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "but he has deserted

me. I could not walk farther on my sore feet. He has gone and left me here to die and he has taken the diamonds with him."

"We shall find him," said the ape-man. "Come."

"But I cannot walk," said the girl.

"That is a small matter," he said, and stooping lifted her to his shoulder.

Easily the ape-man bore the exhausted girl along the trail. "It is not far to water," he said, "and water is what you need. It will help to revive you and give you strength, and perhaps I shall be able to find food for you soon."

"Why are you so good to me?" asked the girl.

"You are a woman. I could not leave you alone in the jungle to die, no matter what you may have done," replied the ape-man. And Flora Hawkes could only sob a broken plea for forgiveness for the wrong she had done him.

It grew quite dark, but still they moved along the silent trail until presently Tarzan caught in the distance the reflection of firelight.

"I think we shall soon find your friend," he whispered. "Make no noise."

A moment later his keen ears caught the sound of voices. He halted and lowered the girl to her feet.

"If you cannot follow," he said, "wait here. I do not wish him to escape. I will return for you. If you can follow on

slowly, do so." And then he left her and made his way cautiously forward toward the light and the voices. He heard Flora Hawkes moving directly behind him. It was evident that she could not bear the thought of being left alone again in the dark jungle. Almost simultaneously Tarzan heard a low whine a few paces to his right. "Jad-bal-ja," he whispered in a low voice, "heel," and the great black-maned lion crept close to him, and Flora Hawkes, stifling a scream, rushed to his side and grasped his arms.

"Silence," he whispered; "Jad-bal-ja will not harm you."

An instant later the three came to the edge of the ancient river bank, and through the tall grasses growing there

looked down upon the little camp beneath.

Tarzan, to his consternation, saw a counterpart of himself standing before a little fire, while slowly approaching the man, with outstretched arms, was a woman, draped in flowing white. He heard her words; soft words of love and endearment, and at the sound of the voice and the scent spoor that a vagrant wind carried suddenly to his nostrils, strange complex of emotion overwhelmed him—happiness, despair, rage, love, and hate.

He saw the man at the fire step forward with open arms to take the woman to his breast, and then Tarzan separated the grasses and stepped to the

very edge of the embankment, his voice shattering the jungle with a single word.

"Jane!" he cried, and instantly the man and woman turned and looked up at him, where his figure was dimly revealed in the light of the campfire. At sight of him the man wheeled and raced for the jungle on the opposite side of the river, and then Tarzan leaped to the bottom of the wash below and ran toward the woman.

"Jane," he cried, "it is you, it is you!"

The woman showed her bewilderment. She looked first at the retreating figure of the man she had been about to embrace and then turned her eyes toward Tarzan. She drew her fingers across her brow and looked back toward Esteban, but Esteban was no

longer in sight. Then she took a faltering step toward the ape-man.

"My God," she cried, "what does it mean? Who are you, and if you are Tarzan who was he?"

"I am Tarzan, Jane," said the ape-man.

She looked back and saw Flora Hawkes approaching. "Yes," she said, "you are Tarzan. I saw you when you ran off into the jungle with Flora Hawkes. I cannot understand, John. I could not believe that you, even had you suffered an accident to your head, could have done such a thing."

"I, run off into the jungle with Flora Hawkes?" he asked, in unfeigned surprise.

"I saw you," said Jane.

The ape-man turned toward Flora. "I do not understand it," he said.

"It was Esteban who ran off into the jungle with me, Lady Greystoke," said the girl. "It was Esteban who was about to deceive you again. This is indeed Lord Greystoke. The other was an impostor, who only just deserted me and left me to die in the jungle. Had not Lord Greystoke come when he did I should be dead by now."

Lady Greystoke took a faltering step toward her husband. "Ah, John," she said, "I knew it could not have been you. My heart told me, but my eyes deceived me. Quick," she cried, "that impostor must be captured. Hurry, John, before he

escapes."

"Let him go," said the ape-man. "As much as I want him, as much as I want that which he has stolen from me, I will not leave you alone again in the jungle, Jane, even to catch him."

"But Jad-bal-ja," she cried. "What of him?"

"Ah", cried the ape-man, "I had forgotten," and turning to the lion he pointed toward the direction that the Spaniard had escaped. "Fetch him, Jad-bal-ja," he cried; and, with a bound, the tawny beast was off upon the spoor of his quarry.

"He will kill him?" asked Flora Hawkes, shuddering. And yet at heart she was glad of the just fate that was

overtaking the Spaniard.

"No, he will not kill him," said Tarzan of the Apes. "He may maul him a bit, but he will bring him back alive if it is possible." And then, as though the fate of the fugitive was already forgotten, he turned toward his mate.

"Jane," he said, "Usula told me that you were dead. He said that they found your burned body in the Arab village and that they buried it there. How is it, then, that you are here alive and unharmed? I have been searching the jungles for Luvini to avenge your death. Perhaps it is well that I did not find him."

"You would never have found him," replied Jane Clayton, "but I cannot

understand why Usula should have told you that he had found my body and buried it."

"Some prisoners that he took," replied Tarzan, "told him that Luvini had taken you bound hand and foot into one of the Arab huts near the village gateway, and that there he had further secured you to a stake driven into the floor of the hut. After the village had been destroyed by fire Usula and the other Waziri returned to search for you with some of the prisoners they had taken who pointed out the location of the hut, where the charred remains of a human body were found beside a burned stake to which it had apparently been tied."

"Ah!" exclaimed the girl, "I see.

Luvini did bind me hand and foot and tie me to the stake but later he came back into the hut and removed the bonds. He attempted to attack me—long we fought I do not know, but so engrosses were we in our struggle that neither one of us was aware of the burning of the village about us. As I persistently fought him off I caught a glimpse of a knife in his belt, and then I let him seize me and as his arms encircled me I grasped the knife and, drawing it from its sheath, plunged it into his back, below his left shoulder—that was the end. Luvini sank lifeless to the floor of the hut. Almost simultaneously the rear and roof of the structure burst into flames.

"I was almost naked, for he had torn

nearly all my clothing from me in our struggles. Hanging upon the wall of the hut was this white burnoose, the property, doubtless, of one of murdered Arabs. I seized it, and throwing about me ran into the village street. The huts were now all aflame, and the last of the natives was disappearing through the gateway. To my right was a section of palisade that had not been attacked by the flames. To escape into jungle by the gateway would have meant into the arms of my enemies, and so, somehow, I managed to scale the palisade and drop into the jungle unseen by any.

"I have had considerable difficulty eluding the various bands of blacks who escaped the village. A part of the time I

have been hunting for the Waziri and the balance I have had to remain in hiding. I was resting in the crotch of a tree, about half a mile from here, when I saw the light of this man's fire, and when I came to investigate I was almost stunned by joy to discover that I had, as I imagined, stumbled upon my Tarzan."

"It was Luvini's body, then, and not yours that they buried," said Tarzan.

"Yes," said Jane, "and it was this man who just escaped whom I saw run off into the jungle with Flora, and not you, as I believed."

Flora Hawkes looked up suddenly. "And it must have been Esteban who came with the Waziri and stole the gold from us. He fooled our men he must have

fooled the Waziri, too."

"He might have fooled anyone if he could have me," said Jane Clayton. "I should have discovered the deception in a few minutes I have no doubt, but in the flickering light of the campfire, and influenced as I was by the great joy of seeing Lord Greystoke again, I believed quickly that which I wanted to believe."

The ape-man ran his fingers through his thick shock of hair in a characteristic gesture of meditation. "I cannot understand how he fooled Usula in broad daylight," he said with a shake of his head.

"I can," said Jane. "He told him that he had suffered an injury to his head which caused him to lose his memory

partially—an explanation which accounted for many lapses in the man's interpretation of your personality."

"He was a clever devil," commented the ape-man.

"He was a devil, all right," said Flora.

It was more than an hour later that the grasses at the river bank suddenly parted and Jad-bal-ja emerged silently into their presence. Grasped in his jaws was a torn and bloody leopard skin which he brought and laid at the feet of his master.

The ape-man picked the thing up and examined it, and then he scowled. "I believe jad-bal-ja killed him after all," he said.

"He probably resisted," said Jane

Clayton, "in which 'event Jad- bal-ja could do nothing else in self-defense but slay him."

"Do you suppose he ate him?'" cried Flora Hawkes, drawing fearfully away from the beast.

"No," said Tarzan, "he has not had time. In the morning we will follow the spoor and find his body. I should like to have the diamonds again." And then he told Jane the strange story connected with his acquisition of the great wealth represented by the little bag of stones.

The following morning they set out in search of Esteban's corpse. The trail led through dense brush and thorns to the edge of the river farther down stream, and there it disappeared, and though the

ape-man searched both sides of the river for a couple of miles above and below the point at which he had lost the spoor, he found no further sign of the Spaniard. There was blood along the tracks that Esteban had made and blood upon the grasses at the river's brim.

At last the ape-man returned to the two women. That is the end of the man who would be Tarzan," he said.

"Do you think he is dead?" asked Jane.

"Yes, I am sure of it," said the ape-man. "From the blood I imagine that Jad-bal-ja mauled him, but that he managed to break away and get into the river. The fact that I can find no indication of his having reached the bank within a

reasonable distance of this spot leads me to believe that he has been devoured by crocodiles."

Again Flora Hawkes shuddered. "He was a wicked man," she said, "but I would not wish even the wickedest such a fate as that."

The ape-man shrugged. "He brought it upon himself, and, doubtless, the world is better off without him."

"It was my fault," said Flora. "It was my wickedness that brought him and the others here. I told them of what I had heard of the gold in the treasure vaults of Opar—it was my idea to come here and steal it and to find a man who could impersonate Lord Greystoke. Because of my wickedness many men have died, and

you, Lord Greystoke, and your lady, have almost met your death —I do not dare to ask for forgiveness."

Jane Clayton put her arm about the girl's shoulder. "Avarice has been the cause of many crimes since the world began," she said, "and when crime is invoked in its aid it assumes its most repulsive aspect and brings most often its own punishment, as you, Flora, may well testify. For my part I forgive you. I imagine that you have learned your lesson."

"You have paid a heavy price for your folly," said the ape-man. "You have been punished enough. We will take you to your friends who are on their way to the coast under escort of a friendly tribe.

They cannot be far distant, for, from the condition of the men when I saw them, long marches are beyond their physical powers."

The girl dropped to her knees at his feet. "How can I thank you for your kindness?" she said. "But I would rather remain here in Africa with you and Lady Greystoke, and work for you and show by my loyalty that I can redeem the wrong I did you."

Tarzan glanced at his wife questioningly, and Jane Clayton signified her assent to the girl's request.

"Very well, then," said the ape-man, "you may remain with us, Flora."

"You will never regret it," said the girl. "I will work my fingers off for

you."

The three, and Jad-bal-ja, had been three days upon the march toward home when Tarzan, who was in the lead, paused, and, raising his head, sniffed the jungle air. Then he turned to them with a smile. "My Waziri are disobedient," he said. "I sent them home and yet here they are, coming toward us, directly away from home."

A few minutes later they met the van of the Waziri, and great was the rejoicing of the blacks when they found both their master and mistress alive and unscathed.

"And now that we have found you," said Tarzan, after the greetings were over, and innumerable questions had

been asked and answered, "tell me what you did with the gold that you took from the camp of the Europeans."

"We hid it, 0 Bwana, where you told us to hide it," replied Usula.

"I was not with you, Usula," said the ape-man. "It was another, who deceived Lady Greystoke even as he deceived you—a bad man—who impersonated Tarzan of the Apes so cleverly that it is no wonder that you were imposed upon."

"Then it was not you who told us that your head had been injured and that you could not remember the language of the Waziri?" demanded Usula.

"It was not I," said Tarzan, "for my head has not been injured, and I remember well the language of my

children."

"Ah," cried Usula, "then it was not our Big Bwana who ran from Buto, the rhinoceros?"

Tarzan laughed. "Did the other run from Buto?"

"That he did," cried Usula; "he ran in great terror."

"I do not know that I blame him," said Tarzan, "for Buto is no pleasant playfellow."

"But our Big Bwana would not run from him," said Usula, proudly.

"Even if another than I hid the gold it was you who dug the hole. Lead me to the spot then, Usula."

The Waziri constructed rude yet

comfortable litters for the two white women, though Jane Clayton laughed at the idea that it was necessary that she be carried and insisted upon walking beside her bearers more often than she rode. Flora Hawkes, however, weak and exhausted as she was, could not have proceeded far without being carried, and was glad of the presence of the brawny Waziri who bore her along the jungle trail so easily.

It was a happy company that marched in buoyant spirits toward the spot where the Waziri had cached the gold for Esteban. The blacks were overflowing with good nature because they had found their master and their mistress, while the relief and joy of Tarzan and Jane were

too deep for expression.

When at last they came to the place beside the river where they had buried the gold the Waziri, singing and laughing, commenced to dig for the treasure, but presently their singing ceased and their laughter was replaced by expressions of puzzled concern.

For a while Tarzan watched them in silence and then a slow smile overspread his countenance.

"You must have buried it deep, Usula," he said.

The black scratched his head. "No, not so deep as this, Bwana," he cried. "I cannot understand it. We should have found the gold before this."

"Are you sure you are looking in the

right place?" asked Tarzan.

"This is the exact spot, Bwana," the black assured him, "but the gold is not here. Someone has removed it since we buried it."

"The Spaniard again," commented Tarzan. "He was a slick customer."

"But he could not have taken it alone," said Usula. "There were many ingots of it."

"No," said Tarzan, "he could not, and yet it is not here."

The Waziri and Tarzan searched carefully about the spot where the gold had been buried, but so clever had been the woodcraft of Owaza that he had obliterated even from the keen senses of the ape- man every vestige of the spoor

that he and the Spaniard had made in carrying the gold from the old hiding place to the new.

"It is gone," said the ape-man, "but I shall see that it does not get out of Africa," and he despatched runners in various directions to notify the chiefs of the friendly tribes surrounding his domain to watch carefully every safari crossing their territory, and to let none pass who carried gold.

"That will stop them," he said after the runners had departed.

That night as they made their camp upon the trail toward home, the three whites were seated about a small fire with Jad-bal-ja lying just behind the ape-man, who was examining the

leopard skin that the golden lion had retrieved in his pursuit of the Spaniard, when Tarzan turned toward his wife.

You were right, Jane," he said. "The treasure vaults of Opar are not for me. This time I have lost not only the gold but a fabulous fortune in diamonds as well, beside risking that greatest of all treasures - yourself."

"Let the gold and the diamonds go, John," she said; "we have one another, and Korak."

"And a bloody leopard skin," he supplemented, "with a mystery map painted upon it in blood."

Jad-bal-ja sniffed the hide and licked his chops in anticipation or retrospection —which?

21. AN ESCAPE AND A CAPTURE

At sight of the true Tarzan, Esteban Miranda turned and fled blindly into the jungle.

His heart was cold with terror as he rushed on in blind fear. He had no objective in mind. He did not know in what direction he was going. His only thought—the thought which dominated him—was based solely upon a desire to put as much distance as possible between himself and the ape-man, and so he blundered on, forcing his way through dense thickets of thorns that tore and lacerated his flesh until, at every step he left a trail of blood behind him.

At the river's edge the thorns reached out and seized again, as they had several times before, the precious leopard skin to which he clung with almost the same tenacity as he clung to life itself. But this time the thorns would not leave go their hold, and as he struggled to tear it away from them his eyes turned back in the direction from which he had come. He heard the sound of a great body, moving rapidly through the thicket toward him, and an instant later saw the baleful glare of two gleaming, yellow-green spots of flame. With a stifled cry of terror the Spaniard relinquished his hold upon the leopard skin and, wheeling, dived into the river.

As the black waters closed above his

head Jad-bal-ja came to the edge of the bank and looked down upon the widening circles which marked the spot of his quarry's disappearance, for Esteban, who was a strong swimmer, struck boldly for the opposite side of the stream, keeping himself well submerged.

For a moment the golden lion scanned the surface of the river, and then he turned and sniffed at the hide the Spaniard had been forced to leave behind, and grasping it in his jaws tore it from the thorns that held it and carried it back to lay it at the feet of his master.

Forced at last to come to the surface for air the Spaniard arose amid a mass of tangled foliage and branches. For a moment he thought that he was lost, so

tightly held was he by the entangling boughs, but presently he forced his way upward, and as his head appeared above the surface of the water amidst the foliage he discovered that he had arisen directly beneath a fallen tree that was floating down the center of the stream. After considerable effort he managed to draw himself up to the boughs and find a place astride the great bole, and thus he floated down stream in comparative safety.

He breathed a deep sigh of relief as he realized with what comparative ease he had escaped the just vengeance of the ape-man. It is true that he bemoaned the loss of the hide which carried the map to the location of the hidden gold, but he

still retained in his possession a far greater treasure, and as he thought of it his hands gloatingly fondled the bag of diamonds fastened to his loin cloth. Yet, even though he possessed this great fortune in diamonds, his avaricious mind constantly returned to the golden ingots by the waterfall.

"Owaza will get it," he muttered to himself. "I never trusted the black dog, and when he deserted me I knew well enough what his plans were."

All night long Esteban Miranda floated down stream upon the fallen tree, seeing no sign of life, until shortly after daybreak, he passed a native village upon the shore.

It was the village of Obebe, the

cannibal, and at sight of the strange figure of the white giant floating down the stream upon the bole of a tree, the young woman who espied him raised a great hue and cry until the population of the village lined the shore watching him pass.

"It is a strange god," cried one.

"It is the river devil," said the witch doctor. "He is a friend of mine. Now, indeed, shall we catch many fish if for each ten that you catch you give one to me."

"It is not the river devil," rumbled the deep voice of Obebe, the cannibal. "You are getting old," he said to the witch doctor, "and of late your medicine has been poor medicine, and now you tell

me that Obebe's greatest enemy is the river devil. That is Tarzan of the Apes. Obebe knows him well, and in truth every cannibal chief in the vicinity knew Tarzan of the Apes well and feared and hated him, for relentless had been the ape-man's war against them.

"It is Tarzan of the Apes," repeated Obebe, "and he is in trouble. Perhaps it is our chance to capture him."

He called his warriors about him, and presently half a hundred brawny young bucks started at a jog trot down the trail that paralleled the river. For miles they followed the slowly moving tree which carried Esteban Miranda until at last at a bend in the river the tree was caught in the outer circle of a slow-moving eddy,

which carried it beneath the overhanging limbs of trees growing close to the river's edge.

Cramped and chilled and hungry as he was, Esteban was glad of the opportunity to desert his craft and gain the shore. And so, laboriously, he drew himself up among the branches of the tree that momentarily offered him a haven of retreat from the river, and crawling to its stem lowered himself to the ground beneath, unconscious of the fact that in the grasses around him squatted half a hundred cannibal warriors.

Leaning against the bole of the tree the Spaniard rested for a moment. He felt for the diamonds and found that they

were safe.

"I am a lucky devil, after all," he said aloud and almost simultaneously the fifty blacks arose about him and leaped upon him. So sudden was the attack, so overwhelming the force, that the Spaniard had no opportunity to defend himself against them, with the result that he was down and securely bound almost before he could realize what was happening to him.

"Ah, Tarzan of the Apes, I have you at last," gloated Obebe, the cannibal, but Esteban did not understand a word the man said, and so he could make no reply. He talked to Obebe in English, but that language the latter did not understand. Of only one thing was

Esteban certain; that he was a prisoner and that he was being taken back toward the interior. When they reached Obebe's village there was great rejoicing on the part of the women and the children and the warriors who had remained behind. But the witch doctor shook his head and made wry faces and dire prophecies.

"You have seized the river devil," he said. "We shall catch no more fish, and presently a great sickness will fall upon Obebe's people and they will all die like flies." But Obebe only laughed at the witch doctor for, being an old man and a great king, he had accumulated much wisdom and, with the acquisition of wisdom man is more inclined to be skeptical in matters of religion.

"You may laugh now, Obebe," said the witch doctor, "but later you will not laugh. Wait and see."

"When, with my own hands, I kill Tarzan of the Apes, then indeed shall I laugh," replied the chief, "and when I and my warriors have eaten his heart and his flesh, then, indeed, shall we no longer fear any of your devils."

"Wait," cried the witch doctor angrily, "and you shall see."

They took the Spaniard, securely bound, and threw him into a filthy hut, through the doorway of which he could see the women of the village preparing cooking fires and pots for the feast of the coming night. A cold sweat stood out upon the brow of Esteban Miranda as he

watched these grewsome preparations, the significance of which he could not misinterpret, when coupled with the gestures and the glances that were directed toward the hut where he lay, by the inhabitants of the village.

The afternoon was almost spent and the Spaniard felt that he could count the hours of life remaining to him upon possibly two fingers of one hand, when there came from the direction of the river a series of piercing screams which shattered the quiet of the jungle, and brought the inhabitants of the village to startled attention, and an instant later sent them in a mad rush in the direction of the fear- laden shrieks. But they were too late and reached the river only just in

time to see a woman dragged beneath the surface by a huge crocodile.

"Ah, Obebe, what did I tell you?" demanded the witch doctor, exultantly. "Already has the devil god commenced his revenge upon your people."

The ignorant villagers, steeped in superstition, looked fearfully from their witch doctor to their chief. Obebe scowled. "He is Tarzan of the Apes," he insisted.

"He is the river devil who has taken the shape of Tarzan of the Apes," insisted the witch doctor.

"We shall see," replied Obebe. "If he is the river devil he can escape our bonds. If he is Tarzan of the Apes he cannot. If he is the river devil he will not

die a natural death, like men die, but will live on forever. If he is Tarzan of the Apes some day he will die. We will keep him, then, and see, and that will prove whether or not he is Tarzan of the Apes or the river devil."

"How?" asked the witch doctor.

"It is very simple," replied Obebe. "If some morning we find that he has escaped we will know that he is the river devil, and because we have not harmed him but have fed him well while he has been here in our village, he will befriend us and no harm will come of it. But if he does not escape we will know that he is Tarzan of the Apes, provided he dies a natural death. And so, if he does not escape, we shall keep him until

he dies and then we shall know that he was, indeed, Tarzan of the Apes."

"But suppose he does not die?" asked the witch doctor, scratching his woolly head.

"Then," exclaimed Obebe triumphantly, "we will know that you are right, and that he was indeed, the river devil."

Obebe went and ordered women to take food to the Spaniard while the witch doctor stood, where Obebe had left him, in the middle of the street, still scratching his head in thought.

And thus was Esteban Miranda, possessor of the most fabulous fortune in diamonds that the world had ever known, condemned to life imprisonment

in the village of Obebe, the cannibal.

While he had been lying in the hut his traitorous confederate, Owaza, from the opposite bank of the river from the spot where he and Esteban had hidden the golden ingots, saw Tarzan and his Waziri come and search for the gold and go away again, and the following morning Owaza came with fifty men whom he had recruited from a neighboring village and dug up the gold and started with it toward the coast.

That night Owaza made camp just outside a tiny village of a minor chief, who was weak in warriors. The old fellow invited Owaza into his compound, and there he fed him and gave him native beer, while the chief's

people circulated among Owaza's boys plying them with innumerable questions until at last the truth leaked out and the chief knew that Owaza's porters were carrying a great store of yellow gold.

When the chief learned this for certain he was much perturbed, but finally a smile crossed his face as he talked with the half- drunken Owaza.

"You have much gold with you"' said the Old chief, and it is very heavy. It will be hard to get your boys to carry it all the way back to the coast."

"Yes," said Owaza, "but I shall pay them well."

"If they did not have to carry it so far from home you would not have to pay them so much, would you?" asked the

chief.

"No," said Owaza, "but I cannot dispose of it this side of the coast."

"I know where you can dispose of it within two days' march," replied the old chief.

"Where?" demanded Owaza. "And who here in the interior will buy it?"

"There is a white man who will give you a little piece of paper for it and you can take that paper to the coast and get the full value of your gold."

"Who is this white man?" demanded Owaza, "and where is he?"

"He is a friend of mine," said the chief, "and if you wish I will take you to him on the morrow, and you can bring

with you all your gold and get the little piece of paper."

"Good," said Owaza, "and then I shall not have to pay the carriers but a very small amount."

The carriers were glad, indeed, to learn the next day that they were not to go all the way to the coast, for even the lure of payment was not sufficient to overcome their dislike to so long a journey, and their fear of being at so great a distance from home. They were very happy, therefore, as they set forth on a two days' march toward the northeast. And Owaza was happy and so was the old chief, who accompanied them himself, though why he was happy about it Owaza could not guess.

They had marched for almost two days when the chief sent one of his own men forward with a message.

"It is to my friend," he said, "to tell him to come and meet us and lead us to his village." And a few hours later, as the little caravan emerged from the jungle onto a broad, grassy plain, they saw not far from them, and approaching rapidly, a large band of warriors. Owaza halted.

"Who are those?" he demanded.

"Those are the warriors of my friend," replied the chief, "and he is with them. See?" and he pointed toward a figure at the head of the blacks, who were approaching at a trot, their spears and white plumes gleaming in the

sunshine.

"They come for war and not for peace," said Owaza fearfully.

"That depends upon you, Owaza," replied the chief.

"I do not understand you," said Owaza.

"But you will in a few minutes after my friend has come."

As the advancing warriors approached more closely Owaza saw a giant white at their head—a white whom he mistook for Esteban—the confederate he had so traitorously deserted. He turned upon the chief. "You have betrayed me," he cried.

"Wait," said the old chief; "nothing

that belongs to you shall be taken from you."

"The gold is not his," cried Owaza. "He stole it," and he pointed at Tarzan who had approached and halted before him, but who ignored him entirely and turned to the chief.

"Your runner came," he said to the old man, "and brought your message, and Tarzan and his Waziri have come to see what they could do for their old friend."

The chief smiled. "Your runner came to me, O Tarzan, four days since, and two days later came this man with his carriers, bearing golden ingots toward the coast. I told him that I had a friend who would buy them, giving him a little piece of paper for them, but that, of

course, only in case the gold belonged to Owaza."

The ape-man smiled. "You have done well, my friend," he said. "The gold does not belong to Owaza."

"It does not belong to you, 'either," cried Owaza. "You are not Tarzan of the Apes. I know you. You came with the four white men and the white woman to steal the gold from Tarzan's country, and then you stole it from your own friends."

The chief and the Waziri laughed. The ape-man smiled one of his slow smiles.

"The other was an impostor, Owaza," he said, "but I am Tarzan of the Apes, and I thank you for bringing my gold to me. Come," he said, "It is but a few more miles to my home," and the ape-

man compelled Owaza to direct his carriers to bear the golden ingots to the Greystoke bungalow. There Tarzan fed the carriers and paid them, and the next morning sent them back toward their own country, and he sent Owaza with them, but not without a gift of value, accompanied with an admonition that the black never again return to Tarzan's country.

When they had all departed, and Tarzan and Jane and Korak were standing upon the veranda of the bungalow with Jad-bal-ja lying at their feet, the ape-man threw an arm about his mate's shoulders.

"I shall have to retract what I said about the gold of Opar not being for me,

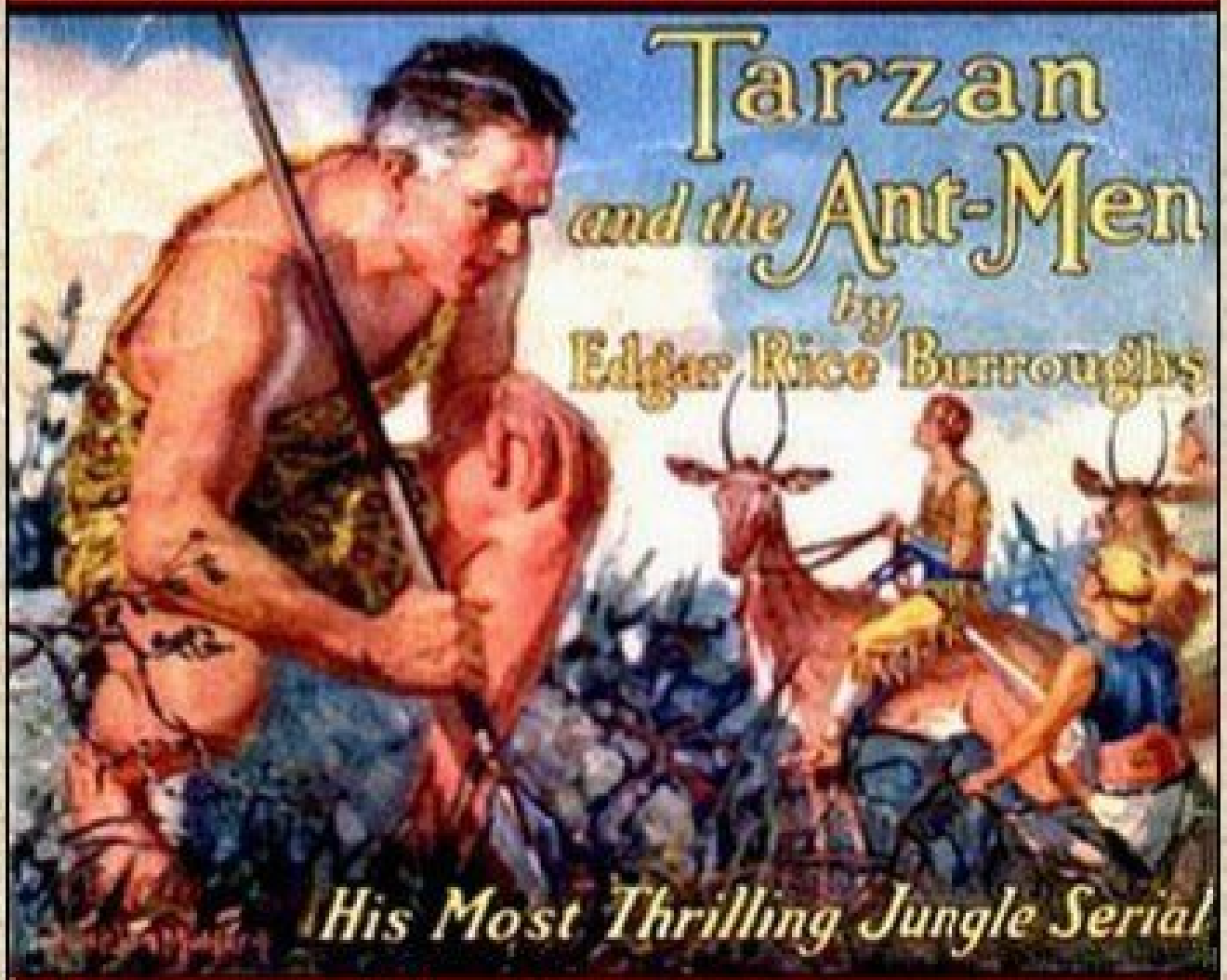
for you see before you a new fortune that has come all the way from the treasure vaults of Opar without any effort on my part."

"Now, if someone would only bring your diamonds back," laughed Jane.

"No chance of that," said Tarzan. "They are unquestionably at the bottom of the Ugogo River," and far away, upon the banks of the Ugogo, in the village of Obebe, the cannibal, Esteban Miranda lay in the filth of the hut that had been assigned to him, gloating over the fortune that he could never utilize as he entered upon a life of captivity that the stubbornness and superstition of Obebe had doomed him to undergo.

THE END

ARGOSY ALL-STORY WEEKLY



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EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN AND THE ANT-MEN

BOOK 10 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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CHAPTER 1

In the filth of a dark hut, in the village of Obebe the cannibal, upon the banks of the Ugogo, Esteban Miranda squatted upon his haunches and gnawed upon the remnants of a half-cooked fish. About his neck was an iron slave collar from which a few feet of rusty chain ran to a stout post set deep in the ground near the low entranceway that let upon the village street not far from the hut of Obebe himself.

For a year Esteban Miranda had been chained thus, like a dog, and like a dog he sometimes crawled through the low doorway of his kennel and basked in the sun outside. Two diversions had he; and only two. One was the persistent idea

that he was Tarzan of the Apes, whom he had impersonated for so long and with such growing success that, like the good actor he was, he had come not only to act the part, but to live it—to be it. He way, as far as he was concerned, Tarzan of the Apes—there was no other—and he was Tarzan of the Apes to Obebe, too; but the village witch doctor still insisted that he was the river devil and as such, one to propitiate rather than to anger.

It had been this difference of opinion between the chief and the witch doctor that had kept Esteban Miranda from the fleshpots of the village, for Obebe had wanted to eat him, thinking him his old enemy the ape-man; but the witch doctor

had aroused the superstitious fears of the villagers by half convincing them that their prisoner was the river devil masquerading as Tarzan, and, as such, dire disaster would descend upon the village were he harmed. The result of this difference between Obebe and the witch doctor had been to preserve the life of the Spaniard until the truth of one claim or the other was proved—if Esteban died a natural death he was Tarzan, the mortal, and Obebe the chief was vindicated; if he lived on forever, or mysteriously disappeared, the claim of the witch doctor would be accepted as gospel.

After he had learned their language and thus come to a realization of the

accident of fate that had guided his destiny by so narrow a margin from the cooking pots of the cannibals he was less eager to proclaim himself Tarzan of the Apes. Instead he let drop mysterious suggestions that he was, indeed, none other than the river devil. The witch doctor was delighted, and everyone was fooled except Obebe, who was old and wise and did not believe in river devils, and the witch doctor who was old and wise and did not believe in them either, but realized that they were excellent things for his parishioners to believe in.

Esteban Miranda's other diversion, aside from secretly believing himself Tarzan, consisted in gloating over the bag of diamonds that Kraski the Russian

had stolen from the ape-man, and that had fallen into the Spaniard's hands after he had murdered Kraski—the same bag of diamonds that the man had handed to Tarzan in the vaults beneath The Tower of Diamonds, in the Valley of The Palace of Diamonds, when he had rescued the Gomangani of the valley from the tyrannical oppression of the Bolgani.

For hours at a time Esteban Miranda sat in the dim light of his dirty kennel counting and fondling the brilliant stones. A thousand times had he weighed each one in an appraising palm, computing its value and translating it into such pleasures of the flesh as great wealth might buy for him in the capitals

of the world. Mired in his own filth, feeding upon rotted scraps tossed to him by unclean hands, he yet possessed the wealth of a Croesus, and it was as Croesus he lived in his imaginings, his dismal hut changed into the pomp and circumstance of a palace by the scintillant gleams of the precious stones. At the sound of each approaching footstep he would hastily hide his fabulous fortune in the wretched loin cloth that was his only garment, and once again become a prisoner in a cannibal hut.

And now, after a year of solitary confinement, came a third diversion, in the form of Uhha, the daughter of Khamis the witch doctor. Uhha was fourteen,

comely and curious. For a year now she had watched the mysterious prisoner from a distance until, at last, familiarity had overcome her fears and one day she approached him as he lay in the sun outside his hut Esteban, who had been watching her half-timorous advance, smiled encouragingly. He had not a friend among the villagers. If he could make but one his lot would be much the easier and freedom a step nearer. At last Uhha came to a halt a few steps from him. She was a child, ignorant and a savage; but she was a woman-child and Esteban Miranda knew women.

"I have been in the village of the chief Obebe for a year," he said haltingly, in the laboriously acquired language of his

captors, "but never before did I guess that its walls held one so beautiful as you. What is your name?"

Uhha was pleased. She smiled broadly. "I am Uhha," she told him. "My father is Khamis the witch doctor."

It was Esteban who was pleased now. Fate, after rebuffing him for long, was at last kind. She had sent him one who, with cultivation, might prove a flower of hope indeed.

"Why have you never come to see me before?" asked Esteban.

"I was afraid," replied Uhha simply.

"Why?"

"I was afraid—" she hesitated.

"Afraid that I was the river devil and

would harm you?" demanded the Spaniard, smiling.

"Yes," she said.

"Listen!" whispered Esteban; "but tell no one. I am the river devil, but I shall not harm you."

"If you are the river devil why then do you remain chained to a stake?" inquired Uhha. "Why do you not change yourself to something else and return to the river?"

"You wonder about that, do you?" asked Miranda, sparring for time that he might concoct a plausible answer.

"It is not only Uhha who wonders," said the girl. "Many others have asked the same question of late. Obebe asked it first and there was none to explain.

Obebe says that you are Tarzan, the enemy of Obebe and his people; but my father Khamis says that you are the river devil, and that if you wanted to get away you would change yourself into a snake and crawl through the iron collar that is about your neck. And the people wonder why you do not, and many of them are commencing to believe that you are not the river devil at all."

"Come closer, beautiful Uhha," whispered Miranda, "that no other ears than yours may hear what I am about to tell you."

The girl came a little closer and leaned toward him where he squatted upon the ground.

"I am indeed the river devil," said

Esteban, "and I come and go as I wish. At night, when the village sleeps, I am wandering through the waters of the Ugogo, but always I come back again. I am waiting, Uhha, to try the people of the village of Obebe that I may know which are my friends and which my enemies. Already have I learned that Obebe is no friend of mine, and I am not sure of Khamis. Had Khamis been a good friend he would have brought me fine food and beer to drink. I could go when I pleased, but I wait to see if there be one in the village of Obebe who will set me free, thus may I learn which is my best friend. Should there be such a one, Uhha, fortune would smile upon him always, his every wish would be granted

and he would live to a great age, for he would have nothing to fear from the river devil, who would help him in all his undertakings. But listen, Uhha, tell no one what I have told you! I shall wait a little longer and then if there be no such friend in the village of Obebe I shall return to my father and mother, the Ugogo, and destroy the people of Obebe. Not one shall remain alive."

The girl drew away, terrified. It was evident that she was much impressed.

"Do not be afraid," he reassured her. "I shall not harm you."

"But if you destroy all the people?" she demanded.

"Then, of course," he said, "I cannot help you; but let us hope that someone

comes and sets me free so that I shall know that I have at least one good friend here. Now run along, Uhha, and remember that you must tell no one what I have told you."

She moved off a short distance and then returned.

"When will you destroy the village?" she asked.

"In a few day," he said.

Uhha, trembling with terror, ran quickly away in the direction of the hut of her father, Khamis, the witch doctor. Esteban Miranda smiled a satisfied smile and crawled back into his hole to play with his diamonds.

Khamis the witch doctor was not in his hut when Uhha his daughter, faint

from fright, crawled into the dim interior. Nor were his wives. With their children, the latter were in the fields beyond the palisade, where Uhha should have been. And so it was that the girl had time for thought before she saw any of them again, with the result that she recalled distinctly, what she had almost forgotten in the first frenzy of fear, that the river devil had impressed upon her that she must reveal to no one the thing that he had told her.

And she had been upon the point of telling her father all!

What dire calamity then would have befallen her? She trembled at the very suggestion of a fate so awful that she could not even imagine it. How close a

call she had had! But what was she to do?

She lay huddled upon a mat of woven grasses, racking her poor, savage little brain for a solution of the immense problem that confronted her —the first problem that had ever entered her young life other than the constantly recurring one of how most easily to evade her share of the drudgery of the fields. Presently she sat suddenly erect, galvanized into statuesque rigidity by a thought engendered by the recollection of one of the river devil's remarks. Why had it not occurred to her before? Very plainly he had said, and he had repeated it, that if he were released he would know that he had at least one friend in

the village of Obebe, and that whoever released him would live to a great age and have every thing he wished for; but after a few minutes of thought Uhha drooped again. How was she, a little girl, to compass the liberation of the river devil alone?

"How, baba," she asked her father, when he had returned to the hut, later in the day, "does the river devil destroy those who harm him?"

"As the fish in the river, so are the ways of the river devil— without number," replied Khamis. "He might send the fish from the river and the game from the jungle and cause our crops to die. Then we should starve. He might bring the fire out of the sky at night and

strike dead all the people of Obebe."

"And you think he may do these things to us, baba?"

"He will not harm Khamis, who saved him from the death that Obebe would have inflicted," replied the witch doctor.

Uhha recalled that the river devil had complained that Khamis had not brought him good food nor beer, but she said nothing about that, although she realized that her father was far from being so high in the good graces of the river devil as he seemed to think he was. Instead, she took another tack.

"How can he escape," she asked "while the collar is about his neck—who will remove it for him?"

"No one can remove it but Obebe, who carries in his pouch the bit of brass that makes the collar open," replied Khamis; "but the river devil needs no help, for when the time comes that he wishes to be free he has but to become a snake and crawl forth from the iron band about his neck. Where are you going, Uhha?"

"I am going to visit the daughter of Obebe," she called back over her shoulder.

The chief's daughter was grinding maize, as Uhha should have been doing. She looked up and smiled as the daughter of the witch doctor approached.

"Make no noise, Uhha," she cautioned, "for Obebe, my father, sleeps

within." She nodded toward the hut. The visitor sat down and the two girls chatted in low tones. They spoke of their ornaments, their coiffures, of the young men of the village, and often, when they spoke of these, they giggled. Their conversation was not unlike that which might pass between two young girls of any race or clime. As they talked, Uhha's eyes often wandered toward the entrance to Obebe's hut and many times her brows were contracted in much deeper thought than their idle passages warranted.

"Where," she demanded suddenly, "is the armlet of copper wire that your father's brother gave you at the beginning of the last moon?"

Obebe's daughter shrugged. "He took

it back from me," she replied, "and gave it to the sister of his youngest wife."

Uhha appeared crestfallen. Could it be that she had coveted the copper bracelet? Her eyes closely scrutinized the person of her friend. Her brows almost met, so deeply was she thinking. Suddenly her face brightened.

"The necklace of many beads that your father took from the body of the warrior captured for the last feast!" she exclaimed. "You have not lost it?"

"No," replied her friend. "It is in the house of my father. When I grind maize it gets in my way and so I laid it aside."

"May I see it?" asked Uhha. "I will fetch it."

"No, you will awaken Obebe and he

will be very angry," said the chiefs daughter.

"I will not awaken him," replied Uhha, and started to crawl toward the hut's entrance.

Her friend tried to dissuade her. "I will fetch it as soon as baba has awakened," she told Uhha, but Uhha paid no attention to her and presently was crawling cautiously into the interior of the hut. Once within she waited silently until her eyes became accustomed to the dim light. Against the opposite wall of the hut Obebe lay sprawled upon a sleeping mat. He snored lustily. Uhha crept toward him. Her stealth was the stealth of Sheeta the leopard. Her heart was beating like the tom-tom when the

dance is at its height. She feared that its noise and her rapid breathing would awaken the old chief, of whom she was as terrified as of the river devil; but Obebe snored on.

Uhha came close to him. Her eyes were accustomed now to the half-light of the hut's Interior. At Obebe's side and half beneath his body she saw the chiefs pouch. Cautiously she reached forth a trembling hand and laid hold upon it. She tried to draw it from beneath Obebe's weight. The sleeper stirred uneasily and Uhha drew back, terrified. Obebe changed his position and Uhha thought that he had awakened. Had she not been frozen with horror she would have rushed into headlong flight, but

fortunately for her she could not move, and presently she heard Obebe resume his interrupted snoring; but her nerve was gone and she thought now only of escaping from the hut without being detected. She cast a last frightened glance at the chief to reassure herself that he still slept. Her eyes fell upon the pouch. Obebe had turned away from it and it now lay within her reach, free from the weight of his body.

She reached for it only to withdraw her hand suddenly. She turned away. Her heart was in her mouth. She swayed dizzily and then she thought of the river devil and of the possibilities for horrid death that lay within his power. Once more she reached for the pouch and this

time she picked it up. Hurriedly opening it she examined the contents. The brass key was there. She recognized it because it was the only thing the purpose of which she was not familiar with. The collar, chain and key had been taken from an Arab slave raider that Obebe had killed and eaten and as some of the old men of Obebe's village had worn similar bonds in the past, there was no difficulty in adapting it to its intended purpose when occasion demanded.

Uhha hastily closed the pouch and replaced it at Obebe's side. Then, clutching the key in a clammy palm, she crawled hurriedly toward the doorway.

That night, after the cooking fires had died to embers and been covered with

earth and the people of Obebe had withdrawn into their huts, Esteban Miranda heard a stealthy movement at the entrance to his kennel. He listened intently. Someone was creeping into the interior—someone or something.

"Who is it?" demanded the Spaniard in a voice that he tried hard to keep from trembling.

"Hush!" responded the intruder in soft tones. "It is I, Uhha, the daughter of Khamis the witch doctor. I have come to set you free that you may know that you have a good friend in the village of Obebe and will, therefore, not destroy us."

Miranda smiled. His suggestion had borne fruit more quickly than he had

dared to hope, and evidently the girl had obeyed his injunction to keep silent. In that matter he had reasoned wrongly, but of what moment that, since his sole aim in life—freedom—was to be accomplished. He had cautioned the girl to silence believing this the surest way to disseminate the word he had wished spread through the village, where, he was positive, it would have come to the ears of some one of the superstitious savages with the means to free him now that the incentive was furnished.

"And how are you going to free me?" demanded Miranda.

"See!" exclaimed Uhha. "I have brought the key to the collar about your neck."

"Good," cried the Spaniard. "Where is it?"

Uhha crawled closer to the man and handed him the key. Then she would have fled.

"Wait!" demanded the prisoner. "When I am free you must lead me forth into the jungle. Whoever sets me free must do this if he would win the favor of the river god."

Uhha was afraid, but she did not dare refuse. Miranda fumbled with the ancient lock for several minutes before it at last gave to the worn key the girl had brought Then he snapped the padlock again and carrying the key with him crawled toward the entrance.

"Get me weapons," he whispered to

the girl and Uhha departed through the shadows of the village street. Miranda knew that she was terrified but was confident that this very terror would prove the means of bringing her back to him with the weapons. Nor was he wrong, for scarce five minutes had elapsed before Uhha had returned with a quiver of arrows, a bow and a stout knife.

"Now lead me to the gate," commanded Esteban.

Keeping out of the main street and as much in rear of the huts as possible Uhha led the fugitive toward the village gates. It surprised her a little that he, a river devil, should not know how to unlock and open them, for she had thought that

river devils were all- wise; but she did as he bid and showed him how the great bar could be withdrawn, and helped him push the gates open enough to permit him to pass through. Beyond was the clearing that led to the river, on either hand rose the giants of the jungle. It was very dark out there and Esteban Miranda suddenly discovered that his new-found liberty had its drawbacks. To go forth alone at night into the dark, mysterious jungle filled him with a nameless dread.

Uhha drew back from the gates. She had done her part and saved the village from destruction. Now she wished to close the gates again and hasten back to the hut of her father, there to lie trembling in nervous excitement and

terror against the morning that would reveal to the village the escape of the river devil.

Esteban reached forth and took her by the arm. "Come," he said, "and receive your reward."

Uhha shrank away from him. "Let me go!" she cried. "I am afraid."

But Esteban was afraid, too, and he had decided that the company of this little Negro girl would be better than no company at all in the depths of the lonely jungle. Possibly when daylight came he would let her go back to her people, but tonight he shuddered at the thought of entering the jungle without human companionship.

Uhha tried to tear herself free from

his grasp. She struggled like a little lion cub, and at last would have raised her voice in a wild scream for help had not Miranda suddenly clapped his palm across her mouth, lifted her bodily from the ground and running swiftly across the clearing disappeared into the jungle.

Behind them the warriors of Obebe the cannibal slept in peaceful ignorance of the sudden tragedy that had entered the life of little Uhha and before them, far out in the jungle, a lion roared thunderously.

CHAPTER 2

Three persons stepped from the veranda of Lord Greystoke's African bungalow and walked slowly toward the gate along a rose- embowered path that swung in a graceful curve through the well- ordered, though unpretentious, grounds surrounding the ape-man's rambling, one-story home. There were two men and a woman, all in khaki, the older man carrying a flier's helmet and a pair of goggles in one hand. He was smiling quietly as he listened to the younger man.

"You wouldn't be doing this now if mother were here," said the latter, "she would never permit it."

"I'm afraid you are right, my son,"

replied Tarzan; "but only this one flight alone and then I'll promise not to go up again until she returns. You have said yourself that I am an apt pupil and if you are any sort of an instructor you should have perfect confidence in me after having said that I was perfectly competent to pilot a ship alone. Eh, Meriem, isn't that true?" he demanded of the young woman.

She shook her head. "Like My Dear, I am always afraid for you, mon père," she replied. "You take such risks that one would think you considered yourself immortal. You should be more careful."

The younger man threw his arm about his wife's shoulders. "Meriem is right," he said; "you should be more careful,

Father."

Tarzan shrugged. "If you and mother had your way my nerves and muscles would have atrophied long since. They were given me to use and I intend using them—with discretion. Doubtless I shall be old and useless soon enough, and long enough, as it is."

A child burst suddenly from the bungalow, pursued by a perspiring governess, and raced to Meriem's side.

"Muwer," he cried, "Dackie doe? Dackie doe?"

"Let him come along," urged Tarzan.

"Dare!" exclaimed the boy, turning triumphantly upon the governess; "Dackie do doe yalk!"

Out on the level plain, that stretched away from the bungalow to the distant jungle the verdant masses and deep shadows of which were vaguely discernible to the northwest, lay a biplane, in the shade of which lolled two Waziri warriors who had been trained by Korak, the son of Tarzan, in the duties of mechanicians, and, later, to pilot the ship themselves; a fact that had not been without weight in determining Tarzan of the Apes to perfect himself in the art of flying, since, as chief of the Waziri, it was not mete that the lesser warriors of his tribe should excel him in any particular. Adjusting his helmet and goggles Tarzan climbed into the cockpit.

"Better take me along," advised

Korak.

Tarzan shook his head, smiling good-naturedly.

"Then one of the boys, here," urged his son. "You might develop some trouble that would force you to make a landing and if you have no mechanician along to make repairs what are you going to do?"

"Walk," replied the ape-man. "Turn her over, Andua!" he directed one of the blacks.

A moment later the ship was bumping over the veldt, from which, directly, it rose in smooth and graceful flight, circled, climbing to a greater altitude, and then sped away in an air line, while on the ground below the six strained

their eyes until the wavering speck that it had dwindled to disappeared entirely from their view.

"Where do you suppose he is going?" asked Meriem.

Korak shook his head. "He isn't supposed to be going anywhere in particular," he replied; "just making his first practice flight alone; but, knowing him as I do, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that he had taken it into his head to fly to London and see mother."

"But he could never do it!" cried Meriem.

"No ordinary man could, with no more experience than he has had; but then, you will have to admit, father is no ordinary man."

For an hour and a half Tarzan flew without altering his course and without realizing the flight of time or the great distance he had covered, so delighted was he with the ease with which he controlled the ship, and so thrilled by this new power that gave him the freedom and mobility of the birds, the only denizens of his beloved jungle that he ever had had cause to envy.

Presently, ahead, he discerned a great basin, or what might better be described as a series of basins, surrounded by wooded hills, and immediately he recognized to the left of it the winding Ugogo; but the country of the basins was new to him and he was puzzled. He recognized, simultaneously, another fact;

that he was over a hundred miles from home, and he determined to put back at once; but the mystery of the basins lured him on—he could not bring himself to return home without a closer view of them. Why was it that he had never come upon this country in his many wanderings? Why had he never even heard of it from the natives living within easy access to it He dropped to a lower level the better to inspect the basins, which now appeared to him as a series of shallow craters of long extinct volcanoes. He saw forests, lakes and rivers, the very existence of which he had never dreamed, and then quite suddenly he discovered a solution of the seeming mystery that there should exist

in a country with which he was familiar so large an area of which he had been in total ignorance, in common with the natives of the country surrounding it. He recognized it now—the so-called Great Thorn Forest. For years he had been familiar with that impenetrable thicket that was supposed to cover a vast area of territory into which only the smallest of animals might venture, and now he saw it was but a relatively narrow fringe encircling a pleasant, habitable country, but a fringe so cruelly barbed as to have forever protected the secret that it held from the eyes of man.

Tarzan determined to circle the long hidden land of mystery before setting the nose of his ship toward home, and, to

obtain a closer view, he accordingly dropped nearer the earth. Beneath him was a great forest and beyond that an open veldt that ended at the foot of precipitous, rocky hills. He saw that absorbed as he had been in the strange, new country he had permitted the plane to drop too low. Coincident with the realization and before he could move the control within his hand, the ship touched the leafy crown of some old monarch of the jungle, veered, swung completely around and crashed downward through the foliage amidst the snapping and rending of broken branches and the splintering of its own woodwork. Just for a second this noise, and then silence.

Along a forest trail slouched a mighty

creature, manlike in its physical attributes, yet vaguely inhuman; a great brute that walked erect upon two feet and carried a club in one horny, calloused hand. Its long hair fell, unkempt, about its shoulders, and there was hair upon its chest and a little upon its arms and legs, though no more than is found upon many males of civilized races. A strip of hide about its waist supported the ends of a narrow G-string as well as numerous rawhide strands to the lower ends of which were fastened round stones from one to two inches in diameter. Close to each stone were attached several small feathers, for the most part of brilliant hues. The strands supporting the stones being fastened to

the belt at intervals of one to two inches and the strands themselves being about eighteen inches long the whole formed a skeleton skirt, fringed with round stones and feathers, that fell almost to the creature's knees. Its large feet were bare and its white skin tanned to a light brown by exposure to the elements. The illusion of great size was suggested more by the massiveness of the shoulders and the development of the muscles of the back and arms than by height, though the creature measured close to six feet. Its face was massive, with a broad nose, and a wide, full-lipped mouth; the eyes, of normal size, were set beneath heavy, beetling brows, topped by a wide, low forehead. As it

walked it flapped its large, flat ears and occasionally moved rapidly portions of its skin on various parts of its head and body to dislodge flies, as you have seen a horse do with the muscles along its sides and flanks.

It moved silently, its dark eyes constantly on the alert, while the flapping ears were often momentarily stilled as the woman listened for sounds of quarry or foe.

She stopped now, her ears bent forward, her nostrils, expanded, sniffing the air. Some scent or sound that our dead sensitory organs could not have perceived had attracted her attention. Warily she crept forward along the trail until, at a turning, she saw before her a

figure lying face downward in the path. It was Tarzan of the Apes. Unconscious he lay while above him the splintered wreckage of his plane was wedged among the branches of the great tree that had caused its downfall.

The woman gripped her club more firmly and approached. Her expression reflected the puzzlement the discovery of this strange creature had engendered in her elementary mind, but she evinced no fear. She walked directly to the side of the prostrate man, her club raised to strike; but something stayed her hand. She knelt beside him and fell to examining his clothing. She turned him over on his back and placed one of her ears above his heart. Then, she fumbled

with the front of his shirt for a moment and suddenly taking it in her two mighty hands tore it apart. Again she listened, her ear this time against his naked flesh. She arose and looked about, sniffing and listening, then she stooped and lifting the body of the ape-man she swung it lightly across one of her broad shoulders and continued along the trail in the direction she had been going. The trail, winding through the forest, broke presently from the leafy shade into an open, park like strip of rolling land that stretched at the foot of rocky hills, and, crossing this, disappeared within the entrance of a narrow gorge, eroded by the elements from the native sandstone fancifully as the capricious architecture of a dream,

among whose grotesque domes and miniature rocks the woman bore her burden.

A half mile from the entrance to the gorge the trail entered a roughly circular amphitheater, the precipitous walls of which were pierced by numerous cave-mouths before several of which squatted creatures similar to that which bore Tarzan into this strange, savage environment.

As she entered the amphitheater all eyes were upon her, for their large, sensitive ears had warned them of her approach long before she had arrived within scope of their vision. Immediately they beheld her and her burden several of them arose and came

to meet her. All females, these, similar in physique and scant garb to the captor of the ape-man, though differing in proportions and physiognomy as do the individuals of all races differ from their fellows. They spoke no words nor uttered any sounds, nor did she whom they approached, as she moved straight along her way which was evidently directed toward one of the cave-mouths, but she gripped her bludgeon firmly and swung it to and fro, while her eyes, beneath their scowling brows, kept sullen surveillance upon the every move of her fellows.

She had approached close to the cave, which was quite evidently her destination, when one of those who

followed her darted suddenly forward and clutched at Tarzan. With the quickness of a cat the woman dropped her burden, turned upon the temerarious one, and swinging her bludgeon with lightning-like celerity felled her with a heavy blow to the head, and then, standing astride the prostrate Tarzan, she glared about her like a lioness at bay, questioning dumbly who would be next to attempt to wrest her prize from her; but the others slunk back to their caves, leaving the vanquished one lying, unconscious, in the hot sand and the victor to shoulder her burden, undisputed, and continue her way to her cave, where she dumped the ape-man unceremoniously upon the ground just

within the shadow of the entranceway, and, squatting beside him, facing outward that she might not be taken unaware by any of her fellows, she proceeded to examine her find minutely. Tarzan's clothing either piqued her curiosity or aroused her disgust, for she began almost immediately to divest him of it, and having had no former experience of buttons and buckles, she tore it away by main force. The heavy, cordovan boots troubled her for a moment, but finally their seams gave way to her powerful muscles.

Only the diamond-studded, golden locket that had been his mother's she left untouched upon its golden chain about his neck.

For a moment she sat contemplating him and then she arose and tossing him once more to her shoulder she walked toward the center of the amphitheater, the greater portion of which was covered by low buildings constructed of enormous slabs of stone, some set on edge to form the walls while others, lying across these, constituted the roofs. Joined end to end, with occasional wings at irregular intervals running out into the amphitheater, they enclosed a rough oval of open ground that formed a large courtyard.

The several outer entrances to the buildings were closed with two slabs of stone, one of which, standing on edge, covered the aperture, while the other,

leaning against the first upon the outside, held it securely in place against any efforts that might be made to dislodge it from the interior of the building.

To one of these entrances the Woman carried her unconscious captive, laid him on the ground, removed the slabs that closed the aperture and dragged him into the dim and gloomy interior, where she deposited him upon the floor and clapped her palms together sharply three times with the result that there presently slouched into the room six or seven children of both sexes, who ranged in age from one year to sixteen or seventeen. The very youngest of them walked easily and seemed as fit to care for itself as the young of most lower

orders at a similar age. The girls, even the youngest, were armed with clubs, but the boys carried no weapons either of offense or defense. At sight of them the woman pointed to Tarzan, struck her head with her clenched fist and then gestured toward herself, touching her breast several times with a calloused thumb. She made several other motions with her hands, so eloquent of meaning that one entirely unfamiliar with her sign language could almost guess their purport, then she turned and left the building, replaced the stones before the entrance, and slouched back to her cave, passing, apparently without notice, the woman she had recently struck down and who was now rapidly regaining

consciousness.

As she took her seat before her cave-mouth her victim suddenly sat erect, rubbed her head for a moment and then, after looking about dully, rose unsteadily to her feet For just an instant she swayed and staggered, but presently she mastered herself, and with only a glance at the author of her hurt moved off in the direction of her own cave. Before she had reached it her attention, together with that of all the others of this strange community, or at least of all those who were in the open, was attracted by the sound of approaching footsteps. She halted in her tracks, her great ears up-pricked, listening, her eyes directed toward the trail leading up from the

valley. The others were similarly watching and listening and a moment later their vigil was rewarded by sight of another of their kind as she appeared in the entrance of the amphitheater. A huge creature this, even larger than she who captured the ape-man, broader and heavier, though little, if any, taller — carrying upon one shoulder the carcass of an antelope and upon the other the body of a creature that might have been half-human and half-beast, yet, assuredly, not entirely either the one or the other.

The antelope was dead, but not so the other creature. It wriggled weakly —its futile movements could not have been termed struggles—as it hung, its middle

across the bare brown shoulder of its captor, its arms and legs dangling limply before and behind, either in partial unconsciousness or in the paralysis of fear.

The woman who had brought Tarzan to the amphitheater rose and stood before the entrance of her cave. We shall have to call her The First Woman, for she had no name; in the muddy convolutions of her sluggish brain she never had sensed even the need for a distinctive specific appellation and among her fellows she was equally nameless, as were they, and so, that we may differentiate her from the others, we shall call her The First Woman, and, similarly, we shall know the creature

that she felled with her bludgeon as The Second Woman, and she who now entered the amphitheater with a burden upon each shoulder, as The Third Woman. So The First Woman rose, her eyes fixed upon the newcomer, her ears up-pricked. And The Second Woman rose, and all the others that were in sight, and all stood glaring at The Third Woman who moved steadily along with her burden, her watchful eyes ever upon the menacing figures of her fellows. She was very large, this Third Woman, so for a while the others only stood and glared at her, but presently The First Woman took a step forward and turning, cast a long look at The Second Woman, and then she took another step forward

and stopped and looked again at The Second Woman, and this time she pointed at herself, at The Second Woman and then at The Third Woman who now quickened her pace in the direction of her cave, for she understood the menace in the attitude of The First Woman. The Second Woman understood, too, and moved forward now with The First Woman. No word was spoken, no sound issued from those savage lips; lips that never had parted to a smile; lips that never had known laughter, nor ever would.

As the two approached her The Third Woman dropped her spoils in a heap at her feet, gripped her cudgel more firmly and prepared to defend her rights. The

others, brandishing their own weapons, charged her. The remaining women were now but onlookers, their hands stayed, perhaps, by some ancient tribal custom that gauged the number of attackers by the quantity of spoil, awarding the right of contest to whoever initiated it. When The First Woman had been attacked by The Second Woman the others had all held aloof, for it had been The Second Woman that had advanced first to try conclusively for the possession of Tarzan. And now The Third Woman had come with two prizes, and since The First Woman and The Second Woman had stepped out to meet her the others had held back.

As the three women came together it

seemed inevitable that The Third Woman would go down beneath the bludgeons of the others, but she warded both blows with the skill and celerity of a trained fencer and stepping quickly into the opening she had dealt The First Woman a terrific blow upon the head that stretched her motionless upon the ground, where a little pool of blood and brains attested the terrible strength of the wielder of the bludgeon the while it marked the savage, unmourned passing of The First Woman.

And now The Third Woman could devote her undivided attention to The Second Woman, but The Second Woman seeing the fate of her companion did not wait to discuss the matter further, and

instead of remaining to continue the fight she broke and ran for the cave, while the creature that The Third Woman had been carrying along with the carcass of the antelope apparently believing that it saw a chance for escape while its captor was engaged with her assailants was crawling stealthily away in the opposite direction. Its attempt might have proved successful had the fight lasted longer; but the skill and ferocity of The Third Woman had terminated the whole thing in a matter of seconds, and now, turning about, she espied a portion of her prey seeking to escape and sprang quickly after it As she did so The Second Woman wheeled and darted back to seize the carcass of the antelope, while

the crawling fugitive leaped to its feet and raced swiftly down the trail that led through the mouth of the amphitheater toward the valley.

As the thing rose to its feet it became apparent that it was a man, or at least a male, and evidently of the same species as the women of this peculiar race, though much shorter and of proportionately lighter build. It stood about five feet in height, had a few hairs on its upper lip and chin, a much lower forehead than the women, and its eyes were set closer together. Its legs were much longer and more slender than those of the women, who seemed to have been designed for strength rather than speed, and the result was that it was apparent

from the start that The Third Woman could have no hope of overhauling her escaping quarry, and then it was that the utility of the strange skirt of thongs and pebbles and feathers became apparent Seizing one of the thongs she disengaged it easily and quickly from the girdle that supported them about her hips, and grasping the end of the thong between a thumb and forefinger she whirled it rapidly in a vertical plane until the feathered pebble at its end was moving with great rapidity—then she let go the thong. Like an arrow the missile sped toward the racing fugitive, the pebble, a fairly good-sized one as large as an English walnut, struck the man upon the back of his head dropping him,

unconscious, to the ground. Then the Third Woman turned upon The Second Woman who, by this time, had seized the antelope, and brandishing her bludgeon bore down upon her. The Second Woman, possessing more courage than good sense, prepared to defend her stolen flesh and took her stand, her bludgeon ready. As The Third Woman bore down upon her, a veritable mountain of muscle, The Second Woman met her with threatening cudgel, but so terrific was the blow dealt by her mighty adversary that her weapon, splintered, was swept from her hands and she found herself at the mercy of the creature she would have robbed. Evidently she knew how much of mercy she might expect.

She did not fall upon her knees in an attitude of supplication—not she. Instead she tore a handful of the pebble-missiles from her girdle in a vain attempt to defend herself. Futilest of futilities! The huge, destroying bludgeon had not even paused, but swinging in a great circle fell crushingly upon the skull of The Second Woman.

The Third Woman paused and looked about questioningly as if to ask: "Is there another who wishes to take from me my antelope or my man? If so, let her step forward." But no one accepted the gage and presently the woman turned and walked back to the prostrate man. Roughly she jerked him to his feet and shook him. Consciousness was returning

slowly and he tried to stand. His efforts, however, were a failure and so she threw him across her shoulder again and walked back to the dead antelope, which she flung to the opposite shoulder and, continuing her interrupted way to her cave, dumped the two unceremoniously to the ground. Here, in the cave-mouth, she kindled a fire, twirling a fire stick dexterously amidst dry tinder in a bit of hollowed wood, and cutting generous strips from the carcass of the antelope ate ravenously. While she was thus occupied the man regained consciousness and sitting up looked about, dazed. Presently his nostrils caught the aroma of the cooking meat and he pointed at it. The woman handed him

the rude stone knife that she had tossed back to the floor of the cave and motioned toward the meat The man seized the implement and was soon broiling a generous cut above the fire. Half- burned and half-raw as it was he ate it with seeming relish, and as he ate the woman sat and watched him. He was not much to look at, yet she may have thought him handsome. Unlike the women, who wore no ornaments, the man had bracelets and anklets as well as a necklace of teeth and pebbles, while in his hair, which was wound into a small knot above his forehead, were thrust several wooden skewers ten or twelve inches long, which protruded in various directions in a horizontal plane.

When the man had eaten his fill the woman rose and seizing him by the hair dragged him into the cave. He scratched and bit at her, trying to escape, but he was no match for his captor.

Upon the floor of the amphitheater, before the entrances to the caves, lay the bodies of The First Woman and The Second Woman and black upon them swarmed the circling scavengers of the sky. Ska, the vulture, was first always to the feast.

CHAPTER 3

Within the dim interior of the strange rocky chamber where he had been so ruthlessly deposited, Tarzan immediately became the center of interest to the several Alali young that crowded about him. They examined him carefully, turned him over, pawed him, pinched him, and at last one of the young males, attracted by the golden locket removed it from the ape-man's neck and placed it about his own. Lowest, perhaps, in the order of human evolution nothing held their interest overlong, with the result that they soon tired of Tarzan and trooped out into the sunlit courtyard, leaving the ape-man to regain consciousness as best he could, or not at

all. It was immaterial to them which he did. Fortunately for the Lord of the Jungle the fall through the roof of the forest had been broken by the fortuitous occurrence of supple branches directly in the path of his descent, with the happy result that he suffered only from a slight concussion of the brain. Already he was slowly regaining consciousness, and not long after the Alali young had left him his eyes opened, rolled dully inspecting the dim interior of his prison, and closed again. His breathing was normal and when again he opened his eyes it was as though he had emerged from a deep and natural slumber, the only reminder of his accident being a dull aching of the head. Sitting up, he looked about him, his eyes

gradually accustoming themselves to the dim light of the chamber. He found himself in a rude shelter constructed of great slabs of rock. A single opening led into what appeared to be another similar chamber the interior of which, however, was much lighter than that in which he lay. Slowly he rose to his feet and crossed to the opening. Across the second chamber he beheld another doorway leading into the fresh air and the sunshine. Except for filthy heaps of dead grasses on the floor both the rooms were unfurnished and devoid of any suggestion that they were utilized as places of human habitation. From the second doorway, to which he crossed, he looked out upon a narrow courtyard

walled by great slabs of stone, the lower ends of which, embedded in the ground, caused them to remain erect. Here he saw the young Alali squatting about, some in the sun, others in the shadow. Tarzan looked at them in evident puzzlement. What were they? What was this place in which he was, all too evidently, incarcerated? Were these his keepers or were they his fellow prisoners? How had he come hither?

Running his fingers through his shock of black hair in a characteristic gesture of perplexity, he shook his head. He recalled the unfortunate termination of the flight; he even remembered falling through the foliage of the great tree; but beyond that all was blank. He stood for

a moment examining the Alali, who were all unconscious of his near presence or his gaze upon them, and then he stepped boldly out into the courtyard before them, as a lion, fearless, ignores the presence of jackals.

Immediately they saw him, they rose and clustered about him, the girls pushing the boys aside and coming boldly close, and Tarzan spoke to them, first in one native dialect and then in another, but they seemed not to understand, for they made no reply, and then, as a last resort, he addressed them in the primitive language of the great apes, the language of Maim the monkey, the first language that Tarzan had learned when, as a babe, he suckled at the hairy

breast of Kala, the she-ape, and listened to the gutturals of the savage members of the tribe of Kerchak; but again his auditors made no response—at least no audible response, though they moved their hands and shoulders and bodies, and jerked their heads in what the ape-man soon recognized as a species of sign language, nor did they utter any vocal sounds that might indicate that they were communicating with one another through the medium of a spoken language. Presently they again lost interest in the newcomer and resumed their indolent lounging about the walls of the courtyard while Tarzan paced to and fro its length, his keen eye searching for whatever avenue of escape chance might provide,

and he saw it in the height of the walls, to the top of which a long, running jump would take his outstretched fingers, he was sure; but not yet—he must wait for darkness to shield his attempt from those within the enclosure and those without. And as darkness approached the actions of the other occupants of the courtyard became noticeably altered; they walked back and forth, constantly passing and re-passing the entrance to the shelter at the end of the courtyard, and occasionally entering the first room and often passing to the second room where they listened for a moment before the great slab that closed the outer aperture, then back into the courtyard again and back and forth in restless movement.

Finally one stamped a foot upon the ground and this was taken up by the others until, in regular cadence the thud, thud, thud of their naked feet must have been audible for some distance beyond the confines of their narrow prison yard.

Whatever this procedure might have been intended to accomplish, nothing, apparently, resulted, and presently one of the girls, her sullen face snarling in anger, seized her bludgeon more firmly in her two hands and stepping close to one of the walls began pounding violently upon one of its huge stone slabs. Instantly the other girls followed her example, while the young males continued beating time with their heels.

For a while Tarzan was puzzled for

an explanation of their behavior, but it was his own stomach that at last suggested an answer—the creatures were hungry and were attempting to attract the attention of their jailers; and their method of doing so suggested something else, as well, something of which his past brief experience with them had already partially convinced him —the creatures were without speech, even totally unvocal, perhaps.

The girl who had started the pounding upon the wall suddenly stopped and pointed at Tarzan. The others looked at him and then back at her, whereupon she pointed at her bludgeon and then at Tarzan again, after which she acted out a little pantomime, very quickly, very

briefly, but none the less realistically. The pantomime depicted the bludgeon falling upon Tarzan's head, following which the pantomimist, assisted by her fellows, devoured the ape-man. The bludgeons ceased to fall upon the wall; the heels no longer smote the earth; the assemblage was interested in the new suggestion. They eyed Tarzan hungrily. The mother who should have brought them food, The First Woman, was dead. They did not know this; all they knew was that they were hungry and that The First Woman had brought them no food since the day before. They were not cannibals. Only in the last stages of hunger, would they have devoured one another, even as shipwrecked sailors of

civilized races have been known to do; but they did not look upon the stranger as one of their own kind. He was as unlike them as some of the other creatures that The First Woman had brought them to feed upon. It was no more wrong to devour him than it would have been to devour an antelope. The thought, however, would not have occurred to most of them; the older girl it was who had suggested it to them, nor would it have occurred to her had there been other food, for she knew that he had not been brought here for that purpose— he had been brought as the mate of The First Woman, who in common with the other women of this primitive race hunted a new mate each season among

the forests and the jungles where the timid males lived their solitary lives except for the brief weeks that they were held captive in the stone corrals of the dominant sex, and where they were treated with great brutality and contempt even by the children of their temporary spouses.

Sometimes they managed to escape, though rarely, but eventually they were turned loose, since it was easier to hunt a new one the following season than to feed one in captivity for a whole year. There was nothing approximating love in the family relations of these savage half-brutes. The young, conceived without love, knowing not their own fathers, possessed not even an elemental

affection for one another, nor for any other living thing. A certain tie bound them to their savage mothers, at whose breasts they suckled for a few short months and to whom they looked for food until they were sufficiently developed to go forth into the forests and make their own kills or secure whatever other food bountiful Nature provided for them.

Somewhere between the ages of fifteen and seventeen the young males were liberated and chased into the forest, after which their mothers knew them not from any other male and at a similar age the females were taken to the maternal cave, where they lived, accompanying their mothers on the daily

hunt, until they had succeeded in capturing a first mate. After that they took up their abodes in separate caves and the tie between parent and child was cut as cleanly as though it never had existed, and they might, the following season, even become rivals for the same man, or at any time quarrel to the death over the spoils of the chase.

The building of the stone shelters and corrals in which the children and the males were kept was the only community activity in which the women engaged and this work they were compelled to do alone, since the men would have escaped into the forest at the first opportunity had they been released from the corrals to take part in the work of

construction, while the children as soon as they had become strong enough to be of any assistance would doubtless have done likewise; but the great shes were able to accomplish their titanic labors alone.

Equipped by nature with mighty frames and thews of steel they quarried the great slabs from a side hill overlooking the amphitheater, slid them to the floor of the little valley and pulled and pushed them into position by main strength and awkwardness, as the homely saying of our forefathers has it.

Fortunately for them it was seldom necessary to add to the shelters and corrals already built since the high rate of mortality among the females

ordinarily left plenty of vacant enclosures for maturing girls. Jealousy, greed, the hazards of the hunt, the contingencies of intertribal wars all took heavy toll among the adult shes. Even the despised male, fighting for his freedom, sometimes slew his captor.

The hideous life of the Alalus was the natural result of the unnatural reversal of sex dominance. It is the province of the male to initiate love and by his masterfulness to inspire first respect, then admiration in the breast of the female he seeks to attract. Love itself developed after these other emotions. The gradually increasing ascendency of the female Alalus over the male eventually prevented the emotions of

respect and admiration for the male from being aroused, with the result that love never followed.

Having no love for her mate and having become a more powerful brute, the savage Alalus woman soon came to treat the members of the opposite sex with contempt and brutality with the result that the power, or at least the desire, to initiate love ceased to exist in the heart of the male—he could not love a creature he feared and hated, he could not respect or admire the unsexed creatures that the Alali women had become, and so he fled into the forests and the jungles and there the dominant females hunted him lest their race perish from the earth.

It was the offspring of such savage and perverted creatures that Tarzan faced, fully aware of their cannibalistic intentions. The males did not attack him at once, but busily engaged themselves in fetching dry grass and small pieces of wood from one of the covered chambers, and while the three girls, one of them scarce seven years of age, approached the ape-man warily with ready bludgeons, they prepared a fire over which they expected soon to be broiling juicy cuts from the strange creature that their hairy dam had brought them.

One of the males, a lad of sixteen, held back, making excited signs with hands, head and body. He appeared to be trying to dissuade or prevent the girls

from the carrying-out of their plan, he even appealed to the other boys for backing, but they merely glanced at the girls and continued their culinary preparations. At last however, as the girls were deliberately approaching the ape-man he placed himself directly in their path and attempted to stop them. Instantly the three little demons swung their bludgeons and sprang forward to destroy him. The boy dodged, plucked several of the feathered stones from his girdle and flung them at his assailants. So swift and so accurate did the missiles speed that two girls dropped, bowling, to the ground. The third missed, striking one of the other boys on the temple, killing him instantly. He was the youth

who had stolen Tarzan's locket, which, being like all his fellow males a timid creature, he had kept continually covered by a palm since the ape- man's return to consciousness had brought him out into the courtyard among them.

The older girl, nothing daunted, leaped forward, her face hideous in a snarl of rage. The boy cast another stone at her and then turned and ran toward the ape-man. What reception he expected he himself probably did not know. Perhaps it was the recrudescence of a long dead emotion of fellowship that prompted him to place himself at Tarzan's side—possibly Tarzan himself in whom loyalty to kind was strong had inspired this reawakening of an atrophied soul-sense.

However that may be the fact remains that the boy came and stood at Tarzan's side while the girl, evidently sensing danger to herself in this strange, new temerity of her brother, advanced more cautiously.

In signs she seemed to be telling him what she would do to him if he did not cease to interpose his weak will between her and her gastronomic desires; but he signed back at her defiantly and stood his ground. Tarzan reached over and patted him on the back, smiling. The boy bared his teeth horribly, but it seemed evident that he was trying to return the ape-man's smile. And now the girl was almost upon them. Tarzan was quite at a loss as to how to

proceed against her. His natural chivalry restrained him from attacking her and made it seem most repellent to injure her even in self-preservation; but he knew that before he was done with her he might even possibly have to kill her and so, while looking for an alternative, he steeled himself for the deed he loathed; but yet he hoped to escape without that.

The Third Woman, conducting her new mate from the cave to the corral where she would keep him imprisoned for a week or two, had heard the cadenced beating of naked heels and heavy bludgeons arising from the corral of The First Woman and immediately guessed their import. The welfare of the offspring of The First Woman concerned

her not as an individual. Community instinct, however, prompted her to release them that they might search for food and their services not be lost to the tribe through starvation. She would not feed them, of course, as they did not belong to her, but she would open their prison gate and turn them loose to fend for themselves, to find food or not to find it, to survive or to perish according to the inexorable law of the survival of the fittest.

But the Third Woman took her time. Her powerful fingers entangled in the hair of her snarling spouse she dragged the protesting creature to her corral, removed the great slab from before the entrance, pushed the man roughly within,

accelerating his speed with a final kick, replaced the slab and turned leisurely toward the nearby corral of The First Woman. Removing the stone door she passed through the two chambers and entered the corral at the moment that the oldest girl was advancing upon Tarzan. Pausing by the entranceway she struck her bludgeon against the stone wall of the shelter, evidently to attract the attention of those within the corral. Instantly all looked in her direction. She was the first adult female, other than their own dam, that the children of The First Woman had seen. They shrunk from her in evident terror. The youth at Tarzan's side slunk behind the ape-man, nor did Tarzan wonder at their fear. The

Third Woman was the first adult Alalus he had seen, since all of the time that he had been in the hands of The First Woman he had been unconscious.

The girl who had been threatening him with her great club seemed now to have forgotten him, and instead stood with snarling face and narrowed eyes confronting the newcomer. Of all the children she seemed the least terrified.

The ape-man scrutinized the huge, brutish female standing at the far end of the corral with her savage eyes upon him. She had not seen him before as she had been in the forest hunting at the time that The First Woman had brought her prize back to the amphitheater. She had not known that The First Woman had any

male in her corral other than her own spawn. Here, indeed, was a prize. She would remove him to her own corral. With this idea in mind, and knowing that, unless he succeeded in dodging past her and reaching the entranceway ahead of her, he could not escape her, she moved very slowly toward him, ignoring now the other occupants of the corral.

Tarzan, not guessing her real purpose, thought that she was about to attack him as a dangerous alien in the sacred precincts of her home. He viewed her great bulk, her enormous muscular development and the huge bludgeon swinging in her ham like hand and compared them with his own defenseless nakedness.

To the jungle-born flight from useless and uneven combat carries with it no stigma of cowardice, and not only was Tarzan of the Apes jungle-born and jungle-raised, but the stripping of his clothes from him had now, as always before, stripped also away the thin and unnatural veneer of his civilization. It was, then, a savage beast that faced the oncoming Alalus woman—a cunning beast as well as a powerful one—a beast that knew when to fight and when to flee.

Tarzan cast a quick glance behind him. There crouched the Alalus lad, trembling in fear. Beyond was the rear wall of the corral, one of the great stone slabs of which tilted slightly outward.

Slow is the mind of man, slower his eye by comparison with the eye and the mind of the trapped beast seeking escape. So quick was the ape-man that be was gone before The Third Woman had guessed that he was contemplating flight, and with him had gone the eldest Alalus boy.

Wheeling, all in a single motion Tarzan had swung the young male to his shoulder, leaped swiftly the few paces that had separated him from the rear wall of the corral, and, catlike, run up the smooth surface of the slightly tilted slab until his fingers closed upon the top, drawn himself over without a single backward glance, dropped the youth to the ground upon the opposite side, following him so quickly that they

alighted almost together. Then he glanced about for the first time he saw the natural amphitheater and the caves before several of which women still squatted. It would soon be dark. The sun was dropping behind the crest of the western hills. Tarzan saw but a single avenue of escape—the opening at the lower end of the amphitheater through which the trail led down into the valley and the forest below. Toward this he ran, followed by the youth.

Presently a woman, sitting before the entrance of her cave, saw him. Seizing her cudgel she leaped to her feet and gave immediate chase. Attracted by her another and another took up the pursuit, until five or six of them thundered along

the trail.

The youth, pointing the way, raced swiftly ahead of the ape- man, but swift as he was, he could not outdistance the lithe muscles that had so often in the past carried their master safely from the swift rush of a maddened Numa, or won him a meal against the fleetness of Bara the deer. The heavy, lumbering women behind them had no chance of overhauling this swift pair if they were to depend entirely upon speed, but that they had no intention of doing. They had their stone missiles with which, almost from birth, they had practiced until approximate perfection was attained by each in casting them at either stationary or moving targets. But it was growing

dark, the trail twisted and turned and the speed of the quarry made them elusive marks at which to cast an accurate missile that would be so timed as to stun rather than to kill. Of course more often than not a missile intended to stun did actually kill, but the quarry must take that chance. Instinct warned the women against killing the males, though it did not warn them against treating them with the utmost brutality. Had Tarzan realized why the women were pursuing him he would have run even faster than he did, and when the missiles began to fly past his head perhaps he did accelerate his speed a trifle.

Soon the ape-man reached the forest and as though he had dissolved into thin

air disappeared from the astonished view of his pursuers, for now, indeed, was he in his own element. While they looked for him upon the ground he swung swiftly through the lower terraces, keeping in view the Alalus boy racing along the trail beneath him.

But with the man escaped, the women stopped and turned back toward the caves. The youth they did not want. For two or three years he would roam the forests unmolested by his own kind, and if he escaped the savage beasts and the spears and arrows of the ant people he would come to man's estate and be fair prey for any of the great shes during the mating season. For the time being, at least, he would lead a comparatively

safe and happy existence.

His chances of survival had been materially lessened by his early escape into the forest. Had The First Woman lived she would have kept him safely within the walls of her corral for another year at least, when he would have been better fitted to cope with the dangers and emergencies of the savage life of the forest and the jungle.

The boy, his keen ears telling him that the women had given up the pursuit, halted and looked back for the strange creature that had freed him from the hated corral, but he could see only a short distance through the darkness of the growing forest night The stranger was not in sight. The youth pricked up his

great ears and listened intently. There was no sound of human footsteps other than the rapidly diminishing ones of the retreating women. There were other sounds, however, unfamiliar forest sounds that filled his muddy brain with vague terrors—sounds that came from the surrounding underbrush; sounds that came from the branches above his head, and, too, there were terrifying odors.

Darkness, complete and impenetrable, had closed in upon him with a suddenness that left him trembling. He could almost feel it weighing down upon him, crushing him and at the same time leaving him exposed to nameless terrors. He looked about him and could see naught, so that it seemed to him that he

was without eyes, and being without a voice he could not call out either to frighten his enemies or attract the attention of the strange creature that had befriended him, and whose presence had so strangely aroused in his own breast an inexplicable emotion—a pleasurable emotion. He could not explain it; he had no word for it who had no word for anything, but he felt it and it still warmed his bosom and he wished in his muddy way that he could make a noise that would attract that strange creature to him again. He was lonely and much afraid.

A crackling of the bushes nearby aroused him to new and more intimate terror. Something large was approaching through the black night. The youth stood

with his back against a great tree. He dared not move. He sniffed but what movement of the air there was took course from him in the direction of the thing that was creeping upon him out of the terrible forest, and so he could not identify it; but his instinct told him that the creature had identified him and was doubtless creeping closer to leap upon him and devour him.

He knew naught of lions, unless instinct carries with it a picture of the various creatures of which the denizens of the wild are instinctively afraid. In all his life he had never been outside the corral of The First Woman and as his people are without speech his dam could have told him nothing of the outside

world, yet when the lion roared he knew that it was a lion.

CHAPTER 4

Esteban Miranda, clinging tightly to the wrist of little Uhha, crouched in the darkness of another forest twenty miles away and trembled as the thunderous notes of another lion reverberated through the jungle.

The girl felt the trembling of the body of the big man at her side and turned contemptuously upon him.

"You are not the river devil!" she cried. "You are afraid. You are not even Tarzan, for Khamis, my father, has told me that Tarzan is afraid of nothing. Let me go that I may climb a tree—only a coward or a fool would stand here dead with terror waiting for the lion to come and devour him. Let me go, I say!" and

she attempted to wrench her wrist free from his grasp.

"Shut up!" he hissed. "Do you want to attract the lion to us?" But her words and struggles had aroused him from his paralysis and stooping he seized her and lifted her until she could grasp the lower branches of the tree beneath which they stood. Then, as she clambered to safety, he swung himself easily to her side.

Presently, higher up among the branches, he found a safer and more comfortable resting place, and there the two settled down to await the coming of the dawn, while below them Numa the lion prowled for a while, coughing and grunting, and occasionally voicing a deep roar that shook the jungle.

When daylight came at last the two, exhausted by a sleepless night, slipped to the ground. The girl would have delayed, hoping that the warriors of Obebe might overtake them; but the man harbored a fear rather than a hope of the same contingency and was, therefore, for hastening on as rapidly as possible that he might put the greatest possible distance between himself and the black cannibal chief.

He was completely lost, having not the remotest idea of where he should search for a reasonably good trail to the coast, nor, at present, did he care; his one wish being to escape recapture by Obebe, and so he elected to move northward, keeping always an eye open

for any indication of a well-marked trail toward the west. Eventually, he hoped, he might discover a village of friendly natives who would aid him upon his journey toward the coast, and so the two moved as rapidly as they could in a northerly direction, their way skirting the Great Thorn Forest along the eastern edge of which they traveled.

The sun beating down upon the hot corral of The First Woman found it deserted of life. Only the corpse of a youth lay sprawled where it had fallen the previous evening. A speck appeared in the distant blue. It grew larger as it approached until it took upon itself the form of a bird gliding easily upon motionless wings. Nearer and nearer it

came, now and again winging great, slow circles, until at last it swung above the corral of The First Woman. Once again it circled and then dropped to earth within the enclosure —Ska, the vulture, had come. Within the hour the body of the youth was hidden by a mantle of the great birds. It was a two-days feast, and when they left, only the clean picked bones remained, and entangled about the neck of one of the birds was a golden chain from which depended a diamond-encrusted locket. Ska fought the bauble that swung annoyingly beneath him when he flew and impeded his progress when he walked upon the ground, but it was looped twice about his neck and he was

unable to dislodge it, and so he winged away across The Great Thorn Forest, the bright gems gleaming and scintillating in the sun.

Tarzan of the Apes, after eluding the women that had chased him and the Alalus youth into the forest, halted in the tree beneath which the frightened son of The First Woman had come to a terrified pause. He was there, close above him, when Numa charged, and reaching quickly down had seized the youth by the hair and dragged him to safety as the lion's raking talons embraced thin air beneath the feet of the Alalus.

The following day the ape-man concerned himself seriously in the hunt for food, weapons and apparel. Naked

and unarmed as he was it might have gone hard with him had he been other than Tarzan of the Apes, and it might have gone hard with the Alalus had it not been for the ape-man. Fruits and nuts Tarzan found, and birds' eggs, but he craved meat and for meat he hunted assiduously, not alone because of the flesh of the kill, but for the skin and the gut and the tendons, that he could use in the fabrication of the things he required for the safety and comfort of his primitive existence.

As he searched for the spoor of his prey he searched also for the proper woods for a spear and for bow and arrows, nor were they difficult to find in this forest of familiar trees, but the day

was almost done before the gentle wind, up which he had been hunting, carried to his sensitive nostrils the scent spoor of Bara the deer.

Swinging into a tree he motioned the Alalus to follow him, but so inept and awkward was the creature that Tarzan was compelled to drag him to a place among the branches, where, by signs, he attempted to impart to him the fact that he wished him to remain where he was, watching the materials that the ape-man had collected for his weapons, while the latter continued the hunt alone.

That the youth understood him he was not at all sure, but at least he did not follow when Tarzan swung off silently through the branches of the forest along

the elusive trail of the ruminant, the scent of which was always translated to the foster son of Kala the she-ape as Bara the deer, though in fact, as practically always, the animal was an antelope. But strong are the impressions of childhood and since that long-gone day upon which be had pored over the colored alphabet primer in the far-off cabin of his dead father beside the landlocked harbor on the West Coast, and learned that "D stands for Deer," and had admired the picture of the pretty animal, the thing that most closely resembled it, with which he was familiar in his daily life, the antelope, became for him then, and always remained, Bara the deer.

To approach sufficiently close to

Bara to bring him down with spear or arrow requires cunning and woodcraft far beyond the limited range of civilized man's ability. The native hunter loses more often than he wins in this game of wits and percipience. Tarzan, however, must excel them both and the antelope, too, in the keenness of his perceptive faculties and in coordination of mind and muscles if he were to lay Bara low with only the weapons with which nature had endowed him.

As Tarzan sped silently through the jungle, guided by his nostrils, in the direction of Bara the deer increasing strength of the familiar effluvium apprised him that not far ahead Bara foregathered in numbers, and the mouth

of the savage ape-man watered in anticipation of the feast that but awaited his coming. And as the strength of the scent increased, more warily went the great beast, moving silently, a shadow among the shadows of the forest, until he came at last to the verge of an opening in which he saw a dozen antelope grazing.

Squatting motionless upon a low hanging limb the ape-man watched the movements of the herd against the moment that one might come close enough to the encircling trees to give a charge at least a shadow of a chance for success. To wait patiently, oftentimes hour upon hour, for the quarry to expose itself to more certain death is a part of the great game that the hunters of the

wild must play. A single ill-timed or thoughtless movement may send the timorous prey scampering off into the far distance from which they may not return for days.

To avoid this Tarzan remained in statuesque immobility waiting for chance to send one of the antelope within striking distance, and while he waited there came to his nostrils, faintly, the scent of Numa the lion. Tarzan scowled. He was downwind from Bara and the lion was not between him and the antelope. It must, therefore, be upwind from the quarry as well as from himself; but why had not the sensitive nostrils of the herbivores caught the scent of their archenemy before it had reached the

ape-man; that they had not was evidenced by their placidity as they grazed contentedly, their tails switching and occasionally a head raised to look about with up- pricked ears though with no symptom of the terror that would immediately follow the discovery of Numa in their vicinity.

The ape-man concluded that one of those freaks of the air currents that so often leave a motionless pocket of air directly in the path of the flow had momentarily surrounded the antelope, insulating them, as it were, from their immediate surroundings. And while he was thinking these things and wishing that Numa would go away he was shocked to hear a sudden crashing in the

underbrush upon the opposite side of the clearing beyond the antelope, who were instantly upon the alert and poised for flight. Almost simultaneously there broke into view a young lion which, upon coming in sight of the antelope, set up a terrific roaring as it charged. Tarzan could have torn his hair in rage and disappointment. The blundering stupidity of a young lion had robbed him of his meat—the ruminants were scattering in all directions. The lion, charging futilely, had lost his own meat and Tarzan's too; but wait! what was this? A terrified buck, blind to all save the single thought of escape from the talons of the dread carnivore, was bolting straight for the tree in which

Tarzan sat. As it came beneath him a sleek brown body shot head- foremost from the foliage, steel fingers gripped the throat of the buck, strong teeth fastened in its neck. The weight of the savage hunter carried the quarry to its knees and before it could stumble to its feet again a quick wrench with those powerful hands had twisted and broken its neck.

Without a backward glance the ape-man threw the carcass to his shoulder and leaped into the nearest tree. He had no need to waste time in looking back to know what Numa would be doing, for he realized that he had leaped upon Bara full in the sight of the king of beasts. Scarce had he drawn himself to safety

ere the great cat crashed across the spot where he had stood.

Numa, baffled, roared terribly as he returned to glare up at the ape-man perched above him. Tarzan smiled.

"Son of Dango, the hyena," he taunted, "go hungry until you learn to hunt," and casting a broken branch contemptuously in the lion's face the ape-man vanished among the leafy branches bearing his kill lightly across one broad shoulder.

It was still daylight when Tarzan returned to where the Alalus was awaiting him. The youth had a small stone knife and with this the ape-man hacked off a generous portion of the antelope for the whelp of The First Woman and another for himself. Into the

raw flesh, hungrily, sank the strong white teeth of the English lord, while the Alalus youth, gazing at him in surprise, sought materials for fire making. Amused, Tarzan watched him until the other had succeeded in preparing his food as he thought it should be prepared-the outside burned to a cinder, the inside raw, yet it was cooked food and doubtless imparted to its partaker a feeling of great superiority over the low beasts that devoured their meat raw, just as though he had been a civilized epicure eating decaying game and putrid cheeses at some fashionable club in London.

Tarzan smiled as he thought how vague, after all, the line that separates

primitive from civilized man in matters pertaining to their instincts and their appetites. Some of his French friends, with whom he was dining upon a certain occasion, were horrified when they learned that in common with many of the African tribes and the apes he ate caterpillars, and they voiced their horror between mouthfuls of the snails they were eating with relish at the time. The provincial American scoffs at the French for eating frogs' legs, the while he munches upon the leg of a pig! The Esquimaux eat raw blubber, the Amazonians, both white and native, eat the contents of the stomachs of parrots and monkeys and consider them delicacies, the Chinese coolie asks not

how his meat came by its death, nor how long since, and there is a man in New York, an estimable and otherwise harmless man, who eats Limburger cheese on Bartlett pears.

The following day, with sufficient meat to last them several days, Tarzan set to work upon his weapons and his loincloth. Showing the Alalus how to scrape the antelope hide with his stone knife, the ape-man set to work, with nothing more in the way of tools than bits of stone picked from the bed of a stream, to fashion weapons with which to cope successfully with the Alali women, the great carnivores and whatever other enemies time might reveal to him.

And as he worked he watched the Alalus youth and wondered of what use the poor creature could be to him in finding his way through the encircling thorn forest that he must pass to reach familiar country and the trail for home. That the poor thing was timid had been evidenced by its manner when fleeing from the Alali women and its terror when confronted by Numa. Its speechlessness made it useless as a companion and it was entirely without woodcraft other than a certain crude, instinctive kind that was of no use to Tarzan. But it had placed itself at his side during the altercation in the corral and although it could not have been of any help to him yet it had won a right to

his consideration by its act. Moreover it was evident, quite evident, that the creature had attached itself to Tarzan and intended to remain with him.

An idea occurred to Tarzan as he worked upon his weapons and thought upon the Alalus-he would make similar weapons for the youth and teach him how to use them. He had seen that the crude weapons of the Alali would be no match against one armed with a bow and arrows, or even a good spear. Accurately they could not hope to throw their missiles as far as a good bowman could speed his shaft and their bludgeons were helpless in the face of a well-thrown spear.

Yes, he would make weapons for the

youth and train him in their use and then he could be made of service in the hunt and, if necessary, in the fight, and as Tarzan of the Apes thought upon the matter the Alalus suddenly paused in his work and bent an ear close to the ground, then he lifted his head and turned his eyes upon Tarzan, pointing at him, at his ear, and then at the ground. The ape-man understood that he was to listen as the other had and when he did so he distinctly heard approaching footsteps resounding upon the hard- worn trail.

Gathering up his belongings he carried them high among the trees to a safe cache with the remnants of Bara the deer and then returning helped the youth into the tree beside him.

Slowly, already, the Alalus was becoming more at ease in the trees and could help himself to a greater extent in climbing into them, but he was still practically helpless in Tarzan's estimation.

The two had not long to wait before there swung down the trail one of the terrible women of the amphitheater, and behind her at ten or fifteen paces another, and behind the second a third. It was not often that they traveled thus, for theirs was a solitary existence, the Alali being almost devoid of gregarious instincts, yet they did occasionally start out upon their hunts together, especially when they were hunting some dangerous beast that had encroached upon their

rights, or when, failing to collect sufficient men from the forest during the mating season, the unfortunate ones banded together to make a raid upon the corrals of a neighboring tribe.

The three, slouching along the trail, passed directly beneath the tree from which Tarzan and the youth watched them. The great, flat ears flapped lazily, the dark eyes wandered from side to side, and from time to time they moved rapidly the skin upon some portions of their bodies as they sought to dislodge annoying insects.

The two in the tree remained motionless while the three brute- women passed along down the trail to be presently lost to their view at a turning

of the forest highway, then, after a short interval of listening, they descended to the ground and resumed their interrupted labors. The ape-man smiled as he idly pondered the events of the past few minutes—Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle, hiding among the trees to escape the notice of three women! But such women! He knew little about them or their ways as yet, but what he did know was sufficient to convince him that they were as formidable foes as ever he had encountered and that while he remained weaponless he was no match against their great bludgeons and swift-thrown missiles.

The days passed; the ape-man and his silent companion perfected the weapons

that would more easily give them food, the latter working mechanically, following the instructions of his master, until at last the time came when Tarzan and the Alalus were fully equipped and then they hunted together, the man training the youth in the use of bow and spear and the long grass rope that from boyhood had formed a unique feature of the ape-man's armament.

During these days of hunting there came over the Alalus youth, quite suddenly, a great change. It had been his habit to glide stealthily through the forest, stopping often to look this way and that, fearful, apparently, of every creature that roamed the shadowed trails; his one great fear the ferocious

females of his kind; but suddenly all this changed as by magic. Slowly he was mastering the bow and the spear; with deep interest and a sense of awe and respect he had watched Tarzan bring down many animals, great and small, for food, and once he had seen him dispatch Sabor the lioness with a single thrust of his great spear when Sabor had caught the ape-man in a clearing too far from the sanctuary of his beloved trees, and then his own day came. He and Tarzan were hunting when the former disturbed a small herd of wild pigs, bringing down two with his arrows. The others scattered in all directions and one of these, a boar, sighting the Alalus, charged him. The youth was of a mind to

flee, for ages of inherited instinct prompted him to flight Always the male Alalus fled from danger, and between fleeing from carnivorous animals and from their own women they had become very swift, so swift that no dangerous enemy could overtake them—an Alalus man could be captured only by craft. He could have escaped the boar by flight and for an instant he was upon the verge of flight, but a sudden thought checked him —back flew his spear hand as the ape-man had taught him and then forward with all the weight of his body behind the cast. The boar was coming straight for him. The spear struck in front of the left shoulder and ranged downward through the heart. Horta the

boar dropped in his tracks.

A new expression came into the eyes and spread over the countenance of the Alalus. He no longer wore that hunted expression; he no longer slunk through the forest casting fearful glances from side to side. Now he walked erect, boldly and with fearless mien, and, perhaps, instead of dreading the appearance of a female he rather courted the event. He was the personification of avenging manhood. Within him rankled countless ages of contemptuous treatment and abuse at the hands of his shes. Doubtless he never thought of the matter in this way at all, but the fact remained, and Tarzan realized it, that the first woman unfortunate enough to stumble

upon this youth was going to get the surprise of her life.

And while Tarzan and the Alalus roamed the strange land hemmed in by The Great Thorn Forest and the ape-man sought for an avenue of escape, Esteban Miranda and little Uliha, daughter of Khamis the witch doctor, wandered along the forest's outer verge in search of a trail toward the west and the coast.

CHAPTER 5

With doglike devotion the Alalus youth clung to Tarzan. The latter had mastered the meager sign language of his protégé, giving them a means of communication that was adequate for all their needs. The former, gaining confidence with a growing familiarity with his new weapons, became more independent, with the result that the two more often separated for the hunt, thus insuring a more fully stocked larder.

It was upon one of these occasions that Tarzan came suddenly upon a strange sight. He had been following the scent spoor of Bara the deer when it was suddenly crossed by that of one of the great female Alali. That probably meant

that another would attempt to rob him of his prey. The savage instinct of the jungle beast predominated in the guidance of the breech-clouted ape-man. It was not the polished Lord Greystoke of London whose snarling upper lip revealed two gleaming fighting fangs—it was a primordial hunting-brute about to be robbed of its quarry.

Taking to the trees he moved rapidly in the direction of the Alalus woman, but before he came within sight of her a new scent impinged upon his nostrils —a strange, new scent that puzzled him. It was the scent of man, yet strange and unfamiliar to a degree. Never before had anything like it arrested his attention. It was very faint and yet, somehow, he

knew that it was close, and then, ahead of him, he heard voices, low musical voices, that came faintly to his ears; and though they were low and musical there was something in the quality and pitch of them that suggested excitement Now Tarzan went more carefully, Bara, the deer, all but forgotten.

As he drew nearer he realized that there were many voices and much commotion and then he came upon a large plain that stretched away to distant hills, and in the foreground, not a hundred yards from him, he looked upon a sight that might well have caused him to doubt the veracity of his own eyes. The only familiar figure was a giant Alalus woman. Surrounding her was a

horde of diminutive men—tiny white warriors—mounted upon what appeared to be a form of the Royal Antelope of the West Coast Armed with lances and swords they repeatedly charged at the huge legs of the Alalus, who, backing slowly toward the forest, kicked viciously at her assailants and struck at them with her heavy bludgeon.

It quickly became evident to Tarzan that they were attempting to hamstring her and had they been successful they might easily have slain her then; but though there must have been fully a hundred of them their chances of success appeared small, since, with a single kick of her mighty foot the woman could lay low a dozen or more of her assailants at

a time. Already fully half the force was hors de combat, their bodies with those of many of their mounts being scattered out onto the plain marking the trail of the combat up to the time that Tarzan had come upon the scene.

The courage of the survivors, however, filled Tarzan with admiration as he watched them hurl themselves upon almost certain death in their stubborn efforts to bring down the female, and then it was that the ape-man saw the reason, or the apparent reason, for the mad sacrifice of life—in her left hand the Alalus clutched one of the tiny warriors. It was to rescue him, evidently, that the others were maintaining this forlorn hope.

If the warriors filled Tarzan with admiration to scarcely a lesser extent did their courageous and agile mounts. Always had he thought of the Royal Antelope, the smallest known member of its family, as the most timid of creatures, but not so these cousins of theirs. Slightly larger, standing perhaps fifteen inches at the withers, they were in all other outward respects identical; yet, at the guidance of their riders, they leaped fearlessly into close range of those enormous feet and the great, slashing bludgeon. Perfectly reined were they, too; so perfectly that their muscles seemed to have coordinated with the minds of their riders. In and out they bounded, scarcely touching the ground

before they were out of harm's way again. Ten or a dozen feet they covered at a leap, so that Tarzan wondered not only at their agility but at the almost marvelous riding ability of the warriors who could keep their seats so perfectly upon these leaping, bounding, turning, twisting mounts.

It was a pretty sight and an inspiring one, and however unreal it had at first appeared to him he was not long in realizing that he was looking upon a race of real pygmies—not members of the black tribe with which all African explorers are more or less familiar, but with that lost white race of diminutive men reference to which is occasionally to be found in ancient manuscript of

travel and exploration, of myth and legend.

While the encounter interested him and he viewed it at first as a disinterested neutral he soon found his sympathies gravitating to the tiny warriors and when it became evident that the Alalus woman was going to make good her escape into the forest with her captive, the ape-man decided to take a hand in the affair himself.

As he stepped from the concealment of the forest the little warriors were the first to see him. Evidently they mistook him at first for another of their giant enemies, for a great cry of disappointment rose from them, and they fell back for the first time since Tarzan

had been watching the unequal struggle. Wishing to make his intentions clear before the little men set upon him he moved quickly in the direction of the woman, who, the instant that her eyes fell upon him, made imperative signs for him to join her in dispatching the balance of the pygmies. She was accustomed to being feared and obeyed by her mankind, when she had them in her power. Perhaps she wondered a little at the temerity of this he, for as a rule they all ran from her; but she needed him badly and that was the idea that dominated her thoughts.

As Tarzan advanced he commanded her in the sign language he had learned from the youth that she was to release

her captive and go away, molesting the little men no more. At this she made an ugly grimace and raising her bludgeon came forward to meet him. The ape- man fitted an arrow to his bow.

"Go back!" he signed her. "Go back, or I will kill you. Go back, and put down the little man."

She snarled ferociously and increased her pace. Tarzan raised the arrow to the level of his eye and drew it back until the bow bent. The pygmies, realizing that for the moment at least this strange giant was their ally, sat their mounts and awaited the outcome of the duel. The ape-man hoped that the woman would obey his commands before he was compelled to take her life, but even a

cursory glance at her face revealed anything but an intention to relinquish her purpose, which now seemed to be to annihilate this presumptuous meddler as well.

On she came. Already she was too close to make further delay safe and the ape-man released his shaft Straight into her savage heart it drove and as she stumbled forward Tarzan leaped to meet her, seizing the warrior from her grasp before she might fall upon the tiny body and crush it, and as he did so the other warriors, evidently mistaking his intentions, spurred forward with loud shouts and brandishing weapons; but before they had reached him he had set the rescued man upon the ground and

released him.

Instantly the attitude of the charging pygmies changed again and from war cries then—tones turned to cheers. Riding forward they drew rein before the warrior that Tarzan had rescued and several of their number leaped from their mounts and, kneeling, raised his hand to their lips. It was evident then to the ape-man that he had rescued one who stood high among them, their chief, perhaps; and now he wondered what would be their attitude toward him, as, with a look of amused tolerance upon his grim features, he watched them as one might watch the interesting doings of a swarm of ants.

As they felicitated their fellow upon

his miraculous escape Tarzan had an opportunity to inspect them more closely. The tallest of them stood about eighteen inches in height, their white skins were tanned by exposure to a shade a trifle darker than his own, yet there was no question but that they were white men; their features were regular and well proportioned, so that by any standards of our race they would have been considered handsome. There were, of course, variations and exceptions; but on the whole those that he saw before him were fine-looking men. All were smooth-faced and there seemed to be no very old men among them, while he whom Tarzan had saved from the Alalus woman was apparently younger than the

average, and much younger than those who had dismounted to do him homage.

As Tarzan watched them the young man bade the others rise and then addressed them for a moment after which he turned toward the ape- man and directed his remarks to him, none of which, of course, Tarzan could understand. By his manner, however, he guessed that the other was thanking him and possibly too asking his further intentions toward them and in reply the ape-man endeavored to assure them that he desired their friendship. Further to emphasize his peaceful intentions he cast his weapons aside and took a step toward them, his arms thrown slightly outward, his open palms in their

direction.

The young man seemed to understand his friendly overtures, for he too advanced, offering his hand to Tarzan. The ape-man knew that the other meant that he should kiss it, but this he did not do, preferring to assume a role of equality with their highest. Instead, he kneeled upon one knee that he might more easily reach the proffered hand of the pygmy and pressing the tiny fingers gently, inclined his head slightly in a formal bow which carried no suggestion of servility. The other seemed satisfied, returned the bow with equal dignity and then attempted to convey to the ape-man that he and his party were about to ride off across the plain, inviting him to

accompany them.

Rather curious to see more of these remarkable little people Tarzan was nothing loath to accept the invitation. Before the party set out, however, they dispersed to gather up their dead and wounded and to put out of their misery any of the injured antelope that were too severely hurt to travel. This they did with the relatively long, straight sword which was part of the armament of each. Their lances they left resting in cylindrical boots attached to the right side of their saddles. For other weapons Tarzan could discover nothing but a tiny knife carried in a scabbard at the right side by each warrior. The blade, like the blade of the rapier, was two edged but

only about an inch and a half long, with a very sharp point.

Having gathered the dead and wounded, the latter were examined by the young leader of the party, who was accompanied by the five or six who had gathered about him at the time that Tarzan had released him. These Tarzan took to be lieutenants, or under-chiefs. He saw them question the wounded and in three cases, each evidently a hopeless one, the leader ran his sword quickly through the hearts of the unhappy men.

While this seemingly cruel, yet unquestionably sound, military measure was being carried out, the balance of the warriors, directed by under-officers, were excavating a long trench beside the

dead, of which there were twenty, their tool being a stout shovel blade carried attached to the saddle and which could be quickly fitted to the butt of the spear or lance. The men worked with extreme rapidity and under a plan that seemed to abhor lost motion, of which there was the absolute minimum, until in an incredibly short time they had excavated a trench fifty inches in length, eighteen inches wide and nine inches deep, the equivalent of which to men of normal size would have been nearly seventeen feet long, six feet wide and three feet deep. Into this they packed the dead like sardines and in two layers. They then shoveled back sufficient earth to fill the interstices between the bodies and to

come to a level with the top of the upper layer, after which loose stones were rolled in until the bodies were entirely covered by two inches of stones. The remaining earth from the excavation was then piled over all.

By the time this work was completed the loose antelope had been caught and the wounded strapped to their backs. At a word from their commander the party formed with military precision, a detail started ahead with the wounded and a moment later the balance of the troop was mounted and on the way. The method of mounting and taking up the march was unique and a source of considerable interest to Tarzan. The dismounted warriors were standing in

line facing the young leader who was mounted, as were the several officers who accompanied him. Each warrior held his mount by the bridle. The commander made a rapid signal with the raised point of his sword—there was no spoken word of command—immediately after which he dropped the point quickly at his side simultaneously wheeling his mount, which leaped quickly off in the direction that the troop was facing, the mounts of his officers wheeling with him as though actuated by a single brain, and at the same instant the mount of each alternate warrior in the line leaped forward and as it leaped its rider swung to his saddle, vaulting to his seat as lightly as a feather. The instant the first

line had cleared them the antelopes of the second line leaped in pursuit, their riders mounted as had the others before them and with a second and longer leap the intervals were closed and the whole troop raced forward in a compact line. It was a most clever and practical evolution and one that made it possible to put mounted troops in motion as rapidly as foot troops; there was no long delay caused by taking distance, mounting and closing ranks.

As the troop galloped away ten warriors wheeled from the left flank and, following one of the officers who had detached himself from the party of the commander of the troop, returned to Tarzan. By signs the officer conveyed to

the ape-man the intelligence that he was to follow this party which would guide him to their destination. Already the main body was far away across the open plain, their lithe mounts clearing as many as five or six feet in a single bound. Even the swift Tarzan could not have kept pace with them.

As the ape-man started away under the guidance of the detachment his thoughts reverted for an instant to the Alalus youth who was hunting alone in the forest behind them, but he soon put the creature from his mind with the realization that it was better equipped to defend itself than any of its kind, and that when he had made his visit to the country of the pygmies he could

doubtless return and find the Alalus, if he so desired.

Tarzan, inured to hardship and to long and rapid marches, fell into a dogtrot such as he could keep up for hours at a time without rest, while his guides, trotting their graceful mounts, kept just ahead of him. The plain was more rolling than it had appeared from the verge of the forest, with here and there a clump of trees; the grass was plentiful and there were occasional bands of the larger species of antelope grazing at intervals. At sight of the approaching riders and the comparatively giant-like figure of Tarzan they broke and ran. Once they passed a rhinoceros, the party making only a slight detour to avoid it,

and later, in a clump of trees, the leader halted his detachment suddenly and seizing his lance advanced again slowly toward a clump of bushes at the same time transmitting an order to his men which caused them to spread and surround the thicket.

Tarzan halted and watched the proceedings. The wind was blowing from him in the direction of the thicket, so that he could not determine what manner of creature, if any, had attracted the attention of the officer; but presently, when the warriors had completely surrounded the bushes and those upon the other side had ridden into it, their spears couched and ready, he heard an ugly snarl issuing from the center of the

thicket and an instant later an African wildcat sprang into view, leaping directly at the officer waiting with ready spear to receive it. The weight and momentum of the beast all but unseated the rider, the point of whose spear had met the cat full in the chest. There were a few spasmodic struggles before death ensued, during which, had the spear broken, the man would have been badly mauled and perhaps killed, for the cat was relatively as formidable a beast as is the lion to us. The instant that it died four warriors leaped forward and with their sharp knives removed the head and skin in an incredibly short time.

Tarzan could not but note that everything these people did was

accomplished with maximum efficiency. Never did there seem to be any lost motion, never was one at a loss as to what to do, never did one worker get in the way of another. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed from the moment that they had encountered the cat before the detachment was again moving, the head of the beast fastened to the saddle of one of the warriors, the skin to that of another.

The officer who commanded the detachment was a young fellow, not much, if any, older than the commander of the troop. That he was courageous Tarzan could bear witness from the manner in which he had faced what must have been, to so diminutive a people, a

most deadly and ferocious beast; but then, the entire party's hopeless attack upon the Alalus woman had proved that they all were courageous, and the ape-man admired and respected courage. Already be liked these little men, though it was at times still difficult for him to accept them as a reality, so prone are we to disbelieve in the possibility of the existence of any form of life with which we are not familiar by association or credible repute.

They had been traveling for almost six hours across the plain, the wind had changed and there was borne to Tarzan's nostrils clearly the scent of Bara the deer, ahead. The ape-man, who had tasted no food that day, was ravenous,

with the result that the odor of meat aroused all the savage instincts fostered by his strange upbringing. Springing forward abreast the leader of the detachment that was escorting him he signed them to halt and then as clearly as he could through the comparatively laborious and never quite satisfactory medium of further signs explained that he was hungry, that there was meat ahead and that they should remain in the rear until he had stalked his prey and made his kill.

The officer having understood and signified his assent Tarzan crept stealthily forward toward a small clump of trees beyond which his keen scent told him there were several antelope,

and behind Tarzan followed the detachment, so noiselessly that even the keen ears of the ape-man heard them not.

Sheltered by the trees Tarzan saw a dozen or more antelope grazing a short distance beyond, the nearest being scarce a hundred feet from the small grove. Unslinging his bow and taking a handful of arrows from his quiver, the ape-man moved noiselessly to the tree nearest the antelope. The detachment was not far behind him, though it had stopped the moment the officer saw the game that Tarzan was stalking, lest it be frightened away.

The pygmies knew naught of bows and arrows and so they watched with deep interest every move of the ape-

man. They saw him fit an arrow to his bow, draw it far back and release it almost all in a single movement, so quick with this weapon was he, and they saw the antelope leap to the impact of the missile which was followed in rapid succession by a second and a third, and as he shot his bolts Tarzan leaped forward in pursuit of his prey; but there was no danger that he would lose it With the second arrow the buck was upon his knees and when Tarzan reached him he was already dead.

The warriors who had followed close behind Tarzan the instant that there was no further need for caution were already surrounding the antelope, where they were talking with much more excitement

than Tarzan had seen them display upon any previous occasion, their interest seemingly centered about the death-dealing projectiles that had so easily laid the great animal low, for to them this antelope was as large as would be the largest elephant to us; and as they caught the ape-man's eye they smiled and rubbed their palms together very rapidly with a circular motion, an act which Tarzan assumed to be in the nature of applause.

Having withdrawn his arrows and returned them to his quiver Tarzan signed to the leader of the detachment that he would borrow his rapier. For an instant the man seemed to hesitate and all his fellows watched him intently, but

he drew the sword and passed it hilt foremost to the ape-man. If you are going to eat flesh raw while it is still warm you do not bleed the carcass, nor did Tarzan in this instance. Instead he merely cut off a hind quarter, sliced off what he wanted and fell to devouring it hungrily.

The little men viewed his act with surprise not unmixed with horror and when he offered them some of the flesh they refused it and drew away. What their reaction was he could not know, but he guessed that they held a strong aversion to the eating of raw meat. Later he was to learn that their revulsion was due to the fact that within the entire range of their experience, heretofore, the

only creatures that devoured raw meat devoured the pygmies as well. When, therefore, they saw this mighty giant eating the flesh of his kill raw they could not but draw the conclusion that should he become sufficiently hungry he would eat them.

Wrapping some of the meat of the antelope in its own skin Tarzan secured it to his back and the party resumed its journey. The warriors now seemed troubled and as they conversed in low tones they cast many backward glances in the direction of the ape-man. They were not afraid for themselves, for these warriors scarcely knew the meaning of fear. The question that caused them apprehension related to the wisdom of

leading among their people such a huge devourer of raw flesh, who, at a single hurried meal, had eaten the equivalent of a grown man.

The afternoon was drawing to a close when Tarzan discerned in the far distance what appeared to be a group of symmetrical, dome- shaped hillocks and later, as they approached these, he saw a body of mounted warriors galloping to meet them. From his greater height he saw these before the others saw them, and attracting the officer's attention made signs apprising the latter of his discovery, but the oncoming warriors were hidden from the view of their fellows by the inequalities of the ground.

Realizing this Tarzan stooped and,

before the officer could guess his intention, had gathered antelope and rider gently in his powerful hands and lifted them high above the ground. For an instant consternation held the remaining warriors. Swords flashed and a warning cry arose and even the plucky pygmy in his grasp drew his own diminutive weapon; but a smile from the ape-man reassured them all, and an instant later the officer saw why Tarzan had raised him aloft. He called down to the others below him then and from their manner as from that of him whom he held the ape-man guessed that the approaching party was composed of friends of his escort, and so, a few minutes later, it proved when he was surrounded by several

hundreds of the pygmies, all friendly, eager and curious. Among them was the leader whom he had rescued from the Alalus woman and him he greeted with a handshake.

A consultation now took place between the leader of the detachment that had escorted the ape-man, the young commander of the larger party and several older warriors. By the expressions of their faces and the tone of their voices Tarzan judged that the matter was serious and that it concerned him he was sure from the numerous glances that were cast in his direction. He could not know, though, that the subject of their discussion was based upon the report of the commander of the

escort that their mighty guest was an eater of raw flesh and the consequent danger of bringing him among their people.

The chief among them, the young commander, settled the question, however, by reminding them that though the giant must have been very hungry to have devoured as much flesh as they told him he had, nevertheless he had traveled for many hours with only a small number of their warriors always within easy reach of him and had not offered to molest them. This seemed a conclusive argument of his good intentions and consequently the cavalcade set forth without further delay in the direction of the hillocks that were now in plain view

a mile or two away.

As they neared them Tarzan saw what appeared to be literally innumerable little men moving about among the hillocks, and as he came nearer still he realized that these seeming hillocks were symmetrical mounds of small stones quite evidently built by the pygmies themselves and that the hordes of pygmies moving about among them were workers, for here was a long line all moving in one direction, emerging from a hole in the ground and following a well- defined path to a hall-completed hillock that was evidently in course of construction. Another line moved, empty-handed, in the opposite direction, entering the ground through a second

hole, and upon the flanks of each line and at frequent intervals, marched armed warriors, while other similar lines of guarded workers moved in and out of openings in each of the other domelike structures, carrying to the mind of the ape-man a suggestion of ants laboring about their hills.

CHAPTER 6

Ska, the vulture, winged his way leisurely in great circles far above the right bank of the Ugogo. The pendant locket, sparkling in the sun light, had ceased to annoy him while on the wing, only when he alighted and walked upon the ground did it become an encumbrance; then he stepped upon it and tripped, but long since had he ceased to fight it, accepting it now as an inescapable evil. Beneath him he presently descried the still, recumbent form of Gorgo, the buffalo, whose posture proclaimed that he was already fit food for Ska. The great bird dropped, alighting in a nearby tree. All was well, no foes were in evidence. Satisfied of

this, Ska flapped down to the fallen beast.

Miles away a giant white man crouched in the concealment of a dense thicket with a little black girl. The fingers of one of the man's hands were across her mouth, those of the other held a knife at her heart. The man's eyes were not upon the girl, but were straining through the dense foliage toward a game trail along which two ebon warriors were advancing. Succor was close at hand for Uhha, the daughter of Khamis the witch doctor, for the two approaching were hunters from the village of Obebe, the chief; but she dared not call aloud to attract them lest the sharp point of Miranda's knife slip

into her young heart, and so she heard them come and go until, their voices lost in the distance, the Spaniard arose and dragged her back upon the trail, where they took up, what seemed to Uhha, their endless and fruitless wanderings through the jungle.

In the village of the ant men Tarzan found a warm welcome and having decided to remain for a while that he might study them and their customs he set to work, as was his wont when thrown among strange peoples, to learn their language as quickly as possible. Having already mastered several languages and numerous dialects the ape-man never found it difficult to add to his linguistic attainments, and so it was only a matter

of a comparatively short time before he found it possible to understand his hosts and to make himself understood by them. It was then that he learned that they had at first thought that he was some form of Alalus and had consequently believed that it ever would be impossible to communicate with him by other means than signs. They were greatly delighted therefore when it had become apparent that he could utter vocal sounds identical to theirs, and when they comprehended that he desired to learn their tongue, Adendrohahkis, the king, placed several instructors at his disposal and gave orders that all his people, with whom the giant stranger might come in contact, should aid him to an early understanding

of their language.

Adendrohahkis was particularly well inclined toward the ape-man because of the fact that it had been the king's son, Komodoflorensal, whom Tarzan had rescued from the clutches of the Alalus woman, and so it was that everything was done to make the giant's stay among them a pleasant one. A hundred slaves brought his food to him where he had taken up his abode beneath the shade of a great tree that grew in lonely majesty just outside the city. When he walked among the group of dome-houses a troop of cavalry galloped ahead to clear a path for him, lest he trod upon some of the people of the city; but always was Tarzan careful of his hosts, so that no

harm ever befell one of them because of him.

As he mastered the language he learned many things concerning these remarkable people. Prince Komodoflorensal almost daily took it upon himself to assist in the instruction of his colossal guest and it was from him that Tarzan learned most. Nor were his eyes idle as he strolled around the city. Particularly interesting was the method of construction used in erecting the comparatively gigantic dome- houses which towered high above even the great Tarzan. The first step in the construction was to outline the periphery of the base with boulders of uniform size and weighing, perhaps, fifty pounds each.

Two slaves easily carried such a boulder when it was slung in a rope hammock and as thousands of slaves were employed the work progressed with rapidity. The circular base, with a diameter of one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet, having been outlined, another, smaller circle was laid about ten feet inside the first, four openings being left in each circle to mark the location of the four entrances to the completed building and corresponding to the four principal cardinal points of the compass. The walls of the entrances were then outlined upon the ground with similar large boulders, these being a little more carefully selected for uniformity, after which the four

enclosures thus formed were packed closely with boulders. The corridors and chambers of the first floor were then outlined and the spaces between filled with boulders, each being placed with the utmost care and nicety in relation to those touching it and those that should rest upon it when the second course was laid, for these were to support a tremendous weight when the edifice was completed. The corridors were generally three feet wide, the equivalent of twelve feet by our standards, while the chambers, varied in dimensions according to the uses to which they were to be put. In the exact center of the building a circular opening was left that measured ten feet in diameter and this

was carried upward as the building progressed until the whole formed an open shaft from ground floor to roof in the completed edifice.

The lower course having been built up in this manner to a height of six inches wooden arches were placed at intervals the lengths of the corridors which were now ceiled over by the simple expedient of fastening thin wooden strips lengthways of the corridors from arch to arch until the corridors were entirely roofed. The strips, or boards, which overlapped one another, were fastened in place by wooden dowels driven through them into the peripheries of the arches. As this work was progressing the walls of the

various chambers and the outer wall of the building were raised to a height of twenty-four inches, bringing them to the level of the ceilings of the arched corridors, and the spaces between chambers and corridors were packed with boulders, the interstices between which were filled with smaller stones and gravel. The ceiling beams were then placed across the other chambers, timbers six inches square hewn from a hard, tough wood being used, and in the larger chambers these were further supported, at intervals, by columns of the same dimensions and material. The ceiling beams being in place they were covered over with tight-fitting boards, doweled to place. The ceilings of the

chambers now projected six inches above the surrounding course of the structure, and at this juncture hundreds of cauldrons were brought in which a crude asphalt was heated until it became liquid and the interstices of the next six inch course were filled with it, bringing the entire completed course to the same level at a height of thirty inches, over all of which a second six inch course of rock and asphalt was laid, and the second story laid out and completed in a similar manner.

The palace of Adendrohahkis, constructed in this way, was two hundred twenty feet in diameter, and one hundred ten feet high, with thirty-six floors capable of housing eighty

thousand people, a veritable anthill of humanity. The city consisted of ten similar domes, though each slightly smaller than the king's, housing a total of five hundred thousand people, two-thirds of whom were slaves; these being for the most part the artisans and body servants of the ruling class. Another half million slaves, the unskilled laborers of the city, dwelt in the subterranean chambers of the quarries from which the building material was obtained. The passageways and chambers of these mines were carefully shored and timbered as the work progressed, resulting in fairly commodious and comfortable quarters for the slaves upon the upper levels at least, and as the city

was built upon the surface of an ancient ground moraine, on account of the accessibility of building material, the drainage was perfect, the slaves suffering no inconvenience because of their underground quarters.

The domes themselves were well ventilated through the large central air shaft and the numerous windows that pierced the outer walls at frequent intervals at each level above the ground floor, in which, as previously explained, there were but four openings. The windows, which were six and one-quarter inches wide by eighteen and a half inches high, admitted a certain amount of light as well as air; but the interior of the dome, especially the

gloomy chambers midway between the windows and the central light and air shaft, was illuminated by immense, slow-burning, smokeless candles.

Tarzan watched the construction of the new dome with keenest interest, realizing that it was the only opportunity that he ever would have to see the ulterior of one of these remarkable, human hives, and as he was thus engaged Komodoflorensal and his friends hastened to initiate him into the mysteries of their language; and while he learned the language of his hosts he learned many other things of interest about them. The slaves, he discovered, were either prisoners of war or the descendants of prisoners of war. Some

had been in bondage for so many generations that all trace of their origin had become lost and they considered themselves as much citizens of Trohanadalmakus, the city of King Adendrohahkis, as did any of the nobility. On the whole they were treated with kindness and were not overworked after, the second generation. The recent prisoners and their children were, for the most part, included in the caste of unskilled labor from which the limit of human endurance was exacted. They were the miners, the quarriers and the builders and fully fifty per cent of them were literally worked to death. With the second generation the education of the children commenced, those who showed

aptitude for any of the skilled crafts being immediately transferred from the quarries to the domes, where they took up the relatively easy life of a prosperous and indulged middle class. In another manner might an individual escape the quarries—by marriage, or rather by selection as they choose to call it, with a member of the ruling class. In a community where class consciousness was such a characteristic of the people and where caste was almost a fetish it was rather remarkable that such connections brought no odium upon the inferiors, but, on the contrary, automatically elevated the lesser to the caste of the higher contracting party.

"It is thus, Deliverer of the Son of

Adendrohahkis," explained Komodoflorensal, in reply to Tarzan's inquiry relative to this rather peculiar exception to the rigid class distinctions the king's son had so often impressed upon him: "Ages ago, during the reign of Klamataamorosal in the city of Trohanadalmakus, the warriors of Veltopishago, king of the city of Veltopismakus, marched upon our fair Trohanadalmakus and in the battle that ensued the troops of our ancestors were all but annihilated. Thousands of our men and women were carried away into slavery and all that saved us from being totally wiped out was the courageous defense that our own slaves waged for their masters. Klamataamorosal, from

whom I am descended, fighting in the thick of the fray noted the greater stamina of the slaves; they were stronger than the warriors of either city and seemed not to tire at all, while the high caste nobility of the fighting clans, though highly courageous, became completely exhausted after a few minutes of fighting.

"After the battle was over Klamataamorosal called together all the chief officers of the city, or rather all who had not been killed or taken prisoner, and pointed out to them that the reason our city had been defeated was not so much because of the greater numbers of the forces of the king Veltopishago as due to the fact that our

own warriors were physical weaklings, and he asked them why this should be and what could be done to remedy so grievous a fault. The youngest man among them, wounded and weak from loss of blood, was the only one who could offer a reasonable explanation, or suggest a means of correcting the one obvious weakness of the city.

"He called their attention to the fact that of all the race of Minunians the people of the city of Trohanadalmakus were the most ancient and that for ages there had been no infusion of new blood, since they were not permitted to mate outside their own caste, while their slaves, recruited from all the cities of Minuni, had interbred, with the result

that they had become strong and robust while their masters, through inbreeding, had grown correspondingly weaker.

"He exhorted Klamataamorosal to issue a decree elevating to the warrior class any slave that was chosen as mate by either a man or woman of that class, and further to obligate each and every warrior to select at least one mate from among their slaves. At first, of course, the objections to so iconoclastic a suggestion were loud and bitter; but Klamataamorosal was quick to sense the wisdom of the idea and not only did he issue the decree, but he was the first to espouse a slave woman, and what the king did all were anxious to do also.

"The very next generation showed the

wisdom of the change and each succeeding generation has more than fulfilled the expectations of Klamataamorosal until now you see in the people of Trohanadalmakus the most powerful and warlike of the Minunians.

"Our ancient enemy, Veltopismakus, was the next city to adopt the new order, having learned of it through slaves taken in raids upon our own community, but they were several generations behind us. Now all the cities of Minuni wed their warriors with their slave women. And why not? Our slaves were all descended from the warrior class of other cities from which their ancestors were captured. We all are of the same race, we all have the same language and in all

important respects the same customs.

"Time has made some slight changes in the manner of the selection of these new mates and now it is often customary to make war upon another city for the sole purpose of capturing their noblest born and most beautiful women.

"For us of the royal family it has been nothing less than salvation from extinction. Our ancestors were transmitting disease and insanity to their progeny. The new, pure, virile blood of the slaves has washed the taint from our veins and so altered has our point of view become that whereas, in the past, the child of a slave woman and a warrior was without caste the lowest of the low, now they rank highest of the

high, since it is considered immoral for one of the royal family to wed other than a slave."

"And your wife?" asked Tarzan. "You took her in a battle with some other city?"

"I have no wife," replied Komodoflorensal. "We are preparing now to make war upon Veltopismakus the daughter of whose king, we are told by slaves from that city, is the most beautiful creature in the world. Her name is Janzara, and as she is not related to me, except possibly very remotely, she is a fit mate for the son of Adendrohahkis."

"How do you know she is not related to you?" asked the ape- man.

"We keep as accurate a record of the royal families of Veltopismakus and several others of the nearer cities of Minuni as we do of our own," replied Komodoflorensal, "obtaining our information from captives, usually from those who are chosen in marriage by our own people. For several generations the kings of Veltopismakus have not been sufficiently powerful or fortunate to succeed in taking royal princesses from us by either force of arms or strategy, though they never have ceased attempting to do so, and the result has been that they have been forced to find their mates in other and oftentimes distant cities.

"The present king of Veltopismakus,

Elkomoelhago, the father of the princess Janzara, took his mate, the mother of the princess, from a far distant city that has never, within historic times, taken slaves from Trohanadalmakus, nor have our warriors visited that city within the memory of any living man. Janzara, therefore, should make me an excellent mate."

"But what about love—suppose you should not care for one another?" asked Tarzan.

Komodoflorensal shrugged his shoulders. "She will bear me a son who will some day be king of Trohanadalmakus," he replied, "and that is all that can be asked."

While the preparations for the

expedition against Veltopismakus were being carried on Tarzan was left much to his own devices. The activities of these diminutive people were a never ending source of interest to him. He watched the endless lines of slaves struggling with their heavy burdens toward the new dome that was rising with almost miraculous speed, or he strolled to the farmlands just beyond the city where other slaves tilled the rich soil, which they scratched with tiny plows drawn by teams of diadets, the diminutive antelope that was their only beast of burden. Always were the slaves accompanied by armed warriors if they were slaves of the first or second generation, lest they should attempt escape or revolution, as

well as a protection against beasts of prey and human enemies, since the slaves were not permitted to bear arms and, consequently, could not protect themselves. These slaves of the first and second generations were always easily recognizable by the vivid green tunic, reaching almost to the knees, which was the single garment of their caste, and which carried upon both its front and back an emblem or character in black that denoted the city of the slave's birth and the individual to whom he now belonged. The slaves employed upon public works all belonged to the king, Adendrohahkis, but in the fields many families were represented by their chattels.

Moving about the city upon their various duties were thousands of white-tunicked slaves. They exercised the mounts of their masters, they oversaw much of the more menial and laborious work of the lower caste slaves, they plied their trades and sold their wares in perfect freedom; but like the other slaves they wore but a single garment, together with rough sandals which were common to both classes. On their breasts and backs in red were the emblems of their masters. The second generation slaves of the green tunics had a similar emblem, these having been born in the city and being consequently considered a part of it. There were other, though minor, distinguishing marks upon the tunics of

the higher caste slaves; small insignia upon one shoulder or upon both, or upon a sleeve, denoting the occupation of the wearer. Groom, body servant, major-domo, cook, hairdresser, worker in gold and silver, potter—one could tell at a glance the vocation of each—and each belonged, body and soul, to his master, who was compelled to feed and dome these dependents, the fruits of whose labors belonged exclusively to him.

The wealth of one warrior family might lie in the beauty and perfection of the gold and silver ornaments it sold to its wealthy fellows and in such an instance all its skilled slaves, other than those required for personal and household duties, would be employed in

the designing and fabrication of these articles. Another family might devote its attention to agriculture, another to the raising of diadets; but all the work was done by the slaves, with the single exception of the breaking of the diadets that were bred for riding, an occupation that was not considered beneath the dignity of the warrior class, but rather, on the contrary, looked upon as a fitting occupation for nobles. Even the king's son broke his own diadets.

As an interested spectator Tarzan whiled the lazy days away. To his repeated queries as to the possibility of a way out of this bizarre, thorn-infested world, his hosts replied mat it was naught to penetrate the forest of thorn

trees, but that as it continued indefinitely to the uttermost extremities of matter it was quite useless to attempt to penetrate it at all, their conception of the world being confined to what they actually had seen —a land of hills, valleys and forest, surrounded by thorn trees. To creatures of their size the thorn forest was far from impenetrable, but Tarzan was not their size. Still he never ceased to plan on a means of escape, though he was in no great haste to attempt it, since he found the Minunians interesting and it suited his present primitive mood to loll in lazy ease in the city of Trohanadalmakus.

But of a sudden a change came, early of a morning, just as the first, faint

promise of dawn was tinging the eastern sky.

CHAPTER 7

The Alalus youth, son of The First Woman, ranged the forest in search of the ape-man, the only creature that ever had stirred within his savage, primitive breast any emotion even slightly akin to affection; but he did not find him. Instead he fell in with two older males of his own species, and these three hunted together, as was occasionally the custom of these inoffensive creatures. His new acquaintances showed little interest in his strange armament—they were quite content with a stick and a stone knife. To the former an occasional rodent fell and the latter discovered many a luscious grub and insect beneath the mold that floored the forest or hidden under the

bark of a tree. For the most part, however, they fed upon fruits, nuts and tubers. Not so the son of The First Woman, however. He brought in many birds and an occasional antelope, for he was becoming daily more proficient with the bow and the spear, and as he often brought in more than he could eat and left the remainder to his two fellows, they were permanently attached to him, or at least until such time as some fearsome woman should appear upon the scene to shatter their idyllic existence and drag one of them away to her corral.

They wondered a little at him in their slow and stupid minds, for he seemed to differ in some vague, intangible way

from them and all others of their sex that they had known. He held his chin higher for one thing and his gaze was far less shifty and apologetic. He strode with a firmer step and with less caution; but perhaps they smiled inwardly as they cogitated muddily upon that inevitable moment that would discover one of their coarse, brutal, hairy shes felling him with her bludgeon and dragging him off toward the caves by the hair of his head.

And then one day the thing happened, or at least a part of it happened —they met a huge she suddenly in an open place in the forest The two who accompanied the son of The First Woman turned in flight, but when they had reached the vantage ground of close-growing timber

they paused and looked back to see if the woman was pursuing them and what had become of their companion. To their relief they saw that the woman was not following them and to their consternation that their fellow had not fled, but was facing her defiantly, and motioning her to go away, or be killed. Such crass stupidity! He must have been whelped without brains. It never occurred to them to attribute his act to courage. Courage was for the shes; the male spent his Life in fleeing danger and the female of his species.

But they were grateful to him, for his rash act would save them since the she would take but one of them and that one would be he who thus foolishly

remained behind to defy her.

The woman, unaccustomed to having her rights challenged by mere man, was filled with surprise and righteous anger. Her surprise brought her to a sudden halt twenty paces from the man and her anger caused her to reach for one of the stone missiles hanging at her girdle. That was her undoing. The son of The First Woman, standing before her with an arrow already fitted to his bow, waited not to discover her further intentions, but even as the woman's fingers loosed the feathered messenger of defeat from the leather thong of her girdle, he drew the shaft to his cheek and released it.

His two companions, watching from the seclusion of the wood, saw the

woman stiffen, her face contorted in a spasm of pain; they saw her clutch frantically at a feathered shaft protruding from her chest, sink to her knees and then sprawl to earth, where she lay kicking with her feet and clutching with her fingers for a brief moment before she relapsed into eternal quiet; then they emerged from their concealment, and as the son of The First Woman approached his victim and wrenched the arrow from her heart they joined him, half- stunned as they were by surprise, and gazed first at the corpse of the she with expressions of incredulity and then at him with what was closely akin to awe and reverence.

They examined his bow and arrows and again and again they returned to the

wound in the woman's chest. It was all quite too amazing. And the son of The First Woman? He held his head high and his chest out and strutted proudly. Never before had he or any other man been cast in the role of hero and he enjoyed it. But he would impress them further. Seizing the corpse of the woman he dragged it to a nearby tree where he propped it in a sitting posture against the bole; then he walked away some twenty feet and, signing his fellows to observe him closely, he raised his heavy spear and hurled it at his realistic target, through which it passed to embed itself in the tree behind.

The others were greatly excited. One of them wanted to attempt this wondrous

feat and when he had thrown, and missed, his fellow insisted upon having a turn. Later they craved practice with the bow and arrow. For hours the three remained before their grisly target, nor did they desist until hunger prompted them to move on and the son of The First Woman had promised to show them how to fashion weapons similar to his own—a momentous occurrence in the history of the Alali, though these three sensed it as little as did the hundreds of Alalus women repairing to their caves that night in blissful ignorance of the blow that had been struck at their supremacy by the militant suffragists of Minuni.

And as suddenly, with more immediate results, the even tenor of

Tarzan's existence in the city of Trohanadalmakus was altered and a series of events initiated that were to lead to the maddest and most unbelievable denouement.

The ape-man lay upon a bed of grasses beneath a great tree that grew beside the city of King Adendrohahkis. Dawn was flushing the sky above the forest to the east of Trohanadalmakus, when Tarzan, his ear close to the ground, was suddenly awakened by a strange reverberation that seemed to come faintly from the bowels of the earth. It was such a dim and distant sound that it would scarce have been appreciable to you or to me had we placed an ear flat against the ground after having been told

that the noise existed; but to Tarzan it was an interruption of the ordinary noises of the night and, therefore, however slight, of sufficient import to impinge upon his consciousness even in sleep.

Awakened, he still lay listening intently. He knew that the sound did not come from the bowels of the earth, but from the surface and he guessed that it originated at no great distance, and also, he knew, that it was coming closer rapidly. For just a moment it puzzled him and then a great light dawned upon him and he sprang to his feet. The dome of the king, Adendrohahkis, lay a hundred yards away and toward it he bent his steps. Just before the south entrance he

was challenged by a tiny sentinel.

"Take word to your king," the ape-man directed him, "that Tarzan hears many diadets galloping toward Trohanadalmakus and that unless he is much mistaken each carries a hostile warrior upon its back."

The sentinel turned and hallooed down the corridor leading from the entrance, and a moment later an officer and several other warriors appeared. At sight of Tarzan they halted.

"What is wrong?" demanded the officer.

"The King's Guest says that he heard many diadets approaching," replied the sentinel.

"From what direction?" demanded the

officer, addressing Tarzan.

"From that direction the sounds appeared to come," replied the ape-man, pointing toward the west.

"The Veltopismakusians!" exclaimed the officer, and then, turning to those who had accompanied him from the interior of the king's dome: "Quick! arouse Trohanadalmakus—I will warn the king's dome and the king," and he wheeled and ran quickly within, while the others sped away to awaken the city.

In an incredibly short space of time Tarzan saw thousands of warriors streaming from each of the ten domes. From the north and the south doors of each dome rode mounted men, and from the east and west marched the foot

soldiers. There was no confusion; everything moved with military precision and evidently in accordance with a plan of defense in which each unit had been thoroughly drilled.

Small detachments of cavalry galloped quickly to the four points of the compass—these were scouts each detail of which spread fan wise just beyond the limits of the domes until the city was encircled by a thin line of mounted men that would halt when it had reached a predetermined distance from the city, and fall back with information before an advancing enemy. Following these, stronger detachments of mounted men moved out to north and south and east and west to take positions just inside the

line of scouts. These detachments were strong enough to engage the enemy and impede his progress as they fell back upon the main body of the cavalry which might by this plan be summoned in time to the point at which the enemy was making his boldest effort to reach the city.

And then the main body of the cavalry moved out, and in this instance toward the west, from which point they were already assured the foe was approaching; while the infantry, which had not paused since it emerged from the domes, marched likewise toward the four points of the compass in four compact bodies of which by far the largest moved toward the west. The

advance foot troops took their stations but a short distance outside the city, while within the area of the domes the last troops to emerge from them, both cavalry and infantry, remained evidently as a reserve force, and it was with these troops that Adendrohahkis took his post that he might be centrally located for the purpose of directing the defense of his city to better advantage.

Komodoflorensal, the prince, had gone out in command of the main body of cavalry that was to make the first determined stand against the oncoming foe. This body consisted of seven thousand five hundred men and its position lay two miles outside the city, half a mile behind a cavalry patrol of

five hundred men, of which there were four, one at each point of the compass, and totaling two thousand men. The balance of the ten thousand advance troops consisted of the five hundred mounted scouts or vedettes who, in turn, were half a mile in advance of the picket patrols, at two hundred foot intervals, entirely surrounding the city at a distance of three miles. Inside the city fifteen thousand mounted men were held in reserve.

In the increasing light of dawn Tarzan watched these methodical preparations for defense with growing admiration for the tiny Minunians. There was no shouting and no singing, but on the face of every warrior who passed close

enough for the ape-man to discern his features was an expression of exalted rapture. No need here for war cries or battle hymns to bolster the questionable courage of the weak—there were no weak.

The pounding of the hoofs of the advancing Veltopismakusian horde had ceased. It was evident that their scouts had discovered that the intended surprise had failed. Were they altering the plan or point of attack, or had they merely halted the main body temporarily to await the result of a reconnaissance? Tarzan asked a nearby officer if, perchance, the enemy had abandoned his intention of attacking at all. The man smiled and shook his head.

"Minunians never abandon an attack," he said.

As Tarzan's eyes wandered over the city's ten domes, illuminated now by the rays of the rising sun, he saw in each of the numerous window embrasures, that pierced the domes at regular intervals at each of their thirty odd floors, a warrior stationed at whose side lay a great bundle of short javelins, while just to his rear was piled a quantity of small, round stones. The ape-man smiled.

"They overlook no possible contingency," he thought. "But the quarry slaves! what of them? Would they not turn against their masters at the first opportunity for escape that an impending battle such as this would be almost

certain to present to them?" He turned again to the officer and put the question to him.

The latter turned and pointed toward the entrance to the nearest quarry, where Tarzan saw hundreds of white-tunicked slaves piling rocks upon it while a detachment of infantry leaned idly upon their spears as their officers directed the labor of the slaves.

"There is another detachment of warriors bottled up inside the quarry entrance," explained the officer to Tarzan. "If the enemy gains the city and this outer guard is driven into the domes or killed or captured, the inner guard can hold off an entire army, as only one man can attack them at a time. Our slaves are

safe, therefore, unless the city falls and that has not happened to any Minunian city within the memory of man. The best that the Veltopismakusians can hope for now is to pick up a few prisoners, but they will doubtless leave behind as many as they take. Had their surprise been successful they might have forced their way into one of the domes and made way with many women and much loot. Now, though, our forces are too well disposed to make it possible for any but a greatly superior force to seriously threaten the city itself. I even doubt if our infantry will be engaged at all."

"How is the infantry disposed?" asked Tarzan.

"Five thousand men are stationed within the windows of the domes," replied the officer; "five thousand more comprise the reserve which you see about you, and from which detachments have been detailed to guard the quarries. A mile from the city are four other bodies of infantry; those to the east, north and south having a strength of one thousand men each, while the one to the west, facing the probable point of attack, consists of seven thousand warriors."

"Then you think the fighting will not reach the city?" asked Tarzan.

"No. The lucky men today are in the advance cavalry—they will get whatever fighting there is. I doubt if an infantryman draws a sword or casts a

spear; but that is usually the case—it is the cavalry that fights, always."

"I take it that you feel unfortunate in not being attached to a cavalry unit. Could you not be transferred?"

"Oh, we must all take our turns of duty in each branch," explained the officer. "We are all mounted except for defense of the city and for that purpose we are assigned to the foot troops for four moons, followed by five moons in the cavalry"—the word he used was diadetax—"five thousand men being transferred from one to the other the night of each new moon."

Tarzan turned and looked out across the plain toward the west. He could see the nearer troops standing at ease,

awaiting the enemy. Even the main body of cavalry, two miles away, he could discern, because there were so many of them; but the distant pickets and vedettes were invisible. As he stood leaning upon his spear watching this scene, a scene such as no other man of his race ever had witnessed, and realized the seriousness of these little men in the business of war that confronted them, he could not but think of the people of his own world lining up their soldiers for purposes usually far less momentous to them than the call to arms that had brought the tough little warriors of Adendrohahkis swarming from their pallets in the defense of home and city.

No chicanery of politics here, no

thinly veiled ambition of some potential tyrant, no mad conception of hair-brained dreamers seized by the avaricious criminal for self-aggrandizement and riches; none of these, but patriotism of purest strain energized by the powerful urge of self-preservation. The perfect fighters, the perfect warriors, the perfect heroes these. No need for blaring trumpets; of no use to them the artificial aids to courage conceived by captains of the outer world who send unwilling men to battle for they know not what, deceived by lying propaganda, enraged by false tales of the barbarity of the foe, whose anger has been aroused against them by similar means.

During the lull that followed the departure from the city of the last of the advance troops Tarzan approached Adendrohahkis where he sat astride his diadet surrounded by a number of his high officers. The king was resplendent in golden jerkin, a leathern garment upon which small discs of gold were sewn, overlapping one another. About his waist was a wide belt of heavy leather, held in place by three buckles of gold, and of such dimensions as to have almost the appearance of a corset. This belt supported his rapier and knife, the scabbards of which were heavily inlaid with gold and baser metals in intricate and beautiful designs. Leather cuisses protected his upper legs in front

covering the thighs to the knees, while his forearms were encased in metal armlets from wrists almost to elbows. Upon his feet were strapped tough sandals, with a circular golden plate protecting each ankle-bone. A well-shaped leather casque fitted his head closely.

As Tarzan stopped before him the king recognized the ape-man with a pleasant greeting. "The captain of the guard reports that it is to you we owe the first warning of the coming of the Veltopismakusians. Once again have you placed the people of Trohanadalmakus under deep obligations. However are we to repay our debt?"

Tarzan gestured deprecatively. "You

owe me nothing, King of Trohanadalmakus," he replied. "Give me your friendship and tell me that I may go forward and join your noble son, the prince: then all the obligations shall be upon my head."

"Until the worms of death devour me I shall be your friend always, Tarzan," returned the king graciously. "Go where you will and that you choose to go where there should be fighting surprises me not."

It was the first time that any Minunian had addressed him by his name. Always had he been called Saviour of the Prince, Guest of the King, Giant of the Forest and by other similar impersonal appellations. Among the Minunians a

man's name is considered a sacred possession, the use of which is permitted only his chosen friends and the members of his family, and to be called Tarzan by Adendrohahkis was equivalent to an invitation, or a command, to the closest personal friendship with the king.

The ape-man acknowledged the courtesy with a bow. "The friendship of Adendrohahkis is a sacred honor, ennobling those who wear it. I shall guard it always with my life, as my most treasured possession," he said in a low voice; nor was the Lord of the Jungle moved by any maudlin sentimentality as he addressed the king. For these little people he had long since acknowledged to himself a keen admiration and for the

personal character of Adendrohahkis he had come to have the most profound respect. Never since he had learned their language had he ceased his inquiries concerning the manners and the customs of these people, and he had found the personality of Adendrohahkis so inextricably interwoven with the lives of his subjects that in receiving the answers to his questions he could not but absorb unquestionable evidence of the glories of the king's character.

Adendrohahkis seemed pleased with his words, which he acknowledged graciously, and then the ape-man withdrew and started toward the front. On the way he tore a leafy branch from a tree that grew beside his path for the

thought had occurred to him that such a weapon might be useful against Minunians and he knew not what the day might hold.

He had just passed the advanced infantry when a courier sped by him on a mad race toward the city. Tarzan strained his eyes ahead, but he could see no sign of battle and when he reached the main cavalry advance there was still no indication of an enemy as far ahead as he could see.

Prince Komodoflorensal greeted him warmly and looked a little wonderingly, perhaps, at the leafy branch he carried across one shoulder.

"What news?" asked Tarzan.

"I have just sent a messenger to the

king," replied the prince, "reporting that our scouts have come in touch with those of the enemy, who are, as we thought, the Veltopismakusians. A strong patrol from the outpost in our front pushed through the enemy's scout line and one courageous warrior even managed to penetrate as far as the summit of the Hill of Gartolas, from which he saw the entire main body of the enemy forming for attack. He says there are between twenty and thirty thousand of them."

As Komodoflorensal ceased speaking, a wave of sound came rolling toward them from the west.

"They are coming!" announced the prince.

CHAPTER 8

Ska, perched upon the horn of dead Gorgo, became suddenly aware of a movement in a nearby thicket. He turned his head in the direction of the sound and saw Sabor the lioness emerge from the foliage and walk slowly toward him. Ska was not terrified. He would leave, but he would leave with dignity. He crouched to spring upward, and extended his great wings to aid him in taking off. But Ska, the vulture, never rose. As he essayed to do so, something pulled suddenly upon his neck and held him down. He scrambled to his feet and, violently this time, strove to fly away. Again he was dragged back. Now Ska was terrified. The hateful thing that had

been dangling about his neck for so long was holding him to earth—the swinging loop of the golden chain had caught around the horn of Gorge, the buffalo. Ska was trapped. He struggled, beating his wings. Sabor stopped to regard him and his wild antics. Ska was flopping around in a most surprising manner. Sabor had never seen Ska behave thus before, and lions are sensitive, temperamental animals; so Sabor was not surprised only, she was inclined to be frightened. For another moment she watched the unaccountable antics of Ska and then she turned tail and slunk back into the undergrowth, turning an occasional growling countenance back upon the vulture, as much as to say;

"Pursue me at your peril!" But Ska had no thought of pursuing Sabor. Never again would Ska, the vulture, pursue aught.

"They are coming!" announced Komodoflorensal prince of Trohanadalmakus.

As Tarzan looked out across the rolling country in the direction of the enemy, he presently saw, from his greater height, the advance of the Veltopismakusians.

"Our scouts are falling back," he announced to Komodoflorensal.

"You can see the enemy?" demanded the prince.

"Yes."

"Keep me advised as to their movements."

"They are advancing in several long lines, deployed over a considerable front," reported the ape-man. "The scouts are falling back upon the outpost which seems to be standing its ground to receive them. It will be overwhelmed — if not by the first line then by those that succeed it."

Komodoflorensal gave a short command. A thousand mounted men leaped forward, urging their diadets into bounding leaps that cleared five, six and even seven feet at a time. Straight for the outpost ahead of them they raced, deploying as they went.

Another thousand moved quickly

toward the right and a third toward the left of the advance cavalry's position following Tarzan's announcement that the enemy had divided into two bodies just before it engaged the outpost, and that one of these was moving as though with the intention of turning the right flank of the main cavalry of Trohanadalmakus, while the other circled in the direction of the left flank.

"They are striking boldly and quickly for prisoners," said the prince to Tarzan.

"Their second and third lines are ploying upon the center and moving straight for us," said Tarzan. "They have reached the outpost, which is racing forward with them, giving battle vigorously with rapiers."

Komodoflorensal was dispatching messengers toward the rear. "It is thus that we fight," he said, evidently in explanation of the action of the outpost "It is time that you returned to the rear, for in another few moments you will be surrounded by the enemy if you remain. When they reach us we, too, will turn and fight them hand-to- hand back toward the city. If it still is their intention to enter the city the battle will resemble more a race than aught else, for the speed will be too great for effective fighting; but if they have abandoned that idea and intend contenting themselves with prisoners there will be plenty of fighting before we reach the infantry, past which I doubt if they will advance.

"With their greatly superior numbers they will take some prisoners, and we shall take some—but, quick! you must get back to the city, if already it is not too late."

"I think I shall remain here," replied the ape-man.

"But they will take you prisoner, or kill you."

Tarzan of the Apes smiled and shook his leafy branch. "I do not fear them," he said, simply.

"That is because you do not know them," replied the prince. "Your great size makes you overconfident, but remember that you are only four times the size of a Minunian and there may be thirty thousand seeking to overthrow

you."

The Veltopismakusians were driving swiftly forward. The prince could give no more time to what he saw was but a futile attempt to persuade Tarzan to retreat, and while he admired the strange giant's courage he likewise deplored his ignorance. Komodoflorensal had grown fond of their strange guest and he would have saved him had it been possible, but now he must turn to the command of his troops, since the enemy was almost upon them.

Tarzan watched the coming of the little men on their agile, wiry mounts. Line after line poured across the rolling country toward him, carrying to his mind a suggestion of their similarity to the

incoming rollers of the ocean's surf, each drop of which was soft and harmless, but in their countless numbers combined into a relentless and terrifying force of destruction, and the ape-man glanced at his leafy bough and smiled, albeit a trifle ruefully.

But now his whole attention was riveted by the fighting in the first two lines of the advancing horde. Racing neck and neck with the Veltopismakusian warriors were the men of Adendrohahkis' outpost and the thousands who had reinforced them. Each had selected an enemy rider whom he sought to strike from his saddle, and at top speed each duel was carried on with keen rapiers, though here and there

was a man wielding his spear, and sometimes to good effect. A few riderless diadets leaped forward with the vanguard, while others, seeking to break back or to the flanks, fouled the racing ranks, often throwing beasts and riders to the ground; but more frequently the warriors leaped their mounts entirely over these terrified beasts. The riding of the Minunians was superb, and their apparently effortless control of their swift and nervous steeds bordered upon the miraculous. Now a warrior, lifting his mount high into the air, cleared an adversary and as he rose above him cut down viciously with his rapier at his foeman's head, striking him from the saddle; but there was scarce time to

catch more than a fleeting, kaleidoscopic impression of the swift-moving spectacle before the great horde swarmed down upon him.

With his leafy bough, Tarzan had thought to sweep the little men from his path, but now friend and foe were so intermingled that he dared not attempt it for fear of unseating and injuring some of the warriors of his hosts. He raised the bough above their heads and waited until the first lines should have passed him and then, with only the enemies of Adendrohahkis about him, he would brush them aside and break the center of their charge.

He saw the surprised expressions upon the faces of the men of

Veltopismakus as they passed near him —surprise, but no fear— and he heard their shouts as one more fortunate than his fellows was able to rein closer to him and cut viciously at his legs as he sped past. Then indeed it became naught other than a matter of self-preservation to attempt to fend these off with his bough, nor was this impossible as the first lines moved past in loose ranks; but presently the solid mass of the Veltopismakusian cavalry was upon him. There was no veering aside to avoid him. In unbroken ranks, file after file, they bore down upon him. He threw his useless bough before him to impede their progress and grappled them with his fingers, tearing the riders from their

mounts and hurling them back upon their on rushing fellows; but still they came.

They jumped then—diadets over every obstruction. One rider, leaping straight for him, struck him head on in the pit of the stomach, half winding him and sending him back a step. Another and another struck his legs and sides. Again and again the needlelike points of their rapiers pierced his brown hide until from hips to feet he was red with his own blood, and always there were more thousands bearing down upon him. His weapons, useless against them, he made no attempt to use and though he wrought havoc among them with his bare hands there were always a hundred to take the place of each that he disposed

of.

He smiled grimly as he realized that in these little people, scarce one-fourth his size, he, the incomparable Tarzan, the Lord of the Jungle, had met his Wellington. He realized that he was entirely surrounded by the Veltopismakusians now, the warriors of Trohanadalmakus having engaged the advancing enemy were racing onward with them toward the seven thousand dismounted men who were to receive the brunt of that terrific charge. Tarzan wished that he might have witnessed this phase of the battle, but he had fighting enough and to spare to engage all his attention where he was.

Again he was struck in the stomach by

a charging rider and again the blow staggered him. Before he could recover himself another struck him in the same place and this time he went down, and instantly he was covered, buried by warriors and diadets, swarming over him, like ants, in countless numbers. He tried to rise and that was the last he remembered before he sank into unconsciousness.

Uhha, daughter of Khamis the witch doctor of the tribe of Obebe the cannibal, lay huddled upon a little pile of grasses in a rude thorn shelter in an open jungle. It was night but she was not asleep. Through narrowed lids she watched a giant white man who squatted just outside the shelter before a tiny fire.

The girl's lids were narrowed in hate as her smoldering eyes rested upon the man. There was no fear of the supernatural in her expression —just hate, undying hate.

Long since had Uhha ceased to think of Esteban Miranda as The River Devil. His obvious fear of the greater beasts of the jungle and of the black men-beasts had at first puzzled and later assured her that her companion was an impostor; River Devils do not fear anything. She was even commencing to doubt that the fellow was Tarzan, of whom she had heard so many fabulous stories during her childhood that she had come to look upon him as almost a devil himself—her people had no gods, only devils—which

answer just as good a purpose among the ignorant and superstitious as do gods among the educated and superstitious.

And when Esteban Miranda quite conclusively proved by his actions that he feared lions and that he was lost in the jungle these things did not square at all with her preconceived estimate of the powers and attributes of the famous Tarzan.

With the loss of her respect for him she lost, also, nearly all her fear. He was stronger than she and brutal. He could and would hurt her if she angered him, but he could not harm her in any other way than physically and not at all if she could keep out of his clutches. Many times had she rehearsed plans for

escape, but always she had hesitated because of the terrible fear she had of being alone in the jungle. Recently, however, she had been coming to realize more and more clearly that the white man was little or no protection to her. In fact, she might be better off without him, for at the first hint of danger it had been Miranda's habit to bolt for the nearest tree, and where trees were not numerous this habit of his had always placed Uhha under a handicap in the race for self-preservation, since Esteban, being stronger, could push her aside if she impeded his progress towards safety.

Yes, she would be as well off alone in the jungle as in the company of this man whom she thoroughly despised and

hated, but before she left him she must, her savage little brain assured her, revenge herself upon him for having tricked her into aiding him in his escape from the village of Obebe the chief as well as for having forced her to accompany him.

Uhha was sure that she could find her way to the village, albeit they had traveled long and far, and she was sure too that she could find the means for subsistence along the way and elude the fiercer beasts of prey that might beset the way. Only man she feared; but in this she was not unlike all other created things. Man alone of all the creations of God is universally hunted and feared and not only by the lower orders but by his own

kind, for of them all man alone joys in the death of others—the great coward who, of all creation, fears death the most.

And so the little Negro girl lay watching the Spaniard and her eyes glittered, for in his occupation she saw a means to her revenge. Squatting before his fire, leaning far forward, Esteban Miranda, gloated over the contents of a small buckskin bag which he had partially emptied into the palm of one of his hands. Little Uhha knew how highly the white man prized these glittering stones, though she was entirely ignorant of their intrinsic worth. She did not even know them for diamonds. All she knew was that the white man loved them, that

he valued them more highly than his other possessions and that he had repeatedly told her that he would die sooner than he would part with them.

For a long time Miranda played with the diamonds and for a long time Uhha watched him; but at last he returned them to their bag, which he fastened securely inside his loincloth. Then he crawled beneath the thorn shelter dragged a pile of thorns into the entrance to close it against the inroads of prowling beasts, and lay down upon the grasses beside Uhha.

How was this little girl going to accomplish the theft of the diamonds from the huge, Amazonian Spaniard? She could not filch them by stealth, for the

bag that contained them was so fastened inside his loincloth that it would be impossible to remove it without awakening him; and certainly this frail child could never wrest the jewels from Esteban by physical prowess. No, the whole scheme must die where it was born—inside Uhha's thick little skull.

Outside the shelter the fire flickered, lighting the jungle grasses about it and casting weird, fantastic shadows that leaped and danced in the jungle night Something moved stealthily among the lush vegetation a score of paces from the tiny camp. It was something large, for the taller grasses spread to its advance. They parted and a lion's head appeared. The yellow-green eyes gazed uneasily at

the fire. From beyond came the odor of man and Numa was hungry; too, upon occasion he had eaten of man and found him good— also of all his prey the slowest and the least able to protect himself; but Numa did not like the looks of things here and so he turned and disappeared from whence he had come. He was not afraid of the fire. Had he been he would have been afraid of the sun by day, for the sun he could not even look at without discomfort, and to Numa the fire and the sun might have been one, for he had no way of knowing which was sixty feet away and which ninety-three million miles. It was the dancing shadows that caused his nervous apprehension. Huge, grotesque creatures

of which he had had no experience seemed to be leaping all about him, threatening bun from every side. But Uhha paid no attention to the dancing shadows and she had not seen Numa the lion. She lay very still now, listening. The fire flared less high as the slow minutes dragged their leaden feet along. It was not so very long that she lay thus, but it seemed long to Uhha, for she had her plan all matured and ready for execution. A civilized girl of twelve might have conceived it, but it is doubtful that she would have carried it to its conclusion. Uhha, however, was not civilized and being what she was she was not hampered by any qualms of conscience.

Presently the Spaniard's breathing indicated that he was asleep. Uhha waited a little longer to make assurance doubly sure, then she reached beneath the grasses just beside her and when she withdrew her hand again she brought forth a short, stout cudgel. Slowly and cautiously she rose until she kneeled beside the recumbent form of the sleeping Spaniard. Then she raised her weapon above her head and brought it down once, heavily, upon Esteban's skull. She did not continue to beat him—the one blow was enough. She hoped that she had not killed him, for he must live if her scheme of revenge was to be realized; he must live and know that Uhha had stolen the bag of pebbles that

he so worshiped. Uhha appropriated the knife that swung at Miranda's hip and with it she cut away his loincloth and took possession of the buckskin bag and its contents. Then she removed the thorns from the entrance to the shelter, slipped out into the night and vanished into the jungle. During all her wanderings with the Spaniard she had not once lost her sense of the direction which pointed toward her home, and now, free, she set her face resolutely toward the southwest and the village of Obebe the cannibal. An elephant trail formed a jungle highway along which she moved at a swinging walk, her way lighted by the rays of a full moon that filtered through the foliage of a sparse forest. She feared

the jungle night and the nocturnal beasts of prey, but she knew that she must take this chance that she might put as great a distance as possible between herself and the white man before he regained consciousness and started in pursuit.

A hundred yards ahead of her, in the dense thicket that bordered the trail, Numa the lion sniffed, and listened with up- pricked ears bent in her direction. No dancing shadows here to suggest menacing forms to Numa's high-strung nervous system—only the scent of man coming closer and closer—a young she-man, most tender of its kind. Numa licked his slavering jowls and waited.

The girl came rapidly along the trail. Now she was abreast the lion, but the

king of beasts did not spring. There is something in the scent of the man-thing and the sight of the man-thing that awakens strange terrors in the breast of Numa. When he stalks Horta the boar or Bara the deer there is nothing in the near presence of either that arouses a similar sensation in the savage carnivore; then he knows no hesitancy when the instant comes to spring upon his prey. It is only the man-thing, helpless and leaden-footed, that causes him to pause in indecision at the crucial moment.

Uhha passed, ignorant of the fact that a great lion, hunting and hungry, stood within two paces of her. When she had passed Numa slunk into the trail behind her, and there he followed, stalking his

tender quarry until the moment should come when the mists of his indecision should be dispelled. And so they went through the jungle night—the great lion, creeping on stealthy, noiseless pads, and just ahead of him the little black girl, unconscious of the grim death stalking her through the dappled moonlight.

CHAPTER 9

When Tarzan of the Apes regained consciousness he found himself lying upon an earthen floor in a large chamber. As he first opened his eyes, before complete consciousness returned, he noticed that the room was well, but not brilliantly, lighted, and that there were others there besides himself. Later, as he commenced to collect and dominate his faculties of thought he saw that the room was lighted by two immense candles that appeared to be fully three feet in diameter and, though evidently partially melted away, yet at least five feet tall. Each supported a wick fully as large as a man's wrist and though the manner of their burning was similar to the candles

with which he was familiar, yet they gave off no smoke, nor were the beams and boards of the ceiling directly above them smoke-blackened.

The lights, being the most noticeable things in the room, had been the first to attract the ape-man's attention, but now his eyes wandered to the other occupants of the room. There were fifty or a hundred men of about his own height; but they were garbed and armed as had been the little men of Trohanadalmakus and Veltopismakus. Tarzan knit his brows and looked long and steadily at them. Who were they? Where was he?

As consciousness spread slowly throughout his body he realized that he was in pain and that his arms felt heavy

and numb. He tried to move them, only to discover that he could not—they were securely bound behind his back. He moved his feet—they were not secured. At last, after considerable effort, for he found that he was very weak, he raised himself to a sitting posture and looked about him. The room was filled with warriors who looked precisely like the little Veltopismakusians, hut they were as large as normal men, and the room itself was immense. There were a number of benches and tables standing about the floor and most of the men either were seated upon the benches or lay stretched upon the hard earth. A few men moved about among them and seemed to be working over them. Then it

was that Tarzan saw that nearly all within the chamber were suffering from wounds, many of them severe ones. The men who moved about among them were evidently attending to the wounded, and those, who might have been the nurses, were garbed in white tunics like the high caste slaves of Trohanadalmakus. In addition to the wounded and the nurses there were a half dozen armed warriors who were uninjured. One of these was the first to espy Tarzan after he had raised himself to a sitting posture.

"Ho!" shouted he. "The giant has come into his senses," and crossing the room he approached the ape-man. Standing before him, his feet widespread, he eyed Tarzan with a

broad grin upon his face. "Your great bulk availed you little," he taunted, "and now we are as large as you. We, too, are giants, eh?" and he turned to his fellows with a laugh in which they joined him.

Seeing that he was a prisoner, surrounded by enemies, the ape- man fell back upon that lifelong characteristic of the wild beast—sullen silence. He made no reply, but only sat there regarding them with the savage, level gaze of the brute at bay.

"He is dumb like the great beast-women of the caves," said the warrior to his fellows.

"Perhaps he is one of them," suggested another.

"Yes," seconded a third, "perhaps he

is one of the Zertalacolols."

"But their men are all cowards," urged the first speaker; "and this one fought like a warrior born."

"Yes, with his bare hands he fought till he went down."

"You should have seen how he threw diadets and warriors as one might pick up tiny pebbles and hurl them afar."

"He would not give a step, or run; and always he smiled."

"He does not look like the men of the Zertalacolols; ask him if he is."

He who had first addressed him put the question to Tarzan, but the ape-man only continued to glare at them.

"He does not understand me," said the

warrior. "I do not think that he is a Zertalacolol, though. What he is, however, I do not know:"

He approached and examined Tarzan's wounds. "These will soon be healed. In seven days, or less, he will be fit for the quarries."

They sprinkled a brown powder upon his wounds and brought him food and water and the milk of antelopes, and when they found that his arms were swelling badly and becoming discolored they brought an iron chain and, fastening one end about his waist with a clumsy padlock, secured him to a ring in the stone wall of the chamber, and cut the bonds from his wrists.

As they believed that he did not

understand their language they spoke freely before him, but as their tongue was almost identical with that employed by the Trohanadalmakusians Tarzan understood everything that they said, and thus he learned that the battle before the city of Adendrohahkis had not gone as well for the Veltopismakusians as Elkomoelhago, their king, had desired. They had lost many in killed and prisoners and in return had not killed near so many of the enemy and had taken comparatively few prisoners, though Elkomoelhago, he learned, considered him worth the entire cost of the brief war.

How they had changed themselves into men of his own stature Tarzan could

not comprehend, nor did any of the remarks he overheard shed any light upon this mystery of mysteries. But the climax of improbability was attained a few days later when he saw pass through the corridor, upon which the room of his incarceration was located, a file of warriors as large as he, each of whom was mounted upon a huge antelope fully as tall at the shoulder as the great eland, though obviously, from its contour and markings, a Royal Antelope, which is the smallest known. Tarzan ran his brown fingers through his thatch of black hair and gave up attempting to solve the enigmas that surrounded him.

His wounds healed quickly, as did those of the Veltopismakusians who

were convalescing about him, and upon the seventh day a half-dozen warriors came for him and the chain was removed from about his waist that he might accompany them. His captors had long since ceased to address him, believing that he was ignorant of their language, which meant to them that he was as speechless as an Alalus, since they could conceive of no language other than their own; but from their conversation, as they led him from the chamber and along a circular corridor, he discovered that he was being taken before their king, Elkomoelhago, who had expressed a desire to see this remarkable captive after he had recovered from his wounds.

The long corridor, through which they

were proceeding, was lighted partially by small candles set in niches and by the light from illuminated chambers the doors of which opened upon it. Slaves and warriors moved in two continuous and opposing lines through this corridor and every one that crossed it. There were high caste slaves in white tunics with the red emblems of their owners and their own occupation insignia upon them; there were green-tunicked slaves of the second generation with their master's insignia upon breast and back in black, and green-tunicked slaves of the first generation with a black emblem upon their breasts denoting the city of their nativity and their master's emblem upon their backs; there were warriors of

every rank and position; there were the plain leather trappings of the young and poor, and the jewel-studded harness of the rich; and passing all these in both directions and often at high speed were other warriors mounted upon the mighty antelopes that were still the greatest wonder that had confronted Tarzan since his incarceration in the city of Veltopismakus.

At intervals along the corridor Tarzan saw ladders extending to a floor above, but as he never saw one descending to a lower level he assumed that they were then upon the lowest floor of the structure. From the construction that he noted he was convinced that the building was similar to the dome he had seen in

the course of construction in the city of Adendrohahkis; but when he permitted his mind to dwell upon the tremendous proportions of such a dome capable of housing men of his own size he was staggered. Had Adendrohahkis' dome been duplicated in these greater dimensions, though in the same proportions, it would have been eight hundred eighty feet in diameter and four hundred forty feet high. It seemed preposterous to think that any race existed capable of accomplishing such an architectural feat with only the primitive means that these people might be able to command, yet here were the corridors with the arched roofs, the walls of neatly laid boulders and the

great chambers with their heavy ceiling beams and stout columns, all exactly as he had seen the dome in Trohanadalmakus, but on a vastly larger scale.

As his eyes and mind dwelt upon these enigmas which confronted them his escort led him from the circular corridor into one that ran at right angles to it where presently they stopped at the entrance to a chamber filled with row upon row of shelving packed full with all manner of manufactured articles. There were large candles and small candles, candles of every conceivable size and shape; there were helmets, belts, sandals, tunics, bowls, jars, vases and the thousand other articles of the

daily life of the Minunians with which Tarzan had become more or less familiar during his sojourn among the Trohanadalmakusians.

As they halted before the entrance to this room a white- tunicked slave came forward in response to the summons of one of the warriors of the escort.

"A green tunic for this fellow from Trohanadalmakus," he ordered.

"Whose insignia upon his back?" inquired the slave.

"He belongs to Zoanthrohago," replied the warrior.

The slave ran quickly to one of the shelves from which he selected a green tunic. From another he took two large, wooden blocks upon the face of each of

which was carved a different device. These he covered evenly with some sort of paint or ink, slipped a smooth board inside the tunic, placed one of the dies face downward upon the cloth, tapped it smartly with a wooden mallet several times and then repeated the operation with the other die upon the reverse side of the tunic. When he handed the garment to Tarzan with the instructions to don it the ape-man saw that it bore a device in black upon the breast and another upon the back, but he could not read them—his education had not progressed thus far.

The slave then gave him a pair of sandals and when he had strapped these to his feet the warriors motioned him on

down the corridor, which, as they proceeded, he was aware changed rapidly in appearance. The rough boulder walls were plastered now and decorated with colored paintings portraying, most often, battle scenes and happenings of the bunt, usually framed in panels bordered in intricate, formal designs. Vivid colorings predominated Many-hued candles burned in frequent niches. Gorgeously trapped warriors were numerous. The green-tunicked slave almost disappeared, while the white tunics of the higher caste bondsmen were of richer material and the slaves themselves were often resplendently trapped with jewels and fine leather.

The splendor of the scene, the brilliancy of the lighting, increased until the corridor came to an abrupt end before two massive doors of hammered gold in front of which stood gorgeously trapped warriors who halted them and questioned the commander of the escort as to their business.

"By the king's command we bring the slave of Zoanthrohago," replied the commander; "the giant who was taken prisoner at Trohanadalmakus."

The warrior who had challenged them turned to one of his fellows. "Go with this message and deliver it to the king!" he said.

After the messenger had departed the warriors fell to examining Tarzan and

asking many questions concerning him, to few of which could his guard give more than speculative answers, and then, presently, the messenger returned with word that the party was immediately to be admitted to the king's presence. The heavy doors were swung wide and Tarzan found himself upon the threshold of an enormous chamber, the walls of which converged toward the opposite end, where a throne stood upon a dais. Massive wooden columns supported the ceiling, which was plastered between its beams. The beams as well as the columns were ornamented with carving, while the plastered portions of the ceiling carried gorgeous arabesques in brilliant colors. The walls were paneled

to half their height, and above the paneling of wood were painted panels which Tarzan assumed depicted historical events from the history of Veltopismakus and her kings.

The room was vacant except for two warriors who stood before doors that flanked the throne dais, and as the party moved down the broad center aisle toward the throne one of these warriors signaled the leader and motioned to the door which he was guarding and which he now threw open before them, revealing a small antechamber in which were half a dozen handsomely trapped warriors seated on small, carved benches, while a seventh lolled in a high-backed chair, his fingers tapping

upon its broad arms as he listened to the conversation of the others, into which he threw an occasional word that always was received with deepest attention. If he scowled when he spoke, the others scowled still more deeply; if he smiled, they broke into laughter, and scarcely for an instant did their eyes leave his face, lest they miss some fleeting index of his changing moods.

Just inside the doorway the warriors who were conducting Tarzan halted, where they remained in silence until the man in the high- backed armchair deigned to notice them, then the leader knelt upon one knee, raised his arms, palms forward, high above his head, leaned as far back as he could and in a

monotonous dead level intoned his salutation.

"O, Elkomoelhago, King of Veltopismakus, Ruler of All Men, Master of Created Things, All-Wise, All-Courageous, All-Glorious! we bring these, as thou hast commanded, the slave of Zoanthrohago."

"Arise and bring the slave closer," commanded the man in the high-backed armchair, and then to his companions: "This is the giant that Zoanthrohago brought back from Trohanadalmakus."

"We have heard of him, All-Glorious," they replied.

"And of Zoanthrohago's wager?" questioned the king.

"And of Zoanthrohago's wager, All-

Wise!" replied one.

"What think you of it?" demanded Elkomoelhago.

"Even as you think, Ruler of All Men," quickly spoke another.

"And how is that?" asked the king.

The six looked quickly and uneasily, one at the others. "How does he think?" whispered he who was farthest from Elkomoelhago to his neighbor, who shrugged his shoulders hopelessly and looked to another.

"What was that, Gofoloso?" demanded the king. "What was that you said?"

"I was about to remark that unless Zoanthrohago first consulted our august

and all-wise ruler and is now acting upon his judgment he must, almost of necessity, lose the wager," replied Gofoloso glibly.

"Of course," said the king, "there is something in what you say, Gofoloso. Zoanthrohago did consult me. It was I who discovered the vibratory principle which made the thing possible. It was I who decided just how the first experiments were to be carried out. Heretofore it has not been enduring; but we believe that the new formula will have a persistency of thirty-nine moons at least—it is upon this that Zoanthrohago has made his wager. If he is wrong he loses a thousand slaves to Dalfastomalo."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Gofoloso. "Blessed indeed are we above all other peoples, with a king so learned and so wise as Elkomoelhago."

"You have much to be thankful for, Gofoloso," agreed the king; "but nothing compared to what will follow the success of my efforts to apply this principle of which we have been speaking, but with results diametrically opposite to those we have so far achieved; but we work upon it, we work upon it. Some day it will come and then I shall give to Zoanthrohago the formula that will revolutionize Minuni—then with a hundred men might we go forth and conquer the world!"

Elkomoelhago now turned his

attention suddenly upon the green-tunicked slave standing a short distance before him. He scrutinized him closely and in silence for several minutes.

"From what city do you come?" demanded the king, at last

"O, All-Glorious Elkomoelhago," spoke up the leader of the escort, "the poor ignorant creature is without speech."

"Utters he any sound?" inquired the king.

"None since he was captured, Master of Men," replied the warrior.

"He is a Zertalacolol," stated Elkomoelhago. "Why all this silly excitement over one of these low, speechless creatures?"

"See now!" exclaimed Gofoloso, "how quickly and surely the father of wisdom grasps all things, probing to the bottom of all mysteries, revealing their secrets. Is it not marvelous!"

"Now that the Sun of Science has shone upon him even the dullest may see that the creature is indeed a Zertalacolol," cried another of the king's companions. "How simple, how stupid of us all! Ah, what would become of us were it not for the glorious intelligence of the All-Wise."

Elkomoelhago was examining Tarzan closely. He seemed not to have heard the eulogies of his courtiers. Presently he spoke again.

"He has not the features of the

Zertalacolols," he pondered musingly. "See his ears. They are not the ears of the speechless ones, nor his hair. His body is not formed as theirs and his head is shaped for the storing of knowledge and the functioning of reason. No, he cannot be a Zertalacolol."

"Marvelous!" cried Gofoloso. "Did I not tell you! Elkomoelhago, our king, is always right?"

"The most stupid of us may easily see that he is not a Zertalacolol, now that the king's divine intelligence has made it go plain," exclaimed the second courtier.

At this juncture a door, opposite that through which Tarzan had been brought into the apartment, opened and a warrior appeared. "O, Elkomoelhago, King of

Veltopismakus," he droned, "thy daughter, the Princess Janzara, has come. She would see the strange slave that Zoanthrohago brought from Trohanadalmakus and craves the royal permission to enter."

Elkomoelhago nodded his assent "Conduct the princess to us!" he commanded.

The princess must have been waiting within earshot immediately outside the door, for scarcely had the king spoken when she appeared upon the threshold, followed by two other young women, behind whom were a half dozen warriors. At sight of her the courtiers rose, but not the king.

"Come in, Janzara," he said, "and

behold the strange giant who is more discussed in Veltopismakus than Veltopismakus' king."

The princess crossed the room and stood directly in front of the ape-man, who remained standing, as he had since be bad entered the chamber, with arms folded across his broad chest, an expression of absolute indifference upon his face. He glanced at the princess as she approached him and saw that she was a very beautiful young woman. Except for an occasional distant glimpse of some of the women of Trohanadalmakus she was the first Minunian female Tarzan had seen. Her features were faultlessly chiseled, her soft, dark hair becomingly arranged

beneath a gorgeous, jeweled headdress, her clear skin shaming the down of the peach in its softness. She was dressed entirely in white, befitting a virgin princess in the palace of her sire; her gown, of a soft, clinging stuff, fell in straight and simple lines to her arched insteps. Tarzan looked into her eyes. They were gray, but the shadows of her heavy lashes made them appear much darker than they were. He sought there an index to her character, for here was the young woman whom his friend, Komodoflorensal, hoped some day to espouse and make queen of Trohanadalmakus, and for this reason was the ape-man interested. He saw the beautiful brows knit into a sudden

frown.

"What is the matter with the beast?" cried the princess. "Is it made of wood?"

"It speaks no language, nor understands any," explained her father. "It has uttered no sound since it was captured."

"It is a sullen, ugly brute," said the princess. "I'll wager to make it utter a sound, and that quickly," with which she snatched a thin dagger from her belt and plunged it into Tarzan's arm. With such celerity had she moved that her act had taken all who witnessed it by surprise; but she had given the Lord of the Jungle an instant's warning in the few words she had spoken before she struck and these had been sufficient for him. He

could not avoid the blow, but he could and did avoid giving her the satisfaction of seeing her cruel experiment succeed, for he uttered no sound. Perhaps she would have struck again, for she was very angry now, but the king spoke sharply to her.

"Enough, Janzara!" he cried. "We would have no harm befall this slave upon whom we are conducting an experiment that means much to the future of Veltopismakus."

"He has dared to stare into my eyes," cried the princess, "and he has refused to speak when he knew that it would give me pleasure. He should be killed!"

"He is not yours to kill," returned the king. "He belongs to Zoanthrohago."

"I will buy him," and turning to one of her warriors, "Fetch Zoanthrohago!"

CHAPTER 10

When Esteban Miranda regained consciousness, the fire before his rude shelter was but a heap of cold ashes and dawn had almost come. He felt weak and dizzy and his head ached. He put his hand to it and found his thick hair matted with coagulated blood. He found something else as well—a great wound in his scalp, that made him shudder and turn sick, so that he fainted. When again he opened his eyes it was quite daylight. He looked about him questioning. Where was he? He called aloud in Spanish—called to a woman with a musical name. Not Flora Hawkes, but a soft, Spanish name that Flora never had heard.

He was sitting up now and presently

he regarded his nakedness in evident surprise. He picked up the loincloth that had been cut from his body. Then he looked all about him on the ground—his eyes dull, stupid, wondering. He found his weapons and picking them up examined them. For a long time he sat fingering them and looking at them, his brows puckered in thought. The knife, the spear, the bow and arrows he went over time and time again.

He looked out upon the jungle scene before him and the expression of bewilderment on his face but increased. He half-rose, remaining upon his knees. A startled rodent scurried across the clearing. At sight of it the man seized his bow and fitted an arrow, but the animal

was gone before he could loose his shaft Still kneeling, the bewildered expression upon his countenance deepening, he gazed in mute astonishment upon the weapon he held so familiarly in his hand. He arose, gathered up his spear and knife and the balance of his arrows and started off into the jungle.

A hundred yards from his shelter he came upon a lion feeding upon the carcass of its kill that it had dragged into the bushes beside the wide elephant trail along which the man made his way. The lion growled ominously. The man halted, listening intently. He was still bewildered; but only for an instant did he remain motionless in the trail. With

the spring of a panther he gained the low swinging limb of the nearest tree. There he squatted for a few minutes. He could see Numa the lion feeding upon the carcass of some animal—what the animal had been he could not determine. After a while the man dropped silently from the tree and went off into the jungle in the opposite direction from that he had at first chanced upon. He was naked, but he did not know it. His diamonds were gone, but he would not have known a diamond had he seen one. Uhha had left him, but he did not miss her, for he knew not that she ever had existed.

Blindly and yet well, his muscles reacted to every demand made upon them in the name of the first law of

nature. He had not known why he leaped to a tree at the sound of Numa's growl, nor could he have told why he walked in the opposite direction when he saw where Numa lay up with his kill. He did not know that his hand leaped to a weapon at each new sound or movement in the jungle about him.

Uhha had defeated her own ends. Esteban Miranda was not being punished for his sins for the very excellent reason that he was conscious of no sins nor of any existence. Uhha had killed his objective mind. His brain was but a storehouse of memories that would never again be raised above the threshold of consciousness. When acted upon by the proper force they stimulated

the nerves that controlled his muscles, with results seemingly identical with those that would have followed had he been able to reason. An emergency beyond his experience would, consequently, have found him helpless, though ignorant of his helplessness. It was almost as though a dead man walked through the jungle. Sometimes he moved along in silence, again he babbled childishly in Spanish, or, perhaps, quoted whole pages of Shakespeare in English.

Could Uhha have seen him now, even she, savage little cannibal, might have felt remorse at the horror of her handiwork, which was rendered even more horrible because its miserable

object was totally unconscious of it; but Uhha was not there to see, nor any other mortal; and the poor clay that once had been a man moved on aimlessly through the jungle, killing and eating when the right nerves were excited, sleeping, talking, walking as though he lived as other men live; and thus, watching him from afar, we see him disappear amidst the riotous foliage of a jungle trail.

The Princess Janzara of Veltopismakus did not purchase the slave of Zoanthrohago. Her father, the king, would not permit it, and so, very angry, she walked from the apartment where she had come to examine the captive and when she had passed into the next room and was out of her royal

sire's range of vision, she turned and made a face in his direction, at which all her warriors and the two hand- maidens laughed.

"Fool!" she whispered in the direction of her unconscious father. "I shall own the slave yet and kill him, too, if I mind." The warriors and the hand-maidens nodded their heads approvingly.

King Elkomoelhago arose languidly from his chair. "Take it to the quarries," he said, indicating Tarzan with a motion of his thumb, "but tell the officer in charge that it is the king's wish that it be not overworked, nor injured," and as the ape-man was led away through one doorway, the king quitted the chamber

by another, his six courtiers bowing in the strange, Minunian way until he was gone. Then one of them tiptoed quickly to the doorway through which Elkomoelhago had disappeared, flattened himself against the wall beside the door and listened for a moment. Apparently satisfied, he cautiously insinuated his head beyond the doorframe until he could view the chamber adjoining with one eye, then he turned back toward his fellows.

"The old half-wit has gone," he announced, though in a whisper that would have been inaudible beyond the chamber in which it was breathed, for even in Minuni they have learned that the walls have ears, though they express it

differently, saying, instead: Trust not too far the loyalty of even the stones of vow chamber.

"Saw you ever a creature endowed with such inordinate vanity!" exclaimed one.

"He believes that he is wiser than, not any man, but all men combined," said another. "Sometimes I feel that I can abide his arrogance no longer."

"But you will, Gefasto," said Gofoloso. "To be Chief of Warriors of Veltopismakus is too rich a berth to be lightly thrown aside."

"When one might simultaneously throw away one's life at the same time," added Torndali, Chief of Quarries.

"But the colossal effrontery of the

man!" ejaculated another, Makahago, Chief of Buildings. "He has had no more to do with Zoanthrohago's success than have I and yet he claims the successes all for himself and blames the failures upon Zoanthrohago."

"The glory of Veltopismakus is threatened by his egotism," cried Throwaldo, Chief of Agriculture. "He has chosen us as his advisers, six princes, whose knowledge of their several departments should be greater than that of any other individuals and whose combined knowledge of the needs of Veltopismakus and the affairs of state should form a bulwark against the egregious errors that he is constantly committing; but never will he heed our

advice. To offer it he considers a usurpation of his royal prerogatives, to urge it, little short of treason. To question his judgment spells ruin. Of what good are we to Veltopismakus? What must the people of the state think of us?"

"It is well known what they think of us," snapped Gofoloso. "They say that we were chosen, not for what we know, but for what we do not know. Nor can you blame them. I, a breeder of diadets, master of ten thousand slaves who till the soil and raise a half of all the food that the city consumes, am chosen Chief of Chiefs, filling an office for which I have no liking and no training, while Throwaldo, who scarce knows the top of

a vegetable from its roots, is Chief of Agriculture. Makahago worked the quarry slaves for a hundred moons and is made Chief of Buildings, while Torndali, who is acclaimed the greatest builder of our time, is Chief of Quarries. Gefasto and Vestako, alone, are masters of their bureaus. Vestako the king chose wisely as Chief of the Royal Dome, that his royal comfort and security might be assured; but in Gefasto behold his greatest blunder! He elevated a gay young pleasure-seeker to the command of the army of Veltopismakus and discovered in his new Chief of Warriors as great a military genius as Veltopismakus has ever produced."

Gefasto bowed his acknowledgment

of the compliment.

"Had it not been for Gefasto the Trohanadalmakusians would have trapped us fairly the other day," continued Gofoloso.

"I advised the king against pushing the assault," interjected Gefasto, "as soon as it became evident that we had failed to surprise them. We should have withdrawn. It was only after we had advanced and I was free from him that I could direct the affair without interference, and then, as you saw, I quickly extricated our troops and withdrew them with as little loss of men and prestige as possible."

"It was nobly done, Gefasto," said Torndali. "The troops worship you.

They would like a king who led them in battle as you might lead them."

"And let them have their wine as of old," interjected Makahago.

"We would all rally around a king who permitted us the innocent pleasure of our wine," said Gofoloso: "What say you, Vestako?"

The Chief of the Royal Dome, the king's major-domo, who had remained silent throughout the arraignment of his master, shook his head.

"It is not wise to speak treason now," he said.

The three looked sharply at him and glanced quickly at one another.

"Who has spoken treason, Vestako?"

demanded Gofoloso.

"You have all come too close to it for safety," said the oily Vestako. He spoke in a much louder voice than the others had spoken, as though, far from being fearful of being overheard, he rather hoped that he would be. "Elkomoelhago has been good to us. He has heaped honors and riches upon us. We are very powerful. He is a wise ruler. Who are we to question the wisdom of his acts?"

The others looked uneasily about. Gofoloso laughed nervously. "You were ever slow to appreciate a joke, my good Vestako." he said. "Could you not see that we were hoaxing you?"

"I could not," replied Vestako; "but the king has a fine sense of humor. I will

repeat the joke to him and if he laughs then I shall laugh, too, for I shall know that it was indeed a joke. But I wonder upon whom it will be!"

"Oh, Vestako, do not repeat what we have said—not to the king. He might not understand. We are good friends and it was said only among friends." Gofoloso was evidently perturbed in spirit—he spoke rapidly. "By the way, my good Vestako, I just happened to recall that the other day you admired one of my slaves. I have intended giving him to you. If you will accept him he is yours."

"I admire a hundred of your slaves," said Vestako, softly.

"They are yours, Vestako," said Gofoloso. "Come with me now and

select them. It is a pleasure to make my friend so trifling a present."

Vestako looked steadily at the other four. They shifted uneasily in momentary silence, which was broken by Throwaldo, Chief of Agriculture. "If Vestako would accept a hundred of my poor slaves I should be overwhelmed with delight," he said.

"I hope they will be slaves of the white tunic," said Vestako.

"They will," said Throwaldo.

"I cannot be outdone in generosity," said Torndali; "you must accept a hundred slaves from me."

"And from me!" cried Makahago, Chief of Buildings.

"If you will send them to my head slave at my quarters before the Sun enters the Warriors' Corridor I shall be overwhelmed with gratitude," said Vestako, rubbing his palms and smiling unctuously. Then he looked quickly and meaningly at Gefasto, Chief of Warriors of Veltopismakus.

"Best can I show my friendship for the noble Vestako," said Gefasto, unsmiling, "by assuring him that I shall, if possible, prevent my warriors from slipping a dagger between his ribs. Should aught of harm befall me, however, I fear that I cannot be responsible for the acts of these men, who, I am told, love me." For a moment longer he stood looking straight into the

eyes of Vestako, then he turned upon his heel and strode from the room.

Of the six men who composed the Royal Council, Gefasto and Gofoloso were the most fearless, though even they flattered the vain and arrogant Elkomoelhago, whose despotic powers rendered him a most dangerous enemy. Custom and inherent loyalty to the royal family, in addition to that most potent of human instrumentalities—self- interest, held them, to the service of their king, but so long had they been plotting against him and so rife was discontent throughout the city, that each now felt that he might become bolder with impunity.

Torndali, Makahago and Throwaldo

having been chosen by the king for their supposed pliability and having, unlike Gefasto and Gofoloso, justified his expectations, counted for little one way or another. Like the majority of the Veltopismakusian nobles under the reign of Elkomoelhago they had become corrupt, and self-interest guided their every act and thought. Gefasto did not trust them, for he knew that they could be bought even while professing their virtue, and Gefasto had taken to the study of men since his success with the warriors of his city—a success that was fully as much a surprise to him as to others—and his knowledge of the mounting restlessness of the people had implanted in the fertile soil of a virile

brain the idea that Veltopismakus was ripe for a new dynasty.

Vestako he knew for a self-acknowledged and shameless bribe-taker. He did not believe that there was an honest hair in the man's head, but he had been surprised at the veiled threat of exposure he had used to mulct his fellows.

"Low indeed have fallen the fortunes of Veltopismakus," he said to Gofoloso as the two walked along the Warriors' Corridor after quitting the council chamber of the king.

"As exemplified by—?" queried the Chief of Chiefs.

"By Vestako's infamy. He cares neither for king nor for people. For

slaves or gold he would betray either, and Vestako is typical of the majority of us. No longer is friendship sacred, for even from Throwaldo he exacted the toll of his silence, and Throwaldo has ever been accounted his best friend."

"What has brought us to such a pass, Gefasto?" asked

Gofoloso, thoughtfully. "Some attribute it to one cause and some to another, and though there should be no man in Veltopismakus better able than myself to answer my own question, I confess that I am at a loss. There are many theories, but I doubt me the right one has yet been expounded."

"If one should ask me, Gofoloso, and you have asked me, I should say to him

as I am about to say to you that the trouble with Veltopismakus is too much peace. Prosperity follows peace—prosperity and plenty of idle time. Time must be occupied. Who would occupy it in labor, even the labor of preparing one's self to defend one's peace and prosperity, when it may so easily be occupied in the pursuit of pleasure? The material prosperity that has followed peace has given us the means to gratify our every whim. We have become satiated with the things we looked upon in the days of yesterday as luxuries to be sparingly enjoyed upon rare occasion. Consequently we have been forced to invent new whims to be gratified and you may rest assured that these have

become more and more extravagant and exaggerated in form and idea until even our wondrous prosperity has been taxed to meet the demands of our appetites.

"Extravagance reigns supreme. It rests, like a malign incubus, upon the king and his government. To mend its inroads upon the treasury, the burden of the incubus is shifted from the back of the government to the back of the people in the form of outrageous taxes which no man can meet honestly and have sufficient remaining wherewith to indulge his appetites, and so by one means or another, he passes the burden on to those less fortunate or less shrewd."

"But the heaviest taxation falls upon

the rich," Gofoloso reminded him.

"In theory, but not in fact," replied Gefasto. "It is true that the rich pay the bulk of the taxes into the treasury of the king, but first they collect it from the poor in higher prices and other forms of extortion, in the proportion of two jetaks for every one that they pay to the tax collector. The cost of collecting this tax added to the loss in revenue to the government by the abolition of wine and the cost of preventing the unscrupulous from making and selling wine illicitly would, if turned back into the coffers of the government, reduce our taxes so materially that they would fall as a burden upon none."

"And that, you think, would solve our

problems and restore happiness to Veltopismakus?" asked Gofoloso.

"No," replied his fellow prince. "We must have war. As we have found that there is no enduring happiness in peace or virtue, let us have a little war and a little sin. A pudding that is all of one ingredient is nauseating —it must be seasoned, it must be spiced, and before we can enjoy the eating of it to the fullest we must be forced to strive for it. War and work, the two most distasteful things in the world, are, nevertheless, the most essential to the happiness and the existence of a people. Peace reduces the necessity for labor, and induces slothfulness. War compels labor, that her ravages may be effaced. Peace turns us

into fat worms. War makes men of us."

"War and wine, then, would restore Veltopismakus to her former pride and happiness, you think?" laughed Gofoloso. "What a firebrand you have become since you came to the command of all the warriors of our city!"

"You misunderstand me, Gofoloso," said Gefasto, patiently. "War and wine alone will accomplish nothing but our ruin. I have no quarrel with peace or virtue or temperance. My quarrel is with the misguided theorists who think that peace alone, or virtue alone, or temperance alone will make a strong, a virile, a contented nation. They must be mixed with war and wine and sin and a great measure of hard work—especially

hard work—and with nothing but peace and prosperity there is little necessity for hard work, and only the exceptional man works hard when he does not have to.

"But come, you must hasten to deliver the hundred slaves to Vestako before the Sun enters the Warriors' Corridor, or he will tell your little joke to Elkomoelhago."

Gofoloso smiled ruefully. "Some day he shall pay for these hundred slaves," he said, "and the price will be very high."

"If his master falls," said Gefasto.

"When his master falls!" Gofoloso corrected.

The Chief of Warriors shrugged his

shoulders, but he smiled contentedly, and he was still smiling after his friend had turned into an intersecting corridor and gone his way.

CHAPTER 11

Tarzan of the Apes was led directly from the Royal Dome to the quarries of Veltopismakus, which lie a quarter of a mile from the nearer of the eight domes which constitute the city. A ninth dome was in course of construction and it was toward this that the line of burdened slaves wound from the entrance to the quarry to which the ape-man was conducted. Just below the surface, in a well-lighted chamber, he was turned over to the officer in charge of the quarry guard, to whom the king's instructions concerning him were communicated.

"Your name?" demanded the officer, opening a large book that lay upon the

table at which he was seated.

"He is as dumb as the Zertalacolols," explained the commander of the escort that had brought him to the quarry. "Therefore he has no name."

"We will call him The Giant, then," said the officer, "for as such has he been known since his capture," and he wrote in his book, Zuanthrol, with Zoanthrohago as the owner, and Trohanadalmakus as the city of his origin, and then he turned to one of the warriors lolling upon a nearby bench.

"Take him to the timbering crew in the extension of tunnel thirteen at the thirty-sixth level and tell the Vental in charge to give him light work and see that no harm befalls him, for such are the

commands of the Thagostogol But wait! Here is his number. Fasten it upon his shoulder."

The warrior took the circular piece of fabric with black hieroglyphics stamped upon it and affixed it with a metal clasp to the left shoulder of Tarzan's green tunic and then, motioning the ape- man to precede him, quit the chamber.

Tarzan now found himself in a short, dark corridor which presently opened into a wider and lighter one along which innumerable, unladen slaves were moving in the same direction that his guard now escorted him. He noticed that the floor of the corridor had a constant downward gradient and that it turned ever to the right, forming a great spiral

leading downward into the earth. The walls and ceiling were timbered and the floor paved with flat stones, worn smooth by the millions of sandaled feet that had passed over them. At sufficiently frequent intervals candles were set in niches in the left-hand wall, and, also at regular intervals, other corridors opened out of it Over each of these openings were more of the strange hieroglyphics of Minuni. As Tarzan was to learn later, these designated the levels at which the tunnels lay and led to circular corridors which surrounded the main spiral runway. From these circular corridors ran the numerous horizontal tunnels loading to the workings at each level. Shafts for ventilation and

emergency exit pierced these tunnels at varying distances, running from the surface to the lowest levels of the quarry.

At almost every level a few slaves turned off into these lateral tunnels which were well lighted, though not quite as brilliantly as the spiral. Shortly after they had commenced the descent, Tarzan, accustomed from infancy to keen observation, bad taken note of the numbers of tunnel entrances they passed, but he could only conjecture at the difference in the depths of the levels into which they opened. A rough guess placed them at fifteen feet, but before they reached the thirty-sixth, into which they turned, Tarzan felt that there must be

an error in his calculations, for he was sure that they could not be five hundred and forty feet below the earth's surface with open flames and no forced ventilation.

The horizontal corridor they now entered after leaving the spiral curved sharply to the right and then back to the left. Shortly afterward it crossed a wide, circular corridor in which were both laden and unladen slaves, beyond which were two lines, those laden with rock moving back in the direction from which Tarzan had come, while others, bearing lumber moved in the same direction that he did. With both lines there were unladen slaves.

After traversing the horizontal tunnel

for a considerable distance they came at last upon the working party, and here Tarzan was turned over to the Vental, a warrior who, in the military organizations of the Minunians, commands ten men.

"So this is The Giant!" exclaimed the Vental. "And we are not to work him top hard." His tone was sneering and disagreeable. "Such a giant!" he cried. "Why, he is no larger than I and they are afraid to let him do any work into the bargain. Mark you, he will work here or get the lash. Kalfastoban permits no sluggards," and the fellow struck his chest vauntingly.

He who had brought Tarzan appeared disgusted. "You will do well,

Kalfastoban," he said, as he turned away to retrace his steps to the guard room, "to heed the king's commands. I should hate to be wearing your harness if aught befell this speechless slave that has set every tongue in Veltopismakus going and made Elkomoelhago so jealous of Zoanthrohago that he would slip steel between his ribs were it not that he could then no longer steal the great wizard's applause."

"Kalfastoban fears no king," blustered the Vental, "least of all the sorry specimen that befouls the throne of Veltopishago. He fools no one but himself. We all know that Zoanthrohago is his brain and Gefasto his sword."

"However," warned the other, "be

careful of Zuanthrol," and he departed.

Kalfastoban Vental set the new slave to work upon the timbering of the tunnel as it was excavated from the great moraine that formed the quarry, the line of slaves coming from the surface empty-handed passed down one side of the tunnel to the end, loosened each a rock, or if heavy a rock to two men, and turned back up the tunnel's opposite side, carrying their burdens back to the spiral runway used by those leaving the workings and so up and out to the new dome. The earth, a light clay, that filled the interstices between the rocks in the moraine was tamped into the opening behind the wall timbers, the tunnel being purposely made sufficiently large to

permit of this. Certain slaves were detailed for this work, others carried timbers cut to the right dimensions down to the timbering crew, of which Tarzan was one. It was only necessary for this crew of three to scoop a narrow, shallow trench in which to place the foot of each wall board, set them in place and slip the ceiling board on top of them. At each end of the ceiling boards was a cleat, previously attached at the surface, which kept the wall boards from falling in after being set in place. The dirt tamped behind them fastened them solidly in their places, the whole making a quickly erected and substantial shoring.

The work was light for the ape-man,

though he still was weak from the effects of his wounds, and he had opportunities constantly to observe all that went on around him and to gather new information relative to the people in whose power he found himself. Kalfastoban he soon set down as a loudmouthed braggart, from whom one need have nothing to fear during the routine of their everyday work, but who would bear watching if ever opportunity came for him to make a show of authority or physical prowess before the eyes of his superiors.

The slaves about him worked steadily, but seemed not to be overtaxed, while the guards, which accompanied them constantly, in the ratio of about one

warrior to every fifty slaves, gave no indications of brutality in the treatment they accorded their charges, insofar as Tarzan was able to observe.

The fact that puzzled him most now as it had since the moment of his first return to consciousness, was the stature of these people. They were no pygmies, but men fully as large as the usual run of Europeans. There was none quite as tall as the ape-man, but there were many who missed it by but the scantiest fraction of an inch. He knew that they were Veltopismakusians, the same people he had seen battling with the Trohanadalmakusians; they spoke of having captured him in the battle that he had seen waged; and they called him

Zuanthrol, The Giant, yet they were as large as he, and as he had passed from the Royal Dome to the quarry he had seen their gigantic dome dwellings rising fully four hundred feet above his head. It was all preposterous and impossible, yet he had the testimony of all his faculties that it was true. Contemplation of it but tended to confuse him more and so he gave over all attempts to solve the mystery and set himself to the gathering of information concerning his captors and his prison against that time which he well knew must some day come when the means of escape should offer itself to the alert and cunning instincts of the wild beast that, at heart, he always considered himself.

Wherever he had been in Veltopismakus, whoever he had heard refer to the subject, he had had it borne in upon him that the people were generally dissatisfied with their king and his government, and he knew that among a discontented people efficiency would be at low ebb and discipline demoralized to such an extent that, should he watch carefully, he must eventually discover the opportunity he sought, through the laxity of those responsible for his safekeeping. He did not expect it today or tomorrow, but today and tomorrow were the days upon which to lay the foundation of observation that would eventually reveal an avenue of escape.

When the long working day at last drew to a close the slaves were conducted to their quarters, which, as Tarzan discovered, were always on levels near to those in which they labored. He, with several other slaves, was conducted to the thirty-fifth level and into a tunnel the far end of which had been widened to the proportions of a large chamber, the narrow entrance to which had been walled up with stone except for a small aperture through which the slaves were forced to pass in and out of their chamber upon all fours, and when the last of them was within, this was closed and secured by a heavy door outside which two warriors watched throughout the night.

Once inside and standing upon his feet the ape-man looked about him to discover himself within a chamber so large that it seemed easy to accommodate the great throng of slaves that must have numbered fully five thousand souls of both sexes. The women were preparing food over small fires the smoke of which found its way from the chamber through openings in the ceiling. For the great number of fires the amount of smoke was noticeably little, a fact which was, however, accounted for by the nature of the fuel, a clean, hard charcoal; but why the liberated gases did not asphyxiate them all was quite beyond the ape-man, as was still the riddle of the open flames and the pure air at the

depth where the workings lay. Candles burned in niches all about the walls and there were at least half-a-dozen large ones standing upon the floor.

The slaves were of all ages from infancy to middle age, but there were no aged venerables among them. The skins of the women and children were the whitest Tarzan had ever seen and he marveled at them until he came to know that some of the former and all of the latter had never seen daylight since birth. The children who were born here would go up into the daylight some time, when they were of an age that warranted beginning the training for the vocations their masters had chosen for them, but the women who had been captured from

other cities would remain here until death claimed them, unless that rarest of miracles occurred—they should be chosen by a Veltopismakusian warrior as his mate; but that was scarce even a remote possibility, since the warriors almost invariably chose their mates from the slaves of the white tunic with whom they came in daily contact in the domes above ground.

The faces of the women bore the imprint of a sadness that brought a spontaneous surge of sympathy to the breast of the savage ape-man. Never in his life had he seen such abject hopelessness depicted upon any face.

As he crossed the room many were the glances that were cast upon him, for

it was obvious from his deep tan that he was a newcomer, and, too, there was that about him that marked him of different clay from them, and soon there were whispers running through the throng, for the slaves who had entered with him had passed the word of his identity to the others, and who, even in the bowels of the earth, had not heard of the wondrous giant captured by Zoanthrohago during the battle with the Trohanadalmakusians?

Presently a young girl, kneeling above a brazier over which she was grilling a cut of flesh, caught his eye and motioned him to her. As he came he saw that she was very beautiful, with a pale, translucent skin the whiteness of which

was accentuated by the blue- black of a wealth of lustrous hair.

"You are The Giant?" she asked.

"I am Zuanthrol," he replied.

"He has told me about you," said the girl. "I will cook for you, too. I cook for him. Unless," she added with a trace of embarrassment, "there is another you would rather have cook for you."

"There is no one I would rather have cook for me," Tarzan told her; "but who are you and who is he?"

"I am Talaskar," she replied; "but I know him only by his number. He says that while he remains a slave he has no name, but will go always by his number, which is Eight Hundred Cubed, Plus Nineteen. I see that you are Eight

Hundred Cubed, Plus Twenty-one." She was looking at the hieroglyphics that had been fastened upon his shoulder. "Have you a name?"

"They call me Zuanthrol."

"Ah," she said, "you are a large man, but I should scarcely call you a giant. He, too, is from Trohanadalmakus and he is about your height. I never heard that there were any giants in Minuni except the people they call Zertalacolols."

"I thought you were a Zertalacolol," said a man's voice at Tarzan's ear.

The ape-man turned to see one of the slaves with whom he had been working eyeing him quizzically, and smiled.

"I am a Zertalacolol to my masters,"

he replied.

The other raised his brows. "I see," he said. "Perhaps you are wise. I shall not be the one to betray you," and passed on about his business.

"What did he mean?" asked the girl.

"I have never spoken, until now, since they took me prisoner," he explained, "and they think I am speechless, though I am sure that I do not look like a Zertalacolol, yet some of them insist that I am one."

"I have never seen one," said the girl.

"You are fortunate," Tarzan told her. "They are neither pleasant to see nor to meet."

"But I should like to see them," she

insisted. "I should like to see anything that was different from these slaves whom I see all day and every day."

"Do not lose hope," he encouraged her, "for who knows but that it may be very soon that you will return to the surface."

"Return," she repeated. "I have never been there."

"Never been to the surf ace! You mean since you were captured."

"I was born in this chamber," she told him, "and never have I been out of it."

"You are a slave of the second generation and are still confined to the quarries—I do not understand it. In all Minunian cities, I have been told, slaves of the second generation are given the

white runic and comparative freedom above ground."

"It was not for me. My mother would not permit it. She would rather I had died than mated with a Veltopismakusian or another slave, as I must do if I go into the city above."

"But how do you avoid it? Your masters certainly do not leave such things to the discretion of their slaves."

"Where there are so many one or two may go unaccounted for indefinitely, and women, if they be ill-favored, cause no comment upon the part of our masters. My birth was never reported and so they have no record of me. My mother took a number for me from the tunic of one who died, and in this way I attract no

attention upon the few occasions that our masters or the warriors enter our chamber."

"But you are not ill-favored—your face would surely attract attention anywhere," Tarzan reminded her.

For just an instant she turned her back upon him, putting her hands to her face and to her hair, and then she faced him again and the ape-man saw before him a hideous and wrinkled hag upon whose crooked features no man would look a second time.

"God!" ejaculated Tarzan.

Slowly the girl's face relaxed, assuming its normal lines of beauty, and with quick, deft touches she arranged her disheveled hair. An expression that was

almost a smile haunted her lips.

"My mother taught me this," she said, "so that when they came and looked upon me they would not want me."

"But would it not be better to be mated with one of them and live a life of comfort above ground than to eke out a terrible existence below ground?" he demanded. "The warriors of Veltopismakus are, doubtless, but little different from those of your own country."

She shook her head. "It cannot be, for me," she said. "My father is of far Mandalamakus. My mother was stolen from him but a couple of moons before I was born in this horrid chamber, far from the air and sunlight that my mother

never tired of telling me about."

"And your mother?" asked Tarzan. "Is she here?"

The girl shook her head sadly. "They came for her over twenty moons since and took her away. I do not know what became of her."

"And these others, they never betray you?" he inquired.

"Never! Whatever slave betrayed another would be torn to pieces by his fellows. But come, you must be hungry," and she offered him of the flesh she had been cooking.

Tarzan would have preferred his meat raw, but he did not wish to offend her and so he thanked her and ate that which she offered him, squatting on his

haunches across the brazier from her.

"It is strange that Aoponato does not come," she remarked, using the Minunian form of Eight Hundred Cubed, Plus Nineteen. "Never before has he been so late."

A brawny slave, who had approached from behind her, had halted and was looking scowlingly at Tarzan.

"Perhaps this is he," said Tarzan to the girl, indicating the man with a gesture.

Talaskar turned quickly, an almost happy light in her eyes, but when she saw who it was that stood behind her she rose quickly and stepped back, her expression altered to one of disgust.

"No," she said, "it is not he."

"You are cooking for him?" demanded the fellow, pointing at Tarzan. "But you would not cook for me," he accused, not waiting for a reply to his question, the answer to which was all too obvious. "Who is he that you should cook for him? Is he better than I? You will cook for me, also."

"There are plenty to cook for you, Caraftap," replied Talaskar, "and I do not wish to. Go to some other woman. Until there are too many men we are permitted to choose those whom we shall cook for. I do not choose to cook for you."

"If you know what is well for you, you will cook for me," growled the man. "You will be my mate, too. I have a right

to you, because I have asked you many times before these others came. Rather than let them have you I will tell the Vental tomorrow the truth about you and he will take you away. Have you ever seen Kalfastoban?"

The girl shuddered.

"I will see that Kalfastoban gets you," continued Caraftap. "They will not permit you to remain here when they find that you refuse to produce more slaves."

"I should prefer Kalfastoban to you," sneered the girl, "but neither one nor the other shall have me."

"Do not be too sure of that," he cried, and stepping forward, quickly, seized her by the arm before she could elude him. Dragging her toward him the man

attempted to kiss her—but he did not succeed. Steel fingers closed upon his shoulder, he was torn roughly from his prey and hurled ruthlessly a dozen paces, stumbling and falling to the floor. Between him and the girl stood the gray-eyed stranger with the shock of black hair.

Almost roaring in his rage, Caraftap scrambled to his feet and charged Tarzan—charged as a mad bull charges, with lowered head and bloodshot eyes.

"For this you shall die," he screamed.

CHAPTER 12

The Son of The First Woman strode proudly through the forest. He carried a spear, jauntily, and there were a bow and arrows slung to his back. Behind him came ten other males of his species, similarly armed, and each walked as though he owned the earth he trod. Toward them along the trail, though still beyond their sight, or hearing, or smell, came a woman of their kind. She, too, walked with fearless step. Presently her eyes narrowed and she paused, up-pricking her great, flat ears to listen; sniffing the air. Men! She increased her gait to a trot, bearing down upon them. There was more than one —there were several. If she came upon them suddenly

they would be startled, filled with confusion, and no doubt she could seize one of them before they took to flight. If not—the feathered pebbles at her girdle would seek one out.

For some time men had been scarce. Many women of her tribe who had gone out into the forest to capture mates had never returned. She had seen the corpses of several of these herself, lying in the forest. She had wondered what had killed them. But here were men at last, the first she had discovered in two moons, and this time she would not return empty-handed to her cave.

At a sudden turning of the forest trail she came within sight of them, but saw, to her dismay, that they were still a long

way off. They would be sure to escape if they saw her, and she was upon the point of hiding when she realized that already it was too late. One of them was pointing at her. Loosing a missile from her girdle and grasping her cudgel more firmly she started toward them at a rapid, lumbering run. She was both surprised and pleased when she saw that they made no attempt to escape. How terrified they must be to stand thus docilely while she approached them. But what was this? They were advancing to meet her! And now she saw the expressions upon their faces. No fear there—only rage and menace. What were the strange things they carried in their bands? One who was running

toward her, the nearest, paused and hurled a long pointed stick at her. It was sharp and when it grazed her shoulder it brought blood. Another paused and holding a little stick across a longer stick, the ends of which were bent back with a piece of gut, suddenly released the smaller stick, which leaped through the air and pierced the flesh beneath one of her arms. And behind these two the others were rushing upon her with similar weapons. She recalled the corpses of women she had seen in the forest and the dearth of men for the past several moons, and though she was dull of wit yet she was not without reasoning faculties and so she compared these facts with the occurrences of the past

few seconds with a resultant judgment that sent her lumbering away, in the direction from which she had come, as fast as her hairy legs could carry her, nor did she once pause in her mad flight until she sank exhausted at the mouth of her own cave.

The men did not pursue her. As yet they had not reached that stage in their emancipation that was to give them sufficient courage and confidence in themselves to entirely overcome their hereditary fear of women. To chase one away was sufficient. To pursue her would have been tempting Providence.

When the other women of the tribe saw their fellow stagger to her cave and sensed that her condition was the result

of terror and the physical strain of long flight they seized their cudgels and ran forth, prepared to meet and vanquish her pursuer, which they immediately assumed to be a lion. But no lion appeared and then some of them wandered to the side of the woman who lay panting on her threshold.

"From what did you run?" they asked her in their simple sign language.

"Men," she replied.

Disgust showed plainly upon every face, and one of them kicked her and another spat upon her.

"There were many," she told them, "and they would have killed me with flying sticks. Look!" and she showed them the spear wound, and the arrow

still embedded in the flesh beneath her arm. "They did not run from me, but came forward to attack me. Thus have all the women been killed whose corpses we have seen in the forest during the past few moons."

This troubled them. They ceased to annoy the prostrate woman. Their leader, the fiercest of them, paced to and fro, making hideous faces. Suddenly she halted.

"Come!" she signaled. "We shall go forth together and find these men, and bring them back and punish them." She shook her cudgel above her head and grimaced horribly.

The others danced about her, imitating her expression and her actions, and

when she started off toward the forest they trooped behind her, a savage, bloodthirsty company—all but the woman who still lay panting where she had fallen. She had had enough of man-she was through with him forever.

"For this you shall die!" screamed Caraftap, as he rushed upon Tarzan of the Apes in the long gallery of the slaves' quarters in the quarry of Elkomeolhago, king of Veltopismakus.

The ape-man stepped quickly aside, avoiding the other, and tripped him with a foot, sending him sprawling, face downward, upon the floor. Caraftap, before he arose, looked about as though in search of a weapon and, his eyes alighting upon the hot brazier, he

reached forth to seize it. A murmur of disapproval rose from the slaves who, having been occupied nearby, had seen the inception of the quarrel.

"No weapons!" cried one. "It is not permitted among us. Fight with your bare hands or not at all."

But Caraftap was too drunk with hate and jealousy to hear them or to heed, and so he grasped the brazier and, rising, rushed at Tarzan to hurl it in his face. Now it was another who tripped him and this time two slaves leaped upon him and wrenched the brazier from his hand. "Fight fair!" they admonished him, and dragged him to his feet.

Tarzan had stood smiling and indifferent, for the rage of others amused

him where it was greater than circumstances warranted, and now he waited for Caraftap and when his adversary saw the smile upon his face it but increased his spleen, so that he fairly leaped upon the ape-man in his madness to destroy him, and Tarzan met him with the most surprising defense that Caraftap, who for long had been a bully among the slaves, ever had encountered. It was a doubled fist at the end of a straight arm and it caught Caraftap upon the point of his chin, stretching him upon his back. The slaves, who had by this time gathered in considerable numbers to watch the quarrel, voiced then—approval in the shrill, "Ee-ah-ee-ah," that constituted one form of applause.

Dazed and groggy, Caraftap staggered to his feet once more and with lowered head looked about him as though in search of his enemy. The girl, Talaskar, had come to Tarzan's side and was standing there looking up into his face.

"You are very strong," she said, but the expression in her eyes said more, or at least it seemed to Caraftap to say more. It seemed to speak of love, whereas it was only the admiration that a normal woman always feels for strength exercised in a worthy cause.

Caraftap made a noise in his throat that sounded much like the squeal of an angry pig and once again he rushed upon the ape-man. Behind them some slaves were being let into the corridor and as

the aperture was open one of the warriors beyond it, who chanced to be stooping down at the time, could see within. He saw but little, though what he saw was enough—a large slave with a shock of black hair raising another large slave high above his head and dashing him to the hard floor. The warrior, pushing the slaves aside, scrambled through into the corridor and ran forward toward the center. Before they were aware of his presence he stood facing Tarzan and Talaskar. It was Kalfastoban.

"What is the meaning of this?" he cried in a loud voice, and then: "Ah, ha! I see. It is The Giant. He would show the other slaves how strong he is, would

he?" He glanced at Caraftap, struggling to rise from the floor, and his face grew very dark—Caraftap was a favorite of his. "Such things are not permitted here, fellow!" he cried, shaking his fist in the ape-man's face, and forgetting in his anger that the new slave neither spoke nor understood. But presently he recollected and motioned Tarzan to follow him. "A hundred lashes will explain to him that he must not quarrel," he said aloud to no one in particular, but he was looking at Talaskar.

"Do not punish him," cried the girl, still forgetful of herself. "It was all Caraftap's fault, Zuanthrol but acted in self- defense."

Kalfastoban could not take his eyes

from the girl's face and presently she sensed her danger and flushed, but still she stood her ground, interceding for the ape-man. A crooked smile twisted Kalfastoban's mouth as he laid a familiar hand upon her shoulder.

"How old are you?" he asked.

She told him, shuddering.

"I shall see your master and purchase you," he announced. "Take no mate."

Tarzan was looking at Talaskar and it seemed that he could see her wilt, as a flower wilts in noxious air, and then Kalfastoban turned upon him.

"You cannot understand me, you stupid beast," he said; "but I can tell you, and those around you may listen and, perhaps, guide you from danger. This

time I shall let you off, but let it happen again and you shall have a hundred lashes, or worse, maybe; and if I hear that you have had aught to do with this girl, whom I intend to purchase and take to the surface, it will go still harder with you," with which he strode to the entrance and passed through into the corridor beyond.

After the Vental had departed and the door of the chamber had been closed a hand was laid upon Tarzan's shoulder from behind and a man's voice called him by name: "Tarzan!" It sounded strange in his ears, far down in this buried chamber beneath the ground, in an alien city and among an alien people, not one of whom ever had heard his name,

but as he turned to face the man who had greeted him a look of recognition and a smile of pleasure overspread his features.

"Kom—!" he started to ejaculate, but the other placed a finger to his lips. "Not here," he said. "Here I am Aoponato."

"But your stature! You are as large as I. It is beyond me. What has happened to swell the race of Minunians to such relatively gigantic proportions?"

Komodoflorensal smiled. "Human egotism would not permit you to attribute this change to an opposite cause from that to which you have ascribed it," he said.

Tarzan knit his brows and gazed long and thoughtfully at his royal friend. An

expression that was of mingled incredulity and amusement crept gradually over his countenance.

"You mean," he asked slowly, "that I have been reduced in size to the stature of a Minunian?"

Komodoflorensal nodded. "Is it not easier to believe that than to think that an entire race of people and all their belongings, even their dwellings and the stones that they were built of, and all their weapons and their diadets, had been increased in size to your own stature?"

"But I tell you it is impossible!" cried the ape-man.

"I should have said the same thing a few moons ago," replied the prince.

"Even when I heard the rumor here that they had reduced you I did not believe it, not for a long time, and I was still a bit skeptical until I entered this chamber and saw you with my own eyes."

"How was it accomplished?" demanded Tarzan.

"The greatest mind in Veltopismakus, and perhaps in all Minuni, is Zoanthrohago," explained Komodoflorensal. "We have recognized this for many moons, for, during the occasional intervals that we are at peace with Veltopismakus, there is some exchange of ideas as well as goods between the two cities, and thus we heard of many marvels attributed to this greatest of walmaks."

"I have never heard a wizard spoken of in Minuni until now," said Tarzan, for he thought that that was the meaning of the word walmak, and perhaps it is, as nearly as it can be translated into English. A scientist who works miracles would be, perhaps, a truer definition.

"It was Zoanthrohago who captured you," continued Aoponato, "encompassing your fall by means at once scientific and miraculous. After you bad fallen he caused you to lose consciousness and while you were in that condition you were dragged hither by a score of diadets hitched to a hastily improvised litter built of small trees tied securely one to the other, after their branches had been removed. It was after

they had you safely within Veltopismakus that Zoanthrohago set to work upon you to reduce your stature, using apparatus that he has built himself. I have heard them discussing it and they say that it did not take him long."

"I hope that Zoanthrohago has the power to undo that which he has done," said the ape-man.

"They say that that is doubtful. He has never been able to make a creature larger than it formerly was, though in his numerous experiments he has reduced the size of many of the lower animals. The fact of the matter is," continued Aoponato, "that he has been searching for a means to enlarge the Veltopismakusians so that they may

overcome all the other peoples of Minuni, but he has only succeeded in developing a method that gives precisely opposite results from that which they seek, so, if he cannot make others larger, I doubt if he can make you any larger than you now are."

"I would be rather helpless among the enemies of my own world," said Tarzan, ruefully.

"You need not worry about that, my friend," said the prince gently.

"Why?" asked the ape-man.

"Because you have very little chance of reaching your own world again," said Komodoflorensal a trifle sadly. "I have no hope of ever seeing Trohanadalmakus again. Only by the utter overthrow of

Veltopismakus by my father's warriors could I hope for rescue, since nothing less could overcome the guard in the quarry mouth. While we often capture slaves of the white tunic from the enemies' cities, it is seldom that we gather in any of the green tunic. Only in the rare cases of utter surprise attacks by daylight do any of us catch an enemies' green slaves above ground, and surprise day attacks may occur once in the lifetime of a man, or never."

"You believe that we will spend the rest of our lives in this underground hole?" demanded Tarzan.

"Unless we chance to be used for labor above ground during the daytime, occasionally," replied the prince of

Trohanadalmakus, with a wry smile.

The ape-man shrugged. "We shall see," he said.

After Kalfastoban had left, Caraftap had limped away to the far end of the chamber, muttering to himself, his ugly face black and scowling.

"I am afraid that he will make you trouble," Talaskar said to Tarzan, indicating the disgruntled slave with a nod of her shapely head, "and I am sorry, for it is all my fault."

"Your fault?" demanded Komodoflorensal.

"Yes," said the girl. "Caraftap was threatening me when Aopontando interfered and punished him."

"Aopontando?" queried Komodoflorensal.

"That is my number," explained Tarzan.

"And it was on account of Talaskar that you were fighting? I thank you, my friend. I am sorry that I was not here to protect her. Talaskar cooks for me. She is a good girl." Komodoflorensal was looking at the girl as he spoke and Tarzan saw how her eyes lowered beneath his gaze and the delicate flush that mounted her cheeks, and he realized that he was downwind from an idea, and smiled.

"So this is the Aoponato of whom you told me?" he said to Talaskar.

"Yes, this is he."

"I am sorry that he was captured, but it is good to find a friend here," said the ape-man. "We three should be able to hit upon some plan of escape," but they shook their heads, smiling sadly.

For a while, after they had eaten, they sat talking together, being joined occasionally by other slaves, for Tarzan had many friends here now since he had chastised Caraftap and they would have talked all night had not the ape-man questioned Komodoflorensal as to the sleeping arrangements of the slaves.

Komodoflorensal laughed, and pointed here and there about the chamber at recumbent figures lying upon the hard earthen floor; men, women and children sleeping, for the most part, where they

had eaten their evening meal.

"The green slaves are not pampered," he remarked laconically.

"I can sleep anywhere," said Tarzan, "but more easily when it is dark. I shall wait until the lights are extinguished."

"You will wait forever, then," Komodoflorensal told him.

"The lights are never extinguished?" demanded the ape-man.

"Were they, we should all be soon dead," replied the prince. "These flames serve two purposes—they dissipate the darkness and consume the foul gases that would otherwise quickly asphyxiate us. Unlike the ordinary flame, that consumes oxygen, these candles, perfected from the discoveries and inventions of an

ancient Minunian scientist, consume the deadly gases and liberate oxygen. It is because of this even more than for the light they give that they are used exclusively throughout Minuni. Even our domes would be dark, ill- smelling, noxious places were it not for them, while the quarries would be absolutely unworkable."

"Then I shall not wait for them to be extinguished," said Tarzan, stretching himself at full length upon the dirt floor, with a nod and a "Tuano!"—a Minunian "Good night!"—to Talaskar and Komodoflorensal.

CHAPTER 13

As Talaskar was preparing their breakfast the following morning Komodoflorensal remarked to Tarzan that he wished they two could be employed upon the same work, that they might be always together.

"If there is ever the chance for escape that you seem to think will some day present itself," he said, "then it will be well if we are together."

"When we go," replied Tarzan, "we must take Talaskar with us."

Komodoflorensal shot a swift glance at the ape-man, but made no comment upon his suggestion.

"You would take me with you!"

exclaimed Talaskar. "Ah, if such a dream could but be realized! I would go with you to Trohanadalmakus and be your slave, for I know that you would not harm me; but, alas, it can be nothing more than a pleasant daydream, enduring for a brief time, for Kalfastoban has spoken for me and doubtless my master will be glad to sell me to him, for I have heard it said among the slaves that he sells many of his each year to raise the money to pay his taxes."

"We will do what we can, Talaskar," said Tarzan, "and if Aoponato and I find a means of escape we will take you with us; but first he and I must find a way to be together more."

"I have a plan," said

Komodoflorensal, "that might prove successful. They believe that you neither speak nor understand our language. To work a slave with whom they cannot communicate is, to say the least, annoying. I shall tell them that I can communicate with you, when it is quite probable that they will assign us to the same crew."

"But how will you communicate with me without using the Minunian language?" demanded the ape-man.

"Leave that to me," replied Komodoflorensal. "Until they discover in some other way that you speak Minunian I can continue to deceive them."

It was not long before the fruits of

Komodoflorensal's plan ripened. The guards had come for the slaves and the various parties had gone forth from the sleeping chamber, joining in the corridors without the thousands of others wending their way to the scene of their daily labor. The ape-man joined the timbering crew at the extension of the thirteenth tunnel at the thirty-sixth level where he once more attacked the monotonous work of shoring the sides and roof of the shaft with an enthusiasm that elicited commendation from even the surly Kalfastoban, though Caraftap, who was removing rocks just ahead of Tarzan, often shot venomous looks at the ape-man.

The work had been progressing for

perhaps two or three hours when two warriors descended the tunnel and halted beside Kalfastoban. They were escorting a green-tunicked slave, to whom Tarzan paid no more attention than he did to the warriors until a scrap of the conversation between the warriors and Kalfastoban reached his ears, then he shot a quick glance in the direction of the four and saw that the slave was Komodoflorensal, Prince of Trohanadalmakus, known in the quarries of Veltopismakus as Slave Aoponato, or 800*+19, which is written in Minunian hieroglyphics.

Tarzan's number Aopontando, 800*+21, appeared thus, upon the shoulder of his green tunic.

Although the Minunian form occupies less space than would our English equivalent of Tarzan's number, which is 512,000,021, it would be more difficult to read if expressed in English words, for it then would be, ten times ten times eight, cubed, plus seven times three; but the Minunians translate it in no such way. To them it is a whole number, Aopontando, which represents at first glance a single quantity as surely as do the digits 37 represent to our minds an invariable amount, a certain, definite measure of quantity which we never think of as three times ten plus seven, which, in reality, it is. The Minunian system of numerals, while unthinkably cumbersome and awkward from the

European point of view, is, however, not without its merits.

As Tarzan looked up Komodoflorensal caught his eye and winked and then Kalfastoban beckoned to the ape-man, who crossed the corridor and stood in silence before the Vental.

"Let us hear you talk to him," cried Kalfastoban to Komodoflorensal. "I don't believe that he will understand you. How could he when he cannot understand us?" The fellow could not conceive of another language than his own.

"I will ask him in his own language," said Komodoflorensal, "if he understands me, and you will see that he

nods his head affirmatively."

"Very good," cried Kalfastoban; "ask him."

Komodoflorensal turned toward Tarzan and voiced a dozen syllables of incomprehensible gibberish and when be was done the ape- man nodded his head.

"You see," demanded Komodoflorensal.

Kalfastoban scratched his head. "It is even as he says," he admitted, ruefully, "the Zertalacolol has a language."

Tarzan did not smile, though he should have liked to, at the clever manner in which Komodoflorensal had deceived the Veltopismakusians into believing that he had communicated with Tarzan in a strange language. As long as

he could contrive to put all his communications into questions that could be answered by yes or no, the deception would be easily maintained; but under circumstances that made this impossible some embarrassments might be expected to arise, and he wondered how the resourceful Trohanadalmakusian would handle these.

"Tell him," said one of the warriors to Komodoflorensal, "that his master, Zoanthrohago, has sent for him, and ask him if he fully understands that he is a slave and that upon his good behavior depends his comfort; yes, even his life, for Zoanthrohago has the power of life and death over him; as much so as have the royal family. If he comes docilely to

his master and is obedient he will not fare ill, but if he be lazy, impudent, or threatening he may expect to taste the point of a freeman's sword."

Komodoflorensal strung out, this time, a much longer series of senseless syllables, until he could scarce compose his features to comport with the seriousness of his mien.

"Tell them," said Tarzan, in English, which, of course, not one of them understood, "that at the first opportunity I shall break the neck of my master; that it would require but little incentive to cause me to seize one of these timbers and crack the skull of Kalfastoban and the rest of the warriors about us; and I shall run away at the first opportunity

and take you and Talaskar with me."

Komodoflorensal listened intently until Tarzan had ceased speaking and then turned to the two warriors who bad come with him to find the ape-man.

"Zuanthrol says that he fully understands his position and that he is glad to serve the noble and illustrious Zoanthrohago, from whom he claims but a single boon," translated the Trohanadalmakusian prince, rather freely.

"And what boon is that?" demanded one of the warriors.

"That I be permitted to accompany him that he may thus better fulfill the wishes of his master, since without me he could not even know what was

desired of him," explained Aoponato.

Tarzan understood now how Komodoflorensal would surmount whatever difficulties of communication might arise and he felt that he would be safe in the hands of his quick-witted friend for as long a time as he cared to pretend ignorance of the Minunian tongue.

"The thought was even in our minds, slave, when we heard that you could communicate with this fellow," said the warrior to whom Komodoflorensal had addressed the suggestion. "You shall both be taken to Zoanthrohago, who will doubtless decide his wishes without consulting you or any other slave. Comet Kalfastoban Vental, we assume

responsibility for the Slave Zuanthrol," and they handed the Vental a slip of paper upon which they had marked some curious hieroglyphics.

Then, with swords drawn, they motioned Komodoflorensal and Tarzan to precede them along the corridor, for the story of Tarzan's handling of Caraftap had reached even to the guard room of the quarry, and these warriors were taking no chances.

The way led through a straight corridor and up a winding spiral runway to the surface, where Tarzan greeted the sunlight and the fresh air almost with a sob of gratitude, for to be shut away from them for even a brief day was to the ape-man cruel punishment, indeed.

Here he saw again the vast, endless multitude of slaves bearing their heavy burdens to and fro, the trim warriors who paced haughtily upon either flank of the long lines of toiling serfs, the richly trapped nobles of the higher castes and the innumerable white- tunicked slaves who darted hither and thither upon the errands of their masters, or upon their own business or pleasure, for many of these had a certain freedom and independence that gave them almost the standing of freemen. Always were these slaves of the white tunic owned by a master, but, especially in the case of skilled artisans, about the only allegiance they owed to this master was to pay to him a certain percentage of

their incomes. They constituted the bourgeoisie of Minuni and also the higher caste serving class. Unlike the green-tunicked slaves, no guard was placed over them to prevent their escape, since there was no danger that they would attempt to escape, there being no city in Minuni where their estate would be improved, for any other city than that of their birth would treat them as alien prisoners, reducing them immediately to the green tunic and lifelong hard labor.

The domes of Veltopismakus were as imposing as those of Trohanadalmakus. In fact, to Tarzan, they appeared infinitely larger since he now was one-fourth the size he had been when he had

left Trohanadalmakus. There were eight of them fully occupied and another in course of construction, for the surface population of Veltopismakus was already four hundred and eighty thousand souls, and as overcrowding was not permitted in the king's dome the remaining seven were packed densely with humanity.

It was to the royal dome that Tarzan and Komodoflorensal were conducted, but they did not enter by way of the King's Corridor, before the gates of which fluttered the white and gold of the royal standards. Instead they were escorted to the Warrior's Corridor, which opens toward the west. Unlike the city of Trohanadalmakus, Veltopismakus

was beautiful in the areas between the domes with flowers and shrubbery and trees, among which wound graveled walks and broad roadways. The royal dome faced upon a large parade where a body of mounted warriors was at drill. There were a thousand of them, forming an amak, consisting of four novands of two hundred fifty men each, the larger body being commanded by a kamak and the smaller by a novand. Five entex of fifty men each compose a novand, there being five entals of ten men each to an entex; these latter units commanded by a Vental and a Ventex, respectively. The evolutions of the amak were performed with kaleidoscopic rapidity, so quick upon their feet and so well trained were

the tiny diadets. There was one evolution in particular, performed while he was passing, that greatly interested the ape-man. Two novands formed line at one end of the parade and two at the other and at the command of the kamak the thousand men charged swiftly down the field in two solid ranks that approached one another with the speed of an express train. Just when it seemed impossible that a serious accident could be averted, when it seemed that in another instant diadets and riders must crash together in a bloody jumble of broken bones, the warriors rushing so swiftly toward the east raised their agile mounts, which fairly flew above the heads of the opposing force and alighting

upon the other side in an unbroken line continued to the far end of the field.

Tarzan was commenting on this maneuver and upon the beauties of the landscaping of the city of Veltopismakus to Komodoflorensal as they proceeded along the Warrior's Corridor, sufficiently ahead of their escort that Tarzan might speak in a low tone without the guard being cognizant of the fact that he was using the language of Minuni.

"It is a beautiful evolution," replied Komodoflorensal, "and it was performed with a precision seldom attained. I have heard that Elkomoelhago's troops are famous for the perfection of their drill, and as justly

so as is Veltopismakus for the beauty of her walks and gardens; but, my friend, these very things constitute the weakness of the city. While Elkomoelhago's warriors are practicing to perfect their appearance upon parade, the warriors of my father, Adendrohahkis, are far afield, out of sight of admiring women and spying slaves, practicing the art of war under the rough conditions of the field and camp. The amaks of Elkomoelhago might easily defeat those of Adendrohahkis in a contest for the most beautiful; but it was not long since you saw less than fifteen thousand Trohanadalmakusians repulse fully thirty thousand warriors of Veltopismakus, for they never passed the infantry line that

day. Yet, they can drill beautifully upon parade and they are courageous, all Minunians are that, but they have not been trained in the sterner arts of war—it is not the way of Elkomoelhago. He is soft and effeminate. He cares not for war. He listens to the advice he likes best —the advice of the weaklings and the women who urge him to refrain from war entirely, which would be not altogether bad if he could persuade the other fellow to refrain, also.

"The beautiful trees and shrubs that almost make a forest of Veltopismakus, and which you so admire! I, too, admire them— especially do I admire them in the city of an enemy. How easy it would be for a Trohanadalmakusian army to

creep through the night, hidden by the beautiful trees and shrubs, to the very gateways of the domes of Veltopismakus! Do you understand now, my friend, why you saw less perfect maneuvers upon the parade grounds of my city than you have seen here, and why, though we love trees and shrubbery, we have none planted within the city of Trohanadalmakus?"

One of the guards who had approached him quickly from the rear touched Komodoflorensal upon the shoulder. "You said that Zuanthrol does not understand our language. Why then do you speak to him in this tongue which he cannot understand," the fellow demanded.

Komodoflorensal did not know how much the warrior had overheard. If he had heard Tarzan speak in Minuni it might be difficult to persuade the fellow that The Giant did not understand the language; but he must act on the assumption that he, alone, had been overheard.

"He wishes to learn it and I am trying to teach him," replied Komodoflorensal quickly.

"Has he learned anything of it?" asked the warrior.

"No," said Komodoflorensal, "he is very stupid."

And after this they went in silence, winding up long, gentle inclines, or again scaling the primitive ladders that

the Minunians use to reach the upper levels of their dome-houses between the occasional levels that are not connected by the inclined runways, which are thus frequently broken for purposes of defense, the ladders being easily withdrawn upward behind hard-pressed defenders and the advance of the enemy thus more easily checked.

The royal dome of Elkomoelhago was of vast proportions, its summit rising to an equivalent of over four hundred feet, had it been built upon a scale corresponding to the relatively larger size of ordinary mankind. Tarzan ascended until he was almost as far above ground as he had been below ground in the quarry. Where the

corridors on lower levels had been crowded with humanity, those which they now traversed were almost devoid of life. Occasionally they passed a tenanted chamber, but far more generally the rooms were utilized for storage purposes, especially for food, great quantities of which, cured, dried neatly wrapped, was packed ceiling-high in many large chambers.

The decorations of the walls were less ornate and the corridors narrower, on the whole, than those at lower levels. However, they passed through many large chambers, or halls, which were gorgeously decorated, and in several of which were many people of both sexes and all ages variously occupied, either

with domestic activities or with the handiwork of one art or another.

Here was a man working in' silver, perhaps fashioning a bracelet of delicate filigree, or another carving beautiful arabesques upon leather. There were makers of pottery, weavers of cloth, metal-stampers, painters, makers of candles, and these appeared to predominate, for the candle was in truth life to these people.

And then, at last, they reached the highest level, far above the ground, where the rooms were much closer to daylight because of the diminished thickness of the walls near the summit of the dome, but even here were the ever-present candles. Suddenly the walls of

the corridor became gorgeously decorated, the number of candles increased, and Tarzan sensed that they were approaching the quarters of a rich or powerful noble. They halted, now, before a doorway where stood a sentinel, with whom one of the warriors conducting them communicated.

"Tell Zoanthrohago Zertol that we have brought Zuanthrol and another slave who can communicate with him in a strange tongue."

The sentinel struck a heavy gong with his lance and presently, from the interior of the chamber, a man appeared to whom the sentinel repeated the warrior's message.

"Let them enter," said the newcomer,

who was a white-tunicked slave; "my glorious master, Zoanthrohago Zertol, expects his slave Zuanthrol! Follow me!"

They followed him through several chambers until at last he led them into the presence of a gorgeously garbed warrior who was seated behind a large table, or desk, upon which were numerous strange instruments, large, cumbersome looking volumes, pads of heavy Minunian writing paper and the necessary implements for writing. The man looked up as they entered the room.

"It is your slave, Zuanthrol, Zertol," announced the fellow who had led them hither.

"But the other?" Prince Zoanthrohago

pointed at Komodoflorensal.

"He speaks the strange language that Zuanthrol speaks, and he was brought along that you might communicate with Zuanthrol if you so wished." Zoanthrohago nodded.

He turned to Komodoflorensal. "Ask him," he ordered, "if he feels any differently since I reduced his size."

When the question was put to Tarzan by Komodoflorensal in the imaginary language with which they were supposed to communicate the ape-man shook his head, at the same time speaking a few words in English.

"He says no, illustrious prince," translated Komodoflorensal out of his imagination, "and he asks when you will

restore him to his normal size and permit him to return to his own country, which is far from Minuni."

"As a Minunian he should know," replied the Zertol, "that he never will be permitted to return to his own country—Trohanadalmakus never will see him again."

"But he is not of Trohanadalmakus, nor is he a Minunian," explained Komodoflorensal. "He came to us and we did not make a slave of him, but treated him as a friend, because he is from a far country with which we have never made war."

"What country is that?" demanded Zoanthrohago.

"That we do not know, but he says

that there is a great country beyond the thorns where dwell many millions as large as was he. He says that his people would not be unfriendly to ours and for this reason we should not enslave him, but treat him as a guest."

Zoanthrohago smiled. "If you believe this you must be a simple fellow, Trohanadalmakusian," he said. "We all know that there is naught beyond Minuni but impenetrable forests of thorn to the very uttermost wall of the blue dome within which we all dwell. I can well believe that the fellow is no Trohanadalmakusian, but he most certainly is a Minunian, since all creatures of whatever kind dwell in Minuni. Doubtless he is a strange form

of Zertalacolol, a member of a tribe inhabiting some remote mountain fastness, which we have never previously discovered; but be that as it may, he will never—"

At this juncture the prince was interrupted by the clanging of the great gong at the outer entrance to his apartments. He paused to count the strokes and when they reached five and ceased he turned to the warriors who had conducted Tarzan and Komodoflorensal to his presence.

"Take the slaves into that chamber," he instructed, pointing to a doorway in the rear of the apartment in which he had received them. "When the king has gone I will send for them."

As they were crossing toward the doorway Zoanthrohago had indicated a warrior halted in the main entrance to the chamber. "Elkomoelhago," he announced, "Thagosto of Veltopismakus, Ruler of All Men, Master of Created Things, All-Wise, All-Courageous, All-Glorious! Down before the thagosto!"

Tarzan glanced back as he was quitting the chamber to see Zoanthrohago and the others in the room kneel and lean far back with arms raised high above their heads as Elkomoelhago entered with a guard of a dozen gorgeous warriors, and he could not but compare this ruler with the simple and dignified soldier who ruled Trohanadalmakus and who went about his city without show or

pomp, and oftentimes with no other escort than a single slave; a ruler to whom no man bent his knee, yet to whom was accorded the maximum of veneration and respect.

And Elkomoelhago had seen the slaves and the warriors leave the chamber as he had entered it. He acknowledged the salutes of Zoanthrohago and his people with a curt wave of the hand and commanded them to arise.

"Who quitted the apartment as I entered?" he demanded, looking suspiciously at Zoanthrohago.

"The slave Zuanthrol and another who interprets his strange language for me," explained the Zertol.

"Have them back," commanded the thagosto; "I would speak with you concerning Zuanthrol."

Zoanthrohago instructed one of his slaves to fetch them and, in the few moments that it required, Elkomoelhago took a chair behind the desk at which his host had been sitting. When Tarzan and Komodoflorensal entered the chamber the guard who accompanied them brought them to within a few paces of the desk behind which the king sat, and here he bade them kneel and make their obeisance to the thagosto.

Familiar since childhood, was every tradition of slavery to Komodoflorensal the Trohanadalmakusian. Almost in a spirit of fatalism had he accepted the

conditions of this servitude that the fortunes of war had thrust him into and so it was that, without question or hesitation, he dropped to one knee in servile salute to this alien king; but not so Tarzan of the Apes. He was thinking of Adendrohahkis. He had bent no knee to him and he did not propose to do greater honor to Elkomoelhago, whose very courtiers and slaves despised him, than he had done to the really great king of Veltopismakus.

Elkomoelhago glared at him. "The fellow is not kneeling," he whispered to Zoanthrohago, who had been leaning back so far that he had not noticed the new slave's act of disrespect.

The Zertol glanced toward Tarzan.

"Down, fellow!" he cried, and then recalling that he understood no Minunian, he landed Komodoflorensal to order him to kneel, but when the Trohanadalmakusian Zertolosto pretended to do so Tarzan but shook his head.

Elkomoelhago signaled the others to rise. "We will let it pass this time," he said, for something in the attitude of the slave told him that Zuanthrol never would kneel to him and as he was valuable because of the experiment of which he was the subject, the king preferred to swallow his pride rather than risk having the slave killed in an effort to compel him to kneel. "He is but an ignorant Zertalacolol. See that he is

properly instructed before we see him again."

CHAPTER 14

The Alali women, fifty strong, sallied forth into the forest to chastise their recalcitrant males. They carried their heavy bludgeons and many-feathered pebbles, but most formidable of all was their terrific rage. Never in the memory of one of them had man dared question their authority, never had he presumed to show aught but fear of them; but now, instead of slinking away at their approach, he had dared defy them, to attack them, to slay them! But such a condition was too preposterous, too unnatural, to exist, nor would it exist much longer. Had they had speech they would have said that and a number of other things. It was looking black for the

men; the women were in an ugly mood—but what else could be expected of women who were denied the power of speech? And in this temper they came upon the men in a large clearing where the renegades had built a fire and were cooking the flesh of a number of antelope. Never had the women seen their men so sleek and trim. Always before had they appeared skinny to the verge of cadaverousness, for in the past they had never fared so well as since the day that Tarzan of the Apes had given weapons to the son of The First Woman. Where before they had spent their lives fleeing in terror from their terrible women, with scarce time to hunt for decent food, now they had leisure and

peace of mind and their weapons brought them flesh that otherwise they might not have tasted once in a year. From caterpillars and grubworms they had graduated to an almost steady diet of antelope meat.

But the women gave very little heed at the moment to the physical appearance of the men. They had found them. That was enough. They were creeping nearer when one of the men looked up and discovered them, and so insistent are the demands of habit that he forget his new-found independence and leaping to his feet, bolted for the trees. The others, scarce waiting to know the cause of his precipitancy, followed close upon his heels. The women raced across the

clearing as the men disappeared among the trees upon the opposite side. The former knew what the men would do. Once in the forest they would stop behind the nearest trees and look back to see if their pursuers were coming in their direction. It was this silly habit of the males that permitted their being easily caught by the less agile females.

But all the men had not disappeared. One had taken a few steps in the mad race for safety and had then halted and wheeled about, facing the oncoming women. He was the son of The First Woman, and to him Tarzan had imparted something more than knowledge of new weapons, for from the Lord of the Jungle, whom he worshipped with

doglike devotion, he had acquired the first rudiments of courage, and so it now happened that when his more timorous fellows paused behind the trees and looked back they saw this one standing alone facing the charge of fifty infuriated shes. They saw him fit arrow to bow, and the women saw, too, but they did not understand—not immediately—and then the bow string twanged and the foremost woman collapsed with an arrow in her heart; but the others did not pause, because the thing had been done so quickly that the full purport of it had not as yet penetrated their thick skulls. The son of The First Woman fitted a second arrow and sped it Another woman fell, rolling over and over, and now the

others hesitated—hesitated and were lost, for that momentary pause gave courage to the other men peering from behind the trees. If one of their number could face fifty women and bring them to halt what might not eleven men accomplish? They rushed forth then with spears and arrows just as the women renewed their assault. The feathered pebbles flew thick and fast, but faster and more accurately flew the feathered arrows of the men. The leading women rushed courageously forward to close quarters where they might use their bludgeons and lay hold of the men with their mighty hands, but they learned then that spears were more formidable weapons than bludgeons, with the result

that those who did not fall wounded, turned and fled.

It was then that the son of The First Woman revealed possession of a spark of generalship that decided the issue for that day, and, perhaps, for all time. His action was epochal in the existence of the Zertalacolols. Instead of being satisfied with repulsing the women, instead of resting upon laurels gloriously won, he turned the tables upon the hereditary foe and charged the women, signaling his fellows to accompany him, and when they saw the women running from them, so enthused were they by this reversal of a custom ages old, they leaped swiftly in pursuit.

They thought that the son of The First

Woman intended that they should slay all of the enemy and so they were surprised when they saw him overhaul a comely, young female and, seizing her by the hair, disarm her. So remarkable did it seem to them that one of their number, having a woman in his power, did not immediately slay her, they were constrained to pause and gather around him, asking questions in their strange sign language.

"Why do you hold her?"

"Why do you not kill her?"

"Are you not afraid that she will kill you?" were some of the many that were launched at him.

"I am going to keep her," replied the son of The First Woman. "I do not like to

cook. She shall cook for me. If she refuses I shall stick her with this," and he made a jab toward the young woman's ribs with his spear, a gesture that caused her to cower and drop fearfully upon one knee.

The men jumped up and down in excitement as the value of this plan and the evident terror of the woman for the man sank into their dull souls.

"Where are the women?" they signed to one another; but the women had disappeared.

One of the men started off in the direction they had gone. "I go!" he signaled. "I come back with a woman of my own, to cook for me!" In a mad rush the others followed him, leaving the son

of The First Woman alone with his she. He turned upon her.

"You will cook for me?" he demanded.

To his signs she but returned a sullen, snarling visage. The son of The First Woman raised his spear and with the heavy shaft struck the girl upon the head, knocking her down, and he stood over her, himself snarling and scowling, menacing her with further punishment, while she cowered where she had fallen. He kicked her in the side.

"Get up!" he commanded.

Slowly she crawled to her knees and embracing his legs gazed up into his face with an expression of doglike adulation and devotion.

"You will cook for me!" he demanded again.

"Forever!" she replied in the sign language of their people.

Tarzan had remained but a short time in the little room adjoining that in which Zoanthrohago had received Elkomoelhago, when he was summoned to appear before them alone, and as he entered the room his master motioned him to approached the desk behind which the two men sat. There was no other person in the room, even the warriors having been dismissed.

"You are quite positive that he understands nothing of our language?" demanded the king.

"He has not spoken a word since he

was captured," replied Zoanthrohago. "We had supposed him some new form of Zertalacolol until it was discovered that he possessed a language through which he was able to communicate with the other Trohanadalmakusian slave. It is perfectly safe to speak freely before him, All-Wise."

Elkomoelhago cast a quick, suspicious glance at his companion. He would have preferred that Zoanthrohago of all men address him as All-Glorious—it was less definite in its implication. He might deceive others, even himself, as to his wisdom, but he was perfectly aware that he could not fool Zoanthrohago.

"We have never discussed fully," said

the king, "the details of this experiment. It was for this purpose that I came to the laboratory today. Now that we have the subject here let us go into the matter fully and determine what next step we should take."

"Yes, All-Wise," replied Zoanthrohago.

"Call me Thagosto," snapped Elkomoelhago.

"Yes, Thagosto," said the prince, using the Minunian word for Chief-Royal, or King, as Elkomoelhago had commanded. "Let us discuss the matter, by all means. It presents possibilities of great importance to your throne." He knew that what Elkomoelhago meant by discussing the matter consisted only in

receiving from Zoanthrohago a detailed explanation of how he had reduced the stature of the slave Zuanthrol to one quarter its original proportions; but he proposed, if possible, to obtain value received for the information, which he knew the king would use for his own aggrandizement, giving Zoanthrohago no credit whatever for his discoveries or all the long moons he had devoted to accomplishing this marvelous, scientific miracle.

"Before we enter into this discussion, O, Thagosto," he said, "I beg that you will grant me one boon, which I have long desired and have hitherto hesitated to request, knowing that I did not deserve the recognition I crave for my

poor talents and my mean service to thy illustrious and justly renowned rule."

"What boon do you wish?" demanded Elkomoelhago, crustily. At heart he feared this wisest of men, and, like the coward that he was, with him to fear was to hate. If he could have destroyed Zoanthrohago he would gladly have done so; but he could not afford to do this, since from this greatest of walmaks came whatever show of scientific ability the king could make, as well as all the many notable inventions for the safeguarding of the royal person.

"I would sit at the royal council," said Zoanthrohago, simply.

The king fidgeted. Of all the nobles of Veltopismakus here was the very last he

would wish to see numbered among the royal councilors, whom he had chosen with especial reference to the obtuseness of their minds.

"There are no vacancies," he said, at last

"The ruler of all men might easily make a vacancy," suggested Zoanthrohago, "or create a new post—Assistant Chief of Chiefs, for example, so that when Gofoloso was absent there would be one to take his place. Otherwise I should not have to attend upon your council meetings, but devote my time to the perfection of our discoveries and inventions."

Here was a way out and Elkomoelhago seized it He had no

objection to Zoanthrohago being a royal councilor and thus escaping the burdensome income tax, which the makers of the tax had been careful to see proved no burden to themselves, and he knew that probably that was the only reason that Zoanthrohago wished to be a councilor. No, the king had no objection to the appointment provided it could be arranged that the new minister was present at no council meetings, for even Elkomoelhago would have shrunk a bit from claiming as his own all the great discoveries of Zoanthrohago had Zoanthrohago been present.

"Very well," said the king, "you shall be appointed this very day— and when I want you at the council meetings I will

send for you."

Zoanthrohago bowed. "And now," he said, "to the discussion of our experiments, which we hope will reveal a method for increasing the stature of our warriors when they go forth to battle with our enemies, and of reducing them to normal size once more when they return."

"I hate the mention of battles," cried the king, with a shudder.

"But we must be prepared to win them when they are forced upon us," suggested Zoanthrohago.

"I suppose so," assented the king; "but once we perfect this method of ours we shall need but a few warriors and the rest may be turned to peaceful and useful

occupations. However, go on with the discussion."

Zoanthrohago concealed a smile, and rising, walked around the end of the table and stopped beside the ape-man. "Here," he said, placing a finger at the base of Tarzan's skull, "there lies, as you know, a small, oval, reddish gray body containing a liquid which influences the growth of tissues and organs. It long ago occurred to me that interference with the normal functioning of this gland would alter the growth of the subject to which it belonged. I experimented with small rodents and achieved remarkable results; but the thing I wished to accomplish, the increase of man's stature I have been unable to achieve. I have tried many

methods and some day I shall discover the right one. I think I am on the right track, and that it is merely now a matter of experimentation. You know that stroking your face lightly with a smooth bit of stone produces a pleasurable sensation. Apply the same stone to the same face in the same manner, but with greatly increased force and you produce a diametrically opposite sensation. Rub the stone slowly across the face and back again many times, and then repeat the same motion rapidly for the same number of times and you will discover that the results are quite different. I am that close to a solution; I have the correct method but not quite, as yet, the correct application. I can reduce

creatures in size, but I cannot enlarge them; and although I can reduce them with great ease, I cannot determine the period or endurance of their reduction. In some cases, subjects have not regained their normal size under thirty-nine moons, and in others, they have done so in as short a period as three moons. There have been cases where normal stature was regained gradually during a period of seven suns, and others where the subject passed suddenly from a reduced size to normal size in less than a hundred heartbeats; this latter phenomenon being always accompanied by fainting and unconsciousness when it occurred during waking hours."

"Of course," commented

Elkomoelhago. "Now, let us see. I believe the thing is simpler than you imagine. You say that to reduce the size of this subject you struck him with a rock upon the base of the skull. Therefore, to enlarge his size, the most natural and scientific thing to do would be to strike him a similar blow upon the forehead. Fetch the rock and we will prove the correctness of my theory."

For a moment Zoanthrohago was at a loss as to how best to circumvent the stupid intention of the king without humiliating his pride and arousing his resentment; but the courtiers of Elkomoelhago were accustomed to think quickly in similar emergencies and Zoanthrohago speedily found an avenue

of escape from his dilemma.

"You sagacity is the pride of your people, Thagosto," he said, "and your brilliant hyperbole the despair of your courtiers. In a clever figure of speech you suggest the way to achievement. By reversing the manner in which we reduced the stature of Zuanthrol we should be able to increase it; but, alas, I have tried this and failed. But wait, let us repeat the experiment precisely as it was originally carried out and then, by reversing it, we shall, perhaps, be enabled to determine why I have failed in the past."

He stepped quickly across the room to one of a series of large cupboards that lined the wall and opening the door of it

revealed a cage in which were a number of rodents. Selecting one of these he returned to the table, where, with wooden pegs and bits of cord he fastened the rodent securely to a smooth board, its legs spread out and its body flattened, the under side of the lower jaw resting firmly upon a small metal plate set flush with the surface of the board. He then brought forth a small wooden box and a large metal disc, the latter mounted vertically between supports that permitted it to be revolved rapidly by means of a hand crank. Mounted rigidly upon the same axis as the revolving disc was another which remained stationary. The latter disc appeared to have been constructed of

seven segments, each of a different material from all the others, and from each of these segments a pad, or brush, protruded sufficiently to press lightly against the revolving disc.

To the reverse side of each of the seven segments of the stationary disc a wire was attached, and these wires Zoanthrohago now connected to seven posts projecting from the upper surface of the wooden box. A single wire attached to a post upon the side of the box had at its other extremity a small, curved metal plate attached to the inside of a leather collar. This collar Zoanthrohago adjusted about the neck of the rodent so that the metal plate came in contact with its skin at the base of the

skull and as close to the hypophysis gland as possible.

He then turned his attention once more to the wooden box, upon the top of which, in addition to the seven binding posts, was a circular instrument consisting of a dial about the periphery of which were a series of hieroglyphics. From the center of this dial projected seven tubular, concentric shafts, each of which supported a needle, which was shaped or painted in some distinguishing manner, while beneath the dial seven small metal discs were set in the cover of the box so that they lay in the arc of a circle from the center of which a revolving metal shaft was so arranged that its free end might be moved to any

of the seven metal discs at the will of the operator.

The connections having all been made, Zoanthrohago moved the free end of the shaft from one of the metal discs to another, keeping his eyes at all times intently upon the dial, the seven needles of which moved variously as he shifted the shaft from point to point.

Elkomoelhago was an intent, if somewhat bewildered, observer, and the slave, Zuanthrol, unobserved, had moved nearer the table that he might better watch this experiment which might mean so much to him.

Zoanthrohago continued to manipulate the revolving shaft and the needles moved hither and thither from one series

of hieroglyphics to another, until at last the walmak appeared satisfied.

"It is not always easy," he said, "to attune the instrument to the frequency of the organ upon which we are working. From all matter and even from such incorporeal a thing as thought there emanate identical particles, so infinitesimal as to be scarce noted by the most delicate of my instruments. These particles constitute the basic structure of all things whether animate or inanimate, corporeal or incorporeal. The frequency, quantity and rhythm of the emanations determine the nature of the substance. Having located upon this dial the coefficient of the gland under discussion it now becomes necessary, in order to so

interfere with its proper functioning that the growth of the creature involved will be not only stopped but actually reversed, that we decrease the frequency, increase the quantity and compound the rhythm of these emanations. This I shall now proceed to do," and he forthwith manipulated several small buttons upon one side of the box, and grasping the crank handle of the free disc revolved it rapidly.

The result was instantaneous and startling. Before their eyes Elkomoelhago, the king, and Zuanthrol, the slave, saw the rodent shrink rapidly in size, while retaining its proportions unchanged. Tarzan, who had followed every move and every word of the

walmak, leaned far over that he might impress indelibly upon his memory the position of the seven needles. Elkomoelhago glanced up and discovered his interest.

"We do not need this fellow now," he said, addressing Zoanthrohago. "Have him sent away."

"Yes, Thagosto," replied Zoanthrohago, summoning a warrior whom he directed to remove Tarzan and Komodoflorensal to a chamber where they could be secured until their presence was again required.

CHAPTER 15

Through several chambers and corridors they were conducted toward the center of the dome on the same level as the chamber in which they had left the king and the walmak until finally they were thrust into a small chamber and a heavy door was slammed and barred behind them.

There was no candle in the chamber. A faint light, however, relieved the darkness so that the interior of the room was discernible. The chamber contained two benches and a table—that was all. The light which faintly illuminated it entered through a narrow embrasure which was heavily barred, but it was evidently daylight.

"We are alone," whispered Komodoflorensal, "and at last we can converse; but we must be cautious," he added. "'Trust not too far the loyalty of even the stones of your chamber!'" he quoted.

"Where are we?" asked Tarzan. "You are more familiar with Minunian dwellings than I."

"We are upon the highest level of the Royal Dome of Elkomoelhago," replied the prince. "With no such informality does a king visit the other domes of his city. You may rest assured that this is Elkomoelhago's. We are in one of the innermost chambers, next the central shaft that pierces the dome from its lowest level to its roof. For this reason

we do not need a candle to support life—we will obtain sufficient air through this embrasure. And now, tell me what happened within the room with Elkomoelhago and Zoanthrohago."

"I discovered how they reduced my stature," replied Tarzan, "and, furthermore, that at almost any time I may regain my full size—an occurrence that may eventuate from three to thirty-nine moons after the date of my reduction. Even Zoanthrohago cannot determine when this thing will happen."

"Let us hope that it does not occur while you are in this small chamber," exclaimed Komodoflorensal.

"I would have a devil of a time getting out," agreed Tarzan.

"You would never get out," his friend assured him. "While you might, before your reduction, have crawled through some of the larger corridors upon the first level, or even upon many of the lower levels, you could not squeeze into the smaller corridors of the upper levels, which are reduced in size as the necessity for direct supports for the roof increase as we approach the apex of the dome."

"Then it behooves me to get out of here as quickly as possible," said Tarzan.

Komodoflorensal shook his head. "Hope is a beautiful thing, my friend," he said, "but if you were a Minunian you would know that under such

circumstances as we find ourselves it is a waste of mental energy. Look at these bars," and he walked to the window and shook the heavy irons that spanned the embrasure. "Think you that you could negotiate these?"

"I haven't examined them," replied the ape-man, "but I shall never give up hope of escaping; that your people do is doubtless the principal reason that they remain forever in bondage. You are too much a fatalist, Komodoflorensal."

As he spoke Tarzan crossed the room and standing at the prince's side took hold of the bars at the window. "They do not seem overheavy," he remarked, and at the same time exerted pressure upon them. They bent! Tarzan was interested

now and Komodoflorensal, as well. The ape-man threw all his strength and weight into the succeeding effort with the result that two bars, bent almost double, were torn from their setting.

Komodoflorensal gazed at him in astonishment. "Zoanthrohago reduced your size, but left you with your former physical prowess," he cried.

"In no other way can it be accounted for," replied Tarzan, who now, one by one, was removing the remaining bars from the window embrasure. He straightened one of the shorter ones and handed it to Komodoflorensal. "This will make a good weapon," he said, "if we are forced to fight for our liberty," and then he straightened another for

himself.

The Trohanadalmakusian gazed at him in wonder. "And you intend," he demanded, "to defy a city of four hundred and eighty thousand people, armed only with a bit of iron rod?"

"And my wits," added Tarzan.

"You will need them," said the prince.

"And I shall use them," Tarzan assured him.

"When shall you start?" asked Komodoflorensal, chaffingly.

"Tonight, tomorrow, next moon—who knows?" replied the ape-man. "Conditions must be ripe. All the time I shall be watching and planning. In that

sense I started to escape the instant I regained consciousness and knew that I was a prisoner."

Komodoflorensal shook his head.

"You have no faith in me?" demanded Tarzan.

"That is precisely what I have—faith," replied Komodoflorensal. "My judgment tells me that you cannot succeed and yet I shall cast my lot with you, hoping for success, yes, believing in success. If that is not faith I do not know what it might be called."

The ape-man smiled. He seldom, if ever, laughed aloud. "Let us commence," he said. "First we will arrange these rods so that they will have the appearance, from the doorway, of not

having been disturbed, for I take it we shall have an occasional visitor. Some one will bring us food, at least, and whoever comes must suspect nothing."

Together they arranged the rods so that they might be quickly removed and as quickly replaced. By that time it was getting quite dark within the chamber. Shortly after they had finished with the rods their door opened and two warriors, lighting their way with candles, appeared escorting a slave who bore food in bucketlike receptacles and water in bottles made of glazed pottery.

As they were going away again, after depositing the food and drink just inside the doorway, taking their candles with them, Komodoflorensal addressed them.

"We are without candles, warrior," he said to the nearer. "Will you not leave us one of yours?"

"You need no candle in this chamber," replied the man. "One night in darkness will do you good, and tomorrow you return to the quarry. Zoanthrohago is done with you. In the quarry you will have plenty of candles," and he passed out of the chamber, closing the door behind him.

The two slaves heard the heavy bolt shot into place upon the opposite side of the door. It was very dark now. With difficulty they found the receptacles containing the food and water.

"Well?" inquired Komodoflorensal, dipping into one of the food jars. "Do

you think it is going to be so easy now, when tomorrow you will be back in the quarry, perhaps five hundred huals below ground?"

"But I shall not be," replied Tarzan, "and neither shall you."

"Why not?" asked the prince.

"Because, since they expect to remove us to the quarries tomorrow, it follows that we must escape tonight," explained Tarzan.

Komodoflorensal only laughed.

When Tarzan had eaten his fill he arose and walked to the window, where he removed the bars and, taking the one that he had selected for himself, crawled through the passage that led to the opposite end of the embrasure, for even

so close to the apex of the dome the wall was quite thick, perhaps ten huals. The hual, which is about three inches in length by our standards, constitutes the Minunian basic unit of measure, corresponding most closely to our foot. At this high level the embrasure was much smaller than those opening at lower levels, practically all of which were of sufficient size to permit a warrior to walk erect within them; but here Tarzan was forced to crawl upon all fours.

At the far end he found himself looking out into a black void above which the stars were shining and about the sides of which were dotted vague reflections of inner lights, marking the

lighted chambers within the dome. Above him it was but a short distance to the apex of the dome, below was a sheer drop of four hundred huals.

Tarzan, having seen all that could be seen from the mouth of the embrasure, returned to the chamber. "How far is it, Komodoflorensal," he asked, "from the floor of this embrasure to the roof of the dome?"

"Twelve huals, perhaps," replied the Trohanadalmakusian.

Tarzan took the longest of the bars from the embrasure and measured it as best he could. "Too far," he said.

"What is too far?" demanded Komodoflorensal.

"The roof," explained Tarzan.

"What difference does it make where the roof is—you did not expect to escape by way of the roof of the dome, did you?"

"Most certainly—had it been accessible," replied the ape-man; "but now we shall have to go by way of the shaft, which will mean crossing entirely through the dome from the interior shaft to the outer periphery. The other route would have entailed less danger of detection."

Komodoflorensal laughed aloud. "You seem to think that to escape a Minunian city it is only necessary to walk out and away. It cannot be done. What of the sentries? What of the outer patrols? You would be discovered

before you were halfway down the outside of the dome, provided that you could get that far without falling to your death."

"Then perhaps the shaft would be safer," said Tarzan. "There would be less likelihood of discovery before we reached the bottom, for from what I could see it is as dark as pitch in the shaft."

"Clamber down the inside of the shaft!" exclaimed Komodoflorensal. "You are mad! You could not clamber from this level to the next without falling, and it must be a full four hundred huals to the bottom."

"Wait!" Tarzan admonished him.

Komodoflorensal could hear his

companion moving around in the dark chamber. He heard the scraping of metal on stone and presently he heard a pounding, not loud, yet heavy.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Wait!" said Tarzan.

And Komodoflorensal waited, wondering. It was Tarzan who spoke next.

"Could you find the chamber in which Talaskar is confined in the quarry?" he asked.

"Why?" demanded the prince.

"We are going after her," explained Tarzan. "We promised that we would not leave without her."

"I can find it," said Komodoflorensal,

rather sullenly Tarzan thought.

For some time the ape-man worked on in silence, except for the muffled pounding and the scraping of iron on stone, or of iron on iron.

"Do you know every one in Trohanadalmakus?" Tarzan asked, suddenly.

"Why, no," replied Komodoflorensal. "There are a million souls, including all the slaves. I could not know them all."

"Did you know by sight all those that dwelt in the royal dome?" continued the ape-man.

"No, not even those who lived in the royal dome," replied the Trohanadalmakusian; "though doubtless I knew practically all of the nobles, and

the warrior class by sight if not by name."

"Did any one?" asked Tarzan,

"I doubt it," was the reply.

"Good!" exclaimed Tarzan.

Again there was a silence, broken again by the Englishman.

"Can a warrior go anywhere without question in any dome of his own city?" he inquired.

"Anywhere, under ordinary circumstances, except into the king's dome, in daytime."

"One could not go about at night, then?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied his companion.

"By day, might a warrior go and come

in the quarries as he pleased?"

"If he appeared to be employed he would not be questioned, ordinarily."

Tarzan worked a little longer in silence. "Come!" he said presently; "we are ready to go."

"I shall go with you," said Komodoflorensal, "because I like you and because I think it would be better to be dead than a slave. At least we shall have some pleasure out of what remains to us of life, even though it be not a long life."

"I think we shall have some pleasure, my friend," replied Zuanthrol. "We may not escape; but, like you, I should rather die now than remain a slave for life. I have chosen tonight for our first step

toward freedom, because I realize that once returned to the quarry our chances for a successful break for liberty will be reduced to almost nothing, and tonight is our only night above ground."

"How do you propose that we escape from this chamber?"

"By way of the central shaft," replied Tarzan; "but first tell me, may a white-tunicked slave enter the quarries freely by day?"

Komodoflorensal wondered what bearing all these seemingly immaterial questions had upon the problem of their escape; but he answered patiently:

"No, white tunics are never seen in the quarries."

"Have you the iron bar I straightened

for you?"

"Yes."

"Then follow me through the embrasure. Bring the other rods that I shall leave in the opening. I will carry the bulk of them. Come!"

Komodoflorensal heard Tarzan crawling into the embrasure, the iron rods that he carried breaking the silence of the little chamber. Then he followed. In the mouth of the embrasure he found the rods that Tarzan had left for him to carry. There were four rods, the ends of each bent into hooks. It had been upon this work that Tarzan had been engaged in the darkness— Komodoflorensal wondered to what purpose. Presently his further advance was halted by Tarzan's

body.

"Just a moment," said the ape-man. "I am making a hole in the window ledge. When that is done we shall be ready." A moment later he turned his head back toward his companion. "Pass along the rods," he said.

After Komodoflorensal had handed the hooked rods to Tarzan he heard the latter working with them, very quietly, for several minutes, and then he heard him moving his body about in the narrow confines of the embrasure and presently when the ape-man spoke again the Trohanadalmakusian realized that he had turned around and that his head was close to that of his companion.

"I shall go first, Komodoflorensal,"

he said. "Come to the edge of the embrasure and when you hear me whistle once, follow me."

"Where?" asked the prince.

"Down the shaft to the first embrasure that will give us foot- hold, and let us pray that there is one directly below this within the next eighteen huals. I have hooked the rods together, the upper end hooked into the bole I made in the ledge, the lower end dangling down a distance of eighteen huals."

"Good-bye, my friend," said Komodoflorensal.

Tarzan smiled and slipped over the edge of the embrasure. In one hand he carried the rod that he had retained as a weapon, with the other he clung to the

window ledge. Below him for eighteen huals dangled the slender ladder of iron hooks, and below this, four hundred huals of pitchy darkness hid the stone flagging of the inner courtyard. Perhaps it roofed the great central throne room of the king, as was true in the royal dome of Adendrohahkis; perhaps it was but an open court. The truth was immaterial if the frail support slipped from the shallow hole in the ledge above, or if one of the hooks straightened under the weight of the ape-man.

Now he grasped the upper section of his ladder with the hand that held his improvised weapon, removed the hand from the ledge and grasped the rod again, still lower down. In this way he

lowered his body a few inches at a time. He moved very slowly for two reasons, the more important of which was that he feared that any sudden strains upon his series of hooks might straighten one of them and precipitate him into the abyss below; the other was the necessity for silence. It was very dark even this close to the summit of the dome, but that was rather an advantage than otherwise, for it hid his presence from any chance observer who might glance through one of the embrasures in the opposite wall of the shaft As he descended he felt in both directions for an embrasure, but he was almost at the end of his ladder before he felt himself swing slightly into one. When he had lowered himself still

farther and could look into the opening he saw that it was dark, an indication that it did not lead into an inhabited chamber, a fact for which he was thankful. He hoped, too, that the inner end of the embrasure was not barred, nor the door beyond bolted upon the outside.

He whistled once, very low, for Komodoflorensal, and an instant later he felt the movement of the iron ladder that told him his companion had commenced the descent. The embrasure in which he stood was higher than the one they had just quitted, permitting him to stand erect There he waited for the Trohanadalmakusian who was soon standing upon the ledge beside him.

"Phew!" exclaimed the prince, in a

whisper. "I should hate to have had to do that in the daytime when I could have seen all the way to the bottom. What next? We have come farther already than ever I dreamed would be possible. Now I am commencing to believe that escape may lie within the realm of possibilities."

"We haven't started yet," Tarzan assured him; "but we are going to now. Come!"

Grasping their rude weapons the two walked stealthily the length of the embrasure. There were no bars to impede their progress and they stepped to the floor of the chamber beyond. Very carefully, feeling each step before he planted a foot and with his weapon

extended before him, Tarzan groped his way about the chamber, which he found was fairly well filled with casks and bottles, the latter in wooden and wicker cases. Komodoflorensal was directly behind him.

"We are in one of the rooms where the nobles charged with enforcing the laws against wine have hidden confiscated liquor," whispered the Trohanadalmakusian. "I have heard much talk concerning the matter since I was made prisoner—the warriors and the slaves, too, seem to talk of nothing else but this and the high taxes. The chances are that the door is heavily barred—they guard these forbidden beverages as never they guarded their

gold or jewels."

"I have found the passageway leading to the door," whispered Tarzan, "and I can see a light beneath it."

They crept stealthily the length of the passage. Each grasped his weapon more firmly as Tarzan gently tried the latch. It gave! Slowly the ape-man pushed the door ajar. Through the tiny aperture thus opened he could see a portion of the room. Its floor was strewn with gorgeous carpets, thick and soft. That portion of the wall that was revealed to him was hung with heavy fabrics woven in many colors and strange patterns—splendid, barbaric. Directly in the line of his vision the body of a man lay sprawled, face down, upon the floor—a

pool of red stained a white rug beneath his head.

Tarzan opened the door a little farther, revealing the bodies of three other men. Two lay upon the floor, the third upon a low divan. The scene, gorgeous in its coloring, tragic in its suggestion of mystery and violent death, held the eyes of the ape-man yet a moment longer before he opened the door still wider and leaped quickly to the center of the room, his weapon raised and ready, giving no possible skulking foe behind the door the opportunity to fell him that would have offered had he edged into the room slowly.

A quick glance about the apartment

showed the bodies of six men that had not been visible from the partially opened door. These were lying in a pile in one corner of the room.

CHAPTER 16

Komodoflorensal stood at Tarzan's side, his weapon ready to take issue with any who might question their presence here; but presently the end of his iron rod dropped to the floor and a broad smile overspread his features.

Tarzan looked at him. "Who are they?" he demanded, "and why have they been killed?"

"They are not dead, my friend," replied Komodoflorensal. "They are the nobles whose duty it is to prevent the use of wine. They are not dead— they are drunk."

"But the blood beneath the head of this one at my feet!" demanded the ape-

man.

"It is red wine, not blood," his companion assured him. Then Tarzan smiled.

"They could not have chosen a better night for their orgy," he said. "Had they remained sober the door through which we entered from the storeroom would have been securely fastened, I imagine."

"Assuredly, and we would have had a sober guard of warriors to deal with in this chamber, instead of ten drunken nobles. We are very fortunate, Zuanthrol."

He had scarcely ceased speaking when a door in the opposite side of the room swung open, revealing two warriors, who stepped immediately into

the chamber. They eyed the two who faced them and then glanced about the room at the inert forms of its other occupants.

"What do you here, slaves?" demanded one of the newcomers.

"Sh-sh-sh!" cautioned Tarzan, placing a finger to his lips. "Enter and close the door, lest others hear."

"There is no one near to hear," snapped one of them, but they entered and he closed the door. "What is the meaning of this?"

"That you are our prisoners," cried the ape-man, leaping past them and placing himself before the door, his iron rod in readiness.

A sneer twisted the mouth of each of

the two Veltopismakusians as they whipped out their rapiers and leaped toward the ape-man, ignoring for the moment the Trohanadalmakusian, who, seizing upon the opportunity thus afforded him, threw aside his iron rod and matched a rapier from the side of one of the drunken nobles—a substitution of weapons that would render Komodoflorensal a dangerous opponent anywhere in Minuni, for there was no better swordsman among all the warlike clans of Trohanadalmakus, whose blades were famed throughout Minuni.

Facing, with only an iron rod, two skilled swordsmen placed Tarzan of the Apes at a disadvantage that might have

proved his undoing had it not been for the presence of Komodoflorensal, who, no sooner than he had appropriated a weapon, leaped forward and engaged one of the warriors. The other pressed Tarzan fiercely.

"Your prisoner, eh, slave?" he sneered as he lunged for his opponent; but though less skilled, perhaps, in swordplay than his antagonist, the Lord of the Jungle had not faced Bolgani and Numa for nothing. His movements were as Lightning, his strength as great as before Zoanthrohago had reduced his stature. At the first onslaught of the warriors he had leaped to one side to avoid the thrust of a blade, and as much to his own astonishment as to theirs,

what he had intended for a nimble sidestep had carried him the length of the room, and then the man had been at him again, while the other was having his time well occupied with the Zertolosto of Trohanadalmakus.

Twice Tarzan parried cuts with his cumbersome bar and then a thrust but missed him by a hairsbreadth, his sidestep coming but in the nick of time. It was a dose call, for the man bad lunged at his abdomen—a close call for Tarzan and death for his opponent, for as the point slipped harmlessly by him the ape-man swung his rod upon the unguarded head of the Veltopismakusian, and with a grunt the fellow slumped to the floor, his skull crushed to the bridge of his nose.

Then Tarzan turned to aid Komodoflorensal, but the son of Adendrohahkis needed no aid. He had his man against the wall and was running him through the heart as Tarzan turned in their direction. As the man fell, Komodoflorensal swung toward the center of the room and as his eye fell upon the ape-man a smile crossed his face.

"With an iron bar you bested a swordsman of Minuni!" he cried. "I would not have believed it possible and so I hastened to dispatch my man that I might come to your rescue before it was too late."

Tarzan laughed. "I had the same thought in mind concerning you," he said.

"And you could have well held it had I not been able to secure this rapier," Komodoflorensal assured him. "But what now? We have again come much farther than it seems possible we can have. Naught will surprise me hereafter."

"We are going to trade apparel with these two unfortunate gentlemen," said Tarzan, divesting himself of the green tunic as he spoke.

Komodoflorensal chuckled as he followed the example of his companion.

"There are other peoples as great as the Minunians," he declared, "though until I met you, my friend, I should never have believed it."

A few moments later the two stood

garbed in the habiliments of Veltopismakusian warriors and Tarzan was slipping his green tunic upon the corpse of him whom he had slain.

"But why are you doing that?" asked the prince.

"Do likewise with yours and you will see, presently," Tarzan replied.

Komodoflorensal did as the other bid him and when the change had been completed the ape-man threw one of the corpses across his shoulder and carried it into the storeroom, followed closely by Komodoflorensal with the other. Walking through the window embrasure to the edge of the shaft Tarzan hurled his burden out into space, and reaching back took Komodoflorensal's from him and

pitched it after the first.

"If they do not examine them too closely," he said, "the ruse may serve to convince them that we died attempting to escape." As he spoke he detached two of the hooks from the ladder down which they had clambered from the window of their dungeon and dropped them after the corpses. "These will lend color to the suggestion," he added, in explanation.

Together they returned to the room where the drunken nobles lay, where Komodoflorensal began to rifle the fat money pouches of the unconscious men.

"We shall need all of this that we can get if we are to pose as Veltopismakusian warriors for any length of time," he said. "I know these

people by reputation and that gold will buy many of the things that we may require—the blindness of guards and the complaisance of officials, if they do not guess too close to the truth concerning us."

"That part of it you must attend to, Komodoflorensal," said Tarzan, "for I am unfamiliar with the ways of your people; but we may not remain here. These gentlemen have served us well, and themselves, too, for their faithlessness and debauchery saved their lives, while the two who followed in sobriety the path of duty were destroyed."

"Matters are strangely ordered," commented Komodoflorensal.

"In Minuni as elsewhere," agreed Tarzan, leading the way to the door of the chamber which they found opened into a corridor instead of into another chamber as they had rather expected would be the fact at a point thus close to the central shaft.

In silence they proceeded along the passageway, which, at this hour of the morning, was deserted. They passed lighted chambers, where men and women were sleeping peacefully in the glare of many candles. They saw a sentry asleep before the door of a noble's quarters. No one discovered them and thus they passed down a series of inclined runways and along interminable corridors until they were

far from that portion of the royal dome in which they had been incarcerated and where it would be most natural for the search for them to commence in the event that the bodies they had hurled into the shaft were not immediately discovered, or were identified for what they really were, rather than for what the two fugitives had tried to make them appear.

And now a white-tunicked slave was approaching them along the corridor. He passed without paying them any heed, and presently another and another appeared until the two realized that morning was approaching and the corridors would soon he filled with the inhabitants of the dome.

"It will be best," said Komodoflorensal, "to find a hiding place until there are more people abroad. We shall be safer in a crowd than among just a few where we shall be the more noticeable."

Nearly all the chambers they passed now were occupied by families, while those that were untenanted were without candles and therefore unsafe as hiding places for any length of time; but presently Komodoflorensal touched Tarzan's arm and pointed to a hieroglyphic beside a door they were approaching.

"Just the place," he said.

"What is it?" asked Tarzan, and as they came opposite the open door; "Why,

it is filled with men! When they awake we shall be discovered."

"But not recognized," returned the Trohanadalmakusian; "or at least the chances are slight that we shall be. This is a common chamber where any man may purchase lodgings over night. Doubtless there are visitors from other domes and strangers will not be particularly remarked on this account."

He entered the room, followed by Tarzan. A white-tunicked slave approached them. "Candles for two," demanded Komodoflorensal, handing the slave one of the smaller golden coins he had filched from the sleeping nobles.

The fellow led them to a far corner of the room where there was plenty of

space upon the floor, lit two candles and left them. A moment later they were stretched at full length, their faces toward the wall as a further protection against recognition, and were soon asleep.

When Tarzan awoke he saw that he and Komodoflorensal were the only remaining occupants of the chamber, other than the slave who had admitted them, and he awoke his companion, believing that they should do nothing that might even in a slight degree call more than ordinary attention to them. A bucket of water was brought them and they performed their ablutions at a gutter which encircled the chamber, passing along the foot of each wall, as was the

custom throughout Minuni, the waste water being carried away in pipes to the fields beyond the cities, where it was used for irrigating the crops. As all the water had to be carried into the domes and to the different levels in buckets, the amount used for ablutions was reduced to the minimum, the warrior and noble class getting the bulk of it, while the white-tunicked slaves depended principally upon the rivers, near which domes are always erected, for their baths. The green slaves fare the worst, and suffer a real hardship through lack of bathing facilities, for the Minunians are a cleanly people; but they manage to alleviate their plight to some extent, where the quarry masters are more

kindly disposed, by the use of stagnant seepage water that accumulates in every quarry at the lower levels and which, not being fit for drinking purposes, may be used by the slaves for bathing when they are permitted the time to obtain it.

Having washed, Tarzan and Komodoflorensal passed out into the corridor, a broad thoroughfare of the dome city, where there were now passing two solid lines of humanity moving in opposite directions, the very numbers of the people proving their greatest safeguard against detection. Candles at frequent intervals diffused a brilliant light and purified the air. Open doorways revealed shops of various descriptions within which men and

women were bartering for goods, and now Tarzan had his first real glimpse of Veltopismakusian life. The shops were all conducted by white-tunicked slaves, but slaves and warriors intermingled as customers, both sexes of each class being represented. It was Tarzan's first opportunity, also, to see the women of the warrior class outside their own homes. He had seen the Princess Janzara in the palace quarters and, through the doorways in various portions of the dome, he had seen other women of varying stations in life; but these were the first that he had seen abroad at close hand. Their faces were painted deep vermilion, their ears blue, and their apparel so arranged that the left leg and

left arm were bare, though if even so much as the right ankle or wrist became uncovered they hastily readjusted their garments to hide them, giving every evidence of confusion and embarrassment As the ape-man watched them he was reminded of fat dowagers he had seen at home whose evening gowns left them naked to their kidneys, yet who would rather have died than to have exposed a knee.

The front of the shops were covered with brilliant paintings, usually depicting the goods that were on sale, together with hieroglyphics describing the wares and advertising the name of the proprietor. One of these finally held the attention of the Trohanadalmakusian,

and he touched Tarzan's arm and pointed toward it.

"A place where food is served," he said. "Let us eat."

"Nothing would suit me better. I am famished," Tarzan assured him, and so the two entered the little shop where several customers were already sitting upon the floor with small benches pulled close to them, upon which food was being served in wooden dishes. Komodoflorensal found a space near the rear of the shop, not far from a doorway leading into another chamber, which was also a shop of a different character, not all the places of business being fortunately located upon a corridor, but having their entrances, like this one,

through another place of business.

Having seated themselves and dragged a bench before them they looked about while waiting to be served. It was evidently a poor shop, Komodoflorensal told Tarzan, catering to the slave caste and the poorer warriors, of which there were several sitting at benches in different parts of the room. By their harness and apparel, which was worn and shabby, one might easily guess at their poverty. In the adjoining shop were several more of the same class of unfortunate warriors mending their own clothes with materials purchased from the poor shopkeeper.

The meal was served by a slave in a white tunic of very cheap material, who

was much surprised when payment for the meal and the service was offered in gold.

"It is seldom," he said, "that warriors rich enough to possess gold come to our poor shop. Pieces of iron and bits of lead, with much wooden money, pass into my coffers; but rarely do I see gold. Once I did, and many of my customers were formerly of the richest of the city. Yonder see that tall man with the heavily wrinkled face. Once he was rich—the richest warrior in his dome. Look at him now! And see them in the next room performing menial services, men who once owned slaves so prosperous that they, in turn, hired other slaves to do the meaner duties for them. Victims, all of

them, of the tax that Elkomoelhago has placed upon industry.

"To be poor," he continued, "assures one an easier life than being rich, for the poor have no tax to pay, while those who work hard and accumulate property have only their labor for their effort, since the government takes all from them in taxes.

"Over there is a man who was very rich. He worked hard all his life and accumulated a vast fortune. For several years after Elkomoelhago's new tax law was enforced, he struggled to earn enough to insure that his income would be at least equal to his taxes and the cost of his living; but he found that it was impossible. He had one enemy, a man

who had wronged him grievously. This man was very poor, and to him he gave all of what remained of his great fortune and his property. It was a terrible revenge. From being a contented man, this victim of another's spleen is now a haggard wreck, laboring unceasingly eighteen hours each day in a futile attempt to insure himself an income that will defray his taxes."

Having finished their meal the two fugitives returned to the corridor and continued their way downward through the dome toward the first level, keeping always to the more crowded corridors, where detection seemed least likely. Now, mounted men were more frequently encountered and so rapidly

and recklessly did the warriors ride along the narrow corridors that it was with difficulty that the pedestrians avoided being ridden down and trampled, and it seemed to Tarzan but little less than a miracle that any of them arrived at their destinations uninjured. Having at last come to the lowest level, they were engaged in searching for one of the four corridors that would lead them from the dome, when their way was completely blocked by a great throng that had congregated at the intersection of two corridors. Those in the rear were stretching their necks to observe what was going on in the center of the gathering. Everyone was asking questions of his neighbor, but as yet no

one upon the outskirts of the mob appeared to know what had occurred, until at last fragments of rumors filtered back to the farthermost. Tarzan and Komodoflorensal dared ask no questions, but they kept their ears open and presently they were rewarded by overhearing repeated what seemed to be an authoritative account of what had transpired to cause this congestion. In answer to a question put by one of the throng a fellow who was elbowing his way out from the center of the jam explained that those in front had halted to view the remains of two slaves who had been killed while trying to escape.

"They were locked in one of Zoanthrohago's slave cells at the very

highest level," he told his questioner, "and they tried to escape by climbing down an improvised ladder into the central shaft. Their ladder broke and they were precipitated to the roof of the throne room, where their bodies, terribly mangled, were but just found. They are being carried out to the beasts, now. One of them was a great loss to Zoanthrohago as it was the slave Zuanthrol, upon whom he was experimenting."

"Ah," exclaimed a listener, "I saw them but yesterday."

"You would not know them today," vouchsafed the informer, "so terribly are their faces disfigured."

When the press of humanity had been relieved Tarzan and Komodoflorensal

continued their way, finding that the Slaves' Corridor lay just before them, and that it was down this avenue that the bodies of their victims of the previous night were being carried.

"What," asked the ape-man, "did he mean by saying that they were being carried to the beasts?"

"It is the way in which we dispose of the bodies of slaves," replied the Trohanadalmakusian. "They are carried to the edge of the jungle, where they are devoured by wild beasts. There are old and toothless lions near Trohanadalmakus that subsist entirely upon slave meat. They are our scavengers and so accustomed are they to being fed that they often come to meet

the parties who bring out the corpses, pacing beside them, roaring and growling, until the spot is reached where the bodies are to be deposited."

"You dispose of all your dead in this manner?"

"Only the slave dead. The bodies of warriors and nobles are burned."

"In a short time, then," continued Tarzan, "there will be no danger of there ever being a correct identification of those two," he jerked his thumb along the corridor ahead, where the bodies of the two dead warriors were being bounced and jolted along upon the backs of diadets.

CHAPTER 17

"Where now?" demanded Komodoflorensal as the two emerged from the mouth of the Slaves' Corridor and I stood for a moment in the brilliant sunlight without.

"Lead the way to the quarry where we were confined and to the chamber in which we slept."

"You must be weary of your brief liberty," remarked the Trohanadalmakusian.

"We are returning for Talaskar, as I promised," Tarzan reminded him.

"I know," said the Zertolosto, "and I commend your loyalty and valor while deprecating your judgment. It will be

impossible to rescue Talaskar. Were it otherwise I should be the first to her assistance; but I know, and she knows, that, for her, escape is beyond hope. We will but succeed in throwing ourselves again into the hands of our masters."

"Let us hope not," said Tarzan; "but, if you feel as you say, that our effort is foredoomed to failure and that we shall but be recaptured, do not accompany me. My only real need of you is to guide me to the apartment where Talaskar is confined. If you can direct me to it that is all I ask."

"Think you I was attempting to evade the danger?" demanded Komodoflorensal. "No! Where you go, I will go. If you are captured I shall be

captured. We shall fail, but let us not separate. I am ready to go wherever you go."

"Good," commented Tarzan. "Now lead the way to the quarry and use your knowledge of things Minunian and your best wits to gain us entrance without too much talking."

They passed, unchallenged, along the shaded walks between the domes of Veltopismakus and past the great parade where gorgeously caparisoned warriors were executing intricate evolutions with the nicest precision, and out beyond the domes along well-worn trails filled with toiling slaves and their haughty guards. Here they fell in beside the long column moving in the direction of the quarry in

which they had been imprisoned, taking their places in the column of flanking guards, and thus they came to the entrance to the quarry.

Perfunctorily the numbers of the slaves were taken, as they passed in, and entered in a great book; but to Tarzan's relief he noted that no attention was paid to the guards, who moved along beside their charges and down into the interior without being checked or even counted, and with them went Komodoflorensal, Prince Royal of Trohanadalmakus, and Tarzan of the Apes.

Once inside the quarry and past the guard room the two fell gradually to the rear of the column, so that when it turned into a level above that which they

wished to reach they were enabled to detach themselves from it without being noticed. To leave one column was but to join another, for there was no break in them and often there were several moving abreast; but when they reached the thirty- fifth level and entered the tunnel leading to the chamber in which Talaskar was confined they found themselves alone, since there is little or no activity in these corridors leading to slave quarters except early in the morning when the men are led forth to their labors and again at night when they are brought back.

Before the door of the chamber they found a single warrior on guard. He was squatting on the floor of the tunnel

leaning against the wall, but at their approach he rose and challenged them.

Komodoflorensal, who was in the lead, approached him and halted. "We have come for the slave girl, Talaskar," he said.

Tarzan, who was just behind Komodoflorensal, saw a sudden light leap to the eyes of the warrior. Was it recognition?

"Who sent you?" demanded the warrior.

"Her master, Zoanthrohago," replied the Trohanadalmakusian.

The expression upon the face of the warrior changed to one of cunning.

"Go in and fetch her," he said, and

unbolted the door, swinging it open.

Komodoflorensal dropped upon his hands and knees and crawled through the low aperture, but Tarzan stood where he was.

"Go in!" said the guard to him.

"I will remain where I am," replied the ape-man. "It will not require two of us to find a single slave girl and fetch her to the corridor."

For an instant the warrior hesitated, then he closed the door hurriedly and shot the heavy bolts. When he turned toward Tarzan again, who was now alone with him in the corridor, he turned with a naked sword in his hands; but he found Zuanthrol facing him with drawn rapier.

"Surrender!" cried the warrior. "I recognized you both instantly."

"I thought as much," said Zuanthrol. "You are clever, with the exception of your eyes—they are fools, for they betray you."

"But my sword is no fool," snapped the fellow, as he thrust viciously at the ape-man's breast.

Lieutenant Paul D'Arnot of the French navy had been recognized as one of the cleverest swordsmen in the service and to his friend Greystoke he had imparted a great measure of his skill during the many hours that the two had whiled away with the foils, and today Tarzan of the Apes breathed a prayer of gratitude to the far-distant friend whose careful

training was, after many long years, to serve the ape-man in such good stead, for he soon realized that, though his antagonist was a master at the art of fence, he was not wholly outclassed, and to his skill was added his great strength and his agility.

They had fought for but a minute or two when the Veltopismakusian realized that he was facing no mean antagonist and that be was laboring at a disadvantage. He being unable to fall back when Tarzan rushed him, while his foeman had at his back the whole length of the tunnel. He tried then to force Tarzan back, but in this he failed, receiving a thrust in the shoulder for his pains, and then he commenced to call for

help and the ape-man realized that he must silence him and that quickly. Awaiting the opportunity that was presently afforded by a feint that evoked a wild lunge, Tarzan stepped quickly in and passed his sword through the heart of the Veltopismakusian and as he withdrew his blade from the body of his antagonist he released the bolts that held the door and swung it open. Beyond it, white of face, crouched Komodoflorensal, but as his eyes fell upon Tarzan and the body of the guard behind him, a smile curved his lips and an instant later he was in the corridor beside his friend.

"How did it happen?" he demanded.

"He recognized us; but what of

Talaskar? Is she not coming?"

"She is not here. Kalfastoban took her away. He has purchased her from Zoanthrohago."

Tarzan wheeled. "Rebolt the door and let us get out of here," he said.

Komodoflorensal closed and fastened the door. "Where now?" he asked.

"To find Kalfastoban's quarters," replied the ape-man.

Komodoflorensal shrugged his shoulders and followed on behind his friend. They retraced their steps toward the surface without incident until they were opposite the sixteenth level, when a face was suddenly turned toward them from a column of slaves crossing the runway from one lateral to another. Just

for an instant did the eyes of the slave meet those of Tarzan, and then the fellow had passed into the mouth of the lateral and disappeared.

"We must hurry," whispered Tarzan to his companion.

"Why now more than before?" demanded Komodoflorensal.

"Did you not see the fellow who just passed us and turned to look a second time at me?"

"No; who was it?"

"Caraftap," replied Tarzan.

"Did he recognize you?"

"As to that I cannot say; but he evidently found something familiar in my appearance. Let us hope that he did not

place me, though I fear that he did."

"Then we must lose no time in getting out of here, and out of Veltopismakus, as well."

They hurried on. "Where are Kalfastoban's quarters?" asked Tarzan.

"I do not know. In Trohanadalmakus warriors are detailed to the quarries for but short periods and do not transfer their quarters or their slaves during the time that they are there. I do not know the custom here. Kalfastoban may have finished his tour of duty in the quarries. On the other hand it may be for a long period that they are detailed for that service and his quarters may lie on the upper level of the quarry. We shall have to inquire."

Soon after this Tarzan stepped up to a warrior moving in the same direction as he and Komodoflorensal. "Where can I find Kalfastoban Vental he asked.

"They will tell you in the guard room, if it is any of your affair," he replied, shooting a quick glance at the two. "I do not know."

After that they passed the fellow and at the first rum that hid them from him they increased their speed, for both were becoming suspicious of every least untoward incident, and their one wish now was to escape the quarry in safety. Nearing the entrance they attached themselves to a column of slaves toiling upward with their heavy burdens of rocks for the new dome, and with them

they came to the guard room where the slaves were checked out. The officer and the clerks labored in a mechanical manner, and it appeared that it was to be as easy to leave the quarry as it had been to enter it, when the officer suddenly drew his brow together and commenced to count.

"How many slaves in this crew?" he asked.

"One hundred," replied one of the warriors accompanying them.

"Then why four guards?" he demanded.

"There are but two of us," rejoined the warrior.

"We are not with them," Komodoflorensal spoke up quickly.

"What do you here?" demanded the officer.

"If we can see you alone we can explain that quickly," replied the Trohanadalmakusian.

The officer waved the crew of slaves upon their way and beckoned to Komodoflorensal and Tarzan to follow him into an adjoining chamber, where they found a small anteroom in which the commander of the guard slept.

"Now," he said, "let me see your passes."

"We have none," replied Komodoflorensal.

"No passes! That will be difficult to explain, will it not?"

"Not to one of your discrimination," replied the prince, accidentally jingling the golden coins in his pouch. "We are in search of Kalfastoban. We understand that he owns a slave we wish to purchase and not being able to obtain a pass to the quarry in the short time at our disposal we ventured to come, upon so simple an errand, without one. Could you direct us to Kalfastoban?" Again he jingled the coins.

"I shall be delighted," replied the officer. "His quarters are upon the fifth level of the Royal Dome upon the central corridor and about midway between the King's Corridor and the Warrior's Corridor. As he was relieved from duty in the quarry this very morning I have no

doubt but that you will find him there."

"We thank you," said Komodoflorensal, leaning far back in the Minunian bow. "And now," he added, as though it was an afterthought, "if you will accept it we shall be filled with gratitude if you will permit us to leave this slight token of our appreciation," and he drew a large gold coin from the pouch and proffered it to the officer.

"Rather than seem ungrateful," replied the officer, "I must accept your gracious gift, with which I may alleviate the sufferings of the poor. May the shadow of disaster never fall upon you!"

The three then bowed and Tarzan and Komodoflorensal quitted the guard room and a moment later were in the free,

fresh air of the surface.

"Even in Minuni!" breathed Tarzan.

"What was that?" asked his friend.

"I was just thinking of my simple, honest jungle and God's creatures that men call beasts."

"What should they call them?" demanded Komodoflorensal.

"If judged by the standards that men themselves make, and fail to observe, they should be called demigods," replied the ape-man.

"I believe I get your point," laughed the other; "but think! Had a lion guarded the entrance to this quarry no gold piece would have let us pass. The frailties of man are not without their virtues;

because of them right has just triumphed over wrong and bribery has worn the vestments of virtue."

Returning to the Royal Dome they passed around the east side of the structure to the north front, where lies the Slaves' Corridor in every dome. In quitting the dome they had come from the Warriors' Corridor on the west and they felt that it would be but increasing the chances of detection were they to pass too often along the same route where someone, half-recognizing them in one instance, might do so fully after a second or third inspection.

To reach the fifth level required but a few minutes after they had gained entrance to the dome. With every

appearance of boldness they made their way toward the point in the central corridor at which the officer of the guard had told them they would find Kalfastoban's quarters, and perhaps Kalfastoban himself; but they were constantly on the alert, for both recognized that the greatest danger of detection lay through the chance that Kalfastoban might recall their features, as he of all Veltopismakusians would be most apt to do so, since he had seen the most of them, or at least the most of Tarzan since he had donned the slave's green.

They had reached a point about midway between the Slaves' Corridor and the Warriors' Corridor when

Komodoflorensal halted a young, female slave and asked her where the quarters of Kalfastoban were located.

"It is necessary to pass through the quarters of Hamadalban to reach those of Kalfastoban," replied the girl. "Go to the third entrance," and she pointed along the corridor in the direction they had been going.

After they had left her Tarzan asked Komodoflorensal if he thought there would be any difficulty in gaining entrance to Kalfastoban's quarters.

"No," he replied; "the trouble will arise in knowing what to do after we get there."

"We know what we have come for," replied the ape-man. "It is only

necessary to carry out our design, removing all obstacles as they intervene."

"Quite simple," laughed the prince.

Tarzan was forced to smile. "To be candid," he admitted, "I haven't the remotest idea what we are going to do after we get in there, or after we get put either, if we are successful in finding Talaskar and bringing her away with us, but that is not strange, since I know nothing, or practically nothing, of what conditions I may expect to confront me from moment to moment in this strange city of a strange world. All that we can do is to do our best. We have come thus far much more easily than I expected—perhaps we will go the whole distance

with no greater friction—or we may stop within the next dozen steps, forever."

Pausing before the third entrance they glanced in, discovering several women squatting upon the floor. Two of them were of the warrior class, the others slaves of the white tunic. Komodoflorensal entered boldly.

"These are the quarters of Hamadalban?" he asked.

"They are," replied one of the women.

"And Kalfastoban's are beyond?"

"Yes."

"And beyond Kalfastoban's?" inquired the Trohanadalmakusian.

"A long gallery leads to the outer corridor. Upon the gallery open many

chambers where live hundreds of people. I do not know them all. Whom do you seek?"

"Palastokar," replied Komodoflorensal quickly, choosing the first name that presented itself to his memory.

"I do not recall the name," said the woman, knitting her brows in thought.

"But I shall find him now, thanks to you," said Komodoflorensal, "for my directions were to pass through the quarters of Hamadalban and Kalfastoban, when I should come upon a gallery into which opened the quarters of Palastokar; but perhaps if Kalfastoban is in, he will be able to direct me more exactly."

"Kalfastoban has gone out with Hamadalban," replied the woman; "but I expect them back momentarily. If you will wait, they will soon be here."

"Thank you," said Komodoflorensal, hastily; "but I am sure that we shall have no trouble finding the quarters of Palastokar. May your candles burn long and brilliantly!" and without waiting on further ceremony he crossed the room and entered the quarters of Kalfastoban, into which Tarzan of the Apes followed at his heels.

"I think, my friend," said the prince, "that we shall have to work rapidly."

Tarzan glanced quickly around the first chamber that they entered. It was vacant. Several doors opened from it.

They were all closed either with wooden doors or with hangings. The ape-man stepped quickly to the nearer and tried the latch. It gave and he pushed the door ajar. All was darkness within.

"Bring a candle, Komodoflorensal," he said.

The prince brought two from their niches in the wall. "A storeroom," he said, as the rays of the candles illuminated the interior of the room. "Food and candles and raiment. Kalfastoban is no pauper. The tax collector has not ruined him yet."

Tarzan, standing in the doorway of the storeroom, just behind Komodoflorensal, turned suddenly and looked out across the other chamber. He

had heard voices in the quarters of Hamadalban beyond—men's voices. One of them he recognized an instant later—it was the voice of Kalfastoban Vental.

"Come!" roared the bull voice of the Vental. "Come to my quarters, Hamadalban, and I will show you this new slave of mine."

Tarzan pushed Komodoflorensal into the storeroom and following him, closed the door. "Did you hear?" he whispered.

"Yes, it was Kalfastoban!" The storeroom door was ornamented with a small, open grill covered with a hanging of some heavy stuff upon the inside. By drawing the hanging aside the two could obtain a view of most of the interior of

the outer chamber, and they could hear all that was said by the two men who now entered from Hamadalban's quarters.

"I tell you she is the greatest bargain I have ever seen," cried Kalfastoban; "but wait, I'll fetch her," and he stepped to another door, which he unlocked with a key. "Come out!" he roared, flinging the door wide.

With the haughty bearing of a queen a girl stepped slowly into the larger room —no cowering servility of the slave here. Her chin was high, her gaze level. She glanced almost with contempt upon the Vental. And she was beautiful. It was Talaskar. Komodoflorensal realized that he had never before appreciated how

really beautiful was the little slave girl, who had cooked for him. Kalfastoban had given her a white tunic of good quality, which set off the olive of her skin and the rich blackness of her hair to better effect than had the cheap green thing that he had always seen her in.

"She belonged to Zoanthrohago," Kalfastoban explained to his friend, "but I doubt that he ever saw her, else he never would have parted with her for the paltry sum I paid."

"You will take her for your own woman and raise her to our class?" asked Hamadalban.

"No," replied Kalfastoban, "for then she would no longer be a slave and I could not sell her. Women are too

expensive. I shall keep her for a time and then sell her while her value is still high. I should make a pretty profit from her."

Tarzan's fingers closed tightly, as though upon the throat of an enemy, and the right hand of Komodoflorensal crept to the hilt of his rapier.

A woman came from the quarters of Hamadalban and stood in the doorway.

"Two of the guards from the quarry are here with a green slave inquiring for Kalfastoban," she said.

"Send them in," directed the Vental.

A moment later the three entered—the slave was Caraftap.

"Ah!" exclaimed Kalfastoban, "my

good slave, Caraftap; the best in the quarry. Why is he brought here?"

"He says that he has information of great value," replied one of the guard; "but he will divulge it to none but you. He has staked his life against the worth of his information and the Novand of the guard ordered him brought hither."

"What information have you?" demanded Kalfastoban.

"It is of great moment," cried Caraftap. "Noble Zoanthrohago, and even the king, will be grateful for it; but were I to give it and have to return to the quarries the other slaves would kill me. You were always good to me, Kalfastoban Vental, and so I asked to be brought to you, for I know that if you

promise that I shall be rewarded with the white tunic, if my service is considered worthy of it, I shall be safe."

"You know that I cannot do that," replied Kalfastoban.

"But the king can, and if you intercede with him he will not refuse."

"I can promise to intercede with the king in your behalf if the information you bring is of value; but that is all I can do."

"That is enough—if you promise," said Caraftap.

"Very well, I promise. What do you know that the king would like to know?"

"News travels fast in Veltopismakus," said Caraftap, "and so it was that we in the quarry heard of the death of the two

slaves, Aoponato and Zuanthrol, within a short time after their bodies were discovered. As both had been slaves of Zoanthrohago we were all confined together in one chamber and thus I knew them both well. Imagine then my surprise when, while crossing one of the main spirals with a crew of other slaves, I beheld both Zuanthrol and Aoponato, in the habiliments of warriors, ascending toward the surface."

"What is the appearance of these two?" suddenly demanded one of the warriors who had accompanied Caraftap from the quarry.

The slave described them as fully as he could.

"The same!" cried the warrior.

"These very two stopped me upon the spiral and inquired the whereabouts of Kalfastoban."

A crowd of women and men had gathered in the doorway of Kalfastoban's chamber, having been attracted by the presence of a green slave accompanied by members of the quarry guard. One of them was a young slave girl.

"I, too, was questioned by these very men," she exclaimed, "only a short time since, and they asked me the same question."

One of Hamadalban's women voiced a little scream. "They passed through our quarters but a moment since," she cried, "and entered Kalfastoban's, but they asked not where lay the quarters of

Kalfastoban, the name they mentioned was unknown to me—a strange name."

"Palastokar," one of her companions reminded her.

"Yes, Palastokar, and they said he had his quarters upon the gallery leading from Kalfastoban's to the outer corridor."

"There is no one of such a name in the Royal Dome," said Kalfastoban. "It was but a ruse to enter my quarters."

"Or to pass through them," suggested one of the quarry guard.

"We must hurry after them," said the other.

"Keep Caraftap here until we return, Kalfastoban," said the first guard, "and

also search your own quarters and those adjoining carefully. Come!" and motioning to the other guard he crossed the chamber and departed along the gallery that led to the outer corridor, followed not alone by his fellow but by Hamadalban and all the other men who had congregated in the chamber, leaving Kalfastoban and Caraftap, with the women, in the Vental's quarters.

CHAPTER 18

Kalfastoban turned immediately to a search of the various chambers of his quarters, but Caraftap laid a restraining hand upon his arm.

"Wait, Vental," he begged. "If they be here would it not be best to insure their capture by fastening the doors leading from your quarters?"

"A good thought, Caraftap," replied Kalfastoban, "and then we may take our time searching for them. Out of here, all you women!" he cried, waving the females back into Hamadalban's quarters. A moment later the two doors leading from the chamber to Hamadalban's quarters and the gallery were closed and locked.

"And now, master," suggested Caraftap, "as there be two of them would it not be well to supply me with a weapon."

Kalfastoban smote his chest. "A dozen such could Kalfastoban overcome alone," he cried; "but for your own protection get you a sword from yonder room while I lock this proud she-cat in her cell again."

As Kalfastoban followed Talaskar to the room in which she had been confined, Caraftap crossed to the door of the storeroom where the Vental had told him he would find a weapon.

The Vental reached the door of the room just behind the girl and reaching out caught her by the arm.

"Not so fast, my pretty!" he cried. "A kiss before you leave me; but fret not! The moment we are sure that those villainous slaves are not within these rooms I shall join you, so do not pine for your Kalfastoban."

Talaskar wheeled and struck the Vental in the face. "Lay not your filthy hands upon me, beast!" she cried, and struggled to free herself from his grasp.

"So-hot a cat, indeed!" exclaimed the man, but he did not release her, and so they struggled until they disappeared from sight within the cell, and at the same moment Caraftap, the slave, laid his hand upon the latch of the storeroom door, and opening it stepped within.

As he did so steel fingers reached

forth out of the darkness and closed upon his throat. He would have screamed in terror, but no sound could he force through his tight-closed throat. He struggled and struck at the thing that held him—a thing so powerful that he knew it could not be human, and then a low voice, cold and terrifying, whispered in his ear.

"Die, Caraftap!" it said. "Meet the fate that you deserve and that you well knew you deserved when you said that you dared not return to the quarters of the slaves of Zoanthrohago after betraying two of your number. Die, Caraftap! and know before you die that he whom you would have betrayed is your slayer. You searched for Zuanthrol

and—you have found him!" With the last word the terrible fingers closed upon the man's neck. Spasmodically the slave struggled, fighting for air. Then the two hands that gripped him turned slowly in opposite directions and the head of the traitor was twisted from his body.

Throwing the corpse aside Tarzan sprang into the main chamber of the Vental's quarters and ran quickly toward the door of Talaskar's cell, Komodoflorensal but half a pace behind him. The door of the little room had been pushed to by the struggles of the couple within, and as Tarzan pushed it open he saw the girl in the clutches of the huge Vental, who, evidently maddened by her resistance, had lost his temper

completely and was attempting to rain blows upon her face, which she sought to ward off, clutching at his arms and hands.

A heavy hand fell upon the shoulder of the Vental. "You seek us!" a low voice whispered in his ear. "Here we are!"

Kalfastoban released the girl and swung around, at the same time reaching for his sword. Facing him were the two slaves and both were armed, though only Aoponato had drawn his weapon. Zuanthrol, who held him, had not yet drawn.

"'A dozen such could Kalfastoban overcome alone,'" quoted Tarzan. "Here we are, braggart, and we are only two;

but we cannot wait while you show us how mighty you be. We are sorry. Had you not molested this girl I should merely have locked you in your quarters, from which you would soon have been released; but your brutality deserves but one punishment—death."

"Caraftap!" screamed Kalfastoban. No longer was he a blusterer, deep-toned and swaggering. His voice was shrill with terror and he shook in the hands of the ape-man. "Caraftap! Help!" he cried.

"Caraftap is dead," said Tarzan. "He died because he betrayed his fellows. You shall die because you were brutal to a defenseless slave girl. Run him through, Komodoflorensal! We have no

time to waste here."

As the Trohanadalmakusian withdrew his sword from the heart of Kalfastoban Vental and the corpse slid to the floor of the cell Talaskar ran forward and fell at the feet of the ape-man.

"Zuanthrol and Aoponato!" she cried. "Never did I think to see you again. What has happened? Why are you here? You have saved me, but now you will be lost Fly—I know not where to you may fly—but go from here! Do not let them find you here. I cannot understand why you are here, anyway."

"We are trying to escape," explained Komodoflorensal, "and Zuanthrol would not go without you. He searched the quarry for you and now the Royal Dome.

He has performed the impossible, but he has found you."

"Why did you do this for me?" asked Talaskar, looking wonderingly at Tarzan.

"Because you were kind to me when I was brought to the chamber of Zoanthrohago's slaves," replied the ape-man, "and because I promised that when the time for escape came we three should be together."

He had lifted her to her feet and led her into the main chamber. Komodoflorensal stood a little aside, his eyes upon the floor. Tarzan glanced at him and an expression of puzzlement came into the eyes of the ape-man, but whatever thought had caused it he must

have put quickly aside for the consideration of more pressing matters.

"Komodoflorensal, you know best what avenues of escape should be the least beset by the dangers of discovery. Whether to go by way of Hamadalban's quarters or through the gallery they mentioned? These are questions I cannot answer to my own satisfaction; and look!" his eyes had been roving about the chamber, "there is an opening in the ceiling. Where might that lead?"

"It might lead almost anywhere, or nowhere at all!" replied the Trohanadalmakusian. "Many chambers have such openings. Sometimes they lead into small lofts that are not connected with any other chamber; again

they lead into secret chambers, or even into corridors upon another level."

There came a pounding upon the door leading into Hamadalban's quarters and a woman's voice called aloud: "Kalfastoban, open!" she cried. "There has come an ental from the quarry guard in search of Caraftap. The sentry at the entrance to the quarters of the slaves of Zoanthrohago has been found slain and they wish to question Caraftap, believing that there is a conspiracy among the slaves."

"We must go by the gallery," whispered Komodoflorensal, stepping quickly to the door leading thereto.

As he reached it someone laid a hand upon the latch from the opposite side and

attempted to open the door, which was locked.

"Kalfastoban!" cried a voice from the gallery beyond. "Let us in! The slaves went not this way. Come, open quickly!"

Tarzan of the Apes glanced quickly about. Upon his face was a half-snarl, for once again was he the cornered beast He measured the distance from the floor to the trap in the ceiling, and then with a little run he sprang lightly upward. He had forgotten to what extent the reduction of his weight affected his agility. He had hoped to reach a handhold upon the upper edge of the opening, but instead he shot entirely through it, alighting upon his feet in a dark chamber. Turning he looked down

at his friends below. Consternation was writ large upon the countenance of each; but at that he could not wonder. He was almost as much surprised himself.

"Is it too far for you to jump?" he asked.

"Too far!" they replied.

He swung, then, head downward through the opening, catching the edge of the trap in the hollow of his knees. At the gallery door the knocking was becoming insistent and now at that leading into the quarters of Hamadalban a man's voice had supplanted that of the woman. The fellow was demanding entrance, angrily.

"Open!" he shouted. "In the name of the king, open!"

"Open yourself!" shouted the fellow

who had been hammering at the opposite door, thinking that the demand to open came from the interior of the chamber to which he sought admission.

"How can I open?" screamed back the other. "The door is locked upon your side!"

"It is not locked upon my side. It is locked upon yours," cried the other, angrily.

"You lie!" shouted he who sought entrance from Hamadalban's quarters, "and you will pay well when this is reported to the king."

Tarzan swung, head downward, into the chamber, his hands extended toward his companions. "Lift Talaskar to me," he directed Komodoflorensal, and as the

other did so he grasped the girl's wrists and raised her as far as he could until she could seize upon a part of his leather harness and support herself alone without falling. Then he took another hold upon her, lower down, and lifted still higher, and in this way she managed to clamber into the chamber above.

The angry warriors at the two doors were now evidently engaged in an attempt to batter their way into the chamber. Heavy blows were falling upon the substantial panels that threatened to splinter them at any moment.

"Fill your pouch with candles, Komodoflorensal," said Tarzan, "and then jump for my hands."

"I took all the candles I could carry while we were in the storeroom," replied the other. "Brace yourself I I am going to jump."

A panel splintered and bits of wood flew to the center of the floor from the door at the gallery just as Tarzan seized the outstretched hands of Komodoflorensal and an instant later, as both men kneeled in the darkness of the loft and looked down into the chamber below the opposite door flew open and the ten warriors who composed the ental burst in at the heels of their Vental.

For an instant they looked about in blank surprise and then their attention was attracted by the pounding upon the other door. A smile crossed the face of

the Vental as he stepped quickly to the gallery door and unlocked it. Angry warriors rushed in upon him, but when he had explained the misapprehension under which both parties had been striving for entrance to the chamber they all joined in the laughter, albeit a trifle shamefacedly.

"But who was in here?" demanded the Vental who had brought the soldiers from the quarry.

"Kalfastoban and the green slave Caraftap," proffered a woman belonging to Hamadalban.

"They must be hiding!" said a warrior.

"Search the quarters!" commanded the Vental.

"It will not take long to find one," said another warrior, pointing at the floor just inside the storeroom doorway.

The others looked and there they saw a human hand resting upon the floor. The fingers seemed frozen into the semblance of clutching claws. Mutely they proclaimed death. One of the warriors stepped quickly to the storeroom, opened the door and dragged forth the body of Caraftap, to which the head was clinging by a shred of flesh. Even the warriors stepped back, aghast. They looked quickly around the chamber.

"Both doors were barred upon the inside," said the Vental. "Whatever did this must still be here."

"It could have been nothing human,"

whispered a woman who had followed them from the adjoining quarters.

"Search carefully," said the Vental, and as he was a brave man, he went first into one chamber and then another. In the first one they found Kalfastoban, run through the heart.

"It is time we got out of here if there is any way out," whispered Tarzan to Komodoflorensal. "One of them will espy this hole directly."

Very cautiously the two men felt their way in opposite direction around the walls of the dark, stuffy loft. Deep dust the dust of ages, rose about them, chokingly, evidencing the fact that the room had not been used for years, perhaps for ages. Presently

Komodoflorensal heard a "H-s-s-t!" from the ape-man who called them to him. "Come here, both of you. I have found something."

"What have you found?" asked Talaskar, coming close.

"An opening near the bottom of the wall," replied Tarzan. "It is large enough for a man to crawl through. Think you, Komodoflorensal, that it would be safe to light a candle?"

"No, not now," replied the prince.

"I will go without it then," announced the ape-man, "for we must see where this tunnel leads, if anywhere."

He dropped upon his hands and knees, then, and Talaskar, who had been standing next him, felt him move away.

She could not see him—it was too dark in the gloomy loft.

The two waited, but Zuanthrol did not return. They beard voices in the room below. They wondered if the searchers would soon investigate the loft but really there was no need for apprehension. The searchers had determined to invest the place—it would be safer than crawling into that dark hole after an unknown thing that could tear the head from a man's body. When it came down, as come down it would have to, they would be prepared to destroy or capture it; but in the meantime they were content to wait.

"What has become of him?" whispered Talaskar, anxiously.

"You care very much for him, do you not?" asked Komodoflorensal.

"Why should I not?" asked the girl. "You do, too, do you no!"

"Yes," replied Komodoflorensal.

"He is very wonderful," said the girl.

"Yes," said Komodoflorensal.

As though in answer to their wish they heard a low whistle from the depths of the tunnel into which Tarzan had crawled. "Come!" whispered the ape-man.

Talaskar first, they followed him, crawling upon hands and knees through a winding tunnel, feeling their way through the darkness, until at last a light flared before them and they saw Zuanthrol

lighting a candle in a small chamber, that was only just high enough to permit a tall man to sit erect within it.

"I got this far," he said to them, "and as it offered a fair hiding place where we might have light without fear of discovery I came back after you. Here we can stop a while in comparative comfort and safety until I can explore the tunnel further. From what I have been able to judge it has never been used during the lifetime of any living Veltopismakusian, so there is little likelihood that anyone will think of looking here for us."

"Do you think they will follow us?" asked Talaskar.

"I think they will," replied

Komodoflorensal, "and as we cannot go back it will be better if we push on at once, as it is reasonable to assume that the opposite end of this tunnel opens into another chamber. Possibly there we shall find an avenue of escape."

"You are right, Komodoflorensal," agreed Tarzan. "Nothing can be gained by remaining here. I will go ahead. Let Talaskar follow me, and you bring up the rear. If the place proves a blind alley we shall be no worse off for having investigated it."

Lighting their way this time with candles the three crawled laboriously and painfully over the uneven, rock floor of the tunnel, which turned often, this way and that, as though passing around

chambers, until, to their relief, the passageway abruptly enlarged, both in width and height, so that now they could proceed in an erect position. The tunnel now dropped in a steep declivity to a lower level and a moment later the three emerged into a small chamber, where Talaskar suddenly placed a hand upon Tarzan's arm, with a little intaking of her breath in a half gasp.

"What is that, Zuanthrol!" she whispered, pointing into the darkness ahead.

Upon the floor at one side of the room a crouching figure was barely discernible close to the wall.

"And that!" exclaimed the girl, pointing to another portion of the room.

The ape-man shook her band from his arm and stepped quickly forward, his candle held high in his left hand, his right upon his sword. He came close to the crouching figure and bent to examine it He laid his hand upon it and it fell into a heap of dust.

"What is it?" demanded the girl.

"It was a man," replied Tarzan; "but it has been dead many years. It was chained to this wall. Even the chain has rusted away."

"And the other, too?" asked Talaskar.

"There are several of them," said Komodoflorensal. "See? There and there."

"At least they cannot detain us," said Tarzan, and moved on again across the

chamber toward a doorway on the opposite side.

"But they tell us something, possibly," ventured Komodoflorensal.

"What do they say?" asked the ape-man.

"That this corridor connected with the quarters of a very powerful Veltopismakusian," replied the prince. "So powerful was he that he might dispose of his enemies thus, without question; and it also tells us that all this happened long years ago."

"The condition of the bodies told us that," said Tarzan.

"Not entirely," replied Komodoflorensal. "The ants would have reduced them to that state in a short time.

In past ages the dead were left within the domes, and the ants, who were then our scavengers, soon disposed of them, but the ants sometimes attacked the living. They grew from a nuisance to a menace, and then every precaution had to be taken to keep from attracting them. Also we fought them. There were great battles waged in Trohanadalmakus between the Minunians and the ants and thousands of our warriors were devoured alive, and though we slew billions of ants their queens could propagate faster than we could kill the sexless workers who attacked us with their soldiers. But at last we turned our attention to their nests. Here the carnage was terrific, but we succeeded in slaying their queens

and since then no ants have come into our domes. They live about us, but they fear us. However, we do not risk attracting them again by leaving our dead within the domes."

"Then you believe that this corridor leads to the quarters of some great noble?" inquired Tarzan.

"I believe that it once did. The ages bring change. Its end may now be walled up. The chamber to which it leads may have housed a king's son when these bones were quick; today it may be a barrack- room for soldiers, or a stable for diadets. About all that we know definitely about it," concluded Komodoflorensal, "is that it has not been used by man for a long time, and

probably, therefore, is unknown to present-day Veltopismakusians."

Beyond the chamber of death the tunnel dropped rapidly to lower levels, entering, at last, a third chamber larger than either of the others. Upon the floor lay the bodies of many men.

"These were not chained to the walls," remarked Tarzan.

"No, they died fighting, as one may see by their naked swords and the position of their bones."

As the three paused a moment to look about the chamber there fell upon their ears the sound of a human voice.

CHAPTER 19

As the days passed and Tarzan did not return to his home his son became more and more apprehensive. Runners were sent to nearby villages, but each returned with the same report. No one had seen The Big Bwana. Korak dispatched messages, then, to the nearest telegraph inquiring from all the principal points in Africa, where the ape-man might have made a landing, if aught had been seen or heard of him; but always again were the answers in the negative.

And at last, stripped to a string and carrying naught but his primitive weapons, Korak the Killer took the trail with a score of the swiftest and bravest of the Waziri in search of his father.

Long and diligently they searched the jungle and the forest, often enlisting the friendly services of the villages near which they chanced to be carrying on their quest, until they had covered as with a fine-toothed comb a vast area of country, covered it as could have no other body of men; but for all their care and all their diligence they uncovered no single clue as to the fate or whereabouts of Tarzan of the Apes, and so, disheartened yet indefatigable, they searched on and on through tangled miles of steaming jungle or across rocky uplands as inhospitable as the stunted thorns that dotted them.

And in the Royal Dome of Elkomoelhago, Thagosto of

Veltopismakus, three people halted in a rock-walled, hidden chamber and listened to a human voice that appeared to come to them out of the very rock of the walls surrounding them. Upon the floor about them lay the bones of long-dead men. About them rose the impalpable dust of ages.

The girl pressed closer to Tarzan. "Who is it?" she whispered.

Tarzan shook his head.

"It is a woman's voice," said Komodoflorensal.

The ape-man raised his candle high above his head and took a step closer to the left-hand wall; then he stopped and pointed. The others looked in the direction indicated by Tarzan's finger

and saw an opening in the wall a hual or two above his head. Tarzan handed his candle to Komodoflorensal, removed his sword and laid it on the floor, and then sprang lightly for the opening. For a moment he clung to its edge, listening, and then he dropped back into the chamber.

"It is pitch-black beyond," he said. "Whoever owns that voice is in another chamber beyond that into which I was just looking. There was no human being in the next apartment."

"If it was absolutely dark, how could you know that?" demanded Komodoflorensal.

"Had there been anyone there I should have smelled him," replied the ape-man.

The others looked at him in astonishment. "I am sure of it," said Tarzan, "because I could plainly feel a draught sucking up from the chamber, through the aperture, and into this chamber. Had there been a human being there his effluvium would have been carried directly to my nostrils."

"And you could have detected it?" demanded Komodoflorensal. "My friend, I can believe much of you, but not that!"

Tarzan smiled. "I at least have the courage of my convictions," he said, "for I am going over there and investigate. From the clearness with which the voice comes to us I am certain that it comes through no solid wall. There must be an

opening into the chamber where the woman is and as we should investigate every possible avenue of escape, I shall investigate this." He stepped again toward the wall below the aperture.

"Oh, let us not separate," cried the girl. "Where one goes, let us all go!"

"Two swords are better than one," said Komodoflorensal, though his tone was only halfhearted.

"Very well," replied Tarzan. "I will go first, and then you can pass Talaskar up to me."

Komodoflorensal nodded. A minute or two later the three stood upon the opposite side of the wall. Their candle revealed a narrow passage that showed indications of much more recent use than

those through which they had passed from the quarters of Kalfastoban. The wall they had passed through to reach it was of stone, but that upon the opposite side was of studding and rough boards.

"This is a passage built along the side of a paneled room," whispered Komodoflorensal.

"The other side of these rough boards supports beautifully polished panels of brilliant woods or burnished metals."

"Then there should be a door, you think, opening from this passage into the adjoining chamber?" asked Tarzan.

"A secret panel, more likely," he replied.

They walked along the passage, listening intently. At first they had just

been able to distinguish that the voice they heard was that of a woman; but now they heard the words.

"—had they let me have him," were the first that they distinguished.

"Most glorious mistress, this would not have happened then," replied another female voice.

"Zoanthrohago is a fool and deserves to die; but my illustrious father, the king, is a bigger fool," spoke the first voice. "He will kill Zoanthrohago and with him the chance of discovering the secret of making our warriors giants. Had they let me buy this Zuanthrol he would not have escaped. They thought that I would have killed him, but that was farthest from my intentions."

"What would you have done with him, wondrous Princess?"

"That is not for a slave to ask or know," snapped the mistress.

For a time there was silence.

"That is the Princess Janzara speaking," whispered Tarzan to Komodoflorensal. "It is the daughter of Elkomoelhago whom you would have captured and made your princess; but you would have had a handful."

"Is she as beautiful as they say?" asked Komodoflorensal.

"She is very beautiful, but she is a devil."

"It would have been my duty to take her," said Komodoflorensal.

Tarzan was silent. A plan was unfolding itself within his mind. The voice from beyond the partition spoke again.

"He was very wonderful," it said. "Much more wonderful than our warriors," and then, after a silence, "You may go, slave, and see to it that I am not disturbed before the sun stands midway between the Women's Corridor and the King's Corridor."

"May your candles burn as deathlessly as your beauty, Princess," said the slave, as she backed across the apartment.

An instant later the three behind the paneling heard a door close.

Tarzan crept stealthily along the

passage, seeking the secret panel that connected the apartment where the Princess Janzara lay composed for the night; but it was Talaskar who found it.

"Here!" she whispered and together the three examined the fastening. It was simple and could evidently be opened from the opposite side by pressure upon a certain spot in the panel.

"Wait here!" said Tarzan to his companions. "I am going to fetch the Princess Janzara. If we cannot escape with her we should be able to buy our liberty with such a hostage."

Without waiting to discuss the advisability of his action with the others, Tarzan gently slid back the catch that held the panel and pushed it slightly ajar.

Before him was the apartment of Janzara—a creation of gorgeous barbarity in the center of which, upon a marble slab, the princess lay upon her back, a gigantic candle burning at her head and another at her feet.

Regardless of the luxuriousness of their surroundings, of their wealth, or their positions in life, the Minunians never sleep upon a substance softer than a single thickness of fabric, which they throw upon the ground, or upon wooden, stone, or marble sleeping slabs, depending upon their caste and their wealth.

Leaving the panel open the ape-man stepped quietly into the apartment and moved directly toward the princess, who

lay with closed eyes, either already asleep, or assiduously wooing Morpheus. He had crossed halfway to her cold couch when a sudden draught closed the panel with a noise that might well have awakened the dead.

Instantly the princess was on her feet and facing him. For a moment she stood in silence gazing at him and then she moved slowly toward him, the sinuous undulations of her graceful carriage suggesting to the Lord of the Jungle a similarity to the savage majesty of Sabor, the lioness.

"It is you, Zuanthrol!" breathed the princess. "You have come for me?"

"I have come for you. Princess," replied the ape-man. "Make no outcry

and no harm will befall you."

"I will make no outcry," whispered Janzara as with half-closed lids she glided to him and threw her arms about his neck.

Tarzan drew back and gently disengaged himself. "You do not understand, Princess," he told her. "You are my prisoner. You are coming with me."

"Yes," she breathed, "I am your prisoner, but it is you who do not understand. I love you. It is my right to choose whatever slave I will to be my prince. I have chosen you."

Tarzan shook his head impatiently. "You do not love me," he said. "I am sorry that you think you do, for I do not

love you. I have no time to waste. Come!" and he stepped closer to take her by the wrist.

Her eyes narrowed. "Are you mad?" she demanded. "Or can it be that you do not know who I am?"

"You are Janzara, daughter of Elkomoelhago," replied Tarzan. "I know well who you are."

"And you dare to spurn my love!" She was breathing heavily, her breasts rising and falling to the tumultuous urge of her emotions.

"It is no question of love between us," replied the ape-man. "To me it is only a question of liberty and life for myself and my companions."

"You love another?" questioned

Janzara.

"Yes," Tarzan told her.

"Who is she?" demanded the princess.

"Will you come quietly, or shall I be compelled to carry you away by force?" asked the ape-man, ignoring her question.

For a moment the woman stood silently before him, her every muscle tensed, her dark eyes two blazing wells of fire, and then slowly her expression changed. Her face softened and she stretched one hand toward him.

"I will help you, Zuanthrol," she said. "I will help you to escape. Because I love you I shall do this. Come! Follow me!" She turned and moved softly across the apartment.

"But my companions," said the ape-man. "I cannot go without them."

"Where are they?"

He did not tell her, for as yet he was none too sure of her motives.

"Show me the way," he said, "and I can return for them."

"Yes," she replied, "I will show you and then perhaps you will love me better than you love the other."

In the passage behind the paneling Talaskar and Komodoflorensal awaited the outcome of Tarzan's venture. Distinctly to their ears came every word of the conversation between the ape-man and the princess.

"He loves you," said

Komodoflorensal. "You see, he loves you."

"I see nothing of the kind," returned Talaskar. "Because he does not love the Princess Janzara is no proof that he loves me."

"But he does love you—and you love him! I have seen it since first he came. Would that he were not my friend, for then I might run him through."

"Why would you run him through because he loves me—if he does?" demanded the girl. "Am I so low that you would rather see your friend dead than mated with me?"

"I—" he hesitated. "I cannot tell you what I mean."

The girl laughed, and then suddenly

sobered. "She is leading him from her apartment. We had better follow."

As Talaskar laid her fingers upon the spring that actuated the lock holding the panel in place, Janzara led Tarzan across her chamber toward a doorway in one of the side walls—not the doorway through which her slave had departed.

"Follow me," whispered the princess, "and you will see what the love of Janzara means."

Tarzan, not entirely assured of her intentions, followed her warily.

"You are afraid," she said. "You do not trust me! Well, come here then and look, yourself, into this chamber before you enter."

Komodoflorensal and Talaskar had

but just stepped into the apartment when Tarzan approached the door to one side of which Janzara stood. They saw the floor give suddenly beneath his feet and an instant later Zuanthrol had disappeared. As he shot down a polished chute he heard a wild laugh from Janzara following him into the darkness of the unknown.

Komodoflorensal and Talaskar leaped quickly across the chamber, but too late. The floor that had given beneath Tarzan's feet had slipped quietly back into place. Janzara stood above the spot trembling with anger and staring down at the place where the ape-man had disappeared. She shook as an aspen shakes in the breeze—shook in the mad

tempest of her own passions.

"If you will not come to me you shall never go to another!" she screamed, and then she turned and saw Komodoflorensal and Talaskar running toward her. What followed occurred so quickly that it would be impossible to record the facts in the brief time that they actually consumed. It was over almost before Tarzan reached the bottom of the chute and picked himself from the earthen floor upon which he had been deposited.

The room in which he found himself was lighted by several candles burning in iron-barred niches. Opposite him was a heavy gate of iron bars through which he could see another lighted apartment in

which a man, his chin sagging dejectedly upon his breast, was seated upon a low bench. At the sound of Tarzan's precipitate entrance into the adjoining chamber the man looked up and at sight of Zuanthrol, leaped to his feet.

"Quick! To your left!" he cried, and Tarzan, turning, saw two huge, green-eyed beasts crouching to spring.

His first impulse was to rub his eyes as one might to erase the phantom figures of a disquieting dream, for what he saw were two ordinary African wildcats—ordinary in contour and markings, but in size gigantic. For an instant the ape-man forgot that he was but one-fourth his normal size, and that the cats, that appeared to him as large as full-grown

lions, were in reality but average specimens of their kind.

As they came toward him he whipped out his sword, prepared to battle for his life with these great felines as he had so often before with their mighty cousins of his own jungle.

"If you can hold them off until you reach this gate," cried the man in the next chamber, "I can let you through. The bolt is upon this side," but even as he spoke one of the cats charged.

Komodoflorensal, brushing past Janzara, leaped for the spot upon the floor at which Tarzan had disappeared and as it gave beneath him he heard a savage cry break from the lips of the Princess of Veltopismakus.

"So it is you he loves?" she screamed. "But he shall not have you— no! not even in death!" and that was all that Komodoflorensal heard as the black chute swallowed him.

Talaskar, confronted by the infuriated Janzara, halted, and then stepped back, for the princess was rushing upon her with drawn dagger.

"Die, slave!" she screamed, as she lunged for the white breast of Talaskar, but the slave girl caught the other's wrist and a moment later they went down, locked in one another's embrace. Together they rolled about the floor, the daughter of Elkomoelhago seeking to drive her slim blade into the breast of the slave girl, while Talaskar fought to

hold off the menacing steel and to close with her fingers upon the throat of her antagonist.

As the first cat charged the other followed, not to be robbed of its share of the flesh of the kill, for both were half-starved and ravenous, and as the ape-man met the charge of the first, sidestepping its rush and springing in again to thrust at its side, Komodoflorensal, who had drawn his sword as he entered the apartment of Janzara, shot into the subterranean den almost into the teeth of the second beast, which was so disconcerted by the sudden appearance of this second human that it wheeled and sprang to the far end of the den before it could gather its

courage for another attack.

In the chamber above, Talaskar and Janzara fought savagely, two she-tigers in human form. They rolled to and fro about the room, straining and striking; Janzara screaming: "Die, slave! You shall not have him!" But Talaskar held her peace and saved her breath, so that slowly she was overcoming the other when they chanced to roll upon the very spot that had let Tarzan and Komodoflorensal to the pit beneath.

As Janzara realized what had happened she uttered a scream of terror. "The cats! The cats!" she cried, and then the two disappeared into the black shaft.

Komodoflorensal did not follow the cat that had retreated to the far end of the

pit; but sprang at once to Tarzan's aid, and together they drove off the first beast as they backed toward the gate where the man in the adjoining chamber stood ready to admit them to the safety of his own apartment.

The two cats charged and then retreated, springing in quickly and away again as quickly, for they had learned the taste of the sharp steel with which the humans were defending themselves. The two men were almost at the gate, another instant and they could spring through. The cats charged again and again were driven to the far corner of the pit. The man in the next chamber swung open the gate.

"Quick!" he cried, and at the same

instant two figures shot from the mouth of the shaft and, locked tightly in one another's embrace, rolled to the floor of the pit directly in the path of the charging carnivores.

CHAPTER 20

As Tarzan and Komodoflorensal realized that Talaskar and Janzara lay exposed to the savage assault of the hungry beasts they both sprang quickly toward the two girls. As had been the case when Komodoflorensal had shot into the pit, the cats were startled by the sudden appearance of these two new humans, and in the first instant of their surprise had leaped again to the far end of the chamber.

Janzara had lost her dagger as the two girls had fallen into the shaft and now Talaskar saw it lying on the floor beside her. Releasing her hold upon the princess she seized the weapon and leaped to her feet. Already Tarzan and

Komodoflorensal were at her side and the cats were returning to the attack.

Janzara arose slowly and half-bewildered. She looked about, terror disfiguring her marvelous beauty, and as she did so the man in the adjoining chamber saw her.

"Janzara!" he cried. "My Princess, I corne!" and seizing the bench upon which he had been sitting, and the only thing within the chamber that might be converted into a weapon, he swung wide the gate and leaped into the chamber where the four were now facing the thoroughly infuriated beasts.

Both animals, bleeding from many wounds, were mad with pain, rage and hunger. Screaming and growling they

threw themselves upon the swords of the two men, who had pushed the girls behind them and were backing slowly toward the gate, and then the man with the bench joined Tarzan and Komodoflorensal and the three fought back the charges of the infuriated carnivores.

The bench proved fully as good a weapon of defense as the swords and so together the five drew slowly back, until, quite suddenly and without the slightest warning both cats leaped quickly to one side and darted behind the party as though sensing that the women would prove easier prey. One of them came near to closing upon Janzara had not the man with the bench, imbued

apparently with demoniacal fury, leaped upon it with his strange weapon and beaten it back so desperately that it was forced to abandon the princess.

Even then the man did not cease to follow it but, brandishing the bench, pursued it and its fellow with such terrifying cries and prodigious blows that, to escape him, both cats suddenly dodged into the chamber that the man had occupied, and before they could return to the attack he with the bench had slammed the gate and fastened them upon its opposite side. Then he wheeled and faced the four.

"Zoanthrohago!" cried the princess.

"Your alive!" replied the noble, dropping to one knee and leaning far

back, with outstretched arms.

"You have saved my life, Zoanthrohago," said Janzara, "and after all the indignities that I have heaped upon you! How can I reward you?"

"I love you, Princess, as you have long known," replied the man; "but now it is too late, for tomorrow I die by the kings will. Elkomoelhago has spoken, and, even though you be his daughter, I do not hesitate to say his very ignorance prevents him ever changing a decision once reached."

"I know," said Janzara. "He is my sire but I love him not. He killed my mother in a fit of unreasoning jealousy. He is a fool—the fool of fools."

Suddenly she turned upon the others.

"These slaves would escape, Zoanthrohago," she cried. "With my aid they might accomplish it. With their company we might succeed in escaping, too, and in finding an asylum in their own land."

"If any one of them is of sufficient power in his native city," replied Zoanthrohago.

"This one," said Tarzan, seeing a miraculous opportunity for freedom, "is the son of Adendrohahkis, King of Trohanadalmakus—the eldest son, and Zertolosto."

Janzara looked at Tarzan a moment after he had done speaking. "I was wicked, Zuanthrol," she said; "but I thought that I wanted you and being the

daughter of a king I have seldom been denied aught that I craved," and then to Talaskar: "Take your man, my girl, and may you be happy with him," and she pushed Talaskar gently toward the ape-man; but Talaskar drew back.

"You are mistaken, Janzara," she said, "I do not love Zuanthrol, nor does he love me."

Komodoflorensal looked quickly at Tarzan as though expecting that he would quickly deny the truth of Talaskar's statement, but the ape-man only nodded his head in assent.

"Do you mean," demanded Komodoflorensal, "that you do not love Talaskar?" and he looked straight into the eyes of his friend.

"On the contrary, I love her very much," replied Tarzan; "but not in the way that you have believed, or should I say feared? I love her because she is a good girl and a kind girl and a loyal friend, and also because she was in trouble and needed the love and protection which you and I alone could give her; but as a man loves his mate, I do not love her, for I have a mate of my own in my country beyond the thorns."

Komodoflorensal said no more, but he thought a great deal. He thought of what it would mean to return to his own city where he was the Zertolosto, and where, by all the customs of ages, he would be supposed to marry a princess from another city. But he did not want a

princess—he wanted Talaskar, the little slave girl of Veltopismakus, who scarcely knew her own mother and most probably had never heard that of her father, if her mother knew it.

He wanted Talaskar, but he could only have her in Trohanadalmakus as a slave. His love for her was real and so he would not insult her by thinking such a thing as that. If he could not make her his princess he would not have her at all, and so Komodoflorensal, the son of Adendrohahkis, was sad.

But he had none too much time to dwell upon his sorrow now, for the others were planning the best means for escape.

"The keepers come down to feed the

cats upon this side," said Zoanthrohago, indicating a small door in the wall of the pit opposite that which led into the chamber in which he had been incarcerated.

"Doubtless it is not locked, either," said Janzara, "for a prisoner could not reach it without crossing through this chamber where the cats were kept."

"We will see," said Tarzan, and crossed to the door.

A moment sufficed to force it open, revealing a narrow corridor beyond. One after another the five crawled through the small aperture and following the corridor ascended an acclivity, lighting their way with candles taken from the den of the carnivores. At the top

a door opened into a wide corridor, a short distance down which stood a warrior, evidently on guard before a door.

Janzara looked through the tiny crack that Tarzan had opened the door and saw the corridor and the man. "Good!" she exclaimed. "It is my own corridor and the warrior is on guard before my door. I know him well. Through me he has escaped payment of his taxes for the past thirty moons. He would die for me. Corne! We have nothing to fear," and stepping boldly into the corridor she approached the sentry, the others following behind her.

Until he recognized her there was danger that the fellow would raise an

alarm, but the moment he saw who it was he was as wax in her hands.

"You are blind," she told him.

"If the Princess Janzara wishes it," he replied.

She told him what she wished—five diadets and some heavy, warriors' wraps. He eyed those who were with her, and evidently recognized Zoanthrohago and guessed who the two other men were.

"Not only shall I be blind for my princess," he said; "but tomorrow I shall be dead for her."

"Fetch six diadets, then," said the princess.

Then she turned to Komodoflorensal

"You are Prince Royal of Trohanadalmakus?" she asked.

"I am," he replied.

"And if we show you the way to liberty you will not enslave us?"

"I shall take you to the city as my own slaves and then liberate you," he replied.

"It is something that has seldom if ever been done," she mused; "not in the memory of living man in Veltopismakus. I wonder if your sire will permit it."

"The thing is not without precedent," replied Komodoflorensal "It has been done but rarely, yet it has been done. I think you may feel assured of a friendly welcome at the court of Adendrohahkis, where the wisdom of Zoanthrohago will not go unappreciated or unrewarded."

It was a long time before the warrior returned with the diadets. His face was covered with perspiration and his hands with blood.

"I had to fight for them," he said, "and we shall have to fight to use them if we do not hurry. Here, Prince, I brought you weapons," and he handed a sword and dagger to Zoanthrohago.

They mounted quickly. It was Tarzan's first experience upon one of the wiry, active, little mounts of the Minunians; but he found the saddle well designed and the diadet easily controlled.

"They will be following me from the King's Corridor," explained Oratharc, the warrior who had fetched the diadets.

"It would be best, then, to leave by one of the others."

"Trohanadalmakus is east of Veltopismakus," said Zoanthrohago, "and if we leave by the Women's Corridor with two slaves from Trohanadalmakus they will assume that we are going there; but if we leave by another corridor they will not be sure and if they lose even a little time in starting the pursuit it will give us just that much of an advantage. If we go straight toward Trohanadalmakus we shall almost certainly be overtaken as the swiftest of diadets will be used in our pursuit. Our only hope lies in deceiving them as to our route or destination, and to accomplish this I

believe that we should leave either by the Warriors' Corridor or the Slaves' Corridor, cross the hills north of the city, circle far out to the north and east, not turning south until we are well past Trohanadalmakus. In this way we can approach that city from the east while our pursuers are patrolling the country west of Trohanadalmakus to Veltopismakus."

"Let us leave by the Warriors' Corridor then," suggested Janzara.

"The trees and shrubbery will conceal us while we pass around to the north of the city," said Komodoflorensal.

"We should leave at once," urged Oratharc.

"Go first then, with the princess," said

Zoanthrohago, "for there is a possibility that the guard at the entrance will let her pass with her party. We will muffle ourselves well with our warriors' cloaks. Come, lead the way!"

With Janzara and Oratharc ahead and the others following closely they moved at a steady trot along the circular corridor toward the Warriors' Corridor, and it was not until they had turned into the latter that any sign of pursuit developed. Even then, though they heard the voices of men behind them, they hesitated to break into a faster gait lest they arouse the suspicions of the warriors in the guard room which they must pass near the mouth of the corridor.

Never had the Warriors' Corridor

seemed so long to any of the Veltopismakusians in the party as it did this night; never had they so wished to race their diadets as now; but they held their mounts to an even pace that would never have suggested to the most suspicious that here were six people seeking escape, most of them from death.

They had come almost to the exit when they were aware that the pursuit had turned into the Warriors' Corridor behind them and that their pursuers were advancing at a rapid gait.

Janzara and Oratharc drew up beside the sentry at the mouth of the corridor as he stepped out to bar their progress.

"The Princess Janzara!" announced Oratharc. "Aside for the Princess

Janzara!"

The princess threw back the hood of the warrior's cloak she wore, revealing her features, well known to every warrior in the Royal Dome— and well feared. The fellow hesitated.

"Aside, man!" cried the princess, "or I ride you down."

A great shout arose behind them. Warriors on swiftly galloping diadets leaped along the corridor toward them. The warriors were shouting something, the sense of which was hidden by the noise; but the sentry was suspicious.

"Wait until I call the Novand of the guard, Princess," he cried. "Something is amiss and I dare let no one pass without authority; but wait! Here he is," and the

party turned in their saddles to see a Novand emerging from the door of the guard room, followed by a number of warriors.

"Ride!" cried Janzara and spurred her diadet straight for the single sentry in their path.

The others lifted their mounts quickly in pursuit. The sentry went down, striking valiantly with his rapier at the legs and bellies of flying diadets. The Novand and his men rushed from the guard room just in time to collide with the pursuers, whom they immediately assumed were belated members of the fleeing party. The brief minutes that these fought, before explanations could be made and understood, gave the

fugitives time to pass among the trees to the west side of the city, and, turning north, make for the hills that were dimly visible in the light of a clear, but moonless night.

Oratharc, who said that he knew the hill trails perfectly, led the way, the others following as closely as they could; Komodoflorensal and Tarzan bringing up the rear. Thus they moved on in silence through the night, winding along precipitous mountain trails, leaping now and again from rock to rock where the trail itself had been able to find no footing; sliding into dank ravines, clambering through heavy brush and timber along tunnel-like trails that followed their windings, or crept up

their opposite sides to narrow ridge or broad plateau; and all night long no sign of pursuit developed.

Came the morning at last and with it, from the summit of a lofty ridge, a panorama of broad plain stretching to the north, of distant hills, of forests and of streams. They decided then to descend to one of the numerous park-like glades that they could see nestling in the hills below them, and there rest their mounts and permit them to feed, for the work of the night had been hard upon them.

They knew that in the hills they might hide almost indefinitely, so wild and so little traveled were they and so they went into camp an hour after sunrise in a tiny cuplike valley surrounded by great

trees, and watered and fed their mounts with a sense of security greater than they had felt since they left Veltopismakus.

Oratharc went out on foot and killed a number of quail and Tarzan speared a couple of fish in the stream. These they prepared and ate, and then, the men taking turns on guard, they slept until afternoon, for none had had sleep the night before.

Taking up their flight again in mid-afternoon they were well out upon the plain when darkness overtook them. Komodoflorensal and Zoanthrohago were riding far out upon the flanks and all were searching for a suitable camping place. It was Zoanthrohago who found it and when they all gathered about

him. Tarzan saw nothing in the waning light of day that appeared any more like a good camping place than any other spot on the open plain. There was a little clump of trees, but they had passed many such clumps, and there was nothing about this one that seemed to offer any greater security than another. As a matter of fact, to Tarzan it appeared anything but a desirable camp-site. There was no water, there was little shelter from the wind and none from an enemy; but perhaps they were going into the trees. That would be better. He looked up at the lofty branches lovingly. How enormous these trees seemed! He knew them for what they were and that they were trees of but average size, yet to him

now they reared their heads aloft like veritable giants.

"I will go in first," he heard Komodoflorensal say, and turned to learn what he referred to.

The other three men were standing at the mouth of a large hole, into which they were looking. Tarzan knew that the opening was the mouth of the burrow of a ratel, the African member of the badger family, and he wondered why any of them wished to enter it. Tarzan had never cared for the flesh of the ratel. He stepped over and joined the others, and as he did so he saw Komodoflorensal crawl into the opening, his drawn sword in his hand.

"Why is he doing that?" he asked

Zoanthrohago.

"To drive out, or kill the cambon, if he is there," replied the prince, giving the ratel its Minunian name.

"And why?" asked Tarzan. "Surely, you do not eat its flesh!"

"No, but we want his home for the night," replied Zoanthrohago. "I had forgotten that you are not a Minunian. We will spend the night in the underground chambers of the cambon, safe from the attacks of the cat or the lion. It would be better were we there now—this is a bad hour of the night for Minunians to be abroad on the plain or in the forest, for it is at this hour that the lion hunts."

A few minutes later Komodoflorensal

emerged from the hole. "The cambon is not there," he said. "The burrow is deserted. I found only a snake, which I killed. Go in, Oratharc, and Janzara and Talaskar will follow you. You have candles?"

They had, and one by one they disappeared into the mouth of the hole, until Tarzan, who had asked to remain until last, stood alone in the gathering night gazing at the mouth of the ratel's burrow, a smile upon his lips. It seemed ridiculous to him that Tarzan of the Apes should ever be contemplating hiding from Numa in the hole of a ratel, or, worse still, hiding from little Skree, the wildcat, and as he stood there smiling a bulk loomed dimly among the trees; the

diadets, standing near, it tethered, snorted and leaped away; and Tarzan wheeled to face the largest lion he ever had seen—a lion that towered over twice the ape-man's height above him.

How tremendous, how awe-inspiring Numa appeared to one the size of a Minunian!

The lion crouched, its tail extended, the tip moving ever so gently; but the ape-man was not deceived. He guessed what was coming and even as the great cat sprang he turned and dove head-foremost down the hole of the ratel and behind him rattled the loose earth pushed into the burrow's mouth by Numa as he alighted upon the spot where Tarzan had stood.

CHAPTER 21

For three days the six traveled toward the east, and then, upon the fourth, they turned south. A great forest loomed upon the distant southern horizon, sweeping also wide upon the east. To the southwest lay Trohanadalmakus, a good two-days' journey for their tired diadets. Tarzan often wondered what rest the little creatures obtained. At night they were turned loose to graze; but his knowledge of the habits of the carnivores assured him that the tiny antelope must spend the greater part of each night in terrified watching or in flight; yet every morning they were back at the camp awaiting the pleasure of their masters. That they did not escape,

never to return, is doubtless due to two facts. One is that they have been for ages bred in the domes of the Minunians—they know no other life than with their masters, to whom they look for food and care—and the other is the extreme kindness and affection which the Minunians accord their beautiful beasts of burden, and which have won the love and confidence of the little animals to such an extent that the diadet is most contented when in the company of man.

It was during the afternoon of the fourth day of their flight that Talaskar suddenly called their attention to a small cloud of dust far to their rear. For a long time all six watched it intently as it increased in size and drew nearer.

"It may be the long-awaited pursuit," said Zoanthrohago.

"Or some of my own people from Trohanadalmakus," suggested Komodoflorensal.

"Whoever they are, they greatly outnumber us," said Janzara, "and I think we should find shelter until we know their identity."

"We can reach the forest before they overtake us," said Oratharc, "and in the forest we may elude them if it is necessary."

"I fear the forest," said Janzara.

"We have no alternative," said Zoanthrohago; "but even now I doubt that we can reach it ahead of them. Come! We must be quick!"

Never before had Tarzan of the Apes covered ground so rapidly upon the back of an animal. The diadets flew through the air in great bounds. Behind them the nucleus of the dust cloud had resolved itself into a dozen mounted warriors, against whom their four blades would be helpless. Their one hope, therefore, lay in reaching the forest ahead of their pursuers, and now it seemed that they would be successful and now it seemed that they would not.

The recently distant wood seemed rushing toward him as Tarzan watched ahead between the tiny horns of his graceful mount, and, behind, the enemy was gaining. They were Veltopismakusian—they were close

enough now for the devices upon their helmets to be seen—and they had recognized their quarry, for they cried aloud upon them to stop, calling several of them by name.

One of the pursuers forged farther ahead than the others. He came now close behind Zoanthrohago, who rode neck and neck with Tarzan, in the rear of their party. A half-length ahead of Zoanthrohago, was Janzara. The fellow called aloud to her.

"Princess!" he cried. "The king's pardon for you all if you return the slaves to us. Surrender and all will be forgiven."

Tarzan of the Apes heard and he wondered what the Veltopismakusians

would do. It must have been a great temptation and he knew it. Had it not been for Talaskar he would have advised them to fall back among their friends; but he would not see the slave girl sacrificed. He drew his sword then and strapped back beside Zoanthrohago, though the other never guessed his purpose.

"Surrender, and all will be forgiven!" shouted the pursuer again.

"Never!" cried Zoanthrohago.

"Never!" echoed Janzara.

"The consequences are yours," cried the messenger, and on they rushed, pursuers and pursued, toward the dark forest, while from just within its rim savage eyes watched the mad race and

red tongues licked hungry lips in anticipation.

Tarzan had been glad to hear the reply given by both Zoanthrohago and Janzara whom he had found likable companions and good comrades. Janzara's whole attitude had changed since the very instant she had joined them in their attempted escape. No longer was she the spoiled daughter of a despot; but a woman seeking happiness through the new love that she had found, or the old love that she had just discovered, for she often told Zoanthrohago that she knew now that she always had loved him. And this new thing in her life made her more considerate and loving of others. She seemed now to be trying to make up to

Talaskar for the cruelty of her attack upon her when she had first seen her. Her mad infatuation for Tarzan she now knew in its true light —because she had been refused him she wanted him, and she would have taken him as her prince to spite her father, whom she hated.

Komodoflorensal and Talaskar always rode together, but no words of love did the Trohanadalmakusian speak in the cur of the little slave girl. A great resolve was crystallizing in his mind, but it bad as yet taken on no definite form. And Talaskar, seemingly happy just to be near him, rode blissfully through the first days of the only freedom she had ever known; but now all was forgotten except the instant danger of

capture and its alternative concomitants, death and slavery.

The six urged their straining mounts ahead. The forest was so near now. Ah, if they could but reach it! There one warrior might be as good as three and the odds against them would be reduced, for in the forest the whole twelve could not engage them at once and by careful maneuvering they doubtless could separate them.

They were going to succeed! A great shout rose to the lips of Oratharc as his diadet leaped into the shadows of the first trees, and the others took it up, for a brief instant, and then it died upon their lips as they saw a giant hand reach down and snatch Oratharc from his saddle.

They tried to stop and wheel their mounts, but it was too late. Already they were in the forest and all about them was a horde of the hideous Zertalacolols. One by one they were snatched from their diadets, while their pursuers, who must have seen what was taking place just inside the forest, wheeled and galloped away.

Talaskar, writhing in the grip of a she Alali, turned toward Komodoflorensal.

"Good-bye!" she cried. "This, at last, is the end; but I can die near you and so I am happier dying than I have been living until you came to Veltopismakus."

"Good-bye, Talaskar!" he replied. "Living, I dared not tell you; but dying, I can proclaim my love. Tell me that you

loved me."

"With all my heart, Komodoflorensal!" They seemed to have forgotten that another existed but themselves. In death they were alone with their love.

Tarzan found himself in the hand of a male and he also found himself wondering, even as he faced certain death, how it occurred that this great band of male and female Alali should be hunting together, and then he noticed the weapons of the male. They were not the crude bludgeon and the slinging-stones that they had formerly carried; but long, trim spears, and bows and arrows.

And now the creature that held him had lifted him even with his face and

was scrutinizing him and Tarzan saw a look of recognition and amazement cross the bestial features, and he, in turn, recognized his captor. It was the son of The First Woman. Tarzan did not wait to learn the temper of his old acquaintance. Possibly their relations were altered now. Possibly they were not. He recalled the doglike devotion of the creature when last be had seen him and he put him to the test at once.

"Put me down!" he signed, peremptorily; "and tell your people to put down all of my people. Harm them not!"

Instantly the great creature set Tarzan gently upon the ground and immediately signaled his fellows to do the same with

their captives. The men did immediately as they were bid, and all of the women but one. She hesitated. The son of The First Woman leaped toward her, his spear raised like a whip, and the female cowered and set Talaskar down upon the ground.

Very proud, the son of The First Woman explained to Tarzan as best he could the great change that had come upon the Alali since the ape-man had given the men weapons and the son of The First Woman had discovered what a proper use of them would mean to the males of his kind. Now each male had a woman cooking for him—at least one, and some of them—the stronger—had more than one.

To entertain Tarzan and to show him what great strides civilization had taken in the land of the Zertalacolols, the son o! The First Woman seized a female by the hair and dragging her to him struck her heavily about the head and face with his clenched fist, and the woman fell upon her knees and fondled his legs, looking wistfully into his face, her own glowing with love and admiration.

That night the six slept in the open surrounded by the great Zertalacolols and the next day they started across the plain toward Trohanadalmakus where Tarzan had resolved to remain until he regained his normal size, when he would make a determined effort to cut his way through the thorn forest to his own

country.

The Zertalacolols went a short distance out into the plain with them, and both men and women tried in their crude, savage way, to show Tarzan their gratitude for the change that he had wrought among them, and the new happiness he had given them.

Two days later the six fugitives approached the domes of Trohanadalmakus. They had been seen by sentries when they were still a long way off, and a body of warriors rode forth to meet them, for it is always well to learn the nature of a visitor's business in Minuni before he gets too close to your home.

When the warriors discovered that

Komodoflorensal and Tarzan had returned they shouted for joy and a number of them galloped swiftly back to the city to spread the news.

The fugitives were conducted at once to the throne room of Adendrohahkis and there that great ruler took his son in his arms and wept, so great was his happiness at having him returned safely to him. Nor did he forget Tarzan, though it was some time before he or the other Trohanadalmakusians could accustom themselves to the fact that this man, no bigger than they, was the great giant who had dwelt among them a few moons since.

Adendrohahkis called Tarzan to the foot of the throne and there, before the

nobles and warriors of Trohanadalmakus, he made him a Zertol, or prince, and he gave him diadets and riches and allotted him quarters fitted to his rank, begging him to stay among them always.

Janzara, Zoanthrohago and Oratharc he gave their liberty and permission to remain in Trohanadalmakus, and then Komodoflorensal drew Talaskar to the foot of the throne.

"And now for myself I ask a boon, Adendrohahkis," he said. "As Zertolosto I am bound by custom to wed a prisoner princess taken from another city; but in this slave girl have I found the one I love. Let me renounce my rights to the throne and have her instead."

Talaskar raised her hand as though to demur, but Komodoflorensal would not let her speak, and then Adendrohahkis rose and descended the steps at the foot of which Talaskar stood and taking her by the hand led her to a place beside the throne.

"You are bound by custom only, Komodoflorensal," he said, "to wed a princess; but custom is not law. A Trohanadalmakusian may wed whom he pleases."

"And even though he were bound by law," said Talaskar, "to wed a princess, still might he wed me, for I am the daughter of Talaskhago, king of Mandalamakus. My mother was captured by the Veltopismakusians but a few

moons before my birth, which took place in the very chamber in which Komodoflorensal found me. She taught me to take my life before mating with anyone less than a prince; but I would have forgotten her teachings had Komodoflorensal been but the son of a slave. That he was the son of a king I did not dream until the night we left Veltopismakus, and I had already given him my heart long before, though he did not know it."

Weeks passed and still no change came to Tarzan of the Apes. He was happy in his life with the Minunians, but he longed for his own people and the mate who would be grieving for him, and so he determined to set forth as he

was, pass through the thorn forest and make his way toward home, trusting to chance that he might escape the countless dangers that would infest his way, and perhaps come to his normal size somewhere during the long journey.

His friends sought to dissuade him, but he was determined, and at last, brooking no further delay, he set out toward the southeast in the direction that he thought lay the point where he had entered the land of the Minuni. A kamak, a body consisting of one thousand mounted warriors, accompanied him to the great forest and there, after some days' delay, the son of The First Woman found him. The Minunians bid him good-bye, and as he watched them ride away

upon their graceful mounts, something rose in his throat that only came upon those few occasions in his life that Tarzan of the Apes knew the meaning of homesickness.

The son of The First Woman and his savage band escorted Tarzan to the edge of the thorn forest. Further than that they could not go. A moment later they saw him disappear among the thorns, with a wave of farewell to them. For two days Tarzan, no larger than a Minunian, made his way through the thorn forest. He met small animals that were now large enough to be dangerous to him, but he met nothing that he could not cope with. By night he slept in the burrows of the larger burrowing animals. Birds and

eggs formed his food supply.

During the second night he awoke with a feeling of nausea suffusing him. A premonition of danger assailed him. It was dark as the grave in the burrow he had selected for the night Suddenly the thought smote him that he might be about to pass through the ordeal of regaining his normal stature. To have this thing happen while he lay buried in this tiny burrow would mean death, for he would be crushed, strangled, or suffocated before he regained consciousness.

Already he felt dizzy, as one might feel who was upon the verge of unconsciousness. He stumbled to his knees and clawed his way up the steep acclivity that led to the surface. Would

he reach it in time? He stumbled on and then, suddenly, a burst of fresh night air smote his nostrils. He staggered to his feet He was out! He was free!

Behind him he heard a low growl. Grasping his sword, he lunged forward among the thorn trees. How far he went, or in what direction he did not know. It was still dark when he stumbled and fell unconscious to the ground.

CHAPTER 22

Awazki, returning from the village of Obebe the cannibal, saw a bone lying beside the trail. This, in itself, was nothing remarkable. Many bones lie along savage trails in Africa. But this bone caused him to pause. It was the bone of a child. Nor was that alone enough to give pause to a warrior hastening through an unfriendly country back toward his own a people.

But Usula had heard strange tales in the village of Obebe the cannibal where rumor had brought him in search of his beloved master. The Big Bwana. Obebe had not seen nor heard anything of Tarzan of the Apes. Not for years had he seen the giant white. He assured Usula

of this fact many times; but from other members of the tribe the Waziri learned that a white man had been kept a prisoner by Obebe for a year or more and that some time since he had escaped. At first Usula thought this white man might have been Tarzan but when he verified the statement of the time that had elapsed since the man was captured he knew that it could not have been his master, and so he turned back along the trail toward home; but when he saw the child's bone along the trail several days out he recalled the story of the missing Uhha and he paused, just for a moment, to look at the bone. And as he looked he saw something else—a small skin bag, lying among some more bones a few feet

off the trail. Usula stooped and picked up the bag. He opened it and poured some of the contents into his palm. He know what the things were and he knew that they had belonged to his master, for Usula was a headman who knew much about his master's affairs. These were the diamonds that had been stolen from The Big Bwana many moons before by the white men who had found Opar. He would take them back to The Big Bwana's lady.

Three days later as he moved silently along the trail close to The Great Thorn Forest he came suddenly to a halt, the hand grasping his heavy spear tensing in readiness. In a little open place he saw a man, an almost naked man, lying upon

the ground. The man was alive—he saw him move— but what was he doing? Usula crept closer, making no noise. He moved around until he could observe the man from another angle and then he saw a horrid sight. The man was white and he lay beside the carcass of a long-dead buffalo, greedily devouring the remnants of hide that clung to the bleaching bones.

The man raised his head a little and Usula, catching a better view of his face, gave a cry of horror. Then the man looked up and grinned. It was The Big Bwana!

Usula ran to him and raised him upon his knees, but the man only laughed and babbled like a child. At his side, caught over one of the horns of the buffalo, was

The Big Bwana's golden locket with the great diamonds set in it Usula replaced it about the man's neck. He built a strong shelter for him nearby and hunted food, and for many days he remained until the man's strength came back; but his mind did not come back. And thus, in this condition, the faithful Usula led home his master.

They found many wounds and bruises upon his body and his head, some old, some new, some trivial, some serious; and they sent to England for a great surgeon to come out to Africa and seek to mend the poor thing that once had been Tarzan of the Apes.

The dogs that had once loved Lord Greystoke slunk from this brainless

creature. Jad-bal-ja, the Golden Lion, growled when the man was wheeled near his cage.

Korak The Killer paced the floor in dumb despair, for his mother was on her way from England, and what would be the effect upon her of this awful blow? He hesitated even to contemplate it.

Khamis, the witch doctor, had searched untiringly for Uhha, his daughter, since The River Devil had stolen her from the village of Obebe the cannibal. He had made pilgrimages to other villages, some of them remote from his own country, but he had found no trace of her or her abductor.

He was returning from another fruitless search that had extended far to

the east of the village of Obebe, skirting the Great Thorn Forest a few miles north of the Ugogo. It was early morning. He had just broken his lonely camp and set out upon the last leg of his homeward journey when his keen old eyes discovered something lying at the edge of a small open space a hundred yards to his right. He had just a glimpse of something that was not of the surrounding vegetation. He did not know what it was; but instinct bade him investigate. Moving cautiously nearer he presently identified the thing as a human knee just showing above the low grass that covered the dealing. He crept closer and suddenly his eyes narrowed and his breath made a single, odd little sound as

it sucked idly between his lips in mechanical reaction to surprise, for what he saw was the body of The River Devil lying upon its back, one knee flexed—the knee that he had seen above the grasses.

His spear advanced and ready he approached until he stood above the motionless body. Was The River Devil dead, or was he asleep? Placing the point of his spear against the brown breast Khamis prodded. The Devil did not awaken. He was not asleep, then! nor did he appear to be dead. Khamis knelt and placed an ear above the other's heart He was not dead!

The witch doctor thought quickly. In his heart he did not believe in River

Devils, yet there was a chance that there might be such things and perhaps this one was shamming unconsciousness, or temporarily absent from the flesh it assumed as a disguise that it might go among men without arousing suspicion. But, too, it was the abductor of his daughter. That thought filled him with rage and with courage. He must force the truth from those lips even though the creature were a Devil.

He unwound a bit of fiber rope from about his waist and, turning the body over upon its back, quickly bound the wrists behind it Then he sat down beside it to wait. It was an hour before signs of returning consciousness appeared, then The River Devil opened his eyes.

"Where is Uhha, my daughter?" demanded the witch doctor.

The River Devil tried to free his arms, but they were too tightly bound. He made no reply to Khamis' question. It was as though he had not heard it. He ceased struggling and lay back again, resting. After a while he opened his eyes once more and lay looking at Khamis, but he did not speak.

"Get up!" commanded the witch doctor and prodded him with a spear.

The River Devil rolled over on his side, flexed his right knee, raised on one elbow and finally got to his feet. Khamis prodded him in the direction of the trail. Toward dusk they arrived at the village of Obebe.

When the warriors and the women and the children saw who it was that Khamis was bringing to the village they became very much excited, and had it not been for the witch doctor, of whom they were afraid, they would have knifed and stoned the prisoner to death before he was fairly inside the village gates; but Khamis did not want The River Devil killed—not yet. He wanted first to force from him the truth concerning Uhha. So far he had been unable to get a word out of his prisoner. Incessant questioning, emphasized by many prods of the spear point had elicited nothing.

Khamis threw his prisoner into the same hut from which The River Devil had escaped; but he bound him securely

and placed two warriors on guard. He had no mind to lose him again. Obebe came to see him. He, too, questioned him; but The River Devil only looked blankly in the face of the chief.

"I will make him speak," said Obebe. "After we have finished eating we will have him out and make him speak. I know many ways."

"You must not kill him," said the witch doctor. "He knows what became of Uhha, and until be tells me no one shall kill him."

"He will speak before he dies," said Obebe.

"He is a River Devil and will never die," said Khamis, re- writing to the old controversy.

"He is Tarzan," cried Obebe, and the two were still arguing after they had passed out of hearing of the prisoner lying in the filth of the hut.

After they had eaten he saw them heating irons in a fire near the hut of the witch doctor, who was squatting before the entrance working rapidly with numerous charms—bits of wood wrapped in leaves, pieces of stone, some pebbles, a zebra's tail.

Villagers were congregating about Khamis until presently the prisoner could no longer see bun. A little later a black boy came and spoke to his guards, and he was taken out and pushed roughly toward the hut of the witch doctor.

Obebe was there, as he saw after the

guards had opened a way through the throng and he stood beside the fire in the center of the circle. It was only a small fire; just enough to keep a couple of irons hot.

"Where is Uhha, my daughter?" demanded Khamis.

The River Devil did not answer. Not once had he spoken since Khamis had captured him.

"Burn out one of his eyes," said Obebe. "That will make him speak!"

"Cut out his tongue!" screamed a woman. "Cut out his tongue."

"Then he cannot speak at all, you fool," cried Khamis.

The witch doctor arose and put the

question again, but received no reply. Then he struck The River Devil a heavy blow in the face. Khamis had lost his temper, so that be did not fear even a River Devil.

"You will answer me now!" he screamed, and stooping he seized a red-hot iron.

"The right eye first!" shrilled Obebe.

The doctor came to the bungalow of the ape-man—Lady Greystoke brought him with her. They were three tired and dusty travelers as they dismounted at last before the rose-embowered entrance—the famous London surgeon, Lady Greystoke, and Flora Hawkes, her maid. The surgeon and Lady Greystoke went immediately to the room where Tarzan

sat in an improvised wheelchair. He looked up at them blankly as they entered.

"Don't you know me, John?" asked the woman.

Her son took her by the shoulders and led her away, weeping.

"He does not know any of us," he said. "Wait until after the operation, mother, before you see him again. You can do him no good and to see him this way is too hard upon you."

The great surgeon made his examination. There was pressure on the brain from a recent fracture of the skull. An operation would relieve the pressure and might restore the patient's mind and memory. It was worth attempting.

Nurses and two doctors from Nairobi, engaged the day they arrived there, followed Lady Greystoke and the London surgeon, reaching the bungalow the day after their arrival. The operation took place the following morning.

Lady Greystoke, Korak and Meriem were awaiting, in an adjoining room, the verdict of the surgeon. Was the operation a failure or a success? They sat mutely staring at the door leading into the improvised operating room. At last it opened, after what seemed ages, but was only perhaps, an hour. The surgeon entered the room where they sat their eyes, dumbly pleading, asked him the question that their lips dared not voice.

"I cannot tell you anything as yet," he said, "other than that the operation, as an operation, was successful. What the result of it will be only time will tell. I have given orders that no one is to enter his room, other than the nurses for ten days. They are instructed not to speak to him or allow him to speak for the same length of time; but he will not wish to speak, for I shall keep him in a semiconscious condition, by means of drugs, until the ten days have elapsed. Until then, Lady Greystoke, we may only hope for the best; but I can assure you that your husband has every chance for complete recovery. I think you may safely hope for the best."

The witch doctor laid his left hand

upon the shoulder of The River Devil; in his right hand was clutched a red-hot iron.

"The right eye first," shrilled Obebe again.

Suddenly the muscles upon the back and shoulders of the prisoner leaped into action, rolling beneath his brown hide. For just an instant he appeared to exert terrific physical force, there was a snapping sound at his back as the strands about his wrists parted, and an instant later steel-thewed fingers fell upon the right wrist of the witch doctor. Blazing eyes burned into his. He dropped the red- hot rod, his fingers paralyzed by the pressure upon his wrist, and he screamed, for he saw death in the angry

face of the god.

Obebe leaped to his feet. Warriors pressed forward, but not near enough to be within reach of The River Devil. They had never been certain of the safety of tempting Providence in any such manner as Khamis and Obebe had been about to do. Now here was the result! The wrath of The River Devil would fall upon them all. They fell back, some of them, and that was a cue for others to fall back. In the minds of all was the the thought—if I have no hand in this The River Devil will not be angry with me. Then they turned and fled to their huts, stumbling over their women and their children who were trying to outdistance their lords and masters.

Obebe turned now to flee also, and The River Devil picked Khamis up, and held him in two hands high above his head, and ran after Obebe the chief. The latter dodged into his own hut. He had scarce reached the center of it when there came a terrific crash upon the light, thatched roof, which gave way beneath a heavy weight A body descending upon the chief filled him with terror. The River Devil had leaped in through the roof of his hut to destroy him! The instinct of self-preservation rose momentarily above his fear of the supernatural, for now he was convinced that Khamis had been right and the creature they had so long held prisoner was indeed The River Devil. And

Obebe drew the knife at his side and plunged it again and again into the body of the creature that had leaped upon him, and when he knew that life was extinct he rose and dragging the body after him stepped out of his hut into the light of the moon and the fires.

"Come, my people!" he cried. "You have nothing to fear, for I, Obebe, your chief, have slain The River Devil with my own hands," and then he looked down at the thing trailing behind him, and gave a gasp, and sat down suddenly in the dirt of the village street, for the body at his heels was that of Khamis, the witch doctor.

His people came and when they saw what had happened they said nothing, but

looked terrified. Obebe examined his hut and the ground around it He took several warriors and searched the village. The stranger had departed. He went to the gates. They were closed; but in the dust before them was the imprint of naked feet—the naked feet of a white man. Then he came back to his hut, where his frightened people stood waiting him.

"Obebe was right," he said. "The creature was not The River Devil— it was Tarzan of the Apes, for only he could hurl Khamis so high above his head that he would fall through the roof of a hut, and only he could pass unaided over our gates."

The tenth day had come. The great surgeon was still at the Greystoke

bungalow awaiting the outcome of the operation. The patient was slowly emerging from under the Influence of the last dose of drugs that had been given him during the preceding night, but he was regaining his consciousness more slowly than the surgeon had hoped. The long hours dragged by, morning ran into afternoon, and evening came, and still there was no word from the sickroom.

It was dark. The lamps were lighted. The family were congregated in the big living room. Suddenly the door opened and a nurse appeared. Behind her was the patient There was a puzzled look upon his face; but the face of the nurse was wreathed in smiles. The surgeon came behind, assisting the man, who was

weak from long inactivity.

"I think Lord Greystoke will recover rapidly now," he said. "There are many things that you may have to tell him. He did not know who he was, when he regained consciousness; but that is not unusual in such cases."

The patient took a few steps into the room, looking wonderingly about

"There is your wife, Greystoke," said the surgeon, kindly.

Lady Greystoke rose and crossed the room toward her husband, her arms outstretched. A smile crossed the face of the invalid, as he stepped forward to meet her and take her in his arms; but suddenly someone was between them, holding them apart. It was Flora

Hawkes.

"My Gawd, Lady Greystoke!" she cried. "He ain't your husband. It's Miranda, Esteban Miranda! Don't you suppose I'd know him in a million? I ain't seen him since we came back, never havin' been in the sick chamber, but I suspicioned something the minute he stepped into this room and when he smiled, I knew."

"Flora!" cried the distracted wife. "Are you sure? No! no! you must be wrong! God has not given me back my husband only to steal him away again. John! tell me, is it you? You would not lie to me?"

For a moment the man before them was silent He swayed to and fro, as in

weakness. The surgeon stepped forward and supported him.

"I have been very sick," he said. "Possibly I have changed; But I am Lord Greystoke. I do not remember this woman," and he indicated Flora Hawkes.

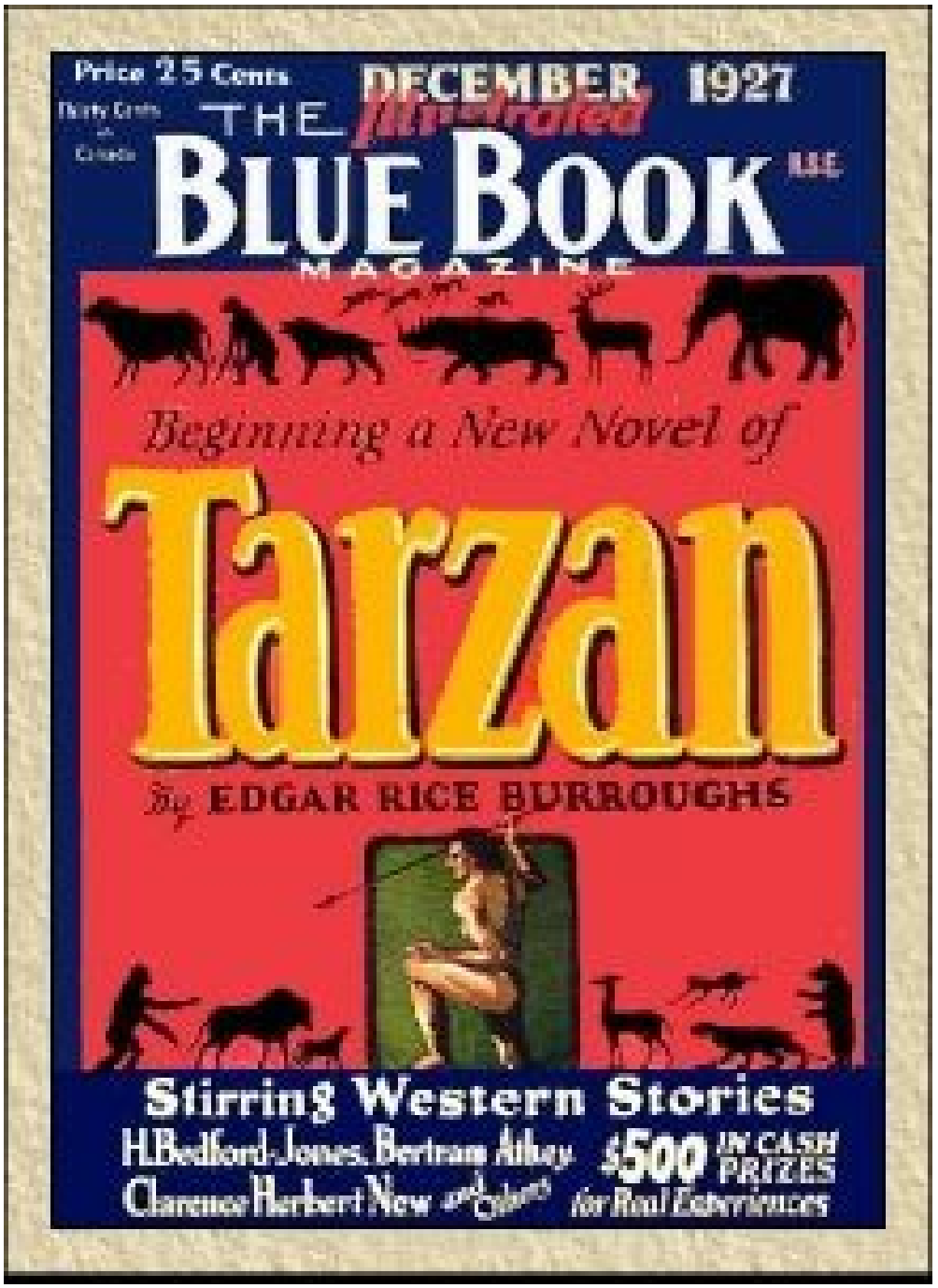
"He lies!" cried the girl.

"Yes, he lies," said a quiet voice behind them, and they all turned to see the figure of a giant white standing in the open French windows leading to the veranda.

"John!" cried Lady Greystoke, running toward him, "how could I have been mistaken? I—" but the rest of the sentence was lost as Tarzan of the Apes sprang into the room and taking his mate

in his arms covered her lips with kisses.

THE END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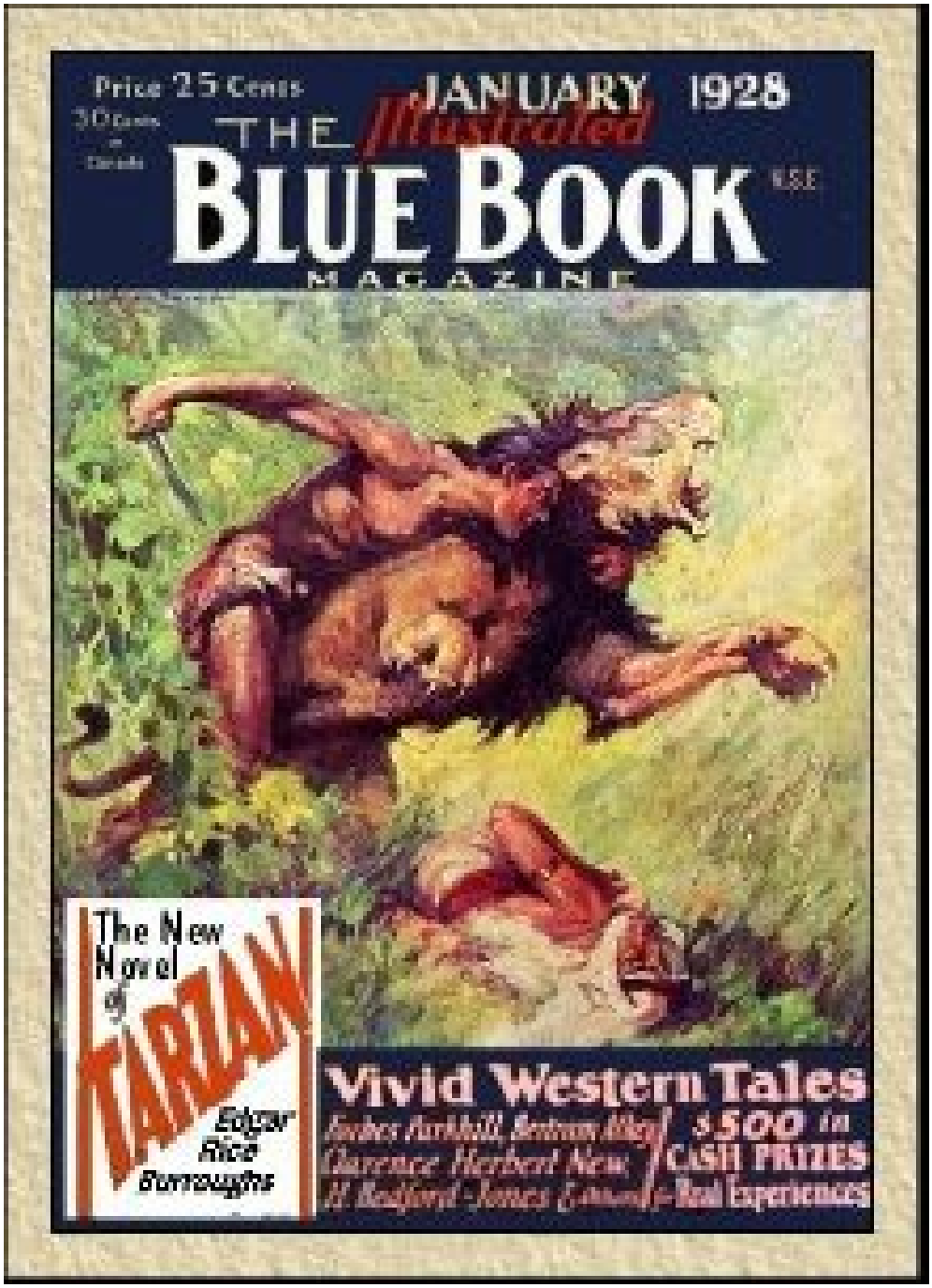
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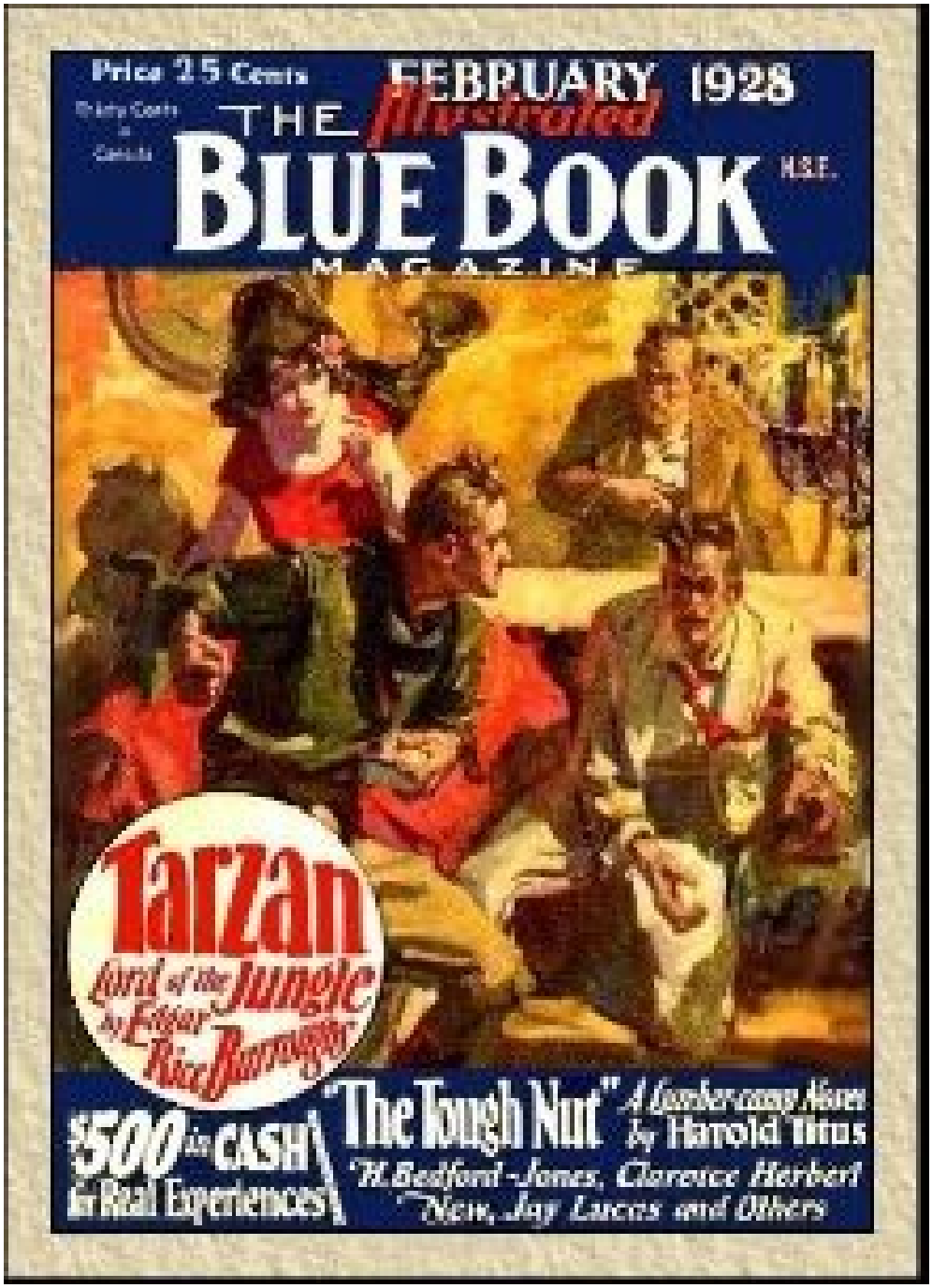
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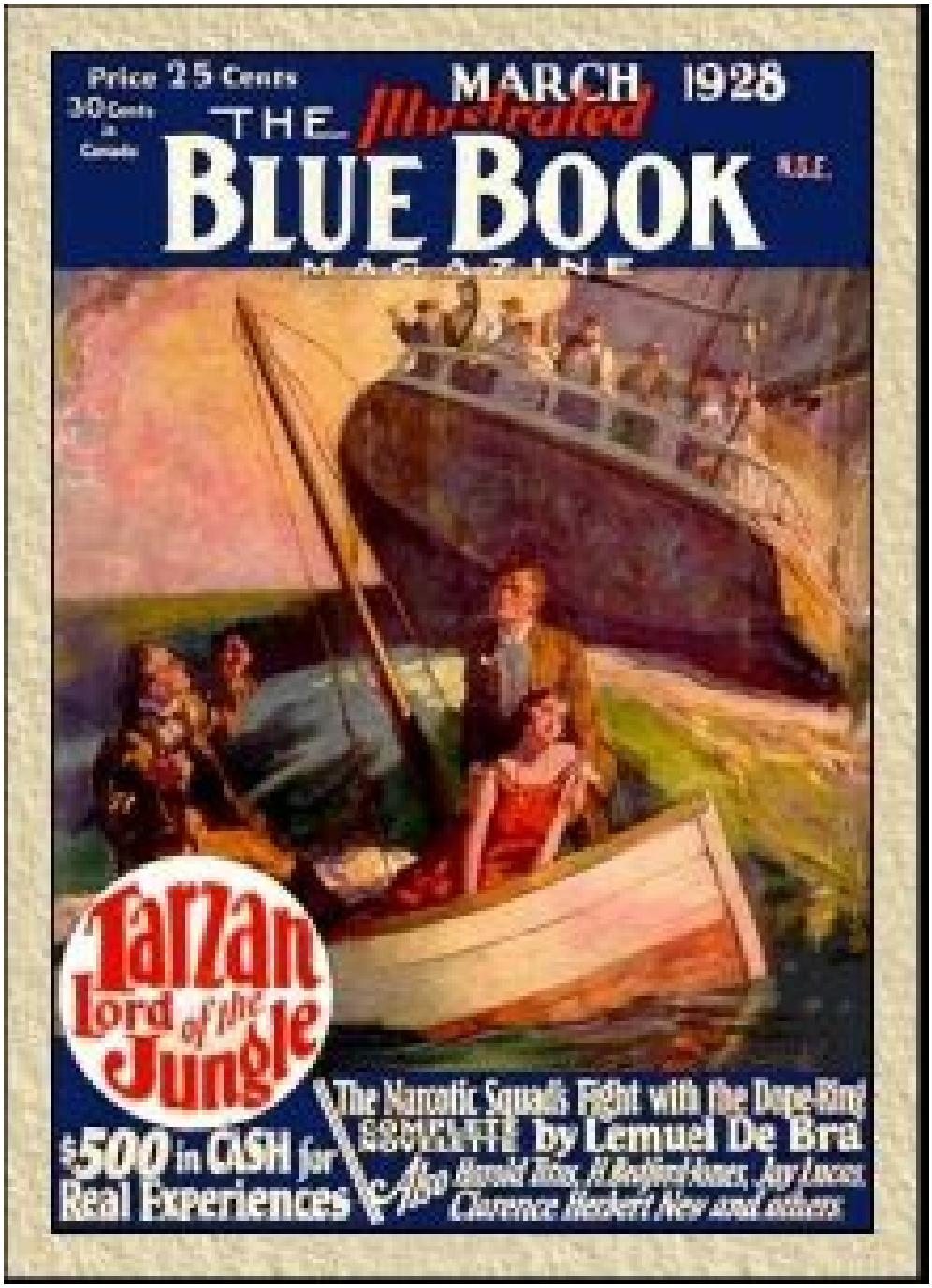
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1. TANTOR THE ELEPHANT

His great bulk swaying to and fro as he threw his weight first upon one side and then upon the other, Tantor the elephant lolled in the shade of the father of forests. Almost omnipotent, he, in the realm of his people. Dango, Sheeta, even Numa the mighty were as naught to the pachyderm. For a hundred years he had come and gone up and down the land that had trembled to the comings and the goings of his forebears for countless ages.

In peace he had lived with Dango the hyena, Sheeta the leopard and Numa the lion. Man alone had made war upon him.

Man, who holds the unique distinction among created things of making war on all living creatures, even to his own kind. Man, the ruthless; man, the pitiless; man, the most hated living organism that Nature has evolved.

Always during the long hundred years of his life, Tantor had known man. There had been black men, always. Big black warriors with spears and arrows, little black warriors, swart Arabs with crude muskets and white men with powerful express rifles and elephant guns. The white men bad been the last to come and were the worst. Yet Tantor did not hate men—not even white men. Hate, vengeance, envy, avarice, lust are a few of the delightful emotions reserved

exclusively for Nature's noblest work— the *lower* animals do not know them. Neither do they know fear as man knows it, but rather a certain bold caution that sends the antelope and the zebra, watchful and wary, to the water hole with the lion.

Tantor shared this caution with his fellows and avoided men— especially white men; and so had there been other eyes there that day to see, their possessor might almost have questioned their veracity, or attributed their error to the half-light of the forest as they scanned the figure sprawling prone upon the rough back of the elephant, half dozing in the heat to the swaying of the great body; for, despite the sun-bronzed

hide, the figure was quite evidently that of a white man. But there were no other eyes to see and Tantor drowsed in the heat of midday and Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, dozed upon the back of his mighty friend. A sultry air current moved sluggishly from the north, bringing to the keen nostrils of the ape- man no disquieting perception. Peace lay upon the jungle and the two beasts were content.

In the forest Fahd and Motlog, of the tribe el-Harb, hunted north from the *menzil* of Sheikh Ibn Jad of the Beny Salem *fendy* el-Guad. With them were black slaves. They advanced warily and in silence upon the fresh spoor of *el-fil* the elephant, the thoughts of the swart

Arabs dwelling upon ivory, those of the black slaves upon fresh meat. The *'abd* Fejjuan, black Galla slave, sleek, ebon warrior, eater of raw meat, famed hunter, led the others.

Fejjuan, as his comrades, thought of fresh meat, but also he thought of el-Habash, the land from which he had been stolen as a boy. He thought of coming again to the lonely Galla hut of his parents. Perhaps el-Habash was not far off now. For months Ibn Jad had been traveling south and now he had come east for a long distance. El-Habash must be near. When he was sure of that his days of slavery would be over and Ibn Jad would have lost his best Galla slave.

Two marches to the north, in the southern extremity of Abyssinia, stood the round dwelling of the father of Fejjuan, almost on the roughly mapped route that Ibn Jad had planned nearly a year since when he had undertaken this mad adventure upon the advice of a learned *sahar*, a magician of repute. But of either the exact location of his father's house or the exact plans of Ibn Jad, Fejjuan was equally ignorant. He but dreamed, and his dreams were flavored with raw meat.

The leaves of the forest drowsed in the heat above the heads of the hunters. Beneath the drowsing leaves of other trees a stone's throw ahead of them Tarzan and Tantor slept, their perceptive

faculties momentarily dulled by the soothing influence of fancied security and the somnolence that is a corollary of equatorial midday.

Fejjuan, the Galla slave, halted in his tracks, stopping those behind him by the silent mandate of an upraised hand. Directly before him, seen dimly between the boles and through the foliage, swayed the giant bulk of *el-fil*. Fejjuan motioned to Fahd, who moved stealthily to the side of the black. The Galla slave pointed through the foliage toward a patch of gray hide. Fahd raised el-Lazzary, his ancient matchlock, to his shoulder. There was a flash of flame, a burst of smoke, a roar and *el-fil*, unhit, was bolting through the forest.

As Tantor surged forward at the sound of the report Tarzan started to spring to an upright position, and at the same instant the pachyderm passed beneath a low hanging limb which struck the ape- man's head, sweeping him to the ground, where he lay stunned and unconscious.

Terrified, Tantor thought only of escape as he ran north through the forest, leaving in his wake felled trees, trampled or up- tore bushes. Perhaps he did not know that his friend lay helpless and injured, at the mercy of the common enemy, man. Tantor never thought of Tarzan as one of the Tarmangani, for the white man was synonymous with discomfort, pain, annoyance, whereas

Tarzan of the Apes meant to him restful companionship, peace, happiness. Of all the jungle beasts, except his own kind, he fraternized with Tarzan only.

"*Billah!* Thou missed," exclaimed Fejjuan.

"Gluck!" ejaculated Fahd. "*Sheytan* guided the bullet. But let us see —perhaps *el- fil* is hit."

"Nay, thou missed."

The two men pushed forward, followed by their fellows, looking for the hoped-for carmine spoor. Fahd suddenly stopped.

"*W'Allah!* What have we here?" he cried. "I fired at *el-fil* and killed a *Nasrany*."

The others crowded about. "It is indeed a Christian dog, and naked, too," said Motlog.

"Or some wild man of the forest," suggested another. "Where did thy bullet strike him, Fahd?"

They stooped and rolled Tarzan over. "There is no mark of bullet upon him."

"Is he dead? Perhaps he, too, hunted *el- fil* and was slain by the great beast."

"He is not dead," announced Fejjuan, who had kneeled and placed an ear above the ape-man's heart. "He lives and from the mark upon his head I think but temporarily out of his wits from a blow. See, he lies in the path that *el-fil* made when he ran away—he was struck down

in the brute's flight."

"I will finish him," said Fahd, drawing his *khusa*.

"By Allah, no! Put back thy knife, Fahd," said Motlog. "Let the sheikh say if he shall be killed. Thou art always too eager for blood."

"It is but a *Nasrany*," insisted Fahd, "Thinkest thou to carry him back to the *menzil*?"

"He moves," said Fejjuan. "Presently he will be able to walk there without help. But perhaps he will not come with us, and look, he hath the size and muscles of a giant. *W'Allah!* What a man!"

"Bind him," commanded Fahd. So with thongs of camel hide they made the

ape-man's two wrists secure together across his belly, nor was the work completed any too soon. They had scarce done when Tarzan opened his eyes and looked them slowly over. He shook his head, like some great lion, and presently his senses cleared. He recognized the Arabs instantly for what they were.

"Why are my wrists bound?" he asked them in their own tongue. "Remove the thongs!"

Fahd laughed. "Thinkest thou, *Nasrany*, that thou art some great sheikh that thou canst order about the *Beduw* as they were dogs?"

"I am Tarzan," replied the ape-man, as one might say, "I am the sheikh of

sheikhs."

"Tarzan!" exclaimed Motlog. He drew Fahd aside. "Of all men," he said, lowering his voice, "that it should be our ill fortune to offend this one! In every village that we have entered in the past two weeks we have heard his name. 'Wait,' they have said, until Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, returns. He will slay you when he learns that you have taken slaves in his country."

"When I drew my *khusa* thou shouldst not have stopped my hand, Motlog," complained Fahd; "but it is not too late yet." He placed his hand upon the hilt of his knife.

"*Billah!*, nay!" cried Motlog. "We have taken slaves in this country. They

are with us now and some of them will escape. Suppose they carry word to the *fendy* of this great sheikh that we have slain him? Not one of us will live to return to Beled el-Guad."

"Let us then take him before Ibn Jad that the responsibility may be his," said Fahd.

"*W'Allah*, you speak wisely," replied Motlog. "What the sheikh doeth with this man in the sheikh's business. Come!"

As they returned to where Tarzan stood he eyed them questioningly.

"What have you decided to do with me?" he demanded. "If you are wise you will cut these bonds and lead me to your sheikh. I wish a word with him."

"We are only poor men," said Motlog.

"It is not for us to say what shall be done, and so we shall take you to our sheikh who will decide."

The Sheikh Ibn Jad of the *fendy* el-Guad squatted in the open men's compartment of his *beyt es- sh'ar*, and beside him in the *mukaad* of his house of hair sat Tollog, his brother, and a young Beduin, Zeyd, who, doubtless, found less attraction in the company of the sheikh than in the proximity of the sheikh's harem whose quarters were separated from the *mukaad* only by a breast-high curtain suspended between the waist poles of the *beyt*, affording thus an occasional glimpse of Ateja, the daughter of Ibn Jad. That it also afforded an occasional glimpse of Hirfa, his wife,

raised not the temperature of Zeyd an iota.

As the men talked the two women were busy within their apartment at their housewifely duties. In a great brazen *jidda* Hirfa was placing mutton to be boiled for the next meal while Ateja fashioned sandals from an old bag of camel leather impregnated with the juice of the dates that it had borne upon many a *rahla*, and meanwhile they missed naught of the conversation that passed in the *mukaad*.

"We have come a long way without mishap from our own *beled*," Ibn Jad was remarking, "and the way has been longer because I wished not to pass through el-Habash lest we be set upon or

followed by the people of that country. Now may we turn north again and enter el-Habash close to the spot where the magician foretold we should find the treasure city of Nimmr."

"And thinkest thou to find this fabled city easily, once we are within the boundaries of el-Habash?" asked Tollog, his brother.

"*W'Allah*, yes. It is known to the people of this far south Habash. Fejjuan, himself an Habashy, though he has never been there, heard of it as a boy. We shall take prisoners among them and, by the grace of Allah, we shall find the means to loose their tongues and have the truth from them."

"By Allah, I hope it does not prove

like the treasure that lies upon the great rock el-Howwara in the plain of Medain Salih," said Zeyd. "An *afrit* guards it where it lay sealed in a stone tower and they say that should it be removed disaster would befall mankind; for men would turn upon their friends, and even upon their brothers, the sons of their fathers and mothers, and the kings of the world would give battle, one against another."

"Yea," testified Tollog, "I had it from one of the *fendy* Hazim that a wise Moghreby came by there in his travels and consulting the cabalistic signs in his book of magic discovered that indeed the treasure lay there."

"But none dared take it up," said

Zeyd.

"*Billah!*" exclaimed Ibn Jad. "There be no *afrit* guarding the treasures of Nimmr. Naught but flesh and blood Habush that may be laid low with ball and powder. The treasure is ours for the taking."

"Allah grant that it may be as easily found as the treasure of Geryeh," said Zeyd, "which lays a journey north of Tebuk in the ancient ruins of a walled city. There, each Friday, the pieces of money roll out of the ground and run about over the desert until sunset."

"Once we are come to Nimmr there will be no difficulty finding the treasure," Ibn Jad assured them. "The difficulty will lie in getting out of el-

Habash with the treasure and the woman; and if she is as beautiful as the *sahar* said, the men of Nimmr may protect her even more savagely than they would the treasure."

"Often do magicians lie," said Tollog.

"Who comes?" exclaimed Ibn Jad, looking toward the jungle that hemmed the *menzil* upon all sides.

"*Billah!* It is Fahd and Motlog returning from the hunt," said Tollog. "Allah grant that they bring ivory and meat."

"They return too soon," said Zeyd.

"But they do not come empty handed," and Ibn Jad pointed toward the naked giant that accompanied the returning hunters.

The group surrounding Tarzan approached the sheikh's *beyt* and halted.

Wrapped in his soiled calico *thobe*, his headkerchief drawn across the lower part of his face, Ibn Jad exposed but two villainous eyes to the intent scrutiny of the ape-man which simultaneously included the pock-marked, shifty-eyed visage of Tollog, the sheikh's brother, and the not ill-favored countenance of the youthful Zeyd.

"Who is sheikh here?" demanded Tarzan in tones of authority that belied the camel leather thongs about his wrists.

Ibn Jad permitted his *thorrib* to fall from before his face. "*W'Allah*, I am sheikh," he said, "and by what name art

thou known, *Nasrany*?"

"They call me Tarzan of the Apes, Moslem."

"Tarzan of the Apes," mused Ibn Jad. "I have heard the name."

"Doubtless. It is not unknown to Arab slave raiders. Why, then, came you to my country, knowing I do not permit my people to be taken into slavery?"

"We do not come for slaves," Ibn Jad assured him. "We do but trade in peace for ivory."

"Thou liest in thy beard, Moslem," returned Tarzan, quietly. "I recognize both Manyuema and Galla slaves in thy *menzil*, and I know that they are not here of their own choosing. Then, too, was I not present when your henchmen

fired a shot at *el- fil*? Is that peaceful trading for ivory? No! it is poaching, and that Tarzan of the Apes does not permit in his country. You are raiders and poachers."

"By Allah! we are honest men," cried Ibn Jad. "Fahd and Motlog did but hunt for meat. If they shot *el- fil* it must be that they mistook him for another beast."

"Enough!" cried Tarzan. "Remove the thongs that bind me and prepare to return north from whence thou camest. Thou shalt have an escort and bearers to the Sudan. That will I arrange for."

"We have come a long way and wish only to trade in peace," insisted Ibn Jad. "We shall pay our bearers for their labor and take no slaves, nor shall we again

fire upon *el- fil*. Let us go our way and when we return we will pay you well for permission to pass through your country."

Tarzan shook his head. "No! you shall go at once. Come, cut these bonds!"

Ibn Jad's eyes narrowed. "We have offered thee peace and profits, *Nasrany*," he said, "but if thou wouldst have war let it be war. Thou art in our power and remember that dead enemies are harmless. Think it over." And to Fahd: "Take him away and bind his feet."

"Be careful, Moslem," warned Tarzan, "the arms of the ape-man are long —they may reach out even in death and their fingers encircle your throat."

"Thou shalt have until dark to decide, *Nasrany*, and thou mayst know that Ibn Jad will not turn back until he hath that for which he came."

They took Tarzan then and at a distance from the *beyt* of Ibn Jad they pushed him into a small*hejra*; but once within this tent it required three men to throw him to the ground and bind his ankles, even though his wrists were already bound.

In the *beyt* of the sheikh the Beduins sipped their coffee, sickish with clove, cinnamon and other spice, the while they discussed the ill fortune that had befallen them; for, regardless of his bravado, Ibn Jad knew full well that only speed and most propitious circumstances could

now place the seal of success upon his venture.

"But for Motlog," said Fahd, "we would now have no cause for worry concerning the *Nasrany*, for I had my knife ready to slit the dog's throat when Motlog interfered."

"And had word of his slaying spread broadcast over his country before another sunset and all his people at our heels," countered Motlog.

"*W'Allah*," said Tollog, the sheikh's brother. "I wish Fahd had done the thing he wished. After all how much better off are we if we permit the *Nasrany* to live? Should we free him we know that he will gather his people and drive us from the country. If we keep him prisoner and

an escaped slave carries word of it to his people will they not be upon us even more surely than as though we had slain him?"

"Tollog, thou speakest words of wisdom," said Ibn Jad, nodding appreciatively.

"But wait," said Tollog, "I have within me, unspoken, words of even greater worth." He leaned forward motioning the others closer and lowered his voice. "Should this one whom they call Tarzan escape during the night, or should we set him free, there would be no bad word for an escaped slave to bear to his people."

"*Billah!*" exclaimed Fahd disgustedly. "There would be no need for an escaped

slave to bring word to his people—the *Nasrany* himself would do that and lead them upon us in person. Bah! the brains of Tollog are as camel's dung."

"Thou hast not heard all that I would say, brother," continued Tollog, ignoring Fahd. "It would only *seem* to the slaves that this man had escaped, for in the morning he would be gone and we would make great lamentation over the matter, or we would say: '*W'Allah*, it is true that Ibn Jad made peace with the stranger, who departed into the jungle, blessing him.'"

"I do not follow thee, brother," said Ibn Jad.

"The *Nasrany* lies bound in yonder *hejra*. The night will be dark. A

slim knife between his ribs were enough. There be faithful Habush among us who will do our bidding, nor speak of the matter after. They can prepare a trench from the bottom of which a dead Tarzan may not reach out to harm us."

"By Allah, it is plain that thou art of sheikhly blood, Tollog," exclaimed Ibn Jad. "The wisdom of thy words proclaims it Thou shalt attend to the whole matter. Then will it be done secretly and well. The blessings of Allah be upon thee!" and Ibn Jad arose and entered the quarters of his harem.

2. COMRADES OF THE WILD

Darkness fell upon the *menzil* of Ibn Jad the sheikh. Beneath the small flitting tent where his captors had left him, Tarzan still struggled with the bonds that secured his wrists, but the tough camel leather withstood even the might of his giant thews. At times he lay listening to the night noises of the jungle, many of them noises that no other human ear could have heard, and always he interpreted each correctly. He knew when Numa passed and Sheeta the leopard; and then from afar and so faintly that it was but the shadow of a whisper, there came down the wind the

trumpeting of a bull elephant.

Without the *beyt* of Ibn Jad Ateja, the sheikh's daughter, loitered, and with her was Zeyd. They stood very close to one another and the man held the maiden's hands in his.

"Tell me, Ateja," he said, "that you love no other than Zeyd."

"How many times must I tell you that?" whispered the girl.

"And you do not love Fahd?" insisted the man.

"*Billah*, no!" she ejaculated.

"Yet your father gives the impression that one day you will be Fahd's."

"My father wishes me to be of the harem of Fahd, but I mistrust the man,

and I could not belong to one whom I neither loved nor trusted."

"I, too, mistrust Fahd," said Zeyd. "Listen Ateja! I doubt his loyalty to thy father, and not his alone, but another whose name I dare not even whisper. Upon occasions I have seen them muttering together when they thought that there were no others about."

The girl nodded her head. "I know. It is not necessary even to whisper the name to me—and I hate him even as I hate Fahd."

"But he is of thine own kin," the youth reminded her.

"What of that? Is he not also my father's brother? If that bond does not hold him loyal to Ibn Jad, who hath

treated him well, why should I pretend loyalty for him? Nay, I think him a traitor to my father, but Ibn Jad seems blind to the fact. We are a long way from our own country and if aught should befall the sheikh, Tollog, being next of blood, would assume the sheikhly duties and honors. I think he hath won Fahd's support by a promise to further his suit for me with Ibn Jad, for I have noticed that Tollog exerts himself to praise Fahd in the hearing of my father."

"And perhaps a division of the spoils of the *ghrazzu* upon the treasure city," suggested Zeyd.

"It is not unlikely," replied the girl, "and—Allah! what was that?"

The Beduins seated about the coffee

fire leaped to their feet The black slaves, startled, peered out into the darkness from their rude shelters. Muskets were seized. Silence fell again upon the tense, listening *menzil*. The weird, uncanny cry that had unnerved them was not repeated.

"*Billah!*" ejaculated Ibn Jad. "It came from the midst of the *menzil*, and it was the voice of a beast, where there are only men and a few domestic animals."

"Could it have been—?" The speaker stopped as though fearful that the thing he would suggest might indeed be true.

"But he is a man and that was the voice of a beast," insisted Ibn Jad. "It could not have been he."

"But he is a *Nasrany*," reminded

Fahd. "Perhaps he has league with *Sheytan*."

"And the sound came from the direction where he lies bound in a *hejra*," observed another.

"Come!" said Ibn Jad. "Let us investigate."

With muskets ready the Arabs, lighting the way with paper lanterns, approached the *hejra*where Tarzan lay. Fearfully the foremost looked within.

"He is here," he reported.

Tarzan, who was sitting in the center of the tent, surveyed the Arabs somewhat contemptuously. Ibn Jad pressed forward.

"You heard a cry?" he demanded of

the ape-man.

"Yes, I heard it. Camest thou, Sheikh Ibn Jad, to disturb my rest upon so trivial an errand, or yearnest thou to release me?"

"What manner of cry was it? What did it signify?" asked Ibn Jad.

Tarzan of the Apes smiled grimly. "It was but the call of a beast to one of his kind," he replied. "Does the noble *Beduwy* tremble thus always when he hears the voices of the jungle people?"

"Gluck!" growled Ibn Jad, "the *Beduw* fear naught. We thought the sound came from this*hejra* and we hastened hither believing some jungle beast had crept within the *menzil* and

attacked thee. Tomorrow it is the thought of Ibn Jad to release thee."

"Why not tonight?"

"My people fear thee. They would that when you are released you depart hence immediately."

"I shall. I have no desire to remain in thy lice infested *menzil*."

"We could not send thee alone into the jungle at night where *el-adrea* is abroad hunting," protested the sheikh'.

Tarzan of the Apes smiled again, one of his rare smiles. "Tarzan is more secure in his teeming jungle than are the *Beduw* in their desert," he replied. "The jungle night has no terrors for Tarzan."

"Tomorrow," snapped the shiek and then, motioning to his followers, he departed.

Tarzan watched their paper lanterns bobbing across the camp to the sheikh's *beyt* and then he stretched himself at full length and pressed an ear to the ground.

When the inhabitants of the Arab *menzil* heard the cry of the beast shatter the quiet of the new night it aroused within their breasts a certain vague unrest, but otherwise it was meaningless to them. Yet there was one far off in the jungle who caught the call faintly and understood—a huge beast, the great, gray dreadnought of the jungle, Tantor the elephant. Again he raised his

trunk aloft and trumpeted loudly. His little eyes gleamed redly wicked as, a moment later, he swung off through the forest at a rapid trot.

Slowly silence fell upon the *menzil* of Sheik Ibn Jad as the Arabs and their slaves sought their sleeping mats. Only the sheikh and his brother sat smoking in the sheikh's *beyt* —smoking and whispering in low tones.

"Do not let the slaves see you slay the *Nasrany*, Tollog," cautioned Ibn Jad. "Attend to that yourself first in secrecy and in silence, then quietly arouse two of the slaves. Fejjuan would be as good as another, as he has been among us since childhood and is loyal. He will do well for one."

"Abbas is loyal, too, and strong," suggested Tollog.

"Yea, let him be the second," agreed Ibn Jad. "But it is well that they do not know how the*Nasrany* came to die. Tell them that you heard a noise in the direction of his *hejra* and that when you had come to learn the nature of it you found him thus dead."

"You may trust to my discretion, brother," Tollog assured.

"And warn them to secrecy," continued the sheikh. "No man but we four must ever know of the death of the *Nasrany*, nor of his place of burial. In the morning we shall tell the others that he escaped during the night. Leave his cut bonds within the *hejra* as proof.

You understand?"

"By Allah, fully."

"Good! Now go. The people sleep." The sheikh rose and Tollog, also. The former entered the apartment of his harem and the latter moved silently through the darkness of the night in the direction of the *hejra* where his victim lay.

Through the jungle came Tantor the elephant and from his path fled gentle beasts and fierce. Even Numa the lion slunk growling to one side as the mighty pachyderm passed.

Into the darkness of the *hejra* crept Tollog, the sheikh's brother; but Tarzan, lying with an ear to the ground, had heard him approaching from the moment

that he had left the *beyt* of Ibn Jad. Tarzan heard other sounds as well and, as he interpreted these others, he interpreted the stealthy approach of Tollog and was convinced when the footsteps turned into the tent where he lay —convinced of the purpose of his visitor. For what purpose but the taking of his life would a Beduin visit Tarzan at this hour of the night?

As Tollog, groping in the dark, entered the tent Tarzan sat erect and again there smote upon the ears of the Beduin the horrid cry that had disturbed the *menzil* earlier in the evening, but this time it arose in the very *hejra* in which Tollog stood.

The Beduin halted, aghast "Allah!" he

cried, stepping back. "What beast is there? *Nasrany*! Art thou being attacked?"

Others in the camp were awakened, but none ventured forth to investigate. Tarzan smiled and remained silent.

"*Nasrany*!" repeated Tollog, but there was no reply.

Cautiously, his knife ready in his hand, the Beduin backed from the *hejra*. He listened but heard no sound from within. Running quickly to his own *beyt* he made a light in a paper lantern and hastened back to the *hejra*, and this time he carried his musket and it was at full cock. Peering within, the lantern held above his head, Tollog saw the ape-man sitting upon the ground

looking at him. There was no wild beast! Then the Beduin understood.

"*Billah!* It was thou, *Nasrany*, who made the fearful cries."

"*Beduwy*, thou comest to kill the *Nasrany*, eh?" demanded Tarzan.

From the jungle came the roar of a lion and the trumpeting of a bull elephant, but the *boma*was high and sharp with thorns and there were guards and beast-fire, so Tollog gave no thought to these familiar noises of the night. He did not answer Tarzan's question but laid aside his musket and drew his kliusa, which after all was answer enough.

In the dim light of the paper lantern Tarzan watched these preparations. He

saw the cruel expression upon the malevolent face. He saw the man approaching slowly, the knife ready in his hand.

The man was almost upon him now, his eyes glittering in the faint light. To the ears of the ape-man came the sound of a commotion at the far edge of the *menzil*, followed by an Arab oath. Then Tollog launched a blow at Tarzan's breast. The prisoner swung his bound wrists upward and struck the Beduin's knife arm away, and simultaneously he struggled to his knees.

With an oath, Tollog struck again, and again Tarzan fended the blow, and this time he followed swiftly with a mighty sweep of his arms that struck the Beduin

upon the side of the head and sent him sprawling across the *hejra*; but Tollog was instantly up and at him again, this time with the ferocity of a maddened bull, yet at the same time with far greater cunning, for instead of attempting a direct frontal attack Tollog leaped quickly around Tarzan to strike him from behind.

In his effort to turn upon his knees that he might face his antagonist the ape-man lost his balance, his feet being bound together, and fell prone at Tollog's mercy. A vicious smile bared the yellow teeth of the Beduin.

"Die, *Nasrany*!" he cried, and then: "*Billah!* What was that?" as, of a sudden, the entire tent was snatched from

above his head and hurled off into the night. He turned quickly and a shriek of terror burst from his lips as he saw, red-eyed and angry, the giant form of *el-fil* towering above him; and in that very instant a supple trunk encircled his body and Tollog, the sheikh's brother, was raised high aloft and hurled off into the darkness as the tent had been.

For an instant Tantor stood looking about, angrily, defiantly, then he reached down and lifted Tarzan from the ground, raised him high above his head, wheeled about and trotted rapidly across the *menzil* toward the jungle. A frightened sentry fired once and fled. The other sentry lay crushed and dead where Tantor had hurled him when he

entered the camp. An instant later Tarzan and Tantor were swallowed by the jungle and the darkness.

The *menzil* of Sheik Ibn Jad was in an uproar. Armed men hastened hither and thither seeking the cause of the disturbance, looking for an attacking enemy. Some came to the spot where had stood the *hejra* where the *Nasrany* had been confined, but *hejra* and *Nasrany* both had disappeared. Nearby, the *beyt* of one of Ibn Jad's cronies lay flattened. Beneath it were screaming women and a cursing man. On top of it was Tollog, the sheikh's brother, his mouth filled with vile Beduin invective, whereas it should have contained only praises of Allah and

thanksgiving, for Tollog was indeed a most fortunate man. Had he alighted elsewhere than upon the top of a sturdily pegged *beyt* he had doubtless been killed or badly injured when Tantor hurled him thus rudely aside.

Ibn Jad, searching for information, arrived just as Tollog was extricating himself from the folds of the tent.

"*Billah!*" cried the sheikh. "What has come to pass? What, O brother, art thou doing upon the*beyt* of Abd el-Aziz?"

A slave came running to the sheikh. "The *Nasrany* is gone and he hath taken the *hejra* with him," he cried.

Ibn Jad turned to Tollog. "Canst thou not explain, brother?" he demanded. "Is the *Nasrany*truly departed?"

"The *Nasrany* is indeed gone," replied Tollog. "He is in league with *Sheytan*, who came in the guise of *el-fil* and carried the *Nasrany* into the jungle, after throwing me upon the top of the *beyt* of Abd el-Aziz whom I still hear squealing and cursing beneath as though it had been he who was attacked rather than I."

Ibn Jad shook his head. Of course he knew that Tollog was a liar— that he always had known—yet he could not understand how his brother had come to be upon the top of the *beyt* of Abd el-Aziz.

"What did the sentries see?" demanded the sheikh. "Where were they?"

"They were at their post," spoke up Motlog. "I was just there. One of them is dead, the other fired upon the intruder as it escaped."

"And what said he of it?" demanded Ibn Jad.

"*W'Allah*, he said that *el-fil* came and entered the *menzil*, killing Yemeny and rushing to the*hejra* where the *Nasrany* lay bound, ripping it aside, throwing Tollog high into the air. Then he seized the prisoner and bore him off into the jungle, and as he passed him Hasan fired."

"And missed," guessed Ibn Jad.

For several moments the sheikh stood in thought, then he turned slowly toward his own *beyt*. "Tomorrow, early, is

the *rahla*," he said; and the word spread quickly that early upon the morrow they would break camp.

Far into the forest Tantor bore Tarzan until they had come to a small clearing well carpeted with grass, and here the elephant deposited his burden gently upon the ground and stood guard above.

"In the morning," said Tarzan, "when Kudu the Sun hunts again through the heavens and there is light by which to see, we shall discover what may be done about removing these bonds, Tantor; but for now let us sleep."

Numa the lion, Dango the hyena, Sheeta the leopard passed near that night, and the scent of the helpless man-thing was strong in their nostrils, but

when they saw who stood guard above Tarzan and heard the mutterings of the big bull, they passed on about their business while Tarzan of the Apes slept.

With the coming of dawn all was quickly astir in the *menzil* of Ibn Jad. Scarce was the meager breakfast eaten ere the *beyt* of the sheikh was taken down by his women, and at this signal the other houses of hair came tumbling to the ground, and within the hour the Arabs were winding northward toward el-Habash.

The Beduins and their women were mounted upon the desert ponies that had survived the long journey from the north, while the slaves that they had brought with them from their own country

marched afoot at the front and rear of the column in the capacity of *askari*, and these were armed with muskets. Their bearers were the natives that they had impressed into their service along the way. These carried the impedimenta of the camp and herded the goats and sheep along the trail.

Zeyd rode beside Ateja, the daughter of the sheikh, and more often were his eyes upon her profile than upon the trail ahead. Fahd, who rode near Ibn Jad, cast an occasional angry glance in the direction of the two. Tollog, the sheikh's brother, saw and grinned.

"Zeyd is a bolder suitor than thou, Fahd," he whispered to the young man.

"He has whispered lies into her ears

and she will have none of me," complained Fahd.

"If the sheikh favored thy suit though," suggested Tollog.

"But he does not," snapped Fahd. "A word from you might aid. You promised it."

"*W'Allah*, yes, but my brother is an over-indulgent sire," explained Tollog. "He doth not mislike you, Fahd, but rather he would have his *bint* happy, and so leaves the selection of her mate to her."

"What is there to do, then?" demanded Fahd.

"If I were sheikh, now," suggested Tollog, "but alas I am not."

"If you were sheikh, what then?"

"My niece would go to the man of my own choosing."

"But you are not sheikh," Fahd reminded him.

Tollog leaned close and whispered in Fahd's ear. "A suitor as bold as Zeyd would find the way to make me sheikh."

Fahd made no reply but only rode on in silence, his head bowed and his brows contracted in thought.

3. THE APES OF TOYAT

Three days crawled slowly out of the east and followed one another across the steaming jungle and over the edge of the world beyond. For three days the Arabs moved slowly northward toward el-Habash. For three days Tarzan of the Apes lay in the little clearing, bound and helpless, while Tantor the elephant stood guard above him. Once each day the great bull brought the ape-man food and water.

The camel leather thongs held securely and no outside aid appeared to release Tarzan from the ever increasing discomfort and danger of his predicament. He had called to Manu the monkey to come and gnaw the strands

apart, but Manu, ever irresponsible, had only promised and forgotten. And so the ape-man lay uncomplaining, as is the way of beasts patiently waiting for release, knowing that it might come in the habiliment of death.

Upon the morning of the fourth day Tantor gave evidences of restlessness. His brief foragings had exhausted the nearby supply of food for himself and his charge. He wanted to move on and take Tarzan with him; but the ape-man was now convinced that to be carried farther into the elephant country would lessen his chances for succor, for he felt that the only one of the jungle people who could release him was Mangani the great ape. Tarzan knew that already he

was practically at the outer limits of the Mangani country, yet there was a remote chance that a band of the great anthropoids might pass this way and discover him, while, should Tantor carry him farther north even this meager likelihood of release would be lost forever.

Tantor wanted to be gone. He nudged Tarzan with his trunk and rolled him over. He raised him from the ground.

"Put me down, Tantor," said the ape-man, and the pachyderm obeyed, but he turned and walked away. Tarzan watched him cross the clearing to the trees upon the far side. There Tantor hesitated, stopped, turned. He looked back at Tarzan and trumpeted. He dug up

the earth with a great tusk and appeared angry.

"Go and feed," said Tarzan, "and then return. Tomorrow the Mangani may come."

Tantor trumpeted again and, wheeling about, disappeared in the jungle. For a long time the ape-man lay listening to the retreating footfalls of his old friend.

"He is gone," he mused. "I cannot blame him. Perhaps it is as well. What matter whether it be today, tomorrow, or the day after?"

The morning passed. The noonday silence lay upon the jungle. Only the insects were abroad. They annoyed Tarzan as they did the other jungle beasts, but to the poison of their stings

he was immune through a lifetime of inoculation.

Suddenly there came a great scampering through the trees. Little Manu and his brothers, his sisters and his cousins came trooping madly through the middle terrace, squealing, chattering and scolding.

"Manu!" called Tarzan. "What comes?"

"The Mangani! The Mangani!" shrieked the monkeys.

"Go and fetch them, Manu!" commanded the ape-man.

"We are afraid."

"Go and call to them from the upper terraces," urged Tarzan. "They cannot

reach you there. Tell them that one of their people lies helpless here. Tell them to come and release me."

"We are afraid."

"They cannot reach you in the upper terraces. Go! They will be your friends then."

"They cannot climb to the upper terraces," said an old monkey. "I will go."

The others, halted in their flight, turned and watched the gray- beard as he scampered quickly off amongst the loftiest branches of the great trees, and Tarzan waited.

Presently he heard the deep gutturals of his own people, the great apes, the Mangani. Perhaps there would be those

among them who knew him. Perhaps, again, the band may have come from afar and have no knowledge of him, though that he doubted. In them, however, was his only hope. He lay there, listening, waiting. He heard Manu screaming and chattering as he scampered about high above the Mangani, then, of a sudden, silence fell upon the jungle. There was only the sound of insects, buzzing, humming.

The ape-man lay looking in the direction from which had come the sounds of the approaching anthropoids. He knew what was transpiring behind that dense wall of foliage. He knew that presently a pair of fierce eyes would be examining him, surveying the clearing,

searching for an enemy, warily probing for a trick or a trap. He knew that the first sight of him might arouse distrust, fear, rage; for what reason had they to love or trust the cruel and merciless Tarmangani?

There lay great danger in the possibility that, seeing him, they might quietly withdraw without showing themselves. That, then, would be the end, for there were no others than the Mangani to whom he might look for rescue. With this in mind he spoke.

"I am a friend," he called to them. "The Tarmangani caught me and bound my wrists and ankles. I cannot move. I cannot defend myself. I cannot get food nor water. Come and remove my bonds."

From just behind the screen of foliage a voice replied, "You are a Tarmangani."

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man.

"Yes," screamed Manu, "he is Tarzan of the Apes. The Tarmangani and the Gomangani bound him and Tantor brought him here. Four times has Kudu hunted across the sky while Tarzan of the Apes lay bound."

"I know Tarzan," said another voice from behind the foliage and presently the leaves parted and a huge, shaggy ape lumbered into the clearing. Swinging along with knuckles to the ground the brute came close to Tarzan.

"M'walat!" exclaimed the ape-man.

"It is Tarzan of the Apes," said the great ape, but the others did not understand.

"What?" they demanded.

"Whose band is this?" asked Tarzan.

"Toyat is king," replied M'walat.

"Then do not tell them it is really I," whispered Tarzan, "until you have cut these bonds. Toyat hates me. He will kill me if I am defenseless."

"Yes," agreed M'walat

"Here," said Tarzan, raising his bound wrists. "Bite these bonds in two."

"You are Tarzan of the Apes, the friend of M'walat. M'walat will do as you ask," replied the ape.

Of course, in the meager language of

the apes, their conversation did not sound at all like a conversation between men, but was rather a mixture of growls and grunts and gestures which, however, served every purpose that could have been served by the most formal and correct of civilized speech since it carried its messages clearly to the minds of both the Mangani and the Tarmangani, the Great Ape and the Great White Ape.

As the other members of the band pressed forward into the clearing, seeing that M'walat was not harmed, the latter stooped and with powerful teeth severed the camel leather thongs that secured the wrists of the ape-man, and similarly he freed his ankles.

As Tarzan came to his feet the

balance of the fierce and shaggy band swung into the clearing. In the lead was Toyat, king ape, and at his heels eight more full grown males with perhaps six or seven females and a number of young. The young and the shes hung back, but the bulls pressed forward to where Tarzan stood with M'walat at his side.

The king ape growled menacingly. "Tarmangani!" he cried. Wheeling in a circle he leaped into the air and came down on all fours; he struck the ground savagely with his clenched fists; he growled and foamed, and leaped again and again. Toyat was working himself to a pitch of rage that would nerve him to attack the Tarmangani, and by these maneuvers he hoped also to arouse the

savage fighting spirit of his fellows.

"It is Tarzan of the Apes, friend of the Mangani," said M'walat.

"It is a Tarmangani, enemy of the Mangani," cried Toyat "They come with great thunder sticks and kill us. They make our shes and our balus dead with a loud noise. Kill the Tarmangani."

"It is Tarzan of the Apes," growled Gayat. "When I was a little balu he saved me from Numa. Tarzan of the Apes is the friend of the Mangani."

"Kill the Tarmangani!" shrieked Toyat, leaping high into the air.

Several of the other bulls were now circling and leaping into the air as Gayat placed himself at Tarzan's side. The ape-man, knew them well. He knew that

sooner or later one of them would have excited himself to such a pitch of maniacal frenzy that he would leap suddenly upon him. M'walat and Gayat would attack in his defense; several more bulls would launch themselves into the battle and there would ensue a free for all fight from which not all of them would emerge alive, and none without more or less serious injuries; but Tarzan of the Apes did not wish to battle with his friends.

"Stop!" he commanded raising his opened palm to attract attention. "I am Tarzan of the Apes, mighty hunter, mighty fighter; long did I range with the tribe of Kerchak; when Kerchak died I became king ape; many of you know me;

all know that I am first a Mangani; that I am friend to all Mangani. Toyat would have you kill me because Toyat hates Tarzan of the Apes. He hates him not because he is a Tarmangani but because Tarzan once kept Toyat from becoming king. That was many rains ago when some of you were still balus. If Toyat has been a good king Tarzan is glad, but now he is not acting like a good king for he is trying to turn you against your best friend.

"You, Zutho!" he exclaimed, suddenly pointing a finger at a huge bull. "You leap and growl and foam at the mouth. You would sink your fangs into the flesh of Tarzan. Have you forgotten, Zutho, the time that you were sick and the other

members of the tribe left you to die? Have you forgotten who brought you food and water? Have you forgotten who it was that kept Sabor the lioness and Sheeta the panther and Dango the hyena from you during those long nights?"

As Tarzan spoke, his tone one of quiet authority, the apes gradually paused to listen to his words. It was a long speech for the jungle folk. The great apes nor the little monkeys long concentrated upon one idea. Already, before he had finished, one of the bulls was overturning a rotted log in search of succulent insects. Zutho was wrinkling his brows in unaccustomed recollection. Presently he spoke.

"Zutho remembers," he said. "He is

the friend of Tarzan," and ranged himself beside M'walat. With this the other bulls, except Toyat, appeared to lose interest in the proceedings and either wandered off in search of food or squatted down in the grass.

Toyat still fumed, but as he saw his cause deserted he prosecuted his war dance at a safer distance from Tarzan and his defenders, and it was not long before he, too, was attracted by the more profitable business of bug hunting.

And so Tarzan ranged again with the great apes. And as he loafed lazily through the forest with the shaggy brutes he thought of his foster mother, Kala, the great she-ape, the only mother he had ever known; he recalled with a thrill of

pride her savage defense of him against all their natural enemies of the jungle and against the hate and jealousy of old Tublat, her mate, and against the enmity of Kerchak, the terrible old king ape.

As it had been but yesterday since he had seen him, Tarzan's memory projected again upon the screen of recollection the huge bulk and the ferocious features of old Kerchak. What a magnificent beast he had been! To the childish mind of the ape-boy Kerchak had been the personification of savage ferocity and authority, and even today he recalled him with almost a sensation of awe. That he had overthrown and slain this gigantic ruler still seemed to Tarzan almost incredible. He fought again his

battles with Terkoz and with Bolgani the gorilla. He thought of Teeka, whom he had loved, and of Thaka and Tana, and of the little black boy, Tibo, whom he had endeavored to adopt; and so he dreamed through lazy daylight hours while Ibn Jad crept slowly northward toward the leopard city of Nimmr and in another part of the jungle events were transpiring that were to entangle Tarzan in the meshes of a great adventure.

4. BOLGANI THE GORILLA

A black porter caught his foot in an entangling creeper and stumbled, throwing his load to the ground. Of such trivialities are crises born. This one altered the entire life of James Hunter Blake, young, rich, American, hunting big game for the first time in Africa with his friend Wilbur Stimbol who, having spent three weeks in the jungle two years before, was naturally the leader of the expedition and an infallible authority on all matters pertaining to big game, African jungle, safari, food, weather and Negroes. The further fact that Stimbol was twenty-five years Blade's senior

naturally but augmented his claims to omniscience.

These factors did not in themselves constitute the basis for the growing differences between the two men, for Blake was a phlegmatically inclined young man of twenty-five who was rather amused at Stimbol's egotism than otherwise. The first rift had occurred at railhead when, through Stimbol's domineering manner and ill temper, the entire purpose of the expedition had been abandoned by necessity, and what was to have been a quasi scientific motion picture camera study of wild African life had resolved itself into an ordinary big game hunt.

At railhead, while preparations were

going on to secure equipment and a safari, Stimbol had so offended and insulted the cameraman that he had left them Sat and returned to the coast. Blake was disappointed, but he made up his mind to go on through and get what pictures he could with a still camera. He was not a man who enjoyed killing for the mere sport of taking life, and as originally planned there was to have been no shooting of game except for food and half a dozen trophies that Stimbol particularly wished to add to his collection.

There had since been one or two altercations relative to Stimbol's treatment of the black porters, but these matters, Blake was hopeful, had been

ironed out and Stimbol had promised to leave the handling of the safari to Blake and refrain from any further abuse of the men.

They had come into the interior even farther than they had planned, had had the poorest of luck in the matter of game and were about to turn back toward railhead. It seemed now to Blake that after all they were going to pull through without further difficulty and that he and Stimbol would return to America together, to all intent and purpose still friends; but just then a black porter caught his foot in an entangling creeper and stumbled, throwing his load to the ground.

Directly in front of the porter Stimbol

and Blake were walking side by side and, as though guided by a malevolent power, the load crashed into Stimbol, hurling him to the ground. Stimbol and the porter scrambled to their feet amidst the laughter of the Negroes who had witnessed the accident. The porter was grinning. Stimbol was flushed with anger.

"You damned clumsy swine!" he cried, and before Blake could interfere or the porter protect himself the angry white man stepped quickly over the fallen load and struck the black a terrific blow in the face that felled him; and as he lay there, Stimbol kicked him in the side. But only once! Before he could repeat the outrage Blake seized him by

the shoulder, wheeled him about and struck him precisely as he had struck the black.

Stimbol fell, rolled over on his side and reached for the automatic that hung at his hip, but quick as he was Blake was quicker. "Cut that!" said Blake, crisply, covering Stimbol with a .45. Stimbol's hand dropped from the grip of his gun. "Get up!" ordered Blake, and when the other had risen: "Now listen to me, Stimbol—this is the end. You and I are through. Tomorrow morning we split the safari and equipment, and whichever way you go with your half. I'll go in the opposite direction."

Blake had returned his gun to its holster as he spoke, the black had risen

and was nursing a bloody nose, the other blacks were looking sullenly. Blake motioned to the porter to pick up his load and presently the safari was again on the move—a sullen safari without laughter or song.

Blake made camp at the first available ground shortly before noon in order that the division of equipment, food and men could be made during the afternoon and the two safaris thus be enabled to make an early start the following morning.

Stimbol, sullen, would give no assistance, but, taking a couple of the *askari*, the armed natives who act as soldiers for the safari, started out from camp to hunt. He had proceeded

scarcely a mile along a mould padded game trail which gave forth no sound in answer to their falling footsteps, when one of the natives in the lead held up his hand in warning as he halted in his tracks.

Stimbol advanced cautiously and the black pointed toward the left, through the foliage. Dimly, Stimbol saw a black mass moving slowly away from them.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"Gorilla," replied the black.

Stimbol raised his rifle and fired at the retreating figure. The black was not surprised that he missed.

"Hell!" ejaculated the white. "Come on, get after him! I've got to have him. Gad! what a trophy he'll make."

The jungle was rather more open than usual and again and again they came within sight of the retreating gorilla. Each time Stimbol fired and each time he missed. Secretly the blacks were amused and pleased. They did not like Stimbol.

At a distance Tarzan of the Apes, hunting with the tribe of Toyat, heard the first shot and immediately took to the trees and was racing in the direction of the sound. He felt sure that the weapon had not been discharged by the Beduins, for he well knew and could differentiate between the reports of their muskets and those made by modern weapons.

Perhaps, he thought, there may be among them such a rifle, because such

was not impossible, but more likely it meant white men, and in Tarzan's country it was his business to know what strangers were there and why. Seldom they came even now, though once they had never come. It was those days that Tarzan regretted, for when the white man comes peace and happiness depart.

Racing through the trees, swinging from limb to limb, Tarzan of the Apes unerringly followed the direction of the sound of the succeeding shots; and as he approached more closely the scene of the pursuit of Bolgani the gorilla, he heard the crashing of underbrush and the voices of men.

Bolgani, fleeing with greater haste than caution, his mind and attention

occupied by thoughts of escape from the hated Tarmangani and the terrifying thunder stick that roared each time the Tarmangani came within sight of him, abandoned his accustomed wariness and hurried through the jungle forgetful of what few other enemies might beset his path; and so it was that he failed to see Histah the snake draped in sinuous loops along an overhanging branch of a nearby patriarch of the forest.

The huge python, naturally short tempered and irritable, had been disturbed and annoyed by the crashing sounds of pursuit and escape and the roaring voice of the rifle. Ordinarily he would have permitted a full grown bull gorilla to pass unmolested, but in his

present state of mind he might have attacked even Tantor himself.

His beady eyes glaring fixedly, he watched the approach of the shaggy Bolgani, and as the gorilla passed beneath the limb to which he clung Histah launched himself upon his prey.

As the great coils, powerful, relentless, silent, encircled Bolgani, he sought to tear the hideous folds from him. Great is the strength of Bolgani, but even greater is that of Histah the snake. A single hideous, almost human scream burst from the lips of Bolgani with the first realization of the disaster that had befallen him, and then he was on the ground tearing futilely at the steadily tightening bands of living steel that

would crush the life from him, crush until his bones gave to the tremendous pressure, until only broken pulp remained within a sausage like thing that would slip between the distended jaws of the serpent.

It was upon this sight that Stimbol and Tarzan came simultaneously— Stimbol stumbling awkwardly through the underbrush, Tarzan of the Apes, demi-god of the forest, swinging gracefully through the foliage of the middle terraces.

They arrived simultaneously but Tarzan was the only one of the party whose presence was unsuspected by the others, for, as always, he had moved silently and with the utmost wariness

because of the unknown nature of the conditions he might discover.

As he looked down upon the scene below his quick eye and his knowledge of the jungle revealed at a glance the full story of the tragedy that had overtaken Bolgani, and then he saw Stimbol raise his rifle, intent upon bagging two royal specimens with a single shot.

In the heart of Tarzan was no great love for Bolgani the gorilla. Since childhood the shaggy, giant man-beast had been the natural foe of the ape-man. His first mortal combat had been with Bolgani. For years he had feared him, or rather avoided him through caution, for of fear Tarzan was ignorant; and since he had emerged from childhood he had

continued to avoid Bolgani for the simple reason that his own people, the great apes, avoided him.

But now when he saw the huge brute beset by two of the natural enemies of both the Mangani and the Bolgani there flared within his breast a sudden loyalty that burned away the personal prejudices of a lifetime.

He was directly above Stimbol, and with such celerity do the mind and muscles of the ape-man coordinate that even as the American raised his weapon to his shoulder Tarzan had dropped upon his back, felling him to the earth; and before Stimbol could discover what had happened to him, long before he could stumble, cursing, to his feet, Tarzan, who

had been unarmed, had snatched the hunter's knife from its scabbard and leaped full upon the writhing, struggling mass of python and gorilla. Stimbol came to his feet ready to kill but what he saw before him temporarily drove the desire for vengeance from his mind.

Naked but for a loin cloth, bronzed, black-haired, a giant white man battled with the dread python; and as Stimbol watched he shuddered as he became aware that the low, beast-like growls he heard came not alone from the savage lips of the gorilla but from the throat of the god-like man-thing that fought for him.

Steel fingers encircled the python just back of its head, while those of the free

hand drove Stimbol's hunting knife again and again into the coiling, writhing body of the serpent. With the projection of a new and more menacing enemy into the battle, Histah was forced partially to release his hold upon Bolgani with, at first, the intention of including Tarzan in the same embrace that be might crush them both at once; but soon he discovered that the hairless man-thing constituted a distinct menace to his life that would necessitate his undivided attention, and so he quickly uncoiled from about Bolgani and in a frenzy of rage and pain that whipped his great length into a lashing fury of destruction he sought to encircle the ape-man; but wheresoever his coils approached, the

keen knife bit deep into tortured flesh.

Bolgani, the spark of life all but crushed from him, lay gasping upon the ground, unable to come to the aid of his preserver, while Stimbol, goggle-eyed with awe and terror, kept at a safe distance, momentarily forgetful both of his lust for trophies and his bent for revenge.

Thus was Tarzan pitted, single-handed, against one of the mightiest of Nature's creations in a duel to the death, the result of which seemed to the watching American already a foregone conclusion, for what man born of woman could hope, unaided, to escape from the embrace of the deadly coils of a python?

Already Histah had encircled the

torso and one leg of the ape- man, but his powers of constriction, lessened by the frightful wounds he had received, had as yet been unable to crush his adversary into helplessness, and Tarzan was now concentrating his attention and the heavy blade of the hunting knife upon a single portion of the weakening body in an attempt to cut Histah in two.

Man and serpent were red with blood; and crimson were the grasses and the brush for yards in all directions as, with a final effort, Histah closed his giant coils spasmodically about his victim at the instant that Tarzan with a mighty upward heavy lunge cut through the vertebrae of the great snake.

Lashing and writhing, the nether

portion, headless, flopped aside while the ape-man, still fighting with what remained, exerting his superhuman strength to its ultimate utmost, slowly forced the coils from about his body and cast the dying Histah from him. Then, without a glance at Stimbol, be turned to Bolgani.

"You are hurt to death?" he asked in the language of the great apes.

"No," replied the gorilla. "I am Bolgani! I kill, Tarmangani!"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," said the ape-man. "I saved you from Histah."

"You did not come to kill Bolgani?" inquired the gorilla.

"No. Let us be friends."

Bolgani frowned in an effort to concentrate upon this remarkable problem. Presently he spoke. "We will be friends," he said. "The Tarmangani behind you will kill us both with his thunder stick. Let us kill him first." Painfully he staggered to his feet.

"No," remonstrated Tarzan. "I will send the Tarmangani away."

"You? He will not go."

"I am Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle," replied the ape-man. "The word of Tarzan is law in the jungle."

Stimbol, who bad been watching, was under the impression that the man and the beast were growling at one another and that a new duel impended. Had he guessed the truth and suspicioned that

they considered him a common enemy he would have felt far less at ease. Now, his rifle regained, he started toward Tarzan just as the latter turned to address him.

"Stand to one side, young fellow," said Stimbol, "while I finish that gorilla. After the experience you just had with the snake, I doubt if you want that fellow to jump you, too." The American was none too sure of what the attitude of the white giant might be, for all too fresh in his mind was the startling and disconcerting manner of the wild man's introduction; but he felt safe because he held a rifle, while the other was unarmed, and he guessed that the giant might be only too glad to be saved from

the attentions of the gorilla, which, from Stimbol's imagined knowledge of such beasts, appeared to him to be quite evidently threatening.

Tarzan halted directly between Bolgani and the hunter and eyed the latter appraisingly for a moment. "Lower your rifle," he said, presently. "You are not going to shoot the gorilla."

"The hell I'm not!" ejaculated Stimbol. "What do you suppose I've been chasing him through the jungle for?"

"Under a misapprehension," replied Tarzan.

"What misapprehension?" demanded Stimbol.

"That you were going to shoot him.

You are not."

"Say, young man, do you know who I am?" demanded Stimbol.

"I am not interested," replied Tarzan coldly.

"Well you'd better be. I'm Wilbur Stimbol of Stimbol and Company, brokers, New York!" That was a name to conjure with—in New York. Even in Paris and London it had opened many a door, bent many a knee. Seldom had it failed the purpose of this purse-arrogant man.

"What are you doing in my country?" demanded the ape-man, ignoring Stimbol's egotistical statement of his identity.

"Your country? Who the hell are

you?"

Tarzan turned toward the two blacks who had been standing a little in the rear of Stimbol and to one side. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said to them in their own dialect. "What is this man doing in my country? How many are there in his party—how many white men?"

"Big Bwana," replied one of the men with sincere deference, "we knew that you were Tarzan of the Apes when we saw you swing from the trees and slay the great snake. There is no other in all the jungle who could do that. This white man is a bad master. There is one other white man with him. The other is kind. They came to hunt Simba the lion and other big game. They have had no luck.

Tomorrow they turn back."

"Where is their camp?" demanded Tarzan.

The black who had spoken pointed. "It is not far," he said.

The ape-man turned to Stimbol. "Go back to your camp," he said. "I shall come there later this evening and talk with you and your companion. In the meantime hunt no more except for food in Tarzan's country."

There was something in the voice and manner of the stranger that had finally gone through Stimbol's thick sensibilities and impressed him with a species of awe—a thing he had scarcely ever experienced in the past except in the presence of wealth that was grossly

superior to his own. He did not reply. He just stood and watched the bronzed giant turn to the gorilla. He heard them growl at one another for a moment and then, to his vast surprise, he saw them move off through the jungle together, shoulder to shoulder. As the foliage closed about them he removed his helmet and wiped the sweat from his forehead with a silken handkerchief as he stood staring at the green branches that had parted to receive this strangely assorted pair.

Finally he turned to his men with an oath. "A whole day wasted!" he complained. "Who is this fellow? You seemed to know him."

"He is Tarzan," replied one of the

blacks.

"Tarzan? Never heard of him," snapped Stimbol.

"All who know the jungle, know Tarzan."

"Humph!" sneered Stimbol. "No lousy wild man is going to tell Wilbur Stimbol where he can hunt and where he can't."

"Master," said the black who had first spoken, "the word of Tarzan is the law of the jungle. Do not offend him."

"I'm not paying you damn fools for advice," snapped Stimbol. "If I say hunt, we hunt, and don't you forget it." But on their return to camp they saw no game, or at least Stimbol saw none. What the blacks saw was their own affair.

5. THE TARMANGANI

During Stimbol's absence from camp Blake had been occupied in dividing the food and equipment into two equal parts which were arranged for Stimbol's inspection and approval; but the division of the porters and *askari* he had left until the other's return, and was writing in his diary when the hunting party entered the camp.

He could see at a glance that Stimbol was in bad humor, but as that was the older man's usual state of temper it caused Blake no particular anxiety, but rather gave him cause for added relief that on the morrow he would be rid of his ill-natured companion for good.

Blake was more concerned, however,

by the sullen demeanor of the *askari* who had accompanied Stimbol for it meant to the younger man that his companion had found some new occasion for bullying, abusing or insulting them, and the difficulty of dividing the safari thus increased. Blake had felt from the moment that he had definitely reached the decision to separate from Stimbol that one of the greatest obstacles they would have to overcome to carry out the plan would be to find sufficient men willing to submit themselves to Stimbol's ideas of discipline, properly to transport his luggage and provisions and guard them and him.

As Stimbol passed and saw the two

piles of equipment the frown upon his face deepened. "I see you've got the stuff laid out," he remarked, as he halted before Blake.

"Yes, I wanted you to look it over and see that it is satisfactorily divided before I have it packed."

"I don't want to be bothered with it," replied the other. "I know you wouldn't take any advantage of me on the division."

"Thanks," replied Blake.

"How about the porters?"

"That's not going to be so easy. You know you haven't treated them very well and there will not be many of them anxious to return with you."

"There's where you're dead wrong, Blake. The trouble with you is that you don't know anything about natives. You're too easy with 'em. They haven't any respect for you, and the man they don't respect they don't like. They know that a fellow who beats 'em is their master, and they know that a master is going to look after them. They wouldn't want to trust themselves on a long trek with you. You divided the junk, now let me handle the men—that's more in my line—and I'll see that you get a square deal and a good, safe bunch, and I'll put the fear of God into 'em so they won't dare be anything but loyal to you."

"Just how do you propose selecting the men?" asked Blake.

"Well, in the first place I'd like you to have those men who may wish to accompany you—I'll grant there are a few—so well just have 'em all up, explain that we are separating, and I'll tell all those who wish to return with your safari to step forward, then I'll choose some good men from what are left and make up enough that way to complete your quota— see? That's fair enough, isn't it?"

"It's quite fair," agreed Blake. He was hoping that the plan would work out as easily as Stimbol appeared to believe that it would, but he was far from believing and so he thought it best to suggest an alternative that he was confident would have to be resorted to

in the end. "In the event that one of us has difficulty in securing the requisite number of volunteers," he said, "I believe that we can enlist the necessary men by offering a bonus to be paid upon safe arrival at railhead. If I am short of men I shall be willing to do so."

"Not a bad idea if you're afraid you can't hold 'em together after I leave you," said Stimbol. "It will be an added factor of safety for you, too; but as for me my men will live up to their original agreement or there'll be some mighty sick porters in these parts. What say we have 'em up and find out just how much of a job we've got on our hands?" He glanced about until his eyes fell on a head man. "Here, you!" he called.

"Come here and make it snappy."

The black approached and stopped before the two white men. "You called me, Bwana?" he asked.

"Gather up every one in camp," directed Stimbol. "Have them up here in five minutes for a palaver—every last man-jack of them."

"Yes, Bwana."

As the head man withdrew Stimbol turned to Blake. "Any stranger in camp today?" he asked.

"No, why?"

"Ran across a wild man while I was hunting," replied Stimbol. "He ordered me out of the jungle. What do you know about that?" and Stimbol laughed.

"A wild man?"

"Yes. Some crazy nut I suppose. The *askari* seemed to know about him."

"Who is he?"

"Calls himself Tarzan."

Blake elevated his brows. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "You have met Tarzan of the Apes and he has ordered you out of the jungle?"

"You've heard of him?"

"Certainly, and if he ever orders me out of his jungle, I'll go."

"*You* would, but not Wilbur Stimbol."

"Why did he order you out?" asked Blake.

"He just ordered me out, that's all. Wouldn't let me shoot a gorilla I'd been

stalking. The fellow saved the gorilla from a python, killed the python, ordered me out of the jungle, said he'd visit us in camp later and walked away with the gorilla like they were old pals. I never saw anything like it, but it doesn't make any difference to me who or what he thinks he is, I know who and what I am and it's going to take more than a half-wit to scare me out of this country till I'm good and ready to go."

"So you think Tarzan of the Apes is a half-wit?"

"I think anyone's a half-wit who'd run about this jungle naked and unarmed."

"You'll find he's not a half-wit, Stimbol; and unless you want to get in more trouble than you ever imagined

existed, you'll do just as Tarzan of the Apes tells you to do."

"What do you know about him? Have you ever seen him?"

"No," replied Blake. "But I have heard a lot about him from our men. He's as much a part of this locality as the jungle, or the lions. Very few, if any, of our men have seen him, but he has the same hold upon their imaginations and superstitions as any of their demons, and they are even more fearful of incurring his displeasure. If they think Tarzan has it in for us we're out of luck."

"Well, all I've got to say is that if this monkey-man knows when he's well off he'll not come butting into the affairs of Wilbur Stimbol."

"And he's coming to visit us, is he?" said Blake. "Well, I certainly want to see him. I've heard of little else since we struck his country."

"It's funny I never heard of him," said Stimbol.

"You never talk with the men," Blake reminded him.

"Gad, it seems as though I'm doing nothing but talk to them," grumbled Stimbol.

"I said, talk *with* them."

"I don't chum with porters," sneered Stimbol.

Blake grinned.

"Here are the men," said Stimbol. He turned toward the waiting porters

and *askari* and cleared his throat. "Mr. Blake and I are going to separate," he announced. "Everything has been divided. I am going to hunt a little farther to the west, make a circle toward the south and return to the coast by a new route. I do not know what Mr. Blake's plans are, but he is going to get half the porters and half the *askari*, and I want to tell you right now that there isn't going to be any funny business about it. Half of you are going with Mr. Blake whether you like it or not."

He paused, impressively, to let the full weight of his pronouncement sink home. "As usual," he continued, "I wish to keep everyone contented and happy, so I'm going to give you who may want

to go with Mr. Blake an opportunity to do so. Now listen! The packs over on that side are Mr. Blake's; those on this side are mine. All those who are willing to accompany Mr. Blake go over on that side!"

There was a moment's hesitation upon the part of the men and then some of them moved quietly over among Blake's packs. Others followed as their understandings slowly grasped the meaning of Stimbol's words until all of the men stood upon Blake's side.

Stimbol turned to Blake with a laugh and a shake of his head. "Gad!" he exclaimed. "Did you ever see such a dumb bunch? No one could have explained the thing more simply than I

and yet look at 'em! Not one of them understood me!"

"Are you quite sure of that, Stimbol?" inquired Blake.

Stimbol did not immediately grasp the insinuation. When he did he scowled. "Don't be a fool," he snapped. "Of course they misunderstood me." He turned angrily toward the men. "You thick- skulled, black idiots! Can't you understand anything?" he demanded. "I did not say that you all had to go with Mr. Blake—only those who wished to. Now the rest of you—those who wish to accompany me—get back over here on this side with my packs, and step lively!"

No one moved in the direction of

Stimbol's packs. The man flushed.

"This is mutiny!" he stormed. "Whoever is at the bottom of this is going to suffer. Come here, you!" He motioned to a head man. "Who put you fellows up to this? Has Mr. Blake been telling you what to do?"

"Don't be a fool, Stimbol," said Blake. "No one has influenced the men and there is no mutiny. The plan was yours. The men have done just what you told them to. If it had not been for your insufferable egotism you would have known precisely what the outcome would be. These black men are human beings. In some respects they are extremely sensitive human beings, and in many ways they are like children. You

strike them, you curse them, you insult them and they will fear you and hate you. You have done all these things to them and they do fear you and hate you. You have sowed and now you are reaping. I hope to God that it will teach you a lesson. There is just one way to get your men and that is to offer them a big bonus. Are you willing to do that?"

Stimbol, his self assurance momentarily shaken at last, wilted in the face of the realization that Blake was right. He looked about helplessly for a moment. The blacks, sullen-faced, stood there like dumb beasts, staring at him. In all those eyes there was no single friendly glance. He turned back to Blake. "See what you can do with them," he

said.

Blake faced the men. "It will be necessary for half of you to accompany Mr. Stimbol back to the coast," he said. "He will pay double wages to all those who go with him, provided that you serve him loyally. Talk it over among yourselves and send word to us later by your head man. That is all. You may go."

The balance of the afternoon passed, the two white men keeping to their respective tents; the blacks gathered in groups, whispering. Blake and Stimbol no longer messed together, but after the evening meal each appeared with his pipe to await the report of the head men. After half an hour Blake sent his boy to summon them and presently they came

and stood before the young man.

"Well, have the men decided who will accompany Mr. Stimbol?" he asked.

"No one will accompany the old bwana," replied their spokesman. "All will go with the young bwana."

"But Mr. Stimbol will pay them well," Blake reminded, "and half of you must go with him."

The black shook his head. "He could not make the pay big enough," he said. "No boy will go with him."

"You agreed to come out with us and return with us," said Blake. "You must fulfill your agreement."

"We agreed to come out with both of you and return with both of you. There

was nothing said about returning separately. We will live up to our agreement and the old bwana may return in safety with the young bwana." There was finality in the tone of the spokesman.

Blake thought for a moment before replying. "You may go," he said. "I will talk with you again in the morning."

The blacks had departed but a moment when the figure of a man appeared suddenly out of the darkness into the light of the camp fire.

"Who the—oh, it's you is it?" exclaimed Stimbol. "Here's the wild man, Blake."

The young American turned and surveyed the figure of the bronze giant

who was standing just within the circle of the firelight. He noted the clean cut features, the quiet dignity, the majestic mien and smiled inwardly at recollection of Stimbol's description of this god-like creature— half-wit!

"So you are Tarzan of the Apes?" he said.

Tarzan inclined his head. "And you?" he asked.

"I am Jim Blake of New York," replied the American.

"Hunting of course?"

"With a camera."

"Your companion was using a rifle," Tarzan reminded him.

"I am not responsible for his acts. I

cannot control them," replied Blake.

"Nor anyone else," snapped Stimbol.

Tarzan permitted his gaze to move to Stimbol for an instant, but ignored his boast.

"I overheard the conversation between you and the head men," he said, addressing Blake. "Some of your blacks had already told me something about your companion, and twice today I have had an opportunity to form an estimate of my own from personal observation, so I assume that you are separating because you cannot agree. Am I right?"

"Yes," acknowledged Blake.

"And after you separate—what are your plans?"

"I intend to push in a little farther west and then swing—" commenced Stimbol.

"I was speaking to Blake," interrupted Tarzan; "my plans concerning you are already made."

"Well, who the—"

"Silence!" admonished the ape-man. "Go ahead, Blake!"

"We have not had much luck so far," replied Blake, "principally because we never can agree on methods. The result is that I have scarcely a single decent wild animal study. I had planned to go north a way in search of lion pictures. I dislike going back without anything to show for the time and money I have put into the expedition, but now that the men

have refused to accompany us separately there is nothing for it but to return to the coast by the shortest route."

"You two don't seem to be taking me into consideration at all," grumbled Stimbol. "I've got as much money and time in this trip as Blake. You forget that I'm here to hunt, and what's more I'm going to hunt and I'm not going straight back to the coast by a damned sight, monkey-man or no monkey-man."

Again Tarzan ignored Stimbol. "Get ready to move out about an hour after sunrise," he said to Blake. "There will be no trouble about dividing the safari. I shall be here to attend to that and give you your final instructions," and as he spoke he turned and disappeared in the

darkness.

6. ARA THE LIGHTNING

Before dawn the camp was astir and by the appointed hour the packs were made and all was in readiness. The porters loitered, awaiting the word that would start the safari upon its eastward journey toward the coast. Blake and Stimbol smoked in silence. The foliage of a nearby tree moved to the swaying of a branch and Tarzan of the Apes dropped lightly into the camp. Exclamations of surprise broke from the lips of the Negroes—surprise clearly tinged with terror. The ape-man turned toward them and addressed them in their own dialect.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said, "Lord of the Jungle. You have brought white men into my country to kill my

people. I am displeased. Those of you who wish to live to return to your villages and your families will listen well and do as Tarzan commands.

"You," he pointed at the chief head man, "shall accompany the younger white man whom I will permit to make pictures in my country where and when he will. Select half the men of the safari to accompany the young bwana."

"And you," he addressed another head man, "take those men that remain and escort the older bwana to railhead in the most direct route and without delay. He is not permitted to hunt and there will be no killing except for food or self-defense. Do not fail me. Remember always that Tarzan watches and Tarzan

never forgets."

He turned then to the white men. "Blake," he said, "the arrangements are made. You may leave when you please, with your own safari, and go where you please. The question of hunting is left to your own discretion—you are the guest of Tarzan."

"And you," he addressed Stimbol, "will be taken directly out of the country by the shortest route. You will be permitted to carry firearms for use in self-defense. If you abuse this permission they will be taken away from you. Do not hunt, even for food—your head man will attend to that."

"Now just hold your horses," blustered Stimbol. "If you think I'm going

to put up with any such high-handed interference with my rights as an American citizen you're very much mistaken. Why I could buy and sell you and your damned jungle forty times and not know that I'd spent a cent. For God's sake, Blake, tell this poor fool who I am before he gets himself into a lot of trouble."

Tarzan turned to the head man he had selected for Stimbol. "You may up-load and march," he said. "If this white man does not follow you, leave him behind. Take good care of him if he obeys me and deliver him safely at railhead. Obey his orders if they do not conflict with those that I have given you. Go!"

A moment later Stimbol's safari was

preparing to depart and, at Tarzan's request, Blake's too was moving out of camp. Stimbol swore and threatened, but his men, sullenly ignoring him, filed off into the jungle toward the east Tarzan had departed, swinging into the trees and disappearing among the foliage, and at last Stimbol stood alone in the deserted camp.

Thwarted, humiliated, almost frothing with rage he ran after his men, screaming commands and threats that were ignored. Later in the day, sullen and silent, he marched near the head of the long file of porters and *askari*, convinced at last that the power of the ape-man was greater than his; but in his heart burned resentment and in his mind rioted plans

for vengeance—plans that he knew were futile.

Tarzan, wishing to assure himself that his instructions were being carried out, had swung far ahead and was waiting in the crotch of a tree that overhung the trail along which Stimbol must pass. In the distance he could hear the sounds that arose from the marching safari. Along the trail from the opposite direction something was approaching. The ape-man could not see it but he knew what it was. Above the tree tops black clouds rolled low, but no air stirred in the jungle.

Along the trail came a great, shaggy, black man-thing. Tarzan of the Apes hailed it as it came in sight of his

arboreal perch.

"Bolgani!" he called in low tones.

The gorilla stopped. He stood erect upon his hind feet and looked about.

"I am Tarzan," said the ape-man.

Bolgani grunted. "I am Bolgani," he replied.

"The Tarmangani comes," warned Tarzan.

"I kill!" growled Bolgani.

"Let the Tarmangani pass," said Tarzan. "He and his people have many thunder sticks. I have sent this Tarmangani out of the jungle. Let him pass. Go a little way from the trail—the stupid Gomangani and the Tarmangani, who is stupider, will pass by without

knowing that Tarzan and Bolgani are near."

From the darkening sky distant thunder boomed and the two beasts looked upward toward the broad field of Nature's powers, more savage and destructive than their own.

"Pand the thunder hunts in the sky," remarked the ape-man.

"Hunts for Usha the wind," said Bolgani.

"Presently we shall hear Usha fleeing through the trees to escape." Tarzan viewed the lowering, black clouds. "Even Kudu the sun fears Pand, hiding his face when Pand hunts."

Ara the lightning shot through the sky. To the two beasts it was a bolt from

Pand's bow and the great drops of rain that commenced to fall shortly after was Meeta, the blood of Usha the wind, pouring from many a wound.

The jungle bent to a great pressure but as yet there was no other noise than the rolling thunder. The trees whipped back and Usha tore through the forest. The darkness increased. The rain fell in great masses. Leaves and branches hurtled through the air, trees crashed amongst their fellows. With deafening roars the elements unleashed their pent anger. The beasts cowered beneath the one awe inspiring power that they acknowledged as supreme.

Tarzan crouched in the crotch of a great tree with his shoulders arched

against the beating rain. Just off the trail Bolgani squatted in drenched and bedraggled misery. They waited. There was nothing else that they could do.

Above them the storm broke again with maniacal fury. The thunder crashed with deafening reverberation. There was a blinding flash of light and the branch upon which Tarzan squatted sagged and hurtled to the trail beneath.

Stunned, the ape-man lay where he had fallen, the great branch partially across his body.

As quickly as it had come, the storm departed. Kudu the sun burst through the clouds. Bolgani, dejected and still terrified, remained where he had squatted, motionless and silent Bolgani

had no desire to attract the attention of Pand the thunder.

Soaked with water, cold, furious, Stimbol slopped along the slippery, muddy trail. He did not know that his safari was some little distance behind him, for he had forged ahead during the storm while they had taken refuge beneath the trees.

At a turn in the trail he came suddenly upon a fallen branch that blocked the way. At first he did not see the body of the man lying beneath it, but when he did he recognized it instantly and a new hope sprang to life within his breast. With Tarzan dead he could be free to do as he pleased; but was the ape-man dead?

Stimbol ran forward and, kneeling, placed an ear to the breast of the prostrate figure. An expression of disappointment crossed his face—Tarzan was not dead. The expression upon Stimbol's face changed—a cunning look came into his eyes as he glanced back down the trail. His men were not in sight! He looked quickly about him. He was alone with the unconscious author of his humiliation!

He thought he was alone. He did not see the shaggy figure that had silently arisen as the sound of Stimbol's approach had come to its sensitive ears and was now peering at him through the foliage—peering at him and at the silent figure of the ape-man.

Stimbol drew his hunting knife from its scabbard. He could clip its point into the wild man's heart and run back down the trail. His men would find him waiting for them. Later they would come upon the dead Tarzan, but they would not guess how he had met his end.

The ape-man moved—consciousness was returning. Stimbol realized that he must act quickly, and at the same instant a great hairy arm reached out through the foliage and a mighty hand closed upon his shoulder. With a screaming curse he turned to look into the hideous face of Bolgani. He tried to strike at the shaggy breast of his antagonist with his hunting knife, but the puny weapon was torn from his grasp and hurled into the

bushes.

The great yellow fangs were bared against Stimbol's throat as Tarzan opened his eyes.

"Kreeg-ah!" cried the ape-man in warning.

Bolgani paused and looked at his fellow beast.

"Let him go," said Tarzan.

"The Tarmangani would have killed Tarzan," explained the gorilla. "Bolgani stopped him. Bolgani kill!" He growled horribly.

"No!" snapped Tarzan. "Free the Tarmangani!"

The gorilla released his grasp upon Stimbol just as the first of the hunter's

men came in sight of them, and as Bolgani saw the blacks and how numerous they were his nervousness and irritability increased.

"Take to the jungle, Bolgani," said Tarzan. "Tarzan will take care of this Tarmangani and the Gomangani."

With a parting growl the gorilla merged with the foliage and the shadows of the jungle as Tarzan of the Apes faced Stimbol and his boys.

"You had a close call then, Stimbol," said the ape-man. "It is fortunate for you that you didn't succeed in killing me. I was here for two reasons. One was to see that you obeyed my instructions and the other to protect you from your men. I did not like the way they eyed you in

camp this morning. It would not be a difficult thing to lose you in the jungle, you know, and that would put a period to you as surely as poison or a knife. I felt a certain responsibility for you because you are a white man, but you have just now released me from whatever obligation racial ties may have influenced me to acknowledge.

"I shall not kill you, Stimbol, as your deserve; but from now on you may reach the coast on your own, and you will doubtless discover that one cannot make too many friends in the jungle or afford a single unnecessary enemy." He wheeled upon Stimbol's black boys. "Tarzan of the Apes goes his way. You will not see him again, perhaps. Do your duty by this

white man as long as he obeys the word of Tarzan, *but see that he does not hunt*!"

With this final admonition the ape-man swung into the lower branches and was gone.

When Stimbol, after repeatedly questioning his men, discovered that Tarzan had practically assured them that they would see no more of him, he regained much of his former assurance and egotistical bluster. Once more he was the leader of men, shouting at the blacks in a loud tone, cursing them, ridiculing them. He thought that it impressed them with his greatness. He believed that they were simple people whom he could deceive into thinking that

he was not afraid of Tarzan, and by flaunting Tarzan's commands win their respect. Now that Tarzan had promised not to return Stimbol felt safer in ignoring his wishes, and so it befell that just before they reached a camping ground Stimbol came upon an antelope and without an instant's hesitation fired and killed it.

It was a sullen camp that Stimbol made that night. The men gathered in groups and whispered. "He has shot an antelope and Tarzan will be angry with us," said one.

"He will punish us," said a head man.

"The bwana is a bad man," said another. "I wish he was dead."

"We may not kill him. Tarzan has said

that."

"If we leave him in the jungle he will die."

"Tarzan told us to do our duty."

"He said to do it as long as the bad bwana obeyed the commands of Tarzan."

"He has disobeyed them."

"Then we may leave him."

Stimbol, exhausted by the long march, slept like a log. When he awoke the sun was high. He shouted for his boy. There was no response. Again he shouted and louder, adding an oath. No one came. There was no sound in camp.

"The lazy swine," he grumbled. "They'll step a little livelier when I get out there."

He arose and dressed, but as he was dressing the silence of the camp came to impress him as something almost menacing, so that he hastened to be through and out of the tent As he stepped into the open the truth was revealed at almost the first quick glance about. Not a human being was in sight and all but one of the packs containing provisions were gone. He had been deserted in the heart of Africa!

His first impulse was to seize his rifle and start after the blacks, but second thought impressed him with the danger of such procedure and convinced him that the last thing he should do would be to place himself again in the power of these men who bad demonstrated that they felt

no compunction in abandoning him to almost certain death. If they wanted to be rid of him they could easily find even a quicker means if he returned and forced himself upon them again.

There was but a single alternative and that was to find Blake and remain with him. He knew that Blake would not abandon him to death in the jungle.

The blacks had not left him without provisions, nor had they taken his rifle or ammunition, but the difficulty that now confronted Stimbol was largely in the matter of transportation for his food. There was plenty of it to last many days, but he knew that he could not carry it through the jungle together with his rifle and ammunition. To remain where the

food was would be equally futile. Blake was returning to the coast by another route; the ape-man had said that he would not follow Stimbol's safari farther; it might be years, therefore, before another human being chanced along this little used game trail.

He knew that he and Blake were now separated by about two marches and if he traveled light and Blake did not march too rapidly he might hope to overtake him inside a week. Perhaps Blake would find good camera hunting soon and make a permanent camp. In that case Stimbol would find him even more quickly.

He felt better when he had definitely decided upon a plan of action, and after

a good breakfast he made up a small pack of provisions, enough to last him a week, filled his belts and pockets with ammunition and started off along the back trail.

It was easy going for the trail of the day before was plain and this was the third time that Stimbol had been over it, so he had no difficulty in reaching the camp at which he and Blake had parted company.

As he entered the little clearing early in the afternoon he determined to keep on and cover as much ground on Blake's trail as he could before dark, but for a few minutes he would rest. *As* he sat down with his back against the bole of a tree he did not notice a movement of the

tops of a clump of jungle grasses a few yards distant, and if he had he would, doubtless, have attached no importance to the matter.

Finishing a cigarette Stimbol arose, rearranged his pack and started off in the direction Blake's men had taken early the preceding morning; but he had covered but a yard or two when he was, brought to a sudden halt by an ominous growl that arose from a little clump of jungle grasses close in front of him. Almost simultaneously the fringing grasses parted and there appeared in the opening the head of a great black-maned lion.

With a scream of fear, Stimbol dropped his pack, threw aside his rifle and started on a run for the tree beneath

which he had been sitting. The lion, itself somewhat surprised, stood for an instant watching him and then started in pursuit at an easy lope.

Stimbol, casting an affrighted glance rearward, was horrified—the lion seemed so close and the tree so far away. If distance lends enchantment to the view, proximity may also at times have its advantage. In this instance it served to accelerate the speed of the fleeing man to a most surprising degree, and though he was no longer young he clawed his way to the lower branches of the tree with speed, if not with grace, that would have done justice to a trained athlete.

Nor was he an instant too speedy.

Numa's raking talons touched his boot and sent him swarming up among the higher branches, where he clung weak and panting looking down into the snarling visage of the carnivore.

For a moment Numa growled up at him and then, with a coughing grunt, turned away and strode majestically in the direction of the clump of grasses from which he had emerged. He stopped to sniff at the pack of provisions Stimbol had discarded and, evidently piqued by the man scent clinging to it, cuffed at it angrily. It rolled to one side and Numa stepped back, eyeing it warily, then, with a growl, he leaped upon it and commenced to maul the insensate thing, ripping and tearing until its contents

were scattered about upon the ground. He bit into tins and boxes until scarcely an article remained intact, while Stimbol crouched in the tree and watched the destruction of his provisions, utterly helpless to interfere.

A dozen times he cursed himself for having thrown away his rifle and even more frequently he vowed vengeance. He consoled himself, however, with the realization that Blake could not be far away and that with Blake there were ample provisions which could be augmented by trading and hunting. When the lion left he would descend and follow Blake's trail.

Numa, tired of the contents of the pack, resumed his way toward the long

grass, but again his attention was distracted—this time by the thunder stick of the Tarmangani. The lion smelted of the discarded rifle, pawed it and finally picked it up between his jaws. Stimbol looked on, horrified. What if the beast damaged the weapon? He would be left without means of defense or for obtaining food!

"Drop it!" shouted Stimbol. "Drop it!"

Numa, ignoring the ravings of the despised man-thing, strode into his lair, carrying the rifle with him.

That afternoon and night spelled an eternity of terror for Wilbur Stimbol. While daylight lasted the lion remained in the nearby patch of grass effectually deterring the unhappy man from

continuing his search for Blake's camp, and after night fell no urge whatever could have induced Stimbol to descend to the paralyzing terrors of the jungle night even had he known that the lion had departed and no sounds had apprised him of the near presence of danger; but sounds did apprise him. From shortly after dark until nearly dawn a perfect bedlam of howls and growls and coughs and grunts and barks arose from directly beneath him as there had been held a convention of all the horrid beasts of the jungle at the foot of the tree that seemed at best an extremely insecure sanctuary.

When morning came the jungle lay silent and peaceful about him and only torn canvas and empty cans bore mute

evidence to the feast of the hyenas that had passed into jungle history. Numa had departed leaving the remains of the kill upon which he had lain as the pièce de résistance of the hyenian banquet for which Stimbol had furnished the hors d'oeuvres.

Stimbol, trembling, descended. Through the jungle, wild-eyed, startled by every sound, scurried a pitiful figure of broken, terror stricken old age. Few could have recognized in it Wilbur Stimbol of Stimbol and Company, brokers, New York.

7. THE CROSS

The storm that had overtaken Stimbol's safari wrought even greater havoc with the plans of Jim Blake, altering in the instant of a single blinding flash of lightning the course of his entire life.

Accompanied by a single black, who carried his camera and an extra rifle, Blake had struck out from the direct route of his safari in search of lion pictures, there being every indication that the great carnivores might be found in abundance in the district through which they were passing.

It was his intention to parallel the route of his main body and rejoin it in camp in the afternoon. The boy who accompanied him was intelligent and

resourceful, the direction and speed of the marching safari were mutually agreed upon and the responsibility for bringing Blake into camp safely was left entirely to the Negro. Having every confidence in the boy, Blake gave no heed to either time or direction, devoting all his energies to the fascinating occupation of searching for photographic studies.

Shortly after leaving the safari Blake and his companion encountered a herd of seven or eight lions which included a magnificent old male, an old lioness and five or six young, ranging from half to full grown.

At sight of Blake and his companion the lions took off leisurely through rather

open forest and the men followed, awaiting patiently the happy coincidence of time, light and grouping that would give the white man such a picture as he desired.

In the mind of the black man was pictured the route of the safari and its relation to the meanderings of the quarry. He knew how far and in what directions he and his companion were being led from their destination. To have returned to the trail of the safari would have been a simple matter to him, but Blake, depending entirely upon the black, gave no heed either to time or direction.

For two hours they clung doggedly to the spoor, encouraged by occasional glimpses of now one, now several

members of the regal group, but never was the opportunity afforded for a successful shot Then the sky became rapidly overcast by black clouds and a few moments later the storm broke in all the terrific fury that only an Equatorial storm can achieve, and an instant later amidst the deafening roar of thunder and a blinding flash of lightning utter disaster engulfed James Hunter Blake.

How long he lay, stunned by the shock of the bolt that had struck but a few feet from him, he did not know. When he opened his eyes the storm had passed and the sun was shining brightly through the leafy canopy of the forest. Still dazed, uncomprehending the cause or extent of the catastrophe, he raised

himself slowly upon an elbow and looked about him.

One of the first sights that met his eyes aided materially in the rapid recovery of his senses. Less than a hundred feet from him stood a group of lions, seven of them, solemnly regarding him. The characteristics of individual lions differ as greatly from those of their fellows as do the characteristics of individuals of the human race and, even as a human being, a lion may have his moods as well as his personal idiosyncrasies.

These lions that gravely inspected the man-thing had been spared any considerable experience with the human species; they had seen but few men; they

had never been hunted; they were well fed; Blake had done nothing greatly to upset their easily irritated nervous systems. Fortunately for him they were merely curious.

But Blake did not know all this. He knew only that seven lions were standing within a hundred feet of him, that they were not in a cage and that while he had pursued them to obtain photographs, the thing that be most desired at the moment was not his camera but his rifle.

Stealthily, that he might not annoy them, he looked about him for the weapon. To his consternation it was nowhere in sight, nor was his gun bearer with the extra rifle. Where could the boy be? Doubtless, frightened by the lions,

he had decamped. Twenty feet away was a most inviting tree. Blake wondered if the lions would charge the moment that he rose to his feet. He tried to remember all that he had heard about lions and he did recall one fact that applies with almost axiomatic verity to all dangerous animals —if you run from them they will pursue you. To reach the tree it would be necessary to walk almost directly toward the lions.

Blake was in a quandary, and then one of the younger lions moved a few steps nearer! That settled the matter as far as Blake was concerned, for the closer the lions came the shorter his chance of gaining the tree ahead of them in the event that they elected to prevent.

In the midst of a tremendous forest, entirely surrounded by trees, Nature bad chosen to strike him down almost in the center of a natural clearing. There was a good tree a hundred feet away and on the opposite side of the clearing from the lions. Blake stole a longing glance at it and then achieved some rapid mental calculations. If he ran for the farther tree the lions would have to cover two hundred feet while he was covering one hundred, while if he chose the nearer tree, they must come eighty feet while he was going twenty. There seemed, therefore, no doubt as to the greater desirability of the nearer tree which ruled favorite by odds of two to one. Against it, however, loomed the mental

hazard that running straight into the face of seven lions involved.

Jim Blake was sincerely, genuinely and honestly scared; but unless the lions were psychoanalysts they would never have dreamed the truth as he started nonchalantly and slowly toward them—and the tree. The most difficult feat that he had ever accomplished lay in making his legs behave themselves. They wanted to run. So did his feet and his heart and his brain. Only his will held them in leash.

Those were tense moments for Jim Blake—the first half dozen steps he took with seven great lions watching his approach. He saw that they were becoming nervous. The lioness moved

uneasily. The old male growled. A younger male, he who had started forward, lashed his tides with his tail, flattened his head, bared his fangs and stealthily approached.

Blake was almost at the tree when something happened—he never knew what the cause, but inexplicably the lioness turned and bounded away, voicing a low whine, and after her went the other six.

The man leaned against the bole of the tree and fanned himself with his helmet "Whew!" he breathed, "I hope the next lion I see is in the Central Park Zoo."

But even lions were forgotten in the developments that the next few moments revealed after repeated shouts for the

black boy had brought no response and Blake had determined that he must set out in search of him. Nor did he have far to go. On the back track, just inside the clearing, Blake found a few remnants of charred flesh and a blackened and half molten rifle barrel. Of the camera not a vestige remained. The bolt that had bowled Blake over must have squarely struck his gun bearer, killing him instantly, exploding all the ammunition, destroying the camera and ruining the rifle that he had carried.

But what had become of the rifle that had been in Blake's hands? The man searched in all directions, but could not find it and was finally forced to the conclusion that its disappearance could

be attributed only to one of those freakish tricks which severe electrical storms so often play upon helpless and futile humanity.

Frankly aware that he was lost and had not the faintest conception of the direction in which lay the proposed camp of his safari, Blake started blindly off on what he devoutly hoped would prove the right route. It was not. His safari was moving northeast. Blake headed north.

For two days he trudged on through dense forest, sleeping at night among the branches of trees. Once his fitful slumbers were disturbed by the swaying of a branch against which he was braced. As he awoke he felt it sag as to

the weight of some large animal. He looked and saw two fiery eyes gleaming in the dark. Blake knew it to be a leopard as he drew his automatic and fired point blank. With a hideous scream the great cat sprang or fell to the ground. Blake never knew if he hit it. It did not return and there were no signs of it in the morning.

He found food and water in abundance, and upon the morning of the third day he emerged from the forest at the foot of a range of lofty mountains and for the first time in weeks reveled in an unobstructed view of the blue sky and saw the horizon again and all that lay between himself and it. He had not realized that he had been depressed by

the darkness and the crowding pressure of the trees, but now he experienced all the spiritual buoyancy of a released convict long immured from freedom and the light of day. Rescue was no longer problematical, merely a matter of time. He wanted to sing and shout; but he conserved his energies and started toward the mountains. There had been no native villages in the forest and so, he reasoned, as there must be native villages in a well-watered country stocked with game, he would find them upon the mountain slopes.

Topping a rise he saw below him the mouth of a canyon in the bed of which ran a small stream. A village would be built on water.

If he followed the water he would come to the village. Quite easy! He descended to the stream where he was deeply gratified to find that a well-worn path paralleled it. Encouraged by the belief that he would soon encounter natives and believing that he would have no difficulty in enlisting their services in aiding him to relocate his safari, Blake followed the path upward into the canyon.

He had covered something like three miles without having discovered any sign of habitation when, at a turn in the path, he found himself at the foot of a great white cross of enormous proportions. Hewn from limestone, it stood directly in the center of the trail

and towered above him fully sixty feet. Checked and weatherworn, it gave an impression of great antiquity, which was further borne out by the remains of an almost obliterated inscription upon the face of its massive base.

Blake examined the carved letters, but could not decipher their message. The characters appeared of early English origin, but he dismissed such a possibility as too ridiculous to entertain. He knew that he could not be far from the southern boundary of Abyssinia and that the Abyssinians are Christians. Thus he explained the presence of the cross; but he could not explain the suggestion of sinister menace that this lonely, ancient symbol of the crucifix held for

him. Why was it? What was it?

Standing there, tongueless, hoary with age, it seemed to call upon him to stop, to venture not beyond it into the unknown; it warned him back, but not, seemingly, out of a spirit of kindliness and protection, but rather with arrogance and hate.

With a laugh Blake threw off the mood that had seized him and went on; but as he passed the great white monolith he crossed himself, though he was not a Catholic. He wondered what had impelled him to the unfamiliar act, but he could no more explain it than he could the strange and uncanny suggestion of power and personality that seemed to surround the crumbling cross.

Another turn in the path and the trail narrowed where it passed between two huge boulders that might have fallen from the cliff top towering far above. Cliffs closed in closely now in front and upon two sides. Apparently he was close to the canyon's head and yet there was no slightest indication of a village. Yet where did the trail lead? It had an end and a purpose. He would discover the former and, if possible, the latter.

Still under the depressing influence of the cross, Blake passed between the two boulders; and the instant that he had passed them a man stepped out behind him and another in front. They were Negroes, stalwart, fine-featured fellows, and in themselves nothing to arouse

wonder or surprise. Blake had expected to meet Negroes in Africa; but not Negroes wearing elaborately decorated leathern jerkins upon the breasts of which red crosses were emblazoned, close fitting nether garments and sandals held by doeskin thongs, cross gartered half way to their knees; not Negroes wearing close fitting bassinets of leopard skin that fitted their heads closely and reached to below their ears; not Negroes armed with two handed broadswords and elaborately tipped pikes.

Blake was acutely aware of the pike tips as there was one pressing against his belly and another in the small of his back.

"Who are ye?" demanded the Negro that faced Blake.

Had the man addressed him in Greek Blake would have been no more surprised than he was by the incongruity of this archaic form of speech falling from the lips of a twentieth century central African black. He was too dumbfounded for an instant to reply.

"Doubtless the fellow is a Saracen, Paul!" said the black behind Blake, "and understandeth not what thou sayest—a spy, perchance."

"Nay, Peter Wiggs, as my name is Paul Bodkin he is no infidel—that I know of mine own good eyes."

"Whatsoe'er he is it is for thee to fetch him before the captain of the gate who

will question him, Paul Bodkin."

"Natheless there is no hurt in questioning him first, an he will answer."

"Stop thy tongue and take him to the captain," said Peter. "I will abide here and guard the way until thou returnest."

Paul stepped aside and motioned for Blake to precede him. Then he fell in behind and the American did not need to glance back to know that the ornate tip of the pike was ever threateningly ready.

The way lay plain before him and Blake followed the trail toward the cliffs where there presently appeared the black mouth of a tunnel leading straight into the rocky escarpment. Leaning against the sides of a niche just within

the entrance were several torches made of reeds or twigs bound tightly together and dipped in pitch. One of these Paul Bodkin selected, took some tinder from a metal box he carried in a pouch at his side, struck a spark to it with flint and steel; and having thus ignited the tinder and lighted the torch he pushed Blake on again with the tip of his pike and the two entered the tunnel, which the American found to be narrow and winding, well suited to defense. Its floor was worn smooth until the stones of which it was composed shone polished in the flaring of the torch. The sides and roof were black with the soot of countless thousands, perhaps, of torch-lighted passages along this strange way that led

to—what?

8. THE SNAKE STRIKES

Unversed in jungle craft, overwhelmed by the enormity of the catastrophe that had engulfed him, his reasoning faculties numbed by terror, Wilbur Stimbol slunk through the jungle, the fleeing quarry of every terror that imagination could conjure. Matted filth caked the tattered remnants of his clothing that scarce covered the filth of his emaciated body. His once graying hair had turned to white, matching the white stubble of a four days' beard.

He followed a broad and well marked trail along which men and horses, sheep and goats had passed within the week, and with the blindness and ignorance of the city dweller he

thought that he was on the spoor of Blake's safari. Thus it came that he stumbled, exhausted, into the *menzil*of the slow moving Ibn Jad.

Fejjuan, the Galla slave, discovered him and took him at once to the sheikh's *beyt* where Ibn Jad, with his brother, Tollog, and several others were squatting in the *mukaad* sipping coffee.

"By Allah! What strange creature hast thou captured now, Fejjuan?" demanded the sheikh.

"Perhaps a holy man," replied the black, "for he is very poor and without weapons and very dirty—yes, surely he must be a very holy man."

"Who art thou?" demanded Ibn Jad.

"I am lost and starving. Give me

food," begged Stimbol.

But neither understood the language of the other.

"Another *Nasrany*," said Fahd, contemptuously. "A *Frenjy*, perhaps."

"He looks more like one of *el-Engleys*," remarked Tollog.

"Perhaps he is from *Fransa*," suggested Ibn Jad. "Speak to him that vile tongue, Fahd, which thou didst come by among the soldiers in Algeria."

"Who are you, stranger?" demanded Fahd, in French.

"I am an American," replied Stimbol, relieved and delighted to have discovered a medium of communication with the Arabs. "*I* have been lost in the

jungle and I am starving."

"He is from the New World and he has been lost and is starving," translated Fahd.

Ibn Jad directed that food be brought, and as the stranger ate they carried on a conversation through Fahd. Stimbol explained that his men had deserted him and that he would pay well to be taken to the coast. The Beduin had no desire to be further hampered by the presence of a weak old man and was inclined to have Stimbol's throat slit as the easiest solution of the problem, but Fahd, who was impressed by the man's boastings of his great wealth, saw the possibilities of a large reward or ransom and prevailed upon the sheikh to permit Stimbol to

remain among them for a time at least, promising to take him into his own *beyt* and be responsible for him.

"Ibn Jad would have slain you, *Nasrany*," said Fahd to Stimbol later, "but Fahd saved you. Remember that when the time comes for distributing the reward and remember, too, that Ibn Jad will be as ready to kill you tomorrow as he was today and that always your life is in the hands of Fahd. What is it worth?"

"I will make you rich," replied Stimbol.

During the days that followed, Fahd and Stimbol became much better acquainted and with returning strength and a feeling of security Stimbol's old

boastfulness returned. He succeed in impressing the young Beduin with his vast wealth and importance, and so lavish were his promises that Fahd soon commenced to see before him a life of luxury, ease and power; but with growing cupidity and ambition developed an increasing fear that someone might wrest his good fortune from him. Ibn Jad being the most logical and powerful competitor for the favors of the*Nasrany*, Fahd lost no opportunity to impress upon Stimbol that the sheikh was still thirsting for his blood; though, as a matter of fact, Ibn Jad was so little concerned over the affairs of Wilbur Stimbol that he would have forgotten his presence entirely were he not

occasionally reminded of it by seeing the man upon the march or about the camps.

One thing, however, that Fahd accomplished was to acquaint Stimbol with the fact that there was dissension and treachery in the ranks of the Beduins and this he determined to use to his own advantage should necessity demand.

And ever, though slowly, the Arabs drew closer to the fabled Leopard City of Nimmr, and as they marched Zeyd found opportunity to forward his suit for the hand of Ateja the daughter of Sheik Ibn Jad, while Tollog sought by insinuation to advance the claims of Fahd in the eyes of the Sheik. This he did always and only when Fahd might hear as, in reality, his only wish was to

impress upon the young traitor the depth of the latter's obligation to him. When Tollog should become sheikh he would not care who won the hand of Ateja.

But Fahd was not satisfied with the progress that was being made. Jealousy rode him to distraction until he could not look upon Zeyd without thoughts of murder seizing his mind; at last they obsessed him. He schemed continually to rid himself and the world of his more successful rival. He spied upon him and upon Ateja, and at last a plan unfolded itself with opportunity treading upon its heels.

Fahd had noticed that nightly Zeyd absented himself from the gatherings of the men in the*mukaad* of the sheikh's tent

and that when the simple household duties were performed Ateja slipped out into the night. Fahd followed and confirmed what was really too apparent to be dignified by the name of suspicion —Zeyd and Ateja met.

And then one night, Fahd was not at the meeting in the sheikh's *beyt*. Instead he hid near the tent of Zeyd, and when the latter had left to keep his tryst Fahd crept in and seized the matchlock of his rival. It was already loaded and he had but to prime it with powder. Stealthily he crept by back ways through the camp to where Zeyd awaited his light of love and sneaked up behind him.

At a little distance, sitting in his *mukaad* with his friends beneath the

light of paper lanterns, Ibn Jad the sheikh was plainly visible to the two young men standing in the outer darkness. Ateja was still in the women's quarters.

Fahd, standing behind Zeyd, raised the ancient matchlock to his shoulder and aimed—very carefully he aimed, but not at Zeyd. No, for the cunning of Fahd was as the cunning of the fox. Had Zeyd been murdered naught could ever convince Ateja that Fahd was not the murderer. Fahd knew that, and he was equally sure that Ateja would have naught of the slayer of her lover.

Beyond Zeyd was Ibn Jad, but Fahd was not aiming at Ibn Jad either. At whom was he aiming? No one. Not yet was the time ripe to slay the sheikh. First

must they have their hands upon the treasure, the secret of which he alone was supposed to hold.

Fahd aimed at one of the *am'jan* of the sheikh's tent. He aimed with great care and then he pulled the trigger. The prop splintered and broke a foot above the level of Ibn Jad's head, and simultaneously Fahd threw down the musket and leaped upon the startled Zeyd, at the same time crying loudly for help.

Startled by the shot and the cries, men ran from all directions and with them was the sheikh. He found Zeyd being held tightly from behind by Fahd.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Ibn Jad.

"By Allah, Ibn Jad, he would have slain thee!" cried Fahd. "I came upon him just in time, and as he fired I leaped upon his back, else he would have killed you."

"He lies!" cried Zeyd. "The shot came from behind me. If any fired upon Ibn Jad it was Fahd himself."

Ateja, wide-eyed, ran to her lover. "Thou didst not do it, Zeyd; tell me that thou didst not do it."

"As Allah is my God and Mohammed his prophet I did not do it," swore Zeyd.

"I would not have thought it of him," said Ibn Jad.

Cunning, Fahd did not mention the matchlock. Shrewdly he guessed that its evidence would be more potent if

discovered by another than he, and that it would be discovered he was sure. Nor was he wrong. Tollog found it.

"Here," he exclaimed, "is the weapon."

"Let us examine it beneath the light," said Ibn Jad. "It should dispel our doubts more surely than any lying tongue."

As the party moved in the direction of the sheikh's *beyt* Zeyd experienced the relief of one reprieved from death, for he knew that the testimony of the matchlock would exonerate him. It could not be his. He pressed the hand of Ateja, walking at his side.

Beneath the light of the paper lanterns in the *mukaad* Ibn Jad held the weapon beneath his gaze as, with craning necks,

the others pressed about him. A single glance sufficed. With stern visage the sheikh raised his eyes.

"It is Zeyd's," he said.

Ateja gasped and drew away from her lover.

"I did not do it! It is some trick," cried Zeyd.

"Take him away!" commanded Ibn Jad. "See that he is tightly bound."

Ateja rushed to her father and fell upon her knees. "Do not slay him!" she cried. "It could not have been he. I know it was not he."

"Silence, girl!" commanded the sheikh sternly. "Go to thy quarters and remain there!"

They took Zeyd to his own *beyt* and bound him securely, and in the *mukaad* of the sheikh the elders sat in judgment while from behind the curtains of the women's quarters, Ateja listened.

"At dawn, then, he shall be shot!" This was the sentence that Ateja heard passed upon her lover.

Behind his greasy *thorrib* Fahd smiled a crooked smile. In his black house of hair Zeyd struggled with the bonds that held him, for though he had not heard the sentence he was aware of what his fate would be. In the quarters of the harem of the Sheik Ibn Jad the sheikh's daughter lay sleepless and suffering. Her long lashes were wet with

tears but her grief was silent. Wide eyed she waited, listening, and presently her patience was rewarded by the sounds of the deep, regular breathing of Ibn Jad and his wife, Hirfa. They slept.

Ateja stirred. Stealthily she raised the lower edge of the tent cloth beside which lay her sleeping mat and rolled quietly beneath it into the *mukaad*, now deserted. Groping, she found the matchlock of Zeyd where Ibn Jad had left it. She carried also a bundle wrapped in an old*thorrib*, the contents of which she had gathered earlier in the evening when Hirfa, occupied with her duties, had been temporarily absent from the women's quarters.

Ateja emerged from the tent of her

father and crept cautiously along the single, irregular street formed by the pitched tents of the Arabs until she came to the *beyt* of Zeyd. For a moment she paused at the opening, listening, then she entered softly on sandaled feet.

But Zeyd, sleepless, struggling with his bonds, heard her. "Who comes?" he demanded.

"S-s-sh!" cautioned the girl. "It is I, Ateja." She crept to his side.

"Beloved!" he murmured.

Deftly the girl cut the bonds that held his wrists and ankles. "I have brought thee food and thy musket," she told him. "These and freedom I give thee—the rest thou must do thyself. Thy mare stands tethered with the others. Far is Beled el-

Guad, beset with dangers is the way, but night and day will Ateja pray to Allah to guide thee safely. Haste, my loved one!"

Zeyd pressed her tightly to his breast, kissed her and was gone into the night.

9. SIR RICHARD

The floor of the tunnel along which Paul Bodkin conducted Blake inclined ever upwards, and again and again it was broken by flights of steps which carried them always to higher levels. To Blake the way seemed interminable. Even the haunting mystery of the long tunnel failed to overcome the monotony of its unchanging walls that slipped silently into the torch's dim ken for a brief instant and as silently back into the Cimmerian oblivion behind to make place for more wall unvaryingly identical.

But, as there ever is to all things, there was an end to the tunnel. Blake first glimpsed it in a little patch of distant daylight ahead, and presently he

stepped out into the sunlight and looked out across a wide valley that was tree-dotted and beautiful. He found himself standing upon a wide ledge, or shelf, some hundred feet above the base of the mountain through which the tunnel had been cut. There was a sheer drop before him, and to his right the ledge terminated abruptly at a distance of a hundred feet or less. Then he glanced to the left and his eyes went wide in astonishment.

Across the shelf stood a solid wall of masonry flanked at either side by great, round towers pierced by long, narrow embrasures. In the center of the wall was a lofty gateway which was closed by a massive and handsomely wrought portcullis behind which Blake saw two

Negroes standing guard. They were clothed precisely as his captors, but held great battle-axes, the butts of which rested upon the ground.

"What ho, the gate!" shouted Paul Bodkin. "Open to the outer guard and a prisoner!"

Slowly the portcullis rose and Blake and his captor passed beneath. Directly inside the gateway and at the left, built into the hillside, was what was evidently a guardhouse. Before it loitered a score or so of soldiers, uniformed like Paul Bodkin, upon the breast of each the red cross. To a heavy wooden rail gaily caparisoned horses were tethered, their handsome trappings recalling to Blake's memory paintings he had seen of

mounted knights of medieval England.

There was so much of unreality in the strangely garbed blacks, the massive barbican that guarded the way, the trappings of the horses, that Blake was no longer capable of surprise when one of the two doors in the guardhouse opened and there stepped out a handsome young man clad in a hauberk of chain mail over which was a light surcoat of rough stuff, dyed purple. Upon the youth's head fitted a leopard skin bassinet from the lower edge of which depended a camail or gorget of chain mail that entirely surrounded and protected his throat and neck. He was armed only with a heavy sword and a dagger, but against the side of the

guardhouse, near the doorway where he paused to look at Blake, leaned a long lance, and near it was a shield with a red cross emblazoned upon its boss.

"'Od's wounds!" exclaimed the young man. "What hast thou there, varlet?"

"A prisoner, an it please thee, noble lord," replied Paul Bodkin, deferentially.

"A Saracen, of a surety," stated the young man.

"Nay, an I may make so bold, Sir Richard," replied Paul—"but methinks he is no Saracen."

"And why?"

"With mine own eyes I did see him make the sign before the Cross."

"Fetch him hither, lout!"

Bodkin prodded Blake in the rear with his pike, but the American scarce noticed the offense so occupied was his mind by the light of truth that had so suddenly illuminated it. In the instant he had grasped the solution. He laughed inwardly at himself for his denseness. Now he understood everything —and these fellows thought they could put it over on him, did they? Well, they had come near to doing it, all right.

He stepped quickly toward the young man and halted, upon his lips a faintly sarcastic smile. The other eyed him with haughty arrogance.

"Whence comest thou," he asked, "and what doest thou in the Valley of the

Sepulcher, varlet?"

Blake's smile faded—too much was too much. "Cut the comedy, young fellow," he drawled in his slow way. "Where's the director?"

"Director? Forsooth, I know not what thou meanest."

"Yes you don't!" snapped Blake, with fine sarcasm. "But let me tell you right off the bat that no seven-fifty a day extra can pull anything like that with me!"

"'Od's blood, fellow! I ken not the meaning of all the words, but I mislike thy tone. It savors o'er much of insult to fall sweetly upon the ears of Richard Montmorency."

"Be yourself," advised Blake. "If the director isn't handy send for the assistant

director, or the camera man—even the continuity writer may have more sense than you seem to have."

"Be myself? And who thinkest thou I would be other than Richard Montmorency, a noble knight of Nimmr."

Blake shook his head in despair, then he turned to the soldiers who were standing about listening to the conversation. He thought some of them would be grinning at the joke that was being played on him, but he saw only solemn, serious faces.

"Look here," he said, addressing Paul Bodkin, "don't any of you know where the director is?"

"'Director'?" repeated Bodkin, shaking his head. "There is none in

Nimmr thus yclept, nay, nor in all the Valley of the Sepulcher that I wot."

"I'm sorry," said Blake, "the mistake is mine; but if there is no director there must be a keeper. May I see him?"

"Ah, keeper!" cried Bodkin, his face lighting with understanding. "Sir Richard is the keeper."

"My gawd!" exclaimed Blake, turning to the young man. "I beg your pardon, I thought that you were one of the inmates."

"Inmates? Indeed thou speakest a strange tongue and yet withal it hath the flavor of England," replied the young man gravely. "But yon varlet is right —I am indeed this day the Keeper of the Gate."

Blake was commencing to doubt his own sanity, or at least his judgment. Neither the young white man nor any of the Negroes had any of their facial characteristics of mad men. He looked up suddenly at the keeper of the gate.

"I am sorry," he said, flashing one of the frank smiles that was famous amongst his acquaintances. "I have acted like a boor, but I've been under considerable of a nervous strain for a long time, and on top of that I've been lost in the jungle for days without proper or sufficient food.

"I thought that you were trying to play some sort of a joke on me and, well, I wasn't in any mood for jokes when I expected friendship and hospitality

instead.

"Tell me, where am I? What country is this?"

"Thou art close upon the city of Nimmr," replied the young man.

"I suppose this is something of a national holiday or something?" suggested Blake.

"I do not understand thee," replied the young man.

"Why, you're all in a pageant or something, aren't you?"

"'Od's bodikins! the fellow speaks an outlandish tongue! Pageant?"

"Yes, those costumes."

"What is amiss with this apparel? True, 'tis not of any wondrous newness,

but methinks it is at least more fair than thine. At least it well sufficeth the daily service of a knight."

"You don't mean that you dress like this every day?" demanded Blake.

"And why not? But enough of this. I have no wish to further bandy words with thee. Fetch him within, two of thee. And thou, Bodkin, return to the outer guard!" The young man turned and re-entered the building, while two of the soldiers seized Blake, none too gently, and hustled him within.

He found himself in a high-ceiled room with walls of cut stone and great, hand-hewn beams and rafters blackened with age. Upon the stone floor stood a table behind which, upon a bench, the

young man seated himself while Blake was placed facing him with a guard on either hand.

"Thy name," demanded the young man.

"Blake."

"That be all—just Blake?"

"James Hunter Blake."

"What title bearest thou in thine own country?"

"I have no title."

"Ah, thou art not a gentleman, then?"

"I am called one."

"What is thy country?"

"America."

"America! There is no such country, fellow."

"And why not?"

"I never heard of it. What doest thou near the Valley of the Sepulcher? Didst not know 'tis forbidden?"

"I told you I was lost. I didn't know where I was. All I want is to get back to my safari or to the coast."

"That is impossible. We are surrounded by Saracens. For seven hundred and thirty-five years we have been invested by their armies. How camest thou through the enemies' lines? How passed'st thou through his vast army?"

"There isn't any army."

"Givest thou the lie to Richard Montmorency, varlet? An thou wert of gentle blood thou shouldst account to me

that insult upon the field of honor. Methinks thou art some lowborn spy sent hither by the Saracen sultan. 'Twould be well an thou confessed'st all to me, for if I take thee before the Prince he will wrest the truth from thee in ways that are far from pleasant. What say?"

"I have nothing to confess. Take me before the Prince, or whoever your boss is; perhaps he will at least give me food."

"Thou shalt have food here. Never shall it be said that Richard Montmorency turned a hungry man from his doorway Hey! Michel! Michel! Where is the lazy brat? Michel!"

A door opened from an inner apartment to admit a boy, sleepy eyed,

digging a grimy fist into one eye. He was clothed in a short tunic, his legs encased in green tights. In his cap was a feather.

"Sleeping again, eh?" demanded Sir Richard. "Thou lazy knave! Fetch bread and meat for this poor wayfarer and be not until the morrow at it!"

Wide-eyed and rather stupidly, the boy stared at Blake. "A Saracen, master?" he asked.

"What booteth it?" snapped Sir Richard. "Did not our Lord Jesus feed the multitude, nor ask if there were unbelievers among them? Haste, churl! The stranger is of great hunger."

The youth turned and shuffled from the room, wiping his nose upon his sleeve, and Sir Richard's attention came

back to Blake.

"Thou art not ill-favored, fellow," he said. "'Tis a pity that thou art not of noble blood, for thy mien appeareth not like that of one lowborn."

"I never considered myself lowborn," said Blake, with a grin.

"Thy father, now—was he not at least a sir knight?"

Blake was thinking quickly now. He was far from being able as yet to so much as hazard a guess that might explain his host's archaic costume and language, but he was sure that the man was in earnest, whether sane or not, and were he not sane it seemed doubly wise to humor him.

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "my father

is a thirty second degree Mason and a Knight Templar."

"'Sblood! I knew it," cried Sir Richard.

"And so am I," added Blake, when he realized the happy effect his statement had produced.

"Ah, I knew it! I knew it!" cried Sir Richard. "Thy bearing proclaimed thy noble blood; but why didst thou seek to deceive me? An so thou art one of the poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon who guard the way of the pilgrims to the Holy Land! This explaineth thy poor raiment and glorifieth it."

Blake was mystified by the allusion, as the picture always suggested by a

reference to Knights Templar was of waving white plumes, gorgeous aprons and glittering swords. He did not know that in the days of their origin they were clothed in any old garments that the charity of others might bequeath them.

At this moment Michel returned bearing a wooden trencher containing cold mutton and several pieces of simnel bread and carrying in one hand a flagon of wine. These he set upon the table before Blake and going to a cupboard fetched two metal goblets into which he decanted a portion of the contents of the flagon.

Sir Richard arose and taking one of the goblets raised it before him on a level with his head.

"Hail, Sir James!" he cried, "and welcome to Nimmr and the Valley of the Sepulcher!"

"Here's looking at you!" replied Blake.

"A quaint saying," remarked Sir Richard. "Methinks the ways of England must be changed since the days of Richard the Lion Hearted when my noble ancestor set forth upon the great crusade in the company of his king. Here's looking at you! 'Ods bodikins! I must not let that from my memory. Here's looking at you! Just wait thou 'til some fair knight doth drink my health —I shall lay him flat with that!

"But, stay! Here, Michel, fetch yon stool for Sir James, and eat, sir knight.

Thou must be passing hungry."

"Ill tell the world I am," replied Blake, feelingly, as he sat down on the stool that Michel brought. There were no knives or forks, but there were fingers and these Blake used to advantage while his host sat smiling happily at him from across the rude table.

"Thou art better than a minstrel for pleasure," cried Sir Richard. "I'll tell the world I am! Ho, ho! Thou wilt be a gift from heaven in the castle of the prince. I'll tell the world I am!"

When Blake had satisfied his hunger, Sir Richard ordered Michel to prepare horses. "We ride down to the castle, Sir James," he explained. "No longer art thou my prisoner, but my friend and

guest. That I should have received thee so scurvily shall ever be to my discredit."

Mounted upon prancing chargers and followed at a respectful distance by Michel, the two rode down the winding mountain road. Sir Richard now carried his shield and lance, a pennon fluttering bravely in the wind from just below the tip of the latter, the sun glancing from the metal of his hauberk, a smile upon his brave face as he chattered with his erstwhile prisoner. To Blake he seemed a gorgeous picture ridden from out the pages of a story book. Yet, belying his martial appearance, there was a childlike simplicity about the man that won Blake's liking from the first, for

there was that about him that made it impossible for one to conceive him as the perpetrator of a dishonorable act.

His ready acceptance of Blake's statements about himself bespoke a credulity that seemed incompatible with the high intelligence reflected by his noble countenance, and the American preferred to attribute it to a combination of un-sophistication and an innate integrity which could not conceive of perfidy in others.

As the road rounded the shoulder of a hill, Blake saw another barbican barring the way and, beyond, the towers and battlements of an ancient castle. At a command from Sir Richard the warders of the gate opened to them and the three

rode through into the ballium. This space between the outer and inner walls appeared unkept and neglected. Several old trees flourished within it and beneath the shade of one of these, close to the outer gateway, lolled several men- at-arms, two of whom were engaged in a game that resembled draughts.

At the foot of the inner wall was a wide moat, the waters of which reflected the gray stones of the wall and the ancient vines that, growing upon its inner side, topped it to form a leaf coping that occasionally hung low upon the outer side.

Directly opposite the barbican was the great gateway in the inner wall and here a drawbridge spanned the moat and

a heavy portcullis barred the way into the great court of the castle; but at a word from Sir Richard the gate lifted and, clattering across the drawbridge, they rode within.

Before Blake's astonished eyes loomed a mighty castle of rough hewn stone, while to the right and left, within the great court, spread broad gardens not illy kept, in which were gathered a company of men and women who might have just stepped from Arthur's court.

At sight of Sir Richard and his companion the nearer members of the company regarded Blake with interest and evident surprise. Several called greetings and questions to Sir Richard as the two men dismounted and turned their

horses over to Michel.

"Ho, Richard!" cried one. "What bringest thou—a Saracen?"

"Nay," replied Richard. "A fair sir knight who would do his devoir to the prince. Where is he?"

"Yonder," and they pointed toward the far end of the court where a large company was assembled.

"Come, Sir James!" directed Richard, and led him down the courtyard, the knights and ladies following closely, asking questions, commenting with a frankness that brought a flush to Blake's face. The women openly praised his features and his image while the men, perhaps prompted by jealousy, made unflattering remarks about his soiled and

torn apparel and its, to them, ridiculous cut; and indeed the contrast was great between their gorgeous dalmaticas of villosa or cyclas, their close fitting tights, their colored caps and Blake's drab shirt, whipcord breeches and cordovan boots, now soiled, torn and scratched.

The women were quite as richly dressed as the men, wearing clinging mantles of rich stuff, their hair and shoulders covered with dainty wimples of various colors and often elaborately embroidered.

None of these men, nor any of those in the assemblage they were approaching wore armor, but Blake had seen an armored knight at the outer gateway and

another at the inner and he judged that only when engaged in military duties did they wear this heavy and uncomfortable dress.

When they reached the party at the end of the court Sir Richard elbowed his way among them to the center of the group where stood a tall man of imposing appearance, chatting with those about him. As Sir Richard and Blake halted before him the company fell silent.

"My lord prince," said Richard, bowing, "I bring thee Sir James, a worthy Knight Templar who hath come under the protection of God through the lines of the enemy to the gates of Nimmr."

The tall man eyed Blake searchingly and he had not the appearance of great credulity.

"Thou sayest that thou comest from the Temple of Solomon in the Kingdom of Jerusalem?" he demanded.

"Sir Richard must have misunderstood me," replied Blake.

"Then thou art no Knight Templar?"

"Yes, but I am not from Jerusalem."

"Perchance he is one of those doughty sir knights that guard the pilgrims' way to the Holy Land," suggested a young woman standing near the prince.

Blake glanced quickly at the speaker and as their eyes met, hers fell, but not before he had seen that they were very

beautiful eyes set in an equally beautiful, oval face.

"More like it haps he is a Saracen spy sent among us by the sultan," snapped a dark man who stood beside the girl.

The latter raised her eyes to the prince. "He looketh not like a Saracen, my father," she said.

"What knowest thou of the appearance of a Saracen, child?" demanded the prince. "Hast seen so many?" The party laughed and the girl pouted.

"Verily, and I have seen full as many a Saracen as has Sir Malud or thyself, my lord prince," she snapped, haughtily. "Let Sir Malud describe a Saracen."

The dark young man flushed angrily. "At least," he said, "my lord prince, I

know an English knight when I see one, and if here be an English knight then Sir Malud is a Saracen!"

"Enough," said the prince and then, turning to Blake: "If thou beest not from Jerusalem where art thou from?"

"New York," replied the American.

"Ha," whispered Sir Malud to the girl, "did I not tell you?"

"Tell me what—that he is from New York? Where is that?" she demanded.

"Some stronghold of the infidel," asserted Malud.

"New York?" repeated the prince. "Is that in the Holy Land?"

"It is sometimes called New Jerusalem," explained Blake.

"And thou comest to Nimmr through the lines of the enemy? Tell me, sir knight, had they many men-at-arms? And how were their forces disposed? Are they close upon the Valley of the Sepulcher? Thinkest thou they plan an early attack? Come, tell me all—thou canst be of great service."

"I have come for days through the forest and seen no living man," said Blake. "No enemy surrounds you."

"What?" cried the prince.

"Did I not tell thee?" demanded Malud. "He is an enemy spy. He would lead us into the belief that we are safe that the forces of the sultan may find us off our guard and take Nimmr and the Valley."

"'Ods blood! Methinks thou art right, Sir Malud," cried the prince. "No enemy indeed! Why else then have the knights of Nimmr lain here seven and a half centuries if there be no horde of infidels surrounding our stronghold?"

"Search me," said Blake.

"Eh, what?" demanded the prince.

"He hath a quaint manner of speech, my lord prince," explained Richard, "but I do not think him an enemy of England. I myself will vouch for him an thou wilt take him into thy service, my lord prince."

"Wouldst enter my service, sir?" demanded the prince.

Blake glanced at Sir Malud and looked dubious—then his eyes

wandered to those of the girl. "I'll tell the world I would!" he said.

10. THE RETURN OF ULALA

Numa was hungry. For three days and three nights he had hunted but always the prey had eluded him. Perhaps Numa was growing old. Not so keen were his scent and his vision, not so swift his charges, nor well timed the spring that heretofore had brought down the quarry. So quick the food of Numa that a fraction of a second, a hair's breadth, might mark the difference between a full belly and starvation.

Perhaps Numa was growing old, yet he still was a mighty engine of destruction, and now the pangs of hunger had increased his ferocity many-fold,

stimulated his cunning, emboldened him to take great risks that his belly might be filled. It was a nervous, irascible, ferocious Numa that crouched beside the trail. His up- pricked ears, his intent and blazing eyes, his quivering nostrils, the gently moving tail-tip, evidenced his awareness of another presence.

Down the wind to the nostrils of Numa the lion came the man- scent. Four days ago, his belly full, Numa had doubtless slunk away at the first indication of the presence of man, but today is another day and another Numa.

Zeyd, three days upon the back track from the *menzil* of the sheikh Ibn Jad, thought of Ateja, of far Guad, congratulated himself upon the good

fortune that had thus far smiled upon his escape and flight. His mare moved slowly along the jungle trail, unurged, for the way was long; and just ahead a beast of prey waited in ambush.

But Numa's were not the only ears to hear, nor his nostrils the only nostrils to scent the coming of the man-thing—another beast crouched near, unknown to Numa.

Over-anxious, fearful of being cheated of his meat, Numa made a false move. Down the trail came the mare. She must pass within a yard of Numa, but Numa could not wait. Before she was within the radius of his spring he charged, voicing a horrid roar. Terrified the mare reared and, rearing, tried to

turn and bolt. Overbalanced, she toppled backward and fell, and in falling unhorsed Zeyd; but in the instant she was up and flying back along the trail, leaving her master in the path of the charging lion.

Horrified, the man saw the snarling face, the bared fangs almost upon him. Then he saw something else—something equally awe-inspiring—a naked giant who leaped from a swaying branch full upon the back of the great cat. He saw a bronzed arm encircle the neck of the beast of prey as the lion was borne to earth by the weight and impact of the man's body. He saw a heavy knife flashing in the air, striking home again and again as the frenzied lion threw

itself about in futile effort to dislodge the thing upon its back. He heard the roars and the growls of *el- adrea*, and mingled with them were growls and snarls that turned his blood cold, for he saw that they came from the lips of the man-beast.

Then Numa went limp and the giant arose and stood above the carcass. He placed one foot upon it and, raising his face toward the heavens, voiced a hideous scream that froze the marrow in the bones of the Beduin—a scream that few men have heard: the victory cry of the bull ape.

It was then that Zeyd recognized his savior and shuddered again as he saw that it was Tarzan of the Apes. The ape-man looked down at him.

"Thou art from the *menzil* of Ibn Jad," he said.

"I am but a poor man," replied Zeyd. "I but followed where my sheikh led. Hold it not against Zeyd sheikh of the jungle, that he is in thy *beled*. Spare my poor life I pray thee and may Allah bless thee."

"I have no wish to harm thee, *Beduwy*," replied Tarzan. "What wrong hath been done in my country is the fault of Ibn Jad alone. Is he close by?"

"*W'Allah* nay, he is many marches from here."

"Where are thy companions?" demanded the ape-man.

"I have none."

"Thou art alone?"

"*Billah*, yes."

Tarzan frowned. "Think well *Beduwy* before lying to Tarzan," he snapped.

"By Allah, I speak the truth! I am alone."

"And why?"

"Fahd did plot against me to make it appear that I had tried to take the life of Ibn Jad, which, before Allah, is a lie that stinketh to heaven, and I was to be shot; but Ateja, the daughter of the sheikh, cut my bonds in the night and I escaped."

"What is thy name?"

"Zeyd."

"Whither goest thou—to thine own

country?"

"Yes, to Beled el-Guad, a Beny Salem *fendy* of el-Harb."

"Thou canst not, alone, survive the perils of the way," Tarzan warned him.

"Of that I be fearful, but death were certain had I not escaped the wrath of Ibn Jad."

For a moment Tarzan was silent in thought. "Great must be the love of Ateja, the daughter of the sheikh, and great her belief in you," he said.

"*W'Allah*, yes, great is our love and, too, she knew that I would not slay her father, whom she loves."

Tarzan nodded. "I believe thee and shall help thee. Thou canst not go on

alone. I shall take thee to the nearest village and there the chief will furnish you with warriors who will take you to the next village, and thus from village to village you will be escorted to the Sudan."

"May Allah ever watch over and guard thee!" exclaimed Zeyd.

"Tell me," said Tarzan as the two moved along the jungle trail in the direction of the nearest village which lay two marches to the south of them, "tell me what Ibn Jad doth in this country. It is not true that he came for ivory alone. Am I not right?"

"*W'Allah* yes, Sheikh Tarzan," admitted Zeyd. "Ibn Jad came for treasure, but not for ivory."

"What, then?"

"In el-Habash lies the treasure city of Nimmr," explained Zeyd. "This Ibn Jad was told by a learned *sahar*. So great is the wealth of Nimmr that a thousand camels could carry away not a tenth part of it. It consists of gold and jewels and —a woman."

"A woman?"

"Yes, a woman of such wondrous beauty that in the north she alone would bring a price that would make Ibn Jad rich beyond dreams. Surely thou must have heard of Nimmr."

"Sometimes the Gallas speak of it," said Tarzan, "but always I thought it of no more reality than the other places of their legends. And Ibn Jad undertook this

long and dangerous journey on no more than the word of a magician?"

"What could be better than the word of a learned *sahar*?" demanded Zeyd.

Tarzan of the Apes shrugged.

During the two days that it took them to reach the village Tarzan learned of the white man who had come to the camp of Ibn Jad, but from Zeyd's description of him he was not positive whether it was Blake or Stimbol.

As Tarzan traveled south with Zeyd, Ibn Jad trekked northward into el-Habash, and Fahd plotted with Tollog, and Stimbol plotted with Fahd, while Fejjuan the Galla slave waited patiently for the moment of his delivery from bondage, and Ateja mourned for Zeyd.

"As a boy thou wert raised in this country, Fejjuan," she said one day to the Galla slave. "Tell me, dost thou think Zeyd could make his way alone to el-Guad?"

"*Billah*, nay," replied the black. "Doubtless he is dead by now."

The girl stifled a sob.

"Fejjuan mourns with thee, Ateja," said the black, "for Zeyd was a kindly man. Would that Allah had spared your lover and taken him who was guilty."

"What dost thou mean?" asked Ateja. "Knowest thou, Fejjuan, who fired the shot at Ibn Jad, my father? It was not Zeyd! Tell me it was not Zeyd! But thy words tell me that, which I well knew before. Zeyd could not have sought the

life of my father!

"Nor did he," replied Fejjuan.

"Tell me what you know of this thing."

"And you will not tell another who told you?" he asked. "It would go hard with me if one I am thinking of knew that I had seen what I did see."

"I swear by Allah that I wilt not betray you, Fejjuan," cried the girl. "Tell me, what didst thou see?"

"I did not see who fired the shot at thy father, Ateja," replied the black, "but something else I saw before the shot was fired."

"Yes, what was it?"

"I saw Fahd creep into the *beyt* of

Zeyd and come out again bearing Zeyd's matchlock. That I saw."

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried the girl.

"But Ibn Jad will not believe if you tell him."

"I know; but now that I am convinced perhaps I shall find a way to have Fahd's blood for the blood of Zeyd," cried the girl, bitterly.

For days Ibn Jad skirted the mountains behind which he thought lay the fabled city of Nimmr as he searched for an entrance which he hoped to find without having recourse to the natives whose haunts he had sedulously avoided lest through them opposition to his venture might develop.

The country was sparsely settled,

which rendered it easy for the Arabs to avoid coming into close contact with the natives, though it was impossible that the Gallas were ignorant of their presence. If however the blacks were willing to leave them alone, Ibn Jad had no intention of molesting them unless he found that it would be impossible to carry his project to a successful issue without their assistance, in which event he was equally ready to approach them with false promises or ruthless cruelty, whichever seemed the more likely to better serve his purpose.

As the days passed Ibn Jad waxed increasingly impatient, for, search as he would, he could locate no pass across the mountains, nor any entrance to the

fabled valley wherein lay the treasure city of Nimmr.

"*Billah!*" he exclaimed one day, "there be a City of Nimmr and there be an entrance to it, and, by Allah, I will find it! Summon the Habush, Tollog! From them or through them we shall have a clue in one way or another."

When Tollog had fetched the Galla slaves to the *beyt* of Ibn Jad, the old sheikh questioned them but there was none who had definite knowledge of the trail leading to Nimmr.

"Then, by Allah," exclaimed Ibn Jad, "we shall have it from the native Habush!"

"They are mighty warriors, O brother," cried Tollog, "and we are far

within their country. Should we anger them and they set upon us it might fare ill with us."

"We are Bedauwy," said Ibn Jad proudly, "and we are armed with muskets. What could their simple spears and arrows avail against us?"

"But they are many and we are few," insisted Tollog.

"We shall not fight unless we are driven to it," said Ibn Jad. "First we shall seek, by friendly overtures, to win their confidence and cajole the secret from them.

"Fejjuan!" he exclaimed, turning to the great black. "Thou art a Habashy. I have heard thee say that thou well rememberest the days of thy childhood in

the hut of thy father and the story of Nimmr was no new story to you. Go, then, and seek out thy people. Make friends with them. Tell them that the great Sheikh Ibn Jad comes among them in friendliness and that he hath gifts for their chiefs. Tell them also that he would visit the city of Nimmr, and if they will lead him there he will reward them well."

"I but await thy commands," said Fejjuan, elated at this opportunity to do what he had long dreamed of doing. "When shall I set forth?"

"Prepare thyself tonight and when dawn comes depart," replied the sheikh.

And so it was that Fejjuan, the Galla slave, set forth early the following

morning from the*menzil* of Ibn Jad, sheikh of the *fendy* el-Guad, to search for a village of his own people.

By noon he had come upon a well-worn trail leading toward the west, and this he followed boldly, guessing that he would best disarm suspicion thus than by attempting to approach a Galla village by stealth. Also he well knew that there was little likelihood that he could accomplish the latter in any event Fejjuan was no fool. He knew that it might be difficult to convince the Gallas that he was of their blood, for there was against him not alone his Arab garments and weapons but the fact that he would be able to speak the Galla tongue but lamely after all these years.

That he was a brave man was evidenced by the fact that he well knew the suspicious and warlike qualities of his people and their inborn hatred of the Arabs and yet gladly embraced this opportunity to go amongst them.

How close he had approached a village Fejjuan did not know. There were neither sounds nor odors to enlighten him when there suddenly appeared in the trail ahead of him three husky Galla warriors and behind him he heard others, though he did not turn.

Instantly Fejjuan raised his hands in sign of peace and at the same time he smiled.

"What are you doing in the Galla country?" demanded one of the warriors.

"I am seeking the house of my father," replied Fejjuan.

"The house of your father is not in the country of the Gallas," growled the warrior. "You are one of these who come to rob us of our sons and daughters."

"No," replied Fejjuan. "I am a Galla."

"If you were a Galla you would speak the language of the Gallas better. We understand you, but you do not speak as a Galla speaks."

"That is because I was stolen away when I was a child and have lived among the Bedauwy since, speaking only their tongue."

"What is your name?"

"The Bedauwy call me Fejjuan, but my Galla name was Ulala."

"Do you think he speaks the truth?" demanded one of the blacks of a companion. "When I was a child I had a brother whose name was Ulala."

"Where is he?" asked the other warrior.

"We do not know. Perhaps Simba the lion devoured him. Perhaps the desert people took him. Who knows?"

"Perhaps he speaks the truth," said the second warrior. "Perhaps he is your brother. Ask him his father's name."

"What was your father's name?" demanded the first warrior.

"Naliny," replied Fejjuan.

At this reply the Galla warriors became excited and whispered among themselves for several seconds. Then the first warrior turned again to Fejjuan.

"Did you have a brother?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Fejjuan.

"What was his name?"

"Tabo," answered Fejjuan without hesitation.

The warrior who had questioned him leaped into the air with a wild shout.

"It is Ulala!" he cried. "It is my brother. I am Tabo, Ulala. Do you not remember me?"

"Tabo!" cried Fejjuan. "No, I would not know you, for you were a little boy

when I was stolen away and now you are a great warrior. Where are our father and mother? Are they alive? Are they well?"

"They are alive and well, Ulala," replied Tabo. "Today they are in the village of the chief, for there is a great council because of the presence of some desert people in our country. Came you with them?"

"Yes, I am a slave to the desert people," replied Fejjuan. "Is it far to the village of the chief? I would see my mother and my father and, too, I would talk with the chief about the desert people who have come to the country of the Gallas."

"Come, brother!" cried Tabo. "We

are not far from the village of the chief. Ah, my brother, that I should see you again whom we thought to be dead all these years! Great will be the joy of our father and mother.

"But, tell me, have the desert people turned you against your own people? You have lived with them many years. Perhaps you have taken a wife among them. Are you sure that you do not love them better than you love those whom you have not seen for many years?"

"I do not love the Bedauwy," replied Fejjuan, "nor have I taken a wife among them. Always in my heart has been the hope of returning to the mountains of my own country, to the house of my father. I love my own people, Tabo. Never again

shall I leave them."

"The desert people have been unkind to you—they have treated you with cruelty?" demanded Tabo.

"Nay, on the contrary they have treated me well," replied Fejjuan. "I do not hate them, but neither do I love them. They are not of my own blood. I am a slave among them."

As they talked the party moved along the trail toward the village while two of the warriors ran ahead to carry the glad tidings to the father and mother of the long missing Ulala. And so it was that when they came within sight of the village they were met by a great crowd of laughing, shouting Gallas, and in the fore-rank were the father and mother of

Fejjuan, their eyes blinded by the tears of love and joy that welled at sight of this long gone child.

After the greetings were over, and every man, woman and child in the company must crowd close and touch the returned wanderer, Tabo conducted Fejjuan into the village and the presence of the chief.

Batando was an old man. He had been chief when Ulala was stolen away. He was inclined to be skeptical, fearing a ruse of the desert people, and he asked many questions of Fejjuan concerning matters that he might hold in his memory from the days of his childhood. He asked him about the house of his father and the names of his playmates and other

intimate things that an impostor might not know, and when be had done he arose and took Fejjuan in his arms and rubbed his cheek against the cheek of the prodigal.

"You are indeed Ulala," he cried. "Welcome back to the land of your people. Tell me now what the desert people do here. Have they come for slaves?"

"The desert people will always take slaves when they can get them, but Ibn Jad has not come first for slaves, but for treasure."

"Ail what treasure?" demanded Batando.

"He has heard of the treasure city of Nimmr," replied Fejjuan. "It is a way

into the valley where lies Nimmr that he seeks. For this he sent me to find Gallas who would lead him to Nimmr. He will make gifts and he promises rich rewards when he shall have wrested the treasure from Nimmr."

"Are these true words?" asked Batando.

"There is no truth in the beards of the desert dwellers," replied Fejjuan.

"And if he does not find the treasure of Nimmr perhaps he will try to find treasure and slaves in the Galla country to repay the expense of the long journey he has undertaken from the desert country?" asked Batando.

"Batando speaks out of the great wisdom of many years," replied Fejjuan.

"What does he know of Nimmr?" asked the old chief.

"Naught other than what an old medicine man of the Arabs told him," replied Fejjuan. "He said to Ibn Jad that great treasure lay hoarded in the City of Nimmr and that there was a beautiful woman who would bring a great price in the far north."

"Nothing more he told him?" demanded Batando. "Did he not tell him of the difficulties of entering the forbidden valley?"

"Nay."

"Then we can guide him to the entrance to the valley," said Batando, smiling slyly.

11. SIR JAMES

As Tarzan and Zeyd journeyed toward the village in which the ape-man purposed to enlist an escort for the Arabs upon the first stage of his return journey toward his desert home, the Beduin had time to meditate much upon many matters, and having come to trust and respect his savage guide he at last unbosomed himself to Tarzan.

"Great Sheikh of the Jungle," he said one day, "by thy kindness thou hast won the undying loyalty of Zeyd who begs that thou wilt grant him one more favor."

"And what is that?" asked the ape-man.

"Ateja, whom I love, remains here in

the savage country in constant danger so long as Fahd be near her. I dare not now return to the *menzil* of Ibn Jad even could I find it, but later, when the beat of Ibn Jad's anger will have had time to cool, then I might come again among them and convince him of my innocence, and be near Ateja and protect her from Fahd."

"What, then, would you do?" demanded Tarzan.

"I would remain in the village to which you are taking me until Ibn Jad returns this way toward el-Guad. It is the only chance that I have to see Ateja again in this life, as I could not cross the Sudan alone and on foot should you compel me to leave your country now."

"You are right," replied the ape-man. "You shall remain here six months. If Ibn Jad has not returned in that time I shall leave word that you be sent to my home. From there I can find a way to return you in safety to your own country."

"May the blessings of Allah be upon thee!" cried Zeyd.

And when they came at last to the village Tarzan received the promise of the chief to keep Zeyd until Ibn Jad returned.

After he had left the village again the ape-man headed north, for he was concerned over the report that Zeyd had given him of the presence of a European prisoner among the Arabs. That Stimbol, whom he had sent eastward toward the

coast, should be so far north and west as Zeyd had reported appeared inconceivable, and so it seemed more probable that the prisoner was young Blake, for whom Tarzan had conceived a liking. Of course the prisoner might not be either Stimbol or Blake, but who ever he was Tarzan could not readily brook the idea of a white man being permitted to remain a prisoner of the Beduins.

But Tarzan was in no hurry, for Zeyd had told him that the prisoner was to be held for ransom. He would have a look about for Blake's camp first and then follow up the spoor of the Arabs. His progress, therefore, was leisurely. On the second day he met the apes of Toyat and for two days he hunted with them,

renewing his acquaintance with Gayat and Zutho, listening to the gossip of the tribe, often playing with the balus.

Leaving them, he loafed on through the jungle, stopping once for half a day to bait Numa where he lay upon a fresh kill, until the earth trembled to the thunderous roars of the maddened king of beasts as the ape-man taunted and annoyed him.

Sloughed was the thin veneer of civilization that was Lord Greystoke; back to the primitive, back to the savage beast the ape- man reverted as naturally, as simply, as one changes from one suit to another. It was only in his beloved jungle, surrounded by its savage denizens, that Tarzan of the Apes was

truly Tarzan, for always in the presence of civilized men there was a certain restraint that was the outcome of that inherent suspicion that creatures of the wild ever feel for man.

Tired of throwing ripe fruit at Numa, Tarzan swung away through the middle terraces of the forest, lay up for the night far away and in the morning, scenting Bara the deer, made a kill and fed. Lazy, he slept again, until the breaking of twigs and the rustle of down tramped grasses awoke him.

He sniffed the air with sensitive nostrils and listened with ears that could hear an ant walk, and then he smiled. Tantor was coming.

For half a day he lolled on the huge

back, listening to Manu the Monkey chattering and scolding among the trees. Then he moved on again.

A day or two later he came upon a large band of monkeys. They seemed much excited and at sight of him they all commenced to jabber and chatter.

"Greetings, Manu!" cried the ape-man. "I am Tarzan, Tarzan of the Apes. What happens in the jungle?"

"Gomangani! Gomangani!" cried one.

"Strange Gomangani!" cried another.

"Gomangani with thunder sticks!" chattered a third.

"Where?" asked the ape-man.

"There! There!" they shouted in chorus, pointing toward the northeast.

"Many sleeps away?" asked Tarzan.

"Close! Close!" the monkeys answered.

"There is one Tarmangani with them?"

"No, only Gomangani. With their thunder sticks they kill little Manu and eat him. Bad Gomangani!"

"Tarzan will talk with them," said the ape-man.

"They will kill Tarzan with their thunder sticks and eat him," prophesied a graybeard.

The ape-man laughed and swung off through the trees in the direction Manu had indicated. He had not gone far when the scent spoor of blacks came faintly to

his nostrils and this spoor he followed until presently he could hear their voices in the distance.

Silently, warily Tarzan came through the trees, noiseless as the shadows that kept him company, until he stood upon a swaying limb directly above a camp of Negroes.

Instantly Tarzan recognized the safari of the young American, Blake, and a second later he dropped to the ground before the astonished eyes of the blacks. Some of them would have rim, but others recognized him.

"It is Big Bwana!" they cried. "It is Tarzan of the Apes!"

"Where is your head man?" demanded Tarzan.

A stalwart Negro approached him. "I am head man," he said.

"Where is your master?"

"He is gone, many days," replied the black.

"Where?"

"We do not know. He hunted with a single *askari*. There was a great storm. Neither of them ever returned. We searched the jungle for them, but could not find them. We waited in camp where they were to have joined us. They did not come. We did not know what to do. We would not desert the young Bwana, who was kind to us; but we feared that he was dead. We have not provisions to last more than another moon. We decided to return home and tell our story

to the friends of the young Bwana."

"You have done well," said Tarzan. "Have you seen a company of the desert people in the jungle?"

"We have not seen them," replied the head man, "but while we were searching for the young Bwana we saw where desert people had camped. It was a fresh camp."

"Where?"

The black pointed. "It was on the trail to the north Galla country in Abyssinia and when they broke camp they went north."

"You may return to your village," said Tarzan, "but first take those things which are the young Bwana's to his friends to keep for him and send a runner to the

home of Tarzan with this message: Send one hundred Waziri to Tarzan in the north Galla country. From the water hole of the smooth, round rocks follow the trail of the desert people."

"Yes, Big Bwana, it will be done," said the head man.

"Repeat my message."

The black boy did as he was bidden.

"Good!" said Tarzan. "I go. Kill not Manu the monkey if you can find other food, for Manu is the cousin of Tarzan and of you."

"We understand, Big Bwana."

In the castle of Prince Gobred in the City of Nimmr James Hunter Blake was being schooled in the duties of a Knight

of Nimmr. Sir Richard had taken him under his protection and made himself responsible for his training and his conduct.

Prince Gobred, quick to realize Blake's utter ignorance of even the simplest observances of knighthood, was frankly skeptical, and Sir Malud was almost openly antagonistic, but the loyal Sir Richard was a well beloved knight and so he had his way. Perhaps, too, the influence of the Princess Guinalda was not without its effect upon her sire, for first among the treasurers of the Prince of Nimmr ranked his daughter Guinalda; and Guinalda's curiosity and interest had been excited by the romance of the coming of this fair stranger knight to the

buried and forgotten city of Nimmr.

Sir Richard had clothed Blake from his own wardrobe until a weaver, a cutter of cloth, a seamstress and an armorer could fashion one for him. Nor did it take long. A week found Sir James clothed, armored and horsed as befitted a Knight of Nimmr, and when he spoke to Sir Richard of payment for all this he found that money was almost unknown among them. There were, Sir Richard told him, a few pieces of coin that their ancestors had brought here seven hundred and thirty five years before, but payment was made by service.

The knights served the prince and he kept them. They protected the laborers and the artisans and in return received

what they required from them. The slaves received their food and clothing from the prince or from whichever knight they served. Jewels and precious metals often changed hands in return for goods or service, but each transaction was a matter of barter as there were no standards of value.

They cared little for wealth. The knights valued most highly their honor and their courage upon which there could be no price. The artisan found his reward in the high perfection of his handicraft and in the honors that it brought him.

The valley provided food in plenty for all; the slaves tilled the ground; the freedmen were the artisans, the men-at-

arms, the herders of cattle; the knights defended Nimmr against its enemies, competed in tourneys and hunted wild game in the valley and its surrounding mountains.

As the days passed Blake found himself rapidly acquiring a certain proficiency in knightly arts under the wise tutorage of Sir Richard. The use of sword and buckler he found most difficult, notwithstanding the fact that he had been proficient with the foils in his college days, for the knights of Nimmr knew naught of the defensive use of their two edged weapons and seldom used the point for other purpose than the *coup-de-grace*. For them the sword was almost wholly a cutting weapon, the buckler

their sole defense; but as Blake practiced with this weapon it dawned upon him that his knowledge of fencing might be put to advantage should the necessity arise, to the end that his awkwardness with the buckler should be outweighed by his nicer defensive handling of his sword and his offensive improved by the judicious use of the point, against which they had developed little or no defense.

The lance he found less difficult, its value being so largely dependent upon the horsemanship of him who wielded it, and that Blake was a splendid horseman was evidenced by his polo rating as an eight goal man.

The ballium, or outer court, which lay

between the inner and outer walls of the castle and entirely surrounded it, was, upon the north or valley side, given over entirely to knightly practice and training. Here the ballium was very wide, and against the inner wall was built a wooden grand stand that could be quickly removed in the event of an attack upon the castle.

Jousts and tilts were held here weekly, while the great tourneys that occurred less often were given upon a field outside the castle wall upon the floor of the valley.

Daily many knights and ladies came to watch the practice and training that filled the ballium with life and action and color during the morning hours.

Good-natured banter flew back and forth, wagers were laid, and woe betide the contender who was unhorsed during these practice bouts, for the thing that a knight dreaded even more than he dreaded death was ridicule.

In the formal jousts that were held weekly greater decorum was observed by the audience, but during the daily practice their raillery verged upon brutality.

It was before such an audience as this that Blake received his training, and because he was a novelty the audiences were larger than usual, and because the friends of Sir Malud and the friends of Sir Richard had tacitly acknowledged him as an issue both the applause and the

ridicule were loud and boisterous.

Even the Prince came often and Guinalda always was there. It was soon apparent that Prince Gobred leaned slightly to the side of Sir Malud, with the natural result that Malud's party immediately acquired numerous recruits.

The training of the lads who were squires to the knights and who would one day be admitted to the charmed circle of knighthood occupied the earlier hours of the morning. This was followed by practice tilts between knights, during which Sir Richard or one of his friends undertook the training of Blake at the far side of the ballium, and it was during this practice that the American's outstanding horsemanship became

apparent, even Gobred being led to applause.

"'Od's bodikins," he exclaimed, "the man be a part of his charger!"

"'Twas but chance that saved him from a fall," said Malud.

"Mayhap," agreed Gobred, "but at that me likes the looks of him within a saddle."

"He doeth not too ill with his lance," admitted Malud. "But, 'Od's blood! didst ever see a more awkward lout with a buckler? Methinks he hath had more use for a trencher." This sally elicited roars of laughter in which the Princess Guinalda did not join, a fact which Malud, whose eyes were often upon her, was quick to note. "Thou still believest

this churl to be a knight, Princess Guinalda?" he demanded.

"Have I said aught?" she asked.

"Thou didst not laugh," he reminded her.

"He is a stranger knight, far from his own country and it seemeth not a knightly nor a gentle thing to ridicule him," she replied. "Therefore I did not laugh, for I was not amused."

Later that day as Blake joined the others in the great court, he ran directly into Malud's party, nor was it at all an accident, as he never made any effort to avoid Malud or his friends and was, seemingly, oblivious to their thinly veiled taunts and insinuations. Malud himself attributed this to the density and

ignorance of a yokel, which he insisted Blake to be, but there were others who rather admired Blake for his attitude, seeing in it a studied affront that Malud was too dense to perceive.

Most of the inmates of the grim castle of Nimmr were inclined pleasantly toward the newcomer. He had brought with him an air of freshness and newness that was rather a relief from the hoary atmosphere that had surrounded Nimmr for nearly seven and a half centuries. He had brought them new words and new expressions and new views, which many of them were joyously adopting, and had it not been for the unreasoning antagonism of the influential Sir Malud, Blake had been accepted with open

arms.

Sir Richard was far more popular then Malud, but lacked the latter's wealth in horses, arms and retainers and consequently had less influence with Prince Gobred. However there were many independent souls who either followed Sir Richard because they were fond of him or arrived at their own decisions without reference to the dictates of policy, and many of these were staunch friends to Blake.

Not all of those who surrounded Malud this afternoon were antagonistic to the American, but the majority of them laughed when Malud laughed and frowned when he frowned, for in the courts of kings and princes flourished

the first order of "yes men."

Blake was greeted by many a smile and nod as he advanced and bowed low before the Princess Guinalda who was one of the company and, being of princely blood, entitled to his first devoirs.

"Thou didst well this morning, Sir James," said the princess, kindly. "It pleases me greatly to see thee ride."

"Methinks 'twould be a rarer treat to see him serve a side of venison," sneered Malud.

This provoked so much laughter that Malud was encouraged to seek further applause.

"Gadzooks!" he cried, "arm him with a trencher and carving knife and he

would be at home."

"Speaking of serving," said Blake, "and Sir Malud's mind seems to be more occupied with that than with more knightly things, does any of you know what is necessary quickly to serve fresh pig?"

"Nay, fair sir knight," said Guinalda, "we know not. Prithee tell us.

"Yes, tell us," roared Malud, "thou, indeed, shouldst know."

"You said a mouthful, old scout, I do know!"

"And what be necessary that you may quickly serve fresh pig?" demanded Malud, looking about him and winking.

"A trencher, a carving knife and you,

Sir Malud," replied Blake.

It was several seconds before the thrust penetrated their simple minds and it was the Princess Guinalda who first broke into merry laughter and soon all were roaring, while some explained the quip to others.

No, not all were laughing—not Sir Malud. When he grasped the significance of Blake's witticism he first turned very red and then went white, for the great Sir Malud liked not to be the butt of ridicule, which is ever the way of those most prone to turn ridicule upon others.

"Sirrah," he cried, "darest thou affront Malud? 'Od's blood, fellow! Low-born varlet! Only thy blood can atone this

affront!"

"Hop to it, old thing!" replied Blake. "Name your poison!"

"I know not the meaning of thy silly words," cried Malud, "but I know that an thou dost not meet me in fair tilt upon the morrow I shall whip thee across the Valley of the Holy Sepulcher with a barrel stave."

"You're on!" snapped back Blake. "Tomorrow morning in the south ballium with—"

"Thou mayst choose the weapons, sirrah," said Malud,

"Don't call me sirrah, I don't like it," said Blake very quietly, and now he was not smiling. "I want to tell you something, Malud, that may be good for

your soul. You are really the only man in Nimmr who didn't want to treat me well and give me a chance, a fair chance, to prove that I am all right."

"You think you are a great knight, but you are not. You have no intelligence, no heart, no chivalry. You are not what we would call in my country a good sport. You have a few horses and a few men-at- arms. That is all you have, for without them you would not have the favor of the Prince, and without his favor you would have no friends.

"You are not so good or great a man in any way as is Sir Richard, who combines all the qualities of chivalry that for centuries have glorified the order of knighthood; nor are you so good

a man as I, who, with your own weapons, will best you on the morrow when, in the north ballium, I meet you on horseback with sword and buckler!"

The members of the party, upon seeing Malud's wrath, had gradually fallen away from Blake until, as he concluded his speech, he stood alone a few paces apart from Malud and those who surrounded him. Then it was that one stepped from among those at Malud's side and walked to Blake. It was Guinalda.

"Sir James." she said with a sweet smile, "thou spokest with thy mouth full!" She broke into a merry laugh. "Walk with me in the garden, sir knight," and taking his arm she guided him

toward the south end of the eastern court.

"You're wonderful!" was all that Blake could find to say.

"Dost really think I am wonderful?" she demanded. "I had to know if men speak the truth to such as I. The truth, as people see it, is spoke more oft to slaves than princes."

"I hope to prove it by my conduct," he said.

They had drawn a short distance away from the others now and the girl suddenly laid her hand impulsively upon his.

"I brought thee away, Sir James, that I might speak with thee alone," she said.

"I do not care what the reason was so

long as you did it," he replied, smiling.

"Thou art a stranger among us, unaccustomed to our ways, unversed in knightly practice—so much so that there are many who doubt thy claims to knighthood. Yet thou art a brave man, or else a very simple one, or thou wouldst never have chosen to meet Sir Malud with sword and buckler, for he is skilled with these while thou art clumsy with them.

"Because I think that thou goest to thy death tomorrow I have brought thee aside to speak with thee."

"What can be done about it now?" asked Blake.

"Thou art passing fair with thy lance," she said, "and it is still not too late to

change thy selection of weapons. I beg thee to do so."

"You care?" he asked. There can be a world of meaning in two words.

The girl's eyes dropped for an instant and then flashed up to his and there was a touch of hauteur in them. "I am the daughter of the Prince of Nimmr," she said. "I care for the humblest of my father's subjects."

"I guess that will hold you for a while, Sir James," thought Blake, but to the girl he said nothing, only smiled.

Presently she stamped her foot. "Thou hast an impudent smile, sirrah!" she exclaimed angrily. "Melikes it not. Then thou art too forward with the daughter of a prince."

"I merely asked you if you cared whether I was killed. Even a cat could ask that."

"And I replied. Why then didst thou smile?"

"Because your eyes had answered me before your lips had spoken and I knew that your eyes had told the truth."

Again she stamped her foot angrily. "Thou art indeed a forward boor," she exclaimed. "I shall not remain to be insulted further."

Her head held high she turned and walked haughtily away to rejoin the other party.

Blake stepped quickly after her. "Tomorrow," he whispered, "I meet Sir Malud with sword and buckler. With

your favor upon my helm I could overthrow the best sword in Nimmr."

The Princess Guinalda did not deign to acknowledge that she had heard his words as she walked on to join the others clustered about Sir Malud.

12. "TOMORROW THOU DIEST!"

There was a great celebration in the village of Batondo the chief the night that Ulala returned. A goat was killed and many chickens, and there were fruit and cassava bread and native beer in plenty for all. There was music, too, and dancing. With all of which it was morning before they sought their sleeping mats, with the result that it was after noon the following day before Fejjuan had an opportunity to speak of serious matters with Batando.

When finally he sought him out he found the old chief squatting in the shade before his hut, slightly the worse for the

orgy of the preceding night.

"I have come to talk with you, Batando," he said, "of the desert people."

Batando grunted. His head ached.

"Yesterday you said that you would lead them to the entrance to the forbidden valley," said Fejjuan. "You mean, then, that you will not fight them?"

"We shall not have to fight them if we lead them to the entrance to the forbidden valley," replied Batando.

"You speak in riddles," said Fejjuan.

"Listen, Ulala," replied the old chief. "In childhood you were stolen from your people and taken from your country. Being young, there were many things you

did not know and there are others that you have forgotten.

"It is not difficult to enter the forbidden valley, especially from the north. Every Galla knows bow to find the northern pass through the mountains or the tunnel beyond the great cross that marks the southern entrance. There are only these two ways in—every Galla knows them; but every Galla also knows that there is no way out of the forbidden valley."

"What do you mean, Batando?" demanded Fejjuan. "If there are two ways in, there must be two ways out."

"No—there is no way out," insisted the chief. "As far back as goes the memory of man or the tales of our fathers

and our fathers' fathers it is known that many men have entered the forbidden valley, and it is also known that no man has ever come out of it."

"And why have they not come out?"

Batando shook his head. "Who knows?" he asked. "We cannot even guess their fate."

"What sort of people inhabit the valley?" asked Fejjuan.

"Not even that is known. No man has seen them and returned to tell. Some say they are the spirits of the dead, others that the valley is peopled by leopards; but no one knows.

"Go therefore, Ulala, and tell the chief of the desert people that we will lead him to the entrance to the valley. If

we do this we shall not have to fight him and his people, nor shall we ever again be bothered by them," and Batando laughed at his little joke.

"Will you send guides back with me to lead the Bedauwy to the valley?" asked Fejjuan.

"No," replied the chief. "Tell them we shall come in three days. In the meantime I shall gather together many warriors from other villages, for I do not trust the desert people. Thus we shall conduct them through our country. Explain this to their chief and also that in payment he must release to us all the Galla slaves he has with him—before he enters the valley."

"That Ibn Jad will not do," said

Fejjuan.

"Perhaps, when he sees himself surrounded by Galla warriors, he will be glad to do even more," replied Batando.

And so Fejjuan, the Galla slave, returned to his masters and reported all that Batando had told him to report.

Ibn Jad at first refused to give up his slaves, but when Fejjuan had convinced him that under no other terms would Batando lead him to the entrance to the valley, and that his refusal to liberate the slaves would invite the hostile attentions of the Gallas, he finally consented; but in the back of his mind was the thought that before his promise was consummated he might find an opportunity to evade it.

Only one regret had Fejjuan in betraying the Beduins, and that was caused by his liking for Ateja, but being a fatalist he was consoled by the conviction that whatever was to be, would be, regardless of what he might do.

And as Ibn Jad waited and Batando gathered his black warriors from far and near, Tarzan of the Apes came to the water hole of the smooth, round rocks and took up the trail of the Beduins.

Since he had learned from Blake's blacks that the young American was missing and also that they had seen nothing of Stimbol since the latter had separated from Blake and started for the coast, the ape-man was more convinced

than ever that the white prisoner among the Arabs was Blake.

Still he felt no great concern for the man's safety, for if the Beduins had sufficient hopes of reward to spare his life at all he was in no great danger from them. Reasoning thus Tarzan made no pretense of speed as he followed the spoor of Ibn Jad and his people.

Two men sat upon rough benches at opposite sides of a rude table. Between them a cresset of oil with a cotton wick laying in it burned feebly, slightly illuminating the stone flagging of the floor and casting weird shadows of themselves upon the rough stone walls.

Through a narrow window, innocent of glass, the night air blew, driving the

flame of the cresset now this way, now that. Upon the table, between the men, lay a square board blocked off into squares, and within some of these were several wooden pieces.

"It is your move, Richard," said one of the men. "You don't appear to be very keen about the game tonight. What's the matter?"

"I be thinking of the morrow, James, and my heart be heavy within me," replied the other.

"And why?" demanded Blake.

"Malud is not the best swordsman in Nimmr," replied Sir Richard, "but —" he hesitated.

"I am the worst," Blake finished the sentence for him, laughingly.

Sir Richard looked up and smiled. "Thou wilt always joke, even in the face of death," he said. "Are all the men of this strange country thou tellest of alike?"

"It is your move, Richard," said Blake.

"Hide not his sword from thine eyes with thy buckler, James," cautioned Richard. "Ever keep thine eyes upon his eyes until thou knowest whereat he striketh, then, with thy buckler ready, thou mayst intercept the blow, for he be over-slow and always his eyes proclaim where his blade will fall. Full well I know that, for often have I exercised against him."

"And he hasn't killed you," Blake

reminded him.

"Ah, we did but practice, but on the morrow it will be different, for Malud engages thee to the death, in mortal combat my friend, to wash away in blood the affront thou didst put him."

"He wants to kill me, just for that?" asked Blake. "I'll tell the world he's a touchy little rascal!"

"Were it only that, he might be satisfied merely to draw blood, but there is more that he hath against thee."

"More? What? I've scarcely spoken to him a dozen times," said Blake,

"He be jealous."

"Jealous? Of whom?"

"He would wed the Princess and he

hath seen in what manner thou lookest at her," explained Richard.

"Poppycock!" cried Blake, but he flushed.

"Nay, he is not the only one who hath marked it," insisted Richard.

"You're crazy," snapped Blake.

"Often men look thus at the princess, for she be beautiful beyond compare, but __"

"Has he killed them all?" demanded the American.

"No, for the princess did not look back at *them* in the same manner."

Blake leaned back upon his bench and laughed. "Now I know you're crazy," he cried, "all of you. I'll admit that I think

the princess is a mighty sweet kid, but say young fellow, she can't see me a little bit."

"Enough of thy outlandish speech I grasp to gather thy meaning, James, but thou canst not confuse me upon the one subject nor deceive me upon the other. The eyes of the princess seldom leave thee whilst thou art at practice upon the lists and the look in thine when they rest upon her—hast ever seen a hound adoring his master?"

"Run along and sell your papers," admonished Blake.

"For this, Malud would put thee out of the way and it is because I know this that I grieve, for I have learned to like thee over well, my friend."

Blake arose and came around the end of the table. "You're a good old scout, Richard," he said, placing a hand affectionately upon the other's shoulder, "but do not worry—I am not dead yet I know I seem awkward with the sword, but I have learned much about its possibilities within the past few days and I think that Sir Malud has a surprise awaiting him."

"Thy courage and thy vast assurance should carry thee far, James, but they may not overcome a life-time of practice with the sword, and that is the advantage Malud hath over thee."

"Doth Prince Gobred favor Malud's suit?" demanded Blake.

"Why not? Malud is a powerful

knight, with a great castle of his own and many horses and retainers. Besides a dozen knights he hath fully an hundred men-at-arms."

"There are several knights who have their own castles and following are there not?" asked Blake.

"Twenty, perchance," replied Richard.

"And they live close to Gobred's castle?"

"At the edge of the hills, within three leagues upon either hand of Gobred's castle," explained Richard.

"And no others live in all this great valley?" demanded Blake.

"You have heard mention made of

Bohun?" asked Richard.

"Yes, often—why?"

"He calls himself king, but never will we refer to him as king. He and his followers dwell upon the opposite side of the valley. They number, perchance, as many as we and we are always at war against them."

"But I've been hearing quite a bit about a great tournament for which the knights are practicing now. I thought that Bohun and his knights were to take part in it."

"They be. Once each year, commencing upon the first Sunday of Lent and extending over a period of three days, there hath been from time immemorial a truce declared between

the Fronters and the Backers, during which is held the Great Tourney, one year in the plain before the city of Nimmr and the next year in the plain before the City of the Sepulcher, as they call it."

"Fronters and Backers! What in heck do those mean?" demanded Blake.

"Thou art a knight of Nimmr and know not that?" exclaimed Richard.

"What I know about knighting would rattle around in a peanut shell," admitted Blake.

"Thou shouldst know and I shall tell thee. Hark thou well, then," said Richard, "for I must need go back to the very beginning." He poured two goblets of wine from a flagon standing on the

floor beside him, took a long drink and proceeded with his tale. "Richard I sailed from Sicily in the spring of 1191 with all his great following bound for Acre, where he was to meet the French king, Philip Augustus, and wrest the Holy Land from the power of the Saracen. But Richard tarried upon the way to conquer Cyprus and punish the vile despot who had placed an insult upon Berengaria, whom Richard was to wed.

"When the great company again set their sails for Acre there were many Cyprian maidens hidden away upon the ships by knights who had taken a fancy to their lovely faces, and it so befell that two of these ships, encountering a storm,

were blown from their course and wrecked upon the Afric shore.

"One of these companies was commanded by a knight yclept Bohun and the other by one Gobred, and though they marched together they kept separate other than when attacked.

"Thus, searching for Jerusalem, they came upon this valley which the followers of Bohun declared was the Valley of the Holy Sepulcher and that the crusade was over. Their crosses, that they had worn upon their breasts as do all crusaders who have not reached their goal, they removed and placed upon their backs to signify that the crusade was over and that they were returning home.

"Gobred insisted that this was not the Valley of the Holy Sepulcher and that the crusade was not accomplished. He, therefore, and all his followers, retained their crosses upon their breasts and built a city and a strong castle to defend the entrance to the valley that Bohun and his followers might be prevented from returning to England until they had accomplished their mission.

"Bohun crossed the valley and built a city and a castle to prevent Gobred from pushing on in the direction in which the latter knew that the true Sepulcher lay, and for nearly seven and a half centuries the descendants of Bohun have prevented the descendants of Gobred from pushing on and rescuing the Holy

Land from the Saracen, while the descendants of Gobred have prevented the descendants of Bohun from returning to England, to the dishonor of knighthood.

"Gobred took the title of prince and Bohun that of king and these titles have been handed down from father to son during the centuries, while the followers of Gobred still wear the cross upon their breasts and are called therefrom, the Fronters, and the followers of Bohun wear theirs upon their backs and are called Backers."

"And you would still push on and liberate the Holy Land?" asked Blake.

"Yes," replied Richard, "and the Backers would return to England; but

long since have we realized the futility of either hope, since we are surrounded by a vast army of Saracens and our numbers be too few to pit against them.

"Thinkest thou not that we are wise to remain here under such stress?" he demanded.

"Well, you'd certainly surprise 'em if you rode into Jerusalem, or London, either," admitted Blake. "On the whole, Richard, I'd remain right here, if I were you. You see, after seven hundred and thirty-five years most of the home folks may have forgotten you and even the Saracens might not know what it was all about if you came charging into Jerusalem."

"Mayhap thou speakest wisely,

James," said Richard, "and then, too, we are content here, knowing no other country."

For a while both men were silent, in thought. Blake was the first to speak. "This big tourney interests me," he said. "You say it starts the first Sunday in Lent. That's not far away."

"No, not far. Why?"

"I was wondering if you thought I'd be in shape to have a part in it. I'm getting better and better with the lance every day."

Sir Richard looked sadly at him and shook his head. "Tomorrow thou wilt be dead," he said.

"Say! You're a cheerful party," exclaimed Blake.

"I am only truthful, good friend," replied Richard. "It grieveth my heart sorely that it should be true, but true it is—thou canst not prevail over Sir Malud on the morrow. Would that I might take thy place in the lists against him, but that may not be. But I console myself with the thought that thou wilt comport thyself courageously and die as a good sir knight should, with no stain upon thy escutcheon. Greatly will it solace the Princess Guinalda to know that thou didst die thus."

"You think so?" ventured Blake.

"Verily."

"And if I don't die—will she be put out?"

"Put out! Put out of what?" demanded

Richard.

"Will she be sore vexed, then," corrected Blake.

"I should not go so far as to say that," admitted Richard, "hut natheless it appeareth certain that no lady would rejoice to see her promised husband overthrown and killed, and if thou beest not slain it may only be because thou hast slain Malud."

"She is his affianced wife?" demanded Blake.

"'Tis understood, that is all. As yet no formal marriage bans have been proclaimed."

"I'm going to turn in," snapped Blake. "If I've got to be killed tomorrow I ought to get a little sleep tonight."

As he stretched himself upon a rough wool blanket that was spread over a bed of rushes upon the stone floor in one corner of the room and drew another similar blanket over him, he felt less like sleep than he had ever felt before. The knowledge that on the morrow he was to meet a medieval knight in mortal combat naturally gave him considerable concern, but Blake was too self-reliant and too young to seriously harbor the belief that he would be the one to be killed. He knew it was possible but he did not intend to permit the thought to upset him. There was, however, another that did. It upset him very much and, too, it made him angry when he realized that he was concerned about it—about the

proposed marriage of Sir Malud of West Castle and Guinalda, Princess of Nimmr.

Could it be that he had been ass enough, he soliloquized, to have fallen in love with this little medieval princess who probably looked upon him as dirt beneath her feet? And what was he going to do about Malud? Suppose he should get the better of the fellow on the morrow? Well, what about it? If he killed him that would make Guinalda unhappy. If he didn't kill him— what? Sir James did not know.

13. IN THE BEYT OF ZEYD

Ibn Jad waited three days in his *menzil* but no Galla guides arrived to lead him into the valley as Batando had promised, and so he sent Fejjuan once more to the chief to urge him to hasten, for always in the mind of Ibn Jad was the fear of Tarzan of the Apes and the thought that he might return to thwart and punish him.

He knew he was out of Tarzan's country now, but he also knew that where boundaries were so vague he could not definitely count upon this fact as an assurance of safety from reprisal..His one hope was that Tarzan

was awaiting his return through Tarzan's country, and this Ibn Jad had definitely decided not to attempt. Instead he was planning upon moving directly west, passing north of the ape-man's stamping grounds, until he picked up the trail to the north down which he had traveled from the desert country.

In the *mukaad* of the sheikh with Ibn Jad sat Tollog, his brother, and Fahd and Stimbol, besides some other Arabs. They were speaking of Batando's delay in sending guides and they were fearful of treachery, for it had long been apparent to them that the old chief was gathering a great army of warriors, and though Fejjuan assured them that they would not be used against the Arabs if

Ibn Jad resorted to no treachery, yet they were all apprehensive of danger.

Ateja, employed with the duties of the harem, did not sing nor smile as had been her wont, for her heart was heavy with mourning for her lover. She heard the talk in the *mukaad* but it did not interest her. Seldom did her eyes glance above the curtain that separated the women's quarters from the *mukaad*, and when they did the fires of hatred blazed within them as they crossed the countenance of Fahd.

She chanced to be thus glancing when she saw Fahd's eyes, which were directed outward across the *menzil*, go suddenly wide with astonishment.

"*Billah*, Ibn Jad!" cried the man.

"Look!"

With the others Ateja glanced in the direction Fahd was staring and with the others she voiced a little gasp of astonishment, though those of the men were rounded into oaths.

Walking straight across the *menzil* toward the sheikh's *beyt* strode a bronzed giant armed with a spear, arrows and a knife. Upon his back was suspended an oval shield and across one shoulder and his breast was coiled a rope, hand plaited from long fibers.

"Tarzan of the Apes!" ejaculated Ibn Jad. "The curse of Allah be upon him!"

"He must have brought his black warriors with him and left them hidden

in the forest," whispered Tollog. "Not else would he dare enter the *menzil* of the *Beduw*."

Ibn Jad was heart sick and he was thinking fast when the ape- man halted directly in the outer opening of the *mukaad*. Tarzan let his eyes run quickly over the assemblage. They stopped upon Stimbol, finally. "Where is Blake?" he demanded of the American.

"You ought to know," growled Stimbol.

"Have you seen him since you and he separated?"

"No."

"You are sure of that?" insisted the ape-man.

"Of course I am."

Tarzan turned to Ibn Jad. "You have lied to me. You are not here to trade but to find and sack a city; to take its treasure and steal its women."

"That is a lie!" cried Ibn Jad. "Whoever told thee that, lied."

"I do not think he lied," replied Tarzan. "He seemed an honest youth."

"Who was he?" demanded Ibn Jad.

"His name is Zeyd." Ateja heard and was suddenly galvanized to new interest. "He says all this and more, and I believe him."

"What else did he tell thee, *Nasrany*?"

"That another stole his musket and

sought to slay thee, Ibn Jad, and then put the blame upon him.

"That is a lie, like all he hath told thee!" cried Fahd.

Ibn Jad sat in thought, his brows contracted in a dark scowl, but presently he looked up at Tarzan with a crooked smile. "Doubtless the poor youth thought that he spoke the truth," he said. "Just as he thought that he should slay his sheikh and for the same reason. Always hath his brain been sick, but never before did I think him dangerous.

"He hath deceived thee, Tarzan of the Apes, and that I can prove by all my people as well as by this *Nasrany* I have befriended, for all will tell thee that I am seeking to obey thee and leave thy

country. Why else then should I have traveled north back in the direction of my own *beled*?"

"If thou wishedst to obey me why didst thou hold me prisoner and send thy brother to slay me in the night?" asked Tarzan.

"Again thou wrongst Ibn Jad," said the sheikh sadly. "My brother came to cut thy bonds and set thee free, but thou settest upon him and then came *el-fil* and carried thee away."

"And what meant thy brother when he raised his knife and cried: 'Die, *Nasrany*!" demanded the ape-man. "Sayeth a man thus who cometh to do a kindness?"

"I did but joke," mumbled Tollog.

"I am here again," said Tarzan, "but not to joke. My Waziri are coming. Together we shall see you well on your way toward the desert."

"It is what we wish," said the sheikh quickly. "Ask this other *Nasrany* if it be not true that we are lost and would be but too glad to have thee lead us upon the right way. Here we are beset by Galla warriors. Their chief hath been gathering them for days and momentarily we fear that we shall be attacked. Is that not true, *Nasrany*?" he turned to Stimbol as he spoke.

"Yes, it is true," said Stimbol.

"It is true that you are going to leave the country," said Tarzan, "and I shall remain to see that you do so. Tomorrow

you will start. In the meantime set aside a *beyt* for me—and let there be no more treachery."

"Thou needst fear nothing," Ibn Jad assured him, then he turned his face toward the women's quarters. "Hirfa! Ateja!" he called. "Make ready the *beyt* of Zeyd for the sheikh of the jungle."

To one side but at no great distance from the *beyt* of Ibn Jad the two women raised the black tent for Tarzan, and when the *am'dan* had been placed and straightened and the *tunb el-beyt*made fast to the pegs that Ateja drove into the earth Hirfa returned to her household duties, leaving her daughter to stretch the side curtains.

The instant that Hirfa was out of ear shot Ateja ran to Tarzan.

"Oh, *Nasrany*," she cried, "thou hast seen my Zeyd? He is safe?"

"I left him in a village where the chief will care for him until such time as thy people come upon thy return to the desert country. He is quite safe and well."

"Tell me of him, oh, *Nasrany*, for my heart hungers for word of him," implored the girl. "How came you upon him? Where was he?"

"His mare had been dragged down by *el- adrea* who was about to devour your lover. I chanced to be there and slew *el-adrea*. Then I took Zeyd to the village of a chief who is my friend, for I

knew that he could not survive the perils of the jungle should I leave him afoot and alone. It was my thought to send him from the country in safety, but he begged to remain until you returned that way. This I have permitted. In a few weeks you will see your lover."

Tears were falling from Ateja's long, black lashes—tears of joy —as she seized Tarzan's hand and kissed it. "My life is thine, *Nasrany*," she cried, "for that thou hast given me back my lover."

That night as the Galla slave, Fejjuan, walked through the *menzil* of his masters he saw Ibn Jad and Tollog sitting in the sheikh's *mukaad* whispering together and Fejjuan, well aware of the inherent turpitude of this precious pair, wondered

what might be the nature of their plotting.

Behind the curtain of the harem Ateja lay huddled upon her sleeping mat, but she did not sleep. Instead she was listening to the whispered conversation of her father and her uncle.

"He must be put out of the way," Ibn Jad insisted.

"But his Waziri are coming," objected Tollog. "If they do not find him here what can we say? They will not believe us, whatever we say. They will set upon us. I have heard that they are terrible men."

"By Allah!" cried Ibn Jad. "If he stays we are undone. Better risk something than to return empty handed to our own country after all that we have passed

through."

"If thou thinkest that I shall again take this business upon myself thou art mistaken, brother," said Tollog. "Once was enough."

"No, not thou; but we must find a way. Is there none among us who might wish more than another to be rid of the *Nasrany*?" asked Ibn Jad, but to himself as though he were thinking aloud.

"The other *Nasrany*!" exclaimed Tollog. "He hateth him."

Ibn Jad clapped his hands together. "Thou hast it, brother!"

"But still shall we be held responsible," reminded Tollog.

"What matter if he be out of the way. We can be no worse off than we now are. Suppose Batando came tomorrow with the guides? Then indeed would the jungle sheikh know that we have lied to him, and it might go hard with us. No, we must be rid of him this very night."

"Yes, but how?" asked Tollog.

"Hold! I have a plan. Listen well, O brother!" and Ibn Jad rubbed his palms together and smiled, but he would not have smiled, perhaps had he known that Ateja listened, or had he seen the silent figure crouching in the dark just beyond the outer curtain of his *beyt*.

"Speak, Ibn Jad," urged Tollog, "tell me thy plan."

"*W'Allah*, it is known by all that

the *Nasrany* Stimbol hates the sheikh of the jungle. With loud tongue he has proclaimed it many times before all when many were gathered in my *mukaad*."

"You would send Stimbol to slay Tarzan of the Apes?"

"Thou guessed'st aright," admitted Ibn Jad.

"But how will that relieve us of responsibility? He will have been slain by thy order in thine own *menzil*," objected Tollog.

"Wait! I shall not command the one *Nasrany* to slay the other; I shall but suggest it, and when it is done I shall be filled with rage and horror that this murder hath been done in my *menzil*.

And to prove my good faith I shall order that the murderer be put to death in punishment for his crime. Thus we shall be rid of two unbelieving dogs and at the same time be able to convince the Waziri that we were indeed the friends of their sheikh, for we shall mourn him with loud lamentations—when the Waziri shall have arrived."

"Allah be praised for such a brother!" exclaimed Tollog, enraptured.

"Go thou now, at once, and summon the *Nasrany* Stimbol," directed Ibn Jad. "Send him to me alone, and after I have spoken with him and he hath departed upon his errand come thou back to my *beyt*."

Ateja trembled upon her sleeping mat,

while the silent figure crouching outside the sheikh's tent arose after Tollog had departed and disappeared in the darkness of the night.

Hastily summoned from the *beyt* of Fahd, Stimbol, cautioned to stealth by Tollog, moved silently through the darkness to the *mukaad* of the sheikh where he found Ibn Jad awaiting him.

"Sit, *Nasrany*," invited the Beduin.

"What in hell do you want of me this time of night?" demanded Stimbol.

"I have been talking with Tarzan of the Apes," said Ibn Jad, "and because you are my friend and he is not I have sent for you to tell you what he plans for you. He has interfered in all my designs and is driving me from the country, but

that is as nothing compared with what he intends for you."

"What in hell is he up to now?" demanded Stimbol. "He's always butting into some one else's business."

"Thou dost not like him?" asked Ibn Jad.

"Why should I?" and Stimbol applied a vile epithet to Tarzan.

"Thou wilt like him less when I tell thee," said Ibn Jad.

"Well, tell me."

"He says that thou hast slain thy companion, Blake," explained the sheikh, "and for that Tarzan is going to kill thee on the morrow."

"Eh? What? Kill me?" demanded

Stimbol. "Why he can't do it! What does he think he is—a Roman emperor?"

"Nevertheless he will do as he says," insisted Ibn Jad. "He is all-powerful here. No one questions the acts of this great jungle sheikh. Tomorrow he will kill thee."

"But—you won't let him, Ibn Jad! Surely, you won't let him?" Stimbol was already trembling with terror.

Ibn Jad elevated his palms, "What can I do?" he asked.

"You can—you can—why there must be something that you can do," wailed the frightened man.

"There is naught that any can do—save yourself," whispered the sheikh.

"What do you mean?"

"He lies asleep in yon *beyt* and—thou hast a sharp *khusa*."

"I have never killed a man," whispered Stimbol.

"Nor hast thou ever been killed," reminded the sheikh; "but tonight thou must kill or tomorrow thou wilt be killed."

"God!" gasped Stimbol.

"It is late," said Ibn Jad, "and I go to my sleeping mat I have warned thee—do what thou wilt in the matter," and he arose as though to enter the women's quarters.

Trembling, Stimbol staggered out into the night For a moment he hesitated, then

he crouched and crept silently through the darkness toward the *beyt* that bad been erected for the ape-man.

But ahead of him ran Ateja to warn the man who had saved her lover from the fangs of *el-adrea*. She was almost at the *beyt* she had helped to erect for the ape-man when a figure stepped from another tent and clapping a palm across her mouth and an arm about her waist held her firmly.

"Where goest thou?" whispered a voice in her ear, a voice that she recognized at once as belonging to her uncle; but Tollog did not wait for a reply, he answered for her. "Thou wantest to warn the *Nasrany* because he befriended thy lover! Go thou back to thy

father's *beyt*. If he knew this he would slay thee. Go!" And he gave her a great shove in the direction from which she had come.

There was a nasty smile upon Tollog's lips as he thought how neatly he had foiled the girl, and he thanked Allah that chance had placed him in a position to intercept her before she had been able to ruin them all; and even as Tollog, the brother of the sheikh, smiled in his beard a hand reached out of the darkness behind him and seized him by the throat —fingers grasped him and dragged him away.

Trembling, bathed in cold sweat, grasping in tightly clenched fingers the hilt of a keen knife, Wilbur Stimbol

crept through the darkness toward the tent of his victim.

Stimbol had been an irritable man, a bully and a coward; but he was no criminal. Every fiber of his being revolted at the thing he contemplated. He did not want to kill, but he was a cornered human rat and he thought that death stared him in the face, leaving open only this one way of escape.

As he entered the *beyt* of the ape- man he steeled himself to accomplish that for which he had come, and he was indeed a very dangerous, a very formidable man, as he crept to the side of the figure lying in the darkness, wrapped in an old burnoose.

14. SWORD AND BUCKLER

As the sun touched the turrets of the castle of the Prince of Nimmr a youth rolled from between his blankets, rubbed his eyes and stretched. Then he reached over and shook another youth of about his own age who slept beside him.

"Awaken, Edward! Awaken, thou sluggard!" he cried.

Edward rolled over on his back and essayed to say "Eh?" and to yawn at the same time.

"Up, lad!" urged Michel. "Forgottest thou that thy master fares forth to be slain this day?"

Edward sat up, now fully awake. His

eyes flashed. "'Tis a lie!" he cried, loyally. "He will cleave Sir Malud from poll to breast- plate with a single blow. There lives no sir knight with such mighty thews as hath Sir James. Thou art disloyal, Michel, to Sir Richard's friend who hath been a good and kindly friend to us as well."

Michel patted the other lad upon the shoulder. "Nay, I did but jest, Edward," he said. "My hopes are all for Sir James, and yet—" he paused, "I fear—"

"Fear what?" demanded Edward.

"That Sir James is not well enough versed in the use of sword and buckler to overcome Sir Malud, for even were his strength the strength of ten men it shall avail him naught without the skill

to use it."

"Thou shalt see!" maintained Edward, stoutly.

"I see that Sir James hath a loyal squire," said a voice behind them, and turning they saw Sir Richard standing in the doorway, "and may all his friends wish him well this day thus loyally!"

"I fell asleep last night praying to our Lord Jesus to guide his blade through Sir Malud's helm," said Edward.

"Good! Get thou up now and look to thy master's mail and to the trappings of his steed, that he may enter the lists bedight as befits a noble sir knight of Nimmr," instructed Richard, and left them.

It was eleven o'clock of this February

morning. The sun shone down into the great north ballium of the castle of Nimmr, glinting from the polished mail of noble knights and from pike and battle-axe of men-at-arms, picking out the gay colon of the robes of the women gathered in the grandstand below the inner wall.

Upon a raised dais at the front and center of the grandstand sat Prince Gobred and his party, and upon either side of them and extending to the far ends of the stand were ranged the noble knights and ladies of Nimmr, while behind them sat men-at-arms who were off duty, then the freedmen and, last of all, the serfs, for under the beneficent rule of the house of Gobred these were

accorded many privileges.

At either end of the lists was a tent, gay with pennons and the colors and devices of its owner; one with the green and gold of Sir Malud and the other with the blue and silver of Sir James.

Before each of these tilts stood two men-at-arms, resplendent in new apparel, the metal of their battle-axes gleaming brightly, and here a groom held a restive, richly caparisoned charger, while the squire of each of the contestants busied himself with last-minute preparations for the encounter.

A trumpeter, statuesque, the bell of his trumpet resting upon his hip, waited for the signal to sound the fanfare that would announce the entrance of his

master into the lists.

A few yards to the rear a second charger champed upon his bit as he nuzzled the groom that held him in waiting for the knight who would accompany each of the contestants upon the field.

In the blue and silver tilt sat Blake and Sir Richard, the latter issuing instructions and advice, and of the two he was the more nervous. Blake's hauberk, gorget and bassinet were of heavy chain mail, the latter lined inside and covered outside, down to the gorget, with leopard skin, offering fair protection for his head from an ordinary, glancing blow; upon his breast was sewn a large, red cross and from one

shoulder depended the streamers of a blue and silver rosette. Hanging from the pole of the tilt, upon a wooden peg, were Blake's sword and buckler.

The grandstand was filled. Prince Gobred glanced up at the sun and spoke to a knight at his side. The latter gave a brief command to a trumpeter stationed at the princely loge and presently, loud and clear, the notes of a trumpet rang in the ballium. Instantly the tilts at either end of the lists were galvanized to activity, while the grandstand seemed to spring to new life as necks were craned first toward the tent of Sir Malud and then toward that of Sir James.

Edward, flushed with excitement, ran into the tilt and seizing Blake's sword

passed the girdle about his hips and buckled it in place at his left side, then, with the buckler, he followed his master out of the tilt.

As Blake prepared to mount Edward held his stirrup while the groom sought to quiet the nervous horse. The lad pressed Blake's leg after he had swung into the saddle (no light accomplishment, weighed down as he was by heavy chain mail) and looked up into his face.

"I have prayed for thee, Sir James," he said, "I know that thou wilt prevail."

Blake saw tears in the youth's eyes as he looked down at him and he caught a choking note in his voice. "You're a good boy, Eddie," he said. "I'll promise that you won't have to be ashamed of

me."

"Ah, Sir James, how could I? Even in death thou wilt be a noble figure of a knight. A fairer one it hath never been given one to see, methinks," Edward assured him as he handed him his round buckler.

Sir Richard had by now mounted, and at a signal from him that they were ready there was a fanfare from the trumpet at Sir Malud's tilt and that noble sir knight rode forward, followed by a single knight.

Blake's trumpeter now announced his master's entry and the American rode out close along the front of the grandstand, followed by Sir Richard. There was a murmur of applause for each contestant,

which increased as they advanced and met before Prince Gobred's loge.

Here the four knights reined in and faced the Prince and each raised the hilt of his sword to his lips and kissed it in salute. As Gobred cautioned them to fight honorably, as true knights, and reminded them of the rules governing the encounter Blake's eyes wandered to the face of Guinalda.

The little princess sat stiffly erect, looking straight before her. She seemed very white, Blake thought, and he wondered if she were ill.

How beautiful, thought Blake, and though she did not once appear to look at him he was not cast down, for neither did she look at Malud.

Again the trumpet sounded and the four knights rode slowly back to opposite ends of the lists and the principals waited for the final signal to engage. Blake disengaged his arm from the leather loop of his buckler and tossed the shield upon the ground.

Edward looked at him aghast. "My Lord knight!" he cried. "Art ill? Art fainting? Didst drop thy buckler?" and he snatched it up and held it aloft to Blake, though he knew full well that his eyes had not deceived him and that his master had cast aside his only protection.

To the horrified Edward there seemed but one explanation and that his loyalty would not permit him to entertain for an instant—that Blake was preparing to

dismount and refuse to meet Sir Malud, giving the latter the victory by default and assuring himself of the contempt and ridicule of all Nimmr.

He ran to Richard who had not seen Blake's act. "Sir Richard! Sir Richard!" he cried in a hoarse whisper. "Some terrible affliction hath befallen Sir James!"

"Hey, what?" exclaimed Richard. "What meanest thou, lad?

"He hath cast aside his buckler," cried the youth. "He must be stricken sore ill, for it cannot be that otherwise he would refuse combat."

Richard spurred to Blake's side. "Hast gone mad, man?" he demanded. "Thou canst not refuse the encounter now

unless thou wouldst bring dishonor upon thy friends!"

"Where did you get that line?" demanded Blake. "Who said I was going to quit?"

"But thy buckler?" cried Sir Richard.

The trumpet at the Prince's loge rang out peremptorily. Sir Malud spurred forward to a fanfare from his own trumpeter.

"Let her go!" cried Blake to his.

"Thy buckler!" screamed Sir Richard.

"The damned thing was in my way," shouted Blake as he spurred forward to meet the doughty Malud, Richard trailing behind him, as did Malud's second behind that knight.

There was a confident smile upon the lips of Sir Malud and he glanced often at the knights and ladies in the grandstand, but Blake rode with his eyes always upon his antagonist.

Both horses had broken immediately into a gallop, and as they neared one another Malud spurred forward at a run and Blake saw that the man's aim was doubtless to overthrow him at the first impact, or at least to so throw him out of balance as to make it easy for Malud to strike a good blow before he could recover himself.

Malud rode with his sword half raised at his right side, while Blake's was at guard, a position unknown to the knights of Nimmr, who guarded solely

with their bucklers.

The horsemen approached to engage upon each other's left, and as they were about to meet Sir Malud rose in his stirrups and swung his sword hand down, to gain momentum, described a circle with his blade and launched a terrific cut at Blake's head.

It was at that instant that some few in the grandstand realized that Blake bore no buckler.

"His buckler! Sir James hath no buckler!"

"He hath lost his buckler!" rose now from all parts of the stand; and from right beside him, where the two knights met before the log of Gobred, Blake heard a woman scream, but he could not look to

see if it were Guinalda.

As they met Blake reined his horse suddenly toward Malud's, so that the two chargers' shoulders struck, and at the same time he cast all his weight in the same direction, whereas Malud, who was standing in his stirrups to deliver his blow, was almost in a state of equilibrium and having his buckler ready for defense was quite helpless insofar as maneuvering his mount was concerned.

Malud, overbalanced, lost the force and changed the direction of his blow, which fell, much to the knight's surprise, upon Blake's blade along which it spent its force and was deflected from its target.

Instantly, his horse well in hand by

reason that his left arm was unencumbered by a buckler, Blake reined in and simultaneously cut to the left and rear, his point opening the mail on Malud's left shoulder and biting into the flesh before the latter's horse had carried him out of reach.

A loud shout of approbation arose from the stands for the thing had been neatly done and then Malud's second spurred to the Prince's loge and entered a protest.

"Sir James hath no buckler!" he cried. "'Tis no fair combat!"

"'Tis fairer for thy knight than for Sir James," said Gobred.

"We would not take that advantage of him," parried Malud's second, Sir

Jarred.

"What sayest thou?" demanded Gobred of Sir Richard who had quickly ridden to Jarred's side. "Is Sir James without a buckler through some accident that befell before he entered the lists?"

"Nay, he cast it aside," replied Richard, "and averred that the 'damned thing' did annoy him; but if Sir Jarred feeleth that, because of this, they be not fairly matched we are willing; if Sir Malud, also, should cast aside his buckler."

Gobred smiled. "That be fair," he said.

The two men, concerned with their encounter and not with the argument of their seconds, had engaged once more.

Blood was showing upon Malud's shoulder and trickling down his back, staining his skirts and the housing of his charger.

The stand was in an uproar, for many were still shouting aloud about the buckler and others were screaming with delight over the neat manner in which Sir James had drawn his first blood. Wagers were being freely made, and though Sir Malud still ruled favorite in the betting, the odds against Blake were not so great, and while men had no money to wager they had jewels and arms and horses. One enthusiastic adherent of Sir Malud bet three chargers against one that his champion would be victorious and the words were scarce

out of his mouth ere he had a dozen takers, whereas before the opening passage at arms offers as high as ten to one had found no takers.

Now the smile was gone from Malud's lips and he glanced no more at the grandstand. There was rage in his eyes as he spurred again toward Blake, who he thought had profited by a lucky accident.

Unhampered by a buckler Blake took full advantage of the nimbleness of the wiry horse he rode and which he had ridden daily since his arrival in Nimmr, so that man and beast were well accustomed to one another.

Again Sir Malud saw his blade glance harmlessly from the sword of his

antagonist and then, to his vast surprise, the point of Sir James' blade leaped quickly beneath his buckler and entered his side. It was not a deep wound, but it was painful and again it brought blood.

Angrily Malud struck again, but Blake had reined his charger quickly to the rear and before Malud could gather his reins Blake had struck him again, this time a heavy blow upon the helm.

Half stunned and wholly infuriated Malud wheeled and charged at full tilt, once again determined to ride his adversary down. They met with a crash directly in front of Gobred's loge, there was a quick play of swords that baffled the eyesight of the onlookers and then, to the astonishment of all, most particularly

Malud, that noble sir knight's sword flew from his grasp and hurtled to the field, leaving him entirely to the mercy of his foe.

Malud reined in and sat erect, waiting. He knew and Blake knew that under the rules that governed their encounter Blake was warranted in running him through unless Malud sued for mercy, and no one, Blake least of all, expected this of so proud and haughty a knight.

Sir Malud sat proudly on his charger waiting for Blake to advance and kill him. Utter silence had fallen upon the stands, so that the champing of Malud's horse upon its bit was plainly audible. Blake turned to Sir Jarred.

"Summon a squire, sir knight," he said, "to return Sir Malud's sword to him."

Again the stands rocked to the applause, but Blake turned his back upon them and rode to Richard's side to wait until his adversary was again armed.

"Well, old top," he inquired of Sir Richard, "just how much a dozen am I offered for bucklers now?"

Richard laughed. "Thou hast been passing fortunate, James," he replied; "but methinks a good swordsman would long since have cut thee through."

"I know Malud would have if I had packed that chopping bowl along on the party," Blake assured him, though it is doubtful if Sir Richard understood what

he was talking about, as was so often the case when Blake discoursed that Richard had long since ceased to even speculate as to the meaning of much that his friend said.

But now Sir Malud was rearmed and riding toward Blake. He stopped his horse before the American and bowed low. "I do my devoirs to a noble and generous knight," he said, graciously.

Blake bowed. "Are you ready sir?" he asked.

Malud nodded.

"On guard, then!" snapped the American.

For a moment the two jockeyed for position. Blake feinted and Malud raised his buckler before his face to catch the

blow, but as it did not fall he lowered his shield, just as Blake had known that he would, and as he did so the edge of the American's weapon fell heavily upon the crown of his bassinet.

Malud's arm dropped at his side, he slumped in his saddle and then toppled forward and rolled to the ground. Agile, even in his heavy armor, Blake dismounted and walked to where his foe lay stretched upon his back almost in front of Gobred's loge. He placed a foot upon Malud's breast and pressed the point of his sword against his throat.

The crowd leaned forward to see the coup-de-grace administered, but Blake did not drive his point home. He looked up at Prince Gobred and addressed him.

"Here is a brave knight," he said, "with whom I have no real quarrel. I spare him to your service, Prince, and to those who love him," and his eyes went straight to the eyes of the Princess Guinalda. Then he turned and walked back along the front of the grandstand to his own tilt, while Richard rode behind him, and the knights and the ladies, the men-at-arms, the freedmen and the serfs stood upon their seats and shouted their applause.

Edward was beside himself with joy, as was Michel. The former knelt and embraced Blake's legs, he kissed his hand, and wept, so great were his happiness and his excitement.

"I knew it! I knew it!" he cried. "Did I

not tell thee, Michel, that my own sir knight would overthrow Sir Malud?"

The men-at-arms, the trumpeter and the grooms at Blake's tilt wore grins that stretched from ear to ear. Whereas a few minutes before they had felt ashamed to have been detailed to the losing side, now they were most proud and looked upon Blake as the greatest hero of Nimmr. Great would be their boasting among their fellows as they gathered with their flagons of ale about the rough deal table in their dining hall.

Edward removed Blake's armor and Michel got Richard out of his amidst much babbling upon the part of the youths who could not contain themselves, so doubly great was their

joy because so unexpected.

Blake went directly to his quarters and Richard accompanied him, and when the two men were alone Richard placed a hand upon Blake's shoulder.

"Thou hast done a noble and chivalrous thing, my friend," he said, "but I know not that it is a wise one."

"And why?" demanded Blake. "You didn't think I could stick the poor mutt when he was lying there defenseless?"

Richard shook his head. "'Tis but what he would have done for thee had thy positions been reversed," said he.

"Well, I couldn't do it. We're not taught to believe that it is exactly ethical to hit a fellow when he's down, where I come from," explained Blake.

"Had your quarrel been no deeper than appeared upon the surface thou mightest well have been thus magnanimous; but Malud is jealous of thee and that jealousy will be by no means lessened by what hath transpired this day. Thou mightest have been rid of a powerful and dangerous enemy hadst thou given him the coup-de-grace, as was thy right; but now thou hast raised up a greater enemy since to his jealousy is added hatred and envy against thee for thy prowess over him. Thou didst make him appear like a monkey, James, and that Sir Malud will never forgive an I know the man."

The knights and ladies attached to the castle of Gobred ate together at a great

table in the huge hall of the castle. Three hundred people could be accommodated at the single board and it took quite a company of serving men to fill their needs. Whole pigs, roasted, were carried in upon great trenchers and there were legs of mutton and sides of venison and bowls of vegetables, with wine and ale, and at the end immense puddings.

There was much laughter and loud talking, and it all presented a wild and fascinating picture to Sir James Blake as he sat at the lower end of the table far below the salt that night, in his accustomed place as one of the latest neophytes in the noble ranks of the knighthood of Nimmr.

The encounter between himself and

Malud was the subject of the moment and many were the compliments bestowed upon him and many the questions as to where and how he had acquired his strange technique of swordsmanship. Although they had seen him accomplish it, yet they still appeared to believe it inconceivable that a man might prevail without a buckler over one who carried this essential article of defense.

Prince Gobred and his family sat, with the higher nobles of Nimmr, at a table slightly raised above the rest of the board and running across its upper end, the whole forming a huge T. When he wished to speak to anyone farther down the table he resorted to the simple

expedient of raising his voice, so that if several were so inclined at the same time the room became a bedlam of uproar and confusion.

And as Blake sat at the farthest end of the table it was necessary for one at Gobred's end to scream to attract attention, though when it was discovered that it was the prince who was speaking the rest of the company usually lapsed into silence out of respect for him, unless they were too far gone in drink.

Shortly after the feasters were seated Gobred had arisen and lifted his goblet high in air, and silence had fallen upon the whole company as knights and ladies rose and faced their prince.

"Hail to our King!" cried Gobred.

"Hail to our liege lord, Richard of England!"

And in a great chorus rose the answering "Hail!" as the company drank the health of Richard Coeur de Lion seven hundred and twenty- eight years after his death!

Then they drank the health of Gobred and of the Princess Brynilda, his wife, and of the Princess Guinalda, and each time a voice boomed from just below the dais of the prince: "Here I am looking at thee!" as Sir Richard with a proud smile displayed his newly acquired knowledge.

Again Prince Gobred arose. "Hail!" he cried, "to that worthy sir knight who hath most nobly and chivalrously

acquitted himself in the lists this day! Hail to Sir James, Knight Templar and, now, Knight of Nimmr!"

Not even the name of Richard I of England had aroused the enthusiasm that followed the drinking to Sir James. The length of the long hall Blake's eyes traveled straight to where Guinalda stood: He saw her drink to him and he saw that her eyes were regarding him, but the distance was too great and the light of the pitch torches and the oil cressets too dim for him to see whether her glance carried a message of friendship or dislike.

When the noise had partially subsided and the drinkers had retaken their seats Blake arose.

"Prince Gobred," he called the length of the room, "knights and ladies of Nimmr, I give you another toast! To Sir Malud!"

For a moment there was silence, the silence of surprise, and then the company arose and drank the health of the absent Sir Malud.

"Thou art a strange sir knight, with strange words upon thy lips and strange ways, Sir James," shouted Gobred, "but though thou callest a hail 'a toast' and thy friends be 'old top' and 'kid,' yet withal it seemeth that we understand thee and we would know more about thy country and the ways of the noble knights that do abide there.

"Tell us, are they all thus chivalrous

and magnanimous to their fallen foes?"

"If they're not they get the raspberry," explained Blake.

"'Get the raspberry'!" repeated Gobred. "'Tis some form of punishment, methinks."

"You said it, Prince!"

"Of a surety I said it, Sir James!" snapped Gobred with asperity.

"I mean, Prince, that you hit the nail on the head—you guessed it the first time. You see the raspberry is about the only form of punishment that the Knights of the Squared Circle, or the Knights of the Diamond can understand."

"Knights of the Squared Circle! Knights of the Diamond! Those are

knightly orders of which I wot not. Be they doughty knights?"

"Some of them are dotty, but a lot of them are regulars. Take Sir Dempsey, for instance, a knight of the Squared Circle. He showed 'em all he was a regular knight in defeat, which is much more difficult than being a regular knight in victory."

"Be there other orders of knighthood these days?" demanded Gobred.

"We're lousy with them!"

"What!" cried Gobred.

"We're all knights these days," explained Blake.

"All knights! Be there no serfs nor yeomen? 'Tis incredible!"

"Well, there are some yeomen in the navy, I think; but all the rest of us, pretty much, are knights. You see things have changed a lot since the days of Richard. The people have sort of overthrown the old order of things. They poked a lot of ridicule at knights and wanted to get rid of knighthood, and as soon as they had they all wanted to be knights themselves; so we have Knights Templar now and Knights of Pythias and Knights of Columbus and Knights of Labor and a lot more I can't recall."

"Methinks it must be a fine and noble world," cried Gobred, "for what with so many noble sir knights it would seem that they must often contend, one against another—is that not true?"

"Well, they do scrap some," Blake admitted.

15. THE LONELY CRAVE

Within the dark interior of the *beyt* Stimbol could see nothing. Just before him he beard a man breathing heavily as might one in a troubled sleep. The would-be murderer paused to steady his nerves. Then, on hands and knees, he crept forward inch by inch.

Presently one of his hands touched the prostrate figure of the sleeper. Lightly, cautiously, Stimbol groped until he had definitely discovered the position in which his victim lay. In one hand, ready, he grasped the keen knife. He scarce dared breathe for fear he might awaken the ape-man. He prayed that Tarzan was a sound sleeper, and he prayed that the first blow of his weapon would reach

that savage heart.

Now he was ready! He had located the exact spot where he must strike! He raised his knife and struck. His victim shuddered spasmodically. Again and again with savage maniacal force and speed the knife was plunged into the soft flesh. Stimbol felt the warm blood spurt out upon his hand and wrist.

At length, satisfied that his mission had been accomplished, he scurried from the *beyt* Now he was trembling so that he could scarcely stand—terrified, revolted by the horrid crime he had committed.

Wild-eyed, haggard, he stumbled to the *mukaad* of Ibn Jad's *beyt* and there he collapsed. The sheikh stepped from

the women's quarters and looked down upon the trembling figure that the dim light of a paper lantern revealed.

"What doest thou here, *Nasrany*?" he demanded.

"I have done it, Ibn Jad!" muttered Stimbol.

"Done what?" cried the sheikh.

"Slain Tarzan of the Apes."

"Ai! Ai!" screamed Ibn Jad. "Tollog! Where art thou? Hirfa! Ateja! Come! Didst hear what the*Nasrany* sayeth?"

Hirfa and Ateja rushed into the *mukaad*.

"Didst hear him?" repeated Ibn Jad. "He hath slain my good friend the great sheikh of the Jungle, Motlog! Fahd!

Haste!" His voice had been rising until now he was screaming at the top of his lungs and Arabs were streaming toward his *beyt* from all directions.

Stimbol, stunned by what he had done, dumb from surprise and terror at the unexpected attitude of Ibn Jad, crouched speechless in the center of the *mukaad*.

"Seize him!" cried the sheikh to the first man that arrived. "He hath slain Tarzan of the Apes, our great friend, who was to preserve us and lead us from this land of dangers. Now all will be our enemies. The friends of Tarzan will fall upon us and slay us. Allah, bear witness that I am free from guilt in this matter and let Thy wrath and the wrath of the

friends of Tarzan fall upon this guilty man!"

By this time the entire population of the *menzil* was gathered in front of the sheikh's *beyt*, and if they were surprised by his protestations of sudden affection for Tarzan they gave no evidence of it.

"Take him away!" commanded Ibn Jad. "In the morning we shall gather and decide what we must do."

They dragged the terrified Stimbol to Fahd's *beyt*, where they bound him hand and foot and left him for Fahd to guard. When they had gone the Beduin leaned low over Stimbol, and whispered in his ear.

"Didst really slay the jungle sheikh?" he demanded.

"Ibn Jad forced me to do so and now he turns against me," whispered Stimbol.

"And tomorrow he will have you killed so that he may tell the friends of Tarzan that he hath punished the slayer of Tarzan," said Fahd.

"Save me, Fahd!" begged Stimbol. "Save me and I will give you twenty million francs—I swear it! Once I am safe in the nearest European colony I will get the money for you. Think of it, Fahd—twenty million francs!"

"I am thinking of it, *Nasrany*," replied the Beduin, "and I think that thou liest. There be not that much money in the world!"

"I swear that I have ten times that amount If I have lied to you you may kill

me. Save me! Save me!"

"Twenty million francs!" murmured Fahd. "Perchance he does not lie! Listen, *Nasrany*. I do not know that I can save thee, but I shall try, and if I succeed and thou forgettest the twenty million francs I shall kill thee if I have to follow thee across the world—dost understand?"

Ibn Jad called two ignorant slaves to him and commanded them to go to the *beyt* that had been Zeyd's and carry Tarzan's body to the edge of the *menzil* where they were to dig a grave and bury it.

With paper lanterns they went to the *beyt* of death and wrapping the dead man in the old burnoose that already

covered him they carried him across the *menzil* and laid him down while they dug a shallow grave; and so, beneath a forest giant in the land that he loved the grave of Tarzan of the Apes was made.

Roughly the slaves rolled the corpse into the hole they had made, shoveled the dirt upon it and left it in its lonely, unmarked tomb.

Early the next morning Ibn Jad called about him the elders of the tribe, and when they were gathered it was noted that Tollog was missing, and though a search was made he could not be found. Fahd suggested that be had gone forth early to hunt.

Ibn Jad explained to them that if they were to escape the wrath of the friends

of Tarzan they must take immediate steps to disprove their responsibility for the slaying of the ape-man and that they might only do this and express their good faith by punishing the murderer.

It was not difficult to persuade them to take the life of a Christian and there was only one that demurred. This was Fahd.

"There are two reasons, Ibn Jad, why we should not take the life of this *Nasrany*," he said.

"By Allah, there never be any reason why a true believer should not take the life of a*Nasrany*!" cried one of the old men.

"Listen," admonished Fahd, "to what I have in mind and then I am sure that you

will agree that I am right."

"Speak, Fahd," said Ibn Jad.

"This *Nasrany* is a rich and powerful man in his own *beled*. If it be possible to spare his life he will command a great ransom—dead he is worth nothing to us. If by chance, the friends of Tarzan do not learn of his death before we are safely out of this accursed land it will have profited us naught to have killed Stimbol and, *Billah*, if we kill him now they may not believe us when we say that he slew Tarzan and we took his life in punishment.

"But if we keep him alive until we are met with the friends of Tarzan, should it so befall that they overtake us, then we may say that we did hold him prisoner

that Tarzan's own people might mete out their vengeance to him, which would suit them better."

"Thy words are not without wisdom," admitted Ibn Jad, "but suppose the *Nasrany* spoke lies concerning us and said that it was we who slew Tarzan? Would they not believe him above us?"

"That be easily prevented," said the old man who had spoken before. "Let us cut his tongue out forthwith that be may not bear false witness against us."

"*W'Allah*, thou hast it!" exclaimed Ibn Jad.

"*Billah*, nay!" cried Fahd. "The better we treat him the larger will be the reward that he will pay us."

"We can wait until the last moment," said Ibn Jad, "an we see that we are to lose him and our reward, then may we cut out his tongue."

Thus the fate of Wilbur Stimbol was left to the gods, and Ibn Jad, temporarily freed from the menace of Tarzan, turned his attention once more to his plans for entering the valley. With a strong party he went in person and sought a palaver with the Galla chief.

As he approached the village of Batando be passed through the camps of thousands of Galla warriors and realized fully what he had previously sensed but vaguely—that his position was most precarious and that with the best grace possible he must agree to whatever

terms the old chief might propose.

Batando received him graciously enough, though with all the majesty of a powerful monarch, and assured him that on the following day he would escort him to the entrance to the valley, but that first he must deliver to Batando all the Galla slaves that were with his party.

"But that will leave us without carriers or servants and will greatly weaken the strength of my party," cried Ibn Jad.

Batando but shrugged his black shoulders.

"Let them remain with us until we have returned from the valley," implored the sheikh.

"No Galla man may accompany you,"

said Batando with finality.

Early the next morning the tent of Ibn Jad was struck in signal that all were to prepare for the*rahla*, and entirely surrounded by Galla warriors they started toward the rugged mountains where lay the entrance to the valley of Ibn Jad's dreams.

Fejjuan and the other Galla slaves that the Arabs had brought with them from Beled el-Guad marched with their own people, happy in their new-found freedom. Stimbol, friendless, fearful, utterly cowed, trudged wearily along under guard of two young Beduins, his mind constantly reverting to the horror of the murdered man lying in his lonely grave behind them.

Winding steadily upward along what at times appeared to be an ancient trail and again no trail at all, the Arabs and their escort climbed higher and higher into the rugged mountains that rim the Valley of the Sepulcher upon the north. At the close of the second day, after they had made camp beside a rocky mountain brook, Batando came to Ibn Jad and pointed to the entrance to a rocky side ravine that branched from the main canyon directly opposite the camp.

"There," he said, "lies the trail into the valley. Here we leave you and return to our villages. Upon the morrow we go."

When the sun rose the following morning Ibn Jad discovered that the

Gallas had departed during the night, but he did not know it was because of the terror they felt for the inhabitants of the mysterious valley from which no Galla ever had returned.

That day Ibn Jad spent in making a secure camp in which to leave the women and children until the warriors had returned from their adventure in the valley or had discovered that they might safely fetch their women, and the next morning, leaving a few old men and boys to protect the camp, he set forth with those who were accounted the fighting men among them, and presently the watchers in the camp saw the last of them disappear in the rocky ravine that lay opposite the *menzil*.

16. THE GREAT TOURNEY

King Bohun with many knights and squires and serving men had ridden down from his castle above the City of the Sepulcher two days ago to take his way across the valley to the field before' the city of Nimmr for the Great Tourney that is held once each year, commencing upon the first Sunday in Lent.

Gay pennons fluttered from a thousand lance tips and gay with color were the housings of the richly caparisoned chargers that proudly bore the Knights of the Sepulcher upon whose backs red crosses were emblazoned to denote that they had completed the

pilgrimage to the Holy Land and were returning to home and England.

Their bassinets, unlike those of the Knights of Nimmr, were covered with bullock hide, and the devices upon their bucklers differed, and their colors. But for these and the crosses upon their backs they might have been Gobred's own good knights and true.

Sturdy sumpter beasts, almost as richly trapped as the knight's steeds, bore the marquees and tilts that were to house the knights during the tourney, as well as their personal belongings, their extra arms and their provisions for the three days of the tourney; for custom, over seven centuries old, forbade the Knights of Nimmr and the Knights of the

Sepulcher breaking bread together.

The Great Tourney was merely a truce during which they carried on their ancient warfare under special rules which transformed it into a gorgeous pageant and an exhibition of martial prowess which noncombatants might witness in comfort and with impunity. It did not permit friendly intercourse between the two factions as this was not compatible with the seriousness of the event, in which knights of both sides often were killed, or the spirit in which the grand prize was awarded.

This prize as much as any other factor had kept open the breach of seven and a half centuries' duration that separated the Fronters from the Backers, for it

consisted of five maidens whom the winners took back with them to their own city and who were never again seen by their friends or relatives.

Though the sorrow was mitigated by the honorable treatment that custom and the laws of knighthood decreed should be accorded these unfortunate maidens, it was still bitter because attached to it was the sting of defeat.

Following the tournament the maidens became the especial charges of Gobred or Bohun, dependent of course upon whether the honors of the tourney had fallen to the Fronters or the Backers, and in due course were given in honorable marriage to knights of the victorious party.

The genesis of the custom, which was now fully seven centuries old, doubtless lay in the wise desire of some ancient Gobred or Bohun to maintain the stock of both factions strong and virile by the regular infusion of new blood, as well, perhaps, as to prevent the inhabitants of the two cities from drifting too far apart in manners, customs and speech.

Many a happy wife of Nimmr had been born in the City of the Sepulcher and seldom was it that the girls themselves repined for long. It was considered an honor to be chosen and there were always many more who volunteered than the requisite number of five that annually made the sacrifice.

The five who constituted the prize

offered by the City of the Sepulcher this year rode on white palfreys and were attended by a guard of honor in silver mail. The girls, selected for their beauty to thus honor the city of their birth, were gorgeously attired and weighed down with ornaments of gold and silver and precious stones.

Upon the plain before the city of Nimmr preparations for the tourney had been in progress for many days. The lists were being dragged and rolled with heavy wooden rollers, the ancient stands of stone from which the spectators viewed the spectacle were undergoing their annual repairs and cleansing, a frame superstructure was being raised to support the canopies that would shade

the choice seats reserved for the nobility, and staffs for a thousand pennons had been set round the outer margin of the lists—these and a hundred other things were occupying a company of workmen; and in the walled city and in the castle that stood above it the hammers of armorers and smiths rang far into the night forging iron shoes and mail and lance tips.

Blake had been assured that he was to have a part in the Great Tourney and was as keen for it as be had been for the big game of the season during his football days at college. He had been entered in two sword contests— one in which five Knights of Nimmr met five Knights of the Sepulcher and another in

which he was pitted against a single antagonist, but his only contest with the lance was to be in the grand finale when a hundred Fronters faced a hundred Backers, since, whereas, before his encounter with Malud he had been considered hopeless with sword and buckler now Prince Gobred looked to him to win many points with these, his lance work being held but mediocre.

King Bohun and his followers were camped in a grove of oaks about a mile north of the lists, nor did the laws governing the Great Tourney permit them to come nearer until the hour appointed for their entrance upon the first day of the spectacle.

Blake, in preparing for the tourney,

had followed the custom adopted by many of the knights of wearing distinctive armor and trapping his charger similarly. His chain mail was all of solid black, relieved only by the leopard skin of his bassinet and the blue and silver pennon upon his lance. The housings of his mount were of black, edged with silver and blue, and there were, of course, the prescribed red crosses upon his breast and upon his horse housings.

As he came from his quarters upon the opening morning of the tourney, followed by Edward bearing his lance and buckler, he appeared a somber figure among the resplendently caparisoned knights and the gorgeously

dressed women that were gathered in the great court awaiting the word to mount their horses which were being held in the north ballium by the grooms.

That his black mail was distinctive was evidenced by the attention he immediately attracted, and that he had quickly become popular among the knights and ladies of Nimmr was equally apparent by the manner in which they clustered about him, but opinion was divided in the matter of his costume, some holding that it was too dismal and depressing.

Guinalda was there but she remained seated upon a bench where she was conversing with one of the maidens that had been chosen as Nimmr's prize.

Blake quickly disengaged himself from those who had crowded about him and crossed the court to where Guinalda sat. At his approach the princess looked up and inclined her head slightly in recognition of his bow and then she resumed her conversation with the maiden.

The rebuff was too obvious to permit of misunderstanding, but Blake was not satisfied to accept it and go his way without an explanation. He could scarce believe, however, that the princess was still vexed merely because he had intimated that be had believed that she took a greater interest in him than she had admitted. There must be some other reason.

He did not turn and walk away, then, although she continued to ignore him, but stood quietly before her waiting patiently until she should again notice him.

Presently he noted that she was becoming nervous as was also the maiden with whom she spoke. There were lapses in their conversation; one of Guinalda's feet was tapping the flagging irritably; a slow flush was creeping upward into her cheeks. The maiden fidgeted, she plucked at the ends of the wimple that lay about her shoulders, she smoothed the rich cyclas of her mantle and finally she arose and bowing before the princess asked if she might go and bid farewell to her mother.

Guinalda bade her begone and then, alone with Blake and no longer able to ignore him, nor caring to, she turned angrily upon him.

"I was right!" she snapped. "Thou art a forward boor. Why standest thou thus staring at me when I have made it plain that I would not be annoyed by thee? Go!"

"Because—" Blake hesitated, "because I love you."

"Sirrah!" cried Guinalda, springing to her feet. "How darest thou!"

"I would dare anything for you, my princess," replied Blake, "because I love you."

Guinalda looked straight at him for a moment in silence, then her short upper

lip curved in a contemptuous sneer.

"Thou liest!" she said. "I have heard what thou hast said concerning me!" and without waiting for a reply she brushed past him and walked away.

Blake hurried after her. "What have I said about you?" he demanded. "I have said nothing that I would not repeat before all Nimmr. Not even have I presumed to tell my best friend, Sir Richard, that I love you. No other ears than yours have heard that."

"I have heard differently," said Guinalda, haughtily, "and I care not to discuss the matter further."

"But—" commenced Blake, but at that instant a trumpet sounded from the north gate leading into the ballium. It was the

signal for the knights to mount. Guinalda's page came running to her to summon her to her father's side. Sir Richard appeared and seized Blake by the arm.

"Come, James!" he cried. "We should have been mounted before now for we ride in the forerank of the knights today." And so Blake was dragged away from the princess before he could obtain an explanation of her, to him, inexplicable attitude.

The north ballium presented a scene of color and activity, crowded as it was with knights and ladies, pages, squires, grooms, men-at-arms and horses, nor would it accommodate them all, so that the overflow stretched into the east and

south balliums and even through the great east gate out upon the road that leads down into the valley.

For half an hour something very like chaos reigned about the castle of the Prince of Nimmr, but eventually perspiring marshals and shouting heralds whipped the cortege into shape as it took its slow and imposing way down the winding mountain road toward the lists.

First rode the marshals and heralds and behind them a score of trumpeters; then came Prince Gobred, riding alone, and following was a great company of knights, their colored pennons streaming in the wind. They rode just before the ladies and behind the ladies was another company of knights, while in the rear

marched company after company of men-at-arms, some armed with cross bows, others with pikes and still others again with battle-axes of huge proportions.

Perhaps a hundred knights and men-at-arms all told were left behind to guard the castle and the entrance to the Valley of the Sepulcher, but these would be relieved to witness the second and third days' exercises.

As the Knights of Nimmr wound down to the lists, the Knights of the Sepulcher moved out from their camp among the oaks, and the marshals of the two parties timed their approach so that both entered the lists at the same time.

The ladies of Nimmr dropped out of the procession and took their places in

the stand; the five maidens of Nimmr and the five from the City of the Sepulcher were escorted to a dais at one end of the lists, after which the knights lined up in solid ranks, the Knights of Nimmr upon the south side of the lists, the Knights of the Sepulcher upon the north.

Gobred and Bohun rode forward and met in the center of the field, where, in measured and imposing tones, Bohun delivered the ancient challenge prescribed by custom and the laws of the Great Tourney and handed Gobred the gage, the acceptance of which constituted an acceptance of the challenge and marked the official opening of the tourney.

As Gobred and Bohun reined about

and faced their own knights these rode out of the lists, those who were not to take part in the encounters of the day seeking places in the stands after turning their chargers over to grooms, while those who were to participate formed again to ride once around the lists, for the double purpose of indicating to their opponents and the spectators the entrants for that day and of viewing the prizes offered by their opponents.

In addition to the maidens there were many minor prizes consisting of jeweled ornaments, suits of mail, lances, swords, bucklers, splendid steeds and the many articles that were valued by knights or that might find favor in the eyes of their ladies.

The Knights of the Sepulcher paraded first, with Bohun at their head, and it was noticeable that the eyes of the king were often upon the women in the stands as he rode past. Bohun was a young man, having but just ascended the throne following the recent death of his father. He was arrogant and tyrannical and it had been common knowledge in Nimmr that for years he had been at the head of a faction that was strong for war with Nimmr, that the city might be reduced and the entire Valley of the Sepulcher brought under the rule of the Bohuns.

His charger prancing, his colors flying, his great company of knights at his back, King Bohun rode along the stands reserved for the people of

Nimmr, and when he came to the central loge in which sat Prince Gobred with the Princess Brynilda and Princess Guinalda, his eyes fell upon the face of the daughter of Gobred.

Bohun reined in his charger and stared straight into the face of Guinalda. Gobred flushed angrily, for Bohun's act was a breach of courtesy, and half rose from his seat, but at that moment Bohun, bowing low across his mount's withers, moved on, followed by his knights.

That day the honors went to the Knights of the Sepulcher, far they scored two hundred and twenty seven points against one hundred and six that the Knights of Nimmr were able to procure.

Upon the second day the tourney

opened with the riding past of the entrants who, ordinarily, were conducted by a herald, but to the surprise of all, Bohun again led his knights past the stands and again he paused and looked full at the Princess Guinalda.

This day the Knights of Nimmr fared a little better, being for the day but seven points behind their opponents, though the score for the two days stood two hundred and sixty nine to three hundred and ninety seven in favor of the Knights of the Sepulcher.

So the third day opened with the knights from the north boasting what seemed an insuperable lead of one hundred and twenty eight points and the

Knights of Nimmr spurred to greater action by the knowledge that to win the tourney they must score two hundred and thirty two of the remaining three hundred and thirty four points.

Once again, contrary to age old custom, Bohun led his entrants about the lists as they paraded before the opening encounter, and once again he drew rein before the loge of Gobred and his eye rested upon the beautiful face of Guinalda for an instant before he addressed her sire.

"Prince Gobred of Nimmr," he said in his haughty and arrogant voice, "as thou well knowest, my valiant sir knights have bested thine by more than six score points and the Great Tourney is as good

as ours already. Yet we would make thee a proposition."

"Speak Bohun! The Great Tourney is yet far from won, but an thou hast any proposition that an honorable prince may consider, thou hast my assurance that 'twill be given consideration."

"Thy five maidens are as good as ours," said Bohun, "but give me thy daughter to be queen of the Valley of the Sepulcher and I will grant thee the tourney."

Gobred went white with anger, but when he replied his voice was low and even for he was master of his own emotions, as befitted a princely man.

"Sir Bohun," he said, refusing to accord to his enemy the title of king, "thy

words are an offense in the ears of honorable men, implying as they do that the daughter of a Gobred be for sale and that the honor of the knighthood of Nimmr may be bartered for.

"Get thou hence to thine own side of the lists before I set serfs upon thee to drive the there with staves."

"So that is thine answer, eh?" shouted Bohun. "Then know thou that I shall take the five maidens by the rules of the Great Tourney and thy daughter by force of arms!" With this threat delivered he wheeled his steed and spurred away.

Word of Bohun's proposition and his rebuff spread like wild fire throughout the ranks of the Knights of Nimmr so that those who were to contend this last day

of the tourney were keyed to the highest pitch of derring do in the defence of the honor of Nimmr and the protection of the Princess Guinalda.

The great lead attained by the Knights of the Sepulcher during the first two days was but an added incentive to greater effort, provoking them, as a spur, to the utmost limits of daring and exertion. There was no need that their marshals should exhort them. The youth and chivalry of Nimmr had heard the challenge and would answer it in the lists!

Blake's sword and buckler encounter with a Knight of the Sepulcher was scheduled for the first event of the day. When the lists were cleared he rode in

to a fanfare of trumpets, moving parallel with the south stands while his adversary rode along the front of the north stands, the latter halting before the loge of Bohun as Blake drew rein in front of that of Gobred, where he raised the hilt of his sword to his lips to the Prince, though his eyes were upon Guinalda.

"Conduct thyself as a true knight this day to the glory and honor of Nimmr," charged Gobred, "and may the blessings of Our Lord Jesus be upon thee and thy sword, our well beloved Sir James!"

"To the glory and honor of Nimmr I pledge my sword and my life!" should have been Blake's reply according to the usages of the Great Tourney.

"To the glory and honor of Nimmr and to the protection of my Princess I pledge my sword and my life!" is what he said, and it was evident from the expression on Gobred's face that he was not displeased, while the look of haughty disdain which had been upon Guinalda's face softened.

Slowly she arose and tearing a ribbon from her gown stepped to the front of the loge. "Receive this favor from thy lady, sir knight," she said, "bearing it with honor and to victory in thine encounter."

Blake reined closed to the rail of the loge and bent low while Guinalda pinned the ribbon upon his shoulder. His face was close to hers; he sensed the intoxicating perfume of her hair; he felt

her warm breath upon his cheek.

"I love you," he whispered, so low that no other ears than hers could hear.

"Thou art a boor," she replied in a voice as low as his. "It is for the sake of the five maidens that I encourage thee with this favor."

Blake looked straight into her eyes. "I love you, Guinalda," he said, "and —you love me!"

Before she could reply be had wheeled away, the trumpets had sounded, and he was cantering slowly toward the end of field where the tilts of the Knights of Nimmr stood.

Edward, very much excited, was there and Sir Richard and Michel, with a marshal, heralds, trumpeters, men-at-

arms—a martial company to urge him on with encouragement and advice.

Blake cast aside his buckler, nor was there any to reprove him now. Instead they smiled proudly and knowingly, for had they not seen him best Sir Malud without other defense than his horsemanship and his sword?

The trumpets blared again. Blake turned and put spurs to his charger. Straight down the center of the lists he rode. From the opposite end came a Knight of the Sepulcher to meet him!

"Sir James! Sir James!" cried the spectators in the stands upon the south side, while the north stands answered with the name of their champion.

"Who is the black knight?" asked

many a man in the north stands of his neighbor.

"He hath no buckler!" cried some. "He is mad!"

"Sir Guy will cleave him open at the first pass!"

"Sir Guy! Sir Guy!"

17. "THE SARACENS!"

Just as the second day of the Great Tourney had opened in the Valley of the Sepulcher upon the plains below the city of Nimmr, a band of swart men in soiled *thobes* and carrying long matchlocks topped the summit of the pass upon the north side of the valley and looked down upon the City of the Sepulcher and the castle of King Bohun.

They had followed upward along what may once have been a trail, but for so long a time had it been unused, or so infrequently had it been used that it was scarce distinguishable from the surrounding brush; but below them now Ibn Jad saw at a short distance a better marked road and, beyond, what

appeared to him a fortress. Beyond that again he glimpsed the battlements of Bohun's castle.

What he saw in the foreground was the barbican guarding the approach to the castle and the city, both of which were situated in much the same relative position as were the barbican and castle upon the south side of the valley where Prince Gobred guarded the city of Nimmr and the valley beyond it against the daily expected assault of the Saracens.

Seeking cover, Ibn Jad and his Beduins crept down toward the barbican where an old knight and a few men-at-arms kept perfunctory ward. Hiding in the mountain brush the Arabs saw two

strangely appareled blacks hunting just outside the great gateway. They were armed with cross bows and arrows and their prey was rabbits. For years they had seen no stranger come down this ancient road, and for years they hunted between the gate and the summit of the mountains, though farther than this they were not permitted to wander. Nor had they any great desire to do so, for, though they were descendants of Gallas who lived just beyond this mountain top, they thought that they were Englishmen and that a horde of Saracens awaited to annihilate them should they venture too far afield.

Today they hunted as they had often hunted when they chanced to be placed

in the guard at the outer barbican. They moved silently forward, warily awaiting the break of a rabbit. They did not see the dark-faced men in the brush.

Ibn Jad saw that the great gateway was open and that the gate that closed it raised and lowered vertically. It was raised now. Great was the laxity of the old knight and the men-at-arms, but King Bohun was away and there was none to reprove them.

Ibn Jad motioned those nearest him to follow and crept slowly closer to the gateway.

What of the old knight and the other watchers? The former was partaking of a late breakfast just within one of the great towers of the barbican and the latter

were taking advantage of the laxity of his discipline to catch a few more winks of sleep as they stretched beneath the shade of some trees within the ballium.

Ibn Jad won to within a few yards of the gateway and waited for the others to reach his side. When they were all there he whispered to them and then trotted on silent sandals toward the gate, his matchlock ready in his hands. Behind him came his fellows. They were all within the ballium before the men-at-arms were aware that there was an enemy this side of Palestine.

With cross bow and battle-axe the men-at-arms sprang to defend the gate. Their cries of "The Saracens! The Saracens!" brought the old sir knight and

the hunters running toward the ballium.

Below, at the castle of King Bohun, the men at the gates and the other retainers who had been left while Bohun sallied forth to the Great Tourney heard strange noises from the direction of the outer barbican. The shouts of men floated down to them and strange, sharp sounds that were like thunder and yet unlike it. Such sounds they had never heard before, nor any of their forbears. They rallied at the outer castle gate and the knights with them consulted as to what was best to be done.

Being brave knights there seemed but one thing open for them. If those at the far outer barbican had been attacked they must hasten to their defense. Summoning

all but four of the knights and men-at-arms at his disposal the marshal of the castle mounted and rode forth toward the outer gate.

Half way there they were espied by Ibn Jad and his men who, having overcome the poorly armed soldiers at the gate, were advancing down the road toward the castle. At sight of these reinforcements Ibn Jad hastened to secrete his followers and himself in the bushes that lined the roadway. So it fell that the marshal rode by them and did not see them and, when they had passed, Ibn Jad and his followers came out of the bushes and continued down the winding mountain road toward the castle of King Bohun.

The men at the castle gate, now fully upon the alert, stood ready with the portcullis raised as the marshal instructed them, so that in the event that those who had ridden out should be hard pressed upon their return by an enemy at their rear they could still find sanctuary within the ballium. The plan was, in such event, to lower the portcullis behind the men of the Sepulcher and in the faces of the pursuing Saracens, for that an enemy must be such was a foregone conclusion—had not they and their ancestors waited for near seven and a half centuries now for this momentarily expected assault? They wondered if it really had come at last.

While they discussed the question Ibn

Jad watched them from a concealing clump of bushes a few yards away.

The wily Beduin knew the purpose of that portcullis and he was trying to plan best how he might enter the enclosure beyond before it could be dropped before his face. At last he found a plan and smiled. He beckoned three men to come close and into their ears he whispered that which he had in mind.

There were four men-at-arms ready to drop the portcullis at the psychological moment and all four of them stood in plain sight of Ibn Jad and the three that were beside him. Carefully, cautiously, noiselessly the four Arabs raised their ancient matchlocks and took careful aim.

"Now!" whispered Ibn Jad and four

matchlocks belched forth flame and black powder and slugs of lead.

The four men-at-arms dropped to the stone flagging and Ibn Jad and all his followers raced forward and stood within the ballium of the castle of King Bohun. Before them, across the ballium, was another gate and a broad moat, but the drawbridge was lowered, the portcullis raised and the gateway unguarded.

The marshal and his followers had ridden unhindered into the ballium of the outer barbican and there they had found all its defenders lying in their own blood, even to the little squire of the old knight who should have watched the gate and did not.

One of the men-at-arms still lived and in his dying breath he gasped the terrible truth. The Saracens had come at last!

"Where are they?" demanded the marshal.

"Didst thou not see them, sir?" asked the dying man. "They marched down the road toward the castle."

"Impossible!" cried the marshal. "We did but ride along that very road and saw no one."

"They marched down toward the castle," gasped the man.

The marshal knit his brows. "Were there many?" he demanded.

"There are few," replied the man-at-arms. "It was but the advance guard of

the armies of the sultan."

Just then the volley that laid low the four warders at the castle gate crashed upon the ears of the marshal and his men.

"'Ods blood!" he cried.

"They must have hid themselves in the bush as we passed," exclaimed a knight at the marshal's side, "for of a surety they are there and we are here and there is but one road between!"

"There are but four men at the castle gate," said the marshal, "and I did bid them keep the 'cullis up till we returned. God pity me! I have given over the Sepulcher to the Saracens. Slay, me, Sir Morley!"

"Nay, man! We need every lance and sword and crossbow that we may

command. This is no time to think of taking thy life when thou canst give it to Our Lord Jesus in defense of His Sepulcher against the infidels!"

"Thou art right, Morley," cried the marshal. "Remain thou here, then, with six men and hold this gate. I shall return with the others and give battle at the castle!"

But when the marshal came again to the castle gate he found the portcullis down and a dark-faced, bearded Saracen glaring at him through the iron bars. The marshal at once ordered the cross bowmen to shoot the fellow down, but as they raised their weapons to their shoulder there was a loud explosion that almost deafened them and flame leaped

from a strange thing that the Saracen held against his shoulder and pointed at them. One of the cross bowmen screamed and lunged forward upon his face and the others turned and fled.

They were brave men in the face of dangers that were natural and to be expected, but in the presence of the supernatural, the weird, the uncanny, they reacted as most men do, and what could have been more weird than death leaping in flame and with a great noise through space to strike their fellow down?

But Sir Bulland, the marshal, was a knight of the Sepulcher.

He might wish to run away fully as much as the simple and lowly men-at-

arms, but there was something that held him there that was more potent than fear of death. It is called Honor.

Sir Bulland could not run away and so he sat there on his great horse and challenged the Saracens to mortal combat; challenged them to send their doughtiest sir knight to meet him and thus decide who should hold the gate.

But the Arabs already held it. Furthermore they did not understand him. In addition to all this they were without honor as Sir Bulland knew it, and perhaps as any one other than a Beduin knows it, and would but have laughed at his silly suggestion.

One thing they did know—two things they knew—that he was a *Nasrany* and

that he was unarmed. They did not count his great lance and his sword as weapons, for he could not reach them with either. So one of them took careful aim and shot Sir Bulland through his chain mail where it covered his noble and chivalrous heart.

Ibn Jad had the run of the castle of King Bohun and he was sure that he had discovered the fabled City of Nimmr that the *sahar* had told him of. He herded together the women and children and the few men that remained and held them under guard. For a while he was minded to slay them, since they were but *Nasrany*, but he was so pleased at having found and taken the treasure city that he let them live—for the time at

least.

At his command his followers ransacked the castle in search of the treasure. Nor were they disappointed, for the riches of Bohun were great. There was gold in the hills of the Valley of the Sepulcher and there were precious stones to be found there, also. For seven and a half centuries the slaves of the Sepulcher and of Nimmr had been washing gold from the creek beds and salvaging precious stones from the same source. The real value of such was not to the men of the Sepulcher and Nimmr what it would be to men of the outer world. They but esteemed these things as trinkets, yet they liked them and saved them and even bartered for them on

occasion, but they did not place them in vaults under lock and key. Why should they in a land where such things were not stolen? Their women and their horses they guarded, but not their gold or their jewels.

And so Ibn Jad gathered a great sack full of treasure, enough to satisfy the wildest imaginings of his cupidity. He gathered all that he could find in the castle of King Bohun, more than he had hoped to find in this fabled city; and then a strange thing happened. Having more wealth than he possibly could use he wanted more. No, not so strange after all, for Ibn Jad was human.

He spent the night with his followers in the castle of King Bohun and during

the night he planned, for he had seen a wide valley stretching far away to other mountains and at the base of those mountains he had seen that which appeared to be a city. "Perhaps," thought Ibn Jad, "it is a richer city than this. I shall start on the morrow to see."

18. THE BLACK KNIGHT

Down the field thundered the two chargers. Silence fell upon the stands. They were almost met when Sir Guy realized that his adversary bore no shield. But what of that? He had been sent to the lists by his own people—the responsibility was theirs, the advantage Sir Guy's. Had they sent him in without a sword Sir Guy might still have slain him without besmirching his knightly honor, for such were the laws of the Great Tourney.

Yet his discovery had its effect upon the Knight of the Sepulcher as just for an instant it had distracted his attention from the thought that should have been uppermost in his mind—gaining the

primary advantage by the skill of his opening attack.

He saw his antagonist's horse swing out just before they met. He stood in his stirrups, as had Sir Malud, to deliver a terrific cut; then Blake threw his horse straight into the shoulder of Sir Guy's. The latter's sword fell and with a loud, clanging noise slipped harmlessly from the blade of the Knight of Nimmr. Guy had raised his buckler to protect his own head and neck and could not see Sir James. Guy's horse stumbled and nearly fell. As it recovered itself Blake's blade slipped beneath the buckler of the Knight of the Sepulcher and its point pierced the gorget of his adversary and passed through his throat.

With a cry that ended in a blood choked gurgle Sir Guy of the Sepulcher toppled backward upon his horse's rump and rolled upon the ground while the south stands went mad with joy.

The laws of the Great Tourney account the knight who is unhorsed as slain, so the coup-de-grace is never given and no knight is killed unnecessarily. The victor rides to the tilt of the vanquished, wheels about and gallops to his own tilt, the full length of the lists, where he waits until a herald of the opposing side fetches the prize to him.

And so it was that as Blake swung from his saddle, sword in hand, and approached the fallen Sir Guy, a gasp

arose from the south stands and a roar of angry protest from the north.

Marshals and heralds galloped madly from the tilt of the fallen Backer and, seeing this, Sir Richard, fearing that Blake would be set upon and slain, led a similar party from his end of the field.

Blake approached the fallen knight, who lay upon his back, feebly struggling to arise, and when the spectators looked to see him run Sir Guy through with his sword they saw him instead toss the weapon to the ground and kneel beside the wounded man.

With an arm beneath Sir Guy's shoulders he raised him and held him against his knee while he tore off his helm and gorget, and when the marshals

and the heralds and the others drew rein beside him. Blake was trying to staunch the Sow of blood.

"Quick!" he cried to them, "a chirurgeon! His jugular is not touched, but this flow of blood must be stopped."

Several of the knights dismounted and gathered about, and among them was Sir Richard. A herald of Sir Guy's faction kneeled and took the youth from Blake's arms.

"Come!" said Richard. "Leave the sir knight to his own friends."

Blake arose. He saw how peculiar were the expressions upon the faces of the knights about him, but as he drew away one of them spoke. An older man, who was one of Bohun's marshals.

"Thou art a generous and chivalrous knight," he said to Blake, "and a courageous one too who would thus set at naught the laws of the Great Tourney and the customs of centuries."

Blake faced him squarely. "I do not give a damn for your laws or your customs," he said. "Where I come from a decent man wouldn't let a yellow dog bleed to death without trying to save him, much less a brave and gallant boy like this, and because he fell by my hand, by the customs of my country I should be compelled to aid him."

"Yes," explained Sir Richard, "as otherwise he would be punished with a raspberry."

The winning of the first event of the

day was but a forerunner of a series of successes on the part of the Knights of Nimmr until, at the opening of the last event, the score showed four hundred fifty two points for them against four hundred forty eight for their opponents. A margin of four points, however, was as nothing at this stage of the tourney, as the final event held one hundred points which Fate might allot almost entirely to one side.

This was the most spectacular event of the whole tourney and one which the spectators always looked forward to with the greatest anticipation. Two hundred knights were engaged in it, one hundred Knights of Nimmr against one hundred Knights of the Sepulcher. They

formed at opposite ends of the lists and as the trumpets sounded the signal they charged with lances, and thus they fought until all of one side had been unhorsed or had retired from the field because of wounds. Broken lances could be replaced as a polo player may ride out and obtain a fresh mallet when he breaks his. Otherwise there were few rules to govern this concluding number of the Great Tourney, which more nearly approximated a battle scene than any other event of the three days of conflict.

Blake had won his fifteen points for the Knights of Nimmr in the opening event of the day and again with four other comrades, pitted against five mounted swordsmen from the north, he

had helped to add still further points to the growing score of the Fronters.

He was entered in the last event largely because the marshals appreciated the value of his horsemanship and felt that it would more than compensate for his inexperience with the lance.

The two hundred mailed knights had paraded for the final event and were forming line at opposite ends of the lists, one hundred Knights of the Sepulcher at one end and one hundred Knights of Nimmr at the other. Their chargers, especially selected for this encounter, were powerful and fleet, chosen for their courage as were the youths who bestrode them.

The knights, with few exceptions, were youths in their twenties, for to youth went the laurels of this great sport of the Middle Ages as they still do in the sports of today. Here and there was a man of middle age, a hardened veteran whose heart and hand had withstood the march of years and whose presence exerted a steadying influence upon the young knights the while it spurred them to their utmost efforts, for these were champions whose deeds were sung by minstrels in the great balls of the castles of Nimmr.

In proud array, with upright lances and fluttering pennons, the sunlight glinting from burnished mail and bit and boss and shining brightly upon the

gorgeous housings of their mounts, the two hundred presented a proud and noble spectacle as they awaited the final summons of the trumpet.

Rearing and plunging, eager to be off, many a war horse broke the line as will a thoroughbred at the barrier, while at one side and opposite the center of the lists a herald waited for the moment that both lines should be formed before he gave the signal that would send these iron men hurtling into combat.

Blake found himself well toward the center of the line of Nimmr's knights, beneath him a great black that fretted to be off, before him the flower of the knighthood of the Sepulcher. In his right hand he grasped a heavy, iron-shod

lance, the butt of which rested in a boot at his stirrup, and upon his left arm he bore a great shield, nor had he any wish to discard it in the face of all those sturdy, iron-tipped lances. As he looked down the long length of the lists upon the hundred knights that would presently be racing toward him in solid array with lance points projecting far ahead of their horses, Blake felt that his shield was entirely inadequate and he experienced a certain nervousness that reminded him of similar moments of tense waiting for the referee's whistle during his football days —those seemingly long gone days of another life that he sensed now as a remote and different incarnation.

As last came the signal! He saw the

herald raise his sword on high. With the two hundred he gathered his restive charger and couched his lance. The sword fell! From the four corners of the lists trumpets blared; from two hundred throats rose the cri de guerre; four hundred spurs transmitted the awaited signal from man to horse.

The thundering lines bore down the field while a score of heralds raced along the flanks and rear to catch any infraction of the sole regulation that bore upon the final tumultuous collision. Each knight must engage the foe upon his bridle hand, for to couch his lance upon the one to his right was an unknightly act, since thus a single knight might have two lances set upon him at once, against

which there could be no defence.

From above the rim of his shield Blake saw the solid front of lances, iron-shod chargers and great shields almost upon him. The speed, the weight, the momentum seemed irresistible and, metaphorically, with deep respect Blake took his hat off to the knights of old.

Now the two lines were about to meet! The spectators sat in spellbound silence; the riders, grim-jawed, with tight set lips, were voiceless now.

Blake, his lance across his horse's withers, picked the knight racing toward him upon his left hand; for an instant he caught the other's eyes and then each crouched behind his shield as the two lines came together with a deafening

crash.

Blake's shield smashed back against his face and body with such terrific force that he was almost carried from his saddle. He felt his own lance strike and splinter and then, half stunned, he was through the iron line, his charger, frantic and uncontrolled, running wildly toward the tilts of Bohun's knights.

With an effort Blake pulled himself together, gathered his reins and finally managed to get his horse under control, and it was not until he had reined him about that he got his first glimpse of the result of the opening encounter. A half dozen chargers were scrambling to their feet and nearly a score more were galloping, riderless, about the lists. A

full twenty-five knights lay upon the field and twice that many squires and serving men were running in on foot to succor their masters.

Already several of the knights bad again set their lances against an enemy and Blake saw one of the Knights of the Sepulcher bearing down upon him, but he raised his broken spear shaft above his head to indicate that he was momentarily hors de combat and galloped swiftly back to his own end of the lists where Edward was awaiting him with a fresh weapon.

"Thou didst nobly well, beloved master," cried Edward.

"Did I get my man?" asked Blake.

"That thou didst, sir," Edward

assured him, beaming with pride and pleasure, "and all be thou breaked'st thy lance upon his shield thou didst then so unhorse him."

Armed anew Blake turned back toward the center of the lists where many individual encounters were taking place. Already several more knights were down and the victors looking for new conquests in which the stands were assisting with hoarse cries and advice, and as Blake rode back into the lists he was espied by many in the north stands occupied by the knights and followers of the Sepulcher.

"The black knight!" they cried. "Here! Here! Sir Wildred! Here is the black knight who overthrew Sir Guy. Have at

him, Sir Wildred!"

Sir Wildred, a hundred yards away, couched his lance. "Have at thee, Sir Black Knight!" he shouted.

"You're on!" Blake shouted back, putting spurs to the great black.

Sir Wildred was a large man and he bestrode a raw-boned roan with the speed of a deer and the heart of a lion. The pair would have been a match for the best of Nimmr's knighthood.

Perhaps it was as well for Blake's peace of mind that Wildred appeared to him like any other knight and that he did not know that he was the most sung of all the heroes of the Sepulcher.

As a matter of fact, any knight looked formidable to Blake, who was still at a

loss to understand how he had unhorsed his man in the first encounter of this event.

"The bird must have lost both stirrups," is what he had mentally assured himself when Edward had announced his victory.

But he couched his lance like a good sir knight and true and bore down upon the redoubtable Sir Wildred. The Knight of the Sepulcher was charging diagonally across the field from the south stands. Beyond him Blake caught a glimpse of a slim, girlish figure standing in the central loge. He could not see her eyes, but he knew that they were upon him.

"For my Princess!" he whispered as

Sir Wildred loomed large before him.

Lance smote on shield as the two knights crashed together with terrific force and Blake felt himself lifted clear of his saddle and hurled heavily to the ground. He was neither stunned nor badly hurt and as he sat up a sudden grin wreathed his face, for there, scarce a lance length from him, sat Sir Wildred. But Sir Wildred did not smile.

"'Sdeath!" he cried. "Thou laughest at me, sirrah?"

"If I look as funny as you do," Blake assured him, "you've got a laugh coming, too."

Sir Wildred knit his brows. "'Ods blood!" he exclaimed. "An thou beest a knight of Nimmr I am a Saracen! Who art

thou? Thy speech savoreth not of the Valley."

Blake had arisen. "Hurt much?" he asked stepping forward. "Here, I'll give you a hand up."

"Thou art, of a certainty, a strange sir knight," said Wildred. "I recall now that thou didst offer succor to Sir Guy when thou hadst fairly vanquished him."

"Well, what's wrong with that?" asked Blake. "I haven't anything against you. We've had a bully good scrap and are out of it. Why should we sit here and make faces at one another?"

Sir Wildred shook his head. "Thou art beyond my comprehension," he admitted.

By this time their squires and a couple of serving men had arrived, but

neither of the fallen knights was so badly injured that he could not walk without assistance. As they started for their respective tilts Blake turned and smiled at Wildred.

"So long, old man!" he cried cheerily. "Hope we meet again some day."

Still shaking his head Sir Wildred limped away, followed by the two who had come to assist him.

At his tilt Blake learned that the outcome of the Great Tourney still hung in the balance and it was another half hour before the last of the Knights of Nimmr went down in defeat, leaving two Knights of the Sepulcher victorious upon the field. But this was not enough to overcome the lead of four points that the

Fronters had held at the opening of the last event and a moment later the heralds announced that the Knights of Nimmr had won the Great Tourney by the close margin of two points.

Amidst the shouting of the occupants of the stands at the south the Knights of Nimmr who had taken part in the tourney and had won points for the Fronters formed to ride upon the lists and claim the grand prize. Not all were there, as some had been killed or wounded in encounters that had followed their victories, though the toll on both sides had been much smaller than Blake had imagined that it would be. Five men were dead and perhaps twenty too badly injured to ride, the casualties being

about equally divided.

As the Knights of Nimmr rode down the field to claim the five maidens from the City of the Sepulcher, Bohun gathered all his knights at his side of the lists as though preparing to ride back to his camp. At the same time a Knight of the Sepulcher, wearing the leopard skin bassinet of Nimmr, entered the stands upon the south side of the field and made his way toward the loge of Prince Gobred.

Bohun watched. The Knights of Nimmr were at the far end of the field engrossed in the ritualistic rites that the laws of the Great Tourney prescribed for the reception of the five maidens.

Close beside Bohun two young

knights sat their chargers, their eyes upon their king, and one of them held the bridle of a riderless horse.

Suddenly Bohun raised his hand and spurred across the field followed by his knights. They moved a little toward the end of the field where the Knights of Nimmr were congregated so that the bulk of them were between this end of the field and Gobred's loge.

The young knight who had sat close beside Bohun, and his companion leading the riderless horse, spurred at a run straight for the stands of Nimmr and the loge of the Prince. As they drew in abreast of it a knight leaped into the loge from the rear, swept Guinalda into his arms, tossed her quickly to the young

knight waiting to receive her, sprang to the edge of the rail and leaped into the saddle of the spare horse being held in readiness for him; then they both wheeled and spurred away before the surprised Gobred or those about him could raise a hand to stay them. Behind them swept Bohun and the Knights of the Sepulcher, out toward the camp among the oaks.

Instantly all was pandemonium. A trumpeter in Gobred's loge sounded the alarm; the prince ran from the stands to the spot where his horse was being held by a groom; the Knights of Nimmr, ignorant of what had occurred, not knowing where to rally or against whom, milled about the lists for a few moments.

Then Gobred came, spurring swiftly before them. "Bohun has stolen the Princess Guinalda!" he cried. "Knights of Nimmr—" but before he could say more, or issue orders to his followers, a black knight on a black charger spurred roughly through the ranks of surrounding men and was away after the retreating Knights of the Sepulcher.

19. LORD TARZAN

There was a nasty smile upon Tollog's lips as he thought how neatly he had foiled Ateja, who would have warned the *Nasrany* of the plot to slay him, and he thanked Allah that chance had placed him in a position to intercept her before she had been able to ruin them all. Even as Tollog, the brother of the sheikh, smiled in his beard a hand reached out of the darkness behind him and seized him by the throat—fingers grasped him and he was dragged away.

Into the *beyt* that had been Zeyd's and which had been set up for the *Nasrany*, Tollog was dragged. He struggled and tried to scream for help, but he was powerless in the grip of steel that held

him and choked him.

Inside the *beyt* a voice whispered in his ear. "Cry out, Tollog," it said, "and I shall have to kill you." Then the grasp upon his throat relaxed, but Tollog did not call for help, for he had recognized the voice that spoke and he knew that it had made no idle threat.

He lay still while the bonds were drawn tight about his wrists and ankles and a gag fastened securely in his mouth, lie felt the folds of his burnoose drawn across his face and then—silence.

He heard Stimbol creep into the *beyt*, but he thought that it as still he who had bound him. And thus died Tollog, the brother of Ibn Jad, died as he had planned that Tarzan of the Apes should

die.

And, knowing that he would die thus, there was a smile upon the lips of the ape-man as he swung through the forest toward the southeast.

Tarzan's quest was not for Beduins but for Blake. Having ensured himself that the white man in the *menzil* of Ibn Jad w as Stimbol and that none knew the whereabouts of the other American, he was hastening back to the locality where Blake's boy had told him their bwana had disappeared, in the hope of picking up his trail and, if unable to assist him, at least to learn what fate had overtaken him.

Tarzan moved swiftly and his uncanny senses of sight and smell aided him

greatly in wresting its secrets from the jungle, yet it was three days before he found the spot where Ara the lightning had struck down Blake's gun bearer.

Here he discovered Blake's faint spoor leading toward the north. Tarzan shook his head, for he knew that there was a stretch of uninhabited forest laying between this place and the first Galla villages. Also he knew that if Blake survived hunger and the menace of wild beasts he might only live to fall victim to a Galla spear.

For two days Tarzan followed a spoor that no other human eye might have discerned. On the afternoon of the second day he came upon a great stone cross built directly in the center of an

ancient trail. Tarzan saw the cross from the concealment of bushes for he moved as beasts of prey moved, taking advantage of every cover, suspicious of every strange object, always ready for flight or battle as occasion might demand.

So it was that he did not walk blindly into the clutches of the two men-at-arms that guarded the outer way to the City of Nimmr. To his keen ears was borne the sound of their voices long before he saw them.

Even as Sheeta or Numa approach their prey, so Tarzan of the Apes crept through the brush until he lay within a few yards of the men-at-arms. To his vast astonishment he heard them

conversing in a quaint form of English that, while understandable to him, seemed yet a foreign tongue. He marvelled at their antiquated costumes and obsolete weapons, and in them he saw an explanation of Blake's disappearance and a suggestion of his fate.

For a time Tarzan lay watching the two with steady, unblinking eyes —it might have been Numa himself, weighing the chances of a sudden charge. He saw that each was armed with a sturdy pike and a sword. They could speak English, after a fashion, therefore, he argued, they might be able to give him word of Blake. But would they receive him in a friendly spirit or would they attempt to set upon

and slay him?

He determined that he could never ascertain what their attitude would be by lying hidden among the brush, and so he gathered himself, as Numa does when he is about to spring.

The two blacks were idly gossiping, their minds as far from thoughts of danger as it were possible they could be, when suddenly without warning Tarzan launched himself full upon the back of the nearer, hurling him to the ground. Before the other could gather his wits the ape-man had dragged his victim into the concealment of the bush from which he had sprung, while the fellow's companion turned and fled in the direction of the tunnel.

The man in Tarzan's grasp fought and struggled to be free but the ape-man held him as easily as he might have held a child.

"Lie still," he advised, "I shall not harm you."

"'Ods blood!" cried the black. "What manner of creature art thou?"

"One who will not harm you if you will tell him the truth," replied Tarzan.

"What wouldst thou know?" demanded the black.

"A white man came this way many weeks ago. Where is he?"

"Thou speakest of Sir James?" asked the soldier.

"Sir James!" mused Tarzan and then

he recollected that Blake's first name was James. "His name was James," he replied, "James Blake."

"Verily, 'tis the same," said the soldier.

"You have seen him? Where is he now?"

"He is defending the honor of Our Lord Jesus and the Knights of Nimmr in the Great Tourney in the lists upon the plain below the city, and hast thou come to wreak despite upon our good Sir James thou wilt find many doughty knights and men-at-arms who will take up the gage in his behalf."

"I am his friend," said Tarzan.

"Then why didst thou leap upon me thus, if thou beest a friend to Sir James?"

demanded the man.

"I did not know how you had received him or how you would receive me."

"A friend of Sir James will be received well in Nimmr," said the man.

Tarzan took the man's sword from him and permitted him to rise—his pike he had dropped before being dragged among the bushes.

"Go before me and lead me to your master," commanded the ape- man, "and remember that your life will be the forfeit that you must pay for treachery."

"Do not make me leave the road unguarded against the Saracens," begged the man. "Soon my companion will return with others and then I shall beg them to take thee where thou wilt."

"Very well," agreed the ape-man. They had not waited long before he heard the sound of hastening footsteps and a strange jingling and clanking that might have been caused by the shaking of many chains and the striking against them of objects of metal.

Shortly afterward he was surprised to see a white man clothed in chain mail and carrying a sword and buckler descending the trail at a trot, a dozen pike-men at his back.

"Tell them to halt!" commanded Tarzan, placing the point of the man's sword in the small of his back. "Tell them I would talk with them before they approach too closely."

"Stop, I pray thee!" cried the fellow.

"This is a friend of Sir James, but he will run me through with my own sword an thou pressest him too close. Parley with him, most noble sir knight, for I would live at least to know the result of the Great Tourney."

The knight halted a few paces from Tarzan and looked him up and down from feet to head. "Thou art truly a friend to Sir James?" he demanded.

Tarzan nodded. "I have been seeking him for days."

"And some mishap befell thee and thou lostest thy apparel."

The ape-man smiled. "I go thus, in the jungle," he said.

"Art thou a sir knight and from the same country as Sir James?"

"I am an Englishman," replied Tarzan of the Apes.

"An Englishman! Thrice welcome then to Nimmr! I am Sir Bertram and a good friend to Sir James."

"And I am called Tarzan," said the ape-man.

"And thy rank?" inquired Sir Bertram.

Tarzan was mystified by the strange manners and garb of his seemingly friendly inquisitor, but he sensed that whatever the man might be he took himself quite seriously and would be more impressed if he knew that Tarzan was a man of position, and so he answered him truthfully, in his quiet way.

"A Viscount," he said.

"A peer of the realm!" exclaimed Sir Bertram. "Prince Gobred wilt be o'er pleased to greet thee, Lord Tarzan. Come thou with me and I will furnish thee with apparel that befits thee."

At the outer barbican Bertram took Tarzan into the quarters reserved for the knight commanding the warders and kept him there while he sent his squire to the castle to fetch raiment and a horse, and while they waited Bertram told Tarzan all that had befallen Blake since his arrival in Nimmr and, too, much of the strange history of this unknown British colony. When the squire returned with the clothing it was found that it fitted the ape-man well, for Bertram was a large man, and presently Tarzan of the Apes

was garbed as a Knight of Nimmr and was riding down toward the castle with Sir Bertram. Here the knight announced him at the gate as the Lord Viscount Tarzan. Once within he introduced him to another knight whom he persuaded to relieve him at the gate while he conducted Tarzan to the lists that he might be presented to Gobred and witness the final scenes of the tourney, were it not concluded before they arrived.

And so it was that Tarzan of the Apes, clad in chain mail, and armed with lance and sword, rode down into the Valley of the Sepulcher just as Bohun put his foul scheme into execution and carried off the Princess Guinalda.

Long before they reached the lists Bertram was aware that something was amiss, for they could see the dust clouds racing rapidly north away from the lists as though one body of knights pursued another. He put spurs to his mount and Tarzan followed suit, and so they came at a stiff run to the lists and there they found all pandemonium.

The women were mounting preparatory to riding back to Nimmr under escort of a few knights that Gobred had sent back to guard them. The men-at-arms were forming themselves into companies, but all was being done in a confused manner since every now and then a great part of the company would rush to the highest part of the

stands and peer off toward the north after the clouds of dust that revealed nothing to them.

Sir Bertram accosted one of his fellows. "What hath befallen?" he demanded.

"Bohun hath seized the Princess Guinalda and carried her away," came the astounding reply.

"Zounds!" cried Bertram, reining about. "Wilt ride with me in the service of our princess, Lord Tarzan?"

For answer Tarzan spurred his horse alongside of Bertram's and stirrup to stirrup the two set out across the plain, while far ahead of them Blake drew gradually closer and closer to the fleeing Knights of the Sepulcher. So thick was

the cloud of dust they threw up that they were hid from their pursuer even as he was hid from them and so were unaware that Blake was near them.

The American carried no lance or shield, but his sword clattered and clashed at his side and at his right hip swung his forty-five. Whenever he had been armed, since he entered Nimmr, be had carried this weapon of another world and another age. To their queries he had answered that it was but a lucky talisman that be carried, but in his heart was the thought that some day it might stand him in better stead than these simple knights and ladies could dream.

He drew that he would never use it except in battle, or as a last resort

against overwhelming odds or unfair tactics, but he was glad that he carried it today as it might mean the difference between liberty and captivity for the woman he loved.

Slowly he drew closer to the rearmost Knights of the Sepulcher. Their mounts bred and trained to the utmost endurance and to carry the great weight of man and mail kept to a brisk canter even after the first long spurt of speed that had carried them away from the lists of Nimmr.

The dust rolled up in clouds from iron-shod feet. Through it Blake groped, catching vague glimpses of mounted men just ahead. The black, powerful, fleet, courageous, showed no sign of fatigue.

The rider carried his sword in his hand, ready. He was no longer a black, knight, but a gray. Bassinet, hauberk, all the rich caparisons of his horse, the horse itself, were gray with dust.

Blake glimpsed a knight toward whom he was slowly drawing closer. This knight was gray! Like a flash Blake realized the value of the camouflage that chance had laid upon him. He might ride among them and they would not suspect that he was not of them!

Instantly he sheathed his sword and pressed forward, but he edged off a little from the knight before he passed him. Urging the black ever a little faster Blake crept up through the ranks of Bohun's knights. Somewhere a knight

was carrying double and this knight he sought.

The nearer the head of the column he forged the greater became the danger of discovery, for now the dust was less thick and men could see farther, but yet his own armor, his face, the leopard skin of his bassinet were coated thick with gray and though knights peered intently at him as he passed none recognized him.

Once one hailed him. "Is't thou, Percival?" he demanded.

"Nay," replied Blake and spurred on a trifle faster.

Now, dimly, just ahead, he saw several knights bunched close and once he thought he glimpsed the fluttering

garments of a woman in their midst. Pressing on, he drew close behind these and there, surrounded by knights, he saw a woman held before one of the riders.

Drawing his sword he spurred straight between two knights who rode close behind he who carried Guinalda, and as Blake passed he cut to the right and left and the two knights rolled from their saddles.

At a touch of the spurs the black leaped abreast the young knight that was bearing off the princess. So quickly was the thing accomplished that the knights who rode scarce an arm's length from him had not the time to realize what was occurring and prevent it.

Blake slipped his left arm about the

girl and at the same time thrust to the left above his left forearm, driving his blade far into the body of the youthful knight Then he spurred forward carrying Guinalda from the dead arms as the knight pitched headlong from his saddle.

Blake's sword was wrenched from his grasp, so far had he driven it into the body of the man who dared commit this wrong against the woman Blake loved.

Cries of rage arose about him as knights spurred in pursuit and the black ran free with no guiding hand upon the reins. A huge fellow loomed just at Blake's rear and another was closing in from the other side. The first man swung his sword as he stood in his stirrups and the second was already reaching for

Blake with his point.

Strange oaths were on their lips and their countenances were contorted by rage as they strove to have the life of the rash man who had almost thwarted them in their design, but that he could succeed they had not the remotest belief, for he was one against a thousand.

Then something happened the like of which had never been known to them or their progenitors. A blue barreled forty-five flashed from the holster at Blake's hip, there was a loud report and the knight upon Blake's right rear lunged head foremost to the ground. Blake turned in his saddle and shot the knight upon his other side between the eyes.

Terrified, the horses of other knights

close by, who might have menaced him, bolted, as did the great black that Blake bestrode; but while the American was trying to replace his weapon in its holster and gather the reins in his right hand he leaned to the left and thus forced the horse slowly around toward the direction he wished him to go, Blake's plan being to cut across the front of the Knights of the Sepulcher and then turn southward toward Nimmr.

He was sure that Gobred and his followers must be close in pursuit, and that it would be but a matter of minutes before he would have Guinalda safe behind a thousand or more knights, any one of whom would lay down his life for her.

But the Knights of the Sepulcher had spread out over a greater front than Blake had anticipated, and now he saw them coming rapidly upon his left and was forced to swerve in a more northerly direction.

Closer and closer they came and once more the American found it necessary to drop his reins and draw his forty-five. One shot sent the horses of the menacing knights rearing and plunging away from the terrifying sound, and it sent the black into a new paroxysm of terror that almost resulted in Blake and the girl being unhorsed.

When the man finally brought the animal again under control the dust cloud that marked the position of the

Knights of the Sepulcher was far behind, and close upon Blake's left was a great forest, whose dark depths offered concealment for the moment at least.

Reining quickly within Sir James drew up and gently lowered Guinalda to the ground. Then he dismounted and tied the black to a tree, for Blake was spent after what he had been through this day since his first entry upon the lists, and the black was spent as well.

He slipped the housing and the heavy saddle from the horse's back and took the great bit from his mouth, replacing a portion of the housing to serve as a cooler until the horse should be less heated, nor once did he glance at the princess until he had finished caring for

his horse.

Then he turned and faced her. She was standing leaning against a tree, looking at him.

"Thou art brave, sir knight," she said softly, and then added, arrogantly, "but still a boor."

Blake smiled, wanly. He was very tired and had no wish to argue.

"I'm sorry to ask you to do it," he said, ignoring what she had said to him, "but Sir Galahad here will have to be kept moving about a bit until he cools off and I'm too fagged to do it."

The Princess Guinalda looked at him in wide-eyed amazement. "Thou—thou," she stammered, "thou meanest that I should lead the beast? I, a princess!"

"I can't do it, Guinalda," replied Blake. "I tell you I'm just about all in, lugging all these skid chains about since sunrise. I guess you'll have to do it."

"Have to! Durst thou command, knave?"

"Snap out if it girl!" advised Blake curtly. "I'm responsible for your safety and it may all depend on this horse. Get busy, and do as I tell you! Lead him back and forth slowly."

There were tears of rage in the eyes of the Princess Guinalda as she prepared to make an angry retort, but there was something in Blake's eyes that silenced her. She looked at him for a long moment and then turned and walked to the black. Untying the rope that tethered him to the

tree she led him slowly to and fro, while Blake sat with his back against a great tree and watched out across the plain for the first sign of pursuit.

But there was no pursuit, for the knights of Nimmr had taken the Knights of the Sepulcher and the two forces were engaging in a running fight that was leading them farther and farther away toward the City of the Sepulcher upon the north side of the valley.

Guinalda led the black for half an hour. She led him in silence and in silence Blake sat gazing out across the valley. Presently he turned toward the girl and rose to his feet.

"That'll be good," he said, approaching her. "Thank you. I'll rub him

a bit now. I was too exhausted to do it before."

Without a word she turned the black over to him and with dry leaves he rubbed the animal from muzzle to dock. When he had finished he threw the housing over him again and came and sat down beside the girl.

He let his eyes wander to her profile —to her straight nose, her short upper lip, her haughty chin. "She is beautiful," thought Blake, "but selfish, arrogant and cruel." But when she turned her eyes toward him, even though they passed over him as though he had not been there, they seemed to belie all the other evidence against her.

He noticed that her eyes were never

quiet. Her glances roved from place to place, but most often into the depths of the wood and upward among the branches of the trees. Once she started and turned suddenly to gaze intently into the forest.

"What is it?" asked Blake.

"Methought something moved within the wood," she said. "Let us be gone."

"It is almost dusk," he replied. "When it is dark we can ride to Nimmr in safety. Some of Bohun's knights may still be searching for you."

"What!" she exclaimed. "Remain here until dark? Knowest thou not where we are?"

"Why, what's wrong with this place?" demanded the man.

She leaned toward him, her eyes wide with terror. "It be the Wood of the Leopards!" she whispered.

"Yes?" he queried casually.

"Here lair the great leopards of Nimmr," she continued, "and after night falls only a camp with many guards and beast fires is safe from them. And even so not always then, for they have been known to leap upon a warder and, dragging him into the wood, devour him within hearing of the camp.

"But," suddenly her eyes responded to a new thought, "I had forgotten the strange, roaring weapon with which thou slewest the knights of Bohun! Of a surety with that thou couldst slay all the leopards of the wood!"

Blake hesitated to undeceive her and add to her alarm. "Perhaps," he said, "it will be as well to start now, for we have a long ride and it will soon be dark."

As he spoke he started toward Sir Galahad. He had almost reached the horse when the animal suddenly raised its head and with up pricked ears and dilated nostrils looked into the gathering shadows of the wood. For an instant Sir Galahad trembled like a leaf and then, with a wild snort, he lay back with all his weight upon the tether, and as it parted with a snap he wheeled and raced out upon the plain.

Blake drew his gun and peered into the wood, but he saw nothing nor could his atrophied sense of smell catch the

scent that had come so clearly to the nostrils of Sir Galahad.

Eyes that he could not see were watching him, but they were not the eyes of Sheeta the leopard.

20. "I LOVE YOU!"

Lord Tarzan rode with Sir Bertram in the wake of the Knights of Nimmr, nor did they overtake them until after Blake had borne Guinalda out of the battle which had followed immediately the hosts of Gobred had overhauled the Knights of the Sepulcher.

As the two approached, Tarzan saw opposing knights paired off in mortal combat. He saw a Knight of Nimmr go down before an adversary's lance and then the victor espied Tarzan.

"Have at you, sir knight!" cried he of the Sepulcher, and couched his lance and put spurs to his charger.

This was a new experience for the

ape-man, a new adventure, a new thrill. He knew as much about jousting as he did about ping-pong, but from childhood he had wielded a spear, and so he smiled as the knight charged upon him.

Lord Tarzan waited, and the Knight of the Sepulcher was disconcerted to see his adversary awaiting him, motionless, his spear not even couched to receive him.

Lord Bertram had reined in his horse to watch the combat and observe how this English peer accounted for himself in battle and he too was perplexed. Was the man mad, or was he fearful of the issue?

As his antagonist approached him, Tarzan rose in his stirrups and carried

his lance hand above and behind his head, and when the tip of the other's lance was yet five paces from him the ape-man launched the heavy weapon as he had so often launched his hunting spear and his war spear in the chase and in battle.

It was not Viscount Greystoke who faced the Knight of the Sepulcher; it was not the king of the great apes. It was the chief of the Waziri, and no other arm in the world could cast a war spear as could his.

Forward his spear hand shot, straight as an arrow sped the great lance. It struck the shield of the Knight of the Sepulcher just above the boss and, splitting the heavy wood, drove into the

heart of Tarzan's foe, and at the same instant the ape-man reined his horse aside as that of his fallen antagonist thundered past.

Sir Bertram shook his head and spurred to meet an antagonist that had just challenged him. He was not sure that the act of Lord Tarzan had been entirely ethical, but he had to admit that it had been magnificent.

The fortunes of the battle carried Tarzan toward the west. His lance gone, he fought with his sword. Luck and his great strength and wondrous agility carried him through two encounters. By this time the battle had drawn off toward the northeast.

Tarzan had accounted for his second

man since he had lost his lance and a Knight of the Sepulcher had slain a Knight of Nimmr. Now these two remained alone upon the field, nor did the other lose a moment in shouting his challenge to the ape-man.

Never in his life had Tarzan seen such fierce, bold men, such gluttons for battle. That they gloried in conflict and in death with a fierce lust that surpassed the maddest fanaticism he had ever witnessed filled Tarzan's breast with admiration. What men! What warriors!

Now the last knight was upon him. Their swords clashed on ready buckler. They wheeled and turned and struck again. They passed and spurred once more to close quarters. Each rose in his

stirrups to deliver a terrified cut, each sought to cleave the other's skull.

The blade of the Knight of the Sepulcher glanced from Tarzan's buckler and bit into the skull of the ape-man's charger, but Tarzan's edge smote true.

As his horse went down Tarzan leaped free, his antagonist falling dead at his feet, while the riderless horse of the slain knight galloped swiftly off in the direction in which lay the City of the Sepulcher.

Tarzan looked about him. He was alone upon the field. Far to the north and east he saw the dust of battle. The City of Nimmr lay across the plain toward the south. When the battle was over it was there that Blake would ride and it was

Blake whom Tarzan wanted to find. The sun was sinking behind the western hills as Tarzan turned toward Nimmr.

The chain mail that he wore was heavy, hot and uncomfortable, and Tarzan had not gone far before he discarded it. He had his knife and his rope. These he always kept with him, but he left the sword with the armor and with a sigh of relief continued on his way.

Ibn Jad, as he had come across the valley from the City of the Sepulcher toward the city that he had seen upon the opposite side, had been perturbed by the great clouds of dust that bad been raised by the Knights of the Sepulcher and the pursuing Nimmrians.

Seeing a forest close upon his right hand he had thought it wiser to seek its concealing shadows until he could learn more concerning that which caused so great a dust cloud, which he saw was rapidly approaching.

Within the forest it was cool and here Ibn Jad and his followers rested.

"Let us remain here," suggested Abd el-Aziz, "until evening, when we may approach the city under cover of darkness."

Ibn Jad approved the plan and so they camped just within the forest and waited. They watched the dust cloud pass and continue on toward the City of the Sepulcher.

"*Billah*, it is well we did escape that

village before yon host returned," said Ibn Jad.

They saw a horseman enter the forest, or pass to the south of it— they could not know which—but they were not interested in single horsemen, or in any horseman, so they did not investigate. He seemed to be either carrying another person upon his horse with him, or some great bundle. At a distance they could not see which.

"Perhaps," said Abd el-Aziz, "we shall find greater treasure in the city to the south."

"And perhaps the beautiful woman of whom the *sahar* spoke," added Ibn Jad, "for she was not within the city we left this morning."

"There were some there that were beautiful," said Fahd.

"The one I seek is more beautiful than an *houri*," said Ibn Jad.

When they took up their march again just before dark they moved cautiously just within the edge of the forest. They had covered a mile, perhaps, when those in the lead heard voices ahead. Ibn Jad sent one to investigate.

The man was soon back. His eyes were bright with excitement. "Ibn Jad," he whispered, "thou needst seek no farther—the *houri* is just ahead!"

Following the suggestion of the scout Ibn Jad, followed by his companions, went deeper into the woods and approached Blake and Guinalda from the

west. When Sir Galahad broke loose and Blake drew his forty-five Ibn Jad knew that they could remain in concealment no longer. He called Fahd to him.

"Many of the *Nasranys* speak the language thou didst learn among the soldiers of the North," he said. "Speak thou therefore to this one in the same tongue, telling him we are friends and that we are lost."

When Fahd saw the Princess Guinalda his eyes narrowed and he trembled almost as might a man with ague. Never in his life had Fahd seen so beautiful a woman, never had he dreamed that an *houri* might be so lovely.

"Do not fire upon us," he called to

Blake from the concealment of some bushes. "We are friends. We are lost."

"Who are you?" demanded Blake, surprised to hear French spoken in the Valley of the Sepulcher.

"We are poor men from the desert country," replied Fahd. "We are lost. Help us to find our way and the blessings of Allah shall be upon thee."

"Come out and let me see you," said Blake. "If you are friendly you need not fear me. I've had all the trouble I'm looking for."

Fahd and Ibn Jad stepped out into view and at sight of them Guinalda voiced a little scream and seized Blake's arm. "The Saracens!" she gasped.

"I guess they're Saracens all right,"

said Blake, "but you needn't worry — they won't hurt you."

"Not harm a crusader?" she demanded incredulously.

"These fellows never heard of a crusader."

"Melikes not the way they look at me," whispered Guinalda.

"Well, neither do I, but perhaps they mean no harm."

With many smiles the Arabs gathered around the two and through Fahd Ibn Jad repeated his protestations of friendship and his delight at meeting one who could direct him from the valley. He asked many questions about the City of Nimmr; and all the while his followers pressed closer to Blake.

Of a sudden the smiles vanished from their faces as, at a signal from their sheikh, four stalwart Beduins leaped upon the American and bore him to the ground, snatching his gun from him, while simultaneously two others seized the Princess Guinalda.

In a moment Blake was securely bound and the Arabs were debating what disposition to make of him. Several wanted to slit his throat, but Ibn Jad counseled against it since they were in a valley filled with the man's friends and should the fortunes of war decide to throw some of the Beduins into the hands of the enemy such would fare better if they spared this one's life.

Blake threatened, promised, begged

that they give Guinalda her liberty, but Fahd only laughed at him and spit upon him. For a time it seemed almost certain that they were going to kill Blake, as one of the Beduins stood over him with a keen *khusa* in his hand, awaiting the word from Ibn Jad.

It was then that Guinalda tore free from those who held her and threw herself upon Blake to shield his body from the blade with her own.

"Thou shall not slay him!" she cried. "Take my life an thou must have Christian blood, but spare him."

"They cannot understand you, Guinalda," said Blake. "Perhaps they will not kill me, but that does not matter. You must escape them."

"Oh, they must not kill thee—they shall not! Canst ever forgive me the cruel words I spoke? I did not mean them. My pride was hurt that thou shouldst say of me what Malud told me thou didst say and so I spoke to hurt thee and not from my heart. Canst forgive me?"

"Forgive you? God love you, I could forgive you murder! but what did Malud tell you I had said?"

"Oh, mind not now. I care not what thou saidst. I tell thee I forgive it! Say to me again thy words that thou didst speak when I pinned my favor upon thy hauberk and I can forgive thee anything."

"What did Malud say?" insisted Blake.

"That thou hadst bragged that thou wouldst win me and even cast my love aside," she whispered.

"The cur! You must know that he lied, Guinalda."

"Say what I have asked and I shall know he lied," she insisted.

"I love you! I love you, Guinalda!" cried Blake.

The Arabs laid heavy hands upon the girl and dragged her to her feet. Ibn Jad and the others still argued about the disposition to be made of Blake.

"By Allah!" exclaimed the sheikh, at last, "We shall leave the *Nasrany* where he lies and if he dies none can say that the *Beduw* did slay him."

"Abd el-Aziz," he continued, "let thou take men and continue across the valley to that other city. Come, I shall accompany thee a way and we will talk out of hearing of this *Nasrany* who, perchance, understandeth more of our tongue than he would have us guess."

As they moved away toward the south Guinalda tried to free herself again from the grasp of her captors, but they dragged her with them. Until the last Blake saw her struggling. He saw her dear face turned toward him, and as they passed out of sight among the trees she called back through the falling night three words that meant more to him than all the languages of all the world combined: "I love you!"

At a distance from Blake the Arabs halted. "I leave thee here, Abd el-Aziz," said Ibn Jad. "Go thou and see if the city appears to be a rich place, and if it be too strongly guarded make no attempt to loot it, but return to the *menzil* that will be just beyond the northern summit where it now is, or, if we move it, we shall make our trail plain that thou mayst follow us.

"I shall hasten from the valley with this rich treasure that we now have, not the least of which is the woman. *Billah!* in the north she will fetch the ransom of a dozen sheikhs.

"Go, Abd el-Aziz, and may Allah be with thee!"

Ibn Jad turned directly north. His

belief that the great body of horsemen he had glimpsed amid the distant dust were returning to the city he had sacked argued against his attempting to leave the valley by the same route that he had entered it, and so he had determined to attempt to scale the steep mountains at a point west of the City of the Sepulcher, avoiding the castle and its defenders entirely.

Blake heard the retreating footsteps of the Beduins die away in the distance. He struggled with his bonds, but the camel leather held securely. Then he lay quiet. How silent, how lonely the great, black wood—the Wood of the Leopards! Blake listened. Momentarily he expected to hear the fall of padded feet, the sound

of a great, furred body approaching through the underbrush. The slow minutes dragged. An hour had passed.

The moon rose—a great, swollen, red moon that floated silently up from behind distant mountains. This moon was looking down upon Guinalda as it was on him. He whispered a message to it—a message for his princess. It was the first time that Blake ever had been in love and he almost forgot his bonds and the leopards in recalling those three words that Guinalda had called back at the instant of their separation.

What was that? Blake strained his eyes into the darkness of the shadowy wood. Something was moving! Yes, it was the sound of stealthy, padded feet

—the scraping of a furred body against leaves and twigs. The leopard of the wood was coming!

Hark! There must be another in a nearby tree, for he was sure that he could see a shadowy form almost above him.

The moonlight, shining from the low moon near the eastern horizon, crept beneath the trees and lighted the ground upon which Blake lay and beyond him for a dozen yards and more.

Presently into this moonlit space stepped a great leopard.

Blake saw the blazing eyes, felt them burning into him like fire. He could not tear his own from the great snarling figure, where they were held in awful

fascination.

The carnivore crouched and crept closer. Inch by inch it crept upon him as though with the studied cruelty of premeditated torture. He saw the sinuous tail lashing from side to side. Me saw the great fangs bared. He saw the beast flatten against the ground, its muscles tensed. It was about to spring! Helpless, horrified, Blake could not take his eyes from the hideous, snarling face.

He saw it leap suddenly with the lightness and agility of a house cat, and at the same instant he saw something flash's through the air. The leopard stopped in mid-leap and was hauled upward into a tree that overhung the spot.

He saw the shadowy form that he had seen before, but now he saw that it was a man and that he was hauling the leopard upward by a rope that had been cast about its neck at the instant that it had risen to leap upon him.

Screaming, pawing with raking talons, Sheeta the leopard was dragged upward. A mighty hand reached out and grasped the great cat by the scruff of the neck and another hand drove a knife blade into the savage heart.

When Sheeta ceased to struggle, and hung quiet, the hand released its grasp and the dead body of the carnivore thudded to the ground beside Blake. Then the god-like figure of an almost naked white man dropped lightly to the

leafy mold.

Blake voiced an exclamation of surprised delight "Tarzan of the Apes!" he cried.

"Blake?" demanded the ape-man, and then: "At last! And I didn't find you much too soon, either."

"I'll tell the world you didn't!" exclaimed Blake.

Tarzan cut the bonds that held the American.

"You've been looking for me?" asked Blake.

"Ever since I learned that you had become separated from your safari."

"By George, that was white of you!"

"Who left you trussed up here?"

"A bunch of Arabs."

Something like a growl escaped the lips of the ape-man. "That villainous old Ibn Jad here?" he demanded incredulously.

"They took a girl who was with me," said Blake. "I do not need to ask you to help me rescue her, I know."

"Which way did they go?" asked Tarzan.

"There." Blake pointed toward the south.

"When?"

"About an hour ago."

"You'd better shed that armor," advised Tarzan, "it makes walking a punishment—I just tried it."

With the ape-man's help Blake got out of his coat of mail and then the two set out upon the plain trail of the Arabs. At the point where Ibn Jad had turned back toward the north they were at a loss to know which of the two spoors to follow, for here the footprints of Guinalda, that the ape-man had been able to pick up from time to time since they left the spot where the girl had been seized, disappeared entirely.

They wondered what had become of them. They could not know that here, when she found that Ibn Jad was going to turn back with her away from Nimmr, she had refused to walk farther. It had been all right as long as they were approaching Nimmr, but she refused

absolutely to be a party to her own abduction when it led away from home.

What breeze there was was blowing from the east, nullifying the value of Tarzan's sense of smell so that even the great ape-man could not know in what direction or with which party Guinalda had been carried off.

"The most reasonable assumption," said Tarzan, "is that your princess is with the party that has gone north, for I know that Ibn Jad's *menzil* must lay in that direction. He did not enter the valley from the south. That I know because I just came in that way myself and Sir Bertram assured me that there are only two entrances—the one through which I came and a pass above the City of the

Sepulcher.

"Ibn Jad would want to get the girl out of the valley and into his camp as soon as possible whether he is going to hold her for ransom or take her north to sell her. The party that went south toward Nimmr may have been sent to treat with her people for a ransom; but the chances are that she is not with that party.

"However, it is at best but a matter of conjecture. We must ascertain definitely, and I suggest that you follow the northern spoor, which is, I am certain, the one that will lead to the girl, while I overtake the party to the south.

"I can travel faster than you and if I am right and the girl is with the northern party I'll turn back and overtake you

without much loss of time. If you catch up with the other band and find the girl is not with them, you can turn back and join me; but if she is with them you'd better not risk trying to recover her until you have help, for you are unarmed and those Beduins would think no more of cutting your throat than they would of drinking a cup of coffee.

"Now, good-bye and good luck!" And Tarzan of the Apes 'is off at a trot upon the trail of the party that had gone in the direction of Nimmr, while Blake turned northward to face a dismal journey through the black depths of the Wood of the leopards.

21. "FOR EVERY JEWEL A DROP OF BLOOD!"

All night Ibn Jad and his party marched northward.. Though they were hampered by the refusal of Guinalda to walk, yet they made rapid progress for they were spurred on by their great desire to escape from the valley with their booty before they should be discovered and set upon by the great host of fighting men they were now convinced were quartered in the castle and city they had been fortunate enough to find almost deserted.

Avarice gave them strength and endurance far beyond that which they normally displayed, with the result that

dawn found them at the foot of the ragged mountains that Ibn Jad had determined to scale rather than attempt an assault upon the castle which guarded the easy way from the valley.

It was a jaded party that won eventually to the pass just above the outer barbican that guarded the road to the City of the Sepulcher, nor were they discovered by the warders there until the last man of them was safely on the trail leading to the low saddle at the summit of the mountains, beyond which lay the *menzil* of the Beduins.

The defenders of the barbican made a sortie against them and approached their rear so closely that the knight who commanded saw Guinalda and

recognized her, but a volley from the matchlocks of the desert people sent the crudely armed soldiers of Bohun back in retreat, though the brave knight couched his lance and charged again until his horse was brought down by a bullet and he lay pinned beneath it.

It was afternoon before Ibn Jad with his fagged company staggered into the *menzil*. Though they dropped in their tracks from sheer exhaustion, he allowed them but an hour of sleep before he gave the signal for the *rahla*, for the sheikh of the *fendy* el-Guad was filled with an ever increasing fear that the treasure and the woman would be taken away from him before he could reach the sandy wastes of his own barren *beled*.

The heavy weight of the treasure had been divided into several bundles and these were distributed among his least mistrusted followers, while the custody of the girl captive was placed in the hands of Fahd, whose evil eyes filled the princess with fear and loathing.

Stimbol, who had secretly scoffed at the stories of treasure and the mad tales of a beautiful woman that the Arabs expected to find in some fabulous, hidden city, was dumbfounded when he viewed the spoils of the Beduin, and at first was inclined to attribute them to the hallucinations of his fever-racked brain.

Weak, Stimbol staggered feebly along the trail, keeping as close to Fahd as he could, for he knew that of all the

company this unscrupulous scoundrel would be most likely to assist him, for to Fahd a live Stimbol meant great wealth; nor was Fahd unmindful of the fact. And now there was another purpose in the evil mind of the Beduin who had conceived for the white girl an infatuation that was driving him to the verge of madness.

With the wealth that Stimbol had promised him Fahd realized that he could afford to possess this lovely *houri* whom otherwise a poor *Beduwy* must sell for the great price that she would bring, and so there revolved in the mind of Fahd many schemes whereby he might hope to gain sole possession of both Guinalda and

Stimbol; but always there loomed in the path of every plan that he considered the dour figure of his greedy sheikh.

At the foot of the Mountains of the Sepulcher Ibn Jad turned toward the east, thus to avoid passing again through the country of Batando. Beyond the eastern end of the range he would turn south again and later strike west just above the northern limits of the territory that was nominally Tarzan's, for though he knew that the Lord of the Jungle was dead he yet feared the vengeance of his people.

It was late before Ibn Jad made camp. The preparations for the evening meal were hurried. The light from the cooking fire and the paper lanterns in the *beyt* of

the sheikh was dim and flickering, yet not so dim but that Ateja saw Fahd drop something into the bowl of food that she had prepared for Ibn Jad and which stood upon the ground between him and his would-be assassin.

As the sheikh reached for the receptacle Ateja stepped from the women's quarters and struck it from his hand, but before she could explain her act or charge Fahd with his villainy the culprit, realizing that his perfidy had been discovered, leaped to his feet and seizing his matchlock sprang into the women's quarters where Guinalda had been left under the watchful care of Hirfa and Ateja.

Seizing the girl by the wrist and

dragging her after him Fahd broke through the curtains at the rear of the *beyt* and ran in the direction of his own tent. By this time the *mukaad* of Ibn Jad was in an uproar. The sheikh was demanding an explanation from Ateja and still unaware that Fahd had escaped through the rear of the *beyt* no one had followed him into the women's quarters.

"He placed *simm* in thy food!" cried Ateja. "I saw him and the proof of it be that he fled when he knew that I had seen."

"*Billah*," exclaimed Ibn Jad. "The son of a jackal would poison me? Seize him and fetch him to me!"

"He hath fled through the *beyt*!" cried Hirfa, "and taken the *Nasrania* with

him."

The Beduins sprang to their feet and took after Fahd, but at his own *beyt* he stopped them with a bullet and they retreated. In his tent he seized Stimbol who was lying upon a filthy sleeping mat and dragged him to his feet.

"Hasten!" he hissed in the American's ear. "Ibn Jad has ordered that thou be slain! Quick! follow me and I will save thee."

Again Fahd had recourse to the rear curtains of a *beyt* and as his fellows approached the front in anger but with caution, Fahd, dragging Guinalda and followed by Stimbol, sneaked through the darkness of the *menzil* and turned toward the west.

It was dusk when James Blake, following the plain trail of Ibn Jad, finally clambered over the last escarpment and stood upon the trail that led through the pass toward the outer world beyond the valley of the Sepulcher.

A hundred yards to his right loomed the gray towers of the barbican, to his left was the trail that led in the direction of his heart's desire, and all about him, concealed in the bushes, were the men-at-arms of King Bohun of the Sepulcher; but this he did not guess, for how could he know that for hours the eyes of the warders had been watching his slow ascent toward the pass trail?

Spent by the long climb following

hours of grueling exertion without food or rest, unarmed, Blake was helpless to resist or to attempt escape when a dozen armed men stepped from the surrounding bushes and encircled him in a band of steel. And so Sir James of Nimmr was seized and haled before King Bohun, and when he was questioned and Bohun found that he was the same black knight that had thwarted his plan to abduct the Princess Guinalda he could scarce contain himself.

Assuring Blake only of the fact that he would be put to death as soon as Bohun could determine upon a fate commensurate with the heinousness of the crime, the king ordered him to be placed in chains, and the American was

led away by guards to a black hole beneath the castle, where by the light of flares a smith forged a heavy iron band about one ankle and he was chained to a damp stone wall.

In the light of the flare Blake saw two emaciated, naked creatures similarly chained, and in a far corner glimpsed a skeleton among the bones of which rusted a length of chain and a great anklet Then silently the guards and the smith departed, taking the flares with them, and James Blake was left in darkness and despair.

Upon the plain, below the City of Nimmr, Tarzan had overtaken the party of Beduins led by Abd el-Aziz, and after assuring himself that the girl was not

with them he had turned without revealing himself to them and hurried northward to take up the trail of the other party.

Requiring food and rest he lay up in the Wood of the Leopards during the heat of the day after stalking Horta the boar and making a quick kill. His belly filled, the ape-man found a high flung tree crotch where there was little likelihood of the heavy leopards of Nimmr disturbing his slumbers, and here he slept until the sun was sinking behind the western *menzil* where Ibn Jad's people had camped during his incursion of the Valley of the Sepulcher.

Some time since, he had lost the spoor of Blake, but that of the girl

frequently recurred, and as her rescue now took precedence over other considerations he followed doggedly along the trail of Ibn Jad. For a time he was mystified by the fact that Guinalda's spoor, well marked by the imprints of the tiny sandals of medieval design, did not appear among the footprints of those who left the Beduin *menzil*.

He lost some time searching about in an effort to discover a clue to the riddle and presently he hit upon the truth, which lay in the fact that Guinalda's light sandals having been badly worn by her journey and far too tight for comfortable walking she had been given a pair belonging to Ateja, and thus it became difficult to differentiate between the

spoor of the two girls, who were of equal weight and of a similarity of carriage that rendered their footprints practically identical.

Tarzan therefore contented himself with following the spoor of the party, and so it was that he passed their first night's camp, where Fahd had stolen Guinalda from the Sheik, without discovering that three of its members had there turned to the west, while the main body of the Arabs marched toward the east.

And as Tarzan followed the spoor of Ibn Jad a hundred stalwart Waziri moved northward from the water hole of the smooth, round rocks upon the old trail of the Beduins. With them was

Zeyd, who had begged so hard to accompany them when they passed the village where he had been waiting that at last the sub-chief had consented.

When Tarzan overtook the Arabs they had already turned south around the eastern end of the Mountains of the Sepulcher. He saw the bags they carried and the evident concern with which Ibn Jad watched and guarded them, and he shrewdly guessed that the wily old thief had indeed found the treasure he had sought; but he saw no evidence of the presence of the Princess, and Stimbol, too, was missing.

Tarzan was furious. He was furious at the thieving Beduins for daring to invade his country and he was furious at himself

because he felt that in some way he had been tricked.

Tarzan had his own methods of inflicting punishment upon his enemies and he had, as well, his own grim and grisly sense of humor. When men were doing wrong it pleased him to take advantage of whatever might cause them the greatest suffering and in this he was utterly ruthless with his enemies.

He was confident that the Arabs thought him dead and it did not suit his whim to reveal their error to them at this time, but it did accord with his fancy to let them commence to feel the weight of his displeasure and taste the first fruits of their villainy.

Moving silently through the trees

Tarzan paralleled the course of the Arabs. They were often plainly visible to him; but none saw Tarzan, nor dreamed that savage eyes were watching their every move.

Five men carried the treasure, though its weight was not so great but that one powerful man might have borne it for a short distance. Tarzan watched these men most often, these and the Sheik Ibn Jad.

The trail was wide and the sheikh walked beside one of those who bore the treasure. It was very quiet in the jungle. Even the Arabs, garrulous among themselves, were quiet, for they were very tired and the day was hot and they were unused to the burdens they were

forced to carry since Batando had robbed them of their slaves.

Of a sudden, without warning and with only the swish of its flight through the air to announce it, an arrow passed through the neck of the Beduin who walked beside Ibn Jad.

With a scream the man lunged forward upon his face and the Arabs, warned by their sheikh, cocked their muskets and prepared to receive an attack, but look where they would they saw no sign of an enemy. They waited, listening, but there was no sound other than the droning of insects and the occasional raucous cry of a bird; but when they moved on again, leaving their fellow dead upon the trail, a hollow

voice called to them from a distance.

"For every jewel a drop of blood!" it wailed dismally, for its author knew well the intensely superstitious nature of the desert dwellers and how best to affright them.

It was a shaken column that continued on its way, nor was there any mention of making camp until almost sunset, so anxious were they all to leave behind this gloomy wood and the horrid*afrit* that inhabited it; but the forest persisted and at length it became necessary to make camp.

Here the camp fires and food relieved the tension upon their overwrought nerves, and their spirits had revived to such an extent that there were again

singing and laughter in the *menzil* of Ibn Jad.

The old sheikh himself sat in his *mukaad* surrounded by the five bags of treasure, one of which he had opened and beneath the light of a lantern was fondling the contents. About him were his cronies, sipping their coffee.

Suddenly something fell heavily upon the ground before the *beyt* and rolled into the *mukaad*among them. It was the severed head of a man! Glaring up at them were the dead eyes of their fellow, whose corpse they had left lying in the trail earlier in the day.

Horror struck, spellbound, they sat staring at the gruesome thing when, from out of the dark forest, came the hollow

voice again: *"For every jewel a drop of blood!"*

Ibn Jad shook as a man with ague. The men of the camp gathered close together in front of the*beyt* of the sheikh. Each grasped a musket in one hand and searched for his *hijab* with the other, for each carried several of these amulets, and that in demand this night was the one written against the *jinn*, for certainly none but a *jinn* could have done this thing.

Hirfa stood half within the *mukaad* staring at the dead face of her fellow while Ateja crouched upon a sleeping mat in the quarters of the women. She did not see the back curtain rise, nor the figure that crept within. It

was dark in the quarters of the harem since little light filtered in from the lanterns in the *mukaad*.

Ateja felt a hand clapped across her mouth at the same instant that another grasped her by the shoulder. A voice whispered in her ear. "Make no sound! I shall not hurt thee. I am a friend to Zeyd. Tell me the truth and no harm will befall thee or him. Where is the woman Ibn Jad brought from the valley?"

He who held her placed his ear close to her lips and removed his hand from them. Ateja trembled like a leaf. She had never seen a *jinn*. She could not see the creature that leaned close to her, but she knew that it was one of those fearsome creatures of the night.

"Answer!" whispered the voice in her ear. "If thou wouldst save Zeyd, speak and speak the truth!"

"Fahd took the woman from our *menzil* last night," she gasped. "I do not know where they went."

As it came, in silence the presence left the side of the terrified girl. When Hirfa sought her a moment later she found her in a swoon.

22. BRIDE OF THE APE

Blake squatted upon the stone floor in the utter darkness of his dungeon. After his jailers had left he had spoken to his fellow prisoners, but only one had replied and his jibbering tones assured the American that the poor wretch had been reduced to stark insanity by the horrors of imprisonment in this foul hole.

The young man, accustomed to freedom, light, activity, already felt the hideousness of his position and wondered how lung it would be before he, too, jibbered incoherently at the end of a rusting chain, how long before he, too, was but mildewed bones upon a clammy floor.

In utter darkness and in utter silence there is no time, for there is no means by which one may compute the passage of time. How long Blake crouched in the stifling air of his dank dungeon he could not know. He slept once, but whether he had dozed for an instant or slept the clock around he could not even hazard a guess. And of what moment was it? A second a day, a year meant nothing here. There were only two things that could mean anything to Jim Blake now—freedom or death. He knew that it would not be long before he would welcome the latter.

A sound disturbed the silence of the buried vault. Footsteps were approaching. Blake listened as they

came nearer. Presently he discerned a flickering light that grew in intensity until a pine torch illuminated the interior of his prison. At first it blinded his eyes so that he could not see who came, bearing the light, but whoever it was crossed and stopped before him.

Blake looked up, his eyes more accustomed to the unwonted brilliance, and saw two knights standing before him.

"It is he," said one.

"Dost thou not know us, Sir Black Knight?" demanded the other.

Blake looked at them closely. A slow smile lighted his face, as he saw a great bandage wrapped about the neck of the younger man.

"I suppose," he said, "here is where I get mine."

"Get thine! What meanest thou?" demanded the older man.

"Well, you two certainly haven't come to pin any medals on me, Sir Wildred," said Blake, with a wry smile.

"Thou speakest in riddles," said Wildred. "We have come to free thee that the young king may not bring disgrace upon the Knights of the Sepulcher by carrying out his wicked will with thee. Sir Guy and I heard that he would burn thee at the stake, and we said to one another that while blood flowed in our bodies we would not let so valorous a knight be thus shamelessly wronged by any tyrant."

As he spoke Wildred stooped and with a great rasp commenced filing upon the iron rivets that held the hinged anklet in place.

"You are going to help me to escape!" exclaimed Blake. "But suppose you are discovered—will not the king punish you?"

"We shall not be discovered," said Wildred, "though I would take that chance for so noble a knight as thee. Sir Guy is upon the outer barbican this night and 'twill be no trick to get thee that far. He can pass thee through and thou canst make thy way down the mountain side and cross to Nimmr. We cannot get thee through the city gates for these be held by two of Bohun's basest creatures, but

perchance upon the morrow Sir Guy or I may find the way to ride out upon the plain with a led horse, and that we shall if so it hap that it be possible."

"Tell us a thing that hath filled us with questioning," said Sir Guy.

"I don't follow you," said Blake.

"Thou didst, and mighty prettily too, take the Princess Guinalda from under the very nose of Bohun," continued Guy, "and yet later she was seen in the clutches of the Saracens. How came this to pass?"

"She was seen?" demanded Blake. "Where?"

"Beyond the outer barbican she was and the Saracens carried her away through the pass that leadeth no man

knoweth where," said Wildred.

Blake told them of all that had transpired since he had taken Guinalda from Bohun, and by the time he had finished the rivets had been cut and he stood again a free man.

Wildred smuggled him through secret passages to his own quarters and there gave him food and new clothing and a suit of armor, for now that they knew he was riding out over the pass into the strange country they had decided that he could only he permitted to do so properly armored, armed and mounted.

It was midnight when Wildred smuggled Blake through the castle gate and rode with him toward the outer barbican. There Sir Guy met them and a

few minutes later Blake bid these chivalrous enemies goodbye and, mounted on a powerful charger, his own colors flying from his lance tip, rode beneath the portcullis and out upon the starlit road that led to the summit of the Mountains of the Sepulcher.

Toyat, the king ape, picked a succulent beetle from the decaying bark of a fallen tree. About him were the great, savage people of his tribe. It was afternoon and the apes loafed in the shade of great trees beside a little natural clearing in the jungle. They were content and at peace with all the world. | Coming toward them were three people, but the wind blew from the apes toward the people and so neither Toyat nor any

of his fellows caught the scent spoor of the Tarmangani. The jungle trail was soft with damp mold, for it had rained the night before, and the feet of the three gave forth no sound that the apes heard. Then, too, the three were moving cautiously for they had not eaten for two days and they were hunting for food.

There was a gray old man, emaciated by fever, tottering along with the aid of a broken tree branch; there was a wicked-eyed Beduin carrying a long musket; and the third was a girl whose strange garments of splendid stuffs were torn and soiled. Her face was streaked with dirt and was drawn and thin, yet still it was a face of almost heavenly beauty. She walked with an effort, and though

she sometimes stumbled from weariness never did she lose a certain regalness of carriage, nor lower the haughty elevation of her well moulded chin.

The Beduin was in the lead. It was he who first sighted a young ape playing at the edge of the clearing, farthest from the great bulls of the tribe of Toyat Here was food! The Beduin raised his ancient weapon and took aim. He pressed the trigger and the ensuing roar mingled with the scream of pain and terror that burst from the wounded balu.

Instantly the great bulls leaped to action. Would they flee the feared and hated thunder stick of the Tarmangani, or would they avenge the hurting of the balu? Who might know? Today they

might do the one, tomorrow, under identical circumstances, the other. Today they chose vengeance.

Led by Toyat, growling hideously, the bulls lumbered forward to investigate. It was this sight that met the horrified gaze of the three as they followed up Fahd's shot to learn if at last they were to eat or if they must plod on hopelessly, weakened by the hunger gnawing at their vitals.

Fahd and Stimbol turned and bolted back down the trail, the Arab, in his cowardly haste, pushing Guinalda to one side and hurling her to the ground. The leading bull, seeing the girl, leaped upon her and was about to sink his teeth into her neck when Toyat seized him and

dragged him from her, for Toyat had recognized her for what she was. The king ape had once seen another Tarmangani she and had decided that he would like to have one as a wife.

The other ape, a huge bull, seeing that Toyat wanted the prey and angered by the bullying manner of the king, immediately decided to contest Toyat's right to what he had first claimed. Baring his fangs he advanced menacingly toward Toyat who had dragged the girl back into the clearing. Toyat snarled back at him. "Go away," said Toyat "This is Toyat's she."

"It is Go-yad's," replied the other, advancing. Toyat turned back. "I kill!" he screamed. Go-yad came on and

suddenly Toyat seized Guinalda in his hairy arms and fled into the jungle. Behind him, bellowing and screaming, pursued Go-yad.

The Princess Guinalda, wide-eyed with horror, fought to free herself from the hideous, hairy creature that was bearing her off. She had never seen nor even heard of such a thing as a great ape, and she thought them now some hideous, low inhabitant of that outer world that she had always been taught consisted of encircling armies of Saracens and beyond and at a great distance a wonderful country known as England. What else was there she had not even tried to guess, but evidently it was a horrid place peopled by hideous

creatures, including dragons.

Toyat had run no great distance when he realized that he could not escape while burdened with the she, and as he had no mind to give her up he turned suddenly and faced the roaring Go-yad. Go-yad did not stop. He came on frothing at the mouth, bristling, snarling —a picture of bestial savagery, power and frenzied rage.

Toyat, relinquishing his hold upon the girl, advanced to meet the charge of his rebellious subject, while Guinalda, weakened by unaccustomed exertion and lace of nourishment, appalled by the hideous circumstances of her plight, sank panting to the ground.

Toyat and Go-yad, immersed in the

prospect of battle, were oblivious to all else. Could Guinalda have taken advantage of this temporary forgetfulness of her she might have escaped; but she was too stunned, too exhausted to take advantage of her opportunity. Spellbound, fascinated by the horror of it, she watched these terrifying, primordial man-beasts preparing to do battle for possession of her.

Nor was Guinalda the sole witness of these savage preliminaries. From the concealment of a low bush behind which he lay another watched the scene with steady, interested eyes. Absorbed by their own passion neither Toyat nor Go-yad noted the occasional movement of

the outer leaves of the bush behind which this other watcher lay, a movement imparted by the body of the watcher with each breath and with each slightest change of position.

Perhaps the watcher discovered no sporting interest in the impending duel, for just as the two apes were about to engage he arose and stepped into the open—a great black-maned lion, whose yellow coat gleamed golden in the sunlight.

Toyat saw him first and with a growl of rage turned and fled, leaving his adversary and their prize to whatever fate Providence might hold in store for them.

Go-yad, thinking his rival had

abandoned the field through fear of him, beat loudly upon his breast and roared forth the victory cry of the bull ape, then, swaggering as became a victor and a champion, he turned to claim the prize.

Between himself and the girl he saw the lion standing, gazing with serious mien straight into his eyes. Go-yad halted. Who would not have? The lion was within springing distance but he was not crouched. Go-yad backed away, snarling, and when the lion made no move to follow, the great ape suddenly turned and lumbered off into the jungle, casting many a backward glance in the direction of the great cat until intervening foliage shut him from his view.

Then the lion turned toward the girl. Poor little Princess! Hopeless, resigned, she lay upon the ground staring, wide-eyed, at this new engine of torture and destruction. The king of beasts surveyed her for a moment and then walked toward her. Guinalda clasped her bands and prayed—not for life, for hope of that she had long since resigned, but for death, speedy and painless.

The tawny beast came close. Guinalda closed her eyes to shut out the fearsome sight She felt hot breath upon her cheek, its fetid odor assailed her nostrils. The lion sniffed about her. God! why did he not end it? Tortured nerves could endure no more and Guinalda swooned. Merciful surcease of her

suffering.

23. JAD-BAL-JA

Nerve-shaken, the remnants of Ibn Jad's company turned toward the west and hastened by forced marches to escape the hideous forest of the *jinn*. Abd el-Aziz and those who had accompanied him from the Wood of the Leopards toward Nimmr had not rejoined them. Nor ever would they, for upon the plain below the treasure city of the Beduins dreaming the knights of Gobred had discovered them and, despite the thundering havoc of the ancient matchlocks, the iron Knights of Nimmr had couched their spears against the Saracens and once again the victorious cri de guerre of the Crusaders had rung out after seven centuries of silence to

announce a new engagement in the hoary war for the possession of the Holy Land —the war that is without end. From the north a mailed knight rode down through the forest of Galla land. A blue and silver pennon fluttered from his lance. The housings of his great charger were rich with gold and silver from the treasure vaults of Wildred of the Sepulcher. Wide-eyed Galla warriors viewed this solitary anachron from afar, and fled.

Tarzan of the Apes, ranging westward, came upon the spoor of Fahd and Stimbol and Guinalda and followed it toward the south.

Northward marched a hundred ebon giants, veterans of a hundred battles —

the famed Waziri—and with them came Zeyd, the lover of Ateja. One day they came upon a fresh spoor crossing their line of march diagonally toward the southwest. It was the spoor of Arab sandals, those of two men and a woman, and when the Waziri pointed them out to Zeyd the young Beduin swore that he recognized those of the woman as belonging to Ateja, for who knew better the shape and size of her little foot, or the style of the sandals she fabricated? He begged the Waziri to turn aside for a time and aid him in finding his sweetheart, and while the sub-chief was debating the question in his mind the sound of something hurrying through the jungle attracted the attention of every

ear.

While they listened a man staggered into view. It was Fahd. Zeyd recognized him instantly and as immediately became doubly positive that the footprints of the woman had been made by Ateja.

Zeyd approached Fahd menacingly. "Where is Ateja?" he demanded.

"How should I know? I have not seen her for days," replied Fahd, truthfully enough.

"Thou liest!" cried Zeyd, and pointed at the ground. "Here are her own footprints beside thine!"

A cunning expression came into the eyes of Fahd. Here he saw an opportunity to cause suffering to the man he hated. He shrugged his shoulders.

"*W'Allah*, if you know, you know," he said. "Where is she?" demanded Zeyd.

"She is dead. I would have spared you," answered Fahd. "Dead?" The suffering in that single word should have melted a heart of stone—but not Fahd's.

"I stole her from her father's *beyt*," continued Fahd, wishing to inflict as much torture as possible upon his rival. "For days and nights she was mine; then a huge ape stole her from me. By now she must be dead."

But Fahd had gone to far. He had encompassed his own undoing. With a scream of rage Zeyd leaped upon him with drawn *khusa*, and before the Waziri could interfere or Fahd defend himself the keen blade had drunk thrice in the

heart of the lying Beduin.

With bent head and dull eyes Zeyd marched on northward with the Waziri, as, a mile behind them, a wasted old man, burning with fever, stumbled in the trail and fell. Twice he tried to regain his feet, only to sink weakly back to earth. A filthy, ragged bundle of old bones, he lay—sometimes raving in delirium, sometimes so still that he seemed dead.

Down from the north came Tarzan of the Apes upon the spoor of Guinalda and the two who had accompanied her. Knowing well the windings of the trail he took short cuts, swinging through the branches of the trees, and so it happened that he missed the Waziri at the point

where their trail had encountered that of Fahd, where Zeyd had slain his rival, and presently his nostrils picked up the scent of the Mangani in the distance.

Toward the great apes he made his way swiftly for he feared that harm might befall the girl should she, by any mischance, fall into the hands of the anthropoids. He arrived in the clearing where they lazed, a short time after the return of Toyat and Go-yad, who, by now, had abandoned their quarrel, since the prize had been taken by one stronger than either of them.

The preliminaries of meeting over and the apes having recognized and acknowledged Tarzan, he demanded if any had seen the Tarmangani she who

had recently passed through the jungle.

M'walat pointed at Toyat and Tarzan turned toward the King.

"You have seen the she?" demanded Tarzan, fearful, for he did not like the manner of the king ape.

Toyat jerked a thumb toward the south. "Numa," he said and went on hunting for food, but Tarzan knew what the ape meant as surely as though he had spoken a hundred words of explanation.

"Where?" asked Tarzan.

Toyat pointed straight to where he had abandoned Guinalda to the lion, and the ape-man, moving straight through the jungle along the line indicated by the king ape, went sadly to investigate, although he already guessed what he

would find. At least he could drive Numa from his kill and give decent burial to the unfortunate girl.

Slowly consciousness returned to Guinalda. She did not open her eyes, but lay very quiet wondering if this was death. She felt no pain.

Presently a sickly sweet and pungent odor assailed her nostrils and something moved very close to her, so close that she felt it against her body, pressing gently, and where it pressed she felt heat as from another body.

Fearfully she opened her eyes and the horror of her predicament again swept over her for she saw that the lion had bin down almost against her. His back was toward her, his noble head was lifted,

his black mane almost brushed her face. He was looking off, intently, toward the north.

Guinalda lay very quiet. Presently she felt, rather than heard, a low rumbling growl that seemed to have its origin deep in the cavernous chest of the carnivore.

Something was coming! Even Guinalda sensed that, but it could not be succor, for what could succor her from this hideous beast?

There was a rustling among the branches of the trees a hundred feet away and suddenly the giant figure of a demigod dropped to the ground. The lion rose and faced the man. The two stood thus, eying one another for a brief

moment. Then the man spoke.

"Jad-bal-ja!" he exclaimed, and then: "Come to heel!"

The great, golden lion whined and strode across the open space, stopping before the man. Guinalda saw the beast look up into the face of the demigod and saw the latter stroke the tawny head affectionately, but meanwhile the eyes of the man, or god, or whatever he was, were upon Guinalda and she saw the sudden relief that came to them as Tarzan realized that the girl was unharmed.

Leaving the lion the ape-man crossed to where the princess lay and knelt beside her.

"You are the Princess Guinalda?" he

asked.

The girl nodded, wondering how he knew her. As yet she was too stunned to command her own voice.

"Are you hurt?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"Do not be afraid," he assured her in a gentle voice. "I am your friend. You are safe now."

There was something in the way he said it that filled Guinalda with such a sense of safety as all the mailed knights of her father's realm had scarce imparted.

"I am not afraid—any more," she said simply.

"Where are your companions?" he

asked.

She told him all that had happened.

"You are well rid of them," said the ape-man, "and we shall not attempt to find them. The jungle will account for them in its own way and in its own good time."

"Who art thou?" asked the girl.

"I am Tarzan."

"How didst thou know, my name?" she queried.

"I am a friend of one whom you know as Sir James," he explained. "He and I were searching for you."

"Thou art his friend?" she cried. "Oh, sweet sir, then thou art mine as well!"

The ape-man smiled. "Always!" he

said.

"Why did the lion not kill thee, Sir Tarzan?" she demanded, thinking him a simple knight, for in her land there were only these beside the members of her princely house and the pseudo king of the City of the Sepulcher. For in the original company that had been wrecked upon the coast of Africa at the time of the Third Crusade there were only knights, except one bastard son of Henry II, who had been the original Prince Gobred. Never having been in contact with an English king since they parted from Richard at Cyprus Gobred had assumed the right to issue patents of nobility to his followers, solely the prerogative of the king.

"Why did the lion not kill me?" repeated Tarzan. "Because he is Jad-bal-ja, the Golden Lion, which I raised from cubhood. All his life he has known me only as friend and master. He would not harm me and it was because of his lifelong association with human beings that he did not harm you; though I was fearful when I saw him beside you that he had—a lion is always a lion!"

"Thou dwellest nearby?" asked the girL

"Far away," said Tarzan, "But there must be some of my people nearby, else Jad-bal-ja would not be here. I sent for my warriors and doubtless he has accompanied them."

Finding that the girl was hungry

Tarzan bade the Golden Lion remain and guard her while he went in search of food.

"Do not fear him," he told her, "and remember that you could not have a protector more competent than he to discourage the approach of enemies."

"And well may I believe it," admitted Guinalda.

Tarzan returned with food and then, as the day was not clone, he started back toward Nimmr with the rescued girl, carrying her, as she was now too weak to walk; and beside them strode the great, black- maned lion of gold.

During that journey Tarzan learned much of Nimmr and also discovered that Blake's love for his princess was

apparently fully reciprocated by the girl, for she seemed never so content as when talking about her Sir James and asking questions concerning his far country and his past life, of which, unfortunately, Tarzan could tell her nothing.

Upon the second day the three came to the great cross and here Tarzan hailed the warders and bade them come and take their princess.

She urged the ape-man to accompany her to the castle and receive the thanks of her father and mother, but he told her that he must leave at once to search for Blake, and at that she ceased her urging.

"An thou findst him," she said, "tell him that the gates of Nimmr are always open to him and that the Princess

Guinalda awaits his return."

Down from the cross went Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja and before she turned back to enter the tunnel that led to her father's castle the Princess Guinalda stood watching them until a turn in the trail hid them from her view.

"May Our Lord Jesus bless thee, sweet sir knight," she murmured, "and watch o'er thee and fetch thee back once more with my beloved!"

24. WHERE TRAILS MET

Down through the forest rode Blake searching for some clue to the whereabouts of the Arabs, ranging this way and that, following trails and abandoning them.

Late one day he came suddenly in to a large clearing where once a native village had stood. The jungle had not yet reclaimed it and as he entered it he saw a leopard crouching upon the far side, and before the leopard lay the body of a human being. At first Blake thought the poor creature dead, but presently he saw it attempt to rise and crawl away.

The great cat growled and advanced toward it. Blake shouted and spurred forward, but Sheeta paid no attention to

him, evidently having no mind to give up its prey; but as Blake came nearer the cat turned to face him with an angry growl.

The American wondered if his horse would dare the close proximity of the beast of prey, but he need not have feared. Nor would he had he been more fully acquainted with the customs of the Valley of the Sepulcher, where one of the greatest sports of the knights of the two enemy cities is hunting the giant cats with lance alone when they venture from the sanctuary of the Wood of the Leopards.

The charger that Blake bestrode had faced many a savage cat, and larger, too, by far than this one, and so he fell into his charging stride with no show of fear

or nervousness and the two thundered down upon Sheeta while the creature that was to have been its prey looked on with wide, astounded eyes.

Within the length of its spring Sheeta rose swiftly to meet the horse and man. He leaped and as he leaped he struck full on the metal tip of the great lance, and the wooden shaft passed through him so far that it was with difficulty that the man forced the carcass from it. When he had done so he turned and rode to the side of the creature lying helpless on the ground.

"My God!" he cried as his eyes rested on the face below him. "Stimbol!"

"Blake!"

The younger roan dismounted.

"I'm dying, Blake," whispered Stimbol. "Before I go I want to tell you that I'm sorry. I acted like a cad. I guess I've got what was coming to me."

"Never mind that, Stimbol," said Blake. "You're not dead yet. The first thing is to get you where there are food and water." He stooped and lifted the emaciated form and placed the man in his saddle. "I passed a small native village a few miles back. They all ran when they saw me, but we'll try there for food."

"What are you doing here?" asked Stimbol. "And in the name of King Arthur, where did you get the outfit?"

"I'll tell you about it when we get to the village," said Blake. "It's a long

story. I'm looking for a girl that was stolen by the Arabs a few days ago."

"God!" ejaculated Stimbol.

"You know something about her?" demanded Blake.

"I was with the man that stole her," said Stimbol, "or at least who stole her from the other Arabs."

"Where is she?"

"She's dead, Blake!"

"Dead?"

"A bunch of those big anthropoid apes got her. The poor child must have been killed immediately."

Blake was silent for a long time, walking with bowed head as, weighted down by heavy armor, he led the horse

along the trail.

"Did the Arabs harm her?" he asked presently.

"No," said Stimbol. "The sheikh stole her either for ransom or to sell her in the north, but Fahd stole her for himself. He took me along because I had promised him a lot of money if he'd save me, and I kept him from harming the girl by telling him that he'd never get a cent from me if he did. I felt sorry for the poor child and I made up my mind that I was going to save her if I could."

When Blake and Stimbol approached the village the blacks fled, leaving the white men in full possession of the place. It did not take Blake long to find food for them both.

Making Stimbol as comfortable as possible, Blake found fodder for his horse and presently returned to the old man. He was engaged in narrating his experiences when he was suddenly aware of the approach of many people. He could hear voices and the pad of naked feet. Evidently the villagers were returning.

Blake prepared to meet them with friendly overtures, but the first glimpse he had of the approaching party gave him a distinct shock, for these were not the frightened villagers he had seen scurrying into the jungle a short time before.

With white plumes waving about their heads a company of stalwart warriors

came swinging down the trail. Great oval shields were upon their backs, long war spears in their hands.

"Well," said Blake, "I guess we're in for it. The villagers have sent for their big brothers."

The warriors entered the village and when they saw Blake the halted in evident wonder. One of their number approached him and to Blake's surprise addressed him in fairly good English.

"We are the Waziri of Tarzan," he said. "We search for our chief and master. Have you seen him, Bwana?"

The Waziri! Blake could have hugged them. He had been at his wits end to know what he was to do with Stimbol. Alone he never could have brought the

man to civilization, but now he knew that his worries were over.

Had it not been for the grief of Blake and Zeyd, it had been a merry party that made free with the cassava and beer of the villagers that night, for the Waziri were not worrying about their chief.

"Tarzan cannot die," said the sub-chief to Blake, when the latter asked if the other felt any fear as to the safety of his master, and the simple conviction of the quiet words almost succeeded in convincing Blake of their truth.

Along the trail plodded the weary Arabs of the Beny Salem *fendy* el-Guad. Tired men staggered beneath the weight of half-loads. The women carried even more. Ibn Jad watched the treasure with

greedy eyes. An arrow came from no where and pierced the heart of a treasure bearer close before Ibn Jad. A hollow voice sounded from the jungle: *"For every jewel a drop of blood!"*

Terrified, the Beduins hastened on. Who would be next? They wanted to cast aside the treasure, but Ibn Jad, greedy, would not let them. Behind them they caught a glimpse of a great lion. He terrified them because he did not come nearer or go away—he just stalked silently along behind. There were no stragglers.

An hour passed. The lion paced just within sight of the tail end of the column. Never had the head of one of Ibn Jad's columns been so much in demand.

Everyone wished to go in the lead.

A scream burst from another treasure carrier. An arrow had passed through his lungs. *"For every jewel a drop of blood!"*

The men threw down the treasure. "We will not carry the accursed thing more!" they cried, and again the voice spoke.

"Take up the treasure, Ibn Jad!" it said. *"Take up the treasure! It is thou who murdered to acquire it. Pick it up, thief and murderer, and carry it thyself!"*

Together the Arabs made the treasure into one load and lifted it to Ibn lad's back. The old sheikh staggered beneath the weight.

"I cannot carry it!" he cried aloud. "I am old and I am not strong."

"Thou canst carry it, or—die!" boomed the hollow voice, while the lion stood in the trail behind them, his eyes glaring fixedly at them.

Ibn Jad staggered on beneath the great load. He could not now travel as fast as the others and so he was left behind with only the lion as company; but only for a short time. Ateja saw his predicament and came back to his side, bearing a musket in her hands.

"Fear not," she said, "I am not the son thou didst crave, but yet I shall protect thee even as a son!"

It was almost dusk when the leaders of the Beduin company stumbled upon a

village. They were in it and surrounded by a hundred warriors before they realized that they were in the midst of the one tribe of all others they most feared and dreaded—the Waziri of Tarzan.

The sub-chief disarmed them at once.

"Where is Ibn Jad?" demanded Zeyd.

"He cometh!" said one.

They looked back along the trail and presently Zeyd saw two figures approaching. One was a man bent beneath a great load and the other was that of a young girl. What he did not see was the figure of a great lion in the shadows behind them.

Zeyd held his breath because, for an instant, his heart had stopped beating.

"Ateja!" he cried and ran forward to meet her and clasp her in his arms.

Ibn Jad staggered into the village. He took one look at the stern visages of the dread Waziri and sank weakly to the ground, the treasure almost burying him as it fell upon his head and shoulders.

Hirfa voiced a sudden scream as she pointed back along the trail, and as every eye turned in that direction, a great golden lion stepped into the circle of the firelight in the village, and at its side strode Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle.

As Tarzan entered the village Blake came forward and grasped his hand.

"We were too late!" said the American sadly.

"What do you mean?" asked the ape-

man.

"The Princess Guinalda is dead!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Tarzan. "I left her this morning at the entrance to the City of Nimmr."

A dozen times Tarzan was forced to assure Blake that he was not playing a cruel joke upon him. A dozen times Tarzan had to repeat Guinalda's message: "An' thou findest him tell him that the gates of Nimmr be always open to him and that the Princess Guinalda awaits his return!"

Later in the evening Stimbol, through Blake, begged Tarzan to come to the hut in which he lay.

"Thank God!" exclaimed the old man fervently. "I thought that I had killed you.

It has preyed on my mind and now I know that it was not you I believe that I can recover."

"You will be taken care of properly, Stimbol," said the ape- man, "and as soon as you are well enough you will be taken to the coast," then he walked away. He would do his duty by the man who bad disobeyed him and tried to kill him, but he would not feign a friendship he did not feel.

The following morning they prepared to leave the village. Ibn Jad and his Arabs, with the exception of Zeyd and Ateja, who had asked to come and serve Tarzan in his home, were being sent to the nearest Galla village under escort of a dozen Waziri. Here they would be

turned over to the Galla and doubtless sold into slavery in Abyssinia.

Stimbol was borne in a litter by four stout Waziri as the party prepared to take up its march toward the south and the country of Tarzan. Four others carried the treasure of the City of the Sepulcher.

Blake, dressed again in his iron mail, bestrode his great charger as the column started out of the village and down the trail into the south. Tarzan and the Golden Lion stood beside him. Blake reached down and extended his band to the ape-man.

"Goodbye, sir!" he said.

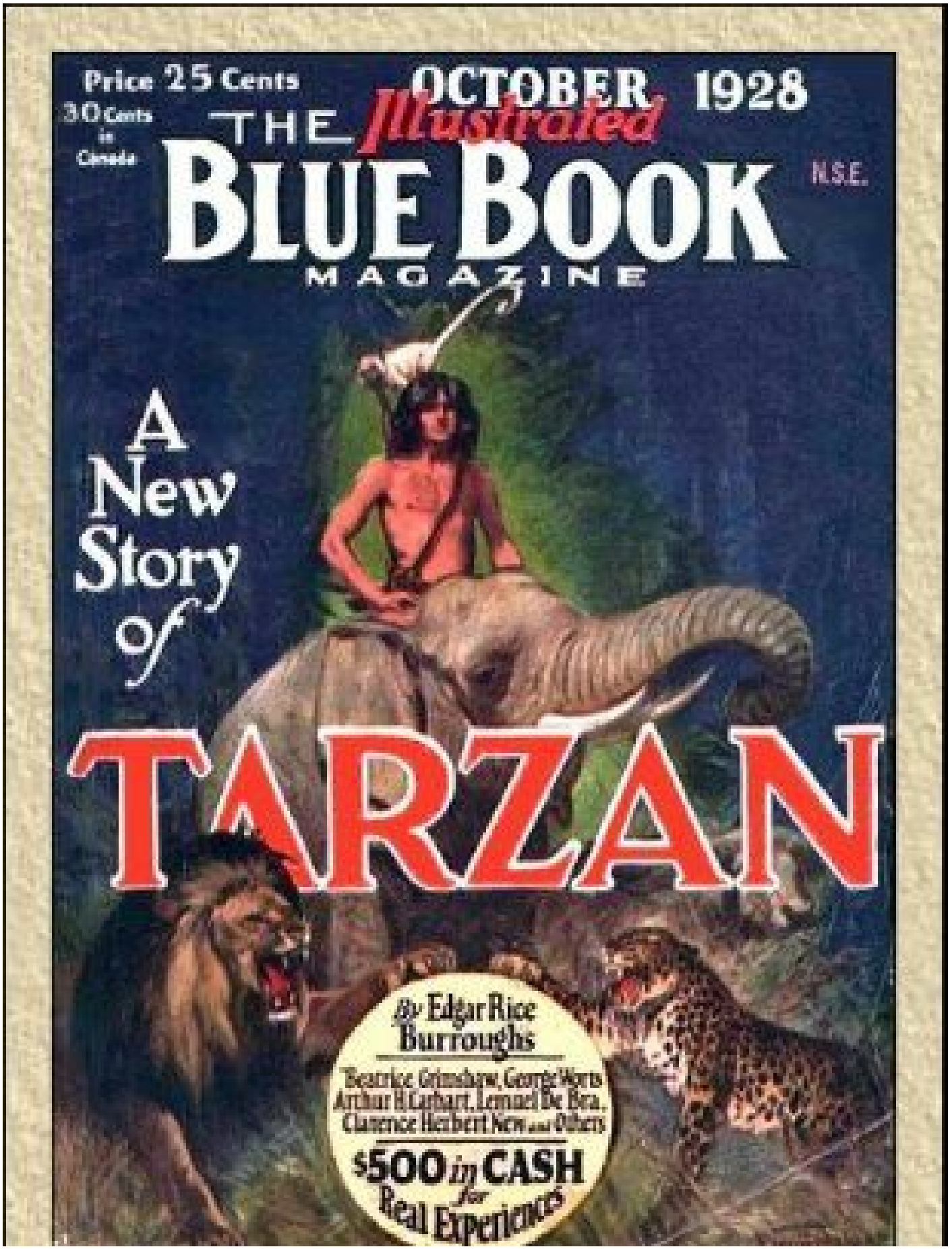
"Goodbye?" demanded Tarzan. "Aren't you coming home with us?"

Blake shook his head.

"No," he said, "I'm going back into the middle ages with the woman I love!"

Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja stood in the trail watching as Sir James rode out toward the City of Nimmr, the blue and silver of his pennon fluttering bravely from the iron tip of his great lance.

THE END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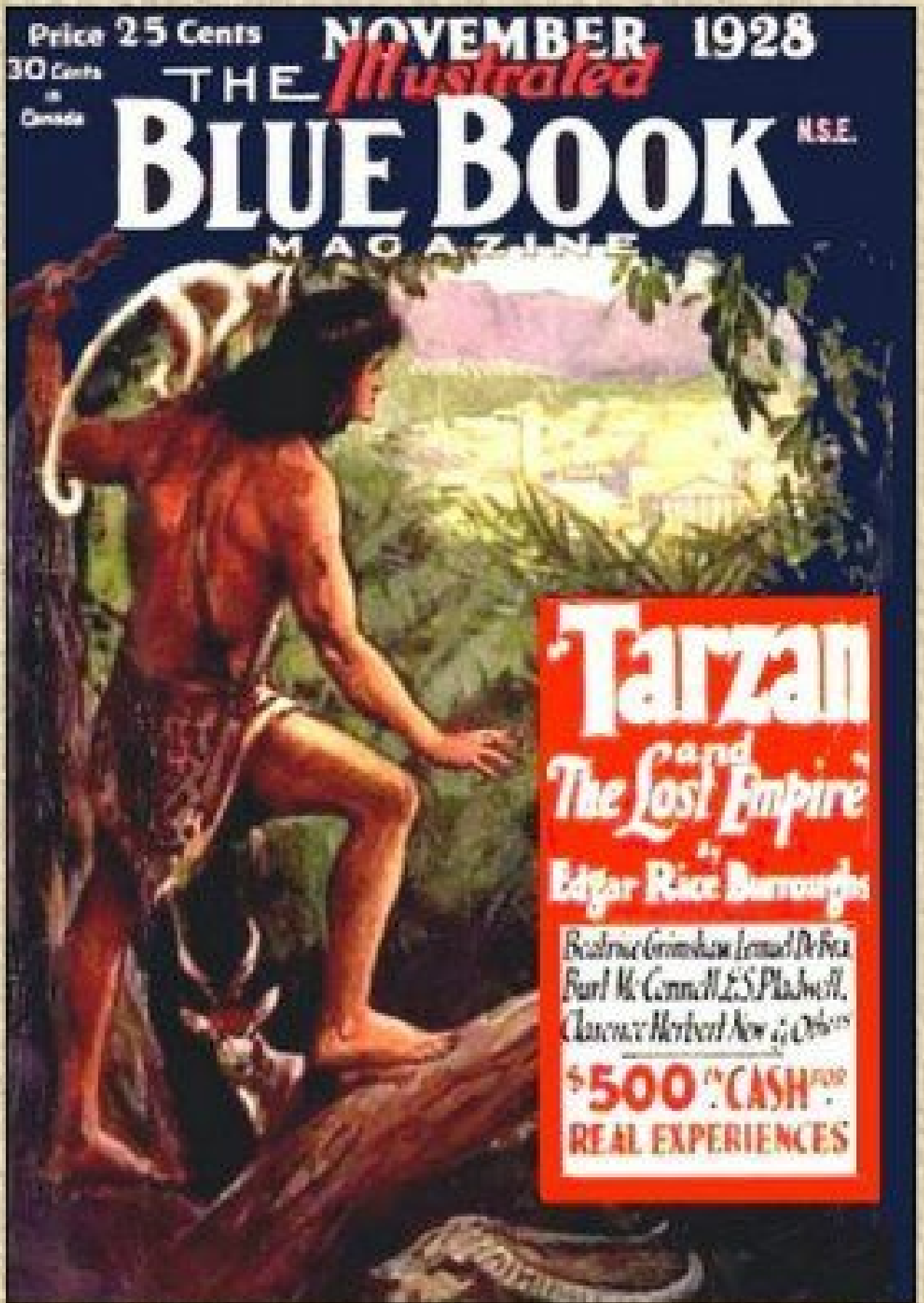
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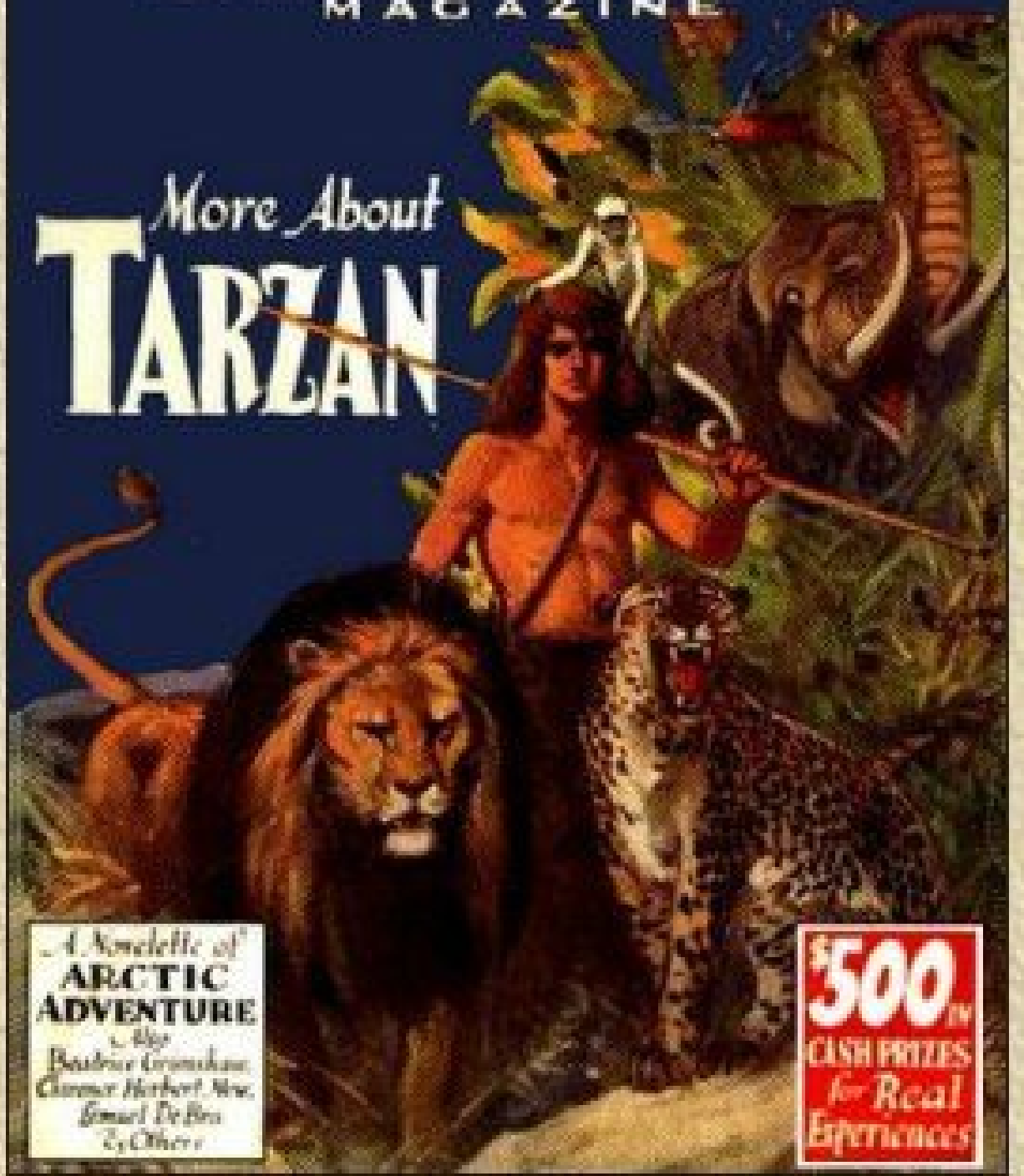

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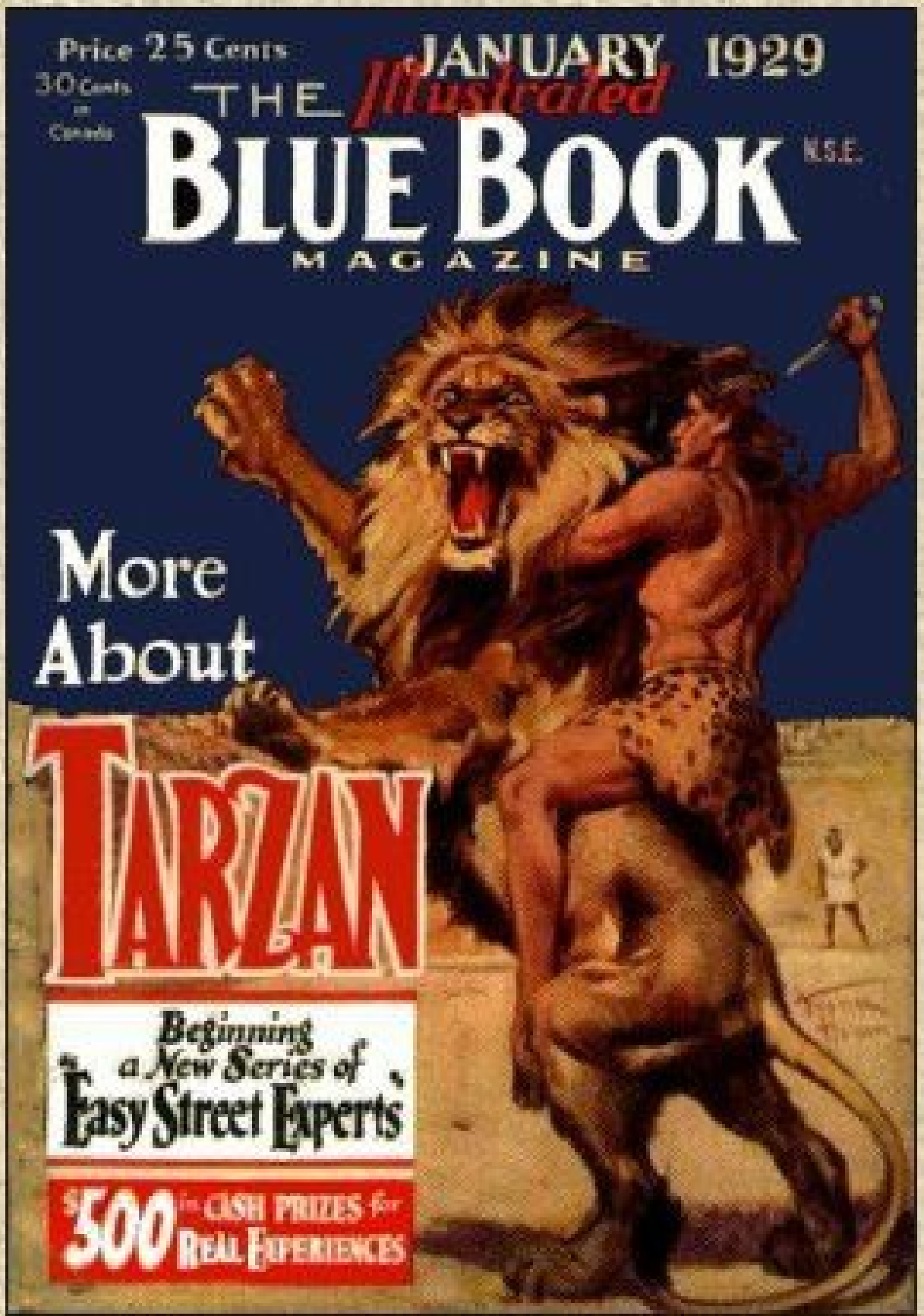
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CHAPTER 1

Nkima danced excitedly upon the naked, brown shoulder of his master. He chattered and scolded, now looking up inquiringly into Tarzan's face and then off into the jungle.

"Something is coming, Bwana," said Muviro, sub-chief of the Waziri. "Nkima has heard it."

"And Tarzan," said the ape-man.

"The big Bwana's ears are as keen as the ears of Bara the antelope," said Muviro.

"Had they not been, Tarzan would not be here today," replied the ape-man, with a smile. "He would not have grown to manhood had not Kala, his mother, taught him to use all of the senses that

Mulungu gave him."

"What comes?" asked Muviro.

"A party of men," replied Tarzan.

"Perhaps they are not friendly," suggested the African. "Shall I warn the warriors?"

Tarzan glanced about the little camp where a score of his fighting men were busy preparing their evening meal and saw that, as was the custom of the Waziri, their weapons were in order and at hand.

"No," he said. "It will, I believe, be unnecessary, as these people who are approaching do not come stealthily as enemies would, nor are their numbers so great as to cause us any apprehension."

But Nkima, a born pessimist, expected only the worst, and as the approaching party came nearer his excitement increased. He leaped from Tarzan's shoulder to the ground, jumped up and down several times and then, springing back to Tarzan's side, seized his arm and attempted to drag him to his feet.

"Run, run!" he cried, in the language of the apes. "Strange Gomangani are coming. They will kill little Nkima."

"Do not be afraid, Nkima," said the ape-man. "Tarzan and Muviro will not let the strangers hurt you."

"I smell a strange Tarmangani," chattered Nkima. "There is a Tarmangani with them. The Tarmangani

are worse than the Gomangani. They come with thundersticks and kill little Nkima and all his brothers and sisters. They kill the Mangani. They kill the Gomangani. They kill everything with their thundersticks. Nkima does not like the Tarmangani. Nkima is afraid."

To Nkima, as to the other denizens of the jungle, Tarzan was no Tarmangani, no white man. He was of the jungle. He was one of them, and if they thought of him as being anything other than just Tarzan it was as a Mangani, a great ape, that they classified him.

The advance of the strangers was now plainly audible to everyone in the camp. The Waziri warriors glanced into the jungle in the direction from which the

sounds were coming and then back to Tarzan and Muviro, but when they saw that their leaders were not concerned they went quietly on with their cooking.

A tall Negro warrior was the first of the party to come within sight of the camp. When he saw the Waziri he halted and an instant later a bearded white man stopped beside him.

For an instant the white man surveyed the camp and then he came forward, making the sign of peace. Out of the jungle a dozen or more warriors followed him. Most of them were porters, there being but three or four rifles in evidence.

Tarzan and the Waziri realized at once that it was a small and harmless

party, and even Nkima, who had retreated to the safety of a nearby tree, showed his contempt by scampering fearlessly back to climb to the shoulder of his master.

"Doctor von Harben!" exclaimed Tarzan, as the bearded stranger approached. "I scarcely recognized you at first."

"God has been kind to me, Tarzan of the Apes," said von Harben, extending his hand. "I was on my way to see you and I have found you a full two days march sooner than I expected."

"We are after a cattle-killer," explained Tarzan. "He has come into our kraal several nights of late and killed some of our best cattle, but he is very

cunning. I think he must be an old lion to outwit Tarzan for so long.

"But what brings you into Tarzan's country, Doctor? I hope it is only a neighborly visit and that no trouble has come to my good friend, though your appearance belies my hope."

"I, too, wish that it were nothing more than a friendly call," said von Harben, "but as a matter of fact I am here to seek your help because I am in trouble—very serious trouble, I fear."

"Do not tell me that the Arabs have come down again to take slaves or to steal ivory, or is it that the leopard men are waylaying your people upon the jungle trails at night?"

"No, it is neither the one nor the other.

I have come to see you upon a more personal matter. It is about my son, Erich. You have never met him."

"No," said Tarzan; "but you are tired and hungry. Let your men make camp here. My evening meal is ready; while you and I eat you shall tell me how Tarzan may serve you."

As the Waziri, at Tarzan's command, assisted von Harben's men in making their camp, the doctor and the ape-man sat cross-legged upon the ground and ate the rough fare that Tarzan's Waziri cook had prepared.

Tarzan saw that his guest's mind was filled with the trouble that had brought him in search of the ape-man, and so he did not wait until they had finished the

meal to reopen the subject, but urged von Harben to continue his story at once.

"I wish to preface the real object of my visit with a few words of explanation," commenced von Harben. "Erich is my only son. Four years ago, at the age of nineteen, he completed his university course with honors and received his first degree. Since then he has spent the greater part of his time in pursuing his studies in various European universities, where he has specialized in archaeology and the study of dead languages. His one hobby, outside of his chosen field, has been mountain climbing and during succeeding summer vacations he scaled every important Alpine peak.

"A few months ago he came here to visit me at the mission and immediately became interested in the study of the various Bantu dialects that are in use by the several tribes in our district and those adjacent thereto.

"While pursuing his investigation among the natives he ran across that old legend of The Lost Tribe of the Wiramwazi Mountains, with which we are all so familiar. Immediately his mind became imbued, as have the minds of so many others, with the belief that this fable might have originated in fact and that if he could trace it down he might possibly find descendants of one of the lost tribes of Biblical history."

"I know the legend well," said

Tarzan, "and because it is so persistent and the details of its narration by the natives so circumstantial, I have thought that I should like to investigate it myself, but in the past no necessity has arisen to take me close to the Wiramwazi Mountains."

"I must confess," continued the doctor, "that I also have had the same urge many times. I have upon two occasions talked with men of the Bagego tribe that live upon the slopes of the Wiramwazi Mountains and in both instances I have been assured that a tribe of white men dwells somewhere in the depths of that great mountain range. Both of these men told me that their tribe has carried on trade with these people from

time immemorial and each assured me that he had often seen members of The Lost Tribe both upon occasions of peaceful trading and during the warlike raids that the mountaineers occasionally launched upon the Bagego.

"The result was that when Erich suggested an expedition to the Wiramwazi I rather encouraged him, since he was well fitted to undertake the adventure. His knowledge of Bantu and his intensive, even though brief, experience among the natives gave him an advantage that few scholars otherwise equipped by education to profit by such an expedition would have, while his considerable experience as a mountain climber would, I felt, stand

him in good stead during such an adventure.

"On the whole I felt that he was an ideal man to lead such an expedition, and my only regret was that I could not accompany him, but this was impossible at the time. I assisted him in every way possible in the organization of his safari and in equipping and provisioning it.

"He has not been gone a sufficient length of time to accomplish any considerable investigation and return to the mission, but recently a few of the members of his safari were reported to me as having returned to their villages. When I sought to interview them they avoided me, but rumors reached me that convinced me that all was not well with

my son. I therefore determined to organize a relief expedition, but in all my district I could find only these few men who dared accompany me to the Wiramwazi Mountains, which, their legends assure them, are inhabited by malign spirits— for, as you know, they consider The Lost Tribe of the Wiramwazi to be a band of bloodthirsty ghosts. It became evident to me that the deserters of Erich's safari had spread terror through the district.

"Under the circumstances I was compelled to look elsewhere for help and naturally I turned, in my perplexity, to Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle. Now you know why I am here."

"I will help you, Doctor," said

Tarzan, after the other had concluded.

"Good!" exclaimed von Harben; "but I knew that you would. You have about twenty men here, I should judge, and I have about fourteen. My men can act as carriers, while yours, who are acknowledged to be the finest fighting men in Africa, can serve as askaris. With you to guide us we can soon pick up the trail and with such a force, small though it be, there is no country that we cannot penetrate."

Tarzan shook his head. "No, Doctor," he said, "I shall go alone. That is always my way. Alone I may travel much more rapidly and when I am alone the jungle holds no secrets from me—I shall be able to obtain more information along

the way than would be possible were I accompanied by others. You know the jungle people consider me as one of themselves. They do not run away from me as they would from you and other men."

"You know best," said von Harben. "I should like to accompany you. I should like to feel that I am doing my share, but if you say no I can only abide by your decision."

"Return to your mission, Doctor, and wait there until you hear from me."

"And in the morning you leave for the Wiramwazi Mountains?" asked von Harben.

"I leave at once," said the ape-man.

"But it is already dark," objected von

Harben.

"There is a full moon and I wish to take advantage of it," explained the other. "I can lie up in the heat of the day for what rest I need." He turned and called Muviro to him. "Return home with my warriors, Muviro," he instructed, "and hold every fighting man of the Waziri in readiness in the event that I find it necessary to send for you."

"Yes, Bwana," replied Muviro; "and how long shall we wait for a message before we set out for the Wiramwazi Mountains in search of you?"

"I shall take Nkima with me and if I need you I shall send him back to fetch and to guide you."

"Yes, Bwana," replied Muviro. "They

will be in readiness—all the fighting men of the Waziri. Their weapons will be at hand by day and by night and fresh war-paint will be ready in every pot."

Tarzan swung his bow and his quiver of arrows across his back. Over his left shoulder and under his right arm lay the coils of his grass rope and at his hip dangled the hunting-knife of his long-dead sire. He picked up his short spear and stood for a moment with head up, sniffing the breeze. The firelight played upon his bronzed skin.

For a moment he stood thus, every sense alert. Then he called to Nkima in the tongue of the ape folk and as the little monkey scampered toward him, Tarzan of the Apes turned without a word of

farewell and moved silently off into the jungle, his lithe carriage, his noiseless tread, his majestic mien suggesting to the mind of von Harben a personification of another mighty jungle animal, Numa the lion, king of beasts.

CHAPTER 2

Erich von Harben stepped from his tent upon the slopes of the Wiramwazi Mountains to look upon a deserted camp.

When he had first awakened, the unusual quiet of his surroundings had aroused within him a presentiment of ill, which was augmented when repeated calls for his body-servant, Gabula, elicited no response.

For weeks, as the safari had been approaching the precincts of the feared Wiramwazi, his men had been deserting by twos and threes until the preceding evening when they had made this camp well upon the mountain slopes only a terrified remnant of the original safari had remained with him. Now even these,

overcome during the night by the terrors of ignorance and superstition, had permitted fear to supplant loyalty and had fled from the impending and invisible terrors of this frowning range, leaving their master alone with the bloodthirsty spirits of the dead.

A hasty survey of the camp site revealed that the men had stripped von Harben of everything. All of his supplies were gone and his gun carriers had decamped with his rifles and all of his ammunition, with the exception of a single Luger pistol and its belt of ammunition that had been in the tent with him.

Erich von Harben had had sufficient experience with these natives to

understand fairly well the mental processes based upon their deep-rooted superstition that had led them to this seemingly inhuman and disloyal act and so he did not place so much blame upon them as might another less familiar with them.

While they had known their destination when they embarked upon the undertaking, their courage had been high in direct proportion to the great distance that they had been from the Wiramwazi, but in proportion as the distance lessened with each day's march their courage had lessened until now upon the very threshold of horrors beyond the ken of human minds the last vestige of self-control had deserted them and they had

fled precipitately.

That they had taken his provisions, his rifles and his ammunition might have seemed the depth of baseness had von Harben not realized the sincerity of their belief that there could be no possible hope for him and that his immediate death was a foregone conclusion.

He knew that they had reasoned that under the circumstances it would be a waste of food to leave it behind for a man who was already as good as dead when they would need it for their return journey to their villages, and likewise, as the weapons of mortal man could avail nothing against the ghosts of Wiramwazi, it would have been a needless extravagance to have

surrendered fine rifles and quantities of ammunition that von Harben could not use against his enemies of the spirit world.

Von Harben stood for some time looking down the mountain slope toward the forest, somewhere in the depths of which his men were hastening toward their own country. That he might overtake them was a possibility, but by no means a certainty, and if he did not he would be no better off alone in the jungle than he would be on the slopes of the Wiramwazi.

He faced about and looked up toward the rugged heights above him. He had come a long way to reach his goal, which now lay somewhere just beyond

that serrated skyline, and he was of no mind to turn back now in defeat. A day or a week in these rugged mountains might reveal the secret of The Lost Tribe of legend, and surely a month would be sufficient to determine beyond a reasonable doubt that the story had no basis in fact, for von Harben believed that in a month he could fairly well explore such portions of the range as might naturally lend themselves to human habitation, where he hoped at best to find relics of the fabled tribe in the form of ruins or burial mounds. For to a man of von Harben's training and intelligence there could be no thought that The Lost Tribe of legend, if it had ever existed, could be anything more than a vague

memory surrounding a few moldy artifacts and some crumbling bones.

It did not take the young man long to reach a decision and presently he turned back to his tent and, entering it, packed a few necessities that had been left to him in a light haversack, strapped his ammunition belt about him, and stepped forth once more to turn his face upward toward the mystery of the Wiramwazi.

In addition to his Luger, von Harben carried a hunting-knife and with this he presently cut a stout staff from one of the small trees that grew sparsely upon the mountainside against the time when he might find an alpenstock indispensable.

A mountain rill furnished him pure, cold water to quench his thirst, and he

carried his pistol cocked, hoping that he might bag some small game to satisfy his hunger. Nor had he gone far before a hare broke cover, and as it rolled over to the crack of the Luger, von Harben gave thanks that he had devoted much time to perfecting himself in the use of small arms.

On the spot he built a fire and grilled the hare, after which he lit his pipe and lay at ease while he smoked and planned. His was not a temperament to be depressed or discouraged by seeming reverses, and he was determined not to be hurried by excitement, but to conserve his strength at all times during the strenuous days that he felt must lie ahead of him.

All day he climbed, choosing the long way when it seemed safer, exercising all the lore of mountain-climbing that he had accumulated, and resting often. Night overtook him well up toward the summit of the highest ridge that had been visible from the base of the range. What lay behind, he could not even guess, but experience suggested that he would find other ridges and frowning peaks before him.

He had brought a blanket with him from the last camp and in this he rolled up on the ground. From below there came the noises of the jungle subdued by distance—the yapping of jackals and faintly from afar the roaring of a lion.

Toward morning he was awakened by

the scream of a leopard, not from the jungle far below, but somewhere upon the mountain slopes near by. He knew that this savage night prowler constituted a real menace, perhaps the greatest he would have to face, and he regretted the loss of his heavy rifle.

He was not afraid, for he knew that after all there was little likelihood that the leopard was hunting him or that it would attack him, but there was always that chance and so to guard against it he started a fire of dry wood that he had gathered for the purpose the night before. He found the warmth of the blaze welcome, for the night had grown cold, and he sat for some time warming himself.

Once he thought he heard an animal moving in the darkness beyond the range of the firelight, but he saw no shining eyes and the sound was not repeated. And then he must have slept, for the next thing that he knew it was daylight and only embers remained to mark where the beast fire had blazed.

Cold and without breakfast, von Harben continued the ascent from his cheerless camp, his eyes, under the constant urging of his stomach, always alert for food. The terrain offered few obstacles to an experienced mountain climber, and he even forgot his hunger in the thrill of expectancy with which he anticipated the possibilities hidden by the ridge whose summit now lay but a

short distance ahead of him.

It is the summit of the next ridge that ever lures the explorer onward. What new sights lie just beyond? What mysteries will its achievement unveil to the eager eyes of the adventurer? Judgment and experience joined forces to assure him that when his eyes surmounted the ridge ahead they would be rewarded with nothing more startling than another similar ridge to be negotiated; yet there was always that other hope hanging like a shining beacon just below the next horizon, above which the rays of its hidden light served to illuminate the figments of his desire, and his imagination transformed the figments into realities.

Von Harben, sane and phlegmatic as he was, was now keyed to the highest pitch of excitement as he at last scaled the final barrier and stood upon the crest of the ridge. Before him stretched a rolling plateau, dotted with stunted windswept trees, and in the distance lay the next ridge that he had anticipated, but indistinct and empurpled by the haze of distance. What lay between him and those far hills? His pulse quickened at the thought of the possibilities for exploration and discovery that lay before him, for the terrain that he looked upon was entirely different from what he had anticipated. No lofty peaks were visible except in the far distance, and between him and them there must lie

intriguing ravines and valleys— virgin fields at the feet of the explorer.

Eagerly, entirely forgetful of his hunger or his solitude, von Harben moved northward across the plateau. The land was gently rolling, rock-strewn, sterile, and uninteresting, and when he had covered a mile of it he commenced to have misgivings, for if it continued on without change to the dim hills in the distance, as it now seemed was quite likely the case, it could offer him neither interest nor sustenance.

As these thoughts were commencing to oppress him, he became suddenly conscious of a vague change in the appearance of the terrain ahead. It was only an impression of unreality. The

hills far away before him seemed to rise out of a great void, and it was as though between him and them there existed nothing. He might have been looking across an inland sea to distant, hazy shores—a waterless sea, for nowhere was there any suggestion of water —and then suddenly he came to a halt, startled, amazed. The lolling plateau ceased abruptly at his feet, and below him, stretching far to the distant hills, lay a great abyss—a mighty canyon similar to that which has made the gorge of the Colorado world-famous.

But here there was a marked difference. There were indications of erosion. The grim walls were scarred and water-worn. Towers and turrets and

minarets, carved from the native granite, pointed upward from below, but they clung close to the canyon's wall, and just beyond them he could see the broad expanse of the floor of the canyon, which from his great height above it appeared as level as a billiard table. The scene held him in a hypnosis of wonderment and admiration as, at first swiftly and then slowly, his eyes encompassed the whole astounding scene.

Perhaps a mile below him lay the floor of the sunken canyon, the further wall of which he could but vaguely estimate to be somewhere between fifteen and twenty miles to the north, and this he realized was the lesser dimension of the canyon. Upon his right, to the east,

and upon his left, to the west, he could see that the canyon extended to considerable distances—just how far he could not guess. He thought that to the east he could trace the wall that hemmed it upon that side, but from where he stood the entire extent of the canyon to the west was not visible, yet he knew that the floor that was visible to him must stretch fully twenty-five or thirty miles from east to west Almost below him was a large lake or marsh that seemed to occupy the greater part of the east end of the canyon. He could see lanes of water winding through what appeared to be great growths of reeds and, nearer the northern shore, a large island. Three streams, winding ribbons

far below, emptied into the lake, and in the far distance was another ribbon that might be a road. To the west the canyon was heavily wooded, and between the forest and the lake he saw moving figures of what he thought to be grazing game.

The sight below him aroused the enthusiasm of the explorer to its highest pitch. Here, doubtless, lay the secret of The Lost Tribe of the Wiramwazi and how well Nature had guarded this secret with stupendous barrier cliffs, aided by the superstitions of the ignorant inhabitants of the outer slopes, was now easily understandable.

As far as he could see, the cliffs seemed sheer and impossible of descent,

and yet he knew that he must find a way—that he would find a way down into that valley of enchantment.

Moving slowly along the rim he sought some foothold, however slight, where Nature had lowered her guard, but it was almost night and he had covered but a short distance before he found even a suggestion of hope that the canyon was hemmed at any point by other than unbroken cliffs, whose perpendicular faces rose at their lowest point fully a thousand feet above any possible foothold for a human being.

The sun had already set when he discovered a narrow fissure in the granite wall. Crumbled fragments of the mother rock had fallen into and partially

filled it so that near the surface, at least, it offered a means of descent below the level of the cliff top, but in the gathering darkness he could not determine how far downward this rough and precarious pathway led.

He could see that below him the cliffs rose in terraced battlements to within a thousand feet of where he stood, and if the narrow fissure extended to the next terrace below him, he felt that the obstacles thereafter would present fewer difficulties than those that had baffled him up to the present time—for while he would still have some four thousand feet to descend, the formation of the cliffs was much more broken at the foot of the first sheer drop and consequently might

be expected to offer some avenues of descent of which an experienced mountain climber could take advantage.

Hungry and cold, he sat beneath the descending night, gazing down into the blackening void below. Presently, as the darkness deepened, he saw a light twinkling far below and then another and another and with each his excitement rose, for he knew that they marked the presence of man. In many places upon the marsh-like lake he saw the fires twinkling, and at a point which he took to mark the site of the island there were many lights.

What sort of men were they who tended these fires? Would he find them friendly or hostile? Were they but

another tribe of Africans, or could it be that the old legend was based upon truth and that far below him white men of The Lost Tribe cooked their evening meals above those tantalizing fires of mystery?

What was that? Von Harben strained his ears to catch the faint suggestion of a sound that arose out of the shadowy abyss below—a faint, thin sound that barely reached his ears, but he was sure that he could not be mistaken—the sound was the voices of men.

And now from out of the valley came the scream of a beast and again a roar that rumbled upward like distant thunder. To the music of these sounds, von Harben finally succumbed to exhaustion; sleep for the moment offering him relief

from cold and hunger.

When morning came he gathered wood from the stunted trees near by and built a fire to warm himself. He had no food, nor all the previous day since he had reached the summit had he seen any sign of a living creature other than the game a mile beneath him on the verdant meadows of the canyon bottom.

He knew that he must have food and have it soon and food lay but a mile away in one direction. If he sought to circle the canyon in search of an easier avenue of descent, he knew that he might not find one in the hundred miles or more that he must travel. Of course he might turn back. He was sure that he could reach the base of the outer slopes

of the Wiramwazi, where he knew that game might be found before exhaustion overcame him, but he had no mind to turn back and the thought of failure was only a vague suggestion that scarcely ever rose above the threshold of his conscious mind.

Having warmed himself before the fire, he turned to examine the fissure by the full light of day. As he stood upon its brink he could see that it extended downward for several hundred feet, but there it disappeared. However, he was by no means sure that it ended, since it was not a vertical cleft, but tilted slightly from the perpendicular.

From where he stood he could see that there were places in the fissure

where descent would be just possible, though it might be very difficult to reascend. He knew, therefore, that should he reach the bottom of the fissure and find that further descent was impossible he would be caught in a trap from which there might be no escape.

Although he felt as fit and strong as ever, he realized perfectly that the contrary was the fact and that his strength must be ebbing and that it would continue to ebb still more rapidly the longer that he was forced to expend it in arduous efforts to descend the cliff and without any possibility of rebuilding it with food.

Even to Erich von Harben, young, self-confident and enthusiastic, his next

step seemed little better than suicidal. To another the mere idea of attempting the descent of these towering cliffs would have seemed madness, but in other mountains von Harben had always found a way, and with this thin thread upon which to hang his hopes he faced the descent into the unknown. Now he was just about to lower himself over the edge of the fissure when he heard the sounds of footsteps behind him. Wheeling quickly, he drew his Luger.

CHAPTER 3

Little Nkima came racing through the tree tops, jabbering excitedly, and dropped to the knee of Tarzan of the Apes where the latter lay stretched upon the great branch of a jungle giant, his back against the rough bole, where he was lying up after making a kill and feeding.

"Gomangani! Gomangani!" shrilled Nkima. "They come! They come!"

"Peace," said Tarzan. "You are a greater nuisance than all the Gomangani in the jungle."

"They will kill little Nkima," cried the monkey. "They are strange Gomangani, and there are no Tarmangani among them."

"Nkima thinks everything wants to kill him," said Tarzan, "and yet he has lived many years and is not dead yet."

"Sabor and Sheeta and Numa, the Gomangani, had Histah the snake like to eat poor little Nkima," walled the monkey. "That is why he is afraid."

"Do not fear, Nkima," said the ape-man. "Tarzan will let no one hurt you."

"Go and see the Gomangani," urged Nkima. "Go and kill them. Nkima does not like the Gomangani."

Tarzan arose leisurely. "I go," he said. "Nkima may come or he may hide in the upper terraces."

"Nkima is not afraid," blustered the little monkey. "He will go and fight the Gomangani with Tarzan of the Apes,"

and he leaped to the back of the ape-man and clung there with his arms about the bronzed throat, from which point of vantage he peered fearfully ahead, first over the top of one broad shoulder and then over the top of the other.

Tarzan swung swiftly and quietly through the trees toward a point where Nkima had discovered the Gomangani, and presently he saw below him some score of natives straggling along the jungle trail. A few of them were armed with rifles and all carried packs of various sizes—such packs as Tarzan knew must belong to the equipment of a white man.

The Lord of the Jungle hailed them and, startled, the men halted, looking up

fearfully.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes. Do not be afraid," Tarzan reassured them, and simultaneously he dropped lightly to the trail among them, but as he did so Nkima leaped frantically from his shoulders and scampered swiftly to a high branch far above, where he sat chattering and scolding, entirely forgetful of his vain boasting of a few moments before.

"Where is your master?" demanded Tarzan.

The Africans looked sullenly at the ground, but did not reply.

"Where is the Bwana, von Harben?" Tarzan insisted.

A tall man standing near fidgeted uneasily. "He is dead," he mumbled.

"How did he die?" asked Tarzan.

Again the man hesitated before replying. "A bull elephant that he had wounded killed him," he said at last.

"Where is his body?"

"We could not find it."

"Then how do you know that he was killed by a bull elephant?" demanded the ape-man.

"We do not know," another spoke up. "He went away from camp and did not return."

"There was an elephant about and we thought that it had killed him," said the tall man.

"You are not speaking true words," said Tarzan.

"I shall tell you the truth," said a third. "Our Bwana ascended the slopes of the Wiramwazi and the spirits of the dead being angry seized him and carried him away."

"I shall tell you the truth," said Tarzan. "You have deserted your master and run away, leaving him alone in the forest."

"We were afraid," the man replied. "We warned him not to ascend the slopes of the Wiramwazi. We begged him to turn back. He would not listen to us, and the spirits of the dead carried him away."

"How long ago was that?" asked the ape-man.

"Six, seven, perhaps ten marchings. I

do not remember."

"Where was he when you last saw him?"

As accurately as they could the men described the location of their last camp upon the slopes of the Wiramwazi.

"Go your way back to your own villages in the Urambi country. I shall know where to find you if I want you. If your Bwana is dead, you shall be punished," and swinging into the branches of the lower terrace, Tarzan disappeared from the sight of the unhappy natives in the direction of the Wiramwazi, while Nkima, screaming shrilly, raced through the trees to overtake him.

From his conversation with the

deserting members of von Harben's safari, Tarzan was convinced that the young man had been traitorously abandoned and that in all likelihood he was making his way alone back upon the trail of the deserters.

Not knowing Erich von Harben, Tarzan could not have guessed that the young man would push on alone into the unknown and forbidding depths of the Wiramwazi, but assumed on the contrary that he would adopt the more prudent alternative and seek to overtake his men as rapidly as possible. Believing this, the ape-man followed back along the trail of the safari, expecting momentarily to meet von Harben.

This plan greatly reduced his speed,

but even so he traveled with so much greater rapidity than the natives that he came to the slopes of the Wiramwazi upon the third day after he had interviewed the remnants of von Harben's safari.

It was with great difficulty that he finally located the point at which von Harben had been abandoned by his men, as a heavy rain and wind-storm had obliterated the trail, but at last he stumbled upon the tent, which had blown down, but nowhere could he see any signs of von Harben's trail.

Not having come upon any signs of the white man in the jungle or any indication that he had followed his fleeing safari, Tarzan was forced to the

conclusion that if von Harben was not indeed dead he must have faced the dangers of the unknown alone and now be either dead or alive somewhere within the mysterious fastnesses of the Wiramwazi.

"Nkima," said the ape-man, "the Tarmangani have a saying that when it is futile to search for a thing, it is like hunting for a needle in a haystack. Do you believe, Nkima, that in this great mountain range we shall find our needle?"

"Let us go home," said Nkima, "where it is warm. Here the wind blows and up there it is colder. It is no place for little Manu, the monkey."

"Nevertheless, Nkima, there is where

we are going."

The monkey looked up toward the frowning heights above. "Little Nkima is afraid," he said. "It is in such places that Sheeta, the panther, lairs."

Ascending diagonally and in a westerly direction in the hope of crossing von Harben's trail, Tarzan moved constantly in the opposite direction from that taken by the man he sought. It was his intention, however, when he reached the summit, if he had in the meantime found no trace of von Harben, to turn directly eastward and search at a higher altitude in the opposite direction. As he proceeded, the slope became steeper and more rugged until at one point near the western end of the

mountain mass he encountered an almost perpendicular barrier high up on the mountainside along the base of which he picked his precarious way among loose boulders that had fallen from above. Underbrush and stunted trees extended at different points from the forest below quite up to the base of the vertical escarpment.

So engrossed was the ape-man in the dangerous business of picking his way along the mountainside that he gave little heed to anything beyond the necessities of the trail and his constant search for the spoor of von Harben, and so he did not see the little group of warriors that were gazing up at him from the shelter of a clump of trees far down the slope, nor

did Nkima, usually as alert as his master, have eyes or ears for anything beyond the immediate exigencies of the trail. Nkima was unhappy. The wind blew and Nkima did not like the wind. All about him he smelled the spoor of Sheeta, the panther, while he considered the paucity and stunted nature of the few trees along the way that his master had chosen. From time to time he noted, with sinking heart, ledges just above them from which Sheeta might spring down upon them; and the way was a way of terror for little Nkima.

Now they had come to a particularly precarious point upon the mountainside. A sheer cliff rose above them on their right and at their left the mountainside

fell away so steeply that as Tarzan advanced his body was pressed closely against the granite face of the cliff as he sought a foothold upon the ledge of loose rubble. Just ahead of them the cliff shouldered out boldly against the distant skies. Perhaps beyond that clear-cut corner the going might be better. If it should develop that it was worse, Tarzan realized that he must turn back.

At the turn where the footing was narrowest a stone gave beneath Tarzan's foot, throwing him off his balance for an instant and at that same instant Nkima, thinking that Tarzan was falling, shrieked and leaped from his shoulder, giving the ape-man's body just the impetus that was required to

overbalance it entirely.

The mountainside below was steep, though not perpendicular, and if Nkima had not pushed the ape-man outward he doubtless would have slid but a short distance before being able to stay his fall, but as it was he lunged head-foremost down the embankment, rolling and tumbling for a short distance over the loose rock until his body was brought to a stop by one of the many stunted trees that clung tenaciously to the wind-swept slope.

Terrified, Nkima scampered to his master's side. He screamed and chattered in his ear and pulled and tugged upon him in an effort to raise him, but the ape-man lay motionless, a tiny

stream of blood trickling from a cut on his temple into his shock of black hair.

As Nkima mourned, the warriors, who had been watching them from below, clambered quickly up the mountainside toward him and his helpless master.

CHAPTER 4

As Erich von Harben turned to face the thing that he had heard approaching behind him, he saw a Negro armed with a rifle coming toward him.

"Gabula!" exclaimed the white man, lowering his weapon. "What are you doing here?"

"Bwana," said the warrior, "I could not desert you. I could not leave you to die alone at the hands of the spirits that dwell upon these mountains."

Von Harben eyed him incredulously. "But if you believe that, Gabula, are you not afraid that they will kill you, too?"

"I expect to die, Bwana," replied Gabula. "I cannot understand why you were not killed the first night or the

second night. We shall both surely be killed tonight."

"And yet you followed me! Why?"

"You have been kind to me, Bwana," replied the man. "Your father has been kind to me. When the others talked they filled me with fear and when they ran away I went with them, but I have come back. There was nothing else that I could do, was there?"

"No, Gabula. For you or for me there would have been nothing else to do, as we see such things, but as the others saw them they found another thing to do and they did it."

"Gabula is not as the others," said the man, proudly. "Gabula is a Batoro."

"Gabula is a brave warrior," said von

Harben. "I do not believe in spirits and so there was no reason why I should be afraid, but you and all your people do believe in them and so it was a very brave thing for you to come back, but I shall not hold you. You may return, Gabula, with the others."

"Yes?" Gabula exclaimed eagerly. "The Bwana is going back? That will be good. Gabula will go back with him."

"No, I am going down into that canyon," said von Harben, pointing over the rim.

Gabula looked down, surprise and wonder reflected by his wide eyes and parted lips.

"But, Bwana, even if a human being could find a way down these steep cliffs,

where there is no place for either hand or foot, he would surely be killed the moment he reached the bottom, for this indeed must be the Land of The Lost Tribe where the spirits of the dead live in the heart of the Wiramwazi."

"You do not need to come with me, Gabula," said von Harben. "Go back to your people."

"How are you going to get down there?" demanded the Negro.

"I do not know just how, or where, or when. Now I am going to descend as far along this fissure as I can go. Perhaps I shall find my way down here, perhaps not."

"But suppose there is no foothold beyond the fissure?" asked Gabula.

"I shall have to find footing."

Gabula shook his head. "And if you reach the bottom, Bwana, and you are right about the spirits and there are none or they do not kill you, how will you get out again?"

Von Harben shrugged his shoulders and smiled. Then he extended his hand. "Goodbye, Gabula," he said. "You are a brave man."

Gabula did not take the offered hand of his master. "I am going with you," he said, simply.

"Even though you realize that should we reach the bottom alive we may never be able to return?"

"Yes."

"I cannot understand you, Gabula. You are afraid and I know that you wish to return to the village of your people. Then why do you insist on coming with me when I give you leave to return home?"

"I have sworn to serve you, Bwana, and I am a Batoro," replied Gabula.

"And I can only thank the Lord that you are a Batoro," said von Harben, "for the Lord knows that I shall need help before I reach the bottom of this canyon, and we must reach it, Gabula, unless we are content to die by starvation."

"I have brought food," said Gabula. "I knew that you might be hungry and I brought some of the food that you like," and, unrolling the small pack that he

carried, he displayed several bars of chocolate and a few packages of concentrated food that von Harben had included among his supplies in the event of an emergency.

To the famished von Harben, the food was like manna to the Israelites, and he lost no time in taking advantage of Gabula's thoughtfulness. The sharp edge of his hunger removed, von Harben experienced a feeling of renewed strength and hopefulness, and it was with a light heart and a buoyant optimism that he commenced the descent into the canyon.

Gabula's ancestry, stretching back through countless generations of jungle-dwelling people, left him appalled as he

contemplated the frightful abyss into which his master was leading him, but so deeply had he involved himself by his protestations of loyalty and tribal pride that he followed von Harben with no outward show of the real terror that was consuming him.

The descent through the fissure was less difficult than it had appeared from above. The tumbled rocks that had partially filled it gave more than sufficient footing and in only a few places was assistance required, and it was at these times that von Harben realized how fortunate for him had been Gabula's return.

When at last they reached the bottom of the cleft they found themselves, at its

outer opening, flush with the face of the cliff and several hundred feet below the rim. This was the point beyond which von Harben had been unable to see and which he had been approaching with deep anxiety, since there was every likelihood that the conditions here might put a period to their further descent along this route.

Creeping over the loose rubble in the bottom of the fissure to its outer edge, von Harben discovered a sheer drop of a hundred feet to the level of the next terrace and his heart sank. To return the way they had come was, he feared, a feat beyond their strength and ingenuity, for there had been places down which one had lowered the other only with the

greatest difficulty, which would be practically unscalable on the return journey.

It being impossible to ascend and as starvation surely faced them where they were, there was but one alternative. Von Harben lay upon his belly, his eyes at the outer edge of the fissure, and, instructing Gabula to hold tightly to his ankles, he wormed himself forward until he could scan the entire face of the cliff below him to the level of the next terrace.

A few feet from the level on which he lay he saw that the fissure lay open again to the base of the cliff, its stoppage at the point where they were having been caused by a large fragment of rock that had wedged securely between the sides

of the fissure, entirely choking it at this point.

The fissure, which had narrowed considerably since they had entered it at the summit, was not more than two or three feet wide directly beneath the rock on which he lay and extended with little variation at this width the remaining hundred feet to the comparatively level ground below.

If he and Gabula could but get into this crevice he knew that they could easily brace themselves against its sides in such a way as to descend safely the remaining distance, but how with the means at hand were they to climb over the edge of the rock that blocked the fissure and crawl back into the fissure

again several feet farther down?

Von Harben lowered his crude alpenstock over the edge of the rock fragment. When he extended his arms at full length the tip of the rod fell considerably below the bottom of the rock on which he lay. A man hanging at the end of the alpenstock might conceivably swing into the fissure, but h would necessitate a feat of acrobatics far beyond the powers of either himself or Gabula.

A rope would have solved their problem, but they had no rope. With a sigh, von Harben drew back when his examination of the fissure convinced him that he must find another way, but he was totally at a loss to imagine in what

direction to look for a solution.

Gabula crouched back in the fissure, terrified by the anticipation of what von Harben's attempted exploration had suggested. The very thought of even looking out over the edge of that rock beyond the face of the cliff left Gabula cold and half paralyzed, while the thought that he might have to follow von Harben bodily over the edge threw the Negro into a fit of trembling; yet had von Harben gone over the edge Gabula would have followed him.

The white man sat for a long time buried in thought. Time and again his eyes examined every detail of the formation of the fissure within the range of his vision. Again and again they

returned to the huge fragment upon which they sat, which was securely wedged between the fissure's sides. With this out of the way he felt that they could make unimpeded progress to the next terrace, but he knew that nothing short of a charge of dynamite could budge the heavy granite slab. Directly behind it were loose fragments of various sizes, and as his eyes returned to them once again he was struck with the possibility that they suggested.

"Come, Gabula," he said. "Help me throw out some of these rocks. This seems to be our only possible hope of escaping from the trap that I have got us into."

"Yes, Bwana," replied Gabula, and

fell to work beside von Harben, though he could not understand why they should be picking up these stones, some of which were very heavy, and pushing them out over the edge of the flat fragment that clogged the fissure.

He heard them crash heavily where they struck the rocks below and this interested and fascinated him to such an extent that he worked feverishly to loosen the larger blocks of stone for the added pleasure he derived from hearing the loud noise that they made when they struck.

"It begins to look," said von Harben, after a few minutes, "as though we may be going to succeed, unless by removing these rocks here we cause some of those

above to slide down and thus loosen the whole mass above us—in which event, Gabula, the mystery of The Lost Tribe will cease to interest us longer."

"Yes, Bwana," said Gabula, and lifting an unusually large rock he started to roll it toward the edge of the fissure. "Look! Look, Bwana!" he exclaimed, pointing at the place where the rock had lain.

Von Harben looked and saw an opening about the size of a man's head extending into the fissure beneath them.

"Thank Nsenene, the grasshopper, Gabula," cried the white man, "if that is the totem of your clan—for here indeed is a way to salvation."

Hurriedly the two men set to work to

enlarge the hole by throwing out other fragments that had long been wedged in together to close the fissure at this point, and as the fragments clattered down upon the rocks below, a tall, straight warrior standing in the bow of a dugout upon the marshy lake far below looked up and called the attention of his comrades.

They could plainly hear the reverberations of the falling fragments as they struck the rocks at the foot of the fissure and, keen-eyed, they could see many of the larger pieces that von Harben and Gabula tossed downward.

"The great wall is falling," said the warrior.

"A few pebbles," said another. "It is

nothing."

"Such things do not happen except after rains," said the first speaker. "It is thus that it is prophesied that the great wall will fall."

"Perhaps it is a demon who lives in the great rift in the wall," said another. "Let us hasten and tell the masters."

"Let us wait and watch," said the first speaker, "until we have something to tell them. If we went and told them that a few rocks had fallen from the great wall they would only laugh at us."

Von Harben and Gabula had increased the size of the opening until it was large enough to permit the passage of a man's body. Through it the white man could see the rough sides of the

fissure extending to the level of the next terrace and knew that the next stage of the descent was already as good as an accomplished fact.

"We shall descend one at a time, Gabula," said von Harben. "I shall go first, for I am accustomed to this sort of climbing. Watch carefully so that you may descend exactly as I do. It is easy and there is no danger. Be sure that you keep your back braced against one wall and your feet against the other. We shall lose some hide in the descent, for the walls are rough, but we shall get down safely enough if we take it slowly."

"Yes, Bwana. You go first," said Gabula. "If I see you do it then, perhaps, I can do it."

Von Harben lowered himself through the aperture, braced himself securely against the opposite walls of the fissure, and started slowly downward. A few minutes later Gabula saw his master standing safely at the bottom, and though his heart was in his mouth the Negro followed without hesitation, but when he stood at last beside von Harben he breathed such a loud sigh of relief that von Harben was forced to laugh aloud.

"It is the demon himself," said the warrior in the dugout, as von Harben had stepped from the fissure.

From where the dugout of the watchers floated, half concealed by lofty papyrus, the terrace at the base of the fissure was just visible. They saw von

Harben emerge and a few moments later the figure of Gabula.

"Now, indeed," said one of the men, "we should hasten and tell the masters."

"No," said the first speaker. "Those two may be demons, but they look like men and we shall wait until we know what they are and why they are here before we go away."

For a thousand feet the descent from the base of the fissure was far from difficult, a rough slope leading in an easterly direction down toward the canyon bottom. During the descent their view of the lake and of the canyon was often completely shut off by masses of weather-worn granite around which they sometimes had difficulty in finding a

way. As a rule the easiest descent lay between these towering fragments of the main body of the cliff, and at such times as the valley was hidden from them so were they hidden from the watchers on the lake.

A third of the way down the escarpment von Harben came to the verge of a narrow gorge, the bottom of which was densely banked with green, the foliage of trees growing luxuriantly, pointing unquestionably to the presence of water in abundance. Leading the way, von Harben descended into the gorge, at the bottom of which he found a spring from which a little stream trickled downward. Here they quenched their thirst and rested. Then, following the

stream downward, they discovered no obstacles that might not be easily surmounted.

For a long time, hemmed in by the walls of the narrow gorge and their view further circumscribed by the forest-like growth along the banks of the stream, they had no sight of the lake or the canyon bottom, but, finally, when the gorge debouched upon the lower slopes von Harben halted in admiration of the landscape spread out before him. Directly below, another stream entered that along which they had descended, forming a little river that dropped steeply to what appeared to be vivid green meadow land through which it wound tortuously to the great swamp that

extended out across the valley for perhaps ten miles.

So choked was the lake with some feathery-tipped aquatic plant that von Harben could only guess as to its extent, since the green of the water plant and the green of the surrounding meadows blended into one another, but here and there he saw signs of open water that appeared like winding lanes or passages leading in all directions throughout the marsh.

As von Harben and Gabula stood looking out across this (to them) new and mysterious world, the warriors in the dugout watched them attentively. The strangers were still so far away that the men were unable to identify them, but

their leader assured them that these two were no demons.

"How do you know that they are not demons?" demanded one of these fellows.

"I can see that they are men," replied the other.

"Demons are very wise and very powerful," insisted the doubter. "They may take any form they choose. They might come as birds or animals or men."

"They are not fools," snapped the leader. "If a demon wished to descend the great wall he would not choose the hardest way. He would take the form of a bird and fly down."

The other scratched his head in perplexity, for he realized that here was

an argument that would be difficult to controvert. For want of anything better to say, he suggested that they go at once and report the matter to their masters.

"No," said the leader. "We shall remain here until they come closer. It will be better for us if we can take them with us and show them to our masters."

The first few steps that von Harben took onto the grassy meadow land revealed the fact that it was a dangerous swamp from which only with the greatest difficulty were they able to extricate themselves.

Floundering back to solid ground, von Harben reconnoitered in search of some other avenue to more solid ground on the floor of the canyon, but he found that

upon both sides of the river the swamp extended to the foot of the lowest terrace of the cliff, and low as these were in comparison to their lofty fellows towering far above them, they were still impassable barriers.

Possibly by re-ascending the gorge he might find an avenue to more solid ground toward the west, but as he had no actual assurance of this and as both he and Gabula were well-nigh exhausted from the physical strain of the descent, he preferred to find an easier way to the lake shore if it were possible.

He saw that while the river at this point was not swift, the current was rapid enough to suggest that the bottom might be sufficiently free from mud to

make it possible for them to utilize it as an avenue to the lake, if it were not too deep.

To test the feasibility of the idea, be lowered himself into the water, holding to one end of his alpenstock, while Gabula seized the other. He found that the water came to his waist-line and that the bottom was firm and solid.

"Come on, Gabula. This is our way to the lake, I guess," he said.

As Gabula slipped into the water behind his master, the dugout containing the warriors pushed silently along the watery lane among the papyrus and with silent paddles was urged swiftly toward the mouth of the stream where it emptied into the lake.

As von Harben and Gabula descended the stream they found that the depth of the water did not greatly increase. Once or twice they stumbled into deeper holes and were forced to swim, but in other places the water shallowed until it was only to their knees, and thus they made their way down to the lake at the verge of which their view was shut off by clumps of papyrus rising twelve or fifteen feet above the surface of the water.

"It begins to look," said von Harben, "as though there is no solid ground along the shore line, but the roots of the papyrus will hold us and if we can make our way to the west end of the lake I am sure that we shall find solid ground, for I

am positive that I saw higher land there as we were descending the cliff."

Feeling their way cautiously along, they came at last to the first clump of papyrus and just as von Harben was about to clamber to the solid footing of the roots, a canoe shot from behind the mass of floating plants and the two men found themselves covered by the weapons of a boatload of warriors.

CHAPTER 5

Lukedi, the Bagego, carried a gourd of milk to a hut in the village of his people on the lower slopes at the west end of the Wiramwazi range.

Two stalwart spearmen stood guard at the doorway of the hut. "Nyuto has sent me with milk for the prisoner," said Lukedi. "Has his spirit returned to him?"

"Go in and see," directed one of the sentries.

Lukedi entered the hut and in the dim light saw the figure of a giant white man sitting upon the dirt floor gazing at him. The man's wrists were bound together behind his back and his ankles were secured with tough fiber strands.

"Here is food," said Lukedi, setting

the gourd upon the ground near the prisoner.

"How can I eat with my hands tied behind my back?" demanded Tarzan. Lukedi scratched his head. "I do not know," he said. "Nyuto sent me with the food. He did not tell me to free your hands."

"Cut the bond," said Tarzan, "otherwise I cannot eat."

One of the spearmen entered the hut. "What is he saying?" he demanded.

"He says, that he cannot eat unless his hands are freed," said Lukedi.

"Did Nyuto tell you to free his hands?" asked the spearman.

"No," said Lukedi.

The spearman shrugged his shoulders. "Leave the food then; that is all you were asked to do."

Lukedi turned to leave the hut. "Wait," said Tarzan. "Who is Nyuto?"

"He is chief of the Bagegos," said Lukedi.

"Go to him and tell him that I wish to see him. Tell him also that I cannot eat with my hands tied behind my back."

Lukedi was gone for half an hour. When he returned he brought an old, rusted slave chain and an ancient padlock.

"Nyuto says that we may chain him to the center pole and then cut the bonds that secure his hands," he said to the guard.

The three men entered the hut where Lukedi passed one end of the chain around the center pole, pulling it through a ring on the other end; the free end he then passed around Tarzan's neck, securing it there with the old slave padlock.

"Cut the bonds that hold his wrists," said Lukedi to one of the spearmen.

"Do it yourself," retorted the warrior, "Nyuto sent you to do it. He did not tell me to cut the bonds."

Lukedi hesitated. It was apparent that he was afraid.

"We will stand ready with our spears," said the guardsmen; "then he cannot harm you."

"I shall not harm him," said Tarzan.

"Who are you anyway and who do you think I am?"

One of the guardsmen laughed. "He asked who we are as though he did not know!"

"We know who you are, all right," said the other warrior.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," said the prisoner, "and I have no quarrel with the Bagegos."

The guardsman who had last spoken laughed again derisively. "That may be your name," he said. "You men of The Lost Tribe have strange names. Perhaps you have no quarrel with the Bagegos, but the Bagegos have a quarrel with you," and still laughing he left the hut followed by his companion, but the

youth Lukedi remained, apparently fascinated by the prisoner at whom he stood staring as he might have stared at a deity.

Tarzan reached for the gourd and drank the milk it contained, and never once did Lukedi take his eyes from him.

"What is your name?" asked Tarzan.

"Lukedi," replied the youth.

"And you have never heard of Tarzan of the Apes?"

"No," replied the youth.

"Who do you think I am?" demanded the ape-man.

"We know that you belong to The Lost Tribe."

"But I thought the members of The

Lost Tribe were supposed to be the spirits of the dead," said Tarzan.

"That we do not know," replied Lukedi. "Some think one way, some another; but you know, for you are one of them."

"I am not one of them," said Tarzan. "I come from a country farther south, but I have heard of the Bagegos and I have heard of The Lost Tribe."

"I do not believe you," said Lukedi.

"I speak the truth," said Tarzan.

Lukedi scratched his head. "Perhaps you do," he said. "You do not wear clothes like the members of The Lost Tribe, and the weapons that we found with you are different."

"You have seen members of The Lost Tribe?" asked Tarzan.

"Many times," replied Lukedi. "Once a year they come out of the bowels of the Wiramwazi and trade with us. They bring dried fish, snails, and iron and take in exchange salt, goats, and cows."

"If they come and trade with you peacefully, why do you make me a prisoner if you think I am one of them?" demanded Tarzan.

"Since the beginning we have been at war with the members of The Lost Tribe," replied Lukedi. "It is true that once a year we trade with them, but they are always our enemies."

"Why is that?" demanded the ape-man.

"Because at other times we cannot tell when they will come with many warriors and capture men, women, and children whom they take away with them into the Wiramwazi. None ever returns. We do not know what becomes of them. Perhaps they are eaten."

"What will your chief, Nyuto, do with me?" asked Tarzan.

"I do not know," said Lukedi. "They are discussing the question now. They all wish to put you to death, but there are some who believe that this would arouse the anger of the ghosts of all the dead Bagegos."

"Why should the ghosts of your dead wish to protect me?" demanded Tarzan.

"There are many who think that you

members of The Lost Tribe are the ghosts of our dead," replied Lukedi.

"What do you think, Lukedi?" asked the ape-man.

"When I look at you I think that you are a man of flesh and blood the same as I, and so I think that perhaps you are telling me the truth when you say that you are not a member of The Lost Tribe, because I am sure that they are all ghosts."

"But when they come to trade with you and when they come to fight with you, can you not tell whether they are flesh and blood or not?"

"They are very powerful," said Lukedi. "They might come in the form of men in the flesh or they might come as

snakes or lions. That is why we are not sure."

"And what do you think the council will decide to do with me?" asked Tarzan.

"I think that there is no doubt but that they will burn you alive, for thus both you and your spirit will be destroyed so that it cannot come back to haunt and annoy us."

"Have you seen or heard of another white man recently?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied the youth. "Many years ago, before I can remember, two white men came who said that they were not members of The Lost Tribe, but we did not believe them and they were killed. I must go now. I shall bring you more milk

tomorrow."

After Lukedi had left, Tarzan commenced examining the chain, padlock, and the center pole of the hut in an effort to discover some means of escape. The hut was cylindrical and surmounted by a conical roof of grass. The side walls were of stakes set upright a few inches in the ground and fastened together at their tops and bottoms by creepers. The center pole was much heavier and was secured in position by rafters radiating from it to the top of the wall. The interior of the hut was plastered with mud, which had been thrown on with force and then smoothed with the palm of the hand. It was a common type with which Tarzan was

familiar. He knew that there was a possibility that he might be able to raise the center pole and withdraw the chain from beneath it.

It would, of course, be difficult to accomplish this without attracting the attention of the guards, and there was a possibility that the center pole might be set sufficiently far in the ground to render it impossible for him to raise it. If he were given time he could excavate around the base of it, but inasmuch as one or the other of the sentries was continually poking his head into the hut to see that all was well, Tarzan saw little likelihood of his being able to free himself without being discovered.

As darkness settled upon the village

Tarzan stretched himself upon the hard dirt floor of the hut and sought to sleep. For some time the noises of the village kept him awake, but at last he slept. How long thereafter it was that he was awakened he did not know. From childhood he had shared with the beasts, among whom he had been raised, the ability to awaken quickly and in full command of all his faculties. He did so now, immediately conscious that the noise that had aroused him came from an animal upon the roof of the hut. Whatever it was, it was working quietly, but to what end the ape-man could not imagine.

The acrid fumes of the village cook fires so filled the air that Tarzan was

unable to catch the scent of the creature upon the roof. He carefully reviewed all the possible purposes for which an animal might be upon the thatched, dry-grass roof of the Bagego hut and through a process of elimination he could reach but one conclusion. That was that the thing upon the outside wished to come in and either it did not have brains enough to know that there was a doorway, or else it was too cunning to risk detection by attempting to pass the sentries.

But why should any animal wish to enter the hut? Tarzan lay upon his back, gazing up through the darkness in the direction of the roof above him as he tried to find an answer to his question. Presently, directly above his head, he

saw a little ray of moonlight. Whatever it was upon the roof had made an opening that grew larger and larger as the creature quietly tore away the thatching. The aperture was being made close to the wall where the radiating rafters were farthest apart, but whether this was through intent or accident Tarzan could not guess. As the hole grew larger and he caught occasional glimpses of the thing silhouetted against the moonlit sky, a broad smile illuminated the face of the ape-man. Now he saw strong little fingers working at the twigs that were fastened laterally across the rafters to support the thatch and presently, after several of these had been removed, the opening was entirely

closed by a furry little body that wriggled through and dropped to the floor close beside the prisoner.

"How did you find me, Nkima?" whispered Tarzan.

"Nkima followed," replied the little monkey. "All day he has been sitting in a high tree above the village watching this place and waiting for darkness. Why do you stay here, Tarzan of the Apes? Why do you not come away with little Nkima?"

"I am fastened here with a chain," said Tarzan. "I cannot come away."

"Nkima will go and bring Muviro and his warriors," said Nkima.

Of course he did not use these words at all, but what he said in the language of

the apes conveyed the same meaning to Tarzan. Black apes carrying sharp, long sticks was the expression that he used to describe the Waziri warriors, and the name for Muviro was one of his own coining, but he and Tarzan understood one another.

"No," said Tarzan. "If I am going to need Muviro, he could not get here in time now to be of any help to me. Go back into the forest, Nkima, and wait for me. Perhaps I shall join you very soon."

Nkima scolded, for he did not want to go away. He was afraid alone in this strange forest; in fact, Nkima's life had been one long complex of terror, relieved only by those occasions when he could snuggle in the lap of his master,

safe within the solid walls of Tarzan's bungalow. One of the sentries heard the voices within the hut and crawled part way in.

"There," said Tarzan to Nkima, "you see what you have done. Now you had better do as Tarzan tells you and get out of here and into the forest before they catch you and eat you."

"Who are you talking to?" demanded the sentry. He heard a scampering in the darkness and at the same instant he caught sight of the hole in the roof and almost simultaneously he saw something dark go through it and disappear. "What was that?" he demanded, nervously.

"That," said Tarzan, "was the ghost of your grandfather. He came to tell me that

you and your wives and all your children would take sick and die if anything happens to me. He also brought the same message for Nyuto."

The sentry trembled. "Call him back," he begged, "and tell him that I had nothing to do with it. It is not I, but Nyuto, the chief, who is going to kill you."

"I cannot call him back," said Tarzan, "and so you had better tell Nyuto not to kill me."

"I cannot see Nyuto until morning," wailed the sentry. "Perhaps then it will be too late."

"No," said Tarzan. "The ghost of your grandfather will not do anything until tomorrow."

Terrified, the sentry returned to his post where Tarzan heard him fearfully and excitedly discussing the matter with his companion until the ape-man finally dropped off to sleep again.

It was late the following morning before anyone entered the hut in which Tarzan was confined. Then came Lukedi with another gourd of milk. He was very much excited.

"Is what Ogonyo says true?" he demanded.

"Who is Ogonyo?" asked Tarzan.

"He was one of the warriors who stood guard here last night, and he has told Nyuto and all the village that he heard the ghost of his grandfather talking with you and that the ghost said that he

would kill everyone in the village if you were harmed, and now everyone is afraid."

"And Nyuto?" asked Tarzan.

"Nyuto is not afraid of anything," said Lukedi.

"Not even of ghosts of grandfathers?" asked Tarzan.

"No. He alone of all the Bagegos is not afraid of the men of The Lost Tribe, and now he is very angry at you because you have frightened his people and this evening you are to be burned. Look!" And Lukedi pointed to the low doorway of the hut. "From here you can see them placing the stake to which you are to be bound, and the boys are in the forest gathering fagots."

Tarzan pointed toward the hole in the roof. "There," he said, "is the hole made by the ghost of Ogonyo's grandfather. Fetch Nyuto and let him see. Then, perhaps, he will believe."

"It will make no difference," said Lukedi. "If he saw a thousand ghosts with his own eyes, he would not be afraid. He is very brave, but he is also very stubborn and a fool. Now we shall all die."

"Unquestionably," said Tarzan.

"Can you not save me?" asked Lukedi.

"If you will help me to escape, I promise you that the ghosts shall not harm you."

"Oh, if I could but do it," said Lukedi, as he passed the gourd of milk to the

ape-man.

"You bring me nothing but milk," said Tarzan. "Why is that?"

"In this village we belong to the Buliso clan and, therefore, we may not drink the milk nor eat the flesh of Timba, the black cow, so when we have guests or prisoners we save this food for them."

Tarzan was glad that the totem of the Buliso clan was a cow instead of a grasshopper, or rainwater from the roofs of houses or one of the hundreds of other objects that are venerated by different clans, for while Tarzan's early training had not placed grasshoppers beyond the pale as food for men, he much preferred the milk of Timba.

"I wish that Nyuto would see me and

talk with me," said Tarzan of the Apes. "Then he would know that it would be better to have me for a friend than for an enemy. Many men have tried to kill me, many chiefs greater than Nyuto. This is not the first hut in which I have lain a prisoner, nor is it the first time that men have prepared fires to receive me, yet I still live, Lukedi, and many of them are dead. Go, therefore, to Nyuto and advise him to treat me as a friend, for I am not from The Lost Tribe of the Wiramwazi."

"I believe you," said Lukedi, "and I shall go and beg Nyuto to hear me, but I am afraid that he will not."

As the youth reached the doorway of the hut, there suddenly arose a great commotion in the village. Tarzan heard

men issuing orders. He heard children crying and the pounding of many naked feet upon the hard ground. Then the war-drums boomed and he heard clashing of weapons upon shields and loud shouting. He saw the guards before the doorway spring to their feet and run to join the other warriors and then Lukedi, at the doorway, shrank back with a cry of terror.

"They come! They come!" he cried, and ran to the far side of the hut where he crouched in terror.

CHAPTER 6

Erich von Harben looked into the faces of the tall, almost naked, warriors whose weapons menaced him across the gunwale of their low dugout, and the first thing to attract his attention was the nature of those weapons.

Their spears were unlike any that he had ever seen in the hands of modern savages. Corresponding with the ordinary spear of the African savage, they carried a heavy, and formidable javelin that suggested to the mind of the young archaeologist nothing other than the ancient Roman pike, and this similarity was further confirmed by the appearance of the short, broad, two-edged swords that dangled in scabbards

supported by straps passing over the left shoulders of the warriors. If this weapon was not the gladius Hispanus of the Imperial Legionary, von Harben felt that his studies and researches had been for naught.

"Ask them what they want, Gabula," he directed. "Perhaps they will understand you."

"Who are you and what do you want of us?" demanded Gabula in the Bantu dialect of his tribe.

"We wish to be friends," added von Harben in the same dialect. "We have come to visit your country. Take us to your chief."

A tall Negro in the stern of the dugout shook his head. "I do not understand

you," he said. "You are our prisoners. We are going to take you with us to our masters. Come, get into the boat. If you resist or make trouble we shall kill you."

"They speak a strange language," said Gabula. "I do not understand them."

Surprise and incredulity were reflected in the expression on von Harben's face, and he experienced such a sensation as one might who looked upon a man suddenly resurrected after having been dead for nearly two thousand years.

Von Harben had been a close student of ancient Rome and its long dead language, but how different was the living tongue, which he heard and which he recognized for what it was, from the

dead and musty pages of ancient manuscripts.

He understood enough of what the man had said to get his meaning, but he recognized the tongue as a hybrid of Latin and Bantu root words, though the inflections appeared to be uniformly those of the Latin language.

In his student days von Harben had often imagined himself a citizen of Rome. He had delivered orations in the Forum and had addressed his troops in the field in Africa and in Gaul, but how different it all seemed now when he was faced with the actuality rather than the figment of imagination. His voice sounded strange in his own ears and his words came haltingly as he spoke to the

tall man in the language of the Caesars.

"We are not enemies," he said. "We have come as friends to visit your country," and then he waited, scarce believing that the man could understand him.

"Are you a citizen of Rome?" demanded the warrior.

"No, but my country is at peace with Rome," replied von Harben.

The man looked puzzled as though he did not understand the reply. "You are from Castra Sanguinarius." His words carried the suggestion of a challenge.

"I am from Germania," replied von Harben.

"I never heard of such a country. You

are a citizen of Rome from Castra Sanguinarius."

"Take me to your chief," said von Harben.

"That is what I intend to do. Get in here. Our masters will know what to do with you."

Von Harben and Gabula climbed into the dugout, so awkwardly that they almost overturned it, much to the disgust of the warriors, who seized hold of them none too gently and forced them to squat in the bottom of the frail craft. This was now turned about and paddled along a winding canal, bordered on either side of tufted papyrus rising ten to fifteen feet above the surface of the water.

"To what tribe do you belong?" asked

von Harben, addressing the leader of the warriors.

"We are barbarians of the Mare Orientis, subjects of Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East; but why do you ask such questions? You know these things as well as I."

A half hour of steady paddling along winding water-lanes brought them to a collection of beehive huts built upon the floating roots of the papyrus, from which the tall plants had been cleared just sufficiently to make room for the half dozen huts that constituted the village. Here von Harben and Gabula became the center of a curious and excited company of men, women, and children, and von Harben heard himself and

Gabula described by their captors as spies from Castra Sanguinarius and learned that on the morrow they were to be taken to Castrum Mare, which he decided must be the village of the mysterious "masters" to whom his captors were continually alluding. The Negroes did not treat them unkindly, though they evidently considered them as enemies.

When they were interviewed by the headman of the village, von Harben, his curiosity aroused, asked him why they had not been molested if all of his people believed, as they seemed to, that they were enemies.

"You are a citizen of Rome," replied the headman, "and this other is your

slave. Our masters do not permit us barbarians to injure a citizen of Rome even though he may be from Castra Sanguinarius, except in self-defense or upon the battlefield in time of war."

"Who are your masters?" demanded von Harben.

"Why, the citizens of Rome who live in Castrum Mare, of course, as one from Castra Sanguinarius well knows."

"But I am not from Castra Sanguinarius," insisted von Harben.

"You may tell that to the officers of Validus Augustus," replied the headman. "Perhaps they will believe you, but it is certain that I do not."

"Are these people who dwell in Castrum Mare Negroes?" asked von

Harben.

"Take them away," ordered the headman, "and confine them safely in a hut. There they may ask one another foolish questions. I do not care to listen to them further."

Von Harben and Gabula were led away by a group of warriors and conducted into one of the small huts of the village. Here they were brought a supper of fish and snails and a dish concocted of the cooked pith of papyrus.

When morning dawned the prisoners were again served with food similar to that which had been given them the previous evening and shortly thereafter they were ordered from the hut.

Upon the water-lane before the

village floated half a dozen dugouts filled with warriors. Their faces and bodies were painted as for war and they appeared to have donned all the finery of barbaric necklaces, anklets, bracelets, armbands, and feathers that each could command; even the prows of the canoes bore odd designs in fresh colors.

There were many more warriors than could have been accommodated in the few huts within the small clearing, but, as von Harben learned later, these came from other clearings, several of which comprised the village. Von Harben and Gabula were ordered into the chiefs canoe and a moment later the little fleet pushed off into the water-lane. Strong paddlers propelled the dugouts along the

winding waterway in a northeasterly direction.

During the first half hour they passed several small clearings in each of which stood a few huts from which the women and children came to the water's edge to watch them as they passed, but for the most part the water-lane ran between monotonous walls of lofty papyrus, broken only occasionally by short stretches of more open water.

Von Harben tried to draw the chief into conversation, especially relative to their destination and the nature of the "masters" into whose hands they were to be delivered, but the taciturn warrior ignored his every advance and finally von Harben lapsed into the silence of

resignation.

They had been paddling for hours, and the heat and monotony had become almost unbearable, when a turn in the water-lane revealed a small body of open water, across the opposite side of which stretched what appeared to be low land surmounted by an earthen rampart, along the top of which was a strong stockade. The course of the canoe was directed toward two lofty towers that apparently marked the gateway through the rampart.

Figures of men could be seen loitering about this gateway, and as they caught sight of the canoes a trumpet sounded and a score of men sallied from the gateway and came down to the

water's edge.

As the boat drew nearer, von Harben saw that these men were soldiers, and at the command of one of them the canoes drew up a hundred yards offshore and waited there while the chief shouted to the soldiers on shore telling them who he was and the nature of his business. Permission was then given for the chiefs canoe to approach, but the others were ordered to remain where they were.

"Stay where you are," commanded one of the soldiers, evidently an under-officer, as the dugout touched the shore. "I have sent for the centurion."

Von Harben looked with amazement upon the soldiers drawn up at the landing. They wore the tunics and cloaks

of Caesar's legionaries. Upon their feet were the sandal-like caligae. A helmet, a leather cuirass, an ancient shield with pike and Spanish sword completed the picture of antiquity; only their skin belied the suggestion of their origin. They were not white men; neither were they Negroes, but for the most part of a light-brown color with regular features.

They seemed only mildly curious concerning von Harben, and on the whole appeared rather bored than otherwise. The under-officer questioned the chief concerning conditions in the village. They were casual questions on subjects of no particular moment, but they indicated to von Harben a seemingly interested and friendly

relationship between the Negroes of the outlying villages in the papyrus swamp and the evidently civilized brown people of the mainland; yet the fact that only one canoe had been permitted to approach the land suggested that other and less pleasant relations had also existed between them at times. Beyond the rampart von Harben could see the roofs of buildings and far away, beyond these, the towering cliffs that formed the opposite side of the canyon.

Presently two more soldiers emerged from the gateway opposite the landing. One of them was evidently the officer for whom they were waiting, his cloak and cuirass being of finer materials and more elaborately decorated; while the

other, who walked a few paces behind him, was a common soldier, probably the messenger who had been dispatched to fetch him.

And now another surprise was added to those which von Harben had already experienced since he had dropped over the edge of the barrier cliffs into this little valley of anachronisms—the officer was unquestionably white.

"Who are these, Rufinus?" he demanded of the under-officer.

"A barbarian chief and warriors from the villages of the western shore," replied Rufinus. "They bring two prisoners that they captured in the Rupes Flumen. As a reward they wish permission to enter the city and see the

Emperor."

"How many are they?" asked the officer.

"Sixty," replied Rufinus.

"They may enter the city," said the officer. "I will give them a pass, but they must leave their weapons in their canoes and be out of the city before dark. Send two men with them. As to their seeing Validus Augustus, that I cannot arrange. They might go to the palace and ask the prefect there. Have the prisoners come ashore."

As von Harben and Gabula stepped from the dugout, the expression upon the officer's face was one of perplexity.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"My name is Erich von Harben," replied the prisoner.

The officer jerked his head impatiently. "There is no such family in Castra Sanguinarius," he retorted.

"I am not from Castra Sanguinarius."

"Not from Castra Sanguinarius!" The officer laughed.

"That is the story he told me," said the chief, who had been listening to the conversation.

"I suppose that he will be saying next that he is not a citizen of Rome," said the officer.

"That is just what he does say," said the chief.

"But wait." exclaimed the officer,

excitedly. "Perhaps you are indeed from Rome herself!"

"No, I am not from Rome," von Harben assured him.

"Can it be that there are white barbarians in Africa!" exclaimed the officer. "Surely your garments are not Roman. Yes, you must be a barbarian unless, as I suspect, you are not telling me the truth and you are indeed from Castra Sanguinarius."

"A spy, perhaps," suggested Rufinus.

"No," said von Harben. "I am no spy nor am I an enemy," and with a smile, "I am a barbarian, but a friendly barbarian."

"And who is this man?" asked the officer, indicating Gabula. "Your

slave?"

"He is my servant, but not a slave."

"Come with me," directed the officer. "I should like to talk with you. I find you interesting, though I do not believe you."

Von Harben smiled. "I do not blame you," he said, "for even though I see you before me I can scarcely believe that you exist."

"I do not understand what you mean," said the officer, "but come with me to my quarters."

He gave orders that Gabula was to be confined in the guardhouse temporarily, and then he led von Harben back to one of the towers that guarded the entrance to the rampart.

The gate lay in a vertical plane at right angles to the rampart with a high tower at either side, the rampart curving inward at this point to connect with the tower at the inner end of the gate. This made a curved entrance that forced an enemy attempting to enter to disclose its right or unprotected side to the defenders upon the rampart, a form of camp fortification that von Harben knew had been peculiar to the ancient Romans.

The officer's quarters consisted of a single, small, bare room directly off a larger room occupied by the members of the guard. It contained a desk, a bench, and a couple of roughly made chairs.

"Sit down." said the officer, after they had entered, "and tell me something

about yourself. If you are not from Castra Sanguinarius, from whence do you come? How did you get into our country and what are you doing here?"

"I am from Germania," replied von Harben.

"Bah!" exclaimed the officer. "They are wild and savage barbarians. They do not speak the language of Rome at all; not even as poorly as you."

"How recently have you come in contact with German barbarians?" von Harben asked.

"Oh, I? Never, of course, but our historians knew them well."

"And how lately have they written of them?"

"Why, Sanguinarius himself mentions them in the story of his life."

"Sanguinarius?" questioned von Harben. "I do not recall ever having heard of him."

"Sanguinarius fought against the barbarians of Germania in the 839th year of Rome."

"That was about eighteen hundred and thirty-seven years ago," von Harben reminded the officer, "and I think you will have to admit that there may have been much progress in that time."

"And why?" demanded the other. "There have been no changes in this country since the days of Sanguinarius and he has been dead over eighteen hundred years. It is not likely then that

barbarians would change greatly if Roman citizens have not. You say you are from Germania. Perhaps you were taken to Rome as a captive and got your civilization there, but your apparel is strange. It is not of Rome. It is not of any place of which I have ever heard. Go on with your story."

"My father is a medical missionary in Africa," explained von Harben. "Often when I have visited him I heard the story of a lost tribe that was supposed to live in these mountains. The natives told strange stories of a white race living in the depths of the Wiramwazi. They said that the mountains were inhabited by the ghosts of their dead. Briefly, I came to investigate the story. All but one of my

men, terrified after we reached the outer slopes of the mountains, deserted me. That one and I managed to descend to the floor of the canyon. Immediately we were captured and brought here."

For a while the other sat in silence, thinking.

"Perhaps you are telling me the truth," he said, at last. "Your apparel is not that of Castra Sanguinarius and you speak our language with such a peculiar accent and with so great effort that it is evidently not your mother tongue. I shall have to report your capture to the Emperor, but in the meantime I shall take you to the home of my uncle, Septimus Favonius. If he believes your story he can help you, as he has great influence

with the Emperor, Validus Augustus."

"You are kind," said von Harben, "and I shall need a friend here if the customs of Imperial Rome still prevail in your country, as you suggest. Now that you know so much about me, perhaps you will tell me something about yourself."

"There is little to tell," said the officer. "My name is Mallius Lepus. I am a centurion in the army of Validus Augustus. Perhaps, if you are familiar with Roman customs, you will wonder that a patrician should be a centurion, but in this matter as in some others we have not followed the customs of Rome. Sanguinarius admitted all his centurions to the patrician class, and since then for

over eighteen hundred years only patricians have been appointed centurions.

"But here is Aspar," exclaimed Mallius Lepus, as another officer entered the room. "He has come to relieve me and when he has taken over the gate you and I shall go at once to the home of my uncle, Septimus Favonius."

CHAPTER 7

Tarzan of the Apes looked at Lukedi in surprise and then out through the low doorway of the hut in an effort to see what it was that had so filled the breast of the youth with terror.

The little section of the village street, framed by the doorway, showed a milling mass of brown bodies, waving spears, terrified women and children. What could it mean?

At first he thought that Lukedi meant that the Bagegos were coming for Tarzan, but now he guessed that the Bagegos were being beset by troubles of their own, and at last he came to the conclusion that some other savage tribe had attacked the village.

But, whatever the cause of the uproar, it was soon over. He saw the Bagegos turn and flee in all directions. Strange figures passed before his eyes in pursuit, and for a time there was comparative silence, only a hurrying of feet, an occasional command and now and then a scream of terror.

Presently three figures burst into the hut—enemy warriors searching the village for fugitives. Lukedi, trembling, inarticulate, paralyzed by fright, crouched against the far wall. Tarzan sat leaning against the center pole to which he was chained. At sight of him, the leading warrior halted, surprise written upon his face. His fellows joined him and they stood for a moment in excited

conversation, evidently discussing their find. Then one of them addressed Tarzan, but in a tongue that the ape-man could not understand, although he realized that there was something vaguely and tantalizingly familiar about it.

Then one of them discovered Lukedi and, crossing the hut, dragged him to the center of the floor. They spoke again to Tarzan, motioning him toward the door so that he understood that they were ordering him from the hut, but in reply he pointed to the chain about his neck.

One of the warriors examined the lock that secured the chain, spoke to his fellows, and then left the hut. He returned very shortly with two rocks

and, making Tarzan lie upon the ground, placed the padlock upon one of the rocks and pounded upon it with the other until it broke.

As soon as he was released, Tarzan and Lukedi were ordered from the hut, and when they had come out into the open the ape-man had an opportunity to examine his captors more closely. In the center of the village there were about one hundred light-brown warriors surrounding their Bagego prisoners, of whom there were some fifty men, women, and children.

The tunics, cuirasses, helmets, and sandals of the raiders Tarzan knew that he had never seen before, and yet they were as vaguely familiar as was the

language spoken by their wearers.

The heavy spears and the swords hanging at their right sides were not precisely like any spears or swords that he had ever seen, and yet he had a feeling that they were not entirely unfamiliar objects. The effect of the appearance of these strangers was tantalizing in the extreme. It is not uncommon for us to have experiences that are immediately followed by such a sensation of familiarity that we could swear we had lived through them before in their minutest detail, and yet we are unable to recall the time or place or any coincident occurrences.

It was such a sensation that Tarzan experienced now. He thought that he bad

seen these men before, that he had heard them talk; he almost felt that at some time he had understood their language, and yet at the same time he knew that he had never seen them. Then a figure approached from the opposite side of the village—a white man, garbed similarly to the warriors, but in more resplendent trappings, and of a sudden Tarzan of the Apes found the key and the solution of the mystery, for the man who came toward him might have stepped from the pedestal of the statue of Julius Caesar in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome!

These were Romans! A thousand years after the fall of Rome he had been captured by a band of Caesar's legionaries, and now he knew why the

language was so vaguely familiar, for Tarzan, in his effort to fit himself for a place in the civilized world into which necessity sometimes commanded him, had studied many things and among them Latin, but the reading of Caesar's Commentaries and scanning Vergil do not give one a command of the language and so Tarzan could neither speak nor understand the spoken words, though the smattering that he had of the language was sufficient to make it sound familiar when he heard others speaking it.

Tarzan looked intently at the Caesar-like white man approaching him and at the dusky, stalwart legionaries about him. He shook himself. This indeed must be a dream, and then he saw Lukedi with

the other Bagego prisoners. He saw the stake that had been set up for his burning and he knew that as these were realities so were the strange warriors about him.

Each soldier carried a short length of chain, at one end of which was a metal collar and a padlock, and with these they were rapidly chaining the prisoners neck to neck.

While they were thus occupied the white man, who was evidently an officer, was joined by two other whites similarly garbed. The three caught sight of Tarzan and immediately approached and questioned him, but the ape-man shook his head to indicate that he could not understand their language. Then they questioned the soldiers who had

discovered him in the hut and finally the commander of the company issued some instructions relative to the ape-man and turned away.

The result was that Tarzan was not chained to the file of prisoners, but though he again wore the iron collar, the end of the chain was held by one of the legionaries in whose keeping he had evidently been placed.

Tarzan could only believe that this preferential treatment was accorded him because of his color and the reluctance of the white officers to chain another white with Negroes.

As the raiders marched away from the village one of the officers and a dozen legionaries marched in advance. These

were followed by the long line of prisoners accompanied by another officer and a small guard. Behind the prisoners, many of whom were compelled to carry the live chickens that were a part of the spoils of the raid, came another contingent of soldiers herding the cows and goats and sheep of the villagers, and behind all a large rear guard comprising the greater part of the legionaries under the command of the third officer.

The march led along the base of the mountains in a northerly direction and presently upward diagonally across the rising slopes at the west end of the Wiramwazi range.

It chanced that Tarzan's position was

at the rear of the line of prisoners, at the end of which marched Lukedi.

"Who are these people, Lukedi?" asked Tarzan, after the party had settled down to steady progress.

"These are the ghost people of the Wiramwazi," replied the young Bagego.

"They have come to prevent the killing of their fellow," said another, looking at Tarzan. "I knew Nyuto should not have made him prisoner. I knew that harm would come from it. It is well for us that the ghost people came before we had slain him."

"What difference will it make?" said another. "I would rather have been killed in my own village than to be taken into the country of the ghost people and

killed there."

"Perhaps they will not kill us," suggested Tarzan.

"They will not kill you because you are one 'of them, but they will kill the Bagegos because they did dare to take you prisoner."

"But they have taken him prisoner, too," said Lukedi. "Can you not see that he is not one of them? He does not even understand their language."

The other men shook their heads, but they were not convinced. They had made up their minds that Tarzan was one of the ghost people and they were determined that nothing should alter this conviction.

After two hours of marching the trail turned sharply to the right and entered a

narrow and rocky gorge, the entrance to which was so choked with trees and undergrowth that it could not have been visible from any point upon the slopes below.

The gorge soon narrowed until its rocky walls could be spanned by a man's outstretched arms. The floor, strewn with jagged bits of granite from the lofty cliffs above, afforded poor and dangerous footing, so that the speed of the column was greatly reduced.

As they proceeded Tarzan realized that, although they were entering more deeply into the mountains, the trend of the gorge was downward rather than upward. The cliffs on either side rose higher and higher above them until in

places the gloom of night surrounded them and, far above, the stars twinkled in the morning sky.

For a long hour they followed the windings of the dismal gorge. The column halted for a minute or two and immediately after the march was resumed Tarzan saw those directly ahead of him filing through an arched gateway in the man-made wall of solid masonry that entirely blocked the gorge to a height of at least a hundred feet. Also, when it was the ape-man's turn to pass the portal, he saw that it was guarded by other soldiers similar to those into whose hands he had fallen and that it was further reinforced by a great gate of huge, hand-hewn timbers that had

been swung open to permit the party pass.

Ahead of him Tarzan saw a well-worn road leading down into a dense forest in which huge, live oaks predominated, though interspersed with other varieties of trees, among which he recognized acacias and a variety of plane tree as well as a few cedars.

Shortly after passing through the gate the officer in charge gave the command to halt at a small village of conical huts that was inhabited by Negroes not unlike the Bagegos, but armed with pikes and swords similar to those carried by the legionaries.

Preparations were Immediately made to camp in the village, the natives turning

over their huts to the soldiers, quite evidently, judging from the expressions on their faces, with poor grace. The legionaries took possession of whatever they wished and ordered their hosts about with all the authority and assurance of conquerors.

At this village a ration of corn and dried fish was issued to the prisoners. They were given no shelter, but were permitted to gather deadwood and build a fire, around which they clustered, still chained neck to neck.

Numerous birds, strange to Tarzan, flitted among the branches of the trees overhead and numerous monkeys chattered and scolded, but monkeys were no novelty to Tarzan of the Apes,

who was far more interested in noting the manners and customs of his captors.

Presently an acorn fell upon Tarzan's head, but as acorns might be expected to fall from oak trees he paid no attention to the occurrence until a second and third acorn in rapid succession struck him squarely from above, and then he glanced up to see a little monkey perched upon a low branch just above him.

"So-o, Nkima!" he exclaimed. "How did you get here?"

"I saw them take you from the village of the Gomangani. I followed."

"You came through the gorge, Nkima?"

"Nkima was afraid that the rocks

would come together and crush him," said the little monkey, "so he climbed to the top and came over the mountains along the edge. Far, far below he could hear the Tarmangani and the Gomangani walking along the bottom. Away up there the wind blew and little Nkima was cold and the spoor of Sheeta the leopard was everywhere and there were great baboons who chased little Nkima, so that he was glad when he came to the end of the mountain and saw the forest far below. It was a very steep mountain. Even little Nkima was afraid, but he found the way to the bottom."

"Nkima had better run home," said Tarzan. "This forest is full of strange monkeys."

"I am not afraid," said Nkima. "They are little monkeys and they are all afraid of Nkima. They are homely little monkeys. They are not so beautiful as Nkima, but Nkima has seen some of the shes looking at him and admiring him. It is not a bad place for Nkima. What are the strange Tarmangani going to do with Tarzan of the Apes?"

"I do not know, Nkima," said the ape-man.

"Then Nkima will go back and fetch Muviro and the Waziri."

"No," said the ape-man. "Wait until I find the Tarmangani for whom we are searching. Then you may go back with a message for Muviro."

That night Tarzan and the other

prisoners slept upon the hard ground in the open and, after it was dark, little Nkima came down and snuggled in his master's arms and there he lay all night, happy to be near the great Tarmangani he loved.

As morning dawned, Ogonyo, who had been captured with the other Bagegos, opened his eyes and looked about him. The camp of the soldiers was just stirring. Ogonyo saw some of the legionaries emerging from the huts that they had commandeered. He saw his fellow prisoners huddled close together for warmth and at a little distance from them lay the white man whom he had so recently guarded in the prison hut in the village of Nyuto, his chief. As his eyes

rested upon the white man, he saw the head of a little monkey arise from the encircling arms of the sleeper. He saw it cast a glance in the direction of the legionaries emerging from the huts and then he saw it scamper quickly to a nearby tree and swing quickly into the branches above.

Ogonyo gave a cry of alarm that awakened the prisoners near him.

"What is the matter, Ogonyo?" cried one of them.

"The ghost of my grandfather!" he exclaimed. "I saw him again. He came out of the mouth of the white man who calls himself Tarzan. He has put a curse upon us because we kept the white man prisoner. Now we are prisoners

ourselves and soon we shall be killed and eaten." The others nodded their heads solemnly in confirmation.

Food similar to that given to them the night before was given to the prisoners, and after they and the legionaries had eaten, the march was resumed in a southerly direction along the dusty road.

Until noon they plodded through the dust toward the south, passing through other villages similar to that at which they had camped during the night, and then they turned directly east into a road that joined the main road at this point. Shortly afterward Tarzan saw before him, stretching across the road to the right and left as far as he could see through the forest, a lofty rampart

surmounted by palisades and battlements. Directly ahead the roadway swung to the left just inside the outer line of the rampart and passed through a gateway that was flanked by lofty towers. At the base of the rampart was a wide moat through which a stream of water moved slowly, the moat being spanned by a bridge where the road crossed it.

There was a brief halt at the gateway while the officer commanding the company conferred with the commander of the gate, and then the legionaries and their prisoners filed through and Tarzan saw stretching before him not a village of native huts, but a city of substantial buildings.

Those near the gate were one-story stucco houses, apparently built around an inner courtyard, as he could see the foliage of trees rising high above the roofs, but at a distance down the vista of a long avenue he saw the outlines of more imposing edifices rising to a greater height.

As they proceeded along the avenue they saw many people upon the streets and in the doorways of the houses—brown and black people, clothed for the most part in tunics and cloaks, though many of the Negroes were almost naked. In the vicinity of the gateway there were a few shops, but as they proceeded along the avenue these gave way to dwellings that continued for a considerable

distance until they reached a section that seemed to be devoted to shops of a better grade and to public buildings. Here they began to encounter white men, though the proportion of them to the total population seemed quite small.

The people they passed stopped to look at the legionaries and their prisoners and at intersections little crowds formed and quite a number followed them, but these were mostly small boys.

The ape-man could see that he was attracting a great deal of attention and the people seemed to be commenting and speculating upon him. Some of them called to the legionaries, who answered them good- naturedly, and there was

considerable joking and chaffing—probably, Tarzan surmised, at the expense of the unfortunate prisoners.

During the brief passage through the city Tarzan came to the conclusion that the Negro inhabitants were the servants, perhaps slaves; the brown men, the soldiers and shopkeepers, while the whites formed the aristocratic or patrician class.

Well within the city the company turned to the left into another broad avenue and shortly afterward approached a great circular edifice constructed of hewn granite blocks. Arched apertures flanked by graceful columns rose tier upon tier to a height of forty or fifty feet, and above the first

story all of these arches were open. Through them Tarzan could see that the enclosure was without a roof and he guessed that this lofty wall enclosed an arena, since it bore a marked resemblance to the Colosseum at Rome.

As they came opposite the building the head of the column turned and entered it beneath a low, wide arch and here they were led through numerous corridors in the first story of the building and down a flight of granite steps into gloomy, subterranean chambers, where, opening from a long corridor, the ends of which were lost in darkness in both directions, were a series of narrow doorways before which swung heavy iron rates. In parties of four or five the

prisoners were unchained and ordered into the dungeons that lay behind.

Tarzan found himself with Lukedi and two other Bagegos in a small room constructed entirely of granite blocks. The only openings were the narrow, grated doorway, through which they entered, and a small, grated window in the top of the wall opposite the door, and through this window came a little light and air. The grating was closed upon them, the heavy padlock snapped, and they were left alone to wonder what fate lay in store for them.

CHAPTER 8

Millius Lepus conducted von Harben from the quarters of the captain of the gate in the south wall of the island city of Castrum Mare and, summoning a soldier, bade him fetch Gabula.

"You shall come with me as my guest, Erich von Harben," announced Mallius Lepus, "and, by Jupiter, unless I am mistaken, Septimus Favonius will thank me for bringing such a find. His dinners lag for want of novelty, for long since has he exhausted all the possibilities of Castrum Mare. He has even had a Negro chief from the Western forest as his guest of honor, and once he invited the aristocracy of Castrum Mare to meet a great ape.

"His friends will be mad to meet a barbarian chief from Germania— you are a chief, are you not?" and as von Harben was about to reply, Mallius Lepus stayed him with a gesture. "Never mind! You shall be introduced as a chief and if I do not know any different I cannot be accused of falsifying."

Von Harben smiled as he realized how alike was human nature the world over and in all periods of time.

"Here is your slave now," said Mallius. "As the guest of Septimus Favonius you will have others to do your bidding, but doubtless you will want to have your own body-servant as well."

"Yes," said Von Harben. "Gabula has been very faithful. I should hate to part

with him."

Mallius led the way to a long shed-like building beneath the inner face of the rampart. Here were two litters and a number of strapping bearers. As Mallius appeared eight of these sprang to their stations in front and behind one of the litters and carried it from the shed, lowering it to the ground again before their master.

"And tell me, if you have visited Rome recently, does my litter compare favorably with those now used by the nobles?" demanded Mallius.

"There have been many changes, Mallius Lepus, since the Rome of which your historian, Sanguinarius, wrote. Were I to tell you of even the least of

them, I fear that you would not believe me."

"But certainly there could have been no great change in the style of litters," argued Mallius, "and I cannot believe that the patricians have ceased to use them."

"Their litters travel upon wheels now," said von Harben.

"Incredible!" exclaimed Mallius. "It would be torture to bump over the rough pavements and country roads on the great wooden wheels of ox-carts. No, Erich von Harben, I am afraid I cannot believe that story."

"The city pavements are smooth today and the country side is cut in all directions by wide level highways over

which the litters of the modern citizens of Rome roll at great speed on small wheels with soft tires— nothing like the great wooden wheels of the ox-carts you have in mind, Mallius Lepus."

The officer called a command to his carriers, who broke into a smart run.

"I warrant you, Erich von Harben, that there be no litters in all Rome that move at greater speed than this," he boasted.

"How fast are we traveling now?" asked von Harben.

"Better than eighty-five hundred paces an hour," replied Mallius.

"Fifty thousand paces an hour is nothing unusual for the wheeled litters of today," said von Harben. "We call them automobiles."

"You are going to be a great success," cried Mallius, slapping von Harben upon the shoulder. "May Jupiter strike me dead if the guests of Septimus Favonius do not say that I have made a find indeed. Tell them that there be litter-carriers in Rome today who can run fifty thousand paces in an hour and they will acclaim you the greatest entertainer as well as the greatest liar Castrum Mare has ever seen."

Von Harben laughed good-naturedly. "But you will have to admit, my friend, that I never said that there were litter-bearers who could run fifty thousand paces an hour," he reminded Mallius.

"But did you not assure me that the litters traveled that fast? How then may a

litter travel unless it is carried by bearers. Perhaps the litters of today are carried by horses. Where are the horses that can run fifty thousand paces in an hour?"

"The litters are neither carried nor drawn by horses or men, Mallius," said von Harben.

The officer leaned back against the soft cushion of the carriage, roaring with laughter. "They fly then, I presume," he jeered. "By Hercules, you must tell this all over again to Septimus Favonius. I promise you that he will love you."

They were passing along a broad avenue bordered by old trees. There was no pavement and the surface of the street was deep with dust. The houses were

built quite up to the street line and where there was space between adjacent houses a high wall closed the aperture, so that each side of the street presented a solid front of masonry broken by arched gateways, heavy doors, and small unglazed windows, heavily barred.

"These are residences?" asked von Harben, indicating the buildings they were passing.

"Yes," said Mallius.

"From the massive doors and heavily barred windows I should judge that your city is overrun with criminals," commented von Harben.

Mallius shook his head. "On the contrary," he said, "we have few criminals in Castrum Mare. The

defenses that you see are against the possible uprising of slaves or invasions by barbarians. Upon several occasions during the life of the city such things have occurred, and so we build to safeguard against disaster in the event that there should be a recurrence of them, but, even so, doors are seldom locked, even at night, for there are no thieves to break in, no criminals to menace the lives of our people. If a man has done wrong to a fellow man he may have reason to expect the dagger of the assassin, but if his conscience be cleared he may live without fear of attack."

"I cannot conceive of a city without criminals," said von Harben. "How do

you account for it?"

"That is simple," replied Mallius. "When Honus Hasta revolted and founded the city of Castrum Mare in the 953rd year of Rome, Castra Sanguinarius was overrun with criminals, so that no man dared go abroad at night without an armed body-guard, nor was any one safe within his own home, and Honus Hasta, who became the first Emperor of the East, swore that there should be no criminals in Castrum Mare and he made laws so drastic that no thief or murderer lived to propagate his kind. Indeed, the laws of Honus Hasta destroyed not only the criminal, but all the members of his family, so that there was none to transmit

to posterity the criminal inclinations of a depraved sire.

"There are many who thought Honus Hasta a cruel tyrant, but time has shown the wisdom of many of his acts and certainly our freedom from criminals may only be ascribed to the fact that the laws of Honus Hasta prevented the breeding of criminals. So seldom now does an individual arise who steals or wantonly murders that it is an event of as great moment as any that can occur, and the entire city takes a holiday to see the culprit and his family destroyed."

Entering an avenue of more pretentious homes, the litter- bearers halted before an ornate gate where Lepus and Erich descended from the

litter. In answer to the summons of the former, the gate was opened by a slave and von Harben followed his new friend across a tiled forecourt into an inner garden, where beneath the shade of a tree a stout, elderly man was writing at a low desk. It was with something of a thrill that von Harben noted the ancient Roman inkstand, the reed pen, and the roll of parchment that the man was using as naturally as though they had not been quite extinct for a thousand years.

"Greetings, Uncle!" cried Lepus, and as the older man turned toward them, "I have brought you a guest such as no citizen of Castrum Mare has entertained since the founding of the city. This, my uncle, is Erich von Harben, barbarian

chief from far Germania." Then to von Harben, "My revered uncle, Septimus Favonius."

Septimus Favonius arose and greeted von Harben hospitably, yet with such a measure of conscious dignity as to carry the suggestion that a barbarian, even though a chief and a guest, could not be received upon a plane of actual social equality by a citizen of Rome.

Very briefly Lepus recounted the occurrences leading to his meeting with von Harben. Septimus Favonius seconded his nephew's invitation to be their guest, and then, at the suggestion of the older man, Lepus took Erich to his apartments to outfit him with fresh apparel.

An hour later, Erich, shaved and appareled as a young Roman patrician, stepped from the apartment, which had been placed at his disposal, into the adjoining chamber, which was a part of the suite of Mallius Lepus.

"Go on down to the garden," said Lepus, "and when I am dressed I shall join you there."

As von Harben passed through the home of Septimus Favonius on his way to the garden court, he was impressed by the peculiar blending of various cultures in the architecture and decoration of the home.

The walls and columns of the building followed the simplest Grecian lines of architecture, while the rugs, hangings,

and mural decorations showed marked evidence of both oriental and savage African influences. The latter he could understand, but the source of the oriental designs in many of the decorations was quite beyond him, since it was obvious that The Lost Tribe had had no intercourse with the outside world, other than with the savage Bagegos, for many centuries.

And when he stepped out into the garden, which was of considerable extent, he saw a further blending of Rome and savage Africa, for while the main part of the building was roofed with handmade tile, several porches were covered with native grass thatch, while a small outbuilding at the far end

of the garden was a replica of a Bagego hut except that the walls were left unplastered, so that the structure appeared in the nature of a summer-house. Septimus Favonius had left the garden and von Harben took advantage of the fact to examine his surroundings more closely. The garden was laid out with winding, graveled walks, bordered by shrubs and flowers, with an occasional tree, some of which gave evidence of great age.

The young man's mind, his eyes, his imagination were so fully occupied with his surroundings that be experienced a sensation almost akin to shock as he followed the turning of the path around a large ornamental shrub and came face to

face with a young woman.

That she was equally surprised was evidenced by the consternation apparent in her expression as she looked wide-eyed into the eyes of von Harben. For quite an appreciable moment of time they stood looking at one another. Von Harben thought that never in his life had he seen so beautiful a girl. What the girl thought, von Harben did not know. It was she who broke the silence.

"Who are you?" she asked, in a voice little above a whisper, as one might conceivably address an apparition that had arisen suddenly and unexpectedly before him.

"I am a stranger here," replied von Harben, "and I owe you an apology for

intruding upon your privacy. I thought that I was alone in the garden."

"Who are you?" repeated the girl. "I have never seen your face before or one like yours."

"And I," said von Harben, "have never seen a girl like you. Perhaps I am dreaming. Perhaps you do not exist at all, for it does not seem credible that in the world of realities such a one as you could exist."

The girl blushed. "You are not of Castrum Mare," she said. "That I can see." Her tone was a trifle cold and slightly haughty.

"I have offended you," said von Harben. "I ask your pardon. I did not mean to be offensive, but coming upon

you so unexpectedly quite took my breath away."

"And your manners, too?" asked the girl, but now her eyes were smiling.

"You have forgiven me?" asked von Harben.

"You will have to tell me who you are and why you are here before I can answer that," she replied. "For all I know you might be an enemy or a barbarian."

Von Harben laughed. "Mallius Lepus, who invited me here, insists that I am a barbarian," he said, "but even so I am the guest of Septimus Favonius, his uncle."

The girl shrugged. "I am not surprised," she said. "My father is

notorious for the guests he honors."

"You are the daughter of Favonius?" asked von Harben.

"Yes, I am Favonia," replied the girl, "but you have not yet told me about yourself. I command you to do so," she said, imperiously.

"I am Erich von Harben of Germania," said the young man.

"Germania!" exclaimed the girl. "Caesar wrote of Germania, as did Sanguinarius. It seems very far away."

"It never seemed so far as now," said von Harben; "yet the three thousand miles of distance seem nothing by comparison with the centuries of time that intervene."

The girl puckered her brows. "I do not understand you," she said.

"No," said von Harben, "and I cannot blame you."

"You are a chief, of course?" she asked.

He did not deny the insinuation, for he had been quick to see from the attitude of the three patricians he had met that the social standing of a barbarian in Castrum Mare might be easily open to question, unless his barbarism was somewhat mitigated by a title. Proud as he was of his nationality, von Harben realized that it was a far cry from the European barbarians of Caesar's day to their cultured descendants of the twentieth century and that it would

probably be impossible to convince these people of the changes that have taken place since their history was written; and, also, he was conscious of a very definite desire to appear well in the eyes of this lovely maiden of a bygone age.

"Favonia!" exclaimed von Harben. He scarcely breathed the name.

The girl looked up at him questioningly. "Yes!" she said.

"It is such a lovely name," he said. "I never heard it spoken before."

"You like it?" she asked.

"Very much, indeed."

The girl puckered her brows in thought. She had beautiful penciled

brows and a forehead that denoted an intelligence that was belied by neither her eyes, her manner, nor her speech. "I am glad that you like my name, but I do not understand why I should be glad. You say that you are a barbarian, and yet you do not seem like a barbarian. Your Appearance and your manner are those of a patrician, though perhaps you are overbold with a young woman you have never met before, but that I ascribe to the ignorance of the barbarian and so I forgive it."

"Being a barbarian has its compensations," laughed von Harben, "and perhaps I am a barbarian. I may be again forgiven if I say you are quite the most beautiful girl I have ever seen and

the only one—I could— ," he hesitated.

"You could what?" she demanded.

"Even a barbarian should not dare to say what I was about to say to one whom I have known scarce half a dozen minutes."

"Whoever you may be, you show rare discrimination," came in a sarcastic tone in a man's voice directly behind von Harben.

The girl looked up in surprise and von Harben wheeled both simultaneously, for neither had been aware of the presence of another. Facing him von Harben saw a short, dark, greasy-looking young man in an elaborate tunic, his hand resting upon the hilt of the short sword that hung at his

hip. There was a sarcastic sneer upon the face of the newcomer.

"Who is your barbarian friend, Favonia?" he demanded.

"This is Erich von Harben, a guest in the home of Septimus Favonius, my father," replied the girl, haughtily; and to von Harben, "This is Fulvus Fupus, who accepts the hospitality of Septimus Favonius so often that he feels free to criticize another guest."

Fupus flushed. "I apologize," he said, "but one may never know when to honor or when to ridicule one of Septimus Favonius's guests of honor. The last, if I recall correctly, was an ape, and before that there was a barbarian from some outer village—but they are always

interesting and I am sure that the barbarian, Erich von Harben, will prove no exception to the rule." The man's tone was sarcastic and obnoxious to a degree, and it was with difficulty that von Harben restrained his mounting temper.

Fortunately, at this moment, Mallius Lepus joined them and von Harben was formally presented to Favonia. Fulvus Fupus thereafter paid little attention to von Harben, but devoted his time assiduously to Favonia. Von Harben knew from their conversation that they were upon friendly and intimate terms and he guessed that Fupus was in love with Favonia, though he could not tell from the girl's attitude whether or not she returned his affection.

There was something else that von Harben was sure of—that he too was in love with Favonia. Upon several occasions in life he had thought that he was in love, but his sensations and reactions upon those other occasions had not been the same in either kind or degree as those which he now experienced. He found himself hating Fulvus Fupus, whom he had known scarce a quarter of an hour and whose greatest offense, aside from looking lovingly at Favonia, had been a certain arrogant sarcasm of speech and manner — certainly no sufficient warrant for a sane man to wish to do murder, and yet Erich von Harben fingered the butt of his Luger, which he had insisted upon

wearing in addition to the slim dagger with which Mallius Lepus had armed him.

Later, when Septimus Favonius joined them, he suggested that they all go to the baths and Mallius Lepus whispered to von Harben that his uncle was already itching to exhibit his new find.

"He will take us to the Baths of Caesar," said Lepus, "which are patronized by the richest patricians only, so have a few good stories ready, but save your best ones, like that you told me about the modern Roman litters, for the dinner that my uncle is sure to give tonight—for he will have the best of Castrum Mare there, possibly even the

Emperor himself."

The Baths of Caesar were housed in an imposing building, of which that portion facing on the avenue was given over to what appeared to be exclusive shops. The main entrance led to a large court where the warmth with which the party was greeted by a number of patrons of the Baths already congregated there attested to the popularity of Favonius, his daughter, and his nephew, while it was evident to von Harben that there was less enthusiasm manifested for Fulvus Fupus.

Servants conducted the bathers to the dressing-rooms, the men's and women's being in different quarters of the building.

After his clothes were removed, von Harben's body was anointed with oils in a warm room and then he was led into a hot room and from there with the other men he passed into a large apartment containing a plunge where both the men and women gathered. About the plunge were seats for several hundred people, and in the Baths of Caesar these were constructed of highly polished granite.

While von Harben enjoyed the prospect of a swim in the clear, cold water of the frigidarium, he was much more interested by the opportunity it afforded him to be with Favonia again. She was swimming slowly around the pool when he entered the room and, making a long, running dive, von Harben

slipped easily and gracefully into the water, a few strokes bringing him to her side. A murmur of applause that followed meant nothing to von Harben, for he did not know that diving was an unknown art among the citizens of Castrum Mare.

Fulvus Fupus, who had entered the frigidarium behind von Harben, sneered as he saw the dive and heard the applause. He had never seen it done before, but he could see that the thing was very easy, and realizing the advantages of so graceful an accomplishment, he determined at once to show the assembled patricians, and especially Favonia, that he was equally a master of this athletic art as was the

barbarian.

Running, as he had seen von Harben run, toward the end of the pool, Fulvus Fupus sprang high into the air and came straight down upon his belly with a resounding smack that sent the wind out of him and the water splashing high in all directions.

Gasping for breath, he managed to reach the side of the pool, where he clung while the laughter of the assembled patricians brought the scarlet of mortification to his face. Whereas before he had viewed von Harben with contempt and some slight suspicion, he now viewed him with contempt, suspicion, and hatred. Disgruntled, Fupus clambered from the pool and

returned immediately to the dressing-room, where he donned his garments.

"Going already, Fupus?" demanded a young patrician who was disrobing in the apodyterium.

"Yes," growled Fupus.

"I hear you came with Septimus Favonius and his new find. What sort may he be?"

"Listen well, Caecilius Metellus," said Fupus. "This man who calls himself Erich von Harben says that he is a chief from Germania, but I believe otherwise."

"What do you believe?" demanded Metellus, politely, though evidently with no considerable interest.

Fupus came close to the other. "I believe him to be a spy from Castra Sanguinarius," he whispered, "and that he is only pretending that he is a barbarian."

"But they say that he does not speak our language well," said Metellus.

"He speaks it as any man might speak it who wanted to pretend that he did not understand it or that it was new to him," said Fupus.

Metellus shook his head. "Septimus Favonius is no fool," he said. "I doubt if there is anyone in Castra Sanguinarius sufficiently clever to fool him to such an extent."

"There is only one man who has any right to judge as to that," snapped Fupus,

"and he is going to have the facts before I am an hour older."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Metellus.

"Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East—I am going to him at once."

"Don't be a fool, Fupus," counseled Metellus. "You will only get yourself laughed at or possibly worse. Know you not that Septimus Favonius is high in the favor of the Emperor?"

"Perhaps, but is it not also known that he was friendly with Cassius Hasta, nephew of the Emperor, whom Validus Augustus accused of treason and banished. It would not take much to convince the Emperor that this Erich von Harben is an emissary of Cassius Hasta,

who is reputed to be in Castra Sanguinarius."

Caecilius Metellus laughed. "Go on then and make a fool of yourself, Fupus," he said. "You will probably bring up at the end of a rope."

"The end of a rope will terminate this business," agreed Fupus, "but von Harben will be there, not I."

CHAPTER 9

As night fell upon the city of Castra Sanguinarius, the gloom of the granite dungeons beneath the city's Colosseum deepened into blackest darkness, which was relieved only by a rectangular patch of starlit sky where barred windows pierced the walls.

Squatting upon the rough stone floor, his back against the wall, Tarzan watched the stars moving in slow procession across the window's opening. A creature of the wild, impatient of restraint, the ape-man suffered the mental anguish of the caged beast—perhaps, because of his human mind, his suffering was greater than would have been that of one of the lower

orders, yet he endured with even greater outward stoicism than the beast that paces to and fro seeking escape from the bars that confine it.

As the feet of the beast might have measured the walls of its dungeon, so did the mind of Tarzan, and never for a waking moment was his mind not occupied by thoughts of escape.

Lukedi and the other inmates of the dungeon slept, but Tarzan still sat watching the free stars and envying them, when he became conscious of a sound, ever so slight, coming from the arena, the floor of which was about on a level with the sill of the little window in the top of the dungeon wall. Something was moving, stealthily and cautiously, upon

the sand of the arena. Presently, framed in the window, silhouetted against the sky, appeared a familiar figure. Tarzan smiled and whispered a word so low that a human ear could scarce have heard it, and Nkima slipped between the bars and dropped to the floor of the dungeon. An instant later the little monkey snuggled close to Tarzan, its long, muscular arms clasped tightly about the neck of the ape-man.

"Come home with me," pleaded Nkima. "Why do you stay in this cold, dark hole beneath the ground?"

"You have seen the cage in which we sometimes keep Jad-Bal-Ja, the Golden Lion?" demanded Tarzan.

"Yes," said Nkima.

"Jad-Bal-Ja cannot get out unless we open the gate," explained Tarzan. "I too am in a cage. I cannot get out until they open the gate."

"I will go and get Muviro and his Gomangani with the sharp sticks," said Nkima. "They will come and let you out."

"No, Nkima," said Tarzan. "If I cannot get out by myself, Muviro could not get here in time to free me, and if he came many of my brave Waziri would be killed, for there are fighting men here in far greater numbers than Muviro could bring." After awhile Tarzan slept, and curled up within his arms slept Nkima, the little monkey, but when Tarzan awoke in the morning Nkima was gone.

Toward the middle of the morning soldiers came and the door of the dungeon was unlocked and opened to admit several of them, including a young white officer, who was accompanied by a slave. The officer addressed Tarzan in the language of the city, but the ape-man shook his head, indicating that he did not understand; then the other turned to the slave with a few words and the latter spoke to Tarzan in the Bagego dialect, asking him if he understood it.

"Yes," replied the ape-man, and through the interpreter the officer questioned Tarzan.

"Who are you and what were you, a white man, doing in the village of the Bagegos?" asked the officer.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the prisoner. "I was looking for another white man who is lost somewhere in these mountains, but I slipped upon the cliffside and fell and while I was unconscious the Bagegos took me prisoner, and when your soldiers raided the Bagego village they found me there. Now that you know about me, I presume that I shall be released."

"Why?" demanded the officer. "Are you a citizen of Rome?"

"Of course not," said Tarzan. "What has that to do with it?"

"Because if you are not a citizen of Rome it is quite possible that you are an enemy. How do we know that you are not from Castrum Mare?"

Tarzan shrugged. "I do not know," he said, "how you would know that since I do not even know what Castrum Mare means."

"That is what you would say if you wished to deceive us," said the officer, "and you would also pretend that you could not speak or understand our language, but you will find that it is not going to be easy to deceive us. We are not such fools as the people of Castrum Mare believe us to be."

"Where is this Castrum Mare and what is it?" asked Tarzan.

The officer laughed. "You are very clever," he said.

"I assure you," said the ape-man, "that I am not trying to deceive you. Believe

me for a moment and answer one question."

"What is it you wish to ask?"

"Has another white man come into your country within the last few weeks? He is the one for whom I am searching."

"No white man has entered this country," replied the officer, "since Marcus Crispus Sanguinarius led the Third Cohort of the Tenth Legion in victorious conquest of the barbarians who inhabited it eighteen hundred and twenty-three years ago."

"And if a stranger were in your country you would know it?" asked Tarzan.

"If he were in Castra Sanguinarius, yes," replied the officer, "but if he had

entered Castrum Mare at the east end of the valley I should not know it; but come, I was not sent here to answer questions, but to fetch you before one who will ask them."

At a word from the officer, the soldiers who accompanied him conducted Tarzan from the dungeon, along the corridor through which he had come the previous day and up into the city. The detachment proceeded for a mile through the city streets to an imposing building, before the entrance to which there was stationed a military guard whose elaborate cuirasses, helmets, and crests suggested that they might be a part of a select military organization.

The metal plates of their cuirasses appeared to Tarzan to ho of gold, as did the metal of their helmets, while the hilts and scabbards of their swords were elaborately carved and further ornamented with colored stones ingeniously inlaid in the metal, and to their gorgeous appearance was added the final touch of scarlet cloaks.

The officer who met the party at the gate admitted Tarzan, the interpreter, and the officer who had brought him, but the guard of soldiery was replaced by a detachment of resplendent men-at-arms similar to those who guarded the entrance to the palace.

Tarzan was taken immediately into the building and along a wide corridor,

from which opened many chambers, to a large, oblong room flanked by stately columns. At the far end of the apartment a large man sat in a huge, carved chair, on a raised dais.

There were many other people in the room, nearly all of whom were colorfully garbed in bright cloaks over colored tunics and ornate cuirasses of leather or metal, while others wore only simple flowing togas, usually of white. Slaves, messengers, officers were constantly entering or leaving the chamber. The party accompanying Tarzan withdrew between the columns at one side, of the room and waited there.

"What is this place?" asked Tarzan of the Bagego interpreter, "and who is the

man at the far end of the room?"

"This is the throne-room of the Emperor of the West and that is Sublatus Imperator himself."

For some time Tarzan watched the scene before him with interest. He saw people, evidently of all classes, approach the throne and address the Emperor, and though he could not understand their words, he judged that they were addressing pleas to their ruler. There were patricians among the suppliants, brown-skinned shopkeepers, barbarians resplendent in their savage finery, and even slaves.

The Emperor, Sublatus, presented an imposing figure. Over a tunic of white linen, the Emperor wore a cuirass of

gold. His sandals were of white with gold buckles, and from his shoulders fell the purple robe of the Caesars. A fillet of embroidered linen about his brow was the only other insignia of his station.

Directly behind the throne were heavy hangings against which were ranged a file of soldiers bearing poles surmounted by silver eagles and various other devices, and banners, of the meaning and purpose of which Tarzan was ignorant. Upon every column along the side of the wall were hung shields of various shapes 'over crossed banners and standards similar to those ranged behind the Emperor. Everything pertaining to the embellishment of the room was martial, the mural decorations

being crudely painted scenes of war.

Presently a man, who appeared to be an official of the court, approached them and addressed the officer who had brought Tarzan from the Colosseum.

"Are you Maximus Praeclarus?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied the officer.

"Present yourself with the prisoner."

As Tarzan advanced toward the throne surrounded by the detachment of the guard, all eyes were turned upon him, for he was a conspicuous figure even in this assemblage of gorgeously appareled courtiers and soldiers, though his only garments were a loincloth and a leopard skin. His suntanned skin, his shock of black hair, and his gray eyes

might not alone have marked him especially in such an assemblage, for there were other dark-skinned, black-haired, gray- eyed men among them, but there was only one who towered inches above them all and he was Tarzan. The undulating smoothness of his easy stride suggested even to the mind of the proud and haughty Sublatus the fierce and savage power of the king of beasts, which perhaps accounted for the fact that the Emperor, with raised hand, halted the party a little further from the throne than usual.

As the party halted before the throne, Tarzan did not wait to be questioned, but, turning to the Bagego interpreter, said: "Ask Sublatus why I have been

made a prisoner and tell him that I demand that he free me at once."

The man quailed. "Do as I tell you," said Tarzan.

"What is he saying?" asked Sublatus of the interpreter.

"I fear to repeat such words to the Emperor," replied the man.

"I command it," said Sublatus.

"He asked why he has been made a prisoner and demands that he be released at once."

"Ask him who he is," said Sublatus, angrily, "that he dares issue commands to Sublatus Imperator."

"Tell him," said Tarzan, after the Emperor's words had been translated to

him, "that I am Tarzan of the Apes, but if that means as little to him as his name means to me, I have other means to convince him that I am as accustomed to issuing orders and being obeyed as is he."

"Take the insolent dog away," replied Sublatus with trembling voice after he had been told what Tarzan's words had been.

The soldiers laid hold of Tarzan, but he shook them off. "Tell him," snapped the ape-man, "that as one white man to another I demand an answer to my question. Tell him that I did not approach his country as an enemy, but as a friend, and that I shall look to him to see that I am accorded the treatment to

which I am entitled, and that before I leave this room."

When these words were translated to Sublatus, the purple of his enraged face matched the imperial purple of his cloak.

"Take him away," he shrieked. "Take him away. Call the guard. Throw Maximus Praeclarus into chains for permitting a prisoner to thus address Sublatus."

Two soldiers seized Tarzan, one his right arm, the other his left, but he swung them suddenly together before him and with such force did their heads meet that they relaxed their grasps upon him and sank unconscious to the floor, and then it was that the ape-man leaped with the agility of a cat to the dais where sat the

Emperor, Sublatus.

So quickly had the act been accomplished and so unexpected was it that there was none prepared to come between Tarzan and the Emperor in time to prevent the terrible indignity that Tarzan proceeded to inflict upon him.

Seizing the Emperor by the shoulder, he lifted him from his throne and wheeled him about and then grasping him by the scruff of the neck and the bottom of his cuirass, he lifted him from the floor just as several pike-men leaped forward to rescue Sublatus. But when they were about to menace Tarzan with their pikes, he used the body of the screaming Sublatus as a shield so that the soldiers dared not to attack for fear

of killing their Emperor.

"Tell them," said Tarzan to the Bagego interpreter, "that if any man interferes with me before I have reached the street, I shall wring the Emperor's neck. Tell him to order them back. If he does. I shall set him free when he is out of the building. If he refuses, it will be at his own risk."

When this message was given to Sublatus, he stopped screaming orders to his people to attack the ape-man and instead warned them to permit Tarzan to leave the palace. Carrying the Emperor above his head, Tarzan leaped from the dais and as he did so the courtiers fell back in accordance with the commands of Sublatus, who now ordered them to

turn their backs that they might not witness the indignity that was being done their ruler.

Down the long throne-room and through the corridors to the outer court Tarzan of the Apes carried Sublatus Imperator above his head and at the command of the ape-man the black interpreter went ahead, but there was no need for him, since Sublatus kept the road clear as he issued commands in a voice that trembled with a combination of rage, fear, and mortification.

At the outer gate the members of the guard begged to be permitted to rescue Sublatus and avenge the insult that had been put upon him, but the Emperor warned them to permit his captor to

leave the palace in safety, provided he kept his word and liberated Sublatus when they had reached the avenue beyond the gate.

The scarlet-cloaked guard fell back grumbling, their eyes fired with anger because of the humiliation of their Emperor. Even though they had no love for him, yet he was the personification of the power and dignity of their government, and the scene that they witnessed filled them with mortification as the half-naked barbarian bore their commander-in-chief through the palace gates out into the tree- bordered avenue beyond, while the interpreter marched ahead, scarce knowing whether to be more downcast by terror or elated

through pride in this unwonted publicity.

The city of Castra Sanguinarius had been carved from the primeval forest that clothed the west end of the canyon, and with unusual vision the founders of the city had cleared only such spaces as were necessary for avenues, buildings, and similar purposes. Ancient trees overhung the avenue before the palace and in many places their foliage overspread the low housetops, mingling with the foliage of the trees in inner courtyards.

Midway of the broad avenue the ape-man halted and lowered Sublatus to the ground. He turned his eyes in the direction of the gateway through which the soldiers of Sublatus v, ere crowding

out into the avenue.

"Tell them," said Tarzan to the interpreter, "to go back into the palace grounds; then and then only shall I release their Emperor," for Tarzan had noted the ready javelins in the hands of many of the guardsmen and guessed that the moment his body ceased to be protected by the near presence of Sublatus it would be the target and the goal of a score of the weapons.

When the interpreter deliver the ape-man's ultimatum to them, the guardsmen hesitated, but Sublatus commanded them to obey, for the barbarian's heavy grip upon his shoulder convinced him that there was no hope that he might escape alive or uninjured unless he and his

soldiers acceded to the creature's demand. As the last of the guardsmen passed back into the palace courtyard Tarzan released the Emperor and as Sublatus hastened quickly toward the gate, the guardsmen made a sudden sally into the avenue.

They saw their quarry turn and take a few quick steps, leap high into the air and disappear amidst the foliage of an overhanging oak, A dozen javelins hurtled among the branches of the tree. The soldiers rushed forward, their eyes strained upward, but the quarry had vanished.

Sublatus was close upon their heels. "Quick!" he cried. "After him! A thousand denarii to the man who brings

down the barbarian."

"There he goes!" cried one, pointing.

"No," cried another. "I saw him there among the foliage. I saw the branches move," and he pointed in the opposite direction.

And in the meantime the ape-man moved swiftly through the trees along one side of the avenue, dropped to a low roof, crossed it and sprang into a tree that rose from an inner court, pausing there to listen for signs of pursuit. After the manner of a wild beast hunted through his native jungle, he moved as silently as the shadow of a shadow, so that now, although he crouched scarce twenty feet above them, the two people in the courtyard below him were

unaware of his presence.

But Tarzan was not unaware of theirs and as he listened to the noise of the growing pursuit, that was spreading now in all directions through the city, he took note of the girl and the man in the garden beneath him. It was apparent that the man was wooing the maid, and Tarzan needed no knowledge of their spoken language to interpret the gestures, the glances, and the facial expressions of passionate pleading upon the part of the man or the cold aloofness of the girl.

Sometimes a tilt of her head presented a partial view of her profile to the ape-man and he guessed that she was very beautiful, but the face of the young man with her reminded him of the face of

Pamba the rat.

It was evident that his courtship was not progressing to the liking of the youth and now there were evidences of anger in his tone. The girl rose haughtily and with a cold word turned away, and then the man leaped to his feet from the bench upon which they had been sitting and seized her roughly by the arm. She turned surprised and angry eyes upon him and had half voiced a cry for help when the rat-faced man clapped a hand across her mouth and with his free arm dragged her into his embrace.

Now all this was none of Tarzan's affair. The shes of the city of Castra Sanguinarius meant no more to the savage ape-man than did the shes of the

village of Nyuto, chief of the Bagegos. They meant no more to him than did Sabor the lioness and far less than did the shes of the tribe of Akut or of Toyat the king apes—but Tarzan of the Apes was often a creature of impulses; now he realized that he did not like the rat-faced young man, and that he never could like him, while the girl that he was maltreating seemed to be doubly likable because of her evident aversion to her tormentor.

The man had bent the girl's frail body back upon the bench. His lips were close to hers when there was a sudden jarring of the ground beside him and he turned astonished eyes upon the figure of a half- naked giant. Steel-gray eyes

looked into his beady black ones, a heavy hand fell upon the collar of his tunic, and he felt himself lifted from the body of the girl and then hurled roughly aside.

He saw his assailant lift his victim to her feet and his little eyes saw, too, another thing: the stranger was unarmed! Then it was that the sword of Fastus leaped from its scabbard and that Tarzan of the Apes found himself facing naked steel. The girl saw what Fastus would do. She saw that the stranger who protected her was unarmed and she leaped between them, at the same time calling loudly, "Axuch! Sarus! Mpingu! Hither! Quickly!"

Tarzan seized the girl and swung her

quickly behind him, and simultaneously Fastus was upon him. But the Roman had reckoned without his host and the easy conquest over an unarmed man that he had expected seemed suddenly less easy of accomplishment, for when his keen Spanish sword swung down to cleave the body of his foe, that foe was not there.

Never in his life had Fastus witnessed such agility. It was as though the eyes and body of the barbarian moved more rapidly than the sword of Fastus, and always a fraction of an inch ahead.

Three times Fastus swung viciously at the stranger, and three times his blade cut empty air, while the girl, wide-eyed with astonishment, watched the

seemingly unequal duel. Her heart filled with admiration for this strange young giant, who, though he was evidently a barbarian, looked more the patrician than Fastus himself. Three times the blade of Fastus cut harmlessly through empty air—and then there was a lightning-like movement on the part of his antagonist. A brown hand shot beneath the guard of the Roman, steel fingers gripped his wrist, and an instant later his sword clattered to the tile walk of the courtyard. At the same moment two white men and a Negro hurried breathlessly into the garden and ran quickly forward—two with daggers in their hands and one, the black, with a sword.

They saw Tarzan standing between Fastus and the girl. They saw the man in the grip of a stranger. They saw the sword clatter to the ground, and naturally they reached the one conclusion that seemed possible—Fastus was being worsted in an attempt to protect the girl against a stranger.

Tarzan saw them coming toward him and realized that three to one are heavy odds. He was upon the point of using Fastus as a shield against his new enemies when the girl stepped before the three and motioned them to stop. Again the tantalizing tongue that he could almost understand and yet not quite, as the girl explained the circumstances to the newcomers while Tarzan still stood

holding Fastus by the wrist.

Presently the girl turned to Tarzan and addressed him, but he only shook his head to indicate that he could not understand her; then, as his eyes fell upon the Negro, a possible means of communicating with these people occurred to him, for the Negro resembled closely the Bagegos of the outer world.

"Are you a Bagego?" asked Tarzan in the language of that tribe.

The man looked surprised. "Yes," he said, "I am, but who are you?"

"And you speak the language of these people?" asked Tarzan, indicating the young woman and Fastus and ignoring the man's query.

"Of course," said the Negro. "I have been a prisoner among them for many years, but there are many Bagegos among my fellow prisoners and we have not forgotten the language of our mothers."

"Good," said Tarzan. "Through you this young woman may speak to me."

"She wants to know who you are, and where you came from, and what you were doing in her garden, and how you got here, and how you happened to protect her from Fastus, and—"

Tarzan held up his hand. "One at a time," he cried. "Tell her I am Tarzan of the Apes, a stranger from a far country, and I came here in friendship seeking one of my own people who is lost."

Now came an interruption in the form of loud pounding and hallooing beyond the outer doorway of the building.

"See what that may be, Axuch," directed the girl, and as the one so addressed, and evidently a slave, humbly turned to do her bidding, she once more addressed Tarzan through the interpreter.

"You have won the gratitude of Dilecta," she said, "and you shall be rewarded by her father."

At this moment Axuch returned followed by a young officer. As the eyes of the newcomer fell upon Tarzan they went wide and he started back, his hand going to the hilt of his sword, and simultaneously Tarzan recognized him as

Maximus Praeclarus, the young patrician officer who had conducted him from the Colosseum to the palace.

"Lay off your sword, Maximus Praeclarus," said the young girl, "for this man is no enemy."

"And you are sure of that, Dilecta?" demanded Praeclarus. "What do you know of him?"

"I know that he came in time to save me from this swine who would have harmed me," said the girl haughtily, casting a withering glance at Fastus.

"I do not understand," said Praeclarus. "This is a barbarian prisoner of war who calls himself Tarzan and whom I took this morning from the Colosseum to the palace at the command

of the Emperor, that Sublatus might look upon the strange creature, whom some thought to be a spy from Castrum Mare."

"If he is a prisoner, what is he doing here, then?" demanded the girl. "And why are you here?"

"This fellow attacked the Emperor himself and then escaped from the palace. The entire city is being searched and I, being in charge of a detachment of soldiers assigned to this district, came immediately hither, fearing the very thing that has happened and that this wild man might find you and do you harm."

"It was the patrician, Fastus, son of Imperial Caesar, who would have harmed me," said the girl. "It was the wild man who saved me from him."

Maximum Praeclarus looked quickly at Fastus, the son of Sublatus, and then at Tarzan. The young officer appeared to be resting upon the horns of a dilemma.

"There is your man," said Fastus, with a sneer. "Back to the dungeons with him."

"Maximus Praeclarus does not take orders from Fastus," said the young man, "and he knows his duty without consulting him."

"You will arrest this man who has protected me, Praeclarus?" demanded Dilecta.

"What else may I do?" asked Praeclarus. "It is my duty."

"Then do it," sneered Fastus.

Praeclarus went white. "It is with difficulty that I can keep my hands off you, Fastus," he said. "If you were the son of Jupiter himself, it would not take much more to get yourself choked. If you know what is well for you, you will go before I lose control of my temper."

"Mpingu," said Dilecta, "show Fastus to the avenue."

Fastus flushed. "My father, the Emperor, shall hear of this," he snarled; "and do not forget, Dilecta, your father stands none too well in the estimation of Sublatus Imperator."

"Get gone," cried Dilecta, "before I order my slave to throw you into the avenue."

With a sneer and a swagger Fastus

quit the garden, and when he had gone Dilecta turned to Maximus Praeclarus.

"What shall we do?" she cried. "I must protect this noble stranger who saved me from Fastus, and at the same time you must do your duty and return him to Sublatus."

"I have a plan," said Maximus Praeclarus, "but I cannot carry it out unless I can talk with the stranger."

"Mpingu can understand and interpret for him," said the girl.

"Can you trust Mpingu implicitly?" asked Praeclarus.

"Absolutely," said Dilecta.

"Then send away the others," said Praeclarus, indicating Axuch and Sarus;

and when Mpingu returned from escorting Fastus to the street he found Maximus Praeclarus, Dilecta, and Tarzan alone in the garden.

Praeclarus motioned Mpingu to advance. "Tell the stranger that I have been sent to arrest him," he said to Mpingu, "but tell him also that because of the service he has rendered Dilecta I wish to protect him, if he will follow my instructions."

"What are they?" asked Tarzan when the question had been put to him. "What do you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to come with me," said Praeclarus; "to come with me as though you are my prisoner. I shall take you in the direction of the Colosseum and when

I am opposite my own home I shall give you a signal so that you will understand that the house is mine. Immediately afterward I will make it possible for you to escape into the trees as you did when you quit the palace with Sublatus. Go, then, immediately to my house and remain there until I return. Dilecta will send Mpingu there now to warn my servants that you are coming. At my command they will protect you with their lives. Do you understand?"

"I understand," replied the ape-man, when the plan had been explained to him by Mpingu.

"Later," said Praeclarus, "we may be able to find a way to get you out of Castra Sanguinarius and across the

mountains."

CHAPTER 10

THE cares of state rested lightly upon the shoulders of Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East, for though his title was imposing his domain was small and his subjects few. The island city of Castrum Mare boasted a population of only a trifle more than twenty-two thousand people, of which some three thousand were whites and nineteen thousand of mixed blood, while outside the city, in the villages of the lake dwellers and along the eastern shore of Mare Orientis, dwelt the balance of his subjects, comprising some twenty- six thousand Negroes.

Today, reports and audiences disposed of, the Emperor had withdrawn

to the palace garden to spend an hour in conversation with a few of his intimates, while his musicians, concealed within a vine- covered bower, entertained him. While he was thus occupied a chamberlain approached and announced that the patrician Fulvus Fupus begged an audience of the Emperor.

"Fulvus knows that the audience hour is past," snapped the Emperor. "Bid him come on the morrow."

"He insists, most glorious Caesar," said the chamberlain, "that his business is of the utmost importance and that it is only because he felt that the safety of the Emperor is at stake that he came at this hour."

"Brim: him here then," commanded

Validus, and, as the chamberlain turned away, "Am I never to have a moment's relaxation without some fool like Fulvus Fupus breaking in upon me with some silly story?" he grumbled to one of his companions.

When Fulvus approached the Emperor a moment later, he was received with a cold and haughty stare.

"I have come, most glorious Caesar," said Fulvus, "to fulfill the duty of a citizen of Rome, whose first concern should be the safety of his Emperor."

"What are you talking about?" snapped Validus. "Quick, out with it!"

"There is a stranger in Castrum Mare who claims to be a barbarian from Germania, but I believe him to be a spy

from Castrum Sanguinarius where, it is said, Cassius Hasta is an honored guest of Sublatus, in that city."

"What do you know about Cassius Hasta and what has he to do with it?" demanded Validus.

"It is said—it is rumored," stammered Fulvus Fupus, "that —"

"I have heard too many rumors already about Cassius Hasta," exclaimed Validus. "Can I not dispatch my nephew upon a mission without every fool in Castrum Mare lying awake nights to conjure motives, which may later be ascribed to me?"

"It is only what I heard," said Fulvus, flushed and uncomfortable. "I do not know anything about it. I did not say that

I knew."

"Well, what did you hear?" demanded Validus. "Come, out with it."

"The talk is common in the Baths that you sent Cassius Hasta away because he was plotting treason and that he went at once to Sublatus, who received him in a friendly fashion and that together they are planning an attack upon Castrum Mare."

Validus scowled. "Baseless rumor," he said; "but what about this prisoner? What has he to do with it and why have I not been advised of his presence?"

"That I do not know," said Fulvus Fupus. "That is why I felt it doubly my duty to inform you, since the man who is harboring the stranger is a most

powerful patrician and one who might well be ambitious."

"Who is he?" asked the Emperor.

"Septimus Favonius," replied Fupus.

"Septimus Favonius!" exclaimed Validus. "Impossible."

"Not so impossible," said Fupus, boldly, "if glorious Caesar will but recall the friendship that ever existed between Cassius Hasta and Mallius Lepus, the nephew of Septimus Favonius. The home of Septimus Favonius was the other home of Cassius Hasta. To whom, then, sooner might he turn for aid than to this powerful friend whose ambitions are well known outside the palace, even though they may not as yet have come to the ears of Validus

Augustus?"

Nervously the Emperor arose and paced to and fro, the eyes of the others watching him narrowly; those of Fulvus Fupus narrowed with malign anticipation.

Presently Validus halted and turned toward one of his courtiers. "May Hercules strike me dead," he cried, "if there be not some truth in what Fulvus Fupus suggests!" and to Fupus, "What is this stranger like?"

"He is a man of white skin, yet of slightly different complexion and appearance than the usual patrician. He feigns to speak our language with a certain practiced stiltedness that is intended to suggest lack of familiarity.

This, I think, is merely a part of the ruse to deceive."

"How did he come into Castrum Mare and none of my officers report the matter to me?" asked Validus.

"That you may learn from Mallius Lepus," said Fulvus Fupus, "for Mallius Lepus was in command of the Porta Decumana when some of the barbarians of the lake villages brought him there, presumably a prisoner, yet Caesar knows how easy it would have been to bribe these creatures to play such a part."

"You explain it so well, Fulvus Fupus," said the Emperor, "that one might even suspect you to have been the instigator of the plot, or at least to have

given much thought to similar schemes."

"Caesar's ever brilliant wit never deserts him," said Fupus, forcing a smile, though his face paled.

"We shall see," snapped Validus, and turning to one of his officers, "Order the arrest of Septimus Favonius, and Mallius Lepus and this stranger at once."

As he ceased speaking a chamberlain entered the garden and approached the Emperor. "Septimus Favonius requests an audience," he announced. "Mallius Lepus, his nephew, and a stranger are with him."

"Fetch them," said Validus, and to the officer who was about to depart to arrest them, "Wait here. We shall see what Septimus Favonius has to say."

A moment later the three entered and approached the Emperor. Favonius and Lepus saluted Validus and then the former presented von Harben as a barbarian chief from Germania.

"We have already heard of this barbarian chief," said Validus with a sneer. Favonius and Lepus glanced at Fupus. "Why was I not immediately notified of the capture of this prisoner?" This time the Emperor directed his remarks to Mallius Lepus.

"There has been little delay, Caesar," replied the young officer. "It was necessary that he be bathed and properly clothed before he was brought here."

"It was not necessary that he be brought here," said Validus. "There are

dungeons in Castrum Mare for prisoners from Castra Sanguinarius."

"He is not from Castra Sanguinarius," said Septimus Favonius.

"Where are you from and what are you doing in my country?" demanded Validus, turning upon von Harben.

"I am from a country that your historians knew as Germania," replied Erich.

"And I suppose you learned to speak our language in Germania," sneered Validus.

"Yes," replied von Harben, "I did."

"And you have never been to Castra Sanguinarius?"

"Never."

"I presume you have been to Rome," laughed Validus.

"Yes, many times," replied von Harben.

"And who is Emperor there now?"

"There is no Roman Emperor," said von Harben.

"No Roman Emperor!" exclaimed Validus. "If you are not a spy from Castra Sanguinarius, you are a lunatic. Perhaps you are both, for no one but a lunatic would expect me to believe such a story. No Roman Emperor, indeed!"

"There is no Roman Emperor," said von Harben, "because there is no Roman Empire. Mallius Lepus tells me that your country has had no intercourse with the outside world for more than eighteen

hundred years. Much can happen in that time—much has happened. Rome fell, over a thousand years ago. No nation speaks its language today, which is understood by priests and scholars only. The barbarians of Germania, of Gallia, and of Britannia have built empires and civilizations of tremendous power, and Rome is only a city in Italia."

Mallius Lepus was beaming delightedly. "I told you," he whispered to Favonius, "that you would love him. By Jupiter, I wish he would tell Validus the story of the litters that travel fifty thousand paces an hour!"

There was that in the tone and manner of von Harben that compelled confidence and belief, so that even the

suspicious Validus gave credence to the seemingly wild tales of the stranger and presently found himself asking questions of the barbarian.

Finally the Emperor turned to Fulvus Fupus. "Upon what proof did you accuse this man of being a spy from Castra Sanguinarius?" he demanded.

"Where else may he be from?" asked Fulvus Fupus. "We know he is not from Castrum Mare, so he must be from Castra Sanguinarius."

"You have no evidence then to substantiate your accusations?"

Fupus hesitated.

"Get out," ordered Validus, angrily. "I shall attend to you later."

Overcome by mortification, Fupus left the garden, but the malevolent glances that he shot at Favonius, Lepus, and Erich boded them no good. Validus looked long and searchingly at von Harben for several minutes after Fupus quit the garden as though attempting to read the soul of the stranger standing before him.

"So there is no Emperor at Rome," he mused, half aloud. "When Sanguinarius led his cohort out of Egyptus, Nerva was Emperor. That was upon the sixth day before the calends of February in the 848th year of the city in the second year of Nerva's reign. Since that day no word of Rome has reached the descendants of Sanguinarius and his cohort."

Von Harben figured rapidly, searching his memory for the historical dates and data of ancient history that were as fresh in his mind as those of his own day. "The sixth day before the calends of February," he repeated; "that would be the twenty-seventh day of January in the 848th year of the city — why, January twenty- seventh, A.D. 98, is the date of Nerva's death," he said.

"Ah, if Sanguinarius had but known," said Validus, "but Aegyptus is a long way from Rome and Sanguinarius was far to the south up the Nilus before word could have reached his post by ancient Thebae that his enemy was dead. And who became Emperor after Nerva? Do you know that?"

"Trajan," replied von Harben.

"Why do you, a barbarian, know so much concerning the history of Rome?" asked the Emperor.

"I am a student of such things," replied von Harben. "It has been my ambition to become an authority on the subject."

"Could you write down these happenings since the death of Nerva?"

"I could put down all that I could recall, or all that I have read," said von Harben, "but it would take a long time."

"You shall do it," said Validus, "and you shall have the time."

"But I had not planned remaining on in your country," dissented von Harben.

"You shall remain," said Validus. "You shall also write a history of the reign of Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East."

"But—" interjected von Harben,

"Enough!" snapped Validus. "I am Caesar. It is a command."

Von Harben shrugged and smiled. Rome and the Caesars, he realized, had never seemed other than musty parchment and weather- worn inscriptions cut in crumbling stone, until now.

Here, indeed, was a real Caesar. What matter it that his empire was naught but a few square miles of marsh, an island and swampy shore-land in the bottom of an unknown canyon, or that his

subjects numbered less than fifty thousand souls—the first Augustus himself was no more a Caesar than was his namesake, Validus.

"Come," said Validus, "I shall take you to the library myself, for that will be the scene of your labors."

In the library, which was a vault-like room at the end of a long corridor, Validus displayed with pride several hundred parchment rolls neatly arranged upon shelves.

"Here," said Validus, selecting one of the rolls, "is the story of Sanguinarius and the history of our country up to the founding of Castrum Mare. Take it with you and read it at your leisure, for while you shall remain with Septimus

Favonius, whom with Mallius Lepus I shall hold responsible for you, every day you shall come to the palace and I shall dictate to you the history of my rein. Go, now, with Septimus Favonius and at this hour tomorrow attend again upon Caesar."

When they were outside the palace of Validus Augustus, von Harben turned to Mallius Lepus. "It is a question whether I am prisoner or guest," he said, with a rueful smile.

"Perhaps you are both," said Mallius Lepus, "but that you are even partially a guest is fortunate for you. Validus Augustus is vain, arrogant, and cruel. He is also suspicious, for he knows that he is not popular, and Fulvus Fupus had

evidently almost succeeded in bringing your doom upon you and ruin to Favonius and myself before we arrived. What strange whim altered the mind of Caesar I do not know, but it is fortunate for you that it was altered; fortunate, too, for Septimus Favonius and Mallius Lepus."

"But it will take years to write the history of Rome," said von Harben.

"And if you refuse to write it you will be dead many more years than it would take to accomplish the task," retorted Mallius Lepus, with a grin.

"Castrum Mare is not an unpleasant place in which to live," said Septimus Favonius.

"Perhaps you are right," said von

Harben, as the face of the daughter of Favonius presented itself to his mind.

Returned to the home of the host, the instinct of the archaeologist and the scholar urged von Harben to an early perusal of the ancient papyrus roll that Caesar had loaned him, so that no sooner was he in the apartments that had been set aside for him than he stretched himself upon a long sofa and untied the cords that confined the roll.

As it unrolled before his eyes he saw a manuscript in ancient Latin, marred by changes and erasures, yellowed by age. It was quite unlike anything that had previously fallen into his hands during his scholarly investigations into the history and literature of ancient Rome.

For whereas such other original ancient manuscripts as he had had the good fortune to examine had been the work of clerks or scholars, a moment's glance at this marked it as the laborious effort of a soldier unskilled in literary pursuits.

The manuscript bristled with the rough idiom of far-flung camps of veteran legionaries, with the slang of Rome and Egypt of nearly two thousand years before, and there were references to people and places that appeared in no histories or geographies known to modern man—little places and little people that were without fame in their own time and whose very memory had long since been erased from the consciousness of man, but yet in this

crude manuscript they lived again for Erich von Harben—the quaestor who had saved the life of Sanguinarius in an Egyptian town that never was on any map, and there was Marcus Crispus Sanguinarius himself who had been of sufficient importance to win the enmity of Nerva in the year 90 A.D. while the latter was consul—Marcus Crispus Sanguinarius, the founder of an empire, whose name appears nowhere in the annals of ancient Rome.

With mounting interest von Harben read the complaints of Sanguinarius and his anger because the enmity of Nerva had caused him to be relegated to the hot sands of this distant post below the ancient city of Thebes in far Aegyptus.

Writing in the third person, Sanguinarius had said:

"Sanguinarius, a prefect of the Third Cohort of the Tenth Legion, stationed below Thebae in Aegyptus in the 846th year of the city, immediately after Nerva assumed the purple, was accused of having plotted against the Emperor.

"About the fifth day before the calends of February in the 848th year of the city a messenger came to Sanguinarius from Nerva commanding the prefect to return to Rome and place himself under arrest, but this Sanguinarius had no mind to do, and as no other in his camp knew the nature of the message he had received from Nerva, Sanguinarius struck the

messenger down with his dagger and caused the word to be spread among his men that the man had been an assassin sent from Rome and that Sanguinarius had slain him in self-defense.

"He also told his lieutenants and centurions that Nerva was sending a large force to destroy the cohort and he prevailed upon them to follow up the Nilus in search of a new country where they might establish themselves far from the malignant power of a jealous Caesar, and upon the following day the long march commenced.

"It so happened that shortly before this a fleet of one hundred and twenty vessels landed at Myos Hormos, a port of Aegyptus on the Sinus Arabius. This

merchant fleet annually brought rich merchandise from the island of Taprobana —silk, the value of which was equal to its weight in gold, pearls, diamonds, and a variety of aromatics and other merchandise, which was transferred to the backs of camels and brought inland from Myos Hormos to the Nilus and down that river to Alexandria, whence it was shipped to Rome.

"With this caravan were hundreds of slaves from India and far Cathay and even light-skinned people captured in the distant northwest by Mongol raiders. The majority of these were young girls destined for the auction block at Rome. And it so chanced that Sanguinarius met this caravan, heavy with riches and

women, and captured it. During the ensuing five years the cohort settled several times in what they hoped would prove a permanent camp, but it was not until the 853rd year of Rome that, by accident, they discovered the hidden canyon where now stands Castra Sanguinarius."

"You find it interesting?" inquired a voice from the doorway, and looking up von Harben saw Mallius Lepus standing on the threshold.

"Very," said Erich.

Lepus shrugged his shoulders. "We suspect that it would have been more interesting had the old assassin written the truth," said Lepus. "As a matter of fact, very little is known concerning his

reign, which lasted for twenty years. He was assassinated in the year 20 Anno Sanguinarii, which corresponds to the 873rd year of Rome. The old buck named the city after himself, decreed a calendar of his own, and had his head stamped on gold coins, many of which are still in existence. Even today we use his calendar quite as much as that of our Roman ancestors, but in Castrum Mare we have tried to forget the example of Sanguinarius as much as possible."

"What is this other city that I have heard mentioned so often and that is called Castra Sanguinarius?" asked von Harben.

"It is the original city founded by Sanguinarius," replied Lepus. "For a

hundred years after the founding of the city conditions grew more and more intolerable until no man's life or property was safe, unless he was willing to reduce himself almost to the status of a slave and continually fawn upon the Emperor. It was then that Honus Hasta revolted and led a few hundred families to this island at the eastern end of the valley, founding the city and the empire of Castrum Mare. Here, for over seventeen hundred years, the descendants of these families have lived in comparative peace and security, but in an almost constant state of war with Castra Sanguinarius.

"From mutual necessity the two cities carry on a commerce that is often

interrupted by raids and wars. The suspicion and hatred that the inhabitants of each city feel for the inhabitants of the other is fostered always by our Emperors, each of whom fears that friendly communication between the two cities would result in the overthrow of one of them."

"And now Castrum Mare is happy and contented under Caesar?" asked Erich.

"That is a question that it might not be safe to answer honestly," said Lepus, with a shrug.

"If I am going to the palace every day to write the history of Rome for Validus Augustus and receive from him the story of his reign," said von Harben, "it might be well if I knew something of the man,

otherwise there is a chance for me to get into serious trouble, which might conceivably react upon you and Septimus Favonius, whom Caesar has made responsible for me. If you care to forewarn me, I promise you that I shall repeat nothing that you may tell me."

Lepus, leaning lightly against the wall by the doorway, played idly with the hilt of his dagger as he took thought before replying. Presently he looked up, straight into von Harben's eyes.

"I shall trust you," he said; "first, because there is that in you which inspires confidence, and, second, because it cannot profit you to harm either Septimus Favonius or myself. Castrum Mare is not happy with its

Caesar. He is arrogant and cruel—not like the Caesars to which Castrum Mare has been accustomed.

"The last Emperor was a kindly man, but at the time of his death his brother, Validus Augustus, was chosen to succeed him because Caesar's son was, at that time, but a year old.

"This son of the former Emperor, a nephew of Validus Augustus, is called Cassius Hasta. And because of his popularity he has aroused the jealousy and hatred of Augustus, who recently sent him away upon a dangerous mission to the west end of the valley. There are many who consider it virtual banishment, but Validus Augustus insists that this is not the fact. No one knows

what Cassius Hasta's orders were. He went secretly by night and was accompanied by only a few slaves.

"It is believed that he has been ordered to enter Castra Sanguinarius as a spy, and if such is the case his mission amounts practically to a sentence of death. If this were known for a fact, the people would rise against Validus Augustus, for Cassius Hasta was the most popular man in Castrum Mare.

"But enough. I shall not bore you with the sorrows of Castrum Mare. Take your reading down into the garden where in the shade of the trees, it is cooler than here and I shall join you presently."

As von Harben lay stretched upon the sward beneath the shade of a tree in the

cool garden of Septimus Favonius, his mind was not upon the history of Sanguinarius, nor upon the political woes of Castrum Mare so much as they were upon plans for escape.

As a scholar, an explorer, and an archaeologist he would delight in remaining here for such a time as might be necessary for him to make an exploration of the valley and study the government and customs of its inhabitants, but to remain cooped up in the vault-like library of the Emperor of the East writing the history of ancient Rome in Latin with a reed pen on papyrus rolls in no way appealed to him.

The rustle of fresh linen and the soft fall of sandaled feet upon the graveled

garden walk interrupted his trend of thought and as he looked up into the face of Favonia, daughter of Septimus Favonius, the history of ancient Rome together with half-formulated plans for escape were dissipated from his mind by the girl's sweet smile, as is a morning mist by the rising sun.

CHAPTER 11

As Maximus Praeclarus led Tarzan of the Apes from the home of Dion Splendidus in the city of Castra Sanguinarius, the soldiers, gathered by the doorway, voiced their satisfaction in oaths and exclamations. They liked the young patrician who commanded them and they were proud that he should have captured the wild barbarian single-handed.

A command from Praeclarus brought silence and at a word from him they formed around the prisoner, and the march toward the Colosseum was begun. They had proceeded but a short distance when Praeclarus halted the detachment and went himself to the doorway of a

house fronting on the avenue through which they were crossing. He halted before the door, stood in thought for a moment, and then turned back toward his detachment as though he had changed his mind about entering, and Tarzan knew that the young officer was indicating to him the home in which he lived and in which the ape-man might find sanctuary later.

Several hundred yards farther along the street, after they had resumed the march, Praeclarus halted his detachment beneath the shade of great trees opposite a drinking fountain, which was built into the outside of a garden wall close beside an unusually large tree, which, overspreading the avenue upon one side

and the wall on the other, intermingled its branches with those of other trees growing inside the garden beyond.

Praeclarus crossed the avenue and drank at the fountain and returning inquired by means of signs if Tarzan would drink. The ape- man nodded in assent and Praeclarus gave orders that he be permitted to cross to the fountain.

Slowly Tarzan walked to the other side of the avenue. He stooped and drank from the fountain. Beside him was the bole of a great tree; above him was the leafy foliage that would conceal him from the sight and protect him from the missiles of the soldiers. Turning from the fountain, a quick step took him behind the tree. One of the soldiers

shouted a warning to Praeclarus, and the whole detachment, immediately suspicious, leaped quickly across the avenue, led by the young patrician who commanded them, but when they reached the fountain and the tree their prisoner had vanished.

Shouting their disappointment, they gazed upward into the foliage, but there was no sign there of the barbarian. Several of the more active soldiers scrambled into the branches and then Maximus Praeclarus, pointing in the direction opposite to that in which his home lay, shouted: "This way, there he goes!" and started on a run down the avenue, while behind him strung his detachment, their pikes ready in their

hands.

Moving silently through the branches of the great trees that overhung the greater part of the city of Castra Sanguinarius, Tarzan paralleled the avenue leading back to the home of Maximus Praeclarus, halting at last in a tree that overlooked the inner courtyard or walled garden, which appeared to be a distinguishing feature of the architecture of the city.

Below him he saw a matronly woman of the patrician class, listening to a tall Negro who was addressing her excitedly. Clustered about the woman and eagerly listening to the words of the speaker were a number of slaves, both men and women.

Tarzan recognized the speaker as Mpingu, and, though he could not understand his words, realized that the man was preparing them for his arrival in accordance with the instructions given him in the garden of Dion Splendidus by Maximus Praeclarus, and that he was making a good story of it was evidenced by his excited gesticulation and the wide eyes and open mouths of the listening men.

The woman, listening attentively and with quiet dignity of mien, appeared to be slightly amused, but whether at the story itself or at the unrestrained excitement of Mpingu, Tarzan did not know.

She was a regal-looking woman of

about fifty, with graying hair and with the poise and manner of that perfect self-assurance which is the hallmark of assured position; that she was a patrician to her finger tips was evident, and yet there was that in her eyes and the little wrinkles at their corners that bespoke a broad humanity and a kindly disposition.

Mpingu had evidently reached the point where his vocabulary could furnish no adequate superlatives wherewith to describe the barbarian who had rescued his mistress from Fastus, and he was acting out in exaggerated pantomime the scene in the garden of his mistress, when Tarzan dropped lightly to the sward beside him. The effect upon the Negroes

of this unexpected appearance verged upon the ludicrous, but the white woman was unmoved to any outward sign of surprise.

"Is this the barbarian?" she asked of Mpingu.

"It is he," replied the black.

"Tell him that I am Festivitas, the mother of Maximus Praeclarus," the woman directed Mpingu, "and that I welcome him here in the name of my son."

Through Mpingu, Tarzan acknowledged the greetings of Festivitas and thanked her for her hospitality, after which she instructed one of her slaves to conduct the stranger to the apartments that were placed at his disposal.

It was late afternoon before Maximus Praeclarus returned to his home, going immediately to Tarzan's apartments. With him was the same man who had acted as interpreter in the morning.

"I am to remain here with you," said the man to Tarzan, "as your interpreter and servant."

"I venture to say," said Praeclarus through the interpreter, "that this is the only spot in Castra Sanguinarius that they have not searched for you and there are three centuries combing the forests outside the city, though by this time Sublatus is convinced that you have escaped. We shall keep you here in hiding for a few days when, I think, I can find the means to get you out of the city

after dark."

The ape-man smiled. "I can leave whenever I choose," he said, "either by day or by night, but I do not choose to leave until I have satisfied myself that the man for whom I am searching is not here. But, first, let me thank you for your kindness to me, the reason for which I cannot understand."

"That is easily explained," said Praeclarus. "The young woman whom you saved from attack this morning is Dilecta, the daughter of Dion Splendidus. She and I are to be married. That, I think, will explain my gratitude."

"I understand," said Tarzan, "and I am glad that I was fortunate enough to come upon them at the time that I did."

"Should you be captured again, it will not prove so fortunate for you," said Praeclarus, "for the man from whom you saved Dilecta is Fastus, the son of Sublatus, and now the Emperor will have two indignities to avenge; but if you remain here you will be safe, for our slaves are loyal and there is little likelihood that you will be discovered."

"If I remain here," said Tarzan, "and it should be discovered that you had befriended me, would not the anger of the Emperor fall upon you?"

Maximus Praeclarus shrugged. "I am daily expecting that," he said; "not because of you, but because the son of the Emperor wishes to marry Dilecta. Sublatus needs no further excuse to

destroy me. I should be no worse off were he to learn that I have befriended you than I now am."

"Then, perhaps, I may be of service to you if I remain," said Tarzan.

"I do not see how you can do anything but remain," said Praeclarus. "Every man, woman, and child in Castra Sanguinarius will be on the lookout for you, for Sublatus has offered a huge reward for your capture, and besides the inhabitants of the city there are thousands of barbarians outside the walls who will lay aside every other interest to run you down."

"Twice today you have seen how easily I can escape from the soldiers of Sublatus," said Tarzan, smiling. "Just as

easily can I leave the city and elude the barbarians in the outer villages."

"Then why do you remain?" demanded Praeclarus. "I came here searching for the son of a friend," replied Tarzan. "Many weeks ago the young man started out with an expedition to explore the Wiramwazi Mountains in which your country is located. His people deserted him upon the outer slopes, and I am convinced that he is somewhere within the range and very possibly in this canyon. If he is here and alive, he will unquestionably come sooner or later to your city where, from the experience that I have gained, I am sure that he will receive anything but friendly treatment from your Emperor.

This is the reason that I wish to remain somewhere in the vicinity, and now that you have told me that you are in danger, I may as well remain in your home where it is possible I may have an opportunity to reciprocate your kindness to me."

"If the son of your friend is in this end of the valley, he will be captured and brought to Castra Sanguinarius," said Maximus Praeclarus, "and when that occurs I shall know of it, since I am detailed to duty at the Colosseum—a mark of the disfavor of Sublatus, since this is the most distasteful duty to which an officer can be assigned."

"Is it possible that this man for whom I am searching might be in some other

part of the valley?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied Praeclarus. "There is only one entrance to the valley, that through which you were brought, and while there is another city at the eastern end, he could not reach it without passing through the forest surrounding Castra Sanguinarius, in which event he would have been captured by the barbarians and turned over to Sublatus."

"Then I shall remain here," said Tarzan, "for a time."

"You shall be a welcome guest," replied Praeclarus. For three weeks Tarzan remained in the home of Maximus Praeclarus. Festivitas conceived a great liking for the bronzed barbarian, and soon tiring of carrying on

conversation with him through an interpreter, she set about teaching him her own language, with the result that it was not long before Tarzan could carry on a conversation in Latin; nor did he lack opportunity to practice his new accomplishment, since Festivitas never tired of hearing stories of the outer world and of the manners and customs of modern civilization.

And while Tarzan of the Apes waited in Castra Sanguinarius for word that von Harben had been seen in the valley, the man he sought was living the life of a young patrician attached to the court of the Emperor of the East, and though much of his time was pleasantly employed in the palace library, yet he

chafed at the knowledge that he was virtually a prisoner and was often formulating plans for escape—plans that were sometimes forgotten when he sat beneath the spell of the daughter of Septimus Favonius.

And often in the library he discovered only unadulterated pleasure in his work, and thoughts of escape were driven from his mind by discoveries of such gems as original Latin translations of Homer and of hitherto unknown manuscripts of Vergil, Cicero, and Caesar—manuscripts that dated from the days of the young republic and on down the centuries to include one of the early satires of Juvenal.

Thus the days passed, while far off in

another world a frightened little monkey scampered through the upper terraces of a distant forest.

CHAPTER 12

A PENCHANT for boasting is not the prerogative of any time, or race, or individual, but is more or less common to all. So it is not strange that Mpingu, filled with the importance of the secret that he alone shared with his mistress and the household of Maximus Praeclarus, should have occasionally dropped a word here and there that might impress his listeners with his importance.

Mpingu meant no harm. He was loyal to the house of Dion Splendidus and he would not willingly have brought harm to his master or his master's friend, but so it is often with people who talk too much, and Mpingu certainly had done

that. The result was that upon a certain day, as he was bartering in the market-place for provisions for the kitchen of Dion Splendidus, he felt a heavy hand laid upon his shoulder and, turning, he was astonished to find himself looking into the face of a centurion of the palace guard, behind whom stood a file of legionaries.

"You are Mpingu, the slave of Dion Splendidus?" demanded the centurion.

"I am," replied the man.

"Come with us," commanded the centurion.

Mpingu drew back, afraid, as all men feared the soldiers of Caesar. "What do you want of me?" he demanded. "I have done nothing."

"Come, barbarian," ordered the soldier. "I was not sent to confer with you, but to get you!" And he jerked Mpingu roughly toward him and pushed him back among the soldiers.

A crowd had gathered, as crowds gathered always when a man is arrested, but the centurion ignored the crowd as though it did not exist, and the people fell aside as the soldiers marched away with Mpingu. No one questioned or interfered, for who would dare question an officer of Caesar? Who would interfere in behalf of a slave?

Mpingu thought that he would be taken to the dungeons beneath the Colosseum, which was the common jail in which all prisoners were confined;

but presently he realized that his captors were not leading him in that direction, and when finally it dawned upon him that the palace was their goal he was filled with terror.

Never before had Mpingu stepped foot within the precincts of the palace grounds, and when the imperial gate closed behind him he was in a mental state bordering upon collapse. He had heard stories of the cruelty of Sublatus, of the terrible vengeance wreaked upon his enemies, and he had visions that paralyzed his mind so that he was in a state of semi-consciousness when he was finally led into an inner chamber where a high dignitary of the court confronted him.

"This," said the centurion, who had brought him, "is Mpingu, the slave of Dion Splendidus, whom I was commanded to fetch to you."

"Good!" said the official. "You and your detachment may remain while I question him." Then he turned upon Mpingu. "Do you know the penalties one incurs for aiding the enemies of Caesar?" he demanded.

Mpingu's lower jaw moved convulsively as though he would reply, but he was unable to control his voice.

"They die," growled the officer, menacingly. "They die terrible deaths that they will remember through all eternity."

"I have done nothing," cried Mpingu,

suddenly regaining control of his vocal cords.

"Do not lie to me, barbarian," snapped the official. "You aided in the escape of the prisoner who called himself Tarzan and even now you are hiding him from your Emperor."

"I did not help him escape. I am not hiding him," wailed Mpingu.

"You lie. You know where he is. You boasted of it to other slaves. Tell me where he is."

"I do not know," said Mpingu.

"If your tongue were cut out, you could not tell us where he is," said the Roman. "If red-hot irons were thrust into your eyes, you could not see to lead us to his hiding-place; but if we find him

without your help, and we surely shall find him, we shall need neither your tongue nor your eyes. Do you understand?"

"I do not know where he is," repeated Mpingu.

The Roman turned away and struck a single blow upon a gong, after which he stood in silence until a slave entered the room in response to the summons. "Fetch tongs," the Roman instructed the slave, "and a charcoal brazier with burning-irons. Be quick."

After the slave had left, silence fell again upon the apartment. The official was giving Mpingu an opportunity to think, and Mpingu so occupied the time in thinking that it seemed to him that the

slave had scarcely left the apartment before he returned again with tongs and a lighted burner, from the glowing heart of which protruded the handle of a burning-iron.

"Have your soldiers throw him to the floor and hold him," said the official to the centurion.

It was evident to Mpingu that the end had come; the officer was not even going to give him another opportunity to speak.

"Wait!" he shrieked.

"Well," said the official, "you are regaining your memory?"

"I am only a slave," wailed Mpingu. "I must do what my masters command."

"And what did they command?"

inquired the Roman.

"I was only an interpreter," said Mpingu. "The white barbarian spoke the language of the Bagegos, who are my people. Through me they talked to him and he talked to them."

"And what was said?" demanded the inquisitor.

Mpingu hesitated, dropping his eyes to the floor.

"Come, quickly!" snapped the other.

"I have forgotten," said Mpingu.

The official nodded to the centurion. The soldiers seized Mpingu and threw him roughly to the floor, four of them holding him there, one seated upon each limb.

"The tongs!" directed the official, and the slave handed the instrument to the centurion.

"Wait!" screamed Mpingu. "I will tell you."

"Let him up," said the official; and to Mpingu: "This is your last chance. If you go down again, your tongue comes out and your eyes, too."

"I will talk," said Mpingu. "I did but interpret, that is all. I had nothing to do with helping him to escape or hiding him."

"If you tell us the truth, you will not be punished," said the Roman. "Where is the white barbarian?"

"He is hiding in the home of Maximus Praeclarus," said Mpingu.

"What has your master to do with this?" commanded the Romans.

"Dion Splendidus has nothing to do with it," replied Mpingu. "Maximus Praeclarus planned it."

"That is all," said the official to the centurion. "Take him away and keep him under guard until you receive further orders. Be sure that he talks to no one."

A few minutes later the official who had interrogated Mpingu entered the apartment of Sublatus while the Emperor was in conversation with his son Fastus.

"I have located the white barbarian, Sublatus," announced the official.

"Good!" said the Emperor. "Where is he?"

"In the home of Maximus Praeclarus."

"I might have suspected as much," said Fastus.

"Who else is implicated?" asked Sublatus.

"He was caught in the courtyard of Dion Splendidus," said Fastus, "and the Emperor has heard, as we all have, that Dion Splendidus has long had eyes upon the imperial purple of the Caesars."

"The slave says that only Maximus Praeclarus is responsible for the escape of the barbarian," said the official.

"He was one of Dion Splendidus's slaves, was he not?" demanded Fastus.

"Yes."

"Then it is not strange that he would

protect his master," said Fastus.

"Arrest them all," commanded Sublatus.

"You mean Dion Splendidus, Maximus Praeclarus, and the barbarian Tarzan?" asked the official.

"I mean those three and the entire household of Dion Splendidus and Maximus Praeclarus," replied Sublatus.

"Wait, Caesar," suggested Fastus; "twice already has the barbarian escaped from the legionaries. If he receives the slightest inkling of this, he will escape again. I have a plan. Listen!"

An hour later a messenger arrived at the home of Dion Splendidus carrying an invitation to the senator and his wife to be the guests of a high court functionary

that evening at a banquet. Another messenger went to the home of Maximus Praeclarus with a letter urging the young officer to attend an entertainment being given that same evening by a rich young patrician.

As both invitations had emanated from families high in favor with the Emperor, they were, in effect, almost equivalent to commands, even to as influential a senator as Dion Splendidus, and so there was no question either in the minds of the hosts or in the minds of the guests but that they would be accepted.

Night had fallen upon Castra Sanguinarius. Dion Splendidus and his wife were alighting from their litter

before the home of their host and Maximus Praeclarus was already drinking with his fellow guests in the banquet hall of one of Castra Sanguinarius's wealthiest citizens. Fastus was there, too, and Maximus Praeclarus was surprised and not a little puzzled at the friendly attitude of the prince.

"I always suspect something when Fastus smiles at me," he said to an intimate.

In the home of Dion Splendidus, Dilecta sat among her female slaves, while one of them told her stories of the wild African village from which she had come.

Tarzan and Festivitas sat in the home

of Maximus Praeclarus, the Roman matron listening attentively to the stories of savage Africa and civilized Europe that she was constantly urging her strange guest to tell her. Faintly they heard a knock at the outer gate and, presently, a slave came to the apartment where they sat to tell them that Mpingu, the slave of Dion Splendidus, had come with a message for Tarzan.

"Bring him hither," said Festivitas, and, shortly, Mpingu was ushered into the room.

If Tarzan or Festivitas had known Mpingu better, they would have realized that he was under great nervous strain; but they did not know him well, and so they saw nothing out of the way in his

manner or bearing.

"I have been sent to fetch you to the home of Dion Splendidus," said Mpingu to Tarzan.

"That is strange," said Festivitas.

"Your noble son stopped at the home of Dion Splendidus on his way to the banquet this evening and as he left I was summoned and told to come hither and fetch the stranger to my master's house," explained Mpingu. "That is all I know about the matter."

"Maximus Praeclarus gave you those instructions himself?" asked Festivitas.

"Yes," replied Mpingu.

"I do not know what his reason can be," said Festivitas to Tarzan, "but there

must be some very good reason, or he would not run the risk of your being caught."

"It is very dark out," said Mpingu. "No one will see him."

"There is no danger," said Tarzan to Festivitas. "Maximus Praeclarus would not have sent for me unless it were necessary. Come, Mpingu!" And he arose, bidding Festivitas goodbye.

Tarzan and Mpingu had proceeded but a short distance down the avenue when the black motioned the ape-man to the side of the street, where a small gate was let into a solid wall.

"We are here," said Mpingu.

"This is not the home of Dion Splendidus," said Tarzan, immediately

suspicious.

Mpingu was surprised that this stranger should so well remember the location of a house that he had visited but once, and that more than three weeks since, but he did not know the training that had been the ape-man's through the long years of moving through the trackless jungle that had trained his every sense and faculty to the finest point of orientation.

"It is not the main gate," replied Mpingu, quickly, "but Maximus Praeclarus did not think it safe that you be seen entering the main gate of the home of Dion Splendidus in the event that, by any chance, you were observed. This way leads into a lane that might

connect with any one of several homes, and once in it there is little or no chance of apprehension."

"I see," said Tarzan. "Lead the way."

Mpingu opened the gate and motioned Tarzan in ahead of him, and as the ape-man passed through into the blackness beyond there fell upon him what seemed to be a score of men and he was borne down in the same instant that he realized that he had been betrayed. So rapidly did his assailants work that it was a matter of seconds only before the ape-man found shackles upon his wrists, the one thing that he feared and hated most.

CHAPTER 13

WHILE Erich von Harben wooed Favonia beneath a summer moon in the garden of Septimus Favonius in the island city of Castrum Mare, a detachment of the brown legionaries of Sublatus Imperator dragged Tarzan of the Apes and Mpingu, the slave of Dion Splendidus, to the dungeons beneath the Colosseum of Castra Sanguinarius—and far to the south a little monkey shivered from cold and terror in the topmost branches of a jungle giant, while Sheeta the panther crept softly through the black shadows far below.

In the banquet hall of his host, Maximus Praeclarus reclined upon a sofa far down the board from Fastus, the

guest of honor. The prince, his tongue loosed by frequent drafts of native wine, seemed in unusually good spirits, radiating self-satisfaction. Several times be had brought the subject of conversation around to the strange white barbarian, who had insulted his sire and twice escaped from the soldiers of Sublatus.

"He would never have escaped from me that day," he boasted, throwing a sneer in the direction of Maximus Praeclarus, "nor from any other officer who is loyal to Caesar."

"You had him, Fastus, in the garden of Dion Splendidus," retorted Praeclarus. "Why did you not hold him?"

Fastus flushed. "I shall hold him this

time," he blurted.

"This time?" queried Praeclarus. "He has been captured again?" There was nothing in either the voice or expression of the young patrician of more than polite interest, though the words of Fastus had come with all the unexpected suddenness of lightning out of a clear sky.

"I mean," explained Fastus, in some confusion, "that if he is again captured I, personally, shall see that he does not escape," but his words did not allay the apprehensions of Praeclarus.

All through the long dinner Praeclarus was cognizant of a sensation of foreboding. There was a menace in the air that was apparent in the veiled

hostility of his host and several others who were cronies of Fastus.

As early as was seemly he made his excuses and departed. Armed slaves accompanied his litter through the dark avenues of Castra Sanguinarius, where robbery and murder slunk among the shadows hand in hand with the criminal element that had been permitted to propagate itself without restraint; and when at last he came to the doorway at his home and had alighted from his litter he paused and a frown of perplexity clouded his face as he saw that the door stood partially ajar, though there was no slave there to receive him.

The house seemed unusually quiet and lifeless. The night light, which ordinarily

a slave kept burning in the forecourt when a member of the household was away, was absent. For an instant Praeclarus hesitated upon the threshold and then, throwing his cloak back from his shoulders to free his arms, he pushed the door open and stepped within.

In the banquet hall of a high court functionary the guests yawned behind their hands from boredom, but none dared leave while Caesar remained, for the Emperor was a guest there that evening. It was late when an officer brought a message to Sublatus—a message that the Emperor read with a satisfaction he made no effort to conceal.

"I have received an important message," said Sublatus to his host,

"upon a matter that interests the noble Senator Dion Splendidus and his wife. It is my wish that you withdraw with the other guests, leaving us three here alone."

When they had gone he turned to Dion Splendidus. "It has long been rumored, Splendidus," he remarked, "that you aspire to the purple."

"A false rumor, Sublatus, as you should well know," replied the senator.

"I have reason to believe otherwise," said Sublatus, shortly. "There cannot be two Caesars, Splendidus, and you well know the penalty for treason."

"If the Emperor has determined, for personal reasons or for any reason whatever, to destroy me, argument will

avail me nothing," said Splendidus, haughtily.

"But I have other plans," said Sublatus, "—plans that might be overturned should I cause your death."

"Yes?" inquired Splendidus, politely.

"Yes," assented Sublatus. "My son wishes to marry your daughter, Dilecta, and it is also my wish, for thus would the two most powerful families of Castra Sanguinarius be united and the future of the empire assured."

"But our daughter, Dilecta, is betrothed to another," said Splendidus.

"To Maximus Praeclarus?" inquired Sublatus.

"Yes," replied the senator.

"Then let me tell you that she shall never wed Maximus Praeclarus," said the Emperor.

"Why?" inquired Splendidus.

"Because Maximus Praeclarus is about to die."

"I do not understand," said Splendidus.

"Perhaps when I tell you that the white barbarian, Tarzan, has been captured, you will understand why Praeclarus is about to die," said Sublatus, with a sneer.

Dion Splendidus shook his head negatively. "I regret," he said, "that I do not follow Caesar."

"I think you do, Splendidus," said the

Emperor, "but that is neither here nor there, since it is Caesar's will that there he no breath of suspicion upon the sire of the next Empress of Castra Sanguinarius. So permit me to explain what I am sure that you already know. After the white barbarian escaped from my soldiers he was found by Maximus Praeclarus in your garden. My son, Fastus, witnessed the capture. One of your own slaves acted as interpreter between the barbarian and Maximus, who arranged that the barbarian should escape and take refuge in the home of Maximus. Tonight he was found there and captured, and Maximus Praeclarus has been placed under arrest. They are both in the dungeons beneath the

Colosseum. It is improbable that these things should have transpired entirely without your knowledge, but I shall let it pass if you give your word that Dilecta shall marry Fastus."

"During the entire history of Castra Sanguinarius," said Dion Splendidus, "it has been our boast that our daughters have been free to choose their own husbands—not even a Caesar might command a free woman to marry against her will."

"That is true," replied Sublatus, "and for that very reason I do not command—I am only advising."

"I cannot answer for my daughter," said Splendidus. "Let the son of Caesar do his own wooing as becomes the men

of Castra Sanguinarius."

Sublatus arose. "I am only advising," but his tone belied his words. "The noble senator and his wife may retire to their home and give thought to what Caesar has said. In the course of a few days Fastus will come for his answer."

By the light of the torch that illuminated the interior of the dungeon into which he was thrust by his captors, Tarzan saw a white man and several Negroes chained to the walls. Among the blacks was Lukedi, but when he recognized Tarzan he evinced only the faintest sign of interest, so greatly had his confinement weighed upon his mind and altered him.

The ape-man was chained next to the

only other white in the dungeon, and he could not help but notice the keen interest that this prisoner took in him from the moment that he entered until the soldiers withdrew, taking the torch with them, leaving the dungeon in darkness.

As had been his custom while he was in the home of Maximus Praeclarus, Tarzan had worn only his loincloth and leopard skin, with a toga and sandals out of courtesy for Festivitas when he appeared in her presence. This evening, when he started out with Mpingu, he had worn the toga as a disguise, but in the scuffle that proceeded his capture it had been torn from him, with the result that his appearance was sufficient to arouse the curiosity of his fellow prisoners, and

as soon as the guards were out of hearing the man spoke to him.

"Can it be," he asked, "that you are the white barbarian whose fame has penetrated even to the gloom and silence of the dungeon?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man.

"And you carried Sublatus out of his palace above your head and mocked at his soldiers!" exclaimed the other. "By the ashes of my imperial father, Sublatus will see that you die the death."

Tarzan made no reply.

"They say you run through the trees like a monkey," said the other. "How then did you permit yourself to be recaptured?"

"It was done by treachery," replied Tarzan, "and the quickness with which they locked the shackles upon me. Without these," and he shook the manacles upon his wrists, "they could not hold me. But who are you and what did you do to get yourself in the dungeons of Caesar?"

"I am in the dungeon of no Caesar," replied the other. "This creature who sits upon the throne of Castra Sanguinarius is no Caesar."

"Who then is Caesar?" inquired Tarzan.

"Only the Emperors of the East are entitled to be called Caesar," replied the other.

"I take it that you are not of Castra

Sanguinarius then," suggested the ape-man.

"No," replied the other, "I am from Castrum Mare."

"And why are you a prisoner?" asked Tarzan.

"Because I am from Castrum Mare," replied the other.

"Is that a crime in Castra Sanguinarius?" asked the ape-man.

"We are always enemies," replied the other. "We trade occasionally under a flag of truce, for we have things that they want and they have things that we must have, but there is much raiding and often there are wars, and then whichever side is victorious takes the things by force that otherwise they would be compelled

to pay for."

"In this small valley what is there that one of you may have that the other one has not already?" asked the ape-man.

"We of Castrum Mare have the iron mines," replied the other, "and we have the papyrus swamps and the lake, which give us many things that the people of Castra Sanguinarius can obtain only from us. We sell them iron and paper, ink, snails, fish, and jewels, and many manufactured articles. In their end of the valley they mine gold, and as they control the only entrance to the country from the outside world, we are forced to obtain our slaves through them as well as new breeding-stock for our herds.

"As the Sanguinarians are naturally

thieves and raiders and are too lazy to work and too ignorant to teach their slaves how to produce things, they depend entirely upon their gold mine and their raiding and trading with the outer world, while we, who have developed many skilled artisans, have been in a position for many generations that permitted us to obtain much more gold and many more slaves than we need in return for our manufactured articles. Today we are much richer than the Sanguinarians. We live better. We are more cultured. We are happier and the Sanguinarians are jealous and their hatred of us has increased."

"Knowing these things," asked Tarzan, "how is it that you came to the

country of your enemies and permitted yourself to be captured?"

"I was delivered over treacherously into the hands of Sublatus by my uncle, Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East," replied the other. "My name is Cassius Hasta, and my father was Emperor before Validus. Validus is afraid that I may wish to seize the purple, and for this reason he plotted to get rid of me without assuming any responsibility for the act; so he conceived the idea of sending me upon a military mission, after bribing one of the servants who accompanied me to deliver me into the hands of Sublatus."

"What will Sublatus do with you?" asked Tarzan.

"The same thing that he will do with you," replied Cassius Hasta. "We shall be exhibited in the triumph of Sublatus, which he holds annually, and then in the arena we shall amuse them until we are slain."

"And when does this take place?" asked Tarzan.

"It will not be long now," replied Cassius Hasta. "Already they have collected so many prisoners to exhibit in the triumph and to take part in the combats in the arena that they are forced to confine Negroes and whites in the same dungeons, a thing they do not ordinarily do."

"Are these Negroes held here for this purpose?" asked the ape- man.

"Yes," replied the other.

Tarzan turned in the direction of Lukedi, whom he could not see in the darkness. "Lukedi!" he called.

"What is it?" asked the black, listlessly.

"You are well?" asked Tarzan.

"I am going to die," replied Lukedi. "They will feed me to lions or burn me upon a cross or make me fight with other warriors, so that it will be all the same for Lukedi. It was a sad day when Nyuto, the chief, captured Tarzan."

"Are all these men from your village?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied Lukedi. "Most of them are from the villages outside the walls of

Castra Sanguinarius."

"Yesterday they called us their own people," spoke up a man, who understood the language of the Bagego, "and tomorrow they make us kill one another to entertain Caesar."

"You must be very few in numbers or very poor in spirit," said Tarzan, "that you submit to such treatment."

"We number nearly twice as many as the people in the city," said the man, "and we are brave warriors."

"Then you are fools," said Tarzan. "We shall not be fools forever. Already there are many who would rise against Sublatus and the whites of Castra Sanguinarius."

"The Negroes of the city as well as

those of the outer villages hate Caesar," said Mpingu, who had been brought to the dungeon with Tarzan.

The statements of the men furnished food for thought to Tarzan. He knew that in the city there must be hundreds and perhaps thousands of African slaves and many thousands of others in the outer Villages. If a leader should arise among them, the tyranny of Caesar might be brought to an abrupt end. He spoke of the matter to Cassius Hasta, but the patrician assured him that no such leader would ever arise.

"We have dominated them for so many centuries," he explained, "that fear of us is an inherited instinct. Our slaves will never rise against their masters."

"But if they did?" asked Tarzan.

"Unless they had a white leader they could not succeed," replied Hasta.

"And why not a white leader then?" asked Tarzan.

"That is unthinkable," replied Hasta.

Their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a detachment of soldiers, and as they halted before the entrance to the dungeon and threw open the gate Tarzan saw, in the light of their torches, that they were bringing another prisoner. As they dragged the man in, he recognized Maximus Praeclarus. He saw that Praeclarus recognized him, but as the Roman did not address him, Tarzan kept silent, too. The soldiers chained Praeclarus to the wall, and after they had

left and the dungeon was in darkness again, the young officer spoke.

"I see now why I am here," said Praeclarus, "but even when they set upon me and arrested me in the vestibule of my home, I had guessed as much, after piecing together the insinuations of Fastus at the banquet this evening."

"I have been fearful that by befriending me you would bring disaster upon yourself," said Tarzan.

"Do not reproach yourself," said Praeclarus. "Fastus or Sublatus would have found another excuse. I have been doomed from the moment that the attention of Fastus fixed itself upon Dilecta. To attain his end it was necessary that I be destroyed. That is all,

my friend, but yet I wonder who it could have been that betrayed me."

"It was I," said a voice out of the darkness.

"Who is that that speaks?" demanded Praeclarus.

"It is Mpingu," said Tarzan. "He was arrested with me when we were on the way to the home of Dion Splendidus to meet you."

"To meet me!" exclaimed Praeclarus.

"I lied," said Mpingu, "but they made me."

"Who made you?" demanded Praeclarus.

"The officers of Caesar and Caesar's son," replied Mpingu. "They dragged me

to the palace of the Emperor and held me down upon my back and brought tongs to tear out my tongue and hot irons to burn out my eyes. Oh, master, what else could I do? I am only a poor slave and I was afraid and Caesar is very terrible."

"I understand," said Praeclarus. "I do not blame you, Mpingu."

"They promised to give me my liberty," said the slave, "but instead they have chained me in this dungeon. Doubtless I shall die in the arena, but that I do not fear. It was the tongs and the red- hot irons that made me a coward. Nothing else could have forced me to betray the friend of my master."

There was little comfort upon the cold, hard stones of the dungeon floor,

but Tarzan, inured to hardship from birth, slept soundly until the coming of the jailer with food awakened him several hours after sunrise. Water and coarse bread were doled out to the inmates of the dungeon by slaves in charge of a surly half-caste in the uniform of a legionary.

As he ate, Tarzan surveyed his fellow prisoners. There was Cassius Hasta of Castrum Mare, son of a Caesar, and Maximus Praeclarus, a patrician of Castra Sanguinarius and captain of Legionaries. These, with himself, were the only whites. There was Lukedi, the Bagego who had befriended him in the village of Nyuto, and Mpingu, the slave of Dion Splendidus, who had betrayed

him, and now, in the light from the little barred window, he recognized also another Bagego—Ogonyo, who still cast fearful eyes upon Tarzan as one might upon any person who was on familiar terms with the ghost of one's grandfather.

In addition to these three, there were five strapping warriors from the outer villages of Castra Sanguinarius, picked men chosen because of their superb physiques for the gladiatorial contests that would form so important a part of the games that would shortly take place in the arena for the glorification of Caesar and the edification of the masses. The small room was so crowded that there was barely space upon the floor for the eleven to stretch their bodies, yet

there was one vacant ring in the stone wall, indicating that the full capacity of the dungeon had not been reached.

Two days and nights dragged slowly by. The inmates of the cell amused themselves as best they could, though the Negroes were too downcast to take a lively interest in anything other than their own sad forebodings.

Tarzan talked much with these and especially with the five warriors from the outer villages. From long experience with them he knew the minds and the hearts of these men, and it was not difficult for him to win their confidence and, presently, he was able to instill within them something of his own courageous self-reliance, which could

never accept or admit absolute defeat.

He talked with Praeclarus about Castra Sanguinarius and with Cassius Hasta about Castrum Mare. He learned all that they could tell him about the forthcoming triumph and games; about the military methods of their people, their laws and their customs until he, who all his Life had been accounted taciturn, might easily have been indicted for loquacity by his fellow prisoners, yet, though they might not realize it, he asked them nothing without a well-defined purpose.

Upon the third day of his incarceration another prisoner was brought to the crowded cell in which Tarzan was chained. He was a young

white man in the tunic and cuirass of an officer. He was received in silence by the other prisoners, as seemed to be the custom among them, but after he had been fastened to the remaining ring and the soldiers who had brought him had departed, Cassius Hasta greeted him with suppressed excitement.

"Caecilius Metellus!" he exclaimed.

The other turned in the direction of Hasta's voice, his eyes not yet accustomed to the gloom of the dungeon.

"Hasta!" he exclaimed. "I would know that voice were I to hear it rising from the blackest depths of Tartarus."

"What ill fortune brought you here?" demanded Hasta.

"It is no ill fortune that unites me with

my best friend," replied Metellus.

"But tell me how it happened, insisted Cassius Hasta.

"Many things have happened since you left Castrum Mare," replied Metellus. "Fulvus Fupus has wormed his way into the favor of the Emperor to such an extent that all of your former friends are under suspicion and in actual danger. Mallius Lepus is in prison. Septimus Favonius is out of favor with the Emperor and would be in prison himself were it not that Fupus is in love with Favonia, his daughter. But the most outrageous news that I have to communicate to you is that Validus Augustus has adopted Fulvus Fupus and has named him as his successor to the

imperial purple."

"Fupus a Caesar!" cried Hasta, in derision. "And sweet Favonia? It cannot be that she favors Fulvus Fupus?"

"No," replied Metellus, "and that fact lies at the bottom of all the trouble. She loves another, and Fupus, in his desire to possess her, has utilized the Emperor's jealousy of you to destroy every obstacle that stands in his way."

"And whom does Favonia love?" asked Cassius Hasta. "It cannot be Mallius Lepus, her cousin?"

"No," replied Metellus, "it is a stranger. One whom you have never known."

"How can that be?" demanded Cassius Hasta. "Do I not know every

patrician in Castrum Mare?"

"He is not of Castrum Mare."

"Not a Sanguinarian?" demanded Cassius Hasta.

"No, he is a barbarian chieftain from Germania."

"What nonsense is this?" demanded Hasta.

"I speak the truth," replied Metellus. "He came shortly after you departed from Castrum Mare, and being a scholar well versed in the history of ancient and modern Rome he won the favor of Validus Augustus, but he brought ruin upon himself and upon Mallius Lepus and upon Septimus Favonius by winning the love of Favonia and with it the jealous hatred of Fulvus Fupus."

"What is his name?" asked Cassius Hasta.

"He calls himself Erich von Harben," replied Metellus.

"Erich von Harben," repeated Tarzan. "I know him. Where is he now? Is he safe?"

Caecilius Metellus turned his eyes in the direction of the ape- man. "How do you know Erich von Harben, Sanguinarian?" he demanded. "Perhaps then the story that Fulvus Fupus told Validus Augustus is true—that this Erich von Harben is in reality a spy from Castra Sanguinarius."

"No," said Maximus Praeclarus. "Do not excite yourself. This Erich von Harben has never been in Castra

Sanguinarius, and my friend here is not himself a Sanguinarian: He is a white barbarian from the outer world, and if his story be true, and I have no reason to doubt it, he came here in search of this Erich von Harben."

"You may believe this story, Metellus," said Cassius Hasta. "These both are honorable men and since we have been in prison together we have become good friends. What they tell you is the truth."

"Tell me something of von Harben," insisted Tarzan. "Where is he now and is he in danger from the machinations of this Fulvus Fupus?"

"He is in prison with Mallius Lepus in Castrum Mare." replied Metellus,

"and if he survives the games, which he will not, Fupus will find some other means to destroy him."

"When are the games held?" asked Tarzan.

"They start upon the ides of August," replied Cassius Hasta.

"And it is now about the nones of August," said Tarzan.

"Tomorrow," corrected Praeclarus.

"We shall know it then," said Cassius Hasta, "for that is the date set for the triumph of Sublatus."

"I am told that the games last about a week," said Tarzan. "How far is it to Castrum Mare?"

"Perhaps an eight hours' march for

fresh troops," said Caecilius Metellus; "but why do you ask? Are you planning on making a trip to Castrum Mare?"

Tarzan noted the other's smile and the ironic tone of his voice. "I am going to Castrum Mare," he said.

"Perhaps you will take us with you," laughed Metellus.

"Are you a friend of von Harben?" asked Tarzan.

"I am a friend of his friends and an enemy of his enemies, but I do not know him well enough to say that he is my friend."

"But you have no love for Validus Augustus, the Emperor?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied the other.

"And I take it that Cassius Hasta has no reason to love his uncle, either?" continued Tarzan.

"You are right," said Hasta.

"Perhaps I shall take you both, then," said Tarzan.

The two men laughed.

"We shall be ready to go with you when you are ready to take us," said Cassius Hasta.

"You may count me in on the party, too," said Maximus Praeclarus, "if Cassius Hasta will remain my friend in Castrum Mare."

"That I promise, Maximus Praeclarus," said Cassius Hasta.

"When do we leave?" demanded

Metellus, shaking his chain.

"I can leave the moment that these shackles are struck from me," said the ape-man, "and that they must do when they turn me into the arena to fight."

"There will be many legionaries to see that you do not escape, you may rest assured of that," Cassius Hasta reminded him.

"Maximus Praeclarus will tell you that I have twice escaped from the legionaries of Sublatus," said Tarzan.

"That he has," declared Praeclarus, "Surrounded by the Emperor's guard, he escaped from the very throne-room of Sublatus and he carried Caesar above his head through the length of the palace and out into the avenue beyond."

"But if I am to take you with me, it will be more difficult," said the ape-man, "and I would take you because it would please me to frustrate the plans of Sublatus and also because two of you, at least, could be helpful to me in finding Erich von Harben in the city of Castrum Mare."

"You interest me," said Cassius Hasta. "You almost make me believe that you can accomplish this mad scheme."

CHAPTER 14

A GREAT sun, rising into a cloudless sky, ushered in the nones of August. It looked down upon the fresh-raked sands of the deserted arena; upon the crowds that lined the Via Principals that bisected Castra Sanguinarius.

Brown artisans and tradesmen in their smart tunics jostled one another for places of vantage along the shady avenue. Among them moved barbarians from the outer villages, sporting their finest feathers and most valued ornaments and skins, and mingling with the others were the slaves of the city, all eagerly waiting for the pageant that would inaugurate the triumph of Sublatus.

Upon the low rooftops of their homes the patricians reclined upon rugs at every point where the avenue might be seen between or beneath the branches of the trees. All Castra Sanguinarius was there, technically to honor Caesar, but actually merely to be entertained.

The air buzzed with talk and laughter; hawkers of sweetmeats and trinkets elbowed through the crowd crying their wares; legionaries posted at intervals the full distance from the palace to the Colosseum kept the center of the avenue clear.

Since the evening of the preceding day the throng had been gathering. During the cold night they had huddled with close-drawn cloaks. There had

been talk and laughter and brawls and near-riots, and many would-be spectators had been haled off to the dungeons where their exuberance might be permitted to cool against cold stone.

As the morning dragged on the crowd became restless. At first, as some patrician who was to have a part in the pageant passed in his ornate litter he would be viewed in respectful and interested silence, or if he were well known and favorably thought of by the multitude he might be greeted with cheers; but with the passing of time and the increasing heat of the day each occasional litter that passed elicited deep-throated groans or raucous catcalls as the patience and the temper of the

mob became thinner.

But presently from afar, in the direction of the palace, sounded the martial notes of trumpets. The people forgot their fatigue and their discomfort as the shrill notes galvanized them into joyous expectancy.

Slowly along the avenue came the pageant, led by a score of trumpeters, behind whom marched a maniple of the imperial guard. Waving crests surmounted their burnished helmets, the metal of two hundred cuirasses, pikes, and shields shot back the sunlight that filtered through the trees beneath which they marched. They made a proud showing as they strode haughtily between the lines of admiring eyes, led

by their patrician officers in gold and embossed leather and embroidered linen.

As the legionaries passed, a great shout of applause arose. A roar of human voices that started at the palace rolled slowly along the Via Principalis toward the Colosseum as Caesar himself, resplendent in purple and gold, rode alone in a chariot drawn by lions led on golden leashes by huge blacks.

Caesar may have expected for himself the plaudits of the populace, but there was a question as to whether these were elicited as much by the presence of the Emperor as by the sight of the captives chained to Caesar's chariot, for Caesar was an old story to the people of Castra

Sanguinarius, while the prisoners were a novelty and, furthermore, something that promised rare sport in the arena.

Never before in the memory of the citizens of Castra Sanguinarius had an Emperor exhibited such noteworthy captives in his triumph. There was Nyuto, the chief of the Bagegos. There was Caecilius Metellus, a centurion of the legions of the Emperor of the East; and Cassius Hasta, the nephew of that Emperor; but perhaps he who aroused their greatest enthusiasm because of the mad stories that had been narrated of his feats of strength and agility was the great white barbarian, with a shock of black hair and his well-worn leopard skin.

The collar of gold and the golden

chain that held him in leash to the chariot of Caesar, curiously enough, imparted to his appearance no suggestion of fear or humiliation. He walked proudly with head erect—a lion tethered to lions—and there was that in the easy sinuosity of his stride that accentuated his likeness to the jungle beasts that drew the chariot of Caesar along the broad Via Principalis of Castra Sanguinarius.

As the pageant moved its length slowly to the Colosseum the crowd found other things to hold their interest. There were the Bagego captives chained neck to neck and stalwart gladiators resplendent in new armor. White men and brown men were numbered among these and many warriors from the outer

villages.

To the number of two hundred they marched—captives, condemned criminals, and professional gladiators—but before them and behind them and on either side marched veteran legionaries whose presence spoke in no uncertain terms of the respect in which Caesar held the potential power of these bitter, savage fighting- men.

There were floats depicting historic events in the history of Castra Sanguinarius and ancient Rome. There were litters bearing the high officers of the court and the senators of the city, while bringing up the rear were the captured flocks and herds of the Bagegos.

That Sublatus failed to exhibit Maximus Praeclarus in his triumph evidenced the popularity of this noble young Roman, but Dilecta, watching the procession from the roof of her father's house, was filled with anxiety when she noted the absence of her lover, for she knew that sometimes men who entered the dungeons of Caesar were never heard of more—but there was none who could tell her whether Maximus Praeclarus lived or not, and so with her mother she made her way to the Colosseum to witness the opening of the games. Her heart was heavy lest she should see Maximus Praeclarus entered there, and his blood upon the white sand, yet, also, she feared that she might not

see him and thus be faced by the almost definite assurance that he had been secretly done to death by the agents of Fastus.

A great multitude had gathered in the Colosseum to witness the entry of Caesar and the pageant of his triumph, and the majority of these remained in their seats for the opening of the games, which commenced early in the afternoon. It was not until then that the sections reserved for the patricians began to fill.

The loge reserved for Dion Splendidus, the senator, was close to that of Caesar. It afforded an excellent view of the arena and with cushions and rugs was so furnished as to afford the maximum comfort to those who occupied

it.

Never had a Caesar essayed so pretentious a fete; entertainment of the rarest description was vouchsafed each lucky spectator, yet never before in her life had Dilecta loathed and dreaded any occurrence as she now loathed and dreaded the games that were about to open.

Always heretofore her interest in the contestants had been impersonal. Professional gladiators were not of the class to come within the ken or acquaintance of the daughter of a patrician. The warriors and slaves were to her of no greater importance than the beasts against which they sometimes contended, while the condemned

criminals, many of whom expiated their sins within the arena, aroused within her heart only the remotest suggestion of sympathy. She was a sweet and lovely girl, whose sensibilities would doubtless have been shocked by the brutality of the prize-ring or a varsity football game, but she could look upon the bloody cruelties of a Roman arena without a qualm, because by custom and heredity they had become a part of the national life of her people.

But today she trembled. She saw the games as a personal menace to her own happiness and the life of one she loved, yet by no outward sign did she divulge her perturbation. Calm, serene, and entirely beautiful, Dilecta, the daughter

of Dion Splendidus, awaited the signal for the opening of the games that was marked by the arrival of Caesar.

Sublatus came, and after he had taken his seat there emerged from one of the barred gates at the far end of the arena the head of a procession, again led by trumpeters, who were followed by those who were to take part in the games during the week. It consisted for the most part of the same captives who had been exhibited in the pageant, to which were added a number of wild beasts, some of which were led or dragged along by slaves, while others, more powerful and ferocious, were drawn in wheeled cages. These consisted principally of lions and leopards, but there were also a

couple of bull buffaloes and several cages in which were confined huge man-like apes.

The participants were formed in a solid phalanx facing Sublatus, where they were addressed by the Emperor, freedom and reward being promised the victors; and then, sullen and lowering, they were herded back to their dungeons and cages.

Dilecta's eyes scanned the faces of the contestants as they stood in solid rank before the loge of Caesar, but nowhere among them could she discover Maximus Praeclarus. Breathless and tense, with fearful apprehension, she leaned forward in her seat across the top of the arena wall as a man entered the

loge from behind and sat upon the bench beside her.

"He is not there," said the man.

The girl turned quickly toward the speaker. "Fastus!" she exclaimed. "How do you know that he is not there?"

"It is by my order," replied the prince.

"He is dead," cried Dilecta. "You have had him killed."

"No," denied Fastus, "he is safe in his cell."

"What is to become of him?" asked the girl.

"His fate lies in your hands," replied Fastus. "Give him up and promise to become the wife of Fastus and I will see that he is not forced to appear in the

arena."

"He would not have it so," said the girl.

Fastus shrugged. "As you will," he said, "but remember that his life is in your hands."

"With sword, or dagger, or pike he has no equal," said the girl, proudly. "If he were entered in the contest, he would be victorious."

"Caesar has been known to pit unarmed men against lions," Fastus reminded her, tauntingly. "Of what avail then is prowess with any weapon?"

"That would be murder," said Dilecta.

"A harsh term to apply to an act of

Caesar," returned Fastus, menacingly.

"I speak my mind," said the girl; "Caesar or no Caesar. It would be a cowardly and contemptible act, but I doubt not that either Caesar or his son is capable of even worse." Her voice trembled with scathing contempt.

With a crooked smile upon his lips, Fastus arose. "It is not a matter to be determined without thought," he said, "and your answer concerns not Maximus Praeclarus alone, nor you, nor me."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"There are Dion Splendidus and your mother, and Festivitas, the mother of Praeclarus!" And with this warning he turned and left the loge.

The games progressed amid the din of

trumpets, the crash of arms, the growling of beasts, and the murmuring of the great audience that sometimes rose to wild acclaim or deep-throated, menacing disapproval. Beneath fluttering banners and waving scarves the cruel, terrible thousand-eyed thing that is a crowd looked down upon the blood and suffering of its fellow men, munching sweetmeats while a victim died and cracking coarse jokes as slaves dragged the body from the arena and raked clean sand over crimsoned spots.

Sublatus had worked long and carefully with the prefect in charge of the games that the resultant program might afford the greatest possible entertainment for Caesar and the

populace, thus winning for the Emperor a certain popularity that his own personality did not command.

Always the most popular events were those in which men of the patrician class participated, and so he counted much upon Cassius Hasta and Caecilius Metellus, but of even greater value for his purpose was the giant white barbarian, who already had captured the imagination of the people because of his exploits.

Wishing to utilize Tarzan in as many events as possible, S u hiatus knew that it would be necessary to reserve the more dangerous ones for the latter part of the week, and so upon the first afternoon of the games Tarzan found

himself thrust into the arena, unarmed, in company with a burly murderer, whom the master of the games had clothed in loincloth and leopard skin similar to Tarzan.

A guard escorted them across the arena and halted them in the sand below the Emperor, where the master of the games announced that these two would fight with bare hands in any way that they saw fit and that he who remained alive or alone in the arena at the end of the combat would be considered victorious.

"The gate to the dungeons will be left open," he said, "and if either contestant gets enough he may quit the arena, but whoever does so forfeits the contest to

the other."

The crowd booed. It was not to see such tame exhibitions as this that they had come to the Colosseum. They wanted blood. They wanted thrills, but they waited, for perhaps this contest might afford comedy—that they enjoyed, too. If one greatly outclassed the other, it would be amusing to see the weaker seek escape. They cheered Tarzan and they cheered the low-browed murderer. They shouted insults at the noble patrician who was master of the games, for they knew the safety and irresponsibility of numbers.

As the word was given the contestants to engage one another Tarzan turned to face the low-browed, hulking brute

against whom he had been pitted and he saw that some one had been at pains to select a worthy antagonist for him. The man was somewhat shorter than Tarzan, but great, hard muscles bulged beneath his brown hide, bulking so thick across his back and shoulders as almost to suggest deformity. His long arms hung almost to his knees, and his thick, gnarled legs suggested a man of bronze upon a pedestal of granite. The fellow circled Tarzan, looking for an opening. He scowled ferociously as though to frighten his adversary.

"There is the gate, barbarian," he cried in a low voice, pointing to the far end of the arena. "Escape while you are yet alive."

The crowd roared in approbation. It enjoyed glorious sallies such as these. "I shall tear you limb from limb," shouted the murderer, and again the crowd applauded.

"I am here," said Tarzan, calmly.

"Flee!" screamed the murderer, and lowering his head he charged like an angry bull.

The ape-man sprang into the air and came down upon his antagonist, and what happened happened so quickly that no one there, other than Tarzan, knew how it had been accomplished; only he knew that he clamped a reverse head-lock upon the murderer.

What the crowd saw was the hulking figure hurtling to a hard fall. They saw

him lying half-stunned upon the sand, while the giant barbarian stood with folded arms looking down upon him.

The fickle crowd rose from its benches, shrieking with delight. "Habet! Habet!" they cried, and thousands of closed fists were outstretched with the thumbs pointing downward, but Tarzan only stood there waiting, as the murderer, shaking his head to clear his brain, crawled slowly to his feet.

The fellow looked about him half-bewildered and then his eyes found Tarzan and with a growl of rage he charged again. Again the terrible hold was clamped upon him, and again he was hurled heavily to the floor of the arena.

The crowd screamed with delight. Every thumb in the Colosseum was pointed downward. They wanted Tarzan to kill his adversary. The ape-man looked up into Caesar's loge, where sat the master of the games with Sublatus.

"Is not this enough?" he demanded, pointing at the prostrate figure of the stunned gladiator.

The prefect waved a hand in an all-including gesture which took in the audience. "They demand his death," he said. "While he remains alive in the arena, you are not the victor."

"Does Caesar require that I kill this defenseless man?" demanded Tarzan, looking straight into the face of Sublatus.

"You have heard the noble prefect,"

replied the Emperor, haughtily.

"Good," said Tarzan. "The rules of the contest shall be fulfilled." He stooped and seized the unconscious form of his antagonist and raised it above his head. "Thus I carried your Emperor from his throne-room to the avenue!" he shouted to the audience.

Screams of delight measured the appreciation of the populace, while Caesar went white and red in anger and mortification. He half rose from his seat, but what he contemplated was never fulfilled, for at that instant Tarzan swung the body of the murderer downward and back like a huge pendulum and then upward with a mighty surge, hurling it over the arena wall, full into the loge of

Sublatus, where it struck Caesar, knocking him to the floor.

"I am alive and alone in the arena," shouted Tarzan, turning to the people, "and by the terms of the contest I am victor," and not even Caesar dared question the decision that was voiced by the shrieking, screaming, applauding multitude.

CHAPTER 15

BLOODY days followed restless nights in comfortless cells, where lice and rats joined forces to banish rest. When the games began there had been twelve inmates in the cell occupied by Tarzan, but now three empty rings dangled against the stone wall, and each day they wondered whose turn was next.

The others did not reproach Tarzan because of his failure to free them, since they had never taken his optimism seriously. They could not conceive of contestants escaping from the arena during the games. It simply was not done and that was all that there was to it. It never had been done, and it never would be.

"We know you meant well," said Praeclarus, "but we knew better than you."

"The conditions have not been right, as yet," said Tarzan, "but if what I have been told of the games is true, the time will come."

"What time could be propitious," asked Hasta, "while more than half of Caesar's legionaries packed the Colosseum?"

"There should be a time," Tarzan reminded him, "when all the victorious contestants are in the arena together. Then we shall rush Caesar's loge and drag him into the arena. With Sublatus as a hostage we may demand a hearing and get it. I venture to say that they will give

us our liberty in return for Caesar."

"But how can we enter Caesar's loge?" demanded Metellus.

"In an instant we may form steps with living men stooping, while others step upon their backs as soldiers scale a wall. Perhaps some of us will be killed, but enough will succeed to seize Caesar and drag him to the sands."

"I wish you luck," said Praeclarus, "and, by Jupiter, I believe that you will succeed. I only wish that I might be with you."

"You will not accompany us?" demanded Tarzan.

"How can I? I shall be locked in this cell. Is it not evident that they do not intend to enter me in the contests? They

are reserving for me some other fate. The jailer has told me that my name appears in no event."

"But we must find a way to take you with us," said Tarzan.

"There is no way," said Praeclarus, shaking his head, sadly.

"Wait," said Tarzan. "You commanded the Colosseum guards, did you not?"

"Yes," replied Praeclarus.

"And you had the keys to the cells?" asked the ape-man.

"Yes," replied Praeclarus, "and to the manacles as well."

"Where are they?" asked Tarzan. "But no, that will not do. They must have

taken them from you when they arrested you."

"No, they did not," said Praeclarus. "As a matter of fact, I did not have them with me when I dressed for the banquet that night. I left them in my room."

"But perhaps they sent for them?"

"Yes, they sent for them, but they did not find them. The jailer asked me about them the day after I was arrested, but I told him that the soldiers took them from me. I told him that because I had hidden them in a secret place where I keep many valuables. I knew that if I had told them where they were they would take not only the keys, but my valuables as well."

"Good!" exclaimed the ape-man.

"With the keys our problem is solved."

"But how are you going to get them?" demanded Praeclarus, with a rueful smile.

"I do not know," said Tarzan. "All I know is that we must have the keys."

"We know, too, that we should have our liberty," said Hasta, "but knowing it does not make us free."

Their conversation was interrupted by the approach of soldiers along the corridor. Presently a detachment of the palace guard halted outside their cell. The jailer unlocked the door and a man entered with two torch-bearers behind him. It was Fastus.

He looked around the cell. "Where is Praeclarus?" he demanded, and then,

"Ah, there you are!"

Praeclarus did not reply.

"Stand up, slave!" ordered Fastus, arrogantly. "Stand up, all of you. How dare you sit in the presence of a Caesar!" he exclaimed.

"Swine is a better title for such as you," taunted Praeclarus.

"Drag them up! Beat them with your pikes!" cried Fastus to the soldiers outside the doorway.

The command of the Colosseum guard, who stood just behind Fastus, blocked the doorway, "Stand back," he said to the legionaries. "No one gives orders here except Caesar and myself, and you are not Caesar yet, Fastus."

"I shall be one day," snapped the prince, "and it will be a sad day for you."

"It will be a sad day for all Castra Sanguinarius," replied the officer. "You said that you wished to speak to Praeclarus? Say what you have to say and be gone. Not even Caesar's son may interfere with my charges."

Fastus trembled with anger, but he knew that he was powerless. The commander of the guard spoke with the authority of the Emperor, whom he represented. He turned upon Praeclarus.

"I came to invite my good friend, Maximus Praeclarus, to my wedding," he announced, with a sneer. He waited, but Praeclarus made no reply. "You do not

seem duly impressed, Praeclarus," continued the prince. "You do not ask who is to be the happy bride. Do you not wish to know who will be the next Empress in Castra Sanguinarius, even though you may not live to see her upon the throne beside Caesar?"

The heart of Maximus Praeclarus stood still, for now he knew why Fastus had come to the dungeon-cell, but he gave no sign of what was passing within his breast, but remained seated in silence upon the hard floor, his back against the cold wall.

"You do not ask me whom I am to wed, nor when," continued Fastus, "but I shall tell you. You should be interested. Dilecta, the daughter of Dion

Splendidus, will have none of a traitor and a felon. She aspires to share the purple with a Caesar. In the evening following the last day of the games Dilecta and Fastus are to be married in the throne-room of the palace."

Gloating, Fastus waited to know the result of his announcement, but if he had looked to surprise Maximus Praeclarus into an exhibition of chagrin he failed, for the young patrician ignored him so completely that Fastus might not have been in the cell at all for all the attention that the other paid to him.

Maximus Praeclarus turned and spoke casually to Metellus and the quiet affront aroused the mounting anger of Fastus to such an extent that he lost what little

control he had of himself. Stepping quickly forward, he stooped and slapped Praeclarus in the face and then spat upon him, but in doing so he had come too close to Tarzan and the ape-man reached out and seized him by the ankle, dragging him to the floor.

Fastus screamed a command to his soldiers. He sought to draw his dagger or his sword, but Tarzan took them from him and hurled the prince into the arms of the legionaries, who had rushed past the commander of the Colosseum guard and entered the cell.

"Get out now, Fastus," said the latter. "You have caused enough trouble here already."

"I shall get you for this," hissed the

prince, "all of you," and he swept the inmates of the cell with an angry, menacing glance.

Long after they had gone, Cassius Hasta continued to chuckle. "Caesar!" he exclaimed. "Swine!"

As the prisoners discussed the discomfiture of Fastus and sought to prophesy what might come of it, they saw a wavering light reflected from afar in the corridor before their cell.

"We are to have more guests," said Metellus.

"Perhaps Fastus is returning to spit on Tarzan," suggested Cassius Hasta, and they all laughed.

The light was advancing along the corridor, but it was not accompanied by

the tramp of soldiers' feet.

"Whoever comes comes silently and alone," said Maximus Praeclarus.

"Then it is not Fastus," said Hasta.

"But it might be an assassin sent by him," suggested Praeclarus.

"We shall be ready for him," said Tarzan.

A moment later there appeared beyond the grating of the cell door the commander of the Colosseum guards, who had accompanied Fastus and who had stood between the prince and the prisoner.

"Appius Applosus!" exclaimed Maximus Praeclarus. "He is no assassin, my friends."

"I am not the assassin of your body, Praeclarus," said Applosus, "but I am indeed the assassin of your happiness."

"What do you mean, my friend?" demanded Praeclarus.

"In his anger Fastus told me more than he told you."

"He told you what?" asked Praeclarus.

"He told me that Dilecta had consented to become his wife only in the hope of saving her father and mother and you, Praeclarus, and your mother, Festivitas."

"To call him swine is to insult the swine," said Praeclarus. "Take word to her, Applosus, that I would rather die than to see her wed to Fastus."

"She knows that, my friend," said the officer, "but she thinks also of her father and her mother and yours."

Praeclarus's chin dropped upon his chest. "I had forgotten that," he moaned. "Oh, there must be some way to stop it."

"He is the son of Caesar," Applosus reminded him, "and the time is short."

"I know it! I know it!" cried Praeclarus, "but it is too hideous. It cannot be."

"This officer is your friend, Praeclarus?" asked Tarzan, indicating Appius Applosus.

"Yes," said Praeclarus.

"You would trust him fully?" demanded the ape-man.

"With my life and my honor," said Praeclarus.

"Tell him where your keys are and let him fetch them," said the ape-man.

Praeclarus brightened instantly. "I had not thought of that," he cried, "but no, his life would be in jeopardy."

"It already is," said Applosus. "Fastus will never forget or forgive what I said tonight. You, Praeclarus, know that I am already doomed. What' keys do you want? Where are they? I will fetch them."

"Perhaps not when you know what they are," said Praeclarus.

"I can guess," replied Appius Applosus.

"You have been in my apartments often, Applosus?"

The other nodded affirmatively.

"You recall the shelves near the window where my books lie?"

"Yes."

"The back of the third shelf slides to one side and behind it in the wall, you will find the keys."

"Good, Praeclarus. You shall have them," said the officer.

The others watched the diminishing light as Appius Applosus departed along the corridor beneath the Colosseum.

The last day of the games had come. The bloodthirsty populace had gathered once more as eager and enthusiastic as

though they were about to experience a new and unfamiliar thrill, their appetites swept as clean of the memories of the past week as were the fresh sands of the arena of the brown stains of yesterday.

For the last time the inmates of the cell were taken to enclosures nearer to the entrance to the arena. They had fared better, perhaps, than others, for of the twelve rings only four were empty.

Maximus Praeclarus alone was left behind. "Goodbye," he said. "Those of you who survive the day shall be free. We shall not see one another again. Good luck to you and may the gods give strength and skill to your arms —that is all that I can ask of them, for not even the gods could give you more courage than

you already possess."

"Applosus has failed us," said Hasta.

Tarzan looked troubled. "If only you were coming out with us, Praeclarus, we should not then need the keys."

From within the enclosure, where they were confined, Tarzan and his companions could hear the sounds of combat and the groans and hoots and applause of the audience, but they could not see the floor of the arena.

It was a very large room with heavily barred windows and a door. Sometimes two men, sometimes four, sometimes six would go out together, but only one, or two, or three returned. The effect upon the nerves of those who remained uncalled was maddening. For some the

suspense became almost unendurable. Two attempted suicide and others tried to pick quarrels with their fellow prisoners, but there were many guards within the room and the prisoners were unarmed, their weapons being issued to them only after they had quit the enclosure and were about to enter the arena.

The afternoon was drawing to a close. Metellus had fought with a gladiator, both in full armor. Hasta and Tarzan had heard the excited cries of the populace. They had heard cheer after cheer, which indicated that each man was putting up a skillful and courageous fight. There was an instant of silence and then the loud cries of "Habet! Habet!"

"It is over," whispered Cassius Hasta.

Tarzan made no reply. He had grown to like these men, for he had found them brave and simple and loyal and he, too, was inwardly moved by the suspense that must be endured until one or the other returned to the enclosure; but he gave no outward sign of his perturbation, and while Cassius Hasta paced nervously to and fro Tarzan of the Apes stood silently, with folded arms, watching the door. After awhile it opened and Caecilius Metellus crossed the threshold.

Cassius Hasta uttered a cry of relief and sprang forward to embrace his friend.

Again the door swung open and a

minor official entered. "Come," he cried, "all of you. It is the last event."

Outside the enclosure each man was given a sword, dagger, pike, shield, and a hempen net, and one by one, as they were thus equipped, they were sent into the arena. All the survivors of the week of combat were there— one hundred of them.

They were divided into two equal parties, and red ribbons were fastened to the shoulders of one party and white ribbons to the shoulders of the other.

Tarzan was among the reds, as were Hasta, Metellus, Lukedi, Mpingu, and Ogonyo.

"What are we supposed to do?" asked Tarzan of Hasta.

"The reds will fight against the whites until all the reds are killed or all the whites."

"They should see blood enough to suit them now," said Tarzan.

"They can never get enough of it," replied Metellus.

The two parties marched to the opposite end of the arena and received their instructions from the prefect in charge of the games, and then they were formed, the reds upon one side of the arena, the whites upon the other. Trumpets sounded and the armed men advanced toward one another.

Tarzan smiled to himself as he considered the weapons with which he was supposed to defend himself. The

pike he was sure of, for the Waziri are great spearmen and Tarzan excelled even among them, and with the dagger he felt at home, so long had the hunting-knife of his father been his only weapon of protection—but the Spanish sword, he felt, would probably prove more of a liability than an asset, while the net in his hands could be nothing more than a sorry joke. He would like to have thrown his shield aside, for he did not like shields, considering them, as a rule, useless encumbrances, but he had used them before when the Waziri had fought other native tribes, and knowing that they were constructed as a defense against the very weapons that his opponents were using he retained his and advanced

with the others toward the white line. He had determined that their only hope lay in accounting for as many of their adversaries in the first clash of arms as was possible, and this word he had passed down the line with the further admonition that the instant that a man had disposed of an antagonist he turn immediately to help the red nearest him, or the one most sorely beset.

As the two lines drew closer, each man selected the opponent opposite him and Tarzan found that he faced a warrior from the outer villages. They came closer. Some of the men, more eager or nervous than the others, were in advance; some, more fearful, lagged behind. Tarzan's opponent came upon

him. Already pikes were flying through the air. Tarzan and the warrior hurled their missiles at the same instant, and back of the ape-man's throw was all the skill and all the muscle and all the weight that he could command. Tarzan struck upward with his shield and his opponent's pike struck it a glancing blow, but with such force that the spear haft was shattered, while Tarzan's weapon passed through the shield of his opponent and pierced the fellow's heart.

There were two others down—one killed and one wounded—and the Colosseum was a babble of voices and a bedlam of noise. Tarzan sprang quickly to aid one of his fellows, but another white, who had killed his red opponent,

ran to interfere. Tarzan's net annoyed him, so he threw it at a white who was pressing one of the reds and took on his fresh opponent, who had drawn his sword. His adversary was a professional gladiator, a man trained in the use of all his weapons, and Tarzan soon realized that only through great strength and agility might he expect to hold his own with this opponent.

The fellow did not rush. He came in slowly and carefully, feeling out Tarzan. He was cautious because he was an old hand at the business and was imbued with but a single hope—to live. He cared as little for the hoots and jibes of the people as he did for their applause, and he hated Caesar. He soon

discovered that Tarzan was adopting defensive tactics only, but whether this was for the purpose of feeling out his opponent or whether it was part of a plan that would lead up to a sudden and swift surprise, the gladiator could not guess, nor did he care particularly, for he knew that he was master of his weapon and many a corpse had been burned that in life had thought to surprise him.

Judging Tarzan's skill with the sword by his skill with the shield, the gladiator thought that he was pitted against a highly skilled adversary, and he waited patiently for Tarzan to open up his offense and reveal his style. But Tarzan had no style that could be compared with

that of the gladiator. What he was awaiting was a lucky chance—the only thing that he felt could assure him victory over this wary and highly skilled swordsman— but the gladiator gave him no openings and he was hoping that one of his companions would be free to come to his assistance, when, suddenly and without warning, a net dropped over his shoulders from behind.

CHAPTER 16

Cassius Hasta split the helmet of a burly thief who opposed him, and as he turned to look for a new opponent he saw a white cast a net over Tarzan's head and shoulders from the rear, while the ape- man was engaged with a professional gladiator. Cassius was nearer the gladiator than Tarzan's other opponent and with a cry he hurled himself upon him. Tarzan saw what Cassius Hasta had done and wheeled to face the white who had attacked him from the rear.

The gladiator found Cassius Hasta a very different opponent from Tarzan. Perhaps he was not as skillful with his shield. Perhaps he was not as powerful,

but never in all his experience had the gladiator met such a swordsman.

The crowd had been watching Tarzan from the beginning of the event because his great height and his nakedness and his leopard skin marked him from all others. They noticed that the first cast of his pike had split the shield of his opponent and dropped him dead and they watched his encounter with I lie gladiator, which did not please them at all. It was far too slow and they hooted and voiced catcalls. When the white cast the net over him they howled with delight, for they did not know from one day to the next, or from one minute to the next, what their own minds would be the next day or the next minute. They were

cruel and stupid, but they were no different from the crowds of any place or any time.

As Tarzan, entangled in the net, turned to face the new menace, the white leaped toward him to finish him with a dagger and Tarzan caught the net with the fingers of both his hands and tore it asunder as though it had been made of paper, but the fellow was upon him in the same instant. The dagger hand struck as Tarzan seized the dagger wrist. Blood poured from beneath the leopard skin from a wound over Tarzan's heart, so close had he been to death, but his hand stopped the other just in time and now steel ringers closed upon that wrist until the man cried out with pain as he felt his

bones crushed together. The ape-man drew his antagonist toward him and seized him by the throat and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat, while the air trembled to the delighted screams of the mob.

An instant later Tarzan cast the lifeless form aside, picked up his sword and shield that he had been forced to abandon, and sought for new foes. Thus the battle waged around the arena each side seeking to gain the advantage in numbers so that they might set upon the remnant of their opponents and destroy them. Cassius Hasta had disposed of the gladiator that he had drawn away from Tarzan and was now engaged with another swordsman when a second fell

upon him. Two to one are heavy odds, but Cassius Hasta tried to hold the second off until another red could come to his assistance.

This, however, did not conform with the ideas of the whites who were engaging him, and they fell upon him with redoubled fury to prevent the very thing that he hoped for. He saw an opening and quick as lightning his sword leaped into it, severing the jugular vein of one of his antagonists, but his guard was down for the instant and a glancing blow struck his helmet and, though it did not pierce it, it sent him stumbling to the sand, half-stunned.

"Habet! Habet!" cried the people, for Cassius Hasta had fallen close to one

side of the arena where a great number of people could see him. Standing over him, his antagonist raised his forefinger to the audience and every thumb went down.

With a smile the white raised his sword to drive it through Hasta's throat, but as he paused an instant, facing the crowd, in a little play to the galleries for effect, Tarzan leaped across the soft sand, casting aside his sword and shield, reverting to the primitive, to the beast, to save his friend.

It was like the charge of a lion. The crowd saw and was frozen into silence. They saw him spring in his stride several yards before he reached the opposing gladiator and, like a jungle

beast, fall upon the shoulders and back of his prey.

Down the two went across the body of Hasta, but instantly the ape-man was upon his feet and in his hands was his antagonist. He shook him as he had shaken the other—shook him into unconsciousness, choking him as he shook, shook him to death, and cast his body from him.

The crowd went wild. They stood upon their benches and shrieked and waved scarves and helmets and threw many flowers and sweetmeats into the arena. Tarzan stooped and lifted Cassius Hasta to his feet as he saw that he was not killed and consciousness was returning.

Scanning the arena quickly, he saw that fifteen reds survived and but ten whites. This was a battle for survival. There were no rules and no ethics. It was your life or mine and Tarzan gathered the surplus five and set upon the strongest white, who now, surrounded by six swordsmen, went down to death in an instant.

At Tarzan's command the six divided and each three charged another white with the result that by following these tactics the event was brought to a sudden and bloody close with fifteen reds surviving and the last white slain.

The crowd was crying Tarzan's name above all others, but Sublatus was enraged. The affront that had been put

upon him by this wild barbarian had not been avenged as he had hoped, but instead Tarzan had achieved a personal popularity far greater than his own. That it was ephemeral and subject to the changes of the fickle public mind did not lessen the indignation and chagrin of the Emperor. His mind could entertain but one thought toward Tarzan. The creature must be destroyed. He turned to the prefect in charge of the games and whispered a command.

The crowd was loudly demanding that the laurel wreaths be accorded the victors and that they be given their freedom, but instead they were herded back to their enclosure, all but Tarzan.

Perhaps, suggested some members of

the audience, Sublatus is going to honor him particularly, and this rumor ran quickly through the crowd, as rumors will, until it became a conviction.

Slaves came and dragged away the corpses of the slain and picked up the discarded weapons and scattered new sand and raked it, while Tarzan stood where he had been told to stand, beneath the loge of Caesar.

He stood with folded arms, grimly waiting for what he knew not, and then a low groan rose from the crowded stands —a groan that grew in volume to loud cries of anger above which Tarzan caught words that sounded like "Tyrant!"

"Coward!"

"Traitor!" and "Down with Sublatus!"

He looked around and saw them pointing to the opposite end of the arena and, facing in that direction, he saw the thing that had aroused their wrath, for instead of a laurel wreath and freedom there stood eying him a great, black- maned lion, gaunt with hunger.

Toward the anger of the populace Sublatus exhibited, outwardly, an arrogant and indifferent mien. Contemptuously he permitted his gaze to circle the stands, but he whispered orders that sent three centuries of legionaries among the audience in time to overawe a few agitators who would have led them against the imperial loge.

But now the lion was advancing, and the cruel and selfish audience forgot its

momentary anger against injustice in the expected thrill of another bloody encounter. Some, who, a moment before, had been loudly acclaiming Tarzan now cheered the lion, though if the lion were vanquished they would again cheer Tarzan. That, however, they did not anticipate, but believed that they had taken sides with the assured winner, since Tarzan was armed only with a dagger, not having recovered his other weapons after he had thrown them aside.

Naked, but for loincloth and leopard skin, Tarzan presented a magnificent picture of physical perfection, and the people of Castra Sanguinarius gave him their admiration, while they placed their denarii and their talents upon the lion.

They had seen other men that week face other lions bravely and hopelessly and they saw the same courageous feeling in the giant barbarian, but the hopelessness they took for granted the ape-man did not feel. With head flattened, half-crouching, the lion moved slowly toward its prey, the tip of its tail twitching in nervous anticipation, its gaunt sides greedy to be filled. Tarzan waited.

Had he been the lion himself, he scarcely could have better known what was passing in that savage brain. He knew to the instant when the final charge would start. He knew the speed of that swift and deadly rush. He knew when and how the lion would rear upon its

hind legs to seize him with great talons and mighty, yellow fangs.

He saw the muscles tense. He saw the twitching tail quiet for an instant. His folded arms dropped to his side. The dagger remained in its sheath at his hip. He waited, crouching almost imperceptibly, his weight upon the balls of his feet, and then the lion charged.

Knowing how accurately the beast had timed its final rush, measuring the distance to the fraction of a stride, even as a hunter approaches a jump, the ape-man knew that the surest way in which to gain the first advantage was to disconcert the charging beast by doing that which he would least expect.

Numa the lion knows that his quarry

usually does one of two things— he either stands paralyzed with terror or he turns and flees. So seldom does he charge to meet Numa that the lion never takes this possibility into consideration and it was, therefore, this very thing that Tarzan did.

As the lion charged, the ape-man leaped to meet him, and the crowd sat breathless and silent. Even Sublatus leaned forward with parted lips, forgetful, for a moment, that he was Caesar.

Numa tried to check himself and rear to meet this presumptuous man-thing, but he slipped a little in the sand and the great paw that struck at Tarzan was ill-timed and missed, for the ape-man had

dodged to one side and beneath it, and in the fraction of a second that it took Numa to recover himself he found that their positions had been reversed and that the prey that he would have leaped upon had turned swiftly and leaped upon him.

Full upon the back of the lion sprang Tarzan of the Apes. A giant forearm encircled the maned throat; steel-thewed legs crossed beneath the gaunt, slim belly and locked themselves there. Numa reared and pawed and turned to bite the savage beast upon his back, but the vise-like arm about his throat pressed tighter, holding him so that his fangs could not reach their goal. He leaped into the air and when he alighted on the sand shook himself to dislodge the growling man-

beast clinging to him.

Holding his position with his legs and one arm, Tarzan, with his free hand, sought the hilt of his dagger. Numa, feeling the life being choked from him, became frantic. He reared upon his hind legs and threw himself upon the ground, rolling upon his antagonist, and now the crowd found its voice again and shouted hoarse delight. Never in the history of the arena had such a contest as this been witnessed. The barbarian was offering such a defense as they had not thought possible and they cheered him, though they knew that eventually the lion would win. Then Tarzan found his dagger and drove the thin blade into Numa's side, just back of his left elbow. Again and

again the knife struck home, but each blow seemed only to increase the savage efforts of the lunging beast to shake the man from his back and tear him to pieces.

Blood was mixed with the foam on Numa's jowls as he stood panting upon trembling legs after a last futile effort to dislodge the ape-man. He swayed dizzily. The knife struck deep again. A great stream of blood gushed from the mouth and nostrils of the dying beast. He lurched forward and fell lifeless upon the crimsoned sand.

Tarzan of the Apes leaped to his feet. The savage personal combat, the blood, the contact with the mighty body of the carnivore had stripped from him the last

vestige of the thin veneer of civilization. It was no English Lord who stood there with one foot upon his kill and through narrowed lids glared about him at the roaring populace. It was no man, but a wild beast, that raised its head and voiced the savage victory cry of the bull ape, a cry that stilled the multitude and froze its blood. But, in an instant, the spell that had seized him passed. His expression changed. The shadow of a smile crossed his face as he stooped and, wiping the blood from his dagger upon Numa's mane, returned the weapon to its sheath.

Caesar's jealousy had turned to terror as he realized the meaning of the tremendous ovation the giant barbarian

was receiving from the people of Castra Sanguinarius. He well knew, though he tried to conceal the fact, that he held no place in popular favor and that Fastus, his son, was equally hated and despised.

This barbarian was a friend of Maximus Praeclarus, whom he had wronged, and Maximus Praeclarus, whose popularity with the troops was second to none, was loved by Dilecta, the daughter of Dion Splendidus, who might easily aspire to the purple with the support of such a popular idol as Tarzan must become if he were given his freedom in accordance with the customs and rules governing the contests. While Tarzan waited in the arena and the people cheered themselves hoarse, more

legionaries filed into the stands until the wall bristled with glittering pikes.

Caesar whispered in consultation with the prefect of the games. Trumpets blared and the prefect arose and raised his open palm for silence. Gradually the din subsided and the people waited, listening, expecting the honors that were customarily bestowed upon the outstanding hero of the games. The prefect cleared his throat.

"This barbarian has furnished such extraordinary entertainment that Caesar, as a special favor to his loyal subjects, has decided to add one more event to the games in which the barbarian may again demonstrate his supremacy. This event will"—but what further the prefect said

was drowned in a murmur of surprise, disapproval, and anger, for the people had sensed by this time the vicious and unfair trick that Sublatus was about to play upon their favorite.

They cared nothing for fair play, for though the individual may prate of it at home it has no place in mob psychology, but the mob knew what it wanted. It wanted to idolize a popular hero. It did not care to see him fight again that day and it wanted to thwart Sublatus, whom it hated. Menacing were the cries and threats directed toward Caesar, and only the glittering pikes kept the mob at bay.

In the arena the slaves were working rapidly; fallen Numa had been dragged away, the sands swept, and as the last

slave disappeared, leaving Tarzan again alone within the enclosure, those menacing gates at the far end swung open once more.

CHAPTER 17

As Tarzan looked toward the far end of the arena he saw six bull apes being herded through the gateway. They had heard the victory cry roll thunderously from the arena a few minutes before and they came now from their cages filled with excitement and ferocity. Already had they long been surly and irritable from confinement and from the teasing and baiting to which they had been subjected by the cruel Sanguinarians. Before them they saw a man-thing—a hated Tarmangani. He represented the creatures that had captured them and teased them and hurt them.

"I am Gayat," growled one of the bull apes. "I kill."

"I am Zutho," bellowed another. "I kill."

"Kill the Tarmangani," barked Go-yad, as the six lumbered forward—sometimes erect upon their hind feet, sometimes swinging with gnarled knuckles to the ground.

The crowd hooted and groaned. "Down with Caesar!"

"Death to Sublatus!" rose distinctly above the tumult. To a man they were upon their feet, but the glittering pikes held them in awe as one or two, with more courage than brains, sought to reach the loge of Caesar, but ended upon the pikes of the legionaries instead. Their bodies, lying in the aisles, served as a warning to the others.

Sublatus turned and whispered to a guest in the imperial loge. "This should be a lesson to all who would dare affront Caesar," he said.

"Quite right," replied the other. "Glorious Caesar is, indeed, all powerful," but the fellow's lips were blue from terror as he saw how great and menacing was the crowd and how slim and few looked the glittering pikes that stood between it and the imperial loge.

As the apes approached, Zutho was in the lead. "I am Zutho," he cried. "I kill."

"Look well, Zutho, before you kill your friend," replied the ape-man. "I am Tarzan of the Apes."

Zutho stopped, bewildered. The

others crowded about him.

"The Tarmangani spoke in the language of the great apes," said Zutho.

"I know him," said Go-yad. "He was king of the tribe when I was a young ape."

"It is, indeed, Whiteskin," said Gayat.

"Yes," said Tarzan, "I am Whiteskin. We are all prisoners here together. These Tarmangani are my enemies and yours. They wish us to fight, but we shall not."

"No," said Zutho, "we shall not fight against Tarzan."

"Good," said the ape-man, as they gathered close around him, sniffing that their noses might validate the testimony

of their eyes.

"What has happened?" growled Sublatus. "Why do they not attack him?"

"He has cast a spell upon them," replied Caesar's guest.

The people looked on wonderingly. They heard the beasts and the man growling at one another. How could they guess that they were speaking together in their common language? They saw Tarzan turn and walk toward Caesar's loge, his bronzed skin brushing against the black coats of the savage beasts lumbering at his side. The ape-man and the apes halted below imperial Caesar. Tarzan's eyes ran quickly around the arena. The wall was lined with legionaries so not even Tarzan might

pass these unscathed. He looked up at Sublatus.

"Your plan has failed, Caesar. These that you thought would tear me to pieces are my own people. They will not harm me. If there are any others that you would turn against me let them come now, but be quick, for my patience is growing short and if I should say the word these apes will follow me into the imperial loge and tear you to shreds."

And that is exactly what Tarzan would have done had he not known that while he doubtless could have killed Sublatus his end would come quickly beneath the pikes of the legionaries. He was not sufficiently well versed in the ways of mobs to know that in their

present mood the people would have swarmed to protect him and that the legionaries, with few exceptions, would have joined forces with them against the hated tyrant.

What Tarzan wanted particularly was to effect the escape of Cassius Hasta and Caecilius Metellus simultaneously with his own, so that he might have the advantage of their assistance in his search for Erich von Harben in the Empire of the East; therefore, when the prefect ordered him back to his dungeon he went, taking the apes with him to their cages.

As the arena gates closed behind him he heard again, above the roaring of the populace, the insistent demand: "Down

with Sublatus!"

As the jailer opened the cell door, Tarzan saw that its only occupant was Maximus Praeclarus.

"Welcome, Tarzan!" cried the Roman. "I had not thought to see you again. How is it that you are neither dead nor free?"

"It is the justice of Caesar," replied Tarzan, with a smile, "but at least our friends are free, for I see they are not here."

"Do not deceive yourself, barbarian," said the jailer. "Your friends are chained safely in another cell."

"But they won their freedom," exclaimed Tarzan.

"And so did you," returned the jailer,

with a grin; "but are you free?"

"It is an outrage," cried Praeclarus. "It cannot be done."

The jailer shrugged. "But it is already done," he said.

"And why?" demanded Praeclarus.

"Think you that a poor soldier has the confidence of Caesar?" asked the jailer; "but I have heard the reason rumored. Sedition is in the air. Caesar fears you and all your friends because the people favor you and you favor Dion Splendidus."

"I see," said Praeclarus, "and so we are to remain here indefinitely."

"I should scarcely say indefinitely," grinned the jailer, as he closed the door

and locked it, leaving them alone.

"I did not like the look in his eye nor the tone of his voice," said Praeclarus, after the fellow was out of hearing. "The gods are unkind, but how can I expect else from them when even my best friend fails me?"

"You mean Appius Applosus?" asked Tarzan.

"None other," replied Praeclarus. "If he had fetched the keys, we might yet escape."

"Perhaps we shall in any event," said Tarzan. "I should never give up hope until I were dead—and I have never been dead."

"You do not know either the power or perfidy of Caesar," replied the Roman.

"Nor does Caesar know Tarzan of the Apes."

Darkness had but just enveloped the city, blotting out even the dim light of their dungeon cell, when the two men perceived wavering light beams lessening the darkness of the corridor without. The light increased and they knew that someone was approaching, lighting his way with a flaring torch.

Visitors to the dungeon beneath the Colosseum were few in the daytime. Guards and jailers passed occasionally and twice each day slaves came with food, but at night the silent approach of a single torch might more surely augur ill than well. Praeclarus and Tarzan dropped the desultory conversation with

which they had been whiling away the time and waited in silence for whoever might be coming.

Perhaps the night-time visitor was not for them, but the egotism of misfortune naturally suggested that he was and that his intentions might be more sinister than friendly. But they had not long to wait and their suspicions precluded any possibility of surprise when a man halted before the barred gateway to their cell. As the visitor fitted the key to the lock Praeclarus recognized him through the bars.

"Appius Applosus!" he cried. "You have come!"

"Ps-st!" cautioned Applosus, and quickly opening the gate he stepped

within and closed it silently behind him. With a quick glance he surveyed the cell and then extinguished his torch against the stone wall. "It is fortunate that you are alone," he said, speaking in whispers, as he dropped to the floor close to the two men.

"You are trembling," said Praeclarus. "What has happened?"

"It is not what has happened but what is about to happen that alarms me," replied Applosus. "You have probably wondered why I had not brought the keys. You have doubtless thought me faithless, but the fact is that up to this instant it has been impossible, although I have stood ready before to risk my life in the attempt, even as I am now doing."

"But why should it be so difficult for the commander of the Colosseum guard to visit the dungeon?"

"I am no longer the commander of the guards," replied Applosus. "Something must have aroused Caesar's suspicions, for I was removed in the hour that I last left you. Whether someone overheard and reported our plan or whether it was merely my known friendship for you that aroused his misgivings, I may only surmise, but the fact remains that I have been kept on duty constantly at the Porta Praetoria since I was transferred there from the Colosseum. I have not even been permitted to return to my home, the reason given being that Caesar expects an uprising of the barbarians of the outer

villages, which, as we all know, is utterly ridiculous.

"I risked everything to leave my post only an hour ago and that because of a word of gossip that was passed to me by a young officer, who came to relieve another at the gate."

"What said he?" demanded Praeclarus.

"He said that an officer of the palace guard had told him that he had been ordered to come to your cell tonight and assassinate both you and this white barbarian. I hastened to Festivitas and together we found the keys that I promised to bring you, but even as I slunk through the shadows of the city's streets, endeavoring to reach the

Colosseum unobserved or unrecognized, I feared that I might be too late, for Caesar's orders are that you are to be dispatched at once. Here are the keys, Praeclarus. If I may do more, command me."

"No, my friend," replied Praeclarus, "you have already risked more than enough. Go at once. Return to your post lest Caesar learn and destroy you."

"Farewell then and good luck," said Applosus. "If you would leave the city, remember that Appius Applosus commands the Porta Praetoria."

"I shall not forget, my friend," replied Praeclarus, "but I shall not impose further risks upon your friendship."

Appius Applosus turned to leave the

cell, but he stopped suddenly at the gate. "It is too late," he whispered. "Look!"

The faint gleams of distant torch-light were cutting the gloom of the corridor.

"They come!" whispered Praeclarus. "Make haste!" but instead Appius Applosus stepped quickly to one side of the doorway, out of sight of the corridor beyond, and drew his Spanish sword.

Rapidly the torch swung down the corridor. The scraping of sandals on stone could be distinctly heard, and the ape-man knew that whoever came was alone. A man wrapped in a long dark cloak halted before the barred door and, holding his torch above his head, peered within.

"Maximus Praeclarus!" he whispered.

"Are you within?"

"Yes," replied Praeclarus.

"Good!" exclaimed the other. "I was not sure that this was the right cell."

"What is your errand?" demanded Praeclarus.

"I come from Caesar," said the other. "He sends a note."

"A sharp one?" inquired Praeclarus.

"Sharp and pointed," laughed the officer.

"We are expecting you."

"You knew?" demanded the other.

"We guessed, for we know Caesar."

"Then make your peace with your gods," said the officer, drawing his sword and pushing the door open, "for

you are about to die."

There was a cold smile upon his lips as he stepped across the threshold, for Caesar knew his men and had chosen well the proper type for this deed —a creature without conscience whose envy and jealousy Praeclarus had aroused, and the smile was still upon his lips as the sword of Appius Applosus crashed through his helmet to his brain. As the man lunged forward dead, the torch fell from his left hand and was extinguished upon the floor.

"Now go," whispered Praeclarus to Applosus, "and maybe the gratitude of those you have saved prove a guard against disaster."

"It could not have turned out better,"

whispered Applosus. "You have the keys; you have his weapons, and now you have ample time to make your escape before the truth is learned. Goodbye, again. Goodbye, and may the gods protect you."

As Applosus moved cautiously along the dark corridor, Maximus Praeclarus fitted keys to their manacles and both men stood erect, freed at last from their hated chains. No need to formulate plans —they had talked and talked of nothing else for weeks, changing them only to meet altered conditions. Now their first concern was to find Hasta and Metellus and the others upon whose loyalty they could depend and to gather around them as many of the other prisoners as might

be willing to follow them in the daring adventure they contemplated.

Through the darkness of the corridor they crept from cell to cell and in the few that still held prisoners they found none unwilling to pledge his loyalty to any cause or to any leader that might offer freedom. Lukedi, Mpingu, and Ogonyo were among those they liberated. They had almost given up hope of finding the others when they came upon Metellus and Hasta in a cell close to the entrance to the arena. With them were a number of professional gladiators, who should have been liberated with the other victors at the end of the games, but who were being kept because of some whim of Caesar

that they could not understand and that only inflamed them to anger against the Emperor.

To a man they pledged themselves to follow wherever Tarzan might lead.

"Few of us will come through alive," said the ape-man, when they had all gathered in the large room that was reserved for the contestants before they were ushered into the arena, "but those who do will have been avenged upon Caesar for the wrongs that he has done them."

"The others will be welcomed by the gods as heroes worthy of every favor," added Praeclarus.

"We do not care whether your cause be right or wrong, or whether we live or

die," said a gladiator, "so long as there is good fighting."

"There will be good fighting. I can promise you that," said Tarzan, "and plenty of it."

"Then lead on," said the gladiator.

"But first I must liberate the rest of my friends," said the ape-man.

"We have emptied every cell," said Praeclarus. "There are no more."

"Oh, yes, my friend," said Tarzan. "There are still others—the great apes."

CHAPTER 18

IN the dungeons of Validus Augustus in Castrum Mare, Erich von Harben and Mallius Lepus awaited the triumph of Validus Augustus and the opening of the games upon the morrow.

"We have nothing to expect but death," said Lepus, gloomily. "Our friends are in disfavor, or in prison, or in exile. The jealousy of Validus Augustus against his nephew, Cassius Hasta, has been invoked against us by Fulvus Fupus to serve his own aims."

"And the fault is mine," said von Harben. "Do not reproach yourself," replied his friend. "That Favonia gave you her love cannot be held against you. It is only the jealous and scheming mind

of Fupus that is to blame."

"My love has brought sorrow to Favonia and disaster to her friends," said von Harben, "and here am I, chained to a stone wall, unable to strike a blow in her defense or theirs."

"Ah, if Cassius Hasta were but here!" exclaimed Lepus. "There is a man. With Fupus adopted by Caesar, the whole city would arise against Validus Augustus if Cassius Hasta were but here to lead us."

And as they conversed sadly and hopelessly in the dungeons of Castrum Mare, noble guests gathered in the throne-room of Sublatus in the city of Castra Sanguinarius, at the opposite end of the valley. There were senators in rich robes and high officers of the court

and of the army, resplendent in jewels and embroidered linen, who, with their wives and their daughters, formed a gorgeous, and glittering company in the pillared chamber, for Fastus, the son of Caesar, was to wed the daughter of Dion Splendidus that evening.

In the avenue, beyond the palace gates, a great crowd had assembled —a multitude of people pushing and surging to and fro, but pressing ever upon the gates up to the very pikes of the legionaries. It was a noisy crowd—noisy with a deep-throated roar of anger.

"Down with the tyrant!"

"Death to Sublatus!"

"Death to Fastus!" was the burden of their hymn of hate.

The menacing notes filled the palace, reaching to the throne- room, but the haughty patricians pretended not to hear the voice of the cattle. Why should they fear? Had not Sublatus distributed donations to all the troops that very day? Would not the pikes of the legionaries protect the source of their gratuity? It would serve the ungrateful populace right if Sublatus set the legions upon them, for had he not given them such a pageant and such a week of games as Castra Sanguinarius never had known before?

For the rabble without, their contempt knew no bounds now that they were within the palace of the Emperor, but they did not speak among themselves of

the fact that most of them had entered by a back gate after the crowd had upset the litter of a noble senator and spilled its passengers into the dust of the avenue.

With pleasure they anticipated the banquet that would follow the marriage ceremony, and while they laughed and chattered over the gossip of the week, the bride sat stark and cold in an upper chamber of the palace surrounded by her female slaves and comforted by her mother.

"It shall not be," she said. "I shall never be the wife of Fastus," and in the folds of her flowing robe she clutched the hilt of a slim dagger.

In the corridor beneath the Colosseum, Tarzan marshaled his

forces. He summoned Lukedi and a chief of one of the outer villages, who had been a fellow prisoner with him and with whom he had fought shoulder to shoulder in the games.

"Go to the Porta Praetoria," he said, "and ask Appius Applosus to pass you through the city wall as a favor to Maximus Praeclarus. Go then among the villages and gather warriors. Tell them that if they would be avenged upon Caesar and free to live their own lives in their own way, they must rise now and join the citizens who are ready to revolt and destroy the tyrant. Hasten, there is no time to be lost. Gather them quickly and lead them into the city by the Porta Pretoria, straight to the palace of

Caesar."

Warning their followers to silence, Tarzan and Maximus Praeclarus led them in the direction of the barracks of the Colosseum guard, where were quartered the men of Praeclarus's own cohort.

It was a motley throng of near-naked warriors from the outer villages, slaves from the city, and brown half-castes, among whom were murderers, thieves and professional gladiators. Praeclarus and Hasta and Metellus and Tarzan led them, and swarming close to Tarzan were Gayat, Zutho, and Go-yad and their three fellow apes.

Ogonyo was certain now that Tarzan was a demon, for who else might

command the hairy men of the woods? Doubtless in each of these fierce bodies presided the ghost of some great Bagego chief. If little Nkima had been the ghost of his grandfather, then these must be the ghosts of very great men, indeed. Ogonyo did not press too closely to these savage allies, nor as a matter of fact did any of the others—not even the most ferocious of the gladiators.

At the barracks Maximus Praeclarus knew to whom to speak and what to say, for mutiny had long been rife in the ranks of the legionaries. Only their affection for some of their officers, among whom was Praeclarus, had kept them thus long in leash, and now they welcomed the opportunity to follow the young patrician

to the very gates of Caesar's palace.

Following a plan that had been decided upon, Praeclarus dispatched a detachment under an officer to the Porta Praetoria with orders to take it by force, if they could not persuade Appius Applosus to join them, and throw it open to the warriors from the outer villages when they should arrive.

Along the broad Via Principalis, overhung by giant trees that formed a tunnel of darkness in the night, Tarzan of the Apes led his followers toward the palace in the wake of a few torch-bearers, who lighted the way.

As they approached their goal, someone upon the outskirts of the crowd, pressing the palace guard, was attracted

by the light of their torches and quickly the word was passed that Caesar had sent for reinforcements— that more troops were coming. The temper of the crowd, already inflamed, was not improved as this news spread quickly through its ranks. A few, following a self-appointed leader, moved forward menacingly to meet the newcomers.

"Who comes?" shouted one.

"It is I, Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man.

The shout that went up in response to this declaration proved that the fickle populace had not, as yet, turned against him.

Within the palace the cries of the people brought a scowl to the face of

Caesar and a sneer to many a patrician lip, but their reaction might have been far different had they known the cause of the elation of the mob.

"Why are you here?" cried voices. "What are you going to do?"

"We have come to rescue Dilecta from the arms of Fastus and to drag the tyrant from the throne of Castra Sanguinarius."

Roars of approval greeted the announcement. "Death to the tyrant!"

"Down with the palace guards!"

"Kill them!"

"Kill them!" rose from a thousand lips.

The crowd pushed forward. The

officer of the guard, seeing the reinforcements, among which were many legionaries, ordered his men to fall back within the palace grounds and close and bar the gate, nor did they succeed in accomplishing this an instant too soon, for as the bolts were shot the crowd hurled itself upon the stout barriers of iron and oak.

A pale-faced messenger hastened to the throne-room and to Caesar's side.

"The people have risen," he whispered, hoarsely, "and many soldiers and gladiators and slaves have joined them. They are throwing themselves against the gates, which cannot hold for long."

Caesar arose and paced nervously to

and fro, and presently he paused and summoned officers.

"Dispatch messengers to every gate and every barracks," he ordered. "Summon the troops to the last man that may be spared from the gates. Order them to fall upon the rabble and kill. Let them kill until no citizen remains alive in the streets of Castra Sanguinarius. Take no prisoners."

As word finds its way through a crowd, as though by some strange telepathic means, so the knowledge soon became common that Sublatus had ordered every legionary in the city to the palace with instructions to destroy the revolutionaries to the last man.

The people, encouraged by the

presence of the legionaries led by Praeclarus, had renewed their assaults upon the gates, and though many were piked through its bars, their bodies were dragged away by their friends and others took their places, so that the gates sagged and bent beneath their numbers; yet they held and Tarzan saw that they might hold for long— or at least long enough to permit the arrival of the reinforcements that, if they remained loyal to Caesar, might overcome this undisciplined mob with ease.

Gathering around him some of those he knew best, Tarzan explained a new plan that was greeted with exclamations of approval, and summoning the apes he moved down the dark avenue, followed

by Maximus Praeclarus, Cassius Hasta, Caecilius Metellus, Mpingu, and a half dozen of Castra Sanguinarius's most famous gladiators.

The wedding of Fastus and Dilecta was to take place upon the steps of Caesar's throne. The high priest of the temple stood facing the audience, and just below him, and at one side, Fastus waited, while slowly up the center of the long chamber came the bride, followed by the vestal virgins, who tended the temple's sacred fires.

Dilecta was pale, but she did not falter as she moved slowly forward to her doom. There were many who whispered that she looked the Empress already, so noble was her mien, so

stately her carriage. They could not see the slim dagger clutched in her right hand beneath the flowing bridal robes. Up the aisle she moved, but she did not halt before the priest as Fastus had done—and as she should have done—but passed him and mounting the first few steps toward the throne she halted, facing Sublatus.

"The people of Castra Sanguinarius have been taught through all the ages that they may look to Caesar for protection," she said. "Caesar not only makes the law—he is the law. He is either the personification of justice or he is a tyrant. Which, Sublatus, are you?"

Caesar flushed. "What mad whim is this, child?" he demanded. "Who has set

you to speak such words to Caesar?"

"I have not been prompted," replied the girl, wearily. "It is my last hope and though I knew beforehand that it was futile, I felt that I must not cast it aside as useless before putting it to the test."

"Come! Come!" snapped Caesar. "Enough of this foolishness. Take your place before the priest and repeat your marriage vows."

"You cannot refuse me," cried the girl, stubbornly. "I appeal to Caesar, which is my right as a citizen of Rome, the mother city that we have never seen, but whose right to citizenship has been handed down to us from our ancient sires. Unless the spark of freedom is to be denied us, you cannot refuse me that

right, Sublatus."

The Emperor paled and then flushed with anger. "Come lo me tomorrow," be said. "You shall have whatever you wish."

"If you do not hear me now, there will be no tomorrow," she said. "I demand my rights now."

"Well," demanded Caesar, coldly, "what favor do you seek?"

"I seek no favor," replied Dilecta. "I seek the right to know if the thing for which I am paying this awful price has been done, as it was promised."

"What do you mean?" demanded Sublatus. "What proof do you wish?"

"I wish to see Maximus Praeclarus

here alive and free," replied the girl, "before I pledge my troth to Fastus. That, as you well know, was the price of my promise to wed him."

Caesar arose angrily. "That cannot be," he said.

"Oh, yes, it can be," cried a voice from the balcony at the side of the chamber, "for Maximus Praeclarus stands just behead me."

CHAPTER 19

EVERY eye turned in the direction of the balcony from which came the voice of the speaker. A gasp of astonishment arose from the crowded room.

"The barbarian!"

"Maximus Praeclarus!" cried a score of voices.

"The guard! The guard!" screamed Caesar, as Tarzan leaped from the balcony to one of the tall pillars that supported the roof and slid quickly to the floor, while behind him came six hairy apes.

A dozen swords flashed from their scabbards as Tarzan and the six leaped toward the throne. Women screamed and fainted. Caesar shrank back upon his

golden seat, momentarily paralyzed by terror.

A noble with bared blade leaped in front of Tarzan to bar his way, but Go-yad sprang full upon him. Yellow fangs bit once into his neck and, as the great ape arose and standing on the body of his kill roared forth his victory cry, the other nobles shrank back. Fastus, with a scream, turned and fled, and Tarzan leaped to Dilecta's side. As the apes ascended the steps to the dais, Caesar, jabbering with terror, scuttled from his seat and hid, half-fainting, behind the great throne that was the symbol of his majesty and his power.

But it was not long before the nobles and officers and soldiers in the

apartment regained the presence of mind that the sudden advent of this horrid horde had scattered to the four winds, and now, seeing only the wild barbarian and six unarmed beasts threatening them, they pushed forward. Just then a small door beneath the balcony from which Tarzan had descended to the floor of the throne-room was pushed open, giving entrance to Maximus Praeclarus, Cassius Hasta, Callous Metellus, Mpingu, and the others who had accompanied Tarzan over the palace wall beneath the shadows of the great trees into which the ape- man and the apes had assisted their less agile fellows.

As Caesar's defenders sprang forward they were met by some of the

best swords in Castra Sanguinarius, as in the forefront of the fighting were the very gladiators whose exploits they had cheered during the week. Tarzan passed Dilecta to Mpingu, for he and Praeclarus must lend a hand in the fighting.

Slowly, Dilecta's defenders fell back before the greater number of nobles, soldiers, and guardsmen who were summoned from other parts of the palace. Back toward the little door they fell, while shoulder to shoulder with the gladiators and with Maximus Praeclarus and Hasta and Metellus, Tarzan fought and the great apes spread consternation among all because of their disposition to attack friend as well as foe.

And out upon the Via Principalis the

crowd surged and the great gates gave to a shrieking mob that poured into the palace grounds, overwhelming the guards, trampling them—trampling their own dead and their own living.

But the veteran legionaries who composed the palace guard made a new stand at the entrance to the palace. Once more they checked the undisciplined rabble, which had by now grown to such proportions that the revolting troops, who had joined them, were lost in their midst. The guard had dragged an onager to the palace steps and were discharging stones into the midst of the crowd, which continued to rush forward to fall upon the pikes of the palace defenders.

In the distance trumpets sounded from

the direction of the Porta Decumana, and from the Porta Principalis Dextra came the sound of advancing troops. At first those upon the outskirts of the mob, who had heard these sounds, did not interpret them correctly. They cheered and shouted. These cowards that hang always upon the fringe of every crowd, letting others take the risks and do the fighting for them, thought that more troops had revolted and that the reinforcements were for them. But their joy was short-lived, for the first century that swung into the Via Principalis from the Porta Decumana fell upon them with pike and sword until those who were not slain escaped, screaming, in all directions.

Century after century came at the double. They cleared the Via Principalis and fell upon the mob within the palace court until the revolt dissolved into screaming individuals fleeing through the darkness of the palace grounds, seeking any shelter that they might find, while terrible legionaries pursued them with flaming torches and bloody swords.

Back into the little room from which they had come fell Tarzan and his followers. The doorway was small and it was not difficult for a few men to hold it, but when they would have retreated through the window they had entered and gone back into the palace grounds to seek escape across the walls in the shadows of the old trees, they saw the

grounds swarming with legionaries and realized that the back of the revolt had been broken.

The anteroom in which they had taken refuge would barely accommodate them all, but it offered probably the best refuge they could have found in all the palace of Sublatus, for there were but two openings in it—the single small doorway leading into the throne-room and an even smaller window letting into the palace gardens. The walls were all stone and proof against any weapons at the disposal of the legionaries; yet if the uprising had failed and the legionaries had not joined the people, as they had expected, of what value this temporary sanctuary? The instant that hunger and

thirst assailed them this same room would become their prison cell and torture chamber —and perhaps for many of them a vestibule to the grave.

"Ah, Dilecta," cried Praeclarus, in the first moment that he could seize to go to her side, "I have found you only to lose you again. My rashness, perhaps, has brought you death."

"Your coming saved me from death," replied the girl, drawing the dagger from her gown and exhibiting it to Praeclarus. "I chose this as husband rather than Fastus," she said, "so if I die now I have lived longer than I should have, had you not come; and at least I die happy, for we shall die together."

"This is no time to be speaking of

dying," said Tarzan. "Did you think a few hours ago that you would ever be together again? Well, here you are. Perhaps in a few more hours everything will be changed and you will be laughing at the fears you are now entertaining."

Some of the gladiators, who were standing near and had overheard Tarzan's words, shook their heads.

"Any of us who gets out of this room alive," said one, "will be burned at the stake, or fed to lions, or pulled apart by wild buffalo. We are through, but it has been a good fight, and I for one thank this great barbarian for this glorious end."

Tarzan shrugged and turned away. "I

am not dead yet," he said, "and not until I am dead is it time to think of it—and then it will be too late."

Maximus Praeclarus laughed. "Perhaps you are right," he said. "What do you suggest? If we stay here, we shall be slain, so you must have some plan for getting us out."

"If we can discern no hope of advantage through our own efforts," replied Tarzan, "we must look elsewhere and await such favors of fortune as may come from without, either through the intervention of our friends beyond the palace grounds or from the carelessness of the enemy himself. I admit that just at present our case appears desperate, but even so I am not

without hope; at least we may be cheered by the realization that whatever turn events may take it must be for the better, since nothing could be worse."

"I do not agree with you," said Metellus, pointing through the window. "See, they ere setting up a small ballista in the garden. Presently our condition will be much worse than it is now."

"The walls appear substantial," returned the ape-man. "Do you think they can batter them down, Praeclarus?"

"I doubt it," replied the Roman, "but every missile that comes through the window must take its toll, as we are so crowded here that all of us cannot get out of range."

The legionaries that had been

summoned to the throne-room had been held at the small doorway by a handful of gladiators and the defenders had been able to close and bar the stout oaken door. For a time there had been silence in the throne-room and no attempt was made to gain entrance to the room upon that side; while upon the garden side two or three attempts to rush the window had been thwarted, and now the legionaries held off while the small ballista was being dragged into place and trained upon the palace wall.

Dilecta having been placed in an angle of the room where she would be safest, Tarzan and his lieutenants watched the operations of the legionaries in the garden.

"They do not seem to be aiming directly at the window," remarked Cassius Hasta.

"No," said Praeclarus. "I rather think they intend making a breach in the wall through which a sufficient number of them can enter to overpower us."

"If we could rush the ballista and take it," mused Tarzan, "We could make it rather hot for them. Let us bold ourselves in readiness for that, if their missiles make it too hot for us in here. We shall have some advantage if we anticipate their assault by a sortie of our own."

A dull thud upon the door at the opposite end of the room brought the startled attention of the defenders to that

quarter. The oak door sagged and the stone walls trembled to the impact.

Cassius Hasta smiled wryly. "They have brought a ram," he said.

And now a heavy projectile shook the outer wall and a piece of plaster crumbled to the floor upon the inside—the ballista had come into action. Once again the heavy battering-ram shivered the groaning timbers of the door and the inmates of the room could hear the legionaries chanting the hymn of the ram to the cadence of which they swung it Kick and heaved it forward.

The troops in the garden went about their duty with quiet, military efficiency. Each time a stone from the ballista struck the wall there was a shout, but

there was nothing spontaneous in the demonstration, which seemed as perfunctory as the mechanical operation of the ancient war-engine that delivered its missiles with almost clocklike regularity.

The greatest damage that the ballista appeared to be doing was to the plaster on the inside of the wall, but the battering-ram was slowly but surely shattering the door at the opposite side of the room.

"Look," said Metellus, "they are altering the line of the ballista. They have discovered that they can effect nothing against the wall."

"They are aiming at the window," said Praeclarus.

"Those of you who are in line with the window lie down upon the floor," commanded Tarzan. "Quickly! the hammer is falling upon the trigger."

The next missile struck one side of the window, carrying away a piece of the stone, and this time the result was followed by an enthusiastic shout from the legionaries in the garden.

"That's what they should have done in the beginning," commented Hasta. "If they get the walls started at the edge of the window, they can make a breach more quickly there than elsewhere."

"That is evidently what they are planning on doing," said Metellus, as a second missile struck in the same place and a large fragment of the wall

crumbled.

"Look to the door," shouted Tarzan, as the weakened timbers sagged to the impact of the ram.

A dozen swordsmen stood ready and waiting to receive the legionaries, whose rush they expected the instant that the door fell. At one side of the room the six apes crouched, growling, and kept in leash only by the repeated assurances of Tarzan that the man-things in the room with them were the friends of the ape-man.

As the door crashed, there was a momentary silence, as each side waited to see what the other would do, and in the lull that ensued there came through the air a roaring sound ominous and

threatening, and then the shouts of the legionaries in the throne- room and the legionaries in the garden drowned all other sounds.

The gap around the window had been enlarged. The missiles of the ballista had crumbled the wall from the ceiling to the floor, and as though in accordance with a prearranged plan the legionaries assaulted simultaneously, one group rushing the doorway from the throne-room, the other the breach in the opposite wall.

Tarzan turned toward the apes and pointing in the direction of the breached wall, shouted: "Stop them, Zutho! Kill, Go-yad! Kill!"

The men near him looked at him in

surprise and perhaps they shuddered a little as they heard the growling voice of a beast issue from the throat of the giant barbarian, but instantly they realized he was speaking to his hairy fellows, as they saw the apes spring forward with bared fangs and, growling hideously, throw themselves upon the first legionaries to reach the window. Two apes went down, pierced by Roman pikes, but before the beastly rage of the others Caesar's soldiers gave back.

"After them," cried Tarzan to Praeclarus. "Follow them into the garden. Capture the ballista and turn it upon the legionaries. We will hold the throne-room door until you have seized the ballista, then we shall fall back upon

you."

After the battling apes rushed the three patricians, Maximus Praeclarus, Cassius Hasta, and Caecilius Metellus, leading gladiators, thieves, murderers, and slaves into the garden, profiting by the temporary advantage the apes had gained for them.

Side by side with the remaining gladiators Tarzan fought to hold the legionaries back from the little doorway until the balance of his party had won safely to the garden and seized the ballista. Glancing back he saw Mpingu leading Dilecta from the room in the rear of the escaped prisoners. Then he turned again to the defense of the doorway, which his little party held stubbornly

until Tarzan saw the ballista in the hands of his own men, and, giving step by step across the room, he and they backed through the breach in the wall.

At a shout of command from Praeclarus, they leaped to one side. The hammer fell upon the trigger of the ballista, which Praeclarus had lined upon the window, and a heavy rock drove full into the faces of the legionaries.

For a moment the fates had been kind to Tarzan and his fellows, but it soon became apparent that they were little if any better off here than in the room they had just quitted, for in the garden they were ringed by legionaries. Pikes were flying through the air, and though the

ballista and their own good swords were keeping the enemy at a respectful distance, there was none among them who believed that they could for long withstand the superior numbers and the bettor equipment of their adversaries.

There came a pause in the fighting, which must necessarily be the case in hand-to-hand encounters, and as though by tacit agreement each side rested. The three whites watched the enemy closely. "They are preparing for a concerted attack with pikes," said Praeclarus.

"That will write finis to our earthly endeavors," remarked Cassius Hasta.

"May the gods receive us with rejoicing," said Caecilius Metellus.

"I think the gods prefer them to us,"

said Tarzan.

"Why?" demanded Cassius Hasta.

"Because they have taken so many more of them to heaven this night," replied the ape-man, pointing at the corpses lying about the garden, and Cassius Hasta smiled, appreciatively.

"They will charge in another moment," said Maximus Praeclarus, and turning to Dilecta he took her in his arms and kissed her. "Goodbye, dear heart," he said. "How fleeting is happiness! How futile the hopes of mortal man!"

"Not goodbye, Praeclarus," replied the girl, "for where you go I shall go," and she showed him the slim dagger in her hand.

"No," cried the man. "Promise me that

you will not do that."

"And why not? Is not death sweeter than Fastus?"

"Perhaps you are right," he said, sadly.

"They come," cried Cassius Hasta.

"Ready!" shouted Tarzan. "Give them all we have. Death is hotter than the dungeons of the Colosseum."

CHAPTER 20

FROM the far end of the garden, above the din of breaking battle, rose a savage cry—a new note that attracted the startled attention of the contestants upon both sides. Tarzan's head snapped to attention. His nostrils sniffed the air. Recognition, hope, surprise, incredulity surged through his consciousness as he stood there with flashing eyes looking out over the heads of his adversaries.

In increasing volume the savage roar rolled into the garden of Caesar. The legionaries turned to face the vanguard of an army led by a horde of warriors, glistening giants from whose proud heads floated white-feathered war-bonnets and from whose throats issued

the savage war-cry that had filled the heart of Tarzan—the Waziri had come.

At their head Tarzan saw Muviro and with him was Lukedi, but what the ape-man did not see, and what none of those in the garden of Caesar saw until later, was the horde of warriors from the outer villages of Castra Sanguinarius that, following the Waziri into the city, were already overrunning the palace seeking the vengeance that had so long been denied them.

As the last of the legionaries in the garden threw down their arms and begged Tarzan's protection, Muviro ran to the ape-man and, kneeling at his feet, kissed his hand, and at the same instant a little monkey dropped from an

overhanging tree onto Tarzan's shoulder.

"The gods of our ancestors have been good to the Waziri," said Muviro, "otherwise we should have been too late."

"I was puzzled as to how you found me," said Tarzan, "until I saw Nkima."

"Yes, it was Nkima," said Muviro. "He came back to the country of the Waziri, to the land of Tarzan, and led us here. Many times we would have turned back thinking that he was mad, but he urged us on and we followed him, and now the big Bwana can come back with us to the home of his own people."

"No," said Tarzan, shaking his head, "I cannot come yet The son of my good friend is still in this valley, but you are

just in time to help me rescue him, nor is there any time to lose."

Legionaries, throwing down their arms, were running from the palace, from which came the shrieks and groans of the dying and the savage hoots and cries of the avenging horde. Praeclarus stepped to Tarzan's side.

"The barbarians of the outer villages are attacking the city, murdering all who fall into their hands," he cried. "We must gather what men we can and make a stand against them. Will these warriors, who have just come, fight with us against them?"

"They will fight as I direct," replied Tarzan, "but I think it will not be necessary to make war upon the

barbarians. Lukedi, where are the white officers who command the barbarians?"

"Once they neared the palace," replied Lukedi, "the warriors became so excited that they broke away from their white leaders and followed their own chieftain."

"Go and fetch their greatest chief," directed Tarzan.

During the half hour that followed, Tarzan and his lieutenants were busy reorganizing their forces into which were incorporated the legionaries who had surrendered to them, in coring for the wounded, and planning for the future. From the palace came the hoarse cries of the looting soldiers, and Tarzan had about abandoned hope that Lukedi would

be able to persuade a chief to come to him when Lukedi returned, accompanied by two warriors from the outer villages, whose bearing and ornaments proclaimed them chieftains.

"You are the man called Tarzan?" demanded one of the chiefs.

The ape-man nodded. "I am," he said.

"We have been looking for you. This Bagego said that you have promised that no more shall our people be taken into slavery and no longer shall our warriors be condemned to the arena. How can you, who are yourself a barbarian, guarantee this to us?"

"If I cannot guarantee it, you have the power to enforce it yourself," replied the ape-man, "and I with my Waziri will aid

you, but now you must gather your warriors. Let no one be killed from now on who does not oppose you. Gather your warriors and take them into the avenue before the palace and then come with your sub-chiefs to the throne-room of Caesar. There we shall demand and receive justice, not for the moment but for all time. Go!"

Eventually the looting horde was quieted by their chiefs and withdrawn to the Via Principalis. Waziri warriors manned the shattered gate of Caesar's palace and lined the corridor to the throne-room and the aisle to the foot of the throne. They formed a half circle about the throne itself, and upon the throne of Caesar sat Tarzan of the Apes

with Praeclarus and Dilecta and Cassius Hasta and Caecilius Metellus and Muviro about him, while little Nkima sat upon his shoulder and complained bitterly, for Nkima, as usual, was frightened and cold and hungry.

"Send legionaries to fetch Sublatus and Fastus," Tarzan directed Praeclarus, "for this business must be attended to quickly, as within the hour I march on Castrum Mare."

Flushed with excitement, the legionaries that had been sent to fetch Sublatus and Fastus rushed into the throne-room. "Sublatus is dead!" they cried. "Fastus is dead! The barbarians have slain them. The chambers and corridors above are filled with the

bodies of senators, nobles, and officers of the legion."

"Are none left alive?" demanded Praeclarus, paling.

"Yes," replied one of the legionaries, "there were many barricaded in another apartment who withstood the onslaught of the warriors. We explained to them that they are now safe and they are coming to the throne-room," and up the aisle marched the remnants of the wedding guests, the sweat and blood upon the men evidencing the dire straits from which they had been delivered, the women still nervous and hysterical. Leading them came Dion Splendidus, and at sight of him Dilecta gave a cry of relief and pleasure and ran down the

steps of the throne and along the aisle to meet him.

Tarzan's face lighted with relief when he saw the old senator, for his weeks in the home of Festivitas and his long incarceration with Maximus Praeclarus in the dungeons of the Colosseum had familiarized him with the politics of Castra Sanguinarius, and now the presence of Dion Splendidus was all that he needed to complete the plans that the tyranny and cruelty of Sublatus had forced upon him.

He rose from the throne and raised his hand for silence. The hum of voices ceased. "Caesar is dead, but upon someone of you must fall the mantle of Caesar."

"Long live Tarzan! Long live the new Caesar!" cried one of the gladiators, and instantly every Sanguinarian in the room took up the cry.

The ape-man smiled and shook his head. "No," he said, "not I, but there is one here to whom I offer the imperial diadem upon the condition that he fulfill the promises I have made to the barbarians of the outer villages. Dion Splendidus, will you accept the imperial purple with the understanding that the men of the outer villages shall be forever free; that no longer shall their girls or their boys be pressed into slavery, or their warriors forced to do battle in the arena?"

Dion Splendidus bowed his bead in

assent—and thus did Tarzan refuse the diadem and create a Caesar.

CHAPTER 21

THE yearly triumph of Validus Augustus, Emperor of the East, had been a poor thing by comparison with that of Sublatus of Castra Sanguinarius, though dignity and interest was lent the occasion by the presence of the much-advertised barbarian chieftain, who strode in chains behind Caesars chariot.

The vain show of imperial power pleased Validus Augustus, deceiving perhaps the more ignorant of his subjects, and would have given Erich von Harben cause for laughter had he not realized the seriousness of his position.

No captive chained to the chariot of the greatest Caesar that ever lived had faced a more hopeless situation than he.

What though he knew that a regiment of marines or a squadron of Uhlans might have reduced this entire empire to vassalage? What though he knew that the mayor of many a modern city could have commanded a fighting force far greater and much more effective than this little Caesar? The knowledge was only tantalizing, for the fact remained that Validus Augustus was supreme here and there was neither regiment of marines nor squadron of Uhlans to question his behavior toward the subject of a great republic that could have swallowed his entire empire without being conscious of any discomfort. The triumph was over. Von Harben had been returned to the cell that he occupied with Mallius Lepus.

"You are back early," said Lepus. "How did the triumph of Validus impress you?"

"It was not much of a show, if I may judge by the amount of enthusiasm displayed by the people."

"The triumphs of Validus are always poor things," said Lepus. "He would rather put ten talents in his belly or on his back than spend one denarius to amuse the people."

"And the games," asked von Harben, "will they be as poor?"

"They do not amount to much," said Lepus. "We have few criminals here and as we have to purchase all our slaves, they are too valuable to waste in this way. Many of the contests are between

wild beasts, an occasional thief or murderer may be pitted against a gladiator, but for the most part Validus depends upon professional gladiators and political prisoners—enemies or supposed enemies of Caesar. More often they are like you and I— victims of the lying and jealous intrigues of favorites. There are about twenty such in the dungeons now, and they will furnish the most interesting entertainment of the games."

"And if we are victorious, we are freed?" asked von Harben.

"We shall not be victorious," said Mallius Lepus. "Fulvus Fupus has seen to that, you may rest assured."

"It is terrible," muttered von Harben.

"You are afraid to die?" asked Mallius Lepus.

"It is not that," said von Harben. "I am thinking of Favonia."

"And well you may," said Mallius Lepus. "My sweet cousin would be happier dead than married to Fulvus Fupus."

"I feel so helpless," said von Harben. "Not a friend, not even my faithful body servant, Gabula."

"Oh, that reminds me," exclaimed Lepus. "They were here looking for him this morning."

"Looking for him? Is he not confined in the dungeon?"

"He was, but he was detailed with

other prisoners to prepare the arena last night, and during the darkness of early morning he is supposed to have escaped —but be that as it may, they were looking for him."

"Good!" exclaimed von Harben. "I shall feel better just knowing that he is at large, though there is nothing that he can do for me. Where could he have gone?"

"Castrum Mare is ill guarded along its waterfront, but the lake itself and the crocodiles form a barrier as efficacious as many legionaries. Gabula may have scaled the wall, but the chances are that he is hiding within the city, protected by other slaves or, possibly, by Septimus Favonius himself."

"I wish I might feel that the poor,

faithful fellow had been able to escape the country and return to his own people," said von Harben.

Mallius Lepus shook his head. "That is impossible," he said. "Though you came down over the cliff, he could not return that way, and even if he could find the pass to the outer world, he would fall into the hands of the soldiers of Castra Sanguinarius or the barbarians of their outer villages. No, there is no chance that Gabula will escape."

The time passed quickly, all too quickly, between the hour that Erich von Harben was returned to his cell, following his exhibition in the triumph of Validus Augustus, and the coming of the Colosseum guards to drive them into the

arena.

The Colosseum was packed. The loges of the patricians were filled. The haughty Caesar of the East sat upon an ornate throne, shaded by a canopy of purple linen. Septimus Favonius sat with bowed head in his loge and with him was his wife and Favonia. The girl sat with staring eyes fixed upon the gateway from which the contestants were emerging. She saw her cousin, Mallius Lepus, emerge and with him Erich von Harben, and she shuddered and closed her eyes for a moment.

When she opened them again the column was forming and the contestants were marched across the white sands to receive the commands of Caesar. With

Mallius Lepus and von Harben marched the twenty political prisoners, all of whom were of the patrician class. Then came the professional gladiators — coarse, brutal men, whose business it was to kill or be killed. Leading these, with a bold swagger, was one who had been champion gladiator of Castrum Mare for five years. If the people had an idol, it was he. They roared their approval of him. "Claudius Taurus! Claudius Taurus!" rose above a babble of voices. A few mean thieves, some frightened slaves, and a half dozen lions completed the victims that were to make a Roman holiday.

Erich von Harben had often been fascinated by the stories of the games of

ancient Rome. Often had he pictured the Colosseum packed with its thousands and the contestants upon the white sand of the arena, but now he realized that they had been but pictures—but the photographs of his imagination. The people in those dreams had been but picture people— automatons, who move only when we look at them. When there had been action on the sand the audience had been a silent etching, and when the audience had roared and turned its thumbs down the actors had been mute and motionless.

How different, this! He saw the constant motion in the packed stands, the mosaic of a thousand daubs of color that became kaleidoscopic with every move

of the multitude. He heard the hum of voices and sensed the offensive odor of many human bodies. He saw the hawkers and vendors passing along the aisles shouting their wares. He saw the legionaries stationed everywhere. He saw the rich in their canopied loges and the poor in the hot sun of the cheap seats.

Sweat was trickling down the back of the neck of the patrician marching just in front of him. He glanced at Claudius Taurus. He saw that his tunic was faded and that his hairy legs were dirty. He had always thought of gladiators as cleanlimbed and resplendent. Claudius Taurus shocked him.

As they formed in solid rank before the loge of Caesar, von Harben smelled

the men pressing close behind him. The air was hot and oppressive. The whole thing was disgusting.

There was no grandeur to it, no dignity. He wondered if it had been like this in Rome.

And then he looked up into the loge of Caesar. He saw the man in gorgeous robes, sitting upon his carved throne. He saw naked slaves swaying long-handled fans of feathers above the head of Caesar. He saw large men in gorgeous tunics and cuirasses of shining gold. He saw the wealth and pomp and circumstance of power, and something told him that after all ancient Rome had probably been much as this was—that its populace had smelled and that its

gladiators had had hairy legs with din on them and that its patricians had sweated behind the ears.

Perhaps Validus Augustus was as great a Caesar as any of them, for did he not rule half of his known world? Few of them had done more than this.

His eyes wandered along the row of loges. The prefect of the games was speaking and von Harben heard his voice, but the words did not reach his brain, for his eyes had suddenly met those of a girl.

He saw the anguish and hopeless horror in her face and he tried to smile as he looked at her, a smile of encouragement and hope, but she only saw the beginning of the smile, for the

tears came and the image of the man she loved was only a dull blur like the pain in her heart.

A movement in the stands behind the loges attracted von Harben's eyes and he puckered his brows, straining his faculties to assure himself that he must be mistaken, but he was not. What he had seen was Gabula—he was moving toward the imperial loge, where he disappeared behind the hangings that formed the background of Caesar's throne.

Then the prefect ordered them from the arena and as von Harben moved across the sand he tried to find some explanation of Gabula's presence there—what errand had brought him to so

dangerous a place?

The contestants had traversed but half the width of the arena returning to their cells when a sudden scream, ringing out behind them, caused them all to turn. Von Harben saw that the disturbance came from the imperial loge, but the scene that met his startled gaze seemed too preposterous to have greater substance than a dream. Perhaps it was all a dream. Perhaps there was no Castrum Mare. Perhaps there was no Validus Augustus. Perhaps there was no —ah, but that could not be true, there was a Favonia and this preposterous thing then that he was looking at was true too. He saw a man holding Caesar by the throat and driving a dagger into his heart

with the other, and the man was Gabula.

It all happened so quickly and was over so quickly that scarcely had Caesar's shriek rung through the Colosseum than he lay dead at the foot of his carved throne, and Gabula, the assassin, in a single leap had cleared the arena wall and was running across the sand toward von Harben.

"I have avenged you, Bwana!" cried Gabula. "No matter what they do to you, you are avenged."

A great groan arose from the audience and then a cheer as someone shouted: "Caesar is dead!"

A hope flashed to the breast of von Harben. He turned and grabbed Mallius Lepus by the arm. "Caesar is dead," he

whispered. "Now is our chance."

"What do you mean?" demanded Mallius Lepus.

"In the confusion we can escape. We can hide in the city and at night we can take Favonia with us and go away."

"Where?" asked Mallius Lepus.

"God! I do not know," exclaimed von Harben, "but anywhere would be better than here, for Fulvus Fupus is Caesar and if we do not save Favonia tonight, it will be too late."

"You are right," said Mallius Lepus.

"Pass the word to the others," said von Harben. "The more there are who try to escape the better chance there will be for some of us to succeed."

The legionaries and their officers as well as the vast multitude could attend only upon what was happening in the logo of Caesar. So few of them had seen what really occurred there that as yet there had been no pursuit of Gabula.

Mallius Lepus turned to the other prisoners. "The gods have been good to us," he cried. "Caesar is dead and in the confusion we can escape. Come!"

As Mallius Lepus started on a run toward the gateway that led to the cells beneath the Colosseum, the shouting prisoners fell in behind him. Only those of the professional gladiators who were freemen held aloof, but they made no effort to stop them.

"Good luck!" shouted Claudius

Taurus, as von Harben passed him. "Now if someone would kill Fulvus Fupus we might have a Caesar who is a Caesar."

The sudden rush of the escaping prisoners so confused and upset the few guards beneath the Colosseum that they were easily overpowered and a moment later the prisoners found themselves in the streets of Castrum Mare.

"Where now?" cried one.

"We must scatter," said Mallius Lepus. "Each man for himself."

"We shall stick together, Mallius Lepus," said von Harben.

"To the end," replied the Roman.

"And here is Gabula," said von

Harben, as the Negro joined them. "He shall come with us."

"We cannot desert the brave Gabula," said Mallius Lepus, "but the first thing for us to do is to find a hiding-place."

"There is a low wall across the avenue," said von Harben, "and there are trees beyond it."

"Come, then," said Mallius Lepus. "It is as good for now as any other place."

The three men hurried across the avenue and scaled the low wall, finding themselves in a garden so overgrown with weeds and underbrush that they at once assumed that it was deserted. Creeping through the weeds and forcing their way through the underbrush, they came to the rear of a house. A broken

door, hanging by one hinge, windows from which the wooden blinds had fallen, an accumulation of rubbish upon the threshold marked the dilapidated structure as a deserted house.

"Perhaps this is just the place for us to hide until night," said von Harben.

"Its proximity to the Colosseum is its greatest advantage," said Mallius Lepus, "for they will be sure to believe that we have rushed as far from our dungeon as we could. Let us go in and investigate. We must be sure that the place is uninhabited."

The rear room, which had been the kitchen, had a crumbling brick oven in one corner, a bench and a dilapidated table. Crossing the kitchen, they entered

an apartment beyond and saw that these two rooms constituted all that there was to the house. The front room was large and as the blinds at the windows facing the avenue had not fallen, it was dark within it. In one corner they saw a ladder reaching to a trap-door in the ceiling, which evidently led to the roof of the building, and two or three feet below the ceiling and running entirely across the end of the room where the ladder arose was a false ceiling, which formed a tiny loft just below the roof-beams, a place utilized by former tenants as a storage room. A more careful examination of the room revealed nothing more than a pile of filthy rags against one wall, the remains perhaps of

some homeless beggar's bed.

"It could not have been better," said Mallius Lepus, "if this had been built for us. Why, we have three exits if we are hard pressed—one into the back garden, one into the avenue in front, and the third to the roof."

"We can remain in safety, then," said von Harben, "until after dark, when it should be easy to make our way unseen through the dark streets to the home of Septimus Favonius."

CHAPTER 22

EAST along the Via Mare from Castra Sanguinarius marched five thousand men. The white plumes of the Waziri nodded at the back of Tarzan. Stalwart legionaries followed Maxim us Praeclarus, while the warriors of the outer villages brought up the rear.

Sweating slaves dragged catapults, ballistae, testudones, huge battering-rams, and other ancient engines of war. There were scaling ladders and wall hooks and devices for throwing fire balls into the defenses of an enemy. The heavy engines had delayed the march and Tarzan had chafed at the delay, but he had to listen to Maximus Praeclarus and Cassius Hasta and Caecilius

Metellus, all of whom had assured him that the fort, which defended the only road to Castrum Mare, could not be taken by assault without the aid of these mechanical engines of war.

Along the hot and dusty Via Mare the Waziri swung, chanting the war-songs of their people. The hardened legionaries, their heavy helmets dangling against their breasts from cords that passed about their necks, their packs on forked sticks across their shoulders, their great oblong shields hanging in their leather covers at their backs, cursed and grumbled as become veterans, while the warriors from the outer villages laughed and sang and chattered as might a party of picnickers.

As they approached the fort with its moat and embankment and palisade and towers, slaves were bearing the body of Valid us Augustus to his palace within the city, and Fulvus Fupus, surrounded by fawning sycophants, was proclaiming himself Caesar, though he trembled inwardly in contemplation of what fate might lie before him—for though he was a fool be knew that he was not popular and that many a noble patrician with a strong following had a better right to the imperial purple than he.

Throughout the city of Castrum Mare legionaries searched for the escaped prisoners and especially for the slave who had struck down Validus Augustus, though they were handicapped by the

fact that no one had recognized Gabula, for there were few in the city and certainly none in the entourage of Caesar who was familiar with the face of the black from distant Urambi.

A few of the thieves and five or six gladiators, who were condemned felons and not freemen, had clung together in the break for freedom and presently they found themselves in hiding in a low part of the city, in a den where wine could be procured and where there were other forms of entertainment for people of their class.

"What sort of a Caesar will this Fulvus Fupus make?" asked one.

"He will be worse than Validus Augustus," said another. "I have seen

him in the Baths where I once worked. He is vain and dull and ignorant; even the patricians hate him."

"They say he is going to marry the daughter of Septimus Favonius."

"I saw her in the Colosseum today," said another. "I know her well by sight, for she used to come to the shop of my father and make purchases before I was sent to the dungeons."

"Have you ever been to the house of Septimus Favonius?" asked another.

"Yes, I have," said the youth. "Twice I took goods there for her inspection, going through the forecourt and into the inner garden. I know the place well."

"If one like her should happen to fall into the hands of a few poor convicts

they might win their freedom and a great ransom," suggested a low-browed fellow with evil, cunning eyes.

"And be drawn asunder by wild oxen for their pains."

"We must die anyway if we are caught."

"It is a good plan."

They drank again for several minutes in silence, evidencing that the plan was milling in their minds.

"The new Caesar should pay an enormous ransom for his bride."

The youth rose eagerly to his feet. "I will lead you to the home of Septimus Favonius and guarantee that they will open the gate for me and let me in, as I

know what to say. All I need is a bundle and I can tell the slave that it contains goods that my father wishes Favonia to inspect."

"You are not such a fool as you look."

"No, and I shall have a large share of the ransom for my part in it," said the youth.

"If there is any ransom, we shall share and share alike."

Night was falling as Tarzan's army halted before the defenses of Castrum Mare. Cassius Hasta, to whom the reduction of the fort had been entrusted, disposed his forces and supervised the placing of his various engines of war.

Within the city Erich von Harben and Mallius Lepus discussed the details of

their plans. It was the judgment of Lepus to wait until after midnight before making any move in leave their hiding-place.

"The streets will be deserted then," said Mallius Lepus, "except for an occasional patrol upon the principal avenue, and these may be easily eluded, since the torches that they curry proclaim their approach long before there is any danger of their apprehending us. I have the key to the gate of my uncle's garden, which insures that we may enter the grounds silently and unobserved."

"Perhaps you are right," said von Harben, "but I dread the long wait and the thought of further inaction seems unbearable."

"Have patience, my friend," said Mallius Lepus. "Fulvus Fupus will be too busy with his new Caesarship to give heed to aught else for some time, and Favonia will be safe from him, certainly for the next few hours at least."

And as they discussed the matter, a youth knocked upon the door of the home of Septimus Favonius. Beneath the shadow of the trees along the wall darker shadows crouched. A slave bearing a lamp came to the door in answer to the knocking and, speaking through a small grille, asked who was without and what the nature of his business.

"I am the son of Tabernarius," said the youth. "I have brought fabrics from

the shop of my father that the daughter of Septimus Favonius may inspect them."

The slave hesitated.

"You must remember me," said the youth. "I have been here often," and the slave held the light a little bit higher and peered through the grille.

"Yes," he said, "your face is familiar. I will go and ask my mistress if she wishes to see you. Wait here."

"These fabrics are valuable," said the youth, holding up a bundle, which he carried under his arm. "Let me stand just within the vestibule lest thieves set upon me and rob me."

"Very well," said the slave, and opening the gate be permitted the youth to enter. "Remain here until I return."

As the slave disappeared into the interior of the house, the son of Tabernarius turned quickly and withdrew the bolt that secured the door. Opening it quickly, he leaned out to voice a low signal.

Instantly the denser shadows beneath the shadowy trees moved and were resolved into the figures of men. Scurrying like vermin, they hurried through the doorway and into the home of Septimus Favonius, and into the anteroom off the vestibule the son of Tabernarius hustled them. Then he closed both doors and waited.

Presently the slave returned. "The daughter of Septimus Favonius recalls having ordered no goods from

Tabernarius," he said, "nor does she feel in any mood to inspect fabrics this night. Return them to your father and tell him that when the daughter of Septimus Favonius wishes to purchase she will come herself to his shop."

Now this was not what the son of Tabernarius desired and he racked his crafty brain for another plan, though to the slave he appeared but a stupid youth, staring at the floor in too much embarrassment even to take his departure.

"Come," said the slave, approaching the door and laying hold of the bolt, "you must be going."

"Wait," whispered the youth, "I have a message for Favonia. I did not wish

anyone to know it and for that reason I spoke of bringing fabrics as an excuse."

"Where is the message and from whom?" demanded the slave, suspiciously.

"It is for her ears only. Tell her this and she will know from whom it is."

The slave hesitated.

"Fetch her here," said the youth. "It will be better that no other member of the household sees me."

The slave shook his head. "I will tell her," he said, for he knew that Mallius Lepus and Erich von Harben had escaped from the Colosseum and he guessed that the message might be from one of these. As he hastened back to his mistress the son of Tabernarius smiled,

for though he knew not enough of Favonia to know from whom she might reasonably expect a secret message, yet he knew there were few young women who might not, at least hopefully, expect a clandestine communication. He had not long to wait before the slave returned and with him came Favonia. Her excitement was evident as she hastened eagerly forward toward the youth.

"Tell me," she cried, "you have brought word from him."

The son of Tabernarius raised a forefinger to his lip to caution her to silence. "No one must know that I am here," he whispered, "and no ears but yours may hear my message. Send your slave away."

"You may go," said Favonia to the slave. "I will let the young man out when he goes," and the slave, glad to be dismissed, content to be relieved of responsibility, moved silently away into the shadows of a corridor and thence into that uncharted limbo into which pass slaves and other lesser people when one has done with them.

"Tell me," cried the girl, "what word do you bring? Where is he?"

"He is here," whispered the youth, pointing to the anteroom.

"Here?" exclaimed Favonia, incredulously.

"Yes, here," said the youth. "Come," and he led her to the door and as she approached it he seized her suddenly

and, clapping a hand over her mouth, dragged her into the dark anteroom beyond.

Rough hands seized her quickly and she was gagged and bound. She heard them converse in low whispers.

"We will separate here," said one. "Two of us will take her to the place we have selected. One of you will have to leave the note for Fulvus Fupus so the palace guards will find it. The rest of you scatter and go by different routes to the deserted house across from the Colosseum. Do you know the place?"

"I know it well. Many is the night that I have slept there."

"Very well," said the first speaker, who seemed to be the leader, "now be

off. We have no time to waste."

"Wait," said the son of Tabernarius, "the division of the ransom has not yet been decided. Without me you could have done nothing. I should have at least half."

"Shut up or you will be lucky if you get anything," growled the leader.

"A knife between his ribs would do him good," muttered another.

"You will not give me what I asked?" demanded the youth.

"Shut up," said the leader. "Come along now, men," and carrying Favonia, whom they wrapped in a soiled and ragged cloak, they left the home of Septimus Favonius unobserved; and as two men carried a heavy bundle through

the dark shadows beneath the shadowy trees the son of Tabernarius started away in the opposite direction.

A youth in soiled and ragged tunic and rough sandals approached the gates of Caesar's palace. A legionary challenged him, holding him at a distance with the point of his pike.

"What do you loitering by the palace of Caesar by night?" demanded the legionary.

"I have a message for Caesar," replied the youth.

The legionary guffawed. "Will you come in or shall I send Caesar out to you?" he demanded, ironically.

"You may take the message to him yourself, soldier," replied the other,

"and if you know what is good for you, you will not delay."

The seriousness of the youth's voice finally compelled the attention of the legionary. "Well," he demanded, "out with it. What message have you for Caesar?"

"Hasten to him and tell him that the daughter of Septimus Favonius has been abducted and that if he hastens he will find her in the deserted house that stands upon the corner opposite the chariot entrance to the Colosseum."

"Who are you?" demanded the legionary.

"Never mind," said the youth. "Tomorrow I shall come for my reward," and he turned and sped away

before the legionary could detain him.

"At this rate midnight will never come," said von Harben.

Mallius Lepus laid a hand upon the shoulder of his friend. "You are impatient, but remember that it will be safer for Favonia, as well as for us, if we wait until after midnight, for the streets now must be full of searchers. All afternoon we have heard soldiers passing. It is a miracle that they have not searched this place."

"Ps-st!" cautioned von Harben. "What was that?"

"It sounded like the creaking of the gate in front of the house," said Mallius Lepus.

"They are coming," said von Harben.

The three men seized the swords with which they had armed themselves, after they had rushed the Colosseum guard, and following a plan they had already decided upon in the event that searchers approached their hiding-place, they scaled the ladder and crept out upon the roof. Leaving the trap-door pushed slightly to one side, they listened to the sounds that were now coming from below, ready to take instant' action should there be any indication that the searchers might mount the ladder to the roof.

Von Harben heard voices coming from below. "Well, we made it," said one, "and no one saw us. Here come the others now," and von Harben heard the

gate creak again on its rusty hinges; then the door of the house opened and he heard several people enter.

"This is a good night's work," said one.

"Is she alive? I cannot hear her breathe."

"Take the gag from her mouth."

"And let her scream for help?"

"We can keep her quiet. She is worth nothing to us dead."

"All right, take it out."

"Listen, you, we will take the gag out of your mouth, but if you scream it will be the worse for you."

"I shall not scream," said a woman's voice in familiar tones that set von

Harben's heart to palpitating, though he knew that it was nothing more than his imagination that suggested the seeming familiarity.

"We shall not hurt you," said a man's voice, "if you keep quiet and Caesar sends the ransom."

"And if he does not send it?" asked the girl.

"Then, perhaps, your father, Septimus Favonius, will pay the price we ask."

"Heavens!" muttered von Harben. "Did you hear that, Lepus?"

"I heard," replied the Roman.

"Then come," whispered von Harben. "Come, Gabula, Favonia is below."

Casting discretion to the wind, von

Harben tore the trap from the opening in the roof and dropped into the darkness below, followed by Mallius Lepus and Gabula.

"Favonia!" he cried. "It is I. Where are you?"

"Here," cried the girl.

Rushing blindly in the direction of her voice, von Harben encountered one of the abductors. The fellow grappled with him, while, terrified by fear that the legionaries were upon them, the others bolted from the building. As they went they left the door open and the light of a full moon dissipated the darkness of the interior, revealing von Harben struggling with a burly fellow who had seized the other's throat and was now trying to

draw his dagger from its sheath.

Instantly Mallius Lepus and Gabula were upon him, and a quick thrust of the former's sword put a definite period to the earthly rascality of the criminal. Free from his antagonist, von Harben leaped to his feet and ran to Favonia, where she lay upon a pile of dirty rags against the wall. Quickly he cut her bonds and soon they had her story.

"If you are no worse for the fright," said Mallius Lepus, "we may thank these scoundrels for simplifying our task, for here we are ready to try for our escape a full three hours earlier than we had hoped."

"Let us lose no time, then," said von Harben. "I shall not breathe freely until I

am across the wall."

"I believe we have little to fear now," said Mallius Lepus. "The wall is poorly guarded. There are many places where we can scale it, and I know a dozen places where we can find boats that are used by the fishermen of the city. What lies beyond is upon the knees of the gods."

Gabula, who had been standing in the doorway, closed the door quickly and crossed to von Harben. "Lights are coming down the avenue, Bwana," he said. "I think many men are coming. Perhaps they are soldiers."

The four listened intently until they made out distinctly the measured tread of marching men.

"Some more searchers," said Mallius Lepus. "When they have passed on their way, it will be safe to depart."

The light from the torches of the legionaries approached until it shone through the cracks in the wooden blinds, but it did not pass on as they had expected. Mallius Lepus put an eye to an opening in one of the blinds.

"They have halted in front of the house," he said. "A part of them are turning the corner, but the rest are remaining."

They stood in silence for what seemed a long time, though it was only a few minutes, and then they heard sounds coming from the garden behind the house and the light of torches was visible

through the open kitchen door.

"We are surrounded," said Lepus. "They are coming in the front way. They are going to search the house."

"What shall we do?" cried Favonia.

"The roof is our only hope," whispered von Harben, but even as he spoke the sound of sandaled feet was heard upon the roof and the light of torches shone through the open trap.

"We are lost," said Mallius Lepus. "We cannot defeat an entire century of legionaries."

"We can fight them, though," said von Harben.

"And risk Favonia's life uselessly?" said Lepus.

"You are right," said von Harben, sadly, and then, "Wait, I have a plan. Come, Favonia, quickly. Lie down here upon the floor and I will cover you with these rags. There is no reason why we should all be taken. Mallius Lepus, Gabula, and I may not escape, but they will never guess that you are here, and when they are gone you can easily make your way to the guard-house in the Colosseum, where the officer in charge will see that you are given protection and an escort to your home."

"Let them take me," said the girl. "If you are to be captured, let me be captured also."

"It will do no good," said von Harben. "They will only separate us, and

if you are found here with us it may bring suspicion upon Septimus Favonius."

Without further argument she threw herself upon the floor, resigned in the face of von Harben's argument, and he covered her over with the rags that had been a beggar's bed.

CHAPTER 23

BY the time that Cassius Hasta had disposed his forces and placed his engines of war before the defenses of Castrum Mare, he discovered that it was too dark to open his assault that day, but he could carry out another plan that he had and so he advanced toward the gate, accompanied by Tarzan, Metellus, and Precarious and preceded by torch-hearers and a legionary bearing a flag of truce.

Within the fort great excitement had reigned from the moment that the advancing troops had been sighted. Word had been sent to Fulvus Fupus and reinforcements had been hurried to the fort. It was assumed by all that Sublatus

had inaugurated a new raid upon a larger scale than usual, but they were ready to meet it, nor did they anticipate defeat. As the officer commanding the defenders saw the party approaching with a flag of truce, he demanded from a tower gate the nature of their mission.

"I have two demands to make upon Validus Augustus," said Cassius Hasta. "One is that he free Mallius Lepus and Erich von Harben and the other is that he permit me to return to Castrum Mare and enjoy the privileges of my station."

"Who are you?" demanded the officer.

"I am Cassius Hasta. You should know me well."

"The gods are good!" cried the officer.

"Long live Cassius Hasta! Down with Fulvus Fupus!" cried a hoarse chorus of rough voices.

Someone threw open the gates, and the officer, an old friend of Cassius Hasta, rushed out and embraced him.

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Cassius Hasta. "What has happened?"

"Validus Augustus is dead. He was assassinated at the Barnes today and Fulvus Fupus has assumed the title of Caesar. You are indeed come in time. All Castrum Mare will welcome you."

Along the Via Mare from the castle to the lakeshore and across the pontoon bridge to the island marched the army of the new Emperor of the East, while the

news spread through the city and crowds gathered and shrieked their welcome to Cassius Hasta.

In a deserted house across the avenue from the Colosseum four fugitives awaited the coming of the legionaries of Fulvus Fupus. It was evident that the soldiers intended to take no chances. They entirely surrounded the building and they seemed to be in no hurry to enter.

Von Harben had had ample time to cover Favonia with the rags, so that she was entirely concealed before the legionaries entered simultaneously from the garden, the avenue, and the roof, torch- bearers lighting their way.

"It is useless to resist," said Mallius

Lepus to the officer who accompanied the men in from the avenue. "We will return to the dungeons peaceably."

"Not so fast," said the officer. "Where is the girl?"

"What girl?" demanded Mallius Lepus.

"The daughter of Septimus Favonius, of course."

"How should we know?" demanded von Harben.

"You abducted her and brought her here," replied the officer. "Search the room," he commanded, and a moment later a legionary uncovered Favonia and raised her to her feet.

The officer laughed as he ordered the

three men disarmed.

"Wait," said von Harben. "What are you going to do with the daughter of Septimus Favonius? Will you see that she has a safe escort to her father's house?"

"I am taking my orders from Caesar," replied the officer.

"What has Caesar to do with this?" demanded von Harben.

"He has ordered us to bring Favonia to the palace and to slay her abductors upon the spot."

"Then Caesar shall pay for us all with legionaries," cried von Harben, and with his sword he fell upon the officer in the doorway, while Gabula and Mallius Lepus, spurred by a similar

determination to sell their lives as dearly as possible, rushed those who were descending the ladder and entering the kitchen door. Taken by surprise and momentarily disconcerted by the sudden and unexpected assault, the legionaries fell back. The officer, who managed to elude von Harben's thrust, escaped from the building and summoned a number of the legionaries who were armed with pikes.

"There are three men in that room," he said, "and a woman. Kill the men, but be sure that the woman is not harmed."

In the avenue the officer saw people running; heard them shouting. He saw them stop as they were questioned by some of his legionaries, whom he had

left in the avenue. He had not given the final order for his pike-men to enter the building because his curiosity had momentarily distracted his attention. As he turned now, however, to order them in, his attention was again distracted by a tumult of voices that rose in great cheers and rolled up the avenue from the direction of the bridge that connects the city with the Via Mare and the fort. As he turned to look, he saw the flare of many torches and now he heard the blare of trumpets and the thud of marching feet.

What had happened? He had known, as had everyone in Castrum Mare, that the forces of Sublatus were camped before the fort, but he knew that there

had been no battle and so this could not be the army of Sublatus entering Castrum Mare, but it was equally strange if the defenders of Castrum Mare should be marching away from the fort while it was menaced by an enemy army. He could not understand these things, nor could he understand why the people were cheering.

As he stood there watching the approach of the marching column, the shouts of the people took on form and he heard the name of Cassius Hasta distinctly.

"What has happened?" he demanded, shouting to the men in the street.

"Cassius Hasta has returned at the head of a big army, and Fulvus Fupus

has already fled and is in hiding."

The shouted question and the equally loud reply were heard by all within the room.

"We are saved," cried Mallius Lepus, "for Cassius Hasta will harm no friend of Septimus Favonius. Aside now, you fools, if you know when you are well off," and he advanced toward the doorway.

"Back, men," cried the officer. "Back to the avenue. Let no hand be raised against Mallius Lepus or these other friends of Cassius Hasta, Emperor of the East."

"I guess this fellow knows which side his bread is buttered on," commented von Harben, with a grin.

Together Favonia, von Harben, Lepus, and Gabula stepped from the deserted building into the avenue. Approaching them they saw the head of a column of marching men; flaming torches lighted the scene until it was almost as bright as day.

"There is Cassius Hasta," exclaimed Mallius Lepus. "It is indeed he, but who are those with him?"

"They must be Sanguinarians," said Favonia. "But look, one of them is garbed like a barbarian, and see the strange warriors with their white plumes that are marching behind them."

"I have never seen the like in all my life," exclaimed Mallius Lepus.

"Neither have I," said von Harben,

"but I am sure that I recognize them, for their fame is great and they answer the description that I have heard a thousand times."

"Who are they?" asked Favonia,

"The white giant is Tarzan of the Apes, and the warriors are his Waziri fighting men."

At sight of the legionaries standing before the house, Cassius Hasta halted the column.

"Where is the centurion in command of these troops?" he demanded.

"It is I, glorious Caesar," replied the officer, who had come to arrest the abductors of Favonia.

"Does it happen that you are one of

the detachments sent out by Fulvus Fupus to search for Mallius Lepus and the barbarian, von Harben?"

"We are here, Caesar," cried Mallius Lepus, while Favonia, von Harben, and Gabula followed behind him.

"May the gods be praised!" exclaimed Cassius Hasta, as he embraced his old friend. "But where is the barbarian chieftain from Germania, whose fame has reached even to Castra Sanguinarius?"

"This is he," said Mallius Lepus. "This is Erich von Harben."

Tarzan stepped nearer. "You are Erich von Harben?" he asked in English.

"And you are Tarzan of the Apes, I know," returned von Harben, in the same

language.

"You look every inch a Roman," said Tarzan with a smile.

"I feel every inch a barbarian, however," grinned von Harben.

"Roman or barbarian, your father will be glad when I bring you back to him."

"You came here in search of me, Tarzan of the Apes?" demanded von Harben.

"And I seemed to have arrived just in time," said the ape- man.

"How can I ever thank you?" exclaimed von Harben.

"Do not thank me, my friend," said the ape-man. "Thank little Nkima!"

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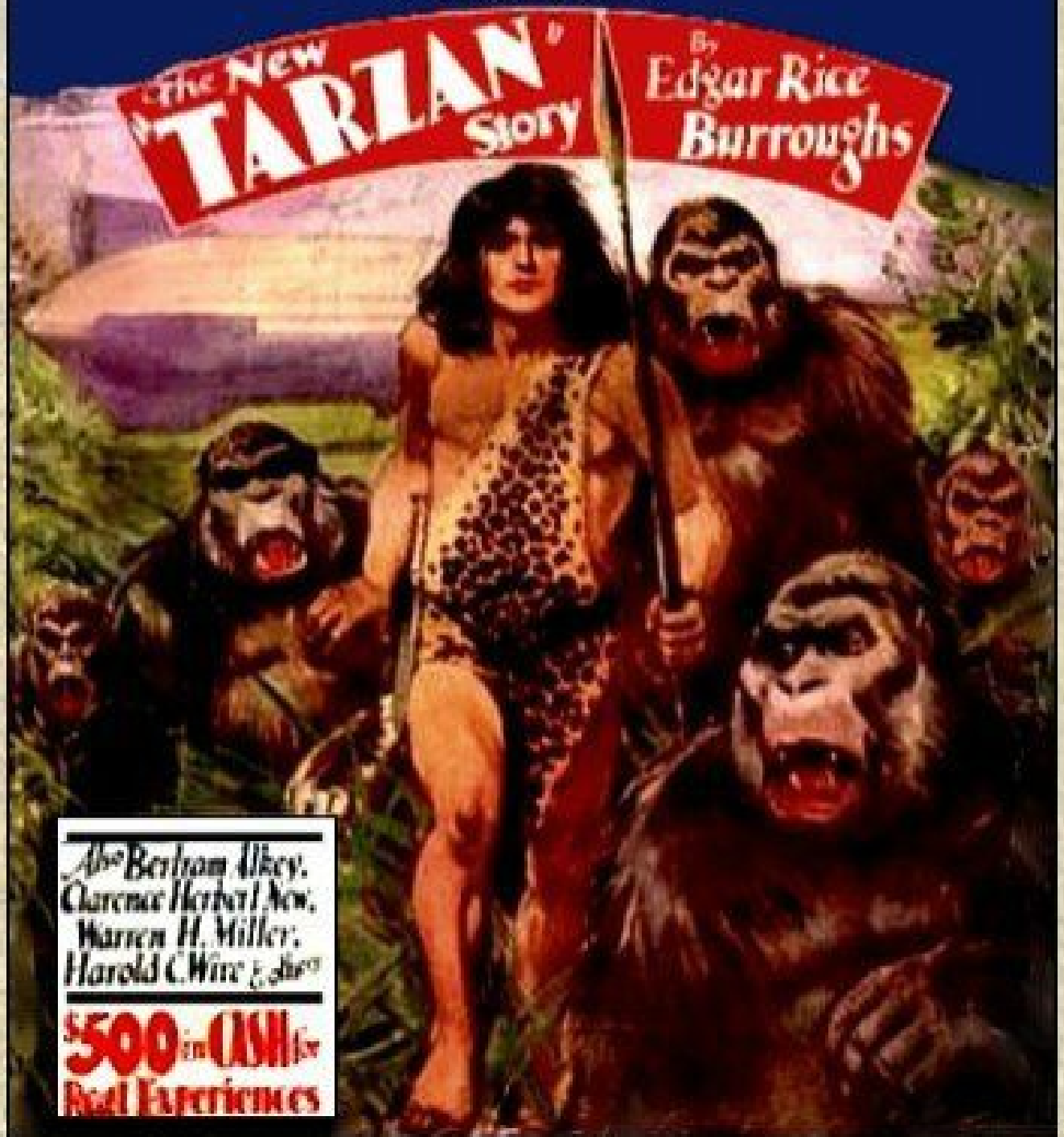

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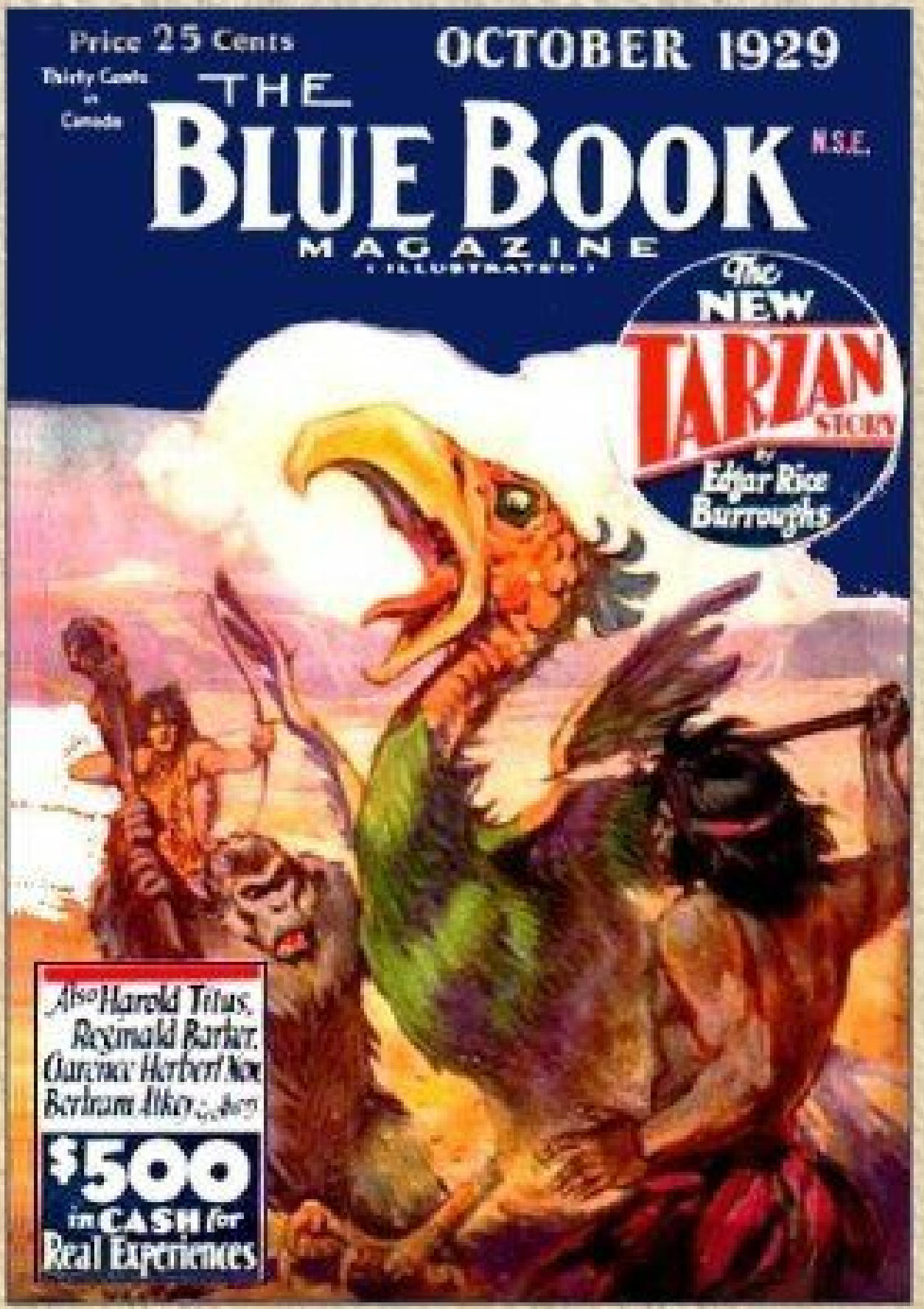
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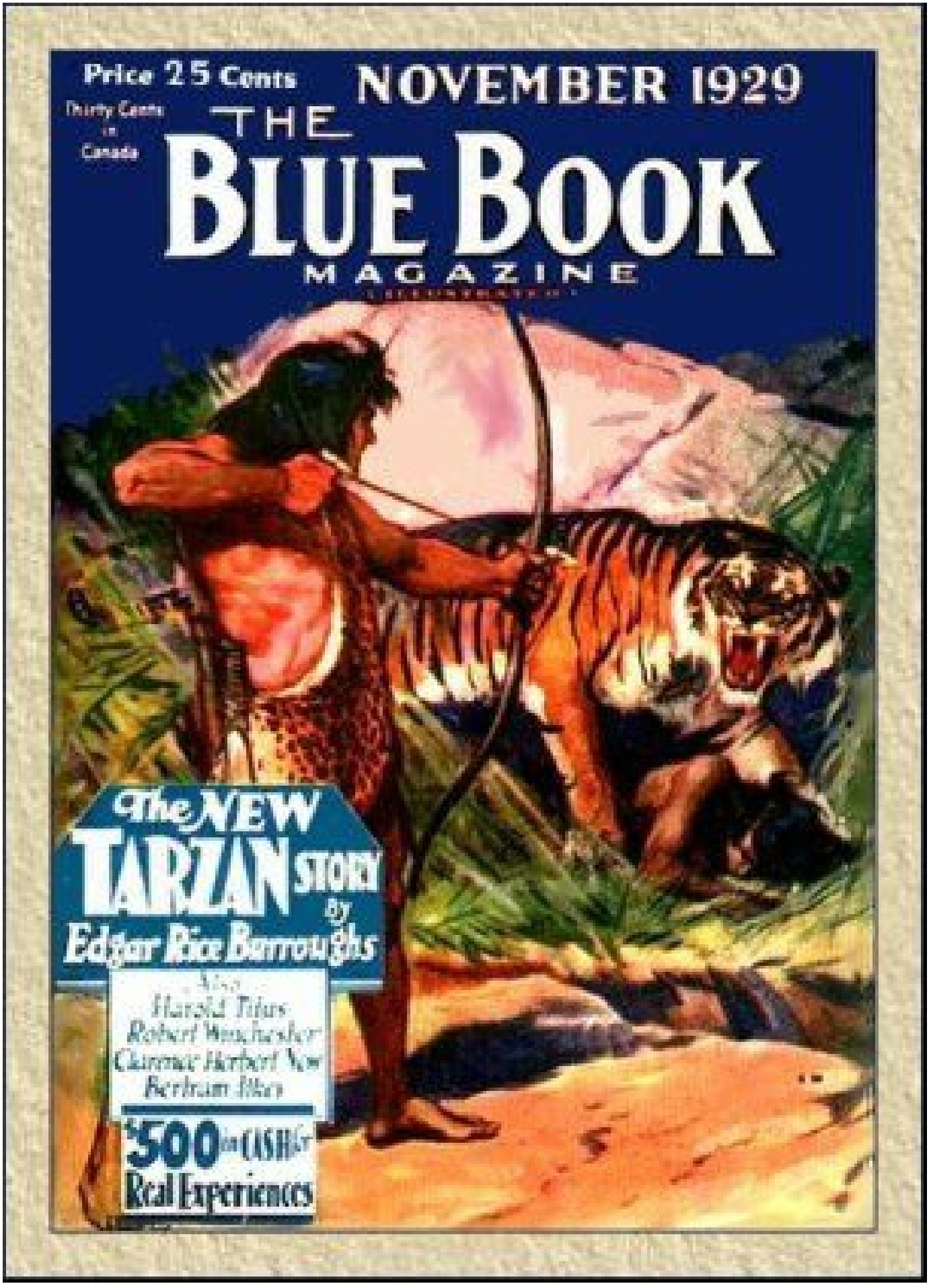
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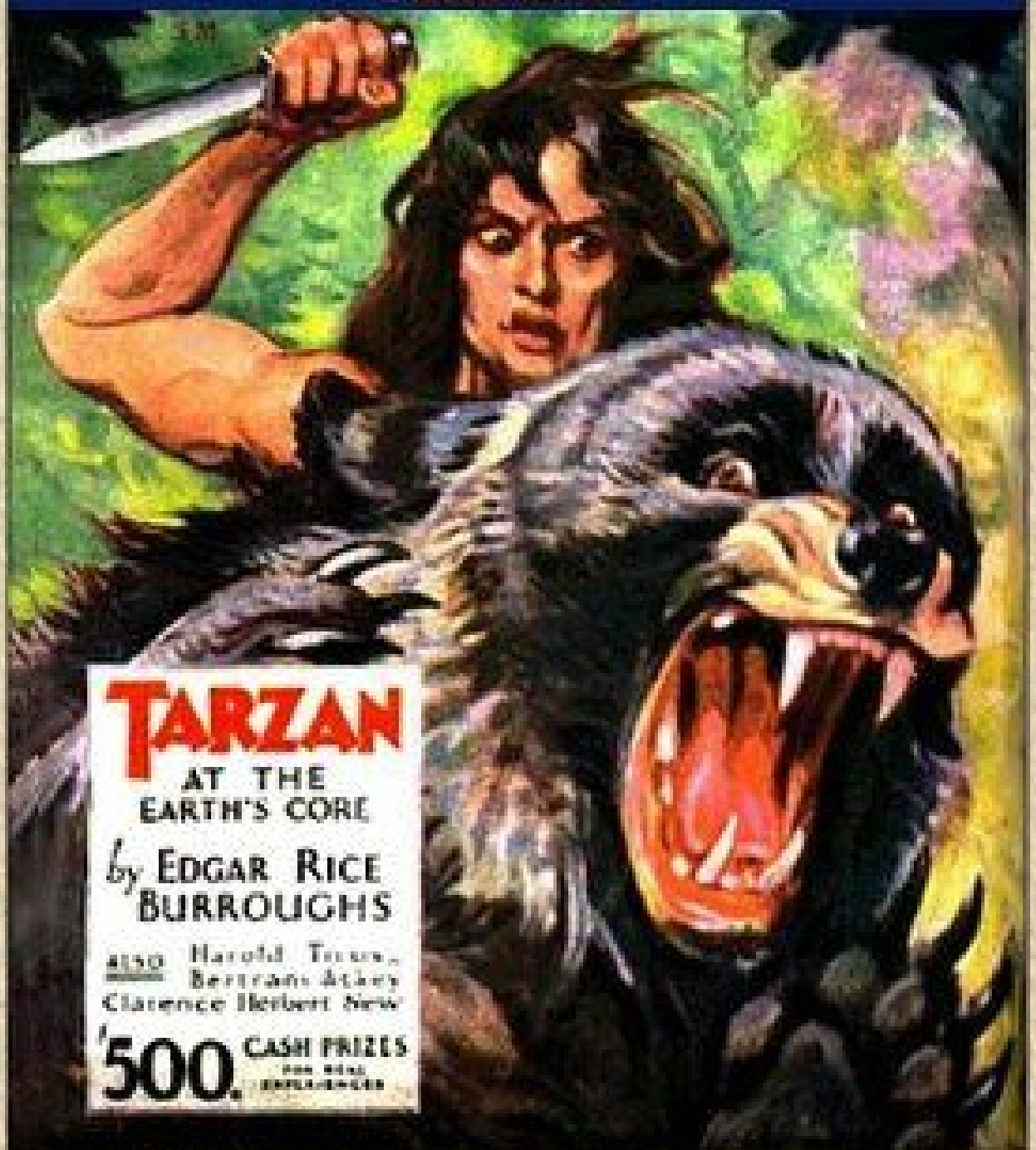

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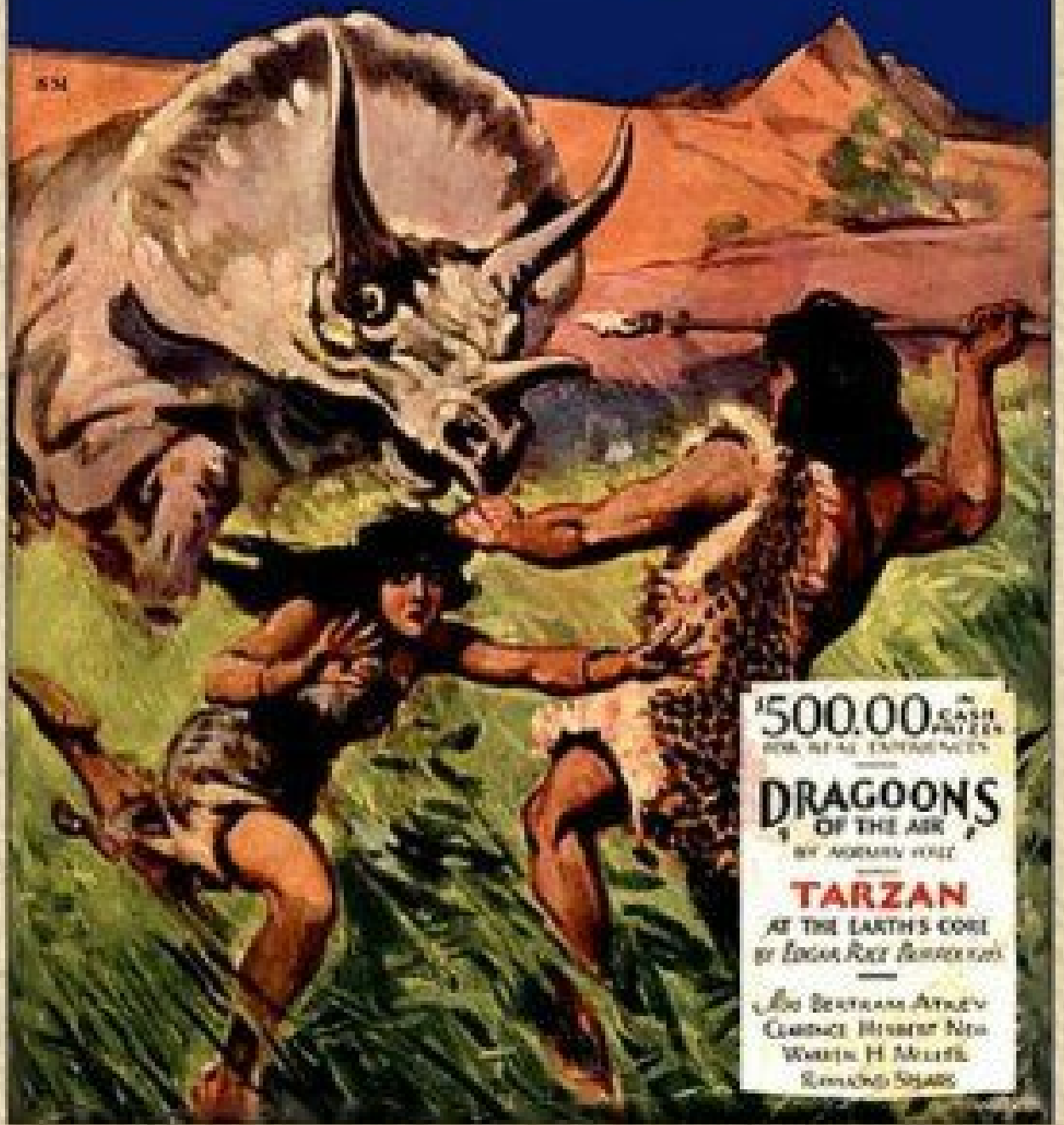

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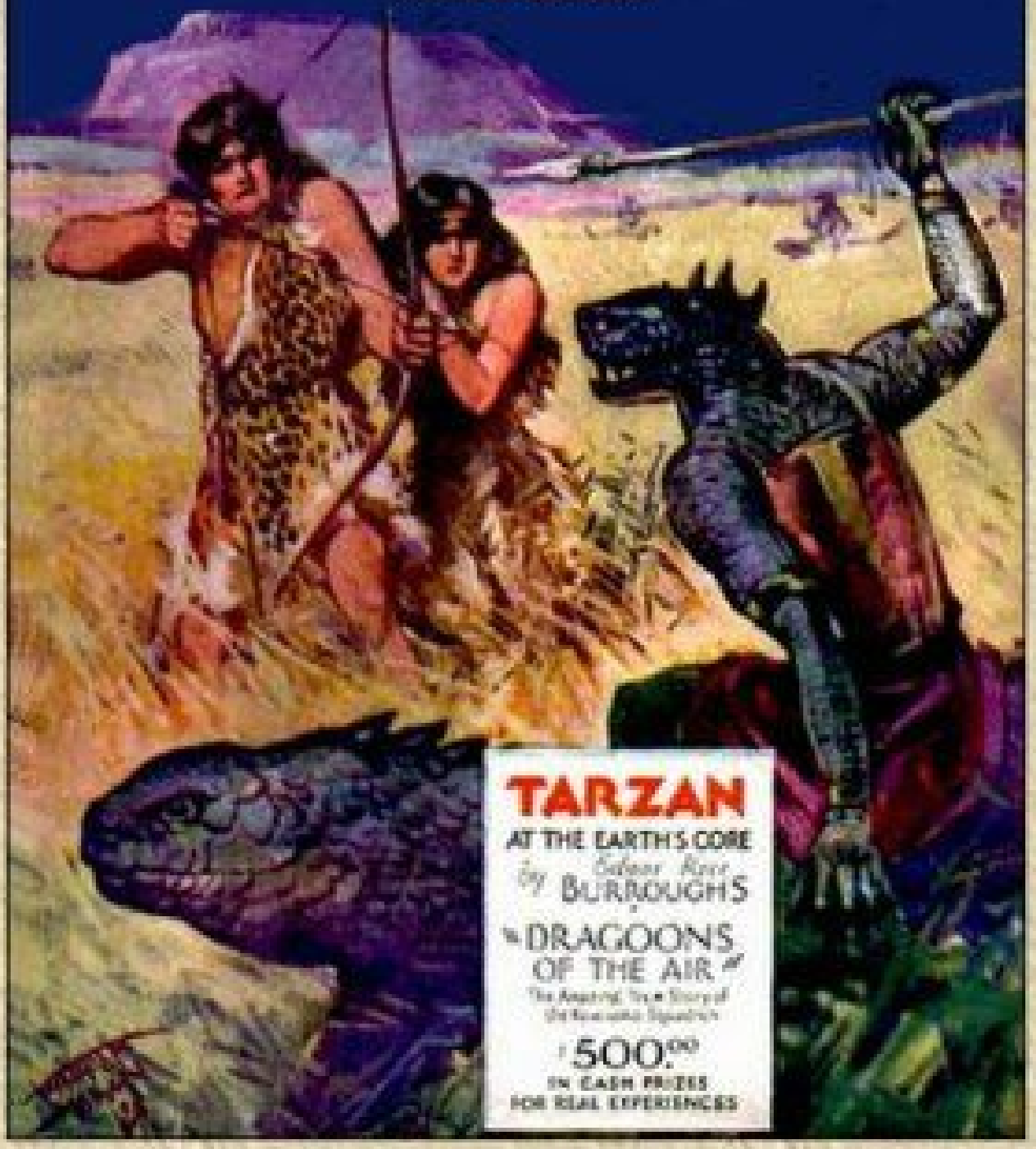

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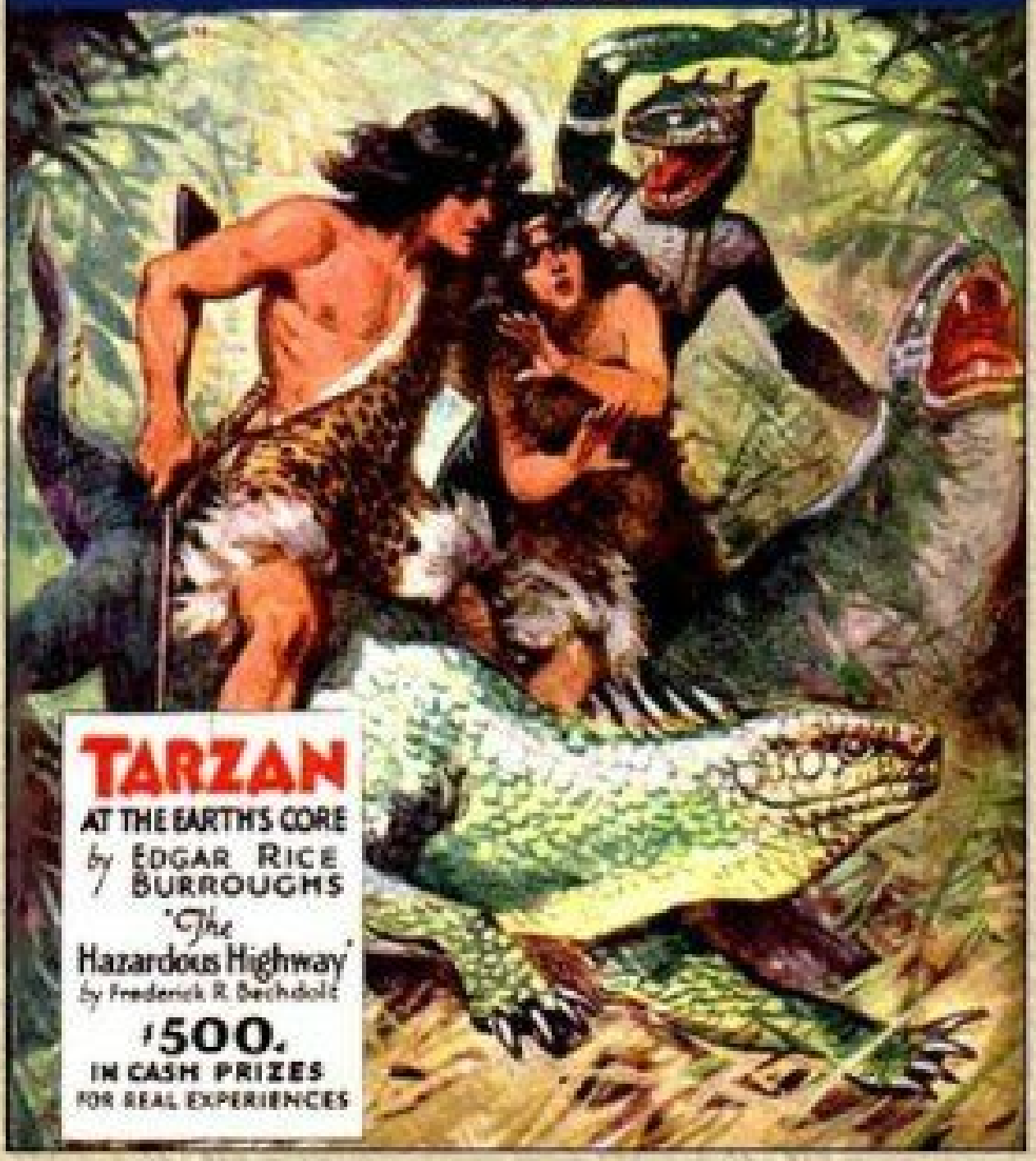

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FOREWORD

Pellucidar, as every schoolboy knows, is a world within a world, lying, as it does, upon the inner surface of the hollow sphere which is the Earth.

It was discovered by David Innes and Abner Perry upon the occasion when they made the trial trip upon the mechanical prospector invented by Perry, wherewith they hoped to locate new beds of anthracite coal. Owing, however, to their inability to deflect the nose of the prospector, after it had started downward into the Earth's crust, they bored straight through for five hundred miles, and upon the third day, when Perry was already unconscious owing to the consumption of their stock

of oxygen, and David was fast losing consciousness, the nose of the prospector broke through the crust of the inner world and the cabin was filled with fresh air.

In the years that have intervened, weird adventures have befallen these two explorers. Perry has never returned to the outer crust, and Innes but once—upon that occasion when he made the difficult and dangerous return trip in the prospector for the purpose of bringing back to the empire he had founded in the inner world the means to bestow upon his primitive people of the stone age the civilization of the twentieth century.

But what with battles with primitive men and still more primitive beasts and

reptiles, the advance of the empire of Pellucidar toward civilization has been small: and in so far as the great area of the inner world is concerned or the countless millions of its teeming life of another age than ours, David Innes and Abner Perry might never have existed.

When one considers that these land and water areas upon the surface of Pellucidar are in opposite relationship to the same areas upon the outer crust, some slight conception of the vast extent of this mighty world within a world may be dreamed.

The land area of the outer world comprises some fifty-three million square miles or one-quarter of the total area of the earth's surface; while within

Pellucidar three-quarters of the surface is land, so that jungle, mountain, forest and plain stretch interminably over 124,110.000 square miles; nor are the oceans with their area of 41,370,000 square miles of any mean or niggardly extent.

Thus, considering the land area only, we have the strange anomaly of a larger world within a smaller one, but then Pellucidar is a world of deviation from what we of the outer crust have come to accept as unalterable laws of nature.

In the exact center of the earth hangs Pellucidar's sun, a tiny orb compared with ours, but sufficient to illuminate Pellucidar and flood her teeming jungles with warmth and life-giving rays. Her

sun hanging thus perpetually at zenith, there is no night upon Pellucidar, but always an endless eternity of noon.

There being no stars and no apparent movement of the sun, Pellucidar has no points of compass; nor has she any horizon since her surface curves always upward in all directions from the observer, so that far above one's line of vision plain or sea or distant mountain range go onward and upward until lost in the haze of the distance. And again, in a world where there is no sun, no stars and no moon, such as we know. there can be no such thing as time, as we know it. And so, in Pellucidar, we have a timeless world which must necessarily be free from those pests who are

constantly calling our attention to "the busy little bee" and to the fact that "time is money." While time may be "the soul of this world" and the "essence of contracts," in the beatific existence of Pellucidar it is nothing and less than nothing.

Thrice in the past have we of the outer world received communication from Pellucidar. We know that Perry's first great gift of civilization to the stone age was gunpowder. We know that he followed this with repeating rifles, small ships of war upon which were mounted guns of no great caliber, and finally we know that he perfected a radio.

Knowing Perry as something of an empiric, we were not surprised to learn

that his radio could not be tuned in upon any known wave or wave length of the outer world, and it remained for young Jason Gridley of Tarzana, experimenting with his newly discovered Gridley Wave, to pick up the first message from Pellucidar.

The last word that we received, from Perry before his messages faltered and died out was to the effect, that David Innes, first Emperor of Pellucidar, was languishing in a dark dungeon in the land of the Korsars, far across continent and ocean from his beloved land of Sari, which lies upon a great plateau not far inland from the Lural Az.

1. THE 0-220

Tarzan of the Apes paused to listen and to sniff the air. Had you been there you could not have heard what he heard, or had you you could not have interpreted it. You could have smelled nothing but the mustiness of decaying vegetation, which blended with the aroma of growing things.

The sounds that Tarzan heard came from a great distance and were faint even to his ears: nor at first could he definitely ascribe them to their true source, though he conceived the impression that they heralded the coming of a party of men.

Buto the rhinoceros, Tantor the elephant or Numa the lion might come

and go through the forest without arousing more than the indifferent interest of the Lord of the Jungle, but when man came Tarzan investigated, for man alone of all creatures brings change and dissension and strife wheresoever he first sets foot.

Reared to manhood among the great apes without knowledge of the existence of any other creatures like himself, Tarzan had since learned to anticipate with concern each fresh invasion of his jungle by these two-footed harbingers of strife. Among many races of men he had found friends, but this did not prevent him from questioning the purposes and the motives of whosoever entered his domain. And so today he moved silently

through the middle terrace of his leafy way in the direction of the sounds that he had heard.

As the distance closed between him and those he went to investigate, his keen ears cataloged the sound of padding, naked feet and the song of native carriers as they swung along beneath their heavy burdens. And then to his nostrils came the scent spoor of black men and with it, faintly, the suggestion of another scent, and Tarzan knew that a white man was on safari before the head of the column came in view along the wide, well marked game trail, above which the Lord of the Jungle waited.

Near the head of the column marched

a young white man, and when Tarzan's eyes had rested upon him for a moment as he swung along the trail they impressed their stamp of approval of the stranger within the ape-man's brain, for in common with many savage beasts and primitive men Tarzan possessed an uncanny instinct in judging aright the characters of strangers whom he met.

Turning about, Tarzan moved swiftly and silently through the trees until he was some little distance ahead of the marching safari, then he dropped down into the trail and awaited its coming.

Rounding a curve in the trail the leading askari came in sight of him and when they saw him they halted and commenced to jabber excitedly, for

these were men recruited in another district—men who did not know Tarzan of the Apes by sight.

"I am Tarzan," announced the ape-man. "What do you in Tarzan's country?"

Immediately the young man, who had halted abreast of his askari, advanced toward the ape-man. There was a smile upon his eager face. "You are Lord Greystoke?" he asked.

"Here, I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the foster son of Kala.

"Then luck is certainly with me," said the young man, "for I have come all the way from Southern California to find you."

"Who are you," demanded the ape-man, "and what do you want of Tarzan of

the Apes?"

"My name is Jason Gridley," replied the other. "And what I have come to talk to you about will make a long story. I hope that you can find the time to accompany me to our next camp and the patience to listen to me there until I have explained my mission."

Tarzan nodded. "In the jungle," he said, "we are not often pressed for time. Where do you intend making camp?"

"The guide that I obtained in the last village complained of being ill and turned back an hour ago, and as none of my own men is familiar with this country we do not know whether there is a suitable camp-site within one mile or ten."

"There is one within half a mile," replied Tarzan, "and with good water."

"Good," said Gridley; and the safari resumed its way, the porters laughing and singing at the prospect of an early camp.

It was not until Jason and Tarzan were enjoying their coffee that evening that the ape-man reverted to the subject of the American's visit.

"And now," he said, "what has brought you all the way from Southern California to the heart of Africa?"

Gridley smiled. "Now that I am actually here," he said, "and face to face with you, I am suddenly confronted with the conviction that after you have heard my story it is going to be difficult to

convince you that I am not crazy, and yet in my own mind I am so thoroughly convinced of the truth of what I am going to tell you that I have already invested a considerable amount of money and time to place my plan before you for the purpose of enlisting your personal and financial support, and I am ready and willing to invest still more money and all of my time. Unfortunately I cannot wholly finance the expedition that I have in mind from my personal resources, but that is not primarily my reason for coming to you. Doubtless I could have raised the necessary money elsewhere, but I believe that you are peculiarly fitted to lead such a venture as I have in mind."

"Whatever the expedition may be that you are contemplating," said Tarzan, "the potential profits must be great indeed if you are willing to risk so much of your own money."

"On the contrary," replied Gridley, "there will be no financial profit for anyone concerned in so far as I now know."

"And you are an American?" asked Tarzan, smiling.

"We are not all money mad," replied Gridley.

"Then what is the incentive? Explain the whole proposition to me."

"Have you ever heard of the theory that the earth is a hollow sphere, containing a habitable world within its

interior?"

"The theory that has been definitely refuted by scientific investigation," replied the ape-man.

"But has it been refuted satisfactorily?" asked Gridley.

"To the satisfaction of the scientists," replied Tarzan.

"And to my satisfaction, too," replied the American, "until I recently received a message direct from the inner world."

"You surprise me," said the ape-man.

"And I, too, was surprised, but the fact remains that I have been in radio communication with Abner Perry in the inner world of Pellucidar and I have brought a copy of that message with me

and also an affidavit of its authenticity from a man with whose name you are familiar and who was with me when I received the message: in fact, he was listening in at the same time with me. Here they are."

From a portfolio he took a letter which he handed to Tarzan and a bulky manuscript bound in board covers.

"I shall not take the time to read you all of the story of Tanar of Pellucidar," said Gridley, "because there is a great deal in it that is not essential to the exposition of my plan."

"As you will," said Tarzan. "I am listening." For half an hour Jason Gridley read excerpts from the manuscript before him. "This," he said,

when he had completed the reading, "is what convinced me of the existence of Pellucidar, and it is the unfortunate situation of David Innes that impelled me to come to you with the proposal that we undertake an expedition whose first purpose shall be to rescue him from the dungeon of the Korsars."

"And how do you think this may be done?" asked the ape-man. "Are you convinced of the correctness of Innes theory that there is an entrance to the inner world at each pole?"

"I am free to confess that I do not know what to believe," replied the American. "But after I received this message from Perry I commenced to investigate and I discovered that the

theory of an inhabitable world at the center of the earth with openings leading into it at the north and south poles is no new one and that there is much evidence to support it. I found a very complete exposition of the theory in a book written about 1830 and in another work of more recent time. Therein I found what seemed to be a reasonable explanation of many well known phenomena that have not been satisfactorily explained by any hypothesis endorsed by science."

"What, for example?" asked Tarzan.

"Well, for example, warm winds and warm ocean currents coming from the north and encountered and reported by practically all arctic explorers; the

presence of the limbs and branches of trees with green foliage upon them floating southward from the far north, far above the latitude where any such trees are found upon the outer crust: then there is the phenomenon of the northern lights, which in the light of David Innes' theory may easily be explained as rays of light from the central sun of the inner world, breaking occasionally through the fog and cloud banks above the polar opening. Again there is the pollen, which often thickly covers the snow and ice in portions of the polar regions. This pollen could not come from elsewhere than the inner world. And in addition to all this is the insistence of the far northern tribes of Eskimos that their

forefathers came from a country to the north."

"Did not Amundson and Ellsworth in the Norge expedition definitely disprove the theory of a north polar opening in the earth's crust, and have not airplane flights been made over a considerable portion of the hitherto unexplored regions near the pole?" demanded the ape-man.

"The answer to that is that the polar opening is so large that a ship, a dirigible or an airplane could dip down over the edge into it a short distance and return without ever being aware of the fact, but the most tenable theory is that in most instances explorers have merely followed around the outer rim of the

orifice, which would largely explain the peculiar and mystifying action of compasses and other scientific instruments at points near the so-called north pole—matters which have greatly puzzled all arctic explorers."

"You are convinced then that there is not only an inner world but that there is an entrance to it at the north pole?" asked Tarzan.

"I am convinced that there is an inner world, but I am not convinced of the existence of a polar opening," replied Gridley. "I can only say that I believe there is sufficient evidence to warrant the organization of an expedition such as I have suggested."

"Assuming that a polar opening into

an inner world exists, by just what means do you purpose accomplishing the discovery and exploration of it?"

"The most practical means of transportation that exists today for carrying out my plan would be a specially constructed rigid airship, built along the lines of the modem Zeppelin. Such a ship, using helium gas, would show a higher factor of safety than any other means of transportation at our disposal. I have given the matter considerable thought and I feel sure that if there is such a polar opening, the obstacles that would confront us in an attempt to enter the inner world would be far less than those encountered by the Norge in its famous trip across the pole

to Alaska, for there is no question in my mind but that it made a wide detour in following the rim of the polar orifice and covered a far greater distance than we shall have to cover to reach a reasonably safe anchorage below the cold, polar sea that David Innes discovered north of the land of the Korsars before he was finally taken prisoner by them.

"The greatest risk that we would have to face would be a possible inability to return to the outer crust, owing to the depletion of our helium gas that might be made necessary by the maneuvering of the ship. But that is only the same chance of life or death that every explorer and scientific investigator must be willing to

assume in the prosecution of his labors. If it were but possible to build a hull sufficiently light, and at the same time sufficiently strong, to withstand atmospheric pressure, we could dispense with both the dangerous hydrogen gas and the rare and expensive helium gas and have the assurance of the utmost safety and maximum of buoyancy in a ship supported entirely by vacuum tanks."

"Perhaps even that is possible," said Tarzan, who was now evincing increasing interest in Gridley's proposition.

The American shook his head. "It may be possible some day," he said, "but not at present with any known material. Any

receptacle having sufficient strength to withstand the atmospheric pressure upon a vacuum would have a weight far too great for the vacuum to lift."

"Perhaps," said Tarzan, "and, again, perhaps not."

"What do you mean?" inquired Gridley.

"What you have just said," replied Tarzan, "reminds me of something that a young friend of mine recently told me. Erich von Harben is something of a scientist and explorer himself, and the last time that I saw him he had just returned from a second expedition into the Wiramwazi Mountains, where he told me that he had discovered a lake-dwelling tribe using canoes made of a

metal that was apparently as light as cork and stronger than steel. He brought some samples of the metal back with him, and at the time I last saw him he was conducting some experiments in a little laboratory he has rigged up at his father's mission."

"Where is this man?" demanded Gridley.

"Dr. von Harben's mission is in the Urambi country," replied the ape-man, "about four marches west of where we now are."

Far into the night the two men discussed plans for the project, for Tarzan was now thoroughly interested, and the next day they turned back toward the Urambi country and von Harben's

mission, where they arrived on the fourth day and were greeted by Dr. von Harben and his son, Erich, as well as by the latter's wife, the beautiful Favonia of Castrum Mare.

It is not my intention to weary you with a recital of the details of the organization and equipment of the Pellucidarian expedition, although that portion of it which relates to the search for and discovery of the native mine containing the remarkable metal now known as Harbenite, filled as it was with adventure and excitement, is well worth a volume by itself.

While Tarzan and Erich von Harben were locating the mine and transporting the metal to the seacoast, Jason Gridley

was in Friedrichshafen in consultation with the engineers of the company he had chosen to construct the specially designed airship in which the attempt was to be made to reach the inner world.

Exhaustive tests were made of the samples of Harbenite brought to Friedrichshafen by Jason Gridley. Plans were drawn, and by the time the shipment of the ore arrived everything was in readiness to commence immediate construction, which was carried on secretly. And six months later, when the O-220, as it was officially known, was ready to take the air, it was generally considered to be nothing more than a new design of the ordinary type of rigid airship, destined

to be used as a common carrier upon one of the already numerous commercial airways of Europe.

The great cigar-shaped hull of the O-220 was 997 feet in length and 150 feet in diameter. The interior of the hull was divided into six large, air-tight compartments, three of which, running the full length of the ship, were above the medial line and three below. Inside the hull and running along each side of the ship, between the upper and lower vacuum tanks, were long corridors in which were located the engines, motors and pumps, in addition to supplies of gasoline and oil.

The internal location of the engine room was made possible by the

elimination of fire risk, which is an ever-present source of danger in airships which depend for their lifting power upon hydrogen gas, as well as to the absolutely fireproof construction of the O- 220; every part of which, with the exception of a few cabin fittings and furniture, was of Harbenite, this metal being used throughout except for certain bushings and bearings in motors, generators and propellers.

Connecting the port and starboard engine and fuel corridors were two transverse corridors, one forward and one aft, while bisecting these transverse corridors were two climbing shafts extending from the bottom of the ship to the top.

The upper end of the forward climbing shaft terminated in a small gun and observation cabin at the top of the ship, along which was a narrow walking-way extending from the forward cabin to a small turret near the tail of the ship, where provision had been made for fixing a machine gun.

The main cabin, running along the keel of the ship, was an integral part of the hull, and because of this entirely rigid construction, which eliminated the necessity for cabins suspended below the hull, the O-220 was equipped with landing gear in the form of six, large, heavily tired wheels projecting below the bottom of the main cabin. In the extreme stern of the keel cabin a small

scout monoplane was carried in such a way that it could be lowered through the bottom of the ship and launched while the O-220 was in flight.

Eight air-cooled motors drove as many propellers, which were arranged in pairs upon either side of the ship and staggered in such a manner that the air from the forward propellers would not interfere with those behind.

The engines, developing 5600 horsepower, were capable of driving the ship at a speed of 105 miles per hour.

In the O-220 the ordinary axial wire, which passes the whole length of the ship through the center, consisted of a tubular shaft of Harbenite from which smaller tubular braces radiated, like the

spokes of a wheel, to the tubular girders, to which the Harbenite plates of the outer envelope were welded.

Owing to the extreme lightness of Harbenite, the total weight, of the ship was 75 tons, while the total lift of its vacuum tanks was 225 tons.

For purposes of maneuvering the ship and to facilitate landing, each of the vacuum tanks was equipped with a bank of eight air valves operated from the control cabin at the forward end of the keel; while six pumps, three in the starboard and three in the port engine corridors, were designed to expel the air from the tanks when it became necessary to renew the vacuum. Special rudders and elevators were also operated from

the forward control cabin as well as from an auxiliary position aft in the port engine corridor, in the event that the control cabin steering gear should break down.

In the main keel cabin were located the quarters for the officers and crew, gun and ammunition room, provision room, galley, additional gasoline and oil storage tanks, and water tanks, the latter so constructed that the contents of any of them might be emptied instantaneously in case of an emergency, while a proportion of the gasoline and oil tanks were slip tanks that might be slipped through the bottom of the ship in cases of extreme emergency when it was necessary instantaneously to reduce the

weight of the load.

This, then, briefly, was the great, rigid airship in which Jason Gridley and Tarzan of the Apes hoped to discover the north polar entrance to the inner world and rescue David Innes, Emperor of Pellucidar, from the dungeons of the Korsars.

2. PELLUCIDAR

Just before daybreak of a clear June morning, the O- 220 moved slowly from its hangar under its own power. Fully leaded and equipped, it was to make its test flight under load conditions identical with those which would obtain when it set forth upon its long journey. The three lower tanks were still filled with air and she carried an excess of water ballast sufficient to overcome her equilibrium, so that while she moved lightly over the ground she moved with entire safety and could be maneuvered almost as handily as an automobile.

As she came into the open her pumps commenced to expel the air from the three lower tanks and at the same time a

portion of her excess water ballast was slowly discharged, and almost immediately the huge ship rose slowly and gracefully from the ground.

The entire personnel of the ship's company during the test flight was the same that had been selected for the expedition.

Zuppner, who had been chosen as, captain, had been in charge of the construction of the ship and had a considerable part in its designing. There were two mates, Von Horst and Dorf, who had been officers in the Imperial air forces, as also had the navigator, Lieutenant Hines. In addition to these there were twelve engineers and eight mechanics, a negro cook and two

Filipino cabin-boys.

Tarzan was commander of the expedition, with Jason Gridley as his lieutenant, while the fighting men of the ship consisted of Muviro and nine of his Waziri warriors.

As the ship rose gracefully above the city, Zuppner, who was at the controls, could scarce restrain his enthusiasm.

"The sweetest thing I ever saw!" he exclaimed. "She responds to the lightest touch."

"I am not surprised at that," said Hines; "I knew she'd do it. Why we've got twice the crew we need to handle her."

"There you go again, Lieutenant," said Tarzan, laughing; "but do not think that

my insistence upon a large crew was based upon any lack of confidence in the ship. We are going into a strange world. We may be gone a long time. If we reach our destination we shall have fighting, as each of you men who volunteered has been informed many times, so that while we may have twice as many men as we need for the trip in., we may yet find ourselves short handed on the return journey, for not all of us will return."

"I suppose you are right." said Hines; "but with the feel of this ship permeating me and the quiet peacefulness of the scene below, danger and death seem remote."

"I hope they are," returned Tarzan, "and I hope that we shall return with

every man that goes out with us, but I believe in being prepared and to that end Gridley and I have been studying navigation and we want you to give us a chance at some practical experience before we reach our destination."

Zuppner laughed. "They have you marked already, Hines." he said.

The Lieutenant grinned. "I'll teach them all I know," he said; "but I'll bet the best dinner that can be served in Berlin that if this ship returns I'll still be her navigator."

"That is a case of heads-I-win, tails-you-lose," said Gridley.

"And to return to the subject of preparedness," said Tarzan, "I am going to ask you to let my Waziri help the

mechanics and engineers. They are highly intelligent men, quick to learn, and if some calamity should overtake us we cannot have too many men familiar with the engines and other machinery of the ship."

"You are right," said Zuppner, "and I shall see that it is done."

The great, shining ship sailed majestically north; Ravensburg fell astern and half an hour later the somber gray ribbon of the Danube lay below them.

The longer they were in the air the more enthusiastic Zuppner became. "I had every confidence in the successful outcome of the trial flight," he said; "but I can assure you that I did not look for

such perfection as I find in this ship. It marks a new era in aeronautics, and I am convinced that long before we cover the four hundred miles to Hamburg that we shall have established the entire air worthiness of the O-220 to the entire satisfaction of each of us."

"To Hamburg and return to Friedrichshafen was to have been the route of the trial trip," said Tarzan, "but why turn back at Hamburg?"

The others turned questioning eyes upon him as the purport of his query sank home.

"Yes, why?" demanded Gridley.

Zuppner shrugged his shoulders. "We are fully equipped and provisioned," he said.

"Then why waste eight hundred miles in returning to Friedrichshafen?" demanded Hines.

"If you are all agreeable we shall continue on toward the north," said Tarzan. And so it was that the trial trip of the O-220 became an actual start upon its long journey toward the interior of the earth, and the secrecy that was desired for the expedition was insured.

The plan had been to follow the Tenth Meridian east of Greenwich north to the pole. But to avoid attracting unnecessary notice a slight deviation from this course was found desirable, and the ship passed to the west of Hamburg and out across the waters of the North Sea, and thus due north, passing to the west of Spitsbergen

and out across the frozen polar wastes.

Maintaining an average cruising speed of about 75 miles per hour, the O-220 reached the vicinity of the north pole about midnight of the second day, and excitement ran high when Hines announced that in accordance with his calculation they should be directly over the pole. At Tarzan's suggestion the ship circled slowly at an altitude of a few hundred feet above the rough, snow-covered ice.

"We ought to be able to recognize it by the Italian flags," said Zuppner, with a smile. But if any reminders of the passage of the Norge remained below them, they were effectually hidden by the mantle of many snows.

The ship made a single circle above the desolate ice pack before she took up her southerly course along the 170th East Meridian.

From the moment that the ship struck south from the pole Jason Gridley remained constantly with Hines and Zuppner eagerly and anxiously watching the instruments, or gazing down upon the bleak landscape ahead. It was Gridley's belief that the north polar opening lay in the vicinity of 85 north latitude and 170 east longitude. Before him were compass, aneroids, bubble statoscope, air speed indicator, inclinometers, rise and fall indicator, bearing plate, clock and thermometers; but the instrument that commanded his closest attention was the

compass, for Jason Gridley held a theory and upon the correctness of it depended their success in finding the north polar opening.

For five hours the ship flew steadily toward the south, when she developed an apparent tendency to fall off toward the west.

"Hold her steady, Captain," cautioned Gridley, "for if I am correct we are now going over the lip of the polar opening, and the deviation is in the compass only and not in our course. The further we go along this course the more erratic the compass will become and if we were presently to move upward, or in other words, straight out across the polar opening toward its center, the needle

would spin erratically in a circle. But we could not reach the center of the polar opening because of the tremendous altitude which this would require. I believe that we are now on the eastern verge of the opening and if whatever deviation from the present course you make is to the starboard we shall slowly spiral downward into Pellucidar, but your compass will be useless for the next four to six hundred miles."

"Zuppner shook his head, dubiously. "If this weather holds, we may be able to do it," he said, "but if it commences to blow I doubt my ability to keep any sort of a course if I am not to follow the compass."

"Do the best you can," said Gridley,

"and when in doubt put her to starboard."

So great was the nervous strain upon all of them that for hours at a time scarcely a word was exchanged.

"Look!" exclaimed Hines suddenly. "There is open water just ahead of us."

"That, of course, we might expect," said Zuppner, "even if, there is no polar opening, and you know that I have been skeptical about that ever since Gridley first explained his theory to me."

"I think," said Gridley, with a smile, "that really I am the only one in the party who has had any faith at all in the theory, but please do not call it my theory for it is not, and even I should not have been surprised had the theory proven to be a

false one. But if any of you has been watching the sun for the last few hours, I think that you will have to agree with me that even though there may be no polar opening into an inner world, there must be a great depression at this point in the earth's crust and that we have gone down into it for a considerable distance, for you will notice that the midnight sun is much lower than it should be and that the further we continue upon this course the lower it drops—eventually it will set completely, and if I am not much mistaken we shall soon see the light of the eternal noonday sun of Pellucidar."

Suddenly the telephone rang and Hines put the receiver to his ear. "Very good, sir," he said, after a moment, and

hung up. "It was Von Horst, Captain, reporting from the observation cabin. He has sighted land dead ahead."

"Land!" exclaimed Zuppner. "The only land our chart shows in this direction is Siberia."

"Siberia lies over a thousand miles south of 85, and we cannot be over three hundred miles south of 85," said Gridley.

"Then we have either discovered a new arctic land, or we are approaching the northern frontiers of Pellucidar," said Lieutenant Hines.

"And that is just what we are doing," said Gridley.

"Look at your thermometer." "The devil!" exclaimed Zuppner. "It is only

twenty degrees above zero Fahrenheit." "You can see the land plainly now," said Tarzan. "It looks desolate enough, but there are only little patches of snow here and there." "This corresponds with the land Innes described north of Korsar," said Gridley.

Word was quickly passed around the ship to the other officers and the crew that there was reason to believe that the land below them was Pellucidar. Excitement ran high, and every man who could spare a moment from his duties was aloft on the walking-way, or peering through portholes for a glimpse of the inner world.

Steadily the O-220 forged southward and just as the rim of the midnight sun

disappeared from view below the horizon astern, the glow of Pellucidar's central sun was plainly visible ahead.

The nature of the landscape below was changing rapidly. The barren land had fallen astern, the ship had crossed a range of wooded hills and now before it lay a great forest that stretched on and on seemingly curving upward to be lost eventually in the haze of the distance. This was indeed Pellucidar—the Pellucidar of which Jason Gridley had dreamed.

Beyond the forest lay a rolling plain dotted with clumps of trees, a well-watered plain through which wound numerous streams, which emptied into a large river at its opposite side.

Great herds of game were grazing in the open pasture land and nowhere was there sight of man.

"This looks like heaven to me," said Tarzan of the Apes. "Let us land, Captain."

Slowly the great ship came to earth as air was taken into the lower vacuum tanks.

Short ladders were run out, for the bottom of the cabin was only six feet above the ground, and presently the entire ship's company, with the exception of a watch of an officer and two men, were knee deep in the lush grasses of Pellucidar.

"I thought we might get some fresh meat," said Tarzan, "but the ship has

frightened all the game away."

"From the quantity of it I saw, we shall not have to go far to bag some," said Dorf.

"What we need most right now, however, is rest," said Tarzan. "For weeks every man has been working at high pitch in completing the preparation for the expedition and I doubt if one of us has had over two hours sleep in the last three days. I suggest that we remain here until we are all thoroughly rested and then take up a systematic search for the city of Korsar."

The plan met with general approval and preparations were made for a stay of several days.

"I believe," said Gridley to Captain

Zuppner, "that it would be well to issue strict orders that no one is to leave the ship, or rather its close vicinity, without permission from you and that no one be allowed to venture far afield except in parties commanded by an officer, for we have every assurance that we shall meet with savage men, and far more savage beasts everywhere within Pellucidar."

"I hope that you will except me from that order," said Tarzan, smiling.

"I believe that you can take care of yourself in any country," said Zuppner.

"And I can certainly hunt to better effect alone than I can with a party," said the ape-man.

"In any event," continued Zuppner, "the order comes from you as

commander, and no one will complain if you exempt yourself from its provisions since I am sure that none of the rest of us is particularly anxious to wander about Pellucidar alone."

Officers and men, with the exception of the watch, which changed every four hours, slept the clock around.

Tarzan of the Apes was the first to complete his sleep and leave the ship. He had discarded the clothing that had encumbered and annoyed him since he had left his own African jungle to join in the preparation of the O-220, and it was no faultlessly attired Englishman that came from the cabin and dropped to the ground below, but instead an almost naked and primitive warrior, armed with

hunting knife, spear, a bow and arrows, and the long rope which Tarzan always carried, for in the hunt he preferred the weapons of his youth to the firearms of civilization.

Lieutenant Dorf, the only officer on duty at the time, saw him depart and watched with unfeigned admiration as the black-haired jungle lord moved across the open plain and disappeared in the forest.

There were trees that were familiar to the eyes of the ape-man, and trees such as he had never seen before, but it was a forest and that was enough to lure Tarzan of the Apes and permit him to forget the last few weeks that had been spent amidst the distasteful surroundings of

civilization. He was happy to be free from the ship, too, and, while he liked all his companions, he was yet glad to be alone.

In the first flight of his new-found freedom Tarzan was like a boy released from school. Unhampered by the hated vestments of civilization, out of sight of anything that might even remotely remind him of the atrocities with which man scars the face of nature, he filled his lungs with the free air of Pellucidar, leaped into a nearby tree and swung away through the forest, his only concern for the moment the joyousness of exultant vitality and life. On he sped through the primeval forest of Pellucidar. Strange birds, startled by his swift and silent

passage, flew screaming from his path, and strange beasts slunk to cover beneath him. But Tarzan did not care; he was not hunting; he was not even searching for the new in this new world. For the moment he was only living.

While this mood dominated him Tarzan gave no thought to the passage of time any more than he had given thought to the timelessness of Pellucidar, whose noonday sun, hanging perpetually at zenith, gives a lie to us of the outer crust who rush frantically through life in mad and futile effort to beat the earth in her revolutions. Nor did Tarzan reckon upon distance or direction, for such matters were seldom the subjects of conscious consideration upon the part of the ape-

man, whose remarkable ability to meet every and any emergency he unconsciously attributed to powers that lay within himself, not stopping to consider that in his own jungle he relied upon the friendly sun and moon and stars as guides by day and night, and to the myriad familiar things that spoke to him in a friendly, voiceless language that only the jungle people can interpret.

As his mood changed Tarzan reduced his speed, and presently he dropped to the ground in a well-marked game trail. Now he let his eyes take in the new wonders all about him. He noticed the evidences of great age as betokened by the enormous size of the trees and the hoary stems of the great vines that clung

to many of them—suggestions of age that made his own jungle seem modem—and be marveled at the gorgeous flowers that bloomed in riotous profusion upon every hand, and then of a sudden something gripped him about the body and snapped him high into the air.

Tarzan of the Apes had nodded. His mind occupied with the wonders of this new world had permitted a momentary relaxation of that habitual wariness that distinguishes creatures of the wild.

Almost in the instant of its occurrence the ape-man realized that what had befallen him. Although he could easily imagine its disastrous sequel, the suggestion of a smile touched his lips—a rueful smile—and one that was perhaps

tinged with disgust for himself, for Tarzan of the Apes had been caught in as primitive a snare as was ever laid for unwary beasts.

A rawhide noose, attached to the downbent limb of an overhanging tree, had been buried in the trail along which he had been passing and he had struck the trigger—that was the whole story. But its sequel might have had less unfortunate possibilities had the noose not pinioned his arms to his sides as it closed about him.

He hung about six feet above the trail, caught securely about the hips, the noose imprisoning his arms between elbows and wrists and pinioning them securely to his sides. And to add to his

discomfort and helplessness, he swung head downward, spinning dizzily like a human plumb-bob.

He tried to draw an arm from the encircling noose so that he might reach his hunting knife and free himself, but the weight of his body constantly drew the noose more tightly about him and every effort upon his part seemed but to strengthen the relentless grip of the rawhide that was pressing deep into his flesh.

He knew that the snare meant the presence of men and that doubtless they would soon come to inspect their noose, for his own knowledge of primitive hunting taught him that they would not leave their snares long untended, since

in the event of a catch, if they would have it at all, they must claim it soon lest it fall prey to carnivorous beasts or birds. He wondered what sort of people they were and if he might not make friends with them, but whatever they were he hoped that they would come before the beasts of prey came. And while such thoughts were running through his mind, his keen ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps, but they were not the steps of men. Whatever was approaching was approaching across the wind and he could detect no scent spoor; nor, upon the other hand, he realized, could the beast scent him. It was coming leisurely and as it neared him, but before it came in sight along the

trail, he knew that it was a hoofed animal and, therefore, that he had little reason to fear its approach unless, indeed, it might prove to be some strange Pellucidarian creature with characteristics entirely unlike any that he knew upon the outer crust.

But even as he permitted these thoughts partially to reassure him, there came strongly to his nostrils a scent that always caused the short hairs upon his head to rise, not in fear but in natural reaction to the presence of an hereditary enemy. It was not an odor that he had ever smelled before. It was not the scent spoor of Numa the lion, nor Sheeta the leopard, but it was the scent spoor of some sort of great cat. And now he could

hear its almost silent approach through the underbrush and he knew that it was coming down toward the trail, lured either by knowledge of his presence or by that of the beast whose approach Tarzan had been awaiting.

It was the latter who came first into view—a great ox- like animal with wide-spread horns and shaggy coat—a huge bull that advanced several yards along the trail after Tarzan discovered it before it saw the ape-man dangling in front of it. It was the thag of Pellucidar, the Bos Primigenus of the paleontologist of the outer crust, a long extinct progenitor of the bovine races of our own world.

For a moment it stood eyeing the man

dangling in its path.

Tarzan remained very quiet. He did not wish to frighten it away for he realized that one of them must be the prey of the carnivore sneaking upon them, but if be expected the thag to be frightened he soon realized his error in judgment for, uttering low grumblings, the great bull pawed the earth with a front foot, and then, lowering his massive horns, gored it angrily, and the ape-man knew that he was working his short temper up to charging pitch; nor did it seem that this was to take long for already he was advancing menacingly to the accompaniment of thunderous bellowing. His tail was up and his head down as he broke into the trot that

precluded the charge.

The ape-man realized that if he was ever struck by those massive horns or that heavy bead, his skull would be crushed like an eggshell.

The dizzy spinning that had been caused by the first stretching of the rawhide to his weight had lessened to a gentle turning motion; so that sometimes he faced the thag and sometimes in the opposite direction. The utter helplessness of his position galled the ape-man and gave him more concern than any consideration of impending death. From childhood he had walked hand in hand with the Grim Reaper and he had looked upon death in so many forms that it held no terror for him. He

knew that it was the final experience of all created things, that it must as inevitably come to him as to others and while he loved life and did not wish to die, its mere approach induced within him no futile hysteria. But to die without a chance to fight for life was not such an end as Tarzan of the Apes would have chosen. And now, as his body slowly revolved and his eyes were turned away from the charging thag, his heart sank at the thought that he was not even to be vouchsafed the meager satisfaction of meeting death face to face.

In the brief instant that he waited for the impact, the air was rent by as horrid a scream as had ever broken upon the ears of the ape-man and the bellowing of

the bull rose suddenly to a higher pitch and mingled with that other awesome sound.

Once more the dangling body of the ape-man revolved and his eyes fell upon such a scene as had not been vouchsafed to men of the outer world for countless ages.

Upon the massive shoulders and neck of the great thag clung a tiger of such huge proportions that Tarzan could scarce credit the testimony of his own eyes. Great saber-like tusks, projecting from the upper jaw, were buried deep in the neck of the bull, which, instead of trying to escape, had stopped in its tracks and was endeavoring to dislodge the great beast of prey, swinging its huge

horns backward in an attempt to rake the living death from its shoulders, or again shaking its whole body violently for the same purpose and all the while bellowing in pain and rage.

Gradually the saber-tooth changed its position until it had attained a hold suited to its purpose. Then with lightning-like swiftness it swung back a great forearm and delivered a single, terrific blow on the side of the thag's head—a titanic blow that crushed that mighty skull and dropped the huge bull dead in its tracks. And then the carnivore settled down to feast upon its kill.

During the battle the saber-tooth had not noticed the ape-man; nor was it until after he had commenced to feed upon the

thag that his eye was attracted by the revolving body swinging above the trail a few yards away. Instantly the beast stopped feeding; his head lowered and flattened, his upper lip turned back in a hideous snarl. He watched the ape-man. Low, menacing growls rumbled from his cavernous throat; his long, sinuous tail lashed angrily as slowly he arose from the body of his kill and advanced toward Tarzan of the Apes.

3. THE GREAT CATS

The ebbing tide of the great war had left human flotsam stranded upon many an unfamiliar beach. In its full flow it had lifted Robert Jones, high private in the ranks of a labor battalion, from uncongenial surroundings and landed him in a prison camp behind the enemy line. Here his good nature won him friends and favors, but neither one nor the other served to obtain his freedom.

Robert Jones seemed to have been lost in the shuffle. And finally, when the evacuation of the prison had been completed, Robert Jones still remained, but he was not down-hearted. He had learned the language of his captors and had made many friends among them.

They found him a job and Robert Jones of Alabama was content to remain where he was. He had been graduated from body servant to cook of an officer's mess and it was in this capacity that he had come under the observation of Captain Zuppner, who had drafted him for the O-220 expedition.

Robert Jones yawned, stretched, turned over in his narrow berth aboard the O-220, opened his eyes and sat up with an exclamation of surprise. He jumped to the floor and stuck his head out of an open port.

"Lawd!" he exclaimed; "you all suah done overslep' yo'sef."

For a moment he gazed up at the noonday sun shining down upon him and

then, hastily dressing, hurried into his galley.

"'S funny," he soliloquized; "dey ain't no one stirrin'—mus' all of overslep' demsef." He looked at the clock on the galley wall. The hour hand pointed to six. He cocked his ear and listened. "She ain't stopped," he muttered. Then he went to the door that opened from the galley through the ship's side and pushed it back. Leaning far out he looked up again at the sun. Then he shook his head. "Dey's sumpin wrong," he said. "Ah dunno whether to cook breakfas', dinner or supper."

Jason Gridley, emerging from his cabin, sauntered down the narrow corridor toward the galley. "Good

morning, Bob'" he said, stopping in the open doorway. "What's the chance for a bite of breakfast?"

"Did you all say breakfas', suh?" inquired Robert.

"Yes," replied Gridley; "just toast and coffee and a couple of eggs - anything you have handy."

"Ah knew it!" the man exclaimed. "Ah knew dat ol' clock couldn't be wrong, but Mistah Sun he suah gone hay wire."

Gridley grinned. "I'll drop down and have a little walk," he said. "I'll be back in fifteen minutes. Have you seen anything of Lord Greystoke?"

"No sub, Ah ain't seen nothin' ,o' Ta'zan sence yesterday."

"I wondered," said Gridley; "he is not in his cabin."

For fifteen minutes Gridley walked briskly about in the vicinity of the ship. When he returned to the mess room he found Zuppner and Dorf awaiting breakfast and greeted them with a pleasant "good morning."

"I don't know whether it's good morning or good evening," said Zuppner.

"We have been here twelve hours," said Dorf, "and it is just the same time that it was when we arrived. I have been on watch for the last four hours and if it hadn't been for the chronometer I could not swear that I had been on fifteen minutes or that I had not been on a week."

"It certainly induces a feeling of unreality that is hard to explain," said Gridley.

"Where is Greystoke?" asked Zuppner. "He is usually an early riser."

"I was just asking Bob," said Gridley, "but he has not seen him."

"He left the ship shortly after I came on watch," said Dorf. "I should say about three hours ago, possibly longer. I saw him cross the open country and enter the forest."

"I wish he had not gone out alone," said Gridley.

"He strikes me as a man who can take care of himself," said Zuppner.

"I have seen some things during the

last four hours," said Dorf, "that make me doubt whether any man can take care of himself alone in this world, especially one armed only with the primitive weapons that Greystoke carried with him."

"You mean that he carried no firearms?" demanded Zuppner.

"He was armed with a bow and arrows, a spear and a rope," said Dorf, "and I think he carried a hunting knife as well. But he might as well have had nothing but a peashooter if he met some of the things I have seen since I went on watch."

"What do you mean?" demanded Zuppner. "What have you seen?"

Dorf grinned sheepishly. "Honestly,

Captain, I hate to tell you,'" he said, "for I'm damned if I believe it myself."

"Well, out with it," exclaimed Zuppner. "We will make allowances for your youth and for the effect that the sun and horizon of Pellucidar may have had upon your eyesight or your veracity."

"Well," said Dorf, "'about an hour ago a bear passed within a hundred yards of the ship."

"There is nothing remarkable about that," said Zuppner.

"There was a great deal that was remarkable about the bear, however," said Dorf.

"In, what way?" asked Gridley.

"It was fully as large as an ox," said

Dorf, "and if I were going out after bear in this country I should want to take along field artillery."

"Was that all you saw—just a bear?" asked Zuppner.

"No," said Dorf, "I saw tigers, not one but fully a dozen, and they were as much larger than our Bengal tigers as the bear was larger than any bear of the outer crust that I have ever seen. They were perfectly enormous and they were armed with the most amazing fangs you ever saw—great curved fangs that extended from their upper jaws to lengths of from eight inches to a foot. They came down to this stream here to drink and then wandered away, some of them toward the forest and some down

toward that big river yonder."

"Greystoke couldn't do much against such creatures as those even if he had carried a rifle," said Zuppner.

"If he was in the forest, he could escape them," said Gridley.

Zuppner shook his head. "I don't like the looks of it," he said. "I wish that he had not gone out alone."

"The bear and the tigers were bad enough," continued Dorf, "but I saw another creature that to me seemed infinitely worse."

Robert, who was more or less a privileged character, had entered from the galley and was listening with wide-eyed interest to Dorf's account of the creatures he had seen, while Victor, one

of the Filipino cabin-boys, served the officers.

"Yes," continued Dorf, "I saw a mighty strange creature. It flew directly over the ship and I had an excellent view of it. At first I thought that it was a bird, but when it approached more closely I saw that it was a winged reptile.

"It had a long, narrow head and it flew so close that I could see its great jaws, armed with an infinite number of long, sharp teeth. Its head was elongated above the eyes and came to a sharp point. It was perfectly immense and must have had a wing spread of at least twenty feet. While I was watching it, it dropped suddenly to earth only a short distance beyond the ship, and when it

arose again it was carrying in its talons some animal that must have been fully as large as a good sized sheep, with which it flew away without apparent effort. That the creature is carnivorous is evident as is also the fact that it has sufficient strength to carry away a man."

Robert Jones covered his large mouth with a pink palm and with hunched and shaking shoulders turned and tiptoed from the room. Once in the galley with the door closed. he gave himself over to unrestrained mirth.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Victor.

"Lawd-a-massy!" exclaimed Robert. "Ah allus thought some o' dem gem'n in dat dere Adventurous Club in

Bummingham could lie some, but, shucks, dey ain't in it with this Lieutenant Dorf. Did you all heah him tell about dat flyin' snake what carries off sheep?"

But back in the mess room Dorf's statement was taken more seriously.

"That would be a pterodactyl," said Zuppner.

"Yes," replied Dorf. "I classified it as a Pteranodon."

"Don't you think we ought to send out a search party?" asked Gridley.

"I am afraid Greystoke would not like it," replied Zuppner.

"It could go out under the guise of a hunting party," suggested Dorf.

"If he has not returned within an

hour," said Zuppner, "we shall have to do something of the sort."

Hines and Von Horst now entered the mess room, and when they learned of Tarzan's absence from the ship and had heard from Dorf a description of some of the animals that he might have encountered, they were equally as apprehensive as the others of his safety.

"We might cruise around a bit, sir," suggested Von Horst to Zuppner.

"But suppose he returns to this spot during our absence?" asked Gridley.

"Could you return the ship to this anchorage again?" inquired Zuppner.

"I doubt it," replied the Lieutenant. "Our instruments are almost worthless under the conditions existing in

Pellucidar."

"Then we had better remain where we are," said Gridley, "until he returns."

"But if we send a searching party after him on foot, what assurance have we that it will be able to find its way back to the ship?" demanded Zuppner.

"That will not be so difficult," said Gridley. "We can always blaze our trail as we go and thus easily retrace our steps."

"Yes, that is so," agreed Zuppner.

"Suppose," said Gridley, "that Von Horst and I go out with Muviro and his Waziri. They are experienced trackers, prime fighting men and they certainly know the jungle."

"Not this jungle," said Dorf.

"But at least they know any jungle better than the rest of us," insisted Gridley.

"I think your plan is a good one," said Zuppner, "and anyway as you are in command now, the rest of us gladly place ourselves under your orders."

"The conditions that confront us here are new to all of us," said Gridley. "Nothing that anyone of us can suggest or command can be based upon any personal experience or knowledge that the rest do not possess, and in matters of this kind I think that we had better reach our decision after full discussion rather than to depend blindly upon official priority of authority."

"That has been Greystoke's policy," said Zuppner, "and it has made it very easy and pleasant for all of us. I quite agree with you, but I can think of no more feasible plan than that which you have suggested."

"Very good," said Gridley. "Will you accompany me, Lieutenant?" he asked, turning to Von Horst.

The officer grinned. "Will I?" he exclaimed. "I should never have forgiven you if you had left me out of it."

"Fine," said Gridley. "And now, I think, we might as well make our preparations at once and get as early a start as possible. See that the Waziri have eaten, Lieutenant, and tell Muviro that I want them armed with rifles. These

fellows can use them all right, but they rather look with scorn upon anything more modern than their war spears and arrows."

"Yes, I discovered that," said Hines. "Muviro told me a few days ago that his people consider firearms as something of an admission of cowardice. He told me that they use them for target practice, but when they go out after lions or rhino they leave their rifles behind and take their spears and arrows."

"After they have seen what I saw," said Dorf, "they will have more respect for an express rifle."

"See, that they take plenty of ammunition, Von Horst," said Gridley, "for from what I have seen in this

country we shall not have to carry any provisions."

"A man who could not live off this country would starve to death in a meat market," said Zuppner.

Von Horst left to carry out Gridley's orders while the latter returned to his cabin to prepare for the expedition. The officers and crew remaining with the O-220 were all on hand to bid farewell to the expedition starting out in search of Tarzan of the Apes, and as the ten stalwart Waziri warriors marched away behind Gridley and Von Horst, Robert Jones, watching from the galley door, swelled with pride. "All dem flyin' snakes bettah clear out de country now," he exclaimed. With the others Robert

watched the little party as it crossed the plain and until it had disappeared within the dark precincts of the forest upon the opposite side. Then he glanced up at the noonday sun, shook his head, elevated his palms in resignation and turned back into his galley.

Almost immediately after the party had left the ship, Gridley directed Muviro to take the lead and watch for Tarzan's trail since, of the entire party, he was the most experienced tracker; nor did the Waziri chieftain have any difficulty in following the spoor of the ape-man across the plain and into the forest, but here, beneath a great tree, it disappeared.

"The Big Bwana took to the trees

here," said Muviro, "and no man lives who can follow his spoor through the lower, the middle or the upper terraces."

"What do you suggest, then, Muviro?" asked Gridley.

"If this were his own jungle," replied the warrior, "I should feel sure that when he took to the trees be would move in a straight line toward the place he wished to go; unless he happened to be hunting, in which case his direction would be influenced by the sign and scent of game."

"Doubtless he was hunting here," said Von Horst.

"If he was hunting," said Muviro, "he would have moved in a straight line until he caught the scent spoor of game or

came to a well-beaten game trail."

"And then what would he do?" asked Gridley.

"He might wait above the trail," replied Muviro, "or he might follow it. In a new country like this, I think he would follow it, for he has always been interested in exploring every new country he entered."

"Then let us push straight into the forest in this same direction until we strike a game trail," said Gridley.

Muviro and ,three of his warriors went ahead, cutting brush where it was necessary and blazing the trees at frequent intervals that they might more easily retrace their steps to the ship. With the aid of a small pocket compass

Gridley directed the line of advance, which otherwise it would have been difficult to hold accurately beneath that eternal noonday sun, whose warm rays filtered down through the foliage of the forest.

"God! What a forest!" exclaimed Von Horst. "To search for a man here is like the proverbial search for the needle in a haystack."

"Except," said Gridley, "that one might stand a slight chance of finding the needle."

"Perhaps we had better fire a shot occasionally," suggested Von Horst.

"Excellent," said Gridley. "The rifles carry a much heavier charge and make a louder report than our revolvers."

After warning the others of his intention, he directed one of the blacks to fire three shots at intervals of a few seconds, for neither Gridley nor Von Horst was armed with rifles, each of the officers carrying two .45 caliber Colts. Thereafter, at intervals of about half an hour, a single shot was fired, but as the searching party forced its way on into the forest each of its members became gloomily impressed with the futility of their search.

Presently the nature of the forest changed. The trees were set less closely together and the underbrush, while still forming an almost impenetrable screen, was less dense than it had been heretofore and here they came upon a

wide game trail worn by countless hoofs and padded feet to a depth of two feet or more below the surface of the surrounding ground, and here Jason Gridley blundered.

"We won't bother about blazing the trees as long as we follow this trail." he said to Muviro, "except at such places as it may fork or be crossed by other trails."

It was, after all, a quite natural mistake since a few blazed trees along the trail would not serve any purpose in following it back when they wished to return.

The going here was easier and as the Waziri warriors swung along at a brisk pace, the miles dropped quickly behind

them and already had the noonday sun so cast its spell upon them that the element of time seemed not to enter into their calculations, while the teeming life about them absorbed the attention of blacks and whites alike.

Strange monkeys, some of them startlingly manlike in appearance and of large size, watched them pass. Birds of both gay and somber plumage scattered protestingly before their advance, and again dim bulks loomed through the undergrowth and the sound of, padded feet was everywhere.

At times they would pass through a stretch of forest as silent as the tomb, and then again they seemed to be surrounded by a bedlam of hideous

growls and roars and screams.

"I'd like to see some of those fellows," said Von Horst, after a particularly savage outburst of sound."

"I am surprised that we haven't," replied Gridley; "but I imagine that they are a little bit leery of us right now, not alone on account of our numbers but because of the, to them strange and unfamiliar, odors which must surround us. These would naturally increase the suspicion which must have been aroused by the sound of our shots."

"Have you noticed," said Von Horst, "that most of the noise seems to come from behind us; I mean the more savage, growling sounds. I have heard squeals and noises that sounded like the

trumpeting of elephants to the right and to the left and ahead, but only an occasional growl or roar seems to come from these directions and then always at a considerable distance."

"How do you account for it?" asked Gridley.

"I can't account for it," replied Von Horst. "It is as though we were moving along in the center of a procession with all the savage carnivores behind us."

"This perpetual noonday sun has its compensations," remarked Gridley with a laugh, "for at least it insures that we shall not have to spend the night here."

At that instant the attention of the two men was attracted by an exclamation from one of the Waziri behind them.

"Look, Bwana! Look!" cried the man, pointing back along the trail. Following the direction of the Waziri's extended finger, Gridley and Von Horst saw a huge beast slinking slowly along the trail in their rear.

"God!" exclaimed. Von Horst; "and I thought Dorf was exaggerating."

"It doesn't seem possible," exclaimed Gridley, "that five hundred miles below our feet automobiles are dashing through crowded streets lined by enormous buildings; that there the telegraph, the telephone and the radio are so commonplace as to excite no comment; that countless thousands live out their entire lives without ever having to use a weapon in self-defense, and yet at the

same instant we stand here facing a saber-tooth tiger in surroundings that may not nave existed upon the outer crust for a million years."

"Look at them!" exclaimed Von Horst. "If there is one there are a dozen of them."

"Shall we fire, Bwana?" asked one of the Waziri.

"Not yet," said Gridley. "Close up and be ready. They seem to be only following us."

Slowly the party fell back, a line of Waziri in the rear facing the tigers and backing slowly away from them. Muviro dropped back to Gridley's side.

"For a long time, Bwana," he said, "there has been the spoor of many

elephants in the trail, or spoor that looked like the spoor of elephants, though it was different. And just now I sighted some of the beasts ahead. I could not make them out distinctly, but if they are not elephants they are very much like them."

"We seem to be between the devil and the deep sea," said Von Horst.

"And there are either elephants or tigers on each side of us," said Muviro. "I can hear them moving through the brush."

Perhaps the same thought was in the minds of all these men, that they might take to the trees, but for some reason no one expressed it. And so they continued to move slowly along the trail until

suddenly it broke into a large, open area in the forest, where the ground was scantily covered with brush and there were few trees. Perhaps a hundred acres were included in the clearing and then the forest commenced again upon all sides.

And into the clearing, along numerous trails that seemed to center at this spot, came as strange a procession as the eyes of these men had ever rested upon. There were great ox-like creatures with shaggy coats and wide-spreading horns. There were red deer and sloths of gigantic size. There were mastodon and mammoth, and a huge, elephantine creature that resembled an elephant and yet did not seem to be an elephant at all.

Its great head was four feet long and three feet wide. It had a short, powerful trunk and from its lower jaw mighty tusks curved downward, their points bending inward toward the body. At the shoulder it stood at least ten feet above the ground, and in length it must have been fully twenty feet. But what resemblance it bore to an elephant was lessened by its small, pig- like ears.

The two white men, momentarily forgetting the tigers behind them in their amazement at the sight ahead, halted and looked with wonder upon the huge gathering of creatures within the clearing.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" exclaimed Gridley.

"No, nor anyone else," replied Von Horst.

"I could catalog a great many of them," said Gridley, "although practically all are extinct upon the outer crust. But that fellow there gets me," and he pointed to the elephantine creature with the downward pointing tusks.

"A Dinotherium of the Miocene," said Von Horst.

Muviro had stopped beside the two whites and was gazing in wide- eyed astonishment at the scene before him.

"Well," asked Gridley, "what do you make of it, Muviro?"

"I think I understand now, Bwana," replied the black, "and if we are ever going to escape our one chance is to

cross that clearing as quickly as possible. The great cats are herding these creatures here and presently there will be such a killing as the eyes of man have never before seen. If we are not killed by the cats, we shall be trampled to death by these beasts in their efforts to escape or to fight the tigers."

"I believe you are right, Muviro," said Gridley.

"There is an opening just ahead of us," said Von Horst.

Gridley called the men around him and pointed out across the clearing to the forest upon the opposite side. "Apparently our only chance now," he said, "is to cross before the cats close in on these beasts. We have already come

into the clearing too far to try to take refuge in the trees on this side for the saber-tooths are too close. Stick close together and fire at nothing unless we are charged."

"Look!" exclaimed Van Horst. "The tigers are entering the clearing from all sides. They have surrounded their quarry."

"There is still the one opening ahead of us, Bwana," said Muviro.

Already the little party was moving slowly across the clearing, which was covered with nervous beasts moving irritably to and fro, their whole demeanor marked by nervous apprehension. Prior to the advent of the tigers the animals had been moving

quietly about, some of them grazing on the short grass of the clearing or upon the leaves and twigs of the scattered trees growing in it; but with the appearance of the first of the carnivores their attitude changed. A huge, bull mastodon raised his trunk and trumpeted shrilly, and instantly every herbivore was on the alert. And as eyes or nostrils detected the presence of the great cats, or the beasts became excited by the excitement of their fellows, each added his voice to the pandemonium that now reigned. To the squealing, trumpeting and bellowing of the quarry were added the hideous growls and roars of the carnivores.

"Look at those cats'" cried Van Horst.

"There must be hundreds of them." Nor was his estimate an exaggeration for from all sides of the clearing, with the exception of a single point opposite them, the cats were emerging from the forest and starting to circle the herd. That they did not rush it immediately evidenced their respect for the huge beasts they had corralled, the majority of which they would not have dared to attack except in superior numbers.

Now a mammoth, a giant bull with tail raised and ears upcocked, curled his trunk above his head and charged. But a score of the great cats, growling hideously, sprang to meet him, and the bull, losing his nerve, wheeled in a wide circle and returned to the herd. Had he

gone through that menacing line of fangs and talons, as with his great size and weight and strength he might have done, he would have opened a hole through which a stampede of the other animals would have carried the bulk of them to safety.

The frightened herbivores, their attention centered upon the menacing tigers, paid little attention to the insignificant man- things passing among them. But there were some exceptions. A thag, bellowing and pawing the earth directly in their line of march, terrified by the odor of the carnivores and aroused and angered by the excited trumpeting and squealing of the creatures about him, seeking to vent his

displeasure upon something, lowered his head and charged them. A Waziri warrior raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired, and a prehistoric Bos Primigenus crashed to the impact of a modern bullet.

As the report of the rifle sounded above the other noises of the clearing, the latter were momentarily stilled, and the full attention of hunters and hunted was focused upon the little band of men, so puny and insignificant in the presence of the mighty beasts of another day. A dinotherium, his little ears up-cocked, his tail stiffly erect, walked slowly toward them. Almost immediately others followed his example until it seemed that the whole aggregation was

converging upon them. The forest was yet a hundred yards away as Jason Gridley realized the seriousness of the emergency that now confronted them.

"We shall have to run for it," he said. "Give them a volley, and then beat it for the trees. If they charge, it will have to be every man for himself."

The Waziri wheeled and faced the slowly advancing herd and then, at Gridley's command, they fired. The thunderous volley had its effect upon the advancing beasts. They hesitated and then turned and retreated; but behind them were the carnivores. And once again they swung back in the direction of the men, who were now moving rapidly toward the forest.

"Here they come!" cried Van Horst. And a backward glance revealed the fact that the entire herd, goaded to terror by the tigers behind them, had broken into a mad stampede. Whether or not it was a direct charge upon the little party of men is open to question, but the fact that they lay in its path was sufficient to seal their doom if they were unable to reach the safety of the forest ahead of the charging quadrupeds.

"Give them another volley!" cried Gridley. And again the Waziri turned and fired. A dinotherium, a thag and two mammoths stumbled and fell to the ground, but the remainder of the herd did not pause. Leaping over the carcasses of their fallen comrades they thundered

down upon the fleeing men.

It was now, in truth, every man for himself, and so close pressed were they that even the brave Waziri threw away their rifles as useless encumbrances to flight.

Several of the red deer, swifter in flight than the other members of the herd, had taken the lead, and, stampeding through the party, scattered them to left and right.

Gridley and Von Horst were attempting to cover the retreat of the Waziri and check the charge of the stampeding animals with their revolvers. They succeeded in turning a few of the leaders, but presently a great, red stag passed between them, forcing them to

jump quickly apart to escape his heavy antlers, and behind him swept a nightmare of terrified beasts forcing them still further apart.

Not far from Gridley grew a single, giant tree, a short distance from the edge of the clearing, and finding himself alone and cut off from further retreat, the American turned and ran for it, while Von Horst was forced to bolt for the jungle which was now almost within reach.

Bowled over by a huge sloth, Gridley scrambled to his feet, and, passing in front of a fleeing mastodon, reached the tree just as the main body of the stampeding herd closed about it. Its great bole gave him momentary protection and

an instant later he had scrambled among it's branches.

Instantly his first thought was for his fellows, but where they had been a moment before was now only a solid mass of leaping, plunging, terrified beasts. No sign of a human being was anywhere to be seen and Gridley knew that no living thing could have survived the trampling of those incalculable tons of terrified flesh.

Some of them, he knew, must have reached the forest, but he doubted that all had come through in safety and he feared particularly for Von Horst, who had been some little distance in rear of the Waziri.

The eyes of the American swept back

over the clearing to observe such as scene as probably in all the history of the world had never before been vouchsafed to the eyes of man. Literally thousands of creatures, large and small, were following their leaders in a break for life and liberty, while upon their flanks and at their rear hundreds of savage saber-tooth tigers leaped upon them, dragging down the weaker, battling with the stronger, leaving the maimed and crippled behind that they might charge into the herd again and drag down others.

The mad rush of the leaders across the clearing had been checked as they entered the forest, and now those in the rear were forced to move more slowly,

but in their terror they sought to clamber over the backs of those ahead. Red deer leaped upon the backs of mastodons and fled across the heaving bodies beneath them, as a mountain goat might leap from rock to rock. Mammoths raised their huge bulks upon lesser animals and crushed them to the ground. Tusks and horns were red with gore as the maddened beasts battled for their lives. The scene was sickening in its horror, and yet fascinating in its primitive strength and savagery—and everywhere were the great, savage cats.

Slowly they were cutting into the herd from both sides in an effort to encircle a portion of it and at last they were successful, though within the circle there

remained but a few scattered beasts that were still unmaimed or uncrippled. And then the great tigers turned upon these, closing in and drawing tighter their hideous band of savage fury.

In twos and threes and scores they leaped upon the remaining beasts and dragged them down until the sole creature remaining alive within their circle was a gigantic bull mammoth. His shaggy coat was splashed with blood and his tusks were red with gore. Trumpeting he stood at bay, a magnificent picture of primordial power, of sagacity, of courage.

The heart of the American went out to that lone warrior trumpeting his challenge to overwhelming odds in the

face of certain doom.

By hundreds the carnivores were closing in upon the great bull; yet it was evident that even though they outnumbered him so overwhelmingly, they still held him in vast respect. Growling and snarling, a few of them slunk in stealthy circles about him, and as he wheeled about with them, three of them charged him from the rear. With a swiftness that matched their own, the pachyderm wheeled to meet them. Two of them he caught upon his tusks and tossed them high into the air, and at the same instant a score of others rushed him from each side and from the rear and fastened themselves to his back and flanks. Down he went as though struck

by lightning, squatting quickly upon his haunches and rolling over backward, crushing a dozen tigers before they could escape.

Gridley could scarce repress a cheer as the great fellow staggered to his feet and threw himself again upon the opposite side to the accompaniment of hideous screams of pain and anger from the tigers he pinioned beneath him. But now he was gushing blood from a hundred wounds, and other scores of the savage carnivores were charging him.

Though he put up a magnificent battle the end was inevitable and at last they dragged him down, tearing him to pieces while he yet struggled to rise again and battle with them.

And then commenced the aftermath as the savage beasts fought among themselves for possession of their prey. For even though there was flesh to more than surfeit them all, in their greed, jealousy and ferocity, they must still battle one with another.

That they had paid heavily for their meat was evident by the carcasses of the tigers strewn about the clearing and as the survivors slowly settled down to feed, there came the jackals, the hyaenodons and the wild dogs to feast upon their leavings.

4. THE SAGOTHS

As the great cat slunk toward him, Tarzan of the Apes realized that at last he faced inevitable death, yet even in that last moment of life the emotion which dominated him was one of admiration for the magnificent beast drawing angrily toward him.

Tarzan of the Apes would have preferred to die fighting, if he must die; yet he felt a certain thrill as he contemplated the magnificence of the great beast that Fate had chosen to terminate his earthly career. He felt no fear, but a certain sense of anticipation of what would follow after death. The Lord of the Jungle subscribed to no creed. Tarzan of the Apes was not a

church man; yet like the majority of those who have always lived close to nature he was, in a sense, intensely religious. His intimate knowledge of the stupendous forces of nature, of her wonders and her miracles had impressed him with the fact that their ultimate origin lay far beyond the conception of the finite mind of man, and thus incalculably remote from the farthest bounds of science. When he thought of God he liked to think of Him primitively, as a personal God. And while he realized that he knew nothing of such matters, he liked to believe that after death he would live again.

Many thought passed quickly through his mind as the saber-tooth advanced

upon him. He was watching the long, glistening fangs that so soon were to be buried in his flesh when his attention was attracted by a sound among the trees about him. That the great cat had heard too was evident, for it stopped in its tracks and gazed up into the foliage of the trees above. And then Tarzan heard a rustling in the branches directly overhead, and looking up he saw what appeared to be a gorilla glaring down upon him.

Two more savage faces showed through the foliage above him and then in other trees about he caught glimpses of similar shaggy forms and fierce faces. He saw that they were like gorillas, and yet unlike them; that in some respects

they were more man than gorilla, and in others more gorilla than man. He caught glimpses of great clubs wielded by hairy hands, and when his eyes returned to the saber-tooth he saw that the great beast had hesitated in its advance and was snarling and growling angrily as its eyes roved upward and around at the savage creatures glaring down upon it.

It was only for a moment that the cat paused in its advance upon the ape- man. Snarling angrily, it moved forward again and as it did so, one of the creatures in the tree above Tarzan reached down, and, seizing the rope that held him dangling in mid-air, drew him swiftly upward. Then several things occurred simultaneously—the saber-tooth leaped

to retrieve its prey and a dozen heavy cudgels hurtled through the air from the surrounding trees, striking the great cat heavily upon the head and body with the result that the talons that must otherwise have inevitably been imbedded in the flesh of the ape-man grazed harmlessly by him, and an instant later he was drawn well up among the branches of the tree, where he was seized by three hairy brutes whose attitude suggested that he might have been as well off had he been left to the tender mercies of the saber-tooth.

Two of them, one on either side, seized an arm and the third grasped him by the throat with one hand while he held his cudgel poised above his head in

the other. And then from the lips of the creature facing him came a sound that fell as startlingly upon the ears of the ape-man as had the first unexpected roar of the saber- tooth, but with far different effect.

"Ka-goda!" said the creature facing Tarzan.

In the language of the apes of his own jungle Ka-goda may be roughly interpreted according to its inflection as a command to surrender, or as an interrogation, "do you surrender?" or as a declaration of surrender.

This word, coming from the lips of a hairy gorilla man of the inner world, suggested possibilities of the most startling nature. For years Tarzan had

considered the language of the great apes as the primitive root language of created things. The great apes, the lesser apes, the gorillas, the baboons and the monkeys utilized this with various degrees of refinement and many of its words were understood by jungle animals of other species and by many of the birds; but, perhaps, after the fashion that our domestic animals have learned many of the words in our vocabulary, with this difference that the language of the great apes has doubtless persisted unchanged for countless ages.

That these gorilla men of the inner world used even one word of this language suggested one of two possibilities—either they held an origin

in common with the creatures of the outer crust, or else that the laws of evolution and progress were so constant that this was the only form of primitive language that could have been possible to any creatures emerging from the lower orders toward the estate of man. But the suggestion that impressed Tarzan most vividly was that this single word, uttered by the creature grasping him by the throat, postulated familiarity on the part of his fierce captors with the entire ape language that he had used since boyhood.

"Ka-goda?" inquired the bull.

"Ka-goda," said Tarzan of the Apes.

The brute, facing Tarzan, half lowered his cudgel as though he were surprised to hear the prisoner answer in

his own tongue. "Who are you?" he demanded in the language of the great apes.

"I am Tarzan—mighty hunter, mighty fighter," replied the ape-man.

"What are you doing in M'wa-lot's country?" demanded the gorilla man.

"I come as a friend," replied Tarzan. "I have no quarrel with your people."

The fellow had lowered his club now, and from other trees had come a score more of the shaggy creatures until the surrounding limbs sagged beneath their weight.

"How did you learn the language of the Sagoths?" demanded the bull. "We have captured gilaks in the past, but you are the first one who ever spoke or

understood our language."

"It is the language of my people," replied Tarzan. "As a little balu, I learned it from Kala and other apes of the tribe of Kerchak."

"We never heard of the tribe of Kerchak," said the bull.

"Perhaps he is not telling the truth," said another. "Let us kill him; he is only a gilak."

"No," said a third. "Take him back to M'wa-lot that the whole tribe of M'wa-lot may join in the killing."

"That is good," said another. "Take him back to the tribe, and while we are killing him we shall dance."

The language of the great apes is not

like our language. It sounds to man like growling and barking and grunting, punctuated at times by shrill screams, and it is practically untranslatable to any tongue known to man; yet it carried to Tarzan and the Sagoths the sense that we have given it. It is a means of communicating thought and there its similarity to the languages of men ceases.

Having decided upon the disposition of their prisoner, the Sagoths now turned their attention to the saber-tooth, who had returned to his kill, across the body of which he was lying. He was not feeding, but was gazing angrily up into the trees at his tormentors.

While three of the gorilla men

secured Tarzan's wrists behind his back with a length of buckskin thong, the others renewed their attention to the tiger. Three or four of them would cast well-aimed cudgels at his face at intervals so nicely timed that the great beast could do nothing but fend off the missiles as they sped toward him. And while he was thus occupied, the other Sagoths, who had already cast their clubs, sprang to the ground and retrieved them with an agility and celerity that would have done credit to the tiniest monkey of the jungle. The risk that they took bespoke great self- confidence and high courage since often they were compelled to snatch their cudgels from almost beneath the claws of the saber-

tooth.

Battered and bruised, the great cat-gave back inch by inch until, unable to stand the fusillade longer, it suddenly turned tail and bounded into the underbrush, where for some time the sound of its crashing retreat could be distinctly heard. And with the departure of the carnivore, the gorilla men leaped to the ground and fell upon the carcass of the thag. With heavy fangs they tore its flesh, oftentimes fighting among themselves like wild beasts for some particularly choice morsel; but unlike many of the lower orders of man upon similar occasions they did not gorge themselves, and having satisfied their hunger they left what remained to the

jackals and wild dogs that had already gathered.

Tarzan of the Apes, silent spectator of this savage scene, had an opportunity during the feast to examine his captors more closely. He saw that they were rather lighter in build than the gorillas he had seen in his own native jungle, but even though they were not as heavy as Bolgani, they were yet mighty creatures. Their arms and legs were of more human conformation and proportion than those of a gorilla, but the shaggy brown hair covering their entire body increased their beast-like appearance while their faces were even more brutal than that of Bolgani himself, except that the development of the skull denoted a brain

capacity seemingly as great as that of man.

They were entirely naked, nor was there among them any suggestion of ornamentation, while their only weapons were clubs. These, however, showed indications of having been shaped by some sharp instrument as though an effort had been made to insure a firm grip and a well-balanced weapon.

Their feeding completed, the Sagoths turned back along the game trail in the same direction that Tarzan had been going when he had sprung the trigger of the snare. But before departing several of them reset the noose, covered it carefully with earth and leaves and set the trigger that it might be sprung by the

first passing animal.

So sure were all their movements and so deft their fingers, Tarzan realized that though these creatures looked like beasts, they had long since entered the estate of man. Perhaps they were still low in the scale of evolution, but unquestionably they were men with the brains of men and the faces and skins of gorillas.

As the Sagoths moved along the jungle trail they walked erect as men walk, but in other ways they reminded Tarzan of the great apes who were his own people, for they were given neither to laughter nor song and their taciturnity suggested the speechlessness of the alali. That certain of their sense faculties were

more highly developed than in man was evidenced by the greater dependence they placed upon their ears and noses than upon their eyes in their unremitting vigil against surprise by an enemy.

While by human standards they might have been judged ugly and even hideous, they did not so impress Tarzan of the Apes, who recognized in them a certain primitive majesty of bearing and mien such as might well have been expected of pioneers upon the frontiers of humanity.

It is sometimes the custom of theorists to picture our primordial progenitors as timid, fearful creatures, fleeing from the womb to the grave in constant terror of the countless, savage creatures that beset

their entire existence. But as it does not seem reasonable that a creature so poorly equipped for offense and defense could have survived without courage, it seems far more consistent to assume that with the dawning of reason came a certain superiority complex—a vast and at first stupid egotism —that knew caution, perhaps, but not fear; nor is any other theory tenable unless we are to suppose that from the loin of a rabbit-hearted creature sprang men who hunted the bison, the mammoth and the cave bear with crude spears tipped with stone.

The Sagoths of Pellucidar may have been analogous in the scale of evolution to the Neanderthal men of the outer crust,

or they may, indeed, have been even a step lower; yet in their bearing there was nothing to suggest to Tarzan that they had reached this stage in evolution through the expedience of flight. Their bearing as they trod the jungle trail bespoke assurance and even truculence, as though they were indeed the lords of creation, fearing nothing. Perhaps Tarzan understood their attitude better than another might have since it had been his own always in the jungle - unquestioning fearlessness—with which a certain intelligent caution was not inconsistent.

They had come but a short distance from the scene of Tarzan's capture when the Sagoths stopped beside a hollow log, the skeleton of a great tree that had fallen

beside the trail. One of the creatures tapped upon the log with his club—one, two; one, two; one, two, three. And then, after a moment's pause, he repeated the same tapping. Three times the signal boomed through the jungle and then the signaler paused, listening, while others stooped and put their ears against the ground.

Faintly through the air, more plainly through the ground, came an answering signal—one, two; one, two; one, two, three.

The creatures seemed satisfied and climbing into the surrounding trees, disposed themselves comfortably as though settling down to a wait. Two of them carried Tarzan easily aloft with

them, as with his hands bound behind his back he could not climb unassisted.

Since they had started on the march Tarzan had not spoken, but now he turned to one of the Sagoths near him. "Remove the bonds from my wrists," he said. "I am not an enemy."

"Tar-gash," said he whom Tarzan had addressed, "the gilak wants his bonds removed."

Tar-gash, a large bull with noticeably long, white canine fangs, turned his savage eyes upon the ape-man. For a long time he glared unblinkingly at the prisoner and it seemed to Tarzan that the mind of the half-brute was struggling with a new idea. Presently he turned to the Sagoth who had repeated Tarzan's

request. "Take them off," he said.

"Why?" demanded another of the bulls. The tone was challenging.

"Because I, Tar-gash, say 'take them off,'" growled the other.

"You are not M'wa-lot. He is king. If M'wa-lot says take them off, we will take them off."

"I am not M'wa-lot, To-yad; I am Tar-gash, and Tar-gash says 'take them off.'"

To-yad swung to Tarzan's side. "M'wa-lot will come soon," he said. "If M'wa-lot says take them off, we-shall take them off. We do not take orders from Tar-gash."

Like a panther, quickly, silently Tar-gash sprang straight for the throat of To-

yad. There was no warning, not even I an instant of hesitation. In this Tarzan saw that Tar-gash differed from the great apes with whom the Lord of the Jungle had been familiar upon the outer crust, for among them two bulls ordinarily must need have gone through a long preliminary of stiff-legged strutting and grumbled invective before either one launched himself upon the other in deadly combat. But the mind of Tar-gash had functioned with man-like celerity, so much so that decision and action had appeared to be almost simultaneous.

The impact of the heavy body of Tar-gash toppled To-yad from the branch upon which he had been standing, but so naturally arboreal were the two great

creatures that even as they fell they reached out and seized the same branch and still fighting, each with his free hand and his heavy fangs, they hung there a second breaking their fall, and then dropped to the ground. They fought almost silently except for low growls, Tar-gash seeking the jugular of To-yad with those sharp, white fangs that had given him his name. To-yad, his every faculty concentrated upon defense, kept the grinning jaws from his flesh and suddenly twisting quickly around, tore loose from the powerful fingers of his opponent and sought safety in flight. But like a football player, Tar-gash launched himself through the air; his long hairy arms encircled the legs of the fleeing

To-yad, bringing him heavily to the ground, and an instant later the powerful aggressor was on the back of his opponent and To-yad's jugular was at the mercy of his foe, but the great jaws of Tar-gash did not close.

"Ka-goda?" he inquired.

"Ka-goda," growled To-yad, and instantly Tar-gash arose from the body of the other bull.

With the agility of a monkey the victor leaped back into the branches of the tree. "Remove the bonds from the wrists of the gilak," he said, and at the same time he glared ferociously about him to see if there was another so mutinously minded as To-yad; but none spoke and none objected as one of the Sagoths who had

dragged Tarzan up into the tree untied the bonds that secured his wrists.

"If he tries to run away from us," said Tar-gash, "kill him."

When his bonds were removed Tarzan expected that the Sagoths would take his knife away from him. He had lost his spear and bow and most of his arrows at the instant that the snare had snapped him from the ground, but though they had lain in plain view in the trail beneath the snare the Sagoths had paid no attention to them; nor did they now pay any attention to his knife. He was sure they must have seen it and he could not understand their lack of concern regarding it, unless they were ignorant of its purpose or held him in such contempt

that they did not consider it worth the effort to disarm him.

Presently To-yad sneaked back into the tree, but he huddled sullenly by himself, apart from the others.

Faintly, from a distance, Tarzan heard something approaching. He heard it just a moment before the Sagoths heard it.

"They come!" announced Tar-gash, "M'wa-lot comes," said another, glancing at To-yad. Now Tarzan knew why the primitive drum had been sounded, but he wondered why they were gathering.

At last they arrived, nor was it difficult for Tarzan to recognize M'wa-lot, the king among the others. A great bull walked in front—a bull with so

much gray among the hairs on his face that the latter had a slightly bluish complexion, and instantly the ape-man saw how the king had come by his name.

As soon as the Sagoths with Tarzan were convinced of the identity of the approaching party, they descended from the trees to the ground and when M'wa-lot had approached within twenty paces of them, he halted. "I am M'wa-lot," he announced. "With me are the people of my tribe."

"I am Tar-gash," replied the bull who seemed to be in charge of the other party. "With me are other bulls of the tribe of M'wa- lot."

This precautionary preliminary over, M'wa-lot advanced, followed by the

bulls, the shes and the balus of his tribe.

"What is that?" demanded M'wa-lot, as his fierce eyes espied Tarzan.

"It is a gilak that we found caught in our snare," replied Tar- gash.

"That is the feast that you called us to?" demanded M'wa-lot, angrily. "You should have brought it to the tribe. It can walk."

"This is not the food of which the drum spoke," replied Tar- gash. "Nearby is the body of a thag that was killed by a tarag close by the snare in which this gilak was caught."

"Ugh!" grunted M'wa-lot. "We can eat the gilak later."

"We can have a dance," suggested one

of Tarzan's captors. "We have eaten and slept many times since we have danced, M'wa-lot."

As the Sagoths, guided by Tar-gash, proceeded along the trail towards the body of the thag, the females with balus growled savagely when one of the little ones chanced to come near to Tarzan. The bulls eyed him suspiciously and all seemed uneasy because of his presence. In these and in other ways the Sagoths were reminiscent of the apes of the tribe of Kerchak and to such an extent was this true that Tarzan, although a prisoner among them, felt strangely at home in this new environment.

A short distance ahead of the ape-man walked M'wa-lot, king of the tribe, and

at M'wa-lot's elbow was To-yad. The two spoke in low tones and from the frequent glances they cast at Tar-gash, who walked ahead of them, it was evident that he was the subject of their conversation, the effect of which upon M'wa-lot seemed to be highly disturbing.

Tarzan could see that the shaggy chieftain was working himself into a frenzy of rage, the inciting cause of which was evidently the information that To-yad was imparting to him. The latter seemed to be attempting to goad him to greater fury, a fact which seemed to be now apparent to every member of the tribe with the exception of Tar-gash, who was walking in the lead, ahead of M'wa-lot and To-yad, for practically

every other eye was turned upon the king, whose evident excitement had imparted a certain fierce restlessness, to the other members of his party. But it was not until they had come within sight of the body of the thag that the storm broke and then, without warning, M'wa-lot swung his heavy club and leaped forward toward Tar- gash with the very evident intention of braining him from behind.

If the life of the ape-man in his constant battle for survival had taught him to act quickly, it also had taught him to think quickly. He knew that in all this savage company he had no friends, but he also knew that Tar-gash, from very stubbornness and to spite To-yad, might

alone be expected to befriend him and now it appeared that Tar-gash himself might need a friend, for it was evident that no hand was to be raised in defense of him nor any voice in warning. And so Tarzan of the Apes, prompted both by considerations of self- interest and fair play, took matters into his own hands with such suddenness that he had already acted before any hand could be raised to stop him.

"Kreeg-ah, Tar-gash!" he cried, and at the same instant he sprang quickly forward, brushing To-yad aside with a single sweep of a giant arm that sent the Sagoth headlong into the underbrush bordering the trail.

At the warning cry of "Kreeg-ah,"

which in the language of the great apes is synonymous to beware, Tar-gash wheeled about to see the infuriated M'wa-lot with upraised club almost upon him and then he saw something else which made his savage eyes widen in surprise. The strange gilak, whom he had taken prisoner, had leaped close to M'wa- lot from behind. A smooth, bronzed arm slipped quickly about the king's neck and tightened. The gilak turned and stooped and surging forward with the king across his hip threw the great, hairy bull completely over his head and sent him sprawling at the feet of his astonished warriors. Then the gilak leaped to Tar-gash's side and, wheeling, faced the tribe with Tar-gash.

Instantly a score of clubs were raised against the two.

"Shall we remain and fight, Tar-gash?" demanded the ape-man.

"They will kill us," said Tar-gash. "If you were not a gilak, we might escape through the trees, but as you cannot escape we shall have to remain and fight."

"Lead the way," said Tarzan. "There is no Sagoth trail that Tarzan cannot follow."

"Come then," said Tar-gash, and as he spoke he hurled his club into the faces of the oncoming warriors and, turning, fled along the trail. A dozen mighty bounds he took and then leaped to the branch of an overhanging tree, and close behind

him came the hairless gilak.

M'wa-lot's hairy' warrior bulls pursued the two for a short distance and then gave up the chase as Tarzan was confident that they would, since among his own people it had usually been considered sufficient to run a recalcitrant bull out of the tribe and, unless he insisted upon returning, no particular effort was made to molest him.

As soon as it became evident that pursuit had been abandoned the Sagoth halted among the branches of a huge tree.

"I am Tar-gash," he said, as Tarzan stopped near him.

"I am Tarzan," replied the ape-man.

"Why did you warn me?" asked Tar-

gash.

"I told you that I did not come among you as an enemy," replied Tarzan, "and when I saw that To-yad had succeeded in urging M'wa-lot to kill you, I warned you because it was you that kept the bulls from killing me when I was captured."

"What were you doing in the country of the Sagoths?" asked Tar- gash.

"I was hunting," replied Tarzan.

"Where do you want to go now?" asked the Sagoth.

"I shall return to my people," replied Tarzan.

"Where are they?"

Tarzan of the Apes hesitated. He

looked upward toward the sun, whose rays were filtering down through the foliage of the forest. He looked about him - everywhere was foliage. There was nothing in the foliage nor upon the boles or branches of the trees to indicate direction. Tarzan of the Apes was lost!

5. BROUGHT DOWN

Jason Gridley, looking down from the branches of the tree in which he had found sanctuary, was held by a certain horrible fascination as he watched the feast of the great cats.

The scene that he had just witnessed —this stupendous spectacle of savagery —suggested to him something of what life upon the outer crust must have been at the dawn of humanity.

The suggestion was borne in upon him that perhaps this scene which he had witnessed might illustrate an important cause of the extinction of all of these animals upon the outer crust.

The action of the great saber-tooth tigers of Pellucidar in rounding up the

other beasts of the forest and driving them to this clearing for slaughter evidenced a development of intelligence far beyond that attained by the carnivores of the outer world of the present day, such concerted action by any great number for the common good being unknown.

Gridley saw the vast number of animals that had been slaughtered and most of them uselessly, since there was more flesh there than the surviving tigers could consume before it reached a stage of putrefaction that would render it unpalatable even to one of the great cats. And this fact suggested the conviction that the cunning of the tigers had reached a plane where it might reasonably be

expected to react upon themselves and eventually cause their extinction, for in their savage fury and lust for flesh they had slaughtered indiscriminately males and females, young and old. If this slaughter went on unchecked for ages, the natural prey of the tigers must become extinct and then, goaded by starvation, they would fall upon one another.

The last stage of the ascendancy of the great cats upon the outer crust must have been short and terrible and so eventually it would prove here in Pellucidar.

And just as the great cats may have reached a point where their mental development had spelled their own doom, so in the preceding era the

gigantic, carnivorous dinosaurs of the Jurassic may similarly have caused the extinction of their own contemporaries and then of themselves. Nor did Jason Gridley find it difficult to apply the same line of reasoning to the evolution of man upon the outer crust and to his own possible extinction in the not far remote future. In fact, he recalled quite definitely that statisticians had shown that within two hundred years or less the human race would have so greatly increased and the natural resources of the outer world would have been so depleted that the last generation must either starve to death or turn to cannibalism to prolong its hateful existence for another short period.

Perhaps, thought Gridley, in nature's laboratory each type that had at some era dominated all others represented an experiment in the eternal search for perfection. The invertebrate had given way to fishes, the fishes to the reptiles, the reptiles to the birds and mammals, and these, in turn, had been forced to bow to the greater intelligence of man.

What would be next? Gridley was sure that there would be something after man, who is unquestionably the Creator's greatest blunder, combining as he does all the vices of preceding types from invertebrates to mammals, while possessing few of their virtues.

As such thoughts were forced upon his mind by the scene below him they

were accompanied by others of more immediate importance, first of which was concern for his fellows.

Nowhere about the clearing did he see any sign of a human being alive or dead. He called aloud several times but received no reply, though he realized that it was possible that above the roaring and the growling of the feeding beasts his voice might not carry to any great distance. He began to have hopes that his companions had an escaped, but he was still greatly worried over the fate of Von Horst.

The subject of second consideration was that of his own escape and return to the O-220. He had it in his mind that at nightfall the beasts might retire and

unconsciously he glanced upward at the sun to note the time, when the realization came to him that there would never be any night, that forever throughout all eternity it would be noon here. And then he began to wonder how long he had been gone from the ship, but when he glanced at his watch he realized that that meant nothing. The hour hand might have made an entire circle since he had last looked at it, for in the excitement of all that had transpired since they had left the O-220 how might the mind of man, unaided, compute time?

But he knew that eventually the beasts must get their fill and leave. After them, however, there would be the hyaenodons and the jackals with their fierce cousins,

the wild dogs. As he watched these, sitting at a respectful distance from the tigers or slinking hungrily in the background, he realized that they might easily prove as much of a bar to his escape as the saber-tooth tigers themselves.

The hyaenodons especially were most discouraging to contemplate. Their bodies were as large as that of a full grown mastiff. They walked upon short, powerful legs and their broad jaws were massive and strong. Dark, shaggy hair covered their backs and sides, turning to white upon their breasts and bellies.

Gnawing hunger assailed Jason Gridley and also an overpowering desire to sleep, convincing him that he

must have been many hours away from the O-220, and yet the beasts beneath him continued to feed.

A dead thag lay at the foot of the tree in which the American kept his lonely vigil. So far it had not been fed upon and the nearest tiger was fifty yards away. Gridley was hungry, so hungry that he eyed the thag covetously. He glanced about him, measuring the distance, from the tree to the nearest tiger and trying to compute the length of time that it would take him to clamber back to safety should he descend to the ground. He had seen the tigers in action and he knew how swiftly they could cover ground and that one of them could leap almost as high as the branch upon which he sat.

Altogether the chance of success seemed slight for the plan he had in mind in the event that the nearest tiger took exception to it. But great though the danger was, hunger won. Gridley drew his hunting knife and lowered himself gently to the ground, keeping an alert eye upon the nearest tiger. Quickly he sliced several long strips of flesh from the thag's hind quarter.

The tarag feeding fifty yards away looked up. Jason sliced another strip, returned his knife to its sheath and climbed quickly back to safety. The tarag lowered its head upon its kill and closed its eyes.

The American gathered dead twigs and small branches that still clung to the

living tree and with them he built a small fire in a great crotch.

Here he cooked some of the meat of the thag; the edges were charred, the inside was raw, but Jason Gridley could have sworn that never before in his life had he tasted such delicious food.

How long his culinary activities employed him, he did not know, but when he glanced down again at the clearing he saw that most of the tigers had quitted their kills and were moving leisurely toward the forest, their distended bellies proclaiming how well they had surfeited themselves. And as the tigers retired, the hyaenodons, the wild dogs and the jackals closed in to the feast.

The hyaenodons kept the others away and Gridley saw another long wait ahead of him; nor was he mistaken. And when the hyaenodons had had their fill and gone, the wild dogs came and kept the jackals away.

In the meantime Gridley had fashioned a rude platform among the branches of the tree, and here he had slept, awakening refreshed but assailed by a thirst that was almost overpowering.

The wild dogs were leaving now and Gridley determined to wait no longer. Already the odor of decaying flesh was warning him of worse to come and there was the fear too that the tigers might return to their kills.

Descending from the tree he skirted the clearing, keeping close to the forest and searching for the trail by which his party had entered the clearing. The wild dogs, slinking away, turned to growl at him, baring menacing fangs. But knowing how well their bellies were filled, he entertained little fear of them; while for the jackals he harbored that contempt which is common among all creatures.

Gridley was dismayed to note that many trails entered the clearing; nor could he recognize any distinguishing mark that might suggest the one by which he had come. Whatever footprints his party had left had been entirely obliterated by the pads of the carnivores.

He tried to reconstruct his passage

across the clearing to the tree in which he had found safety and by this means he hit upon a trail to follow, although he had no assurance that it was the right trail. The baffling noonday sun shining down upon him seemed to taunt him with his helplessness.

As he proceeded alone down the lonely trail, realizing that at any instant he might come face to face with some terrible beast of a long dead past; Jason Gridley wondered how the ape-like progenitors of man had survived to transmit any of their characteristics however unpleasant to a posterity. That he could live to reach the O-220 he much doubted. The idea that he might live to take a mate and raise a family

was preposterous.

While the general aspect of the forest through which he was passing seemed familiar, he realized that this might be true no matter what trail he was upon and now he reproached himself for not having had the trees along the trail blazed. What a stupid ass he had been, he thought; but his regrets were not so much for himself as for the others, whose safety had been in his hands.

Never in his life had Jason Gridley felt more futile or helpless. To trudge ceaselessly along that endless trail, having not the slightest idea whether it led toward the O-220 or in the opposite direction was depressing, even maddening; yet there was naught else to

do. And always that damned noonday sun staring unblinkingly down upon him—the cruel sun that could see his ship,but would not lead him to it.

His thirst was annoying, but not yet overpowering, when he came to a small stream that was crossed by the trail. Here he drank and rested for a while, built a small fire, cooked some more of his thag meat, drank again and took up his weary march—but much refreshed.

Aboard the O-220, as the hours passed and hope waned, the spirit of the remaining officers and members of the crew became increasingly depressed as apprehension for the safety of their absent comrades increased gradually until it became eventually an almost

absolute conviction of disaster.

"They have been gone nearly seventy-two hours now," said Zuppner, who, with Dorf and Hines, spent most of his time in the upper observation cabin or pacing the narrow walkingway along the ship's back. "I never felt so helpless before in my life," he continued ruefully, "but I am free to admit that I don't know what in the devil to do."

"It just goes to show," said Hines, "how much we depend upon habit and custom and precedence in determining all our action even in the face of what we are pleased to call emergency. Here there is no custom, habit or precedence to guide us."

"We have only our own resources to

fall back upon," said Dorf, "and it is humiliating to realize that we have no resources."

"Not under the conditions that surround us;" said Zuppner. "On the outer crust there would be no question but that we should cruise around in search of the missing members of our party. We could make rapid excursions, returning to our base often: but here in Pellucidar if we should lose sight of our base there is not one of us who believes he could return the ship to this same anchorage. And that is a chance we cannot take for the only hope those men have is that the ship shall be here when they return."

One hundred and fifty feet below them

Robert Jones leaned far out of the galley doorway in an effort to see the noonday sun shining down upon the ship. His simple, good-natured face wore, a puzzled expression not untinged with awe, and as he drew back into the galley he extracted a rabbit's foot from his trousers pocket. Gently he touched each eye with it and then rubbed it vigorously upon the top of his head at the same time muttering incoherently below his breath.

From the vantage point of the walkingway far above, Lieutenant Hines scanned the landscape in all directions through powerful glasses as he had done for so long that it seemed he knew every shrub and tree and blade of grass within sight. The wild life of savage Pellucidar

that crossed and re-crossed the clearing had long since become an old story to these three men. Again and again as one animal or another had emerged from the distant forest the glasses had been leveled upon it until it could be identified as other than man; but now Hines voiced a sudden, nervous exclamation.

"What is it?" demanded Zuppner. "What do you see?"

"It's a man!" exclaimed Hines. "I'm sure of it."

"Where?" asked Dorf, as he and Zuppner raised their glasses to their eyes.

"About two points to port"

"I see it." said Dorf.

"It's either Gridley or Von Horst, and whoever it is he is alone."

"Take ten of the crew at once, Lieutenant," said Zuppner, turning to Dorf. "See that they are well armed and go out and meet him. Lose no time," he shouted after the Lieutenant, who had already started down the climbing shaft.

The two officers upon the top of the O-220 watched Dorf and his party as it set out to meet the man they could see trudging steadily toward the ship. They watched them as they approached one another, though, owing to the contour of the land, which was rolling, neither Dorf nor the man he had gone to meet caught sight of one another until they were less than a hundred yards apart. It was then

that the Lieutenant recognized the other as Jason Gridley.

As they hastened forward and clasped hands it was typical of the man that Gridley's first words were an inquiry relative to the missing members of the party.

Dorf shook his head. "You are the only one that has returned," he said.

The eager light died out of Gridley's eyes and he suddenly looked very tired and much older as he greeted the engineers and mechanics who made up the party that had come to escort him back to the ship.

"I have been within sight of the ship for a long time," he said. "How long, I do not know. I broke my watch back in

the forest a way trying to beat a tiger up a tree. Then another one treed me just on the edge of the clearing in plain view of the ship. It seems as though I have been there a week. How long have I been gone, Dorf?"

"About seventy-two hours." Gridley's face brightened. "Then there is no reason to give up hope yet for the others," he said. "I honestly thought I had been gone a week. I have slept several times, I never could tell how long; and then I have gone for what seemed long periods without sleep because I became very tired and excessively hungry and thirsty." During the return march to the ship Jason insisted upon hearing a detailed account of everything that had

happened since his departure, but it was not until they had joined Zuppner and Hines that he narrated the adventures that had befallen him and his companions during their ill-fated expedition.

"The first thing I want," he told them after he had been greeted by Zuppner and Hines, "is a bath, and then if you will have Bob cook a couple of cows I'll give you the details of the expedition while I am eating them. A couple of handfuls of Bos Primigenus and some wild fruit have only whetted my appetite."

A half hour later, refreshed by a bath, a shave and fresh clothing, he joined them in the mess room.

As the three men seated themselves,

Robert Jones entered from the galley, his shining face wreathed in smiles.

"Ah'm suttinly glad to see you all, suh,'" said Robert. "Ah knew sumpin was a-goin' to happen though—Ah knew we was a- goin' to have good luck."

"Well, I'm glad to be back, Bob," said Gridley, "and I don't know of anyone that I am any happier to see than you, for I sure have missed your cooking. But what made you think that we're going to have good luck?"

"Ah jes had a brief conversation with mah rabbit's foot. Dat ole boy he never fails me. We suah be out o' luck if Ah lose him."

"Oh, I've seen lots of rabbits around, Bob," said Zuppner. "We can get you a

bushel of them in no time."

"Yes suh, Cap'n, but you cain't get 'em in de dahk of de moon where dey ain't no dahk an' dey ain't no moon, an' othe'wise dey lacks efficiency."

"It's a good thing, then, that we brought you along," said Jason, "and a mighty good thing for Pellucidar, for she never has had a really effective rabbit's foot before in all her existence. But I can see where you're going to need that rabbit's foot pretty badly yourself in about a minute, Bob."

"How's dat, suh?" demanded Robert.

"The spirits tell me that something is going to happen to you if you don't get food onto this table in a hurry," laughed Gridley.

"Yes suh, comin' right up," exclaimed the man as he hastened into the galley.

As Gridley ate, he went over the adventures of the last seventy- two hours in careful detail and the three men sought to arrive at some definite conjecture as to the distance he had covered from the ship and the direction.

"Do you think that you could lead another party to the clearing where you became separated from Von Horst and the Waziri?" asked Zuppner.

"Yes, of course I could," replied Gridley, "because from the point that we entered the forest we blazed the trees up to the time we reached the trail, which we followed to the left. In fact I would not be needed at all and if we decide to

send out such a party, I shall not accompany it."

The other officers looked at him in surprise and for a moment there was an embarrassed silence.

"I have what I consider a better plan," continued Gridley. "There, are twenty-seven of us left. In the event of absolute necessity, twelve men can operate the ship. That will leave fifteen to form a new searching party. Leaving me out, you would have fourteen, and after you have heard my plan, if you decide upon sending out such a party, I suggest that Lieutenant Dorf command it, leaving you, Captain Zuppner and Hines to navigate the ship in the event that none of us returns, or that you finally decide to

set out in search of us."

"But I thought that you were not going," said Zuppner.

"I am not going with the searching party. I am going alone in the scout plane, and my advice would be that you send out no searching party for at least twenty-four hours after I depart, for in that time I shall either have located those who are missing or have failed entirely."

Zuppner shook his head, dubiously. "Hines, Dorf and I have discussed the feasibility of using the scout plane," he said. "Hines was very anxious to make the attempt, although he realizes better than any of us that once a pilot is out of sight of the O-220 he may never be able to locate it again, for you must remember

that we know nothing concerning any of the landmarks of the country in the direction that our search must be prosecuted."

"I have taken all that into consideration," replied Gridley, "and I realize that it is at best but a forlorn hope."

"Let me undertake .it," said Hines. "I have had more flying experience than any of you with the possible exception of Captain Zuppner, and it is out of the question that we should risk losing him."

"Anyone of you three is probably better fitted to undertake such a flight than I," replied Gridley; "but that does not relieve me of the responsibility. I am more responsible than any other member

of this party for our being where we are and, therefore, my responsibility for the safety of the missing members of the expedition is greater than that of any of the rest of you. Under the circumstances, then, I could not permit anyone else to undertake this flight. I think that you will all understand and appreciate how I feel and that you will do me the favor to interpose no more objection."

It was several minutes thereafter before anyone spoke, the four seeming to be immersed in the business of sipping their coffee and smoking their cigarettes. It was Zuppner who broke the silence.

"Before you undertake this thing," he said, "you should have a long sleep, and in the meantime we will get the plane out

and have it gone over thoroughly. You must have every chance for success that we can give you."

"Thank you!" said Gridley. "I suppose you are right about the sleep. I hate to waste the time, but if you will call me the moment that the ship is ready I shall go to my cabin at once and get such sleep as I can in the meantime."

While Gridley slept, the scout plane, carried aft in the keel cabin, was lowered to the ground, where it underwent a careful inspection and test by the engineers and officers of the O-220.

Even before toe plane was ready Gridley appeared at the cabin door of the O-220 and descended to the ground.

"You did not sleep long," said Zuppner.

"I do not know how long," said Gridley, "but I feel rested and anyway I could not have slept longer, knowing that those fellows are out there somewhere waiting and hoping for succor."

"What route do you expect to follow," asked Zuppner, "and how are you planning to insure a reasonable likelihood of your being able to return?"

"I shall fly directly over the forest as far as I think it at all likely that they could have marched in the time that they have been absent, assuming that they became absolutely confused and have traveled steadily away from the ship. As soon as I have gained sufficient altitude

to make any observation I shall try and spot some natural landmark, like a mountain or a body of water, near the ship and from time to time, as I proceed, I shall make a note of similar landmarks. I believe that in this way I can easily find my way back, since at the furthest I cannot proceed over two hundred and fifty miles from the O-220 and return to it with the fuel that I can carry.

"After I have reached the furthest possible limits that I think the party could have strayed, I shall commence circling, depending upon the noise of the motor to attract their attention and, of course, assuming that they will find some means of signaling their presence to me, which they can do even in

wooded country by building smudges."

"You expect to land?" inquired Zuppner, nodding at the heavy rifle which Gridley carried.

"If I find them in open country, I shall land; but even if I do not find them it may be necessary for me to come down and my recent experiences have taught me not to venture far in Pellucidar without a rifle."

After a careful inspection, Gridley shook hands with the three remaining officers and bid farewell to the ship's company, all of whom were anxious observers of his preparation for departure.

"Good-bye, old man," said Zuppner, "and may God and luck go with you."

Gridley pressed the hand of the man he had come to look upon as a staunch and loyal friend, and then took his seat in the open cockpit of the scout plane. Two mechanics spun the propeller, the motor roared and a moment later the block was kicked away and the plane rolled out across the grassy meadowland towards the forest at the far side. The watchers saw it rise swiftly and make a great circle and they knew that Gridley was looking for a landmark. Twice it circled above the open plain and then darted away across the forest.

It had not been until he had made that first circle that Jason Gridley had realized the handicap that this horizonless landscape of Pellucidar had

placed upon his chances of return. He had thought of a mountain standing boldly out against the sky, for such a landmark would have been almost constantly within the range of his vision during the entire flight.

There were mountains in the distance, but they stood out against no background of blue sky nor upon any horizon. They simply merged with the landscape beyond them, curving upward in the distance. Twice he circled, his keen eyes searching for any outstanding point in the topography of the country beneath him, but there was nothing that was more apparent than the grassy plain upon which the O-220 rested.

He felt that he could not waste time

and fuel by searching longer for a landmark that did not exist, and while he realized that the plain would be visible for but a comparatively short distance he was forced to accept it as his sole guide in lieu of a better one.

Roaring above the leafy roof of the primeval forest, all that transpired upon the ground below was hidden from him and it was tantalizing to realize that he might have passed directly over the heads of the comrades he sought, yet there was no other way. Returning, he would either circle or hold an exaggerated zig-zag course, watching carefully for sign of a signal.

For almost two hours Jason Gridley held a straight course, passing over

forest, plain and rolling, hilly country, but nowhere did he see any sign of those he sought. Already he had reached the limit of the distance he had planned upon coming when there loomed ahead of him in the distance a range of lofty mountains. These alone would have determined him to turn back, since his judgment told him that the lost members of the party, should they have chanced to come this far, would by now have realized that they were traveling in the wrong direction.

As he banked to turn he caught a glimpse out of the corner of an eye of something in the air above him and looking quickly back, Jason Gridley caught his breath in astonishment.

Hovering now, almost above him, was a gigantic creature, the enormous spread of whose wings almost equaled that of the plane he was piloting. The man had a single glimpse of tremendous jaws, armed with mighty teeth, in the very instant that he realized that this mighty anachronism was bent upon attacking him.

Gridley was flying at an altitude of about three thousand feet when the huge pteranodon launched itself straight at the ship. Jason sought to elude it by diving. There was a terrific crash, a roar, a splintering of wood and a grinding of metal as the pteranodon swooped down upon its prey and full into the propeller.

What happened then happened so

quickly that Jason Gridley could not have reconstructed the scene five seconds later.

The plane turned completely over and at the same instant Gridley jumped. He jerked the rip cord of his parachute. Something struck him on the head and he lost consciousness.

6. A PHORORHACOS OF THE MIOCENE

"Where are your people?" Tar-gash asked again.

Tarzan shook his head. "I do not know," he said.

"Where is your country?" asked Tar-gash.

"It is a long way off," replied the ape-man. "It is not in Pellucidar;" but, that the Sagoth could not understand any more than he could understand that a creature might be lost at all, for inherent in him was that same homing instinct that marked all the creatures of Pellucidar and which constitutes a wise provision of nature in a world without guiding celestial bodies.

Had it been possible to transport Tar-gash instantly to any point within that mighty inner world, elsewhere than upon the surface of an ocean, he could have unerringly found his way to the very spot where he was born, and because that power was instinctive he could not understand why Tarzan did not possess it.

"I know where there is a tribe of men," he said, presently. "Perhaps they are your people. I shall lead you to them."

As Tarzan had no idea as to the direction in which the ship lay and as it was remotely possible that Tar-gash was referring to the members of the O-220 expedition, he felt that he was as well

off following where Tar-gash led as elsewhere, and so he signified his readiness to accompany the Sagoth.

"How long since you saw this tribe of men," he asked after a while, "and how long have they lived where you saw them?"

Upon the Sagoth's reply to these questions, the ape-man felt that he might determine the possibility of the men to whom Tar-gash referred being the members of his own party, for if they were newcomers in the district then the chances were excellent that they were the people he sought; but his questions elicited no satisfactory reply for the excellent reason that time meant nothing to Tar-gash. And so the two set out upon

a leisurely search for the tribe of men that Tar-gash knew of. It was leisurely because for Tar-gash time did not exist; nor had it ever been a very important factor in the existence of the ape-man, except in occasional moments of emergency.

They were a strangely assorted pair—one a creature just standing upon the threshold of humanity, the other an English Lord in his own right, who was, at the same time, in many respects as primitive as the savage, shaggy bull into whose companionship chance had thrown him.

At first Tar-gash had been inclined to look with contempt upon this creature of another race, which he considered far

inferior to his own in strength, agility, courage and woodcraft, but he soon came to hold the ape-man in vast respect. And because he could respect his prowess he became attached to him in bonds of loyalty that were as closely akin to friendship as the savage nature of his primitive mind permitted.

They hunted together and fought together. They swung through the trees when the great cats hunted upon the ground, or they followed game trails ages old beneath the hoary trees of Pellucidar or out across her rolling, grassy, flower-spangled meadowland.

They lived well upon the fat of the land for both were mighty hunters.

Tarzan fashioned a new bow and

arrows and a stout spear, and these, at first, the Sagoth refused even to notice, but presently when he saw how easily and quickly they brought game to their larder he evinced a keen interest and Tarzan taught him how to use the weapons and later how to fashion them.

The country through which they traveled was well watered and was alive with game. It was partly wooded with great stretches of open land, where tremendous herds of herbivores grazed beneath the eternal noonday sun, and because of these great herds the beasts of prey were numerous—and such beasts!

Tarzan had thought that there was no world like his own world and no jungle

like his own jungle, but the more deeply he dipped into the wonders of Pellucidar the more enamored he became of this savage, primitive world, teeming with the wild life he loved best. That there were few men was Pellucidar's chiefest recommendation. Had there been none the ape-man might have considered this the land of ultimate perfection, for who is there more conversant with the cruelty and inconsideration of man than the savage beasts of the jungle?

The friendship that had developed between Tarzan and the Sagoth— and that was primarily based upon the respect which each felt for the prowess of the other—increased as each seemed to realize other admirable, personal

qualities and characteristics in his companion, not the least of which being a common taciturnity. They spoke only when conversation seemed necessary, and that, in reality, was seldom.

If man spoke only when he had something worth while to say and said that as quickly as possible, ninety-eight per cent of the human race might as well be dumb, thereby establishing a heavenly harmony from pate to tonsil.

And so the companionship of Tar-gash, coupled with the romance of strange sights and sounds and odors in this new world, acted upon the ape-man as might a strong drug, filling him with exhilaration and dulling his sense of responsibility, so that the necessity of

finding his people dwindled to a matter of minor importance. Had he known that some of them were in trouble his attitude would have changed immediately, but this he did not know. On the contrary he was only aware that they had every facility for insuring their safety and their ultimate return to the outer world and that his absence would not handicap them in any particular. However, when he did give the matter thought he knew that he must return to them, that he must find them, and that sooner or later he must go back with them to the world from which they had come.

But all such considerations were quite remote from his thoughts as he and Tar-gash were crossing a rolling, tree-

dotted plain in their search for the tribe of men to which the Sagoth was guiding him. By comparison with other plains they had crossed, this one seemed strangely deserted, but the reason for this was evident in the close-cropped grass which suggested that great herds had grazed it off before moving on to new pastures. The absence of life and movement was slightly depressing and Tarzan found himself regretting the absence of even the dangers of the teeming land through which they had just come.

They were well out toward the center of the plain and could see the solid green of a great forest curving upward into the hazy distance when the attention of both

was attracted by a strange, droning noise that brought them to a sudden halt; Simultaneously both turned and looked backward and up into the sky from which the sound seemed to come.

Far above and just emerging from the haze of the distance was a tiny speck. "Quick!" exclaimed Tar-gash. "It is a thipdar," and motioning Tarzan to follow him he ran swiftly to concealment beneath a large tree.

"What is a thipdar?" asked Tarzan, as the two halted beneath the friendly shade.

"A thipdar," said the Sagoth, "is a thipdar;" nor could he describe it more fully other than to add that the thipdars were sometimes used by the Mahars

either to protect them or to hunt their food.

"Is the thipdar a living thing?" demanded Tarzan.

"Yes," replied Tar-gash. "It lives an' is very strong and very fierce."

"Then that is not a thipdar," said Tarzan.

"What is it then?" demanded the Sagoth.

"It is an aeroplane," replied Tarzan.

"What is that?" inquired the Sagoth.

"It would be hard to explain it to you," replied the ape-man: "It is something that the men of my world build and in which they fly through the air," and as he spoke he stepped out into

the opening, where he might signal the pilot of the plane, which he was positive was the one carried by the O-220 and which, he assumed, was prosecuting a search for him.

"Come back," exclaimed Tar-gash. "You cannot fight a thipdar. It will swoop down and carry you off if you are out in the open."

"It will not harm me," said Tarzan; "One of my friends is in it."

"And you will be in it, too, if you do not come back under the tree," replied Tar-gash.

As the plane approached, Tarzan ran around in a small circle to attract the pilot's attention, stopping occasionally to wave his arms, but the plane sped on

above him and it was evident that its pilot had not seen him.

Until it faded from sight in the distance, Tarzan of the Apes stood upon the lonely plain, watching the ship that was bearing his comrade away from him.

The sight of the ship awakened Tarzan to a sense of his responsibility. He realized now that someone was risking his life to save him and with this thought came a determination to exert every possible effort to locate the O-220.

The passage of the plane opened many possibilities for conjecture. If it was circling, which was possible, the direction of its flight as it passed over

him would have no bearing upon the direction of the O-220, and if it were not circling, then how was he to know whether it was traveling away from the ship in the beginning of its quest, or was returning to it having concluded its flight.

"That was not a thipdar," said Tar-gash, coming from beneath the tree and standing at Tarzan's side. "It is a creature that I have never seen before. It is larger and must be even more terrible than a thipdar. It must have been very angry, for it growled terribly all the time."

"It is not alive," said Tarzan. "It is something that the men of my country build that they may fly through the air.

Riding in it is one of my friends. He is looking for me."

The Sagoth shook his head. "I am glad he did not come down," he said. "He was either very angry or very hungry, otherwise he would not have growled so loudly."

It was apparent to Tarzan that Tar-gash was entirely incapable of comprehending his explanation of the aeroplane and that he would always believe it was a huge, flying reptile; but that was of no importance— the thing that troubled Tarzan being the question of the direction in which he should now prosecute his search for the O-220, and eventually he determined to follow in the direction taken by the airship, for as this

coincided with the direction in which Tar- gash assured him he would find the tribe of human beings for which they were searching, it seemed after all the wisest course to pursue.

The drone of the motor had died away in the distance when Tarzan and Tar-gash took up their interrupted journey across the plain and into broken country of low, rocky hills.

The trail, which was well marked and which Tar-gash said led through the hills, followed the windings of a shallow canyon, which was rimmed on one side by low cliffs, in the face of which there were occasional caves and crevices. The bottom of the canyon was strewn with fragments of rock of various

sizes. The vegetation was sparse and there was every indication of an aridity such as Tarzan had not previously encountered since he left the O-220, and as it seemed likely that both game and water would be scarce here, the two pushed on at a brisk, swinging walk.

It was very quiet and Tarzan's ears were constantly upon the alert to catch the first sound of the hum of the motor of the returning aeroplane, when suddenly the silence was shattered by the sound of hoarse screeching which seemed to be, coming from a point further up the canyon.

Tar-gash halted. "Dyal," he said.

Tarzan looked at the Sagoth questioningly.

"It is a Dyal," repeated Tar-gash, "and it is angry."

"What is a Dyal?" asked Tarzan.

"It is a terrible bird," replied the Sagoth; "but its meat is good, and Tar-gash is hungry."

That was enough. No matter how terrible the Dyal might be, it was meat and Tar-gash was hungry, and so the two beasts of prey crept warily forward, stalking their quarry. A vagrant breeze, wafting gently down the canyon, brought to the nostrils of the ape-man a strange, new scent. It was a bird scent, slightly suggestive of the scent of an ostrich, and from its volume Tarzan guessed that it might come from a very large bird, a suggestion that was borne out by the loud

screeching of the creature, intermingled with which was a scratching and a scraping sound.

Tar-gash, who was in the lead and who was taking advantage of all the natural shelter afforded by the fragments of rock with which the canyon bed was strewn, came to a halt upon the lower side of a great boulder, behind which he quickly withdrew, and as Tarzan joined him he signaled the ape-man to look around the corner of the boulder.

Following the suggestion of his companion, Tarzan saw the author of the commotion that had attracted their attention. Being a savage jungle beast, he exhibited no outward sign of the astonishment he felt as he gazed upon the

mighty creature that was clawing frantically at a crevice in the cliffside.

To Tarzan it was a nameless creature of another world. To Tar- gash it was simply a Dyal. Neither knew that he was looking upon a Phororhacos of the Miocene. They saw a huge creature whose crested head, larger than that of a horse, towered eight feet above the ground. Its powerful, curved beak gaped wide as it screeched in anger. It beat its short, useless wing in a frenzy of rage as it struck with its mighty three-toed talons at something just within the fissure before it. And then it was that Tarzan saw that the thing at which it struck was a spear, held by human hands—a pitifully inadequate weapon with which

to attempt to ward off the attack of the mighty Dyal.

As Tarzan surveyed the creature he wondered how Tar-gash, armed only with his puny club, might hope to pit himself in successful combat against it. He saw the Sagoth creep stealthily out from behind their rocky shelter and move slowly to another closer to the Dyal and behind it, and so absorbed was the bird in its attack upon the man within the fissure that it did not notice the approach of the enemy in its rear.

The moment that Tar-gash was safely concealed behind the new shelter, Tarzan followed him and now they were within fifty feet of the great bird.

The Sagoth, grasping his club firmly

by the small end, arose and ran swiftly from his concealment, straight toward the giant Dyal, and Tarzan followed, fitting an arrow to his bow.

Tar-gash had covered but half the distance when the sound of his approach attracted the attention of the bird. Wheeling about, it discovered the two rash creatures who dared to interfere with its attack upon its quarry, and with a loud screech and wide distended beak it charged them.

The instant that the Dyal had turned and discovered them, Tar- gash had commenced whirling his club about his head and as the bird charged he launched it at one of those mighty legs, and on the instant Tarzan understood the purpose of

the Sagoth's method of attack. The heavy club, launched by the mighty muscles of the beast man, would snap the leg bone that it struck, and then the enormous fowl would be at the mercy of the Sagoth. But if it did not strike the leg, what then? Almost certain death for Tar-gash.

Tarzan had long since had reason to appreciate his companion's savage disregard of life in the pursuit of flesh, but this seemed the highest pinnacle to which rashness might ascend and still remain within the realm of sanity.

And, indeed, there happened that which Tarzan had feared—the club missed its mark. Tarzan's bow sang and an arrow sank deep into the breast of the Dyal. Tar-gash leaped swiftly to one

side, eluding the charge, and another arrow pierced the bird's feathers and hide. And then the ape-man sprang quickly to his right as the avalanche of destruction bore down upon him, its speed undiminished by the force of the two arrows buried so deeply within it.

Before the Dyal could turn to pursue either of them, Tar-gash hurled a rock, many of which were scattered upon the ground about them. It struck the Dyal upon the side of the head, momentarily dazing him, and Tarzan drove home two more arrows. As he did so, the Dyal wheeled drunkenly toward him and as he faced about a great spear drove past Tarzan's shoulder and plunged deep into the breast of the maddened creature, and

to the impact of this last missile it went down, falling almost at the feet of the ape-man.

Ignorant though he was of the strength and the methods of attack and defense of this strange bird, Tarzan nevertheless hesitated not an instant and as the Dyal fell he was upon it with drawn hunting knife.

So quickly was he in and out that he had severed its windpipe and was away again before he could become entangled in its death struggle, and then it was that for the first time he saw the man who had cast the spear.

Standing erect, a puzzled expression upon his face, was a tall, stalwart warrior, his slightly bronzed skin

gleaming in the sunlight, his shaggy head of hair bound back by a deerskin band.

For weapons, in addition to his spear, he carried a stone knife, thrust into the girdle that supported his G-string. His eyes were well set and intelligent. His features were regular and well cut. Altogether he was as splendid a specimen of manhood as Tarzan had ever beheld.

Tar-gash, who had recovered his club, was advancing toward the stranger. "I am Tar-gash," he said. "I kill."

The stranger drew his stone knife and waited, looking first at Tar-gash and then at Tarzan.

The ape-man stepped in front of Tar-gash. "Wait," he commanded. "Why do

you kill?"

"He is a gilak," replied the Sagoth.

"He saved you from the Dyal," Tarzan reminded Tar-gash. "My arrows would not stop the bird. Had it not been for his spear, one or both of us must have died."

The Sagoth appeared puzzled. He scratched his head in perplexity. "But if I do not kill him, he will kill me," he said finally.

Tarzan turned toward the stranger. "I am Tarzan," he said.: "This is Tar-gash," and he pointed at the Sagoth and waited.

"I am Thoar," said the stranger.

"Let us be friends," said Tarzan. "We have no quarrel with you."

Again the stranger looked puzzled.

"Do you understand the language of the Sagoths?" asked Tarzan, thinking that possibly the man might not have understood him.

Thoar nodded. "A little," he said; "but why should we be friends?"

"Why should we be enemies?" countered the ape-man.

Thoar shook his head. "I do not know," he said. "It is always thus."

"Together we have slain the Dyal," said Tarzan. "Had we not come it would have killed you. Had you not cast your spear it would have killed us. Therefore, we should be friends, not enemies. Where are you going?"

"Back to my own country," replied Thoar, nodding in the direction that Tarzan and Tar-gash had been traveling.

"We, too, are going in that direction," said Tarzan. "Let us go together. Six hands are better than four."

Thoar glanced at the Sagoth.

"Shall we all go together as friends, Tar-gash?" demanded Tarzan.

"It is not done," said the Sagoth, precisely as though he had behind him thousands of years of civilization and culture.

Tarzan smiled one of his rare smiles. "We shall do it, then," he said. "Come!"

As though taking it for granted that the others would obey his command, the

ape-man turned to the body of the Dyal and, drawing his hunting knife, fell to work cutting off portions of the meat. For a moment Thoar and Tar-gash hesitated, eyeing each other suspiciously, and then the bronzed warrior walked over to assist Tarzan and presently Tar-gash joined them.

Thoar exhibited keen interest in Tarzan's steel knife, which slid so easily through the flesh while he hacked and hewed laboriously with his stone implement; while Tar-gash seemed not particularly to notice either of the implements as he sunk his strong fangs into the breast of the Dyal and tore away a large hunk of the meat, which he devoured raw. Tarzan was about to do

the same, having been raised exclusively upon a diet of raw meat, when he saw Thoar preparing to make fire, which he accomplished by the primitive expedient of friction. The three ate in silence, the Sagoth carrying his meat to a little distance from the others, perhaps because in him the instinct of the wild beast was stronger.

When they had finished they followed the trail upward toward the pass through which it led across the hills, and as they went Tarzan sought to question Thoar concerning his country and its people, but so limited is the primitive vocabulary of the Sagoth and so meager Thoar's knowledge of this language that they found communication difficult and

Tarzan determined to master Thoar's tongue.

Considerable experience in learning new dialects and languages rendered the task far from difficult and as the ape-man never for a moment relinquished a purpose he intended to achieve, nor ever abandoned a task that he had set himself until it had been successfully concluded, he made rapid progress which was greatly facilitated by the interest which Thoar took in instructing him.

As they reached the summit of the low hills, they saw, hazily in the far distance, what appeared to be a range of lofty mountains.

"There," said Thoar, pointing, "lies Zoram."

"What is Zoram?" asked Tarzan.

"It is my country," replied the warrior. "It lies in the Mountains of the Thipdars."

This was the second time that Tarzan had had a reference to thipdars. Tar-gash had said the aeroplane was a thipdar and now Thoar spoke of the Mountains of Thipdars.

"What is a thipdar?" he asked.

Thoar looked at him in astonishment. "From what country do you come,'" he demanded, "that you do not know what a thipdar is and do not speak the language of the gilaks?"

"I am not of Pellucidar," said Tarzan.

"I could believe that," said Thoar, "if

there were any other place from which you could be, but there is not, except Molop Az, the flaming sea upon which Pellucidar floats. But the only inhabitants of the Molop Az are the little demons, who carry the dead who are buried in the ground, piece by piece, down to Molop Az, and while I have never seen one of these little demons I am sure that they are not like you."

"No," said Tarzan, "I am not from Molop Az, yet sometimes I have thought that the world from which I come is inhabited by demons, both large and small."

As they hunted and ate and slept and marched together, these three creatures found their confidence in one another

increasing so that even Tar-gash looked no longer with suspicion upon Thoar, and though they represented three distinct periods in the ascent of man, each separated from the other by countless thousands of years, yet they had so much in common that the advance which man had made from Tar-gash to Tarzan seemed scarcely a fair recompense for the time and effort which Nature must have expended.

Tarzan could not even conjecture the length of time he had been absent from the O-220, but he was confident that he must be upon the wrong trail, yet it seemed futile to turn back since he could not possibly have any idea as to what direction he should take. His one hope

was that either he might be sighted by the pilot of the plane, which he was certain was hunting for him, or that the O-220, in cruising about, would eventually pass within signaling distance of him. In the meantime he might as well be with Tar-gash and Thoar as elsewhere.

The three had eaten and slept again and were resuming their journey when Tarzan's keen eyes espied from the summit of a low hill something lying upon an open plain at a considerable distance ahead of them. He did not know what it was, but he was sure that whatever it was, it was not a part of the natural landscape, there being about it that indefinable suggestion of discord, or, more properly, lack of harmony with

its surroundings that every man whose perception has not been dulled by city dwelling will understand. And as it was almost instinctive with Tarzan to investigate anything that he did not understand, he turned his footsteps in the direction of the thing that he had seen.

The object that had aroused his curiosity was hidden from him almost immediately after he started the descent of the hill upon which he had stood when he discovered it; nor did it come again within the range of his vision until he was close upon it, when to his astonishment and dismay he saw that it was the wreck of an aeroplane.

7. THE RED FLOWER OF ZORAM

Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram, paused and looked back across the rocky crags behind and below her. She was very hungry and it had been long since she had slept, for behind her, dogging her trail, were the four terrible men from Pheli, which lies at the foot or the Mountains of the Thipdars, beyond the land of Zoram.

For just an instant she stood erect and then she threw herself prone upon the rough rock, behind a jutting fragment that partially concealed her, and here she looked back along the way she had come, across a pathless waste of tumbled granite. Mountain-bred, she had lived her life among the lofty peaks of

the Mountains of the Thipdars, considering contemptuously the people of the lowland to which those who pursued her belonged. Perchance, if they followed her here she might be forced to concede them some measure of courage and possibly to look upon them with a slightly lessened contempt, yet even so she would never abate her effort to escape them.

Bred in the bone of The Red Flower was loathing of the men of Pheli, who ventured occasionally into the fastnesses of the Mountains of the Thipdars to steal women, for the pride and the fame of the mountain people lay in the beauty of their girls, and so far had this fame spread that men came from far countries,

out of the vast river basin below their lofty range, and risked a hundred deaths in efforts to steal such a mate as Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram.

The girl's sister, Lana, had been thus stolen, and within her memory two other girls of Zoram, by the men from the lowland, and so the fear, as well as the danger, was ever present. Such a fate seemed to The Red Flower worse than death, since not only would it take her forever from her beloved mountains, but make her a low-country woman and her children low-country children than which, in the eyes of the mountain people, there could be no deeper disgrace, for the mountain men mated only with mountain women, the men of

Zoram, and Clovi, and Daroz taking mates from their own tribes or stealing them from their neighbors.

Jana was beloved by many of the young warriors of Zoram, and though, as yet, there had been none who had fired her own heart to love she knew that same day she would mate with one of them, unless in the meantime she was stolen by a warrior from another tribe.

Were she to fall into the hands of one from either Clovi or Daroz she would not be disgraced and she might even be happy, but she was determined to die rather than to be taken by the men from Pheli.

Long ago, it seemed to her now, who had no means for measuring time, she

had been searching for thipdar eggs among the lofty crags above the caverns that were the home of her people when a great hairy man leaped from behind a rock and endeavored to seize her. Active as a chamois, she eluded him with ease, but he stood between her and the village and when she sought to circle back she discovered that he had three companions who effectually barred her way, and then had commenced the flight and the pursuit that had taken her far from Zoram among lofty peaks where she had never been before.

Not far below her, four squat, hairy men had stopped to rest. "Let us turn back," growled one. "You can never catch her, Skruk, in country like this,

which is fit only for thipdars and no place for men."

Skruk shook his bullet head. "I have seen her," he said, "and I shall have her if I have to chase her to the shores of Molop Az."

"Our hands are torn by the sharp rock," said another.

"Our sandals are almost gone and our feet bleed. We cannot go on. We shall die."

"You may die," said Skruk, "but until then you shall go on. I am Skruk, the chief, and I have spoken."

The others growled resentfully, but when Skruk took up the pursuit again they followed him. Being from a low country they found strenuous exertion at

these high altitudes exhausting, it is true, but the actual basis for their disinclination to continue the pursuit was the terror which the dizzy heights inspired in them and the perilous route along which The Red Flower of Zoram was leading them.

From above Jana saw them ascending, and knowing that they were again upon the right trail she stood erect in plain view of them. Her single, soft garment made from the pelt of tarag cubs, whipped about her naked legs, half revealing, half concealing the rounded charms of her girlish figure. The noonday sun shone dawn upon her light, bronzed skin, glistening from the naked contours of a perfect shoulder and

imparting golden glints to her hair that was sometimes a lustrous brawn and again a copper bronze. It was piled loosely upon her head and held in place by slender, hollow bones of the dimorphodon, a little long-tailed cousin of the thipdar. The upper ends of these bone pins were ornamented with carving and some of them were colored. A fillet of soft skin ornamented in colors encircled her brow and she wore bracelets and anklets made of the vertebrae of small animals, strung upon leather thongs. These, too, were carved and colored. Upon her feet were stout, little sandals, soled with the hide of the mastodon and from the center of her headband rose a single feather. At her

hip was a stone knife and in her right hand a light spear.

She stooped and picking up a small fragment of rock hurled it down at Skruk and his companions. "Go back to your swamps, jaloks of the low country," she cried. "The Red Flower of Zoram is not for you," and then she turned and sped away across the pathless granite.

To her left lay Zoram, but there was a mighty chasm between her and the city. Along its rim she made her way, sometimes upon its very verge, but unshaken by the frightful abyss below her. Constantly she sought for a means of descent, since she knew that if she could cross it she might circle back toward Zoram, but the walls rose sheer for two

thousand feet offering scarce a handhold in a hundred feet.

As she rounded the shoulder of the peak she saw a vast country stretching away below her—a country that she had. never seen before—and she knew that she had crossed the mighty range and was looking on the land that lay beyond. The fissure that she had been following she could see widening below her into a great canyon that led out through foothills to a mighty plain. The slopes of the lower hills were wooded and beyond the plain were forests.

This was a new world to Jana of Zoram, but it held no lure for her; it did not beckon to her for she knew that savage beasts and savage men of the low

countries roamed its plains and forests.

To her right rose the mountains she had rounded; to her left was the deep chasm, and behind her were Skruk and his three companions.

For a moment she feared that she was trapped, but after advancing a few yards she saw that the sheer wall of the abyss had given way to a tumbled mass of broken ledges. But whether there were any means of descent, even here, she did not know—she could only hope.

From pausing often to search for a way down into the gorge, Jana had lost precious time and now she became suddenly aware that her pursuers were close behind her. Again she sprang forward, leaping from rock to rock,

while they redoubled their speed and stumbled after her in pursuit, positive now that they were about to capture her.

Jana glanced below, and a hundred feet beneath her she saw a tumbled mass of granite that had fallen from above and formed a wide ledge. Just ahead the mountain jutted out forming an overhanging cliff.

She glanced back. Skruk was already in sight. He was stumbling awkwardly along in a clumsy run and breathing heavily, but he was very near and she must choose quickly.

There was but one way—over the edge of the cliff lay temporary escape or certain death. A leather thong, attached a foot below the point of her spear, she

fastened around her neck, letting the spear hang down her back, threw herself upon the ground and slid over the edge of the cliff. Perhaps there were handholds; perhaps not. She glanced down. The face of the cliff was rough and not perpendicular, leaning in a little toward the mountain. She felt about with her toes and finally she located a protuberance that would hold her weight. Then she relinquished her hold upon the top of the cliff with one hand and searched about for a crevice in which to insert her fingers, or a projection to which she could cling.

She must work quickly for already the footsteps of the Phelians were sounding above her. She found a hold to which

she might cling with scarcely more than the tips of her fingers, but it was something and the horror of the lowland was just above her and only death below.

She relinquished her hold upon the cliff edge with her other hand and lowered herself very slowly down the face of the cliff, searching with her free foot for another support.

One foot, two, three she descended, and then attracted by a noise above her she glanced up and saw the hairy face of Skruk just above her.

"Hold my legs," he shouted to his companions, at the same time throwing himself prone at the edge of the cliff, and as they obeyed his command he reached

down a long, hairy arm to seize Jana, and the girl was ready to let go all holds and drop to the jagged rocks beneath when Skruk's hand should touch her. Still looking upward she saw the fist of the Phelian but a few inches from her face.

The outstretched fingers of the man brushed the hair of the girl. One of her groping feet found a tiny ledge and she lowered herself from immediate danger of capture. Skruk was furious, but that one glance into the upturned face of the girl so close beneath him only served to add to his determination to possess her. No lengths were too far now to go to achieve his heart's desire, but as he glanced down that frightful escarpment

his savage heart was filled with fear for the safety of his prize. It seemed incredible that she had descended as far as she had without falling and she had only commenced the descent. He knew that he and his companions could not follow the trail that she was blazing and he realized, too, that if they menaced her from above she might be urged to a greater haste that would spell her doom.

With these thoughts in his mind Skruk arose to his feet and turned to his companions. "We shall seek an easier way down," he said in a low voice, and then leaning over the cliff edge, he called down to Jana. "You have beaten me, mountain girl," he said. "I go back now to Pheli in the lowland. But I shall

return and then I shall take you with me as my mate."

"May the thipdars catch you and tear out your heart before ever you reach Pheli again,", cried Jana. But Skruk made no reply and she saw that they were going back the way that they had come, but she did not know that they were merely looking for an easier way into the bottom of the gorge toward which she was descending, or that Skruk's words had been but a ruse to throw her off her guard.

The Red Flower of Zoram, relieved of immediate necessity for haste, picked her way cautiously down the face of the cliff to the first ledge of tumbled granite. Here, by good fortune, she found the egg

of a thipdar, which furnished her with both food and drink.

It was a long, slow descent to the bottom of the gorge, but finally the girl accomplished it, and in the meantime Skruk and his companions had found an easier way and had descended into the gorge several miles above her.

For a moment after she reached the bottom Jana was undecided as to what course to pursue. Instinct urged her to turn upward along the gorge in the general direction of Zoram, but her judgment prompted her to descend and skirt the base of the mountain to the left in search of an easier route back across them. And so she came leisurely down toward the valley, while behind her

followed the four men from Pheli.

The canyon wall at her left, while constantly lessening in height as she descended, still presented a formidable obstacle, which it seemed wiser to circumvent than to attempt to surmount, and so she continued on downward toward the mouth of the canyon, where it debauched upon a lovely valley.

Never before in all her life had Jana approached the lowland so closely. Never before had she dreamed how lovely the lowland country might be, for she had always been taught that it was a horrid place and no fit abode for the stalwart tribes of the mountains.

The lure of the beauties and the new scenes unfolding before her, coupled

with a spirit of exploration which was being born within her, led her downward into the valley much farther than necessity demanded.

Suddenly her attention was attracted by a strange sound coming suddenly from on high—a strange, new note in the diapason of her savage world, and glancing upward she finally descried the creature that must be the author of it.

A great thipdar, it appeared to be, moaning dismally far above her head - but what a thipdar! Never in her life had she seen one as large as this.

As she watched she saw another thipdar, much smaller, soaring above it. Suddenly the lesser one swooped upon its intended prey. Faintly she heard

sounds of shattering and tearing and then the two combatants plunged earthward. As they did so she saw something separate itself from the mass and as the two creatures, partially supported by the wings of the larger, fell in a great, gliding spiral a most remarkable thing happened to the piece that had broken loose. Something shot out of it and unfolded above it in the air - something that resembled a huge toadstool, and as it did so the swift flight of the falling body was arrested and it floated slowly earthward, swinging back and forth as she had seen a heavy stone do when tied at the end of a buckskin thong.

As the strange thing descended nearer, Jana's eyes went wide in

surprise and terror as she recognized the dangling body as that of a man.

Her people had few superstitions, not having advanced sufficiently in the direction of civilization to have developed a priesthood, but here was something that could be explained according to no natural logic. She had seen two great, flying reptiles meet in battle, high in air and out of one of them had come a man. It was incredible, but more than all it was terrifying. And so The Red Flower of Zoram, reacting in the most natural way, turned and fled.

Back toward the canyon she raced, but she had gone only a short distance when, directly in front of her, she saw Skruk and his three companions.

They, too, had seen the battle in mid-air and they had seen the thing floating downward toward the ground, and while they had not recognized it for what it was they had been terrified and were themselves upon the point of fleeing when Skruk descried Jana running toward them. Instantly every other consideration was submerged in his desire to have her, and growling commands to his terrified henchmen he led them toward the girl.

When Jana discovered them she turned to the right and tried to circle about them, but Skruk sent one to intercept her and when she turned in the opposite direction, the four spread out across her line of retreat so as to

effectually bar her escape in that direction.

Choosing any fate rather than that which must follow her capture by Skruk, Jana turned again and fled down the valley and in pursuit leaped the four squat, hairy men of Pheli. At the instant that Jason Gridley had pulled the rip cord of his parachute a fragment of the broken propeller of his plane had struck him a glancing blow upon the head, and when he regained consciousness he found himself lying upon a bed of soft grasses at the head of a valley, where a canyon, winding out of lofty mountains, opened onto leveler land.

Disgusted by the disastrous end of his futile search for his companions, Gridley

arose and removed the parachute harness. He was relieved to discover that he had suffered no more serious injury than a slight abrasion of the skin upon one temple.

His first concern was for his ship and though he knew that it must be a total wreck he hoped against hope that he might at least salvage his rifle and ammunition from it. But even as the thought entered his mind it was forced into the background by a chorus of savage yelps and growls that caused him to turn his eyes quickly to the right. At the summit of a little rise of ground a short distance away he saw four of the ferocious wolf dogs of Pellucidar. As hyaenodons they were known to the

paleontologists of the outer crust, and as jaloks to the men of the inner world. As large as full grown mastiffs they stood there upon their short, powerful legs, their broad, strong jaws parted in angry growls, their snarling lips drawn back to reveal their powerful fangs.

As he discovered them Jason became aware that their attention was not directed upon him—that they seemed not as yet to have discovered him —and as he looked in the direction that they were looking he was astounded to see a girl running swiftly toward them, and at a short distance behind the girl four men, who were apparently pursuing her.

As the vicious growls of the jaloks broke angrily upon the comparative

silence of the scene, the girl paused and it was evident that she had not before been aware of the presence of this new menace. She glanced at them and then back at her pursuers.

The hyaenodons advanced toward her at an easy trot. In piteous bewilderment she glanced about her. There was but one way open for escape and then as she turned to flee in that direction her eyes fell upon Jason Gridley, straight ahead in her path of flight and again she hesitated.

To the man came an intuitive understanding of her quandary. Menaced from the rear and upon two sides by known enemies, she was suddenly faced by what might indeed be another, cutting

off all hope of retreat.

Acting impulsively and in accordance with the code that dominates his kind, Gridley ran toward the girl, shouting. words of encouragement and motioning her to come to him.

Skruk and his companions were closing in upon her from behind and from her right, while upon her left came the jaloks. For just an instant longer, she hesitated and then seemingly determined to place her fate in the hands of an unknown, rather than surrender it to the inevitable doom which awaited her either at the hands of the Phelians or the fangs of the jaloks, she turned and sped toward Gridley, and behind her came the four beasts and the four men.

As Gridley ran forward to meet the girl he drew one of his revolvers; a heavy .45 caliber Colt.

The hyaenodons were charging now and the leader was close behind her, and at that instant Jana tripped and fell, and simultaneously Jason reached her side, but so close was the savage beast that when Jason fired the hyaenodon's body fell across the body of the girl.

The shot, a startling sound to which none of them was accustomed, brought the other hyaenodons to a sudden stop, as well as the four men, who were racing rapidly forward under Skruk's command in an effort to save the girl from the beasts.

Quickly rolling the body of the jalok

from its intended victim, Jason lifted the girl to her feet and as he did so she snatched her stone knife from its scabbard. Jason Gridley did not know how near he was to death at that instant. To Jana, every man except the men of Zoram was a natural enemy. The first law of nature prompted her to kill lest she be killed, but in the instant before she struck the blade home she saw something in the eyes of this man, something in the expression upon his face that she had never seen in the eyes or face of any man before. As plainly as though it had been spoken in words she understood that this stranger was prompted by solicitousness for her safety; that he was prompted by a desire

to befriend rather than to harm her, and though in common with the jaloks and the Phelians she had been terrified by the loud noise and the smoke that had burst from the strange stick in his hand she knew that this had been the means that he had taken to protect her from the jaloks.

Her knife hand dropped to her side, and, as a slow smile lighted the face of the stranger, The Red Flower of Zoram smiled back in response.

They stood as they had when he had lifted her from the ground, his left arm about her shoulders supporting her and he maintained this unconscious gesture of protection as he turned to face the girl's enemies, who, after their first fright, seemed on the point of returning

to the attack.

Two of the hyaenodons, however, had transferred their attention to Skruk and his companions, while the third was slinking bare fanged, toward Jason and Jana.

The men of Pheli stood ready to receive the charge of the hyaenodons, having taken positions in line, facing their attackers, and at sufficient intervals to permit them properly to wield their clubs. As the beasts charged two of the men hurled their weapons, each singling out one of the fierce carnivores. Skruk hurled his weapon with the greater accuracy, breaking one of the forelegs of the beast attacking him, and as it went down the Phelian standing next to Skruk

leaped forward and rained heavy blows upon its skull.

The cudgel aimed at the other beast struck it a glancing blow upon the shoulder, but did not stop it and an instant later it was upon the Phelian whose only defense now was his crude stone knife. But his companion, who had reserved his club for such an emergency, leaped in and swung lustily at the savage brute, while Skruk and the other, having disposed of their adversary, came to the assistance of their fellows.

The savage battle between men and beast went unnoticed by Jason, whose whole attention was occupied by the fourth wolfdog as it moved forward to attack him and his companion.

Jana, fully aware that the attention of each of the men was fully centered upon the attacking beasts, realized that now was the opportune moment to make a break for freedom. She felt the arm of the stranger about her shoulders, but it rested there lightly—so lightly that she might easily disengage herself by a single, quick motion. But there was something in the feel of that arm about her that imparted to her a sense of greater safety than she had felt since she had left the caverns of her people—perhaps the protective instinct which dominated the man subconsciously exerted its natural reaction upon the girl to the end that instead of fleeing she was content to remain, sensing greater safety

where she was than elsewhere.

And then the fourth hyaenodon charged, growling, to be met by the roaring bark of the Colt. The creature stumbled and went down, stopped by the force of the heavy charge—but only for an instant—again it was up, maddened by pain, desperate in the face of death. Bloody foam crimsoned its jowls as it leaped for Jason's throat.

Again the Colt spoke, and then the man went down beneath the heavy body of the wolf dog, and at the same instant the Phelians dispatched the second of the beasts which had attacked them.

Jason Gridley was conscious of a great weight upon him as he was borne to the ground and he sought to fend those

horrid jaws from his throat by interposing his left forearm, but the jaws never closed and when Gridley struggled from beneath the body of the beast and scrambled to his feet he saw the girl tugging upon the shaft of her crude, stone-tipped spear in an effort to drag it from the body of the jalok.

Whether his last bullet or the spear had dispatched the beast the man did not know, and he was only conscious of gratitude and admiration for the brave act of the slender girl, who had stood her ground at his side, facing the terrible beast without loss of poise or resourcefulness.

The four jaloks lay dead, but Jason Gridley's troubles were by no means

over, for scarcely had he arisen after the killing of the second beast when the girl seized him by the arm and pointed toward something behind him.

"They are coming," she said. "They will kill you and take me. Oh, do not let them take me!"

Jason did not understand a word that she had said, but it was evident from her tone of voice and from the expression upon her beautiful face that she was more afraid of the four men approaching them than she had been of the hyaenodons, and as he turned to face them he could not wonder, for the men of Pheli looked quite as brutal as the hyaenodons and there was nothing impressive or magnificent in their

appearance as there had been in the mien of the savage carnivores—a fact which is almost universally noticeable when a comparison is made between the human race and the so-called lower orders.

Gridley raised his revolver and leveled it at the leading Phelian, who happened to be another than Skruk. "Beat it!" he said. "Your faces frighten the young lady."

"I am Gluf," said the Phelian. "I kill."

"If I could understand you I might agree with you," replied Jason, "but your exuberant whiskers and your diminutive forehead suggest that you are all wet." He did not want to kill the man, but he realized that he could not let him approach too closely. But if he had any

compunction in the matter of manslaughter, it was evident that the girl did not for she was talking volubly, evidently urging him to some action, and when she realized that he could not understand her she touched his pistol with a brown forefinger and then pointed meaningly at Gluf.

The fellow was now within fifteen paces of them and Jason could see that his companions were starting to circle them. He knew that something must be done immediately and prompted by humanitarian motives he fired his Colt, aiming above the head of the approaching Phelian. The sharp report stopped all four of them, but when they realized that none of them was injured

they broke into a torrent of taunts and threats, and Gluf, inspired only by a desire to capture the girl so that they might return to Pheli, resumed his advance, at the same time commencing to swing his club menacingly. Then it was that Jason Gridley regretfully shot, and shot to kill. Gluf stopped in his tracks, stiffened, whirled about and sprawled forward upon his face.

Wheeling upon the others, Gridley fired again, for he realized that those menacing clubs were almost as effective at short range as was his Colt. Another Phelian dropped in his tracks, and then Skruk and his remaining companion turned and fled.

"Well," said Gridley, looking about

him at the bodies of the four hyaenodons and the corpses of the two men, "this is a great little country, but I'll be gosh-darned if I see how anyone grows up to enjoy it."

The Red Flower of Zoram stood looking at him admiringly. Everything about this stranger aroused her interest, piqued her curiosity and stimulated her imagination. In no particular was he like any other man she had ever seen. Not one item of his strange apparel corresponded to anything that any other human being of her acquaintance wore. The remarkable weapon, which spat smoke and fire to the accompaniment of a loud roar, left her dazed with awe and admiration; but perhaps the outstanding

cause for astonishment, when she gave it thought, was the fact that she was not afraid of this man. Not only was the fear of strangers inherent in her, but from earliest childhood she had been taught to expect only the worst from men who were not of her own tribe and to flee from them upon any and all occasions. Perhaps it was his smile that had disarmed her, or possibly there was something in his friendly, honest eyes that had won her immediate trust and confidence. Whatever the cause, however, the fact remained that The Red Flower of Zoram made no effort to escape from Jason Gridley, who now found himself completely lost in a strange world, which in itself was quite

sad enough without having added to it responsibilities for the protection of a strange, young woman, who could understand nothing that he said to her and whom, in turn, he could not understand.

8. JANA AND JASON

Tar-Gash and Thoar looked with wonder upon the wreckage of the plane and Tarzan hastily searched it for the body of the pilot. The ape-man experienced at least temporary relief when be discovered that there was no body there, and a moment later he found footprints in the turf upon the opposite side of the plane—the prints of a booted foot which he recognized immediately as having been made by Jason Gridley—and this evidence assured him that the American had not been killed and apparently not even badly injured by the fall. And then he discovered something else which puzzled him exceedingly. Mingling with the footprints of Gridley

and evidently made at the same time were those of a small sandaled foot.

A further brief examination revealed the fact that two persons, one of them Gridley and the other apparently a female or a youth of some Pellucidarian tribe, who had accompanied him, had approached the plane after it had crashed, remained in its vicinity for a short time and then returned in the direction from which they had come. With the spoor plain before him there was nothing for Tarzan to do other than to follow it.

The evidence so far suggested that Gridley had been forced to abandon the plane in air and that he had safely made a parachute descent, but where and

under what circumstances he had picked up his companion, Tarzan could not even hazard a guess.

He found it difficult to get Thoar away from the aeroplane, the strange thing having so fired his curiosity and imagination that he must need remain near it and ask a hundred questions concerning it.

With Tar-gash, however, the reaction was entirely different. He had glanced at it with only a faint show of curiosity or interest, and then he had asked one question,

"What is it?"

"This is the thing that passed over us and which you said was a flying reptile," replied Tarzan. "I told you at that time

that one of my friends was in it. Something happened and the thing fell, but my friend escaped without injury."

"It has no eyes," said Tar-gash. "How could it see to fly?"

"It was not alive," replied Tarzan.

"I heard it growl," said the Sagoth; nor was he ever convinced that the thing was not some strange form of living creature.

They had covered but a short distance along the trail made by Gridley and Jana, after they had left the aeroplane, when they came upon the carcass of a huge pteranodon. Its head was crushed and battered and almost severed from its body and a splinter of smooth wood projected from its skull—a splinter that

Tarzan recognized as a fragment of an aeroplane propeller —and instantly he knew the cause of Gridley's crash.

Half a mile further on the three discovered further evidence, some of it quite startling. An opened parachute lay stretched upon the ground where it had fallen and at short distances from it lay the bodies of four hyaenodons and two hairy men.

An examination of. the bodies revealed the fact that both of the men and two of the hyaenodons had died from bullet wounds. Everywhere upon the trampled turf appeared the imprints of the small sandals of Jason's companion. It was evident to the keen eyes of Tarzan that two other men, both natives, had

taken part in the battle which had been waged here. That they were of the same tribe as the two that had fallen was evidenced by the imprints of their sandals, which were of identical make, while those of Tarzan's companion differed materially from all the others.

As be circled about, searching for further evidence, he saw that the two men who had escaped had run rapidly for some distance toward the mouth of a large canyon, and that, apparently following their retreat, Jason and his companion had set out in search of the plane. Later they had returned to the scene of the battle, and when they had departed they also had gone toward the mountains, but along a line considerably

to the right of the trail made by the fleeing natives.

Thoar, too, was much interested in the various tracks that the participants in the battle by the parachute had left, but he said nothing until after Tarzan had completed his investigation.

"There were four men and either a woman or a youth here with my friend," said Tarzan.

"Four of them were law countrymen from Pheli," said Thoar, "and the other was a woman of Zoram."

"How do you know?" asked Tarzan, who was always anxious to add to his store of woodcraft.

"The low country sandals are never shaped to the foot as closely as are those

of the mountain tribes," replied Thoar, "and the sales are much thinner, being made usually of the hides of the thag, which is tough enough for people who do not walk often upon anything but soft grasses or in soggy marshland. The sandals of the mountain tribes are soled with the thick hide of Maj, the cousin of Tandor. If you will look at the spoor you will see that they are not worn at all, while there are holes in the sandals of these dead men of Pheli."

"Are we near Zoram?" asked Tarzan.

"No," replied Thoar. "It lies across the highest range ahead of us."

"When we first met, Thoar, you told me that you were from Zoram."

"Yes, that is my country," replied

Thoar.

"Then, perhaps, this woman is someone whom you know?"

"She is my sister," replied Thoar.

Tarzan of the Apes looked at him in surprise. "How do you know?" he demanded.

"I found an imprint where there was no turf, only soft earth, and there the spoor was so distinct that I could recognize the sandals as hers. So familiar with her work am I that I could recognize the stitching alone, where the sole is joined to the upper part of the sandal, and in addition there are the notches, which indicate the tribe. The people of Zoram have three notches in the underside of the sole at the toe of the

left sandal."

"What was your sister doing so far from her own country and how is it that she is with my friend?"

"It is quite plain," replied Thoar. "These men of Pheli sought to capture her. One of them wanted her for his mate, but she eluded them and they pursued her across the Mountains of the Thipdars and down into this valley, where she was set upon by jaloks. The man from your country came and killed the jaloks and two of the Phelians and drove the other two away. It is evident that my sister could not escape him, and he captured her."

Tarzan of the Apes smiled. "The spoor does not indicate that she ever

made any effort to escape him," he said.

Thoar scratched his head. "That is true," he replied, "and I cannot understand it, for the women of my tribe do not care to mate with the men of other tribes and I know that Jana, my sister, would rather die than mate outside the Mountains of the Thipdars. Many times has she said so and Jana is not given to idle talk."

"My friend would not take her by force," said Tarzan. "If she has gone with him, she has gone with him willingly. And I think that when we find them you will discover that he is simply accompanying her back to Zoram, for he is the sort of man who would not permit a woman to go alone and unprotected."

"We shall see," said Thoar, "but if he has taken Jana against her wishes, he must die."

As Tarzan, Tar-gash and Thoar followed the spoor of Jason and Jana a disheartened company of men rounded the end of the great Mountains of the Thipdars, fifty miles to the east of them, and entered the Gyor Cors, or great Plains of the Gyors.

The party consisted of ten black warriors and a white man, and, doubtless, never in the history of mankind had eleven men been more completely and hopelessly lost than these.

Muviro and his warriors, than whom no better trackers ever lived, were

totally bewildered by their inability even to back-track successfully.

The stampeding of the maddened beasts, from which they had barely escaped with their lives and then only by what appeared nothing short of a miracle, had so obliterated all signs of the party's former spoor that though they were all confident that they had gone but a short distance from the clearing, into which the beasts had been herded by the tarags, they had never again been able to locate the clearing, and now they were wandering hopelessly and, in accordance with Von Horst's plans, keeping as much in the open as possible in the hope that the cruising O-220 might thus discover them, for Von Horst was

positive that eventually his companions would undertake a search for them.

Aboard the O-220 the grave fear that had been entertained for the safety of the thirteen missing members of the ship's company had developed into a conviction of disaster when Gridley failed to return within the limit of the time that he might reasonably be able to keep the scout plane in the air.

Then it was that Zuppner had sent Dorf out with another searching party, but at the end of seventy hours they had returned to report absolute failure. They had followed the trail to a clearing where jackals fed upon rotting carrion, but beyond this there was no sign of spoor to suggest in what direction their

fellows had wandered.

Going and coming they had been beset by savage beasts and so ruthless and determined had been the attacks of the giant tarags that Dorf reported to Zuppner that he was confident that all of the missing members of the party must by this time have been destroyed by these great cats.

"Until we have proof of that, we must not give up hope," replied Zuppner, "nor may we relinquish our efforts to find them, whether dead or alive, and that we cannot do by remaining here."

There was nothing now to delay the start. While the motors were warming up, the anchor was drawn in and the air expelled from the lower vacuum tanks.

As the giant ship rose from the ground Robert Jones jotted down a brief note in a greasy memorandum book: "We sailed from here at noon."

* * * * *

When Skruk and his companion had left the field to the victorious Jason, the latter had returned his six-gun to its holster and faced the girl. "Well," he inquired, "what now?"

She shook her head. "I cannot understand you," she said. "You do not speak the language of gilaks."

Jason scratched his head. "That being the case," he said, "and as it is evident that we are never going to get anywhere on conversation which neither one of us understands, I am going to have a look

around for my ship, in the meantime, praying to all the gods that my thirty-thirty and ammunition are safe. It's a cinch that she did not burn for she must have fallen close by and I could have seen the smoke."

Jana listened attentively and shook her head.

"Come on," said Jason, and started off in the direction that he thought the ship might lie.

"No, not that way," exclaimed Jana, and running forward she seized his arm and tried to stop him, pointing back to the tall peaks of the Mountains of the Thipdars, where Zoram lay.

Jason essayed the difficult feat of explaining in a weird sign language of

his own invention that he was looking for an aeroplane that had crashed somewhere in the vicinity, but the conviction soon claimed him that that would be a very difficult thing to accomplish even if the person to whom he was trying to convey the idea knew what an aeroplane was, and so he ended up by grinning good naturedly, and, seizing the girl by the hand, gently leading her in the direction he wished to go.

Again that charming smile disarmed The Red Flower of Zoram and though she knew that this stranger was leading her away from the caverns of her people, yet she followed docilely, though her brow was puckered in perplexity as she

tried to understand why she was not afraid, or why she was willing to go with this stranger, who evidently was not even a gilak, since he could not speak the language of men.

A half hour's search was rewarded by the discovery of the wreck of the plane, which had suffered far less damage than Jason had expected.

It was evident that in its plunge to earth it must have straightened out and glided to a landing. Of course, it was wrecked beyond repair, even if there had been any facilities for repairs, but it had not burned and Jason recovered his thirty-thirty and all his ammunition.

Jana was intensely interested in the plane and examined every portion of it

minutely. Never in her life had she wished so much to ask questions, for never in her life had she seen anything that had so aroused her wonder. And here was the one person in all the world who could answer her questions, but she could not make him understand one of them. For a moment she almost hated him, and then he smiled at her and pressed her hand, and she forgave him and smiled back.

"And now," said Jason, "where do we go from here? As far as I am concerned one place is as good as another."

Being perfectly well aware that he was hopelessly lost, Jason Gridley felt that the only chance he had of being reunited with his companions lay in the

possibility that the O-220 might chance to cruise over the very locality where he happened to be, and no matter whither he might wander, whether north or south or east or west, that chance was as slender in one direction as another, and, conversely, equally good. In an hour the O-220 would cover a distance fully as great as he could travel in several days of outer earthly time. And so even if he chanced to be moving in a direction that led away from the ship's first anchorage, he could never go so far that it might not easily and quickly overtake him, if its search should chance to lead it in his direction. Therefore he turned questioningly to the girl, pointing first in one direction, and then in another, while

he looked inquiringly at her, attempting thus to convey to her the idea that he was ready and willing to go in any direction she chose, and Jana, sensing his meaning, pointed toward the lofty Mountains of the Thipdars.

"There," she said, "lies Zoram, the land of my people."

"Your logic is unassailable," said Jason, "and I only wish I could understand what you are saying, for I am sure that anyone with such beautiful teeth could never be uninteresting."

Jana did not wait to discuss the matter, but started forthwith for Zoram and beside her walked Jason Gridley of California.

Jana's active mind had been working

rapidly and she had come to the conclusion that she could not for long endure the constantly increasing pressure of unsatisfied curiosity. She must find some means of communicating with this interesting stranger and to the accomplishment of this end she could conceive of no better plan than teaching the man her language. But how to commence! Never in her experience or that of her people had the necessity arisen for teaching a language. Previously she had not dreamed of the existence of such a means. If you can feature such a state, which is doubtful, you must concede to this primitive girl of the stone age a high degree of intelligence. This was no accidental

blowing off of the lid of the teapot upon which might be built a theory. It required, as a matter of fact, a greater reasoning ability. Give a steam engine to a man who had never heard of steam and ask him to make it go—Jana's problem was almost as difficult. But the magnitude of the reward spurred her on, for what will one not do to have one's curiosity satisfied, especially if one happens to be a young and beautiful girl and the object of one's curiosity an exceptionally handsome young man. Skirts may change, but human nature never.

And so The Red Flower of Zoram pointed at herself with a slim, brown forefinger and said, "Jana." She repeated

this several times and then she pointed at Jason, raising her eyebrows in interrogation.

"Jason," he said, for there was no misunderstanding her meaning. And so the slow, laborious task began as the two trudged upward toward the foothills of the Mountains of the Thipdars.

There lay before them a long, hard climb to the higher altitudes, but there was water in abundance in the tumbling brooks, dropping down the hillside, and Jana knew the edible plants, and nuts, and fruits which grew in riotous profusion in many a dark, deep ravine, and there was game in plenty to be brought down, when they needed meat, by Jason's thirty-thirty.

As they proceeded in their quest for Zoram, Jason found greater opportunity to study his companion and he came to the conclusion that nature had attained the pinnacle of physical perfection with the production of this little savage. Every line and curve of that lithe, brown body sang of symmetry, for The Red Flower of Zoram was a living poem of beauty. If he had thought that her teeth were beautiful he was forced to admit that they held no advantage in that respect over her eyes, her nose or any other of her features. And when she fell to with her crude stone knife and helped him skin a kill and prepare the meat for cooking, when he saw the deftness and celerity with which she made fire with

the simplest and most primitive of utensils, when he witnessed the almost uncanny certitude with which she located nests of eggs and edible fruit and vegetables, he was conscious that her perfections were not alone physical and he became more than ever anxious to acquire a sufficient understanding of her tongue to be able to communicate with her, though he realized that he might doubtless suffer a rude awakening and disillusionment when, through an understanding of her language, he might be able to judge the limitations of her mind.

When Jana was tired she went beneath a tree, and, making a bed of grasses, curled up and fell asleep

immediately, and, while she slept, Gridley watched, for the dangers of this primitive land were numerous and constant. Fully as often as he shot for food he shot to protect them from some terrible beast, until the encounters became as prosaic and commonplace as does the constant eluding of death by pedestrians at congested traffic comers in cities of the outer crust.

When Jason felt the need of sleep, Jana watched and sometimes they merely rested without sleeping, usually beneath a tree for there they found the greatest protection from their greatest danger, the fierce and voracious thipdars from which the mountains took their name. These hideous, flying reptiles were a

constant menace, but so thoroughly had nature developed a defense against them that the girl could hear their wings at a greater distance than either of them could see the creatures.

Jason had no means for determining how far they had traveled, or how long they had been upon their way, but he was sure that considerable outer earthly time must have elapsed since he had met the girl, when they came to a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, for already he had made considerable progress toward mastering her tongue and they were exchanging short sentences, much to Jana's delight, her merry laughter, often marking one of Jason's more flagrant errors in pronunciation or construction.

And now they had come to a deep chasm with overhanging walls that not even Jana could negotiate. To Jason it resembled a stupendous fault that might have been caused by the subsidence of the mountain range for it paralleled the main axis of the range. And if this were true he knew that it might extend for hundreds of miles, effectually barring the way across the mountains by the route they were following.

For a long time Jana sought a means of descent into the crevice. She did not want to turn to the left as that route might lead her eventually back to the canyon that she had descended when pursued by Skruk and his fellows and she well knew how almost unscalable were the

perpendicular sides of this terrific gorge. Another thing, perhaps, which decided her against the left hand route was the possibility that in that direction they might again come in contact with the Phelians, and so she led Jason toward the right and always she searched for a way to the bottom of the rift.

Jason realized that they were consuming a great deal of time in trying to cross, but he became also aware of the fact, that time meant nothing in timeless Pellucidar. It was never a factor with which to reckon for the excellent reason that it did not exist, and when he gave the matter thought he was conscious of a mild surprise that he, who had been always a slave of time, so

easily and naturally embraced the irresponsible existence of Pellucidar. It was not only the fact that time itself seemed not to matter but that the absence of this greatest of all task masters singularly affected one's outlook upon every other consideration of existence. Without time there appeared to be no accountability for one's acts since it is to the future that the slaves of time have learned to look for their reward or punishment. Where there is no time, there is no future. Jason Gridley found himself affected much as Tarzan had been in that the sense of his responsibility for the welfare of his fellows seemed deadened. What had happened to them had happened and no

act of his could alter it. They were not there with him and so he could not be of assistance to them, and as it was difficult to visualize the future beneath an eternal noonday sun how might one plan ahead for others or for himself?

Jason Gridley gave up the riddle with it shake of his head and found solace in contemplation of the profile of The Red Flower of Zoram.

"Why do you look at me so much?" demanded the girl; for by now they could make themselves understood to one another.

Jason Gridley flushed slightly and looked quickly away. Her question had been very abrupt and surprising and for the first time he realized that he had been

looking at her a great deal. He started to answer, hesitated and stopped. Why had he been looking at her so much? It seemed silly to say that it was because she was beautiful.

"Why do you not say it, Jason?" she inquired.

"Say what?" he demanded.

"Say the thing that is in your eyes when you look at me," she replied.

Gridley looked at her in astonishment. No one but an imbecile could have misunderstood her meaning, and Jason Gridley was no imbecile.

Could it be possible that he had been looking at her that way? Had he gone stark mad that he was even subconsciously entertaining such

thoughts of this little barbarian who seized her meat in both hands and tore pieces from it with her flashing, white teeth, who went almost as naked as the beasts of the field and with all their unconsciousness of modesty? Could it be that his eyes had told this untutored savage that he was harboring thoughts of love for her? The artificialities of a thousand years of civilization rose up in horror against such a thought.

Upon the screen of his memory there was flashed a picture of the haughty Cynthia Furnois of Hollywood, daughter of the famous director, Abelard Furnois, né Abe Fink. He recalled Cynthia's meticulous observance of the minutest details of social usages and the studied

perfection of her deportment that had sometimes awed him. He saw, too, the aristocratic features of Barbara Green, daughter of old John Green, the Los Angeles realtor, from Texas. It is true that old John was no purist and that his total disregard of the social precedence of forks often shocked the finer sensibilities that Mrs. Green and Barbara had laboriously achieved in the universities of Montmartre and Coconut Grove, but Barbara had had two years at Marlborough and knew her suffixes and her hardware.

Of course Cynthia was a rotten little snob, not only on the surface but to the bottom of her shallow, selfish soul, while Barbara's snobbishness, he felt,

was purely artificial, the result of mistaking for the genuine the silly artificialities and affectations of the almost celebrities and sudden rich that infest the public places of Hollywood.

But nevertheless these two did, after a fashion, reflect the social environment to which he was accustomed and as he tried to answer Jana's question he could not but picture her seated at dinner with a company made up of such as these. Of course, Jana was a bully companion upon an adventure such as that in which they were engaged, but modern man cannot go adventuring forever in the Stone Age. If his eyes had carried any other message to Jana than that of friendly comradeship he felt sorry, for

he realized that in fairness to her, as well as to himself, there could never be anything more than this between them.

As Jason hesitated for a reply, the eyes of The Red Flower of Zoram searched his soul and slowly the half expectant smile faded from her lips. Perhaps she was a savage little barbarian of the Stone Age, but she was no fool and she was a woman.

Slowly she drew her slender figure erect as she turned away from him and started back along the rim of the rift toward the great gorge through which she had descended from the higher peaks when Skruk and his fellows had been pursuing her.

"Jana," he exclaimed, "don't be angry.

Where are you going?"

She stopped and with her haughty little chin in air turned a withering look back upon him across a perfect shoulder. "Go your way, jalok," she said, "and Jana will go hers."

9. TO THE THIPDAR'S NEST

Heavy clouds formed about the lofty peaks of the Mountains of the Thipdars—black, angry clouds that rolled down the northern slopes, spreading far to east and west.

"The waters have come again," said Thoar. "They are falling upon Zoram. Soon they will fall here too."

It looked very dark up there above them and presently the clouds swept out across the sky, blotting out the noonday sun.

It was a new landscape upon which Tarzan looked—a sullen, bleak and forbidding landscape. It was the first time that he had seen Pellucidar in shadow and he did not like it. The effect

of the change was strikingly apparent in Thoar and Tar-gash. They seemed depressed, almost fearful. Nor was it man alone that was so strangely affected by the blotting out of the eternal sunlight, for presently from the upper reaches of the mountains the lower animals came, pursuing the sunlight. That they, too, were strangely affected and filled with terror was evidenced by the fact that the carnivores and their prey trotted side by side and that none of them paid any attention to the three men.

"Why do they not attack us, Thoar?" asked Tarzan.

"They know that the water is about to fall," he replied, "and they are afraid of the falling water. They forget their

hunger and their quarrels as they seek to escape the common terror."

"Is the danger so great then?" asked the ape-man.

"Not if we remain upon high ground," replied Thoar. "Sometimes the gullies and ravines fill with water in an instant, but the only danger upon the high land is from the burning spears that are hurled from the black clouds. But if we stay in the open, even these are not dangerous for, as a rule, they are aimed at trees. Do not go beneath a tree while the clouds are hurling their spears of fire."

As the clouds shut off the sunlight, the air became suddenly cold. A raw wind swept down from above and the three men shivered in their nakedness.

"Gather wood," said Tarzan. "We shall build a fire for warmth." And so the three gathered firewood and Tarzan made fire and they sat about it, warming their naked hides; while upon either side of them the brutes passed on their way down toward the sunlight.

The rain came. It did not fall in drops, but in great enveloping blankets that seemed to beat them down and smother them. Inches deep it rolled down the mountainside, filling the depressions and the gullies, turning the canyons into raging torrents.

The wind lashed the falling miter into a blinding maelstrom that the eye could not pierce a dozen feet. Terrified animals stampeded blindly, constituting

themselves the greatest menace of the storm. The lightning flashed and the thunder roared, and the beasts progressed from panic to an insanity of fear.

Above the roar of the thunder and the howling of the wind rose the piercing shrieks and screams of the monsters of another day, and in the air above flapped shrieking reptiles fighting toward the sunlight against the pounding wrath of the elements. Giant pteranodons, beaten to the ground, staggered uncertainly upon legs unaccustomed to the task, and through it all the three beast-men huddled at the spot where their fire had been, though not even an ash remained.

It seemed to Tarzan that the storm

lasted a great while, but like the others he was inured to the hardships and discomforts of primitive life. Where a civilized man might have railed against fate and cursed the elements, the three beast-men sat in stoic silence, their backs hunched against the storm, for each knew that it would not last forever and each knew that there was nothing he could say or do to lessen its duration or abate its fury.

Had it not been for the example set by Tarzan and Thoar, Tar- gash would have fled toward the sunlight with the other beasts, not that he was more fearful than they, but that he was influenced more by instinct than by reason. But where they stayed, he was content to stay, and so he

squatted there with them, in dumb misery, waiting for the sun to come again.

The rain lessened; the howling wind died down; the clouds passed on and the sun burst forth upon a steaming world. The three beast-men arose and shook themselves.

"I am hungry," said Tarzan.

Thoar pointed about them to where lay the bodies of lesser beasts that had been crushed in the mad stampede for safety.

Now even Thoar was compelled to eat his meat raw, for there was no dry wood wherewith to start a fire, but to Tarzan and Tar-gash this was no hardship. As Tarzan ate, the suggestion

of a smile smoldered in his eyes. He was recalling a fussy old nobleman with whom he had once dined at a London club and who had almost suffered a stroke of apoplexy because his bird had been slightly underdone.

When the three had filled their bellies, they arose to continue their search for Jana and Jason, only to discover that the torrential rain had effectually erased every vestige of the spoor that they had been following.

"We cannot pick up their trail again," said Thoar, "until we reach the point where they continued on again after the waters ceased to fall. To the left is a deep canyon, whose walls are difficult to scale. In front of us is a fissure, which

extends along the base of the mountains for a considerable distance in both directions. But if we go to the right we shall find a place where we can descend into it and cross it. This is the way that they should have gone. Perhaps there we shall pick up their trail again." But though they continued on and crossed the fissure and clambered upward toward the higher peaks, they found no sign that Jana or Jason had come this way.

"Perhaps they reached your country by another route," suggested Tarzan.

"Perhaps," said Thoar. "Let us continue on to Zoram. There is nothing else that we can do. There we can gather the men of my tribe and search the mountains for them."

In the ascent toward the summit Thoar sometimes followed trails that for countless ages the rough pads of the carnivores had followed, or again he led them over trackless wastes of granite, taking such perilous chances along dizzy heights that Tarzan was astonished that any of them came through alive.

Upon a bleak summit they had robbed a thipdar's nest of its eggs and the three were eating when Thoar became suddenly alert and listening. To the ears of the ape-man came faintly a sound that resembled the dismal flapping of distant wings.

"A thipdar," said Thoar, "and there is no shelter for us!"

"There are three of us," said Tarzan.

"What have we to fear?"

"You do not know them," said Thoar. "They are hard to kill and they are never defeated until they are killed. Their brains are very small. Sometimes when we have cut them open it has been difficult to find the brain at all, and having no brain they have no fear of anything, not even death, for they cannot know what death is; nor, do they seem to be affected much by pain, it merely angers them, making them more terrible. Perhaps we can kill it, but I wish that there were a tree."

"How do you know that it will attack us?" asked Tarzan.

"It is coming in this direction. It cannot help but see us, and whatever

living thing they see they attack."

"Have you ever been attacked by one?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," replied Thoar; "but only when there was no tree or cave. The men of Zoram are not ashamed to admit that they fear the mighty thipdars."

"But if you have killed them in the past, why may we not kill this one?" demanded the ape-man.

"We may," replied Thoar, "but I have never chanced to have an encounter with one, except when there were a number of my tribesmen with me. The lone hunter who goes forth and never returns is our reason for fearing the thipdar. Even when there are many of us to fight them, always there are some killed and many

injured."

"It comes," said Tar-gash, pointing.

"It comes," said Thoar, grasping his spear more firmly.

Down to their ears came a sound resembling the escaping of steam through a petcock.

"It has seen us," said Thoar.

Tarzan laid his spear upon the ground at his feet, plucked a handful of arrows from his quiver and fitted one to his bow. Tar-gash swung his club slowly to and fro and growled.

On came the giant reptile, the dismal flapping of its wings punctuated occasionally by a loud and angry hiss. The three men waited, poised, ready,

expectant.

There were no preliminaries. The mighty pteranodon drove straight toward them. Tarzan loosed a bolt which drove true to its mark, burying its head in the breast of the pterodactyl. The hiss became a scream of anger and then in rapid succession three more arrows buried themselves in the creature's flesh.

That this was a warmer reception than it had expected was evidenced by the fact that it rose suddenly upward, skimmed above their heads as though to abandon the attack, and then, quite suddenly and with a speed incomprehensible in a creature of its tremendous size, wheeled like a sparrow hawk and dove straight at Tarzan's back.

So quickly did the creature strike that there could be no defense. The ape-man felt sharp talons half buried in his naked flesh and simultaneously he was lifted from the ground.

Thoar raised his spear and Tar-gash swung his cudgel, but neither dared strike for fear of wounding their comrade. And so they were forced to stand there futilely inactive and watch the monster bear Tarzan of the Apes away across the tops of the Mountains of the Thipdars.

In silence they stood watching until the creature passed out of sight beyond the summit of a distant peak, the body of the ape-man still dangling in its talons. Then Tar-gash. turned and looked at

Thoar.

"Tarzan is dead," said the Sagoth. Thoar of Zoram nodded sadly. Without another word Tar-gash turned and started down toward the valley from which they had ascended. The only bond that had united these two hereditary enemies had parted, and Tar-gash was going his way back to the stamping grounds of his tribe.

For a moment Thoar watched him, and then, with a shrug of his shoulders, he turned his face toward Zoram.

As the pteranodon bore him off across the granite peaks, Tarzan hung limply in its clutches, realizing that if Fate held in store for him any hope of escape it could not come in midair and if he were to

struggle against his adversary, or seek to battle with it, death upon the jagged rocks below would be the barren reward of success. His one hope lay in retaining consciousness and the power to fight when the creature came to the ground with him. He knew that there were birds of prey that kill their victims by dropping them from great heights, but he hoped that the pteranodons of Pellucidar had never acquired this disconcerting habit.

As he watched the panorama of mountain peaks passing below him, he realized that he was being carried a considerable distance from the spot at which he had been seized; perhaps twenty miles.

The flight at last carried them across a frightful gorge and a short distance beyond the pteranodon circled a lofty granite peak, toward the summit of which it slowly dropped, and there, below him, Tarzan of the Apes saw a nest of small thipdars, eagerly awaiting with wide distended jaws the flesh that their savage parent was bringing to them.

The nest rested upon the summit of a lofty granite spire, the entire area of the summit encompassing but a few square yards, the walls dropping perpendicularly hundreds of feet to the rough granite of the lofty peak the spire surmounted. It was, indeed, a precarious place at which to stage a battle for life.

Cautiously, Tarzan of the Apes drew

his keen hunting knife from its sheath. Slowly his left hand crept upward against his body and passed over his left shoulder until his fingers touched the thipdar's leg. Cautiously, his fingers encircled the scaly, birdlike ankle just above the claws.

The reptile was descending slowly toward its nest. The hideous demons below were screeching and hissing in anticipation. Tarzan's feet were almost in their jaws when he struck suddenly upward with his blade at the breast of the thipdar.

It was no random thrust. What slender chance for life the ape- man had depended upon the accuracy and the strength of that single blow. The giant

pteranodon emitted a shrill scream, stiffened convulsively in mid-air and, as it collapsed, relaxed its hold upon its prey, dropping the ape-man into the nest among the gaping jaws of its frightful brood.

Fortunately for Tarzan there were but three of them and they were still very young, though their teeth were sharp and their jaws strong.

Striking quickly to right and left with his blade he scrambled from the nest with only a few minor cuts and scratches upon his legs.

Lying partially over the edge of the spire was the body of the dead thipdar. Tarzan gave it a final shove and watched it as it fell three hundred feet to the rocks

below. Then he turned his attention to a survey of his surroundings, but almost hopelessly since the view that be had obtained of the spire while the thipdar was circling it assured him that there was little or no likelihood that he could find any means of descent.

The young thipdars were screaming and hissing, but they had made no move to leave their nest as Tarzan started a close investigation of the granite spire upon the lofty summit of which it seemed likely that he would terminate his adventurous career.

Lying flat upon his belly he looked over the edge, and thus moving slowly around the periphery of the lofty aerie he examined the walls of the spire with

minute attention to every detail.

Again and again he crept around the edge until he had catalogued within his memory every projection and crevice and possible handhold that he could see from above.

Several times he returned to one point and then he removed the coils of his grass rope from about his shoulders and holding the two ends in one hand, lowered the loop over the edge of the spire. Carefully he noted the distance that it descended from the summit and what a pitiful span it seemed— that paltry twenty-five feet against the three hundred that marked the distance from base to apex.

Releasing one end of the rope, he let

that fall to its full length, and when he saw where the lower end touched the granite wall he was satisfied that be could descend at least that far, and below that another twenty-five feet. But it was difficult to measure distances below that point and from there on he must leave everything to chance.

Drawing the rope up again he looped the center of it about a projecting bit of granite, permitting the ends to fall over the edge of the cliff. Then he seized both strands of the rope tightly in one hand and lowered himself over the edge. Twenty feet below was a projection that gave him precarious foothold and a little crevice into which he could insert the fingers of his left hand. Almost directly

before his face was the top of a buttress-like projection and below him he knew that there were many more similar to it. It was upon these that he had based his slender hope of success.

Gingerly he pulled upon one strand of the rope with his right hand. So slender was his footing upon the rocky escarpment that he did not dare draw the rope more than a few inches at a time lest the motion throw him off his balance. Little by little he drew it in until the upper end passed around the projection over which the rope had been looped at the summit and fell upon him. And as it descended he held his breath for fear that even this slight weight might topple him to the jagged rocks below.

And now came the slow process of drawing the rope unaided through one hand, fingering it slowly an inch at a time until the center was in his grasp. This he looped over the top of the projection in front of him, seating it as securely as he could, and then he grasped both strands once more in his right hand and was ready to descend another twenty-five feet.

This stage of the descent was the most appalling of all, since the rope was barely seated upon a shelving protuberance from which he was aware it might slip at any instant. And so it was with a sense of unspeakable relief that he again found foothold near the end of the frail strands that were supporting

him.

At this point the surface of the spire became much rougher. It was broken by fissures and horizontal cracks that had not been visible from above, with the result that compared with the first fifty feet the descent from here to the base was a miracle of ease, and it was not long before Tarzan stood again squarely upon his two feet and level ground. And now for the first time he had an opportunity to take stock of his injuries.

His legs were scratched and cut by the teeth and talons of the young thipdars, but these wounds were as nothing to those left by the talons of the adult reptile upon his back and shoulders. He could feel the deep

wounds, but he could not see them; nor the clotted blood that had dried upon his brown skin.

The wounds pained and his muscles were stiff and sore, but his only fear lay in the possibility of blood poisoning and that did not greatly worry the ape-man, who had been repeatedly torn and mauled by carnivores since childhood.

A brief survey of his position showed him that it would be practically impossible for him to recross the stupendous gorge that yawned between him and the point at which he had been so ruthlessly torn from his companions. And with that discovery came the realization that there was little or no likelihood that the people toward which

Tar-gash had been attempting to guide him could be the members of the O-220 expedition. Therefore it seemed useless to attempt the seemingly impossible feat of finding Thoar and Tar-gash again among this maze of stupendous peaks, gorges and ravines. And so he determined merely to seek a way out of the mountains and back to the forests and plains that held a greater allure for him than did the rough and craggy contours of inhospitable hills. And to the accomplishment of this end he decided to follow the line of least resistance, seeking always the easiest avenues of descent.

Below him, in various directions, he could see the timber line and toward this

he hastened to make his way.

As he descended the way became easier, though on several occasions he was again compelled to resort to his rope to lower himself from one level to another. Then the steep crags gave place to leveler land upon the shoulders of the mighty range and here, where earth could find lodgment, vegetation commenced. Grasses and shrubs, at first, then stunted trees and finally what was almost a forest, and here he came upon a trail.

It was a trail that offered infinite variety. For a while it wound through a forest and then climbed to a ledge of rock that projected from the face of a cliff and overhung a stupendous canyon.

He could not see the trail far ahead for it was continually rounding the shoulders of jutting crags.

As he moved along it, sure-footed, silent, alert, Tarzan of the Apes became aware that somewhere ahead of him other feet were treading probably the same trail.

What wind there was was eddying up from the canyon below and carrying the scent spoor of the creature ahead of him as well as his own up toward the mountain top, so that it was unlikely that either might apprehend the presence of the other by scent; but there was something in the sound of the footsteps that even at a distance assured Tarzan that they were not made by man, and it

was evident too that they were going in the same direction as he for they were not growing rapidly more distinct, but very gradually as though he was slowly overhauling the author of them.

The trail was narrow and only occasionally, where it crossed some ravine or shallow gully, was there a place where one might either descend or ascend from it.

To meet a savage beast upon it, therefore, might prove, to say the least, embarrassing but Tarzan had elected to go this way and he was not in the habit of turning back whatever obstacles in the form of man or beast might bar his way. And, too, he had the advantage over the creature ahead of him whatever it might

be, since he was coming upon it from behind and was quite sure that it had no knowledge of his presence, for Tarzan well knew that no creature could move with greater silence than he, when he elected to do so, and now he passed along that trail as noiselessly as the shadow of a shadow.

Curiosity caused him to increase his speed that he might learn the nature of the thing ahead, and as he did so and the sound of its footsteps increased in volume, he knew that he was stalking some heavy, four-footed beast with padded feet—that much he could tell, but beyond that he had no idea of the identity of the creature; nor did the winding trail at any time reveal it to his view. Thus

the silent stalker pursued his way until he knew that he was but a short distance behind his quarry when there suddenly broke upon his ears the horrid snarling and growling of an enraged beast just ahead of him.

There was something in the tone of that awful voice that increased the ape-man's curiosity. He guessed from the volume of the sound that it must come from the throat of a tremendous beast, for the very hills seemed to shake to the thunder of its roars.

Guessing that it was attacking or was about to attack some other creature, and spurred, perhaps, entirely by curiosity, Tarzan hastened forward at a brisk trot, and as he rounded the shoulder of a

buttressed crag his eyes took in a scene that galvanized him into instant action.

A hundred feet ahead the trail ended at the mouth of a great cave, and in the entrance to the cave stood a boy—a lithe, handsome youth of ten or twelve—while between the boy and Tarzan a huge cave bear was advancing angrily upon the former.

The boy saw Tarzan and at the first glance his eyes lighted with hope, but an instant later, evidently recognizing that the newcomer was not of his own tribe, the expression of hopelessness that had been there before returned to his face, but he stood his ground bravely, his spear and his crude stone knife ready.

The scene before the ape-man told its

own story. The bear, returning to its cave, had unexpectedly discovered the youth emerging from it, while the latter, doubtless equally surprised, found himself cornered with no avenue of escape open to him.

By the primitive jungle laws that had guided his youth, Tarzan of the Apes was under no responsibility to assume the dangerous role of savior, but there had always burned within his breast the flame of chivalry, bequeathed him by his English parents, that more often than not found him jeopardizing his own life in the interests of others. This child of a nameless tribe in an unknown world might hold no claim upon the sympathy of a savage beast or even of savage men

who were not of his tribe. And perhaps Tarzan of the Apes would not have admitted that the youth had any claim upon him, yet in reality he exercised a vast power over the ape-man—a power that lay solely in the fact that he was a child and that he was helpless.

One may analyze the deeds of a man of action and speculate upon them, whereas the man himself does not appear, to do so at all—he merely acts; and thus it was with Tarzan of the Apes. He saw an emergency confronting him and he was ready to meet it, for since the moment that he had known that there was a beast upon the trail ahead of him he had had his weapons in readiness, years of experience with primitive men and

savage beasts having taught him the value of preparedness.

His grass rope was looped in the hollow of his left arm and in the fingers of his left hand were grasped his spear, his bow and three extra arrows, while a fourth arrow was ready in his right hand.

One glance at the beast ahead of him had convinced him that only by a combination of skill and rare luck could he hope to destroy this titanic monster with the relatively puny weapons with which he was armed, but he might at least divert its attention from the lad and by harassing it draw it away until the boy could find some means of escape. And so it was that within the very instant that his eyes took in the picture his bow

twanged and a heavy arrow sank deeply into the back of the bear close to its spine, and at the same time Tarzan voiced a savage cry intended to apprise the beast of an enemy in its rear.

Maddened by the pain and surprised by the voice behind it, the creature evidently associated the two, instantly whirling about on the narrow ledge.

Tarzan's first impression was that in all his life he had never gazed upon such a picture of savage bestial rage as was depicted upon the snarling countenance of the mighty cave bear as its fiery eyes fell upon the author of its hurt.

In quick succession three arrows sank into its chest as it charged, howling, down upon the ape-man.

For an instant longer Tarzan held his ground. Poising his heavy spear he carried his spear hand far back behind his right shoulder, and then with all the force of those giant muscles, backed by the weight of his great body, he launched the weapon.

At the instant that it left his hand the bear was almost upon him and he did not wait to note the effect of his throw, but turned and leaped swiftly down the trail; while close behind him the savage growling and the ponderous footfalls of the carnivore proved the wisdom of his strategy.

He was sure that upon this narrow, rocky ledge, if no obstacle interposed itself, he could outdistance the bear, for

only Ara, the lightning, is swifter than Tarzan of the Apes.

There was the possibility that he might meet the bear's mate coming up to their den, and in that event his position would be highly critical, but that, of course, was only a remote possibility and in the meantime he was sure that he had inflicted sufficiently severe wounds upon the great beast to sap its strength and eventually to prove its total undoing. That it possessed an immense reserve of vitality was evidenced by the strength and savagery of its pursuit. The creature seemed tireless and although Tarzan was equally so he found fleeing from an antagonist peculiarly irksome and to a considerable degree obnoxious to his

self esteem. And so he cast about him for some means of terminating the flight and to that end he watched particularly the cliff walls rising above the trail down which he sped, and at last he saw that for which he had hoped—a jutting granite projection protruding from the cliff about twenty- five feet above the trail.

His coiled rope was ready in his left hand, the noose in his right, and as he came within throwing distance of the projection, he unerringly tossed the latter about it. The bear tore down the trail behind him. The ape-man pulled heavily once upon the end of the rope to assure himself that it was safely caught above, and then with the agility of Manu, the

monkey, he clambered upward.

10. ONLY A MAN MAY GO

It required no Sherlockian instinct to deduce that Jana was angry, and Jason was not so dense as to be unaware of the cause of her displeasure, which he attributed to natural feminine vexation induced by the knowledge that she had been mistaken in assuming that her charms had effected the conquest of his heart. He judged Jana by his own imagined knowledge of feminine psychology. He knew that she was beautiful and he knew that she knew it, too. She had told him of the many men of Zoram who had wanted to take her as their mate, and he had saved her from one suitor, who had pursued her across the terrible Mountains of the Thipdars,

putting his life constantly in jeopardy to win her. He felt that it was only natural, therefore, that Jana should place a high valuation upon her charms and believe that any man might fall a victim to their spell, but he saw no reason why she should be angry because she had not succeeded in enthralling him. They had been very happy together. He could not recall when ever before he had been for so long a time in the company of any girl, or so enjoyed the companionship of one of her sex. He was sorry that anything had occurred to mar the even tenor of their friendship and he quickly decided that the manly thing to do was to ignore her tantrum and go on with her as he had before, until she came to her

senses. Nor was there anything else that he might do for he certainly could not permit Jana to continue her journey to Zoram without protection. Of course it was not very nice of her to have called him a jalok, which he knew to be a Pellucidarian epithet of high insult, but he would overlook that for the present and eventually she would relent and ask his forgiveness.

And so he followed her, but he had taken scarcely a dozen steps when she wheeled upon him like a young tiger, whipping her stone knife from its sheath. "I told you to go your way," she cried. "I do not want to see you again. If you follow me I shall kill you."

"I cannot let you go on alone, Jana,"

he said quietly.

"The Red Flower of Zoram wants no protection from such as you," she replied haughtily.

"We have been such good friends, Jana," he pleaded. "Let us go on together as we have in the past. I cannot help it if —" He hesitated and stopped.

"I do not care that you do not love me," she said. "I hate you. I hate you because your eyes lie. Sometimes lips lie and we are not hurt because we have learned to expect that from lips, but when eyes lie then the heart lies and the whole man is false. I cannot trust you. I do not want your friendship. I want nothing more of you. Go away."

"You do not understand, Jana," he

insisted.

"I understand that if you try to follow me I will kill you," she said.

"Then you will have to kill me," he replied, "for I shall follow you. I cannot let you go on alone, no matter whether you hate me or not," and as he ceased speaking he advanced toward her.

Jana stood facing him, her little feet firmly planted, her crude stone dagger grasped in her right hand, her eyes flashing angrily.

His hands at his sides, Jason Gridley walked slowly up to her as though offering his breast as a target for her weapon. The stone blade flashed upward. It poised a moment above her shoulder and then The Red Flower of

Zoram turned and fled along the rim of the rift.

She ran very swiftly and was soon far ahead of Jason, who was weighted down by clothes, heavy weapons and ammunition. He called after her once or twice, begging her to stop, but she did not heed him and he continued doggedly along her trail, making the best time that he could. He felt hurt and angry, but after all the emotion which dominated him was one of regret that their sweet friendship had been thus wantonly blasted.

Slowly the realization was borne in upon him that he had been very happy with Jana and that she had occupied his thoughts almost to the exclusion of every

other consideration of the past or future. Even the memory of his lost comrades had been relegated to the hazy oblivion of temporary forgetfulness in the presence of the responsibility which he had assumed for the safe conduct of the girl to her home land.

"Why, she has made a regular monkey out of me," he mused. "Odysseus never met a more potent Circe. Nor one half so lovely," he added, as he regretfully recalled the charms of the little barbarian.

And what a barbarian she had proven herself—whipping out her stone knife and threatening to kill him. But he could not help but smile when he realized how in the final extremity she had proven

herself so wholly feminine. With a sigh he shook his head and plodded on after The Red Flower of Zoram.

Occasionally Jason caught a glimpse of Jana as she crossed a ridge ahead of him and though she did not seem to be traveling as fast as at first, yet he could not gain upon her. His mind was constantly harassed by the fear that she might be attacked by some savage beast and destroyed before he could come to her rescue with his rifle. He knew that sooner or later she would have to stop and rest and then he was hopeful of overtaking her, when he might persuade her to forget her anger and resume their former friendly comradeship.

But it seemed that The Red Flower of

Zoram had no intention of resting, though the American had long since reached a stage of fatigue that momentarily threatened to force him to relinquish the pursuit until outraged nature could recuperate. Yet he plodded on doggedly across the rough ground, while the weight of his arms and ammunition seemed to increase until his rifle assumed the ponderous proportions of a field gun. Determined not to give up, he staggered down one hill and struggled up the next, his legs seeming to move mechanically as though they were some detached engine of torture over which he had no control and which were bearing him relentlessly onward, while every fiber of his being cried out for rest.

Added to the physical torture of fatigue, were hunger and thirst, and knowing that only thus might time be measured, he was confident that he had covered a great distance since they had last rested and then he topped the summit of a low rise and saw Jana directly ahead of him.

She was standing on the edge of the rift where it opened into a mighty gorge that descended from the mountains and it was evident that she was undecided what course to pursue. The course which she wished to pursue was blocked by the rift and gorge. To her left the way led back down into the valley in a direction opposite to that in which lay Zoram, while to retrace her steps would entail

another encounter with Jason.

She was looking over the edge of the precipice, evidently searching for some avenue of descent when she became aware, of Jason's approach.

She wheeled upon him angrily. "Go back," she cried, "or I shall jump." '

"Please, Jana," he pleaded, "let me go with you. I shall not annoy you. I shall not even speak to you unless you wish it, but let me go with you to protect you from the beasts."

The girl laughed. "You protect me!" she exclaimed, her tone caustic with sarcasm. "You do not even know the dangers which beset the way. Without your strange spear, which spits fire and death, you would be helpless before the

attack of even one of the lesser beasts, and in the high Mountains of the Thipdars there are beasts so large and so terrible that they would devour you and your fire spear in a single gulp. Go back to your own people, man of another world; go back to the soft women of which you have told me. Only a man may go where The Red Flower of Zoram goes."

"You half convince me," said Jason with a rueful smile, "that I am only a caterpillar, but nevertheless even a caterpillar must have guts of some sort and so I am going to follow you, Red Flower of Zoram, until some goggle-eyed monstrosity of the Jurassic snatches me from this vale of tears."

"I do not know what you are talking about," snapped Jana; "but if you follow me you will be killed. Remember what I told you—only a man may go where goes The Red Flower of Zoram," and as though to prove her assertion she turned and slid quickly over the edge of the precipice, disappearing from his view.

Running quickly forward to the edge of the chasm, Jason Gridley looked down and there, a few yards below him, clinging to the perpendicular face of the cliff Jana was working her way slowly downward. Jason held his breath. It seemed incredible that any creature could find hand or foothold upon that dizzy escarpment. He shuddered and cold sweat broke out upon him as he

watched the girl.

Foot by foot she worked her way downward, while the man, lying upon his belly, his head projecting over the edge of the cliff, watched her in silence. He dared not speak to her for fear of distracting her attention and when, after what seemed an eternity, she reached the bottom, he fell to trembling like a leaf and for the first time realized the extent of the nervous strain he had been undergoing.

"God!" he murmured. "What a magnificent display of nerve and courage and skill!"

The Red Flower of Zoram did not look back or upward once as she resumed her way, following the gorge

upward, searching for some point where she might clamber out of it above the rift.

Jason Gridley looked down into the terrible abyss. "Only a man may go where goes The Red Flower of Zoram," he mused.

He watched the girl until she disappeared behind a mass of fallen rock, where the gorge curved to the right, and he knew that unless he could descend into the gorge she had passed out of his life forever.

"Only a man may go where goes The Red Flower of Zoram!"

Jason Gridley arose to his feet. He readjusted the leather, sling upon his rifle so that he could carry the weapon

hanging down the center of his back. He slipped the holsters of both of his six-guns to the rear so that they, too, were entirely behind him. He removed his boots and dropped them over the edge of the cliff. Then he lay upon his belly and lowered his body slowly downward, and from a short distance up the gorge two eyes watched him from behind a pile of tumbled granite. There was anger in them at first, then skepticism, then surprise, and then terror.

As gropingly the man sought for some tiny foothold and then lowered himself slowly a few inches at a time, the eyes of the girl, wide in horror, never left him for an instant.

"Only a man may go where goes The

Red Flower of Zoram!"

Cautiously, Jason Gridley groped for each handhold and foothold— each precarious support from which it seemed that even his breathing might dislodge him. Hunger, thirst and fatigue were forgotten as he marshaled every faculty to do the bidding of his iron nerve.

Hugging close to the face of the cliff he did not dare turn his head sufficiently to look downward and though it seemed he had clung there, lowering himself inch by inch, for an eternity, yet he had no idea how much further he had to descend. And so impossible of accomplishment did the task that he had set himself appear that never for an instant did he dare to hope for a

successful conclusion. Never for an instant did any new hold impart to him a feeling of security, but each one seemed, if possible, more precarious than its predecessor, and then he reached a point where, grope as he would, he could find no foothold. He could not move to right or left; nor could he ascend. Apparently he had reached the end of his resources, but still he did not give up. Replacing his torn and bleeding feet upon the last slight hold that they had found, he cautiously sought for new handholds lower down, and when he had found them—mere protuberances of tough granite—he let his feet slip slowly from their support as gradually he lowered his body to its full length, supported only by

his fingers, where they clutched at the tiny projections that were his sole support.

As he clung there, desperately searching about with his feet for some slight projection, he reproached himself for not having discarded his heavy weapons and ammunition. And why? Because his life was in jeopardy and he feared to die? No, his only thought was that because of them he would be unable to cling much longer to the cliff and that when his hands slipped from their holds and he was dashed into eternity, his last, slender hope of ever again seeing The Red Flower of Zoram would be gone. It is remarkable, perhaps, that as he clung thus literally upon the brink of eternity,

no visions of Cynthia Furnois or Barbara Green impinged themselves upon his consciousness.

He felt his fingers weakening and slipping from their hold. The end came suddenly. The weight of his body dragged one hand loose and instantly the other slipped from the tiny knob it had been clutching, and Jason Gridley dropped downward, perhaps eighteen inches to the bottom of the cliff.

As he came to a stop, his feet on solid rock, Jason could not readily conceive the good fortune that had befallen him. Almost afraid to look, he glanced downward and then the truth dawned upon him—he had made the descent in safety. His knees sagged beneath him

and as he sank to the ground, a girl, watching him from up the gorge, burst into tears.

A short distance below him a spring bubbled from the canyon side, forming a little brooklet which leaped downward in the sunlight toward the bottom of the canyon and the valley, and after he had regained his composure he found his boots and hobbled down to the water. Here he satisfied his thirst and washed his feet, cleansing the cuts as best he could, bandaged them crudely with strips torn from his handkerchief; pulled his boots on once more and started up the canyon after Jana.

Far above, near the summit of the stupendous range, he saw ominous

clouds gathering. They were the first clouds that he had seen in Pellucidar, but only for this reason did they seem remarkable or important. That they presaged rain, he could well imagine; but how could he dream of the catastrophic proportions of their menace.

Far ahead of him The Red Flower of Zoram was clambering upward along a precarious trail that gave promise of leading eventually over the rim of the gorge to the upper reaches that she wished to gain. When she had seen Jason's life in imminent jeopardy, she had been filled with terror and remorse, but when he had safely completed the descent her mood changed, and with the

perversity of her sex she still sought to elude him. She had almost gained the summit of the escarpment when the storm broke and with it came a realization that the man behind her was ignorant of the danger which now more surely menaced him than had the descent of the cliff.

Without an .instant's hesitation The Red Flower of Zoram turned and fled swiftly down the steep trail she had just so laboriously ascended. She must reach him before the waters reached him. She must guide him to some high place upon the canyon's wall, for she knew that the bottom of this great gorge would soon be a foaming, boiling torrent, spreading from side to side, its waters, perhaps, two hundred feet in depth. Already the

water was running deep in the canyon far below her and spilling over the rim above her, racing downward in torrents and cataracts and waterfalls that carried earth and stone with them. Never in her life had Jana witnessed a storm so terrible. The thunder roared and the lightning flashed; the wind howled and the water fell in blinding sheets, and yet constantly menaced by instant death the girl groped her way blindly downward upon her hopeless errand of mercy. How hopeless it was she was soon to see, for the waters in the gorge had risen, she saw them just below her now, nor was the end in sight. Nothing down there could have survived. The man must long since have been washed away.

Jason was dead! The Red Flower of Zoram stood for an instant looking at the rising waters below her. There came to her an urge to throw herself into them. She did not want to live, but something stayed her; perhaps it was the instinct of primeval man, whose whole existence was a battle against death, who knew no other state and might not conceive voluntary surrender to the enemy, and so she turned and fought her way upward as the waters rising below her climbed to overtake her and the waters from above sought to hurl her backward to destruction.

Jason Gridley had witnessed cloudbursts in California and Arizona and he knew how quickly gullies and

ravines may be transformed into raging torrents. He had seen a river a mile wide formed in a few hours in the San Simon Flats, and when he saw the sudden rush of waters in the bottom of the gorge below him and realized that no storm that he had ever previously witnessed could compare in magnitude with this, he lost no time in seeking higher ground; but the sides of the canyon were steep and his upward progress discouragingly slow, as he saw the waters rising rapidly behind him. Yet there was hope, for just ahead and above him he saw a gentle acclivity rising toward the summit of the canyon rim.

As he struggled toward safety the boiling torrent rose and lapped his feet,

while from above the torrential rain thundered down upon him, beating him backward so that often for a full minute at a time he could make no headway.

The raging waters that were filling the gorge reached his knees and for an instant he was swept from his footing. Clutching at the ground above him with his hands, he lost his rifle, but as it slid into the turgid waters he clambered swiftly upward and regained momentary safety.

Onward and upward he fought until at last he reached a spot above which he was confident the flood could not reach and there he crouched in the partial shelter of an overhanging granite ledge as Tarzan and Thoar and Tar-gash were

crouching in another part of the mountains, waiting in dumb misery for the storm to spend its wrath.

He wondered if Jana had escaped the flood and so much confidence did he have in her masterful ability to cope with the vagaries of savage Pellucidarian life that he harbored few fears for her upon the score of the storm.

In the cold and the dark and the wet he tried to plan for the future. What chance had he to find The Red Flower of Zoram in this savage chaos of stupendous peaks when he did not even know the direction in which her country lay and where there were no roads or trails and where even the few tracks that she might have left must have been

wholly obliterated by the torrents of water that had covered the whole surface of the ground?

To stumble blindly on, then, seemed the only course left open to him, since he knew neither the direction of Zoram, other than in a most general way, nor had any idea as to the whereabouts of his fellow members of the O-220 expedition.

At last the rain ceased; the sun burst forth upon a steaming world and beneath the benign influence of its warm rays Jason felt the cold ashes of hope rekindled within his breast. Revivified, he took up the search that but now had seemed so hopeless.

Trying to bear in mind the general

direction in which Jana had told him Zoram lay, he set his face toward what appeared to be a low saddle between two lofty peaks, which appeared to surmount the summit of the range. Thirst no longer afflicted him and the pangs of hunger had become deadened. Nor did it seem at all likely that he might soon find food since the storm seemed to have driven all animal life from the higher hills, but fortune smiled upon him. In a water worn rocky hollow he found a nest of eggs that had withstood the onslaught of the elements. The nature of the creature that had laid them he did not know; nor whether they were the eggs of fowl or reptile did he care. They were fresh and they were food and so large

were they that the contents of two of them satisfied his hunger.

A short distance from the spot where he had found them grew a low stunted tree, and having eaten he carried the three remaining eggs to this meager protection from the prying eyes of soaring reptiles and birds of prey. Here he removed his clothing, hanging it upon the branches of the tree where the sunlight might dry it, and then he lay down beneath the tree to sleep, and in the warmth of Pellucidar's eternal noon he found no discomfort.

How long a time he slept he had no means of estimating, but when he awoke he was completely rested and refreshed. He was imbued with a new sense of

self-confidence as he arose, stretching luxuriously, to don his clothes. His stretch half completed, he froze with consternation—his clothes were gone! He looked hastily about for them or for some sign of the creature that had purloined them, but never again did he see the one, nor ever the other.

Upon the ground beneath the tree lay a shirt that, having fallen, evidently escaped the eye of the marauder. That, his revolvers and belts of ammunition, which had lain close to him while he slept, were all that remained to him.

The temperature of Pellucidar is such that clothing is rather a burden than a necessity, but so accustomed is civilized man to the strange apparel with which he

has encumbered himself for generations that, bereft of it, his efficiency, self-reliance and resourcefulness are reduced to a plane approximating the vanishing point.

Never in his life had Jason Gridley felt so helpless and futile as he did this instant as he contemplated the necessity which stared him in the face of going forth into this world clothed only in a torn shirt and an ammunition belt. Yet he realized that with the exception of his boots he had lost nothing that was essential either to his comfort or his efficiency, but perhaps he was appalled most by the realization of the effect that this misfortune would have upon the pursuit of the main object of his quest —

how could he prosecute the search for The Red Flower of Zoram thus scantily appareled?

Of course The Red Flower had not been overburdened with wearing apparel; yet in her case this seemed no reflection upon her modesty, but the anticipation of finding her was now dampened by a realization of the ridiculousness of the figure he would cut, and already the mere contemplation of such a meeting caused a flush to overspread him.

In his dreams he had sometimes imagined himself walking aboard in some ridiculous state of undress, but now that such a dream had become an actuality he appreciated that in the

figment of the subconscious mind he had never fully realized such complete embarrassment and loss of self-confidence as the actuality entailed.

Ruefully he tore his shirt into strips and devised a G-string; then he buckled his ammunition belt around him and stepped forth into the world, an Adam armed with two Colts.

As he proceeded upon his search for Zoram he found that the greatest hardship which the loss of his clothing entailed was the pain and discomfort attendant upon traveling barefoot on soles already lacerated by his descent of the rough granite cliff. This discomfort, however, he eventually partially overcame when with the return of the game to the

mountains he was able to shoot a small reptile, from the hide of which he fashioned two crude sandals.

The sun, beating down upon his naked body, had no such effect upon his skin as would the sun of the outer world under like conditions, but it did impart to him a golden bronze color, which gave him a new confidence similar to that which he would have felt had he been able to retrieve his lost apparel, and in this fact he saw what he believed to be the real cause of his first embarrassment at his nakedness—it had been the whiteness of his skin that had made him seem so naked by contrast with other creatures, for this whiteness had suggested softness and weakness, arousing within him a

disturbing sensation of inferiority; but now as he took on his heavy coat of tan and his feet became hardened and accustomed to the new conditions, he walked no longer in constant realization of his nakedness.

He slept and ate many times and was conscious, therefore, that considerable outer earthly time had passed since he had been separated from Jana. As yet he had seen no sign of her or any other human being, though he was often menaced by savage beasts and reptiles, but experience had taught him how best to elude these without recourse to his weapons, which he was determined to use only in extreme emergencies for he could not but anticipate with misgivings

the time, which must sometime come, when the last of his ammunition would have been exhausted.

He had crossed the summit of the range and found a fairer country beyond. It was still wild and tumbled and rocky, but the vegetation grew more luxuriantly and in many places the mountain slopes were clothed in forests that reached far upward toward the higher peaks. There were more streams and a greater abundance of smaller game, which afforded him relief from any anxiety upon the score of food.

For the purpose of economizing his precious ammunition he had fashioned other weapons; the influence of his association with Jana being reflected in

his spear, while to Tarzan of the Apes and the Waziri he owed his crude bow and arrows. Before he had mastered the intricacies of either of his new weapons he might have died of starvation had it not been for his Colts, but eventually he achieved a sufficient degree of adeptness to insure him a full larder at all times.

Jason Gridley had long since given up all hope of finding his ship or his companions and had accepted with what philosophy he could command the future lot from which there seemed no escape, in which he visioned a lifetime spent in Pellucidar, battling with his primitive weapons for survival amongst the savage creatures of the inner world.

Most of all he missed human companionship and he looked forward to the day that he might find a tribe of men with which he could cast his lot. Although he was quite aware from the information that he had gleaned from Jana that it might be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to win either the confidence or the friendship of any Pellucidarian tribe whose attitude towards strangers was one of habitual enmity; yet he did not abandon hope and his eyes were always on the alert for a sign of man; nor was he now to have long to wait.

He had lost all sense of direction in so far as the location of Zoram was concerned and was wandering aimlessly

from camp to camp in the idle hope that some day he would stumble upon Zoram, when a breeze coming from below brought to his nostrils the acrid scent of smoke. Instantly his whole being was surcharged with excitement, for smoke meant fire and fire meant man.

Moving cautiously down the mountain in the direction from which the wind was blowing, his eager, searching eyes were presently rewarded by sight of a thin wisp of smoke arising from a canyon just ahead. It was a rocky canyon with precipitous walls, those upon the opposite side from him being lofty, while that which he was approaching was much lower and in many places so broken down by erosion or other natural

causes as to give ready ingress to the canyon bottom below.

Creeping stealthily to the rim Jason Gridley peered downward into the canyon. Along the center of its grassy floor tumbled a mountain torrent. Giant trees grew at intervals, lending a park-like appearance to the scene; a similarity which was further accentuated by the gorgeous blooms which starred the sward or blossomed in the trees themselves.

Beside a small fire at the edge of a brook squatted a bronzed warrior, his attention centered upon a fowl which he was roasting above the fire. Jason, watching the warrior, deliberated upon the best method of approaching him, that

he might convince him of his friendly intentions and overcome the natural suspicion of strangers that he knew to be inherent in these savage tribesmen. He had decided that the best plan would be to walk boldly down to the stranger, his hands empty of weapons, and he was upon the point of putting his plan into action when his attention was attracted to the summit of the cliff upon the opposite side of the narrow canyon.

There had been no sound that had been appreciable to his ears and the top of the opposite cliff had not been within the field of his vision while he had been watching the man in the bottom of the canyon. So what had attracted his attention he did not know, unless it had

been the delicate powers of perception inherent in that mysterious attribute of the mind which we are sometimes pleased to call a sixth sense.

But be that as it may, his eyes moved directly to a spot upon the summit of the opposite cliff where stood such a creature as no living man upon the outer crust had ever looked upon before—a giant armored dinosaur it was, a huge reptile that appeared to be between sixty and seventy feet in length, standing at the rump, which was its highest point, fully twenty-five feet above the ground. Its relatively small, pointed head resembled that of a lizard. Along its spine were thin, horny plates arranged alternately, the largest of which were almost three

feet high and equally as long, but with a thickness of little more than an inch. The stout tail, which terminated in a long, horny spine, was equipped with two other such spines upon the upper side and toward the tip. Each of these spines was about three feet in length. The creature walked upon four lizard- like feet, its short, front legs bringing its nose close to the ground, imparting to it an awkward and ungainly appearance.

It appeared to be watching the man in the canyon, and suddenly, to Jason's amazement, it gathered its gigantic hind legs beneath it and launched itself straight from the top of the lofty cliff.

Jason's first thought was that the gigantic creature would be dashed to

pieces upon the ground in the canyon bottom, but to his vast astonishment he saw that it was not falling but was gliding swiftly through the air, supported by its huge spinal plates, which it had dropped to a horizontal position, transforming itself into a gigantic animate glider.

The swish of its passage through the air attracted the attention of the warrior squatting over his fire. The man leaped to his feet, snatching up his spear as he did so, and simultaneously Jason Gridley sprang over the edge of the cliff and leaped down the rough declivity toward the lone warrior, at the same time whipping both his six-guns from their holsters.

11. THE CAVERN OF CLOVI

As Tarzan swarmed up the rope the bear, almost upon his heels and running swiftly, squatted upon its haunches to overcome its momentum and came to a stop directly beneath him. And then it was that there occurred one of those unforeseen accidents which no one might have guarded against.

It chanced that the granite projection across which Tarzan had cast his noose was at a single point of knife-like sharpness upon its upper edge, and with the weight of the man dragging down upon it the rope parted where it rested upon this sharp bit of granite, and the Lord of the Jungle was precipitated upon the back of the cave bear.

With such rapidity had these events transpired it is a matter of question as to whether the bear or Tarzan was the more surprised, but primitive creatures who would survive cannot permit surprise to disconcert them. In this instance both of the creatures accepted the happening as though it had been planned and expected.

The bear reared up and shook itself in an effort to dislodge the man-thing from its back, while Tarzan slipped a bronzed arm around the shaggy neck and clung desperately to his hold while he dragged his hunting knife from its sheath. It was a precarious place in which to stage a struggle for life. On one side the cliff rose far above them, and upon the other it dropped away dizzily into the depth of

a gloomy gorge, and here the efforts of the cave bear to dislodge its antagonist momentarily bade fair to plunge them both into eternity.

The growls and roars of the quadruped reverberated among the mighty peaks of the Mountains of the Thipdars, but the ape-man battled silently, driving his blade repeatedly into the back of the lunging beast, which was seeking by every means at its command to dislodge him, though ever wary against precipitating itself over the brink into the chasm.

But the battle could not go on forever and at last the blade found the spinal cord. The creature stiffened spasmodically and Tarzan slipped

quickly from its back. He found safe footing upon the ledge as the mighty carcass stumbled forward and rolled over the edge to hurtle downward to the gorge's bottom, carrying with it four of Tarzan's arrows and his spear.

The ape-man found his rope lying upon the ledge where it had fallen, and gathering it up he started back along the trail in search of the bow that he had been forced to discard in his flight, as well as to find the boy.

He had taken only a few steps when, upon rounding the shoulder of a crag, he came face to face with the youth. At sight of him the latter stopped, his spear ready, his stone knife loosened in its sheath. He had been carrying Tarzan's

bow, but at sight of the ape- man he dropped it at his feet, the better to defend himself in the event that he was attacked by the stranger.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," said the Lord of the Jungle. "I come as a friend, and not to kill."

"I am Ovan," said the boy. "If you did not come to our country to kill, then you came to steal a mate, and thus it is the duty of every warrior of Clovi to kill you."

"Tarzan seeks no mate," said the ape-man.

"Then why is he in Clovi?" demanded the youth.

"He is lost," replied the ape-man. "Tarzan comes from another world that

is beyond Pellucidar. He has become separated from his friends and he cannot find his way back to them. He would be friend with the people of Clovi."

"Why did you attack the bear?" demanded Ovan, suddenly.

"If I had not attacked it it would have killed you," replied the ape-man.

Ovan scratched his head. "It seemed to me," he said presently, "that there could be no other reason. It is what one of the men of my own tribe would have done, but you are not of my tribe. You are an enemy and so I could not understand why you did it. Do you tell me that though I am not of your tribe you would have saved my life?"

"Certainly," replied Tarzan.

Ovan looked long and steadily at the handsome giant standing before him. "I believe you," he said presently, "although I do not understand. I never heard of such a thing before, but I do not know that the men of my tribe will believe. Even after I have told them what you have done for me they may still wish to kill you, for they believe that it is never safe to trust an enemy."

"Where is your village?" asked Tarzan.

"It is not at a great distance," replied Ovan.

"I will go there with you," said, Tarzan, "and talk with your chief."

"Very well;" said the boy. "You may talk with Avan the chief. He is my father.

And if they decide to kill you I shall try to help you, for you saved my life when the ryth would have destroyed me."

"Why were you in the cave?" demanded Tarzan. "It was plainly apparent that it was the den of a wild beast."

"You, too, were upon the same trail," said the boy, "while you chanced to be behind the ryth. It was my misfortune that I was in front of it."

"I did not know where the trail led," said the ape-man.

"Neither did I," said Ovan. "I have never hunted before except in the company of older men, but now I have reached an age when I would be a warrior myself, and so I have come out

of the caves of my people to make my first kill alone, for only thus may a man hope to become a warrior. I saw this trail and, though I did not know where it led, I followed it; nor had I been long upon it when I heard the footsteps of the ryth behind me and when I came to the cave and saw that the trail ended there, I knew that I should never again see the caves of my people, that I should never become a warrior. When the great ryth came and saw me standing there he was very angry, but I should have fought him.

"Perhaps I might have killed him, though I do not believe that that is at all likely.

"And then you came and with this bent stick cast a little spear into the back of

the ryth, which so enraged him that he forgot me and turned to pursue you as you knew that he would. They must indeed be brave warriors who come from the land from which you come. Tell me about your country. Where is it? Are your warriors great hunters and is your chief powerful in the land?"

Tarzan tried to explain that his country was not in Pellucidar, but that was beyond Ovan's powers of conception, and so Tarzan turned the conversation from himself to the youth and as they followed a winding trail toward Clovi, Ovan discoursed upon the bravery of the men of his tribe and the beauty of its women.

"Avan, my father, is a great chief," he

said, "and the men of my tribe are mighty warriors. Often we battle with the men of Zoram and we have even gone as far as Daroz, which lies beyond Zoram, for always there are more men than women in our tribe and the warriors must seek their mates in Zoram and Daroz. Even now Carb has gone to Zoram with twenty warriors to steal women. The women of Zoram are very beautiful. When I am a little larger I shall go to Zoram and steal a mate."

"How far is it from Clovi to Zoram?" asked Tarzan.

"Some say that it is not so far, and others that it is farther," replied Ovan. "I have heard it said that going to Zoram is much farther than returning inasmuch as

the warriors usually eat six times on the journey from Clovi to Zoram, but returning a strong man may make the journey eating only twice and still retain his strength."

"But why should the distance be shorter returning than going?" demanded the ape-man.

"Because when they are returning they are usually pursued by the warriors of Zoram," replied Ovan.

Inwardly Tarzan smiled at the naïveté of Ovan's reasoning, while it again impressed upon him the impossibility of measuring distances or computing time under the anomalous condition obtaining in Pellucidar.

As the two made their way toward

Clovi, the boy gradually abandoned his suspicious attitude toward Tarzan and presently seemed to accept him quite as he would have a member of his own tribe. He noticed the wound made by the talons of the thipdar on Tarzan's back and shoulders and when he had wormed the story from his companion he marveled at the courage, resourcefulness and strength that had won escape for this stranger from what a Pellucidarian would have considered an utterly hopeless situation.

Ovan saw that the wounds were inflamed and realized that they must be causing Tarzan considerable pain and discomfort, and so when first their way led near a brook he insisted upon

cleansing them thoroughly, and collecting the leaves of a particular shrub he crushed them and applied the juices to the open wounds.

The pain of the inflammation had been as nothing compared to the acute agony caused by the application thus made by Ovan and yet the boy noticed that not even by the tremor of a single muscle did the stranger evidence the agony that Ovan well knew he was enduring, and once again his admiration for his new-found companion was increased.

"It may hurt," he said, "but it will keep the wounds from rotting and afterward they will heal quickly."

For a short time after they resumed their march the pain continued to be

excruciating, but it lessened gradually until it finally disappeared, and thereafter the ape-man felt no discomfort.

The way led to a forest where there were straight, tough, young saplings, and here Tarzan tarried long enough to fashion a new spear and to split and scrape half a dozen additional arrows.

Ovan was much interested in Tarzan's steel-bladed knife and in his bow and arrows, although secretly he looked with contempt upon the latter, which he referred to as little spears for young children. But when they became hungry and Tarzan bowled over a mountain sheep with a single shaft, the lad's contempt was changed to admiration and

thereafter he not only evinced great respect for the bow and arrows, but begged to be taught how to make and to use them.

The little Clovian was a lad after the heart of the ape-man and the two became fast friends as they made their way toward the land of Clovi, for Ovan possessed the quiet dignity of the wild beast; nor was he given to that garrulity which is at once the pride and the curse of civilized man— there were no boy orators in the peaceful Pliocene.

"We are almost there," announced Ovan, halting at the brink of a canyon. "Below lie the caves of the Clovi. I hope that Avan, the chief, will receive you as a friend, but that I cannot promise.

Perhaps it might be better for you to go your way and not come to the caves of the Clovi. I do not want you to be killed."

"They will not kill me," said Tarzan. "I come as a friend." But in his heart he knew that the chances were that these primitive savages might never accept a stranger among them upon an equal or a friendly footing.

"Come, then," said Ovan, as he started the descent into the canyon. Part way down the trail turned up along the canyon side in the direction of the head of the gorge. It was a level trail here, well kept and much used, with indications that no little engineering skill had entered into its construction. It was

by no means the haphazard trail of beasts, but rather the work of intelligent, even though savage and primitive men.

They had proceeded no great distance along the trail when Ovan sounded a low whistle, which, a moment later, was answered from around the bend in the trail ahead, and when the two had passed this turn Tarzan saw before him a wide, natural ledge of rock entirely overhung by beetling cliffs and in the depth of the recess thus formed in the cliff-side he saw the dark mouth of a cavern.

Upon the flat surface of the ledge, which comprised some two acres, were congregated fully a hundred men, women and children.

All eyes were turned in their direction as they came into view and on sight of Tarzan the warriors sprang to their feet, seizing spears and knives. The women called their children to them and moved quickly toward the entrance to the cavern.

"Do not fear," cried the boy. "It is only Ovan and his friend, Tarzan."

"We kill," growled some of the warriors.

"Where is Avan the chief?" demanded the boy.

"Here is Avan the chief," announced a deep gruff voice, and Tarzan shifted his gaze to the figure of a stalwart, brawny savage emerging from the mouth of the cavern.

"What have you there, Ovan?" demanded the chief. "If you have brought a prisoner of war, you should have disarmed him first."

"He is no prisoner," replied Ovan. "He is a stranger in Pellucidar and he comes as a friend and not as an enemy."

"He is a stranger," replied Avan, "and you should have killed him. He has learned the way to the caverns of Clovi and if we do not kill him he will return to his people and lead them against us."

"He has no people and he does not know how to return to his own country," said the boy.

"Then he does not speak true words, for that is not possible," said Avan. "There can be no man who does not

know the way to his own country. Come! Stand aside, Ovan, while I destroy him."

The lad drew himself stiffly erect in front of Tarzan. "Who would kill the friend of Ovan," he said, "must first kill Ovan."

A tall warrior, standing near the chief, laid his hand upon Avan's arm. "Ovan has always been a good boy," he said. "There is none in Clovi near his age whose words are as full of wisdom as his. If he says that this stranger is his friend and if he does not wish us to kill him, he must have a reason and we should listen to him before we decide to destroy the stranger."

"Very well," said the chief; "perhaps you are right, Ulan. We shall see. Speak,

boy, and tell us why we should not kill the stranger."

"Because at the risk of his life he saved mine. Hand to hand he fought with a great ryth from which I could not have escaped had it not been for him; nor did he offer to harm me, and what enemy of the Clovi is there, even among the people of Zoram or Daroz who are of our own blood, that would not slay a Clovi youth who was so soon to become a warrior? Not only is he very brave, but he is a great hunter. It would be well for the tribe of Clovi if he came to live with us as a friend."

Avan bowed his head in thought. "When Carb returns we shall call a council and decide what to do," he said.

"In the meantime the stranger must remain here as a prisoner."

"I shall not remain as a prisoner," said Tarzan. "I came as a friend and I shall remain as a friend, or I shall not remain at all."

"Let him stay as a friend," said Ulan. "He has marched with Ovan and has not harmed him. Why should we think that he will harm us when we are many and he only one?"

"Perhaps he has come to steal a woman," suggested Avan.

"No," said Avan, "that is not so. Let him remain and with my life I will guarantee that he will harm no one."

"Let him stay," said some of the other warriors, for Ovan had long been the pet

of the tribe so that they were accustomed to humoring him and so unspoiled was he that they still found pleasure in doing so.

"Very well," said Avan. "Let him remain. But Ovan and Ulan shall be responsible for his conduct."

There were only a few of the Clovians who accepted Tarzan without suspicion, and among these was Maral, the mother of Ovan, and Rela, his sister. These two accepted him without question because Ovan had accepted him. Ulan's friendship, too, had been apparent from the first; nor was it without great value for Ulan, because of his intelligence, courage and ability was a force in the councils of the Clovi.

Tarzan, accustomed to the tribal life of primitive people, took his place naturally among them, paying no attention to those who paid no attention to him, observing scrupulously the ethics of tribal life and conforming to the customs of the Clovi in every detail of his relations with them. He liked to talk with Maral because of her sunny disposition and her marked intelligence. She told him that she was from Zoram, having been captured by Avan when, as a young warrior, he had decided to take a mate. And to her nativity he attributed her great beauty, for it seemed to be an accepted fact among the Clovis that the women of Zoram were the most beautiful of all women.

Ulan he had liked from the first, being naturally attracted to him because he had been the first of the Clovians to champion his cause. In many ways Ulan differed from his fellows. He seemed to have been the first among his people to discover that a brain may be used for purposes other than securing the bare necessities of existence. He had learned to dream and to exercise his brain along pleasant paths that gave entertainment to himself and others —fantastic stories that sometimes amused and sometimes awed his eager audiences; and, too, he was a maker of pictures and these he exhibited to Tarzan with no small measure of pride. Leading the ape-man into the rocky cavern that was the

shelter, the storehouse and the citadel of the tribe, he lighted a crude torch which illuminated the walls, revealing the pictures that Ulan had drawn there. Mammoth and saber- tooth and cave bear were depicted, with the red deer, the hyaenodon and other familiar beasts, and in addition thereto were some with which Tarzan was unfamiliar and one that he had never seen elsewhere than in Pal-ul-don, where it had been known as a gryf. Ulan told him that it was a gyor and that it was found upon the Gyor Cors, or Gyor Plains, which lie at the end of the range of the Mountains of the Thipdars beyond Clovi.

The drawings were in outline and were well executed. The other members

of the tribe thought they were very wonderful for Ulan was the first ever to have made them and they could not understand how he did it. Perhaps if he had been a weakling he would have lost caste among them because of this gift, but inasmuch as he was also a noted hunter and warrior his talents but added to his fame and the esteem in which he was held by all.

But though these and a few others were friendly toward him, the majority of the tribe looked upon Tarzan with suspicion, for never within the memory of one of them had a strange warrior entered their village other than as an enemy. They were waiting for the return of Carb and the warriors who had

accompanied him, when, the majority of them hoped, the council would sentence the stranger to death.

As they became better acquainted with Tarzan, however, others among them were being constantly won to his cause and this was particularly true when he accompanied them upon their hunts, his skill and his prowess winning their admiration, and his strange weapons which they had at first viewed with contempt, soon commanding their unqualified respect.

And so it was that the longer that Carb remained away the better Tarzan's chances became of being accepted into the tribe upon an equal footing with its other members; a contingency for which

he hoped since it would afford him a base from which to prosecute his search for his fellows and allies familiar with the country, whose friendly services he could enlist to aid him in his search.

He was confident that Jason Gridley, if he still lived, was lost somewhere among these stupendous mountains and if he could but find him they might eventually, with the assistance of the Clovians, locate the camp of the O-220.

He had eaten and slept with the Clovi many times and had accompanied them upon several hunts. It had been noon when he arrived and it was still noon, so whether a day or a month had passed he did not know. He was squatting by the cook-fire of Maral, talking with her and

with Ulan, when from down the gorge there sounded the whistled signal of the Clovians announcing the approach of a friendly party and an instant later a youth rounded the shoulder of the cliff and entered the village.

"It is Tomar," announced Maral. "Perhaps he brings news of Carb."

The youth ran to the center of the ledge upon which the village stood and halted. For a moment he stood there dramatically with upraised hand, commanding silence, and then he spoke. "Carb is returning," he cried. "The victorious warriors of. Clovi are returning with the most beautiful woman of Zoram. Great is Carb! Great are the warriors of Clovi!"

Cook fires and the routine occupations of the moment were abandoned as the tribe advanced to await the coming of the victorious war party.

Presently it came into sight, rounding the shoulder of the cliff and filing on to the ledge—twenty warriors led by Carb and among them a girl, her wrists bound behind her back, a rawhide leash around her neck, the free end held by a brawny warrior.

The ape-man's greatest interest lay in Carb, for his position in the tribe, perhaps even his life itself might rest with the decision of this man, whose influence, he had learned, was great in the councils of his people.

Carb was evidently a man of great physical strength; his regular features imparted to him much of the physical beauty that is an attribute of his people, but an otherwise handsome countenance was marred by thin, cruel lips and cold, unsympathetic eyes.

From contemplation of Carb the ape-man's eyes wandered to the face of the prisoner, and there they were arrested by the startling beauty of the girl. Well, indeed, thought Tarzan, might she be acclaimed the most beautiful woman of Zoram, for it was doubtful that there existed many in this world or the outer who might lay claim to greater pulchritude than she.

Avan, the chief, standing in the center

of the ledge, received the returning warriors. He looked with favor upon the prize and listened attentively while Carb narrated the more important details of the expedition.

"We shall hold the council at once," announced Avan, "to decide who shall possess the prisoner, and at the same time we may settle another matter that has been awaiting the return of Carb and his warriors."

"What is that?" demanded Carb.

Avan pointed at Tarzan. "There is a stranger who would come into the tribe and be as one of us."

Carb turned his cold eyes in the direction of the ape-man and his face clouded. "Why has he not been

destroyed?" he asked. "Let us do away with him at once."

"That is not for you to decide," said Avan, the chief.

"The warriors in council alone may say what shall. be done." -

Carb shrugged. "If the council does not destroy him, I shall kill him myself," he said. "I, Carb, will have no enemy living in the village where I live."

"Let us hold the council at once, then," said Ulan, "for if Carb is greater than the council of the warriors we should know it." There was a note of sarcasm in his voice.

"We have marched for a long time without food or sleep," said Carb. "Let us eat and rest before the council is held,

for matters may arise in the council which will demand all of our strength," and he looked pointedly at Ulan.

The other warriors, who had accompanied Carb, also wished to eat and rest before the council was held, and Avan, the chief, acceded to their just demands.

The girl captive had not spoken since she had arrived in the village and she was now turned over to Maral, who was instructed to feed her and permit her to sleep. The bonds were removed from her wrists and she was brought to the cook-fire of the chief's mate, where she stood with an expression of haughty disdain upon her beautiful face.

None of the women revealed any

inclination to abuse the prisoner— an attitude which rather surprised Tarzan until the reason for it had been explained to him, for he had upon more than one occasion witnessed the cruelties inflicted upon female prisoners by the women of native African tribes into whose hands the poor creatures had fallen.

Maral, in particular, was kind to the girl. "Why should I be otherwise?" she asked when Tarzan commented upon the fact. "Our daughters, or even anyone of us, may at any time be captured by the warriors of another tribe, and if it were known that we had been cruel to their women, they would doubtless repay us in kind; nor, aside from this, is there any

reason why we should be other than kind to a woman who will live among us for the rest of her life. We are few in numbers and we are constantly together. If we harbored enmities and if we quarreled our lives would be less happy. Since you have been here you have never seen quarreling among the women of Clovi; nor would you if you remained here for the rest of your life. There have been quarrelsome women among us, just as at some time there have been crippled children, but as we destroy the one for the good of the tribe we destroy the others."

She turned to the girl. "Sit down," she said pleasantly. "There is meat in the pot. Eat, and then you may sleep. Do not

be afraid; you are among friends. I, too, am from Zoram."

At that the girl turned her eyes upon the speaker. "You are from Zoram?" she asked. "Then you must have felt as I feel. I want to go back to Zoram. I would rather die than live elsewhere."

"You will get over that," said Maral. "I felt the same way, but when I became acquainted I found that the people of Clovi are much like the people of Zoram. They have been kind to me; they will be kind to you, and you will be happy as I have been. When they have given you a mate you will look upon life very differently."

"I shall not mate with one of them," cried the girl, stamping her sandaled

foot. "I am Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram, and I choose my own mate."

Maral shook her head sadly. "Thus spoke I once," she said; "but I have changed, and so will you."

"Not I," said the girl, "I have seen but one man with whom I would mate and I shall never mate with another."

"You are Jana," asked Tarzan, "the sister of Thoar?"

The girl looked at him in surprise, and as though she had noticed him now for the first time her eyes quickly investigated him. "Ah," she said, "you are the stranger whom Carb would destroy."

"Yes," replied the ape-man.

"What do you know of Thoar, my brother?"

"We hunted together. We were traveling back to Zoram when I became separated from him. We were following the tracks made by you and the man who was with you when a storm came and obliterated them. Your companion was the man whom I was seeking."

"What do you know of the man who was with me?" demanded the girl.

"He is my friend," replied Tarzan. "What has become of him?"

"He was caught in a canyon during the storm and be must have been drowned," replied Jana sadly. "You are from his country?"

"Yes."

"How did you know be was with me?" she demanded.

"I recognized his tracks and Thoar recognized yours."

"He was a great warrior," she said, "and a very brave man."

"Are you sure that be is dead?" asked Tarzan.

"I am sure," replied The Red Flower of Zoram.

For a time they were silent, both occupied with thoughts of Jason Gridley. "You were his friend," said Jana. She had moved close to him and had seated herself at his side. Now she leaned still closer. "They are going to kill you," she whispered. "I know the people of these tribes better than you and I know Carb.

He will have his way. You were Jason's friend and so was I. If we can escape I can lead the way back to Zoram, and if you are Thoar's friend and mine the people of Zoram will have to accept you."

"Why do you whisper?" asked a gruff voice behind them, and turning they saw Avan, the chief. Without waiting for a reply, be turned to Maral. "Take the woman to the cavern," he said. "She will remain there until the council has decided who shall have her as mate, and in the meantime I will place warriors at the entrance to the cavern to see that she does not escape."

As Maral motioned Jana toward the cavern, the latter arose, and as she did

so she cast an appealing glance at Tarzan. The ape-man, who was already upon his feet, looked quickly about him. Perhaps a hundred members of the tribe were scattered about the ledge, while near the opening to the trail which led down the canyon and which afforded the only avenue of escape, fully a dozen warriors loitered. Alone he might have won his way through, but with the girl it would have been impossible. He shook his head and his lips, which were turned away from Avan, formed the word, "Wait." and a moment later The Red Flower of Zoram had entered the dark cavern of the Clovians.

"And as for you, man of another country," said Avan, addressing Tarzan,

"until the council has decided upon your fate, you are a prisoner. Go, therefore, into the cavern and remain there until the council of warriors has spoken."

A dozen warriors barred his way to freedom now, but they were lolling idly, expecting no emergency. A bold dash for freedom might carry him beyond them before they could realize that he was attempting escape. He was confident that the voice of the council would be adverse to him and when its decision was announced he would be surrounded by all the warriors of Clovi, alert and ready to prevent his escape. Now, therefore, was the most propitious moment; but Tarzan of the Apes made no break for liberty; instead he turned and

strode toward the entrance to the cavern, for The Red Flower of Zoram had appealed to him for aid and he would not desert the sister of Thoar and the friend of Jason.

12. THE PHELIAN SWAMP

As Jason Gridley leaped down the canyon side toward the lone warrior who stood facing the attack of the tremendous reptile gliding swiftly through the air from the top of the opposite cliff side, there flashed upon the screen of his recollection the picture of a restoration of a similar extinct reptile and he recognized the creature as a stegosaurus of the Jurassic; but how inadequately had the picture that he had seen carried to his mind the colossal proportions of the creature, or but remotely suggested its terrifying aspect.

Jason saw the lone warrior standing there facing inevitable doom, but in his attitude was no outward sign of fear. In

his right hand he held his puny spear, and in his left his crude stone knife. He would die, but he would give a good account of himself. There was no panic of terror, no futile flight.

The distance between Jason and the stegosaurus was over great for a revolver shot, but the American hoped that he might at least divert the attention of the reptile from its prey and even, perhaps, frighten it away by the unaccustomed sound of the report of the weapon, and so he fired twice in rapid succession as he leaped downward toward the bottom of the canyon. That at least one of the shots struck the reptile was evidenced by the fact that it veered from its course, simultaneously emitting

a loud, screaming sound.

Attracted to Jason by the report of the revolver and evidently attributing its hurt to this new enemy, the reptile, using its tail as a rudder and tilting its spine plates up on one side, veered in the direction of the American.

As the two shots shattered the silence of the canyon, the warrior turned his eyes in the direction of the man leaping down the declivity toward him, and then he saw the reptile veer in the direction of the newcomer.

Heredity and training, coupled with experience, had taught this primitive savage that every man's hand was against him, unless that man was a member of his own tribe. Only upon a

single occasion in his life had experience controverted these teachings, and so it seemed inconceivable that this stranger, whom he immediately recognized as such, was deliberately risking his life in an effort to succor him; yet there seemed no other explanation, and so the perplexed warrior, instead of seeking to escape now that the attention of the reptile was diverted from him, ran swiftly toward Jason to join forces with him in combating the attack of the creature.

From the instant that the stegosaurus had leaped from the summit of the cliff, it had hurtled through the air with a speed which seemed entirely out of proportion to its tremendous bulk, so that

all that had transpired in the meantime had occupied but a few moments of time, and Jason Gridley found himself facing this onrushing death almost before he had had time to speculate upon the possible results of his venturesome interference.

With wide distended jaws and uttering piercing shrieks, the terrifying creature shot toward him, but now at last it presented an easy target and Jason Gridley was entirely competent to take advantage of the altered situation.

He fired rapidly with both weapons, trying to reach the tiny brain, at the location of which he could only guess and for which his bullets were searching through the roof of the opened mouth.

His greatest hope, however, was that the beast could not for long face that terrific fusillade of shots, and in this he was right. The strange and terrifying sound and the pain and shock of the bullets tearing into its skull proved too much for the stegosaurus. Scarcely half a dozen feet from Gridley it swerved upward and passed over his head, receiving two or three bullets in its belly as it did so.

Still shrieking with rage and pain it glided to the ground beyond him.

Almost immediately it turned to renew the attack. This time it came upon its four feet, and Jason saw that it was likely to prove fully as formidable upon the ground as it had been in the air, for considering its tremendous bulk it

moved with great agility and speed.

As he stood facing the returning creature, the warrior reached his side.

"Get on that Side of him," said the warrior, "and I will attack him on this. Keep out of the way of his tail. Use your spear; you cannot frighten a dyrodor away by making a noise."

Jason Gridley leaped quickly to one side to obey the suggestions of the warrior smiling inwardly at the naïve suggestion of the other that his Colt had been used solely to frighten the creature.

The warrior took his place upon the opposite side of the approaching reptile, but before he had time to cast his spear or Jason to fire again the creature stumbled forward, its nose dug into the

ground and it rolled over upon its side dead.

"It is dead!" said the warrior in a surprised tone. "What could have killed it? Neither one of us has cast a spear."

Jason slipped his Colts into their holsters. "These killed it," he said, tapping them.

"Noises do not kill," said the warrior skeptically. "It is not the bark of the jalok or the growl of the ryth that rends the flesh of man. The hiss of the thipdar kills no one."

"It was not the noise that killed it," said Jason, "but if you will examine its head and especially the roof of its mouth you will see what happened when my weapons spoke."

Following Jason's suggestion the warrior examined the head and mouth of the dyrodor and when he had seen the gaping wounds he looked at Jason with a new respect. "Who are you," he asked, "and what are you doing in the land of Zoram?"

"My God!" exclaimed Jason. "Am I in Zoram?"

"You are."

"And you are one of the men of Zoram?" demanded the American.

"I am; but who are you?"

"Tell me, do you know Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram?" insisted Jason.

"What do you know of The Red Flower of Zoram, stranger?" demanded

the other. And then suddenly his eyes widened to a new thought. "Tell me," he cried, "by what name do they call you in the country from which you come?" '

"'My name is Gridley," replied the American; "Jason Gridley."

"Jason!" exclaimed the other; "yes, Jason Gridley, that is it. Tell me, man, where is, The Red Flower of Zoram? What did you with her?"

"That is what I am asking you," said Jason. "We became separated and I have been searching for her. But what do you know of me?"

"I followed you for a long time," replied the other, "but the waters fell and obliterated your tracks."

"Why did you follow me?" asked

Jason.

"I followed because you were with The Red Flower of Zoram," replied the other. "I followed to kill you, but he said you would not harm her; he said that she went with you willingly. Is that true?"

"She came with me willingly for a while," replied Jason, "and then she left me; but I did not harm her."

"Perhaps he was right then," said the warrior. "I shall wait until I find her and if you have not harmed her, I shall not kill you."

"Whom do you mean by 'he'?" asked Jason. "There is no one in Pellucidar who could possibly know anything about me, except Jana."

"Do you not know Tarzan?" asked the

warrior.

"Tarzan!" exclaimed Jason. "You have seen Tarzan? He is alive?"

"I saw him. We hunted together and we followed you and Jana, but he is not alive now; he is dead."

"Dead! You are sure that he is dead?"

"Yes, he is dead."

"How did it happen?"

"We were crossing the summit of the mountains when he was seized by a thipdar and carried away."

Tarzan dead! He had feared as much and yet now that he had proof it seemed unbelievable. His mind could scarcely grasp the significance of the words that he had heard as he recalled the strength

and vitality of that man of steel. It seemed incredible that that giant frame should cease to pulsate with life; that those mighty muscles no longer rolled beneath the sleek, bronzed hide; that that courageous heart no longer beat.

"You were very fond of him?" asked the warrior, noticing the silence and dejection of the other.

"Yes," said Jason.

"So was I," said the warrior; "but neither Tar-gash nor I could save him, the thipdar struck so swiftly and was gone before we could cast a weapon."

"Who is Tar-gash?" asked Jason.

"A Sagoth—one of the hairy men," replied the warrior. "They live in the forest and are often used as warriors by

the Mahars."

"And he was with you and Tarzan?" inquired Jason.

"Yes. They were together when I first saw them, but now Tarzan is dead and Tar-gash has gone back to his own country and I must proceed upon my search for The Red Flower of Zoram. You have saved my life, man from another country, but I do not know that you have not harmed Jana. Perhaps you have slain her. How am I to know? I do not know what I should do."

"I, too, am looking for Jana," said Jason. "Let us look for her together."

"Then if we find her, she shall tell me whether or not I shall kill you," said the warrior.

Jason could not but recall how angry Jana had been with him. She had almost killed him herself. Perhaps she would find it easier to permit this warrior to kill him. Doubtless the man was her sweetheart and if he knew the truth he would need no urging to destroy a rival, but neither by look nor word did he reveal any apprehension as he replied.

"I will go with you," he said, "and if I have harmed The Red Flower of Zoram you may kill me. What is your name?"

"Thoar," replied the warrior.

Jana had spoken of her brother to Jason, but if she had ever mentioned his name, the American had forgotten it, and so he continued to think that Thoar was the sweetheart and possibly the mate of

The Red Flower and his reaction to this belief was unpleasant; yet why it should have been he could not have explained. The more he thought of the matter the more certain he was that Thoar was Jana's mate, for who was there who might more naturally desire to kill one who had wronged her. Yes, he was sure that the man was Jana's mate. The thought made him angry for she had certainly led him to believe that she was not mated. That was just like a woman, he meditated; they were all flirts; they would make a fool of a man merely to pass an idle hour, but she had not made a fool of him. He had not fallen victim to her lures, that is why she had been so angry—her vanity had been piqued—and

being a very primitive young person the first thought that had come to her mind had been to kill him. What a little devil she was to try to get him to make love to her when she already had a mate, and thus Jason almost succeeded in working himself into a rage until his sense of humor came to his rescue; yet even though he smiled, way down deep within him something hurt and he wondered why.

"Where did you last see Jana?" asked Thoar. "We can return there and try and locate her tracks."

"I do not know that I can explain," replied Jason. "It is very difficult for me to locate myself or anything else where there are no points of compass."

"We can start together at the point where we found your tracks with Jana's," said Thoar.

"Perhaps that will not be necessary if you are familiar with the country on the other side of the range," said Jason. "Returning toward the mountains from the spot where I first saw Jana, there was a tremendous gorge upon our left. It was toward this gorge that the two men of the four that had been pursuing her ran after I had killed two of their number. Jana tried to find a way to the summit, far to the right of this gorge, but our path was blocked by a deep rift which paralleled the base of the mountains, so that she was compelled to turn back again toward the gorge, into which she

descended. The last I saw of her she was going up the gorge, so that if you know where this gorge lies it will not be necessary for us to go all the way back to the point at which I first met her."

"I know the gorge," said Thoar, "and if the two Phelians entered it it is possible that they captured her. We will search in the direction of the gorge then and if we do not find any trace of her, we shall drop down to the country of the Phelians in the lowland."

Through a maze of jagged peaks Thoar led the way. To him time meant nothing; to Jason Gridley it was little more than a memory. When they found food they ate; when they were tired they slept, and always just ahead there were

perilous crags to skirt and stupendous cliffs to scale. To the American it would have seemed incredible that a girl ever could find her way here had he not had occasion to follow where The Red Flower of Zoram led.

Occasionally they were forced to take a lower route which led into the forests that climbed higher along the slopes of the mountains, and here they found more game and with Thoar's assistance Jason fashioned a garment from the hide of a mountain goat. It was at best but a sketchy garment; yet it sufficed for the purpose for which it was intended and left his arms and legs free. Nor was it long before he realized its advantages and wondered why civilized man of the

outer crust should so encumber himself with useless clothing, when the demands of temperature did not require it.

As Jason became better acquainted with Thoar he found his regard for him changing from suspicion into admiration, and finally to a genuine liking for the savage Pellucidarian, in spite of the fact that this sentiment was tinged with a feeling that, while not positive animosity, was yet akin to it. It was difficult for Jason to fathom the sentiment which seemed to animate him. There could be no rivalry between him and this primitive warrior and yet Jason's whole demeanor and attitude toward Thoar was such as might be scrupulously observed by any honorable

man toward an honorable opponent or rival.

They seldom, if ever, spoke of Jana; yet thoughts of her were uppermost in the mind of each of them. Jason often found himself reviewing every detail of his association with her; every little characteristic gesture and expression was indelibly imprinted upon his memory, as were the contours of her perfect figure and the radiant loveliness of her face. Not even the bitter words with which she had parted with him could erase the memory of her joyous comradeship. Never before in his life had he missed the companionship of any woman. At times he tried to crowd her from his thoughts by recalling incidents

of his friendship with Cynthia Furnois or Barbara Green, but the vision of The Red Flower of Zoram remained persistently in the foreground, while that of Cynthia and Barbara always faded gradually into forgetfulness.

This state of mental subjugation to the personality of an untutored savage, however beautiful, annoyed his ego and he tried to escape it by dwelling upon the sorrow entailed by the death of Tarzan; but somehow he never could convince himself that Tarzan was dead. It was one of those things that it was simply impossible to conceive.

Failing in this, he would seek to occupy his mind with conjectures concerning the fate of Yon Horst,

Muviro and the Waziri warriors, or upon what was transpiring aboard the great dirigible in search of which his eyes were often scanning the cloudless Pellucidarian sky. But travel where it would, even, to his remote Tarzana hills in far off California, it would always return to hover around the girlish figure of The Red Flower of Zoram.

Thoar, upon his part, found in the American a companion after his own heart—a dependable man of quiet ways, always ready to assume his share of the burden and responsibilities of the savage trail they trod.

So the two came at last to the rim of the great gorge and though they followed it up and down for a great distance in

each direction they found no trace of Jana, nor any sign that she had passed that way.

"We shall go down to the lowlands," said Thoar, "to the country that is called Pheli and even though we may not find her, we shall avenge her."

The idea of primitive justice suggested by Thoar's decision aroused no opposing question of ethics in the mind of the civilized American; in fact, it seemed quite the most natural thing in the world that he and Thoar should constitute themselves a court of justice as well as the instrument of its punishment, for thus easily does man slough off the thin veneer of civilization, which alone differentiates him from his

primitive ancestors.

Thus a gap of perhaps a hundred thousand years which yawned between Thoar of Zoram, and Jason Gridley of Tarzana was closed. Imbued with the same hatred, they descended the slopes of the Mountains of the Thipdars toward the land of Pheli, and the heart of each was hot with the lust to kill. No greedy munitions manufacturer was needed here to start a war.

Down through stately forests and across rolling foothills went Thoar and Jason toward the land of Pheli. The country teemed with game of all descriptions and their way was beset by fierce carnivores, by stupid, irritable herbivores of ponderous weight and

short tempers or by gigantic reptiles beneath whose charging feet the earth trembled. It was by the exercise of the superior intelligence of man combined with a considerable share of luck that they passed unscathed to the swamp land where Pheli lies. Here the world seemed dedicated to the reptilia. They swarmed in countless thousands and in all sizes and infinite varieties. Aquatic and amphibious, carnivorous and herbivorous, they hissed and screamed and fought and devoured one another constantly, so that Jason wondered in what intervals they found the time to propagate their kind and he marveled that the herbivores among them could exist at all. A terrific orgy of

extermination seemed to constitute the entire existence of a large proportion of the species and yet the tremendous size of many of them, including several varieties of the herbivores, furnished ample evidence that considerable numbers of them lived to a great age, for unlike mammals, reptiles never cease to grow while they are living.

The swamp, in which Thoar believed the villages of the Phelians were to be found, supported a tremendous forest of gigantic trees and so interlaced were their branches that oftentimes the two men found it expedient to travel among them rather than upon the treacherous, boggy ground. Here, too, the reptiles were smaller, though scarcely less

numerous. Among these, however, there were exceptions, and those which caused them the greatest anxiety were snakes of such titanic proportions that when he first encountered one Jason could not believe the testimony of his own eyes. They came upon the creature suddenly as it was in the act of swallowing a trachodon that was almost as large as an elephant. The huge herbivorous dinosaur was still alive and battling bravely to extricate itself from the jaws of the serpent, but not even its giant strength nor its terrific armament of teeth, which included a reserve supply of over four hundred in the lower jaw alone, availed it in its unequal struggle with the colossal creature that was

slowly swallowing it alive.

Perhaps it was their diminutive size as much as their brains or luck that saved the two men from the jaws of these horrid creatures. Or, again, it may have been the dense stupidity of the reptiles themselves, which made it comparatively easy for the men to elude them.

Here in this dismal swamp of horrors not even the giant tarags or the equally ferocious lions and leopards of Pellucidar dared venture, and how man existed there it was beyond the power of Jason to conceive. In fact he doubted that the Phelians or any other race of men made their homes here.

"Men could not exist in such a place,"

he said to Thoar. "Pheli must lie elsewhere."

"No," said his companion, "members of my tribe have come down here more than once in the memory of man to avenge the stealing of a woman and the stories that they have brought back have familiarized us all with the conditions existing in the land of Pheli. This is indeed it."

"You may be right," said Jason, "but, like these snakes that we have seen, I shall have to see the villages of the Phelians before I will believe that they exist here and even then I won't know whether to believe it or not."

"It will not be long now," said Thoar, "before you shall see the Phelians in

their own village."

"What makes you think so?" asked Jason.

"Look down below you and you will see what I have been searching for," replied Thoar, pointing.

Jason did as he was bid and discovered a small stream meandering through the swamp. "I see nothing but a brook," he said.

"That is what I have been searching for," replied Thoar. "All of my people who have been here say that Phelians live upon the banks of a river that runs through the swamp. In places the land is high and upon these hills the Phelians build their homes. They do not live in caverns as do we, but they make houses

of great trees so strong that not even the largest reptiles can break into them."

"But why should anyone choose to live in such a place?" demanded the American.

"To eat and to breed in comparative peace and contentment,'" replied Thoar. "The Phelians, unlike the mountain people, are not a race of warriors. They do not like to fight and so they have hidden their villages away in this swamp where no man would care to come and thus they are practically free from human enemies. Also, here, meat abounds in such quantities that food lies always at their doors. For them then the conditions are ideal and here, more than elsewhere in Pellucidar, may they find

contentment."

As they advanced now they exercised the greatest caution, knowing that any moment they might come within sight of a Phelian village. Nor was it long before Thoar halted and drew back behind the bole of a tree through which they were passing, then he pointed forward. Jason, looking, saw a bare hill before them, just a portion of which was visible through the trees. It, was evident that the hill had been cleared by man, for many stumps remained. Within the range of his vision was but a single house, if such it might be called.

It was constructed of logs, a foot or two in diameter. Three or four of these logs, placed horizontally and lying one

upon the other, formed the wall that was presented to Jason's view. The other side wall paralleled it at a distance of five or six feet, and across the top of the upper logs were laid sections of smaller trees, about six inches in diameter, and placed not more than a foot apart. These supported the roof, which consisted of several logs, a little longer than the logs constituting the walls. The roof logs were laid close together, the interstices being filled with mud. The front of the building was formed by shorter logs set upright in the ground, a single small aperture being left to form a doorway. But the most noticeable feature of Phelian architecture consisted of long pointed stakes, which protruded

diagonally from the ground at an angle of about forty-five degrees, pointing outward from the base of the walls entirely around the building at intervals of about eighteen inches. The stakes themselves were six or eight inches in diameter and about ten feet long, being sharpened at the upper end, and forming a barrier against which few creatures, however brainless they might be, would venture to hurl themselves.

Drawing closer the two men had a better view of the village, which contained upon that side of the hill they were approaching and upon the top four buildings similar to that which they had first discovered. Close about the base of the hill grew the dense forest, but the hill

itself had been entirely denuded of vegetation so that nothing, either large or small, could approach the habitation of the Phelians without being discovered.

No one was in sight about the village, but that did not deceive Thoar, who guessed that anything which transpired upon the hillside would be witnessed by many eyes peering through the openings between the wall logs from the dim interiors of the long buildings, beneath whose low ceilings Phelians must spend their lives either squatting or lying down, since there was not sufficient headroom to permit an adult to stand erect.

"Well," said Jason, "here we are. Now, what are we going to do?"

Thoar looked longingly at Jason's two Colts. "You have refused to use those for fear of wasting the deaths which they spit from their blue mouths," he said, "but with one of those we might soon find Jana if she was here or quickly avenge her if she is not."

"Come on then," said Jason. "I would sacrifice more than my ammunition for The Red Flower of Zoram." As he spoke he descended from the tree and started toward the neatest Phelian dwelling. Close behind him was Thoar and neither saw the eyes that watched them from among the trees that grew thickly upon the river side of the hill—cruel eyes that gleamed from whiskered faces.

13. THE HORIBS

Avan, chief of the Clovi, had placed warriors before the entrance to the cavern and as Tarzan approached it to enter they halted him.

"Where are you going?" demanded one.

"Into the cavern," replied Tarzan.

"Why?" asked the warrior.

"I wish to sleep," replied the ape-man. "I have entered often before and no one has ever stopped me."

"Avan has issued orders that no strangers are to enter or leave the cavern until after the council of the warriors," exclaimed the guard.

At this juncture Avan approached.

"Let him enter," he said. "I sent him hither, but do not let him come out again." Without a word of comment or question the Lord of the Jungle passed into the interior of the gloomy cavern of Clovi. It was several moments before his eyes became accustomed to the subdued light within and permitted him to take account of his surroundings.

That portion of the cavern which was visible and with which he was familiar was of considerable extent. He could see the walls on either side, and, very vaguely, a portion of the rear wall, but adjoining that was utter darkness, suggesting that the cavern extended further into the mountainside. Against the walls upon pallets of dry grasses

covered with hide lay many warriors and a few women and children, almost all of whom were wrapped in slumber. In the greater light near the entrance a group squatted engaged in whispered conversation as, silently, he moved about the cavern searching for the girl from Zoram. It was she who recognized him first, attracting his attention by a low whistle.

"You have a plan of escape?" she asked as Tarzan seated himself upon a skin beside her.

"No," he said, "all that we may do is to await developments and take advantage of any opportunity that may present itself."

"I should think that it would be easy

for you to escape," said the girl; "they do not treat you as a prisoner; you go about among them freely and they have permitted you to retain your weapons."

"I am a prisoner now," he replied. "Avan just instructed the warriors at the entrance not to permit me to leave here until after the council of warriors had decided my fate."

"Your future does not look very bright then," said Jana, "and as for me I already know my fate, but they shall not have me, Carb nor any other!"

They talked together in low tones with many periods of long silence, but when Jana turned the conversation upon the world from which Jason had come, the silences were few and far between.

She would not let Tarzan rest, but plied him with questions, the answers to many of which were far beyond her powers to understand. Steam and electricity and all the countless activities of civilized existence which are dependent upon them were utterly beyond her powers of comprehension, as were the heavenly bodies or musical instruments or books, and yet despite what appeared to be the darkest depth of ignorance, to the very bottom of which she had plumbed, she was intelligent and when she spoke of those things pertaining to her own world with which she was familiar, she was both interesting and entertaining.

Presently a warrior near them opened his eyes, sat up and stretched. He looked

about him and then he arose to his feet. He walked around the apartment awakening the other warriors.

"Awaken," he said to each, "and attend the council of the warriors."

When he approached Tarzan and Jana he recognized the former and stopped to glare down at him.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

Tarzan arose and faced the Clovian warrior, but he did not reply to the other's question.

"Answer me," growled Carb. "Why are you here?"

"You are not the chief," said Tarzan. "Go and ask your question of women and

children."

Carb sputtered angrily. "Go" said Tarzan, pointing toward the exit. For an instant the Clovian hesitated, then he continued on around the apartment, awakening the remaining warriors.

"Now he will see that you are killed," said the girl.

"He had determined on that before," replied Tarzan. "We are no worse off than we were."

Now they lapsed into silence, each waiting for the doom that was to be pronounced upon them. They knew that outside upon the ledge the warriors were sitting in a great circle and that there would be much talking and boasting and argument before any decision was

reached, most of it unnecessary, for that has been the way with men who make laws from time immemorial, a great advantage, however, lying with our modem lawmakers in that they know more words than the first ape-men.

As Tarzan and Jana waited a youth entered the cavern. He bore a torch in the light of which he searched about the interior. Presently he discovered Tarzan and came swiftly toward him. It was Ovan.

"The council has reached it's decision," he said. "They will kill you and the girl goes to Carb."

Tarzan of the Apes rose to his feet. "Come," he said to Jana, "now is as good a time as any. If we can cross the

ledge and reach the trail only a swift warrior can overtake us. And if you are my friend," he continued, turning to Ovan, "and you have said that you are, you will remain silent and give us our chance."

"I am your friend," replied the youth; "that is why I am here, but you would never live to cross the ledge to the trail, there are too many warriors and they are all prepared. They know that you are armed and they expect that you will try to escape."

"There is no other way," said Tarzan.

"There is another way," replied the boy, "and I have come to show it to you."

"Where?" asked Jana.

"Follow me," replied Ovan, and he started back into the remote recesses of the cavern, which were fitfully illumined by his flickering torch, while behind him followed Jana and the ape-man.

The walls of the cavern narrowed, the floor rose steeply ahead of them, so that in places it was only with considerable difficulty that they ascended in the semi-darkness. At last Ovan halted and held his torch high above his head revealing a small, natural chamber, at the far end of which there was a dark fissure.

"In that dark hole," he said, "lies a trail that leads to the summit of the mountains. Only the chief and the chiefs first son ever know of this trail. If my father learns that I have shown it to you,

he will have to kill me, but he shall never know for when next they find me I shall be asleep upon a skin in the cavern far below. The trail is steep and rough, but it is the only way. Go now. This is the return I make you for having saved my life." With that he dashed the torch to the floor, leaving them in utter darkness. He did not speak again, but Tarzan heard the soft falls of his sandaled feet groping their way back down toward the cavern of the Clovi.

The ape-man. reached out through the darkness and found Jana's hand. Carefully he led her through the stygian darkness toward the mouth of the fissure. Feeling his way step by step, groping forward with his free hand, the ape-man

finally discovered the entrance to the trail.

Clambering upward over broken masses of jagged granite through utter darkness, it seemed to the two fugitives that they made no progress whatever. If time could be measured by muscular effort and physical discomfort, the two might have guessed that they passed an eternity in this black fissure, but at length the darkness lessened and they knew that they were approaching the opening in the summit of the mountains; nor was it long thereafter before they emerged into the brilliant light of the noonday sun.

"And now," said Tarzan, "in which direction lies Zoram?"

The girl pointed. "But we cannot

reach it by going back that way," she said, "for every trail will be guarded by Carb and his fellows. Do not think that they will let us escape so easily. Perhaps in searching for us they may even find the fissure and follow us here."

"This is your world," said Tarzan. "You are more familiar with it than I. What, then, do you suggest?"

"We should descend the mountains, going directly away from Clovi," replied Jana, "for it is in the mountains that they will look for us. When we have reached the lowland we can turn back along the foot of the range until we are below Zoram, but not until then should we come back to the mountains."

The descent of the mountains was slow because neither of them was familiar with this part of the range. Oftentimes, their way barred by yawning chasms, they were compelled to retrace their steps to find another way around. They ate many times and slept thrice and thus only could Tarzan guess that they had consumed considerable time in the descent, but what was time to them?

During the descent Tarzan had caught glimpses of a vast plain, stretching away as far as the eye could reach. The last stage of their descent was down a long, winding canyon, and when, at last, they came to its mouth they found themselves upon the edge of the plain that Tarzan had seen. It was almost treeless and

from where he stood it looked as level as a lake.

"This is the Gyor Cors," said Jana, "and may we not have the bad fortune to meet a Gyor."

"And what is a Gyor?" asked Tarzan.

"Oh, it is a terrible creature," replied Jana. "I have never seen one, but some of the warriors of Zoram have been to the Gyor Cors and they have seen them. They are twice the size of a tandor and their length is more than that of four tall men tall men, lying upon the ground. They have a curved beak and three great horns, two above their eyes and one above their nose. Standing upright at the backs of their heads is a great collar of bony substance covered with thick,

horny hide, which protects them from the horns of their fellows and spears of men. They do not eat flesh, but they are irritable and snort tempered, charging every creature that they see and thus keeping the Gyor Cors for their own use."

"Theirs is a vast domain", said Tarzan, letting his eyes sweep the illimitable expanse of pasture land that rolled on and on, curving slowly upward into the distant haze, "and your description of them suggests that they have few enemies who would care to dispute their dominion."

"Only the Horibs," replied Jana. "They hunt them for their flesh and hide."

"What are Horibs?" asked Tarzan.

The girl shuddered. "The snake people," she whispered in an awed tone.

"Snake people." repeated Tarzan, "and what are they?"

"Let us not speak of them. They are horrible. They are worse than the Gyors. Their blood is cold and men say that they have no hearts, for they do not possess any of the characteristics that men admire, knowing not friendship or sympathy or love."

Along the bottom of the canyon through which they had descend a mountain torrent had cut a deep gorge, the sides of which were so precipitous that they found it expedient to follow the stream down into the plain in order to discover an easier crossing, since the

stream lay between them and Zoram.

They had proceeded for about a mile below the mouth of the canyon; around them were low rolling hills which gradually merged with the plain below where and there were scattered clumps of trees; to their knees grew the gently waving grasses that rendered the Gyor Cars a paradise for the huge herbivorous dinosaurs. The noonday sun shone down upon a scene of peace and quiet, yet Tarzan of the Apes was restless. The apparent absence of animal life seemed almost uncanny to one familiar with the usual teeming activity of Pellucidar; yet the ape-man knew that there were creatures about and it was the strange and unfamiliar scent spoors carried to

his nostrils that aroused within him a foreboding of ill omen. Familial odors had no such effect upon him, but here were scents that he could not place, strangely disagreeable in the nostrils of man. They suggested the scent spoor of Histah the snake, but they were not his.

For Jana's sake Tarzan wished that they might quickly find a crossing and ascend again to the higher levels on their journey to Zoram, for there the creatures would be well known to them, and the dangers which they portended familiar dangers with which they were prepared to cope, but the vertical banks of the raging torrent as yet offered no means of descent and now they saw that the appearance of flatness which distance

had imparted to the great Gyor Cors was deceptive, since it was cut by ravines and broken by depressions, some of which were of considerable extent and depth. Presently a lateral ravine, opening into the now comparatively shallow gorge of the river, necessitated a detour which took them directly away from Zoram. They had proceeded for about a mile in this direction when they discovered a crossing and as they emerged upon the opposite side the girl touched Tarzan's arm and pointed. The thing that she saw he had seen simultaneously.

"A Gyor," whispered the girl. "Let us lie down and hide in this tall grass."

"He has not seen us yet," said Tarzan,

"and he may not come in this direction."

No description of the beast looming tremendously before them could convey an adequate impression of its titanic proportions or its frightful mien. At the first glance Tarzan was impressed by its remarkable likeness to the Gryfs of Pal-ul-don. It had the two large horns above the eyes, a medial horn on the nose, a horny beak and a great, horny hood or transverse crest over the neck, and its coloration was similar but more subdued, the predominant note being a slatey gray with yellowish belly and face. The blue bands around the eyes were less well marked and the red of the hood and the bony protuberances along the spine were less brilliant than in the

Gryf. That it was herbivorous, a fact that he had learned from Jana, convinced him that he was looking upon an almost unaltered type of the gigantic triceratops that had, with its fellow dinosaurs, ruled the ancient Jurassic world.

Jana had thrown herself prone among the grasses and was urging Tarzan to do likewise. Crouching low, his eyes just above the grasses, Tarzan watched the huge dinosaur.

"I think he has caught our scent," he said. "He is standing with his head up, looking about him; now he is trotting around in a circle. He is very light on his feet for a beast of such enormous size. There, he has caught a scent, but it is not ours; the wind is not in the right

direction. There is something approaching from our left, but it is still at a considerable distance. I can just hear it, a faint suggestion of something moving. The Gyor is looking in that direction now. Whatever is coming is coming swiftly. I can tell by the rapidly increasing volume of sound, and there are more than one—there are many. He is moving forward now to investigate, but he will pass at a considerable distance to our left." Tarzan watched the Gyor and listened to the sound coming from the, as yet, invisible creatures that were approaching. "Whatever is approaching is coming along the bottom of the ravine we just crossed," he whispered. "They will pass directly

behind us."

Jana remained hiding low in the grasses. She did not wish to tempt Fate by revealing even the top of her head to attract the attention of the Gyor. "Perhaps we had better try to crawl away while his attention is attracted elsewhere," she suggested.

"They are coming out of the ravine," whispered Tarzan. "They are coming up over the edge—a number of men—but in the name of God what is it that they are riding?"

Jana raised her eyes above the level of the grasses and looked in the direction that Tarzan was gazing. She shuddered. "They are not men," she said; "they are the Horibs and the things upon the backs

of which they ride are Gorobors. If they see us we are lost. Nothing in the world can escape the Gorobors, for there is nothing in all Pellucidar so swift as they. Lie still. Our only chance is that they may not discover us,"

At sight of the Horibs the Gyor emitted a terrific bellow that shook the ground and, lowering his head, he charged straight for them. Fully fifty of the Horibs on their horrid mounts had emerged from the ravine. Tarzan could see that the riders were armed with long lances—pitiful and inadequate weapons, he thought, with which to face an enraged triceratops. But it soon became apparent that the Horibs did not intend to meet that charge head-on. Wheeling to

their right they formed in single file behind their leader and then for the first time Tarzan had an exhibition of the phenomenal speed of the huge lizards upon which they were mounted, which is comparable only to the lightning-like rapidity of a tiny desert lizard known as a swift.

Following tactics similar to those of the plains Indians of western America, the Horibs were circling their prey. The bellowing Gyor, aroused to a frenzy of rage, charged first in one direction and then another, but the Gorobors darted from his path so swiftly that he never could overtake them. Panting and blowing, he presently came to bay and then the Horibs drew their circle closer,

whirling dizzily about him, while Tarzan watched the amazing scene, wondering by what means they might ever hope to dispatch the ten tons of incarnate fury that wheeled first this way and then that at the center of their circle.

Presently a Horib darted in close to the Gyor at such speed that the mount and the rider were little more than a blur. The Gyor wheeled to meet him, head down, the three terrible horns set to impale him, and then two other Horibs darted in from the rear upon either side.

As swiftly as they had darted in all three wheeled and were out again, part of the racing circle, but in the sides of the Gyor they had left two lances deeply imbedded. The fury of the wounded

triceratops transcended any of his previous demonstrations. His bellowing became a hoarse, coughing scream as once again he lowered his head and charged.

This time he did not turn and charge in another direction as he had in the past, but kept on in a straight line, possibly in the hope of breaking through the encircling Horibs, and to his dismay the ape- man saw that he and Jana were directly in the path of the charging beast. If the Horibs did not turn him, they were lost.

A dozen of the reptile-men darted in upon the rear of the Gyor. A dozen more lances sank deeply into its body, proving sufficient to turn him in an effort to

avenge himself upon those who had inflicted these new hurts.

This charge had carried the Gyor within fifty-feet of Tarzan and Jana. It had given the ape-man an uncomfortable moment, but its results were almost equally disastrous for it brought the circling Horibs close to their position.

The Gyor stood now with lowered head, breathing heavily and bleeding from more than a dozen wounds. A Horib now rode slowly toward him, approaching him directly from in front. The attention of the triceratops was centered wholly upon this single adversary as two more moved toward him diagonally from the rear, one on either side, but in such a manner that they

were concealed from his view by the great transverse crest encircling his neck behind the horns and eyes. The three approached thus to within about fifty feet of the brute, and then those in the rear darted forward simultaneously at terrific speed, leaning well forward upon their mounts, their lances lowered. At the same instant each struck heavily upon either side of the Gyor, driving their spears far in. So close did they come to their prey that their mounts struck the shoulders of the Gyor as they turned and darted out again.

For an instant the great creature stood reeling in its tracks and then it slumped forward heavily and rolled over upon its side—the final lances had pierced its

heart.

Tarzan was glad that it was over as he had momentarily feared discovery by the circling Horibs and he was congratulating himself upon their good fortune when the entire band of snake men wheeled their mounts and raced swiftly in the direction of their hiding place. Once more they formed their circle, but this time Tarzan and Jana were at its center. Evidently the Horibs had seen them, but had temporarily ignored them until after they had dispatched the Gyor.

"We shall have to fight," said Tarzan, and as concealment was no longer possible he arose to his feet.

"Yes," said Jana, arising to stand

beside him. "We shall have to fight, but the end will be the same. There are fifty of them and we are but two."

Tarzan fitted an arrow to his bow. The Horibs were circling slowly about them inspecting their new prey. Finally they came closer and halted their mounts, facing the two.

Now for the first time Tarzan was able to obtain a good view of the snake-men and their equally hideous mounts. The conformation of the Horibs was almost identical to man insofar as the torso and extremities were concerned. Their three-toed feet and five-toed hands were those of reptiles. The head and face resembled a snake, but pointed ears and two short horns gave a grotesque

appearance that was at the same time hideous. The arms were better proportioned than the legs, which were quite shapeless. The entire body was covered with scales, although those upon the hands, feet and face were so minute as to give the impression of bare skin, a resemblance which was further emphasized by the fact that these portions of the body were a much lighter color, approximating the shiny dead whiteness of a snake's belly. They wore a single apron-like garment fashioned from a piece of very heavy hide, apparently that of some gigantic reptile. This garment was really a piece of armor, its sole purpose being, as Tarzan later learned, to cover the soft, white

bellies of the Horibs. Upon the breast of each garment was a strange device—an eight- pronged cross with a circle in the center. Around his waist each Horib wore a leather belt, which supported a scabbard in which was inserted a bone knife. About each wrist and above each elbow was a band or bracelet. These completed their apparel and ornaments. In addition to his knife each Horib carried a long lance shod with bone. They sat on their grotesque mounts with their toes locked behind the elbows of the Gorobors, anomodont reptiles of the Triassic, known to paleontologists as Parcisauri. Many of these creatures measured ten feet in length, though they stood low upon squat and powerful legs.

As Tarzan gazed in fascination upon the Horibs, whose "blood ran cold and who had no hearts," he realized that he might be gazing upon one of the vagaries of evolution, or possibly upon a replica of some form that had once existed upon the outer crust and that had blazed the trail that some, to us, unknown creature must have blazed from the age of reptiles to the age of man. Nor did it seem to him, after reflection, any more remarkable that a man-like reptile might evolve from reptiles than that birds should have done so or, as scientific discoveries are now demonstrating, mammals must have.

These thoughts passed quickly, almost instantaneously, through his mind as the

Horibs sat there with their beady, lidless eyes fastened upon them, but if Tarzan had been astounded by the appearance of these creatures the emotion thus aroused was nothing compared with the shock he received when one of them spoke, addressing him in the common language of the gilaks of Pellucidar.

"You cannot escape," he said. "Lay down your weapons."

14. THROUGH THE DARK FOREST

Jason Gridley ran swiftly up the hill toward the Phelian village in which he hoped to find The Red Flower of Zoram and at his side was Thoar, ready with spear and knife to rescue or avenge his sister, while behind them, concealed by the underbrush that grew beneath the trees along the river's bank, a company of swarthy, bearded men watched the two.

To Thoar's surprise no defending warriors rushed from the building they were approaching, nor did any sound come from the interior. "Be careful," he cautioned Jason, "we may be running into a trap," and the American, profiting by the advice of his companion,

advanced more cautiously. To the very entrance of the building they came and as yet no opposition to their advance had manifested itself.

Jason stopped and looked through the low doorway, then, stooping, he entered with Thoar at his heels.

"There is no one here," said Jason; "the building is deserted."

"Better luck in the next one then," said Thoar; but there was no one in the next building, nor in the next, nor in any of the buildings of the Phelian village.

"They have all gone," said Jason.

"Yes," replied Thoar, "but they will return. Let us go down among the trees at the riverside and wait for them there in hiding."

Unconscious of danger, the two walked down the hillside and entered the underbrush that grew luxuriantly beneath the trees. They followed a narrow trail, worn by Phelian sandals.

Scarcely had the foliage closed about them when a dozen men sprang upon them and bore them to the ground. In an instant they were disarmed and their wrists bound behind their backs, then they were jerked roughly to their feet and Jason Gridley's eyes went wide as they got the first glimpse of his captors.

"Well, for Pete's sake!" he exclaimed. "I have learned to look with comparative composure upon woolly rhinoceroses, mammoths, trachodons, pterodactyls and dinosaurs, but I never expected to see

Captain Kidd, Lafitte and Sir Henry Morgan in the heart of Pellucidar."

To his surprise he reverted to his native tongue, which, of course, none of the others understood.

"What language is that?" demanded one of their captors. "Who are you and from what country do you come?"

"That is good old American, from the U. S. A.," replied Jason; "but who the devil are you and why have you captured us?" and then turning to Thoar "these are not the Phelians, are they?"

"No," replied Thoar, "These are strange men, such as I have never before seen."

"We know who you are," said one of the bearded men. "We know the country

from which you come. Do not try to deceive us."

"Very well, then, if you know, turn me loose, for you must know that we haven't a war on with anyone."

"Your country is always at war with Korsar," replied the speaker. "You are a Sarian. I know it by the weapons that you carry. The moment I saw them, I knew that you were from distant Sari. The Cid will be glad to have you and so will Bulf. Perhaps," he added, turning to one of his fellows, "this is Tanar, himself. Did you see him when he was a prisoner in Korsar?"

"No, I was away upon a cruise," replied the other. "I did not see him, but if this is indeed he we shall be well

rewarded."

"We might as well return to the ship now," said the first speaker. "There is no use waiting any longer for these flat-footed natives with but one chance in a thousand of finding a good-looking woman among them."

"They told us further down the river that these people sometimes captured women from Zoram. Perhaps it would be well to wait."

"No," said the other, "I should like well enough to see one of these women from Zoram that I have heard of all my life, but the natives' will not return as long as we are in the vicinity. We have been gone from the ship too long now and if I know the captain, he will be

wanting to slit a few throats by the time we get back."

Moored to a tree along the shore and guarded by five other Korsars was a ship's longboat, but of a style that was reminiscent of Jason's boyhood reading as were the bearded men with their bizarre costumes, their great pistols and cutlasses and their ancient arquebuses.

The prisoners were bundled into the boat, the Korsars entered and the craft was pushed off into the stream, which here was narrow and swift.

As the current bore them rapidly along Jason had an opportunity to examine his captors. They were as villainous a looking crew as he had ever imagined outside of fiction and were

more typically piratical than the fiercest pirates of his imagination. What with earrings and, in some instances, nose rings of gold, with the gay handkerchiefs bound about their heads and body sashes around their waists, they would have presented a gorgeous and colorful picture at a distance sufficiently great to transform their dirt and patches into a pleasing texture.

Although in the story of Tanar of Pellucidar that Jason had received by radio from Perry, he had become familiar with the appearance and nature of the Korsars, yet he now realized that heretofore he had accepted them more as he had accepted the pirates of history and of his boyhood reading—as fictional

or, at best, legendary—and not men of flesh and bone such as he saw before him, their mouths filled with oaths and coarse jokes, the grime and filth of reality marking them as real human beings.

In these savage Korsars, their boat, their apparel and their ancient firearms, Jason saw conclusive proof of their descent from men of the outer crust and realized how they must have carried to the mind of David Innes an overwhelming conviction of the existence of a polar opening leading from Pellucidar to the outer world.

While Thoar was disheartened by the fate that had thrown them into the hands of these strange people, Jason was not at

all sure but that it might prove a stroke of fortune for himself, as from the conversation and comments that he had heard since their capture it seemed reasonable to assume that they were to be taken to Korsar, the city in which David Innes was confined and which was, therefore, the first goal of their expedition to effect the rescue of the Emperor of Pellucidar.

That he would arrive there alone and a prisoner were not in themselves causes for rejoicing; yet, on the whole, he would be no worse off than to remain wandering aimlessly through a country filled with unknown dangers without the faintest shadow of a hope of ever being able to locate his fellows. Now, at least,

he was almost certain of being transported to a place that they also were attempting to reach and thus the chances of a reunion were so much the greater.

The stream down which they floated wound through a swampy forest, crossing numerous lagoons that sometimes were of a size that raised them to the dignity of lakes. Everywhere the waters and the banks teemed with reptilian life, suggesting to Jason Gridley that he was reviewing a scene such as might have been enacted in a Mesozoic paradise countless ages before upon the outer crust. So numerous and oftentimes so colossal and belligerent were the savage reptiles that

the descent of the river became a running fight, during which the Korsars were constantly upon the alert and frequently were compelled to discharge their arquebuses in defense of their lives. More often than not the noise of the weapons frightened off the attacking reptiles, but occasionally one would persist in its attack until it had been killed; nor was the possibility ever remote that in one of these encounters some fierce and brainless saurian might demolish their craft and with its fellows devour the crew.

Jason and Thoar had been placed in the middle of the boat, where they squatted upon the bottom, their wrists still secured behind their backs. Close to

Jason was a Korsar whose fellows addressed him as Lajo. There was something about this fellow that attracted Jason's particular attention. Perhaps it was his more open countenance or a less savage and profane demeanor. He had not joined the others in the coarse jokes that were directed against their captives; in fact, he paid little attention to anything other than the business of defending the boat against the attacking monsters.

There seemed to be no one in command of the party, all matters being discussed among them and in this way a decision arrived at; yet Jason had noticed that the others listened attentively when Lajo spoke, which was seldom, though always intelligently and

to the point. Guided by the result of these observations he selected Lajo as the most logical Korsar through whom to make a request. At the first opportunity, therefore, he attracted the man's attention.

"What do you want?" asked Lajo.

"Who is in command here?" asked Jason.

"No one," replied the Korsar. "Our officer was killed on the way up. Why do you ask?"

"I want the bonds removed from our wrists," replied Jason. "We cannot escape. We are unarmed and outnumbered and, therefore, cannot harm you; while in the event that the boat is destroyed or capsized by any of these

reptiles we shall be helpless with our wrists tied behind our backs."

Lajo drew his knife.

"What are you going to do?" asked one of the other Korsars who had been listening to the conversation.

"I am going to cut their bonds," replied Lajo. "There is nothing to be gained by keeping them bound."

"Who are you to say that their bonds shall be cut?" demanded the other belligerently.

"Who are you to say that they shall not?" returned Lajo quietly, moving toward the prisoners.

"I'll show you who I am," shouted the other, whipping out his knife and

advancing toward Lajo.

There was no hesitation. Like a panther Lajo swung upon his adversary, striking up the other's knife-hand with his left forearm and at the same time plunging his villainous looking blade to the hilt in the other's breast. Voicing a single blood-curdling scream the man sank lifeless to the bottom of the boat. Lajo wrenched his knife from the corpse; wiped it upon his adversary's shirt and quietly cut the bonds that confined the wrists of Thoar and Jason. The other Korsars looked on, apparently unmoved by the killing of their fellow, except for a coarse joke or two at the expense of the dead man and a grunt of approbation for Lajo's act.

The killer removed the weapons from the body of the dead man and cast them aft out of reach of the prisoners, then he motioned to the corpse. "Throw it, overboard," he commanded, addressing Jason and Thoar.

"Wait," cried another member of the crew. "I want his boots."

"His sash is mine," cried another, and presently half a dozen of them were quarreling over the belongings of the corpse like a pack of dogs over a bone. Lajo took no part in this altercation and presently the few wretched belongings that had served to cover the nakedness of the dead man were torn from his corpse and divided among them by the simple expedient of permitting the stronger to

take what they could; then Jason and Thoar eased the naked body over the side, where it was immediately seized upon by voracious denizens of the river.

Interminable, to an unknown destination, seemed the journey to Jason. They ate and slept many times and still the river wound through the endless swamp. The luxuriant vegetation and flowering blooms which lined the banks long since had ceased to interest, their persistent monotony making them almost hateful to the eyes.

Jason could not but wonder at the superhuman efforts that must have been necessary to row this large, heavy boat upstream in the face of all the terrific assaults which must have been launched

upon it by the reptilian hordes that contested every mile of the downward journey.

But presently the landscape changed, the river widened and the low swamp gave way to rolling hills. The forests, which still joined the banks, were freer from underbrush, suggesting that they might be the feeding grounds of droves of herbivorous animals, a theory that was soon substantiated by sight of grazing herds, among which Jason recognized red deer, bison, bos, and several other species of herbivorous animals. The forest upon the right bank was open and sunny and with its grazing herds presented a cheerful aspect of warmth and life, but the forest upon the

left bank was dark and gloomy. The foliage of the trees, which grew to tremendous proportions, was so dense as practically to shut out the sunlight, the space between the boles giving the impression of long, dark aisles, gloomy and forbidding.

There were fewer reptiles in the stream here, but the Korsars appeared unusually nervous and apprehensive of danger after they entered this stretch of the river. Previously they had been drifting with the current, using but a single oar, scull fashion, from the stern to keep the nose of the boat pointed downstream, but now they manned the oars, pressing Jason and Thoar into service to row with the others. Loaded

arquebuses lay beside the oarsmen, while in the bow and stern armed men were constantly upon watch. They paid little attention to the right bank of the river, but toward the dark and gloomy left bank they directed their nervous, watchful gaze. Jason wondered what it was that they feared, but he had no opportunity to inquire and there was no respite from the rowing, at least not for him or Thoar, though the Korsars alternated between watching and rowing.

Between oars and current they were making excellent progress, though whether they were close to the end of the danger zone or not, Jason had no means of knowing any more than he could guess

the nature of the menace which must certainly threaten them if aught could be judged by the attitude of the Korsars.

The two prisoners were upon the verge of exhaustion when Lajo noticed their condition and relieved them from the oars. How long they had been rowing, Jason could not determine, although he knew that while no one had either eaten or slept, since they had entered this stretch of the river, the time must have been considerable. The distance they had come he estimated roughly at something over a hundred miles, and he and Thoar had been continuously at the oars during the entire period, without food or sleep, but they had barely thrown themselves to the

bottom of the boat when a cry, vibrant with excitement, arose from the bow. "There they are!" shouted the man, and instantly all was excitement aboard the boat.

"Keep to the oars!" shouted Lajo. "Our best chance is to run through them."

Although almost too spent with fatigue to find interest even in impending death, Jason dragged himself to a sitting position that raised his eyes above the level of the gunwales of the boat. At first he could not even vaguely classify the horde of creatures swimming out upon the bosom of the placid river with the evident intention of intercepting them, but presently he saw that they were man-like creatures riding upon the backs of

hideous reptiles. They bore long lances and their scaly mounts sped through the waters at incredible speed. As the boat approached them he saw that the creatures were not men, though they had the forms of men, but were grotesque and horrid reptiles with the heads of lizards to whose naturally frightful mien, pointed ears and short horns added a certain horrid grotesquery.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "What are they?" Thoar, who had also dragged himself to a sitting posture, shuddered. "They are the Horibs," he said. "It is better to die than to fall into their clutches." Carried downward by the current and urged on by the long sweeps and its own terrific momentum, the

heavy boat shot straight toward the hideous horde. The distance separating them was rapidly closing; the boat was almost upon the leading Horib when an arquebus in the bow spoke. Its loud report broke the menacing silence that had overhung the river like a pall. Directly in front of the boat's prow the horde of Horibs separated and a moment later they were racing along on either side of the craft. Arquebuses were belching smoke and fire, scattering the bits of iron and pebbles with which they were loaded among the hissing enemy, but for every Horib that fell there were two to take its place.

Now they withdrew to a little distance, but with apparently no effort

whatever their reptilian mounts kept pace with the boat and then, one after another on either side, a rider would dart in and cast his lance; nor apparently ever did one miss its mark. So deadly was their aim that the Korsars were compelled to abandon their oars and drop down into the bottom of the boat, raising themselves above the gunwales only long enough to fire their arquebuses, when they would again drop down into concealment to reload. But even these tactics could not preserve them for long, since the Horibs, darting in still closer to the side of the boat, could reach over the edge and lance the inmates. Straight to the muzzles of the arquebuses they came, apparently

entirely devoid of any conception of fear; great holes were blown entirely through the bodies of some, others were decapitated, while more than a score lost a hand or an arm, yet still they came.

Presently one succeeded in casting the noose of a long leather rope over a cleat upon the gunwale and instantly several of the Horibs seized it and headed their mounts toward the river's bank.

Practically exhausted and without weapons to defend themselves, Jason and Thoar had remained lying upon the bottom of the boat almost past caring what fate befell them. Half covered by the corpses of the Korsars that had fallen, they lay in a pool of blood. About them arquebuses still roared amid

screams and curses, and above all rose the shrill, hissing screech that seemed to be the war cry of the Horibs.

The boat was dragged to shore and the rope made fast about the bole of a tree, though three times the Korsars had cut the line and three times the Horibs had been forced to replace it.

There was only a handful of the crew who had not been killed or wounded when the Horibs left their mounts and swarmed over the gunwales to fall upon their prey. Cutlasses, knives and arquebuses did their deadly work, but still the slimy snake-men came, crawling over the bodies of their dead to fall upon the survivors until the latter were practically buried by greater numbers.

When the battle was over there were but three Korsars who had escaped death or serious wounds—Lajo was one of them. The Horibs bound their wrists and took them ashore, after which they started unloading the dead and wounded from the boat, killing the more seriously wounded with their knives. Coming at last upon Jason and Thoar and finding them unwounded, they bound them as they had the living Korsars and placed them with the other prisoners on the shore.

The battle over, the prisoners secured, the Horibs now fell upon the corpses of the dead, nor did they rest until they had devoured them all, while Jason and his fellow prisoners sat

nauseated with horror during the grizzly feast. Even the Korsars, cruel and heartless as they were, shuddered at the sight.

"Why do you suppose they are saving us?" asked Jason.

Lajo shook his head. "I do not know," he said.

"Doubtless to feed us to their women and children," said Thoar. "They say that they keep their human prisoners and fatten them."

"You know what they are? You have seen them before?" Lajo asked Thoar.

"Yes, I know what they are," said Thoar, "but these are the first that I have ever seen. They are the Horibs, the snake people. They dwell between the

Rela Am and the Gyor Cors."

As Jason watched the Horibs at their grizzly feast, he became suddenly conscious of a remarkable change that was taking place in their appearance. When he had first seen them and all during the battle they had been of a ghastly bluish color, the hands, feet and faces being several shades paler than the balance of the body, but as they settled down to their gory repast this hue gradually faded to be replaced by a reddish tinge, which varied in intensity in different individuals, the faces and extremities of a few of whom became almost crimson as the feast progressed.

If the appearance and blood-thirsty ferocity of the creatures appalled him, he

was no less startled when he first heard them converse in the common language of the men of Pellucidar.

The general conformation of the creatures, their weapons, which consisted of long lances and stone knives, the apron-like apparel which they wore and the evident attempt at ornamentation as exemplified by the insignia upon the breasts of their garments and the armlets which they wore, all tended toward establishing a suggestion of humanity that was at once grotesque and horrible, but when to these other attributes was added human speech the likeness to man created an impression that was indescribably repulsive.

So powerful was the fascination that the creatures aroused in the mind of Jason that he could divert neither his thoughts nor his eyes from them. He noticed that while the majority of them were about six feet in height, there were many much smaller, ranging downward to about four feet, while there was one tremendous individual that must have been fully nine feet tall; yet all were proportioned identically and the difference in height did not have the appearance of being at all related to a difference in age, except that the scales upon the largest of them were considerably thicker and coarser. Later, however, he was to learn that differences in size predicated

differences in age, the growth of these creatures being governed by the same law which governs the growth of reptiles, which, unlike mammals, continue to grow throughout the entire duration of their lives.

When they had gorged themselves upon the flesh of the Korsars, the Horibs lay down, but whether to sleep or not Jason never knew since their lidless eyes remained constantly staring. And now a new phenomenon occurred. Gradually the reddish tinge faded from their bodies to be replaced by a dull brownish gray, which harmonized with the ground upon which they lay.

Exhausted by his long tour at the oars and by the horrors that he had witnessed,

Jason gradually drifted off into deep slumber, which was troubled by hideous dreams in which he saw Jana in the clutches of a Horib. The creature was attempting to devour The Red Flower of Zoram, while Jason struggled with the bonds that secured him.

He was awakened by a sharp pain in his shoulder and opening his eyes he saw one of the homosaurians, as he had mentally dubbed them, standing over him, prodding him with the point of his sharp lance. "Make less noise," said the creature, and Jason realized that he must have been raving in his sleep.

The other Horibs were rising from the ground, voicing strange whistling hisses, and presently from the waters of the

river and from the surrounding aisles of the gloomy forest their hideous mounts came trooping in answer to the summons.

"Stand up!" said the Horib who had awakened Jason. "I am going to remove your bonds," he continued. "You cannot escape. If you try to you will be killed. Follow me," he then commanded after he had removed the thongs which secured Jason's wrists.

Jason accompanied the creature into the midst of the herd of periosauri that was milling about, snapping and hissing, along the shore of the river.

Although the Gorobors all looked alike to Jason, it was evident that the Horibs differentiated between

individuals among them for he who was leading Jason threaded his way through the mass of slimy bodies until he reached the side of a particular individual.

"Get up," "he said, motioning Jason to mount the creature. "Sit well forward on its neck."

It was with a sensation of the utmost disgust that Jason vaulted onto the back of the Gorobor. The feel of its cold, clammy, tough hide against his naked legs sent a chilly shudder up his spine. The reptile-man mounted behind him and presently the entire company was on the march, each of the other prisoners being mounted in front of a Horib.

Into the gloomy forest the strange

cavalcade marched, down dark, winding corridors overhung with dense vegetation, much of which was of a dead pale cast through lack of sunlight. A clammy chill, unusual in Pellucidar, pervaded the atmosphere and a feeling of depression weighed heavily upon an the prisoners.

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Jason after they had proceeded in silence for some distance.

"You will be fed upon eggs until you are fit to be eaten by the females and the little ones," replied the Horib. "They tire of fish and Gyor flesh. It is not often that we get as much gilak meat as we have just had."

Jason relapsed into silence,

discovering that, as far as he was concerned, the Horib was conversationally a total loss and for long after the horror of the creature's reply weighed upon his mind. It was not that he feared death; it was the idea of being fattened for slaughter that was peculiarly abhorrent.

As they rode between the never ending trees he tried to speculate as to the origin of these gruesome creatures. It seemed to him that they might constitute a supreme effort upon the part of Nature to reach a higher goal by a less devious route than that which evolution had pursued upon the outer crust from the age of reptiles upwards to the age of man.

During the march Jason caught

occasional glimpses of Thoar and the other prisoners, though he had no opportunity to exchange words with them, and after what seemed an interminable period of time the cavalcade emerged from the forest into the sunlight and Jason saw in the distance the shimmering blue waters of an inland lake. As they approached its shores he discerned throngs of Horibs, some swimming or lolling in the waters of the lake, while others lay or squatted upon the muddy bank. As the company arrived among them they showed only a cold, reptilian interest in the returning warriors, though some of the females and young evinced a suggestive interest in the prisoners.

The adult females differed but slightly from the males. Aside from the fact that they were hornless and went naked, Jason could discover no other distinguishing feature. He saw no signs of a village, nor any indication of arts or crafts other than those necessary to produce their crude weapons and the simple apron-like armor that the warriors wore to protect the soft skin of their bellies.

The prisoners were now dragged from their mounts and herded together by several of the warriors, who conducted them along the edge of the lake toward a slightly higher bank.

On the way they passed a number of females laying eggs, which they

deposited in the soft, warm mud just above the water line, covering them lightly with mud, afterwards pushing a slender stake into the ground at the spot to mark the nest. All along the shore at this point were hundreds of such stakes and further on Jason saw several tiny Horibs, evidently but just hatched, wriggling upward out of the mud. No one paid the slightest attention to them as they stumbled and reeled about trying to accustom themselves to the use of their limbs, upon all four of which they went at first, like tiny, grotesque lizards.

Arrived at the higher bank the warrior in charge of Thoar, who was in the lead, suddenly clapped his hand over the prisoner's mouth, pinching Thoar's nose

tightly between his thumb and first finger, and, without other preliminaries, dove head foremost into the waters of the lake carrying his victim with him.

Jason was horrified as he saw his friend and companion disappear beneath the muddy waters, which, after a moment of violent agitation, settled down again, leaving only an ever widening circular ripple to mark the spot where the two had disappeared. An instant later another Horib dove in with Lajo and in rapid succession the other two Korsars shared a similar fate.

With a superhuman effort Jason sought to tear himself free from the clutches of his captor, but the cold, clammy hands held him tightly. One of

them was suddenly clapped over his mouth and nose and an instant later he felt the warm waters of the lake close about him.

Still struggling to free himself he was conscious that the Horib was carrying him swiftly beneath the surface. Presently he felt slimy mud beneath him, along which his body was being dragged. His lungs cried out in tortured agony for air, his senses reeled and momentarily all went black before him, though no blacker than the stygian darkness of the hole into which he was being dragged, and then the hand was removed from his mouth and nose; mechanically his lungs gasped for air and as consciousness slowly returned

Jason realized that he was not drowned, but that he was lying upon a bed of mud inhaling air and not water.

Total darkness surrounded him; he felt a clammy body scrape against his, and then another and another. There was a sound of splashing, gurgling water and then silence—the silence of the tomb.

15. PRISONERS

Standing upon the edge of the great Gyor plains surrounded by armed creatures; who had but just demonstrated their ability to destroy one of the most powerful and ferocious creatures that evolution has ever succeeded in producing, Tarzan of the Apes was yet loath to lay down his weapons, as he had been instructed and surrender, without resistance, to an unknown fate.

"What do you intend to do with us?" he demanded of the Horib who had ordered him to lay down his weapons.

"We shall take you to our village where you will be well-fed," replied the creature. "You cannot escape us; no one escapes the Horibs."

The ape-man hesitated. The Red Flower of Zoram moved closer to his side. "Let us go with them," she whispered. "We cannot escape them now; there are too many of them. Possibly if we go with them we shall find an opportunity later."

Tarzan nodded and then he turned to the Horib. "We are ready," he said.

Mounted upon the necks of Gorobor, each in front of a Horib warrior, they were carried across a corner, of the Gyor Cors to the same gloomy forest through which Jason and Thoar had been taken, though they entered it from a different direction.

Rising at the east end of the Mountains of the Thipdars, a river flows

in a southeasterly direction entering upon its course the gloomy forest of the Horibs, through which it runs down to the Rela Am, or River of Darkness. It was near the confluence of the two rivers that the Korsars had been attacked by the Horibs and it was along the upper reaches of the same river that Tarzan and Jana were being conducted down stream toward the village of the lizard- men.

The lake of the Horibs lies at a considerable distance from the eastern end of the mountains of the Thipdars, perhaps five hundred miles, and where there is no time and distances are measured by food and sleep it makes little difference whether places are separated by five miles or five hundred.

One man might travel a thousand miles without mishap, while another, in attempting to go one mile, might be killed, in which event the one mile would be much further than the thousand miles, for, in fact, it would have proved an interminable distance to him who had essayed it in this instance.

As Tarzan and Jana rode through the dismal forest, hundreds of miles away Jason Gridley drew himself to a sitting position in such utter darkness that he could almost feel it. "God!" he exclaimed.

"Who spoke?" asked a voice out of the darkness, and Jason recognized the voice as Thoar's.

"It is I, Jason," replied Gridley.

"Where are we?" demanded another voice. It was Lajo.

"It is dark. I wish they had killed us," said a fourth voice.

"Don't worry," said a fifth, "we shall be killed soon enough."

"We are all here," said Jason. "I thought we were all done for when I saw them drag you into the water one by one."

"Where are we?" demanded one of the Korsars. "What sort of hole is this into which they have put us?"

"In the world from which I come," said Jason, "there are huge reptiles, called crocodiles, who build such nests or retreats in the banks of rivers, just above the water line, but the only

entrance leads down below the waters of the river. It is such a hole as that into which we have been dragged."

"Why can't we swim out again?" asked Thoar.

"Perhaps we could," replied Jason, "but they would see us and bring us back again."

"Are we going to lie here in the mud and wait to be slaughtered?" demanded Lajo.

"No," said Jason; "but let us work out a reasonable plan of escape. It will gain us nothing to act rashly."

For some time the men sat in silence, which was finally broken by the American. "Do you think we are alone here?" he asked in a low tone. "I have

listened carefully, but I have heard no sound other than our own breathing."

"Nor I," said Thoar.

"Come closer then," said Jason, and the five men groped through the darkness and arranged themselves in a circle, where they squatted leaning forward till their heads touched. "I have a plan," continued Jason. "When they were bringing us here I noticed that the forest grew close to the lake at this point. If we can make a tunnel into the forest, we may be able to escape."

"Which way is the forest?" asked Lajo.

"That is something that we can only guess at," replied Jason. "We may guess wrong, but we must take the chance. But

I think that it is reasonable to assume that the direction of the forest is directly opposite the entrance through which we were carried into this hole."

"Let us start digging at once," exclaimed one of the Korsars.

"Wait until I locate the entrance," said Thoar.

He crawled away upon his hands and knees, groping through the darkness and the mud. Presently he announced that he had found the opening, and from the direction of his voice the others knew where to start digging.

All were filled with enthusiasm, for success seemed almost within the range of possibility; but now they were confronted with the problem of the

disposal of the dirt which they excavated from their tunnel. Jason instructed Lajo to remain at the point where they intended excavating and then had the others crawl in different directions in an effort to estimate the size of the chamber in which they were confined. Each man was to crawl in a straight line in the direction assigned him and count the number of times that his knees touched the ground before he came to the end of the cavern.

By this means they discovered that the cave was long and narrow and, if they were correct in the directions they had assumed, it ran parallel to the lake shore. For twenty feet it extended in one direction and for over fifty in the other.

It was finally decided that they should distribute the earth equally over the floor of the chamber for a while and then carry it to the further end, piling it against the further wall uniformly so as not to attract unnecessary attention in the event that any of the Horibs visited them.

Digging with their fingers was slow and laborious work, but they kept steadily at it, taking turns about. The man at work would push the dirt behind him and the others would gather it up and distribute it, so that at no time was there a fresh pile of earth upon the ground to attract attention should a Horib come. Horibs did come; they brought food, but the men could hear the splash of their bodies in the water as they dove into the

lake to reach the tunnel leading to the cave and being thus warned they grouped themselves in front of the entrance to their tunnel effectually hiding it from view. The Horibs who came into the chamber at no time gave any suggestion of suspicion that all was not right. While it was apparent that they could see in the dark it was also quite evident that they could not discern things clearly and thus the greatest fear that their plot might be discovered was a least partially removed.

After considerable effort they had succeeded in excavating a tunnel some three feet in diameter and about ten feet long when Jason, who was excavating at the time, unearthed a large shell, which

greatly facilitated the process of excavation. From then on their advance was more rapid, yet it seemed to them all that it was an endless job; nor was there any telling at what moment the Horibs would come to take them for the feast.

It was Jason's wish to get well within the forest before turning their course upward toward the surface, but to be certain of this he knew that they must first encounter roots of trees and pass beyond them, which might necessitate a detour and delay, yet to come up prematurely would be to nullify all that they had accomplished so far and to put a definite end to all hope of escape.

And while the five men dug beneath

the ground in the dark hole that was stretching slowly out beneath the dismal forest of the Horibs a great ship rode majestically high in air above the northern slopes of the Mountains of the Thipdars.

"They never passed this way," said Zuppner. "Nothing short of a mountain goat could cross this range."

"I quite agree with you, sir," said Hines. "We might as well search in some other direction now."

"God!" exclaimed Zuppner, "if I only knew in what direction to search."

Hines shook his head. "One direction is as good as another, sir," he said.

"I suppose so," said Zuppner, and, obeying his light touch upon the helm,

the nose of the great dirigible swung to port. Following an easterly course she paralleled the Mountains of the Thipdars and sailed out over the Gyor Cors. A slight turn of the wheel would have carried her to the south-east, across the dismal forest through whose gloomy corridors Tarzan and Jana were being borne to a horrible fate. But Captain Zuppner did not know and so the O-220 continued on toward the east, while the Lord of the Jungle and The Red Flower of Zoram rode silently toward their doom.

From almost the moment that they had entered the forest Tarzan had known that he might escape. It would have been the work of but an instant to have leaped

from the back of the Gorobor upon which he was riding to one of the lower branches of the forest, some of which barely grazed their heads as they passed beneath, and once in the trees he knew that no Horib nor any Gorobor could catch him, but he could not desert Jana; nor could he acquaint her with his plans for they were never sufficiently close together for him to whisper to her unheard by the Horibs. But even had he been able to lay the whole thing before her, he doubted her ability to reach the safety of the trees before the Horibs recaptured her.

If he could but get near enough to take hold of her, he was confident that he could effect a safe escape for both of

them and so he rode on in silence, hoping against hope that the opportunity he so desired would eventually develop.

They had reached the upper end of the lake and were skirting its western shore and, from remarks dropped by the Horibs in their conversations, which were far from numerous, the ape-man guessed that they were almost at their destination, and still escape seemed as remote as ever.

Chafing with impatience Tarzan was on the point of making a sudden break for liberty, trusting that the unexpectedness of his act would confuse the lizard-men for just the few seconds that would be necessary for him to throw Jana to his shoulder and swing to the

lower terrace that beckoned invitingly from above.

The nerves and muscles of Tarzan of the Apes are trained to absolute obedience to his will; they are never surprised into any revelation of emotion, nor are they often permitted to reveal what is passing in the mind of the ape-man when he is in the presence of strangers or enemies, but now, for once, they were almost shocked into revealing the astonishment that filled him as a vagrant breeze carried to his nostrils a scent spoor that he had never thought to know again.

The Horibs were moving almost directly up wind so that Tarzan knew that the authors of the familiar odors that

he had sensed were somewhere ahead of them. He thought quickly now, but not without weighing carefully the plan that had leaped to his mind the instant that that familiar scent spoor had impinged upon his nostrils. His major consideration was for the safety of the girl, but in order to rescue her he must protect himself. He felt that it would be impossible for them both to escape simultaneously, but there was another way now—a way which seemed to offer excellent possibilities for success. Behind him, upon the Gorobor, and so close that their bodies touched, sat a huge Horib. In one hand he carried a lance, but the other hand was free. Tarzan must move so quickly that the

fellow could not touch him with his free hand before he was out of reach. To do this would require agility of an almost superhuman nature, but there are few creatures who can compare in this respect with the ape-man. Low above them swung the branches of the dismal forest; Tarzan waited, watching for the opportunity he sought. Presently he saw it—a sturdy branch with ample head room above it —a doorway in the ceiling of somber foliage. He leaned forward, his hands resting lightly upon the neck of the Gorobor. They were almost beneath the branch he had selected when he sprang lightly to his feet and almost in the same movement sprang upward into the tree. So quickly

had he accomplished the feat that he was gone before the Horib that had been guarding him realized it. When he did it was too late—the prisoner had gone. With others who had seen the escape, he raised a cry of warning to those ahead, but neither by sight nor sound could they locate the fugitive, for Tarzan traveled through the upper terrace and all the foliage beneath hid him from the eyes of his enemies.

Jana, who had been riding a little in the rear of Tarzan, saw his escape and her heart sank for in the presence of the Horibs The Red Flower of Zoram had come as near to experiencing fear as she ever had in her life. She had derived a certain sense of comfort from the

presence of Tarzan and now that he was gone she felt very much alone. She did not blame him for escaping when he had the opportunity, but she was sure in her own heart that Jason would not thus have deserted her.

Following the scent spoor that was his only guide, Tarzan of the Apes moved rapidly through the trees. At first he climbed high to the upper terraces and here he found a new world—a world of sunlight and luxuriant foliage, peopled by strange birds of gorgeous plumage which darted swiftly hither and thither. There were flying reptiles, too, and great gaudy moths. Snakes coiled upon many a branch and because they were of varieties unknown to him, he did

not know whether they constituted a real menace or not. It was at once a beautiful and a repulsive world, but the feature of it which attracted him most was its silence, for its denizens seemed to be voiceless. The presence of the snakes and the dense foliage rendered it an unsatisfactory world for one who wished to travel swiftly and so the ape-man dropped to a lower level, and here he found the forest more open and the scent spoor clearer in his nostrils.

Not once had he doubted the origin of that scent although it seemed preposterously unbelievable that he should discover it here in this gloomy wood in vast Pellucidar.

He was moving very rapidly for he

wished, if possible, to reach his destination ahead of the Horibs. He hoped that his escape might delay the lizard-men and this was, in fact, the case, for they had halted immediately while a number of them had climbed into the trees searching for Tarzan. There was little in their almost expressionless faces to denote their anger, but the sickly bluish cast which overspread their scales denoted their mounting rage at the ease with which this gilak prisoner had escaped them, and when, finally, thwarted in their search, they resumed their interrupted march, they were in a particularly ugly mood.

Far ahead of them now Tarzan of the Apes dropped to the lower terraces.

Strong in his nostrils was the scent spoor he had been following, telling him in a language more dependable than words that he had but little farther to go to find those he sought, and a moment later he dropped down into one of the gloomy aisles of the forest, dropping as from heaven into the astonished view of ten stalwart warriors.

For an instant they stood looking at him in wide-eyed amazement and then they ran forward and threw themselves upon their knees about him, kissing his hands as they shed tears of happiness. "Oh, Bwana, Bwana," they cried; "it is indeed you! Mulungu has been good to his children; he has given their Big Bwana back to them alive."

"And now I have work for you, my children," said Tarzan; "the snake people are coming and with them is a girl whom they have captured. I thank God that you are armed with rifles and I hope that you have plenty of ammunition."

"We have saved it, Bwana, using our spears and our arrows whenever we could."

"Good," said Tarzan; "we shall need it now. How far are we from the ship?"

"I do not know," said Muviro.

"You do not know?" repeated Tarzan.

"No, Bwana, we are lost. We have been lost for a long while," replied the chief of the Waziri.

"What were you doing away from the ship alone?" demanded Tarzan.

"We were sent out with Gridley and Von Horst to search for you, Bwana."

"Where are they?" asked Tarzan.

"A long time ago, I do not know how long, we became separated from Gridley and never saw him again. At that time it was savage beasts that separated us, but how Von Horst became separated from us we do not know. We had found a cave and had gone into it to sleep; when we awoke Von Horst was gone; we never saw him again."

"They are coming'" warned Tarzan.

"I hear them, Bwana," replied Muviro.

"Have you seen them—the snake people?" asked Tarzan.

"No, Bwana, we have seen no people for a long time; only beasts— terrible beasts."

"You are going to see some terrible men now," Tarzan warned them; "but do not be frightened by their appearance. Your bullets will bring them down."

"When, Bwana, have you seen a Waziri frightened?" asked Muviro proudly.

The ape-man smiled, "One of you let me take his rifle," he said, "and then spread out through the forest. I do not know exactly where they will pass, but the moment that any of you makes contact with them commence shooting and shoot

to kill, remembering, however, that the girl rides in front of one of them. Be careful that you do not harm her."

He had scarcely ceased speaking when the first of the Horibs rode into view. Tarzan and the Waziri made no effort to seek concealment and at sight of them the leading Horib gave voice to a shrill cry of pleasure. Then a rifle spoke and the leading Horib writhed convulsively and toppled sideways to the ground. The others in the lead, depending upon the swiftness of their mounts, darted quickly toward the Waziri and the tall, white giant who led them, but swifter than the Gorobors were the bullets of the outer world. As fast as Tarzan and the Waziri could fire the

Horibs fell. Never before had they known defeat. They blazed blue with rage, which faded to a muddy gray when the bullets found their hearts and they rolled dead upon the ground.

So swiftly did the Gorobors move and so rapidly did Tarzan and the Waziri fire that the engagement was decided within a few minutes of its inception, and now the remaining Horibs, discovering that they could not hope to overcome and capture gilaks armed with these strange weapons that hit them more swiftly than they could hurl their lances, turned and scattered in an effort to pass around the enemy and continue on their way.

As yet Tarzan had not caught a

glimpse of Jana, though he knew that she must be there somewhere in the rear of the remaining Horibs, and then he saw her as she flashed by in the distance, borne swiftly upon the back of a fleet Gorobor. What appeared to be the only chance to save her now was to shoot down the swift beast upon which she was being borne away. Tarzan swung his rifle to his shoulder and at the same instant a riderless Gorobor struck him in the back and sent him sprawling upon the ground. By the time he had regained his feet, Jana and her captor were out of sight, hidden by the boles of intervening trees.

Milling near the Waziri were a number of terrified, riderless Gorobors.

It was from this number that the fellow had broken who had knocked Tarzan down. The beasts seemed to be lost without the guidance of. their masters, but when they saw one of their number start in pursuit of the Horibs who had ridden away, the others followed and in their mad rush these savage beasts constituted as great a menace as the Horibs themselves.

Muviro and his warriors leaped nimbly behind the boles of large trees to escape them, but to the mind of the ape-man they carried a new hope, offering as they did the only means whereby he might overtake the Horib who was bearing away The Red Flower of Zoram, and then, to the horror and astonishment

of the Waziri, Tarzan leaped to the back of one of the great lizards as it scuttled abreast of him. Locking his toes beneath its elbows, as he had seen the Horibs do, he was carried swiftly in the mad rush of the creature to overtake its fellows and its masters. No need to urge it on, if he had known what means to employ to do so, for probably still terrified and excited by the battle it darted with incredible swiftness among the boles of the gray trees, outstripping its fellows and leaving them behind.

Presently, just ahead of him, Tarzan saw the Horib who was bearing Jana away and he saw, too, that he would soon overtake him, but so swiftly was his own mount running that it seemed

quite likely that he would be carried past Jana without being able to accomplish anything toward her rescue, and with this thought came the realization that he must stop the Horib's mount.

There was just an instant in which to decide and act, but in that instant he raised his rifle and fired. Perhaps it was a wonderful bit of marksmanship, or perhaps it was just luck, but the bullet struck the Gorobor in the spine and a moment later its hind legs collapsed and it rolled over on its side, pitching Jana and the Horib heavily to the ground. Simultaneously Tarzan's mount swept by and the ape-man, risking a bad fall, slipped from its back to go tumbling head over heels against the carcass of

the Horib's mount.

Leaping to his feet, he faced the lizard-man and as he did so the ground gave way beneath him and he dropped suddenly into a hole, almost to his armpits. As he was struggling to extricate himself something seized him by the ankles and dragged him downward—cold fingers that clung relentlessly to him dragging him into a dark, subterranean hole.

16. ESCAPE

The O-220 cruised slowly above the Gyor Cars, watchful eyes scanning the ground below, but the only living things they saw were huge dinosaurs. Disturbed by the motors of the dirigible, the great beasts trotted angrily about in circles and occasionally an individual, sighting the ship above him, would gallop after it, bellowing angrily, or again one might charge the elliptical shadow that moved along the ground directly beneath the O-220.

"Sweet tempered little fellows," remarked Lieutenant Hines, who had been watching them from a mess-room port.

"Jes' which am dem bad dreams,

Lieutenant?" asked Robert Jones.

"Triceratops," replied the officer.

"Ah'll try most anything once, suh, but not dem babies," replied Robert.

Unknown to the bewildered navigating officer, the ship was taking a southeasterly course. Far away, on its port side, loomed a range of mountains, hazily visible in the upcurving distance, and now a river cut the plain—a river that came down from the distant mountains—and this they followed, knowing that men lost in a strange country are prone to follow the course of a river, if they are so fortunate as to find one.

They had followed the river for some distance when lieutenant Dorf

telephoned down from the observation cabin. "There is a considerable body of water ahead, sir," he reported to Captain Zuppner. "From its appearance I should say that we might be approaching the shore of a large ocean."

All eyes were now strained ahead and presently a large body of water became visible to all on board. The ship cruised slowly up and down the coast for a short distance, and as it had been some time since they had had fresh water or fresh meat, Zuppner decided to land and make camp, selecting a spot just north of the river they had been following, where it emptied into the sea. And as the great ship settled gently to rest upon a rolling, grassy meadow,

Robert Jones made an entry in his little black diary.

"Arrived here at noon."

While the great ship settled down beside the shore of the silent Pellucidarian sea, Jason Gridley and his companions, hundreds of miles to the west, pushed their tunnel upward toward the surface of the ground. Jason was in front, laboriously pushing the earth backward a few handfuls at a time to those behind him. They were working frantically now because the length of the tunnel already was so great that it was with difficulty that they could return to the cavern in time to forestall discovery when they heard Horibs approaching.

As Jason scraped away at the earth

above him, there broke suddenly upon his ears what sounded like the muffled reverberation of rifle shots. He could not believe that they were such, and yet what else could they be? For so long had he been separated from his fellows that it seemed impossible that any freak of circumstance had brought them to this gloomy corner of Pellucidar, and though hope ran high yet he cast this idea from his mind, substituting for it a more natural conclusion—that the shots had come from the arquebuses of Korsars, who had come up from the ship that Lajo had told him was anchored somewhere, below in the Rela Am. Doubtless the captain had sent an expedition in search of the missing members of his crew, but

even the prospects of falling again into the hands of the fierce Korsars appeared a heavenly one by comparison to the fate with which they were confronted.

Now Jason redoubled his efforts, working frantically to drive his narrow shaft upward toward the surface. The sound of the shots, which had lasted but a few minutes, had ceased, to be followed by the rapidly approaching thunder of many feet, as though heavy animals were racing in his direction. He heard them passing almost directly overhead and they seemed so close that he was positive he must be near the surface of the ground. Another shot sounded almost directly above him; he heard the thud of a heavy body and the

earth about him shook to the impact of its fall. Jason's excitement had arisen to the highest pitch when suddenly the earth gave way above him and something dropped into the shaft upon his head.

His mind long imbued with the fear that their plan for escape would be discovered by the Horibs, Jason reacted instinctively to the urge of self-preservation, the best chance for the accomplishment of which seemed to be to drag the discoverer of their secret out of sight as quickly as possible, and with this end in view he backed quickly into the tunnel, dragging the interloper with him, and to a certain point this was not difficult, but it so happened that Tarzan had clung to his rifle. The rifle chanced

to strike the ground in a horizontal position, as the ape-man was dragged into the tunnel, and the muzzle and butt lodged upon opposite sides of the opening, thus forming a rigid bar across the mouth of the aperture, to which the ape-man clung as Jason dragged frantically upon his ankles, and then slowly the steel thews of the Jungle Lord tensed and as he drew himself upward, he drew Jason Gridley with him. Strain and struggle as he would, the American could not overcome the steady pull of those giant thews. Slowly, irresistibly, he was dragged into the shaft and upward toward the surface of the ground.

By this time, of course, he knew that

the creature to which he clung was no Horib, for his fingers were closed upon the smooth skin of a human being, and not upon the scaly hide of a lizard-man, but yet he felt that he must not let the fellow escape.

The Horib, who had been expecting Tarzan's attack, had seen him disappear mysteriously into the ground; nor did he wait to investigate the miracle, but seizing Jana by the wrist he hurried after his fellows, dragging the struggling girl with him.

The two were just disappearing among the boles of the trees down a gloomy aisle of the somber forest when Tarzan, emerging from the shaft, caught a single fleeting glimpse of them. It was

almost the growl of an enraged beast that escaped his lips as he realized that this last calamity might have definitely precluded the possibility of effecting the girl's rescue. Chafing at the restraint of the clutching fingers clinging desperately to his ankles, the ape- man kicked violently in an effort to dislodge them and with such good effect that he sent Jason tumbling back into his tunnel, while he leaped to the solid ground and freedom to spring into pursuit of the Horib and The Red Flower of Zoram.

Calling back to his companions to hurry after him, Jason clambered swiftly to the surface of the ground just in time to see a half-naked bronzed giant before he disappeared from view behind the

bole of a large tree, but that single glimpse awakened familiar memories and his heart leaped within him at the suggestion it implied. But how could it be? Had not Thoar seen the Lord of the Jungle carried to his doom? Whether the man was Tarzan or not was of less import than the reason for his haste. Was he escaping or pursuing? But in either event something seemed to tell Jason Gridley that he should not lose sight of him; at least he was not a Horib, and if not a Horib, then he must be an enemy of the lizard-men. So rapidly had events transpired that Jason was confused in his own mind as to the proper course to pursue; yet something seemed to urge him not to lose sight of the stranger and

acting upon this impulse, he followed at a brisk run.

Through the dark wood ran Tarzan of the Apes, guided only by the delicate and subtle aroma that was the scent spoor of The Red Flower of Zoram and which would have been perceptible to no other human nostrils than those of the Lord of the Jungle. Strong in his nostrils also, was the sickening scent of the Horibs and fearful lest he come upon them unexpectedly in numbers, he swung lightly into the trees and, with undiminished speed, raced in the direction of his quarry; nor was it long before he saw them beneath him —a single Horib dragging the still struggling Jana.

There was no hesitation, there was no diminution in his speed as he launched himself like a living projectile straight for the ugly back of the Horib. With such force he struck the creature that it was half-stunned as he bore it to the ground. A sinewy arm encircled its neck as Tarzan arose dragging the creature up with him. Turning quickly and bending forward, Tarzan swung the body over his head and hurled it violently to the ground, still retaining his hold about its neck. Again and again he whipped the mighty body over his head and dashed it to the gray earth, while the girl, wide-eyed with astonishment at this exhibition of Herculean strength looked on.

At last, satisfied that the creature was

dead or stunned, Tarzan released it. Quickly he appropriated its stone knife and picked up its fallen lance, then he turned to Jana.

"Come," he said, "there is but one safe place for us," and lifting her to his shoulder he leaped to the low hanging branch of a nearby tree. "Here, at least," he said, "you will be safe from Horibs, for I doubt if any Gorobor can follow us here."

"I always thought that there were no warriors like the warriors of Zoram," said Jana, "but that was before I had known you and Jason;" nor could she, as Tarzan well knew, have voiced a more sincere appreciation of what he had done for her, for to the primitive woman

there are no men like her own men. "I wish," she continued sadly after a pause, "that Jason had lived. "He was a great man and a mighty warrior, but above all he was a kind man. The men of Zoram are never cruel to their women, but they are not always thoughtful and considerate. Jason seemed always to think of my comfort before everything except my safety."

"You were very fond of him, were you not?" asked Tarzan.

The Red Flower of Zoram did not answer: There were tears in her eyes and in her throat so that she could only nod her head.

Once in the trees, Tarzan had lowered Jana to her feet, presently discovering

that she could travel without assistance, as might have been expected of one who could leap lightly from crag to crag upon the dizzy slopes of Thipdars heights. They moved without haste back to the point where they had last seen Muviro, and his Waziri warriors, but as the way took them down wind Tarzan could not hope to pick up the scent spoor of his henchmen and so his ears were constantly upon the alert for any slightest sound that might reveal their whereabouts. Presently they were rewarded by the sound of footsteps hurrying through the forest toward them.

The ape-man drew the girl behind the bole of a large tree and waited, silent, motionless, for all footfalls are not the

footfalls of friends.

They had waited for but a moment when there came into view upon the ground below them an almost naked man clothed in a bit of filthy goatskin, which was almost undistinguishable as such beneath a coating of mud, while the original color of his skin was hidden beneath a similar covering. A great mass of tousled black hair surmounted his head. He was quite the filthiest appearing creature that Tarzan had ever looked upon, but he was evidently no Horib and he was unarmed. What he was doing there alone in the grim forest, the ape-man could not imagine, so he dropped to the ground immediately in front of the surprised wayfarer.

At sight of the ape-man, the other stopped, his eyes wide with astonishment and incredulity. "Tarzan!" he exclaimed. "My God, it is really you. You are not dead. Thank God you are not dead."

It was an instant before the ape-man could recognize the speaker, but not so the girl hiding in the tree above. The instant that she had heard his voice she had known him.

A slow smile overspread the features of the Lord of the jungle. "Gridley!' he exclaimed. "Jason Gridley! Jana told me that you were dead."

"Jana?" exclaimed Jason. "You know her? You have seen her? Where is she?"

"She is here with me," replied

"Tarzan.

The Red Flower of Zoram had slipped to the ground upon the opposite side of the tree and now she stepped from behind its trunk.

"Jana!" cried Jason, coming eagerly toward her.

The girl drew herself to her full height and turned a shoulder toward him. "Jalok!" she cried contemptuously. "Must I tell you again to keep away from The Red Flower of Zoram?"

Jason halted in his tracks, his arms dropped limply to his side, his attitude one of utter dejection.

Tarzan looked silently on, his brows momentarily revealing his perplexity, but it was not his way to interfere in

affairs that were wholly the concern of others. "Come," he said, "we must find the Waziri."

Suddenly loud voices just ahead apprised them of the presence of other men and in the babel of excited voices Tarzan recognized the tones of his Waziri. Hurrying forward. the three came upon a scene that was momentarily ludicrous, but which might soon have developed into tragedy had they not arrived in time.

Ten Waziri warriors armed with rifles had surrounded Thoar and the three Korsars and each party was jabbering volubly in a language unknown to the other.

The Pellucidarians, never before

having seen human beings of the rich, deep, black color of the Waziri and assuming that all strangers were enemies, apprehended only the worst and were about to make a concerted effort to escape their captors, while Muviro, believing that these men might have some sinister connection with the disappearance of his master, was determined to hold and question them; nor would he have hesitated to kill them had they resisted him. It was, therefore, a relief to both parties when Tarzan, Jason and Jana appeared, and the Waziri saw their Big Bwana greet one of their captives with every indication of friendship.

Thoar was even more surprised to

find Tarzan alive than Jason had been, and when he saw Jana the natural reserve which ordinarily marked his bearing was dissipated by the joy and relief which he felt in finding her safe and well; nor any less surprised and happy was Jana as she rushed forward and threw herself into her brother's arms.

His breast filled with emotion such as he had never experienced before, Jason Gridley stood apart, a silent witness of this loving reunion, and then, probably for the first time, there came to him an acute realization of the fact that the sentiment which he entertained for this little barbarian was nothing less than love.

It galled him even to admit it to himself and he felt that he was contemptible to harbor jealousy of Thoar, not only because Thoar was his friend, but because he was only a primitive savage, while he, Jason Gridley, was the product of ages of culture and civilization.

Thoar, Lajo and the other two Korsars were naturally delighted when they found that the strange warriors whom they had looked upon as enemies were suddenly transformed into friends and allies, and when they heard the story of the battle with the Horibs they new that the greatest danger which threatened them was now greatly minimized because of the presence of these

warriors armed with death-dealing weapons that made the ancient arquebuses of the Korsars appear as inadequate as sling shots, and that escape from this horrible country was as good as accomplished.

Resting after their recent exertion, each party briefly narrated the recent adventures that had befallen them and attempts were made to formulate plans for the future, but here difficulties arose. Thoar wished to return to Zoram with Jana. Tarzan, Jason and the Waziri desired only to find the other members of their expedition; while Lajo and his two fellows were principally concerned with getting back to their ship.

Tarzan and Jason, realizing that it

might not be expedient to acquaint the Korsars with the real purpose of their presence in Pellucidar and finding that the men were familiar with the story of Tanar, gave them to believe that they were merely searching for Sari in order to pay a friendly visit to Tanar and his people.

"Sari is a long way," said Lajo. "He who would go to Sari from here must sleep over a hundred times upon the journey, which would take him across the Korsar Az and then through strange countries filled with enemies, even as far as The Land of Awful Shadow. Maybe one would never reach it."

"Is there no way overland?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," replied Lajo, "and if we were at Korsar, I might direct you, but that, too, would be a terrible journey, for no man knows what savage tribes and beasts beset the long marches that must lie between Korsar and Sari."

"And if we went to Korsar," said Jason, "we could not hope to be received as friends. Is this not true, Lajo?"

The Korsar nodded. "No," he said. "You would not be received as friends."

"Nevertheless," said Tarzan to Jason, "I believe that if we are ever to find the O-220 again our best chance is to look for it in the vicinity of Korsar."

Jason nodded in acquiescence. "But that will not accord with Thoar's plans,"

he said, "for, if I understand it correctly, we are much nearer to Zoram now than we are to Korsar and if we decide to go to Korsar, our route will lead directly away from Zoram. But, unless we accompany them with the Waziri, I doubt if Thoar and Jana could live to reach Zoram if they returned by the route that he and I have followed since we left the Mountains of the Thipdars."

Tarzan turned to Thoar. "If you will come with us, we can return you very quickly to Zoram if we find our ship. If we do not find it within a reasonable time, we will accompany you back to Zoram. In either event you would have a very much better chance of reaching your own country than you would if you and

Jana set out alone from here."

"We will accompany you, then," said Thoar, and then his brow clouded as some thought seemed suddenly to seize upon his mind. He looked for a moment at Jason, and then he turned to Jana. "I had almost forgotten," he said. "Before we can go with these people as friends, I must know if this man offered you any injury or harm while you were with him. If he did, I must kill him."

Jana did not look at Jason as she replied. "You need not kill him," she said. "Had that been necessary The Red Flower of Zoram would have done it herself."

"Very well," said Thoar, "I am glad because he is my friend, Now we may

all go together."

"Our boat is probably in the river where the Horibs left it after they captured us," said Lajo. "If it is we can soon drop down to our ship, which is anchored in the lower waters of the Rela Am."

"And be taken prisoners by your people," said Jason. "No, Lajo, the tables are turned now and if you go with us, it is you who will be the prisoners."

The Korsar shrugged. "I do not care," he said. "We will doubtless get a hundred lashes apiece when the captain finds that we have been unsuccessful, that we have brought back nothing and that he has lost an officer and many members of his crew."

It was finally decided that they would return to the Rela Am and look for the longboat of the Korsars. If they found it they would float down in search of the ship, when they would at least make an effort to persuade the captain to receive them as friends and transport them to the vicinity of Korsar.

On the march back to the Rela Am they were not molested by the Horibs, who had evidently discovered that they had met their masters in the Waziri. During the march Jason made it a point to keep as far away from Jana as possible. The very sight of her reminded him of his hopeless and humiliating infatuation, and to be very near her constituted a form of refined agony

which he could not endure. Her contempt, which she made no effort to conceal galled him bitterly, though it was no greater than his own self-contempt when he realized that in spite of every reason that he had to dislike her, he still loved her—loved her more than he had thought it was possible for him to love any woman.

The American was glad when a glimpse of the broad waters of the Rela Am ahead of them marked the end of this stage of their journey, which his own unhappy thoughts, combined with the depressing influence of the gloomy forest, had transformed into one of the saddest periods of his life.

To the relief of all, the boat was

found still moored where the Horibs had left it; nor did it take them long to embark and push out upon the waters of the River of Darkness.

The river widened as they floated down toward the sea until it became possible to step a mast and set sail, after which their progress was still more rapid. Though the way was often beset by dangers in the form of angry and voracious saurians, the rifles of the Waziri proved adequate protection when other means of defense had failed.

The river became very wide so that but for the current they might have considered it an arm of the sea and at Lajo's direction they kept well in toward the left bank, near which, he said, the

ship was anchored. Dimly visible in the distance was the opposite shore, but only so because the surface of Pellucidar curved upward. At the same distance upon the outer crust, it would have been hidden by the curvature of the earth.

As they neared the sea it became evident that Lajo and the two other Korsars were much concerned because they had not sighted their ship.

"We have passed the anchorage," said Lajo at last. "That wooded hill, which we just passed, was directly opposite the spot where the ship lay. I cannot be mistaken because I noted it particularly and impressed it upon my memory as a landmark against the time when we should return from our expedition up the

river."

"He has sailed away and left us," growled one of the Korsars, applying a vile epithet to the captain of the departed ship.

Continuing on down to the ocean they sighted a large island directly off the mouth of the river, which Lajo told them afforded good hunting with plenty of fresh water and as they were in need of meat they landed there and made camp. It was an ideal spot inasmuch as that part of the island at which they had touched seemed to be peculiarly free from the more dangerous forms of carnivorous mammals and reptiles; nor did they see any sign of the presence of man. Game, therefore, was abundant.

Discussing their plans for the future, it was finally decided that they would push on toward Korsar in the longboat, for Lajo assured them that it lay upon the coast of the same landmass that loomed plainly from their island refuge. "What lies in that direction," he said, pointing south, "I do not know, but there lies Korsar, upon this same coast," and he pointed in a direction a little east of north. "Otherwise I am not familiar with this sea, or with this part of Pellucidar, since never before has an expedition come as far as the Rela Am."

In preparation for the long cruise to Korsar, great quantities of meat were cut into strips and dried in the sun, or smoked over slow fires, after which it

was packed away in bladders that had been carefully cleaned and dried. These were stowed in the boat together with other bladders filled with fresh water, for, although it was their intention to hug the coast on the way to Korsar, it might not always be expedient to land for water or food and there was always the possibility that a storm arising they might be blown out to sea.

At length, all preparations having been made, the strangely assorted company embarked upon their hazardous journey toward distant Korsar.

Jana had worked with the others preparing the provisions and the containers and though she had upon several occasions worked side by side

with Jason, she had never relaxed toward him; nor appeared to admit that she was cognizant of his presence.

"Can't we be friends, Jana?" he asked once. "I think we would both be very much happier if we were."

"I am as happy as I can be," she replied lightly, "until Thoar takes me back to Zoram."

17. REUNITED

As favorable winds carried the longboat and its company up the sunlit sea, the O-220, following the same route, made occasional wide circles inland upon what Zuppner now considered an almost hopeless quest for the missing members of the expedition, and not only was he hopeless upon this score, but he also shared the unvoiced hopelessness of the balance of the company with regard to the likelihood of their ever being able to find the polar opening and return again to the outer world. With them, he knew that even their tremendous reserve of fuel and oil would not last indefinitely and if they were unable to find the polar opening, while they still had sufficient in

reserve to carry them back to civilization, they must resign themselves to remaining in Pellucidar for the rest of their lives.

Lieutenant Hines finally broached this subject and the two officers, after summoning Lieutenant Dorf to their conference, decided that before their fuel was entirely exhausted they would try to locate some district where they might be reasonably free from attacks by savage tribesmen, or the even more dangerous menace of the mighty carnivores of Pellucidar.

While the remaining officers of the O-220 pondered the serious problems that confronted them, the great ship moved serenely through the warm Pellucidarian

sunlight and the members of the crew went quietly and efficiently about their various duties.

Robert Jones of Alabama, however, was distressed. He seemed never to be able to accustom himself to the changed conditions of Pellucidar. He often mumbled to himself, shaking his head vehemently, and frequently he wound a battered alarm clock or took it down from the hook upon which it hung and held it to his ear.

Below the ship there unrolled a panorama of lovely sea coast indented by many beautiful bays and inlets. There were rolling hills and plains and forests and winding rivers blue as turquoise. It was a scene to inspire the loftiest

sentiments in the lowliest heart nor was it without its effect upon the members of the ship's company, which included many adventurous spirits, who would experience no regret should it develop that they must remain forever in this, to them, enchanted land. But there were others who had left loved ones at home and these were already beginning to discuss the possibilities and the probabilities of the future. With few exceptions, they were keen and intelligent men and fully cognizant of the possible plight of the O-220 as was its commander, but they had been chosen carefully, and there was not one who wavered even momentarily in loyalty to Zuppner, for they well knew that

whatever fate was to be theirs, he would share it with them and, too, they had confidence that if any man could extricate them from their predicament, it was he. And so the great ship rode its majestic way between the sun and earth and each part, whether mechanical or human, functioned perfectly.

The Captain and his Lieutenant discussed the future as Robert Jones laboriously ascended the climbing shaft to the walkingway upon the ship's back, a hundred and fifty feet above his galley. He did not come entirely out of the climbing shaft onto the walkingway, but merely looked about the blue heaven and when his gaze had completed the circle, he hesitated a moment and then looked

straight up, where, directly overhead, hung the eternal noonday sun of Pellucidar.

Robert Jones blinked his eyes and retreated into the shaft, closing the hatch after him. Muttering to himself, he descended carefully to the galley, crossed it, took the clock off, its hook and, walking to an open port, threw it overboard.

To the occupants of the longboat dancing over the blue waves, without means of determining either time or distance, the constant expectation of nearing their journey's end lessened the monotony as did the oft recurring attacks of the frightful denizens of this Mesozoic sea. To the highly civilized American

the utter timelessness of Pellucidarian existence brought a more marked nervous reaction than to the others. To a lesser degree Tarzan felt it, while the Waziri were only slightly conscious of the anomalous conditions. Upon the Pellucidarians, accustomed to no other state, it had no effect whatever. It was apparent when Tarzan and Jason discussed the matter with them that they had practically no conception of the meaning of time.

But time did elapse, leagues of ocean passed beneath them and conditions changed.

As they moved along the coast their course changed; though without instruments or heavenly bodies to guide

them they were not aware of it. For a while they had moved northeast and then, for a long distance, to the east, where the coast curved gradually until they were running due north.

Instinct told the Korsars that they had come about three quarters of the distance from the island where they had outfitted to their destination. A land breeze was blowing stiffly and they were tacking briskly up the coast at a good clip.

Lajo was standing erect in the bow apparently sniffing the air, as might a hunting dog searching out a scent spoor. Presently he turned to Tarzan.

"We had better put in to the coast," he said. "We are in for a stiff blow." But it was too late, the wind and the sea

mounted to such proportions that finally they had to abandon the attempt and turn and flee before the storm. There was no rain nor lightning, for there were no clouds—just a terrific wind that rose to hurricane violence and stupendous sea that threatened momentarily to engulf them.

The Waziri were frankly terrified, for the sea was not their element. The mountain girl and her brother seemed awed, but if they felt fear they gave no outward indication of it. Tarzan and Jason were convinced that the boat could not live and the latter made his way to where Jana sat huddled upon a thwart. The howling of the wind made speech almost impossible, but he bent

low placing his lips close to her ear.

"Jana," he said, "it is impossible for this small boat to ride out such a storm. We are going to die, but before we die, whether you hate me or not, I am going to tell you that I love you," and then before she could reply, before she could humiliate him further, he turned away and moved forward to where he had been before.

He knew that he had done wrong; he knew that he had no right to tell Thoar's sweetheart that he loved her; it had been an act of disloyalty and yet a force greater than loyalty, greater than pride, had compelled him to speak those words —he could not die with them unspoken. Perhaps it had been a little easier

because he could not help but have noticed the seemingly platonic relationship which existed between Thoar and Jana and being unable to picture Jana as platonic in love, he had assumed that Thoar did not appreciate her. He was always kind to her and always pleasant, but he had never been quite as thoughtful of her as Jason thought that he should have been. He felt that perhaps it was one of the strange inflections of Pellucidarian character, but it was difficult to know either Jana or Thoar and also to believe that, for they were evidently quite as normal human beings as was he, and though they had much of the natural primitive reserve and dignity that civilized man

now merely affects; yet it seemed unlikely that either one of them could have been for so long a time in close association without inadvertently, at least, having given some indication of their love, "Why," mused Jason, "they might be brother and sister from the way they act."

By some miracle of fate the boat lived through the storm, but when the wind diminished and the seas went down there were only tumbling waters to be seen on every hand; nor any sign of land.,

"Now that we have lost the coast, Lajo, how are we going to set our course for Korsar?" asked Tarzan.

"It will not be easy," replied Lajo. "The only guide that we have is the

wind. We are well out on the Korsar Az and I know from which direction the wind usually blows. By keeping always on the same tack we shall eventually reach land and probably not far from Korsar."

"What is that?" asked Jana, pointing, and all eyes turned in the direction that she indicated.

"It is a sail," said Lajo presently. "We are saved,"

"But suppose the ship is manned by unfriendly people?" asked Jason.

"It is not," said Lajo. "It is manned by Korsars, for no other ships sail the Korsar Az."

"There is another," exclaimed Jana. "There are many of them."

"Come about and run for it," said Tarzan; "perhaps they have not seen us yet."

"Why should we try to escape?" asked Lajo.

"Because we have not enough men to fight them," replied Tarzan. "They may not be your enemies, but they will be ours."

Lajo did as he was bid, nor had he any alternative since the Korsars aboard were only three unarmed men, while there were ten Waziri with rifles.

All eyes watched the sails in the distance and it soon became apparent that they were coming closer, for the longboat, with its small sail, was far from fast. Little by little the distance

between them and the ships decreased until it was evident that they were being pursued by a considerable fleet.

"Those are no Korsars," said Lajo. "I have never seen ships like those before."

The longboat wallowed through the sea making the best headway that it could, but the pursuing ships, stringing out as far as the eye could reach until their numbers presented the appearance of a vast armada, continued to close up rapidly upon it.

The leading ship was now closing up so swiftly upon them that the occupants of the longboat had an excellent view of it. It was short and broad of beam with rather a high bow. It had two sails and in addition was propelled by oars, which

protruded through ports along each side, there being some fifty oars all told. Above the line of oars, over the sides of the ship, were hung the shields of the warriors.

"Lord!" exclaimed Jason to Tarzan; "Pellucidar not only boasts Spanish pirates, but vikings as well, for if those are not viking ships they certainly are an adaptation of them."

"Slightly modernized, however," remarked the Lord of the Jungle. "There is a gun mounted on a small deck built in the bow."

"So there is," exclaimed Jason, "and I think we had better come about. There is a fellow up there turning it on us now."

Presently another man appeared upon

the elevated bow deck of the enemy. "Heave to," he cried, "or I'll blow you out of the water."

"Who are you?" demanded Jason."

"I am Ja of Anoroc," replied the man, "and this is the fleet of David I, Emperor of Pellucidar."

"Come about," said Tarzan to Lajo.

"Someone in this boat must have been born on Sunday," exclaimed Jason. "I never knew there was so much good luck in the world." .

"Who are you?" demanded Ja as the longboat came slowly about.

"We are friends," replied Tarzan.

"The Emperor of Pellucidar can have no friends upon the Korsar Az," replied

Ja.

"If Abner Perry is with you, we can prove that you are wrong," replied Jason.

"Abner Perry is not with us," said Ja; "but what do you know of him?"

By this time the two boats were alongside and the bronzed Mezop warriors of Ja's crew were gazing down curiously upon the occupants of the boat.

"This is Jason Gridley," said Tarzan to Ja, indicating the American. "Perhaps you have heard Abner Perry speak of him. He organized an expedition in the outer world to come here to rescue David Innes from the dungeons of the Korsars."

The three Korsars of the longboat

made Ja suspicious, but when a full explanation had been made and especially when they had examined the rifles of the Waziri, he became convinced of the truth of their statements and welcomed them warmly aboard his ship, about which were now gathered a considerable number of the armada. When word was passed among them that two of the strangers were friends from the outer world who had come to assist in the rescue of David Innes, a number of the captains of other ships came aboard Ja's flagship to greet Tarzan and Jason. Among these captains were Daoor the Strong One, brother of Dian the Beautiful, Empress of Pellucidar; Kolk, son of Goork, who is chief of the

Thurians; and Tanar, son of Ghak, the Hairy One, King of Sari.

From these Tarzan and Jason learned that this fleet was on its way to effect the rescue of David. It had been building for a great while, so long that they had forgotten how many times they had eaten and slept since the first keel was laid, and then they had had to find a way into the Korsar Az from the Lural Az, where the ships were built upon the island of Anoroc.

"Far down the Sojar Az beyond the Land of Awful Shadow, we found a passage that led to the Korsar Az. The Thurians had heard of it and while the fleet was building they sent warriors out to see if it was true and they found the

passage and soon we shall be before the city of Korsar."

"How did you expect to rescue David with only a dozen men?" asked Tanar.

"We are not all here," said Tarzan. "We became separated from our companions and have been unable to find them. However, they were not very many men in our expedition. We depended upon other means than manpower to effect the rescue of your Emperor."

At this moment a great cry arose from one of the ships. The excitement rose and spread. The warriors were all looking into the air and pointing. Already some of them were elevating the muzzles of their cannons and all were

preparing their rifles, and as Tarzan and Jason looked up they saw the O-220 far above them.

The dirigible had evidently discovered the fleet and was descending toward it in a wide spiral.

"Now I know someone was born on Sunday," said Jason. "That is our ship. Those are our friends," he added, turning to Ja.

All that transpired on board the flagship passed quickly from ship to ship until every member of the armada knew that the great thing hovering above them was no gigantic flying reptile, but a ship of the air in which were friends of Abner Perry and their beloved Emperor, David I.

Slowly the great ship settled toward the surface of the sea and as it did so Jason Gridley borrowed a spear from one of the warriors and tied Lajo's head handkerchief to its tip. With this improvised flag he signaled, "O-220 ahoy! This is the war fleet of David I, Emperor of Pellucidar, commanded by Ja of Anoroc; Lord Greystoke, ten Waziri and Jason Gridley aboard."

A moment later a gun boomed from the rear turret of the O-220, marking the beginning of the first international salute of twenty-one guns that had ever reverberated beneath the eternal sun of Pellucidar, and when the significance of it was explained to Ja he returned the salute with the bow gun of his flagship.

The dirigible dropped lower until it was within speaking distance of the flagship.

"Are you all well aboard?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," came back the reassuring reply in Zuppner's booming tone.

"Is Yon Horst with you?" asked Jason.

"No," replied Zuppner.

"Then he alone is missing," said Jason sadly.

"Can you drop a sling and take us aboard?" asked Tarzan.

Zuppner maneuvered the dirigible to within fifty feet of the deck of Ja's flagship, a sling was lowered and one

after another the members of the party were taken on board the O-220, the Waziri first and then Jana and Thoar, followed by Jason and Tarzan, the three Korsars being left prisoners with Ja with the understanding that they were to be treated humanely.

Before Tarzan left the deck of the flagship he told Ja that if he would proceed toward Korsar, the dirigible would keep in touch with him and in the meantime they would be perfecting plans for the rescue of David Innes.

As Thoar and Jana were hoisted aboard the O-220, they were filled with a boundless amazement. To them such a creation as the giant dirigible was inconceivable. As Jana expressed it

afterward: "I knew that I was dreaming, but yet at the same time I knew that I could not dream about such a thing as this because no such thing existed."

Jason introduced Jana and Thoar to Zuppner and Hines, but Lieutenant Dorf did not come to the cabin until after Tarzan had boarded the ship, and it was the latter who introduced them to Dorf.

He presented Lieutenant Dorf to Jana and then, indicating Thoar, "This is Thoar, the brother of The Red Flower of Zoram."

As those words broke upon the ears of Jason Gridley he reacted almost as to the shock of a physical blow. He was glad that no one chanced to be looking at him at the time and instantly he regained

his composure, but it left him with a distinct feeling of injury. They had all known it and none of them had told him. He was almost angry at them until it occurred to him that they had all probably assumed that he had known it too, and yet try as he would he could not quite forgive Jana. But, really, what difference did it make, for, whether sister or mate of Thoar or another, he knew that The Red Flower of Zoram was not for him. She had made that definitely clear in her attitude toward him, which had convinced him even more definitely than had her bitter words.

The reunited officers of the expedition had much to discuss and

many reminiscences to narrate as the O-220 followed above the slowly moving fleet. It was a happy reunion, clouded only by the absence of Von Horst.

As the dirigible moved slowly above the waters of the Korsar Az, Zuppner dropped occasionally to within speaking distance of Ja of Anoroc, and when the distant coast of Korsar was sighted a sling was lowered and Ja was taken aboard the O-220, where plans for the rescue of David were discussed, and when they were perfected Ja was returned to his ship, and Lajo and the two other Korsars were taken aboard the dirigible.

The three prisoners were filled with awe and consternation as Jason and

Tarzan personally conducted them throughout the giant craft. They were shown the armament, which was carefully explained to them, special stress being laid upon the destructive power of the bombs which the O-220 carried.

"One of these," said Jason to Lajo, "would blow The Cid's palace a thousand feet into the air and, as you see, we have many of them. We could destroy all of Korsar and all the Korsar ships."

While Ja's fleet was still a considerable distance off the coast, the O-220 raced ahead at full speed toward Korsar, for the plan which they had evolved was such that, if successful,

David's release would be effected without the shedding of blood—a plan which was especially desirable since if it was necessary to attack Korsar either from the sea or the air, the Emperor's life would be placed in jeopardy from the bombs and cannons of his friends, as well as from a possible spirit of vengeance which might animate The Cid.

As the dirigible glided almost silently over the city of Korsar, the streets and courtyards filled with people staring upward in awestruck wonder.

Three thousand feet above the city the ship stopped and Tarzan sent for the three Korsar prisoners.

"As you know," he said to them, "we are in a position to destroy Korsar. You

have seen the great fleet coming to the rescue of the Emperor of Pellucidar. You know that every warrior manning those ships is armed with a weapon far more effective than your best; even with their knives and spears and their bows and arrows they might take Korsar without their rifles, but they have the rifles and they have better ammunition than yours and in each ship of the fleet cannons are mounted. Alone the fleet could reduce Korsar, but in addition to the fleet there is this airship. Your shots could never reach it as it sailed back and forth above Korsar, dropping bombs upon the city. Do you think, Lajo, that we can take Korsar?"

"I know it," replied the Korsar.

"Very well," said Tarzan. "I am going to send you with a message to The Cid. Will you tell him the truth?"

"I will," replied Lajo.

"The message is simple," continued Tarzan. "You may tell him that we have come to effect the release of the Emperor of Pellucidar. You may explain to him the means that we have to enforce our demands, and then you may say to him that if he will place the Emperor upon a ship and take him out to our fleet and deliver him unharmed to Ja of Anoroc, we will return to Sari without firing a shot. Do you understand?"

"I do," said Lajo.

"Very well, then," said Tarzan. He turned to Dorf, "Lieutenant, will you take

him now?" he asked.

Dorf approached with a bundle in his hand. "Slip into this," he said.

"What is it?" asked Lajo.

"It is a parachute," said Dorf.

"What is that?" demanded Lajo.

"Here," said Dorf, "put your arms through here." A moment later he had the parachute adjusted upon the Korsar.

"Now," said Jason, "a great distinction is going to be conferred upon you —you are going to make the first parachute jump that has ever been witnessed in Pellucidar."

"I don't understand what you mean," said Lajo.

"You will presently," said Jason.

"You are going to take Lord Greystoke's message to The Cid."

"But you will have to bring the ship down to the ground before I can," objected Lajo.

"On the contrary we are going to stay right where we are," said Jason; "you are going to jump overboard."

"What?" exclaimed Lajo. "You are going to kill me?"

"No," said Jason with a laugh. "Listen carefully to what I tell you and you will land safely. You have seen some wonderful things on board this ship so you must have some conception of what we of the outer world can do. Now you are going to have a demonstration of another very wonderful invention and

you may take my word for it that no harm will befall you if you do precisely as I tell you to. Here is an iron ring," and he touched the ring opposite Lajo's left breast; "take hold of it with your right hand. After you jump from the ship, pull it; give it a good jerk and you will float down to the ground as lightly as a feather."

"I will be killed," objected Lajo.

"If you are a coward," said Jason, "perhaps one of these other men is braver than you. I tell you that you will not be hurt."

"I am not afraid," said Lajo. "I will jump."

"Tell The Cid," said Tarzan, "that if we do not presently see a ship sail out

alone to meet the fleet, we shall start dropping bombs upon the city." Dorf led Lajo to a door in the cabin and flung it open. The man hesitated.

"Do not forget to jerk the ring," said Dorf, and at the same time he gave Lajo a violent push that sent him headlong through the doorway and a moment later the watchers in the cabin saw the white folds of the parachute streaming in the air. They saw it open and they knew that the message of Tarzan would be delivered to The Cid.

What went on in the city below we may not know, but presently a great crowd was seen to move from the palace down toward the river, where the ships were anchored, and a little later one of

the ships weighed anchor and as it drifted slowly with the current its sails were set and presently it was moving directly out to sea toward the fleet from Sari.

The O-220 followed above it and Ja's flagship moved forward to meet it, and thus David Innes, Emperor of Pellucidar, was returned to his people.

As the Korsar ship turned back to port the dirigible dropped low above the flagship of the Sarian fleet and greetings were exchanged between David and his rescuers—men from another world whom be had never seen.

The Emperor was half starved and very thin and weak from his long period of confinement, but otherwise he bad

been unharmed, and great was the rejoicing aboard the ships of Sari as they turned back to cross the Korsar Az toward their own land.

Tarzan was afraid to accompany the fleet back to Sari for fear that their rapidly diminishing store of fuel would not be sufficient to complete the trip and carry them back to the outer world. He followed the fleet only long enough to obtain from David explicit directions for reaching the polar opening from the city of Korsar.

"We have an other errand to fulfill first," said Jason to Tarzan. "We must return Thoar and Jana to Zoram."

"Yes," said the ape-man, "and drop these two Korsars off near their city. I

have thought of all that and we shall have fuel enough for that purpose."

"I am not going to return with you," said Jason. "I wish to be put aboard Ja's flagship."

"What?" exclaimed Tarzan. "You are going to remain here?"

"This expedition was undertaken at my suggestion. I feel responsible for the life and safety of every man in it and I shall never return to the outer world while the fate of lieutenant Von Horst remains a mystery."

"But how can you find Von Horst if you go back to Sari with the fleet?" asked Tarzan.

"I shall ask David Innes to equip an expedition to go in search of him,"

replied Jason, "and with such an expedition made up of native Pellucidarians I shall stand a very much better chance of finding him than we would in the O-220."

"I quite agree with you," said Tarzan, "and if you are unalterably determined to carry out your project, we will lower you to Ja's ship immediately."

As the O-220 dropped toward Ja's flagship and signaled it to heave to, Jason gathered what belongings he wished to take with him, including rifles and revolvers and plenty of ammunition. These were lowered first to Ja's ship, while Jason bid farewell to his companions of the expedition.

"Good-bye, Jana," he said, after he

had shaken hands with the others.

The girl made no reply, but instead turned to her brother.

"Good-bye, Thoar," she said.

"Good-bye?" he asked. "What do you mean?"

"I am going to Sari with the man I love," replied The Red Flower of Zoram.

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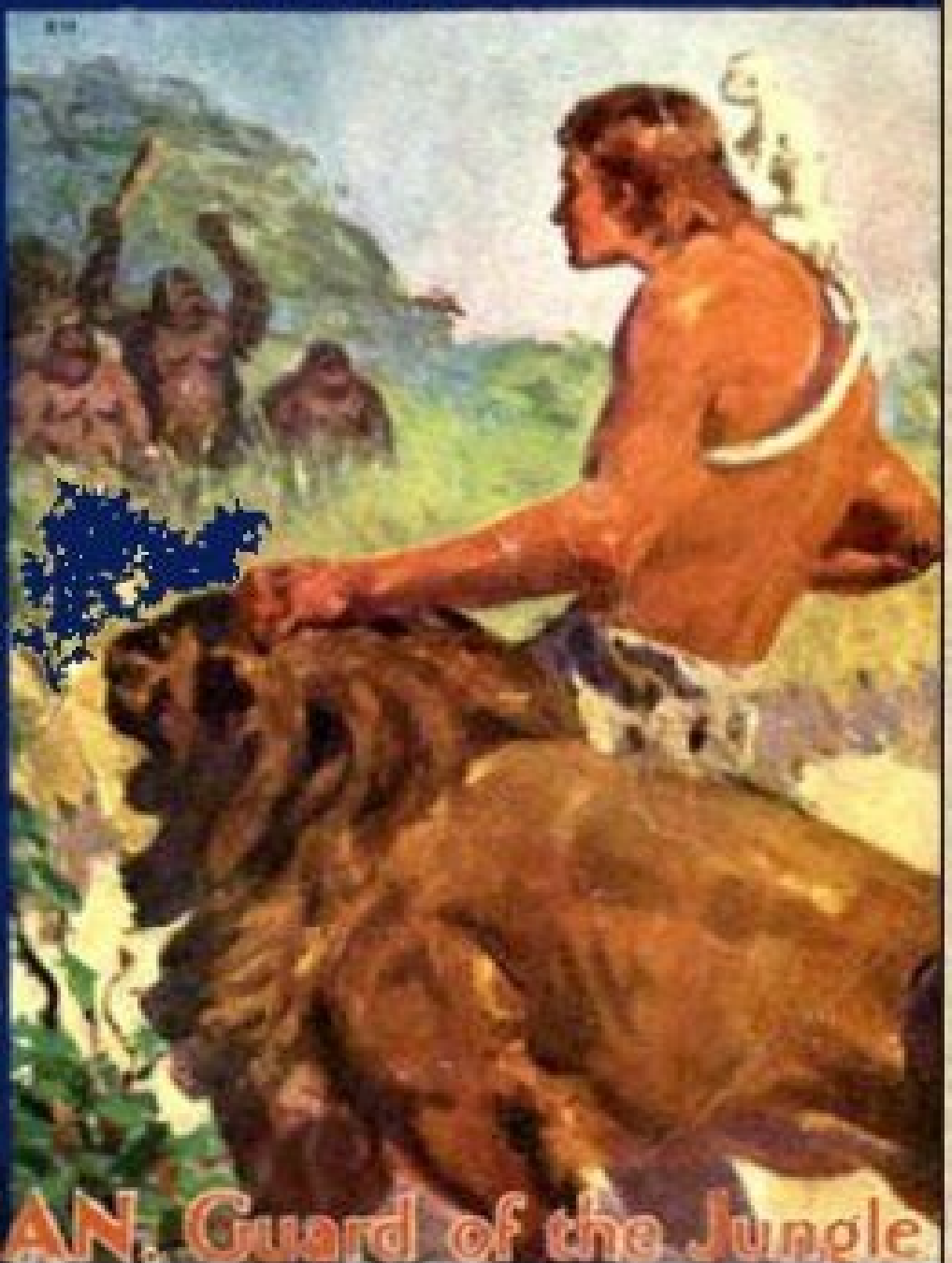

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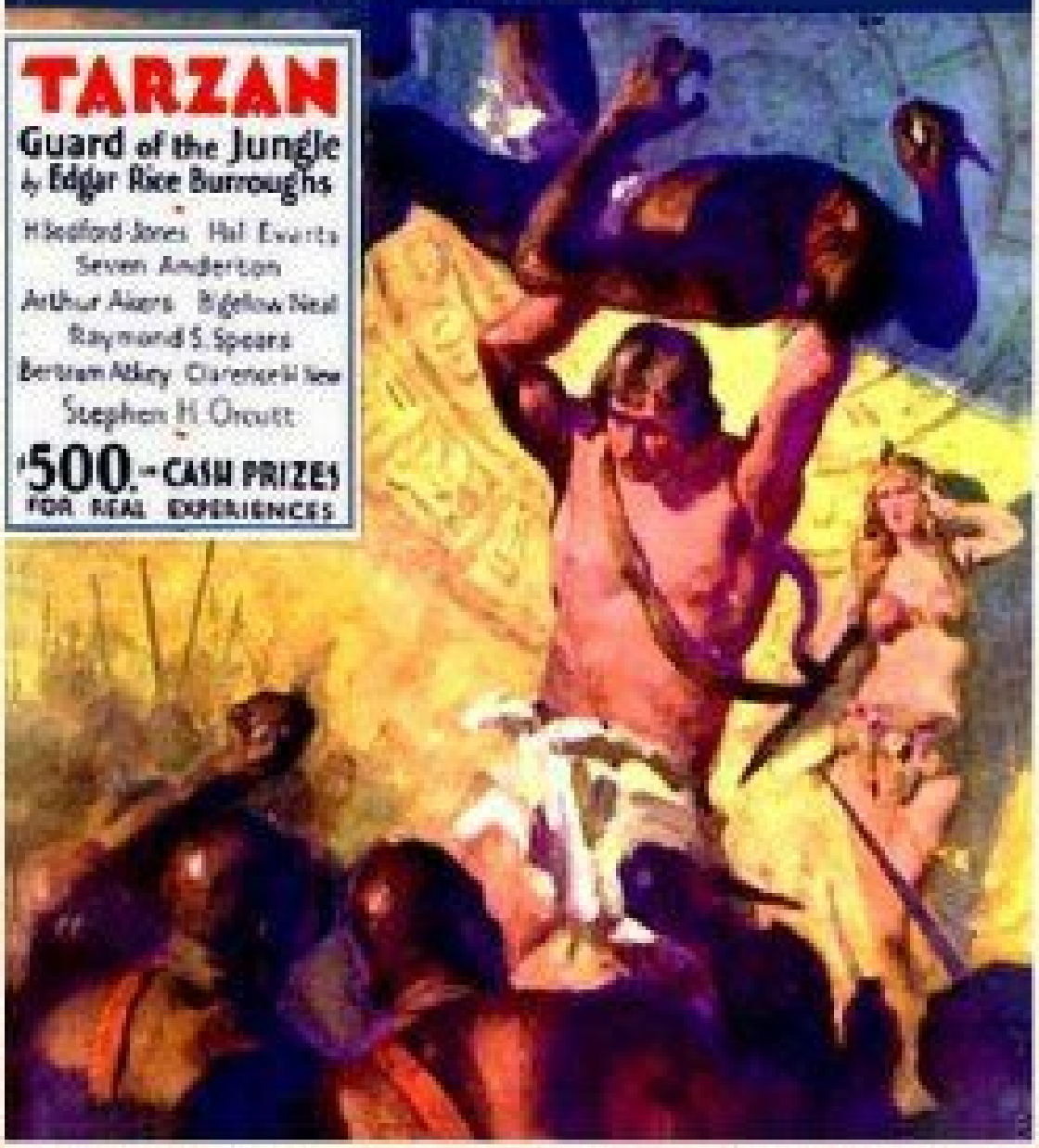

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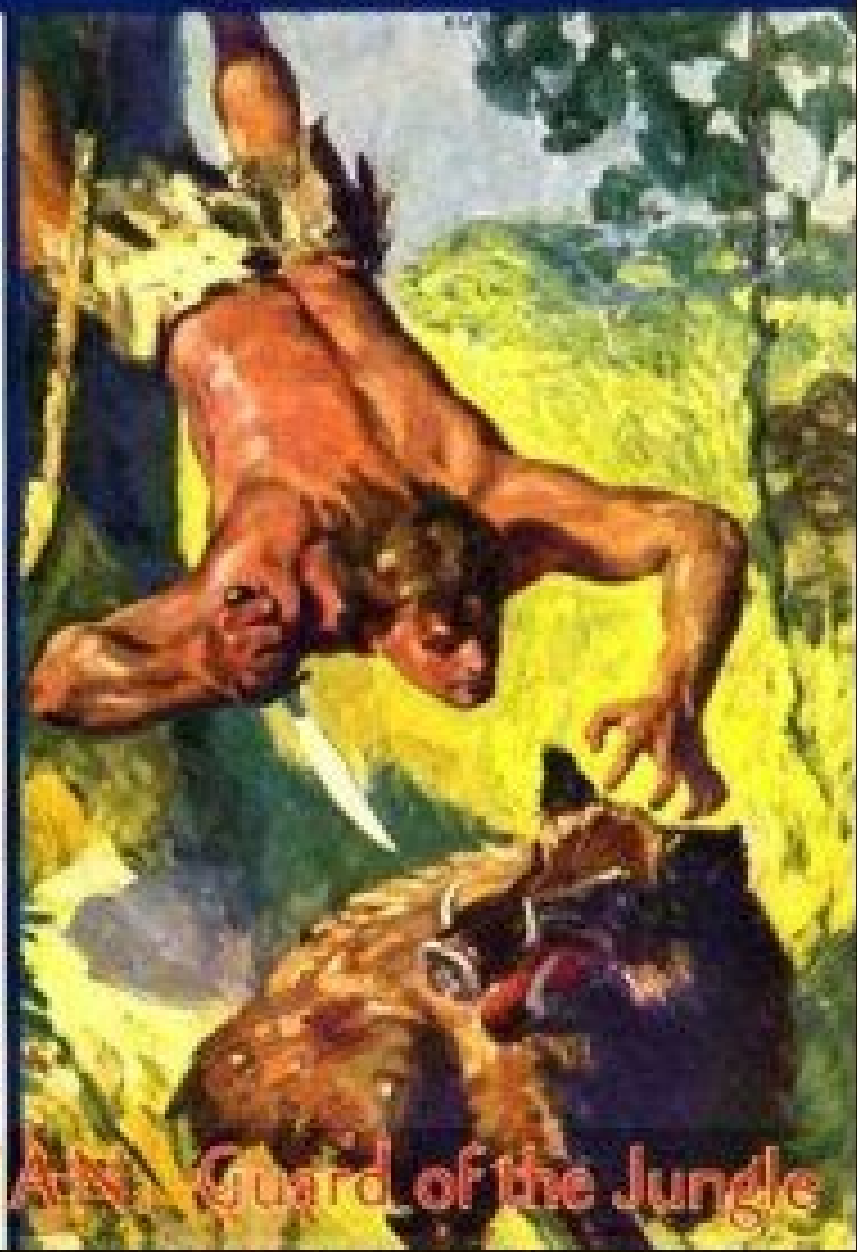

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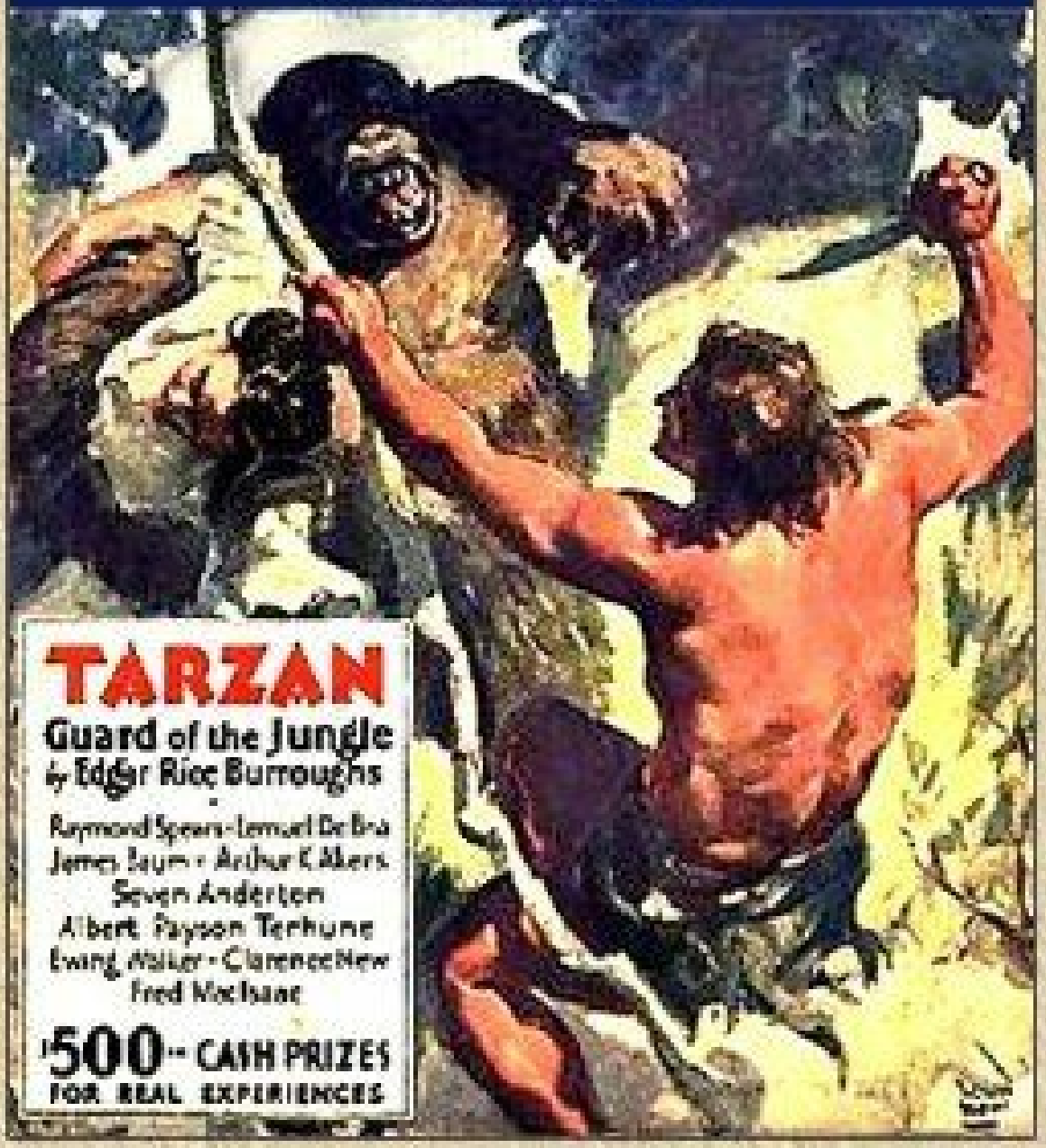

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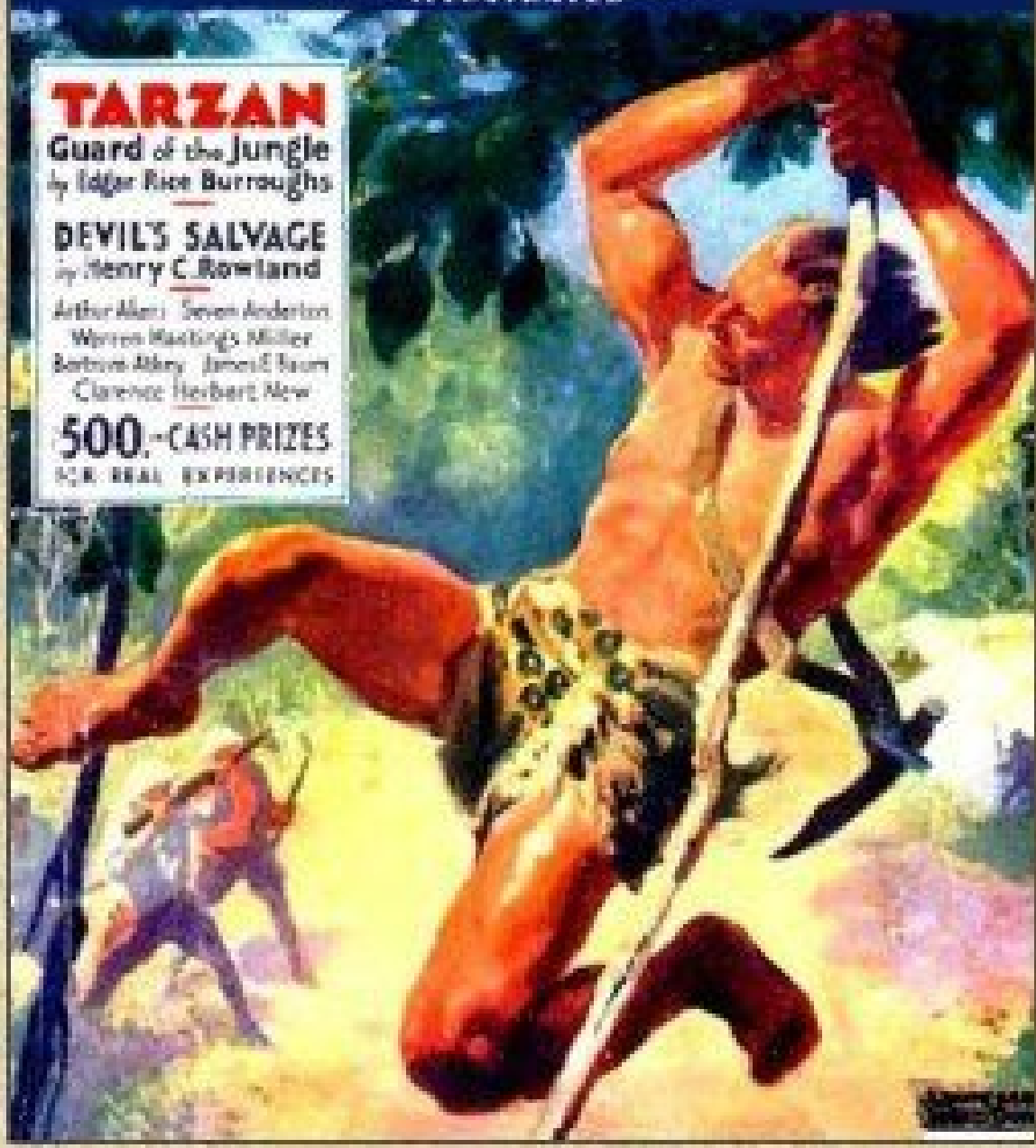

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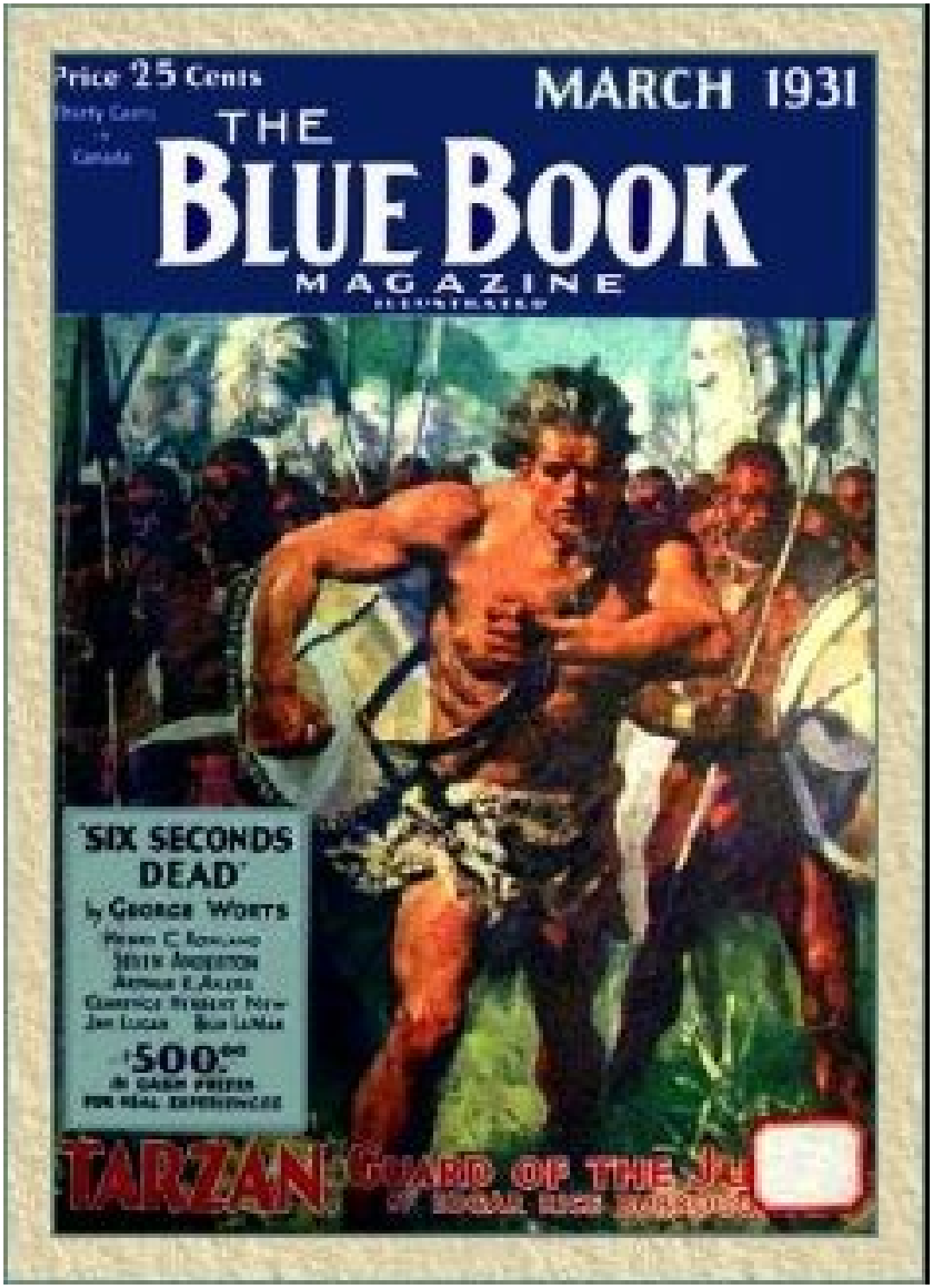
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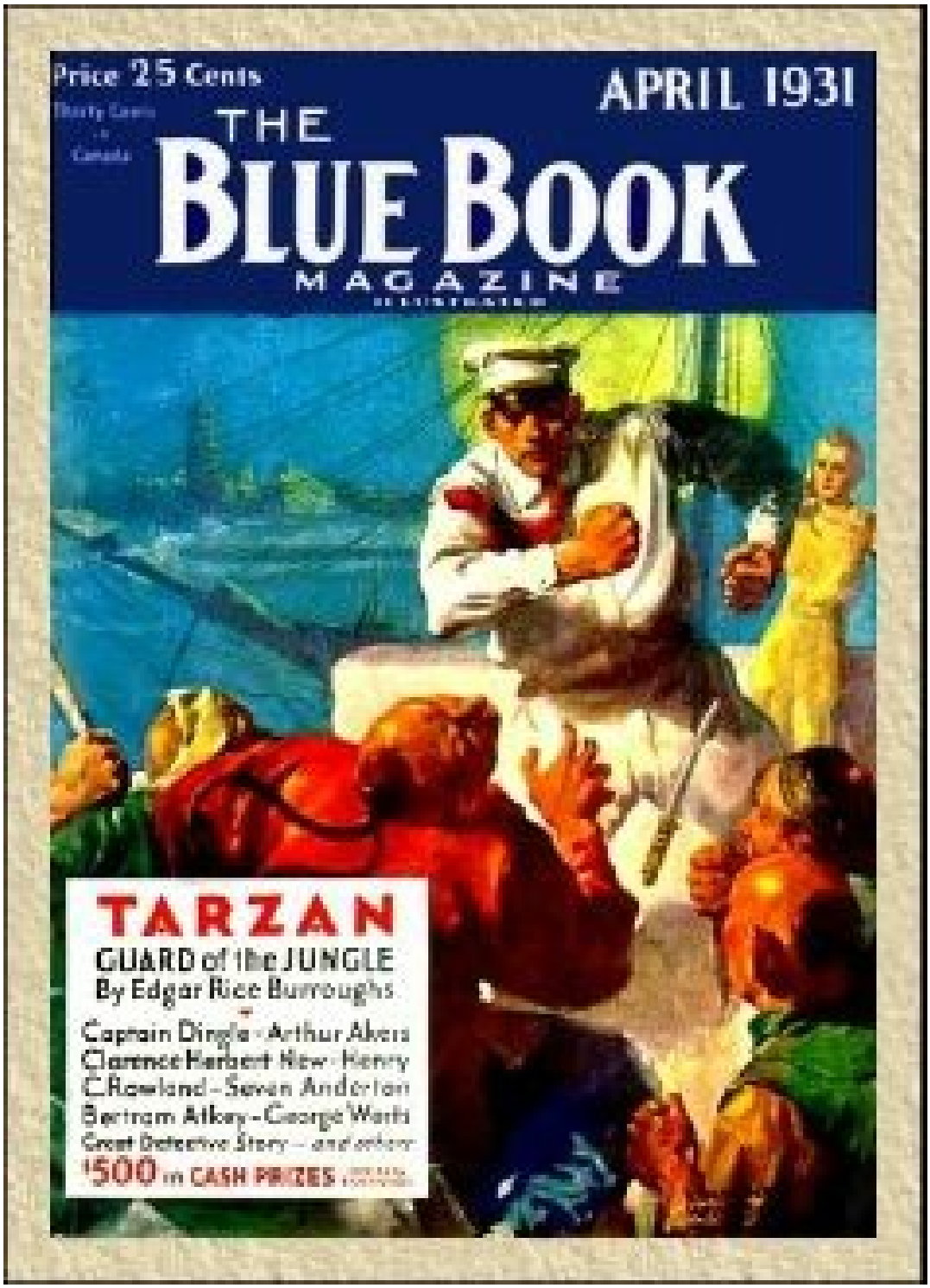
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1. LITTLE NKIMA

I am no historian, no chronicler of facts, and, furthermore, I hold a very definite conviction that there are certain subjects which fiction writers should leave alone, foremost among which are politics and religion. However, it seems to me not unethical to pirate an idea occasionally from one or the other, provided that the subject be handled in such a way as to impart a definite impression of fictionizing.

Had the story that I am about to tell you broken in the newspapers of two certain European powers, it might have precipitated another and a more terrible world war. But with that I am not particularly concerned. What interests

me is that it is a good story that is particularly well adapted to my requirements through the fact that Tarzan of the Apes was intimately connected with many of its most thrilling episodes.

I am not going to bore you with dry political history, so do not tax your intellect needlessly by attempting to decode such fictitious names as I may use in describing certain people and places, which, it seems to me, to the best interest of peace and disarmament, should remain incognito.

Take the story simply as another Tarzan story, in which, it is hoped, you will find entertainment and relaxation. If you find food for thought in it, so much the better.

Doubtless, very few of you saw, and still fewer will remember having seen, a news dispatch that appeared inconspicuously in the papers some time since, reporting a rumor that French Colonial Troops stationed in Somaliland, on the northeast coast of Africa, had invaded an Italian African colony. Back of that news item is a story of conspiracy, intrigue, adventure and love— a story of scoundrels and of fools, of brave men, of beautiful women, a story of the beasts of the forest and the jungle.

If there were few who saw the newspaper account of the invasion of Italian Somaliland upon the northeast coast of Africa, it is equally a fact that

none of you saw a harrowing incident that occurred in the interior some time previous to this affair. That it could possibly have any connection whatsoever with European international intrigue, or with the fate of nations, seems not even remotely possible, for it was only a very little monkey fleeing through the tree tops and screaming in terror. It was little Nkima, and pursuing him was a large, rude monkey—a much larger monkey than little Nkima.

Fortunately for the peace of Europe and the world, the speed of the pursuer was in no sense proportionate to his unpleasant disposition, and so Nkima escaped him; but for long after the larger monkey had given up the chase, the

smaller one continued to flee through the tree tops, screeching at the top of his shrill little voice, for terror and flight were the two major activities of little Nkima.

Perhaps it was fatigue, but more likely it was a caterpillar or a bird's nest that eventually terminated Nkima's flight and left him scolding and chattering upon a swaying bough, far above the floor of the jungle.

The world into which little Nkima had been born seemed a very terrible world, indeed, and he spent most of his waking hours scolding about it, in which respect he was quite as human as he was simian. It seemed to little Nkima that the world was populated with large, fierce

creatures that liked monkey meat. There were Numa, the lion, and Sheeta, the panther, and Histah, the snake—a triumvirate that rendered unsafe his entire world from the loftiest tree top to the ground. And then there were the great apes, and the lesser apes, and the baboons, and countless species of monkeys, all of which God had made larger than He had made little Nkima, and all of which seemed to harbor a grudge against him.

Take, for example, the rude creature which had just been pursuing him. Little Nkima had done nothing more than throw a stick at him while he was asleep in the crotch of a tree, and just for that he had pursued little Nkima with

unquestionable homicidal intent—I use the word without purposing any reflection upon Nkima. It had never occurred to Nkima, as it never seems to occur to some people, that, like beauty, a sense of humor may sometimes be fatal.

Brooding upon the injustices of life, little Nkima was very sad. But there was another and more poignant cause of sadness that depressed his little heart. Many, many moons ago his master had gone away and left him. True, he had left him in a nice, comfortable home with kind people who fed him, but little Nkima missed the great Tarmangani, whose naked shoulder was the one harbor of refuge from which he could with perfect impunity hurl insults at the

world. For a long time now little Nkima had braved the dangers of the forest and the jungle in search of his beloved Tarzan.

Because hearts are measured by content of love and loyalty, rather than by diameters in inches, the heart of little Nkima was very large so large that the average human being could hide his own heart and himself, as well, behind it and for a long time it had been just one great ache in his diminutive breast. But fortunately for the little Manu his mind was so ordered that it might easily be distracted even from a great sorrow. A butterfly or a luscious grub might suddenly claim his attention from the depths of brooding, which was well,

since otherwise he might have grieved himself to death.

And now, therefore, as his melancholy thoughts returned to contemplation of his loss, their trend was suddenly altered by the shifting of a jungle breeze that brought to his keen ears a sound that was not primarily of the jungle sounds that were a part of his hereditary instincts. It was a discord. And what is it that brings discord into the jungle as well as into every elsewhere that it enters? Man. It was the voices of men that Nkima heard.

Silently the little monkey glided through the trees into the direction from which the sounds had come; and presently, as the sounds grew louder,

there came also that which was the definite, final proof of the identity of the noise makers, as far as Nkima, or, for that matter, any other of the jungle folk, might be concerned—the scent spoor.

You have seen a dog, perhaps your own dog, half recognize you by sight; but was he ever entirely satisfied until the evidence of his eyes had been tested and approved by his sensitive nostrils?

And so it was with Nkima. His ears had suggested the presence of men, and now his nostrils definitely assured him that men were near. He did not think of them as men, but as great apes. There were Gomangani, Great Black Apes, Negroes, among them. This his nose told him. And there were Tarmangani, also.

These, which to Nkima would be Great White Apes, were white men.

Eagerly his nostrils sought for the familiar scent spoor of his beloved Tarzan, but it was not there—that he knew even before he came within sight of the strangers.

The camp upon which Nkima presently looked down from a nearby tree was well established. It had evidently been there for a matter of days and might be expected to remain still longer. It was no overnight affair. There were the tents of the white men and the beyts of Arabs neatly arranged with almost military precision and behind these the shelters of the Negroes, lightly constructed of such materials as Nature

had provided upon the spot.

Within the open front of an Arab beyt sat several white burnoosed Bedouins drinking their inevitable coffee; in the shade of a great tree before another tent four white men were engrossed in a game of cards; among the native shelters a group of stalwart Galla warriors were playing at Mancala. There were blacks of other tribes too—men of East Africa and of Central Africa, with a sprinkling of West Coast Negroes.

It might have puzzled an experienced African traveller or hunter to catalog this motley aggregation of races and colors. There were far too many blacks to justify a belief that all were porters, for with all the impedimenta of the camp

ready for transportation there would have been but a small fraction of a load for each of them, even after more than enough had been included among the askari, who do not carry any loads beside their rifles and ammunition.

Then, too, there were more rifles than would have been needed to protect even a larger party. There seemed, indeed, to be a rifle for every man. But these were minor details which made no impression upon Nkima. All that impressed him was the fact that here were many strange Tarmangani and Gomangani in the country of his master; and as all strangers were, to Nkima, enemies, he was perturbed. Now more than ever he wished that he might find Tarzan.

A swarthy, turbaned East Indian sat cross-legged upon the ground before a tent, apparently sunk in meditation; but could one have seen his dark, sensuous eyes, he would have discovered that their gaze was far from introspective—they were bent constantly upon another tent that stood a little apart from its fellows—and when a girl emerged from this tent, Raghunath Jafar arose and approached her. He smiled an oily smile as he spoke to her, but the girl did not smile as she replied. She spoke civilly, but she did not pause, continuing her way toward the four men at cards.

As she approached their table they looked up; and upon the face of each was reflected some pleasurable emotion,

but whether it was the same in each, the masks that we call faces, and which are trained to conceal our true thoughts, did not divulge. Evident it was, however, that the girl was popular.

"Hello, Zora!" cried a large, smooth-faced fellow. "Have a good nap?" "Yes, Comrade," replied the girl; "but I am tired of napping. This inactivity is getting on my nerves."

"Mine, too," agreed the man.

"How much longer will you wait for the American, Comrade Zveri?" asked Raghunath Jafar.

The big man shrugged. "I need him," he replied. "We might easily carry on without him, but for the moral effect upon the world of having a rich and

high-born American identified actively with the affair it is worth waiting."

"Are you quite sure of this gringo, Zveri?" asked a swarthy young Mexican sitting next to the big, smooth-faced man, who was evidently the leader of the expedition.

"I met him in New York and again in San Francisco," replied Zveri. "He has been very carefully checked and favorably recommended."

"I am always suspicious of these fellows who owe everything they have to capitalism," declared Romero. "It is in their blood—at heart they hate the proletariat, just as we hate them."

"This fellow is different, Miguel," insisted Zveri. "He has been won over

so completely that he would betray his own father for the good of the cause and already he is betraying his country."

A slight, involuntary sneer, that passed unnoticed by the others, curled the lip of Zora Drinov as she heard this description of the remaining member of the party, who had not yet reached the rendezvous.

Miguel Romero, the Mexican, was still unconvinced. "I have no use for gringos of any sort," he said.

Zveri shrugged his heavy shoulders. "Our personal animosities are of no importance," he said, "as against the interests of the workers of the world. When Colt arrives we must accept him as one of us; nor must we forget that

however much we may detest America and Americans nothing of any moment may be accomplished in the world of today without them and their filthy wealth."

"Wealth ground out of the blood and sweat of the working class," growled Romero.

"Exactly," agreed Raghunath Jafar, "but how appropriate that this same wealth should be used to undermine and overthrow capitalistic America and bring the workers eventually into their own."

"That is precisely the way I feel about it," said Zveri. "I would rather use American gold in furthering the cause than any other—and after that British."

"But what do the puny resources of this single American mean to us?" demanded Zora. "A mere nothing compared to what America is already pouring into Soviet Russia. What is his treason compared with the treason of those others who are already doing more to hasten the day of world communism than the Third Internationale itself—it is nothing, not a drop in the bucket."

"What do you mean, Zora?" asked Miguel.

"I mean the bankers, and manufacturers, and engineers of America, who are selling their own country and the world to us in the hope of adding more gold to their already bursting coffers. One of their most pious

and lauded citizens is building great factories for us in Russia, where we may turn out tractors and tanks; their manufacturers are vying with one another to furnish us with engines for countless thousands of airplanes; their engineers are selling us their brains and their skill to build a great modern manufacturing city, in which ammunitions and engines of war may be produced. These are the traitors, these are the men who are hastening the day when Moscow shall dictate the policies of a world."

"You speak as though you regretted it," said a dry voice at her shoulder.

The girl turned quickly. "Oh, it is you, Sheikh Abu Batn?" she said, as she

recognized the swart Arab who had strolled over from his coffee. "Our own good fortune does not blind me to the perfidiousness of the enemy, nor cause me to admire treason in anyone, even though I profit by it."

"Does that include me?" demanded Romero, suspiciously.

Zora laughed. "You know better than that, Miguel," she said. "You are of the working class—you are loyal to the workers of your own country —but these others are of the capitalistic class; their government is a capitalistic government that is so opposed to our beliefs that it has never recognized our government; yet, in their greed, these swine are selling out their own kind and their own

country for a few more rotten dollars. I loathe them."

Zveri laughed. "You are a good Red, Zora," he cried; "you hate the enemy as much when he helps us as when he hinders."

"But hating and talking accomplish so little," said the girl. "I wish we might do something. Sitting here in idleness seems so futile."

"And what would you have us do?" demanded Zveri, good naturedly.

"We might at least make a try for the gold of Opar," she said. "If Kitembo is right, there should be enough there to finance a dozen expeditions such as you are planning, and we do not need this American—what do they call them, cake

eaters?—to assist us in that venture."

"I have been thinking along similar lines," said Raghunath Jafar.

Zveri scowled. "Perhaps some of the rest of you would like to run this expedition," he said, crustily. "I know what I am doing and I don't have to discuss all my plans with anyone. When I have orders to give, I'll give them. Kitembo has already received his, and preparations have been under way for several days for the expedition to Opar."

"The rest of us are as much interested and are risking as much as you, Zveri," snapped Romero. "We were to work together—not as master and slaves."

"You'll soon learn that I am master," snarled Zveri in an ugly tone.

"Yes," sneered Romeo, "the czar was master, too, and Obregon. You know what happened to them?"

Zveri leaped to his feet and whipped out a revolver, but as he levelled it at Romero the girl struck his arm up and stepped between them. "Are you mad, Zveri?" she cried.

"Do not interfere, Zora; this is my affair and it might as well be settled now as later. I am chief here and I am not going to have any traitors in my camp. Stand aside."

"No!" said the girl with finality. "Miguel was wrong and so were you, but to shed blood—our own blood—now would utterly ruin any chance we have of success. It would sow the seed

of fear and suspicion and cost us the respect of the blacks, for they would know that there was dissension among us. Furthermore, Miguel is not armed; to shoot him would be cowardly murder that would lose you the respect of every decent man in the expedition." She had spoken rapidly in Russian, a language that was understood by only Zveri and herself, of those who were present; then she turned again to Miguel and addressed him in English. "You were wrong, Miguel," she said gently. "There must be one responsible head, and Comrade Zveri was chosen for the responsibility. He regrets that he acted hastily. Tell him that you are sorry for what you said, and then the two of you

shake hands and let us all forget the matter."

For an instant Romero hesitated; then he extended his hand toward Zveri. "I am sorry," he said.

The Russian took the proffered hand in his and bowed stiffly. "Let us forget it, Comrade," he said; but the scowl was still upon his face, though no darker than that which clouded the Mexican's.

Little Nkima yawned and swung by his tail from a branch far overhead. His curiosity concerning these enemies was sated. They no longer afforded him entertainment, but he knew that his master should know about their presence; and that thought, entering his little head, recalled his sorrow and his

great yearning for Tarzan, to the end that he was again imbued with a grim determination to continue his search for the ape-man. Perhaps in half an hour some trivial occurrence might again distract his attention, but for the moment it was his life work. Swinging through the forest, little Nkima held the fate of Europe in his pink palm, but he did not know it.

The afternoon was waning. In the distance a lion roared. An instinctive shiver ran up Nkima's spine. In reality, however, he was not much afraid, knowing, as he did, that no lion could reach him in the tree tops.

A young man marching near the head of a safari cocked his head and listened.

"Not so very far away, Tony," he said.

"No, sir; much too close," replied the Filipino.

"You'll have to learn to cut out that 'sir' stuff, Tony, before we join the others," admonished the young man.

The Filipino grinned. "All right, Comrade," he assented. "I got so used calling everybody 'sir' it hard for me to change."

"I'm afraid you're not a very good Red then, Tony."

"Oh, yes I am," insisted the Filipino emphatically. "Why else am I here? You think I like come this God forsaken country full of lion, ant, snake, fly, mosquito just for the walk? No, I come lay down my life for Philippine

independence."

"That's noble of you all right, Tony," said the other gravely; "but just how is it going to make the Philippines free?"

Antonio Mori scratched his head. "I don't know," he admitted; "but it make trouble for America."

High among the tree tops a little monkey crossed their path. For a moment he paused and watched them; then he resumed his journey in the opposite direction.

A half hour later the lion roared again, and so disconcertingly close and unexpected rose the voice of thunder from the jungle beneath him that little Nkima nearly fell out of the tree through which he was passing. With a scream of

terror he scampered as high aloft as he could go and there he sat, scolding angrily.

The lion, a magnificent full-maned male, stepped into the open beneath the tree in which the trembling Nkima clung. Once again he raised his mighty voice until the ground itself trembled to the great, rolling volume of his challenge. Nkima looked down upon him and suddenly ceased to scold. Instead he leaped about excitedly, chattering and grimacing. Numa, the lion, looked up; and then a strange thing occurred. The monkey ceased its chattering and voiced a low, peculiar sound. The eyes of the lion, that had been glaring balefully upward, took on a new and almost gentle

expression. He arched his back and rubbed his side luxuriously against the bole of the tree, and from those savage jaws came a soft, purring sound. Then little Nkima dropped quickly downward through the foliage of the tree, gave a final nimble leap, and alighted upon the thick mane of the king of beasts.

2. THE HINDU

With the coming of a new day came a new activity to the camp of the conspirators. Now were the Bedauwy drinking no coffee in the muk'aad; the cards of the whites were put away and the Galla warriors played no longer at Mancala.

Zveri sat behind his folding camp table directing his aides and with the assistance of Zora and Raghunath Jafar issued ammunition to the file of armed men marching past them. Miguel Romero and the two remaining whites were supervising the distribution of loads among the porters. Savage black Kitembo moved constantly among his men, hastening laggards from belated

breakfast fires and forming those who had received their ammunition into companies. Abu Batn, the sheikh, squatted aloof with his sun-bitten warriors. They, always ready, watched with contempt the disorderly preparations of their companions.

"How many are you leaving to guard the camp?" asked Zora.

"You and Comrade Jafar will remain in charge here," replied Zveri. "Your boys and ten askaris also will remain as camp guard."

"That will be plenty," replied the girl. "There is no danger."

"No," agreed Zveri, "not now, but if that Tarzan were here it would be different. I took pains to assure myself as

to that before I chose this region for our base camp, and I have learned that he has been absent for a great while—went on some fool dirigible expedition that has never been heard from. It is almost certain that he is dead."

When the last of the blacks had received his issue of ammunition, Kitembo assembled his tribesmen at a little distance from the rest of the expedition and harangued them in a low voice. They were Basembos, and Kitembo, their chief, spoke to them in the dialect of their people.

Kitembo hated all whites. The British had occupied the land that had been the home of his people since before the memory of man; and because Kitembo,

hereditary chief, had been irreconcilable to the domination of the invaders they had deposed him, elevating a puppet to the chieftaincy.

To Kitembo, the chief—savage, cruel and treacherous—all whites were anathema, but he saw in his connection with Zveri an opportunity to be avenged upon the British; and so he had gathered about him many of his tribesmen and enlisted in the expedition that Zveri promised him would rid the land forever of the British and restore Kitembo to even greater power and glory than had formerly been the lot of Basembo chiefs. It was not, however, always easy for Kitembo to hold the interest of his people in this undertaking. The British

had greatly undermined his power and influence, so that warriors, who formerly might have been as subservient to his will as slaves, now dared openly to question his authority. There had been no demur so long as the expedition entailed no greater hardships than short marches, pleasant camps, and plenty of food, with West Coast blacks, and members of other tribes less warlike than the Basembos, to act as porters, carry the loads, and do all of the heavy work; but now, with fighting looming ahead, some of his people had desired to know just what they were going to get out of it, having, apparently, little stomach for risking their hides for the gratification of the ambitions or hatreds

of either the white Zveri or the black Kitembo.

It was for the purpose of mollifying these malcontents that Kitembo was now haranguing his warriors, promising them loot on the one hand and ruthless punishment on the other as a choice between obedience and mutiny. Some of the rewards he dangled before their imaginations might have caused Zveri and the other white members of the expedition considerable perturbation could they have understood the Basembo dialect; but perhaps a greater argument for obedience to his commands was the genuine fear that most of his followers still entertained for their pitiless chieftain.

Among the other blacks of the expedition were outlaw members of several tribes and a considerable number of porters hired in the ordinary manner to accompany what was officially described as a scientific expedition.

Abu Batn and his warriors were animated to temporary loyalty to Zveri by two motives—a lust for loot and hatred for all Nasrany as represented by the British influence in Egypt and out into the desert, which they considered their hereditary domain.

The members of other races accompanying Zveri were assumed to be motivated by noble, humanitarian aspirations; but it was, nevertheless, true

that their leader spoke to them more often of the acquisition of personal riches and power than of the advancement of the brotherhood of man or the rights of the proletariat.

It was, then, such a loosely knit, but none the less formidable expedition, that set forth this lovely morning upon the sack of the treasure vaults of mysterious Opar.

As Zora Drinov watched them depart, her beautiful, inscrutable eyes remained fixed steadfastly upon the person of Peter Zveri until he had disappeared from view along the river trail that led into the dark forest.

Was it a maid watching in trepidation the departure of her lover upon a

mission fraught with danger, or

"Perhaps he will not return," said an oily voice at her shoulder.

The girl turned her head to look into the half-closed eyes of Raghunath Jafar. "He will return, Comrade," she said. "Peter Zveri always returns to me."

"You are very sure of him," said the man, with a leer.

"It is written," replied the girl as she started to move toward her tent.

"Wait," said Jafar.

She stopped and turned toward him. "What do you want?" she asked.

"You," he replied. "What do you see in that uncouth swine, Zora? What does he know of love or beauty? I can

appreciate you, beautiful flower of the morning. With me you may attain the transcendent bliss of perfect love, for I am an adept in the cult of love. A beast like Zveri would only degrade you."

The sickening disgust that the girl felt she hid from the eyes of the man, for she realized that the expedition might be gone for days and that during that time she and Jafar would be practically alone together, except for a handful of savage black warriors whose attitude toward a matter of this nature between an alien woman and an alien man she could not anticipate; but she was none the less determined to put a definite end to his advances.

"You are playing with death, Jafar,"

she said quietly. "I am here upon no mission of love, and if Zveri should learn of what you have said to me he would kill you. Do not speak to me again on this subject."

"It will not be necessary," replied the Hindu, enigmatically. His half-closed eyes were fixed steadily upon those of the girl. For perhaps less than half a minute the two stood thus, while there crept through Zora Drinov a sense of growing weakness, a realization of approaching capitulation. She fought against it, pitting her will against that of the man. Suddenly she tore her eyes from his. She had won, but victory left her weak and trembling as might be one who had but just experienced a stubbornly

contested physical encounter. Turning quickly away, she moved swiftly toward her tent, not daring to look back for fear that she might again encounter those twin pools of vicious and malignant power that were the eyes of Raghunath Jafar; and so she did not see the oily smile of satisfaction that twisted the sensuous lips of the Hindu, nor did she hear his whispered repetition—"It will not be necessary."

As the expedition wound along the trail that leads to the foot of the barrier cliffs that hem the lower frontier of the arid plateau beyond which stand the ancient ruins that are Opar, Wayne Colt, far to the west, pushed on toward the base camp of the conspirators. To the

south, a little monkey rode upon the back of a great lion, shrilling insults now with perfect impunity at every jungle creature that crossed their path; while, with equal contempt for all lesser creatures, the mighty carnivore strode haughtily down wind, secure in the knowledge of his unquestioned might. A herd of antelope, grazing in his path, caught the acrid scent of the cat and moved nervously about; but when he came within sight of them they trotted only a short distance to one side, making a path for him; and, while he was still in sight, they resumed their feeding, for Numa, the lion, had fed well and the herbivores knew, as creatures of the wild know many things that are beyond the dull sensibilities of man, and

felt no fear of Numa with a full belly.

To others, yet far off, came the scent of the lion; and they, too, moved nervously, though their fear was less than bad been the first fear of the antelopes. These others were the great apes of the tribe of To-yat, whose mighty bulls had little cause to fear even Numa himself, though their shes and their balus might well tremble.

As the cat approached, the Mangani became more restless and more irritable. To-yat, the king ape, beat his breast and bared his great fighting fangs. Ga-yat, his powerful shoulders hunched, moved to the edge of the herd nearest the approaching danger. Zu-tho thumped a warning menace with his calloused feet.

The shes called their balus to them, and many took to the lower branches of the larger trees or sought positions close to an arboreal avenue of escape.

It was at this moment that an almost naked white man dropped from the dense foliage of a tree and alighted in their midst. Taut nerves and short tempers snapped. Roaring and snarling, the herd rushed upon the rash and hated manthing. The king ape was in the lead.

"To-yat has a short memory," said the man in the tongue of the Mangani.

For an instant the ape paused, surprised perhaps to hear the language of his kind issuing from the lips of a manthing. "I am To- yat!" he growled. "I kill."

"I am Tarzan," replied the man, "mighty hunter, mighty fighter. I come in peace."

"Kill! Kill!" roared To-yat, and the other great bulls advanced, bare-fanged, menacingly.

"Zu-tho! Ga-yat!" snapped the man, "it is I, Tarzan of the Apes"; but the bulls were nervous and frightened now, for the scent of Numa was strong in their nostrils, and the shock of Tarzan's sudden appearance had plunged them into a panic.

"Kill! Kill!" they bellowed, though as yet they did not charge, but advanced slowly, working themselves into the necessary frenzy of rage that would terminate in a sudden, blood-mad rush

that no living creature might withstand and which would leave naught but torn and bloody fragments of the object of their wrath.

And then a shrill scream broke from the lips of a great, hairy mother with a tiny balu on her back. "Numa!" she shrieked, and, turning, fled into the safety of the foliage of a nearby tree.

Instantly the shes and balus remaining upon the ground took to the trees. The bulls turned their attention for a moment from the man to the new menace. What they saw upset what little equanimity remained to them. Advancing straight toward them, his round, yellow- green eyes blazing in ferocity, was a mighty, yellow lion; and upon his back perched

a little monkey, screaming insults at them. The sight was too much for the apes of To-yat, and the king was the first to break before it. With a roar, the ferocity of which may have salved his self esteem, he leaped for the nearest tree; and instantly the others broke and fled, leaving the white giant to face the angry lion alone.

With blazing eyes the king of beasts advanced upon the man, his head lowered and flattened, his tail extended, the brush flicking. The man spoke a single word in a low tone that might have carried but a few yards. Instantly the head of the lion came up, the horrid glare died in his eyes; and at the same instant the little monkey, voicing a shrill

scream of recognition and delight, leaped over Numa's head and in three prodigious bounds was upon the shoulder of the man, his little arms encircling the bronzed neck.

"Little Nkima!" whispered Tarzan, the soft cheek of the monkey pressed against his own.

The lion strode majestically forward. He sniffed the bare legs of the man, rubbed his head against his side and lay down at his feet.

"Jad-bal-ja!" greeted the ape man.

The great apes of the tribe of To-yat watched from the safety of the trees. Their panic and their anger had subsided. "It is Tarzan," said Zu-tho.

"Yes, it is Tarzan," echoed Ga-yat.

To-yat grumbled. He did not like Tarzan, but he feared him; and now, with this new evidence of the power of the great Tarmangani, he feared him even more.

For a time Tarzan listened to the glib chattering of little Nkima. He learned of the strange Tarmangani and the many Gomangani warriors who had invaded the domain of the Lord of the Jungle.

The great apes moved restlessly in the trees, wishing to descend; but they feared Numa, and the great bulls were too heavy to travel in safety upon the high flung leafy trails along which the lesser apes might pass with safety, and so could not depart until Numa had gone.

"Go away!" cried To-yat, the King.

"Go away, and leave the Mangani in peace."

"We are going," replied the ape-man, "but you need not fear either Tarzan or the Golden Lion. We are your friends. I have told Jad-bal-ja that he is never to harm you. You may descend."

"We shall stay in the trees until he has gone," said To-yat; "he might forget."

"You are afraid," said Tarzan contemptuously. "Zu-tho or Ga-yat would not be afraid."

"Zu-tho is afraid of nothing," boasted that great bull.

Without a word Ga-yat climbed ponderously from the tree in which he had taken refuge and, if not with marked enthusiasm, at least with slight

hesitation, advanced toward Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja, the Golden Lion. His fellows eyed him intently, momentarily expecting to see him charged and mauled by the yellow-eyed destroyer that lay at Tarzan's feet watching every move of the shaggy bull. The Lord of the Jungle also watched great Numa, for none knew better than he, that a lion, however accustomed to obey his master, is still a lion. The years of their companionship, since Jad-bal-ja had been a little, spotted, fluffy ball, had never given him reason to doubt the loyalty of the carnivore, though there had been times when he had found it both difficult and dangerous to thwart some of the beast's more ferocious hereditary instincts.

Ga-yat approached, while little Nkima scolded and chattered from the safety of his master's shoulder; and the lion, blinking lazily, finally looked away. The danger, if there had been any, was over—it is the fixed, intent gaze of the lion that bodes ill.

Tarzan advanced and laid a friendly hand upon the shoulder of the ape. "This is Ga-yat," he said addressing Jad-bal-ja, "friend of Tarzan; do not harm him." He did not speak in any language of man. Perhaps the medium of communication that he used might not properly be called a language at all, but the lion and the great ape and the little Manu understood him.

"Tell the Mangani that Tarzan is the

friend of little Nkima," shrilled the monkey. "He must not harm little Nkima."

"It is as Nkima has said," the ape-man assured Ga-yat.

"The friends of Tarzan are the friends of Ga-yat," replied the great ape.

"It is well," said Tarzan, "and now I go. Tell To-yat and the others what we have said and tell them also that there are strange men in this country which is Tarzan's. Let them watch them, but do not let the men see them, for these are bad men, perhaps, who carry the thunder sticks that hurl death with smoke and fire and a great noise. Tarzan goes now to see why these men are in his country."

Zora Drinov had avoided Jafar since

the departure of the expedition to Opar. Scarcely had she left her tent, feigning a headache as an excuse, nor had the Hindu made any attempt to invade her privacy. Thus passed the first day. Upon the morning of the second Jafar summoned the head man of the askaris that had been left to guard them and to procure meat.

"Today," said Raghunath Jafar, "would be a good day to hunt. The signs are propitious. Go, therefore, into the forest, taking all your men, and do not return until the sun is low in the west. If you do this there will be presents for you, besides all the meat you can eat from the carcasses of your kills. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Bwana," replied the black.

"Take with you the boy of the woman. He will not be needed here. My boy will remain to cook for us."

"Perhaps he will not come," suggested the Negro.

"You are many, he is only one; but do not let the woman know that you are taking him."

"What are the presents?" demanded the head man.

"A piece of cloth and cartridges," replied Jafar.

"And the curved sword that you carry when we are on the march."

"No," said Jafar.

"This is not a good day to hunt,"

replied the black, turning away.

"Two pieces of cloth and fifty cartridges," suggested Jafar.

"And the curved sword," and thus, after much haggling, the bargain was made.

The head man gathered his askaris and bade them prepare for the hunt, saying that the brown bwana had so ordered, but he said nothing about any presents. When they were ready, he dispatched one to summon the white woman's servant.

"You are to accompany us on the hunt," he said to the boy.

"Who said so?" demanded Wamala.

"The brown bwana," replied Kahiya,

the head man.

Wamala laughed. "I take my orders from my mistress—not from the brown bwana."

Kahiya leaped upon him and clapped a rough palm across his mouth as two of his men seized Wamala upon either side. "You take your orders from Kahiya," he said. Hunting spears were pressed against the boy's trembling body. "Will you go upon the hunt with us?" demanded Kahiya.

"I go," replied Wamala. "I did but joke."

As Zveri led his expedition toward Opar, Wayne Colt, impatient to join the main body of the conspirators, urged his men to greater speed in their search for

the camp. The principal conspirators had entered Africa at different points that they might not arouse too much attention by their numbers. Pursuant to this plan Colt had landed on the west coast and had travelled inland a short distance by train to railhead, from which point he had had a long and arduous journey on foot; so that now, with his destination almost in sight, he was anxious to put a period to this part of his adventure. Then, too, he was curious to meet the other principals in this hazardous undertaking, Peter Zveri being the only one with whom he was acquainted.

The young American was not unmindful of the great risks he was inviting in affiliating himself with an

expedition which aimed at the peace of Europe and at the ultimate control of a large section of Northeastern Africa through the disaffection by propaganda of large and warlike native tribes, especially in view of the fact that much of their operation must be carried on within British territory, where British power was considerably more than a mere gesture. But, being young and enthusiastic, however misguided, these contingencies did not weigh heavily upon his spirits, which, far from being depressed, were upon the contrary eager and restless for action.

The tedium of the journey from the coast had been unrelieved by pleasurable or adequate companionship,

since the childish mentality of Tony could not rise above a muddy conception of Philippine independence and a consideration of the fine clothes he was going to buy when, by some vaguely visualized economic process, he was to obtain his share of the Ford and Rockefeller fortunes.

However, notwithstanding Tony's mental shortcomings, Colt was genuinely fond of the youth and as between the companionship of the Filipino or Zveri, he would have chosen the former, his brief acquaintance with the Russian in New York and San Francisco having convinced him that as a playfellow he left everything to be desired; nor had he any reason to anticipate that he would

find any more congenial associates among the conspirators.

Plodding doggedly onward, Colt was only vaguely aware of the now familiar sights and sounds of the jungle, both of which by this time, it must be admitted, had considerably palled upon him. Even had he taken particular note of the latter, it is to be doubted that his untrained ear would have caught the persistent chatter of a little monkey that followed in the trees behind him; nor would this have particularly impressed him, unless he had been able to know that this particular little monkey rode upon the shoulder of a bronzed Apollo of the forest, who moved silently in his wake along a leafy highway of the lower

terraces.

Tarzan had guessed that perhaps this white man, upon whose trail he had come unexpectedly, was making his way toward the main camp of the party of strangers for which the Lord of the Jungle was searching; and so, with the persistence and patience of the savage stalker of the jungle, he followed Wayne Colt; while little Nkima, riding upon his shoulder, berated his master for not immediately destroying the Tarmangani and all his party, for little Nkima was a bloodthirsty soul when the spilling of blood was to be accomplished by someone else.

And while Colt impatiently urged his men to greater speed and Tarzan

followed and Nkima scolded, Raghunath Jafar approached the tent of Zora Drinov. As his figure darkened the entrance, casting a shadow across the book she was reading, the girl looked up from the cot upon which she was lying.

The Hindu smiled his oily, ingratiating smile. "I came to see if your headache was better," he said.

"Thank you, no," said the girl coldly; "but perhaps with undisturbed rest I may be better soon."

Ignoring the suggestion, Jafar entered the tent and seated himself in a camp chair. "I find it lonely," he said, "since the others have gone. Do you not also?"

"No," replied Zora. "I am quite content to be alone and resting."

"Your headache developed very suddenly," said Jafar. "A short time ago you seemed quite well and animated."

The girl made no reply. She was wondering what had become of her boy, Wamala, and why he had disregarded her explicit instructions to permit no one to disturb her.

Perhaps Raghunath Jafar read her thoughts, for to East Indians are often attributed uncanny powers, however little warranted such a belief may be. However that may be, his next words suggested the possibility.

"Wamala has gone hunting with the askaris," he said.

"I gave him no such permission," said Zora.

"I took the liberty of doing so," said Jafar.

"You had no right," said the girl angrily, sitting up upon the edge of her cot. "You have presumed altogether too far, Comrade Jafar."

"Wait a moment, my dear," said the Hindu soothingly. "Let us not quarrel. As you know, I love you and love does not find confirmation in crowds. Perhaps I have presumed, but it was only for the purpose of giving me an opportunity to plead my cause without interruption; and then, too, as you know, all is fair in love and war."

"Then we may consider this as war," said the girl, "for it certainly is not love, either upon your side or upon mine.

There is another word to describe what animates you, Comrade Jafar, and that which animates me now is loathing. I could not abide you if you were the last man on earth, and when Zveri returns, I promise you that there shall be an accounting."

"Long before Zveri returns I shall have taught you to love me," said the Hindu, passionately. He arose and came toward her. The girl leaped to her feet, looking about quickly for a weapon of defense. Her cartridge belt and revolver hung over the chair in which Jafar had been sitting, and her rifle was upon the opposite side of the tent.

"You are quite unarmed," said the Hindu; "I took particular note of that

when I entered the tent. Nor will it do you any good to call for help; for there is no one in camp but you, and me, and my boy and he knows that, if he values his life, he is not to come here unless I call him."

"You are a beast," said the girl.

"Why not be reasonable, Zora?" demanded Jafar. "It would not harm you any to be kind to me, and it will make it very much easier for you. Zveri need know nothing of it, and once we are back in civilization again, if you still feel that you do not wish to remain with me I shall not try to hold you; but I am sure that I can teach you to love me and that we shall be very happy together."

"Get out!" ordered the girl. There was

neither fear nor hysteria in her voice. It was very calm and level and controlled.

To a man not entirely blinded by passion, that might have meant something—it might have meant a grim determination to carry self-defense to the very length of death—but Raghunath Jafar saw only the woman of his desire, and stepping quickly forward he seized her.

Zora Drinov was young and lithe and strong, yet she was no match for the burly Hindu, whose layers of greasy fat belied the great physical strength beneath them. She tried to wrench herself free and escape from the tent, but he held her and dragged her back. Then she turned upon him in a fury and struck

him repeatedly in the face, but he only enveloped her more closely in his embrace and bore her backward upon the cot.

3. OUT OF THE GRAVE

Wayne Colt's guide, who had been slightly in advance of the American, stopped suddenly and looked back with a broad smile. Then he pointed ahead. "The camp, Bwana!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"Thank the Lord!" exclaimed Colt with a sigh of relief.

"It is deserted," said the guide.

"It does look that way, doesn't it?" agreed Colt. "Let's have a look around," and, followed by his men, he moved in among the tents. His tired porters threw down their loads and, with the askaris, sprawled at full length beneath the shade of the trees, while Colt, followed by

Tony, commenced an investigation of the camp.

Almost immediately the young American's attention was attracted by the violent shaking of one of the tents. "There is someone or something in there," he said to Tony, as he walked briskly toward the entrance.

The sight within that met his eyes brought a sharp ejaculation to his lips — a man and woman struggling upon the ground, the former choking the bare throat of his victim while the girl struck feebly at his face with clenched fists.

So engrossed was Jafar in his unsuccessful attempt to subdue the girl that he was unaware of Colt's presence until a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder

and he was jerked violently aside.

Consumed by maniacal fury, he leaped to his feet and struck at the American only to be met with a blow that sent him reeling backward. Again he charged and again he was struck heavily upon the face. This time he went to the ground, and as he staggered to his feet, Colt seized him, wheeled him around and hurtled him through the entrance of the tent, accelerating his departure with a well-timed kick. "If he tries to come back, Tony, shoot him," he snapped at the Filipino, and then turned to assist the girl to her feet. Half carrying her, he laid her on the cot and then, finding water in a bucket, bathed her forehead, her throat and her wrists.

Outside the tent Raghunath Jafar saw the porters and the askaris lying in the shade of a tree. He also saw Antonio Mori with a determined scowl upon his face and a revolver in his hand, and with an angry imprecation he turned and made his way toward his own tent, his face livid with anger and murder in his heart.

Presently Zora Drinov opened her eyes and looked up into the solicitous face of Wayne Colt, bending over her.

From the leafy seclusion of a tree above the camp, Tarzan of the Apes overlooked the scene below. A single, whispered syllable had silenced Nkima's scolding. Tarzan had noted the violent shaking of the tent that had attracted Colt's attention, and he had

seen the precipitate ejection of the Hindu from its interior and the menacing attitude of the Filipino preventing Jafar's return to the conflict. These matters were of little interest to the ape-man. The quarrellings and defections of these people did not even arouse his curiosity. What he wished to learn was the reason for their presence here, and for the purpose of obtaining this information he had two plans. One was to keep them under constant surveillance until their acts divulged that which he wished to know. The other was to determine definitely the head of the expedition and then to enter the camp and demand the information he desired. But this he would not do until he had obtained

sufficient information to give him an advantage. What was going on within the tent he did not know, nor did he care.

For several seconds after she opened her eyes Zora Drinov gazed intently into those of the man bent upon her. "You must be the American," she said finally.

"I am Wayne Colt," he replied, "and I take it from the fact that you guessed my identity that this is Comrade Zveri's camp."

She nodded. "You came just in time, Comrade Colt," she said.

"Thank God for that," he said.

"There is no God," she reminded him.

Colt Hushed. "We are creatures of heredity and habit," he explained.

Zora Drinov smiled. "That is true," she said, "but it is our business to break a great many bad habits not only for ourselves, but for the entire world."

Since he had laid her upon the cot, Colt had been quietly appraising the girl. He had not known that there was a white woman in Zveri's camp, but had he it is certain that he would not have anticipated one at all like this girl. He would rather have visualized a female agitator capable of accompanying a band of men to the heart of Africa as a coarse and unkempt peasant woman of middle age; but this girl, from her head of glorious, wavy hair to her small well-shaped foot, suggested the antithesis of a peasant origin and, far from being

unkempt, was as trig and smart as it were possible for a woman to be under such circumstances and, in addition, she was young and beautiful.

"Comrade Zveri is absent from camp?" he asked.

"Yes, he is away on a short expedition."

"And there is no one to introduce us to one another?" he asked, with a smile.

"Oh, pardon me," she said. "I am Zora Drinov."

"I had not anticipated such a pleasant surprise," said Colt. "I expected to find nothing but uninteresting men like myself. And who was the fellow I interrupted?"

"That was Raghunath Jafar, a Hindu."

"He is one of us?" asked Colt.

"Yes," replied the girl, "but not for long—not after Peter Zveri returns."

"You mean -?"

"I mean that Peter will kill him."

Colt shrugged. "It is what he deserves," he said. "Perhaps I should have done it."

"No," said the girl, "leave that for Peter."

"Were you left alone here in this camp without any protection?" demanded Colt.

"No. Peter left my boy and ten askaris, but in some way Jafar got them all out of camp."

"You will be safe now," he said. "I shall see to that until Comrade Zveri returns. I am going now to make my camp, and I shall send two of my askaris to stand guard before your tent."

"That is good of you," she said, "but I think now that you are here it will not be necessary."

"I shall do it anyway," he said. "I shall feel safer."

"And when you have made camp, will you come and have supper with me?" she asked, and then, "Oh, I forgot, Jafar has sent my boy away, too. There is no one to cook for me."

"Then, perhaps, you will dine with me," he said. "My boy is a fairly good cook."

"I shall be delighted, Comrade Colt," she replied.

As the American left the tent, Zora Drinov lay back upon the cot with half-closed eyes. How different the man had been from what she had expected. Recalling his features, and especially his eyes, she found it difficult to believe that such a man could be a traitor to his father or to his country, but then, she realized, many a man has turned against his own for a principle. With her own people it was different. They had never had a chance. They had always been ground beneath the heel of one tyrant or another. What they were doing they believed implicitly to be for their own and for their country's good. Among

those of them who were motivated by honest conviction there could not fairly be brought any charge of treason, and yet, Russian though she was to the core, she could not help but look with contempt upon the citizens of other countries who turned against their governments to aid the ambitions of a foreign power. We may be willing to profit by the act of foreign mercenaries and traitors, but we cannot admire them.

As Colt crossed from Zora's tent to where his men lay to give the necessary instructions for the making of his camp, Raghunath Jafar watched him from the interior of his own tent. A malignant scowl clouded the countenance of the Hindu, and hatred smoldered in his eyes.

Tarzan, watching from above, saw the young American issuing instructions to his men. The personality of this young stranger had impressed Tarzan favorably. He liked him as well as he could like any stranger, for deeply ingrained in the fiber of the ape-man was the wild beast suspicion of all strangers and especially of all white strangers. As he watched him now nothing else within the range of his vision escaped him. It was thus that he saw Raghunath Jafar emerge from his tent, carrying a rifle. Only Tarzan and little Nkima saw this, and only Tarzan placed any sinister interpretation upon it.

Raghunath Jafar walked directly away from camp and entered the jungle.

Swinging silently through the trees, Tarzan of the Apes followed him. Jafar made a half circle of the camp just within the concealing verdure of the jungle, and then he halted. From where he stood the entire camp was visible to him, but his own position was concealed by foliage.

Colt was watching the disposition of his loads and the pitching of his tent. His men were busy with the various duties assigned to them by their headman. They were tired and there was little talking. For the most part they worked in silence, and an unusual quiet pervaded the scene —a quiet that was suddenly and unexpectedly shattered by an anguished scream and the report of a rifle, blending

so closely that it was impossible to say which had preceded the other. A bullet whizzed by Colt's head and nipped the lobe off the ear of one of his men standing behind him. Instantly the peaceful activities of the camp were supplanted by pandemonium. For a moment there was a difference of opinion as to the direction from which the shot and the scream had come, and then Colt saw a wisp of smoke rising from the jungle just beyond the edge of camp.

"There it is," he said, and started toward the point.

The headman of the askaris stopped him. "Do not go, Bwana," he said. "Perhaps it is an enemy. Let us fire into

the jungle first."

"No," said Colt, "we will investigate first. Take some of your men in from the right, and I'll take the rest in from the left. We'll work around slowly through the jungle until we meet."

"Yes, Bwana," said the headman, and calling his men he gave the necessary instructions.

No sound of flight or any suggestion of a living presence greeted the two parties as they entered the jungle; nor had they discovered any signs of a marauder when, a few moments later, they made contact with one another. They were now formed in a half circle that bent back into the jungle and, at a word from Colt, they advanced toward

the camp.

It was Colt who found Raghunath Jafar lying dead just at the edge of camp. His right hand grasped his rifle. Protruding from his heart was the shaft of a sturdy arrow.

The Negroes gathering around the corpse looked at one another questioningly and then back into the jungle and up into the trees. One of them examined the arrow. "It is not like any arrow I have ever seen," he said. "It was not made by the hand of man."

Immediately the blacks were filled with superstitious fears.

"The shot was meant for the bwana," said one; "therefore the demon who shot the arrow is a friend of our bwana. We

need not be afraid."

This explanation satisfied the blacks, but it did not satisfy Wayne Colt. He was puzzling over it as he walked back into camp, after giving orders that the Hindu be buried.

Zora Drinov was standing in the entrance to her tent, and as she saw him she came to meet him. "What was it?" she asked. "What happened?"

"Comrade Zveri will not kill Raghunath Jafar," he said.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because Raghunath Jafar is already dead."

"Who could have shot the arrow?" she asked, after he had told her of the

manner of the Hindu's death.

"I haven't the remotest idea," he admitted. "It is an absolute mystery, but it means that the camp is being watched and that we must be very careful not to go into the jungle alone. The men believe that the arrow was fired to save me from an assassin's bullet; and while it is entirely possible that Jafar may have been intending to kill me, I believe that if I had gone into the jungle alone instead of him it would have been I that would be lying out there dead now. Have you been bothered at all by natives since you made camp here, or have you had any unpleasant experiences with them at all?"

"We have not seen a native since we

entered this camp. We have often commented upon the fact that the country seems to be entirely deserted and uninhabited, notwithstanding the fact that it is filled with game."

"This thing may help to account for the fact that it is uninhabited," suggested Colt, "or rather apparently uninhabited. We may have unintentionally invaded the country of some unusually ferocious tribe that takes this means of acquainting newcomers with the fact that they are persona non grata."

"You say one of our men was wounded?" asked Zora.

"Nothing serious. He just had his ear nicked a little."

"Was he near you?"

"He was standing right behind me," replied Colt.

"I think there is no doubt that Jafar meant to kill you," said Zora.

"Perhaps," said Colt, "but he did not succeed. He did not even kill my appetite; and if I can succeed in calming the excitement of my boy, we shall have supper presently."

From a distance Tarzan and Nkima watched the burial of Raghunath Jafar and a little later saw the return of Kahiya and his askaris with Zora's boy Wamala, who had been sent out of camp by Jafar.

"Where," said Tarzan to Nkima, "are all the many Tarmangani and Gomangani that you told me were in this camp?"

"They have taken their thundersticks

and gone away," replied the little Manu. "They are hunting for Nkima."

Tarzan of the Apes smiled one of his rare smiles. "We shall have to hunt them down and find out what they are about, Nkima," he said.

"But it grows dark in the jungle soon," pleaded Nkima, "and then will Sabor, and Sheeta, and Numa, and Histah be abroad, and they, too, search for little Nkima."

Darkness had fallen before Colt's boy announced supper, and in the meantime Tarzan, changing his plans, had returned to the trees above the camp. He was convinced that there was something irregular in the aims of the expedition whose base he had discovered. He knew

from the size of the camp that it had contained many men. Where they had gone and for what purpose were matters that he must ascertain. Feeling that this expedition, whatever its purpose, might naturally be a principal topic of conversation in the camp, he sought a point of vantage wherefrom he might overhear the conversations that passed between the two white members of the party beneath him; and so it was that as Zora Drinov and Wayne Colt seated themselves at the supper table, Tarzan of the Apes crouched amid the foliage of a great tree just above them.

"You have passed through a rather trying ordeal today," said Colt, "but you do not appear to be any the worse for it.

I should think that your nerves would be shaken."

"I have passed through too much already in my life, Comrade Colt, to have any nerves left at all," replied the girl.

"I suppose so," said Colt. "You must have passed through the revolution in Russia."

"I was only a little girl at the time," she explained, "but I remember it quite distinctly."

Colt was gazing at her intently. "From your appearance," he ventured, "I imagine that you were not by birth of the proletariat."

"My father was a laborer. He died in exile under the Czarist regime. That was

how I learned to hate everything monarchistic and capitalistic. And when I was offered this opportunity to join Comrade Zveri, I saw another field in which to encompass my revenge, while at the same time advancing the interests of my class throughout the world."

"When I last saw Zveri in the United States," said Colt, "he evidently had not formulated the plans he is now carrying out, as he never mentioned any expedition of this sort. When I received orders to join him here, none of the details was imparted to me; and so I am rather in the dark as to what his purpose is."

"It is only for good soldiers to obey," the girl reminded him.

"Yes, I know that," agreed Colt, "but at the same time even a poor soldier may act more intelligently sometimes if he knows the objective."

"The general plan, of course, is no secret to any of us here," said Zora, "and I shall betray no confidence in explaining it to you. It is a part of a larger plan to embroil the capitalistic powers in wars and revolutions to such an extent that they will be helpless to unite against us.

"Our emissaries have been laboring for a long time toward the culmination of the revolution in India that will distract the attention and the armed forces of Great Britain. We are not succeeding so well in Mexico as we had planned, but

there is still hope, while our prospects in the Philippines are very bright. The conditions in China you well know. She is absolutely helpless, and we have hope that with our assistance she will eventually constitute a real menace to Japan. Italy is a very dangerous enemy, and it is largely for the purpose of embroiling her in war with France that we are here."

"But just how can that be accomplished in Africa?" asked Colt.

"Comrade Zveri believes that it will be simple," said the girl. "The suspicion and jealousy that exist between France and Italy are well known; their race for naval supremacy amounts almost to a scandal. At the first overt act of either

against the other, war might easily result, and a war between Italy and France would embroil all of Europe."

"But just how can Zveri, operating in the wilds of Africa, embroil Italy and France in war?" demanded the American.

"There is now in Rome a delegation of French and Italian Reds engaged in this very business. The poor men know only a part of the plan and, unfortunately for them, it will be necessary to martyr them in the cause for the advancement of our world plan. They have been furnished with papers outlining a plan for the invasion of Italian Somaliland by French troops. At the proper time one of Comrade Zveri's secret agents in Rome

will reveal the plot to the Fascist Government; and almost simultaneously a considerable number of our own blacks, disguised in the uniforms of French native troops, led by the white men of our expedition, uniformed as French officers, will invade Italian Somaliland.

"In the meantime our agents are carrying on in Egypt and Abyssinia and among the native tribes of North Africa, and already we have definite assurance that with the attention of France and Italy distracted by war and Great Britain embarrassed by a revolution in India the natives of North Africa will arise in what will amount almost to a holy war for the purpose of throwing off the yoke

of foreign domination and the establishment of autonomous soviet states throughout the entire area."

"A daring and stupendous undertaking," exclaimed Colt, "but one that will require enormous resources in money as well as men."

"It is Comrade Zveri's pet scheme," said the girl. "I do not know, of course, all the details of his organization and backing; but I do know that while he is already well financed for the initial operations, he is depending to a considerable extent upon this district for furnishing most of the necessary gold to carry on the tremendous operations that will be necessary to insure final success."

"Then I am afraid he is foredoomed to failure," said Colt, "for he surely cannot find enough wealth in this savage country to carry on any such stupendous program."

"Comrade Zveri believes to the contrary," said Zora; "in fact, the expedition that he is now engaged upon is for the purpose of obtaining the treasure he seeks."

Above them, in the darkness, the silent figure of the apeman lay stretched at ease upon a great branch, his keen ears absorbing all that passed between them, while curled in sleep upon his bronzed back lay little Nkima, entirely oblivious of the fact that he might have listened to words well calculated to

shake the foundations of organized government throughout the world.

"And where," demanded Colt, "if it is no secret, does Comrade Zveri expect to find such a great store of gold?"

"In the famous treasure vaults of Opar," replied the girl. "You certainly must have heard of them."

"Yes," answered Colt, "but I never considered them other than purely legendary. The folk lore of the entire world is filled with these mythical treasure vaults."

"But Opar is no myth," replied Zora.

If the startling information divulged to him affected Tarzan, it induced no outward manifestation. Listening in silence imperturbably, trained to the

utmost refinement of self control, he might have been part and parcel of the great branch upon which he lay, or of the shadowy foliage which hid him from view.

For a time Colt sat in silence, contemplating the stupendous possibilities of the plan that, he had just heard unfolded. It seemed to him little short of the dream of a mad man, and he did not believe that it had the slightest chance for success. What he did realize was the jeopardy in which it placed the members of the expedition, for he believed that there would be no escape for any of them once Great Britain, France, and Italy were apprised of their activities; and, without conscious

volition, his fears seemed centered upon the safety of the girl. He knew the type of people with whom he was working and so he knew that it would be dangerous to voice a doubt as to the practicability of the plan, for scarcely without exception the agitators whom he had met had fallen naturally into two separate categories, the impractical visionary, who believed everything that he wanted to believe, and the shrewd knave, actuated by motives of avarice, who hoped to profit either in power or riches by any change that he might be instrumental in bringing about in the established order of things. It seemed horrible that a young and beautiful girl should have been enticed into such a desperate situation. She

seemed far too intelligent to be merely a brainless tool, and even his brief association with her made it most difficult for him to believe that she was a knave.

"The undertaking is certainly fraught with grave dangers," he said, "and as it is primarily a job for men I cannot understand why you were permitted to face the dangers and hardships that must of necessity be entailed by the carrying out of such a perilous campaign."

"The life of a woman is of no more value than that of a man," she declared, "and I was needed. There is always a great deal of important and confidential clerical work to be done which Comrade Zveri can entrust only to one in

whom he has implicit confidence. He reposes such trust in me and, in addition, I am a trained typist and stenographer. Those reasons in themselves are sufficient to explain why I am here, but another very important one is that I desire to be with Comrade Zveri."

In the girl's words Colt saw the admission of a romance; but to his American mind this was all the greater reason why the girl should not have been brought along, for he could not conceive of a man exposing the girl he loved to such dangers.

Above them Tarzan of the Apes moved silently. First he reached over his shoulder and lifted little Nkima from his back. Nkima would have objected, but

the veriest shadow of a whisper silenced him. The ape-man had various methods of dealing with enemies—methods that he had learned and practiced long before he had been cognizant of the fact that he was not an ape. Long before he had ever seen another white man he had terrorized the Gomangani, the black men of the forest and the jungle, and had learned that a long step toward defeating an enemy may be taken by first demoralizing its morale. He knew now that these people were not only the invaders of his own domain and, therefore, his own personal enemies, but that they threatened the peace of Great Britain, which was dear to him, and of the rest of the civilized world, with

which, at least, Tarzan had no quarrels. It is true that he held civilization in general in considerable contempt, but in even greater contempt he held those who interfered with the rights of others or with the established order of jungle or city.

As Tarzan left the tree in which he had been hiding, the two below him were no more aware of his departure than they had been of his presence. Colt found himself attempting to fathom the mystery of love. He knew Zveri, and it appeared inconceivable to him that a girl of Zora Drinov's type could be attracted by a man of Zveri's stamp. Of course, it was none of his affair, but it bothered him nevertheless because it seemed to

constitute a reflection upon the girl and to lower her in his estimation. He was disappointed in her, and Colt did not like to be disappointed in people to whom he had been attracted.

"You knew Comrade Zveri in America, did you not?" asked Zora.

"Yes," replied Colt.

"What do you think of him?" she demanded.

"I found him a very forceful character," replied Colt. "I believe him to be a man who would carry on to a conclusion anything that he attempted. No better man could have been chosen for this mission."

If the girl had hoped to surprise Colt into an expression of personal regard or

dislike for Zveri, she had failed, but if such was the fact she was too wise to pursue the subject further. She realized that she was dealing with a man from whom she would get little information that he did not wish her to have; but on the other hand a man who might easily wrest information from others, for he was that type which seemed to invite confidences, suggesting as he did, in his attitude, his speech and his manner a sterling uprightness of character that could not conceivably abuse a trust. She rather liked this upstanding young American, and the more she saw of him the more difficult she found it to believe that he had turned traitor to his family, his friends and his country. However,

she knew that many honorable men had sacrificed everything to a conviction and, perhaps, he was one of these. She hoped that this was the explanation.

Their conversation drifted to various subjects—to their lives and experiences in their native lands—to the happenings that had befallen them since they had entered Africa, and, finally, to the experiences of the day. And while they talked, Tarzan of the Apes returned to the tree above them, but this time he did not come alone.

"I wonder if we shall ever know," she said, "who killed Jafar."

"It is a mystery that is not lessened by the fact that none of the askaris could recognize the type of arrow with which

he was slain, though that, of course, might be accounted for by the fact that none of them are of this district."

"It has considerably shaken the nerves of the men," said Zora, "and I sincerely hope that nothing similar occurs again. I have found that it does not take much to upset these natives, and while most of them are brave in the face of known dangers, they are apt to be entirely demoralized by anything bordering on the supernatural."

"I think they felt better when they got the Hindu planted under ground," said Colt, "though some of them were not at all sure that he might not return anyway."

"There is not much chance of that," rejoined the girl, laughing.

She had scarcely ceased speaking when the branches above them rustled, and a heavy body plunged downward to the table top between them, crushing the flimsy piece of furniture to earth.

The two sprang to their feet, Colt whipping out his revolver and the girl stifling a cry as she stepped back. Colt felt the hairs rise upon his head and goose flesh form upon his arms and back, for there between them lay the dead body of Raghunath Jafar upon its back, the dead eyes rolled backward staring up into the night.

4. INTO THE LION'S DEN

Nkima was angry. He had been awakened from the depth of a sound sleep, which was bad enough, but now his master had set out upon such foolish errands through the darkness of the night that, mingled with Nkima's scoldings were the whimperings of fear, for in every shadow he saw Sheeta, the panther, lurking and in each gnarled limb of the forest the likeness of Histah, the snake. While Tarzan had remained in the vicinity of the camp, Nkima had not been particularly perturbed, and when he had returned to the tree with his burden the little Manu was sure that he was going to remain there for the rest of the night; but instead he had departed immediately and

now was swinging through the black forest with an evident fixity of purpose that boded ill for either rest or safety for little Nkima during the remainder of the night.

Whereas Zveri and his party had started slowly along winding jungle trails, Tarzan moved almost in an air line through the jungle toward his destination, which was the same as that of Zveri. The result was that before Zveri reached the almost perpendicular crag which formed the last and greatest natural barrier to the forbidden valley of Opar, Tarzan and Nkima had disappeared beyond the summit and were crossing the desolate valley, upon the far side of which loomed the great

walls and lofty spires and turrets of ancient Opar. In the bright light of the African sun, domes and minarets shone red and gold above the city; and once again the ape-man experienced the same feeling that had impressed him upon the occasion, now years gone, when his eyes had first alighted upon the splendid panorama of mystery that had unfolded before them.

No evidence of ruin was apparent at this great distance. Once again, in imagination, he beheld a city of magnificent beauty, its streets and temples thronged with people; and once again his mind toyed with the mystery of the city's origin, when back somewhere in the dim vista of antiquity a race of

rich and powerful people had conceived and built this enduring monument to a vanished civilization. It was possible to conceive that Opar might have existed when a glorious civilization flourished upon the great continent of Atlantis, which, sinking beneath the waves of the ocean, left this lost colony to death and decay.

That its few inhabitants were direct descendants of its once powerful builders seemed not unlikely in view of the rites and ceremonies of the ancient religion which they practiced, as well as by the fact that by scarcely any other hypothesis could the presence of a white-skinned people be accounted for in this remote inaccessible African

vastness.

The peculiar laws of heredity, which seemed operative in Opar as in no other portion of the world, suggested an origin differing materially from that of other men; for it is a peculiar fact that the men of Opar bear little or no resemblance to the females of their kind. The former are short, heavy set, hairy, almost ape-like in their conformation and appearance, while the women are slender, smooth skinned and often beautiful. There were certain physical and mental attributes of the men that had suggested to Tarzan the possibility that at some time in the past the colonists had, either by choice or necessity, interbred with the great apes of the district; and he also was aware

that owing, to the scarcity of victims for the human sacrifice, which their rigid worship demanded it was common practice among them to use for this purpose either males or females who deviated considerably from the standard time had established for each sex, with the result that through the laws of natural selection an overwhelming majority of the males would be grotesque and the females normal and beautiful.

It was with such reveries that the mind of the ape-man was occupied as he crossed the desolate valley of Opar, which lay shimmering in the bright sunlight that was relieved only by the shade of an occasional gnarled and stunted tree. Ahead of him and to his

right was the small rocky hillock, upon the summit of which was located the outer entrance to the treasure vaults of Opar. But with this he was not now interested, his sole object being to forewarn La of the approach of the invaders that she might prepare her defense.

It had been long since Tarzan had visited Opar; but upon that last occasion, when he had restored La to her loyal people and re- established her supremacy following the defeat of the forces of Cadj, the high priest, and the death of the latter beneath the fangs and talons of Jad-bal-ja, he had carried away with him for the first time a conviction of the friendliness of all of

the people of Opar. He had for years known that La was secretly his friend, but her savage, grotesque retainers always heretofore had feared and hated him; and so it was now that he approached Opar as one might approach any citadel of one's friends, without stealth and without any doubt but that he would be received in friendship.

Nkima, however, was not so sure. The gloomy ruins terrified him. He scolded and pleaded, but all to no avail; and at last terror overcame his love and loyalty so that, as they were approaching the outer wall, which loomed high above them, he leaped from his master's shoulder and scampered away from the ruins that confronted him, for deep in his

little heart was an abiding fear of strange and unfamiliar places, that not even his confidence in Tarzan could overcome.

Nkima's keen eyes had noted the rocky hillock which they had passed a short time before, and to the summit of this he scampered as a comparatively safe haven from which to await the return of his master from Opar.

As Tarzan approached the narrow fissure which alone gave entrance through the massive outer walls of Opar, he was conscious, as he had been years before on the occasion of his first approach to the city, of unseen eyes upon him, and at any moment he expected to hear a greeting when the watchers recognized him.

Without hesitation, however, and with no apprehensiveness, Tarzan entered the narrow cleft and descended a flight of concrete steps that led to the winding passage through the thick outer wall. The narrow court, beyond which loomed the inner wall, was silent and deserted; nor was the silence broken as he crossed it to another narrow passage which led through it; at the end of this he came to a broad avenue, upon the opposite side of which stood the crumbling ruins of the great temple of Opar.

In silence and solitude he entered the frowning portal, flanked by its rows of stately pillars, from the capitals of which grotesque birds glared down upon him as they had stared through all the

countless ages since forgotten hands had carved them from the solid rock of the monoliths. On through the temple toward the inner courtyard, where he knew the activities of the city were carried on, Tarzan made his way in silence. Perhaps another man would have given notice of his coming, voicing a greeting to apprise them of his approach; but Tarzan of the Apes in many respects is less man than beast. He goes the silent way of most beasts, wasting no breath in useless mouthing. He had not sought to approach Opar stealthily, and he knew that he had not arrived unseen. Why a greeting was delayed he did not know, unless it was that, after carrying word of his coming to La, they were waiting for her

instructions.

Through the main corridor Tarzan made his way, noting again the tablets of gold with their ancient and long undeciphered hieroglyphics. Through the chamber of the seven golden pillars he passed and across the golden floor of an adjoining room, and still only silence and emptiness, yet with vague suggestions of figures moving in the galleries that overlooked the apartment through which he was passing; and then at last he came to a heavy door beyond which he was sure he would find either priests or priestesses of this great temple of the Flaming God. Fearlessly he pushed it open and stepped across the threshold, and in the same instant a

knotted club descended heavily upon his head, felling him senseless to the floor.

Instantly he was surrounded by a score of gnarled and knotted men; their matted beards fell low upon their hairy chests as they rolled forward upon their short, crooked legs. They chattered in low, growling gutturals as they bound their victim's wrists and ankles with stout thongs, and then they lifted him and carried him along other corridors and through the crumbling glories of magnificent apartments to a great tiled room, at one end of which a young woman sat upon a massive throne, resting upon a dais a few feet above the level of the floor.

Standing beside the girl upon the

throne was another of the gnarled and knotted men. Upon his arms and legs were bands of gold and about his throat many necklaces. Upon the floor beneath these two was a gathering of men and women—the priests and priestesses of the Flaming God of Opar.

Tarzan's captors carried their victim to the foot of the throne and tossed his body upon the tile floor. Almost simultaneously the ape-man regained consciousness and, opening his eyes, looked about him.

"Is it he?" demanded the girl upon the throne.

One of Tarzan's captors saw that he had regained consciousness and with the help of others dragged him roughly to his

feet.

"It is he, Oah," exclaimed the man at her side.

An expression of venomous hatred convulsed the face of the woman. "God has been good to His high priestess," she said. "I have prayed for this day to come as I prayed for the other, and as the other came so has this."

Tarzan looked quickly from the woman to the man at her side. "What is the meaning of this, Dooth?" he demanded. "Where is La? Where is your high priestess?"

The girl rose angrily from her throne. "Know, man of the outer world, that I am high priestess. I, Oah, am high priestess of the Flaming God."

Tarzan ignored her. "Where is La?" he demanded again of Dooth.

Oah flew into a frenzy of rage. "She is dead!" she screamed, advancing to the edge of the dais as though to leap upon Tarzan, the jeweled handle of her sacrificial knife gleaming in the sunlight, which poured through a great aperture where a portion of the ancient roof of the throne room had fallen in. "She is dead!" she repeated. "Dead as you will be when next we honor the Flaming God with the life blood of a man. La was weak. She loved you, and thus she betrayed her God, who had chosen you for sacrifice. But Oah is strong—strong with the hate she has nursed in her breast since Tarzan and La stole the throne of Opar from her.

Take him away!" she screamed to his captors, "and let me not see him again until I behold him bound to the altar in the court of sacrifice."

They cut the bonds now that secured Tarzan's ankles so that he might walk; but even though his wrists were tied behind him it was evident that they still held him in great fear, for they put ropes about his neck and his arms and led him as man might lead a lion. Down into the familiar darkness of the pits of Opar they led him, lighting the way with torches; and when finally they had brought him to the dungeon in which he was to be confined it was some time before they could muster sufficient courage to cut the bonds that held his wrists, and even then

they did not do so until they had again bound his ankles securely so that they might escape from the chamber and bolt the door before he could release his feet and pursue them. Thus greatly had the prowess of Tarzan impressed itself upon the brains of the crooked priests of Opar.

Tarzan had been in the dungeons of Opar before and, before, he had escaped; and so he set to work immediately seeking for a means of escape from his present predicament, for he knew that the chances were that Oah would not long delay the moment for which she had prayed—the instant when she should plunge the gleaming sacrificial knife into his breast. Quickly

removing the thongs from his ankles, Tarzan groped his way carefully along the walls of his cell until he had made a complete circuit of it; then, similarly, he examined the floor. He discovered that he was in a rectangular chamber about ten feet long and eight wide and that by standing upon his tiptoes he could just reach the ceiling. The only opening was the door through which he had entered, in which an aperture, protected by iron bars, gave the cell its only ventilation but, as it opened upon a dark corridor, admitted no light. Tarzan examined the bolts and the hinges of the door, but they were, as he had conjectured, too substantial to be forced; and then, for the first time, he saw that a priest sat on

guard in the corridor without, thus putting a definite end to any thoughts of surreptitious escape.

For three days and nights priests relieved each other at intervals; but upon the morning of the fourth day Tarzan discovered that the corridor was empty, and once again he turned his attention actively to thoughts of escape.

It had so happened that at the time of Tarzan's capture his hunting knife had been hidden by the tail of the leopard skin that formed his loin cloth; and, in their excitement, the ignorant, half-human priests of Opar had overlooked it when they took his other weapons away from him. Doubly thankful was Tarzan for this good fortune, since, for

sentimental reasons, he cherished the hunting knife of his long dead sire the knife that had started him upon the upward path to ascendancy over the beasts of the jungle that day, long gone, when, more by accident than intent, he had plunged it into the heart of Bolgani, the gorilla. But for more practical reasons it was, indeed, a gift from the gods, since it afforded him not only a weapon of defense, but an instrument wherewith he might seek to make good his escape.

Years before had Tarzan of the Apes escaped from the pits of Opar, and so he well knew the construction of their massive walls. Granite blocks of various sizes, hand hewn to fit with

perfection, were laid in courses without mortar, the one wall that he had passed through having been fifteen feet in thickness. Fortune had favored him upon that occasion in that he had been placed in a cell which, unknown to the present inhabitants of Opar, had a secret entrance, the opening of which was closed by a single layer of loosely laid courses that the ape-man had been able to remove without great effort.

Naturally he sought for a similar condition in the cell in which he now found himself, but his search was not crowned with success. No single stone could be budged from its place, anchored as each was by the tremendous weight of the temple walls they

supported; and so, perforce, he turned his attention toward the door.

He knew that there were few locks in Opar since the present degraded inhabitants of the city had not developed sufficient ingenuity either to repair old ones or construct new. Those locks that he had seen were ponderous affairs opened by huge keys and were, he guessed, of an antiquity that reached back to the days of Atlantis; but, for the most part, heavy bolts and bars secured such doors as might be fastened at all, and he guessed that it was such a crude contrivance that barred his way to freedom.

Groping his way to the door, he examined the small opening that let in

air. It was about shoulder high and perhaps ten inches square and was equipped with four vertical iron bars half an inch square, set an inch and a half apart—too close to permit him to insert his hands between them, but this fact did not entirely discourage the ape-man. Perhaps there was another way.

His steel thewed fingers closed upon the center of one of the bars. With his left hand he clung to another, and bracing one knee high against the door he slowly flexed his right elbow. Rolling like plastic steel, the muscles of his forearm and his biceps swelled, until gradually the bar bent inward toward him. The ape-man smiled as he took a new grip upon the iron bar. Then he surged

backward with all his weight and all the strength of that mighty arm, and the bar bent to a wide U as he wrenched it from its sockets. He tried to insert his arm through the new opening, but it still was too small. A moment later another bar was torn away, and now, his arm through the aperture to its full length, he groped for the bar or bolts that held him prisoner.

At the fullest extent to which he could reach his fingertips downward against the door, he just touched the top of the bar, which was a timber about three inches in thickness. Its other dimensions, however, he was unable to ascertain, or whether it would release by raising one end or must be drawn back through

keepers. It was most tantalizing! To have freedom almost within one's grasp and yet to be denied it was maddening.

Withdrawing his arm from the aperture, he removed his hunting knife from his scabbard and, again reaching outward, pressed the point of the blade, into the wood of the bar. At first he tried lifting the bar by this means, but his knife point only pulled out of the wood. Next, he attempted to move the bar backward in a horizontal plane, and in this he was successful. Though the distance that he moved it in one effort was small, he was satisfied, for he knew that patience would win its reward. Never more than a quarter of an inch, sometimes only a sixteenth of an inch at a time, Tarzan

slowly worked the bar backward. He worked methodically and carefully, never hurrying, never affected by nervous anxiety, although he never knew at what moment a savage warrior priest of Opar might make his rounds; and at last his efforts were rewarded, and the door swung upon its hinges.

Stepping quickly out, Tarzan shot the bar behind him and, knowing no other avenue of escape, turned back up the corridor along which his captors had conducted him to his prison cell. Faintly in the distance he discerned a lessening darkness, and toward this he moved upon silent feet. As the light increased slightly, he saw that the corridor was about ten feet wide and that at irregular

intervals it was pierced by doors, all of which were closed and secured by bolts or bars.

A hundred yards from the cell in which he had been incarcerated he crossed a transverse corridor, and here he paused an instant to investigate with palpitating nostrils and keen eyes and ears. In neither direction could he discern any light, but faint sounds came to his ears indicating that life existed somewhere behind the doors along this corridor, and his nostrils were assailed by a medley of scents—the sweet aroma of incense, the odor of human bodies and the acrid scent of carnivores; but there was nothing there to attract his further investigation, so he continued on his way

along the corridor toward the rapidly increasing light ahead.

He had advanced but a short distance when his keen ears detected the sound of approaching footsteps. Here was no place to risk discovery. Slowly he fell back toward the transverse corridor, seeking to take concealment there until the danger had passed; but it was already closer than he had imagined, and an instant later half a dozen priests of Opar turned into the corridor from one just ahead of him. They saw him instantly and halted, peering through the gloom.

"It is the ape-man," said one. "He has escaped," and with their knotted cudgels and their wicked knives they advanced

upon him.

That they came slowly evidenced the respect in which they held his prowess, but still they came; and Tarzan fell back, for even he, armed only with a knife, was no match for six of these savage half- men with their heavy cudgels. As he retreated, a plan formed quickly in his alert mind, and when he reached the transverse corridor he backed slowly into it. Knowing that now that he was hidden from them they would come very slowly, fearing that he might be lying in wait for them, he turned and ran swiftly along the corridor. He passed several doors, not because he was looking for any door in particular, but because he knew that the more difficult it was for

them to find him the greater his chances of eluding them; but at last he paused before one secured by a huge wooden bar. Quickly he raised it, opened the door and stepped within just as the leader of the priests came into view at the intersection of the corridor.

The instant that Tarzan stepped into the dark and gloomy chamber beyond he knew that he had made a fatal blunder. Strong in his nostrils was the acrid scent of Numa, the lion; the silence of the pit was shattered by a savage roar; in the dark background he saw two yellow-green eyes flaming with hate, and then the lion charged.

5. BEFORE THE WALLS OF OPAR

Peter Zveri established his camp on the edge of the forest at the foot of the barrier cliff that guards the desolate valley of Opar. Here he left his porters and a few askaris as guards and then, with his fighting men, guided by Kitembo, commenced the arduous climb to the summit.

None of them had ever come this way before, not even Kitembo, though he had known the exact location of Opar from one who had seen it; and so when the first view of the distant city broke upon them they were filled with awe, and vague questionings arose in the primitive

minds of the black men.

It was a silent party that filed across the dusty plain toward Opar; nor were the blacks the only members of the expedition to be assailed with doubt, for in their black tents on distant deserts the Arabs had imbibed with the milk of their mothers the fear of jan and ghrol and had heard, too, of the fabled city of Nimmr, which it was not well for men to approach. With such thoughts and forebodings were the minds of the men filled as they approached the towering ruins of the ancient Atlantian city.

From the top of the great boulder that guards the outer entrance to the treasure vaults of Opar a little monkey watched the progress of the expedition across the

valley. He was a very much distraught little monkey, for in his heart he knew that his master should be warned of the coming of these many Gomangani and Tarmangani with their thundersticks; but fear of the forbidding ruins gave him pause, and so he danced about upon the top of the rock, chattering and scolding. The warriors of Peter Zveri marched right past and never paid any attention to him; and as they marched, other eyes were upon them, peering from out of the foliage of the trees that grew rank among the ruins.

If any member of the party saw a little monkey scampering quickly past upon their right, or saw him clamber up the ruined outer wail of Opar, he doubtless

gave the matter no thought; for his mind, like the minds of all his fellows, was occupied by speculation as to what lay within that gloomy pile.

Kitembo did not know the location of the treasure vaults of Opar. He had but agreed to guide Zveri to the city, but, like Zveri, he entertained no doubt but that it would be easy to discover the vaults if they were unable to wring its location from any of the inhabitants of the city. Surprised, indeed, would they have been had they known that no living Oparian knew either of the location of the treasure vaults or of their existence and that, among all living men, only Tarzan and some of his Waziri warriors knew their location or how to reach

them.

"The place is nothing but a deserted ruin," said Zveri to one of his white companions.

"It is an ominous looking place though," replied the other, "and it has already had its effect upon the men."

Zveri shrugged. "This might frighten them at night, but not in broad daylight; they are certainly not that yellow."

They were close to the ruined outer wall now, which frowned down upon them menacingly, and here they halted while several searched for an opening. Abu Batn was the first to find it—the narrow crevice with the flight of concrete steps leading upward. "Here is a way through, Comrade," he called to

Zveri.

"Take some of your men with you and reconnoiter," ordered Zveri.

Abu Batn summoned a half dozen of his black men, who advanced with evident reluctance.

Gathering the skirt of his thob about him, the sheikh entered the crevice, and at the same instant a piercing screech broke from the interior of the ruined city —a long drawn, high pitched shriek that ended in a series of low moans. The Bedauwy halted. The blacks froze in terrified rigidity.

"Go on!" yelled Zveri. "A scream can't kill you!"

"Wullah!" exclaimed one of the Arabs; "but jan can."

"Get out of there, then!" cried Zveri angrily. "If you damned cowards are afraid to go, I'll go in myself."

There was no argument. The Arabs stepped aside. And then a little monkey, screaming with terror, appeared upon the top of the wall from the inside of the city. His sudden and noisy appearance brought every eye to bear upon him. They saw him turn an affrighted glance backward over his shoulder and then, with a loud scream, leap far out to the ground below. It scarcely seemed that he could survive the jump, yet it barely sufficed to interrupt his flight, for he was on his way again in an instant as, with prodigious leaps and bounds, he fled screaming out across the barren plains.

It was the last straw. The shaken nerves of the superstitious blacks gave way to the sudden strain; and almost with one accord they turned and fled the dismal city, while close upon their heels were Abu Batn and his desert warriors in swift and undignified retreat.

Peter Zveri and his three white companions, finding themselves suddenly deserted, looked at one another questioningly. "The dirty cowards!" exclaimed Zveri angrily. "You go back, Mike, and see if you can rally them. We are going on in, now that we are here."

Michael Dorsky, only too glad of any assignment that took him farther away from Opar, started at a brisk run after the fleeing warriors, while Zveri turned

once more into the fissure with Miguel Romero and Paul Ivitch at his heels.

The three men passed through the outer wall and entered the court yard, across which they saw the lofty inner wall rising before them. Romero was the first to find the opening that led to the city proper and, calling to his fellows, he stepped boldly into the narrow passage. Then once again the hideous scream shattered the brooding silence of the ancient temple.

The three men halted. Zveri wiped the perspiration from his brow. "I think we have gone as far as we can alone," he said. "Perhaps we had all better go back and rally the men. There is no sense in doing anything foolhardy." Miguel

Romero threw him a contemptuous sneer, but Ivitch assured Zveri that the suggestion met with his entire approval.

The two men crossed the court quickly without waiting to see whether the Mexican followed them or not and were soon once again outside the city.

"Where is Miguel?" asked Ivitch.

Zveri looked around. "Romero!" he shouted in a loud voice, but there was no reply.

"It must have got him," said Ivitch with a shudder.

"Small loss," grumbled Zveri.

But whatever the thing was that Ivitch feared, it had not, as yet, gotten the young Mexican, who, after watching his

companions' precipitate flight, had continued on through the opening in the inner wall determined to have at least one look at the interior of the ancient city of Opar that he had travelled so far to see and of the fabulous wealth of which he had been dreaming for weeks.

Before his eyes spread a magnificent panorama of stately ruins, before which the young and impressionable Latin-American stood spellbound; and then once again the eerie wail rose from the interior of a great building before him, but if he was frightened Romero gave no evidence of it. Perhaps he grasped his rifle a little more tightly; perhaps he loosened his revolver in his holster, but he did not retreat. He was awed by the

stately grandeur of the scene before him, where age and ruin seemed only to enhance its pristine magnificence.

A movement within the temple caught his attention. He saw a figure emerge from somewhere, the figure of a gnarled and knotted man that rolled on short crooked legs; and then another and another came until there were fully a hundred of the savage creatures approaching slowly toward him. He saw their knotted bludgeons and their knives, and he realized that here was a menace more effective than an unearthly scream.

With a shrug he backed into the passageway. "I cannot fight an army single-handed," he muttered. Slowly he crossed the outer court, passed through

the first great wall and stood again upon the plain outside the city. In the distance he saw the dust of the fleeing expedition and, with a grin, he started in pursuit, swinging along at an easy walk as he puffed upon a cigarette. From the top of the rocky hill at his left a little monkey saw him pass—a little monkey, which still trembled from fright, but whose terrified screams had become only low, pitiful moans. It had been a hard day for little Nkima.

So rapid had been the retreat of the expedition that Zveri, with Dorsky and Ivitch, did not overtake the main party until the greater part of it was already descending the barrier cliffs; nor could any threats or promises stay the retreat,

which ended only when camp was reached.

Immediately Zveri called Abu Batn, together with Dorsky and Ivitch, into council. The affair had been Zveri's first reverse, and it was a serious one inasmuch as he had relied heavily upon the inexhaustible store of gold to be found in the treasure vaults of Opar. First, he berated Abu Batn, Kitembo, their ancestors and all their followers for cowardice; but all that he accomplished was to arouse the anger and resentment of these two.

"We came with you to fight the white men, not demons and ghosts," said Kitembo. "I am not afraid. I would go into the city, but my men will not

accompany me and I cannot fight the enemy alone."

"Nor I," said Abu Batn, a sullen scowl still further darkening his swart countenance.

"I know," sneered Zveri, "you are both brave men, but you are much better runners than you are fighters. Look at us. We were not afraid. We went in and we were not harmed."

"Where is Comrade Romero?" demanded Abu Batn.

"Well, perhaps, he is lost," admitted Zveri. "What do you expect? To win a battle without losing a man?"

"There was no battle," said Kitembo, "and the man who went farthest into the accursed city did not return."

Dorsky looked up suddenly. "There he is now!" he exclaimed, and as all eyes turned up the trail toward Opar, they saw Miguel Romero strolling jauntily into camp.

"Greeting, my brave comrades!" he cried to them. "I am glad to find you alive. I feared that you might all succumb to heart failure."

Sullen silence greeted his raillery, and no one spoke until he had approached and seated himself near them.

"What detained you?" demanded Zveri presently.

"I wanted to see what was beyond the inner wall," replied the Mexican.

"And you saw?" asked Abu Batn.

"I saw magnificent buildings in splendid ruin," replied Romero; "a dead and moldering city of the dead past." "And what else?" asked Kitembo.

"I saw a company of strange warriors, short heavy men on crooked legs, with long powerful arms and hairy bodies. They came out of a great building that might have been a temple. There were too many of them for me. I could not fight them alone, so I came away."

"Did they have weapons?" asked Zveri.

"Clubs and knives," replied Romero.

"You see," exclaimed Zveri, "just a band of savages armed with clubs. We could take the city without the loss of a man."

"What did they look like?" demanded Kitembo. "Describe them to me," and when Romero had done so, with careful attention to details, Kitembo shook his head. "It is as I thought," he said. "They are not men; they are demons."

"Men or demons, we are going back there and take their city," said Zveri angrily. "We must have the gold of Opar."

"You may go, white man," returned Kitembo, "but you will go alone. I know my men, and I tell you that they will not follow you there. Lead us against white men, or brown men, or black men, and we will follow you. But we will not follow you against demons and ghosts."

"And you, Abu Batn?" demanded

Zveri.

"I have talked with my men on the return from the city, and they tell me that they will not go back there. They will not fight the jan and ghrol. They heard the voice of the jan warning them away, and they are afraid."

Zveri stormed and threatened and cajoled, but all to no effect. Neither the Arab sheikh nor the African chief could be moved.

"There is still a way," said Romero.

"And what is that?" asked Zveri.

"When the gringo comes and the Philippine, there will be six of us who are neither Arabs nor Africans. We six can take Opar." Paul Ivitch made a wry face, and Zveri cleared his throat.

"If we are killed," said the latter, "our whole plan is wrecked. There will be no one left to carry on."

Romero shrugged. "It was only a suggestion," he said, "but, of course, if you are afraid—"

"I am not afraid," stormed Zveri, "but neither am I a fool."

An ill-concealed sneer curved Romero's lips. "I am going to eat," he said, and, rising, he left them.

The day following his advent into the camp of his fellow conspirators, Wayne Colt wrote a long message in cipher and dispatched it to the Coast by one of his boys. From her tent Zora Drinov had seen the message given to the boy. She had seen him place it in the end of a

forked stick and start off upon his long journey. Shortly after, Colt joined her in the shade of a great tree beside her tent.

"You sent a message this morning, Comrade Colt," she said.

He looked up at her quickly. "Yes," he replied.

"Perhaps you should know that only Comrade Zveri is permitted to send messages from the expedition," she told him.

"I did not know," he said. "It was merely in relation to some funds that were to have been awaiting me when I reached the Coast. They were not there. I sent the boy back after them."

"Oh," she said, and then their conversation drifted to other topics.

That afternoon he took his rifle and went out to look for game and Zora went with him, and that evening they had supper together again, but this time she was the hostess. And so the days passed until an excited native aroused the camp one day with an announcement that the expedition was returning. No words were necessary to apprise those who had been left behind that victory had not perched upon the banner of their little army. Failure was clearly written upon the faces of the leaders. Zveri greeted Zora and Colt, introducing the latter to his companions, and when Tony had been similarly presented the returning warriors threw themselves down upon cots or upon the ground to rest.

That night, as they gathered around the supper table, each party narrated the adventures that had befallen them since the expedition had left camp. Colt and Zora were thrilled by the stories of weird Opar, but no less mysterious was their tale of the death of Raghunath Jafar and his burial and uncanny resurrection.

"Not one of the boys would touch the body after that," said Zora. "Tony and Comrade Colt had to bury him themselves."

"I hope you made a good job of it this time," said Miguel.

"He hasn't come back again," rejoined Colt with a grin.

"Who could have dug him up in the first place?" demanded Zveri.

"None of the boys certainly," said Zora. "They were all too much frightened by the peculiar circumstances surrounding his death."

"It must have been the same creature that killed him," suggested Colt, "and whoever or whatever it was must have been possessed of almost superhuman strength to carry that heavy corpse into a tree and drop it upon us."

"The most uncanny feature of it to me," said Zora, "is the fact that it was accomplished in absolute silence. I'll swear that not even a leaf rustled until just before the body hurtled down upon our table."

"It could have been only a man," said Zveri.

"Unquestionably," said Colt, "but what a man!"

As the company broke up later, repairing to their various tents, Zveri detained Zora with a gesture. "I want to talk to you a minute, Zora," he said, and the girl sank back into the chair she had just quitted. "What do you think of this American? You have had a good opportunity to size him up."

"He seems to be all right. He is a very likable fellow," replied the girl.

"He said or did nothing, then, that might arouse your suspicion?" demanded Zveri.

"No," said Zora, "nothing at all."

"You two have been alone here together for a number of days,"

continued Zveri. "Did he treat you with perfect respect?"

"He was certainly much more respectful than your friend, Raghunath Jafar."

"Don't mention that dog to me," said Zveri. "I wish that I had been here to kill him myself."

"I told him that you would when you got back, but someone beat you to it."

They were silent for several moments. It was evident that Zveri was trying to frame into words something that was upon his mind. At last he spoke. "Colt is a very prepossessing young man. See that you don't fall in love with him, Zora."

"And why not?" she demanded. "I

have given my mind and my strength and my talent to the cause and, perhaps, most of my heart. But there is a corner of it that is mine to do with as I wish."

"You mean to say that you are in love with him?" demanded Zveri.

"Certainly not. Nothing of the kind. Such an idea had not entered my head. I just want you to know, Peter, that in matters of this kind you may not dictate to me."

"Listen, Zora. You know perfectly well that I love you, and what is more, I am going to have you. I get what I go after."

"Don't bore me, Peter. I have no time for anything so foolish as love now. When we are well through with this

undertaking, perhaps I shall take the time to give it a little thought."

"I want you to give it a lot of thought right now, Zora," he insisted. "There are some details in relation to this expedition that I have not told you. I have not divulged them to anyone, but I am going to tell you now because I love you and you are going to become my wife. There is more at stake in this for us than you dream. After all the thought and all the risks and all the hardships, I do not intend to surrender all of the power and the wealth that I shall have gained to anyone."

"You mean not even to the cause?" she asked.

"I mean not even to the cause, except

that I shall use them both for the cause."

"Then what do you intend? I do not understand you," she said.

"I intend to make myself Emperor of Africa," he declared, "and I intend to make you my empress."

"Peter!" she cried. "Are you crazy?"

"Yes, I am crazy for power, for riches, and for you."

"You can never do it, Peter. You know how far-reaching are the tentacles of the power we serve. If you fail it, if you turn traitor, those tentacles will reach you and drag you down to destruction."

"When I win my goal, my power will be as great as theirs, and then I may defy

them."

"But how about these others with us, who are serving loyally the cause which they think you represent? They will tear you to pieces, Peter."

The man laughed. "You do not know them, Zora. They are all alike. All men and women are alike. If I offered to make them Grand Dukes and give them each a palace and a harem, they would slit their own mothers' throats to obtain such a prize."

The girl arose. "I am astounded, Peter. I thought that you, at least, were sincere."

He arose quickly and grasped her by the arm. "Listen, Zora," he hissed in her ear, "I love you, and because I love you I

have put my life in your hands. But understand this, if you betray me, no matter how well I love you, I shall kill you. Do not forget that."

"You did not have to tell me that, Peter. I was perfectly well aware of it."

"And you will not betray me?" he demanded.

"I never betray a friend, Peter," she said.

The next morning Zveri was engaged in working out the details of a second expedition to Opar based upon Romero's suggestions. It was decided that this time they would call for volunteers; and as the Europeans, the two Americans and the Filipino had already indicated their willingness to take part in the adventure,

it remained now only to seek to enlist the services of some of the blacks and Arabs, and for this purpose Zveri summoned the entire company to a palaver. Here he explained just what they purposed doing. He stressed the fact that Comrade Romero had seen the inhabitants of the city and that they were only members of a race of stunted savages, armed only with sticks. Eloquently he explained how easily they might be overcome with rifles.

Practically the entire party was willing to go as far as the walls of Opar; but there were only ten warriors who would agree to enter the city with the white men, and all of these were from the askaris who had been left behind to

guard camp and from those who had accompanied Colt from the Coast, none of whom had been subjected to the terrors of Opar. Not one of those who had heard the weird screams issuing from the ruins would agree to enter the city, and it was admitted among the whites that it was not at all unlikely that their ten volunteers might suddenly develop a change of heart when at last they stood before the frowning portals of Opar and heard the weird warning cry from its defenders.

Several days were spent in making careful preparations for the new expedition, but at last the final detail was completed; and early one morning Zveri and his followers set out once

more upon the trail to Opar.

Zora Drinov had wished to accompany them, but as Zveri was expecting messages from a number of his various agents throughout Northern Africa, it had been necessary to leave her behind. Abu Batn and his warriors were left to guard the camp, and these, with a few black servants, were all who did not accompany the expedition.

Since the failure of the first expedition and the fiasco at the gates of Opar, the relations of Abu Batn and Zveri had been strained. The sheikh and his warriors, smarting under the charges of cowardice, had kept more to themselves than formerly; and though they would not volunteer to enter the city

of Opar, they still resented the affront of their selection to remain behind as camp guards; and so it was that as the others departed, the Arabs sat in the muk'aad of their sheikh's beyt es-sh'ar, whispering over their thick coffee, their swart scowling faces half hidden by their thoribs.

They did not deign even to glance at their departing comrades, but the eyes of Abu Batn were fixed upon the slender figure of Zora Drinov as the sheikh sat in silent meditation.

6. BETRAYED

The heart of little Nkima had been torn by conflicting emotions, as from the vantage point of the summit of the rocky hillock he had watched the departure of Miguel Romero from the city of Opar. Seeing these brave Tarmangani, armed with death-dealing thundersticks, driven away from the ruins, he was convinced that something terrible must have befallen his master within the grim recesses of that crumbling pile. His loyal heart prompted him to return and investigate, but Nkima was only a very little Manu—a little Manu who was very much afraid; and though he started twice again toward Opar, he could not muster his courage to the sticking point; and at

last, whimpering pitifully, he turned back across the plains toward the grim forest, where, at least, the dangers were familiar ones.

The door of the gloomy chamber which Tarzan had entered swung inward, and his hands were still upon it as the menacing roar of the lion apprised him of the danger of his situation. Agile and quick is Numa, the lion, but with even greater celerity functioned the mind and muscles of Tarzan of the Apes. In the instant that the lion sprang toward him a picture of the whole scene flashed to the mind of the ape-man. He saw the gnarled priests of Opar advancing along the corridor in pursuit of him. He saw the heavy door that swung inward. He

saw the charging lion, and he pieced these various factors together to create a situation far more to his advantage than they normally presented. Drawing the door quickly inward, he stepped behind it as the lion charged, with the result that the beast, either carried forward by his own momentum or sensing escape, sprang into the corridor full in the faces of the advancing priests, and at the same instant Tarzan closed the door behind him.

Just what happened in the corridor without he could not see, but from the growls and screams that receded quickly into the distance he was able to draw a picture that brought a quiet smile to his lips; and an instant later a piercing

shriek of agony and terror announced the fate of at least one of the fleeing Oparians.

Realizing that he would gain nothing by remaining where he was, Tarzan decided to leave the cell and seek a way out of the labyrinthine mazes of the pits beneath Opar. He knew that the lion upon its prey would doubtless bar his passage along the route he had been following when his escape had been interrupted by the priests and though, as a last resort, he might face Numa, he was of no mind to invite such an unnecessary risk; but when he sought to open the heavy door he found that he could not budge it, and in an instant he realized what had happened and that he was now

in prison once again in the dungeons of Opar.

The bar that secured this particular door was not of the sliding type but, working upon a pin at the inner end, dropped into heavy wrought iron keepers bolted to the door itself and to its frame. When he had entered, he had raised the bar, which had dropped into place of its own weight when the door slammed to, imprisoning him as effectually as though the work had been done by the hand of man.

The darkness of the corridor without was less intense than that of the passage upon which his former cell had been located; and though not enough light entered the cell to illuminate its interior,

there was sufficient to show him the nature of the ventilating opening in the door, which he found to consist of a number of small round holes, none of which was of sufficient diameter to permit him to pass his hand through in an attempt to raise the bar.

As Tarzan stood in momentary contemplation of his new predicament, the sound of stealthy movement came to him from the black recesses at the rear of the cell. He wheeled quickly, drawing his hunting knife from its sheath. He did not have to ask himself what the author of this sound might be, for he knew that the only other living creature that might have occupied this cell with its former inmate was another lion. Why it had not

joined in the attack upon him, he could not guess, but that it would eventually seize him was a foregone conclusion. Perhaps even now it was preparing to sneak upon him. He wished that his eyes might penetrate the darkness, for if he could see the lion as it charged he might be better prepared to meet it. In the past he had met the charges of other lions, but always before he had been able to see their swift spring and to elude the sweep of their mighty talons as they reared upon their hind legs to seize him. Now it would be different, and for once in his life, Tarzan of the Apes felt death was inescapable. He knew that his time had come.

He was not afraid. He simply knew

that he did not wish to die and that the price at which he would sell his life would cost his antagonist dearly. In silence he waited. Again he heard that faint, yet ominous sound. The foul air of the cell reeked with the stench of the carnivores. From somewhere in a distant corridor he heard the growling of a lion at its kill; and then a voice broke the silence.

"Who are you?" it asked. It was the voice of a woman, and it came from the back of the cell in which the ape-man was imprisoned.

"Where are you?" demanded Tarzan.

"I am here at the back of the cell," replied the woman.

"Where is the lion?"

"He went out when you opened the door," she replied.

"Yes, I know," said Tarzan, "but the other one. Where is he?"

"There is no other one. There was but one lion here and it is gone. Ah, now I know you!" she exclaimed. "I know the voice. It is Tarzan of the Apes."

"La!" exclaimed the ape-man, advancing quickly across the cell. "How could you be here with the lion and still live?"

"I am in an adjoining cell that is separated from this one by a door made of iron bars," replied La. Tarzan heard metal hinges creak. "It is not locked," she said. "It was not necessary to lock it, for it opens into this other cell where the

lion was."

Groping forward through the dark, the two advanced until their hands touched one another.

La pressed close to the man. She was trembling. "I have been afraid," she said, "but I shall not be afraid now."

"I shall not be of much help to you," said Tarzan. "I also am a prisoner."

"I know it," replied La, "but I always feel safe when you are near."

"Tell me what has happened," demanded Tarzan. "How is it that Oah is posing as high priestess and you a prisoner in your own dungeons?"

"I forgave Oah her former treason when she conspired with Cadj to wrest

my power from me," explained La, "but she could not exist without intrigue and duplicity. To further her ambitions, she made love to Dooth, who has been high priest since Jad-bal-ja killed Cadj. They spread stories about me through the city; and as my people have never forgiven me for my friendship for you, they succeeded in winning enough to their cause to overthrow and imprison me. All the ideas were Oah's, for Dooth and the other priests, as you well know, are stupid beasts. It was Oah's idea to imprison me thus with a lion for company, merely to make my suffering more terrible, until the time should come when she might prevail upon the priests to offer me in sacrifice to the Flaming

God. In that she has had some difficulty, I know, as those who have brought my food have told me."

"How could they bring food to you here?" asked Tarzan. "No one could pass through the outer cell while the lion was there."

"There is another opening in the lion's cell, that leads into a low, narrow corridor into which they can drop meat from above. Thus they would entice the lion from this outer cell, after which they would lower a gate of iron bars across the opening of the small corridor into which he went, and while he was thus imprisoned they brought my food to me. But they did not feed him much. He was always hungry and often growling and

pawing at the bars of my cell. Perhaps Oah hoped that some day he would batter them down."

"Where does this other corridor, in which they fed the lion, lead?" asked Tarzan.

"I do not know," replied La, "but I imagine that it is only a blind tunnel built in ancient times for this very purpose."

"We must have a look at it," said Tarzan. "It may offer a means of escape."

"Why not escape through the door by which you entered?" asked La; and when the ape-man had explained why this was impossible, she pointed out the location of the entrance to the small tunnel.

"We must get out of here as quickly as

possible, if it is possible at all," said Tarzan, "for if they are able to capture the lion, they will certainly return him to this cell."

"They will capture him," said La. "There is no question as to that."

"Then I had better hurry and make my investigation of the tunnel, for it might prove embarrassing were they to return him to the cell while I was in the tunnel, if it proved to be a blind one."

"I will listen at the outer door while you investigate," offered La. "Make haste."

Groping his way toward the section of the wall that La had indicated, Tarzan found a heavy grating of iron closing an aperture leading into a low and narrow

corridor. Lifting the barrier, Tarzan entered and with his hands extended before him moved forward in a crouching position, since the low ceiling would not permit him to stand erect. He had progressed but a short distance when he discovered that the corridor made an abrupt right-angle turn to the left, and beyond the turn he saw at a short distance a faint luminosity. Moving quickly forward, he came to the end of the corridor, at the bottom of a vertical shaft, the interior of which was illuminated by subdued daylight. The shaft was constructed of the usual rough-hewn granite of the foundation walls of the city, but here set with no great nicety or precision, giving the interior of the

shaft a rough and uneven surface.

As Tarzan was examining it, he heard La's voice coming along the tunnel from the cell in which he had left her. Her tone was one of excitement, and her message one that presaged a situation wrought with extreme danger to them both.

"Make haste, Tarzan. They are returning with the lion!"

The ape-man hurried quickly back to the mouth of the tunnel.

"Quick!" he cried to La, as he raised the gate that had fallen behind him after he had passed through.

"In there?" she demanded in an affrighted voice.

"It is our only chance of escape," replied the ape-man.

Without another word La crowded into the corridor beside him. Tarzan lowered the grating and, with La following closely behind him, returned to the opening leading into the shaft. Without a word, he lifted La in his arms and raised her as high as he could, nor did she need to be told what to do. With little difficulty she found both hand and footholds upon the rough surface of the interior of the shaft, and with Tarzan just below her, assisting and steadying her, she made her way slowly aloft.

The shaft led directly upward into a room in the tower, which overlooked the entire city of Opar; and here, concealed

by the crumbling walls, they paused to formulate their plans.

They both knew that their greatest danger lay in discovery by one of the numerous monkeys infesting the ruins of Opar, with which the inhabitants of the city are able to converse. Tarzan was anxious to be away from Opar that he might thwart the plans of the white men who had invaded his domain. But first he wished to bring about the downfall of La's enemies and reinstate her upon the throne of Opar, or if that should prove impossible, to insure the safety of her flight.

As he viewed her now in the light of day he was struck again by the matchlessness of her deathless beauty

that neither time, nor care, nor danger seemed capable of dimming, and he wondered what he should do with her; where he could take her; where this savage priestess of the Flaming God could find a place in all the world, outside the walls of Opar, with the environments of which she would harmonize. And as he pondered, he was forced to admit to himself that no such place existed. La was of Opar, a savage queen born to rule a race of savage half-men. As well introduce a tigress to the salons of civilization as La of Opar. Two or three thousand years earlier she might have been a Cleopatra or a Sheba, but today she could be only La of Opar.

For some time they had sat in silence,

the beautiful eyes of the high priestess resting upon the profile of the forest god. "Tarzan!" she said. The man looked up. "What is it, La?" he asked.

"I still love you, Tarzan," she said in a low voice.

A troubled expression came into the eyes of the ape-man. "Let us not speak of that."

"I like to speak of it," she murmured. "It gives me sorrow, but it is a sweet sorrow—the only sweetness that has ever come into my life."

Tarzan extended a bronzed hand and laid it upon her slender, tapering fingers. "You have always possessed my heart, La," he said, "up to the point of love. If my affection goes no further than this, it

is through no fault of mine nor yours."

La laughed. "It is certainly through no fault of mine, Tarzan," she said, "but I know that such things are not ordered by ourselves. Love is a gift of the gods. Sometimes it is awarded as a recompense; sometimes as a punishment. For me it has been a punishment, perhaps, but I would not have it otherwise. I had nurtured it in my breast since first I met you; and without that love, however hopeless it may be, I should not care to live."

Tarzan made no reply, and the two relapsed into silence, waiting for night to fall that they might descend into the city unobserved. Tarzan's alert mind was occupied with plans for reinstating La

upon her throne, and presently they fell to discussing these.

"Just before the Flaming God goes to his rest at night," said La, "the priests and the priestesses all gather in the throne room. There they will be tonight before the throne upon which Oah will be seated. Then may we descend to the city."

"And then what?" asked Tarzan.

"If we can kill Oah in the throne room," said La, "and Dooth at the same time, they would have no leaders; and without leaders they are lost."

"I cannot kill a woman," said Tarzan.

"I can," returned La, "and you can attend to Dooth. You certainly would not object to killing him?"

"If he attacked, I would kill him," said Tarzan, "but not otherwise. Tarzan of the Apes kills only in self-defense and for food, or when there is no other way to thwart an enemy."

In the floor of the ancient room in which they were waiting were two openings; one was the mouth of the shaft through which they had ascended from the dungeons, the other opened into a similar but larger shaft, to the bottom of which ran a long wooden ladder set in the masonry of its sides. It was this shaft which offered them a means of escape from the tower, and as Tarzan sat with his eyes resting idly upon the opening, an unpleasant thought suddenly obtruded itself upon his consciousness.

He turned toward La. "We had forgotten," he said, "that whoever casts the meat down the shaft to the lion must ascend by this other shaft. We may not be as safe from detection here as we had hoped."

"They do not feed the lion very often," said La; "not every day."

"When did they feed him last?" asked Tarzan.

"I do not recall," said La. "Time drags so heavily in the darkness of the cell that I lost count of days."

"S-st!" cautioned Tarzan. "Someone is ascending now."

Silently the ape-man arose and crossed the floor to the opening, where he crouched upon the side opposite the

ladder. La moved stealthily to his side, so that the ascending man, whose back would be toward them, as he emerged from the shaft, would not see them. Slowly the man ascended. They could hear his shuffling progress coming nearer and nearer to the top. He did not climb as the ape-like priests of Opar are wont to climb. Tarzan thought perhaps he was carrying a load either of such weight or cumbersomeness as to retard his progress, but when finally his head came into view the apeman saw that he was an old man, which accounted for his lack of agility; and then powerful fingers closed about the throat of the unsuspecting Oparian, and he was lifted bodily out of the shaft.

"Silence!" said the ape-man. "Do as you are told and you will not be harmed."

La had snatched a knife from the girdle of their victim, and now Tarzan forced him to the floor of the room and slightly released his hold upon the fellow's throat, turning him around so that he faced them.

An expression of incredulity and surprise crossed the face of the old priest as his eyes fell upon La.

"Darus!" exclaimed La.

"All honor to the Flaming God who has ordered your escape!" exclaimed the priest.

La turned to Tarzan. "You need not fear Darus," she said; "he will not betray

us. Of all the priests of Opar, there never lived one more loyal to his queen."

"That is right," said the old man, shaking his head.

"Are there many more loyal to the high priestess, La?" demanded Tarzan. "Yes, very many," replied Darns, "but they are afraid. Oah is a she-devil and Dooth is a fool. Between the two of them there is no longer either safety or happiness in Opar."

"How many are there whom you absolutely know may be depended upon?" demanded La.

"Oh, very many," replied Darus.

"Gather them in the throne room tonight then, Darus; and as the Flaming God goes to his couch, be ready to strike

at the enemies of La, your priestess."

"You will be there?" asked Darus.

"I shall be there," replied La. "This, your dagger, shall be the signal. When you see La of Opar plunge it into the breast of Oah, the false priestess, fall upon those who are the enemies of La."

"It shall be done, just as you say," Darus assured her, "and now I must throw this meat to the lion and be gone."

Slowly the old priest descended the ladder, gibbering and muttering to himself, after he had cast a few bones and scraps of meat into the other shaft to the lion.

"You are quite sure you can trust him, La?" demanded Tarzan.

"Absolutely," replied the girl. "Darus would die for me, and I know that he hates Oah and Dooth."

The slow remaining hours of the afternoon dragged on, the sun was low in the west, and now the two must take their greatest risk, that of descending into the city while it was still light and making their way to the throne room, although the risk was greatly minimized by the fact that the inhabitants of the city were all supposed to be congregated in the throne room at this time, performing the age-old rite with which they speeded the Flaming God to his night of rest. Without interruption they descended to the base of the tower, crossed the courtyard and entered the temple. Here,

through devious and round- about passages, La led the way to a small doorway that opened into the throne room at the back of the dais upon which the throne stood. Here she paused, listening to the services being conducted within the great chamber, waiting for the cue that would bring them to a point when all within the room, except the high priestess, were prostrated with their faces pressed against the floor.

When that instant arrived, La swung open the door and leaped silently upon the dais behind the throne in which her victim sat. Close behind her came Tarzan, and in that first instant both realized that they had been betrayed, for the dais was swarming with priests

ready to seize them.

Already one had caught La by an arm, but before he could drag her away Tarzan sprang upon him, seized him by the neck and jerked his head backward so suddenly and with such force that the sound of his snapping vertebra could be heard across the room. Then he raised the body high above his head and cast it into the faces of the priests charging upon him. As they staggered back, he seized La and swung her into the corridor along which they had approached the throne room.

It was useless to stand and fight, for he knew that even though he might hold his own for a while, they must eventually overcome him and that once they laid

their hands upon La they would tear her limb from limb.

Down the corridor behind them came the yelling horde of priests, and in their wake, screaming for the blood of her victim, was Oah.

"Make for the outer walls by the shortest route, La," directed Tarzan, and the girl sped on winged feet, leading him through the labyrinthine corridors of the ruins, until they broke suddenly into the chamber of the seven pillars of gold, and then Tarzan knew the way.

No longer needing his guide, and realizing that the priests were overtaking them, being fleeter of foot than La, he swept the girl into his arms and sped through the echoing chambers of the

temple toward the inner wall. Through that, across the courtyard and through the outer wall they passed, and still the priests pursued, urged on by screaming Oah. Out across the deserted valley they fled; and now the priests were losing ground, for their short, crooked legs could not compete with the speed of Tarzan's clean limbed stride, even though he was burdened by the weight of La.

The sudden darkness of the near tropics that follows the setting of the sun soon obliterated the pursuers from their sight; and a short time thereafter the sounds of pursuit ceased, and Tarzan knew that the chase had been abandoned, for the men of Opar have no love for the

darkness of the outer world.

Then Tarzan paused and lowered La to the ground; but as he did so her soft arms encircled his neck and she pressed close to him, her cheek against his breast, and burst into tears.

"Do not cry, La," he said. "We shall come again to Opar, and when we do you shall be seated upon your throne again."

"I am not crying for that," she replied.

"Then why do you cry?" he asked.

"I am crying for joy," she said, "joy that perhaps I shall be alone with you now for a long time."

In pity, Tarzan pressed her to him for a moment, and then they set off once

more toward the barrier cliff.

That night they slept in a great tree in the forest at the foot of the cliff, after Tarzan had constructed a rude couch for La between two branches, while he settled himself in a crotch of the tree a few feet below her.

It was dawn when Tarzan awoke. The sky was overcast, and he sensed an approaching storm. No food had passed his lips for many hours, and he knew that La had not eaten since the morning of the previous day. Food, therefore, was a prime essential and he must find it and return to La before the storm broke. Since it was meat that he craved, he knew that he must be able to make fire and cook it before La could eat it, though

he himself still preferred it raw. He looked into La's cot and saw that she was still asleep. Knowing that she must be exhausted from all that she had passed through the previous day, he let her sleep on; and swinging to a nearby tree, he set out upon his search for food.

As he moved up wind through the middle terrace, every faculty of his delicately attuned senses was alert. Like the lion, Tarzan particularly relished the flesh of Pacco, the zebra, but either Bara, the antelope, or Horta, the boar, would have proven an acceptable substitute; but the forest seemed to be deserted by every member of the herds he sought. Only the scent spoor of the great cats assailed his nostrils, mingled

with the lesser and more human odor of Manu, the monkey. Time means little to a hunting beast. It meant little to Tarzan, who, having set out in search of meat, would return only when he had found meat.

When La awakened, it was some time before she could place her surroundings; but when she did, a slow smile of happiness and contentment parted her lovely lips, revealing an even row of perfect teeth. She sighed, and then she whispered the name of the man she lovers. "Tarzan!" she called.

There was no reply. Again she spoke his name, but this time louder, and again the only answer was silence. Slightly troubled, she arose upon an elbow and

leaned over the side of her sleeping couch. The tree beneath her was empty.

She thought, correctly, that perhaps he had gone to hunt, but still she was troubled by his absence, and the longer she waited the more troubled she became. She knew that he did not love her and that she must be a burden to him. She knew, too, that he was as much a wild beast as the lions of the forest and that the same desire for freedom, which animated them, must animate him. Perhaps he had been unable to withstand the temptation longer and while she slept, he had left her.

There was not a great deal in the training or ethics of La of Opar that could have found exception to such

conduct, for the life of her people was a life of ruthless selfishness and cruelty. They entertained few of the finer sensibilities of civilized man, or the great nobility of character that marked so many of the wild beasts. Her love for Tarzan had been the only soft spot in La's savage life, and realizing that she would think nothing of deserting a creature she did not love, she was fair enough to cast no reproaches upon Tarzan for having done the thing that she might have done, nor to her mind did it accord illy with her conception of his nobility of character.

As she descended to the ground, she sought to determine some plan of action for the future, and in this moment of her

loneliness and depression she saw no alternative but to return to Opar, and so it was toward the city of her birth that she turned her steps; but she had not gone far before she realized the danger and futility of this plan, which could but lead to certain death while Oah and Dooth ruled in Opar. She felt bitterly toward Darus, who she believed had betrayed her; and accepting his treason as an index of what she might expect from others whom she had believed to be friendly to her, she realized the utter hopelessness of regaining the throne of Opar without outside help. La had no happy life to which she might look forward; but the will to live was yet strong within her, the result more,

perhaps, of the courageousness of her spirit than of any fear of death, which, to her, was but another word for defeat.

She paused in the trail that she had reached a short distance from the tree in which she had spent the night; and there, with almost nothing to guide her, she sought to determine in what direction she should break a new trail into the future, for wherever she went, other than back to Opar, it would be a new trail, leading among peoples and experiences as foreign to her as though she had suddenly stepped from another planet, or from the long-lost continent of her progenitors.

It occurred to her that perhaps there might be other people in this strange world as generous and chivalrous as

Tarzan. At least in this direction there lay hope. In Opar there was none, and so she turned back away from Opar; and above her black clouds rolled and billowed as the storm king marshalled his forces, and behind her a tawny beast with gleaming eyes slunk through the underbrush beside the trail that she followed.

7. IN FUTILE SEARCH

Tarzan of the Apes, ranging far in search of food caught at length the welcome scent of Horta, the boar. The man paused and, with a deep and silent inhalation, filled his lungs with air until his great bronzed chest expanded to the full. Already he was tasting the fruits of victory. The red blood coursed through his veins, as every fiber of his being reacted to the exhilaration of the moment—the keen delight of the hunting beast that has scented its quarry. And then swiftly and silently he sped in the direction of his prey.

Presently he came upon it, a young tusker, powerful and agile, his wicked tusks gleaming as he tore bark from a

young tree. The ape- man was poised just above him, concealed by the foliage of a great tree.

A vivid flash of lightning broke from the billowing black clouds above. Thunder crashed and boomed. The storm broke, and at the same instant the man launched himself downward upon the back of the unsuspecting boar, in one hand the hunting knife of his long-dead sire.

The weight of the man's body crushed the boar to the earth, and before it could struggle to its feet again, the keen blade had severed its jugular. Its life blood gushing from the wound, the boar sought to rise and turn to fight; but the steel thews of the ape-man dragged it down,

and an instant later, with a last convulsive shudder, Horta died.

Leaping to his feet, Tarzan placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and, raising his face to the heavens, gave voice to the victory cry of the bull-ape.

Faintly to the ears of marching men came the hideous scream. The blacks in the party halted, wide-eyed.

"What the devil was that?" demanded Zveri.

"It sounded like a panther," said Colt.

"That was no panther," said Kitembo. "It was the cry of a bull- ape who has made a kill, or—"

"Or what?" demanded Zveri.

Kitembo looked fearfully in the

direction from which the sound had come. "Let us get away from here," he said.

Again the lightning flashed and the thunder crashed, and as the torrential rain deluged them, the party staggered on in the direction of the barrier cliffs of Opar. Cold and wet, La of Opar crouched beneath a great tree that only partially protected her almost naked body from the fury of the storm, and in the dense underbrush a few yards from her a tawny carnivore lay with unblinking eyes fixed steadily upon her.

The storm, titanic in its brief fury, passed on, leaving the deep worn trail a tiny torrent of muddy water; and La, thoroughly chilled, hastened onward in

an effort to woo new warmth to her chilled body.

She knew that trails must lead somewhere, and in her heart she hoped that this one would lead to the country of Tarzan. If she could live there, seeing him occasionally, she would be content. Even knowing that he was near her would be better than nothing. Of course she had no conception of the immensity of the world she trod. A knowledge of even the extent of the forest that surrounded her would have appalled her. In her imagination she visualized a small world, dotted with the remains of ruined cities like Opar, in which dwelt creatures like those she had known; gnarled and knotted men like the priests

of Opar, white men like Tarzan, black men such as she had seen, and great shaggy gorillas like Bolgani, who had ruled in the Valley of the Palace of Diamonds.

And thinking these thoughts, she came at last to a clearing into which the unbroken rays of the warm sun poured without interruption. Near the center of the clearing was a small boulder; and toward this she made her way with the intention of basking in the warm rays of the sun until she should be thoroughly dried and warmed, for the dripping foliage of the forest had kept her wet and cold even after the rain had ceased.

As she seated herself she saw a movement at the edge of the clearing

ahead of her, and an instant later a great leopard bounded into view. The beast paused at sight of the woman, evidently as much surprised as she; and then, apparently realizing the defenselessness of this unexpected prey, the creature crouched and with twitching tail slowly wormed itself forward.

La rose and drew from her girdle the knife that she had taken from Darus. She knew that flight was futile. In a few bounds the great beast could overtake her, and even had there been a tree that she could have reached before she was overtaken, it would have proven no sanctuary from a leopard. Defense, too, she knew to be futile, but surrender without battle was not within the fiber of

La of Opar.

The metal discs, elaborately wrought by the hands of some long- dead goldsmith of ancient Opar, rose and fell above her firm breasts as her heart beat, perhaps a bit more rapidly, beneath them. On came the leopard. She knew that in an instant he would charge; and then of a sudden he rose to his feet, his back arched, his mouth grinning in a fearful snarl; and simultaneously a tawny streak whizzed by her from behind, and she saw a great lion leap upon her would-be destroyer.

At the last instant, but too late, the leopard had turned to flee; and the lion seized him by the back of the neck, and with his jaws and one great paw he

twisted the head back until the spine snapped. Then, almost contemptuously, he cast the body from him and turned toward the girl.

In an instant La realized what had happened. The lion had been stalking her, and seeing another about to seize his prey, he had leaped to battle in its defense. She had been saved, but only to fall victim immediately to another and more terrible beast.

The lion stood looking at her. She wondered why he did not charge and claim his prey. She did not know that within that little brain the scent of the woman had aroused the memory of another day, when Tarzan had lain bound upon the sacrificial altar of Opar with

Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, standing guard above him. A woman had come—this same woman—and Tarzan, his master, had told him not to harm her, and she had approached and cut the bonds that secured him.

This Jad-bal-ja remembered, and he remembered, too, that he was not to harm this woman; and if he was not to harm her, then nothing must harm her. For this reason he had killed Sheeta, the leopard.

But all this, La of Opar did not know, for she had not recognized Jad-bal-ja. She merely wondered how much longer it would be; and when the lion came closer she steeled herself, for still she meant to fight; yet there was something

in his attitude that she could not understand. He was not charging; he was merely walking toward her, and when he was a couple of yards from her he half turned away and lay down and yawned.

For what seemed an eternity to the girl she stood there watching him. He paid no attention to her. Could it be that, sure of his prey and not yet hungry, he merely waited until he was quite ready to make his kill? The idea was horrible, and even La's iron nerves commenced to weaken beneath the strain.

She knew that she could not escape, and so better instant death than this suspense. She determined, therefore, to end the matter quickly and to discover once and for all whether the lion

considered her already his prey or would permit her to depart. Gathering all the forces of self-control that she possessed, she placed the point of her dagger to her heart and walked boldly past the lion. Should he attack her, she would end the agony instantly by plunging the blade into her heart.

Jad-bal-ja did not move, but with lazy, half-closed eyes he watched the woman cross the clearing and disappear beyond the turn of the trail that wound its way back into the jungle.

All that day La moved on with grim determination, looking always for a ruined city like Opar, astonished by the immensity of the forest, appalled by its loneliness. Surely, she thought, she must

soon come to the country of Tarzan. She found fruits and tubers to allay her hunger, and as the trail descended a valley in which a river ran, she did not want for water. But night came again, and still no sight of man or city. Once again she crept into a tree to sleep, but this time there was no Tarzan of the Apes to fashion a couch for her or to watch over her safety. After Tarzan had slain the boar, he cut off the hind quarters and started back to the tree in which he had left La.

The storm made his progress much slower than it otherwise would have been, but notwithstanding this he realized long before he reached his destination that his hunting had taken him

much farther afield than he had imagined.

When at last he reached the tree and found that La was not there, he was slightly disconcerted, but thinking that perhaps she had descended to stretch her limbs after the storm, he called her name aloud several times. Receiving no answer, he became genuinely apprehensive for her safety and, dropping to the ground, sought some sign of her spoor. It so happened that beneath the tree her footprints were still visible, not having been entirely obliterated by the rain. He saw that they led back in the direction of Opar, so that, although he lost them when they reached the trail, in which water still was running, he was

none the less confident that he knew her intended destination; and so he set off in the direction of the barrier cliff.

It was not difficult for him to account for her absence and for the fact that she was returning to Opar, and he reproached himself for his thoughtlessness in having left her for so long a time without first telling her of his purpose. He guessed, rightly, that she had imagined herself deserted and had turned back to the only home she knew, to the only place in the world where La of Opar might hope to find friends; but that she would find them even there Tarzan doubted, and he was determined that she must not go back until she could do so with a force of warriors

sufficiently great to insure the overthrow of her enemies.

It had been Tarzan's plan first to thwart the scheme of the party whose camp he had discovered in his dominion and then to return with La to the country of his Waziri, where he would gather a sufficient body of those redoubtable warriors to insure the safety and success of La's return to Opar. Never communicative, he had neglected to explain his purposes to La; and this he now regretted, since he was quite certain that had he done so she would not have felt it necessary to have attempted to return alone to Opar.

But he was not much concerned with the outcome since he was confident that

he could overtake her long before she reached the city; and, enured as he was to the dangers of the forest and the jungle, he minimized their importance, as we do those which confront us daily in the ordinary course of our seemingly humdrum existence, where death threatens us quite as constantly as it does the denizens of the jungle.

At any moment expecting to catch sight of her whom he sought, Tarzan traversed the back trail to the foot of the rocky escarpment that guards the plain of Opar; and now he commenced to have his doubts, for it did not seem possible that La could have covered so great a distance in so short a time. He scaled the cliff and came out upon the summit of the

flat mountain that overlooked distant Opar. Here only a light rain had fallen, the storm having followed the course of the valley below, and plain in the trail were the footprints of himself and La where they had passed down from Opar the night before; but nowhere was there any sign of spoor to indicate that the girl had returned, nor, as he looked out across the valley, was there any moving thing in sight.

What had become of her? Where could she have gone? In the great forest that spread below him there were countless trails. Somewhere below, her spoor must be plain in the freshly-wet earth, but he realized that even for him it might prove a long and difficult task to

pick it up again.

As he turned back rather sorrowfully to descend the barrier cliff, his attention was attracted by a movement at the edge of the forest below. Dropping to his belly behind a low bush, Tarzan watched the spot to which his attention had been attracted; and as he did so the head of a column of men debouched from the forest and moved toward the foot of the cliff.

Tarzan had known nothing of what had transpired upon the occasion of Zveri's first expedition to Opar, which had occurred while he had been incarcerated in the cell beneath the city. The apparent mysterious disappearance of the party that he had known to have

been marching on Opar had mystified him; but here it was again, and where it had been in the meantime was of no moment.

Tarzan wished that he had his bow and arrow, which the Oparians had taken from him and which he had not had an opportunity to replace since he had escaped. But if he did not have them, there were other ways of annoying the invaders. From his position he watched them approach the cliff and commence the ascent.

Tarzan selected a large boulder, many of which were strewn about the flat top of the mountain, and when the leaders of the party were about half way to the summit and the others were strung out

below them, the ape-man pushed the rock over the edge of the cliff just above them. In its descent it just grazed Zveri, struck a protuberance beyond him, bounded over Colt's head, and carried two of Kitembo's warriors to death at the base of the escarpment.

The ascent stopped instantly. Several of the blacks who had accompanied the first expedition started a hasty retreat; and utter disorganization and rout faced the expedition, whose nerves had become more and more sensitive the nearer that they approached Opar.

"Stop the damn cowards!" shouted Zveri to Dorsky and Ivitch, who were bringing up the rear. "Who will volunteer to go over the top and

investigate?"

"I'll go," said Romero.

"And I'll go with him," offered Colt.

"Who else?" demanded Zveri; but no one else volunteered, and already the Mexican and the American were climbing upward.

"Cover our advance with a few rifles," Colt shouted back to Zveri. "That ought to keep them away from the edge."

Zveri issued instructions to several of the askaris who had not joined in the retreat; and when their rifles commenced popping, it put new heart into those who had started to flee, and presently Dorsky and Ivitch had rallied the men and the ascent was resumed.

Perfectly well aware that he might not stop the advance single- handed, Tarzan had withdrawn quickly along the edge of the cliff to a spot where tumbled masses of granite offered concealment and where he knew that there existed a precipitous trail to the bottom of the cliff. Here he could remain and watch, or, if necessary, make a hasty retreat. He saw Romero and Colt reach the summit and immediately recognized the latter as the man he had seen in the base camp of the invaders. He had previously been impressed by the appearance of the young American, and now he acknowledged his unquestioned bravery and that of his companion in leading a party over the summit of the cliff in the

face of an unknown danger.

Romero and Colt looked quickly about them, but there was no enemy in sight, and this word they passed back to the ascending company.

From his point of vantage Tarzan watched the expedition surmount the summit of the cliff and start on its march toward Opar. He believed that they could never find the treasure vaults; and now that La was not in the city, he was not concerned with the fate of those who had turned against her. Upon the bare and inhospitable Oparian plain, or in the city itself, they could accomplish little in furthering the objects of the expedition he had overheard Zora Drinov explaining to Colt. He knew that

eventually they must return to their base camp, and in the meantime he would prosecute his search for La; and so as Zveri led his expedition once again toward Opar, Tarzan of the Apes slipped over the edge of the barrier cliff and descended swiftly to the forest below.

Just inside the forest and upon the bank of the river was an admirable camp site; and having noticed that the expedition was accompanied by no porters, Tarzan naturally assumed that they had established a temporary camp within striking distance of the city, and it occurred to him that in this camp he might find La a prisoner.

As he had expected, he found the

camp located upon the spot where, upon other occasions, he had camped with his Waziri warriors. An old thorn boma that had encircled it for years had been repaired by the newcomers, and within it a number of rude shelters had been erected, while in the center stood the tents of the white men. Porters were dozing in the shade of the trees; a single askari made a pretense of standing guard, while his fellows lolled at their ease, their rifles at their sides; but nowhere could he see La of Opar.

He moved down wind from the camp, hoping to catch her scent spoor if she was a prisoner there, but so strong was the smell of smoke and the body odors of the blacks that he could not be sure but

that these drowned La's scent. He decided, therefore, to wait until darkness had fallen when he might make a more careful investigation, and he was further prompted to this decision by the sight of weapons, which he sorely needed. All of the warriors were armed with rifles, but some, clinging through force of ancient habit to the weapons of their ancestors, carried also bows and arrows, and in addition there were many spears.

As a few mouthfuls of the raw flesh of Horta had constituted the only food that had passed Tarzan's lips for almost two days, he was ravenously hungry. With the discovery that La had disappeared, he had cached the hind quarter of the boar in the tree in which they had spent

the night and set out upon his fruitless search for her; so now, while he waited for darkness, he hunted again, and this time Bara, the antelope, fell a victim to his prowess, nor did he leave the carcass of his kill until he had satisfied his hunger. Then he lay up in a nearby tree and slept.

The anger of Abu Batn against Zveri was rooted deeply in his inherent racial antipathy for Europeans and their religion, and its growth was stimulated by the aspersions which the Russian had cast upon the courage of the Arab and his followers.

"Dog of a Nasrany!" ejaculated the sheikh. "He called us cowards, we Bedauwy, and he left us here like old

men and boys to guard the camp and the woman."

"He is but an instrument of Allah," said one of the Arabs, "in the great cause that will rid Africa of all Nasrany."

"Wellah-billah!" ejaculated Abu Batn. "What proof have we that these people will do as they promise? I would rather have my freedom on the desert and what wealth I can gather by myself than to lie longer in the same camp with these Nasrany pigs."

"There is no good in them," muttered another.

"I have looked upon their woman," said the sheikh, "and I find her good. I know a city where she would bring many pieces of gold."

"In the trunk of the chief Nasrany there are many pieces of gold and silver," said one of the men. "His boy told that to a Galla, who repeated it to me."

"The plunder of the camp is rich besides," suggested a swarthy warrior.

"If we do this thing, perhaps the great cause will be lost," suggested he who had first answered the sheikh.

"It is the cause of the Nasrany," said Abu Batn, "and it is only for profit. Is not the huge pig always reminding us of the money, and the women, and the power that we shall have when we have thrown out the English? Man is moved only by his greed. Let us take our profits in advance and be gone."

Wamala was preparing the evening meal for his mistress. "Before, you were left with the brown bwana," he said, "and he was no good; nor do I like any better the sheikh Abu Batn. He is no good. I wish that Bwana Colt were here."

"So do I," said Zora. "It seems to me that the Arabs have been sullen and surly ever since the expedition returned from Opar."

"They have sat all day in the tent of their chief talking together," said Wamala, "and often Abu Batn looked at you."

"That is your imagination, Wamala," replied the girl. "He would not dare to harm me."

"Who would have thought that the brown bwana would have dared to?" Wamala reminded her.

"Hush, Wamala, the first thing you know you will have me frightened," said Zora, and then suddenly, "Look, Wamala! Who is that?"

The black boy turned his eyes in the direction toward which his mistress was looking. At the edge of the camp stood a figure that might have wrung an exclamation of surprise from a Stoic. A beautiful woman stood there regarding them intently. She had halted just at the edge of camp—an almost naked woman whose gorgeous beauty was her first and most striking characteristic. Two golden discs covered her firm breasts, and a

narrow stomacher of gold and precious stones encircled her hips, supporting in front and behind a broad strip of soft leather, studded with gold and jewels, which formed the pattern of a pedestal on the summit of which was seated a grotesque bird. Her feet were shod in sandals that were covered with mud, as were her shapely legs upward to above her knees. A mass of wavy hair, shot with golden bronze lights by the rays of the setting sun, half surrounded an oval face, and from beneath narrow penciled brows fearless gray eyes regarded them.

Some of the Arabs had caught sight of her, too, and they were coming forward now toward her. She looked quickly from Zora and Wamala toward the

others. Then the European girl arose quickly and approached her that she might reach her before the Arabs did; and as she came near the stranger with outstretched hands, Zora smiled. La of Opar came quickly to meet her as though sensing in the smile of the other an index to the friendly intent of this stranger.

"Who are you," asked Zora, "and what are you doing here alone in the jungle?"

La shook her head and replied in a language that Zora did not understand.

Zora Drinov was an accomplished linguist but she exhausted every language in her repertoire, including a few phrases from various Bantu dialects, and still found no means of communicating

with the stranger, whose beautiful face and figure but added to the interest of the tantalizing enigma she presented to pique the curiosity of the Russian girl.

The Arabs addressed her in their own tongue and Wamala in the dialect of his tribe, but all to no avail. Then Zora put an arm about her and led her toward her tent; and there, by means of signs, La of Opar indicated that she would bathe. Wamala was directed to prepare a tub in Zora's tent, and by the time supper was prepared the stranger reappeared, washed and refreshed.

As Zora Drinov seated herself opposite her strange guest, she was impressed with the belief that never before had she looked upon so beautiful

a woman, and she marvelled that one who must have felt so utterly out of place in her surroundings should still retain a poise that suggested the majestic bearing of a queen rather than of a stranger ill at ease.

By signs and gestures, Zora sought to converse with her guest until even the regal La found herself laughing; and then La tried it too until Zora knew that her guest had been threatened with clubs and knives and driven from her home, that she had walked a long way, that either a lion or a leopard had attacked her and that she was very tired.

When supper was over, Wamala prepared another cot for La in the tent with Zora, for something in the faces of

the Arabs had made the European girl fear for the safety of her beautiful guest.

"You must sleep outside the tent door tonight, Wamala," she said. "Here is an extra pistol."

In his goat hair beyt Abu Batn, the sheikh, talked long into the night with the principal men of his tribe. "The new one," he said, "will bring a price such as has never been paid before."

Tarzan awoke and glanced upward through the foliage at the stars. He saw that the night was half gone, and he arose and stretched himself. He ate again sparingly of the flesh of Bara and slipped silently into the shadows of the night.

The camp at the foot of the barrier

cliff slept. A single askari kept guard and tended the beast fire. From a tree at the edge of the camp two eyes watched him, and when he was looking away a figure dropped silently into the shadows. Behind the huts of the porters it crept, pausing occasionally to test the air with dilated nostrils. It came at last, among the shadows, to the tents of the Europeans, and one by one it ripped a hole in each rear wall and entered. It was Tarzan searching for La, but he did not find her and, disappointed, he turned to another matter.

Making a half circuit of the camp, moving sometimes only inch by inch as he wormed himself along on his belly, lest the askari upon guard might see him,

he made his way to the shelters of the other askaris, and there he selected a bow and arrows, and a stout spear, but even yet he was not done.

For a long time he crouched waiting —waiting until the askari by the fire should turn in a certain direction.

Presently the sentry arose and threw some dry wood upon the fire, after which he walked toward the shelter of his fellows to awaken the man who was to relieve him. It was this moment for which Tarzan had been waiting. The path of the askari brought him close to where Tarzan lay in hiding. The man approached and passed, and in the same instant Tarzan leaped to his feet and sprang upon the unsuspecting black. A

strong arm encircled the fellow from behind and swung him to a broad, bronzed shoulder. As Tarzan had anticipated, a scream of terror burst from the man's lips, awakening his fellows; and then he was borne swiftly through the shadows of the camp away from the beast fire as, with his prey struggling futilely in his grasp, the ape-man leaped the thorn boma and disappeared into the black jungle beyond.

So sudden and violent was the attack, so complete the man's surprise, that he had loosened his grasp upon his rifle in an effort to clutch his antagonist as he was thrown lightly to the shoulder of his captor.

His screams, echoing through the forest, brought his terrified companions from their shelters in time to see an indistinct form leap the boma and vanish into the darkness. They stood temporarily paralyzed by fright, listening to the diminishing cries of their comrade. Presently these ceased as suddenly as they had commenced. Then the headman found his voice.

"Simba!" he said.

"It was not Simba," declared another. "It ran high upon two legs, like a man. I saw it."

Presently from the dark jungle came a hideous, long-drawn cry. "That is the voice of neither man nor lion," said the headman.

"It is a demon," whispered another, and then they huddled about the fire, throwing dry wood upon it until its blaze had crackled high into the air.

In the darkness of the jungle Tarzan paused and laid aside his spear and bow, possession of which had permitted him to use but one hand in his abduction of the sentry. Now the fingers of his free hand closed upon the throat of his victim, putting a sudden period to his screams. Only for an instant did Tarzan choke the man; and when he relaxed his grasp upon the fellow's throat, the black made no further outcry, fearing to invite again the ungentle grip of those steel fingers. Quickly Tarzan jerked the fellow to his feet, relieved him of his

knife and, grasping him by his thick wool, pushed him ahead of him into the jungle, after stooping to retrieve his spear and bow. It was then that he voiced the victory cry of the bull-ape, for the value of the effect that it would have not only upon his victim, but upon his fellows in the camp behind them.

Tarzan had no intention of harming the fellow. His quarrel was not with the innocent black tools of the white men; and, while he would not have hesitated to take the life of the black had it been necessary, he knew them well enough to know that he might effect his purpose with them as well without bloodshed as with it.

The whites could not accomplish

anything without their black allies, and if Tarzan could successfully undermine the morale of the latter, the schemes of their masters would be as effectually thwarted as though he had destroyed them, since he was confident that they would not remain in a district where they were constantly reminded of the presence of a malign, supernatural enemy. Furthermore, this policy accorded better with Tarzan's grim sense of humor and, therefore, amused him, which the taking of life never did.

For an hour he marched his victim ahead of him in an utter silence, which he knew would have its effect upon the nerves of the black man. Finally he halted him, stripped his remaining

clothing from him, and taking the fellow's loin cloth bound his wrists and ankles together loosely. Then, appropriating his cartridge belt and other belongings, Tarzan left him, knowing that the black would soon free himself from his bonds; yet, believing that he had made his escape, would remain for life convinced that he had narrowly eluded a terrible fate.

Satisfied with his night's work, Tarzan returned to the tree in which he had cached the carcass of Bara, ate once more and lay up in sleep until morning, when he again took up his search for La, seeking trace of her up the valley beyond the barrier cliff of Opar, in the general direction that her spoor had indicated

she had gone, though, as a matter of fact, she had gone in precisely the opposite direction, down the valley.

8. THE TREACHERY OF ABU BATN

Night was falling when a frightened little monkey took refuge in a tree top. For days he had been wandering through the jungle, seeking in his little mind a solution for his problem during those occasional intervals that he could concentrate his mental forces upon it. But in an instant he might forget it to go swinging and scampering through the trees, or again a sudden terror would drive it from his consciousness, as one or another of the hereditary menaces to his existence appeared within the range of his perceptive faculties.

While his grief lasted, it was real and

poignant, and tears welled in the eyes of little Nkima as he thought of his absent master. Lurking always within him upon the borderland of conviction was the thought that he must obtain succor for Tarzan. In some way he must fetch aid to his master. The great black Gomangani warriors, who were also the servants of Tarzan, were many darknesses away, but yet it was in the general direction of the country of the Waziri that he drifted. Time was in no sense the essence of the solution of this or any other problem in the mind of Nkima. He had seen Tarzan enter Opar alive. He had not seen him destroyed, nor had he seen him come out of the city; and, therefore, by the standards of his logic Tarzan must still

be alive and in the city, but because the city was filled with enemies Tarzan must be in danger. As conditions were they would remain. He could not readily visualize any change that he did not actually witness, and so, whether he found and fetched the Waziri today or tomorrow would have little effect upon the result. They would go to Opar and kill Tarzan's enemies, and then little Nkima would have his master once more, and he would not have to be afraid of Sheeta, or Sabor, or Histah.

Night fell, and in the forest Nkima heard a gentle tapping. He aroused himself and listened intently. The tapping grew in volume until it rolled and moved through the jungle. Its source

was at no great distance, and as Nkima became aware of this, his excitement grew.

The moon was well up in the heavens, but the shadows of the jungle were dense. Nkima was upon the horns of a dilemma, between his desire to go to the place from which the drumming emanated and his fear of the dangers that might lie along the way; but at length the urge prevailed over his terror, and keeping well up in the relatively greater safety of the tree tops, he swung quickly in the direction from which the sound was coming to halt at last, above a little natural clearing that was roughly circular in shape.

Below him, in the moonlight, he

witnessed a scene that he had spied upon before, for here the great apes of To-yat were engaged in the death dance of the Dum-Dum. In the center of the amphitheater was one of those remarkable earthen drums, which from time immemorial primitive man has heard, but which few have seen. Before the drum were seated two old shes, who beat upon its resounding surface with short sticks. There was a rough rhythmic cadence to their beating, and to it, in a savage circle, danced the bulls; while encircling them in a thin outer line, the females and the young squatted upon their haunches, enthralled spectators of the savage scene. Close beside the drum lay the dead body of Sheeta, the leopard,

to celebrate whose killing the Dum-Dum had been organized.

Presently the dancing bulls would rush in upon the body and beat it with heavy sticks and, leaping out again, resume their dance. When the hunt, and the attack, and the death had been depicted at length, they would cast away their bludgeons and with bared fangs leap upon the carcass, tearing and rending it as they fought among themselves for large pieces or choice morsels.

Now Nkima and his kind are noted neither for their tact nor judgment. One wiser than little Nkima would have remained silent until the dance and the feast were over and until a new day had

come and the great bulls of the tribe of To-yat had recovered from the hysterical frenzy that the drum and the dancing always induced within them. But little Nkima was only a monkey. What he wanted, he wanted immediately, not being endowed with that mental poise which results in patience, and so he swung by his tail from an overhanging branch and scolded at the top of his voice in an effort to attract the attention of the great apes below.

"To-yat! Ga-yat! Zu-tho!" he cried. "Tarzan is in danger! Come with Nkima and save Tarzan!"

A great bull stopped in the midst of the dancing and looked up. "Go away, Manu," he growled. "Go away or we

kill!" But little Nkima thought that they could not catch him, and so he continued to swing from the branch and yell and scream at them until finally To-yat sent a young ape, who was not too heavy, to clamber into the upper branches of the tree, to catch little Nkima and kill him.

Here was an emergency which Nkima had not foreseen. Like many people, he had believed that everyone would be as interested in what interested him as he; and when he had first heard the booming of the drums of the Dum-Dum, he thought that the moment the apes learned of Tarzan's peril they would set out upon the trail to Opar.

Now, however, he knew differently, and as the real menace of his mistake

became painfully apparent with the leaping of a young ape into the tree below him, little Nkima emitted a loud shriek of terror and fled through the night; nor did he pause until, panting and exhausted, he had put a good mile between himself and the tribe of To- yat.

When La of Opar awoke in the tent of Zora Drinov she looked about her, taking in the unfamiliar objects that surrounded her, and presently her gaze rested upon the face of her sleeping hostess. These, indeed, she thought, must be the people of Tarzan, for had they not treated her with kindness and courtesy? They had offered her no harm and had fed her and given her shelter. A new thought crossed her mind now and her brows contracted,

as did the pupils of her eyes into which there came a sudden, savage light. Perhaps this woman was Tarzan's mate. La of Opar grasped the hilt of Darus' knife where it lay ready beside her. But then, as suddenly as it had come, the mood passed, for in her heart she knew that she could not return evil for good, nor could she harm whom Tarzan loved, and when Zora opened her eyes La greeted her with a smile.

If the European girl was a cause for astonishment to La, she herself filled the other with profoundest wonder and mystification. Her scant, yet rich and gorgeous apparel harked back to an ancient age, and the gleaming whiteness of her skin seemed as much out of place

in the heart of an African jungle as did her trappings in the twentieth century. Here was a mystery that nothing in the past experience of Zora Drinov could assist in solving. How she wished that she could converse with her, but all that she could do was to smile back at the beautiful creature regarding her so intently.

La, accustomed as she had been to being waited upon all her life by the lesser priestesses of Opar, was surprised by the facility with which Zora Drinov attended to her own needs as she rose to bathe and dress, the only service she received being in the form of a pail of hot water that Wamala fetched and poured into her folding tub; yet though

La had never before been expected to lift a hand in the making of her toilet, she was far from helpless, and perhaps she found pleasure in the new experience of doing for herself.

Unlike the customs of the men of Opar, those of its women required scrupulous bodily cleanliness, so that in the past much of La's time had been devoted to her toilet, to the care of her nails, and her teeth, and her hair, and to the massaging of her body with aromatic unguents—customs, handed down from a cultured civilization of antiquity, to take on in ruined Opar the significance of religious rites.

By the time the two girls were ready for breakfast, Wamala was prepared to

serve it; and as they sat outside the tent beneath the shade of a tree, eating the coarse fare of the camp, Zora noted unwonted activity about the beyts of the Arabs, but she gave the matter little thought, as they had upon other occasions moved their tents from one part of the camp to another.

Breakfast over, Zora took down her rifle, wiped out the bore and oiled the breech mechanism, for today she was going out after fresh meat, the Arabs having refused to hunt. La watched her with evident interest and later saw her depart with Wamala and two of the black porters; but she did not attempt to accompany her since, although she had looked for it, she had received no sign to

do so.

Ibn Dammuk was the son of a sheikh of the same tribe as Abu Batn, and upon this expedition he was the latter's right-hand man. With the fold of his thorib drawn across the lower part of his face, leaving only his eyes exposed, he had been watching the two girls from a distance. He saw Zora Drinov quit the camp with a gun-bearer and two porters and knew that she had gone to hunt.

For some time after she had departed he sat in silence with two companions. Then he arose and sauntered across the camp toward La of Opar, where she sat buried in reverie in a camp chair before Zora's tent. As the three men approached, La eyed them with level

gaze, her natural suspicion of strangers aroused in her breast. As they came closer and their features became distinct, she felt a sudden distrust of them. They were crafty, malign looking men, not at all like Tarzan, and instinctively she distrusted them.

They halted before her and Ibn Dammuk, the son of a sheikh, addressed her. His voice was soft and oily, but it did not deceive her.

La eyed him haughtily. She did not understand him and she did not wish to, for the message that she read in his eyes disgusted her. She shook her head to signify that she did not understand and turned away to indicate that the interview was terminated, but Ibn

Dammuk stepped closer and laid a hand familiarly upon her naked shoulder.

Her eyes flaming with anger, La leaped to her feet, one hand moving swiftly to the hilt of her dagger. Ibn Dammuk stepped back, but one of his men leaped forward to seize her.

Misguided fool! Like a tigress she was upon him; and before his friends could intervene, the sharp blade of the knife of Darus, the priest of the Flaming God, had sunk thrice into his breast, and with a gasping scream he had slumped to the ground dead.

With flaming eyes and bloody knife, the high priestess of Opar stood above her kill, while Abu Batn and the other Arabs, attracted by the death cry of the

stricken man, ran hurriedly toward the little group.

"Stand back!" cried La. "Lay no profaning hand upon the person of the high priestess of the Flaming God."

They did not understand her words, but they understood her flashing eyes and her dripping blade. Jabbering volubly, they gathered around her, but at a safe distance. "What means this, Ibn Dammuk?" demanded Abu Batn.

"Dogman did but touch her, and she flew at him like el adrea, lord of the broad head."

"A lioness she may be," said Abu Batn, "but she must not be harmed."

"Wullah!" exclaimed Ibn Dammuk, "but she must be tamed."

"Her taming we may leave to him who will pay many pieces of gold for her," replied the sheikh. "It is necessary only for us to cage her. Surround her, my children, and take the knife from her. Make her wrists secure behind her back, and by the time the other returns we shall have struck camp and be ready to depart."

A dozen brawny men leaped upon La simultaneously. "Do not harm her! Do not harm her!" screamed Abu Batn, as, fighting like a lioness indeed, La sought to defend herself. Slashing right and left with her dagger, she drew blood more than once before they overpowered her; nor did they accomplish it before another Arab fell with a pierced heart,

but at length they succeeded in wrenching the blade from her and securing her wrists.

Leaving two warriors to guard her, Abu Batn turned his attention to gathering up the few black servants that remained in camp. These he forced to prepare loads of such of the camp equipment and provisions as he required. While this work was going on under Ibn Dammuk's supervision, the sheikh ransacked the tents of the Europeans, giving special attention to those of Zora Drinov and Zveri, where he expected to find the gold that the leader of the expedition was reputed to have in large quantities; nor was he entirely disappointed since he found in

Zora's tent a box containing a considerable amount of money, though by no means the great quantity that he had expected, a fact which was due to the foresight of Zveri, who had personally buried the bulk of his funds beneath the floor of his tent.

Zora met with unexpected success in her hunting, for within a little more than an hour of her departure from camp she had come upon antelope, and two quick shots had dropped as many members of the herd. She waited while the porters skinned and dressed them and then returned leisurely toward camp. Her mind was occupied to some extent with the disquieting attitude of the Arabs, but she was not at all prepared for the

reception that she met when she approached camp about noon.

She was walking in advance, immediately followed by Wamala, who was carrying both of her rifles, while behind them were the porters, staggering under their heavy loads. Just as she was about to enter the clearing, Arabs leaped from the underbrush on either side of the trail. Two of them seized Wamala and wrenched the rifles from his grasp, while others laid heavy hands upon Zora. She tried to free herself from them and draw her revolver, but the attack had taken her so by surprise that before she could accomplish anything in defense, she was overpowered and her hands bound at her back.

"What is the meaning of this?" she demanded. "Where is Abu Batn, the sheikh?"

The men laughed at her. "You shall see him presently," said one. "He has another guest whom he is entertaining, so he could not come to meet you," at which they all laughed again.

As she stepped into the clearing where she could obtain an unobstructed view of the camp, she was astounded by what she saw. Every tent had been struck. The Arabs were leaning on their rifles ready to march, each of them burdened with a small pack, while the few black men, who had been left in camp, were lined up before heavy loads. All the rest of the paraphernalia of the

camp, which Abu Batn had not men enough to transport, was heaped in a pile in the center of the clearing, and even as she looked she saw men setting torches to it.

As she was led across the clearing toward the waiting Arabs, she saw her erstwhile guest between two warriors, her wrists confined by thongs even as her own. Near her, scowling malevolently, was Abu Batn.

"Why have you done this thing, Abu Batn?" demanded Zora.

"Allah was wroth that we should betray our land to the Nasrany," said the sheikh. "We have seen the light, and we are going back to our own people."

"What do you intend to do with this

woman and with me?" asked Zora.

"We shall take you with us for a little way," replied Abu Batn. "I know a kind man who is very rich, who will give you both a good home."

"You mean that you are going to sell us to some black sultan?" demanded the girl.

The sheikh shrugged. "I would not put it that way," he said. "Rather let us say that I am making a present to a great and good friend and saving you and this other woman from certain death in the jungle should we depart without you."

"Abu Batn, you are a hypocrite and a traitor," cried Zora, her voice vibrant with contempt.

"The Nasrany like to call names,"

said the sheikh with a sneer. "Perhaps if the pig, Zveri, had not called us names, this would not have happened."

"So this is your revenge," asked Zora, "because he reproached you for your cowardice at Opar?"

"Enough!" snapped Abu Batn. "Come, my children, let us be gone."

As the flames licked at the edges of the great pile of provisions and equipment that the Arabs were forced to leave behind, the deserters started upon their march toward the West.

The girls marched near the head of the column, the feet of the Arabs and the carriers behind them totally obliterating their spoor from the motley record of the trail. They might have found some

comfort in their straits had they been able to converse with one another; but La could understand no one and Zora found no pleasure in speaking to the Arabs, while Wamala and the other blacks were so far toward the rear of the column that she could not have communicated with them had she cared to.

To pass the time away, Zora conceived the idea of teaching her companion in misery some European language, and because in the original party there had been more who were familiar with English than any other tongue, she selected that language for her experiment.

She began by pointing to herself and

saying "woman" and then to La and repeating the same word, after which she pointed to several of the Arabs in succession and said "man" in each instance. It was evident that La understood her purpose immediately, for she entered into the spirit of it with eagerness and alacrity, repeating the two words again and again, each time indicating either a man or a woman.

Next the European girl again pointed to herself and said "Zora." For a moment La was perplexed, and then she smiled and nodded.

"Zora," she said, pointing to her companion, and then, swiftly, she touched her own breast with a slender forefinger and said, "La."

And this was the beginning. Each hour La learned new words, all nouns at first, that described each familiar object that appeared oftenest to their view. She learned with remarkable celerity, evidencing an alert and intelligent mind and a retentive memory, for once she learned a word she never forgot it. Her pronunciation was not always perfect, for she had a decidedly foreign accent that was like nothing Zora Drinov ever had heard before, and so altogether captivating that the teacher never tired of hearing her pupil recite.

As the march progressed, Zora realized that there was little likelihood that they would be mistreated by their captors, it being evident to her that the

sheikh was impressed with the belief that the better the condition in which they could be presented to their prospective purchaser the more handsome the return that Abu Batn might hope to receive.

Their route lay to the northwest through a section of the Galla country of Abyssinia, and from scraps of conversation Zora overhead she learned that Abu Batn and his followers were apprehensive of danger during this portion of the journey. And well they may have been, since for ages the Arabs have conducted raids in Galla territory for the purpose of capturing slaves, and among the Negroes with them was a Galla slave that Abu Batn had brought with him from his desert home.

After the first day the prisoners had been allowed the freedom of their hands, but always Arab guards surrounded them, though there seemed little likelihood that an unarmed girl would take the risk of escaping into the jungle, where she would be surrounded by the dangers of wild beasts or almost certain starvation. However, could Abu Batn have read their thoughts, he might have been astonished to learn that in the mind of each was a determination to escape to any fate rather than to march docilely on to an end that the European girl was fully conscious of and which La of Opar unquestionably surmised in part.

La's education was progressing nicely by the time the party approached the

border of the Galla country, but in the meantime both girls had become aware of a new menace threatening La of Opar. Ibn Dammuk marched often beside her, and in his eyes, when he looked at her, was a message that needed no words to convey. But when Abu Batn was near, Ibn Dammuk ignored the fair prisoner, and this caused Zora the most apprehension, for it convinced her that the wily Ibn was but biding his time until he might find conditions favorable to the carrying out of some scheme that he already had decided upon, nor did Zora harbor any doubts as to the general purpose of his plan.

At the edge of the Galla country they were halted by a river in flood. They

could not go north into Abyssinia proper, and they dared not go south, where they might naturally have expected pursuit to follow. So perforce they were compelled to wait where they were.

And while they waited Ibn Dammuk struck.

9. IN THE DEATH CELL OF OPAR

Once again Peter Zveri stood before the walls of Opar, and once again the courage of his black soldiers was dissipated by the weird cries of the inmates of the city of mystery. The ten warriors, who had not been to Opar before and who had volunteered to enter the city, halted trembling as the first of the blood-curdling screams rose, shrill and piercing, from the forbidding ruins.

Miguel Romero once more led the invaders, and directly behind him was Wayne Colt. According to the plan the blacks were to have followed closely behind these two, with the rest of the

whites bringing up the rear, where they might rally and encourage the Negroes, or if necessary, force them on at the points of their pistols. But the blacks would not even enter the opening of the outer wall, so demoralized were they by the uncanny warning screams which their superstitious minds attributed to malignant demons, against which there could be no defense and whose animosity meant almost certain death for those who disregarded their wishes.

"In with you, you dirty cowards!" cried Zveri, menacing the blacks with his revolver in an effort to force them into he opening.

One of the warriors raised his rifle threateningly. "Put way your weapon,

white man," he said. "We will fight men, but we will not fight the spirits of the dead."

"Lay off, Peter," said Dorsky. "You will have the whole bunch on us in a minute and we shall all be killed."

Zveri lowered his pistol and commenced to plead with the warriors, promising them rewards that amounted to riches to them if they would accompany the whites into the city; but the volunteers were obdurate - nothing could induce them to venture into Opar.

Seeing failure once again imminent and with a mind already obsessed by the belief that the treasures of Opar would make him fabulously wealthy and insure the success of his secret scheme of

empire, Zveri determined to follow Romero and Colt with the remainder of his aides, which consisted only of Dorsky, Ivitch and the Filipino boy. "Come on," he said, "we will have to make a try at it alone, if these yellow dogs won't help us."

By the time the four men had passed through the outer wall, Romero and Colt were already out of sight beyond the inner wall. Once again the warning scream broke menacingly upon the brooding silence of the ruined city.

"God!" ejaculated Ivitch. "What do you suppose it could be?"

"Shut up," exclaimed Zveri irritably. "Stop thinking about it, or you'll go yellow like those damn blacks."

Slowly they crossed the court toward the inner wall, nor was there much enthusiasm manifest among them other than for an evident desire in the breast of each to permit one of the others the glory of leading the advance. Tony had reached the opening when a bedlam of noise from the opposite side of the wall burst upon their ears—a hideous chorus of war cries, mingled with the sound of rushing feet. There was a shot, and then another and another.

Tony turned to see if his companions were following him. They had halted and were standing with blanched faces, listening.

Then Ivitch turned. "To hell with the gold!" he said, and started back toward

the outer wall at a run.

"Come back, you lousy cur," cried Zveri, and took after him with Dorsky at his heels. Tony hesitated for a moment and then scurried in pursuit, nor did any of them halt until they were beyond the outer wall. There Zveri overtook Ivitch and seized him by the shoulder. "I ought to kill you," he cried in a trembling voice.

"You were as glad to get out of there as I was," growled Ivitch. "What was the sense of going in there? We should only have been killed like Colt and Romero. There were too many of them. Didn't you hear them?"

"I think Ivitch is right," said Dorsky. "It's all right to be brave, but we have

got to remember the cause—if we are killed everything is lost."

"But the gold!" exclaimed Zveri. "Think of the gold!"

"Gold is no good to dead men," Dorsky reminded him.

"How about our comrades?" asked Tony. "Are we to leave them to be killed?"

"To bell with the Mexican," said Zveri, "and as for the American I think his funds will still be available as long as we can keep the news of his death from getting back to the Coast."

"You are not even going to try to rescue them?" asked Tony.

"I cannot do it alone," said Zveri.

"I will go with you," said Tony.

"Little good two of us can accomplish," mumbled Zveri, and then in one of his sudden rages, he advanced menacingly upon the Filipino, his great figure towering above that of the other.

"Who do you think you are anyway?" he demanded. "I am in command here. When I want your advice I'll ask for it."

When Romero and Colt passed through the inner wall, that part of the interior of the temple which they could see appeared deserted, and yet they were conscious of movement in the darker recesses and the apertures of the ruined galleries that looked down into the courtway.

Colt glanced back. "Shall we wait for

the others?" he asked.

Romero shrugged. "I think we are going to have this glory all to ourselves, comrade," he said with a grin.

Colt smiled back at him. "Then let's get on with the business," he said. "I don't see anything very terrifying yet."

"There is something in there though," said Romero. "I've seen things moving."

"So have I," said Colt.

With their rifles ready, they advanced boldly into the temple; but they had not gone far when, from shadowy archways and from numerous gloomy doorways there rushed a horde of horrid men, and the silence of the ancient city was shattered by hideous war cries.

Colt was in advance and now he kept on moving forward, firing a shot above the heads of the grotesque warrior priests of Opar. Romero saw a number of the enemy running along the side of the great room which they had entered, with the evident intention of cutting off their retreat. He swung about and fired, but not over their heads. Realizing the gravity of their position, he shot to kill, and now Colt did the same, with the result that the screams of a couple of wounded men mingled now with the war cries of their fellows.

Romero was forced to drop back a few steps to prevent the Oparians from surrounding him. He shot rapidly now and succeeded in checking the advance

around their flank. A quick glance at Colt showed him standing his ground, and at the same instant he saw a hurled club strike the American on the head. The man dropped like a log, and instantly his body was covered by the terrible little men of Opar.

Miguel Romero realized that his companion was lost, and even if not now already dead, he, single-handed, could accomplish nothing toward his rescue. If he escaped with his own life he would be fortunate, and so, keeping up a steady fire, he fell back toward the aperture in the inner wall.

Having captured one of the invaders, seeing the other falling back, and fearing to risk further the devastating fire of the

terrifying weapon in the hand of their single antagonist, the Oparians hesitated.

Romero passed through the inner wall, turned and ran swiftly to the outer and a moment later had joined his companions upon the plain.

"Where is Colt?" demanded Zveri.

"They knocked him out with a club and captured him," said Romero. "He is probably dead by this time."

"And you deserted him?" asked Zveri.

The Mexican turned upon his chief in fury. "You ask me that?" he demanded. "You turned pale and ran even before you saw the enemy. If you fellows had backed us up Colt might not have been lost, but to let us go in there alone the two of us didn't have a Chinaman's

chance with that bunch of wild men. And you accuse me of cowardice?"

"I didn't do anything of the kind," said Zveri sullenly. "I never said you were a coward."

"You meant to imply it though," snapped Romero, "but let me tell you, Zveri, that you can't get away with that with me or anyone else who has been to Opar with you."

From behind the walls rose a savage cry of victory; and while it still rumbled through the tarnished halls of Opar, Zveri turned dejectedly away from the city. "It's no use," he said. "I can't capture Opar alone. We are returning to camp."

The little priests, swarming over

Colt, stripped him of his weapons and secured his hands behind his back. He was still unconscious, and so they lifted him to the shoulder of one of their fellows and bore him away into the interior of the temple.

When Colt regained consciousness he found himself lying on the floor of a large chamber. It was the throne room of the temple of Opar, where he had been fetched that Oah, the high priestess, might see the prisoner.

Perceiving that their captive had regained consciousness, his guards jerked him roughly to his feet and pushed him forward toward the foot of the dais upon which stood Oah's throne.

The effect of the picture bursting

suddenly upon him imparted to Colt the definite impression that he was the victim of an hallucination or a dream. The outer chamber of the ruin, in which he had fallen, had given no suggestion of the size and semi-barbaric magnificence of this great chamber, the grandeur of which was scarcely dimmed by the ruin of ages.

He saw before him, upon an ornate throne, a young woman of exceptional physical beauty, surrounded by the semibarbaric grandeur of an ancient civilization. Grotesque and hairy men and beautiful maidens formed her entourage. Her eyes, resting upon him, were cold and cruel; her mien haughty and contemptuous. A squat warrior,

more ape-like in his conformation than human, was addressing her in a language unfamiliar to the American.

When he had finished, the girl rose from the throne and, drawing a long knife from her girdle, raised it high above her head as she spoke rapidly and almost fiercely, her eyes fixed upon the prisoner.

From among a group of priestesses at the right of Oah's throne, a girl, just come into womanhood, regarded the prisoner through half- closed eyes, and beneath the golden plates that confined her smooth, white breasts, the heart of Nao palpitated to the thoughts that contemplation of this strange warrior engendered within her.

When Oah had finished speaking, Colt was lead away, quite ignorant of the fact that he had been listening to the sentence of death imposed upon him by the high priestess of the Flaming God. His guards conducted him to a cell just within the entrance of a tunnel leading from the sacrificial court to the pits beneath the city, and because it was not entirely below ground, fresh air and light had access to it through a window and the grated bars of its doorway. Here the escort left him, after removing the bonds from his wrists.

Through the small window in his cell Wayne Colt looked out upon the inner court of the Temple of the Sun at Opar.

He saw the surrounding galleries

rising tier upon tier to the summit of a lofty wall. He saw the stone altar standing in the center of the court, and the brown stains upon it and upon the pavement at its foot told him what the unintelligible words of Oah had been unable to convey. For an instant he felt his heart sink within his breast, and a shudder passed through his frame as he contemplated his inability to escape the fate which confronted him. There could be no mistaking the purpose of that altar when viewed in connection with the grinning skulls of former human sacrifices which stared through eyeless sockets upon him from their niches in the surrounding walls.

Fascinated by the horror of his

situation, he stood staring at the altar and skulls, but presently he gained control of himself and shook the terror from him, yet the hopelessness of his situation continued to depress him. His thoughts turned to his companion. He wondered what Romero's fate had been. There, indeed, had been a brave and gallant comrade, in fact, the only member of the party who had impressed Colt favorably, or in whose society he had found pleasure. The others had seemed either ignorant fanatics or avaricious opportunists, while the manner and speech of the Mexican had stamped him as a light-hearted soldier of fortune, who might gayly offer his life in any cause which momentarily seized his fancy with

an eye more singly for excitement and adventure than for any serious purpose. He did not know, of course, that Zveri and the others had deserted him; but he was confident that Romero had not before his cause had become utterly hopeless, or until the Mexican himself had been killed or captured.

In lonely contemplation of his predicament, Colt spent the rest of the long afternoon. Darkness fell, and still there came no sign from his captors. He wondered if they intended leaving him there without food or water, or if, perchance, the ceremony that was to see him offered in sacrifice upon that grim, brown-stained altar was scheduled to commence so soon that they felt it

unnecessary to minister to his physical needs.

He had lain down upon the hard cement-like surface of the cell floor and was trying to find momentary relief in sleep, when his attention was attracted by the shadow of a sound coming from the courtyard where the altar stood. As he listened he was positive that someone was approaching, and rising quietly he went to the window and looked out. In the shadowy darkness of the night, relieved only by the faint light of distant stars, he saw something moving across the courtyard toward his cell, but whether man or beast he could not distinguish; and then, from somewhere high up among the lofty ruins, there

pealed out upon the silent night the long drawn scream, which seemed now to the American as much a part of the mysterious city of Opar as the crumbling ruins themselves. It was a sullen and discouraged party that made its way back to the camp at the edge of the forest below the barrier cliffs of Opar, and when they arrived it was to find only further disorganization and discouragement.

No time was lost in narrating to the members of the returning expedition the story of the sentry who had been carried off into the jungle at night by a demon, from whom the man had managed to escape before being devoured. Still fresh in their minds was the uncanny

affair of the death of Raghunath War, nor were the nerves of those who had been before the walls of Opar inclined to be at all steadied by that experience, so that it was a nervous company that bivouacked that night beneath the dark trees at the edge of the gloomy forest and, with sighs of relief, witnessed the coming of dawn.

Later, after they had taken up the march toward the base camp, the spirit of the blacks gradually returned to normal and presently the tension under which they had been laboring for days was relieved by song and laughter, but the whites were gloomy and sullen. Zveri and Romero did not speak to one another, while Ivitch, like all weak

characters, nursed a grievance against everyone because of his own display of cowardice during the fiasco at Opar.

From the interior of a hollow tree in which he had been hiding, little Nkima saw the column pass; and after it was safely by he emerged from his retreat and, dancing up and down upon a limb of the tree, shouted dire threats after them and called them many names. Tarzan of the Apes lay stretched upon his belly upon the back of Tantor, the elephant, his elbows upon the broad head, his chin resting in his cupped hands. Futile had been his search for the spoor of La of Opar. Had the Earth opened and swallowed her she could not more effectually have disappeared.

Today Tarzan had come upon Tantor and, as had been his custom from childhood, he had tarried for that silent communion with the sagacious old patriarch of the forest, which seemed always to impart to the man something of the beast's great strength of character and poise. There was an atmosphere of restful stability about Tantor that filled the ape-man with a peace and tranquility that he found restful; and Tantor, upon his part, welcomed the companionship of the Lord of the Jungle, whom, alone, of all two legged creatures, he viewed with friendship and affection.

The beasts of the jungle acknowledge no master, least of all the cruel tyrant that drives civilized man throughout his

headlong race from the cradle to the grave—Time, the master of countless millions of slaves. Time, the measurable aspect of duration, was measureless to Tarzan and Tantor. Of all the vast resources that Nature had placed at their disposal, she had been most profligate with Time, since she had awarded to each all that he could use during his lifetime, no matter how extravagant of it he might be. So great was the supply of it that it could not be wasted, since there was always more, even up to the moment of death, after which it ceased, with all things, to be essential to the individual. Tantor and Tarzan, therefore, were wasting no time as they communed together in silent meditation; but though

Time and space go on forever, whether in curves or straight lines, all other things must end; and so the quiet and the peace that the two friends were enjoying were suddenly shattered by the excited screams of a diminutive monkey in the foliage of a great tree above them.

It was Nkima. He had found his Tarzan, and his relief and joy aroused the jungle to the limit of his small, shrill voice. Lazily Tarzan rolled over and looked up at the jabbering simian above him; and then Nkima, satisfied now beyond peradventure of a doubt that this was, indeed, his master, launched himself downward to alight upon the bronzed body of the ape-man. Slender, hairy little arms went around Tarzan's

neck as Nkima hugged close to this haven of refuge which imparted to him those brief moments in his life when he might enjoy the raptures of a temporary superiority complex. Upon Tarzan's shoulder he felt almost fearless and could, with impunity, insult the entire world.

"Where have you been, Nkima?" asked Tarzan.

"Looking for Tarzan," replied the monkey.

"What have you seen since I left you at the walls of Opar?" demanded the ape-man.

"I have seen many things. I have seen the great Mangani dancing in the moonlight around the dead body of

Sheeta. I have seen the enemies of Tarzan marching through the forest. I have seen Histah, gorging himself on the carcass of Bara."

"Have you seen a Tarmangani she?" demanded Tarzan.

"No," replied Nkima. "There were no shes among the Gomangani and Tarmangani enemies of Tarzan. Only bulls, and they marched back toward the place where Nkima first saw them."

"When was this?" asked Tarzan.

"Kudu had climbed into the heavens but a short distance out of the darkness when Nkima saw the enemies of Tarzan marching back to the place where he first saw them."

"Perhaps we had better see what they

are up to," said the ape- man. He slapped Tantor affectionately with his open palm in farewell, leaped to his feet and swung nimbly into the overhanging branches of a tree; while far away Zveri and his party plodded through the jungle toward their base camp.

Tarzan of the Apes follows no earth-bound trails where the density of the forest offers him the freedom of leafy highways, and thus he moves from point to point with a speed that has often been disconcerting to his enemies.

Now he moved in an almost direct line so that he overtook the expedition as it made camp for the night. As he watched them from behind a leafy screen of high-flung foliage, he noticed, though

with no surprise, that they were not burdened with any treasure from Opar.

As the success and happiness of jungle dwellers, nay, even life itself, is largely dependent upon their powers of observation, Tarzan had developed his to a high degree of perfection. At his first encounter with this party he had made himself familiar with the faces, physiques and carriages of all of its principals and of many of its humble warriors and porters, with the result that he was immediately aware that Colt was no longer with the expedition. Experience permitted Tarzan to draw a rather accurate picture of what had happened at Opar and of the probable fate of the missing man.

Years ago he had seen his own courageous Waziri turn and flee upon the occasion of their first experience of the weird warning screams from the ruined city, and he could easily guess that Colt, attempting to lead the invaders into the city, had been deserted and found either death or capture within the gloomy interior. This, however, did not greatly concern Tarzan. While he had been rather drawn toward Colt by that tenuous and invisible power known as personality, he still considered him as one of his enemies, and if he were either dead or captured Tarzan's cause was advanced by that much.

From Tarzan's shoulder Nkima looked down upon the camp, but he kept

silent as Tarzan had instructed him to do. Nkima saw many things that he would have liked to have possessed, and particularly he coveted a red calico shirt worn by one of the askaris. This, he thought, was very grand, indeed, being set off as it was by the unrelieved nakedness of the majority of the blacks. Nkima wished that his master would descend and slay them all, but particularly the man with the red shirt; for, at heart, Nkima was bloodthirsty, which made it fortunate for the peace of the jungle that he had not been born a gorilla. But Tarzan's mind was not set upon carnage. He had other means for thwarting the activities of these strangers. During the day he had made a

kill, and now he withdrew to a safe distance from the camp and satisfied his hunger, while Nkima searched for birds' eggs, fruit, and insects.

And so night fell and when it had enveloped the jungle in impenetrable darkness, relieved only by the beast fires of the camp, Tarzan returned to a tree where he could overlook the activities of the bivouacked expedition. He watched them in silence for a long time, and then suddenly he raised his voice in a long scream that perfectly mimicked the hideous warning cry of Opar's defenders.

The effect upon the camp was instantaneous. Conversation, singing, and laughter ceased. For a moment the

men sat as in a paralysis of terror. Then, seizing their weapons, they came closer to the fire.

With the shadow of a smile upon his lips, Tarzan melted away into the jungle.

10. THE LOVE OF A PRIESTESS

Ibn Dammuk had bided his time and now, in the camp by the swollen river at the edge of the Galla country, he at last found the opportunity he had so long awaited. The surveillance over the two prisoners had somewhat relaxed, due largely to the belief entertained by Abu Batn that the women would not dare to invite the perils of the jungle by attempting to escape from captors who were, at the same time, their protectors from even greater dangers. He had, however, reckoned without a just estimation of the courage and resourcefulness of his two captives,

who, had he but known it, were constantly awaiting the first opportunity for escape. It was this fact, as well that played into the hands of Ibn Dammuk.

With great cunning he enlisted the services of one of the blacks who had been forced to accompany them from the base camp and who was virtually a prisoner. By promising him his liberty Ibn Dammuk had easily gained the man's acquiescence in the plan that he had evolved.

A separate tent had been pitched for the two women, and before it sat a single sentry, whose presence Abu Batn considered more than sufficient for this purpose, which was, perhaps, even more to protect the women from his own

followers than to prevent a very remotely possible attempt at escape.

This night, which Ibn Dammuk had chosen for his villainy, was one for which he had been waiting, since it found upon duty before the tent of the captives one of his own men, a member of his own tribe, who was bound by laws of hereditary loyalty to serve and obey him. In the forest, just beyond the camp, waited Ibn Dammuk, with two more of his own tribesmen, four slaves that they had brought from the desert and the black porter who was to win his liberty by this night's work.

The interior of the tent that had been pitched for Zora and La was illuminated by a paper lantern, in which a candle

burned dimly; and in this subdued light the two sat talking in La's newly acquired English, which was at best most fragmentary and broken. However, it was far better than no means of communication and gave the two girls the only pleasure that they enjoyed. Perhaps it was not a remarkable coincidence that this night they were speaking of escape and planning to cut a hole in the back of their tent through which they might sneak away into the jungle after the camp had settled down for the night and their sentry should be dozing at his post. And while they conversed, the sentry before their tent rose and strolled away, and a moment later they heard a scratching upon the

back of the tent. Their conversation ceased, and they sat with eyes riveted upon the point where the fabric of the tent moved to the pressure of the scratching without.

Presently a voice spoke in a low whisper. "Memsahib Drinov!"

"Who is it? What do you want?" asked Zora in a low voice.

"I have found a way to escape. I can help you if you wish."

"Who are you?" demanded Zora.

"I am Bukula," and Zora at once recognized the name as that of one of the blacks that Abu Batn had forced to accompany him from the base camp.

"Put out your lantern," whispered

Bukula. "The sentry has gone away. I will come in and tell you my plans."

Zora arose and blew out the candle, and a moment later the two captives saw Bukula crawling into the interior of the tent. "Listen, Memsahib," he said, "the boys that Abu Batn stole from Bwana Zveri are running away tonight. We are going back to the safari. We will take you two with us, if you want to come."

"Yes," said Zora, "we will come."

"Good!" said Bukula. "Now listen well to what I tell you. The sentry will not come back, but we cannot all go out at once. First I will take this other Memsahib with me out into the jungle where the boys are waiting; then I will return for you. You can make talk to her.

Tell her to follow me and to make no noise."

Zora turned to La. "Follow Bukula," she said. "We are going tonight. I will come after you."

"I understand," replied La.

"It is all right, Bukula," said Zora. "She understands."

Bukula stepped to the entrance to the tent and looked quickly about the camp. "Come!" he said, and, followed by La, disappeared quickly from Zora's view.

The European girl fully realized the risk that they ran in going into the jungle alone with these half-savage blacks, yet she trusted them far more implicitly than she did the Arabs and, too, she felt that she and La together might circumvent

any treachery upon the part of any of the Negroes, the majority of whom she knew would be loyal and faithful. Waiting in the silence and loneliness of the darkened tent, it seemed to Zora that it took Bukula an unnecessarily long time to return for her; but when minute after minute dragged slowly past until she felt that she had waited for hours and there was no sign either of the black or the sentry, her fears were aroused in earnest. Presently she determined not to wait any longer for Bukula, but to go out into the jungle in search of the escaping party. She thought that perhaps Bukula had been unable to return without risking detection and that they were all waiting just beyond the camp for a favorable

opportunity to return to her. As she arose to put her decision into action, she heard footsteps approaching the tent, and thinking that they were Bukula's, she waited; but instead she saw the flapping robe and the long-barreled musket of an Arab silhouetted against the lesser darkness of the exterior as the man stuck his head inside the tent. "Where is Hajellan?" he demanded, giving the name of the departed sentry.

"How should we know?" retorted Zora in a sleepy voice. "Why do you awaken us thus in the middle of the night? Are we the keepers of your fellows?"

The fellow grumbled something in reply and then, turning, called aloud

across the camp, announcing to all who might hear that Hajellan was missing and inquiring if any had seen him. Other warriors strolled over then, and there was a great deal of speculation as to what had become of Hajellan. The name of the missing man was called aloud many times, but there was no response, and finally the sheikh came and questioned everyone. "The women are in the tent yet?" he demanded of the new sentry.

"Yes," replied the man. "I have talked with them."

"It is strange," said Abu Batn, and then, "Ibn Dammuk!" he cried. "Where art thou, Ibn? Hajellan was one of thy men." There was no answer. "Where is

Ibn Dammuk?"

"He is not here," said a man standing near the sheikh.

"Nor are Fodil and Dareyem," said another.

"Search the camp and see who is missing," commanded Abu Batn; and when the search had been made they found that Ibn Dammuk, Hajellan, Fodil, and Dareyem were missing with five of the blacks.

"Ibn Dammuk has deserted us," said Abu Batn. "Well, let it go. There will be fewer with whom to share the reward we shall reap when we are paid for the two women," and thus reconciling himself to the loss of four good fighting men, Abu Batn repaired to his tent and

resumed his interrupted slumber.

Weighted down by apprehension as to the fate of La and disappointment occasioned by her own failure to escape, Zora spent an almost sleepless night, yet fortunate for her peace of mind was it that she did not know the truth.

Bukula moved silently into the jungle, followed by La; and when they had gone a short distance from the camp, the girl saw the dark forms of men standing in a little group ahead of them. The Arabs, in their tell-tale thobs, were hidden in the underbrush, but their slaves had removed their own white robes and, with Bukula, were standing naked but for G strings, thus carrying conviction to the mind of the girl that only black prisoners

of Abu Batn awaited her. When she came among them, however, she learned her mistake; but too late to save herself, for she was quickly seized by many hands and effectually gagged before she could give the alarm. The Ibn Dammuk and his Arab companions appeared, and silently the party moved on down the river through the dark forest, though not before they had subdued the enraged high priestess of the Flaming God, secured her wrists behind her back, and placed a rope about her neck.

All night they fled, for Ibn Dammuk well guessed what the wrath of Abu Batn would be when, in the morning, he discovered the trick that had been played upon him; and when morning dawned

they were far away from camp, but still Ibn Dammuk pushed on, after a brief halt for a hurried breakfast.

Long since had the gag been removed from La's mouth, and now Ibn Dammuk walked beside her, gloating upon his prize. He spoke to her, but La could not understand him and only strode on in haughty disdain, biding her time against the moment when she might be revenged and inwardly sorrowing over her separation from Zora, for whom a strange affection had been aroused in her savage breast.

Toward noon the party withdrew from the game trail which they had been following and made camp near the river. It was here that Ibn Dammuk made a

fatal blunder. Goaded to passion by close proximity to the beautiful woman for whom he had conceived a mad infatuation, the Arab gave way to his desire to be alone with her; and leading her along a little trail that paralleled the river, he took her away out of sight of his companions; and when they had gone perhaps a hundred yards from camp, he seized her in his arms and sought to kiss her lips.

With equal safety might Ibn Dammuk have embraced a lion. In the heat of his passion he forgot many things, among them the dagger that hung always at his side. But La of Opar did not forget. With the coming of daylight she had noticed that dagger, and ever since she had

coveted it; and now as the man pressed her close, her hand sought and found its hilt. For an instant she seemed to surrender. She let her body go limp in his arms, while her own, firm and beautifully rounded, crept about him, one to his right shoulder, the other beneath his left arm. But as yet she did not give him her lips, and then as he struggled to possess them the hand upon his shoulder seized him suddenly by the throat. The long, tapered fingers that seemed so soft and white were suddenly claws of steel that closed upon his windpipe; and simultaneously the hand that had crept so softly beneath his left arm drove his own long dagger into his heart from beneath his shoulder blade.

The single cry that he might have given was choked in his throat. For an instant the tall form of Ibn Dammuk stood rigidly erect; then it slumped forward, and the girl let it slip to the earth. She spurned it once with her foot, then removed from it the girdle and sheath for the dagger, wiped the bloody blade upon the man's thob and hurried on up the little river trail until she found an opening in the underbrush that led away from the stream. On and on she went until exhaustion overtook her; and then, with her remaining strength, she climbed into a tree in search of much needed rest.

Wayne Colt watched the shadowy figure approach the mouth of the corridor where his cell lay. He

wondered if this was a messenger of death, coming to lead him to sacrifice. Nearer and nearer it came until presently it stopped before the bars of his cell door; and then a soft voice spoke to him in a low whisper and in a tongue which he could not understand, and he knew that his visitor was a woman.

Prompted by curiosity, he came close to the bars. A soft hand reached in and touched him, almost caressingly. A full moon rising above the high walls that ring the sacrificial court suddenly flooded the mouth of the corridor and the entrance to Colt's cell in silvery light, and in it the American saw the figure of a young girl pressed against the cold iron of the grating. She handed him food,

and when he took it she caressed his hand and drawing it to the bars pressed her lips against it.

Wayne Colt was nonplussed. He could not know that Nao, the little priestess, had been the victim of love at first sight, that to her mind and eyes, accustomed to the sight of males only in the form of the hairy, grotesque priests of Opar, this stranger appeared a god indeed.

A slight noise attracted Nao's attention toward the court and, as she turned, the moonlight flooded her face, and the American saw that she was very lovely. Then she turned back toward him, her dark eyes wells of adoration, her full, sensitive lips trembling with

emotion as, still clinging to his hand, she spoke rapidly in low liquid tones.

She was trying to tell Colt that at noon of the second day he was to be offered in sacrifice to the Flaming God, that she did not wish him to die and if it were possible she would help him, but that she did not know how that would be possible.

Colt shook his head. "I cannot understand you, little one," he said, and Nao, though she could not interpret his words, sensed the futility of her own. Then, raising one of her hands from his, she made a great circle in a vertical plane from east to west with a slender index finger, indicating the path of the sun across the heavens; and then she

started a second circle, which she stopped at zenith, indicating high noon of the second day. For an instant her raised hand poised dramatically aloft; and then, the fingers closing as though around the hilt of an imaginary sacrificial knife, she plunged the invisible point deep into her bosom.

"Thus will Oah destroy you," she said, reaching through the bars and touching Colt over the heart.

The American thought that he understood the meaning of her pantomime, which he then repeated, plunging the imaginary blade into his own breast and looking questioningly at Nao.

In reply she nodded sadly, and the

tears welled to her eyes.

As plainly as though he had understood her words, Colt realized that here was a friend who would help him if she could, and reaching through the bars, he drew the girl gently toward him and pressed his lips against her forehead. With a low sob Nao encircled his neck with her arms and pressed her face to his. Then, as suddenly, she released him and, turning, hurried away on silent feet, to disappear in the gloomy shadows of an archway at one side of the court of sacrifice.

Colt ate the food that she had brought him and for a long time lay pondering the inexplicable forces which govern the acts of men. What train of circumstances

leading down out of a mysterious past had produced this single human being in a city of enemies in whom, all unsuspecting, there must always have existed a germ of potential friendship for him, a stranger and alien, of whose very existence she could not possibly have dreamed before this day. He tried to convince himself that the girl had been prompted to her act by pity for his plight, but he knew in his heart that a more powerful motive impelled her.

Colt had been attracted to many women, but he had never loved; and he wondered if that was the way that love came and if some day it would seize him as it had seized this girl; and he wondered also if, had conditions been

different, he might have been as strongly attracted to her. If not, then there seemed to be something wrong in the scheme of things; and still puzzling over this riddle of the ages, he fell asleep upon the hard floor of his cell.

With morning a hairy priest came and gave him food and water, and during the day others came and watched him, as though he were a wild beast in a menagerie. And so the long day dragged on, and once again night came— his last night.

He tried to picture what the final ceremony would be like. It seemed almost incredible that in the twentieth century he was to be offered as a human sacrifice to some heathen deity, but yet

the pantomime of the girl and the concrete evidence of the bloody altar and the grinning skulls assured him that such must be the very fate awaiting him upon the morrow. He thought of his family and his friends at home; they would never know what had become of him. He weighed his sacrifice against the mission that he had undertaken and he had no regret, for he knew that it had not been in vain. Far away, already near the Coast, was the message he had dispatched by the runner. That would insure that he had not failed in his part for the sake of a great principle for which, if necessary, he was glad to lay down his life. He was glad that he had acted promptly and sent the message

when he had, for now, upon the morrow, he could go to his death without vain regrets.

He did not want to die, and he made many plans during the day to seize upon the slightest opportunity that might be presented to him to escape.

He wondered what had become of the girl and if she would come again now that it was dark. He wished that she would, for he craved the companionship of a friend during his last hours; but as the night wore on, he gave up the hope and sought to forget the morrow in sleep.

As Wayne Colt moved restlessly upon his hard couch, Firg, a lesser priest of Opar, snored upon his pallet of straw in the small, dark recess that was his bed

chamber. Firg was the keeper of the keys, and so impressed was he with the importance of his duties that he never would permit anyone even to touch the sacred emblems of his trust, and probably because it was well known that Firg would die in defense of them they were entrusted to him. Not with justice could Firg have laid any claim to intellectuality, if he had known that such a thing existed. He was only an abysmal brute of a man and, like many men, far beneath the so-called brutes in many of the activities of mind. When he slept, all his faculties were asleep, which is not true of wild beasts when they sleep.

Firg's cell was in one of the upper stories of the ruins that still remained

intact. It was upon a corridor that encircled the main temple court —a corridor that was now in dense shadow, since the moon, touching it early in the night, had now passed on; so that the figure creeping stealthily toward the entrance to Firg's chamber would have been noticeable only to one who happened to be quite close. It moved silently, but without hesitation, until it came to the entrance beyond which Firg lay. There it paused, listening, and when it heard Firg's noisy snoring, it entered quickly. Straight to the side of the sleeping man it moved, and there it knelt, searching with one hand lightly over his body, while the other grasped a long, sharp knife that hovered constantly

above the hairy chest of the priest.

Presently it found what it wanted—a great ring, upon which were strung several enormous keys. A leather thong fastened the ring to Firg's girdle, and with the keen blade of the dagger the nocturnal visitor sought to sever the thong. Firg stirred, and instantly the creature at his side froze to immobility. Then the priest moved restlessly and commenced to snore again, and once more the dagger sawed at the leather thong. It passed through the strand unexpectedly and touched the metal of the ring lightly, but just enough to make the keys jangle ever so slightly.

Instantly Firg was awake, but he did not rise. He was never to rise again.

Silently, swiftly, before the stupid creature could realize his danger, the keen blade of the dagger had pierced his heart.

Soundlessly, Firg collapsed. His slayer hesitated a moment with poised dagger as though to make certain that the work had been well done. Then, wiping the tell-tale stains from the dagger's blade with the victim's loin cloth the figure arose and hurried from the chamber, in one hand the great keys upon their golden ring.

Colt stirred uneasily in his sleep and then awakened with a start. In the waning moonlight he saw a figure beyond the grating of his cell. He heard a key turn in the massive lock. Could it

be that they were coming for him? He rose to his feet, the urge of his last conscious thought strong upon him - escape. And then as the door swung open, a soft voice spoke, and he knew that the girl had returned.

She entered the cell and threw her arms about Colt's neck, drawing his lips down to hers. For a moment she clung to him, and then she released him and, taking one of his hands in hers, urged him to follow her; nor was the American loath to leave the depressing interior of the death cell.

On silent feet Nao led the way across the corner of the sacrificial court, through a dark archway into a gloomy corridor. Winding and twisting, keeping

always in dark shadows, she led him along a circuitous route through the ruins, until, after what seemed an eternity to Colt, the girl opened a low, strong, wooden door and led him into the great entrance hall of the temple, through the mighty portal of which he could see the inner wall of the city.

Here Nao halted, and coming close to the man looked up into his eyes. Again her arms stole about his neck, and again she pressed her lips to his. Her cheeks were wet with tears, and her voice broke with little sobs that she tried to stifle as she poured her love into the ears of the man who could not understand.

She had brought him here to offer him

his freedom, but she could not let him go yet. She clung to him, caressing him and crooning to him.

For a quarter of an hour she held him there, and Colt had not the heart to tear himself away, but at last she released him and pointed toward the opening in the inner wall.

"Go!" she said, "taking the heart of Nao with you. I shall never see you again, but at least I shall always have the memory of this hour to carry through life with me."

Wayne stooped and kissed her hand, the slender, savage little hand that had but just killed that her lover might live. Though of that, Wayne knew nothing.

She pressed her dagger with its sheath

upon him that he might not go out into the savage world unarmed, and then he turned away from her and moved slowly toward the inner wall. At the entrance of the opening he paused and turned about. Dimly, in the moonlight, he saw the figure of the little priestess standing very erect in the shadows of the ancient ruins. He raised his hand and waved a final, silent farewell.

A great sadness depressed Colt as he passed through the inner wall and crossed the court to freedom, for he knew that he had left behind him a sad and hopeless heart, in the bosom of one who must have risked death, perhaps, to save him—a perfect friend of whom he could but carry a vague memory of a

half-seen lovely face, a friend whose name he did not know, the only tokens of whom he had carried away with him were the memory of hot kisses and a slender dagger.

And thus, as Wayne Colt walked across the moonlit plain of Opar, the joy of his escape was tempered by sadness as he recalled the figure of the forlorn little priestess standing in the shadows of the ruins.

11. LOST IN THE JUNGLE

It was some time after the uncanny scream had disturbed the camp of the conspirators before the men could settle down to rest again.

Zveri believed that they had been followed by a band of Oparian warriors, who might be contemplating a night attack, and so he placed a heavy guard about the camp; but his blacks were confident that that unearthly cry had broken from no human throat.

Depressed and dispirited, the men resumed their march the following morning. They made an early start and by dint of much driving arrived at the base camp just before dark. The sight that met their eyes there filled them with

consternation. The camp had disappeared, and in the center of the clearing where it had been pitched a pile of ashes suggested that disaster had overtaken the party that had been left behind.

This new misfortune threw Zveri into a maniacal rage, but there was no one present upon whom he might lay the blame, and so he was reduced to the expedient of trampling back and forth while he cursed his luck in loud tones and several languages.

From a tree Tarzan watched him. He, too, was at a loss to understand the nature of the disaster that seemed to have overtaken the camp during the absence of the main party, but as he saw that it

caused the leader intense anguish, the ape-man was pleased.

The blacks were confident that this was another manifestation of the anger of the malign spirit that had been haunting them, and they were all for deserting the ill-starred white man, whose every move ended in failure or disaster. Zveri's powers of leadership deserve full credit, since from the verge of almost certain mutiny he forced his men by means of both cajolery and threat to remain with him. He set them to building shelters for the entire party, and immediately he dispatched messengers to his various agents, urging them to forward necessary supplies at once. He knew that certain things he needed

already were on the way from the Coast—uniforms, rifles, ammunition. But now he particularly needed provisions and trade goods. To insure discipline, he kept the men working constantly, either in adding to the comforts of the camp, enlarging the clearing, or hunting fresh meats.

And so the days passed and became weeks, and meanwhile Tarzan watched in waiting. He was in no hurry, for hurry is not a characteristic of the beasts. He roamed the jungle often at a considerable distance from Zveri's camp, but occasionally he would return, though not to molest them, preferring to let them lull themselves into a stupor of tranquil security, the shattering of which

in his own good time would have dire effect upon their morale. He understood the psychology of terror, and it was with terror that he would defeat them.

To the camp of Abu Batn, upon the border of the Galla country, word had come from spies that he had sent out that the Galla warriors were gathering to prevent his passage through their territory. Being weakened by the desertion of so many men, the sheikh dared not defy the bravery and numbers of the Galla warriors, but he knew that he must make some move, since it seemed inevitable that pursuit must overtake him from the rear, if he remained where he was much longer.

At last scouts that he had sent far up

the river on the opposite side returned to report that a way to the west seemed clear along a more northerly route, and so breaking camp, Abu Batn moved north with his lone prisoner.

Great had been his rage when he discovered that Ibn Dammuk had stolen La, and now he redoubled his precaution to prevent the escape of Zora Drinov. So closely was she guarded that any possibility of escape seemed almost hopeless. She had learned the fate for which Abu Batn was reserving her, and now, depressed and melancholy, her mind was occupied with plans for self-destruction. For a time she had harbored the hope that Zveri would overtake the Arabs and rescue her, but this she had

long since discarded, as day after day passed without bringing the hoped for succor.

She could not know, of course, the straits in which Zveri had found himself. He had not dared to detach a party of his men to search for her, fearing that, in their mutinous state of mind, they might murder any of his lieutenants that he placed in charge of them and return to their own tribe, where, through the medium of gossip, word of his expedition and its activities might reach his enemies; nor could he lead all of his force upon such an expedition in person, since he must remain at the base camp to receive the supplies that he knew would presently be arriving.

Perhaps, had he known definitely the danger that confronted Zora, he would have cast aside every other consideration and gone to her rescue; but being naturally suspicious of the loyalty of all men, he had persuaded himself that Zora had deliberately deserted him—a half-hearted conviction that had at least the effect of rendering his naturally unpleasant disposition infinitely more unbearable, so that those who should have been his companions and his support in his hour of need contrived as much as possible to keep out of his way.

And while these things were transpiring, little Nkima sped through the jungle upon a mission. In the service of his beloved master, little Nkima could

hold to a single thought and a line of action for considerable periods of time at a stretch; but eventually his attention was certain to be attracted by some extraneous matter and then, for hours perhaps, he would forget all about whatever duty had been imposed upon him; but when it again occurred to him, he would carry on entirely without any appreciation of the fact that there had been a break in the continuity of his endeavor.

Tarzan, of course, was entirely aware of this inherent weakness in his little friend; but he knew, too, from experience that, however many lapses might occur, Nkima would never entirely abandon any design upon which his mind

had been fixed; and having himself none of civilized man's slavish subservience to time, he was prone to overlook Nkima's erratic performance of a duty as a fault of almost negligible consequence. Some day Nkima would arrive at his destination. Perhaps it would be too late. If such a thought occurred at all to the ape-man, doubtless he passed it off with a shrug.

But time is of the essence of many things to civilized man. He fumes, and frets, and reduces his mental and physical efficiency if he is not accomplishing something concrete during the passage of every minute of that medium which seems to him like a flowing river, the waters of which are

utterly wasted if they are not utilized as they pass by.

Imbued by some such insane conception of time, Wayne Colt sweated and stumbled through the jungle, seeking his companions as though the very fate of the universe hung upon the slender chance that he should reach them without the loss of a second.

The futility of his purpose would have been entirely apparent to him could he have known that he was seeking his companions in the wrong direction. Wayne Colt was lost. Fortunately for him he did not know it; at least not yet. That stupefying conviction was to come later.

Days passed and still his wanderings

revealed no camp. He was hard put to it to find food, and his fare was meager and often revolting, consisting of such fruits as he had already learned to know and of rodents, which he managed to bag only with the greatest difficulty and an appalling waste of that precious time which he still prized above all things. He had cut himself a stout stick and would lie in wait along some tiny runway where observation had taught him he might expect to find his prey, until some unwary little creature came within striking distance. He had learned that dawn and dusk were the best hunting hours for the only animals that he could hope to bag, and he learned other things as he moved through the grim jungle, all

of which pertained to his struggle for existence. He had learned, for instance, that it was wiser for him to take to the trees whenever he heard a strange noise. Usually the animals got out of his way as he approached; but once a rhinoceros charged him, and again he almost stumbled upon a lion at his kill. Providence intervened in each instance and he escaped unkilled, but thus he learned caution.

About noon one day he came to a river that effectually blocked his further progress in the direction that he had been travelling. By this time the conviction was strong upon him that he was utterly lost, and not knowing which direction he should take, he decided to follow the

line of least resistance and travel down hill with the river, upon the shore of which he was positive that sooner or later he must discover a native village.

He had proceeded no great distance in the new direction, following a hard-packed trail, worn deep by the countless feet of many beasts, when his attention was arrested by a sound that reached his ears dimly from a distance. It came from somewhere ahead of him, and his hearing, now far more acute than it ever had been before, told him that something was approaching. Following the practice that he had found most conducive to longevity since he had been wandering alone and ill-armed against the dangers of the jungle, he flung himself quickly

into a tree and sought a point of vantage from where he could see the trail below him. He could not see it for any distance ahead, so tortuously did it wind through the jungle. Whatever was coming would not be visible until it was almost directly beneath him, but that now was of no importance. This experience of the jungle had taught him patience, and perchance he was learning, too, a little of the valuelessness of time, for he settled himself comfortably to wait at his ease.

The noise that he heard was little more than an imperceptible rustling, but presently it assumed a new volume and a new significance, so that now he was sure that it was someone running rapidly

along the trail, and not one but two—he distinctly heard the footfalls of the heavier creature mingling with those he had first heard.

And then he heard a man's voice cry "Stop!" and now the sounds were very close to him, just around the first bend ahead. The sound of running feet stopped, to be followed by that of a scuffle and strange oaths in a man's voice.

And then a woman's voice spoke, "Let me go! You will never get me where you are taking me alive."

"Then I'll take you for myself now," said the man.

Colt had heard enough. There had been something familiar in the tones of

the woman's voice. Silently he dropped to the trail, drawing his dagger, and stepped quickly toward the sounds of the altercation. As he rounded the bend in the trail, he saw just before him only a man's back—by thob and thorib an Arab—but beyond the man and in his clutches Colt knew the woman was hidden by the flowing robes of her assailant.

Leaping forward he seized the fellow by the shoulder and jerked him suddenly about; and as the man faced him Colt saw that it was Abu Batn, and now, too, he saw why the voice of the woman had seemed familiar—she was Zora Drinov.

Abu Batn purpled with rage at the interruption, but great as was his anger so, too, was his surprise as he

recognized the American. Just for an instant he thought that possibly this was the advance guard of a party of searchers and avengers from Zveri's camp, but when he had time to observe the unkempt, disheveled, unarmed condition of Colt he realized that the man was alone and doubtless lost.

"Dog of a Nasrany!" he cried, jerking away from Colt's grasp. "Lay not your filthy hand upon a true believer." At the same time he moved to draw his pistol, but in that instant Colt was upon him again, and the two men went down in the narrow trail, the American on top.

What happened then, happened very quickly. As Abu Batn drew his pistol, he caught the hammer in the folds of his

thob, so that the weapon was discharged. The bullet went harmlessly into the ground, but the report warned Colt of his imminent danger, and in self defense he ran his blade through the sheikh's throat.

As he rose slowly from the body of the sheikh, Zora Drinov grasped him by the arm. "Quick!" she said. "That shot will bring the others. They must not find us."

He did not wait to question her, but, stooping, quickly salvaged Abu Batn's weapons and ammunition, including a long musket that lay in the trail beside him; and then with Zora in the lead they ran swiftly up the trail down which he had just come.

Presently, hearing no indication of

pursuit, Colt halted the girl.

"Can you climb?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied. "Why?"

"We are going to take to the trees," he said. "We can go into the jungle a short distance and throw them off the trail."

"Good!" she said, and with his assistance clambered into the branches of a tree beneath which they stood.

Fortunately for them, several large trees grew close together so that they were able to make their way with comparative ease a full hundred feet from the trail, where, climbing high into the branches of a great tree, they were effectually hidden from sight in all directions.

When at last they were seated side by side in a great crotch, Zora turned toward Colt. "Comrade Colt!" she said. "What has happened? What are you doing here alone? Were you looking for me?"

The man grinned. "I was looking for the whole party," he said. "I have seen no one since we entered Opar. Where is the camp, and why was Abu Batn pursuing you?"

"We are a long way from the camp," replied Zora. "I do not know how far, though I could return to it, if it were not for the Arabs." And then briefly she told the story of Abu Batn's treachery and of her captivity. "The sheikh made a temporary camp shortly after noon today.

The men were very tired, and for the first time in days they relaxed their vigilance over me. I realized that at last the moment I had been awaiting so anxiously had arrived, and while they slept I escaped into the jungle. My absence must have been discovered shortly after I left, and Abu Batn overtook me. The rest you witnessed."

"Fate functioned deviously and altogether wonderfully," he said. "To think that your only chance of rescue hinged upon the contingency of my capture at Opar!"

She smiled. "Fate reaches back further than that," she said. "Suppose you had not been born?"

"Then Abu Batn would have carried

you off to the harem of some black sultan, or perhaps another man would have been captured at Opar."

"I am glad that you were born," said Zora.

"Thank you," said Colt.

While listening for signs of pursuit, they conversed in low tones, Colt narrating in detail the events leading up to his capture, though some of the details of his escape he omitted through a sense of loyalty to the nameless girl who had aided him. Neither did he stress Zveri's lack of control over his men, or what Colt considered his inexcusable cowardice in leaving himself and Romero to their fate within the walls of Opar without attempting to succor them,

for he believed that the girl was Zveri's sweetheart and he did not wish to offend her.

"What became of Comrade Romero?" she asked.

"I do not know," he said. "The last I saw of him he was standing his ground, fighting off those crooked little demons."

"Alone?" she asked.

"I was pretty well occupied myself," he said.

"I do not mean that," she replied. "Of course, I know you were there with Romero, but who else?"

"The others had not arrived," said Colt.

"You mean you two went in alone?"

she asked.

Colt hesitated. "You see," he said, "the blacks refused to enter the city, so the rest of us had to go in or abandon the attempt to get the treasures."

"But only you and Miguel did go in. Is that not true?" she demanded.

"I passed out so soon, you see," he said with a laugh, "that really I do not know exactly what did happen."

The girl's eyes narrowed. "It was beastly," she said.

As they talked, Colt's eyes were often upon the girl's face. How lovely she was, even beneath the rags and the dirt that were the outward symbols of her captivity among the Arabs. She was a little thinner than when he had last seen

her, and her eyes were tired and her face drawn from privation and worry. But, perhaps, by very contrast her beauty was the more startling. It seemed incredible that she could love the coarse, loud-mouthed Zveri, who was her antithesis in every respect.

Presently she broke a short silence. "We must try to get back to the base camp," she said. "It is vital that I be there. So much must be done, so much that no one else can do."

"You think only of the cause," he said; "never of yourself. You are very loyal."

"Yes," she said in a low voice. "I am loyal to the thing I have sworn to accomplish."

"I am afraid," he said, "that for the

past few days I have been thinking more of my own welfare than of that of the proletariat."

"I am afraid that at heart you are still bourgeois," she said, "and that you cannot yet help looking upon the proletariat with contempt."

"What makes you say that?" he asked. "I am sure that I said nothing to warrant it."

"Often a slight unconscious inflection in the use of a word alters the significance of a whole statement, revealing a speaker's secret thoughts."

Colt laughed good naturedly. "You are a dangerous person to talk to," he said. "Am I to be shot at sunrise?"

She looked at him seriously. "You are

different from the others," she said. "I think you could never imagine how suspicious they are. What I have said is only in the way of warning you to watch your every word when you are talking with them. Some of them are narrow and ignorant, and they are already suspicious of you because of your antecedents. They are sensitively jealous of a new importance which they believe their class has attained."

"Their class?" he asked. "I thought you told me once that you were of the proletariat?"

If he had thought that he had surprised her and that she would show embarrassment, he was mistaken. She met his eyes squarely and without

wavering. "I am," she said, "but I can still see the weaknesses of my class."

He looked at her steadily for a long moment, the shadow of a smile touching his lips. "I do not believe—"

"Why do you stop?" she asked. "What is it that you do not believe?"

"Forgive me," he said. "I was starting to think aloud."

"Be careful, Comrade Colt," she warned him. "Thinking aloud is sometimes fatal"; but she tempered her words with a smile.

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of the voices of men in the distance. "They are coming," said the girl.

Colt nodded, and the two remained silent, listening to the sounds of approaching voices and footsteps. The men came abreast of them and halted; and Zora, who understood the Arab tongue, heard one of them say, "The trail stops here. They have gone into the jungle."

"Who can the man be who is with her?" asked another.

"It is a Nasrany. I can tell by the imprint of his feet," said another.

"They would go toward the river," said a third. "That is the way that I should go if I were trying to escape."

"Wullah! You speak words of wisdom," said the first speaker. "We will spread out here and search toward

the river; but look out for the Nasrany. He has the pistol and the musket of the sheikh."

The two fugitives heard the sound of pursuit diminishing in the distance as the Arabs forced their way into the jungle toward the river. "I think we had better get out of this," said Colt; "and while it may be pretty hard going, I believe that we had better stick to the brush for awhile and keep on away from the river."

"Yes," replied Zora, "for that is the general direction in which the camp lies." And so they commenced their long and weary march in search of their comrades.

They were still pushing through dense

jungle when night overtook them. Their clothes were in rags and their bodies scratched and torn, mute and painful reminders of the thorny way that they had traversed.

Hungry and thirsty they made a dry camp among the branches of a tree, where Colt built a rude platform for the girl, while he prepared to sleep upon the ground at the foot of the great bole. But to this, Zora would not listen.

"That will not do at all," she said. "We are in no position to permit ourselves to be the victims of every silly convention that would ordinarily order our lives in civilized surroundings. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration, but I would rather have you up here in

the tree with me than down there where the first hunting lion that passed might get you." And so with the girl's help Colt built another platform close to the one that he had built for her; and as darkness fell, they stretched their tired bodies on their rude couches and sought to sleep.

Presently Colt dozed, and in his dream he saw the slender figure of a star-eyed goddess, whose cheeks were wet with tears, but when he took her in his arms and kissed her he saw that she was Zora Drinov; and then a hideous sound from the jungle below awakened him with a start, so that he sat up, seizing the musket of the sheikh in readiness.

"A hunting lion," said the girl in a low voice.

"Phew!" exclaimed Colt. "I must have been asleep, for that certainly gave me a start."

"Yes, you were asleep," said the girl. "I heard you talking," and he felt that he detected laughter in her voice.

"What was I saying?" asked Colt.

"Maybe you wouldn't want to hear. It might embarrass you," she told him.

"No. Come ahead. Tell me."

"You said 'I love you.'"

"Did I, really?"

"Yes. I wonder whom you were talking to," she said, banteringly.

"I wonder," said Colt, recalling that in his dream the figure of one girl had merged into that of another.

The lion, hearing their voices moved away growling. He was not hunting the hated man-things.

12. DOWN TRAILS OF TERROR

Slow days dragged by for the man and woman searching for their comrades - days filled with fatiguing effort, most of which was directed toward the procuring of food and water for their sustenance. Increasingly was Colt impressed by the character and personality of his companion. With apprehension he noticed that she was gradually weakening beneath the strain of fatigue and the scant and inadequate food that he had been able to procure for her. But yet she kept a brave front and tried to hide her condition from him. Never once had she complained. Never

by word or look had she reproached him for his inability to procure sufficient food, a failure which he looked upon as indicative of inefficiency. She did not know that he himself often went hungry that she might eat, telling her when he returned with food that he had eaten his share where he had found it, a deception that was made possible by the fact that when he hunted he often left Zora to rest in some place of comparative security, that she might not be subjected to needless exertion.

He had left her thus today, safe in a great tree beside a winding stream. She was very tired. It seemed to her that now she was always tired. The thought of continuing the march appalled her, and

yet she knew that it must be undertaken. She wondered how much longer she could go on before she sank exhausted for the last time. It was not, however, for herself that she was most concerned, but for this man—this scion of wealth, and capitalism, and power, whose constant consideration and cheerfulness and tenderness had been a revelation to her. She knew that when she could go no further, he would not leave her and that thus his chances of escape from the grim jungle would be jeopardized and perhaps lost forever because of her. She hoped, for his sake, that death would come quickly to her that, thus relieved of responsibility, he might move on more rapidly in search of that elusive camp

that seemed to her now little more than a meaningless myth. But from the thought of death she shrank, not because of the fear of death, as well might have been the case, but for an entirely new reason, the sudden realization of which gave her a distinct shock. The tragedy of this sudden self-awakening left her numb with terror. It was a thought that must be put from her, one that she must not entertain even for an instant; and yet it persisted— persisted with a dull insistency that brought tears to her eyes.

Colt had gone farther afield than usual this morning in his search for food, for he had sighted an antelope; and, his imagination inflamed by the contemplation of so much meat in a

single kill and what it would mean for Zora, he clung doggedly to the trail, lured further on by an occasional glimpse of his quarry in the distance.

The antelope was only vaguely aware of an enemy, for he was upwind from Colt and had not caught his scent, while the occasional glimpses he had had of the man had served mostly to arouse his curiosity: so that though he moved away he stopped often and turned back in an effort to satisfy his wonderment. But presently he waited a moment too long. In his desperation, Colt chanced a long shot; and as the animal dropped, the man could not stifle a loud cry of exultation.

As time, that she had no means of measuring, dragged on, Zora grew

increasingly apprehensive on Colt's account. Never before had he left her for so long a time, so that she began to construct all sorts of imaginary calamities that might have overtaken him. She wished now that she had gone with him. If she had thought it possible to track him, she would have followed him; but she knew that that was impossible. However, her forced inactivity made her restless. Her cramped position in the tree became unendurable; and then, suddenly assailed by thirst, she lowered herself to the ground and walked toward the river.

When she had drunk and was about to return to the tree, she heard the sound of something approaching from the

direction in which Colt had gone. Instantly her heart leaped with gladness, her depression and even much of her fatigue seemed to vanish, and she realized suddenly how very lonely she had been without him. How dependent we are upon the society of our fellow-men, we seldom realize until we become the victims of enforced solitude. There were tears of happiness in Zora Drinov's eyes as she advanced to meet Colt. Then the bushes before her parted, and there stepped into view, before her horrified gaze, a monstrous, hairy ape.

To-yat, the king, was as much surprised as the girl, but his reactions were almost opposite. It was with no horror that he viewed this soft, white

she-Mangani. To the girl there was naught but ferocity in his mien, though in his breast was an entirely different emotion. He lumbered toward her; and then, as though released from a momentary paralysis, Zora turned to flee. But how futilely, she realized an instant later as a hairy paw gripped her roughly by the shoulder. For an instant she had forgotten the sheikh's pistol that Colt always left with her for self-protection. Jerking it from its holster, she turned upon the beast; but To-yat, seeing in the weapon a club with which she intended to attack him, wrenched it from her grasp and hurled it aside; and then, though she struggled and fought to regain her freedom, he lifted her lightly

to his hip and lumbered off into the jungle in the direction that he had been going.

Colt tarried at his kill only long enough to remove the feet, the head and the viscera, that he might by that much reduce the weight of the burden that he must carry back to camp, for he was quite well aware that his privation had greatly reduced his strength.

Lifting the carcass to his shoulder, he started back toward camp, exulting in the thought that for once he was returning with an ample quantity of strength-giving flesh. As he staggered along beneath the weight of the small antelope, he made plans that imparted a rosy hue to the future. They would rest now until their

strength returned; and while they were resting they would smoke all of the meat of his kill that they did not eat at once, and thus they would have a reserve supply of food that he felt would carry them a great distance. Two days' rest with plenty of food would, he was positive, fill them with renewed hope and vitality.

As he started laboriously along the back trail, he commenced to realize that he had come much farther than he had thought, but it had been well worth while. Even though he reached Zora in a state of utter exhaustion, he did not fear for a minute but that he would reach her, so confident was he of his own powers of endurance and the strength of his will.

As he staggered at last to his goal, he looked up into the tree and called her by name. There was no reply. In that first brief instant of silence, a dull and sickening premonition of disaster crept over him. He dropped the carcass of the deer and looked hurriedly about.

"Zora! Zora!" he cried; but only the silence of the jungle was his answer. Then his searching eyes found the pistol of Abu Batn where To-yat had dropped it; and his worst fears were substantiated, for he knew that if Zora had gone away of her own volition she would have taken the weapon with her. She had been attacked by something and carried off, of that he was positive; and presently as he examined the ground

closely he discovered the imprints of a great man- like foot.

A sudden madness seized Wayne Colt. The cruelty of the jungle, the injustice of Nature aroused within his breast a red rage. He wanted to kill the thing that had stolen Zora Drinov. He wanted to tear it with his bands and rend it with his teeth. All the savage instincts of primitive man were reborn within him as, forgetting the meat that the moment before had meant so much to him, he plunged headlong into the jungle upon the faint spoor of To-yat, the king ape.

La of Opar made her way slowly through the jungle after she had escaped from Ibn Dammuk and his companions. Her native city called to her, though she

knew that she might not enter it in safety; but what place was there in all the world that she might go to? Something of a conception of the immensity of the great world had been impressed upon her during her wandering since she had left Opar, and the futility of searching further for Tarzan had been indelibly impressed upon her mind. So she would go back to the vicinity of Opar, and perhaps some day again Tarzan would come there. That great dangers beset her way she did not care, for La of Opar was indifferent to life that had never brought her much of happiness. She lived because she lived; and it is true that she would strive to prolong life because such is the law of Nature, which imbues the most

miserable unfortunates with as powerful an urge to prolong their misery as it gives to the fortunate few who are happy and contented a similar desire to five.

Presently she became aware of pursuit, and so she increased her speed and kept ahead of those who were following her. Finding a trail, she followed it, knowing that if it permitted her to increase her speed it would permit her pursuers also to increase theirs, nor would she be able to hear them now as plainly as she had before, when they were forcing their way through the jungle. Still she was confident that they could not overtake her; but as she was moving swiftly on, a turn in the trail brought her to a sudden

stop, for there, blocking her retreat, stood a great, maned lion. This time La remembered the animal, not as Jad-bal-ja, the hunting mate of Tarzan, but as the lion that had rescued her from the leopard, after Tarzan had deserted her.

Lions were familiar creatures to La of Opar, where they were often captured by the priests while cubs, and where it was not unusual to raise some of them occasionally as pets until their growing ferocity made them unsafe. Therefore, La knew that lions could associate with people without devouring them; and, having had experience of this lion's disposition and having as little sense of fear as Tarzan himself, she quickly made her choice between the lion and the

Arabs pursuing her and advanced directly toward the great beast, in whose attitude she saw there was no immediate menace. She was sufficiently a child of nature to know that death came quickly and painlessly in the embrace of a lion, and so she had no fear, but only a great curiosity.

Jad-bal-ja had long had the scent spoor of La in his nostrils, as she had moved with the wind along the jungle trails; and so he had awaited her, his curiosity aroused by the fainter scent spoor of the men who trailed her. Now as she came toward him along the trail, he stepped to one side that she might pass and, like a great cat, rubbed his maned neck against her legs.

La paused and laid a hand upon his head and spoke to him in low tones in the language of the first man—the language of the great apes that was the common language of her people, as it was Tarzan's language.

Hajellan, leading his men in pursuit of La, rounded a bend in the trail and stopped aghast. He saw a great lion facing him a lion that bared its fangs now in an angry snarl; and beside the lion, one hand tangled in its thick black mane, stood the white woman.

The woman spoke a single word to the lion in a language that Hajellan did not understand. "Kill!" said La in the language of the great apes.

So accustomed was the high priestess

of the Flaming God to command that it did not occur to her that Numa might do other than obey; and so, although she did not know that it was thus that Tarzan had been accustomed to command Jad-bal-ja, she was not surprised when the lion crouched and charged.

Fodil and Dareyem had pushed close behind their companion as he halted, and great was their horror when they saw the lion leap forward. They turned and fled, colliding with the blacks behind them; but Hajellan only stood paralyzed with fright as Jad-bal-ja reared upon his hind feet and seized him, his great jaws crunching through the man's head and shoulders, cracking his skull like an egg shell. He gave the body a vicious shake

and dropped it. Then he turned and looked inquiringly at La.

In the woman's heart was no more sympathy for her enemies than in the heart of Jad-bal-ja; she only wished to be rid of them. She did not care whether they lived or died, and so she did not urge Jad- bal-ja after those who had escaped. She wondered what the lion would do now that he had made his kill; and knowing that the vicinity of a feeding lion was no safe place, she turned and moved on along the trail. But Jad-bal-ja was no eater of man, not because he had any moral scruples, but because he was young and active and had no difficulty in killing prey that he relished far more than he did the salty

flesh of man. Therefore, he left Hajellan lying where he had fallen and followed La along the shadowy jungle trails.

A black man, naked but for a G-string, bearing a message from the Coast for Zveri, paused where two trails crossed. From his left the wind was blowing, and to his sensitive nostrils it bore the faint stench that announced the presence of a lion. Without a moment's hesitation, the man vanished into the foliage of a tree that overhung the trail. Perhaps Simba was not hungry, perhaps Simba was not hunting; but the black messenger was taking no chances. He was sure that the lion was approaching, and he would wait here where he could see both trails until he discovered which one Simba

took.

Watching with more or less indifference because of the safety of his sanctuary, the Negro was ill-prepared for the shock which the sight that presently broke upon his vision induced. Never in the lowest steps of his superstition had he conceived such a scene as he now witnessed, and he blinked his eyes repeatedly to make sure that he was awake; but, no, there could be no mistake. It was indeed a white woman almost naked but for golden ornaments and a soft strip of leopard skin beneath her narrow stomacher —a white woman who walked with the fingers of one hand tangled in the black mane of a great golden lion.

Along the trail they came, and at the crossing they turned to the left into the trail that he had been following. As they disappeared from his view, the black man fingered the fetish that was suspended from a cord about his neck and prayed to Mulungo, the god of his people; and when he again set out toward his destination he took another and more circuitous route.

Often, after darkness had fallen, Tarzan had come to the camp of the conspirators and, perched in a tree above them, listened to Zveri outlining his plans to his companions; so that the ape-man was familiar with what they intended, down to the minutest detail.

Now, knowing that they would not be

prepared to strike for some time, he was roaming the jungle far away from the sight and stench of man, enjoying to the full the peace and freedom that were his life. He knew that Nkima should have reached his destination by this time and delivered the message that Tarzan had dispatched by him. He was still puzzled by the strange disappearance of La and piqued by his inability to pick up her trail. He was genuinely grieved by her disappearance, for already he had his plans well formulated to restore her to her throne and punish her enemies; but he gave himself over to no futile regrets as he swung through the trees in sheer joy of living, or when hunger overtook him, stalked his prey in the grim and

terrible silence of the hunting beast.

Sometimes he thought of the good-looking young American, to whom he had taken a fancy in spite of the fact that he considered him an enemy. Had he known of Colt's now almost hopeless plight, it is possible that he would have gone to his rescue, but he knew nothing of it.

So, alone and friendless, sunk to the uttermost depths of despair, Wayne Colt stumbled through the jungle in search of Zora Drinov and her abductor. But already he had lost the faint trail; and To-yat, far to his right, lumbered along with his captive safe from pursuit.

Weak from exhaustion and shock, thoroughly terrified now by the

hopelessness of her hideous position, Zora had lost consciousness. To- yat feared that she was dead; but he carried her on, nevertheless, that he might at least have the satisfaction of exhibiting her to his tribe as evidence of his prowess and, perhaps, to furnish an excuse for another Dum-Dum. Secure in his might, conscious of few enemies that might with safety to themselves molest him, To-yat did not take the precaution of silence, but wandered on through the jungle heedless of all dangers.

Many were the keen ears and sensitive nostrils that carried the message of his passing to their owners, but to only one did the strange mingling of the scent spoor of the bull ape with

that of a she-Mangani suggest a condition worthy of investigation. So as To-yat pursued his careless way, another creature of the jungle, moving silently on swift feet, bore down upon him; and when, from a point of vantage, keen eyes beheld the shaggy bull and the slender, delicate girl, a lip curled in a silent snarl. A moment later To-yat, the king ape, was brought to a snarling, bristling halt as the giant figure of a bronzed Tarmangani dropped lightly into the trail before him, a living threat to his possession of his prize.

The wicked eyes of the bull shot fire and hate. "Go away," he said. "I am To-yat. Go away or I kill."

"Put down the she," demanded

Tarzan.

"No," bellowed To-yat. "She is mine."

"Put down the she," repeated Tarzan, "and go your way; or I kill. I am Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle!"

Tarzan drew the hunting knife of his father and crouched as he advanced toward the bull. To-yat snarled; and seeing that the other meant to give battle, he cast the body of the girl aside that he might not be handicapped. As they circled, each looking for an advantage, there came a sudden, terrific crashing sound in the jungle down wind from them.

Tantor, the elephant, asleep in the security of the depth of the forest, had

been suddenly awakened by the growling of the two beasts. Instantly his nostrils caught a familiar scent spoor—the scent spoor of his beloved Tarzan—and his ears told him that he was facing in battle the great Mangani, whose scent was also strong in the nostrils of Tantor.

To the snapping and bending of trees, the great bull rushed through the forest; and as he emerged suddenly, towering above them To-yat, the king ape, seeing death in those angry eyes and gleaming tusks, turned and fled into the jungle.

13. THE LION-MAN

Peter Zveri was, in a measure, regaining some of the confidence that he had lost in the ultimate success of his plan, for his agents were succeeding at last in getting to him some of his much needed supplies, together with contingents of disaffected blacks wherewith to recruit his forces to sufficient numbers to insure the success of his contemplated invasion of Italian Somaliland. It was his plan to make a swift and sudden incursion, destroying native villages and capturing an outpost or two, then retreating quickly across the border, pack away the French uniforms for possible future use and undertake the overthrow of Ras Tafari in Abyssinia, where his agents had assured

him conditions were ripe for a revolution. With Abyssinia under his control to serve as a rallying point, his agents assured him that the native tribes of all Northern Africa would flock to his standards.

In distant Bokhara a fleet of two hundred planes—bombers, scouts, and fighting planes—made available through the greed of American capitalists, were being mobilized for a sudden dash across Persia and Arabia to his base in Abyssinia. With these to support his great native army, he felt that his position would be secure, the malcontents of Egypt would join forces with him and, with Europe embroiled in a war that would prevent any concerted

action against him, his dream of empire might be assured and his position made impregnable for all time.

Perhaps it was a mad dream; perhaps Peter Zveri was mad—but, then, what great world conqueror has not been a little mad?

He saw his frontiers pushed toward the south as, little by little, he extended his dominion, until one day he should rule a great continent— Peter I, Emperor of Africa.

"You seem happy, Comrade Zveri," said little Antonio Mori.

"Why should I not be, Tony?" demanded the dreamer. "I see success just before us. We should all be happy, but we are going to be very much

happier later on."

"Yes," said Tony, "when the Philippines are free, I shall be very happy. Do you not think that I should be a very big man back there, then, Comrade Zveri?"

"Yes," said the Russian, "but you can be a bigger man if you stay here and work for me. How would you like to be a Grand Duke, Tony?"

"A Grand Duke!" exclaimed the Filipino. "I thought there were no more Grand Dukes."

"But perhaps there may be again."

"They were wicked men who ground down the working classes," said Tony.

"To be a Grand Duke who grinds

down the rich and takes money from them might not be so bad," said Peter. "Grand Dukes are very rich and powerful. Would you not like to be rich and powerful, Tony?"

"Well, of course, who would not?"

"Then always do as I tell you, Tony; and some day I shall make you a Grand Duke," said Zveri.

The camp was filled with activity now at all times, for Zveri had conceived the plan of whipping his native recruits into some semblance of military order and discipline. Romero, Dorsky, and Ivitch having had military experience, the camp was filled with marching men, deploying, charging and assembling, practicing the Manual of

Arms, and being instructed in the rudiments of fire discipline.

The day following his conversation with Zveri, Tony was assisting the Mexican, who was sweating over a company of black recruits.

During a period of rest, as the Mexican and Filipino were enjoying a smoke, Tony turned to his companion. "You have travelled much, Comrade," said the Filipino. "Perhaps you can tell me what sort of uniform a Grand Duke wears."

"I have heard," said Romero, "that in Hollywood and New York many of them wear aprons."

Tony grimaced. "I do not think," he said, "that I want to be a Grand Duke."

The blacks in the camp, held sufficiently interested and busy in drills to keep them out of mischief, with plenty of food and with the prospects of fighting and marching still in the future, were a contented and happy lot. Those who had undergone the harrowing experiences of Opar and those other untoward incidents that had upset their equanimity had entirely regained their self confidence, a condition for which Zveri took all the credit to himself, assuming that it was due to his remarkable gift for leadership. And then a runner arrived in camp with a message for him and with a weird story of having seen a white woman hunting in the jungle with a black-maned golden lion. This

was sufficient to recall to the blacks the other weird occurrences and to remind them that there were supernatural agencies at work in this territory, that it was peopled by ghosts and demons, and that at any moment some dire calamity might befall them.

But if this story upset the equanimity of the blacks, the message that the runner brought to Zveri precipitated an emotional outbreak in the Russian that bordered closely upon the frenzy of insanity. Blaspheming in a loud voice, he strode back and forth before his tent; nor would he explain to any of his lieutenants the cause of his anger.

And while Zveri fumed, other forces were gathering against him. Through the

jungle moved a hundred ebon warriors, their smooth, sleek skin, their rolling muscles and elastic step bespeaking their physical fitness. They were naked but for narrow loin cloths of leopard or lion skin and a few of those ornaments that are dear to the hearts of savages—anklets and arm bands of copper and necklaces of the claws of lions or leopards—while above the head of each floated a white plume. But here the primitiveness of their equipment ceased, for their weapons were the weapons of modern fighting men; high- powered service rifles, revolvers, and bandoleers of cartridges. It was, indeed, a formidable appearing company that swung steadily and silently through the

jungle, and upon the shoulder of the black chief who led them rode a little monkey.

Tarzan was relieved when Tantor's sudden and unexpected charge drove To-yat into the jungle; for Tarzan of the Apes found no pleasure in quarreling with the Mangani, which he considered above all other creatures his brothers. He never forgot that he had been nursed at the breast of Kala, the she-ape, nor that he had grown to manhood in the tribe of Kerchak, the king. From infancy to manhood he had thought of himself only as an ape, and even now it was often easier for him to understand and appreciate the motives of the great Mangani than those of man.

At a signal from Tarzan, Tantor stopped; and assuming again his customary composure, though still alert to any danger that might threaten his friend, he watched while the ape-man turned and knelt beside the prostrate girl. Tarzan had at first thought her dead, but he soon discovered that she was only in a swoon. Lifting her in his arms, he spoke a half dozen words to the great pachyderm, who turned about and, putting down his head, started off straight into the dense jungle, making a pathway along which Tarzan bore the unconscious girl.

Straight as an arrow moved Tantor, the elephant, to halt at last upon the bank of a considerable river. Beyond this was

a spot that Tarzan had in mind to which he wished to convey To-yat's unfortunate captive, whom he had recognized immediately as the young woman he had seen in the base camp of the conspirators and a cursory examination of whom convinced him was upon the verge of death from starvation, shock, and exposure.

Once again he spoke to Tantor; and the great pachyderm, twining his trunk around their bodies, lifted the two gently to his broad back. Then he waded into the river and set out for the opposite shore. The channel in the center was deep and swift, and Tantor was swept off his feet and carried down stream for a considerable distance before he found

footing again, but eventually he won to the opposite bank. Here again he went ahead, making trail, until at last he broke into a broad, well marked game trail.

Now Tarzan took the lead, and Tantor followed. While they moved thus silently toward their destination, Zora Drinov opened her eyes. Instantly recollection of her plight filled her consciousness; and then almost simultaneously she realized that her cheek, resting upon the shoulder of her captor, was not pressing against a shaggy coat, but against the smooth skin of a human body, and then she turned her head and looked at the profile of the creature that was carrying her.

She thought at first that she was the

victim of some strange hallucination of terror; for, of course, she could not measure the time that she had been unconscious, nor recall any of the incidents that had occurred during that period. The last thing that she remembered was that she had been in the arms of a great ape, who was carrying her off to the jungle. She had closed her eyes; and when she opened them again, the ape had been transformed into a handsome demigod of the forest.

She closed her eyes and turned her head so that she faced back over the man's shoulder. She thought that she would keep her eyes tightly closed for a moment, then open them and turn them stealthily once more toward the face of

the creature that was carrying her so lightly along the jungle trail. Perhaps this time he would be an ape again, and then she would know that she was indeed mad, or dreaming.

And when she did open her eyes, the sight that met them convinced her that she was experiencing a nightmare; for plodding along the trail directly behind her, was a giant bull elephant.

Tarzan, apprised of her returning consciousness by the movement of her head upon his shoulder, turned his own to look at her and saw her gazing at Tantor in wide-eyed astonishment. Then she turned toward him, and their eyes met.

"Who are you?" she asked in a

whisper. "Am I dreaming?" But the ape-man only turned his eyes to the front and made no reply.

Zora thought of struggling to free herself; but realizing that she was very weak and helpless, she at last resigned herself to her fate and let her cheek fall again to the bronzed shoulder of the ape-man.

When Tarzan finally stopped and laid his burden upon the ground, it was in a little clearing through which ran a tiny stream of clear water. Immense trees arched overhead, and through their foliage the great sun dappled the grass beneath them.

As Zora Drinov lay stretched upon the soft turf, she realized for the first time

how weak she was; for when she attempted to rise, she found that she could not. As her eyes took in the scene about her, it seemed more than ever like a dream—the great bull elephant standing almost above her and the bronzed figure of an almost naked giant squatting upon his haunches beside the little stream. She saw him fold a great leaf into the shape of a cornucopia and, after filling it with water, rise and come toward her. Without a word he stooped, and putting an arm beneath her shoulders and raising her to a sitting position, he offered her the water from his improvised cup.

She drank deeply, for she was very thirsty. Then, looking up into the

handsome face above her, she voiced her thanks; but when the man did not reply, she thought, naturally, that he did not understand her. When she had satisfied her thirst and he had lowered her gently to the ground again, he swung lightly into a tree and disappeared into the forest. But above her the great elephant stood, as though on guard, his huge body swaying gently to and fro.

The quiet and peace of her surroundings tended to soothe her nerves, but deeply rooted in her mind was the conviction that her situation was most precarious. The man was a mystery to her; and while she knew, of course, that the ape that had stolen her had not been transformed miraculously into a

handsome forest god, yet she could not account in any way for his presence or for the disappearance of the ape, except upon the rather extravagant hypothesis that the two had worked together, the ape having stolen her for this man, who was its master. There had been nothing in the man's attitude to suggest that he intended to harm her, and yet so accustomed was she to gauge all men by the standards of civilized society that she could not conceive that he had other than ulterior designs.

To her analytical mind the man presented a paradox that intrigued her imagination, seeming, as he did, so utterly out of place in this savage African jungle; while at the same time he

harmonized perfectly with his surroundings, in which he seemed absolutely at home and assured of himself, a fact that was still further impressed upon her by the presence of the wild bull elephant, to which the man paid no more attention than one would to a lap dog. Had he been unkempt, filthy, and degraded in appearance, she would have catalogued him immediately as one of those social outcasts, usually half demented, who are occasionally found far from the haunts of men, living the life of wild beasts, whose high standards of decency and cleanliness they uniformly fail to observe. But this creature had suggested more the trained athlete in whom cleanliness was a fetish, nor did

his well shaped head and intelligent eyes even remotely suggest mental or moral degradation.

And as she pondered him, the man returned, bearing a great load of straight branches, from which the twigs and leaves had been removed. With a celerity and adeptness that bespoke long years of practice, he constructed a shelter upon the bank of the rivulet. He gathered broad leaves to thatch its roof, and leafy branches to enclose it upon three sides, so that it formed a protection against the prevailing winds. He floored it with leaves and small twigs and dry grasses. Then he came and, lifting the girl in his arms, bore her to the rustic bower he had fabricated.

Once again he left her; and when he returned he brought a little fruit, which he fed to her sparingly, for he guessed that she had been long without food and knew that he must not overtax her stomach.

Always he worked in silence; and though no word had passed between them, Zora Drinov felt growing within her consciousness a conviction of his trustworthiness.

The next time that he left her he was gone a considerable time, but still the elephant stood in the clearing, like some titanic sentinel upon guard.

When next the man returned, he brought the carcass of a deer; and then Zora saw him make fire, after the manner

of primitive men. As the meat roasted above it, the fragrant aroma came to her nostrils, bringing consciousness of a ravening hunger. When the meat was cooked, the man came and squatted beside her, cutting small pieces with his keen hunting knife and feeding her as though she had been a helpless baby. He gave her only a little at a time, making her rest often; and while she ate he spoke for the first time, but not to her, nor in any language that she had ever heard. He spoke to the great elephant, and the huge pachyderm wheeled slowly about and entered the jungle, where she could hear the diminishing noise of his passage until it was lost in the distance. Before the meal was over, it was quite

dark; and she finished it in the fitful light of the fire that shone redly on the bronzed skin of her companion and shot back from mysterious gray eyes that gave the impression of seeing everything, even her inmost thoughts. Then he brought her a drink of water, after which he squatted down outside her shelter and proceeded to satisfy his own hunger.

Gradually the girl had been lulled to a feeling of security by the seeming solicitude of her strange protector. But now distinct misgivings assailed her, and suddenly she felt a strange new fear of the silent giant in whose power she was; for when he ate she saw that he ate his meat raw, tearing the flesh like a wild beast. When there came the sound

of something moving in the jungle just beyond the fire light and he raised his head and looked and there came a low and savage growl of warning from his lips, the girl closed her eyes and buried her face in her arms in sudden terror and revulsion. From the darkness of the jungle there came an answering growl; but the sound moved on, and presently all was silent again.

It seemed a long time before Zora dared open her eyes again, and when she did she saw that the man had finished his meal and was stretched out on the grass between her and the fire. She was afraid of him, of that she was quite certain; yet, at the same time, she could not deny that his presence there imparted to her a

feeling of safety that she had never before felt in the jungle. As she tried to fathom this, she dozed and presently was asleep.

The young sun was already bringing renewed warmth to the jungle when she awoke. The man had replenished the fire and was sitting before it, grilling small fragments of meat. Beside him were some fruits, which he must have gathered since he had awakened. As she watched him, she was still further impressed by his great physical beauty, as well as by a certain marked nobility of bearing that harmonized well with the dignity of his poise and the intelligence of his keen gray eyes. She wished that she had not seen him devour his meat like a-ah, that

was it—like a lion. How much like a lion he was, in his strength; and dignity, and majesty, and with all the quiet suggestion of ferocity that pervaded his every act. And so it was that she came to think of him as her lion-man and, while trying to trust him, always fearing him not a little.

Again he fed her and brought her water before he satisfied his own hunger; but before he started to eat, he arose and voiced a long, low call. Then once more he squatted upon his haunches and devoured his food. Although he held it in his strong, brown hands and ate the flesh raw, she saw now that he ate slowly and with the same quiet dignity that marked his every act, so that

presently she found him less revolting. Once again she tried to talk with him, addressing him in various languages and several African dialects, but as for any sign he gave that he understood her she might as well have been addressing a dumb brute. Doubtless her disappointment would have been replaced by anger could she have known that she was addressing an English lord, who understood perfectly every word that she uttered, but who, for reasons which he himself best knew, preferred to remain the dumb brute to this woman whom he looked upon as an enemy.

However, it was well for Zora Drinov that he was what he was, for it was the prompting of the English lord

and not that of the savage carnivore that had moved him to succor her because she was alone, and helpless, and a woman. The beast in Tarzan would not have attacked her, but would merely have ignored her, letting the law of the jungle take its course as it must with all her creatures.

Shortly after Tarzan had finished his meal, a crashing in the jungle announced the return of Tantor; and when he appeared in the little clearing, the girl realized that the great brute had come in response to the call of the man, and marvelled.

And so the days wore on; and slowly Zora Drinov regained her strength, guarded by night by the silent forest god

and by day by the great bull elephant. Her only apprehension now was for the safety of Wayne Colt, who was seldom from her thoughts. Nor was her apprehension groundless, for the young American had fallen upon bad days.

Almost frantic with concern for the safety of Zora, he had exhausted his strength in futile search for her and her abductor, forgetful of himself until hunger and fatigue had taken their toll of his strength. He had awakened at last to the realization that his condition was dangerous; and now when he needed food most, the game that he had formerly found reasonably plentiful seemed to have deserted the country. Even the smaller rodents that had once sufficed to

keep him alive were either too wary for him or not present at all. Occasionally he found fruits that he could eat, but they seemed to impart little or no strength to him; and at last he was forced to the conviction that he had reached the end of his endurance and his strength and that nothing short of a miracle could preserve him from death. He was so weak that he could stagger only a few steps at a time and then, sinking to the ground, was forced to lie there for a long time before he could arise again; and always there was the knowledge that eventually he would not arise.

Yet he would not give up. Something more than the urge to live drove him on. He could not die, he must not die while

Zora Drinov was in danger. He had found a well beaten trail at last where he was sure that sooner or later he must meet a native hunter, or, perhaps, find his way to the camp of his fellows. He could only crawl now, for he had not the strength to rise; and then suddenly the moment came that he had striven so long to avert— the moment that marked the end, though it came in a form that he had only vaguely anticipated as one of several that might ring the curtain upon his earthly existence.

As he lay in the trail resting before he dragged himself on again, he was suddenly conscious that he was not alone. He had heard no sounds, for doubtless his hearing had been dulled by

exhaustion; but he was aware through the medium of that strange sense, the possession of which each of us has felt at some time in his existence, that told him eyes were upon him.

With an effort he raised his head and looked, and there, before him in the trail, stood a great lion, his lips drawn back in an angry snarl, his yellow-green eyes glaring balefully.

14. SHOT DOWN

Tarzan went almost daily to watch the camp of his enemy, moving swiftly through the jungle by trails unknown to man. He saw that preparations for the first bold stroke were almost completed, and finally he saw uniforms being issued to all members of the party— uniforms which he recognized as those of French Colonial Troops—and he realized that the time had come when he must move. He hoped that little Nkima had carried his message safely, but if not, Tarzan would find some other way.

Zora Drinov's strength was slowly returning. Today she had arisen and taken a few steps out into the sunlit clearing. The great elephant regarded

her. She had long since ceased to fear him, as she had ceased to fear the strange white man who had befriended her. Slowly the girl approached the great bull, and Tantor regarded her out of his little eyes as he waved his trunk to and fro.

He had been so docile and harmless all the days that he had guarded her that it had grown to be difficult for Zora to conceive him capable of inflicting injury upon her. But as she looked into his little eyes now, there was an expression there that brought her to a sudden halt; and as she realized that after all he was only a wild bull elephant, she suddenly appreciated the rashness of her act. She was already so close to him that she

could have reached out and touched him, as had been her intention, having thought that she would thus make friends with him.

It was in her mind to fall back with dignity, when the waving trunk shot suddenly out and encircled her body. Zora Drinov did not scream. She only closed her eyes and waited. She felt herself lifted from the ground, and a moment later the elephant had crossed the little clearing and deposited her in her shelter. Then he backed off slowly and resumed his post of duty.

He had not hurt her. A mother could not have lifted her baby more gently, but he had impressed upon Zora Drinov that she was a prisoner and that he was her

keeper. As a matter of fact, Tantor was only carrying out Tarzan's instructions, which had nothing to do with the forcible restraint of the girl, but were only a measure of precaution to prevent her wandering into the jungle where other dangers might overtake her.

Zora had not fully regained her strength, and the experience left her trembling. Though she now realized that her sudden fears for her safety had been groundless, she decided that she would take no more liberties with her mighty warden.

It was not long after, that Tarzan returned, much earlier in the day than was his custom. He spoke only to Tantor; and the great beast, touching him

almost caressingly with his trunk, turned and lumbered off into the forest. Then Tarzan advanced to where Zora sat in the opening of her shelter. Lightly he lifted her from the ground and tossed her to his shoulder; and then, to her infinite surprise at the strength and agility of the man, he swung into a tree and was off through the jungle in the wake of the pachyderm.

At the edge of the river that they had crossed before, Tantor was awaiting them, and once more he carried Zora and Tarzan safely to the other bank.

Tarzan himself had crossed the river twice a day since he had made the camp for Zora; but when he went alone he needed no help from Tantor or any other,

for he swam the swift stream, his eye alert and his keen knife ready should Gimla, the crocodile, attack him. But for the crossing of the woman, he had enlisted the services of Tantor that she might not be subjected to the danger and hardship of the only other means of crossing that was possible.

As Tantor clambered up the muddy bank, Tarzan dismissed him with a word, as with the girl in his arms he leaped into a nearby tree.

That flight through the jungle was an experience that might long stand vividly in the memory of Zora Drinov. That a human being could possess the strength and agility of the creature that carried her seemed unbelievable, and she might

easily have attributed a supernatural origin to him had she not felt the life in the warm flesh that was pressed against hers. Leaping from branch to branch, swinging across breathless voids, she was borne swiftly through the middle terrace of the forest. At first she had been terrified, but gradually fear left her, to be replaced by that utter confidence which Tarzan of the Apes has inspired in many a breast. At last he stopped and, lowering her to the branch upon which he stood, pointed through the surrounding foliage ahead of them. Zora looked and to her astonishment saw the camp of her companions lying ahead and below her. Once more the ape-man took her in his arms and dropped lightly to the

ground into a wide trail that swept past the base of the tree in which he had halted. With a wave of his hand he indicated that she was free to go to the camp.

"Oh, how can I thank you!" exclaimed the girl. "How can I ever make you understand how splendid you have been and how I appreciate all that you have done for me?" But his only reply was to turn and swing lightly into the tree that spread its green foliage above them.

With a rueful shake of her head, Zora Drinov started along the trail toward camp, while above her Tarzan followed through the trees to make certain that she arrived in safety.

Paul Ivitch had been hunting, and he

was just returning to camp when he saw something move in a tree at the edge of the clearing. He saw the spots of a leopard, and raising his rifle, he fired; so that at the moment that Zora entered the camp, the body of Tarzan of the Apes lunged from a tree almost at her side, blood trickling from a bullet wound in his head as the sunshine played upon the leopard spots of his loin cloth.

The sight of the lion growling above him might have shaken the nerves of a man in better physical condition than was Wayne Colt, but the vision of a beautiful girl running quickly toward the savage beast from the rear was the final stroke that almost overwhelmed him.

Through his brain ran a medley of

recollection and conjecture. In a brief instant he recalled that men had borne witness to the fact that they had felt no pain while being mauled by a lion— neither pain nor fear— and he also recalled that men went mad from thirst and hunger. If he were to die, then, it would not be painful, and of that he was glad; but if he were not to die, then surely he was mad, for the lion and the girl must be the hallucination of a crazed mind.

Fascination held his eyes fixed upon the two. How real they were! He heard the girl speak to the lion, and then he saw her brush past the great savage beast and come and bend over him where he lay helpless in the trail. She

touched him, and then he knew that she was real.

"Who are you?" she asked, in limping English that was beautiful with a strange accent. "What has happened to you?"

"I have been lost," he said, "and I am about done up. I have not eaten for a long while," and then he fainted.

Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, had conceived a strange affection for La of Opar. Perhaps it was the call of one kindred savage spirit to another. Perhaps it was merely the recollection that she was Tarzan's friend. But be that as it may, he seemed to find the same pleasure in her company that a faithful dog finds in the company of his master. He had protected her with fierce loyalty,

and when he made his kill he shared the flesh with her. She, however, after cutting off a portion that she wanted, had always gone away a little distance to build her primitive fire and cook the flesh; nor ever had she ventured back to the kill after Jad-bal-ja had commenced to feed, for a lion is yet a lion, and the grim and ferocious growls that accompanied his feeding warned the girl against presuming too far upon the new found generosity of the carnivore.

They had been feeding, when the approach of Colt had attracted Numa's attention and brought him into the trail from his kill. For a moment La had feared that she might not be able to keep the lion from the man, and she had

wanted to do so; for something in the stranger's appearance reminded her of Tarzan, whom he more nearly resembled than he did the grotesque priests of Opar. Because of this fact she thought that possibly the stranger might be from Tarzan's country. Perhaps he was one of Tarzan's friends and if so, she must protect him. To her relief, the lion had obeyed her when she had called upon him to halt, and now he evinced no further desire to attack the man.

When Colt regained consciousness, La tried to raise him to his feet; and, with considerable difficulty and some slight assistance from the man, she succeeded in doing so. She put one of his arms across her shoulders and,

supporting him thus, guided him back along the trail, while Jad-bal-ja followed at their heels. She had difficulty in getting him through the brush to the hidden glen where Jad-bal-ja's kill lay and her little fire was burning a short distance away. But at last she succeeded and when they had come close to her fire, she lowered the man to the ground, while Jad-bal-ja turned once more to his feeding and his growling.

La fed the man tiny pieces of the meat that she had cooked, and he ate ravenously all that she would give him. A short distance away ran the river, where La and the lion would have gone to drink after they had fed; but doubting whether she could get the man so great a

distance through the jungle, she left him there with the lion and went down to the river; but first she told Jad-bal-ja to guard him, speaking in the language of the first men, the language of the Mangani, that all creatures of the jungle understand to a greater or lesser extent. Near the river La found what she sought —a fruit with a hard rind. With her knife she cut an end from one of these fruits and scooped out the pulpy interior, producing a primitive but entirely practical cup, which she filled with water from the river.

The water, as much as the food, refreshed and strengthened Colt; and though he lay but a few yards from a feeding lion, it seemed an eternity since

he had experienced such a feeling of contentment and security, clouded only by his anxiety concerning Zora.

"You feel stronger now?" asked La, her voice tinged with concern.

"Very much," he replied.

"Then tell me who you are and if this is your country."

"This is not my country," replied Colt. "I am an American. My name is Wayne Colt."

"You are perhaps a friend of Tarzan of the Apes?" she asked.

He shook his head. "No," he said. "I have heard of him, but I do not know him."

La frowned. "You are his enemy,

then?" she demanded.

"Of course not," replied Colt. "I do not even know him."

A sudden light flashed in La's eyes. "Do you know Zora?" she asked.

Colt came to his elbow with a sudden start. "Zora Drinov?" he demanded. "What do you know of her?"

"She is my friend," said La.

"She is my friend also," said Colt.

"She is in trouble," said La.

"Yes, I know it; but how did you know?"

"I was with her when she was taken prisoner by the men of the desert. They took me also, but I escaped."

"How long ago was that?"

"The Flaming God has gone to rest many times since I saw Zora," replied the girl.

"Then I have seen her since."

"Where is she?"

"I do not know. She was with the Arabs when I found her. We escaped from them; and then, while I was hunting in the jungle something came and carried her away. I do not know whether it was a man or a gorilla; for though I saw its footprints, I could not be sure. I have been searching for her for a long time; but I could not find food, and it has been some time since I have had water; so I lost my strength, and you found me as I am."

"You shall not want for food nor

water now," said La, "for Numa, the lion, will hunt for us; and if we can find the camp of Zora's friends, perhaps they will go out and search for her."

"You know where the camp is?" he asked. "Is it near?"

"I do not know where it is. I have been searching for it to lead her friends after the men of the desert."

Colt had been studying the girl as they talked. He had noted her strange, barbaric apparel and the staggering beauty of her face and figure. He knew almost intuitively that she was not of the world that be knew, and his mind was filled with curiosity concerning her.

"You have not told me who you are," he said.

"I am La of Opar," she replied, "high priestess of the Flaming God."

Opar! Now indeed he knew that she was not of his world. Opar, the city of mystery, the city of fabulous treasures. Could it be that the same city that housed the grotesque warriors with whom he and Romero had fought produced also such beautiful creatures as Nao and La, and only these? He wondered why he had not connected her with Opar at once, for now he saw that her stomacher was similar to that of Nao and of the priestess that he had seen upon the throne in the great chamber of the ruined temple. Recalling his attempt to enter Opar and loot it of its treasures, he deemed it expedient to make no mention

of any familiarity with the city of the girl's birth, for he guessed that Opar's women might be as primitively fierce in their vengeance as he had found Nao in her love.

The lion, and the girl, and the man lay up that night beside Jad-bal-ja's kill, and in the morning Colt found that his strength had partially returned. During the night Numa had finished his kill; and after the sun had risen, La found fruits which she and Colt ate, while the lion strolled to the river to drink, pausing once to roar, that the world might know the king was there.

"Numa will not kill again until tomorrow," she said, "so we shall have no meat until then, unless we are

fortunate enough to kill something ourselves."

Colt had long since abandoned the heavy rifle of the Arabs, to the burden of which his growing weakness hart left his muscles inadequate; so he had nothing but his bare hands and La only a knife with which they might make a kill.

"Then I guess we shall eat fruit until the lion kills again," he said. "In the meantime we might as well be trying to find the camp."

She shook her head. "No," she said, "you must rest. You were very weak when I found you, and it is not well that you should exert yourself until you are strong again. Numa will sleep all day. You and I will cut some sticks and lie

beside a little trail, where the small things go. Perhaps we shall have luck; but if we do not, Numa will kill again tomorrow, and this time I shall take a whole hind quarter."

"I cannot believe that a lion would let you do that," said the man.

"At first I did not understand it myself," said La, "but after a while I remembered. It is because I am Tarzan's friend that he does not harm me."

When Zora Drinov saw her lion-man lying lifeless on the ground, she ran quickly to him and knelt at his side. She had heard the shot, and now seeing the blood running from the wound upon his head, she thought that someone had killed him intentionally and when Ivitch

came running out, his rifle in his hand, she turned upon him like a tigress.

"You have killed him," she cried. "You beast! He was worth more than a dozen such as you."

The sound of the shot and the crashing of the body to the ground had brought men running from all parts of the camp; so that Tarzan and the girl were soon surrounded by a curious and excited throng of blacks, among whom the remaining whites were pushing their way.

Ivitch was stunned, not only by the sight of the giant white man lying apparently dead before him, but also by the presence of Zora Drinov, whom all within the camp had given up as

irretrievably lost. "I had no idea, Comrade Drinov," he explained, "that I was shooting at a man. I see now what caused my mistake. I saw something moving in a tree and thought that it was a leopard, but instead it was the leopard skin that he wears about his loins."

By this time Zveri had elbowed his way to the center of the group. "Zora!" he cried in astonishment as he saw the girl. "Where did you come from? What has happened? What is the meaning of this?"

"It means that this fool, Ivitch, has killed the man who saved my life," cried Zora.

"Who is he?" asked Zveri.

"I do not know," replied Zora. "He

has never spoken to me. He does not seem to understand any language with which I am familiar."

"He is not dead," cried Ivitch. "See, he moved."

Romero knelt and examined the wound in Tarzan's head. "He is only stunned," he said. "The bullet struck him a glancing blow. There are no indications of a fracture of the skull. I have seen men hit thus before. He may be unconscious for a long time, or he may not, but I am sure that he will not die."

"Who the devil do you suppose he is?" asked Zveri.

Zora shook her head. "I have no idea," she said. "I only know that he is

as splendid as he is mysterious."

"I know who he is," said a black, who had pushed forward to where he could see the figure of the prostrate man, "and if he is not already dead, you had better kill him, for he will be your worst enemy."

"What do you mean?" demanded Zveri. "Who is he?"

"He is Tarzan of the Apes."

"You are certain?" snapped Zveri.

"Yes, Bwana," replied the black. "I saw him once before, and one never forgets Tarzan of the Apes."

"Yours was a lucky shot, Ivitch," said the leader, "and now you may as well finish what you started."

"Kill him, you mean?" demanded Ivitch.

"Our cause is lost and our lives with it, if he lives," replied Zveri. "I thought that he was dead, or I should never have come here; and now that Fate has thrown him into our hands we would be fools to let him escape, for we could not have a worse enemy than he."

"I cannot kill him in cold blood," said Ivitch.

"You always were a weak minded fool," said Zveri, "but I am not. Stand aside, Zora," and as he spoke he drew his revolver and advanced toward Tarzan.

The girl threw herself across the ape-man, shielding his body with hers. "You

cannot kill him," she cried. "You must not."

"Don't be a fool, Zora," snapped Zveri.

"He saved my life and brought me back here to camp. Do you think I am going to let you murder him?" she demanded.

"I am afraid you can't help yourself, Zora," replied the man. "I do not like to do it, but it is his life or the cause. If he lives, we fail."

The girl leaped to her feet and faced Zveri. "If you kill him, Peter, I shall kill you—I swear it by everything that I hold most dear. Hold him prisoner if you will, but as you value your life, do not kill him."

Zveri went pale with anger. "Your words are treason," he said. "Traitors to the cause have died for less than what you have said."

Zora Drinov realized that the situation was extremely dangerous. She had little reason to believe that Zveri would make good his threat toward her, but she saw that if she would save Tarzan she must act quickly. "Send the others away," she said to Zveri. "I have something to tell you before you kill this man."

For a moment the leader hesitated. Then he turned to Dorsky, who stood at his side. "Have the fellow securely bound and taken to one of the tents," he commanded. "We shall give him a fair trial after he has regained consciousness

and then place him before a firing squad," and then to the girl, "Come with me, Zora, and I will listen to what you have to say."

In silence the two walked to Zveri's tent. "Well?" inquired Zveri, as the girl halted before the entrance. "What have you to say to me that you think will change my plans relative to your lover?"

Zora looked at him for a long minute, a faint sneer of contempt curling her lips. "You would think such a thing," she said, "but you are wrong. However you may think, though, you shall not kill him."

"And why not?" demanded Zveri.

"Because if you do I shall tell them all what your plans are; that you yourself are a traitor to the cause, and that you

have been using them all to advance your own selfish ambition to make yourself Emperor of Africa."

"You would not dare," cried Zveri; "nor would I let you; for as much as I love you, I shall kill you here on the spot, unless you promise not to interfere in any way with my plans."

"You do not dare kill me," taunted the girl. "You have antagonized every man in the camp, Peter, and they all like me. Some of them, perhaps, love me a little. Do you think that I should not be avenged within five minutes after you had killed me? You will have to think of something else, my friend; and the best thing that you can do is to take my advice. Keep Tarzan of the Apes a

prisoner if you will, but on your life do not kill him or permit anyone else to do so."

Zveri sank into a camp chair. "Everyone is against me," he said. "Even you the woman I love, turn against me."

"I have not changed toward you in any respect, Peter," said the girl.

"You mean that?" he asked, looking up.

"Absolutely," she replied.

"How long were you alone in the jungle with that man?" he demanded.

"Don't start that, Peter," she said. "He could not have treated me differently if he had been my own brother; and certainly, all other considerations aside,

you should know me well enough to know that I have no such weakness in the direction that your tone implied."

"You have never loved me—that is the reason," he declared. "But I would not trust you or any other woman with a man she loves or with whom she was temporarily infatuated."

"That," she said, "has nothing to do with what we are discussing. Are you going to kill Tarzan of the Apes, or are you not?"

"For your sake, I shall let him live," replied the man, "even though I do not trust you," he added. "I trust no one. How can I? Look at this," and he took a code message from his pocket and handed it to her. "This came a few days

ago—the damn traitor. I wish I could get my hands on him. I should like to have killed him myself, but I suppose I shall have no such luck, as he is probably already dead."

Zora took the paper. Below the message, in Zveri's scrawling hand, it had been decoded in Russian script. As she read it, her eyes grew large with astonishment. "It is incredible," she cried.

"It is the truth, though," said Zveri. "I always suspected the dirty hound," and he added with an oath, "I think that damn Mexican is just as bad."

"At least," said Zora, "his plan has been thwarted, for I take it that his message did not get through."

"No," said Zveri. "By error it was delivered to our agents instead of his."

"Then no harm has been done."

"Fortunately, no; but it has made me suspicious of everyone, and I am going to push the expedition through at once before anything further can occur to interfere with my plans."

"Everything is ready, then?" she asked.

"Everything is ready," he replied. "We march tomorrow morning. And now tell me what happened while I was at Opar. Why did the Arabs desert, and why did you go with them?"

"Abu Batn was angry and resentful because you left him to guard the camp. The Arabs felt that it was a reflection

upon their courage, and I think that they would have deserted you anyway, regardless of me. Then, the day after you left, a strange woman wandered into camp. She was a very beautiful white woman from Opar; and Abu Batn, conceiving the idea of profiting through the chance that Fate had sent him, took us with him with the intention of selling us into captivity on his return march to his own country."

"Are there no honest men in the world?" demanded Zveri.

"I am afraid not," replied the girl; but as he was staring moodily at the ground, he did not see the contemptuous curl of her lip that accompanied her reply.

She described the luring of La from

Abu Batn's camp and of the sheikh's anger at the treachery of Ibn Dammuk; and then she told him of her own escape, but she did not mention Wayne Colt's connection with it and led him to believe that she wandered alone in the jungle until the great ape had captured her. She dwelt at length upon Tarzan's kindness and consideration and told of the great elephant who had guarded her by day.

"Sounds like a fairy story," said Zveri, "but I have heard enough about this ape-man to believe almost anything concerning him, which is one reason why I believe we shall never be safe while he lives."

"He cannot harm us while he is our prisoner; and certainly, if you love me as

you say you do, the man who saved my life deserves better from you than ignominious death."

"Speak no more of it," said Zveri. "I have already told you that I would not kill him," but in his treacherous mind he was formulating a plan whereby Tarzan might be destroyed while still he adhered to the letter of his promise to Zora.

15. "KILL, TANTOR, KILL!"

Early the following morning the expedition filed out of camp, the savage black warriors arrayed in the uniforms of French Colonial Troops; while Zveri, Romero, Ivitch, and Mori wore the uniforms of French officers. Zora Drinov accompanied the marching column; for though she had asked to be permitted to remain and nurse Tarzan, Zveri would not permit her to do so, saying that he would not again let her out of his sight. Dorsky and a handful of blacks were left behind to guard the prisoner and watch over the store of provisions and equipment that were to be left in the base

camp.

As the column had been preparing to march, Zveri gave his final instructions to Dorsky. "I leave this matter entirely in your hands," he said. "It must appear that he escaped, or, at worst, that he met an accidental death."

"You need give the matter no further thought, Comrade," replied Dorsky. "Long before you return, this stranger will have been removed."

A long and difficult march lay before the invaders, their route lying across southeastern Abyssinia into Italian Somaliland, along five hundred miles of rough and savage country. It was Zveri's intention to make no more than a demonstration in the Italian colony,

merely sufficient to arouse the anger of the Italians still further against the French and to give the fascist dictator the excuse which Zveri believed was all that he awaited to carry his mad dream of Italian conquest across Europe.

Perhaps Zveri was a little mad, but then he was a disciple of mad men whose greed for power wrought distorted images in their minds, so, that they could not differentiate between the rational and the bizarre; and then, too, Zveri had for so long dreamed his dream of empire that he saw now only his goal and none of the insurmountable obstacles that beset his path. He saw a new Roman emperor ruling Europe, and himself as Emperor of Africa making an alliance

with his new European power against all the balance of the world. He pictured two splendid golden thrones; upon one of them sat the Emperor Peter I, and upon the other the Empress Zora; and so he dreamed through the long, hard marches toward the east.

It was the morning of the day following that upon which he had been shot before Tarzan regained consciousness. He felt weak and sick, and his head ached horribly. When he tried to move, he discovered that his wrists and ankles were securely bound. He did not know what had happened, and at first he could not imagine where he was; but, as recollection slowly returned and he recognized about him the

canvas walls of a tent, he understood that in some way his enemies had captured him. He tried to wrench his wrists free from the cords that held them, but they resisted his every effort.

He listened intently and sniffed the air, but he could detect no evidence of the teeming camp that he had seen when he had brought the girl back. He knew, however, that at least one night had passed; for the shadows that he could see through the tent opening indicated that the sun was high in the heavens, whereas it had been low in the west when last he saw it. Hearing voices, he realized that he was not alone, though he was confident that there must be comparatively few men in camp.

Deep in the jungle he heard an elephant trumpeting, and once, from far off, came faintly the roar of a lion. Tarzan strove again to snap the bonds that held him, but they would not yield. Then he turned his head so that he faced the opening in the tent, and from his lips burst a long, low cry; the cry of a beast in distress.

Dorsky, who was lolling in a chair before his own tent, leaped to his feet. The blacks, who had been talking animatedly, before their own shelters, went quickly quiet and seized their weapons.

"What was that?" Dorsky demanded of his black boy.

The fellow, wide-eyed and trembling,

shook his head. "I do not know, Bwana," he said. "Perhaps the man in the tent has died, for such a noise may well have come from the throat of a ghost."

"Nonsense," said Dorsky. "Come, we'll have a look at him." But the black held back, and the white man went on alone.

The sound, which had come apparently from the tent in which the captive lay, had had a peculiar effect upon Dorsky, causing the flesh of his scalp to creep and a strange foreboding to fill him; so that as he neared the tent, he went more slowly and held his revolver ready in his hand.

When he entered the tent, he saw the man lying where he had been left; but

now his eyes were open, and when they met those of the Russian, the latter had a sensation similar to that which one feels when he comes eye to eye with a wild beast that has been caught in a trap.

"Well," said Dorsky, "so you have come to, have you? What do you want?" The captive made no reply, but his eyes never left the other's face. So steady was the unblinking gaze that Dorsky became uneasy beneath it. "You had better learn to talk," he said gruffly, "if you know what is good for you." Then it occurred to him that perhaps the man did not understand him so he turned in the entrance and called to some of the blacks, who had advanced, half in curiosity, half in fear, toward the tent of

the prisoner. "One of you fellows come here," he said.

At first no one seemed inclined to obey, but presently a stalwart warrior advanced. "See if this fellow can understand your language. Come in and tell him that I have a proposition to make to him and that he had better listen to it."

"If this is indeed Tarzan of the Apes," said the black, "he can understand me," and he came warily to the entrance of the tent.

The black repeated the message in his own dialect, but by no sign did the ape-man indicate that he understood.

Dorsky lost his patience. "You damned ape," he said. "You needn't try to make a fool of me. I know perfectly

well that you understand this fellow's gibberish, and I know, too, that you are an Englishman and that you understand English. I'll give you just five minutes to think this thing over, and then I am coming back. If you have not made up your mind to talk by that time, you can take the consequences." Then he turned on his heel and left the tent.

Little Nkima had travelled far. Around his neck was a stout thong, supporting a little bag of leather, in which reposed a message. This eventually he had brought to Muviro, war chief of the Waziri; and when the Waziri had started out upon their long march, Nkima had ridden proudly upon the shoulder of Muviro. For some time

he had remained with the black warriors; but then, at last, moved perhaps by some caprice of his erratic mind, or by a great urge that he could not resist, he had left them and, facing alone all the dangers that he feared most, had set out by himself upon business of his own.

Many and narrow were the escapes of Nkima as he swung through the giants of the forest. Could he have resisted temptation, he might have passed with reasonable safety, but that he could not do; and so he was forever getting himself into trouble by playing pranks upon strangers, who, if they possessed any sense of humor themselves, most certainly failed to appreciate little

Nkima's. Nkima could not forget that he was friend and confidant of Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, though he seemed often to forget that Tarzan was not there to protect him when he hurled taunts and insults at other monkeys less favored. That he came through alive speaks more eloquently for his speed than for his intelligence or courage. Much of the time he was fleeing in terror, emitting shrill screams of mental anguish; yet he never seemed to learn from experience, and having barely eluded one pursuer intent upon murdering him he would be quite prepared to insult or annoy the next creature he met, especially selecting, it would seem, those that were larger and stronger than himself.

Sometimes he fled in one direction, sometimes in another, so that he occupied much more time than was necessary in making his journey. Otherwise he would have reached his master in time to be of service to him at a moment that Tarzan needed a friend as badly, perhaps, as ever he had needed one before in his life.

And now, while far away in the forest Nkima fled from an old dog baboon, whom he had hit with a well-aimed stick, Michael Dorsky approached the tent where Nkima's master lay bound and helpless. The five minutes were up, and Dorsky had come to demand Tarzan's answer. He came alone, and as he entered the tent his simple plan of action

was well formulated in his mind.

The expression upon the prisoner's face had changed. He seemed to be listening intently. Dorsky listened then, too, but could hear nothing; for by comparison with the hearing of Tarzan of the Apes Michael Dorsky was deaf. What Tarzan heard filled him with quiet satisfaction.

"Now," said Dorsky, "I have come to give you your last chance. Comrade Zveri has led two expeditions to Opar in search of the gold that we know is stored there. Both expeditions failed. It is well known that you know the location of the treasure vaults of Opar and can lead us to them. Agree that you will do this when Comrade Zveri returns, and not

only will you not be harmed, but you will be released as quickly as Comrade Zveri feels that it would be safe to have you at liberty. Refuse and you die." He drew a long, slender stiletto from its sheath at his belt. "If you refuse to answer me, I shall accept that as evidence that you have not accepted my proposition." And as the ape-man maintained his stony silence, the Russian held the thin blade low before his eyes. "Think well, ape," he said, "and remember that when I slip this between your ribs there will be no sound. It will pierce your heart, and I shall leave it there until the blood has ceased to flow. Then I shall remove it and close the wound. Later in the day you will be

found dead, and I shall tell the blacks that you died from the accidental gunshot. Thus your friends will never learn the truth. You will not be avenged, and you will have died uselessly." He paused for a reply, his evil eyes glinting menacingly into the cold, grey eyes of the ape-man. The dagger was very near Tarzan's face now; and of a sudden, like a wild beast, he raised his body, and his jaws closed like a steel trap upon the wrist of the Russian. With a scream of pain, Dorsky drew back. The dagger dropped from his nerveless fingers. At the same instant Tarzan swung his legs around the feet of the would-be assassin; and as Dorsky rolled over on his back, he dragged Tarzan of the Apes on top of

him.

The ape-man knew from the snapping of Dorsky's wrist bones between his teeth that the man's right hand was useless, and so he released it. Then to the Russian's horror, the apeman's jaws sought his jugular as, from his throat, there rumbled the growl of a savage beast at bay.

Screaming for his men to come to his assistance, Dorsky tried to reach the revolver at his right hip with his left hand, but he soon saw that unless he could rid himself of Tarzan's body he would be unable to do so.

Already he heard his men running toward the tent, shouting among themselves, and then he heard

exclamations of surprise and screams of terror. The next instant the tent vanished from above them, and Dorsky saw a huge bull elephant towering above him and his savage antagonist.

Instantly Tarzan ceased his efforts to close his teeth on Dorsky's throat and at the same time rolled quickly from the body of the Russian. As he did so, Dorsky's hand found his revolver.

"Kill, Tantor!" shouted the ape-man. "Kill!"

The sinuous trunk of the pachyderm twined around the Russian. The little eyes of the elephant flamed red with hate, and he trumpeted shrilly as he raised Dorsky high above his head and, wheeling about, hurled him out into the

camp; while the terrified blacks, casting affrighted glances over their shoulders, fled into the jungle. Then Tantor charged his victim. With his great tusks he gored him; and then, in a frenzy of rage, trumpeting and squealing, he trampled him until nothing remained of Michael Dorsky but a bloody pulp.

From the moment that Tantor had seized the Russian, Tarzan had sought ineffectually to stay the great brute's fury, but Tantor was deaf to commands until he had wreaked his vengeance upon this creature that had dared to attack his friend. But when his rage had spent its force and nothing remained against which to vent it, he came quietly to Tarzan's side and at a word from the

ape-man lifted his brown body gently in his powerful trunk and bore him away into the forest.

Deep into the jungle to a hidden glade, Tantor carried his helpless friend and there he placed him gently on soft grasses beneath the shade of a tree. Little more could the great bull do other than to stand guard. As a result of the excitement attending the killing of Dorsky and his concern for Tarzan, Tantor was nervous and irritable. He stood with upraised ears, alert for any menacing sound, waving his sensitive trunk to and fro, searching each vagrant air current for the scent of danger.

The pain of his wound annoyed Tarzan far less than the pangs of thirst.

To little monkeys watching him from the trees he called, "Come, Manu, and untie the thongs that bind my wrists."

"We are afraid," said an old monkey.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," said the man reassuringly. "Tarzan has been your friend always. He will not harm you."

"We are afraid," repeated the old monkey. "Tarzan deserted us. For many moons the jungle has not known Tarzan; but other Tarmangani and strange Gomangani came and with thundersticks they hunted little Manu and killed him. If Tarzan had still been our friend, he would have driven these strange men away."

"If I had been here, the strange men-things would not have harmed you," said

Tarzan. "Still would Tarzan have protected you. Now I am back, but I cannot destroy the strangers or drive them away until the thongs are taken from my wrists."

"Who put them there?" asked the monkey.

"The strange Tarmangani," replied Tarzan.

"Then they must be more powerful than Tarzan," said Manu, "so what good would it do to set you free? If the strange Tarmangani found out that we had done it, they would be angry and come and kill us. Let Tarzan, who for many rains has been Lord of the Jungle, free himself."

Seeing that it was futile to appeal to

Manu, Tarzan, as a forlorn hope, voiced the long, plaintive, uncanny help call of the great apes. With slowly increasing crescendo it rose to a piercing shriek that drove far and wide through the silent jungle.

In all directions, beasts, great and small, paused as the weird note broke upon their sensitive eardrums. None was afraid, for the call told them that a great bull was in trouble and, therefore, doubtless harmless; but the jackals interpreted the sound to mean the possibility of flesh and trotted off through the jungle in the direction from which it had come; and Dango, the hyena, heard and slunk on soft pads, hoping that he would find a helpless

animal that would prove easy prey. And far away, and faintly, a little monkey heard the call, recognizing the voice of the caller. Swiftly, then, he flew through the jungle, impelled as he was upon rare occasions by a directness of thought and a tenacity of purpose that brooked no interruption.

Tarzan had sent Tantor to the river to fetch water in his trunk. From a distance he caught the scent of the jackals and the horrid scent of Dango, and he hoped that Tantor would return before they came creeping upon him. He felt no fear, only an instinctive urge toward self-preservation. The jackals he held in contempt, knowing that, though bound hand and foot, he still could keep the

timid creatures away; but Dango was different, for once the filthy brute realized his helplessness, Tarzan knew that those powerful jaws would make quick work of him. He knew the merciless savagery of the beast; knew that in all the jungle there was none more terrible than Dango.

The jackals came first, standing at the edge of the little glade watching him. Then they circled slowly, coming nearer; but when he raised himself to a sitting position they ran yelping away. Three times they crept closer, trying to force their courage to the point of actual attack; and then a horrid, slinking form appeared upon the edge of the glade, and the jackals withdrew to a safe distance.

Dango, the hyena, had come.

Tarzan was still sitting up, and the beast stood eyeing him, filled with curiosity and with fear. He growled, and the manthing facing him growled back; and then from above them came a great chattering, and Tarzan, looking up, saw little Nkima dancing upon the limb of a tree above him.

"Come down, Nkima," he cried, "and untie the thongs that bind my wrists."

"Dango! Dango!" shouted Nkima. "Little Nkima is afraid of Dango."

"If you come now," said Tarzan, "it will be safe; but if you wait too long, Dango will kill Tarzan; and then to whom may little Nkima go for protection?"

"Nkima comes," shouted the little monkey, and dropping quickly through the trees, he leaped to Tarzan's shoulder.

The hyena bared his fangs and laughed his horrid laugh. Tarzan spoke. "Quick, the thongs, Nkima," urged Tarzan; and the little monkey, his fingers trembling with terror, went to work upon the leather thongs at Tarzan's wrists.

Dango, his ugly head lowered, made a sudden rush; and from the deep lungs of the ape-man came a thunderous roar that might have done credit to Numa himself. With a yelp of terror the cowardly Dango turned and fled to the extremity of the glade, where he stood bristling and growling.

"Hurry, Nkima," said Tarzan. "Dango

will come again. Maybe once, maybe twice, maybe many times before he closes on me; but in the end he will realize that I am helpless, and then he will not stop or turn back."

"Little Nkima's fingers are sick," said the Manu. "They are weak and they tremble. They will not untie the knot."

"Nkima has sharp teeth," Tarzan reminded him. "Why waste your time with sick fingers over knots that they cannot untie? Let your sharp teeth do the work."

Instantly Nkima commenced to gnaw upon the strands. Silent perforce because his mouth was otherwise occupied, Nkima strove diligently and without interruption.

Dango, in the meantime, made two short rushes, each time coming a little closer, but each time turning back before the menace of the ape-man's roars and savage growls, which by now had aroused the jungle.

Above them, in the tree tops, the monkeys chattered, scolded and screamed, and in the distance the voice of Numa rolled like far thunder, while from the river came the squealing and trumpeting of Tantor.

Little Nkima was gnawing frantically at the bonds, when Dango charged again, evidently convinced by this time that the great Tarmangani was helpless, for now, with a growl, he rushed in and closed upon the man.

With a sudden surge of the great muscles of his arms that sent little Nkima sprawling, Tarzan sought to tear his hands free that he might defend himself against the savage death that menaced him in those slavering jaws; and the thongs, almost parted by Nkima's sharp teeth, gave to the terrific strain of the ape-man's efforts.

As Dango leaped for the bronzed throat, Tarzan's hand shot forward and seized the beast by the neck, but the impact of the heavy body carried him backward to the ground. Dango twisted, struggled and clawed in a vain effort to free himself from the death grip of the ape-man, but those steel fingers closed relentlessly upon his throat, until,

gasping for breath, the great brute sank helplessly upon the body of its intended victim.

Until death was assured, Tarzan did not relinquish his grasp; but when at last there could be no doubt, he hurled the carcass from him and, sitting up, fell quickly to the thongs that secured his ankles.

During the brief battle, Nkima had taken refuge among the topmost branches of a lofty tree, where he leaped about, screaming frantically at the battling beasts beneath him. Not until he was quite sure that Dango was dead did he descend. Warily he approached the body, lest, perchance, he had been mistaken; but again convinced by closer

scrutiny, he leaped upon it and struck it viciously, again and again, and then he stood upon it shrieking his defiance at the world with all the assurance and bravado of one who has overcome a dangerous enemy.

Tantor, startled by the help cry of his friend, had turned back from the river without taking water. Trees bent beneath his mad rush as, ignoring winding trails, he struck straight through the jungle toward the little glade in answer to the call of the ape-man; and now, infuriated by the sounds of battle, he came charging into view, a titanic engine of rage and vengeance.

Tantor's eyesight is none too good, and it seemed that in his mad charge he

must trample the ape-man, who lay directly in his path; but when Tarzan spoke to him the great beast came to a sudden stop at his side and, pivoting, wheeled about in his tracks, his ears forward, his trunk raised, trumpeting a savage warning as he searched for the creature that had been menacing his friend.

"Quiet, Tantor; it was Dango. He is dead," said the apeman. As the eyes of the elephant finally located the carcass of the hyena he charged and trampled it, as he had trampled Dorsky, to a bloody pulp; as Nkima fled, shrieking, to the trees.

His ankles freed of their bonds, Tarzan was upon his feet; and, when

Tantor had vented his rage upon the body of Dango, he called the elephant to him. Tantor came then quietly to his side and stood with his trunk touching the apeman's body, his rage quieted and his nerves soothed by the reassuring calm of the ape-man.

And now Nkima came, making an agile leap from a swaying bow to the back of Tantor and then to the shoulder of Tarzan, where, with his little arms about the ape-man's neck, he pressed his cheek close against the bronzed cheek of the great Tarmangani, who was his master and his god.

Thus the three friends stood in the silent communion that only beasts know, as the shadows lengthened and the sun

set behind the forest.

16. "TURN BACK!"

The privations that Wayne Colt had endured had weakened him far more than he had realized, so that before his returning strength could bring renewed powers of resistance, he was stricken with fever.

The high priestess of the Flaming God, versed in the lore of ancient Opar, was conversant with the medicinal properties of many roots and herbs and, as well, with the mystic powers of incantation that drove demons from the bodies of the sick. By day she gathered and brewed, and at night she sat at the feet of her patient, intoning weird prayers, the origin of which reached back through countless ages to vanished

temples, above which now rolled the waters of a mighty sea; and while she wrought with every artifice at her command to drive out the demon of sickness that possessed this man of an alien world, Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, hunted for all three, and though at times he made his kill at a distance he never failed to carry the carcass of his prey back to the hidden lair where the woman nursed the man.

Days of burning fever, days of delirium, shot with periods of rationality, dragged their slow length. Often Colt's mind was confused by a jumble of bizarre impressions, in which La might be Zora Drinov one moment, a ministering angel from heaven the next,

and then a Red Cross nurse; but in whatever guise he found her it seemed always a pleasant one, and when she was absent, as she was sometimes forced to be, he was depressed and unhappy.

When, upon her knees at his feet, she prayed to the rising sun, or to the sun at zenith, or to the setting sun, as was her wont, or when she chanted strange, weird songs in an unknown tongue, accompanying them with the mysterious gestures that were a part of the ritual, he was sure that the fever was worse and that he had become delirious again.

And so the days dragged on, and while Colt lay helpless, Zveri marched toward Italian Somaliland; and Tarzan,

recovered from the shock of his wound followed the plain trail of the expedition, and from his shoulder little Nkima scolded and chattered through the day.

Behind him Tarzan had left a handful of terrified blacks in the camp of the conspirators. They had been lolling in the shade, following their breakfast, a week after the killing of Dorsky and the escape of his captive. Fear of the ape-man at liberty, that had so terrified them at first, no longer concerned them greatly. Psychologically akin to the brutes of the forest, they happily soon forgot their terrors; nor did they harass their minds by anticipating those which might assail them in the future, as it is

the silly custom of civilized man to do.

And so it was that this morning a sight burst suddenly upon their astonished eyes found them entirely unprepared. They heard no noise, so silently go the beasts of the jungle, however large or heavy they may be; yet suddenly, in the clearing at the edge of the camp, appeared a great elephant, and upon his head sat the recent captive, whom they had been told was Tarzan of the Apes, and upon the man's shoulder perched a little monkey. With exclamations of terror, the blacks leaped to their feet and dashed into the jungle upon the opposite side of the camp.

Tarzan leaped lightly to the ground and entered Dorsky's tent. He had

returned for a definite purpose; and his effort was crowned with success, for in the tent of the Russian he found his rope and his knife, which had been taken away from him at the time of his capture. For bow and arrows and a spear he had only to look to the shelters of the blacks; and having found what he wanted, he departed as silently as he had come.

Now the time had arrived when Tarzan must set out rapidly upon the trail of his enemy, leaving Tantor to the peaceful paths that he loved best.

"I go, Tantor," he said. "Search out the forest where the young trees have the tenderest bark and watch well against the men-things, for they alone in all the world are the enemies of all living

creatures." He was off through the forest then, with little Nkima clinging tightly to his bronzed neck.

Plain lay the winding trail of Zveri's army before the eyes of the ape-man, but he had no need to follow any trail. Long weeks before, as he had kept vigil above their camp, he had heard the principals discussing their plans; and so he knew their objectives, and he knew, too, how rapidly they could march and, therefore, about where he might hope to overtake them. Unhampered by files of porters sweating under heavy loads, earthbound to no winding trails, Tarzan was able to travel many times faster than the expedition. He saw their trail only when his own chanced to cross it as he laid a

straight course for a point far in advance of the sweating column.

When he overtook the expedition night had fallen, and the tired men were in camp. They had eaten and were happy and many of the men were singing. To one who did not know the truth it might have appeared to be a military camp of French Colonial Troops; for there was a military precision about the arrangement of the fires, the temporary shelters, and the officers' tents that would not have been undertaken by a hunting or scientific expedition, and, in addition, there were the uniformed sentries pacing their beats. All this was the work of Miguel Romero, to whose superior knowledge of military matters Zveri had

been forced to defer in all matters of this nature, though with no diminution of the hatred which each felt for the other.

From his tree Tarzan watched the scene below, attempting to estimate as closely as possible the number of armed men that formed the fighting force of the expedition, while Nkima, bent upon some mysterious mission, swung nimbly through the trees toward the east. The ape-man realized that Zveri had recruited a force that might constitute a definite menace to the peace of Africa, since among its numbers were represented many large and warlike tribes, who might easily be persuaded to follow this mad leader were success to crown his initial engagement. It was,

however, to prevent this very thing that Tarzan of the Apes had interested himself in the activities of Peter Zveri; and here, before him, was another opportunity to undermine the Russian's dream of empire while it was still only a dream and might be dissipated by trivial means; by the grim and terrible jungle methods of which Tarzan of the Apes was a past- master.

Tarzan fitted an arrow to his bow. Slowly his right hand drew back the feathered end of the shaft until the point rested almost upon his left thumb. His manner was marked by easy, effortless grace. He did not appear to be taking conscious aim; and yet when he released the shaft, it buried itself in the fleshy part

of a sentry's leg precisely as Tarzan of the Apes had intended that it should.

With a yell of surprise and pain the black collapsed upon the ground, more frightened, however, than hurt; and as his fellows gathered around him, Tarzan of the Apes melted away into the shadows of the jungle night.

Attracted by the cry of the wounded man, Zveri, Romero, and the other leaders of the expedition hastened from their tents and joined the throng of excited blacks that surrounded the victim of Tarzan's campaign of terrorism.

"Who shot you?" demanded Zveri when he saw the arrow protruding from the sentry's leg.

"I do not know," replied the man.

"Have you an enemy in camp who might want to kill you?" asked Zveri.

"Even if he had," said Romero, "he couldn't have shot him with an arrow because no bows or arrows were brought with the expedition."

"I hadn't thought of that," said Zveri.

"So it must have been someone outside camp," declared Romero.

With difficulty and to the accompaniment of the screams of their victim, Ivitch and Romero cut the arrow from the sentry's leg, while Zveri and Kitembo discussed various conjectures as to the exact portent of the affair.

"We have evidently run into hostile natives," said Zveri.

Kitembo shrugged non-committally. "Let me see the arrow," he said to Romero. "Perhaps that will tell us something."

As the Mexican handed the missile to the black chief, the latter carried it close to a camp fire and examined it closely, while the white men gathered about him waiting for his findings.

At last Kitembo straightened up. The expression upon his face was serious, and when he spoke his voice trembled slightly. "This is bad," he said, shaking his bullet head.

"What do you mean?" demanded Zveri.

"This arrow bears the mark of a warrior who was left behind in our base

camp," replied the chief.

"That is impossible," cried Zveri.

Kitembo shrugged. "I know it," he said, "but it is true."

"With an arrow out of the air the Hindu was slain," suggested a black headman, standing near Kitembo.

"Shut up, you fool," snapped Romero, "or you'll have the whole camp in a blue funk."

"That's right," said Zveri. "We must hush this thing up." He turned to the headman. "You and Kitembo," he commanded, "must not repeat this to your men. Let us keep it to ourselves." Both Kitembo and the headman agreed to guard the secret, but within half an hour every man in camp knew that the sentry

had been shot with an arrow that had been left behind in the base camp, and immediately their minds were prepared for other things that lay ahead of them upon the long trail.

The effect of the incident upon the minds of the black soldiers was apparent during the following day's march. They were quieter and more thoughtful, and there was much low voiced conversation among them; but if they had given signs of nervousness during the day, it was nothing as compared with their state of mind after darkness fell upon their camp that night. The sentries evidenced their terror plainly by their listening attitudes and nervous attention to the sounds that came out of the blackness surrounding

the camp. Most of them were brave men who would have faced a visible enemy with courage, but to a man they were convinced that they were confronted by the supernatural, against which they knew that neither rifle nor bravery might avail. They felt that ghostly eyes were watching them, and the result was as demoralizing as would an actual attack have been; in fact, far more so.

Yet they need not have concerned themselves so greatly, as the cause of all their superstitious apprehension was moving rapidly through the jungle, miles away from them, and every instant the distance between him and them was increasing.

Another force, that might have caused

them even greater anxiety had they been aware of it, lay still further away upon the trail that they must traverse to reach their destination.

Around tiny cooking fires squatted a hundred black warriors, whose white plumes nodded and trembled as they moved. Sentries guarded them; sentries who were unafraid, since these men had little fear of ghosts or demons. They wore their amulets in leather pouches that swung from cords about their necks and they prayed to strange gods, but deep in their hearts lay a growing contempt for both. They had learned from experience and from the advice of a wise leader to look for victory more to themselves and their weapons than to

their god.

They were a cheerful, happy company, veterans of many an expedition and, like all veterans, took advantage of every opportunity for rest and relaxation, the value of both of which is enhanced by the maintenance of a cheerful frame of mind; and so there was much laughing and joking among them, and often both the cause and butt of this was a little monkey, now teasing, now caressing, and in return being himself teased or caressed. That there was a bond of deep affection between him and these clean-limbed black giants was constantly apparent. When they pulled his tail they never pulled it very hard, and when he turned upon them in

apparent fury, his sharp teeth closing upon their fingers or arms, it was noticeable that he never drew blood. Their play was rough, for they were all rough and primitive creatures; but it was all playing, and it was based upon a foundation of mutual affection.

These men had just finished their evening meal, when a figure, materializing as though out of thin air, dropped silently into their midst from the branches of a tree which overhung their camp.

Instantly a hundred warriors sprang to arms, and then, as quickly, they relaxed, as with shouts of "Bwana! Bwana!" they ran toward the bronzed giant standing silently in their midst.

As to an emperor or a god they went upon their knees before him, and those that were nearest him touched his hands and his feet in reverence; for to the Waziri Tarzan of the Apes, who was their king, was yet something more and of their own volition they worshipped him as their living god.

But if the warriors were glad to see him, little Nkima was frantic with joy. He scrambled quickly over the bodies of the kneeling blacks and leaped to Tarzan's shoulder, where he clung about his neck, jabbering excitedly.

"You have done well, my children," said the ape-man, "and little Nkima has done well. He bore my message to you, and I find you ready where I had planned

that you should be."

"We have kept always a day's march ahead of the strangers, Bwana," replied Muviro, "camping well off the trail that they might not discover our fresh camp sites and become suspicious."

"They do not suspect your presence," said Tarzan. "I listened above their camp last night, and they said nothing that would indicate that they dreamed that another party was preceding them along the trail."

"Where the dirt of the trail was soft a warrior, who marched at the rear of the column, brushed away the freshness of our spoor with a leafy bough," explained Muviro.

"Tomorrow we shall wait here for

them," said the apeman, "and tonight you shall listen to Tarzan while he explains the plans that you will follow."

As Zveri's column took up the march upon the following morning, after a night of rest that had passed without incident, the spirits of all had risen to an appreciable degree. The blacks had not forgotten the grim warning that had sped out of the night surrounding their previous camp, but they were of a race whose spirits soon rebound from depression.

The leaders of the expedition were encouraged by the knowledge that over a third of the distance to their goal had been covered. For various reasons they were anxious to complete this part of the

plan. Zveri believed that upon its successful conclusion hinged his whole dream of empire. Ivitch, a natural born trouble-maker, was happy in the thought that the success of the expedition would cause untold annoyance to millions of people and perhaps, also, by the dream of his return to Russia as a hero; perhaps a wealthy hero.

Romero and Mori wanted to have it over for entirely different reasons. They were thoroughly disgusted with the Russian. They had lost all confidence in the sincerity of Zveri, who, filled as he was with his own importance and his delusions of future grandeur, talked too much, with the result that he had convinced Romero that he and all his

kind were frauds, bent upon accomplishing their selfish ends with the assistance of their silly dupes and at the expense of the peace and prosperity of the world. It had not been difficult for Romero to convince Mori of the truth of his deductions, and now, thoroughly disillusioned, the two men continued on with the expedition because they believed that they could not successfully accomplish their intended desertion until the party was once more settled in the base camp.

The march had continued uninterruptedly for about an hour after camp had been broken, when one of Kitembo's black scouts, leading the column, halted suddenly in his tracks.

"Look!" he said to Kitembo, who was just behind him.

The chief stepped to the warrior's side; and there, before him in the trail, sticking upright in the earth, was an arrow.

"It is a warning," said the warrior.

Gingerly, Kitembo plucked the arrow from the earth and examined it. He would have been glad to have kept the knowledge of his discovery to himself, although not a little shaken by what he had seen; but the warrior at his side had seen, too. "It is the same," he said. "It is another of the arrows that were left behind in the base camp."

When Zveri came abreast of them, Kitembo handed him the arrow. "It is the

same," he said to the Russian, "and it is a warning for us to turn back."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Zveri contemptuously. "It is only an arrow sticking in the dirt and cannot stop a column of armed men. I did not think that you were a coward, too, Kitembo."

The black scowled. "Nor do men with safety call me a coward," he snapped; "but neither am I a fool, and better than you do I know the danger signals of the forest. We shall go on because we are brave men, but many will never come back. Also, your plans will fail."

At this Zveri flew into one of his frequent rages; and though the men continued the march, they were in a sullen mood, and many were the ugly

glances that were cast at Zveri and his lieutenants.

Shortly after noon the expedition halted for the noonday rest. They had been passing through a dense woods, gloomy and depressing; and there was neither song nor laughter, nor a great deal of conversation, as the men squatted together in little knots while they devoured the cold food that constituted their midday meal.

Suddenly, from somewhere far above, a voice floated down to them. Weird and uncanny, it spoke to them in a Bantu dialect that most of them could understand. "Turn back, children of Mulungu," it cried. "Turn back before you die. Desert the white men before it

is too late."

That was all. The men crouched fearfully, looking up into the trees. It was Zveri who broke the silence. "What the hell was that?" he demanded. "What did it say?"

"It warned us to turn back," said Kitembo.

"There will be no turning back," snapped Zveri.

"I do not know about that," replied Kitembo.

"I thought you wanted to be a king," cried Zveri. "You'd make a hell of a king."

For the moment Kitembo had forgotten the dazzling prize that Zveri

had held before his eyes for months—to the king of Kenya. That was worth risking much for.

"We will go on," he said.

"You may have to use force," said Zveri, "but stop at nothing. We must go on, no matter what happens," and then he turned to his other lieutenants. "Romero, you and Mori go to the rear of the column and shoot every man who refuses to advance."

The men had not as yet refused to go on, and when the order to march was given, they sullenly took their places in the column. For an hour they marched thus; and then, far ahead, came the weird cry that many of them had heard before at Opar, and a few minutes later a voice

out of the distance called to them. "Desert the white men," it said.

The blacks whispered among themselves, and it was evident that trouble was brewing; but Kitembo managed to persuade them to continue the march, a thing that Zveri never could have accomplished.

"I wish we could get that trouble-maker," said Zveri to Zora Drinov, as the two walked together near the head of the column. "If he would only show himself once, so that we could get a shot at him; that's all I want."

"It is someone familiar with the workings of the native mind," said the girl. "Probably a medicine man of some tribe through whose territory we are

marching."

"I hope that it is nothing more than that," replied Zveri. "I have no doubt that the man is a native, but I am afraid that he is acting on instructions from either the British or the Italians, who hope thus to disorganize and delay us until they can mobilize a force with which to attack us."

"It has certainly shaken the morale of the men," said Zora, "for I believe that they attribute all of the weird happenings, from the mysterious death of Jafar to the present time, to the same agency, to which their superstitious minds naturally attribute a supernatural origin."

"So much the worse for them, then,"

said Zveri, "for they are going on whether they wish to or not; and when they find that attempted desertion means death, they will wake up to the fact that it is not safe to trifle with Peter Zveri."

"They are many, Peter," the girl reminded him, "and we are few; in addition they are, thanks to you, well armed. It seems to me that you may have created a Frankenstein that will destroy us all in the end."

"You are as bad as the blacks," growled Zveri, "making a mountain out of a mole hill. Why if I—"

Behind the rear of the column and again apparently from the air above them sounded the warning voice. "Desert the whites." Silence fell again upon the

marching column, but the men moved on, exhorted by Kitembo and threatened by the revolvers of their white officers.

Presently the forest broke at the edge of a small plain, across which the trail led through buffalo grass that grew high above the heads of the marching men. They were well into this when, ahead of them, a rifle spoke, and then another and another, seemingly in a long line across their front.

Zveri ordered one of the blacks to rush Zora to the rear of the column into a position of safety, while he followed close behind her, ostensibly searching for Romero and shouting words of encouragement to the men.

As yet no one had been hit; but the

column had stopped, and the men were rapidly losing all semblance of formation.

"Quick, Romero," shouted Zveri, "take command up in front. I will cover the rear with Mori and prevent desertions."

The Mexican sprang past him and with the aid of Ivitch and some of the black chiefs he deployed one company in a long skirmish line, with which he advanced slowly; while Kitembo followed with half the rest of the expedition acting as a support, leaving Ivitch, Mori, and Zveri to organize a reserve from the remainder.

After the first widely scattered shots, the firing had ceased, to be followed by

a silence even more ominous to the overwrought nerves of the black soldiers. The utter silence of the enemy, the lack of any sign of movement in the grasses ahead of them, coupled with the mysterious warnings which still rang in their ears, convinced the blacks that they faced no mortal foe.

"Turn back!" came mournfully from the grasses ahead. "This is the last warning. Death will follow disobedience."

The line wavered, and to steady it Romero gave the command to fire. In response came a rattle of musketry out of the grasses ahead of them, and this time a dozen men went down, killed or wounded.

"Charge!" cried Romero, but instead the men wheeled about and broke for the rear and safety.

At sight of the advance line bearing down upon them, throwing away their rifles as they ran, the support turned and fled, carrying the reserve with it, and the whites were carried along in the mad rout.

In disgust, Romero fell back alone. He saw no enemy, for none pursued him, and this fact induced within him an uneasiness that the singing bullets had been unable to arouse. As he plodded on alone far in the rear of his companions, he began to share to some extent the feeling of unreasoning terror that had seized his black companions, or at least,

if not to share it, to sympathize with them. It is one thing to face a foe that you can see, and quite another to be beset by an invisible enemy, of whose very appearance, even, one is ignorant.

Shortly after Romero re-entered the forest, he saw someone walking along the trail ahead of him; and presently, when he had an unobstructed view, he saw that it was Zora Drinov.

He called to her then, and she turned and waited for him.

"I was afraid that you had been killed, Comrade," she said.

"I was born under a lucky star," he replied smiling. "Men were shot down on either side of me and behind me. Where is Zveri?"

Zora shrugged. "I do not know," she answered.

"Perhaps he is trying to reorganize the reserve," suggested Romero.

"Doubtless," said the girl shortly.

"I hope he is fleet of foot then," said the Mexican, lightly.

"Evidently he is," replied Zora.

"You should not have been left alone like this," said the man.

"I can take care of myself," replied Zora.

"Perhaps," he said, "but if you belonged to me—"

"I belong to no one, Comrade Romero," she replied icily.

"Forgive me, Señorita," he said. "I

know that. I merely chose an unfortunate way of trying to say that if the girl I loved were here she would not have been left alone in the forest, especially when I believe, as Zveri must believe, that we are being pursued by an enemy."

"You do not like Comrade Zveri, do you, Romero?"

"Even to you, Señorita," he replied, "I must admit, since you ask me, that I do not."

"I know that he has antagonized many."

"He has antagonized all—except you, Señorita."

"Why should I be excepted?" she asked. "How do you know that he has not antagonized me also?"

"Not deeply, I am sure," he said, "or else you would not have consented to become his wife."

"And how do you know that I have?" she asked.

"Comrade Zveri boasts of it often," replied Romero.

"Oh, he does?" nor did she make any other comment.

17. A GULF THAT WAS BRIDGED

The general rout of Zveri's forces ended only when their last camp had been reached and even then only for part of the command, for as night fell it was discovered that fully twenty-five percent of the men were missing, and among the absentees were Zora and Romero. As the stragglers came in, Zveri questioned each about the girl, but no one had seen her. He tried to organize an expedition to go back in search of her, but no one would accompany him. He threatened and pleaded, only to discover that he had lost all control of his men. Perhaps he would have gone back alone, as he

insisted that he intended doing; but he was relieved of this necessity when, well after dark, the two walked into camp together.

At sight of them Zveri was both relieved and angry. "Why didn't you remain with me?" he snapped at Zora.

"Because I cannot run so fast as you," she replied, and Zveri said no more.

From the darkness of the trees above the camp came the now familiar warning. "Desert the whites!" A long silence followed this, broken only by the nervous whisperings of the blacks, and then the voice spoke again. "The trails to your own countries are free from danger, but death walks always with the white men. Throw away your uniforms and

leave the white men to the jungle and to me."

A black warrior leaped to his feet and stripped the French uniform from his body, throwing it upon a cooking fire that burned near him. Instantly others followed his example.

"Stop that!" cried Zveri.

"Silence, white man!" growled Kitembo.

"Kill the whites!" shouted a naked Basembo warrior.

Instantly there was a rush toward the whites, who were gathered near Zveri, and then from above them came a warning cry. "The whites are mine!" it cried. "Leave them to me."

For an instant the advancing warriors halted; and then he, who had constituted himself their leader, maddened perhaps by his hatred and his blood lust, advanced again grasping his rifle menacingly.

From above a bow string twanged. The black, dropping his rifle, screamed as he tore at an arrow protruding from his chest; and, as he fell forward upon his face, the other blacks fell back, and the whites were left alone, while the Negroes huddled by themselves in a far corner of the camp. Many of them would have deserted that night, but they feared the darkness of the jungle and the menace of the thing hovering above them.

Zveri strode angrily to and fro, cursing his luck, cursing the blacks, cursing every one. "If I had had any help, if I had had any cooperation," he grumbled, "this would not have happened, but I cannot do everything alone."

"You have done this pretty much alone," said Romero.

"What do you mean?" demanded Zveri.

"I mean that you have made such an overbearing ass of yourself that you have antagonized everyone in the expedition, but even so they might have carried on if they had had any confidence in your courage no man likes to follow a coward."

"You call me that, you yellow greaser," shouted Zveri, reaching for his revolver.

"Cut that," snapped Romero. "I have you covered. And let me tell you now that if it weren't for Señorita Drinov I would kill you on the spot and rid the world of at least one crazy mad dog that is threatening the entire world with the hydrophobia of hate and suspicion. Señorita Drinov saved my life once. I have not forgotten that; and because, perhaps, she loves you, you are safe, unless I am forced to kill you in self-defense."

"This is utter insanity," cried Zora. "There are five of us here alone with a band of unruly blacks who fear and hate

us. Tomorrow, doubtless, we shall be deserted by them. If we hope ever to get out of Africa alive, we must stick together.

Forget your quarrels, both of you, and let us work together in harmony hereafter for our mutual salvation."

"For your sake, Señorita, yes," said Romero.

"Comrade Drinov is right," said Ivitch.

Zveri dropped his hand from his gun and turned sulkily away; and for the rest of the night peace, if not happiness, held sway in the disorganized camp of the conspirators.

When morning came the whites saw that the blacks had all discarded their

French uniforms, and from the concealing foliage of a nearby tree other eyes had noted this same fact—gray eyes that were touched by the shadow of a grim smile. There were no black boys now to serve the whites, as even their personal servants had deserted them to foregather with the men of their own blood, and so the five prepared their own breakfast, after Zveri's attempt to command the services of some of their boys had met with surly refusal.

While they were eating, Kitembo approached them, accompanied by the headmen of the different tribes that were represented in the personnel of the expedition. "We are leaving with our people for our own countries," said the

Basembo chief. "We leave food for your journey to your own camp. Many of our warriors wish to kill you, and that we cannot prevent if you attempt to accompany us, for they fear the vengeance of the ghosts that have followed you for many moons. Remain here until tomorrow. After that you are free to go where you will."

"But," expostulated Zveri, "you can't leave us like this without porters or askaris."

"No longer can you tell us what we can do, white man," said Kitembo, "for you are few and we are many, and your power over us is broken. In everything you have failed. We do not follow such a leader."

"You can't do it," growled Zveri. "You will all be punished for this, Kitembo."

"Who will punish us?" demanded the black. "The English? The French? The Italians? You do not dare go to them. They would punish you, not us. Perhaps you will go to Ras Tafari. He would have your heart cut out and your body thrown to the dogs, if he knew what you were planning."

"But you can't leave this white woman alone here in the jungle without servants, or porters, or adequate protection," insisted Zveri, realizing that his first argument had made no impression upon the black chief, who now held their fate in his hands.

"I do not intend to leave the white woman," said Kitembo. "She is going with me," and then it was that, for the first time, the whites realized that the headmen had surrounded them and that they were covered by many rifles.

As he had talked, Kitembo had come closer to Zveri, at whose side stood Zora Drinov, and now the black chief reached out quickly and grasped her by the wrist. "Come!" he said, and as he uttered the word something hummed above their heads, and Kitembo, chief of the Basembos, clutched at an arrow in his chest.

"Do not look up," cried a voice from above. "Keep your eyes upon the ground, for whosoever looks up dies. Listen

well to what I have to say, black men. Go your way to your own countries, leaving behind you all of the white people. Do not harm them. They belong to me. I have spoken."

Wide-eyed and trembling, the black headmen fell back from the whites, leaving Kitembo writhing upon the ground. They hastened to cross the camp to their fellows, all of whom were now thoroughly terrified; and before the chief of the Basembos ceased his death struggle, the black tribesmen had seized the loads which they had previously divided amongst them and were pushing and elbowing for precedence along the game trail that led out of camp toward the west.

Watching them depart, the whites sat in stupefied silence, which was not broken until after the last black had gone and they were alone.

"What do you suppose that thing meant by saying we belong to him?" asked Ivitch in a slightly thickened voice.

"How could I know?" growled Zveri.

"Perhaps it is a man-eating ghost," suggested Romero with a smile.

"It has done about all the harm it can do now," said Zveri. "It ought to leave us alone for awhile."

"It is not such a malign spirit," said Zora. "It can't be, for it certainly saved me from Kitembo."

"Saved you for itself," said Ivitch.

"Nonsense!" said Romero. "The purpose of that mysterious voice from the air is just as obvious as is the fact that it is the voice of a man. It is the voice of someone who wanted to defeat the purposes of this expedition, and I imagine Zveri guessed close to the truth yesterday when he attributed it to English or Italian sources that were endeavoring to delay us until they could mobilize a sufficient force against us."

"Which proves," declared Zveri, "what I have suspected for a long time; that there is more than one traitor among us," and he looked meaningly at Romero.

"What it means," said Romero, "is that crazy, harebrained theories always

fail when they are put to the test. You thought that all the blacks in Africa would rush to your standard and drive all the foreigners into the ocean. In theory, perhaps, you were right, but in practice one man, with a knowledge of native psychology which you did not have, burst your entire dream like a bubble, and for every other hare-brained theory in the world there is always a stumbling block of fact."

"You talk like a traitor to the cause," said Ivitch threateningly.

"And what are you going to do about it?" demanded the Mexican. "I am fed up with all of you and your whole rotten, selfish plan. There isn't an honest hair in your head nor in Zveri's. I can accord

Tony and Señorita Drinov the benefit of a doubt, for I cannot conceive either of them as knaves. As I was deluded, so may they have been deluded, as you and your kind have striven for years to delude countless millions of others."

"You are not the first traitor to the cause," cried Zveri, "nor will you be the first traitor to pay the penalty of his treason."

"That is not a good way to talk now," said Mori. "We are not already too many. If we fight and kill one another, perhaps none of us will come out of Africa alive. But if you kill Miguel, you will have to kill me, too, and perhaps you will not be successful. Perhaps it is you who will be killed."

"Tony is right," said the girl. "Let us call a truce until we reach civilization." And so it was that under something of the nature of an armed truce, the five set forth the following morning on the back trail toward their base camp; while upon another trail, a full day ahead of them, Tarzan and his Waziri warriors took a short cut for Opar.

"La may not be there," Tarzan explained to Muviro, "but I intend to punish Oah and Dooth for their treachery and thus make it possible for the high priestess to return in safety, if she still lives."

"But how about the white enemies in the jungle back of us, Bwana?" asked Muviro.

"They shall not escape us," said Tarzan. "They are weak and inexperienced to the jungle. They move slowly. We may always overtake them when we will. It is La who concerns me most, for she is a friend, while they are only enemies."

Many miles away, the object of his friendly solicitude approached a clearing in the jungle, a man-made clearing that was evidently intended for a camp site for a large body of men, though now only a few rude shelters were occupied by a handful of blacks.

At the woman's side walked Wayne Colt, his strength now fully regained, and at their heels paced Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion.

"We have found it at last," said the man; "thanks to you."

"Yes, but it is deserted," replied La. "They have all left."

"No," said Colt, "I see some blacks over by those shelters at the right."

"It is well," said La, "and now I must leave you." There was a note of regret in her voice.

"I hate to say good-bye," said the man, "but I know where your heart is and that all your kindness to me has only delayed your return to Opar. It is futile for me to attempt to express my gratitude, but I think that you know what is in my heart."

"Yes," said the woman, "and it is enough for me to know that I have made

a friend, I who have so few loyal friends."

"I wish that you would let me go with you to Opar," he said. "You are going back to face enemies, and you may need whatever little help I should be able to give you."

She shook her head. "No, that cannot be," she replied. "All the suspicion and hatred of me that was engendered in the hearts of some of my people was caused by my friendship for a man of another world. Were you to return with me and assist me in regaining my throne, it would but arouse their suspicions still further. If Jad-bal-ja and I cannot succeed alone, three of us could accomplish no more."

"Won't you at least be my guest for the rest of the day?" he asked. "I can't offer you much hospitality," he added with a rueful smile.

"No, my friend," she said. "I cannot take the chance of losing Jad-bal-ja; nor could you take the chance of losing your blacks, and I fear that they would not remain together in the same camp. Good-bye, Wayne Colt. But do not say that I go alone, at whose side walks Jad-bal-ja."

From the base camp La knew the trail back to Opar; and as Colt watched her depart, he felt a lump rise in his throat, for the beautiful girl and the great lion seemed personifications of loveliness, and strength, and loneliness.

With a sigh he turned into camp and

crossed to where the blacks lay sleeping through the midday heat. He awoke them, and at sight of him they were all very much excited, for they had been members of his own safari from the Coast and recognized him immediately. Having long given him up for lost, they were at first inclined to be a little bit frightened until they had convinced themselves that he was, indeed, flesh and blood.

Since the killing of Dorsky they had had no master, and they confessed to him that they had been seriously considering deserting the camp and returning to their own countries; for they had been unable to rid their minds of the weird and terrifying occurrences that the expedition

had witnessed in this strange country, in which they felt very much alone and helpless without the guidance and protection of a white master. Across the plain of Opar, toward the ruined city, walked a girl and a lion; and behind them, at the summit of the escarpment which she had just scaled, a man halted, looking out across the plain, and saw them in the distance.

Behind him a hundred warriors swarmed up the rocky cliff. As they gathered about the tall, bronzed, gray-eyed figure that had preceded them, the man pointed. "La!" he said.

"And Numa!" said Muviro. "He is stalking her. It is strange, Bwana, that he does not charge."

"He will not charge," said Tarzan. "Why, I do not know; but I know that he will not because it is Jad-bal-ja."

"The eyes of Tarzan are like the eyes of the eagle," said Muviro. "Muviro sees only a woman and a lion, but Tarzan sees La and Jad-bal-ja."

"I do not need my eyes for those two," said the ape-man. "I have a nose."

"I, too, have a nose," said Muviro, "but it is only a piece of flesh that sticks out from my face. It is good for nothing."

Tarzan smiled. "As a little child you did not have to depend upon your nose for your life and your food," he said, "as I have always done, then and since. Come, my children, La and Jad-bal-ja will be glad to see us."

It was the keen ears of Jad-bal-ja that caught the first faint warning noises from the rear. He halted and turned, his great head raised majestically, his ears forward, the skin of his nose wrinkling to stimulate his sense of smell. Then he voiced a low growl, and La stopped and turned back to discover the cause of his displeasure.

As her eyes noted the approaching column, her heart sank. Even Jad-bal-ja could not protect her against so many. She thought then to attempt to outdistance them to the city; but when she glanced again at the ruined walls at the far side of the valley she knew that that plan was quite hopeless, as she would not have the strength to maintain a fast pace for so

great a distance, while among those black warriors there must be many trained runners who could easily outdistance her. And so, resigned to her fate, she stood and waited; while Jad-bal-ja, with flattened head and twitching tail, advanced slowly to meet the oncoming men; and as he advanced, his savage growls rose to the tumult of tremendous roars that shook the earth as he sought to frighten away this menace to his loved mistress.

But the men came on; and then, of a sudden, La saw that one who came in advance of the others was lighter in color, and her heart leaped in her breast; and then she recognized him, and tears came to the eyes of the savage high

priestess of Opar.

"It is Tarzan! Jad-bal-ja, it is Tarzan!" she cried, the fight of her great love illuminating her beautiful features.

Perhaps at the same instant the lion recognized his master, for the roaring ceased, the eyes no longer glared, no longer was the great head flattened as he trotted forward to meet the ape-man. Like a great dog, he reared up before Tarzan. With a scream of terror little Nkima leaped from the ape-man's shoulder and scampered, screaming, back to Muviro, since bred in the fiber of Nkima was the knowledge that Numa was always Numa. With his great paws on Tarzan's shoulder Jad-bal-ja licked the bronzed cheek, and then Tarzan

pushed him aside and walked rapidly toward La; while Nkima, his terror gone, jumped frantically up and down on Muviro's shoulder calling the lion many jungle names for having frightened him.

"At last!" exclaimed Tarzan, as he stood face to face with La.

"At last," repeated the girl, "you have come back from your hunt."

"I came back immediately," replied the man, "but you had gone."

"You came back?" she asked.

"Yes, La," he replied. "I travelled far before I made a kill, but at last I found meat and brought it to you, and you were gone and the rain had obliterated your spoor and though I searched for days I could not find you."

"Had I thought that you intended to return," she said, "I should have remained there forever."

"You should have known that I would not have left you thus," replied Tarzan.

"La is sorry," she said.

"And you have not been back to Opar since?" he asked.

"Jad-bal-ja and I are on our way to Opar now," she said. "I was lost for a long time. Only recently did I find the trail to Opar, and then, too, there was the white man who was lost and sick with fever. I remained with him until the fever left him and his strength came back, because I thought that he might be a friend of Tarzan's."

"What was his name?" asked the ape-

man.

"Wayne Colt," she replied.

The ape-man smiled. "Did he appreciate what you did for him?" he asked.

"Yes, he wanted to come to Opar with me and help me regain my throne."

"You liked him then, La?" he asked.

"I liked him very much," she said, "but not in the same way that I like Tarzan."

He touched her shoulder in a half caress. "La, the immutable!" he murmured, and then, with a sudden toss of his head as though he would clear his mind of sad thoughts, he turned once more toward Opar. "Come," he said,

"the Queen is returning to her throne."

The unseen eyes of Opar watched the advancing column. They recognized La, and Tarzan, and the Waziri, and some there were who guessed the identity of Jad-bal-ja; and Oah was frightened, and Dooth trembled, and little Nao, who hated Oah, was almost happy, as happy as one may be who carries a broken heart in one's bosom.

Oah had ruled with a tyrant hand, and Dooth had been a weak fool, whom no one longer trusted; and there were whisperings now among the ruins, whisperings that would have frightened Oah and Dooth had they heard them, and the whisperings spread among the priestesses and the warrior priests, with

the result that when Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja led the Waziri into the courtyard of the outer temple there was no one there to resist them; but instead voices called down to them from the dark arches of surrounding corridors pleading for mercy and voicing earnest assurance of their future loyalty to La.

As they made their way into the city, they heard far in the interior of the temple a sudden burst of noise. High voices were punctuated by loud screams, and then came silence; and when they came to the throne room the cause of it was apparent to them, for lying in a welter of blood were the bodies of Oah and Dooth, with those of a half dozen priests and priestesses who

had remained loyal to them; and, but for these, the great throne room was empty.

Once again did La, the high priestess of the Flaming God, resume her throne as Queen of Opar.

That night Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, ate again from the golden platters of Opar, while young girls, soon to become priestesses of the Flaming God, served meats and fruits, and wines so old that no living man knew their vintage, nor in what forgotten vineyard grew the grapes that went into their making.

But in such things Tarzan found little interest, and he was glad when the new day found him at the head of his Waziri crossing the plain of Opar toward the barrier cliffs. Upon his bronzed shoulder

sat Nkima, and at the ape-man's side paced the golden lion, while in column behind him marched his hundred Waziri warriors.

It was a tired and disheartened company of whites that approached their base camp after a long, monotonous and uneventful journey. Zveri and Ivitch were in the lead, followed by Zora Drinov, while a considerable distance to the rear Romero and Mori walked side by side, and such had been the order in which they had marched all these long days.

Wayne Colt was sitting in the shade of one of the shelters, and the blacks were lolling in front of another, a short distance away, as Zveri and Ivitch came

into sight.

Colt rose and came forward, and it was then that Zveri spied him. "You damned traitor!" he cried. "I'll get you if it's the last thing I do on earth," and as he spoke he drew his revolver and fired point blank at the unarmed American.

His first shot grazed Colt's side without breaking the skin, but Zveri fired no second shot, for almost simultaneously with the report of his own shot another rang out behind him, and Peter Zveri, dropping his pistol and clutching at his back, staggered drunkenly upon his feet.

Ivitch wheeled about. "My God, Zora, what have you done?" he cried.

"What I have been waiting to do for

twelve years," replied the girl. "What I have been waiting to do ever since I was little more than a child."

Wayne Colt had run forward and seized Zveri's gun from the ground where it had fallen, and Romero and Mori now came up at a run.

Zveri had sunk to the ground and was glaring savagely about him. "Who shot me?" he screamed. "I know. It was that damned greaser."

"It was I," said Zora Drinov.

"You!" gasped Zveri.

Suddenly she turned to Wayne Colt as though only he mattered. "You might as well know the truth," she said. "I am not a Red and never have been. This man killed my father, and my mother, and an

older brother and sister. My father was —well, never mind who he was. He is avenged now." She turned fiercely upon Zveri. "I could have killed you a dozen times in the last few years," she said, "but I waited because I wanted more than your life. I wanted to help kill the hideous schemes with which you and your kind are seeking to wreck the happiness of the world."

Peter Zveri sat on the ground, staring at her, his wide eyes slowly glazing. Suddenly he coughed and a torrent of blood gushed from his mouth. Then he sank back dead.

Romero had moved close to Ivitch. Suddenly he poked the muzzle of a revolver into the Russian's ribs. "Drop

your gun," he said. "I'm taking no chances on you either."

Ivitch, paling, did as he was bid. He saw his little world tottering, and he was afraid.

Across the clearing a figure stood at the edge of the jungle. It had not been there an instant before. It had appeared silently as though out of thin air. Zora Drinov was the first to perceive it. She voiced a cry of surprised recognition; and as the others turned to follow the direction of her eyes, they saw a bronzed white man, naked but for a loin cloth of leopard skin, coming toward them. He moved with the easy, majestic grace of a lion and there was much about him that suggested the king of beasts.

"Who is that?" asked Colt.

"I do not know who he is," replied Zora, "other than that he is the man who saved my life when I was lost in the jungle."

The man halted before them.

"Who are you?" demanded Wayne Colt.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the other. "I have seen and heard all that has occurred here. The plan that was fostered by this man," he nodded at the body of Zveri, "has failed and he is dead. This girl has avowed herself. She is not one of you. My people are camped a short distance away. I shall take her to them and see that she reaches civilization in safety. For the rest of you

I have no sympathy. You may get out of the jungle as best you may. I have spoken."

"They are not all what you think them, my friend," said Zora.

"What do you mean?" demanded Tarzan.

"Romero and Mori have learned their lesson. They avowed themselves openly during a quarrel when our blacks deserted us."

"I heard them," said Tarzan.

She looked at him in surprise. "You heard them?" she asked.

"I have heard much that has gone on in many of your camps," replied the ape-man, "but I do not know that I may

believe all that I hear."

"I think you may believe what you heard them say," Zora assured him. "I am confident that they are sincere."

"Very well," said Tarzan. "If they wish they may come with me also, but these other two will have to shift for themselves."

"Not the American," said Zora.

"No? And why not?" demanded the ape-man.

"Because he is a special agent in the employ of the United States Government," replied the girl.

The entire party, including Colt, looked at her in astonishment. "How did you learn that?" demanded Colt.

"The message that you sent when you first came to camp and we were here alone was intercepted by one of Zveri's agents. Now do you understand how I know?"

"Yes," said Colt. "It is quite plain."

"That is why Zveri called you a traitor and tried to kill you."

"And how about this other?" demanded Tarzan, indicating Ivitch. "Is he, also, a sheep in wolf's clothing?"

"He is one of those paradoxes who are so numerous," replied Zora. "He is one of those Reds who is all yellow."

Tarzan turned to the blacks who had come forward and were standing, listening questioningly to a conversation they could not understand. "I know your

country," he said to them in their own dialect. "It lies near the end of the railroad that runs to the Coast."

"Yes, master," said one of the blacks.

"You will take this white man with you as far as the railroad. See that he has enough to eat and is not harmed, and then tell him to get out of the country. Start now." Then he turned back to the whites. "The rest of you will follow me to my camp." And with that he turned and swung away toward the trail by which he had entered the camp. Behind him followed the four who owed to his humanity more than they could ever know, nor had they known could have guessed that his great tolerance, courage, resourcefulness and the protective

instinct that had often safeguarded them sprang not from his human progenitors, but from his lifelong association with the natural beasts of the forest and the jungle, who have these instinctive qualities far more strongly developed than do the unnatural beasts of civilization, in whom the greed and lust of competition have dimmed the luster of these noble qualities where they have not eradicated them entirely.

Behind the others walked Zora Drinov and Wayne Colt, side by side.

"I thought you were dead," she said.

"And I thought that you were dead," he replied.

"And worse than that," she continued, "I thought that, whether dead or alive, I

might never tell you what was in my heart."

"And I thought that a hideous gulf separated us that I could never span to ask you the question that I wanted to ask you," he answered in a low tone.

She turned toward him, her eyes filled with tears, her lips trembling. "And I thought that, alive or dead, I could never say yes to that question, if you did ask me," she replied.

A curve in the trait hid them from the sight of the others as he took her in his arms and drew her lips to his.

THE END

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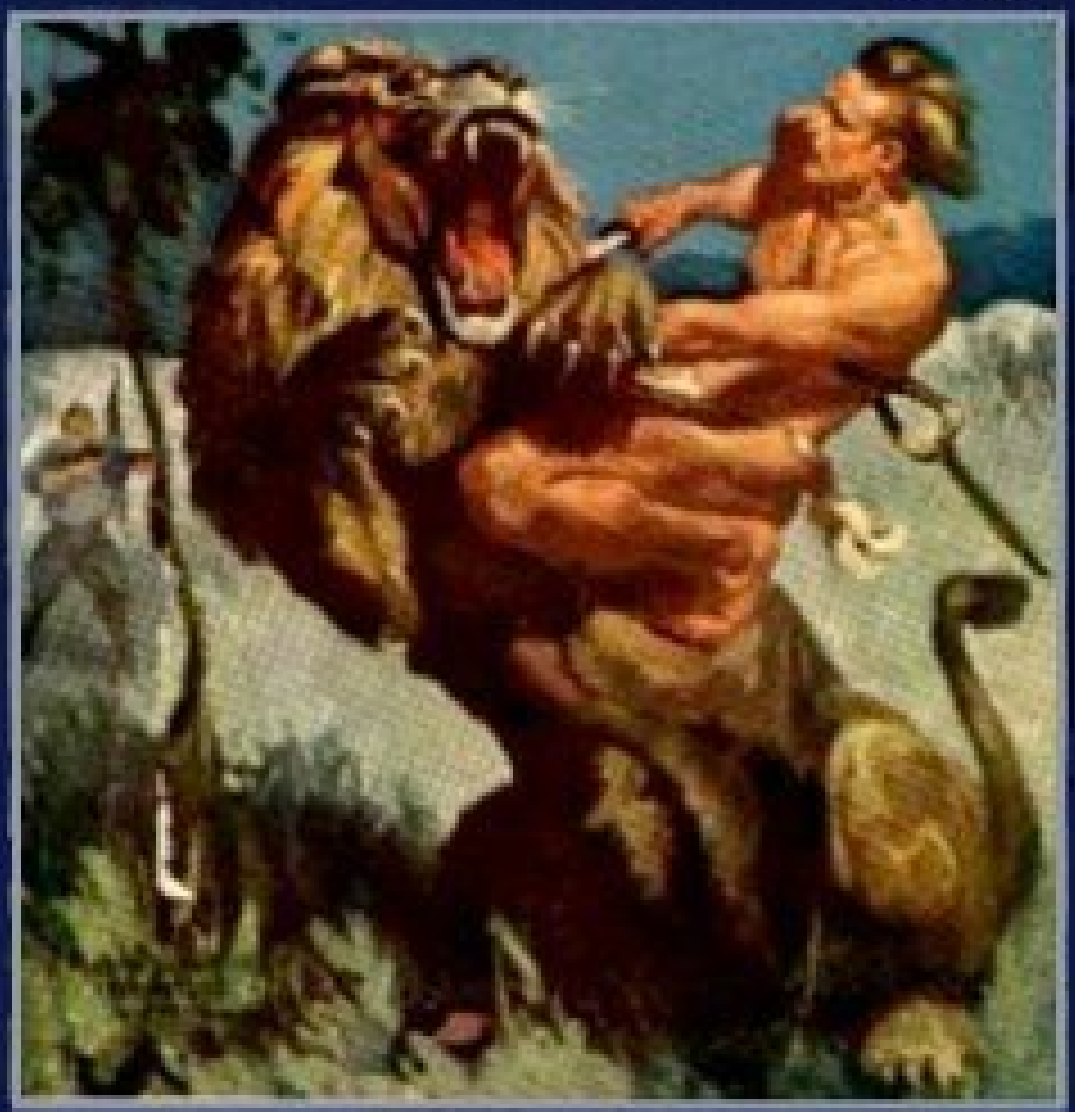

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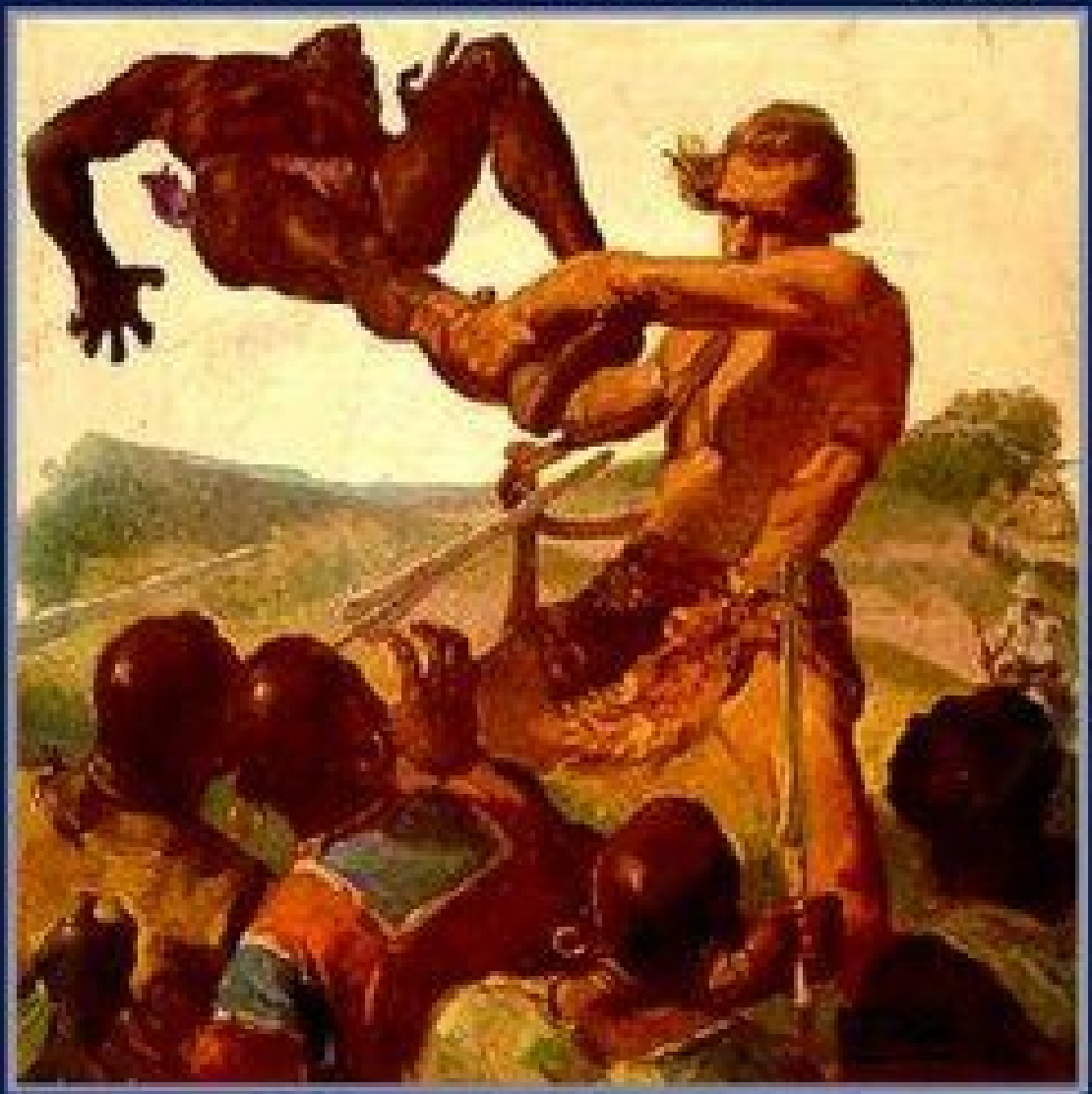

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BOOK 15 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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PROLOGUE

Time is the warp of the tapestry which is life. It is eternal, constant, unchanging. But the woof is gathered together from the four corners of the earth and the twenty-eight seas and out of the air and the minds of men by that master artist, Fate, as she weaves the design that is never finished.

A thread from here, a thread from there, another from out of the past that has waited years for the companion thread without which the picture must be incomplete.

But Fate is patient. She waits a hundred or a thousand years to bring together two strands of thread whose union is essential to the fabrication of her

tapestry, to the composition of the design that was without beginning and is without end.

A matter of some one thousand eight hundred sixty- five years ago (scholars do not agree as to the exact year) Paul of Tarsus suffered martyrdom at Rome.

That a tragedy so remote should seriously affect the lives and destinies of an English aviatrix and an American professor of geology, neither of whom was conscious of the existence of the other at the time this narrative begins—when it does begin, which is not yet, since Paul of Tarsus is merely by way of prologue—may seem remarkable to us, but not to Fate, who has been patiently waiting these nearly two thousand years

for these very events I am about to chronicle.

But there is a link between Paul and these two young people. It is Angustus the Ephesian. Angustus was a young man of moods and epilepsy, a nephew of the house of Onesiphorus. Numbered was he among the early converts to the new faith when Paul of Tarsus first visited the ancient Ionian city of Ephesus.

Inclined to fanaticism, from early childhood an epileptic, and worshipping the apostle as the representative of the Master of earth, it is not strange that news of the martyrdom of Paul should have so affected Angustus as to seriously imperil his mental balance.

Conjuring delusions of persecution, he

fled Ephesus, taking ship for Alexandria; and here we might leave him, wrapped in his robe, huddled, sick and frightened, on the deck of the little vessel, were it not for the fact that at the Island of Rhodus, where the ship touched, Angustus, going ashore, acquired in some manner (whether by conversion or purchase we know not) a fair haired slave girl from some far northern barbarian tribe.

And here we bid Angustus and the days of the Caesars adieu, and not without some regrets upon my part for I can well imagine adventure, if not romance, in the flight of Angustus and the fair haired slave girl down into Africa from the storied port of Alexandria, through

Memphis and Thebae into the great unknown.

1. GATHERING THE THREADS

As far as I know the first Earl of Whimsey has nothing to do with this story, and so we are not particularly interested in the fact that it was not so much the fine grade of whiskey that he manufactured that won him his earldom as the generous contribution he made to the Liberal party at the time that it was in power a number of years ago.

Being merely a simple historian and no prophet, I cannot say whether we shall see the Earl of Whimsey again or not. But if we do not find the Earl particularly interesting, I can assure you that the same may not be said of his fair

daughter, Lady Barbara Collis.

The African sun, still an hour high, was hidden from the face of the earth by solid cloud banks that enveloped the loftier peaks of the mysterious, impenetrable fastnesses of the forbidding Ghenzi Mountain range that frowned perpetually upon a thousand valleys little known to man.

From far above this seeming solitude, out of the heart of the densely banked clouds, there came to whatever ears there might be to hear a strange and terrifying droning, suggesting the presence of a preposterous Gargantuan bumblebee circling far above the jagged peaks of Ghenzi. At times it grew in volume until it attained terrifying

proportions; and then gradually it diminished until it was only a suggestion of a sound, only to grow once again in volume and to again retreat.

For a long time, invisible and mysterious, it had been describing its great circles deep in the concealing vapors that hid it from the earth and hid the earth from it.

Lady Barbara Collis was worried. Her petrol was running low. At the crucial moment her compass had failed her, and she had been flying blind through the clouds looking for an opening for what now seemed an eternity of hours to her.

She had known that she must cross a lofty range of mountains, and she had

kept at a considerable altitude above the clouds for this purpose; but presently they had risen to such heights that she could not surmount them; and, foolishly, rather than turn back and give up her projected non-stop flight from Cairo to the Cape, she had risked all in one effort to penetrate them.

For an hour Lady Barbara had been indulging in considerable high powered thinking, intermingled with the regret that she had not started thinking a little more heavily before she had taken off, as she had, against the explicit command of her sire. To say that she was terrified in the sense that fear bad impaired any of her faculties would not be true. However, she was a girl of keen intelligence, fully

competent to understand the grave danger of her situation; and when there loomed suddenly close to the tip of her left wing a granite escarpment that was lost immediately above and below her in the all enveloping vapor, it is no reflection upon her courage that she involuntarily caught her breath in a quick gasp and simultaneously turned the nose of her ship upwards until her altimeter registered an altitude that she knew must be far higher than the loftiest peak that reared its head above any part of Africa.

Rising in a wide spiral, she was soon miles away from that terrifying menace that had seemingly leaped out of the clouds to seize her. Yet even so, her plight was still as utterly hopeless as it

well could be. Her fuel was practically exhausted. To attempt to drop below the cloud banks, now that she knew positively that she was among lofty mountains, would be utter madness; and so she did the only thing that remained to her.

Alone in the cold wet clouds, far above an unknown country, Lady Barbara Collis breathed a little prayer as she balled out. With the utmost meticulosity she counted ten before she jerked the rip cord of her chute.

At that same instant Fate was reaching out to gather other threads— far flung threads—for this tiny fragment of her tapestry.

Kabariga, chief of the Bangalo people

of Bungalo, knelt before Tarzan of the Apes many weary marches to the south of the Ghenzi Mountain.

In Moscow, Leon Stabutch entered the office of Stalin, the dictator of Red Russia.

Ignorant of the very existence of Kabariga, the black chief, or of Leon Stabutch or Lady Barbara Collis, Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D., professor of geology at the Phil Sheridan Military Academy, boarded a steamship in the harbor of New York.

Mr. Smith was a quiet, modest, scholarly looking young man with horn rimmed spectacles, which he wore not because of any defect of eyesight but in the belief that they added a certain

dignity and semblance of age to his appearance. That his spectacles were fitted with plain glass was known only to himself and his optician.

Graduated from college at seventeen the young man had devoted four additional years to acquiring further degrees, during which time he optimistically expected the stamp of dignified maturity to make itself evident in his face and bearing; but, to his intense dismay, his appearance seemed quite as youthful at twenty-one as it had at seventeen.

Lafe Smith's great handicap to the immediate fulfillment of his ambition (to occupy the chair of geology in some university of standing) lay in his

possession of the unusual combination of brilliant intellect and retentive memory with robust health and a splendid physique. Do what he might he could not look sufficiently mature and scholarly to impress any college board. He tried whiskers, but the result was humiliating; and then he conceived the idea of horn rimmed spectacles and pared his ambition down, temporarily, from a university to a prep school.

For a school year, now, he had been an instructor in an inconspicuous western military academy, and now he was about to achieve another of his cherished ambitions—he was going to Africa to study the great rift valleys of the Dark Continent, concerning the

formation of which there are so many theories propounded and acclaimed by acknowledged authorities on the subject as to leave the layman with the impression that a fundamental requisite to success in the science of geology is identical to that required by weather forecasters.

But be that as it may, Lafayette Smith was on his way to Africa with the financial backing of a wealthy father and the wide experience that might be gained from a number of week-end field excursions into the back pastures of accommodating farmers, plus considerable ability as a tennis player and a swimmer.

We may leave him now, with his note

books and seasickness, in the hands of Fate, who is leading him inexorably toward sinister situations from which no amount of geological knowledge nor swimming nor tennis ability may extricate him.

When it is two hours before noon in New York it is an hour before sunset in Moscow and so it was that as Lafe Smith boarded the liner in the morning, Leon Stabutch, at the same moment, was closeted with Stalin late in the afternoon.

"That is all," said Stalin; "you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Stabutch. "Peter Zveri shall be avenged, and the obstacle that thwarted our plans in Africa shall be removed."

"The latter is most essential," emphasized Stalin, "but do not belittle the abilities of your obstacle. He may be, as you have said, naught but an ape-man; but he utterly routed a well organized Red expedition that might have accomplished much in Abyssinia and Egypt but for his interference. And," he added, "I may tell you, comrade, that we contemplate another attempt; but it will not be made until we have a report from you that—the obstacle has been removed."

Stabutch swelled his great chest. "Have I ever failed?" he asked.

Stalin rose and laid a hand upon the other's shoulder. "Red Russia does not look to the OGPU for failures," he said.

Only his lips smiled as he spoke.

That same night Leon Stabutch left Moscow. He thought that he left secretly and alone, but Fate was at his side in the compartment of the railway carriage.

As Lady Barbara Collis bailed out in the clouds above the Ghenzi range, and Lafayette Smith trod the gangplank leading aboard the liner, and Stabutch stood before Stalin, Tarzan, with knitted brows, looked down upon the black kneeling at his feet.

"Rise!" he commanded, and then; "Who are you and why have you sought Tarzan of the Apes?"

"I am Kabariga, O Great Bwana," replied the black. "I am chief of the Bangalo people of Bungalo. I come to

the Great Bwana because my people suffer much sorrow and great fear and our neighbors, who are related to the Gallas, have told us that you are the friend of those who suffer wrongs at the hands of bad men."

"And what wrongs have your people suffered?" demanded Tarzan, "and at whose hands?"

"For long we lived at peace with all men," explained Kabariga; "we did not make war upon our neighbors. We wished only to plant and harvest in security. But one day there came into our country from Abyssinia a band of *shiftas* who had been driven from their own country. They raided some of our villages, stealing our grain, our goats

and our people, and these they sold into slavery in far countries.

"They do not take everything, they destroy nothing; but they do not go away out of our country. They remain in a village they have built in inaccessible mountains, and when they need more provisions or slaves they come again to other villages of my people.

"And so they permit us to live and plant and harvest that they may continue to take toll of us."

"But why do you come to me?" demanded the ape-man. "I do not interfere among tribes beyond the boundaries of my own country, unless they commit some depredation against my own people."

"I come to you, Great Bwana," replied the black chief, "because you are a white man and these*shiftas* are led by a white man. It is known among all men that you are the enemy of bad white men."

"That," said Tarzan, "is different. I will return with you to your country."

And thus Fate, enlisting the services of the black chief, Kabariga, led Tarzan of the Apes out of his own country, toward the north. Nor did many of his own people know whither he had gone nor why—not even little Nkima, the close friend and confidant of the ape-man.

2. THE LAND OF MIDIAN

Abraham, the son of Abraham, stood at the foot of the towering cliff that is the wall of the mighty crater of a long extinct volcano. Behind and above him were the dwellings of his people, carved from the soft volcanic ash that rose from the bottom of the crater part way up the encircling cliffs; and clustered about him were the men and women and children of his tribe.

One and all, they stood with faces raised toward the heavens, upon each countenance reflected the particular emotion that the occasion evoked—wonder, questioning, fear, and always rapt, tense listening, for from the low clouds hanging but a few hundred feet

above the rim of the great crater, the floor of which stretched away for fully five miles to its opposite side, came a strange, ominous droning sound, the like of which not one of them had ever heard before.

The sound grew in volume until it seemed to hover just above them, filling all the heavens with its terrifying threat; and then it diminished gradually until it was only a suggestion of a sound that might have been no more than a persistent memory rumbling in their heads; and when they thought that it had gone it grew again in volume until once more it thundered down upon them where they stood in terror or in ecstasy, as each interpreted the significance of

the phenomenon.

And upon the opposite side of the crater a similar group, actuated by identical fears and questionings, clustered about Elija, the son of Noah.

In the first group a woman turned to Abraham, the son of Abraham. "What is it, Father?" she asked. "I am afraid."

"Those who trust in the Lord," replied the man, "know no fear. You have revealed the wickedness of your heresy, woman."

The face of the questioner blenched and now, indeed, did she tremble. "Oh, Father, you know that I am no heretic!" she cried piteously.

"Silence, Martha!" commanded Abraham. "Perhaps this is the Lord

Himself, come again to earth as was prophesied in the days of Paul, to judge us all." His voice was high and shrill, and he trembled as he spoke.

A half grown child, upon the outskirts of the assemblage, fell to the ground, where he writhed, foaming at the mouth. A woman screamed and fainted.

"Oh, Lord, if it is indeed Thou, Thy chosen people await to receive Thy blessing and Thy commands," prayed Abraham; "but," he added, "if it is not Thou, we beseech that Thou savest us whole from harm."

"Perhaps it is Gabriel!" suggested another of the long bearded men.

"And the sound of his trump," wailed a woman—"the trump of doom!"

"Silence!" shrilled Abraham, and the woman shrank back in fear.

Unnoticed, the youth floundered and gasped for breath as, with eyes set as in death, he struggled in the throes of agony; and then another lurched and fell and he, too, writhed and foamed.

And now they were dropping on all sides—some in convulsions and others in deathlike faints—until a dozen or more sprawled upon the ground, where their pitiable condition elicited no attention from their fellows unless a stricken one chanced to fall against a neighbor or upon his feet, in which case the latter merely stepped aside without vouchsafing so much as a glance at the poor unfortunate.

With few exceptions those who suffered the violent strokes were men and boys, while it was the women who merely fainted; but whether man, woman or child, whether writhing in convulsions or lying quietly in coma, no one paid the slightest attention to any of them. As to whether this seeming indifference was customary, or merely induced by the excitement and apprehension of the moment, as they stood with eyes, ears, and minds focussed on the clouds above them, only a closer acquaintance with these strange people may enlighten us.

Once more the terrifying sound, swollen to hideous proportions, swept toward them; it seemed to stop above

them for a moment and then—

Out of the clouds floated a strange apparition—a terrifying thing —a great, white thing above, below which there swung to and fro a tiny figure. At sight of it, dropping gently toward them, a dozen of the watchers collapsed, frothing, in convulsions.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, dropped to his knees, raising his hands in supplication toward the heavens. His people, those of them who were still upon their feet, followed his example. From his lips issued a torrent of strange sounds—a prayer perhaps, but if so not in the same language as that in which he had previously spoken to his people nor in any language known to man, and as he

prayed, his followers knelt in terrified silence.

Closer and closer floated the mysterious apparition until, at length, expectant eyes recognized in the figure floating beneath the small, white cloud the outlines of a human form.

A great cry arose as recognition spread—a cry that was a mingling of terror born wail and ecstatic hosanna. Abraham was among the last to recognize the form of the dangling figure for what it was, or, perhaps, among the last to admit the testimony of his eyes. When he did he toppled to the ground, his muscles twitching and jerking his whole body into horrid contortions, his eyes rolled upward and set as in death,

his breath expelled in painful gasps between lips flecked with foam.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, never an Adonis, was at this moment anything but a pretty sight; but no one seemed to notice him any more than they had the score or more of lesser creatures who had succumbed to the nervous excitation of the experiences of the past half hour.

Some five hundred people, men, women and children, of which thirty, perhaps, lay quietly or writhed in convulsions upon the ground, formed the group of watchers toward which Lady Barbara Collis gently floated. As she landed in, if the truth must be told (and we historians are proverbially truthful, except when we are chronicling the lives

of our national heroes, or living rulers within whose grasp we may be, or of enemy peoples with whom our country has been at war, and upon other occasions)—but, as I was recording, as Lady Barbara landed in an awkward sprawl within a hundred yards of the assemblage all those who had remained standing up to this time went down upon their knees.

Hastily scrambling to her feet, the girl disengaged the harness of her parachute and stood gazing in perplexity upon the scene about her. A quick glance had revealed the towering cliffs that formed the encircling walls of the gigantic crater, though at the time she did not suspect the true nature of the valley

spreading before her. It was the people who claimed her surprised attention.

They were white! In the heart of Africa she had landed in the midst of a settlement of whites. But this thought did not wholly reassure her. There was something strange and unreal about these prone and kneeling figures; but at least they did not appear ferocious or unfriendly—their attitudes, in fact, were quite the opposite, and she saw no evidence of weapons among them.

She approached them, and, as she did so, many of them began to wail and press their faces against the ground, while others raised their hands in supplication—some toward the heavens, and others toward her.

She was close enough now to see their features and her heart sank within her, for she had never conceived the existence of an entire village of people of such unprepossessing appearance, and Lady Barbara was one of those who are strongly impressed by externals.

The men were particularly repulsive. Their long hair and beards seemed as little acquainted with soap, water and combs as with shears and razors.

There were two features that impressed her most strongly and unfavorably —the huge noses and receding chins of practically the entire company. The noses were so large as to constitute a deformity, while in many of those before her, chins were almost

nonexistent.

And then she saw two things that had diametrically opposite effects upon her —the score of epileptics writhing upon the ground and a singularly beautiful, golden haired girl who had risen from the prostrate herd and was slowly approaching her, a questioning look in her large grey eyes.

Lady Barbara Collis looked the girl full in the eyes and smiled, and when Lady Barbara smiled stone crumbled before the radiant vision of her face — or so a poetic and enthralled admirer had once stated in her hearing. The fact that he lisped, however, had prejudiced her against his testimony.

The girl returned the smile with one

almost as gorgeous, but quickly she erased it from her features, at the same time glancing furtively about her as though fearful that some one had detected her in the commission of a crime; but when Lady Barbara extended both her hands toward her, she came forward and placed her own within the grasp of the English girl's.

"Where am I?" asked Lady Barbara. "What country is this? Who are these people?"

The girl shook her head. "Who are you?" she asked. "Are you an angel that the Lord God of Hosts has sent to His chosen people?"

It was now the turn of Lady Barbara to shake her head to evidence her

inability to understand the language of the other.

An old man with a long white beard arose and came toward them, having seen that the apparition from Heaven had not struck the girl dead for her temerity.

"Get thee gone, Jezebel!" cried the old man to the girl. "How durst thou address this Heavenly visitor?"

The girl stepped back, dropping her head; and though Lady Barbara had understood no word that the man spoke, his tone and gesture, together with the action of the girl, told her what had transpired between them.

She thought quickly. She had 'realized the impression that her miraculous appearance had made upon these

seemingly ignorant people, and she guessed that their subsequent attitude toward her would be governed largely by the impression of her first acts; and being English, she held to the English tradition of impressing upon lesser people the authority of her breed. It would never do, therefore, to let this unkempt patriarch order the girl from her if Lady Barbara chose to retain her; and, after glancing at the faces about her, she was quite sure that if she must choose a companion from among them the fair haired beauty would be her nominee.

With an imperious gesture, and a sinking heart, she stepped forward and took the girl by the arm, and, as the latter turned a surprised glance upon her, drew

her to her side.

"Remain with me," she said, although she knew her words were unintelligible to the girl.

"What did she say, Jezebel?" demanded the old man.

The girl was about to reply that she did not know, but something stopped her. Perhaps the very strangeness of the question gave her pause, for it must have been obvious to the old man that the stranger spoke in a tongue unknown to him and, therefore, unknown to any of them.

She thought quickly, now. Why should he ask such a question unless he might entertain a belief that she might have understood? She recalled the smile that

the stranger had brought to her lips without her volition, and she recalled, too, that the old man had noted it.

The girl called Jezebel knew the price of a smile in the land of Midian, where any expression of happiness is an acknowledgment of sin; and so, being a bright girl among a people who were almost uniformly stupid, she evolved a ready answer in the hope that it might save her from punishment.

She looked the ancient one straight in the eye. "She said, Jobab," she replied, "that she cometh from Heaven with a message for the chosen people and that she will deliver the message through me and through no other."

Now much of this statement had been

suggested to Jezebel by the remarks of the elders and the apostles as they had watched the strange apparition descending from the clouds and had sought to find some explanation for the phenomenon. In fact, Jobab himself had volunteered the very essence of this theory and was, therefore, the more ready to acknowledge belief in the girl's statement.

Lady Barbara stood with an arm about the slim shoulders of the golden haired Jezebel, her shocked gaze encompassing the scene before her— the degraded, unkempt people huddled stupidly before her, the inert forms of those who had fainted, the writhing contortions of the epileptics. With

aversion she appraised the countenance of Jobab, noting the watery eyes, the huge monstrosity of his nose, the long, filthy beard that but half concealed his weak chin. With difficulty she stemmed the involuntary shudder that was her natural nervous reaction to the sight before her.

Jobab stood staring at her, an expression of awe on his stupid, almost imbecile face. From the crowd behind him several other old men approached, almost fearfully, halting just behind him. Jobab looked back over his shoulder. "Where is Abraham, the son of Abraham?" he demanded.

"He still communeth with Jehovah," replied one of the ancients.

"Perhaps even now Jehovah revealeth to him the purpose of this visitation," suggested another hopefully.

"She hath brought a message," said Jobab, "and she will deliver it only through the girl called Jezebel. I wish Abraham, the son of Abraham, was through communing with Jehovah," he added; but Abraham, the son of Abraham, still writhed upon the ground, foaming at the mouth.

"Verily," said another old man, "if this be indeed a messenger from Jehovah let us not stand thus idly staring, lest we arouse the anger of Jehovah, that he bring a plague upon us, even of flies or of lice."

"Thou speakest true words, Timothy,"

agreed Jobab, and, turning to the crowd behind them; "Get thee hence quickly and fetch offerings that may be good in the sight of Jehovah, each in accordance with his ability."

Stupidly the assemblage turned away toward the caves and hovels that constituted the village, leaving the small knot of ancients facing Lady Barbara and the golden Jezebel and, upon the ground, the stricken ones, some of whom were evidencing symptoms of recovery from their seizures.

Once again a feeling of revulsion gripped the English girl as she noted the features and carriages of the villagers. Almost without exception they were disfigured by enormous noses and chins

so small and receding that in many instances the chin seemed to be lacking entirely. When they walked they ordinarily leaned forward, giving the impression that they were upon the verge of pitching headlong upon their faces.

Occasionally among them appeared an individual whose countenance suggested a much higher mentality than that possessed by the general run of the villagers, and without exception these had blond hair, while the hair of all the others was black.

So striking was this phenomenon that Lady Barbara could not but note it almost in her first brief survey of these strange creatures, yet she was never to discover an indisputable explanation, for

there was none to tell her of Angustus and the fair haired slave girl from some barbarian horde of the north, none who knew that Augustus had had a large nose, a weak chin and epilepsy, none to guess the splendid mind and the radiant health of that little slave girl, dead now for almost nineteen centuries, whose blood, even now, arose occasionally above the horrid decadence of all those long years of enforced inbreeding to produce such a creature as Jezebel in an effort, however futile, to stem the tide of degeneracy.

Lady Barbara wondered now why the people had gone to their dwellings — what did it portend? She looked at the old men who had remained behind; but their stupid, almost imbecile faces

revealed nothing. Then she turned to the girl. How she wished that they might understand one another. She was positive that the girl was actively friendly, but she could not be so sure of these others. Everything about them repelled her, and she found it impossible to have confidence in their intentions toward her.

But how different was the girl! She, too, doubtless, was an alien among them; and that fact gave the English girl hope, for she had seen nothing to indicate that the golden haired one was being threatened or mistreated; and at least she was alive and uninjured. Yet, she must be of another breed. Her simple, and scant, apparel, fabricated apparently

from vegetable fiber, was clean, as were those parts of her body exposed to view, while the garments of all the others, especially the old men, were filthy beyond words, as were their hair and beards and every portion of their bodies not concealed by the mean garments that scarce half covered their nakedness.

As the old men whispered among themselves, Lady Barbara turned slowly to look about her in all directions. She saw precipitous cliffs completely hemming a small circular valley, near the center of which was a lake. Nowhere could she see any indication of a break in the encircling walls that rose hundreds of feet above the floor of the valley; and yet she felt that there must be

an entrance from the outer world, else how had these people gained entrance?

Her survey suggested that the valley lay at the bottom of the crater of a great volcano, long extinct, and if that were true the path to the outer world must cross the summit of those lofty walls; yet these appeared, insofar as she could see, utterly unscalable. But how account for the presence of these people? The problem vexed her, but she knew that it must remain unsolved until she had determined the attitude of the villagers and discovered whether she were to be a guest or a prisoner.

Now the villagers were returning, and she saw that many of them carried articles in their hands. They came

slowly, timidly nearer her, exhorted by the ancients, until at her feet they deposited the burdens they had carried—bowls of cooked food, raw vegetables and fruits, fish, and pieces of the fiber cloth such as that from which their crude garments were fabricated, the homely offerings of a simple people.

As they approached her many of them displayed symptoms of great nervousness and several sank to the ground, victims of the convulsive paroxysms that marked the seizures to which so many of them appeared to be subject.

To Lady Barbara it appeared that these simple folk were either bringing gifts attesting their hospitality or were

offering their wares, in barter, to the stranger within their gates; nor did the truth once occur to her at the moment—that the villagers were, in fact, making votive offerings to one they believed the messenger of God, or even, perhaps, a goddess in her own right. When, after depositing their offerings at her feet, they turned and hastened away, the simple faces of some evidencing fear caused her to abandon the idea that the goods were offered for sale; and she determined that, if not gifts of hospitality, they might easily be considered as tribute to appease the wrath of a potential enemy.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, had regained consciousness. Slowly he

raised himself to a sitting position and looked about him. He was very weak. He always was after these seizures. It required a minute or two before he could collect his wits and recall the events immediately preceding the attack. He saw the last of those bringing offerings to Lady Barbara deposit them at her feet. He saw the stranger. And then he recalled the strange droning that had come out of the heavens and the apparition that he had seen floating down toward them.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, arose. It was Jobab, among the ancients, who saw him first. "Hallelujah!" he exclaimed. "Abraham, the son of Abraham, walketh no longer with

Jehovah. He hath returned to our midst. Let us pray!" Whereupon the entire assemblage, with the exception of Lady Barbara and the girl called Jezebel, dropped to its knees. Among them, Abraham, the son of Abraham, moved slowly, as though in a trance, toward the stranger, his mind still lethargic from the effects of his seizure. About him arose a strange, weird babel as the ancients prayed aloud without concord or harmony, interrupted by occasional cries of "Hallelujah" and "Amen."

Tall and thin, with a long grey beard still flecked with foam and saliva, his scant robe ragged and filthy, Abraham, the son of Abraham, presented a most repulsive appearance to the eyes of the

English girl as, at last, he stopped before her.

Now his mind was clearing rapidly, and as he halted he seemed the to note the presence of the girl, Jezebel, for the first time. "What doest thou here, wanton?" he demanded. "Why are thou not upon thy knees praying with the others?"

Lady Barbara was watching the two closely. She noted the stern and accusing attitude and tones of the man, and she saw the appealing glance that the girl cast toward her. Instantly she threw an arm about the latter's shoulders. "Remain here!" she said, for she feared that the man was ordering the girl to leave her.

If Jezebel did not understand the

words of the strange, heavenly visitor, she could not mistake the detaining gesture; and, anyway, she did not wish to join the others in prayer. Perhaps it was only that she might cling a few brief minutes longer to the position of importance to which the incident had elevated her out of a lifetime of degradation and contempt to which her strange inheritance of beauty had condemned her.

And so, nerved by the pressure of the arm about her, she faced Abraham, the son of Abraham, resolutely, although, withal, a trifle fearfully, since who knew better than she what a terrible man Abraham, the son of Abraham, might become when crossed by anyone.

"Answer me, thou—thou—" Abraham, the son of Abraham, could not find an epithet sufficiently excoriating to meet the emergency.

"Let not thy anger blind thee to the will of Jehovah," warned the girl.

"What meanest thou?" he demanded.

"Canst thou not see that His messenger hath chosen me to be her mouthpiece?"

"What sacrilege is this, woman?"

"It is no sacrilege," she replied sturdily. "It is the will of Jehovah, and if thou believest me not, ask Jobab, the apostle."

Abraham, the son of Abraham, turned to where the ancients prayed. "Jobab!"

he cried in a voice that arose above the din of prayer.

Instantly the devotions ceased with a loud "Amen!" from Jobab. The old men arose, their example being followed by those others of the villagers who were not held earth-bound by epilepsy; and Jobab, the apostle, approached the three who were now the goal of every eye.

"What transpired while I walked with Jehovah?" demanded Abraham, the son of Abraham.

"There came this messenger from heaven," replied Jobab, "and we did her honor, and the people brought offerings, each according to his ability, and laid them at her feet, and she did not seem displeased—nor either did she seem

pleased," he added. "And more than this we knew not what to do."

"But this daughter of Satan!" cried Abraham, the son of Abraham. "What of her?"

"Verily I say unto you that she speaks with the tongue of Jehovah," replied Jobab, "for He hath chosen her to be the mouthpiece of His messenger."

"Jehovah be praised," said Abraham, the son of Abraham; "the ways of the Almighty pass understanding." He turned now to Jezebel, but when he spoke there was a new note in his tones—a conciliatory note—and, perhaps, not a little of fear in his eyes. "Beseech the messenger to look upon us poor servants of Jehovah with mercy and forgiveness;

beg of her that she open her mouth to us poor sinners and divulge her wishes. We await her message, trembling and fearful in the knowledge of our unworthiness."

Jezebel turned to Lady Barbara.

"But wait!" cried Abraham, the son of Abraham, as a sudden questioning doubt assailed his weak mind. "How can you converse with her? You speak only the language of the land of Midian. Verily, if thou canst speak with her, why may not I, the Prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah?"

Jezebel had a brain worth fifty such brains as that possessed by the Prophet of Paul; and now she used it to advantage, though, if the truth were known, not without some misgivings as to the outcome of her rash proposal, for,

although she had a bright and resourceful mind, she was none the less the ignorant child of an ignorant and superstitious people.

"Thou hast a tongue, Prophet," she said. "Speak thou then to the messenger of Jehovah, and if she answers thee in the language of the land of Midian thou canst understand her as well as I."

"That," said Abraham, the son of Abraham, "is scarce less than an inspiration."

"A miracle!" exclaimed Jobab. "Jehovah must have put the words in her mouth."

"I shall address the messenger," said the Prophet. "O angel of light!" he cried, turning toward Lady Barbara, "look with

compassion upon an old man, upon Abraham, the son of Abraham, the Prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah, and deign to make known to him the wishes of Him who sent you to us."

Lady Barbara shook her head. "There is something that one does when one is embarrassed," she said. "I have read it repeatedly in the advertising sections of American periodicals, but I haven't that brand. However, any port in a storm," and she extracted a gold cigarette case from a pocket of her jacket and lighted one of the cigarettes.

"What did she say, Jezebel?" demanded the Prophet—"and, in the name of Paul, what miracle is this? 'Out of his nostrils goeth smoke' is said of the

behemoth of holy writ. What can be the meaning of this?"

"It is a warning," said Jezebel, "because thou didst doubt my words."

"Nay, nay," exclaimed Abraham, the son of Abraham, "I doubted thee not. Tell her that I did not doubt thee, and then tell me what she said."

"She said," replied Jezebel, "that Jehovah is not pleased with thee or thy people. He is angry because thou so mistreatest Jezebel. His anger is terrible because thou dost make her work beyond her strength, nor give her the best food, and that thou dost punish her when she would laugh and be happy."

"Tell her," said the Prophet, "that we knew not that thou wert overworked and

that we shall make amends. Tell her that we love thee and thou shalt have the best of food. Speak to her, O Jezebel, and ask if she has further commands for her poor servants."

Jezebel looked into the eyes of the English girl, and upon her countenance rested an expression of angelic guilelessness, while from her lips issued a stream of meaningless jargon which was as unintelligible to Jezebel as to Lady Barbara or the listening villagers of the land of Midian.

"My dear child," said Lady Barbara when Jezebel eventually achieved a period, "what you say is as Greek to me, but you are very beautiful and your voice is musical. I am sorry that you can

understand me no better than I understand you."

"What saith she?" demanded Abraham, the son of Abraham.

"She saith that she is tired and hungry and that she wisheth the offerings brought by the people to be taken to a cave—a clean cave—and that I accompany her and that she be left in peace, as she is tired and would rest; and she wisheth no one but Jezebel to be with her."

Abraham, the son of Abraham, turned to Jobab. "Send women to make clean the cave next to mine," he commanded, "and have others carry the offerings to the cave, as well as clean grasses for a bed."

"For two beds," Jezebel corrected him.

"Yea, even for two beds," agreed the Prophet, hastily.

And so Lady Barbara and Jezebel were installed in a well- renovated cave near the bottom of the cliff, with food enough to feed a numerous company. The English girl stood at the entrance to her strange, new abode looking out across the valley as she sought to evolve some plan whereby she might get word of her predicament and her whereabouts to the outside world. In another twenty-four hours she knew the apprehension of her friends and her family would be aroused and soon many an English plane would be roaring over the Cape to Cairo route

in search of her, and, as she pondered her unfortunate situation, the girl called Jezebel lay in luxurious idleness upon her bed of fresh grasses and ate from a pile of fruit near her head, the while a happy smile of contentment illumed her lovely countenance.

The shadows of night were already falling, and Lady Barbara turned back into the cave with but a single practical idea evolved from all her thinking —that she must find the means to communicate with these people, nor could she escape the conviction that only by learning their language might this be accomplished.

As darkness came and chill night air replaced the heat of the day, Jezebel kindled a fire at the mouth of the cave.

Near it the two girls sat upon a soft cushion of grass, the firelight playing upon their faces, and there the Lady Barbara commenced the long and tedious task of mastering a new language. The first step consisted in making Jezebel understand what she desired to accomplish, but she was agreeably astonished at the celerity with which the girl grasped the idea. Soon she was pointing to various objects, calling them by their English names and Jezebel was naming them in the language of the land of Midian.

Lady Barbara would repeat the word in the Midian language several times until she had mastered the pronunciation, and she noticed that, similarly, Jezebel

was repeating its English equivalent. Thus was Jezebel acquiring an English vocabulary while she taught the Midian to her guest.

An hour passed while they occupied their time with their task. The village lay quiet about them. Faintly, from the distant lake, came the subdued chorus of the frogs. Occasionally a goat bleated somewhere out in the darkness. Far away, upon the opposite side of the valley, shone tiny, flickering lights —the cooking fires of another village, thought Lady Barbara.

A man, bearing a lighted torch, appeared suddenly, coming from a nearby cave. In low, monotonous tones he voiced a chant Another man, another

torch, another voice joined him. And then came others until a procession wound down toward the level ground below the caves.

Gradually the voices rose. A child screamed. Lady Barbara saw it now —a small child being dragged along by an old man.

Now the procession encircled a large boulder and halted, but the chanting did not cease; nor did the screaming of the child. Tall among the others Lady Barbara recognized the figure of the man who had last interrogated her. Abraham, the son of Abraham, the Prophet, stood behind the boulder that rose waist high in front of him. He raised his open palm and the chanting ceased. The child had

ceased to scream, but its broken sobs came clearly to the ears of the two girls.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, commenced to speak, his eyes raised toward the heavens. His voice came monotonously across the little span of darkness. His grotesque features were lighted by the flickering torches that played as well upon the equally repulsive faces of his congregation.

Unaccountably, the entire scene assumed an aspect of menace in the eyes of the English girl. Apparently it was only the simple religious service of a simple people and yet, to Barbara Coils, there was something terrible about it, something that seemed fraught with horror.

She glanced at Jezebel. The girl was sitting cross legged, her elbows on her knees, her chin supported in the palms of her hands, staring straight ahead. There was no smile now upon her lips.

Suddenly the air was rent by a childish scream of fear and horror that brought the Lady Barbara's gaze back to the scene below. She saw the child, struggling and fighting, dragged to the top of the boulder; she saw Abraham, the son of Abraham, raise a hand above his head; she saw the torchlight play upon a knife; and then she turned away and hid her face in her hands.

3. THE "GUNNER"

Danny "Gunner" Patrick stretched luxuriously in his deck chair. He was at peace with the world—temporarily, at least. In his clothes were 20 G. securely hidden. Beneath his left arm pit, also securely hidden, snuggled a .45 in a specially designed holster. "Gunner" Patrick did not expect to have to use it for a long, long time perhaps; but it was just as well to be prepared. "Gunner" hailed from Chicago where people in his circle of society believe in preparedness.

He had never been a Big Shot, and if he had been content to remain more or less obscure he might have gone along about his business for some time until

there arrived the allotted moment when, like many of his late friends and acquaintances, he should be elected to stop his quota of machine gun bullets; but Danny Patrick was ambitious. For years he had been the right hand, and that means the pistol hand, of a Big Shot. He had seen his patron grow rich —"lousy rich," according to Danny's notion—and he had become envious.

So Danny double-crossed the Big Shot, went over to the other side, which, incidentally, boasted a bigger and better Big Shot, and was a party to the hijacking of several truck loads of booze belonging to his former employer.

Unfortunately, on the occasion of the hijacking of the last truck, one of his

former pals in the service of the double-crossed recognized him; and Danny, knowing that he had been recognized, sought, quite pardonably, to eliminate this damaging evidence; but his unwilling target eluded him and before he could rectify his ballistic errors the police came.

It is true that they obligingly formed an escort to convoy the truck safely to the warehouse of the bigger and better Big Shot, but the witness to Danny's perfidy escaped.

Now Danny "Gunner" Patrick knew the temper of his erstwhile patron— and who better? Many of the Big Shot's enemies, and several of his friends, had Danny taken for a ride. He knew the

power of the Big Shot, and he feared him. Danny did not want to go for a ride himself, but he knew that if he remained in dear old Chi he would go the way of all good gunmen much too soon to suit his plans.

And so, with the 20 G. that had been the price of his perfidy, he had slipped quietly out of town; and, being wise in his day and generation, he had also slipped quietly out of the country, another thread to be woven into Fate's tapestry.

He knew that the Big Shot was slipping (that was one reason he had deserted him); and he also knew that, sooner or later, the Big Shot would have a grand funeral with truck loads of

flowers and, at least, a ten thousand dollar casket. So Danny would daily in foreign climes until after the funeral.

Just where he would daily he did not know, for Danny was shy of geographic lore; but he knew he was going at least as far as England, which he also knew to be somewhere in London.

So now he lolled in the sun, at peace with the world that immediately surrounded him; or almost at peace, for there rankled in his youthful breast various snubs that had been aimed in his direction by the few fellow passengers he had accosted. Danny was at a loss to understand why he was *persona non grata*. He was good looking. His clothes had been designed by one of Chicago's

most exclusive tailors—they were quiet and in good taste. These things Danny knew, and he also knew that no one aboard ship had any inkling of his profession. Why then, after a few minutes conversation, did they invariably lose interest in him and thereafter look through him as though he did not exist? The "Gunner" was both puzzled and peeved.

It was the third day out, and Danny was already fed up on ocean travel. He almost wished that he were back in Chicago where he knew he could find congenial spirits with whom to foregather, but not quite. Better a temporary isolalion above ground than a permanent one below.

A young man whom he had not before noticed among the passengers came and sat down in the chair next to his. He looked over at Danny and smiled. "Good morning," he said. "Lovely weather we're having."

Danny's cold, blue eyes surveyed the stranger. "Are we?" he replied in a tone as cold as his gaze; then he resumed his previous occupation of staring out across the rail at the illimitable expanse of rolling sea.

Lafayette Smith smiled, opened a book, settled himself more comfortably in his chair and proceeded to forget all about his discourteous neighbor.

Later that day Danny saw the young man at the swimming pool and was

impressed by one of the few things that Danny could really understand—proficiency in a physical sport. The young man far outshone the other passengers both in swimming and diving, and his sun bronzed body evidenced long hours in a bathing suit.

The following morning when Danny came on deck he found that the young man had preceded him. "Good morning," said Danny pleasantly as he dropped into his chair. "Nice morning."

The young man looked up from his book. "Is it?" he asked and let his eyes fall again to the printed page.

Danny laughed. "Right back at me, eh?" he exclaimed. "You see I thought youse was one of them high hat guys.

Then I seen you in the tank. You sure can dive, buddy."

Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D., let his book drop slowly to his lap as he turned to survey his neighbor. Presently a smile stole across his face —a good natured, friendly smile. "Thanks," he said. "You see it is because I like it so well. A fellow who's spent as much time at it as I have ever since I was a little shaver would have to be an awful dub not to be fairly proficient."

"Yeah," agreed Danny. "It's your racket, I suppose."

Lafayette Smith looked about the deck around his chair. He thought, at first, that Danny was referring to a tennis racket, as that would be the thing that the word

would connote to the mind of so ardent a tennis enthusiast as he. Then he caught the intended meaning and smiled. "I am not a professional swimmer, if that is what you mean," he said.

"Pleasure trip?" inquired Danny.

"Well, I hope it will be," replied the other, "but it is largely what might be called a business trip, too. Scientific investigation. I am a geologist."

"Yeah? I never heard of that racket before."

"It is not exactly a racket," said Smith. "There is not enough money in it to raise it to the importance and dignity of a racket."

"Oh, well, I know a lot of little rackets that pay good—especially if a

fellow goes it alone and doesn't have to split with a mob. Going to England?"

"I shall be in London a couple of days only," replied Smith.

"I thought maybe you was goin' to England."

Lafayette Smith looked puzzled. "I am," he said.

"Oh, you're goin' there from London?"

Was the young man trying to kid him? Very good! "Yes," he said, "if I can get permission from King George to do so I shall visit England while I am in London."

"Say, does that guy live in England? He's the fellow Big Bill was goin' to punch in the snout. Geeze, but there is

one big bag of hot wind."

"Who, King George?"

"No, I don't know him—I mean Thompson."

"I don't know either of them," admitted Smith; "but I've heard of King George."

"You ain't never heard of Big Bill Thompson, mayor of Chicago?"

"Oh, yes; but there are so many Thompson's—I didn't know to which one you referred."

"Do you have to get next to King George to get to England?" demanded Danny, and something in the earnestness of his tone assured Smith that the young man had not been kidding him.

"No," he replied. "You see London is the capital of England. When you are in London you are, of course, in England."

"Geeze!" exclaimed Danny. "I sure was all wet, wasn't I; but you see," he added confidentially, "I ain't never been out of America before."

"Are you making a protracted stay in England?"

"A what?"

"Are you going to remain in England for some time?"

"I'll see how I like it," replied Danny.

"I think you'll like London," Smith told him.

"I don't have to stay there," Danny confided; "I can go where I please.

Where are you goin'?"

"To Africa."

"What sort of a burgh is it? I don't think I'd like bein' bossed by a lot of savages, though a lot of 'em is regular, at that. I knew some negro cops in Chi that never looked to frame a guy."

"You wouldn't be bothered by any policeman where I'm going," Smith assured him; "there are none."

"Geeze! You don't say? But get me right, mister, I ain't worried about no cops—they ain't got nothin' on me. Though I sure would like to go somewhere where I wouldn't never see none of their ugly mugs. You know, mister," he added confidentially, "I just can't like a cop."

This young man puzzled Lafayette Smith the while he amused him. Being a scholar, and having pursued scholarly ways in a quiet university town, Smith was only aware of the strange underworld of America's great cities to such a sketchy extent as might result from a cursory and disinterested perusal of the daily press. He could not catalog his new acquaintance by any first hand knowledge. He had never talked with exactly such a type before. Outwardly, the young man might be the undergraduate son of a cultured family, but when he spoke one had to revise this first impression.

"Say," exclaimed Danny, after a short silence; "I know about this here Africa,

now. I seen a moving pitcher once—lions and elephants and a lot of foolish lookin' deer with funny monickers. So that's where you're goin'? Huntin', I suppose?"

"Not for animals, but for rocks," explained Smith.

"Geeze! Who ain't huntin' for rocks?" demanded Danny, "I know guys would croak their best friends for a rock."

"Not the sort I'm going to look for," Smith assured him.

"You don't mean diamonds then?"

"No, just rock formations that will teach me more about the structure of the earth."

"And you can't cash in on them after

you find them?"

"Geeze, that's a funny racket. You know a lot about this here Africa, don't you?"

"Only what I've read in books," replied Smith.

"I had a book once," said Danny, with almost a verbal swagger.

"Yes?" said Smith politely. "Was it about Africa?"

"I don't know. I never read it. Say, I been thinkin'," he added. "Why don't I go to this here Africa? That pitcher I seen looked like they wasn't many people there, and I sure would like to get away from people for a while —I'm fed up on 'em. How big a place is Africa?"

"Almost four times as large as the United States."

"Geeze! An' no cops?"

"Not where I'm going, nor very many people. Perhaps I shall see no one but the members of my safari for weeks at a time."

"Safari?"

"My people—porters, soldiers, servants."

"Oh, your mob."

"It may be."

"What say I go with you, mister? I don't understand your racket and I don't want to, but I won't demand no cut-in whatever it is. Like the old dame that attended the funeral, I just want to go

along for the ride—only I'll pay my way."

Lafayette Smith wondered. There was something about this young man he liked, and he certainly found him interesting as a type. Then, too, there was an indefinable something in his manner and in those cold, blue eyes that suggested he might be a good companion in an emergency. Furthermore, Lafayette Smith had recently been thinking that long weeks in the interior without the companionship of another white man might prove intolerable. Yet he hesitated. He knew nothing about the man. He might be a fugitive from justice. He might be anything. Well, what of it? He had about made up his mind.

"If it's expenses that's worrying you," said Danny, noting the other's hesitation, "forget 'em. I'll pay my share and then some, if you say so."

"I wasn't thinking of that, though the trip will be expensive—not much more for two, though, than for one."

"How much?"

"Frankly, I don't know, but I have been assuming that five thousand dollars should cover everything, though I may be wrong."

Danny Patrick reached into his trousers' pocket and brought forth a great roll of bills—50's and 100's. He counted out three thousand dollars. "Here's three G. to bind the bargain," he said, "and there's more where that came from. I

ain't no piker. I'll pay my share and part of yours, too."

"No," said Smith, motioning the proffered bills aside. "It is not that. You see we don't know anything about each other. We might not get along together."

"You know as much about me as I do about you," replied Danny, "and I'm game to take a chance. Maybe the less we know the better. Anyhow, I'm goin' to this here Africa, and if you're goin' too, we might as well go together. It'll cut down expenses, and two white fellows is got a better chanct than one alone. Do we stick or do we split?"

Lafayette Smith laughed. Here, perhaps, was the making of an adventure, and in his scholarly heart he

had long held the secret hope that some day he might go adventuring. "We stick," he said.

"Gimme five!" exclaimed "Gunner" Patrick, extending his hand.

"Five what?" asked Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D.

4. GATHERING THE STRANDS

Weeks rolled by. Trains rattled and chugged. Steamships plowed. Black feet padded well worn trails. Three safaris, headed by white men from far separated parts of the earth, moved slowly along different trails that led toward the wild fastnesses of the Ghenzis. None knew of the presence of the others, nor were their missions in any way related.

From the West came Lafayette Smith and "Gunner" Patrick; from the South, an English big game hunter, Lord Passmore; from the East, Leon Stabutch.

The Russian had been having trouble with his men. They had enlisted with

enthusiasm, but their eagerness to proceed had waned as they penetrated more deeply into strange and unknown country. Recently they had talked with men of a village beside which they had camped, and these men had told them terrifying tales of the great band of *shiftas*, led by a white man, that was terrorizing the country toward which they were marching, killing and raping as they collected slaves to be sold in the north.

Stabutch had halted for the noonday rest upon the southern slopes of the foothills of the Ghenzis. To the north rose the lofty peaks of the main range; to the south, below them, they could see forest and jungle stretching away into the

distance; about them were rolling hills, sparsely timbered, and between the hills and the forest an open, grassy plain where herds of antelope and zebra could be seen grazing.

The Russian called his headman to him. "What's the matter with those fellows?" he asked, nodding toward the porters, who were gathered, squatting, in a circle, jabbering in low voices.

"They are afraid, Bwana," replied the black.

"Afraid of what?" demanded Stabutch, though he well knew.

"Afraid of the *shiftas*, Bwana. Three more deserted last night."

"We didn't need them anyway," snapped Stabutch; "the loads are getting

lighter."

"More will run away," said the headman. "They are all afraid."

"They had better be afraid of me," blustered Stabutch. "If any more men desert I'll—I'll—"

"They are not afraid of you, Bwana," the headman told him, candidly. "They are afraid of the*shiftas* and the white man who is their chief. They do not want to be sold into slavery, far from their own country."

"Don't tell me you believe in that cock-and-bull story, you black rascal," snapped Stabutch. "It's just an excuse to turn back. They want to get home so they can loaf, the lazy dogs. And I guess you're as bad as the rest of them. Who

said you were a headman, anyway? If you were worth a kopeck you'd straighten those fellows out in no time; and we wouldn't have any more talk about turning back, nor any more desertions, either."

"Yes, Bwana," replied the black; but what he thought was his own business.

"Now, listen to me," growled Stabutch, but that to which he would have had the headman listen was never voiced.

The interruption came from one of the porters, who leaped suddenly to his feet, voicing a low cry of warning pregnant with terror. "Look!" he cried, pointing toward the west. "The *shiftas!*"

Silhouetted against the sky, a group of

mounted men bad reined in their horses upon the summit of a low hill a mile away. The distance was too great to permit the excited watchers in the Russian's camp to distinguish details, but the very presence of a body of horsemen was all the assurance that the blacks needed to convince them that it was composed of members of the*shifta* band of which they had heard terrifying rumors that had filled their simple breasts with steadily increasing dread during the past several days. The white robes fluttering in the breeze at the summit of the distant hill, the barrels of rifles and the shafts of spears that, even at a distance, were sufficiently suggestive of their true nature to permit

of no doubt, but served to definitely crystallize the conjectures of the members of Stabutch's safari and augment their panic.

They were standing now, every eye turned toward the menace of that bristling hill top. Suddenly one of the men ran toward the loads that had been discarded during the noonday halt, calling something back over his shoulder to his fellows. Instantly there was a break for the loads.

"What are they doing?" cried Stabutch. "Stop them!"

The headman and the *askaris* ran quickly toward the porters, many of whom already had shouldered their loads and were starting on the back trail.

The headman sought to stop them, but one, a great, burly fellow, felled him with a single blow. Then another, glancing back toward the west, voiced a shrill cry of terror. "Look!" he cried. "They come!"

Those who heard him turned to see the horsemen, their robes fluttering backward in the breeze, reining down the hillside toward them at a gallop.

It was enough. As one man, porters, *askaris*, and the headman, they turned and fled. Those who had shouldered loads threw them to the ground lest their weight retard the runner's speed.

Stabutch was alone. For an instant he hesitated on the verge of flight, but

almost immediately he realized the futility of attempted escape.

With loud yells the horsemen were bearing down upon his camp; and presently, seeing him standing there alone, they drew rein before him. Hard faced, villainous appearing, they presented such an appearance of evil as might have caused the stoutest heart to quail.

Their leader was addressing Stabutch in a strange tongue, but his attitude was so definitely menacing that the Russian had little need of knowledge of the other's language to interpret the threat reflected in the speaker's tones and scowling face; but he dissembled his fears and met the men with a cool

equanimity that impressed them with the thought that the stranger must be sure of his power. Perhaps he was but the advance guard of a larger body of white men!

The *shiftas* looked about them uneasily as this thought was voiced by one of their number, for they well knew the temper and the arms of white men and feared both. Yet, notwithstanding their doubts, they could still appreciate the booty of the camp, as they cast Covetous and appraising eyes upon the abandoned loads of the departed porters, most of whom were still in view as they scurried toward the jungle.

Failing to make himself understood by the white man, the leader of

the *shiftas* fell into a heated argument with several of his henchmen and when one, sitting, stirrup to stirrup, beside him, raised his rifle and aimed it at Stabutch the leader struck the weapon up and berated his fellow angrily. Then he issued several orders, with the result that, while two of the band remained to guard Stabutch, the others dismounted and loaded the packs on several of the horses.

A half hour later the *shiftas* rode back in the direction from which they had come, taking with them all of the Russian's belongings and him, also, disarmed and a prisoner.

And, as they rode away, keen grey eyes watched them from the concealing

verdure of the jungle—eyes that had been watching every turn of events in the camp of the Russian since Stabutch had called the halt for the disastrous noonday rest.

Though the distance from the jungle to the camp was considerable, nothing had escaped the keen eyes of the watcher reclining at ease in the fork of a great tree just at the edge of the plain. What his mental reactions to the happenings he had witnessed none might have guessed by any changing expression upon his stern, emotionless countenance.

He watched the retreating figures of the *shiftas* until they had disappeared from view, and then he sprang lightly to his feet and swung off through the jungle

in the opposite direction—in the direction taken by the fleeing members of Stabutch's safari.

Goloba, the headman, trod fearfully the gloomy trails of the jungle; and with him were a considerable number of the other members of Stabutch's safari, all equally fearful lest the *shiftas*pursue them.

The first panic of their terror had abated; and as the minutes sped, with no sign of pursuit, they took greater heart, though there grew in the breast of Goloba another fear to replace that which was fading—it was the fear of the trusted lieutenant who has deserted his bwana. It was something that Goloba would have to explain one day, and even

now he was formulating his excuse.

"They rode upon us, firing their rifles," he said. "There were many of them—at least a hundred." No one disputed him. "We fought bravely in defense of the Bwana, but we were few and could not repulse them." He paused and looked at those walking near him. He saw that they nodded their heads in assent. "And then I saw the Bwana fall and so, to escape being taken and sold into slavery, we ran away."

"Yes," said one walking at his side, "it is all as Goloba has said. I myself—" but he got no further. The figure of a bronzed white man, naked but for a loin cloth, dropped from the foliage of the trees into the trail a dozen paces ahead

of them. As one man they halted, surprise and fear writ large upon their faces.

"Which is the headman?" demanded the stranger in their own dialect, and every eye turned upon Goloba.

"I am," replied the black leader.

"Why did you desert your bwana?"

Goloba was about to reply when the thought occurred to him that here was only a single, primitively armed white without companions, without a safari — a poor creature, indeed, in the jungle -- lower than the meanest black.

"Who are you, to question Goloba, the headman?" he demanded, sneeringly. "Get out of my way," and he started forward along the trail toward the

stranger.

But the white man did not move. He merely spoke, in low, even tones. "Goloba should know better," he said, "than to speak thus to any white man."

The black hesitated. He was not quite sure of himself, but yet he ventured to hold his ground. "Great bwanas do not go naked and alone through the forests, like the low Bagesu. Where is your safari?"

"Tarzan of the Apes needs no safari," replied the white man.

Goloba was stunned. He had never seen Tarzan of the Apes, for he came from a country far from Tarzan's stamping ground, but he had heard tales of the great bwana—tales that had lost

nothing in the telling.

"You are Tarzan?" he asked.

The white man nodded, and Goloba sank, fearfully, to his knees. "Have mercy, great bwana!" he begged. "Goloba did not know."

"Now, answer my question," said Tarzan. "Why did you desert your bwana?"

"We were attacked by a band of *shiftas*," replied Goloba. "They rode upon us, firing their rifles. There were at least a hundred of them. We fought bravely —"

"Stop!" commanded Tarzan. "I saw all that transpired. No shots were fired. You ran away before you knew whether the horsemen were enemies or friends.

Speak now, but speak true words."

"We knew that they were enemies," said Goloba, "for we had been warned by villagers, near whom we had camped, that these *shiftas* would attack us and sell into slavery all whom they captured."

"What more did the villagers tell you?" asked the ape-man.

"That the *shiftas* are led by a white man."

"That is what I wished to know," said Tarzan.

"And now may Goloba and his people go?" asked the black. "We fear that the *shiftas* may be pursuing us."

"They are not," Tarzan assured him. "I

saw them ride away toward the west, taking your bwana with them. It is of him I would know more. Who is he? What does he here?"

"He is from a country far in the north," replied Goloba. "He called it 'Russa.'"

"Yes," said Tarzan. "I know the country. Why did he come here?"

"I do not know," replied Goloba. "It was not to hunt. He did not hunt, except for food."

"Did he speak ever of Tarzan?" demanded the ape-man.

"Yes," replied Goloba. "Often he asked about Tarzan. At every village he asked when they had seen Tarzan and where he was; but none knew."

"That is all,!" said the ape-man. "You may go."

5. WHEN THE LION CHARGED

Lord Passmore was camped in a natural clearing on the bank of a small river a few miles south of the jungle's northern fringe. His stalwart porters and *askaris* squatted over their cooking fires laughing and joking among themselves. It was two hours past sunset; and Lord Passmore, faultlessly attired in dinner clothes, was dining, his native boy, standing behind his chair, ready to anticipate his every need.

A tall, well built Negro approached the fly beneath which Lord Passmore's camp table had been placed. "You sent for me, bwana?" he asked.

Lord Passmore glanced up into the intelligent eyes of the handsome black. There was just the faintest shadow of a smile lurking about the corners of the patrician mouth of the white man. "Have you anything to report?" he asked.

"No, bwana," replied the black. "Neither to the east nor to the west were there signs of game. Perhaps the bwana had better luck."

"Yes," replied Passmore, "I was more fortunate. To the north I saw signs of game. Tomorrow, perhaps, we shall have better hunting. Tomorrow I shall —" He broke off abruptly. Both men were suddenly alert, straining their ears to a faint sound that rose above the nocturnal voices of the jungle for a few

brief seconds.

The black looked questioningly at his master. "You heard it, bwana?" he asked. The white nodded. "What was it, bwana?"

"It sounded deucedly like a machine gun," replied Passmore. "It came from south of us; but who the devil would be firing a machine gun here? and why at night?"

"I do not know, bwana," replied the headman. "Shall I go and find out?"

"No," said the Englishman. "Perhaps tomorrow. We shall see. Go now, and get your sleep."

"Yes, bwana; good night."

"Good night—and warn the *askari* on

sentry duty to be watchful."

"Yes, bwana." The black bowed very low and backed from beneath the fly. Then he moved silently away, the flickering flames of the cook fires reflecting golden high lights from his smooth brown skin, beneath which played the mighty muscles of a giant.

"This," remarked "Gunner" Patrick, "is the life. I ain't seen a cop for weeks."

Lafayette Smith smiled. "If cops are the only things you fear, Danny, your mind and your nerves can be at rest for several weeks more."

"What give you the idea I was afraid of cops?" demanded Danny. "I ain't never seen the cop I was afraid of. They're a bunch of punks. Anyhow, they

ain't got nothin' on me. What a guy's got to look out for though is they might frame a guy. But, geeze, out here a guy don't have to worry about nothin'." He settled back easily in his camp chair and exhaled a slowly spiraling column of cigarette smoke that rose lazily in the soft night air of the jungle. "Geeze," he remarked after a brief silence, "I didn't know a guy could feel so peaceful. Say, do you know this is the first time in years I ain't packed a rod?"

"A what?"

"A rod, iron, a gat—you know—a gun."

"Why didn't you say so in the first place?" laughed Smith. "Why don't you try talking English once in a while?"

"Geeze!" exclaimed Danny. "You're a great guy to talk about a guy talkin' English. What's that you pulled on me the other day when we was crossin' that open rollin' country? I learned that by heart—'a country of low relief in an advanced stage of mature dissection'—an' you talk about me talkin' English! You and your thrust faults and escarpments, your calderas and solfataras—geeze!"

"Well, you're learning, Danny."

"Learnin' what? Every racket has its own lingo. What good is your line to me? But every guy wants to know what a rod is—if he knows what's good for his health."

"From what Ogonyo tells me it may

be just as well to continue 'packing your rod,'" said Smith.

"How come?"

"He says we're getting into lion country. We may even find them near here. They don't often frequent jungles, but we're only about a day's march to more open terrain."

"Whatever that is. Talk English. Geeze! What was that?" A series of coughing grunts rose from somewhere in the solid black wall of jungle that surrounded the camp, to be followed by a thunderous roar that shook the earth.

"Simba!" cried one of the blacks, and immediately a half dozen men hastened to add fuel to the fires.

"Gunner" Patrick leaped to his feet

and ran into the tent, emerging a moment later with a Thompson submachine gun. "T'ell with a rod," he said. "When I get that baby on the spot I want a typewriter."

"Are you going to take him for a ride?" inquired Lafayette Smith, whose education had progressed noticeably in the weeks he had spent in the society of Danny "Gunner" Patrick.

"No," admitted Danny, "unless he tries to muscle in on my racket."

Once again the rumbling roar of the lion shattered the quiet of the outer darkness. This time it sounded so close that both men started nervously.

"He appears to be harboring the thought," commented Smith.

"What thought?" demanded the "Gunner."

"About muscling in."

"The smokes got the same hunch," said Danny. "Look at 'em."

The porters were palpably terrified and were huddled close to the fires, the *askaris* fingering the triggers of their rifles. The "Gunner" walked over to where they stood straining their eyes out into the impenetrable darkness.

"Where is he?" he asked Ogonyo, the headman. "Have you seen him?"

"Over there," said Ogonyo. "It looks like something moving over there, bwana."

Danny peered into the darkness. He

could see nothing, but now he thought he heard a rustling of foliage beyond the fires. He dropped to one knee and aimed the machine gun in the direction of the sound. There was a burst of flame and the sudden rat-a-tat-tat of the weapon as he squeezed the trigger. For a moment the ringing ears of the watchers heard nothing, and then, as their auditory nerves returned to normal, to the keenest ears among them came the sound of crashing among the bushes, diminishing in the distance.

"I guess I nicked him," said Danny to Smith, who had walked over and was standing behind him.

"You didn't kill him," said Smith. "You must have wounded him."

"Simba is not wounded, bwana," said Ogonyo.

"How do you know?" demanded Danny. "You can't see nothin' out there."

"If you had wounded him he would have charged," explained the headman. "He ran away. It was the noise that frightened him."

"Do you think he will come back?" asked Smith.

"I do not know, bwana," replied the negro. "No one knows what Simba will do."

"Of course he won't come back," said Danny. "The old typewriter scared him stiff. I'm goin' to turn in."

Numa, the lion, was old and hungry.

He had been hunting in the open country; but his muscles, while still mighty, were not what they had been in his prime. When he reared to seize Pacco, the zebra, or Wappi, the antelope, he was always just a trifle slower than he had been in the past; and his prey eluded him. So Numa, the lion, had wandered into the jungle where the scent of man had attracted him to the camp. The beast fires of the blacks blinded him; but, beyond them, his still keen scent told him there was flesh and blood, and Numa, the lion, was ravenous.

Slowly his hunger was overcoming his inherent urge to avoid the man-things; little by little it drew him closer to the hated fires. Crouched almost upon his

belly he moved forward a few inches at a time. In another moment he would charge—and then came the sudden burst of flame, the shattering crash of the machine gun, the shriek of bullets above his head.

The startling suddenness with which this unexpected tumult broke the fear laden silence of the camp and the jungle snapped the taut nerves of the great cat, and his reaction was quite as natural as it was involuntary. Wheeling in his tracks, he bounded away into the forest.

The ears of Numa, the lion, were not the only jungle ears upon which the discord of "Gunner" Patrick's typewriter impinged, for that seeming solitude of impenetrable darkness harbored a

myriad life. For an instant it was motionless, startled into immobility; and then it moved on again upon the multitudinous concerns of its varied existence. Some, concerned by the strangeness of the noise, moved farther from the vicinity of the camp of the man-things; but there was at least one that curiosity attracted to closer investigation.

Gradually the camp was settling down for the night. The two bwanas had retired to the seclusion of their tent. The porters had partially overcome their nervousness, and most of them had lain down to sleep. A few watched the beast fires near which two *askaris* stood on guard, one on either side of the camp.

Numa stood with low hung head out there, somewhere, in the night. The tattoo of the machine gun had not appeased his appetite, but it had added to his nervous irritability—and to his caution. No longer did he rumble forth his coughing protests against the emptiness of his belly as he watched the flames of the beast fires that now fed the flood of his anger until it submerged his fears.

And as the camp drifted gradually into sleep the tawny body of the carnivore slunk slowly closer to the dancing circle of the beast fires' light. The yellow-green eyes stared in savage fixity at an unsuspecting *askari* leaning sleepily upon his rifle.

The man yawned and shifted his position. He noted the condition of the fire. It needed new fuel, and the man turned to the pile of branches and dead wood behind him. As he stooped to gather what he required, his back toward the jungle, Numa charged.

The great lion wished to strike swiftly and silently; but something within him, the mark of the ages of charging forebears that had preceded him, raised a low, ominous growl in his throat.

The victim heard and so did "Gunner" Patrick, lying sleepless on his cot. As the *askari*wheeled to the menace of that awesome warning, the "Gunner" leaped to his feet, seizing the Thompson as he sprang into the open just as Numa rose,

towering, above the black. A scream of terror burst from the lips of the doomed man in the instant that the lion's talons buried themselves in his shoulders. Then the giant jaws closed upon his face.

The scream, fraught with the terror of utter hopelessness, awakened the camp. Men, startled into terrified consciousness, sprang to their feet, most of them in time to see Numa, half carrying, half dragging his victim, bounding off into the darkness.

The "Gunner" was the first to see all this and the only one to act. Without waiting to kneel he raised the machine gun to his shoulder. That his bullets must indubitably find the man if they found the lion was of no moment to Danny Patrick,

intimate of sudden and violent death. He might have argued that the man was already dead, but he did not waste a thought upon a possibility which was, in any event, of no consequence, so do environment and habitude warp or dull the sensibilities of man.

The lion was still discernible in the darkness when Danny squeezed the trigger of his beloved typewriter, and this time he did not miss— perhaps unfortunately, for a wounded lion is as dangerous an engine of destruction as an all wise Providence can create.

Aroused by the deafening noise of the weapon, enraged by the wound inflicted by the single slug that entered his body, apprehending that he was to be robbed

of his prey, and bent upon swift and savage reprisal, Numa dropped the *askari*, wheeled about, and charged straight for Danny Patrick.

The "Gunner" was kneeling, now, to take better aim. Lafayette Smith stood just behind him, armed only with a nickel plated .32 caliber revolver that some friend had given him years before. A great tree spread above the two men —a sanctuary that Lafayette Smith, at least, should have sought, but his mind was not upon flight, for, in truth, Lafayette was assailed by no fear for his own welfare or that of his companion. He was excited, but not afraid, since he could conceive of no disaster, in the form of man or beast, overwhelming one

under the protection of Danny Patrick and his submachine gun. And even in the remote contingency that they should fail, was not he, himself, adequately armed? He grasped the grip of his shiny toy more tightly and with a renewed sensation of security.

The porters, huddled in small groups, stood wide eyed awaiting the outcome of the event, which was accomplished in a few brief seconds from the instant that one of Danny's slugs struck the fleeing carnivore.

And now as the lion came toward him, not in bounds, but rather in a low gliding rush of incredible speed, several things, surprising things, occurred almost simultaneously. And if there was the

element of surprise, there was also, for Danny, at least one cause for embarrassment.

As the lion had wheeled Danny had again squeezed the trigger. The mechanism of the piece was set for a continuous discharge of bullets as long as Danny continued to squeeze and the remainder of the one hundred rounds in the drum lasted; but there was only a brief spurt of fire, and then the gun jammed.

How may one record in slow moving words the thoughts and happenings of a second and impart to the narration any suggestion of the speed and action of the instant?

Did the "Gunner" seek, frantically, to

remove the empty cartridge that had caused the jam? Did terror enter his heart, causing his fingers to tremble and bungle? What did Lafayette Smith do? Or rather, what did he contemplate doing? since he had no opportunity to do aught but stand there, a silent observer of events. I do not know.

Before either could formulate a plan wherewith to meet the emergency, a bronzed white man, naked but for a G string, dropped from the branches of the tree above them directly into the path of the charging lion. In the man's hand was a heavy spear, and as he alighted silently upon the soft mold he was already braced to receive the shock of the lion's charge upon the point of his weapon.

The impact of Numa's heavy body would have hurled a lesser man to earth; but this one kept his feet, and the well placed thrust drove into the carnivore's chest a full two feet, while in the same instant the man stepped aside. Numa, intercepted before the completion of his charge, had not yet reared to seize his intended victim. Now, surprised and thwarted by this new enemy, while the other was almost within his grasp, he was momentarily confused; and in that brief moment the strange man-thing leaped upon his back. A giant arm encircled his throat, legs of steel locked around his shrunken waist, and a stout blade was driven into his side.

Spellbound, Smith and Patrick and

their men stood staring incredulously at the sight before them. They saw Numa turn quickly to seize his tormentor. They saw him leap and bound and throw himself to the ground in an effort to dislodge his opponent. They saw the free hand of the man repeatedly drive home the point of his knife in the tawny side of the raging lion.

From the tangled mass of man and lion there issued frightful snarls and growls, the most terrifying element of which came to the two travelers with the discovery that these bestial sounds issued not alone from the savage throat of the lion but from that of the man as well.

The battle was brief, for the already

sorely wounded animal had received the spear thrust directly through its heart, only its remarkable tenacity of life having permitted it to live for the few seconds that intervened between the death blow and the collapse.

As Numa slumped suddenly to his side, the man leaped clear. For a moment he stood looking down upon the death throes of his vanquished foe, while Smith and Patrick remained in awestruck contemplation of the savage, primordial scene; and then he stepped closer; and, placing one foot upon the carcass of his kill, he raised his face to the heavens and gave tongue to a cry so hideous that the negroes dropped to the ground in terror while the two whites felt the hair

rise upon their scalps.

Once again upon the jungle fell the silence and the paralysis of momentary terror. Then faintly, from the far distance, came an answering challenge. Somewhere out there in the black void of night a bull ape, awakened, had answered the victory cry of his fellow. More faintly, and from a greater distance, came the rumbling roar of a lion.

The stranger stooped and seized the haft of his spear. He placed a foot against Numa's shoulder and withdrew the weapon from the carcass. Then he turned toward the two white men. It was the first intimation he had given that he had been aware of their presence.

"Geeze!" exclaimed "Gunner" Patrick, beyond which his vocabulary failed to meet the situation.

The stranger surveyed them coolly. "Who are you?" he asked. "What are you doing here?"

That he spoke English was both a surprise and a relief to Lafayette Smith. Suddenly he seemed less terrifying. "I am a geologist," he explained. "My name is Smith—Lafayette Smith—and my companion is Mr. Patrick. I am here to conduct some field research work—purely a scientific expedition."

The stranger pointed to the machine gun. "Is that part of the regular field equipment of a geologist?" he asked.

"No," replied Smith, "and I'm sure I

don't know why Mr. Patrick insisted on bringing it along."

"I wasn't takin' no chances in a country full of strange characters," said the "Gunner."

"Say, a broad I meets on the boat tells me some of these guys eats people."

"It would come in handy, perhaps, for hunting," suggested the stranger. "A herd of antelope would make an excellent target for a weapon of that sort."

"Geeze!" exclaimed the "Gunner," "wot do you think I am, Mister, a butcher? I packs this for insurance only. It sure wasn't worth the premium this time though," he added disgustedly; "jammed on me right when I needed it the most. But say, you were there all

right. I gotta hand it to you. You're regular, Mister, and if I can ever return the favor—" He made an expansive gesture that completed the sentence and promised all that the most exacting might demand of a reciprocatory nature.

The giant nodded. "Don't use it for hunting," he said, and then, turning to Smith, "Where are you going to conduct your research?"

Suddenly a comprehending light shone in the eyes of the "Gunner," and a pained expression settled definitely upon his face. "Geeze!" he exclaimed disgustedly to Smith. "I might have known it was too good to be true."

"What?" asked Lafayette.

"What I said about there not bein' no

cops here."

"Where are you going?" asked the stranger, again.

"We are going to the Ghenzi Mountains now," replied Smith.

"Say, who the hell are you, anyhow?" demanded the "Gunner," "and what business is it of yours where we go?"

The stranger ignored him and turned again toward Smith. "Be very careful in the Ghenzi country," he said. "There is a band of slave raiders working there at present, I understand. If your men learn of it they may desert you."

"Thanks," replied Smith. "It is very kind of you to warn us. I should like to know to whom we are indebted," but the stranger was gone.

As mysteriously and silently as he had appeared, he swung again into the tree above and disappeared. The two whites looked at one another in amazement.

"Geeze," said Danny.

"I fully indorse your statement," said Smith.

"Say, Ogonyo," demanded the "Gunner," "who was that bozo? You or any of your men know?"

"Yes, bwana," replied the headman, "that was Tarzan of the Apes."

6. THE WATERS OF CHINNERETH

Lady Barbara Collis walked slowly along the dusty path leading from the Midian village down to the lake that lay in the bottom of the ancient crater which formed the valley of the Land of Midian. At her right walked Abraham, the son of Abraham, and at her left the golden haired Jezebel. Behind them came the apostles, surrounding a young girl whose sullen countenance was enlivened occasionally by the fearful glances she cast upon the old men who formed her escort or her guard. Following the apostles marched the remainder of the villagers, headed by the elders. Other

than these general divisions of the cortege, loosely observed, there was no attempt to maintain a semblance of orderly formation. They moved like sheep, now huddled together, now spewing beyond the limits of the narrow path to spread out on either side, some forging ahead for a few yards only to drop back again.

Lady Barbara was apprehensive. She had learned many things in the long weeks of her virtual captivity among this strange religious sect. Among other things she had learned their language, and the mastery of it had opened to her inquiring mind many avenues of information previously closed. And now she was learning, or she believed she

was, that Abraham, the son of Abraham, was nursing in his bosom a growing skepticism of her divinity.

Her first night in Midian had witnessed her introduction to the cruel customs and rites of this degenerate descendant of the earliest Christian Church, and as she acquired a working knowledge of the language of the land and gained an appreciation of the exalted origin the leaders of the people attributed to her, and her position of spokesman for their god, she had used her influence to discourage, and even to prohibit, the more terrible and degrading practices of their religion.

While recollection of the supernatural aspects of her descent from the clouds

remained clear in the weak mind of Abraham, the son of Abraham, Lady Barbara had been successful in her campaign against brutality; but daily association with this celestial visitor had tended to dissipate the awe that had at first overwhelmed the prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah. The interdictions of his heavenly guest were all contrary to the desires of Abraham, the son of Abraham, and to the word of Jehovah as it had been interpreted by the prophets beyond the memory of man. Such were the foundations of the prophet's increasing skepticism, nor was the changing attitude of the old man toward her unrecognized by the English girl.

Today he had ignored her and was

even forcing her to accompany them and witness the proof of his apostasy. What would come next? She had had not only ocular proof of the fanatical blood frenzy of the terrible old man, but she had listened for hours to detailed descriptions of orgies of frightfulness from the lips of Jezebel. Yes, Lady Barbara Collis was apprehensive, and not without reason; but she determined to make a last effort to reassert her waning authority.

"Think well Abraham, the son of Abraham," she said to the man walking at her side, "of the wrath of Jehovah when he sees that you have disobeyed him."

"I walk in the path of the prophets,"

replied the old man. "Always we have punished those who defied the laws of Jehovah, and Jehovah has rewarded us. Why should he be wroth now? The girl must pay the price of her iniquity."

"But she only smiled," argued Lady Barbara.

"A sin in the eyes of Jehovah," replied Abraham, the son of Abraham. "Laughter is carnal, and smiles lead to laughter, which gives pleasure; and all pleasures are the lures of the devil. They are wicked."

"Do not say any more," said Jezebel, in English. "You will only anger him, and when he is angry he is terrible."

"What sayest thou, woman?" demanded Abraham, the son of

Abraham.

"I was praying to Jehovah in the language of Heaven," replied the girl.

The Prophet let his scowling gaze rest upon her. "Thou doest well to pray, woman. Jehovah looketh not with pleasure upon thee."

"Then I shall continue praying," replied the girl meekly, and to Lady Barbara, in English; "The old devil is already planning my punishment. He has always hated me, just as they always hate us poor creatures who are not created in the same image as they."

The remarkable difference in physical appearance and mentality that set Jezebel apart from the other Midians was an inexplicable phenomenon that

had' constantly puzzled Lady Barbara and would continue to puzzle her, since she could not know of the little fair haired slave girl whose virile personality still sought to express itself beyond a grave nineteen centuries old. How greatly Jezebel's mentality surpassed that of her imbecilic fellows had been demonstrated to Lady Barbara by the surprising facility with which the girl had learned to speak English while she was teaching Lady Barbara the language of the Midians. How often and how sincerely had she thanked a kindly Providence for Jezebel!

The procession had now arrived at the shore of the lake, which legend asserted to be bottomless, and had halted

where a few flat lava rocks of great size overhung the waters. The apostles took their places with Abraham, the son of Abraham, upon one of the rocks, the girl in their midst; and then a half dozen younger men came forward at a signal from Jobab. One of their number carried a fiber net, and two others brought a heavy piece of lava. Quickly they threw the net over the now terrified and screaming girl and secured the lava rock to it.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, raised his hands above his head, and at the signal all knelt. He commenced to pray in that now familiar gibberish that was not Midian, nor, according to Jezebel, any language whatsoever, for she

insisted that the Prophet and the Apostles, to whose sole use it was restricted, could not understand it themselves. The girl, kneeling, was weeping softly now, sometimes choking down a muffled sob, while the young men held the net securely.

Suddenly Abraham, the son of Abraham, abandoned the ecclesiastical tongue and spoke in the language of his people. "For as she has sinned so shall she suffer," he cried. "It is the will of Jehovah, in his infinite mercy, that she shall not be consumed by fire, but that she shall be immersed three times in the waters of Chinnereth that her sins may be washed from her. Let us pray that they may be not too grievous, since otherwise

she shall not survive." He nodded to the six young men, who seemed well schooled in their parts.

Four of them seized the net and raised it between them, while the remaining two held the ends of long fiber ropes that were attached to it. As the four commenced to swing the body of the girl pendulum like between them, her screams and pleas for mercy rose above the silent waters of Chinnereth in a diapason of horror, mingled with which were the shrieks and groans of those who, excited beyond the capacity of their nervous systems, were falling to the ground in the throes of epileptic seizures.

To and fro, with increasing rapidity,

the young men swung their terror crazed burden. Suddenly one of them collapsed to sink, writhing and foaming, to the surface of the great block of lava upon which they stood, dropping the soft body of the girl heavily to the hard rocks. As Jobab signaled to another young man to take the place of him who had fallen, an apostle screamed and dropped in his tracks.

But no one gave heed to those who had succumbed, and a moment later the girl was swinging to and fro out over the waters of Chinnereth, back over the hard face of the lava.

"In the name of Jehovah! In the name of Jehovah!" chanted Abraham, the son of Abraham, to the cadence of the

swinging sack. "In the name of Jehovah! In the name of his son—" there was a pause, and as the body of the girl swung again out over the water—"Paul!"

It was the signal. The four young men released their holds upon the net, and the body of the girl shot downward toward the dark waters of the lake. There was a splash. The screaming ceased. The waters closed in above the victim of cruel fanaticism, leaving only a widening circle of retreating wavelets and two fiber ropes extending upward to the altar of castigation.

For a few seconds there was silence and immobility, except for the groans and contortions of the now greatly increased numbers of the victims of the

Nemesis of the Midians. Then Abraham, the son of Abraham, spoke again to the six executioners, who immediately laid hold of the two ropes and hauled the girl upward until she swung, dripping and choking, just above the surface of the water.

For a brief interval they held her there; and then, at a word from the Prophet, they dropped her again beneath the waters.

"You murderer!" cried Lady Barbara, no longer able to control her anger. "Order that poor creature drawn ashore before she is drowned."

Abraham, the son of Abraham, turned eyes upon the English girl that almost froze her with horror—the wild, staring

eyes of a maniac; piercing pupils rimmed round with white. "Silence, blasphemer!" screamed the man. "Last night I walked with Jehovah, and He told me that you would be next."

"Oh, please," whispered Jezebel, tugging at Lady Barbara's sleeve. "Do not anger him more or you are lost."

The Prophet turned again to the six young men, and again, at his command, the victim was drawn above the surface of the lake. Fascinated by the horror of the situation, Lady Barbara had stepped to the edge of the rock, and, looking down, saw the poor creature limp but still gasping in an effort to regain her breath. She was not dead, but an other immersion must surely prove fatal.

"Oh, please," she begged, turning to the Prophet, "in the name of merciful God, do not let them lower her again!"

Without a word of reply Abraham, the son of Abraham, gave the signal; and for the third time the now unconscious girl was dropped into the lake. The English girl sank to her knees in an attitude of prayer, and raising her eyes to heaven plead fervently to her Maker to move the heart of Abraham, the son of Abraham, to compassion, or out of the fullness of His own love to save the victim of these misguided creatures from what seemed now certain death. For a full minute she had prayed, and still the girl was left beneath the waters. Then the Prophet commanded that she be raised.

"If she is now pure in the eyes of Jehovah," he cried, "she will emerge alive. If she be dead, it is the will of Jehovah. I have but walked in the paths of the Prophets."

The six young men raised the sagging net to the surface of the rocks where they rolled the limp form of the girl from it close to where Lady Barbara kneeled in prayer. And now the Prophet appeared to notice the attitude and the pleading voice of the English girl for the first time.

"What doest thou?" he demanded.

"I pray to a God whose power and mercy are beyond your understanding," she replied. "I pray for the life of this poor child."

"There is the answer to your prayer," sneered the Prophet contemptuously, indicating the still body of the girl. "She is dead, and Jehovah has revealed to all who may have doubted that Abraham, the son of Abraham, is His prophet and that thou art an impostor."

"We are lost," whispered Jezebel.

Lady Barbara thought as much herself; but she thought quickly, for the emergency was critical. Rising, she faced the Prophet. "Yes, she is dead," she replied, "but Jehovah can resurrect her."

"He can, but He will not," said Abraham, the son of Abraham.

"Not for you, for He is angry with him who dares to call himself His prophet

and yet disobeyeth His commands." She stepped quickly to the side of the lifeless body. "But for me He will resurrect her. Come Jezebel and help me!"

Now Lady Barbara, in common with most modern, athletically inclined young women, was familiar with the ordinary methods for resuscitating the drowned; and she fell to work upon the victim of the Prophet's homicidal mania with a will born not only of compassion, but of vital necessity. She issued curt orders to Jezebel from time to time, orders which broke but did not terminate a constant flow of words which she voiced in chant-like measures. She started with The Charge of the Light Brigade, but after two stanzas her memory failed and

she had recourse to Mother Goose, snatches from the verse in Alice in Wonderland, Kipling, Omar Khayyam; and, as the girl after ten minutes of heartbreaking effort commenced to show signs of life, Lady Barbara closed with excerpts from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Crowded about them were the Prophet, the Apostles, the Elders, and the six executioners, while beyond these the villagers pressed as close as they dared to witness the miracle if such it were to be.

"'And that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth,'" chanted Lady Barbara, rising to her feet. "Lay the child

in the net," she commanded, turning to the wide eyed young men who had cast her into the lake, "and carry her tenderly back to the cave of her parents. Come Jezebel!" To Abraham, the son of Abraham, she vouchsafed not even a glance.

That night the two girls sat at the entrance of their cave looking out across the uncharted valley of Midian. A full moon silvered the crest of the lofty escarpment of the crater's northern rim. In the middle distance the silent waters of Chinnereth lay like a burnished shield.

"It is beautiful," sighed Jezebel.

"But, oh, how horrible, because of man," replied Lady Barbara, with a

shudder.

"At night, when I am alone, and can see only the beautiful things, I try to forget man," said the golden one. "Is there so much cruelty and wickedness in the land from which you come, Barbara?"

"There are cruelty and wickedness everywhere where men are, but in my land it is not so bad as here where the church rules and cruelty is the sole business of the church."

"They say the men over there are very cruel," said Jezebel, pointing across the valley; "but they are beautiful—not like our people."

"You have seen them?"

"Yes. Sometimes they come searching

for their strayed goats, but not often. Then they chase us into our caves, and we roll rocks down on them to keep them from coming up and killing us. They steal our goats at such times; and if they catch any of our men they kill them, too. If I were alone I would let them catch me for they are very beautiful, and I do not think they would kill me. I think they would like me."

"I don't doubt it," agreed Lady Barbara, "but if I were you I would not let them catch me."

"Why not? What have I to hope for here? Perhaps some day I shall be caught smiling or singing; and then I shall be killed, and you have not seen all of the ways in which the Prophet can destroy

sinners. If I am not killed I shall certainly be taken to his cave by some horrible old man; and there, all my life, I shall be a slave to him and his other women; and the old women are more cruel to such as I than even the men. No, if I were not afraid of what lies between I should run away and go to the land of the North Midians."

"Perhaps your life will be happier and safer here with me since we showed Abraham, the son of Abrahm, that we are more powerful than he; and when the time comes that my people find me, or I discover an avenue of escape, you shall come away with me, Jezebel; though I don't know that you will be much safer in England than you are here."

"Why?" demanded the girl.

"You are too beautiful ever to have perfect safety or perfect happiness."

"You think I am beautiful? I always thought so, too. I saw myself when I looked into the lake or into a vessel of water; and I thought that I was beautiful, although I did not look like the other girls of the land of Midian. Yet you are beautiful and I do not look like you. Have you never been safe or happy, Barbara?"

The English girl laughed. "I am not *too* beautiful, Jezebel," she explained.

A footfall on the steep pathway leading to the cave caught their attention. "Someone comes," said Jezebel.

"It is late," said Lady Barbara. "No one should be coming now to our cave."

"Perhaps it is a man from North Midian," suggested Jezebel. "Is my hair arranged prettily?"

"We had better be rolling a rock into position than thinking about our hair," said Lady Barbara, with a short laugh.

"Ah, but they are such beautiful men!" sighed Jezebel.

Lady Barbara drew a small knife from one of her pockets and opened the blade. "I do not like 'beautiful' men," she said.

The approaching footfalls were coming slowly nearer; but the two young women, sitting just within the entrance to their cave, could not see the steep

pathway along which the nocturnal visitor was approaching. Presently a shadow fell across their threshold and an instant later a tall old man stepped into view. It was Abraham, the son of Abraham.

Lady Barbara rose to her feet and faced the Prophet. "What brings you to my cave at this time of night?" she demanded. "What is it, of such importance, that could not wait until morning? Why do you disturb me now?"

For a long moment the old man stood glaring at her. "I have walked with Jehovah in the moonlight," he said, presently; "and Jehovah hath spoken in the ear of Abraham, the son of Abraham, Prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah."

"And thou hast come to make your peace with me as Jehovah directed?"

"Such are not the commands of Jehovah," replied the Prophet. "Rather He is wroth with thee who didst seek to deceive the Prophet of His son."

"You must have been walking with someone else," snapped Lady Barbara.

"Nay. I walked with Jehovah," insisted Abraham, the son of Abraham. "Thou hast deceived me. With trickery, perhaps even with sorcery, thou didst bring to life her who was dead by the will of Jehovah; and Jehovah is wroth."

"Thou heardest my prayers, and thou witnessedst the miracle of the resurrection," Lady Barbara reminded him. "Thinkest thou that I am more

powerful than Jehovah? It was Jehovah who raised the dead child."

"Thou speakest even as Jehovah prophesied," said the Prophet. "And He spake in my ear and commanded that I should prove thee false, that all men might see thine iniquity."

"Interesting, if true," commented Lady Barbara; "but not true."

"Thou darest question the word of the Prophet?" cried the man angrily. "But tomorrow thou shalt have the opportunity to prove thy boasts. Tomorrow Jehovah shall judge thee. Tomorrow thou shalt be cast into the waters of Chinnereth in a weighted net, nor will there be cords attached whereby it may be drawn above the surface."

7. THE SLAVE RAIDER

Leon Stabutch mounted behind one of his captors, riding to an unknown fate, was warrantably perturbed. He had been close to death at the hands of one of the band already, and from their appearance and their attitude toward him it was not difficult for him to imagine that they would require but the slightest pretext to destroy him.

What their intentions might be was highly problematical, though he could conceive of but one motive which might inspire such as they to preserve him. But if ransom were their aim he could not conjecture any method by which these semi-savages might contact with his friends or superiors in Russia. He was

forced to admit that his prospects appeared most discouraging.

The *shiftas* were forced to move slowly because of the packs some of their horses were carrying since the looting of the Russian's camp. Nor could they have ridden much more rapidly, under any circumstances, on the trail that they entered shortly following their capture of Stabutch.

Entering a narrow, rocky canyon the trail wound steeply upward to debouch at last upon a small, level mesa, at the upper end of which Stabutch saw what, at a distance, appeared to be a palisaded village nestling close beneath a rocky cliff that bounded the mesa in that direction.

This evidently was the destination of his captors, who were doubtless members of the very band the mere rumor of which had filled his men with terror. Stabutch was only sorry that the balance of the story, postulating the existence of a white leader, was evidently erroneous, since he would have anticipated less difficulty in arranging the terms and collection of a ransom with a European than with these ignorant savages.

As they neared the village Stabutch discovered that their approach had been made beneath the scrutiny of lookouts posted behind the palisade, whose heads and shoulders were now plainly visible above the crude though substantial

rampart.

And presently these sentries were shouting greetings and queries to the members of the returning band as the village gate swung slowly open and the savage horsemen entered the enclosure with their captive, who was soon the center of a throng of men, women, and children, curious and questioning —a savage throng of surly blacks.

Although there was nothing actively menacing in the attitude of the savages there was a definite unfriendliness in their demeanor that cast a further gloom of apprehension upon the already depressed spirits of the Russian; and as the cavalcade entered the central compound, about which the huts were

grouped, he experienced a sensation of utter hopelessness.

It was at this moment that he saw a short, bearded white man emerge from one of the squalid dwellings; and instantly the depression that had seized him was, partially at least, relieved.

The *shiftas* were dismounting, and now he was roughly dragged from the animal which had borne him from his camp and pushed unceremoniously toward the white man, who stood before the doorway from whence he had appeared surveying the prisoner sullenly, while he listened to the report of the leader of the returning band.

There was no smile upon the face of the bearded man as he addressed

Stabutch after the black*shifta* had completed his report. The Russian recognized that the language employed by the stranger was Italian, a tongue which he could neither speak nor understand, and this he explained in Russian; but the bearded one only shrugged and shook his head. Then Stabutch tried English.

"That is better," said the other brokenly. "I understand English a little. Who are you? What was the language you first spoke to me? From what country do you come?"

"I am a scientist," replied Stabutch. "I spoke to you in Russian."

"Is Russia your country?"

"Yes."

The man eyed him intently for some time, as though attempting to read the innermost secrets of his mind, before he spoke again. Stabutch noted the squat, powerful build of the stranger, the cruel lips, only partially concealed by the heavy, black beard, and the hard, crafty eyes, and guessed that he might have fared as well at the hands of the blacks.

"You say you are a Russian," said the man. "Red or white?"

Stabutch wished that he might know how to answer this question. He was aware that the Red Russians were not well beloved by all peoples; and that the majority of Italians were trained to hate them, and yet there was something in the personality of this stranger that

suggested that he might be more favorably inclined to a Red than to a White Russian. Furthermore, to admit that he was a Red might assure the other that a ransom could be obtained more surely than from a White, whose organization was admittedly weak and poverty stricken. For these reasons Stabutch decided to tell the truth.

"I am a Red," he said.

The other considered him intently and in silence for a moment; then he made a gesture that would have passed unnoticed by any but a Red Communist. Leon Stabutch breathed an inaudible sigh of relief, but his facial expression gave no indication of recognition of this secret sign as he answered it in

accordance with the ritual of his organization, while the other watched him closely.

"Your name, comrade?" inquired the bearded one in an altered tone.

"Leon Stabutch," replied the Russian; "and yours, comrade?"

"Dominic Capietro. Come, we will talk inside. I have a bottle there wherewith we may toast the cause and become better acquainted."

"Lead on, comrade," said Stabutch; "I feel the need of something to quiet my nerves. I have had a bad few hours."

"I apologize for the inconvenience to which my men have put you," replied Capietro, leading the way into the hut; "but all shall be made right again. Be

seated. As you see, I lead the simple life; but what imperial throne may compare in grandeur with the bosom of Mother Earth!"

"None, comrade," agreed Stabutch, noting the entire absence of chairs, or even stools, that the other's speech had already suggested and condoned. "Especially," he added, "when enjoyed beneath a friendly roof."

Capietro rummaged in an old duffle bag and at last withdrew a bottle which he uncorked and handed to Stabutch. "Golden goblets are for royal tyrants, Comrade Stabutch," he declaimed, "but not for such as we, eh?"

Stabutch raised the bottle to his lips and took a draught of the fiery liquid,

and as it burned its way to his stomach and the fumes rose to his head the last of his fears and doubts vanished. "Tell me now," he said, as he passed the bottle back to his host, "why I was seized, who you are, and what is to become of me?"

"My headman told me that he found you alone, deserted by your safari, and not knowing whether you were friend or enemy he brought you here to me. You are lucky, comrade, that Dongo chanced to be in charge of the scouting party today. Another might have killed you first and inquired later. They are a pack of murderers and thieves, these good men of mine. They have been oppressed by cruel masters, they have felt the heel of the tyrant upon their necks, and their

hands are against all men. You cannot blame them.

"But they are good men. They serve me well. They are the man power, I am the brains; and we divide the profits of our operations equally—half to the man power, half to the brains," and Capietro grinned.

"And your operations?" asked Stabutch.

Capietro scowled; then his face cleared. "You are a comrade, but let me tell you that it is not always safe to be inquisitive."

Stabutch shrugged. "Tell me nothing," he said. "I do not care. It is none of my business."

"Good," exclaimed the Italian, "and

why you are here in Africa is none of my business, unless you care to tell me. Let us drink again."

While the conversation that ensued, punctuated by numerous drinks, carefully eschewed personalities, the question of the other's occupation was uppermost in the mind of each; and as the natural effects of the liquor tended to disarm their suspicions and urge confidence it also stimulated the curiosity of the two, each of whom was now mellow and genial in his cups.

It was Capietro who broke first beneath the strain of an overpowering curiosity. They were sitting side by side upon a disreputably filthy rug, two empty bottles and a newly opened one before

them. "Comrade," he cried, throwing an arm about the shoulders of the Russian affectionately, "I like you. Dominic Capietro does not like many men. This is his motto: Like few men and love all women," whereat he laughed loudly.

"Let's drink to that," suggested Stabutch, joining in the laughter. "'Like few men and love all women.' That is the idea!"

"I knew the minute I saw you that you were a man after my own heart, comrade," continued Capietro, "and why should there be secrets between comrades?"

"Certainly, why?" agreed Stabutch.

"So I shall tell you why I am here with this filthy band of thieving

cutthroats. I was a soldier in the Italian army. My regiment was stationed in Eritrea. I was fomenting discord and mutiny, as a good Communist should, when some dog of a Fascist reported me to the commanding officer. I was arrested. Doubtless, I should have been shot, but I escaped and made my way to Abyssinia, where Italians are none too well liked; but when it was known that I was a deserter I was treated well.

"After a while I obtained employment with a powerful *ras* to train his soldiers along European lines. There I became proficient in Amharic, the official language of the country, and also learned to speak that of the Gallas, who constituted the bulk of the population of

the principality of the*ras* for whom I worked. Naturally, being averse to any form of monarchistic government, I commenced at once to instill the glorious ideals of Communism into the breasts of the retainers of the old *ras*; but once again I was frustrated by an informer, and only by chance did I escape with my life.

"This time, however, I succeeded in enticing a number of men to accompany me. We stole horses and weapons from the *ras* and rode south where we joined a band of *shiftas*, or rather, I should say, absorbed them.

"This organized body of raiders and thieves made an excellent force with which to levy tribute upon chance

travelers and caravans, but the returns were small and so we drifted down into this remote country of the Ghenzi where we can ply a lucrative trade in black ivory."

"Black ivory? I never knew there was such a thing."

Capietro laughed. "Two legged ivory," he explained.

Stabutch whistled. "Oh," he said, "I think I understand. You are a slave raider; but where is there any market for slaves, other than the wage slaves of capitalistic countries?"

"You would be surprised, comrade. There are still many markets, including the mandates and protectorates of several highly civilized signatories to

world court conventions aimed at the abolition of human slavery. Yes, I am a slave raider—rather a remarkable vocation for a university graduate and the former editor of a successful newspaper."

"And you prefer this?"

"I have no alternative, and I must live. At least I think I must live —a most common form of rationalization. You see, my newspaper was anti-Fascist. And now, comrade, about yourself—what 'scientific' research is the Soviet government undertaking in Africa?"

"Let us call it anthropology," replied Stabutch. "I am looking for a man."

"There are many men in Africa and much nearer the coast than the Ghenzi

country. You have traveled far inland looking for a man."

"The man I look for I expected to find somewhere south of the Ghenzis," replied Stabutch.

"Perhaps I can aid you. I know many men, at least by name and reputation, in this part of the world," suggested the Italian.

Stabutch, had he been entirely sober, would have hesitated to give this information to a total stranger, but alcohol induces thoughtless confidences. "I search for an Englishman known as Tarzan of the Apes," he explained.

Capietro's eyes narrowed. "A friend of yours?" he asked.

"I know of no one I would rather see,"

replied Stabutch.

"You say he is here in the Ghenzi country?"

"I do not know. None of the natives I have questioned knew his whereabouts."

"His country is far south of the Ghenzis," said Capietro.

"Ah, you know of him, then?"

"Yes. Who does not? But what business have you with Tarzan of the Apes?"

"I have come from Moscow to kill him," blurted Stabutch, and in the same instant regretted his rash admission.

Capietro relaxed. "I am relieved," he said.

"Why?" demanded the Russian.

"I feared he was a friend of yours," explained the Italian. "In which case we could not be friends; but if you have come to kill him you shall have nothing but my best wishes and heartiest support."

Stabutch's relief was almost a thing of substance, so considerable and genuine was it. "You, too, have a grievance against him?" he asked.

"He is a constant threat against my little operations in black ivory," replied Capietro. "I should feel much safer if he were out of the way."

"Then perhaps you will help me, comrade?" inquired Stabutch eagerly.

"I have lost no ape-man," replied Capietro, "and if he leaves me alone I

shall never look for him. That adventure, comrade, you will not have to share with me."

"But you have taken away my means of carrying out my plans. I cannot seek Tarzan without a safari," complained Stabutch.

"That is right," admitted the raider; "but perhaps the mistake of my men may be rectified. Your equipment and goods are safe. They will be returned to you, and, as for men, who better could find them for you than Dominic Capietro, who deals in men?"

The safari of Lord Passmore moved northward, skirting the western foothills of the Ghenzi Mountains. His stalwart porters marched almost with the

precision of trained soldiers, at least in that proper distances were maintained and there were no stragglers. A hundred yards in advance were three *askaris* and behind these came Lord Passmore, his gun bearer, and his headman. At the head and rear of the column of porters was a detachment of *askaris*—well armed, efficient appearing men. The whole entourage suggested intelligent organization and experienced supervision. Evidence of willingly observed discipline was apparent, a discipline that seemed to be respected by all with the possible exception of Isaza, Lord Passmore's "boy," who was also his cook.

Isaza marched where his fancy

dictated, laughing and joking with first one and then another of the members of the safari—the personification of good nature that pervaded the whole party and that was constantly manifested by the laughter and singing of the men. It was evident that Lord Passmore was an experienced African traveler and that he knew what treatment to accord his followers.

How different, indeed, this well ordered safari, from another that struggled up the steep slopes of the Ghenzis a few miles to the east. Here the column was strung out for fully a mile, the*askaris* straggling along among the porters, while the two white men whom they accompanied forged far ahead with

a single boy and a gun bearer.

"Geeze," remarked the "Gunner," "you sure picked on a lousy racket! I could of stayed home and climbed up the front of the Sherman Hotel, if I had of wanted to climb, and always been within a spit of eats and drinks."

"Oh, no you couldn't," said Lafayette Smith.

"Why not? Who'd a stopped me?"

"Your friends, the cops."

"That's right; but don't call 'em my friends—the lousy bums. But wherinell do you think you're going?"

"I think I perceive in this mountain range evidences of upthrust by horizontal compression," replied Lafayette Smith,

"and I wish to examine the surface indications more closely than it is possible to do from a distance. Therefore, we must go to the mountains, since they will not come to us."

"And what does it get you?" demanded "Gunner" Patrick. "Not a buck. It's a bum racket."

Lafayette Smith laughed good-naturedly. They were crossing a meadowland through which a mountain stream wound. Surrounding it was a forest. "This would make a good camp," he said, "from which to work for a few days. You can hunt, and I'll have a look at the formations in the vicinity. Then we'll move on."

"It's jake with me," replied the

"Gunner." "I'm fed up on climbing."

"Suppose you remain with the safari and get camp made," suggested Smith. "I'll go on up a little farther with my boy and see what I can see. It's early yet."

"Oke," assented the "Gunner." "I'll park the mob up near them trees. Don't get lost, and, say, you better take my protection guy with you," he added, nodding in the direction of his gun bearer.

"I'm not going to hunt," replied Smith. "I won't need him."

"Then take my rod here." The "Gunner" started to unbuckle his pistol belt. "You might need it."

"Thanks, I have one," replied Smith, tapping his .32.

"Geeze, you don't call that thing a rod, do you?" demanded the "Gunner," contemptuously.

"It's all I need. I'm looking for rocks, not trouble. Come on Obambi," and he motioned his boy to follow him as he started up the slope toward the higher mountains.

"Geeze," muttered the "Gunner," "I seen pipies what ain't as much of a nut as that guy; but," he added, "he's a regular guy at that. You can't help likin' him." Then he turned his attention to the selection of a campsite.

Lafayette Smith entered the forest beyond the meadowland; and here the going became more difficult, for the ground rose rapidly; and the underbrush

was thick. He fought his way upward, Obambi at his heels; and at last he reached a higher elevation, where the forest growth was much thinner because of the rocky nature of the ground and the absence of top soil. Here he paused to examine the formation, but only to move on again, this time at right angles to his original direction.

Thus, stopping occasionally to investigate, he moved erratically upward until he achieved the summit of a ridge from which he had a view of miles of rugged mountains in the distance. The canyon that lay before him, separating him from the next ridge, aroused his interest. The formation of the opposite wall, he decided, would bear closer

investigation.

Obambi had flung himself to the ground when Smith halted. Obambi appeared exhausted. He was not. He was merely disgusted. To him the bwana was mad, quite mad. Upon no other premises could Obambi explain the senseless climbing, with an occasional pause to examine rocks. Obambi was positive that they might have discovered plenty of rocks at the foot of the mountains had they but searched for them. And then, too, this bwana did not hunt. He supposed all bwanas came to Africa to hunt. This one, being so different, must be mad.

Smith glanced at his boy. It was too bad, he thought, to make Obambi do all

this climbing unnecessarily. Certainly there was no way in which the boy might assist him, while seeing him in a constant state of exhaustion reacted unfavorably on Smith. Better by far be alone. He turned to the boy. "Go back to camp, Obambi," he said. "I do not need you here."

Obambi looked at him in surprise. Now he knew the bwana was very mad. However, it would be much more pleasant in camp than climbing about in these mountains. He rose to his feet. "The bwana does not need me?" he asked. "Perhaps he will need me." Obambi's conscience was already troubling him. He knew that he should not leave his bwana alone.

"No, I shan't need you, Obambi," Smith assured him. "You run along back to camp. I'll come in pretty soon."

"Yes, bwana," and Obambi turned back down the mountain side.

Lafayette Smith clambered down into the canyon, which was deeper than he had supposed, and then worked his way up the opposite side that proved to be even more precipitous than it had appeared from the summit of the ridge. However, he found so much to interest him that he considered it well worth the effort, and so deeply absorbed was he that he gave no heed to the passage of time.

It was not until he reached the top of the far side of the canyon that he noted

the diminishing light that presaged the approach of night. Even then he was not greatly concerned; but he realized that it would be quite dark before he could hope to recross the canyon, and it occurred to him that by following up the ridge on which he stood he could reach the head of the canyon where it joined the ridge from which he had descended into it, thus saving him a long, arduous climb and shortening the time, if not the distance, back to camp.

As he trudged upward along the ridge, night fell; but still he kept on, though now he could only grope his way slowly, nor did it occur to him for several hours that he was hopelessly lost.

8. THE BABOONS

A new day had dawned, and Africa greeted the age old miracle of Kudu emerging from his lair behind the eastern hills and smiled. With the exception of a few stragglers the creatures of the night had vanished, surrendering the world to their diurnal fellows.

Tongani, the baboon, perched upon his sentinel rock, surveyed the scene and, perhaps, not without appreciation of the beauties; for who are we to say that God touched so many countless of his works with beauty yet gave to but one of these the power of appreciation?

Below the sentinel fed the tribe of Zugash, the king; fierce tongani shes with their balm clinging to their backs, if very

young, while others played about, imitating their elders in their constant search for food; surly, vicious bulls; old Zugash himself, the surliest and most vicious.

The keen, close-set eyes of the sentinel, constantly upon the alert down wind, perceived something moving among the little hills below. It was the top of a man's head. Presently the whole head came into view; and the sentinel saw that it belonged to a tarmangani; but as yet he sounded no alarm, for the tarmangani was still a long way off and might not be coming in the direction of the tribe. The sentinel would watch yet a little longer and make sure, for it was senseless to interrupt the feeding of the

tribe if no danger threatened.

Now the tarmangani was in full view. Tongani wished that he might have the evidence of his keen nose as well as his eyes; then there would be no doubt, for, like many animals, the tonganis preferred to submit all evidence to their sensitive nostrils before accepting the verdict of their eyes; but the wind was in the wrong direction.

Perhaps, too, Tongani was puzzled, for this was such a tarmangani as he had never before seen—a tarmangani who walked almost as naked as Tongani himself. But for the white skin he might have thought him a gomangani. This being a tarmangani, the sentinel looked for the feared thunder stick; and because

he saw none he waited before giving the alarm. But presently he saw that the creature was coming directly toward the tribe.

The tarmangani had long been aware of the presence of the baboons, being down wind from them where their strong scent was borne to his keen nostrils. Also, he had seen the sentinel at almost the same instant that the sentinel had seen him; yet he continued upward, swinging along in easy strides that suggested the power and savage independence of Numa, the lion.

Suddenly Tongani, the baboon, sprang to his feet, uttering a sharp bark, and instantly the tribe awoke to action, swarming up the low cliffs at the foot of

which they had been feeding. Here they turned and faced the intruder, barking their defiance as they ran excitedly to and fro.

When they saw that the creature was alone and bore no thunder stick they were more angry than frightened, and they scolded noisily at this interruption of their feeding. Zugash and several of the other larger bulls even clambered part way down the cliff to frighten him away; but in this they only succeeded in increasing their own anger, for the tarmangani continued upward toward them.

Zugash, the king, was now beside himself with rage. He stormed and threatened. "Go away!" he barked. "I am

Zugash. I kill!"

And now the stranger halted at the foot of the cliff and surveyed him. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said. "Tarzan does not come to the stamping grounds of the tongani to kill. He comes as a friend."

Silence fell upon the tribe of Zugash; the silence of stunning surprise. Never before had they heard either tarmangani or gomangani speak the language of the ape-people. They had never heard of Tarzan of the Apes, whose country was far to the south; but nevertheless they were impressed by his ability to understand them and speak to them. However, he was a stranger, and so Zugash ordered him away again.

"Tarzan does not wish to remain with the tongani," replied the ape-man; "he desires only to pass them in peace."

"Go away!" growled Zugash. "I kill. I am Zugash."

Tarzan swung up the cliff quite as easily as had the baboons. It was his answer to Zugash, the king. None was there who better knew the strength, the courage, the ferocity of the tongani than he, yet he knew, too, that he might be in this country for some time and that, if he were to survive, he must establish himself definitely in the minds of all lesser creatures as one who walked without fear and whom it was well to let alone.

Barking furiously, the baboons

retreated; and Tarzan gained the summit of the cliff, where he saw that the shes and balus had scattered, many of them going farther up into the hills, while the adult bulls remained to contest the way.

As Tarzan paused, just beyond the summit of the cliff, he found himself the center of a circle of snarling bulls against the combined strength and ferocity of which he would be helpless. To another than himself his position might have appeared precarious almost to the point of hopelessness; but Tarzan knew the wild peoples of his savage world too well to expect an unprovoked attack, or a killing for the love of killing such as only man, among all the creatures of the world, habitually

commits. Neither was he unaware of the danger of his position should a bull, more nervous or suspicious than his fellows, mistake Tarzan's intentions or misinterpret some trivial act or gesture as a threat against the safety of the tribe.

But he knew that only an accident might precipitate a charge and that if he gave them no cause to attack him they would gladly let him proceed upon his way unmolested. However, he had hoped to achieve friendly relations with the tongani, whose knowledge of the country and its inhabitants might prove of inestimable value to him. Better, too, that the tribe of Zugash be allies than enemies. And so he assayed once more to win their confidence.

"Tell me, Zugash," he said, addressing the bristling king baboon, "if there be many tarmangani in your country. Tarzan hunts for a bad tarmangani who has many gomangani with him. They are bad men. They kill. With thunder sticks they kill. They will kill the tongani. Tarzan has come to drive them from your country."

But Zugash only growled and placed the back of his head against the ground in challenge. The other males moved restlessly sideways, their shoulders high, their tails bent in crooked curves. Now some of the younger bulls rested the backs of their heads upon the ground, imitating the challenge of their king.

Zugash, grimacing at Tarzan, raised

and lowered his brows rapidly, exposing the white skin about his eyes. Thus did the savage old king seek to turn the heart of his antagonist to water by the frightfulness of his mien; but Tarzan only shrugged indifferently and moved on again as though convinced that the baboons would not accept his overtures of friendship.

Straight toward the challenging bulls that stood in his path he walked, without haste and apparently without concern; but his eyes were narrowed and watchful, his every sense on the alert. One bull, stiff legged and arrogant, moved grudgingly aside; but another stood his ground. Here, the ape-man knew the real test would come that

should decide the issue.

The two were close now, face to face, when suddenly there burst from the lips of the man-beast a savage growl, and simultaneously he charged. With an answering growl and a catlike leap the baboon bounded aside; and Tarzan passed beyond the rim of the circle, victor in the game of bluff which is played by every order of living thing sufficiently advanced in the scale of intelligence to possess an imagination.

Seeing that the man-thing did not follow upward after the shes and balus, the bulls contented themselves with barking insults after him and aiming uncomplimentary gestures at his retreating figure; but such were not the

acts that menaced safety, and the ape-man ignored them.

Purposely he had turned away from the shes and their young, with the intention of passing around them, rather than precipitate a genuine attack by seeming to threaten them. And thus his way took him to the edge of a shallow ravine into which, unknown either to Tarzan or the tongani, a young mother had fled with her tiny balu.

Tarzan was still in full view of the tribe of Zugash, though he alone could see into the ravine, when suddenly three things occurred that shattered the peace that seemed again descending upon the scene. A vagrant air current wafted upward from the thick verdure below

him the scent of Sheeta, the panther; a baboon voiced a scream of terror; and, looking down, the ape-man saw the young she, her balu clinging to her back, fleeing upward toward him with savage Sheeta in pursuit.

As Tarzan, reacting instantly to the necessity of the moment, leaped downward with back thrown spear hand, the bulls of Zugash raced forward in answer to the note of terror In the voice of the young mother.

From his position above the actors in this sudden tragedy of the wilds the ape-man could see the panther over the head of the baboon and realizing that the beast must reach his victim before succor could arrive he hurled his spear in the

forlorn hope of stopping the carnivore, if only for a moment.

The cast was one that only a practiced hand might have dared attempt, for the danger to the baboon was almost as great as that which threatened the panther should the aim of the ape-man not be perfect.

Zugash and his bulls, bounding forward at an awkward gallop, reached the edge of the ravine just in time to see the heavy spear hurtle past the head of the she by a margin of inches only and bury itself in the breast of Sheeta. Then they were down the slope, a snarling, snapping pack, and with them went an English viscount, to fail upon a surprised, pain-maddened panther.

The baboons leaped in to snap at their hereditary foe and leaped out again, and the man-beast, as quick and agile as they, leaped and struck with his hunting knife, while the frenzied cat lunged this way and that, first at one tormentor and then at another.

Twice those powerful, raking talons reached their mark and two bulls sprawled, torn and bloody, upon the ground; but the bronzed hide of the ape-man ever eluded the rage of the wounded cat.

Short was the furious battle, ferocious the growls and snarls of the combatants, prodigious the leaps and bounds of the excited shes hovering in the background; and then Sheeta, rearing high upon his

hind feet, struck savagely at Tarzan and, in the same instant, plunged to earth dead, slain by the spear point puncturing his heart.

Instantly the great tarmangani, who had once been king of the great apes, leaped close and placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill. He raised his face toward Kudu, the sun; and from his lips broke the horrid challenge of the bull ape that has killed.

For a moment silence fell upon the forest, the mountain, and the jungle. Awed, the baboons ceased their restless movement and their din. Tarzan stooped and drew the spear from the quivering body of Sheeta, while the tongani watched him with a new interest.

Then Zugash approached. This time he did not rest the back of his head against the ground in challenge. "The bulls of the tribe of Zugash are the friends of Tarzan of the Apes," he said.

"Tarzan is the friend of the bulls of the tribe of Zugash," responded the ape-man.

"We have seen a tarmangani," said Zugash. "He has many gomangani. There are many thunder sticks among them. They are bad. Perhaps it is they whom Tarzan seeks."

"Perhaps," admitted the slayer of Sheeta. "Where are they?"

"They were camped where the rocks sit upon the mountain side, as here." He nodded toward the cliff.

"Where?" asked Tarzan again, and this time Zugash motioned along the foothills toward the south.

9. THE GREAT FISSURE

The morning sun shone upon the bosom of Chinnereth, glancing from the breeze born ripples that moved across its surface like vast companies of soldiers passing in review with their countless spears gleaming in the sunlight—a dazzling aspect of beauty.

But to Lady Barbara Collis it connoted something quite different—a shallow splendor concealing cruel and treacherous depths, the real Chinnereth. She shuddered as she approached its shore surrounded by the apostles, preceded by Abraham, the son of Abraham, and followed by the elders and the villagers. Among them, somewhere, she knew were the six with

their great net and their fiber ropes.

How alike were they all to Chinnereth, hiding their cruelty and their treachery beneath a thin veneer of godliness! But there the parallel terminated, for Chinnereth was beautiful. She glanced at the faces of the men nearest her, and again she shuddered. "'So God created man in his own image,'" she mused. "Who, then, created these?"

During the long weeks that fate had held her in this land of Midian she had often sought an explanation of the origin of this strange race, and the deductions of her active mind had not deviated greatly from the truth. Noting the exaggerated racial characteristics of

face and form that distinguished them from other peoples she had seen, recalling their common tendency to epilepsy, she had concluded that they were the inbred descendants of a common ancestor, himself a defective and an epileptic.

This theory explained much; but it failed to explain Jezebel, who insisted that she was the child of two of these creatures and that, insofar as she knew, no new strain of blood had ever been injected into the veins of the Midian by intermating with other peoples. Yet, somehow, Lady Barbara knew that such a strain must have been introduced, though she could not guess the truth nor the antiquity of the fact that lay buried in

the grave of a little slave girl.

And their religion! Again she shuddered. What a hideous travesty of the teachings of Christ! It was a confused jumble of ancient Christianity and still more ancient Judaism, handed down by word of mouth through a half imbecile people who had no written language; a people who had confused Paul the Apostle with Christ the Master and lost entirely the essence of the Master's teachings, while interpolating hideous barbarisms of their own invention. Sometimes she thought she saw in this exaggerated deviation a suggestion of parallel to other so-called Christian sects of the civilized outer world.

But now her train of thoughts was

interrupted by the near approach of the procession to the shore of the lake. Here was the flat-topped lava rock of grim suggestiveness and hideous memory. How long it seemed since she had watched the six hurl their screaming victim from its well worn surface, and yet it had been but yesterday. Now it was her turn. The Prophet and the Apostles were intoning their senseless gibberish, meant to impress the villagers with their erudition and cloak the real vacuity of their minds, a practice not unknown to more civilized sects.

She was halted now upon the smooth surface of the lava, polished by soft sandals and naked feet through the countless years that these cruel rites had

been enacted beside the waters of Chinnereth. Again she heard the screams of yesterday's victim. But Lady Barbara Collis had not screamed, nor would she. She would rob them of that satisfaction at least.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, motioned the six to the fore; and they came, bearing their net and their cords. At their feet lay the lava fragment that would weight the net and its contents. The Prophet raised his hands above his head and the people kneeled. In the forefront of their ranks Lady Barbara saw the golden haired Jezebel; and her heart was touched, for there were anguish in the beautiful face and tears in the lovely eyes. Here was one, at least,

who could harbor love and compassion.

"I have walked with Jehovah," cried Abraham, the son of Abraham, and Lady Barbara wondered that he did not have blisters on his feet, so often he walked with Jehovah. The levity of the conceit brought an involuntary smile to her lips, a smile that the Prophet noticed. "You smile," he said, angrily. "You smile when you should scream and beg for mercy as the others do. Why do you smile?"

"Because I am not afraid," replied Lady Barbara, though she was very much afraid.

"Why art thou not afraid, woman?" demanded the old man.

"I, too, have walked with Jehovah,"

she replied, "and He told me to fear not, because you are a false prophet, and—"

"Silence!" thundered Abraham, the son of Abraham. "Blaspheme no more. Jehovah shall judge you in a moment." He turned to the six. "Into the net with her!"

Quickly they did his bidding; and as they commenced to swing her body to and fro, to gain momentum against the moment that they would release their holds and cast her into the deep lake, she heard The Prophet reciting her iniquities that Jehovah was about to judge in his own peculiar way. His speech was punctuated by the screams and groans of those of the company who were seized in the grip of the now familiar attacks to

which Lady Barbara had become so accustomed as to be almost as callous to as the Midians themselves.

From her pocket the girl extracted the little pen knife that was her only weapon and held it firmly in one hand, the blade open and ready for the work she intended it to do. And what work was that? Surely, she could not hope to inflict instant death upon herself with that inadequate weapon! Yet, in the last stages of fear induced by utter helplessness and hopelessness one may attempt anything, even the impossible.

Now they were swinging her far out over Chinnereth. The Apostles and the elders were intoning their weird chant in voices excited to frenzy by the

imminence of death, those who were not writhing upon the rocky face of the altar in the throes of seizures.

Suddenly came the word from Abraham, the son of Abraham. Lady Barbara caught her breath in a last frightened gasp. The six released their holds. A loud scream arose from the huddled villagers—the scream of a woman —and as she plunged toward the dark waters Lady Barbara knew that it was the voice of Jezebel crying out in the anguish of sorrow. Then mysterious Chinnereth closed above her head.

At that very moment Lafayette Smith, A.M., Ph.D., Sc.D., was stumbling along a rocky mountain side that walled the great crater where lay the land of Midian

and Chinnereth. He was no less aware of the tragedy being enacted upon the opposite side of that stupendous wall than of the fact that he was moving directly away from the camp he was seeking. Had there been anyone there to tell him, and had they told him, that he was hopelessly lost he would have been inclined to dispute the statement, so positive was he that he was taking a short cut to camp, which he imagined was but a little distance ahead.

Although he had been without supper and breakfast, hunger had not as yet caused him any annoyance, partially because of the fact that he had had some chocolate with him, which had materially assisted in allaying its pangs,

and partially through his interest in the geologic formations that held the attention of his scholarly mind to the exclusion of such material considerations as hunger, thirst, and bodily comfort. Even the question of personal safety was relegated to the oblivion that usually engulfed all practical issues when Lafayette Smith was immersed in the pleasant waters of research.

Consequently he was unaware of the proximity of a tawny body, nor did the fixed and penetrating gaze of a pair of cruel, yellow- green eyes penetrate the armor of his preoccupation to disturb that sixth sense that is popularly supposed to warn us of unseen danger.

Yet even had any premonition of threat to his life or safety disturbed him he doubtless would have ignored it, safe in the consciousness that he was adequately protected by the possession of his .32 caliber, nickel plated pistol.

Moving northward along the lower slopes of a conical mountain, the mind of the geologist became more and more deeply engrossed in the rocky story that Nature had written upon the landscape, a story so thrilling that even the thoughts of camp were forgotten; and as he made his way farther and farther from camp a great lion stalked us his wake.

What hidden urge prompted Numa thus to follow the man-thing perhaps the great cat, himself, could not have

guessed. He was not hungry, for he had but recently finished a kill, nor was he a man- eater, though a properly balanced combination of circumstances might easily find the scales tipped in that direction by hunger, inevitable and oft recurring. It may have been only curiosity, or, again, some motive akin to that playfulness which is inherent in all cats.

For an hour Numa followed the man —an hour of intense interest for both of them—an hour that would have been replete with far greater interest for the man, if less pleasurable, had he shared with Numa the knowledge of their propinquity. Then the man halted before a narrow vertical cleft in the rocky

escarpment towering above him. Here was an interesting entry in the book of Nature! What titanic force had thus rent the solid rock of this mighty mountain? It had its own peculiar significance, but what was it? Perhaps elsewhere on the face of the mountain, that here became precipitous, there would be other evidence to point the way to a solution. Lafayette Smith looked up at the face of the cliff towering above him, he looked ahead in the direction he had been going; and then he looked back in the direction from which he had come—and saw the lion.

For a long moment the two stared at one another. Surprise and interest were the most definitely registered of the

emotions that the discovery engendered in the mind of the man. Suspicion and irritability were aroused in Numa.

"Most interesting," thought Lafayette Smith. "A splendid specimen;" but his interest in lions was purely academic, and his thoughts quickly reverted to the more important phenomenon of the crack in the mountain, which now, again, claimed his undivided attention. From which it may be inferred that Lafayette Smith was either an inordinately courageous man or a fool. Neither assumption, however, would be wholly correct, especially the latter. The truth of the matter is that Lafayette Smith suffered from inexperience and impracticality. While he knew that a lion

was, *per se*, a threat to longevity he saw no reason why this lion should attack him. He, Lafayette Smith, had done nothing to offend this, or any other, lion; he was attending to his own affairs and, like the gentleman he was, expected others, including lions, to be equally considerate. Furthermore, he had a childlike faith in the infallibility of his nickel plated .32 should worse develop into worst. Therefore he ignored Numa and returned to contemplation of the intriguing crack.

It was several feet wide and was apparent as far up the face of the cliff as he could see. Also there was every indication that it continued far below the present surface of the ground, but had

been filled by debris brought down by erosion from above. How far into the mountain it extended he could not guess; but he hoped that it ran back, and was open, for a great distance, in which event it would offer a most unique means for studying the origin of this mountain massif.

Therefore, with this thought uppermost in his mind, and the lion already crowded into the dim background of his consciousness, he entered the narrow opening of the intriguing fissure. Here he discovered that the cleft curved gradually to the left and that it extended upward to the surface, where it was considerably wider than at the bottom, thus affording

both light and air for the interior.

Thrilled with excitement and glowing with pride in his discovery, Lafayette clambered inward over the fallen rocks that littered the floor of the fissure, intent now on exploring the opening to its full extent and then working back slowly to the entrance in a more leisurely manner, at which time he would make a minute examination of whatever geological record Nature had imprinted upon the walls of this majestic corridor. Hunger, thirst, camp, and the lion were forgotten.

Numa, however, was no geologist. The great cleft aroused no palpitant enthusiasm within his broad breast. It did not cause him to forget anything, and it intrigued his interest only to the extent

of causing him to speculate on why the man-thing had entered it. Having noted the indifferent attitude of the man, his lack of haste, Numa could not attribute his disappearance within the maw of the fissure to flight, of which it bore not a single earmark; and it may be recorded here that Numa was an expert on flight. All of his life things had been fleeing from him.

It had always seemed to Numa an unfair provision of Nature that things should so almost inevitably seek to escape him, especially those things he most coveted. There were, for example, Pacco, the zebra, and Wappi, the antelope, the tenderest and most delicious of his particular weaknesses,

and, at the same time, the fleetest. It would have been much simpler all around had Kota the tortoise been endowed with the speed of Pacco and Pacco with the torpidity of Kota.

But in this instance there was nothing to indicate that the man- thing was fleeing him. Perhaps, then, there was treachery afoot. Numa bristled. Very cautiously he approached the fissure into which his quarry had disappeared. Numa was beginning to think of Lafayette Smith in terms of food, now, since his long stalking had commenced to arouse within his belly the first, faint suggestions of hunger. He approached the cleft and looked in. The tarmangani was not in sight. Numa was not pleased,

and he evidenced his displeasure by an angry growl.

A hundred yards within the fissure Lafayette Smith heard the growl and halted abruptly. "That damn lion!" he ejaculated. "I had forgotten all about him." It now occurred to him that this might be the beast's lair—a most unhappy contretemps, if true. A realization of his predicament at last supplanted the geologic reveries that had filled his mind. But what to do? Suddenly his faith in his trusty .32 faltered. As he recalled the appearance of the great beast the weapon seemed less infallible, yet it still gave him a certain sense of assurance as his fingers caressed its grip.

He determined that it would not be wise to retrace his steps toward the entrance at this time. Of course the lion might not have entered the fissure, might not even be harboring any intention of so doing. On the other hand, he might, in which event a return toward the opening could prove embarrassing, if not disastrous. Perhaps, if he waited a while, the lion would go away; and in the meantime, he decided, it would be discreet to go still farther along the cleft, as the lion, if it entered at all, might conceivably not proceed to the uttermost depths of the corridor. Further, there was the chance that he would find some sort of sanctuary farther in—a cave, a ledge to which he could climb, a

miracle. Lafayette Smith was open to anything by this time.

And so he scrambled on, tearing his clothes and his flesh as well on sharp fragments of tumbled rock, going deeper into this remarkable corridor that seemed endless. In view of what might be behind him he hoped that it was endless. He had shuddered regularly to the oft recurring expectation of running into a blank wall just beyond that portion of the gently curving fissure that lay within his view ahead. He pictured the event. With his back to the rocky end of the cul-de-sac he would face back down the corridor, his pistol ready in his hand. Presently the lion would appear and discover him.

At this point he had some difficulty in constructing the scene, because he did not know just what the lion would do. Perhaps, seeing a man, cowed by the superior gaze of the human eye, he would turn in hasty retreat. And then again, perhaps not. Lafayette Smith was inclined to the conclusion that he would not. But then, of course, he had not had sufficient experience of wild animals to permit him to pose as an authority on the subject. To be sure, upon another occasion, while engaged in field work, he had been chased by a cow. Yet even this experience had not been conclusive—it had not served to definitely demonstrate the cow's ultimate intent—for the very excellent reason that

Lafayette had attained a fence two jumps ahead of her.

Confused as the issue now seemed to be by his total ignorance of leonine psychology, he was convinced that he must attempt to visualize the expectant scene that he might be prepared for the eventuality.

Forging grimly ahead over the roughly tumbled fragments, casting an occasional glance backward, he again pictured his last stand with his back against the corridor's rocky end. The lion was creeping slowly toward him, but Lafayette was waiting until there should be no chance of a miss. He was very cool. His hand was steady as he took careful aim.

Here regrets interrupted the even tenor of his musing—regrets that he had not practiced more assiduously with his revolver. The fact that he had never discharged it troubled him, though only vaguely, since he harbored the popular subconscious conviction that if a firearm is pointed in the general direction of an animate object it becomes a deadly weapon.

However, in this mental picture he took careful aim—the fact that he was utilizing the front sight only giving him no concern. He pulled the trigger. The lion staggered and almost fell. It required a second shot to finish him, and as he sank to the ground Lafayette Smith breathed a genuine sigh of relief. He felt

himself trembling slightly to the reaction of the nervous strain he had been undergoing. He stopped, and, withdrawing a handkerchief from his pocket, mopped the perspiration from his forehead, smiling a little as he realized the pitch of excitement to which he had aroused himself. Doubtless the lion had already forgotten him and had gone on about his business, he soliloquized.

He was facing back in the direction from which he had come as this satisfying conclusion passed through his mind; and then, a hundred feet away, where the corridor passed from view around a curve, the lion appeared.

10. IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE ENEMY

The "Gunner" was perturbed. It was morning, and Lafayette Smith was still missing. They had searched for him until late the previous night, and now they were setting forth again. Ogonyo, the headman, acting under instructions from the "Gunner" had divided the party into pairs and, with the exception of four men left to guard the camp, these were to search in different directions combing the country carefully for trace of the missing man.

Danny had selected Obambi as his companion, a fact which irked the black boy considerably as he had been the

target for a great deal of angry vituperation ever since Danny had discovered, the afternoon before, that he had left 'Smith alone in the mountains.

"It don't make no difference what he told you, you punk," the "Gunner" assured him, "you didn't have no business leavin' him out there alone. Now I'm goin' to take you for a walk, and if we don't find Lafayette you ain't never comin' back."

"Yes, bwana," replied Obambi, who had not even a crude idea of what the white man was talking about. One thing, however, pleased him immensely and that was that the bwana insisted on carrying his own gun, leaving nothing for Obambi to carry but a light lunch and

two fifty-round drums of ammunition. Not that the nine pounds and thirteen ounces of a Thompson submachine gun would have been an exceptionally heavy burden, but that Obambi was always glad to be relieved of any burden. He would have been mildly grateful for a load reduction of even thirteen ounces.

The "Gunner," in attempting to determine the probable route that Smith would have followed in his search for the camp, reasoned in accordance with what he assumed he would have done under like circumstances; and, knowing that Smith had been last seen well above the camp and a little to the north of it, he decided to search in a northerly direction along the foothills, it being

obvious that a man would come down hill rather than go farther up in such an emergency.

The day was hot and by noon the "Gunner" was tired, sweating, and disgusted. He was particularly disgusted with Africa, which, he informed Obambi, was "a hell of a burgh."

"Geeze," he grumbled; "I've walked my lousy legs off, and I ain't been no further than from The Loop to Cicero. I been six hours, and I could of done it in twenty minutes in a taxi. Of course they ain't got no cops in Africa, but they ain't got no taxis either."

"Yes, bwana," agreed Obambi.

"Shut up!" growled the "Gunner."

They were sitting beneath the shade of

a tree on a hillside, resting and eating their lunch. A short distance below them the hillside dropped sheer in a fifty foot cliff, a fact that was not apparent from where they sat, any more than was the palisaded village at the cliff's base. Nor did they see the man squatting by a bush at the very brink of the cliff. His back was toward them, as, from the concealment of the bush, he gazed down upon the village below.

Here, the watcher believed, was the man he sought; but he wished to make sure, which might require days of watching. Time, however, meant little or nothing to Tarzan—no more than it did to any other jungle beast. He would come back often to this vantage spot and

watch. Sooner or later he would discover the truth or falsity of his suspicion that one of the white men he saw in the village below was the slave raider for whom he had come north. And so, like a great lion, the ape-man crouched, watching his quarry.

Below him Dominic Capietro and Leon Stabutch lolled in the shade of a tree outside the hut of the raider, while a half dozen slave girls waited upon them as they leisurely ate their belated breakfast.

A couple of fiery liquid bracers had stimulated their jaded spirits, which had been at low ebb after their awakening following their debauch of the previous day, though, even so, neither could have

been correctly described as being in fine fettle.

Capietro, who was even more surly and quarrelsome than usual, vented his spleen upon the hapless slaves, while Stabutch ate in morose silence, which he finally broke to revert to the subject of his mission.

"I ought to get started toward the south," he said. "From all I can learn there's nothing to be gained looking for the ape-man in this part of the country."

"What you in such a hurry to find him for?" demanded. Capietro. "Ain't my company good enough for you?"

"'Business before pleasure,' you know, comrade," Stabutch reminded the Italian in a conciliatory tone.

"I suppose so," grunted Capietro.

"I should like to visit you again after I have come back from the south," suggested Stabutch.

"You may not come back."

"I shall. Peter Zveri must be avenged. The obstacle in the path of Communism must be removed."

"The monkey-man killed Zveri?"

"No, a woman killed him," replied the Russian, "but the monkey- man, as you call him, was directly responsible for the failure of all Zveri's plans and thus indirectly responsible for his death."

"You expect to fare better than Zveri, then? Good luck to you, but I don't envy you your mission. This Tarzan is like a

lion with the brain of a man. He is savage. He is terrible. In his own country he is also very powerful."

"I shall get him, nevertheless," said Stabutch, confidently. "If possible I shall kill him the moment I first see him, before he has an opportunity to become suspicious; or, if I cannot do that, I shall win his confidence and his friendship and then destroy him when he least suspects his danger." Voices carry upward to a great distance, and so, though Stabutch spoke only in normal tones, the watcher, squatting at the cliff top, smiled—just the faintest suggestion of a grim smile.

So that was why the man from "Russa," of whom Goloba the headman

had told him, was inquiring as to his whereabouts? Perhaps Tarzan had suspected as much, but he was glad to have definite proof.

"I shall be glad if you do kill him," said Capietro. "He would drive me out of business if he ever learned about me. He is a scoundrel who would prevent a man from earning an honest dollar."

"You may put him from your mind, comrade," Stabutch assured the raider. "He is already as good as dead. Furnish me with men, and I shall soon be on my way toward the south."

"My ruffians are already saddling to go forth and find men for your safari," said Capietro, with a wave of his hand in the direction of the central compound,

where a score of cutthroats were saddling their horses in preparation for a foray against a distant Galla village.

"May luck go with them," said Stabutch. "I hope—What was that?" he demanded, leaping to his feet as a sudden crash of falling rock and earth came from behind them.

Capietro was also upon his feet. "A landslide," he exclaimed. "A portion of the cliff has fallen. Look! What is that?" he pointed at an object half way up the cliff—the figure of a naked white man clinging to a tree that had found lodgment for its roots in the rocky face of the cliff. The tree, a small one, was bending beneath the weight of the man. Slowly it gave way, there was the sound

of rending wood, and then the figure hurtled downward into the village where it was hidden from the sight of the two white watchers by an intervening hut.

But Stabutch had seen the giant figure of the almost naked white long enough to compare it with the description he had had of the man for whom he had come all the long way from Moscow. There could not be two such, of that he was certain. "It is the ape-man!" he cried. "Come, Capietro, he is ours!"

Instantly the Italian ordered several *shiftas* to advance and seize the ape-man.

Fortune is never necessarily with either the brave or the virtuous. She is, unfortunately, quite as likely to perch

upon the banner of the poltroon or the blackguard. Today she deserted Tarzan completely. As he squatted upon the edge of the cliff, looking down upon the village of Dominic Capietro, he suddenly felt the earth giving beneath him. Catlike, he leaped to his feet, throwing his hands above his head, as one does, mechanically, to preserve his balance or seek support, but too late. With a small avalanche of earth and rock he slid over the edge of the cliff. The tree, growing part way down the face of the escarpment, broke his fall and, for a moment, gave him hope that he might escape the greater danger of the final plunge into the village, where, if the fall did not kill him it was quite evident that

his enemies would. But only for a moment were his hopes aroused. With the breaking of the bending stem hope vanished as he plunged on downward.

Danny "Gunner" Patrick, having finished his lunch, lighted a cigarette and let his gaze wander out over the landscape that unfolded in a lovely panorama before him. City bred, he saw only a part of what there was to be seen and understood but little of that. What impressed him most was the loneliness of the prospect. "Geeze," he soliloquized, "what a hideout! No one wouldn't ever find a guy here." His eyes suddenly focused upon an object in the foreground. "Hey, feller," he whispered to Obambi, "what's that?" He pointed in

the direction of the thing that had aroused his curiosity.

Obambi looked and, when they found it, his keen eyes recognized it for what it was. "It is a man, bwana," he said. "It is the man who knifed Simba in our camp that night. It is Tarzan of the Apes."

"How t'ell do you know?" demanded the "Gunner."

"There is only one Tarzan," replied the black. "It could be no other, as no other white man in all the jungle country or the mountain country or the plains country goes thus naked."

The "Gunner" rose to his feet. He was going down to have a talk with the ape-man, who, perhaps, could help him in his search for Lafayette Smith; but as he

arose he saw the man below him leap to his feet and throw his arms above his head. Then he disappeared as though swallowed up by the earth. The "Gunner" knitted his brows.

"Geeze," he remarked to Obambi, "he sure screwed, didn't he?"

"What, bwana?" asked Obambi.

"Shut up," snapped the "Gunner." "That was funny," he muttered. "Wonder what became of him. Guess I'll give him a tail. Come on," he concluded aloud to Obambi.

Having learned through experience, wholly the experience of others who had failed to do so, that attention to details is essential to the continued pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, the "Gunner"

looked carefully to his Thompson as he walked rapidly but cautiously toward the spot where Tarzan had disappeared. He saw that there was a cartridge in the chamber, that the magazine drum was properly attached and that the fire control lever was set for full automatic fire.

In the village, which he could not yet see and of the presence of which he did not dream, the*shiftas* were running toward the place where they knew the body of the fallen man must lie; and in the van were Stabutch and Capietro, when suddenly there stepped from the interior of the last hut the man they sought. They did not know that he had alighted on the thatched roof of the hut

from which he had just emerged, nor that, though he had broken through it to the floor below, it had so broken his fall that he had suffered no disabling injury.

To them it seemed a miracle; and to see him thus, apparently uninjured, took the two white men so by surprise that they halted in their tracks while their followers, imitating their example, clustered about them.

Stabutch was the first to regain his presence of mind. Whipping a revolver from its holster he was about to fire point blank at the ape-man, when Capietro struck his hand up. "Wait," growled the Italian. "Do not be too fast. I am in command here."

"But it is the ape-man," cried

Stabutch.

"I know that," replied Capietro, "and for that very reason I wish to take him alive. He is rich. He will bring a great ransom."

"Damn the ransom," ejaculated Stabutch. "It is his life I want."

"Wait until I have the ransom," said Capietro, "and then you can go after him."

In the meantime Tarzan stood watching the two. He saw that his situation was fraught with exceptional danger. It was to the interest of either one of these men to kill him; and while the ransom of which one spoke might deter him temporarily he knew that but little provocation would be required to

induce this one to kill him rather than to take the chance that he might escape, while it was evident that the Russian already considered that he had sufficient provocation, and Tarzan did not doubt but that he would find the means to accomplish his design even in the face of the Italian's objections.

If he could but get among them, where they could not use firearms against him, because of the danger that they might kill members of their own party, he felt that, by virtue of his superior strength, speed and agility, he might fight his way to one of the palisaded walls of the village where he would have a fair chance to escape. Once there he could scale the palisade with the speed of Manu, the

monkey, and with little danger other than from the revolvers of the two whites, since he held the marksmanship of the *shiftas* in contempt.

He heard Capietro call to his men to take him alive; and then, waiting not upon them, he charged straight for the two whites, while from his throat burst the savage growl of a wild beast that had, upon more than a single occasion in the past, wrought havoc with the nerves of human antagonists.

Nor did it fail in its purpose now. Shocked and unnerved for the instant, Stabutch fell back while Capietro, who had no desire to kill the ape-man unless it became necessary, leaped to one side and urged his followers to seize him.

For a moment bedlam reigned in the village of the white raider. Yelling, cursing men milled about a white giant who fought with his bare hands, seizing an antagonist and hurling him in the faces of others, or, using the body of another like a flail, sought to mow down those who opposed him.

Among the close massed fighters, excited curs ran yelping and barking, while children and women upon the outskirts of the mêlée shrieked encouragement to the men.

Slowly Tarzan was gaining ground toward one of the coveted walls of the village where, as he stepped quickly backward to avoid a blow, he stumbled over a yapping cur and went down

beneath a dozen men.

From the top of the cliff "Gunner" Patrick looked down upon this scene. "That mob has sure got him on the spot," he said aloud. "He's a regular guy, too. I guess here's where I step for him."

"Yes, bwana," agreed the willing Obambi.

"Shut up," said the "Gunner," and then he raised the butt of the Thompson to his shoulder and squeezed the trigger.

Mingled with the rapid reports of the machine gun were the screams and curses of wounded and frightened men and the shrieks of terrified women and children. Like snow before a spring shower, the pack that had surrounded Tarzan melted away as men ran for the

shelter of their huts or for their saddled ponies.

Capietro and Stabutch were among the latter, and even before Tarzan could realize what had happened he saw the two racing through the open gates of the village.

The "Gunner," noting the satisfactory effect of his fire, had ceased, though he stood ready again to rain a hail of death down upon the village should necessity require. He had aimed only at the outskirts of the crowd surrounding the ape-man, for fear that a bullet might strike the man he was endeavoring to succor; but he was ready to risk finer shooting should any press the naked giant too closely.

He saw Tarzan standing alone in the village street like a lion at bay, and then he saw his eyes ranging about for an explanation of the burst of fire that had liberated him.

"Up here, feller!" shouted the "Gunner."

The ape-man raised his eyes and located Danny instantly.

"Wait," he called; "I'll be up there in a moment."

11. THE CRUCIFIXION

As the waters of Chinnereth closed over the head of Lady Barbara, the golden haired Jezebel sprang to her feet and ran swiftly forward among the men congregated upon the great flat lava rock from which the victim of their cruel fanaticism had been hurled to her doom. She pushed apostles roughly aside as she made her way toward the brink, tears streaming from her eyes and sobs choking her throat.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, standing directly in her path, was the first to guess her purpose to throw herself into the lake and share the fate of her loved mistress. Impelled by no humanitarian urge, but rather by a selfish

determination to save the girl for another fate which he already had chosen for her, the Prophet seized her as she was about to leap into the water.

Turning upon the old man like a tigress, Jezebel scratched, bit, and kicked in an effort to free herself, which she would have succeeded in doing had not the Prophet called the six executioners to his aid. Two of them seized her; and, seeing that her efforts were futile, the girl desisted; but now she turned the flood gates of her wrath upon Abraham, the son of Abraham.

"Murderer!" she cried. "Son of Satan! May Jehovah strike thee dead for this. Curses be upon thy head and upon those of all thy kin. Damned be they and thee

for the foul crime thou hast committed here this day."

"Silence, blasphemer!" screamed Abraham, the son of Abraham. "Make thy peace with Jehovah, for tonight thou shalt be judged by fire. Take her back to the village," he directed the two who held her, "and make her secure in a cave. Seest thou, too, that she escapeth not."

"Fire or water, it is all the same to me," cried the girl as they dragged her away, "just so it taketh me away forever from this accursed land of Midian and the mad beast who poseth as the prophet of Jehovah."

As Jezebel moved off toward the village between her two guards the villagers fell in behind them, the women

calling her foul names and otherwise reviling her, and in the rear of all came the Prophet and the Apostles, leaving a score of their fellows still lying upon the ground, where they writhed, unnoticed, in the throes of epilepsy.

The impact with the surface of the water had almost stunned Lady Barbara, but she had managed to retain her senses and control of her mental and physical powers, so that, although dazed, she was able to put into effect the plan that she had nursed from the moment that she was aware of the fate to which the Prophet had condemned her.

Being an excellent swimmer and diver the thought of being immersed below the surface of Chinnereth for a

few minutes had not, in itself, caused her any great mental perturbation. Her one fear had lain in the very considerable possibility that she might be so badly injured by the impact with the water, or stunned, as to be helpless to effect her own release from the net. Her relief was great, therefore, when she discovered that she was far from helpless, nor did she delay an instant in bringing her small pocket knife to play upon the fiber strands of the net that enmeshed her.

Slashing rapidly, but yet, at the same time, in accordance with a practical plan, she severed strand after strand in a straight line, as the rock dragged her downward toward the bottom. Constantly through her mind ran a single

admonition—"Keep cool! Keep cool!" Should she permit herself to give away to hysteria, even for an instant, she knew that she must be lost. The lake seemed bottomless, the strands innumerable, while the knife grew constantly duller, and her strength appeared to be rapidly ebbing.

"Keep cool! Keep cool!" Her lungs were bursting. "Just a moment more! Keep cool!" She felt unconsciousness creeping upon her. She struggled to drag herself through the opening she had made in the net—her senses reeled dizzily—she was almost unconscious as she shot rapidly toward the surface.

As her head rose above the surface those standing upon the rock above her

had their attention riveted upon Jezebel who was engaged at that moment in kicking the prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah, on the shins. Lady Barbara was ignorant of all this; but it was fortunate for her, perhaps, because it prevented any of the Midians from noticing her resurrection from the deep and permitted her to swim, unseen, beneath the shelter of the overhanging rock from which she had been precipitated into the lake.

She was very weak, and it was with a prayer of thanksgiving that she discovered a narrow ledge of beach at the water's edge beneath the great lava block that loomed above her. As she dragged herself wearily out upon it she heard the voices of those upon the rock

overhead—the voice of Jezebel cursing the Prophet and the old man's threat against the girl.

A thrill of pride in the courage of Jezebel warmed the heart of Lady Barbara, as did the knowledge that she had won a friend so loyal and devoted that she would put her own life in jeopardy merely for the sake of openly accusing the murderer of her friend. How magnificent she was in the primitive savagery of her denunciation! Lady Barbara could almost see her standing there defying the greatest power that her world knew, her golden hair framing her oval face, her eyes flashing, her lips curling in scorn, her lithe young body tense with emotion.

And what she had heard, and the thought of the helplessness of the young girl against the power of the vile old man, changed Lady Barbara's plans completely. She had thought to remain in hiding until night and then seek to escape this hideous valley and its mad denizens. There would be no pursuit, for they would think her dead at the bottom of Chinnereth; and thus she might seek to find her way to the outer world with no danger of interference by the people of the land of Midian.

She and Jezebel had often speculated upon the likelihood of the existence of a possible avenue of ascent of the crater wall; and from the entrance of their cave they had chosen a spot about midway of

the western face of the crater, where the rim had fallen inward, as offering the best chance of escape. Tumbled masses of rock rose here from the bottom of the valley almost to the summit of the crater, and here Lady Barbara had decided to make her first bid for freedom.

But now all was changed. She could not desert Jezebel, whose life was now definitely jeopardized because of her friendship and loyalty. But what was she to do? How could she be of assistance to the girl? She did not know. Of only one thing was she certain—she must try.

She had witnessed enough horrors in the village of the South Midians to know that whatever Abraham, the son of Abraham, planned for Jezebel would

doubtless be consummated after dark, the time he chose, by preference, for all the more horrible of his so-called religious rites. Only those which took them to a distance from the village, such as immersions in the waters of Chinnereth, were performed by daylight.

With these facts in mind, Lady Barbara decided that she might, with safety, wait until after dark before approaching the village. To do so earlier might only result in her own recapture, an event that would render her helpless in effecting the succor of Jezebel, while giving the Prophet two victims instead of one.

The sound of voices above her had ceased. She had heard the vituperations

of the women diminishing in the distance, and by this she had known that the party had returned to the village. It was cold beneath the shadow of the rock, with her wet clothing clinging to her tired body; and so she slipped back into the water and swam along the shore a few yards until she found a spot where she could crawl out and lie in the pleasant warmth of the sun.

Here she rested again for a few minutes, and then she cautiously ascended the bank until her eyes were on a level with the ground. At a little distance she saw a woman, lying prone, who was trying to raise herself to a sitting position. She was evidently weak and dazed, and Lady Barbara realized

that she was recovering from one of those horrid seizures to which nearly all the inhabitants of the village were subject. Near her were others, some lying quietly, some struggling; and in the direction of the village she saw several who had recovered sufficiently to attempt the homeward journey.

Lying very still, her forehead concealed behind a low shrub, Lady Barbara watched and waited for half an hour, until the last of the unfortunate band had regained consciousness and self control sufficiently to permit them to depart in the direction of their squalid habitations.

She was alone now with little or no likelihood of discovery. Her clothes

were still wet and exceedingly uncomfortable; so she quickly removed them and spread them in the hot sun to dry, while she luxuriated in the soothing comfort of a sun bath, alternated with an occasional dip in the waters of the lake.

Before the sun dropped to the western rim of the crater her clothing had dried; and now she sat, fully dressed again waiting for darkness to fall. Below her lay the waters of the lake and beyond its farther shore she could dimly see the outlines of the village of the North Midians, where dwelt the mysterious "beautiful men" of Jezebel's day dreams.

Doubtless, thought Lady Barbara, the prince charming of the golden one's imagination would prove to be a

whiskered Adonis with a knotted club; but, even so, it were difficult to imagine more degraded or repulsive males than those of her own village. Almost anything—even a gorilla— might seem preferable to them.

As night approached, the girl saw little lights commence to twinkle in the northern village—the cooking fires, doubtless—and then she rose and turned her face toward the village of Abraham, the son of Abraham, of Jobab and Timothy and Jezebel, toward certain danger and possible death.

As she walked along the now familiar path toward the village, the mind of Lady Barbara Collis was vexed by the seemingly hopeless problem that

confronted her, while hovering upon the verge of her consciousness was that fear of the loneliness and the darkness of an unfamiliar and inhospitable country that is inherent in most of us. Jezebel had told her that dangerous beasts were almost unknown in the land of Midian, yet her imagination conjured slinking forms in the darkness and the sound of padded feet upon the trail behind her and the breathing of savage lungs. Yet ahead of her lay a real menace more terrible, perhaps, than swiftly striking talons and powerful jaws.

She recalled that she had heard that men who had been mauled by lions, and lived to narrate their experiences, had all testified uniformly to the fact that

there had been no pain and little terror during the swift moments of the experience; and she knew that there was a theory propounded by certain students of animal life that the killing of the carnivores was always swift, painless, and merciful. Why was it, she wondered, that of all created things only man was wantonly cruel and only man, and the beasts that were trained by man, killed for pleasure?

But now she was nearing the village and passing from the possibility of attack by merciful beasts to the assurance of attack by merciless men, should she be apprehended by them. To reduce this risk she skirted the village at a little distance and came to the foot of the cliff

where the caves were located and where she hoped to find Jezebel and, perhaps, discover a means of liberating her.

She glanced up the face of the cliff, which seemed to be deserted, most of the villagers being congregated about a group of small cooking fires near the few huts at the foot of the cliff. They often cooked thus together gossiping and praying and narrating experiences and revelations—they all received revelations from Jehovah when they "walked" with Him, which was their explanation of their epileptic seizures.

The more imaginative members of the community were the recipients of the most remarkable revelations; but, as all of them were stupid, Jehovah had not, at

least during Lady Barbara's sojourn among them, revealed anything of a particularly remarkable or inspiring nature. Their gossip, like their "experiences," was mean and narrow and sordid. Each sought constantly to discover or invent some scandal or heresy in the lives of his fellows, and if the finger pointed at one not in the good graces of the Prophet or the Apostles the victim was quite likely to make a Roman holiday.

Seeing the villagers congregated about their fires, Lady Barbara commenced the ascent of the steep path that zigzagged up the face of the cliff. She moved slowly and cautiously, stopping often to look about her, both

above and below; but, notwithstanding her fears and doubts she finally reached the mouth of the cave that she and Jezebel had occupied. If she hoped to find the golden one there she was disappointed; but at least, if Jezebel were not there, it was a relief to find that no one else was; and with a sense of greater security than she had felt since the dawn of this eventful day she crawled into the interior and threw herself down upon the straw pallet that the girls had shared.

Home! This rough lair, no better than that which housed the beasts of the wilds, was home now to Lady Barbara Collis whose life had been spent within the marble halls of the Earl of Whimsey.

Permeating it were memories of the strange friendship and affection that had gradually united these two girls whose origins and backgrounds could scarcely have been more dissimilar. Here each had learned the language of the other, here they had laughed and sung together, here they had exchanged confidences, and here they had planned together a future in which they would not be separated. The cold walls seemed warmer because of the love and loyalty to which they had been silent witnesses.

But now Lady Barbara was here alone. Where was Jezebel? It was the answer to that question that the English girl must find. She recalled the Prophet's threat—"for tonight thou shalt be judged

by fire." She must hasten, then, if she were to save Jezebel. But how was she to accomplish it in the face of all the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which confronted her? —her ignorance of where Jezebel was being held, the numbers of her enemies, her lack of knowledge of the country through which they would be forced to flee should she be so fortunate as to effect the girl's escape from the village.

She roused herself. Lying here upon her pallet would accomplish nothing. She rose and looked down toward the village; and instantly she was all alertness again, for there was Jezebel. She was standing between two guards, surrounded by many villagers who

maintained an open space about her. Presently the spectators separated and men appeared carrying a burden. What was it? They laid it in the center of the open space, in front of Jezebel; and then Lady Barbara saw what it was—a large wooden cross.

A man was digging a hole at the center of the circular space that had been left around the prisoner; others were bringing brush and fagots. Now the men who guarded Jezebel seized her and bore her to the ground. They laid her upon the cross and stretched her arms out upon the wooden cross arm.

Lady Barbara was horror stricken. Were they going to perpetrate the horrible atrocity of nailing her to the

cross? Abraham, the son of Abraham, stood at the head of the cross, his hands in the attitude of prayer, a personification of pious hypocrisy. The girl knew that no cruelty, however atrocious, was beyond him. She knew, too, that she was powerless to prevent the consummation of this foul deed, yet she cast discretion and self interest to the winds, as, with a warning cry that shattered the silence of the night, she sped swiftly down the steep pathway toward the village—a self-sacrifice offered willingly upon the altar of friendship.

Startled by her scream, every eye was turned upward toward her. In the darkness they did not recognize her, but

their stupid minds were filled with questioning and with terror as they saw something speeding down the cliff face toward them. Even before she reached the circle of firelight where they stood many had collapsed in paroxysms of epilepsy induced by the nervous shock of this unexpected visitation.

When she came closer, and was recognized, others succumbed, for now indeed it appeared that a miracle had been worked and that the dead had been raised again, even as they had seen the dead girl resurrected the previous day.

Pushing aside those who did not quickly enough make way for her, Lady Barbara hastened to the center of the circle. As his eyes fell upon her,

Abraham, the son of Abraham, paled and stepped back. For a moment he seemed upon the verge of a stroke.

"Who art thou?" he cried. "What art thou doing here?"

"Thou knowest who I am," replied Lady Barbara. "Why dost thou tremble if thou dost not know that I am the messenger of Jehovah whom thou reviledst and sought to destroy? I am here to save the girl Jezebel from death. Later Jehovah will send His wrath upon Abraham, the son of Abraham, and upon all the people of the land of Midian for their cruelties and their sins."

"I did not know," cried the Prophet. "Tell Jehovah that I did not know. Intercede for me, that Jehovah may

forgive me; and anything within my power to grant shall be yours."

So great was her surprise at the turn events had taken that Lady Barbara, who had expected only opposition and attack, was stunned for the moment. Here was an outcome so foreign to any that she had imagined that she had no response ready. She almost laughed aloud as she recalled the fears that had constantly harassed her since she had determined to attempt Jezebel's escape. And now it was all so easy.

"Liberate the girl, Jezebel," she commanded, "and then make food ready for her and for me."

"Quick!" cried the Prophet. "Raise the girl and set her free."

"Wait!" exclaimed a thin, querulous voice behind him. "I have walked with Jehovah." All turned in the direction of the speaker. He was Jobab the apostle.

"Quick! Release her!" demanded Lady Barbara, who, in this interruption and in the manner and voice of the speaker, whom she knew as one of the most fanatically intolerant of the religious bigots of Midian, saw the first spark that might grow into a flame of resistance to the will of the Prophet; for she knew these people well enough to be sure that they would grasp at any excuse to thwart the abandonment of their cruel pleasure.

"Wait!" shrieked Jobab. "I have walked with Jehovah, and He hath

spoken unto me, saying: 'Behold, Jobab the Apostle, a seeming miracle shall be wrought out of Chinnereth; but be not deceived, for I say unto thee that it shall be the work of Satan; and whosoever believeth in it shall perish.'"

"Hallelujah!" shrieked a woman, and the cry was taken up by the others. To right and left the excited villagers were being stricken by their Nemesis. A score of writhing bodies jerked and struggled upon the ground in the throes of convulsions, the horrible choking, the frothing at the mouth, adding to the horror of the scene.

For a moment, Abraham, the son of Abraham, stood silent in thought. A cunning light flickered suddenly in his

crafty eyes, and then he spoke. "Amen!" he said. "Let the will of Jehovah be done as revealed to the Apostle Jobab. Let Jobab speak the word of Jehovah, and upon Jobab's head be the reward."

"Another cross," screamed Jobab; "bring another cross. Let two beacon fires light the path of Jehovah in the heavens, and if either of these be His children He will not let them be consumed," and so, as Abraham, the son of Abraham, had passed the buck to Jobab, Jobab passed it along to Jehovah, who has been the recipient of more than His share through the ages.

Futile were the threats and arguments of Lady Barbara against the blood-lust of the Midians. A second cross was

brought, a second hole dug, and presently both she and Jezebel were lashed to the symbols of love and raised to an upright position. The bottoms of the crosses were sunk in the holes prepared for them and earth tamped around them to hold them upright. Then willing hands brought faggots and brushwood and piled them about the bases of the two pyres.

Lady Barbara watched these preparations in silence. She looked upon the weak, degenerate faces of this degraded people; and she could not, even in the extremity of her danger, find it in her heart to condemn them too severely for doing what supposedly far more enlightened people had done,

within the memory of man, in the name of religion.

She glanced at Jezebel and found the girl's eyes upon her. "You should not have come back," said the girl. "You might have escaped." Lady Barbara shook her head. "You did it for me," continued Jezebel. "May Jehovah reward you, for I may only thank you."

"You would have done the same for me at Chinnereth," replied Lady Barbara. "I heard you defy the Prophet there."

Jezebel smiled. "You are the only creature I have ever loved," she said; "the only one who I ever thought loved me. Of course I would die for you."

Abraham, the son of Abraham, was

praying. Young men stood ready with flaming torches, the flickering light from which danced grotesquely upon the hideous features of the audience, upon the two great crosses, and upon the beautiful faces of the victims.

"Good bye, Jezebel," whispered Lady Barbara.

"Good bye," replied the golden one.

12. OUT OF THE GRAVE

Notwithstanding the fact that Lafayette Smith had so recently visualized this very emergency and had, as it were, rehearsed his part in it, now that he stood face to face with the lion he did none of the things exactly as he had pictured. He was not at all cool when he saw the carnivore appear at the turn in the fissure; he did not face him calmly, draw a deadly bead, and fire. Nothing was in the least as he had imagined it would be. In the first place the distance between them seemed entirely inadequate and the lion much larger than he had supposed any lion could be, while his revolver seemed to shrink to proportions that represented utter

futility.

All this, however, was encompassed in a single, instantaneous and overwhelming conception. No appreciable time elapsed, therefore; between the instant that he perceived the lion and that at which he commenced to jerk the trigger of his pistol, which he accomplished, without aiming, while in the act of turning to flee.

Running headlong over the jumbled rocks Lafayette Smith fled precipitately into the unknown depths of the ancient rift, at his elbow the ghastly fear that beyond each successive turn would loom the rocky terminus of his flight, while just behind him he pictured the ravenous carnivore thirsting for his blood. The

fall of swiftly moving padded feet close behind him urged him to greater speed, the hot breath of the lion surged from the savage lungs to pound upon his ears like surf upon an ocean beach.

Such is the power of imagination. It is true that Numa was bounding along the bottom of the rift, but in the opposite direction to that in which Lafayette Smith bounded. Fortunately, for Lafayette, none of his wild shots had struck the lion; but the booming reverberation of the explosions in the narrow fissure had so surprised and unnerved him that he had wheeled and fled even as the man had.

Had the pursuit been as real as Lafayette imagined it, it could have

urged him to no greater speed, nor could the consequent terror have nerved him to greater endurance; but physical powers have their limits, and presently the realization that his had about reached theirs forced itself upon Lafayette's consciousness and with it realization of the futility of further flight.

It was then that he turned to make his stand. He was trembling, but with fatigue rather than fear; and inwardly he was cool as he reloaded his revolver. He was surprised to discover that the lion was not on top of him, but he expected momentarily to see him appear where the fissure turned from his sight. Seating himself on a flat rock he waited the coming of the carnivore while he rested,

and as the minutes passed and no lion came his wonderment increased.

Presently his scientific eye commenced to note the structure of the fissure's walls about him, and as his interest grew in the geologic facts revealed or suggested his interest in the lion waned, until, once again, the carnivore was relegated to the background of his consciousness, while in its place returned the momentarily forgotten plan to explore the rift to its farthest extent.

Recovered from the excessive fatigue of his strenuous exertion he undertook once more the exploration so rudely interrupted. Regained was the keen pleasure of discovery; forgotten, hunger,

fatigue, and personal safety as he advanced along this mysterious path of adventure.

Presently the floor of the rift dropped rapidly until it was inclined at an angle that made progress difficult; and at the same time it narrowed, giving evidence that it might be rapidly pinching out. There was now barely width for him to squeeze forward between the walls when the fissure ahead of him became suddenly shrouded in gloom. Glancing up in search of an explanation of this new phenomenon Lafayette discovered that the walls far above were converging, until directly above him there was only a small streak of sky visible while ahead the rift was

evidently closed entirely at the top.

As he pushed on, the going, while still difficult because of the steepness of the floor of the fissure, was improved to some extent by the absence of jumbled rocks underfoot, the closed ceiling of the corridor having offered no crumbling rim to the raging elements of the ages; but presently another handicap made itself evident—darkness, increasing steadily with each few yards until the man was groping his way blindly, though none the less determinedly, toward the unknown that lay ahead.

That an abyss might yawn beyond his next step may have occurred to him, but so impractical was he in all worldly matters while his scientific entity was in

the ascendancy that he ignored the simplest considerations of safety. However, no abyss yawned; and presently, at a turning, daylight showed ahead. It was only a small patch of daylight; and when he reached the opening through which it shone it appeared, at first, that he had achieved the end of his quest—that he could proceed no farther.

Dropping to his hands and knees he essayed the feat of worming his way through the aperture, which he then discovered was amply large to accommodate his body; and a moment later he stood erect in astonished contemplation of the scene before him.

He found himself standing near the

base of a lofty escarpment overlooking a valley that his practiced eye recognized immediately as the crater of a long extinct volcano. Below him spread a panorama of rolling, tree-dotted landscape, broken by occasional huge outcroppings of weathered lava rock; and in the center a blue lake danced in the rays of an afternoon sun.

Thrilling to an identical reaction such as doubtless dominated Balboa as he stood upon the heights of Darien overlooking the broad Pacific, Lafayette Smith experienced that spiritual elation that is, perhaps, the greatest reward of the explorer. Forgotten, for the moment, was the scientific interest of the geologist, submerged by intriguing

speculation upon the history of this lost valley, upon which, perhaps, the eyes of no other white man had ever gazed.

Unfortunately for the permanency of this beatific state of mind two other thoughts rudely obtruded themselves, as thoughts will. One appertained to the camp, for which he was supposed to be searching, while the other involved the lion, which was supposedly searching for him. The latter reminded him that he was standing directly in front of the mouth of the fissure, at the very spot where the lion would emerge were he following; and this suggested the impracticability of the fissure as an avenue of return to the opposite side of the crater wall.

A hundred yards away Smith espied a tree, and toward this he walked as offering the nearest sanctuary in the event the lion should reappear. Here, too, he might rest while considering plans for the future; and, that he might enjoy uninterrupted peace of mind while so engaged, he climbed up into the tree, where, straddling a limb, he leaned his back against the bole.

It was a tree of meager foliage, thus affording him an almost unobstructed view of the scene before him, and as has eyes wandered across the landscape they were arrested by something at the foot of the southern wall of the crater—something that did not perfectly harmonize with its natural surroundings.

Here his gaze remained fixed as he sought to identify the thing that had attracted his attention. What it looked like he was positive that it could not be, so definitely had his preconception of the inaccessibility of the valley to man impressed itself upon his mind; yet the longer he looked the more convinced he became that what he saw was a small village of thatched huts.

And what thoughts did this recognition inspire? What noble and aesthetic emotions were aroused within his breast by the sight of this lonely village in the depths of the great crater which should, by all the proofs that he had seen, have been inaccessible to man?

No, you are wrong again. What it suggested was food. For the first time since he had become lost Lafayette Smith was acutely conscious of hunger, and when he recalled that it had been more than twenty-four hours since he had eaten anything more substantial than a few chocolates his appetite waxed ravenous. Furthermore, he suddenly realized that he was actually suffering from thirst.

At a little distance lay the lake. Glancing back toward the entrance to the fissure he discovered no lion; and so he dropped to the ground and set off in the direction of the water, laying his course so that at no time was he at any great distance from a tree.

The water was cool and refreshing; and when he had drunk his fill he became acutely conscious, for the first time during the day, of an overpowering weariness. The water had temporarily relieved the pangs of hunger, and he determined to rest a few minutes before continuing on toward the distant village. Once again he assured himself that there was no pursuing lion in evidence; and then he stretched himself at full length in the deep grass that grew near the edge of the lake, and with a low tree as protection from the hot sun relaxed his tired muscles in much needed rest.

He had not intended to sleep; but his fatigue was greater than he had supposed, so that, with relaxation,

unconsciousness crept upon him unawares. Insects buzzed lazily about him, a bird alighted in the tree beneath which he lay and surveyed him critically, the sun dropped lower toward the western rim, and Lafayette Smith slept on.

He dreamed that a lion was creeping toward him through high grass. He tried to rise, but he was powerless. The horror of the situation was intolerable. He tried to cry out and frighten the lion away, but no sound issued from his throat. Then he made a final supreme effort, and the shriek that resulted awakened him. He sat up, dripping with perspiration, and looked quickly and fearfully about him. There was no lion.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "What a relief."

Then he glanced at the sun and realized that he had slept away the greater part of the afternoon. Now his hunger returned and with it recollection of the distant village. Rising, he drank again at the lake, and then started on his journey toward the base of the southern rim, where he hoped he would find friendly natives and food.

The way led for the greater part around the edge of the lake; and as dusk settled and then darkness it became more and more difficult to move except at a slow and cautious pace, since the ground was often strewn with fragments of lava that were not visible in the darkness.

Night brought the cheering sight of

fires in the village; and these, seeming nearer than they really were, buoyed his spirits by the assurance that his journey was nearing completion. Yet, as he stumbled onward, the conviction arose that he was pursuing a will-o'- the-wisp, as the firelight appeared to retreat as rapidly as he advanced.

At last, however, the outlines of mean huts, illumined by the fires, became distinguishable and then the figures of people clustered about them. It was not until he was almost within the village that he saw with astonishment that the people were white, and then he saw something else that brought him to a sudden halt. Upon two crosses, raised above the heads of the villagers, were

two girls. The firelight played upon their faces, and he saw that both were beautiful.

What weird, unholy rite was this? What strange race inhabited this lost valley? Who were the girls? That they were not of the same race as the villagers was apparent at the first casual glance at the degraded features of the latter.

Lafayette Smith hesitated. It was evident that he was witnessing some sort of religious rite or pageant; and he assumed that to interrupt it would prove far from a satisfactory introduction to these people, whose faces, which had already repelled him, impressed him so unfavorably that he questioned the

friendliness of his reception even under the most favorable auspices.

And then a movement of the crowd opened for a moment an avenue to the center of the circle where the crosses stood; and the man was horrified by what was revealed for an instant to his amazed eyes, for he saw the dry brush and the faggots piled about the bottoms of the crosses and the young men with the flaming torches ready to ignite the inflammable piles.

An old man was intoning a prayer. Here and there villagers writhed upon the ground in what Smith thought were evidences of religious ecstasy. And then the old man gave a signal, and the torch bearers applied the flames to the dry

brush.

Lafayette Smith waited to see no more. Leaping forward be thrust surprised villagers from his path and sprang into the circle before the crosses. With a booted foot he kicked the already burning brush aside; and then, with his little .32 shining in his hand, he turned and faced the astonished and angry crowd.

For a moment Abraham, the son of Abraham, was paralyzed by surprise. Here was a creature beyond his experience or his ken. It might be a celestial messenger; but the old man had gone so far now, and his crazed mind was so thoroughly imbued with the lust for torture, that he might even have

defied Jehovah Himself rather than forego the pleasures of the spectacle he had arranged.

At last he found his voice. "What blasphemy is this?" he screamed. "Set upon this infidel, and tear him limb from limb."

"You will have to shoot, now," said an English voice at Smith's back, "for if you don't they will kill you."

He realized that it was one of the girls upon the crosses—another astonishing mystery in this village of mysteries, that cool English voice. Then one of the torch bearers rushed him with a maniacal shriek, and Smith fired. With a scream the fellow clutched his chest and sprawled at the American's feet; and at

the report of the pistol and the sudden collapse of their fellow the others, who had been moving forward upon the intruder, fell back, while upon all sides the over-excited creatures succumbed to the curse that had descended to them from Angustus the Ephesian, until the ground was strewn with contorted forms.

Realizing that the villagers were, for the moment at least, too disconcerted and overawed by the death of their fellow to press their attack, Smith turned his attention at once to the two girls. Replacing his pistol in its holster, he cut their bonds with his pocket knife before Abraham, the son of Abraham, could collect his scattered wits and attempt to urge his followers to a renewed attack.

It was more than the work of a moment to liberate the two captives as, after he had cut the bonds that held their feet Smith had been compelled to partially support each with one arm as he severed the fibers that secured their wrists to the cross arms, lest a bone be broken or a muscle wrenched as the full weight of the victim was thrown suddenly upon one wrist.

He had cut Lady Barbara down first; and she was assisting him with Jezebel, who, having been crucified for a longer time, was unable to stand alone, when Abraham, the son of Abraham, regained sufficient composure to permit him to think and act.

Both Lady Barbara and Smith were

supporting Jezebel into whose numbed feet the blood was again beginning to circulate. Their backs were toward the Prophet; and, taking advantage of their preoccupation, the old man was creeping stealthily upon them from the rear. In his hand was a crude knife, but none the less formidable for its crudeness. It was the blood stained sacrificial knife of this terrible old high priest of the Midians, more terrible now because of the rage and hatred that animated the cruel, defective mind that directed the claw-like hand that wielded it.

All of his rage, all of his hatred were directed against the person of Lady Barbara, in whom he saw the author of his humiliation and his thwarted desires.

Stealthily he crept upon her from behind while his followers, frozen to silence by his terrible glances, watched in breathless anticipation.

Occupied with the half-fainting Jezebel none of the three at the crosses saw the repulsive figure of the avenger as he towered suddenly behind the English girl, his right hand raised high to drive the blade deeply into her back; but they heard his sudden, choking, gasping scream and turned in time to see the knife fall from his nerveless fingers as they clutched at his throat, and to witness his collapse.

Angustus the Ephesian had reached out of a grave digged two thousand years before, to save the life of Lady Barbara

Collis—though doubtless he would have turned over in that same grave had he realized the fact.

13. THE "GUNNER" WALKS

Like a great cat, Tarzan of the Apes scaled the palisade of the raiders' village, dropped lightly to the ground upon the opposite side and ascended the cliffs a little to the south of the village where they were less precipitous. He might have taken advantage of the open gate; but the direction he chose was the shorter way; and a palisade constituted no obstacle to the foster son of Kala, the she- ape.

The "Gunner" was waiting for him upon the summit of the cliff directly behind the village, and for the second time these strangely dissimilar men met

—dissimilar, and yet, in some respects, alike. Each was ordinarily quiet to taciturnity, each was self- reliant, each was a law unto himself in his own environment; but there the similarity ceased for the extremes of environment had produced psychological extremes as remotely separated as the poles.

The ape-man had been reared amidst scenes of eternal beauty and grandeur, his associates the beasts of the jungle, savage perhaps, but devoid of avarice, petty jealousy, treachery, meanness, and intentional cruelty; while the "Gunner" had known naught but the squalid aspects of scenery defiled by man, of horizons grotesque with screaming atrocities of architecture, of an earth hidden by

concrete and asphalt and littered with tin cans and garbage, his associates, in all walks of life, activated by grand and petty meannesses unknown to any but mankind.

"A machine gun has its possibilities," said the ape-man, with the flicker of a smile.

"They had you in a bad spot, mister," remarked the "Gunner."

"I think I should have gotten out all right," replied Tarzan, "but I thank you none the less. How did you happen to be here?"

"I been looking for my sidekick, and I happened to see you go over the edge here. Obambi here, tipped me off that you was the guy saved me from the lion,

—so I was glad to step for you."

"You are looking for whom?"

"My sidekick, Smith."

"Where is he?"

"I wouldn't be lookin' for him if I knew. He's went and lost himself. Been gone since yesterday afternoon."

"Tell me the circumstances," said Tarzan, "perhaps I can help you."

"That's what I was goin' to ask you," said the "Gunner." "I know my way around south of Madison Street, but out here I'm just a punk. I ain't got no idea where to look for him. Geeze, take a slant at them mountains. You might as well try to meet a guy at the corner of Oak and Polk as hunt for him there. I'll

tell you how it happened," and then he briefly narrated all that was known of the disappearance of Lafayette Smith.

"Was he armed?" asked the ape-man.

"He thought he was."

"What do you mean?"

"He packed a shiny toy pistol, what if anybody ever shot me with it, and I found it out, I'd turn him over my knee and spank him."

"It might serve him in getting food," said Tarzan, "and that will be of more importance to him than anything else. He's not in much danger, except from men and starvation. Where's your camp?"

Danny nodded toward the south.

"Back there about a thou sand miles," he said.

"You'd better go to it and remain there where he can find you if he can make his way back to it, and where I can find you if I locate him."

"I want to help you hunt for him. He's a good guy, even if he is legitimate."

"I can move faster alone," replied the ape-man. "If you start out looking for him I'll probably have to find you, too."

The "Gunner" grinned. "I guess you ain't so far off, at that," he replied. "All right, I'll beat it for camp and wait there for you. You know where our camp is at?"

"I'll find out," replied Tarzan and turned to Obambi to whom he put a few

questions in the native Bantu dialect of the black. Then he turned again to the "Gunner." "I know where your camp is now. Watch out for these fellows from that village, and don't let your men wander very far from the protection of your machine gun."

"Why," demanded Danny, "what are them guys?"

"They are robbers, murderers, and slave raiders," replied Tarzan.

"Geeze," exclaimed the "Gunner," "they's rackets even in Africa, ain't they?"

"I do not know what a racket is," replied the ape-man, "but there is crime wherever there are men, and nowhere else." He turned then, without word of

parting, and started upward toward the mountains.

"Geeze!" muttered the "Gunner." "That guy ain't so crazy about men."

"What, bwana?" asked Obambi.

"Shut up," admonished Danny.

The afternoon was almost spent when the "Gunner" and Obambi approached camp. Tired and footsore as he was the white man had, none the less, pushed rapidly along the back-trail lest night descend upon them before they reached their destination, for Danny, in common with most city-bred humans, bad discovered something peculiarly depressing and awe-inspiring in the mysterious sounds and silences of the nocturnal wilds. He wished the fires and

companionship of men after the sun had set. And so the two covered the distance on the return in much less time than had been consumed in traversing it originally.

As he came in sight of the camp the brief twilight of the tropics had already fallen, the cooking fires were burning, and to a trained eye a change would have been apparent from the appearance of the camp when he had left it early that morning; but Danny's eyes were trained in matters of broads, bulls, and beer trucks and not in the concerns of camps and safaris; so, in the failing light of dusk, he did not notice that there were more men in camp than when he had left, nor that toward the rear of it there were

horses tethered where no horses had been before.

The first intimation he had of anything unusual came from Obambi. "White men are in the camp, bwana," said the black —"and many horses. Perhaps they found the mad bwana and brought him back."

"Where do you see any white men?" demanded the "Gunner."

"By the big fire in the center of camp, bwana," replied Obambi.

"Geeze, yes, I see 'em now," admitted Danny. "They must have found old Smithy all right; but I don't see him, do you?"

"No, bwana, but perhaps he is in his tent."

The appearance of Patrick and Obambi caused a commotion in the camp that was wholly out of proportion to its true significance. The white men leaped to their feet and drew their revolvers while strange blacks, in response to the commands of one of these, seized rifles and stood nervously alert.

"You don't have to throw no fit," called Danny, "it's only me and Obambi."

The white men were advancing to meet him now, and the two parties halted face to face near one of the fires. It was then that the eyes of one of the two strange white men alighted on the Thompson submachine gun. Raising his revolver he covered Danny.

"Put up your hands!" he commanded sharply.

"Wotinell?" demanded the "Gunner," but he put them up as every sensible man does when thus invited at the business end of a pistol.

"Where is the ape-man?" asked the stranger.

"What ape-man? What you talkin' about? What's your racket?"

"You know who I mean—Tarzan," snapped the other. The "Gunner" glanced quickly about the camp. He saw his own men herded under guard of villainous looking blacks in long robes that had once been white; he saw the horses tethered Just beyond them; he saw nothing of Lafayette Smith. The training

and the ethics of gangland controlled him on the instant. "Don't know the guy," he replied sullenly.

"You were with him today," snarled the bearded white. "You fired on my village."

"Who, me?" inquired the "Gunner" innocently. "You got me wrong, mister. I been hunting all day. I ain't seen no one. I ain't fired at nothing. Now it's my turn. What are you guys doin' here with this bunch of Ku Klux Klanners? If it's a stick up, hop to it; and get on your way. You got the drop on us, and they ain't no one to stop you. Get it over with. I'm hungry and want to feed."

"Take the gun away from him," said Capietro, in Galla, to one of his men,

"also his pistol," and there was nothing for Danny "Gunner" Patrick, with his hands above his head, to do but submit. Then they sent Obambi, under escort, to be herded with the other black prisoners and ordered the "Gunner" to accompany them to the large fire that blazed in front of Smith's tent and his own.

"Where is your companion?" demanded Capietro.

"What companion?" inquired Danny.

"The man you have been traveling with," snapped the Italian. "Who else would I mean?"

"Search me," replied the "Gunner."

"What you mean by that? You got something concealed upon your person?"

"If you mean money, I ain't got none."

"You did not answer my question," continued Capietro.

"What question?"

"Where is your companion?"

"I ain't got none."

"Your headman told us there were two of you. What is your name?"

"Bloom," replied Danny.

Capietro looked puzzled. "The headman said one of you was Smith and the other Patrick."

"Never heard of 'em," insisted Danny. "The guy must of been stringin' you. I'm here alone, hunting, and my name's Bloom."

"And you didn't see Tarzan of the

Apes today?"

"Never even heard of a guy with that monicker."

"Either he's lying to us," said Stabutch, "or it was the other one who fired on the village."

"Sure, it must of been two other fellows," Danny assured them. "Say, when do I eat?"

"When you tell us where Tarzan is," replied Stabutch.

"Then I guess I don't eat," remarked Danny. "Geeze, didn't I tell you I never heard of the guy? Do you think I know every monkey in Africa by his first name? Come on now, what's your racket? If we got anything you want, take it and screw. I'm sick lookin' at your

mugs."

"I do not understand English so well," whispered Capietro to Stabutch. "I do not always know what he says."

"Neither do I," replied the Russian; "but I think he is lying to us. Perhaps he is trying to gain time until his companion and Tarzan arrive."

"That is possible," replied Capietro in his normal voice.

"Let's kill him and get out of here," suggested Stabutch. "We can take the prisoners and as much of the equipment as you want and be a long way from here in the morning."

"Geeze," exclaimed Danny, "this reminds me of Chi. It makes me homesick."

"How much money you pay if we don't kill you?" asked Capietro. "How much your friends pay?"

The "Gunner" laughed. "Say, mister, you're giving yourself a bum steer." He was thinking how much more one might collect for killing him, if one could make connections with certain parties on the North Side of Chicago, than for sparing his life. But here was an opportunity, perhaps, to gain time. The "Gunner" did not wish to be killed, and so he altered his technique. "My friends ain't rich," he said, "but they might come across with a few grand. How much do you want?"

Capietro considered. This must be a rich American, for only rich men could afford these African big game

expeditions. "One hundred thousand should not be excessive for a rich man like you," he said.

"Quit your kidding," said the "Gunner." "I ain't rich."

"What could you raise?" asked Capietro, who saw by the prisoner's expression of astonishment that the original bid was evidently out of the question.

"I might scrape up twenty grand," suggested Danny.

"What are grand?" demanded the Italian.

"Thousand—twenty thousand," explained the "Gunner."

"Poof!" cried Capietro. "That would

not pay me for the trouble of keeping you until the money could be forwarded from America. Make it fifty thousand lire and it's a bargain."

"Fifty thousand lire? What's them?"

"A lire is an Italian coin worth about twenty cents in American money," explained Stabutch.

Danny achieved some rapid mental calculations before he replied; and when he had digested the result he had difficulty in repressing a smile, for he discovered that his offer of twenty thousand grand was actually twice what the Italian was now demanding. Yet he hesitated to agree too willingly. "That's ten thousand iron men," he said. "That's a lot of jack."

"Iron men? Jack? I do not understand," said Capietro.

"Smackers," explained Danny lucidly.

"Smackers? Is there such a coin in America?" asked Capietro, turning to Stabutch.

"Doubtless a vernacularism," said the Russian.

"Geeze, you guys is dumb," growled the "Gunner." "A smacker's a buck. Every one knows that."

"Perhaps if you would tell him in dollars it would be easier," suggested Stabutch. "We all understand the value of an American dollar."

"That's a lot more than some Americans understand," Danny assured

him; "but it's just what I been saying right along—ten thousand dollars —and it's too damn much."

"That is for you to decide," said Capietro. "I am tired of bargaining — nobody but an American would bargain over a human life."

"What you been doing?" demanded the "Gunner." "You're the guy that started it."

Capietro shrugged. "It is not my life," he said. "You will pay me ten thousand American dollars, or you will die. Take your choice."

"Oke," said Danny. "I'll pay. Now do I eat? If you don't feed me I won't be worth nothing."

"Tie his hands," Capietro ordered one

of the *shiftas*, then he fell to discussing plans with Stabutch. The Russian finally agreed with Capietro that the palisaded village of the raider would be the best place to defend themselves in the event that Tarzan enlisted aid and attacked them in force. One of their men had seen Lord Passmore's safari; and, even if their prisoner was lying to them, there was at least another white, probably well armed, who might be considered a definite menace. Ogonyo had told them that this man was alone and probably lost, but they did not know whether or not to believe the headman. If Tarzan commandeered these forces, which Capietro knew he had the influence to do, they might expect an attack upon

their village.

By the light of several fires the blacks of the captured safari were compelled to break camp and, when the loads were packed, to carry them on the difficult night march toward Capietro's village. With mounted shiftas in advance, upon the flanks, and bringing up the rear there was no lagging and no chance to escape.

The "Gunner," plodding along at the head of his own porters, viewed the prospect of that night march with unmitigated disgust. He had traversed the route twice already since sunrise; and the thought of doing it again, in the dark, with his hands tied behind him was far from cheering. To add to his discomfort he was weak from hunger

and fatigue, and now the pangs of thirst were assailing him.

"Geeze," he soliloquized, "this ain't no way to treat a regular guy. When I took 'em for a ride I never made no guy walk, not even a rat. I'll get these lousy bums yet—a thinkin' they can put Danny Patrick on the spot, an' make him walk all the way!"

14. FLIGHT

As the choking cry broke from the lips of Abraham, the son of Abraham, Lady Barbara and Smith wheeled to see him fall, the knife clattering to the ground from his nerveless fingers. Smith was horrified, and the girl blenched, as they realized how close death had been. She saw Jobab and the others standing there, their evil faces contorted with rage.

"We must get away from here," she said. "They will be Upon us in a moment."

"I'm afraid you'll have to help me support your friend," said Smith. "She cannot walk alone."

"Put your left arm around her,"

directed Lady Barbara. "That will leave your right hand free for your pistol. I will support her on the other side."

"Leave me," begged Jezebel. "I will only keep you from escaping."

"Nonsense," said Smith. "Put your arm across my shoulders."

"You will soon be able to walk," Lady Barbara told her, "when the blood gets back into your feet. Come! Let's get away from here while we can."

Half carrying Jezebel, the two started to move toward the circle of menacing figures surrounding them. Jobab was the first to regain his wits since the Prophet had collapsed at the critical moment. "Stop them!" he cried, as he prepared to block their way, at the same time

drawing a knife from the folds of his filthy garment.

"One side, fellow!" commanded Smith, menacing Jobab with his pistol.

"The wrath of Jehovah will be upon thee," cried Lady Barbara in the Midian tongue, "as it has been upon the others who would have harmed us, if thou failest to let us pass in peace."

"It is the work of Satan," shrilled Timothy. "Do not let them weaken thy heart with lies, Jobab. Do not let them pass!" The elder was evidently under great mental and nervous strain. His voice shook as he spoke, and his muscles were trembling. Suddenly he, too, collapsed as had Abraham, the son of Abraham. But still Jobab stood his

ground, his knife raised in a definite menace against them. All around them the circle was growing smaller and its circumference more solidly knit by the forward pressing bodies of the Midians.

"I hate to do it," said Smith, half aloud, as he raised his pistol and aimed it at Jobab. The Apostle was directly in front of Lafayette Smith and little more than a yard distant when the American, aiming point blank at his chest, jerked the trigger and fired.

An expression of surprise mingled with that of rage which had convulsed the unbecoming features of Jobab the Apostle. Lafayette Smith was also surprised and for the same reason—he had missed Jobab. It was incredible—

there must be something wrong with the pistol!

But Jobab's surprise, while based upon the same miracle, was of a loftier and nobler aspect. It was clothed in the sanctity of divine revelation. It emanated from a suddenly acquired conviction that he was immune to the fire and thunder of this strange weapon that he had seen lay Lamech low but a few minutes earlier. Verily, Jehovah was his shield and his buckler!

For a moment, as the shot rang out, Jobab paused and then, clothed in the fancied immunity of this sudden revelation, he leaped upon Lafayette Smith. The sudden and unexpected impact of his body knocked the pistol

from Smith's hand and simultaneously the villagers closed in upon him. A real menace now that they had witnessed the futility of the strange weapon.

Lafayette Smith was no weakling, and though his antagonist was inspired by a combination of maniacal fury and religious fanaticism the outcome of their struggle must have been a foregone conclusion had there been no outside influences to affect it. But there were. Beside the villagers, there was Lady Barbara Collis.

With consternation she had witnessed the futility of Smith's marksmanship; and when she saw him disarmed and in the grip of Jobab, with others of the villagers rushing to his undoing, she

realized that now, indeed, the lives of all three of them were in direct jeopardy.

The pistol lay at her feet, but only for a second. Stooping, she seized it; and then, with the blind desperation of self-preservation, she shoved the muzzle against Jobab's side and pulled the trigger; and as he fell, a hideous shriek upon his lips, she turned the weapon upon the advancing villagers and fired again. It was enough. Screaming in terror, the Midians turned and fled. A wave of nausea swept over the girl; she swayed and might have fallen had not Smith supported her.

"I'll be all right in a moment," she said. "It was so horrible!"

"You were very brave," said

Lafayette Smith.

"Not as brave as you," she replied with a weak little smile; "but a better shot."

"Oh," cried Jezebel, "I thought they would have us again. Now that they are frightened, let us go away. It will require only a word from one of the apostles to send them upon us again."

"You are right," agreed Smith. "Have you any belongings you wish to take with you?"

"Only what we wear," replied Lady Barbara.

"What is the easiest way out of the valley?" asked the man, on the chance that there might be another and nearer avenue of escape than the fissure through

which he had come.

"We know of no way out," replied Jezebel.

"Then follow me," directed Smith. "I'll take you out the way I came in."

They made their way from the village and out onto the dark plain toward Chinnereth, nor did they speak again until they had gone some distance from the fires of the Midians and felt that they were safe from pursuit. It was then that Lafayette Smith asked a question prompted by natural curiosity.

"How can it be possible that you young ladies know of no way out of this valley?" he asked. "Why can't you go out the way you came in?"

"I could scarcely do that," replied

Jezebel; "I was born here."

"Born here?" exclaimed Smith. "Then your parents must live in the valley. We can go to their home. Where is it?"

"We just came from it," explained Lady Barbara. "Jezebel was born in the village from which we have just escaped."

"And those beasts killed her parents?" demanded Lafayette. "You do not understand," said Lady Barbara. "Those people are her people."

Smith was dumbfounded. He almost ejaculated: "How horrible!" but stayed the impulse. "And you?" he asked presently. "Are they your people, too?" There was a note of horror in his voice.

"No," replied Lady Barbara. "I am

English."

"And you don't know how you got into this valley?"

"Yes, I know—I came by parachute."

Smith halted and faced her. "You're Lady Barbara Collis!" he exclaimed.

"How did you know?" she asked. "Have you been searching for me?"

"No, but when I passed through London the papers were full of the story of your flight and your disappearance—pictures and things, you know."

"And you just stumbled onto me? What a coincidence! And how fortunate for me."

"To tell you the truth, I am lost myself," admitted Smith. "So possibly

you are about as badly off as you were before."

"Scarcely," she said. "You have at least prevented my premature cremation."

"They were really going to burn you? It doesn't seem possible in this day and age of enlightenment and civilization."

"The Midians are two thousand years behind the times," she told him, "and in addition to that they are religious, as well as congenital, maniacs."

Smith glanced in the direction of Jezebel whom he could see plainly in the light of a full moon that had but just topped the eastern rim of the crater. Perhaps Lady Barbara sensed the unspoken question that disturbed him.

"Jezebel is different," she said. "I cannot explain why, but she is not at all like her people. She tells me that occasionally one such as she is born among them."

"But she speaks English," said Smith. "She cannot be of the same blood as the people I saw in the village, whose language is certainly not the same as hers, to say nothing of the dissimilarity of their physical appearance."

"I taught her English," explained Lady Barbara.

"She wants to go away and leave her parents and her people?" asked Smith.

"Of course I do," said Jezebel. "Why should I want to stay here and be murdered? My father, my mother, my

brothers and sisters were in that crowd you saw about the crosses tonight. They hate me. They have hated me from the day I was born, because I am not like them. But then there is no love in the land of Midian—only religion, which preaches love and practices hate."

Smith fell silent as the three plodded on over the rough ground down toward the shore of Chinnereth. He was considering the responsibility that Fate had loaded upon his shoulders so unexpectedly and wondering if he were equal to the emergency, who, as he was becoming to realize, could scarcely be sure of his ability to insure his own existence in this savage and unfamiliar world.

Keenly the realization smote him that in almost thirty hours that he had been thrown exclusively upon his own resources he had discovered not a single opportunity to provide food for himself, the result of which was becoming increasingly apparent in a noticeable loss of strength and endurance. What then might he hope to accomplish with two additional mouths to feed?

And what if they encountered either savage beasts or unfriendly natives? Lafayette Smith shuddered. "I hope they can run fast," he murmured.

"Who?" asked Lady Barbara. "What do you mean?"

"Oh," stammered Lafayette. "I—I did not know that I spoke aloud." How could

he tell her that he had lost confidence even in his .32? He could not. Never before in his life had he felt so utterly incompetent. His futility seemed to him to border on criminality. At any rate it was dishonorable, since it was deceiving these young women who had a right to expect guidance and protection from him.

He was very bitter toward himself; but that, perhaps, was due partly to the nervous reaction following the rather horrible experience at the village and physical weakness that was bordering on exhaustion. He was excoriating himself for having dismissed Obambi, which act, he realized, was at the bottom of all his troubles; and then he recalled that had it

not been for that there would have been no one to save these two girls from the horrible fate from which he had preserved them. This thought somewhat restored his self-esteem, for he could not escape the fact that he had, after all, saved them.

Jezebel, the circulation restored to her feet, had been walking without assistance for some time. The three had lapsed into a long silence, each occupied with his own thoughts, as Smith led the way in search of the opening into the fissure.

A full African moon lighted their way, its friendly beams lessening the difficulties of the night march. Chinnereth lay upon their right, a vision

of loveliness in the moonlight, while all about them the grim mass of the crater walls seemed to have closed in upon them and to hang menacingly above their heads, for night and moonlight play strange tricks with perspective.

It was shortly after midnight that Smith first stumbled and fell. He arose quickly, berating his awkwardness; but as he proceeded, Jezebel, who was directly behind him, noticed that he walked unsteadily, stumbling more and more often. Presently he fell again, and this time it was apparent to both girls that it was only with considerable effort that he arose. The third time he fell they both helped him to his feet.

"I'm terribly clumsy," he said. He was

swaying slightly as she stood between them.

Lady Barbara observed him closely. "You are exhausted," she said.

"Oh, no," insisted Smith. "I'm all right."

"When did you eat last?" demandd thee girl.

"I had some chocolate with me," replied Smith. "I ate the last of it this afternoon sometime."

"When did you eat a meal, I mean?" persisted Lady Barbara.

"Well," he admitted, "I had a light lunch yesterday noon, or rather day before yesterday. It must be after midnight now."

"And you have been walking all the time since?"

"Oh, I ran part of the time," he replied, with a weak laugh. "That was when the lion chased me. And I slept in the afternoon before I came to the village."

"We are going to stop right here until you are rested" announced the English girl.

"Oh, no," he demurred, "we mustn't do that. I want to get you out of this valley before daylight, as they will probably pursue us as soon as the sun comes up."

"I don't think so," said Jezebel. "They are too much afraid of the North Midians to come this far from the village; and,

anyway, we have such a start that we can reach the cliffs, where you say the fissure is, before they could overtake us."

"You must rest," insisted Lady Barbara.

Reluctantly Lafayette sat down. "I'm afraid I'm not going to be much help to you," he said. "You see I am not really familiar with Africa, and I fear that I am not adequately armed for your protection. I wish Danny were here."

"Who is Danny?" asked Lady Barbara.

"He's a friend who accompanied me on this trip."

"He's had African experience?"

"No," admitted Lafayette, "but one always feels safe with Danny about. He seems so familiar with firearms. You see he is a protection guy."

"What is a protection guy?" asked Lady Barbara.

"To be quite candid," replied Lafayette, "I am not at all sure that I know myself what it is. Danny is not exactly garrulous about his past; and I have hesitated to pry into his private affairs, but he did volunteer the information one day that he had been a protection guy for a big shot. It sounded reassuring."

"What is a big shot?" inquired Jezebel.

"Perhaps a big game hunter,"

suggested Lady Barbara. "No," said Lafayette. "I gather from Danny's remarks that a big shot is a rich brewer or distiller who also assists in directing the affairs of a large city. It may be just another name for political boss."

"Of course," said Lady Barbara, "it would be nice if your friend were here; but he is not, so suppose you tell us something about yourself. Do you realize that we do not even know your name?"

Smith laughed. "That's about all there is to know about me," he said. "It's Lafayette Smith, and now will you introduce me to this other young lady? I already know who you are."

"Oh, this is Jezebel," said Lady Barbara.

There was a moment's silence. "Is that all?" asked Smith. Lady Barbara laughed. "Just Jezebel," she said. "If we ever get out of here we'll have to find a surname for her. They don't use 'em in the land of Midian."

Smith lay on his back looking up at the moon. Already he was commencing to feel the beneficial effects of relaxation and rest. His thoughts were toying with the events of the past thirty hours. What an adventure for a prosaic professor of geology, he thought. He had never been particularly interested in girls, although he was far from being a misogynist, and to find himself thus thrown into the intimate relationship of protector to two beautiful young women

was somewhat disconcerting. And the moon had revealed that they were beautiful. Perhaps the sun might have a different story to tell. He had heard of such things and he wondered. But sunlight could not alter the cool, crisp, well bred voice of Lady Barbara Collis. He liked to hear her talk. He had always enjoyed the accent and diction of cultured English folk.

He tried to think of something to ask her that he might listen to her voice again. That raised the question of just how he should address her. His contacts with nobility had been few—in fact almost restricted to a single Russian prince who had been a door man at a restaurant he sometimes patronized, and

he had never heard him addressed otherwise than as Mike. He thought Lady Barbara would be the correct formula, though that smacked a little of familiarity. Lady Collis seemed, somehow, even less appropriate. He wished he were sure. Mike would never do. Jezebel. What an archaic name! And then he fell asleep.

Lady Barbara looked down at him and raised a warning finger to her lips lest Jezebel awaken him. Then she rose and walked away a short distance, beckoning the golden one to follow.

"He is about done up," she whispered, as they seated themselves again. "Poor chap, he has had a rough time of it. Imagine being chased by a

lion with only that little popgun with which to defend oneself."

"Is he from your country?" asked Jezebel.

"No, he's an American. I can tell by his accent."

"He is very beautiful," said Jezebel, with a sigh.

"After looking at Abraham, the son of Abraham, and Jobab, for all these weeks I could agree with you if you insisted that St. Ghandi is an Adonis," replied Lady Barbara.

"I do not know what you mean," said Jezebel; "but do you not think him beautiful?"

"I am less interested in his

pulchritude than in his marksmanship, and that is positively beastly. He's got sand though, my word! no end. He walked right into that village and took us out from under the noses of hundreds of people with nothing but his little peashooter for protection. That, Jezebel, was top hole."

The golden Jezebel sighed. "He is much more beautiful than the men of the land of North Midian," she said.

Lady Barbara looked at her companion for a long minute; then she sighed. "If I ever get you to civilization," she said, "I'm afraid you are going to prove something of a problem." Wherewith she stretched herself upon the ground and was soon asleep, for she,

too, had had a strenuous day.

15. ESHBAAL, THE SHEPHERD

The sun shining on his upturned face awakened Lafayette Smith. At first he had difficulty in collecting his thoughts.

The events of the previous night appeared as a dream, but when he sat up and discovered the figures of the sleeping girls a short distance from him his mind was jerked rudely back into the world of realities. His heart sank. How was he to acquit himself creditably of such a responsibility? Frankly, he did not know.

He had no doubt but that he could find the fissure and lead his charges to the outer world, but how much better off

would they be then? He had no idea now, and he realized that he never had, where his camp lay. Then there was the possibility of meeting the lion again in the fissure, and if they did not there was still the question of sustenance. What were they going to use for food, and how were they going to get it?

The thought of food awoke a gnawing hunger within him. He arose and walked to the shore of the lake where he lay on his belly and filled himself with water. When he stood up the girls were sitting up looking at him.

"Good morning," he greeted them. "I was just having breakfast. Will you join me?"

They returned his salutation as they

arose and came toward him. Lady Barbara was smiling. "Thank the lord, you have a sense of humor," she said. "I think we are going to need a lot of it before we get out of this."

"I would much prefer ham and eggs," he replied ruefully.

"Now I know you're an American," she said.

"I suppose you are thinking of tea and marmalade," he rejoined.

"I am trying not to think of food at all," she replied.

"Have some lake," he suggested. "You have no idea how satisfying it is if you take enough of it."

After the girls had drunk the three set

off again, led by Smith, in search of the opening to the fissure. "I know just where it is," he had assured them the night before, and even now he thought that he would have little difficulty in finding it, but when they approached the base of the cliff at the point where he had expected to find it it was not there.

Along the foot of the beetling escarpment he searched, almost frantically now, but there was no sign of the opening through which he had crawled into the valley of the land of Midian. Finally, crushed, he faced Lady Barbara. "I cannot find it," he admitted, and there was a quality of hopelessness in his voice that touched her.

"Never mind," she said. "It must be

somewhere. We shall just have to keep searching until we find it."

"But it's so hard on you young ladies," he said. "It must be a bitter disappointment to you. You don't know how it makes me feel to realize that, with no one to depend on but me, I have failed you so miserably."

"Don't take it that way, please," she begged. "Anyone might have lost his bearings in this hole. These cliffs scarcely change their appearance in miles."

"It's kind of you to say that, but I cannot help but feel guilty. Yet I know the opening cannot be far from here. I came in on the west side of the valley, and that is where we are now. Yes, I am

sure I must find it eventually; but there is no need for all of us to search. You and Jezebel sit down here and wait while I look for it."

"I think we should remain together," suggested Jezebel.

"By all means," agreed Lady Barbara.

"As you wish," said Smith. "We will search toward the north as far as it is possible that the opening can lie. If we don't find it we can come back here and search toward the south."

As they moved along the base of the cliff in a northerly direction Smith became more and more convinced that he was about to discover the entrance to the fissure. He thought that he discerned something familiar in the outlook across

the valley from this location, but still no opening revealed itself after they had gone a considerable distance.

Presently, as they climbed the rise and gained the summit of one of the numerous low ridges that ran, buttress-like, from the face of the cliff down into the valley, he halted in discouragement.

"What is it?" asked Jezebel.

"That forest," he replied. "There was no forest in sight of the opening."

Before them spread an open forest of small trees that grew almost to the foot of the cliffs and stretched downward to the shore of the lake, forming a landscape of exceptional beauty in its park- like aspect. But Lafayette Smith saw no beauty there—he saw only

another proof of his inefficiency and ignorance.

"You came through no forest on your way from the cliffs to the village?" demanded Lady Barbara.

He shook his head. "We've got to walk all the way back now," he said, "and search in the other direction. It is most disheartening. I wonder if you can forgive me."

"Don't be silly," said Lady Barbara. "One might think that you were a Cook's Tour courier who had got lost during a personally conducted tour of the art galleries of Paris and expected to lose his job in consequence."

"I feel worse than that," Smith admitted with a laugh, "and I imagine

that's saying a lot."

"Look!" exclaimed Lady Barbara. "There are animals of some sort down there in the forest. Don't you see them?"

"Oh, yes," cried Jezebel, "I see them."

"What are they?" asked Smith. "They look like deer."

"They are goats," said Jezebel. "The North Midians have goats. They roam over this end of the valley."

"They look like something to eat, to me," said Lady Barbara. "Let's go down and get one of them."

"They will probably not let us catch them," suggested Lafayette.

"You've a pistol," the English girl reminded him.

"That's a fact," he agreed. "I can shoot one."

"Maybe," qualified Lady Barbara.

"I'd better go down alone," said Smith. "Three of us together might frighten them."

"You'll have to be mighty careful or you'll frighten them yourself," warned Lady Barbara. "Have you ever stalked game?"

"No," admitted the American, "I never have."

Lady Barbara moistened a finger and held it up. "The wind is right," she announced. "So all you have to do is keep out of sight and make no noise."

"How am I going to keep out of

sight?" demanded Smith. "You'll have to crawl down to them, taking advantage of trees, rocks and bushes— anything that will conceal you. Crawl forward a few feet and then stop, if they show any sign of nervousness, until they appear unconcerned again."

"That will take a long time," said Smith.

"It may be a long time before we find anything else to eat," she reminded him, "and nothing we do find is going to walk up to us and lie down and die at our feet."

"I suppose you are right," assented Smith. "Here goes! Pray for me." He dropped to his hands and knees and crawled slowly forward over the rough

ground in the direction of the forest and the goats. After a few yards he turned and whispered: "This is going to be tough on the knees."

"Not half as hard as it's going to be on our stomachs if you don't succeed," replied Lady Barbara.

Smith made a wry face and resumed his crawling while the two girls, lying flat now to conceal themselves from the quarry, watched his progress.

"He's not doing half badly," commented Lady Barbara after several minutes of silent watching.

"How beautiful he is," sighed Jezebel.

"Just at present the most beautiful things in the landscape are those goats," said Lady Barbara. "If he gets close

enough for a shot and misses I shall die—and I know he will miss."

"He didn't miss Lamech last night," Jezebel reminded her. "He must have been aiming at someone else," commented Lady Barbara shortly.

Lafayette Smith crawled on apace. With numerous halts, as advised by Lady Barbara, he drew slowly nearer his unsuspecting quarry. The minutes seemed hours. Pounding constantly upon his brain was the consciousness that he must not fail, though not for the reason that One might naturally assume. The failure to procure food seemed a less dreadful consequence than the contempt of Lady Barbara Collis.

Now, at last, he was quite close to the

nearest of the herd. Just a few more yards and he was positive that he could not miss. A low bush, growing just ahead of him, concealed his approach from the eyes of his victim. Lafayette Smith reached the bush and paused behind it. A little farther ahead he discovered another shrub still closer to the goat, a thin nanny with a large udder. She did not look very appetizing, but beneath that unprepossessing exterior Lafayette Smith knew there must be hidden juicy steaks and cutlets. He crawled on. His knees were raw and his neck ached from the unnatural position his unfamiliar method of locomotion had compelled it to assume.

He passed the bush behind which he

had paused, failing to see the kid lying hidden upon its opposite side -- hidden by a solicitous mamma while she fed. The kid saw Lafayette but it did not move. It would not move until its mother called it, unless actually touched by something, or terrified beyond the limit of its self control.

It watched Lafayette crawling toward the next bush upon his itinerary —the next and last. What it thought is unrecorded, but it is doubtful that it was impressed by Lafayette's beauty.

Now the man had reached the concealment of the last bush, unseen by any other eyes than those of the kid. He drew his pistol cautiously, lest the slightest noise alarm his potential

dinner. Raising himself slightly until his eyes were above the level of the bush he took careful aim. The goat was so close that a miss appeared such a remote contingency as to be of negligible consideration.

Lafayette already felt the stirring warmth of pride with which he would toss the carcass of his kill at the feet of Lady Barbara and Jezebel. Then he jerked the trigger.

Nanny leaped straight up into the air, and when she hit the ground again she was already streaking north in company with the balance of the herd. Lafayette Smith had missed again.

He had scarcely time to realize the astounding and humiliating fact as he

rose to his feet when something struck him suddenly and heavily from behind —a blow that bent his knees beneath him and brought him heavily to earth in a sitting posture. No, not to earth. He was sitting on something soft that wriggled and squirmed. His startled eyes, glancing down, saw the head of a kid protruding from between his legs—little Capra hircus had been terrified beyond the limit of his self-control.

"Missed!" cried Lady Barbara Collis. "How could he!" Tears of disappointment welled to her eyes.

Eshbaal, hunting his goats at the northern fringe of the forest cocked his ears and listened. That unfamiliar sound! And so near. From far across the valley,

toward the village of the South Midians, Eshbaal had heard a similar sound, though faintly from afar, the night before. Four times it had broken the silence of the valley and no more. Eshbaal had heard it and so had his fellows in the village of Elija, the son of Noah.

Lafayette Smith seized the kid before it could wriggle free, and despite its struggles he slung it across his shoulder and started back toward the waiting girls.

"He didn't miss it!" exclaimed Jezebel. "I knew he wouldn't," and she went down to meet him, with Lady Barbara, perplexed, following in her wake.

"Splendid!" cried the English girl as

they came closer. "You really did shoot one, didn't you? I was sure you missed."

"I did miss," admitted Lafayette ruefully.

"But how did you get it?"

"If I must admit it," explained the man, "I sat on it. As a matter of fact it got me."

"Well, anyway, you have it," she said.

"And it will be a whole lot better eating than the one I missed," he assured them. "That one was terribly thin and very old."

"How cute it is," said Jezebel.

"Don't," cried Lady Barbara. "We mustn't think of that. Just remember that we are starving."

"Where shall we eat it?" asked Smith.

"Right here," replied the English girl. "There is plenty of deadwood around these trees. Have you matches?"

"Yes. Now you two look the other way while I do my duty. I wish I'd hit the old one now. This is like murdering a baby."

Upon the opposite side of the forest Eshbaal was once again experiencing surprise, for suddenly the goats for which he had been searching came stampeding toward him.

"The strange noise frightened them," soliloquized Eshbaal. "Perhaps it is a miracle. The goats for which I have searched all day have been made to return unto me."

As they dashed past, the trained eye of the shepherd took note of them. There were not many goats in the bunch that had strayed, so he had no difficulty in counting them. A kid was missing. Being a shepherd there was nothing for Eshbaal to do but set forth in search of the missing one. He advanced cautiously, alert because of the noise he had heard.

Eshbaal was a short, stocky man with blue eyes and a wealth of blond hair and beard. His features were regular and handsome in a primitive, savage way. His single garment, fashioned from a goat skin, left his right arm entirely free, nor did it impede his legs, since it fell not to his knees. He carried a club and a

rude knife.

Lady Barbara took charge of the culinary activities after Lafayette had butchered the kid and admitted that, beyond hard boiling eggs, his knowledge of cooking was too sketchy to warrant serious mention. "And anyway," he said, "we haven't any eggs."

Following the directions of the English girl, Smith cut a number of chops from the carcass; and these the three grilled on pointed sticks that Lady Barbara had had him cut from a nearby tree.

"How long will it take to cook them?" demanded Smith. "I could eat mine raw. I could eat the whole kid raw, for that matter, in one sitting and have room left

for the old nanny I missed."

"We'll eat only enough to keep us going," said Lady Barbara; "then we'll wrap the rest in the skin and take it with us. If we're careful, this should keep us alive for three or four days."

"Of course you're right," admitted Lafayette. "You always are."

"You can have a big meal this time," she told him, "because you've been longer without food than we."

"You have had nothing for a long time, Barbara," said Jezebel. "I am the one who needs the least."

"We all need it now," said Lafayette. "Let's have a good meal this time, get back our strength, and then ration the balance so that it will last several days.

Maybe I will sit on something else before this is gone."

They all laughed; and presently the chops were done, and the three fell to upon them. "Like starving Armenians," was the simile Smith suggested.

Occupied with the delightful business of appeasing wolfish hunger, none of them saw Eshbaal halt behind a tree and observe them. Jezebel he recognized for what she was, and a sudden fire lighted his blue eyes. The others were enigmas to him—especially their strange apparel.

Of one thing Eshbaal was convinced. He had found his lost kid and there was wrath in his heart. For just a moment he watched the three; then he glided back into the forest until he was out of their

sight, when he broke into a run.

The meal finished, Smith wrapped the remainder of the carcass in the skin of the kid; and the three again took up their search for the fissure.

An hour passed and then another. Still their efforts were not crowned with success. They saw no opening in the stern, forbidding face of the escarpment, nor did they see the slinking figures creeping steadily nearer and nearer —a score of stocky, yellow haired men led by Eshbaal, the Shepherd.

"We must have passed it," said Smith at last. "It just cannot be this far south," yet only a hundred yards farther on lay the illusive opening into the great fissure.

"We shall have to hunt for some other way out of the valley then," said Lady Barbara. "There is a place farther south that Jezebel and I used to see from the mouth of our cave where the cliff looked as though it might be scaled."

"Let's have a try at it then," said Smith. "Say, look there!" he pointed toward the north.

"What is it? Where?" demanded Jezebel.

"I thought I saw a man's head behind that rock," said Smith. "Yes, there he is again. Lord, look at 'em. They're all around."

Eshbaal and his fellows, realizing that they were discovered, came into the open, advancing slowly toward the

three.

"The men of North Midian!" exclaimed Jezebel. "Are they not beautiful!"

"What shall we do?" demanded Lady Barbara. "We must not let them take us."

"We'll see what they want," said Smith. "They may not be unfriendly. Anyway, we couldn't escape them by running. They would overtake us in no time. Get behind me, and if they show any signs of attacking I'll shoot a few of them."

"Perhaps you had better go out and sit on them," suggested Lady Barbara, wearily.

"I am sorry," said Smith, "that my marksmanship is so poor; but,

unfortunately perhaps, it never occurred to my parents to train me in the gentle art of murder. I realize now that they erred and that my education has been sadly neglected. I am only a school teacher, and in teaching the young intellect to shoot I have failed to learn to do so myself."

"I didn't intend to be nasty," said Lady Barbara, who detected in the irony of the man's reply a suggestion of wounded pride. "Please forgive me."

The North Midians were advancing cautiously, halting occasionally for brief, whispered conferences. Presently one of them spoke, addressing the three. "Who are ye?" he demanded. "What do ye in the land of Midian?"

"Can you understand him?" asked Smith, over his shoulder.

"Yes," replied both girls simultaneously.

"He speaks the same language as Jezebel's people," explained Lady Barbara. "He wants to know who we are and what we are doing here."

"You talk to him, Lady Barbara," said Smith.

The English girl stepped forward. "We are strangers in Midian," she said. "We are lost. All we wish is to get out of your country."

"There is no way out of Midian," replied the man. "Ye have killed a kid belonging to Eshbaal. For that ye must be punished. Ye must come with us."

"We were starving," explained Lady Barbara. "If we could pay for the kid we would gladly do so. Let us go in peace."

The Midians held another whispered conference, after which their spokesman addressed the three again. "Ye must come with us," he said, "the women at least; if the man will go away we will not harm you, we do not want him; we want the women."

"What did he say?" demanded Smith, and when Lady Barbara had interpreted he shook his bead. "Tell them no," he directed. "Also tell them that if they molest us I shall have to kill them."

When the girl delivered this ultimatum to the Midians they laughed. "What can one man do against twenty?"

demanded their leader, then he advanced followed by his retainers. They were brandishing their clubs now, and some of them raised their voices in a savage war cry.

"You will have to shoot," said Lady Barbara. "There are at least twenty. You cannot miss them all."

"You flatter me," said Smith, as he raised his .32 and levelled it at the advancing Midians.

"Go back!" shouted Jezebel, "or you will be killed," but the attackers only came forward the faster.

Then Smith fired. At the sharp crack of the pistol the Midians halted, surprised; but no one fell. Instead, the leader hurled his club, quickly and

accurately, just as Smith was about to fire again. He dodged; but the missile struck his pistol hand a glancing blow, sending the weapon flying— then the North Midians were upon them.

16. TRAILING

Tarzan of the Apes had made a kill it was only a small rodent, but it would satisfy his hunger until the morrow. Darkness had fallen shortly after he had discovered the spoor of the missing American, and he was forced to abandon the search until daylight came again. The first sign of the spoor had been very faint —just the slightest imprint of one corner of a boot heel, but that had been enough for the ape-man. Clinging to a bush nearby was the scarcely perceptible scent spoor of a white man, which Tarzan might have followed even after dark; but it would have been a slow and arduous method of tracking which the ape-man did not consider the

circumstances warranted. Therefore he made his kill, ate, and curled up in a patch of tall grass to sleep.

Wild beasts may not sleep with one eye open, but often it seems that they sleep with both ears cocked. The ordinary night sounds go unnoticed, while a lesser sound, portending danger or suggesting the unfamiliar, may awaken them on the instant. It was a sound falling into the latter category that awoke Tarzan shortly after midnight.

He raised his head and listened, then he lowered it and placed an ear against the ground. "Horses and men," he soliloquized as he rose to his feet. Standing erect, his great chest rising and falling to his breathing, he listened

intently. His sensitive nostrils, seeking to confirm the testimony of his ears, dilated to receive and classify the messages that Usha, the wind, bore to them. They caught the scent of Tongani, the baboon, so strong as almost to negate the others. Tenuous, from a great distance came the scent spoor of Sabor, the lioness, and the sweet, heavy stench of Tantor, the elephant. One by one the ape-man read these invisible messages brought by Usha, the wind; but only those interested him that spoke of horses and men.

Why did horses and men move through the night? Who and what were the men? He scarcely needed to ask himself that latter question, and only the

first one interested him.

It is the business of beasts and of men to know what their enemies do. Tarzan stretched his great muscles lazily and moved down the slope of the foot hills in the direction from which had come the evidence that his enemies were afoot.

The "Gunner" stumbled along in the darkness. Never in his twenty odd years of life had he even approximated such utter physical exhaustion. Each step he was sure must be his last. He had long since become too tired even to curse his captors as he plodded on, now almost numb to any sensation, his mind a chaos of dull misery.

But even endless journeys must ultimately end; and at last the cavalcade

turned into the gateway of the village of Dominic Capietro, the raider; and the "Gunner" was escorted to a hut where he slumped to the hard earth floor after his bonds had been removed, positive that he would never rise again.

He was asleep when they brought him food; but aroused himself long enough to eat, for his hunger was fully as great as his fatigue. Then he stretched out again and slept, while a tired and disgusted *shifta* nodded drowsily on guard outside the entrance to the hut.

Tarzan had come down to the cliff above the village as the raiders were filing through the gateway. A full moon cast her revealing beams upon the scene, lighting the figures of horses and men.

The ape-man recognized Capietro and Stabutch, he saw Ogonyo, the headman of the safari of the young American geologist; and he saw the "Gunner" stumbling painfully along in bonds.

The ape-man was an interested spectator of all that transpired in the village below. He noted particularly the location of the hut into which the white prisoner had been thrust. He watched the preparation of food, and he noted the great quantities of liquor that Capietro and Stabutch consumed while waiting for the midnight supper being prepared by slaves. The more they drank the better pleased was Tarzan.

As he watched them, he wondered how supposedly rational creatures could

consider the appellation *beast* a term of reproach and *man* one of glorification. The beasts, as he knew, held an opposite conception of the relative virtues of these two orders, although they were ignorant of most of man's asininities and degredations, their minds being far too pure to understand them.

Waiting with the patience of the unspoiled primitive nervous system, Tarzan watched from the cliff top until the village below seemed to have settled down for the night. He saw the sentries in the banquette inside the palisade, but he did not see the guard squatting in the shadow of the hut where the "Gunner" lay in heavy slumber.

Satisfied, the ape-man rose and

moved along the cliff until he was beyond the village; and there, where the escarpment was less precipitous, he made his way to its base. Noiselessly and cautiously he crept to the palisade at a point that was hidden from the view of the sentries. The moon shone full upon him, but the opposite side of the palisade he knew must be in dense shadow. There he listened for a moment to assure himself that his approach had aroused no suspicion. He wished that he might see the sentries at the gate, for when he topped the palisade he would be in full view for an instant. When last he had seen them they had been squatting upon the banquette, their backs to the palisade, and apparently upon the verge

of sleep. Would they remain thus?

Here, however, was a chance he must take, and so he gave the matter little thought and few regrets. What was, was; and if he could not change it he must ignore it; and so, leaping lightly upward, he seized the top of the palisade and drew himself up and over. Only a glance he threw in the direction of the sentries as he topped the barrier, a glance that told him they had not moved since he had last looked.

In the shadow of the palisade he paused to look about. There was nothing to cause him apprehension; and so he moved quickly, keeping ever in the shadows where he could, toward the hut where he expected to find the young

white man. It was hidden from his view by another hut which he approached and had circled when he saw the figure of the guard sitting by the doorway, his rifle across his knees.

This was a contingency the ape-man had not anticipated, and it caused a change in his immediate plans. He drew back out of sight behind the hut he had been circling, lay down flat upon the ground, and then crawled forward again until his head protruded beyond the hut far enough to permit one eye to watch the unconscious guard. Here he lay waiting —a human beast watching its quarry.

For a long time he lay thus trusting to his knowledge of men that the moment for which he waited would arrive.

Presently the chin of the *shifta* dropped to his chest; but immediately it snapped back again, erect. Then the fellow changed his position. He sat upon the ground, his legs stretched before him, and leaned his back against the hut. His rifle was still across his knees. It was a dangerous position for a man who would remain awake.

After a while his head rolled to one side. Tarzan watched him closely, as a cat watches a mouse. The head remained in the position to which it had rolled, the chin dropped, and the mouth gaped; the tempo of the breathing changed, denoting sleep.

Tarzan rose silently to his feet and as silently crept across the intervening

space to the side of the unconscious man. There must be no outcry, no scuffle.

As strikes Histah, the snake, so struck Tarzan of the Apes. There was only the sound of parting vertebrae as the neck broke in the grip of those thews of steel.

The rifle Tarzan laid upon the ground; then he raised the corpse in his arms and bore it into the darkness of the hut's interior. Here he groped for a moment until he had located the body of the sleeping white, and knelt beside him. Cautiously he shook him, one hand ready to muffle any outcry the man might make, but the "Gunner" did not awaken. Tarzan shook him again more roughly and yet without results, then he slapped him heavily across the face.

The "Gunner" stirred. "Geeze," he muttered "can't you let a guy sleep? Didn't I tell you you'd get your ransom?"

Tarzan permitted a faint smile to touch his lips. "Wake up," he whispered. "Make no noise. I have come to take you away?"

"Who are you?"

"Tarzan of the Apes."

"Geeze!" The "Gunner" sat up.

"Make no noise," cautioned the ape-man once more.

"Sure," whispered Danny as he raised himself stiffly to his feet.

"Follow me," said Tarzan, "and no matter what happens stay very close to me. I am going to toss you to the top of

the palisade. Try not to make any noise as you climb over, and be careful when you drop to the ground on the other side to alight with your knees flexed—it is a long drop."

"You say you're going to toss me to the top of the palisade, guy?"

"Yes."

"Do you know what I weigh?"

"No, and I don't care. Keep still and follow me. Don't stumble over this body." Tarzan paused in the entrance and looked about; then he passed out, with the "Gunner" at his heels, and crossed quickly to the palisade. Even if they discovered him now he still had time to accomplish what he had set out to do, before they could interfere, unless the

sentries, firing on them, chanced to make a hit; but on that score be felt little apprehension.

As they came to the palisade the "Gunner" glanced up, and his skepticism increased—a fat chance any guy would have to toss his one hundred and eighty pounds to the top of that!

The ape-man seized him by the collar and the seat of his breeches. "Catch the top!" he whispered. Then he swung the "Gunner" backward as though he had been a fifty pound sack of meal, surged forward and upward; and in the same second Danny Patrick's outstretched fingers clutched the top of the palisade.

"Geeze," he muttered, "if I'd missed I'd of gone clean over." Catlike, the ape-

man ran up the barrier and dropped to the ground on the outside almost at the instant that the "Gunner" alighted, and without a word started toward the cliff, where once again he had to assist the other to reach the summit.

Danny "Gunner" Patrick was speechless, partly from shortness of breath following his exertions, but more, by far, from astonishment. Here was a guy! In all his experience of brawny men, and it had been considerable, he had never met, nor expected to meet, such a one as this.

"I have located the spoor of your friend," said Tarzan.

"The what?" asked the "Gunner." "Is he dead?"

"His tracks," explained the ape-man, who was still leading the way up the slope toward the higher mountains.

"I gotcha," said the "Gunner." "But you ain't seen him?"

"No, it was too dark to follow him when I found them. We will do so in the morning."

"If I can walk," said the "Gunner."

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Tarzan. "Injured?"

"I ain't got no legs from the knees down," replied Danny. "I walked my lousy dogs off yesterday."

"I'll carry you," suggested Tarzan.

"Nix!" exclaimed Danny. "I can crawl, but I'll be damned if I'll let any

guy carry me."

"It will be a hard trip if you're exhausted now," the ape-man told him. "I could leave you somewhere near here and pick you up after I find your friend."

"Nothing doing. I'm going to look for old Smithy if I wear 'em off to the hips."

"I could probably travel faster alone," suggested Tarzan. "Go ahead," agreed the "Gunner" cheerfully. "I'll tail along behind you."

"And get lost."

"Let me come along, mister. I'm worried about that crazy nut."

"All right. It won't make much difference anyway. He may be a little hungrier when we find him, but he can't

starve to death in a couple of days."

"Say," exclaimed Danny, "how come you knew them guys had taken me for a ride?"

"I thought you walked."

"Well, what's the difference? How did you know I was in that lousy burgh of theirs?"

"I was on the cliff when they brought you in. I waited until they were asleep. I am not ready to deal with them yet."

"What you goin' to do to them?"

Tarzan shrugged but made no reply; and for a long time they walked on in silence through the night, the ape-man timing his speed to the physical condition of his companion, whose

nerve he was constrained to admire, though his endurance and knowledge he viewed with contempt.

Far up in the hills, where he had bedded down earlier in the night, Tarzan halted and told the "Gunner" to get what rest he could before dawn.

"Geeze, them's the pleasantest words I've heard for years," sighed Danny, as he lay down in the high grass. "You may think you've seen a guy pound his ear, but you ain't seen nothin'. Watch me," and he was asleep almost before the words had left his mouth.

Tarzan lay down at a little distance; and he, too, was soon asleep, but at the first suggestion of dawn he was up. He saw that his companion still slept, and

then he slipped silently away toward a water hole he had discovered the previous day in a rocky ravine near the cliff where he had met the tribe of Zugash, the tongani.

He kept well down the slope of the foot hills, for with the coming of dawn the wind had changed, and he wished to come up wind toward the water hole. He moved as silently as the disappearing shadows of the retreating night, his nostrils quivering to catch each vagrant scent borne upon the bosom of the early morning breeze.

There was deep mud at one edge of the water hole, where the earth had been trampled by the feet of drinking beasts; and near here he found that which he

sought, the sticky sweetness of whose scent had been carried to his nostrils by Usha.

Low trees grew in the bottom of the ravine and much underbrush, for here the earth held its moisture longer than on the ridges that were more exposed to Kudu's merciless rays. It was a lovely sylvan glade, nor did its beauties escape the appreciative eyes of the ape- man, though the lure of the glade lay not this morning in its aesthetic charms, but rather in the fact that it harbored Horta, the boar.

Silently to the edge of the underbrush came the ape-man as Horta came down to the pool to drink. Upon the opposite side stood Tarzan, his bow and arrows

ready in his hands; but the high brush precluded a fair shot, and so the hunter stepped out in full view of the boar. So quickly he moved that his arrow sped as Horta wheeled to run, catching the boar in the side behind the left shoulder—a vital spot.

With a snort of rage Horta turned back and charged. Straight through the pool he came for Tarzan; and as he came three more arrows shot with unbelievable accuracy and celerity, buried themselves deep in the breast of the great beast. Bloody foam flecked his jowls and his flashing tusks, fires of hate shot from his wicked little eyes as he sought to reach the author of his hurts and wreak his vengeance before he died.

Discarding his bow the ape-man met the mad charge of Horta with his spear, for there was no chance to elude the swift rush of that great body, hemmed, as he was, by the thick growth of underbrush. His feet braced, he dropped the point of his weapon the instant Horta was within its range, that they might have no opportunity to dodge it or strike it aside with his tusks. Straight through the chest it drove, deep into the savage heart, yet the beast still strove to reach the man-thing that held it off with a strength almost equal to its own.

But already as good as dead on his feet was Horta, the boar. His brief, savage struggles ended; and he dropped in the shallow water at the edge of the

pool. Then the ape-man placed a foot upon his vanquished foe and screamed forth the hideous challenge of his tribe.

The "Gunner" sat suddenly erect, awakened out of a sound sleep. "Geeze!" he exclaimed. "What was that?" Receiving no answer he looked about. "Wouldn't that eat you?" he murmured. "He's went. I wonder has he run out on me? He didn't seem like that kind of a guy. But you can't never tell—I've had pals to double-cross me before this."

In the village of Capietro a dozing sentry snapped suddenly alert, while his companion half rose to his feet. "What was that?" demanded one.

"A hairy one has made a kill," said the other.

Sheeta, the panther, down wind, stalking both the man and the boar, stopped in his tracks; then he turned aside and loped away in easy, graceful bounds; but he had not gone far before he stopped again and raised his nose upwind. Again the scent of man; but this time a different man, nor was there any sign of the feared thunder stick that usually accompanied the scent spoor of the tarmangani. Belly low, Sheeta moved slowly up the slope toward Danny "Gunner" Patrick.

"What to do?" mused the "Gunner." "Geeze, I'm hungry! Should I wait for him or should I go on? On, where? I sure got myself in a jam all right. Where do I go? How do I eat? Hell!"

He arose and moved about, feeling out his muscles. They were lame and sore, but he realized that he was much rested. Then he scanned the distances for a sight of Tarzan and, instead, saw Sheeta, the panther, a few hundred yards away.

Danny Patrick, hoodlum, racketeer, gangster, gunman, killer, trembled in terror. Cold sweat burst from every pore, and he could feel the hair rise on his scalp. He felt a mad impulse to run; but, fortunately for Danny, his legs refused to move. He was literally, in the vernacular to which he was accustomed, scared stiff. The "Gunner," without a gun, was a very different man.

The panther had stopped and was

surveying him. Caution and an hereditary fear of man gave the great cat pause, but he was angry because he had been frightened from his prey after hunting futilely all night, and he was very, very hungry. He growled, his face wrinkled in a hideous snarl; and Danny felt his knees giving beneath him.

Then, beyond the panther, he saw the high grass moving to the approach of another animal, which the "Gunner" promptly assumed was the beast's mate. There was just a single, narrow strip of this high grass; and when the animal had crossed it he, too, would see Danny, who was confident that this would spell the end. One of them might hesitate to attack a man—he didn't know—but he

was sure that two would not.

He dropped to his knees and did something that he had not done for many years—he prayed. And then the grasses parted; and Tarzan of the Apes stepped into view, the carcass of a boar upon one broad shoulder. Instantly the ape-man took in the scene that his nostrils had already prepared him for.

Dropping the carcass of Horta he voiced a sudden, ferocious growl that startled Sheeta no more than it did Danny Patrick. The cat wheeled, instantly on the defensive. Tarzan charged, growls rumbling from his throat; and Sheeta did exactly what he had assumed he would do—turned and fled. Then Tarzan picked up the carcass

of Horta and came up the slope to Danny, who knelt open-mouthed and petrified.

"What are you kneeling for?" asked the ape-man.

"I was just tying my boot lace," explained the "Gunner."

"Here is breakfast," said Tarzan, dropping the boar to the ground. "Help yourself."

"That sure looks good to me," said Danny. "I could eat it raw."

"That is fine," said Tarzan; and, squatting, he cut two strips from one of the hams. "Here," he said, offering one to the "Gunner."

"Quit your kidding," remonstrated the

latter.

Tarzan eyed him questioningly, at the same time tearing off a mouthful of the meat with his strong teeth. "Horta is a little bit tough," he remarked, "but he is the best I could do without losing a great deal of time. Why don't you eat? I thought you were hungry."

"I got to cook mine," said the "Gunner."

"But you said you could eat it raw," the ape-man reminded him.

"That's just a saying," explained the "Gunner." "I might at that but I ain't never tried it."

"Make a fire, then; and cook yours," said Tarzan.

"Say," remarked Danny a few minutes later as he squatted before his fire grilling his meat, "did you hear that noise a little while ago?"

"What was it like?"

"I never heard nothing like it but once before—say I just took a tumble to myself! That was you killin' the pig. I heard you yell like that the night you killed the lion in our camp."

"We will be going as soon as you finish your meat," said Tarzan. He was hacking off several pieces, half of which he handed to the "Gunner" while he dropped the balance into his quiver. "Take these," he said. "You may get hungry before we can make another kill." Then he scraped a hole in the loose earth

and buried the remainder of the carcass.

"What you doin' that for?" asked the "Gunner." "Afraid it will smell?"

"We may come back this way," explained Tarzan. "If we do Horta will be less tough."

The "Gunner" made no comment; but he assured himself, mentally, that he "wasn't no dog," to bury his meat and then dig it up again after it had rotted. The idea almost made him sick.

Tarzan quickly picked up the trail of Lafayette Smith and followed it easily, though the "Gunner" saw nothing to indicate that human foot had ever trod these hills.

"I don't see nothing," he said.

"I have noticed that," returned Tarzan.

"That," thought Danny Patrick, "sounds like a dirty crack;" but he said nothing.

"A lion picked up his trail here," said the ape-man.

"You ain't spoofin' me are you?" demanded Danny. "There ain't no sign of nothin' on this ground."

"Nothing that you can see perhaps," replied Tarzan; "but then, though you may not know it, you so-called civilized men are almost blind and quite stone deaf."

Soon they came to the fissure, and here Tarzan saw that the man and the lion had both gone in, the lion following the man, and that only the lion had come

out.

"That looks tough for old Smithy, doesn't it?" said the "Gunner" when Tarzan had explained the story of the spoor.

"It may," replied the ape-man. "I'll go on in and look for him. You can wait here or follow. You can't get lost if you stay inside this crack."

"Go ahead," said Danny. "I'll follow."

The fissure was much longer than Tarzan had imagined; but some distance from the entrance he discovered that the lion had not attacked Smith, for he could see where Numa had turned about and that the man had continued on. Some recent scars on the sides of the fissure told him the rest of the story quite

accurately.

"It's fortunate he didn't hit Numa," soliloquized the ape- man.

At the end of the fissure Tarzan had some difficulty in wriggling through the aperture that opened into the valley of the Land of Midian; but once through he picked up the trail of Smith again and followed it down toward the lake, while Danny, far behind him, stumbled wearily along the rough floor of the fissure.

Tarzan walked rapidly for the spoor was plain. When he came to the shore of Chinnereth he discovered Smith's tracks intermingled with those of a woman wearing well worn European boots and another shod with sandals.

When he had first entered the valley

he had seen the village of the South Midians in the distance and now he drew the false conclusion that Smith had discovered a friendly people and other whites and that he was in no danger.

His curiosity piqued by the mystery of this hidden valley, the ape-man determined to visit the village before continuing on Smith's frail. Time had never entered greatly into his calculations, trained, as he had been, by savage apes to whom time meant less than nothing; but to investigate and to know every detail of his wilderness world was as much a part of the man as is his religion to a priest.

And so he continued rapidly on toward the distant village while Danny

Patrick still crawled and stumbled slowly along the rocky floor of the fissure.

Danny was tired. Momentarily he expected to meet Tarzan returning either with Smith or with word of his death; so he stopped often to rest, with the result that when he had reached the end of the fissure and crawled through to behold the mystifying sight of a strange valley spread before him, Tarzan was already out of sight.

"Geeze!" exclaimed the "Gunner." "Who would have thought that hole led into a place like this? I wonder which way that Tarzan guy went?"

This thought occupied the "Gunner" for a few minutes. He examined the

ground as he had seen Tarzan do, mistook a few spots where some little rodent had scratched up the earth, or taken a dust bath, for the footprints of a man, and set forth in the wrong direction.

17. SHE IS MINE!

The stocky, blond warriors of Elija, the son of Noah, quickly surrounded and seized Lafayette Smith and his two companions. Elija picked up Smith's pistol and examined it with interest; then he dropped it into a goat skin pouch that was suspended from the girdle that held his single garment about him.

"This one," said Eshbaal, pointing to Jezebel, "is mine."

"Why?" asked Elija, the son of Noah.

"I saw her first," replied Eshbaal.

"Did you hear what he said?" demanded Jezebel of Lady Barbara.

The English girl nodded apathetically. Her brain was numb with

disappointment and the horror of the situation, for in some respects their fate might be worse with these men than with those of South Midian. These were lusty, primitive warriors, not half-witted creatures whose natural passions had been weakened by generations of hereditary disease of nerve and brain.

"He wants me," said Jezebel. "Is he not beautiful?"

Lady Barbara turned upon the girl almost angrily, and then suddenly she remembered that Jezebel was little more than a child in experience and that she had no conception of the fate that might await her at the hands of the North Midians.

In their narrow religious fanaticism

the South Midians denied even the most obvious phases of procreation. The subject was absolutely taboo and so hideous had ages of training and custom made it appear to them that mothers often killed their first born rather than exhibit these badges of sin.

"Poor little Jezebel," said Lady Barbara.

"What do you mean, Barbara?" asked the girl. "Are you not happy that the beautiful man wants me?"

"Listen, Jezebel," said Lady Barbara. "You know I am your friend, do you not?"

"My only friend," replied the girl. "The only person I ever loved."

"Then believe me when I say that you

must kill yourself, as I shall kill myself, if we are unable to escape from these creatures."

"Why?" demanded Jezebel. "Are they not more beautiful than the South Midians?"

"Forget their fatal beauty," replied Lady Barbara, "but never forget what I have told you."

"Now I am afraid," said Jezebel.

"Thank God for that," exclaimed the English girl.

The North Midians marched loosely and without discipline. They seemed a garrulous race, and their arguments and speeches were numerous and lengthy. Sometimes so intent did they become on some point at argument, or in listening to

a long winded oration by one of their fellows, that they quite forgot their prisoners, who were sometimes amongst them, sometimes in advance and once behind them.

It was what Lady Barbara had been awaiting and what she had to some extent engineered.

"Now!" she whispered. "They are not looking." She halted and turned back. They were among the trees of the forest where some concealment might be found.

Smith and Jezebel had stopped at Lady Barbara's direction; and for an instant the three paused, breathless, watching the retreating figures of their captors.

"Now run!" whispered Lady Barbara. "We'll scatter and meet again at the foot of the cliff."

Just what prompted Lady Barbara to suggest that they separate Lafayette Smith did not understand. To him it seemed a foolish and unnecessary decision; but as he had a great deal more confidence in Lady Barbara's judgment in practical matters than in his own he did not voice his doubts, though he accepted her plan with certain mental reservations, which guided his subsequent acts.

The English girl ran in a southeasterly direction, while Jezebel, obeying the commands of her friend, scurried off toward the southwest. Smith, glancing to

the rear, discovered no indication that their captors had, as yet, missed them. For a moment he was hesitant as to what course to pursue. The conviction still gripped him that he was the natural protector of both girls, notwithstanding the unfortunate circumstances that had nullified his efforts to function successfully in that role; but he saw that it was going to be still more difficult to protect them both now that they had elected to run in different directions.

However, his decision was soon made, difficult though it was. Jezebel was in her own world; contemplation of her capture by the North Midians had, so far from alarming her, appeared rather to have met with enthusiastic anticipation

on her part; she could not be worse off with them than the only other people she knew.

Lady Barbara, on the other hand, was of another world—his own world—and he had heard her say that death would be preferable to captivity among these semi-savages. His duty, therefore, was to follow and protect Lady Barbara; and so he let Jezebel take her way unprotected back toward the cliff, while he pursued the English girl in the direction of Chinnereth.

Lady Barbara Collis ran until she was out of breath. For several minutes she had distinctly heard the sounds of pursuit behind her—the heavy footfalls of a man. Frantic from hopelessness, she

drew her pocket knife from a pocket of her jacket and opened the blade as she ran.

She wondered if she could destroy herself with this inadequate weapon. She was positive that she could not inflict either fatal or disabling injuries upon her pursuer with it. Yet the thought of self-destruction revolted her. The realization was upon her that she had about reached the limit of her endurance, and that the fatal decision could not be long averted, when her heritage of English fighting blood decided the question for her. There was but one thing it would permit—she must stand and defend herself. She stopped then, suddenly, and wheeled about, the little knife clutched in her

right hand—a tigress at bay.

When she saw Lafayette Smith running toward her she collapsed suddenly and sank to the ground, where she sat with her back against the bole of a tree. Lafayette Smith, breathing hard, came and sat down beside her. Neither had any breath for words.

Lady Barbara was the first to regain her power of speech. "I thought I said we would scatter," she reminded him.

"I couldn't leave you alone," he replied.

"But how about Jezebel? You left her alone."

"I couldn't go with both of you," he reminded her, "and you know Jezebel is really at home here. It means much more

to you to escape than it means to her."

She shook her head. "Capture means the same thing to either of us," she said, "But of the two I am better able to take care of myself than Jezebel —she does not understand the nature of her danger."

"Nevertheless," he insisted, "you are the more important. You have relatives and friends who care for you. Poor little Jezebel has only one friend, and that is you, unless I may consider myself a friend, as I should like to do."

"I imagine we three have the unique distinction of being the closest corporation of friends in the world," she replied, with a wan smile, "and there doesn't seem to be anyone who wants to buy in."

"The Friendless Friends Corporation, Limited," he suggested.

"Perhaps we'd best hold a directors' meeting and decide what we should do next to conserve the interests of the stockholders."

"I move we move," he said.

"Seconded." The girl rose to her feet.

"You're terribly tired, aren't you?" he asked. "But I suppose the only thing we can do is to get as far away from the territory of the North Midians as possible. It's almost certain they will try to capture us again as soon as they discover we are missing."

"If we can only find a place to hide until night," she said. "Then we can go back to the cliffs under the cover of

darkness and search for Jezebel and the place that she and I thought might be scaled."

"This forest is so open that it doesn't afford any good hiding places, but at least we can look."

"Perhaps we shall find a place near the lake," said Lady Barbara. "We ought to come to it soon."

They walked on for a considerable distance without talking, each occupied with his own thoughts; and as no sign of pursuit developed their spirits rose.

"Do you know," he said presently, "that I can't help but feel that we're going to get out of this all right in the end?"

"But what a terrible experience! It doesn't seem possible that such things

could have happened to me. I can't forget Jobab." It was the first time mention had been made of the tragedy at the southern village.

"You must not give that a thought," he said. "You did the only thing possible under the circumstances. If you had not done what you did both you and Jezebel would have been recaptured, and you know what that would have meant."

"But I've killed a human being," she said. There was an awed tone in her voice.

"I killed one, too," he reminded her, "but I don't regret it in the least, notwithstanding the fact that I never killed anyone before. If I were not such a terrible marksman I should have killed

another today, perhaps several. My regret is that I didn't."

"It's a strange world," he continued after a moment's reflective silence. "Now, I always considered myself rather well educated and fitted to meet the emergencies of life; and I suppose I should be, in the quiet environment of a college town; but what an awful failure I have proved to be when jolted out of my narrow little rut. I used to feel sorry for the boys who wasted their time in shooting galleries and in rabbit hunting. Men who boasted of their marksmanship merited only my contempt, yet within the last twenty- four hours I would have traded all my education along other lines for the ability to shoot straight."

"One should know something of many things to be truly educated," said the girl, "but I'm afraid you exaggerate the value of marksmanship in determining one's cultural status."

"Well, there's cooking," he admitted. "A person who cannot cook is not well educated. I had hoped one day to be an authority on geology; but with all I know of the subject, which of course isn't so much at that, I would probably starve to death in a land overrunning with game, because I can neither shoot nor cook."

Lady Barbara laughed. "Don't develop an inferiority complex at this stage," she cried. "We need every ounce of self-assurance that we can muster. I think you are top hole. You may not be

much of a marksman—that I'll have to admit, and perhaps you cannot cook; but you've one thing that covers a multitude of shortcomings in a man—you are brave."

It was Lafayette Smith's turn to laugh. "That's mighty nice of you," he said. "I'd rather you thought that of me than anything else in the world; and I'd rather you thought it than any one else, because it would mean so much to you now; but it isn't true. I was scared stiff in that village last night and when those fellows came at us today, and that's the truth."

"Which only the more definitely justifies my statement," she replied.

"I don't understand."

"Cultured and intelligent people are

more ready to realize and appreciate the dangers of a critical situation than are ignorant, unimaginative types. So, when such a person stands his ground determinedly in the face of danger, or voluntarily walks into a dangerous situation from a sense of duty, as you did last night, it evidences a much higher quality of courage than that possessed by the ignorant, physical lout who hasn't brains enough to visualize the contingencies that may result from his action."

"Be careful," he warned her, "or you'll make me believe all that— then I'll be unbearably egotistical. But please don't try to convince me that my inability to cook is a hallmark of virtue."

"I—listen! What was that?" she halted and turned her eyes toward the rear.

"They have found us," said Lafayette Smith. "Go on—go as fast as you can! I'll try to delay them."

"No," she replied, "there is no use. I'll remain with you, whatever happens."

"Please!" he begged. "Why should I face them if you won't take advantage of it."

"It wouldn't do any good," she said. "They'd only get me later, and your sacrifice would be useless. We might as well give ourselves up in the hope that we can persuade them to free us later, or, perhaps, find the opportunity to escape after dark."

"You had better run," he said,

"because I am going to fight. I am not going to let them take you without raising a hand in your defense. If you get away now, perhaps I can get away later. We can meet at the foot of the cliffs —but don't wait for me if you can find a way out. Now, do as I tell you!" His tone was peremptory—commanding.

Obediently she continued on toward Chinnereth, but presently she stopped and turned. Three men were approaching Smith. Suddenly one of the three swung his club and hurled it at the American, at the same instant dashing forward with his fellows.

The club fell short of its mark, dropping at Smith's feet. She saw him stoop and seize it, and then she saw

another detachment of the Midians coming through the woods in the wake of the first three.

Smith's antagonists were upon him as he straightened up with the club in his hand, and he swung it heavily upon the skull of the man who had hurled it at him and who had rushed forward in advance of his fellows with hands outstretched to seize the stranger.

Like a felled ox the man dropped; and then Lady Barbara saw Smith carry the unequal battle to the enemy as, swinging the club above his head, he rushed forward to meet them.

So unexpected was his attack that the men baited and turned to elude him, but one was too slow and the girl heard the

fellow's skull crush beneath the heavy blow of the bludgeon.

Then the reinforcements, advancing at a run, surrounded and overwhelmed their lone antagonist, and Smith went down beneath them.

Lady Barbara could not bring herself to desert the man who had thus bravely, however hopelessly, sought to defend her; and when the North Midians had disarmed and secured Smith they saw her standing where she had stood during the brief engagement.

"I couldn't run away and leave you," she explained to Smith, as the two were being escorted toward the village of the North Midians. "I thought they were going to kill you, and I couldn't help you

—Oh, it was awful. I couldn't leave you then, could I?"

He looked at her for a moment. "No," he answered. "*You* couldn't."

18. A GUY AND A SKIRT

Danny "Gunner" Patrick was tired and disgusted. He had walked for several hours imagining that he was following a spoor, but he had seen nothing of his erstwhile companion. He was thirsty, and so cast frequent glances in the direction of the lake.

"Hell!" he muttered. "I ain't goin' to tail that guy no longer till I get me a drink. My mouth feels like I'd been eating cotton for a week."

He turned away from the cliffs and started down in the direction of the lake, the inviting waters of which sparkled alluringly in the afternoon sun; but the beauties of the scene were wasted upon the "Gunner," who saw only a means of

quenching his thirst.

The way led through a field of scattered boulders fallen from the towering rim above. He had to pick his way carefully among the smaller ones, and his eyes were almost constantly upon the ground. Occasionally he was compelled to skirt some of the larger masses, many of which towered above his head obstructing his view ahead.

He was damning Africa in general and this section of it in particular as he rounded the corner of an unusually large fragment of rock, when suddenly he stopped and his eyes went wide.

"Geeze!" he exclaimed aloud. "A broad!"

Before him, and coming in his

direction, was a golden haired girl attired in a single, scant piece of rough material. She saw him simultaneously and halted.

"Oh," exclaimed Jezebel with a happy smile. "Who art thou?" but as she spoke in the language of the land of Midian the "Gunner" failed to understand her.

"Geeze," he said. "I knew I must of come to Africa for something, and I guess you're it. Say kid, you're about all right. I'll tell the world you *are* all right."

"Thank you," said Jezebel in English. "I am so glad that you like me."

"Geeze," said Danny. "You talk United States, don't you? Where you from?"

"Midian," replied Jezebel.

"Ain't never heard of it. What you doin' here? Where're your people?"

"I am waiting for Lady Barbara," replied the girl, "and Smith," she added.

"Smith! What Smith?" he demanded.

"Oh, he is beautiful," confided Jezebel.

"Then he ain't the Smith I'm lookin' for," said the "Gunner." "What's he doin' here, and who's this Lady Barbara dame?"

"Abraham, the son of Abraham, would have killed Lady Barbara and Jezebel if Smith had not come and saved us. He is very brave."

"Now I know it ain't my Smith," said

Danny, "though I ain't sayin' he ain't got guts. What I mean is he wouldn't know how to save no one— he's a geologist."

"Who are you?" demanded Jezebel.

"Call me Danny, Kid."

"My name is not kid," she explained sweetly. "It is Jezebel."

"Jezebel! Geeze, what a monicker! You look like it ought to be Gwendolyn."

"It is Jezebel," she assured him. "Do you know who I hoped you'd be?"

"No. Now just tell me, kid, who you supposed I was. Probably President Hoover or Big Bill Thompson, eh?"

"I do not know them," said Jezebel. "I hoped that you were the 'Gunner.'"

"The 'Gunner'? What do you know about the 'Gunner,' kid?"

"My name is not kid, it is Jezebel," she corrected him, sweetly.

"Oke, Jez," conceded Danny, "but tell me who wised you up to the 'Gunner' bozo."

"My name is not Jez, it is—"

"Oh, sure kid, it's Jezebel—that's oke by me; but how about the 'Gunner'?"

"What about him?"

"I just been a-askin' you."

"But I don't understand your language," explained Jezebel. "It sounds like English, but it is not the English Lady Barbara taught me."

"It ain't English," Danny assured her,

seriously; "it's United States."

"It is quite like English though, isn't it?"

"Sure," said the "Gunner." "The only difference is we can understand English but the English don't never seem to understand all of ours. I guess they're dumb."

"Oh, no; they're not dumb," Jezebel assured him. "Lady Barbara is English, and she can talk quite as well as you."

Danny scratched his head. "I didn't say they was dummies. I said they was dumb. Dummies can't talk only with their mitts. If a guy's dumb, he don't know nothing."

"Oh," said Jezebel.

"But what I asked you is, who wised you up to this 'Gunner' bozo?"

"Can you say it in English, please," asked Jezebel. "Geeze, what could be plainer? I asked who told you about the 'Gunner' and what did they tell you?" Danny was waxing impatient.

"Smith told us. He said the 'Gunner' was a friend of his; and when I saw you I thought you must be Smith's friend, hunting for him."

"Now, what do you know about that!" exclaimed Danny. "I have just told you what I know about it," explained the girl; "but perhaps you did not understand me. Perhaps you are what you call dumb."

"Are you trying to kid me, kid?" demanded the "Gunner."

"My name is not—"

"Oh, all right, all right. I know what your name is."

"Then why do you not call me by my name? Do you not like it?"

"Sure, kid—I mean Jezebel—sure I like it. It's a swell handle when you get used to it. But tell me, where is old Smithy?"

"I do not know such a person."

"But you just told me you did."

"Oh, I see," cried Jezebel. "Smithy is the United States for Smith. But Smith is not old. He's quite young."

"Well, where is he?" demanded Danny, resignedly.

"We were captured by the beautiful

men from North Midian," explained Jezebel; "but we escaped and ran away. We ran in different directions, but we are going to meet tonight farther south along the cliffs."

"Beautiful men?" demanded the "Gunner." "Did old Smithy let a bunch of fairies hoist him?"

"I do not understand," said Jezebel.

"*You* wouldn't," he assured her; "but say, kid—"

"My name—"

"Aw, forget it—you know who I mean. As I was saying, let's me and you stick together till we find old Smithy. What say?"

"That would be nice, the 'Gunner,"

she assured him.

"Say, call me Danny, k—Jezebel."

"Yes, Danny."

"Geeze, I never knew Danny was such a swell monicker till I heard you say it. What say we beat it for the big drink down there? I got me such a thirst my tongue's hanging out. Then we can come back to this here rock pile and look for old Smithy."

"That will be nice," agreed Jezebel. "I, too, am thirsty." She sighed. "You can not know how happy I am, Danny."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you are with me."

"Geeze, k—Jezebel, but you're sure a fast worker."

"I do not know what you mean," she replied, innocently. "Well just tell me why you're happy because I'm with you."

"It is because I feel safe with you after what Smith told us. He said he always felt safe when you were around."

"So that's it? All you want is a protection guy, eh? You don't like me for myself at all, eh?"

"Oh, of course I like you, Danny," cried the girl. "I think you are beautiful."

"Yeah? Well, listen, sister. You may be a swell kidder—I dunno —or you may be just a dumb egg—but don't call me no names. I know what my pan looks like; and it ain't beautiful, and I ain't never wore a beret."

Jezebel, who only caught the

occasional high-spots of Danny's conversation, made no reply, and they walked on in the direction of the lake, in silence, for some time. The forest was some little distance away, on their left, and they had no knowledge of what was transpiring there, nor did any sound reach their ears to acquaint them with the misfortune that was befalling Lady Barbara and Lafayette Smith.

At the lake they quenched their thirst, after which the "Gunner" announced that he was going to rest for a while before he started back toward the cliffs. "I wonder," he said, "just how far a guy can walk, because in the last two days I've walked that far and back again."

"How far is that?" inquired Jezebel.

He looked at her a moment and then shook his head. "It's twice as far," he said, as he stretched himself at full length and closed his eyes. "Geeze, but I'm about all in," he murmured.

"In what?"

He deigned no reply, and presently the girl noted from his altered breathing that he was asleep. She sat with her eyes glued upon him, and occasionally a deep sigh broke from her lips. She was comparing Danny with Abraham, the son of Abraham, with Lafayette Smith and with the beautiful men of North Midian; and the comparison was not uncomplimentary to Danny.

The hot sun was beating down upon them, for there was no shade here; and

presently its effects, combined with her fatigue, made her drowsy. She lay down near the "Gunner" and stretched luxuriously. Then she, too, fell asleep.

The "Gunner" did not sleep very long; the sun was too hot. When he awoke he raised himself on an elbow and looked around. His eyes fell on the girl and there they rested for some time, noting the graceful contours of the lithe young body, the wealth of golden hair, and the exquisite face.

"The kid's sure some looker," soliloquized Danny. "I seen a lotta broads in my day, but I ain't never seen nothin' could touch her. She'd sure be a swell number dolled up in them Boul Mich rags. Geeze, wouldn't she knock

their lamps out! I wonder where this Midian burgh is she says she comes from. If they's all as swell lookin' as her, that's the burgh for me."

Jezebel stirred and he reached over and shook her on the shoulder. "We'd better be beatin' it," he said. "We don't want to miss old Smithy and that dame."

Jezebel sat up and looked about her. "Oh," she exclaimed, "you frightened me. I thought something was coming."

"Why? Been dreaming?"

"No. You said we'd have to beat something."

"Aw, cheese it! I meant we'd have to be hittin' the trail for the big rocks."

Jezebel looked puzzled.

"Hike back to them cliffs where you said old Smithy and that Lady Barbara dame were going to meet you."

"Now I understand," said Jezebel. "All right, come on." But when they reached the cliffs there was no sign of Smith or Lady Barbara, and at Jezebel's suggestion they walked slowly southward in the direction of the place where she and the English girl had hoped to make a crossing to the outer world.

"How did you get into the valley, Danny?" asked the girl. "I come through a big crack in the mountain," he replied. "That must be the same place Smith came through," she said. "Could you find it again?"

"Sure. That's where I'm headed for now."

It was only mid-afternoon when Danny located the opening into the fissure. They had seen nothing of Lady Barbara and Smith, and they were in a quandary as to what was best to do.

"Maybe they come along and made their getaway while we was hittin' the hay," suggested Danny.

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Jezebel, "but what I think is that they may have located the opening while we were asleep and gone out of the valley."

"Well ain't that what I said?" demanded Danny.

"It didn't sound like it."

"Say, you trying to high hat me?"

"High hat?"

"Aw, what's the use?" growled the "Gunner," disgustedly. "Let's you and me beat it out of this here dump and look for old Smithy and the skirt on the other side. What say?"

"But suppose they haven't gone out?"

"Well, then we'll have to come back again; but I'm sure they must have. See this foot print?" he indicated one of his own, made earlier in the day, which pointed toward the valley. "I guess I'm getting good," he said. "Pretty soon that Tarzan guy won't have no edge on me at all."

"I'd like to see what's on the other side of the cliffs," said Jezebel. "I have

always wanted to do that."

"Well, you won't see nothin' much," he assured her. "Just some more scenery. They ain't even a hot dog stand or a single speakeasy."

"What are those?"

"Well, you might call 'em filling stations."

"What are filling stations?"

"Geeze, kid, what do you think I am, a college perfessor? I never saw anyone who could ask so many questions in my whole life."

"My name—"

"Yes, I know what your name is. Now come on and we'll crawl through this hole-in-the-wall. I'll go first. You follow

right behind me."

The rough going along the rocky floor of the fissure taxed the "Gunner's" endurance and his patience, but Jezebel was all excitement and anticipation. All her life she had dreamed of what might lie in the wonderful world beyond the cliffs.

Her people had told her that it was a flat expanse filled with sin, heresy, and iniquity, where, if one went too far he would surely fall over the edge and alight in the roaring flames of an eternal Hades; but Jezebel had been a doubter. She had preferred to picture it as a land of flowers and trees and running water, where beautiful people laughed and sang through long, sunny days. Soon she was

to see for herself, and she was much excited by the prospect.

And now at last they came to the end of the great fissure and looked out across the rolling foot hills toward a great forest in the distance.

Jezebel clasped her hands together in ecstasy. "Oh, Danny," she cried, "how beautiful it is!"

"What?" asked the "Gunner."

"Oh, everything. Don't you think it is beautiful, Danny?"

"The only beautiful thing around here, k—Jezebel, is you," said Danny.

The girl turned and looked up at him with her great blue eyes. "Do you think I am beautiful, Danny?"

"Sure I do."

"Do you think I am *too* beautiful?"

"There ain't no such thing," he replied, "but if they was you're it. What made you ask?"

"Lady Barbara said I was."

The "Gunner" considered this for some moments, "I guess she's right at that kid."

"You like to call me Kid, don't you?" asked Jezebel. "Well, it seems more friendly-like," he explained, "and it's easier to remember."

"All right, you may call me Kid if you want to, but my name is Jezebel."

"That's a bet," said Danny. "When I don't think to call you Jezebel, I'll call

you kid, Sister."

The girl laughed. "You're a funny man, Danny. You like to say everything wrong. I'm not your sister, of course."

"And I'm damn glad you ain't, kid."

"Why? Don't you like me?"

Danny laughed. "I never seen a kid like you before," he said. "You sure got me guessin'. But at that," he added, a little seriously for him, "they's one thing I ain't guessin' about and that's that you're a good little kid."

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Jezebel.

"And at that I'll bet you don't," he replied; "and now kid, let's sit down and rest. I'm tired."

"I'm hungry," said Jezebel.

"I ain't never see a skirt that wasn't, but why did you have to bring that up? I'm so hungry I could eat hay."

"Smith killed a kid and we ate some of that," said Jezebel. "He wrapped the rest up in the skin and I suppose he lost it when the North Midians attacked us. I wish—"

"Say," exclaimed Danny, "what a dumb-bell I am!" He reached down into one of his pockets and brought out several strips of raw meat. "Here I been packin' this around all day and forgets all about it—and me starvin' to death."

"What is it?" asked Jezebel, leaning closer to inspect the unsavory morsels.

"It's pig," said Danny as he started

searching for twigs and dry grass to build a fire, "and I know where they is a lot more that I thought I couldn't never eat but I know now I could—even if I had to fight with the maggots for it."

Jezebel helped him gather wood, which was extremely scarce, being limited to dead branches of a small variety of artemisia that grew on the mountain side; but at length they had collected quite a supply, and presently they were grilling pieces of the boar meat over the flames. So preoccupied were they that neither saw three horsemen draw rein at the top of a ridge a mile away and survey them.

"This is like housekeeping, ain't it?" remarked the "Gunner."

"What is that?" asked Jezebel.

"That's where a guy and his girl friend get hitched and go to doin' their own cooking. Only in a way this is better—they ain't goin' to be no dishes to wash."

"What is hitched, Danny?" asked Jezebel.

"Why—er," Danny flushed. He had said many things to many girls in his life, many of them things that might have brought a blush to the cheek of a wooden Indian; but this was the first time, perhaps, that Danny had felt any embarrassment.

"Why—er," he repeated, "hitched means married."

"Oh," said Jezebel. She was silent for a while, watching the pork sizzling over

the little flames. Then she looked up at Danny. "I think housekeeping is fun," she said.

"So do I," agreed Danny; "with you," he added and his voice was just a trifle husky. His eyes were on her; and there was a strange light in them, that no other girl had ever seen there. "You're a funny little kid," he said presently. "I never seen one like you before," and then the neglected pork fell off the end of the sharpened twig, with which be had been holding it, and tumbled into the fire.

"Geeze!" exclaimed Danny. "Look at that!" He fished the unsavory looking morsel from the ashes and flames and surveyed it. "It don't look so good, but I'm goin' to fool it. I'm goin' to eat it

anyway. I wouldn't care if a elephant had sat on it for a week—I'd eat it, and the elephant, too."

"Oh, look!" cried Jezebel. "Here come some men and they are all black. What strange beasts are they sitting on? Oh, Danny, I am afraid."

At her first exclamation the "Gunner" had turned and leaped to his feet. A single look told him who the strangers were—no strangers to him.

"Beat it, kid!" he cried. "Duck back into the crack, and hit the trail for the valley. They can't follow you on gee-gees."

The three *shiftas* were already close; and when they saw that they had been discovered they spurred forward at a

gallop, and yet Jezebel stood beside the little fire, wide eyed and frightened. She had not understood the strange argot that the "Gunner" employed in lieu of English. "Beat it" and "duck" and "hit the trail" had not been included in the English idiom she had gleaned from Lady Barbara Collis. But even had she understood him it would have made no difference, for Jezebel was not of the clay that is soft in the face of danger, her little feet not of the kind that run away, leaving a companion in distress.

The "Gunner" glanced behind him and saw her. "For God's sake run, kid," he cried. "These are tough guys. I know 'em," then the *shiftas* were upon him.

To conserve ammunition, which was

always scarce and difficult to obtain, they tried to ride him down, striking at him with their rifles. He dodged the leading horseman; and as the fellow reined in to wheel his mount back to the attack, the "Gunner" leaped to his side and dragged him from the saddle. The mount of a second *shifta* stumbled over the two men and fell, unhorsing its rider.

The "Gunner" seized the long rifle that had fallen from the hands of the man he had dragged down and scrambled to his feet. Jezebel watched him in wide eyed wonder and admiration. She saw him swing the rifle like a club and strike at the third horseman, and then she saw the one he had first grappled lunge forward and, seizing him around the

legs, drag him down, while the second to be unhorsed ran in now and leaped upon him just as the remaining *shifta* struck him a heavy blow on the head.

As she saw him fall, the blood gushing from an ugly wound in his head, Jezebel ran forward to him; but the *shiftas* seized her. She was thrown to the back of a horse in front of one of them, the others mounted, and the three galloped away with their prisoner, leaving Danny "Gunner" Patrick lying motionless in a welter of his own blood.

19. IN THE VILLAGE OF ELIJA

As Tarzan approached the village of Abraham, the son of Abraham, he was seen by a watcher who immediately warned his fellows, with the result that when the ape-man arrived the huts were deserted, the villagers having taken refuge in the caves in the face of the towering cliff.

Abraham, the son of Abraham, from the safety of the highest cave, exhorted his people to repel the advance of this strange creature, whose partial nakedness and strange armament filled him with alarm, with the result that when Tarzan came near the base of the cliff the

villagers, with much shouting, rolled rocks down the steep declivity in an effort to destroy him.

The Lord of the Jungle looked up at the howling creatures above him. Whatever his emotions his face did not reveal them. Doubtless contempt was predominant, for he read in their reception of him only fear and cowardice.

As naught but curiosity had prompted his visit to this strange village, since he knew that Smith already had quitted it, he remained only long enough for a brief survey of the people and their culture, neither of which was sufficiently attractive to detain him; and then he turned and retraced his steps toward the

place on the shore of Chinnereth where he had picked up the northbound spoor of Smith and Lady Barbara and Jezebel.

He made his way in a leisurely manner, stopping beside the lake to quench his thirst and eat from his small store of boar meat; and then he lay down to rest, after the manner of beasts who have fed and are not hurried.

In the village he had quitted Abraham, the son of Abraham, gave thanks to Jehovah for their deliverance from the barbarian, though reserving proper credit to himself for his masterly defense of his flock.

And how fared it with Lady Barbara and Lafayette Smith? Following their recapture they were permitted no second

opportunity to escape, as, heavily guarded, they were conducted northward toward the village of Elija, the son of Noah.

The girl was much depressed; and Smith sought to reassure her, though upon what grounds he himself could scarcely explain.

"I cannot believe that they intend to harm us," he said. "We have done nothing worse than kill one of their goats and that only because we were starving. I can pay them whatever price they name for the animal, and thus they will be recompensed and have no further cause for complaint against us."

"With what will you pay them?" asked Lady Barbara.

"I have money," replied Smith.

"Of what good would it be to them?"

"Of what good would it be to them! Why they could buy another goat if they wanted to," he replied.

"These people know nothing of money," she said. "It would be worthless to them."

"I suppose you are right," he admitted. "I hadn't thought of that. Well, I could give them my pistol, then."

"They already have it."

"But it's mine," he exclaimed. "They'll have to give it back to me."

She shook her head. "You are not dealing with civilized people guided by the codes and customs of civilization or

responsible to the law enforcing agencies with which we are familiar and which, perhaps, are all that keep us civilized."

"We escaped once," he ventured; "perhaps we can escape again."

"That, I think, is our only hope."

The village of the North Midians, where they presently arrived, was more pretentious than that of the people at the southern end of the valley. While there were many crude huts there were also several of stone, while the entire appearance of the village was more cleanly and prosperous.

Several hundred villagers came to meet the party as soon as it was sighted, and the prisoners noted that there was no

evidence of the degeneracy and disease which were such marked characteristics of the South Midians. On the contrary, these people appeared endowed with abundant health, they looked intelligent and, physically, they were a splendid race, many of them being handsome. All were golden haired and blue eyed. That they were descended from the same stock that had produced Abraham, the son of Abraham, and his degraded flock would have appeared impossible, yet such was the fact.

The women and children pushed and jostled one another and the men in their efforts to get close to the prisoners. They jabbered and laughed incessantly, the clothing of the prisoners seeming to

arouse the greatest wonder and mirth.

Their language being practically the same as that of the South Midians Lady Barbara had no difficulty in understanding what they were saying, and from scraps of their conversation which she overheard she realized that her worst fears might be realized. However, the crowd offered them no personal injury; and it was apparent that in themselves they were not inherently a cruel people, though their religion and their customs evidently prescribed harsh treatment for enemies who fell into their hands.

Upon arrival in the village Lady Barbara and Smith were separated. She was taken to a hut and put in charge of a

young woman, while Smith was confined, under guard of several men, in another.

Lady Barbara's jailer, far from being ill favored, was quite beautiful, bearing a strong resemblance to Jezebel; and she proved to be quite as loquacious as the men who had captured them.

"You are the strangest looking South Midian I ever saw," she remarked, "and the man does not look at all like one. Your hair is neither the color of those they keep nor of those they destroy—it is just between, and your garments are such as no one ever saw before."

"We are not Midians," said Lady Barbara.

"But that is impossible," cried the

woman. "There are none but Midians in the land of Midian and no way to get in or out. Some say there are people beyond the great cliffs, and some say there are only devils. If you are not a Midian perhaps you are a devil; but then, of course, you are a Midian."

"We come from a country beyond the cliffs," Lady Barbara told her, "and all we want is to go back to our own country."

"I do not think Elija will let you. He will treat you as we always treat South Midians."

"And how is that?"

"The men are put to death because of their heresy; and the women, if they are good looking, are kept as slaves. But

being a slave is not bad. I am a slave. My mother was a slave. She was a South Midian who was captured by my father who owned her. She was very beautiful. After a while the South Midians would have killed her, as you do to all your beautiful women just before their first child is born.

"But we are different. We kill the bad looking ones, both boys and girls, and also any who become subject to the strange demons which afflict the South Midians. Do you have these demons?"

"I am not a Midian, I told you," said Lady Barbara.

The woman shook her head. "It is true that you do not look like them, but if Elija ever believes you are not you are

lost."

"Why?" asked Lady Barbara.

"Elija is one of those who believe that the world beyond the cliffs is inhabited by demons; so, if you are not a South Midian, you must be a demon; and he would certainly destroy you as he will destroy the man; but for my part I am one of those who say they do not know. Some say that perhaps this world around Midian is inhabited by angels. Are you an angel?"

"I am not a demon," replied Lady Barbara.

"Then you must be a South Midian or an angel."

"I am no South Midian," insisted the English girl.

"Then you are an angel," reasoned the woman. "And if you are you will have no difficulty in proving it."

"How?"

"Just perform a miracle."

"Oh," said Lady Barbara.

"Is the man an angel?" demanded the woman.

"He is an American."

"I never heard of that—is it a kind of angel?"

"Europeans do not call them that."

"But really I think Elija will say he is a South Midian, and he will be destroyed."

"Why do your people hate the South Midians so?" asked Lady Barbara.

"They are heretics."

"They are very religious," said Lady Barbara; "they pray all the time to Jehovah and they never smile. Why do you think them heretics?"

"They insist that Paul's hair was black, while we know that it was yellow. They are very wicked, blasphemous people. Once, long before the memory of man, we were all one people; but there were many wicked heretics among us who had black hair and wished to kill all those with yellow hair; so those with yellow hair ran away and came to the north end of the valley. Ever since, the North Midians have killed all those with black hair and the South Midians all those with yellow

hair. Do you think Paul had yellow hair?"

"Certainly I do," said Lady Barbara.

"That will be a point in your favor," said the woman.

Just then a man came to the door of the hut and summoned Lady Barbara. "Come with me," he commanded.

The English girl followed the messenger, and the woman who had been guarding her accompanied them. Before a large stone hut they found Elija surrounded by a number of the older men of the village, while the remainder of the population was grouped in a semi-circle facing them. Lafayette Smith stood before Elija, and Lady Barbara was conducted to the side of the American.

Elija, the Prophet, was a middle aged man of not unprepossessing appearance. He was short and stocky, extremely muscular in build, and his face was adorned with a wealth of blond whiskers. Like the other North Midians he was garbed in a single garment of goat skin, his only ornament being the pistol he had taken from Smith, which he wore on a leather thong that encircled his neck.

"This man," said Elija, addressing Lady Barbara, "will not talk. He maketh noises, but they mean nothing. Why will he not talk?"

"He does not understand the language of the land of Midian," replied the English girl.

"He must understand it," insisted Elija; "everyone understands it."

"He is not from Midian," said Lady Barbara.

"Then he must be a demon," said Elija.

"Perhaps he is an angel," suggested Lady Barbara; "he believes that Paul's hair was yellow."

This statement precipitated a wordy argument and so impressed Elija and his apostles that they withdrew into the interior of the hut for a secret conference.

"What's it all about, Lady Barbara?" asked Smith, who, of course, had understood nothing of what had been said.

"You believe Paul's hair was yellow, don't you?" she asked.

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"Well, I told them you were a firm believer in the yellowness of Paul's hair."

"Why did you tell them that?" demanded Smith.

"Because the North Midians prefer blonds," she replied.

"But who is Paul?"

"Was, you mean. He is dead."

"Of course I'm sorry to hear that, but who *was* he?" insisted the American.

"I am afraid you have neglected the scriptures," she told him.

"Oh, the apostle; but what difference does it make what color his hair was?"

"It doesn't make any difference," she explained. "What does make a difference is that you have stated, through me, that you believe he had yellow hair; and that may be the means of saving your life."

"What nonsense!"

"Of course—the other fellow's religion is always nonsense; but not to him. You are also suspected of being an angel. Can you imagine!"

"No! Who suspects me?"

"It was I; or at least I suggested it, and I am hoping Elija will now suspect it. If he does we are both safe, provided that, in your celestial capacity, you will intercede for me."

"You are as good as saved then," he said, "for inasmuch as I cannot speak their language you can put any worth you wish into my mouth without fear of being called to account."

"That's a fact, isn't it?" she said, laughing. "If our emergency were not so critical I could have a lot of fun, couldn't I?"

"You seem to find fun in everything," he replied, admiringly; "even in the face of disaster."

"Perhaps I am whistling in the dark," she said.

They talked a great deal while they waited for Elija and the apostles to return, for it helped them to tide over the anxious minutes of nervous strain that

slowly dragged into hours. They could hear the chatter and buzz of conversation within the hut, as Elija and his fellows debated, while, outside, the villagers kept up a constant babel of conversation.

"They like to talk," commented Smith.

"And perhaps you have noticed an idiosyncrasy of the North Midians in this respect?" she asked.

"Lots of people like to talk."

"I mean that the men gabble more than the women."

"Perhaps in self-defense."

"Here they come!" she exclaimed as Elija appeared in the doorway of the hut, fingering the pistol he wore as an ornament.

Darkness was already falling as the Prophet and the twelve apostles filed out to their places in the open. Elija raised his hands in a signal for silence and when quiet had been restored he spoke.

"With the aid of Jehovah," he said, "we have wrestled with a mighty question. There were some among us who contended that this man is a South Midian, and others that he is an angel. Mighty was the weight of the statement that he believeth that Paul had yellow hair, for if such is the truth then indeed he is not a heretic; and if he is no heretic he is not a South Midian, for they, as all the world knows, are heretics. Yet again, it was brought forth that if he is a demon he might still claim that he

believed in the yellowness of Paul, in order that he might deceive us.

"How were we to know? We must know lest we, through our ignorance, do sin against one of His angels and bring down the wrath of Jehovah upon our heads.

"But at last I, Elija, the son of Noah, True Prophet of Paul, the son of Jehovah, discovered the truth. The man is no angel! The revelation descended upon me in a burst of glory from Jehovah Himself—the man cannot be an angel because he has no wings!"

There was an immediate burst of "Amens" and "Hallelujahs" from the assembled villagers, while Lady Barbara went cold with dread.

"Therefore," continued Elija, "he must be either a South Midian or a demon, and in either case he must be destroyed."

Lady Barbara turned a pale face toward Lafayette Smith—pale even through its coating of tan. Her lip trembled, just a little. It was the first indication of a weaker, feminine emotion that Smith had seen this remarkable girl display.

"What is it?" he asked. "Are they going to harm you?"

"It is you, my dear friend," she replied. "You must escape."

"But how?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know; I don't know," she cried. "There is only one way. You will have to make a break for it—now. It is

dark. They will not expect it. I will do something to engage their attention, and then you make a dash for the forest."

He shook his head. "No," he said. "We shall go together, or I do not go."

"Please," she begged, "or it will be too late."

Elija had been talking to one of his apostles, and now he raised his voice again so that all might hear. "Lest we have mistaken the divine instructions of Jehovah," he said, "we shall place this man in the mercy of Jehovah and as Jehovah wills so shall it be. Make ready the grave. If he is indeed an angel he will arise unharmed."

"Oh, go; please go!" cried Lady Barbara.

"What did he say?" demanded Smith.

"They are going to bury you alive," she cried.

"And you," he asked; "what are they going to do to you?"

"I am to be held in slavery."

With sharpened sticks and instruments of bone and stone a number of men were already engaged in excavating a grave in the center of the village street before the hut of Elija, who stood waiting its completion surrounded by his apostles. The Prophet was still toying with his new found ornament, concerning the purpose and mechanism of which he was wholly ignorant.

Lady Barbara was urging Smith to attempt escape while there was yet an

opportunity, and the American was considering the best plan to adopt.

"You will have to come with me," he said. "I think if we make a sudden break right back through the village toward the cliffs we shall find our best chance for success. There are fewer people congregated on that side."

From the darkness beyond the village on the forest side a pair of eyes watched the proceedings taking place before the hut of Elija. Slowly, silently the owner of the eyes crept closer until he stood in the shadow of a hut at the edge of the village.

Suddenly Smith, seizing Lady Barbara's hand, started at a run toward the north side of the village; and so

unexpected was his break for liberty that, for a moment, no hand was raised to stay him; but an instant later, at a cry from Elija, the entire band leaped in pursuit, while from the shadow of the hut where he had stood concealed the watcher slipped forward into the village where he stood near the hut of Elija watching the pursuit of the escaped prisoners. He was alone, for the little central compound of the village had emptied as by magic, even the women and children having joined in the chase.

Smith ran swiftly, holding tightly to the girl's hand; and close on their heels came the leaders of the pursuit. No longer did the village fires light their way; and only darkness loomed ahead,

as the moon had not yet risen.

Gradually the American bore to the left, intending to swing in a half circle toward the south. There was yet a chance that they might make good their escape if they could outdistance the nearer of their pursuers until they reached the forest, for their strait gave them both speed and endurance far above normal.

But just as success seemed near they entered a patch of broken lava rock, invisible in the darkness; and Smith stumbled and fell dragging Lady Barbara down with him. Before they could scramble to their feet the leading Midian was upon them.

The American freed himself for a

moment and struggled to his feet; and again the fellow sought to seize him, but Smith swung a heavy blow to his chin and felled him.

Brief, however, was this respite, for almost immediately both the American and the English girl were overwhelmed by superior numbers and once again found themselves captives, though Smith fought until he was overpowered, knocking his antagonists to right and left.

Miserably dejected, they were dragged back to the village compound, their last hope gone; and again the Midians gathered around the open grave to witness the torture of their victim.

Smith was conducted to the edge of the excavation, where he was held by

two stalwart men, while Elija raised his voice in prayer, and the remainder of the assemblage knelt, bursting forth occasionally with hallelujahs and amens.

When he had concluded his long prayer the Prophet paused. Evidently there was something on his mind, which vexed him. In fact it was the pistol which dangled from the thong about his neck. He was not quite sure of its purpose, and he was about to destroy the only person who might tell him.

To Elija the pistol was quite the most remarkable possession that had ever fallen into his hands, and he was filled with a great curiosity concerning it. It might be, he argued, some magic talisman for averting evil, or, upon the

other hand, it might be the charm of a demon or a sorcerer, that would work evil upon him. At that thought he quickly removed the thong from about his neck, but he still held the weapon in his hand.

"What is this?" he demanded, turning to Lady Barbara and exhibiting the pistol.

"It is a weapon," she said. "Be careful or it will kill some one."

"How does it kill?" asked Elija.

"What is he saying?" demanded Smith.

"He is asking how the pistol kills," replied the girl.

A brilliant idea occurred to the American. "Tell him to give it to me, and

I will show him," he said.

But when she translated the offer to Elija he demurred. "He could then kill me with it," he said, shrewdly.

"He wont give it to you," the girl told Smith. "He is afraid you want to kill him."

"I do," replied the man.

"Tell him," said Elija, "to explain to me how I may kill some one with it."

"Repeat my instructions to him very carefully," said Smith, after Lady Barbara had translated the demand of the prophet. "Tell him how to grasp the pistol," and when Lady Barbara had done so and Elija held the weapon by the grip in his right hand, "now tell him to place his index finger through the

guard, but warn him not to pull the trigger."

Elija did as he was bid. "Now," continued Smith, "explain to him that in order to see how the weapon operates he should place one eye to the muzzle and look down the barrel."

"But I can see nothing," expostulated Elija when he had done as Lady Barbara directed. "It is quite dark down the little hole."

"He says it is too dark in the barrel for him to see anything," repeated Lady Barbara to the American.

"Explain to him that if he pulls the trigger there will be a light in the barrel," said Smith.

"But that will be murder," exclaimed

the girl.

"It is war," said Smith, "and in the subsequent confusion we may escape."

Lady Barbara steeled herself. "You could see nothing because you did not press the little piece of metal beneath your index finger," she explained to Elija.

"What will that do?" demanded the prophet.

"It will make a light in the little hole," said Lady Barbara. Elija again placed his eye against the muzzle; and this time he pulled the trigger; and as the report cracked the tense silence of the watching villagers Elija, the son of Noah, pitched forward upon his face.

Instantly Lady Barbara sprang toward

Smith, who simultaneously sought to break away from the grip of the men who held him; but they, although astonished at what had occurred, were not to be caught off their guard, and though he struggled desperately they held him.

For an instant there was a hushed silence; and then pandemonium broke loose as the villagers realized that their prophet was dead, slain by the wicked charm of a demon; but at the very outset of their demands for vengeance their attention was distracted by a strange and remarkable figure that sprang from the hut of Elija, stooped and picked up the pistol that had fallen from the hands of the dead man, and leaped to the side of the prisoner struggling with his guards.

This was such a man as none of them had ever seen—a giant white man with a tousled shock of black hair and with grey eyes that sent a shiver through them, so fierce and implacable were they. Naked he was but for a loin cloth of skin, and the muscles that rolled beneath his brown hide were muscles such as they never had seen before.

As the newcomer sprang toward the American one of the men guarding Smith, sensing that an attempt was being made to rescue the prisoner, swung his club in readiness to deal a blow against the strange creature advancing upon him. At the same time the other guard sought to drag Smith from the compound.

The American did not at first

recognize Tarzan of the Apes, yet, though he was not aware that the stranger was bent upon his rescue, he sensed that he was an enemy of the Midians, and so struggled to prevent his guard from forcing him away.

Another Midian seized Lady Barbara with the intention of carrying her from the scene, for all the villagers believed that the strange giant was a friend of the prisoners and had come to effect their release.

Smith was successful in tearing himself free from the man who held him, and immediately sprang to the girl's assistance, felling her captor with a single blow, just as Tarzan levelled the American's pistol at the guard who was

preparing to cudgel him.

The sound of this second shot and the sight of their fellow dropping to the ground, as had Elija, filled the Midians with consternation; and for a moment they fell back from the three, leaving them alone in the center of the compound.

"Quick!" called Tarzan to Smith. "You and the girl get out of here before they recover from their surprise. I will follow you. That way," he added, pointing toward the south.

As Lafayette Smith and Lady Barbara hurried from the village Tarzan backed slowly after them, keeping the little pistol in full view of the frightened villagers, who, having seen two of their

number die beneath its terrifying magic, were loath to approach it too closely.

Until out of range of a thrown club Tarzan continued his slow retreat; then he wheeled and bounded off into the night in pursuit of Lafayette Smith and Lady Barbara Collis.

20. THE BEST THREE OUT OF FIVE

Though Jezebel was terrified by the black faces of her captors and by the strange beasts they bestrode, the like of which she had never even imagined, her fear for herself was outweighed by her sorrow. Her one thought was to escape and return to the side of the "Gunner," even though she believed him dead from the terrific blow that his assailant had struck him.

She struggled violently to free herself from the grasp of the man in front of whom she rode; but the fellow was far too powerful; and, though she was difficult to hold, at no time was there the

slightest likelihood that she might escape. Her efforts, however, angered him and at last he struck her, bringing to the girl a realization of the futility of pitting her puny strength against his. She must wait, then, until she could accomplish by stealth what she could not effect by force.

The village of the raiders lay but a short distance from the point at which she had been captured, and but a few minutes had elapsed since that event when they rode up to its gates and into the central compound.

The shouts that greeted the arrival of a new and beautiful prisoner brought Capietro and Stabutch to the doorway of their hut.

"Now what have the black devils brought in?" exclaimed Capietro.

"It looks like a young woman," said Stabutch.

"It is," cried Capietro, as the *shiftas* approached the hut with their prisoner. "We shall have company, eh, Stabutch? Who have you there, my children?" he demanded of the three who were accompanying Jezebel.

"The price of a chief's ransom, perhaps," replied one of the blacks.

"Where did you find her?"

"Above the village a short distance, when we were returning from scouting. A man was with her. The man who escaped with the help of the ape-man."

"Where is he! Why did you not bring him, also?" demanded Capietro.

"He fought us, and we were forced to kill him."

"You have done well," said Capietro. "She is worth two of him—in many ways. Come girl, hold up your head, let us have a look at that pretty face. Come, you need not fear anything—if you are a good girl you will find Dominic Capietro a good fellow."

"Perhaps she does not understand Italian," suggested Stabutch.

"You are right, my friend; I shall speak to her in English."

Jezebel had looked up at Stabutch when she heard him speak a language she understood. Perhaps this man would

be a friend, she thought; but when she saw his face her heart sank.

"What a beauty!" ejaculated the Russian.

"You have fallen in love with her quickly, my friend," commented Capietro. "Do you want to buy her?"

"How much do you want for her?"

"Friends should not bargain," said the Italian. "Wait, I have it! Come, girl," and he took Jezebel by the arm and led her into the hut, where Stabutch followed them.

"Why was I brought here?" asked Jezebel. "I have not harmed you. Let me go back to Danny; he is hurt."

"He is dead," said Capietro; "but

don't you grieve, little one. You now have two friends in place of the one you have lost. Soon you will forget him; it is easy for a woman to forget."

"I shall never forget him," cried Jezebel. "I want to go back to him — perhaps he is not dead." Then she broke down and cried.

Stabutch stood eyeing the girl hungrily. Her youth and her beauty aroused a devil within him, and he made a mental vow that he would possess her. "Do not cry," he said, kindly. "I am your friend. Everything will be all right."

The new tone in his voice gave hope to Jezebel, and she looked up at him gratefully. "If you are my friend," she said, "take me away from here and back

to Danny."

"After a while," replied Stabutch, and then to Capietro, "How much?"

"I shall not sell her to my good friend," replied the Italian. "Let us have a drink, and then I shall explain my plan."

The two drank from a bottle standing on the earth floor of the hut. "Sit down," said Capietro, waving Jezebel to a seat on the dirty rug. Then he searched for a moment in his duffle bag and brought out a deck of soiled and grimy cards. "Be seated, my friend," he said to Stabutch. "Let us have another drink, and then you shall hear my plan."

Stabutch drank from the bottle and wiped his lips with the back of his band.

"Well," he said, "what is it?"

"We shall play for her," exclaimed the Italian, shuffling the deck, "and whoever wins, keeps her."

"Let us drink to that," said Stabutch. "Five games, eh, and the first to win three takes her?"

"Another drink to seal the bargain!" exclaimed the Italian. "The best three out of five!"

Stabutch won the first game, while Jezebel sat looking on in ignorance of the purpose of the bits of pasteboard, and only knowing that in some way they were to decide her fate. She hoped the younger man would win, but only because he had said that he was her friend. Perhaps she could persuade him

to take her back to Danny. She wondered what kind of water was in the bottle from which they drank, for she noticed that it wrought a change in them. They talked much louder now and shouted strange words when the little cards were thrown upon the rug, and then one would appear very angry while the other always laughed immoderately. Also they swayed and lurched in a peculiar manner that she had not noticed before they bad drunk so much of the water from the bottle.

Capietro won the second game and the third. Stabutch was furious, but now he became very quiet. He exerted all his powers of concentration upon the game, and he seemed almost sober as the cards

were dealt for the fourth game.

"She is as good as mine!" cried Capietro, as he looked at his hand.

"She will never be yours," growled the Russian.

"What do you mean?"

"I shall win the next two games."

The Italian laughed loudly. "That is good!" he cried. "We should drink to that." He raised the bottle to his lips and then passed it to Stabutch.

"I do not want a drink," said the Russian, in a surly tone, pushing the bottle aside.

"Ah, ha! My friend is getting nervous. He is afraid he is going to lose and so he will not drink. Sapristi! It is all the same

to me. I get the brandy and the girl, too."

"Play!" snapped Stabutch.

"You are in a hurry to lose," taunted Capietro.

"To win," corrected Stabutch, and he did.

Now it was the Italian's turn to curse and rage at luck, and once again the cards were dealt and the players picked up their hands.

"It is the last game," said Stabutch.

"We have each won two," replied Capietro. "Let us drink to the winner — although I dislike proposing a toast to myself," and he laughed again, but this time there was an ugly note in his laughter.

In silence, now, they resumed their play. One by one the little pasteboards fell upon the rug. The girl looked on in wondering silence. There was a tenseness in the situation that she felt, without understanding. Poor little Jezebel, she understood so little!

Suddenly, with a triumphant oath, Capietro sprang to his feet. "I win!" he cried. "Come, friend, drink with me to my good fortune."

Sullenly the Russian drank, a very long draught this time. There was a sinister gleam in his eye as he handed the bottle back to Capietro. Leon Stabutch was a poor loser.

The Italian emptied the bottle and flung it to the ground. Then he turned

toward Jezebel and stooping lifted her to her feet. "Come, my dear," he said, his coarse voice thick from drink, "Give me a kiss."

Jezebel drew back, but the Italian jerked her roughly to him and tried to draw her lips to his.

"Leave the girl alone," growled Stabutch. "Can't you see she is afraid of you?"

"What did I win her for?" demanded Capietro. "To leave her alone? Mind your own business."

"I'll make it my business," said Stabutch. "Take your bands off her." He stepped forward and laid a hand on Jezebel's arm. "She is mine by rights anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"You cheated. I caught you at it in the last game."

"You lie!" shouted Capietro and simultaneously he struck at Stabutch. The Russian dodged the blow and closed with the other.

Both were drunk and none too steady. It required much of their attention to keep from falling down. But as they wrestled about the interior of the hut a few blows were struck—enough to arouse their rage to fury and partially to sober them. Then the duel became deadly, as each sought the throat of the other.

Jezebel, wide eyed and terrified, had difficulty in keeping out of their way as

they fought to and fro across the floor of the hut; and so centered was the attention of the two men upon one another that the girl might have escaped had she not been more afraid of the black men without than of the whites within.

Several times Stabutch released his hold with his right hand and sought for something beneath his coat and at last he found it—a slim dagger. Capietro did not see it.

They were standing in the center of the hut now, their arms locked about one another, and resting thus as though by mutual consent. They were panting heavily from their exertions, and neither seemed to have gained any material advantage.

Slowly the Russian's right hand crept up the back of his adversary. Jezebel saw, but only her eyes reflected her horror. Though she had seen many people killed she yet had a horror of killing. She saw the Russian feel for a spot on the other's back with the point of his thumb. Then she saw him turn his hand and place the dagger point where his thumb had been.

There was a smile upon Stabutch's face as he drove the blade home. Capietro stiffened, screamed, and died. As the body slumped to the ground and rolled over on its back the murderer stood over the corpse of his victim, a smile upon his lips, and his eyes upon the girl.

But suddenly the smile died as a new thought came to the cunning mind of the slayer and his eyes snapped from the face of Jezebel to the doorway of the hut, where a filthy blanket answered the purpose of a door.

He had forgotten the horde of cut-throats who had called this thing upon the floor their chief! But now he recalled them and his soul was filled with terror. He did not need to ask himself what his fate would be when they discovered his crime.

"You have murdered him!" cried the girl suddenly, a note of horror in her voice.

"Be quiet!" snapped Stabutch. "Do you want to die? They will kill us when

they discover this."

"I did not do it," protested Jezebel.

"They will kill you just the same—afterwards. They are beasts."

Suddenly he stooped, seized the corpse by the ankles and, dragging it to the far end of the hut, he covered it with rugs and clothing.

"Now keep quiet until I come back," he said to Jezebel. "If you give an alarm I'll kill you myself before they have a chance to."

He rummaged in a dark corner of the but and brought forth a revolver with its holster and belt, which he buckled about his hips, and a rifle which he leaned beside the doorway.

"When I return be ready to come with me," he snapped, and raising the rug that covered the doorway, he stepped out into the village.

Quickly he made his way to where the ponies of the band were tethered. Here were several of the blacks loitering near the animals.

"Where is the headman?" he asked, but none of them understood English. He tried to tell them by means of signs, to saddle two horses, but they only shook their heads. If they understood him, as they doubtless did, they refused to take orders from him.

At this juncture the headman, attracted from a nearby but, approached. He understood a little pidgin English, and

Stabutch had no difficulty in making him understand that he wanted two horses saddled; but the headman wanted to know more. Did the chief want them?

"Yes, he wants them," replied Stabutch. "He sent me to get them. The chief is sick. Drink too much." Stabutch laughed and the headman seemed to understand.

"Who go with you?" asked the headman.

Stabutch hesitated. Well, he might as well tell him—everyone would see the girl ride out with him anyway. "The girl," he said.

The headman's eyes narrowed. "The Chief say?" he asked. "Yes. The girl thinks the white man not dead. The Chief

send me to look for him."

"You take men?"

"No. Man come back with us if girl say so. Be afraid of black men. No come."

The other nodded understandingly and ordered two horses saddled and bridled. "Him dead," he offered.

Stabutch shrugged. "We see," he replied, as he led the two animals toward the hut where Jezebel awaited him.

The headman accompanied him, and Stabutch was in terror. What if the man insisted on entering the hut to see his chief? Stabutch loosened the revolver in its holster. Now his greatest fear was that the shot might attract others to the

hut. That would never do. He must find some other way. He stopped and the headman halted with him.

"Do not come to the hut yet," said Stabutch.

"Why?" asked the headman.

"The girl is afraid. If she sees you she will think we are deceiving her, and she may refuse to show me where the man is. We promised her that no black man would come."

The headman hesitated. Then he shrugged and turned back. "All right," he said.

"And tell them to leave the gates open till we have gone," called Stabutch.

At the hut door he called to the girl.

"All ready," he said, "and hand me my rifle when you come out;" but she did not know what a rifle was and he had to step in and get it himself.

Jezebel looked at the horses with dismay.

At the thought of riding one of these strange beasts alone she was terrified. "I cannot do it," she told Stabutch.

"You will have to—or die," he whispered. "I'll lead the one you ride. Here, hurry."

He lifted her into the saddle and showed her how to use the stirrups and hold the reins. Then he put a rope about the neck of her horse; and, mounting his own, he led hers out through the village gateway while half a hundred murderers

watched them depart.

As they turned upward toward the higher hills the setting sun projected their shadows far ahead, and presently night descended upon them and hid their sudden change of direction from any watchers there may have been at the village gates.

21. AN AWAKENING

Danny "Gunner" Patrick opened his eyes and stared up at the blue African sky. Slowly consciousness returned and with it the realization that his head pained severely. He raised a hand and felt of it. What was that? He looked at his hand and saw that it was bloody.

"Geeze!" he muttered. "They got me!" He tried to recall how it had happened. "I knew the finger was on me, but how the hell did they get me? Where was I?" His thoughts were all back in Chicago, and he was puzzled. Vaguely he felt that he had made his getaway, and yet they had "got" him. He could not figure it out.

Then he turned his head slightly and saw lofty mountains looming near.

Slowly and painfully he sat up and looked around. Memory, partial and fragmentary, returned. "I must have fell off them mountains," he mused, "while I was lookin' for camp."

Gingerly he rose to his feet and was relieved to find that he was not seriously injured—at least his arms and legs were intact. "My head never was much good. Geeze, it hurts, though."

A single urge dominated him—he must find camp. Old Smithy would be worrying about him if he did not return. Where was Obambi? "I wonder if he fell off too," he muttered, looking about him. But Obambi, neither dead nor alive, was in sight; and so the "Gunner" started upon his fruitless search for camp.

At first he wandered toward the northwest, directly away from Smith's last camp. Tongani, the baboon, sitting upon his sentinel rock, saw him coming and sounded the alarm. At first Danny saw only a couple of "monkeys" coming toward him, barking and growling. He saw them stop occasionally and place the backs of their heads against the ground and he mentally classified them as "nutty monks;" but when their numbers were swollen to a hundred and he finally realized the potential danger lying in those powerful jaws and sharp fangs, he altered his course and turned toward the southwest.

For a short distance the tongani followed him, but when they saw that he

intended them no harm they let him proceed and returned to their interrupted feeding, while the man, with a sigh of relief, continued on his way.

In a ravine Danny found water, and with the discovery came a realization of his thirst and his hunger. He drank at the same pool at which Tarzan had slain Horta, the boar; and he also washed the blood from his head and face as well as he could. Then he continued on his aimless wandering. This time he climbed higher up the slope toward the mountains, in a southeasterly direction, and was headed at last toward the location of the now abandoned camp. Chance and the tongani had set him upon the right trail.

In a short time he reached a spot that seemed familiar; and here he stopped and looked around in an effort to recall his wandering mental faculties, which he fully realized were not functioning properly.

"That bat on the bean sure knocked me cuckoo," he remarked, half aloud. "Geeze, what's that?" Something was moving in the tall grass through which he had just come. He watched intently and a moment later saw the head of Sheeta, the panther, parting the grasses a short distance from him. The scene was suddenly familiar.

"I gotcha Steve!" exclaimed the "Gunner." "Me and that Tarzan guy flopped here last night—now I

remember."

He also remembered how Tarzan had chased the panther away by "running a bluff on him," and he wondered if he could do the same thing.

"Geeze, what a ornery lookin' pan! I'll bet you got a rotten disposition —and that Tarzan guy just growled and ran at you, and you beat it. Say, I don't believe it, if I did see it myself. Whyinell don't you go on about your business, you big stiff? You give me the heeby-jeebies." He stooped and picked up a fragment of rock. "Beat it!" he yelled, as he hurled the missile at Sheeta.

The great cat wheeled and bounded away, disappearing in the tall grass that the "Gunner" could now see waving

along the path of the panther's retreat. "Well, what do you know about that?" ejaculated Danny. "I done it! Geeze, these lions ain't so much."

His hunger now claimed his attention as his returning memory suggested a means of appeasing it. "I wonder could I do it?" he mused, as he hunted around on the ground until he had found a thin fragment of rock, with which he commenced to scrape away the dirt from a loose heap that rose a few inches above the contour of the surrounding ground. "I wonder could I!"

His digging soon revealed the remains of the boar Tarzan had cached against their possible return. With his pocket knife the "Gunner" hacked off

several pieces, after which he scraped the dirt back over the body and busied himself in the preparation of a fire, where he grilled the meat in a sketchy fashion that produced culinary results which ordinarily would have caused him to turn up his nose in disgust. But today he was far from particular and bolted the partially cooked and partially charred morsels like a ravenous wolf.

His memory had returned now up to the point of the meal he had eaten at this same spot with Tarzan—from there on until he had regained consciousness a short time before, it was a blank. He knew now that he could find his way back to camp from the point above the raiders' village where he and Obambi

had lunched, and so he turned his footsteps in that direction.

When he had found the place, he crept on down to the edge of the cliff where it overlooked the village; and here he lay down to rest and to spy upon the raiders, for he was very tired.

"The lousy bums!" he ejaculated beneath his breath, as he saw the *shiftas* moving about the village. "I wish I had my typewriter, I'd clean up that dump."

He saw Stabutch emerge from a hut and walk down to the horses. He watched him while he talked to the blacks there and to the headman. Then he saw the Russian leading two saddled horses back to the hut.

"That guy don't know it," he muttered, "but the finger is sure on him. I'll get him on the spot some day if it takes the rest of my natural life. Geeze, glom the broad!" Stabutch had summoned Jezebel from the hut. Suddenly a strange thing happened inside the head of Danny "Gunner" Patrick. It was as though someone had suddenly raised a window shade and let in a flood of light. He saw everything perfectly now in retrospection. With the sight of Jezebel his memory had returned!

It was with difficulty that he restrained an urge to call out and tell her that he was there; but caution stilled his tongue, and he lay watching while the two mounted and rode out of the

gateway.

He rose to his feet and ran along the ridge toward the north, parallel to the course they were taking. It was already dusk. In a few minutes it would be dark. If he could only keep them in sight until he knew in what direction they finally went!

Exhaustion was forgotten as he ran through the approaching night. Dimly now he could see them. They rode for a short distance upward toward the cliffs; and then, just before the darkness swallowed them, he saw them turn and gallop away toward the northwest and the great forest that lay in that direction.

Reckless of life and limb, the "Gunner" half stumbled, half fell down

the cliffs that here had crumbled away and spilled their fragments out upon the slope below.

"I gotta catch 'em, I gotta catch 'em," he kept repeating to himself. "The poor kid! The poor little kid! So help me God, if I catch 'em, what I won't do to that ——————if be's hurt her!"

On through the night he stumbled, falling time and again only to pick himself up and continue his frantic and hopeless search for the little golden haired Jezebel who had come into his life for a few brief hours to leave a mark upon his heart that might never be erased.

Gradually the realization of it crept upon him as he groped blindly into the

unknown, and it gave him strength to go on in the face of such physical exhaustion as he had never known before.

"Geeze," he muttered, "I sure must of fell hard for that kid."

22. BY A LONELY POOL

Night had fallen; and Tarzan of the Apes, leading Lady Barbara Collis and Lafayette Smith from the valley of the land of Midian, did not see the spoor of Jezebel and the "Gunner."

His two charges were upon the verge of exhaustion, but the ape- man led them on through the night in accordance with a plan he had decided upon. He knew that there were two more whites missing—Jezebel and Danny Patrick—and he wanted to get Lady Barbara and Smith to a place of safety that he might be free to pursue his search for these others.

To Lady Barbara and Smith the journey seemed interminable, yet they made no complaint, for the ape-man had

explained the purpose of this forced march to them; and they were even more anxious than he concerning the fate of their friends.

Smith supported the girl as best he could; but his own strength was almost spent, and sometimes his desire to assist her tended more to impede than to aid her. Finally she stumbled and fell; and when Tarzan, striding in advance, heard and returned to them he found Smith vainly endeavoring to lift Lady Barbara.

This was the first intimation the ape-man had received that his charges were upon the verge of exhaustion, for neither had voiced a single complaint; and when he realized it he lifted Lady Barbara in his arms and carried her, while Smith,

relieved at least of further anxiety concerning her, was able to keep going, though he moved like an automaton, apparently without conscious volition. Nor may his state be wondered at, when one considers what he had passed through during the preceding three days.

With Lady Barbara, be marvelled at the strength and endurance of the ape-man, which, because of his own weakened state, seemed unbelievable even as he witnessed it.

"It is not much farther," said Tarzan, guessing that the man needed encouragement.

"You are sure the hunter you told us of has not moved his camp?" asked Lady Barbara.

"He was there day before yesterday," replied the ape-man. "I think we shall find him there tonight."

"He will take us in?" asked Smith.

"Certainly, just as you would, under similar circumstances, take in anyone who needed assistance," replied the Lord of the Jungle. "He is an Englishman," he added, as though that fact in itself were a sufficient answer to their doubts.

They were in a dense forest now, following an ancient game trail; and presently they saw lights flickering ahead.

"That must be the camp," exclaimed Lady Barbara.

"Yes," replied Tarzan, and a moment

later he called out in a native dialect.

Instantly came an answering voice; and a moment later Tarzan halted upon the edge of the camp, just outside the circle of beast- fires.

Several *askaris* were on guard, and with them Tarzan conversed for a few moments; then he advanced and lowered Lady Barbara to her feet.

"I have told them not to disturb their bwana," the ape-man explained. "There is another tent that Lady Barbara may occupy, and the headman will arrange to have a shelter thrown up for Smith. You will be perfectly safe here. The men tell me their bwana is Lord Passmore. He will doubtless arrange to get you out to rail head. In the meantime I shall try to

locate your friends."

That was all—the ape-man turned and melted into the black night before they could voice any thanks.

"Why he's gone!" exclaimed the girl. "I didn't even thank him."

"I thought he would remain here until morning," said Smith. "He must be tired."

"He seems tireless," replied Lady Barbara. "He is a superman, if ever there was one."

"Come," said the headman, "your tent is over here. The boys are arranging a shelter for the bwana."

"Good night, Mr. Smith," said the girl. "I hope you sleep well."

"Good night, Lady Barbara," replied Smith. "I hope we wake up sometime."

And as they prepared for this welcome rest Stabutch and Jezebel were riding through the night, the man completely confused and lost.

Toward morning they drew rein at the edge of a great forest, after riding in wide circles during the greater part of the night. Stabutch was almost exhausted; and Jezebel was but little better off, but she had youth and health to give her the reserve strength that the man had undermined and wasted in dissipation.

"I've got to get some sleep," he said, dismounting.

Jezebel needed no invitation to slip

from her saddle for she was stiff and sore from this unusual experience. Stabutch led the animals inside the forest and tied them to a tree. Then he threw himself upon the ground and was almost immediately asleep.

Jezebel sat in silence listening to the regular breathing of the man. "Now would be the time to escape," she thought. She rose quietly to her feet. How dark it was! Perhaps it would be better to wait until it became light enough to see. She was sure the man would sleep a long time, for it was evident that he was very tired.

She sat down again, listening to the noises of the jungle. They frightened her. Yes, she would wait until it was light;

then she would untie the horses, ride one and lead the other away so that the man could not pursue her.

Slowly the minutes crept by. The sky became lighter in the east, over the distant mountains. The horses became restless. She noticed that they stood with ears pricked up and that they looked deeper into the jungle and trembled.

Suddenly there was the sound of crashing in the underbrush. The horses snorted and surged back upon their ropes, both of which broke. The noise awakened Stabutch, who sat up just as the two terrified animals wheeled and bolted. An instant later a lion leaped past the girl and the man, in pursuit of the two fleeing horses.

Stabutch sprang to his feet, his rifle in his hands. "God!" he exclaimed. "This is no place to sleep," and Jezebel's opportunity had passed.

The sun was topping the eastern mountains. The day had come. Soon the searchers would be ahorse. Now that he was afoot, Stabutch knew that he must not loiter. However, they must eat, or they would have no strength to proceed; and only by his rifle could they eat.

"Climb into that tree, little one," he said to Jezebel. "You will be safe there while I go and shoot something for our breakfast. Watch for the lion, and if you see him returning this way shout a warning. I am going farther into the forest to look for game."

Jezebel climbed into the tree, and Stabutch departed upon the hunt for breakfast. The girl watched for the lion, hoping it would return, for she had determined that she would give no warning to the man if it did.

She was afraid of the Russian because of things he had said to her during that long night ride. Much that he had said she had not understood at all, but she understood enough to know that he was a bad man. But the lion did not return, and presently Jezebel dozed and nearly fell out of the tree.

Stabutch, hunting in the forest, found a water hole not far from where he had left Jezebel; and here he hid behind bushes waiting for some animal to come down

to drink. Nor had he long to wait before he saw a creature appear suddenly upon the opposite side of the pool. So quietly had it come that the Russian had not dreamed that a creature stirred within a mile of his post. The most surprising feature of the occurrence, however, was that the animal thus suddenly to step into view was a man.

Stabutch's evil eyes narrowed. It was *the* man—the man he had traveled all the way from Moscow to kill. What an opportunity! Fate was indeed kind to him. He would fulfill his mission without danger to himself, and then he would escape with the girl—that wondrous girl! Stabutch had never seen so beautiful a woman in his life, and

now he was to possess her—she was to be his.

But first he must attend to the business of the moment. What a pleasant business it was, too. He raised his rifle very cautiously and aimed. Tarzan had halted and turned his head to one side. He could not see the rifle barrel of his enemy because of the bush behind which Stabutch hid and the fact that his eyes were centered on something in another direction.

The Russian realized that he was trembling, and he cursed himself under his breath. The nervous strain was too great. He tensed his muscles in an effort to hold his hands firm and the rifle steady and immovable upon the target.

The front sight of the rifle was describing a tiny circle instead of remaining fixed upon that great chest which offered such a splendid target.

But he must fire! The man would not stand there thus forever. The thought hurried Stabutch, and as the sight passed again across the body of the ape-man the Russian squeezed the trigger.

At the sound of the shot Jezebel's eyes snapped open. "Perhaps the lion returned," she soliloquized, "or maybe the man has found food. If it were the lion, I hope he missed it."

Also, as the rifle spoke, the target leaped into the air, seized a low hung branch and disappeared amidst the foliage of the trees above. Stabutch had

missed—he should have relaxed his muscles rather than tensed them.

The Russian was terrified. He felt as must one who stands upon the drop with the noose already about his neck. He turned and fled. His cunning mind suggested that he had better not return where the girl was. She was already lost to him, for he could not be burdened with her now in this flight, upon the success of which hung his very life. Accordingly he ran toward the south.

As he rushed headlong through the forest he was already out of breath when he felt a sudden sickening pain in his arm and at the same instant saw the feathered tip of an arrow waving beside him as he ran.

The shaft had pierced his forearm, its tip projecting from the opposite side. Sick with terror Stabutch increased his speed. Somewhere above him was his Nemesis, whom he could neither see nor hear. It was as though a ghostly assassin pursued him on silent wings.

Again an arrow struck him, sinking deep into the triceps of his other arm. With a scream of pain and horror Stabutch halted and, dropping upon his knees, raised his hands in supplication. "Spare me!" he cried. "Spare me! I have never wronged you. If you will spare—"

An arrow, speeding straight, drove through the Russian's throat. He screamed and clutched at the missile and fell forward on his face.

Jezebel, listening in the tree, heard the agonized shriek of the stricken man; and she shuddered. "The lion got him," she whispered. "He was wicked. It is the will of Jehovah!"

Tarzan of the Apes dropped lightly from a tree and warily approached the dying man. Stabutch, writhing in agony and terror, rolled over on his side. He saw the ape-man approaching, his bow and arrow ready in his hand, and, dying, reached for the revolver at his hip to complete the work that he had come so far to achieve and for which he was to give his life.

No more had his hand reached the grip of his weapon than the Lord of the Jungle loosed another shaft that drove

deep through the chest of the Russian, deep through his heart. Without a sound Leon Stabutch collapsed; and a moment later there rang through the jungle the fierce, uncanny victory cry of the bull ape.

As the savage notes reverberated through the forest Jezebel slid to the ground and fled in terror. She knew not where nor to what fate her flying feet led her. She was obsessed by but a single idea—to escape from the terrors of that lonely spot.

23. CAPTURED

With the coming of day the "Gunner" found himself near a forest. He had heard no sound of horses all during the night; and now that day had come, and he could see to a distance, he scanned the landscape for some sign of Stabutch and Jezebel but without success.

"Geeze," he muttered, "there ain't no use, I gotta rest. The poor little kid! If I only knew where the rat took her; but I don't, and I gotta rest." He surveyed the forest. "That looks like a swell hideout. I'll lay up there and grab off a little sleep. Geeze, I'm all in."

As he walked toward the forest his attention was attracted to something moving a couple of miles to the north of

him. He stopped short, and looked more closely as two horses, racing from the forest, dashed madly toward the foothills, pursued by a lion.

"Geeze!" exclaimed the "Gunner," "those must be their horses. What if the lion got her!"

Instantly his fatigue was forgotten; and he started at a run toward the north; but he could not keep the pace up for long; and soon he was walking again, his brain a turmoil of conjecture and apprehension.

He saw the lion give up the chase and turn away almost immediately, cutting up the slope in a northeasterly direction. The "Gunner" was glad to see him go, not for his own sake so much as for

Jezebel, whom, he reasoned, the lion might not have killed after all. There was a possibility, he thought, that she might have had time to climb a tree. Otherwise, he was positive, the lion must have killed her.

His knowledge of lions was slight. In common with most people, he believed that lions wandered about killing everything so unfortunate as to fall into their pathways—unless they were bluffed out as he had bluffed the panther the day before. But of course, he reasoned, Jezebel wouldn't have been able to bluff a lion.

He was walking close to the edge of the forest, making the best time that he could, when he heard a shot in the

distance. It was the report of Stabutch's rifle as he fired at Tarzan. The "Gunner" tried to increase his speed. There was too much doing there, where he thought Jezebel might be, to permit of loafing; but he was too exhausted to move rapidly.

Then, a few minutes later, the Russian's scream of agony was wafted to his ears and again he was goaded on. This was followed by the uncanny cry of the ape-man, which, f or some reason, Danny did not recognize, though he had heard it twice before. Perhaps the distance and the intervening trees muffled and changed it.

On he plodded, trying occasionally to run; but his overtaxed muscles had

reached their limit; and he had to give up the attempt, for already he was staggering and stumbling even at a walk.

"I ain't no good," he muttered; "nothing but a lousy punk. Here's a guy beatin' it with my girl, and I ain't even got the guts to work my dogs. Geeze, I'm a flop."

A little farther on he entered the forest so that he could approach the spot, where he had seen the horses emerge, without being seen, if Stabutch were still there.

Suddenly he stopped. Something was crashing through the brush toward him. He recalled the lion and drew his pocket knife. Then he hid behind a bush and waited, nor did he have long to wait

before the author of the disturbance broke into view.

"Jezebel!" he cried, stepping into her path. His voice trembled with emotion.

With a startled scream the girl halted, and then she recognized him. "Danny!" It was the last straw—her overwrought nerves went to pieces; and she sank to the ground, sobbing hysterically.

The "Gunner" took a step or two toward her. He staggered, his knees gave beneath him, and he sat down heavily a few yards from her; and then a strange thing happened. Tears welled to the eyes of Danny "Gunner" Patrick; he threw himself face down on the ground; and he, too, sobbed.

For several minutes they lay there,

and then Jezebel gained control of herself and sat up. "Oh, Danny," she cried. "Are you hurt? Oh, your head! Don't die, Danny."

He had quelled his emotion and was roughly wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve. "I ain't dyin'," he said; "but I oughta. Some one oughta bump me off — a great big stiff like me, cryin'!"

"It's because you've been hurt, Danny," said Jezebel.

"Naw, it ain't that. I been hurt before, but I ain't bawled since I was a little kid —when my mother died. It was something else. I just blew up when I seen you, and knew that you was O. K. My nerves went blooey— just like that!" he snapped his fingers. "You see," he

added, hesitantly, "I guess I like you an awful lot, kid."

"I like you, Danny," she told him. "You're top hole."

"I'm what? What does that mean?"

"I don't know," Jezebel admitted. "It's English, and you don't understand English, do you?"

He crawled over closer to her and took her hand in his. "Geeze," he said, "I thought I wasn't never goin' to see you again. Say," he burst out violently, "did that bum hurt you any, kid?"

"The man who took me away from the black men in the village, you mean?"

"Yes."

"No, Danny. After he killed his friend

we rode all night. He was afraid the black men would catch him."

"What became of the rat? How did you make your getaway?"

She told him all that she knew, but they were unable to account for the sounds both had heard or to guess whether or not they had portended the death of Stabutch.

"I wouldn't be much good, if he showed up again," said Danny. "I gotta get my strength back some way."

"You must rest," she told him.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said. "We'll lay around here until we are rested up a bit; then we'll beat it back up toward the hills where I know where they's water and something to eat. It ain't

very good food," he added, "but it's better than none. Say, I got some of it in my pocket. We'll just have, a feed now." He extracted some dirty scraps of half burned pork from one of his pockets and surveyed them ruefully.

"What is it?" asked Jezebel.

"It's pig, kid," he explained. "It don't look so hot, does it? Well, it don't taste no better than it looks; but it's food, and that's what we are needin' bad right now. Here, hop to it." He extended a handful of the scraps toward her. "Shut your eyes and hold your nose, and it ain't so bad," he assured her. "Just imagine you're in the old College Inn."

Jezebel smiled and took a piece of the meat. "United States is a funny language,

isn't it, Danny?"

"Why, I don't know—is it?"

"Yes, I think so. Sometimes it sound just like English and yet I can't understand it at all."

"That's because you ain't used to it," he told her; "but I'll learn you if you want me to. Do you?"

"Oke, kid," replied Jezebel.

"You're learnin' all right," said Danny, admiringly.

They lay in the growing heat of the new day and talked together of many things, as they rested. Jezebel told him the story of the land of Midian, of her childhood, of the eventful coming of Lady Barbara and its strange effect upon

her life; and Danny told her of Chicago, but there were many things in his own life that he did not tell her—things that, for the first time, he was ashamed of. And he wondered why he was ashamed.

As they talked, Tarzan of the Apes quitted the forest and set out upon his search for them, going upward toward the hills, intending to start his search for their spoor at the mouth of the fissure. If he did not find it there he would know that they were still in the valley; it he did find it, he would follow it until he located them.

At break of day a hundred *shiftas* rode out of their village. They had discovered the body of Capietro, and now they knew that the

Russian had tricked them and fled, after killing their chief. They wanted the girl for ransom, and they wanted the life of Stabutch.

They had not ridden far when they met two riderless horses galloping back toward the village. The *shiftas* recognized them at once, and knowing that Stabutch and the girl were now afoot they anticipated little difficulty in overhauling them.

The rolling foothills were cut by swales and canyons; so that at times the vision of the riders was limited. They had been following downward along the bottom of a shallow canyon for some time, where they could neither see to a great distance nor be seen; and then their

leader turned his mount toward higher ground, and as he topped the summit of a low ridge he saw a man approaching from the direction of the forest.

Tarzan saw the *shifta* simultaneously and changed his direction obliquely to the left, breaking into a trot. He knew that if that lone rider signified a force of mounted *shiftas* he would be no match for them; and, guided by the instinct of the wild beast, he sought ground where the advantage would be with him—the rough, rocky ground leading to the cliffs, where no horse could follow him.

With a yell to his followers, the *shifta* chieftain put spurs to his horse and rode at top speed to intercept the ape-man; and close behind him came his

yelling, savage horde.

Tarzan quickly saw that he could not reach the cliffs ahead of them; but he maintained his steady, tireless trot that he might be that much nearer the goal when the attack came. Perhaps he could hold them off until he reached the sanctuary of the cliffs, but certainly he had no intention of giving up without exerting every effort to escape the unequal battle that must follow if they overtook him.

With savage yells the *shiftas* approached, their loose cotton garments fluttering in the wind, their rifles waving above their heads. The chief rode in the lead; and when he was near enough, the ape-man, who had

been casting occasional glances rearward across a brown shoulder, stopped, wheeled and let an arrow drive at his foe; then he was away again as the shaft sank into the breast of the *shifta* chieftain.

With a scream, the fellow rolled from his saddle; and for a moment the others drew rein, but only for a moment. Here was but a single enemy, poorly armed with primitive weapons—he was no real menace to mounted riflemen.

Shouting their anger and their threats of vengeance, they spurred forward again in pursuit; but Tarzan had gained and the rocky ground was not far away.

Spreading in a great half circle, the *shiftas* sought to surround and head

off their quarry, whose strategy they had guessed the moment that they had seen the course of his flight. Now another rider ventured too near, and for a brief instant Tarzan paused to loose another arrow. As this second enemy fell, mortally wounded, the ape-man continued his flight to the accompaniment of a rattle of musketry fire; but soon he was forced to halt again as several of the horsemen passed him and cut off his line of retreat.

The hail of slugs screaming past him or kicking up the dirt around him gave him slight concern, so traditionally poor was the marksmanship of these roving bands of robbers, lily equipped with ancient firearms with which, because of

habitual shortage of ammunition, they had little opportunity to practice.

Now they pressed closer, in a rough circle of which he was the center; and, firing across him from all sides, it seemed impossible that they should miss him; but miss him they did, though their bullets found targets among their own men and horses, until one, who had supplanted the slain chief, took command and ordered them to cease firing.

Turning again in the direction of his flight, Tarzan tried to shoot his way through the cordon of horsemen shutting off his retreat; but, though each arrow sped true to its mark, the yelling horde closed in upon him until, his last shaft

spent, he was the center of a closely milling mass of shrieking enemies.

Shrilly above the pandemonium of battle rose the cries of the new leader. "Do not kill! Do not kill!" he screamed. "It is Tarzan of the Apes, and he is worth the ransom of a *ras*!"

Suddenly a giant black threw himself from his horse full upon the Lord of the Jungle, but Tarzan seized the fellow and hurled him back among the horsemen. Yet closer and closer they pressed; and now several fell upon him from their saddles, bearing him down beneath the feet of the now frantic horses.

Battling for life and liberty, the ape-man struggled against the overpowering odds that were being constantly

augmented by new recruits who hurled themselves from their mounts upon the growing pile that overwhelmed him. Once he managed to struggle to his feet, shaking most of his opponents from him; but they seized him about the legs and dragged him down again; and presently succeeded in slipping nooses about his wrists and ankles, thus effectually subduing him.

Now that he was harmless many of them reviled and struck him; but there were many others who lay upon the ground, some never to rise again. The *shiftas* had captured the great Tarzan, but it had cost them dear.

Now some of them rounded up the riderless horses, while others stripped

the dead of their weapons, ammunition, and any other valuables the living coveted. Tarzan was raised to an empty saddle, where he was securely bound; and four men were detailed to conduct him and the horses of the dead to the village, the wounded accompanying them, while the main body of the blacks continued the search for Stabutch and Jezebel.

24. THE LONG NIGHT

The sun was high in the heavens when Lady Barbara, refreshed by her long, undisturbed sleep, stepped from her tent in the camp of Lord Passmore. A smiling, handsome black boy came running toward her. "Breakfast soon be ready," he told her. "Lord Passmore very sorry. He have to go hunt."

She asked after Lafayette Smith and was told that he had just awakened, nor was it long before he joined her; and soon they were breakfasting together.

"If Jezebel and your friend were here," she said, "I should be very happy. I am praying that Tarzan finds them."

"I am sure he will," Smith assured

her, "though I am only worried about Jezebel. Danny can take care of himself."

"Doesn't it seem heavenly to eat a meal again?" the girl remarked. "Do you know it has been months since I have eaten anything that even vaguely approximated a civilized meal. Lord Passmore was fortunate to get such a cook for his safari. I had no such luck."

"Have you noticed what splendid looking fellows all his men are?" asked Smith. "They would make that aggregation of mine resemble fourth rate roustabouts with hookworm and sleeping sickness."

"There is another very noticeable thing about them," said Lady Barbara.

"What is that?"

"There is not a single piece of cast off European finery among them —their garb is native, pure and simple; and, while I'll have to admit there isn't much to it, it lends a dignity to them that European clothing would change to the absurd."

"I quite agree with you," said Smith. "I wonder why I didn't get a safari like this."

"Lord Passmore is evidently an African traveler and hunter of long experience. No amateur could hope to attract such men as these."

"I shall hate to go back to my own camp, if I stay here very long," said Smith; "but I suppose I'll have to; and

that suggests another unpleasant feature of the change."

"And what is that?" she asked.

"I shan't see you any more," he said with a simple directness that vouched for the sincerity of his regret.

The girl was silent for a moment, as though the suggestion had aroused a train of thought she had not before considered. "That is true, isn't it?" she remarked, presently. "We shan't see each other any more—but not for always. I'm sure you'll stop and Visit me in London. Isn't it odd what old friends we seem? And yet we only met two days ago. Or, maybe, it doesn't seem that way to you. You see I was so long without seeing a human being of my own world that you were

quite like a long lost brother, when you came along so unexpectedly."

"I have the same feeling," he said —"as though I had known you forever— and—" he hesitated, "—as though I could never get along without you in the future." He flushed a little as he spoke those last words.

The girl looked up at him with a quick smile—a sympathetic, understanding smile. "It was nice of you to say that," she said. "Why it sounded almost like a declaration," she added, with a gay, friendly laugh.

He reached across the little camp table and laid a hand upon hers. "Accept it as such," he said. "I'm not very good at saying things—like that."

"Let's not be serious," she begged. "Really, we scarcely know each other, after all."

"I have known you always," he replied. "I think we were amoebas together before the first Cambrian dawn."

"Now you've compromised me," she cried, laughingly, "for I'm sure there were no chaperons way back there. I hope that you were a proper amoeba. You didn't kiss me, did you?"

"Unfortunately for me amoebas have no mouths," he said, "but I've been profiting by several millions of years of evolution just to remedy that defect."

"Let's be amoebas again," she suggested.

"No," he said, "for then I couldn't tell you that I—I—" He choked and flushed.

"Please! Please, don't tell me," she cried. "We're such ripping friends — don't spoil it."

"Would it spoil it?" he asked.

"I don't know. It might. I am afraid."

"Can't I ever tell you?" he asked.

"Perhaps, some day," she said.

A sudden burst of distant rifle fire interrupted them. The blacks in the camp were instantly alert. Many of them sprang to their feet, and all were listening intently to the sounds of this mysterious engagement between armed men.

The man and the girl heard the

headman speaking to his fellows in some African dialect. His manner showed no excitement, his tones were low but clear. It was evident that he was issuing instructions. The men went quickly to their shelters, and a moment later Lady Barbara saw the peaceful camp transformed. Every man was armed now. As by magic a modern rifle and a bandoleer of cartridges were in the possession of each black. White feathered headdresses were being adjusted and war paint applied to glossy hides.

Smith approached the headman. "What is the matter?" he asked. "Is something wrong?"

"I do not know, bwana," replied the

black; "but we prepare."

"Is there any danger?" continued the white.

The headman straightened to his full, impressive height. "Are we not here?" he asked.

Jezebel and the "Gunner" were walking slowly in the direction of the distant water bole and the cached boar meat, following the bottom of a dip that was the mouth of a small canyon that led up into the hills.

They were stiff and lame and very tired; and the wound on the "Gunner's" head pained; but, notwithstanding, they were happy as, hand in hand, they dragged their weary feet toward water and food.

"Geeze, kid," said Danny, "it sure is a funny world. Just think, if I hadn't met old Smithy on board that ship me and you wouldn't never have met up. It all started from that," but then Danny knew nothing of Angustus the Ephesian.

"I got a few grand salted away, kid, and when we get out of this mess we'll go somewhere where nobody doesn't know me and I'll start over again. Get myself a garage or a filling station, and we'll have a little fiat. Geeze, it's goin' to be great showin' you things. You don't know what you ain't seen——movies and railroads and boats! Geeze! You ain't seen nothin' and nobody ain't going to show you nothin', only me."

"Yes, Danny," said Jezebel, "it's

going to be ripping," and she squeezed his hand.

Just then they were startled by the sound of rifle fire ahead.

"What was that?" asked Jezebel.

"It sounded like the Valentine Massacre," said Danny, "but I guess it's them toughs from the village. We better hide, kid." He drew her toward some low bushes; and there they lay down, listening to the shouts and shots that came down to them from where Tarzan fought for his life and liberty with the odds a hundred to one against him.

Alter awhile the din ceased, and a little later the two heard the thudding of many galloping hoofs. The sound increased in volume as it drew nearer,

and Danny and Jezebel tried to make themselves as small as possible beneath the little bush in the inadequate concealment of which they were hiding.

At a thundering gallop the *shiftas* crossed the swale just above them, and all but a few had passed when one of the stragglers discovered them. His shout, which attracted the attention of others, was carried forward until it reached the new chief, and presently the entire band had circled back to learn what their fellow had discovered.

Poor "Gunner"! Poor Jezebel! Their happiness had been short lived. Their recapture was effected with humiliating ease. Broken and dejected, they were soon on their way to the village under

escort of two black ruffians.

Bound, hands and feet, they were thrown into the hut formerly occupied by Capietro and left without food or water upon the pile of dirty rugs and clothing that littered the floor.

Beside them lay the corpse of the Italian which his followers, in their haste to overtake his slayer, had not taken the time to remove. It lay upon its back, the dead eyes staring upward.

Never before in his life had the spirits of Danny Patrick sunk so low, for the very reason, perhaps, that never in his life had they risen so high as during the brief interlude of happiness he had enjoyed following his reunion with Jezebel. Now he saw no hope ahead,

for, with the two white men eliminated, he feared that he might not even be able to dicker with these ignorant black men for the ransom that he would gladly pay to free Jezebel and himself.

"There goes the garage, the filling station, and the flat," he said, lugubriously.

"Where?" asked Jezebel.

"Flooie," explained Danny.

"But you are here with me," said the golden one; "so I do not care what else there is."

"That's nice, kid; but I ain't much help, all tied up like a Christmas present. They sure picked out a swell bed for me —feels like I was lyin' on a piece of the kitchen stove." He rolled himself to one

side and nearer Jezebel. "That's better," he said, "but I wonder what was that thing I was parked on."

"Maybe your friend will come and take us away," suggested Jezebel.

"Who, Smithy? What would he take us with—that dinky toy pistol of his?"

"I was thinking of the other that you told me about."

"Oh, that Tarzan guy! Say kid, if he knew we was here he'd walk in and push all these nutty dumps over with one mitt and kick the whole gang over the back fence. Geeze, you bet I wish he was here. There is one big shot, and I don't mean maybe."

In a hut on the edge of the village was the answer to the "Gunner's" wish,

bound hand and foot, as was the "Gunner," and, apparently, equally helpless. Constantly the ape-man was working on the thongs that confined his wrists —twisting, tugging, pulling.

The long day wore on and never did the giant captive cease his efforts to escape; the thongs were heavy and securely tied, yet little by little he felt that they were loosening.

Towards evening the new chief returned with the party that had been searching for Stabutch. They had not found him; but scouts had located the camp of Lord Passmore, and now the *shiftas*were discussing plans for attacking it on the morrow.

They had not come sufficiently close

to it to note the number of armed natives it contained; but they had glimpsed Smith and Lady Barbara; and, being sure that there were not more than two white men, they felt little hesitation in attempting the raid, since they were planning to start back for Abyssinia on the morrow.

"We will kill the white man we now have," said the chief, "and carry the two girls and Tarzan with us. Tarzan should bring a good ransom and the girls a good price."

"Why not keep the girls for ourselves," suggested another.

"We shall sell them," said the chief.

"Who are you, to say what we shall do?" demanded the other. "You are no chief."

"No," growled a villainous-looking black squatting beside the first objector.

He who would be chief leaped, catlike, upon the first speaker, before any was aware of his purpose. A sword gleamed for an instant in the light of the new made cook fires and fell with terrific force upon the skull of the victim.

"Who am I?" repeated the killer, as he wiped the bloody blade upon the garment of the slain man. "I am chief!" He looked around upon the scowling faces about him. "Is there any who says I am not chief?" There was no demur. Ntale was chief of the *shifta* band.

Inside the dark interior of the hut where he had lain bound all day without

food or water the ape-man tugged and pulled until the sweat stood in beads upon his body, but not in vain. Gradually a hand slipped through the stretched thong, and he was free. Or at least his hands were, and it took them but a moment to loosen the bonds that secured his ankles.

With a low, inaudible growl he rose to his feet and stepped to the doorway. Before him lay the village compound. He saw the *shiftas* squatting about while slaves prepared the evening meal. Nearby was the palisade. They must see him as he crossed to it, but what matter?

He would be gone before they could gather their wits. Perhaps a few stray shots would be fired; but then, had they

not fired many shots at him this morning, not one of which had touched him?

He stepped out into the open, and at the same instant a burly black stepped from the next but and saw him. With a shout of warning to his fellows the man leaped upon the escaping prisoner. Those at the fires sprang to their feet and came running toward the two.

Within their prison hut Jezebel and Danny heard the commotion and wondered.

The ape-man seized the black who would have stopped him and wheeling him about to form a shield for himself, backed quickly toward the palisade.

"Stay where you are," he called to the advancing *shiftas*, in their own dialect.

"Stay where you are, or I will kill this man."

"Let him kill him then," growled Ntale. "He is not worth the ransom we are losing," and with a shout of encouragement to his followers he leaped quickly forward to intercept the ape-man.

Tarzan was already near the palisade as Ntale charged. He raised the struggling black above his head and hurled him upon the advancing chief, and as the two went down he wheeled and ran for the palisade.

Like Manu the monkey he scaled the high barrier. A few scattered shots followed him, but he dropped to the ground outside unscathed and

disappeared in the growing gloom of the advancing night.

The long night of their captivity dragged on and still the "Gunner" and Jezebel lay as they had been left, without food or drink, while the silent corpse of Capietro stared at the ceiling.

"I wouldn't treat nobody like this," said the "Gunner," "not even a rat."

Jezebel raised herself to one elbow. "Why not try it?" she whispered.

"What?" demanded Danny. "I'd try anything once."

"What you said about a rat made me think of it," said Jezebel. "We have lots of rats in the land of Midian. Sometimes we catch them—they are very good to eat We make traps, but if we do not kill

the rats soon after they are caught they gnaw their way to freedom—they gnaw the cords which bind the traps together."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Danny. "We ain't got no rats, and if we had — well, I won't say I wouldn't eat 'em kid; but I don't see what it's got to do with the mess we're in."

"We're like the rats, Danny," she said. "Don't you see? We're like the rats and —we can gnaw our way to freedom!"

"Well, kid," said Danny, "if you want to gnaw your way through the side of this hut, hop to it; but if I gets a chance to duck I'm goin' through the door."

"You do not understand, Danny," insisted Jezebel. "You are an egg that cannot talk. I mean that I can gnaw the

cords that fasten your wrists together."

"Geeze, kid!" exclaimed Danny. "Dumb ain't no name for it, and I always thought I was the bright little boy. You sure got a bean, and I don't mean maybe."

"I wish I knew what you are talking about, Danny," said Jezebel, "and I wish you would let me try to gnaw the cords from your wrist. Can't you understand what I'm talking about?"

"Sure, kid, but I'll do the gnawing—my jaws are tougher. Roll over, and I'll get busy. When you're free you can untie me."

Jezebel rolled over on her stomach and Danny wriggled into position where he could reach the thongs at her wrists

with his teeth. He fell to work with a will, but it was soon evident to him that the job was going to be much more difficult than he had anticipated.

He found, too, that he was very weak and soon tired; but though often he was forced to stop through exhaustion, he never gave up. Once, when he paused to rest, he kissed the little hands that he was trying to liberate. It was a gentle, reverent kiss, quite unlike the "Gunner;" but then love is a strange force, and when it is aroused in the breast of a man by a clean and virtuous woman it makes him always a little tenderer and a little better.

Dawn was lifting the darkness within the hut, and still the "Gunner" gnawed

upon the thongs that it seemed would never part. Capietro lay staring at the ceiling, his dead eyes rolled upward, just as he had lain there staring through all the long hours of the night, unseeing.

The *shiftas* were stirring in the village, for this was to be a busy day. Slaves were preparing the loads of camp equipment and plunder that they were to carry toward the north. The fighting men were hastening their breakfasts that they might look to their weapons and their horse gear before riding out on their last raid from this village, against the camp of the English hunter.

Ntale the chief was eating beside the fire of his favorite wife. "Make haste, woman," he said. "I have work to do

before we ride."

"You are chief now," she reminded him. "Let others work."

"This thing I do myself," replied the black man.

"What do you do that is so important that I must hasten the preparation of the morning meal?" she demanded.

"I go to kill the white man and get the girl ready for the journey," he replied. "Have food prepared for her. She must eat or she will die."

"Let her die," replied the woman. "I do not want her around. Kill them both."

"Shut thy mouth!" snapped the man. "I am chief."

"If you do not kill her, I shall," said

the woman. "I shall not cook for any white bitch."

The man rose. "I go to kill the man," he said. "Have breakfast for the girl when I return with her."

25. THE WAZIRI

"There!" gasped the "Gunner."

"I am free!" exclaimed Jezebel.

"And my jaws is wore out," said Danny.

Quickly Jezebel turned and worked upon the thongs that confined the "Gunner's" wrists before taking the time to loose her ankles. Her fingers were quite numb, for the cords had partially cut off the circulation from her hands; and she was slow and bungling at the work. It seemed to them both that she would never be done. Had they known that Ntale had already arisen from his breakfast fire with the announcement that he was going to kill the "Gunner," they

would have been frantic; but they did not know it, and perhaps that were better, since to Jezebel's other handicaps was not added the nervous tension that surely would have accompanied a knowledge of the truth.

But at last the "Gunner's" hands were free; and then both fell to work upon the cords that secured their ankles, which were less tightly fastened.

At last the "Gunner" arose. "The first thing I do," he said, "is to find out what I was lyin' on yesterday. It had a familiar feel to it; and, if I'm right—boy!"

He rummaged among the filthy rags at the end of the hut, and a moment later straightened tip with a Thompson submachine gun in one hand and his

revolver, belt and holster in the other—a grin on his face.

"This is the first break I've had in a long time," he said. "Everything's jake now, sister."

"What are those things?" asked Jezebel.

"Them's the other half of 'Gunner' Patrick," replied Danny. "Now, bring on the dirty rats!"

As he spoke, Ntale the chief drew aside the rug at the doorway and looked in. The interior of the hut was rather dark, and at first glance he could not make out the figures of the girl and the man standing at the far side; but, silhouetted as he was against the growing morning light beyond the

doorway, he was plainly visible to his intended victim; and Danny saw that the man carried a pistol ready in his hand.

The "Gunner" had already buckled his belt about him. Now he transferred the machine gun to his left hand and drew his revolver from its holster. He did these things quickly and silently. So quickly that, as he fired, Ntale had not realized that his prisoners were free of their bonds—a thing he never knew, as, doubtless, he never heard the report of the shot that killed him.

At the same instant that the "Gunner" fired, the report of his revolver was drowned by yells and a shot from a sentry at the gate, to whom the coming day had revealed a hostile force

creeping upon the village.

As Danny Patrick stepped over the dead body of the chief and looked out into the village he realized something of what had occurred. He saw men running hastily toward the village gates and scrambling to the banquette. He heard a fusillade of shots that spattered the palisade, splintering the wood and tearing through to fill the village with a screaming, terror stricken mob.

His knowledge of such things told him that only high powered rifles could send their projectiles through the heavy wood of the palisade. He saw the *shiftas* on the banquette returning the fire with their antiquated muskets. He saw the slaves and prisoners cowering in a corner of

the village that was freer from the fire of the attackers than other portions.

He wondered who the enemies of the *shiftas* might be, and past experience suggested only two possibilities—either a rival "gang" or the police.

"I never thought I'd come to it, kid," he said.

"Come to what, Danny?"

"I hate to tell you what I been hopin'," he admitted.

"Tell me, Danny," she said. "I won't be angry."

"I been hopin' them guys out there was cops. Just think of that, kid! Me, 'Gunner' Patrick, a-hopin' the cops would come!"

"What are cops, Danny?"

"Laws, harness bulls—Geeze, kid, why do you ask so many questions? Cops is cops. And I'll tell you why I hope its them. If it ain't cops its a rival mob, and we'd get just as tough a break with them as with these guys."

He stepped out into the village street. "Well," he said, "here goes Danny Patrick smearin' up with the police. You stay here, kid, and lie down on your bread basket, so none of them slugs'll find you, while I go out and push the smokes around."

Before the gate was a great crowd of *shiftas* firing through openings at the enemy beyond. The "Gunner" knelt and raised the machine gun to his shoulder. There was the vicious b-r-r-r as of some

titanic rattle snake; and a dozen of the massed *shiftas* collapsed, dead or screaming, to the ground.

The others turned and, seeing the "Gunner," realized that they were caught between two fires, for they remembered the recent occasion upon which they had witnessed the deadly effects of this terrifying weapon.

The "Gunner" spied Ogonyo among the prisoners and slaves huddled not far from where he stood, and the sight of him suggested an idea to the white man.

"Hey! Big feller, you!" He waved his hand to Ogonyo. "Come here! Bring all them guys with you. Tell 'em to grab anything they can fight with if they want to make their getaway."

Whether or not Ogonyo understood even a small part of what the "Gunner" said, he seemed at least to grasp the main idea; and presently the whole mob of prisoners and slaves, except the women, had placed themselves behind Danny.

The firing from the attacking force had subsided somewhat since Danny's typewriter had spoken, as though the leader of that other party had recognized its voice and guessed that white prisoners within the village might be menaced by his rifle fire. Only an occasional shot, aimed at some specific target, was coming into the village.

The *shiftas* had regained their composure to some extent and were

preparing their horses and mounting, with the evident intention of executing a sortie. They were leaderless and confused, half a dozen shouting advice and instructions at the same time.

It was at this moment that Danny advanced upon them with his motley horde armed with sticks and stones, an occasional knife and a few swords hastily stolen from the huts of their captors.

As the *shiftas* realized that they were menaced thus seriously from the rear, the "Gunner" opened fire upon them for the second time, and the confusion that followed in the village compound gave the attackers both within and without a new advantage.

The *shiftas* fought among themselves for the loose horses that were now stampeding in terror about the village; and as a number of them succeeded in mounting they rode for the village gates, overthrowing those who had remained to defend them. Some among them forced the portals open; and as the horsemen dashed out they were met by a band of black warriors, above whose heads waved white plumes, and in whose hands were modern high powered rifles.

The attacking force had been lying partially concealed behind a low ridge, and as it rose to meet the escaping *shiftas* the savage war cry of the Waziri rang above the tumult of the battle.

First to the gates was Tarzan, war chief of the Waziri, and while Muviro and a small detachment accounted for all but a few of the horsemen who had succeeded in leaving the village, the ape-man, with the remaining Waziri, charged the demoralized remnants of Capietro's band that remained within the palisade.

Surrounded by enemies, the *shiftas* threw down their rifles and begged for mercy, and soon they were herded into a corner of the village under guard of a detachment of the Waziri.

As Tarzan greeted the "Gunner" and Jezebel he expressed his relief at finding them unharmed.

"You sure come at the right time,"

Danny told him. "This old typewriter certainly chews up the ammunition, and that last burst just about emptied the drum; but say, who are your friends? Where did you raise this mob?"

"They are my people," replied Tarzan.

"Some gang!" ejaculated the "Gunner," admiringly; "but say, have you seen anything of old Smithy?"

"He is safe at my camp."

"And Barbara," asked Jezebel; "where is she?"

"She is with Smith," replied Tarzan. "You will see them both in a few hours. We start back as soon as I arrange for the disposal of these people." He turned away and commenced to make inquiries

among the prisoners of the *shiftas*.

"Is he not beautiful!" exclaimed Jezebel.

"Hey, sister, can that 'beautiful stuff' warned the "Gunner," "and from now on remember that I'm the only 'beautiful' guy you know, no matter what my pan looks like."

Quickly Tarzan separated the prisoners according to their tribes and villages, appointed headman to lead them back their homes and issued instructions to them as he explained his plans.

The weapons, ammunition, loot and belongings of the *shiftas*, were divided among the prisoners, after the Waziri had been allowed to select such trifles

as they desired. The captured*shiftas* were placed in charge of a large band of Gallas with orders to return them to Abyssinia and turn them over to the nearest *ras*.

"Why not hang them here?" asked the Galla headman. "We shall then save all the food they would eat on the long march back to our country, besides saving us much trouble and worry in guarding them—for the *ras* will certainly hang them."

"Take them back, as I tell you," replied Tarzan. "But if they give you trouble do with them as you see fit."

It took little more than an hour to evacuate the village. All of Smith's loads were recovered, including Danny's

precious ammunition and extra drums for his beloved Thompson; and these were assigned to Smith's porters, who were once again assembled under Ogonyo.

When the village was emptied it was fired in a dozen places; and, as the black smoke curled up toward the blue heavens, the various parties took their respective ways from the scene of their captivity, but not before the several headmen had come and knelt before the Lord of the Jungle and thanked him for the deliverance of their people.

26. THE LAST KNOT IS TIED

Lafayette Smith and Lady Barbara had been mystified witnesses to the sudden transformation of the peaceful scene in the camp of Lord Passmore. All day the warriors had remained in readiness, as though expecting a summons; and when night fell they still waited.

Evidences of restlessness were apparent; and there was no singing and little laughter in the camp, as there had been before. The last that the two whites saw, as they retired for the night, were the little groups of plumed warriors squatting about their fires, their rifles ready to their hands; and they were

asleep when the summons came and the sleek, black fighting men melted silently into the dark shadows of the forest, leaving only four of their number to guard the camp and the two guests.

When Lady Barbara emerged from her tent in the morning she was astonished to find the camp all but deserted. The *boy* who acted in the capacity of personal servant and cook for her and Smith was there and three other blacks. All were constantly armed; but their attitude toward her had not changed, and she felt only curiosity relative to the other altered conditions, so obvious at first glance, rather than apprehension.

When Smith joined her a few minutes

later he was equally at a loss to understand the strange metamorphosis that had transformed the laughing, joking porters and *askaris* into painted warriors and sent them out into the night so surreptitiously, nor could they glean the slightest information from their boy, who, though still courteous and smiling, seemed by some strange trick of fate suddenly to have forgotten the very fair command of English that he had exhibited with evident pride on the previous day.

The long day dragged on until mid afternoon without sign of any change. Neither Lord Passmore nor the missing blacks returned, and the enigma was as baffling as before. The two whites,

however, seemed to find much pleasure in one another's company; and so, perhaps, the day passed more rapidly for them than it did for the four blacks, waiting and listening through the hot, drowsy hours.

But suddenly there was a change. Lady Barbara saw her *boy* rise and stand in an attitude of eager listening. "They come!" he said, in his own tongue, to his companions. Now they all stood and, though they may have expected only friends, their rifles were in readiness for enemies.

Gradually the sound of voices and of marching men became distinctly audible to the untrained ears of the two whites, and a little later they saw the head of a

column filing through the forest toward them.

"Why there's the 'Gunner!'" exclaimed Lafayette Smith. "And Jezebel, too. How odd that they should be together."

"With Tarzan of the Apes!" cried Lady Barbara. "He has saved them both."

A slow smile touched the lips of the ape-man as he witnessed the reunion of Lady Barbara and Jezebel and that between Smith and the "Gunner;" and it broadened a little, when, after the first burst of greetings and explanations, Lady Barbara said, "It is unfortunate that our host, Lord Passmore, isn't here."

"He is," said the ape-man.

"Where?" demanded Lafayette Smith,

looking about the camp.

"I am 'Lord Passmore," said Tarzan.

"You?" exclaimed Lady Barbara.

"Yes. I assumed this role when I came north to investigate the rumors I had heard concerning Capietro and his band, believing that they not only would suspect no danger, but hoping, also, that they would seek to attack and plunder my safari as they have those of others."

"Geeze," said the "Gunner." "What a jolt they would of got!"

"That is why we never saw 'Lord Passmore," said Lady Barbara, laughing. "I thought him a most elusive host."

"The first night I left you here," explained Tarzan, "I walked into the

jungle until I was out of sight, and then I came back from another direction and entered my tent from the rear. I slept there all night. The next morning, early, I left in search of your Mends—and was captured myself. But everything has worked out well, and if you have no other immediate plans I hope that you will accompany me back to my home and remain a while as my guests while you recover from the rather rough experiences Africa has afforded you. Or, perhaps," he added, "Professor Smith and his friend wish to continue their geological investigations."

"I, ah, well, you see," stammered Lafayette Smith; "I have about decided to abandon my work in Africa and

devote my life to the geology of England. We, or, er—you see, Lady Barbara—"

"I am going to take him back to England and teach him to shoot before I let him return to Africa. Possibly we shall come back later, though."

"And you, Patrick," asked Tarzan, "are you remaining to hunt, perhaps?"

"Nix, mister," said Danny, emphatically, "We're goin' to California and buy a garage and filling station."

"We?" queried Lady Barbara.

"Sure," said the "Gunner;" "me and Jez."

"Really?" exclaimed Lady Barbara. "Is he in earnest, Jezebel?"

"Oke, kid—isn't it ripping?" replied

the golden one.

THE END

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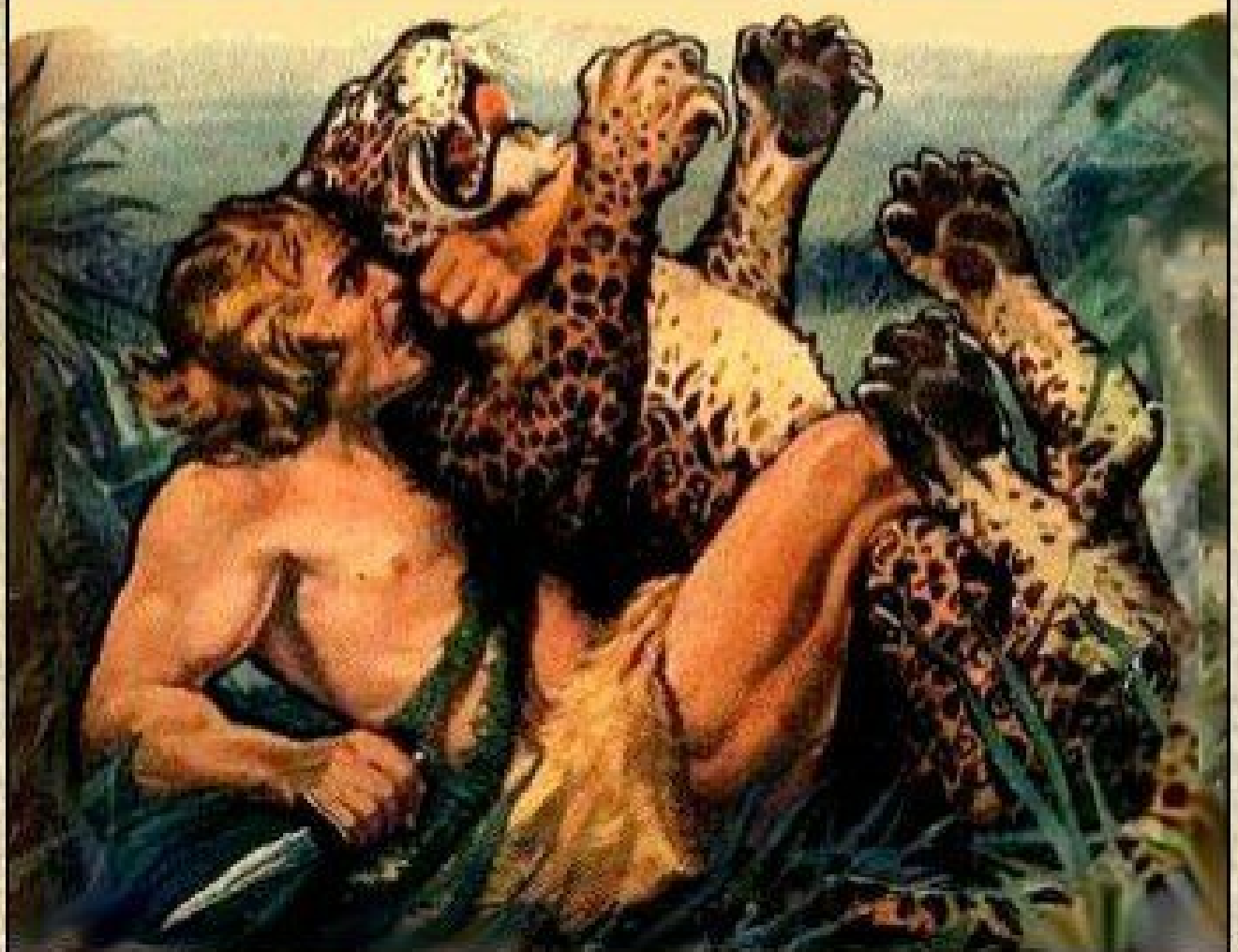

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN AND THE CITY OF GOLD

BOOK 16 IN THE TARZAN

SERIES

Serialized in *The Argosy* magazine, March 12—April 16, 1932

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1. SAVAGE QUARRY

Down out of Tigre and Amhara upon Gojam and Shoa and Kaffa come the rains from June to September, carrying silt and prosperity from Abyssinia to the eastern Sudan and to Egypt, bringing muddy trails and swollen rivers and death and prosperity to Abyssinia.

Of these gifts of the rains, only the muddy trails and the swollen rivers and death interested a little band of Shiftas that held out in the remote fastnesses of the mountains of Kaffa. Hard men were these mounted bandits, cruel criminals without even a vestige of culture such as occasionally leavens the activities of rogues, lessening their ruthlessness. Kaficho and Galla they were, the off-

scourings of their tribes, outlaws, men with prices upon their heads.

It was not raining now, and the rainy season was drawing to a close, for it was the middle of September. But there was still much water in the rivers, and the ground was soft after a recent rain.

The Shiftas rode, seeking loot from wayfarer, caravan, or village; and as they rode, the unshod hoofs of their horses left a plain spoor that one might read upon the run.

A short distance ahead of them, in the direction toward which they were riding, a hunting beast stalked its prey. The wind was blowing from it toward the approaching horsemen, and for this reason their scent spoor was not borne

to its sensitive nostrils, nor did the soft ground give forth any sound beneath the feet of their walking mounts.

Though the stalker did not resemble a beast of prey, such as the term connotes to the mind of man, he was one nevertheless, for in his natural haunts he filled his belly by the chase and by the chase alone. Neither did he resemble the mental picture that one might hold of a typical British lord, yet he was that, too —he was Tarzan of the Apes.

All beasts of prey find hunting poor during a rain, and Tarzan was no exception to the rule. It had rained for two days, and as a result Tarzan was hungry. A small buck was drinking in a stream fringed by bushes and tall reeds,

and Tarzan was worming his way upon his belly through short grass to reach a position from which he might either charge or loose an arrow or cast a spear. He was not aware that a group of horsemen had reined in upon a gentle rise a short distance behind him where they sat in silence regarding him intently.

Usha the wind, who carries scent, also carries sound. Today, Usha carried both the scent and the sound of the Shiftas away from the keen nostrils and ears of the ape-man.

The circumstances that brought Tarzan northward into Kaffa are not a part of this story. Perhaps they were not urgent, for the Lord of the Jungle loves to roam remote fastnesses still unspoiled

by the devastating hand of civilization, and needs but trifling incentive to do so.

At the moment, however, Tarzan's mind was not occupied by thoughts of adventure. He did not know that it loomed threateningly behind him. His concern and his interest were centered upon the buck which he intended should satisfy the craving of his ravenous hunger. He crept cautiously forward.

From behind, the white-robed Shiftas moved from the little rise where they had been watching him in silence, moved down toward him with spear and long-barreled matchlock. They were puzzled. Never before had they seen a white man like this one, but if curiosity was in their minds, there was only

murder in their hearts.

The buck raised his head occasionally to glance about him, wary, suspicious. When he did so, Tarzan froze into immobility. Suddenly the animal's gaze centered for an instant upon something in the direction of the ape-man; then it wheeled and bounded away. Instantly Tarzan glanced behind him, for he knew that it had not been he who had frightened his quarry, but something beyond and behind him that the alert eyes of Wappi had discovered. That quick glance revealed a half-dozen horsemen moving slowly toward him, told him what they were, and explained their purpose. Knowing that they were Shiftas, he knew that they came only to

rob and kill—knew that here were enemies more ruthless than Numa.

When they saw that he had discovered them, the horsemen broke into a gallop and bore down upon him, waving their weapons and shouting. They did not fire, evidently holding in contempt this primitively armed victim, but seemed to purpose riding him down and trampling him beneath the hoofs of their horses or impaling him upon their spears.

But Tarzan did not turn and run. He knew every possible avenue of escape within the radius of his vision for every danger that might reasonably be expected to confront him here, for it is the business of the creatures of the wild to know these things if they are to

survive, and so he knew that there was no escape from mounted men by flight. But this knowledge threw him into no panic. Could the requirements of self-preservation have been best achieved by flight, he would have fled, but as they could not, he adopted the alternative quite as a matter of course—he stood to fight, ready to seize upon any fortuitous circumstance that might offer a chance to escape.

Tall, magnificently proportioned, muscled more like Apollo than like Hercules, garbed only in a lion skin, he presented a splendid figure of primitive manhood that suggested more, perhaps, the demigod of the forest than it did man. Across his back hung his quiver of

arrows and a light, short spear; the loose coils of his grass rope lay across one bronzed shoulder. At his hip swung the hunting knife of his father, the knife that had given the boy-Tarzan the first suggestion of his coming supremacy over the other beasts of the jungle on that far-gone day when his youthful hand drove it into the heart of Bolgani the gorilla. In his left hand was his bow and between the fingers four extra arrows.

As Ara the lightning, so is Tarzan for swiftness. The instant that he had discovered and recognized the menace creeping upon him from behind and known that he had been seen by the horsemen, he had leaped to his feet, and in the same instant strung his bow. Now,

perhaps even before the leading Shiftas realized the danger that confronted them, the bow was bent, the shaft sped.

Short but powerful was the bow of the ape-man; short, that it might be easily carried through the forest and the jungle; powerful, that it might send its shafts through the toughest hide to a vital organ of its prey. Such a bow was this that no ordinary man might bend it.

Straight through the heart of the leading Shifta drove the first arrow, and as the fellow threw his arms above his head and lunged from his saddle four more arrows sped with lightning-like rapidity from the bow of the ape-man, and every arrow found a target. Another Shifta dropped to ride no more, and

three were wounded.

Only seconds had elapsed since Tarzan had discovered his danger, and already the four remaining horsemen were upon him. The three who were wounded were more interested in the feathered shafts protruding from their bodies than in the quarry they had expected so easily to overcome, but the fourth was whole, and he thundered down upon the ape-man with his spear set for the great chest.

There could be no retreat for Tarzan; there could be no side- stepping to avoid the thrust, for a step to either side would have carried him in front of one of the other horsemen. He had but a single slender hope for survival, and that hope,

forlorn though it appeared, he seized upon with the celerity, strength, and agility that make Tarzan Tarzan. Slipping his bowstring about his neck after his final shot, he struck up the point of the menacing weapon of his antagonist, and grasping the man's arm swung himself to the horse's back behind the rider.

As steel-thewed fingers closed upon the Shifta's throat he voiced a single piercing scream; then a knife drove home beneath his left shoulder blade, and Tarzan hurled the body from the saddle. The terrified horse, running free with flying reins, tore through the bushes and the reeds into the river, while the remaining Shiftas, disabled by their

wounds, were glad to abandon the chase upon the bank, though one of them, retaining more vitality than his companions, did raise his matchlock and send a parting shot after the escaping quarry.

The river was a narrow, sluggish stream but deep in the channel, and as the horse plunged into it, Tarzan saw a commotion in the water a few yards downstream and then the outline of a long sinuous body moving swiftly toward them. It was Gimla the crocodile. The horse saw it too and, becoming frantic, turned upstream in an effort to escape. Tarzan climbed over the high cantle of the Abyssinian saddle and unslung his spear in the rather futile

hope of holding the reptile at bay until his mount could reach the safety of the opposite bank toward which he was now attempting to guide him.

Gimla is as swift as he is voracious. He was already at the horse's rump, with opened jaws, when the Shifta at the river's edge fired wildly at the ape-man. It was well for Tarzan that the wounded man had fired hurriedly, for simultaneously with the report of the firearm, the crocodile dove, and the frenzied lashing of the water about him evidenced the fact that he had been mortally wounded.

A moment later the horse that Tarzan rode reached the opposite bank and clambered to the safety of dry land. Now

he was under control again, and the ape-man wheeled him about and sent a parting arrow across the river toward the angry, cursing bandits upon the opposite side, an arrow that found its mark in the thigh of the already wounded man who had unwittingly rescued Tarzan from a serious situation with the shot that had been intended to kill him.

To the accompaniment of a few wild and scattered shots, Tarzan of the Apes galloped toward a nearby forest into which he disappeared from the sight of the angry Shiftas.

2. THE WHITE PRISONER

Far to the south a lion rose from his kill and walked majestically to the edge of a nearby river. He cast not so much as a single glance at the circle of hyenas and jackals that had ringed him and his kill waiting for him to depart and which had broken and retreated as he rose. Nor, when the hyenas rushed in to tear at what he had left, did he appear even to see them.

There were the pride and bearing of royalty in the mien of this mighty beast, and to add to his impressiveness were his great size, his yellow, almost golden, coat, and his great black mane. When he had drunk his fill, he lifted his massive head and voiced a roar, as is the habit of

lions when they have fed and drunk, and the earth shook to his thunderous voice, and a hush fell upon the jungle.

Now he should have sought his lair and slept, to go forth again at night and kill, but he did not do so. He did not do at all what might have been expected of a lion under similar circumstances. He raised his head and sniffed the air, and then he put his nose to the ground and moved to and fro like a hunting dog searching for a game scent. Finally he halted and voiced a low roar; then, with head raised, he moved off along a trail that led toward the north. The hyenas were glad to see him go; so were the jackals, who wished that the hyenas would go also. Ska the vulture, circling

above, wished that they would all leave.

At about the same time, many marches to the north, three angry, wounded Shiftas viewed their dead comrades and cursed the fate that had led them upon the trail of the strange white giant. Then they stripped the clothing and weapons from their dead fellows and rode away, loudly vowing vengeance should they ever again come upon the author of their discomfiture and secretly hoping that they never would. They hoped that they were done with him, but they were not.

Shortly after he had entered the forest, Tarzan swung to an overhanging branch beneath which his mount was passing and let the animal go its way. The ape-man was angry; the Shiftas had

frightened away his dinner. That they had sought to kill him annoyed him far less than the fact that they had spoiled his hunting. Now he must commence his search for meat all over again, but when he had filled his belly he would look into this matter of Shiftas. Of this he was certain.

Tarzan hunted again until he had found flesh, nor was it long before he had made his kill and eaten it.

Satisfied, he lay up for a while in the crotch of a tree, but not for long. His active mind was considering the matter of the Shiftas. Here was something that should be looked into. If the band were on the march, he need not concern himself about them, but if they were

permanently located in this district, that was a different matter. Tarzan expected to be here for some time, and it was well to know the nature, the number, and the location of all enemies.

Returning to the dyer, Tarzan crossed it and took up the plain trail of the Shiftas. It led him up and down across some low hills and then down into the narrow valley of the stream that he had crossed farther up. Here the floor of the valley was forested, the river winding through the wood. Into this wood the trail led.

It was almost dark now; the brief equatorial twilight was rapidly fading into night. The nocturnal life of the forest and the hills was awakening, and from

down among the deepening shadows of the valley came the coughing grunts of a hunting lion. Tarzan sniffed the warm air rising from the valley toward the mountains; it carried with it the odors of a camp and the scent spoor of man. He raised his head, and from his deep chest rumbled a full-throated roar. Tarzan of the Apes was hunting, too.

In the gathering shadows he stood then, erect and silent, a lonely figure standing in solitary grandeur upon that desolate hillside. Swiftly the silent night enveloped him; his figure merged with the darkness that made hill and valley, river and forest one. Not until then did Tarzan move; then he stepped down on silent feet toward the forest. Now was

every sense alert, for now the great cats would be hunting. Often his sensitive nostrils quivered as they searched the air. No slightest sound escaped his keen ears.

As he advanced, the man scent became stronger, guiding his steps. Nearer and nearer sounded the deep cough of the lion, but of Numa Tarzan had little fear at present, knowing that the great cat, being upwind, could not be aware of his presence. Doubtless Numa had heard the ape-man's roar, but he could not know that its author was approaching him.

Tarzan had estimated the lion's distance down the valley and the distance that lay between himself and the

forest, and had guessed that he would reach the trees before their paths crossed. He was not hunting for Numa the lion, and with the natural caution of the wild beast, he would avoid an encounter.

The mingled odors of a camp grew stronger in his nostrils, the scents of horses and men and food and smoke.

To you or to me, alone in a savage wilderness, engulfed in darkness, cognizant of the near approach of a hunting lion, these odors would have been most welcome. Tarzan's reaction to them was that of the wild beast that knows man only as an enemy—his muscles tensed as he smothered a low growl.

As he reached the edge of the forest, Numa was but a short distance to his right and approaching, so the ape-man took to the trees, through which he swung silently to the camp of the Shiftas.

Below him he saw a band of some twenty men with their horses and equipment. A rude boma of branches and brush had been erected about the camp site as a partial protection against wild beasts, but more dependence was evidently placed upon the fire which they kept burning in the center of the camp.

In a single quick glance the ape-man took in the details of the scene below him, and then his eyes came to rest upon the only one that aroused either interest

or curiosity, a white man who lay securely bound a short distance from the fire.

Ordinarily, Tarzan was no more concerned by the fate of a white man than by that of a black man or any other created thing to which he was not bound by ties of friendship. But in this instance there were two factors that made the life of the captive a matter of interest to the Lord of the Jungle. First, and probably predominant, was his desire to be further avenged upon the Shiftas; the second was curiosity, for the white man that lay bound below him was different from any that he had seen before.

His only garment appeared to be a habergeon made up of ivory discs that

partially overlay one another, unless certain ankle, wrist, neck, and head ornaments might have been considered to possess such utilitarian properties as to entitle them to a similar classification. Except for these, his arms and legs were naked. His head rested upon the ground with the face turned away from Tarzan so that the ape-man could not see his features but only that his hair was heavy and black.

As he watched the camp, seeking for some suggestion as to how he might most annoy or inconvenience the bandits, it occurred to Tarzan that a just reprisal would consist in taking from them something that they wanted, just as they had deprived him of the buck he had

desired. Evidently they wished the prisoner very much or they would not have gone to the trouble of securing him so carefully, so this fact decided Tarzan to steal the white man from them.

To accomplish his design, he decided to wait until the camp slept, and settling himself comfortably in a crotch of the tree, he prepared to keep his vigil with the tireless patience of the hunting beast he was. As he watched, he saw several of the Shiftas attempt to communicate with their prisoner, but it was evident that neither understood the other.

Tarzan was familiar with the language spoken by the Kafichos and Gallos, and the questions that they put to their prisoner aroused his curiosity still

further. There was one question that they asked him in many different ways, in several dialects, and in sign which the captive either did not understand or pretended not to. Tarzan was inclined to believe that the latter was true, for the sign language was such that it could scarcely be misunderstood. They were asking him the way to a place where there was much ivory and gold, but they got no information from him.

"The pig understands us well enough," growled one of the Shiftas; "he is just pretending that he does not."

"If he won't tell us, what is the use of carrying him around with us and feeding him?" demanded another. "We might as well kill him now."

"We will let him think it over tonight," replied one who was evidently the leader, "and if he still refuses to speak in the morning, we will kill him then."

This decision they attempted to transmit to the prisoner both by words and signs, and then they squatted about the fire and discussed the occurrences of the day and their plans for the future. The principal topic of their conversation was the strange white giant who had slain three of their number and had escaped upon one of their horses. After this had been debated thoroughly and in detail for some time, and the three survivors of the encounter had boasted severally of their deeds of valor, they withdrew to the

rude shelters they had constructed and left the night to Tarzan, Numa, and a single sentry.

The silent watcher among the shadows of the tree waited on in patience until the camp should be sunk in deepest slumber and, waiting, planned the stroke that was to rob the Shiftas of their prey and satisfy his own desire for revenge.

At last the ape-man felt that the time had come when he might translate his plan into action; all but the sentry were wrapped in slumber, and even he was dozing beside the fire. As noiselessly as the shadow of a shadow, Tarzan descended from the tree, keeping well in the shadow cast by the fire.

For a moment he stood in silence, listening. He heard the breathing of Numa, in the darkness beyond the circle of firelight, and knew that the king of beasts was near and watching. Then he looked from behind the great bole of the tree and saw that the sentry's back was still turned toward him. Silently he moved into the open; stealthily, on soundless feet, he crept toward the unsuspecting bandit. He saw the matchlock across the fellow's knees: and for it he had respect, as have all jungle animals that have been hunted.

Closer and closer he came to his prey. At last he crouched directly behind him. There must be no noise, no outcry. Tarzan waited. Beyond the rim of fire

waited Numa, expectant, for he saw that very gradually the flames were diminishing. A bronzed hand shot quickly forward; fingers of steel gripped the brown throat of the sentry almost at the instant that a knife was driven from below his left shoulder blade into his heart. The sentry was dead without knowing that death threatened him.

Tarzan withdrew the knife from the limp body and wiped the blade upon the once white robe of his victim; then he moved softly toward the prisoner who was lying in the open. For him, they had not bothered to build a shelter. As he made his way toward the man, Tarzan passed close to two of the shelters in which lay members of the band, but he

made no noise that might awaken them. When he approached the captive more closely, he saw in the diminishing light of the fire that the man's eyes were open and that he was regarding Tarzan with level, though questioning, gaze. The ape-man put a finger to his lips to enjoin silence, and then he came and knelt beside the man and cut the thongs that secured his wrists and ankles. He helped him to his feet, for the thongs had been drawn tightly, and his legs were numb.

For a moment he waited while the stranger tested his feet and moved them rapidly in an effort to restore circulation; then he beckoned him to follow, and all would have been well but for Numa the lion. At this moment, either to voice his

anger against the flames or to terrify the horses into a stampede, he elected to voice a thunderous roar.

So close was the lion that the sudden shattering of the deep silence of the night startled every sleeper to wakefulness. A dozen men seized their matchlocks and leaped from their shelters. In the waning light of the fire they saw no lion, but they saw their liberated captive, and they saw Tarzan of the Apes standing beside him.

Among those who ran from the shelters was the least seriously wounded of Tarzan's victims of the afternoon. Instantly recognizing the bronzed white giant, he shouted loudly to his companions, "It is he! It is the white

demon who killed our friends."

"Kill him!" screamed another.

Completely surrounding the two white men, the Shiftas Advanced upon them, but they dared not fire because of The fear that they might wound one of their own comrades.

Tarzan could not loose an arrow or cast a spear, for he had left all his weapons except his rope and his knife hidden in the tree above the camp.

One of the bandits, more courageous, probably because less intelligent than his fellows, rushed to close quarters with musket clubbed. It was his undoing. The man-beast crouched, growling, and, as the other was almost upon him, charged. The musket butt, hurtling

through the air to strike him down, he dodged, and then seized the weapon and wrenched it from the Shifta's grasp as though it had been a toy in a child's hands.

Tossing the matchlock at the feet of his companion, Tarzan laid hold upon the rash Galla, spun him around, and held him as a shield against the weapons of his fellows. But despite this reverse the other Shiftas gave no indication of giving up.

Two of them rushed in behind the ape-man, for it was he they feared the more; but they were to learn that their former prisoner might not be considered lightly. He had picked up a musket and, grasping it close to the muzzle, was

using it as a club.

A quick backward glance assured Tarzan that his companion was proving himself a worthy ally, but it was evident that they could not hope to hold out long against the superior numbers pitted against them. Their only hope, he believed, lay in making a sudden, concerted rush through the thin line of foemen surrounding them, and he sought to convey his plan to the man standing back to back with him. But though he spoke to him in English and in several continental languages, the only reply he received was in a language that he himself had never before heard.

What was he to do? They must go together, and both must understand the

purpose animating Tarzan. But how was that possible if they could not communicate with one another? Tarzan turned and touched the other lightly on the shoulder; then he jerked his thumb in the direction he intended going and beckoned with a nod of his head.

Instantly the man nodded his understanding and wheeled about as Tarzan started to charge. Using the man in his grasp as a flail, Tarzan sought to mow down those standing between him and liberty, but there were many of them, and presently they succeeded in dragging their comrade from the clutches of the ape-man. Now it seemed that the situation of the two whites was hopeless.

One fellow in particular was well-placed to fire without endangering any of his fellows, and raising his matchlock to his shoulder he took careful aim at Tarzan.

3. CATS BY NIGHT

As the man raised his weapon to his shoulder to fire at Tarzan, a scream of warning burst from the lips of one of his comrades, to be drowned by the throaty roar of Numa the lion, as the swift rush of his charge carried him over the boma into the midst of the camp.

The man who would have killed Tarzan cast a quick backward glance as the warning cry apprised him of his danger. When he saw the lion, he cast away his rifle in his excitement and terror, his terrified scream mingled with the voice of Numa, and in his anxiety to escape the fangs of the man-eater he rushed into the arms of the ape-man.

The lion, momentarily confused by the

firelight and the swift movement of the men, paused, crouching, as he looked to right and left. In that brief instant Tarzan seized the fleeing Shifta, and lifted him into the face of Numa; then he motioned to his companion to follow him, and, running directly past the lion, leaped the boma at the very point that Numa had leaped it. Close at his heels was the white captive of the Shiftas, and before the bandits had recovered from the first shock and surprise of the lion's unexpected charge, the two had disappeared in the shadows of the night.

Just outside the camp Tarzan left his companion for a moment while he swung into the tree where he had left his weapons and recovered them; then he

led the way out of the valley up into the hills. At his elbow trotted the silent white man he had rescued from certain death at the hands of the Kaficho and Galla bandits.

During the brief encounter in the camp, Tarzan had noted with admiration the strength, agility, and courage of the stranger who had aroused both his interest and his curiosity. Here, seemingly, was a man molded to the dimensions of Tarzan's own standards, a quiet, resourceful, courageous fighting man. Radiating that intangible aura which we call personality, even in his silences he impressed the ape- man with a conviction that loyalty and dependability were innate

characteristics of the man; so Tarzan, who ordinarily preferred to be alone, was not displeased to have the companionship of this stranger.

The moon, almost full, had risen above the black mountain mass to the east, shedding her soft light on hill and valley and forest, transforming the scene once more into that of a new world which was different from the world of daylight and from the world of moonless night, a world of strange grays and silvery greens.

Up toward a fringe of forest that clothed the upper slopes of the foothills and dipped down into canyon and ravine the two men moved as noiselessly as the passing shadow of a cloud; yet to one

hidden in the dark recesses of the wood above, their approach was not unheralded, for on the breath of Usha the wind it was borne ahead of them to the cunning nostrils of the prince of hunters.

Sheeta the panther was hungry. For several days prey had been scarce and elusive. Now, in his nostrils, the scent of the man-things grew stronger as they drew nearer. Eagerly, Sheeta the panther awaited the coming of the men.

Within the forest, Tarzan sought a tree where they might lie up for the night. He found a branch that forked horizontally. With his hunting knife he cut other branches and laid them across the two arms of the Y thus formed. Over this rude platform he spread leaves, and then

he lay down to sleep, while from an adjacent tree upwind Sheeta watched him. Sheeta also watched the other man-thing on the ground between the two trees. The great cat did not move; he seemed scarcely to breathe.

Even Tarzan was unaware of his presence, yet the ape-man was restless. He listened intently and sniffed the air, but detected nothing amiss. Below him, his companion was making his bed upon the ground in preference to risking the high-flung branches of the trees to which he was unaccustomed. It was the man upon the ground that Sheeta watched.

At last, his bed of leaves and grasses arranged to suit him, Tarzan's companion lay down. Sheeta waited. Gradually,

almost imperceptibly, the sinuous muscles were drawing the hindquarters forward beneath the sleek body in preparation for the spring. Sheeta edged forward on the great limb upon which he crouched, but in doing so he caused the branch to move slightly and the leaves at its end to rustle a little.

Tarzan heard, and his eyes, turning quickly, sought and found the intruder. At the same instant Sheeta launched himself at the man lying on his rude pallet on the ground below, and as Sheeta sprang so did Tarzan.

Tarzan voiced a roar that was intended both to warn his companion and to distract the attention of Sheeta from his prey. The man upon the ground

leaped quickly to one side, prompted more by an instinctive reaction than by reason. The panther's body brushed him as it struck the ground, but the beast's thoughts were now upon the thing that had voiced that menacing roar rather than upon its intended prey.

Wheeling as he leaped aside, the man turned and saw the savage carnivore just as Tarzan landed full upon the beast's back. He heard the mingled growls of the two as they closed in battle, and his scalp stiffened as he realized that the sounds coining from the lips of his companion were quite as bestial as those issuing from the throat of the carnivore.

Tarzan sought a hold about the neck of the panther, while the great cat instantly

attempted to roll over on its back that it might rip the body of its antagonist to shreds with the terrible talons that armed its hind feet. But this strategy the ape-man had anticipated, and rolling beneath Sheeta as Sheeta rolled, he locked his powerful legs beneath the belly of the panther. Then the great cat leaped to its feet again and sought to shake the man-thing from its back, and all the while a mighty arm was tightening about its neck, closing off its wind.

Tarzan had succeeded in drawing his knife. Momentarily the blade flashed before his eyes; then it was buried in the body of Sheeta. The cat, screaming from pain and rage, redoubled its efforts to dislodge the creature clinging to it in the

embrace of death, but again the knife fell. Now Sheeta stood trembling upon uncertain feet as once again the knife was plunged deeply into his side; then, his great voice forever stilled, he sank lifeless to the ground as the ape-man rolled from beneath him and sprang to his feet.

The man whose life Tarzan had saved came forward and laid a hand upon the shoulder of the ape-man, speaking a few words in a low voice but in the tongue that Tarzan did not understand, though he guessed that it expressed the gratitude that the manner of the man betokened.

Influenced by the attack of the panther and knowing that Numa was abroad, Tarzan, by signs, persuaded the man to

come up into the tree. Here the ape-man helped him construct a nest similar to his own. For the balance of the night they slept in peace, and the sun was an hour old before either stirred the following morning. Then the ape-man rose and stretched himself.

Nearby, the other man sat up and looked about him. His eyes met Tarzan's, and he smiled and nodded.

The wild beast in Tarzan looked into the brown eyes of the stranger and was satisfied that here was one who must be trusted; the man in him noted the headband that confined the black hair, saw the strangely wrought ivory ornament in the center of the forehead, the habergeon that he was now donning,

the ivory ornaments on wrists and ankles, and found his curiosity piqued.

The ivory ornament in the center of the headband was shaped like a concave, curved trowel, the point of which projected above the top of the man's head and curved forward. His wristlets and anklets were of long flat strips of ivory laid close together and fastened around the limbs by leather thongs that were laced through holes piercing the strips near their tops and bottoms. His sandals were of heavy leather, apparently elephant hide, and were supported by leather thongs fastened to the bottoms of his anklets.

That all these trappings were solely for purposes of ornamentation Tarzan

did not believe. He saw that almost without exception they would serve as a protection against a cutting weapon such as a sword or battle-axe.

But speculation concerning this matter was relegated to the background of his thoughts by hunger and recollection of the remains of yesterday's kill that he had hung high in a tree of the forest farther up the river. He dropped lightly to the ground, motioning the young warrior to follow him, and set off in the direction of his cache, keeping his keen senses always on the alert for enemies.

Cleverly hidden by leafy branches, the meat was intact when Tarzan reached it. He cut several strips and tossed them down to the warrior waiting on the

ground below; then he cut some for himself and crouching in a crotch proceeded to eat it raw. His companion watched him for a moment in surprise: then he made fire with a bit of steel and flint and cooked his own portion.

As he ate, Tarzan's active mind was considering plans for the future. He had come to Abyssinia for a specific purpose, though the matter was not of such immediate importance that it demanded instant attention. In fact, in the philosophy that a lifetime of primitive environment had inspired, time was not an important consideration.

The phenomenon of this ivory-armored warrior aroused questions that intrigued his interest to a far greater

extent than did the problems that had brought him thus far from his own stamping grounds, and he decided that the latter should wait the solving of the riddle that his new-made acquaintance presented.

Having no other means of communication than signs rendered an exchange of ideas between the two difficult, but when they had finished their meal and Tarzan had descended to the ground, he succeeded in asking his companion in what direction he wished to go. The warrior pointed in a north-easterly direction toward the high mountains, and, as plainly as he could through the medium of signs, invited Tarzan to accompany him to his country.

This invitation Tarzan accepted and motioned the other to lead the way.

For days that stretched to weeks the two men struck deeper and deeper into the heart of a stupendous mountain system. Always mentally alert and eager to learn, Tarzan took advantage of the opportunity to learn the language of his companion, and he proved such an apt pupil that they were soon able to make themselves understood by one another.

Among the first things that Tarzan learned was that his companion's name was Valthor, while Valthor took the earliest opportunity to evince an interest in the ape-man's weapons. As he was unarmed, Tarzan spent a day in making a spear and bow and arrows for him.

Thereafter, as Valthor taught the Lord of the Jungle to speak his language, Tarzan instructed the former in the use of the bow, the spear being already a familiar weapon to the young warrior.

Thus the days and the weeks passed and the two seemed no nearer the country of Valthor than when they had started from the vicinity of the camp of the Shiftas. Tarzan found game of certain varieties plentiful in the mountains. He hunted, and enjoyed the beauties of unspoiled nature, practically oblivious of the passage of time.

But Valthor was less patient, and at last, late one day when they found themselves at the head of a blind canyon where stupendous cliffs barred further

progress, he admitted defeat. "I am lost," he said simply.

"That," remarked Tarzan, "I could have told you many days ago."

Valthor looked at him in surprise. "How could you know that," he demanded, "when you yourself do not know in what direction my country lies?"

"I know," replied the ape-man, "because during the past week you have led the way toward the four points of the compass, and today we are within five miles of where we were a week ago. Across this ridge at our right, not more than five miles away, is the little stream where I killed the ibex, and the gnarled old tree in which we slept that night just

seven suns ago."

Valthor scratched his head in perplexity, and then he smiled. "I cannot dispute you," he admitted. "Perhaps you are right, but what are we going to do?"

"Do you know in what direction your country lies from the camp in which I found you?" asked Tarzan.

"The valley of Thenar is due east of that point," replied Valthor; "of that I am positive."

"Then we are directly southwest of it now, for we have traveled a considerable distance toward the south since we entered the higher mountains. If your country lies in these mountains, then it should not be difficult to find it if we can keep moving always in a

northeasterly direction."

"This jumble of mountains with their twisting canyons and gorges confuses me," Valthor admitted. "You see, in all my life before, I have never been farther from Ihenar than the valley of Onthar, and both these valleys are surrounded by landmarks with which I am so familiar that I need no other guides. It has never been necessary for me to consult the positions of the sun, the moon, nor the stars before, and so they have been of no help to me since we set out in search of Thenar. Do you believe that you could hold a course toward the northeast in this maze of mountains? If you can, then you had better lead the way rather than I."

"I can go toward the northeast," Tarzan assured him "but I cannot find your country unless it lies in my path."

"If we reach a point within fifty or a hundred miles of it, from some high eminence we shall see Xarator," explained Valthor, "and then I shall know my way to Thenar, for Xarator is almost due west of Athne."

"What are Xarator and Athne?" demanded Tarzan.

"Xarator is a great peak, the center of which is filled with fire and molten rock. It lies at the north end of the valley of Onthar and belongs to the men of Cathne, the city of gold. Athne, the city of ivory, is the city from which I come. The men of Cathne, in the valley of

Onthar, are the enemies of my people."

"Tomorrow, then," said Tarzan, "we shall set out for the city of Athne in the valley of Thenar."

As Tarzan and Valthor ate meat that they had cut from yesterday's kill and carried with them, many weary miles to the south a black-maned lion lashed his tail angrily and voiced a savage growl as he stood over the body of a buffalo calf he had killed, and faced an angry bull pawing the earth and bellowing a few yards away.

Rare is the beast that will face Gorgo the buffalo, when rage inflames his red-rimmed eyes, but the great lion showed no intention of leaving its prey even in the face of the bull's threatened charge.

He stood his ground. The roars of the lion and the bull mingled in a savage, thunderous dissonance that shook the ground, stilling the voices of the lesser people of the jungle.

Gorgo gored the earth, working himself into a frenzy of rage. Behind him, bellowing, stood the mother of the slain calf. Perhaps she was urging her lord and master to avenge the murder. The other members of the herd had bolted into the thickest of the jungle, leaving these two to contest with Numa his right to his kill, leaving vengeance to those powerful horns backed by that massive neck.

With a celerity and agility that belied his great weight, the bull charged. That

two such huge beasts could move so quickly and so lightly seemed incredible, as it seemed incredible that any creature could either withstand or avoid the menace of those mighty horns. But the lion was ready, and as the bull was almost upon him, he leaped to one side, reared upon his hind feet, and with one massive, taloned paw struck the bull a terrific blow on the side of its head that wheeled it half around and sent it stumbling to its knees, half- stunned and bleeding, its great jawbone crushed and splintered. And before Gorgo could regain his feet, Numa leaped full upon his back, buried his teeth in the bulging muscles of the great neck, and with one paw reached for the nose of the

bellowing bull, jerking the head back with a mighty surge that snapped the vertebrae.

Instantly the lion was on his feet again, facing the cow, but she did not charge. Instead, bellowing, she crashed away into the jungle, leaving the king of beasts standing with his forefeet upon his latest kill.

That night Numa fed well, but when he had gorged himself he did not lie up as a lion should, but continued toward the north along the mysterious trail he had been following for many days.

4. DOWN THE FLOOD

The new day dawned cloudy and threatening. The season of rains was over, but it appeared that a belated storm was gathering above the lofty peaks through which Tarzan and Valthor were searching for the elusive valley of Thenar.

All day they moved toward the northeast. Sometimes it rained a little, and always it threatened to rain more. A great storm seemed always to be gathering, yet it never broke during the long day. Tarzan made a kill before noon, and they ate, but immediately afterward they started on again.

It was late in the afternoon when they ascended out of a deep gorge and stood

upon a lofty plateau. In the near foreground were no mountains, but at a distance lofty peaks were visible dimly through a light drizzle of rain.

Suddenly Valthor voiced an exclamation of elation. "We have found it!" he cried. "There is Xarator!"

Tarzan looked in the direction that the other pointed and saw a mighty, flat-topped peak in the distance, directly above which low clouds were reflecting a dull red light. "So that is Xarator!" he remarked. "And Thenar is directly east of it?"

"Yes," replied Valthor, "which means that Onthar must be just below the edge of this plateau, almost directly in front of us. Come!"

The two walked quickly over the level, grassy ground for a mile or two to come at length to the edge of the plateau beyond which, and below them, stretched a wide valley.

"We are almost at the southern end of Onthar," said Valthor. "There is Cathne, the city of gold. It is a rich city, but its people are the enemies of my people."

Through the rain, Tarzan saw a walled city between a forest and a river. The houses were nearly all white, and there were many domes of dull yellow. The river, which ran between them and the city, was spanned by a bridge that was also a dull yellow color in the twilight of the late afternoon storm. Tarzan saw that the river extended the

full length of the valley, a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles, being fed by smaller streams coming down out of the mountains. Also extending the length of the valley was what appeared to be a well marked road.

Tarzan's eyes wandered back to the city of Cathne.

"Why do you call it the city of gold?" he asked.

"Do you not see the golden domes and the bridge of gold?" demanded Valthor.

"Are they covered with gold paint?" inquired Tarzan.

"They are covered with solid gold," replied Valthor.

"The gold on some of the domes is an

inch thick, and the bridge is built of solid blocks of gold."

"Where do they find their gold?" Tarzan asked.

"Their mines lie in the hills directly south of the city," replied Valthor.

"And where is your country, Thenar?" asked the ape-man.

"Just beyond the hills east of Onthar. Do you see where the river and the road cut through the forest about five miles above the city? You can see them entering the hills just beyond the forest."

"Yes," replied Tarzan, "I see."

"The road and the river run through the Pass of the Warriors into the valley of Thenar: a little north-east of the center

of the valley lies Athne the city of ivory. There, beyond the pass, is my country.

"How far are we from Athne?' inquired Tarzan.

"About twenty-five miles, possibly a little less," replied Valthor.

"We might as well start now, then," suggested the ape-man, "for in this rain it will be more comfortable to be on the march than to lie up until morning, and in your city we can find a dry place to sleep, I presume."

"Certainly," replied Valthor, "but it will not be safe to attempt to cross Onthar by daylight. We should certainly be seen by the sentries on the gates of Cathne, and, as these people are our enemies, the chances are that we should

never cross the valley without being either killed or taken prisoners."

"Whatever you wish," agreed Tarzan with a shrug; "it is all the same to me if we start now or wait until dark."

"It is not very comfortable here," remarked the Athnean. "The rain is cold."

"I have been uncomfortable before," replied Tarzan; "rains do not last forever."

"If we were in Athne we should be very comfortable," sighed Valthor. "In my father's house there are fireplaces. Even now the flames are roaring about great logs, and all is warmth and comfort."

"Above the clouds the sun is shining,"

replied Tarzan, "but we are not above the clouds. We are here where the sun is not shining and there is no fire, and we are cold." A faint smile touched his lips. "It does not warm me to speak of fires or the sun."

"Nevertheless, I wish I were in Athne," insisted Valthor. "It is a splendid city, and Thenar is a lovely valley. In Thenar we raise goats and sheep and elephants. In Thenar there are no lions except those that stray in from Onthar; those we kill. Our farmers raise vegetables and fruits and hay; our artisans manufacture leather goods. They make cloth from the hair of goats and the wool of sheep. Our carvers work in ivory and wood.

"We trade a little with the outside world, paving for what we buy with ivory and gold. Were it not for the Cathneans we should lead a happy, peaceful life without a care.

"What do you buy from the outside world, and of whom do you buy it?" asked Tarzan.

"We buy salt, of which we have none of our own", explained Valthor. "We also buy steel for our weapons."

These things we buy from a band of Shiftas. With this same band we have traded since before the memory of man. Shifta chiefs and kings of Athne have come and gone, but our relations with this band have never altered. I was searching for them when I became lost

and was captured by another band."

"Do you never trade with the people of Cathne?" asked the ape- man.

"Once each year there is a week's truce during which we trade with them in peace. They give us gold and foodstuffs and hay in exchange for the salt and the steel we buy from the Shiftas, and the cloth, leather, and ivory that we produce.

"Besides mining gold, the Cathneans breed lions for war and sport, raise fruits, vegetables, cereals, and hay, and work in gold and, to a lesser extent, in ivory. Their gold and their hay are the products most valuable to us, and of these we value the hay more, for without it we should have to decrease our

elephant herds."

"Why should two peoples so dependent upon one another fight?" asked Tarzan.

Valthor shrugged. "I do not know; perhaps it is just a custom. Yet, though we talk much of wanting peace, we should miss the thrills and excitement that peace does not hold." His eyes brightened. "The raids:" he exclaimed. "There is a sport for men The Cathneans come with their lions to hunt our goats, our sheep, our elephants, and us. When we wish sport we go into Onthar after gold. No, I do not think that either we or Cathneans would care for peace."

For some time the two talked. Valthor told of his life in Athne. And as Valthor

talked, the invisible sun sank over into the west; heavy clouds, dark and ominous, hid the peaks to the north, settling low over the upper end of the valley. "I think we may start now," Valthor said.

"It will soon be dark."

Downward through a gully, the sides of which hid them from the city of Cathne, the two men made their way towards the floor of the valley. From the heavy storm clouds burst a flash of lightning followed by the roar of thunder; upon the upper end of the valley the storm god loosed his wrath; water fell in a deluge, wiping from their sight the hills beyond the storm.

By the time they reached level ground

the storm was upon them and the gully they had descended a raging mountain torrent. The swift night had fallen; utter darkness surrounded them, darkness frequently broken by vivid flashes of lightning. The pealing of the constant thunder was deafening. The rain engulfed them in solid sheets like the waves of the ocean. It was, perhaps, the most terrific storm that either of these men had ever seen.

They could not converse; only the lightning prevented their becoming separated, as it alone permitted Valthor to keep his course across the grassy floor of the valley in the direction of the city of gold, where they would find the road that led to the Pass of the Warriors

and on into the valley of Thenar.

Presently they came within sight of the lights of the city, a few dim lights framed by the casements of windows, and a moment later they were on the road and were moving northward against the full fury of the storm.

For miles they pitted their muscles against the Herculean strength of the storm god. The rage of the storm god seemed to rise against them, knowing no bounds, as though he was furious that these two puny mortals should pit their strength against his. Suddenly, as though in a last titanic effort to overcome them, the lightning burst into a mighty blaze that illuminated the entire valley for seconds, the thunder crashed as it had

never crashed before, and a mass of water fell that crushed the two men to earth.

As they staggered to their feet again, foot-deep water swirled about their legs; they stood in a broad, racing torrent that rushed past them towards the river. But in that last effort the storm god had spent his force. The rain ceased; through a rift in the dark clouds the moon looked down, perhaps in wonder, upon a drowned world, and Valthor led the way again towards the Pass of the Warriors. The last of the rainy season was over.

It is seven miles from the bridge of gold, that is the gateway to the city of Cathne, to the ford where the road to Thenar crosses the river. It required

three hours for Valthor and Tarzan to cover the distance, but at last they stood at the river's bank.

A boiling flood confronted them, tearing down a widened river towards the city of Cathne. Valthor hesitated. "Ordinarily," he said to Tarzan, "the water is little more than a foot deep. It must be three feet deep now.

"And it will soon be deeper," commented the ape-man.

"Only a small portion of the storm waters have had time to reach this point from the hills and the upper valley. If we are going to cross tonight, we shall have to do it now.

"Very well," replied Valthor, "but follow me; I know the ford."

As the Athnean stepped into the water, the clouds closed again beneath the moon and plunged the world once more into darkness. As Tarzan followed he could scarcely see his guide ahead of him, and since Valthor knew the ford he moved more rapidly than the ape-man with the result that presently Tarzan could not see him at all, but he felt his way towards the opposite bank without thought of disaster.

The force of the stream was mighty, but mighty, too, are the thews of Tarzan of the Apes. The water, which Valthor had thought to be three feet in depth, was soon surging to the ape-man's waist, and then he missed the ford and stepped into a hole. Instantly the current seized him

and swept him away; not even the giant muscles of Tarzan could cope with the might of the flood.

The Lord of the Jungle fought the swirling waters in an effort to reach the opposite shore, but in their embrace he was powerless.

Finding even his great strength powerless and weakening, Tarzan gave up the struggle to reach the opposite bank and devoted his efforts to keeping his nose above the surface of the angry flood. Even this was none too easy an accomplishment, as the rushing waters had a trick of twisting him about or turning him over. Often his head was submerged, and sometimes he floated feet first and sometimes head first, but he

tried to rest his muscles as best he could against the time when some vagary of the torrent might carry him within reach of the bank upon one side or the other.

He knew that several miles below the city of Cathne the river entered a narrow gorge, for that he had seen from the edge of the plateau from which he had first viewed the valley of Onthar. Valthor had told him that beyond the gorge it tumbled in a mighty falls a hundred feet to the bottom of a rocky canyon. Should he not succeed in escaping the clutches of the torrent before it carried him into the gorge his doom was sealed, but Tarzan felt neither fear nor panic. His life had been in jeopardy often during his savage existence, yet he still lived.

He wondered what had become of Valthor. Perhaps he, too, was being hurtled along either above or below him. But such was not the fact. Valthor had reached the opposite bank in safety and waited there air Tarzan. When the ape-man did not appear within a reasonable Time, the Athnean shouted his name aloud, but though he received no answer he was still not sure that Tarzan was not upon the opposite side of the river, the loud roaring of which might have drowned the sound of the voice of either.

Then Valthor decided to wait until daylight, rather than abandon his friend in a country with which he was entirely unfamiliar.

Through the long night he waited and,

with the coming of dawn, eagerly scanned the opposite bank of the river, his slender hope for the safety of his friend dying when daylight failed to reveal any sign of him. Then, at last, he was convinced that Tarzan had been swept away to his death by the raging flood, and, with a heavy heart, he turned away from the river and resumed his interrupted journey towards the Pass of the Warriors and the valley of Thenar.

5. THE CITY OF GOLD

As Tarzan battled for his life in the swirling waters of the swollen river, he lost all sense of time; the seemingly interminable struggle against death might have been enduring without beginning, might endure without end, in so far as his numbed senses were concerned.

Turnings in the river cast him occasionally against one shore and then the other. Always, then, his hands reached up in an attempt to grasp something that might stay his mad rush towards the falls and death. At last success crowned his efforts—his fingers closed upon the stem of a heavy vine that trailed down the bank into the swirling waters, closed and held.

Hand over hand the man dragged himself out of the water and onto the bank, where he lay for several minutes; then he rose slowly to his feet, shook himself like some great lion, and looked about him in the darkness, trying to penetrate the impenetrable night. Faintly, as through shrubbery, he thought that he saw a light shining dimly in the distance. Where there was a light, there should be men. Tarzan moved cautiously toward it to investigate.

But a few steps from the river Tarzan encountered a wall, and when he was close to the wall he could no longer see the light. Reaching upward, he discovered that the top of the wail was still above the tips of his outstretched

fingers—but walls which were made to keep one out also invited one to climb them.

Stepping back a few paces. Tarzan ran toward the wall and sprang upward. His extended fingers gripped the tip of the wall and clung there. Slowly he drew himself up, threw a leg across the capstones, and looked to see what might be seen upon the opposite side of the wall.

He did not see much—a square of dim light forty or fifty feet away - that was all, and it did not satisfy his curiosity. Silently he lowered himself to the ground upon the same side as the light and moved cautiously forward. Beneath his bare feet he felt stone

flagging, and guessed that he was in a paved courtyard.

He had crossed about half the distance to the light when the retreating storm flashed a farewell bolt from the distance. This distant lightning but barely sufficed to relieve momentarily the darkness surrounding the ape-man, revealing a low building, a lighted window, a deeply recessed doorway in the shelter of which stood a man. It also revealed Tarzan to the man in the doorway.

Instantly the silence was shattered by the brazen clatter of a gong. The door swung open, and men bearing torches rushed out. Tarzan, impelled by the natural caution of the beast, turned to

run, but as he did so, he saw other open doors upon his flanks, and armed men with torches were rushing from these as well.

Realizing that flight was useless, Tarzan stood still with folded arms as the men converged upon him from three directions.

The torches carried by some of the men showed Tarzan that he was in a paved, quadrangular courtyard enclosed by buildings upon three sides and the wall he had scaled upon the fourth. Their light also revealed the fact that he was being surrounded by some fifty men armed with spears, the points of which were directed toward him in a menacing circle.

"Who are you?" demanded one of the men as the cordon drew tightly about him. The language in which the man spoke was the same as that which Tarzan had learned from Valthor, the common language of the enemy cities of Athne and Cathne.

"I am a stranger from a country far to the south," replied the ape-man.

"What are you doing inside the walls of the palace of Nemone?" The speaker's voice was threatening, his tone accusatory.

"I was crossing the river far above here when the flood caught me and swept me down; it was only by chance that I finally made a landing here."

The man who had been questioning

him shrugged. "Well", he admitted, "it is not for me to question you, anyway. Come! You will have a chance to tell your story to an officer, but he will not believe it either."

They conducted Tarzan into a large, low-ceilinged room which was furnished with rough benches and tables. Upon the walls hung weapons, spears and swords. There were shields of elephant hide studded with gold bosses. Upon the walls were mounted the heads of animals; there were the heads of sheep and goats and lions and elephants.

Two men guarded Tarzan in one corner of the room, while another was dispatched to notify a superior of the capture. The remainder loafed about the

room, talking, playing games, cleaning their weapons. The prisoner took the opportunity to examine his captors.

They were well-set-up men, many of them not ill-favored, though for the most part of ignorant and brutal appearance. Their helmets, habergeons, wristlets, and anklets were of elephant hide heavily embossed with gold studs. Long hair from the manes of lions fringed the tops of their anklets and wristlets and was also used for ornamental purposes along the crests of their helmets and upon some of their shields and weapons. The elephant hide that composed their habergeons was cut into discs, and the habergeon fabricated in a manner similar to that one of ivory which Valthor had

worn. In the center of each shield was a heavy brass of solid gold. Upon the harnesses and weapons of these common soldiers was a fortune in the precious metal.

While Tarzan, immobile, silent, surveyed the scene with eyes that seemed scarcely to move yet missed no detail, two warriors entered the room, and the instant that they crossed the threshold silence fell upon the men congregated in the chamber. Tarzan knew by that these were officers, though their trappings would have been sufficient evidence of their superior stations in life.

At a word of command from one of the two, the common warriors fell back,

clearing one end of the room; then the two seated themselves at a table and ordered Tarzan's guards to bring him forward. As the Lord of the Jungle halted before them, both men surveyed him critically.

"Why are you in Onthar?" demanded one who was evidently the superior, since he propounded all the questions during the interview.

Tarzan answered this and other questions as he had answered similar ones at the time of his capture, but he sensed from the attitudes of the two officers that neither was impressed with the truth of his statements. They seemed to have a preconceived conviction concerning him that nothing which he

might say could alter.

"He does not look much like an Athnean," remarked the younger man.

"That proves nothing," snapped the other. "Naked men look like naked men. He might pass for your own cousin were he garbed as you are garbed."

"Perhaps you are right, but why is he here? A man does not come alone from Thenar to raid in Onthar. Unless—" he hesitated, "unless he was sent to assassinate the queen!"

"I had thought of that," said the older man. "Because of what happened to the last Athnean prisoners we took, the Athneans are very angry with the queen. Yes, they might easily attempt to assassinate her."

Tarzan was almost amused as he Contemplated the ease with which these two convinced themselves that what they wanted to believe true, was true. But he realized that this form of one-sided trial might prove disastrous to him if his fate were to be decided by such a tribunal, and so he was prompted to speak.

"I have never been in Athne," he said quietly. "I am from a country far to the south. An accident brought me here. I am not an enemy. I have not come to kill your queen or any other. Until today I did not know that your city existed." This was a long speech for Tarzan of the Apes. He was almost positive that it would not influence his captors, yet there was a chance that they might

believe him.

Men are peculiar, and none knew this better than Tarzan, who, because he had seen rather less of men than of beasts, had been inclined to study those whom he had seen. Now he was studying the two men who were questioning him. The elder he judged to be a man accustomed to the exercise of great power - cunning, ruthless, cruel. Tarzan did not like him. His was the instinctive appraisal of the wild beast.

The younger man was of an entirely different mold. He was intelligent rather than cunning; his countenance bespoke a frank and open nature. The ape-man judged that he was honest and courageous.

While he was certain that the younger man had little authority, compared with that exercised by his superior, vet Tarzan thought best to address him rather than the other. He thought that he might win an ally in the younger man ad was sure that he could never influence the elder, unless it was very much to the latter's interests to be influenced. And so, when he spoke again, he spoke to the younger of the two officers.

"Are these men of Athne like me?" he asked.

For an instant the officer hesitated: then he said, quite frankly, "No, they are not like you. You are unlike any man that I have seen".

"Are their weapons like my

weapons?" continued the ape-man. "There are mine over in the corner of the room; your men took them away from me. Look at them."

Even the elder officer seemed interested. "Bring them here," he ordered one of the warriors.

The man brought them and laid them on the table before the two officers; the spear, the bow, the quiver of arrows, the grass rope, and the knife. The two men picked them up one by one and examined them carefully. Both seemed interested.

"Are they like the weapons of the Athneans?" demanded Tarzan.

"They are nothing like them," admitted the younger man. "What do you suppose this thing is for, Tomos?" he

asked his companion as he examined Tarzan's bow.

"Let me take it," suggested Tarzan, "and I will show you how it is used."

The younger man handed the bow to the ape-man.

"Be careful, Gemnon," cautioned Tomos. "This may be a trick, a subterfuge by which he hopes to get possession of a weapon with which to kill us." "He cannot kill us with that thing," replied Gemnon.

"Let's see how he uses it. Go ahead. Let's see, what did you say your name is?"

"Tarzan," replied the Lord of the Jungle, "Tarzan of the Apes."

"Well, go ahead, Tarzan, but see that you don't attempt to attack any of us."

Tarzan stepped to the table and took an arrow from his quiver; then he glanced about the room. On the wall at the far end a lion's head with open mouth hung near the ceiling. With what appeared but a single swift motion he fitted the arrow to the bow, drew the feathered shaft to his shoulder, and released it.

Every eye in the room had been upon him, for the common warriors had been interested spectators of what had been transpiring. Every eye saw the shaft quivering now where it protruded from the center of the lion's mouth, and an involuntary exclamation broke from

every throat, an exclamation in which were mingled surprise and applause.

"Take the thing away from him, Gemnon," snapped Tomos. "It is not a safe weapon in the hands of an enemy."

Tarzan tossed the bow to the table. "Do the Athneans use this weapon?" he asked.

Gemnon shook his head. "We know no men who use such a weapon," he replied.

"Then you must know that I am no Athnean," stated Tarzan, looking squarely at Tomos.

"It makes no difference where you are from," snapped Tomos; "you are an enemy".

The ape-man shrugged but remained silent. He had accomplished all that he had hoped for. He was sure that he had convinced them both that he was not an Athnean and had aroused the interest of the younger man.

Gemnon had leaned close to Tomos and was whispering in the latter's ear, evidently urging some action upon him. Tarzan could not hear what he was saying. The elder man listened impatiently; it was clear that he was not in accord with the suggestions of his junior.

"No," he said when the other had finished. "I will not permit anything of the sort. The life of the queen is too sacred to risk by permitting this fellow

any freedom. We shall lock him up for the night, and tomorrow decide what shall he done with him." He turned to a warrior who seemed to be an under-officer. "Take this fellow to the strong-house," he said "and see that he does not escape." Then he rose and strode from the room, followed by his younger companion.

When they had gone, the man in whose charge Tarzan had been left picked up the bow examined it. "What do you call this thing?" he demanded.

"A bow," replied the ape-man.

"And these?"

"Arrows."

'Will they kill a man?"

"With them I have killed men and lions and buffaloes and elephants," replied Tarzan. "Would you like to learn how to use them?" Perhaps, he thought, a little kindly feeling in the guardroom might be helpful to him later on. Just at present he was not thinking of escape; these people and the city of gold were far too interesting to leave until he had seen more of them.

The man fingering the bow hesitated. Tarzan guessed that he wished to try his hand with the weapon but feared to delay carrying out the order of his officer.

"It will take but a moment," suggested Tarzan. "See, let me show you."

Half-reluctantly the man handed him

the bow and Tarzan selected another arrow.

"Hold them like this," he directed and placed the bow and arrow correctly in the other's hands. "Tell your men to stand aside; you may not shoot accurately at first. Aim at the lion's head, as I did. Now draw the bow-string back as far as you can."

The man, of stocky, powerful build, tugged at the bow-string, but the bow that Tarzan bent so easily he could scarcely bend at all. When he released the arrow it flew but a few feet and dropped to the floor. "What's wrong?" he demanded.

"It requires practice," the ape-man told him.

"There is a trick to it," insisted the under-officer. "Let me see you do it again."

The other warriors, watching with manifest interest, whispered among themselves or commented openly.

"It takes a strong man to bend that stick," said one.

Althides, the under-officer, watched intently while Tarzan strung the bow again and bent it; he saw bow easily the stranger flexed the heavy wood, and he marveled. The other men looked on in open admiration, and this time a shout of approval arose as Tarzan's second arrow crowded the first in the mouth of the lion.

Althides scratched his head. "I shall

have to lock you up now," he said, "or old Tomos will have my head on the wall of his palace, but I shall practice with this weapon until I learn to use it. Are you sure that there is no trick in bending that thing you call a bow?"

"There is no trick to it," Tarzan assured him.

A guard accompanied Tarzan across the courtyard to another building where he was placed in a room which, in the light of the torches borne by his escort, he saw had another occupant. Then they left him, locking the heavy door behind them.

6. THE MAN WHO STEPPED ON A GOD

Now that the torches were gone the room was very dark, but Tarzan lost no time in starting to investigate his prison. First he groped his way to the door, which he found to be constructed of solid planking with a small, square hole cut in it about the height of his eyes. There was no sign of lock or latch upon the inside and no way of ascertaining how it was secured from the outside.

Leaving the door, Tarzan moved slowly along the walls, feeling carefully over the stone surface. He knew that the other occupant of the cell was sitting on a bench in one corner at the far end. He

could hear him breathing. As he examined the room Tarzan approached closer and closer to his fellow prisoner.

In the rear wall the ape-man discovered a window. It was small and high- set. The night was so dark that he could not tell whether it opened onto the outdoors or into another apartment of the building. As an avenue of escape the window appeared quite useless, as it was much too small to accommodate the body of a man.

As Tarzan was examining the window he was close to the corner where the other man sat, and now he heard a movement there. He also noticed that the fellow's breathing had increased in rapidity, as though he were nervous or

excited. At last a voice sounded through the darkness.

"What are you doing?" it demanded.

"Examining the cell," replied Tarzan.

"It will do you no good, if you are looking for a way to escape," said the voice. "You won't get out of here until they take you out, no more than I shall."

Tarzan made no reply. There seemed nothing to say, and Tarzan seldom speaks, even when others might find much to say. He went on with his examination of the room. Passing the other occupant, he felt along the fourth and last wail, but his search revealed nothing to repay the effort. He was in a small, rectangular cell of stone that was furnished with a long bench at one end

and had a door and a window letting into it.

Tarzan walked to the far end of the room and sat down upon the bench. He was cold, wet, and hungry, but he was unafraid. He was thinking of all that had transpired since night had fallen and left him to the mercy of the storm; he wondered what the morrow held for him.

Presently the man in the corner of the cell addressed him. "Who are you?" he asked. "When they brought you in I saw by the light of the torches that you are neither a Cathnean nor an Athnean." The man's voice was coarse, his tones gruff; he demanded rather than requested.

This did not please Tarzan, so he did

not reply. "What's the matter?" growled his fellow prisoner. "Are you dumb?" His voice was raised angrily.

"Nor deaf," replied the ape-man. "You do not have to shout at me."

The other was silent for a short time; then he spoke in an altered tone. "We may be locked in this hole together for a long time," he said. "We might as well be friends."

"As you will," replied Tarzan, his involuntary shrug passing unnoticed in the darkness of the cell.

My name is Phobeg,' said the man; "what is yours?"

"Tarzan" replied the ape-man.

"Are you either Cathnean or

Athnean?"

"Neither: I am from a country far to the south."

"You would be better off had you stayed there," offered Phobeg. "How do you happen to be here in Cathne?"

"I was lost," explained the ape-man, who had no intention of telling the entire truth and thus identifying himself as a friend of one of the Cathneans' enemies. "I was caught in the flood and carried down the river to your city. Here they captured me and accused me of coming to assassinate your queen.

"So they think you came to assassinate Nemone! Well, whether you did come for that purpose or not will make no difference."

"What do you mean?" demanded Tarzan.

"I mean that in any event you will be killed in one way or another," explained Phobeg, "whatever way will best amuse Nemone."

"Nemone is your queen?" inquired the ape-man indifferently.

"By the mane of Thoos, she is all that and more!" exclaimed Phobeg fervently. "Such a queen there never has been in Onthar or Thenar before nor ever will be again. By the teeth of the great one! She makes them all stand around, the priests, the captains, and the councilors."

"But why should she have me destroyed who am only a stranger that became lost?"

"We keep no white men prisoners, only blacks as slaves. Now, were you a woman you would not be killed, unless, of course, you were too good-looking."

"And what would happen to a too good-looking woman?" asked Tarzan.

"Enough, if Nemone saw her," replied Phobeg meaningfully. "To be more beautiful than the queen is equivalent to high treason in the estimation of Nemone. Why, men hide their wives and daughters if they think that they are too beautiful."

"What did you do to get here?" inquired the ape-man.

"I accidentally stepped on our god's tail," replied Phobeg gloomily.

The man's strange oaths had not gone

unnoticed by Tarzan and now this latest remarkable reference to deity astounded him. But contact with strange peoples had taught him to learn certain things concerning them by observation and experience rather than by direct questioning, matters of religion being chief among these. Now he only commented, "And therefore you are being punished."

"Not yet," replied Phobeg. "The form of my punishment has not yet been decided. If Nemone has other amusements I may escape punishment, or I may come through my trial successfully and be freed, but the chances are all against me, for Nemone seldom has sufficient bloody amusement to sate her.

"Of course, if she leaves the decision of my guilt or innocence to the chances of an encounter with a single man, I shall doubtless be successful in proving the latter, for I am very strong and there is no better sword, or spear-man in Cathne. But I should have less chance against a lion, while, faced by the eternal fires of frowning Xarator, all men are guilty."

Although the man spoke the language Valthor had taught the ape- man and he understood the words, the meaning of what he said was as Greek to Tarzan. He could not quite grasp what the amusements of the queen had to do with the administration of justice, even though the inferences to be derived from Phobeg's remarks seemed apparent. The

conclusion was too sinister to be entertained by the noble mind of the Lord of the Jungle.

He was still considering the subject and wondering about the eternal fires of frowning Xarator when sleep overcame his physical discomforts and merged his speculations with his dreams. To the south, another jungle beast crouched in the shelter of a rocky ledge while the storm that had betrayed Tarzan to new enemies wasted its waning wrath and passed on into the nothingness that is the sepulcher of storms. Then, as the new day dawned bright and clear, he arose and stepped out into the sunlight, the great lion that we have seen before, the great lion with the golden coat and the

black mane.

He sniffed the morning air and stretched, yawning. His sinuous tail twitched nervously as he looked about over the vast domain that was his because he was there, as every wilderness is the domain of the king of beasts while his majesty is in residence.

From the slight elevation upon which he stood, his yellow-green eyes surveyed a broad plain, tree-dotted. There was game there in plenty - wildebeest, zebra, giraffe, koodoo, and hartebeest—and the king was hungry, for the rain had prevented his making a kill the previous night. He blinked his yellow-green eyes in the new sunlight and strode majestically down toward the

plain and his breakfast, as, many miles to the north, a black slave accompanied by two warriors brought breakfast to another lord of the jungle in a prison cell at Cathne.

At the sound of footsteps approaching his prison, Tarzan awoke and arose from the cold stone floor where he had been sleeping. Phobeg sat upon the edge of the wooden bench and watched the door.

"They bring us food or death," he said; "one never knows."

The ape-man made no reply. He stood there waiting until the door swung open and the slave entered with the food in a rough earthen bowl, and water in a glazed jug. He looked at the two warriors standing in the open doorway

and at the sunlit courtyard beyond them. Curiosity kept him prisoner there quite as much as armed men or sturdy door, and now he only looked beyond the two warriors who were eying him intently. They had not been on duty the night before and had not seen him, but they had heard of him. His feat with his strange weapon had been told them by their fellows.

"So this is the wild man!" exclaimed one.

"You had better be careful, Phobeg," said the other. "I should hate to be locked up in a cell with a wild man." Then, laughing at his joke, he slammed the door after the slave had come out, and the three went away.

Phobeg was appraising Tarzan with a new eye; his nakedness took on a new meaning in the light of that descriptive term, wild man. Phobeg noted the great height of his cell-mate, the expanse of his chest, and his narrow hips, but he greatly under-estimated the strength of the symmetrical muscles that flowed so smoothly beneath the bronzed hide. Then he glanced at his own gnarled and knotted muscles and was satisfied.

"So you are a wild man!" he demanded. "How wild are you?"

Tarzan turned slowly toward the speaker. He thought that he recognized thinly veiled sarcasm in the tone of Phobeg's voice. For the first time he saw his companion in the light of day. He

saw a man a few inches shorter than himself but of mighty build, a man of great girth and bulging muscles, a man who might outweigh the Lord of the Jungle by fifty pounds. He noted his prominent jaw, his receding forehead, and his small eyes. In silence Tarzan regarded Phobeg.

"Why don't you answer me?" angrily demanded the Cathnean.

"Do not be a fool," admonished Tarzan. "I recall that last night you said that as we might be confined here for a long time we might as well be friends. We cannot be friends by insulting one another. Food is here. Let us eat."

Phobeg grunted and inserted one of his big paws into the pot the slave had

brought. As there was no knife or fork or spoon Tarzan, had no alternative but to do likewise if he wished to eat; and so he, too, took food from the pot with his fingers. The food was meat; it was tough and stringy and under-cooked. Had it been raw, Tarzan had been better suited.

Phobeg chewed assiduously upon a mouthful of the meat until he had reduced the fibers to a pulp that would pass down his throat. "An old lion must have died yesterday." he remarked, "a very old lion."

"If we acquire the characteristics of the creatures we eat, as many men believe," Tarzan replied, "we should soon die of old age on this diet."

"Yesterday I had a piece of goat's

meat from Thenar," said Phobeg. "It was strong and none too tender, but it was better than this. I am accustomed to good food. In the temple the priests live as well as the nobles do in the palace, and so the temple guard lives well on the leavings of the priests. I was a member of the temple guard. I was the strongest man on the guard. I am the strongest man in Cathne. When raiders come from Thenar, or when I am taken there on raids, the nobles marvel at my strength and bravery. I am afraid of nothing. With my bare hands I have killed men. Did you ever see a man like me?"

"No," admitted the ape-man.

"Yes, it is well that we should be friends," continued Phobeg, "well for

you. Everyone wants to be friends with me, for they have learned that my enemies get their necks twisted. I take them like this, by the head and the neck," and with his great paws he went through a pantomime of seizing and twisting. "Then, crack! their spines break. What do you think of that?"

"I should think that your enemies would find that very uncomfortable," replied Tarzan.

"Uncomfortable!" ejaculated Phobeg. "Why, man, it kills them!"

"At least they can no longer hear," commented the Lord of the Jungle dryly.

"Of course they cannot hear; they are dead. I do not see what that has to do with it."

"That does not surprise me," Tarzan assured him.

"What does not surprise you?" demanded Phobeg.

"That they are dead, or that they cannot hear?"

"I am not easily surprised by anything" explained the ape- man.

Beneath his low forehead Phobeg's brows were knitted in thought. He scratched his head. "What were we talking about?" he demanded.

"We were trying to decide which would be more terrible," explained Tarzan patiently, "to have you for a friend or an enemy."

Phobeg looked at his companion for a

long time. One could almost see the laborious effort of thinking going on inside that thick skull. Then he shook his head. "That is not what we were talking about at all," he grumbled.

"Now I have forgotten. I never saw anyone as stupid as you. When they called you a wild man they must have meant a crazy man. And I have got to remain locked in here with you for no one knows how long".

"You can always get rid of me," said Tarzan quite seriously.

"How can I get rid of you?" demanded the Cathnean.

"You can twist my neck, like this." Tarzan mimicked the pantomime in which Phobeg had explained how he rid

himself of his enemies.

"I could do it," boasted Phobeg, "but then they would kill me. No, I shall let you live."

"Thanks," said Tarzan.

"Or at least while we are locked up here together," added Phobeg.

Loss of liberty represented for Tarzan, as it does for all creatures endowed with brains, the acme of misery, more to be avoided than physical pain; yet, with stoic fortitude he accepted his fate without a murmur of protest, and while his body was confined in four walls of stone, his memories roved the jungle and the veldt and lived again the freedom and the experience of the past.

He recalled the days of his childhood when fierce Kala, the she- ape that had suckled him at her hairy breast in his infancy, had protected him from the dangers of their savage life. He recalled her gentleness and her patience with this backward child who must still be carried in her arms long after the balus of her companion shes were able to scurry through the trees seeking their own food and even able to protect themselves against their enemies by flight if nothing more.

These were his first impressions of life, dating back perhaps to his second year while he was still unable to swing through the trees or even make much progress upon the ground. After that he

had developed rapidly, far more rapidly than a pampered child of civilization, for upon the quick development of his cunning and his strength depended his life.

With a faint smile he recalled the rage of old Tublat, his foster father, when Tarzan had deliberately undertaken to annoy him. Old "Broken-nose" had always hated Tarzan because the helplessness of his long-drawn infancy had prevented Kala from bearing other apes. Tublat had argued in the meager language of the apes that Tarzan was a weakling that would never become strong enough or clever enough to be of value to the tribe. He wanted Tarzan killed, and he tried to get old Kerchak,

the king, to decree his death; so when Tarzan grew old enough to understand, he hated Tublat and sought to annoy him in every way that he could.

His memories of those days brought only smiles now, save only the great tragedy of his life, the death of Kala. But that had occurred later, when he was almost a grown man. She had been saved to him while he needed her most and not taken away until after he was amply able to fend for himself and meet the other denizens of the jungle upon an equal footing. But it was not the protection of those great arms and mighty fangs that he had missed, that he still missed even today: he had missed the maternal live of that savage heart, the only mother-love

that he had ever known.

And now his thoughts turned naturally to other friends of the jungle of whom Kala had been first and greatest. There were his many friends among the great apes; there was Tantor the elephant; there was Jad-bal-ja the Golden Lion; there was little Nkima. Poor little Nkima! Much to his disgust and amid loud howls, Nkima had been left behind this time when Tarzan set out upon his journey into the north country. The little monkey had contracted a cold and the ape-man did not wish to expose him to the closing rains of the rainy season.

Tarzan regretted a little that he had not brought Jad-bal-ja with him, for though he could do very well for

considerable periods without the companionship of man, he often missed that of the wild beasts that were his friends. Of course the Golden Lion was sometimes an embarrassing companion when one was in contact with human beings, but he was a loyal friend and good company, for only occasionally did he break the silence.

Tarzan recalled the day that he had captured the tiny cub. What a cub he had been! All lion from the very first. Tarzan sighed as he thought of the days that he and the Golden Lion had hunted and fought together.

7. NEMONE

Tarzan had thought, when he went without objection into the prison cell at Cathne, that the next morning he would be questioned and released, or at least be taken from the cell. Once out of the cell again, Tarzan had no intention of returning to it, the Lord of the Jungle being very certain of his prowess.

But they had not let him out the next morning nor the next nor the next. Perhaps he might have made a break for liberty when food was brought, but each time he thought that the next day would bring his release, and waited.

Phobeg had been imprisoned longer than had Tarzan, and the confinement was making him moody. Sometimes he

sat for hours staring at the floor; at other times he would mumble to himself, carrying on long conversations which were always bitter and that usually resulted in working him up into a rage. Then he might seek to vent his spleen upon Tarzan. The fact that Tarzan remained silent under such provocation increased Phobeg's ire, but it also prevented an actual break between them, for it is still a fact, however trite the saying, that it takes two to make a quarrel. Tarzan would not quarrel; at least, not yet.

"Nemone won't get much entertainment out of you," growled Phobeg this morning after one of his tirades had elicited no response from the

ape- man.

"Well, even so," replied Tarzan, "you should more than make up to her any amusement value that I may lack."

"That I will!" exclaimed Phobeg. "If it is fighting she wants, she shall see such fighting as she has never seen before when she matches Phobeg with either man or beast. But you! Bah! She will have to pit you against some half-grown child if she wishes to see any fight at all. You have no courage; your veins are filled with water. If she is wise she will dump you into Xarator. By Thoos's tail! I should like to see you there. I'll bet my best habergeon they could hear you scream in Athne."

The ape-man was standing gazing at

the little rectangle of sky that he could see through the small barred opening in the door. He remained silent after Phobeg had ceased speaking, totally ignoring him as though he did not exist. Phobeg became furious. He rose from the bench upon which he had been sitting.

"Coward!" he cried. "Why don't you answer me? By the yellow fangs of Thoos! I've a mind to beat some manners into you, so that you will know enough to answer when your betters speak." He took a step in the direction of the ape-man.

Slowly Tarzan turned toward the angry man, his level gaze fixed upon the other's eyes, and waited. He said

nothing, but his attitude was an open book that even the stupid Phobeg could read. And Phobeg hesitated.

Just what might have happened no man may know, for at that instant four warriors came and swung the door of the cell open. "Come with us," said one of them, "both of you."

Phobeg sullenly, Tarzan with the savage dignity of Numa, accompanied the four warriors across the open courtyard and through a doorway that led into a long corridor, at the end of which they were ushered into a large room. Here, behind a table, sat seven warriors trapped in ivory and gold. Among them Tarzan recognized the two who had questioned him the night of his capture,

old Tomos and the younger Gemnon.

"These are nobles," whispered Phobeg to Tarzan.

"That one at the center of the table is old Tomos, the queen's councilor. He would like to marry the queen, but I guess he is too old to suit her. The one on his right is Erot. He used to be a common warrior like me, but Nemone took a fancy to him, and now he is the queen's favorite. She won't marry him though, for he is not of noble blood. The young fellow on Tomos's left is Gemnon. He is from an old and noble family. Warriors who have served him say he is a very decent sort."

As Phobeg gossiped, the two prisoners and their guard had been

standing just inside the doorway waiting to be summoned to advance, and Tarzan had had an opportunity to note the architecture and furnishings of the room. The ceiling was low and was supported by a series of engaged columns at regular intervals about the four walls. Between the columns, along one side of the room behind the table at which the nobles were seated, were unglazed windows, and there were three doorways: that through which Tarzan and Phobeg had been brought, which was directly opposite the windows, and one at either side of the room.

The floor was of stone, composed of many pieces of different shapes and sizes, but all so nicely fitted that joints

were barely discernible. On the floor were a few rugs either of the skins of lions or of a stiff and heavy wool weave.

But now Tarzan's examination of the room was interrupted by the voice of Tomos. "Bring the prisoners forward," he directed the under- officer who was one of the four warriors escorting them.

When the two men had been halted upon the opposite side of the table from the nobles, Tomos pointed at Tarzan's companion.

"Which is this one?" he demanded.

"He is called Phobeg" replied the under-officer.

"What is the charge against him".

"He profaned Thorns."

"Who brought the charge?"

"The high priest."

"It was an accident," Phobeg hastened to explain. "I meant no disrespect."

"Silence!" snapped Tomos. Then he pointed at Tarzan.

"And this one?" he demanded. "Who is he?"

"This is the one who calls himself Tarzan," explained Gemnon. "You will recall that you and I examined him the night he was captured."

"Yes, yes," said Tomos. "I recall. He carried some sort of strange weapon."

"Is he the man of whom you told me," asked Erot, "the one who came from

Athne to assassinate the queen?" "This is the one," replied Tomos.

"He does not greatly resemble an Athnean," commented Erot.

"I am not," said Tarzan.

"Silence!" commanded Tomos.

"Why should I be silent?" demanded Tarzan. "There is none other to speak for me than myself; therefore I shall speak for myself. I am no enemy of your people, nor are my people at war with yours. I demand my liberty!"

"He demands his liberty," mimicked Erot and laughed aloud as though it was a good joke. "The slave demands his liberty!"

Tomos half rose from his seat, his

face purple with rage. He banged the table with his fist. He pointed a finger at Tarzan. "Speak when you are spoken to, slave, and not otherwise."

"It is evident that he is a man from a far country," interjected Gemnon. "It is not strange that he neither understands our customs nor recognizes the great among us. Perhaps we should listen to him. If he is not an Athnean and no enemy, why should we imprison him or punish him?"

"He came over the palace walls at night," retorted Tomos. "He could have come for but one purpose, to kill our queen; therefore, he must die."

"He told us that the river washed him down to Cathne," persisted Gemnon. "It

was a very dark night and he did not know where he was when he finally succeeded in crawling ashore; it was only chance that brought him to the palace."

"A pretty story but not plausible," countered Erot.

"Why not plausible?" demanded Gemnon. "I think it quite plausible. We know that no man could have swum the river in the flood that was raging that night, and that this man could not have reached the spot at which he climbed the wall except by swimming the river or crossing the bridge of gold. We know that he did not cross the bridge, because the bridge was well-guarded and no one crossed that night. Knowing therefore

that he did not cross the bridge and could not have swum the river, we know that the only way he could have reached that particular spot upon the river's bank was by being swept downstream from above. I believe his story, and I believe that we should treat him as an honorable warrior from some distant kingdom until we have better reasons than we now have for believing otherwise."

"I should not care to be the one to defend a man who came here to kill the queen," sneered Erot meaningfully.

"Enough of this!" said Tomos curtly. "The man shall be judged fairly and destroyed as Nemone thinks best."

As he ceased speaking, a door at one end of the room opened and a noble

resplendent in ivory and gold stepped into the chamber. Halting just within the threshold, he faced the nobles at the table.

"The queen" he announced in a loud voice and then stepped aside.

All eyes turned in the direction of the doorway and at the same time the nobles rose to their feet and then knelt upon the floor, facing the doorway through which the queen would enter. The warriors on guard,. including those with Tarzan and Phobeg, did likewise. Phobeg following their example. Everyone in the room knelt except the noble who had announced the queen, or rather every Cathnean. Tarzan of the Apes did not kneel.

"Down, jackal!" growled one of the guards in a whisper, and then amidst deathly silence a woman stepped into view and paused, framed in the carved casing of the doorway. Regal, she stood there glancing indolently about the apartment; then her eyes met those of the ape-man and, for a moment, held there on his. A slight frown of puzzlement contracted her straight brows as she continued on into the room, approaching the table and the kneeling men.

Behind her followed a half-dozen richly arrayed nobles, resplendent in burnished gold and gleaming ivory, but as they crossed the chamber Tarzan saw only the gorgeous figure of the queen. She was clothed more simply than her

escort, but she was far more beautiful than the crude Phobeg had ever painted her.

A narrow diadem set with red stones encircled her brow, confining her glossy black hair. Upon either side of her head, covering her ears, a large golden disc depended from the diadem, while from its rear rose a slender filament of gold that curved forward, supporting a large red stone above the center of her head. About her throat was a simple golden band that held a brooch and pendant of ivory in the soft hollow of her neck. Upon her upper arms were similar golden bands supporting triangular, curved ornaments of ivory.

That she was marvelously beautiful

by the standards of any land or any time grew more apparent to the Lord of the Jungle as she came nearer to him; yet her presence exhaled a subtle essence that left him wondering if her beauty were the reflection of a nature all good or all evil, for her mien and bearing suggested that there could be no compromise—Nemone, the queen, was all one or all the other.

She kept her eyes upon him as she crossed the room slowly, and Tarzan did not drop his own from hers.

The quizzical frown still furrowed Nemone's smooth brow as she reached the end of the table where the nobles knelt. It was not an angry frown, and there might have been in it much of

interest and something of amusement, for unusual things interested and amused Nemone, so rare were they in the monotony of her life. It was certainly unusual to see one who did not accord her the homage due a queen.

As she halted she turned her eyes upon the kneeling nobles. "Arise!" she commanded, and in that single word the vibrant qualities of her rich, deep voice sent a strange thrill through the ape-man. "Who is this that does not kneel to Nemone?" she demanded.

As Tarzan had been standing behind the nobles as they had turned to face Nemone when they knelt, only two of his guards had been aware of his dereliction. Now as they arose and faced

about, their countenances were filled with horror and rage when they discovered that the strange captive had so affronted their queen.

Tomos went purple again. He spluttered with rage. "He is an ignorant and impudent savage, my queen," he said, "but as he is about to die, his actions are of no consequence."

"Why is he about to die," demanded Nemone, "and how is he to die?"

"He is to die because he came here in the dead of night to assassinate your majesty," explained Tomos; "the manner of his death rests, of course, in the hands of our gracious queen."

Nemone's dark eyes, veiled behind long lashes, appraised the ape-man.

lingering upon his bronzed skin and the rolling contours of his muscles, then rising to the handsome race until her eyes met his. "Why did you not kneel?" she asked.

"Why should I kneel to you who they have said will have me killed?" demanded Tarzan. "Why should I kneel to you who are not my queen? Why should I, Tarzan of the Apes, who kneels to no one, kneel to you?"

"Silence!" cried Tomos. "Your impertinence knows no bounds. Do you not realize, ignorant slave, low savage, that you are addressing Nemone, the queen!"

Tarzan made no reply; he did not even look at Tomos; his eyes were fixed upon

Nemone. She fascinated him, but whether as a thing of beauty or a thing of evil, he did not know.

Tomos turned to the under-officer in command of the escort that was guarding Tarzan and Phobeg. "Take them away!" he snapped. "Take them back to their cell until we are ready to destroy them."

"Wait," said Nemone. "I would know more of this man," and then she turned to Tarzan. "So you came to kill me!" Her voice was smooth, almost caressing. At the moment the woman reminded Tarzan of a cat that is playing with its victim. "Perhaps they chose a good man for the purpose; you look as though you might be equal to any feat of arms."

"Killing a woman is no feat of arms,"

replied Tarzan. "I do not kill women. I did not come here to kill you." "Then why did you come to Onthar?" inquired the queen in her silky voice.

"That I have already explained twice to that old man with the red face," replied Tarzan, nodding in the general direction of Tomos. "Ask him; I am tired of explaining to people who have already decided to kill me."

Tomos trembled with rage and half drew his slender, dagger-like sword.

Nemone had flushed angrily at Tarzan's words, but she did not lose control of herself. "Sheath your sword, Tomos," she commanded icily. "Nemone is competent to decide when she is affronted and what steps to take. The

fellow is indeed impertinent, but it seems to me that if he affronted anyone, it was Tomos he affronted and not Nemone. However, his temerity shall not go unpunished. Who is this other?"

"He is a temple guard named Phobeg," explained Erot. "He profaned Thoos."

"It would amuse us," said Nemone, "to see these two men fight upon the Field of the Lions. Let them fight without other weapons than those which Thoos has given them. To the victor, freedom," she hesitated momentarily, "freedom within limits. Take them away!"

8. UPON THE FIELD OF THE LIONS

Tarzan and Phobeg were back in their little stone cell; the ape- man had not escaped. He had had no opportunity to escape on the way back to his prison, for the warriors who guarded him had redoubled their vigilance.

Phobeg was moody and thoughtful. The attitude of his fellow prisoner during their examination by the nobles, his seeming indifference to the majesty and power of Nemone, had tended to alter Phobeg's former estimate of the ape-man's courage. He realized now that the fellow was either a very brave man or a very great fool, and he hoped that he

was the latter.

Phobeg was stupid, but past experience had taught him something of the psychology of mortal combat. He knew that when a man went into battle fearing his antagonist, he was already handicapped and partly defeated. Now Phobeg did not fear Tarzan; he was too stupid and too ignorant to anticipate fear.

Tarzan, on the other hand, was of an entirely different temperament, and though he never knew fear it was for a very different reason. Being intelligent and imaginative, he could visualize all the possibilities of an impending encounter, but he could never know fear, because death held no terrors for him. He had learned to suffer physical pain

without the usually attendant horrors of mental anguish.

"It will doubtless be tomorrow," said Phobeg grimly.

"What will be tomorrow?" inquired the ape-man.

"The combat in which I shall kill you," explained the cheerful Phobeg.

"Oh, so you are going to kill me! Phobeg, I am surprised. I thought that you were my friend." Tarzan's tone was serious, though a brighter man than Phobeg might have discovered in it a note of banter. But Phobeg was not bright at all, and he thought that Tarzan was already commencing to throw himself upon his mercy.

"It will soon be over," Phobeg

assured him. "I promise that I shall not let you suffer long."

"I suppose that you will twist my neck like this," said Tarzan, pretending to twist something with his two hands.

"M-m-m, perhaps," admitted Phobeg, "but I shall have to throw you about a bit first. We must amuse Nemone, you know."

"Surely, by all means!" assented Tarzan. "But suppose you should not be able to throw me about? Suppose that I should throw you about? Would that amuse Nemone? Or perhaps it would amuse you!"

Phobeg laughed. "It amuses me very much just to think about it," he said, "and I hope that it amuses you to think about

it, for that is as near as you will ever come to throwing Phobeg about. Have I not told you that I am the strongest man in Cathne?"

"Oh, of course," admitted Tarzan. "I had forgotten that for the moment."

"You would do well to try to remember it," advised Phobeg, "or otherwise our combat will not be interesting at all."

"And Nemone would not be amused! That would be sad. We should make it as interesting and exciting as possible, and you must not conclude it too soon."

"You are right about that," agreed Phobeg. "The better it is the more generous will Nemone feel toward me when it is over. She may even give me a

donation in addition to my liberty if we amuse her well".

"By the belly of Thoos!" he exclaimed, slapping his thigh. "We must make a good fight of it and a long one. Now listen! How would this be At first we shall pretend that you are defeating me; I shall let you throw me about a bit. You see? Then I shall get the better of it for a while, and then you. We shall take turns up to a certain point, and then, when I give you the cue, you must pretend to be frightened, and run away from me. I shall then chase you all over the arena, and that will give them a good laugh. When I catch you at last (and you must let me catch you right in front of Nemone), I shall then twist your neck

and kill you, but I will do it as painlessly as possible."

"You are very kind," said Tarzan grimly.

"Do you like the plan?" demanded Phobeg.

"It will certainly amuse them," agreed Tarzan, "if it works."

"If it works! Why should it not work? It will, if you do your part."

"But suppose I kill you?" inquired the Lord of the Jungle.

"There you go again!" exclaimed Phobeg. "I must say that you are a good fellow after all, for you will have your little joke. And I can tell you that there is no one who enjoys a little joke more

than Phobeg."

"I hope that you are in the same mood tomorrow," remarked Tarzan.

When the next day dawned, the slave and the guard came with a large breakfast for the two prisoners, the best meal that had been served them since they had been imprisoned.

"Eat well," advised one of the warriors, "that you may have strength to fight a good fight for the entertainment of the queen. For one of you it is the last meal, so you had both better enjoy it to the full, since there is no telling for which one of you it is the last."

"It is the last for him," said Phobeg, jerking a thumb in the direction of Tarzan.

"It is thus that the betting goes," said the warrior, "but even so, one cannot always be sure. The stranger is a large man, and he looks strong."

An hour later a large detachment of warriors came and took Tarzan and Phobeg from the prison. They led them through the palace grounds and out into an avenue bordered by old trees.

Here were throngs of people waiting to see the start of the pageant, and companies of warriors standing at ease, leaning upon their spears. It was an interesting sight to Tarzan who had been so long confined in the gloomy prison.

Tarzan and Phobeg were escorted west along the avenue, and as they passed, the crowd commented upon

them.

At the end of the avenue Tarzan saw the great bridge of gold that spanned the river. It was a splendid structure built entirely of the precious metal. Two golden lions of heroic size flanked the approach from the city, and as he was led across the bridge the ape- man saw two identical lions guarding the western end.

Out upon the plain that is called the Field of the Lions a crowd of spectators was filing toward a point about a mile from the city where many people were congregated, and toward this assemblage the detachment escorted the two gladiators. Here was a large, oval arena excavated to a depth of twenty or thirty

feet in the floor of the plain. Upon the excavated earth piled symmetrically around the edges of the pit, and terraced from the plain level to the top, were arranged slabs of stone to serve as seats. At the east end of the arena was a wide ramp descending into it. Spanning the ramp was a low arch surmounted by the loges of the queen and high nobility.

As Tarzan passed beneath the arch and descended the ramp toward the arena he saw that nearly half the seats were already taken. The people were eating food that they had brought with them, and there was much laughter and talking. Evidently it was a gala day.

The warriors conducted the two men to the far end of the arena where a

terrace had been cut part way up the sloping side of the arena, a wooden ladder leaning against the wall giving access to it. Here, upon this terrace, Tarzan and Phobeg were installed with a few warriors to serve as guards.

Presently, from the direction of the city, Tarzan heard the music of drums and trumpets.

"Here they come!" cried Phobeg.

"Who?" asked Tarzan.

"The queen and the lion men," replied his adversary.

"What are the lion men?" inquired Tarzan.

"They are the nobles," explained Phobeg. "Really only the hereditary

nobles are members of the clan of lions, but we usually speak of all nobles as lion men. Erot is a noble because Nemone has created him one, but he is not a lion man, as he was not born a noble."

Now the blaring of the trumpets and the beating of the drums burst with increased volume upon their ears, and Tarzan saw that the musicians were marching down the ramp into the arena at the far end of the great oval.

Behind the music marched a company of warriors, and from each spearhead fluttered a colored pennon. It was a stirring and colorful picture but nothing to what followed.

A few yards to the rear of the

warriors came a chariot of gold drawn by four maned lions, where, half-reclining upon a couch draped with furs and gaily colored cloths, rode Nemone, the queen. Sixteen black slaves held the lions in leash, and at either side of the chariot marched six nobles resplendent in gold and ivory, while a huge black, marching behind, held a great red parasol over the queen, squatting upon little seats above the rear wheels of the chariot were two small blackamoors with feathered fans above her.

At sight of the chariot and its royal occupant the people in the stands arose and then knelt down in salute to their ruler, while wave after wave of applause rolled round the amphitheater

as the pageant slowly circled the arena.

Behind Nemone's chariot marched another company of warriors. These were followed by a number of gorgeously decorated wooden chariots, each drawn by two lions and driven by a noble, and following these marched a company of nobles on foot, while a third company of warriors brought up the rear.

When the column had circled the arena, Nemone quit her chariot and ascended to her loge above the ramp amid the continued cheering of the populace, the chariots driven by the nobles lined up in the center of the arena, the royal guard formed across the entrance to the stadium, and the nobles who had no part in the games went to

their private loges.

There followed then in quick succession contests in dagger throwing and in the throwing of spears, feats of strength and skill, and foot races.

When the minor sports were completed the chariot races began. Two drivers raced in each event, the distance being always the same, one lap of the arena, for lions cannot maintain high speed for great distances. After each race the winner received a pennon from the queen, while the loser drove up the ramp and out of the stadium amid the hoots of the spectators. Then two more raced, and when the last pair had finished the winners paired off for new events. Thus, by elimination, the

contestants were eventually reduced to two, winners in each event in which they had contested. This, then, was the premiere racing event of the day.

The winner of this final race was acclaimed champion of the day and was presented with a golden helmet by Nemone herself, and the crowd gave him a mighty ovation as he drove proudly around the arena and disappeared up the ramp beneath the arch of the queen, his golden helmet shining bravely in the sun.

"Now," said Phobeg in a loud voice, "the people are going to see something worth while. It is what they have been waiting for, and they will not be disappointed. If you have a god, fellow, pray to him, for you are about to die."

"Are you not going to permit me to run around the arena first while you chase me?" demanded Tarzan.

9. "DEATH! DEATH!"

A score of slaves were busily cleaning up the arena following the departure of the lion-drawn chariots, the audience was standing and stretching itself, nobles were wandering from loge to loge visiting their friends. The sounds of many voices enveloped the stadium in one mighty discord. The period was one of intermission between events.

Now a trumpet sounded, and the warriors guarding Tarzan and Phobeg ordered them down into the arena and paraded them once around it that the people might compare the gladiators and choose a favorite. As they passed before the royal loge, Nemone leaned forward with half-closed eyes surveying the tall

stranger and the squat Cathnean.

The two men were posted in the arena a short distance from the royal loge, and the captain of the stadium was giving them their instructions which were extremely simple: they were to remain inside the arena and try to kill one another with their bare hands, though the use of elbows, knees, feet, or teeth was not barred. There were no other rules governing the combat. The winner was to receive his freedom, though even this had been qualified by Nemone.

"When the trumpet sounds you may attack," said the captain of the stadium. "And may Thoos be with you."

Tarzan and Phobeg had been placed ten paces apart.

Now they stood waiting the signal. Phobeg swelled his chest and beat upon it with his fists; he flexed his arms, swelling the great muscles of his biceps until they stood out like great knotty balls; then he hopped about, warming up his leg muscles. He was attracting all the attention, and that pleased him excessively.

Tarzan stood quietly, his arms folded loosely across his chest, his muscles relaxed. He appeared totally unconscious of the presence of the noisy multitude or even of Phobeg, but he was not unconscious of anything that was transpiring about him. His eyes and his ears were alert; it would be Tarzan who would hear the first note of the trumpet's

signal. Tarzan was ready!

The trumpet pealed, and Tarzan's eyes swung back to Phobeg. A strange silence fell upon the amphitheater. The two men approached one another, Phobeg strutting and confident, Tarzan with the easy, graceful stride of a lion.

"Say your prayers, fellow!" shouted the temple guard. "I am going to kill you, but first I shall play with you for the amusement of Nemone."

Phobeg came closer and reached for Tarzan. The ape-man let him seize him by the shoulders; then Tarzan cupped his two hands and brought the heels of them up suddenly and with great force beneath Phobeg's chin and at the same time pushed the man from him. The great head

snapped back, and the fellow's huge bulk hurtled backward a dozen paces, where Phobeg sat down heavily. A groan of surprise arose from the audience. Phobeg scrambled to his feet. His face was contorted with rage; in an instant he had gone berserk. With a roar, he charged the ape-man.

"No quarter!" he screamed. "I kill you now!"

"Don't you wish to throw me about a bit first?" asked Tarzan in a low voice, as he lightly side stepped the other's mad charge. "No!" screamed Phobeg, turning clumsily and charging again. "I kill! I kill!"

Tarzan Caught the outstretched hands and spread them wide; then a bronzed

arm, lightning-like, clamped about Phobeg's short neck. The ape-man wheeled suddenly about, leaned forward, and hurled his antagonist over his head. Phobeg fell heavily to the sandy gravel of the arena.

Nemone leaned from the royal loge, her eyes flashing, her bosom heaving. Phobeg arose but this time more slowly, nor did he charge again, but approached his antagonist warily. His tactics now were very different from what they had been. He wanted to get close enough to Tarzan to get a hold; that was all he desired, just a hold; then, he knew, he could crush the man with his great strength.

Perhaps the ape-man sensed what was

in the mind of his foe, perhaps it was just chance that caused him to taunt Phobeg by holding his left wrist out to the other. Whatever it was, Phobeg seized upon the opportunity and, grasping Tarzan's wrist, sought to drag the ape- man into his embrace. Tarzan stepped in quickly, struck Phobeg a terrific blow in the face with his right fist, seized the wrist of the hand that held his, and, again whirling quickly beneath his victim, threw him heavily once more, using Phobeg's arm as a lever and his own shoulder as a fulcrum.

This time Phobeg had difficulty in arising at all. He came up slowly. The ape-man was standing over him.

Suddenly Tarzan stooped and seized

Phobeg, and, lifting him bodily, held him above his head. "Shall I run now, Phobeg," he growled, "or are you too tired to chase me?" Then he hurled the man to the ground again a little nearer to the royal loge where Nemone sat, tense and thrilled.

Like a lion with its prey, the Lord of the Jungle followed the man who had taunted him and would have killed him; twice again he picked him up and hurled him closer to the end of the arena. Now the fickle crowd was screaming to Tarzan to kill Phobeg—Phobeg, the strongest man in Cathne.

Again Tarzan seized his antagonist and held him above his head. Phobeg struggled weakly, but he was quite

helpless. Tarzan walked to the side of the arena near the royal loge and hurled the great body up into the audience.

"Take your strong man," he said; "Tarzan does not want him." Then he walked away and stood before the ramp, waiting, as though he demanded his freedom.

Amid shrieks and howls that called to Tarzan's mind only the foulest of wild beasts, the loathsome hyena, the crowd hurled the unhappy Phobeg back into the arena. "Kill him! Kill him!" they screamed.

Nemone leaned from her loge. "Kill him, Tarzan!" she cried.

"I shall not kill him," replied the ape-man.

Nemone arose in her loge. She was flushed and excited. "Tarzan!" she cried, and when the ape-man glanced up at her, "Why do you not kill him?"

"Why should I kill him?" he demanded. "He cannot harm me, and I kill only in self-defense or for food." Phobeg, bruised, battered, and helpless, arose weakly to his feet and stood reeling drunkenly. He heard the voice of the pitiless mob screaming for his death. He saw his antagonist standing a few paces away in front of the ramp, paying no attention to him, and dimly and as though from a great distance he had heard him refuse to kill him. He had heard, but he did not comprehend.

"Kill him, fellow!" Erot cried. "It's

the queen's command."

The ape-man glanced up at the queen's favorite.

"Tarzan kills only whom it pleases him to kill." He spoke in a low voice that yet carried to the royal loge. "I shall not kill Phobeg."

"You fool," cried Erot, "do you not understand that it is the queen's wish, that it is the queen's command, which no one may disobey and live, that you kill the fellow?"

"If the queen wants him killed, why doesn't she send you down to do it? She is your queen, not mine." There was neither awe nor respect in the voice of the ape-man.

Erot looked horrified. He glanced at

the queen. "Shall I order the guard to destroy the impudent savage?" he asked.

Nemone shook her head. Her countenance remained inscrutable, but a strange light burned in her eyes. "We give them both their lives," she said. "Set Phobeg free, and bring the other to me in the palace."

10. IN THE PALACE OF THE QUEEN

A detachment of common warriors commanded by an under-officer had escorted Tarzan to the stadium, but he returned to the city in the company of nobles.

Congratulating him upon his victory, praising his prowess, asking innumerable questions, they followed him from the arena, and at the top of the ramp another noble accosted him. It was Gemnon.

"The queen has commanded me to accompany you to the city and look after you," he explained. "This evening I am to bring you to her in the palace, but in

the meantime you will want to bathe and rest, and I imagine that you might welcome some decent food after the prison fare you have been eating recently.

"I shall be glad of a bath and good food," replied Tarzan, "but why should I rest? I have been doing nothing else for several days."

"But you have just come through a terrific battle for your life!" exclaimed Gemnon. "You must be tired."

Tarzan shrugged his broad shoulders. "Perhaps you had better look after Phobeg instead," he replied. "It is he who needs rest; I am not tired."

Gemnon laughed. "Phobeg should consider himself lucky to be alive. If

anyone looks after him, it will be himself."

As they were walking toward the city now. The other nobles had joined their own parties or had dropped behind, and Gemnon and Tarzan were alone, if two may be said to be alone who are surrounded by a chattering mob through which bodies of armed men and lion-drawn chariots are making their slow way.

"You are popular now," commented Gemnon.

"A few minutes ago they were screaming at Phobeg to kill me," Tarzan reminded him.

"I am really surprised that they are so friendly," remarked Gemnon. "You

cheated them of a death, the one thing they are all hoping to see when they go to the stadium. It is for this they pay their lepta for admission."

When they reached the city, Gemnon took Tarzan to his own quarters in the palace. These consisted of a bedroom and bath in addition to a living room that was shared with another officer. Here Tarzan found the usual decorations of weapons and shields, in addition to pictures painted on leather. He saw no books, nor any other printed matter; neither was there any sign of writing materials in the rooms. He wanted to question Gemnon on this subject, but he found that he had never learned any word for writing or for a written

language.

The bath interested the ape-man. The tub was a coffin-like affair made of clay and baked. The plumbing fixtures were apparently all of solid gold. While questioning Gemnon he learned that the water was brought from the mountains east of the city through clay pipes of considerable size and distributed by means of pressure tanks distributed throughout all of urban Cathne. Gemnon summoned a slave to prepare the bath, and when Tarzan had finished, a meal was awaiting him in the living room. While he was eating, and Gemnon lounged near in conversation, another young noble entered the apartment. He had a narrow face and rather unpleasant

eyes, nor was he overly cordial when Gemnon introduced him to Tarzan.

"Xerstle and I are quartered together," Gemnon explained.

"I have orders to move out," snapped Xerstle.

"Why is that?" asked Gemnon.

"To make room for your friend here," replied Xerstle sourly, and then he went into his own room mumbling something about slaves and savages.

"He does not seem pleased," remarked Tarzan.

"But I am," replied Gemnon in a low voice. "Xerstle and I have not gotten along well together. We have nothing in common. He is one of Erot's friends and

was elevated from nothing after Erot became Nemone's favourite. He is the son of a foreman at the mines. If they had elevated his father he would have been an acquisltion to the nobility, for he is a splendid man, but Xerstle is a rat—like his friend, Erot."

"I have heard something of your nobility," said Tarzan. "I understand that there are two classes of nobles, and that one class rather looks upon the other with contempt even though a man of the lower class may hold a higher title than many of those in the other class."

"We do not look upon them with contempt if they are worthy men," replied Gemnon. "The old nobility, the lion men of Cathne, is hereditary; the

other is but temporary—for the lifetime of the man who has received it as a special mark of favour from the throne. In one respect at least it reflects greater glory on its possessor than does hereditary nobility, as it is often the deserved reward of merit. I am a noble by accident of birth; had I not been born a noble I might never have become one. I am a lion man because my father was; I may own lions because, beyond the memory of man, an ancient ancestor of mine led the king's lions to battle."

"What did Erot do to win his patent of nobility?" continued the ape- man.

Gemnon grimaced. "Whatever services he has rendered have been tiersonal; he has never served the state

with distinction. If he owns any distinction, it is that of being the prince of flatterers, the king of sycophants."

"Your queen seems to intelligent a woman to be duped by flattery."

"No one is, always!"

"There are no flatterers among the beasts," said Tarzan.

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Gemnon.

"Erot is almost a beast."

"You malign the beasts. Did you ever see a lion that fawned upon another creature to curry favour?"

Xerstle, entering from his room, interrupted their conversation. "I have gathered my things together," he said; "I

shall send a slave for them presently." His manner was short and brusque. Gemnon merely nodded in assent, and Xerstle departed.

"He does not seem pleased," commented the ape-man.

"May Xarator have him!" ejaculated Gemnon.

"Though he would serve a better purpose as food for my lions," he added as an afterthought, "if they would eat him."

"You own lions?" inquired Tarzan.

"Certainly," replied Gemnon. "I am a lion man and must own lions. It is a caste obligation. Each lion man must own lions of war to fight in the service of the queen. I have five. In times of

peace I use them for hunting and racing. Only royalty and the lion men may own lions." The sun was setting behind the mountains that rimmed the western edge of the Field of the Lions as a slave entered the apartment with a lighted cresset which he hung at the end of a chain depending from the ceiling.

"It is time for the evening meal," announced Gemnon, rising.

"I have eaten," replied Tarzan.

"Come anyway; it may interest you to meet the other nobles of the palace."

Tarzan arose. "Very well," he said and followed Gemnon from the apartment.

Forty nobles were assembled in a large dining room on the main floor of

the palace as Gemnon and Tarzan entered. Tomos was there and Erot and Xerstle; several of the others Tarzan also recognized as having been seen by him before, either in the council room or at the stadium.

A sudden silence fell upon the assemblage as he entered, as though the men had been interrupted while discussing either him or Gemnon.

"This is Tarzan," announced Gemnon by way of introduction as he led the ape-man to the table.

Tomos, who sat at the head of the table, did not appear pleased. Erot was scowling; it was he who spoke first. "This table is for nobles," he said, "not for slaves."

"By his own prowess and the grace of her majesty, the queen, this man is here as my guest," said Gemnon quietly. "If one of my equals takes exception to his presence, I will be glad to discuss the matter with swords." He turned to Tarzan. "Because this man sits at table with nobles of my own rank, I apologize for the inference he intended you to draw from his words. I hope you are not offended."

"Does the jackal offend the lion?" asked the ape-man.

The meal was not a complete success socially. Erot and Xerstle whispered together. Tomos did not speak but applied himself assiduously to the business of eating. Several of Gemnon's

friends engaged Tarzan in conversation, and he found one or two of them agreeable, but others were inclined to be patronizing. Possibly they would have been surprised and their attitude toward him different had they known that their guest was a peer of England, but then again this might have made little impression upon them inasmuch as none of them had ever heard of England.

When Tomos arose and the others were free to go, Gemnon conducted Tarzan to the apartments of the queen After returning to his awn apartments to don a more elaborate habergeon, helmet, and equipments.

"Do not forget to kneel when we enter the presence of Nemone", cautioned

Gemnon, "and do not speak until she addresses you." A noble received them in a small anteroom where he left them while he went to announce their presence to the queen, and as they waited Gemnon's eyes watched the tall stranger standing quietly near him.

"Have you no nerves?" he asked presently.

"What do you mean?" demanded the ape-man.

"I have seen the bravest warriors tremble who had been summoned before Nemone," explained his companion.

"I have never trembled," replied Tarzan. "How is it done?"

"Perhaps Nemone will teach you to tremble."

"Perhaps, but why should I tremble to go where a jackal does not tremble to go?"

"I do not understand what you mean by that," said Gemnon, puzzled.

"Erot is in there."

Gemnon grinned. "But how do you know that?" he asked.

"I know," said Tarzan. He did not think it necessary to explain that when the noble had opened the door his sensitive nostrils had caught the scent spoor of the queen's favorite.

"I hope not," said Gemnon, an expression of concern upon his countenance. "If he is there, this may be a trap from which you will never come out alive."

"One might fear the queen," replied Tarzan, "but not the jackal."

"It is the queen of whom I was thinking."

The noble returned to the anteroom. He nodded to Tarzan. "Her majesty will receive you now," he said.

"You may go, Gemnon; your attendance will not be required." Then he turned to the ape-man once more.

"When I open the door and announce you, enter the room and kneel. Remain kneeling until the queen tells you to arise, and do not speak until after her majesty addresses you. Do you hear?"

"I hear," replied Tarzan. "Open the door!"

Gemnon, just leaving the anteroom by another doorway, heard and smiled, but the noble did not smile. He frowned.

The bronzed giant had spoken to him in a tone of command, but the noble did not know what to do about it, so he opened the door. But he got some revenge, or at least he thought that he did.

"The slave, Tarzan!" he announced in a loud voice.

The Lord of the Jungle stepped into the adjoining chamber, crossed to the center of it, and stood erect, silently regarding Nemone. He did not kneel. Erot was there standing at the foot of a couch upon which the queen reclined upon fat pillows. The queen regarded

Tarzan from her deep eyes without any change of expression, but Erot scowled angrily.

"Kneel, you fool!" he commanded.

"Silence!" admonished Nemone. "It is I who give commands."

Erot flushed and fingered the golden hilt of his sword. Tarzan neither spoke nor moved nor took his eyes from the eyes of Nemone. Though he had thought her beautiful before, he realized now that she was even more gorgeous than he had believed it possible for any woman to be.

"I shall not need you again tonight, Erot," said Nemone. "You may go now."

Now Erot paled and then turned fiery red. He started to speak but thought

better of it; then he backed to the doorway, executed a bow that brought him to one knee, arose and departed.

As Tarzan had crossed the threshold, his observing eyes noted every detail of the room's interior almost in a single sweeping glance. The chamber was not large, but magnificent in its conception and its appointments. Columns of gold supported the ceiling, the walls were Tiled with ivory, the floor a mosaic of colored stones upon Which were scattered rugs of colored stuff and the skins of animals.

On the walls were paintings, for the most part very crude, and the usual array of heads, and at one end of the room a great lion was chained between two of

the golden Doric columns. He was a very large lion with a tuft of white hair in his mane directly in the center of the back of his neck.

From the instant that Tarzan entered the room the lion eyed him malevolently, and Erot had scarcely passed out and closed the door behind him when the beast sprang to his feet with a terrific roar and leaped at the ape-man. The chains stopped him and he dropped down, growling.

"Belthar does not like you," said Nemone who had remained unmoved when the beast sprang. She noticed, too, that Tarzan had not started nor given any other indication that he had heard the lion or seen him, and she was pleased.

"He but reflects the attitude of all Cathne," replied Tarzan.

"That is not true," contradicted Nemone.

"No?"

"I like you." Nemone's voice was low and caressing.

"You defied me before my people at the stadium today, but I did not have you destroyed. Do you suppose that I should have permitted you to live if I had not liked you? You do not kneel to me. No one else in the world has ever refused to do that and lived. I have never seen a man like you. I do not understand you, I am beginning to think that I do not understand myself. You have piqued my curiosity, Tarzan."

"And when that is satisfied you will kill me, perhaps?" asked Tarzan, a half-smile curving his lip.

"Perhaps," admitted Nemone with a low laugh. "Come here and sit down beside me. I want to talk with you; I want to know more about you."

"I shall see that you do not learn too much," Tarzan assured her as he crossed to the couch and seated himself facing her, while Belthar growled and strained at his chains.

"In your own country you are no slave," said Nemone.

"But I do not need to ask that; your every act has proved ft. Perhaps you are a king?"

Tarzan shook his head. "I am Tarzan,"

he said, as though that explained everything, setting him above kings.

"Are you a lion man? You must be," insisted the queen. "It would not make me better or worse, so what difference does it make? You might make Erot a king, but he would still be Erot."

A sudden frown darkened Nemone's countenance.

"What do you mean by that?" she demanded. There was a suggestion of anger in her tone.

"I mean that a title of nobility does not make a man noble. You may call a jackal a lion, but he will still be a jackal."

"Do you not know that I am supposed to be very fond of Erot," she demanded, "or that you may drive my patience too

far?"

Tarzan shrugged. "You show execrable taste."

Nemone sat up very straight. Her eyes flashed. "I should have you killed!" she cried. Tarzan said nothing. He just kept his eyes on hers. She could not tell whether or not he was laughing at her. Finally she sank back on her pillows with a gesture of resignation. "What is the use?" she demanded. "You probably would not let me get any satisfaction from killing you anyway, and by this time I should be accustomed to being affronted. Now answer my question. Are you a lion man in your own country?"

"I am a noble," replied the ape-man, "but I can tell you that means little; a

ditch digger may become a noble if he controls enough votes, or a rich brewer if he subscribes a large amount of money to the political party in power."

"And which were you," demanded Nemone, "a ditch digger or a rich brewer?"

"Neither," laughed Tarzan.

"Then why are you a noble?" insisted the queen.

"For even less reason than either of those," admitted the ape- man. "I am a noble through no merit of my own but by an accident of birth; my family for many generations has been noble."

"Ah!" exclaimed Nemone. "It is just as I thought; you are a lion man!"

"And what of it?" demanded Tarzan.

"It simplifies matters," she explained, but she did not amplify the explanation nor did Tarzan either understand or inquire as to its implication. As a matter of fact he was not greatly interested in the subject.

Nemone extended a hand and laid it on his, a soft, warm hand that trembled just a little. "I am going to give you your freedom," she said, "but on one condition."

"And what is that?" asked the ape-man.

"That you remain here, that you do not try to leave Onthar—or me." Her voice was eager and just a little husky, as though she spoke under suppressed

emotion.

Tarzan remained silent. He would not promise, and so he did not speak.

"I will make you a noble of Cathne," whispered Nemone. She was sitting erect now, her face close to Tarzan's. "I will have made for you helmets of gold and habergeons of ivory, the most magnificent in Cathne. I will give you lions, fifty, a hundred! You shall be the richest, the most powerful noble of my court!"

"I do not want such things," Tarzan said.

And then a door at the far end of the chamber opened and a Negress entered. She had been very tall, but now she was old and bent; her scraggly wool was

scant and white. Her withered lips were twisted into something that might have been either a snarl or a grin, revealing her toothless gums. She stood in the doorway leaning upon a staff and shaking her head, an ancient palsied hag.

At the interruption Nemone straightened looked around. The expression that had softened her countenance was swept away a sudden wave of rage, inarticulate but no less terrible.

The old hag tapped upon the floor with her staff; her head nodded ceaselessly like that of some grotesque and horrible doll, and her lips were still contorted in what Tarzan realized now was no smile but a hideous snarl.

"Come!" she cackled. "Come! Come! Come!"

Nemone sprang to her feet and faced the woman.

"M'duze!" she screamed. "I could kill you! I could tear you to pieces! Get out of here!"

But the old woman only tapped with her staff and cackled, "Come! Come! Come!"

Slowly Nemone approached her. As one drawn by an invisible and irresistible power, the queen crossed the chamber, the old hag stepped aside, and the queen passed on through the doorway into the darkness of a corridor beyond. The old woman turned her eyes upon Tarzan, and, snarling, backed through the

door after Nemone. Noiselessly the door closed behind them.

Tarzan had arisen as Nemone arose. For an instant he hesitated and then took a step toward the doorway in pursuit of the queen and the old hag. Then he heard a door open and a step behind him, and turned to see the noble who had ushered him into Nemone's presence standing just within the threshold.

"You may return to the quarters of Gemnon," announced the noble politely.

Tarzan shook himself as might a lion; he drew a palm across his eyes as one whose vision has been clouded by a mist. Then he drew a deep sigh and moved towards the doorway as the noble stepped aside to let him pass, but

whether it was a sigh of relief or regret, who may say?

As the Lord of the Jungle passed out of the chamber, Belthar sprang to the ends of his chains with a thunderous roar.

11. THE LIONS OF CATHNE

When Gemnon entered the living room of their quarters the morning after Tarzan's audience with Nemone, he found the ape-man standing by the window looking out over the palace grounds.

"I am glad to see you here this morning," said the Cathnean.

"And surprised, perhaps," suggested the Lord of the Jungle.

"I should not have been surprised had you never returned," replied Gemnon. "How did she receive you? And Erot? I suppose he was glad to have you there!"

Tarzan smiled. "He did not appear to

be, but it did not matter much as the queen sent him away immediately." "And you were alone with her all evening?" Gemnon appeared incredulous.

"Belthar and I," Tarzan corrected him. "Belthar does not seem to like me any better than Erot does."

"Yes, Belthar would be there," commented Gemnon. "She usually has him chained near her. But do not be offended if he does not like you; Belthar likes no one. Belthar is a man-eater. How did Nemone treat you?"

"She was gracious." Tarzan assured him, and that, too, notwithstanding the first thing I did was to offend her royal majesty."

"And what was that?" demanded Gemnon.

"I remained standing when I should have knelt," explained Tarzan.

"But I told you to kneel!" exclaimed Gemnon.

"So did the noble at the door."

"And you forgot?"

"No."

"You refused to kneel? And she did not have you destroyed! It is incredible."

"But it is true, and she offered to make me a noble and give me a hundred lions."

Gemnon shook his head. "What enchantment have you worked to so change Nemone?"

"None; it was I who was under a spell. I have told you these things because I do not understand them. You are the only friend I have in Cathne, and I come to you for an explanation of much that was mysterious in my visit to the queen last night. I doubt that I or another can ever understand the woman herself. She can be tender or terrible, weak or strong within the span of a dozen seconds. One moment she is the autocrat, the next the obedient vassal of a slave."

"Ah!" exclaimed Gemnon. "So you saw M'duze! I'll warrant she was none too cordial."

"No," admitted the ape-man. "As a matter of fact, she did not pay any attention to me; she just ordered Nemone

out of the room, and Nemone went. The remarkable feature of the occurrence lies in the fact that, though the queen did not want to leave and was very angry about it, she obeyed the old woman meekly."

"There are many legends surrounding M'duze," said Gemnon, "but there is one that is whispered more often than the others, though you may rest assured that it is only whispered and, at that, only among trusted friends.

"M'duze has been a slave in the royal family since the days of Nemone's grandfather. She was only a child then, a few years older than the king's son, Nemone's father. The oldsters recall that she was a fine-looking young woman, and the legend that is only whispered is

that Nemone is her daughter.

"About a year after Nemone was born, in the tenth year of her father's reign, the queen died under peculiar and suspicious circumstances. Her child, a son, was born just before the queen expired. He was named Alextar, and he still lives."

"Then why is he not king?" demanded Tarzan.

"That is a long story of mystery and court intrigue and murder, perhaps, of which more is surmised than is actually known by more than two now living. Perhaps Nemone knows, but that is doubtful, though she must guess close to the truth.

"Immediately following the death of

the queen the influence of M'duze increased and became more apparent. M'duze favored Tomos, a noble of little or no importance at the time, and from that day the influence and power of Tomos grew. Then, about a year after the death of the queen, the king died. It was so obvious that he had been poisoned that a revolt of the nobles was barely averted; but Tomos, guided by M'duze, conciliated them by fixing the guilt upon a slave woman of whom M'duze was jealous and executing her.

"For ten years Tomos ruled as regent for the boy, Alextar. During this time he had, quite naturally, established his own following in important positions in the palace and in the council. Alextar was

adjudged insane and imprisoned in the temple; Nemone, at the age of twelve, was crowned queen of Cathne."

Erot is a creature of M'duze and Tomos, a situation has produced a mix-up that would be amusing were it not so tragic. Tomos wishes to marry Nemone, but M'duze will not permit it. M'duze wishes Nemone to Marry Erot, but Erot is not a lion man, and, so far, the Queen has refused to break this ancient custom that requires the ruler to marry into this highest class of Cathneans. M'duze is insistent upon the marriage because she can control Erot, and she discourages and interest which Nemone may manifest in other men, which undoubtedly accounts for her having interrupted the

queen's visit with you.

"You may rest assured that M'duze is your enemy, and it may be of value to you to recall that whoever has stood in the old hag's path has died a violent death. Beware of M'duze and Tomos and Erot, and, as a friend, I may say to you in confidence, beware of Nemone, also. And now let us forget the cruel and sordid side of Cathne and go for that walk I promised you for this morning, that you may see the beauty of the city and the riches of her citizens."

Along avenues bordered by old trees Gemnon led Tarzan between the low, white and gold homes of nobles, glimpses of which were discernible only occasionally through grilled gateways in

the walls that enclosed their spacious grounds. For a mile they walked along the stone-flagged street. Passing nobles greeted Gemnon, some nodding to his companion. Artisans, tradesmen, and slaves stopped to stare at the strange, bronzed giant who had overthrown the strongest man in Cathne.

Then they came to a high wall that separated this section of the city from the next. Massive gates, swung wide now and guarded by warriors, opened into a portion of the city inhabited by better class artisans and tradesmen. Their grounds were less spacious, their houses smaller and plainer, but evidences of prosperity and even affluence were apparent everywhere.

Beyond this was a meaner district, yet even here all was orderly and neat, nor was there any sign of abject poverty in either the people or their homes. Here, as in the other portions of the city, they occasionally met a tame lion either wandering about or lying before the gate of its master's grounds.

As the two men talked they continued on toward the center of the city until they came to a large square that was bounded on all sides by shops. Here were many people. All classes from nobles to slaves mingled before the shops and in the great open square of the market place.

There were lions held by slaves who were exhibiting them for sale for their

noble masters who dickered with prospective purchasers, other nobles. Near the lion market was the slave block, and as slaves, unlike lions, might be owned by anyone, there was brisk bidding on the part of many wishing to buy. A huge black Galla was on the block as Tarzan and Gemnon paused to watch the scene.

"For all the interest he shows," remarked Tarzan, "one might think that being sold like a piece of merchandise or a bullock was a daily occurrence in his life."

"Not quite daily," replied Gemnon, "but no novelty. He has been sold many times. I know him well; I used to own him."

"Look at him!" shouted the seller. "Look at those arms! Look at those legs! Look at that back! He is as strong as an elephant, and not a blemish on him. Sound as a lion's tooth he is; never ill a day in his life. And docile! A child can handle him."

"He is so refractory that no one can handle him," commented Gemnon in a whisper to the ape-man. "That is the reason I had to get rid of him; that is the reason he is up for sale so often."

"There seem to be plenty of customers interested in him," observed Tarzan.

"Do you see that slave in the red tunic?" asked Gemnon. "He belongs to Xerstle, and he is bidding on that fellow. He knows all about him, too. He knew

him when the man belonged to me."

"Then why does he want to buy him? "asked the ape-man.

"I do not know, but there are other uses to which a slave may be put than labor. Xerstle may not care what sort of a disposition the fellow has or even whether he will work."

It was Xerstle's slave who bought the Galla as Tarzan and Gemnon moved on to look at the goods displayed in the shops. There were many articles of leather, wood, ivory, or gold; there were dagger-swords, spears, shields, habergeons, helmets, and sandals. One shop displayed nothing but articles of apparel for women; another, perfumes and incense. There were jewelery shops,

vegetable shops, and meat shops. The last displayed dried meats and fish and the carcasses of goats and sheep. The fronts of these shops were heavily barred to prevent passing lions from raiding them, Gemnon explained.

Wherever Tarzan went he attracted attention, and a small crowd always followed him, for he had been recognized the moment that he had entered the market place.

"Let's get out of here," suggested the Lord of the Jungle. "I do not like crowds."

"Suppose we go back to the palace and look at the queen's lions," said Gemnon.

"I would rather look at lions than

people," Tarzan assured him.

The war lions of Cathne were kept in stables within the royal grounds at a considerable distance from the palace. The building was of stone neatly laid and painted white. In it each lion had his separate cage, and outside were yards surrounded by high stone walls near the tops of which pointed sticks, set close together and inclined downward on the inside of the walls, kept the lions from escaping. In these yards the lions exercised themselves.

There was another, larger arena where they were trained by a corps of keepers under the supervision of nobles; here the racing lions were taught to obey the commands of the hunter, to trail, to

charge, to retrieve.

As Tarzan entered the stable a familiar scent spoor impinged upon his nostrils. "Belthar is here," he remarked to Gemnon. "It is possible," replied the noble, "but I don't understand how you know it."

As they were walking along in front of the cages inspecting the lions that were inside, Gemnon, who was in advance, suddenly halted. "How do you do it?" he demanded. "Last night you knew that Erot was with Nemone, though you could not see him and no one could have informed you, and now you knew that Belthar was here, and sure enough, he is."

Tarzan approached and stood beside

Gemnon, and the instant that Belthar's eyes fell upon him the beast leaped against the bars of his cage in an effort to seize the ape-man, at the same time voicing an angry roar that shook the building.

Instantly keepers came running to the spot, certain that something had gone amiss, but Gemnon assured them that it was only Belthar exhibiting his bad temper.

"He does not like me," said Tarzan.

"If he ever got you, he would make short work of you," said a head keeper.

"It is evident that he would like to," replied the ape-man.

"He is a bad one and a man-killer," said Gemnon after the keepers had

departed, "but Nemone will not have him destroyed. Occasionally he is loosed in the palace arena with someone who has incurred Nemone's disfavor; thus she derives pleasure from the sufferings of the culprit.

"Formerly he was her best hunting lion, but the last time he was used he killed four men and nearly escaped. He has already eaten three keepers who ventured into the arena with him, and he will eat more before good fortune rids us of him. Nemone is supposed to entertain a superstition that In some peculiar way her life and the life of Belthar are linked in some mysterious, supernatural bond and that when one dies the other must die. Naturally, under

the circumstances, it is neither politic or safe to suggest that she destroy the old devil. It is odd that he has conceived such a violent dislike for you."

"I have met lions before which did not like me," said Tarzan.

"May you never meet Belthar in the open, my friend!"

12. THE MAN IN THE LION PIT

As Tarzan and Gemnon turned away from Belthar's cage a slave approached the ape-man and addressed him.

"Nemone, the queen, commands your presence immediately," he said. "You are to come to the ivory room; the noble Gemnon will wait in the anteroom. These are the commands of Nemone, the queen."

"What now, I wonder!" exclaimed Tarzan as they walked through the royal grounds toward the palace.

"No one ever knows why he is summoned to an audience with Nemone until he gets there," commented Gemnon.

"One may be going to receive an honor or hear his death sentence. Nemone is capricious. She is always bored and always seeking relief from her boredom. Oftentimes she finds strange avenues of escape that make one wonder if her mind —but no! Such thoughts may not even be whispered among friends."

When Tarzan presented himself he was immediately admitted to the ivory room, where he found Nemone and Erot much as he had found them the preceding night. Nemone greeted him with a smile that was almost pathetically eager, but Erot only scowled darkly, making no effort to conceal his growing hatred.

"We are having a diversion this morning," Nemone explained, "and we

summoned you and Gemnon enjoy it with us. A party raiding in Thenar a day or ago captured an Athnean noble. We are going to have to some sport with him this morning."

Tarzan nodded. He did not understand what she meant, and he was not particularly interested.

Nemone turned to Erot. "Go and tell them we are ready," she directed, "and ascertain if all is in readiness for us."

Erot flushed and backed toward the door, still scowling.

"It shall be as the queen commands," replied Erot in a surly tone.

When the door had closed behind him, Nemone motioned Tarzan to a seat upon the couch. "I am afraid that Erot

does not like you," she said, smiling. "He is furious that you do not kneel to me, and that I do not compel you to do so. I really do not know, myself, why I do not."

"There might be two reasons, either of which would be sufficient," replied the ape-man.

"And what are they? I have been curious to know how you explained it."

"Consideration of the customs of a stranger and courtesy to a guest," suggested Tarzan.

Nemone considered for a moment. "Yes," she admitted, "either is a fairly good reason, but neither is really in keeping with the customs of the court of Nemone. And then they are practically

the same thing, so they constitute only one reason. Is there not another?"

"Yes," replied Tarzan. "There is an even better one, the one which probably influences you to overlook my dereliction."

"And what is it?"

"The fact that you cannot make me kneel."

A hard look flashed in the queen's eyes; it was not the answer had been hoping for. Tarzan's eyes did not leave hers: she saw amusement in them. "Oh, why do I endure it!" she cried, and with the query her anger melted. You should not try to make it so hard for me to be nice to you," she said almost appealingly.

"I wish to be nice to you, Nemone," he replied, "but not at the price of my self-respect. But that is not the only reason why I shall never kneel to you."

"What is the other reason?" she demanded.

"That I wish you to like me. You would not like me if I cringed to you."

"Perhaps you are right," she admitted musingly.

"Everyone cringes, until the sight of it disgusts me, yet I am angry when they do not cringe. Why is that?"

"You will be offended if I tell you," warned the ape-man.

"In the past two days I have become accustomed to being offended," she

replied with a grimace of resignation, "so you might as well tell me."

"You are angry if they do not cringe, because you are not quite sure of yourself. You wish this outward evidence of their subservience that you may be constantly reassured that you are queen of Cathne."

"Who says that I am not queen of Cathne?" she demanded, instantly on the defensive. "Who says that will find that I am and that I have the power of life and death."

"You do not impress me," said Tarzan. "I have not said that you are not queen of Cathne, only that your manner may often suggest your own doubts. A queen should be so sure of herself that

she can always afford to be gracious and merciful."

For a while Nemone sat in silence, evidently pondering the thought that Tarzan had suggested. "They would not understand," she said at last. "If I were gracious and merciful they would think me weak; then they would take advantage of me, and eventually they would destroy me.

"Oh, Tarzan, I wish that you would promise to remain in Cathne. If you will, there is nothing that you may not have from Nemone. I would build you a palace second only to my own. I would be very good to you. We—you could be very happy here."

The ape-man shook his head. "Tarzan

can be happy in the jungle only."

Nemone leaned close to him; she seized him fiercely by the shoulders. "I will make you happy here," she whispered.

"Erot and M'duze and Tomos may think differently," Tarzan reminded her.

"I hate them!" cried Nemone. "If they interfere this time, I shall kill them all!"

The door opened and Erot entered unceremoniously; he knelt, but the act was nearer a gesture than an accomplished fact. Nemone flashed an angry look at him.

"Before you enter our presence," she said coldly, "see to it that you are properly announced and that we have expressed a desire to receive you.

"But your majesty," objected Erot, "have I not been in the habit of - "

"You have gotten into bad habits," she interrupted; "see that you mend them. Is the diversion arranged?"

"All is in readiness, your majesty," replied the crestfallen Erot.

"Come, then!" directed Nemone, motioning Tarzan to follow her.

In the anteroom they found Gemnon waiting, and the Queen bid him accompany them. Preceded and followed by armed guards, they passed along several corridors and through a number of rooms, then up a stairway to the second floor of the palace. Here they were conducted to a balcony overlooking a small enclosed court. The

windows opening onto this court from the first storey of the building were heavily barred, and from just below the top of the parapet, behind which the queen and her party sat, sharpened stakes protruded, giving the court the appearance of a miniature arena for wild animals.

As Tarzan Looked down into the courtyard, wondering a little what the nature of the diversion was to be, a door at one end swung open and a young lion stepped out into the sunlight, blinking his eyes and looking about. When he saw those on the balcony looking down at him, he growled.

"He is going to make a good lion," remarked Nemone. "From a cub, he has

been vicious."

"What is he doing in here," asked Tarzan, "or what is he going to do?"

"He is going to entertain us," replied Nemone. "Presently an enemy of Cathne will be turned into the pit with him, the Athnean who was captured in Thenar."

"And if he kills the lion you will give him his liberty?" demanded Tarzan.

Nemone laughed. "I promise that I will, but he will not kill the lion."

"He might," said Tarzan; "men have killed lions before."

"With their bare hands?" asked Nemone.

"You mean the man will not be armed?" demanded Tarzan

incredulously.

"Why, of course not!" exclaimed Nemone. "He is not being put in there to kill or wound a fine young lion but to be killed."

"And he has no chance, then! That is not sport; it is murder!"

"Perhaps you would like to go down and defend him," sneered Erot. "The queen would give the fellow his liberty if he had a champion who would kill the lion, for that is the custom."

"It is a custom that is without a precedent since I have been queen," said Nemone. "It is true that it is a law of the arena, but I have yet to see a champion volunteer to take the risk."

The lion paced across the courtyard

and stood directly beneath the balcony, glaring up at them. He was a splendid beast, young but full-grown.

"He is going to be a mean customer," remarked Gemnon.

"He already is," rejoined the queen. "I was going to make a racing lion of him, but after he killed a couple of trainers I decided that he would make a better hunting lion for grand hunts. There is the Athnean." She pointed down into the courtyard. "He is a fine-looking young fellow."

Tarzan glanced at the stalwart figure in ivory standing upon the opposite side of the small arena bravely awaiting its fate; then the lion turned its head slowly in the direction of the prey it had not yet

seen. At the same instant Tarzan seized the hilt of Erot's dagger-like sword, tore the weapon from its sheath, and, stepping to the top of the parapet, leaped for the lion below.

So quickly and so silently had he moved that none was aware of his intent until it had been accomplished. Gemnon voiced an ejaculation of astonishment; Erot, of relief; while Nemone cried out in genuine terror and alarm. Leaning over the parapet, the queen saw the lion struggling to tear the body that had crushed it to the stone flagging, or escape from beneath it. The horrid growls of the beast reverberated in the narrow confines of the pit, and mingled with them were the growls of the beast-

man on its back. One bronzed arm was about the maned neck of the carnivore, two powerful legs were locked around its middle, and the sharp point of Erot's sword was awaiting the opportune instant to plunge into the savage heart. The Athnean was running towards the two embattled beasts.

"By Thoos!" exclaimed Nemone. "If the lion kills him, I will have it torn limb from limb. It must not kill him! Go down there, Erot, and help him. Go, Gemnon."

Gemnon did not wait, but springing to the parapet, lowered himself by the stakes and dropped into the courtyard. Erot hung back. "Let him take care of himself," he grumbled.

Nemone turned to the guard standing

behind her. She was white with apprehension because of Tarzan an: with rage and disgust at Erot. "Throw him into the pit" she commanded, pointing at the cringing favorite. But Erot did not wait to be thrown, and a moment later he had followed Gemnon to the courtyard.

Neither Erot nor Gemnon nor the man from Athne was needed to save Tarzan from the lion, for already he had sunk the sword into the tawny side. Twice again the point drove into the wild heart before the roaring beast collapsed upon the white stones, and its great voice was stilled forever.

Then Tarzan rose to his feet. For a moment the men about him, the queen leaning across the parapet above, the

city of gold, all were forgotten. Here was no English lord, but a beast of the jungle that had made its kill. With one foot upon the carcass of the lion, the ape-man raised his face towards the heavens, and from the heart of the palace of Nemone rose the hideous victory cry of the bull ape that has killed.

Gemnon and Erot shuddered, and Nemone drew back in terror. But the Athnean was unmoved; he had heard that savage challenge before. He was Valthor. And now Tarzan turned; all the savagery faded from his countenance as he stretched forth a hand and laid it on Valthor's shoulder. "We meet again, my friend," he said.

"And once again you save my life!"

exclaimed the Athnean noble.

The two men had spoken in low tones that had not carried to the ears of Nemone or the others in the balcony; Erot, fearful that the lion might not be dead, had run to the far end of the court, where he was cowering behind a column; that Gemnon might have heard did not concern Tarzan, who trusted the young Cathnean. But those others must not know that he had known Valthor before, or immediately the old story that Tarzan had come from Athne to assassinate Nemone would be revived and then a miracle could save either them.

His hand still upon Valthor's shoulder, Tarzan spoke again rapidly in

a whisper. "They must not know that we are acquainted," he said. "They are looking for an excuse to kill me, some of them, but as far as you are concerned they do not have to look for any."

Nemone was now calling orders rapidly to those about her. "Go down and let Tarzan out of the arena; Tarzan and Gemnon, send them to me. Erot may go to his quarters until I give further orders; I do not wish to see him again. Take the Athnean back to his cell; later I will decide how he shall be destroyed."

Tarzan heard the queen's commands with surprise and resentment, and, wheeling, he looked up at her. "This man is free by your own word," he reminded her. "If he be returned to a cell, I shall

go with him, for I have told him that he would be free."

"Do with him as you please," cried Nemone; "he is yours. Only come up to me, Tarzan. I thought that you would be killed, and I am still frightened." Erot and Gemnon heard these words with vastly different emotions. Each recognized that they signalized a change in the affairs of the court of Cathne. Gemnon anticipated the effects of a better influence injected into the councils of Nemone, and was pleased. Erot saw the flimsy structure of his temporary grandeur and reflected authority crumbling to ruin. Both were astonished by this sudden revealment of a new Nemone, whom none had ever

before seen bow to the authority of other than M'duze.

Accompanied by Gemnon and Valthor, Tarzan returned to the balcony where Nemone, her composure regained, awaited them. For a moment, moved by excitement and apprehension for Tarzan's safety, she had revealed a feminine side of her character that few of her intimates might even have suspected she possessed, but now she was the queen again. She surveyed Valthor haughtily and yet with interest.

"What is your name, Athnean?" she demanded.

"Valthor," he replied and added, "of the house of Xanthus."

"We know the house," remarked

Nemone. "Its head is a king's councilor; a most noble house and close to the royal line in both blood and authority."

"My father is the head of the house of Xanthus," said Valthor.

"You would have made a noble hostage," sighed Nemone, "but we have given our promise that you shall be freed."

"I would have been honored by such a position," replied Valthor, the faintest trace of a smile upon his lips, "but I shall have to be content to wait a more propitious event."

"We shall look forward with keen anticipation to that moment," rejoined Nemone graciously. "In the meantime we will arrange an escort to return you to

Athne, and hope for better fortune the next time that you fall into our hands. Be ready then early tomorrow to return to your own country."

"I thank your majesty," replied Valthor. "I shall be ready, and when I go I shall carry with me, to cherish through life, the memory of the gracious and beautiful queen of Cathne."

"Our noble Gemnon shall be your host until tomorrow" announced Nemone. "Take him with you now to your quarters, Gemnon, and let it be known that he is Nemone's guest whom none may harm."

Tarzan would have accompanied Gemnon and Valthor, But Nemone detained him. "You will return to my

apartments with me," she directed. "I wish to talk with you."

As they walked through the palace, the queen did not Precede her companion as the etiquette of the court Demanded but moved close at his side, looking up into his face as she talked. "I was frightened, Tarzan," she confided. "It is not often that Nemone is frightened by the peril of another, but when I saw you leap into the arena with the lion, my heart stood still. Why did you do it, Tarzan?"

"I was disgusted with what I saw," replied the ape-man shortly.

"Disgusted! What do you mean?"

"The cowardliness of the authority that would permit an unarmed and utterly

defenseless man to be forced into an arena with a lion," explained Tarzan candidly.

Nemone flushed. "You know that that authority is I," she said coldly.

"Of course I know it," replied the ape-man, "but that only renders it the more odious."

"What do you mean?" she snapped. "Are you trying to drive me beyond my patience? If you knew me better you would know that that is not safe, not even for you, before whom I have already humbled myself."

"I am not seeking to try your patience," replied the ape-man quietly, "for I am neither interested nor concerned in your powers of self-

control. I am merely shocked that one so beautiful may at the same time be so heartless."

The flush faded from the queen's face, the anger from her eyes. She moved on in silence, her mood suddenly introspective, and when they reached the anteroom leading to her private chambers she halted at the threshold of the latter and laid a hand gently upon the arm of the man at her side.

"You are very brave," she said. "Only a very brave man would have leaped into the arena with the lion to save a stranger, but only the bravest of the brave could have dared to speak to Nemone as you have spoken, for the death that the lion deals may be merciful

compared with that which Nemone deals when she has been affronted."

"Yet perhaps you knew that I would forgive you. Oh, Tarzan, what magic have you exercised to win such power over me!" She took him by the hand then and led him toward the doorway of her chambers. "You shall teach Nemone how to be human!" As the door swung open there was a new light in the eyes of the queen of Cathne, a softer light than had ever before shone in those beautiful depths. Then it faded, to be replaced by a cold, hard glitter of bitterness and hate. Facing them, in the center of the apartment, stood M'duze.

She stood there, bent and horrible, wagging her head and tapping the stone

floor with her staff. She spoke no word, but fixed them with her baleful glare. As one held in the grip of a power she is unable to resist, Nemone moved slowly towards the ancient hag, leaving Tarzan just beyond the threshold. Slowly and silently the door closed between them. Beyond it the ape-man heard, faintly, the tapping of the staff upon the colored stones of the mosaic.

13. ASSASSIN IN THE NIGHT

A great lion moved silently from the south across the border of Kaffa. If he were following a trail, the heavy rain that had terminated the wet season must have obliterated it long since; yet he moved on with a certain assurance that betokened no sign of doubt.

Why was he there? What urge had drawn him thus, contrary to the habits and customs of his kind, upon this long and arduous journey? Where was he bound? What or whom did he seek? Only he, Numa the lion, king of beasts, knew.

In his quarters in the palace, Erot

paced the floor, angry and disconsolate. Sprawled on a bench, his feet wide apart, sat Xerstle deep in thought. The two men were facing a crisis, and they were terrified. Had Erot definitely fallen from the favor of the queen, Xerstle would be dragged down with him; of that there was no doubt.

"But there must be something you can do," insisted Xerstle.

"I have seen both Tomos and M'duze," replied Erot drearily, "and they have promised to help. But Nemone is infatuated with this stranger. None knows Nemone better than does M'duze, and I can tell you, Xerstle, the old hag is frightened. Nemone hates her, and if the attempted thwarting of this new passion

arouses her anger sufficiently, it may sweep away the fear that the queen has always held for M'duze, and she will destroy her. It is this that M'duze fears. And you can imagine how terrified old Tomos is! Without M'duze he would be lost, for Nemone tolerates him only because M'duze demands it."

"But there must be some Way," again insisted Xerstle. "There is no way so long as this fellow, Tarzan, is able to turn Nemone's heart to water," answered Erot. "Why, he does not even kneel to her, and he speaks to her as one might to a naughty slave girl."

"But there is a way!" exclaimed Xerstle in a sudden whisper. "Listen!" Then he launched forth into a detailed

explanation of his plan. Erot sat listening to his friend, an expression of rapt interest upon his face. A slave girl crossed the living room where the two men talked, and departed into the corridor beyond, but so engrossed were Erot and Xerstle that neither was aware that she had come or that she had gone.

In their quarters that evening Gemnon and Tarzan partook of the final meal of the day, for neither had enjoyed the prospect of again eating with the other nobles. Valthor slept in the bedroom, having asked not to be disturbed until morning.

"When you have definitely displaced Erot, conditions will be different," explained Gemnon. "Then they will fawn

upon you, shower you with attentions, and wait upon your every whim."

"That will never occur," snapped the ape-man.

"Why not?" demanded his companion. "There is nothing that Nemone would not do for you, absolutely nothing.

Why, man, you can rule Cathne if you so choose."

"But I do not choose," replied Tarzan. "Nemone may be mad but I am not. And even were I, I could never be mad enough to accept a position that had once been filled by Erot, the idea disgusts me; let us talk of something pleasant."

"Very well," consented Gemnon with a smile. "Perhaps I think you are foolish, but I admit that I cannot help but admire

your courage and decency.

"And now for something more pleasant! Something very much more pleasant! I am going to take you visiting tonight. I am going to take you to see the most beautiful girl in Cathne."

"I thought that there could be no woman in Cathne more beautiful than the queen," objected Tarzan.

"There would not be if Nemone knew of her," replied Gemnon, "but fortunately she does not know. She has never seen this girl, and may Thoos forbid that she ever does!"

"You are much interested," remarked the ape-man, smiling.

"I am in love with her," explained Gemnon simply.

"And Nemone has never seen her? I should think that a difficult condition to maintain, for Cathne is not large, and if the girl be of the same class as you, many other nobles must know of her beauty. One would expect such news to come quickly to the ears of Nemone."

"She is surrounded by very loyal friends, this girl of whom I speak," replied Gemnon. "She is Doria, the daughter of Thudos. Her father is a very powerful noble and head of the faction which wishes to place Alextar on the throne. Only Nemone's knowledge of his great power preserves his life, but owing to the strained relations that exist between Nemone and his house neither he nor members of his family are often at

court. Thus it has been easier to prevent knowledge of the great beauty of Doria coming to Nemone."

As the two men were leaving the palace a short time later, they came unexpectedly upon Xerstle, who was most effusive in his greetings. "Congratulations, Tarzan!" he exclaimed, halting the companions. "That was a most noble feat you performed in the lion pit today. All the palace is talking about it, and let me be among the first to tell you how glad I am that you have won the confidence of our gracious and beautiful queen by your bravery, strength, and magnanimity."

Tarzan nodded in acknowledgment of the man's avowal and started to move

on, but Xerstle held him with a gesture. "We must see more of one another," he continued. "I am arranging a grand hunt, and I must have you as my guest of honor. There will be but a few of us, a most select party, and I can assure you of good sport. When all the arrangements are completed, I will let you know the day of the hunt. And now good-bye and good luck to you!"

"I care nothing about him or his grand hunt," said Tarzan as he and Gemnon continued on toward the home of Doria.

"Perhaps it would be well to accept," advised Gemnon.

"That fellow and his friends will bear watching, and if you are with them occasionally you can watch them that

much better."

Tarzan shrugged. "If I am still here, I shall go with him if you think best."

"If you are still here!" exclaimed Gemnon. "You certainly are not expecting to get away from Cathne, are you?"

"Why, certainly," replied Tarzan. "I may go any day or night. There is nothing to hold me here, and I have given no promise that I would not escape when I wished."

Gemnon smiled a wry smile that Tarzan did not see in the semi- darkness of the ill-lit avenue through which they were passing. "That will make it extremely interesting for me," he remarked.

"Why?" demanded the ape-man.

"Nemone turned you over into my keeping. If you escape while I am responsible for you, she will have me destroyed."

A frown knit the brows of the Lord of the Jungle.

"I did not know that," he said, "but you need not worry. I shall not go until you have been relieved of responsibility." A sudden smile lighted his countenance."

"I think I shall ask Nemone to give me over into the keeping of Erot or Xerstle."

Gemnon chuckled. "What a story that would make!" he cried.

An occasional torch only partially

dispelled the gloom beneath the overhanging trees that bordered the avenue that led toward the palace of Thudos. At the intersection of a narrow alleyway, beneath the branches of a wide spreading oak a dark figure lurked in the shadows as Tarzan and Gemnon approached. The keen eyes of the ape-man saw and recognized it as the figure of a man before they came close enough to be in danger, and Tarzan was ready even though he had no suspicion that the man's presence there was in any way concerned with him, for it is the business of the jungle-bred to be always ready, whether danger threatens or not.

Just as the two came opposite the figure, Tarzan heard his name whispered

in a hoarse voice. He stopped. "Beware of Erot!" whispered the voice. "Tonight!" Then the figure wheeled and lumbered into the denser shadows of the narrow alleyway, but in the glimpse that Tarzan got of it there was a familiar roll to the great body, just as there had been a suggestion of familiarity in the voice.

"Now who do you suppose that is?" demanded Gemnon. "Come on! We'll capture him and find out," and he started as though to pursue the stranger down the alley.

Tarzan laid a restraining hand upon his shoulder.

"No," he said. "It was someone who has tried to befriend me. If he wishes to conceal his identity, it is not for me to

reveal it."

"You are right," assented Gemnon.

"And I think I would have learned no more by pursuing him than I already know. I recognized him by his voice and his gait, and then, as he turned to leave, a movement in the air brought his scent spoor to my nostrils.

I think I would recognize that a mile away, for it is very strong; it always is in powerful men and beasts."

"Why was he afraid of you?" asked Gemnon.

"He was not afraid of me; he was afraid of you because you are a noble."

"He need not have been, if he is a friend of yours. I would not have

betrayed him."

"I know that, but he could not. You are a noble, and so you might be a friend of Erot. I do not mind telling you who it was, because I know you would not use the knowledge to harm him. But you will be surprised; I surely was. It was Phobeg."

"No! Why should he befriend the man who defeated and humiliated him, and almost killed him?"

"Because he did not kill him. Phobeg is a simple minded fellow, but he is the type that would not be devoid of gratitude. He is the sort that would bestow dog-like devotion upon one who was more powerful than he, for he worships physical prowess."

At the palace of Thudos the two men were ushered into a magnificent apartment by a slave, after the guard at the entrance had recognized Gemnon and permitted them to pass. In the soft light of a dozen cressets they awaited the coming of the daughter of the house to whom the slave carried Gemnon's ring to evidence the identity of her caller.

The light fall of soft sandals upon stone announced the coming of their hostess, and both men turned toward the doorway leading into a small open garden from which she was coming. Tarzan saw a girl of exquisite beauty; but be was more beautiful than Nemone he could not say, there are so many things that enter into the making of a

beautiful countenance. Yet he acknowledged to himself that Thudos was wise in keeping her hidden from the queen. She greeted Gemnon with the sweet familiarity of an Old friend, and when Tarzan was present her manner Was cordial and unaffected, yet always the fact that she Was the daughter of Thudos seemed a part of her.

The three spent the evening in pleasant Conversation, and Gemnon and Tarzan were about to leave, when a middle-aged man entered the room. It was Thudos, the father of Doria. He greeted Gemnon cordially and seemed pleased to meet Tarzan, whom he immediately commenced to question relative to the world outside the valleys

of Onthar and Thenar.

Thudos was a strikingly handsome man, with strong features, an athletic build, and eyes that were serious and stern that yet had wrinkles at their corners that betokened much laughter. His was a face that one might trust, for integrity, loyalty, and courage had left their imprints plainly upon it, at least for eyes as observant as those of the Lord of the Jungle.

When the two guests rose to leave again, Thudos seemed satisfied with his appraisal of the stranger. "I am glad that Gemnon brought you," he said. "The very fact that he did convinces me that he has confidence in your friendship and loyalty, for, as you may already know,

the position of my house at the court of Nemone is such that we receive only assured friends within our walls."

"I understand," replied the ape-man. He made no other reply, but both Thudos and Doria felt that here was a man who might be trusted.

As the two men entered the avenue in front of the palace of their host, a figure slunk into the shadow of a tree a few paces from them, and neither saw it. Then they walked leisurely toward their apartments in the palace.

"Doria said she saw my meeting with Phobeg in the arena," remarked Tarzan. "I have been curious to ask you how she dared come to the stadium when her life is constantly in danger should her beauty

become known to the queen?"

"She is always disguised when she goes abroad," replied Gemnon. "A few touches by an expert hand and hollows appear in her cheeks and beneath her eyes, her brow is wrinkled, and behold! She is no longer the most beautiful woman in the world. Nemone would not give her a second thought if she saw her, but still care is taken to see that Nemone does not see her too closely even then. It is informers we fear the most. Thudos never sells a slave who has seen Doria, and once a new slave enters the palace walls he never leaves them again until long years of service have proved him, and his loyalty is unquestioned. "It is a monotonous life for Doria, the penalty

she pays for beauty, but all that we can do is hope and pray that relief will come some day in the death of Nemone or the elevation of Alextar to the throne."

Valthor was asleep on Tarzan's couch when the ape-man entered his bedroom. He had had little rest since his capture, and, in addition, he was suffering from a slight wound, so Tarzan moved softly that he might not disturb him and made no light in the room, the darkness of which was partially dispelled by moonlight.

Spreading some skins on the floor against the wall opposite the window, the ape-man lay down and was soon asleep, while in the apartment above him two men crouched in the dark beside the

window that was directly above that in Tarzan's bedroom.

For a long time they crouched there in silence. One a large, powerful man, the other smaller and lighter.

Fully an hour passed before either moved other than to Changed a cramped position for one more comfortable; Then smaller man arose. One end of a long rope was Knotted about his body beneath beneath his armpits; in his right He carried a slim dagger-sword.

Cautiously, and silently he went to the window and Looked out, his careful gaze searching the grounds below; Then he sat on the sill and swung his legs through the Window. The larger man, holding the rope firmly with both hands,

braced himself. The smaller turned over on his belly and slid out of the window. Hand over hand, the other lowered him; his head disappeared below the sill.

Very carefully, so as to make no noise, the larger man lowered the smaller until the feet of the latter rested on the sill of Tarzan's bedroom window. Here the man reached in and took hold of the casing; then he jerked twice upon the rope to acquaint his fellow with the fact that he had reached his destination safely and the other let the rope slip through his fingers loosely as the movements of the man below dragged it slowly out.

The smaller man stepped gingerly to the floor inside the room. Without

hesitation he moved toward the bed, his weapon raised and ready in his hand. He made no haste; his one purpose for the present appeared to be the achievement of absolute silence. It was evident that he feared to waken the sleeper. Even when he reached the bed he stood there for a long time searching with his eyes for the right spot to strike that the blow might bring instant death. The assassin knew that Gemnon slept in another bedroom across the living room; what he did not know was that Valthor, the Athnean, lay stretched on the bed beneath his keen weapon.

As the assassin hesitated, Tarzan of the Apes opened his eyes. Though the intruder had made no sound his mere

presence in the room had aroused the ape-man; perhaps the effluvium from his body, reaching the sensitive nostrils of the sleeping beast-man, carried the same message to the alert brain that sound would have carried.

At the instant that Tarzan opened his eyes he saw the stranger in the room, saw the dagger raised above the form of the sleeping Valthor, read the whole story in a single glance, and in the same moment arose and leaped upon the unsuspecting murderer, who was dragged back from his victim at the very instant that his weapon was descending.

As the two men crashed to the floor, Valthor awoke and sprang from his cot; but by the time he had discovered what

was transpiring, the would-be assassin lay dead upon the floor, and Tarzan of the Apes stood with one foot upon the body of his kill. For an instant the ape-man hesitated, his face upturned as the weird scream of the victorious bull ape trembled on his lips, but then he shook his head, and only a low growl rumbled upward from the deep chest.

Valthor had heard these growls before and was neither surprised nor shocked. The man in the room above had heard only beasts growl, and the sound made him hesitate and wonder. He had heard, too, the crash of the two bodies as Tarzan had hurled the other to the floor, and while he had not interpreted that correctly it had suggested resistance and

put him on his guard. Cautiously he stepped closer to the window and looked out, listening.

In the room below, Tarzan of the Apes seized the corpse of the man who had come to kill him and hurled it through the window into the grounds beneath. The man above saw and, turning, slunk from the room and vanished among the dark shadows of the palace corridors.

14. THE GRAND HUNT

With the breaking of dawn Tarzan and Valthor arose, for the latter was to set out upon his journey to Athne early. The previous evening a slave had been directed to serve breakfast at daybreak, and the two men now heard him arranging the table in the adjoining room.

"We have met again, and again we part," commented Valthor as he fastened his sandal straps to the ivory guards that encircled his ankles. "I wish that you were going with me to Athne, my friend."

"I would go with you were it not for the fact that Gemnon's life would be forfeited should I leave Cathne while he

is responsible for me," replied the ape-man, "but you may rest assured that some day I shall pay you a visit in Athne."

I never expected to see you alive again after we were separated by the flood," continued Valthor, "and when I realized you in the lion pit I could not believe my own eyes. Four times at least have you saved my life, Tarzan. You may be assured of a warm welcome in the house of my father at Athne whenever you come.

The debt, if you feel that there was one, is wiped out," Tarzan assured him, "since you saved my life last night by sleeping in my bed."

"What saved whose life?" demanded a voice at the door.

"Good morning, Gemnon!" greeted Tarzan. "My compliments and congratulations!"

"Thanks! But what about?" demanded the Cathnean.

"Upon your notable ability as a sound sleeper," explained Tarzan, smiling.

Gemnon shook his head dubiously. "Your words are beyond me. What are you talking about?"

"You slept last night through an attempted assassination, the killing of the culprit, and the disposition of his body. Phobeg's warning was no idle gossip."

"You mean that someone came here last night to kill you?"

"And almost killed Valthor instead,"

and then Tarzan briefly narrated the events of the attempt upon his life.

"Had you ever seen the man before?" asked Gemnon.

"Did you recognize him?"

"I paid little attention to him," admitted Tarzan; "I threw him out of the window. But I do not recall having seen him before."

"Was he a noble?"

"No, he was a common warrior. Perhaps you will recognize him when you see him."

"I shall have to have a look at him and report the matter at once," said Gemnon. "Nemone is going to be furious when she hears this."

"She may have instigated it herself," suggested Tarzan. "She is half-mad."

"Hush!" cautioned Gemnon. "It is death even to whisper that thought. No, I do not believe it was Nemone, but were you to accuse Erot, M'duze, or Tomos I could easily agree to that. I must go now, and if I do not return before you leave, Valthor, be assured that I have enjoyed entertaining you. It is unfortunate that we are enemies and that the next time we meet we shall have to endeavor to take one another's head."

"It is unfortunate and foolish," replied Valthor.

"But it is the custom," Gemnon reminded him.

"Then may we never meet, for I could

never take pleasure in killing you."

"Here's to it, then," cried Gemnon, raising his hand as though it held a drinking horn. "May we never meet again!" And with that he turned and left them.

Tarzan and Valthor had but scarcely finished their meal when a noble arrived to tell them that Valthor's escort was ready to depart, and a moment later, with a brief farewell, the Athnean left.

By Nemone's command the ape-man's weapons had been returned to him, and he was engaged in inspecting them, looking to the points and feathers of his arrows, his bowstring, and his grass rope, when Gemnon returned. The Cathnean was quite evidently angry and

not a little excited. This was one of the few occasions upon which Tarzan had seen his warder other than smiling and affable.

"I have had a bad half hour with the queen," explained Gemnon. "I was lucky to get away with my life. She is furious over this attempt upon your life and blames me for neglect of duty. What am I to do? Sit on your window sill all night?"

Tarzan laughed. "I am an embarrassment," he said lightly, "and I am sorry. But how can I help it? It was an accident that brought me here; it is perversity that keeps me, the perversity of a spoiled woman."

'You had better not tell her that, or let

other than me hear you say it," Gemnon cautioned him.

I may tell her," laughed Tarzan. "I am afraid I never acquired that entirely human accomplishment called diplomacy."

"She has sent me to summon you, and I warn you to exercise a little judgment, even though you have no diplomacy. She is like a raging lion, and whoever arouses her further will be in for a mauling."

"What does she want of me?" demanded Tarzan.

"Am I to remain in this house, caged up like a pet dog, to run at the beck of a woman?"

"She is investigating this attempt on

your life and has summoned others to be questioned," Gemnon explained.

Gemnon led the way to a large audience chamber where the nobles of the court were congregated before a massive throne on which the queen sat, her beautiful brows contracted in a frown. As Tarzan and Gemnon entered the room, she looked up; but she did not smile. A noble advanced and led the two men to seats near the foot of the throne.

As Tarzan glanced about at the faces of those near him, he saw Tomos, and Erot, and Xerstle. Erot was nervous; he fidgeted constantly upon his bench; he played with his fingers and with the hilt of his sword.

"We have been awaiting you," said

the queen as Tarzan took his seat. "It appears that you did not exert yourself to hasten in response to our command."

Tarzan looked up at her with an amused smile. "On the contrary, your majesty, I returned at once with the noble Gemnon," he explained respectfully.

"We have summoned you to tell the story of what happened in your apartment last night that resulted in the killing of a warrior." She then turned to a noble standing at her side and whispered a few words in his ear, whereupon the man quit the room. "You may proceed," she said, turning again to Tarzan.

"There is little to tell," replied the

ape-man, rising.

"A man came to my room to kill me, but I killed him instead."

"How did he enter your room?" demanded Nemone.

"Where was Gemnon? Did he admit the fellow?"

"Of course not," replied Tarzan. "Gemnon was asleep in his own room. The man who would have killed me was lowered from the window of the apartment above mine and entered through my window. There was a long rope tied about his body."

"How did you know he came to kill you? Did he attack you?"

"Valthor, the Athnean, was sleeping

in my bed; I was sleeping on the floor. The man did not see me, for the room was dark. He went to the bed where he thought I was sleeping. I awoke as he stood over Valthor, his sword raised in his hand ready to strike. Then I killed him and threw his body out of the window."

"Did you recognize him? Had you ever seen him before?" asked the queen.

"I did not recognize him."

There was a noise at the entrance to the audience chamber that caused Nemone to glance up. Four slaves bore a stretcher into the room and laid it at the foot of the throne; on it was the corpse of a man.

"Is this the fellow who attempted your

life?" demanded Nemone.

"It is," replied Tarzan.

She turned suddenly upon Erot. "Did you ever see this man before?" she demanded.

Erot arose. He was white and trembled a little. "But, your majesty, he is only a common warrior," he countered.

I may have seen him often, yet have forgotten him; that would not be strange, I see so many of them."

"And you," the queen addressed a young noble standing near, "have you ever seen this man before?"

Often," replied the noble. "He was a member of the palace guard and in my

company."

"How long has he been attached to the palace?" demanded Nemone. "Not a month, your majesty."

"And before that? Do you know anything about his prior service?"

"He was attached to the retinue of a noble, your replied the young officer hesitantly."

"What noble?" demanded Nemone.

"Erot," replied the witness in a low voice.

The queen looked long and searchingly at Erot. "You have a short memory," she said presently, an undisguised sneer in her voice.

Erot was pale and shaken. He looked

long at the face of the dead man before he spoke again. "I do recall him now, your majesty, but he does not look the same. Death has changed him; that is why I did not recognize him immediately."

"You are lying," snapped Nemone. "There are some things about this affair that I do not understand. What part you have had in it, I do not know, but I am sure that you had some part, and I am going to find out what.

In the meantime you are banished from the palace. There may be others," she looked meaningfully at Tomos, "but I shall find them all out, and when I do it will be the lion pit for the lot!"

Rising, she descended from the

throne, and all knelt save Tarzan. As she passed him on her way from the chamber, she paused and looked long and searchingly into his eyes. "Be careful," she whispered; "your life is in danger. I dare not see you for a while, for there is one so desperate that not even I could protect you should you visit my apartments again. Tell Gemnon to quit the palace and take you to his father's house. You will be safer there, but even then far from safe. In a few days I shall have removed the obstacles that stand between us. Until then, Tarzan, good-bye!"

The ape-man bowed, and the queen of Cathne passed on out of the audience chamber. The nobles rose. They drew

away from Erot and clustered about Tarzan. In disgust the ape-man drew away. "Come, Gemnon," he said. "There is nothing to keep us here longer."

Xerstle blocked their way as they were leaving the chamber. "Everything is ready for the grand hunt!" he exclaimed, rubbing his palms together genially. "I thought this tiresome audience would prevent our starting today, but it is still early. The lions and the quarry are awaiting us at the edge of the forest. Get your weapon, and join me in the avenue."

Gemnon hesitated. "Who are hunting with you?" he asked.

"Just you and Tarzan and Pindes," explained Xerstle, "a small and select

company that ensures a good hunt."

"We will come," said the ape-man.

As the two returned to their quarters to get their weapons, Gemnon appeared worried. "I am not sure that it is wise to go," he said.

"And why not?" inquired Tarzan.

"This may be another trap for you."

The ape-man shrugged. "It is quite possible, but I cannot remain cooped up in hiding. I should like to see what a grand hunt is; I have heard the term often since I came to Cathne. Who is Pindes? I do not recall him."

"He was an officer of the guard when Erot became the queen's favorite, but through Erot he was dismissed. He is not

a bad fellow but weak and easily influenced; however he must hate Erot, and so I think you have nothing to fear from him."

"I have nothing to fear from anyone," Tarzan assured "Perhaps "you think not, but be on guard."

"I am always on guard; had I not been I should have been dead long ago."

"Your self-complacency may be your undoing," growled Gemnon testily.

Tarzan laughed. "I appreciate both danger and my own limitations, but I cannot let fear rob me of my liberty and pleasures of life. Fear is to be more dreaded than death. You are afraid, Erot is afraid, Nemone is afraid; and are all unhappy. Were I afraid, I should be

unhappy but no safer. I prefer to be simply cautious.

And by the way, way, speaking of caution, Nemone instructed Me to tell you to take me from the palace and keep me in your father's house. She says the palace is no safe place for me. I really think that it is M'duze who is after me."

"M'duze and Erot and Tomos," said Gemnon; "there is a triumvirate of greed and malice and duplicity that I should hate to have upon my trail."

At his quarters, Gemnon gave orders that his and Tarzan's belongings be moved to the house of his father while the two men were hunting; then they went to the avenue where they found Xerstle and Pindes awaiting them. The latter

was a man of about thirty, rather good looking but with a weak face and eyes that invariably dropped from a direct gaze. He met Tarzan with great cordiality, and as the four men walked along the main avenue of the city toward the eastern gate he was most affable.

Beyond the eastern gate an open parklike plain stretched for a short distance to the forest. Near the gate four stalwart slaves held two lions in leash, while a fifth man, naked but for a dirty loin- cloth, squatted upon the ground a short distance away.

As the four hunters approached the party, Xerstle explained to Tarzan that the leashed beasts were his hunting lions, and as the ape- man's observant

eyes ran over the five men who were to accompany them on the hunt he recognized the stalwart black seated upon the ground apart as the man he had seen upon the auction block in the market- place. Xerstle approached the fellow and spoke briefly with him, evidently giving him orders.

When Xerstle had finished, the black started off at a trot across the plain in the direction of the forest. Everyone watched his progress.

"Why is he running ahead?" asked Tarzan. "He will frighten away the quarry."

Pindes laughed. "He is the quarry."

"You mean "demanded Tarzan with a scowl.

"That this is a grand hunt," cried Xerstle, "where we hunt man, the grandest quarry."

"What happens if you do not get him? Is he free then?"

"I should say not; not if we can capture him again cried Xerstle. "Slaves cost too much money to be lightly thrown away like that."

When the native reached the forest, Xerstle spoke a word of command to the keepers and they unleashed the two great beasts. The lions bounded away in pursuit of the quarry.

Halfway to the forest the lions settled down to a slower gait, and the hunters commenced gradually to overhaul them. Xerstle and Pindes appeared excited, far

more excited than the circumstances of the hunt warranted; Gemnon was silent and thoughtful; Tarzan was disgusted and bored. But before they reached the forest his interest was aroused, for a plan had occurred to him whereby he might derive some pleasure from the day's sport.

The wood, which the hunters presently entered a short distance behind the lions, was of extraordinary beauty. The trees were very old and gave evidence of having received the intelligent care of man, as did the floor of the forest. There was little or no deadwood in the trees, and only occasional clumps of underbrush upon the ground between them. As far as

Tarzan could see among the boles of the trees, the aspect was that of a well-kept park rather than of a natural wood, and in answer to a comment he made upon this fact Gemnon explained that for ages his people had given regular attention to the conservation of this forest from the city of gold to the Pass of the Warriors.

Once within the forest, Tarzan dropped gradually to the near of the party, and then, when none was looking, swung the branches of a tree. Plain to his nostrils had been the scent spoor of the quarry from the beginning of the chase and now the ape-man knew, possibly even better than the lions, the direction of the hopeless flight of the man.

Swinging through the trees in a slight

detour that Carried him around and beyond the hunters without revealing his desertion to them, Tarzan sped through the middle terraces of the forest as only the Lord of the Jungle can. Stronger and stronger in his nostrils waxed the scent of the quarry; behind him came the lions and the hunters.

And he knew that he must act quickly, for they were no great distance in his rear. A grim smile lighted his gray eyes as he considered the denouement of the project he had undertaken.

Presently he saw the native running through the forest just ahead of him. The fellow was moving at a dogged trot, casting an occasional glance behind him.

Tarzan was directly above the man

now, and he spoke to him in the language of his people. "Take to the trees," he called down.

The native looked up, but he did not stop. "Who are you?" he demanded.

"An enemy of your master, who would help you escape," replied the ape-man.

"There is no escape; if I take to the trees they will stone me down."

"They will not find you; I will see to that."

"Why should you help me?" demanded the man, but he stopped now and looked up again, searching for the man whose voice came down to him in a tongue that gave him confidence in the speaker.

"I have told you that I am an enemy of your master."

Now the native saw the bronzed figure of the giant above him. "You are a white man!" he exclaimed. "You are trying to trick me. Why should a white man help me?" "Hurry!" admonished Tarzan, "or it will be too late, and no one can help you.

For just an instant longer the native hesitated; then be leaped for a low-hanging branch and swung himself up into the tree as Tarzan came down to meet him.

15. THE PLOT THAT FAILED

Swiftly, the giant of the jungle bore the Galla slave toward the east where, beyond the forest, loomed the mountains that hemmed Onthar upon that side. For a mile he carried him through the trees and then swung lightly to the ground.

"If the lions ever pick up your trail now," he said, it will not be until long after you have reached the mountains and safety. But do not delay —go now.

The man fell upon his knees and took the hand of his savor in his own. "I am Hafim," he said. "If I could serve you, I would die for you. Who are you?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes. Now go

your way and lose no time."

One more favor," begged the native.

"What?"

"I have a brother. He, too, was captured by these when they captured me. He is a slave in the gold mines south of Cathne. His name is Niaka. If you should to the gold mines, tell him that Hafim has escaped."

"I shall tell him. Now go."

Silently the native disappeared among the boles of the Forest trees, and Tarzan sprang again into the branches and Swung rapidly back in the direction of the hunters. When he reached them, dropping to the ground and approaching them from behind, they were clustered near the spot at which Hafim had taken

to the trees.

"Where have you been?" asked Xerstle. "We thought that you had become lost."

"I dropped behind," replied the ape-man. "Where is your quarry? I thought that you would have had him by this time."

"We cannot understand it," admitted Xerstle. "It is evident that he climbed this tree, because the lions followed him to this very spot, where they stood looking up into the tree; but they did not growl as though they saw the man. Then we leashed them again and sent one of the keepers into the tree, but he saw no sign of the quarry.

"It is a mystery!" exclaimed Pindes.

"It is indeed," agreed Tarzan; "at least for those who do not know the secret."

"Who does know the secret?" demanded Xerstle.

"The black slave who has escaped you must know, if no other."

"He has not escaped me," snapped Xerstle. "He has but prolonged the hunt and increased its interest. Come, let us go. I shall hunt with Gemnon and Pindes with Tarzan. We shall take one lion, they the other."

"Agreed," said Tarzan.

"But I am responsible to the queen for the safe return of Tarzan," demurred Gemnon. "I do not like to have him out of my sight even for a short time."

"I promise that I shall not try to escape," the ape-man assured him.

"It was not that alone of which I was thinking," explained Gemnon.

"And I can assure you that I can take care of myself, if you feel fears for my safety," added Tarzan.

Reluctantly Gemnon assented to the arrangement, and presently the two parties separated, Xerstle and Gemnon going towards the northwest while Pindes and Tarzan took an easterly direction. The latter had proceeded but a short distance, the lion still upon its leash, when Pindes suggested that they separate, spreading out through the forest, and thus combing it more carefully.

"You go straight east," he said to Tarzan, "the keepers and the lion will go northeast, and I will go north. If any comes upon the trail he may shout to attract the others to his position. If we have not located the quarry in an hour let us all converge toward the mountains at the eastern side of the forest."

The ape-man nodded and started off in the direction assigned him, soon disappearing among the trees. But neither Pindes nor the keepers moved from where he had left them, the keepers held by a whispered word from Pindes. The leashed lion looked after the departing ape-man, and Pindes smiled. The keepers looked at him questioningly.

"Such sad accidents have happened

many times before," said Pindes.

Tarzan moved steadily toward the east. Presently he heard a noise behind him and glancing back was not surprised by what he saw. A lion was stalking him, a lion wearing the harness of a hunting lion of Cathne. It was one of Xerstle's lions; it was the same lion that had accompanied Pindes and Tarzan.

Instantly the ape-man guessed the truth, and a grim light glinted in his eyes. It was no light of anger, but there was disgust in it and the shadowy suggestion of a savage smile. The lion, realizing that its quarry had discovered it, began to roar. In the distance Pindes heard and smiled.

Let us go now," he said to the

keepers. "We must not find the remains too quickly; that might not look well."

The three men moved slowly off toward the north.

From a distance Gemnon and Xerstle heard the roar of The hunting lion. "They have picked up the trail." said Gemnon, halting; "we had best join them."

"Not yet," demurred Xerstle. "It may be a false trail. We will wait until we hear the hunters call. But Gemnon was troubled.

Tarzan stood awaiting the coming of the lion. He could have taken to the trees and escaped, but a spirit of bravado prompted him to remain. He hated treachery, and exposing it gave him pleasure. He carried a Cathnean spear

and his own hunting knife; his bow and arrows he had left behind.

The lion came nearer; it seemed vaguely disturbed. Perhaps it did not understand why the quarry stood and faced it instead of running away. Its tail twitched; its head was flattened; slowly it came on again, its wicked eyes gleaming angrily.

Tarzan waited. In his right hand was the sturdy Cathnean spear, in his left his hunting knife. He measured the distance with a trained eye as the lion started its swift, level charge; then, when it was coming at full speed, his spear hand flew back and he launched the heavy weapon.

Deep beneath the left shoulder it drove, deep into the savage heart, but it

checked the beast's charge for but an instant. Infuriated now, the carnivore rose upon its hind legs above the ape-man, its great, taloned paws reaching to drag him to the slavering jowls; but Tarzan, swift as Ara the lightning, stooped and sprang beneath them, sprang to one side and then in again, closing with the lion, leaping upon its back.

With a hideous roar, the animal wheeled and sought to bury its great fangs in the bronzed body or reach it with those raking talons. It threw itself to right and left as the creature clinging to it drove a steel blade repeatedly into the already torn and bleeding heart.

The vitality and life tenacity of a lion are astounding, but even that mighty

frame could not long withstand the lethal wounds its adversary had inflicted, and presently it slumped to earth and, with a little quiver, died.

Then the ape-man leaped to his feet. With one foot upon the carcass of his kill, Tarzan of the Apes raised his face to the leafy canopy of the Cathnean forest and from his great chest rolled the hideous victory cry of the bull ape which has killed.

As the uncanny challenge reverberated down the forest aisles, Pindes and the two keepers looked questioningly at one another and laid their hands upon their sword hilts.

"In the name of Thoos! What was that?" demanded one of the keepers.

"Silence!" admonished Pindes. "Do you want the thing to creep upon us unheard because of your jabbering!"

"What was it, master?" asked one of the men in a whisper.

"It may have been the death cry of the stranger," suggested Pindes, voicing the hope that was in his heart.

"It sounded not like a death cry, master," replied the keeper. "There was a note of strength and elation in it, and none of weakness and defeat."

At a little distance, Gemnon and Xerstle heard, too. "What was that?" demanded the latter.

Gemnon shook his head. "I do not know, but we had better go and find out. I did not like the sound of it."

Xerstle appeared nervous. "It was nothing, perhaps, but the wind in the trees. Let us go on with our hunting." "There is no wind," demurred Gemnon. "I am going to investigate. I am responsible for the safety of the stranger; but, of even more importance than that, I like him."

"Oh, so do I!" exclaimed Xerstle eagerly. "But nothing could have happened to him. Pindes is with him."

"That is precisely what I was thinking," observed Gemnon.

"That nothing could have happened to him?"

"That Pindes is with him!"

Xerstle shot a quick, suspicious look at the other, motioned to the keepers to

follow with the leashed lion, and fell in behind Gemnon, who had already started back toward the point at which they had separated from their companions.

In the meantime Pindes, unable to curb his curiosity, overcame his fears and started after Tarzan.

They had not gone far when Pindes, who was in the lead, halted suddenly and pointed straight ahead. "What is that?" he demanded.

The keepers pressed forward. "Mane of Thoos!" cried one. "It is the lion!"

They advanced slowly, watching the lion, looking to right and left. "It is dead!" exclaimed Pindes.

The three men examined the body of the dead beast, turning it over. "It has

been stabbed to death," announced one of the keepers.

"The Galla slave had no weapon," said Pindes thoughtfully.

"The stranger carried a knife," a keeper reminded him.

"Whoever killed the lion must have fought it hand to hand," reflected Pindes aloud.

"Then he must be lying nearby dead or wounded, master."

"He could have killed Phobeg with his bare hands that day that he threw him into the audience at the stadium," a keeper reminded the noble. "He carried him around as though Phobeg were a babe. He is very strong."

"What has that to do with the matter?" demanded Pindes irritably.

"I do not know, master. I was only thinking."

I did not tell you to think," snapped Pindes; "I told You to hunt for the man that killed the lion. He must be dying or dead nearby."

While they hunted, Xerstle and Gemnon were drawing Nearer. The latter was much concerned about the welfare of his charge. He trusted neither Xerstle nor Pindes, and now he commenced to suspect that he and Tarzan had been deliberately separated sinister purposes. He was walking a little behind Xerstle at the time: the keepers, with the lion lion, were just

ahead of them. He felt a hand upon his shoulder and wheeled about. There stood Tarzan, a smile upon his lips. "Where did you drop from?" demanded Gemnon.

"We separated to search for the Galla. Pindes and I," explained the ape-man as Xerstle turned at the sound of Gemnon' s voice and discovered him.

"Did you hear that terrible scream a while ago?" demanded Xerstle. "We thought it possible that one of you was hurt, and we were hurrying to investigate."

"Did someone scream?" inquired Tarzan innocently.

"Perhaps it was Pindes, for I am not hurt."

Shortly after Tarzan had rejoined them, Xerstle and Gemnon came upon Pindes and his two lion keepers searching the underbrush and the surrounding forest.

As his eyes fell upon Tarzan, Pindes's eyes went wide in astonishment, and he paled a little.

"What has happened?" demanded Xerstle. "What are you looking for? Where is your lion?"

"He is dead," explained Pindes. "Someone or something stabbed him to death." He did not look at Tarzan; he feared to do so. "We have been looking for the man who did it, thinking that he must have been badly mauled and, doubtless, killed."

"Have you found him?" asked Tarzan.

"No".

"Shall I help you search for him? Suppose you and I, Pindes, go away alone and look for him!"

For a moment Pindes seemed choking as he sought for a reply. "No!" he exclaimed presently. "It would be useless; we have searched carefully. There is not even a sign of blood to indicate that he was wounded."

"And you found no trace of the quarry?" asked Xerstle.

"None," replied Pindes. "He has escaped, and we might as well return to the city. I have had enough hunting for today."

Xerstle only grunted and strode on moodily toward the city. When the party separated before the house of Gemnon's father, Tarzan stood close to Xerstle and whispered in a low voice, "My compliments to Erot, and may he have better luck next time!"

16. IN THE TEMPLE OF THOOS

As Tarzan sat with Gemnon and the latter's father and mother at dinner that evening, a slave entered the room to announce that a messenger had come from the house of Thudos, the father of Doria, with an important communication for Gemnon.

"Fetch him here," directed the young noble, and a moment later a tall slave was ushered into the apartment.

"Ah, Gemba!" exclaimed Gemnon in a kindly tone.

"You have a message for me?"

"Yes, master," replied the slave, "but it is important—and secret."

"You may speak before these others, Gemba," replied Gemnon. "What is it?"

"Doria, the daughter of Thudos, my master, has sent me to tell you that by a ruse the noble Erot gained entrance to her father's house and spoke with her today. What he said to her was of no importance; only the fact that he saw her is important."

"The jackal!" exclaimed Gemnon's father.

Gemnon paled. "That is all?" he inquired.

"That is all, master," replied Gemba.

Gemnon took a gold coin from his pocket pouch and handed it to the slave. "Return to your mistress, and tell her that I shall come and speak with her lather

tomorrow. After the slave had withdrawn, Gemnon looked hopelessly at his father. "What can I do?" he asked. "What can Thudos do? What can anyone do? We are helpless."

"Perhaps I can do something," suggested Tarzan. "For the moment I seem to hold the confidence of your queen. When I see her I shall question her, and if it is necessary I shall intercede in your behalf."

A new hope sprang to Gemnon's eyes. "If you will!" he cried. "She will listen to you. I believe that you alone might save Doria. But remember that the queen must not see her."

Early the next morning a messenger from the palace brought a command to

Tarzan to visit the queen at noon, with instructions to Gemnon to accompany Tarzan with a strong guard as she feared treachery on the part of Tarzan's enemies.

"They must be powerful enemies that dare attempt to thwart the wishes of Nemone," commented Gemnon's father.

"There is only one in all Cathne who dares do that," replied Gemnon, "and that is M'duze.

"Come," he continued, "we have the morning to ourselves. What shall we do in the meantime?"

"I should like to visit the mines of Cathne," replied Tarzan; "shall we have time?"

"Yes, we shall," replied Gemnon.

"The Mine of the Rising Sun is not far, and as there is little to see after you get there, the trip will not take long."

On the road from Cathne to the mine, Gemnon pointed out the place where the war and hunting lions of Cathne were bred; but they did not stop to visit the place, and presently they were winding up the short mountain road to the Gold Mine of the Rising Sun.

As Gemnon had warned him, there was little of interest for Tarzan to see. The workings were open, the mother lode lying practically upon the surface of the ground. So rich was it that only a few slaves working with crude picks and bars were needed to supply the coffers of Cathne with vast quantities of the

precious metal. But it was not the mines nor gold that had caused Tarzan to wish to visit the diggings. He had promised Hafim that he would carry a message to his brother Niaka, and it was for this purpose that he had suggested the visit.

As he moved about among the slaves, ostensibly inspecting the lode, he finally succeeded in separating himself sufficiently from Gemnon and the warriors who guarded the workers to permit him to speak unnoticed to one of the slaves.

"Which is Niaka?" he asked in Galla, lowering his voice to a whisper.

The man looked up in surprise, but at a warning gesture from Tarzan bent his head again and answered in a whisper,

"Niaka is the big man at my right. He is headman; you see that he does not work."

Tarzan moved then in the direction of Niaka, and, when he was close, stopped beside him and leaned as though inspecting the lode that was uncovered at his feet.

"Listen," he whispered. "I bring you a message, but let no one know that I am talking to you. it is from your brother Hafim. He has escaped."

"How?" whispered Niaka.

Briefly, Tarzan explained.

"It was you, then, who saved him?"

The ape-man nodded.

"I am only a poor slave," said Niaka,

"and you are a powerful noble, no doubt, so I can never repay you. But should you ever need any service that Niaka can render, you have but to command; with my life I would serve you. In that hut I live with my woman; because I am headman I am trusted and thus live alone. If you ever want me you will find me there." "I ask no return for what I did," replied Tarzan. "but I shall remember where you live; one never knows what the future holds." He moved away then and joined Gemnon, and presently the two turned back toward the city, while in the palace of the queen, Tomos entered the apartment of Nemone and knelt.

"What now?" she demanded. "Is the

affair so urgent that I must be interrupted at my toilet?"

"It is, majesty," replied the councilor, "and I beg that you send your slaves away. What I have to say is for your ears alone."

Nemone dismissed the girls. Then she turned to the councilor, who had arisen. "Well, what is it?"

"Your majesty has long had reason to suspect the loyalty of Thudos," Tomos reminded her, "and in the interest of your majesty's welfare and the safety of the throne, I am constantly watchful of the activities of this powerful enemy. Spurred on by love and loyalty, the noble Erot has been my most faithful agent and ally, and it is really to him that

we owe the information that I bring you.

Nemone tapped her sandaled foot impatiently upon the mosaic floor. "Have done with the self-serving preamble, and tell me what you have to tell me," she snapped.

"Briefly, then, it is this: Gemnon conspires also with Thudos, hoping, doubtless, that his reward will be the beautiful daughter of his chief."

"That hollow-cheeked strumpet!" exclaimed Nemone. "Who said she was beautiful?"

"Erot tells me that Gemnon and Thudos believe her the most beautiful woman in the world," replied Tomos.

"There are others who think so, too," he added.

"What others?"

"I but hesitated to name the other for fear of wounding your majesty," said Tomos oilily, "but if you insist, it is the stranger called Tarzan."

Nemone sat up very straight. "What fabric of lies is this you and M'duze are weaving?" she demanded.

"It is no lie, majesty. Tarzan and Gemnon were seen coming from the house of Thudos late at night. Erot had followed them there. He saw them go in, and they were there long while. Hiding in the shadows across the avenue, he saw them come out. He says that they were quarreling over Doria, and he believes that it was Gemnon who sought the life of Tarzan because of jealousy."

Nemone sat straight and stiff upon her couch; her face was pale and tense with fury. "Someone shall die for this," she said in a low voice. "Go!"

Tomos backed from the room. He was elated until he had time to reflect more fully upon her words; then he reflected that Nemone had not stated explicitly who should die.

It was almost noon when Tarzan and Gemnon returned to the city, and time for the latter to conduct Tarzan to his audience with Nemone. With a guard of warriors they went to the palace, where the ape-man was immediately admitted alone into the presence of the queen.

"Where have you been?" she demanded.

Tarzan looked at her in surprise; then he smiled. "I visited the Mine of the Rising Sun."

"Where were you last night?"

"At the house of Gemnon," he replied.

"You were with Doria!" accused Nemone.

"No," said the ape-man; "that was the night before."

He had been surprised by the accusation and the knowledge that it connoted, but he did not let her see that he was surprised. He was not thinking of himself but of Doria and Gemnon, seeking a plan whereby he might protect them. It was evident that some enemy had turned informer and that Nemone already knew of the visit to the house of

Thudos. Therefore, he felt that it would but have aroused the queen's suspicions to have denied it; to admit it freely, to show that he sought to conceal nothing, would allay them. As a matter of fact Tarzan's frank and ready reply left Nemone rather flat.

"Why did you go to the house of Thudos" she asked, but this time her tone was not accusing.

"You see, Gemnon does not dare to leave me alone for fear that I shall escape or that something may befall me, and so he is forced to take me wherever he goes. It is rather hard on him, Nemone, and I have been intending to ask you to make someone else responsible for me for at least a part of

the time."

"We will speak of that later," replied the queen. "Why does Gemnon go to the house of Thudos?" Nemone's eyes narrowed suspiciously.

The ape-man smiled. "What a foolish question for a woman to ask!" he exclaimed. "Gemnon is in love with Doria. I thought all Cathne knew that; he certainly takes enough pains to tell all his acquaintances."

"You are sure that it is not you who are in love with her?" demanded Nemone.

Tarzan looked at her with disgust he made no effort to conceal. "Do not be a fool, Nemone," he said. "I do not like fool women."

The jaw of the queen of Cathne dropped. In all her life no one had ever addressed her in words or tones like these.

When she spoke again, she had regained her calm. "I was told that you loved her," she explained, "but I did not believe it. Is she very beautiful? I have heard that she is considered the most beautiful woman in Cathne."

"Perhaps Gemnon thinks so," replied Tarzan with a laugh, "but you know what love does to the eyes of youth."

"What do you think of her?" demanded the queen.

The ape-man shrugged. "She is not bad looking," he said.

"Is she as beautiful as Nemone?"

demanded the queen.

"As the brilliance of a far star is to the brilliance of the sun."

The reply appeared to please Nemone. She arose and came closer to Tarzan. There was a rattling of chains at the far end of the room, followed by a terrific roar as Belthar sprang to his feet. Nemone shrank suddenly away from the ape-man, a shudder ran through her body, and an expression, half fright, half anger, suffused her face.

"It is always something," she said irritably, trembling a little. "Belthar is jealous. There is a strange bond linking the life of that beast to my life. I do not know what it is; I wish I did." A light, almost of madness, glittered in her eyes.

"But this I know: when Belthar dies, I die!"

She looked up rather sadly at Tarzan as again her mood changed. "Come, my friend," she said. "We shall go to the temple together and perhaps Thoos may answer the questions that are in the heart of Nemone." She struck a bronze disc that depended from the ceiling, and as the brazen notes reverberated in the room, a door opened and a noble bowed low upon the threshold.

"The guard!" commanded the queen. "We are visiting Thoos in his temple."

The progress to the temple was in the nature of a pageant—marching warriors with pennons streaming from spear tips, nobles resplendent in gorgeous

trappings, the queen in a golden chariot drawn by lions. Tomos walked upon one side of the glittering car, Tarzan upon the other where Erot had previously walked.

The ape-man was as uneasy as a forest lion as he strode between the lines of gaping citizenry. Crowds annoyed and irritated him; formalities irked him. His thoughts were far away in the distant jungle that he loved. He knew that Gemnon was nearby watching him, but whether he was nearby or not, Tarzan would not attempt to escape this friend was responsible for him. His mind occupied with such thoughts, he spoke to the queen.

"At the palace," he reminded her, "I spoke to you concerning the matter of

relieving Gemnon of the irksome job of watching me."

"Gemnon has acquitted himself well," she replied. "I see no reason for changing."

"Relieve him then, occasionally," suggested Tarzan. "Let Erot take his place."

Nemone looked at him in astonishment. "But Erot hates you!" she exclaimed.

"All the more reason that he would watch me carefully," argued Tarzan.

"He would probably kill you."

"He would not dare if he knew that he must pay for my death or escape with his own life," suggested Tarzan.

"You like Gemnon, do you not?" inquired Nemone innocently.

"Very much," the ape-man assured her.

"Then he is the man to watch you, for you would not imperil his life by escaping while he is responsible." Tarzan smiled inwardly and said no more. It was evident that Nemone was no fool. He would have to devise some other plan of escape that would not jeopardize the safety of his friend.

At the entrance to the temple Phobeg was on guard as a girl entered to worship. Recognizing the warrior, she greeted him and paused for a moment's conversation, the royal party having not yet entered the temple square.

"I have not seen you to talk with for a long time, Phobeg," she said. "I am glad that you are back again on the temple guard."

'Thanks to the stranger called Tarzan I am alive and here," replied Phobeg.

"I should think that you would hate him!" exclaimed the girl.

"Not I," cried Phobeg. "I know a better man when I see one. I admire him. And did he not grant me my life when the crowd screamed for my death?"

"That is true," admitted the girl. "And now he needs a friend."

"What do you mean, Maluma?" demanded the warrior.

"I was in the adjoining room when

Tomos visited the queen this morning," explained the girl, "and I overheard him tell her that Thudos and Gemnon and Tarzan were conspiring against her and that Tarzan loved Doria, the daughter of Thudos."

"How did Tomos know these things?" asked Phobeg.

"Did he offer proof?"

"He said that Erot had watched and had seen Gemnon and Tarzan visit the house of Thudos," explained Maluma. "He also told her that Erot had seen Doria and had reported that she was very beautiful."

Phobeg whistled. "That will be the end of the daughter of Thudos," he said.

"It will be the end of the stranger,

too," prophesied Maluma, "and I am sorry, for I like him. He is not like the jackal Erot, whom everyone hates."

"Here comes the queen!" exclaimed Phobeg as the procession entered the temple square.

Before the temple, Nemone alighted from her chariot and walked up the broad stairway to the ornate entrance. Behind her were the priests. Following them came the nobles of the court, the warriors of the guard remaining in the temple square before the entrance.

The temple was a large three-storied building with a great central dome, about the interior of which ran galleries at the second and third stories. The interior of the dome was of gold as were the pillars

that supported the galleries, while the walls of the building were embellished with colorful mosaics. Directly opposite the main entrance, on a level with a raised dais, a great cage was built into a niche, and on either side of the cage was an altar supporting a lion carved from solid gold. Before the dais was a stone railing inside of which was a throne and a row of stone benches facing the cage in the niche.

Nemone advanced and seated herself upon the throne while the nobles took their places upon the benches. No one paid any attention to Tarzan, so he remained outside the railing, a mildly interested spectator.

The high priest began a meaningless

singsong chant, in which the others joined occasionally as though making responses. Nemone leaned forward eagerly; her eyes were fastened upon the old lion.

Suddenly the chanting ceased and the queen arose.

"O Thoos!" she cried, her hands outstretched toward the mangy old carnivore. "Nemone brings you greetings. Receive them from Nemone and bless her. Give her life and health and happiness; most of all Nemone prays for happiness. Preserve her friends and destroy her enemies. And, O Thoos, give her the one thing that she most desires—love, the love of the one man in all the world that Nemone has ever loved!"

And the lion glared at her through the bars.

She spoke as though in a trance, as though oblivious to all else around her save the god to which she prayed.

Nemone sat, silent and rigid, upon her throne, staring straight ahead at the lion in the cage. The priests and many of the nobles were reciting prayers in monotones. It was evident to Tarzan that they were praying to the lion, for every eye was upon the repulsive beast. Some of the questions that had puzzled him when he had first come to Cathne were answered. He understood now the strange oaths of Phobeg and his statement that he had stepped upon the tail of Thoos.

Tarzan turned away in disgust and anger and walked from the temple out into the fresh air and the sunlight, and as he did so a warrior at the entrance hailed him by name in a whisper. There was a cautionary warning in the voice that prompted the ape-man to give no apparent sign of having heard as he turned his eyes casually in the direction from which the words had come, nor did he betray any interest when he discovered that it was Phobeg addressed him.

Turning slowly, so that his back was toward the warrior, Tarzan looked back into the temple as though expecting the return of the royal party. Then he backed to the side of the entrance as one might

who waits and stood so close to Phobeg that the latter might have touched him by moving his spear hand a couple of inches; but neither gave any sign of being aware of the identity or presence of the other.

In a low whisper, through lips that scarcely moved, Phobeg spoke. "I must speak to you! Come to the rear of the temple two hours after the sun has set. Do not answer, but if you hear and will come, turn your head to the right."

As Tarzan gave the assenting signal, the royal party commenced to file from the temple, and he fell in behind Nemone. The queen was quiet and moody, as she always was after the temple had aroused her to religious

frenzy; the reaction left her weak and indifferent. At the palace, she dismissed her following, including Tarzan, and withdrew to the seclusion of her apartments.

17. THE SECRET OF THE TEMPLE

After the royal party left the temple, Maluma came out and paused again to gossip with Phobeg. For some time they talked before she bid him good-bye and started back toward the palace. They spoke of many things—of the man in the secret prison behind a heavy golden door beneath the temple floor, of Erot and Tomos, of Nemone and Tarzan, of Gemnon and Doria, and of themselves. Being human, they talked mostly of themselves. It was late when Maluma returned to the palace. It was already the evening meal hour.

In the home of his father, Gemnon

paced the floor of the patio as he awaited the summons to the evening meal.

Seeking to divert Gemnon's mind from his troubles, Tarzan spoke of the ceremony at the temple, but principally of the temple itself, praising its beauty, commenting upon its magnificence.

"The temple does hide a real wrong," Gemnon said.

"Somewhere within it is hidden Alextar, the brother of Nemone, and while he rots there the corrupt Tomos and the cruel M'duze rule Cathne through the mad Nemone. "There are many who would have a change and place Alextar on the throne, but they fear the wrath of the terrible triumvirate. So we go on,

and nothing is done. Victim after victim succumbs to the jealousy and fear that constantly animate the throne.

"We have little hope today; we shall have no hope if the queen carries out the plan she is believed to be contemplating and destroys Alextar. There are reasons why it would be to her advantage to do so, the most important being the right of Alextar to proclaim himself king should he ever succeed in reaching the palace.

"If Nemone should die, Alextar would become king, and the populace would insist that he take his rightful place. For this reason Tomos and M'duze are anxious to destroy him. It is to Nemone's credit that she has withstood their arguments for all these years, steadfastly

refusing to destroy Alextar. But if ever he seriously threatens her powers, he is lost. Rumors that have reached her ears that a plot has been perfected to place him on the throne may already have sealed his doom."

During the meal that evening, Tarzan considered plans for visiting Phobeg at the temple. He wished to go alone but knew that he would place Gemnon in an embarrassing position should he suggest such a plan, while to permit the noble to accompany him might not only seal Phobeg's lips but jeopardize his safety as well. Therefore, he decided to go secretly.

Following the stratagem he had adopted, he remained in conversation

with Gemnon and his parents until almost two hours after the sun had set; then he excused himself, saying that he was tired, and went to the room that had been assigned him. But he did not tarry there. Instead, he merely crossed the room from the door to the window and stepped out into the patio upon which it faced. Here, as throughout the gardens and avenues of the section of the city occupied by the nobility, grew large, old trees, and a moment later the Lord of the Jungle was winging through his native element toward the golden temple of Thoos.

He stopped at last in a tree near the rear of the temple where he saw the huge and familiar figure of Phobeg waiting in

the shadows below. Soundlessly, the ape-man dropped to the ground in front of the astonished warrior "By the great fangs of Thoos!" ejaculated Phobeg "but you gave me a start."

"You expected me," was Tarzan's only comment.

"But not from the skies," retorted Phobeg. "However, you are here and it is well; I have much more to tell you than when I asked you to come. I have learned more since.

"I am listening," said Tarzan.

"A girl in the service of the queen overheard a conversation between Nemone and Tomos," commenced Phobeg. "Tomos accused you and Gemnon and Thudos of conspiring

against her. Erot spied upon you and knew of your long visit at the home of Thudos a few nights since. He also managed to enter the house on some pretext the following night and saw Doria, the daughter of Thudos. Tomos told Nemone that Doria was very beautiful and that you were in love with her.

"Nemone is not yet convinced that you love Doria, but to be on the safe side she has ordered Tomos to have the girl abducted and brought to the temple where she will be imprisoned until Nemone decides upon her fate. She may destroy her, or she may be content to have her beauty disfigured.

"But what you must know is this: if

you give Nemone the slightest reason to believe that you are conspiring against her or that you are fond of Doria, she will have you killed. All that I can do is warn you.

"You warned me once before, did you not," asked Tarzan, "the night that Gemnon and I went to the house of Thudos?"

"Yes, that was I," replied Phobeg.

"Why have you done these things?" asked the ape-man.

"Because I owe my life to you," replied the warrior, "and because I know a man when I see one. If a man can pick Phobeg up and toss him around as though he were a baby, Phobeg is willing to be his slave."

"I can only thank you for what you have told me, Phobeg," said Tarzan. "Now tell me more. If Doria is brought to the temple, where will she be imprisoned?"

"That is hard to say. Alextar is kept in rooms beneath the floor of the temple, but there are rooms upon the second and third floors where a prisoner might be safely confined, especially a woman."

"Could you get word to me if she is arrested?"

"I could try," replied Phobeg.

"Good! Is there anything further?"

"No."

"Then I shall return to Gemnon and warn him. Perhaps we shall find a way

to pacify Nemone or outwit her."

"Either would be difficult," commented Phobeg, "but good-bye and good luck!"

Tarzan swung into the tree above the warrior's head and disappeared among the shadows of the night, while Phobeg shook his head in wonderment and returned to his quarters in the temple.

The ape-man made his way to his room by the same avenue he had left it and went immediately to the common living room where the family ordinarily congregated for the evenings. Here he found Gemnon's father and mother, but Gemnon was not there.

"You could not sleep?" inquired the mother.

"No," replied the ape-man. "Where is Gemnon?"

"He was summoned to the palace a short time alter you went to your room," explained Gemnon's father.

Announcing that he would wait up until the son returned, Tarzan remained in the living room in conversation with the parents. He wondered a little that Gemnon should have been summoned to the palace at such an hour, and the things that Phobeg had told him made him a little apprehensive, but he kept his own council rather than frighten his host and hostess.

Scarcely an hour had passed when they heard a summons at the outer gate, and presently a slave came to announce

that a warrior wished to speak to Tarzan upon a matter of urgent necessity.

The ape-man arose. "I will go outside and see him," he said.

"Be careful," cautioned Gemnon's father. "You have bitter enemies who would be glad to see you destroyed."

"I shall be careful," Tarzan assured him as he left the room behind the slave.

At the gate two warriors connected with the house were detaining a huge man whom Tarzan recognized even from a distance as Phobeg. "I must speak with you at once and alone," said the latter.

"This man is all right," Tarzan told the guards. "Let him enter and I will talk with him in the garden."

When they had walked a short distance from the guards, Tarzan paused and faced his visitor. "What is it?" he asked. "You have brought me bad news?"

"Very bad," replied Phobeg. "Gemnon, Thudos, and many of their friends have been arrested and are now in the dungeons. Doria has been taken and is imprisoned in the temple. I did not expect to find you at liberty, but took the chance that Nemone's interest in you might have saved you temporarily. If you can escape from Cathne, do so at once. Her mood may change at any moment; she is as mad as a monkey."

"Thank you, Phobeg," said the ape-man. "Now get back to your quarters

before you become embroiled in this affair." "And you will escape?" asked the warrior.

"I owe something to Gemnon," replied Tarzan, "for his kindness and his friendship, so I shall not go until I have done what I can to help him."

"No one can help him," stated Phobeg emphatically.

"All that you will do is get yourself in trouble."

"I shall have to chance it, and now good-bye, my friend; but before you go tell me where Doria is imprisoned."

"On the third floor of the temple at the rear of the building, just above the doorway where I awaited you this evening."

Tarzan accompanied Phobeg to the gate and out into the avenue. "Where are you going?" demanded the latter.

"To the palace."

"You, too, are mad," protested Phobeg, but already the ape-man had left him and was walking rapidly along the avenue in the direction of the palace.

It was late, but Tarzan was now a familiar figure to the palace guards, and when he told them that Nemone had summoned him they let him enter, nor was he stopped until he had reached the anteroom outside the queen's apartments. Here a noble on guard protested that the hour was late and that the queen had retired, but Tarzan insisted upon seeing her.

"Tell her it is Tarzan," he said.

"I do not dare disturb her," explained the noble nervously.

"I dare," said Tarzan and stepped to the door leading to the ivory room where Nemone had been accustomed to receive him. The noble sought to interfere but the ape-man pushed him aside and attempted to open the door, only to find it securely bolted upon the opposite side. Then with his clenched fist he pounded loudly upon its carved surface.

Instantly from beyond it came the savage growls of Belthar and a moment later the frightened voice of a woman. "Who is there?" she demanded. "The queen sleeps. Who dares disturb her?"

"Go and awaken her," shouted Tarzan

through the door. "Tell her that Tarzan is here and wishes to see her at once."

"I am afraid," replied the girl. "The queen will be angry. Go away, and come in the morning."

Then Tarzan heard another voice beyond the door demanding, "Who is it comes pounding on Nemone's door at such an hour?" and recognized it as the queen's.

"It is the noble Tarzan," replied the slave girl.

"Draw the bolts and admit him," commanded Nemone, and as the door swung open Tarzan stepped into the ivory room.

The queen stood halfway across the apartment, facing him. She directed the

slave to re-bolt the door and leave the apartment; then she turned and, walking to the couch, motioned Tarzan to approach. As she sank among the soft cushions she motioned Tarzan to her side.

"I am glad you came," she said. "I could not sleep. I have been thinking of you. But tell me, why did you come? Had you been thinking of me?"

"I have been thinking of you, Nemone," replied the ape-man. "I have been thinking that perhaps you will help me; that you can help me, I know."

"You have only to ask," replied the queen softly.

"There is no favor that you may not have from Nemone for the asking."

A single cresset shed a soft, flickering light that scarcely dispelled the darkness of the room, at the far end of which the yellow-green eyes of Belthar blazed like twin lamps.

Then that same fatal door at the far end of the apartment opened and the tapping of a metal-shod staff upon the stone floor brought them both erect to gaze into the snarling face of M'duze.

"You fool!" cried the old hag in a shrill falsetto. "Send the man away, unless you would see him killed here before your eyes! Send him away at once!"

Nemone sprang to her feet and faced the old woman who was now trembling with rage.

"You have gone too far, M'duze," she said in a cold and level voice. "Remember that I am queen.

She glided quickly toward the old woman, and as she passed a low stand she stooped and seized something that lay there. Suddenly the slave woman shrieked and shrank away, but before she could turn and flee Nemone was upon her and seized her by the hair.

"Always you have ruined my life," cried Nemone, "you and Tomos. You have robbed me of happiness, and for that, this" and she drove the gleaming blade of a knife into the withered breast of the screaming woman.

Presently M'duze ceased shrieking and sank to the floor. Someone was

pounding upon the door to the anteroom and the terrified voices of nobles and guardsmen could be heard demanding entrance. In his corner Belthar tugged at his chains and roared. Nemone stood looking down upon M'duze with blazing eyes and snarling lips. Then she turned slowly towards the door upon which the pounding of her retainers' fists resounded. "Have done!" she called imperiously. "I, Nemone the queen, am safe."

The voices beyond the door died away as the guardsmen returned to their posts; then Nemone faced Tarzan. She looked suddenly worn and very tired. "That favor," she said, "ask it another time. Nemone is unstrung."

"I must ask it now," replied Tarzan; "tomorrow may be too late."

"Very well," she said. "I am listening. "What is it?"

"There is a noble in your court who has been very kind to me since I have been in Cathne," commenced Tarzan.

"Now he is in trouble, and I have come to ask you to save him."

Nemone's brow clouded. "Who is he?" she demanded.

"Gemnon," replied the ape-man. "He has been arrested with Thudos and the daughter of Thudos and several of their friends. It is only a plot to destroy me.

"You dare come to me to intercede for traitors!" cried the queen, blazing

with sudden fury. "But I know the reason; you love Doria!"

"I do not love her. I have seen her but once. Gemnon loves her. Let them be happy, Nemone."

"I am not happy," she replied; "why should they be happy?"

She turned away and buried her face in her arms as she sank to the couch; he saw her shoulders shaken by sobs, and pity filled his heart. He drew nearer to console her, but he had no chance to speak before she wheeled upon him, her eyes flashing through tears. "The girl, Doria, dies!" she cried. "Xarator shall have her tomorrow!"

18. FLAMING XARATOR

Her wrists and ankles bound, Doria, the daughter of Thudos, lay on a pile of skins in a room upon the third floor of the temple of Thoos. Diffused moonlight entered the single window, relieving the darkness of the interior of her prison. She had seen her father seized and dragged away; she was in the power of one so ruthless that she knew she could expect no mercy and that either death or cruel disfigurement awaited her, yet she did not weep.

Above her grief rose the pride of the noble blood of the house of Thudos, the courage of a line of warriors that stretched back into the forgotten ages; and she was brave.

She thought of Gemnon, and then the tears almost came, not for herself but for him, because of the grief that would be his when he learned of her fate. She did not know that he, too, had fallen into the clutches of the enemies of her father.

Presently she heard the sound of footsteps approaching along the corridor, heard them stop before the door behind which she was locked. The door swung open and the room was illuminated by the light of a torch held in the hand of a man who entered and closed the door behind him.

The girl lying upon the pile of skins recognized Erot. She saw him place the blazing torch in a wall socket designed for the purpose and turn toward her.

"Ah, the lovely Doria!" he exclaimed. "What ill fate has brought you here?"

"Doubtless the noble Erot could answer that question better than I," she replied.

"Yes, I believe that he could; in fact, I know it. It was I who caused you to be brought here; it was I who caused your father to be imprisoned; it was I who sent Gemnon. to the same cell with the noble Thudos."

"Gemnon imprisoned!" cried the girl.

"Yes, with many other conspirators against the throne. Behind his back they used to sneer at Erot because he was not a lion man. They will not sneer for long."

"And what is to be done with me?"

asked the girl.

"Nemone has decreed Xarator for you," replied Erot. "You are even now lying upon the skins in which you are to be sewn. It is for that purpose that I am here. My good friend Tomos the councilor sent me to sew you into the bag."

At that moment, a low growl sounded from the direction of the window. Erot looked up, and his face went ashy white. He leaped back and fled toward the door upon the opposite side of the room, his craven heart pounding in terror.

It was early in the morning as the procession formed that was to accompany the doomed Doria to Xarator, for Xarator lies sixteen miles

from the city of Cathne in the mountains at the far end of the valley of Onthar, and the procession could move no faster than the lions drawing the chariot of the queen would walk, which was not fast.

Bred for generations for this purpose, the lions of Cathne had far greater endurance than forest bred lions, yet it would be well into the night before it could be hoped to make the long journey to Xarator and return. Hundreds of slaves bore torches with which to light the homeward Journey after night had fallen.

Nemone entered her chariot. She was wrapped in woolen robes and the skins of animals, for the morning air was still chill. At her side walked Tomos,

nervous and ill at ease. He knew that M'duze was dead and wondered if he would be next. The queen's manner was curt and abrupt, filling him with dread, for now there was no M'duze to protect him from the easily aroused wrath of Nemone.

"Where is Tarzan?" she demanded.

"I do not know, majesty," replied Tomos. "I have not seen him."

"Produce him," commanded Nemone sullenly. "It grows late, and Nemone is not accustomed to wait upon any.

"But, majesty—" began Tomos again.

"Here he comes now!" exclaimed Nemone as Tarzan strode up the avenue toward her.

Tomos breathed a sigh of relief and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. He did not like Tarzan, but in all his life he had never before been so glad to see anyone alive and well.

"You are late," said Nemone as Tarzan stopped beside her chariot.

The Lord of the Jungle made no reply.

"We are not accustomed to being delayed," she continued a little sharply.

"Perhaps if you placed me in the custody of Erot, as I suggested, he would deliver me on time in future."

Nemone ignored this and turned to Tomos. "We are ready," she said.

At a word from the councilor a trumpeter at his side raised his

instrument to his lips and sounded a call. Slowly the long procession began to move, and like a huge serpent crawled toward the bridge of gold. The citizens lining the avenue moved with it, men, women, and children. The women and children carried packages in which food was wrapped, the men bore arms. A journey to Xarator was an event. It took them the length of Onthar where wild lions roamed and where Athnean raiders might set upon them at any moment of the day or night, especially of the night, so the march took on something of the aspects of both a pageant and a military excursion.

Behind the golden chariot of the queen rolled a second chariot on the

floor of which lay a bundle sewn in the skins of lions. Chained to this chariot were Thudos and Gemnon. Following were a hundred chariots driven by nobles in gold and ivory, while other nobles on foot entirely surrounded the chariot of the queen.

There were columns of marching warriors in the lead, and in the rear were the war lions of Cathne, the royal fighting lions of the queen. Keepers held them on leashes of gold, and proud nobles of ancient families marched beside them—the lion men of Cathne.

The barbaric splendor of the scene impressed even the ape-man who cared little for display, though he gave no outward sign of interest as he strode at

the wheel of Nemone's chariot drawn by its eight great lions held in leash by twenty four powerful slaves in tunics of red and gold.

The sun, climbing into the heavens, was bringing heat. Slaves carrying an umbrella over the queen adjusted it to fend the hot rays from her; others waved lions' tails attached to the ends of long poles to and fro about her to drive the insects away. A gentle breeze carried the dust of the long column lazily toward the west.

Nemone sighed and turned to Tarzan. "Why were you late?" she asked.

"Would it be strange that I overslept?" he asked. "It was late when I left the palace, and there was no keeper

to awaken me since you took Gemnon away.

"Had you wished to see me again as badly as I wished to see you, you would not have been late."

"I was as anxious to be here as you," he replied.

"You have never seen Xarator?" she asked.

"No".

"It is a holy mountain, created by Thoos for the enemies of the kings and queens of Cathne. In all the world there is nothing like it."

"I am going to enjoy seeing it," replied the ape-man grimly.

They were approaching a fork in the

road. "That road leading to the right runs through the Pass of the Warriors into the valley of Thenar," she explained. "Some day I shall send you on a raid to Thenar, and you shall bring me Athne's greatest warriors as hostages."

Tarzan thought of Valthor and wondered if he had reached Athne in safety. He glanced back at Thudos and Gemnon. He had not spoken to them, but it was because of them that he was here. He might easily have escaped had he not determined to remain until he was certain that he could not aid these friends. Their case appeared hopeless, yet the ape-man had not given up hope.

At noon the procession stopped for lunch. The populace scattered about

seeking the shade of the trees that dotted the plain and that had not already been selected by the queen and the nobles. The lions were led into shade, where they lay down to rest. Warriors, always on the lookout for danger, stood guard about the temporary encampment.

There was always danger on the Field of the Lions.

The halt was brief; in half an hour the cavalcade was on the march again. There was less talking now; silence and the great heat hung over the dusty column. The hills that bounded the valley upon the north were close, and soon they entered them, following a canyon upward to a winding mountain road that led into the hills above.

Presently the smell of sulfur fumes came plainly to the nostrils of the ape-man, and a little later the column turned the shoulder of a great mass of volcanic rock and came upon the edge of a huge crater. Far below, molten rock bubbled, sending up spurts of flame, geysers of steam, and columns of yellow smoke. The scene was impressive and awe-inspiring. Tarzan stood with folded arms and bent head gazing down into the seething inferno until the queen touched him on the shoulder. "What do you think of Xarator?" she asked.

He shook his head. "There are some emotions," he answered slowly, "for which no words have yet been coined."

"It was created by Thoos for the kings

of Cathne," she explained proudly.

Tarzan made no reply; perhaps he was thinking that here again the lexicographers had failed to furnish words adequate to the occasion.

On either side of the royal party the people crowded close to the edge of the crater that they might miss nothing of what was about to transpire. The children laughed and played, or teased their mothers for the food that was being saved for the evening meal upon the return journey to Cathne.

The ceremony at Xarator, though it bore the authority of so- called justice, was of a semi-religious nature that required the presence and active participation of priests, two of whom

lifted the sack containing the victim from the chariot and placed it at the edge of the crater at the feet of the queen.

As two other priests lifted the body from the ground and were about to hurl it into the crater, she stopped them with a curt command. "Wait!" she cried. "We would look upon the too great beauty of Doria, the daughter of Thudos, the traitor."

All eyes were upon the priest who drew his dagger and ripped open the bag along one loosely sewn seam. The eyes of Thudos and Gemnon were fixed upon the still figure outlined beneath the tawny skins of lions. Beads of perspiration stood upon their foreheads; their jaws and their fists were clenched.

The eyes of Tarzan turned from the activities of the priest to the face of the queen; between narrowed lids, from beneath stern brows they watched her.

The priests, gathering the bag by one side, raised it and let the body roll out upon the ground where all could see it. There was a gasp of astonishment. Nemone cried out in a sudden fit of rage. The body was that of Erot, and he was dead!

19. THE QUEEN'S QUARRY

After the first involuntary cries of surprise and rage, an ominous silence fell upon the barbaric scene. Now all eyes were centered upon the queen, whose ordinarily beautiful countenance was almost hideous from rage, a rage which, after her single angry cry, choked further utterance for the moment. But at length she found her voice and turned furiously upon Tomos.

"What means this?" she demanded, her voice now controlled and as cold as the steel in the sheath at her side.

Tomos, who was as much astounded as she, stammered as he trembled in his

sandals of elephant hide. "There are traitors even in the temple of Thoos!" he cried. "I chose Erot to prepare the girl for the embraces of Xarator because I knew that his loyalty to his queen would ensure the work being well done. I did not know, O gracious Nemone, that this vile crime had been committed or that the body of Erot had been substituted for that of the daughter of Thudos until this very instant."

With an expression of disgust the queen commanded the priests to hurl the body of Erot into the crater, and, as it was swallowed by the fiery pit, she ordered an immediate return to Cathne.

In morose and gloomy silence she rode down the winding mountain trail

and out onto the Field of the Lions, and often her eyes were upon the bronzed giant striding beside her chariot.

At last she broke her silence. "Two of your enemies are gone now," she said. "I destroyed one; who do you think destroyed the other?"

"Perhaps I did," suggested Tarzan with a "I had been thinking of that possibility," replied Nemone, but she did not smile.

"Whoever did it performed a service for Cathne."

"Perhaps," she half agreed, "but it is not the killing of Erot that annoys me. It is the effrontery that dared interfere with the plans of Nemone."

Tarzan shrugged his broad shoulders,

but remained silent.

The tedious journey back to Cathne ended at last, an with flaring torches lighting the way, the queen's procession crossed the bridge of gold and entered the city. Here she immediately ordered a thorough search to be made for Doria.

Thudos and Gemnon, happy but mystified, were returned to their cell to await the new doom that Nemone would fix for them. Tarzan was commanded to accompany Nemone into the palace and dine with her. Tomos had been dismissed with a curt injunction to find Doria or prepare for the worst.

Tarzan and the queen ate alone in a small dining room attended only by slaves, and when the meal was over

Nemone conducted him to the now all too familiar ivory room, where he was greeted by the angry growls of Belthar "Erot and M'duze are dead," said the queen, "and I have sent Tomos away. There will be none to disturb us tonight."

The ape-man sat with his eyes fixed upon her, studying her. It seemed incredible that this sweet and lovely woman could be the cruel tyrant that was Nemone the queen.

But then, as the Lord of the Jungle looked at her, the spell that had held him vanished. Beneath the beautiful exterior he saw the crazed mind of a mad woman. He saw the creature that cast defenseless men to will beasts that disfigured or destroyed women who

might be more beautiful than she, and all that was fine in him revolted.

With a half growl he arose to his feet. Nemone gazed for a moment questioningly at the man above her; then she seemed to realize what he was thinking, and the mad, cruel light of rage blazed in her eyes. She sprang to one side of the room where a metal gong depended from the ceiling and seizing the striker smote it three times.

The brazen notes rang through the chamber mingling with the roars of the infuriated lion Belthar.

Tarzan stood watching her; she seemed wholly irresponsible, quite mad. It would be useless to attempt to reason with her. He moved slowly toward the

door, but before he reached it, it swung open, and a score of warriors accompanied by two nobles rushed in.

"Take this man!" ordered Nemone. "Throw him into the cell with the other enemies of the queen!"

Tarzan was unarmed. He had worn only a sword when he entered the ivory room and that he had unbuckled and laid upon a stand near the doorway. There were twenty spears leveled at him, twenty spears that entirely encircled him. With a shrug he surrendered. It was that or death. In prison he might find the means to escape; at least he would see Gemnon again, and there was something that he very much wished to tell Gemnon and Thudos.

As the soldiers conducted him from the room and the door closed behind them, Nemone threw herself among the cushions of her couch, her body racked by choking sobs. The great lion grumbled in the dusky corner of the room. Suddenly Nemone sat erect and her eyes blazed into the blazing eyes of the lion. For a moment she sat there thus, and then she arose and a peal of maniacal laughter broke from her lips.

Thudos and Gemnon sitting in their cell heard the tramp of marching men approaching the prison in which they were confined. "Evidently Nemone cannot wait until tomorrow," said Thudos.

"You think she is sending for us

now?" asked Gemnon.

"What else?" demanded the older man. "The lion pit can be illuminated."

As they waited and listened, the steps stopped outside their cell, the door was pushed open, and a man entered. The warriors had carried no torches and neither neither Thudos nor Gemnon could discern the features of the newcomer. None of them spoke until the guard had departed out of earshot. "Greetings, Thudos and Gemnon!" exclaimed the new prisoner cheerily.

"Tarzan!" exclaimed Gemnon.

"None other," admitted the ape-man.

"What brings you here?" demanded Thudos.

"Twenty warriors and the whim of a woman, an insane woman," replied Tarzan.

"So you have fallen from favor!" exclaimed Gemnon. "I am sorry."

"It was inevitable," said Tarzan.

"And what will your punishment be?"

"I do not know, but I suspect that it will be quite sufficient. However, that is something that need not concern any of us until it happens. Maybe it won't happen at all."

"There is no room in the dungeon of Nemone for optimism," remarked Thudos with a grim laugh.

"Perhaps not," agreed the ape-man, "but I shall continue to indulge myself.

Doubtless Doria felt hopeless in her prison in the temple last night, yet she escaped Xarator."

"That is a miracle that I cannot fathom," said Gemnon.

"It was quite simple," Tarzan assured him. "A loyal friend, whose identity you may guess, came and told me that she was a prisoner in the temple. I went at once to find her. Fortunately the trees of Cathne are old and large and numerous; one of them grows close to the rear of the temple, its branches almost brushing the window of the room in which Doria was confined. When I arrived there, I found Erot there with Doria. I also found the sack in which he had purposed tying her for the journey to Xarator. What was

simpler? I let Erot take the ride that had been planned for Doria."

"You saved her! Where is she?" cried Thudos, his voice breaking in the first emotion he had displayed since he had learned of his daughter's plight.

"Come close," cautioned Tarzan, "lest the walls themselves be enemies." The two men pressed close to the speaker who continued in a low whisper, "Do you recall, Gemnon, that when we were at the gold mine I spoke aside to one of the slaves there?"

"I believe that I did notice it," replied Gemnon. "I thought you were asking questions about the operation of the mine.

"No; I was delivering a message from

his brother, and so grateful was he that he begged that he be permitted to serve me if the opportunity arose. It was to arise much sooner than either of us could have expected; and so, when it was necessary to find a hiding place for Doria, I thought immediately of the isolated hut of Niaka, the headman of the black slaves at the gold mine.

"She is there now, and the man will protect her as long as is necessary. He has promised me that if he hears nothing from me for half a moon he is to understand that none of us three can come to her aid, and that then he will get word to the faithful slaves of the house of Thudos. He says that that will be difficult but not impossible."

"Doria safe!" whispered Gemnon. "Thudos and I may now die happy."

For some time the three men sat in silence that was broken at last by Gemnon. "How did it happen that you knew the brother of a slave well enough to carry a message from one to the other?" he asked, a note of puzzlement in his voice.

"Do you recall Xerstle's grand hunt?" asked Tarzan with a laugh.

"Of course, but what has that to do with it?" demanded Gemnon.

"Do you remember the quarry, the man we saw on the slave block in the market place?"

"Yes."

"He is the brother of Niaka," explained Tarzan.

"But you never had an opportunity to speak to him," objected the young noble.

"Oh, but I did. It was I who helped him escape. That was why his brother was so grateful to me."

"I still do not understand," said Gemnon.

"There is probably much connected with Xerstle's grand hunt that you do not understand," suggested Tarzan. And he went on to tell his part in the hunt.

"Now I am doubly sorry that I must die," said Gemnon.

"Why more so than before?" asked Thudos.

"I shall never have the opportunity to tell the story of Xerstle's grand hunt," he explained. "What a story that would make!"

The morning dawned bright and beautiful, just as though there was no misery or sorrow or cruelty in the world, but it did not change matters at all, other than to make the cell in which the three men were confined uncomfortably warm as the day progressed.

Shortly after noon a guard came and took Tarzan away. All three of the prisoners were acquainted with the officer who commanded it, a decent fellow who spoke sympathetically to them. "Is he coming back?" asked

Thudos, nodding toward Tarzan.

The officer shook his head. "No. The queen hunts today."

Thudos and Gemnon pressed the ape-man's shoulder.

No word was spoken, but that wordless farewell was more eloquent than words. They saw him go out, saw the door close behind him, but neither spoke, and so they sat for a long hour in silence.

In the guardroom, to which he had been conducted from his cell, Tarzan was heavily chained. A golden collar was placed about his neck, and a chain reaching from each side of it was held in the hands of a warrior.

"Why all the precautions?" demanded

the ape-man.

"It is merely a custom," explained the officer. "It is always thus that the queen's quarry is led to the Field of the Lions."

Once again Tarzan of the Apes walked near the chariot of the queen of Cathne, but this time he walked behind it, a chained prisoner between two stalwart warriors and surrounded by a score of others. Once again he crossed the bridge of gold out onto the Field of the Lions in the valley of Onthar.

The procession did not go far, scarcely more than a mile from the city. With scowling brows Nemone sat brooding in her chariot as it stopped at last at the point she had selected for the start of the hunt. She ordered the guard to

fetch the prisoner to her. She was looking straight ahead as the ape-man halted by the wheel of her chariot.

"Send all away except the two warriors who hold him," commanded Nemone.

"You may send them, too, if you wish," said Tarzan. "I give you my word not to harm you or try to escape while they are away.

Nemone, still looking straight ahead, was silent for a moment; then, "You may all go. I would speak with the prisoner alone."

When the guard had departed a number of paces, the queen turned her eyes toward Tarzan and found his smiling into her own. "You are going to

be very happy, Nemone," he said in an easy, friendly voice.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "How am I going to be happy?"

"You are going to see me die, that is if the lion catches me," he laughed.

"You think that will give me pleasure? Well, I thought so myself, but now I am wondering if it will. Nothing in life is ever what I hope for."

"Possibly you don't hope for the right things," he suggested. "Did you ever try hoping for something that would bring pleasure and happiness to someone beside yourself?"

"Why should I?" she asked. "I hope for my own happiness; let others do the same. I strive for my own happiness—"

"And never have any," interrupted the ape-man good-naturedly.

"Probably I should have less if I strove only for the happiness of others," she insisted.

"There are people like that," he assented. "Perhaps you are one of them, so you might as well go on striving for happiness in your own way. Of course you won't get it, but you will at least have the pleasures of anticipation, and that is something."

"I think I know myself and my own affairs well enough to determine for myself how to conduct my life," she said with a note of asperity in her voice.

Tarzan shrugged. "It was not in my thoughts to interfere," he said. "If you are

determined to kill me and are quite sure that you will derive pleasure from it, why, I should be the last in the world to suggest that you abandon the idea."

"You do not amuse me," said Nemone haughtily. "I do not care for irony that is aimed at myself." She turned fiercely on him. "Men have died for less!" she cried, and the Lord of the Jungle laughed in her face.

"How many times?" he asked.

"A moment ago," said Nemone, "I was beginning to regret the thing that is about to happen. Had you been different, I might have relented and returned you to favor, but you do everything to antagonize me. You affront me, you insult me, you laugh at me." Her voice

was rising, a barometric indication, Tarzan had learned, of her mental state.

"You will go on killing people and being unhappy until it is your turn to be killed," Tarzan said.

She shuddered. "Killed!" she repeated. "Yes, they are all killed, the kings and queens of Cathne. But it is not my turn yet. While Belthar lives, Nemone lives."

She was silent for a moment. "You may live, too, Tarzan, if you kneel here, before my people, and beg for mercy. "Bring on your lion," said Tarzan. "His mercy might be kinder than Nemone's."

"You refuse?" she demanded angrily. "You would kill me eventually," he replied. "There is a chance the lion may

not be able to."

"Not a chance!" she said. "Have you seen the lion?"

"No."

Nemone turned and called a noble. "Have the hunting lion brought to scent the quarry!"

Behind them there was a scattering of troops and nobles as they made an avenue for the hunting lion and his keepers, and along the avenue Tarzan saw a great lion straining at the golden leashes to which eight men clung. Growling and roaring, the beast sprang from side to side in an effort to seize a keeper or lay hold upon one of the warriors or nobles that lined the way; so that it was all that four stalwart men on

either side of him could do to prevent his accomplishing his design.

He was still afar when Tarzan saw the tuft of white hair in the center of his mane between his ears. It was Belthar!

Nemone was eying the man at her side as a cat might eye a mouse, but though the lion was close now she saw no change in the expression on Tarzan's face. "Do you not recognize him?" she demanded.

"Of course I do," he replied.

"And you are not afraid?"

"Of what?" he asked, looking at her wonderingly.

She stamped her foot in anger, thinking that he was trying to rob her of

the satisfaction of witnessing his terror, for how could she know that Tarzan of the Apes could not understand the meaning of fear? "Prepare for the grand hunt!" she commanded, turning to a noble standing with the guard.

The warriors who had held Tarzan in leash ran forward and picked up the golden chains that were attached to the golden collar about his neck, the guards took posts about the chariot of the queen, and Tarzan was led a few yards in advance of it. Then the keepers brought Belthar closer to him, holding him just out of reach but only with difficulty, for when the irascible beast recognized the ape-man he flew into a frenzy of rage that taxed the eight men to hold him at

all.

A noble approached Tarzan. He was Phordos, the father of Gemnon, hereditary captain of the hunt for the rulers of Cathne. He came quite close to Tarzan and spoke to him in a low whisper. "I am sorry that I must have a part in this," he said, "but my office requires it." And then aloud, "In the name of the queen, silence! These are the rules of the grand hunt of Nemone, queen of Cathne: the quarry shall move north down the center of the lane of warriors; when he has proceeded a hundred paces the keepers shall unleash the hunting lion, Belthar. Let no man distract the lion from the chase or aid the quarry, under penalty of death."

"What if I elude him and escape?" demanded the ape-man. "Shall I have my freedom then?"

Phordos shook his head sadly. "You will not escape him," he said. Then he turned toward the queen and knelt. "Allis in readiness, your majesty. Shall the hunt commence?"

"Let the lion scent the quarry once more; then the hunt may start," she directed.

The keepers let Belthar move a little closer to the ape-man.

Nemone leaned forward eagerly, staring at the savage beast that was the pride of her stable; the light of insanity gleamed in her eyes now. "It is enough!" she cried.

In a hollow near the river that runs past Cathne a lion lay asleep in dense brush, a mighty beast with a yellow coat and a great black mane. Strange sounds coming to him from the plain disturbed him and he rumbled complainingly in his throat, but as yet he seemed only half awake.

His eyes were closed, but his half wakefulness was only seeming. Numa was awake, but he wanted to sleep and was angry with the men-things that were disturbing him. They were not too close as yet, but he knew that if they came closer he would have to get up and investigate. and that he did not want to do. He felt very lazy.

Out on the field Tarzan was striding

along the spear bound lane. He counted his steps, knowing that at the hundredth Belthar would be loosed upon him. The ape-man had a plan. Across the river to the east was the forest in which he had hunted with Xerstle and Pindes and Gemnon; could he reach it, he would be safe. No lion or no man could hope ever to overtake the Lord of the Jungle once he swung to the branches of those towering old trees.

But could he reach the wood before Belthar overtook him? Tarzan was swift, but there are few creatures as swift as Numa at the height of his charge. With a start of a hundred paces, the ape-man felt that he might outdistance an ordinary lion, but Belthar was no ordinary lion.

At the hundredth pace Tarzan leaped forward at top speed. Behind him he heard the frenzied roar of the hunting lion as his leashes were slipped and, mingling with it, the roar of the crowd.

Smoothly and low ran Belthar, the hunting lion, swiftly closing up the distance that separated him from the quarry. He looked neither to right nor to left; his fierce, blazing eyes remained fixed upon the fleeing man ahead.

Belthar was gaining on the quarry when Tarzan turned suddenly to the east toward the river after he had passed the end of the gauntlet that had held him to a straight path at the beginning of his flight.

A scream of rage burst from the lips

of Nemone as she saw and realized the purpose of the quarry. A sullen roar rose from the pursuing crowd. They had not thought that the hunted man had a chance, but now they understood that he might yet reach the river and the forest.

Tarzan, glancing back over a bronzed shoulder, realized that the end was near. The river was still two hundred yards away and the lion, steadily gaining on him, but fifty.

Then the ape-man turned and waited. He stood at ease, his arms hanging at his side, but he was alert and ready.

He knew precisely what Belthar would do, and he knew what he would do. No amount of training would have changed the lion's instinctive method of

attack. He would rush at Tarzan, rear upon his hind feet when close, seize him with his taloned paws and drive his great fangs through his head or neck or shoulder. Then he would drag him down.

But Tarzan had met the charge of lions before. It would not be quite as easy for Belthar as Belthar and the screaming audience believed, yet the ape-man guessed that, without a knife, he could do no more than delay the inevitable. He would die fighting, however, and now, as Belthar charged growling upon him, he crouched slightly and answered the roaring challenge of the carnivore with a roar as savage as the lion's.

Suddenly he detected a new note in

the voice of the crowd, a note of surprise and consternation. Belthar was almost upon him as a tawny body streaked past the ape-man, brushing his leg as it came from behind him, and, as Belthar rose upon his hind feet, fell upon him, a fury of talons and gleaming fangs, a great lion with a golden coat and a black mane—a mighty engine of rage and destruction.

Roaring and growling, the two great beasts rolled upon The ground as they tore at one another with teeth and claws while the astounded ape-man looked on and the chariot of the queen approached, and the breathless crowd pressed forward.

The strange lion was larger than

Belthar and more powerful, a giant of a lion in the full prime of his strength and ferocity. Presently Belthar gave him an opening, and his great jaws closed upon the throat of the hunting lion of Nemone, jaws that drove mighty fangs through the thick mane of his adversary, through hide and flesh deep into the jugular of Belthar. Then he braced his feet and shook Belthar as a cat might shake a mouse.

Dropping Belthar to the ground, the victor faced the astonished Cathneans with snarling face. Then he slowly backed to where the ape- man stood and stopped beside him and Tarzan laid his hand upon the black mane of Jad-bal-ja, the Golden Lion.

For a long moment there was unbroken silence as the two faced the enemies of the Lord of the Jungle, and the awed Cathneans only stood and stared; then a woman s voice rose in a weird scream. It was Nemone. Slowly she stepped from her golden car and amidst utter silence walked toward the dead Belthar while her people watched her, motionless and wondering.

She stopped with her sandaled feet touching the bloody mane of the hunting lion and gazed down upon the dead carnivore.

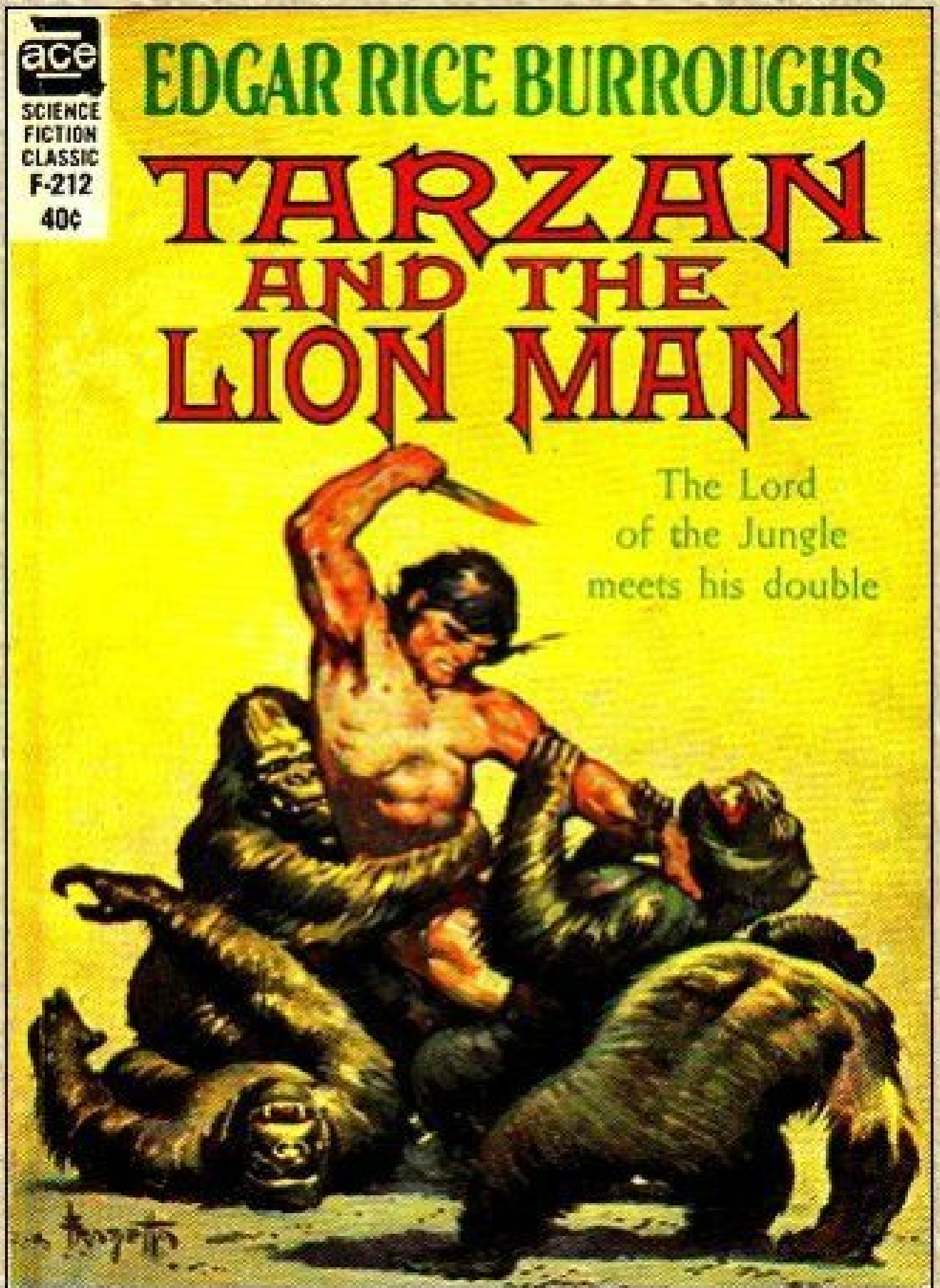
"Belthar is dead!" she screamed, and whipping her dagger from its sheath drove its glittering point deep into her own heart.

As the moon rose, Tarzan placed a final rock upon a mound of earth beside the river that runs to Cathne through the valley of Onthar.

The warriors and the nobles and the people had followed Phordos to the city to empty the dungeons of Nemone and proclaim Alextar king, leaving their dead queen lying at the edge of the Field of the Lions with the dead Belthar.

The human service they had neglected, the beast-man had performed, and now beneath the soft radiance of an African moon he stood with bowed head beside the grave of a woman who had found happiness at last.

THE END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TARZAN AND THE LION MAN
The Lord of the Jungle meets his double

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN AND THE LION MAN

BOOK 17 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

Serialized in *Liberty Magazine,* November 11, 1933—January 6, 1934

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TARZAN COMES TO LIBERTY!

Here Begins the Best of All the Stories Written Around the Most Widely Known Character in Modern Fiction

Tarzan *and the* Lion Man

By

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Illustrated by "Rex Maxon"

The enemy and white man were completely surprised by the Great Kidnap Group. Their rifles fell, their boys on the ground.

(Reading time: 25 minutes 5 minutes)

HERE he is, Tarzan. We have to worldwide the opinion in Liberty that this time is the greatest of all his stories. Thrills, drama, romance, all the mystery and lure of the people that have made him so well known in Tarzan. Burroughs has packed into this extraordinary tale of amazing adventures.

In presenting this story Liberty has created a permanent treasure of popular reading, and whether you have or haven't met Tarzan before, you will be completely and poignantly the startling chain of circumstances that carry this novel to a dramatic conclusion.

Part One—In Commerce

MR. WILFRED SMITH, President of the Department of Protection, was in conference. Long distance was changing constantly, as daily he dictated and it was about six hours since breakfast when the U. S. Marine, Mr. Smith had a short interval in his conference.

"I've heard of him a hundred," he answered the telephone. "Give me the new story."

A moment, another the news and could see over the desk. "Mr. Tarzan is here," she said.

"Good." Smith rose to meet the visitor.

Tarzan the Ape-man, and the conference ceased in a minute. Smith was shaking hands with him.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Tarzan." he said. "Doesn't seem to office time are busy. Sorry, Barnes. Come back with the news figure." And he put something in front of the man. "Are you ... The doctor has wonderful news of the

Transcription of Tarzan made with their and [illegible] pictures?"

"Are [illegible] I [illegible]?"

"Well, there are [illegible] pictures and [illegible] pictures. [illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible]. "[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

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1. IN CONFERENCE

Mr. Milton Smith, Executive Vice President in Charge of Production, was in conference. A half dozen men lounged comfortably in deep, soft chairs and divans about his large, well-appointed office in the B.O. studio. Mr. Smith had a chair behind a big desk, but he seldom occupied it. He was an imaginative, dramatic, dynamic person. He required freedom and space in which to express himself. His large chair was too small; so he paced about the office more often than he occupied his chair, and his hands interpreted his thoughts quite as fluently as did his tongue.

"It's bound to be a knock-out," he assured his listeners; "no synthetic

jungle, no faked sound effects, no toothless old lions that every picture fan in the U.S. knows by their first names. No, sir! This will be the real thing."

A secretary entered the room and closed the door behind her. "Mr. Orman is here," she said.

"Good! Ask him to come in, please." Mr. Smith rubbed his palms together and turned to the others. "Thinking of Orman was nothing less than an inspiration," he exclaimed. "He's just the man to make this picture."

"Just another one of your inspirations, Chief," remarked one of the men. "They've got to hand it to you."

Another, sitting next to the speaker, leaned closer to him. "I thought you

suggested Orman the other day," he whispered.

"I did," said the first man out of the corner of his mouth.

Again the door opened, and the secretary ushered in a stocky, bronzed man who was greeted familiarly by all in the room. Smith advanced and shook hands with him.

"Glad to see you, Tom," he said. "Haven't seen you since you got back from Borneo. Great stuff you got down there. But I've got something bigger still on the fire for you. You know the clean-up Superlative Pictures made with their last jungle picture?"

"How could I help it; it's all I've heard since I got back. Now I suppose

everybody's goin' to make jungle pictures."

"Well, there are jungle pictures and jungle pictures. We're going to make a real one. Every scene in that Superlative picture was shot inside a radius of twenty-five miles from Hollywood except a few African stock shots, and the sound effects—lousy!" Smith grimaced his contempt.

"And where are we goin' to shoot?" inquired Orman; "fifty miles from Hollywood?"

"No, sir! We're goin' to send a company right to the heart of Africa, right to the—ah—er—what's the name of that forest, Joe?"

"The Ituri Forest."

"Yes, right to the Ituri Forest with sound equipment and everything. Think of it, Tom! You get the real stuff, the real natives, the jungle, the animals, the sounds. You 'shoot' a giraffe, and at the same time you record the actual sound of his voice."

"You won't need much sound equipment for that, Milt."

"Why?"

"Giraffes don't make any sounds; they're supposed not to have any vocal organs."

"Well, what of it? That was just an illustration. But take the other animals for instance; lions, elephants, tigers—Joe's written in a great tiger sequence. It's goin' to yank 'em right out of their

seats."

"There ain't any tigers in Africa, Milt," explained the director.

"Who says there ain't?"

"I do," replied Orman, grinning.

"How about it, Joe?" Smith turned toward the scenarist.

"Well, Chief, you said you wanted a tiger sequence."

"Oh, what's the difference? We'll make it a crocodile sequence."

"And you want me to direct the picture?" asked Orman.

"Yes, and it will make you famous."

"I don't know about that, but I'm game —I ain't ever been to Africa. Is it feasible to get sound trucks into Central

Africa?"

"We're just having a conference to discuss the whole matter," replied Smith. "We've asked Major White to sit in. I guess you men haven't met —Mr. Orman, Major White," and as the two men shook hands Smith continued, "the major's a famous big game hunter, knows Africa like a book. He's to be technical advisor and go along with you."

"What do you think, Major, about our being able to get sound trucks into the Ituri Forest?" asked Orman.

"What'll they weigh? I doubt that you can get anything across Africa that weighs over a ton and a half."

"Ouch!" exclaimed Clarence Noice, the sound director. "Our sound trucks

weigh seven tons, and we're planning on taking two of them."

"It just can't be done," said the major.

"And how about the generator truck?" demanded Noice. "It weighs nine tons."

The major threw up his hands. "Really, gentlemen, it's preposterous."

"Can you do it, Tom?" demanded Smith, and without waiting for a reply, "you've got to do it."

"Sure I'll do it—if you want to foot the bills."

"Good!" exclaimed Smith. "Now that's settled let me tell you something about the story. Joe's written a great story—it's goin' to be a knock-out. You see, this fellow's born in the Jungle and

brought up by a lioness. He pals around with the lions all his life—doesn't know any other friends. The lion is king of beasts; when the boy grows up he's king of the lions; so he bosses the whole menagerie. See? Big shot of the jungle."

"Sounds familiar," commented Orman.

"And then the girl comes in, and here's a great shot! She doesn't know any one's around, and she's bathing in a jungle pool. Along comes the Lion Man. He ain't ever seen a woman before. Can't you see the possibilities, Tom? It's goin' to knock 'em cold." Smith was walking around the room, acting out the scene. He was the girl bathing in the pool in one corner of the room, and then he went

to the opposite corner and was the Lion Man. "Great, isn't it?" he demanded. "You've got to hand it to Joe."

"Joe always was an original guy," said Orman. "Say, who you got to play this Lion Man that's goin' to pal around with the lions? I hope he's got the guts."

"Best ever, a regular find. He's got a physique that's goin' to have all the girls goofy."

"Yes, them and their grandmothers," offered another conferee.

"Who is he?"

"He's the world's champion marathoner."

"Marathon dancer?"

"No, marathon runner."

"If I was playin' that part I'd rather be a sprinter than a distance runner. What's his name?"

"Stanley Obroski."

"Stanley Obroski? Never heard of him."

"Well, he's famous nevertheless; and wait till you see him! He's sure got 'It,' and I don't mean maybe."

"Can he act?" asked Orman.

"He don't have to act, but he looks great stripped—I'll run his tests for you."

"Who else is in the cast?"

"The Madison's cast for lead opposite Obroski, and—"

"M-m-m, Naomi's plenty hot at 34 north; she'll probably melt at the

Equator."

"And Gordon Z. Marcus goes along as her father; he's a white trader."

"Think Marcus can stand it? He's getting along in years."

"Oh, he's rarin' to go. Major White, here, is taking the part of a white hunter."

"I'm afraid," remarked the major, "that as an actor I'll prove to be an excellent hunter."

"Oh, all you got to do is act natural. Don't worry."

"No, let the director worry," said the scenarist; "that's what he's paid for."

"And rewritin' bum continuity," retorted Orman. "But say, Milt, gettin'

back to Naomi. She's great in cabaret scenes and flaming youth pictures, but when it comes to steppin' out with lions and elephants—I don't know."

"We're sendin' Rhonda Terry along to double for her."

"Good! Rhonda'd go up and bite a lion on the wrist if a director told her to; and she does look a lot like the Madison, come to think of it."

"Which is flatterin' the Madison, if any one asks me," commented the scenarist.

"Which no one did," retorted Smith.

"And again, if any one asks me," continued Joe, "Rhonda can act circles all around Madison. How some of these punks get where they are beats me."

"And you hangin' around studios for the last ten years!" scoffed Orman. "You must be dumb."

"He wouldn't be an author if he wasn't," gibed another conferee.

"Well," asked Orman, "who else am I takin'? Who's my chief cameraman?"

"Bill West."

"Fine."

"What with your staff, the cast, and drivers *you'll* have between thirty-five and forty whites. Besides the generator truck and the two sound trucks, you'll have twenty five-ton trucks and five passenger cars. We're picking technicians and mechanics who can drive trucks so as to cut down the size of the company as much as possible. I'm

sorry you weren't in town to pick your own company, but we had to rush things. Every one's signed up but the assistant director. You can take any one along you please."

"When do we leave?"

"In about ten days."

"It's a great life," sighed Orman. "Six months in Borneo, ten days in Hollywood, and then another six months in Africa! You guys give a fellow just about time to get a shave between trips."

"Between drinks, did you say?" inquired Joe.

"Between drinks!" offered another. "There isn't any between drinks in Tom's young life."

2. MUD

Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem and his swarthy followers sat in silence on their ponies and watched the mad *Nasara* sweating and cursing as they urged on two hundred blacks in an effort to drag a nine-ton generator truck through the muddy bottom of a small stream.

Nearby, Jerrold Baine leaned against the door of a muddy touring car in conversation with the two girls who occupied the back seat.

"How you feeling, Naomi?" he inquired.

"Rotten."

"Touch of fever again?"

"Nothing but since we left Jinja. I

wish I was back in Hollywood; but I won't ever see Hollywood again. I'm going to die here."

"Aw, shucks! You're just blue. You'll be all right."

"She had a dream last night," said the other girl. "Naomi believes in dreams."

"Shut up," snapped Miss Madison.

"*You* seem to keep pretty fit, Rhonda," remarked Baine.

Rhonda Terry nodded. "I guess I'm just lucky."

"You'd better touch wood," advised the Madison; then she added, "Rhonda's physical, purely physical. No one knows what we artistes suffer, with our high-strung, complex, nervous organizations."

"Better be a happy cow than a miserable artiste," laughed Rhonda.

"Beside that, Rhonda gets all the breaks," complained Naomi. "Yesterday they shoot the first scene in which I appear, and where was I? Flat on my back with an attack of fever, and Rhonda has to double for me—even in the close-ups."

"It's a good thing you look so much alike," said Baine. "Why, knowing you both as well as I do, I can scarcely tell you apart."

"That's the trouble," grumbled Naomi. "People'll see her and think it's me."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Rhonda. "You'll get the credit."

"Credit!" exclaimed Naomi. "Why,

my dear, it will ruin my reputation. You are a sweet girl and all that, Rhonda; but remember, I am Naomi Madison. My public expects superb acting. They will be disappointed, and they will blame me."

Rhonda laughed good-naturedly. "I'll do my best not to entirely ruin your reputation, Naomi," she promised.

"Oh, it isn't your fault," exclaimed the other. "I don't blame you. One is born with the divine afflatus, or one is not. That is all there is to it. It is no more your fault that you can't act than it is the fault of that sheik over there that he was not born a white man."

"What a disillusionment that sheik was!" exclaimed Rhonda.

"How so?" asked Baine.

"When I was a little girl I saw Rudolph Valentino on the screen; and, ah, brothers, sheiks was sheiks in them days!"

"This bird sure doesn't look much like Valentino," agreed Baine.

"Imagine being carried off into the desert by that bunch of whiskers and dirt! And here I've just been waiting all these years to be carried off."

"I'll speak to Bill about it," said Baine.

The girl sniffed. "Bill West's a good cameraman, but he's no sheik. He's just about as romantic as his camera."

"He's a swell guy," insisted Baine.

"Of course he is; I'm crazy about him. He'd make a great brother."

"How much longer we got to sit here?" demanded Naomi, peevishly.

"Until they get the generator truck and twenty-two other trucks through that mud hole."

"I don't see why we can't go on. I don't see why we have to sit here and fight flies and bugs."

"We might as well fight 'em here as somewhere else," said Rhonda.

"Orman's afraid to separate the safari," explained Baine. "This is a bad piece of country. He was warned against bringing the company here. The natives never have been completely subdued, and they've been acting up lately."

They were silent for a while, brushing away insects and watching the heavy truck being dragged slowly up the muddy bank. The ponies of the Arabs stood switching their tails and biting at the stinging pests that constantly annoyed them.

Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem spoke to one at his side, a swarthy man with evil eyes. "Which of the*benat*, Atewy, is she who holds the secret of the valley of diamonds?"

"*Billah*!" exclaimed Atewy, spitting. "They are as alike as two pieces o f*jella*. I cannot be sure which is which."

"But one of them hath the paper? You are sure?"

"Yes. The old *Nasrany*, who is the father of one of them, had it; but she took it from him. The young man leaning against that invention of *Sheytan*, talking to them now, plotted to take the life of the old man that he might steal the paper; but the girl, his daughter, learned of the plot and took the paper herself. The old man and the young man both believe that the paper is lost."

"But the *bint* talks to the young man who would have killed her father," said the sheikh. "She seems friendly with him. I do not understand these Christian dogs."

"Nor I," admitted Atewy. "They are all mad. They quarrel and fight, and then immediately they sit down together,

laughing and talking. They do things in great secrecy while every one is looking on. I saw the *bint* take the paper while the young man was looking on, and yet he seems to know nothing of it. He went soon after to her father and asked to see it. It was then the old man searched for it and could not find it. He said that it was lost, and he was heartbroken."

"It is all very strange," murmured Sheikh Ah el-Ghrennem. "Are you sure that you understand their accursed tongue and know that which they say, Atewy?"

"Did I not work for more than a year with a mad old *Nasrany* who dug in the sands at Kheybar? If he found only a piece of a broken pot he would be happy all the rest of the day. From him I

learned the language of *el-Engleys*."

"*Wellah!*" sighed the sheikh. "It must be a great treasure indeed, greater than those of Howwara and Geryeh combined; or they would not have brought so many carriages to transport it." He gazed with brooding eyes at the many trucks parked upon the opposite bank of the stream waiting to cross.

"When shall *I* take the *bint* who hath the paper?" demanded Atewy after a moment's silence.

"Let us bide our time," replied the sheikh. "There be no hurry, since they be leading us always nearer to the treasure and feeding us well into the bargain. The *Nasrany* are fools. They thought to fool the *Bedauwy* with their picture

taking as they fooled *el-Engleys*, but we are brighter than they. We know the picture making is only a blind to hide the real purpose of their safari."

Sweating, mud-covered, Mr. Thomas Orman stood near the line of natives straining on the ropes attached to a heavy truck. In one hand he carried a long whip. At his elbow stood a bearer, but in lieu of a rifle he carried a bottle of Scotch.

By nature Orman was neither a harsh nor cruel taskmaster. Ordinarily, both his inclinations and his judgment would have warned him against using the lash. The sullen silence of the natives which should have counseled him to forbearance only irritated him still

further.

He was three months out of Hollywood and already almost two months behind schedule, with the probability staring him in the face that it would be another month before they could reach the location where the major part of the picture could be shot. His leading woman had a touch of fever that might easily develop into something that would keep her out of the picture entirely. He had already been down twice with fevers and that had had its effects upon his disposition. It seemed to him that everything had gone wrong, that everything had conspired against him. And now these damn savages, as he thought of them, were lying down on the

job.

"Lay into it, you lazy bums!" he yelled, and the long lash reached out and wrapped around the shoulders of a native.

A young man in khaki shirt and shorts turned away in disgust and walked toward the car where Baine was talking to the two girls. He paused in the shade of a tree, and, removing his sun helmet, wiped the perspiration from his forehead and the inside of the hat band; then he moved on again and joined them.

Baine moved over to make room for him by the rear door of the car. "You look sore, Bill," he remarked.

West swore softly. "Orman's gone nuts. If he doesn't throw that whip away

and leave the booze alone we're headed for a lot of grief."

"It's in the air," said Rhonda. "The men don't laugh and sing the way they used to."

"I saw Kwamudi looking at him a few minutes ago," continued West. "There was hate in his eyes all right, and there was something worse."

"Oh, well," said Baine, "you got to treat those workmen rough; and as for Kwamudi, Tom can tie a can to him and appoint some one else headman."

"Those slave driving days are over, Baine; and the natives know it. Orman'll get in plenty of trouble for this if the men report it, and don't fool yourself about Kwamudi. He's no ordinary headman;

he's a big chief in his own country, and most of our gang are from his own tribe. If he says quit, they'll quit; and don't you forget it. We'd be in a pretty mess if those fellows quit on us."

"Well, what are we goin' to do about it? Tom ain't asking our advice that I've ever noticed."

"You could do something, Naomi," said West, turning to the girl.

"Who, me? What could I do?"

"Well, Tom likes you a lot. He'd listen to you."

"Oh, nerts! It's his own funeral. I got troubles of my own."

"It may be your funeral, too," said West.

"Blah!" said the girl. "All I want to do is get out of here. How much longer I got to sit here and fight flies? Say, where's Stanley? I haven't seen him all day."

"The Lion Man is probably asleep in the back of his car," suggested Baine. "Say, have you heard what Old Man Marcus calls him?"

"What does he call him?" demanded Naomi.

"Sleeping Sickness."

"Aw, you're all sore at him," snapped Naomi, "because he steps right into a starring part while you poor dubs have been working all your lives and are still doin' bits. Mr. Obroski is a real artiste."

"Say, we're going to start!" cried Rhonda. "There's the signal."

At last the long motorcade was under way. In the leading cars was a portion of the armed guards, the askaris; and another detachment brought up the rear. To the running boards of a number of the trucks clung some of the work-gang, but most of them followed the last truck afoot. Pat O'Grady, the assistant director, was in charge of these.

O'Grady carried no long whip. He whistled a great deal, always the same tune; and he joshed his charges unmercifully, wholly ignoring the fact that they understood nothing that he said. But they reacted to his manner and his smile, and slowly their tenseness relaxed. Their sullen silence broke a little, and they talked among themselves.

But still they did not sing, and there was no laughter.

"It would be better," remarked Major White, walking at O'Grady's side, "if you were in full charge of these men at all times. Mr. Orman is temperamentally unsuited to handle them."

O'Grady shrugged. "Well, what is there to do about it?"

"He won't listen to me," said the major. "He resents every suggestion that I make. I might as well have remained in Hollywood."

"I don't know what's got into Tom. He's a mighty good sort. I never saw him like this before." O'Grady shook his head.

"Well, for one thing there's too much

Scotch got into him," observed White.

"I think it's the fever and the worry." The assistant director was loyal to his chief.

"Whatever it is we're in for a bad mess if there isn't a change," the Englishman prophesied. His manner was serious, and it was evident that he was worried.

"Perhaps you're—" O'Grady started to reply, but Ms words were interrupted by a sudden rattle of rifle fire coming, apparently, from the direction of the head of the column.

"My lord! What now?" exclaimed White, as, leaving O'Grady, he hurried toward the sound of the firing.

3. POISONED ARROWS

The ears of man are dull. Even on the open veldt they do not record the sound of a shot at any great distance. But the ears of hunting beasts are not as the ears of man; so hunting beasts at great distances paused when they heard the rifle fire that had startled O'Grady and White. Most of them slunk farther away from the dread sound.

Not so two lying in the shade of a tree. One was a great black- maned golden lion; the other was a man. He lay upon his back, and the lion lay beside him with one huge paw upon his chest.

"Tarmangani!" murmured the man.

A low growl rumbled in the

cavernous chest of the carnivore.

"I shall have to look into this matter," said the man, "perhaps tonight, perhaps tomorrow." He closed his eyes and fell asleep again, the sleep from which the shots had aroused him.

The lion blinked his yellow-green eyes and yawned; then he lowered his great head, and he too slept.

Near them lay the partially devoured carcass of a zebra, the kill that they had made at dawn. Neither Ungo, the jackal, nor Dango, the hyena, had as yet scented the feast; so quiet prevailed, broken only by the buzzing of insects and the occasional call of a bird.

Before Major White reached the head of the column the firing had ceased, and

when he arrived he found the askaris and the white men crouching behind trees gazing into the dark forest before them, their rifles ready. Two black soldiers lay upon the ground, their bodies pierced by arrows. Already their forms were convulsed by the last throes of death. Naomi Madison crouched upon the floor of her car. Rhonda Terry stood with one foot on the running board, a pistol in her hand.

White ran to Orman who stood with rifle in hand peering into the forest. "What happened, Mr. Orman?" he asked. "An ambush," replied Orman. "The devils just fired a volley of arrows at us and then beat it. We scarcely caught a glimpse of them."

"The Bansutos," said White.

Orman nodded. "I suppose so. They think they can frighten me with a few arrows, but I'll show the dirty rats."

"This was just a warning, Orman. They don't want us in their country."

"I don't care what they want; I'm going in. They can't bluff me."

"Don't forget, Mr. Orman, that you have a lot of people here for whose lives you are responsible, including two white women, and that you were warned not to come through the Bansuto country."

"I'll get my people through all right; the responsibility is mine, not yours." Orman's tone was sullen, his manner that of a man who knows that he is wrong but

is constrained by stubbornness from admitting it.

"I cannot but feel a certain responsibility myself," replied White. "You know I was sent with you in an advisory capacity."

"I'll ask for your advice when I want it."

"You need it now. You know nothing about these people or what to expect from them."

"The fact that we were ready and sent a volley into them the moment that they attacked has taught 'em a good lesson," blustered Orman. "You can be sure they won't bother us again."

"I wish that I could be sure of that, but I can't. We haven't seen the last of those

beggars. What you have seen is just a sample of their regular strategy of warfare. They'll never attack in force or in the open— just pick us off two or three at a time; and perhaps we'll never see one of them."

"Well, if you're afraid, go back," snapped Orman. "I'll give you porters and a guard."

White smiled. "I'll remain with the company, of course." Then he turned back to where Rhonda Terry still stood, a trifle pale, her pistol ready in her hand.

"You'd best remain in the car, Miss Terry," he said. "It will afford you some protection from arrows. You shouldn't expose yourself as you have."

"I couldn't help but overhear what you

said to Mr. Orman." said the girl. "Do you really think they will keep on picking us off like this?"

"I am afraid so; it is the way they fight. I don't wish to frighten you unnecessarily, but you must be careful."

She glanced at the two bodies that lay quiet now in the grotesque and horrible postures of death. "I had no idea that arrows could kill so quickly." A little shudder accompanied her words.

"They were poisoned," explained the major.

"Poisoned!" There was a world of horror in the single word.

White glanced into the tonneau of the car. "I think Miss Madison has fainted," he said.

"She would!" exclaimed Rhonda, turning toward the unconscious girl.

Together they lifted her to the seat, and Rhonda applied restoratives; and, as they worked, Orman was organizing a stronger advance guard and giving orders to the white men clustered about him.

"Keep your rifles ready beside you all the time. I'll try to put an extra armed man on every truck. Keep your eyes open, and at the first sight of anything suspicious, shoot.

"Bill, you and Baine ride with the girls; I'll put an askari on each running board of their car. Clarence, you go to the rear of the column and tell Pat what has happened. Tell him to strengthen the

rear guard, and you stay back there and help him.

"And Major White!" The Englishman came forward. "I wish you'd see old el-Ghrennem and ask him to send half his force to the rear and the other half up with us. We can use 'em to send messages up and down the column, if necessary.

"Mr. Marcus," he turned to the old character man, "you and Obroski ride near the middle of the column." He looked about him suddenly. "Where is Obroski?"

No one had seen him since the attack. "He was in the car when I left it," said Marcus. "Perchance he has fallen asleep again." There was a sly twinkle in the

old eyes.

"Here he comes now," said Clarence Noice.

A tall, handsome youth with a shock of black hair was approaching from down the line of cars. He wore a six-shooter strapped about his hips and carried a rifle. When he saw them looking toward him he commenced to run in their direction.

"Where are they?" he called. "Where did they go?"

"Where you been?" demanded Orman.

"I been looking for them. I thought they were back there."

Bill West turned toward Gordon Z. Marcus and winked a slow wink.

Presently the column moved forward again. Orman was with the advance guard, the most dangerous post; and White remained with him.

Like a great snake the safari wound its way into the forest, the creaking of springs, the sound of the tires, the muffled exhausts its only accompaniment. There was no conversation—only tense, fearful expectancy.

There were many stops while a crew of natives with knives and axes hewed a passage for the great trucks. Then on again into the shadows of the primitive wilderness. Their progress was slow, monotonous, heartbreaking.

At last they came to a river. "We'll

camp here," said Orman.

White nodded. To him had been delegated the duty of making and breaking camp. In a quiet voice he directed the parking of the cars and trucks as they moved slowly into the little clearing along the river bank.

As he was thus engaged, those who had been passengers climbed to the ground and stretched their legs. Orman sat on the running board of a car and took a drink of Scotch. Naomi Madison sat down beside him and lighted a cigarette. She darted fearful glances into the forest around them and across the river into the still more mysterious wood beyond.

"I wish we were out of here, Tom,"

she said. "Let's go back before we're all killed."

"That ain't what I was sent out here for. I was sent to make a picture, and I'm goin' to make it in spite of hell and high water."

She moved closer and leaned her lithe body against him. "Aw, Tom, if you loved me you'd take me out of here. I'm scared. I know I'm going to die. If it isn't fever it'll be those poisoned arrows."

"Go tell your troubles to your Lion Man," growled Orman, taking another drink.

"Don't be an old meany, Tom. You know I don't care anything about him. There isn't any one but you."

"Yes, I know it—except when you

think I'm not looking. You don't think I'm blind, do you?"

"You may not be blind, but you're all wet," she snapped angrily.

A shot from the rear of the column halted her in mid-speech. Then came another and another in quick succession, followed by a fusillade.

Orman leaped to his feet. Men started to run toward the rear. He called them back. "Stay here!" he cried. "They may attack here, too—if that's who it is back again. Major White! Tell the sheik to send a horseman back there *pronto* to see what's happened."

Naomi Madison fainted. No one paid any attention to her. They left her lying where she had fallen. The black askaris

and the white men of the company stood with rifles in tense fingers, straining their eyes into the woods about them.

The firing at the rear ceased as suddenly as it had begun. The ensuing silence seemed a thing of substance. It was broken by a weird, blood-curdling scream from the dark wood on the opposite bank of the river.

"Gad!" exclaimed Baine. "What was that?"

"I think the bounders are just trying to frighten us," said White.

"Insofar as I am concerned they have succeeded admirably," admitted Marcus. "If one could be scared out of seven years growth retroactively, I would soon be a child again."

Bill West threw a protective arm about Rhonda Terry. "Lie down and roll under the car," he said. "You'll be safe from arrows there."

"And get grease in my eyes? No, thanks."

"Here comes the sheik's man now," said Baine. "There's somebody behind him on the horse—a white man."

"It's Clarence," said West.

As the Arab reined his pony in near Orman, Noice slipped to the ground.

"Well, what was it?" demanded the director.

"Same thing that happened up in front back there," replied Noice. "There was a volley of arrows without any warning,

two men killed; then we turned and fired; but we didn't see any one, not a soul. It's uncanny. Say, those porters of ours are all shot. Can't see anything but the whites of their eyes, and they're shaking so their teeth rattle."

"Is Pat hurryin' the rest of the safari into camp?" asked Orman.

Noice grinned. "They don't need any hurryin'. They're comin' so fast that they'll probably go right through without seein' it."

A scream burst in their midst, so close to them that even the stolid Major White jumped. All wheeled about with rifles ready.

Naomi Madison had raised herself to a sitting position. Her hair was

disheveled, her eyes wild. She screamed a second time and then fainted again.

"Shut up!" yelled Orman, frantically, his nerves on edge; but she did not hear him.

"If you'll have our tent set up, I'll get her to bed," suggested Rhonda.

Cars, horsemen, black men afoot were crowding into the clearing. No one wished to be left back there in the forest. All was confusion.

Major White, with the assistance of Bill West, tried to restore order from chaos; and when Pat O'Grady came in, he helped.

At last camp was made. Blacks, whites, and horses were crowded close together, the blacks on one side, the

whites on the other.

"If the wind changes," remarked Rhonda Terry, "we're sunk."

"What a mess," groaned Baine, "and I thought this was going to be a lovely outing. I was so afraid I wasn't going to get the part that I was almost sick."

"Now you're sick because you did get it."

"I'll tell the world I am."

"You're goin' to be a whole lot sicker before we get out of this Bansuto country," remarked Bill West.

"You're telling me!"

"How's the Madison, Rhonda?" inquired West.

The girl shrugged. "If she wasn't so

darned scared she wouldn't be in such a bad way. That last touch of fever's about passed, but she just lies there and shakes—scared stiff."

"You're a wonder, Rhonda. You don't seem to be afraid of anything."

"Well, I'll be seein' yuh," remarked Baine as he walked toward his own tent.

"Afraid!" exclaimed the girl. "Bill, I never knew what it was to be afraid before. Why, I've got goose-pimples inside."

West shook his head. "You're sure a game kid. No one would ever know you were afraid—you don't show it."

"Perhaps I've just enough brains to know that it wouldn't get me anything. It doesn't even get her sympathy." She

nodded her head toward the tent.

West grimaced. "She's a—" he hesitated, searching for adequate invective.

The girl placed her fingers against his lips and shook her head. "Don't say it," she admonished. "She can't help it I'm really sorry for her."

"You're a wonder! And she treats you like scum. Gee, kid, but you've got a great disposition. I don't see how you can be decent to her. It's that dog-gone patronizing air of hers toward you that gets my nanny. The great artiste! Why, you can act circles all around her, kid; and as for looks! You got her backed off the boards."

Rhonda laughed. "That's why she's a

famous star and I'm a double. Quit your kidding."

"I'm not kidding. The company's all talking about it. You stole the scenes we shot while she was laid up. Even Orman knows it, and he's got a crush on her."

"You're prejudiced—you don't like her."

"She's nothing in my young life, one way or another. But I do like you, Rhonda. I like you a lot. I—oh, pshaw—you know what I mean."

"What are you doing, Bill—making love to me?"

"I'm trying to."

"Well, as a lover you're a great cameraman—and you'd better stick to

your camera. This is not exactly the ideal setting for a love scene. I am surprised that a great cameraman like you should have failed to appreciate that. You'd never shoot a love scene against this background."

"I'm shootin' one now, Rhonda. I love you."

"Cut!" laughed the girl.

4. DISSENSION

Kwamudi, the black headman, stood before Orman. "My people go back," he said; "not stay in Bansuto country and be killed."

"You can't go back," growled Orman. "You signed up for the whole trip. You tell 'em they got to stay; or, by George, I'll—"

"We not sign up to go Bansuto country; we not sign up be killed. You go back, we come along. You stay, we go back, We go daylight." He turned and walked away.

Orman started up angrily from his camp chair, seizing his ever ready whip. "I'll teach you, you black!" he yelled.

White, who had been standing beside him, seized him by the shoulder. "Stop!" His voice was low but his tone peremptory. "You can't do that! I haven't interfered before, but now you've got to listen to me. The lives of all of us are at stake."

"Don't you interfere, you meddlin' old fool," snapped Orman. "This is my show, and I'll run it my way."

"You'd better go soak your head, Tom," said O'Grady; "you're full of hootch. The major's right. We're in a tight hole, and we won't ever get out of it on Scotch." He turned to the Englishman. "You handle things, Major. Don't pay any attention to Tom; he's drunk. Tomorrow he'll be sorry— if he sobers

up. We're all back of you. Get us out of the mess if you can. How long would it take to get out of this Bansuto country if we kept on in the direction we want to go?"

Orman appeared stunned by this sudden defection of his assistant. It left him speechless.

White considered O'Grady's question. "If we were not too greatly delayed by the trucks, we could make it in two days," he decided finally.

"And how long would it take us to reach the location we're headed for if we have to go back and go around the Bansuto country?" continued O'Grady.

"We couldn't do it under two weeks," replied the major. "We'd be lucky if we

made it in that time. We'd have to go way to the south through a beastly rough country."

"The studio's put a lot of money into this already," said O'Grady, "and we haven't got much of anything to show for it. We'd like to get onto location as quick as possible. Don't you suppose you could persuade Kwamudi to go on? If we turn back, we'll have those beggars on our neck for a day at least. If we go ahead, it will only mean one extra day of them. Offer Kwamudi's bunch extra pay if they'll stick—it'll be a whole lot cheaper for us than wastin' another two weeks."

"Will Mr. Orman authorize the bonus?" asked White.

"He'll do whatever I tell him, or I'll punch his fool head," O'Grady assured him.

Orman had sunk back Into his camp chair and was staring at the ground. He made no comment.

"Very well," said White. "I'll see what I can do. I'll talk to Kwamudi over at my tent, if you'll send one of the boys after him."

White walked over to his tent, and O'Grady sent a black boy to summon the headman; then he turned to Orman. "Go to bed, Tom," he ordered, "and lay off that hootch."

Without a word, Orman got up and went into his tent.

"You put the kibosh on him all right,

Pat," remarked Noice, with a grin. "How do you get away with it?"

O'Grady did not reply. His eyes were wandering over the camp, and there was a troubled expression on his usually smiling face. He noted the air of constraint, the tenseness, as though all were waiting for something to happen, they knew not what.

He saw his messenger overhaul Kwamudi and the headman turn back toward White's tent. He saw the natives silently making their little cooking fires. They did not sing or laugh, and when they spoke they spoke in whispers.

The Arabs were squatting in the *muk'aad* of the sheikh's *beyt*. They were a dour lot at best; and their

appearance was little different tonight than ordinarily, yet he sensed a difference.

Even the whites spoke in lower tones than usual and there was less chaffing. And from all the groups constant glances were cast toward the surrounding forest.

Presently he saw Kwamudi leave White and return to his fellows; then O'Grady walked over to where the Englishman was sitting in a camp chair, puffing on a squat briar. "What luck?" he asked.

"The bonus got him," replied White. "They will go on, but on one other condition."

"What is that?"

"His men are not to be whipped."

"That's fair enough," said O'Grady.

"But how are you going to prevent it?"

"For one thing, I'll throw the whip away; for another, I'll tell Orman we'll all quit him if he doesn't lay off. I can't understand him; he never was like this before. I've worked with him a lot during the last five years."

"Too much liquor," said White; "it's finally got him."

"He'll be all right when we get on location and get to work. He's been worrying too much. Once we get through this Bansuto country everything'll be jake."

"We're not through it yet, Pat. They'll get some more of us tomorrow and some

more the next day. I don't know how the natives will stand it. It's a bad business. We really ought to turn around and go back. It would be better to lose two weeks time than to lose everything, as we may easily do if the natives quit us. You know we couldn't move through this country without them."

"We'll pull through somehow," O'Grady assured him. "We always do. Well, I'm goin' to turn in. Good-night, Major."

The brief equatorial twilight had ushered in the night. The moon had not risen. The forest was blotted out by a pall of darkness. The universe had shrunk to a few tiny earth fires surrounded by the huddled forms of men

and, far above, a few stars.

Obroski paused in front of the girls' tent and scratched on the flap. "Who is it?" demanded Naomi Madison from within.

"It's me, Stanley."

She bade him enter; and he came in to find her lying on her cot beneath a mosquito bar, a lantern burning on a box beside her.

"Well," she said peevishly, "it's a wonder any one came. I might lie here and die for all any one cares."

"I'd have come sooner, but I thought of course Orman was here."

"He's probably in his tent soused."

"Yes, he is. When I found that out I

came right over."

"I shouldn't think you'd be afraid of him. I shouldn't think you'd be afraid of anything." She gazed admiringly on Ms splendid physique, his handsome face.

"Me afraid of that big stiff!" he scoffed. "I'm not afraid of anything, but you said yourself that we ought not to let Orman know about—about you and me."

"No," she acquiesced thoughtfully, "that wouldn't be so good. He's got a nasty temper, and there's lots of things a director can do if he gets sore."

"In a picture like this he could get a guy killed and make it look like an accident," said Obroski.

She nodded. "Yes. I saw it done once. The director and the leading man were

both stuck on the same girl. The director had the wrong command given to a trained elephant."

Obroski looked uncomfortable. "Do you suppose there's any chance of his coming over?"

"Not now. He'll be dead to the world till morning."

"Where's Rhonda?"

"Oh, she's probably playing contract with Bill West and Baine and old man Marcus. She'd play contract and let me lie here and die all alone."

"Is she all right?"

"What do you mean, all right?"

"She wouldn't tell Orman about us— about my being over here— would she?"

"No, she wouldn't do that—she ain't that kind."

Obroski breathed a sigh of relief. "She knows about us, don't she?"

"She ain't very bright; but she ain't a fool, either. The only trouble with Rhonda is, she's got it in her head she can act since she doubled for me while I was down with the fever. Some one handed her some apple sauce, and now she thinks she's some pumpkins. She had the nerve to tell me that I'd get credit for what she did. Believe me, she won't get past the cutting room when I get back to Hollywood—not if I know my groceries and Milt Smith."

"There couldn't anybody act like you, Naomi," said Obroski. "Why, before I

ever dreamed I'd be in pictures I used to go see everything you were in. I got an album full of your pictures I cut out of movie magazines and newspapers. And now to think that I'm playin' in the same company with you, and that"—he lowered his voice—"you love me! You do love me, don't you?"

"Of course I do."

"Then I don't see why you have to act so sweet on Orman."

"I got to be diplomatic—I got to think of my career."

"Well, sometimes you act like you were in love with him," he said, petulantly.

"That answer to a bootlegger's dream! Say, if he wasn't a big director I couldn't

see him with a hundred-inch telescope."

In the far distance a wailing scream echoed through the blackness of the night, a lion rumbled forth a thunderous answer, the hideous, mocking voice of a hyena joined the chorus.

The girl shuddered. "God! I'd give a million dollars to be back in Hollywood."

"They sound like lost souls out there in the night," whispered Obroski.

"And they're calling to us. They're waiting for us. They know that we'll come, and then they'll get us."

The flap of the tent moved, and Obroski jumped to Ms feet with a nervous start. The girl sat straight up on her cot, wide-eyed. The flap was pulled

back, and Rhonda Terry stepped into the light of the lone lantern.

"Hello, there!" she exclaimed cheerily.

"*I* wish you'd scratch before you come in," snapped Naomi. "You gave me a start."

"If we have to camp this close to the black belt every night we'll all be scratching." She turned to Obroski. "Run along home now; it's time all little Lion Men were in bed."

"I was just going," said Obroski."

"You'd better. I just saw Tom Orman reeling in this direction."

Obroski paled. "Well, I'll be running along," he said hurriedly, while making

a quick exit.

Naomi Madison looked distinctly worried. "Did you really see Tom out there?" she demanded.

"Sure. He was wallowing around like the Avalon in a heavy sea."

"But they said he went to bed."

"If he did, he took his bottle to bed with him."

Orman's voice came to them from outside. "Hey, you! Come back here!"

"Is that you, Mr. Orman?" Obroski's voice quavered noticeably.

"Yes, it's me. What you doin' in the girls' tent? Didn't I give orders that none of you guys was to go into that tent?"

"I was just lookin' for Rhonda. I

wanted to ask her something."

"You're a liar. Rhonda wasn't there. I just saw her go in. You been in there with Naomi. I've got a good mind to bust your jaw."

"Honestly, Mr. Orman, I was just in there a minute. When I found Rhonda wasn't there I came right out."

"You came right out after Rhonda went in, you dirty, sneakin' skunk; and now you listen to me. You lay off Naomi. She's my girl. If I ever find you monkeyin' around her again I'll kill you. Do you get that?"

"Yes, sir."

Rhonda looked at Naomi and winked. "Papa cross; papa spank," she said.

"My God! he'll kill me," shuddered Naomi.

The flap of the tent was thrust violently aside, and Orman burst into the tent. Rhonda wheeled and faced him.

"What do you mean by coming into our tent?" she demanded. "Get out of here!"

Orman's jaw dropped. He was not accustomed to being talked to like that, and it took him off his feet. He was as surprised as might be a pit bull slapped in the face by a rabbit. He stood swaying at the entrance for a moment, staring at Rhonda as though he had discovered a new species of animal.

"I just wanted to speak to Naomi," he said. "I didn't know you were here."

"You can speak to Naomi in the morning. And you did know that I was here; I heard you tell Stanley."

At the mention of Obroski's name Orman's anger welled up again. "That's what I'm goin' to talk to her about." He took a step in the direction of Naomi's cot. "Now look here, you dirty little tramp," he yelled, "you can't make a monkey of me. If I ever catch you playin' around with that Polack again I'll beat you into a pulp."

Naomi shrank back, whimpering. "Don't touch me! I didn't do anything. You got it all wrong, Tom. He didn't come here to see me; he came to see Rhonda. Don't let him get me, Rhonda, for God's sake, don't let him get me."

Orman hesitated and looked at Rhonda. "Is that on the level?" he asked.

"Sure," she replied, "he came to see me. I asked him to come."

"Then why didn't he stay after you came in?" Orman thought he had her there.

"I saw you coming, and I told him to beat it."

"Well, you got to cut it out," snapped Orman. "There's to be no more men in this tent—do your visiting outside."

"That suits me," said Rhonda. "Good-night."

As Orman departed, the Madison sank back on her cot trembling. "Phew!" she whispered after she thought the man was

out of hearing. "That was a close shave." She did not thank Rhonda. Her selfish egotism accepted any service as her rightful due.

"Listen," said the other girl. "I'm hired to double for you in pictures, not in your love affairs. After this, watch your step."

Orman saw a light in the tent occupied by West and one of the other cameramen. He walked over to it and went in. West was undressing. "Hello, Tom!" he said. "What brings you around? Anything wrong?"

"There ain't now, but there was. I just run that dirty Polack out of the girls' tent. He was over there with Rhonda."

West paled. "I don't believe it."

"You callin' me a liar?" demanded

Orman.

"Yes, you and any one else who says that."

Orman shrugged. "Well, she told me so herself—said she asked him over and made him scram when she saw me coming. That stuff's got to stop, and I told her so. I told the Polack too—the damn pansy."

Then he lurched out and headed for his own tent.

Bill West lay awake until almost morning.

5. DEATH

While the camp slept, a bronzed white giant, naked but for a loin cloth, surveyed it—sometimes from the branches of overhanging trees, again from the ground inside the circle of the sentries. Then, he moved among the tents of the whites and the shelters of the natives as soundlessly as a shadow. He saw everything, he heard much. With the coming of dawn he melted away into the mist that enveloped the forest.

It was long before dawn that the camp commenced to stir. Major White had snatched a few hours sleep after midnight. He was up early routing out the cooks, getting the whites up so that their tents could be struck for an early

start, directing the packing and loading by Kwamudi's men. It was then that he learned that fully twenty-five of the porters had deserted during the night.

He questioned the sentries, but none had seen any one leave the camp during the night. He knew that some of them lied. When Orman came out of his tent he told him what had happened.

The director shrugged. "We still got more than we need anyway."

"If we have any more trouble with the Bansutos today, we'll have more desertions tonight," White warned. "They may all leave in spite of Kwamudi, and if we're left in this country without porters I wouldn't give a fig for our chances of ever getting out.

"I still think, Mr. Orman, that the sensible thing would be to turn back and make a detour. Our situation is extremely grave."

"Well, turn back if you want to, and take the rats with you," growled Orman. "I'm going on with the trucks and the company." He turned and walked away.

The whites were gathering at the mess table—a long table that accommodated them all. In the dim light of the coming dawn and the mist rising from the ground, figures at a little distance appeared spectral, and the illusion was accentuated by the silence of the company. Every one was cold and sleepy. They were apprehensive too of what the day held for them. Memory of

the black soldiers, pierced by poisoned arrows, writhing on the ground was too starkly present in every mind.

Hot coffee finally thawed them out a bit. It was Pat O'Grady who thawed first. "Good morning, dear teacher, good morning to you," he sang in an attempt to reach a childish treble.

"Ain't we got fun!" exclaimed Rhonda Terry. She glanced down the table and saw Bill West. She wondered a little, because he had always sat beside her before. She tried to catch his eye and smile at him, but he did not look in her direction—he seemed to be trying to avoid her glance.

"Let us eat and drink and be merry; for tomorrow we die," misquoted

Gordon Z. Marcus.

"That's not funny," said Baine.

"On second thought I quite agree with you," said Marcus. "I loosed a careless shaft at humor and hit truth "

"Right between the eyes," said Clarence Noice.

"Some of us may not have to wait until tomorrow," offered Obroski; "some of us may get it today." His voice sounded husky.

"Can that line of chatter!" snapped Orman. "If you're cared, keep it to yourself."

"I'm not scared," said Obroski.

"The Lion Man scared? Don't be foolish." Baine winked at Marcus. "I tell

you, Tom, what we ought to do now that we're in this bad country. It's funny no one thought of it before."

"What's that?" asked Orman.

"We ought to send the Lion Man out ahead to clear the way for the rest of us; he'd just grab these Bansutos and break 'em in two if they got funny."

"That's not a bad idea," replied Orman grimly. "How about it, Obroski?"

Obroski grinned weakly. "I'd like to have the author of that story here and send him out," he said.

"Some of those porters had good sense anyway," volunteered a truck driver at the foot of the table.

"How come?" asked a neighbor.

"Hadn't you heard? About twenty-five or thirty of 'em pulled their freight out of here—they beat it back for home."

"Those bimbos must know," said another; "this is their country."

"That's what we ought to do," growled another—"get out of here and go back."

"Shut up!" snapped Orman. "You guys make me sick. Who ever picked this outfit for me must have done it in a pansy bed."

Naomi Madison was sitting next to him. She turned her frightened eyes up to him. "Did some of the blacks really run away last night?" she asked.

"For Pete's sake, don't you start in too!" he exclaimed; then he got up and

stamped away from the table.

At the foot of the table some one muttered something that sounded like that epithet which should always be accompanied with a smile; but it was not.

By ones and twos they finished their breakfasts and went about their duties. They went in silence without the customary joking that had marked the earlier days of the expedition.

Rhonda and Naomi gathered up the hand baggage that they always took in the car with them and walked over to the machine. Baine was at the wheel warming up the motor. Gordon Z. Marcus was stowing a make-up case in the front of the car.

"Where's Bill?" asked Rhonda.

"He's going with the camera truck today," explained Baine.

"That's funny," commented Rhonda. It suddenly occurred to her that he was avoiding her, and she wondered why. She tried to recall anything that she had said or done that might have offended him, but she could not. She felt strangely sad.

Some of the trucks had commenced to move toward the river. The Arabs and a detachment of askaris had already crossed to guard the passage of the trucks.

"They're going to send the generator truck across first," explained Baine. "If they get her across, the rest will be easy.

If they don't, we'll have to turn back."

"I hope it gets stuck so fast they never get it out," said the Madison.

The crossing of the river, which Major White had anticipated with many misgivings, was accomplished with ease; for the bottom was rocky and the banks sloping and firm. There was no sign of the Bansutos, and no attack was made on the column as it wound its way into the forest ahead.

All morning they moved on with comparative ease, retarded only by the ordinary delays consequent upon clearing a road for the big trucks where trees had to be thinned. The underbrush they bore down beneath them, flattening it out into a good road for the lighter

cars that followed.

Spirits became lighter as the day progressed without revealing any sign of the Bansutos. There was a noticeable relaxation. Conversation increased and occasionally a laugh was heard. Even the blacks seemed to be returning to normal. Perhaps they had noticed that Orman no longer carried his whip, nor did he take any part in the direction of the march.

He and White were on foot with the advance guard, both men constantly alert for any sign of danger. There was still considerable constraint in their manner, and they spoke to one another only as necessity required.

The noon-day stop for lunch passed

and the column took up its snakelike way through the forest once more. The ring of axes against wood ahead was accompanied by song and laughter. Already the primitive minds of the porters had cast off the fears that had assailed them earlier in the day.

Suddenly, without warning, a dozen feathered missiles sped from the apparently deserted forest around them. Two natives fell. Major White, walking beside Orman, clutched at a feathered shaft protruding from his breast and fell at Orman's feet. The askaris and the Arabs fired blindly into the forest, The column came to a sudden halt.

"Again!" whispered Rhonda Terry.

Naomi Madison screamed and

slipped to the floor of the car. Rhonda opened the door and stepped out onto the ground.

"Get back in, Rhonda!" cried Baine. "Get under cover."

The girl shook her head as though the suggestion irritated her. "Where is Bill?" she asked. "Is he up in front?"

"Not way up," replied Baine; "only a few cars ahead of us."

The men all along the line of cars slipped to the ground with their rifles and stood searching the forest to right and left for some sign of an enemy.

A man was crawling under a truck.

"What the hell are you doing, Obroski?" demanded Noice.

"I—I'm going to lie in the shade until we start again."

Noice made a vulgar sound with his lips and tongue.

In the rear of the column Pat O'Grady stopped whistling. He dropped back with the askaris guarding the rear. They had faced about and were nervously peering into the forest. A man from the last truck joined them and stood beside O'Grady.

"Wish we could get a look at 'em once," he said.

"It's tough tryin' to fight a bunch of guys you don't ever see," said O'Grady.

"It sort of gets a guy's nanny," offered the other. "I wonder who they got up in front this time."

O'Grady shook his head.

"It'll be our turn next; it was yesterday," said the man.

O'Grady looked at him. He saw that he was not afraid—he was merely stating what he believed to be a fact. "Can't ever tell," he said. "If it's a guy's time, he'll get it; if it isn't, he won't."

"Do you believe that? I wish I did."

"Sure—why not? It's pleasanter. I don't like worryin'."

"I don't know," said the other dubiously. "I ain't superstitious." He paused and lighted a cigarette.

"Neither am I," said O'Grady.

"I got one of my socks on wrong side out this morning," the man volunteered

thoughtfully.

"You didn't take it off again, did you?" inquired O'Grady.

"No."

"That's right; you shouldn't."

Word was passed back along the line that Major White and two askaris had been killed. O'Grady cursed. "The major was a swell guy," he said. "He was worth all the lousy savages in Africa. I hope I get a chance to get some of 'em for this."

The porters were nervous, frightened, sullen. Kwamudi came up to O'Grady. "My people not go on," he said. "They turn back—go home."

"They better stick with us," O'Grady

told him. "If they turn back they'll all be killed; they won't have a lot of us guys with rifles to fight for 'em. Tomorrow we ought to be out of this Bansuto country. You better advise 'em to stick, Kwamudi."

Kwamudi grumbled and walked away.

"That was just a bluff," O'Grady confided to the other white. "I don't believe they'd turn back through this Bansuto country alone."

Presently the column got under way again, and Kwamudi and his men marched with it.

Up in front they had laid the bodies of Major White and the two natives on top of one of the loads to give them decent

burial at the next camp. Orman marched well in advance with set, haggard face. The askaris were nervous and held back. The party of Negroes clearing the road for the leading truck was on the verge of mutiny. The Arabs lagged behind. They had all had confidence in White, and his death had taken the heart out of them. They remembered Orman's lash and his cursing tongue; they would not have followed him at all had it not been for his courage. That was so evident that it commanded their respect.

He didn't curse them now. He talked to them as he should have from the first. "We've got to go on," he said. "If we turn back we'll be worse off. Tomorrow we ought to be out of this."

He used violence only when persuasion failed. An axe man refused to work and started for the rear. Orman knocked him down and then kicked him back onto the job. That was something they could all understand. It was right because it was just. Orman knew that the lives of two hundred people depended upon every man sticking to his job, and he meant to see that they stuck.

The rear of the column was not attacked that day, but just before they reached a camping place another volley of arrows took its toll from the head of the column. This time three men died, and an arrow knocked Orman's sun helmet from Ms head.

It was a gloomy company that made

camp late that afternoon. The death of Major White had brought their own personal danger closer to the white members of the party. Before this they had felt a certain subconscious sense of immunity, as though the poisoned arrows of the Bansutos could deal death only to black men. Now they were quick to the horror of their own situation. Who would be next? How many of them were asking themselves this question!

6. REMORSE

Atewy, the Arab, taking advantage of his knowledge of English, often circulated among the Americans, asking questions, gossiping. They had become *so* accustomed to him that they thought nothing of his presence among them; nor did his awkward attempts at joviality suggest to them that he might be playing a part for the purpose of concealing ulterior motives, though it must have been apparent to the least observing that by nature Atewy was far from jovial.

He was, however, cunning; so he hid the fact that Ms greatest interest lay in the two girl members of the company. Nor did he ever approach them unless

men of their own race were with them.

This afternoon Rhonda Terry was writing at a little camp table in front of her tent, for it was not yet dark. Gordon Z, Marcus had stopped to chat with her. Atewy from the corners of his eyes noted this and strolled casually closer. "Turning literary, Rhonda?" inquired Marcus. The girl looked up and smiled. "Trying to bring my diary up to date."

"I fear that it will prove a most lugubrious document."

"Whatever that is. Oh, by the way!" She picked up a folded paper. "I just found this map in my portfolio. In the last scene we shot they were taking close-ups of me examining it. I wonder if they want it again—I'd like to swipe it

for a souvenir."

As she unfolded the paper Atewy moved closer, a new light burning in his eyes.

"Keep it," suggested Marcus, "until they ask you for It. Perhaps they're through with it. It's a most authentic looking thing, isn't it? I wonder if they made it in the studio."

"No. Bill says that Joe found it between the leaves of a book he bought in a secondhand book store. When he was commissioned to write this story it occurred to him to write it around this old map. It *is* intriguing, isn't it? Almost makes one believe that it would be easy to find a valley of diamonds." She folded the map and replaced *it in* her

portfolio. Hawklike, the swarthy Atewy watched her.

Marcus regarded her with his kindly eyes. "You were speaking of Bill," he said. "What's wrong with you two children? He used to be with you so much."

With a gesture Rhonda signified her inability to explain. "I haven't the remotest idea," she said. "He just avoids me as though I were some particular variety of pollen to which he reacted. Do I give you hives or hay fever?"

Marcus laughed. "I can imagine, Rhonda, that you might induce high temperatures in the male of the species; but to suggest hives or hay fever —that would be sacrilege."

Naomi Madison came from the tent. Her face was white and drawn. "My God!" she exclaimed. "How can you people joke at such a time? Why, any minute any of us may be killed!"

"We must keep up our courage," said Marcus. "We cannot do it by brooding over our troubles and giving way to our sorrows."

"Pulling a long face isn't going to bring back Major White or those other poor fellows," said Rhonda. "Every one knows how sorry every one feels about it; we don't have to wear crepe to prove that."

"Well, we might be respectful until after the funeral anyway," snapped Naomi.

"Don't be stupid," said Rhonda, a little tartly.

"When are they going to bury them, Mr. Marcus?" asked Naomi.

"Not until after dark. They don't want the Bansutos to see where they're buried."

The girl shuddered. "What a horrible country! I feel that I shall never leave it —alive."

"You certainly won't leave it dead." Rhonda, who seldom revealed her emotions, evinced a trace of exasperation.

The Madison sniffed. "They would never bury *me* here. My public would never stand for that. I shall lie in state in Hollywood."

"Come, come!" exclaimed Marcus. "You girls must not dwell on such morbid, depressing subjects. We must all keep our minds from such thoughts. How about a rubber of contract before supper? We'll just about have time."

"I'm for it," agreed Rhonda.

"You would be," sneered the Madison; "you have no nerves. But no bridge for me at such a time. I am too highly organized, too temperamental. I think that is the way with all true artistes, don't you, Mr. Marcus? We are like high-strung thoroughbreds."

"Well," laughed Rhonda, running her arm through Marcus's, "I guess we'll have to go and dig up a couple more skates if we want a rubber before

supper. Perhaps we could get Bill and Jerrold. Neither of them would ever take any prizes in a horse show."

They found Bill West pottering around his cameras. He declined their invitation glumly. "You might get Obroski," he suggested, "if you can wake him up."

Rhonda shot a quick glance at him through narrowed lids. "Another thoroughbred," she said, as she walked away. And to herself she thought, "That's the second crack he's made about Obroski. All right, I'll show him!"

"Where to now, Rhonda?" inquired Marcus.

"You dig up Jerrold; I'm going to find Obroski. We'll have a game yet."

They did, and it so happened that their table was set where Bill West could not but see them. It seemed to Marcus that Rhonda laughed a little more than was usual and a little more than was necessary.

That night white men and black carried each their own dead into the outer darkness beyond the range of the camp fires and buried them. The graves were smoothed over and sprinkled with leaves and branches, and the excess dirt was carried to the opposite side of camp where it was formed in little mounds that looked like graves.

The true graves lay directly in the line of march of the morrow. The twenty-three trucks and the five passenger cars

would obliterate the last trace of the new-made graves.

The silent men working in the dark hoped that they were unseen by prying eyes; but long into the night a figure lay above the edge of the camp, hidden by the concealing foliage of a great tree, and observed all that took place below. Then, when the last of the white men had gone to bed, it melted silently into the somber depths of the forest.

Toward morning Orman lay sleepless on his army cot. He had tried to read to divert his mind from the ghastly procession of thoughts that persisted despite his every effort to sleep or to think of other things. In the light of the lantern that he had placed near his head

harsh shadows limned his face as a drawn and haggard mask.

From his cot on the opposite side of the tent Pat O'Grady opened Ms eyes and surveyed his chief. "Hell, Tom," he said, "you better get some sleep or you'll go nuts."

"I can't sleep," replied Orman wearily. "I keep seein' White. I killed him. I killed all those blacks."

"Hooey!" scoffed O'Grady. "It wasn't any more your fault than it was the studio's. They sent you out here to make a picture, and you did what you thought was the thing to do. There can't nobody blame you."

"It was my fault all right. White warned me not to come this way. He

was right; and I knew he was right, but I was too damn pig- headed to admit it."

"What you need is a drink. It'll brace you up and put you to sleep."

"I've quit."

"It's all right to quit; but don't quit so sudden—taper off."

Orman shook his head. "I ain't blamin' it on the booze," he said; "there's no one nor nothing to blame but me—but if I hadn't been drinkin' this would never have happened, and White and those other poor devils would have been alive now."

"One won't hurt, Tom; you need it."

Orman lay silent in thought for a moment; then he threw aside the

mosquito bar and stood up. "Perhaps you're right, Pat," he said.

He stepped to a heavy, well-worn pigskin bag that stood at the foot of his cot and, stooping, took out a fat bottle and a tumbler. He shook a little as he filled the latter to the brim.

O'Grady grinned. "I said one drink, not four."

Slowly Orman raised the tumbler toward his lips. He held it there for a moment looking at it; then his vision seemed to pass beyond it, pass through the canvas wall of the tent out into the night toward the new-made graves.

With an oath, he hurled the full tumbler to the ground; the bottle followed it, breaking into a thousand

pieces.

"That's goin' to be hell on bare feet," remarked O'Grady.

"I'm sorry, Pat," said Orman; then he sat down wearily on the edge of his cot and buried his face in his hands.

O'Grady sat up, slipped his bare feet into a pair of shoes, and crossed the tent. He sat down beside his friend and threw an arm about his shoulders. "Buck up, Tom!" That was all he said, but the pressure of the friendly arm was more strengthening than many words or many drinks.

From somewhere out in the night came the roar of a lion and a moment later a blood-curdling cry that seemed neither that of beast nor man.

"Sufferin' cats!" ejaculated O'Grady. "What was that?"

Orman had raised his head and was listening. "Probably some more grief for us," he replied forebodingly.

They sat silent for a moment then, listening.

"I wonder what could make such a noise." O'Grady spoke in hushed tones,

"Pat," Orman's tone was serious, "do you believe in ghosts?"

O'Grady hesitated before he replied. "I don't know—but I've seen some funny things in my time."

"So have I," said Orman.

But perhaps of all that they could conjure to their minds nothing so strange

as the reality; for how could they know that they had heard the victory cry of an English lord and a great lion who had just made their kill together?

7. DISASTER

The cold and gloomy dawn but reflected the spirits of the company as the white men dragged themselves lethargically from their blankets. But the first to view the camp in the swiftly coming daylight were galvanized into instant wakefulness by what it revealed.

Bill West was the first to suspect what had happened. He looked wonderingly about for a moment and then started, almost at a run, for the crude shelters thrown up by the blacks the previous evening.

He called aloud to Kwamudi and several others whose names he knew, but there was no response. He looked into shelter after shelter, and always the

results were the same. Then he hurried over to Orman's tent. The director was just coming out as West ran up. O'Grady was directly behind him.

"What's the matter with breakfast?" demanded the latter. "I don't see a sign of the cooks."

"And you won't," said West; "they've gone, ducked, vamoosed. If you want breakfast, you'll cook it yourself."

"What do you mean gone, Bill?" asked Orman.

"The whole kit and kaboodle of 'em have run out on us," explained the cameraman. "There's not a smoke in camp. Even the askaris have beat it. The camp's unguarded, and God only knows how long it has been."

"Gone!" Orman's inflection registered incredulity. "But they couldn't! Where have they gone?"

"Search me," replied West, "They've taken a lot of our supplies with 'em too. From what little I saw I guess they outfitted themselves to the queen's taste. I noticed a couple of trucks that looked like they'd been rifled."

Orman swore softly beneath his breath; but he squared his shoulders, and the haggard, hang-dog expression he had worn vanished from his face. O'Grady had been looking at him with a worried furrow in his brow; now he gave a sigh of relief and grinned—the Chief was himself again.

"Rout every one out," Orman

directed. "Have the drivers check their loads. You attend to that, Bill, while Pat posts a guard around the camp. I see old el-Gran'ma'am and his bunch are still with us. You better put them on guard duty, Pat. Then round up every one else at the mess tables for a palaver."

While his orders were being carried out Orman walked about the camp making a hurried survey. His brain was clear. Even the effects of a sleepless night seemed to have been erased by this sudden emergency call upon his resources. He no longer wasted Ms nervous energy upon vain regrets, though he was still fully conscious of the fact that this serious predicament was of his own making.

When he approached the mess table five minutes later the entire company was assembled there talking excitedly about the defection of the blacks and offering various prophecies as to the future, none of which were particularly roseate.

Orman overheard one remark. "It took a case of Scotch to get us into this mess, but Scotch won't ever get us out of it."

"You all know what has happened," Orman commenced; "and I guess you all know why it happened, but recriminations won't help matters. Our situation really isn't so hopeless. We have men, provisions, arms, and transportation. Because the porters deserted us doesn't mean that we've got

to sit down here and kiss ourselves good-bye.

"Nor is there any use in turning around now and going back—the shortest way out of the Bansuto country is straight ahead. When we get out of it we can recruit more blacks from friendly tribes and go ahead with the picture.

"In the meantime every one has got to work and work hard. We have got to do the work the blacks did before—make camp, strike camp, unload and load, cook, cut trail, drag trucks through mud holes, stand guard on the march and in camp. That part and trail cutting will be dangerous, but every one will have to take his turn at it—every one except the girls and the cooks; they're the most

important members of the safari." A hint of one of Orman's old smiles touched his lips and eyes.

"Now," he continued, "The first thing to do is eat. Who can cook?"

"I can like nobody's business," said Rhonda Terry.

"I'll vouch for that," said Marcus. "I've eaten a chicken dinner with all the trimmings at Rhonda's apartment."

"I can cook," spoke up a male voice.

Every one turned to see who had spoken; he was the only man that had volunteered for the only safe assignment.

"When did you learn to cook, Obroski?" demanded Noice. "I went camping with you once; and you couldn't

even build a fire, let alone cook on one after some one else had built it."

Obroski flushed. "Well, some one's got to help Rhonda," he said lamely, "and no one else offered to."

"Jimmy, here, can cook," offered an electrician. "He used to be assistant chef in a cafeteria in L.A."

"I don't want to cook," said Jimmy. "I don't want no cinch job. *I* served in the Marines in Nicaragua. Gimme a gun, and let me do guard duty."

"Who else can cook?" demanded Orman. "We need three."

"Shorty can cook," said a voice from the rear. "He used to run a hot-dog stand on Ventura Boulevard."

"O.K.!" said Orman. "Miss Terry is chief cook; Jimmy and Shorty will help her; Pat will detail three more for K.P. every day. Now get busy. While the cooks are rustling some grub the rest of you strike the tents and load the trucks."

"Oh, Tom," said Naomi Madison at his elbow, "my personal boy has run away with the others. I wish you would detail one of the men to take his place."

Orman wheeled and looked at her in astonishment. "I'd forgotten all about you, Naomi. I'm glad you reminded me. If you can't cook, and I don't suppose you can, you'll peel spuds, wait on the tables, and help wash dishes."

For a moment the Madison looked aghast; then she smiled icily, "I suppose

you think you are funny," she said, "but really this is no time for joking."

"I'm not joking, Naomi." His tone was serious, his face unsmiling.

"Do you mean to say that you expect me, Naomi Madison, to peel potatoes, wait on tables, and wash dishes! Don't be ridiculous—I shall do nothing of the kind."

"Be yourself, Naomi! Before Milt Smith discovered you you were slinging hash in a joint on Main Street; and you'll do it again here, or you won't eat." He turned and walked away.

During breakfast Naomi Madison sat in haughty aloofness in the back seat of an automobile. She did not wait on table, nor did she eat.

Americans and Arabs formed the advance and rear guards when the safari finally got under way; but the crew that cut trail was wholly American —the Arabs would fight, but they would not work; that was beneath their dignity.

Not until the last kitchen utensil was washed, packed, and loaded did Rhonda Terry go to the car in which she and Naomi Madison rode. She was flushed and a little tired as she entered the car.

Naomi eyed her with compressed lips. "You're a fool, Rhonda," she snapped. "You shouldn't have lowered yourself by doing that menial work. We were not employed to be scullery maids."

Rhonda nodded toward the head of

the column. "There probably isn't anything in those boys' contracts about chopping down trees or fighting cannibals." She took a paper-wrapped parcel from her bag. "I brought you some sandwiches. I thought you might be hungry."

The Madison ate in silence, and for a long time thereafter she seemed to be immersed in thought.

The column moved slowly. The axe men were not accustomed to the sort of work they were doing, and in the heat of the equatorial forest they tired quickly. The trail opened with exasperating slowness as though the forest begrudged every foot of progress that they made.

Orman worked with his men,

wielding an axe when trees were to be felled, marching with the advance guard when the trail was opened.

"Tough goin'," remarked Bill West, leaning his axe handle against his hip and wiping the perspiration from his eyes.

"This isn't the toughest part of it," replied Orman.

"How come?"

"Since the guides scrammed we don't know where we're goin'."

West whistled. "I hadn't thought of that."

As they trudged on an opening in the forest appeared ahead of them shortly after noon. It was almost treeless and

covered with a thick growth of tall grass higher than a man's head.

"That certainly looks good," remarked Orman. "We ought to make a little time for a few minutes."

The leading truck forged into the open, flattening the grass beneath its great tires.

"Hop aboard the trucks!" Orman shouted to the advance guard and the axe men. "Those beggars won't bother us here; there are no trees to hide them."

Out into the open moved the long column of cars. A sense of relief from the oppressive closeness of the forest animated the entire company.

And then, as the rearmost truck bumped into the clearing, a shower of

arrows whirred from the tall grasses all along the line. Savage war cries filled the air; and for the first time the Bansutos showed themselves, as their spearmen rushed forward with screams of hate and blood lust.

A driver near the head of the column toppled from his seat with an arrow through his heart. His truck veered to the left and went careening off into the midst of the savages.

Rifles cracked, men shouted and cursed, the wounded screamed. The column stopped, that every man might use his rifle. Naomi Madison slipped to the floor of the car. Rhonda drew her revolver and fired into the faces of the onrushing blacks. A dozen men hurried

to the defense of the car that carried the two girls.

Some one shouted, "Look out! They're on the other side too." Rifles were turned in the direction of the new threat. The fire was continuous and deadly. The Bansutos, almost upon them, wavered and fell back. A fusillade of shots followed them as they disappeared into the dense grass, followed and found many of them.

It was soon over; perhaps the whole affair had not lasted two minutes. But it had wrought havoc with the company. A dozen men were dead or dying, a truck was wrecked, the morale of the little force was shattered.

Orman turned the command of the

advance guard over to West and hurried back down the line to check up on casualties. O'Grady was running forward to meet him.

"We'd better get out of here, Tom," he cried; "those devils may fire the grass."

Orman paled. He had not thought of that. "Load the dead and wounded onto the nearest cars, and get going!" he ordered. "We'll have to check up later."

The relief that the party had felt when they entered the grassy clearing was only equaled by that which they experienced when they left it to pull into the dense, soggy forest where the menace of fire, at least, was reduced to a minimum.

Then O'Grady went along the line with his roster of the company checking

the living and the dead. The bodies of Noice, Baine, seven other Americans and three Arabs were on the trucks.

"Obroski!" shouted O'Grady. "Obroski! Has any one seen Obroski?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Gordon Z. Marcus. "I saw him. I remember now. When those devils came up on our left, he jumped out of the other side of the car and ran off into that tall grass."

Orman started back toward the rear of the column. "Where you goin', Tom?" demanded West.

"To look for Obroski."

"You can't go alone. I'll go with you."

Half a dozen others accompanied them, but though they searched for the

better part of an hour they found no sign of Obroski either dead or alive.

Silent, sad, and gloomy, the company found a poor camping site late in the afternoon. When they spoke, they spoke in subdued tones, and there was no joking or laughing. Glumly they sat at table when supper was announced, and few appeared to notice and none commented upon the fact that the famous Naomi Madison waited on them.

8. THE COWARD

WE are all either the victims or the beneficiaries of heredity and environment. Stanley Obroski was one of the victims. Heredity had given him a mighty physique, a noble bearing, and a handsome face. Environment had sheltered and protected him throughout his life. Also, every one with whom he had come in contact had admired his great strength and attributed to him courage commensurate to it.

Never until the past few days had Obroski been confronted by an emergency that might test his courage, and so all his life he had been wondering if his courage would measure up to what was expected of it when the

emergency developed.

He had given the matter far more thought than does the man of ordinary physique because he knew that so much more was expected of him than of the ordinary man. It had become an obsession together with the fear that he might not live up to the expectations of his admirers. And finally he became afraid —afraid of being afraid.

It is a failing of nearly all large men to be keenly affected by ridicule. It was the fear of ridicule, should he show fear, rather than fear of physical suffering, that Obroski shrank from, though perhaps he did not realize this. It was a psyche far too complex for easy analysis.

But the results were disastrous. They

induced a subconscious urge to avoid danger rather than risk showing fear and thus inducing ridicule.

And when the first shower of arrows fell among the cars of the safari Obroski leaped from the opposite side of the automobile in which he was riding and disappeared among the tall grasses that hemmed them in on both sides. His reaction to danger had been entirely spontaneous—a thing beyond his will.

As he pushed blindly forward he was as unthinking as a terrified animal bent only upon escape. But he had covered only a few yards when he ran directly into the arms of a giant black warrior.

Here indeed was art emergency. The black was as surprised as Obroski. He

probably thought that all the whites were charging to the attack; he was terrified. He wanted to flee, but the white was too close; so he leaped for him, calling loudly to his fellows as he did so.

It was too late for Obroski to escape the clutching fingers of the black. If he didn't do something the man would kill him! If he could get rid of the fellow he could run back to the safari. He *must* get rid of him!

The black had seized him by the clothes, and now Obroski saw a knife in the fellow's free hand. Death stared him in the face! Heretofore Obroski's dangers had always been more or less imaginary; now he was faced with a stark reality.

Terror galvanized his mind and his giant muscles into instant action. He seized the black and lifted him above his head; then he hurled him heavily to the ground.

The black, fearful of his life, started to rise; and Obroski, equally fearful of his own, lifted him again high overhead and again cast him down. As he did so a half dozen blacks closed upon him from the tall surrounding grasses and bore him to the earth.

His mind half numb with terror, Obroski fought like a cornered rat. The blacks were no match for his great muscles. He seized them and tossed them aside; then he turned to run. But the black he had first hurled to the ground

reached out and seized him by an ankle, tripping him: then the others were upon him again and more came to their assistance. They held him by force of numbers and bound his hands behind him.

In all his life Stanley Obroski had never fought before. A good disposition and his strange complex had prevented him from seeking trouble, and his great size and strength had deterred others from picking quarrels with him. He had never realized his own strength; and now, his mental faculties cloyed by terror, he only partly appreciated it. All that he could think of was that they had bound his hands and he was helpless; that they would kill him.

At last they dragged him to his feet. Why they did not kill him he could not guess—then. They seemed a little awed by his great size and strength. They jabbered much among themselves as they led him away toward the forest.

Obroski heard the savage war cries of the main body as it attacked the safari and the crack of rifles that told that his fellows were putting up a spirited defense. A few bullets whirred close, and one of his captors lunged forward with a slug in his heart.

They took him into the forest and along a winding trail where presently they were overtaken by other members of the tribe, and with the arrival of each new contingent he was surrounded by

jabbering savages who punched him and poked him, feeling of his great muscles, comparing his height with theirs.

Bloodshot eyes glared from hideous, painted faces—glared in hatred that required no knowledge of their language to interpret. Some threatened him with spears and knives, but the party that had captured him preserved him from these.

Stanley Obroski was so terrified that he walked as one in a trance, giving no outward sign of any emotion; but the blacks thought that his manner was indicative of the indifference of great bravery.

At last a very large warrior overtook them. He was resplendent in paint and feathers, in many necklaces and armlets

and anklets. He bore an ornate shield, and his spear and his bow and the quiver for his arrows were more gorgeously decorated than those of his fellows.

But it was his commanding presence and his air of authority more than these that led Obroski to infer that he was a chief. As he listened to the words of those who had made the capture, he examined the prisoner with savage disdain; then he spoke commandingly to those about him and strode on. The others followed, and afterward none threatened to harm the white man.

All afternoon they marched, deeper and deeper into the gloomy forest. The cords about Obroski's wrists cut into the flesh and hurt him; another cord about

his neck, by which a savage led him, was far too tight for comfort; and when the savage jerked it, as he occasionally did, Obroski was half choked.

He was very miserable, but he was so numb with terror that he made no outcry nor any complaint. Perhaps he felt that it would be useless, and that the less he caused them annoyance or called attention to himself the better off he would be.

The result of this strategy, if such it were, he could not have guessed; for he could not understand their words when they spoke among themselves of the bravery of the white man who showed no fear.

During the long march his thoughts

were often of the members of the company he had deserted. He wondered how they had fared in the fight and if any had been killed. He knew that many of the men had held him in contempt before. What would they think of him now! Marcus must have seen him run away at the first threat of danger. Obroski winced, the old terrifying fear of ridicule swept over him; but it was nothing compared to the acute terror he suffered as he shot quick glances about him at the savage faces of his captors and recalled the stories he had heard of torture and death at the hands of such as these.

He heard shouting ahead, and a moment later the trail debouched onto a

clearing in the center of which was a palisaded village of conical, straw-thatched huts. It was late in the afternoon, and Obroski knew that they must have covered considerable distance since his capture. He wondered, in the event that he escaped or they released him, if he could find his way back to the trail of the safari. He had his doubts.

As they entered the village, women and children pressed forward to see him. They shouted at him. From the expressions of the faces of many of the women he judged that they were reviling and cursing him. A few struck or clawed at him. The children threw stones and refuse at him.

The warriors guarding him beat his assailants off, as they conducted him down the single street of the village to a hut near the far end. Here they motioned him to enter; but the doorway was so low that one might only pass through it on hands and knees, and as his hands were fastened behind his back that was out of the question for him. So they threw him down and dragged him in. Then they bound his ankles and left him.

The interior of the hut was dark, but as his eyes became accustomed to the change from daylight he was able to see his surroundings dimly. It was then that he became aware that he was not alone in the hut. Within the range of his vision he saw three figures, evidently men. One

was stretched out upon the packed earth floor, the other two sat hunched forward over their updrawn knees. He felt the eyes of the latter upon him. He wondered what they were doing there—if they, too, were prisoners.

Presently one of them spoke. "How the Bansuto get you, Bwana Simba?" It was the name the natives of the safari had given him because of the part that he was to take in the picture, that of the Lion Man.

"Who the devil are you?" demanded Obroski.

"Kwamudi," replied the speaker.

"Kwamudi! Well, it didn't do you much good to run away—" He almost added "either" but stopped himself in

time. "They attacked the safari shortly after noon. I was taken prisoner then. How did they get you?"

"Early this morning. I had followed my people, trying to get them to return to the safari." Obroski guessed that Kwamudi was lying. "We ran into a party of warriors coming from a distant village to join the main tribe. They killed many of my people. Some escaped. They took some prisoners. Of these they killed all but Kwamudi and these two. They brought us here."

"What are they going to do with you? Why didn't they kill you when they killed the others?"

"They not kill you, they not kill Kwamudi, they not kill these others —

yet—all for same reason. Kill by and by."

"Why? What do they want to kill us for?"

"They eat."

"Eh? You don't mean to say they're cannibals!"

"Not like some. Bansuto not eat men all time; not eat all men. Only chiefs, brave men, strong men. Eat brave men, make them brave; eat strong men, make them strong; eat chiefs, make them wise."

"How horrible!" muttered Obroski. "But they can't eat me—I am not a chief—I am not brave—I am a coward," he mumbled.

"What, Bwana?"

"Oh, nothing. When do you suppose they'll do it? Right away?"

Kwamudi shook his head. "Maybe. Maybe not for long time. Witch doctor make medicine, talk to spirits, talk to moon. They tell him when. Maybe soon, maybe long time."

"And will they keep us tied up this way until they kill us? It's mighty uncomfortable. But then you aren't tied, are you?"

"Yes, Kwamudi tied—hands and feet. That why he lean forward across his knees."

"Can you talk their language, Kwamudi?"

"A little."

"Ask them to free our hands, and our feet too if they will."

"No good. Waste talk."

Listen, Kwamudi! They want us to be strong when they eat us, don't they?"

"Yes, Bwana."

"Very well; then get hold of the chief and tell him that if he keeps us tied up like this we'll get weak. He's certainly got brains enough to know that that's true. He's got plenty of warriors to guard us, and I don't see how we could get out of this village anyhow—not with all those harpies and brats hanging around.'"

Kwamudi understood enough of what the white man had said to get the main

idea. "First time I get a chance, I tell him," he said.

Darkness fell. The light from the cooking fires was visible through the low doorway of the prison hut. Women were screaming and wailing for the warriors who had fallen in battle that day. Many had painted their bodies from head to feet with ashes, rendering them even more hideous than nature had fashioned them. Others laughed and gossiped.

Obroski was thirsty and hungry, but they brought him neither water nor food. The hours dragged on. The warriors commenced to dance in celebration of their victory. Tomtoms boomed dismally through the night. The wails of the

mourners, the screams and war cries of the dancers rose and fell in savage consonance with the savage scene, adding to the depression of the prisoners.

"This is no way to treat people you're going to eat," grumbled Obroski. "You ought to get 'em fat, not starve 'em thin."

"Bansuto do not care about our fat," observed Kwamudi. "They eat our hearts, the palms of our hands, the soles of our feet. They eat the muscles from your arms and legs. They eat my brains."

"You're not very cheering and you're not very complimentary," said Obroski with a wry smile. "But at that there isn't much to choose between our brains, for they've ended up by getting us both into

the same hole."

9. TREACHERY

Orman and Bill West entered the cook tent after supper. "We're going to do the dishes, Rhonda," said the director. "We're so shorthanded now we got to take the K.P.'s off and give 'em to Pat for guard duty. Jimmy and Shorty will stay on cooking and help with the other work."

Rhonda demurred with a shake of her head. "You boys have had a tough day. All we've done is sit in an automobile. Sit down here and smoke and talk to us —we need cheering up. The four of us can take care of the dishes. Isn't that right?" She turned toward Jimmy, Shorty, and Naomi.

"Sure!" said Jimmy and Shorty in

unison.

Naomi nodded. "I've washed dishes till after midnight for a lot of Main Street bums many a time. I guess I can wash 'em for you bums, too," she added with a laugh. "But for the love o' Mike, do as Rhonda said—sit down and talk to us, and *say something funny*. I'm nearly nuts."

There was a moment's awkward silence. They could have been only a little more surprised had they seen Queen Mary turn handsprings across Trafalgar Square.

Then Tom Orman laughed and slapped Naomi on the back. "Atta girl!" he exclaimed.

Here was a new Madison; they were

all sure that they were going to like her better than the old.

"I don't mind sitting down," admitted West. "And I don't mind talking, but I'm damned if I can be funny—I can't forget Clarence and Jerrold and the rest of them."

"Poor Stanley," said Rhonda. "He won't even get a decent burial."

"He don't deserve one," growled Jimmy, who had served with the Marines; "he deserted under fire."

"Let's not be too hard on him," begged Rhonda. "No one is a coward because he wants to be. It's something one can't help. We ought to pity him." Jimmy grumbled in dissent.

Bill West grunted. "Perhaps we

would, if we were all stuck on him."

Rhonda turned and eyed him coolly. "He may have had his faults," she said, "but at least I never heard him say an unkind thing about any one."

"He was never awake long enough," said Jimmy contemptuously.

"I don't know what I'm goin' to do without him," observed Orman. "There isn't anybody in the company I can double for him."

"You don't think you're going on with the picture after what's happened, do you?" asked Naomi.

"That's what we came over here for, and that's what we're goin' to do if it takes a leg," replied Orman.

"But you've lost your leading man and your heavy and your sound man and a lot more, and you haven't any guides, and you haven't any porters. If you think you can go on with a picture like that, you're just plain cuckoo, Tom."

"I never saw a good director who wasn't cuckoo," said Bill West.

Pat O'Grady stuck his head inside the tent. "The Chief here?" he asked. "Oh, there you are! Say, Tom, Atewy says old Ghrennem will stand all the guard with his men from 12 to 6 if we'll take care of it from now to midnight. He wants to know if that's all right with you. Atewy says the Arabs can do better together than workin' with Americans that they can't understand."

"O.K." replied Orman. "That's sort of decent of 'em takin' that shift. It'll give our boys a chance to rest up before we shove off in the morning, and God knows they need it. Tell 'em we'll call 'em at midnight."

Exhausted by the physical and nervous strains of the day, those members of the company that were not on guard were soon asleep. For the latter it was a long stretch to midnight, a tour of duty rendered still more trying by the deadly monotony of the almost unbroken silence of the jungle. Only faintly from great distances came the usual sounds to which they had become accustomed. It was as though they had been abandoned by even the beasts of the forest. But at

last midnight came, and O'Grady awoke the Arabs. Tired men stumbled through the darkness to their blankets, and within fifteen minutes every American in the camp was deep in the sleep of utter exhaustion.

Even the unwonted activity of the Arabs could not arouse them; though, to be sure, the swart sons of the desert moved as silently as the work they were engaged upon permitted—rather unusual work it seemed for those whose sole duty it was to guard the camp.

It was full daylight before an American stirred—several hours later than it was customary for the life of the camp to begin.

Gordon Z. Marcus was the first to be

up, for old age is prone to awaken earlier than youth. He had dressed hurriedly, for he had noted the daylight and the silence of the camp. Even before he came into the open he sensed that something was amiss. He looked quickly about. The camp seemed deserted. The fires had died to smoldering embers. No sentry stood on guard.

Marcus hastened to the tent occupied by Orman and O'Grady, and without formality burst into the interior. "Mr. Orman! Mr. Orman!" he shouted.

Orman and O'Grady, startled out of deep sleep by the excited voice of the old character man, threw aside their mosquito bars and leaped from their cots.

"What's wrong?" demanded Orman.

"The Arabs!" exclaimed Marcus. "They've gone! Their tents, their horses, everything!"

Neither of the other men spoke as they quickly slipped into their clothes and stepped out into the open. Orman looked quickly about the camp.

"They must have been gone for hours," he said; "the fires are out." Then he shrugged. "We'll have to get along without them, but that doesn't mean that we got to stop eating. Where are the cooks? Wake the girls, Marcus, please, and rout out Jimmy and Shorty."

"I thought those fellows were getting mighty considerate all of a sudden when they offered to stand guard after midnight

last night," remarked O'Grady.

"I might have known there was something phoney about it," growled Orman. "They played me for a sucker. I'm nothin' but a damn boob."

"Here comes Marcus again," said O'Grady. "I wonder what's eatin' him now —he looks fussed."

And Gordon Z. Marcus was fussed. Before he reached the two men he called aloud to them. "The girls aren't there," he shouted, "and their tent's a mess."

Orman turned and started on a run for the cook tent. "They're probably getting breakfast," he explained. But there was no one in the cook tent.

Every one was astir now; and a thorough search of the camp was made,

but there was no sign of either Naomi Madison or Rhonda Terry. Bill West searched the same places again and again, unwilling to believe the abhorrent evidence of his own eyes. Orman was making a small pack of food, blankets, and ammunition.

"Why do you suppose they took them?" asked Marcus.

"For ransom, most likely," suggested O'Grady.

"I wish I was sure of that," said Orman; "but there is still a safe market for girls in Africa and Asia."

"I wonder why they tore everything to pieces so in the tent," mused Marcus. "It looks like a cyclone had struck it."

"There wasn't any fight," said

O'Grady. "It would have waked some of us up if there had been."

"The Arabs were probably looking for loot," suggested Jimmy.

Bill West had been watching Orman. Now he too was making a pack. The director noticed it.

"What do you think you're goin' to do?" he asked.

"I'm goin' with you," replied West.

Orman shook his head. "Nothing doing! This is my funeral."

West continued his preparations without reply.

"If you fellows are going out to look for the girls, I'm goin' with you," announced O'Grady.

"Same here," said another.

The whole company volunteered.

"I'm goin' alone," announced Orman. "One man on foot can travel faster than this motorcade and faster than men on horseback who will have to stop and cut trail in places."

"But what in hell can one man do after he catches up with those rats?" demanded O'Grady. "He'll just get himself killed. He can't fight 'em all."

"I don't intend to fight," replied Orman. "I got the girls into this mess by not using my head; I'm going to use it to get them out. Those Arabs will do anything for money, and I can offer them more for the girls than they can hope to get from any one else."

O'Grady scratched his head. "I guess you're right, Tom."

"Sure I'm right. You are in charge of the outfit while I'm away. Get it to the Omwamwi Falls, and wait there for me. You'll be able to hire natives there. Send a runner back to Jinja by the southern route with a message for the studio telling what's happened and asking for orders if I don't show up again in thirty days."

"You're not going without breakfast!" demanded Marcus.

"No, I'll eat first," replied Orman.

"How about grub?" shouted O'Grady.

"Comin' right up!" yelled back Shorty from the cook tent.

Orman ate hurriedly, giving final instructions to O'Grady between mouthfuls. When he had finished he got up, shouldered his pack, and picked up his rifle.

"So long, boys!" he said.

They crowded up to shake his hand and wish him luck. Bill West was adjusting the straps of a pack that he had slung to his back. Orman eyed him.

"You can't come, Bill," he said. "This is my job."

"I'm coming along," replied West.

"I won't let you."

"You and who else?" demanded West, and then added in a voice that he tried hard to control, "Rhonda's out there

somewhere."

The hard lines of grim stubbornness on Orman's face softened. "Come on then," he said; "I hadn't thought of it that way, Bill."

The two men crossed the camp and picked up the plain trail of the horsemen moving northward.

10. TORTURE

Stanley Obroski had never before welcomed a dawn with such enthusiasm. The new day might bring him death, but almost anything would be preferable to the hideous discomforts of the long night that had finally dragged its pain-racked length into the past.

His bonds had hurt him; his joints ached from long inaction and from cold; he was hungry, but he suffered more from thirst; vermin crawled over him at will and bit him; they and the cold and the hideous noises of the mourners and the dancers and the drums had combined to deny him sleep.

All these things had sapped his strength, both physical and nervous,

leaving him exhausted. He felt like a little child who was afraid and wanted to cry. The urge to cry was almost irresistible. It seemed to offer relief from the maddening tension.

A vague half-conviction forced its way into the muddy chaos of his numb brain—crying would be a sign of fear, and fear meant cowardice! Obroski did not cry. Instead, he found partial relief in swearing. He had never been given to profanity, but even though he lacked practice he acquitted himself nobly.

His efforts awoke Kwamudi who had slept peacefully in this familiar environment. The two men conversed haltingly—mostly about their hunger and thirst.

"Yell for water and food," suggested Obroski, "and keep on yelling until they bring it."

Kwamudi thought that might be a good plan, and put It into execution. After five minutes it brought results. One of the guards outside the hut was awakened. He came in saying things.

In the meantime both the other prisoners had awakened and were sitting up. One of these was nearer the hut doorway than his fellows. He therefore chanced to be the first in the path of the guard, who commenced to belabor him over the head and shoulders with the haft of his spear.

"If you make any more noise like that," said the guard, "I'll cut out the

tongues of all of you." Then he went outside and fell asleep again.

"That idea," observed Obroski, "was not so hot."

"What, Bwana?" inquired Kwamudi.

The morning dragged on until almost noon, and still the village slept. It was sleeping off the effects of the previous night's orgy. But at last the women commenced to move about, making preparations for breakfast.

Fully an hour later warriors came to the hut. They dragged and kicked the prisoners into the open and jerked them to their feet after removing the bonds from their ankles; then they led them to a large hut near the center of the village. It was the hut of Rungula, chief of the

Bansutos.

Rungula sat on a low stool before the doorway. Behind him were ranged the more important subchiefs; and on the flanks, forming a wide semicircle, were grouped the remainder of the warriors—a thousand savage fighting men from many a far-flung Bansuto village.

From the doorway of the chief's hut several of his wives watched the proceedings, while a brood of children spewed out between their feet into the open sunshine.

Rungula eyed the white prisoner with scowling brows; then he spoke to him.

"What is he saying, Kwamudi?" asked Obroski.

"He is asking what you were doing in

his country."

"Tell him that we were only passing through—that we are friends —that he must let us go."

When Kwamudi interpreted Obroski's speech Rungula laughed. "Tell the white man that only a chief who is greater than Rungula can say *must* to Rungula and that there is no chief greater than Rungula.

"The white man will be killed and so will all his people. He would have been killed yesterday had he not been so big and strong."

"He will not stay strong if he does not have food and water," replied Kwamudi. "None of us will do you any good if you starve us and keep us tied up."

Rungula thought this over and discussed it with some of his lieutenants; then he stood up and approached Obroski. He fingered the white man's shirt, jabbering incessantly. He appeared much impressed also by Obroski's breeches and boots.

"He says for you to take off your clothes, Bwana," said Kwamudi; "he wants them."

"All of them?" inquired Obroski.

"All of them, Bwana."

Exhausted by sleeplessness, discomfort, and terror, Obroski had felt that nothing but torture and death could add to his misery, but now the thought of nakedness awoke him to new horrors. To the civilized man clothing imparts a

self-confidence that is stripped away with his garments. But Obroski dared not refuse.

"Tell him I can't take my clothes off with my hands tied behind my back."

When Kwamudi had interpreted this last, Rungula directed that Obroski's hands be released.

The white man removed his shirt and tossed it to Rungula. Then the chief pointed at his boots. Slowly Obroski unlaced and removed them, sitting on the ground to do so. Rungula became intrigued by the white man's socks and jerked these off, himself.

Obroski rose and waited. Rungula felt of his great muscles and jabbered some more with his fellows. Then he called

his tallest warrior and stood him beside the prisoner. Obroski towered above the man. The blacks jabbered excitedly.

Rungula touched Obroski's breeches and grunted.

"He want them," said Kwamudi.

"Oh, for Pete's sake, tell him to have a heart," exclaimed Obroski. "Tell him I got to have something to wear."

Kwamudi and the chief spoke together briefly, with many gesticulations.

"Take them off, Bwana," said the former. "There is nothing else you can do. He says he will give you something to wear."

As he unbuttoned his breeches and slipped them off, Obroski was painfully

aware of giggling girls and women in the background. But the worst was yet to come—Rungula was greatly delighted by the gay silk shorts that the removal of the breeches revealed.

When these had passed to the ownership of Rungula, Obroski could feel the hot flush beneath the heavy coat of tan he had acquired on the beach at Malibu.

"Tell him to give me something to wear," he begged.

Rungula laughed uproariously when the demand was made known to him; but he turned and called something to the women in his hut, and a moment later a little pickaninny came running out with a very dirty G string which he threw at

Obroski's feet.

Shortly after, the prisoners were returned to their hut; but their ankles were not bound again, nor were Obroski's wrists. While he was removing the bonds from the wrists of his fellow prisoners a woman came with food and water for them. Thereafter they were fed with reasonable regularity.

Monotonously the days dragged. Each slow, hideous night seemed an eternity to the white prisoner. He shivered in his nakedness and sought warmth by huddling close between the bodies of two of the natives. All of them were alive with vermin.

A week passed, and then one night some warriors came and took one of the

black prisoners away. Obroski and the others watched through the doorway. The man disappeared around the corner of a hut near the chief's. They never saw him again.

The tom-toms commenced their slow thrumming; the voices of men rose in a weird chant; occasionally the watchers caught a glimpse of savage dancers as their steps led them from behind the corner of a hut that hid the remainder of the scene.

Suddenly a horrid scream of agony rose above the voices of the dancers. For a half hour occasional groans punctuated the savage cries of the warriors, but at last even these ceased.

"He is gone, Bwana," whispered

Kwamudi.

"Yes, thank God!" muttered the white man. "What agony he must have suffered!"

The following night warriors came and took away the second black prisoner. Obroski tried to stop his ears against the sounds of the man's passing. That night he was very cold, for there was only Kwamudi to warm him on one side.

"Tomorrow night, Bwana," said the black man, "you will sleep alone."

"And the next night?"

"There will be none, Bwana—for you."

During the cold, sleepless hours

Obroski's thoughts wandered back through the past, the near past particularly. He thought of Naomi Madison, and wondered if she were grieving much over his disappearance. Something told him she was not.

Most of the other figures were pale in his thoughts—he neither liked nor disliked them; but there was one who stood out even more clearly than the memory picture of Naomi. It was Orman. His hatred of Orman rose above all his other passions—it was greater than his love for Naomi, greater than his fear of torture and death. He hugged it to his breast now and nursed it and thanked God for it, because it made him forget the lice and the cold and the things that

were to happen to him on the next night or the next.

The hours dragged on; day came and went, and night came again. Obroski and Kwamudi, watching, saw warriors approaching the hut.

"They come, Bwana," said the black man. "Good-bye!"

But this time they took them both. They took them to the open space before the hut of Rungula, chief of the Bansutos, and tied them flat against the boles of two trees, facing one another.

Here Obroski watched them work upon Kwamudi. He saw tortures so fiendish, so horrible, so obscene that he feared for his reason, thinking that these visions must be the figments of a mad

brain. He tried to look away, but the horror of it fascinated him. And so he saw Kwamudi die.

Afterward he saw even more disgusting sights, sights that nauseated him. He wondered when they would commence on him, and prayed that it would be soon and soon over. He tried to steel himself against fear, but he knew that he was afraid. By every means within the power of his will he sought to bolster a determination not to give them the satisfaction of knowing that he suffered when his turn came; for he had seen that they gloated over the agonies of Kwamudi.

It was almost morning when they removed the thongs that bound him to the

tree and led him back to the hut. Then it became evident that they were not going to kill him—this night. It meant that his agony was to be prolonged.

In the cold of the coming dawn he huddled alone on the filthy floor of his prison, sleepless and shivering; and the lice swarmed over his body unmolested. He had plumbed the nadir of misery and hopelessness and found there a dull apathy that preserved his reason.

Finally he slept, nor did he awaken until midafternoon. He was warm then; and new life seemed to course through his veins, bringing new hope. Now he commenced to plan. He would not die as the others had died, like sheep led to the slaughter. The longer he considered his

plan the more anxious he became to put it into execution, awaiting impatiently those who were to lead him to torture.

His plan did not include escape; for that he was sure was impossible, but it did include a certain measure of revenge and death without torture. Obroski's reason was tottering.

When he saw the warriors coming to get him he came out of the hut and met them, a smile upon his lips.

Then they led him away as they had led the three natives before him.

11. THE LAST VICTIM

Tarzan of the Apes was ranging a district that was new to him, and with the keen alertness of the wild creature he was alive to all that was strange or unusual. Upon the range of his knowledge depended his ability to cope with the emergencies of an unaccustomed environment. Nothing was so trivial that it did not require investigation; and already, in certain matters concerning the haunts and habits of game both large and small, he knew quite as much if not more than many creatures that had been born here.

For three nights he had heard the almost continuous booming of tom-toms, faintly from afar; and during the day

following the third night he had drifted slowly in his hunting in the direction from which the sounds had come.

He had seen something of the natives who inhabited this region. He had witnessed their methods of warfare against the whites who had invaded their territory. His sympathies had been neither with one side nor the other. He had seen Orman, drunk, lashing his black porters; and he had felt that whatever misfortunes overtook him he deserved them.

Tarzan did not know these Tarmangani; and so they were even less to him than the other beasts that they would have described as lower orders but which Tarzan, who knew all orders

well, considered their superiors in many aspects of heart and mind.

Some passing whim, some slight incitement, might have caused him to befriend them actively, as he had often befriended Numa and Sabor and Sheeta, who were by nature his hereditary enemies. But no such whim had seized him, no such incitement had occurred; and he had seen them go upon their way and had scarcely given them a thought since the last night that he had entered their camp.

He had heard the fusillade of shots that had followed the attack of the Bansutos upon the safari; but he had been far away, and as he had already witnessed similar attacks during the

preceding days Ms curiosity was not aroused; and he had not investigated.

The doings of the Bansutos interested him far more. The Tarmangani would soon be gone—either dead or departed—but the Gomangani would be here always; and he must know much about them if he were to remain in their country.

Lazily he swung through the trees in the direction of their village. He was alone now; for the great golden lion, Jad-bal-ja, was hunting elsewhere, hunting trouble, Tarzan thought with a half smile as he recalled the sleek young lioness that the great beast had followed off into the forest fastness.

It was dark before the ape-man

reached the village of Rungula. The rhythm of the tom-toms blended with a low, mournful chant. A few warriors were dancing listlessly—a tentative excursion into the borderland of savage ecstasy into which they would later hurl themselves as their numbers increased with the increasing tempo of the dance.

Tarzan watched from the concealment of the foliage of a tree at the edge of the clearing that encircled the village. He was not greatly interested; the savage orgies of the blacks were an old story to him. Apparently there was nothing here to hold his attention, and he was about to turn away when his eyes were attracted to the figure of a man who contrasted strangely with the savage black warriors

of the village.

He was entering the open space where the dancers were holding forth — a tall, bronzed, almost naked white man surrounded by a group of warriors. He was evidently a prisoner.

The ape-man's curiosity was aroused. Silently he dropped to the ground, and keeping in the dense shadows of the forest well out of the moonlight he circled to the back of the village. Here there was no life, the interest of the villagers being centered upon the activities near the chief's hut.

Cautiously but quickly Tarzan crossed the strip of moonlit ground between the forest and the palisade. The latter was built of poles sunk into the ground close

together and lashed with pliant creepers. It was about ten feet high.

A few quick steps, a running jump, and Tarzan's fingers closed upon the top of the barrier. Drawing himself cautiously up, he looked over into the village. In silence he listened, sniffing the air. Satisfied, he threw a leg over the top of the palisade, and a moment later dropped lightly to the ground inside the village of Rungula, the Bansuto.

When the ground had been cleared for the village a number of trees had been left standing within the palisade to afford shelter from the equatorial sun. One of these overhung Rungula's hut, as Tarzan had noticed from the forest; and it was this tree that he chose from which

to examine the white prisoner more closely.

Keeping well in the rear of the chiefs hut and moving cautiously from the shadow of one hut to that of the next, the ape- man approached his goal. Had he moved noisily the sound of his coming would have been drowned by the tom-toms and the singing; but he moved without sound, as was second nature to him.

The chance of discovery lay in the possibility that some native might not have yet left his hut to join the throng around the dancers and that such a belated one would see the strange white giant and raise an alarm. But Tarzan came to the rear of Rungula's hut unseen.

Here fortune again favored him; for while the stem of the tree he wished to enter stood in front of the hut in plain view of the entire tribe, another, smaller tree grew at the rear of the hut, and, above it, mingled its branches with its fellow.

As the ape-man moved stealthily into the trees and out upon a great branch that would hold his weight without bending, the savage scene below unfolded itself before him. The tempo of the dance had increased. Painted warriors were leaping and stamping around a small group that surrounded the prisoner, and as Tarzan's gaze fell upon the man he experienced something in the nature of a shock. It was as though his disembodied

spirit hovered above and looked down upon himself, so startling was the likeness of this man to the Lord of the Jungle.

In stature, in coloring, even in the molding of his features he was a replica of Tarzan of the Apes; and Tarzan realized it instantly although it is not always that we can see our own likeness in another even when it exists.

Now indeed was the ape-man's interest aroused. He wondered who the man was and where he had come from. By the merest accident of chance he had not seen him when he had visited the camp of the picture company, and so he did not connect him with these people. His failure to do so might have been still

further explained by the man's nakedness. The clothing that had been stripped from him might, had he still worn it, have served to place him definitely; but his nakedness gave him only fellowship with the beasts. Perhaps that is why Tarzan was inclined to be favorably impressed with him at first sight.

Obroski, unconscious that other eyes than those of black enemies were upon him, gazed from sullen eyes upon the scene around him. Here, at the hands of these people, his three fellow prisoners had met hideous torture and death; but Obroski was in no mind to follow docilely in their footsteps. He had a plan.

He expected to die. He could find no slenderest hope for any other outcome, but he did not intend to submit supinely to torture. He had a plan.

Rungula squatted upon a stool eyeing the scene from bloodshot eyes beneath scowling brows. Presently he shouted directions to the warriors guarding Obroski, and they led him toward the tree on the opposite side of the open space. With thongs they prepared to bind him to the bole of the tree, and then it was that the prisoner put his plan into action; the plan of a fear-maddened brain.

Seizing the warrior nearest him he raised the man above his head as though be had been but a little child and hurled

him into the faces of the others, knocking several of them to the ground. He sprang forward and laid hold upon a dancing buck, and him he flung to earth so heavily that he lay still as though dead.

So sudden, so unexpected had been his attack that it left the Bansutos momentarily stunned; then Rungula leaped to his feet. "Seize him!" he cried. "But do not harm him." Rungula wished the mighty stranger to die after a manner of Rungula's own choosing, not the swift death that Obroski had hoped to win by his single-handed attack upon a thousand armed warriors.

As they closed upon him, Obroski felled them to right and left with mighty blows rendered even more terrific by the

fear-maddened brain that directed them. Terror had driven him berserk.

The cries of the warriors, the screams of the women and children formed a horrid cacophony in his ears that incited him to madder outbursts of fury. The arms that reached out to seize him he seized and broke like pipe stems.

He wanted to scream and curse, yet he fought in silence. He wanted to cry out against the terror that engulfed him, but he made no sound. And so, in terror, he fought a thousand men.

But this one-sided battle could not go on for long. Slowly, by force of numbers, they closed upon him; they seized his ankles and his legs. With heavy fists he struck men unconscious

with a single blow; but at last they dragged him down.

And then

12. THE MAP

Weyley!" sighed Eyad, dolorously. "Methinks the sheikh hath done wrong to bring these *benat*with us. Now will the *Nasara* follow us with many guns; they will never cease until they have destroyed us and taken the *benat* back for themselves—I know *el-Engleys*."

"*Ullah yelbisak berneta*!" scoffed Atewy.

"Thou roundest the map; was not that enough? They would not have followed and killed us for the map, but when you take away men's women they follow and kill—yes! be they Arab, English, or Negro." Eyad spat a period.

"I will tell thee, fool, why we brought

the two girls," said Atewy. "There may be no valley of diamonds, or we may not find it. Should we therefore, after much effort, return to our own country empty-handed? These girls are not ill-favored. They will bring money at several places of which I know, or it may be that the mad *Nasara* will pay a large ransom for their return. But in the end we shall profit if they be not harmed by us; which reminds me, Eyad, that I have seen thee cast evil eyes upon them. *Wellah*! If one harms them the sheikh will kill him; and if the sheikh doth not, I will."

"They will bring us nothing but trouble," insisted Eyad. "I wish that we were rid of them."

"And there is still another reason why

we brought them," continued Atewy. "The map is written in the language of *el- Engleys*, which I can speak but cannot read; the *benat* will read it to me. Thus it is well to keep them."

But still Eyad grumbled. He was a dour young *Bedauwy* with sinister eyes and a too full lower lip. Also, he did not speak what was in his thoughts; for the truth was not in him.

Since very early in the morning the horsemen had been pushing northward with the two girls. They had found and followed an open trail, and so had suffered no delays. Near the center of the little column rode the prisoners, often side by side; for much of the way the trail had been wide. It had been a trying

day for them, not alone because of the fatigue of the hard ride, but from the nervous shock that the whole misadventure had entailed since Atewy and two others had crept into their tent scarcely more than an hour after midnight, silenced them with threats of death, and, after ransacking the tent, carried them away into the night.

All day long they had waited expectantly for signs of rescue, though realizing that they were awaiting the impossible. Men on foot could not have overtaken the horsemen, and no motor could traverse the trail they had followed without long delays for clearing trail in many places.

"I can't stand much more," said

Naomi. "I'm about through."

Rhonda reined closer to her. "If you feel like falling, take hold of me," she said. "It can't last much longer today. They'll be making camp soon. It sure has been a tough ride—not much like following Ernie Vogt up Coldwater Canyon; and I used to come home from one of those rides and think I'd done something. Whew! They must have paved this saddle with bricks."

"I don't see how you can stay so cheerful."

"Cheerful! I'm about as cheerful as a Baby Star whose option hasn't been renewed."

"Do you think they're going to kill us, Rhonda?"

"They wouldn't have bothered to bring us all this way to kill us. They're probably after a ransom."

"I hope you're right. Tom'll pay 'em anything to get us back. But suppose they're going to sell us! I've heard that they sell white girls to black sultans in Africa."

"The black sultan that gets me is goin' to be out of luck."

The sun was low in the west when the Arabs made camp that night. Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem had no doubt but that angry and determined men were pursuing him, but he felt quite certain that now they could not overtake him.

His first thought had been to put distance between himself and

the *Nasara* he had betrayed—now he could look into the matter of the map of which Atewy had told him, possession of which had been the principal incentive of his knavery.

Supper over, he squatted where the light of the fire fell upon the precious document; and Atewy leaning over his shoulder scanned it with him.

"I can make nothing of it," growled the sheikh. "Fetch the *bint* from whom you took it."

"I shall have to fetch them both," replied Atewy, "since I cannot tell them apart."

"Fetch them both then," commanded el-Ghrennem; and while he waited he puffed meditatively upon his *nargileh*,

thinking of a valley filled with diamonds and of the many riding camels and mares that they would buy; so that he was in a mellow humor when Atewy returned with the prisoners.

Rhonda walked with her chin up and the glint of battle in her eye, but Naomi revealed her fear in her white face and trembling limbs.

Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem looked at her and smiled. "*Ma aleyk*," he said in what were meant to be reassuring tones.

"He says," interpreted Atewy, "that thou hast nothing to fear—that there shall no evil befall thee."

"You tell him," replied Rhonda, "that it will be just too bad for him if any evil does befall us and that if he wants to

save his skin he had better return us to our people *pronto*."

"The *Bedauwy* are not afraid of your people," replied Atewy, "but if you do what the sheikh asks no harm will come to you."

"What does he want?" demanded Rhonda.

"He wishes you to help us find the valley of diamonds," replied Atewy.

"What valley of diamonds?"

"It is on this map which we cannot read because we cannot read the language of *el-Engleys*." He pointed at the map the sheikh was holding.

Rhonda glanced at the paper and broke into laughter. "You don't mean to

tell me that you dumb bunnies kidnapped us because you believe that there is a valley of diamonds! Why, that's just a prop map."

"Dumb bunnies! Prop! I do not understand."

"I am trying to tell you that that map doesn't mean a thing. It was just for use in the picture we are making. You might as well return us to our people, for there isn't any valley of diamonds."

Atewy and the sheikh jabbered excitedly to one another for a few moments, and then the former turned again to the girl. "You cannot make fools of the *Bedauwy*," he said. "We are smarter than you. We knew that you would say that there is no valley of

diamonds, because you want to save it all for your father. If you know what is well for you, you will read this map for us and help us find the valley. Otherwise —" he scowled horridly and drew a forefinger across his throat.

Naomi shuddered; but Rhonda was not impressed—she knew that while they had ransom or sale value the Arabs would not destroy them except as a last resort for self-protection.

"You are not going to kill us, Atewy," she said, "even if I do not read the map to you; but there is no reason why I should not read it. I am perfectly willing to; only don't blame us if there is no valley of diamonds."

"Come here and sit beside Ab el-

Ghrennem and read the map to us," ordered Atewy.

Rhonda kneeled beside the sheikh and looked over his shoulder at the yellowed, timeworn map. With a slender finger she pointed at the top of the map. "This is north," she said, "and up here—this is the valley of diamonds. You see this little irregular thing directly west of the valley and close to it? It has an arrow pointing to it and a caption that says, '*Monolithic column: Red granite outcropping near only opening into valley*.' And right north of it this arrow points to '*Entrance to valley*.'

"Now here, at the south end of the valley, is the word '*Falls'* and below the falls a river that runs south and then

southwest."

"Ask her what this is," the sheikh instructed Atewy, pointing to characters at the eastern edge of the map southeast of the falls.

"That says '*Cannibal village,'*" explained the girl. "And all across the map down there it says, '*Forest*!' See this river that rises at the southeast edge of the valley, flows east, southeast, and then west in a big loop before it enters the '*Big river'* here. Inside this loop it says, '*Open country*,' and near the west end of the loop is a '*Barren, cone-shaped hill—volcanic*.' Then here is another river that rises in the southeast part of the map and flows northwest, emptying into the second

river just before the latter joins the big river."

Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem ran his fingers through his beard as he sat in thoughtful contemplation of the map. At last he placed a finger on the falls.

"*Shuf*, Atewy!" he exclaimed. "This should be the Omwamwi Falls, and over here the village of the Bansuto. We are here." He pointed at a spot near the junction of the second and third rivers. "Tomorrow we should cross this other river and come into open country. There we shall find a barren hill."

"*Billah*!" exclaimed Atewy. "If we do we shall soon be in the valley of diamonds, for the rest of the way is plain."

"What did the sheik say?" asked Rhonda.

Atewy told her, adding, "We shall all be very rich; then I shall buy you from the sheikh and take you back to my *ashirat*."

"You and who else?" scoffed Rhonda.

"*Billah*! No one else. I shall buy you for myself alone."

"*Caveat emptor*," advised the girl.

"I do not understand, *bint*," said Atewy.

"You will if you ever buy *me*. And when you call me *bint*, smile. It doesn't sound like a nice word."

Atewy grinned. He translated what she had said to the sheikh, and they both

laughed. "The*Narrawia* would be good to have in the *beyt* of Ab el-Ghrennem," said the sheikh, who had understood nothing of what Atewy had said to Rhonda. "When we are through with this expedition, I think that I shall keep them both; for I shall be so rich that I shall not have to sell them. This one will amuse me; she hath a quick tongue that is like *aud* in tasteless food."

Atewy was not pleased. He wanted Rhonda for himself; and he was determined to have her, sheikh or no sheikh. It was then that plans commenced to formulate in the mind of Atewy that would have caused Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem's blood pressure to rise had he known of them.

The Arabs spread blankets on the ground near the fire for the two girls; and the sentry who watched the camp was posted near, that they might have no opportunity to escape.

"We've got to get away from these highbinders, Naomi," said Rhonda as the girls lay close together beneath their blankets. "When they find out that the valley of diamonds isn't just around the corner, they're going to be sore. The poor saps really believe that that map is genuine—they expect to find that barren, volcanic hill tomorrow. When they don't find it tomorrow, nor next week nor next, they'll just naturally sell us 'down river'; and by that time we'll be so far from the outfit that we won't have a Chinaman's

chance ever to find it."

"You mean to go out alone into this forest at night!" whispered Naomi, aghast. "Think of the lions!"

"I am thinking of them; but I'm thinking of some fat, greasy, black sultan too. I'd rather take a chance with the lion—he'd be sporting at least."

"It's all so horrible! Oh, why did I ever leave Hollywood!"

"D'you know it's a funny thing, Naomi, that a woman has to fear her own kind more than she does the beasts of the jungle. It sort o' makes one wonder if there isn't something wrong somewhere—it's hard to believe that a divine intelligence would create something in His own image that was more brutal and

cruel and corrupt than anything else that He created. It kind of explains why some of the ancients worshipped snakes 'and bulls and birds. *I* guess they had more sense than we have."

At the edge of the camp Atewy squatted beside Eyad. "You would like one of the white *benat*, Eyad," whispered Atewy. "I have seen it in your eyes."

Eyad eyed the other through narrowed lids. "Who would not?" he demanded. "Am I not a man?"

"But you will not get one, for the sheikh is going to keep them both. You will not get one—unless."

"Unless what?" inquired Eyad.

"Unless an accident should befall Ab

el-Ghrennem. Nor will you get so many diamonds, for the sheikh's share of the booty is one fourth. If there were no sheikh we should divide more between us."

"Thou art *hatab lil nar*," ejaculated Eyad.

"Perhaps I *am* fuel for hell-fire," admitted Atewy, "but I shall burn hot while I burn."

"What dost *thou* get out of it?" inquired Eyad after a short silence.

Atewy breathed an inaudible sigh of relief. Eyad was coming around! "The same as thou," he replied, "my full share of the diamonds and one of the *benat*."

"Accidents befall sheikhs even as they befall other men," philosophized

Eyad as he rolled himself in his blanket and prepared to sleep.

Quiet fell upon the camp of the Arabs. A single sentry squatted by the fire, half dozing. The other Arabs slept.

Not Rhonda Terry. She lay listening to the diminishing sounds of the camp, she heard the breathing of sleeping men, she watched the sentry, whose back was toward her.

She placed her lips close to one of Naomi Madison's beautiful ears. "Listen!" she whispered, "but don't move nor make a sound. When I get up, follow me. That is all you have to do. Don't make any noise."

"What are you going to do?" The Madison's voice was quavering.

"Shut up, and do as I tell you."

Rhonda Terry had been planning ahead. Mentally she had rehearsed every smallest piece of business in the drama that was to be enacted. There were no lines—at least she hoped there would be none. If there were the tag might be very different from that which she hoped for.

She reached out and grasped a short, stout piece of wood that had been gathered for the fire. Slowly, stealthily, catlike, she drew herself from her blankets. Trembling, Naomi Madison followed her.

Rhonda rose, the piece of firewood in her hand. She crept toward the back of the unsuspecting sentry. She lifted the stick above the head of the Arab. She

swung it far back, and then—.

13. A GHOST

Orman and Bill West tramped on through the interminable forest. Day after day they followed the plain trail of the horsemen, but then there came a day that they lost it. Neither was an experienced tracker. The trail had entered a small stream, but it had not emerged again directly upon the opposite bank.

Assuming that the Arabs had ridden in the stream bed for some distance either up or down before coming out on the other side, they had crossed and searched up and down the little river but without success. It did not occur to either of them that their quarry had come out upon the same side that they had entered, and so they did not search upon

that side at all. Perhaps it was only natural that they should assume that when one entered a river it was for the purpose of crossing it.

The meager food supply that they had brought from camp was exhausted, and they had had little luck in finding game. A few monkeys and some rodents had fallen to their rifles, temporarily averting starvation; but the future looked none too bright. Eleven days had passed, and they had accomplished nothing.

"And the worst of this mess," said Orman, "is that we're lost. We've wandered so far from that stream where we lost the trail that we can't find our back track."

"I don't want to find any back track,"

said West. "Until I find Rhonda I'll never turn back."

"I'm afraid we're too late to do 'em much good now, Bill."

"We could take a few pot shots at those lousy Arabs."

"Yes, I'd like to do that; but I got to think of the rest of the company. I got to get 'em out of this country. I thought we'd overtake el-Ghrennem the first day and be back in camp the next. I've sure made a mess of everything. Those two cases of Scotch will have cost close to a million dollars and God knows how many lives before any of the company sees Hollywood again.

"Think of it, Bill—Major White, Noice, Baine, Obroski, and seven others

killed, to say nothing of the Arabs and blacks—and the girls gone. Sometimes I think I'll go nuts just thinking about them."

West said nothing. He had been thinking about it a great deal, and thinking too of the day when Orman must face the wives and sweethearts of those men back in Hollywood. No matter what Orman's responsibility, West pitied him.

When Orman spoke again it was as though he had read the other's mind. "If it wasn't so damn yellow," he said, "I'd bump myself off; it would be a lot easier than what I've got before me back home."

As the two men talked they were walking slowly along a game trail that

wandered out of one unknown into another. For long they had realized that they were hopelessly lost.

"I don't know why we keep on," remarked West. "We don't know where we're headed."

"We won't find out by sitting down, and maybe we'll find something or some one if we keep going long enough."

West glanced suddenly behind him. "I thought so," he said in a low tone. "I thought I'd been hearing something."

Orman's gaze followed that of his companion. "Anyway we got a good reason now for not sitting down or turning back," he said.

"He's been following us for a long time," observed West. "I heard him quite

a way back, now that I think of it."

"I hope we're not detaining him."

"Why do you suppose he's following us?" asked West.

"Perhaps he's lonesome."

"Or hungry."

"Now that you mention it, he does look hungry," agreed Orman.

"This is a nasty place to *be* caught too. The trail's so narrow and with this thick undergrowth on both sides we couldn't get out of the way of a charge. And right here the trees are all too big to climb."

"We might shoot him," suggested Orman, "but I'm leary of these rifles. White said they were a little too light to

stop big game, and if we don't stop him it'll be curtains for one of us."

"I'm a bum shot," admitted West. "I probably wouldn't even hit him."

"Well, he isn't coming any closer. Let's keep on going and see what happens."

The men continued along the trail, continually casting glances rearward. They held their rifles in readiness. Often, turns in the trail hid from their view momentarily the grim stalker following in their tracks.

"They look different out here, don't they?" remarked West. "Fiercer and sort of—inevitable, if you know what I mean—like death and taxes."

"Especially death. And they take all

the wind out of a superiority complex. Sometimes when I've been directing I've thought that trainers were a nuisance, but I'd sure like to see Charlie Gay step out of the underbrush and say, 'Down, Slats!'"

"Say, do you know this fellow looks something like Slats—got the same mean eye?"

As they talked, the trail debouched into a small opening where there was little underbrush and the trees grew farther apart. They had advanced only a short distance into it when the stalking beast dogging their footsteps rounded the last turn in the trail and entered the clearing.

He paused a moment in the mouth of

the trail, his tail twitching, his great jowls dripping saliva. With lowered head he surveyed them from yellow-green eyes, menacingly. Then he crouched and crept toward them.

"We've got to shoot, Bill," said Orman; "he's going to charge."

The director shot first, his bullet creasing the lion's scalp. West fired and missed. With a roar, the carnivore charged. The empty shell jammed in the breech of West's rifle. Orman fired again when the lion was but a few paces from him; then he clubbed his rifle as the beast rose to seize him. A great paw sent the rifle hurtling aside, spinning Orman dizzily after it. West stood paralyzed, his useless weapon clutched in his hands.

He saw the lion wheel to spring upon Orman; then he saw something that left him stunned, aghast. He saw an almost naked man drop from the tree above them full upon the lion's back.

A great arm encircled the beast's neck as it reared and turned to rend this new assailant. Bronzed legs locked quickly beneath its belly. A knife flashed as great muscles drove the blade into the carnivore's side again and again. The lion hurled itself from side to side as it sought to shake the man from it. Its mighty roars thundered in the quiet glade, shaking the earth.

Orman, uninjured, had scrambled to his feet. Both men, spellbound, were watching this primitive battle of Titans.

They heard the roars of the man mingle with those of the lion, and they felt their flesh creep.

Presently the lion leaped high in air, and when he crashed to earth he did not rise again. The man upon him leaped to his feet. For an instant he surveyed the carcass; then he placed a foot upon it, and raising his face toward the sky voiced a weird cry that sent cold shivers down the spines of the two Americans.

As the last notes of that inhuman scream reverberated through the forest, the stranger, without a glance at the two he had saved, leaped for an overhanging branch, drew himself up into the tree, and disappeared amidst the foliage above.

Orman, pale beneath his tan, turned toward West. "Did you see what I saw, Bill?" he asked, his voice shaking.

"I don't know what you saw, but I know what I *thought* I saw— but I *couldn't* have seen it."

"Do you believe in ghosts, Bill?"

"I—I don't know—you don't think?"

"You know as well as I do that that couldn't have been him; so it must have been his ghost."

"But we never knew for sure that Obroski was dead, *Tom"*

"We know it now."

14. A MADMAN

AS Stanley Obroski was dragged to earth in the village of Rungula, the Bansuto, a white man, naked but for a G string, looked down from the foliage of an overhanging tree upon the scene below and upon the bulk of the giant chieftain standing beneath him.

The pliant strands of a strong rope braided from jungle grasses swung in his powerful hands, the shadow of a grim smile played about his mouth.

Suddenly the rope shot downward; a running noose in its lower end settled about Rungula's body, pinning his arms at his sides. A cry of surprise and terror burst from the chiefs lips as he felt himself pinioned; and as those near him

turned, attracted by his cry, they saw him raised quickly from the ground to disappear in the foliage of the tree above as though hoisted by some supernatural power.

Rungula felt himself dragged to a sturdy branch, and then a mighty hand seized and steadied him. He was terrified, for he thought his end had come. Below him a terrified silence had fallen upon the village. Even the prisoner was forgotten in the excitement and fright that followed the mysterious disappearance of the chief.

Obroski stood looking about him in amazement. Surrounded by struggling warriors as he had been he had not seen the miracle of Rungula's ascension. Now

he saw every eye turned upward at the tree that towered above the chief's hut. He wondered what had happened. He wondered what they were looking at. He could see nothing unusual. All that lingered in his memory to give him a clue was the sudden, affrighted cry of Rungula as the noose had tightened about him.

Rungula heard a voice speaking, speaking his own language. "Look at me!" it commanded.

Rungula turned his eyes toward the thing that held him. The light from the village fires filtered through the foliage to dimly reveal the features of a white man bending above him. Rungula gasped and shrank back. "*Walumbe*!" he

muttered in terror.

"I am not the god of death," replied Tarzan; "I am not Walumbe. But I can bring death just as quickly, for I am greater than Walumbe. I am Tarzan of the Apes!"

"What do you want?" asked Rungula through chattering teeth. "What are you going to do to me?"

"I tested you to see if you were a good man and your people good people. I made myself into two men, and one I sent where your warriors could capture him. I wanted to see what you would do to a stranger who had not harmed you. Now I know. For what you have done you should die. What have you to say?"

"You are here," said Rungula, "and

you are also down there." He nodded toward the figure of Obroski standing in surprised silence amidst the warriors. "Therefore you must be a demon. What can I say to *a*. demon? I can give you food and drink and weapons. I can give you girls who can cook and draw water and fetch wood and work all day in the fields—girls with broad hips and strong backs. All these things will I give you if you will not kill me—if you just go away and leave us alone."

"I do not want your food nor your weapons nor your women. I want but one thing from you, Rungula, as the price of your life."

"What is that, Master?"

"Your promise that you will never

again make war upon white men, and that when they come through your country you will help them instead of killing them."

"I promise, Master."

"Then call down to your people, and tell them to open the gates and let the prisoner go out into the forest."

Rungula spoke in a loud voice to his people, and they fell away from Obroski, leaving him standing alone; then warriors went to the village gates and swung them open.

Obroski heard the voice of the chief coming from high in a tree, and he was mystified. He also wondered at the strange action of the natives and suspected treachery. Why should they

fall back and leave him standing alone when a few moments before they were trying to seize him and bind him to a tree? Why should they throw the gates wide open? He did not move. He waited, believing that he was being baited into an attempt at escape for some ulterior purpose.

Presently another voice came from the tree above the chief's hut, addressing him in English. "Go out of the village into the forest," it said. "They will not harm you now. I will join you in the forest."

Obroski was mystified; but the quiet English voice reassured him, and he turned and walked down the village street toward the gateway.

Tarzan removed the rope from about Rungula, ran lightly through the tree to the rear of the hut and dropped to the ground. Keeping the huts between himself and the villagers, he moved swiftly to the opposite end of the village, scaled the palisade, and dropped into the clearing beyond. A moment later he was in the forest and circling back toward the point where Obroski was entering it.

The latter heard no slightest noise of his approach, for there was none. One instant he was entirely alone, and the next a voice spoke close behind him. "Follow me," it said.

Obroski wheeled. In the darkness of the forest night he saw dimly only the figure of a man about his own height.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes."

Obroski was silent, astonished. He had heard of Tarzan of the Apes, but he had thought that it was no more than a legendary character—a fiction of the folklore of Africa. He wondered if this were some demented creature who imagined that it was Tarzan of the Apes. He wished that he could see the fellow's face; that might give him a clue to the sanity of the man. He wondered what the stranger's intentions might be.

Tarzan of the Apes was moving away into the forest. He turned once and repeated his command, "Follow me!"

"I haven't thanked you yet for getting me out of that mess," said Obroski as he

moved after the retreating figure of the stranger. "It was certainly decent of you. I'd have been dead by now if it hadn't been for you."

The ape-man moved on in silence, and Obroski followed him. The silence preyed a little upon his nerves. It seemed to bear out his deduction that the man was not quite normal, not as other men. A normal man would have been asking and answering innumerable questions had he met a stranger for the first time under such exciting circumstances.

And Obroski's deductions were not wholly inaccurate—Tarzan is not as other men; the training and the instincts of the wild beast have given him standards of behavior and a code of

ethics peculiarly his own. For Tarzan there are times for silence and times for speech. The depths of the night, when hunting beasts are abroad, is no time to go gabbling through the jungle; nor did he ever care much for speech with strangers unless he could watch their eyes and the changing expressions upon their faces, which often told him more than their words were intended to convey.

So in silence they moved through the forest, Obroski keeping close behind the ape-man lest he lose sight of him in the darkness. Ahead of them a lion roared; and the American wondered if his companion would change his course or take refuge in a tree, but he did neither.

He kept on in the direction they had been going.

Occasionally the voice of the lion sounded ahead of them, always closer. Obroski, unarmed and practically naked, felt utterly helpless and, not unaccountably, nervous. Nor was his nervousness allayed when a cry, half roar and half weird scream, burst from the throat of his companion.

After that he heard nothing from the lion for some time; then, seemingly just ahead of them, he heard throaty, coughing grunts. The lion! Obroski could scarcely restrain a violent urge to scale a tree, but he steeled himself and kept on after his guide.

Presently they came to an opening in

the forest beside a river. The moon had risen. Its mellow light flooded the scene, casting deep shadows where tree and shrub dotted the grass carpeted clearing, dancing on the swirling ripples of the river.

But the beauty of the scene held his eye for but a brief instant as though through the shutter of a camera; then it was erased from his consciousness by a figure looming large ahead of them in the full light of the African moon. A great lion stood in the open watching them as they approached. Obroski saw the black mane ripple in the night wind, the sheen of the yellow body in the moonlight. Now, beyond him, rose a lioness. She growled.

The stranger turned to Obroski. "Stay where you are," he said. "I do not know this Sabor; she may be vicious."

Obroski stopped, gladly. He was relieved to discover that he had stopped near a tree. He wished that he had a rifle, so that he might save the life of the madman walking unconcernedly toward his doom.

Now he heard the voice of the man who called himself Tarzan of the Apes, but he understood no word that the man spoke: "*Tarmangani yo. Jad-bal-ja tand bundolo. Savor tand bundolo*."

The madman was talking to the great lion! Obroski trembled for him as he saw him drawing nearer and nearer to the beast.

The lioness rose and slunk forward. "*Kreeg-ah Sabor*!" exclaimed the man.

The lion turned and rushed upon the lioness, snarling; she crouched and leaped away. He stood over her growling for a moment; then he turned and walked forward to meet the man. Obroski's heart stood still.

He saw the man lay a hand upon the head of the huge carnivore and then turn and look back at him. "You may come up now," he said, "that Jad-bal-ja may get your scent and know that you are a friend. Afterward he will never harm you—unless I tell him to."

Obroski was terrified. He wanted to run, to climb the tree beside which he stood, to do anything that would get him

away from the lion and the lioness; but he feared still more to leave the man who had befriended him. Paralyzed by fright, he advanced; and Tarzan of the Apes, believing him courageous, was pleased.

Jad-bal-ja was growling in his throat. Tarzan spoke to him in a low voice, and he stopped. Obroski came and stood close to him, and the lion sniffed at his legs and body. Obroski felt the hot breath of the flesh eater on his skin.

"Put your hand on his head," said Tarzan. "If you are afraid do not show it."

The American did as he was bid. Presently Jad-bal-ja rubbed his head against the body of the man; then Tarzan

spoke again, and the lion turned and walked away toward the lioness, lying down beside her.

Now, for the first time, Obroski looked at his strange companion under the light of the full moon. He voiced an exclamation of amazement—he might have been looking into a mirror.

Tarzan smiled—one of his rare smiles. "Remarkable, isn't it?" he said.

"It's uncanny," replied Obroski.

"I think that is why I saved you from the Bansutos—it was too much like seeing myself killed."

"I'm sure you would have saved me anyway."

The ape-man shrugged. "Why should I

have? I did not know you."

Tarzan stretched his body upon the soft grasses. "We shall lie up here for the night," he said.

Obroski shot a quick glance in the direction of the two lions lying a few yards away, and Tarzan interpreted his thoughts.

"Don't worry about them," he said. "Jad-bal-ja will see that nothing harms you, but look out for the lioness when he is not around. He just picked her up the other day. She hasn't made friends with me yet, and she probably never will. Now, if you care to, tell me what you are doing in this country."

Briefly Obroski explained, and Tarzan listened until he had finished.

"If I had known you were one of that safari I probably would have let the Bansutos kill you."

"Why? What have you got against us?"

"I saw your leader whipping his blacks," replied Tarzan.

Obroski was silent for a time. He had come to realize that this man who called himself Tarzan of the Apes was a most remarkable man, and that his power for good or evil in this savage country might easily be considerable. He would be a good friend to have, and his enmity might prove fatal. He could ruin their chances of making a successful picture —he could ruin Orman.

Obroski did not like Orman. He had

good reasons not to like him. Naomi Madison was one of these reasons. But there were other things to consider than a personal grudge. There was the money invested by the studio, the careers of his fellow players, and even Orman—Orman was a great director.

He explained all this to Tarzan—all except his hatred of Orman. "Orman," he concluded, "was drunk when he whipped the blacks, he had been down with fever, he was terribly worried. Those who knew him best said it was most unlike him."

Tarzan made no comment, and Obroski said no more. He lay looking up at the great full moon, thinking. He thought of Naomi and wondered. What

was there about her that he loved? She was petty, inconsiderate, arrogant, spoiled. Her character could not compare with that of Rhonda Terry, for instance; and Rhonda was fully as beautiful.

At last he decided that it was the glamour of the Madison's name and fame that had attracted him—stripped of these, there was little about her to inspire anything greater than an infatuation such as a man might feel for any beautiful face and perfect body.

He thought of his companions of the safari, and wondered what they would think if they could see him now lying down to sleep with a wild man and two savage African lions. Smiling, he dozed

and fell asleep. He did not see the lioness rise and cross the clearing with Jad-bal-ja pacing majestically behind her as they set forth upon the grim business of the hunt.

15. TERROR

AS Rhonda Terry stood with her weapon poised above the head of the squatting sentry, the man turned his eyes quickly in her direction. Instantly he realized his danger and started to rise as the stick descended; thus the blow had far more force than it otherwise would have, and he sank senseless to the ground without uttering a sound.

The girl looked quickly about upon the sleeping camp. No one stirred. She beckoned the trembling Naomi to follow her and stepped quickly to where some horse trappings lay upon the ground. She handed a saddle and bridle to the Madison and took others for herself.

Half dragging, half carrying their

burdens they crept to the tethered ponies. Here, the Madison was almost helpless; and Rhonda had to saddle and bridle both animals, giving thanks for the curiosity that had prompted her days before to examine the Arab tack and learn the method of its adjustment.

Naomi mounted, and Rhonda passed the bridle reins of her own pony to her companion. "Hold him," she whispered, "and hold him tight."

She went quickly then to the other ponies, turning them loose one after another. Often she glanced toward the sleeping men. If one of them should awaken, they would be recaptured. But if she could carry out her plan they would be safe from pursuit. She felt that

it was worth the risk.

Finally the last pony was loose. Already, cognizant of their freedom, some of them had commenced to move about. Herein had lain one of the principal dangers of the girl's plan, for free horses moving about a camp must quickly awaken such horsemen as the Bedouins.

She ran quickly to her own pony and mounted. "We are going to try to drive them ahead of us for a little way," she whispered. "If we can do that we shall be safe—as far as Arabs are concerned."

As quietly as they could, the girls reined their ponies behind the loose stock and urged them away from camp. It

seemed incredible to Rhonda that the noise did not awaken the Arabs.

The ponies had been tethered upon the north side of the camp, and so it was toward the north that they drove them. This was not the direction in which their own safari lay, but Rhonda planned to circle back around the Arabs after she had succeeded in driving off their mounts.

Slowly the unwilling ponies moved toward the black shadows of the forest beyond the little opening in which the camp had been pitched—a hundred feet, two hundred, three hundred. They were almost at the edge of the forest when a cry arose from behind them. Then the angry voices of many men came to them

in a babel of strange words and stranger Arab oaths.

It was a bright, starlit night. Rhonda knew that the Arabs could see them. She turned in her saddle and saw them running swiftly in pursuit. With a cowboy yell and a kick of her heels she urged her pony onto the heels of those ahead. Startled, they broke into a trot.

"Yell, Naomi!" cried the girl. "Do anything to frighten them and make them run."

The Madison did her best, and the yells of the running men approaching added to the nervousness of the ponies. Then one of the Arabs fired his musket; and as the bullet whistled above their heads the ponies broke into a run, and,

followed by the two girls, disappeared into the forest.

The leading pony had either seen or stumbled upon a trail, and down this they galloped. Every step was fraught with danger for the two fugitives. A low hanging branch or a misstep by one of their mounts would spell disaster, yet neither sought to slacken the speed. Perhaps they both felt that anything would be preferable to falling again into the hands of old Ab el-Ghrennem.

It was not until the voices of the men behind them were lost in the distance that Rhonda reined her pony to a walk. "Well, we made it!" she cried exultantly. "I'll bet old Apple Gran'ma'am is chewing his whiskers. How do you feel

—tired?"

The Madison made no reply; then Rhonda heard her sobbing. "What's the matter?" she demanded. "You haven't been hurt, have you?" Her tone was worried and solicitous.

"I—I'm—so frightened. Oh, I—never was so frightened in all my life," sobbed the Madison.

"Oh, buck up, Naomi; neither was I; but weeping and wailing and gnashing our teeth won't do us any good. We got away from them, and a few hours ago that seemed impossible. Now all we have to do is ride back to the safari, and the chances are we'll meet some of the boys looking for us."

"I'll never see any of them again. I've

known all along that I'd die in this awful country," and she commenced to sob again hysterically.

Rhonda reined close to her side and put an arm around her. "It *is* terrible, dear," she said; "but we'll pull through. I'll get you out of this, and some day we'll lie in the sand at Malibu again and laugh about it."

For a time neither of them spoke. The ponies moved on through the dark forest at a walk. Ahead of them the loose animals followed the trail that human eyes could not see. Occasionally one of them would pause, snorting, sensing something that the girls could neither see nor hear; then Rhonda would urge them on again, and so the long hours dragged

out toward a new day.

After a long silence, Naomi spoke. "Rhonda," she said, "I don't see how you can be so decent to me. I used to treat you so rotten. I acted like a dirty little cat. I can see it now. The last few days have done something to me—opened my eyes, I guess. Don't say anything—I just want you to know—that's all."

"I understand," said Rhonda softly. "It's Hollywood—we all try to be something we're not, and most of us succeed only in being something we ought not to be."

Ahead of them the trail suddenly widened, and the loose horses came to a stop. Rhonda tried to urge them on, but they only milled about and would not

advance.

"I wonder what's wrong," she said and urged her pony forward to find a river barring their path. It was not a very large river; and she decided to drive the ponies into it, but they would not go.

"What are we to do?" asked Naomi.

"We can't stay here," replied Rhonda. "We've got to keep on going for a while. If we turn back now we'll run into the sheiks."

"But we can't cross this river."

"I don't know about that. There must be a ford here—this trail runs right to the river, right into it. You can see how it's worn down the bank right into the water. I'm going to try it."

"Oh, Rhonda, we'll drown!"

"They say it's an easy death. Come on!" She urged her pony down the bank into the water. "I hate to leave these other ponies," she said. "The sheikhs'll find them and follow us, but if we can't drive them across there's nothing else to be done."

Her pony balked a little at the edge of the water, but at last he stepped in, snorting. "Keep close to me, Naomi. I have an idea two horses will cross better together than one alone. If we get into deep water try to keep your horse's head pointed toward the opposite bank."

Gingerly the two ponies waded out into the stream. It was neither deep nor swift, and they soon gained confidence.

On the bank behind them the other ponies gathered, nickering to their companions.

As they approached the opposite shore Rhonda heard a splashing in the water behind her. Turning her head, she saw the loose ponies following them across; and she laughed. "Now I've learned something," she said. "Here we've been driving them all night, and if we'd left 'em alone they'd have followed us."

Dawn broke shortly after they had made the crossing, and the light of the new day revealed an open country dotted with trees and clumps of brush. In the northwest loomed a range of mountains. It was very different country from any they had seen for a long time.

"How lovely!" exclaimed Rhonda.

"Anything would be lovely after that forest," replied Naomi. "I got so that I hated it."

Suddenly Rhonda drew rein and pointed. "Do you see what I see?" she demanded.

"That hill?"

"Do you realize that we have just crossed a river out of a forest and come into open country and that there is a 'barren, cone- shaped hill— volcanic'?"

"You don't mean !"

"The map! And there, to the northwest, are the mountains. If it's a mere coincidence it's a mighty uncanny one."

Naomi was about to reply when both their ponies halted, trembling. With dilated nostrils and up-pricked ears they stared at a patch of brush close upon their right and just ahead. Both girls looked in the same direction.

Suddenly a tawny figure broke from the brush with a terrific roar. The ponies turned and bolted. Rhonda's was to the right of Naomi's and half a neck in advance. The lion was coming from Rhonda's side. Both ponies were uncontrollable. The loose horses were bolting like frightened antelopes.

Naomi, fascinated, kept her eyes upon the lion. It moved with incredible speed. She saw it leap and seize the rump of Rhonda's pony with fangs and talons. Its

hindquarters swung down under, the pony's belly. The frightened creature kicked and lunged, hurling Rhonda from the saddle; and then the lion dragged it down before the eyes of the terrified Madison.

Naomi's pony carried her from the frightful scene. Once she looked back. She saw the lion standing with its forepaws on the carcass of the pony. Only a few feet away Rhonda's body lay motionless.

The frightened ponies raced back along the trail they had come. Naomi was utterly powerless to check or guide the terrified creature that carried her swiftly in the wake of its fellows. The distance they had covered in the last

hour was traversed in minutes as the frightened animals drew new terror from the galloping hoofs of their comrades.

The river that they had feared to cross before did not check them now. Lunging across, they threw water high in air, waking the echoes of the forest with their splashing.

Heartsick, terrified, hopeless, the girl clung to her mount; but for once in her life the thoughts of the Madison were not of herself. The memory of that still figure lying close to the dread carnivore crowded thoughts of self from her mind —her terror and her hopelessness and her heartsickness were for Rhonda Terry.

16. EYAD

Long day had followed long day as Orman and West searched vainly through dense forest and jungle for the trail they had lost. Nearly two weeks had passed since they had left camp in search of the girls when their encounter with the lion and the "ghost" of Obroski took place.

The encounter left them unnerved, for both were weak from lack of food and their nerves harassed by what they had passed through and by worry over the fate of Naomi and Rhonda.

They stood for some time by the carcass of the lion looking and listening for a return of the apparition.

"Do you suppose," suggested West,

"that hunger and worry could have affected us so much that we imagined we saw—what we think we saw?"

Orman pointed at the dead lion. "Are we imagining *that*?" he demanded. "Could we both have the same hallucination at the same instant? No! We saw what we saw. I don't believe in ghosts—or I never did before —but if that wasn't Obroski's ghost it was Obroski; and you know as well as I that Obroski would never have had the guts to tackle a lion even if he could have gotten away with it."

West rubbed his chin meditatively. "You know, another explanation has occurred to me. Obroski was the world's prize coward. He may have escaped the

Bansutos and got lost in the jungle. If he did, he would have been scared stiff every minute of the days and nights. Terror might have driven him crazy. He may be a madman now, and you know maniacs are supposed to be ten times as strong as ordinary men."

"I don't know about maniacs being any stronger," said Orman; "that's a popular theory, and popular theories are always wrong; but every one knows that when a man's crazy he does things that he wouldn't do when he's sane. So perhaps you're right—perhaps that was Obroski gone nuts. No one but a nut would jump a lion; and Obroski certainly wouldn't have saved my life if he'd been sane—he didn't have any

reason to be very fond of me."

"Well, whatever prompted him, he did us a good turn in more ways than one—he left us something to eat." West nodded toward the carcass of the lion.

"I hope we can keep him down," said Orman; "he looks mangy."

"I don't fancy cat meat myself," admitted West, "but I could eat a pet dog right now."

After they had eaten and cut off pieces of the meat to carry with them they set out again upon their seemingly fruitless search. The food gave them new strength; but it did little to raise their spirits, and they plodded on as dejected as before.

Toward evening West, who was in

the lead, stopped suddenly and drew back, cautioning Orman to silence. The latter advanced cautiously to where West stood pointing ahead at a long figure squatting over a small fire near the bank of a stream.

"It's one of el-Ghrennem's men," said West.

"It's Eyad," replied Orman. "Do you see any one with him?"

"No. What do you suppose he is doing here alone?"

"We'll find out. Be ready to shoot if he tries any funny business or if any more of them show up."

Orman advanced upon the lone figure, his rifle ready; and West followed at his elbow. They had covered only a few

yards when Eyad looked up and discovered them. Seizing his musket, he leaped to his feet; but Orman covered him.

"Drop that gun!" ordered the director.

Eyad understood no English, but he made a shrewd guess at the meaning of the words, doubtless from the peremptory tone of the American's voice, and lowered the butt of his musket to the ground.

The two approached him. "Where is el-Ghrennem?" demanded Orman. "Where are Miss Madison and Miss Terry?"

Eyad recognized the names and the interrogatory inflection. Pointing toward the north he spoke volubly in Arabic.

Neither Orman nor West understood what he said, but they saw that he was much excited. They saw too that he was emaciated, his garments in rags, and his face and body covered with wounds. It was evident that he had been through some rough experiences.

When Eyad realized that the Americans could not understand him he resorted to pantomime, though he continued to jabber in Arabic.

"Can you make out what he's driving at, Tom?" asked West.

"I picked up a few words from Atewy but not many. Something terrible seems to have happened to all the rest of the party—this bird is scared stiff. I get *sheikh* and *el-*

Bedauwy and*benat;* he's talking about el-Ghrennem, the other Bedouins, and the girls— *benat* is the plural of*bint*, girl. One of the girls has been killed by some animal—from the way he growled and roared when he was explaining it, I guess it must have been a lion. Some other fate befell the rest of the party, and I guess it must have been pretty awful."

West paled. "Does he know which girl was killed?" he asked.

"I can't make out which one—perhaps both are dead."

"We've got to find out. We've got to go after them. Can he tell us where they were when this thing happened?"

"I'm going to make him guide us," replied Orman. "There's no use going on

tonight—it's too late. In the morning we'll start."

They made a poor camp and cooked some of their lion meat. Eyad ate ravenously. It was evident that he had been some time without food. Then they lay down and tried to sleep, but futile worry kept the two Americans awake until late into the night.

To the south of them, several miles away, Stanley Obroski crouched in the fork of a tree and shivered from cold and fear. Below him a lion and a lioness fed upon the carcass of a buck. Hyenas, mouthing their uncanny cries, slunk in a wide circle about them. Obroski saw one, spurred by hunger to greater courage, slink in to seize a mouthful of

the kill. The great lion, turning his head, saw the thief and charged him, growling savagely. The hyena retreated, but not quickly enough. A mighty, raking paw flung it bleeding and lifeless among its fellows. Obroski shuddered and clung more tightly to the tree. A full moon looked down upon the savage scene.

Presently the figure of a man strode silently into the clearing. The lion looked up and growled and an answering growl came from the throat of the man. Then a hyena charged him, and Obroski gasped in dismay. What would become of him if this man were killed! He feared him, but he feared him least of all the other horrid creatures of the jungle.

He saw the man side-step the charge, then stoop quickly and seize the unclean beast by the scruff of its neck. He shook it once, then hurled it onto the kill where the two lions fed. The lioness closed her great jaws upon it once and then cast it aside. The other hyenas laughed hideously.

Tarzan looked about him. "Obroski!" he called.

"I'm up here," replied the American.

Tarzan swung lightly into the tree beside him. "I saw two of your people today," he said—"Orman and West."

"Where are they? What did they say?"

"I did not talk with them. They are a few miles north of us. I think they are lost."

"Who was with them?"

"They were alone. I looked for their safari, but it was nowhere near. Farther north I saw an Arab from your safari. He was lost and starving."

"The safari must be broken up and scattered," said Obroski. "What could have happened? What could have become of the girls?"

"Tomorrow we'll start after Orman," said Tarzan. "Perhaps he can answer your questions."

17. ALONE

For several moments Rhonda Terry lay quietly where she had been hurled by her terrified horse. The lion stood with his forefeet on the carcass of his kill growling angrily after the fleeing animal that was carrying Naomi Madison back toward the forest.

As Rhonda Terry gained consciousness the first thing that she saw as she opened her eyes was the figure of the lion standing with its back toward her, and instantly she recalled all that had transpired. She tried to find Naomi without moving her head, for she did not wish to attract the attention of the lion; but she could see nothing of the Madison.

The lion sniffed at his kill; then he turned and looked about. His eyes fell on the girl, and a low growl rumbled in his throat. Rhonda froze in terror. She wanted to close her eyes to shut out the hideous snarling face, but she feared that even this slight movement would bring the beast upon her. She recalled having heard that if animals thought *a* person dead they would not molest the body. It also occurred to her that this might not hold true in respect to meat eaters.

So terrified was she that it was with the utmost difficulty that she curbed an urge to leap to her feet and run, although she knew that such an act would prove instantly fatal. The great cat could have overtaken her with a single bound.

The lion wheeled slowly about and approached her, and all the while that low growl rumbled in his throat. He came close and sniffed at her body. She felt his hot breath against her face, and its odor sickened her.

The beast seemed nervous and uncertain. Suddenly he lowered his face close to hers and growled ferociously, Ms eyes blazed into hers. She thought that the end had come. The brute raised a paw and seized her shoulder. He turned her over on her face. She heard him sniffing and growling above her. For what seemed an eternity to the frightened girl he stood there; then she realized that he had walked away.

From her one unobscured eye she

watched him after a brief instant that she had become very dizzy and almost swooned. He returned to the body of the horse and worried it for a moment; then he seized it and dragged it toward the bushes from which he had leaped to the attack.

The girl marveled at the mighty strength of the beast, as it dragged the carcass without seeming effort and disappeared in the thicket. Now she commenced to wonder if she had been miraculously spared or if the lion, having hidden the body of the horse, would return for her.

She raised her head a little and looked around. About twenty feet away grew a small tree. She lay between it

and the thicket where she could hear the lion growling.

Cautiously she commenced to drag her body toward the tree, glancing constantly behind in the direction of the thicket. Inch by inch, foot by foot she made her slow way. Five feet, ten, fifteen! She glanced back and saw the lion's head and forequarters emerge from the brush.

No longer was there place for stealth. Leaping to her feet she raced for the tree. Behind, she heard the angry roar of the lion as it charged.

She sprang for a low branch and scrambled upward. Terror gave her an agility and a strength far beyond her normal powers. As she climbed

frantically upward among the branches she felt the tree tremble to the impact of the lion's body as it hurtled against the bole, and the raking talons of one great paw swept just beneath her foot.

Rhonda Terry did not stop climbing until she had reached a point beyond which she dared not go; then, clinging to the now slender stem, she looked down.

The lion stood glaring up at her. For a few minutes he paced about the tree; and then, with an angry growl, he strode majestically back to his thicket.

It was not until then that the girl descended to a more secure and comfortable perch, where she sat trembling for a long time as she sought to compose herself.

She had escaped the lion, at least temporarily; but what lay In the future for her? Alone, unarmed, lost in a savage wilderness, upon what thin thread could she hang even the slightest vestige of a hope!

She wondered what had become of Naomi. She almost wished that they had never attempted to escape from the Arabs. If Tom Orman and Bill West and the others were looking for them they might have had a chance to find them had they remained the captives of old Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem, but now how could any one ever find them?

From her tree sanctuary she could see quite a distance in all directions. A tree-dotted plain extended northwest toward

a range of mountains. Close to the northeast of her rose the volcanic, cone-shaped hill that she had been pointing out to Naomi when the lion charged.

All these landmarks, following so closely the description on the map, intrigued her curiosity and started her to wondering and dreaming about the valley of diamonds. Suddenly she recalled something that Atewy had told her —that the falls at the foot of the valley of diamonds must be the Omwamwi Falls toward which the safari had been moving.

If that were true she would stand a better chance of rejoining the company were she to make her way to the falls and await them there than to return to the

forest where she was certain to become lost.

She found it a little amusing that she should suddenly be pinning her faith to a property map, but her situation was such that she must grasp at any straw.

The mountains did not seem very far away, but she knew that distances were usually deceiving. She thought that she might reach them in a day, and believed that she might hold out without food or water until she reached the river that she prayed might be there.

Every minute was precious now, but she could not start while the lion lay up in the nearby thicket. She could hear him growling as he tore at the carcass of the horse.

An hour passed, and then she saw the lion emerge from his lair. He did not even glance toward her, but moved off in a southerly direction toward the river that she and Naomi had crossed a few hours before.

The girl watched the beast until it disappeared in the brush that grew near the river; then she slipped from the tree and started toward the northwest and the mountains.

The day was still young, the terrain not too difficult, and Rhonda felt comparatively fresh and strong despite her night ride and the harrowing experiences of the last few hours—a combination of circumstances that buoyed her with hope.

The plain was dotted with trees, and the girl directed her steps so that she might at all times be as near as possible to one of these. Sometimes this required a *zigzag* course that lengthened the distance, but after her experience with the lion she did not dare be far from sanctuary at any time.

She turned often to look back in the direction she had come, lest the lion follow and surprise her. As the hours passed the sun shone down hotter and hotter. Rhonda commenced to suffer from hunger and thirst; her steps were dragging; her feet seemed weighted with lead. More and more often she stopped beneath the shade of a tree to rest. The mountains seemed as far away as ever.

Doubts assailed her.

A shadow moved across the ground before her. She looked up. Circling above was a vulture. She shuddered. "I wonder if he only hopes," she said aloud, "or if he *knows*."

But she kept doggedly on. She would not give up—not until she dropped in her tracks. She wondered how long it would be before that happened.

Once as she was approaching a large black rock that lay across her path it moved and stood up, and she saw that it was a rhinoceros. The beast ran around foolishly for a moment, its nose in the air; then it charged. Rhonda clambered into a tree, and the great beast tore by like a steam locomotive gone *must*.

As it raced off with its silly little tail in air the girl smiled. She realized that she had forgotten her exhaustion under the stress of emergency, as bedridden cripples sometimes forget their affliction when the house catches fire.

The adventure renewed her belief in her ability to reach the river, and she moved on again in a more hopeful frame of mind. But as hot and dusty hour followed hot and dusty hour and the pangs of thirst assailed her with increasing violence, her courage faltered again in the face of the weariness that seemed to penetrate to the very marrow of her bones.

For a long time she had been walking in a depression of the rolling plain, her

view circumscribed by the higher ground around her. The day was drawing to a close. Her lengthening shadow fell away behind her. The low sun was in her eyes.

She wanted to sit down and rest, but she was afraid that she would never get up again. More than that, she wanted to see what lay beyond the next rise in the ground. It is always the next summit that lures the traveler on even though experience may have taught him that he need expect nothing more than another rise of ground farther on.

The climb ahead of her was steeper than she had anticipated, and it required all her strength and courage to reach the top of what she guessed might have been an ancient river bank or, perhaps, a

lateral moraine; but the view that was revealed rewarded her for the great effort.

Below her was a fringe of wood through which she could see a broad river, and to her right the mountains seemed very close now.

Forgetful of lurking beast or savage man, the thirst tortured girl hurried down toward the tempting water of the river. As she neared the bank she saw a dozen great forms floating on the surface of the water. A huge head was raised with wide distended jaws revealing a cavernous maw, but Rhonda did not pause. She rushed to the bank of the river and threw herself face down and drank while the hippopotamuses,

snorting and grunting, viewed her with disapproval.

That night she slept in a tree, dozing fitfully and awakening to every sudden jungle noise. From the plain came the roar of the hunting lions. Below her a great herd of hippopotamuses came out of the river to feed on land, their grunting and snorting dispelling all thoughts of sleep. In the distance she heard the yelp of the jackal and the weird cry of the hyena, and there were other strange and terrifying noises that she could not classify. It was not a pleasant night.

Morning found her weak from loss of sleep, fatigue, and hunger. She knew that she must get food, but she did not know

how to get it. She thought that perhaps the safari had reached the falls by now, and she determined to go up river in search of the falls in the hope that she might find her people —a vague hope in the realization of which she had little faith.

She discovered a fairly good game trail paralleling the river, and this she followed up stream. As she stumbled on she became conscious of an insistent, muffled roaring in the distance. It grew louder as she advanced, and she guessed that she was approaching the falls.

Toward noon she reached them—an imposing sight much of the grandeur of which was lost on her fatigue-benumbed sensibilities. The great river poured

over the rim of a mighty escarpment that towered far above her. A smother of white water and spume filled the gorge at the foot of the falls. The thunderous roar of the falling water was deafening.

Slowly the grandeur and the solitude of the scene gripped her. She felt as might one who stood alone, the sole inhabitant of a world, and looked upon an eternal scene that no human eye had ever scanned before.

But she was not alone. Far up, near the top of the escarpment, on a narrow ledge a shaggy creature looked down upon her from beneath beetling brows. It nudged another like it and pointed.

For a while the two watched the girl; then they started down the escarpment.

Like flies they clung to the dizzy cliff, and when the ledge ended they swung to sturdy trees that clung to the rocky face of the great wall.

Down, down they came, two great first-men, shaggy, powerful, menacing. They dropped quickly, and always they sought to hide their approach from the eyes of the girl.

The great falls, the noise, the boiling river left Rhonda Terry stunned and helpless. There was no sign of her people, and if they were camped on the opposite side of the river she felt that they might as well be in another world, so impassable seemed the barrier that confronted her.

She felt very small and alone and

tired. With a sigh she sat down on a rounded boulder and leaned against another piled behind it. All her remaining strength seemed to have gone from her. She closed her eyes wearily, and two tears rolled down her cheeks. Perhaps she dozed, but she was startled into wakefulness by a voice speaking near her. At first she thought she was dreaming and did not open her eyes.

"She is alone," the voice said. "We will take her to God—he will be pleased."

It was an English voice, or at least the accent was English; but the tones were gruff and deep and guttural. The strange words convinced her she was dreaming. She opened her eyes, and shrank back

with a little scream of terror. Standing close to her were two gorillas, or such she thought them to be until one of them opened its mouth and spoke.

"Come with us," it said; "we are going to take you to God;" then it reached out a mighty, hairy hand and seized her.

18. GORILLA KING

Rhonda Terry fought to escape the clutches of the great beast thing that held her, but she was helpless in the grasp of those giant muscles. The creature lifted her easily and tucked her under one arm.

"Be quiet," it said, "or I'll wring your neck."

"You had better not," cautioned his companion. "God will be angry if you do not bring this one to him alive and unharmed. He has been hoping for such a she as this for a long time."

"What does *he* want of her? He is so old now that he can scarcely chew his food."

"He will probably give her to Henry

the Eighth."

"He already has seven wives. I think that I shall hide her and keep her for myself."

"You will take her to God," said the other. "If you don't, I will."

"We'll see about that!" cried the creature that held the girl.

He dropped her and sprang, growling, upon his fellow. As they closed, great fangs snapping, Rhonda leaped to her feet and sought to escape.

The whole thing seemed a hideous and grotesque nightmare, yet it was so real that she could not know whether or not she were dreaming.

As she bolted, the two ceased their

quarreling and pursued her. They easily overtook her, and once again she was a captive.

"You see what will happen," said the beast that had wished to take her to God, "if we waste time quarreling over her. I will not let you have her unless God gives her to you."

The other grumbled and tucked the girl under his arm again. "Very well," he said, "but Henry the Eighth won't get her. I'm sick of that fellow. He thinks he is greater than God."

With the agility of monkeys the two climbed up the tall trees and precarious ledges they had descended while Rhonda Terry closed her eyes to shut out the terror of the dizzy heights and sought

to convince herself that she was dreaming.

But the reality was too poignant. Even the crass absurdity of the situation failed to convince her. She knew that she was not dreaming and that she was really in the power of two huge gorillas who spoke English with a marked insular accent. It was preposterous, but she knew that it was true.

To what fate were they bearing her? From their conversation she had an inkling of what lay in store for her. But who was Henry the Eighth? And who was God?

Up and up the beast bore her until at last they stood upon the summit of the escarpment. Below them, to the south,

the river plunged over the edge of the escarpment to form Omwamwi Falls; to the north stretched a valley hemmed in by mountains—the valley of diamonds, perhaps.

The surprise, amounting almost to revulsion, that she had experienced when she first heard the two beasts speak a human language had had a strange effect upon her in that while she understood that they were speaking English it had not occurred to her that she could communicate with them in the same language—the adventure seemed so improbable that perhaps she still doubted her own senses.

The first shock of capture had been neutralized by the harrowing ascent of

the escarpment and the relief at gaining the top in safety. Now she had an instant in which to think clearly, and with it came the realization that she had the means of communicating with her captors.

"Who are you?" she demanded. "And why have you made me prisoner?"

The two turned suddenly upon her. She thought that their faces denoted surprise.

"She speaks English!" exclaimed one of them.

"Of course I speak English. But tell me what you want of me. You have no right to take me with you. I have not harmed you. I was only waiting for my own people. Let me go!"

"This will please God," said one of her captors. "He has always said that if he could get hold of an English woman he could do much for the race."

"Who is this thing you call God?" she demanded.

"He is not a thing—he is a man," replied the one who had carried her up the escarpment. "He is very old—he is the oldest creature in the world and the wisest. He created us. But some day he will die, and then we shall have no god."

"Henry the Eighth would like to be God," said the other.

"He never will while Wolsey lives—Wolsey would make a far better god than he."

"Henry the Eighth will see that he

doesn't live."

Rhonda Terry closed her eyes and pinched herself. She must be dreaming! Henry the Eighth! Thomas Wolsey! How preposterous seemed these familiar allusions to sixteenth century characters from the mouths of hairy gorillas.

The two brutes had not paused at the summit of the escarpment, but had immediately commenced the descent into the valley. Neither of them, not even the one that had carried her up the steep ascent, showed the slightest sign of fatigue even by accelerated breathing.

The girl was walking now, though one of the brutes held her by an arm and jerked her roughly forward when her steps lagged.

"I cannot walk so fast," she said finally. "I have not eaten for a long time, and I am weak."

Without a word the creature gathered her under one arm and continued on down into the valley. Her position was uncomfortable, she was weak and frightened. Several times she lost consciousness.

How long that journey lasted she did not know. When she was conscious her mind was occupied by futile speculation as to the fate that lay ahead of her. She tried to visualize the *God*of these brutal creatures. What mercy, what pity might she expect at the hands of such a thing? —if, indeed, their god existed other than in their imaginations.

After what seemed a very long time the girl heard voices in the distance, growing louder as they proceeded; and soon after he who carried her set her upon her feet.

As she looked about her she saw that she stood at the bottom of a cliff before a city that was built partially at the foot of the cliff and partially carved from its face.

The approach to the city was bordered by great fields of bamboo, celery, fruits, and berries in which many gorillas were working with crude, handmade implements.

As they caught sight of the captive these workers left their fields and clustered about asking many questions

and examining the girl with every indication of intelligent interest, but her captors hurried her along into the city.

Here again they were surrounded by curious crowds; but nowhere was any violence offered the captive, the attitude of the gorillas appearing far more friendly than that which she might have expected from human natives of this untracked wilderness.

That portion of the city that was built upon the level ground at the foot of the cliff consisted of circular huts of bamboo with thatched conical roofs, of rectangular buildings of sun dried bricks, and others of stone.

Near the foot of the cliff was a three-story building with towers and ramparts,

roughly suggestive of medieval England; and farther up the cliff, upon a broad ledge, was another, even larger structure of similar architecture.

Rhonda's captors led her directly to the former building, before the door of which squatted two enormous gorillas armed with crude weapons that resembled battle axes; and here they were stopped while the two guards examined Rhonda and questioned her captors.

Again and again the girl tried to convince herself that she was dreaming. All her past experience, all her acquired knowledge stipulated the utter absurdity of the fantastic experiences of the past few hours. There could be no such things

as gorillas that spoke English, tilled fields, and lived in stone castles. And yet here were all these impossibilities before her eyes as concrete evidence of their existence.

She listened as one in a dream while her captors demanded entrance that they might take their prisoner before the king; she heard the guard demur, saying that the king could not be disturbed as he was engaged with the Privy Council.

"Then we'll take her to God," threatened one of her captors, "and when the king finds out what you have done you'll be working in the quarry instead of sitting here in the shade."

Finally a young gorilla was summoned and sent into the palace with

a message. When he returned it was with the word that the king wished to have the prisoner brought before him at once.

Rhonda was conducted into a large room the floor of which was covered with dried grass. On a dais at one end of the room an enormous gorilla paced to and fro while a half dozen other gorillas squatted in the grass at the foot of the dais—enormous, shaggy beasts, all.

There were no chairs nor tables nor benches in the room, but from the center of the dais rose the bare trunk and leafless branches of a tree.

As the girl was brought into the room the gorilla on the dais stopped his restless pacing and scrutinized her. "Where did you find her, Buckingham?"

he demanded.

"At the foot of the falls, Sire," replied the beast that had captured her.

"What was she doing there?"

"She said that she was looking for her friends, who were to meet her at the falls."

"She *said*! You mean that she speaks English?" demanded the king.

"Yes, I speak English," said Rhonda; "and if I am not dreaming, and you are king, I demand that you send me back to the falls, so that I may find my people."

"Dreaming? What put that into your head? You are not asleep, are you?"

"I do not know," replied Rhonda. "Sometimes I am sure that I must be."

"Well, you are not," snapped the king. "And who put it into your head that there might be any doubt that I am king? That sounds like Buckingham."

"Your majesty wrongs me," said Buckingham stiffly. "It was I who insisted on bringing her to the king."

"It is well you did; the wench pleases us. We will keep her."

"But, your majesty," exclaimed the other of Rhonda's two captors, "it is our duty to take her to God. We brought her here first that your majesty might see her; but we must take her on to God, who had been hoping for such a woman for years."

"What, Cranmer! Are you turning against me too?"

"Cranmer is right," said one of the great bulls squatting on the floor. "This woman should be taken to God. Do not forget, Sire, that you already have seven wives."

"That is just like you, Wolsey," snapped the king peevishly. "You are always taking the part of God."

"We must all remember," said Wolsey, "that we owe everything to God. It was he who created us. He made us what we are. It is he who can destroy us."

The king was pacing up and down the straw covered dais rapidly. His eyes were blazing, his lips drawn back in a snarl. Suddenly he stopped by the tree and shook it angrily as though he would

tear it from the masonry in which it was set. Then he climbed quickly up into a fork and glared down at them. For a moment he perched there, but only for a moment. With the agility of a small monkey he leaped to the floor of the dais. With his great fists he beat upon his hairy breast, and from his cavernous lungs rose a terrific roar that shook the building.

"I am king!" he screamed. "My word is law. Take the wench to the women's quarters!"

The beast the king had addressed as Wolsey now leaped to his feet and commenced to beat his breast and scream. "This is sacrilege," he cried. "He who defies God shall die. That is

the law. Repent, and send the girl to God!"

"Never!" shrieked the king. "She is mine."

Both brutes were now beating their breasts and roaring so loudly that their words could scarcely be distinguished; and the other bulls were moving restlessly, their hair bristling, their fangs bared.

Then Wolsey played his ace. "Send the girl to God," he bellowed, "or suffer excommunication!"

But the king had now worked himself to such a frenzy that he was beyond reason. "The guard! The guard!" he screamed. "Suffolk, call the guard, and take Cardinal Wolsey to the tower!

Buckingham, take the girl to the women's quarters or off goes your head."

The two bulls were still beating their breasts and screaming at one another as Rhonda Terry was dragged from the apartment by the shaggy Buckingham.

Up a circular stone stairway the brute dragged her and along a corridor to a room at the rear of the second floor. It was a large room in the corner of the building, and about its grass strewn floor squatted or lay a number of adult gorillas, while young ones of all ages played about or suckled at their mothers' breasts.

Many of the beasts were slowly eating celery stalks, tender bamboo tips, or fruit; but all activity ceased as

Buckingham dragged the American girl into their midst.

"What have you there, Buckingham?" growled an old she.

"A girl we captured at the falls," replied Buckingham. "The king commanded that she be brought here, your majesty." Then he turned to his captive. "This is Queen Catherine," he said, "Catherine of Aragon."

"What does he want of her?" demanded Catherine peevishly.

Buckingham shrugged his broad shoulders and glanced about the room at the six adult females. "Your majesties should well be able to guess."

"Is he thinking of taking that puny, hairless thing for a wife?" demanded

another, sitting at a little distance from Catherine of Aragon.

"Of course that's what he's thinking of, Anne Boleyn," snapped Catherine; "or he wouldn't have sent her here."

"Hasn't he got enough wives already?" demanded another.

"That is for the king to decide," said Buckingham as he quitted the room.

Now the great shes commenced to gather closer to the girl. They sniffed at her and felt of her clothing. The younger ones crowded in, pulling at her skirt. One, larger than the rest, grabbed her by the ankles and pulled her feet from under her; and, as she fell, it danced about the room, grimacing and screaming.

As she tried to rise it rushed toward

her; and she struck it in the face, thinking it meant to injure her. Whereupon it ran screaming to Catherine of Aragon, and one of the other shes seized Rhonda by the shoulder and pushed her so violently that she was hurled against the wall.

"How dare you lay hands on the Prince of Wales!" cried the beast that had pushed her.

The Prince of Wales, Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn! If not asleep, Rhonda Terry was by this time positive that she had gone mad. What possible explanation could there be for such a mad burlesque in which gorillas acted the parts and spoke with the tongues of men?—what other than the fantasy of sleep or insanity? None.

She sat huddled against the wall where she had fallen and buried her face in her arms.

19. DESPAIR

The frightened pony carried Naomi Madison in the wake of its fellows. She could only cling frantically to the saddle, constantly fearful of being brushed to the ground. Presently, where the trail widened into a natural clearing, the horses in front of her stopped suddenly; and the one she rode ran in among them before it stopped too.

Then she saw the reason—Sheikh Ab el-Ghrennem and his followers. She tried to rein her horse around and escape; but he was wedged in among the other horses, and a moment later the little herd was surrounded. Once more she was a prisoner.

The sheikh was so glad to get his

horses back that he almost forgot to be angry over the trick that had robbed him of them temporarily. He was glad, too, to have one of his prisoners. She could read the map to them and be useful in other ways if he decided not to sell her.

"Where is the other one?" demanded Atewy.

"She was killed by a lion," replied Naomi.

Atewy shrugged. "Well, we still have you; and we have the map. We shall not fare so ill."

Naomi recalled the cone-shaped volcanic hill and the mountains in the distance. "If I lead you to the valley of diamonds will you return me to my people?" she asked.

Atewy translated to el-Ghrennem. The old sheikh nodded. "Tell her we will do that if she leads us to the valley of diamonds," he said. "*Wellah!* yes; tell her that; but after we find the valley of diamonds we may forget what we have promised. But do not tell her *that*."

Atewy grinned. "Lead us to the valley of diamonds," he said to Naomi, "and all that you wish will be done."

Unaccustomed to the strenuous labor of pushing through the jungle on foot that the pursuit of the white girls and their ponies had necessitated, the Arabs made camp as soon as they reached the river.

The following day they crossed to the open plain; and when Naomi called their attention to the volcanic hill and the

location of the mountains to the northwest, and they had compared these landmarks with the map, they were greatly elated.

But when they reached the river below the falls the broad and turbulent stream seemed impassable and the cliffs before them unscalable.

They camped that night on the east side of the river, and late into the night discussed plans for crossing to the west side, for the map clearly indicated but a single entrance to the valley of diamonds, and that was several miles northwest of them.

In the morning they started downstream in search of a crossing, but it was two days before they found a

place where they dared make the attempt. Even here they had the utmost difficulty in negotiating the river, and consumed most of the day in vain attempts before they finally succeeded in winning to the opposite shore with the loss of two men and their mounts.

The Madison had been almost paralyzed by terror, not alone by the natural hazards of the swift current but by the constant menace of the crocodiles with which the stream seemed alive. Wet to the skin, she huddled close to the fire; and finally, hungry and miserable, dropped into a sleep of exhaustion.

What provisions the Arabs had had with them had been lost or ruined in the crossing, and so much time had been

consumed in reaching the west bank that they had been unable to hunt for game before dark. But they were accustomed to a life of privation and hardship, and their spirits were buoyed by the certainty that all felt that within a few days they would be scooping up diamonds by the handfuls from the floor of the fabulous valley that now lay but a short distance to the north.

Coming down the east bank of the river they had consumed much time in unsuccessful attempts to cross the stream, and they had been further retarded by the absence of a good trail. But on the west side of the river they found a wide and well beaten track along which they moved rapidly.

Toward the middle of the afternoon of the first day after crossing the river Naomi called to Atewy who rode near her.

"Look!" she said, pointing ahead. "There is the red granite column shown on the map. Directly east of it is the entrance to the valley."

Atewy, much excited, transmitted the information to el-Ghrennem and the others; and broad grins wreathed their usually saturnine countenances.

"And now," said Naomi, "that I have led you to the valley, keep your promise to me and send me back to my people."

"Wait a bit," replied Atewy. "We are not in the valley yet.

We must be sure that this is indeed the

valley of diamonds.

You must come with us yet a little farther."

"But that was not the agreement," insisted the girl. "I was to lead you to the valley, and that I have done. I am going back to look for my people now whether you send any one with me or not."

She wheeled her pony to turn back along the trail they had come. She did not know where her people were; but she had heard the Arabs say that the falls they had passed were the Omwamwi Falls, and she knew that the safari had been marching for this destination when she had been stolen more than a week before. They must be close to them by this time.

But she was not destined to carry her scheme into execution, for as she wheeled her mount Atewy spurred to her side, grasped her bridle rein, and, with an oath, struck her across the face.

"The next time you try that you'll get something worse," he threatened.

Suffering from the blow, helpless, hopeless, the girl broke into tears. She thought that she had plumbed the uttermost depths of terror and despair, but she did not know what the near future held in store for her.

That night the Arabs camped just east of the red granite monolith that they believed marked the entrance to the valley of diamonds, at the mouth of a narrow canyon.

Early the following morning they started up the canyon *on* the march that they believed would lead them to a country of fabulous wealth. From far above them savage eyes looked down from scowling black faces, watching their progress.

20. "COME WITH ME!"

In the light of a new day Tarzan of the Apes stood looking down upon the man who resembled him so closely that the ape-man experienced the uncanny sensation of standing apart, like a disembodied spirit, viewing his corporeal self.

It was the morning that they were to have set off in search of Orman and West, but Tarzan saw that it would be some time before Obroski would travel again on his own legs.

With all the suddenness with which it sometimes strikes, fever had seized the American. His delirious ravings had awakened Tarzan, but now he lay in a coma.

The lord of the jungle considered the matter briefly. He neither wished to leave the man alone to the scant mercy of the jungle, nor did he wish to remain with him. His conversations with Obroski had convinced him that no matter what his inclinations might be the dictates of simplest humanity required that he do what he might to succor the innocent members of Orman's party. The plight of the two girls appealed especially to his sense of chivalry, and it was with his usual celerity that he reached a decision.

Lifting the unconscious Obroski in his arms he threw him across one of his broad shoulders and swung off through the jungle toward the south.

All day he traveled, stopping briefly once for water, eating no food. Sometimes the American lay unconscious, sometimes he struggled and raved in delirium; or, again, consciousness returning, he begged the ape-man to stop and let him rest. But Tarzan ignored his pleas, and moved on toward the south. Toward evening the two came to a native village beyond the Bansuto country. It was the village of the chief, Mpugu, whom Tarzan knew to be friendly to whites as well as under obligations to the lord of the jungle who had once saved his life.

Obroski was unconscious when they arrived in the village, and Tarzan placed him in a hut which Mpugu placed at his

disposal.

"When he is well, take him to Jinja," Tarzan instructed Mpugu, "and ask the commissioner to send him on to the coast."

The ape-man remained in the village only long enough to fill his empty belly; then he swung off again through the gathering dusk toward the north, while far away, in the city of the gorilla king, Rhonda Terry crouched in the dry grass that littered the floor of the quarters of the king's wives and dreamed of the horrid fate that awaited her.

A week had passed since she had been thrust into this room with its fierce denizens. She had learned much concerning them since then, but not the

secret of their origin. Most of them were far from friendly, though none offered her any serious harm. Only one of them paid much attention to her, and from this one and the conversations she had overheard she had gained what meager information she had concerning them.

The six adult females were the wives of the king, Henry the Eighth; and they bore the historic names of the wives of that much married English king. There were Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr.

It was Catherine Parr, the youngest, who had been the least unfriendly; and that, perhaps, because she had suffered at the hands of the others and hated them.

Rhonda told her that there had been a king in a far country four hundred years before who had been called Henry the Eighth and who had had six wives of the same names as theirs and that such an exact parallel seemed beyond the realms of possibility—that in this far off valley their king should have found six women that he wished to marry who bore those identical names.

"Those were not our names before we became the wives of the king," explained Catherine Parr. "When we were married to the king we were given these names."

"By the king?"

"No—by God."

"What is your god like?" asked Rhonda.

"He is very old. No one knows how old he is. He has been here in England always. He is the god of England. He knows everything and is very powerful."

"Have you ever seen him?"

"No. He has not come out of his castle for many years. Now, he and the king are quarreling. That is why the king has not been here since you came. God has threatened to kill him if he takes another wife."

"Why?" asked Rhonda.

"God says Henry the Eighth may have only six wives—there are no names for more."

"There doesn't seem much sense in that," commented the girl.

"We may not question God's reasons. He created us, and he is all-wise. We must have faith; otherwise he will destroy us."

"Where does your god live?"

"In the great castle on the ledge above the city. It is called The Golden Gates. Through it we enter into heaven after we die—if we have believed in God and served him well."

"What is the castle like inside?" asked Rhonda, "this castle of God?"

"I have never been in it. Only the king and a few of his nobles, the cardinal, the archbishop, and the priests have ever entered The Golden Gates and come out again. The spirits of the dead enter, but, of course, they never come back. And

occasionally God sends for a young man or a young woman. What happens to them no one knows, but they never come back either. It is said —" she hesitated.

"What is said?" Rhonda found herself becoming intrigued by the mystery surrounding this strange god that guarded the entrance to heaven.

"Oh, terrible things are said; but I dare not even whisper them. I must not think them. God can read our thoughts. Do not ask me any more questions. You have been sent by the devil to lure me to destruction," and that was the last that Rhonda could get out of Catherine Parr.

Early the next day the American girl was awakened by horrid growls and roars that seemed to come not only from

outside the palace but from the interior as well.

The she gorillas penned in the quarters with her were restless. They growled as they crowded to the windows and looked down into the courtyard and the streets beyond.

Rhonda came and stood behind them and looked over their shoulders, She saw shaggy beasts struggling and fighting at the gate leading through the outer wall, surging through the courtyard below, and battling before the entrance to the palace. They fought with clubs and battle axes, talons and fangs.

"They have freed Wolsey from the tower," she heard Jane Seymour say, "and he is leading God's party against

the king."

Catherine of Aragon squatted in the dry grass and commenced to peel a banana. "Henry and God are always quarreling," she said wearily—"and nothing ever comes of it. Every time Henry wants a new wife they quarrel."

"But I notice he always gets his wife," said Catherine Howard.

"He has had Wolsey on his side before—this time it may be different. I have heard that God wants this hairless she for himself. If he gets her that will be the last that any one will ever see of her — which will suit me." Catherine of Aragon bared her fangs at the American girl, and then returned her attention to the banana.

The sound of fighting surged upward from the floor below until they heard it plainly in the corridor outside the closed door of their quarters. Suddenly the door was thrown open, and several bulls burst into the room.

"Where is the hairless one?" demanded the leading bull. "Ah, there she is!"

He crossed the room and seized Rhonda roughly by the wrist.

"Come with me!" he ordered. "God has sent for you."

21. ABDUCTED

The Arabs made their way up the narrow canyon toward the summit of the pass that led into the valley of diamonds. From above, fierce, cruel eyes looked down. Ab el-Ghrennem gloated exultantly. He had visions of the rich, treasure that was soon to give him wealth beyond his previous wildest dreams of avarice. Atewy rode close to Naomi Madison to prevent her from escaping.

At last they came to a precipitous wall that no horse could scale. The perpendicular sides of the rocky canyon had drawn close together.

"The horses can go no farther," announced Ab el-Ghrennem. "Eyad, thou

shalt remain with them. The rest of us will continue on foot."

"And the girl?" asked Atewy.

"Bring her with us, lest she escape Eyad while he is guarding the horses," replied the sheikh. "I would not lose her."

They scrambled up the rocky escarpment, dragging Naomi Madison with them, to find more level ground above. The rocky barrier had not been high, but sufficient to bar the progress of a horse.

Sitting in his saddle, Eyad could see above it and watch his fellows continuing on up the canyon, which was now broader with more sloping walls upon which timber grew as it did upon

the summit.

They had proceeded but a short distance when Eyad saw a black, shaggy, manlike figure emerge from a bamboo thicket above and behind the sheikh's party. Then another and another followed the first. They carried clubs or axes with long handles.

Eyad shouted a warning to his comrades. It brought them to a sudden halt, but it also brought a swarm of the hairy creatures pouring down the canyon sides upon them.

Roaring and snarling, the beasts closed in upon the men. The matchlocks of the Arabs roared, filling the canyon with thundering reverberations, adding to the bedlam.

A few of the gorillas were hit. Some fell; but the others, goaded to frightful rage by their wounds, charged to close quarters. They tore the weapons from the hands of the Arabs and cast them aside. Seizing the men in their powerful hands, they sank great fangs into the throats of their adversaries. Others wielded club or battle axe.

Screaming and cursing, the Arabs sought now only to escape. Eyad was filled with terror as he saw the bloody havoc being wrought upon his fellows. He saw a great bull gather the girl into his arms and start up the slope of the canyon wall toward the wooded summit. He saw two mighty bulls descending the canyon toward him. Then Eyad wheeled

and put spurs to his horse. Clattering down the canyon, he heard the sounds of conflict growing dimmer and dimmer until at last he could hear them no longer.

And as Eyad disappeared in the lower reaches of the canyon, Buckingham carried Naomi Madison into the forest above the strange city of the gorilla king.

Buckingham was mystified. He thought that this hairless she was the same creature he had captured many days before below the great falls that he knew as Victoria Falls. Yet only this very morning he had seen her taken by Wolsey to the castle of God.

He paused beyond the summit at a

point where the city of the gorillas could be seen below them. He was in a quandary. He very much wanted this she for himself, but then both God and the king wanted her. He stood scratching his head as he sought to evolve a plan whereby he might possess her without incurring the wrath of two such powerful personages.

Naomi, hanging in the crook of his arm, was frozen with horror. The Arabs had seemed bad enough, but this horrid brute! She wondered when he would kill her and how.

Presently he stood her on her feet and looked at her. "How did you escape from God?" he demanded.

Naomi Madison gasped in

astonishment, and her eyes went wide. A great fear crept over her, a fear greater than the physical terror that the brute itself aroused—she feared that she was losing her reason. She stood with wild, staring eyes gazing at the beast. Then, suddenly, she burst into wild laughter.

"What are you laughing at?" growled Buckingham.

"At you," she cried. "You think you can fool me, but you can't. I know that I am just dreaming. In a moment I'll be awake, and I'll see the sun coming in my bedroom window. I'll see the orange tree and the loquat in my patio. I'll see Hollywood stretching below me with its red roofs and its green trees."

"I don't know what you are talking

about," said Buckingham. "You are not asleep. You are awake. Look down there, and you will see London and the Thames."

Naomi looked where he indicated. She saw a strange city on the banks of a small river. She pinched herself; and it hurt, but she did not awake. Slowly she realized that she was not dreaming, that the terrible unrealities she had passed through were real.

"Who are you? What are you?" she asked. "Answer my question," commanded Buckingham. "How did you escape from God?"

"I don't know what you mean. The Arabs captured me. I escaped from them once, but they got me again."

"Was that before I captured you several days ago?"

"I never saw you before."

Buckingham scratched his head again. "Are there two of you?" he demanded. "I certainly caught you or another just like you at the falls over a week ago."

Suddenly Naomi thought that she comprehended. "You caught a girl like me?" she demanded. "Yes."

"Did she wear a red handkerchief around her neck?"

"Yes."

"Where is she?"

"If you are not she, she is with God in his castle—down there." He leaned out over the edge of the cliff and pointed to

a stone castle on a ledge far below. He turned toward her as a new idea took form in his mind. "If you are not she," he said, "then God has the other one—and I can have you!"

"No! No!" cried the girl. "Let me go! Let me go back to my people."

Buckingham seized her and tucked her under one of his huge arms. "Neither God nor Henry the Eighth shall ever see you," he growled. "I'll take you away where they can't find you—they shan't rob me of you as they robbed me of the other. I'll take you to a place I know where there is food and water. I'll build a shelter among the trees. We'll be safe there from both God and the king."

Naomi struggled and struck at him;

but he paid no attention to her, as he swung off to the south toward the lower end of the valley.

22. THE IMPOSTER

The Lord of the Jungle awoke and stretched. A new day was dawning. He had traveled far from Mpugu's village the previous night before he lay up to rest. Now, refreshed, he swung on toward the north. He would make a kill and eat on the way, or he would go hungry—it depended upon the fortunes of the trail. Tarzan could go for long periods without food with little inconvenience. He was no such creature of habit as are the poor slaves of civilization.

He had gone but a short distance when he caught the scent spoor of men—tarmangani—white men. And before he saw them he had recognized them by

their scent.

He paused in a tree above them and looked down upon them. There were three of them—two whites and an Arab. They had made a poor camp the night before. Tarzan saw no sign of food. The men looked haggard, almost exhausted. Not far from them was a buck, but the starving men did not know it. Tarzan knew it because Usha, the wind, was carrying the scent of the buck to his keen nostrils.

Seeing their dire need and fearing that they might frighten the animal away before he could kill it, Tarzan passed around them unseen and swung silently on through the trees.

Wappi, the antelope, browsed on the

tender grasses of a little clearing. He would take a few mouthfuls; then raise his head, looking and listening —always alert. But he was not sufficiently alert to detect the presence of the noiseless stalker creeping upon him.

Suddenly the antelope started! He had heard, but it was too late. A beast of prey had launched itself upon him from the branches of a tree.

A quarter of a mile away Orman had risen to his feet. "We might as well get going, Bill," he said.

"Can't we make this bird understand that we want him to guide us to the point where he last saw one of the girls?"

"I've tried. You've heard me threaten to kill him if he doesn't, but he either

can't or won't understand."

"If we don't get something to eat pretty soon we won't ever find anybody. If—" The incompleted sentence died in a short gasp.

An uncanny cry had come rolling out of the mysterious jungle fastness, freezing the blood in the veins of all three men.

"The ghost!" said Orman in a whisper.

An involuntary shudder ran through West's frame. "You know that's all hooey, Tom," he said.

"Yes, I know it," admitted Orman; "but "

"That probably wasn't—Obroski at

all. It must have been some animal," insisted West.

"Look!" exclaimed Orman, pointing beyond West.

As the cameraman wheeled he saw an almost naked white man walking toward them, the carcass of a buck across one broad shoulder.

"Obroski!" exclaimed West.

Tarzan saw the two men gazing at him in astonishment, he heard West's ejaculation, and he recalled the striking resemblance that he and Obroski bore to one another. If the shadow of a smile was momentarily reflected by his grey eyes it was gone when he stopped before the two men and tossed the carcass of the buck at their feet.

"I thought you might be hungry," he said. "You look hungry."

"Obroski!" muttered Orman. "Is it really you?" He stepped closer to Tarzan and touched his shoulder.

"What did you think I was—a ghost?" asked the ape- man.

Orman laughed—an apologetic, embarrassed laugh. "I—well —we thought you were dead. It was so surprising to see you—and then the way that you killed the lion the other day—you did kill the lion, didn't you?"

"He seemed to be dead," replied the ape-man.

"Yes, of course; but then it didn't seem exactly like you, Obroski— we didn't know that you could do anything

like that."

"There are probably a number of things about me that you don't know. But never mind about that. I've come to find out what you know about the girls. Are they safe? And how about the rest of the safari?"

"The girls were stolen by the Arabs almost two weeks ago. Bill and I have been looking for them. I don't know where the rest of the outfit are. I told Pat to try to get everything to Omwamwi Falls and wait for me there if I didn't show up before. We captured this Arab. It's Eyad—you probably remember him. Of course we can't understand his lingo; but from what we can make out one of the girls has been killed by a wild beast,

and something terrible has happened to the other girl and the rest of the Arabs."

Tarzan turned to Eyad; and, much to the Arab's surprise, questioned him in his own tongue while Orman and West looked on in astonishment. The two spoke rapidly for a few minutes; then Tarzan handed Eyad an arrow, and the man, squatting on his haunches, smoothed a little area of ground with the palm of his hand and commenced to draw something with the point of the arrow.

"What's he doing?" asked West. "What did he say?"

"He's drawing a map to show me where this fight took place between the Arabs and the gorillas."

"Gorillas! What did he say about the girls?"

"One of them was killed by a lion a week or more ago, and the last he saw of the other she was being carried off by a big bull gorilla."

"Which one is dead?" asked West. "Did he say?"

Tarzan questioned Eyad, and then turned to the American. "He does not know. He says that he could never tell the two girls apart."

Eyad had finished his map and was pointing out the different landmarks to the ape-man. Orman and West were also scrutinizing the crude tracing.

The director gave a short laugh. "This bird's stringin' you, Obroski." he said.

"That's a copy of a fake map we had for use in the picture."

Tarzan questioned Eyad rapidly in Arabic; then he turned again to Orman. "I think he is telling the truth," he said. "Anyway, I'll soon know. I am going up to this valley and look around. You and West follow on up to the falls. Eyad can guide you. This buck will last you until you get there." Then he turned and swung into the trees.

The three men stood staring at the spot for a moment. Finally Orman shook his head. "I never was so fooled in any one before in my life," he said. "I had Obroski all wrong—we all did. By golly, I never saw such a change in a man before in my whole life."

"Even his voice has changed," said West

"He certainly was a secretive son-of-a-gun," said Orman. "I never had the slightest idea that he could speak Arabic."

"I think he mentioned that there were several things about him that you did not know."

"If I wasn't so familiar with that noble mug of his and that godlike physique I'd swear that this guy isn't Obroski at all."

"Not a chance," said West. "I'd know him in a million."

23. MAN AND BEAST

The great bull gorilla carried Naomi Madison south along the wooded crest of the mountains toward the southern end of the valley. When they came to open spaces he scurried quickly across them, and he looked behind him often as though fearing pursuit.

The girl's first terror had subsided, to be replaced by a strange apathy that she could not understand. It was as though her nervous system was under the effects of an anesthetic that deadened her susceptibility to fear but left all her other faculties unimpaired. Perhaps she had undergone so much that she no longer cared what befell her.

That she could converse in English

with this brutal beast lent an unreality to the adventure that probably played a part in inducing the mental state in which she found herself. After this, anything might be, anything might happen.

The uncomfortable position in which she was being carried and her hunger presently became matters of the most outstanding importance, relegating danger to the background,

"Let me walk," she said.

Buckingham grunted and lowered her to her feet. "Do not try to run away from me," he warned.

They continued on through the woods towards the south, the beast sometimes stopping to look back and listen. He was moving into the wind; so his nose was

useless in apprehending danger from the rear.

During one of these stops Naomi saw fruit growing upon a tree. "I am hungry," she said. "Is this fruit good to eat?"

"Yes," he replied and permitted her to gather some; *then* he pushed on again.

They had come almost to the end of the valley and were crossing a space almost devoid of trees at a point where the mountains fell in a series of precipitous cliffs down to the floor of the valley when the gorilla paused as usual under such circumstances to glance back.

The girl, thinking he feared pursuit by the Arabs, always looked hopefully back at such times. Even the leering

countenance of Atewy would have been a welcome sight under the circumstances. Heretofore they had seen no sign of pursuit, but this time a figure emerged from the patch of wood they had just quitted—it was the lumbering figure of a bull gorilla.

With a snarl, Buckingham lifted the girl from her feet and broke into a lumbering run. A short distance within the forest beyond the clearing he turned abruptly toward the cliff; and when he reached the edge he swung the girl to his back, telling her to put her arms about his neck and hang on.

Naomi Madison glanced once into the abyss below; then she shut her eyes and prayed for strength to hang onto the hairy

creature making its way down the sheer face of the rocky escarpment.

What he found to cling to she did not know, for she did not open her eyes until he loosed her hands by main strength and let her drop to her feet behind him.

"I'll come back for you when I have thrown Suffolk off the trail," said the beast and was gone.

The Madison found herself in a small natural cave in the face of the cliff. A tiny stream of water trickled from a hidden spring, formed a little pool at the front of the cave, and ran over the edge down the face of the cliff. A part of the floor of the cave was dry; but there was no covering upon it, only the bare rock.

The girl approached the ledge and

looked down. The great height of the seemingly bare cliff face made her shrink back, giddy. Then she tried it again and looked up. There seemed scarcely a hand or foothold in any direction. She marveled that the heavy gorilla had been able to make his way to the cave safely, burdened by her weight.

As she examined her situation, Buckingham clambered quickly to the summit of the cliff and continued on toward the south. He moved slowly, and it was not long before the pursuing beast overtook him.

The creature upon his trail hailed him. "Where is the hairless she?" he demanded.

"I do not know," replied the other.

"She has run away from me. I am looking for her."

"Why did you run away from me, Buckingham?"

"I did not know it was you, Suffolk. I thought you were one of Wolsey's men trying to rob me of the she so that I could not take her to the king."

Suffolk grunted. "We had better find her. The king is not in a good humor. How do you suppose she escaped from God?"

"She did not escape from God—this is a different she, though they look much alike." The two passed on through the forest, searching for the Madison.

For two nights and two days the girl lay alone in the rocky cave. She could

neither ascend nor descend the vertical cliff. If the beast did not return for her, she must starve. This she knew, yet she hoped that it would not return.

The third night fell. Naomi was suffering from hunger. Fortunately the little trickle of water through the cave saved her from suffering from thirst also. She heard the savage sounds of the night life of the wilderness, but she was not afraid. The cave had at least that advantage. If she had food she could live there in safety indefinitely, but she had no food.

The first pangs of hunger had passed. She did not suffer. She only knew that she was growing weaker. It seemed strange to her that she, Naomi Madison,

should be dying of hunger—and alone! Why, in all the world the only creature that could save her from starvation, the only creature that knew where she was was a great, savage gorilla—she who numbered her admirers by the millions, whose whereabouts, whose every act was chronicled in a hundred newspapers and magazines. She felt very small and insignificant now. Here was no room for arrogant egotism.

During the long hours she had had more opportunity for self- scrutiny than ever before, and what she discovered was not very flattering. She realized that she had already changed much during the past two weeks—she had learned much from the attitude of the other members of

the safari toward her but most from the example that Rhonda Terry had set her. If she were to have the chance, she knew that she would be a very different woman; but she did not expect the chance. She did not want life at the price she would have to pay. She prayed that she might die before the gorilla returned to claim his prize.

She slept fitfully through the third night—the rocky floor that was her bed was torture to her soft flesh. The morning sun, shining full into the mouth of her cave, gave her renewed hope even though her judgment told her that there was no hope.

She drank, and bathed her hands and face; then she sat and looked out over the

valley of diamonds. She should have hated it, for it had aroused the avarice that had brought her to this sorry pass; but she did not—it was too beautiful.

Presently her attention was attracted by a scraping sound outside the cave and above it. She listened intently. What could it be?

A moment later a black, hairy leg appeared below the top of the mouth of the cave; and then the gorilla dropped to the narrow ledge before it. The thing had returned! The girl crouched against the back wall, shuddering.

The brute stopped and peered into the gloomy cavern. "Come here!" it commanded. "I see you. Hurry—we have no time to waste. They may have

followed me. Suffolk has had me watched for two days. He did not believe that you had run away. He guessed that I had hidden you. Come! Hurry!"

"Go away and leave me," she begged. "I would rather stay here and die."

He made no answer at once, but stooped and came toward her. Seizing her roughly by the arm he dragged her to the mouth of the cave. "So I'm not good enough for you?" he growled. "Don't you know that I am the Duke of Buckingham? Get on my back, and hold tight."

He swung her up into position, and she clung about his neck. She wanted to hurl herself over the edge of the cliff, but she could not raise her courage to the

point. Against her will she clung to the shaggy brute as he climbed the sheer face of the cliff toward the summit. She did not dare even to look down.

At the top he lowered her to her feet and started on southward toward the lower end of the valley, dragging her after him.

She was weak; and she staggered, stumbling often. Then he would jerk her roughly to her feet and growl at her, using strange, medieval oaths.

"I can't go on," she said. "I am weak. I have had nothing to eat for two days."

"You are just trying to delay me so that Suffolk can over-take us. You would rather belong to the king, but you won't. You'll never see the king. He is just

waiting for an excuse to have my head, but he won't ever get it. We're never going back to London, you and I. We'll go out of the valley and find a place below the falls."

Again she stumbled and fell. The beast became enraged. He kicked her as she lay on the ground; then he seized her by the hair and dragged her after him.

But he did not go far thus. He had taken but a few steps when he came to a sudden halt. With a savage growl and upturned lips baring powerful yellow fangs he faced a figure that had dropped from a tree directly in his path.

The girl saw too, and her eyes went wide. "Stanley!" she cried. "Oh, Stanley, save me, save me!"

It was the startled cry of a forlorn hope, but in the instant of voicing it she knew that she could expect no help from Stanley Obroski, the coward. Her heart sank, and the horror of her position seemed suddenly more acute because of this brief instant of false reprieve.

The gorilla released his hold upon her hair and dropped her to the ground, where she lay too weak to rise, watching the great beast at her side and the bronzed white giant facing it.

"Go away, Bolgani!" commanded Tarzan in the language of the great apes. "The she is mine. Go away, or I kill!"

Buckingham did not understand the tongue of this stranger, but he understood the menace of his attitude. "Go away!"

he cried in English. "Go away, or I will kill you!" Thus a beast spoke in English to an Englishman who spoke the language of beasts!

Tarzan of the Apes is not easily astonished; but when he heard Bolgani, the gorilla, speak to him in English he at first questioned his hearing and then his sanity. But whatever the condition of either it could not conceal the evident intent of the bull gorilla advancing menacingly toward him as it beat its breast and screamed its threats.

Naomi Madison watched with horror-wide, fascinated eyes. She saw the man she thought to be Stanley Obroski crouch slightly as though waiting to receive the charge. She wondered why he did not

turn and run—that was what all who knew him, including herself, would have expected of Stanley Obroski.

Suddenly the gorilla charged, and still the man held his ground. Great hairy paws reached out to seize him; but he eluded them with quick, panther-like movements. Stooping, he sprang beneath a swinging arm; and before the beast could turn leaped upon its back. A bronzed arm encircled the squat neck of the hairy Buckingham. In a frenzy of rage the beast swung around, clawing futilely to rid himself of his antagonist.

He felt the steel thews of the ape-man's arm tightening, and realized that he was coping with muscles far beyond what he had expected. He threw himself

to the ground in an effort to crush his foe with his great weight, but Tarzan broke the fall with his feet and slipped partially from beneath the hairy body.

Then Buckingham felt powerful jaws close upon his neck near the jugular, he heard savage growls mingling with his own. Naomi Madison heard too, and a new horror filled her soul. Now she knew why Stanley Obroski had not fled in terror—he had gone mad! Fear and suffering had transformed him into a maniac.

She shuddered at the thought, she shrank within herself as she saw his strong white teeth sink into the black hide of the gorilla and heard the bestial growls rumbling from that handsome

mouth.

The two beasts rolled over and over upon the ground, the roars of the gorilla mingling with the growls of the man; and the girl, leaning upon her hands, watched through fascinated, horror-stricken eyes.

She knew that there could be but one outcome—even though the man appeared to have a slight initial advantage, the giant strength of the mighty bull must prevail in the end. Then she saw a knife flash, reflecting the rays of the morning sun. She saw it driven into the great bull's side. She heard his agonized shriek of pain and rage. She saw him redouble his efforts to dislodge the creature clinging to his back.

Again and again the knife was driven

home. Suddenly the maddened struggles of the bull grew weaker; then they ceased, and with a convulsive shudder the great form relaxed and lay inert.

The man leaped erect; he paid no attention to the girl; upon his face was the savage snarl of a wild beast. Naomi was terrified; she tried to crawl away and hide from him, but she was too weak. He placed a foot upon the carcass of the dead bull and threw back his head; then from his parted lips burst a cry that made her flesh creep. It was the victory cry of the bull ape, and as its echoes died away in the distance the man turned toward her.

All the savagery had vanished from Ms face; his gaze was intent and earnest.

She looked for a maniacal light in his eyes, but they seemed sane and normal.

"Are you injured?" he asked.

"No," she said and tried to rise, but she had not the strength.

He came and lifted her to her feet. He was so strong! A sense of security swept over her and unnerved her. She threw her arms about his neck and commenced to sob,

"Oh, Stanley! Stanley!" she gasped. She tried to say more, but her sobs choked her.

Obroski had told Tarzan a great deal about the members of the company. He knew the names of all of them, and had identified most of them from having seen them while he had watched the safari in

the past. He knew of the budding affair between Obroski and Naomi Madison, and he guessed now from the girl's manner that she must be Naomi. It suited him that these people should think him Stanley Obroski, for the sometimes grim and terrible life that he led required the antidote of occasional humor.

He lifted her in his arms. "Why are you so weak?" he asked. "Is it from hunger?"

She sobbed a scarcely audible "Yes," and buried her face in the hollow of his neck. She was still half afraid of him. It was true that he did not act like a madman, but what else could account for the remarkable accession of courage and strength that had transformed him in the

short time since she had last seen him.

She had known that he was muscular; but she had never attributed to him such superhuman strength as that which he had displayed during his duel with the gorilla, and she had known that he was a coward. But this man was no coward.

He carried her for a short distance, and then put her down on a bed of soft grasses. "I will get you something to eat," he said.

She saw him swing lightly into the trees and disappear, and again she was afraid. What a difference it made when he was near her! She puckered her brows to a sudden thought. Why did she feel so safe with Stanley Obroski now? She had never looked upon him as a

protector or as able to protect. Every one had considered him a coward. Whatever metamorphosis had occurred had been sufficiently deep rooted to carry its impression to her subconscious mind imparting this new feeling *of* confidence.

He was gone but a short time, returning with some nuts and fruit. He came and squatted beside her. "Eat a little at a time," he cautioned. "After a while I will get flesh for you; that will bring back your strength."

As she ate she studied him. "You have changed, Stanley," she said. "Yes?"

"But I like you better. To think that you killed that terrible creature single-handed! It was marvelous."

"What sort of a beast was it?" he asked. "It spoke English."

"It is a mystery to me. It called itself an Englishman and said that it was the Duke of Buckingham. Another one pursued it whom it called Suffolk. A great number of them attacked us at the time that this one took me from the Arabs. They live in a city called London—he pointed it out to me. And Rhonda is *a* captive there in a castle on a ledge a little above the main part of the city—he said that she was with God in his castle."

"I thought Rhonda had been killed by a lion," said Tarzan.

"So did I until that creature told me differently. Oh, the poor dear! Perhaps it

would have been better had the lion killed her. Think of being in the power of those frightful half-men!"

"Where is this city?" asked Tarzan.

"It is back there a way at the foot of the cliff—one can see it plainly from the summit."

The man rose and lifted the girl into his arms again. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"I am going to take you to Orman and West. They should *be* at the falls before night."

"Oh! They are alive?"

"They were looking for you, and they got lost. They have been hungry, but otherwise they have gotten along all

right, They will be glad to see you."

"And then we can get out of this awful country?" she asked.

"First we must find out what became of the others and save Rhonda," he replied,

"Oh, but she can't be saved!" exclaimed the girl. "You should see how those devils fight—the Arabs, even with their guns, were helpless against them. There isn't a chance in the world of saving poor Rhonda, even if she is alive—which I doubt."

"We must try—and, anyway, I wish to see this gorilla city of London."

"You mean you would go there!"

"How else can I see it?"

"Oh, Stanley, please don't go back there!"

"I came here for you."

"Well, then, let Bill West go after Rhonda."

"Do you think he could get her?"

"I don't think any one can get her."

"Perhaps not," he said, "but at least I shall see the city and possibly learn something about these gorillas that talk English. There is a mystery worth solving."

They had reached the south end of the valley where the hills drop down almost to the level of the river. The current here, above the falls, was not swift; and Tarzan waded in with the girl still in his

arms.

"Where are you going?" she cried, frightened.

"We have got to cross the river, and it is easier to cross here than below the falls. There the current is much swifter, and there are hippopotamuses and crocodiles. Take hold of my shoulders and hold tight."

He plunged in and struck for the opposite shore, while the terrified girl clung to him in desperation. The farther bank looked far away indeed. Below she could hear the roar of the falls. They seemed to be drifting down toward them.

But presently the strong, even strokes of the swimmer reassured her. He seemed unhurried and unexcited, and

gradually she relaxed as though she had absorbed a portion of his confidence. But she sighed in relief as he clambered out on solid ground.

Her terror at the river crossing was nothing to that which she experienced in the descent of the escarpment to the foot of the falls—it froze her to silent horror.

The man descended as nimbly as a monkey; the burden of her weight seemed nothing to him. Where had Stanley Obroski acquired this facility that almost put to shame the mountain goat and the monkey?

Half way down he called her attention to three figures near the foot of the cliff. "There are Orman and West and the Arab," he said, but she did not dare look

down.

The three men below them were watching in astonishment—they had just recognized that of the two descending toward them one was Obroski and the other a girl, but whether Naomi or Rhonda they could not be sure.

Orman and West ran forward to meet them as they neared the foot of the cliff. Tears' came to Orman's eyes as he took Naomi in his arms; and West was glad to see her too, but he was saddened when he discovered that it was not Rhonda.

"Poor girl!" he muttered as they walked back to their little camp. "Poor Rhonda! What an awful death!"

"But she is not dead," said Naomi.

"Not dead! How do you know?"

"She is worse than dead, Bill," and then Naomi told all that she knew of Rhonda's fate.

When she was through, Tarzan rose. "You have enough of that buck left to last until you can make a kill?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Orman.

"Then I'll be going," said the ape-man.

"Where?" asked the director.

"To find Rhonda."

West leaped to his feet. "I'll go with you, Stanley," he cried.

"But, my God, man! you can't save her now. After what Eyad has told us of those beasts and Naomi's experience with them you must know that you

haven't a chance." Orman spoke with great seriousness.

"It is my duty to go anyway," said West, "not Stanley's; and I'm going."

"You'd better stay here," advised Tarzan. "You wouldn't have a chance."

"Why wouldn't I have as good a chance as you?" demanded West.

"Perhaps you would, but you would delay me." Tarzan turned away and walked toward the foot of the escarpment.

Naomi Madison watched him through half closed eyes. "Good bye, Stanley!" she called.

"Oh, good-bye!" replied the ape-man and continued on.

They saw him seize a trailing liana and climb to another handhold; the quick equatorial night engulfed him before he reached the top.

West had stood silently watching him, stunned by his grief. "I'm going with him," he said finally and started for the escarpment.

"Why, you couldn't climb that place in the daytime, let alone after dark," warned Orman.

"Don't be foolish, Bill," counseled Naomi. "We know how you feel, but there's no sense throwing away another life uselessly. Even Stanley'll never come back." She commenced to sob.

"Then I won't either," said West; "but I'm goin'."

24. GOD

Beyond the summit of the escarpment the ape-man moved silently through the night. He heard familiar noises, and his nostrils caught familiar scents that told him that the great cats roamed this strange valley of the gorillas.

He crossed the river farther up than he had swum it with Naomi, and he kept to the floor of the valley as he sought the mysterious city. He had no plan, for he knew nothing of what lay ahead of him—his planning must await the result of his reconnaissance.

He moved swiftly, often at a trot that covered much ground; and presently he saw dim lights ahead. That must be the city! He left the river and moved in a

straight line toward the lights, cutting across a bend in the river which again swung back into his path just before he reached the shadowy mass of many buildings.

The city was walled, probably, he thought, against lions; but Tarzan was not greatly concerned—he had scaled walls before. When he reached this one he discovered that it was not high—perhaps ten feet— but sharpened stakes, pointing downward, had been set at close intervals just below the capstones, providing an adequate defense against the great cats

The ape-man followed the wall back toward the cliff, where it joined the rocky, precipitous face of the

escarpment. He listened, scenting the air with his delicate nostrils, seeking to assure himself that nothing was near on the opposite side of the wall.

Satisfied, he leaped for the stakes. His hands closed upon two of them; then he drew himself up slowly until his hips were on a level with his hands, his arms straight at his sides. Leaning forward, he let his body drop slowly forward until it rested on the stakes and the top of the wall.

Now he could look down into the narrow alleyway beyond the barrier. There was no sign of life as far as he could see in either direction—just a dark, shadowy, deserted alleyway. It required but a moment now to draw his

body to the wall top and drop to the ground inside the city of the gorillas.

From the vantage point of the wall he had seen lights a short distance above the level of the main part of the city and what seemed to be the shadowy outlines of a large building. That, he conjectured, must be the castle of God, of which Naomi Madison had spoken.

If he were right, that would be his goal; for there the other girl was supposed to be imprisoned. He moved along the face of the cliff in a narrow, winding alley that followed generally the contour of the base of the mountain, though sometimes it wound around buildings that had been built against the cliff.

He hoped that he would meet none of the denizens of the city, for the passage was so narrow that he could not avoid detection; and it was so winding that an enemy might be upon him before he could find concealment in a shadowy doorway or upon a rooftop, which latter he had decided would make the safest hiding place and easy of access, since many of the buildings were low.

He heard voices and saw the dim glow of lights in another part of the city, and presently there rose above the strange city the booming of drums.

Shortly thereafter Tarzan came to a flight of steps cut from the living rock of the cliff. They led upward, disappearing in the gloom above; but they pointed in

the general direction of the building he wished to reach. Pausing only long enough to reconnoiter with his ears, the ape-man started the ascent.

He had climbed but a short distance when *he* turned to see the city spread out below him. Not far from the foot of the cliff rose the towers and battlements of what appeared to be a medieval castle. From within its outer walls came the light that he had seen dimly from another part of the city; from here too came the sound of drumming. It was reminiscent of another day, another scene. In retrospection it all came vividly before him now.

He saw the shaggy figures of the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak. He saw an

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

Slowly and softly they began tapping upon the resounding surface of the drum as the first, faint rays of the ascending moon silvered the encircling tree-tops. Then, as the light in the amphitheater increased, the females augmented the frequency and force of their blows until presently a wild, rhythmic din pervaded the great jungle for miles in every direction.

As the din of the drum rose to almost deafening volume Kerchak sprang into the open space between the squatting males and the drummers. Standing erect he threw his head far back and looking full into the eye of the rising moon he beat upon his breast with his great hairy paws and emitted a fearful, roaring shriek.

Then, crouching, Kerchak slunk noiselessly around the open circle, veering away from a dead body that lay before the altar-drum; but, as he passed, keeping his fierce, wicked eyes upon the corpse.

Another male then sprang into the arena and, repeating the horrid cries of his king, followed stealthily in his wake.

Another and another followed in quick succession until the jungle reverberated with the now almost ceaseless notes of their bloodthirsty screams. It was the challenge and the hunt.

How plainly it all came back to the ape-man now as he heard the familiar beating of the drums in this far-off city!

As he ascended the steps farther he could see over the top of the castle wall below into the courtyard beyond. He saw a number of gorillas dancing to the booming of the drums. The scene was lit by torches, and as he watched, a fire was lighted near the dancers. The dry material of which it was built ignited quickly and blazed high, revealing the scene in the courtyard like daylight and

illuminating the face of the cliff and the stairway that Tarzan was ascending; then it died down as quickly as it had arisen.

The ape-man hastened up the stone stairway that wound and zigzagged up the cliff face, hoping that no eye had discerned him during the brief illumination of the cliff. There was no indication that he had been discovered as he approached the grim pile now towering close above him, because the strange figure gazing down upon him from the ramparts of the castle gave no sign that might apprise the ape-man of its presence. Chuckling, it turned away and disappeared through an embrasure in a turret.

At the top of the stairway Tarzan

found himself upon a broad terrace, the fore part of the great ledge upon which the castle was built. Before him rose the grim edifice without wall or moat looming menacingly in the darkness.

The only opening on the level of the ledge was a large double doorway, one of the doors of which stood slightly ajar. Perhaps the lord of the jungle should have been warned by this easy accessibility. Perhaps it did arouse his suspicions—the natural suspicion of the wild thing for the trap —but he had come here for the purpose of entering this building; and he could not ignore such a God-given opportunity.

Cautiously he approached the doorway. Beyond was only darkness. He

pushed against the great door, and it swung silently inward. He was glad that the hinges had not creaked. He paused a moment in the opening, listening. From within came the scent of gorillas and a strange man-like scent that intrigued and troubled him, but he neither heard nor saw signs of life beyond the doorway.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom of the interior he saw that he was in a semi-circular foyer in the posterior wall of which were set several doors. Approaching the door farthest to the left he tried it; but it was locked, nor could he open the second. The third, however, swung in as he pushed upon it, revealing a descending staircase.

He listened intently but heard nothing;

then he tried the fourth door. It too was locked. So were the fifth and sixth, This was the last door, and he returned to the third. Passing through it he descended the stairway, feeling his way through the darkness.

Still all was silence. Not a sound had come to his ears since he had entered the building to suggest that there was another within it than himself; yet he knew that there were living creatures there. His sensitive nostrils had told him that and the strange, uncanny instinct of the jungle beast.

At the foot of the stairs he groped with his hands, finding a door. He felt for and found a latch. Lifting it, he pushed upon the door; and it opened.

Then there came strongly to his nostrils the scent of a woman— a white woman! Had he found her? Had he found the one he sought?

The room was utterly dark. He stepped into it, and as he released the door he heard it close behind him with a gentle click. With the quick intuition of the wild beast, he guessed that he was trapped. He sprang back to the door, seeking to open it; but his fingers found only a smooth surface.

He stood in silence, listening, waiting. He heard rapid breathing at a little distance from him. Insistent in his nostrils was the scent of the woman. He guessed that the breathing he heard was hers; its tempo connoted fear. Cautiously

he approached the sound.

He was quite close when a noise ahead of him brought him to a sudden halt. It sounded like the creaking of rusty hinges. Then a light appeared revealing the whole scene.

Directly before him on a pallet of straw sat a white woman. Beyond her was a door constructed of iron bars through which he saw another chamber. At the far side of this second chamber was a doorway in which stood a strange creature holding a lighted torch in one hand. Tarzan could not tell if it were human or gorilla.

It approached the barred doorway, chuckling softly to itself. The woman had turned her face away from Tarzan

and was looking at the thing in horror. Now she turned a quick glance toward the ape-man. He saw that she was quite like the girl, Naomi, and very beautiful.

As her eyes fell upon him, revealed by the flickering light of the torch, she gasped in astonishment. "Stanley Obroski!" she ejaculated. "Are you a prisoner too?"

"I guess I am," replied the ape-man.

"What were you doing here? How did they get you? I thought that you were dead."

"I came here to find you," he replied,

"You!" Her tone was incredulous.

The creature in the next room had approached the bars, and stood there

chuckling softly. Tarzan looked up at it. It had the face of a man, but its skin was black like that of a gorilla. Its grinning lips revealed the heavy fangs on the anthropoid. Scant black hair covered those portions of its body that an open shirt and a loin cloth revealed. The skin of the body, arms, and legs was black with large patches of white. The bare feet were the feet of a man; the hands were black and hairy and wrinkled, with long, curved claws; the eyes were the sunken eyes of an old man—a very old man.

"So you are acquainted?" he said. "How interesting! And you came to get her, did you? I thought that you had come to call on me. Of course it is not quite

the proper thing for a stranger to come by night without an invitation —and by stealth.

"It was just by the merest chance that I learned of your coming. I have Henry to thank for that. Had he not been staging a dance I should not have known, and thus I should have been denied the pleasure of receiving you as I have.

"You see, I was looking down from my castle into the courtyard of Henry's palace when his bonfire flared up and lighted the Holy Stairs—and there you were!"

The creature's voice was well modulated, its diction that of a cultivated Englishman. The incongruity between its speech and its appearance rendered the

latter all the more repulsive and appalling by contrast.

"Yes, I came for this girl," said the ape-man.

"And now you are a prisoner too." The creature chuckled.

"What do you want of us?" demanded Tarzan. "We are not enemies; we have not harmed you."

"What do I want of you! That is a long story. But perhaps you two would understand and appreciate it. The beasts with which I am surrounded hear, but they do not understand. Before you serve my final purpose I shall keep you for a while for the pleasure of conversing with rational human beings.

"I have not seen any for a long time, a

long, long time. Of course I hate them none the less, but I must admit that I shall find pleasure in their companionship for a short time. You are both very good-looking too. That will make it all the more pleasant, just as it increases your value for the purpose for which I intend you—the final purpose, you understand. I am particularly pleased that the girl is so beautiful. I always did have a fondness for blonds. Were I not already engaged along other lines of research, and were it possible, I should like nothing better than to conduct a scientific investigation to determine the biological or psychological explanation of the profound attraction that the blond female has for the male of all races."

From the pocket of his shirt he extracted a couple of crudely fashioned cheroots, one of which he preferred through the bars to Tarzan. "Will you not smoke Mr.—ah—er—Obroski I believe the young lady called you. Stanley Obroski! That would be a Polish name, I believe; but you do not resemble a Pole. You look quite English—quite as English as I."

"I do not smoke," said Tarzan, and then added, "than you."

"You do not know what you miss—tobacco is such a boon to tired nerves."

"My nerves are never tired."

"Fortunate man! And fortunate for me too. I could not ask for anything better than a combination of youth with a

healthy body and a healthy nervous system—to say nothing of your unquestionable masculine beauty. I shall be wholly regenerated."

"I do not know what you are talking about," said Tarzan.

"No, of course not. How could one expect that you would understand what I alone in all the world know! But some other time I shall be delighted to explain. Right now I must go up and have a look down into the king's courtyard. I find that I must keep an eye on Henry the Eighth. He has been grossly misbehaving himself of late—he and Suffolk and Howard. I shall leave this torch burning for you—it will make it much more pleasant; and I want you to enjoy

yourselves as much as possible before the —ah—er—well, *au revoir*! Make yourselves quite at home." He turned and crossed toward a door at the opposite side of the room, chuckling as he went.

Tarzan stepped quickly to the bars separating the two rooms. "Come back here!" he commanded. "Either let us out of this hole or tell us why you are holding us—what you intend doing with us."

The creature wheeled suddenly, its expression transformed by a hideous snarl. "You dare issue orders to me!" it screamed.

"And why not?" demanded the ape-man. "Who are you?"

The creature took a step nearer the

bars and tapped its hairy chest with a horny talon. "I am God!" it cried.

25. "BEFORE I EAT YOU!"

As the thing that called itself God departed from the other chamber, closing the door after it, Tarzan turned toward the girl sitting on the straw of their prison cell. "I have seen many strange things in my life," he said, "but this is by far the strangest. Sometimes I think that I must be dreaming."

"That is what I thought at first," replied the girl; "but this is no dream — it is a terrible, a frightful reality."

"Including God?" he asked.

"Yes; even God is a reality. That thing is the god of these gorillas. They all fear him and most of them worship him.

They say that he created them. I do not understand it—it is all like a hideous chimera."

"What do you suppose he intends to do with us?"

"Oh, I don't know; but it is something horrible," she replied. "Down in the city they venture hideous guesses, but even they do not know. He brings young gorillas here, and they are never seen again."

"How long have you been here?"

"I have been in God's castle since yesterday, but I was in the palace of Henry the Eighth for more than a week. Don't those names sound incongruous when applied to beasts?"

"I thought that nothing more could

ever sound strange to me after I met *Buckingham* this morning and heard him speak English—a bull gorilla!"

"You met Buckingham? It was he who captured me and brought me to this city. Did he capture you too?"

Tarzan shook his head. "No. He had captured Naomi Madison."

"Naomi! What became of her?"

"She is with Orman and West and one of the Arabs at the foot of the falls. I came here to find you and take you to them; but it is commencing to look as though I had made a mess of it—getting captured myself."

"But how did Naomi get away from Buckingham?" demanded the girl.

"I killed him."

"*You* killed *Buckingham*!" She looked at him with wide, unbelieving eyes.

From the reactions of the others toward his various exploits Tarzan had already come to understand that Obroski's friends had not held his courage in very high esteem, and so it amused him all the more that they should mistake him for this unquestioned coward.

The girl surveyed him in silence through level eyes for several moments as though she were trying to read his soul and learn the measure of his imposture; then she shook her head.

"You're not a bad kid, Stanley," she said; "but you mustn't tell naughty stories

to your Aunt Rhonda."

One of the ape-man's rare smiles bared his strong, white teeth. "No one can fool you, can they?" he asked admiringly.

"Well, I'll admit that they'd have to get up pretty early in the morning to put anything over on Rhonda Terry. But what I can't understand is that make-up of yours—the scenery—where did you get it and why? I should think you'd freeze."

"You will have to ask Rungula, chief of the Bansutos," replied Tarzan.

"What has he to do with it?"

"He appropriated the Obroski wardrobe."

"I commence to see the light. But if you were captured by the Bansutos, how did you escape?"

"If I told you you would not believe me. You do not believe that I killed Buckingham."

"How could I, unless you sneaked up on him while he was asleep? It just isn't in the cards, Stanley, for any man to have killed that big gorilla unless he had a rifle—that's it! You shot him."

"And then threw my rifle away?" inquired the ape-man.

"M-m-m, that doesn't sound reasonable, does it? No, I guess you're just a plain damn liar, Stanley."

"Thank you."

"Don't get sore. I really like you and always have; but I have seen too much of life to believe in miracles, and the idea of you killing Buckingham single-handed would be nothing short of a miracle."

Tarzan turned away and commenced to examine the room in which they were confined. The flickering light of the torch in the adjoining room lighted it dimly. He found a square chamber the walls of which were faced with roughly hewn stone. The ceiling was of planking supported by huge beams. The far end of the room was so dark that he could not see the ceiling at that point; the last beam cast a heavy shadow there upon the ceiling. He thought he detected a steady current of air moving from the barred

doorway of the other room to this far corner of their cell, suggesting an opening there; but he could find none, and abandoned the idea.

Having finished his inspection he came and sat down on the straw beside Rhonda. "You say you have been here a week?" he inquired.

"In the city—not right here," she replied. "Why?"

"I was thinking—they must feed you, then?" he inquired.

"Yes; celery, bamboo tips, fruit, and nuts—it gets monotonous."

"I was not thinking of *what* they fed you but of how. How is your food brought to you and when? I mean since you have been in this room."

"When they brought me here yesterday they gave me enough food for the day; this morning they brought me another day's supply. They bring it into that next room and shove it through the bars—no dishes or anything like that—they just shove it through onto the floor with their dirty, bare hands, or paws. All except the water—they bring water in that gourd there in the corner."

"They don't open the door, then, and come into the room?"

"No."

"That is too bad."

"Why?"

"If they opened the door we might have a chance to escape," explained the ape-man.

"Not a chance—the food is brought by a big bull gorilla. Oh, I forgot!" she exclaimed, laughing, "You'd probably break him in two and throw him in the waste basket like you did Buckingham."

Tarzan laughed with her. "I keep forgetting that I am a coward," he said. "You must be sure to remind me if any danger threatens us."

"I guess you won't have to be reminded, Stanley." She was looking at him again closely. "But you have changed in some way," she ventured finally. "I don't know just how to explain it, but you seem to have more assurance. And you sure put up a good front when you were talking to God. Say! Do you suppose what you've been through the

past few weeks has affected your mind?"

Further conversation was interrupted by the return of God. He pulled a chair up in front of the barred door and sat down.

"Henry is a fool," he announced. "He's trying to work his followers up to a pitch that will make it possible for him to induce them to attack heaven and kill God. Henry wants to be God. But he gave them too much to drink; and now most of them are asleep in the palace courtyard, including Henry. They won't bother me tonight; so I thought I'd come down and have a pleasant visit with you. There won't be many more opportunities, for you will have to serve your purpose before something happens to prevent. I

can't take any chances."

"What is this strange purpose we are to serve?" asked Rhonda.

"It is purely scientific; but it is a long story and I shall have to start at the beginning," explained God.

"The beginning!" he repeated dreamily. "How long ago it was! It was while I was still an undergraduate at Oxford that I first had a glimmering of the light that finally dawned. Let me see —that must have been about 1855. No, it was before that—I graduated in '55. That's right, I was born in '33 and I was twenty-two when I graduated.

"I had always been intrigued by Lamarck's investigations and later by Darwin's. They were on the right track,

but they did not go far enough; then, shortly after my graduation, I was traveling in Austria when I met a priest at Brunn who was working along lines similar to mine. His name was Mendel. We exchanged ideas. He was the only man in the world who could appreciate me, but he could not go all the way with me. I got some help from him; but, doubtless, he got more from me; though I never heard anything more about him before I left England.

"In 1857 I felt that I had practically solved the mystery of heredity, and in that year I published a monograph on the subject. I will explain the essence of my discoveries in as simple language as possible, so that you may understand the

purpose you are to serve.

"Briefly, there are two types of cells that we inherit from our parents —body cells and germ cells. These cells are composed of chromosomes containing genes—a separate gene for each mental and physical characteristic. The body cells, dividing, multiplying, changing, growing, determine the sort of individual we are to be; the germ cells, remaining practically unchanged from our conception, determine what characteristics our progeny will inherit, through us, from our progenitors and from us.

"I determined that heredity could be controlled through the transference of these genes from one individual to

another. I learned that the genes never die; they are absolutely indestructible—the basis of all life on earth, the promise of immortality throughout all eternity.

"I was certain of all this, but I could carry on no experiments. Scientists scoffed at me, the public laughed at me, the authorities threatened to lock me up in a madhouse. The church wished to crucify me.

"I hid, and carried on my research in secret. I obtained genes from living subjects—young men and women whom I enticed to my laboratory on various pretexts. I drugged them and extracted germ cells from them. I had not discovered at that time, or, I should say, I had not perfected the technique of

recovering body cells.

"In 1858 I managed, through bribery, to gain access to a number of tombs in Westminster Abbey; and from the corpses of former kings and queens of England and many a noble lord and lady I extracted the deathless genes.

"It was the rape of Henry the Eighth that caused my undoing. I was discovered in the act by one who had not been bribed. He did not turn me over to the authorities, but he commenced to blackmail me. Because of him I faced either financial ruin or a long term in prison.

"My fellow scientists had flouted me; the government would punish me; I saw that my only rewards for my labors for

mankind were to be ingratitude and persecution. I grew to hate man, with his bigotry, his hypocrisy, and his ignorance. I still hate him.

"I fled England. My plans were already made. I came to Africa and employed a white guide to lead me to gorilla country. He brought me here; then I killed him, so that no one might learn of my whereabouts.

"There were hundreds of gorillas here, yes, thousands. I poisoned their food, I shot them with poisoned arrows; but I used a poison that only anesthetized them. Then I removed their germ cells and substituted human cells that I had brought with me from England in a culture medium that encouraged their

multiplication."

The strange creature seemed warmed *by some* mysterious inner fire as he discoursed on this, his favorite subject. The man and the girl listening to him almost forgot the incongruity of his cultured English diction and his hideous, repulsive appearance—far more hideous and repulsive than that of the gorillas; for he seemed neither beast nor man but rather some horrid hybrid born of an unholy union. Yet the mind within that repellant skull held them fascinated.

"For years I watched then," he continued, "with increasing disappointment. From generation to generation I could note no outward indication that the human germ cells had

exerted the slightest influence upon the anthropoids; then I commenced to note indications of greater intelligence among them. Also, they quarreled more, were more avaricious, more vindictive—they were revealing more and more the traits of man. I felt that I was approaching my goal.

"I captured some of the young and started to train them. Very shortly after this training commenced I heard them repeating English words among themselves—words that they had heard me speak. Of course they did not know the meaning of the words; but that was immaterial—they had revealed the truth to me. My gorillas had inherited the minds and vocal organs of their synthetic

human progenitors.

"The exact reason why they inherited these human attributes and not others is still a mystery that I have not solved. But I had proved the correctness of my theory. Now I set to work to educate my wards. It was not difficult. I sent these first out as missionaries and teachers.

"As the gorillas learned and came to me for further instruction, I taught them agriculture, architecture, and building—among other things. Under my direction they built this city, which I named London, upon the river that I have called Thames. We English always take England wherever we go.

"I gave them laws, I became their god, I gave them a royal family and a

nobility. They owe everything to me, and now some of them want to turn upon me and destroy me—yes, they have become very human. They have become ambitious, treacherous, cruel—they are almost men."

"But you?" asked the girl. "You are not human, You are part gorilla. How could you have been an Englishman?"

"I am an Englishman, nevertheless," replied the creature. "Once I was a very handsome Englishman. But old age overtook me. I felt my powers failing. I saw the grave beckoning. I did not wish to die, for I felt that I had only commenced to learn the secrets of life.

"I sought some means to prolong my own and to bring back youth. At last I

was successful. I discovered how to segregate body cells and transfer them from one individual to another. I used young gorillas of both sexes and transplanted their virile, youthful body cells to my own body.

"I achieved success in so far as staying the ravages of old age is concerned and renewing youth, but as the body cells of the gorillas multiplied within me I began to acquire the physical characteristics of gorillas. My skin turned black, hair grew upon all parts of my body, my hands changed, my teeth; some day I shall be, to all intent and purpose, a gorilla. Or rather I should have been had it not been for the fortunate circumstance that brought you

to me."

"I do not understand," said Rhonda.

"You will. With the body cells from you and this young man I shall not only insure my youth, but I shall again take on the semblance of man." His eyes burned with a mad fire.

The girl shuddered. "It is horrible!" she exclaimed.

The creature chuckled. "You will be serving a noble purpose—a far more noble purpose than as though you had merely fulfilled the prosaic biological destiny for which you were born."

"But you will not have to kill us!" she exclaimed. "You take the germ cells from gorillas without killing them. When you have taken some from us, you will

let us go?"

The creature rose and came close to the bars. His yellow fangs were bared in a fiendish grin. "You do not know all," he said. A mad light shone in his blazing eyes. "I have not told you all that I have learned about rejuvenation. The new body cells are potent, but they work slowly. I have found that by eating the flesh and the glands of youth the speed of the metamorphosis is accelerated.

"I leave you now to meditate upon the great service that you are to render science!" He backed toward the far door of the other apartment. "But I will return. Later I shall eat you—eat you both. I shall eat the man first; and then, my beauty, I shall eat you! But before I eat

you—ah, before I eat you!"

Chuckling, he backed through the doorway and closed the door after him.

26. TRAPPED

It looks like curtains," said the girl.

"Curtains?"

"The end of the show."

Tarzan smiled. "I suppose you mean that there is no hope for us— that we are doomed."

"It looks like it, and I am afraid. Aren't you afraid?"

"I presume that I am supposed to be, eh?"

She surveyed him from beneath puckered brows. "I cannot understand you, Stanley," she said. "You do not seem to be afraid now, but you used to be afraid of everything. Aren't you really afraid, or are you just posing —the

actor, you know?"

"Perhaps I feel that what is about to happen is about to happen and that being afraid won't help any. Fear will never get us out of here alive, and I certainly don't intend to stay here and die if I can help it."

"I don't see how we are going to get out," said Rhonda.

"We are nine tenths out now."

"What do you mean?"

"We are still alive," he laughed, "and that is fully nine tenths of safety. If we were dead we would be a hundred per cent lost; so alive we should certainly be at least ninety per cent saved."

Rhonda laughed. "I didn't know you

were such an optimist," she declared.

"Perhaps I have something to be optimistic about," he replied. "Do you feel that draft on the floor?"

She looked up at him quickly. There was a troubled expression in her eyes as she scrutinized his. "Perhaps you had better lie down and try to sleep," she suggested. "You are overwrought."

It was his turn to eye her. "What do you mean?" he asked. "Do I seem exhausted?"

"No, but—but I just thought the strain might have been too great on you."

"What strain?" he inquired.

"What strain!" she exclaimed. "Stanley Obroski, you come and lie

down here and let me rub your head—perhaps it will put you to sleep."

"I'm not sleepy. Don't you want to get out of here?"

"Of course I do, but we can't."

"Perhaps not, but we can try. I asked you if you felt the draft on the floor."

"Of course I feel it, but what has that to do with anything. I'm not cold."

"It may not have anything to do with anything," Tarzan admitted, "but it suggests possibilities."

"What possibilities?" she demanded.

"A way out. The fresh air comes in from that other room through the bars of that door; it has to go out somewhere. The draft is so strong that it suggests a

rather large opening. Do you see any large opening in this room through which the air could escape."

The girl rose to her feet. She was commencing to understand the drift of his remarks. "No," she said, "I see no opening."

"Neither do I; but there must be one, and we know that it must be some place that we cannot see." He spoke in a whisper.

"Yes, that is right."

"And the only part of this room that we can't see plainly is among the dark shadows on the ceiling over in that far corner. Also, I have felt the air current moving in that direction."

He walked over to the part of the

room he had indicated and looked up into the darkness. The girl came and stood beside him, also peering upward.

"Do you see anything?" she asked, her voice barely audible.

"It is very dark," he replied, "but I think that I do see something —a little patch that appears darker than the rest, as though it had depth."

"Your eyes are better than mine," she said. "I see nothing."

From somewhere apparently directly above them, but at a distance, sounded a hollow chuckle, weird, uncanny.

Rhonda laid her hand impulsively on Tarzan's arm. "You are right," she whispered. "There is an opening above us—that sound came down through it."

"We must be very careful what we say above a whisper," he cautioned.

The opening in the ceiling, if such it were, appeared to be directly in the corner of the room. Tarzan examined the walls carefully, feeling every square foot of them as high as he could reach; but he found nothing that would give him a handhold. Then he sprang upward with outstretched hand —and felt an edge of an opening in the ceiling.

"It is there," he whispered.

"But what good will it do us? We can't reach it."

"We can try," he said; then he stooped down close to the wall in the corner of the room. "Get on my shoulders," he directed—"Stand on them. Support

yourself with your hands against the wall."

Rhonda climbed to his broad shoulders. Grasping her legs to steady her, he rose slowly until he stood erect.

"Feel carefully in all directions," he whispered. "Estimate the seize of the opening; search for a handhold."

For some time the girl was silent. He could tell by the shifting of her weight from one foot to the other and by the stretching of her leg muscles that she was examining the opening in every direction as far as she could reach.

Presently she spoke to him. "Let me down," she said.

He lowered her to the floor. "What did you discover?" he asked.

"The opening is about two feet by three. It seems to extend inward over the top of the wall at one side—I could distinctly feel a ledge there. If I could get on it I could explore higher."

"We'll try again," said Tarzan. "Put your hands on my shoulders." They stood facing one another. "Now place your left foot in my right hand. That's it! Straighten up and put your other foot in my left hand. Now keep your legs and body rigid, steady yourself with your hands against the wall; and I'll lift you up again—probably a foot and a half higher than you were before."

"All right," she whispered. "Lift!"

He raised her easily but slowly to the full extent of Ms arms. For a moment he

held her thus; then, first from one hand and then from the other, her weight was lifted from him.

He waited, listening. A long minute of silence ensued; then, from above him, came a surprised "Ouch!"

Tarzan made no sound, he asked no question—he waited. He could hear her breathing, and knew that nothing very serious had surprised that exclamation from her. Presently he caught a low whisper from above.

"Toss me your rope!"

He lifted the grass rope from where it lay coiled across one shoulder and threw a loop upward into the darkness toward the girl above. The first time, she missed it and it fell back; but the next,

she caught it. He heard her working with it in the darkness above.

"Try it," she whispered presently.

He seized the rope above his head and raised his feet from the ground so that it supported all his weight. It held without slipping; then, hand over hand, he climbed. He felt the girl reach out and touch his body; then she guided one of his feet to the ledge where she stood—a moment later he was standing by her side.

"What have you found?" he asked, straining his eyes through the darkness.

"I found a wooden beam," she replied. "I bumped my head on it."

He understood now the origin of the exclamation he had heard, and reaching

out felt a heavy beam opposite his shoulders. The rope was fastened around it. The ledge they were standing on was evidently the top of the wall of the room below. The shaft that ran upward was, as the girl had said, about two feet by three. The beam bisected its longer axis, leaving a space on each side large enough to permit a man's body to pass.

Tarzan wedged himself through, and clambered to the top of the beam. Above him, the shaft rose as far as he could reach without handhold or foothold.

He leaned down toward the girl. "Give me your hand," he said, and lifted her to the beam. "We've got to do a little more exploring," he whispered. "I'll lift you as I did before."

"I hope you can keep your balance on this beam," she said, but she did not hesitate to step into his cupped hands.

"I hope so," he replied laconically.

For a moment she groped about above her; then she whispered, "Let me down."

He lowered her to his side, holding her so that she would not lose her balance and fall

"Well?" he asked.

"I found another beam," she said, "but the top of it is just out of my reach. I could feel the bottom and a part of each side, but I was just a few inches too short to reach the top. What are we to do? It is just like a nightmare—straining here in the darkness, with some horrible menace lurking ready to seize one, and

not being quite able to reach the sole means of safety."

Tarzan stooped and untied the rope that was still fastened around the beam upon which they stood.

"The tarmangani have a number of foolish sayings," he remarked. "One of them is that there are more ways than one of skinning a cat."

"Who are the tarmangani?" she asked.

Tarzan grinned in the safety of the concealing darkness. For a moment he had forgotten that he was playing a part. "Oh, just a silly tribe," he replied.

"That is an old saying in America. I have heard my grandfather use it. It is strange that an African tribe should have an identical proverb."

He did not tell her that in his mother tongue, the first language that he had learned, the language of the great apes, tarmangani meant any or all white men.

He coiled the rope; and, holding one end, tossed the coils into the darkness of the shaft above him. They fell back *on* top of them. Again he coiled and threw—again with the same result. Twice more he failed, and then the end of the rope that he held in his hand remained stretching up into the darkness while the opposite end dropped to swing against them. With the free end that he had thrown over the beam he bent a noose around the length that depended from the opposite side of the beam, making it fast with a bowline knot; then

he pulled the noose up tight against the beam above.

"Do you think you can climb it?" he asked the girl.

"I don't know," she said, "but I can try."

"You might fall," he warned. "I'll carry you." He swung her lightly to his back before she realized what he purposed. "Hold tight!" he admonished; then he swarmed up the rope like a monkey.

At the top he seized the beam and drew himself and the girl onto it; and here they repeated what they had done before, searching for and finding another beam above the one upon which they stood.

As the ape-man drew himself to the third beam he saw an opening directly before his face, and through the opening a star. Now the darkness was relieved. The faint light of a partially cloudy night revealed a little section of flat roof bounded by a parapet, and when Tarzan reconnoitered further he discovered that they had ascended into one of the small towers that surmounted the castle.

As he was about to step from the tower onto the roof he heard the uncanny chuckle with which they were now so familiar, and drew back into the darkness of the interior. Silent and motionless the two stood there waiting, listening.

The chuckling was repeated, this time

nearer; and to the keen ears of Tarzan came the sound of naked feet approaching. His ears told him more than this; they told him that the thing that walked did not walk alone— there was another with it.

Presently they came in sight, walking slowly. One of them, as the ape-man had guessed, was the creature that called itself God; the other was a large bull gorilla.

As they came opposite the two fugitives they stopped and leaned upon the parapet, looking down into the city.

"Henry should not have caroused tonight, Cranmer," remarked the creature called God. "He has a hard day before him tomorrow."

"How is that, My Lord God?" inquired the other.

"Have you forgotten that this is the anniversary of the completion of the Holy Stairway to Heaven?"

" 'Sblood! So it is, and Henry has to walk up it on his hands to worship at the feet of his God."

"And Henry is getting old and much too fat. The sun will be hot too. But —it humbleth the pride of kings and teacheth humility to the common people."

"Let none forget that thou art the Lord our God, O Father!" said Cranmer piously.

"And what a surprise I'll have for Henry when he reaches the top of the stairs! There I'll stand with this English

girl I stole from him kneeling at my feet. You sent for her, didn't you, Cranmer?"

"Yes, My Lord, I sent one of the lesser priests to fetch her. They should be here any minute now. But, My Lord, do you think that it will be wise to anger Henry further? You know that many of the nobles are on his side and are plotting against you."

A horrid chuckle broke from the lips of the gorilla-man. "You forget that I am God," he said. "You must never forget that fact, Cranmer. Henry is forgetting it, and his poor memory will prove his undoing." The creature straightened up to its full height. An ugly growl supplanted the chuckle of a moment before. "You all forget," he cried, "that it was I who

created you; it is I who can destroy you! First I shall make Henry mad, and then I shall crush him. That is the kind of god that humans like—it is the only kind they can understand. Because they are jealous and cruel and vindictive they have to have a jealous, cruel, vindictive god. I was able to give you only the minds of humans; so I have to be a god that such minds can appreciate. Tomorrow Henry shall appreciate me to the full!"

"What do you mean, My Lord?"

The gorilla god chuckled again. "When he reaches the top of the stairs I am going to blast him; I am going to destroy him."

"You are going to kill the king! But, My Lord, the Prince of Wales is too

young to be king."

"He will not be king—I am tired of kings. We shall pass over Edward VI and Mary. That is one of the advantages of having God on your side, Cranmer—we shall skip eleven years and save you from burning at the stake. The next sovereign of England will be Queen Elizabeth."

"Henry has many daughters from which to choose, My Lord," said Cranmer.

"I shall choose none of them. I have just had an inspiration, Cranmer."

"From whence, My Lord God?"

"From myself, of course, you fool! It is perfect. It is ideal." He chuckled appreciatively. "I am going to make this

English girl queen of England—Queen Elizabeth! She will be tractable'—she will do as I tell her; and she will serve all my other purposes as well. Or almost all. Of course I cannot eat her, Cranmer. One cannot eat his queen and have her too."

"Here comes the under-priest, My Lord," interrupted Cranmer.

"He is alone," exclaimed God. "He has not brought the girl."

An old gorilla lumbered up to the two. He appeared excited.

"Where is the girl?" demanded God.

"She was not there, My Lord. She is gone, and the man too."

"Gone! But that is impossible."

"The room is empty."

"And the doors! Had they been unlocked—either of them?"

"No, My Lord; they were both locked," replied the under priest.

The gorilla god went suddenly silent. For a few moments he remained in thought; then he spoke in very low tones to Ms two companions.

Tarzan and the girl watched them from their place of concealment in the tower. The ape-man was restless. He wished that they would go away so that he could search for some avenue of escape from the castle. Alone, he might have faced them and relied on his strength and agility to win his freedom; but he could not hope to make good the

escape of the girl and himself both in the face of their ignorance of a way out of the castle and the numbers which he was sure the gorilla god could call to his assistance *in* case of need.

He saw the priest turn and hurry away. The other two walked a short distance from the tower, turned so that they faced it, leaned against the parapet, and continued their conversation: though now Tarzan could no longer overhear their exact words. The position of the two was such that the fugitives could not have left the tower without being seen by them.

The ape-man became apprehensive. The abnormal sensibility of the hunted beast warned him of impending danger;

but he did not know where to look for it, nor in what form to expect it.

Presently he saw a bull gorilla roll within the range of his vision. The beast carried a poke. Behind him came an other similarly armed, and another and another and another until twenty of the great anthropoids were gathered on the castle roof.

They clustered about Cranmer and the gorilla god for a minute or two. The latter was talking to them. Tarzan could recognize the tones if not the words. Then the twenty approached the tower and grouped themselves in a semicircle before the low aperture leading into it.

Both Rhonda Terry and the lord of the jungle were assured that their hiding

place was guessed if not known, yet they could not be certain. They would wait. That was all that they could do. However, it was an easy place to defend; and they might remain there awaiting some happy circumstance that would give them a better chance of escape than was presented to them at the moment.

The gorillas on the roof seemed only to be waiting. They did not appear to be contemplating an investigation of the interior of the tower. Perhaps, thought Tarzan, they were there for some other purpose than that which he had imagined. They might have been gathered in preparation for the coming of the king to his death in the morning.

By the parapet stood the gorilla god with the bull called Cranmer. The weird chuckle of the former was the only sound that broke the silence of the night. The ape-man wondered why the thing was chuckling.

A sudden upward draft from the shaft below them brought a puff of acrid smoke and a wave of heat. Tarzan felt the girl clutch his arm. Now he knew why the gorillas waited so patiently before the entrance to the tower. Now he knew why the gorilla god chuckled,

27. HOLOCAUST

Tarzan considered the problem that confronted him. It was evident that they could not long endure the stifling, blinding smoke. To make a sudden attack upon the gorillas would be but to jeopardize the life of his companion without offering her any hope of escape. Had he been alone it would have been different, but now there seemed no alternative to coming quietly out and giving themselves up.

On the other hand he knew that the gorilla god purposed death for him and either death or a worse fate for the girl. Whatever course he pursued, then, would evidently prove disastrous. The ape- man, seldom hesitant in reaching a

decision, was frankly in a quandary.

Briefly he explained his doubts to Rhonda. "I think I'll rush them," he concluded. "At least there will be some satisfaction in that."

"They'd only kill you, Stanley," she said. "Oh, I wish you hadn't come. It was brave, but you have just thrown away your life. I can never—" The stifling smoke terminated her words in a fit of coughing.

"We can't stand this any longer," he muttered. "I'm going out. Follow me, and watch for a chance to escape."

Stooping low, the ape-man sprang from the tower. A savage growl rumbled from his deep chest. The girl, following directly behind him, heard and was

horrified. She thought only of the man with her as Stanley Obroski, the coward; and she believed that his mind must have been deranged by the hopelessness of his situation.

The gorillas leaped forward to seize him. "Capture him!" cried the gorilla god. "But do not kill him."

Tarzan leaped at the nearest beast. His knife flashed in the light of the torches that some of the creatures carried. It sank deep into the chest of the victim that chance had placed in the path of the lord of the jungle. The brute screamed, clutched at the ape-man only to collapse at his feet.

But others closed upon the bronzed giant; then another and another tasted the

steel of that swift blade. The gorilla god was beside himself with rage and excitement. "Seize him! Seize him!" he screamed. "Do not kill him! He is mine!"

During the excitement Rhonda sought an avenue of escape. She slunk behind the battling beasts to search for a stairway leading from the roof. Every eye, every thought was on the battle being waged before the tower. No one noticed the girl. She came to a doorway in another tower. Before her she saw the top of a flight of stairs. They were illuminated by the flickering light of torches.

At a run she started down. Below her, smoke was billowing, shutting off her view. It was evident, she guessed, that

the smoke from the fire that had been lighted to dislodge

Obroski and herself from the tower had drifted to other parts of the castle.

At a turn in the stairs she ran directly into the arms of a gorilla leaping upward. Behind him were two others. The first seized her and whirled her back to the others. "She must be trying to escape," said her captor. "Bring her along to God." Then he leaped swiftly on up the stairs.

Three gorillas had fallen before Tarzan's knife, but the fourth seized his wrist and struck at him with the haft of his pike. The ape- man closed; his teeth sought the jugular of his antagonist and fastened there. The brute screamed and

sought to tear himself free; then one of his companions stepped in and struck Tarzan heavily across one temple with the butt of a battle axe.

The lord of the jungle sank senseless to the roof amid the victorious shouts of his foemen. The gorilla god pushed forward.

"Do not kill him!" he screamed again. "He is already dead, My Lord," said one of the gorillas. The god trembled with disappointment and rage, and was about to speak when the gorilla that had recaptured Rhonda forced its way through the crowd.

"The castle is afire, My Lord!" he cried. "The smudge that was built to smoke out the prisoners spread to the dry

grass on the floor of their cell, and now the beams and floor above are all ablaze —the first floor of the castle is a roaring furnace. If you are not to be trapped, My Lord, you must escape at once."

Those who heard him looked quickly about. A dense volume of smoke was pouring from the tower from which Tarzan and Rhonda had come; smoke was coming from other towers nearby; it was rising from beyond the parapet, evidently coming from the windows of the lower floors.

There was instant uneasiness. The gorillas rushed uncertainly this way and that. All beasts are terrified by fire, and the instincts of beasts dominated these aberrant creatures. Presently, realizing

that they might be cut off from all escape, panic seized them.

Screaming and roaring, they bolted for safety, deserting their prisoners and their god. Some rushed headlong down blazing stairways to death, others leaped the parapet to an end less horrible, perhaps, but equally certain.

Their piercing shrieks, their terrified roars rose above the crackling and the roaring of the flames, above the screamed commands of their gorilla god, who, seeing himself deserted by his creatures, completely lost his head and joined in the mad rush for safety.

Fortunately for Rhonda, the two who had her in charge ignored the instructions of their fellow to bring her

before their god; but, instead, turned and fled down the stairway before retreat was cut off by the hungry flames licking their upward way from the pits beneath the castle.

Fighting their way through blinding smoke, their shaggy coats at one time seated by a sudden burst of flame, the maddened brutes forgot their prisoner, forgot everything but their fear of the roaring flames. Even when they won to the comparative safety of a courtyard they did not stop, but ran on until they had swung open an outer gate and rushed headlong from the vicinity of the castle.

Rhonda, almost equally terrified but retaining control of her wits, took advantage of this opportunity to escape.

Following the two gorillas, she came out upon the great ledge upon which the castle stood. The rising flames now illuminated the scene, and she saw behind her a towering cliff, seemingly unscalable. Below her lay the city, dark but for a few flickering torches that spotted the blackness of the night with their feeble rays.

To her right she saw the stairway leading from the castle ledge to the city below—the only avenue of escape that she could discern. If she could reach the city, with its winding, narrow alleyways, she might make her way unseen across the wall and out into the valley beyond.

The river would lead her down the

valley to the brink of the escarpment at the foot of which she knew that Orman and West and Naomi were camped. She shuddered at the thought of descending that sheer cliff, but she knew that she would risk much more than this to escape the horrors of the valley of diamonds.

Running quickly along the ledge to the head of the stairway, she started downward toward the dark city. She ran swiftly, risking a fall in her anxiety to escape. Behind her rose the roaring and the crackling of the flames gutting the castle of God, rose the light of the fire casting her dancing shadow grotesquely before her, illuminating the stairway; and then, to her horror, a horde of

gorillas rushing up to the doomed building.

She stopped, but she could not go back. There was no escape to the right nor to the left. Her only chance lay in the possibility that they might ignore her in their excitement. Then the leaders saw her.

"The girl!" they cried. "The hairless one! Catch her! Take her to the king!"

Hairy hands seized her. They passed her back to those behind. "Take her to the king!" And again she was hustled and pushed on to others behind. "Take her to the king! Take her to the king!" And so, pulled and hauled and dragged, she was borne down to the city and to the palace of the king.

Once again she found herself with the shes of Henry's harem. They cuffed her and growled at her, for most of them did not wish her back. Catherine of Aragon was the most vindictive. She would have torn the girl to pieces had not Catherine Parr intervened.

"Leave her alone," she warned; "or Henry will have us all beaten, and some of us will lose our heads. All he needs is an excuse to get yours, Catherine," she told the old queen.

At last they ceased abusing her; and, crouching in a corner, she had an opportunity to think for the first time since she had followed Tarzan from the tower. She thought of the man who had risked his life to save hers. It seemed

incredible that all of them had so misunderstood Stanley Obroski. Strength and courage seemed so much a part of him now that it was unbelievable that not one of them had ever discerned it. She saw him now through new eyes with a vision that revealed qualities such as women most admire in men and invoked a tenderness that brought a sob to her throat.

Where was he now? Had he escaped? Had they recaptured him? Was he a victim of the flames that she could see billowing from the windows of the great castle on the ledge? Had he died for her?

Suddenly she sat up very straight, her fists clenched until her nails bit into her flesh. A new truth had dawned upon her.

This man whom yesterday she had considered with nothing but contempt had aroused within her bosom an emotion that she had never felt for any other man. Was it love? Did she love Stanley Obroski?

She shook her head as though to rid herself of an obsession. No, it could not be that. It must be gratitude and sorrow that she felt—nothing more. Yet the thought persisted. The memory of no other man impinged upon her thoughts in this moment of her extremity before, exhausted by fatigue and excitement, she finally sank into restless slumber.

And while she slept the castle on the ledge burned itself out, the magnificent funeral pyre of those who had been

trapped within it.

28. THROUGH SMOKE AND FLAME

AS the terrified horde fought for safety and leaped to death from the roof of the castle of God, the gorilla god himself scurried for a secret stairway that led to the courtyard of the castle.

Cranmer and some of the priests knew also of this stairway; and they, too, bolted for it. Several members of the gorilla guard, maddened by terror, followed them; and when they saw the entrance to the stairway fought to be the first to avail themselves of its offer of safety.

Through this fighting, screaming pack the gorilla god sought to force his way.

He was weaker than his creatures, and they elbowed him aside. Screaming commands and curses which all ignored, he pawed and clawed in vain endeavor to reach the entrance to the stairs; but always they beat him back.

Suddenly terror and rage drove him mad. Foaming at the mouth, gibbering like a maniac, he threw himself upon the back of a great bull whose bulk barred his way. He beat the creature about the head and shoulders, but the terrified brute paid no attention to him until he sank his fangs deep in its neck; then with a frightful scream it turned upon him. With its mighty paws it tore him from his hold; then, lifting him above its head, the creature hurled him from it. The gorilla

god fell heavily to the roof and lay still, stunned.

The crazed beasts at the stairway fought and tore at one another, jamming and wedging themselves into the entrance until they clogged it; then those that remained outside ran toward other stairways, but now it was too late. Smoke and flame roared from every turret and tower. They were trapped!

By ones and twos, with awful shrieks, they hurled themselves over the parapet, leaving the roof to the bodies of the gorilla god and his erstwhile captive.

The flames roared up through the narrow shafts of the towers, transforming them into giant torches, illuminating the face of the cliff towering

above, shedding weird lights and shadows on the city and the valley. They ate through the roof at the north end of the castle, and the liberated gases shot smoke and flame high into the night. They gnawed through a great roof beam, and a section of the roof fell into the fiery furnace below showering the city with sparks. Slowly they crept toward the bodies of the ape-man and the gorilla god.

Before the castle, the Holy Stairway and the ledge were packed with the horde that had come up from the city to watch the holocaust. They were awed to silence. Somewhere in that grim pile was their god. They knew nothing of immortality, for *he had* not taught them

that. They thought that their god was dead, and they were afraid. These were the lowly ones. The creatures of the king rejoiced; for they envisaged the power of the god descending upon the shoulders of their leader, conferring more power upon themselves. They were gorillas contaminated by the lusts and greed of men.

On the roof one of the bodies stirred. The eyes opened. It was a moment before the light of consciousness quickened them; then the man sat up. It was Tarzan. He leaped to his feet. All about him was the roaring and crackling of the flames. The heat was intense, almost unbearable.

He saw the body of the gorilla god

lying near him. He saw it move. Then the creature sat up quickly and looked about. It saw Tarzan. It saw the flames licking and leaping on all sides, dancing the dance of death— its death.

Tarzan gave it but a single glance and walked away. That part of the roof closest to the cliff was freest of flames, and toward the parapet there he made his way.

The gorilla god followed him. "We are lost," he said, "Every avenue of escape is cut off."

The ape-man shrugged and looked over the edge of the parapet down the side of the castle wall. Twenty feet below was the roof of a section of the building that rose only one story. It was

too far to jump. Flames were coming from the windows on that side, flames and smoke, but not in the volumes that were pouring from the openings on the opposite side.

Tarzan tested the strength of one of the merlons of the battlemented parapet. It was strong. The stones were set in good mortar. He uncoiled his rope, and passed it about the merlon.

The gorilla god had followed him and was watching. "You are going to escape!" he cried. "Oh, save me too."

"So that you can kill and eat me later?" asked the ape-man.

"No, no! I will not harm you. For God's sake save me!"

"I thought you were God. Save

yourself."

"You can't desert me. I'm an Englishman. Blood is thicker than water—you wouldn't see an Englishman die when you can save him!"

"I am an Englishman," replied the ape-man, "but you would have killed me and eaten me into the bargain."

"Forgive me that. I was mad to regain my human form, and you offered the only chance that I may ever have. Save me, and I will give you wealth beyond man's wildest dreams of avarice."

"I have all I need," replied Tarzan.

"You don't know what you are talking about. I can lead you to diamonds. Diamonds! Diamonds! You can scoop them up by the handful."

"I care nothing for your diamonds," replied the ape-man, "but I will save you on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you help me save the girl, if she still lives, and get her out of this valley."

"I promise. But hurry—soon it will be too late."

Tarzan had looped the center of his rope about the merlon; the loose ends dangled a few feet above the roof below. He saw that the rope hung between windows where the flames could not reach it.

"I will go first," he said, "to be sure that you do not run away and forget your promise."

"You do not trust me!" exclaimed the gorilla god.

"Of course not—you are a man."

He lowered his body over the parapet, hung by one hand, and seized both strands of the rope in the other.

The gorilla god shuddered. "I could never do that," he cried. "I should fall. It *is* awful!" He covered his eyes with his hands.

"Climb over the parapet and get on my back, then." directed the ape-man. "Here, I will steady you." He reached up a powerful hand.

"Will the rope hold us both?"

"I don't know. Hurry, or I'll have to go without you. The heat is getting worse."

Trembling, the gorilla god climbed over the parapet; and, steadied and assisted by Tarzan, slid to the ape-man's back where he clung with a deathlike grip about the bronzed neck.

Slowly and carefully Tarzan descended. He had no doubt as to the strength of the rope on a straight pull, but feared that the rough edges of the merlon might cut it.

The heat was terrific. Flames leaped out of the openings on each side of them. Acrid, stifling smoke enveloped them. Where the descent at this point had seemed reasonably safe a moment before, it was now fraught with dangers that made the outcome of their venture appear more than doubtful. It was as

though the fire demon had discovered their attempt to escape his clutches and had marshaled all his forces to defeat it and add them to his list of victims.

With grim persistence Tarzan continued his slow descent. The creature clinging to his back punctuated paroxysms of coughing and choking with piercing screams of terror. The ape-man kept his eyes closed and tried not to breathe in the thick smoke that enveloped them.

His lungs seemed upon the point of bursting when, to his relief, his feet touched solid footing. Instantly he threw himself upon his face and breathed. The rising smoke, ascending with the heat of flames, drew fresh air along the roof on

which the two lay; and they filled their lungs with it.

Only for a moment did Tarzan lie thus; then he rolled over on his back and pulled rapidly upon one end of the rope until the other passed about the merlon above and fell to the roof beside him.

This lower roof on which they were was but ten feet above the level of the ground; and, using the rope again, it was only a matter of seconds before the two stood in comparative safety between the castle and the towering cliff.

"Come now," said the ape-man; "we will go around to the front of the castle and find out if the girl escaped."

"We shall have to be careful," cautioned the gorilla god. "This fire will

have attracted a crowd from the city. I have many enemies in the palace of the king who would be glad to capture us both. Then we should be killed and the girl lost—if she is not already dead."

"What do you suggest, then?" Tarzan was suspicious. He saw a trap, he saw duplicity in everything conceived by the mind of man.

"The fire has not reached this low wing yet," explained the other. "In it is the entrance to a shaft leading down to the quarters of a faithful priest who dwells in a cave at the foot of the cliff on a level with the city. If we can reach him we shall be safe. He will hide us and do my bidding."

Tarzan scowled. He had the wild

beast's aversion to entering an unfamiliar enclosure, but he had overheard enough of the conversation between the gorilla god and Cranmer to know that the former's statement was at least partially true—his enemies in the palace might gladly embrace an opportunity to imprison or destroy him.

"Very well," he assented; "but I am going to tie this rope around your neck so that you may not escape me, and remind you that I still have the knife with which I killed several of your gorillas. I and the knife will be always near you."

The gorilla god made no reply; but he submitted to being secured, and then led the way into the building and to a cleverly concealed trap opening into the

top of a shaft descending into darkness.

Here a ladder led downward, and Tarzan let his companion precede him into the Stygian blackness of the shaft. They descended for a short distance to a horizontal corridor which terminated at another vertical shaft. These shafts and corridors alternated until the gorilla god finally announced that they had reached the bottom of the cliff.

Here they proceeded along a corridor until a heavy wooden door blocked their progress. The gorilla god listened intently for a moment, his ear close to the planking of the door. Finally he raised the latch and pushed the door silently ajar. Through the crack the ape-man saw a rough cave lighted by a single

smoky torch.

"He is not here," said the gorilla god as he pushed the door open and entered. "He has probably gone with the others to see the fire."

Tarzan looked about the interior. He saw a smoke blackened cave, the floor littered with dirty straw. Opposite the doorway through which they had entered was another probably leading into the open. It was closed with a massive wooden door. Near the door was a single small window. Some sacks made of the skins of animals hung from pegs driven into the walls. A large jar sitting on the floor held water.

"We shall have to await his return," said the gorilla god. "In the meantime let

us eat."

He crossed to the bags hanging on the wall and examined their contents, finding celery, bamboo tips, fruit, and nuts. He selected what he wished and sat down on the floor. "Help yourself," he invited with a wave of a hand toward the sacks.

"I have eaten," said Tarzan and sat down near the gorilla god where he could watch both him and the doorway.

His companion ate in silence for a few minutes; then he looked up at the ape-man. "You said that you did not want diamonds." His tone was skeptical. "Then why did you come here?"

"Not for diamonds."

The gorilla god chuckled. "My people

killed some of your party as they were about to enter the valley. On the body of one of them was a map of this valley—the valley of diamonds. Are you surprised that I assume that you came for the diamonds?"

"I knew nothing of the map. How could we have had a map of this valley which, until we came, was absolutely unknown to white men?"

"You had a map."

"But who could have made it?"

"I made it."

"You! How could we have a map that you made? Have you returned to England since you first came here?"

"No—but I made that map."

"You came here because you hated men and to escape them. It is not reasonable that you should have made a map to invite men here, and if you did make it how did it get to America or to England or wherever it was that these — my people got it?" demanded Tarzan.

"I will tell you. I loved a girl. She was not interested in a poor scientist with no financial future ahead of him. She wanted wealth and luxuries. She wanted a rich husband.

"When I came to this valley and found the diamonds I thought of her. I cannot say that I still loved her, but I wanted her. I should have liked to be revenged upon her for the suffering that she had caused me. I thought what a fine revenge

it would be to get her here and keep her here as long as she lived. I would give her wealth—more wealth than any other creature in the world possessed; but she would be unable to buy anything with it." He chuckled as he recalled his plan.

"So I made the map, and I wrote her a letter. I told her what to do, where to land, and how to form her safari. Then I waited. I have been waiting for seventy-four years, but she has never come.

"I had gone to considerable effort to get the letter to her. It had been necessary for me to go a long way from the valley to find a friendly tribe of natives and employ one of them as a runner to take my letter to the coast. I never knew whether or not the letter

reached the coast. The runner might have been killed. Many things might have happened. I often wondered what became of the map. Now it has come back to me—after seventy-four years." Again he chuckled. "And brought another girl—a very much prettier girl. Mine would be—let's see—ninety-four years old, a toothless old hag." He sighed. "But now I suppose that I shall not have either of them."

There was a sound at the outer door. Tarzan sprang to Ms feet. The door opened, and an old gorilla started to enter. At sight of the ape-man he bared his fangs and paused.

"It is all right, Father Tobin," said the gorilla god. "Come in and close the

door."

"My Lord!" exclaimed the old gorilla as he closed the door behind him and threw himself upon his knees. "We thought that you had perished in the flames. Praises be to heaven that you have been spared to us."

"Blessing be upon you, my son," replied the gorilla god. "And now tell me what has happened in the city."

"The castle is destroyed."

"Yes, I knew that; but what of the king? Does he think me dead?"

"All think so; and, may curses descend upon him, Henry is pleased. They say that he will proclaim himself God."

"Do you know aught of the fate of the girl Wolsey rescued from Henry's clutches and brought to my castle? Did she die in the fire?" asked the gorilla god.

"She escaped, My Lord. I saw her."

"Where is she?" demanded Tarzan.

"The king's men recaptured her and took her to the palace."

"That will be the end of her," announced the gorilla god,

"for if Henry insists on marrying her, as he certainly will, Catherine of Aragon will tear her to pieces."

"We must get her away from him at once," said Tarzan.

The gorilla god shrugged. "I doubt if

that can be done."

"You have said that some one did it before—Wolsey I think you called him."

"But Wolsey had a strong incentive."

"No stronger than the one you have," said the ape-man quietly, but he jerked a little on the rope about God's neck and fingered the hilt of his hunting knife.

"But how can I do it?" demanded the gorilla god. "Henry has many soldiers. The people think that I am dead, and now they will be more afraid of the king than ever."

"You have many faithful followers, haven't you?" inquired Tarzan.

"Yes."

"Then send this priest out to gather

them. Tell them to meet outside this cave with whatever weapons they can obtain."

The priest was looking in astonishment from his god to the stranger who spoke to him with so little reverence and who held an end of the rope tied about the god's neck. With horror, he had even seen the creature jerk the rope.

"Go, Father Tobin," said the gorilla god, "and gather the faithful."

"And see that there is no treachery," snapped Tarzan. "I have your god's promise to help me save that girl. You see this rope about his neck? You see this knife at my side?"

The priest nodded.

"If you both do not do all within your power to help me your god dies." There was no mistaking the sincerity of that statement.

"Go, Father Tobin," said the gorilla god.

"And hurry," added Tarzan.

"I go, My Lord," cried the priest; "but I hate to leave you in the clutches of this creature."

"He will be safe enough if you do your part," Tarzan assured him.

The priest knelt again, crossed himself, and departed. As the door closed after him, Tarzan turned to his companion. "How is it," he asked, "that you have been able to transmit the power to speak and perhaps to reason to these

brutes, yet they have not taken on any of the outward physical attributes of man?"

"That is due to no fault of mine," replied the gorilla god, "but rather to an instinct of the beasts themselves more powerful than their newly acquired reasoning faculties. Transmitting human germ cells from generation to generation, as they now do, it is not strange that there are often born to them children with the physical attributes of human beings. But in spite of all that I can do these sports have invariably been destroyed at birth.

"In the few cases where they have been spared they have developed into monsters that seem neither beast nor human—manlike creatures with all the

worst qualities of man and beast. Some of these have either been driven out of the city or have escaped, and there is known to be a tribe of them living in caves on the far side of the valley.

"I know of two instances where the mutants were absolutely perfect in human form and figure but possessed the minds of gorillas; the majority, however, have the appearance of grotesque hybrids.

"Of these two, one was a very beautiful girl when last I saw her but with the temper of a savage lioness; the other was a young man with the carriage and the countenance of an aristocrat and the sweet amiability of a Jack the Ripper.

"And now, young man," continued the gorilla god, "when my followers have gathered here, what do you purpose doing?"

"Led by us," replied Tarzan, "they will storm the palace of the king and take the girl from him."

29. DEATH AT DAWN

Rhonda Terry awoke with a start. She heard shouting and growls and screams and roars that sounded very close indeed. She saw the shes of Henry's harem moving about restlessly. Some of them uttered low growls like nervous, half frightened beasts; but it was not these sounds that had awakened her—they came through the unglazed windows of the apartment, loud, menacing.

She rose and approached a window. Catherine of Aragon saw her and bared her fangs in a vicious snarl.

"It is she they want," growled the old queen.

From the window Rhonda saw in the

light of torches a mass of hairy forms battling to the death. She gasped and pressed a hand to her heart, for among them she saw Stanley Obroski fighting his way toward an entrance to the palace.

At first it seemed to her that he was fighting alone against that horde of beasts, but presently she realized that many of them were his allies. She saw the gorilla god close to Obroski; she even saw the grass rope about the creature's neck. Now her only thought was of the safety of Obroski.

Vaguely she heard voices raised about her in anger; then she became conscious of the words of the old queen. "She has caused all this trouble,"

Catherine of Aragon was saying. "If she were dead we should have peace."

"Kill her, then," said Anne of Cleves.

"Kill her!" screamed Anne Boleyn.

The girl turned from the window to see the savage beasts advancing upon her—great hairy brutes that could tear her to pieces. The incongruity of their human speech and their bestial appearance seemed suddenly more shocking and monstrous than ever before.

One of them stepped forward from her side and stood in front of her, facing the others. It was Catherine Parr. "Leave her alone," she said. "It is not her fault that she is here."

"Kill them both! Kill Parr too!"

screamed Catherine Howard.

The others took up the refrain. "Kill them both!" The Howard leaped upon the Parr; and with hideous growls the two sought each other's throat with great, yellow fangs. Then the others rushed upon Rhonda Terry.

There was no escape. They were between her and the door; the windows were barred. Her eyes searched vainly for something with which to beat them off, but there was nothing. She backed away from them, but all the time she knew that there was no hope.

Then the door was suddenly thrown open, and three great bulls stepped into the apartment. "His Majesty, the King!" cried one of them, and the shes quieted

their tongues and fell away from Rhonda. Only the two battling on the floor did not hear.

The great bull gorilla that was Henry the Eighth rolled into the room. "Silence!" he bellowed, and crossing to the embattled pair he kicked and cuffed them until they desisted. "Where is the fair, hairless one?" he demanded, and then his eyes alighted upon Rhonda where she stood almost hidden by the great bulks of his wives.

"Come here!" he commanded. "God has come for you, but he'll never get you. You belong to me."

"Let him have her, Henry," cried Catherine of Aragon; "she has caused nothing but trouble."

"Silence, woman!" screamed the king. "Or you'll go to the Tower and the block."

He stepped forward and seized Rhonda, throwing her across one shoulder as though she had no weight whatever; then he crossed quickly to the door. "Stand in the corridor here, Suffolk and Howard, and, if God's men reach this floor, hold them off until I have time to get safely away."

"Let us go with you, Sire," begged one of them.

"No; remain here until you have news for me; then follow me to the north end of the valley, to the canyon where the east branch of the Thames rises." He turned then and hurried down the

corridor.

At the far end he turned into a small room, crossed to a closet, and raised a trap door. "They'll never follow us here, my beauty," he said. "I got this idea from God, but he doesn't know that I made use of it."

Like a huge monkey he descended a pole that led downward into darkness, and after they reached the bottom Rhonda became aware that they were traversing a subterranean corridor. It was very long and very dark. The gorilla king moved slowly, feeling his way; but at last they came out into the open.

He had set Rhonda down upon the floor of the corridor, and she had been aware by the noises that she heard that

he was moving some heavy object. Then she had felt the soft night air and had seen stars above them. A moment later they stood upon the bank of a river at the foot of a low cliff while Henry replaced a large, flat stone over the dark entrance to the tunnel they had just quitted.

Then commenced a trek of terror for Rhonda. Following the river, they hurried along through the night toward the upper end of the valley. The great brute no longer carried her but dragged her along by one wrist. He seemed nervous and fearful, occasionally stopping to sniff the air or listen. He moved almost silently, and once or twice he cautioned her to silence.

After a while they crossed the river

toward the east where the water, though swift, was only up to their knees; then they continued in a northeasterly direction. There was no sound of pursuit, yet the gorilla's nervousness increased. Presently Rhonda guessed the reason for it— from the north came the deep throated roar of a lion.

The gorilla king growled deep in his chest and quickened his pace. A suggestion of dawn was tinging the eastern horizon. A cold mist enveloped the valley. Rhonda was very tired. Every muscle in her body ached and cried out for rest, but still her captor dragged her relentlessly onward.

Now the voice of the lion sounded again, shattering the silence of the night,

making the earth tremble. It was much closer than before—it seemed very near. The gorilla broke into a lumbering run. Dawn was coming. Nearby objects became visible.

Rhonda saw a lion ahead of them and a little to their left. The gorilla king saw it too, and changed his direction toward the east and a fringe of trees that were visible now about a hundred yards ahead of them.

The lion was approaching them at an easy, swinging walk. Now he too changed his direction and broke into a trot with the evident intention of heading them off before they reached the trees.

Rhonda noticed how his flat belly swung from side to side to the motion of

his gait. It is strange how such trivialities often impress one at critical moments of extreme danger. He looked lean and hungry. He was roaring almost continuously now as though he were attempting to lash himself into a rage. He commenced to gallop.

Now it became obvious that they could never reach the trees ahead of him. The gorilla paused, growling. Instantly the lion changed its course again and came straight for them. The gorilla hesitated; then he lifted the girl in his powerful paws and hurled her into the path of the lion, at the same time turning and running at full speed back in the direction from which they had come. His prize had become the offering which he

hoped would save his life.

But he reckoned without sufficient knowledge of lion psychology. Rhonda fell face downward. She knew that the lion was only a few yards away and coming toward her, that she could not escape him; but she recalled her other experience with a lion, and so she lay very still. After she fell she did not move a muscle.

It is the running creature that attracts the beast of prey. You have seen that exemplified by your own dog, which is a descendant of beasts of prey. Whatever runs he must chase. He cannot help it. Provided it is running away from him he has to chase it because he is the helpless pawn of a natural law a million years

older than the first dog.

If Henry the Eighth had ever known this he must have forgotten it; otherwise he would have made the girl run while he lay down and remained very quiet. But he did not, and the inevitable happened. The lion ignored the still figure of the girl and pursued the fleeing gorilla.

Rhonda felt the lion pass swiftly, close to her; then she raised her head and looked. The gorilla was moving much more swiftly than she had guessed possible but not swiftly enough. In a moment the lion would overhaul it. They would be some distance from Rhonda when this happened, and the lion would certainly be occupied for a few moments

with the killing of its prey. It seemed incredible that the huge ape, armed as it was with powerful jaws and mighty fighting fangs, would not fight savagely for self-preservation.

The girl leaped to her feet, and without a backward glance raced for the trees. She had covered but a few yards when she heard terrific roars and growls and screams that told her that the lion had overtaken the gorilla and that the two beasts were already tearing at one another. As long as these sounds lasted she knew that her flight would not be noticed by the lion.

When, breathless, she reached the trees she stopped and looked back. The lion was dragging the gorilla down, the

great jaws closed upon its head, there was a vicious shake; and the ape went limp. Thus died Henry the Eighth.

The carnivore did not even look back in her direction but immediately crouched upon the body of its kill and commenced to feed. He was very hungry.

The girl slipped silently into the wood. A few steps brought her to the bank of a river. It was the east fork of the Thames, the wood a fringe of trees on either side. Thinking to throw the lion off her trail should it decide to follow her, as well as to put the barrier of the river between them, she entered it and swam to the opposite shore.

Now, for the first time in many a long

day, she was inspired by hope. She was free! Also, she knew where her friends were; and that by following the river down to the escarpment that formed the Omwamwi Falls she could find them. What dangers beset her path she did not know, but it seemed that they must be trivial by comparison with those she had already escaped. The trees that lined the river bank would give her concealment and protection, and before the day was over she would be at the escarpment. How she was to descend it she would leave until faced by the necessity.

She was tired, but she did not stop to rest—there could be no rest for her until she had found safety. Following the river, she moved southward. The sun

had risen above the mountains that hemmed the valley on the east. Her body was grateful for the warmth that dispelled the cold night mists. Presently the river turned in a great loop toward the east, and though she knew that following the meanderings of the river would greatly increase the distance that she must travel there was no alternative —she did not dare leave the comparative safety of the wood nor abandon this unfailing guide that would lead her surely to her destination.

On and on she plodded in what approximated a lethargy of fatigue, dragging one foot painfully after another. Her physical exhaustion was reflected in her reactions. They were dull and slow.

Her senses were less acute. She either failed to hear unusual sounds or to interpret them as subjects worthy of careful investigation. It was this that brought disaster.

When she became aware of danger it was too late. A hideous creature, half man, half gorilla, dropped from a tree directly in her path. It had the face of a man, the ears and body of an ape.

The girl turned to run toward the river, thinking to plunge In and escape by swimming; but as she turned another fearsome thing dropped from the trees to confront her; then, growling and snarling, the two leaped forward and seized her. Each grasped her by an arm, and one pulled in one direction while the

other pulled in the opposite. They screamed and gibbered at one another.

She thought that they must wrench her arms from their sockets. She had given up hope when a naked white man dropped from an overhanging branch. He carried a club in his hand, and with it he belabored first one and then the other of her assailants until they relinquished their holds upon her. But to her horror she saw that her rescuer gibbered and roared just as the others had.

Now the man seized her and stood snarling like a wild beast as a score of terrible beast-men swung from the trees and surrounded them. The man who held her was handsome and well formed; his skin was tanned to a rich bronze; a head

of heavy blond hair fell about his shoulders like the mane of a lion.

The creatures that surrounded them were hybrids of all degrees of repulsiveness: yet he seemed one of them, for he made the same noises that they made. Also, it was evident that he had been in the trees with them. The others seemed to stand a little in awe of him or of his club; for, while they evidently wanted to come and lay hands upon the girl, they kept their distance, out of range of the man's weapon.

The man started to move away with his captive, to withdraw her from the circle surrounding them; then, above the scolding of the others, a savage scream sounded from the foliage overhead.

The man and the beasts glanced nervously aloft. Rhonda let her eyes follow the direction in which they were looking. Involuntarily she voiced a gasp of astonishment at what she beheld. Swinging downward toward them with the speed and agility of a monkey was a naked white girl, her golden hair streaming out behind her. From between her perfect lips issued the horrid screams of a beast.

As she touched the ground she ran toward them. Her face, even though reflecting savage rage, was beautiful; her youthful body was flawless in its perfection. But her disposition was evidently something else.

As she approached, the beasts

surrounding Rhonda and the man edged away, making a path for her, though they growled and bared their teeth at her. She paid no attention to them, but came straight for Rhonda.

The man screamed at her, backing away; then he whirled Rhonda to a shoulder, turned, and bolted. Even burdened with the weight of his captive he ran with great speed. Behind him, raging and screaming, the beautiful she-devil pursued.

30. THE WILD-GIRL

The palace guard gave way before the multitude of faithful that battered at the doors of the king's house at the behest of their god. The god was pleased. He wished to punish Henry, but he had never before quite dared to assault the palace. Now he was victorious; and in victory one is often generous, especially to him who made victory possible.

Previously he had fully intended to break his promise to Tarzan and revenge himself for the affront that had been put upon his godhood, but now he was determined to set both the man and the girl free.

Tarzan cared nothing for the political aspects of the night's adventure. He

thought only of Rhonda. "We must find the girl," he said to the gorilla god the moment that they had gained entrance to the palace. "Where could she be?"

"She is probably with the other women. Come with me—they are upstairs."

At the top of the stairs stood Howard and Suffolk to do the bidding of their king; but when they saw their god ascending toward them and the lower hall and the stairs behind him filled with his followers and recalled that the king had fled, they experienced a change of heart. They received God on bended knee and assured him that they had driven Henry out of the palace and were just on their way downstairs to fall tooth

and nail upon God's enemies; and God knew that they lied, for it was he himself who had implanted the minds of men in their gorilla skulls.

"Where is the hairless she?" demanded the gorilla god.

"Henry took her with him," replied Suffolk.

"Where did he go?"

"I do not know. He ran to the end of the corridor and disappeared."

"Some one must know," snapped Tarzan.

"Perhaps Catherine of Aragon knows," suggested Howard.

"Where is she?" demanded the ape-man.

They led the way to the door of the harem. Suffolk swung the door open. "My Lord God!" he announced.

The shes, nervous and frightened, had been expecting to be dragged to their death by the mob. When they saw the gorilla god they fell on their faces before him.

"Have mercy, My Lord God!" cried Catherine of Aragon. "I am your faithful servant."

"Then tell me where Henry is," demanded the god.

"He fled with the hairless she," replied the old queen.

"Where?"

The rage of a jealous female showed

Catherine of Aragon how to have her revenge. "Come with me," she said.

They followed her down the corridor to the room at the end and into the closet there. Then she lifted the trap door. "This shaft leads to a tunnel that runs under the city to the bank of the river beyond the wall—he and that hairless thing went this way."

The keen scent of the ape-man detected the delicate aroma of the white girl. He knew that the king gorilla had carried her into this dark hole. Perhaps they were down there now, the king hiding from his enemies until it would be safe for him to return; or perhaps there was a tunnel running beyond the city as the old she said, and the gorilla had

carried his captive off to some fastness in the mountains surrounding the valley.

But in any event the ape-man must go on now alone—he could trust none of the creatures about him to aid him in the pursuit and capture of one of their own kind. He had already removed his rope from around the neck of the gorilla god; now it lay coiled across one shoulder; at his hip swung his hunting knife. Tarzan of the Apes was prepared for any emergency.

Without a word, he swung down the pole into the black abyss below. The gorilla god breathed a sigh of relief when he had departed.

Following the scent spoor of those he sought, Tarzan traversed the tunnel that

led from the bottom of the shaft to the river bank. He pushed the great stone away from the entrance and stepped out into the night. He stood erect, listening and sniffing the air. A scarcely perceptible air current was moving up toward the head of the valley. It bore no suspicion of the scent he had been following. All that this indicated was that his quarry was not directly south of him. The gorilla king might have gone to the east or the west or the north; but the river flowed deep and swift on the east, and only the north and west were left.

Tarzan bent close to the ground. Partly by scent, partly by touch he found the trail leading toward the north; or, more accurately, toward the northeast

between the river and the cliffs. He moved off upon it; but the necessity for stopping often to verify the trail delayed him, so that he did not move quite as rapidly as the beast he pursued.

He was delayed again at the crossing of the river, for he passed the place at which the trail turned sharply to the right into the stream. He had to retrace his steps, searching carefully until he found it again. Had the wind been right, had the gorilla been moving directly upwind, Tarzan could have trailed him at a run.

The enforced delays caused no irritation or nervousness such as they would have in an ordinary man, for the patience of the hunting beast is infinite. Tarzan knew that eventually he would

overhaul his quarry, and that while they were on the move the girl was comparatively safe.

Dawn broke as he crossed the river. Far ahead he heard the roaring of a hunting lion, and presently with it were mingled the snarls and screams of another beast—a gorilla. And the ape-man knew that Numa had attacked one of the great apes. He guessed that it was the gorilla king. But what of the girl? He heard no human voice mingling its screams with that of the anthropoid. He broke into a run.

Presently, from a little rise of rolling round, he saw Numa crouching upon his kill. It was light enough now for him to see that the lion was feeding upon the

body of a gorilla. The girl was nowhere in sight.

Tarzan made a detour to avoid the feeding carnivore. He had no intention of risking an encounter with the king of beasts—an encounter that would certainly delay him and possibly end in death.

He passed at a considerable distance upwind from the lion; and when the beast caught his scent it did not rise from its kill.

Beyond the lion, near the edge of the wood, Tarzan picked up the trail of the girl again. He followed it across the second river. It turned south here, upwind; and now he was below her and could follow her scent spoor easily. At a

trot he pressed on.

Now other scent spoor impinged upon his nostrils, mingling with those of the girl. They were strange scents—a mixture of mangani and tarmangani, of great ape and white man, of male and of female.

Tarzan increased his gait. That strange instinct that he shared with the other beasts of the forest warned him that danger lay ahead—danger for the girl and perhaps for himself. He moved swiftly and silently through the fringe of forest that bordered the river.

The strange scents became stronger in his nostrils. A babel of angry voices arose in the distance ahead. He was nearing them. He took to the trees now,

to his native element; and he felt at once the sense of security and power that the trees always imparted to him. Here, as nowhere else quite in the same measure, was he indeed lord of the jungle.

Now he heard the angry, raging voice of a female. It was almost human, yet the beast notes predominated; and he could recognize words spoken in the language of the great apes. Tarzan was mystified.

He was almost upon them now, and a moment later he looked down upon a strange scene. There were a score of monstrous creatures—part human, part gorilla. And there was a naked white man just disappearing among the trees with the girl he sought across one shoulder. Pursuing them was a white girl

with golden hair streaming behind her. She was as naked as the other beasts gibbering and screaming in her wake.

The man bearing Rhonda Terry ran swiftly, gaining upon the golden haired devil behind him. They both out-stripped the other creatures that had started in pursuit, and presently these desisted and gave up the chase.

Tarzan, swinging through the trees, gained slowly on the strange pair; and so engrossed were they in the business of escape and pursuit that they did not glance up and discover him.

Now the ape-man caught up with the running girl and passed her. Her burst of speed had taken toll of her strength, and she was slowing down. The man had

gained on her, too; and now considerable distance separated them.

Through the trees ahead of him Tarzan saw a stretch of open ground, beyond which rose rocky cliffs; then the forest ended. Swinging down to earth, he continued the pursuit; but he had lost a little distance now, and though he started to gain gradually on the fleeing man, he realized that the other would reach the cliffs ahead of him. He could hear the pursuing girl panting a short distance behind him.

Since he had first seen the naked man and woman and the grotesque monsters that they had left behind in the forest, Tarzan had recalled the story that the gorilla god had told him of the mutants

that had escaped destruction and formed a tribe upon this side of the valley. These, then, were the terrible fruits of the old biologist's profane experiment—children of the unnatural union of nature and science.

It was only the passing consciousness of a fact to which the ape-man now had no time to give thought. His every faculty was bent upon the effort of the moment—the overtaking of the man who carried Rhonda Terry. Tarzan marveled at the man's speed burdened as he was by the weight of his captive.

The cliffs were only a short distance ahead of him now. At their base were piled a tumbled mass of fragments that had fallen from above during times past.

The cliffs themselves presented a series of irregular, broken ledges; and their face was pitted with the mouths of innumerable caves. As the man reached the rubble at the foot of the cliffs, he leaped from rock to rock like a human chamois; and after him came the ape-man, but slower; for he was unaccustomed to such terrain—and behind him, the savage she.

Clambering from ledge to ledge the creature bore Rhonda Terry aloft; and Tarzan followed, and the golden haired girl came after. Far up the cliff face the man pushed Rhonda roughly into a cave mouth and turned to face his pursuer. Tarzan of the Apes turned abruptly to the right then and ran along a narrow

ascending ledge with the intention of gaining the ledge upon which the other stood without having to ascend directly into the face of his antagonist. The man guessed his purpose and started along his own ledge to circumvent him. Below them the girl was clambering upward. "Go back!" shouted the man in the language of the great apes. "Go back! I kill!"

"Rhonda!" called the ape-man.

The girl crawled from the cave out onto the ledge. "Stanley!" she cried in astonishment.

"Climb up the cliff," Tarzan directed. "You can follow the ledges up. I can keep him occupied until you get to the top. Then go south toward the lower end

of the valley."

"I'll try," she replied and started to climb from ledge to ledge.

The girl ascending from below saw her and shouted to the man. "Kreeg-ah!" she screamed. "The she is escaping!"

Now the man turned away from Tarzan and started in pursuit of Rhonda; and the ape-man, instead of following directly after him, clambered to a higher ledge, moving diagonally in the direction of the American girl.

Rhonda, spurred on by terror, was climbing much more rapidly than she herself could have conceived possible. The narrow ledges, the precarious footing would have appalled her at any other time; but now she ignored all

danger and thought only of reaching the summit of the cliff before the strange white man overtook her. And so It was that by a combination of her speed and

Tarzan's strategy the ape-man was able to head off her pursuer before he overtook her.

When the man realized that he had been intercepted he turned upon Tarzan with a savage, snarling growl, his handsome face transformed into that of a wild beast.

The ledge was narrow. It was obvious to Tarzan that the two could not do battle upon it without falling; and while at this point there was another ledge only a few feet below, it could only momentarily stay their descent —

while they fought they must roll from ledge to ledge until one or both of them were badly injured or killed.

A quick glance showed him that the wild-girl was ascending toward them. Below and beyond her appeared a number of the grotesque hybrids that had again taken up the chase. Even if the ape-man were the one to survive the duel, all these creatures might easily be upon him before it was concluded.

Reason dictated that he should attempt to avoid so useless an encounter in which he would presumably lose his life either in victory or defeat. These observations and deductions registered upon his brain with the speed of a camera shutter flashing one exposure

rapidly after another. Then the decision was taken from him—the man-beast charged. With a bestial roar he charged.

The girl, ascending, screamed savage encouragement; the horrid mutants gibbered and shrieked. Above them all, Rhonda turned at the savage sounds and looked down. With parted lips, her hand pressed to her heart, she watched with dismay and horror.

Crouching, Tarzan met the charge. The man-beast fought without science but with great strength and ferocity. Whatever thin veneer of civilization his contacts with men had imparted to the ape-man vanished now. Here was a beast meeting a beast.

A low growl rumbled from the throat

of the lord of the jungle, snarling-muscles drew back his lip to expose strong, white teeth, the primitive weapons of the first-man.

Like charging bulls they came together, and like mad panthers each sought the other's throat. Locked in feral embrace they swayed a moment upon the ledge; then they toppled over the brink.

At that moment Rhonda Terry surrendered the last vestige of hope. She had ascended the cliff to a point beyond which she could discover no foothold for further progress. The man whom she believed to be Stanley Obroski, whose newly discovered valor had become the sole support of whatever hope of escape she might have entertained, was already

as good as dead; for if the fall did not kill him the creatures swarming up the cliff toward him would. Yet self-pity was submerged in the grief she felt for the fate of the man. Her original feeling of contempt for him had changed to one of admiration, and this had grown into an emotion that she could scarcely have analyzed herself. It was something stronger than friendship; perhaps it was love. She did not want to see him die; yet, fascinated, her eyes clung to the scene below.

But Tarzan had no mind to die now. In ferocity, in strength, he was equal to his antagonist; in courage and intellect, he was his superior. It was by his own intelligent effort that the two had so

quickly plunged from the ledge to another a few feet below; and as he had directed the fall, so he directed the manner of their alighting. The man-beast was underneath; Tarzan was on top.

The former struck upon the back of his head, as Tarzan had intended that he should; and one of the ape-man's knees was at his stomach; so not only was he stunned into insensibility, but the wind was knocked out of him. He would not fight again for some considerable time.

Scarcely had they struck the lower ledge than Tarzan was upon his feet. He saw the monsters scrambling quickly toward him; he saw the wild-girl already reaching out to clutch him, and in the instant his plan was formed.

The girl was on the ledge below, reaching for one of his ankles to drag him down. He stooped quickly and seized her by the hair; then he swung her, shrieking and screaming, to his shoulder.

She kicked and scratched and tried to bite him; but he held her until he had carried her to a higher ledge; then he threw her down and made his rope fast about her body. She fought viciously, but her strength was no match for that of the ape-man.

The creatures scaling the cliff were almost upon them by the time that Tarzan had made the rope secure; then he ran nimbly upward from ledge to ledge dragging the girl after him; and in this way he was out of her reach, and she

could not hinder him.

The highest ledge, that from which Rhonda watched wide-eyed the changing scenes of the drama being enacted below her, was quite the widest of all. Opening on to it was the mouth of a cave. Above it the cliff rose, unscalable, to the summit.

To this ledge Tarzan dragged the now strangely silent wild- girl; and here he and Rhonda were cornered, their backs against a wall, with no avenue of escape in any direction.

The girl clambered the last few feet to the ledge; and when she stood erect, facing Tarzan, she no longer fought. The savage snarl had left her face. She smiled into the eyes of the ape-man, and

she was very beautiful; but the man's attention was now upon the snarling pack, the leaders of which were mounting rapidly toward this last ledge.

"Go back," shouted Tarzan, "or I kill your she!"

This was the plan that he had conceived to hold them off, using the girl as a hostage. It was a good plan; but, like many another good plan, it failed to function properly.

"They will not stop," said the girl. "They do not care if you kill me. You have taken me. I belong to you. They will kill us all and eat us—if they can. Throw rocks down on them; drive them back; then I will show you how we can get away from them."

Following her own advice, she picked up a bit of loose rock and hurled it at the nearest of the creatures. It struck him on the head, and he tumbled backward to a lower ledge. The girl laughed and screamed taunts and insults at her former companions.

Tarzan, realizing the efficacy of this mode of defense, gathered fragments of rock and threw them at the approaching monsters; then Rhonda joined in the barrage, and the three rained down a hail of missiles that drove their enemies to the shelter of the caves below.

"They won't eat us for a while," laughed the girl.

"You eat human flesh?" asked Tarzan.

"Not Malb'yat nor I," she replied; "but

they do—they eat anything."

"Who is Malb'yat?"

"My he—you fought with him and took me from him. Now I am yours. I will fight for you. No one else shall have you!" She turned upon Rhonda with a snarl, and would have attacked her had not Tarzan seized her.

"Leave her alone," he warned.

"You shall have no other she but me," said the wild-girl.

"She is not mine," explained the ape-man; "you must not harm her."

The girl continued to scowl at Rhonda, but she quit her efforts to reach her. "I shall watch," she said. "What is her name."

"Rhonda."

"And what is yours?" she demanded.

"You may call me Stanley," said Tarzan. He was amused, but not at all disconcerted, by the strange turn events 'had taken. He realized that their only chance of escape might be through this strange, beautiful, little savage, and he could not afford to antagonize her.

"Stanley," she repeated, stumbling a little over the strange word. "My name is Balza."

Tarzan thought that it fitted her well, for in the language of the great apes it meant golden girl. Ape names are always descriptive. His own meant white skin. Malb'yat was yellow head.

Balza stooped quickly and picked up

a rock which she hurled at a head that had been cautiously poked from a cave mouth below them. She scored another hit and laughed gaily.

"We will keep them away until night," she said; "then we will go. They will not follow us at night. They are afraid of the dark. If we went now they would follow us, and there are so many of them that we should all be killed."

The girl interested Tarzan. Remembering what the gorilla god had told him of these mutants, he had assumed that her perfect human body was dominated by the brain of a gorilla; but he had not failed to note that she had repeated the name he had given her—something no gorilla could have done.

"Do you speak English?" he asked in that language.

She looked at him in surprise. "Yes," she replied; "but I didn't imagine that you did."

"Where did you learn it?" he asked.

"In London—before they drove me out."

"Why did they drive you out?"

"Because I was not like them. My mother kept me hidden for years, but at last they found me out. They would have killed me had I remained."

"And Malb'yat is like you?"

"No, Malb'yat is like the others. He cannot learn a single English word. I like you much better. I hope that you

killed Malb'yat."

"I didn't, though," said the ape-man. "I see him moving on the ledge down there where he has been lying."

The girl looked; then she picked up a rock and flung it at the unfortunate Malb'yat. It missed him, and he crawled to shelter. "If he gets me back he'll beat me," she remarked.

"I should think he'd kill you," said Tarzan.

"No—there is no one else like me. The others are ugly—I am beautiful. No, he will never kill me, but the shes would all like to." She laughed gaily. "I suppose this one would like to kill me." She nodded toward Rhonda.

The American girl had been a

surprised and interested listener to that part of the conversation that had been carried on in English, but she had not spoken.

"I do not want to kill you," she said. "There is no reason why we should not be friends."

Balza looked at her in surprise; then she studied her carefully.

"Is she speaking the truth?" she asked Tarzan.

The ape-man nodded. "Yes."

"Then we are friends," said Balza to Rhonda. Her decisions in matters of love, friendship, or murder were equally impulsive.

For hours the three kept vigil upon the

ledge, but only occasionally was it necessary to remind the monsters below them to keep their distance.

31. DIAMONDS!

At last the long day drew to a close. All were hungry and thirsty. All were anxious to leave the hard, uncomfortable ledge where they had been exposed to the hot African sun since morning.

Tarzan and Rhonda had been entertained and amused by the savage little wild-girl. She was wholly unspoiled and without inhibitions of any nature. She said or did whatever she wished to say or do with a total lack of self-consciousness that was disarming and, often, not a little embarrassing.

As the sun was dropping behind the western hills across the valley, she rose to her feet. "Come," she said; "we can go now. They will not follow, for it will

soon be night."

She led the way into the interior of the cave that opened upon the ledge. The cave was narrow but quite straight. The girl led them to the back of the cave to the bottom of a natural chimney formed by a cleft in the rocky hill. The twilight sky was visible above them, the light revealing the rough surface of the interior of the chimney to its top a few yards up.

Tarzan took in the situation at a glance. He saw that by bracing their backs against one side of the chimney, their feet against the other, they could work themselves to the top; but he also realized that the rough surface would scratch and tear the flesh of the girls'

backs.

"I'll go first," he said. "Wait here, and I'll drop a rope for you. It's strange, Balza, that your people didn't come to the cliff top and get us from above—they could have come down this chimney and taken us by surprise."

"They are too stupid," replied the girl. "They have brains enough only to follow us; they would never think of going around us and heading us off."

"Which is fortunate for us and some of them," remarked the ape- man as he started the ascent of the chimney.

Reaching the top, he lowered his rope and raised the two girls easily to his side, where they found themselves in a small, bowl- shaped gully the floor of

which was covered with rough, crystallized pebbles that gave back the light of the dying day, transforming the gully into a well of soft luminance.

The moment that her eyes fell upon the scene, Rhonda voiced an exclamation of surprised incredulity. "Diamonds!" she gasped. "The valley of diamonds!"

She stooped and gathered some of the precious stones in her hands. Balza looked at her in surprise; the gems meant nothing to her. Tarzan, more sophisticated, gathered several of the larger specimens.

"May I take some with me?" asked Rhonda.

"Why not?" inquired the ape-man.

"Take what you can carry comfortably."

"We shall all be rich!" exclaimed the American girl. "We can bring the whole company here and take truck loads of these stones back with us— why there must be tons of them here!"

"And then do you know what will happen?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," she replied. "I shall have a villa on the Riviera, a town house in Beverly Hills, a hundred and fifty thousand dollar cottage at Malibu, a place at Palm Beach, a penthouse in New York."

"You will have no more than you have always had," the ape-man interrupted, "for if you took all these diamonds back to civilization the market

would be glutted; and diamonds would be as cheap as glass. If you are wise, you will take just a few for yourself and your friends; and then tell nobody how they may reach the valley of diamonds."

Rhonda pondered this for a moment. "You are right," she admitted. "From this moment, as far as I am concerned, there is no valley of diamonds."

During the brief twilight Balza guided them to a trail that led down into the valley some distance below the cave dwellings of the tribe of mutants, and all during the night they moved southward toward the escarpment and Omwamwi Falls.

The way was new to all of them, for Balza had never been far south of the

cave village; and this, combined with the darkness, retarded them, so that it was almost dawn when they reached the escarpment.

For much of the way Tarzan carried Rhonda who was almost exhausted by all that she had passed through, and only thus were they able to progress at all. But Balza was tireless, moving silently in the footsteps of her man, as she now considered Tarzan. She did not speak, for experience and instinct both had trained her to the necessity for stealth if one would pass through savage nights alive. Every sense must be alert, concentrated upon the business of self-preservation. But who may know what passed in that savage little brain as the

beautiful creature followed her new lord and master out into a strange world?

In the early dawn the scene from the top of the escarpment looked weird and forbidding to Rhonda Terry. The base was mist- hidden. Only the roar of the falls, rising sepulchral, like the voices of ghostly Titans from the tomb, belied the suggestion of bottomless depth. She seemed to be gazing down into another world, a world she would never reach alive.

Strong in her memory was that other experience when the giant gorilla had carried her up this dizzy height. She knew that she could never descend it safely alone. She knew that Stanley Obroski could not carry her down. She

had learned that he could do many things with the possibility of which none might ever have credited him a few weeks before, but here was something that no man might do. She even doubted his ability to descend alone.

Even as these thoughts passed quickly through her mind the man swung her across one broad shoulder and started the descent. Rhonda gasped, but she clenched her teeth and made no outcry. Seemingly with all the strength of the bull gorilla and with far greater agility he swung down into the terrifying abyss, finding foothold and handhold with unerring accuracy; and after him came Balza, the wild-girl, as sure of herself as any monkey.

And at last the impossible was achieved—the three stood safely at the foot of the escarpment. The sun had risen, and before it the mist was disappearing. New hope rose in the breast of the American girl, and new strength animated her body.

"Let me down, Stanley," she said. "I am sure I can walk all right now. I feel stronger."

He lowered her to the ground. "It is not a great way to the camp where I left Orman and the others," he said.

Rhonda glanced at Balza and cleared her throat. "Of course we're all from Hollywood," she said, "but don't you think we ought to rig some sort of skirt for Balza before we take her into

camp?"

Tarzan laughed. "Poor Balza," he said; "she will have to eat of the apple soon enough now that she is coming into contact with civilized man. Let her keep her naturalness and her purity of mind as long as she may."

"But I was thinking of her," remonstrated Rhonda. "She won't be embarrassed," Tarzan assured her. "A skirt would probably embarrass her far more."

Rhonda shrugged. "O.K." she said. "And Tom and Bill forgot how to blush years ago, anyway."

They had proceeded but a short distance down the river when Tarzan stopped and pointed. "There is where

they were camped," he said, "but they are gone."

"What could have happened to them? Weren't they going to wait for you?"

The ape-man stood listening and sniffing the air. "They are farther down the river," he announced presently, "and they are not alone—there are many with them."

They continued on for over a mile when they suddenly came in sight of a large camp. There were many tents and motor trucks.

"The safari!" exclaimed Rhonda. "Pat got through!" As they approached the camp some one saw them and commenced to shout; then there was a stampede to meet them. Everyone kissed

Rhonda, and Naomi Madison kissed Tarzan; whereat, with a growl, Balza leaped for her. The ape-man caught the wild-girl around the waist and held her, while Naomi shrank back, terrified.

"Hands off Stanley," warned Rhonda with a laugh. "The young lady has annexed him."

Tarzan took Balza by the shoulders and wheeled her about until she faced him. "These are my people," he said. "Their ways are not as your ways. If you quarrel with them I shall send you away. These shes are your friends."

Every one was staring at Balza with open admiration, Orman with the eye of a director discovering a type, Pat O'Grady with the eye of an assistant

director—which is something else again.

"Balza," continued the ape-man, "go with these shes. Do as they tell you. They will cover your beautiful body with uncomfortable clothing, but you will have to wear it. In a month you will be smoking cigarettes and drinking high balls; then you will be civilized. Now you are only a barbarian. Go with them and be unhappy."

Every one laughed except Balza. She did not know what it was all about; but her god had spoken, and she obeyed. She went with Rhonda and Naomi to their tent.

Tarzan talked with Orman, Bill West, and O'Grady. They all thought that he was Stanley Obroski, and he did not

attempt to undeceive them. They told him that Bill West had spent half the previous night trying to scale the escarpment. He had ascended far enough to see the camp fires of the safari and the headlights of some of the trucks; then, forced to abandon his attempt to reach the summit, he had returned and led the others to the main camp.

Orman was now enthusiastic to go ahead with the picture. He had his star back again, his leading woman, and practically all the other important members of his cast. He decided to play the heavy himself and cast Pat O'Grady in Major White's part, and he had already created a part for Balza. "She'll knock 'em cold," he prophesied.

32. GOOD-BYE, AFRICA!

FOR two weeks Orman shot scene after scene against the gorgeous background of the splendid river and the magnificent falls. Tarzan departed for two days and returned with a tribe of friendly natives to replace those that had deserted. He led the cameramen to lions, to elephants, to every form of wild life that the district afforded; and all marveled at the knowledge, the power, and the courage of Stanley Obroski.

Then came a sad blow. A runner arrived bringing a cablegram to Orman. It was from the studio; and it ordered him to return at once to Hollywood, bringing the company and equipment with him.

Every one except Orman was delighted. "Hollywood!" exclaimed Naomi Madison. "Oh, Stanley, just think of it! Aren't you crazy to get to Hollywood?"

"Perhaps that's the right word," he mused.

The company danced and sang like children watching the school house burn, and Tarzan watched them and wondered. He wondered what this Hollywood was like that it held such an appeal to these men and women. He thought that some day he might go and see for himself.

Over broken trails the return journey was made with ease and speed. Tarzan accompanied the safari through the Bansuto country, assuring them that they

would have no trouble. "I arranged that with Rungula before I left his village," he explained.

Then he left them, saying that he was going on ahead to Jinja. He hastened to the village of Mpugu, where he had left Obroski. Mpugu met him with a long face. "White bwana die seven days ago," announced the chief. "We take his body to Jinja so that the white men know that we did not kill him."

Tarzan whistled. It was too bad, but there was nothing to do about it. He had done the best that he could for Obroski.

Two days later the lord of the jungle and Jad-bal-ja, the Golden Lion, stood on a low eminence and watched the long caravan of trucks wind toward Jinja.

In command of the rear guard walked Pat O'Grady. At his side was Balza. Each had an arm about the other, and Balza puffed on a cigarette.

33. HELLO, HOLLYWOOD!

A year had passed. A tall, bronzed man alighted from The Chief in the railroad station at Los Angeles. The easy, majestic grace of his carriage; his tread, at once silent and bold; his flowing muscles; the dignity of his mien; all suggested the leonine, as though he were, indeed, a personification of Numa, the lion.

A great throng of people crowded about the train. A cordon of good natured policemen held them back, keeping an aisle clear for the alighting passengers and for the great celebrity that all awaited with such eagerness.

Cameras clicked and whirred for local papers, for news syndicates, for news reels; eager reporters, special correspondents, and sob-sisters pressed forward.

At last the crowd glimpsed the celebrity, and a great roar of welcome billowed into the microphones strategically placed by Freeman Lang.

A slip of a girl with green hair had alighted from The Chief; her publicity agent preceded her, while directly behind her were her three secretaries, who were followed by a maid leading a gorilla.

Instantly he was engulfed by the reporters. Freeman forced his way to her side. "Won't you say just a word to all

your friends of the air?" he asked, taking her by the arm. "Right over here, please, dear."

She stepped to the microphone. "Hello, everybody! I wish you were all here. It's simply marvelous. I'm so happy to be back in Hollywood."

Freeman Lang took the microphone. "Ladies and gentlemen," he announced, "you have just heard the voice of the most beautiful and most popular little lady in motion pictures today. You should see the crowds down here at the station to welcome her back to Hollywood. I've seen lots of these homecomings, but honestly, folks, I never saw anything like this before —all Los Angeles has turned out to greet

B.O.'s beautiful star— the glorious Balza."

There was a suspicion of a smile in the eyes of the bronzed stranger as he succeeded at last in making his way through the crowd to the street, where he hailed a taxi and asked to be driven to a hotel in Hollywood,

As he was registering at The Roosevelt, a young man leaning against the desk covertly noted his entry, John Clayton, London; and as Clayton followed the bell boy toward the elevator, the young man watched him, noting the tall figure, the broad shoulders, and the free, yet cat-like stride.

From the windows of his room

Clayton looked down upon Hollywood Boulevard, upon the interminable cars gliding noiselessly east and west. He caught glimpses of tiny trees and little patches of lawn where the encroachment of shops had not obliterated them, and he sighed.

He saw many people riding in cars or walking on the cement sidewalks and the suggestion of innumerable people in the crowded, close-built shops and residences; and he felt more alone than he ever had before in all his life.

The confining walls of the hotel room oppressed him; and he took the elevator to the lobby, thinking to go into the hills that he had seen billowing so close, to the north.

In the lobby a young man accosted him. "Aren't you Mr. Clayton?" he asked.

Clayton eyed the stranger closely for a moment before he replied. "Yes, but I do not know you."

"You have probably forgotten, but I met you in London."

Clayton shook his head. "I never forget."

The young man shrugged and smiled. "Pardon me, but nevertheless I recognized you. Here on business?" He was unembarrassed and unabashed.

"Merely to see Hollywood," replied Clayton. "I have heard so much about it that I wished to see it."

"Got a lot of friends here, I suppose."

"No one knows me here."

"Perhaps I can be of service to you," suggested the young man. "I am an old timer here—been here two years. Nothing to do—glad to show you around. My name is Reece."

Clayton considered for a moment. He had come to see Hollywood. A guide might be helpful. Why not this young man as well as some one else? "It is kind of you," he said.

"Well, then, how about a little lunch? I suppose you would like to see some of the motion picture celebrities—they all do."

"Naturally!" admitted Clayton. "They are the most interesting denizens of Hollywood."

"Very well! We'll go to the Brown Derby. You'll see a lot of them there."

As they alighted from a taxi in front of the Brown Derby, Clayton saw a crowd of people lined up on each side of the entrance. It reminded him of the crowds he had seen at the station welcoming the famous Balza.

"They must be expecting a very important personage," he said to Reece.

"Oh, these boobs are here every day," replied the young man.

The Brown Derby was crowded—well groomed men, beautifully gowned girls. There was something odd in the apparel, the ornaments, or the hair dressing of each, as though each was trying to out-do the others in attracting

attention to himself. There was a great deal of chattering and calling back and forth between tables: "How ah you?"

"How mahvelous you look!"

"How ah you?"

"See you at the Chinese tonight?"

"How ah you?"

Reece pointed out the celebrities to Clayton. One or two of the names were familiar to the stranger, but they all looked so much alike and talked so much alike, and said nothing when they did talk, that Clayton was soon bored. He was glad when the meal was over. He paid the check, and they went out.

"Doing anything this evening?" asked Reece.

"I have nothing planned."

"Suppose we go to the premiere of Balza's latest picture. Soft Shoulders, at the Chinese. I have a ticket; and I know a fellow who can get you one, but it will probably cost you twenty-five smackers." He eyed Clayton questioningly.

"Is it something that I ought to see if I am to see Hollywood?"

"Absolutely!"

A glare of lights illuminated the front of Grauman's Chinese Theater and the sky above, twenty thousand people milled and pushed and elbowed in Hollywood Boulevard, filling the street from building line to building line, a solid mass of humanity blocking all

traffic. Policemen shouldered and sweated. Street cars were at a standstill. Clayton and Reece walked from The Roosevelt through the surging crowd.

As they approached the theater Clayton heard loud speakers broadcasting the arrival of celebrities who had left their cars two or three blocks away and forced their way through the mob to the forecourt of the theater.

The forecourt of the theater was jammed with spectators and autograph seekers. Several of the former had brought chairs; many had been sitting or standing there since morning that they might be assured of choice vantage spots from which to view the great ones of

filmdom's capital.

As Clayton entered the forecourt, the voice of Freeman Lang was filling the boulevard from the loud speakers. "The celebrities are coming thick and fast now. Naomi Madison is just getting out of her car—and there's her new husband with her, the Prince Mudini. And here comes the sweetest little girl, just coming into the forecourt now. It's Balza herself! I'll try to get her to say something to you. Oh,' Sweetheart, come over here. My, how gorgeous you're looking tonight. Won't you say just a word to all your friends of the air? Right over here, please, dear."

A dozen autograph pests were poking pencils and books toward Balza, but she

quieted them with her most seductive smile and approached the microphone.

"Hello, everybody!" she lisped. "I wish you were all here. It's simply mahvelous. I'm so happy to be back in Hollywood."

Clayton smiled enigmatically, the crowd in the street roared its applause, and Freeman turned to greet the next celebrity. "And here comes—well, he can't get through the crowd. Honestly, folks, this crowd is simply tremendous. We've officiated at a lot of premieres, but we've never seen anything like this. The police can't hold 'em back. They're crowding right up here on top of the microphone. Yes, here he comes! Hello, there, Jimmie! Right over here. The folks

want to hear from you. This is Jimmie Stone, second assistant production manager of the B.O. Studio, whose super feature, Soft Shoulders, is being premiered here tonight in Grauman's Chinese Theater."

"Hello, efferybody. I wish you was all here. It's simply marvelous. Hello, Momma!"

"Let's go inside," suggested Clayton.

"Well, Clayton, how did you like the picture?" asked Reece.

"The acrobats in the prologue were splendid," replied the Englishman.

Reece looked a little crestfallen. Presently he brightened. "I'll tell you what we'll do," he announced. "I'll get hold of a couple more fellows and we'll

go to a party."

"At this time of night?"

"Oh, it's early. There's Billy Brouke now. Hi, there, Billy! Say, I want you to meet Mr. Clayton, an old friend of mine from London. Mr. Clayton, this is Billy Brouke. How about a little party, Billy?"

"O.K. by me! We'll go in my car; it's parked around the corner."

On a side street near Franklin they climbed into a flashy roadster. Brouke drove west a few blocks on Franklin and then turned up a narrow street that wound into the hills.

Clayton was troubled. "Perhaps your friends may not be pleased if you bring a stranger," he suggested.

Reece laughed. "Don't worry," he admonished; "they'll be as glad to see you as they will be to see us."

That made Brouke laugh, too. "I'll say they will," he commented.

Presently they came to the end of the street. "Hell!" muttered Brouke and turned the car around. He turned into another street and followed that for a few blocks; then he turned back toward Franklin.

"Forgotten where your friends live?" asked Clayton.

On a side street in an otherwise quiet neighborhood they sighted a brilliantly lighted house in front of which several cars were parked; laughter and the sounds of radio music were coming from

an open window.

"This looks like the place," said Reece.

"It is," said Brouke with a grin, and drew up at the curb.

A Filipino opened the door in answer to their ring. Reece brushed in past him, and the others followed. A man and a girl were sitting on the stairs leading to the upper floor. They were attempting to kiss one another ardently without spilling the contents of the cocktail glasses they held. They succeeded in kissing one another, paying no attention to the newcomers.

To the right of the reception hall was a large living room in which several couples were dancing to the radio music;

others were sprawled about on chairs and divans; all were drinking. There was a great deal of laughter.

"The party's getting good," commented Brouke, as he led the way into the living room. "Hello, everybody!" he cried. "Where's the drinks? Come on, boys!" and he started for the back of the house, doing a little dance step on the way.

A middle-aged man, greying at the temples, rose from a divan and approached Reece. There was a puzzled expression on his face. "I don't believe —" he started, but Brouke interrupted him.

"It's all right, old man!" he exclaimed. "Sorry to be late. Shake hands with Mr.

Reece and Mr. Clayton of London. How about a little drink?" and without waiting for an answer he headed for the kitchen. Reece and the host followed him, but Clayton hesitated. He had failed to note any exuberant enthusiasm in the attitude of the greying man whom he assumed to be the master of the house.

A tall blond, swaying a little, approached him. "Haven't I met you somewhere before, Mr.—ah?"

"Clayton," he came to her rescue.

"How about a little dance?" she demanded. "My boy friend," she confided, as they swung into the rhythm of the music, "passed out, and they had to put him to bed."

She talked incessantly, but Clayton

managed to ask her if she knew Rhonda Terry.

"Know Rhonda Terry! I should say I do. She's in Samoa now starring in her husband's new picture."

"Her husband! Is she married?"

"Yes, she's married to Tom Orman, the director. Do you know her?"

"I met her once," replied Clayton.

"She was all broken up over Stanley Obroski's death, but she finally snapped out of it and married Tom. Obroski sure made a name for himself in Africa. Say, that bunch is still talking about the way he killed lions and gorillas with one hand tied behind him."

Clayton smiled politely.

After the dance she drew him over to a sofa on which two men were sitting. "Abe," she said to one of the men, "here's a find for you. This is Mr. Potkin, Mr. Clayton, Abe Potkin, you know; and this is Mr. Pliant, Dan Puant, *the* famous scenarist."

"We've been watching Mr. Clayton," replied Potkin.

"You'd better grab him," advised the girl; "you'll never find a better Tarzan."

"He isn't exactly the type, but he might answer; I've been noticing him," said Potkin. "What do you think, Dan?"

"He's not my idea of Tarzan, but he might do."

"Of course his face doesn't look like Tarzan; but he's big, and that's what I

want," replied Potkin.

"He hasn't a name; nobody ever heard of him, and you said you wanted a big name," argued Puant.

"We'll use that platinum blond, Era Dessent, opposite him; she's got a lot of sex appeal and a big name."

"I got an idea!" exclaimed Puant. "I'll write the story around Dessent and some good looking juvenile, bring in another fem with 'It' and a heavy with a big name; and we can use Clayton in long shots with apes for atmosphere."

"That's a swell idea, Dan; get in a lot of sex stuff and a triangle and a ballroom or cabaret scene—a big one with a jazz orchestra. What we want is something different."

"That ought to fix it so that we can use this fellow," said Puant, "for it won't make much difference who takes the part of Tarzan."

"How about it, Mr. Clayton?" inquired Potkin with an ingratiating smile.

At this juncture Reece and Brouke romped in from the kitchen, each with a bottle. The host was following, expostulating.

"Have a drink, everybody!" cried Brouke, "The party's goin' stale."

They passed about the room filling up glasses with neat bourbon or gin; sometimes they mixed them. They paused occasionally to take a drink themselves. Finally they disappeared

into the hallway looking for other empty glasses.

"Well," demanded Potkin, after the interruption had passed, "how about it?"

Clayton eyed him questioningly. "How about what?"

"I'm going to make a jungle picture," explained Potkin. "I got a contract for a Tarzan picture, and I want a Tarzan. I'll make a test of you tomorrow morning."

"You think I might fill the r61e of Tarzan of the Apes?" inquired Clayton, as a faint smile touched his lips.

"You ain't just what I want, but you might do. You see, Mr. Puant, here, can write a swell Tarzan story even if we ain't got no Tarzan at all. And, say! it will make you. You ought almost to pay

me for such a chance. But I tell you what I do; I like you, Mr. Clayton; I give you fifty dollars a week, and look at all the publicity you get that it don't cost you nothing. You be over at the studio in the morning; and I make a test of you, eh?"

Clayton stood up. "I'll think it over," he said and started across the room.

A good-looking young woman came running in from the reception hall. Brooke was pursuing her. "Leave me alone, you cad!" she cried.

The greying host was close behind Brouke. "Leave my wife alone," he shouted, "and get out of here!"

Brouke gave the man a push that sent him staggering back against a chair, over which he fell in a heap next to the wall;

then he seized the woman, lifted her in his arms, and ran out into the hall.

Clayton looked on in amazement. He turned and saw the girl, Maya, at his elbow. "Your friend is getting a little rough," she said.

"He is not my friend," replied Clayton. "I just met him this evening. He invited me to come to this party that is being given by a friend of his."

The girl laughed. "Friend of his!" she mimicked. "Joe never saw any of you guys before. You—" she looked at him closely—"you don't mean to say you didn't know you were crashing a party in a stranger's house!"

Clayton looked bewildered. "They were not friends of these people?" he

demanded. "Why didn't they order us out? Why didn't they call the police?"

"And have the police find a kitchen full of booze? Quit your kidding, Big Boy."

A woman's scream was wafted down from the upper floor. The host was staggering to his feet. "My God, my wife!" he cried.

Clayton sprang into the hall and leaped up the stairs. He heard cries coming from behind a closed door; it was locked; he put his shoulder to it, and it flew open with a crash.

Inside the room a woman was struggling in the clutches of the drunken Brouke. Clayton seized the man by the scruff of the neck and tore him away.

Brouke voiced a scream of pain and rage; then he turned upon Clayton, but he was helpless in the giant grip of those mighty muscles.

A police siren wailed in the distance. That seemed to sober Brouke. "Drop me, you damn fool," he cried; "here come the police!"

Clayton carried the struggling man to the head of the stairs and pitched him down; then he turned back to the room where the woman lay on the floor where she had fallen. He raised her to her feet.

"Are you hurt?" he asked.

"No, just frightened. He was trying to make me tell him where I kept my jewels."

The police siren sounded again, much

closer now. "You better get out. Joe's awful sore. He'll have all three of you arrested."

Clayton glanced toward an open window, near which the branches of a great oak shone in the light from the street lamps in front of the house. He placed a foot upon the sill and leaped into the darkness. The woman screamed.

In the morning Clayton found Reece waiting for him in the lobby of the hotel. "Great little party, eh, what?" demanded the young man.

"I thought you would be in jail," said Clayton.

"Not a chance. Billy Brouke has a courtesy card from one of the big shots. Say, I see you're going to work for Abe

Potkin, doing Tarzan."

"Who told you that?"

"It's in Louella Parsons' column in the *Examiner*."

"I'm not."

"You're wise. But I'll tell you a good bet, if you are thinking of getting into the movies. Prominent Pictures is casting a new Tarzan picture, and —"

A bell boy approached them. "Telephone call for you, Mr. Clayton," he said.

Clayton stepped to the booth and picked up the receiver.

"This is Clayton," he said.

"This is the casting office of Prominent Pictures. Can you come right

over for an interview?"

"I'll think about it," replied Clayton, and hung up.

"That was Prominent Pictures calling me," he said as he rejoined Reece. "They want me to come over for an interview."

"You'd better go; if you get in with Prominent, you're made."

"It might be interesting."

"Think you could do Tarzan?"

"I might."

"Dangerous part. I wouldn't want any of it in mine."

"I think I'll go over." He turned toward the street.

"Say, old man," said Reece, "could

you let me have ten until Saturday?"

The casting director sized Clayton up. "You look all right to me; I'll take you up to Mr. Goldeen; he's production manager. Had any experience?"

"As Tarzan?"

The casting director laughed. "I mean in pictures."

"No."

"Well, you might be all right at that. You don't have to be a Barrymore to play Tarzan. Come on, we'll go up to Mr. Goldeen's office."

They had to wait a few minutes in the outer office, and then a secretary ushered them in.

"Hello, Ben!" the casting director

greeted Goldeen. "I think I've got just the man for you. This is Mr. Clayton, Mr. Goldeen."

"For what?"

"For Tarzan."

"Oh, m-m-m."

Goldeen's eyes surveyed Clayton critically for an instant; then the production manager made a gesture with his palm as though waving them away. He shook his head. "Not the type," he snapped. "Not the type, at all."

As Clayton followed the casting director from the room the *shadow of* a smile touched his lips.

"I'll tell you what," said the casting director; "there may be a minor part in it

for you; I'll keep you in mind. If anything turns up, I'll give you a ring. Good-bye!"

Later in the day as Clayton was looking through an afternoon paper he saw a banner spread across the top of the theatrical page:

CYRIL WAYNE TO DO TARZAN
FAMOUS ADAGIO DANCER
SIGNED BY PROMINENT
PICTURES
FOR STELLAR ROLE IN
FORTHCOMING PRODUCTION

A week passed. Clayton was preparing to leave California and return home. The telephone in his room rang. It was the casting director at Prominent Pictures. "Got a bit for you in the Tarzan picture," he announced. "Be at the studio

at seven-thirty tomorrow morning."

Clayton thought a moment. "All right," he said; "seven- thirty."

He felt that it might be an interesting experience that would round out his stay in Hollywood.

"Say, you," shouted the assistant director, "what's *your* name?"

"Clayton."

"Oh, you're the guy that takes the part of the white hunter that Tarzan rescues from the lion."

Cyril Wayne, garbed in a loin cloth, his body covered with brown make-up, was eyeing Clayton and whispering to the director, who now also turned and looked.

"Geeze!" exclaimed the director. "He'll steal the picture. What dumb-egg ever cast him?"

"Can't you fake it?" asked Wayne.

"Sure, just a flash of him. We won't show his face at all. Let's get busy and rehearse the scene. Here, you, come over here. What's your name?"

"Clayton."

"Listen, Clayton. You're supposed to be comin' straight toward the camera through this jungle in the first shot. You're scared stiff; you keep lookin' behind you. You're about all in, too; you stagger like you was about ready to fall down. You see, you're lost in the jungle. There's a lion stalkin' you. We'll cut the lion shots in. Then in the last scene the

lion is right behind you—and the lion's really in this scene with you, but you needn't be scared; he won't hurt you. He's perfectly tame and gentle. You scream. You draw your knife. Your knees shake. Tarzan hears you and comes swinging through the trees. Say, is that double here that's goin' to swing through the trees for Cyril?" he interrupted himself to address his assistant. Assured that the double was on the set, he continued, "The lion charges; Tarzan swings down between you and the lion. We get a close up of you there; keep your back to the camera. Then Tarzan leaps on the lion and kills it. Say, Eddie, has that lion tamer that's doublin' for Cyril in the kill got his make-up on

even? He looked lousy in the rushes yesterday."

"Everything's all O.K., Chief," replied the assistant.

"All ready then—everybody!" yelled the director. "Get in there, Clayton, and remember there's a lion behind you and you're scared stiff."

The rehearsal was satisfactory and the first shots pleased the director; then came the big scene in which Wayne and Clayton and the lion appeared. The lion was large and handsome. Clayton admired him. The trainer cautioned them all that if anything went wrong they were to stand perfectly still, and under no circumstances was any one to touch Leo.

The cameras were grinding; Clayton

staggered and half fell. He looked fearfully behind him and uttered a scream of terror. Cyril Wayne dropped from the branch of a low tree just as the lion emerged from the jungle behind Clayton. And then something went wrong.

The lion voiced an ugly roar and crouched. Wayne, sensing danger and losing his head, bolted past Clayton; the lion charged. Leo would have passed Clayton, who had remained perfectly still, and pursued the fleeing Wayne; but then something else happened.

Clayton, realizing more than any of the others the danger that menaced the actor, sprang for the beast and leaped upon its back. A powerful arm encircled

the lion's neck. The beast wheeled and struck at the man-thing clinging to it, but the terrible talons missed their mark. Clayton locked his legs beneath the sunken belly of the carnivore. The lion threw itself to the ground and lashed about in a frenzy of rage.

With his hideous growls mingled equally bestial growls from the throat of the man. The lion regained its feet and reared upon its hind legs. The knife that they had given Clayton flashed in the air. Once, twice, three times it was driven deep into the side of the frenzied beast; then Leo slumped to the ground, shuddered convulsively and lay still.

Clayton leaped erect; he placed one foot upon his kill and raised his face to

the heavens; then he checked himself and that same slow smile touched his lips.

An excited man rushed onto the set. It was Benny Goldeen, the production manager.

"My God!" he cried. "You've killed our best lion. He was worth ten thousand dollars if he was worth a cent. You're fired!"

The clerk at The Roosevelt looked up. "Leaving us, Mr. Clayton?" he asked politely. "I hope you have enjoyed Hollywood."

"Very much indeed," replied Clayton; "but I wonder if you could give me some information?"

"Certainly; what is it?"

"What is the shortest route to Africa?"

THE END

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BOOK 18 IN THE TARZAN

SERIES

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CHAPTER 1.—STORM

The girl turned uneasily upon her cot. The fly, bellying in the rising wind, beat noisily against the roof of the tent. The guy ropes creaked as they tugged against their stakes. The unfastened flaps of the tent whipped angrily. Yet in the midst of this growing pandemonium, the sleeper did not fully awaken. The day had been a trying one. The long, monotonous march through the sweltering jungle had left her exhausted, as had each of the weary marches that had preceded it through the terrible, grueling days since she had left rail-head in that dim past that seemed now a dull eternity of suffering.

Perhaps she was less exhausted physically than before, as she was

gradually becoming inured to the hardships; but the nervous strain of the past few days had taken its toll of energy since she had become aware of the growing insubordination of the native men who were her only companions on this rashly conceived and illy ordered safari.

Young, slight of build, accustomed to no sustained physical effort more gruelling than a round of golf, a few sets of tennis, or a morning canter on the back of a well-mannered mount, she had embarked upon this mad adventure without the slightest conception of the hardships and dangers that it would impose. Convinced almost from the first day that her endurance might not be

equal to the heavy tax placed upon it, urged by her better judgment to turn back before it became too late, she had sturdily, and perhaps stubbornly, pushed on deeper and deeper into the grim jungle from which she had long since practically given up hope of extricating herself. Physically frail she might be for such an adventure, but no paladin of the Round Table could have boasted a sturdier will.

How compelling must be the exigency that urged her on! What necessity strove her from the paths of luxury and ease into the primeval forest and this unaccustomed life of danger, exposure, and fatigue? What ungovernable urge denied her the right of self- preservation

now that she was convinced that her only chance of survival lay in turning back? Why had she come? Not to hunt; she had killed only under the pressure of necessity for food. Not to photograph the wild life of the African hinterland; she possessed no camera. Not in the interests of scientific research; if she had ever had any scientific interest it had been directed principally upon the field of cosmetics, but even that had languished and expired in the face of the fierce equatorial sun and before an audience consisting exclusively of low crowed, West Africans. The riddle, then, remains a riddle as unfathomable and inscrutable as the level gaze of her brave grey eyes.

The forest bent beneath the heavy hand of Usha, the wind. Dark clouds obscured the heavens. The voices of the jungle were silenced. Not even the greatest of the savage beasts risked calling the attention of the mighty forces of Nature to their presence. Only the sudden flares of the windswept beast-fires illumined the camp in fitful bursts that wrought grotesquely dancing shadow-shapes from the prosaic impedimenta of the safari, scattered upon the ground.

A lone and sleepy askari, bracing his back against the growing gale, stood careless guard. The camp slept, except for him and one other; a great hulking native, who crept stealthily toward the

tent of the sleeping girl.

Then the fury of the storm broke upon the crouching forest. Lightning flashed. Thunder boomed, and rolled, and boomed again. Rain fell. At first in great drops and then in solid, wind-sped sheets it enveloped the camp.

Even the sleep of utter exhaustion could not withstand this final assault of Nature. The girl awoke. In the vivid and almost incessant flashes of lightning she saw a man entering the tent. Instantly she recognized him. The great, hulking figure of Golato the headman might not easily be mistaken for another. The girl raised herself upon an elbow.

"Is there something wrong, Golato?" she asked. "What do you want?"

"You, Kali Bwana," answered the man huskily.

So it had come at last! For two days she had been dreading it, her fears aroused by the changed attitude of the man toward her; a change that was reflected in the thinly veiled contempt of the other members of her party for her orders, in the growing familiarities of their speech and actions. She had seen it in the man's eyes.

From a holster at the side of her cot she drew a revolver. "Get out of here," she said, "or I'll kill you."

For answer the man leaped toward her. Then she fired.

Moving from west to east, the storm cut a swath through the forest. In its

wake lay a trail of torn and twisted branches, here and there an uprooted tree. It sped on, leaving the camp of the girl far behind.

In the dark a man crouched in the shelter of a great tree, protected from the full fury of the wind by its hoary bole. In the hollow of one of his arms something cuddled close to his naked hide for warmth. Occasionally he spoke to it and caressed it with his free hand. His gentle solicitude for it suggested that it might be a child, but it was not. It was a small, terrified, wholly miserable little monkey. Born into a world peopled by large, savage creatures with a predilection for tender monkey meat he had early developed, perhaps inherited,

an inferiority feeling that had reduced his activities to a series of screaming flights from dangers either real or imaginary.

His agility, however, often imparted a certain appearance of reckless bravado in the presence of corporeal enemies from whom experience had taught him he could easily escape; but in the face of Usha, the wind, Ara, the lightning, and Pand, the thunder, from whom none might escape, he was reduced to the nadir of trembling hopelessness. Not even the sanctuary of the mighty arms of his master from whose safe embrace he had often thrown insults into the face of Numa, the lion, could impart more than a fleeting sense of security.

He cowered and whimpered to each new gust of wind, each flash of lightning, each stunning burst of thunder. Suddenly the fury of the storm rose to the pinnacle of its Titanic might; there was the sound of rending wood from the ancient fibers of the jungle patriarch at whose foot the two had sought shelter. Catlike, from his squatting position, the man leaped to one side even as the great tree crashed to earth, carrying a half dozen, of its neighbors with it. As he jumped he tossed the monkey from him, free of the branches of the fallen monarch. He, himself, was less fortunate. A far spreading limb struck him heavily upon the head and, as he fell, pinned him to the ground.

Whimpering, the little monkey crouched in an agony of terror while the tornado, seemingly having wrought its worst, trailed off toward the east and new conquests. Presently, sensing the departure of the storm, he crept fearfully in search of his master, calling to him plaintively from time to time. It was dark. He could see nothing beyond a few feet from the end of his generous, sensitive nose. His master did not answer and that filled the little monkey with dire forebodings; but presently he found him beneath the fallen tree, silent and lifeless.

Nyamwegi had been the life of the party in the little thatched village of Kibbu, where he had gone from his own

village of Tumbai to court a dusky belle. His vanity flattered by the apparent progress of his suit and by the very evident impression that his wit and personality had made upon the company of young people before whom he had capered and boasted, he had ignored the passage of time until the sudden fall of the equatorial night had warned him that he had long overstayed the time allowed him by considerations of personal safety.

Several miles of grim and forbidding forest separated the villages of Kibbu and Tumbai. They were miles fraught by night with many dangers, not the least of which to Nyamwegi were the most unreal, including, as they did, the ghosts of departed enemies and the countless

demons that direct the destinies of human life, usually with malign intent.

He would have preferred to remain the night in Kibbu as had been suggested by his inamorata; but there was a most excellent reason why he could not, a reason that transcended in potency even the soft blandishments of a sweetheart or the terrors of the jungle night. It was a tabu that had been placed upon him by the witch- doctor of Tumbai for some slight transgression when the latter had discovered that, above all things, Nyamwegi would doubtless wish to spend many nights in Kibbu village. For a price the tabu might be lifted, a fact which doubtless had more to do with its imposition than the sin it purported to

punish; but then, of course, the church must live—in Africa as elsewhere. The tragedy lay in the fact that Nyamwegi did not have the price; and tragedy indeed it proved for poor Nyamwegi.

On silent feet the young warrior followed the familiar trail toward Tumbai. Lightly he carried his spear and shield, at his hip swung a heavy knife; but of what potency were such weapons against the demons of the night? Much more efficacious was the amulet suspended about his neck, which he fingered often as he mumbled prayers to his muzimo, the protecting spirit of the ancestor for whom he had been named.

He wondered if the girl were worth the risk, and decided that she was not.

Kibbu village lay a mile behind when the storm overtook Nyamwegi. At first his anxiety to reach Tumbai and his fear of the night urged him on despite the buffetings of the gale; but at last he was forced to seek what shelter he could beneath a giant tree, where he remained until the greatest fury of the elements had subsided, though the lightning was still illuminating the forest as he pushed on. Thus the storm became his undoing, for where he might have passed unnoticed in the darkness the lightning revealed his presence to whatever enemy might be lurking along the trail.

He was already congratulating himself that half the journey had been accomplished when, without warning, he

was seized from behind. He felt sharp talons sink into his flesh. With a scream of pain and terror he wheeled to extricate himself from the clutches of the thing that had seized him, the terrifying, voiceless thing that made no sound. For an instant he succeeded in breaking the hold upon his shoulders and as he turned, reaching for his knife, the lightning flashed, revealing to his horrified eyes a hideous human face surmounted by the head of a leopard.

Nyamwegi struck out blindly with his knife in the ensuing darkness, and simultaneously he was seized again from behind by rending talons that sank into his chest and abdomen as the creature encircled him with hairy arms. Again

vivid lightning brought into high relief the tragic scene. Nyamwegi could not see the creature that gripped him from behind; but he saw three others menacing him in front and on either side, and he abandoned hope as he recognized his assailants, from their leopard skins and masks, as members of the feared secret order of Leopard Men.

Thus died Nyamwegi the Utengan.

CHAPTER 2.—THE HUNTER

The dawn-light danced among the tree tops above the grass- thatched huts of the village of Tumbai as the chief's son, Orando arose from his crude pallet of straw and stepped out into the village street to make an offering to his muzimo, the spirit of the long dead ancestor for whom he had been named, preparatory to setting out upon a day of hunting. In his outstretched palm he held an offering of fine meal as he stood like an ebony statue, his face upturned toward the heavens.

"My namesake, let us go to the hunt together." He spoke as one might who

addresses a familiar but highly revered friend. "Bring the animals near to me and ward off from me all danger. Give me meat today, oh, hunter!"

The trail that Orando followed as he set forth alone to hunt was for a couple of miles the same that led to Kibbu village. It was an old, familiar trail; but the storm of the preceding night had wrought such havoc with it that in many places it was as unrecognizable as it was impassable. Several times fallen trees forced him to make detours into the heavy underbrush that often bordered the trail upon each side. It was upon such an occasion that his attention was caught by the sight of a human leg protruding from beneath the foliage of a newly uprooted

tree.

Orando halted in his tracks and drew back. There was a movement of the foliage where the man lay. The warrior poised his light hunting spear, yet at the same time he was ready for instant flight. He had recognized the bronzed flesh as that of a white man, and Orando, the son of Lobongo, the chief, knew no white man as friend. Again the foliage moved, and the head of a diminutive monkey was thrust through the tangled verdure.

As its frightened eyes discovered the man the little creature voiced a scream of fright and disappeared beneath the foliage of the fallen tree, only to reappear again a moment later upon the opposite side where it climbed up into

the branches of a jungle giant that had successfully withstood the onslaughts of the storm. Here, far above the ground, in fancied security, the small one perched upon a swaying limb and loosed the vials of its wrath upon Orando.

But the hunter accorded it no further attention. Today he was not hunting little monkeys, and for the moment his interest was focused upon the suggestion of tragedy contained in that single, bronzed leg. Creeping cautiously forward, Orando stooped to look beneath the great mass of limbs and leaves that concealed the rest of the body from his view, for he must satisfy his curiosity.

He saw a giant white man, naked but for a loin cloth of leopard skin, pinned

to the ground by one of the branches of the fallen tree. From the face turned toward him two grey eyes surveyed him; the man was not dead.

Orando had seen but few white men; and those that he had seen had worn strange, distinctive apparel. They had carried weapons that vomited smoke, and flame, and metal. This one was clothed as any native warrior might have been, nor was there visible any of those weapons that Orando hated and feared.

Nevertheless the stranger was white and, therefore, an enemy. It was possible that he might extricate himself from his predicament and, if he did, become a menace to the village of Tumbai. Naturally, therefore, there was but one

thing for a warrior and the son of a chief to do. Orando fitted an arrow to his bow. The killing of this man meant no more to him than would have the killing of the little monkey.

"Come around to the other side," said the stranger; "your arrow cannot reach my heart from that position."

Orando dropped the point of his missile and surveyed the speaker in surprise, which was engendered, not so much by the nature of his command, as by the fact that he had spoken in the dialect of Orando's own people.

"You need not fear me," continued the man, noticing Orando's hesitation; "I am held fast by this branch and cannot harm you."

What sort of man was this? Had he no fear of death? Most men would have begged for their lives. Perhaps this one sought death.

"Are you badly injured?" demanded Orando.

"I think not. I feel no pain."

"Then why do you wish to die?"

"I do not wish to die."

"But you told me to come around and shoot you in the heart. Why did you say that if you do not wish to die?"

"I know that you are going to kill me. I asked you, to make sure that your first arrow enters my heart. Why should I suffer pain needlessly?"

"And you are not afraid to die?"

"I do not know what you mean."

"You do not know what fear is?"

"I know the word, but what has it to do with death? All things die. Were you to tell me that I must live forever, then I might feel fear."

"How is it that you speak the language of the Utengas?" demanded Orando.

The man shook his head. "I do not know."

"Who are you?" Orando's perplexity was gradually becoming tinged with awe.

"I do not know," replied the stranger.

"From what country do you come?"

Again the man shook his head. "I do not know."

"What will you do if I release you?"

"And do not kill me?" queried the white.

"No, not kill you."

The man shrugged. "What is there to do? I shall hunt for food because I am hungry. Then I shall find a place to lie up and sleep."

"You will not kill me?"

"Why should I? If you do not try to kill me I shall not try to kill you."

The warrior wormed his way through the tangled branches of the fallen tree to the side of the pinioned white man, where he found that a single branch resting across the latter's body prevented the prisoner from getting his arms,

equipped with giant muscles, into any position where he might use them effectively for his release. It proved, however, a comparatively easy matter for Orando to raise the limb the few inches necessary to permit the stranger to worm his body from beneath it, and a moment later the two men faced one another beside the fallen tree while a little monkey chattered and grimaced from the safety of the foliage above them.

Orando felt some doubt as to the wisdom of his rash act. He could not satisfactorily explain what had prompted him to such humane treatment of a stranger, yet despite his doubts something seemed to assure him that he

had acted wisely. However, he held his spear in readiness and watched the white giant before him with a cautious eye.

From beneath the tree that had held him prisoner the man recovered his weapons, a bow and spear. Over one shoulder hung a quiver of arrows; across the other was coiled a long, fiber rope. A knife swung in a sheath at his hip. His belongings recovered, he turned to Orando.

"Now, we hunt," agreed Orando.

"Where?"

"I know where the pigs feed in the morning and where they lie up in the heat of the day," said Orando.

As they spoke Orando had been

appraising the stranger. He noted the clean-cut features, the magnificent physique. The flowing muscles that rolled beneath a skin sun-tanned almost to the hue of his own impressed him by their suggestion of agility and speed combined with great strength. A shock of black hair partially framed a face of rugged, masculine beauty from which two steady, grey eyes surveyed the world fearlessly. Over the left temple was a raw gash (legacy of the storm's fury) from which blood had flowed, and dried in the man's hair and upon his cheek. In moments of silence his brows were often drawn together in thought, and there was a puzzled expression in his eyes. At such times he impressed

Orando as one who sought to recall something he had forgotten; but what it was, the man did not divulge.

Orando led the way along the trail that still ran in the direction of Kibbu village. Behind him came his strange companion upon feet so silent that the native occasionally cast a backward glance to assure himself that the white man had not deserted him. Close above them the little monkey swung through the trees, chattering and jabbering.

Presently Orando heard another voice directly behind him that sounded like another monkey speaking in lower tones than those of the little fellow above them. He turned his head to see where the other monkey, sounding so close,

could be. To his astonishment he saw that the sounds issued from the throat of the man behind him. Orando laughed aloud. Never before had he seen a man who could mimic the chattering of monkeys so perfectly. Here, indeed, was an accomplished entertainer.

But Orando's hilarity was short-lived. It died when he saw the little monkey leap nimbly from an over-hanging branch to the shoulder of the white man and heard the two chattering to one another, obviously carrying on a conversation.

What sort of man was this, who knew no fear, who could speak the language of the monkeys, who did not know who he was, nor where he came from? This

question, which he could not answer, suggested another equally unanswerable, the mere consideration of which induced within Orando qualms of uneasiness. Was this creature a mortal man at all?

This world into which Orando had been born was peopled by many creatures, not the least important and powerful of which were those that no man ever saw, but which exercised the greatest influence upon those one might see. There were demons so numerous that one might not count them all, and the spirits of the dead who more often than not were directed by demons whose purposes, always malign, they carried out. These demons and sometimes the spirits of the dead occasionally took

possession of the body of a living creature, controlling its thoughts, its actions and its speech. Why, right in the river that flowed past the village of Tumbai dwelt a demon to which the villagers had made offerings of food for many years. It had assumed the likeness of a crocodile, but it had deceived no one; least of all the old witch-doctor who had recognized it immediately for what it was after the chief had threatened him with death when his charms had failed to frighten it away or his amulets to save villagers from its voracious jaws. It was easy, therefore, for Orando to harbor suspicions concerning the creature moving noiselessly at his heels.

A feeling of uneasiness pervaded the

son of the chief. This was somewhat mitigated by the consciousness that he had treated the creature in a friendly way and, perhaps, earned its approbation. How fortunate it was that he had reconsidered his first intention of loosing an arrow into its body! That would have been fatal; not for the creature but for Orando. It was quite obvious now why the stranger had not feared death, knowing that, being a demon, it could not die. Slowly it was all becoming quite clear to the black hunter, but he did not know whether to be elated or terrified. To be the associate of a demon might be a distinction, but it also had its distressing aspects. One never knew what a demon

might be contemplating, though it was reasonably certain to be nothing good.

Orando's further speculations along this line were rudely interrupted by a sight that met his horrified gaze at a turning of the trail. Before his eyes lay the dead and mutilated body of a warrior. The hunter required no second glance to recognize in the upturned face the features of his friend and comrade, Nyamwegi. But how had he come to his death?

The stranger came and stood at Orando's side, the little monkey perched upon his shoulder. He stooped and examined the body of Nyamwegi, turning the corpse over upon its face, revealing the cruel marks of steel claws.

"The Leopard Men," he remarked briefly and without emotion, as one might utter the most ordinary commonplace.

But Orando was bursting with emotion. Immediately when he had seen the body of his friend he had thought of the Leopard Men, though he had scarcely dared to acknowledge his own thought, so fraught with terror was the very suggestion. Deeply implanted in his mind was fear of this dread secret society, the weird cannibalistic rites which seemed doubly horrible because they could only be guessed at, no man outside their order ever having witnessed them and lived.

He saw the characteristic mutilation

of the corpse, the parts cut away for the cannibalistic orgy, of which they would be the piece de resistance. Orando saw and shuddered; but, though he shuddered, in his heart was more of rage than of fear. Nyamwegi had been his friend. From infancy they had grown to manhood together. Orando's soul cried out for vengeance against the fiends who had perpetrated this vile outrage, but what could one man do alone against many? The maze of footsteps in the soft earth about the corpse indicated that Nyamwegi had been overcome by numbers.

The stranger, leaning on his spear, had been silently watching the warrior, noting the signs of grief and rage

reflected in the mobile features.

"You knew him?" he asked.

"He was my friend."

The stranger made no comment, but turned and followed a trail that ran toward the south. Orando hesitated. Perhaps the demon was leaving him. Well, in a way that would be a relief; but, after all, he had not been a bad demon, and certainly there was something about him that inspired confidence and a sense of security. Then, too, it was something to be able to fraternize with a demon and, perhaps, to show him off in the village. Orando followed.

"Where are you going?" he called after the retreating figure of the giant

white.

"To punish those who killed your friend."

"But they are many," remonstrated Orando. "They will kill us."

"They are four," replied the stranger. "I kill."

"How do you know there are but four?" demanded the black.

The other pointed to the trail at his feet. "One is old and limps," he said; "one is tall and thin; the other two are young warriors. They step lightly, although one of them is a large man.

"You have seen them?"

"I have seen their spoor; that is enough."

Orando was impressed. Here, indeed, was a tracker of the first order; but perhaps he possessed something of a higher order than human skill. The thought thrilled Orando; but if it caused him a little fear, too, he no longer hesitated. He had cast his lot, and he would not turn back now.

"At least we can see where they go," he said. "We can follow them to their village, and afterward we can return to Tumbai, where my father, the chief, lives. He will send runners through the Watenga country; and the war drums will boom, summoning the Utenga warriors. Then will we go and make war upon the village of the Leopard Men, that Nyamwegi may be avenged in

blood."

The stranger only grunted and trotted on. Sometimes Orando, who was rated a good tracker by his fellows, saw no spoor at all; but the white demon never paused, never hesitated. The warrior marvelled and his admiration grew; likewise his awe. He had leisure to think now, and the more he thought the more convinced he was that this was no mortal who guided him through the jungle upon the trail of the Leopard Men. If it were, indeed, a demon, then it was a most remarkable demon, for by no word or sign had it indicated any malign purpose. It was then, engendered by this line of reasoning, that a new and brilliant thought illuminated the mind of

Orando like a bright light bursting suddenly through darkness. This creature, being nothing mortal, must be the protecting spirit of that departed ancestor for whom Orando had been named—his muzimo!

Instantly all fear left the warrior. Here was a friend and a protector. Here was the very namesake whose aid he had invoked before setting out upon the hunt, he whom he had propitiated with a handful of meal. Suddenly Orando regretted that the offering had not been larger. A handful of meal seemed quite inadequate to appease the hunger of the powerful creature trotting tirelessly ahead of him, but perhaps muzimos required less food than mortals. That

seemed quite reasonable, since they were but spirits. Yet Orando distinctly recalled that before he had released the creature from beneath the tree it had stated that it wished to hunt for food as it was hungry. Oh, well, perhaps there were many things concerning muzimos that Orando did not know; so why trouble his head about details? It was enough that this must be his muzimo. He wondered if the little monkey perched upon his muzimo's shoulder was also a spirit. Perhaps it was Nyamwegi's ghost. Were not the two very friendly, as he and Nyamwegi had been throughout their lives? The thought appealed to Orando, and henceforth he thought of the little monkey as Nyamwegi. Now it occurred

to him to test his theory concerning the white giant.

"Muzimo!" he called.

The stranger turned his head and looked about. "Why did you call 'muzimo'?" he demanded.

"I was calling you, Muzimo," replied Orando.

"Is that what you call me?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

Now Orando was convinced that he had made no mistake. What a fortunate man he was! How his fellows would envy him!

"Why did you call to me?" insisted the other.

"Do you think we are close to the Leopard Men, Muzimo?" inquired Orando, for want of any better question to ask.

"We are gaining on them, but the wind is in the wrong direction. I do not like to track with the wind at my back, for then Usha can run ahead and tell those I am tracking that I am on their trail."

"What can we do about it?" demanded Orando. "The wind will not change for me, but perhaps you can make it blow in a different direction."

"No," replied the other, "but I can fool Usha, the wind. That I often do. When I am hunting up wind I can remain on the ground in safety, for then Usha can only carry tales to those behind me, for

whom I care nothing; but when I hunt down wind I travel through the trees, and Usha carries my scent spoor above the head of my quarry. Or sometimes I move swiftly and circle the hunted one, and then Usha comes down to my nostrils and tells me where it is. Come!" The stranger swung lightly to the low-hanging branch of a great tree.

"Wait!" cried Orando. "I cannot travel through the trees."

"Go upon the ground, then. I will go ahead through the trees and find the Leopard Men."

Orando would have argued the wisdom of this plan; but the white disappeared amidst the foliage, the little monkey clinging tightly to its perch upon

his shoulder.

"That," thought Orando, "is the last that I shall see of my muzimo. When I tell this in the village they will not believe me. They will say that Orando is a great liar."

Plain before him now lay the trail of the Leopard Men. It would be easy to follow; but, again, what could one man hope to accomplish against four, other than his own death? Yet Orando did not think of turning back. Perhaps he could not, alone, wreak his vengeance upon the slayers of Nyamwegi; but he could, at least, track them to their village, and later lead the warriors of Lobongo, the chief, his father, in battle against it.

The warrior moved tirelessly in a

rhythmic trot that consumed the miles with stubborn certainty, relieving the monotony by reviewing the adventures of the morning. Thoughts of his muzimo occupied his mind almost to the exclusion of other subjects. Such an adventure was without parallel in the experience of Orando, and he enjoyed dwelling upon every phase of it. He recalled, almost with the pride of personal possession, the prowess of this other self of his from the spirit world. Its every mannerism and expression was photographed indelibly upon his memory; but that which impressed him most was an indefinable something in the steel-grey eyes, a haunting yearning that suggested a constant effort to recall an

illusive memory.

What was his muzimo trying to recall? Perhaps it was the details of his earthly existence. Perchance he sought to conjure once again the reactions off the flesh to worldly stimuli. Doubtless he regretted his spirit state and longed to live again—to live and fight and love.

With such thoughts as their accompaniment the miles retreated beneath his pounding feet. With such thoughts his mind was occupied to the exclusion of matters which should have concerned him more. For instance, he did not note how fresh the spoor of his quarry had become. In puddles left by the rain of the previous night and roiled by the passage of feet the mud had not

yet settled when Orando passed; in places the earth at the edges of footprints was still falling back into the depressions; but these things Orando failed to note, though he was accounted a good tracker. It is well that a man should keep his mind concentrated upon a single thing at a time unless he has a far more elastic mind than Orando. One may not dream too long in the savage jungle.

When Orando came suddenly into a small, natural clearing he failed to notice a slight movement of the surrounding jungle foliage. Had he, he would have gone more cautiously; and doubtless his jungle- craft would have suggested the truth, even though he could not have seen the four pairs of greedy, malevolent eyes

that watched him from behind the concealing verdure; but when he reached the center of the clearing he saw all that he should have guessed before, as, with savage cries, four hideously caparisoned warriors leaped into the open and sprang toward him.

Never before had Orando, the son of Lobongo, seen one of the feared and hated members of the dread society of Leopard Men; but as his eyes fell upon these four there was no room for doubt as to their identity. And then they closed upon him.

CHAPTER 3.—DEAD MEN WHO SPOKE

As the girl fired, Golato voiced a cry of pain, wheeled and dashed from the tent, his left hand grasping his right arm above the elbow. Then Kali Bwana arose and dressed, strapping a cartridge belt, with its holster and gun, about her hips. There could be no more thought of sleep that night, for even though Golato might be hors de combat there were others to be feared almost as much as he.

She lighted a lantern and, seated in a camp-chair with her rifle across her knees, prepared to spend the remainder of the night in wakeful watching; but if she anticipated any further molestation

she was agreeably disappointed. The night dragged its interminable length until outraged Nature could be no longer denied, and presently the girl dozed in her chair.

When she awoke the new sun was an hour old. The storm had passed leaving only mud and soggy canvas in its wake to mark its passage across the camp. The girl stepped to the flap of her tent and called to her boy to prepare her bath and her breakfast. She saw the porters preparing the loads. She saw Golato, his arm roughly bandaged and supported in a crude sling. She saw her boy and called to him again, this time peremptorily; but he ignored her summons and went on with the roping of

a pack. Then she crossed over to him, her eyes flashing.

"You heard me call you, Imba," she said. "Why did you not come and prepare my bath and my breakfast?"

The fellow, a middle-aged man of sullen demeanor, scowled and hung his head. Golato, surly and glowering, looked on. The other members of the safari had stopped their work and were watching, and among them all there was not a friendly eye.

"Answer me, Imba," commanded the girl. "Why do you refuse to obey me?"

"Golato is headman," was the surly rejoinder. "He gives orders. Imba obey Golato."

"Imba obeys me," snapped Kali

Bwana. "Golato is no longer headman." She drew her gun from its bolster and let the muzzle drop on Imba. "Get my bath ready. Last night it was dark. I could not see well, so I only shot Golato in the arm. This morning I can see to shoot straighter. Now move!"

Imba cast an imploring glance in the direction of Golato, but the ex- headman gave him no encouragement. Here was a new Kali Bwana, bringing new conditions, to which Golato's slow mind had not yet adapted itself. Imba moved sheepishly toward the tent of his mistress. The other natives muttered in low tones among themselves.

Kali Bwana had found herself, but it was too late. The seeds of discontent

and mutiny were too deeply sown; they had already germinated, and although she might wrest a fleeting victory the end could bring only defeat. She had the satisfaction, however, of seeing Imba prepare her bath and, later, her breakfast; but while she was eating the latter she saw her porters up-loading, preparatory to departure, although her own tent had not been struck, nor had she given any orders for marching.

"What is the meaning of this?" she demanded, walking quickly to where the men were gathered. She did not address Golato, but another who had been his lieutenant and whom she had intended appointing headman in his place.

"We are going back," replied the man.

"You cannot go back and leave me alone," she insisted.

"You may come with us," said the native. "But you will have to look after yourself," he added.

"You shall not do anything of the sort," cried the girl, thoroughly exasperated. "You agreed to accompany me wherever I went. Put down your loads, and wait until you get marching orders from me."

As the men hesitated she drew her revolver. It was then that Golato interfered. He approached her with the askaris, their rifles ready. "Shut up, woman," he snarled, "and get back to your tent. We are going back to our own country. If you had been good to Golato

this would not have happened; but you were not, and this is your punishment. If you try to stop us these men will kill you. You may come with us, but you will give no orders. Golato is master now."

"I shall not go with you, and if you desert me here you know what your punishment will be when I get back to railhead and report the matter to the commissioner."

"You will never get back," replied Golato sullenly. Then he turned to the waiting porters and gave the command to march.

It was with sinking heart that the girl saw the party file from camp and disappear in the forest. She might have followed, but pride had a great deal to

do with crystallizing her decision not to. Likewise, her judgment assured her that she would be far from safe with this sullen, mutinous band at whose head was as great a menace to her personal safety as she might find in all Africa. Again, there was the pertinacity of purpose that had kept her forging ahead upon her hopeless mission long after mature judgment and convinced her of its futility. Perhaps it was no more than ordinary stubbornness; but whatever it was it held her to what she conceived to be her duty, even though it led to what she now knew must be almost certain death.

Wearily she turned back toward her tent and the single load of provisions

they had left behind for her sustenance. What was she to do? She could not go on, and she would not go back. There was but an single alternative. She must remain here, establishing a permanent camp as best she could, and await the remotely possible relief party that might come after long, long months.

She was confident that her safari could not return to civilization without her and not arouse comment and investigation; and when investigation was made some one at least among all those ignorant porters would divulge the truth. Then there would be a searching party organized unless Golato succeeded with his lying tongue in convincing them that she was already dead. There was a

faint hope, however, and to that she would cling. If, perchance, she could cling to life also during the long wait she might be saved at the last.

Taking stock of the provisions that the men had left behind for her, she found that she had enough upon which to subsist for a month, provided that she exercised scrupulous economy in their use. If game proved plentiful and her hunting was successful, this time might be indefinitely prolonged. Starvation, however, was not the only menace that she apprehended nor the most dreaded. There were prowling carnivores against which she had little defense to offer. There was the possibility of discovery by unfriendly natives. There was always

the danger (and this she dreaded most) of being stricken by one of the deadly jungle fevers.

She tried to put such thoughts from her mind, and to do so she occupied herself putting her camp in order, dragging everything perishable into her tent and, finally, commencing the construction of a crude boma as a protection against the prowlers of the night. The work was fatiguing, necessitating frequent rests, during which she wrote in her diary, to which she confided nothing of the fears that assailed her, fears that she dreaded admitting, even to herself. Instead, she confined herself to a narration of the events of the past few days since she had written. Thus she occupied her time as

Fate marshalled the forces that were presently to drag her into a situation more horrible than any that she could possibly have conceived.

As the four, clothed in the leopard skins of their order, closed upon Orando there flashed to the mind of the son of the chief a vision of the mutilated corpse of his murdered friend; and in that mental picture he saw a prophecy of his own fate; but he did not flinch. He was a warrior, with a duty to perform. These were the murderers of his comrade, the enemies of his people. He would die, of that he was certain; but first he would avenge Nyamwegi. The enemy should feel the weight of the wrath of a Utenga fighting-man.

The four Leopard Men were almost upon him as he launched his spear. With a scream one of the foemen dropped, pierced by the sharp tip of the Utenga's weapon. Fortunate it was for Orando that the methods of the Leopard Men prescribed the use of their improvised steel claws as weapons in preference to spears or arrows, which they resorted to only in extremities or when faced by superior numbers. The flesh for their unholy rites must die beneath their leopard claws, or it was useless for religious purposes. Maddened by fanaticism, they risked death to secure the coveted trophies. To this Orando owed the slender chance he had to overcome his antagonists. But at best the

respite from death could be but brief.

The remaining three pressed closer, preparing for the lethal charge in simulation of the carnivore they personified. Silence enveloped the jungle, as though Nature awaited with bated breath the consummation of this savage tragedy. Suddenly the quiet was shattered by the scream of a monkey in a tree overhanging the clearing. The sound came from behind Orando. He saw two opponents who were facing him dart startled glances beyond him. He heard a scream that forced his attention rearward in a brief glance, and what he saw brought the sudden joy of an unexpected reprieve from death. In the grasp of his muzimo, the third of the surviving

Leopard Men was struggling impotently against death.

Then Orando wheeled again to face his remaining enemies, while, from behind him, came savage growls that stiffened the hairs upon his scalp. What new force had been thus suddenly injected into the grim scene? He could not guess, nor could he again risk even a brief backward glance. His whole attention was now required by the hideous creatures sneaking toward him, their curved, steel talons opened, claw-like, to seize him.

The action that is so long in the telling occupied but a few seconds of actual time. A shriek mingled with the growls that Orando had heard. The Leopard

Men leaped swiftly toward him. A figure brushed past him from the rear and, with a savage growl, leaped upon the foremost Leopard Man. It was Orando's muzimo. The heart of the warrior missed a beat as he realized that those beast-like sounds had issued from the throat of his namesake. But if the fact perturbed Orando it utterly demoralized the fourth antagonist who had been advancing upon him, with the result that the fellow wheeled and bolted for the jungle, leaving the sole survivor of his companions to his fate.

Orando was free now to come to the aid of his muzimo, who was engaged with the larger of the two younger Leopard Men; but he quickly realized

that his muzimo required no aid. In a grip of steel he held the two clawed hands, while his free hand grasped the throat of his antagonist. Slowly but as inexorably as Fate he was choking the life from the struggling man. Gradually his victim's efforts grew weaker, until suddenly, with a convulsive shudder, the body went limp. Then he cast it aside. For a moment he stood gazing at it, a puzzled expression upon his face; and then, apparently mechanically, he advanced slowly to its side and placed a foot upon it. The reaction was instantaneous and remarkable. Doubt and hesitation were suddenly swept from the noble features of the giant to be replaced by an expression of savage exultation as

he lifted his face to the heavens and gave voice to a cry so awesome that Orando felt his knees tremble beneath him.

The Utenga had heard that cry before, far in the depths of the forest, and knew it for what it was; the victory cry of the bull ape. But why was his muzimo voicing the cry of a beast? Here was something that puzzled Orando quite as much as had the materialization of this ancestral spirit. There had never been any doubt in his mind as to the existence of muzimos. Everyone possessed a muzimo, but there were certain attributes that all men attributed to muzimos, and all these were human attributes. Never in his life had Orando heard it even vaguely hinted that muzimos growled

like Simba, the lion, or screamed as the bull apes scream when they have made a kill. He was troubled and puzzled. Could it be that his muzimo was also the muzimo of some dead lion and departed ape? And if such were the case might it not be possible that, when actuated by the spirit of the lion or the ape, instead of by that of Orando's ancestor, he would become a menace instead of a blessing?

Suspiciously, now, Orando watched his companion, noting with relief the transition of the savage facial expression to that of quiet dignity that normally marked his mien. He saw the little monkey that had fled to the trees during the battle return to the shoulder of the

muzimo, and considering this an accurate gauge of the latter's temper he approached, though with some trepidation.

"Muzimo," he ventured timidly, "you came in time and saved the life of Orando. It is yours."

The white was silent. He seemed to be considering this statement. The strange, half bewildered expression returned to his eyes.

"Now I remember," he said presently. "You saved my life. That was a long time ago."

"It was this morning, Muzimo."

The white man shook his head and passed a palm across his brow.

"This morning," he repeated thoughtfully. "Yes, and we were going to hunt. I am hungry. Let us hunt."

"Shall we not follow the one who escaped?" demanded Orando. "We were going to track the Leopard Men to their village, that my father, the chief, might lead the Utengas against it."

"First let us speak with the dead men," said Muzimo. "We shall see what they have to tell us."

"You can speak with the dead?" Orando's voice trembled at the suggestion.

"The dead do not speak with words," explained Muzimo; "but nevertheless they often have stories to tell. We shall see. This one," he continued, after a

brief inspection of the corpse of the man he had killed last, "is the larger of the two young men. There lies the tall thin man, and yonder, with your spear through his heart, is he who limped, an old man with a crippled leg. These three, then, have told us that he who escaped is the smaller of the two young men."

Now, more carefully, he examined each of the corpses, noting their weapons and their ornaments, dumping the contents of their pouches upon the ground. These he scanned carefully, paying particular attention to the amulets, of the dead men. In a large package carried by the crippled old man, he found parts of a human body.

"There is no doubt now but that these were the killers of Nyamwegi," said Orando; "for these are the same parts that were removed from his body."

"There was never any doubt," asserted Muzimo confidently. "The dead men did not have to tell me that."

"What have they told you, Muzimo?"

"Their filed teeth have told me that they are eaters of men; their amulets and the contents of their pouches have told me that their village lies upon the banks of a large river. They are fishermen; and they fear Gimla, the crocodile, more than they fear aught else. The hooks in their pouches tell me the one their amulets the other. From their ornaments and weapons, by the cicatrices upon their

foreheads and chins I know their tribe and the country it inhabits. I do not need to follow the young warrior; his friends have told me where he is going. Now we may hunt. Later we can go to the village of the Leopard Men."

"Even as I prayed today before setting out from the village, you have protected me from danger," observed Orando, "and now, if you bring the animals near to me and give me meat, all of my prayer will have been fulfilled."

"The animals go where they will," responded Muzimo. "I cannot lead them to you, but I can lead you to them; and when you are near, then, perhaps, I can frighten them toward you. Come."

He turned backward along the trail

down which they had followed the Leopard Men and fell into an easy trot, while Orando followed, his eyes upon the broad shoulders of his muzimo and the spirit of Nyamwegi, perched upon one of them. Thus they continued silently for a half hour, when Muzimo halted.

"Move forward slowly and cautiously," he directed. "The scent spoor of Wappi, the antelope, has grown strong in my nostrils. I go ahead through the trees to get upon the other side of him. When he catches my scent he will move away from me toward you. Be ready."

Scarcely had Muzimo ceased speaking before he disappeared amidst the overhanging foliage of the forest,

leaving Orando filled with wonder and admiration, with which was combined overweening pride in his possession of a muzimo such as no other man might boast. He hoped that the hunting would be quickly concluded that he might return to the village of Tumbai and bask in the admiration and envy of his fellows as he nonchalantly paraded his new and wondrous acquisition before their eyes. It was something, of course, to be a chief's son, just as it was something to be a chief or a witch- doctor; but to possess a muzimo that one might see and talk to and hunt with—ah, that was glory transcending any that might befall mortal man.

Suddenly Orando's gloating thoughts

were interrupted by a slight sound of something approaching along the trail from the direction in which he was moving. Just the suggestion of a sound it was, but to the ears of the jungle hunter it was sufficient. You or I could not have heard it; nor, hearing it, could we have interpreted it; but to Orando it bore a message as clear to his ears as is the message of a printed page to our eyes. It told him that a hoofed animal was approaching him, walking quickly, though not yet in full flight. A turn in the trail just ahead of him concealed him from the view of the approaching animal. Orando grasped his spear more firmly, and stepped behind the bole of a small tree that partially hid him from the

sight of any creature coming toward him. There he stood, motionless as a bronze statue, knowing that motion and scent are the two most potent stimuli to fear in the lower orders. What wind there was moved from the unseen animal toward the man, precluding the possibility of his scent reaching the nostrils of the hunted; and as long as Orando did not move, the animal, he knew, would come fearlessly until it was close enough to catch his scent, which would be well within spear range.

A moment later there came into view one of those rarest of African animals, an okapi. Orando had never before seen one of them, for they ranged much farther to the west than the Watenga country. He

noted the giraffe-like markings on the hind quarters and forelegs; but the short neck deceived him, and he still thought that it was an antelope. He was all excitement now, for here was real meat and plenty of it, the animal being larger than an ordinary cow. The blood raced through the hunter's veins, but outwardly he was calm. There must be no bungling now; every movement must be perfectly timed— a step out into the trail and, simultaneously, the casting of the spear, the two motions blending into each other as though there was but one.

At that instant the okapi wheeled to flee. Orando had not moved, there had been no disturbing sound audible to the ears of the man; yet something had

frightened the quarry just a fraction of a second too soon. Orando was disgusted. He leaped into the trail to cast his spear, in the futile hope that it might yet bring down his prey; and as he raised his arm he witnessed a scene that left him gaping in astonishment.

From the trees above the okapi, a creature launched itself onto the back of the terrified animal. It was Muzimo. From his throat rumbled a low growl. Orando stood spellbound. He saw the okapi stumble and falter beneath the weight of the savage man-beast. Before it could recover itself a hand shot out and grasped it by the muzzle. Then steel thews wrenched the head suddenly about, so that the vertebrae of the neck

snapped. An instant later a keen knife had severed the jugular, and as the blood gushed from the carcass Orando heard again the victory cry of the bull-ape. Faintly, from afar, came the answering challenge of a lion.

"Let us eat," said Muzimo, as he carved generous portions from the quivering carcass of his kill.

"Yes, let us eat," agreed Orando.

Muzimo grunted as he tossed a piece of the meat to the native. Then he squatted on his haunches and tore at his portion with his strong, white teeth. Cooking fires were for the effete, not for this savage jungle god whose mores harked back through the ages to the days before men had mastered the art of

making fire.

Orando hesitated. He preferred his meat cooked, but he dreaded losing face in the presence of his muzimo. He deliberated for but a second; then he approached Muzimo with the intention of squatting down beside him to eat. The forest god looked up, his teeth buried in the flesh from which he was tearing a piece. A sudden, savage light blazed in his eyes. A low growl rumbled warningly in his throat. Orando had seen lions disturbed at their kills. The analogy was perfect. The warrior withdrew and squatted at a distance. Thus the two finished their meal in a silence broken only by the occasional low growls of the white.

CHAPTER 4.—SOBITO, THE WITCH-DOCTOR

Two white men sat before a much patched, weatherworn tent. They sat upon the ground, for they had no chairs. Their clothing was, if possible, more patched and weatherworn than their tent. Five natives squatted about a cook-fire at a little distance from them. Another native was preparing food for the white men at a small fire near the tent.

"I'm sure fed up on this," remarked the older man.

"Then why don't you beat it?" demanded the other, a young man of twenty-one or twenty-two.

His companion shrugged. "Where? I'd

be just another dirty bum, back in the States. Here, I at least have the satisfaction of servants, even though I know damn well they don't respect me. It gives me a certain sense of class to be waited upon. There, I'd have to wait on somebody else. But you—I can't see why you want to hang around this lousy godforsaken country, fighting bugs and fever. You're young. You've got your whole life ahead of you and the whole world to carve it out of any way you want."

"Hell!" exclaimed the younger man. "You talk as though you were a hundred. You aren't thirty yet. You told me your age, you know, right after we threw in together."

"Thirty's old," observed the other. "A guy's got to get a start long before thirty. Why, I know fellows who made theirs and retired by the time they were thirty. Take my dad for instance—" He went silent then, quite suddenly. The other urged no confidences.

"I guess we'd be a couple of bums back there," he remarked laughing.

"You wouldn't be a bum anywhere, Kid," remonstrated his companion. He broke into sudden laughter.

"What you laughing about?"

"I was thinking about the time we met; it's just about a year now. You tried to make me think you were a tough guy from the slums. You were a pretty good actor—while you were thinking about

it."

The Kid grinned. "It was a hell of a strain on my histrionic abilities," he admitted; "but, say, Old Timer, you didn't fool anybody much, yourself. To listen to you talk one would have imagined that you were born in the jungle and brought up by apes, but I tumbled to you in a hurry. I said to myself, 'Kid, it's either Yale or Princeton; more likely Yale.'"

"But you didn't ask any questions. That's what I liked about you."

"And you didn't ask any. Perhaps that's why we've gotten along together so well. People who ask questions should be taken gently, but firmly, by the hand, led out behind the barn and shot. It

would be a better world to live in."

"Oke, Kid; but still it's rather odd, at that, that two fellows should pal together for a year, as we have, and not know the first damn thing about one another—as though neither trusted the other."

"It isn't that with me," said the Kid; "but there are some things that a fellow just can't talk about—to any one."

"I know," agreed Old Timer. "The thing each of us can't talk about probably explains why he is here. It was a woman with me; that's why I hate 'em."

"Hooey!" scoffed the younger man. "I'd bet you fall for the first skirt you see—if I had anything to bet."

"We won't have anything to eat or any one to cook it for us if we don't have a

little luck pronto," observed the other. "It commences to look as though all the elephants in Africa had beat it for parts unknown."

"Old Bobolo swore we'd find 'em here, but I think old Bobolo is a liar."

"I have suspected that for some time," admitted Old Timer.

The Kid rolled a cigarette. "All he wanted was to get rid of us, or, to state the matter more accurately, to get rid of you."

"Why me?"

"He didn't like the goo-goo eyes his lovely daughter was making at you. You've sure got a way with the women, Old Timer."

"It's because I haven't that I'm here," the older man assured him.

"Says you."

"Kid, I think you are the one who is girl-crazy. You can't get your mind off the subject. Forget 'em for a while, and let's get down to business. I tell you we've got to do something and do it damn sudden. If these loyal retainers of ours don't see a little ivory around the diggings pretty soon they'll quit us. They know as well as we do that it's a case of no ivory, no pay."

"Well, what are we going to do about it; manufacture elephants?"

"Go out and find 'em. Thar's elephants in them thar hills, men; but they aren't going to come trotting into camp to be

shot. The natives won't help us; so we've got to get out and scout for them ourselves. We'll each take a couple of men and a few days' rations; then we'll head in different directions, and if one of us doesn't find elephant tracks I'm a zebra."

"How much longer do you suppose we'll be able to work this racket without getting caught?" demanded The Kid.

"I've been working it for two years, and I haven't been nabbed yet," replied Old Timer; "and, believe me, I don't want to be nabbed. Have you ever seen their lousy jail?"

"They wouldn't put white men in that, would they?" The Kid looked worried.

"They might. Ivory poachin' makes

'em sorer than Billy Hell."

"I don't blame 'em," said The Kid. "It's a lousy racket."

"Don't I know it?" Old Timer spat vehemently. "But a man's got to eat, hasn't he? If I knew a better way to eat I wouldn't be an ivory poacher. Don't think for a minute that I'm stuck on the job or proud of myself. I'm not. I just try not to think of the ethics of the thing, just like I try to forget that I was ever decent. I'm a bum, I tell you, a dirty, low down bum; but even bums cling to life—though God only knows why. I've never dodged the chance of kicking off, but somehow I always manage to wiggle through. If I'd been any good on earth; or if any one had cared whether I croaked or not, I'd have

been dead long ago. It seems as though the Devil watches over things like me and protects them, so that they can suffer as long as possible in this life before he forks them into eternal hell-fire and brimstone in the next."

"Don't brag," advised The Kid. "I'm just as big a bum as you. Likewise, I have to eat. Let's forget ethics and get busy."

"We'll start tomorrow," agreed Old Timer.

* * * * *

Muzimo stood silent with folded arms, the center of a chattering horde of natives in the village of Tumbai. Upon his shoulders squatted The Spirit of Nyamwegi. He, too, chattered. It was

fortunate, perhaps, that the villagers of Tumbai could not understand what The Spirit of Nyamwegi said. He was hurling the vilest of jungle invective at them, nor was there in all the jungle another such master of diatribe. Also, from the safety of Muzimo's shoulder, he challenged them to battle, telling them what he would do to them if he ever got hold of them. He challenged them single and en masse. It made no difference to The Spirit of Nyamwegi how they came, just so they came.

If the villagers were not impressed by The Spirit of Nyamwegi, the same is not true of the effect that the presence of Muzimo had upon them after they had heard Orando's story, even after the first

telling. By the seventh or eighth telling their awe was prodigious. It kept them at a safe distance from this mysterious creature of another world.

There was one skeptic, however. It was the village witch- doctor, who doubtless felt that it was not good business to admit too much credence in a miracle not of his own making. Whatever he felt, and it is quite possible that he was as much in awe as the others, he hid it under a mask of indifference, for he must always impress the laity with his own importance.

The attention bestowed upon this stranger irked him; it also pushed him entirely out of the limelight. This nettled him greatly. Therefore, to call attention

to himself, as well as to reestablish his importance, he strode boldly up to Muzimo. Whereupon The Spirit of Nyamwegi screamed shrilly and took refuge behind the back of his patron. The attention of the villagers was now attracted to the witch- doctor, which was precisely what he desired. The chattering ceased. All eyes were on the two. This was the moment the witch-doctor had awaited. He puffed himself to his full height and girth. He swaggered before the spirit of Orando's ancestor. Then he addressed him in a loud tone.

"You say that you are the muzimo of Orando, the son of Lobongo; but how do we know that your words are true words? You say that the little monkey is

the ghost of Nyamwegi. How do we know that, either?"

"Who are you, old man, who asks me these questions?" demanded Muzimo.

"I am Sobito, the witch-doctor."

"You say that you are Sobito, the witch-doctor; but how do I know that your words are true words?"

"Every one knows that I am Sobito, the witch-doctor." The old man was becoming excited. He discovered that he had been suddenly put upon the defensive, which was not at all what he had intended. "Ask any one. They all know me."

"Very well, then," said Muzimo; "ask Orando who I am. He, alone, knows me. I have not said that I am his muzimo. I

have not said that the little monkey is the ghost of Nyamwegi. I have not said who I am. I have not said anything. It does not make any difference to me who you think I am; but if it makes a difference to you, ask Orando," whereupon he turned about and walked away, leaving Sobito to feel that he had been made to appear ridiculous in the eyes of his clansmen.

Fanatical, egotistical, and unscrupulous, the old witch-doctor was a power in the village of Tumbai. For years he had exercised his influence, sometimes for good and sometimes for evil, upon the villagers. Even Lobongo, the chief, was not as powerful as Sobito, who played upon the superstitions and fears of his ignorant followers until they

dared not disobey his slightest wish.

Tradition and affection bound them to Lobongo, their hereditary chief; fear held them in the power of Sobito, whom they hated. Inwardly they were pleased that Orando's muzimo had flaunted him; but when the witch-doctor came among them and spoke disparagingly of the muzimo they only listened in sullen silence, daring not to express their belief in him.

Later, the warriors gathered before the hut of Lobono to listen to the formal telling of the story of Orando. It was immaterial that they had heard it several times already. It must be told again in elaborate detail before a council of the chief and his warriors; and so once more

Orando retold the oft-told tale, nor did it lose anything in the telling. More and more courageous became the deeds of Orando, more and more miraculous those of Muzimo; and when he closed his oration it was with an appeal to the chief and his warriors to gather the Utengas from all the villages of the tribe and go forth to avenge Nyamwegi. Muzimo, he told them, would lead them to the village of the Leopard Men.

There were shouts of approval from the younger men, but the majority of the older men sat in silence. It is always thus; the younger men for war, the older for peace. Lobongo was an old man. He was proud that his son should be warlike. That was the reaction of the

father, but the reaction of age was all against war. So he, too, remained silent. Not so, Sobito. To his personal grievance against Muzimo were added other considerations that inclined him against this contemplated foray; at least one of which (and the most potent) was a secret he might not divulge with impunity. Scowling forbiddingly he leaped to his feet.

"Who makes this foolish talk of war?" he demanded. "Young men. What do young men know of war? They think only of victory. They forget defeat. They forget that if they make war upon a village the warriors of that village will come some day and make war upon us. What is to be gained by making war

upon the Leopard Men? Who knows where their village lies? It must be very far away. Why should our warriors go far from their own country to make war upon the Leopard Men? Because Nyamwegi has been killed? Nyamwegi has already been avenged. This is foolish talk, this war-talk. Who started it? Perhaps it is a stranger among us who wishes to make trouble for us." He looked at Muzimo. "Who knows why? Perhaps the Leopard Men have sent one of their own people to lure us into making war upon them. Then all our warriors will be ambushed and killed. That is what will happen. Make no more foolish talk about war."

As Sobito concluded his harangue and

again squatted upon his heels Orando arose. He was disturbed by what the old witch-doctor had said; and he was angry, too; angry because Sobito had impugned the integrity of his muzimo. But his anger was leashed by his fear of the powerful old man; for who dares openly oppose one in league with the forces of darkness, one whose enmity can spell disaster and death? Yet Orando was a brave warrior and a loyal friend, as befitted one in whose views flowed the blood of hereditary chieftainship; and so he could not permit the innuendoes of Sobito to go entirely unchallenged.

"Sobito has spoken against war," he began. "Old men always speak against

war, which is right if one is an old man. Orando is a young man yet he, too, would speak against war if it were only the foolish talk of young men who wished to appear brave in the eyes of women; but now there is a reason for war. Nyamwegi has been killed. He was a brave warrior. He was a good friend. Because we have killed three of those who killed Nyamwegi we cannot say that he is avenged. We must go and make war upon the chief who sent these murderers into the Watenga country, or he will think that the Utengas are all old women. He will think that whenever his people wish to eat the flesh of man they have only to come to the Watenga country to get it.

"Sobito has said that perhaps the Leopard Men sent a stranger among us to lure us into ambush. There is only one stranger among us—Muzimo. But Muzimo cannot be a friend of the Leopard Men. With his own eyes Orando saw him kill two of the Leopard Men; he saw the fourth run away very fast when his eyes discovered the might of Muzimo. Had Muzimo been his friend he would not have run away.

"I am Orando, the son of Lobongo. Some day I shall be chief. I would not lead the warriors of Lobongo into a foolish war. I am going to the village of the Leopard Men and make war upon them, that they may know that not all the Utenga warriors are old women.

Muzimo is going with me. Perhaps there are a few brave men who will accompany us. I have spoken."

Several of the younger warriors leaped from their haunches and stamped their feet in approval. They raised their voices in the war- cry of their clan and brandished their spears. One of them danced in a circle, leaping high and jabbing with his spear.

"Thus will I kill the Leopard Men!" he cried.

Another leaped about, slashing with his knife. "I cut the heart from the chief of the Leopard Men!" He pretended to tear at something with his teeth, while he held it tightly in his hands. "I eat the heart of the chief of the Leopard Men!"

"War! War!" cried others, until there were a dozen howling savages dancing in the sunlight, their sleek hides glistening with sweat, their features contorted by hideous grimaces.

The Lobongo arose. His deep voice boomed above the howling of the dancers as he commanded them to silence. One by one they ceased their howling, but they gathered together in a little knot behind Orando.

"A few of the young men have spoken for war," he announced, "but we do not make war lightly because a few young men wish to fight. There are times for war and times for peace. We must find out if this is the time for war; otherwise we shall find only defeat and death at the

end of the war-trail. Before undertaking war we must consult the ghosts of our dead chiefs."

"They are waiting to speak to us," cried Sobito. "Let there be silence while I speak with the spirits of the chiefs who are gone."

As he spoke there was the gradual beginning of a movement among the tribesmen that presently formed a circle in the center of which squatted the witch-doctor. From a pouch he withdrew a number of articles which he spread upon the ground before him. Then he called for some dry twigs and fresh leaves, and when these were brought he built a tiny fire. With the fresh leaves he partially smothered it, so that it threw off

a quantity of smoke. Stooping, half doubled, the witch-doctor moved cautiously around the fire, describing a small circle, his eyes constantly fixed upon the thin column of smoke spiraling upward in the quiet air of the drowsy afternoon. In one hand Sobito held a small pouch made of the skin of a rodent, in the other the tail of a hyena, the root bound with copper wire to form a handle.

Gradually the old man increased his pace until at last, he was circling the fire rapidly in prodigious leaps and bounds; but always his eyes remained fixed upon the spiraling smoke column. As he danced he intoned a weird jargon, a combination of meaningless syllables

interspersed with an occasional shrill scream that brought terror to the eyes of his spell-bound audience.

Suddenly he halted, and stooping low tossed some powder from his pouch upon the fire; then with the root of the hyena tail he drew a rude geometric figure in the dust before the blaze. Stiffening, he closed his eyes and appeared to be listening intently, his face turned partially upward.

In awestruck silence the warriors leaned forward, waiting. It was a tense moment and quite effective. Sobito prolonged it to the utmost. At last he opened his eyes and let them move solemnly about the circle of expectant faces, waiting again before he spoke.

"There are many ghosts about us," he announced. "They all speak against war. Those who go to battle with the Leopard Men will die. None will return. The ghosts are angry with Orando. The true muzimo of Orando spoke to me; it is very angry with Orando. Let Orando beware. That is all; the young men will not go to war against the Leopard Men."

The warriors gathered behind Orando looked questioningly at him and at Muzimo. Doubt was written plainly upon every face. Gradually they began to move, drifting imperceptibly away from Orando. Then the son of the chief looked at Muzimo questioningly. "If Sobito has spoken true words," he said, "you are not my muzimo." The words seemed a

challenge.

"What does Sobito know about it?" demanded Muzimo. "I could build a fire and wave the tail of Dango. I could make marks in the dirt and throw powders on the fire. Then I could tell you whatever I wanted to tell you, just as Sobito has told you what he wanted you to believe; but such things prove nothing. The only way you can know if a war against the Leopard Men will succeed is to send warriors to fight them. Sobito knows nothing about it."

The witch-doctor trembled from anger. Never before had a creature dared voice a doubt as to his powers. So abjectly had the members of his clan acknowledged his infallibility that he

had almost come to believe in it himself. He shook a withered finger at Muzimo.

"You speak with a lying tongue," he cried. "You have angered my fetish. Nothing can save you. You are lost. You will die." He paused as a new idea was born in his cunning brain. "Unless," he added, "you go away, and do not come back."

Having no idea as to his true identity, Muzimo had had to accept Orando's word that he was the ancestral spirit of the chief's son; and having heard himself described as such innumerable times he had come to accept it as fact. He felt no fear of Sobito, the man, and when Sobito, the witchdoctor, threatened him he recalled that he was a muzimo and, as

such, immortal. How, therefore, he reasoned, could the fetish of Sobito kill him? Nothing could kill a spirit.

"I shall not go away," he announced. "I am not afraid of Sobito."

The villagers were aghast. Never had they heard a witchdoctor flouted and defied as Muzimo had flouted and defied Sobito. They expected to see the rash creature destroyed before their eyes, but nothing happened. They looked at Sobito, questioningly, and that wily old fraud, sensing the critical turn of the event and fearing for his prestige, overcame his physical fear of the strange, white giant in the hope of regaining his dignity by a single bold stroke.

Brandishing his hyena tail, he leaped toward Muzimo. "Die!" he screamed. "Nothing can save you now. Before the moon has risen the third time you will be dead. My fetish has spoken!" He waved the hyena tail in the face of Muzimo.

The white man stood with folded arms, a sneer upon his lips. "I am Muzimo," he said; "I am the spirit of the ancestor of Orando. Sobito is only a man; his fetish is only the tail of Dango." As he ceased speaking his hand shot out and snatched the fetish from the grasp of the witch-doctor. "Thus does Muzimo with the fetish of Sobito!" he cried, tossing the tail into the fire to the consternation of the astonished villagers.

Seized by the unreasoning rage of

fanaticism Sobito threw caution to the winds and leaped for Muzimo, a naked blade in his upraised hand. There was the froth of madness upon his bared lips. His yellow fangs gleamed in a hideous snarl. He was the personification of hatred and maniacal fury. But swift and vicious as was his attack it did not find Muzimo unprepared. A bronzed hand seized the wrist of the witch-doctor in a grip of steel; another tore the knife from his grasp. Then Muzimo picked him up and held him high above his head as though Sobito were some incorporeal thing without substance or weight.

Terror was writ large upon the countenances of the astounded onlookers; an idol was in the clutches of

an iconoclast. The situation had passed beyond the scope of their simple minds, leaving them dazed. Perhaps it was well for Muzimo that Sobito was far from being a beloved idol.

Muzimo looked at Orando. "Shall I kill him?" he asked, almost casually.

Orando was as shocked and terrified as his fellows. A lifetime of unquestioning belief in the supernatural powers of witch-doctors could not be overcome in an instant. Yet there was another force working upon the son of the chief. He was only human. Muzimo was his muzimo, and being very human he could not but feel a certain justifiable pride in the fearlessness and prowess of this splendid enigma whom he had

enthusiastically accepted as the spirit of his dead ancestor. However, witch-doctors were witch-doctors. Their powers were well known to all men. There was, therefore, no wisdom in tempting fate too far.

Orando ran forward. "No!" he cried. "Do not kill him."

Upon the branch of a tree a little monkey danced, screaming and scolding. "Kill him!" he shrieked. "Kill him!" He was a very blood- thirsty little monkey, was The Spirit of Nyamwegi. Muzimo tossed Sobito to the ground in an ignominious heap.

"He is no good," he announced. "No witch-doctor is any good. His fetish was not good. If it had been, why did it not

protect Sobito? Sobito did not know what he was talking about. If there are any brave warriors among the Utengas they will come with Orando and Muzimo and make war on the Leopard Men."

A low cry, growing in volume, rose among the younger warriors; and in the momentary confusion Sobito crawled to his feet and sneaked away toward his hut. When he was safely out of reach of Muzimo he halted and faced about. "I go," he called back, "to make powerful medicine. To-night the white man who calls himself Muzimo dies."

The white giant took a few steps in the direction of Sobito, and the witch-doctor turned and fled. The young men, seeing the waning of Sobito's power,

talked loudly now of war. The older men talked no more of peace. One and all, they feared and hated Sobito. They were relieved to see his power broken. Tomorrow they might be afraid again, but today they were free from the domination of a witch- doctor for the first time in their lives.

Lobongo, the chief, would not sanction war; but, influenced by the demands of Orando and other young men, he at last grudgingly gave his approval to the formation of a small raiding party. Immediately runners were dispatched to other villages to seek recruits, and preparations were begun for a dance to be held that night.

Because of Lobongo's refusal to make

general war against the Leopard Men there was no booming of war-drums; but news travels fast in the jungle; and night had scarcely closed down upon the village of Tumbai before warriors from the nearer villages commenced coming in to Tumbai by ones and twos to join the twenty volunteers from Loblongo's village, who swaggered and strutted before the admiring eyes of the dusky belles preparing the food and native beer that would form an important part of the night's festivities.

From Kibbu came ten young warriors, among them the brother of the girl Nyamwegi had been courting and one Lupingu, from whom the murdered warrior had stolen her heart. That

Lupingu should volunteer to risk his life for the purpose of avenging Nyamwegi passed unnoticed, since already thoughts of vengeance had been submerged by lust for glory and poor Nyamwegi practically forgotten by all but Orando.

There was much talk of war and of brave deeds that would be accomplished; but the discomfiture of Sobito, being still fresh in every mind, also had an important part in the conversations. The village gossips found it a choice morsel with which to regale the warriors from other villages, with the result that Muzimo became an outstanding figure that reflected more glory upon the village of Tumbai than ever Sobito had. The visiting warriors

regarded him with awe and some misgivings. They were accustomed to spirits that no one ever saw; the air was full of them. It was quite another matter to behold one standing in their midst.

Lupingu, especially, was perturbed. Recently he had purchased a love charm from Sobito. He was wondering now if he had thrown away, uselessly, the little treasure he had paid for it. He decided to seek out the witch-doctor and make inquiries; perhaps there was not so much truth in what he had heard. There was also another reason why he wished to consult Sobito, a reason of far greater importance than a love charm.

When he could do so unnoticed, Lupingu withdrew from the crowd

milling in the village street and sneaked away to Sobito's hut. Here he found the old witch-doctor squatting upon the floor surrounded by charms and fetishes. A small fire burning beneath a pot fitfully lighted his sinister features, which were contorted by so hideous a scowl that Lupingu almost turned and fled before the old man looked up and recognized him.

For a long time Lupingu sat in the hut of the witchdoctor. They spoke in whispers, their heads close together. When Lupingu left he carried with him an amulet of such prodigious potency that no enemy could inflict injury upon him, and in his head he carried a plan that caused him both elation and terror.

CHAPTER 5. —"UNSPEAKABLE BOOR!"

Long days of loneliness. Long nights of terror. Hopelessness and vain regrets so keen that they pained as might physical hurts. Only a brave heart had kept the girl from going mad since her men had deserted her. That seemed an eternity ago; days were ages.

Today she had hunted. A small boar had fallen to her rifle. At the sound of the shot, coming faintly to his ears, a white man had halted, scowling. His three companions jabbered excitedly.

With difficulty the girl had removed the viscera of the boar, thus reducing its

weight sufficiently so that she could drag it to her camp; but it had been an ordeal that had taxed her strength and endurance to their limits. The meat was too precious, however, to be wasted; and she had struggled for hours, stopping often to rest, until at last, exhausted, she had sunk beside her prize before the entrance to her tent.

It was not encouraging to consider the vast amount of labor that still confronted her before the meat would be safe for future use. There was the butchering. The mere thought of it appalled her. She had never seen an animal butchered until after she had set out upon this disastrous safari. In all her life she had never even so much as cut a piece of raw meat. Her

preparation, therefore, was most inadequate; but necessity overcomes obstacles, as it mothers inventions. She knew that the boar must be butchered, and the flesh cut into strips and that these strips must be smoked. Even then they would not keep long, but she knew no better way.

With her limited knowledge of practical matters, with the means at hand, she must put up the best fight for life of which she was capable. She was weak and inexperienced and afraid; but none the less it was a courageous heart that beat beneath her once chic but now soiled and disreputable flannel shirt. She was without hope, yet she would not give up.

Wearily, she had commenced to skin the boar, when a movement at the edge of the clearing in which her camp had been pitched attracted her attention. As she looked up she saw four men standing silently, regarding her. One was a white man. The other three were natives. As she sprang to her feet hope welled so strongly within her that she reeled slightly with dizziness; but instantly she regained control of herself and surveyed the four, who were now advancing, the white man in the lead, then, when closer scrutiny was possible, hope waned. Never in her life had she seen so disreputable appearing a white man. His filthy clothing was a motley of rags and patches; his face was unshaven; his hat

was a nondescript wreck that might only be distinguished as a hat by the fact that it surmounted his head; his face was stern and forbidding. His eyes wandered suspiciously about her camp; and when he halted a few paces from her, scowling, there was no greeting on his lips.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What are you doing here?"

His tone and words antagonized her. Never before had any white man addressed her in so cavalier a manner. In a proud and spirited girl the reaction was inevitable. Her chin went up; she eyed him coldly; the suggestion of a supercilious sneer curved her short upper lip; her eyes evaluated him

disdainfully from his run-down boots to the battered thing that covered his dishevelled hair. Had his manner and address been different she might have been afraid of him, but now for the moment at least she was too angry to be afraid.

"I cannot conceive that either matter concerns you," she said, and turned her back on him.

The scowl deepened on the man's face, and angry words leaped to his tongue; but he controlled himself, regarding her silently. Had he not already seen her face he would have guessed from the lines of her haughty little back that she was young. Having seen her face he knew that she was

beautiful. She was dirty, hot, perspiring, and covered with blood; but she was still beautiful. How beautiful she must be when properly garbed and groomed he dared not even imagine. He had noticed her blue-grey eyes and long lashes; they alone would have made any face beautiful. Now he was appraising her hair, confined in a loose knot at the nape of her neck; it had that peculiar quality of blondness that is described, today, as platinum.

It had been two years since Old Timer had seen a white woman. Perhaps if this one had been old and scrawny, or had buckteeth and a squint, he might have regarded her with less disapprobation and addressed her more

courteously. But the moment that his eyes had beheld her, her beauty had recalled all the anguish and misery that another beautiful girl had caused him, arousing within him the hatred of women that he had nursed and cherished for two long years.

He stood in silence for a moment; and he was glad that he had; for it permitted him to quell the angry, bitter words that he might otherwise have spoken. It was not that he liked women any better, but that he realized and admired the courageousness of her reply.

"It may not be any of my business," he said presently, "but perhaps I shall have to make it so. It is rather unusual to see a white woman alone in this country. You

are alone?" There was a faint note of concern in the tone of his question.

"I was quite alone," she snapped, "and I should prefer being so again."

"You mean that you are without porters or white companions?"

"Quite."

As her back was toward him she did not see the expression of relief that crossed his face at her admission. Had she, she might have felt greater concern for her safety, though his relief had no bearing upon her welfare; his anxiety as to the presence of white men was simply that of the elephant poacher.

"And you have no means of transportation?" he queried.

"None."

"You certainly did not come this far into the interior alone. What became of the other members of your party?"

"They deserted me."

"But your white companions—what of them?"

"I had none." She had faced him by now, but her attitude was still unfriendly.

"You came into the interior without any white men?" There was skepticism in his tone.

"I did."

"When did your men desert you?"

"Three days ago."

"What do you intend doing? You can't

stay here alone, and I don't see how you can expect to go on without porters."

"I have stayed here three days alone; I can continue to do so until —"

"Until what?"

"I don't know."

"Look here," he demanded; "what in the world are you doing here, anyway?"

A sudden hope seemed to flash to her brain. "I am looking for a man," she said. "Perhaps you have heard of him; perhaps you know where he is." Her voice was vibrant with eagerness.

"What's his name?" asked Old Timer.

"Jerry Jerome." She looked up into his face hopefully.

He shook his head. "Never heard of

him."

The hope in her eyes died out, suffused by the faintest suggestion of tears. Old Timer saw the moisture in her eyes, and it annoyed him. Why did women always have to cry? He steeled his heart against the weakness that was sympathy and spoke brusquely. "What do you think you're going to do with that meat?" he demanded.

Her eyes widened in surprise. There were no tears in them now, but a glint of anger. "You are impossible. I wish you would get out of my camp and leave me alone."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," he replied. Then he spoke rapidly to his three followers in their native dialect,

whereupon the three advanced and took possession of the carcass of the boar.

The girl looked on in angry surprise. She recalled the heartbreaking labor of dragging the carcass to camp. Now it was being taken from her. The thought enraged her. She drew her revolver from its holster. "Tell them to leave that alone," she cried, "or I'll shoot them. It's mine."

"They're only going to butcher it for you," explained Old Timer. "That's what you wanted, isn't it? Or were you going to frame it?"

His sarcasm nettled her, but she realized that she had misunderstood their purpose. "Why didn't you say so?" she demanded. "I was going to smoke it. I

may not always be able to get food easily."

"You won't have to," he told her; "we'll look after that."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that as soon as I'm through here you're going back to my camp with me. It ain't my fault that you're here; and you're a damn useless nuisance, like all other women; but I couldn't leave a white rat here alone in the jungle, much less a white woman."

"What if I don't care to go with you?" she inquired haughtily.

"I don't give a damn what you think about it," he snapped; "you're going with me. If you had any brains you'd be grateful. It's too much to expect you to

have a heart. You're like all the rest—selfish, inconsiderate, ungrateful."

"Anything else?" she inquired.

"Yes. Cold, calculating hard."

"You do not think much of women, do you?"

"You are quite discerning."

"And just what do you propose doing with me when we get to your camp?" she asked.

"If we can scrape up a new safari for you I'll get you out of Africa as quickly as I can," he replied.

"But I do not wish to get out of Africa. You have no right to dictate to me. I came here for a purpose, and I shall not leave until that purpose is

fulfilled."

"If you came here to find that Jerome fellow it is my duty to a fellow man to chase you out before you can find him."

Her level gaze rested upon him for several moments before she replied. She had never before seen a man like this. Such candor was unnatural. She decided that he was mentally unbalanced; and having heard that the insane should be humored, lest they become violent, she determined to alter her attitude toward him.

"Perhaps you are right," she admitted. "I will go with you."

"That's better," he commented. "Now that that's settled let's have everything else clear. We're starting back to my

camp as soon as I get through with my business here. That may be tomorrow or next day. You're coming along. One of my boys will look after you—cooking and all that sort of stuff. But I don't want to be bothered with any women. You leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone. I don't even want to talk to you."

"That will be mutually agreeable," she assured him, not without some asperity. Since she was a woman and had been for as long as she could recall the object of masculine adulation, such a speech, even from the lips of a disreputable ragamuffin whose sanity she questioned, could not but induce a certain pique.

"One more thing," he added. "My

camp is in Chief Bobolo's country. If anything happens to me have my boys take you back there to my camp. My partner will look after you. Just tell him that I promised to get you back to the coast." He left her then, and busied himself with the simple preparation of his modest camp, calling one of the men from the butchering to pitch his small tent and prepare his evening meal, for it was late in the afternoon. Another of the boys was detailed to serve the girl.

From her tent that evening she could see him sprawled before a fire, smoking his pipe. From a distance she gazed at him contemptuously, convinced that he was the most disagreeable person she had ever encountered, yet forced to

admit that his presence gave her a feeling of security she had not enjoyed since she had entered Africa. She concluded that even a crazy white man was better than none. But was he crazy? He seemed quite normal and sane in all respects other than his churlish attitude toward her. Perhaps he was just an ill-bred boor with some fancied grievance against women. Be that as it might he was an enigma, and unsolved enigmas have a way of occupying one's thoughts. So, notwithstanding her contempt for him, he filled her reveries quite to the exclusion of all else until sleep claimed her.

Doubtless she would have been surprised to know that similarly the

man's mind was occupied with thoughts of her, thoughts that hung on with bulldog tenacity despite his every effort to shake them loose. In the smoke of his pipe he saw her, unquestionably beautiful beyond comparison. He saw the long lashes shading the depths of her blue-grey eyes; her lips, curved deliciously; the alluring sheen of her wavy blond hair; the perfection of her girlish figure.

"Damn!" muttered Old Timer. "Why in hell did I have to run into her?"

The following morning he left camp early, taking two of the boys with him; leaving the third, armed with an old rifle, to protect the girl and attend to her wants. She was already up when he departed, but he did not look in her

direction as he strode out of camp, though she furtively watched him go, feeding her contempt on a final disparaging appraisement of his rags and tatters.

"Unspeakable boor!" she whispered venomously as a partial outlet for her pent up hatred of the man.

Old Timer had a long, hard day. No sign of elephant rewarded his search, nor did he contact a single native from whom he might obtain information as to the whereabouts of the great herd that rumor and hope had located in this vicinity.

Not only was the day one of physical hardship, but it had been mentally trying as well. He had been disappointed in not

locating the ivory they needed so sorely, but this had been the least of his mental perturbation. He had been haunted by thoughts of the girl. All day he had tried to rid his mind of recollection of that lowly face and the contours of her perfect body, but they persisted in haunting him. At first they had aroused other memories, painful memories of another girl. But gradually the vision of that other girl had faded until only the blue-grey eyes and blond hair of the girl in the lonely camp persisted in his thoughts.

When he turned back toward camp at the end of his fruitless search for elephant signs a new determination filled him with disquieting thoughts and

spurred him rapidly upon the back-trail. It had been two years since he had seen a white woman, and then Fate had thrown this lovely creature across his path. What had women ever done for him? "Made a bum of me," he soliloquized; "ruined my life. This girl would have been lost but for me. She owes me something. All women owe me something for what one woman did to me. This girl is going to pay the debt.

"God, but she's beautiful! And she belongs to me. I found her, and I am going to keep her until I am tired of her. Then I'll throw her over the way I was thrown over. See how the woman will like it! Gad, what lips! Tonight they will be mine. She'll be all mine, and I'll make

her like it. It's only fair. I've got something coming to me in this world. I'm entitled to a little happiness; and, by God, I'm owing to have it."

The great sun hung low in the west as the man came in sight of the clearing. The tent of the girl was the first thing that greeted his eyes. The soiled canvas suggested an intimacy that was provocative; it had sheltered and protected her; it had shared the most intimate secrets of her alluring charm. Like all inanimate objects that have been closely associated with an individual the tent reflected something of the personality of the girl. The mere sight of it stirred the man deeply. His passions, aroused by hours of anticipation, surged

through his head like wine. He quickened his pace in his eagerness to take the girl in his arms.

Then he saw an object lying just beyond her tent that turned him cold with apprehension. Springing forward at a run, closely followed by his two retainers, he came to a halt beside the grisly thing that had attracted his horrified attention and turned the hot wave of his desire to cold dread. It was the dead and horribly mutilated body of the native he had left to guard the girl. Cruel talons had lacerated the flesh with deep wounds that might have been inflicted by one of the great carnivores, but the further mutilation of the corpse had been the work of man.

Stooping over the body of their fellow the two Negroes muttered angrily in their native tongue; then one of them turned to Old Timer. "The Leopard Men, Bwana," he said.

Fearfully, the white man approached the tent of the girl, dreading what he might find there, dreading even more that he might find nothing. As he threw aside the flap and looked in, his worst fears were realized; the girl was not there. His first impulse was to call aloud to her as though she might be somewhere near in the forest; but as he turned to do so he suddenly realized that he did not know her name, and in the brief pause that this realization gave him the futility of the act was borne in upon him. If she still lived

she was far away by now in the clutches of the fiends who had slain her protector.

A sudden wave of rage overwhelmed the white man, his hot desire for the girl transmuted to almost maniacal anger toward her abductors. He forgot that he himself would have wronged her. Perhaps he thought only of his own frustrated hopes; but he believed that he was thinking only of the girl's helplessness, of the hideousness of her situation. Ideas of rescue and vengeance filled his whole being, banishing the fatigue of the long, arduous day.

It was already late in the afternoon, but he determined upon immediate pursuit. Following his orders the two

hastily buried their dead comrade, made up two packs with such provisions and camp necessities as the marauders had not filched, and with the sun but an hour high followed their mad master upon the fresh trail of the Leopard Men.

CHAPTER 6.—THE TRAITOR

The warriors of Watenga had not responded with great enthusiasm to the call to arms borne by the messengers of Orando. There were wars, and wars. One directed against the feared secret order of the Leopard Men did not appear to be highly popular. There were excellent reasons for this. In the first place the very name of Leopard Man was sufficient to arouse terror in the breast of the bravest, the gruesome methods of the Leopard Men being what they were. There was also the well known fact that, being a secret order recruited among unrelated clans, some of

one's own friends might be members, in which event an active enemy of the order could easily be marked for death. And such a death!

It is little wonder, then, that from thousands of potential crusaders Orando discovered but a scant hundred awaiting the call to arms the morning following the celebration and war dance at Tumbai. Even among the hundred there were several whose martial spirit had suffered eclipse over night. Perhaps this was largely due to the after effects of an overdose of native beer. It is not pleasant to set out for war with a headache.

Orando was moving about among the warriors squatting near the numerous

cooking fires. There was not much talk this morning and less laughter; the boasting of yestereve was stilled. Today war seemed a serious business; yet, their bellies once filled with warm food, they would go forth presently with loud yells, with laughter, and with song.

Orando made inquiries. "Where is Muzimo?" he asked, but no one had seen Muzimo. He and The Spirit of Nyamwegi had disappeared. This seemed an ill omen. Some one suggested that possibly Sobito had been right; Muzimo might be in league with the Leopard Men. This aroused inquiry as to the whereabouts of Sobito. No one had seen him either; which was strange, since Sobito was an early riser and not

one to be missing when the cook-pots were a-boil. An old man went to his hut and questioned one of the witch-doctor's wives. Sobito was gone! When this fact was reported conversation waxed. The enmity between Muzimo and Sobito was recalled, as was the latter's threat that Muzimo would die before morning. There were those who suggested that perhaps it was Sobito who was dead, while others recalled the fact that there was nothing unusual in his disappearance. He had disappeared before. In fact, it was nothing unusual for him to absent himself mysteriously from the village for days at a time. Upon his return after such absences he had darkly hinted that he had been sitting in council

with the spirits and demons of another world, from whom he derived his supernatural powers.

Lupingu of Kibbu thought that they should not set out upon the war trail in the face of such dire omens. He went quietly among the warriors seeking adherents to his suggestion that they disband and return to their own villages, but Orando shamed them out of desertion. The old men and the women would laugh at them, he told them. They had made too much talk about war; they had boasted too much. They would lose face forever if they failed to go through with it now.

"But who will guide us to the village of the Leopard Men now that your

muzimo has deserted you?" demanded Lupingu.

"I do not believe that he has deserted me," maintained Orando stoutly. "Doubtless he, too, has gone to take council with the spirits. He will return and lead us."

As though in answer to his statement, which was also a prayer, a giant figure dropped lightly from the branches of a nearby tree and strode toward him. It was Muzimo. Across one of his broad shoulders rested the carcass of a buck. On top of the buck sat The Spirit of Nyamwegi, screaming shrilly to attract attention to his prowess. "We are mighty hunters," he cried. "See what we have killed." No one but Muzimo understood

him, but that made no difference to The Spirit of Nyamwegi because he did not know that they could not understand him. He thought that he was making a fine impression, and he was quite proud of himself.

"Where have you been, Muzimo?" asked Orando. "Some said that Sobito had slain you."

Muzimo shrugged. "Words do not kill. Sobito is full of words."

"Have you killed Sobito?" demanded an old man.

"I have not seen Sobito since before Kudu, the sun, went to his lair last night," replied Muzimo.

"He is gone from the village," explained Orando. "It was thought that

maybe—"

"I went to hunt. Your food is no good; you spoil it with fire." He squatted down at the bole of a tree and cut meat from his kill, which he ate, growling. The warriors looked on terrified, giving him a wide berth.

When he had finished his meal he arose and stretched his great frame, and the action reminded them of Simba, the lion. "Muzimo is ready," he announced. "If the Utengas are ready let us go."

Orando gathered his warriors. He selected his captains and gave the necessary orders for the conduct of the march. This all required time, as no point could be decided without a general argument in which all participated

whether the matter concerned them or not.

Muzimo stood silently aside. He was wondering about these people. He was wondering about himself. Physically he and they were much alike; yet in addition to the difference in coloration there were other differences, those he could see and those he could not see but sensed. The Spirit of Nyamwegi was like them and like him, too; yet here again was a vast difference. Muzimo knit his brows in perplexity. Vaguely, he almost recalled a fleeting memory that seemed the key to the riddle; but it eluded him. He felt dimly that he had had a past, but he could not recall it. He recalled only the things that he had seen and the

experiences that had come to him since Orando had freed him from the great tree that had fallen on him; yet he appreciated the fact that when he had seen each seemingly new thing he had instantly recognized it for what it was—man, the okapi, the buck, each and every animal and bird that had come within the range of his vision or his sensitive ears or nostrils. Nor had he been at a loss to meet each new emergency of life as it confronted him.

He had thought much upon this subject (so much that at times the effort of sustained thought tired him), and he had come to the conclusion that somewhere, sometime he must have experienced many things. He had questioned Orando

casually as to the young man's past, and learned that he could recall events in clear detail as far back as his early childhood. Muzimo could recall but a couple of yesterdays. Finally he came to the conclusion that his mental state must be the natural state of spirits, and because it was so different from that of man he found in it almost irrefutable proof of his spirithood. With a feeling of detachment he viewed the antics of man, viewed them contemptuously. With folded arms he stood apart in silence, apparently as oblivious to the noisy bickerings as to the chattering and scolding of The Spirit of Nyamwegi perched upon his shoulder.

But at last the noisy horde was herded

into something approximating order; and, followed by laughing, screaming women and children, started upon its march toward high adventure. Not, however, until the latter turned back did the men settle down to serious marching, though Lupingu's croakings of eventual disaster had never permitted them to forget the seriousness of their undertaking.

For three days they marched, led by Orando and guided by Muzimo. The spirits of the warriors were high as they approached their goal. Lupingu had been silenced by ridicule. All seemed well. Muzimo had told them that the village of the Leopard Men lay near at hand and that upon the following morning he would go ahead alone and reconnoiter.

With the dawning of the fourth day all were eager, for Orando had never ceased to incite them to anger against the murderers of Nyamwegi. Constantly he had impressed them with the fact that The Spirit of Nyamwegi was with them to watch over and protect them, that his own muzimo was there to insure them victory.

It was while they were squatting about their breakfast fires that some one discovered that Lupingu was missing. A careful search of the camp failed to locate him; and it was at once assumed that, nearing the enemy, he had deserted through fear. Loud was the condemnation, bitter the scorn that this cowardly defection aroused. It was still

the topic of angry discussion as Muzimo and The Spirit of Nyamwegi slipped silently away through the trees toward the village of the Leopard Men.

* * * * *

A fiber rope about her neck, the girl was being half led, half dragged through the jungle. A powerful young native walking ahead of her held the free end of the rope; ahead of him an old man led the way; behind her was a second young man. All three were strangely garbed in leopard skins. The heads of leopards, cunningly mounted, fitted snugly over their woolly pates. Curved steel talons were fitted to their fingers. Their teeth were filed, their faces hideously painted. Of the three, the old man was the most

terrifying. He was the leader. The other cringed servilely when he gave commands.

The girl could understand little that they said. She had no idea as to the fate that was destined for her. As yet they had not injured her, but she could anticipate nothing other than a horrible termination of this hideous adventure. The young man who led her was occasionally rough when she stumbled or faltered, but he had not been actually brutal. Their appearance, however, was sufficient to arouse the direst forebodings in her mind; and she had always the recollection of the horrid butchery of the faithful Negro who had been left to guard her.

Thoughts of him reminded her of the white man who had left him to protect her. She had feared and mistrusted him; she had wanted to be rid of him. Now she wished that she were back in his camp. She did not admire him any more than she had. It was merely that she considered him the lesser of two evils. As she recalled him she thought of him only as an ill-mannered boor, as quite the most disagreeable person she had ever seen. Yet there was that about him which aroused her curiosity. His English suggested anything other than illiteracy. His clothes and his attitude toward her placed him upon the lowest rung of the social scale. He occupied her thoughts to a considerable extent, but he still

remained an inexplicable enigma.

For two days her captors followed obscure trails. They passed no villages, saw no other human beings than them selves. Then, toward the close of the second day they came suddenly upon a large, palisaded village beside a river. The heavy gates that barred the entrance were closed, although the sun had not yet set; but when they had approached closely enough to be recognized they were admitted following a short parlay between the old man and the keepers of the gate.

The stronghold of the Leopard Men was the village of Gato Mgungu, chief of a once powerful tribe that had dwindled in numbers until now it boasted but this

single village. But Gato Mgungu was also chief of the Leopard Men, a position which carried with it a sinister power far above that of many a chief whose villages were more numerous and whose tribes were numerically far stronger. This was true largely because of the fact that the secret order whose affairs he administered was recruited from unrelated clans and villages; and, because of the allegiance enforced by its strict and merciless code, Gato Mgungu demanded the first loyalty of its members, even above their loyalty to their own tribes or families. Thus, in nearly every village within a radius of a hundred miles Gato Mgungu had followers who kept him informed as to

the plans of other chiefs, followers who must even slay their own kin if the chief of the Leopard Men so decreed.

In the village of Gato Mgungu alone were all the inhabitants members of the secret order; in the other villages his adherents were unknown, or, at most, only suspected of membership in the feared and hated order. To be positively identified as a Leopard Man, in most villages, would have been to meet, sudden, mysterious death; for so loathed were they a son would kill his own father if he knew that he was a member of the sect, and so feared that no man dared destroy one except in secret lest the wrath and terrible vengeance of the order fall upon him.

In secret places, deep hidden in impenetrable jungle, the Leopard Men of outlying districts performed the abhorrent rites of the order except upon those occasions when they gathered at the village of Gato Mgungu, near which was located their temple. Such was the reason for the gathering that now filled the village with warriors and for the relatively small number of women and children that the girl noticed as she was dragged through the gateway into the main street.

Here the women, degraded, hideous, filed-toothed harpies, would have set upon her and torn her to pieces but for the interference of her captors, who laid about them with the hafts of their spears,

driving the creatures off until the old man could make himself heard. He spoke angrily with a voice of authority; and immediately the women withdrew, though they cast angry, venomous glances at the captive that boded no good for her should she fall into their hands.

Guarding her closely, her three captors led her through a horde of milling warriors to a large hut before which was seated an old, wrinkled Negro, with a huge belly. This was Gato Mgungu, chief of the Leopard Men. As the four approached he looked up, and at sight of the white girl a sudden interest momentarily lighted his blood-shot eyes that ordinarily gazed dully from between

red and swollen lids. Then he recognized the old man and addressed him.

"You have brought me a present, Lulimi?" he demanded.

"Lulimi has brought a present," replied the old man, "but not for Gato Mgungu alone."

"What do you mean?" The chief scowled now.

"I have brought a present for the whole clan and for the Leopard God."

"Gato Mgungu does not share his slaves with others," the chief growled.

"I have brought no slave," snapped Lulimi. It was evident that he did not greatly fear Gato Mgungu. And why

should he, who was high in the priesthood of the Leopard Clan?

"Then why have you brought this white woman to my village?"

By now there was a dense half-circle of interested auditors craning their necks to view the prisoner and straining their ears to catch all that was passing between these two great men of their little world. For this audience Lulimi was grateful, for he was never so happy as when he held the center of the stage, surrounded by credulous and ignorant listeners. Lulimi was a priest.

"Three nights ago we lay in the forest far from the village of Gato Mgungu, far from the temple of the Leopard God." Already he could see his auditors

pricking up their ears. "It was a dark night. The lion was abroad, and the leopard. We kept a large fire burning to frighten them away. It was my turn to watch. The others slept. Suddenly I saw two green eyes shining just beyond the fire. They blazed like living coals. They came closer, and I was afraid; but I could not move. I could not call out. My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth. My jaws would not open. Closer and closer they came, those terrible eyes, until, just beyond the fire, I saw a great leopard, the largest leopard that I have ever seen. I thought that the end of my days had come and that I was about to die.

"I waited for him to spring upon me, but he did not spring. Instead he opened

his mouth and spoke to me." Gasps of astonishment greeted this statement while Lulimi paused for effect.

"What did he say to you?" demanded Gato Mgungu.

"He said, 'I am the brother of the Leopard God. He sent me to find Lulimi, because he trusts Lulimi. Lulimi is a great man. He is very brave and wise. There is no one knows as much as Lulimi.'"

Gato Mgungu looked bored. "Did the Leopard God send his brother three marches to tell you that?"

"He told me other things, many things. Some of them I can repeat, but others I may never speak of. Only the Leopard God, and his brother, and Lulimi know

these things."

"What has all this to do with the white woman?" demanded Gato Mgungu.

"I am getting to that," replied Lulimi sourly. He did not relish these interruptions. "Then, when the brother of the Leopard God had asked after my health, he told me that I was to go to a certain place the next day and that there I should find a white woman. She would be alone in the jungle with one man. He commanded me to kill the black man and bring the woman to his temple to be high priestess of the Leopard Clan. This Lulimi will do. Tonight Lulimi takes the white high priestess to the great temple. I have spoken."

For a moment there was awed

silence. Gato Mgungu did not seem pleased; but Lulimi was a powerful priest to whom the rank and file looked up, and he had greatly increased his prestige by this weird tale. Gato Mgungu was sufficiently a judge of men to know that. Furthermore, he was an astute old politician with an eye to the future. He knew that lmigeg, the high priest, was a very old man who could not live much longer and that Lulimi, who had been laying his plans to that end for years, would doubtless succeed him.

Now a high priest friendly to Gato Mgungu could do much to increase the power and prestige of the chief and, incidentally, his revenues; while one who was inimical might threaten his

ascendancy. Therefore, reading thus plainly the handwriting on the wall, Gato Mgungu seized this opportunity to lay the foundations of future friendship and understanding between them though he knew that Lulimi was an old fraud and his story doubtless a canard.

Many of the warriors, having sensed in the chief's former attitude a certain antagonism to Lulimi, were evidently waiting a cue from their leader. As Gato Mgungu jumped, so would the majority of the fighting men; but when the day came that a successor to Imigeg must be chosen it would be the priests who would make the selection, and Gato Mgungu knew that Lulimi had a long memory.

All eyes were upon the chief as he cleared his royal throat. "We have heard the story of Lulimi," he said. "We all know Lulimi. In his own village he is a great witchdoctor. In the temple of the Leopard God there is no greater priest after Imigeg. It is not strange that the brother of the Leopard God should speak to Lulimi—Gato Mgungu is only a fighting man. He does not talk with gods and demons. This is not a matter for warriors. It is a matter for priests. All that Lulimi has said we believe, but let us take the white woman to the temple. The Leopard God and Imigeg will know whether the jungle leopard spoke true words to Lulimi or not. Has not my tongue spoken wise words, Lulimi?"

"The tongue of Gato Mgungu, the chief, always speaks wise words," replied the priest, who was inwardly delighted that the chief's attitude had not been, as he had feared, antagonistic. And thus the girl's fate was decided by the greed of corrupt politicians, temporal and ecclesiastical, suggesting that the benighted of central Africa are in some respects quite as civilized as we.

As preparations were being made to conduct the girl to the temple, a lone warrior, sweat-streaked and breathless, approached the gates of the village. Here he was halted, but when he had given the secret sign of the Leopard Clan he was admitted. There was much excited jabbering at the gate way; but to all

questions the newcomer insisted that he must speak to Gato Mgungu immediately upon a matter of urgent importance, and presently he was brought before the chief.

Again he gave the secret sign of the Leopard Clan as he faced Gato Mgungu.

"What message do you bring?" demanded the chief.

"A few hours' march from here a hundred Utenga warriors led by Orando, the son of Lobongo, the chief, are waiting to attack your village. They come to avenge Nyamwegi of Kibbu, who was killed by members of the clan. If you send warriors at once to hide beside the trail they can ambush the Utengas and kill them all."

"Where lies their camp?"

The messenger described the location minutely; and when he had finished, Gato Mgungu ordered a sub-chief to gather three hundred warriors and march against the invaders; then he turned to the messenger. "We shall feast tonight upon our enemies," he growled, "and you shall sit beside Gato Mgungu and have the choicest morsels."

"I may not remain," replied the messenger. "I must return from whence I came lest I be suspected of carrying word to you."

"Who are you?" demanded Gato Mgungu.

"I am Lupingu of Kibbu, in the Watenga country," replied the

messenger.

CHAPTER 7.—THE CAPTIVE

Knowing nothing of the meaning of what was transpiring around her, the girl sensed in the excitement and activity following the coming of the messenger something of the cause that underlay them. She saw fighting men hurriedly arming themselves; she saw them depart from the village. In her heart was a hope that perhaps the enemy they went to meet might be a succoring party in search of her. Reason argued to the contrary; but hope catches at straws, unreasoning.

When the war party had departed, attention was again focused upon the girl. Lulimi waxed important. He

ordered people about right and left. Twenty men armed with spears and shields and carrying paddles formed about her as an escort. Led by Lulimi, they marched through the gateway of the village down to the river. Here they placed her in a large canoe which they launched in silence, knowing that enemies were not far distant. There was no singing or shouting as there would have been upon a similar occasion under ordinary circumstances. In silence they dipped their paddles into the swift stream; silently they sped with the current down the broad river, keeping close to the river bank upon the same side as that upon which they bad launched the craft by the village of Gato

Mgungu.

Poor little Kati Bwana! They had taken the rope from about her neck; they treated her now with a certain respect, tinged with awe, for was she not to be the high priestess of the Leopard God? But of that she knew nothing. She could only wonder, as numb with hopelessness she watched the green verdure of the river bank move swiftly past. Where were they taking her? To what horrid fate? She noted the silence and the haste of her escort; she recalled the excitement following the coming of the messenger to the village and the hasty exodus of the war party.

All these facts combined to suggest that her captors were hurrying her away

from a rescuing party. But who could have organized such an expedition? Who knew of her plight? Only the bitter man of rags and patches. But what could he do to effect her rescue, even if he cared to do so? It had been evident to her that he was a poor and worthless vagabond. His force consisted now of but two natives. His camp, he had told her, was several marches from where he had found her. He could not possibly have obtained reinforcements from that source in the time that had elapsed since her capture, even if they existed, which she doubted. She could not imagine that such a sorry specimen of poverty commanded any resources whatever. Thus she was compelled to abandon hope of succor

from this source; yet hope did not die. In the last extremity one may always expect a miracle.

For a mile or two the canoe sped down the river, the paddles rising and falling with clock-like regularity and almost in silence; then suddenly the speed of the craft was checked, and its nose turned toward the bank. Ahead of them the girl saw the mouth of a small affluent of the main river, and presently the canoe slid into its sluggish waters.

Great trees arched above the narrow, winding stream; dense underbrush choked the ground between their boles; matted vines and creepers clung to their mossy branches, or hung motionless in the breathless air, trailing almost to the

surface of the water; gorgeous blooms shot the green with vivid color. It was a scene of beauty, yet there hung about it an air of mystery and death like a noxious miasma. It reminded the girl of the face of a lovely woman behind whose mask of beauty hid a vicious soul. The silence, the scent of rotting things in the heavy air oppressed her.

Just ahead a great, slimy body slid from a rotting log into the slow moving waters. It was a crocodile. As the canoe glided silently through the semi-darkness the girl saw that the river was fairly alive with these hideous reptiles whose presence served but to add to the depression that already weighed so heavily upon her.

She sought to arouse her drooping spirits by recalling the faint hope of rescue that she had entertained and clung to ever since she had been so hurriedly removed from the village. Fortunately for her peace of mind she did not know her destination, nor that the only avenue to it lay along this crocodile-infested stream. No other path led through the matted jungle to the cleverly hidden temple of the Leopard God. No other avenue than this fetid river gave ingress to it, and this was known to no human being who was not a Leopard Man.

The canoe had proceeded up the stream for a couple of miles when the girl saw upon the right bank just ahead of them a large, grass-thatched building.

Unaccustomed as she had been during the past few months to seeing any structure larger than the ordinary native huts, the size of this building filled her with astonishment. It was quite two hundred long and fifty wide, nor less than fifty feet in height. It lay parallel to the river, its main entrance being in the end they were approaching. A wide veranda extended across the front of the building and along the side facing the river. The entire structure was elevated on piles to a height of about ten feet above the ground. She did not know it, but this was the temple of the Leopard God, whose high priestess she was destined to be.

As the canoe drew closer to the

building a number of men emerged from its interior. Lulimi rose from the bottom of the craft where he had been squatting and shouted a few words to the men on the temple porch. They were the secret passwords of the order, to which one of the guardians of the temple replied, whereupon the canoe drew in to the shore.

A few curious priests surrounded Lulimi and the girl as the old man escorted her up the temple steps to the great entrance flanked by grotesquely carved images and into the half-light of the interior. Here she found herself in an enormous room open to the rafters far above her head. Hideous masks hung upon the supporting columns with

shields, and spears, and knives, and human skulls. Idols, crudely carved, stood about the floor. Many of these represented a human body with the head of an animal, though so rude was the craftsmanship that the girl could not be certain what animal they were intended to represent. It might be a leopard, she thought.

At the far end of the room, which they were approaching, she discerned a raised dais. It was, in reality, a large platform paved with clay. Upon it, elevated a couple of feet, was a smaller dais about five feet wide and twice as long, which was covered with the skins of animals. A heavy post supporting a human skull was set in the center of the

long dimension of the smaller dais close to its rear edge. These details she noted only casually at the time. She was to have reason to remember them vividly later.

As Lulimi led her toward the dais a very old man emerged from an opening in the wall at its back and came toward them. He had a particularly repellant visage, the ugliness of which was accentuated by the glowering scowl with which he regarded her.

As his old eyes fell upon Lulimi they were lighted dimly by a feeble ray of recognition. "It is you?" he mumbled.

"But why do you bring this white woman? Who is she? A sacrifice?" "Listen, lmigeg," whispered Lulimi, "and

think well. Remember your prophecy."

"What prophecy?" demanded the high priest querulously. He was very old; and his memory sometimes played him tricks, though he did not like to admit it.

"Long ago you said that some day a white priestess would sit with you and the Leopard God, here on the great throne of the temple. Now your prophecy shall be fulfilled. Here is the white priestess, brought by Lulimi, just as you prophesied."

Now lmigeg did not recall having made any such prophecy, for the very excellent reason that he never had done so; but Lulimi was a wily old person who knew lmigeg better than lmigeg knew himself. He knew that the old high

priest was rapidly losing his memory; and he knew, too, that he was very sensitive on the subject, so sensitive that he would not dare deny having made such a prophecy as Lulimi imputed to him.

For reasons of his own Lulimi desired a white priestess. Just how it might redound to his benefit is not entirely clear, but the mental processes of priests are often beyond the ken of lay minds. Perhaps his reasons might have been obvious to a Hollywood publicity agent; but however that may be, the method he had adopted to insure the acceptance of his priestess was entirely successful.

lmigeg swallowed the bait, hook,

line, and sinker. He swelled with importance. "Imigeg talks with the demons and the spirits," he said; "they tell him everything. When we have human flesh for the Leopard God and his priests, the white woman shall be made high priestess of the order."

"That should be soon then," announced Lulimi.

"How do you know that?" demanded Imigeg.

"My muzimo came to me and told me that the warriors now in the village of Gato Mgungu would march forth today, returning with food enough for all."

"Good," exclaimed Imigeg quickly; "it is just as I prophesied yesterday to the lesser priests."

"Tonight then," said Lulimi. "Now you will want to have the white woman prepared."

At the suggestion Imigeg clapped his hands, whereupon several of the lesser priests advanced. "Take the woman," he instructed one of them "to the quarters of the priestesses. She is to be high priestess of the order. Tell them this and that they shall prepare her. Tell them, also, that Imigeg holds them responsible for her safety."

The lesser priest led the girl through the opening at the rear of the dais, where she discovered herself in a corridor flanked on either side by rooms. To the door of one of these the man conducted her and, pushing her ahead, entered. It

was a large room in which were a dozen women, naked but for tiny G strings. Nearly all of them were young; but there was one toothless old hag, and it was she whom the man addressed.

The angry and resentful movement of the women toward the white girl at the instant that she entered the room was halted at the first words of her escort. "This is the new high priestess of the Leopard God," he announced. "lmigeg sends orders that you are to prepare her for the rites to be held tonight. If any harm befalls her you will be held accountable, and you all know the anger of lmigeg."

"Leave her with me," mumbled the old woman. "I have served in the temple

through many rains, but I have not filled the belly of the Leopard God yet."

"You are too old and tough," snarled one of the younger women.

"You are not," snapped the old hag. "All the more reason that you should be careful not to make lmigeg angry, or Mumga, either. Go," she directed the priest. "The white woman will be safe with old Mumga."

As the man left the room the women gathered about the girl. Hatred distorted their features. The younger women tore at her clothing. They pushed and pulled her about, all the while jabbering excitedly; but they did not injure her aside from a few scratches from claw-like nails.

The reason for bringing her here at all was unknown to Kali Bwana; the intentions of the women were, similarly, a mystery. Their demeanor boded her no good, and she believed that eventually they would kill her. Their degraded faces, their sharp-filed, yellow fangs, their angry voices and glances left no doubt in her mind as to the seriousness of her situation or the desires of the harpies. That a power which they feared restrained them she did not know. She saw only the menace of their attitude toward her and their rough and brutal handling of her.

One by one they stripped her garments from her until she stood even more naked than they, and then she was

accorded a respite as they fell to fighting among themselves for her clothing. For the first time she had an opportunity to note her surroundings. She saw that the room was the common sleeping and eating apartment of the women. Straw mats were stretched across one of its sides. There was a clay hearth at one end directly below a hole in the roof, through which some of the smoke from a still smoldering fire was finding its way into the open air, though most of it hung among the rafters of the high ceiling, from whence it settled down to fill the apartment with acrid fumes. A few cooking pots stood on or beside the hearth. There were earthen jars and wooden boxes, fiber baskets and

pouches of skin strewn upon the floor along the walls, many near the sleeping mats. From pegs stuck in the walls depended an array of ornaments and finery: strings of beads, necklaces of human teeth and of the teeth of leopards, bracelets of copper and iron and anklets of the same metals, feather head-dresses and breastplates of metal and of hide, and innumerable garments fashioned from the black-spotted, yellow skins of leopards. Everything in the apartment bespoke primitive savagery in keeping with its wild and savage inmates.

When the final battle for the last vestige of her apparel had terminated, the women again turned their attention to the girl. Old Mumga addressed her at

considerable length, but Kali Bwana only shook her head to indicate that she could understand nothing that was said to her. Then at a word from the old woman they laid hold of her again, none too gently. She was thrown upon one of the filthy sleeping mats, an earthen jar was dragged to the side of the mat, and two young women proceeded to anoint her with a vile smelling oil, the base of which might have been rancid butter. This was rubbed in by rough hands until her flesh was almost raw; then a greenish liquid, which smelled of bay leaves and stung like fire, was poured over her; and again she was rubbed until the liquid had evaporated.

When this ordeal had been concluded,

leaving her weak and sick from its effects, she was clothed. Much discussion accompanied this ceremony, and several times women were sent to consult Imigeg and to fetch apparel from other parts of the temple. Finally they seemed satisfied with their handiwork, and Kali Bwana, who had worn some of the most ridiculous creations of the most famous couturiers of Paris, stood clothed as she had never been clothed before.

First they had adjusted about her slim, fair waist a loin cloth made from the skins of unborn leopard cubs; and then, over one shoulder, had been draped a gorgeous hide of vivid yellow, spotted with glossy black. This garment hung in graceful folds almost to her knee on one

side, being shorter on the other. A rope of leopard tails gathered it loosely about her hips. About her throat was a necklace of human teeth; upon her wrists and arms were heavy bracelets, at least two of which she recognized as a gold. In similar fashion were her ankles adorned, and then more necklaces were hung about her neck. Her head-dress consisted of a diadem of leopard skin supporting a variety of plumes and feathers which entirely encircled her head. But the finishing touch brought a chill of horror to her; long, curved talons of gold were affixed to her fingers and thumbs, recalling the cruel death of the native who had striven so bravely and so futilely to protect her.

Thus was Kali Bwana prepared for the hideous rites of the Leopard Men that would make her high priestess of their savage god.

CHAPTER 8.—TREASON UNMASKED

Muzimo loafed through the forest. He was glad to be alone, away from the noisy, boasting creatures that were men. True, The Spirit of Nyamwegi was given to boasting; but Muzimo never paid much attention to him. Sometimes he chided him for behaving so much like men; and as long as The Spirit of Nyamwegi could remember, he was quiet; but his memory was short. Only when a certain stern expression entered the eyes of Muzimo and he spoke in a low voice that was half growl, was The Spirit of Nyamwegi quiet for long; but that occurred only when there was

important need for silence.

Muzimo and The Spirit of Nyamwegi had departed early from the camp of the Utengas for the purpose of locating and spying upon the village of the Leopard Men, but time meant nothing to Muzimo. This thing that he had set out to do, he would do when he was ready. So it was that the morning was all but spent before Muzimo caught sight of the village.

The warriors had already departed in search of the enemies from Watenga, and Muzimo had not seen them because he had taken a circuitous route from the camp to the village. The girl had also been taken away to the temple, though even had she still been there her presence would have meant nothing to

the ancestral spirit of Orando, who was no more concerned with the fate of whites than he was with the fate of Negroes.

The village upon which he looked from the concealing verdure of a nearby tree differed little from the quiet native village of Tumbai except that its palisade was taller and stronger. There were a few men and women in its single main street, the former lolling in the shade of trees, the latter busy with the endless duties of their sex, which they lightened by the world-wide medium of gossip.

Muzimo was not much interested in what he saw, at least at first. There was no great concourse of warriors. A

hundred Utengas, if they could surprise the village, could wreak vengeance upon it easily. He noted, however, that the gates were thick and high, that they were closed, and that a guard of warriors squatted near them in the shade of the palisade. Perhaps, he thought, it would be better to take the place by night when a few agile men might scale the palisade undetected and open the gates for their fellows. He finally decided that he would do that himself without assistance. For Muzimo it would be a simple matter to enter the village undetected.

Suddenly his eyes were arrested by a group before a large hut. There was a large man, whom he intuitively knew to

be the chief, and there were several others with whom he was conversing; but it was not the chief who arrested his attention. It was one of the others. Instantly Muzimo recognized him, and his grey eyes narrowed. What was Lupingu doing in the village of the Leopard Men? It was evident that he was not a prisoner, for it was plainly to be seen that the conversation between the men was amicable.

Muzimo waited. Presently he saw Lupingu leave the party before the chief's hut and approach the gates. He saw the warriors on guard open them, and he saw Lupingu pass through them and disappear into the forest in the direction of the camp of the Utengas.

Muzimo was puzzled. What was Lupingu going to do? What had he already done? Perhaps he had gone to spy upon the Leopard Men and was returning with information for Orando.

Silently Muzimo slipped from the tree in which he had been hiding, and swung through the trees upon the trail of Lupingu, who, ignorant of the presence of the Nemesis hovering above him, trotted briskly in the direction of the camp of the tribesmen he had betrayed.

Presently from a distance, far ahead, Muzimo heard sounds, sounds that the ears of Lupingu could not hear. They told him that many people were coming through the forest in his direction. Later he interpreted them as the sounds made

by warriors marching hurriedly. They were almost upon him before Lupingu heard them. When he did he went off from the trail a short distance and hid in the underbrush.

Muzimo waited among the foliage above the trees. He had caught the scent of the oncoming men and had recognized none that was familiar to him. It was the scent of warriors, and mixed with it was the scent of fresh blood. Some of them wounded. They had been in battle.

Presently they came in sight; and he saw that they were not the Utengas, as his nostrils had already told him. He guessed that they were from the village of the Leopard Men, and that they were returning to it. This accounted for the

small number of warriors that he had seen in the village. Where had they been? Had they been in battle with Orando's little force?

He counted them, roughly, as they passed below him. There were nearly three hundred of them, and Orando had but a hundred warriors. Yet he was sure that Orando had not been badly defeated, for he saw no prisoners nor were they bringing any dead warriors with them, not even their own dead, as they would have, if they were Leopard Men and had been victorious.

Evidently, whoever they had fought, and it must have been Orando, had repulsed them; but how bad the Utengas fared? Their losses must have been great

in battle with a force that so greatly outnumbered them. But all this was only surmise. Presently he would find the Utengas and learn the truth. In the meantime he must keep an eye on Lupingu who was still hiding at one side of the trail.

When the Leopard Men had passed, Lupingu came from his concealment, and continued on in the direction he had been going, while above him and a little in his rear swung Muzimo and The Spirit of Nyamwegi.

When they came at last to the place where the Utengas had camped, they found only grim reminders of the recent battle; the Utengas were not there. Lupingu looked about him, a pleased

smile on his crafty face. His efforts had not been in vain; the Leopard Men had at least driven the Utengas away, even though it had been as evident to him as it had been to Muzimo that their victory had been far from decisive.

For a moment he hesitated, of two minds as to whether to follow his former companions, or return to the village and take part in the ceremonies at the temple at the installation of the white priestess; but at last he decided that the safer plan was to rejoin the Utengas, lest a prolonged absence should arouse their suspicions as to his loyalty. He did not know that the matter was not in his hands at all, or that a power far greater than his own lurked above him, all but reading

his mind, a power that would have frustrated an attempt to return to the village of Gato Mgungu and carried him by force to the new camp of Orando.

Lupingu had jogged on along the plain trail of the retreating Utengas for a couple of miles when he was halted by a sentry whom he recognized at once as the brother of the girl whose affections Nyamwegi had stolen from him. When the sentry saw that it was Lupingu, the traitor was permitted to pass; and a moment later he entered the camp, which he found bristling with spears, the nerve-shaken warriors having leaped to arms at the challenge of the sentry.

There were wounded men groaning upon the ground, and ten of the Utenga

dead were stretched out at one side of the camp, where a burial party was digging a shallow trench in which to inter them.

A volley of questions was hurled at Lupingu as he sought out Orando, and the angry or suspicious looks that accompanied them warned him that his story must be a most convincing one if it were to avail him.

Orando greeted him with a questioning scowl. "Where have you been, Lupingu, while we were fighting?" he demanded.

"I, too, have been fighting," replied Lupingu glibly.

"I did not see you," countered Orando. "You were not there. You were

not in camp this morning. Where were you? See that your tongue speaks no lies."

"My tongue speaks only true words," insisted Lupingu. "Last night I said to myself: 'Orando does not like Lupingu. There are many who do not like Lupingu. Because he advised them not to make war against the Leopard Men they do not like him. Now he must do something to show them that he is a brave warrior. He must do something to save them from the Leopard Men.'

"And so I went out from camp while it was still dark to search for the village of the Leopard Men, that I might spy upon them and bring word to Orando. But I did not find the village. I became

lost, and while I was searching for it I met many warriors. I did not run. I stood and fought with them until I had killed three. Then some came from behind and seized me. They made me prisoner, and I learned that I was in the hands of the Leopard Men.

"Later they fought with you. I could not see the battle, as their guards held me far behind the fighting men; but after a while the Leopard Men ran away, and I knew that the Utengas had been victorious. In the excitement I escaped and hid. When they had all gone I came at once to the camp of Orando."

The son of Lobongo, the chief, was no fool. He did not believe Lupingu's story, but he did not guess the truth. The worst

interpretation that he put on Lupingu's desertion was cowardice in the face of an impending battle; but that was something to be punished by the contempt of his fellow warriors and the ridicule of the women of his village when he returned to Kibbu.

Orando shrugged. He had other, more important matters to occupy his thoughts. "If you want to win the praise of warriors," he advised, "remain and fight beside them." Then he turned away.

With startling suddenness that shocked the frayed nerves of the Utengas, Muzimo and The Spirit of Nyamwegi dropped unexpectedly into their midst from the overhanging branches of a tree. Once again three

score spears danced nervously, their owners ready to fight or fly as the first man set the example; but when they saw who it was their fears were calmed; and perhaps they felt a little more confidence, for the presence of two friendly spirits is most reassuring to a body of half defeated warriors fearful of the return of the enemy.

"You have had a battle," said Muzimo to Orando. "I saw the Leopard Men running away; but your men act as though they, too, had been defeated. I do not understand."

"They came to our camp and fell upon us while we were unprepared," explained Orando. "Many of our men were killed or wounded in their first

charge, but the Utengas were brave. They rallied and fought the Leopard Men off, killing many, wounding many; then the Leopard Men ran away, for we were fighting more bravely than they.

"We did not pursue them, because they greatly outnumbered us. After the battle my men were afraid they might return in still greater numbers. They did not wish to fight any more. They said that we had won, and that now Nyamwegi was fully avenged. They want to go home. Therefore we fell back to this new camp. Here we bury our dead. Tomorrow we do what the gods decide. I do not know.

"What I should like to know, though, is how the Leopard Men knew we were

here. They shouted at us and told us that the god of the Leopard Men had sent them to our camp to get much flesh for a great feast. They said that tonight they would eat us all. It was those words that frightened the Utengas and made them want to go home."

"Would you like to know who told the Leopard Men that you were coming and where your camp was?" asked Muzimo.

Lupingu's eyes reflected a sudden fear. He edged off toward the jungle. "Watch Lupingu," directed Muzimo, "lest he go again to 'spy upon the Leopard Men.'" The words were scarcely uttered before Lupingu bolted; but a dozen warriors blocked his way; and presently he was dragged back,

struggling and protesting. "It was not a god that told the Leopard Men that the Utengas were coming," continued Muzimo. "I crouched in a tree above their village, and saw the one who told them talking to their chief. Very friendly were they, as though both were Leopard Men. I followed him when he left the village. I saw him hide when the retreating warriors passed in the jungle. I followed him to the camp of the Utengas. I heard his tongue speak lies to Orando. I am Muzimo. I have spoken."

Instantly hoarse cries for vengeance arose. Men fell upon Lupingu and knocked him about. He would have been killed at once had not Muzimo interfered. He seized the wretched man

and shielded him with his great body, while The Spirit of Nyamwegi fled to the branches of a tree and screamed excitedly as he danced up and down in a perfect frenzy of rage, though what it was all about he did not know.

"Do not kill him," commanded Muzimo, sternly. "Leave him to me."

"The traitor must die," shouted a warrior.

"Leave him to me," reiterated Muzimo.

"Leave him to Muzimo," commanded Orando; and at last, disgruntled, the warriors desisted from their attempts to lay hands upon the wretch.

"Bring ropes," directed Muzimo, "and bind his wrists and his ankles."

When eager hands had done as Muzimo bid, the warriors formed a half circle before him and Lupingu, waiting expectantly to witness the death of the prisoner, which they believed would take the form of some supernatural and particularly atrocious manifestation.

They saw Muzimo lift the man to one broad shoulder. They saw him take a few running steps, leap as lightly into the air as though he bore no burden whatsoever, seize a low-hanging limb as he swung himself upward, and disappear amidst the foliage above, melting into the shadows of the coming dusk.

CHAPTER 9.—THE LEOPARD GOD

Night was approaching. The sun, half hidden by the tops of forest trees, swung downward into the west. Its departing rays turned the muddy waters of a broad river into the semblance of molten gold. A ragged white man emerged from a forest trail upon the outskirts of a broad field of manioc, at the far side of which a palisaded village cast long shadows back to meet the shadows of the forest where he stood with his two black companions. To his right the forest hemmed the field and came down to overhang the palisade at the rear of the village.

"Do not go on, Bwana," urged one of the natives. "It is the village of the Leopard Men."

"It is the village of old Gato Mgungu," retorted Old Timer. "I have traded with him in the past."

"Then you came with many followers and with guns; then Gato Mgungu was a trader. Today you come with only two boys; today you will find that old Gato Mgungu is a Leopard Man."

"Bosh!" exclaimed the white man. "He would not dare harm a white."

"You do not know them," insisted the black. "They would kill their own mothers for flesh if there was no one to see them do it."

"Every sign that we have seen

indicates that the girl was brought here," argued Old Timer. "Leopard Men or no Leopard Men, I am going into the village."

"I do not wish to die," said the Negro.

"Nor do I," agreed his fellow.

"Then wait for me in the forest. Wait until the shadow of the forest has left the palisade in the morning. If I have not returned then, go back to the camp where the young bwana waits and tell him that I am dead."

The natives shook their heads. "Do not go, Bwana. The white woman was not your wife, neither was she your mother nor your sister. Why should you die for a woman who was nothing to you?"

Old Timer shook his head. "You would not understand." He wondered if he himself understood. Vaguely he realized that the force that was driving him on was not governed by reason; back of it was something inherent, bred into his fiber through countless generations of his kind. Its name was duty. If there was another more powerful force actuating him he was not conscious of it. Perhaps there was no other. There were lesser forces, though, and one of them was anger and another, desire for revenge. But two days of tracking through the jungle had cooled these to the point where he would no longer have risked his life to gratify them. It was the less obvious but more powerful urge that

drove him on.

"Perhaps I shall return in a few minutes," he said, "but if not, then until tomorrow morning!" He shook their hands in parting.

"Good luck, Bwana!"

"May the good spirits watch over you, Bwana!"

He strode confidently along the path that skirted the manioc field toward the gates set in the palisade. Savage eyes watched his approach. Behind him the eyes of his servitors filled with tears. Inside the palisade a warrior ran to the hut of Gato Mgungu.

"A white man is coming," he reported. "He is alone."

"Let him enter, and bring him to me," ordered the chief.

As Old Timer came close to the gates one of them swung open. He saw a few warriors surveying him more or less apathetically. There was nothing in their demeanor to suggest antagonism, neither was their greeting in any way friendly. Their manner was wholly perfunctory. He made the sign of peace, which they ignored; but that did not trouble him. He was not concerned with the attitude of warriors, only with that of Gato Mgungu, the chief. As he was, so would they be.

"I have come to visit my friend, Gato Mgungu," he announced.

"He is waiting for you," replied the warrior who had taken word of his

coming to the chief. "Come with me."

Old Timer noted the great number of warriors in the village. Among them he saw wounded men and knew that there had been a battle. He hoped that they had been victorious. Gato Mgungu would be in better humor were such the case. The scowling, unfriendly glances of the villagers did not escape him as he followed his guide toward the hut of the chief. On the whole, the atmosphere of the village was far from reassuring; but he had gone too far to turn back, even had he been of a mind to do so.

Gato Mgungu received him with a surly nod. He was sitting on a stool in front of his hut surrounded by a number of his principal followers. There was no

answering smile or pleasant word to Old Timer's friendly greeting. The aspect of the situation appeared far from roseate.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Gato Mgungu.

The smile had faded from the white man's face. He knew that this was no time for soft words. There was danger in the very air. He sensed it without knowing the reason for it; and he knew that a bold front, along, might release him from a serious situation.

"I have come for the white girl," he said.

Gato Mgungu's eyes shifted. "What white girl?" he demanded.

"Do not lie to me with questions,"' snapped Old Timer. "The white girl is

here. For two days I have followed those who stole her from my camp. Give her to me. I wish to return to my people who wait for me in the forest."

"There is no white girl in my village," growled Gato Mgungu, "nor do I take orders from white men. I am Gato Mgungu, the chief. I give orders."

"You'll take orders from me, you old scoundrel," threatened the other, "or I'll have a force down on your village that'll wipe it off the map."

Gato Mgungu sneered. "I know you, white man. There are two of you and six natives in your safari. You have few guns. You are poor. You steal ivory. You do not dare go where the white rulers are. They would put you in jail.

You come with big words, but big words do not frighten Gato Mgungu; and now you are my prisoner."

"Well, what of it?" demanded Old Timer. "What do you think you're going to do with me?"

"Kill you," replied Gato Mgungu.

The white man laughed. "No you won't; not if you know what's good for you. The government would burn your village and hang you when they found it out."

"They will not find it out," retorted the chief. "Take him away. See that he does not escape."

Old Timer looked quickly around at the evil, scowling faces surrounding him. It was then that he recognized the

chief, Bobolo, with whom he had long been upon good terms. Two warriors laid heavy hands upon him to drag him away. "Wait!" he exclaimed, thrusting them aside. "Let me speak to Bobolo. He certainly has sense enough to stop this foolishness."

"Take him away!" shouted Gato Mgungu.

Again the warriors seized him, and as Bobolo made no move to intercede in his behalf the white man accompanied his guard without further demonstration. After disarming him they took him to a small hut, filthy beyond description, and, tying him securely, left him under guard of a single sentry who squatted on the ground outside the low doorway; but

they neglected to remove the pocket knife from a pocket in his breeches.

Old Timer was very uncomfortable. His bonds hurt his wrists and ankles. The dirt floor of the hut was uneven and hard. The place was alive with crawling, biting things. It was putrid with foul stenches. In addition to these physical discomforts the outlook was mentally distressing. He began to question the wisdom of his quixotic venture and to upbraid himself for not listening to the council of his two followers.

But presently thoughts of the girl and the horrid situation in which she must be, if she still lived, convinced him that even though he had failed he could not

have done otherwise than he had. He recalled to his mind a vivid picture of her as he had last seen her, he recounted her perfections of face and figure, and he knew that if chance permitted him to escape from the village of Gato Mgungu he would face even greater perils to effect her rescue.

His mind was still occupied with thoughts of her when he heard someone in conversation with his guard, and a moment later a figure entered the hut. It was now night; the only light was that reflected from the cooking fires burning about the village and a few torches set in the ground before the hut of the chief. The interior of his prison was in almost total darkness. The features of his visitor

were quite invisible. He wondered if he might be the executioner, come to inflict the death penalty pronounced by the chief; but at the first words he recognized the voice of Bobolo.

"Perhaps I can help you," said his visitor. "You would like to get out of here?"

"Of course. Old Mgungu must have gone crazy. What's the matter with the old fool, anyway?"

"He does not like white men. I am their friend. I will help you."

"Good for you, Bobolo," exclaimed Old Timer. "You'll never regret it."

"It cannot be done for nothing," suggested Bobolo.

"Name your price."

"It is not my price," the black hastened to assure him; "it is what I shall have to pay to others."

"Well, how much?"

"Ten tusks of ivory."

Old Timer whistled. "Wouldn't you like a steam yacht and a Rolls Royce, too?"

"Yes," agreed Bobolo, willing to accept anything whether or not he knew what it was.

"Well, you don't get them; and, furthermore, ten tusks are too many."

Bobolo shrugged. "You know best, white man, what your life is worth." He arose to go.

"Wait!" exclaimed Old Timer. "You know it is hard to get any ivory these days."

"I should have asked for a hundred tusks; but you are a friend, and so I asked only ten."

"Get me out of here and I will bring the tusks to you when I get them. It may take time, but I will bring them."

Bobolo shook his head. "I must have the tusks first. Send word to your white friend to send me the tusks; then you will be freed."

"How can I send word to him? My men are not here."

"I will send a messenger."

"All right, you old horse-thief,"

consented the white. "Untie my wrists and I'll write a note to him."

"That will not do. I would not know what the paper that talks said. It might say things that would bring trouble to Bobolo."

"You're darn right it would," soliloquized Old Timer. "If I could get the notebook and pencil out of my pocket The Kid would get a message that would land you in jail and hang Gato Mgungu into the bargain." But aloud he said, "How will he know that the message is from me?"

"Send something by the messenger that he will know is yours. You are wearing a ring. I saw it today."

"How do I know you will send the

right message?" demurred Old Timer. "You might demand a hundred tusks."

"I am your friend. I am very honest. Also, there is no other way. Shall I take the ring?"

"Very well; take it."

The Negro stepped behind Old Timer and removed the ring from his finger. "When the ivory comes you will be set free," he said as he stooped, and passed out of the hut.

"I don't take any stock in the old fraud," thought the white man, "but a drowning man clutches at a straw."

Bobolo grinned as he examined the ring by the light of a fire. "I am a bright man," he muttered to himself. "I shall have a ring as well as the ivory." As for

freeing Old Timer, that was beyond his power; nor had he any intention of even attempting it. He was well contented with himself when he joined the other chiefs who were sitting in council with Gato Mgungu.

They were discussing, among other things, the method of dispatching the white prisoner. Some wished to have him slain and butchered in the village that they might not have to divide the flesh with the priests and the Leopard God at the temple. Others insisted that he be taken forthwith to the high priest that his flesh might be utilized in the ceremonies accompanying the induction of the new white high priestess. There was a great deal of oratory, most of

which was in apropos; but that is ever the way of men in conferences. Black or white they like to hear their own voices.

Gato Mgungu was in the midst of a description of heroic acts that he had performed in a battle that had been fought twenty years previously when he was silenced by a terrifying interruption. There was a rustling of the leaves in the tree that overhung his hut; a heavy object hurtled down into the center of the circle formed by the squatting councilors, and as one man they leaped to their feet in consternation. Expressions of surprise, awe, or terror were registered upon every countenance. They turned affrighted glances upward into the tree, but nothing was visible there among the

dark shadows; then they looked down at the thing lying at their feet. It was the corpse of a man, its wrists and ankles bound, its throat cut from ear to ear.

"It is Lupingu, the Utenga," whispered Gato Mgungu. "He brought me word of the coming of the son of Lobongo and his warriors."

"It is an ill omen," whispered one.

"They have punished the traitor," said another.

"But who could have carried him into the tree and thrown him down upon us?" demanded Bobolo.

"He spoke today of one who claimed to be the muzimo of Orando," explained Gato Mgungu, "a huge white man whose powers were greater than the powers of

Sobito, the witch-doctor of Tumbai."

"We have heard of him from another," interjected a chief.

"And he spoke of another," continued Gato Mgungu, "that is the spirit of Nyamwegi of Kibbu, who was killed by children of the Leopard God. This one has taken the form of a little monkey."

"Perhaps it was the muzimo that brought Lupingu here," suggested Bobolo. "It is a warning. Let us take the white man to the high priest to do with as he sees fit. If he kills him the fault will not be ours."

"Those are the words of a wise man." The speaker was one who owed a debt to Bobolo.

"It is dark," another reminded them;

"perhaps we had better wait until morning."

"Now is the time," said Gato Mgungu. "If the muzimo is white and is angry because we have made this white man prisoner, he will hang around the village as long as we keep the other here. We will take him to the temple. The high priest and the Leopard God are stronger than any muzimo."

Hidden amidst the foliage of a tree Muzimo watched the natives in the palisaded village below. The Spirit of Nyamwegi, bored by the sight, disgusted with all this wandering about by night, had fallen asleep in his arms, Muzimo saw the warriors arming and forming under the commands of their chiefs. The

white prisoner was dragged from the hut in which he had been imprisoned, the bonds were removed from his ankles, and he was hustled under guard toward the gateway through which the warriors were now debouching upon the river front. Here they launched a flotilla of small canoes (some thirty of them) each with a capacity of about ten men, for there were almost three hundred warriors of the Leopard God in the party, only a few having been left in the village to act as a guard. The large war canoes, seating fifty men, were left behind, bottom up, upon the shore.

As the last canoe with its load of painted savages drifted down the dark current, Muzimo and The Spirit of

Nyamwegi dropped from the tree that had concealed them and followed along the shore. An excellent trail paralleled the river; and along this Muzimo trotted, keeping the canoes always within hearing.

The Spirit of Nyamwegi, aroused from sound sleep to follow many more of the hated Gomangani than he could count, was frightened and excited. "Let us turn back," he begged. "Why must we follow all these Gomangani who will kill us if they catch us, when we might be sleeping safely far away in a nice large tree?"

"They are the enemies of Orando," explained Muzimo. "We follow to see where they are going and what they are

going to do."

"I do not care where they are going or what they are going to do," whimpered The Spirit of Nyamwegi; "I am sleepy. If we go on, Sheeta will get us or Sabor or Numa; if not they, then the Gomangani. Let us go back."

"No," replied the white giant. "I am a muzimo. Muzimos must know everything. Therefore I must go about by night as well as by day watching the enemies of Orando. If you do not wish to come with me climb a tree and sleep."

The Spirit of Nyamwegi was afraid to go on with Muzimo, but he was more afraid to remain alone in this strange forest; so he said nothing more about the matter as Muzimo trotted along the dark

trail beside the dark, mysterious river.

They had covered about two miles when Muzimo became aware that the canoes had stopped, and a moment later he came to the bank of a small affluent of the larger stream. Into this the canoes were moving slowly in single file. He watched them, counting, until the last had entered the sluggish stream and disappeared in the darkness of the overhanging verdure; then, finding no trail, he took to the trees, following the canoes by the sound of the dipping paddles beneath him.

It chanced that Old Timer was in a canoe commanded by Bobolo, and he took advantage of the opportunity to ask the chief whither they were taking him

and why; but Bobolo cautioned him to silence, whispering that at present no one must know of his friendship for the prisoner. "Where you are going you will be safer; your enemies will not be able to find you," was the most that he would say.

"Nor my friends either," suggested Old Timer; but to that Bobolo made no answer.

The surface of the stream beneath the trees, which prevented even the faint light of a moonless sky from reaching it, was shrouded in utter darkness. Old Timer could not see the man next to him, nor his hand before his face. How the paddlers guided their craft along this narrow, tortuous river appeared little

less than a miracle to him, yet they moved steadily and surely toward their destination. He wondered what that destination might be. There seemed something mysterious and uncanny in the whole affair. The river itself was mysterious. The unwonted silence of the warriors accentuated the uncanniness of the situation. Everything combined to suggest to his imagination a company of dead men paddling up a river of death, three hundred Charons escorting his dead soul to Hell. It was not a pleasant thought; he sought to thrust it from his mind, but there was none more pleasant to replace it. It seemed to Old Timer that his fortunes never before had been at such low ebb.

"At least," he soliloquized, "I have the satisfaction of knowing that things could get no worse."

One thought which recurred persistently caused him the most concern. It was of the girl and her fate. While he was not convinced that she had not been in the village while he was captive there, he felt that such had not been the case. He realized that his judgment was based more upon intuition than reason, but the presentiment was so strong that it verged upon conviction. Being positive that she had been brought to the village only a short time before his arrival, he sought to formulate some reasonable conjecture as to the disposition the savages had made of her.

He doubted that they had killed her as yet. Knowing, as he did, that they were cannibals, he was positive that the killing of the girl, if they intended to kill her, would be reserved for a spectacular ceremony and followed by a dance and an orgy. There had not been time for such a celebration since she had been brought to the village; therefore it seemed probable that she had preceded him up this mysterious river of darkness.

He hoped that this last conjecture might prove correct, not only because of the opportunity it would afford to rescue her from her predicament (provided that lay within his power) but because it would bring him near her once more where, perchance, he might see or even

touch her. Absence had but resulted in stimulating his mad infatuation for her. Mere contemplation of her charms aroused to fever heat his longing for her, redoubled his anger against the savages who had abducted her.

His mind was thus occupied by these complex emotions when his attention was attracted by a light just ahead upon the right bank of the stream. At first he saw only the light, but presently he perceived human figures dimly illuminated by its rays and behind it the outlines of a large structure. The number of the figures increased rapidly and more lights appeared. He saw that the former were the crews of the canoes which had preceded his and the latter

torches borne by people coming from the structure, which he now saw was a large building.

Presently his own canoe pulled in to the bank, and he was hustled ashore. Here, among the warriors who had come from the village, were savages clothed in the distinctive apparel of the Leopard Men. It was these who had emerged from the building, carrying torches. A few of them wore hideous masks. They were the priests of the Leopard God.

Slowly there was dawning upon the consciousness of the white man the realization that he had been brought to that mysterious temple of the Leopard Men of which he had heard frightened, whispered stories from the lips of

terrified natives upon more than a single occasion, and which he had come to consider more fabulous than real. The reality of it, however, was impressed upon him with overpowering certainty when he was dragged through the portals of the building into it barbaric interior.

Lighted by many torches, the scene was one to be indelibly impressed upon the memory of a beholder. Already the great chamber was nearly filled with the warriors from the village of Gato Mgungu. They were milling about several large piles of leopard skins presided over by masked priests who were issuing these ceremonial costumes to them. Gradually the picture changed as the warriors donned the garb of their

savage order, until the white man saw about him only the black and yellow hides of the carnivores; the curved, cruel, steel talons; and the black faces, hideously painted, partially hidden by the leopard head helmets.

The wavering torchlight played upon carved and painted idols; it glanced from naked human skulls, from gaudy shields and grotesque masks hung upon the huge pillars that supported the roof of the building. It lighted, more brilliantly than elsewhere, a raised dais at the far end of the chamber, where stood the high priest upon a smaller platform at the back of the dais. Below and around him were grouped a number of lesser priests; while chained to a

heavy post near him was a large leopard, bristling and growling at the massed humanity beneath him, a devil-faced leopard that seemed to the imagination of the white man to personify the savage bestiality of the cult it symbolized.

The man's eyes ranged the room in search of the girl, but she was nowhere to be seen. He shuddered at the thought that she might be hidden somewhere in this frightful place, and would have risked everything to learn, had his guards given him the slightest opportunity. If she were here her case was hopeless, as hopeless as he now realized his own to be; for since he had become convinced that he had been

brought to the temple of the Leopard Men, allowed to look upon their holy of holies, to view their most secret rites, he had known that no power on earth could save him; and that the protestations and promises of Bobolo had been false, for no one other than a Leopard Man could look upon these things and live.

Gato Mgungu, Bobolo, and the other chiefs had taken their places in front of the common warriors at the foot of the dais. Gato Mgungu had spoken to the high priest, and now at a word from the latter his guards dragged Old Timer forward and stood with him at the right of the dais. Three hundred pairs of evil eyes, filled with hatred, glared at him—savage eyes, hungry eyes.

The high priest turned toward the snarling, mouthing leopard. "Leopard God," he cried in a high, shrill voice, "the children of the Leopard God have captured an enemy of his people. They have brought him here to the great temple. What is the will of the Leopard God?"

There was a moment's silence during which all eyes were fixed upon the high priest and the leopard. Then a weird thing happened, a thing that turned the skin of the white man cold and stiffened the hairs upon his scalp. From the snarling mouth of the leopard came human speech. It was incredible, yet with his own ears he heard it.

"Let him die that the children of the

Leopard God may be fed!" The voice was low and husky and merged with bestial growls. "But first bring forth the new high priestess of the temple that my children may look upon her whom my brother commanded Lulimi to bring from a far country."

Lulimi, who by virtue of his high priestly rank stood nearest to the throne of the high priest, swelled visibly with pride. This was the big moment for which he had waited. All eyes were upon him. He trod a few steps of a savage dance, leaped high into the air, and voiced a hideous cry that echoed through the lofty rafters far above. The lay brothers were impressed; they would not soon forget Lulimi. But instantly their

attention was distracted from Lulimi to the doorway at the rear of the dais. In it stood a girl, naked but for a few ornaments. She stepped out upon the dais, to be followed immediately by eleven similarly garbed priestesses. Then there was a pause.

Old Timer wondered which of these was the new high priestess. There was little difference between them other than varying degrees of age and ugliness. Their yellow teeth were filed to sharp points; the septa of their noses were pierced, and through these holes were inserted ivory skewers; the lobes of their ears were stretched to their shoulders by heavy ornaments of copper, iron, brass, and ivory; their faces were painted a

ghoulish blue and white.

Now the Leopard God spoke again. "Fetch the high priestess!" he commanded, and with three hundred others Old Timer centered his gaze again upon the aperture at the back of the dais. A figure, dimly seen, approached out of the darkness of the chamber beyond until it stood in the doorway, the flare of the torches playing upon it.

The white man stifled a cry of astonishment and horror. The figure was that of the girl whom he sought.

CHAPTER 10.—WHILE THE PRIESTS SLEPT

As Kali Bwana was pushed into the doorway at the rear of the dais by the old hag who was her chief guardian, she paused in consternation and horror at the sight which met her eyes. Directly before her stood the high priest, terrifying in his weird costume and horrid mask, and near him a great leopard, nervous and restless on its chain. Beyond these was a sea of savage, painted faces and grotesque masks, discernible vaguely in the light of torches against a background of leopard skins.

The atmosphere of the room was

heavy with the acrid stench of bodies. A wave of nausea surged over the girl; she reeled slightly and placed the back of one hand across her eyes to shut out the terrifying sight.

The old woman behind her whispered angrily and shoved her forward. A moment later Imigeg, the high priest, seized her hand and drew her to the center of the smaller, higher dais beside the growling leopard. The beast snarled and sprang at her; but Imigeg had anticipated such an emergency, and the leopard was brought to a sudden stop by its chain before its raking talons touched the soft flesh of the shrinking girl.

Old Timer shuddered as the horror of her position impressed itself more

deeply upon his consciousness. His rage against the men and his own futility left him weak and trembling. His utter helplessness to aid her was maddening, as the sight of her redoubled the strength of his infatuation. He recalled the harsh and bitter things he had said to her, and he flushed with shame at the recollection. Then the eyes of the girl, now taking in the details of the scene before her, met his. For a moment she regarded him blankly; then she recognized him. Surprise and incredulity were written upon her countenance. At first she did not realize that he, too, was a prisoner. His presence recalled his boorish and ungallant attitude toward her at their first meeting. She saw in him

only another enemy; yet the fact that he was a white man imparted a new confidence. It did not seem possible that even he would stand idly by and permit a white woman to be imprisoned and maltreated by Negroes. Slowly, then, it dawned upon her that he was a prisoner as well as she; and though the new hope waned, there still remained a greater degree of confidence than she had felt before.

She wondered what queer trick of fate had brought them together again thus. She could not know, nor even dream, that he had been captured in an effort to succor her. Perhaps had she known and known, too, the impulse that had actuated him, even the slight confidence that his

presence imparted to her would have been dissipated; but she did not know. She only realized that he was a man of her own race, and that because he was there she felt a little braver.

As Old Timer watched the slender, graceful figure and beautiful face of the new high priestess of the Leopard God, other eyes surveyed and appraised her. Among these were the eyes of Bobolo—savage, bloodshot eyes; greedy, lustful eyes. Bobolo licked his lips hungrily. The savage chief was hungry, but not for food.

The rites of installation were proceeding. Imigeg held the center of the stage. He jabbered incessantly. Sometimes he addressed an underpriest

or a priestess, again the Leopard God; and when the beast answered, it never failed to elicit a subdued gasp of awe from the assembled warriors, though the white girl and Old Timer were less mystified or impressed after their first brief surprise.

There was another listener who also was mystified by the talking leopard, but who, though he had never heard of a ventriloquist, pierced the deception with his uncanny perceptive faculties as, perched upon a tie-beam of the roof that projected beyond the front wall of the building, he looked through an opening below the ridgepole at the barbaric scene being enacted beneath him.

It was Muzimo; and beside him,

trembling at the sight of so many leopards, perched The Spirit of Nyamwegi. "I am afraid," he said; "Nkima is afraid. Let us go back to the land that is Tarzan's. Tarzan is king there; here no one knows him, and he is no better than a Gomangani."

"Always you speak of Nkima and Tarzan," complained Muzimo. "I have never heard of them. You are The Spirit of Nyamwegi and I am Muzimo. How many times must I tell you these things?"

"You are Tarzan, and I am Nkima," insisted the little monkey. "You are a Tarmangani."

"I am the spirit of Orando's ancestor," insisted the other. "Did not Orando say so?"

"I do not know," sighed The Spirit of Nyamwegi wearily;

"I do not understand the language of the Gomangani. All I know is that I am Nkima, and that Tarzan has changed. He is not the same since the tree fell upon him. I also know that I am afraid. I want to go away from here."

"Presently," promised Muzimo. He was watching the scene below him intently. He saw the white man and the white girl, and he guessed the fate that awaited them, but it did not move him to compassion, nor arouse within him any sense of blood-responsibility. He was the ancestral spirit of Orando, the son of a chief; the fate of a couple of strange Tarmangani meant nothing to him.

Presently, however, his observing eyes discovered something which did arouse his keen interest. Beneath one of the hideous priest-masks he caught a glimpse of familiar features. He was not surprised, for he had been watching this particular priest intently for some time, his attention having been attracted to him by something familiar in his carriage and conformation. The shadow of a smile touched the lips of Muzimo. "Come!" he whispered to The Spirit of Nyamwegi, as he clambered to the roof of the temple.

Sure-footed as a cat he ran along the ridgepole, the little monkey at his heels. Midway of the building he sprang lightly down the sloping roof and launched

himself into the foliage of a nearby tree, and as The Spirit of Nyamwegi followed him the two were engulfed in the Erebusan darkness of the forest.

Inside the temple the priestesses had lighted many fires upon the large clay dais and swung cooking pots above them on crude tripods, while from a rear room of the temple the lesser priests had brought many cuts of meat, wrapped in plantain leaves. These the priestesses placed in the cooking pots, while the priests returned for gourds and jugs of native beer, which were passed among the warriors.

As the men drank they commenced to dance. Slowly at first, their bodies bent forward from the hips, their elbows

raised, they stepped gingerly, lifting their feet high. In their hands they grasped their spears and shields, holding them awkwardly because of the great, curved steel talons affixed to their fingers. Restricted by lack of space upon the crowded floor, each warrior pivoted upon the same spot, pausing only to take long drinks from the beer jugs as they were passed to him. A low, rhythmic chant accompanied the dance, rising in volume and increasing in tempo as the temp of the dance steps increased, until the temple floor was a mass of howling, leaping savages.

Upon the upper dais the Leopard God, aroused to fury by the din and movement about him and the scent of the flesh that

was cooking in the pots, strained at his chain, snarling and growling in rage. The high priest, stimulated by the contents of a beer pot, danced madly before the frenzied carnivore, leaping almost within reach of its raking talons, then springing away again as the infuriated beast struck at him. The white girl shrank to the far side of the dais, her brain reeling to the hideous pandemonium surrounding her, half numb from fear and apprehension. She had seen the meat brought to the cooking pots but had only vaguely guessed the nature of it until a human hand had fallen from its wrappings of plantain leaves. The significance of the grisly object terrified and sickened her.

The white man watching the scene about him looked most often in her direction. Once he had tried to speak to her; but one of his guards had struck him heavily across the mouth, silencing him. As the drinking and the dancing worked the savages into augmented fury, his concern for the safety of the girl increased. He saw that religious and alcoholic drunkenness were rapidly robbing them of what few brains and little self-control Nature had vouchsafed them, and he trembled to think of what excesses they might commit when they had passed beyond even the restraint of their leaders; nor did the fact that the chiefs, the priests, and the priestesses were becoming as drunk as their

followers tend but to aggravate his fears.

Bobolo, too, was watching the white girl. In his drunken brain wild schemes were forming. He saw her danger, and he wished to save her for himself. Just how he was going to possess her was not entirely clear to his muddled mind, yet it clung stubbornly to the idea. Then his eyes changed to alight on Old Timer, and a scheme evolved hazily through the beer fumes.

The white man wished to save the white woman. This fact Bobolo knew and recalled. If he wished to save her he would protect her. The white man also wished to escape. He thought Bobolo was his friend. Thus the premises formed slowly in his addled brain. So

far, so good! The white man would help him abduct the high priestess, but that could not be effected until practically everyone was too drunk to prevent the accomplishment of his plan or remember it afterward. He would have to wait for the proper moment to arrive, but in the meantime he must get the girl out of this chamber and hide her in one of the other rooms of the temple. Already the priestesses were mingling freely with the excited, drunken warriors; presently the orgy would be in full swing. After that it was possible that no one might save her; not even the high priest, who was now quite as drunk as any of them.

Bobolo approached Old Timer and spoke to his guards. "Go and join the

others," he told them. "I will watch the prisoner."

The men, already half drunk, needed no second invitation. The word of a chief was enough; it released them from all responsibility. In a moment they were gone. "Quick!" urged Bobolo, grasping Old Timer by the arm. "Come with me."

The white man drew back. "Where?" he demanded.

"I am going to help you to escape," whispered Bobolo.

"Not without the white woman," insisted the other.

This reply fitted so perfectly with Bobolo's plans that he was delighted. "I will arrange that, too; but I must get you out of here into one of the back rooms of

the temple. Then I shall come back for her. I could not take you both at the same time. It is very dangerous. Imigeg would have me killed if he discovered it. You must do just as I say."

"Why do you take this sudden interest in our welfare?" demanded the white, suspiciously.

"Because you are both in danger here," replied Bobolo. "Everyone is very drunk, even the high priest. Soon there would be no one to protect either of you, and you would be lost. I am your friend. It is well for you that Bobolo is your friend and that he is not drunk."

"Not very!" thought Old Timer as the man staggered at his side toward a doorway in the rear partition of the

chamber.

Bobolo conducted him to a room at the far end of the temple. "Wait here," he said. "I shall go back and fetch the girl."

"Cut these cords at my wrists," demanded the white. "They hurt."

Bobolo hesitated, but only for a moment. "Why not?" he asked. "You do not have to try to escape, because I am going to take you away myself; furthermore you could not escape alone. The temple stands upon an island surrounded by the river and swamp land alive with crocodiles. No trails lead from it other than the river. Ordinarily there are no canoes here, lest some of the priests or priestesses might escape. They, too, are prisoners. You will wait

until I am ready to take you away from here."

"Of course I shall. Hurry, now, and bring the white woman."

Bobolo returned to the main chamber of the temple, but this time he approached it by way of the door that let upon the upper dais at its rear. Here he paused to reconnoiter. The meat from the cooking pots was being passed among the warriors, but the beer jugs were still circulating freely. The high priest lay in a stupor at the far side of the upper dais. The Leopard God crouched, growling, over the thigh bone of a man. The high priestess leaned against the partition close to the doorway where Bobolo stood. The chief touched her upon the

arm. With startled eyes she turned toward him.

"Come," he whispered and beckoned her to follow.

The girl understood only the gesture, but she had seen this same man lead her fellow prisoner away from the foot of the dais but a moment before; and instantly she concluded that by some queer freak of fate this man might be friendly. Certainly there had been nothing threatening or unfriendly in his facial expressions as he had talked to the white man. Reasoning thus, she followed Bobolo into the gloomy chambers in the rear of the temple. She was afraid, and how close to harm she was only Bobolo knew. Excited to desire by propinquity

and impelled to rashness by drink, he suddenly thought to drag her into one of the dark chambers that lined the corridor along which he was conducting her; but as he turned to seize her a voice spoke at his elbow. "You got her more easily than I thought possible." Bobolo wheeled. "I followed you," continued Old Timer, "thinking you might need help." The chief grunted angrily, but the surprise had brought him to his senses. A scream or the noise of a scuffle might have brought a guardian of the temple to investigate, which would have meant death for Bobolo. He made no reply, but led them back to the room in which he had left Old Timer.

"Wait here for me," he cautioned

them. "If you are discovered do not say that I brought you here. If you do I shall not be able to save you. Say that you were afraid and came here to hide." He turned to go.

"Wait," said Old Timer. "Suppose we are unable to get this girl away from here; what will become of her?"

Bobolo shrugged. "We have never before had a white priestess. Perhaps she is for the Leopard God, perhaps for the high priest, who knows?" Then he left them.

"'Perhaps for the Leopard God, perhaps for the high priest,'" repeated Mali Bwana when the man had translated the words. "Oh, how horrible!"

The girl was standing very close to the white man. He could feel the warmth of her almost naked body. He trembled, and when he tried to speak his voice was husky with emotion. He wanted to seize her and crush her to him. He wanted to cover her soft, warm lips with kisses. What stayed him he did not know. They were alone at the far extremity of the temple, the noises of the savage orgy in the main chamber of the building would have drowned any outcry that she might make; she was absolutely at his mercy, yet he did not touch her.

"Perhaps we shall escape soon," he said. "Bobolo has promised to take us away."

"You know him and can trust him?"

she asked.

"I have known him for a couple of years," he replied, "but I do not trust him. I do not trust any of them. Bobolo is doing this for a price. He is an avaricious old scoundrel."

"What is the price?"

"Ivory."

"But I have none."

"Neither have I," he admitted, "but I'll get it."

"I will pay you for my share," she offered. "I have money with an agent at rail-head."

He laughed. "Let's cross that bridge when we get to it, if we ever do."

"That doesn't sound very reassuring."

"We are in a bad hole," he explained. "We mustn't raise our hopes too high. Right now our only hope seems to lie in Bobolo. He is a Leopard Man and a scoundrel, in addition to which he is drunk—a slender hope at best."

Bobolo, returning slightly sobered to the orgy, found himself suddenly frightened by what he had done. To bolster his waning courage he seized upon a large jug of beer and drained it. The contents exercised a magical effect upon Bobolo, for when presently his eyes fell upon a drunken priestess reeling in a corner she was transformed into a much-to-be-desired houri. An hour later Bobolo was fast asleep in the middle of the floor.

The effects of the native beer wore off almost as rapidly as they manifested themselves in its devotees, with the result that in a few hours the warriors commenced to bestir themselves. They were sick and their heads ached. They wished more beer; but when they demanded it they learned that there was no more, nor was there any food. They had consumed all the refreshments, liquid and solid.

Gato Mgungu had never had any of the advantages of civilization (He had never been to Hollywood); but he knew what to do under the circumstances, for the psychology of celebrators is doubtless the same in Africa as elsewhere. When there is nothing more to eat or drink, it

must be time to go home. Gato Mgungu gathered the other chiefs and transmitted this philosophical reflection to them. They agreed, Bobolo included. His brain was slightly befogged. He had already forgotten several events of the past evening, including the houri-like priestess. He knew that there was something important on his mind, but he could not recall just what it was; therefore he herded his men to their canoes just as the other chiefs and headmen were doing.

Presently he was headed down river, part of a long procession of war canoes filled with headaches. Back in the temple lay a few warriors who had still been too drunk to stand. For these they

had left a single canoe. These men were strewn about the floor of the temple, asleep. Among them were all of the lesser priests and the priestesses. Imigeg was curled up on one corner of the dais fast asleep. The Leopard God, his belly filled, slept also.

Kali Bwana and Old Timer, waiting impatiently in the dark room at the rear of the temple for the return of Bobolo, had noted the increasing quiet in the front chamber of the building; then they had heard the preparations for departure as all but a few made ready to leave. They heard the shuffling of feet as the warriors passed out of the building; they heard the shouts and commands at the river bank that told the white man that

the natives were launching their canoes. After that there had been silence.

"Bobolo ought to be coming along," remarked the man.

"Perhaps he has gone away and left us," suggested Kali Bwana.

They waited a little longer. Not a sound came from any part of the temple nor from the grounds outside. The silence of death reigned over the holy of holies of the Leopard God. Old Timer stirred uneasily. "I am going to have a look out there," he said. "Perhaps Bobolo has gone, and if he has we want to know it." He moved toward the doorway. "I shall not be gone long," he whispered. "Do not be afraid."

As the girl waited in the darkness her

mind dwelt upon the man who had just left her. He seemed changed since the time of their first meeting. He appeared more solicitous as to her welfare and much less brusque and churlish. Yet she could not forget the harsh things he had said to her upon that other occasion. She could never forgive him, and in her heart she still half feared and mistrusted him. It galled her to reflect that in the event of their escape she would be under obligation to him, and as these thoughts occupied her mind Old Timer crept stealthily along the dark corridor toward the small doorway that opened upon the upper dais.

Only a suggestion of light came through it now to guide his footsteps, and

when he reached it he looked out into an almost deserted room. The embers of the cooking fires were hidden by white ashes; only a single torch remained that had not burned out. Its smoky flame burned steadily in the quiet air, and in its feeble light he saw the sleepers sprawled upon the floor. In the dim light he could not distinguish the features of any; so he could not know if Bobolo were among them. One long searching look he gave that took in the whole interior of the chamber, a look that assured him that no single conscious person remained in the temple; then he turned and hastened back to the girl.

"Did you find him?" she asked.

"No. I doubt that he is here. Nearly all

of them have left, except just a few who were too drunk to leave. I think it is our chance."

"What do you mean?"

"There is no one to prevent our escaping. There may be no canoe. Bobolo told me that no canoe was ever left here, for fear that the priests or priestesses might escape. He may have been lying, but whether he was or not we may as well take the chance. There is no hope for either of us if we remain here. Even the crocodiles would be kinder to you than these fiends."

"I will do whatever you say," she replied, "but if at any time I am a burden, if my presence might hinder your escape, do not consider me. Go on without me.

Remember that you are under no obligation to me, nor—" She hesitated and stopped.

"Nor what?" he asked.

"Nor do I wish to be under obligation to you. I have not forgotten the things that you said to me when you came to my camp."

He hesitated a moment before replying; then he ignored what she had said. "Come!" he commanded brusquely. "We have no time to waste."

He walked to a window in the rear wall of the room and looked out. It was very dark. He could see nothing. He knew that the building was raised on piles and that the drop to the ground might prove dangerous; but he also knew

that a veranda stretched along one side of the structure. Whether it continued around to the rear of the building where this room was located he could not know. To go out through the main room among all those savages was too fraught with risk. An alternative was to find their way to one of the rooms overlooking the veranda that he knew was there on the river side of the building.

"I think we'll try another room," he whispered. "Give me your hand, so that we shall not become separated."

She slipped her hand into his. It was tender and warm. Once again the mad urge of his infatuation rose like a great tide within him, so that it was with

difficulty that he controlled himself, yet by no sign did he betray his passion to the girl. Quietly they tiptoed into the dark corridor, the man groping with his free hand until he found a doorway. Gingerly they crossed the room beyond in search of a window.

What if this were the apartment of some temple inmate who had left the orgy to come here and sleep! The thought brought cold sweat to the man's brow, and he swore in his heart that he would slay any creature that put itself in the way of the rescue of the girl; but fortunately the apartment was uninhabited, and the two came to the window unchallenged. The man threw a leg over the sill, and a moment later

stood upon the veranda beyond; then he reached in and assisted the girl to his side.

They were near the rear of the building. He dared not chance detection by going to the stairway that led to the ground from the front entrance to the temple. "We shall have to climb down one of the piles that support the building," he explained. "It is possible that there may be a guard at the front entrance. Do you think that you can do it?"

"Certainly," she replied.

"I'll go first," he said. "If you slip I'll try to hold you."

"I shall not slip; go ahead."

The veranda had no railing. He lay

down and felt beneath its edge until he found the top of a pile. "Here," he whispered, and lowered himself over the edge.

The girl followed. He dropped a little lower and guided her legs until they had found a hold upon the pile, which was the bole of a young tree about eight inches in diameter. Without difficulty they reached the ground, and again he took her hand and led her to the bank of the river. As they moved down stream parallel with the temple he sought for a canoe, and when they had come opposite the front of the building he could scarce restrain an exclamation of relief and delight when they came suddenly upon one drawn up on the shore, partially out

of the water.

Silently they strained to push the heavy craft into the river. At first it seemed that their efforts would prove of no avail; but at last it started to slip gently downward, and once it was loosened from the sticky mud of the bank that same medium became a slipper slide down which it coasted easily.

He helped her in, shoved the canoe out into the sluggish stream, and jumped in after her; then with a silent prayer of thanksgiving they drifted silently down toward the great river.

CHAPTER 11.—BATTLE

Into the camp of the sleeping Utengas dropped Muzimo and The Spirit of Nyamwegi an hour after midnight. No sentry had seen them pass, a fact which did not at all surprise the sentries, who knew that spirits pass through the forest unseen at all times if they choose to do so.

Orando, being a good soldier, had just made the rounds of his sentry posts and was still awake when Muzimo located him. "What news have you brought me, O Muzimo?" demanded the son of Lobongo. "What word of the enemy?"

"We have been to his village," replied Muzimo, "The Spirit of

Nyamwegi, Lupingu, and I."

"And where is Lupingu?"

"He remained there after carrying a message to Gato Mgungu."

"You gave the traitor his liberty!" exclaimed Orando.

"It will do him little good. He was dead when he entered the village of Gato Mgungu."

"How then could he carry a message to the chief?"

"He carried a message of terror that the Leopard Men understood. He told them that traitors do not go unpunished. He told them that the power of Orando is great."

"And what did the Leopard Men do?"

"They fled to their temple to consult the high priest and the Leopard God. We followed them there; but they did not learn much from the high priest or the Leopard God, for they all got very drunk upon beer—all except the Leopard, and he cannot talk when the high priest cannot talk. I came to tell you that their village is now almost deserted except for the women, the children, and a few warriors. This would be a good time to attack it, or to lie in ambush near it awaiting the return of the warriors from the temple. They will be sick, and men do not fight so well when they are sick."

"Now is a good time," agreed Orando, clapping his palms together to awaken the sleepers near him.

"In the temple of the Leopard God I saw one whom you know well," remarked Muzimo as the sleepy headmen aroused their warriors. "He is a priest of the Leopard God."

"I know no Leopard Men," replied Orando.

"You knew Lupingu, although you did not know that he was a Leopard Man," Muzimo reminded him; "and you know Sobito. It was he whom I saw behind the mask of a priest. He is a Leopard Man."

Orando was silent for a moment. "You are sure?" he asked.

"Yes."

"When he went to consult the spirits and the demons, and was gone from the village of Tumbai for many days, he was

with the Leopard Men instead," said Orando. "Sobito is a traitor. He shall die."

"Yes," agreed Muzimo, "Sobito shall die. He should have been killed long ago."

Along the winding forest trail Muzimo guided the warriors of Orando toward the village of Gato Mgungu. They moved as rapidly as the darkness and the narrow trail would permit, and at length he halted them at the edge of the field of manioc that lies between the forest and the village. After that they crept silently down toward the river when Muzimo had ascertained that the Leopard Men had not returned from the temple. There they waited, hiding among

the bushes that grew on either side of the landing place, while Muzimo departed to scout down the river.

He was gone but a short time when he returned with word that he had counted twenty-nine canoes paddling up stream toward the village. "Though thirty canoes went down river to the temple," he explained to Orando, "these must be the Leopard Men returning."

Orando crept silently among his warriors, issuing instructions, exhorting them to bravery. The canoes were approaching. They could hear the paddles now, dipping, dipping, dipping. The Utengas waited—tensed, eager. The first canoe touched the bank and its warriors leaped out. Before they had

drawn their heavy craft out on the shore the second canoe shot in. Still the Utengas awaited the sign of their leader. Now the canoes were grounding in rapid succession. A line of warriors was stringing out toward the village gate. Twenty canoes had been drawn up on the shore when Orando gave the signal, a savage battle cry that was taken up by ninety howling warriors as spears and arrows showered into the ranks of the Leopard Men.

The charging Utengas broke through the straggling line of the enemy. The Leopard Men, taken wholly by surprise, thought only of flight. Those who had been cut off at the river sought to launch their canoes and escape; those who had

not yet landed turned their craft down stream. The remainder tried toward the village, closely pursued by the Utengas. At the closed gates, which the defenders feared to open, the fighting was fierce; at the river it was little better than a slaughter as the warriors of Orando cut down the terrified Leopard Men struggling to launch their canoes.

When it was too late the warriors left to guard the village opened the gates with the intention of making a sortie against the Utengas. Already the last of their companions had been killed or had fled, and when the gates swung open a howling band of Utengas swarmed through.

The victory was complete. No living

soul was left within the palisaded village of Gato Mgungu when the blood-spattered warriors of Orando put the torch to its thatched huts.

From down the river the escaping Leopard Men saw the light of the flames billowing upward above the trees that lined the bank, saw their reflection on the surface of the broad river behind them, and knew the proportions of the defeat that had overwhelmed them. Gato Mgungu, squatting in the bottom of his canoe, saw the flames from his burning village, saw in them, perhaps the waning of his savage, ruthless power. Bobolo saw them and, reading the same story, knew that Gato Mgungu need no longer be feared. Of all that band of fleeing

warriors Bobolo was the least depressed.

By the light of the burning village Orando took stock of his losses, mustering his men and searching out the dead and wounded. From a tree beyond the manioc field a little monkey screamed and chattered. It was The Spirit of Nyamwegi calling to Muzimo, but Muzimo did not answer. Among the dead and wounded Orando found him like mortal clay stretched out upon his back from a blow upon the head.

The son of the chief was surprised and grieved; his followers were shocked. They had been certain that Muzimo was of the spirit world and therefore immune from death. Suddenly

they realized that they had won the battle without his aid. He was a fraud. Filled with blood lust, they would have vented their chagrin through spear thrusts into his lifeless body; but Orando stopped them.

"Spirits do not always remain in the same form," he reminded them. "Perhaps he has entered another body or, unseen, is watching us from above. If that is so he will avenge any harm that you do this body he has quitted." In the light of their knowledge this seemed quite possible to the Utengas; so they desisted from their proposed mutilation and viewed the body with renewed awe. "Furthermore," continued Orando, "man or ghost, he was loyal to me; and those of you who saw

him fight know that he fought bravely and well." "That is so," agreed a warrior.

"Tarzan! Tarzan!" shrieked The Spirit of Nyamwegi from the tree at the edge of the manioc field. "Tarzan of the Apes, Nkima is afraid!"

The white man paddled the stolen canoe down the sluggish stream toward the great river depending upon the strong current for aid to carry him and the girl to safety. Kali Bwana sat silent in the bottom of the craft. She had torn the barbaric headdress from her brow and the horrid necklace of human teeth from her throat, but she retained the bracelets and anklets, although why it might have been difficult for her to explain. Perhaps

it was because, regardless of her plight and all that she had passed through, she was still a woman—a beautiful woman. That is something which one does not easily forget.

Old Timer felt almost certain of success. The Leopard Men who had preceded him down the stream must have been returning to their village; there was no reason to expect that they would return immediately. There was no canoe at the temple; therefore there could be no pursuit, for Bobolo had assured him that there were no trails through the forest leading to the temple of the Leopard Men. He was almost jubilant as the canoe moved slowly into the mouth of the stream and he saw the

dark current of the river stretching before him.

Then he heard the splash of paddles, and his heart seemed to leap into his throat. Throwing every ounce of his muscle and weight into the effort, he turned the prow of the canoe toward the right bank, hoping to hide in the dense shadows, undiscovered, until the other craft had passed. It was very dark, so dark that he had reason to believe that his plan would succeed.

Suddenly the oncoming canoe loomed out of the darkness. It was only a darker blur against the darkness of the night. Old Timer held his breath. The girl crouched low behind a gunwale lest her blonde hair and white skin might be

visible to the occupants of the other boat even in the darkness that engulfed all other objects. The canoe passed on up the stream.

The broad river lay just ahead now; there, there would be less danger of detection. Old Timer dipped his paddle and started the canoe again upon its interrupted voyage. As the current caught it, it moved more rapidly. They were out upon the river! A dark object loomed ahead of them. It seemed to rise up out of the water directly in front of their craft. Old Timer plied his paddle in an effort to alter the course of the canoe, but too late. There was a jarring thud as it struck the object in its path, which the man had already recognized as a canoe filled

with warriors.

Almost simultaneously another canoe pulled up beside him. There was a babel of angry questions and commands. Old Timer recognized the voice of Bobolo. Warriors leaped into the canoe and seized him, fists struck him, powerful fingers dragged him down. He was overpowered and bound.

Again he heard the voice of Bobolo. "Hurry! We are being pursued. The Utengas are coming!"

Brawny hands grasped the paddles. Old Timer felt the canoe shoot forward, and a moment later it was being driven frantically up the smaller river toward the temple. The heart of the white man went cold with dread. He had had the

girl upon the threshold of escape. Such an opportunity would never come again. Now she was doomed. He did not think of his own fate. He thought only of the girl. He searched through the darkness with his eyes, but he could not find her; then he spoke to her. He wanted to comfort her. A new emotion had suddenly taken possession of him. He thought only of her safety and comfort. He did not think of himself at all.

He called again, but she did not answer. "Be quiet!" growled a warrior near him.

"Where is the girl?" demanded the white man.

"Be quiet," insisted the warrior. "There is no girl here."

As the canoe in which Bobolo rode swung alongside that in which the girl and the white man were attempting to escape, it had brought the chief close to the former, so close that even in the darkness of the night he had seen her white skin and her blonde hair. Instantly he had recognized his opportunity and seized it. Reaching over the gunwales of the two canoes he had dragged her into his own; then he had voiced the false alarm that he knew would send the other canoes off in a panic.

The warriors with him were all his own men. His village lay on the left bank of the river farther down. A low-voiced command sent the canoe out into the main current of the river, and willing

hands sped it upon its course.

The girl, who had passed through so much, who had seen escape almost assured, was stunned by the sudden turn of events that had robbed her of the only creature to whom she might look for aid and crushed hope from her breast.

To Old Timer, bound and helpless, the return journey to the temple was only a dull agony of vain regrets. It made little difference to him now what they did to him. He knew that they would kill him. He hoped that the end would come speedily, but he knew enough about the methods of cannibals to be almost certain that death would be slow and horrible.

As they dragged him into the temple

he saw the floor strewn with the bodies of the drunken priests and priestesses. The noise of the entrance aroused Imigeg, the high priest. He rubbed his eyes sleepily and then rose unsteadily to his feet.

"What has happened?" he demanded.

Gato Mgungu strode into the room at the moment, his canoe having followed closely upon that in which Old Timer had been brought back. "Enough has happened," be snapped. "While you were all drunk this white man escaped. The Utengas have killed my warriors and burned my village. What is the matter with your medicine, Imigeg? It is no good."

The high priest looked about him, a

dazed expression in his watery eyes. "Where is the white priestess?" he cried. "Did she escape?"

"I saw only the white man," replied Gato Mgungu.

"The white priestess was there, too," volunteered a warrior. "Bobolo took her into his canoe."

"Then she should be along soon," offered Gato Mgungu. "Bobolo's canoe cannot have been far behind mine."

"She shall not escape again," said Imigeg, "nor shall the man. Bind him well, and put him in the small room at the rear of the temple."

"Kill him!" cried Gato Mgungu. "Then he cannot run away again."

"We shall kill him later," replied Imigeg, who had not relished Gato Mgungu's irreverent tone or his carping criticism and desired to reassert his authority.

"Kill him now," insisted the chief, "or he will get away from you again; and if he does, the white men will come with their soldiers and kill you and burn the temple."

"I am high priest," replied Imigeg haughtily. "I take orders from no one but the Leopard God. I shall question him. What he says I shall do." He turned toward the sleeping leopard and prodded it with a sharp-pointed pole. The great cat leaped to its feet, its face convulsed by a horrid snarl. "The white

man escaped," explained Imigeg to the leopard. "He has been captured again. Shall he die tonight?"

"No," replied the leopard. "Tie him securely and place him in the small room at the rear of the temple; I am not hungry."

"Gato Mgungu says to kill him now," continued Imigeg.

"Tell Gato Mgungu that I speak only through Imigeg, the high priest. I do not speak through Gato Mgungu. Because Gato Mgungu had evil in his mind I have caused his warriors to be slain and his village to be destroyed. If he thinks evil again he shall be destroyed that the children of the Leopard God may eat. I have spoken."

"The Leopard God has spoken," said Imigeg.

Gato Mgungu was deeply impressed and thoroughly frightened. "Shall I take the prisoner to the back of the temple and see that he is safely bound?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Imigeg, "take him, and see to it that you bind him so that he cannot escape."

CHAPTER 12.—THE SACRIFICE

"Tarzan! Tarzan!" shrieked The Spirit of Nyamwegi from the tree at the edge of the manioc field. "Tarzan of the Apes, Nkima is afraid!"

The white giant lying upon the ground opened his eyes and looked about him. He saw Orando and many warriors gathered about. A puzzled expression overspread his countenance. Suddenly he leaped to his feet.

"Nkima! Nkima!" he called in the language of the great apes. "Where are you, Nkima? Tarzan is here!"

The little monkey leaped from the tree and came bounding across the field of

manioc. With a glad cry he leaped to the shoulder of the white man and throwing his arms about the bronzed neck pressed his cheek close to that of his master; and there he clung, whimpering with joy.

"You see," announced Orando to his fellows, "Muzimo is not dead."

The white man turned to Orando. "I am not Muzimo," he said; "I am Tarzan of the Apes." He touched the monkey. "This is not The Spirit of Nyamwegi; it is Nkima. Now I remember everything. For a long time I have been trying to remember but until now I could not—not since the tree fell upon me."

There was none among them who had not heard of Tarzan of the Apes. He was a legend of the forest and the jungle that

had reached to their far country. Like the spirits and the demons which they never saw, they had never expected to see him. Perhaps Orando was a little disappointed, yet, on the whole, it was a relief to all of them to discover that this was a man of flesh and blood, motivated by the same forces that actuated them, subject to the same laws of Nature that controlled them. It had always been a bit disconcerting never to be sure in what strange form the ancestral spirit of Orando might choose to appear, nor to know of a certainty that he would turn suddenly from a benign to a malign force; and so they accepted him in his new role, but with this difference: where formerly he had seemed the creature of

Orando, doing his bidding as a servant does the bidding of his master, now he seemed suddenly clothed in the dignity of power and authority. The change was so subtly wrought that it was scarcely apparent and was due, doubtless, to the psychological effect of the reawakened mentality of the white man over that of his black companions.

They made camp beside the river near the ruins of Gato Mgungu's village, for there were fields of manioc and plantain that, with the captured goats and chickens of the Leopard Men, insured full bellies after the lean fare of the days of marching and fighting.

During the long day Tarzan's mind was occupied with many thoughts. He

had recalled now why he had come into this country, and he marvelled at the coincidence of later events that had guided his footsteps along the very paths that he had intended treading before accident had robbed him of the memory of his purpose. He knew now that depredations by Leopard Men from a far country had caused him to get forth upon a lonely reconnaissance with only the thought of locating their more or less fabled stronghold and temple. That he should be successful in both finding these and reducing one of them was gratifying in the extreme, and he felt thankful now for the accident that had been responsible for the results.

His mind was still not entirely clear

on certain details; but these were returning gradually, and as evening fell and the evening meal was under way he suddenly recalled the white man and the white girl whom he had seen in the temple of the Leopard God. He spoke to Orando about them, but he knew nothing of them. "If they were in the temple they probably have been killed." he knew nothing of them.

Tarzan sat immersed in thought for a long time. He did not know these people, yet he felt a certain obligation to them because they were of his race. Finally he arose and called Nkima, who was munching on a plantain that a warrior was sharing with him.

"Where are you going?" asked

Orando.

"To the temple of the Leopard God," replied Tarzan.

* * * * *

Old Timer had lain all day securely bound and without food or water. Occasionally a priest or a priestess had looked in to see that he had not escaped or loosened his bonds, but otherwise he had been left alone. The inmates of the temple had stirred but little during the day, most of them being engaged in sleeping off the effects of the previous night's debauch; but with the coming of night the prisoner heard increased evidence of activity. There were sounds of chanting from the temple chamber, and above the other noises the shrill

voice of the high priest and the growls of the leopard. His thoughts during those long hours were often of the girl. He had heard the warrior tell Imigeg that Bobolo had captured her, and supposed that she was again being forced to play her part on the dais with the Leopard God. At least he might see her again (that would be something), but hope that he might rescue her had ebbed so low that it might no longer be called hope.

He was trying to reason against his better judgment that having once escaped from the temple they could do so again, when a priest entered the room, bearing a torch. He was an evil-appearing old fellow, whose painted face accentuated the savagery of the visage. He was

Sobito, the witch-doctor of Tumbai. Stooping, he commenced to untie the cords that secured the white man's ankles.

"What are they going to do to me?" demanded Old Timer.

A malevolent grin bared Sobito's yellow fangs. "What do you suppose, white man?"

Old Timer shrugged. "Kill me, I suppose."

"Not too quickly," explained Sobito. "The flesh of those who die slowly and in pain is tender."

"You old devil" exclaimed the prisoner.

Sobito licked his lips. He delighted in

inflicting torture either physical or mental. Here was an opportunity he could not forego. "First your arms and legs will be broken," he explained; "then you will be placed upright in a hole in the swamp and fastened so that you cannot get your mouth or nose beneath the surface and drown yourself. You will be left there three days, by which time your flesh will be tender." He paused.

"And then?" asked the white. His voice was steady. He had determined that he would not give them the added satisfaction of witnessing his mental anguish, and when the time came that he must suffer physically he prayed that he might have the strength to endure the

ordeal in a manner that would reflect credit upon his race. Three days! God, what a fate to anticipate!

"And then?" repeated Sobito. "Then you will be carried into the temple, and the children of the Leopard God will tear you to pieces with their steel claws. Look!" He exhibited the long, curved weapons which dangled from the ends of the loose leopard skin sleeves of his garment.

"After which you will eat me, eh?"

"Yes."

"I hope you choke."

Sobito had at last untied the knots that had secured the bonds about the white man's ankles. He gave him a kick and told him to rise.

"Are you going to kill and eat the white girl, too?" demanded Old Timer.

"She is not here. Bobolo has stolen her. Because you helped her to escape, your suffering shall be greater. I have already suggested to Imigeg that he remove your eyeballs after your arms and legs are broken. I forgot to tell you that we shall break each of them in three or four places.

"Your memory is failing," commented Old Timer, "but I hope that you have not forgotten anything else."

Sobito grunted. "Come with me," he commanded, and led the white man through the dark corridor to the great chamber where the Leopard Men were gathered.

At sight of the prisoner a savage cry broke from a hundred and fifty throats, the leopard growled, the high priest danced upon the upper dais, the hideous priestesses screamed and leaped forward as though bent upon tearing the white man to pieces. Sobito pushed the prisoner to the summit of the lower dais and dragged him before the high priest. "Here is the sacrifice!" he screamed.

"Here is the sacrifice!" cried Imigeg, addressing the Leopard God. "What are your commands, O father of the leopard children?"

The bristling muzzle of the great beast wrinkled into a snarl as Imigeg prodded him with his sharp pole, and from the growling throat the answer seemed to

come. "Let him be broken, and on the third night let there be a feast!"

"And what of Bobolo and the white priestess?" demanded Imigeg.

"Send warriors to fetch them to the temple that Bobolo may be broken for another feast. The white girl I give to Imigeg, the high priest. When he tires of her we shall feast again."

"It is the word of the Leopard God," cried Imigeg. "As he commands, it shall be done."

"Let the white man be broken," growled the leopard, "and on the third night let my children return that each may be made wise by eating the flesh of a white man. When you have eaten of it the white man's weapons can no longer harm

you. Let the white man be broken!"

"Let the white man be broken!" shrieked Imigeg.

Instantly a half dozen priests leaped forward and seized the prisoner, throwing him heavily to the clay floor of the dais, and here they pinioned him, stretching his arms and legs far apart, while four priestesses armed with heavy clubs rushed forward. A drum commenced to boom somewhere in the temple, weirdly, beating a cadence to which the priestesses danced about the prostrate form of their victim.

Now one rushed in and flourished her club above the prisoner; but a priest pretended to protect him, and the woman danced out again to join her companions

in the mad whirl of the dance. Again and again was this repeated, but each succeeding time the priests seemed to have greater difficulty in repulsing the maddened women.

That it was all acting (part of a savage ceremony) the white man realized almost from the first, but what it was supposed to portray he could not imagine. If they had hoped to wring some evidence of fear from him, they failed. Lying upon his back, he watched them with no more apparent concern than an ordinary dance might have elicited.

Perhaps it was because of his seeming indifference that they dragged the dance out to great lengths, that they howled the louder, and that the savagery

of their gestures and their screams beggared description; but the end, he knew, was inevitable. The fate that Sobito had pictured had been no mere idle threat. Old Timer had long since heard that among some cannibal tribes this method of preparing human flesh was the rule rather than the exception. The horror of it, like a loathsome rat, gnawed at the foundations of the citadel of his reason. He sought to keep his mind from contemplation of it, lest he go mad.

The warriors, aroused to frenzy by the dancing and the drum, urged the priestesses on. They were impatient for the climax of the cruel spectacle. The high priest, master showman, sensed the temper of his audience. He made a

signal, and the drumming ceased. The dancing stopped. The audience went suddenly quiet. Silence even more terrifying than the din which had preceded it enveloped the chamber. It was then that the priestesses, with raised clubs, crept stealthily toward their helpless victim.

CHAPTER 13.—DOWN RIVER

Kali Bwana crouched in the bottom of the canoe; she heard the rhythmic dip of the paddles as powerful arms sent the craft swiftly down stream with the current. She knew that they were out on the bosom of the large river, that they were not returning to the temple nor up stream to the village of Gato Mgungu. Where, then, to what new trials was fate consigning her?

Bobolo leaned toward her and whispered, "Do not be afraid. I am taking you away from the Leopard Men."

She understood just enough of the tribal dialect that he employed to catch

the sense of what he had said. "Who are you?" she asked.

"I am Bobolo, the chief," he replied.

Instantly she recalled that the white man had hoped for aid from this man, for which he was to pay him in ivory. Her hopes rose. Now she could purchase safety for both of them. "Is the white man in the canoe?" she asked.

"No," replied Bobolo.

"You promised to save him," she reminded him.

"I could save but one," replied Bobolo.

"Where are you taking me?"

"To my village. There you will be safe. Nothing can harm you."

"Then you will take me on down river to my own people?" she asked.

"Maybe so after a while," he answered. "There is no hurry. You stay with Bobolo. He will be good to you, for Bobolo is a very big chief with many huts and many warriors. You shall have lots of food; lots of slaves; no work."

The girl shuddered, for she knew the import of his words. "No!" she cried. "Oh, please let me go. The white man said that you were his friend. He will pay you; I will pay you."

"He will never pay," replied Bobolo. "If he is not already dead, he will be in a few days."

"But I can pay," she pleaded. "Whatever you ask I will pay you if you

will deliver me safely to my own people."

"I do not want pay," growled Bobolo; "I want you."

She saw that her situation was without hope. In all this hideous land the only person who knew of her danger and might have helped her was either dead or about to die, and she could not help herself. But there was a way out! The idea flashed suddenly to her mind. The river!

She must not permit herself to dwell too long upon the idea—upon the cold, dark waters, upon the crocodiles, lest her strength fail her. She must act instantly, without thought. She leaped to her feet, but Bobolo was too close. Upon

the instant he guessed her intention and seized her, throwing her roughly to the bottom of the canoe. He was very angry and struck her heavily across the face; then he bound her, securing her wrists and her ankles.

"You will not try that again," he growled at her.

"I shall find some other way then," she replied defiantly. "You shall not have me. It will be better for you to accept my offer, as otherwise you shall have neither me nor the pay."

"Be quiet, woman," commanded Bobolo; "I have heard enough," and he struck her again.

For four hours the canoe sped swiftly onward; the ebon paddlers, moving in

perfect rhythm, seemed tireless. The sun had risen, but from her prone position in the bottom of the craft the girl saw nothing but the swaying bodies of the paddlers nearest her, the degraded face of Bobolo, and the brazen sky above.

At last she heard the sound of voices shouting from the shore. There were answering shouts from the crew of the canoe, and a moment later she felt its prow touch the bank. Then Bobolo removed the bonds from her wrists and ankles and helped her to her feet. Before her, on the river bank, were hundreds of savages; men, women, and children. Beyond them was a village of grass-thatched, beehive huts, surrounded by a palisade of poles bound together with

lianas.

When the eyes of the villagers alighted upon the white prisoner there was a volley of shouts and questions; and as she stepped ashore she was surrounded by a score of curious savages, among whom the women were the most unfriendly. She was struck and spat upon by them; and more serious harm would have been done her had not Bobolo stalked among them, striking right and left with the shaft of his spear.

Trailed by half the village, she was led into the compound to the hut of the chief, a much larger structure than any of the others, flanked by several two-room huts, all of which were enclosed by a low palisade. Here dwelt the chief and

his harem with their slaves. At the entrance to the chief's compound the rabble halted, and Kali Bwana and Bobolo entered alone. Instantly the girl was surrounded again by angry women, the wives of Bobolo. There were fully a dozen of them; and they ranged in age from a child of fourteen to an ancient, toothless hag, who, despite the infirmities of age, appeared to dominate the others.

Again Bobolo had recourse to his spear to save his captive from serious harm. He belabored the most persistent of them unmercifully until they fell back out of reach of his weapon, and then he turned to the old woman.

"Ubooga," he said, addressing her,

"this is my new wife. I place her in your care. See that no harm comes to her. Give her two women-slaves. I shall send men-slaves to build a hut for her close to mine."

"You are a fool," cried Ubooga. "'She is white. The women will not let her live in peace, if they let her live at all, nor will they let you live in peace until she is dead or you get rid of her. You were a fool to bring her, but then you were always a fool."

"Hold your tongue, old woman!" cried Bobolo. "I am chief. If the women molest her I will kill them—and you, too," he added.

"Perhaps you will kill the others," screamed the old hag, "but you will not

kill me. I will scratch out your eyes and eat your heart. You are the son of a pig. Your mother was a jackal. You, a chief! You would have been the slave of a slave had it not been for me. Who are you! Your own mother did not know who your father was. "You—" But Bobolo had fled. With her hands on her hips the old termagant turned toward Kali Bwana and surveyed her, appraising her from head to feet. She noted the fine leopard skin garment and the wealth of bracelets and anklets. "Come, you!" she screamed and seized the girl by the hair.

It was the last straw. Far better to die now than to prolong the agony through brutal abuse and bitter insult. Kali

Bwana swung a blow to the side of Ubooga's head that sent her reeling. The other women broke into loud laughter. The girl expected that the old woman would fall upon her and kill her, but she did nothing of the kind. Instead she stood looking at her; her lower jaw dropped, her eyes wide in astonishment. For a moment she stood thus, and then she appeared to notice the laughter and taunts of the other women for the first time. With a maniacal scream she seized a stick and charged them. They scattered like frightened rabbits seeking their burrows, but not before the stick had fallen heavily upon a couple of them as Ubooga, screaming curses, threatened them with the anger of Bobolo.

When she returned to the white girl she merely nodded her head in the direction of one of the huts and said "Come" again, but this time in a less peremptory tone; in other ways, too, her attitude seemed changed and far less unfriendly, or perhaps it would be better to say less threatening. That the terrible old woman could be friendly to any one seemed wholly beyond the range of possibility.

Having installed the girl in her own but, under the protection of two women slaves, Ubooga hobbled to the main entrance of the chief's compound, possibly in the hope of catching a glimpse of Bobolo, concerning whom she had left a number of things unsaid;

but Bobolo was nowhere to be seen. There was, however, a warrior who had returned with the chief from up river squatting before a nearby but while his wife prepared food for him.

Ubooga, being a privileged character and thus permitted to leave the sacred precincts off the harem crossed over and squatted down near the warrior.

"Who is the white girl?" demanded the old woman.

The warrior was a very stupid fellow, and the fact that he had recently been very drunk and had had no sleep for two nights lent him no greater acumen. Furthermore, he was terribly afraid of Ubooga, as who was not? He looked up dully out of red-rimmed,

bloodshot eyes.

"She is the new white priestess of the Leopard God," he said.

"Where did Bobolo get her?" persisted Ubooga.

"We had come from the battle at Gato Mgungu's village, where we were defeated, and were on our way with Gato Mgungu back to the temp—" He stopped suddenly. "I don't know where Bobolo got her," he ended sullenly.

A wicked, toothless grin wrinkled Ubooga's unlovely features. "I thought so," she cackled enigmatically and, rising, hobbled back to the chief's compound.

The wife of the warrior looked at him with disgust. "So you are a Leopard

Man!" she whispered accusingly.

"It is a lie," he cried; "I said nothing of the sort."

"You did," contradicted his wife, "and you told Ubooga that Bobolo is a Leopard Man. This will not be well for Bobolo or for you."

"Women who talk too much sometimes have their tongues cut out," he reminded her.

"It is you who have talked too much," she retorted. "I have said nothing. I shall say nothing. Do you think that I want the village to know that my man is a Leopard Man?" There was deep disgust in her tone.

The order of Leopard Men is a secret order. There are few villages and no

entire tribes composed wholly of Leopard Men, who are looked upon with disgust and horror by all who are not members of the feared order. Their rites and practices are viewed with contempt by even the most degraded of tribes, and to be proved a Leopard Man is equivalent to the passing of a sentence of exile or death in practically any community.

Ubooga nursed the knowledge she had gained, metaphorically cuddling it to her breast. Squatting down before her hut, she mumbled to herself; and the other women of the harem who saw her were frightened, for they saw that Ubooga smiled, and when Ubooga smiled they knew that something unpleasant was

going to happen to some one. When Bobolo entered the compound they saw that she smiled more broadly, and they were relieved, knowing that it was Bobolo and not they who was to be the victim.

"Where is the white girl?" demanded Bobolo as he halted before Ubooga. "Has any harm befallen her?"

"Your priestess is quite safe, Leopard Man," hissed Ubooga, but in a voice so low that only Bobolo might hear.

"What do you mean, you old she-devil?" Bobolo's face turned a livid blue from rage.

"For a long time I have suspected it," cackled Ubooga. "Now I know it."

Bobolo seized his knife and grasped

the woman by the hair, dragging her across one knee. "You said I did not dare to kill you," he growled.

"Nor do you. Listen. I have told another, who will say nothing unless I command it, or unless I die. If I die the whole village will know it, and you will be torn to pieces. Now kill me, if you dare!"

Bobolo let her fall to the ground. He did not know that Ubooga had lied to him, that she had told no one. He may have surmised as much; but he dared not take the chance, for he knew that Ubooga was right. His people would tear him to pieces should they discover he was a Leopard Man, nor would the other culprits in the tribe dare come to his

defense. To divert suspicion from themselves they would join his executioners. Bobolo was very much worried.

"Who told you?" he demanded. "It is a lie, whoever told you."

"The girl is high priestess of the Leopard God," taunted Ubooga. "After you left the village of Gato Mgungu, following the fight in which you were defeated, you returned to the temple with Gato Mgungu who all men know is the chief of the Leopard Men. There you got the girl."

"It is a lie. I stole her from the Leopard Men. I am no Leopard Man."

"Then return her to the Leopard Men, and I will say nothing about the matter. I

will tell no one that you are such a good friend of Gato Mgungu that you fight with him against his enemies, for then everyone will know that you must be a Leopard Man."

"It is a lie," repeated Bobolo, who could think of nothing else to say.

"Lie or no lie, will you get rid of her?"

"Very well," said Bobolo; "in a few days." "Today," demanded Ubooga. "Today, or I will kill her tonight."

"Today," assented Bobolo. He turned away.

"Where are you going?"

"To get someone to take her back where the Leopard Men can find her."

"Why don't you kill her?"

"The Leopard Men would kill me if I did. They would kill many of my people. First of all they would kill my women if I killed theirs."

"Go and get someone to take her away," said Ubooga, "but see that there is no trickery, you son of a wart hog, you pig, you—"

Bobolo heard no more. He had fled into the village. He was very angry, but he was more afraid. He knew that what Ubooga had said was true; but, on the other hand, his passion still ran high for the white girl. He must try to find some means to preserve her for himself; in case he failed, however, there were other uses to which she could be put.

Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind as he walked the length of the village street toward the hut of his old crony Kapopa, the witch doctor, upon more than one occasion a valuable ally.

He found the old man engaged with a customer who desired a charm that would kill the mother of one of his wives, for which Kapopa had demanded three goats—in advance. There was considerable haggling, the customer insisting that his mother-in-law was not worth one goat, alive, which, he argued, would reduce her value when dead to not more than a single chicken; but Kapopa was obdurate, and finally the man departed to give the matter further thought.

Bobolo plunged immediately into the matter that had brought him to the witch-doctor. "Kapopa knows," he commenced, "that when I returned from up the river I brought a white wife with me."

Kapopa nodded. "Who in the village does not?"

"Already she has brought me much trouble," continued Bobolo.

"And you wish to be rid of her."

"I do not. It is Ubooga who wishes to rid me of her."

"You wish a charm to kill Ubooga?"

"I have already paid you for three such charms," Bobolo reminded him, "and Ubooga still lives. I do not wish

another. Your medicine is not so strong as Ubooga."

"What do you wish?"

"I will tell you. Because the white girl is a priestess of the Leopard God, Ubooga says that I must be a Leopard Man, but that is a lie. I stole her from the Leopard Men. Everyone knows that I am not a Leopard Man."

"Of course," assented Kapopa.

"But Ubooga says that she will tell everyone that I am a Leopard Man if I do not kill the girl or send her away. What can I do?"

Kapopa sat in silence for a moment; then he rummaged in a bag that lay beside him. Bobolo fidgeted. He knew that when Kapopa rummaged in that bag

it was always expensive. Finally the witch- doctor drew forth a little bundle wrapped in dirty cloth. Very carefully he untied the strings and spread the cloth upon the ground, revealing its contents, a few short twigs and a figurine carved from bone. Kapopa set the figurine in an upright position facing him, shook the twigs between his two palms, and cast them before the idol. He examined the position of the twigs carefully, scratched his head for a moment, then gathered them up, cast them again. Once more he studied the situation in silence. Presently he looked up.

"I now have a plan," he announced.

"How much will it cost?" demanded Bobolo. "Tell me that first."

"You have a daughter," said Kapopa.

"I have many of them," rejoined Bobolo.

"I do not want them all."

"You may have your choice if you will tell me how I may keep the white girl without Ubooga knowing it."

"It can be done," announced Kapopa. "In the village of the little men there is no witch-doctor. For a long time they have been coming to Kapopa for their medicine. They will do whatever Kapopa asks."

"I do not understand," said Bobolo.

"The village of the little men is not far from the village of Bobolo. We shall take the white girl there. For a small

payment of meal and a few fish at times they will keep her there for Bobolo until Ubooga dies. Some day she must die. Already she has lived far too long. In the meantime Bobolo can visit his wife in the village of the little men."

"You can arrange this with the little men?"

"Yes. I shall go with you and the white girl, and I will arrange everything."

"Good," exclaimed Bobolo. "We will start now; when we return you may go to the harem of Bobolo and select any of his daughters that you choose."

Kapopa wrapped up the twigs and the idol and replaced them in his pouch; then he got his spear and shield. "Fetch the

white girl," he said.

CHAPTER 14.—THE RETURN OF SOBITO

The wavering light of the smoky torches illuminated the interior of the temple of the Leopard God, revealing the barbaric, savage drama being enacted there; but outside it was very dark, so dark that the figure of a man moving swiftly along the river bank might scarcely have been seen at a distance of fifty feet. He stepped quickly and silently among the canoes of the Leopard Men, pushing them out into the current of the stream. When all had been turned adrift save one, he dragged that up the river and partially beached it opposite the rear of the temple; then he

ran toward the building, scaled one of the piles to the veranda, and a moment later paused upon the tiebeam just beneath the overhanging roof at the front of the building, where, through an opening, he could look down upon the tragic scene within.

He had been there a few moments before, just long enough to see and realize the precarious position of the white prisoner. Instantly his plan had been formed, and he had dropped swiftly to the river bank to put a part of it into immediate execution. Now that he was back he realized that a few seconds later he would have been too late. A sudden silence had fallen upon the chamber below. The priestesses of the Leopard

God were sneaking stealthily toward their prostrate victim. No longer did the lesser priests make the purely histrionic pretense of protection. The end had come.

Through the aperture and into the interior of the temple swung Tarzan of the Apes. From tiebeam to tiebeam he leaped, silent as the smoke rising from the torches below. He saw that the priestesses were almost upon the white prisoner, that, swift as he was, he might not be able to reach the man's side in time. It was a bold, mad scheme that had formed in the active brain of the ape-man, and one that depended for success largely upon its boldness. Now it seemed that it was foredoomed to failure

even before it could be put into execution.

The sudden silence, following the din of drums and yells and dancing feet, startled the tense nerves of the pinioned prisoner. He turned his eyes from side to side and saw the priestesses creeping toward him. Something told him that the final, hideous horror was upon him now. He steeled himself to meet the agony of it, lest his tormentors should have the added gratification of witnessing the visible effects of his suffering. Something inherent, something racial rebelled at the thought of showing fear or agony before these creatures of an inferior race.

The priestesses were almost upon him

when a voice high above them broke the deathly silence. "Sobito! Sobito! Sobito!" it boomed in hollow accents from the rafters of the temple. "I am the muzimo of Orando, the friend of Nyamwegi. I have come for you. With The Spirit of Nyamwegi, I have come for you!"

Simultaneously a giant white man, naked but for a loin cloth, ran down one of the temple pillars like an agile monkey and leaped to the lower dais. The startling interruption momentarily paralyzed the natives, partially from astonishment and partially from fear. Sobito was speechless. His knees trembled beneath him; then, recovering himself, he fled screaming from the dais

to the protection of the concourse of warriors on the temple floor.

Old Timer, no less astonished than the Negroes, looked with amazement upon the scene. He expected to see the strange white man pursue Sobito, but he did nothing of the sort. Instead, he turned directly toward the prisoner.

"Be ready to follow me," commanded the stranger. "I shall go out through the rear of the temple." He spoke in low tones and in English; then, as swiftly, he changed to the dialect of the district. "Capture Sobito and bring him to me," he shouted to the warriors below the dais. "Until you fetch him I shall hold this white man as hostage."

Before there could be either reply or

opposition, he leaped to the side of Old Timer, hurled the terrified priests from him, and seizing him by the hand jerked him to his feet. He spoke no further word but turned and ran swiftly across the lower dais, leaped to the higher one where Imigeg shrank aside as they passed, and disappeared from the sight of the Leopard Men through the doorway at its rear. There he paused for a moment and stopped Old Timer.

"Where is the white girl?" he demanded. "We must take her with us."

"She is not here," replied old Timer; "a chief stole her and, I imagine, took her down river to his village."

"This way, then," directed Tarzan, darting into a doorway on their left.

A moment later they were on the veranda, from which they gained the ground by way of one of the piles that supported the building; then the ape-man ran quickly toward the river, followed closely by Old Timer. At the edge of the river Tarzan stopped beside a canoe.

"Get into this," he directed; "it is the only one left here. They cannot follow you. When you reach the main river you will have such a start that they cannot overtake you."

"Aren't you coming with me?"

"No," he replied and started to shove the craft out into the stream. "Do you know the name of the chief who stole the girl?" he asked.

"It was Bobolo."

Tarzan pushed the canoe away from the bank.

"I can't thank you, old man," said Old Timer; "there just aren't the right words in the English language."

The silent figure on the river bank made no reply, and a moment later, as the current caught the canoe, it was swallowed up in the darkness. Then Old Timer seized a paddle and sought to accelerate the speed of the craft, that he might escape as quickly as possible from this silent river of mystery and death.

The canoe had scarcely disappeared in the darkness when Tarzan of the Apes turned back toward the temple. Once again he scaled a pile to the veranda and reentered the rear of the building. He

heard screaming and scuffing in the fore part of the temple, and a grim smile touched his lips as he recognized the origin of the sounds. Advancing quickly to the doorway that opened upon the upper dais he saw several warriors dragging the kicking, screaming Sobito toward him; then he stepped out upon the dais beside the Leopard God. Instantly all eyes were upon him, and fear was in every eye. The boldness of his entrance into their holly of holies, his effrontery, the ease with which he had taken their prisoner from them had impressed them, while the fact that Sobito, a witch-doctor, had fled from him in terror had assured them of his supernatural origin.

"Bind his hands and feet,"

commanded Tarzan, "and deliver him to me. The Spirit of Nyamwegi watches, waiting whom he shall kill; so delay not."

Hastily the warriors dragging Sobito secured his wrists and ankles; then they lifted him to their shoulders and carried him through the doorway at the side of the dais to the rear chambers of the temple. Here Tarzan met them.

"Leave Sobito with me," he directed.

"Where is the white prisoner you seized as hostage?" demanded one more courageous than his fellows.

"Search for him in the last room at the far end of the temple," said the ape-man; but he did not say that they would find him there. Then he lifted Sobito to his

shoulder and stepped into the room through which he had led Old Timer to freedom, and as the warriors groped through the darkness in search of their victim the ape-man carried Sobito, screaming from fright, out into the forest.

For a long time the silent, terrified listeners in the temple of the Leopard God heard the eerie wails of the witchdoctor of Tumbai growing fainter in the distance; then the warriors returned from their search of the temple to report that the prisoner was not there.

"We have been tricked!" cried Imigeg. "The muzimo of Orando, the Utenga, has stolen our prisoner."

"Perhaps he escaped while the muzimo was taking Sobito," suggested

Gato Mgungu.

"Search the island," cried another chief.

"The canoes!" exclaimed a third.

Instantly there was a rush for the river, and then the Leopard Men realized the enormity of the disaster that had befallen them, for not a canoe was left of all those that had brought them to the temple. Their situation was worse than it might appear at first glance. Their village had been burned and those of their fellows who had not accompanied them to the temple were either dead or scattered; there was no path through the tangled mazes of the jungle; but worse still was the fact that religious superstition forbade them from entering

the dismal stretch of forest that extended from the island to the nearest trail that they might utilize. The swamps about them and the river below them were infested with crocodiles. The supply of food at the temple was not sufficient to support them for more than a few days. They were cannibals, and the weaker among them were the first to appreciate the significance of that fact.

The warriors of Orando squatted about their fires in their camp beside the manioc field of Gato Mgungu. Their bellies were full, and they were happy. Tomorrow they would start upon the return march to their own country. Already they were anticipating the reception that awaited victorious

warriors. Again and again each, when he could make himself heard, recounted his own heroic exploits, none of which lost dramatic value in the retelling. A statistician overhearing them might have computed the enemy dead at fully two thousand.

Their reminiscences were interrupted by the appearance of a giant figure among them. It appeared to have materialized from thin air. It had not been there one moment; the next it had. It was he whom they had known as Muzimo; it was Tarzan of the Apes. Upon his shoulder he bore the bound figure of a man.

"Tarzan of the Apes!" cried some.

"Muzimo!" cried other.

"What have you brought us?" demanded Orando.

Tarzan threw the bound figure to the ground. "I have brought back your witch-doctor," he replied. "I have brought back Sobito, who is also a priest of the Leopard God."

"It is a lie!" screamed Sobito.

"See the leopard skin upon him," exclaimed a warrior.

"And the curved claws of the Leopard Men!" cried another.

"No, Sobito is not a Leopard Man!" jeered a third.

"I found him in the temple of the Leopard Men," explained Tarzan. "I thought you would like to have your

witch-doctor back to make strong medicine for you that would preserve you from the Leopard Men."

"Kill him!" screamed a warrior.

"Kill Sobito! Kill Sobito!" was taken up by four score throats.

Angry men advanced upon the witch-doctor.

"Wait!" commanded Orando. "It will be better to take Sobito back to Tumbai, for there are many there who would like to see him die. It will give him time to think about the bad things he has done; it will make him suffer longer, as he has made others suffer; and I am sure that the parents of Nyamwegi would like to see Sobito die."

"Kill me now," begged Sobito. "I do

not wish to go back to Tumbai."

"Tarzan of the Apes captured him," suggested a warrior. "Let him tell us what to do with Sobito."

"Do as you please with him," replied the apeman; "he is not my witch- doctor. I have other business to attend to. I go now. Remember Tarzan of the Apes, if you do not see him again, and because of him treat white men kindly, for Tarzan is your friend and you are his."

As silently as he had come, he disappeared; and with him went little Nkima, whom the warriors of the Watenga country knew as The Spirit of Nyamwegi.

CHAPTER 15.—THE LITTLE MEN

Bobolo and Kapopa dragged Kali Bwana along the narrow forest trails away from the great river that was life artery of the district, back into the dense, dismal depth of the jungle, where great beasts prowled and the little men lived. Here there were no clearings nor open fields; they passed no villages.

The trails were narrow and little used and in places very low, for the little men do not have to clear their trails to the same height that others must.

Kapopa went ahead, for he knew the little men better than Bobolo knew them; though both knew their methods, knew

how they hid in the underbrush and speared unwary passersby or sped poisoned arrows from the trees above. They would recognize Kapopa and not molest them. Behind Kapopa came Kali Bwana. There was a fiber rope around her fair neck. Behind her was Bobolo, holding the rope's end.

The girl was in total ignorance of their destination or of what fate awaited her there. She moved in a dumb lethargy of despair. She was without hope, and her only regret was that she was also without the means of ending her tragic sufferings. She saw the knife at the hip of Kapopa as he walked ahead of her and coveted it. She thought of the dark river and the crocodiles and regretted them. In

all respects her situation appeared to her worse than it had ever been before. Perhaps it was the depressing influence of the somber forest or the mystery of the unknown into which she was being led like some dumb beast to the slaughter. Slaughter! The word fascinated her. She knew that Bobolo was a cannibal. Perhaps they were taking her somewhere into the depths of the grim wood to slaughter and devour her. She wondered why the idea no longer revolted her, and then she guessed the truth—it postulated death. Death! Above all things now she craved death.

How long they plodded that seemingly endless trail she did not know, but after an eternity of dull misery

a voice bailed them. Kapopa halted.

"What do you want in the country of Rebega?" demanded the voice.

"I am Kapopa, the witch-doctor," replied Kapopa. "With me are Bobolo, the chief, and his wife. We come to visit Rebega."

"I know you, Kapopa," replied the voice, and a second later a diminutive warrior stepped into the trail ahead of them from the underbrush at its side. He was about four feet tall and stark naked except for a necklace and some anklets and arm bands of copper and iron.

His eyes were small and close set, giving his unpleasant countenance a crafty appearance. His expression denoted surprise and curiosity as he

regarded the white girl, but he asked no questions. Motioning them to follow him, he continued along the crooked trail. Almost immediately two other warriors, apparently materializing from thin air, fell in behind them; and thus they were escorted to the village of Rebega, the chief.

It was a squalid village of low huts, bisected ovals with a door two or three feet in height at each end. The huts were arranged about the periphery of an ellipse, in the center of which was the chief's hut. Surrounding the village was a crude boma of pointed sticks and felled timber with an opening at either end to give ingress and egress.

Rebega was an old, wrinkled man. He

squatted on his haunches just outside one of the entrances to his hut, surrounded by his women and children. As the visitors approached him he gave no sign of recognition, his small, beady eyes regarding them with apparent suspicion and malice. His was indeed a most repellent visage.

Kapopa and Bobolo greeted him, but he only nodded once and grunted. To the girl his whole attitude appeared antagonistic, and when she saw the little warriors closing in about them from every hut she believed that Kapopa and Bobolo had placed themselves in a trap from which they might have difficulty in escaping. The thought rather pleased her. What the result would be for her was

immaterial; nothing could be worse than the fate that Bobolo had intended for her. She had never seen pygmies before; and, notwithstanding her mental perturbation, her normally active mind found interest in observing them. The women were smaller than the men, few of them being over three feet in height; while the children seemed incredibly tiny. Among them all, however, there was not a prepossessing countenance nor a stitch of clothing, and they were obviously filthy and degraded.

There was a moment's silence as they halted before Rebega, and then Kapopa addressed him. "You know us, Rebega-Kapopa, the witch- doctor, and Bobolo, the chief!"

Rebega nodded. "What do you want here?" he demanded.

"We are friends of Rebega," continued Kapopa, ingratiatingly.

"Your hands are empty," observed the pygmy; "I see no presents for Rebega."

"You shall have presents if you will do what we ask," promised Bobolo.

"What do you want Rebega to do?"

"Bobolo has brought his white wife to you," explained Kapopa. "Keep her here in your village for him in safety; let no one see her; let no one know that she is here."

"What are the presents?"

"Meal, plantain, fish; every moon enough for a feast for all in your

village," replied Bobolo.

"It is not enough," grunted Rebega. "We do not want a white woman in our village. Our own women make us enough trouble."

Kapopa stepped close to the chief and whispered rapidly into his ear. The sullen expression on Rebega's countenance deepened, but he appeared suddenly nervous and fearful. Perhaps Kapopa, the witch- doctor, had threatened him with the malign attentions of ghosts and demons if he did not accede to their request. At last he capitulated.

"Send the food at once," he said. "Even now we have not enough for ourselves, and this woman will need as

much food as two of us."

"It shall be sent tomorrow," promised Bobolo. "I shall come with it myself and remain over night. Now I must return to my village. It is getting late, and it is not well to be out after night has fallen. The Leopard Men are everywhere."

"Yes," agreed Rebega, "the Leopard Men are everywhere. I shall keep your white woman for you if you bring food. If you do not I shall send her back to your village."

"Do not do that!" exclaimed Bobolo. "The food shall be sent you."

It was with a feeling of relief that Kali Bwana saw Bobolo and Kapopa depart. During the interview with Rebega no one had once addressed her,

just as no one would have addressed a cow he was arranging to stable. She recalled the plaints of American Negroes that they were not treated with equality by the whites. Now that conditions were reversed, she could not see that the Negroes were more magnanimous than the whites. Evidently it all depended upon which was the more powerful and had nothing whatsoever to do with innate gentleness of spirit or charity.

When Bobolo and Kapopa had disappeared in the forest, Rebega called to a woman who had been among the interested spectators during the brief interview between him and his visitors. "Take the white woman to your hut," he

commanded. "See that no harm befalls her. Let no stranger see her. I have spoken."

"What shall I feed her?" demanded the woman. "My man was killed by a buffalo while hunting, and I have not enough food for myself."

"Let her go hungry, then, until Bobolo brings the food he has promised. Take her away."

The woman seized Kali Bwana by the wrist and led her toward a miserable but at the far end of the village. It seemed to the girl to be the meanest hut of all the squalid village. Filth and refuse were piled and strewn about the doorway through which she was conducted into its gloomy, windowless interior.

A number of other women had followed her guardian, and now all these crowded into the hut after them. They jabbered excitedly and pawed her roughly in their efforts to examine and finger her garments and her ornaments. She could understand a little of their language, for she had been long enough now with the natives to have picked up many words, and the pygmies of this district used a dialect similar to that spoken in the villages of Gato Mgungu and Bobolo. One of them, feeling of her body, remarked that she was tender and that her flesh should be good to eat, at which they all laughed, exposing their sharp-filed, yellow teeth.

"If Bobolo does not bring food for

her, she will be too thin," observed Wlala, the woman who was her guardian.

"If he does not bring food, we should eat her before she becomes too thin," advised another. "Our men hunt, but they bring little meat. They say the game has gone away. We must have meat."

They remained in the small, ill-smelling hut until it was time to go and prepare the evening meal for their men. The girl, exhausted by physical exertion and nervous strain, sickened by the close air and the stench of the hut's interior, had lain down in an effort to secure the peace of oblivion in sleep; but they had prodded her with sticks, and some of them had struck her in mere wanton

cruelty. When they had gone she lay down again, but immediately Wlala struck her a sharp blow.

"You cannot sleep while I work, white woman," she cried. "Get to work!" She pressed a stone pestle into the girl's hand and indicated a large stone at one side of the hut. In a hollow worn in the stone was some corn. Kali Bwana could not understand all that the woman said, but enough to know that she was to grind the corn. Wearily she commenced the work, while Wlala, just outside the hut, built her cooking fire and prepared her supper. When it was ready the woman gobbled it hungrily, offering none to the girl. Then she came back into the hut.

"I am hungry," said Kali Bwana.

"Will you not give me food?"

Wlala flew into a frenzy of rage. "Give you food!" she screamed. "I have not enough food for myself. You are the wife of Bobolo; let him bring you food."

"I am not his wife," replied the girl. "I am his prisoner. When my friends discover how you have treated me, you will all be punished."

Wlala laughed. "Your friends will never know," she taunted. "No one comes to the country of the Betetes. In my life I have seen only two other white-skinned people; those two we ate. No one came and punished us. No one will punish us after we have eaten you. Why did Bobolo not keep you in his own village? Were his women angry? Did

they drive you out?"

"I guess so," replied the girl.

"Then he will never take you back. It is a long way from the village of Bobolo to the village of Rebega. Bobolo will soon tire of coming so far to see you while he has plenty of wives in his own village; then he will give you to us." Wlala licked her thick lips.

The girl sat dejectedly before the stone mortar. She was very tired. Her hands had dropped to her sides. "Get to work, you lazy sow!" cried Wlala and struck her across the head with the stick she kept ever ready at hand. Wearily, Kali Bwana resumed her monotonous chore. "And see that you grind it fine," added Wlala; then she went out to gossip

with the other women of the village.

As soon as she was gone the girl stopped working. She was so tired that she could scarcely raise the stone pestle, and she was very hungry. Glancing fearfully through the doorway of the hut, she saw that no one was near enough to see her, and then, quickly, she gathered a handful of the raw meal and ate it. She dared not eat too much, lest Wlala discover the theft; but even that little was better than nothing. Then she added some fresh corn to the meal in the mortar and ground that to the same consistency as the other.

When Wlala returned to the hut, the girl was fast asleep beside the mortar. The woman kicked her into wakefulness;

but as by now it was too dark to work and the woman herself lay down to sleep, Kali Bwana was at last permitted undisturbed slumber.

Bobolo did not return the following day, nor the second day, nor the third; neither did he send food. The pygmies were very angry. They had been anticipating a feast. Perhaps Wlala was the angriest, for she was the hungriest; also, she had commenced to suspect the theft of her meal. Not being positive, but to be on the safe side, she had beaten Kali Bwana unmercifully while she accused her of it. At least she started to beat her; then suddenly something quite unexpected had happened. The white girl, leaping to her feet, had seized the

pygmy, torn the stick from her hand, and struck her repeatedly with it before Wlala could run from the hut. After that Wlala did not again strike Kali Bwana. In fact, she treated her with something approximating respect, but her voice was raised loudly in the village against the hated alien and against Bobolo.

In front of Rebega's hut was a concourse of women and warriors. They were all angry and hungry. "Bobolo has not brought the food," cried one, repeating for the hundredth time what had been said by each.

"What do we want of meal, or plantain, or fish when we have flesh here for all?" The speaker jerked a thumb meaningfully in the direction of

Wlala's hut.

"Bobolo would bring warriors and kill us if we harmed his white wife," cautioned another.

"Kapopa would cast a spell upon us, and many of us would die."

"He said he would come back with food the next day."

"Now it has been three days, and he has not returned."

"The flesh of the white girl is good now," argued Wlala. "She has been eating my meal, but I have stopped that. I have taken the meal from the hut and hidden it. If she does not have food soon, her flesh will not be so good as now. Let us eat her."

"I am afraid of Kapopa and Bobolo," admitted Rebega.

"We do not have to tell them that we ate her," urged Wlala.

"They will guess it," insisted Rebega.

"We can tell them that the Leopard Men came and took her away," suggested a rat-faced little fighting man; "and if they do not believe us we can go away. The hunting is not good here, anyway. We should go elsewhere and hunt."

For a long time Rebega's fears outweighed his natural inclination for human flesh, but at last he told them that if the food Bobolo had promised did not arrive before dark they would have a dance and a feast that night.

In the hut of Wlala, Kali Bwana heard the loud shouts of approval that greeted Rebega's announcement and thought that the food Bobolo had promised had arrived. She hoped that they would give her some of it, for she was weak from hunger. When Wlala came she asked her if the food had arrived.

"Bobolo has sent no food, but we shall eat tonight," replied the woman, grinning. "We shall eat all that we wish; but it will not be meal, nor plantain, nor fish." She came over to the girl then and felt of her body, pinching the flesh slightly between her fingers. "Yes, we shall eat," she concluded.

To Kali Bwana the inference was obvious, but the strange chemistry of

emotion had fortunately robbed her of the power to feel repugnance for the idea that would have so horribly revolted her a few short weeks ago. She did not think of the grisly aftermath; she thought only of death, and welcomed it.

The food from Bobolo did not come, and that night the Betetes gathered in the compound before Rebega's hut. The women dragged cooking pots to the scene and built many fires. The men danced a little; but only for a short time, for they had been too long on short rations. Their energy was at low ebb.

At last a few of them went to the hut of Wlala and dragged Kali Bwana to the scene of the festivities. There was some dispute as to who was to kill her.

Rebega was frankly afraid of the wrath of Kapopa, though he was not so much concerned about Bobolo. Bobolo could only follow them with warriors whom they could see and kill; but Kapopa could remain in his village and send demons and ghosts after them. At last it was decided that the women should kill her; and Wlala, remembering the blows that the white girl had struck her, volunteered to do the work herself.

"Tie her hands and feet," she said, "and I will kill her." She did not care to risk a repetition of the scene in her but at the time she had attempted to beat the girl.

Kali Bwana understood, and as the warriors prepared to bind her she

crossed her hands to facilitate their work. They threw her to the ground and secured her feet; then she closed her eyes and breathed a prayer. It was for those she had left behind in that far away country and for "Jerry."

CHAPTER 16.—A CLUE

The night that Tarzan had brought Sobito to their camp the Utengas had celebrated the event in beer salvaged from the loot of Gato Mgungu's village before they had burned it. They had celebrated late into the night, stopping only when the last of the beer had been consumed; then they had slept heavily and well. Even the sentries had dozed at their posts, for much beer poured into stomachs already filled with food induces a lethargy difficult to combat.

And while the Utenga warriors slept, Sobito was not idle. He pulled and tugged at the bonds that held his wrists, with little fear that his rather violent efforts would attract attention. At last he

felt them gradually stretching. Sweat poured from his tough old hide; beads of it stood out upon his wrinkled forehead. He was panting from the violence of his exertions. Slowly he dragged one hand farther and farther through the loop; just a hair's breadth at a time it moved, but eventually it slipped out— free!

For a moment the old witch-doctor lay still, recouping the energy that he had expended in his efforts to escape his bonds. Slowly his eyes ranged the camp. No one stirred. Only the heavy, stertorous breathing of the half-drunk warriors disturbed the silence of the night. Sobito drew his feet up within reach of his hands and untied the knots of the cords that confined them; then very

quietly and slowly he arose and slipped, bent half-doubled, down toward the river. In a moment the darkness had swallowed him, and the sleeping camp slept on.

On the shore he found the canoes that the Utengas had captured from the forces of Gato Mgungu; with considerable difficulty he pushed one of the smaller of them into the river, after satisfying himself that there was at least one paddle in it. As he leaped into it and felt it glide out into the current, he felt like one snatched from the jaws of death by some unexpected miracle.

His plans were already made. He had had plenty of time while he was lying working with his bonds to formulate

them. He might not with safety return to the temple of the Leopard God, that he knew full well; but down the river lay the village of his old friend Bobolo, who by the theft of the white priestess was doubtless as much anathema in the eyes of the Leopard Men as he. To Bobolo's village, therefore, he would go. What he would do afterward was in the laps of the gods.

Another lone boatman drifted down the broad river toward the village of Bobolo. It was Old Timer. He, too, had determined to pay a visit to the citadel of his old friend; but it would be no friendly visit. In fact, if Old Timer's plans were successful, Bobolo would not be aware that a visit was being paid

him, lest his hospitality wax so mightily that the guest might never be permitted to depart. It was the white girl, not Bobolo, who lured Old Timer to this rash venture. Something within him more powerful than reason told him that he must save her, and he knew that if any succor was to avail it must come to her at once. As to how he was to accomplish it he had not the most remote conception; all that must depend upon his reconnaissance and his resourcefulness.

As he drifted downward, paddling gently, his mind was filled with visions of the girl. He saw her as he had first seen her in her camp: her blood-smeared clothing, the dirt and perspiration, but, over all, the radiance of her fair face, the

haunting allure of her blond hair, dishevelled and falling in wavy ringlets across her forehead and about her ears. He saw her as he had seen her in the temple of the Leopard God, garbed in savage, barbaric splendor, more beautiful than ever. It thrilled him to live again the moments during which he had talked to her, touched her.

Forgotten was the girl whose callous selfishness had made him a wanderer and an outcast. The picture of her that he had carried constantly upon the screen of memory for two long years had faded. When he thought of her now he laughed; and instead of cursing her, as he had so often done before, he blessed her for having sent him here to meet and know

this glorious creature who now filled his dreams.

Old Timer was familiar with this stretch of the river. He knew the exact location of Bobolo's village, and he knew that day would break before he came within sight of it. To come boldly to it would be suicidal; now that Bobolo was aware that the white man knew of his connection with the Leopard Men, his life would not be safe if he fell into the hands of the crafty old chief.

For a short time after the sun rose he drifted on down stream, keeping close to the left bank; and shortly before he reached the village he turned the prow of his craft in to shore. He did not know that he would ever need the canoe again;

but on the chance that he might he secured it to the branch of a tree, and then clambered up into the leafy shelter of the forest giant.

He planned to make his way through the forest toward the village in the hope of finding some vantage point from which he might spy upon it; but he was confident that he would have to wait until after darkness had fallen before he could venture close, when it was in his plan to scale the palisade and search the village for the girl while the natives slept. A mad scheme - but men have essayed even madder when spurred on by infatuation for a woman.

As Old Timer was about to leave the tree and start toward the village of

Bobolo, his attention was attracted toward the river by a canoe which had just come into sight around a bend a short distance up stream. In it was a single native. Apprehending that any movement on his part might attract the attention of the lone paddler and wishing above all things to make his way to the village unseen, he remained motionless. Closer and closer came the canoe, but it was not until it was directly opposite him that the white man recognized its occupant as that priest of the Leopard God whom his rescuer had demanded should be delivered into his hands.

Yes, it was Sobito; but how had Sobito come here? What was the meaning of it? Old Timer was confident

that the strange white giant who had rescued him had not demanded Sobito for the purpose of setting him free. Here was a mystery. Its solution was beyond him, but he could not see that it materially concerned him in any way; so he gave it no further thought after Sobito had drifted out of sight beyond the next turning of the river below.

Moving cautiously through the jungle the white man came at last within sight of the village of Bobolo. Here he climbed a tree well off the trail where he could overlook the village without being observed. He was not surprised that he did not see the girl who he was confident was there, knowing that she was doubtless a prisoner in one of the

huts of the chief's compound. All that he could do was wait until darkness had fallen— wait and hope.

Two days' march on the opposite side of the river lay his own camp. He had thought of going there first and enlisting the aid of his partner, but he dared not risk the four days' delay. He wondered what The Kid was doing; he had not had much time to think about him of late, but he hoped he had been more successful in his search for ivory than he had.

The tree in which Old Timer had stationed himself was at the edge of a clearing. Below him and at a little distance women were working, hoeing with sharpened sticks. They were chattering like a band of monkeys. He

saw a few warriors set out to inspect their traps and snares. The scene was peacefully pastoral. He had recognized most of the warriors and some of the women, for Old Timer was well acquainted in the village of Bobolo. The villagers had been friendly, but he knew that he dared no longer approach the village openly because of his knowledge of Bobolo's connection with the Leopard Men. Because of that fact and his theft of the white girl the chief could not afford to let him live; he knew too much.

He had seen the village many times before, but now it had taken on a new aspect. Before, it had been only another native village inhabited by savage natives; today it was glorified in his

eyes by the presence of a girl. Thus does imagination color our perceptions. How different would the village of Bobolo have appeared in the eyes of the watcher had he known the truth, had he known that the girl he thought so near him was far away in the hut of Wlala, the Betete pygmy, grinding corn beneath the hate-filled eyes of a cruel taskmaster, suffering from hunger!

In the village Bobolo was having troubles of his own. Sobito had come! The chief knew nothing of what had befallen the priest of the Leopard God. He did not know that he had been discredited in the eyes of the order; nor did Sobito plan to enlighten him. The wily old witch-doctor was not sure that

he had any plans at all. He could not return to Tumbai, but he had to live somewhere. At least he thought so; and he needed, if not friends, allies. He saw in Bobolo a possible ally. He knew that the chief had stolen the white priestess, and he hoped that this knowledge might prove of advantage to him; but he said nothing about the white girl. He believed that she was in the village and that sooner or later he would see her. They had talked of many things since his arrival, but they had not spoken of the Leopard Men nor of the white girl. Sobito was waiting for any turn of events that would give him a cue to his advantage.

Bobolo was nervous. He had been

planning to take food to Rebega this day and visit his white wife. Sobito had upset his plans. He tried to think of some way by which he could rid himself of his unwelcome guest. Poison occurred to him; but he had already gone too far in arousing the antagonism of the Leopard Men, and knowing that there were loyal members of the clan in his village, he feared to add the poisoning of a priest to his other crime against the Leopard God.

The day dragged on. Bobolo had not yet discovered why Sobito had come to his village; Sobito had not yet seen the white girl. Old Timer was still perched in the tree overlooking the village. He was hungry and thirsty, but he did not dare desert his post lest something might

occur in the village that it would be to his advantage to see. Off and on all day he had seen Bobolo and Sobito. They were always talking. He wondered if they were discussing the fate of the girl. He wished that night would come. He would like to get down and stretch his legs and get a drink. His thirst annoyed him more than his hunger; but even if he had contemplated deserting his post to obtain water, it could not be done now. The women in the field had worked closer to his tree. Two of them were just beneath its overhanging branches. They paused in the shade to rest, their tongues rattling ceaselessly.

Old Timer had overheard a number of extremely intimate anecdotes relating to

members of the tribe. He learned that if a certain lady were not careful her husband was going to catch her in an embarrassing situation, that certain charms are more efficacious when mixed with nail parings, that the young son of another lady had a demon in his belly that caused him intense suffering when he overate. These things did not interest Old Timer greatly, but presently one of the women asked a question that brought him to alert attention.

"What do you think Bobolo did with his white wife?"

"He told Ubooga that he had sent her back to the Leopard Men from whom he says that he stole her," replied the other.

"Bobolo has a lying tongue in his

head," rejoined the first woman; "it does not know the truth."

"I know what he did with her," volunteered the other. "I overheard Kapopa telling his wife."

"What did he say?"

"He said that they took her to the village of the little men."

"They will eat her."

"No, Bobolo has promised to give them food every moon if they keep her for him."

"I would not like to be in the village of the little men no matter what they promised. They are eaters of men, they are always hungry, and they are great liars." Then the women's work carried

them away from the tree, and Old Timer heard no more; but that which he had heard had changed all his plans.

No longer was he interested in the village of Bobolo; once again it was only another native village.

CHAPTER 17.— CHARGING LIONS

When Tarzan of the Apes left the camp of the Utengas, he appropriated one of the canoes of the defeated Leopard Men, as Sobito was to do several hours later, and paddled across the broad river to its opposite shore. His destination was the village of Bobolo; his mission, to question the chief relative to the white girl. He felt no keen personal interest in her and was concerned only because of racial ties, which, after all, are not very binding. She was a white woman and he was a white man, a fact that he sometimes forgot, since, after all, he was a wild

beast before everything else.

He had been very active for several days and nights, and he was tired. Little Nkima also was tired, nor did he let Tarzan forget it for long; so when the ape-man leaped ashore from the canoe he sought a comfortable place among the branches of a tree where they might lie up for a few hours.

The sun was high in the heavens when Tarzan awoke. Little Nkima, snuggling close to him, would have slept longer; but the ape- man caught him by the scruff of the neck and shook him into wakefulness. "I am hungry," said Tarzan; "let us find food and eat."

"There is plenty to eat in the forest," replied Nkima; "let us sleep a little

longer."

"I do not want fruit or nuts," said the ape-man. "I want meat. Nkima may remain here and sleep, but Tarzan goes to kill."

"I shall go with you," announced Nkima. "Strong in this forest is the scent of Sheeta, the leopard. I am afraid to remain alone. Sheeta is hunting, too; he is hunting for little Nkima."

The shadow of a smile touched the lips of the ape-man, one of those rare smiles that it was vouchsafed but few to see. "Come," he said, "and while Tarzan hunts for meat Nima can rob birds' nests."

The hunting was not good, for though the apeman ranged far through the forest

his searching nostrils were not rewarded with the scent of flesh that he liked. Always strong was the scent of Sheeta, but Tarzan liked not the flesh of the carnivores. Driven to it by the extremity of hunger, he had eaten more than once of Sheeta and Numa and Sabor; but it was the flesh of the herbivores that he preferred.

Knowing that the hunting was better farther from the river, where there were fewer men, he swung deeper and deeper into the primeval forest until be was many miles from the river. This country was new to Tarzan, and he did not like it; there was too little game. This thought was in his mind when there came to his nostrils the scent of Wappi, the antelope.

It was very faint, but it was enough. Straight into the wind swung Tarzan of the Apes, and steadily the scent of Wappi grew stronger in his nostrils. Mingling with it were other scents: the scent of Pacco, the zebra, and of Numa, the lion; the fresh scent of open grassland.

On swung Tarzan of the Apes and little Nkima. Stronger grew the scent spoor of the quarry in the nostrils of the hunter, stronger the hunger-craving growing in his belly. His keen nostrils told him that there was not one antelope ahead but many. This must be a good hunting ground that he was approaching! Then the forest ended; and a rolling, grassy plain, tree-dotted, stretched

before him to blue mountains in the distance.

Before him, as he halted at the forest's edge, the plain was rich with lush grasses; a mile away a herd of antelope grazed, and beyond them the plain was dotted with zebra. An almost inaudible growl rumbled from his deep chest; it was the anticipatory growl of the hunting beast that is about to feed.

Strong in his nostrils was the scent of Numa, the lion. In those deep grasses were lions; but in such rich hunting ground, they must be well fed, he knew, and so he could ignore them. They would not bother him, if he did not bother them, which he had no intention of doing.

To stalk the antelope amid the concealment of this tall grass was no difficult matter for the apeman. He did not have to see them; his nose would guide him to them. First he noted carefully the terrain, the location of each tree, an outcropping of rock that rose above the grasses. It was likely that the lions would be lying up there in the shadow of the rocks. He beckoned to Nkima, but Nkima held back. "Numa is there," complained the monkey, "with all his brothers and sisters. They are waiting there to eat little Nkima. Nkima is afraid."

"Stay where you are, then; and when I have made my kill I will return."

"Nkima is afraid to remain."

Tarzan shook his head. "Nkima is a great coward," he said. "He may do what he pleases. Tarzan goes to make his kill."

Silently he slid into the tall grasses, while Nkima crouched high in a great tree, choosing the lesser of two evils. The little monkey watched him go out into the great plain where the lions were; and he shivered, though it was very warm.

Tarzan made a detour to avoid the rocks; but even where he was, the lion scent was so strong that he almost lost the scent of Wappi. Yet he felt no apprehension. Fear he did not know. By now he had covered half the distance to the quarry, which was still feeding

quietly, unmindful of danger.

Suddenly to his left he heard the angry coughing growl of a lion. It was a warning growl that the ape-man knew might presage a charge. Tarzan sought no encounter with Numa. All that he wished was to make his kill and depart. He moved away to the right. Fifty feet ahead of him was a tree. If the lion charged, it might be necessary to seek sanctuary there, but he did not believe that Numa would charge. He had given him no reason to do so; then a cross current of wind brought to his nostrils a scent that warned him of his peril. It was the scent of Sabor, the lioness. Now Tarzan understood; he had nearly stumbled upon a mating lion, which meant that a charge

was almost inevitable, for a mating lion will charge anything without provocation.

Now the tree was but twenty-five feet away. A roar thundered from the grasses behind him. A quick backward glance, showing the grass tops waving tumultuously, revealed the imminence of his danger; Numa was charging!

Up to that time he had seen no lion, but now a massive head framed by a dark brown mane burst into view. Tarzan of the Apes was angry. It galled him to flee. A dignified retreat prompted by caution was one thing; abject flight, another. Few creatures can move with the swiftness of Tarzan, and he had a start of twenty-five feet. He could have

reached the tree ahead of the lion, but he did not attempt to do so—not at once. Instead he wheeled and faced the roaring, green-eyed monster. Back went his spear arm, his muscles rolling like molten steel beneath his bronzed skin; then forward with all the weight of his powerful frame backed by those mighty thews. The heavy Utenga war spear shot from his hand. Not until then did Tarzan of the Apes turn and fly; but he did not run from the lion that was pursuing him. Behind Numa he had seen Sabor coming, and behind her the grasses waved in many places above the rushing bodies of charging lions. Tarzan of the Apes fled from certain and sudden death.

The spear momentarily checked the

charge of the nearest lion, and in that fraction of a split second that spelled the difference between life and death the ape-man swarmed up the tree that had been his goal, while the raking talons of Numa all but grazed his heel.

Safe out of reach Tarzan turned and looked down. Below him a great lion in his death throes was clawing at the haft of the spear that was buried in his heart. Behind the first lion a lioness and six more males had burst into view. Far out across the plain the antelopes and the zebras were disappearing in the distance, startled into flight by the roars of the charging lion.

The lioness, never pausing in her charge, ran far up the bole of the tree in

her effort to drag down the man-thing. She had succeeded in getting one forearm across a lower branch, and she hung there a moment in an effort to scramble farther upward; but she could not get sufficient footing for her hind feet to force her heavy weight higher, and presently she slipped back to the ground. She sniffed at her dead mate and then circled the tree, growling. The six males paced to and fro, adding their angry roars to the protest of Sabor, while from above them the ape-man looked down and through snarling lips growled out his own disappointment and displeasure. In a tree top half a mile away a little monkey screamed and scolded.

For half an hour the lioness circled

the tree, looking up at Tarzan, her yellow-green eyes blazing with rage and hatred; then she lay down beside the body of her fallen mate, while the six males squatted upon their haunches and watched now Sabor, now Tarzan, and now one another.

Tarzan of the Apes gazed ruefully after his departed quarry and back toward the forest. He was hungrier now than ever. Even if the lions went away and permitted him to descend, he was still as far from a meal as he had been when he awoke in the morning. He broke twigs and branches from the tree and hurled them at Sabor in an attempt to drive her away, knowing that wherever she went the males would follow; but

she only growled the more ferociously and remained in her place beside the dead lion.

Thus passed the remainder of the day. Night came, and still the lioness remained beside her dead mate. Tarzan upbraided himself for leaving his bow and arrows behind in the forest. With them he could have killed the lioness and the lions and escaped. Without them he could do nothing but throw futile twigs at them and wait. He wondered how long he would have to wait. When the lioness waxed hungry enough she would go away; but when would that be? From the size of her belly and the smell of her breath the manbeast squatting above her knew that she had eaten

recently and well.

Tarzan had long since resigned himself to his fate. When he had found that hurling things at Sabor would not drive her away, he had desisted. Unlike man he did not continue to annoy her merely for the purpose of venting his displeasure. Instead he curled himself in a crotch of the tree and slept.

In the forest, at the edge of the plain, a terrified little monkey rolled himself into the tiniest ball that he could achieve and suffered in silence. If he were too large or too noisy, he feared that he might sooner attract the attention of Sheeta, the leopard. That Sheeta would come eventually and eat him he was certain. But why hasten the evil moment?

When the sun rose and he was still alive, Nkima was surprised but not wholly convinced. Sheeta might have overlooked him in the dark, but in the daylight he would be sure to see him; however, there was some consolation in knowing that he could see Sheeta sooner and doubtless escape him. With the rising sun his spirits rose, but he was still unhappy because Tarzan had not returned. Out on the plain he could see him in the tree, and he wondered why he did not come down and return to little Nkima. He saw the lions, too; but it did not occur to him that it was they who prevented Tarzan returning. He could not conceive that there might be any creature or any number of creatures which his

mighty master could not overcome.

Tarzan was irked. The lioness gave no sign that she was ever going away. Several of the males had departed to hunt during the night, and one that had made a kill near by lay on it not far from the tree. Tarzan hoped that Sabor would be attracted by it; but though the odor of the kill was strong in the ape-man's nostrils, the lioness was not tempted away by it.

Noon came. Tarzan was famished and his throat was dry. He was tempted to cut a club from a tree branch and attempt to battle his way to liberty; but he knew only too well what the outcome would be. Not even he, Tarzan of the Apes, could hope to survive the onslaught of

all those lions, which was certain to follow immediately he descended from the tree if the lioness attacked him. That she would attack him if he approached that close to her dead mate was a foregone conclusion. There was nothing to do but wait. Eventually she would go away; she could not remain there forever.

Nor did she. Shortly after noon she arose and slunk toward the kill that one of the males had made. As she disappeared in the tall grass, the other males followed her. It was fortunate for the ape-man that the kill lay beyond the tree in which he had taken refuge, away from the forest. He did not wait after the last male disappeared among the waving

grasses, but dropped from the tree, recovered his spear from the carcass of Numa, and started at a brisk walk toward the forest. His keen ears took note of every sound. Not even soft-padded Numa could have stalked him without his being aware of it, but no lion followed him.

Nkima was frantic with joy. Tarzan was only hungry and thirsty. He was not long in finding the means for quenching his thirst, but it was late before he made a kill and satisfied his hunger; then his thoughts returned to the object of his excursion. He would go to the village of Bobolo and reconnoiter.

He had gone far inland from the river, and his hunting had taken him down the

valley to a point which he guessed was about opposite the village where he hoped to find the girl. He had passed a band of great apes led by Zu-tho, whom he had thought far away in his own country; and he had stopped to talk with them for a moment; but neither the great apes nor Tarzan, who was reared among them, are loquacious, so that he soon left them to pursue the purpose he had undertaken. Now he swung through the trees directly toward the river, where he knew that he could find landmarks to assure him of his position.

It was already dark; so Nkima clung to the back of his master, his little arms about the bronzed neck. By day he swung through the trees with Tarzan; but at

night he clung tightly to him, for by night there are terrible creatures abroad in the jungle; and they are all hunting for little Nkima.

The scent spoor of man was growing stronger in the nostrils of Tarzan, so that he knew that he was approaching a village of the Gomangani. He was certain that it could not be the village of Bobolo; it was too far from the river. Furthermore, there was an indication in the odors wafted to his nostrils that the people who inhabited it were not of the same tribe as Bobolo. The mere presence of Gomangani would have been sufficient to have caused Tarzan to investigate, for it was the business of the Lord of the Jungle to have knowledge of

all things in his vast domain; but there was another scent spoor faintly appreciable among the varied stenches emanating from the village that in itself would have been sufficient to turn him from his direct path to the river. It was but the faintest suggestion of a scent, yet the ape-man recognized it for what it was; and it told him that the girl he sought was close at hand.

Silently he approached the village, until from the outspreading branches of a great tree he looked down upon the compound before the hut of Rebega, the chief.

CHAPTER 18.—ARROWS OUT OF THE NIGHT

The Kid had returned to his camp after a fruitless search for elephants. He hoped that Old Timer had been more successful. At first he thought that the other's protracted absence indicated this, but as the days passed and his friend did not return he became anxious. His position was not an enviable one. The faith and loyalty of his three retainers had been sorely shaken. Only a genuine attachment for the two white men had kept them with them during the recent months of disappointment and ill fortune. How much longer he could expect to hold them he did not know. He was

equally at a loss to imagine what he would do if they deserted him, yet his chief concern was not for himself but for his friend.

Fortunately he had been able to keep the camp well supplied with fresh meat, and the natives, therefore, reasonably contented; but he knew that they longed to return to their own village now that they could not see any likelihood of profiting by their connection with these two poverty-stricken white men.

Such thoughts were occupying his mind late one afternoon upon his return from a successful hunt for meat when his reveries were interrupted by the shouts of his boys. Glancing up, he saw two of the men who had accompanied Old

Timer entering the camp. Leaping to his feet, he went forward to meet them, expecting to see his friend and the third following closely behind them; but when he was close enough to see the expressions upon their faces he realized that something was amiss.

"Where are your bwana and Andereya?" he demanded.

"They are both dead," replied one of the returning natives.

"Dead!" ejaculated The Kid. It seemed to him that the bottom had suddenly dropped from his world. Old Timer dead! It was unthinkable. Until now he had scarcely realized how much he had depended upon the older man for guidance and support, nor to what extent

this friendship had become a part of him. "How did it happen?" he inquired dully. "Was it an elephant?"

"The Leopard men, Bwana," explained the native who had made the announcement.

"The Leopard Men! Tell me how it happened."

With attention to minute details and with much circumlocution the two boys told all they knew; and when at last they had finished, The Kid saw a suggestion of a ray of hope. They had not actually seen Old Timer killed. He might still be a prisoner in the village of Gato Mgungu.

"He said that if he had not returned to us by the time the shadow of the forest

had left the palisade in the morning we should know that he was dead," insisted the native.

The youth mentally surveyed his resources: five discontented natives and himself-six men to march upon the stronghold of the Leopard Men and demand an accounting of them. And five of these men held the Leopard Men in such awe that he knew that they would not accompany him. He raised his eyes suddenly to the waiting natives. "Be ready to march when the sun rises tomorrow," he snapped.

There was a moment's hesitation. "Where do we march?" demanded one, suspiciously.

"Where I lead you," he replied,

shortly; then he returned to his tent, his mind occupied with plans for the future and with the tragic story that the two boys had narrated.

He wondered who the girl might be. What was Old Timer doing pursuing a white woman? Had he gone crazy, or had he forgotten that he hated all white women? Of course, he reflected, there was nothing else that his friend might have done. The girl had been in danger, and that of course would have been enough to have sent Old Timer on the trail of her abductors; but how had he become involved with her in the first place? The boys had not been explicit upon this point. He saw them now, talking with their fellows. All of them

appeared excited. Presently they started across the camp toward his tent.

"Well, what is it now?" he asked as they stopped before him.

"If you are going to the village of the Leopard Men, Bwana," announced the spokesman, "we will not follow you. We are few, and they would kill us all and eat us."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed The Kid. "They will do nothing of the sort. They would not dare."

"That is what the old bwana said," replied the spokesman, "but he did not return to us. He is dead."

"I do not believe that he is dead," retorted The Kid. "We are going to find out."

"You, perhaps, but not we," rejoined the man.

The Kid saw that he could not shake them in their decision. The outlook appeared gloomy, but he was determined to go if he had to go alone. Yet what could he accomplish without them? A plan occurred to him.

"Will you go part way with me?" he asked.

"How far?"

"To the village of Bobolo. I may be able to get help from him.

For a moment the natives argued among themselves in low voices; then their spokesman turned again to the white man. "We will go as far as the village of Bobolo," he said.

"But no farther," added another.

* * * * *

Old Timer waited until the women hoeing in the field had departed a little distance from the tree in which he was hiding; then he slipped cautiously to the ground on the side opposite them. He had never been to the village of the little men. He had often heard the natives of Bobolo's village speak of them and knew in a general way the direction in which they pygmy village lay, but there were many trails in this part of the forest. It would be easy to take the wrong one.

He knew enough of the Betetes to know that he might have difficulty in entering their village. They were a

savage, warlike race of Pygmies and even reputed to be cannibals. The trails to their village were well guarded, and the first challenge might be a poisoned spear. Yet, though he knew these things to be true, the idea of abandoning his search for the girl because of them did not occur to him. He did not hesitate in reaching a decision, but the very fact that she was there hastened it instead.

Dark soon overtook him, but he stopped only because he could not see to go on. At the first break of dawn he was away again. The forest was dense and gloomy. He could not see the sun, and he was haunted by the conviction that he was on the wrong trail. It must have been about mid-afternoon when he came to a

sudden halt, baffled. He had recognized his own footprints in the trail ahead of him; he had walked in a great circle.

Absolutely at a loss as to which direction to take, he struck out blindly along a narrow, winding trail that intercepted the one he had been traversing at the point at which he had made his harrowing discovery. Where the trail led or in what direction he could not know, nor even whether it led back toward the river or farther inland: but he must be moving, he must go on.

Now he examined carefully every trail that crossed or branched from the one he was following. The trails, some of them at least, were well-worn; the ground was damp; the spoor of animals

was often plain before his eyes. But he saw nothing that might afford him a clue until shortly before dark; then careful scrutiny of an intersecting trail revealed the tiny footprint of a pygmy. Old Timer was elated. It was the first sense of elation that he had experienced during all that long, dreary day. He had come to hate the forest. Its sunless gloom oppressed him. It had assumed for him the menacing personality of a powerful, remorseless enemy that sought not only to thwart his plans but to lure him to his death. He longed to defeat it—to show it that he was more cunning, if less powerful than it.

He hastened along the new trail, but darkness overtook him before he learned

whether or not it led to his goal. Yet now he did not stop as he had the previous night. So long had the forest defeated and mocked him that perhaps he was a little mad. Something seemed to be calling to him out of the blackness ahead. Was it a woman's voice? He knew better, yet he listened intently as he groped his way through the darkness.

Presently his tensely listening ears were rewarded by a sound. It was not the voice of a woman calling to him, but it was still the sound of human voices. Muffled and indistinct, it came to him out of that black void ahead. His heart beat a little faster; he moved more cautiously.

When he came at last within sight of a

village he could see nothing beyond the palisade other than the firelight playing upon the foliage of overspreading trees and upon the thatched roofs of huts, but he knew that it was the village of the little men. There, behind that palisade, was the girl he sought. He wanted to cry aloud, shouting words of encouragement to her. He wanted her to know that he was near her, that he had come to save her; but he made no sound.

Cautiously he crept nearer. There was no sign of sentry. The little men do not need sentries in the dark forest at night, for few are the human enemies that dare invite the dangers of the nocturnal jungle. The forest was their protection by night.

The poles that had been stuck in the ground to form the palisade were loosely bound together by lianas; there were spaces between them through which he glimpsed the firelight. Old Timer moved cautiously forward until he stood close against the palisade beside a gate and, placing an eye to one of the apertures, looked into the village of Rebega. What he saw was not particularly interesting: a group of natives gathered before a central hut which he assumed to be the hut of the chief. They appeared to be arguing about something, and some of the men were dancing. He could see their heads bobbing above those of the natives who shut off his view.

Old Timer was not interested in what the little men were doing. At least he thought he was not. He was interested only in the girl, and he searched the village for some evidence of her presence there, though he was not surprised that he did not see her. Undoubtedly she was a prisoner in one of the huts. Had he known the truth he would have been far more interested in the activities of that little group of pygmies, the bodies of some of which hid from his sight the bound girl at its center.

Old Timer examined the gate and discovered that it was crudely secured with a fiber rope. From his breeches' pocket he took the pocket knife that the

Leopard Men had overlooked and began cutting the fastening, congratulating himself upon the fact that the villagers were occupied to such an extent with something over by the chief's hut that he could complete his work without fear of detection.

He planned only to prepare a way into the village, when he undertook his search for the girl after the natives had retired to their huts for the night, and a way out when he had found her. For some unaccountable reason his spirits were high; success seemed assured. Already he was anticipating his reunion with the girl; then there was a little break in the circle of natives standing between him and the center of the group,

and through that break he saw a sight that turned him suddenly cold with dread.

It was the girl, bound hand and foot, and a savage-faced devil- woman wielding a large knife. As Old Timer saw the hideous tableau revealed for a moment to his horrified gaze, the woman seized the girl by the hair and forced her head back, the knife flashed in the light of the cooking fires that had been prepared against the coming feast, and Old Timer, unarmed save for a small knife, burst through the gates and ran toward the scene of impending murder.

A cry of remonstrance burst from his lips that sounded in the ears of the astonished pygmies like the war cry of attacking natives, and at the same instant

an arrow passed through the body of Wlala from behind, transfixing her heart. Old Timer's eyes were on the executioner at the moment, and he saw the arrow, as did many of the pygmies; but like them he had no idea from whence it had come—whether from friend or foe.

For a moment the little men stood in stupid astonishment, but the white man realized that their inactivity would be brief when they discovered that they had only a lone and unarmed man to deal with; it was then that there flashed to his fertile brain a forlorn hope.

Half turning, he shouted back toward the open gate, "Surround the village! Let no one escape, but do not kill unless they

kill me." He spoke in a dialect that he knew they would understand, the language of the people of Bobolo's tribe; and then to the villagers, "Stand aside! Let me take the white woman, and you will not be harmed." But he did not wait for permission.

Leaping to the girl's side, he raised her in his arms; and then it was that Rebega seemed to awaken from his stupor. He saw only one man. Perhaps there were others outside his village, but did he not have warriors who could fight? "Kill the white man!" he shouted, leaping forward.

A second arrow passed through the body of Rebega; and as he sank to the ground, three more, shot in rapid

succession, brought down three warriors who had sprung forward to do his bidding. Instantly terror filled the breasts of the remaining pygmies, sending them scurrying to the greater security of their huts.

Throwing the girl across his shoulder, Old Timer bolted for the open gate and disappeared in the forest. He heard a rending and a crash behind him, but he did not know what had happened, nor did he seek to ascertain.

CHAPTER 19.—"THE DEMONS ARE COMING!"

The sight that met the eyes of Tarzan of the Apes as he looked down into the compound of the village of Rebega, the Betete chief, gave him cause for astonishment. He saw a white girl being bound. He saw the cooking pots and the fires, and he guessed what was about to transpire. He was on his way to the village of Bobolo in search of a white girl imprisoned there. Could there be two white girls captives of natives in this same district? It scarcely seemed probable. This, therefore, must be the white girl whom he had supposed in the village of Bobolo; but how had she

come here?

The question was of less importance than the fact that she was here or the other still more important fact that he must save her. Dropping to the ground, he scaled the palisade and crept through the village from the rear, keeping well in the shadow of the huts; while little Nkima remained behind in the tree that the ape-man had quitted, his courage having carried him as far as it could.

When the pygmies had cleared a space for their village they had left a few trees within the enclosure to afford them shade, and one of these grew in front of the hut of Rebega. To this tree Tarzan made his way, keeping the bole of it between him and the natives

assembled about the fires; and into its branches he swung just in time to see Wlala seize the girl by the hair and lift her blade to slash the fair throat.

There was no time for thought, barely time for action. The muscles of the ape-man responded almost automatically to the stimulus of necessity. To fit an arrow to his bow and to loose the shaft required but the fraction of a split second. Simultaneously he heard the noise at the gate, saw the white man running forward, heard him yell. Even had he not recognized him, he would have known instinctively that he was here for but one purpose—the rescue of the girl. And when he heard Rebega's command, knowing the danger that the

white man faced, he shot the additional arrows that brought down those most closely menacing him and frightened the rest of the pygmies away for the short time that was necessary to permit the removal of the captive from the village.

Tarzan of the Apes had no quarrel with the little men. He had accomplished that for which he had come and was ready to depart, but as he turned to descend from the tree there was a rending of wood, and the limb upon which he was standing broke suddenly from the stem of the tree and crashed to the ground beneath, carrying the ape-man with it.

The fall stunned him momentarily, and when he regained consciousness he

found his body overrun by pygmy warriors who were just completing the act of trussing his arms and legs securely. Not knowing that they had completed their job, nor how well they had done it, the ape-man surged heavily upon his bonds, the effort sending the pygmies in all directions; but the cords held and the Lord of the Jungle knew that he was the captive of as cruel and merciless a people as the forests of the great river basin concealed.

The Betetes were still nervous and fearful. They had refastened the gates that Old Timer had opened, and a force of warriors was guarding this entrance as well as the one at the opposite end of the village. Poison-tipped spears and

arrows were in readiness for any enemy who might approach, but the whole village was in a state of nervous terror bordering upon panic. Their chief was dead; the white girl whom they had been about to devour was gone; a gigantic white man had dropped from the heavens into their village and was now their prisoner. All these things had happened within a few seconds; it was little wonder that they were nervous.

As to their new captive there was a difference of opinion. Some thought that he should be slain at once, lest he escape. Others, impressed by the mysterious manner of his entrance into the village, were inclined to wait, being fearful because of their ignorance of his

origin, which might easily be supernatural.

The possible danger of an attack by an enemy beyond their gates finally was a reprieve for the ape-man, for the simple reason that they dared not distract their attention from the defense of the village to indulge in an orgy of eating. Tomorrow night would answer even better, their leaders argued; and so a score of them half carried, half dragged the great body of their prisoner into an unoccupied hut, two of their number remaining outside the entrance on guard.

Swaying upon the topmost branch of a tree, Nkima hugged himself in grief and terror, but principally terror; for in many respects he was not greatly unlike the

rest of us who, with Nkima, have descended from a common ancestor. His own troubles affected him more than the troubles of another, even though that other was a loved one.

This seemed a cruel world indeed to little Nkima. He was never long out of one trouble before another had him in its grip, though more often than not the troubles were of his own making. This time however, he had been behaving perfectly (largely through the fact that he was terror-stricken in this strange forest); he had not insulted a single creature all day nor thrown missiles at one; yet here he was alone in the dark, the scent of Sheeta strong in his nostrils, and Tarzan a prisoner in the hands of the

little Gomangani.

He wished that Muviro and the other Waziri were here, or Jad- bal-ja, the Golden Lion. Either of these would come to the rescue of Tarzan and save him, too; but they were far away. So far away were they that Nkima had long since given up hope of seeing any of them again. He wanted to go into the village of the little Gomangani that he might be near his master, but he dared not. He could only crouch in the tree and wait for Sheeta or Kudu. If Sheeta came first, as he fully expected him to do, that would be the last of little Nkima. But perhaps Kudu, the sun, would come first, in which event there would be another day of comparative safety before

hideous night settled down again upon an unhappy world.

As his thoughts dwelt upon such lugubrious prophecies, there rose from the village below him the uncanny notes of a weird cry. The natives in the village were startled and terrified, because they only half guessed what it was. They had heard it before occasionally all during their lives, sounding mysterious and awe-inspiring from the dark distances of the jungle; but they had never heard it so close to them before. It sounded almost in the village. They had scarcely had time to think these thoughts when they learned that the terrible cry had been voiced from one of their own huts.

Two terrified warriors apprised them

of this, the two warriors who had been placed on guard over their giant captive. Wide-eyed and breathless, they fled from their post of duty. "It is no man that we have captured," cried one of them, "but a demon. He has changed himself into a great ape. Did you not hear him?"

The other natives were equally frightened. They had no chief, no one to give orders, no one to whom they might look for advice and protection in an emergency of this nature. "Did you see him?" inquired one of the sentries. "What does he look like?"

"We did not see him, but we heard him."

"If you did not see him, how do you know that he has changed himself into a

great ape?"

"Did I not say that I heard him?" demanded a sentry. "When the lion roars, do you have to go out into the forest to look at him to know that he is a lion?"

The skeptic scratched his head. Here was logic irrefutable. However, he felt that he must have the last word. "If you had looked, you would have known for sure," he said. "Had I been on guard I should have looked in the hut. I should not have run away like an old woman."

"Go and look, then," cried one of the sentries. The skeptic was silenced.

Nkima heard the weird cry from the village of the little men. It thrilled him, too, but it did not frighten him. He

listened intently, but no sound broke the silence of the great forest. He became uneasy. He wished to raise his voice, too, but he dared not, knowing that Sheeta would hear. He wished to go to the side of his master, but fear was stronger than love. All he could do was wait and shiver; he did not dare whimper for fear of Sheeta.

Five minutes passed—five minutes during which the Betetes did a maximum of talking and a minimum of thinking. However, a few of them had almost succeeded in screwing up their courage to a point that would permit them to investigate the hut in which the captive was immured, when again the weird cry shattered the silence of the night;

whereupon the investigation was delayed by common consent.

Now, faintly from afar sounded the roar of a lion; and a moment later out of the dim distance came an eerie cry that seemed a counterpart of that which had issued from the hut. After that, silence fell again upon the forest, but only for a short time. Now the wives of Rebega and the wives of the warriors who had been killed commenced their lamentations. They moaned and howled and smeared themselves with ashes.

An hour passed, during which the warriors held a council and chose a temporary chief. It was Nyalwa, who was known as a brave warrior. The little men felt better now; there was a

recrudescence of courage. Nyalwa perceived this and realized that he should take advantage of it while it was hot. He also felt that, being chief, he should do something important.

"Let us go and kill the white man," he said. "We shall be safer when he is dead."

"And our bellies will be fuller," remarked a warrior. "Mine is very empty now."

"But what if he is not a man but a demon?" demanded another.

This started a controversy that lasted another hour, but at last it was decided that several of them should go to the hut and kill the prisoner; then more time was consumed deciding who should go. And

during this time little Nkima had experienced an accession of courage. He had been watching the village all the time; and he had seen that no one approached the hut in which Tarzan was confined and that none of the natives were in that part of the village, all of them being congregated in the open space before the hut of the dead Rebega.

Fearfully Nkima descended from the tree and scampered to the palisade, which he scaled at the far end of the village where there were no little men, even those who had been guarding the rear gate having deserted it at the first cry of the prisoner. It took him but a moment to reach the hut in which Tarzan lay. At the entrance he stopped and

peered into the dark interior, but he could see nothing. Again he grew very much afraid.

"It is little Nkima," he said. "Sheeta was there in the forest waiting for me. He tried to stop me, but I was not afraid. I have come to help Tarzan."

The darkness hid the smile that curved the lips of the apeman. He knew his Nkima—knew that if Sheeta had been within a mile of him he would not have moved from the safety of the slenderest high- flung branch to which no Sheeta could pursue him. But he merely said, "Nkima is very brave."

The little monkey entered the hut and leaped to the broad chest of the ape-man. "I have come to gnaw the cords that hold

you," he announced.

"That you cannot do," replied Tarzan; "otherwise I should have called you long ago."

"Why can I not?" demanded Nkima. "My teeth are very sharp."

"After the little men bound me with rope," explained Tarzan, "they twisted copper wire about my wrists and ankles. Nkima cannot gnaw through copper wire."

"I can gnaw through the cords," insisted Nkima, "and then I can take the wire off with my fingers."

"You can try," replied Tarzan, "but I think that you cannot do it."

Nyalwa had at last succeeded in

finding five warriors who would accompany him to the hut and kill the prisoner. He regretted that he had suggested the plan, for he had found it necessary, as candidate for permanent chieftainship, to volunteer to head the party.

As they crept slowly toward the hut, Tarzan raised his head. "They come!" his whispered to Nkima. "Go out and meet them. Hurry!"

Nkima crept cautiously through the doorway. The sight that first met his eyes was of six warriors creeping stealthily toward him. "They come!" he screamed to Tarzan. "The little Gomangani come!" And then he fled precipitately.

The Betetes saw him and were

astonished. They were also not a little fearful. "The demon has changed himself into a little monkey and escaped," cried a warrior.

Nyalwa hoped so, but it seemed almost too good to be true; however, he grasped at the suggestion. "Then we may go back," he said. "If he has gone we cannot kill him."

"We should look into the hut," urged a warrior who had hoped to be chief and who would have been glad to demonstrate that he was braver than Nyalwa.

"We can look into it in the morning when it is light," argued Nyalwa; "it is very dark now. We could see nothing."

"I will go and get a brand from the

fire," said the warrior, "and then if Nyalwa is afraid I will go into the hut. I am not afraid."

"I am not afraid," cried Nyalwa. "I will go in without any light." But he had no more than said it than he regretted it. Why was he always saying things first and thinking afterward?

"Then why do you stand still?" demanded the warrior. "You cannot get into the hut by standing still."

"I am not standing still," remonstrated Nyalwa, creeping forward very slowly.

While they argued, Nkima scaled the palisade and fled into the dark forest. He was very much afraid, but he felt better when he had reached the smaller branches of the trees, far above the

ground. He did not pause here, however, but swung on through the darkness, for there was a fixed purpose in the mind of little Nkima. Even his fear of Sheeta was submerged in the excitation of his mission.

Nyalwa crept to the doorway of the hut and peered in. He could see nothing. Prodding ahead of him with his spear he stepped inside. The five warriors crowded to the entrance behind him. Suddenly there burst upon Nyalwa's startled ears the same weird cry that had so terrified them all before. Nyalwa wheeled and bolted for the open air, but the five barred his exit. He collided with them and tried to claw his way over or through them. He was terrified, but it

was a question as to whether he was any more terrified than the five. They had not barred his way intentionally, but only because they had not moved as quickly as he. Now they rolled out upon the ground and, scrambling to their feet, bolted for the opposite end of the village.

"He is still there," announced Nyalwa after he had regained his breath. "That was what I went into the hut to learn. I have done what I said I would."

"We were going to kill him," said the warrior who would be chief. "Why did you not kill him? You were in there with him and you had your spear. He was bound and helpless. If you had let me go in, I would have killed him."

"Go in and kill him then," growled Nyalwa, disgusted.

"I have a better way," announced another warrior.

"What is it?" demanded Nyalwa, ready to jump at any suggestion.

"Let us all go and surround the hut; then when you give the word we will hurl our spears through the walls. In this way we shall be sure to kill the white man."

"That is just what I was going to suggest," stated Nyalwa. "We will all go; follow me!"

The little men crept again stealthily toward the hut. Their numbers gave them courage. At last they had surrounded it and were waiting the signal from

Nyalwa. The spears with their poisoned tips were poised. The life of the apeman hung in the balance, when a chorus of angry growls just beyond the palisade stilled the word of command on the lips of Nyalwa.

"What is that?" he cried.

The little men glanced toward the palisade and saw dark forms surmounting it. "The demons are coming!" shrieked one.

"It is the hairy men of the forest," cried another.

Huge, dark forms scaled the palisade and dropped into the village. The Betetes dropped back, hurling their spears. A little monkey perched upon the roof of a hut screamed and chattered.

"This way!" he cried. "This way, Zu-tho! Here is Tarzan of the Apes in this nest of the Gomangani."

A huge, hulking form with great shoulders and long arms rolled toward the hut. Behind him were half a dozen enormous bulls. The Betetes had fallen back to the front of Rebega's hut.

"Here!" called Tarzan. "Tarzan is here, Zu-tho!"

The great ape stooped and peered into the dark interior of the hut. His enormous frame was too large for the small doorway. With his great hands he seized the hut by its door posts and tore it from the ground, tipping it over upon its back, as little Nkima leaped, screaming, to the roof of an adjacent hut.

"Carry me out into the forest," directed the ape-man.

Zu-tho lifted the white man in his arms and carried him to the palisade, while the pygmies huddled behind the hut of Rebega, not knowing what was transpiring in that other part of their village. The other bulls followed, growling angrily. They did not like the scent of the man-things. They wished to get away. As they had come, they departed; and a moment later the dark shadows of the jungle engulfed them.

CHAPTER 20.—"I HATE YOU!"

As Old Timer carried the girl out of the village of the Betetes into the forest, every fiber of his being thrilled to the contact of her soft, warm body. At last he held her in his arms. Even the danger of their situation was forgotten for the moment in the ecstasy of his gladness. He had found her! He had saved her! Even in the excitement of the moment he realized that no other woman had ever aroused within him such an overpowering tide of emotion.

She had not spoken; she had not cried out. As a matter of fact she did not know into whose hands she had now fallen.

Her reaction to her rescue had been anything but a happy one, for she felt that she had been snatched from merciful death to face some new horror of life. The most reasonable explanation was that Bobolo had arrived in time to snatch her from the hands of the pygmies, and she preferred death to Bobolo.

A short distance from the village Old Timer lowered her to the ground and commenced to cut away her bonds. He had not spoken either. He had not dared trust his voice to speak, so loudly was his heart pounding in his throat. When the last bond was cut he helped her to her feet. He wanted to take her in his arms and crush her to him, but something stayed him. Suddenly he felt almost

afraid of her. Then he found his voice.

"Thank God that I came in time," he said.

The girl voiced a startled exclamation of surprise. "You are a white man!" she cried. "Who are you?"

"Who did you think I was?"

"Bobolo."

He laughed. "I am the man you don't like," he explained.

"Oh! And you risked your life to save me. Why did you do it? It was obvious that you did not like me; perhaps that was the reason I did not like you."

"Let's forget all that and start over."

"Yes, of course," she agreed; "but you must have come a long way and faced

many dangers to save me. Why did you do it?"

"Because I—" He hesitated. "Because I couldn't see a white woman fall into the hands of these devils."

"What are we going to do now? Where can we go?"

"We can't do much of anything before morning," he replied. "I'd like to get a little farther away from that village; then we must rest until morning. After that we'll try to reach my camp. It's two days' march on the opposite side of the river—if I can find the river. I got lost today trying to locate Rebega's village."

They moved on slowly through the darkness. He knew that they were starting in the right direction, for when

he had come to the clearing where the village stood he had noted the constellations in the sky; but how long they could continue to hold their course in the blackness of the forest night where the stars were hidden from their view, he did not know.

"What happened to you after Bobolo dragged me from the canoe at the mouth of that frightful river?" she asked.

"They took me back to the temple."

The girl shuddered. "That terrible place!"

"They were going to—to prepare me for one of their feasts," he continued. "I imagine I'll never be so close to death as that again without dying. The priestesses were just about to mess me up with their

clubs."

"How did you escape?"

"It was nothing short of a miracle," he replied. "Even now I cannot explain it. A voice called down from the rafters of the temple, claiming to be the muzimo of some native. A muzimo, you know, is some kind of ghost; I think each one of them is supposed to have a muzimo that looks after him. Then the finest looking white man I ever saw shinned down one of the pillars, grabbed me right out from under the noses of the priests and priestesses, and escorted me to the river where he had a canoe waiting for me."

"Hadn't you ever seen him before?"

"No. I tell you it was a modern miracle, not unlike one that happened in

the pygmy village just as I had busted in to head off that bloodthirsty, old she-devil who was going to knife you."

"The only miracle that I am aware of was your coming just when you did; if there was another I didn't witness it. You see I had my eyes closed, waiting for Wlala to use her knife, when you stopped her."

"I didn't stop her."

"What?"

"That was the miracle."

"I do not understand."

"Just as the woman grabbed you by the hair and raised her knife to kill you, an arrow passed completely through her body, and she fell dead. Then as I rushed

in and the warriors started to interfere with me, three or four of them fell with arrows through them, but where the arrows came from I haven't the slightest idea. I didn't see anyone who might have shot them. I don't know whether it was someone trying to aid us, or some natives attacking the Betete village."

"Or some one else trying to steal me," suggested the girl. "I have been stolen so many times recently that I have come to expect it; but I hope it wasn't that, for they might be following us."

"Happy thought," commented Old Timer; "but I hope you're wrong. I think you are, too, for if they had been following us to get you, they would have been on us before. There is no reason

why they should have waited."

They moved on slowly through the darkness for about half an hour longer; then the man stopped. "I think we had better rest until morning," he said, "though I don't know just how we are going to accomplish it. There is no place to lie down but the trail, and as that is used by the leopards at night it isn't exactly a safe couch."

"We might try the trees," she suggested.

"It is the only alternative. The underbrush is too thick here—we couldn't find a place large enough to lie down. Can you climb?"

"I may need a little help."

"I'll go up first and reach down and

help you up," he suggested.

A moment later he had found a low branch and clambered onto it. "Here," he said, reaching down, "give me your hand." Without difficulty he swung her to his side. "Stay here until I find a more comfortable place."

She heard him climbing about in the tree for a few minutes, and then he returned to her. "I found just the place," he announced. "It couldn't have been better if it had been made to order." He helped her to her feet, and then he put an arm about her and assisted her from branch to branch as they climbed upward toward the retreat he had located.

It was a great crotch where three

branches forked, two of them laterally and almost parallel. "I can fix this up like a Pullman," he observed. "Just wait a minute until I cut some small branches. How I ever stumbled on it in the dark gets me."

"Another miracle, perhaps," she suggested.

Growing all about them were small branches, and it did not take Old Timer long to cut as many as he needed. These he laid close together across the two parallel branches. Over them he placed a covering of leaves.

"Try that," he directed. "It may not be a feather bed, but it's better than none."

"It's wonderful." She had stretched out on it in the first utter relaxation she

had experienced for days—relaxation of the mind and nerves even more than of the body. For the first time in days she did not lie with terror at her side.

He could see her only dimly in the darkness; but in his mind's eyes he visualized the contours of that perfect form, the firm bosom, the slender waist, the rounded thigh; and again passion swept through him like a racing torrent of molten gold.

"Where are you going to sleep?" she asked.

"I'll find a place," he replied huskily. He was edging closer to her. His desire to take her in his arms was almost maniacal.

"I am so happy," she whispered

sleepily. "I didn't expect ever to be happy again. It must be because I feel so safe with you."

The man made no reply. Suddenly he felt very cold, as though his blood had turned to water; then a hot flush suffused him. "What the devil did she say that for?" he soliloquized. It angered him. He felt that it was not fair. What right had she to say it? She was not safe with him. It only made the thing that he contemplated that much harder to do—took some of the pleasure from it. Had he not saved her life at the risk of his own? Did she not owe him something? Did not all women owe him a debt for what one woman had done to him?

"It seems so strange," she said

drowsily.

"What?" he asked.

"I was so afraid of you after you came to my camp, and now I should be afraid if you were not here. It just goes to show that I am not a very good judge of character, but really you were not very nice then. You seem to have changed."

He made no comment, but he groped about in the darkness until he had found a place where he could settle himself, not comfortably, but with a minimum of discomfort. He felt that he was weak from hunger and exhaustion. He would wait until tomorrow. He thought that it might be easier then when her confidence in him was not so fresh in his mind, but he did not give up his

intention.

He wedged himself into a crotch where a great limb branched from the main bole of the tree. He was very uncomfortable there, but at least there was less danger that he might fall should he doze. The girl was a short distance above him. She seemed to radiate an influence that enveloped him in an aura at once delicious and painful. He was too far from her to touch her, yet always he felt her. Presently he heard the regular breathing that denoted that she slept. Somehow it reminded him of a baby—innocent, trusting, confident. He wished that it did not. Why was she so lovely? Why did she have hair like that? Why had God given her such eyes and lips?

Why -? Tired nature would be denied no longer. He slept.

Old Timer was very stiff and sore when he awoke. It was daylight. He glanced up toward the girl. She was sitting up looking at him. When their eyes met she smiled. Little things, trivial things often have a tremendous effect upon our lives. Had Kali Bwana not smiled then in just the way that she did, the lives of two people might have been very different.

"Good morning," she called, as Old Timer smiled back at her. "Did you sleep in that awful position all night?"

"It wasn't so bad," he assured her; "at least I slept."

"You fixed such a nice place for me;

why didn't you do the same for yourself?"

"You slept well?" he asked.

"All night. I must have been dead tired; but perhaps what counted most was the relief from apprehension. It is the first night since before my men deserted me that I have felt free to sleep."

"I am glad," he said; "and now we must be on the move; we must get out of this district."

"Where can we go?"

"I want to go west first until we are below Bobolo's stamping grounds and then cut across in a northerly direction toward the river. We may have a little difficulty crossing it, but we shall find a

way. At present I am more concerned about the Betetes than about Bobolo. His is a river tribe. They hunt and trap only a short distance in from the river, but the Betetes range pretty well through the forest. Fortunately for us they do not go very far to the west."

He helped her to the ground, and presently they found a trail that seemed to run in a westerly direction. Occasionally he saw fruits that he knew to be edible and gathered them; thus they ate as they moved slowly through the forest. They could not make rapid progress because both were physically weak from abstinence from sufficient food; but necessity drove them, and though they were forced to frequent rests

they kept going.

Thirst had been troubling them to a considerable extent when they came upon a small stream, and here they drank and rested. Old Timer had been carefully scrutinizing the trail that they had been following for signs of the pygmies; but he had discovered no spoor of human foot and was convinced that this trail was seldom used by the Betetes.

The girl sat with her back against the stem of a small tree, while Old Timer lay where he could gaze at her profile surreptitiously. Since that morning smile he looked upon her out of new eyes from which the scales of selfishness and lust had fallen. He saw now beyond the

glittering barrier of her physical charms a beauty of character that far transcended the former. Now he could appreciate the loyalty and the courage that had given her the strength to face the dangers of this savage world for—what?

The question brought his pleasant reveries to an abrupt conclusion with a shock. For what? Why, for Jerry Jerome, of course. Old Timer had never seen Jerry Jerome. All that he knew about him was his name, yet he disliked the man with all the fervor of blind jealousy. Suddenly he sat up.

"Are you married?" He shot the words as though from a pistol.

The girl looked at him in surprise. "'Why, no," she replied.

"Are you engaged?"

"Aren't your questions a little personal?" There was just a suggestion of the total frigidity that had marked her intercourse with him that day that he had come upon her in her camp.

Why shouldn't he be personal, he thought. Had he not saved her life; did she not owe him everything? Then came a realization of the caddishness of his attitude. "I am sorry," he said.

For a long time he sat gazing at the ground, his arms folded across his knees, his chin resting on them. The girl watched him intently; those level, grey eyes seemed to be evaluating him. For the first time since she had met him she was examining his face carefully.

Through the unkempt beard she saw strong, regular features, saw that the man was handsome in spite of the dirt and the haggard look caused by deprivation and anxiety. Neither was he as old as she had thought him. She judged that he must still be in his twenties.

"Do you know," she remarked presently, "that I do not even know your name?"

He hesitated a moment before replying and then said, "The Kid calls me Old Timer."

"That is not a name," she remonstrated, "and you are not old."

"Thank you," he acknowledged, "but if a man is as old as he feels I am the oldest living man."

"You are tired," she said soothingly, her voice like the caress of a mother's hand; "you have been through so much, and all for me." Perhaps she recalled the manner in which she had replied to his recent question, and regretted it. "I think you should rest here as long as you can."

"I am all right," he told her; "it is you who should rest, but it is not safe here. We must go on, no matter how tired we are, until we are farther away from the Betete country." He rose slowly to his feet and offered her his hand.

Across the stream, through which he carried her despite her objections that he must not overtax his strength, they came upon a wider trail along which they could walk abreast. Here he stopped

again to cut two staffs. "They will help us limp along," he remarked with a smile; "we are getting rather old, you know." But the one that he cut for himself was heavy and knotted at one end. It had more the appearance of a weapon than a walking stick.

Again they took up their weary flight, elbow to elbow. The feel of her arm touching his occasionally sent thrills through every fiber of his body; but recollection of Jerry Jerome dampened them. For some time they did not speak, each occupied with his own thoughts. It was the girl who broke the silence.

"Old Timer is not a name," she said; "I cannot call you that—it's silly."

"It is not much worse than my real

name," he assured her. "I was named for my grandfather, and grandfathers so often have peculiar names."

"I know it," she agreed, "but yet they were good old substantial names. Mine was Abner."

"Did you have only one?" he bantered.

"Only one named Abner. What was yours, the one you were named for?"

"Hiram; but my friends call me Hi," he added hastily.

"But your last name? I can't call you Hi."

"Why not? We are friends, I hope."

"All right," she agreed; "but you haven't told me your last name."

"Just call me Hi," he said a little shortly.

"But suppose I have to introduce you to some one?"

"To whom, for instance?"

"Oh, Bobolo," she suggested, laughingly.

"I have already met the gentleman; but speaking about names," he added, "I don't know yours."

"The natives called me Kali Bwana."

"But I am not a native," he reminded her.

"I like Kali," she said; "call me Kali."

"It means woman. All right, Woman."

"If you call me that, I shan't answer you."

"Just as you say, Kali." Then after a moment, "I rather like it myself; it makes a cute name for a girl."

As they trudged wearily along, the forest became more open, the underbrush was not so dense, and the trees were farther apart. In an open space Old Timer halted and looked up at the sun; then he shook his head.

"We've been going east instead of south," he announced.

"How hopeless!"

"I'm sorry; it was stupid of me, but I couldn't see the sun because of the damned trees. Oftentimes inanimate objects seem to assume malign personalities that try to thwart one at every turn and then gloat over his

misfortunes."

"Oh, it wasn't your fault," she cried quickly. "I didn't intend to imply that. You've done all that anyone could have."

"I'll tell you what we can do," he announced.

"Yes, what?"

"We can go on to the next stream and follow that to the river; it's bound to run into the river somewhere. It's too dangerous to go back to the one we crossed back there. In the meantime we might as well make up our minds that we're in for a long, hard trek and prepare for it."

"How? What do you mean?"

"We must eat; and we have no means

of obtaining food other than the occasional fruits and tubers that we may find, which are not very strengthening food to trek on. We must have meat, but we have no means for obtaining it. We need weapons."

"And there is no sporting goods house near, not even a hardware store." Her occasional, unexpected gaieties heartened him. She never sighed or complained. She was often serious, as became their situation; but even disaster, added to all the trials she had endured for weeks, could not dampen her spirits entirely nor destroy her sense of humor.

"We shall have to be our own armorers," he explained. "We shall have to make our own weapons."

"Let's start on a couple of Thompson machine guns," she suggested. "I should feel much safer if we had them."

"Bows and arrows and a couple of spears are about all we rate," he assured her.

"I imagine I could make a machine gun as readily," she admitted. "What useless things modern women are!"

"I should scarcely say that. I don't know what I should do without you." The involuntary admission slipped out so suddenly that he scarcely realized what he had said—he, the woman-hater. But the girl did, and she smiled.

"I thought you didn't like women," she remarked, quite seriously. "It seems to me that I recall quite distinctly that you

gave me that impression the afternoon that you came to my camp."

"Please don't," he begged. "I did not know you then."

"What a pretty speech! It doesn't sound at all like the old bear I first met."

"I am not the same man, Kali." He spoke the words in a low voice seriously.

To the girl it sounded like a confession and a plea for forgiveness. Impulsively she placed a hand on his arm. The soft, warm touch was like a spark to powder. He wheeled and seized her, pressing her close to him, crushing her body to his as though he would make them one; and in the same instant, before she could prevent it, his lips covered

hers in a brief, hot kiss of passion.

She struck at him and tried to push him away. "How—how dared you!" she cried. "I hate you!"

He let her go and they stood looking at one another, panting a little from exertion and excitement.

"I hate you!" she repeated.

He looked into her blazing eyes steadily for a long moment. "I love you, Kali," he said, "my Kali!"

CHAPTER 21.—BECAUSE NSENENE LOVED

Zu-tho, the great ape, had quarrelled with To-yat, the king. Each had coveted a young she just come into maturity. To-yat was a mighty bull, the mightiest of the tribe, for which excellent reason he was king; therefore Zu-tho hesitated to engage him in mortal combat. However, that did not lessen his desire for the fair one; so he ran away with her, coaxing some of the younger bulls who were dissatisfied with the rule of To-yat to accompany them. They came and brought their mates. Thus are new tribes formed. There is always a woman at the bottom of it.

Desiring peace, Zu-tho had moved to new hunting grounds far removed from danger of a chance meeting with To-yat. Ga-yat, his life- long friend, was among those who had accompanied him. Ga-yat was a mighty bull, perhaps mightier than To-yat himself; but Ga-yat was of an easy-going disposition. He did not care who was king as long as he had plenty to eat and was not disturbed in the possession of his mates, a contingency that his enormous size and his great strength rendered remote.

Ga-yat and Zu-tho were good friends of Tarzan, perhaps Ga-yat even more than the latter, for Ga-yat was more inclined to be friendly; so when they saw Tarzan in the new jungle they had

chosen for their home they were glad, and when they heard his cry for help they hastened to him, taking all but the two that Zu-tho left to guard the shes and the balus.

They had carried Tarzan far away from the village of the Gomangani to a little open glade beside a stream. Here they laid him on soft grasses beneath the shade of a tree, but they could not remove the wires that held his wrists and ankles. They tried and Nkima tried; but all to no avail, though the little monkey finally succeeded in gnawing the ropes which had also been placed around both his wrists and his ankles.

Nkima and Ga-yat brought food and water to Tarzan, and the great apes were

a protection to him against the prowling carnivores; but the ape-man knew that this could not last for long. Soon they would move on to some other part of the forest, as was their way, nor would any considerations of sympathy or friendship hold them. Of the former they knew little or nothing, and of the latter not sufficient to make them self-sacrificing.

Nkima would remain with him; he would bring him food and water, but he would be no protection. At the first glimpse of Dango, the hyena, or Sheeta, the leopard, little Nkima would flee, screaming, to the trees. Tarzan racked his fertile brain for a solution to his problem. He thought of his great and good friend, Tantor, the elephant, but

was forced to discard him as a possibility for escape as Tantor could no more remove his bonds than the apes. He could carry him, but where? There was no friend within reach to untwist the confining wire. Tantor would protect him, but of what use would protection be if he must lie here bound and helpless. Better death than that.

Presently, however, a solution suggested itself; and he called Ga-yat to him. The great bull came lumbering to his side. "I am Ga- yat," he announced, after the manner of the great apes. It was a much shorter way of saying, "You called me, and I am here. What do you want?"

"Ga-yat is not afraid of anything,"

was Tarzan's manner of approaching the subject he had in mind.

"Ga-yat is not afraid," growled the bull. "Ga-yat kills."

"Ga-yat is not afraid of the Gomangani," continued the ape- man.

"Ga-yat is not afraid," which was a much longer way of saying no.

"Only the Tarmangani or the Gomangani can remove the bonds that keep Tarzan a prisoner."

"Ga-yat kills the Tarmangani and the Gomangani."

"No," objected Tarzan. "Ga-yat will go and fetch one to take the wires from Tarzan. Do not kill. Bring him here."

"Ga-yat understands," said the bull

after a moment's thought.

"Go now," directed the ape-man, and with no further words Ga- yat lumbered away and a moment later had disappeared into the forest.

* * * * *

The Kid and his five followers arrived at the north bank of the river opposite the village of Bobolo, where they had no difficulty in attracting the attention of the natives upon the opposite side and by means of signs appraising them that they wished to cross.

Presently several canoes put out from the village and paddled up stream to make the crossing. They were filled with warriors, for as yet Bobolo did not know either the identity or numbers of

his visitors and was taking no chances. Sobito was still with him and had given no intimation that the Leopard Men suspected that he had stolen the white priestess, yet there was always danger that Gato Mgungu might lead an expedition against him.

When the leading canoe came close to where The Kid stood, several of the warriors in it recognized him, for he had been often at the village of Bobolo; and soon he and his men were taken aboard and paddled across to the opposite bank.

There was little ceremony shown him, for he was only a poor elephant poacher with a miserable following of five Negroes; but eventually Bobolo condescended to receive him; and he

was led to the chief's hut, where Bobolo and Sobito, with several of the village elders, were seated in the shade.

The Kid's friendly greeting was answered with a surly nod. "What does the white man want?" demanded Bobolo.

The youth was quick to discern the altered attitude of the chief; before, he had always been friendly. He did not relish the implied discourtesy of the chief's salutation, the omission of the deferential bwana; but what was he to do? He fully realized his own impotency, and though it galled him to do so he was forced to overlook the insulting inflection that Bobolo had given the words "white man."

"I have come to get you to help me

find my friend, the old bwana," he said. "My boys say that he went into the village of Gato Mgungu, but that he never came out."

"Why do you come to me, then," demanded Bobolo; "why do you not go to Gato Mgungu?"

"Because you are our friend," replied The Kid; "I believed that you would help me."

"How can I help you? I know nothing about your friend."

"You can send men with me to the village of Gato Mgungu," replied The Kid, "while I demand the release of the old bwana."

"What will you pay me?" asked Bobolo.

"I can pay you nothing now. When we get ivory I will pay."

Bobolo sneered. "I have no men to send with you," he said. "You come to a great chief and bring no presents; you ask him to give you warriors and you have nothing to pay for them."

The Kid lost his temper. "You lousy old scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "You can't talk that way to me and get away with it. I'll give you until tomorrow morning to come to your senses." He turned on his heel and walked down the village street, followed by his five retainers; then he heard Bobolo yelling excitedly to his men to seize him. Instantly the youth realized the predicament in which his hot temper had placed him. He thought

quickly, and before the warriors had an opportunity to arrest him he turned back toward Bobolo's hut.

"And another thing," he said as he stood again before the chief; "I have already dispatched a messenger down river to the station telling them about this affair and my suspicions. I told them that I would be here waiting for them when they came with soldiers. If you are thinking of harming me, Bobolo, be sure that you have a good story ready, for I told them that I was particularly suspicious of you."

He waited for no reply, but turned again and walked toward the village gate, nor was any hand raised to stay him. He grinned to himself as he passed

out of the village, for he had sent no messenger, and no soldiers were coming.

As a gesture of contempt for the threats of Bobolo, The Kid made camp close to the village; but his men were not a little perturbed. Some of the villagers came out with food, and from his almost exhausted stores the white extracted enough cloth to purchase a day's rations for himself and his men. Among his callers was a girl whom he had known for some time. She was a happy, good-natured creature; and The Kid had found amusement in talking to her. In the past he had given her little presents, which pleased her simple heart, as did the extravagant compliments that The Kid

amused himself by paying her.

Bring a girl presents often and tell her that she is the most beautiful girl in the village, and you may be laying the foundation for something unpleasant in the future. You may be joking, but the girl may be in earnest. This one was. That she had fallen in love with The Kid should have worked to his detriment as a punishment for his thoughtlessness, but it did not.

At dusk the girl returned, sneaking stealthily through the shadows. The Kid was startled by her abrupt appearance before his tent, where he sat smoking.

"Hello there, Nsenene!" he exclaimed. "What brings you here?" He was suddenly impressed by the usually

grave demeanor of the girl and her evident excitement.

"Hush!" cautioned the girl. "Do not speak my name. They would kill me if they knew I had come here."

"What's wrong?"

"Much is wrong. Bobolo is going to send men with you tomorrow. He will tell you that they are going to the village of Gato Mgungu with you, but they will not. When they get you out in the river, out of sight of the village, they will kill you and all your men and throw you to the crocodiles. Then when the white men come, they will tell them that they left you at the village of Gato Mgungu; and the white men will go and they will find no village, because it has been burned

by the Utengas. There will be no one there to tell them that Bobolo lied."

"Gato Mgungu's village burned! What became of the old bwana?"

"I know nothing about him, but he is not at the village of Gato Mgungu, because there is no village there. I think he is dead. I heard it said that the Leopard Men killed him. Bobolo is afraid of the Leopard Men because he stole their white priestess from them."

"White priestess! What do you mean?" demanded The Kid.

"They had a white priestess. I saw her here when Bobolo brought her to be his wife, but Ubooga would not have her around and made Bobolo send her away. She was a white woman, very white,

with hair the color of the moon."

"When was this?" demanded the astonished youth.

"Three days ago, maybe four days. I do not remember."

"Where is she now? I should like to see her."

"You will never see her," replied Nsenene; "no one will ever see her."

"Why not?"

"Because they sent her to the village of the little men."

"You mean the Betetes?"

"Yes, the Betetes. They are eaters of men."

"Where is their village?" asked The Kid.

"You want to go there and get the white woman?" demanded Nsenene suspiciously.

There was something in the way the girl asked the question that gave The Kid his first intimation that her interest was prompted by more than friendship for him, for there was an unquestionable tinge of jealous suspicion in her tone. He leaned forward with a finger on his lips. "Don't tell anybody, Nsenene," he cautioned in a whisper; "but the white woman is my sister. I must go to her rescue. Now tell me where the village is, and next time I come I'll bring you a fine present." If he had felt any compunction about lying to the girl, which he did not, he could easily have

salved his conscience with the knowledge that he had done it in a good cause; for if there was any truth in the story of the white priestess, captive of the Betetes, then there was but one course of procedure possible for him, the only white man in the district who had knowledge of her predicament. He had thought of saying that the woman was his mother or daughter, but had compromised on sister as appearing more reasonable.

"Your sister!" exclaimed Nsenene. "Yes, now that I remember, she looked like you. Her eyes and her nose were like yours."

The Kid suppressed a smile. Suggestion and imagination were potent

powers. "We do look alike," he admitted; "but tell me, where is the village?"

As well as she could Nsenene described the location of the village of Rebega. "I will go with you, if you will take me," she suggested. "I do not wish to stay here any longer. My father is going to sell me to an old man whom I do not like. I will go with you and cook for you. I will cook for you until I die."

"I cannot take you now," replied The Kid. "Maybe some other time, but this time there may be fighting."

"Some other time then," said the girl. "Now I must go back to the village before they close the gates."

At the first break to dawn The Kid set

out in search of the village of Rebega. He told his men that he had given up the idea of going to the village of Gato Mgungu, but that while they were here he was going to look for ivory on this side of the river. If he had told them the truth, they would not have accompanied him.

CHAPTER 22.—IN THE CRUCIBLE OF DANGER

For a long time Old Timer and the girl walked on in silence. There were no more interchanges of friendly conversation. The atmosphere was frigid. Kali Bwana walked a little behind the man. Often her eyes were upon him. She was thinking seriously, but what her thoughts were she did not reveal.

When they came to a pleasant open stretch through which a small stream wound, Old Timer stopped beneath a great tree that grew upon the bank of the stream. "We shall remain here for a while," he said.

The girl made no comment, and he did not look at her but started at once to make camp. First he gathered dead branches of suitable size, for a shelter, cutting a few green ones to give it greater strength. These he formed into a framework resembling that of an Indian wickiup, covering the whole with leafy branches and grasses.

While he worked, the girl assisted him, following his example without asking for directions. Thus they worked in silence. When the shelter was finished he gathered wood for a fire. In this work she helped him, too.

"We shall be on short rations," he said, "until I can make a bow and some arrows."

This elicited no response from the girl; and he went his way, searching for suitable material for his weapon. He never went far, never out of sight of the camp; and presently he was back again with the best that he could find. With his knife he shaped a bow, rough but practical; and then he strung it with the pliable stem of a slender creeper that he had seen natives use for the same purpose in an emergency. This done, he commenced to make arrows. He worked rapidly, and the girl noticed the deftness of his strong fingers. Sometimes she watched his face, but on the few occasions that he chanced to look up she had quickly turned her eyes away before he could catch them upon him.

There were other eyes watching them from the edge of a bit of jungle farther up the stream, close-set, red-rimmed, savage eyes beneath beetling brows; but neither of them was aware of this; and the man continued his work, and the girl continued to study his face contemplatively. She still felt his arms about her; his lips were still hot upon hers. How strong he was! She had felt in that brief moment that he could have crushed her like an egg shell, and yet in spite of his savage impulsiveness he had been tender and gentle.

But these thoughts she tried to put from her and remember only that he was a boor and a cad. She scanned his clothing that now no longer bore even a

resemblance to clothing, being nothing but a series of rags held together by a few shreds and the hand of Providence. What a creature to dare take her in his arms! What a thing to dare kiss her! She flushed anew at the recollection. Then she let her eyes wander again to his face. She tried to see only the unkempt beard, but through it her eyes persisted in seeing the contours of his fine features. She became almost angry with herself and turned her eyes away that she might not longer entertain this line of thought; and as she did so she stifled a scream and leaped to her feet.

"God!" she cried; "look!"

At her first cry the man raised his eyes. Then he, too, leaped to his feet.

"Run!" he cried to the girl. "For God's sake, Kali, run!"

But she did not run. She stood there waiting, in her hand the futile staff he had cut for her that she had seized as she leaped to her feet; and the man waited, his heavier cudgel ready in his hand.

Almost upon them, rolling toward them in his awkward gait, was an enormous bull ape, the largest that Old Timer had ever seen. The man glanced quickly sideways and was horrified to see the girl still standing there near him.

"Please run away, Kali," he implored. "I cannot stop him; but I can delay him, and you must get away before he can get you. Don't you understand, Kali? It is you he wants." But the girl did not move,

and the great beast was advancing steadily. "Please!" begged the man.

"You did not run away when I was in danger," she reminded him.

He started to reply; but the words were never spoken, for it was then that the ape charged. Old Timer struck with his club, and the girl rushed in and struck with hers. Utter futility! The beast grasped the man's weapon, tore it from his hand, and flung it aside. With his other hand he sent Kali Bwana spinning with a blow that might have felled an ox had not the man broken its force by seizing the shaggy arm; then he picked Old Timer up as one might a rag doll and rolled off toward the jungle.

When the girl, still half dazed from

the effect of the blow, staggered to her feet she was alone; the man and the beast had disappeared. She called aloud, but there was no reply. She thought that she had been unconscious, but she did not know; so she could not know how long it had been since the beast had carried the man away. She tried to follow, but she did not know in which direction they had gone; she would have followed and fought for the man —her man. The words formed in her mind and brought no revulsion of feeling. Had he not called her "my Kali"—my woman?

What a change this brief episode had wrought in her!

A moment before, she had been trying to hate him, trying to seek out everything

disgusting about him—his rags, his beard, the dirt upon him. Now she would have given a world to have him back, nor was it alone because she craved protection. This she realized. Perhaps she realized the truth, too; but if she did she was not ashamed. She loved him, loved this nameless man of rags and tatters.

* * * * *

Tarzan of the Apes stoically awaited his fate, whatever it might be. He neither wasted his strength in useless efforts to break bonds that he had found unbreakable, nor dissipated his nervous energy in futile repining. He merely lay still. Nkima squatted dejectedly beside him. There was always something wrong

with the world; so Nkima should have been accustomed to that, but he liked to feel sorry for himself. Today he was in his prime; he could scarcely have been more miserable if Sheeta had been pursuing him.

The afternoon was waning as Tarzan's keen ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps. He heard them before either Nkima or the great apes heard them, and he voiced a low growl that apprised the others. Instantly the great, shaggy beasts were alert. The shes and the balus gathered nearer the bulls; all listened in absolute silence. They sniffed the air; but the wind blew from them toward whatever was approaching, so that they could detect no revealing

spoor. The bulls were nervous; they were prepared either for instant battle or for flight.

Silently, notwithstanding its great weight, a mighty figure emerged from the forest. It was Ga-yat. Under one arm he carried a man-thing. Zu-tho growled. He could see Ga-yat; but he could not smell him, and one knows that one's eyes and ears may deceive one, but never one's nose. "I am Zu-tho," he growled, baring his great fighting fangs. "I kill!"

"I am Ga-yat," answered the other, as he lumbered toward Tarzan.

Presently the others caught his scent spoor and were satisfied, but the scent of the man-thing annoyed and angered them. They came forward, growling. "Kill the

Tarmangani!" was on the lips of many.

Ga-yat carried Old Timer to where Tarzan lay and threw him unceremoniously to the ground. "I am Ga-yat," he said; "here is a Tarmangani. Ga-yat saw no Gomangani."

The other bulls were crowding close, anxious to fall upon the man-thing. Old Timer had never seen such a concourse of great apes, had never known that they grew so large. It was evident that they were not gorillas, and they were more man-like than any apes he had seen. He recalled the stories that natives had told of these hairy men of the forest, stories that he had not believed. He saw the white man lying bound and helpless among them, but at first he did not

recognize him. He thought that he, too, was a prisoner of these man- like brutes. What terrible creatures they were! He was thankful that his captor had taken him rather than Kali. Poor Kali! What would become of her now?

The bulls were pressing closer. Their intentions were evident even to the man. He thought the end was near. Then, to his astonishment, he heard savage growls burst from the lips of the man near him, saw his lip curl upward, revealing strong, white teeth.

"The Tarmangani belongs to Tarzan," growled the apeman. "Do not harm that which is Tarzan's."

Ga-yat and Zu-tho turned upon the other bulls and drove them back, while

Old Timer looked on in wide-eyed astonishment. He had not understood what Tarzan said; he could scarcely believe that he had communicated with the apes, yet the evidence was such that he was convinced of it against his better judgment. He lay staring at the huge, hairy creatures moving slowly away from him; even they seemed unreal.

"You are no sooner out of one difficulty than you find yourself in another," said a deep, low voice in English.

Old Timer turned his eyes toward the speaker. The voice was familiar. Now he recognized him. "You are the man who got me out of that mess in the temple!" he exclaimed.

"And now I am in a mess,'" said the other.

"Both of us," added Old Timer. "What do you suppose they will do with us?"

"Nothing," replied the ape-man.

"Then why did they bring me here?"

"I told one of them to go and get me a man," replied Tarzan. "Evidently you chanced to be the first man he came upon. I did not expect a white man."

"You sent that big brute that got me? They do what you ask? Who are you, and why did you send for a man?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes, and I wanted someone who could untwist these wires that are around my wrists; neither the apes nor Nkima could do it."

"Tarzan of the Apes!" exclaimed Old Timer. "I thought you were only a part of the folklore of the natives." As he spoke he started to work on the wires that confined the apeman's wrists—copper wires that untwisted easily.

"What became of the white girl?" asked the latter. "You got her out of the Betete village, but I couldn't follow you because the little devils got me."

"You were there! Ah, now I see; it was you who shot the arrows."

"Yes."

"How did they get you, and how did you get away from them?"

"I was in a tree above them. The branch broke. I was stunned for a moment. Then they bound me."

"That was the crash I heard as I was leaving the village."

"Doubtless," agreed the ape-man. "I called the great apes," he continued, "and they came and carried me here. Where is the white girl?"

"She and I were on our way toward my camp when the ape got me," explained Old Timer. "She is alone back there now. When I get these wires off, may I go back to her?"

"I shall go with you. Where was the place? Do you think you can find it?"

"It cannot be far, not more than a few miles, yet I may not be able to find it."

"I can," said Tarzan.

"How?" inquired Old Timer.

"By Ga-yat's spoor. It is still fresh."

The white man nodded, but he was not convinced. He thought it would be a slow procedure picking out the foot prints of the beast all the way back to the spot at which he had been seized. He had removed the wires from Tarzan's wrists and was working upon those of his ankles; a moment later the ape-man was free. He leaped to his feet.

"Come!" he directed and started at a trot toward the spot at which Ga-yat had emerged from the jungle.

Old Timer tried to keep up with him, but discovered that he was weak from hunger and exhaustion. "You go ahead," he called to the ape- man. "I cannot keep up with you, and we can't waste any

time. She is there alone."

"If I leave you, you will get lost," objected Tarzan. "Wait, I have it!" He called to Nkima, who was swinging through the trees above them, and the monkey dropped to his shoulder. "Stay near the Tarmangani," he directed, "and show him the trail that Tarzan follows."

Nkima objected; he was not interested in the Tarmangani, but at last he understood that he must do as Tarzan wished. Old Timer watched them chattering to one another. It seemed incredible that they were conversing, yet the illusion was perfect.

"Follow Nkima," said Tarzan; "he will guide you in the right direction." Then he was off at a swinging trot along

a track that Old Timer could not see.

* * * * *

Kali Bwana was stunned by the hopelessness of her position. After the brief sense of security she had enjoyed since the man had taken her from the village of the pygmies her present situation seemed unbearable by contrast, and in addition she had suffered a personal loss. To the burden of her danger was added grief.

She gazed at the crude shelter he had built for her, and two tears rolled down her cheeks. She picked up the bow he had made and pressed her lips against the insensate wood. She knew that she would never see him again, and the thought brought a choking sob to her

throat. It had been long since Kali Bwana had wept. In the face of privation, adversity, and danger she had been brave; but now she crept into the shelter and gave herself over to uncontrolled grief.

What a mess she had made of everything! Thus ran her thoughts. Her ill-conceived search for Jerry had ended in failure; but worse, it had embroiled a total stranger and led him to his death, nor was he the first to die because of her. There had been the faithful Andereya, whom the Leopard Men had killed when they captured her; and there had been Wlala, and Rebega, and his three warriors—all these lives snuffed out because of her stubborn refusal to

understand her own limitations. The white officers and civilians along the lower stretch of the river had tried to convince her, but she had refused to listen. She had had her own way, but at what price! She was paying now in misery and remorse.

For some time she lay there, a victim of vain regrets; and then she realized the futility of repining, and by an effort of the will seized control of her shaken nerves. She told herself that she must not give up, that even this last, terrible blow must not stop her. She still lived, and she had not found Jerry. She would go on. She would try to reach the river; she would try in some way to cross it, and she would find Old Timer's camp and

enlist the aid of his partner. But she must have food, strength-giving flesh. She could not carry on in her weakened condition. The bow that he had made, and that she had hugged to her breast as she lay in the shelter, would furnish her the means to secure meat; and with this thought in mind she arose and went out to gather up the arrows. It was still not too late to hunt.

As she emerged from the frail hut she saw one of the creatures that she had long feared inwardly, knowing that this forest abounded in them—a leopard. The beast was standing at the edge of the jungle looking toward her. As its yellow eyes discovered her, it dropped to its belly, its face grimacing in a horrid

snarl. Then it started to creep cautiously toward her, its tail weaving sinuously. It could have charged and destroyed her without these preliminaries; but it seemed to be playing with her, as a cat plays with a mouse.

Nearer and nearer it came. The girl fitted an arrow to the bow. She knew how futile a gesture it would be to launch that tiny missile at this great engine of destruction; but she was courageous, and she would not give up her life without defending it to the last.

The beast was coming closer. She wondered when it would charge. Many things passed through her mind, but clear and outstanding above all the rest was the image of a man in rags and tatters.

Then, beyond the leopard, she saw a figure emerge from the jungle—a giant white man, naked but for a loin cloth.

He did not hesitate. She saw him running quickly forward toward the leopard; and she saw that the beast did not see him, for its eyes were upon her. The man made no sound as he sprang lightly across the soft turf. Suddenly, to her horror, she saw that he was unarmed.

The leopard raised its body a little from the ground. It gathered its hind feet beneath it. It was about to start the swift rush that would end in death for her. Then she saw the running man launch himself through the air straight for the back of the grim beast. She wanted to close her eyes to shut out the horrid

scene that she knew must ensue as the leopard turned and tore his rash antagonist to ribbons.

What followed after the bronzed body of the white man closed with that of the great cat defied her astonished eyes to follow. There was a swift intermingling of spotted hide and bronzed skin, of arms and legs, of talons and teeth; and above all rose the hideous growls of two blood-mad beasts. To her horror she realized that not the cat alone was the author of them; the growls of the man were as savage as those of the beast.

From the midst of the whirling mass she saw the man suddenly rise to his feet, dragging the leopard with him. His powerful fingers encircled the throat of

the carnivore from behind. The beast struck and struggled to free itself from that grip of death, but no longer did it growl. Slowly its struggles lessened in violence, and at last it went limp; then the man released one hand and twisted its neck until the vertebrae snapped, after which he cast the carcass to the ground. For a moment he stood over it. He seemed to have forgotten the girl; then he placed a foot upon it, and the forest reechoed to the victory cry of the bull ape.

Kali Bwana shuddered. She felt her flesh turn cold. She thought to flee from this terrible wild man of the forest; then he turned toward her, and she knew that it was too late. She still held the bow

and arrow ready in her hands. She wondered if she could hold him off with these. He did not appear an easy man to frighten.

Then he spoke to her. "I seem to have arrived just in time," he said quietly. "Your friend will be here presently," he added, for he saw that she was afraid of him. That one should fear him was no new thing to Tarzan of the Apes. There were many who had feared him, and perhaps for this reason he had come to expect it from every stranger. "You may put down your bow. I shall not harm you."

She lowered the weapon to her side. "My friend!" she repeated. "Who? Whom do you mean?"

"I do not know his name. Have you many friends here?"

"Only one, but I thought him dead. A huge ape carried him away."

"He is safe," the ape-man assured her. "He is following behind me."

Kali Bwana sank limply to the ground. "Thank God!" she murmured.

Tarzan stood with folded arms watching her. How small and delicate she looked! He wondered that she had been able to survive all that she had passed through. The Lord of the Jungle admired courage, and he knew what courage this slender girl must possess to have undergone what she had undergone and still be able to face a charging leopard with that puny weapon lying on

the grass beside her.

Presently he heard some one approaching and knew it was the man. When he appeared he was breathing hard from his exertion, but at sight of the girl he ran forward. "You are all right?" he cried. He had seen the dead leopard lying near her.

"Yes," she replied.

To Tarzan, her manner seemed constrained, and so did that of the man. He did not know what had passed between them just before they had been separated. He could not guess what was in the heart of each, nor could Old Timer guess what was in the heart of the girl. Being a girl, now that the man was safe, she sought to hide her true emotions from

him. And Old Timer was ill at ease. Fresh in his mind were the events of the afternoon; ringing in his ears her bitter cry, "I hate you!"

Briefly he told her all that had occurred since the ape had carried him away, and then they planned with Tarzan for the future. He told them that he would remain with them until they had reached the man's camp, or that he would accompany them down river to the first station; but to Old Timer's surprise the girl said that she would go to his camp and there attempt to organize a new safari, either to accompany her down river or in the further prosecution of her search for Jerry Jerome.

Before night fell Tarzan had brought

meat to the camp, using the bow and arrows that Old Timer had made, and the man and the girl cooked theirs over a fire while the apeman sat apart tearing at the raw flesh with his strong, white teeth. Little Nkima, perched upon his shoulder, nodded sleepily.

CHAPTER 23.— CONVERGING TRAILS

Early the next morning they started for the river, but they had not gone far when the wind veered into the north, and Tarzan halted. His delicate nostrils questioned the tell-tale breeze.

"There is a camp just ahead of us," he announced. "There are white men in it."

Old Timer strained his eyes into the forest. "I can see nothing," he said.

"Neither can I," admitted Tarzan; "but I have a nose."

"You can smell them?" asked Kali.

"Certainly, and because my nose tells me that there are white men there I assume that it is a friendly camp; but we

will have a look at it before we go too close. Wait here."

He swung into the trees and was gone, leaving the man and the girl alone together; yet neither spoke what was in his heart. The constraint of yesterday still lay heavily upon him. He wanted to ask her forgiveness for having taken her into his arms, for having dared to kiss her. She wanted him to take her into his arms again and kiss her. But they stood there in silence like two strangers until Tarzan returned.

"They are all right," announced the ape-man. "It is a company of soldiers with their white officers and one civilian. Come! They may prove the solution of all your difficulties."

The soldiers were breaking camp as Tarzan and his companions arrived. The surprised shouts of the black soldiers attracted the attention of the white men—two officers and a civilian—who came forward to meet them. As his eyes fell upon the civilian, Old Timer voiced an exclamation of surprise.

"The Kid!" he exclaimed, and the girl brushed past him and ran forward, a glad cry upon her lips.

"Jerry! Jerry!" she cried as she threw herself into The Kid's arms.

Old Timor's heart sank. Jerry! Jerry Jerome, his best friend! What cruel tricks fate can play.

When the greetings and the introductions were over, the strange

combination of circumstances that had brought them together thus unexpectedly were explained as the story of each was unfolded.

"Not long ago," the lieutenant in command of the expedition explained to Kali, "we heard rumors of the desertion of your men. We arrested some of them in their villages and got the whole story. Then I was ordered out to search for you. We had come as far as Bobolo's yesterday when we got an inkling of your whereabouts from a girl named Nsenene. We started for the Betete village at once and met this young man wandering about, lost, just as we were going into camp here. Now you have assured the success of my mission by walking in on me this

morning. There remains nothing now but to take you back to civilization."

"There is one other thing that you can do while you are here," said Old Timer.

"'And that?" inquired the lieutenant.

"There are two known Leopard Men in the village of Bobolo. Three of us have seen them in the temple of the Leopard God taking active parts in the rites. If you wish to arrest them it will be easy."

"I certainly do," replied the officer. "Do you know them by sight?"

"Absolutely," stated Old Timer. "One of them is an old witch- doctor named Sobito, and the other is Bobolo himself."

"Sobito!" exclaimed Tarzan. "Are you

sure?"

"He is the same man you carried away from the temple, the man you called Sobito. I saw him drifting down the river in a canoe the morning after I escaped."

"We shall arrest them both," said the officer, "and now as the men are ready to march, we will be off."

"I shall leave you here," said the ape-man. "You are safe now," he added, turning to the girl. "Go out of the jungle with these men and do not come back; it is no place for a white girl alone."

"Do not go yet," exclaimed the officer. "I shall need you to identify Sobito."

"You will need no one to identify

Sobito," replied the ape-man, and swinging into a tree, he vanished from their sight.

"And that is that," commented The Kid.

On the march toward Bobolo's village the girl and The Kid walked close together, while Old Timer followed dejectedly behind. Finally The Kid turned and addressed him. "Come on up here, old man, and join us; I was just telling Jessie about a strange coincidence in something I said in Bobolo's village last night. There is a girl there named Nsenene. You probably remember her, Old Timer. Well, she told me about this white girl who was a captive in the pygmy village; and when I

showed interest in her and wanted to know where the village was so that I could try to get the girl away from them, the little rascal got jealous. I discovered that she had a crush on me; so I had to think quickly to explain my interest in the white girl, and the first thing that entered my head was to tell her that the girl was my sister. Wasn't that a mighty strange coincidence?"

"Where's the coincidence?" demanded Old Timer.

The Kid looked at him blankly. "Why, didn't you know," he exclaimed. "Jessie is my sister."

Old Timer's jaw dropped. "Your sister!" Once again the sun shone and the birds sang. "Why didn't you tell me you

were looking for your brother?" he demanded of Kali.

"Why didn't you tell me that you knew Jerry Jerome?" she countered.

"I didn't know that I knew him," he explained. "I never knew The Kid's name. He didn't tell me and I never asked."

"There was a reason why I couldn't tell you," said The Kid; "but it's all right now. Jessie just told me."

"You see,—" she hesitated.

"Hi," prompted Old Timer.

The girl smiled and flushed slightly. "You see, Hi," she commenced again, "Jerry thought that he had killed a man. I am going to tell you the whole story

because you and he have been such close friends.

"Jerry was in love with a girl in our town. He learned one night that an older man, a man with a vile reputation, had enticed her to his apartment. Jerry went there and broke in. The man was furious, and in the fight that followed Jerry shot him. Then he took the girl home, swearing her to secrecy about her part in the affair. That same night he ran away, leaving a note saying that he had shot Sam Berger, but giving no reason.

"Berger did not die and refused to prosecute; so the case was dropped. We knew that Jerry had run away to save the girl from notoriety, more than from fear of punishment; but we did not know

where he had gone. I didn't know where to look for him for a long time.

"Then Berger was shot and killed by another girl, and in the meantime I got a clue from an old school friend of Jerry's and knew that he had come to Africa. Now there was absolutely no reason why he should not return home; and I started out to look for him."

"And you found him," said Old Timer.

"I found something else," said the girl, but he did not catch her meaning.

It was late when they arrived at the village of Bobolo, which they found in a state of excitement. The officer marched his men directly into the village and formed them so that they could command any situation that might arise.

At sight of The Kid and Old Timer and the girl Bobolo appeared frightened. He sought to escape from the village, but the soldiers stopped him, and then the officer informed him that he was under arrest. Bobolo did not ask why. He knew.

"Where is the witch-doctor called Sobito?" demanded the officer.

Bobolo trembled. "He is gone," he said.

"Where?" demanded the officer.

"To Tumbai," replied Bobolo. "A little while ago a demon came and carried him away. He dropped into the village from the sky and took Sobito up in his arms as though he had no weight at all. Then he cried, 'Sobito is going back

to the village of Tumbai!', and he ran through the gateway and was gone into the forest before anyone could stop him."

"Did anyone try?" inquired Old Timer with a grin.

"No," admitted Bobolo. "Who could stop a spirit?"

The sun was sinking behind the western forest, its light playing upon the surging current of the great river that rolled past the village of Bobolo. A man and a woman stood looking out across the water that was plunging westward in its long journey to the sea down to the trading posts and the towns and the ships, which are the frail links that connect the dark forest with civilization.

"Tomorrow you will start," said the

man. "In six or eight weeks you will be home. Home!" There was a world of wistfulness in the simple, homely word. He sighed. "I am so glad for both of you."

She came closer to him and stood directly in front of him, looking straight into his eyes. "You are coming with us," she said.

"What makes you think so?" he asked.

"Because I love you, you will come."

THE END

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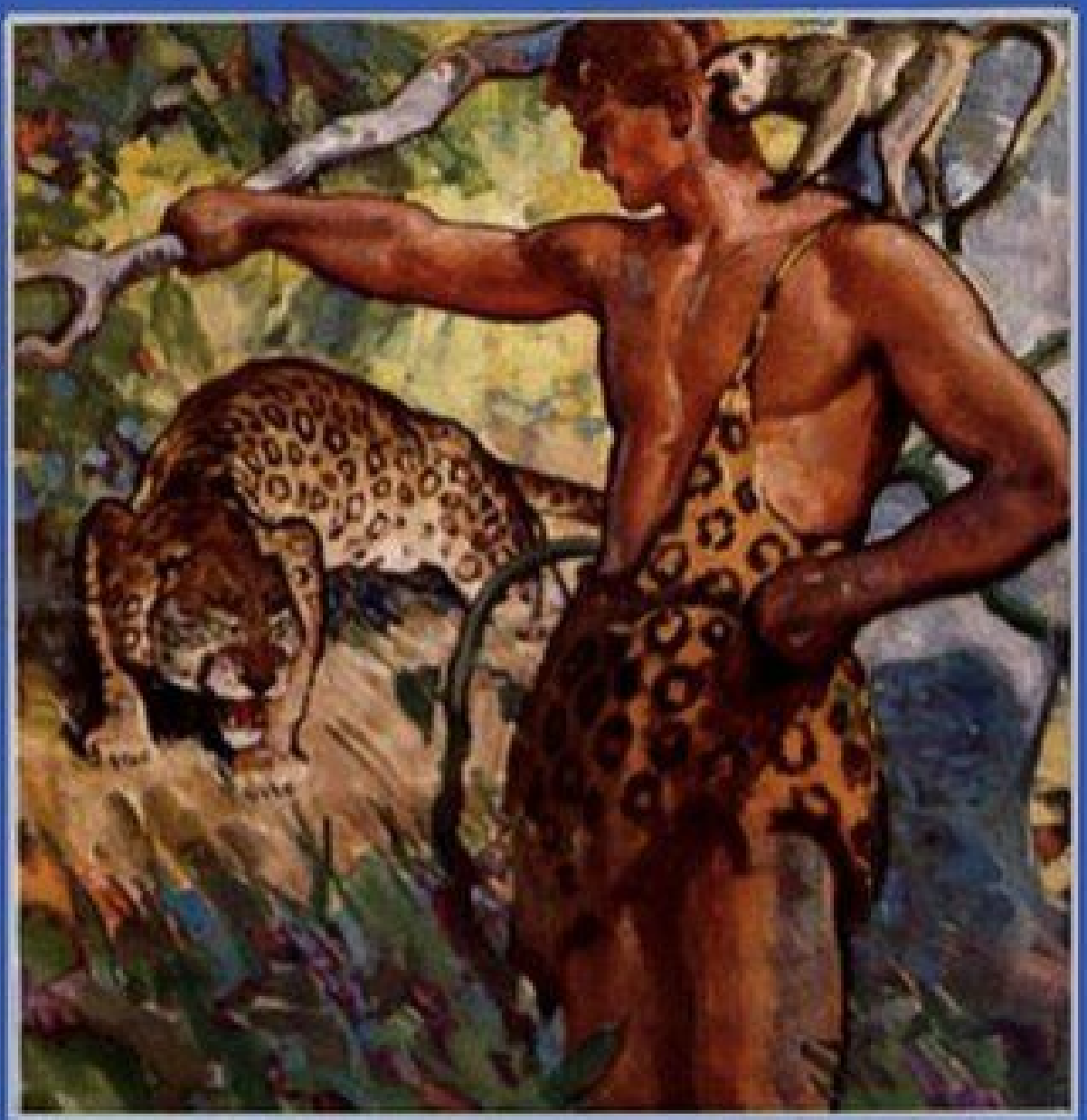

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TARZAN'S QUEST

BOOK 19 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. THE PRINCESS SBOROV

"My dear Jane, you know everyone."

"Not quite, Hazel; but one sees everyone in the Savoy."

"Who is that woman at the second table to our right?—the one who spoke so cordially. There is something very familiar about her—I'm sure I've seen her before."

"You probably have. Don't you remember Kitty Krause?"

"O-oh, yes; now I recall her. But she went with an older crowd."

"Yes, she's a full generation ahead of us; but Kitty'd like to forget that and have everyone else forget it."

"Let's see—she married Peters, the cotton king, didn't she?"

"Yes, and when he died he left her so many millions she didn't have enough fingers to count 'em on; so the poor woman will never know how rich she is."

"Is that her son with her?"

"Son, my dear! That's her new husband."

"Husband? Why, she's old enough to __"

"Yes, of course; but you see he's a prince, and Kitty always was— er— well, ambitious."

"Yes, I recall now—something of a climber; but she climbed pretty high,

even in aristocratic old Baltimore, with those Peters millions."

"But she's an awfully good soul, Hazel. I'm really very fond of her. There isn't anything she wouldn't do for a friend, and underneath that one silly complex of hers is a heart of gold."

"And kind to her mother! If anyone ever says I'm good-hearted, I'll —"

"S-sh, Hazel; she's coming over."

The older woman, followed by her husband, swooped down upon them. "My darling Jane," she cried, "I'm so glad to see you."

"And I'm glad to see you, Kitty. You remember Hazel Strong, don't you?"

"Oh, not of the Strongs of Baltimore!

Oh, my dear! I mean I'm just— how perfectly wonder—I must present my husband, Prince Sborov. Alexis, my very, very dearest friends, Lady Greystoke and Miss Strong."

"Lady Tennington now, Kitty," corrected Jane.

"Oh, my dear, how perfectly wonderful! Lady Greystoke and Lady Tennington, Alexis, dear."

"Charmed," murmured the young man. His lips smiled; but the murky light in his deep eyes was appraising, questioning, as they brooded upon the lovely face of Jane, Lady Greystoke.

"Won't you join us?" invited the latter. "Please sit down. You know it's been ages, Kitty, since we had a good visit."

"Oh, how perfectly won—oh, I'd love to—I mean it seems —thank you, Alexis dear—now you sit over there."

"Why, Kitty, it must be a year since I have heard anything of you, except what I have read in the newspapers," said Jane.

"At that, you might be very well informed as to our goings and comings," remarked Sborov, a little ironically.

"Yes, indeed—I mean—we have a whole book filled with newspaper clippings—some of them were horrid."

"But you kept them all," remarked the prince.

"Oh, well," cried Princess Sborov, "I mean—I suppose one must pay for fame and position; but these newspaper

people can be so terribly horrid."

"But what have you been doing?" inquired Jane. "Have you been back home again? I'm sure you haven't been in London for a year."

"No, we spent the whole year on the continent. We had a perfectly wonderful time, didn't we, Alexis dear? You see it was last Spring in Paris that we met; and dear, dear Alexis just swept me off my feet. He wouldn't take no for an answer, would you, darling?"

"How could I, my sweet?"

"There, you see, isn't he won—and then we were married, and we've been traveling ever since."

"And now, I suppose, you are going to settle down?" asked Jane.

"Oh, my dear, no. You never could guess what we're planning on now— we are going to Africa!"

"Africa! How interesting," commented Hazel. "Africa! What memories it conjures."

"You have been to Africa, Lady Tennington?" inquired the prince.

"Right in the heart of it—cannibals, lions, elephants— everything."

"Oh, how perfectly wonder—I mean how thrilling—and I know that Jane knows all there is to know about Africa."

"Not quite all, Kitty."

"But enough," interposed Hazel.

"I'm going down myself, shortly," said

Jane. "You see," she added, turning to Prince Sborov, "Lord Greystoke spends a great deal of time in Africa. I am planning on joining him there. I have already booked my passage."

"Oh, how perfectly wonderful," exclaimed the princess. "I mean, we can all go together."

"That is a splendid idea, my dear," said the prince, his face brightening.

"It would be lovely," said Jane, "but you see, I am going into the interior, and I am sure that you—"

"Oh, my dear, so are we."

"But, Kitty, you don't know what you're talking about. You wouldn't like it at all. No comforts, no luxuries; dirt, insects, smelly natives, and all kinds of

wild beasts."

"Oh, but my dear, we are—I mean, we really are. Shall I tell Lady Greystoke our secret, darling?"

The prince shrugged. "Why not? She could have little more than a passing interest."

"Well, maybe some day she will. We all grow old, you know, my dear."

"It seems incredible to think—" murmured Alexis half to himself.

"What did you say, darling?" interrupted his wife.

"I was just going to say that Lady Greystoke might think the story incredible."

"Now you must tell me," said Jane.

"You have my curiosity aroused."

"Yes, indeed, do tell us," urged Hazel.

"Well, my dears, you see it was like this. We have been doing a great deal of flying the past year, and it's perfectly wonderful. We just love it, and so I bought an aeroplane in Paris last week. We flew to London in it; but what I was going to tell you is about our pilot. He is an American, and he has had the most amazing experiences."

"I think he is what you call a rackster in America," said Alexis.

"You mean a gangster, my dear," corrected the princess.

"Or a racketeer," suggested Hazel.

"Whatever he is, I do not like him," said Alexis.

"But, my dear, you have to admit that he is a good pilot. I mean that he is perfectly wonder—and he has been to Africa and had the most frightful experiences.

"The last time he was there, he got track of a witch-doctor who possesses the secret of an amazing formula for renewing youth and inducing longevity. He met a man who knows where the old fellow lives way in the interior; but neither of them had money enough to organize an expedition to go in search of him. He says that this will make people as young as they wish to be and keep them that way forever. Oh, isn't it

wonderful?"

"I think the fellow is a scoundrel," said Alexis. "He has induced my wife to finance this expedition; and when he gets us down there in the interior, he will probably slit our throats and steal our jewelry."

"Oh, my darling, I am sure you are quite wrong. Brown is the last word in loyalty."

"He may be all of that, but still I don't see why you want to drag me to Africa—the bugs, the dirt; and I do not like lions."

Jane laughed. "Really, you might spend a year in Africa without seeing a lion; and you will get used to the bugs and the dirt."

Prince Sborov grimaced. "I prefer the Savoy," he said.

"You will go with us, dear, won't you?" insisted Kitty.

"Well," hesitated Jane, "I really don't know. In the first place, I don't know where you are going."

"We are going to fly direct to Nairobi and outfit there; and, my dear, to get any place in Africa, you have to go to Nairobi first."

Jane smiled. "Well, it happens that that is where I intend going anyway. Lord Greystoke is to meet me there."

"Then it's all settled. Oh, isn't it wonderful?"

"You almost make me want to go,"

said Hazel.

"Well, my dear, we would be delighted to have you," exclaimed Princess Sborov. "You see, I have a six-passenger cabin plane. There are four of us, and the pilot and my maid will make six."

"How about my man?" asked the prince.

"Oh, my dear, you won't need a man in Africa. You will have a little colored boy who will do your washing and cooking and carry your gun. I read about it time and time again in African stories."

"Of course," said Hazel, "it's awfully sweet of you; but I really couldn't go. It's out of the question. Bunny and I are

sailing for America Saturday."

"But you'll come with us, Jane dear?"

"Why, I'd like to, Kitty, if I can get ready in time. When do you start?"

"We were planning on going next week; but, of course, I mean—if—"

"Why, yes, I think I can make it all right."

"Then it's settled, my dear. How perfectly won—we'll take off from the Croydon Airdrome next Wednesday."

"I'll cable Lord Greystoke today; and Friday I am giving a farewell dinner for Lord and Lady Tennington, and you and Prince Sborov must be there."

2. SOUND ABOVE THE STORM

The Lord of the Jungle rose from a crude, leaf- covered platform constructed in the crotch of two branches of a mighty patriarch of the jungle. He stretched luxuriously. The slanting rays of the morning sun mottled his bronze body through the leafy canopy that stretched interminably above him.

Little Nkima stirred and awoke. With a scream, he leaped to the shoulder of the ape-man and encircled his neck with his hairy arms.

"Sheeta!" screamed the monkey. "He was about to spring on little Nkima."

The ape-man smiled. "Nkima has

been seeing things in his sleep," he said.

The monkey looked about him among the branches of the trees and down at the ground below. Then, seeing that no danger threatened, he commenced to dance and chatter; but presently the ape-man silenced him and listened.

"Sheeta comes," he said. "He is coming up wind toward us. We cannot smell him but if Manu had the ears of Tarzan, he could hear him."

The monkey cocked an ear down wind and listened. "Little Nkima hears him," he said. "He comes slowly." Presently the sinuous, tawny body of the panther forced its way through the brush and came into view below them.

"Sheeta is not hunting," said Tarzan.

"He has fed and he is not hungry." And thus reassured, Nkima commenced to hurl invectives at the savage beast below them. The great cat paused and looked up, and when he saw Tarzan and Nkima he bared his fangs in an angry snarl. But he started on again, for he had no business with them.

Feeling secure in the protection of Tarzan, little Nkima waxed belligerent, as he always did under similar circumstances when the possibility of danger seemed remote. He hurled at his hereditary enemy every jungle epithet that he could put his tongue to, but as these seemed to make no impression upon Sheeta he leaped from Tarzan's shoulder to a trailing vine that bore a

soft, ill-smelling fruit, and gathering one of these he hurled it at the panther.

By accident, his aim proved true; and the missile struck Sheeta on the back of the head.

With an angry snarl, the beast wheeled about and started toward the tree that harbored his annoyer. Screaming with terror, little Nkima fled upwards to the safety of the smaller branches that would not bear the weight of the great cat.

The ape-man grinned up after the fleeing monkey and then glanced down at the angry panther. A low, growling "Kreeg-ah" rumbled from his throat, and the other beast below returned an answering growl. Then it turned and

slunk away into the jungle, rumbling in its throat.

The ape-man was returning leisurely from an excursion into a remote district of the great forest, far from his own haunts.

He had heard strange rumors, and he had gone to investigate them. From deep in the interior, on the borders of a tractless waste that few men had entered and from which some had never returned alive, had come a strange and mysterious story since so long before the memory of living man that the facts had become interwoven with the legends and the folklore of the tribes inhabiting this borderland to such an extent that they had come to be accepted as something

inevitable and inescapable; but recently the disappearance of young girls had increased to an alarming extent and had occurred in tribes far removed from the mysterious country.

But when Tarzan investigated and sought to solve the mystery, he was balked by the fear and superstition of the natives. So fearful were they of the malign, mysterious power that snatched their young girls from them, that they would give Tarzan no information or assist him in any way to aid them; and so, disgusted, he had left them to their fate.

After all, why should the ape-man concern himself? Life to the jungle-bred is a commodity of little value. It is given

and taken casually as a matter of course. One loves or kills as naturally as one sleeps or dreams. Yet the mystery of the thing intrigued him.

Young girls, always between the ages of fourteen and twenty, vanished as in thin air. No trace of them ever was seen again. Their fate remained an unsolved mystery.

But by now Tarzan had relegated the matter to the background of his thoughts, for his active mind could not long concern itself with a problem that did not closely concern him and which at any event seemed impossible of solution.

He swung easily through the trees, his alert senses conscious of all that

transpired within their range. Since Sheeta had passed up wind, he had known by the decreasing volume of the great cat's spoor that the distance between them was constantly increasing—proof that Sheeta was not stalking him. From far away, muted by the distance, sounded the roar of Numa, the lion; and deeper in the forest Tantor, the elephant, trumpeted.

The morning air, the sounds and smells of his beloved jungle, filled the ape-man with exhilaration. Had he been the creature of another environment, he might have whistled or sung or whooped aloud like a cowboy in sheer exuberance of spirit; but the jungle-bred are not thus. They veil their emotions; and they move

noiselessly always, for thus do they extend the span of their precarious lives.

Scampering sometimes at his side, sometimes far above him, little Nkima traveled many times the distance of his master, wasting much energy; as, safe in the protection of his benefactor, he insulted all living things that came his way.

But presently he saw his master stop and sniff the air and listen, and then little Nkima dropped silently to a great bronzed shoulder.

"Men," said Tarzan.

The little monkey sniffed the air. "Nkima smells nothing," he said.

"Neither does Tarzan," replied the ape-man, "but he hears them. What is

wrong with the ears of little Nkima? Are they growing old?"

"Now Nkima hears them. Tarmangani?" he asked.

"No," replied Tarzan, "Tarmangani make different sounds—the squeeking of leather, the rattle of too much equipment. These are Gomangani; they move softly."

"We shall kill them," said Nkima.

The ape-man smiled. "It is well for the peace of the jungle that you have not the strength of Bolgani, the gorilla; but perhaps if you had, you would not be so blood-thirsty."

"Ugh, Bolgani," sneered Nkima, contemptuously. "He hides in the thickets and runs away at the first sound that he hears."

The ape-man changed his direction to the right and made a great circle through the trees until presently he reached a point where Usha, the wind, could carry the scent spoor of the strangers to him.

"Gomangani," he said.

"Many Gomangani," exclaimed Nkima, excitedly. "They are as the leaves upon the trees. Let us go away. They will kill little Nkima and eat him."

"There are not so many," replied Tarzan, "no more than the fingers upon my two hands, a hunting party, perhaps. We will go closer."

Moving up on the blacks from behind, the ape-man rapidly closed up the distance between them. The scent spoor grew stronger in his nostrils.

"They are friends," he said. "They are Waziri."

The two jungle creatures moved on in silence then, until they overhauled a file of black warriors who moved silently along the jungle trail. Then Tarzan spoke to them in their own tongue.

"Muviro," he said, "what brings my children so far from their own country?"

The blacks halted and wheeled about, gazing up into the trees from which the voice had seemed to come. They saw nothing, but they knew the voice.

"Oh, Bwana, it is well that you have come," said Muviro. "Your children need you."

Tarzan dropped to the trail among them. "Has harm befallen any of my

people?" he asked, as the blacks clustered about him.

"Buira, my daughter, has disappeared," said Muviro. "She went alone toward the river, and that is the last that was ever seen of her."

"Perhaps Gimla, the crocodile—" Tarzan commenced to suggest.

"No, it was not Gimla. There were other women at the river. Buira never reached the river. We have heard stories, Bwana, that fill us with terror for our girls. There is evil, there is mystery in it, Bwana. We have heard of the Kavuru. Perhaps it is they; we go to search for them."

"Their country lies far away," said Tarzan. "I have just come from a place

that is supposed to be near it, but the people there are all cowards. They were afraid to tell me where I might find the Kavuru, even though their girls have been stolen by these people for so long that no man can remember when it began."

"Muviro will find them," said the black, doggedly. "Buira was a good daughter. She was not as other girls. I will find those who stole her, and kill them."

"And Tarzan of the Apes will help you," said the ape-man. "Have you found the trail of the thieves?"

"There is no trail," replied Muviro. "That is why we know it was the Kavuru; they leave no trail."

"Many of us think that they are demons," said another warrior.

"Men or demons, I shall find them and kill them," replied Muviro.

"From all that I could learn," said Tarzan, "these Bukena live nearest to the Kavuru. They have lost the most girls. That is the reason it is thought that they live nearest to the Kavuru, but they would not help me. They were afraid. However, we will go first to the kraals of the Bukena. I can travel faster; so I will go ahead. In four marches, perhaps three if nothing detains you, you should be there. In the meantime, it may be that Tarzan will have learned more."

"Now that the big Bwana is with me, my mind is happy again," said Muviro,

"for I know that Buira will be found and returned to me, and that those who took her will be punished."

Tarzan glanced up at the skies and sniffed the air. "A bad storm is coming, Muviro," he said. "It is coming from where Kudu, the sun, beds down at night; you will have to trek directly into it, and it will hold you back."

"But it will not stop us, Bwana."

"No," replied Tarzan. "It takes more than Usha, the wind, and Ara, the lightning, to stop the Waziri.

"Already Usha is drawing his veil of clouds across the face of Kudu, hiding him from his people."

Torn and ragged clouds scudded across the sky; and in the distance, far to

the West, thunder reverberated. The ape-man remained with his head thrown back, watching the impressive spectacle of the gathering storm.

"It will be a bad storm," he said, musingly. "See how frightened the clouds are. Like a great herd of buffaloes, they stampede in terror, fearful of the roars of the thunder god that pursues them."

The wind now was whipping the topmost branches of the trees. The thunder grew nearer and increased in violence. As the clouds sank thicker across the sky, gloomy darkness settled upon the jungle. Lightning flashed. Thunder crashed terrifically, and then the rain fell. It came in solid sheets,

bending the trees beneath its weight; and over all Usha screamed like a lost soul.

The eleven men squatted with shoulders hunched against the beating rain, waiting for the first fury of the storm to spend itself.

For half an hour they sat there, and still the storm raged unabated. Suddenly the ape-man cocked an attentive ear upward, and a moment later several of the blacks raised their eyes to the heavens.

"What is it, Bwana?" asked one, fearfully. "What is it in the sky that moans and whines?"

"It sounds very much like an aeroplane," replied Tarzan, "but what an aeroplane would be doing here, I cannot

understand."

3. OUT OF GAS

Prince Alexis poked his head into the pilot's compartment. His face, overcast with a greenish pallor, reflected apprehension, if not actual fright. "Are we in any danger, Brown?" he shouted above the roar of the exhaust and the blast of the propeller. "Do you think you can get us out of here?"

"For God's sake, shut up," snapped the pilot. "Ain't I got troubles enough without you asking fool questions every five minutes?"

The man in the seat beside the pilot looked horrified. "S-s- sh," he cautioned. "You shouldn't speak to his 'ighness like that, my man. It's most disrespectful."

"Nuts," snapped Brown.

The prince staggered back to his seat in the cabin. He almost succeeded in registering offended dignity when a current of air tossed the ship at the moment and threw him off his balance, so that it was a very angry prince who lurched awkwardly into his seat.

"Fasten your safety belt, darling," admonished his princess. "We are apt to turn over at any minute. I mean, really, did you ever see anything so terribly rough? Oh, I wish we had never come."

"So do I," growled Alexis. "I didn't want to come in the first place; and if I ever get my feet on the ground again, the first thing I am going to do is fire that impudent boor."

"I think, under the circumstances," said Jane, "that we really ought to overlook any idiosyncrasy of manner that he may manifest. He's got all the responsibility. He must be under a terrific nervous strain; and, regardless of everything else, I think you will have to admit that so far he has proved himself a splendid pilot."

"Annette, my smelling salts, please," cried Princess Sborov, in a weak voice; "I am sure I'm going to faint. I certainly am."

"Sapristi, what a trip!" exclaimed Sborov. "If it were not for you, dear lady, I should go crazy. You seem to be the only one in the party with any poise. Are you not afraid?"

"Yes, of course I am afraid. We have been flying around in this storm for what seems an eternity, but getting excited about it won't do us any good."

"But how can you help being excited? How could anyone help being excited?"

"Look at Tibbs," said Jane. "He's not excited. He's as cool as a cucumber."

"Bah!" exclaimed Sborov. "Tibbs is not human. I do not like these English valets—no heart, no feeling."

"Really, my dear," expostulated the princess, "I think he is perfect —a regular gentleman's gentleman."

A vivid flash of lightning shot the dark clouds that enveloped them. Thunder roared and crashed. The ship lurched drunkenly onto one wing and

nosed suddenly down. Annette screamed; the Princess Sborov swooned. The plane spun once before Brown could pull her out of it. He righted her with an effort.

"Wh-ew!" he exclaimed.

"My word," said Tibbs.

Princess Sborov was slumped in her chair. Her smelling salts had fallen to the floor. Her hat was over one eye; her hair disheveled. Alexis made no move to come to her aid.

"You had better look after the princess, Annette," said Jane. "I think she needs attention."

There was no answer. Jane turned to see why the girl had not responded. Annette had fainted.

Jane shook her head. "Tibbs," she called. "Come back here and look after the princess and Annette. I'm coming up to sit with Brown."

Gingerly Tibbs made his way into the cabin, and Jane took the seat beside the pilot.

"That last was a bad one," she said. "I really thought we were through. You handled the ship marvelously, Brown."

"Thanks," he said. "It would be easier if they were all like you. The rest of them get in my hair. Although," he added, "Tibbs ain't so bad. I guess he's too dumb to be scared."

"You are having real trouble with the ship, aren't you, Brown?" she asked.

"Yes," he said. "I didn't want to tell

the others. They'd have gone nutty. We've got too much of a load. I told the old lady so before we took off; but she was set on bringing everything but the kitchen sink, and now I can't get no elevation. That's the reason I can't get up above this storm, just wallowing around here in this muck without any idea where we are or which way we're going; and there's mountains in Africa, Miss, some damned high mountains."

"Yes, I know that," replied Jane. "But you must have some idea where we are; you have a compass, and you know your air speed."

"Yes," he said, "I got a compass; and I know my air speed; but there's another thing that the rest of 'em better not know.

The compass has gone haywire."

"You mean?"

"I mean we're just flying blind in this pea soup without a compass."

"Not so good; is it, Brown?"

"I'll say it's not."

"What are we going to do about it?"

"If we could get at the baggage compartment, we could throw all the junk out," he replied; "but we can't, and there you are."

"And in the meantime we may crash into a mountain at any moment, is that it?"

"Yes, Miss," he replied, "or run out of gas and have to come down, which will probably be just as bad as hitting a

mountain."

"There's no other way out?" she asked. Her voice was level, her eyes unafraid.

"Well, I've got a little plan I'd like to work," he said, and turned to her with a grin.

"What is it, Brown?"

"Well, we can't get at the junk to throw it overboard; but the prince must weigh about a hundred and fifty pounds. That would help some."

Jane turned her head away to hide a smile, but evidently he saw it.

"I thought you'd like the idea," he said.

"We shouldn't joke about such a thing,

Brown," she reprimanded.

"I guess we can't help it," he said. "We both got that American sense of humor."

"Is the petrol—gas really very low, Brown?" she asked.

"Look," he indicated the gauge on the dash. "We're good for about an hour at the outside."

"And no parachutes."

"Nary a chute. Most people don't bother with them on a cabin job."

She shook her head. "It does look bad, doesn't it? But we'd better not tell the others how really bad it is. There is nothing they can do to help themselves."

"Not a thing," he said, with a wry

smile, "unless they want to pray."

"I think they've been doing that already."

"What are you going to do—just cruise around until the gas is gone?"

"No, of course not. If I don't find a hole in this mess in half an hour, I'm going to nose down easy and try to get under it. There'll be nothing to it, if we ain't over mountains. That's all I'm afraid of. Then I may find a place where I can get her down, but I'm hoping for a hole. I'd like to look down first."

"Jane! Jane!" It was a plaintive wail from the cabin. "Oh, my dear, where are we? I mean are we all dead?"

Jane looked back. Tibbs had recovered the lost smelling salts and had

successfully applied first-aid to the princess. Annette had come to and was sobbing hysterically. The prince sat tense and ashen- faced, beads of perspiration standing upon his forehead. He was quite evidently in a blue funk. He caught Jane's eye.

"Is there any hope?" he asked. "Has Brown said anything?"

"We'll be all right if he can find an opening in the clouds," she replied. "That is what he is looking for."

"If we'd had a decent pilot, we'd never have gotten into this," grumbled the prince. "As I told you, Kitty, you should have hired a good French pilot. These Americans don't know anything about flying; and into the bargain you

don't know anything about this fellow, Brown."

"I guess that guy never heard of the Wright Brothers or Lindbergh," grumbled Brown.

"Don't mind what he says," said Jane. "We are all under a terrific nervous strain, and not exactly accountable for what we say or do."

"It doesn't seem to be bothering you much, Miss," said Brown.

"Well, it's just the way we happen to be," she said, "and we can't help that either. Just because I succeed in hiding it, doesn't mean that I am not frightened to death."

"You're sure a good sport," said Brown. "You've got guts, and so I don't

mind telling you that I don't feel like no little school girl going to her first picnic. I can think of lots of things I'd rather do than crash in the middle of Africa."

"What did he say?" demanded Sborov. "We are going to crash? Look what you have gotten me into, you old fool," he cried, angrily, turning upon his wife, "you and your rejuvenation and your perpetual youth. Sapristi! You've had your face lifted so many times now that you could be arrested for indecent exposure."

The Princess Sborov gasped. "Why, Alexis!" she exclaimed. Then she burst into tears.

"Oh, why did I ever come?" wailed Annette. "I did not wish to come. I am

afraid. I do not want to die. Oh, mon Dieu, save me! Save me!"

"Here, madam, try the smelling salts again," said Tibbs.

"Nice party," remarked Brown. "Perhaps they think I'm enjoying it."

"In great danger, we think mostly of ourselves," said Jane.

"I suppose so. I'm thinking mostly of myself right now; but I'm thinking of you and Annette and Tibbs, too. You're worth saving. As far as the other two are concerned, I'd like to chuck 'em overboard; but I think I read somewhere that there was a law against that."

"Yes, I believe there is," smiled Jane. "But, really, Brown, do you know I have an idea that you are going to get us out of

this all right?"

"That's the first encouragement I've had," he replied. "And I'm sure going to try to get us out of this. It all depends upon what's underneath this mess. If there's any ceiling at all, we'll have a chance; and that's what I'm hoping for."

"I'm praying for it."

"I'm going to start down now, Miss. I'll just ease her down slowly."

"At a hundred and fifty miles an hour."

"Well, we won't lose elevation that fast."

The ship struck a down current and dropped a hundred feet, careening wildly. The screams of the Princess

Sborov and Annette, the maid, mingled with the curses of Alexis.

Jane gasped. "Well, we went down pretty fast that time," she said.

"But when she drops like that, you can be sure you're not on the ground, anyway. The air has to have some place to go. It can't get through the earth; so they never carry you all the way down."

For tense minutes the two sat in silence. Then suddenly Jane voiced a quick exclamation. "Look, Brown," she cried, "trees! We're below it."

"Yes," he said, "and with five hundred feet to spare but—"

She looked at him questioningly. "We're not much better off, are we? How much gas have you left?"

"Oh, maybe fifteen or twenty minutes, and I don't need to tell you— well, it doesn't look so hot."

"Nothing but forest," she said; "there's not a place to land anywhere."

"We may find an opening, and believe me it won't have to be a Croydon either."

"And if you don't find an opening?"

He shrugged. "We'll just have to set down in the tree tops," he said. "The chances are pretty fair that we won't all be killed, Miss." He turned and looked back in the cabin. "Tibbs, get into a seat and fasten your safety belt. Put your wraps and pillows in front of your faces. I am going to make a forced landing in a few minutes. I will tell you when. If you pad your faces, you may not get hurt at

all."

Nobody made any reply. The princess moaned, and Annette sobbed.

"There's a terrific wind, isn't there?" said Jane. "Look at those tree tops bend."

"Yes," he said, "and in a way that may help us. The wind will cut down our ground speed a lot; and if I can hook the tail skid into those trees, we may land on them easy-like and hang there."

"You know those tree tops may be a couple of hundred feet from the ground, or even more?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose they may, but I don't think we'll go through them; they look too dense. And if I set her down easy, the wings and fuselage will

catch and hold her. I think we've got a chance."

The ship skimmed on a few hundred feet above the swaying forest top for several minutes. There was no sign of a clearing; no break in those wildly tossing waves of green.

"We're out of gas now, Miss," said Brown, and mechanically he cut the switch. Then he turned back once more to the cabin. "Hold everything," he said; "I'm going to bring her down."

4. IN THE KRAAL OF UDALO

The ship settled toward the madly tossing sea of green foliage below. Blinding rain drove in sheets against the windows of the cabin. Vivid lightning shot the gloom beneath the dark, glowering clouds. Thunder crashed. Straight into the teeth of the gale, Brown nosed down. The force of the wind held the ship until it seemed to hover above the tree tops as the pilot leveled off just above them; and as the ship settled, he brought the tail down sharply. There was a crash of splintering wood, the ripping of torn fabric as the ship nosed down into the swaying, slashing branches. And

above the noise of the storm and the crashing of the ship were the screams and curses of the terrified passengers in the cabin.

But at last it was over. With a final ripping, tearing jolt, the ship came to rest.

Then, for a tense and terrible moment, silence.

Brown turned to the girl at his side. "Are you hurt, Miss?" he asked.

"I don't think so," she said; "just dazed. It was terrible, wasn't it?"

He turned then and glanced back into the cabin. The four passengers were hanging in their safety belts in various stages of collapse. "All right back there?" he demanded. "How about you,

Annette?" There was a note of greater concern in Brown's voice.

"Oh, mon Dieu!" moaned the French girl. "I am already dead."

The Princess Sborov groaned. "Oh, how horrible! Why doesn't someone do something for me? Why doesn't someone help me? Annette! Alexis! Where are you? I am dying. Where are my smelling salts?"

"It would serve you right," growled Alexis, "dragging me off on a crazy adventure like this. It's a wonder we weren't all killed. If we'd had a French pilot, this would never have happened."

"Don't be so stupid," snapped Jane. "Brown handled the ship magnificently."

Alexis turned upon Tibbs. "Why don't

you do something, you idiot? You English and Americans are all alike—stupid, dumb. I wanted a French valet in the first place."

"Yes, sir," said Tibbs. "I am very sorry that you didn't get one, sir."

"Well, shut up and do something."

"What shall I do, sir?"

"Sapristi! How should I know? But do something."

"I am sorry, sir, but I am not a mountain goat nor a monkey. If I unfasten this seat belt, I shall simply land on your head, sir."

"Wait a minute," called Jane. "I'll see what can be done." And she unfastened her belt and climbed up into the cabin.

The ship had come to rest at an angle of about 45 degrees with the nose down, but Jane easily made her way into the cabin; and Brown followed close behind her. She went first to the Princess Sborov.

"Are you really seriously hurt, Kitty?" she asked.

"I am torn in two; I know that all my ribs are broken."

"You got us into this, Brown," snapped Alexis. "Now get us out of it."

"Listen," said the American, "you may be better off in than out, for when we get on the ground I ain't pilot no more. I ain't responsible then, and I won't be taking any of your lip."

"Did you hear that, Kitty?" demanded

Alexis. "Would you sit there and let a servant talk to me like that? If you don't discharge him, I will."

Brown snorted "Don't make me laugh. You didn't hire me, you little runt; and you ain't going to fire me."

"Don't be impudent, my man," cried Alexis, his voice trembling. "You forget who I am."

"No, I don't forget who you are; you ain't nothing. In the country you come from, half the cab drivers are princes."

"Come, come," snapped Jane. "Stop bickering. We must find out if anyone is really injured."

"Get me out of here," wailed Princess Sborov. "I can't stand it any longer."

"It would be foolish to try to get out now," said Jane. "Just look at that storm. We shall be safer and much more comfortable here in the ship while the storm lasts."

"Oh, we'll never get down from here. We are way up in the tops of the trees," wailed Annette.

"Don't worry none, sister," said Brown, reassuringly. "We'll find a way to get down from here when the storm lets up. The ship's lodged tight; she won't fall no farther; so we might as well sit tight like Lady Greystoke says and wait for it to quit raining and blowing."

Tibbs strained his eyes upwards through the window at his side. "It

doesn't seem to be clearing any, if I may say so," he remarked.

"These equatorial storms oftentimes end as suddenly as they commence," said Jane. "It may be all over, and the sun out, within half an hour. I've seen it happen a hundred times."

"Oh, it won't ever stop raining; I know it won't," wailed the princess, "and I don't see how we are ever going to get down from here if it does. This is terrible. I mean I wish I'd never come."

"Crying about it now, Kitty, won't do any good," said Jane. "The thing to do is try to make ourselves comfortable and then make the best of it until the storm lets up and we can get down. Here, Brown, get a couple of those seat

cushions and put them down here on the floor in front of the princess' chair. Then we'll unfasten her seat belt and she can turn around and sit on the floor with her back against the pilot's compartment."

"Let me help, milady," said Tibbs, as he unfastened his belt and slid forward.

"The rest of you had better do the same thing," said Brown. "Unfasten your belts and sit on the floor with your backs against the seat in front of you."

With some difficulty and much sobbing on her part, the Princess Sborov was finally arranged in a more comfortable position; and the others, following Brown's suggestion, disposed themselves as best they could for the wait, long or short, until the storm

should subside.

Tarzan and the Waziri hunched in what meager protection they could find until the storm should abate; for, in its fury, it was a force against which it were foolish for man to pit himself unless the need were great.

For awhile Tarzan had heard the roar of the ship's motor, even above the storm. It had been evident to him that the ship was circling, and then gradually the sound had diminished and quickly faded into nothingness.

"Bwana," said Muviro, "were there men up there above the storm?"

"Yes, at least one," replied the ape-man, "above it or in it. In either event, I should not care to be in his place. The

forest stretches many marches in all directions. If he were looking for a place to land, I do not know where he would find it."

"It is well to be on the ground," said Muviro. "I do not think that the gods intended that men should fly like birds. If they had, they would have given them wings."

Little Nkima cuddled close to his master. He was drenched and cold and miserable. The world looked very black to Nkima, and there was no future. He was quite sure that it would always be dark, but he was not resigned to his fate. He was merely too crushed and unhappy to complain. But presently it commenced to get lighter. The wind passed on with a

last, dismal wail. The sun burst forth, and the crushed jungle arose once more to its full life.

The ape-man arose and shook himself, like a great lion. "I shall start now for Ukena," he said, "and talk with the Bukena. This time, perhaps, they will tell me where the Kavuru dwell."

"There are ways of making them talk," said Muviro.

"Yes," said Tarzan, "there are ways."

"And we will follow on to Ukena," said Muviro.

"If you do not find me there, you will know that I am searching for the Kavuru and Buira. If I need you, I will send Nkima back to guide you to me."

Without further words, without useless good-byes and God- speeds, Tarzan swung Into the dripping trees and disappeared toward the West.

Strange stories had come from the Bukena, and filtered by word of mouth through a hundred tribes to Uziri, the land of the Waziri. They were tales of the Kavuru, tales of a savage, mysterious people, whom no man saw, or seeing, lived to tell. They were demons with horns and tails. Or again, they were a race of men without heads. But the most common report was that they were a race of savage whites, who had reverted to barbarism and went naked in their hidden fastness. One story had it that they were all women, and another that

they were all men. But Tarzan knew the distortion that was the fruit of many tongues, and gave little heed to things he heard; only the things that he had seen with his own eyes was he sure of.

He knew that many tribes stole women, but oftentimes these women were seen again. Yet the women that the Kavuru stole were not, and so he was willing to admit that there was some tribe dwelling in a remote fastness that specialized in the stealing of young girls. But many of the other stories he heard, he did not believe.

For instance, there was the fable of the longevity and perpetual youth of the Kavuru. That, Tarzan did not believe, although he knew that there were many

strange and unbelievable happenings in the depths of the Dark Continent.

It was a long trek, even for Tarzan, back to the country of the Bukena. The forest was soggy and dripping; the jungle steamed. But of such things and their attendant discomfort, the ape-man took small note. From birth he had become inured to discomfort, for the jungle is not a comfortable place. Cold, heat, danger were as natural to him as warmth and comfort and safety are to you. As you take the one, he took the other, as a matter of course. Even in infancy, he had never whined because he was uncomfortable, nor did he ever complain. If he could better conditions, he did so; if he could not, he ignored

them.

Just before dark, Tarzan made a kill; and the fresh meat warmed him and gave him new life, but that night he slept cold and uncomfortable in the dank and soggy forest.

Before dawn he was astir again, eating once more of his kill. Then he swung off swiftly upon his journey, until the good red blood flowed hot through his veins, bringing warmth and a sense of well- being.

But Nkima was miserable. He had wanted to go home, and now he was going back into a strange country that he did not like. He scolded and fretted a great deal; but when the sun came out and warmed him, he felt better; and then

he scampered through the trees, looking for whom he might insult.

On the morning of the third day, Tarzan came to the kraal of Udalo, chief of the Bukena.

The sight of the tall, bronzed white, with the little monkey perched upon his shoulder, striding through the gate into the village, brought a horde of blacks jabbering and chattering about him. He was no stranger to them, for he had been there a short time before; and so they were not afraid of him. They were a little awed, however, for tales of the mighty ape-man had reached them even over the great distance that separated Ukena from the land of the Waziri.

Paying no more attention to them than

he would have to a herd of wildebeest, Tarzan strode straight to the hut of Udalo, the chief, where he found the old man squatting beneath the shade of a tree, talking with some of the elders of the tribe.

Udalo had been watching the approach of the ape-man along the village street. He did not seem overly pleased to see him.

"We thought the big Bwana had gone away, and that he would not return," said the chief; "but now he is back. Why?"

"He has come to make talk with Udalo."

"He has made talk with Udalo before. Udalo has told him all that he knows."

"This time Udalo is going to tell him

more. He is going to tell him where lies the country of the Kavuru."

The old man fidgeted. "Udalo does not know."

"Udalo does not talk true words. He has lived here all his life. The young girls of his tribe have been stolen by the Kavuru. Everyone knows that. Udalo is not such a fool that he does not know where these young girls are taken. He is afraid of what the Kavuru will do to him, if he leads people to their kraal. But he need not be afraid; the Kavuru need not know how Tarzan finds them."

"Why do you want to go to the kraal of the Kavuru? They are bad people."

"I will tell you," said Tarzan. "Buira, the daughter of Muviro, the hereditary

chief of the Waziri, has disappeared. Muviro thinks that the Kavuru took her; that is why Tarzan, who is war chief of the Waziri, must find the kraal of the Kavuru."

"I do not know where it is," insisted Udalo, sullenly. As they talked, warriors had been approaching from all parts of the village, until now Tarzan and the chief had been surrounded by scowling, silent spear-men.

Udalo appeared ill at ease; his eyes shifted restlessly. The whole atmosphere seemed surcharged with suspicion and danger. Even little Nkima sensed it; he trembled as he clung tightly to Tarzan.

"What is the meaning of this, Udalo?" demanded the ape-man, indicating the

surrounding warriors, with a nod. "I came in peace, to talk to you as a brother."

Udalo cleared his throat nervously. "Since you were here and went away, there has been much talk. Our people remembered the stories they had heard about the Kavuru. It is said that they are white men who go naked, even as you. We do not know anything about you; you are a stranger. Many of my people think that you are a Kavuru, that you have come to spy upon us and select young girls to steal from us."

"That is foolish talk, Udalo," said Tarzan.

"My people do not think it is foolish talk," growled the chief. "You have

come to the kraal of Udalo once too often." He rose slowly to his feet. "You shall not steal any more of our young girls." And with that, he slapped his palms sharply together; and instantly the surrounding warriors leaped upon the ape-man.

5. "THE LION IS COMING!"

"I can't stand it any longer," said the princess. "I mean this cramped position is killing me, and it is cold in here; I am nearly frozen."

"What right have you got to whine?" growled Alexis. "You got us into this, you and your aviator." He spat the last word out contemptuously.

"Listen, Prince," said Jane, "you and the rest of us can thank Brown's cool head and efficiency for the fact that we are alive and uninjured. It is little short of a miracle that none of us is hurt. I'll venture to say that there's not one pilot in a thousand who could set this ship down

as he did."

"I beg your pardon," said Tibbs, "if I may say so, it has stopped raining."

"And there's the sun," cried Annette, excitedly. Making her way to the door, Jane opened it and looked down. "We are only fifty feet from the ground," she said, "but we may have a little difficulty getting down— that is, some of us may."

"What in the world are you doing, my dear?" demanded the princess, as Jane commenced to take off her shoes and stockings.

"I am going to have a look around. I want to see if I can get at the baggage compartment. We are going to need some of the stuff in there. I'm afraid we are going to find it mighty uncomfortable

on the ground; it may be cold in here, but it will be cold and wet both, down there."

"We might make a fire, madam, if I might be so bold as to suggest it," offered Tibbs.

"Everything is rather wet and soggy, but perhaps we can manage it. It's too bad we haven't gasoline left. That would help a lot."

"There'll be some in the sump in the bottom of the tank," said Brown.

"But why are you taking off your shoes and stockings?" asked the princess.

"It's the only safe way to climb around in trees, Kitty."

"But my dear, I mean—after all, you don't intend to climb around in that tree?"

"Precisely, and that is what you will have to do, too, if you ever want to get down from here."

"Oh, but my dear, I couldn't. I positively couldn't do it."

"We'll help you when the time comes, and see that you don't fall; and while I am looking around, Brown, I wish you and Tibbs would remove all the safety belts and fasten them together into one long strap. It may be necessary to lower the princess to the ground, and a strap will come in handy in getting the luggage down safely."

"You better let me go out and look

around, Miss," said Brown; "you might fall."

Jane smiled. "I am used to it, Brown," she said. "You'd probably be in far more danger than I." And then she stepped out onto the crumpled wing and leaped lightly to a nearby branch.

"Great Scott, look out, miss, you'll fall!" shouted Brown.

"Be careful, madam! You'll kill yourself." Tibbs almost showed emotion.

"My dear, I mean, come back," wailed the princess.

Annette screamed and covered her eyes with her palms.

"My dear lady, come back! For my

sake, come back!" begged Alexis.

But Jane paid no attention to them, as she took two short steps along the branch that brought her within reach of the baggage compartment. It was not locked, and she quickly opened the door.

"Wh-ew!" she exclaimed. "What a mess. There's a broken branch rammed right up through here. It's a good thing for us it didn't come through the cabin."

"Is everything ruined?" asked Alexis.

"Oh, my no, some of the things must be damaged, but I imagine we can salvage nearly everything; and one of the first things I want to salvage is a pair of shorts. Skirts are bad enough at any time, but in a treetop they are a calamity. What luck! Here is my bag right in front. I

won't be but a jiffy, and after I've changed I'll be able to accomplish something."

She opened her bag and selected two or three garments. Then she swung lightly to a lower branch and disappeared from their view beneath the ship.

"Say!" exclaimed Brown, admiringly. "She's as much at home in the trees as a monkey. I never say anything like it."

Alexis clambered to a point from which he could look out of the door. Brown and Tibbs were removing the safety belts and fastening them together.

Alexis looked down and shuddered. "It must be a hundred feet to the ground," he said. "I don't see how we are ever

going to make it; and those branches are wet and slippery."

"Take off your shoes and stockings like she did," advised Brown.

"I'm no monkey."

"No?"

"If I might venture to suggest it, sir, we could fasten the strap around you and lower you."

"It will hold a thousand pounds," said Brown; "it's tested for that. It'll sure hold you, but you'd better leave your title behind; that's the heaviest part of you."

"I've stood about enough of your impertinence, fellow," snapped Alexis. "Another word like that from you and I'll —I'll—"

"You'll what?" demanded Brown. "—you and who else?"

"I wish you two would quit quarreling," said the princess. "I mean, aren't things bad enough as they are without that?"

"My dear, I do not quarrel with servants," said Alexis, haughtily.

"In the first place," said Brown, "I ain't no servant; and in the second place, you'd better not quarrel if you know what's good for you. There's nothing I'd like better than an excuse to smack you on the beezer."

"If you ever dare lay hands on me, I'll __"

"What? Fire me again?" exclaimed Brown. "Now I'll just naturally have to

paste you one to learn you your place; then maybe you'll remember that you ain't nothing but a worm, and that if you had a title a block long you'd still be a worm."

"Don't you dare strike me," cried the prince, shrinking back.

"What is the meaning of all this?" Jane stepped lightly into the doorway of the cabin. "I thought I told you two to stop quarreling. Now before we go any further, I want to tell you something. We're stranded here, the Lord only knows where; there may not be a white man within hundreds of miles; we shall have to depend solely upon our own resources. Quarreling and bickering among ourselves won't get us anywhere;

it will just make our plight all the worse. One of us has got to take charge. It should be a man, and the only man here having any jungle experience, insofar as I know, or who is capable of commanding, is Brown. But there's too much friction between him and the prince; so Brown is out of the question."

"I will take full charge," said Alexis.

"The heck you will!" exclaimed Brown.

"My rank entitles me to the post," insisted Alexis, haughtily.

"You said it," jibed Brown. "You're rank all right."

"No, Alexis, you're out, too," said Jane. "We've got to have someone whom all will obey."

"That just leaves Tibbs, then," said Brown. "Tibbs will suit me all right."

"Oh, dear me, no," cried Tibbs. "Really, if you'll permit me, I couldn't think of assuming so much authority. I—I—well, you know, I haven't been accustomed to it, madam." He turned piteously to Jane. "But you, madam, I am sure that we would all be extraordinarily proud to have you for our leader."

"That is what I was going to suggest," said Jane. "I know the jungle better than any of you, and I am sure there isn't anyone else we could all agree on."

"But it's our expedition," objected Alexis. "We paid for everything; we own the ship and all the supplies; I am the one who should command. Isn't that

right, my dear?" He turned to his wife.

"Oh, really, my dear, I mean. I don't know. Since you said those horrid things to me, I am crushed. My world has collapsed around my ears."

"Well," said Brown, "there's no use chewing the fat any more about that. Lady Greystoke is boss from now on, and if there's anybody that don't like it, I'll attend to them."

The Princess Sborov was slumped dejectedly on the floor of the ship, her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. "It doesn't make any difference to me," she said; "I don't care what happens now. I don't care if I die; I hope I do." As she finished, she glanced up, presumably to note the effect of her words upon her

listeners, and for the first time since Jane had returned to the ship she saw her. "Oh, my dear," she exclaimed, "what a cute outfit. I mean, it's perfectly ducky."

"Thanks," said Jane, "I'm glad you like it; it's practical, at least." She was wearing shorts, and a leather jacket. Her legs and feet were bare. A figured red scarf, wrapped once around her head, confined her hair and served the purposes of a hat.

"But, my dear, won't you freeze to death?" demanded the princess.

"Well," laughed Jane, "I won't exactly freeze to death, but I shall probably be cold lots of times—one gets used to being either too hot or too cold in the jungle. Now I am going down to look

around for a suitable camping place, and you'd all better pray that there's one close by. While I am gone, Brown, you and Tibbs lower the luggage to the ground. Alexis, you go below and receive it; there's got to be someone there to unfasten the strap each time."

"Let Annette do it," growled Alexis. "What do you suppose we've got servants for?"

"Each of us has got to do his share, Alexis," said Jane, quietly, "and there are certain things, the heavier and more dangerous work, that will naturally fall to the men. There are no servants and no masters among us now. The sooner we all realize that, the better off and the happier we are going to be."

Alexis approached the door of the ship gingerly and looked down. "Let Brown go down," he said; "I'll help Tibbs lower the baggage to him." Then he glanced in the direction of the baggage compartment. "How could anyone get out there on that branch," he said, "and do anything? He'd fall and break his neck."

"Ah, can the chatter and go on down, as Lady Greystoke told you to," said Brown. "Say the word, Miss, and I'll toss him down."

"No you won't; you don't dare touch me."

"Then get on over the edge and start down."

"I can't; I'd fall."

"Put the strap around him, Brown," said Jane, "and you and Tibbs lower him to the ground. I'm going along now." And with that, she jumped lightly to a nearby branch and swung down through the leafy foliage toward the ground below.

She breathed the odors of the steaming jungle with a keen delight. The restrictions of ordered society, the veneer of civilization, fell away, leaving her free; and she sensed this new freedom with a joy that she had not felt since she had left the jungle to return to London.

Everything about her reminded her of Tarzan. She looked about her, listening intently. It seemed inevitable that at the next moment she would see a bronzed

giant swing down through the foliage to clasp her in his arms; and then, with a sigh and a rueful smile, she shook her head, knowing full well that Tarzan was probably hundreds of miles away, ignorant both of her whereabouts and her plight. It was possible that he might not even yet have received her cable, telling him that she was flying to Nairobi. When he did receive it and she did not come, how would he know where to search for her? They had flown blind for so long that even Brown had no idea how far off their course they had been, nor even the approximate location of their landing place. It seemed quite hopeless that they should expect outside help. Their only hope lay within themselves.

Whatever their situation, she and Brown she felt might reasonably expect to pull through; that is, if they had been alone. But how about the others? Tibbs, she thought, might have possibilities of resourcefulness and endurance. She had her doubts about Alexis. Men of his stamp were oftentimes almost as helpless as women. Annette was young and strong, but temperamentally unfitted for the grim realities of the jungle against which they would have to pit themselves. Her efficiency and even her strength would be lessened by the constant terror in which she would exist. As for Kitty, Jane mentally threw up her hands—hopeless, absolutely hopeless, in the face of any hardship, emergency,

or danger. Yes, she felt that she and Brown could pull through; but could they pull the others through? It went without saying that they would not desert them.

Her mind partially occupied with these thoughts, she moved through the lower terrace of the jungle, for so thickly was the ground overgrown with underbrush that she had kept to the lower branches of the trees to make her progress easier.

She did not go far in one direction, because she realized the difficulty of transporting their supplies for any great distance through the heavy undergrowth.

Circling, she sought for an open space, however small, in which they might build a temporary camp; but the

jungle appeared to become wilder and less penetrable.

She had completed half the circle, and was on the side of the ship opposite that from which she had descended, when she came unexpectedly upon a game trail.

Immediately her spirits rose, for now they were assured of comparatively easy going and the certainty, almost, that eventually they would find natives.

Before returning to the ship, she followed the trail a short distance, when suddenly she came upon a small stream and, beside it, an opening in the underbrush, perhaps an acre in extent.

Elated, she turned back toward the ship, following the trail to ascertain how

close it ran to the point from which the baggage must be transported.

As she turned, she heard a slight rustling in the undergrowth behind her, a sound which her trained ears detected quickly and almost identified. Yet she was not sure.

Nevertheless, she increased her gait, taking quick glances ahead and upward that she might always have an avenue of escape located in the event of sudden necessity.

The sound continued, a little behind her and paralleling the trail along which she moved.

She could hear Brown and Alexis quarreling with one another and bickering over the handling of the

baggage. Alexis was on the ground, and he seemed very close. Of course, she might be mistaken. The thing that she heard might not be what she feared it was; but perhaps it would be as well to warn Alexis before it was too late, and so she called to him.

"What is it?" he demanded, sullenly.

"You had better climb a tree, Alexis. I think a lion is following me. He is very close."

"I can't climb a tree," shouted Alexis. "I can't move through this undergrowth. Help! Brown, help! Do something, somebody!"

"Lower the strap to him and pull him up," shouted Jane. "It may not be a lion; and he may not bother us if it is, but we'd

better be on the safe side."

"Hurry up with that strap, you fool," shrieked Alexis.

"There ain't no hurry," Brown replied, tantalizingly; "at least, I ain't in no hurry."

"If you let that lion get me, it'll be murder."

"Oh, I guess he can stand it," replied Brown.

"Hurry up and lower that strap, you murderer."

"Ain't I lowering it, as fast as I can?"

"Oh, I can hear him now; he's right on top of me; he'll get me."

"That is me you hear, Alexis," said Jane, reassuringly.

"Well, what if he does get you?" demanded Brown. "Ain't a lion got to eat? In California they feed them animals that ain't no good; so what are you crabbing about?"

"Hurry now, Brown," cried Jane. "The lion is coming, and he's coming fast."

6. THE BALLOT OF DEATH

As the Bukena warriors closed in upon him, Tarzan stood with folded arms, ignoring them. He was surrounded by many spears; and he knew that at this instant, if he sought to escape or give battle, a dozen spearpoints would transfix him instantly.

His one hope lay in gaining time, and he felt that he could accomplish this best by feigning indifference.

"Kill the Kavuru!" shouted a woman in rear of the warriors. "They stole my daughter."

"And mine," screamed another.

"Kill him! Kill him!" urged others of

the savage throng.

A very old man, who had been squatting beside Udalo, leaped to his feet. "No! No!" he screamed. "Do not kill him. If he be a Kavuru, his people will come and punish us. They will kill many of us and take all of our girls."

Instantly the blacks commenced arguing among themselves. Some insisted upon killing him, others wanted to take him prisoner, while others thought that he should be released to mollify the Kavuru.

As they jabbered, the spearmen in the front rank relaxed their vigilance. Some of them turned around and sought to expound their views to those behind them, and in this circumstance Tarzan

thought he saw his chance to escape. With the speed of Ara, the lightning, and the strength of Gorgo, the buffalo, he leaped upon a nearby warrior and holding him as a shield in front of him, charged through the human ring that surrounded him, turning constantly so that no weapon could be directed against him without endangering the life of the black.

So quickly had he acted that the blacks were taken entirely off their guard; and he had won almost to the clear, where he might have made a quick run for the village gate, when something struck him heavily on the back of the head.

When he regained consciousness, he

found himself in the dark interior of an evil-smelling hut, his wrists and ankles securely bound.

With the return of consciousness came recollection of what had transpired; and the ape-man could not restrain a slow smile, for it was evident to him that the faction that had been afraid to kill him was more powerful than that which would have taken his life. Once again luck was with him.

For the time being, therefore, he was safe; and so he was certain of escape; for he was so constituted that while life remained in him, he could not conceive a permanent captivity; nor could anything for long shake his confidence in his ability to extricate himself from any

predicament that might overtake him; for was he not Tarzan of the Apes, Lord of the Jungle?

Presently he commenced to test the bonds that secured his wrists and ankles. They were very strong and there were a great many strands, and soon he saw that it would be hopeless to attempt to liberate himself. There was nothing to do, therefore, but wait.

Unlike an ordinary man, he did not waste time wondering what his fate would be. Instead, he composed himself as comfortably as he could and fell asleep.

And while he slept, a council of warriors plotted in the council house with Udalo, the chief. It was they who

were wondering what Tarzan's fate should be.

The old man who had first warned them against killing their prisoner was still his staunchest defender. He was Gupingu, the witch- doctor. He prophesied that dire calamity would befall them if they harmed this man who, he assured them, was a Kavuru. But there were others who spoke quite as insistently for death.

"If he is a Kavuru," said one of these, "his people will come and punish us as soon as they find that we have attacked him and made him prisoner. If we kill him, he cannot go back to them and tell them; and the chances are that they will never know what became of him."

"Those are true words," said another; "a dead Kavuru is better than a live one."

Then Udalo spoke. "It is not for one man to decide," he said. "The talk of many men is better than the talk of one."

On the ground beside him were two bowls. One contained kernels of corn and the other small, round pebbles. He passed one of these bowls to the warrior upon his right and one to him upon his left. "Let each warrior take a kernel of corn and a pebble—just one of each, not more," he said.

They passed the bowls from hand to hand about the circle; and each warrior took a kernel of corn and a pebble; and when the bowls were returned to Udalo,

he set them down beside him and picked up a gourd with a small neck.

"We will pass this gourd around the circle," he said, "and each man shall speak either with a kernel of corn or with a pebble for the life or the death of the stranger. If you wish him to live, put a kernel of corn in the gourd; if you wish him to die, put a pebble."

In silence, the gourd was passed around the grim circle as savage eyes followed it from the tense, painted faces of the warriors.

The dropping of the fateful ballots into the hollow gourd sounded distinctly in every part of the large council-house. At last the gourd completed the circle and came back to Udalo.

There were fully a hundred warriors in the circle; and Udalo could not count to a hundred, but he had an equally certain way of determining the outcome of the voting even though he was unable to determine how many votes were cast upon each side.

He emptied the contents of the gourd upon the ground in front of him. Then with one hand, he picked up a grain of corn and, simultaneously, with the other, a pebble, and placed each in its respective bowl; and this he continued to do as long as there were kernels of corn and pebbles to match one another. But this was not for long, for he soon ran out of corn; and even then there were seventy-five or eighty pebbles left,

showing that only a few had voted to spare the life of the ape-man.

Udalo looked up and around the table. "The stranger dies," he said. A savage, sinister shout rose from the assembled warriors.

"Let us go and kill him now," said one, "before the Kavuru can come and find him among us."

"No," said Udalo, "tomorrow night he dies. Thus will the women have time to prepare a feast. Tomorrow night we shall eat and drink and dance, while we torture the Kavuru. Let him suffer as he has made us suffer when he stole our children."

A roar of approval and satisfaction greeted this suggestion.

The council was over. The warriors had returned to their huts. Fires were banked. Silence had fallen upon the village of the Bukena. Even the usually yapping curs were silent. The kraal was wrapped in slumber.

From a hut near the chiefs, a figure crept silently into the night. It paused in the shadow of the hut from which it had emerged and looked fearfully about.

Nothing stirred, and silently as a ghostly shadow the figure crept along the village streets.

Tarzan had been awakened by the savage cries from the council- house; and he had lain sleepless for some time because of the discomfort of his bonds, but presently he dozed again.

He was not yet fully asleep when something awakened him—a sound that you or I, with our dull ears, might not have heard—the sound of naked feet creeping slowly and stealthily toward the hut where he lay.

Tarzan rolled over so that he could see the entrance to the but, and presently it was filled by a shadowy form. Someone was entering. Was it the executioner coming to destroy him?

7. THE MERRY COMPANY

The lion broke through the underbrush into the trail a short distance behind Jane. It was then that she called her warning to Alexis.

At sight of Jane, the lion bared his fangs and growled. Then he came toward her at a trot, and as he did so the girl leaped for an overhanging branch. As she caught it, the lion charged. He leaped for her, and his raking talons barely missed her bare foot as she drew herself safely out of his reach. With a hideous growl, he turned and leaped again.

The prince was only a short distance

away, but he was hidden by the dense underbrush beneath the ship. The angry growl sounded very close; the man was paralyzed with terror.

From her position on the branch of the tree, Jane could see him. "You'd better get out of there, Alexis," she said, "but don't make any noise. If he hears you, he'll come for you; he's terribly sore about something— must have missed his kill last night."

Alexis tried to speak, but no sound came from his throat. He just stood there trembling, an ashen pallor on his face.

Jane could not see Brown, but she knew that he was directly above Alexis. "Brown," she called, "drop the end of the strap to the prince. Fasten it around

your body underneath your arms, Alexis; and Brown and Tibbs will pull you up. I'll try and keep Numa's attention riveted on me."

The lion was pacing back and forth beneath the tree, glaring hungrily up at the girl.

Jane broke off a small, dead branch and threw it at the beast. It struck him in the face; and, with a roar, he leaped again for the branch on which Jane stood.

In the meantime, Brown lowered the end of the strap quickly to Alexis. "Hurry up; fasten it around you," he said. "For Pete's sake, what's the matter with you? Get a move on."

But Alexis just stood there trembling,

his teeth chattering, and his knees knocking together.

"Alexis, snap out of it," cried Jane. "You've got to get that belt fastened around you before the lion discovers you. Don't you understand? It's a matter of life and death with you."

"You poor sap," yelled Brown. "Get a move on."

With trembling hands, Alexis reached for the belt, and at the same time he seemed to find his voice and commenced to scream lustily for help.

"Keep still," warned Jane. "The lion hears you; he is looking in your direction now."

"Hurry up, you dumb cluck," shouted Brown.

The lion was tearing through the underbrush, searching for the author of these new sounds. Jane threw another branch at him, but it did not distract his attention. He only growled and started cautiously into the brush.

With fumbling fingers, Alexis was tying the belt about his body.

"Hoist away, Brown," cried Jane; "the lion is coming!"

Brown and Tibbs pulled away lustily, and Alexis rose out of the underbrush.

The lion came steadily on. At last he was directly beneath the terrified man. Alexis, looking down straight into the cruel eyes of the carnivore, voiced a scream of horror.

Slowly, a few inches at a time,

Brown and Tibbs were raising Alexis out of harm's way; but still he was perilously close to the great beast. Then the lion reared up to its full height and struck at him. A raking talon touched the heel of the man's shoe; and, with a final scream, Alexis fainted.

Brown and Tibbs redoubled their efforts. The lion dropped back to the ground, gathered himself and sprang. Again he missed, but only by inches; and before he could spring again, Alexis was safely out of his reach.

The two men hoisted the limp body of Sborov to the ship, and with considerable difficulty dragged him into the cabin.

At sight of him, the princess

commenced to scream. "He's dead! he's dead! Oh, my darling, and your Kitty was so cross to her Allie."

"For Pete's sake, shut up," snapped Brown. "My nerves are about shot, and anyway the sap isn't dead; he's just scared stiff."

"Brown, how dare you speak to me like that!" cried the princess. "Oh, it's terrible; nobody knows what I'm suffering. I mean, no one understands me; everyone is against me."

"Lord," cried Brown, "a little more of this and we'll all be nuts."

"Excuse me, madam, but he seems to be coming to," said Tibbs; "I think he'll be all right in a minute, mam."

"Do something, Annette," cried the

princess. "What are you sitting there for—just like a bump on a log? I mean, where are the smelling salts? Get some water. Oh, isn't it terrible? Oh, darling, Allie, speak to your Kitty."

Alexis opened his eyes and looked about him. Then he closed them and shuddered. "I thought he had me," he said, in a trembling whisper.

"No such luck," said Brown.

"It was a very close call, sir, if I may make so bold as to say so, sir," said Tibbs.

Jane stepped into the cabin doorway. "All right?" she asked. "From the noise you were making, Kitty, I thought something dreadful had happened."

"The Lord only knows what would

happen if something really should happen," said Brown, disgustedly. "I'm getting fed up on all this screaming and bellyaching. I never had no royalty in my hair before, but I sure got 'em now."

Jane shook her head. "Be patient, Brown," she said. "Remember this is all new to them, and naturally anyway their nerves are on edge after all that we have passed through."

"Well, ain't the rest of us got nerves, Miss? Ain't we got a right to be upset, too? But you don't hear none of us bawling around like them. I suppose being royal gives 'em the right to be nuisances."

"Never mind, now," said Jane; "you're getting as bad as the others,

Brown. The thing that I am interested in just now is what we are going to do about that lion. He may hang around here for hours; and as long as he does, we're just blocked. He's in a nasty mood, and it won't be safe to go down there until we know that he has cleared out. The best thing for us to do is to kill him, as he may hang around this neighborhood waiting for a chance to get some of us. He's an old fellow; and because of that, he may be a man-eater. They get that way when they are too old to bag their regular prey."

"A man-eater!" The Princess Sborov shuddered. "How horrible. I mean, how terribly horrible."

"I think we can get rid of him," said

Jane. "You brought rifles, of course, Alexis?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, two of them—high-powered rifles—they'd stop an elephant."

"Good," said Jane, "where are they?"

"They're in the baggage compartment, Miss; I'll get them," said Brown.

"And bring some ammunition, too," said Jane.

"Who's going down there to shoot the horrid thing?" demanded the princess.

"I, of course," said Jane.

"But, my dear," cried the princess, "I mean, you just couldn't."

Brown returned with a rifle. "I couldn't find no ammunition, Miss," he

said. "Where is it packed, Sborov?"

"Eh, what?" demanded the prince.

"The ammunition," snapped Brown.

"Oh, ammunition?"

"Yes, ammunition, you—"

The prince cleared his throat. "Well, you see, I—ah—"

"You mean you didn't bring any ammunition?" demanded Brown. "Well, of all the—"

"Never mind," said Jane. "If there's no ammunition, there's no ammunition, and grousing about it isn't going to get us any."

"If I may be permitted, I think I can be of assistance, Milady," said Tibbs, not without some show of pride.

"How is that, Tibbs?" asked Jane.

"I have a firearm in my bag, Milady. I will kill the beast."

"That's fine, Tibbs," said Jane; "please go and get it."

As Tibbs was moving toward the doorway, he suddenly stopped. A flush slowly mantled his face; he appeared most uncomfortable.

"What's the matter, Tibbs?" asked Jane.

"I—I had forgotten, Milady," he stammered, "but my bag has already been lowered down there with the bloomin' lion."

Jane could not repress a laugh. "This is becoming a comedy of errors," she

cried, "—rifles without ammunition, and our only firearm in possession of the enemy."

"Oh, my dear, what are we going to do?" demanded the princess.

"There's nothing to do until that brute goes away. It's almost too late now anyway to try to make camp; we'll simply have to make the best of it up here for the night."

And so it was that a most unhappy and uncomfortable party shivered and grumbled through the long, dark night—a night made hideous by the roars of hunting lions and the shrill screams of stricken beasts. But at last day broke with that uncanny suddenness that is a phenomenon of equatorial regions.

The moment that it was light enough Jane was out reconnoitering. The lion was gone; and a survey of the surrounding country in the immediate vicinity of the ship, from the lower branches of the trees, revealed no sign of him or any other danger.

"I think we can go down now and start making camp," she said, after she had returned to the ship. "Is most of the baggage down, Brown?"

"All but a few pieces, Miss," he replied.

"Well, get it down as rapidly as possible; and then we'll cut an opening to the trail; it is only a few yards."

"All right, Miss," said Brown. "Come on, your majesty, we'll lower you down

to unhook the stuff at the other end."

"You won't lower me down," said Alexis. "I wouldn't go down there alone again for all the baggage in the world."

Brown looked at the man with disgust that he made no effort to conceal. "All right," he said, "you stay up here and help Tibbs; I'll go down and unfasten the stuff when you lower it to me."

"If you think I'm going to balance out there on that limb and unload the baggage compartment, you're mistaken," said the prince. "It's absolutely out of the question; I get very dizzy in high places, and I should most certainly fall."

"Well, what are you going to do?" demanded Brown; "sit around here while the rest of us wait on you?"

"That's what you servants were hired for," said Alexis.

"Oh, yeah? Well—"

"I'll go down below," said Jane. "Brown, you and Tibbs lower the stuff to me. Now let's get busy," and with that she turned and dropped down through the trees to the ground below.

With a grunt of disgust, Brown climbed out on the limb that led to the baggage compartment, followed by Tibbs; and the two soon lowered away the remainder of the luggage.

"Now lower your passengers," called Jane, after Brown had told her that there was no more baggage. "Alexis, you come first."

"Come on, your majesty," said

Brown; "you're going first."

"I told you that I wouldn't go down there alone," said the prince. "Lower the others."

"All right, your majesty, but if you don't go now, you'll either climb down yourself or stay here till Hell freezes over, for all I care. Come ahead, Annette; I guess you're the one to go first, and then we'll lower the old lady."

"Brown, how dare you refer to me so disrespectfully?" It was the voice of the Princess Sborov coming from the interior of the cabin.

"There's nothing wrong with her ears," said Brown, with a grin.

"I'm terribly afraid, Mr. Brown," said Annette.

"You needn't be, little one," he replied; "we'll see that nothing happens to you. Come on, sit down in the doorway and I'll put this belt around you."

"You won't drop me?"

"Not a chance, my dear. I might drop royalty, but not you."

She flashed him a quick smile. "You are so very nice, Mr. Brown," she said.

"You just finding that out? Well, come on, sister; climb out on this branch here. I'll help you. Steady—now sit down. Ready, Tibbs?"

"Ready, sir," replied Tibbs.

"All right. Now down you go."

Annette clutched her rosary, closed

her eyes, and started praying, but before she realized it she had touched the ground and Jane was helping to remove the belt from about her.

"Now, princess," called Brown.

"Oh, I can't move," cried the princess. "I'm paralyzed. I mean, I really am."

Brown turned to Sborov. "Go in there, mister, and fork your old lady out," he snapped. "We ain't got no time to fool around. Tell her if she don't come pronto, we'll leave you both up here."

"You unspeakable ruffian," sputtered the prince.

"Shut up, and go on and do what I tell you to," growled the pilot.

Sborov turned back to his wife and

helped her to the door of the cabin, but one glance down was enough for her. She screamed and shrank back.

"Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up," said Brown.

"I can't. I mean, I just can't, Brown."

Brown made his way to the cabin. He carried the end of a long strap with him. "Come on," he said, "let me get this around you."

"But I can't do it, I tell you. I mean, I shall die of fright."

"You won't die of nothing; half-witted people live forever."

"That will be enough out of you, Brown. I have endured all of your insults that I am going to." The princess bridled

and attempted to look very dignified, in which, in her disheveled condition, she failed miserably.

Brown had stooped and fastened the belt about her.

"Ready, Tibbs?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. All ready, sir," replied the valet.

"Come on then, princess. Here, you, give me a lift. Shove on her from behind."

Brown pulled from in front, and Alexis pushed from behind, and the Princess Sborov shrieked and clawed at everything in sight in an attempt to get a hold that they could not break.

"What's the matter up there?"

demanded Jane. "Is anyone hurt?"

"No," replied Brown. "We're just moving the better half of the royal family. Now listen, princess, we're doing this for your own good. If you stays up here alone, you starves to death."

"Yes, go on, Kitty. You're delaying things," said Alexis.

"A lot you'd care if I were killed, Alexis. I suppose you'd be glad if I were dead—it's all that will you got me to make. I was a big fool to do it; but, believe me, I mean, just as soon as I find writing materials, I'm going to change it, after what you said to me and what you called me. I'll cut you off without a cent, Alexis, without a cent."

The eyes of Prince Sborov closed to two ugly slits. His brow contracted in a frown, but he made no reply.

Brown took the princess's hands and held them away from the chair to which she had been clinging. "There ain't no use, princess," he said, a little less harshly this time, for he saw that the woman was genuinely terrified. "Tibbs and I'll see that you don't get hurt none. We'll lower you easy, and Lady Greystoke and Annette are down there to help you. Just get hold of yourself and show a little spunk for a minute and it will be over."

"Oh, I shall die, I know I shall die."

Brown and Alexis lifted her out of the cabin onto the branch that passed close

to the doorway. Slowly they eased her off it and then lowered her carefully to the ground.

"Well, Tibbs," said Brown, "I guess you're next. Do you want to be lowered, or will you climb down?"

"I shall climb down," replied Tibbs. "You and I can go together and perhaps help one another."

"Hey, how about me?" demanded Sborov.

"You climb, too, you louse, or you can stay up here," replied Brown, "and I don't mean maybe!"

8. YDENI, THE KAVURU

Framed in the small doorway of the hut and silhouetted against the lesser darkness beyond, Tarzan saw the figure of his stealthy nocturnal visitor and knew that it was a man.

Helpless in his bonds, the Lord of the Jungle could only wait, for he could not defend himself. And though he chafed at the thought of giving up his life without an opportunity to defend it, he was still unmoved and unafraid.

The figure crept closer, groping in the darkness, when suddenly Tarzan spoke. "Who are you?" he demanded.

The creature sought to silence him with a sibilant hiss. "Not so loud," he

cautioned. "I am Gupingu, the witch-doctor."

"What do you want?"

"I have come to set you free. Go back to your people, Kavuru, and tell them that Gupingu saved you from death. Tell them that because of this, they must not harm Gupingu or take his daughters from him."

Darkness hid the faint smile with which Tarzan received this charge. "You are a wise man, Gupingu," he said; "now cut my bonds."

"One thing more," said Gupingu.

"What is that?"

"You must promise never to tell Udalo, or any of my people, that I freed

you."

"They will never know from me," replied the ape-man, "if you will tell me where your people think we Kavuru live."

"You live to the north, beyond a barren country, by a high mountain that stands alone in the center of a plain," explained Gupingu.

"Do your people know the trail to the Kavuru country?"

"I know it," replied the witch-doctor, "but I promise not to lead anyone there."

"That is well—if you know."

"I do know," insisted Gupingu.

"Tell me how you would reach this trail; then I shall know whether you

know or not."

"To the north of our kraal, leading to the north, is an old elephant trail. It winds much, but it leads always toward the country of the Kavuru. Much bamboo grows on the slopes of the mountain beside your village, and there the elephants have gone for years to feed on the young shoots."

The witch-doctor came closer and felt for the bonds around Tarzan's ankles. "After I have freed you," he said, "wait here until I have had time to return to my hut; then go silently to the gates of the village; there you will find a platform just inside the palisade from which the warriors shoot their arrows over the top when enemies attack us. From there you

can easily climb over the top of the palisade, and drop to the ground on the outside."

"Where are my weapons?" demanded Tarzan.

"They are in the hut of Udalo, but you cannot get them. A warrior sleeps just inside the doorway; you would awaken him if you tried to enter."

"Cut my bonds," said the ape-man.

With his knife, Gupingu severed the thongs about the prisoner's ankles and wrists. "Wait now, until I have reached my hut," he said, and turning, crawled silently through the doorway.

The ape-man stood up and shook himself. He rubbed his wrists and then his ankles to restore circulation. As he

waited for Gupingu to reach his hut, he considered the possibility of regaining his weapons.

Presently, dropping to his knees, he crawled from the hut; and when he stood erect again upon the outside, he drew a deep breath. It was good to be free. On silent feet he moved down the village street. Other than in silence, he sought no concealment for he knew that even if he were discovered they could not take him again before he could reach the palisade and scale it.

As he approached the chief's hut, he paused. The temptation was very great; for it takes time and labor to produce weapons, and there were his own only a few paces from him.

He saw a faint light illuminating the interior of the hut—a very faint light from the embers of a dying fire. He approached the entrance, which was much larger than those of the other huts, and just inside and across the threshold he saw the figure of a sleeping warrior.

Tarzan stooped and looked into the interior. His quick, keen eyes, accustomed to darkness, discovered much more than might yours or mine; and one of the first things that they discovered were his weapons lying near the fire beyond the body of the warrior.

The throat of the sleeping man lay bare and fully exposed. It would have been the work of but a moment for the steel-thewed fingers of the ape-man to

have throttled life from that unconscious figure. Tarzan considered the possibilities of this plan, but he discarded it for two reasons. One was that he never chose to kill wantonly; and the other, and probably the dominating reason, was that he was sure that the man would struggle even if he could not cry out and that his struggles would awaken the sleepers inside the hut, an event which would preclude the possibility of Tarzan retrieving his weapons. So he decided upon another and even more dangerous plan.

Stooping and moving cautiously, he stepped over the body of the warrior. He made no sound, and the two steps took him to his weapons.

First of all, he retrieved his precious knife, which he slipped into the sheath at his hip; then he adjusted the quiver of arrows behind his right shoulder and looped his rope across his left. Gathering his short spear and bow in one hand, he turned again toward the entrance, after a hasty glance around the interior of the hut to assure himself that its occupants were all asleep.

At that instant, the warrior rolled over and opened his eyes. At the sight of a man standing between himself and the fire, he sat up. In the gloom of the interior, it was impossible for him to know that this was an enemy, and the natural assumption was that one of the inmates of the hut was moving about in

the night. Yet the figure did not seem familiar, and the warrior was puzzled.

"Who's that?" he demanded. "What's the matter?"

Tarzan took a step nearer the man. "Silence," he whispered. "One sound and you die; I am the Kavuru."

The black's lower jaw dropped; his eyes went wide. Even in the semi-darkness, Tarzan could see him tremble.

"Go outside," directed the ape-man, "and I will not harm you; and go quietly."

Shaking like a leaf, the warrior did as he was bid; and Tarzan followed him. He made the warrior accompany him to the gates and open them; then he passed out of the village of Udalo into the black

jungle night. A moment later he heard the shouts of the warrior as he aroused the village, but Tarzan knew that there would be no pursuit. They would not dare follow a Kavuru into the night.

For an hour Tarzan followed the trail toward the north in accordance with Gupingu's directions. All about him were the noises of the jungle night — stealthy movements in the underbrush, the sound of padded feet, the coughing grunts of a nearby lion, the roar of a distant one; but his sensitive ears and nostrils told him where danger lurked; so that he was always alert to avoid it.

He was moving up wind, and presently he caught the scent of a lion that had not fed—a hunting lion, a hungry

lion; and Tarzan took to the trees. A short search revealed a comfortable resting place, and here he lay up for the remainder of the night. Wondering what had become of Nkima, whom he had not seen since he was captured, he fell asleep, soothed by the familiar jungle sounds.

With the coming of dawn, he moved on again toward the north; and back in the village of Udalo, little Nkima cowered among the branches of the tree above the chief's hut.

He was a most unhappy little monkey, a very frightened little monkey. During the night the blacks had run from their huts shouting and jabbering. That had awakened Nkima, but he had not known

the cause of it; he did not know that it meant that his master had escaped from the village. He thought he was still lying in the hut where he had seen the Bukena take him.

When Nkima awoke again, dawn was dispelling the darkness. Below him, the village streets were deserted. He heard no sound of life from any hut. He looked down upon that one to which they had dragged his master; and, summoning all his courage, he dropped quickly to the ground and scampered along the village street to the entrance to this hut.

A woman, coming from her hut to start her cooking fire, saw the little monkey and tried to catch him; but he escaped her and, racing across the

village, scaled the palisade.

Not daring to enter the village again, and terrified at the thought of being alone in this strange country, Nkima fled through the jungle in the direction of home. And so Nkima went his way not knowing that his master had escaped.

All day Tarzan made his way north along the winding elephant trail. It was not until late in the afternoon that he was able to make a kill; and then after feeding he lay up once more for the night.

In the afternoon of the second day the nature of the country changed. The jungle became more open and there were park-like places where there was little or no underbrush and the trees grew farther

apart. It was a country entirely new to Tarzan, and as such whetted his imagination and aroused within him the instinct of exploration which had always been a powerful factor in affecting his destiny; for he had that intelligent inquisitiveness which set him above the other beasts of the jungle.

As he moved silently along his way, constantly on the alert, a vagrant breeze carried to his nostrils a strange scent that brought him to a halt. For a moment he stood in statuesque pose, every faculty alert.

Tarzan was puzzled. The scent was that of a tarmangani, and yet there was a difference. It was an odor entirely new to him; and then, mingling with it, but

fainter, came the familiar scent spoor of Numa, the lion.

Those two in proximity often meant trouble, and while Tarzan was not particularly interested in saving the man from the lion, or the lion from the man, whichever was hunting the other, natural curiosity prompted him to investigate.

The trees ahead of him grew sufficiently close together so that he could move through their branches; and this he elected to do, since always it gave him an advantage to come from above upon those he sought, especially where, in the case of men, they would not be expecting him.

The perception of the eyes of man is normally in a horizontal plane, while

those of the cat family, with their vertical pupils, detect things above them far more quickly than would a man. Perhaps this is because for ages the cat family has hunted its prey in trees, and even though the lion no longer does so, he still has the eyes of his smaller progenitors. As Tarzan swung in the direction of the strange scent spoor, he was aware that the odor of the lion was becoming stronger much more rapidly than the other scent, a fact which convinced him that the lion was approaching the man, though whether by accident or intent he could not of course determine; but the fact that the lion scent was that of a hungry lion, led him to believe that the beast was stalking the

man.

Any beast with a full belly gives off a different odor from one that is empty; and as an empty stomach is always a hungry one, and as hungry lions are hunting lions, to Tarzan's mind it was a foregone conclusion that the man was the quarry and the lion the hunter.

Tarzan came in sight of the man first, and the initial glimpse brought the Lord of the Jungle to a sudden stop.

Here, indeed, was a white man, but how different from any white man that Tarzan had seen before! The fellow was clothed only in a loin cloth that appeared to be made of gorilla hide. His ankles and wrists and arms were loaded with bracelets; a many-stranded necklace of

human teeth, fell across his breast. A slender cylinder of bone or ivory ran transversely through the pierced septum of his nose; his ears were ornamented with heavy rings. Except for a mane of hair from his forehead to the nape of his neck, his skull was shaved; and in this mane were fastened gay feathers which floated above a face hideously painted; and yet, with all these earmarks of the savage Negro, the man was undoubtedly white, even though his skin was bronzed by much exposure to the weather.

He was sitting on the ground with his back against a tree, eating something from a skin bag fastened to the string that supported his loin cloth, and it was apparent that he was absolutely unaware

of the proximity of the lion.

Cautiously, silently, Tarzan moved nearer until he was in the tree directly above the unconscious man. As he examined him more closely, he recalled the many fables concerning the Kavuru, and especially the one which described them as white savages.

This stranger then, might be a Kavuru. It seemed reasonable to assume that he was, but further speculation on this subject was interrupted by a low snarl a short distance away.

Instantly the savage white was on his feet. In one hand he grasped a heavy spear, in the other a crude knife.

The lion burst from the underbrush at full charge. He was so close that the man

had no chance to seek safety in the tree above him. All that he could do, he did. Swiftly his spear hand flew back, and in the next lightning move he launched the heavy weapon.

Perhaps the suddenness of this unexpected attack had momentarily unnerved him, for he made a clean miss; and simultaneously Tarzan leaped for the carnivore from a branch above the two.

He struck the lion at the shoulder diagonally from above just as he reared upon his hind legs to seize his victim. The impact of the ape-man's body toppled the lion upon its side. With a frightful roar, it regained its feet but not before the ape-man had locked his powerful legs around the small of its

body and encircled its massive throat with one great arm.

As the two beasts fought, the white savage stood an awestruck witness to the strange duel. He heard the growls and roars of the man mingle with those of the lion. He saw them roll upon the ground together as lashing talons sought to reach the bronzed hide of the man-thing; and then he saw the knife hand rise and fall; and each time it drove the blade deep into the side of the king of beasts, until at last the roaring ceased and the tawny body collapsed in the final spasm of death.

The ape-man leaped erect. He placed a foot upon the carcass of his foe and raising his face to the sky voiced the

kill-cry of the victorious bull ape.

At that weird and hideous call, the white savage shrank back and clutched the hilt of his knife more tightly.

As the last weird note died away in the distance, Tarzan, turned and faced the creature whose life he had saved.

The two stood appraising each other in silence for a moment; then the savage spoke. "Who are you?" he demanded, in the same dialect that the Bukena used.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," replied the ape-man. "And you?"

"I am Ydeni, the Kavuru."

Tarzan experienced that sense of satisfaction which one feels when events bear out his judgment. This was, indeed,

a bit of good fortune, for now he would at least know what sort of people the Kavuru were. Perhaps this fellow would even guide him to the country he sought.

"But why did you kill the lion?" asked Ydeni.

"If I had not, he would have killed you."

"Why should you care if he killed me? Am I not a stranger?"

The ape-man shrugged. "Perhaps it was because you are a white man," he said.

Ydeni shook his head. "I do not understand you. I've never seen anyone like you before. You are not a black; you are not a Kavuru. What are you?"

"I am Tarzan," replied the ape-man. "I am looking for the village of the Kavuru; now you can take me there. I wish to speak with your chief."

Ydeni scowled and shook his head. "No one comes to the village of the Kavuru," he said, "other than those who come there to die. Because you have saved my life, I will not take you there, nor will I kill you now, as I should. Go your way, Tarzan, and see that it does not lead you to the village of the Kavuru."

9. SHEETA, THE LEOPARD

With the aeroplane party safely deposited on the ground, Brown cut a narrow path to the trail, using a small hand axe that fortunately had been included in the heterogeneous and generally quite useless impedimenta that the Prince and Princess Sborov had thought essential to the success of their expedition.

Tibbs had offered to help cut trail, but a lifetime of valeting had not fitted him for anything so practical as wielding a hand axe. He meant well, but he could hit nothing that he aimed at; and for fear that he might commit mayhem or suicide,

Brown took the implement from him.

Sborov did not offer to help; and Brown ignored him entirely, knowing that he would prove less efficient, if possible, than Tibbs. But when it came to transporting the baggage, the pilot insisted that the prince do his share.

"You may be the scion of a long line of cab drivers," he said, "but you are going to work or get a punch on the nose."

Sborov grumbled, but he worked.

After the luggage had been transported to the little clearing beside the stream that Jane had found, she directed the building of a boma and some rude shelters.

In this, the brunt of the work fell on

Brown and Jane, though Annette and Tibbs assisted to the best of their ability. No one expected Kitty Sborov to do anything but moan, and she didn't. Alexis was assigned to the building of the boma after someone else had cut the brush—a job that was far beyond either his physical or mental attainments.

"I can't see how guys like him ever live to grow up," grumbled Brown, "nor what good they are after they do grow up. I never seen such a total loss before in my life."

Jane laughed. "He dances divinely, Brown," she said.

"I'll bet he does," replied the pilot. "Damned gigolo, bringing along just a dinky little hand axe and rifles without

any ammunition." He spat the words out disgustedly. "And look at all this here junk. Maybe there's something in it; we ought to take an inventory and see what we got."

"That's not a bad idea," said Jane. "Oh, by the way, Tibbs, where's that gun of yours? We really should have it handy."

"Yes, Milady, right away," said Tibbs. "I never travel without it; one can never tell when one is going to need it, and especially in Africa with all these lions and things."

He located his bag, rummaged through it, and finally located his weapon, which he withdrew gingerly and exhibited not without considerable pride, holding it up

where all might see it.

"There she is, Milady," he said, "and rather a beauty I fancy, too."

Jane's heart sank as she looked at the little single shot .22 short pistol that Tibbs dangled before her so proudly.

Brown burst into a loud laugh. "Say," he said, "if the Germans had known you had that, there wouldn't have been no World War."

"Beg pardon, Mr. Brown," said Tibbs, stiffly; "it is really a very fine weapon. The man I got it from said so himself. It stood me back seven bob, sir."

"Let me see it," said Brown. Taking the pistol he opened the breech. "'Tain't loaded," he said, "and it wouldn't be no

good if it was."

"Bless me, no!" exclaimed Tibbs; "I wouldn't think of carrying a loaded weapon, sir; it's too dangerous. One never knows when it might go off."

"Well," said Jane, "it may come in handy shooting small game. Got plenty of ammunition for it?"

"Well—er—Milady," stammered Tibbs, "you see I've always been intending to buy ammunition for it, but I never got around to it."

Brown looked at the Englishman in pitying astonishment.

"Well, I'll be—"

Jane sat down on an upended suitcase and burst into laughter. "Forgive me,

Tibbs, but really it's too funny," she cried.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Brown. "We'll put Tibbs on guard tonight and if he sees a lion he can throw that thing at him. It ain't any good for nothing else."

"I don't see how you can laugh, Jane," said Kitty. "Suppose a lion should come. Tibbs, you should have brought ammunition. It is very careless of you."

"It doesn't make any difference, Kitty, for as far as a lion is concerned, that pistol is just as effective empty as it would be loaded."

"I know we are all going to be killed," moaned Kitty. "I wish I were back in the ship; it's much safer there."

"Don't worry," said Jane; "the boma will be some protection, and we will keep a fire going all night. Most beasts are afraid of a fire; they won't come near one."

Late in the afternoon, a shelter had been completed with two compartments, one for the women and one for the men. It was a very crude affair, but it provided some shelter from the elements and it induced a feeling of security far greater than it warranted, for it is a fact that if we can hide in something, however flimsy, we feel much safer than we do in the open.

While the shelters and boma were being built, Jane busied herself with another activity. Kitty had been watching

her for some time, and finally her curiosity got the best of her.

"What in the world are you doing, dear?" she asked, as she watched Jane shaping a small branch with the hand axe.

"I am making weapons—a bow and arrows, and a spear."

"Oh, how perfectly wonder—I mean, isn't it ducky? It's just like you, my dear, to think of archery; it will help us to pass the time away."

"What I am making will help us obtain food and defend ourselves," replied Jane.

"Oh, of course!" exclaimed Kitty; "how perfectly silly of me, but when I think of archery I always think of little

arrows sticking in the straw target. They are so colorful, my dear—I mean, the way they are painted. I recall such beautiful pictures of young people in sport clothes, of green turfs, and sunshine against a background of lovely trees. But who do you suppose ever thought of using bows and arrows to hunt game? I'm sure it must be original with you, my dear; but it's very clever of you, if you can hit anything."

Toward the middle of the afternoon Jane had completed a very crude bow and half a dozen arrows, the tips of which she had fire- hardened.

Her work completed, she stood up and surveyed the camp. "You are getting along splendidly," she said. "I'm going

out to see what I can rustle for supper. Have you a knife, Brown? I may need one."

"But, my dear, I mean you're not going out there alone?" cried Kitty.

"Sure she's not," said Brown. "I'll go along with you, Miss."

"I'm afraid," said Jane, with a smile, "that where I am going, you couldn't follow. Here, let me have your knife."

"I reckon I can go anywhere you can go, Miss," said Brown, grinning.

"Let me have the knife," said Jane. "Why it's a nice big one! I always did like to see a man carrying a man-sized knife."

"Well, if we are ready," said Brown,

"let's start."

Jane shook her head. "I told you, you couldn't follow me," she said.

"Want to lay a little bet on that?"

"Sure," said Jane. "I'll bet you a pound sterling against this knife that you can't keep up with me for a hundred yards."

"I'll just take you up on that, Miss," said Brown; "let's get going."

"Come ahead, then," said Jane. And with that, she ran lightly across the clearing, leaped for a low hanging branch and swinging herself into the trees was out of sight in an instant.

Brown ran after her, seeking to catch a glimpse of her from the ground, but he

was soon floundering in heavy undergrowth.

It didn't take him long to realize that he was beaten, and rather crestfallen he returned to the camp.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the princess. "Did you ever see anything like it? It was perfectly wonderful. I mean, it really was; but I am so afraid something will happen to her out there alone. Alexis, you should not have permitted it."

"I thought Brown was going with her," said Alexis. "If I had known that he was afraid, I would have gone myself."

Brown eyed Alexis with contempt too deep for words as he returned to his work on the shelter.

"I should think anyone would be afraid to go out there," said Annette, who was helping Brown thatch the roof with large leaves. "Lady Greystoke must be so very brave."

"She's sure got guts," said Brown; "and did you see the way she took to them trees? Just like a monkey."

"Just as though she had lived in them all her life," said Annette.

"Do you really think she can kill anything with her bow and arrows?" asked Tibbs; "they look so—er—ah inadequate, if I may make so bold as to say so."

"Say," said Brown, "she's not the kind that would go out there if she didn't know what she was doing. I thought all

the time, until just before we crashed, that she was another one of them silly society dames that had never had anything in her noodle heavier than champagne bubbles; but believe me I take my hat off to her now; and you can believe me, when I take orders from a dame she's got to be some dame."

"Lady Greystoke is a very remarkable woman," said Alexis, "and a very beautiful one. Kindly remember also, Brown, that she is a lady, a member of the English nobility, my man; I resent the lack of deference you show by referring to her as a dame, and saying that she has guts. I know you Americans are notoriously ill-bred, but there is a limit to what I can stand from you."

"Yeah?" inquired Brown; "and what are you going to do about it, you damned pansy?"

"Alexis, you forget yourself," said the princess. "You should not stoop to quarrel with an employee."

"You're darned tootin', lady," said Brown. "He better not stoop to quarrel with this bozo; I'm just laying for an excuse to push in his mush."

Annette laid a hand upon Brown's arm. "Please, Mr. Brown," she said, "do not quarrel. Is it not bad enough as it is, that we should make it worse by always quarreling among ourselves?"

Brown turned and looked at her quizzically; then he covered her little hand with his. "I guess you're right,

girlie, at that. I'll lay off him, if he'll lay off me." He closed his hand on hers. "I guess you and me's going to hit it off O.K. kid."

"Hit what off, Mr. Brown?"

"I mean, we're going to be pals!" he exclaimed,

"Pals? What are they?"

"Buddies—friends. I thought you savvied English."

"Oh, friends; yes, I understand that. I should like to be friends with Mr. Brown. Annette likes to be friends with everyone."

"That's all right, baby, but don't be too promiscuous, for I have a feeling that I'm going to like you a lot."

The French girl cast her eyes down coquettishly. "I think, Mr. Brown, we had better get along with our work, or we shall have only half a roof over our heads tonight."

"O.K. kiddo, but we'll talk about this friendship business later— there ought to be a full moon tonight."

After she left the camp, Jane moved rapidly and silently through the trees paralleling the little stream which she tried to keep in view while she searched for a place where the signs indicated the beasts were accustomed to come to drink.

A light breeze was blowing in her face, bringing faintly various scent spoors to her nostrils, which, while not

as sensitive as those of her mate, were nevertheless far more sensitive than those of an ordinary civilized person. Jane had learned long ago that senses may be developed by training, and she had let no opportunity pass to train hers to the fullest of her ability.

Now, very faintly, she caught the suggestion of a scent that set her nerves to tingling with that thrill which only the huntsman knows. Quarry lay ahead.

The girl moved even more cautiously than before; scarcely a leaf stirred to her passage, and presently she saw ahead that which she sought—a small, harnessed antelope, a bush buck, which was moving daintily along the trail just ahead of her.

Jane increased her speed; but now more than ever it was imperative that she move silently, for the little animal below her was nervous and constantly alert. At the slightest unusual sound, it would be gone like a flash.

Presently she came within range, but there was always intervening foliage that might deflect her arrow.

Patience is the most important asset of the jungle hunter, and patience she had learned from Tarzan and from her own experiences.

Now the antelope halted suddenly in its tracks and turned its head to the left; at the same instant Jane was aware of a movement in the underbrush in that direction. She saw that she could wait

no longer; already something had startled her quarry. There was a small opening in the foliage between her and the antelope. Like lightning, she drew her bow; the string snapped with a whang and the shaft buried itself deep in the body of the antelope behind its left shoulder. It leaped high into the air and fell dead.

Jane had reason to suspect that something else was stalking the antelope; but she could see nothing of it, and the turn in the trail had resulted in a cross-wind that would carry the scent of the creature away from her.

She knew that it was a risky thing to do; but she was hungry, and she was aware that all her companions were

hungry; they must have food, for a cursory examination of the baggage had revealed the fact that besides some sandwiches which had already been eaten, their stock of provisions consisted of a few chocolate bars, six bottles of cognac and two of Cointreau.

Trusting to luck and pinning her faith in her speed, Jane dropped lightly to the trail and ran quickly to the fallen animal.

She worked rapidly, as Tarzan had taught her to work. Slitting its throat to let it bleed, she quickly eviscerated it to reduce the weight; and as she worked, she heard again those stealthy sounds in the underbrush not far distant along the back trail.

Her work completed, she closed the

knife and slipped it into her pocket; then she raised the carcass of the little antelope to her shoulder. As she did so, an angry growl shattered the silence of the jungle; and Sheeta, the leopard, stepped into the trail twenty paces from her.

Instantly Jane saw that it would be impossible to escape with her kill, and resentment flared high in her bosom at the thought of relinquishing her prey to the savage cat.

She felt reasonably sure that she could save herself by taking to the trees and leaving the carcass of the antelope to Sheeta, but a sudden anger against the injustice of this contretemps impelled her to stand her ground and caused her to

do a very foolish thing.

Dropping the antelope, she strung her bow and pulling it back to the full limit of her strength she drove an arrow straight at the breast of Sheeta.

As it struck, the beast voiced a horrifying scream of pain and rage; then it charged.

To those in the camp, the cry sounded almost human.

"Sapristi! What was that?" cried Alexis.

"Mon Dieu, it was a woman's scream!" exclaimed Annette.

"Lady Greystoke!" said Brown, horrified.

"Oh, Alexis, Alexis! Annette!" cried

the princess; "My smelling salts, quick; I am going to faint."

Brown seized the puny hand axe and started in the direction of the sound.

"Oh, where are you going?" cried Kitty. "Don't leave me, don't leave me."

"Shut up, you old fool," snapped Brown. "Lady Greystoke must be in trouble. I am going to find out."

Tibbs pulled his empty pistol from his pocket. "I'll go with you, Mr. Brown," he said; "we can't let anything happen to Milady."

10. ABDUCTION

When Ydeni refused to lead him to the village of the Kavuru, Tarzan was neither surprised nor disappointed. He knew men and especially savage men and the numerous taboos that govern their individual and tribal lives. He would have preferred to have gone to the chief of the Kavuru with one of his own people whom Tarzan had befriended; but if this were impossible, he was at least no worse off than he had been before he had met Ydeni. And he was confident that no matter how brutal or savage the man might be, he was probably not without a spark of gratitude for the service Tarzan had rendered him.

"If I came as a friend," said Tarzan,

"surely there could be no harm in that."

"The Kavuru have no friends," replied Ydeni. "You must not come." The ape-man shrugged. "Then I shall come as an enemy."

"You will be killed. You saved my life; I do not wish you to be killed, but I could not prevent it; it is the law of the Kavuru."

"Then you kill the girls that you steal?" demanded the ape- man.

"Who says that the Kavuru steal girls?"

"It is well known among all people. Why do you do it? Have you not enough women of your own?"

"There are no Kavuru women,"

replied Ydeni. "The rains have come and gone as many times as there are fingers and toes upon four men since there was a Kavuru woman—since the last one gave her life that the men of the Kavuru might live."

"Eighty years since there have been women among you?" demanded the ape-man. "That is impossible, Ydeni, for you are still a young man, and you must have had a mother; but perhaps she was not a Kavuru?"

"My mother was a Kavuru, but she died long before the last woman. But I have told you too much already, stranger. The ways of the Kavuru are not as the ways of lesser people, and they are not for the ears of lesser people. To

speak of them is taboo. Go your way now, and I will go mine."

Convinced that he could get no more information from Ydeni, Tarzan took to the trees; and a moment later was lost to the sight of the Kavuru. Purposely he had gone toward the west so that Ydeni would be deceived into thinking that he was not on the right trail toward the Kavuru country. However, he did not go far in that direction; but quickly doubled back toward the spot where he had left the white savage; for he was determined that if Ydeni would not lead him willingly to his village, he should do so unknowingly.

When Tarzan had returned to the spot where he killed the lion, the Kavuru was

no longer there; and assuming that he had gone toward the north, his pursuer set off in that direction. After pursuing a northerly course for a short time, Tarzan realized that there were no indications that his quarry had come this way.

Quickly he started a great circle in order to pick up the scent spoor.

For an hour he ranged through forest and open glade before, at last, Usha, the wind, carried to his nostrils the scent spoor of Ydeni; and when at last he came upon the object of his search Tarzan was perplexed, for the Kavuru was moving due south.

Tarzan reasoned that Ydeni might be doing this to throw him off the trail, or perchance he had misinformed him as to

the location of the Kavuru village; but he was sure now that if he clung tenaciously to the trail, Ydeni would eventually lead him to his goal.

Back over the long trail he had come since he had escaped from the village of Udalo, the chief, Tarzan dogged the footsteps of his quarry; yet never once was Ydeni aware that he was being followed, though oftentimes he was plainly visible to the ape-man.

Tarzan found it interesting to study this strange creature whose very existence was tinged with mystery. He noted the weapons and the ornaments of Ydeni and saw that they differed from any that he had ever seen before. He was particularly interested in the slender

fiber rope that was wrapped many times around the Kavuru's waist; for of all the savages in the jungle, as far as Tarzan knew, he alone used a rope as a weapon. He wondered just how Ydeni would use it.

Late one afternoon, when Tarzan knew they must be approaching the village of the Bukena, he was surprised to see Ydeni take to the trees, through which he moved with considerable agility and speed, though in no respect to compare with those of the Lord of the Jungle.

He moved with the utmost wariness, stopping often to listen intently. Presently he uncoiled the rope from about his waist, and Tarzan saw there

was a running noose in one end of it.

Now Tarzan heard voices ahead of them; they came faintly as from a great distance. It was evident that the Kavuru heard them, too, for he slightly changed his direction to bear more in that from which the voices came.

Tarzan was keenly interested. The attitude of the man in front of him was that of the keen hunter, stalking his prey. He felt that one mystery was about to be cleared up.

In a short time, the Kavuru came to the edge of a clearing and halted. Below him, working in the small fields, were a number of women. Ydeni looked them over; presently he espied a girl of about fifteen and made his way to another tree

nearer her.

Tarzan followed, watching intently every move of the Kavuru. He heard him voice a strange call, so low that it must barely have reached the ears of the girl. For a moment she paid no attention to it; and then presently she turned and looked with dull, uncomprehending eyes toward the jungle. The sharpened stick with which she had been cultivating the maize dropped from her limp hand.

Ydeni continued to voice that weird, insistent call. The girl took a few steps in the direction of the jungle; then she paused; and Tarzan could almost sense the struggle that was going on within her breast to overcome the mysterious urge that was drawing her away from the

other women; but Ydeni's voice was insistent and compelling, and at last she again moved listlessly toward him. She moved as one in a trance, with staring eyes fixed on Ydeni.

Now the Kavuru retreated slowly deeper into the forest, calling, always calling to the helpless girl that followed.

Tarzan watched; nor did he make any effort to interfere. To him, the life of the black girl was no more than the life of an antelope or that of any other beast of the jungle. To Tarzan, all were beasts, including himself, and none with any rights greater than another, except that which he might win by strength or cunning or ferocity.

Much more important than the life of

the black girl was the possibility of fathoming the mystery that had always surrounded the disappearance of girls supposed to have been taken by the Kavuru.

Ydeni lured the girl deeper into the forest, halting at last upon a broad limb.

Slowly the girl approached. It was evident that she was not the master of her own will. The weird, monotonous droning chant of the Kavuru seemed to have numbed all her faculties.

At last, she came directly beneath the tree and the branch where Ydeni crouched. Then the man dropped his noose about her.

She made no outcry, no protest, as he tightened it and drew her slowly up

toward him; nor ever once did the chant cease.

Removing the rope from about her, he threw her limp body across one of his broad shoulders and turning, started back in the direction from which he had come.

Tarzan had watched the abduction of the girl with keen interest, for it explained the seeming mystery of the disappearance of so many other young girls during past times.

He could readily understand the effect that these mysterious disappearances would have upon the superstitious minds of the natives; yet it was all very simple except the strange, hypnotic power of the Kavuru. That was not at all clear to him.

He wondered how the natives had come to connect these disappearances with the Kavuru, and the only reasonable explanation seemed to be that in times past some exceptionally tenacious relatives had prosecuted their search until they had come by accident upon the abductor and his prey and so learned the identity of the former without ascertaining the method he had used to achieve his ends.

Feeling no responsibility in the matter, Tarzan was not moved by any impulse to rescue the girl, his only concern now being to follow Ydeni back to the village of the Kavuru, where he was confident he would find Muviro's daughter, Buira, if she still lived.

Ydeni kept to the trees for hours, until he must have been reasonably certain that he had passed beyond the point where possible pursuers would be likely to search, since they had no trail to follow. Then he came to the ground; but he still carried the girl, who lay across his shoulder as one dead.

On and on he plodded, apparently tireless; and in the trees just behind him followed Tarzan of the Apes.

It was very late in the afternoon when the Kavuru halted. He carried the girl into a tree then, and tied her securely to a branch with the same rope that had snared her. Leaving her, he departed; and Tarzan followed him.

Ydeni was merely searching for food;

and when he found some edible fruits and nuts, he returned with them to the girl.

The hypnosis which had held her in its spell for so long was now relinquishing its hold upon her, and as Ydeni approached her she looked at him with startled eyes and shrank away when he touched her.

Releasing her bonds, he carried her to the ground and offered her food.

By this time, full consciousness had returned; and it was evident that the girl was aware of her plight and the identity of her abductor, for an expression of utter horror distorted her features; and then she burst into tears.

"Shut up," snapped Ydeni. "I have not

hurt you. If you give me no trouble, I shall not hurt you."

"You are a Kavuru," she gasped in horror-laden tones. "Take me back to my father; you promised him that you would not harm any member of his family."

Ydeni looked at the girl in surprise. "I promised your father?" he demanded. "I never saw your father; I have never spoken to one of your men."

"You did. You promised him when he liberated you from the hut in which Udalo had you bound. Udalo would have killed you; my father, Gupingu, the witch-doctor, saved you. Because of that you made the promise."

This recital made no impression upon Ydeni, but it did upon the grim and silent

watcher in the trees above. So this was the daughter of Gupingu. Apparently Fate was a capricious wench with a strange sense of humor.

Knowledge of the identity of the girl gave a new complexion to the affair. Tarzan felt that by accepting his freedom at the hands of Gupingu he had given the witch-doctor passive assurance that his daughters would be safe from the Kavuru. It was a moral obligation that the Lord of the Jungle could not ignore; but if he took the girl from Ydeni and returned her to her people, he would be unable to follow the Kavuru to his village. However, with a shrug he accepted the responsibility that honor seemed to lay upon him.

Now he devoted himself to a consideration of ways and means. He could, of course, go down and take the girl by force, for it never occurred to him that any creature, least of all man, might be able to prevent him from having his way; but this plan he scarcely considered before discarding it. He did not wish Ydeni to know that it was he who took the girl from him, since he realized the possibility of Ydeni being useful to him in the event that he reached the village of the Kavuru, for after all he had saved the man's life; and that was something that only the lowest of beasts might forget.

He waited therefore to see what disposal Ydeni would make of the girl

for the night, for he had it in mind now to take her by stealth; and if that failed, the likelihood of Ydeni recognizing him would be greatly lessened after dark; and so he waited, patient as any other beast of prey that watches for the propitious moment to attack.

Seeing that she would be unable to move the Kavuru by her pleas, the girl had lapsed into silence. Her brooding eyes glowered sullenly at her captor. Fear and hate were reflected in them.

Darkness was approaching rapidly when the Kavuru seized the girl and threw her roughly to the ground. She fought like a young lioness, but Ydeni was powerful and soon overcame her. Then he deftly bound her hands behind

her back and trussed her legs so tightly that she could scarcely move them. Terrified, she lay trembling.

"Now," he said, when he had finished, "you cannot run away. Ydeni can sleep; you had better sleep; we have a long march tomorrow, and Ydeni will not carry you."

The girl made no reply. The man threw himself upon the ground near her. A silent figure moved stealthily closer in the trees above them. It was very dark and very quiet. Only the roar of a distant lion, coming faintly to their ears, gave evidence of life in the jungle.

Tarzan waited patiently. By the man's regular breathing, he knew that Ydeni slept; but his slumber was not yet deep

enough to satisfy the ape-man.

A half hour passed, and then an hour. Ydeni was sleeping very soundly now, but the girl had not yet slept. That was well; it was what Tarzan wished for.

He bent low from the branch where he lay and spoke to the girl in a low whisper. "Do not cry out," he said. "I am coming down to take you back to your people."

Very gently he lowered himself to the ground. Even the girl beside whom he stood did not know that he had descended from the trees. He stooped over her with a sibilant caution on his lips.

The girl was afraid; but she was more afraid of the Kavuru, and so she made no

outcry as Tarzan raised her to his shoulder and carried her silently along the jungle trail until he could take to the trees with less likelihood of arousing Ydeni.

At a safe distance from the sleeping man he paused and cut the girl's bonds.

"Who are you?" she whispered.

"I am the man that Udalo would have killed and that your father set free," replied the ape-man.

She shrank back. "Then you are a Kavuru, too," she said. "I am no Kavuru. I told them that, but they would not believe me. I am Tarzan of the Apes, chief of the Waziri whose country lies many marches toward the rising sun."

"You are a Kavuru," she insisted; "my

father said so."

"I am not, but what difference does it make if I take you back to your father?"

"How do I know that you will take me back?" she demanded. "Perhaps you are lying to me."

"If you'd rather," said the ape-man, "I will set you free now; but what will you do here alone in the jungle? A lion or a leopard will surely find you; and even if one did not you might never find your way back to your village, because you do not know in what direction the Kavuru carried you while you were unconscious."

"I will go with you," said the girl.

11. "SEVENTY MILLION DOLLARS"

Brown and Tibbs followed the game trail in the direction of the uncanny scream that had startled the camp. "Milady!" shouted Tibbs. "Milady, where are you? What has happened?"

Brown quickly forged ahead of Tibbs who had not run a hundred feet in ten years. "Yes, Miss!" he bellowed, "where are you?"

"Here, follow the trail," came back the answer in clear, unshaken tones. "I'm all right; don't get excited."

Presently Brown came in sight of her. She was withdrawing the last of three arrows from the carcass of a leopard,

and just beyond her lay the eviscerated carcass of an antelope.

"What the—what's all this?" demanded Brown.

"I just killed this bush-buck," explained Jane, "and Sheeta here tried to take it away from me."

"You killed him?" demanded Brown. "You killed him with your arrows?"

"Well, I didn't bite him to death, Brown," laughed the girl.

"Was it him or you that let out that yell?"

"That was Sheeta. He was charging; and when my first arrow struck him, he didn't seem to like it at all."

"And one arrow settled him?" asked

the pilot.

"I let him have two more. I don't know which one stopped him. All three went into his heart."

Brown wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "By golly," he said, "I've got to take my hat off to you, Miss."

"Well, you can put it back on, Brown, and pack that antelope back to camp. I'll like that a whole lot better."

Tibbs had come up and was standing in wide-eyed astonishment gazing at the dead leopard. "If I may make so bold, Milady, I might say that it's most extraordinary. I would never have believed it, Milady, upon my honor, I wouldn't. I never thought those little arrows would kill anything bigger than a

bird."

"You'd be surprised, Tibbs," said Jane.

"I am, Milady."

"Do we take the cat back to camp, too?" asked Brown.

"No," replied Jane. "Saving the pelt is too much of a job; and, besides that, Princess Sborov would probably collapse with fright at sight of it."

The pilot picked up the carcass of the antelope, and together the three returned to camp.

Annette was standing wide-eyed, awaiting them. She breathed a sigh of relief when she saw that all three had returned safely.

"Oh," she cried, "you really got something to eat. I am so hungry."

"Where are the prince and princess?" demanded Jane.

Annette snickered, and pointed toward the shelter. "As soon as Brown and Tibbs left, they ran in there and hid," she whispered.

Almost immediately the prince appeared. He was very white, and he was also very angry. "You men had no right running off and leaving this camp unguarded," he snapped. "There's no telling what might have happened. Hereafter, see that both of you are never absent at the same time."

"Oh, Lord, give me strength," groaned Brown. "I am long suffering, but I can't

stand much more of this bozo."

"What's that?" demanded Alexis.

"I was just going to say that if you ever shoot off your yap in that tone of voice to me again, I'm going to make a king out of you."

"What?" demanded Alexis, suspiciously.

"I'm going to crown you."

"I suppose that is another weird Americanism," sneered the prince; "but whatever it is, coming from you, I know it is insulting."

"And how!" exclaimed Brown.

"Instead of standing around here quarreling," said Jane, "let's get busy. Brown, will you and Tibbs build a fire,

please. Alexis, you can cut up the antelope. Cut five or six good-sized steaks, and then Annette can cook them. Do you know how to grill them over an open fire, Annette?"

"No, Madame, but I can learn, if you'll just show me once."

The princess emerged from the shelter. "Oh, my dear, whatever have you there?" she demanded. "Oh, take it away; it's all covered with blood."

"That's your supper, Kitty," said Jane.

"Eat that thing? Oh, don't; I shall be ill. Take it away and bury it."

"Well, here's your chance to reduce, lady," said Brown, "because if you don't eat that, you ain't going to eat nothing."

"How dare you, Brown, intimate that you would even think of keeping food away from me?" demanded the princess.

"I ain't going to keep no food away from you. I'm just trying to tell you that there ain't no food except this. If you won't eat this, you don't eat, that's all."

"Oh, I never could bring myself—really, my dear, how it smells."

Less than an hour later, the princess was tearing away at an antelope steak like a famished wolf. "How perfectly thrilling," she took time out to remark. "I mean, isn't it just like camping out?"

"Quite similar," said Jane, drily.

"Terrible," said Alexis; "this steak is much too rare. Hereafter, Annette, see that mine are quite well done."

"You take what you get, playboy, and like it," said Brown. "And hereafter don't use that tone of voice in speaking to Annette or anyone else in this bunch."

Tibbs was very much embarrassed. He always was when what he considered a member of the lower classes showed lack of proper deference to one of what he liked to call the aristocracy. "If I may make so bold as to inquire, Milady," he said, addressing Jane in an effort to divert the conversation into another channel, "might I ask how we are going to get out of here and back to civilization?"

"I've been thinking a lot about that myself, Tibbs," replied Jane. "You see, if we were all in good physical

condition, we might follow this stream down to a larger river when eventually we would be sure to come to a native village where we could get food and employ guides and carriers to take us on to some settlement where there are Europeans; or, failing in that, we could at least hire runners to carry a message out for us."

"I think that is a splendid idea, Milady; I 'ope we start soon."

"I doubt that we could all stand the hardships of a long trek," said Jane.

"I suppose you mean me, my dear," said the princess, "but really I am very fond of walking. I remember I used to walk a mile every morning. That was before dear Mr. Peters passed on. He

insisted upon my doing it; he was such an athletic man himself. He played golf every Wednesday afternoon. But after he went, I gave it up; it hurt my feet so."

"We could build a litter," suggested Alexis. "I have seen pictures of them in the cinema. Brown and Tibbs could carry the princess."

"Yeah?" demanded Brown, "and who'd carry you?"

"Oh, I think that would be just wonderful, I mean, I think that would solve every problem!" exclaimed Kitty. "We could build the litter large enough for two and then we could both ride."

"Why not a four-passenger job?" demanded Brown; "and then Tibbs and I could carry you all."

"Oh, no," exclaimed the princess. "I'm afraid that would be much too heavy a load for you."

"The fellow is attempting to be facetious, my dear," said Alexis; "but certainly there is no reason why they could not carry you."

"Except only one," said Brown.

"And pray, what is that?" asked Kitty. "I mean, I see no reason why you and Tibbs should not carry me."

"It's absolutely out of the question, Kitty," said Jane, with some asperity. "You simply don't know what you're talking about. Two men could not carry anyone through this jungle; and no matter what you may think, you wouldn't last an hour if you tried to walk."

"Oh, but my dear Jane, what am I going to do—stay here forever?"

"One or two of us will have to go out and look for help; the others will remain here in camp. That is the only way."

"Who's going?" asked Brown, "me and Tibbs?"

Jane shook her head. "I'm afraid Tibbs couldn't make the grade," she said; "he's never had any experience in anything of this sort, and anyway he'd be very much more useful in camp. I thought you and I should go. We know something about Africa, and how to take care of ourselves in the jungle."

"I don't know about that," said Brown. "I don't see how both of us can go and leave these people. They are the most

helpless bunch of yaps I've ever seen."

The Sborovs showed their resentment of Brown's blunt appraisal, but they said nothing. Tibbs appeared shocked, but Annette turned away to hide a smile.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," continued the pilot. "You stay here and take care of these people and run the camp. I'll go out and look for help."

"I wouldn't trust him, Jane," said Alexis. "If he once got away, he'd never come back; he'd leave us here to die."

"Nonsense," snapped Jane. "Brown is perfectly right in saying that both of us should not leave you. None of you is experienced; you couldn't find food; you couldn't protect yourselves. No; one of us will have to stay; and as I can travel

faster through the jungle than any of you, I shall go out and look for help."

There were several protesting voices raised against this program. Alexis sat regarding the girl through half-closed lids; he seemed to be appraising her; the expression in his eyes was not pleasant. Presently he spoke.

"You shouldn't go alone, Jane," he said. "You're right in saying that I couldn't be of much help around the camp. I'll go with you; you should have someone to protect you."

Brown laughed, a very rude and annoying laugh. The princess looked shocked and startled.

"Why, Alexis," she cried, "I am surprised that you would even suggest

such an impossible thing. Think of Jane's reputation."

It was now Jane's turn to laugh. "My dear Kitty," she cried, "don't be ridiculous. Of course, I don't intend to let Alexis go with me, but not for the reason that you suggest. When one's life is at stake, one may ride rough-shod over conventions."

"Naturally," agreed the prince.

"Well," said the princess, definitely, "Alexis may go; but if he goes, I go with him."

"That's right," said Alexis, "you got us into this mess; and now you're trying to put obstacles in the way of our getting ourselves out of it. If it were not for you, we could all leave together; and as for

that, if it hadn't been for you and your American pilot, we wouldn't be in this fix now."

"Oh, Alexis," sobbed the princess, "how can you be so cruel to me? You don't love me any more."

He shot a contemptuous glance at her, and turned and walked away. There was an uncomfortable silence that was finally broken by Jane.

"I shall leave in the morning," she said, "very early. Do you think, Brown, that you could provide food for these people while I am away?"

"I reckon I can if they're light eaters and ain't particular what they eat," he replied, with a grin.

"Do you know which plants and fruits

are edible and which are unsafe?" she asked.

"I know enough of the safe ones to get by on," he said, "and I'll leave the others alone."

"That's right; be very careful about what you eat and drink." Brown grinned. "We won't have much to be careful about."

In the growing coolness of the jungle night, the warmth of the beast-fire was pleasant; and most of the party remained around it, only Alexis, moody and sullen, holding aloof. He stood in the opening of the men's shelter, glowering at the figures illuminated by the fire. His dark eyes rested upon his wife, who sat with her back toward him; and his

expression at this time that he was free from observation was marked with loathing. The thoughts that were passing through his petty brain were not lovely thoughts. In the outer rim of the light from the fire, he looked what he was, a small, cheap grafter who had suddenly become sinister and dangerous.

And then his eyes moved on to Jane and his expression changed. He licked his full, weak lips—lips that were flabby and repulsive.

His gaze wandered again to his wife. "If it were not for you," he thought —"seventy million dollars—I wish I were out of here— that fellow, Brown; I'd like to kill him—Annette's not so bad looking —seventy million dollars—

Paris, Nice, Monte Carlo—the old fool—Jane is beautiful—I suppose the old fool will live forever—dead, dead, dead—seventy million dollars."

Over by the fire, Jane was arranging for the guarding of the camp by night. "I think three four-hour shifts will be long enough," she said. "It's just a matter of keeping the fire going. If any animals come around, you'll be able to see their eyes shining in the dark. If they come too close, light a brand and throw at them. They are all afraid of fire."

"Oh, my dear, do I have to do that?" cried Kitty. "I never could, really, I mean, do I have to sit out here alone at night?"

"No, my dear," said Jane, "you'll be

excused from guard duty. How about you, Annette? Do you think you could do it?"

"I can do my share, Madame," said the girl, "whatever the others do."

"Atta girl," said Brown.

"If I may make so bold as to suggest it, Milady," said Tibbs, deferentially, "I rather think the three men should stand guard. It's no job for a lady."

"I think Tibbs is perfectly right," said the princess. "And I really think that Alexis should not stand guard; he's a very susceptible person to colds; and night air always affects him; and now I think that I shall go to bed. Annette, come and help me."

"You'd better turn in, too, Miss," said

Brown. "If you're going to start out early in the morning, you'll need all the sleep you can get." Jane rose. "Perhaps you're right," she said. "Good night."

When she had gone, Brown glanced at his watch. "It's nine o'clock now, Tibbs. Suppose you stand guard until midnight, then wake me, and I'll take it until three. After that, his nibs, the grand duke, can watch until morning."

"Really, Mr. Brown, if you mean the prince, I rather fawncy he won't be caring to stand guard."

"Well, he's going to," said Brown, "and he's going to like it."

Tibbs sighed. "If it weren't for the princess," he said, "we wouldn't have to stay here at all. I don't fawncy staying

here and just waiting. I'm sure something terrible will happen to us if Lady Greystoke leaves us. She's the only one that can do anything."

"Yes," said Brown, "the old girl is a damned nuisance. You might bump her off, Tibbs." Brown grinned, rose, and stretched. "I'll be turning in, Tibbsy. Wake me at midnight."

Sborov was sitting in the entrance of the shelter which was only a few steps from the fire and as Brown entered, he spoke to him. "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with Tibbs," he said. "I am perfectly willing to do my share. Call me at three, and I will stand guard. I'm going to bed now. I am a very sound sleeper, and you may have

difficulty in waking me."

The change in the man's tone and attitude so surprised Brown that for once he had no reply to make. He merely grunted as he passed on into the shelter. Sborov followed and lay down, and in a few moments Brown was fast asleep.

It seemed to him when Tibbs woke him at midnight that he had not slept at all.

He had been on guard but a few minutes when Annette joined him. She came and sat down beside him.

"What the dickens are you doing up this time of the morning, girlie?" he demanded.

"Something awoke me about half an hour ago," she said, "and I haven't been

able to get back to sleep. I don't know what it could have been, but I awoke with a start; and I had a feeling that there was someone crawling around inside the hut. You know, it's really very dark in there after the curtain is hung up in front of the door."

12. MURDER IN THE NIGHT

"Maybe it was Lady Greystoke you heard moving around in the hut," suggested Brown. "No," said Annette, "I could hear her breathing. She was sound asleep."

"Then it must have been the old girl."

"It was not she, either. After I woke up, I heard her sort of groaning in her sleep and snoring I guess it was, but she stopped right away."

"Then I guess you must have been dreaming, girlie," said Brown.

"Perhaps I was," said the girl; "but some unusual sound must have awakened me, for I sleep very soundly; and I was

sure that I heard someone afterward."

"Perhaps you had better go back and go to sleep again now," he suggested.

"Really, Mr. Brown, I couldn't. I am so wide awake; and then I—I felt funny in there, as though—oh, I don't know." She lowered her voice to a whisper. "It was as though there were something terrible in there, something that frightened me. You don't mind my staying out here with you, do you, Mr. Brown?"

"I'll say I don't, girlie. You and Lady Greystoke are about the only human beings in the bunch. The rest of 'em are nuts."

"You do not like them, Mr. Brown?"

"Oh, the old girl's harmless; she's just

a nuisance; and Tibbsy means well, I guess; but when it comes to doing anything more than pressing somebody's pants, he just ain't all there."

"And the other one?" inquired Annette. "I think you do not like him so much."

"Him? He's the last zero after the decimal point."

"No, I do not like him, either, Mr. Brown. I am afraid of him."

"Afraid of him? What you got to be afraid of him about?"

"In London he say things to me a man should not say to a nice girl."

"Well, the dirty so and so," growled Brown. "If he ever makes any cracks at

you again, honey, let me know. Say, I'd spill him all over the ground and then wipe him up with himself."

"You would protect me, Mr. Brown?" She raised her dark eyes to his, questioningly.

"And how!"

The girl sighed. "You are so beeg and strong."

"You know," said Brown, "I like you a lot, girlie."

"I am glad. I think I like you, too."

Brown was silent for a moment. "If we ever get out of here," he said, presently, and then stopped.

"Yes?" she inquired. "If we ever get out of here, what?"

He fidgeted uneasily, and threw another piece of wood on the fire. "I was just thinking," he said, lamely.

"What were you thinking?"

"I was just thinking that maybe you and me—that may—"

"Yes?" she breathed, encouragingly.

"Say, you don't have to call me Mr. Brown."

"What shall I call you?"

"My best friends call me Chi."

"What a funny name; I never hear a name like that before. What does it mean? It is not really your name?"

"It's short for the name of the town where I come from—Chicago," he explained.

"Oh," she laughed, "then you spell it C-h-i and not S-h-y. I think maybe you should spell it the last way."

"I ain't never been accused of being shy before," he said, "but I guess you're right. When I try to say things to you, my tongue runs out on me."

"What funny expressions you use. You Americans are all so funny."

"Oh, I don't know," he said; "it's the foreigners that seem funny to me."

"Am I funny?"

"Well, you got some funny little ways with you, but when you pull them, they're cute."

"You think so? I am glad that you do, Mr. Brown."

"Chi."

"Chi. Have you another name? Maybe that would be easier to say."

"Yep. My real name's Neal."

"That's a nice name."

"So's Annette. I'm crazy about Annette."

"You like the name?"

"Yes, and the girl, too—I like the girl a lot." He reached over and took her hand and drew her toward him.

"No, you must not do that," she said sharply, and pulled away; and then suddenly she cried out, "oh, look, look," and pointed.

Brown looked up in the direction that she indicated. Blazing against the dark

background of the forest were two yellow-green points of flame.

Annette moved quickly toward him and pressed against his side. "What is it?" she whispered in a frightened voice.

"Don't be scared, honey; it's only looking at us. That won't hurt us none."

"What is it?" she demanded.

"I've seen cow's eyes shine like that in the dark," he said; "it might be a cow."

"But you know it's not a cow. There are no cows in the jungle. You just say that so that I will not be frightened."

"Well, now that you mention it, maybe there ain't no cows in the jungle; but whatever it is, I'm going to frighten it

away." He stooped over and gathered a stick from the fire; one end of it was blazing. Then he stood up and hurled it at the burning eyes.

There was a shower of sparks, an angry growl, and the eyes disappeared.

"That fixed him," he said. "See how easy it was?"

"Oh, you are so very brave, Neal."

He sat down beside her; and this time, he boldly put an arm about her.

She sighed and snuggled closer to him. "A nice girl should not do this," she said, "but it make me feel so safe."

"You never was less safe in your life, girlie," said Brown.

"You think the eyes will come back?"

she asked, with a shudder.

"I was not thinking about eyes, girlie."

"Oh."

It was long after three o'clock before Brown thought to awaken Sborov. When the prince came into the firelight, he was nervous and ill at ease.

"Did you see or hear anything during the night?" he asked.

"Something came up and looked at us," said Brown; "but I threw some fire at it, and it beat it."

"Everything all right in camp?" he asked.

"Sure," said Brown, "everything's O.K."

"I slept so soundly that anything might

have happened," said the prince. "I never knew a thing from the time I lay down until you awakened me."

"Well, I guess I'll go tear off a few yards myself," said the pilot, "and you better go back in and try to get some sleep, girlie."

They walked together the few paces to the shelter. She shuddered a little. "I hate to go back in there," she said. "I do not understand why, but I just dread it."

"Don't be silly," he said. "There ain't nothing going to hurt you. That dream got your nanny."

"I do not know what is my nanny," she replied, "and I am not so certain it was a dream."

"Well, you run along like a good girl;

and I'll sleep with one eye open. If you hear anything, call me."

It was daylight when Brown was awakened by a piercing scream from the adjoining shelter.

"My word!" exclaimed Tibbs. "What was that?" But Brown was already on his feet and running to the women's quarters. He saw Sborov standing by the fire, ashen-grey in the morning light. His lower jaw drooped loosely; his eyes were staring, fixed upon the hut in which the women slept.

Brown collided with Annette, who was running from the hut as he started to enter.

"Oh, Neal," she cried, "it was no dream. Something horrible happened in

there last night."

He brushed past her and went into the hut. Jane was standing in horrified silence, gazing down at the Princess Sborov.

"God!" exclaimed Brown. Kitty Sborov was dead, her skull split wide.

"How horrible," breathed Jane. "Who could have done this thing?"

Tibbs joined them. He remained silent and unmoved in the face of this gruesome discovery, always the perfect servant.

"Where is the prince?" asked Jane.

"He was on guard," said Brown. "He was standing there by the fire when I came in."

"Somebody will have to tell him," she said.

"I reckon it won't be no news to him," said Brown.

Jane looked up at him quickly. "Oh, he couldn't!" she cried.

"Well, who could, then?" demanded the pilot.

"If you wish, Milady," suggested Tibbs, "I will inform his 'ighness."

"Very well, Tibbs."

The man stepped out into the open. The prince was still standing gazing at the hut; but when he saw Tibbs coming toward him, he gathered himself together.

"What's the matter in there?" he

asked. "What was Annette screaming about?"

"Something has happened to her 'ighness—she's—she's dead."

"What?—Who?—It can't be possible. She was quite all right when she went to bed last night."

"She has been murdered, your 'ighness," said Tibbs, "oh, so 'orribly!"

"Murdered!" He still stood where he was, making no move to approach the hut. He watched Jane and Brown emerge and come toward him.

"It is horrible, Alexis," said Jane. "I can't imagine who could have done it, nor why."

"I know who did it," he said,

excitedly. "I know who did it and I know why."

"What do you mean?" demanded Jane.

Alexis pointed a trembling finger at Brown. "Last night I heard that man tell Tibbs to kill her. One of them must have done it, and I don't believe that it was Tibbs."

"Prince Sborov, I don't believe that it was either one of them," said Jane.

"Ask Tibbs if he didn't tell him to kill her," cried Sborov.

Jane looked questioningly at Tibbs.

"Well, Milady, Mr. Brown did suggest that I 'bump her off'; but it was only by way of being a joke, Milady."

"How was she killed?" asked the

prince.

Jane looked puzzled. "Why—why, it must have been with the hatchet. Where is the hatchet?"

"Find the hatchet, and you'll have the murderer," said Sborov.

"But suppose he threw it away?" asked Jane.

"He couldn't have thrown it away. I've been on guard here since three o'clock, and nobody entered your part of the shelter after Annette went in after I came on guard. Whoever did it, probably hid it."

"It happened before you went on guard," said Annette. "It happened before Mr. Brown went on guard. It was that that awakened me; I know it now;

and when I thought she was moaning in her sleep and snoring, she was really dying —it was the death rattle. Oh, how horrible!"

"Just when was that, Annette?" asked Jane.

"It was while Tibbs was on guard and about half an hour before Mr. Brown went on. I couldn't get back to sleep, and I went out and joined him. I sat up with him until he awoke the prince."

Jane turned to Tibbs. "Was Mr. Brown asleep when you went in to wake him at midnight?" she asked.

"Yes, Milady," replied Tibbs.

"How do you know?"

"Well, I could tell by his breathing for

one thing; and then I had difficulty in arousing him."

"He might have feigned that," said Sborov.

"Was the prince asleep when you went in there, Tibbs, to awaken Brown?"

"He seemed to be sound asleep, Milady. I carried a burning brand in for a torch. I could see them quite distinctly."

"He was asleep, and I was pretendin' to be, I suppose," said Brown.

"Find the hatchet," said Sborov.

"Well, suppose you find it," retorted Brown. "I don't know where it is."

"Tibbs says that both of you were

asleep. That leaves Tibbs and Annette and me under suspicion," said Jane.

"There ain't no sense to that way of figuring," said Brown. "We all know that you and Annette didn't have nothin' to do with it; so you two are out. I know damned well that I didn't do it, and I'm just about as sure that Tibbs didn't; so that puts it up to the only one in the bunch that would profit by the old woman's death."

"You'd profit as much as any of us," pointed out Sborov, sullenly. "You knew that your life was at stake, that if you didn't get out of here very soon you might never get out. You knew and you said that my wife was all that made it impossible for us to start together

tomorrow. I can see your whole line of reasoning, my man. You felt that the princess could never get out of here, anyway; and so you just hurried matters along by killing her yourself."

"All right, Sherlock Holmes, you've got it all figured out, haven't you? But what are you going to do about it?"

"Find the hatchet," repeated Sborov.

"All right," said Jane. "You men go in the women's part of the shelter and search, and Annette and I will search your part."

Sborov followed Jane to the door of the men's hut. "I cannot go in there where she is," he said, "I want to remember her as she was when I last saw her—alive."

Jane nodded. "Help us search here,

then," she said.

There was really no place to search except among the litter of grasses that the men had used as beds.

Jane searched the pile upon which Alexis had slept, while Alexis took Tibbs' and Annette poked around in those belonging to Brown. Presently the girl's hand came into contact with something cold and hard. She stiffened as her fingers touched it, as though by intuition she knew what it was. With a shudder she withdrew her hand. For a moment she remained very quiet and tense. She was thinking rapidly. Then she arose to her feet. "There is nothing here," she said.

Sborov glanced up at her quickly.

"There is nothing here, either," said Jane.

"I can find nothing in Tibbs' bed," said Alexis; "but perhaps, Annette, you did not search Brown's bed carefully enough. Let me see."

She took a step toward him as though to prevent the search. "What is the use?" she said. "It is not there; it's just a waste of time to look again."

"Nevertheless, I shall look," said Alexis.

Sborov stooped and slipped his hand in among the grasses. He did not have to search long. "Here it is," he said. "I don't see how you could have missed it, Annette," he added, with a sneer. "You must have had your own reasons."

He withdrew the hatchet from among the grasses and held it up to their view. The head was smeared with blood.

"Are you satisfied now, Jane?" demanded the prince.

"I can't believe it of Brown," she said.

"But you could have believed it of me?"

"Frankly, Alexis, yes."

"Well, you've got plenty of proof now as to who did it. What are you going to do about it? The fellow ought to be destroyed."

"Who ought to be destroyed?" demanded Brown. He and Tibbs were standing in the doorway.

"The hatchet was found in your bed, Brown," said Jane. "The prince has it; as you can see, it is covered with blood."

"Oh, so you planted that thing in my bed, did you, you lousy little runt? Trying to frame me, eh?"

"I do not understand your talk," said Alexis. "I only know what I heard you say last night and what I found in your bed. Tibbs has already corroborated my report of what you said, and Lady Greystoke and Annette saw me find the hatchet in here right where you had hidden it."

Brown looked from one to another with a questioning expression in his eyes. Could it be that these people believed that he had done this thing? He

realized that what slender evidence was at hand pointed to him.

"Well," he said, "don't get it into your heads that you're going to hang me."

13. TREACHERY

The little band of Waziri warriors under Muviro had moved steadily westward since their encounter with Tarzan. The ten moved silently along a winding jungle trail; there was no song nor laughter; and when they spoke, which was seldom, their tones were low, for they were in a country strange to them, with the temper of whose people they were not familiar. They moved warily, every sense alert.

Some time during this day they hoped to contact the Bukena, the people who lived nearest to the Kavuru; and here they hoped to have word of Tarzan of the Apes.

Presently, above the subdued noises

of the jungle, they heard the excited chattering of a monkey above them; and a moment later a familiar little figure swung downward through the trees.

"It is Nkima," said Muviro. "The big bwana must be near."

Little Nkima jabbered with excitement. He leaped to the shoulder of Muviro and jumped up and down, screaming and chattering. He leaped to the ground and ran ahead very fast, jabbering excitedly in his high, little voice, as he continually looked back at them. He would run ahead until a bend in the trail threatened to hide them from his view; then he would run back and tug at Muviro's legs before starting off again at great speed.

"Something is wrong," said one of the warriors to Muviro. "Little Nkima is trying to tell us."

"He wants us to hurry," said Muviro; "perhaps something has happened to the big bwana." Then he broke into a trot, his fellows following close behind; but still Nkima ran ahead always urging them to greater speed.

Members of a warrior clan that is trained from childhood in feats of endurance, the Waziri could maintain for hour after hour a pace that would soon exhaust an ordinary man.

Their smooth, ebony bodies glistening with sweat, their broad chests rising and falling to their unhurried breathing, their supple muscles rolling easily, they

presented a splendid picture of primitive savagery, to which a note of barbaric color was added by anklets and armlets of strange design, their weapons, their shields, and the flowing white plumes that surmounted their heads.

Here, indeed, were men, the very sight of whom would have instilled respect, and perhaps fear, in the hearts of any strange tribesmen who might see them.

And thus it was, when breaking from the jungle into a clearing, little Nkima still in the lead, they burst upon the view of a score of women working in the fields before the village of Udalo, chief of the Bukena.

With terrified cries of warning, the

women fled for the village gate.

Bukena warriors inside the kraal seized their weapons and ran to meet their women; and as the rearmost of the latter entered the village, the warriors made haste to close the gate behind them; and as some attended the gate, others manned the barbette inside the palisade over the top of which they could loose their arrows upon an enemy.

At the sight of the village and the fleeing women, Muviro had halted his warriors. He saw the hostile attitude of the Bukena, but he attributed it to the fact that they did not know whether he came in peace or war.

Nkima was very much excited. He waved his hands and jabbered loudly; he

was trying so hard to make them understand that his master was a captive in the village. It was always a mystery to Nkima that these gomangani could not understand him. It seemed that no one could understand him except his cousins, brothers, and sisters, and his beloved Tarzan. Everyone else must be very stupid.

Muviro left his companions at a short distance from the village and advanced slowly toward the palisade, making the sign of peace that the villagers might know that they did not come with hostile intent.

Udalo, the chief, standing upon the barbette, looked down upon the approaching warrior and his

companions. He knew that these were indeed fighting men; and while there were only ten of them he was glad to see the peace sign, for there might be many others back in the forest and this only an advance guard.

As Muviro halted at the foot of the palisade and looked up, Udalo addressed him.

"Who are you? What do you want?" he demanded.

"I am Muviro, chief of the Waziri. We have come here to meet our big chief, Tarzan of the Apes, or to get word of him. Has he been here?"

Gupingu, the witch-doctor, was standing beside Udalo. Searing his heart was the memory of a secret he dared tell

no one—the secret of the release of Tarzan upon his promise that the Kavuru would not steal the daughters of Gupingu; and yet almost immediately Naika, his favorite daughter, had been stolen.

Gupingu was confident now that not only was Tarzan a Kavuru, but that it was he who had come back to steal Naika. Resentment and hatred burned in the breast of Gupingu. He recalled that Tarzan had said that he was a Waziri; and, assembling all the facts as he knew them, he conjectured that the Waziri were either the vassals or the allies of the Kavuru.

"Do not trust them, Udalo," he said to the chief; "they are the people of the

Kavuru who escaped us. He has sent them back here to be revenged." Scowling down upon Muviro, Udalo thought quickly.

He would like to be revenged upon the Kavuru but he feared reprisals; and, too, he did not know but what there might be a large body of them back in the forest. The truth or falsity of this he must ascertain before he could make any definite plans.

Annoyed because he had received no answer, Muviro spoke again, this time impatiently. "We come in peace," he said, "to ask a question. Is Tarzan, our master, here?"

"There," whispered Gupingu to Udalo, "he admits that the Kavuru is his

master."

"He is not here," said Udalo; "we know nothing of him, and I do not know that you come in peace."

"You are not speaking true words," said Muviro. "Little Nkima, the monkey, is Tarzan's friend. He brought us here, and he would not have done so had Tarzan not been here."

"I did not say that Tarzan had not been here," retorted Udalo; "I say that he is not here, and that I know nothing of him. I do not know where he went after he left here.

"If—"

"We do not fear ten men," said Udalo! "The ten may enter the village; then we may talk. If you come in peace, you will

do this; if you do not do it, Udalo will know that you have come to make war. As you can see, he has many warriors. We are not afraid of you, but we do not want war."

"We have come in peace," replied Muviro, "but warriors do not lay aside their weapons. If you have so many brave warriors, why should you fear ten men?"

"We do not fear ten men," said Udalo; "the ten may enter and bring their weapons, but the rest of your warriors must not approach the village."

"There are no others with us," said Muviro. "We are alone."

This was the information that Udalo wished. "You may come in," he said; "I

will order the gates opened." Then he turned and whispered to Gupingu.

Muviro signalled for his men to approach. The gates swung open, and they entered the village of the Bukena.

Udalo and Gupingu had left the barbette and gone together toward the chief's hut. They were whispering volubly with many gesticulations, Gupingu explaining, Udalo assenting and giving orders. At the chief's hut they separated, Udalo remaining to await the coming of the visitors, while Gupingu hastened to his own hut.

As the Waziri entered the village street, they were surrounded by warriors and conducted to the hut of the chief, where Udalo awaited them.

Here commenced one of those long palavers so dear to the hearts of African natives. With endless circumlocution they iterated and reiterated, and in the end nothing had been said by Udalo other than that Tarzan was not in his village and that he knew nothing whatsoever about him; nor did he know anything concerning the Kavuru or the location of their village, none of which Muviro believed.

And while the palaver progressed, Gupingu was busy in his hut grinding herbs and boiling them in water to extract their juices. He constantly muttered and mumbled to himself, but it is doubtful that he was chanting an incantation over the mess that he was

brewing and for the same reason that he did not lay out amulets before him or make passes over the brew with magic sticks or the tail of a zebra—he had no audience.

While the Bukena warriors and their visitors palavered and Gupingu concocted his brew, the women were busy preparing a feast at the orders of Udalo; and in the trees beyond the clearing, a little monkey waited, whimpering and desolated—waited for the release of his master whom he thought to be still confined in a hut in the village.

At last Gupingu left his hut, carrying his brew in a small gourd, and made his way directly to the women who were

preparing the native beer for the feast.

The women were already filling the gourds that would be passed around among the warriors. Gupingu went to the one who was filling the large ceremonial gourd that would be passed first to the chief and then to the visitors. They held a whispered conversation and then Gupingu walked away, leaving behind him the small gourd containing his brew. He approached the palaver from the rear of the Waziri, and catching Udalo's eye he nodded. Then the chief clapped his hands and ordered the feast served.

The women came, bringing food and drink; and in the lead was one carrying the ceremonial gourd of native beer.

Udalo took it from her and in silence

raised it to his lips. His throat moved, as in the act of swallowing; but none of the liquor passed his lips; then he passed it to Muviro, who took a long drink and handed the gourd to the Waziri next beside him; and so it passed among them all, but when the last of the ten had drunk, the woman was waiting to take the gourd, though it was not yet empty, and the other women brought other gourds of beer to the Bukena warriors; nor did Muviro nor any of his companions suspect that anything was wrong, for had they not seen Udalo drink from the same gourd as they?

Now food was brought, but Muviro did not partake of it. He was looking, strange and glassy-eyed, at his fellow

Waziri. What had gone wrong with his eyes? Everything was blurred. He saw his men sitting there with stony stares, their bodies weaving drunkenly; then Muviro, the chief of the Waziri, staggered to his feet. He seized his long knife and drew it from his loin-cloth. "Kill!" he cried. "We have been poisoned." Then he lurched and fell.

Several of the remaining Waziri tried to rise; but the brew of Gupingu worked quickly and well; and though the Bukena warriors had leaped to their feet at a word from Udalo, following Muviro's command to his followers, their ready spears were not needed, as one by one the Waziri collapsed upon the ground.

The Bukena gazed in astonishment

upon this strange sight, for only Udalo and one woman knew what Gupingu had done.

The witch-doctor leaped among the fallen Waziri and beat his chest.

"The medicine of Gupingu is strong," he said. "It lays low the enemies of the Bukena; even the great Kavuru it lays low."

"Kill!" shouted a woman, and others took up the refrain. "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

"No," said Udalo. "Bind them securely so that they cannot escape and put them in the hut where the other Kavuru was confined. I shall send runners to the other villages of the Bukena; and when the moon is full on the second night, we shall dance and feast

and eat the hearts of our enemies."

Shouts of approval met this announcement, as warriors fell to the work of binding the prisoners and carrying them to the hut where Tarzan had been confined.

In a tree at the edge of the jungle, a little monkey sat gazing disconsolately at the gates of the village. He brightened momentarily when he saw some warriors emerge; lithe young men these, who started off at a brisk gait in different directions; but they were not his beloved Waziri, and he sank again into despondency.

It was many hours before the Waziri recovered from the effects of the narcotic. After they commenced to

regain consciousness it was some little time before they could realize their plight. Their heads ached and they were very sick. When they tried to move, they discovered that they were fast bound.

"I knew," said Muviro, after they were able to talk among themselves, "that the chief lied to me. I should have been more careful. I should not have drunk his beer or allowed you to."

"I saw him drink it, and so I thought it was safe," said another.

"He only pretended to drink it," said Muviro. "This Udalo is a very bad man."

"What do you think he will do with us?"

"I do not think," said Muviro; "I know."

"And what do you know?"

"I have heard about these Bukena. I have heard that while they are not cannibals, they do eat the hearts of their enemies, thinking that this will make them brave, for they are great cowards."

"They will eat our hearts?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"That we may not know until we are led out; but if we see that they are preparing for a great feast, we shall know that our end is near."

"And we must lie here and be slaughtered like goats?"

"If one of us can loosen his bonds, we may die as Waziri should— fighting,"

replied Muviro.

"If only the big bwana could know," said a young man; "he would save us."

"I think perhaps that the big bwana is already dead," said Muviro. "I think that Udalo has killed him, and eaten his heart; and if that is so, I am ready to die, too; for I do not care to live if the big bwana be dead."

"Nor I," said another. "I am so sick and my head hurts so, that I shall be glad to die."

Night came, but no one approached the hut to bring them water or food. They were very miserable, and Muviro was chagrined to think that he had been led into such a trap. He was ashamed of himself, and he felt that only death could

atone for his great fault.

Miserable as they were, however, there was one even more miserable— a little monkey that shivered and trembled in a tree beyond the clearing that surrounded the village of Udalo, the Bukena. He heard the roar of Numa, the lion, and the cry of Sheeta, the leopard; and he climbed as high as he dared and hung there shivering and trembling waiting for the thing that he knew was about to leap upon him and devour him. For such was the life of little Nkima.

14. NKIMA FORGETS

Naika, the daughter of Gupingu, the witch-doctor, accompanied her new captor because the only alternative was to be left alone in the jungle, a prey not only to wild beasts but to the numerous demons that infest the grim forest. At first, she momentarily expected the worst; but as time went on and no harm befell her, she gained confidence in the tall, bronzed warrior who accompanied her. Eventually all fear of him vanished.

But if she were no longer afraid of Tarzan, she was far from being without fear; for the jungle night was very black and she conjured in that Stygian gloom all manner of horrifying creatures lying in wait to spring upon her. She could not

understand how he traveled so surely through the darkness, and she marvelled at his great courage.

She knew that few men are so brave, and therefore it occurred to her that he must be a demon.

Here, indeed, was an adventure, one that she, Naika, could boast about as long as she lived; for had she not traveled at night through the jungle with a demon? She should have liked to ask him point-blank, but of course there was always the danger of offending a demon. Perhaps if she questioned him adroitly, he might accidentally reveal the truth.

It took quite a little will-power to screw up her courage to the point where she might ask him any question at all; but

finally she succeeded. "What country are you from?" she asked.

"I am from the land of the Waziri."

"What sort of men are they?"

"They are black men."

"But you are white."

"Yes," he replied, "but many years ago, when I was much younger, I was adopted into the tribe."

"Have you ever met a demon?" she asked.

"No, there are no such things."

"Then you are not a demon?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes."

"Then you are not a Kavuru?"

"I told you I am from the land of the Waziri. When you are back among your

people, tell them that Tarzan of the Apes is not a Kavuru. Tell them also that he rescued you from the Kavuru, and that they must always be friends with Tarzan and the Waziri."

"I will tell them," said Naika; and, after a moment, "I am very tired."

"We will stop here the rest of the night," said the ape-man.

Picking her up, he carried her high among the trees until she was very much afraid; and when he set her down upon a branch she clung frantically to the bole of the tree.

Here the moon was filtering through the foliage, and it was much less dark than on the ground. In this semi-light, Tarzan cut branches and built a platform

upon which Naika could lie during the night.

In the early morning, Tarzan gathered food for himself and the girl; and after they had eaten, they resumed their journey toward the village of the Bukena.

Feeling that she was approaching her home, and with all her fears dissipated, Naika's spirits rose. She laughed and chatted happily; and so at last they came to the edge of the clearing that encircles the village of the Bukena.

"You are safe now, Naika," said the ape-man. "Return to your people and tell them that Tarzan of the Apes is not their enemy." Then he turned and disappeared into the forest, but not before a pair of

sharp little eyes had seen him; and as Naika ran shouting toward the gates of the village, little Nkima swung through the trees screaming at the top of Ms voice, as he pursued his lord and master into the forest.

The diminutive monkey soon overtook the ape-man, and with a final ecstatic yelp leaped to one of his broad shoulders.

Tarzan reached up and took the little fellow in his hand. "So Nkima is back again," he said; "Sheeta did not get him."

"Nkima is not afraid of Sheeta," boasted the monkey. "Sheeta came into the trees hunting for little Nkima; crouching, he crept; he came close. Little Nkima took a stick and beat Sheeta on

the head. Sheeta was afraid, and ran away."

"Yes," said Tarzan, "little Nkima is very brave."

Thus encouraged, the monkey became enthusiastic and still more imaginative. "Then came the gomangani, many gomangani; they were going to kill little Nkima and eat him. Little Nkima took two sticks and beat them on the head. They were afraid; they ran away."

"Yes," said Tarzan, "everyone is afraid of little Nkima."

Nkima stood up in the palm of Tarzan's hand and beat his chest. He grimaced, showing his teeth, and looked very fierce. "Everyone is afraid of Nkima," he said.

Back along the trail to the north, in search of the village of the Kavuru went Tarzan and Nkima; and in the village of the Bukena Naika was the center of an admiring and curious throng.

She told her story well, omitting nothing, adding considerable embroidery; it was a good story and it held her listeners spellbound. She told it many times, for the blacks like repetition; and always she stressed the fact that Tarzan had saved her, that he was the friend of the Bukena and that they must never harm Tarzan or the Waziri; and at that time she did not know that ten Waziri lay bound in a nearby hut waiting for the orgy that would spell their doom.

The Bukena warriors looked at one another and at Udalo, their chief. Udalo was slightly disconcerted; his runners had long since reached their destinations, and by this time the inhabitants of several villages must be on their way toward his kraal. Udalo did not know what to do about it.

Gupingu was troubled, too. He realized now that the giant white, whom he had liberated, had not stolen his daughter as he had thought, but had rescued her and returned her to him. Udalo looked at him questioningly, but Gupingu did not know what to say.

At last the chief spoke, for he saw the question in the eyes of his warriors. "You said, Naika, that you thought this

Tarzan of the Apes was a demon; you said that he was fearless in the dark, and that he did things that no man could do; you said also that he went through the trees even more easily than the Kavuru. All these things we believe, but we could not believe them if we knew that he were a man like ourselves. He must therefore be a demon. None but a demon could have escaped from his bonds and left the village as easily as he did."

"If he were a demon, why did he save me from the Kavuru and return me to the village?" demanded Naika.

"The ways of demons are strange," said Udalo. "I think that he wanted to make our fears dead, so that he could come safely into our village and harm us

as he pleases. No, I am sure that he is a demon and a Kavuru, and that the prisoners we have taken are Kavuru. We shall not let them escape; they might come back and kill us, and furthermore the Bukena are coming from every village to dance and feast and eat the hearts of our enemies."

Thus did the highest court of the Bukena uphold itself and place its final seal upon the death warrant of Muviro and his warriors.

Through the brooding forest, moving northward, went the Lord of the Jungle, ignorant of the impending fate of his people; and on his shoulder rode Nkima, his little mind fully occupied with his boasting and the present.

Short is the memory of Manu, the monkey. Great is his egotism and his selfishness. Little Nkima had not meant to forget the Waziri; they were his friends and he loved them.

But being wholly occupied with thoughts of himself and with relief at being safe again in the arms of his master, the plight of the Waziri had been crowded into the background of his consciousness. Eventually he would think of them again, but perhaps only after it was too late to be of any benefit to them.

And so the afternoon was half gone, and Nkima was happy, and Tarzan was satisfied; for once again he was on the trail of the Kavuru, concerning whom his

curiosity had been intrigued by his brief contact with Ydeni and the suggestion of mystery that Kavuru's few words had lent to the manners and customs of this strange and savage tribe.

Tarzan had not forgotten the Waziri; but his mind was at rest concerning them for he felt that now, because of his rescue of Naika, they would be welcomed in the village of Udalo and directed on their way toward the Kavuru country.

The ape-man seldom spoke unless that which he had to say warranted expression. Ordinarily he kept his thoughts to himself, especially in the presence of men; but he often relaxed with little Nkima and with Tantor, the

elephant, for of such were the friendships of his childhood; and deep-rooted within him was the sense of their loyalty and sympathy.

Thus it happened that while he was thinking of the Waziri, he spoke of them to Nkima. "Muviro must be close to the village of the Bukena," he said; "so he and his warriors will not be far behind us when we reach the village of the Kavuru. Then little Nkima will have many good friends to defend him from Sheeta, the leopard, and from Hista, the snake, and from all the gomangani who would catch and devour him."

For a moment Nkima was silent. He was gathering his thoughts and his memory. Then suddenly he began to leap

up and down upon Tarzan's shoulder and screech in his ear.

"What is the matter with you, Nkima?" demanded the ape-man. "Are your brains chasing one another around in your head? Stop screaming in my ear."

"Tarzan, the Waziri! the Waziri!" cried the little monkey.

Tarzan looked quickly around. "What of them?" he demanded. "They are not here."

"They are there," cried Nkima. "They are back there in the village of the gomangani. Their feet and their hands are wrapped with cord; they lie in the hut where Tarzan lay. The gomangani will kill them and eat them."

Tarzan halted in his tracks. "What are

you saying, Nkima?" he demanded, and then as best he could in the simple language that is common to the greater apes, and the lesser apes, and the little monkeys, and to their cousin Tongani, the baboon, and to their friend Tarzan, he narrated all that he had witnessed since he had met the Waziri in the forest.

The ape-man turned about then, and started back toward the village of the Bukena. He did not ask Nkima why he had not told him this before because he knew full well; nor did he scold the little monkey, nor reproach him, for he knew that it would do no good. Little Nkima would always be a monkey; he was born that way, and he would never have the mind of a man, even though in many

other respects he was more admirable than man.

The sun had not been long down when Tarzan came to the village. From a tall tree at the edge of the clearing, he looked down at the scene beyond the palisade. He saw that there were many people there, many more than there had been before; and he guessed that they were gathered for a feast. But his knowledge of the customs of the blacks told him that it would not be this night. Doubtless they were awaiting others that would come upon the morrow; perhaps then the feast would be held, and he guessed that the Waziri were being saved for sacrifice at that time.

When boldness is necessary, the ape-

man acts boldly. No spirit of bravado animates him; and when no emergency confronts him, his acts reflect only the caution and stealth of the wild beasts who, impelled by instinct, avoid all unnecessary risks and dangers.

Tonight he reasoned that if the Waziri were already dead he could accomplish nothing by boldly entering the kraal of the Bukena; if they were still alive there was little likelihood that they would be harmed before the following night; but if he were wrong, and this night were the night set for their destruction, he would know it in ample time; for they would he brought out into the open where they would be tortured and killed for the edification of the assembled Bukena.

Then he would have to do something about it; in the meantime, he would go closer where he could see and hear what transpired in the village.

"Tarzan goes into the village," he whispered to Nkima. "If Nkima comes, he will make no noise. Does Nkima understand?"

"No noise, no talk," repeated the monkey.

Moving quietly through the trees, Tarzan circled the village; and close beside him, silent as he, moved little Nkima.

At last the two came opposite the rear of the kraal. That part of the village seemed dark and deserted, for all were congregated in the wide street before the

hut of Udalo, the chief.

Tarzan dropped to the ground and moved toward the palisade. When a few paces from it, he sprang swiftly forward, leaped into the air, and ran up the barrier with all the agility of little Nkima, who followed close behind him. Then the two dropped silently into the shadows among the huts in the rear of the village.

Creeping stealthily, noiseless as the shadow of a shadow, the two crept toward the hut of the chief. Separated biologically by countless ages, one a little monkey, the other a peer of England, yet there was little difference in the way they passed through the night and swung nimbly into the tree that overshadowed Udalo's hut.

As Tarzan looked down at close range upon the dancing, shouting blacks, he realized that they had been partaking too freely of their native beer; and he knew that under such circumstances anything might happen.

A big black, half drunk, was haranguing Udalo. The man was evidently a sub-chief from another village.

"Bring out the Kavuru," he said; "let us have a look at them; we'll give them a taste of what they are going to get tomorrow night."

"The others are not here," said Udalo; "we should wait for the rest of the tribe."

"Bring them out," demanded another; "we have not seen them; we want to see

the Kavuru who steal our girls."

"Bring them out," shrieked a woman. "They stole my daughter; let me burn out their eyes with a red-hot coal, that they may suffer as I have suffered."

Then Tarzan heard the voice of a child. "Do not harm the Waziri," she said; "they are the friends of Tarzan, and Tarzan is a friend of the Bukena. He saved me from the Kavuru and brought me back to my village."

"You cannot trust the Kavuru or a demon," said Udalo. He turned to some of his warriors. "Bring the prisoners," he said, "but see that they are not killed tonight."

Already Tarzan of the Apes was on the ground behind the hut of the chief.

Here was an emergency. Every danger, every risk, must be faced without hesitation, boldly, after the manner of the Lord of the Jungle.

He moved quickly to the hut where he had been confined; and as he stooped and entered it, his sensitive nostrils told him that the Waziri were there.

"Silence," he whispered; "it is I, Tarzan. They are coming for you. I will cut your bonds. We will fall upon the warriors who come and take their weapons from them; bind and gag them; let them make no noise. Then bring them where Tarzan leads, to the rear of the chiefs hut."

He worked quickly as he talked; and when the three warriors came to fetch

the prisoners, all of them were free and waiting, waiting in silence in the darkness.

15. A BIT OF CLOTH

"Don't get it into your heads that you are going to hang me." There was a challenge in Brown's tone that sounded to Jane like the defiance of a guilty man; and yet she could not believe that it was he who had killed the Princess Sborov.

"We shall hang no one," she said. "We cannot take the law into our own hands; we must all be equally under suspicion until a properly constituted court of law determines our guilt or innocence. There is but one thing to do; we must try to reach the nearest established civilized authority, tell our story, and let the law take its course."

"I quite agree with you, Milady," said Tibbs.

"Well, I don't," grumbled Alexis; "it wouldn't be safe to travel through this lonely country with a murderer who might easily kill all of us and thus dispose of all the witnesses who could testify against him."

"And what do you suggest?" asked Jane.

"That we leave the murderer here, make our way to the nearest post, report the affair, and leave it to the authorities to apprehend the guilty man and arrest him."

Jane shook her head. "But we don't know who the murderer is; in the eyes of the law, we are all equally suspects. No, the only proper thing to do is to find a magistrate or a commissioner, tell our

story and request an investigation."

"Not for me," said Brown. "I wouldn't have a chance in one of these foreign ports. There ain't anybody in Europe got any use for an American anyway, but they sure knuckle down to titles. What chance would an American without money have against a prince with millions? Nix, Miss, there ain't nobody goin' to railroad my neck into a noose!"

"You see, Jane," said Alexis, "he practically admits his guilt. An innocent man would not be afraid to stand trial."

"Listen, Miss," said Brown, turning appealingly to Jane, "I ain't never bumped anyone off yet; but if you don't want another killing around here, make that fool shut up and keep shut up."

"Then you refuse to come with us, Brown?" demanded Jane. "I think you are very foolish."

"I may be foolish, Miss; but I ain't taking no chances with no foreign court. An English court might be all right, but we are not in English territory. No, I came out here with these people in the hopes I could get hold of that formula for perpetual youth. That would be worth millions back home; and now that I am here, I am going ahead and try to find it. I don't know how, but I am going to try."

"There are so few of us," said Jane, "and we are so poorly armed that we really ought to stick together, at least until we contact some friendly natives."

"I didn't plan on leaving you cold,

Miss," said the pilot. "I'll stick until you and Annette are safe."

"I was sure you would, Brown; and now that that's settled, we've something else to do—a very unpleasant duty. The princess must be buried. I guess you men will have to dig the grave."

The only implement they had with which to dig was the hatchet that had been used to kill the princess; and thus a task, sufficiently gruesome in itself, was rendered incalculably more so.

While one of the men loosened the earth with the hatchet, the other two scooped it out with their hands; and while the men were thus occupied, Jane and Annette prepared the body for burial as best they might by wrapping it in

articles of the victim's clothing taken from her baggage.

Annette wept continually; but Jane, even though she felt the loss infinitely more than the little French maid could have, remained dry-eyed. She had work to do, a duty to perform; and she could not permit her personal sorrow to interfere.

When all was in readiness and the body lowered into the grave, Jane recited as much of the burial service as she could recall, while the others stood about with bowed heads, the men uncovered.

"I think," said Jane, when it was all over and the grave filled, "that we had better break camp immediately; no one

will want to remain here."

"Have you any plan?" asked Alexis. "Do you know where we are going?"

"There are only two things we can do," said Jane. "One is to follow this trail toward the west, and the other is to follow it toward the east. The toss of a coin could decide that as intelligently as any of us. Not knowing where we are, it is impossible to know in which direction lies the nearest friendly village. Personally, I should prefer going toward the east because there lies the country with which I am familiar, the country where I have many friends among the natives."

"Then we go to the east," said Brown. "You're boss; what you say goes."

"I doubt the wisdom of your decision, Jane," said Alexis. "The Belgian Congo must lie to the west, if we are not already in it, which I believe; and in that event, we shall strike civilization sooner by going in that direction."

"It's all guess-work at best, Alexis," said Jane. "It really doesn't make much difference which way we go. Let's leave it to a vote. How about you, Tibbs?"

"I—ahem—I beg pardon, Milady, I shall cast my lot with the majority."

"You're a lot of help," said Brown.

"And you, Annette?" asked Jane.

"Oh, if you and Mr. Brown wish to go to the east, I wish to go to the east also."

"That's settled," said Jane; "we go to

the east then."

"I still object," demurred Alexis. "As the financial head of the expedition, the one who has paid and must pay all the bills, I believe that some consideration should be shown my wishes."

"Alexis," said Jane, "you make it very difficult. Like the rest, you will have to follow my orders, or when there is a question, accept the will of the majority. As for financing the expedition, each of us has the necessary wherewithal if we care to use it, and it's not money; it's cooperation and loyalty, courage and endurance."

Alexis had been watching her closely as she spoke, and suddenly his whole attitude changed. "I am sorry, Jane," he

said, "I spoke thoughtlessly. You must understand that I am terribly upset by what has happened. I have lost my dear wife, and I am heart-broken."

Brown turned away disgustedly and held his nose with a thumb and forefinger.

"All right, Alexis," said Jane. "Now Jet's gather up what necessities we can carry and get going."

"How about breakfast?" demanded Brown.

"Oh, I had forgotten all about breakfast," said Jane. "Well, it will have to be bush-buck again."

"I don't believe I can eat a mouthful," said Annette to Brown.

"Oh, yes you can, girlie," replied the pilot; "you gotta eat whether you want it or not. We've probably got a lot of hard days ahead of us and we got to keep up our strength."

"I'll try," she said, "for you."

He squeezed her arm. "And say," he said, "you don't believe I done it, do you?"

"No, Mr. Brown, I do not believe it."

"Aw, can the mister, girlie."

"All right—Neal, but I do not see how he could have done it; I do not see how a man could kill his wife. She was such a nice lady."

"Yeah, she was sort of nuts, but she was all right at that. She was a whole lot

better than him. As a matter of fact, the old dame killed herself."

"What do you mean? How could she kill herself so horribly with a hatchet?"

"Well, she done it all right; she done it when she told him she was going to change her will."

"Oh! What a terrible man."

"I've known of fellows that was bumped off for less than what this guy will get," said Brown. "Back in the land of the free and the home of the brave, you can get it done to almost any guy for a hundred smackers."

"One hundred smackers? What is a smacker? My English, she is not so good."

"I've noticed that, kiddo, but don't worry; I'll learn you."

"Now I must cook the meat for our breakfast," said Annette, "if you will cut off a few slices for me from the hind quarters."

"Sure." He felt in his pockets. "Where's my knife? Oh, yes, I remember," and he turned to Jane. "Say, Miss," he called, "let me have my knife if you are through with it."

"You haven't any knife," laughed Jane, "but I'll loan you mine." Brown rubbed his chin. "That's right; I did lose, didn't I?"

While Annette was cooking the antelope, the others busied themselves selecting such things as they thought they

would need and could carry on the march. Tibbs was busy repacking suitcases under the direction of Alexis. Jane gathered her weapons together and then fastened a small handbag to the belt that supported her shorts. It was such a bag as a woman uses to carry her money, keys, lipstick, and such odds and ends. Other than this and her weapons, Jane selected nothing more than what she wore.

Brown, who was wearing aviator's boots, chose to take along an extra pair of shoes and several pairs of socks. He also crammed the contents of a carton of cigarettes into various pockets and inside his shirt. These things, with a supply of matches, and the fateful hand-

axe, constituted his entire equipment. He knew the bitterness of heavy packs.

As Annette grilled the meat over the coals, her eyes were attracted by something at the edge of the fire, among the cooling ashes. It was a bit of burned fabric to which three buttons remained attached. With a piece of stick, she turned it over. As it had been lying flat on the ground near the edge of the fire, the underneath portion of the fabric was not burned; the color and pattern remained.

A look of recognition entered her eyes; then they half closed in brooding, speculative contemplation of her find.

Brown wandered over toward the fire. "I'll finish the meat," he said; "you

go and gather together what you are going to take."

"I don't know what to take," said the girl. "I can't carry very much."

"Take whatever you need, girlie," he said; "I'll help you carry the stuff. Take extra shoes if you have them and plenty of stockings and a warm wrap. Unless I'm mistaken, we are going to need a lot of shoes and stockings, especially you. Them things you are wearing was never meant to walk in nohow."

"I have two pair of low-heeled shoes," said the girl.

"Then throw them things away and take the low-heeled ones."

"All right," she said; "I'll go and get my things together. While I am gone, you

might like to look at this," and she touched the piece of burned fabric with the stick she was holding.

Brown picked the thing up and looked at it; then he whistled as he raised his eyes to the person of Prince Alexis Sborov. Annette walked away to make up her bundle. Tibbs was still busy packing. Jane was seated on a rotting log, deep in thought. Brown was whistling; he seemed very much pleased about something. Presently he looked up at the others.

"Come and get it," he called.

"Beg pardon," said Tibbs, "come and get what?"

"Chuck," explained Brown.

"'Chuck'!" sneered Sborov.

Jane rose. "I guess we eat," she said, "and after all, I am hungry. I didn't think I should be."

They all gathered around the fire where Brown had laid strips of cooked meat on a little bed of clean twigs close beside the coals.

"Come ahead folks; pitch in," said Brown.

"Tibbs," said Alexis, "you may fetch me a piece not too rare nor too well done—about medium."

Brown looked up in undisguised disgust. He jabbed a stick into a piece of meat and tossed it at Alexis. "Here, Napoleon," he said, "we are sorry we ain't got no gold platters; but the keeper of the imperial pantry ran out on us and

no one else ain't got no key."

Alexis gave Brown a venomous look, but he picked up the sorry- looking piece of meat and took a bite of it.

"This is terrible," he said; "it's burned on the outside and raw on the inside. My stomach will never be able to stand such cooking as this. I shall not eat it."

"Well, ain't that just too bad!" said Brown. "Let's all cry."

"You better eat it, Alexis," said Jane. "You'll get awfully hungry before night."

"Tibbs will prepare my food hereafter," said Alexis haughtily. "I shall eat apart."

"That will suit me," Brown assured him, "and the farther apart, the better."

"Come, come," said Jane, "don't start that all over again; we've had enough of it."

"O.K. Miss," assented Brown; "but there is something I'd like to ask the grand duke. I notice that he's changed his coat. That was a mighty nice coat he was wearing last night, and I thought if he wasn't going to use it no more, I'd like to buy it from him—that is, if nothing ain't happened to it."

Alexis looked up quickly, his face paling. "I do not sell my old clothes," he said. "When I am through with it, I'll give it to you."

"That's mighty nice of you," said Brown. "May I see it now? I'd like to find out if it fits me."

"Not now, my man; it's packed with my other things."

"All of it?" demanded Brown.

"All of it? What do you mean? Of course it's all packed."

"Well, here's one piece 'you forgot, Mister," and Brown held up the charred remnant of the sleeve with the three buttons still remaining on it.

Sborov's face took on a ghastly hue; his eyes stared wildly at the bit of cloth, but almost as quickly he regained his self- possession.

"Some more American humor?" he asked. "That thing doesn't belong to me."

"It looks a powerful like the coat you was wearing last night," said Brown.

"Annette thinks so, too; but Tibbs ought to know; he's your valet. Ever see this before, Tibbs?"

The valet coughed. "I—er—"

"Come over and take a good look at it," said Brown.

Tibbs approached and examined the piece of fabric carefully, turning it over and wiping the ashes from the buttons.

"When did you see that last, Tibbs?" demanded Brown.

"I—really—" He glanced apprehensively at Sborov.

"You're a liar, Tibbs," shouted the prince. "I never had a coat like that; I never saw it before. It's not mine, I tell you."

"Tibbs didn't say nothing," Brown reminded him; "he ain't opened his trap except to say 'I—er.' He never said it was off your coat; but you're going to, ain't you, Tibbs?"

"It looks very much like it, sir," replied the Englishman. "Of course, I couldn't exactly take oath to it, seeing as how it's so badly burned."

Brown turned his gaze upon Alexis. "The blood must have spattered some when you hit her."

"Don't!" screamed Alexis; "my God! don't. I never touched her, I tell you."

"Tell it to the judge," said Brown. "You'd better hang on to that evidence, Annette," he added; "the judge might like to know about that, too."

Alexis had quickly gained control of himself. "It was my coat," he said; "someone stole it out of my luggage; it's what you call in America a frame."

"Let's leave this whole terrible matter to the courts," said Jane; "it's not for us to try to decide, and constantly harping on it only makes our situation all the more bitter."

Brown nodded. "I guess you're right, Miss, as usual."

"Very well, then. If you have all finished eating, we'll start. I've left a note stuck up in the shelter telling about our accident and the direction we are taking, and giving the names of all in the party, just on the chance, the very remote chance, that someone might pass this

way some day— some white hunter who could take our message out in case we never get out ourselves. Are you all ready?"

"All ready," said Alexis. "Tibbs, my luggage."

Tibbs walked over to where his small handbag, a large Gladstone, and two suitcases were stacked.

"Where's your luggage, Jane?" asked Alexis. "Brown could carry that."

"I'm carrying my own," replied Jane, "what little I'm taking."

"But you haven't any," said the prince.

"I am carrying all that I am going to take. We are not traveling de luxe."

They were all standing silently

watching Tibbs trying to gather up the four pieces of baggage so that he could carry them.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but if I may make so bold as to say so, I don't think that I can carry them all."

"Well, let Annette carry that small bag of yours, then. You certainly ought to be able to manage three pieces. I've seen porters carry twice that much."

"Not across Africa," said Jane.

"Well," said Alexis, "I've only brought along what I actually need; I've left nearly all of my stuff behind. Tibbs will have to manage somehow. If Brown were the right sort he'd help him."

Only by the exercise of all his will-power had Brown remained silent; but

now he exploded. "Listen, mister," he said, "I ain't going to carry none of your stuff, and neither is Annette, and if Tibbs does, he's a damned fool."

"I fancy I rather agree with you, Mr. Brown," said Tibbs, and dropped all three of the pieces of baggage.

"What?" demanded Alexis. "You refuse to carry my lug gage? Why, you impudent upstart, I'll—"

"No you won't, sir," said Tibbs; "I know just what you are going to say, sir, if I may make so bold as to say so; but it won't be necessary, sir." He drew himself up haughtily. "I am giving notice, sir; I am leaving your employ now, immediately."

"Lady Greystoke," said Alexis, with

great dignity, "you have assumed command here. I demand that you compel these people to carry my luggage."

"Nonsense," said Jane. "Take an extra pair of shoes and some socks and whatever else you can carry, and come along. We can't waste any more time here."

And thus the unhappy party started upon the trail toward the east. They had had but two guesses; and they had guessed wrong, but fortunately they could not know the dangers and the terrors that lay ahead of them on the trail toward the east.

16. THE MESSAGE

The three Bukena warriors crept into the hut where Tarzan and the ten Waziri warriors lay waiting for them in silence.

As the last of the three entered, Tarzan leaped upon him. Powerful fingers closed about the fellow's throat; and simultaneously the other two were dragged down by Muviro and a couple of his warriors. There was no outcry; there was only the subdued sound of the shuffling feet of struggling men, and that for but a moment.

Quickly the three were bound and gagged; then the Waziri, headed by Tarzan, carried them to the tree beside the chiefs hut, where a corner of the latter concealed them from the sight of

the drunken natives assembled in the street in front.

Shouldering one of the warriors, Tarzan swarmed up into the tree; then after he had deposited his burden safely where it would not fall, the Waziri handed the other two up to him.

Taking his victims up into the denser foliage where they would not be visible from the ground, Tarzan laid them side by side across the huge branch that projected out over the Negroes assembled below.

Tarzan ran his rope through the bonds that encircled the ankles of one of the prisoners. Then he removed the gag from the fellow's mouth and lowered him, head foremost, toward the ground; but

before the fellow's head broke through the foliage and came in sight of those below, Tarzan voiced the warning cry of the bull ape. Instantly the dancing stopped; the natives looked around them in evident terror; the sound was very close; it seemed right beside them, but as yet they had been unable to locate it.

Silence followed; and then the head of one of their fellows broke through the foliage above them, and slowly his body descended.

The blacks were already on the verge of panic, for this was a mysterious, supernatural occurrence for which they could find no explanation in their past experience; yet they hesitated, perhaps fascinated and momentarily incapable of

movement.

The deep voice rang out above them. "I am Tarzan of the Apes. Let those beware who would harm Tarzan or his Waziri. Open the gates and let my people go in peace, or many of you shall die by the hand of Tarzan."

The victim hanging head downward found his tongue. "Open the gates," he screamed. "Let them go before they kill me."

Still the blacks hesitated.

"The time is short," said Tarzan, and then he started to drag the warrior back up into the tree again.

"Do you promise that none of us will be harmed if we open the gates?" demanded Udalo.

"None will be harmed if you open the gates and let us go in peace, returning their weapons to my Waziri."

"It shall be done," said Udalo. "Fetch the weapons of the Waziri; open the gates; let them go, and may they never return."

Tarzan drew the warrior back up into the tree and laid him beside his fellows.

"Keep still," he warned them, "and I shall kill none of you." Then he dropped to the ground and joined the Waziri.

Fearlessly they walked around the end of the hut; and the blacks gave way fearfully, opening a path before them. Some little boys ran timidly forward with their weapons, for the warriors had not dared to do so. The gates were

opened, and Tarzan led his Waziri toward them.

"Where are my three warriors?" demanded Udalo. "You have not kept your word."

"You will find your three warriors alive in the tree above your hut," replied the ape-man. He halted and turned toward the chief. "And now, Udalo, when strangers come to your kraal, treat them well, and especially Tarzan and the Waziri." A moment later the black jungle night beyond the palisade had swallowed them.

Little Naika, the daughter of Gupingu, the witch-doctor danced up and down and clapped her hands. "It is he!" she cried. "It is the white warrior who saved

me. I am glad that he and his Waziri got away before we killed them. I told you not to do it."

"Shut up," cried Udalo, "and go to your hut. I never want to hear that white man spoken of again."

"I thought that it was the end," said Muviro, as they crossed the clearing toward the forest.

"Thanks to Nkima's bad memory, it came very near being the end," replied the ape-man. Then he voiced a strange, weird note; and an answer came from the blackness of the jungle trees.

"He is still there," said the ape-man to Muviro.

"Hurry, hurry," cried the monkey. "Little Nkima is fighting with Sheeta, the

panther; he is beating him on the head with a stick; he is pounding him on the nose. Sheeta is very frightened."

Tarzan grinned and walked on slowly through the forest, and when he came under the first tree, the little monkey dropped down upon his shoulder. "Where is Sheeta?" demanded Tarzan.

"Little Nkima beat him so hard on the face that he ran away."

"Little Nkima is very brave," said the ape-man.

"Yes," replied the monkey, "little Nkima is a mighty fighter, a mighty hunter."

The following day, Tarzan and the Waziri moved slowly toward the north, resting often, for the latter were still

suffering from the effects of the drug that had been administered to them by Gupingu, the witch-doctor. Finally, when Tarzan realized their condition more fully, he ordered a halt; and the party went into camp upon the banks of a river.

As time had never been a matter of consequence to the ape-man, delays, except in cases of immediate emergency, gave him no concern. He could wait there for one day, or two days, or as long as was necessary while his warriors recuperated; nor would he leave them while they needed someone to hunt for them. He made them rest therefore while he foraged for food.

The day after they had left the village

of Udalo, a lone warrior trotted into the clearing and approached the gates of the kraal. The white plume of the Waziri waved above his head; and in his hand he carried a split stick, in the end of which an envelope was inserted.

When warriors met him at the gates, he asked to see the chief; and they took him to Udalo, but not without misgivings; for he bore a marked resemblance to the ten prisoners who had escaped them.

Udalo eyed the warrior sullenly. "Who are you?" he demanded, "and what do you want in the village of Udalo?

"I am a Waziri," replied the man. "I bear a message for the big bwana, Tarzan. The sun has risen many times

since he left his country to come here in search of the Kavuru. I have followed to bring this message to him. Have you seen him?"

"He has been here, but he has gone," said Udalo, sullenly.

"When did he go, and in which direction?" asked the messenger.

"He went away yesterday with ten Waziri warriors. They took the trail toward the north. You will follow him?"

"Yes."

"I will give you food before you go, and when you find Tarzan tell him that Udalo treated you well." The fear of the Lord of the Jungle was in the heart of Udalo, the chief.

It was mid-day of the following day. The Waziri lay resting in their camp beside the river. Tarzan squatted at the base of a tree fashioning arrows for his quiver. Little Nkima perched upon one of his shoulders, busily occupied by that age-old simian pastime of searching for fleas upon his belly. He was vastly contented.

Presently the ape-man raised his head and looked toward the south where the trail debouched upon the clearing where they were encamped.

"Someone comes," he said.

The Waziri stirred themselves. Some of them seized their weapons and started to rise, but Tarzan reassured them.

"There is no danger," he said; "there

is only one. He comes boldly, and not by stealth."

"Who could it be?" asked Muviro. "We have seen no one in all this lonely country since we left the Bukena village."

The ape-man shrugged. "We shall have to wait," he said, "until our eyes tell us, for he is down-wind from us."

Little Nkima, noting the listening attitudes of the others, abandoned the pursuit of a singularly notable specimen and following the example of the Waziri, stared intently toward the south.

"Something comes?" he asked Tarzan.

"Yes."

Little Nkima slipped quickly down

behind Tarzan's back, and peered anxiously across his left shoulder. "Something is coming to eat little Nkima?" he demanded.

He glanced up into the tree behind him, gauging the distance to the lowest branch, and debated in his little mind the wisdom of discretion. However, feeling reasonably safe in his present sanctuary, he stood his ground; and a moment later a lone warrior trotted into the clearing. At sight of the party encamped there, he voiced his pleasure in a series of savage whoops; and the Waziri returned his greeting in kind, for he was the runner bearing a message for Tarzan.

As he came forward with the message in the split stick to deliver it to Tarzan,

little Nkima evinced great interest and as the message was handed to his master he seized the stick and commenced to scold and jabber when Tarzan took the envelope from it.

The ape-man removed the message and dropped the envelope to the ground, whereupon little Nkima sprang upon it and occupied himself in a futile endeavor to make it remain upright on the end of the stick as the messenger had carried it.

The Waziri were looking expectantly at Tarzan as he read the message, for messages delivered in the depths of the forest were rare indeed.

As he read, Tarzan's brow clouded; and when he had finished he turned to

Muviro.

"There is bad news, bwana?" asked the black.

"The mem-sahib left London for Nairobi in an aeroplane," he said; "that was just before the big storm. You remember, Muviro, that after the storm broke we heard an aeroplane circling above?"

"Yes, bwana."

"We thought then that it was in great danger. Perhaps that was the ship in which the mem-sahib rode."

"It went away," Muviro reminded him, "and we did not hear it again. Perhaps it went on to Nairobi."

"Perhaps," said the ape-man, "but it

was a very bad storm and the pilot was lost. Either that, or he was in trouble and looking for a landing place; otherwise he would not have been circling as he was."

For some time Tarzan sat in thought, and then the silence was broken by Muviro. "You will go back at once to Nairobi, bwana?" he asked.

"What good would it do?" asked the ape-man. "If they reached Nairobi, she is safe; if they did not, where might I search? In an hour an aeroplane might fly as far as one could travel on the ground in a day; perhaps, if they had trouble, it flew for many hours after we heard it before it came down; and if the pilot were lost, there is no telling in what

direction it went. The chances are that I should never find it; even if I did, it would be too late. Then, too, it may as easily be that it came down in the direction we are going as in any other direction."

"Then we may continue to search for my daughter, Buira?" asked Muviro.

"Yes," said Tarzan. "As soon as you are rested and well again, we shall go on toward the country of the Kavuru."

Little Nkima was becoming more and more excited and irritable. Notwithstanding all his efforts, the envelope would not remain upright upon the end of the stick. He chattered and scolded, but it availed him nothing; and then Tarzan noticed him, and taking the

stick from him spread the slit end open and inserted the envelope.

Nkima watched him intently, his head cocked upon one side. Tarzan repeated the operation several times, and then he handed the envelope and the stick to Nkima.

An adept in mimicry, the monkey re-enacted all that he had watched Tarzan do; and after a few trials succeeded in inserting the envelope into the end of the stick.

His achievement filled him with enthusiasm and pride. Jabbering excitedly, he leaped from Waziri to Waziri until all had examined the marvel that little Nkima had wrought; nor did his excitement soon subside, and in the

exuberance of his spirits he went racing through the trees clinging tightly to the stick that bore the envelope in its end. Tarzan and the Waziri laughed at his antics.

"Little Nkima is proud because he has learned a new trick," said one.

"He thinks now he is a great witch-doctor among the monkeys," said Muviro.

"It is like many of the useless things that man learns," said Tarzan. "It will never do him nor anyone else any good; but if it makes him happy, that is enough."

For three days more the Waziri rested, and then Muviro said that they were ready to continue on toward the

north.

In the meantime, Tarzan had dispatched the runner back to Nairobi with a message for Jane and also one to the authorities there, asking them to make a search for the ship in the event that it had not already arrived.

Little Nkima was still intrigued by his new accomplishment. He would sit for an hour at a time taking the envelope out of the stick and putting it back in, and he never permitted it out of his possession. Wherever he went, he carried the stick and the envelope with him.

Having been several days in this camp, and having seen no danger, Nkima, always restless, had formed the habit of wandering farther and farther

away. He found some other little monkeys of his own species with whom he tried to make friends; but in this he succeeded only partially; the males bared their teeth and chattered at him, scolding; and sometimes when he came too close, they chased him away. But handicapped though he was by his stick and his envelope, he always succeeded in eluding them; for Nkima was an adept in escaping danger.

But there was one who did not bare her teeth and scold. However, it was difficult for Nkima to find her when there was not an old male hanging around; and old males can be very disagreeable.

This last day in camp, however, he

was more successful; he discovered her some little distance from her fellows.

The young lady was coy; she did not repulse him but she led Nkima a merry chase through the trees. It was all in fun; and they were enjoying it greatly, for she was not really trying to escape from Nkima, nor was he seriously intent upon capturing her, for he knew that eventually she would stop and let him come close.

And so, thoughtless of time or direction or distance, they swung through the trees, a little lady monkey and Nkima with his stick and his envelope.

They had had a glorious time and thoroughly understood one another when the little lady finally came to rest upon a

broad branch. That they might permanently cement this friendship, each was soon searching for what he might find upon the head of the other, and certainly that is almost the last word in intimacy—the final proof of trust and confidence and friendship.

They were very happy, and only once did a shadow momentarily becloud this bliss. That was when the young lady sought to snatch the stick and envelope from Nkima. He bared his teeth in a terrible grimace, and gave her a resounding box on one of her shell-like ears. She lowered her head sheepishly then and cuddled closer to him, and it was plain to see that she liked this dominant male and his cave- man tactics.

What a day for little Nkima! They hunted for fruit and nuts; they ate together; they scampered through the trees; they sat enfolded in each other's arms; and little Nkima was entirely unaware that Tarzan and the Waziri had broken camp and started north again. Perhaps if he had known, it would have made no difference at the moment for the alchemy of love works strange metamorphoses in the minds of its victims.

To their consternation, while they were still far away, night overtook them; and they were afraid to return through the menacing darkness of the glowering forest. They were afraid; but they were happy, and when the moon rose it looked

down upon two little monkeys clutched tightly in each other's arms. Above their heads rose a little stick bearing an envelope in its split end.

17. THE SNAKE

It was with feelings of relief that the five left the scene of the tragedy that had cast a pall of gloom and horror over them; and while the future held out little of encouragement to them, the very fact of being on the move raised their spirits to some extent.

Brown had insisted upon marching at the head of the little column, and Jane had acceded to his request. Annette stayed as close to Brown as she could. Jane brought up the rear and Alexis walked with her. Tibbs plodded along behind Annette.

Either because he tired more quickly than the others, or because he wanted to get out of earshot of those whom he

considered servants and beneath him, Alexis lagged.

"We shouldn't fall so far behind the others," said Jane. "We must not become separated. You will have to walk a little faster, Alexis." Her tone was just a little impatient.

"I thought it would be nice for us to be alone together, Jane," he said. "You see, you and I have nothing in common with those others; and it must be as much of a relief to you as to me to have the companionship of one of your own class."

"You will have to get over that," said Jane; "there are no class distinctions here."

"I am afraid you do not like me, dear

lady."

"You have been very annoying at times, Alexis."

"I have been terribly upset," he replied, "and most of all by you."

"By me? What have I done?"

"It is not that you have done anything; it is just that you are you. Can't you understand, Jane? Haven't you noticed?"

"Noticed what?"

"From the first, you attracted me strangely. There seemed to be no hope, though, and I was desperately blue; but now I am free, Jane." He seized her hand. "Oh, Jane, can't you like me a little?"

She jerked her hand from his. "You

fool!" she exclaimed.

His eyes narrowed menacingly. "You are going to regret that," he said. "I tell you I'm in love with you, madly in love. I'm desperate, and I won't stand idly by and see an illiterate aeroplane pilot get the woman I want."

"Just what do you mean by that?" The girl's eyes and voice were level and cold.

"It's too obvious to need explanation. Anyone can see that you are in love with Brown."

"Alexis, did you ever hear a man referred to as an unspeakable cad? I have; but until this minute I never knew what it meant. I never could have conceived the sort of man it describes

until now. Move on now. Get away from me. Get up there with Tibbs."

Instantly his manner changed. "Oh, Jane," he pleaded, "please don't send me away. I don't know why I ever said that; I was just mad with jealousy. Can't you understand that it is because I love you so? Can't you understand and forgive me?"

She made no reply but started ahead, increasing her gait to overtake the others.

"Wait!" he exclaimed, huskily. "You've got to listen to me. I'm not going to give you up." He seized her by the arm and pulled her toward him, endeavoring to throw his arms about her. Then she struck him; and, jumping back,

levelled her spear to hold him off.

For a moment they stood there facing one another in silence; and in that moment she saw something in his eyes, in the expression on his face, that made her fear him for the first time. She knew then how really dangerous he was, and it was no longer difficult for her to believe that he had murdered his wife.

"Go up there now as I told you," she said, "or I will kill you. There is no law here but the law of the jungle."

Perhaps he, too, read something in her narrowed lids and icy tone, for he did as she bid, and went on ahead of her in silence.

By mid-afternoon, Tibbs and Alexis and Annette were almost exhausted; and

when the party reached a favorable spot, Jane called a halt.

The trail by which they had come had followed the meanderings of the stream upon which they had been camped, and thus the water problem had been solved for them.

"What now, Miss?" demanded Brown. "Hadn't we better rustle some grub?"

"Yes," she replied. "I'll go out and see what I can bring in."

"I'm going to have a look-see myself," said Brown. "We can go in different directions and maybe one of us will find something."

"All right. You go on up the trail, and I'll take to the trees and follow the river.

I may run across a drinking hole." She turned to the others. "And while we are gone, the rest of you can be building a boma and gathering firewood. All right, Brown, let's get going."

The three that remained in camp seemed physically unable to drag themselves to their feet, but Alexis was resourceful.

"Tibbs," he said, "go out and gather material for the boma and get some firewood."

Motivated by years of servile obedience, the Englishman rose painfully to his feet and started away.

"I'll help you, Tibbs," said Annette, and started to rise.

Alexis laid a restraining hand on her

arm. "Wait," he said, "I want to talk with you."

"But we must help Tibbs."

"He can do very nicely by himself. You wait here."

"What do you want, Prince Sborov? I've got to go and help Tibbs."

"Listen, my dear," said Alexis, "how would you like to have a hundred thousand francs?"

The girl shrugged. "Who would not like to have a hundred thousand francs?" she demanded.

"Very well, you can earn them—and very easily."

"And how?" Her tone was skeptical.

"You have something that I wish. I

will pay you one hundred thousand francs for it; you know what it is."

"You mean the burned sleeve of your coat, Prince Alexis?"

"You won't let them frame me, Annette? You won't let them send me to the guillotine for something I didn't do, when everybody in this party hates me; they will all lie about me, and when they bring that piece of burned cloth into court, I shall be convicted in spite of my innocence. Give it to me. No one need ever know; you can say that you lost it, and as soon as we get back to civilization I will give you one hundred thousand francs."

The girl shook her head. "No, I could not do that. It may be all that will save

Mr. Brown."

"You are wasting your time on Brown," he said, nastily. "You think he loves you, but he doesn't. Don't be fooled."

The girl flushed. "I have not said that he loves me."

"Well, you think so; and he's trying to make you think so; but if you knew what I know, you wouldn't be so anxious to save his worthless head."

"I do not know what you mean. I do not care to talk about it any more. I will not give you the piece of cloth."

"Well, I'll tell you what I mean, you little fool," snapped Alexis. "Brown's in love with Lady Greystoke, and she's in love with him. What do you suppose

they've gone off into the jungle for? Why, to meet each other, of course."

"I do not believe it," said Annette. "I will not listen to any more."

She started to rise; and as she did so, he leaped to his feet and seized her.

"Give me that piece of cloth," he demanded, in a hoarse whisper. The fingers of his right hand encircled her throat. "Give it to me or I'll kill you, you little fool."

Quick as a cat, and with surprising strength, she tore herself away from him and screamed.

"Help, Tibbs! Help!" she cried.

The Englishman had not gone far, and he came running back.

"If you tell on me," cried Sborov in a low whisper, "I'll kill you. I'll kill you as I killed her."

Annette looked into his eyes, as Jane had, and was frightened.

"What's wrong, sir?" demanded Tibbs, as he approached them.

"It wasn't anything," said Alexis, with a laugh. "Annette thought she saw a snake."

"I did see a snake," she said.

"Well, it's all right now, Tibbs," said Alexis; "you can go back to your work."

"I shall need a little help, sir," said the Englishman. "I cannot do it all alone."

"I'll come with you, Tibbs," said

Annette.

Alexis followed them. He walked very close to Annette and whispered, "Remember, if you tell them."

"I don't fancy having a snake around the camp," said Tibbs, "the nasty beggars. I don't like 'em."

"Neither do I," said Annette, "but I won't be afraid when Mr. Brown comes back. If a snake tries to harm me then, he will kill it." She did not look at Tibbs as she spoke, although she seemed to be addressing him, but at Alexis.

"I think I would not tell the others about the snake," said Sborov; "it might frighten Lady Greystoke."

"My word, sir, I don't believe she's afraid of anything, sir."

"Nevertheless, see that you don't mention it," cautioned Alexis.

"Why, here's Mr. Brown now," cried Tibbs. "He's running. Something must have happened."

"What's wrong?" demanded Brown. "I heard someone scream. Was that you, Annette?"

"Annette saw a snake," said Alexis. "Did you not, Annette?"

"Where is it?" asked Brown. "Did you kill it?"

"No," replied the girl, "I had nothing with which to kill it; but if it frightens me again, you will kill it."

"You bet your life I will, girlie. Where is it now?"

"It got away," said Alexis.

Annette looked straight into his eyes. "Next time it will not get away," she said.

Brown's pockets were bulging with fruit which he took out and laid on the ground.

"I hope this ain't poison," he said. "I had a heck of a time getting it. Lady Greystoke will know whether or not we can eat it."

"Here she comes now," said Annette.

"What luck, Jane?" asked Alexis.

"Not so good," she replied, "just a little fruit. I didn't see any game." Her eyes fell on the fruit that Brown had gathered. "Oh, you found the same

thing," she said. "Well, it won't taste very good, but it's safe and it's food. I thought I heard a scream a few moments ago. Did any of you hear it?"

"It was Annette," said Brown; "she seen a snake."

Jane laughed. "Oh, before Annette gets out of Africa, she'll be used to snakes."

"Not this one," said the girl.

A puzzled expression crossed Brown's face. He started to speak, and then evidently thinking better of it remained silent.

Not much had been accomplished toward the building of the boma and collecting the firewood; so Jane and Brown lent a hand in the work which

moved much more rapidly with the aid of the hand-axe.

It was dark before the work was completed, and then they felt that they could take their ease around the fire that Jane had built.

Jane showed them how they might make the fruit that constituted their sole food supply more palatable by roasting it on the end of a stick. So hungry were they that even Sborov ate without complaining; and as they ate, a pair of eyes watched them from behind the concealing foliage of a nearby tree.

Brown had insisted that the three men assume the duty of guarding the camp; and though Jane and Annette insisted upon doing their share, the pilot was

firm in respect to this matter and would not be moved.

"Two hours on and four off won't hurt nobody," he insisted, "and you girls are going to need all the sleep you can get if you're going to keep up with us."

The statement made Jane smile, for she knew that she could endure more than any of them, not excepting Brown; but she appreciated the spirit that animated him; and knowing how jealous men are of their protective prerogative she bowed to his will rather than offend him.

The three men matched coins to determine the order in which they should stand guard.

"I wish you'd let me be a sentry," said

Annette.

"No, that ain't no work for a girl," said Brown.

"Oh, please, Neal, just once," she begged. "Oh, please."

"Nothing doing."

"Oh, just one little hour. You are on from two to four, Neal. Wake me at four and let me stand guard until five. Then I will wake the prince. It will be almost morning, anyway."

"Let her do it, if she wants to," said Jane.

"All right," said Brown, "but it ain't goin' to be the regular thing."

All were stretched out around the fire, apparently sleeping, when Tibbs woke

Brown for his first tour of duty at eight o'clock.

Tibbs was so exhausted that he was asleep almost as soon as he lay down. Then Annette raised on one elbow and looked around. A moment later she came over and sat down beside Brown.

"You better get back to bed, kid," he said.

"I just wanted to talk with you for a minute, Neal," she said.

"What's on your mind, girlie."

She was silent for a moment. "Oh, nothing in particular," she replied. "I like to be alone with you; that is all."

He put an arm about her and pressed her closer, and thus they sat in silence

for a moment before Brown spoke again.

"You know, I've been thinking a lot about that snake business, Annette," he said. "It sounded sort of fishy to me. You sure you wasn't stringin' me?"

"Stringing? I don't know what stringing is."

"Well, skip it. I seen funny looks pass between you and the grand duke when you was handing me that line about snakes. On the level now, kiddo, give me the low-down."

"The low-down?"

"The facts—truth. What was it all about?"

"I am so afraid of him, Neal. Promise me that you won't tell him that I told you.

I think of what he did to her; he would do the same to me; he said so."

"What? He said he'd kill you?"

"If I told."

"If you told what?"

"That he had tried to take that piece of coat sleeve away from me."

"That was when you screamed?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I'll get him for that," said Brown.

"Please don't say anything about it; please promise me," she begged. "Only don't leave me alone with him again."

"All right, then," he promised; "but if he ever makes another break like that, I'll sure get him. You needn't be afraid of

him."

"I am not afraid when you are with me. I do not know what I should do if it were not for you."

"You like me a little, kid?"

"I like you a great deal, Neal."

He pressed her closer to him. "I guess I like you a lot, too—more than I ever liked anyone else."

She nestled closer to him. "Tell me how much that is," she whispered.

"I'm not much good at saying things like that. I—I—well, you know what I mean."

"I want to hear you say it." He cleared his throat. "Well—I love you, kid."

"And you don't love Lady

Greystoke?"

"Eh? What!" he exclaimed. "What put that into your head?"

"He said so; he said that you loved her, and that she loved you."

"The dirty rat! Imagine that dame, the wife of an English viscount, falling for me. That is to laugh."

"But you might—what you call it—fall for her."

"Not on your life, kid; not while I've got you."

She put her arms around his neck and drew him down toward her. "I love you, Neal," she murmured, before their lips met.

They felt that they had the night and

the world to themselves, but that was because they were not aware of the silent watcher in the tree above them. She sat with him until he awoke Sborov.

The camp was sleeping soundly when Tibbs finished his tour of duty at two in the morning and called Brown again.

At four Brown hesitated to awaken Annette, but he had given his word that she might stand guard for an hour; so he shook her gently.

"It's four o'clock and all's well," he whispered. Then he kissed her ear. "And now it's better."

She raised herself to an elbow, laughing. "Now you lie down and sleep," she said, "and I'll stand guard."

"I'll sit along with you for awhile," he

said.

"No, that was not in the bargain," she insisted. "I want to watch alone. I shall feel very important. Go on, and go to sleep."

Then quiet fell upon the camp—a quiet that was unbroken until Jane awoke after daylight. She sat up and looked about her. No one was on guard. Alexis, who should have been, was fast asleep.

"Come on, sleepy heads," she cried; "it's time to get up."

Brown sat up sleepily and looked around. He saw Alexis just awakening.

"I thought the grand duke was on guard," said Brown. "Did you take his place?"

"There wasn't anyone on guard when I woke up," said Jane, and then she noticed. "Where is Annette?"

Brown sprang to his feet. "Annette!" he cried. There was no answer. Annette was gone.

18. A BIT OF PAPER

When morning broke, Nkima, had he been a man, would have said that he had not slept a wink all night; but that was because when he was awake he was so worried and frightened that the time had dragged interminably. During the night, he regretted that he had not stayed with Tarzan and determined to return to the camp the first thing in the morning; but when morning came, dispelling the gloom with brilliant sunshine, his little monkey mind forgot its good resolution and concerned itself only with the moment and his new playmate.

Off they went, racing through the jungle, swinging from limb to limb, scampering high aloft, dropping again to

lower levels.

Nkima was very happy. The sun was shining. It would always shine. He could not vision that another night of cold and dread was coming quickly.

Farther and farther toward the west they scampered, farther and farther away from camp; and in one hand Nkima clutched the little stick with the split end, topped by the soiled and crumpled envelope. Through all the playing and the love-making and the long night, little Nkima had clung to his sole treasure.

The little she, who was Nkima's playmate, was mischievous. She was also covetous. For long had she looked upon the stick and the envelope with envy, but she had been cuffed once for

trying to take them; so she was wary, yet the more she saw them, the more she wished them.

Nkima was running along a branch holding the envelope on high. The little she was following in his wake when she saw her chance—just ahead, a limb beneath which Nkima would have to pass. Quickly she sprang upward and raced ahead along this limb; and, as Nkima passed beneath her, she reached down and seized the envelope. She was disappointed because she did not get the stick, too; but even a part of this wonderful thing was better than nothing.

Having achieved her design, she scampered on ahead as fast as she could go. Nkima witnessed the theft, and his

heart was filled with righteous anger and indignation. He pursued her, but fear lent her a new speed.

On they raced; but the little she always seemed to have the advantage, for she steadily outdistanced Nkima until she was lost to his sight; and then his indignation and sorrow at the loss of his treasure was submerged in a fear that he had lost the little she also.

But he had not. He came upon her perched innocently in a high- flung crotch, contentedly eating a piece of fruit. As Nkima approached her, he looked for the envelope. It was gone. He wanted to pound her, but he also wanted to hug her; so he compromised by hugging her.

He asked for his bit of paper. Of course, he had no name for it; but he made her understand. It seemed that she had become frightened and thrown it away.

Nkima went back a little way to look for it, but he became interested in some fuzzy caterpillars that he passed on the way; and when he had eaten all that he could find, he had temporarily forgotten the paper.

A little river flowed beneath them. Rivers always intrigued Nkima. He liked to follow them; so he followed this one.

Presently he espied something that brought him to a sudden stop. In a small, natural clearing on the bank of the river

was a flimsy man-made hut.

Nkima thought that there must be gomangani around; and he was wary, but he was also very curious. He watched and listened. The place seemed deserted. Finally he mustered sufficient courage to drop to the ground and investigate.

Followed by the little she, he crept toward the entrance to the hut. Cautiously he peeked around a corner of the door frame and peered within. There was no one there. Nkima entered. Luggage and clothing were strewn about the floor. He looked things over, seeking what he might appropriate. Then his eyes fell upon a piece of paper fastened to the wall with a sliver of wood. With a yelp

of delight, Nkima leaped for it. Then he scampered out of the hut with his prize, raced across the clearing, and swarmed up to the topmost branches of a giant tree. Behind him came the little she.

By the time Nkima had succeeded in inserting the piece of paper in the notch at the end of the stick, his interest in the other things that he had seen in the hut had, monkey-like, waned.

Now he recalled the tall warrior who had brought the piece of paper in the end of the stick to Tarzan. Nkima decided that he would do likewise. He felt very important and was only sorry that he did not have a white plume to wave above his head.

Holding to this single idea for an

unusually long time, Nkima raced back in the direction of the camp where he had left Tarzan and the Waziri.

It was late in the afternoon when he got there, and his little heart leaped into his throat when he discovered that his friends were gone.

He was very sad and a little frightened, although it was not yet dark; but when his lady friend came and sat close beside him, he felt better.

Unfortunately, this respite from despair was all too brief. The little band of monkeys to which his playmate belonged came trooping through the trees. They saw Nkima and the shameless young creature who had run away with him.

Jabbering, chattering, scolding, several of the males of the clan came swinging through the trees toward Nkima and his light-of- love. For a moment, just a fleeting moment, Nkima had visions of standing his ground and doing battle; but the leading male was an old fellow, very large and strong. His fangs were bared in a most disconcerting manner; and he voiced terrifying threats that made Nkima's heart quail, so that on second thought he determined to go elsewhere and go quickly; but his lady friend clung to him tightly, hampering his movements, for she, too, was frightened. Perhaps she did not want to lose Nkima who, after all, had a way with him.

The terrifying old monkey was

approaching rapidly, and then Nkima did a most ungallant thing; he struggled to free himself from the lady's embrace, and when she only clung more tightly he tore at her arms to disengage himself, and then struck her in the face until she finally released him.

By now, Nkima was screaming in terror. The little she was screaming, and so were all the other monkeys. Bedlam reigned in the jungle; and to the accompaniment of this din of rage and terror, little Nkima broke away and fled; but through it all he had clung to his stick with its fluttering bit of paper, and now toward the north he bore it away like a banner, but scarcely triumphantly.

Some of the males pursued him for a

short distance; but when terror impelled little Nkima only a bird on the wing might hope to overtake him; and so his pursuers soon gave up the chase.

For some time thereafter, Nkima did not reduce his speed; he continued to flee, screaming at the top of his voice.

It was only after he had almost reached the point of exhaustion that he slowed down and looked back, listening. In his mind's eye was the picture of the snarling visage of the old male; but he was nowhere to be seen, nor was there any sound of pursuit; so little Nkima took heart and his courage commenced to return. He even swaggered a little as though he were returning triumphant from a well- earned victory. Had he had

a wife, he would have gone home to her and bragged of his exploits; there are men like that; so who may censure little Nkima who was only a monkey.

Presently he found the trail of Tarzan and the Waziri. He knew that they had been traveling north, and so he came down and sniffed the earth in the game trail that they had been following. Clear in his nostrils was the scent spoor of his friends. This heartened him, and he hurried on again.

Little Nkima moved through the trees many times faster than a man on foot. His fear of the coming jungle night held him to his purpose, so that he did not stop along the way to chase butterflies and birds.

That night he perched high among the smaller branches where Sheeta, the panther, cannot go.

19. HATE AND LUST

The discovery that Annette was missing from the camp momentarily stunned the remaining members of the ill-fated expedition.

"What could possibly have become of her?" demanded Jane. "I know that she wouldn't just have wandered off into the jungle. She was too much afraid of it."

Brown advanced slowly upon Sborov. There was murder in his heart and it was reflected in his eyes. "You know where she is, you rat," he said. "Tell me what you've done with her."

Sborov fell back, instinctively raising his hands in defense. "I know nothing about her," he said; "I was asleep."

"You lie," said Brown, still advancing.

"Keep away from me," cried Sborov; "don't let him get me, Jane; he'll kill me."

"You're right I'm going to kill you," growled Brown. It was then that Sborov turned and ran.

Brown sprang forward. In a dozen steps he had overtaken the terrified man and seized him by the shoulder. Screaming, Sborov wheeled to fight with all the mad ferocity of the cornered rat fighting for its life. He pounded and scratched and bit, but the American bore him to the ground and closed his fingers upon his throat.

"Where is she?" demanded the American. "Where is she, you—"

"I don't know," gasped Sborov. "As God is my judge, I don't know."

"If you don't know, you might as well be killed anyway, for you ain't no good for anything then nohow."

Brown's fingers tightened upon the throat of the terrified Sborov, who still struggled and fought furiously to free himself.

All that it takes so long to tell happened in the span of a few brief seconds.

Nor during this time was Jane idle. The instant that she realized the gravity of the situation and that Brown was really intent upon destroying Sborov, she seized her spear and ran toward them.

"Stop it, Brown," she commanded.

"Let the prince up."

"Not 'til I've given him what's coming to him," cried the pilot; "and he's going to get it, even if I hang for it."

Jane placed the point of her spear beneath Brown's left shoulder-blade and pushed until he felt the sharp point against his flesh.

"Drop him, Brown," demanded Jane; "or I'll run this spear straight through your heart."

"What do you want to kill me for, Miss?" demanded Brown. "You need me."

"I don't want to kill you, Brown," she said; "but that fact won't do you any good unless you obey my command and remember that I am leader of this

expedition. You are doing a foolish thing, Brown; you haven't any evidence to uphold your judgment. Remember, we haven't made the slightest investigation. We should do that first to determine the direction in which Annette left camp, and whether she left alone or was accompanied by another. We can also tell by examining the spoor if she went willingly or was taken by force."

Slowly Brown's fingers relaxed upon the throat of the struggling, gasping prince; then he released him and rose slowly to his feet.

"I guess you're right, Miss," he said; "you're always right; but poor little Annette—what she told me yesterday about that rat made me see red."

"What did she tell you?" asked Jane.

"He waylaid her yesterday and tried to take that piece of coat sleeve away from her, and then he threatened to kill her if she told. It wasn't no snake that made her scream yesterday, Miss, leastways not an honest-to-God respectable snake; it was him. She was terribly afraid of him, Miss."

Alexis was gasping his breath back slowly. He was trembling from head to foot from terror.

"Is this true, Alexis?" demanded Jane.

"No," he gasped. "I just asked her for the coat sleeve so that I could see if it was really mine, and she commenced to scream just to get me in trouble. She did it just for spite."

"Well," said Jane, "we're not accomplishing anything this way. The rest of you stay where you are while I look for some kind of tracks. If we all wander around looking for them, we'll obliterate any that there may be."

She started to circle the camp slowly, examining the ground carefully. "Here they are," she said presently; "she walked out this way, and she went alone."

Jane walked slowly for a few yards, following the footprints of the missing girl; then she stopped. "They end here," she said, "right under this tree. There is no indication of a struggle, no sign that she was forced. As a matter of fact, she walked very slowly. There are no other

footprints near hers. It is all very strange."

Jane stood for a moment, looking first at the footprints that ended so mysteriously and then up into the branches of the tree above. Suddenly she sprang upward, seized a branch and drew herself up into the tree.

Brown came running forward and stood beneath her. "Have you found anything, Miss?" he asked.

"There's only one explanation," she replied. "People do not vanish in thin air. Annette walked from the camp to the spot where her footprints ended beneath this tree; she did not return to the camp. There is only one place that she could have gone, and that is up here where I

am."

"But she couldn't have jumped up there the way you did," protested Brown. "She just couldn't have done it."

"She didn't jump," said Jane. "Her tracks would have shown it, if she had jumped. She was lifted up."

"Lifted up! My God, Miss, by what?" Brown's voice was trembling with emotion.

"It might have been a snake, Miss, if you'll pardon me for suggesting it," said Tibbs; "it could have reached down and wound itself around her and pulled her up into the tree."

"She would have screamed," said Brown; "we'd have heard her."

"Snakes charm their victims so that they are helpless," said Tibbs.

"That is all poppycock, Tibbs," said Jane, impatiently. "I don't believe snakes do anything of the sort, and it wasn't a snake that got her anyway. There has been a man up here. He has been in this tree for a long time, or if not a man some sort of a man-like creature."

"How can you tell that?" demanded Brown.

"I can see where he squatted on this big branch," she replied. "The bark is scuffed a little, for he must have remained in the same position for a long time; and then in a line between where his eyes would have been and the camp, some small twigs have been cut away

with a knife, giving a less obstructed view of the camp. Whatever it was, sat here for a long time watching us."

Sborov and Tibbs had approached and were standing nearby. "I told you I had nothing to do with it," said the former.

"I can't figure it out," said Brown; "I just can't figure it out. If she had been frightened, she would have screamed for help and some of us would have heard her."

"I don't know," said Tibbs, "but I saw something like it once before, sir. His Grace had a castle on the east coast up in Lincoln. It was a most lonely place, overlooking the North Sea. We only went there once a year for about six

weeks; but that was enough, and what happened there the last time was why I gave notice. I couldn't stand the place any longer. Her Grace, the Duchess, was murdered there one night, and that was 'arrowing enough; but what 'appened three days later was, to my way of thinking, even worse.

"Her Grace had a maid she was very fond of, and three nights after the duchess was murdered, the maid disappeared. She just vanished in thin air, as it were, sir. There was never a trace found of her from then until now, and the country folk round said that Her Grace had come back for her—that it had 'appened before in the Castle of the Duke of Doningham—so I was thinking

__"

"For Pete's sake, shut up!" cried Brown. "You'll have us all nuts."

"Horrible," muttered Alexis.

"Well, whatever it was, it wasn't a ghost," said Jane. She dropped to the ground beside Brown and laid a hand on his arm. "I'm sorry, Brown," she said; "I know you were very fond of her, but I don't believe that there is anything we can do, except to try to reach some outpost of civilization and report the matter. Then a search will be made."

"It will be too late then," said Brown. "I reckon it's too late now. She was so little and delicate. She couldn't have stood very much. She probably is dead by this time." He stopped speaking and

turned away. "Perhaps she's better off dead," he added.

In silence the four ate of what little they had to eat, and then set out once more on their seemingly hopeless journey.

There were few attempts at conversation. The four seemed stunned by the series of calamities that had overtaken them. Suspicion, fear, and distrust dogged their footsteps; and beside them stalked the shadow of the nameless menace that had snatched Annette away.

Brown suffered more than the others, so much so that his mind was numb even to his hatred of Alexis. So completely did he ignore him that it was as though

the man did not exist.

Jane walked at the rear of the column. Her tread was firm and light; but Alexis, who was directly in front of her, was footsore and weary. He was, however, no worse off than Tibbs for whose soft muscles continued exercise was little better than torture.

"Jane," said Sborov, after they had walked a long way in silence, "haven't you any idea what it was took Annette away?"

Jane shook her head. "All I know is that I don't believe in ghosts, and that no animal could have done it; therefore it must have been a man, but what sort of man, I have no idea. Whatever it was must have been as agile as a monkey,

and for that reason I cannot bring myself to believe that it was a member of any native tribe—they are, as a rule, far from being excellent climbers; and I never heard of one who traveled through the trees as this—creature must have to reach our camp and depart again with Annette without leaving any spoor on the ground."

"But you are willing to believe now, that it was not I?" queried Sborov.

"There is no reason to believe that you did it," replied Jane.

"Then why not give me the benefit of the doubt in the other matter. You must know that I couldn't have killed Kitty."

"What does it matter what I think?" asked Jane. "That is a matter for the

court to decide."

"Your opinion matters a lot to me, Jane. You have no idea how much." She looked at him shortly. "I have no desire to know."

The note of finality in her tone was lost on Sborov. "But I want you to know," he persisted. "I've never known anyone like you; I'm mad about you, Jane. You must have seen it."

The girl shook her head impatiently. "That will be about enough of that, Alexis," she said. "Our situation is sufficiently difficult without your making it any worse."

"Does it make it any worse for you to know that someone is with you who loves you very much?" he demanded.

"Oh, Jane," he cried, "I could make you very happy." Then he seized her arm and tried to draw her to him.

Once again she wrenched herself free; once again she struck him heavily in the face with her open palm. Instantly his expression changed. His face became contorted with rage.

"I'll get you for this, you little—"

"You'll do what?" demanded a man's voice angrily.

The two looked up. Brown was striding toward them, followed by Tibbs. The hand-axe swung at the pilot's side in his right hand. Sborov cowered and backed away.

"I'm going to finish you now, once and for all," said Brown.

Jane stepped between the two men. "No, Brown," she said, "we can't take the law into our own hands, as much as we'd like to."

"But you're not safe as long as he's alive; none of us is."

"I can take care of myself," replied Jane; "and if I can, I guess the rest of you can."

Brown hesitated, but finally he acquiesced. "Very well," he said, "I can wait." There seemed a world of meaning in those few words, nor was it lost on Sborov.

That night they camped again near the little river whose winding the trail followed.

The instant that they stopped, Sborov

and Tibbs threw themselves upon the ground thoroughly exhausted.

"If I may say so, Milady," said the latter, "I fancy I couldn't carry on for another half hour if my life depended upon it. Tomorrow you had better go on without me; I'm afraid I can't keep up, ma'am; and I'm only delaying the rest of you."

"You're doing splendidly, Tibbs," said Jane, encouragingly. "I know it's hard on you now; but you'll be surprised how quickly your muscles will toughen as they get accustomed to the work, and then you'll be able to keep up with any of us."

"I 'ope so, Milady, but the way I feel now I don't believe I'll be able to go on."

"Don't worry, Tibbsy, we'll stick by you," said Brown, reassuringly.

"It's mighty good of you, Mr. Brown, but—"

"But nothing," said Brown. "We could get along with one less member in this outfit," and as he spoke, he stared straight at Sborov, "but it ain't you, Tibbsy."

"Now," said Jane, "I'm going out to look for meat. I want you men to promise me that you will not quarrel while I'm gone. We have already had too much bloodshed and disaster."

"Tibbsy don't never fight with no one," said Brown, "and I won't be here; so you won't have to worry."

"You won't be here?" demanded Jane.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going with you, Miss."

"But you can't. I can't hunt with you along."

"Then you won't do no hunting," said Brown, "because I'm going with you. You may be boss, but there's one thing you ain't going to do no more."

"What is that?" asked the girl.

"You ain't going off alone by yourself, again, after what happened to Annette."

"If I may say so, Milady, I think Mr. Brown is quite right. We can't take any chances with you, Milady."

Jane shrugged. "Perhaps you're right," she said, "from your point of view, but really I'm much better able to take care

of myself in the jungle than any of you."

"That ain't neither here nor there," said Brown. "You just ain't going into the jungle alone, and that's that."

"All right," said Jane, with a laugh. "I suppose I'll have to give in. Come ahead then, Brown; we'll see what we can find."

Tibbs and Alexis watched them depart, and then the former turned to the prince. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but hadn't we better start building a boma and gathering firewood?"

"Yes, you had," said Alexis; "and you'd better hurry up about it as it will soon be dark."

"You're not going to help me, sir?" demanded Tibbs.

"Certainly not, my man. I'm far too tired."

"And 'ow about me, sir? I'm tired, too." Tibbs was surprised at his own temerity.

"You've no business to be tired. I'm not paying you to be tired. I'm paying you to work. Come, get busy; and don't be impudent. You seem to be forgetting yourself, Tibbs."

"If I may make so bold as to say so, your 'ighness, if you're not careful, I shall."

"What do you mean, you impertinent puppy?" demanded Alexis.

Tibbs sat down on the ground and leaned his back against the tree. "I mean, sir, that if you don't help and do your

share there won't be any boma and there won't be any firewood when Lady Greystoke and Brown come back to the camp. I daresay they'll both be very angry, especially Brown. If I were you, sir, I wouldn't antagonize him any more. I suspect that he does not like you; and out here in the jungle sir, where there ain't no laws nor no Bobbies, he wouldn't need much more of an excuse to kill you."

For a minute or two Alexis sat in silent thought; then he rose painfully and slowly. "Come on, my man," he said, "and I'll give you a hand with the boma."

It was almost sunset when Jane and Brown returned with a small antelope, slices of which Tibbs was soon grilling

before a cooking fire, while the others sat silently waiting.

There was little conversation as they ate their slender meal. It was an ill-assorted company, with little in common among them other than the grim disasters which had befallen them and which made such depressing conversation that they were taboo as though by a tacit understanding. The girl and Brown each found the other the most congenial member of the party; and what little talk there was passed between these two; but very soon even they were silent; and presently all slept, except Tibbs who had the first watch.

The long night wore on to the accompaniment of savage, jungle sound,

usually remote but sometimes so close as to arouse the sleepers— stealthy sounds, weird sounds, fierce and savage sounds, sometimes whispering, sometimes thundering, died softly, dying into nothingness, or reverberated through the jungle until the earth trembled.

Each in his turn, the men stood guard. At four in the morning, Tibbs completing his second tour, awoke Alexis who was to follow him.

Shivering in the chill of early morning, Sborov piled more wood upon the fire. Then he stood with his back toward it gazing out into the night.

Just beyond the farthest reaches of the firelight rose a black, impenetrable wall of darkness—a mysterious world filled

with nameless terrors; when a tongue of flame leaped higher in the air than its fellows its light glanced momentarily from the bole of a tree or from a cluster of leaves giving the impression of movement out there beyond the rim of his little world.

There were noises, too, sounds that he could not interpret. His fear and his imagination put strange interpretation upon the things that he saw and heard. A moaning woman floated at the borderline of reality. He could swear that he saw her.

Sborov recalled the ghost of the murdered woman that came back for her maid, and cursed Tibbs. A beast screamed and Sborov shuddered.

He turned away from the forest and sought to concentrate his mind upon other things. His eyes wandered over the figures of his sleeping comrades. They fell upon the hand-axe lying close beside Brown. Sborov breathed an imprecation and tore his gaze away. It fell on Jane and rested there. How beautiful she was. Why did she spurn him? He had always had luck with women. He fascinated them, and he knew it. He could not understand why Jane repulsed him; and so he blamed Brown, whom he hated, assuring himself that the fellow had talked against him and embittered Jane's mind.

His eyes wandered back to Brown and the hand-axe. How he hated the man

and feared him. The fellow would kill him. He had threatened him more than once.

Alexis felt that if the man were dead, his own life would be safer and —there would be no one to stand between him and Jane.

He rose and walked nervously to and fro. Every once in awhile he shot a glance at Brown and the axe.

He walked closer to Tibbs and listened. Yes, the fellow was already asleep, sound asleep. He must have been asleep almost at the instant he touched the ground. Jane was asleep, too, and so was Brown. Sborov assured himself of both of these facts.

If Brown were only dead! The thought

repeated itself monotonously, drumming on his tired brain. If Brown were only dead! Presently Alexis Sborov seemed galvanized by a sudden determination. He moved directly, though stealthily, toward the sleeping Brown. He paused beside him and kneeled upon one knee. Listening intently, he remained there silent, motionless; then cautiously one hand crept out toward the axe.

Brown moved and turned in his sleep, and Sborov froze with terror; then the pilot resumed the regular breathing of sleep. Sborov reached out and seized the axe handle. His mad eyes glued upon the forehead of the sleeping man, he raised the weapon aloft to strike.

20. NKIMA PLAYS A GAME

Tarzan and the Waziri moved on in search of the village of the Kavuru. It was yet early in the morning; the dawn mists still defied the efforts of a low-swinging sun to dispel them. The spirits of the searchers were low, for they were many long marches from their homeland; and with each passing day a sense of the futility of their quest had been increasingly impressed upon them, for not once since they started had they seen any sign or clue to suggest that they were on the right track; only vague rumors based upon tribal legend had suggested the fate of Buira, the daughter of Muviro.

Several of the warriors felt that they were chasing a myth; and only great courage and loyalty kept them, uncomplaining, on the trail.

It was true that Tarzan had met Ydeni, the Kavuru, and that he had rescued Naika, the daughter of Gupingu, and heard her story; yet these things had occurred at such a remote distance from the land of the Waziri that even Muviro was commencing to doubt that it had been a Kavuru who had been responsible for the disappearance of Buira, for why should these strange men go so far afield when they could find young girls much closer to their mysterious village.

But upon this chill and misty morning,

it was not the Waziri alone who were depressed and discouraged. Upon the trail behind them, a damp and bedraggled little monkey swung through the trees. In one hand he carried a stick in the end of which fluttered a bit of paper; that he still clung to it was a miracle, for Nkima was not particularly tenacious of purpose. Perhaps it had become a fixed idea, for the stick was often an encumbrance to him; yet it never occurred to him to discard it.

There was however another thought that was forming in his mind—it was the thought that he was very far from his own country, that he had lost Tarzan and could never find him again, and that he was very much afraid. It made him wish

to turn around and start for home. He was almost upon the verge of turning about, when he recollected the grimacing visage of the disagreeable old male whom Nkima was certain thirsted for his life-blood somewhere upon the back trail; and then there were Sheeta, and Hista, the snake, and the bad gomangani. All these lay behind him; and until he encountered some of their like upon the trail he was following, his little mind so functioned that he could not anticipate their presence there— what little Nkima did not know did not bother him. And so he continued on his way into a land that seemed free from inhospitable monkeys and bloodthirsty beasts and men.

As the ascending sun warmed him, his

spirits rose; and after he had discovered and robbed a bird's nest, sucking the eggs, he felt equal to any adventure.

Then came the crowning moment of happiness. In the trail ahead of him, he saw a file of ten ebon warriors led by the giant white man who was his god. With a loud scream of joy that attracted the attention of the men below him, Nkima fairly flew through the trees to drop upon one of Tarzan's broad shoulders.

"Where has Nkima been?" asked the ape-man. "Tarzan thought that at last Sheeta had caught him."

"Little Nkima has been fighting with all the Manus in the forest," replied the monkey. "They tried to stop little Nkima

from coming through their trees, but he scratched them and bit them and hit them with a stick; then he chased them into the country where Kudu, the sun, lies down at night. That is where little Nkima has been; that is what he has been doing; that is why he has been away from Tarzan."

The ape-man smiled. "Little Nkima is very brave," he said, as he stroked the little head nestled in the hollow of his neck.

Tarzan noticed that Nkima still carried the message stick, and was surprised that his little friend should have been constant to one idea for so long a time; and then he noticed that the paper in the end of the stick was not the same as that which Nkima had taken

away with him. The ape-man's curiosity was aroused.

"What is that in the end of your stick, Nkima?" he asked. "Where did you get it? It is not the thing that Tarzan gave you. Let me see it." And he reached for it.

Now Nkima had forgotten just why he had clung to the stick. He had forgotten that he had been mimicking the Waziri warrior who had carried the message to Tarzan. Also, he was very happy and wanted to play; so when Tarzan tried to take the paper from the end of the stick, Nkima saw therein a challenge and an invitation to a new game; and so he leaped nimbly from Tarzan's shoulder and scampered away, waving the stick

with its bit of fluttering paper above him.

The ape-man called to him to come back; but Nkima's thoughts were wholly centered upon play; and he only climbed the higher, grimacing and chattering in great good humor, as he challenged the ape-man to catch him.

Perhaps if Tarzan had guessed the message that fluttered from the end of the cleft stick and all that it meant to him and one dear to him he would not have laughed so lightly and let Nkima go his way unrebuked, but he did not know. Upon such trivial things may hinge the lives and happiness of men.

Seeing that Tarzan did not pursue him, nor even pay any further attention to him,

Nkima soon lost interest in the game and started to descend again to his master. But once more Fate intervened, this time in the form of a fledgling bird trying its wings for the first time in short, uncertain flights.

Little Nkima espied it, and forthwith forgot all else in the excitement of the chase. When the bird rested upon a twig he crept toward it; but when he would have seized it, it flew away just eluding his grasp. Again and again was this repeated, and as long as the bird remained in sight the excitement of the chase held Nkima enthralled.

Farther and farther north he followed the fledgling, bearing with him the message that would have meant so much

to Tarzan of the Apes; but at length, in a flight much longer sustained than any it had previously attained, the bird disappeared; and that was the last that Nkima saw of it.

For no good reason he had pursued it, for thus his little monkey mind functioned. He had wasted his time, he had missed an opportunity to accomplish something worth while; and he had nothing to show for his pains. But then we have seen men do likewise. We have all chased chimeras.

For some time Nkima continued on toward the north, impelled by the rapidly fading vestiges of the urge that had been driving him; but presently he noticed the paper in the end of the stick that he had

been carrying mechanically because he had been carrying it for so long. This recalled Tarzan to his mind and the fact that he was again alone in a strange land. He decided to return to the ape-man and the Waziri, but even as the determination was forming he heard something to the north of him that aroused his curiosity, demanding investigation. It was the voice of a human being.

Now, by nature Nkima is curious; and in addition Tarzan has trained him to investigate unusual occurrences; so it was not at all strange that he swung on through the trees in the direction of the voice that had attracted his attention, for the moment wholly absorbed in this new interest.

From a lofty height he at last looked down upon the objects of his interest, two Tarmangani, a he and a she. And when Nkima saw the he-Tarmangani he was glad that he was perching safely out of reach, for here was indeed a terrifying Tarmangani. Nkima had never before seen a white man like this one. He had seen the Gomangani, the black men, thus arrayed, but never a white man.

The fellow was large and powerful, with a fierce, evil face, the ferocity of which was surely not lessened by the straight piece of bone or ivory six or eight inches long that pierced the septum of his nose, nor by the feathers in his head dress, nor the paint on his face, the rings in his ears, and the necklace of

human teeth lying against his massive chest.

Nkima noted all these things and more—the loin cloth of gorilla skin, the armlets, wristlets, and anklets, the fiber rope wound many times about the waist, the dagger, and the spear.

This was indeed a Tarmangani to avoid. He filled little Nkima with fear, but not so his companion. She was of a far different mold—small, dainty, and with no indications of barbaric ornamentation. Had Nkima been accustomed to making intelligent deductions from his perceptions he would have guessed immediately that the she was not of the same tribe, perhaps not of the same race as the man; but he

could not have guessed that she was a French girl named Annette. No more could he know that the man was her captor, nor that he was a Kavuru. The mind of Nkima had its limitations.

However, his curiosity was once more aroused. For this reason and another, he followed them. The other reason presupposes imagination, a characteristic that little Nkima possessed, as must all creatures that know how to play; for play is often make-believe, and make-believe requires imagination of no mean order.

So now little Nkima pretended that he was stalking the two Tarmangani; he pretended that they were afraid of him and that presently he would leap upon

them and destroy them. It was great fun for Nkima of whom almost nothing in the whole jungle was afraid, little Nkima who could destroy so few creatures in his teeming world, from whom nothing more important than a fledgling bird might seek to escape. It gave him a fleeting sense of superiority. There are men like that. Often one sees them strutting, clothed in a shred of tenuous, evanescent authority, play-acting at importance.

Pursuing this exciting game, he lost all sense of time, of which, at best, he had little or no conception. Presently night would come; and then he would know that time had passed, but while it was passing he gave it no thought.

The afternoon waned. The quarry passed out of the forest into an open plain at the foot of a tall mountain. The distance from the forest to the mountain was not great. Nkima could see across the plain, cut with little ravines, cluttered with huge boulders, to a village that lay at the foot of a perpendicular cliff.

A little river wound down toward the forest from the village, as though it rose in the village itself and flowed out beneath the gates of the lofty palisade. These things Nkima saw. He also saw the two he had been stalking cross the plain toward the village, but he did not follow them. After all a game is a game; there is no use carrying one too far.

He saw the gates open to admit the couple. He saw them close behind them. Then, for the first time, he realized that night was falling; and suddenly he became very lonely and afraid.

He thought of Tarzan and the safety of that bronzed shoulder; then he turned and scampered through the trees back into the south, clutching the forked stick tightly in his little fist, whimpering as he went.

21. ONLY TWO LEFT

Tibbs awoke suddenly out of a sound sleep, and as he opened his eyes he saw Sborov with upraised hatchet kneeling above Brown. With a cry of warning, he leaped to his feet. Sborov hesitated an instant and looked quickly toward Tibbs. It was that momentary hesitation that saved Brown's life.

Tibbs' cry awakened him, and almost instinctively he recoiled and rolled to one side; perhaps it was a natural reaction to the note of warning and the terror in the voice of the Englishman.

Sborov struck, but the sharp blade missed Brown by a fraction of an inch and was buried in the earth where his bead had lain but a brief instant before.

At Tibbs' cry Jane leaped to her feet, fully awake on the instant. Sborov, on one knee, reached his feet before Brown, and clinging to the hatchet fled into the jungle.

Brown started in pursuit, but Jane called him back. "Don't follow him," she said. "What's the use? We are well rid of him; he won't dare come back now. If you followed him, he might lie in wait for you and kill you. We can't spare any more; we are all too few now."

Brown turned back. "I hate to let him get away with anything like that. But I suppose you're right. He could hide and get me in that mess of trees and undergrowth before I knew what it was all about." He shook his head ruefully.

"But I still hate to let him go; he ought to get what's coming to him."

"He will—out there alone," prophesied Jane. "Hi 'opes 'e does before hever Hi lays eyes on 'im again, the bounder, if you'll pardon me, Milady."

"I think you're quite right, Tibbs; we all feel the same about the man. But now we are only three—though he never was much good to us."

"'Much good'!" exploded Brown. "Migawd, miss, he wasn't no good. He never done a thing except make trouble. If I don't never see the sight of him again that will be twenty years too soon."

"Prince!" There was a world of contempt and irony in the American's

tones. "If they was all like him I don't wonder they been kickin' 'em out."

Jane smiled. "There have been some pretty good ones, Brown; and there still are. Princes like Sborov are not really princes at all—it is often just a courtesy title, as meaningless as a colonelcy in Kentucky. They don't rate very high in their own countries."

Brown grinned. "They sure are the fair haired boys in America, though. It was that title the poor old lady fell for, and look what it cost her. American women are fools, the way they go for titles."

Jane smiled good naturedly. "I'm an American, you know, Brown."

The pilot flushed. "Heck, no, Miss, I

didn't know it. I'm sorry."

"You needn't be, because you're right about some American women— the climbers. It's not as bad as it used to be; but Americans still buy titles, and they don't often get very much for their money beside the titles. Oftentimes even the titles are as spurious as their owners.

"I recall reading a book written a number of years ago by a French count who had married a daughter of one of America's richest railroad families. He made fun of his wife's people, their poor taste, their love of money. Yet nothing that they were accused of could have been in such rotten taste as this book, nor was their love of money any greater than his by his own admission; for he bragged

of having sold his title for their money. In the same breath he spoke of the honor of his house and his ancient lineage. He and his kind are sickening.

"I grow more and more to agree with my husband's appraisal of beasts and men—he prefers the beasts."

Brown shook his head dubiously. "I ain't got much use for men, myself," he admitted; "leastwise some men, but if your husband was in our fix I reckon he'd be doggone glad to get out of this jungle back where there were plenty of men and no beasts."

"You don't know my husband."

"Well, perhaps he'd rather be here than in good old Chi; but I wouldn't."

"Then we'd better start getting out,"

suggested Jane. "There's nothing to keep us here any longer."

"Quite right, Milady, if you'll pardon my saying so," agreed Tibbs.

"I'm for hopping off right away," said Brown. "Perhaps—well, perhaps—"

"Perhaps what?" asked Jane.

"I was just thinking of Annette. I know there ain't no chance of running across her, but I can't help hoping."

"We're all hoping, Brown. That's about all we can do, I'm afraid." Jane laid a sympathetic hand on the man's arm.

As the three set out once more upon the trail toward the east, a pair of eyes watched them from the foliage of a

nearby tree, sinister, unblinking eyes that appraised the two men casually but were most often centered upon Jane.

Brown took the lead, setting a pace that would not be too hard on Tibbs; he had learned that whatever pace he set, the girl was equal to it; perhaps even more. He often wondered at her strength, endurance, and nerve. She was not at all the sort of person that he had imagined a titled English woman would be. He had always thought of women of her class as pampered, helpless creatures. It seemed strange to him now that he should look up to one as a trusted, dependable leader; that is, it seemed strange when he gave the matter any thought; otherwise, it appeared perfectly natural. He had never

followed a man in whom he had greater confidence, or for whom he had more respect, than this slender, beautiful lady of quality.

Behind Brown came Tibbs. The night's rest had refreshed him. His muscles were already becoming inured to the hardships of the trail. He swung along this morning like a veteran.

"Hit's a grand day, Milady," he remarked, "if you don't mind my saying so. I feels as 'ow things was goin' to be a little bit of all right, you know, from now on."

"I hope so, Tibbs. Perhaps the worst is over. If we only knew just where we were, it would make things so much easier. We may be headed straight for

some friendly village where we can get guides, or we may be headed into a wilderness. That is what troubles me most. If we only knew."

"The Duke of Doningham used to say that what we don't know won't never harm us, Milady."

"It won't do us any good, either," laughed Jane.

"But maybe 'e wasn't ever lost in Africa," suggested Tibbs, "Hi never 'ad no idea Africa was such a large place."

"It covers quite a lot of territory, Tibbs. It's no place to be lost."

"Hi'd 'ate to be lost in it all alone, milady—like 'is 'ighness. My word, milady, but 'e must be frightened back there all alone— nothin' only his

thoughts to keep 'im company."

"And such terrible thoughts, Tibbs. I shudder to think what they must be; but I'm not worrying about him—it's poor little Annette."

Tibbs was silent. He too was thinking of Annette.

Gliding silently through the trees behind them followed a tireless stalker. Seldom now were those cruel eyes allowed to wander from the slender figure of the girl swinging along behind the two men.

As the hours passed, Tibbs commenced to tire again. He lagged a little and dropped farther behind Brown. He no longer sought to converse with Jane. He was too tired to talk. The last

couple of times that he had glanced back to see if the girl were coming he had stumbled because his muscles were so weary and his feet seemed so heavy; so he gave it up, and set his mind wholly upon plodding steadily ahead.

He thought that Brown would never stop. What was the man made of, anyway —iron? His legs and feet seemed to be mechanical things that must go on and on, forever. They no longer seemed a part of him. Yet he realized that he had done better today, that he had tired less quickly than on previous days. That was something; but—sitting down would be Heaven. Would Brown never stop?

But at last Brown did stop. "This

looks like as good a place as any to stop for the night," he said. "Tired, Tibbsy?"

The Englishman staggered up and threw himself to the ground. "Tired!" he echoed. "Mr. Brown, there ain't no word in the whole bloomin' Hoxford Hinglish Dictionary that's as tired as Hi am."

Brown laughed. "Well, I don't feel so chipper myself," he admitted. "I'll bet the lady's the freshest one of all. Say, where is she?"

Tibbs looked back along the trail. "She was right behind me the last time I looked. Doubtless she'll be along in a second."

"She shouldn't get so far behind," grumbled Brown. It was evident that he was becoming apprehensive. Then he

called aloud. "Hi, there! Lady Greystoke!"

There was no answering call. The two men stared expectantly along the trail. Tibbs rose wearily to his feet. Brown called again. There was only silence. Brown looked at Tibbs. There was an expression on the American's face that Tibbs had never seen there before. It was fear; but it was not fear for himself.

At a run Brown started along the back trail. Tibbs staggered after him. Occasionally Brown would stop and call the missing girl's name aloud, but there was never any answer. They kept on until darkness overtook them.

Tibbs was exhausted; he could go no

farther. Brown, too, was almost at the limit of his powers. They threw themselves to the ground.

"It ain't no use," said Brown wearily. "She's gone—just like Annette—and I think in the same way. Why didn't she let me kill him? Why didn't I kill him anyway? I knew I should of."

"You think it was the prince?"

"Sure it was, the dirty—. Oh, what's the use? It's all my fault for lettin' a woman tell me what to do. She's a grand woman, but women are all alike when it comes to a job like that; they're too soft hearted. I ought to 'ave killed him when I first wanted to. We'd 'ave had Lady Greystoke and Annette both with us now if I had."

"Hit ain't your fault, Mr. Brown," said Tibbs soothingly. "You only done what any man would 'ave done. We hall of us promised to hobey Lady Greystoke, hand she told you not to kill 'im. Though, if you'll pardon my saying so, Hi think the blighter ought to have been killed long ago."

The rumble of a lion's roar echoed through the darkening forest awakening the men to the dangers of the coming night. Brown groaned.

"If I only knew where they were! If I just knew they was alive. If he hasn't killed 'em; just think of 'em back there somewheres in the dark with only that—that pansy to look after 'em," The gloom of Brown's mood was reflected in his

voice.

"You don't really think 'e'd kill Lady Greystoke, do you?" demanded Tibbs, horrified. It was quite one thing to kill a lady's maid, but another, an unthinkable thing, to kill a titled lady. Tibbs' viewpoint on such matters was largely a matter of heredity (his people had been serving people as far back as any of them knew) and training and habit of thought. His snobbishness was the snobbishness of the serving class, ingrained and ineradicable.

"No, I don't think he'd kill her, unless she resisted him; and there ain't no question about that. But he did have good reason to want to kill poor little Annette. If it was him that got her, she's

dead all right. God, if I could only lay my hands on him! What say we back track tomorrow and keep on huntin' 'till we find him. We may never find them, but it would be some satisfaction to find him. What do you say, Tibbsy? I'll let you help me kill him."

"Hi've never been one that believed in bloodshed, Mr. Brown; but Hi do say, hand Hi'm not ashamed of hit, that hif 'e killed Lady Greystoke and Annette Hi'd like nothing better than to do 'im in all by my bloomin' self; but, Mr. Brown, Hi don't think we ought to turn back. Hi think we should carry on just like milady told us to, hand get 'elp to come back 'ere hand search for them—some one that knows the country."

"I suppose you're right, Tibbsy. We couldn't find the Empire State building if it was wandering around in this man's jungle, let alone a couple of girls."

A lion roared again, nearer this time.

"I reckon we'd better climb a tree, Tibbsy, and wait for daylight. It don't look like sleepin' on the ground was goin' to be very healthy."

"My father always said it was most un'ealthy. 'E got rheumatism something terrible sleeping on the ground in the Crimea."

"Then let's climb," said Brown. "I don't want to get rheumatism."

22. STALKED BY NUMA

Nkima spent a night of terror. Sheeta, the leopard, prowled on the ground, climbed through the trees. Nkima clung to the loftiest branch that would support his weight and shivered from cold and terror throughout the long night. But at last day dawned, and with the first lessening of the terrifying darkness he swung off through the trees in search of Tarzan and the Waziri. And still he clung to the little cleft stick with the bit of paper fluttering from its tip.

He had not gone far when he heard the voices of men. His little heart beat wildly as he sped in the direction of the sound. So anxious was he to find Tarzan that he had no place in his mind for any

doubt that the voices he heard might be those of others than his friends. Nor were they.

Chattering and screaming, Nkima dropped plummetlike from high branches to alight upon the shoulder of his friend. One arm encircled Tarzan's neck, and from the little clenched paw the cleft stick brought the fluttering bit of paper directly in front of the ape- man's eyes. He saw writing upon it, handwriting that even in a brief glance he recognized. Yet he could not believe. It was incredible, preposterous to even imagine that little Nkima bore a message penned by Jane. The remarkable similarity between this handwriting and hers could be nothing more than a fantastic coincidence.

Before Nkima could again escape him Tarzan slipped the message from the stick; and, while the monkey chattered and scolded, scanned it hurriedly. The Waziri, watching him, saw sudden concern mirrored in his expression.

"Where did you get this, Nkima?" demanded the ape-man. "Who gave it to you?"

Nkima stopped scolding and scratched his head. Where did he get it? He could not recall. Many things had happened since then. His memory was a long, dim corridor; and this event a tiny thing at the far end.

"Something is wrong, Bwana?" asked Muviro. "Nkima has brought you bad news?"

"It is a message from Lady Greystoke. She and a party of friends were forced down in an aeroplane. They are lost somewhere without provisions or weapons."

He turned his attention again to Nkima. "Who gave you this?" he demanded. "Was it a she?—a Tarmangani?"

Slowly Nkima was recollecting. "It was not a Tarmangani," he said.

"A Gomangani?"

"It was not a Gomangani."

"Who did give it to you, then?"

Now Nkima recalled. "No one gave it to Nkima. Nkima found it in a wala."

"What does he say, Bwana?" asked

Muviro; for Nkima had spoken in the language of his people, which only Tarzan, among men, understands.

"He says he found it in a 'nest'," explained the Lord of the Jungle. "That might mean a house, or a hut, or a shelter, the lair of a wild beast, or the nest of a bird. I will find out."

"Nkima, what built the nest in which you found this?"

"Tarmangani. The Gomangani do not build a wala like it."

"Where is it? Try to recall. You must take me to it. Where was it?"

Nkima waved a paw loosely in the general direction of the West.

"You will take Tarzan to this nest,"

said the ape-man.

Instantly Nkima was all excitement. He felt quite important. He hopped to the ground and pulled on Tarzan's leg.

"Come with Nkima," he begged.

"Lead your warriors toward the north until you find the village of the Kavuru," Tarzan directed Muviro. "If they are unfriendly, and you cannot enter their village to recover Buira, wait for me there. If you find her and take her away, leave some sign that will tell me so. You understand?"

"Yes, Bwana."

"Then Nkima and I go to search for Lady Greystoke."

It was not by a direct route that Nkima

led Tarzan toward the shelter in which he had found the message, but a circuitous one that retraced his wanderings. Each of his mischances and adventures of the preceding days was a landmark on the back trail, and thus slowly he found his way back toward the shelter.

At one point he told Tarzan he had seen a strange Tarmangani with a she-Tarmangani; and Tarzan was almost convinced that it might have been Jane, the captive of a Kavuru. He was tempted to give up the search for the shelter where the message had been found and attempt to trail the man and the woman; but Nkima could not tell him in which direction they had gone, the spoor had

disappeared, and his judgment told him that the place to start his search for Jane was at some point at which he might be positive she had been.

It required infinite patience to endure the vagaries of Nkima's memory and his inability to hold for long to a fixed continuity of thought; but most beasts are patient, and in this respect Tarzan was like his fellows of the jungle. His reward came eventually when Nkima proudly led him down through the trees to the camp that the marooned fliers had made—the camp where Nkima had found the note.

Here Tarzan found indisputable evidence that Jane had indeed been a member of the ill-starred company, and

plain before him lay the trail that they had taken toward the east. No longer was he dependent upon Nkima, and with renewed hope he swung off into the unknown country that had swallowed his mate.

* * * * *

Retribution is seldom swift or well directed, yet perhaps in his terror Prince Alexis Sborov was tasting the immediate fruits of his misdeeds through a punishment scarcely less drastic than death itself; for Sborov was an arrant coward, and he was suffering as only a coward might as he trembled alone in the menacing silence of the mysterious jungle.

And he was torn between two terrors,

one of which almost cancelled the other. He was afraid of the denizens of the jungle and the thought of facing a jungle night alone, and it was this fear that almost submerged another —his fear of Brown. But not quite. As much as he longed to return to the companionship of those he had persistently sought to offend or injure, the knowledge that Brown would kill him if he did, exiled him to the torture of his terror- stricken loneliness.

When he had finally been forced to definitely abandon any thought of returning to the others, he determined to follow the plan that he had originally suggested to them, the plan that had been voted down in favor of Jane's suggestion

that they search toward the east for friendly tribes; and so he set his face toward the west in the hope that he might stumble upon a white settlement in the Belgian Congo.

One ordeal that he dreaded lay ahead of him on this route, for in retracing his steps he must pass the grave of his murdered wife. He had no regrets for his deed; but his superstitious mind was terror ridden by imaginings induced by Tibbs' story of the murdered Duchess of Doningham, who returned from the grave to carry away her maid.

As Tibbs had, so did Sborov see a parallel in the mysterious disappearance of Annette, a disappearance that he could not account for logically in any

other way.

But there was no alternative. He must pass close to the grave and the scene of the murder. Once again he would wield the hand-axe in the fullness of his imagination, and once again the warm blood of his victim would splatter upon his hand and his clothing.

The first night he spent among the branches of a tree, too terrified to sleep. He heard the hunting beasts prowl beneath him. He heard the screams of stricken prey. The earth trembled to the roar of the king of beasts; and there were other sounds, stealthy, mysterious sounds that were even more terrifying because he could not identify them.

But at last the night passed and dawn

came to look down upon a haggard, unkempt creature that started at its own shadow, a creature exhausted by fright, by sleeplessness, and by hunger, a very different creature from the Prince Sborov of the Paris boulevards.

His hands and arms, his unshaven face, his matted hair were caked with dirt and dried sweat, cut down his shrunken cheeks by muddy rivulets of tears. His mind was tottering. He talked to himself, and then cautioned himself to silence lest his voice might attract the attention of some beast of prey.

Thus he stumbled on through the day, without food and without water — hopeless victim of his own avarice, a sorry contrast to the proud beasts he

feared, a sad commentary upon the theory of evolution.

It was midafternoon when the thing that he had dreaded occurred. He was walking a broad and, for a short distance, straight trail. As he had been constantly doing, he glanced behind him. His knees trembled. He thought that he must fall. For a moment he was paralyzed.

For where the trail turned to disappear among the underbrush stood a great lion. He was eyeing Sborov appraisingly. What he was doing abroad at that hour of the day when he should have been lying up waiting for evening and the hunting hours is a matter of his own concern, but there he was. He

merely stood and contemplated Sborov.

Presently the man regained control of his muscles. He started to move slowly along the trail. He had heard that if one ran, almost any beast of prey would pursue—and overtake; for man is of the slowest of animals.

As Sborov moved away, the lion moved after him. It came slowly, just keeping pace with the man. It was stalking him. When it was ready to do so, it would charge; and that would be the end.

Sborov knew little of the habits of lions; but he had gleaned this much from yarns spun around the camp fires, to which he had listened, even though he had never been encouraged to take part.

He wondered how long it would be before the lion would rush at him and drag him down. He wanted to run. It was with difficulty that he restrained the impulse. He looked longingly at the trees that he was too weak to climb.

A turn in the trail hid the lion from him, and then Sborov broke into a run. An instant later an angry growl sounded behind him. It seemed very close. The man threw a glance back across his shoulder. The lion was advancing at a trot. Its eyes were blazing, terrible yellow-green eyes that shrivelled the last vestige of his self-control.

Sborov voiced a piercing scream of terror.

23. CAPTIVE

Tarzan swung through the trees not far from a jungle trail that led toward the east. Nkima scampered sometimes ahead, sometimes above his master. He was very brave and truculent, for the sanctuary of a bronzed shoulder was always near.

Usha, the wind, was blowing in Tarzan's face. To his nostrils it brought messages from the jungle ahead. It spoke of Hista, the snake, of Wappi, the antelope, and of Sheeta, the leopard. Faintly from a great distance, it told of water it had passed upon its journey. Thus could Tarzan direct his course and select his camp sites far ahead when he passed through country that was

unfamiliar to him.

There came also upon the breath of Usha the pungent odor of Numa, the lion; and a moment later Tarzan heard the angry growl of the king of beasts. Almost simultaneously he caught the scent spoor of man, of a lone Tarmangani.

Tarzan could almost picture the scene that was being enacted somewhere along that trail ahead of him, and he increased his speed; for a white man in this particular district might well be a member of the party that Jane had accompanied; he might know where she was or what fate had befallen her. It would not do to let Numa destroy him; at least not until Tarzan had questioned

him.

No considerations of humanity prompted Tarzan of the Apes to hasten to the aid of this unknown man, nor would it have been selfish callousness to the suffering of another that would have left him more or less indifferent but for the thought of Jane. He was a jungle animal, a fellow to the lion; and he knew that the lion must eat, even as he must. If it did not feed upon this man, it would feed upon some other living creature whose life was as precious to it as the man's was to him; and in the philosophy of the jungle one life is no more valuable than another, unless it be that of one's self or a friend.

Tarzan knew that the two were not far

ahead of him. The odor of Numa told him that the lion was not empty and that therefore he was probably stalking the Tarmangani with no immediate likelihood that he would attack unless provoked.

Then the quiet of the jungle was shattered by a scream of terror, and Tarzan guessed that the lion's short temper had been aroused. Instantly the ape-man swung forward at terrific speed, and so swiftly he sped through the middle terrace of the forest that even little Nkima had difficulty in keeping pace.

Sborov thought that the lion was charging, but it was not. It was merely keeping its prey in sight, but the angry

growl of annoyance was a warning against attempted escape and a threat of what the quarry might expect if it forced the king to exert himself unnecessarily at this hour of the day when heat lay heavy and humid upon the jungle and royalty should be taking its siesta.

But Sborov would have been deaf to all warnings now even had he understood them. He was crazed with terror. His one, his only impulse was to escape; and so he ran on, his legs staggering from exhaustion and fear, his heart pounding in his throat, choking the screams that trembled there unborn.

Now indeed did Numa wax wroth. This pitiful thing was trying to escape him, and it was making him trot when he

wished only to loaf along the trail at his ease until he was again ready to kill and feed. He would put an end to it; and that, quickly. He voiced another warning roar as he prepared to charge—a roar that half paralyzed the man.

Thinking the end had come, Sborov fell to his knees, turning so that he faced the lion; and as he did so a strange thing happened, a thing so remarkable that it surprised the lion quite as much as it did Sborov. A white man dropped from above into the trail between them.

Sborov had never seen a man such as this, a bronzed giant, almost naked; a handsome giant with grim, stern features; a giant who faced a lion with as little apparent concern as one might reveal in

shooing away an alley cat. He just stood there facing the lion and waiting; and the lion stopped in its tracks, eyeing the intruder but with evidently growing displeasure.

As Sborov looked at the man he realized that he was really not of gigantic proportions, yet he conveyed the impression of great size. Perhaps it was the suggestion of power and majesty in his mien that gave him the appearance of towering over other creatures. He stood, perhaps, a couple of inches over six feet; rounded muscles flowed smoothly beneath clear, bronzed skin; his proportions were as perfect for his kind as were those of the great lion he faced. It occurred to Sborov that these two

were very much alike, and he began to be as afraid of the man as of the other beast.

They stood thus facing each other for but a moment; then the lion growled, lashing its tail, and took a step forward. The man growled, and Sborov shuddered. Now, indeed, was he terrified. Above them a little monkey danced up and down upon the limb of a tree, chattering and scolding. He loosed upon the lion a vocabulary of rich invective, but to Sborov it was only the silly chattering of a monkey.

The bronzed giant moved slowly forward to meet the lion; from the mighty cavity of his deep chest rolled savage growls. Numa halted. He glanced

quickly from side to side. He shook his head and, holding it upon one side, snarled; then he wheeled about and stalked majestically away without a backward glance. The man had outbluffed the lion.

Suddenly the newcomer wheeled upon Sborov. "Who are you?" he demanded. Had the lion spoken, Sborov would have been little less surprised than he was to hear excellent English fall from lips that had just been voicing the hideous growls of a beast. He was so surprised that he did not reply; then the man repeated the question. This time his tone was peremptory, brooking no delay.

"I am Prince Alexis Sborov."

"Where are the rest of your party—

Lady Greystoke and the others?"

Sborov's eyes went wide. How did this man know about them? Who could he be?

"I don't know. They left me alone to die in the jungle."

"Who left you alone?"

"Only Lady Greystoke, myself, my valet, and the pilot, Brown were left of the original party when they abandoned me."

"Why did they abandon you?"

"Brown wanted me to die. He did not want me to reach civilization and accuse him of murder."

Tarzan scrutinized the man closely. There was nothing about him to arouse

the ape-man's admiration or liking. "Whom did he murder?" he asked.

"He killed my wife, because he thought that she could not keep up with the rest of us and would thus prevent Brown's escape from the jungle. He knew that I would not leave her, and he did not want to lose any of the men —he was afraid to travel alone."

"Then why did he abandon you?" demanded Tarzan.

Sborov realized the inconsistency of his two statements; but his explanation came quickly, glibly. "He was in love with Lady Greystoke— they ran off together."

Tarzan's face darkened, and his fingers moved as though closing upon

something—a throat, perhaps. "Which way did they go?" he asked.

"Along this same trail toward the east," replied Sborov.

"When?"

"Yesterday, I think, or perhaps the day before. It seems very long that I have been alone in the jungle—I have lost track of time."

"Where are Tibbs and Annette?"

Again Sborov was astonished. "Who are you?" he asked. "How do you know so much about us?"

Tarzan did not reply. He just stood looking at the man. What was he to do with him? He would delay his search for Jane, yet he could not leave him alone to

die, as he most assuredly would, because he believed that he was a friend of Jane. In her note she had given no details of the mishaps that had befallen them. She had only enumerated the members of the party, explained that their ship had crashed and that Princess Sborov had died. He naturally assumed that Jane was a guest of the Sborovs and that therefore the man must be her friend.

"What became of Tibbs and Annette?"

"Annette disappeared," explained the prince. "We do not know what became of her. She just vanished in thin air. Her footprints led to a point beneath a tree. They stopped there."

"How long ago was that?"

"I think it was the day before Brown

ran away with Lady Greystoke."

"And Tibbs?"

"Tibbs went with them."

"Why did he take Tibbs and not you?"

"He was not afraid of Tibbs. He knew that I would protect Lady Greystoke and also bring him to justice if we ever reached civilization."

Tarzan's level gaze held steadily upon Sborov as he appraised the man. He mistrusted him, but no hint of what was passing in his mind was betrayed by any changing expression of his inscrutable face. He was repelled by Sborov's face, by his manner, by the suggestion of contradiction and inconsistency in several of his statements; yet he realized that in the latter must lie some germ of

fact.

At least the fellow had definitely assured him that he was on Jane's trail; and convinced him that the girl Nkima had seen with the Kavuru must have been Annette, as Jane must still have been with Brown and Sborov at the time that Nkima had seen the other woman.

"Come," he said to the man, "we shall go and find Lady Greystoke and Brown."

"Brown will kill me," said Sborov. "He has threatened to many times."

"He will not kill you while I am with you."

"You do not know him."

"I do not need to know him," replied the ape-man; "I know myself."

"I am too weak to travel fast," explained Sborov. "If you know this country, you had better take me to some village and then go on after Brown yourself. I have not eaten for a long time. I doubt that I could walk another mile, I am so weak from hunger."

"Stay here," directed Tarzan. "I will get food; then we will go on after Brown."

Sborov watched the man move off into the forest, a little monkey perched upon one broad shoulder.

24. DOWN INTO DARKNESS

Jane's thoughts had been far away as she swung along the trail behind Tibbs and Brown that afternoon; they had been far to the west where a little, time worn cabin stood near the shore of a landlocked cove on the west coast. There had centered many of the important events and thrilling adventures of her life; there she had met that strange demi-god of the forest whom she had later come to know as Tarzan of the Apes.

Where was he now? Had he received her cablegram? If he had, he was already searching for her. The thought gave her

renewed hope. She longed for the sanctuary of those mighty arms, for the peace and safety that his strength and jungle-craft afforded.

As her thoughts re-explored the winding back-trail of time her pace slowed and she dropped still farther in the rear of her companions. For the moment they were forgotten; she was alone in the great jungle of her memories.

But she was not alone. Eyes watched her every move; from the foliage of the trees above, they watched her, ever keeping pace with her.

Presently she felt an unaccountable urge to turn back. She wondered why. Was it a woman's intuition directing her

for her best good? Was it a beneficent or a malign influence? She could only wonder.

At first this peculiar urge was only a faint suggestion; then it became more pronounced, became a force beyond her power to deny. At last she ceased to wonder or to question. Tibbs and Brown seemed very far away. She thought of calling to them, but she knew that it would be useless. For just an instant longer she hesitated, striving to force her will to drive her along the trail in an effort to overtake them; then she surrendered. A power stronger than she controlled her, and she turned docilely back away from them.

It was as though some one was calling

to her in a voice that she could not hear but that she must obey. It offered her nothing, nor did it threaten her. She had neither hope nor fear because of it.

When the noose of the Kavuru dropped about her she felt no surprise, no terror—her sensibilities were numbed. She looked into the savage, painted face of the white man who drew her to a limb beside him and removed the noose from about her. It all seemed perfectly natural, as though it were something that had been foreordained since the beginning of time.

The man lifted her to a shoulder and started off through the trees toward the east away from the trail that ran in a northeasterly direction at that point. He

did not speak, nor did she. It all seemed quite in order. This state of mind persisted for a matter of an hour or so; then it gradually commenced to fade as she slowly emerged from the state of hypnosis that had deadened her sensibilities. Slowly the horror of her situation dawned upon her. She realized that she was in the clutches of a strange, savage creature that was also a white man. She knew now that she had been hypnotized, the victim of a strange power that turned her will to its own purposes yet left her conscious of all that transpired.

She felt that she must do something about it, but what was there to do? From the ease with which the man carried her,

she knew that his strength was abnormal—far beyond any that she could pit against it in an effort to escape. Her only hope lay in evolving some stratagem that would permit her to elude him when he was off guard. This she could never hope to do as long as he carried her.

She wondered where he was taking her and to what fate. If she could only carry on a conversation with him she might discover, but what language would such a creature speak? Well, she could only try.

"Who are you?" she asked in English. "What are you going to do with me?"

The man grunted and then mumbled in a Bantu dialect with which she was familiar, "I do not understand."

Jane experienced a moment of elation that was great by contrast with the hopelessness of her situation when she realized that he spoke a language she was familiar with.

"I understand you," she said in the same dialect that he had used. "Now tell me who you are and why you have taken me. I am not an enemy of your people, but if you keep me or harm me my people will come and destroy your village; they will kill many of you."

"Your people will not come. No one ever comes to the village of the Kavuru. If any did, they would be killed."

"You call yourselves Kavuru? Where is your village?"

"You will see."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"I take you to Kavandavanda."

"Who is Kavandavanda?" she demanded.

"He is Kavandavanda." The man spoke as though that were sufficient explanation. It was as though one said, "God is God."

"What does he want of me? What is he going to do with me? If he wants ransom, if you want ransom, my people will pay much to have me back unharmed."

"You talk too much," snapped the Kavuru. "Shut up." For a while Jane was silent; then she tried again, spurred on by the discomfort of the position in which she was being carried.

"Put me down," she said. "I can travel through the trees quite as well as you. There is no reason why you should carry me. It will be easier for us both if you let me walk."

At first the Kavuru appeared to ignore the suggestion; but at last he put her down. "Do not try to escape," he warned. "If you do try to, I may have to kill you. No one must ever escape from a Kavuru."

Jane stretched her cramped muscles and surveyed her captor. He was indeed a savage appearing specimen; but how much of that was due to his natural countenance and how much to the paint, the nose ornament and the ear rings she could not guess. Like many savage or

primitive people, his age was undeterminable by his appearance; yet somehow she felt that he was a young man.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Ogdli," he replied.

"You are a chief, of course," she said, hoping to make a favorable impression by flattery.

"I am not a chief," he replied. "There is only one chief, and that is Kavandavanda."

She tried to draw him on into a conversation; but he was short and taciturn at first, finally becoming ugly.

"Shut up, or I will cut your tongue out," he snapped. "Kavandavanda does

not need your tongue."

Thereafter, Jane was silent; for there was that about her captor and the tone in which he made the threat that told her it was no idle one.

That night he bound her securely with his rope while he lay down to sleep, and the next morning they were on their way again. At the halt he had gathered some fruit and nuts, and these formed the only breakfast that they had.

In the middle of the forenoon they came suddenly to the end of the forest and looked out across a narrow plain to a lofty mountain at the foot of which Jane thought that she discerned what appeared to be a palisade built close to a perpendicular cliff.

The plain was strewn with large boulders and cut by several washes; so that as they advanced across it toward the mountain the palisade was sometimes in view and sometimes hidden from their sight.

As they approached more closely, Jane saw that the palisade was a massive affair of stone and that it formed three sides of a rectangle the rear wall of which was evidently the face of the mighty cliff that loomed high above them.

A small river followed a winding course across the plain from the very foot of the palisade, as though it were born there; though when she came closer she saw that it flowed from beneath the

stone wall through an opening left for that purpose.

Her captor shouted as he approached the palisade, and a moment later one of the two massive gates swung open a little way to admit them. Beyond was a narrow street flanked by small stone houses, the flat roofs of which suggested that this was a country of little rain. They were houses similar in design to those built of stone and adobe by the prehistoric builders of the ancient pueblos of southwestern America.

Savage warriors loitered before tiny doorways or tended cooking fires built in little outdoor ovens. Like Ogdli, they were all young men, their ornaments, apparel, and weapons being almost

identical to his.

Some of them gathered around Jane and her captor, examining her and asking questions of Ogdli.

"You and Ydeni have all the luck," grumbled one. "He captured a black girl and a white girl all during the full of the moon."

"The black girl got away from him," said another.

"Yes, but he went right back into the forest and caught a white girl."

"He will get no teeth for the black girl."

"No, but he will get a fine string for the white one; and Ogdli will get another row of teeth—that will make four for

Ogdli. Kavandavanda will think well of him."

"He should," said Ogdli. "I am the greatest warrior among the Kavuru."

A big fellow grunted derisively. "You have but three rows of teeth," he taunted. "I have seven," and he tapped his chest where it joined his throat.

Jane, listening to this strange conversation, made little of it until this gesture of the speaker called her attention to the necklaces of human teeth about his throat; then she saw that there were seven rows of them and that about Ogdli's neck were three similar strands. She glanced at some of the other warriors. Some had one or two, others had none. These necklaces were

evidently a sign of greatness, evidencing the prowess of the individual and his success in capturing women.

Suddenly she became aware of a marked peculiarity of her surroundings —here she was in an isolated village of a war- like people far removed from other villages, a village in which there were many men in the prime of life; yet she had seen neither women nor children.

What could it mean? Did some strange custom require that women and children remain indoors at certain hours or upon certain occasions, or were there no women nor children? If the latter were true, then what became of the women captives of which they boasted?

But it could not be true; there must be women and children. But if there were women, why did the men attend the cooking fires? That was no fit work for warriors.

These observations and thoughts passed quickly through Jane's mind as she was led along the narrow street by Ogdli. At an intersection her captor turned into a narrow alley and led her to a low, circular building that lent to her surroundings a still greater similitude to the ancient villages of the pueblos; for this was a windowless structure against which leaned a primitive wooden ladder leading to the roof. If it were not a ceremonial kiva its appearance belied its purpose.

With a grunt, Ogdli motioned her to precede him up the ladder; and when she gained the roof she found still further evidence of kivalike attributes, for here the top of a second ladder protruded from a small, rectangular opening.

Ogdli pointed to it. "Go down," he commanded; "and stay down. Do not try to escape. It will be worse for you if you do try."

Jane looked down through the aperture. She could see nothing—just a black pit.

"Hurry!" admonished Ogdli.

The girl placed a foot upon a rung of the ladder and started slowly down into the black, mysterious void. She was no coward, but her courage was tested to its

utmost as she forced her unwilling feet down that shaky, primitive ladder. Uppermost in her mind was the fact that she had seen no women in the village of the Kavuru. What had been the fate of the captives of which the warriors had boasted? Had they, too, descended this ladder? Had they gone down into this dark abyss never to return?

25. DEFEAT

Muviro and the Waziri came to the end of the forest. Before them stretched a narrow plain that lay at the foot of a lone mountain.

One of the warriors pointed. "There is a village built at the foot of that high cliff. I see the palisade."

Muviro shaded his eyes with his hand. He nodded. "It must be the village of Kavuru. We have found it at last. Perhaps we shall not find Buira, but we will punish the Kavuru. We will teach them to leave the daughters of the Waziri alone."

The other warriors assented with savage growls; for they were Waziri,

known for ages as mighty warriors. Who might dare encroach upon their rights? Who might steal their women with impunity? None.

Other tribes suffered similar losses. They made big noise with tom-toms and shouting. They danced their war dances. And then, when there was little chance of overtaking their enemy, they set out in pursuit; but always they abandoned the chase before they overhauled the quarry. Not so the Waziri. What they undertook, they pursued relentlessly whether it brought victory or defeat.

"Come!" said Muviro, and led his warriors out upon the plain toward the village of the Kavuru. Suddenly he halted. "What is that?" he demanded.

The Waziri listened. A low droning sound that at first barely commanded the attention of their ears was growing steadily in volume. The warriors, standing in silence, looked up toward the heavens.

"There it is," said one, pointing. "It is a canoe that flies. I saw one pass low over the country of the Waziri. It made the same sound."

The ship came rapidly into view, flying at an altitude of three or four thousand feet. It passed over the plain and the Waziri; then it banked steeply and turned back. With motor throttled, the ship descended gracefully in wide spirals. At a few hundred feet from the ground the pilot gave it the gun, but still

he continued to circle low over the plain. He was searching for a landing place. For two hours he had been searching for one, almost hopelessly.

Lost, and with only a little fuel remaining in his tanks, he welcomed the sight of this open plain and the village with heartfelt thanks. He knew that he couldn't get fuel here, but he could get his position, and at least he was saved from making a forced landing over the forest.

Flying low, he saw the Waziri, white plumed savages evidently coming from the forest; and he saw natives emerging from the village, too. He saw that these were different in a most surprising way, and he dropped lower and circled twice

more to make sure.

His companion, in the front cockpit, scribbled a note and handed it back to him; "What do you make of them? They look white to me."

"They are white," wrote the pilot.

Owing to the washes and boulders there were not many safe landing places available on the plain. One of the best, or perhaps it would be truer to say least impossible, was directly in front of the village; another, and perhaps a better one, lay across the plain, near the forest. Muviro and his Waziri stood near the edge of it, a band of primitive savages; and the sight of these and the implications their presence suggested determined the pilot to set his ship down

nearer the village and its white inhabitants. Tragic error.

Once again the ship circled the plain, rising to an altitude of a thousand feet; then the pilot cut his motor and glided toward a landing.

Muviro resumed his advance upon the village; and as the way led him and his men down into a deep wash they did not see the actual landing of the ship, but when they again reached higher ground they saw two men climbing from the cockpits of the plane, while advancing from the open gates of the Kavura village was a swarm of savage, white warriors, whose hostile intent was all too apparent to Muviro.

They were white! No longer was

there any doubt in the mind of the Waziri chieftain; now he knew that these were indeed the Kavuru. They were shouting and brandishing their spears as they ran toward the two aviators. Apparently they had not as yet discovered the presence of the Waziri; or, if they had, they ignored them.

Muviro spoke to his men in low tones, and they spread out in a thin line and moved silently forward at a trot. They did not yell and prance as do many native warriors, and because they did not they seemed always to inspire greater fear in the hearts of their enemies. There were only ten of them, yet they charged the savage Kavuru, who outnumbered them ten to one, with all the

assurance that they might have been expected to have had the odds been reversed.

The fliers, seeing that the natives were hostile, fell back toward their ship. One of them fired a shot over the heads of the advancing Kavuru; but as it had no deterrent effect, the man fired again; and this time a Kavuru fell. Still the savage white warriors came on.

Now both the fliers opened fire, yet on came the Kavuru. Soon they would be within spear range of their victims. The men glanced behind them as though seeking temporary shelter, but what they saw must have been disheartening —a thin line of black warriors trotting silently toward them from the rear.

They did not know that these would have been friends and allies; so one of them raised his pistol and fired at Muviro. The bullet missed its mark; and the Waziri chieftain sought cover behind a boulder, ordering his men to do likewise; for he knew better than the Kavuru the deadly effectiveness of firearms.

Then he called to the two fliers in English, telling them that the Waziri were friendly; but the harm had already been done—the delay permitted the Kavuru to close in upon the two men before the Waziri could join forces with them to repel the enemy. Perhaps it would have done no good, so greatly did the Kavuru outnumber them all.

With savage yells they bore down upon the fliers, though several of their number dropped before the fire that the two poured into their ranks. Now they were close; but close too were the Waziri, who were moving forward again, now at a run.

Presently the Kavuru spears began to fly. One of the strangers fell with a weapon through his heart. Now a volley of spears leaped from the hands of the Waziri, momentarily checking the advance of the Kavuru, who seemed to fear spears more than they did firearms.

They did not retreat, but merely paused a moment; then they launched another flight of spears; and this time the second flier fell, and with him three

Waziri. A moment later the Kavuru and Waziri closed in hand-to-hand struggle.

Now there were but seven of the latter; and though they fought valiantly, they were no match for the hundred Kavuru warriors that overwhelmed them.

Fighting close to the bodies of the slain fliers, Muviro and one of his warriors, Balando, salvaged the pistols and ammunition of the dead men. At close quarters the firearms had a more definite effect on the morale of the Kavuru, stopping them temporarily and permitting Muviro and his remaining warriors to fall back in search of shelter. Now there were but four of them, Muviro, Balando, and two others.

The Waziri chief sought to reach a pile of granite rising spire- like from the plain; and at last he was successful, but now only Balando remained alive to carry on the unequal struggle with him. Together they fell back to the rocky sanctuary Muviro had chosen, and while Muviro held the Kavuru at bay Balando clambered to the summit safely out of effective spear range; then he fired down upon the enemy while Muviro climbed to his side.

Again and again the Kavuru hurled their spears aloft; but the height was too great for any but the most powerful muscles, and even the weapons of these had lost so much speed and momentum by the time they reached the level at

which their targets stood that they ceased to constitute a menace. The revolvers and bows of the two Waziri, however, still did effective work —so effective that the Kavuru fell back toward their village; and with the coming of the swift equatorial twilight Muviro saw them definitely give up the attack and file back toward the village gate.

As they passed the grounded ship, Muviro saw that they avoided it and guessed that they were afraid of it as of something supernatural; then night fell, blotting out the scene.

Sorrowfully Muviro and Balando descended from the rock that had afforded them sanctuary. They sought shelter and a place to sleep in the forest,

the unpenetrable gloom of which seemed no darker than their future. But they made no plans; they were too exhausted, too overcome by grief and disappointment to think clearly.

"If only the Big Bwana would come," sighed Balando.

"Yes," agreed Muviro. "If he had been here, this would not have happened."

26. TARZAN STALKS BROWN

The morning mist floated lazily in the still air, the soul of the dead night clinging reluctantly to earth. A strange hush lay on the jungle, a silence as poignant as a leopard's scream. It awakened Brown. He moved gingerly in the crotch of the tree into which he had wedged himself the evening before. He was stiff and lame and sore. Every muscle ached. He looked up at Tibbs, a couple of feet above him, and grinned. The Englishman was spread-eagled across two parallel branches to which he was clinging tightly in restless slumber.

"He looks like he was goin' to be grilled," mused the pilot. "Poor old Tibbsy." He spoke the last words half aloud.

Tibbs opened his eyes and looked around. For a moment his expression was surprised and troubled; then he discovered Brown below him, and full consciousness returned.

"My word!" he exclaimed with a shake of his head. "Hi was just drawing 'is Grace's bawth."

"You even wait on 'em in your sleep, don't you, Tibbsy?"

"Well, you see, sir, hits been my life, always; and Hi wouldn't hask for a better one—peace and orderliness. Heverything clean and straight;

heverything always in its place. Hand not 'ard work, sir. Hand you're always treated well—that is, by gentlemen. It's been my good fortune to be in the service mostly of gentlemen."

"Like this Sborov guy?" inquired Brown.

"'E was not a gentleman."

"But he was a prince, wasn't he? Don't that make him a gentleman?"

Tibbs scratched his head. "It should but it doesn't; not always. Hi sometimes think when Hi see a bounder with a title that possibly at some time his mother may have been indiscreet."

Brown laughed. "I guess there must of been a lot of indiscretion in high places," he remarked, and then: "How

about pullin' our freight, Tibbsy? We got a long ways to go on a pair of empty stomachs."

Wearily the two men plodded on through the jungle. All the forces of nature and the laws of chance seemed to have combined against them from the first. Now they were sad, disheartened, almost without hope; yet each tried bravely to keep up the spirits of the other. It was oftentimes a strain, and occasionally one of them voiced the morbid doubts and fears that assailed them both.

"Do you believe in black magic, Tibbsy?" asked Brown.

"Hi 'ave seen some strange things hin my life, sir," replied the Englishman.

"You know what the old dame come down here to look for, don't you?"

"Yes, something that would renew youth, wasn't it?"

"Yes. I know a lot about that. I knew a lot I didn't tell her. If I had she might not have come, and I sure wanted her to. I wanted to get that formula. Cripes, Tibbsy! It would be worth a million back in civilization. But it's well guarded. A few men have tried to get it. None of 'em was ever heard of again."

"Well, we ain't trying to get it now. We got troubles enough trying to find our way out of this jungle to be bothering with any helixir of life. If we just go along and mind our own business, we'll be all right."

"I don't know about that. I never took much stock in black magic, but it is funny all the things that's happened to this expedition ever since it started out. Just like somebody or something had put a jinx on it. It started right off the bat with that zero- zero flyin' weather; then come the forced landin'; then the old dame's murdered; then Annette disappears; now Lady Greystoke's gone.

"Do you realize, Tibbsy, that of the six that took off from Croydon there's only two of us left? It's just like something was following us, pickin' off one at a time. It sure gets my goat when I stop to think about it. It's doggone funny, Tibbsy, that's what it is."

"Hi see nothing amusing in it, sir,"

objected Tibbs; "but then Hi've always 'eard that you Americans had a strange sense of humor."

"The trouble is that you Englishmen don't understand English," explained Brown. "But let's skip it. The question is, which one of us will be next?"

"Don't," begged Tibbs. "That's just what Hi've been trying not to think about."

Brown turned again and looked back at his companion who was following along a narrow trail. The American grinned. "Wasn't Lady Greystoke walkin' behind when it got her?" he reminded.

Tarzan, following the trail toward the east, found Sborov a problem. The man was too exhausted to move faster than a

snail's pace, and even so he was compelled to rest often.

Tarzan was anxious to overtake Brown and Tibbs with whom he believed Jane to be. He would kill Brown. The very thought of the man caused the scar across his forehead to burn red—the scar that Bolgani, the gorilla, had given him years ago in that first life-and- death struggle that had taught the boy Tarzan one of the uses of his dead father's hunting knife and thus set his feet upon the trail that led to the lordship of the jungle.

Ordinarily the life of a strange tarmangani would have weighed as nothing as against a delay in his search for Jane; but Alexis had given the

impression that he had been Jane's friend and protector, and Tarzan could not desert him to the certain fate that would have claimed such as he alone in the jungle.

So the Lord of the Jungle decided to remain with Sborov until he could turn him over to the chief of some friendly tribe for protection and guidance to the nearest outpost of civilization, or place him in the hands of his own Waziri.

Seemingly imbued with many of the psychic characteristics of the wild beasts among which he had been reared, Tarzan often developed instinctive likes or dislikes for individuals on first contact; and seldom did he find it necessary to alter his decisions.

He had formed such a conviction within a few moments after his meeting with Sborov, a conviction which made it doubly distasteful to him to be in the company of the man and waste time befriending him. He mistrusted and disliked him, but for Jane's sake he would not abandon him. Little Nkima seemed to share his mistrust, for he seldom came near the stranger; and when he did he bared his teeth in a menacing snarl.

Chafing under the delay forced upon him by Sborov's physical condition, which bordered on complete exhaustion, the ape-man at last swung the surprised Sborov to his shoulder and took to the trees with the agility and speed of a

small monkey.

Alexis voiced a cry of remonstrance that carried also a note of fear, but he was helpless to escape the situation into which he had been snatched as though by the hand of Fate. Should he succeed in wriggling from that vise-like grasp, it would only lead to injury in the resultant fall to the ground below. So Alexis shut his eyes tight and hoped for the best.

He knew that they were moving rapidly through the trees; the swift passage of foliage and twigs across his body told him that. He remonstrated with the bronzed savage that was carrying him, but he might as well have sought conversation with the Sphinx. At last he gained sufficient courage to open his

eyes; then, indeed, did he gasp in horror; for at that very moment Tarzan leaped out into space to catch a trailing liana and swing to another tree upon his arboreal trail. Fifty feet below the eyes of the thoroughly terrified Sborov lay the hard ground. He screamed aloud, and then he found articulate voice.

"Take me down," he cried. "Let me walk. You'll kill us both." Overcome by terror, he struggled to free himself.

"It will be you who will kill us if you don't lie still," warned the ape-man.

"Then take me down."

"You are too slow," replied Tarzan. "I cannot be held to the pace of Kota, the tortoise, if I am ever to overtake the man you call Brown. If I take you down I

shall have to leave you alone here in the jungle. Would you prefer that?"

Sborov was silent. He was trying to weigh the terrors of one plan against those of the other. All that he could think of was that he wished he were back in Paris, which really didn't help at all in this emergency.

Suddenly Tarzan came to an abrupt halt on a broad limb. He was listening intently. Sborov saw him sniffing the air. It reminded him of a hound on a scent trail.

"What do those two men look like?" demanded Tarzan.

"Describe them to me, so that I may know Brown when I see him."

"Tibbs is a small man with thin hair

and a pinched face. He is an Englishman with a slight cockney accent. Brown is a big fellow, an American. I suppose he would be called good looking," added Sborov, grudgingly.

Tarzan dropped to a trail that they had crossed many times as it wound through the jungle, and set Sborov on the ground.

"Follow this trail," he directed. "I am going on ahead."

"You are going to leave me alone here in the jungle?" demanded Alexis, fearfully.

"I will come back for you," replied the ape-man. "You will be safe enough for the short time I shall be gone."

"But suppose a lion—" commenced Sborov.

"There are no lions about," interrupted Tarzan. "There is nothing near that will harm you."

"How do you know?"

"I know. Do as I tell you and follow the trail."

"But—" Sborov started to expostulate; then he gasped and sighed resignedly, for he was alone. Tarzan had swung into the trees and disappeared.

The ape-man moved swiftly along the scent spoor that had attracted his attention. His sensitive nostrils told him it was the scent of two white men. He sought in vain to detect the spoor of a woman, but there was none— if the two men were Brown and Tibbs, then Jane was no longer with them.

What had become of her? The man's jaw set grimly. That information he would get from Brown before he killed him.

A human life meant no more to Tarzan of the Apes than that of any other creature. He never took life wantonly, but he could kill a bad man with less compunction than he might feel in taking the life of a bad lion.

Any living thing that harmed his mate or threatened her with harm he could even find a species of grim pleasure in killing, and Sborov had convinced him that Brown meant harm to Jane if he had not already harmed her.

The man's statement that Jane and Brown had run away together had not

carried the conviction that the implication might have provoked, so sure was the Lord of the Jungle of the loyalty of his mate. Her intentions and her voluntary acts he never doubted nor questioned.

What were his thoughts as he swung along the trail of the two unsuspecting men? That inscrutable face gave no suggestion of what passed in the savage mind, but they must have been grim and terrible thoughts of revenge.

Rapidly the scent of his quarry grew stronger as the distance that separated them grew shorter.

Now he went more slowly; and, if possible, even more silently. He moved as soundlessly as his own shadow as he

came at last in sight of two men trudging wearily along the trail beneath him.

It was they; he could not mistake them—the small Englishman, the big American. He paid little attention to Tibbs, but his eyes never left the figure of the aviator. Stealthily he stalked, as the lion stalks his prey.

He was quite close above them. Easily now at any moment he could launch himself down upon his victim.

Tibbs mopped the streaming perspiration from his forehead and out of his eyes. "Whew!" he sighed. "Hit all seems so bloody useless. Hit's like lookin' for a needle in a hay stack. We won't never find her anyway. Let's stop and rest. I'm jolly well done in."

"I know how you feel, but we got to keep on lookin' though. We might find her. The more I think about it, the less I think Sborov got away with Lady Greystoke."

"What's made you change your mind?" demanded Tibbs. "Hi thought you was sure he had."

"Well, in the first place, she was armed; and she had the guts to defend herself. He ain't got no guts at all."

"'E 'ad enough to murder his poor wife," objected Tibbs.

"He sneaked up on her in the dark while she was asleep," sneered Brown. "That didn't take no guts."

"But 'ow about Annette?"

Brown shook his head. "I don't know. I can't make it out. Of course, there was a good reason for his wanting to kill Annette. She had the evidence against him—she knew too much; and she wasn't armed.

"But what gets me is the way her footprints disappeared, just like she'd dissolved in thin air. If his footprints had been there too, and gone on, I'd have thought he picked her up and carried her into the jungle to finish her; but hers were all alone."

They had stopped now while Tibbs rested. The ape-man crouched above them, listening. He missed no word, but what effect they had upon him was not revealed by any change of expression.

"But 'e couldn't 'ave picked 'er up and carried her hoff and her not scream," argued Tibbs. "That would have woke some of us."

"She might have been too scared to scream," explained Brown. "Annette was awful scared of him."

"Lady Greystoke wasn't scared of him. Why didn't she call for help?"

"Lady Greystoke wasn't scared of nothing. There was some dame, Tibbs."

"Hi quite agree with you," replied the Englishman. "Lady Greystoke was a most extraordinary person. Hi 'opes as how we find her."

"Yes, and I hope we find Annette. I can't believe she is dead, somehow." The note of yearning in the aviator's

voice was not lost on the silent listener above.

"You was rather soft on Annette, wasn't you?" said Tibbs, sympathetically.

"Plenty," admitted Brown, "and that louse, Sborov, told her I was tryin' to make Lady Greystoke. Hell! Can you picture a English noblewoman falling for me?"

"If you'll pardon my saying so, I can't," admitted Tibbs, candidly.

"No more can I. She was a swell dame, but Annette was the only girl I ever seen that had me ga-ga. I'd give—well, all I ain't got to know for sure what became of her."

Softly the ape-man dropped to the

trail behind the two men.

"I think I know," he said.

At the sound of his voice they wheeled suddenly and faced him, surprise written large upon the face of each.

"Who the devil are you and where did you come from?" demanded Brown, while Tibbs stood with his lower lip dropped, staring wide- eyed at the strange figure of the ape-man. "And what do you think you know?" concluded the American.

"I think I know how your two women disappeared."

"Say," exclaimed Brown, "what are you, anyway? This country's got me nuts —people disappearing and you jumping

out of thin air like a spook. Are you a friend or what?"

"Friend," replied Tarzan.

"What you runnin' around undressed for?" demanded Brown. "Ain't you got no clothes, or ain't you got no sense?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes."

"Yeah? Well, I'm glad to meet you, Tarzan; I'm Napoleon. But spill what you know about Annette—about both the dames. What got 'em? Was it Sborov? But of course you don't know nothin' about Sborov."

"I know about Sborov," replied Tarzan. "I know about the accident that wrecked your plane. I know the Princess Sborov was murdered. I think I know what happened to Lady Greystoke and

Annette."

Brown looked puzzled. "I don't know how you got hep to all this, but you know plenty. Now tell me what happened to the two dames."

"The Kavuru got them. You are in Kavuru country."

"What are Kavuru?" demanded Brown.

"A tribe of savage white men. They make a practice of stealing women, presumably for use in some religious rite."

"Where do they hang out?"

"I don't know. I was looking for their village when I heard about the accident to your ship. I believe I can find it soon.

It lies in a very wild country. The Kavuru have secrets they wish to guard; so no one is allowed to approach their village."

"What secrets?" inquired Brown.

"They are believed to have discovered some sort of an elixir of life, something that will make old people young again."

Brown whistled. "So that's it? They were the people we were looking for."

"You were looking for the Kavuru?" asked Tarzan, incredulously.

"The old dame was looking for the formula for that elixir stuff," explained Brown, "and so am I, now that she is dead—someone has to carry on, you know," he added rather lamely. "But say,

how did you hear of the accident to the ship? How could you hear about it? We ain't seen or talked to no one." Suddenly Brown ceased speaking. His face darkened in anger.

"Sborov!" he exclaimed.

The prince, rounding a bend in the trail, halted when he saw Brown. The American started toward him, menacingly, an oath on his lips.

Sborov turned to run. "Stop him!" he screamed to Tarzan. "You promised you wouldn't let him harm me."

The ape-man sprang after Brown and seized him by the arm. "Stop!" he commanded. "I promised the man."

Brown attempted to wrench himself free. "Let me go, you fool," he growled.

"Mind your own business." Then he aimed a heavy blow at Tarzan's jaw with his free hand. The ape-man ducked, and the clenched fist only grazed his cheek. The shadow of a grim smile touched his lips as he lifted the American above his head and shook him; then he tossed him into the thick underbrush that bordered the trail.

"You forgot Waterloo, Napoleon," he said.

Upon the branch of a tree above, little Nkima danced and chattered; and as Brown was extricating himself with difficulty from the thorny embrace of the bushes, Nkima gathered a ripe and odorous fruit and hurled it at him.

Tibbs looked on in consternation,

believing that Brown had made a dangerous enemy in this giant white savage; and when he saw Tarzan step toward the struggling American he anticipated nothing less than death for both of them.

But there was no anger in the breast of the ape-man as he again seized the aviator and lifted him out of the entangling bushes and set him upon his feet in the trail.

"Do not again forget," he said, quietly, "that I am Tarzan of the Apes or that when I give an order it is to be obeyed."

Brown looked the ape-man squarely in the eyes for a moment before he spoke. "I know when I'm licked," he

said. "But I still don't savvy why you wouldn't let me kill that louse—he sure has it coming to him."

"Your quarrels are of no importance," said the ape-man; "but it is important to locate Lady Greystoke."

"And Annette," added Brown.

"Yes," agreed Tarzan. "Also that you three men get back to civilization where you belong. You do not belong in the jungle. The world is full of fools who go places where they do not belong, causing other people worry and trouble."

"If Hi may make so bold as to say so, sir, Hi quite agree with you," ventured Tibbs. "Hi shall be jolly well pleased to get hout of this bally old jungle."

"Then don't any of you start killing off

the others," advised Tarzan. "The more of you there are the better chance you will have of getting out, and three are none too many. Many times you will find it necessary for some one to stand watch at night; so the more there are the easier it will be for all."

"Not for mine with that prince guy along!" said Brown, emphatically. "The last time he stood guard he tried to kill me with a hatchet, and he'd have done it if it hadn't been for old Tibbsy. If you say I don't kill him, I don't kill—unless he forces me to it; but I don't travel with him, and that's that."

"We'll get him back here," said Tarzan, "and have a talk with him. I think I can promise you he'll be good. He was

in a blue funk when I found him —a lion had been stalking him—and I think he'd promise anything not to be left alone again."

"Well," agreed Brown, grudgingly, "get him back and see what he says."

Tarzan called Sborov's name aloud several times, but there was no answer.

"'E couldn't have gotten so very far," said Tibbs. "'E must 'ear you, sir."

Tarzan shrugged. "He'll come back when he gets more afraid of the jungle than he is of Brown."

"Are we going to sit here waiting for him?" asked the American.

"No," replied Tarzan. "I am going on to find the Kavuru village. My own

people are somewhere to the east. I'll take you to them. Sborov will most certainly follow and catch up with us after we stop for the night. Come."

27. MADMEN AND LEOPARDS

As Jane reached the foot of the ladder leading down into the dark interior of the kivalike structure in the village of the Kavuru her ears caught a faint sound as of someone or something moving at no great distance from her.

Instantly she froze to silent immobility, listening. She thought that she heard the sound of breathing. Dim light from the opening above relieved the darkness immediately about her, and she knew that she must be revealed to whatever was in the room with her. Then a voice spoke, spoke in English with a familiar accent.

"Oh, madame! It is you? They got you, too?"

"Annette! You are here? Then it was not the prince who took you away?"

"No, madame. It was a terrible white man who held me powerless by some black magic. I could not cry out for help. I could not resist. I simply went to him, and he took me up into the trees and carried me away."

"One of them took me in the same way, Annette. They possess a hypnotic power beyond anything that I had ever dreamed might be possible. Have they harmed you, Annette?"

"I have only been terribly frightened," replied the girl, "because I don't know what they intend to do with me."

Jane's eyes had become accustomed to the gloom of the dark chamber. Now she could discern more of the details of the interior. She saw a circular room with a litter of dry grasses and leaves on the hard dirt floor. Against one wall Annette was sitting on a little pallet of these same leaves and grasses that she had evidently scraped together. There was no one else, nothing else, in the room.

"What do you suppose they are going to do with us?" asked Jane. "Haven't they given you any clue at all?"

"None, madame, absolutely none. Nor you? They have told you nothing?"

"The man who captured me was named Ogdli. He told me that much and

that he was taking me to some one called Kavandavanda, who, I gathered, is their chief. When I asked more questions he threatened to cut my tongue out, saying that Kavandavanda did not need my tongue. They are most unpleasant people."

"Ah, madame, that does not describe them—they are terrifying. If only Monsieur Brown was here. You have seen him lately, madame? He is well?"

"Quite well, Annette, in body; but his heart was sick. He was worrying about you."

"I think he loves me very much, madame."

"I am sure of it, Annette."

"And I love him. It is terrible to have

this happen now when we might have been so happy. Now we never shall be. I shall never see him again. I have that feeling, madame. It is what you call a—a premonition. I shall die here in this awful village—soon."

"Nonsense, Annette! You mustn't say such things; you mustn't even think them. What we should be thinking about is escape—and nothing else."

"Escape? What chance have we, madame?"

"I saw no guard at the entrance to this hole when they brought me in," explained Jane; "and if there is none posted at night we can certainly get to the roof. From there on will depend upon what obstacles we find in our way,

but it will be worth trying."

"Whatever you say, madame."

"Tonight then, Annette."

"S-sh, madame! Some one is coming."

Footsteps sounded plainly on the roof above them now, and then the opening through which they had entered was darkened by the form of a man.

"Come up!" he commanded; "both of you."

Jane sighed. "Our poor little plan," she bemoaned.

"What difference does it make?" asked Annette. "It would not have succeeded anyway."

"We shall have to try something else later," insisted the other, as she started

to ascend the ladder.

"It will fail, too," prophesied Annette gloomily. "We shall die here —both of us—tonight, perhaps."

As they stepped out onto the roof Jane recognized the warrior as the one who had captured her. "Now what, Ogdli?" she asked. "Are you going to set us free?"

"Be still," growled the Kavuru. "You talk too much. Kavandavanda has sent for you. Do not talk too much to Kavandavanda."

He took hold of her arm to urge her along—a soft, smooth, sun-tanned arm. Suddenly he stopped and wheeled her about until she faced him. A new fire burned in his eyes. "I never saw you

before," he said, in a low voice. "I never saw you before." It was an almost inaudible whisper.

Jane bared her teeth in a flashing smile. "Look at my teeth," she said. "You will soon be wearing them; then you will have four rows."

"I do not want your teeth, woman," growled Ogdli huskily. "You have cast a spell on me; I, who have foresworn women, am bewitched by a woman."

Jane thought quickly. The change in the man had come so suddenly, and his infatuation was so apparent that for an instant it only frightened her; then she saw in it possibilities that might be turned to the advantage of herself and Annette.

"Ogdli," she whispered softly, "you can help me, and no one need ever know. Hide us until tonight. Tell Kavandavanda that you could not find us, that we must have escaped; then come back after dark and let us out of the village. Tomorrow you can come out to look for us; and perhaps, Ogdli, you will find me—find me waiting for you in the forest." Her words, her tones, were provocative.

The man shook his head as though to rid his brain of an unwelcome thought; he passed a palm across his eyes as one who would push aside a veil.

"No!" he almost shouted; then he seized her roughly and dragged her along. "I will take you to Kavandavanda.

After that you will bewitch me no more."

"Why are you afraid of me, Ogdli?" she asked. "I am only a woman."

"That is why I am afraid of you. You see no women here. There are none, other than those who are brought for Kavandavanda; and they are here but briefly. I am a priest. We are all priests. Women would contaminate us. We are not allowed to have them. If we were to weaken and succumb to their wiles, we should live in torment forever after death; and if Kavandavanda found it out, we should die quickly and horribly."

"What is he saying, madame?" asked Annette. "What are you talking about?"

"It is preposterous, Annette," replied Jane; "but Ogdli has developed a sudden

infatuation for me. I tried to play upon it in order to tempt him to let us escape—and meet me in the forest tomorrow. It offered hope."

"Oh, madame! You would not!"

"Of course not; but all is fair in love and war, and this is both. If we ever get into the forest, Annette, it will just be too bad for Ogdli if he can't find us."

"And what does he say to it?"

"Thumbs down. He is dragging me off to Kavandavanda as fast as he can, so that temptation may be removed from his path."

"All our hopes are dashed, madame," said Annette, woefully.

"Not entirely, if I know men," replied

Jane. "Ogdli will not so easily escape his infatuation. When he thinks he has lost me, it will tear at his vitals; then anything may happen."

The Kavuru was leading the two girls along the main street toward the rear of the village. Confronting them was a heavy gate across the bottom of a narrow cleft in the cliff that towered ominously above the village.

Ogdli opened the gate and herded them through into the narrow, rocky cleft, beyond which they could see what appeared to be an open valley; but when they reached the far end of the cleft they found themselves in a box canyon entirely surrounded by lofty cliffs.

A small stream of clear water wound

down through the canyon and out through the cleft and the village where it was entirely bridged over at the outer gate as well as in the cleft leading into the canyon.

The floor of the canyon appeared extremely fertile, supporting numerous large trees and growing crops. In the small fields Jane saw men laboring beneath the watchful eyes of Kavuru warriors. At first she paid little heed to the workers in the fields, as Ogdli led her and Annette toward a massive pile of buildings standing in the center of the canyon, but presently her attention was attracted to one of the laborers who was irrigating a small patch of Kaffir corn.

Suddenly he threw down the crude

wooden hoe he was using and stood upon his head in the mud. "I am a tree," he screamed in the Bukena dialect, "and they have planted me upside down. Turn me over, put my roots in the ground, irrigate me, and I will grow to the moon."

The Kavuru warrior who was guarding the workers in the vicinity stepped up to the man and struck him a sharp blow across the shins with the haft of his spear. "Get down and go to work," he growled.

The worker cried out in pain; but he immediately came to his feet, picked up his hoe, and continued to work as though there had been no interruption.

A little farther on another worker,

looking up and catching sight of the two white girls, rushed toward them. Before the guard could interfere he was close to Jane. "I am the king of the world," he whispered; "but don't tell them. They would kill me if they knew, but they can't know because I tell everyone not to tell them."

Ogdli leaped at the fellow and struck him over the head with his spear just as the guard arrived to drag him back to his work.

"They are all bewitched," explained Ogdli. "Demons have entered their heads and taken possession of their brains; but it is well to have them around, as they frighten away other evil spirits. We keep them and take care of them. If they die a

natural death, the demons die with them; if we were to kill them the demons would escape from their heads and might enter ours. As it is, they can't get out in any other way."

"And these workers are all madmen?" asked Jane.

"Each has a demon in his head, but that doesn't keep them from working for us. Kavandavanda is very wise; he knows how to use everything and everybody."

Now they had arrived before closed gates in the wall surrounding the building that they had seen when they first entered the canyon. Two Kavuru warriors stood on guard at the entrance to Kavandavanda's stronghold, but at the

approach of Ogdli and his prisoners they opened the gates and admitted them.

Between the outer wall and the buildings was an open space corresponding to the ballium of a medieval castle. In it grew a few large trees, a few clumps of bamboo, and patches of brush and weeds. It was ill-kept and unsightly. The buildings themselves were partially of unbaked brick and partially of bamboo and thatch, a combination which produced a pleasing texture, enhancing the general effect of the low, rambling buildings that seemed to have been put together at different times and according to no predetermined plan, the whole achieving an unstudied disharmony that was most

effective.

As they crossed to the entrance to what appeared to be the main building, a leopard rose from a patch of weeds, bared its fangs at them, and slunk away toward a clump of bamboo. Then another and another of the treacherous beasts, disturbed by their passage, moved sinuously out of their path.

Annette, her eyes wide with fright, pressed close to Jane. "I am so afraid!" she said.

"They're ugly looking brutes," agreed Jane. "I wouldn't imagine this to be a very safe place. Perhaps that is why there are no people here."

"Only the guards at the entrance ahead of us," said Annette. "Ask Ogdli if the

leopards are dangerous."

"Very," replied the Kavuru in reply to the question that Jane put to him.

"Then why are they allowed to run at large?" demanded Jane.

"They do not bother us much in the day time, partially because they are fairly well fed, partially because only armed men cross this court yard, and partially because they are, after all, cowardly beasts that prefer to sneak upon their prey in the dark. But it is after dark that they best serve the purpose of Kavandavanda. You may be sure that no one escapes from the temple by night."

"And that is all that they are kept for?" asked the girl.

"That is not all," replied Ogdli. Jane

waited for him to continue, but he remained silent.

"What else, then?" she asked.

He gazed at her for a moment before he replied. There was a light in his eyes that appeared strange to Jane, for it seemed to reflect something that was almost compassion. He shook his head. "I cannot tell," he said; "but you will know soon enough another reason that the leopards are here in the outer court."

They were almost at the entrance when a weird, wailing scream broke the stillness that seemed to brood like an evil thing above the temple of Kavandavanda. The sound seemed to come either from the interior of the mass of buildings or from beyond them—

sinister, horrible.

Instantly it was answered by the snarls and growls of leopards that appeared suddenly from amongst the weeds, the brush, or the bamboo and bounded off to disappear around the ends of the buildings.

"Something called to them," whispered Annette, shuddering.

"Yes," said Jane, "something unclean—that was the impression conveyed to me."

At the entrance there were two more guards to whom Ogdli spoke briefly; then they were admitted. As they passed the portal and came into the interior they heard muffled screams and growls and snarls as of many leopards fighting, and

to the accompaniment of this savage chorus the two girls were conducted through the dim rooms and corridors of the temple of Kavandavanda.

Kavandavanda! Who, or what, was he? To what mysterious fate was he summoning them? Such were the questions constantly recurring in the thoughts of the girls. Jane felt that they would soon find answers, and she anticipated only the worst. There seemed to be no hope of escape from whatever fate lay in store for them.

That one hope that had given her strength to carry on through danger-fraught situations many times in the past was denied her now, for she felt that Tarzan must be wholly ignorant of her

whereabouts. How could he know where, in the vast expanse of the African wilderness, the ship had crashed? He would be searching for her—she knew that; for he must have long since received her cablegram, but he could never find her— at least, not in time. She must depend wholly upon her own resources, and these were pitifully meager. At present there was only the frail straw of Ogdli's seeming infatuation. This she must nurse. But how? Perhaps when he had delivered her to Kavandavanda he would return to the village and she would never see him again; then even the single straw to which her hope clung in the deluge of dangers that threatened to engulf her

would be snatched from her.

"Ogdli," she said, suddenly, "do you live here in the temple or back in the village?"

"I live where Kavandavanda commands," he replied. "Sometimes in the village, again in the temple."

"And now! Where do you live now?"

"In the village."

Jane mused. Ogdli would be of no good to her unless he were in the temple. "You have lived here all your life, Ogdli?"

"No."

"How long?"

"I do not remember. Perhaps a hundred rains have come and gone,

perhaps two hundred; I have lost count. It makes no difference, for I shall be here forever—unless I am killed. I shall never die otherwise."

Jane looked at him in astonishment. Was he another maniac? Were they all maniacs in this terrible city? But she determined to humor him.

"Then if you have been here so long," she said, "you must be on very friendly terms with Kavandavanda. If you asked him a favor he'd grant it."

"Perhaps," he agreed, "but one must be careful what one asks of Kavandavanda."

"Ask him if you can remain in the temple," suggested the girl.

"Why?" demanded Ogdli,

suspiciously.

"Because you are my only friend here, and I am afraid without you."

The man's brows knit into an angry scowl. "You are trying to bewitch me again," he growled.

"You have bewitched yourself, Ogdli," she sighed; "and you have bewitched me. Do not be angry with me. Neither of us could help it." Her beautiful eyes looked up at him appealingly, seemingly on the verge of tears.

"Do not look at me like that," he cried, huskily; and then once more she saw the same look in his eyes that she had noticed before they left the village.

She laid a hand upon his bare arm.

"You will ask him?" she whispered. It was more a statement than a question.

He turned away roughly and continued on in silence, but on Jane's lips was a smile of satisfaction. Intuition told her that she had won. But what would she do with her success? Its implications terrified her. Then she gave a mental shrug. By her wits she must turn the circumstance to her advantage without paying the price—she was every inch a woman.

As they passed through the temple corridors and apartments, Jane saw a number of black men—fat, soft, oily looking fellows that reminded her of the guardians of a sultan's harem. They seemed to personify cruelty, greed, and

craft. She instinctively shrank from them if they passed close. These, she assumed, were the servants of Kavandavanda. What then was Kavandavanda like?

She was soon to know.

28. KAVANDAVANDA

An idiot jibbered beneath the gloomy shadows of the forbidding forest. A little monkey swung low from a branch; and the idiot leaped for it, shrieking horribly.

From high among the foliage of a nearby tree two appraising eyes watched the idiot. What passed in the brain behind those eyes only the creature and its Maker knew.

The idiot suddenly started to run blindly along a trail. He stumbled and fell. It was evident that he was very weak. He scrambled to his feet and staggered on. Through the branches above, the creature followed, watching, always watching.

The trail debouched upon a little clearing, perhaps an acre in extent. A single tree grew alone near the far side. Beneath the tree sprawled three maned lions; young lions, they were, but in the prime of their strength.

As the idiot stumbled into the clearing one of the lions arose and stared at the intruder, more in curiosity than in disapproval. The idiot saw the lions; and with loud screams, hideous screams, he bore down upon them waving his arms wildly above his head.

Now lions are nervous, temperamental creatures. It is difficult to prophesy just what they will do under any given circumstances.

The others had come to their feet with

the first scream of the idiot, and now all three stood watching his approach. For just a moment they stood their ground before such an emergency as had never confronted any of them before, nor, doubtless, ever would again. Then the one who had first risen turned and bounded off into the jungle, his two companions close upon his heels.

The idiot sat down suddenly and commenced to cry. "They all run away from me," he muttered. "They know I am a murderer, and they are afraid of me — afraid of me! afraid of me! AFRAID OF ME!" His shrieking voice rose to a final piercing crescendo.

The stalker among the trees dropped to the floor of the clearing and

approached the idiot. He came upon him from behind. He was Ydeni, the Kavuru. Stealthily he crept forward. In his hand was a coiled rope.

Ydeni leaped upon the idiot and bore him to the ground. The idiot screamed and struggled, but to no avail. The mighty muscles of the Kavuru held him and deftly bound his wrists together behind his back.

Then Ydeni lifted the man and set him upon his feet. The idiot looked at his captor with wide eyes from which terror quickly faded to be replaced by a vacuous grin.

"I have a friend," he mumbled. "At last I have a friend, and I shall not be alone. What is your name, friend? I am

Prince Sborov. Do you understand? I am a prince."

Ydeni did not understand, and if he had he would not have cared. He had been scouting for more girls and he had found an idiot. He knew that Kavandavanda would be pleased; for, while there were never too many girls, there were even fewer idiots; and Kavandavanda liked idiots.

Ydeni examined his captive. He discovered that he was weak and emaciated and that he was unarmed.

Satisfied that the man was harmless, the Kavuru released his wrists; then he fastened the rope securely about Sborov's neck and led him off into the jungle along a secret, hidden path that

was a short cut to the village.

His mind broken by terror and privation, the European babbled incessantly as he staggered along behind his captor. Often he stumbled and fell; and always Ydeni had to lift him to his feet, for he was too weak to rise without assistance.

At last the Kavuru found food and halted while Sborov ate; and when they started on again Ydeni assisted him, carrying him much of the way until at last they came to the village of the Kavuru beside the lone mountain in the wilderness.

And in the meantime, Tarzan led Brown and Tibbs along the main trail, a much longer route to the same village;

for none of them knew where it was located, and at best could only harbor the hope that this trail led to it.

Sometimes Nkima rode upon Tarzan's shoulder; or, again, swung through the trees above the three men. He, at least, was carefree and happy; Tarzan was concerned over the fate of his mate, Brown was worried about Annette, and Tibbs was always sad on general principles when he was away from London. Being hungry and footsore and weary and terrified by the jungle and its savage life in no way lessened the pall of gloom that enveloped him.

They were not a happy company, but none could tell from Tarzan's manner or expression or any word that fell from his

lips the bitterness of the sorrow that he held within his breast. He did not know what fate was reserved for the girl captives of the Kavuru, but his knowledge of the more savage tribes of these remote fastnesses offered but faint hope that he might be in time to rescue her. To avenge her was the best that he could anticipate.

And while his thoughts dwelt upon her, recalling each least detail of their companionship, Jane was being led into a large, central room in the temple of Kavandavanda, king, witch-doctor, and god of the Kavuru.

It was a large, low room, its ceiling supported by columns consisting of the trunks of trees, the surfaces of which,

stripped of bark and darkened by antiquity, bore a high polish. Toothless skulls hung in clusters from the capitals of the columns, white against the darkened surfaces of the ceiling and the columns, grinning, leering upon the scene below, watching the silly antics of mortal men through the wisdom of eternity out of sightless eyes.

The gloom of the remoter purlieus of the large chamber was only partially relieved by the sunlight shining through a single opening in the ceiling and flooding a figure seated upon a great throne on a dais carpeted with the skins of leopards.

As her eyes rested for the first time upon the enthroned man, Jane was

plainly aware of a mental gasp of astonishment. The picture was striking, barbaric; the man was beautiful.

If this were Kavandavanda, how utterly different was he from any of the various pictures of him her imagination had conceived; and it was Kavandavanda, she knew; it would be none other. Every indolent, contemptuous line of his pose bespoke the autocrat. Here indeed was a king—nay, something more, even, than a king. Jane could not rid herself of the thought that she was looking upon a god.

He sat alone upon the dais except for two leopards, one chained on either side of his great throne chair. Below him, surrounding the dais, were Kavuru

warriors; and close at hand the soft, fat slaves such as Jane had seen elsewhere in the temple. Upon the floor, on each side of the dais, a dozen girls reclined upon leopard skins. They were mostly black girls, but there were a number with the lighter skins and the features of the Bedouins.

One of the Bedouin girls and a couple of the blacks were reasonably comely of face and figure, but on the whole they did not appear to have been selected with an eye to pulchritude.

Ogdli led his two charges to within a few yards of the dais; then, as he knelt himself, gruffly ordered them to kneel. Annette did as she was bid; but Jane remained erect, her eyes fearlessly

appraising the man upon the throne.

He was a young man, almost naked but for an elaborate loin- cloth and ornaments. Many rows of human teeth suspended about his neck, covered his chest and fell as low as his loin-cloth. Armlets, bracelets, and anklets of metal, of wood, and of ivory, completed his barbaric costume. But it was not these things that riveted the girl's attention, but rather the divine face and form of the youth.

At first Jane felt that she had never looked upon a more beautiful countenance. An oval face was surmounted by a wealth of golden hair; below a high, full forehead shone luminous dark eyes that glowed with the

fires of keen intelligence. A perfect nose and a short upper lip completed the picture of divine beauty that was marred and warped and ruined by a weak, cruel mouth.

Until she noticed that mouth, hope had leaped high in Jane's breast that here she and Annette might find a benevolent protector rather than the cruel savage they had expected Kavandavanda to be.

The man's eyes were fixed upon her in a steady stare. He, too, was appraising; but what his reaction, his expression did not reveal.

"Kneel!" he commanded suddenly, in imperious tones.

"Why should I kneel?" demanded Jane. "Why should I kneel to you?"

"I am Kavandavanda."

"That is no reason why an English woman should kneel to you."

Two of the fat, black slaves started toward her, looking questioningly at Kavandavanda.

"You refuse to kneel?" asked the youth.

"Most certainly."

The slaves were still advancing toward her, but they kept one eye on Kavandavanda. He waved them back. A strange expression twisted his lips. Whether it was from amusement or anger, Jane could not guess.

"It pleases me to discuss the matter," said the youth; then he commanded Ogdli

and Annette to rise. "You brought in both of these prizes, Ogdli?" he asked.

"No," replied Ogdli. "Ydeni brought this one." He gestured toward Annette. "I brought the other."

"You did well. We have never had one like her—she contains the seeds of beauty as well as youth." Then he turned his eyes upon Jane once more. "Who are you?" he demanded, "and what were you doing in the country of the Kavuru?"

"I am Jane Clayton, Lady Greystoke. I was flying from London to Nairobi when our ship was forced down. My companions and I were trying to make our way to the coast when this girl and myself were captured by your warriors. I ask that you release us and give us

guides to the nearest friendly village."

A crooked smile twisted the lips of Kavandavanda. "So you came in one of those devil birds," he said. "Two others came yesterday. Their dead bodies lie beside their devil bird outside the city gates. My people are afraid of the devil bird; they will not go near it. Tell me, will it harm them?"

The girl thought quickly before she replied. Perhaps she might turn their superstitious fear to her advantage. "They had better keep away from it," she advised. "More devil birds will come, and if they find that you have harmed me or my companion they will destroy your village and your people. Send us away in safety, and I will tell them not to

bother you."

"They will not know that you are here," replied the youth. "No one knows what happens in the village of the Kavuru or the temple of Kavandavanda."

"You will not set us free?"

"No. No stranger who enters the gates of the village ever passes out again — and you, least of all. I have had many girls brought to me, but none like you."

"You have plenty of girls here. What do you want of me?"

His eyes half closed as he regarded her. "I do not know," he said in a voice scarce raised above a whisper. "I thought that I knew, but now I am not sure." Suddenly he turned his eyes upon Ogdli. "Take them to the room of the

three snakes," he commanded, "and guard them there. They cannot escape, but see that they do not try. I don't want anything to happen to this one. Medek will show you the way," he nodded toward one of the fat blacks standing near the dais.

"What was all the talk about, madame?" asked Annette, as they were being led through the temple by Medek.

Jane told her, briefly.

"The room of the three snakes!" repeated Annette. "Do you suppose there are snakes in the room?" She shuddered. "I am afraid of snakes."

"Look above the doors of the rooms we pass," suggested Jane. "I think you will find the answer to your question

there. There is a doorway with a boar's head above it. We just passed one with two human skulls over the lintel; and there, on the other side of the corridor, ahead, is one with three leopards' heads. It is evidently their way of designating rooms, just as we number them in our hotels. I imagine it has no other significance."

Medek led them up a flight of rude stairs and along a corridor on the second floor of the temple and ushered them into a room above the doorway of which were mounted the heads of three snakes. Ogdli entered the room with them. It was a low ceiled room with windows overlooking the courtyard that surrounded the temple.

Annette looked quickly around the apartment. "I don't see any snakes, madame," she said, with evident relief.

"Nor much of anything else, Annette. The Kavuru don't waste much thought on furniture."

"There are two benches, madame, but no table and not a bed."

"There's the bed over in the corner," said Jane.

"That's just a pile of filthy skins," objected the French girl.

"Nevertheless, it's all the bed we'll get, Annette."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Ogdli. "Don't think that you can escape. You haven't a chance; so

there's no sense in planning anything of the sort."

"We weren't," Jane assured him. "We can't escape unless you'll help us. I was so glad when Kavandavanda said that you were to guard us. You know, you are the only friend we have, Ogdli."

"Did you see how Kavandavanda looked at you?" the man demanded, suddenly.

"Why no, not particularly," replied Jane.

"Well, I did; and I've never seen him look that way at a captive before. Neither did I ever know him to permit a person to stand before him without first kneeling. I believe that you have bewitched him, too. Did you like him,

woman?"

"Not as well as I like you, Ogdli," whispered the girl.

"He can't do it!" exclaimed the man. "He's got to obey the law the same as the rest of us."

"Do what?" demanded Jane.

"If he tries it, I'll—" A noise in the corridor silenced him, and just in time. The door was swung open by a slave, and as he stood aside the figure of Kavandavanda was revealed behind him.

As he entered the room Ogdli dropped to his knees. Annette followed his example, but Jane remained erect.

"So you won't kneel, eh?" demanded

Kavandavanda. "Well, perhaps that is the reason I like you—one of the reasons. You two may arise. Get out into the corridor, all of you except this one who calls herself Jane. I wish to speak with her alone."

Ogdli looked Kavandavanda straight in the eyes. "Yes," he said; "yes, high priest of the priests of Kavuru, I go; but I shall be near."

Kavandavanda flushed momentarily in what seemed anger, but he said nothing as the others passed out into the corridor. When they had gone and the door had been closed, he turned to Jane. "Sit down," he said, motioning toward one of the benches; and when she had, he came and sat beside her. For a long time

he looked at her before he spoke, his eyes the eyes of a dreamer of dreams. "You are very beautiful," he said, at last. "I have never seen a creature more beautiful. It seems a pity, then; it seems a pity."

"What seems a pity?" demanded the girl.

"Never mind," he snapped, brusquely. "I must have been thinking aloud." Again, for a space, he was silent, sunk in thought; and then: "What difference will it make. I may as well tell you. It is seldom that I have an opportunity to talk with anyone intelligent enough to understand; and you will understand—you will appreciate the great service you are to render—if I am strong. But when I

look at you, when I look deep into those lovely eyes, I feel weak. No, no! I must not fail; I must not fail the world that is waiting for me."

"I do not understand what you are talking about," said the girl.

"No, not now; but you will. Look at me closely. How old do you think I am?"

"In your twenties, perhaps." He leaned closer. "I do not know how old I am. I have lost all track. Perhaps a thousand years; perhaps a few hundred; perhaps much older. Do you believe in God?"

"Yes, most assuredly."

"Well, don't. There is no such thing—not yet, at least. That has been the trouble with the world. Men have

imagined a god instead of seeking god among themselves. They have been led astray by false prophets and charlatans. They have had no leader. God should be a leader, and a leader should be a tangible entity—something men can see and feel and touch. He must be mortal and yet immortal. He may not die. He must be omniscient. All the forces of nature have been seeking throughout all the ages to produce such a god that the world may be ruled justly and mercifully forever, a god who shall control the forces of nature as well as the minds and acts of men.

"Almost such am I, Kavandavanda, high priest of the priests of Kavuru. Already am I deathless; already am I

omniscient; already, to some extent, can I direct the minds and acts of men. It is the forces of nature that yet defy me. When I have conquered these, I shall indeed be God."

"Yes," agreed Jane, bent upon humoring this madman; "yes, you shall indeed be God; but remember that mercy is one of the characteristics of godliness. Therefore, be merciful; and set my companion and me free."

"And have the ignorant barbarians of the outer world swoop down upon us and rob mankind of its sole hope of salvation by destroying me? No!"

"But what purpose can I serve? If you free us, I promise to lead no one here."

"You can serve the only purpose for

which women are fit. Man may only attain godliness alone. Woman weakens and destroys him. Look at me! Look at my priests! You think we are all young men. We are not. A hundred rains have come and gone since the latest neophyte joined our holy order. And how have we attained this deathlessness? Through women. We are all celibates. Our vows of celibacy were sealed in the blood of women; in our own blood will we be punished if we break them. It would be death for a Kavuru priest to succumb to the wiles of a woman."

Jane shook her head. "I still do not understand," she said.

"But you will. Long ago I learned the secret of deathless youth. It lies in an

elixir brewed of many things—the pollen of certain plants, the roots of others, the spinal fluid of leopards, and, principally, the glands and blood of women—young women. Now do you understand?"

"Yes." The girl shuddered.

"Do not recoil from the thought; remember that you will thus become a part of the living god. You will live forever. You will be glorified."

"But I won't know anything about it; so what good will it do me?"

"I shall know. I shall know that you are a part of me. In that way I shall have you." He leaned closer to her. "But I should like to keep you as you are." His breath was hot upon her cheek. "And

why not? Am I not almost a god? And may not God do as he chooses? Who is there to say him nay?"

He seized her and drew her to him.

29. TO WHAT DOOM?

It was almost dusk when Ydeni led his captive through the village of the Kavuru and to the temple of Kavandavanda. By another trail Tarzan was approaching the clearing before the village. He paused and lifted his head.

"What is it?" asked Brown.

"Is 'is 'ighness coming?" inquired Tibbs.

The ape-man shook his head. "We are nearing a village. It is the village of the Kavuru; but nearer still are friends—Waziri."

"How do you know?" demanded Brown.

Tarzan ignored the question, but

motioned for silence; then from his lips came softly the call of the quail—three times he voiced it. For a moment, as he stood listening, there was silence; then once, twice, thrice came the answering call.

Tarzan moved forward again followed by his companions, and a moment later Muviro and Balando came running to drop to their knees before him.

Very briefly and in sorrow Muviro told what had happened. Tarzan listened without comment. No emotion of either sorrow or anger was reflected by his expression.

"Then you think it impossible to gain entrance to the village?" he asked.

"We are too few, Bwana," replied Muviro, sadly.

"But if Buira still lives, she is there," Tarzan reminded him, "and your memsahib and another white girl who belongs to this man." He gestured toward the American. "Much that life holds for us three may be behind the gates of that village, and there is the memory of our slain friends. Would you turn back now, Muviro?"

"Muviro follows where Tarzan leads," replied the black, simply.

"We will go to the edge of the clearing that you speak of, and there we may make our plans. Come." The apeman moved silently along the trail, followed by the others.

As they came to the edge of the clearing, he halted. Brown smothered an exclamation of surprise. "Well! In the name of—. Say, do you see what I see? That's a ship."

"I forgot to tell you," said Muviro. "Two men came in a ship and landed. The Kavuru killed them. You can see their bodies lying beside the ship."

As Tarzan stood at the edge of the forest beyond the village of the Kavuru it was well for his peace of mind that he did not know what was transpiring in the temple of Kavandavanda on the opposite side of the village, for at that very moment the high priest seized Jane and crushed her to him.

Helpless and hopeless, not knowing

which way to turn for help, the girl acted upon what appeared an inspiration. Pushing the man's lips from hers, she raised her voice in a single piercing cry: "Ogdli!"

Instantly the door of the apartment swung open. Kavandavanda released her and sprang to his feet. Ogdli crossed the threshold and halted. The two men stood glaring at one another. Ogdli did not ask why the girl had summoned him. He appeared to know.

Kavandavanda's face and neck burned scarlet for a moment; then went deadly white as he strode past Ogdli and out of the room without a word.

The warrior crossed quickly to the girl. "He will kill us both, now," he said.

"We must escape; then you will belong to me."

"But your vows!" cried Jane, clutching at a straw.

"What are vows to a dead man?" asked Ogdli. "And I am as good as dead now. I shall go and take you with me. I know a secret passage beneath the courtyard and the village. Thus sometimes goes Kavandavanda to search in the forest for secret flowers and roots. When it is dark, we shall go."

As Kavandavanda strode through the corridors of his palace, his heart black with rage, he met Ydeni coming with his captive.

"What have you there?" he demanded. Ydeni dropped to his knees. "One of

those into whose skull a demon has come to dwell. I have brought him to Kavandavanda."

"Take him away," growled the high priest, "and lock him up. I will see him in the morning."

Ydeni rose and led Sborov on through the temple. He took him to the second floor and shoved him into a dark room. It was the room of the two snakes. Next to it was the room of the three snakes. Then Ydeni shot a bolt on the outside of the door and went away and left his prisoner without food or water.

In the next room Ogdli was planning the escape. He knew he could not carry it out until after the temple slept. "I will go away now and hide," he said, "so that

Kavandavanda cannot find me before it is time to go. Later I shall return and get you."

"You must take Annette, too," said Jane—"the other girl. Where is she?"

"In the next room. I put her there when Kavandavanda sent us out of this one."

"You will take her with us?"

"Perhaps," he replied; but Jane guessed that he had no intention of doing so.

She very much wished to have Annette along, not alone to give her a chance to escape the clutches of the high priest, but because she felt that two of them together would have a better chance of thwarting the designs of Ogdli once they were in the jungle.

"Do not try to escape while I am gone," cautioned Ogdli. "There is only one way besides the secret passage, and that is across the courtyard. To enter the courtyard would mean certain death." He opened the door and stepped out into the corridor. Jane watched him close the door, and then she heard a bolt moved into place.

In the room of the two snakes Sborov groped around in the darkness. A lesser darkness came from the night outside through the single window overlooking the courtyard. He went to the window and looked out. Then he heard what seemed to be muffled voices coming from an adjoining chamber. He prowled along the wall until he found a door. He

tried it, but it was locked. He continued to fumble with the latch.

In the next room Jane heard him and approached the door after Ogdli left her. The warrior had said that Annette was in the next room; that must be Annette, she thought, trying to return to her.

Jane found that the door was secured by a heavy bolt on her side. She was about to call to Annette when she realized that the girl evidently realized some necessity for silence, else she had called to Jane.

Very cautiously she slipped the bolt a fraction of an inch at a time. Annette was still fumbling with the latch on the opposite side—Jane could hear her.

At last the bolt drew clear and the

door swung slowly open. "Annette!" whispered Jane as a figure, dimly visible in the gloom, came slowly into the room.

"Annette is dead," said a man's voice. "Brown killed her. He killed Jane, too. Who are you?"

"Alexis!" cried Jane.

"Who are you?" demanded Sborov.

"I am Jane—Lady Greystoke. Don't you recognize my voice?"

"Yes, but you are dead. Is Kitty with you? My God!" he cried, "you have brought her back to haunt me. Take her away! Take her away!" His voice rose to a shrill scream.

From the door on the opposite side of

the apartment came the sound of running, and then Annette's voice. "Madame! Madame! What is it? What has happened?"

"Who's that?" demanded Sborov. "I know—it's Annette. You have all come back to haunt me."

"Calm yourself, Alexis," said Jane, soothingly. "Kitty is not here, and Annette and I are both alive." As she spoke she crossed the room to the door of the chamber in which the French girl was confined; and, feeling for the bolt, drew it.

"Don't let her in!" screamed Sborov. "Don't let her in. I'll tear you to pieces if you do, ghost or no ghost." He started across the room on a run just as the door

swung open and Annette rushed in. At the same moment the door leading into the corridor was pushed open; and the black slave, Medek, entered.

"What's going on here?" he demanded. "Who let that man in here?"

At sight of Annette, Sborov recoiled, screaming. Then he saw Medek in the dim light of the interior. "Kitty!" he shrieked. "I won't go with you. Go away!"

Medek started toward him. Sborov turned and fled toward the far end of the room, toward the window looking out upon the courtyard. He paused a moment at the sill and turned wild eyes back toward the shadowy figure pursuing him; then, with a final maniacal scream of

terror, he leaped out into the night.

Medek followed him to the window and leaned out; then from his lips broke the same horrid scream that Jane had heard earlier in the day as she was being led from the throne-room of Kavandavanda. From below came the moans of Sborov, who must have been badly injured by the fall from the second story window; but presently these were drowned by the snarls and growls of leopards.

The two girls could hear them converging from all parts of the grounds upon the moaning creature lying out there in the night. Presently the sounds of the leopards rose to a hideous din as they fought over the flesh of their prey. For a

few moments the screams of their victim mingled with the savage mouthings of the beasts, but soon they ceased.

Medek turned away from the window. "It is not well to seek escape in that direction," he said, as he returned to the outer corridor, closing the door behind him.

"How awful, madame," whimpered Annette.

"Yes," replied Jane, "but his sufferings were mercifully brief. Perhaps, after all, it is just as well. His mind is gone. Prince Sborov had become a maniac."

"What a terrible price he paid. But is it not, perhaps, that he deserved it, madame?"

"Who shall say? But we, too, are paying a terrible price for his greed and his wife's vanity. The thing she sought is here, Annette."

"What thing, madame? Not the restorer of youth?"

"Yes. Kavandavanda holds the secret, but neither the princess nor any other could have gotten it from him. We should all have met a terrible fate just the same had the entire party succeeded in reaching the village of the Kavuru—the fate that is reserved for you and me."

"What fate, madame? You frighten me."

"I do not mean to, but you may as well know the truth. If we do not succeed in escaping we shall be butchered to

furnish ingredients for Kavandavanda's devilish potion that keeps the priests of Kavuru always youthful."

"S-s-sh, madame!" cautioned Annette, fearfully. "What was that?"

"I don't know. It sounded as though someone in the corridor had tried to scream."

"Then there was a thud, as though someone had fallen. Did you hear that?"

"Yes—and now someone is trying the door. They are slipping the bolt."

"Oh, madame! Some new horror."

The door swung open and a figure stepped into the room. A voice spoke. "Woman! Are you there?" It was the voice of Ogdli.

"I am here," said Jane.

"Then come quickly. There is no time to be lost."

"But how about the slave in the corridor? He will see us go out."

"The slave is there, but he will not see us. Come!"

"Come, Annette! It is our only chance."

"The other woman is here?" demanded Ogdli.

"Yes," replied Jane. "And if I go, she must go."

"Very well," snapped the Kavuru, "but hurry."

The two girls followed the man into the corridor. Across the doorway lay the

body of Medek. The dead eyes were staring up at them. Ogdli kicked the black face and gave a short laugh. "He looks, but he does not see."

The girls shuddered and pressed on behind the warrior. He led them cautiously along dark corridors. At the slightest sound he dragged them into pitch-black rooms along the way until he was sure there was no danger of discovery. Thus, much time was consumed in nerve-wracking suspense.

Ogdli advanced with evident trepidation. It was apparent that now that he had embarked upon this venture he was terrified—the shadow of Kavandavanda's wrath lay heavy upon him.

The night dragged on, spent mostly in hiding, as the trio made their slow way toward the secret entrance to the tunnel that led out into the jungle.

Once more they crept on after a long period of tense waiting and listening in a dark chamber; then Ogdli spoke in a relieved whisper. "Here we are," he said. "Through this doorway. The entrance to the tunnel is ha this room. Make no noise."

He pushed the door open cautiously and entered the chamber, the two girls following closely behind him. Instantly hands reached out of the dark and seized them. Jane heard a scuffling and the sound of running feet; then she was dragged out into the corridor. A light

was brought from another apartment —a bit of reed burning in a shallow vessel.

Annette was there, close to her, trembling. They were surrounded by five sturdy warriors. In the light of the sputtering cresset the men looked quickly from one to another.

"Where is Ogdli?" demanded a warrior. Then Jane realized that her would-be abductor had vanished.

"I thought you had him," replied another. "I seized one of the girls."

"I thought I had him," spoke up a third.

"And so did I," said a fourth, "but it was you I had. He must have run for the tunnel. Come, we'll go after him."

"No," objected the first warrior. "It is too late. He has a good start. We could not catch him before he reached the forest."

"We could not find him there at night," agreed another. "It will soon be daylight; then we can go after him."

"We'll see what Kavandavanda says when we take the women to him," said the first warrior. "Bring them along."

Once again the girls were led through the corridors of the temple this time to an apartment adjoining the throne-room. Two warriors stood before the door. When they saw the girls and were told what had happened, one of them knocked on the door. Presently it was opened by a black slave, sleepily rubbing his eyes.

"Who disturbs Kavandavanda at this hour of the night?" he demanded.

"Tell him we have come with the two white girls. He will understand."

The black turned back into the apartment, but in a few moments he returned.

"Bring your prisoners in," he said; "Kavandavanda will see you."

They were led through a small antechamber lighted by a crude cresset to a larger apartment similarly illuminated. Here Kavandavanda received them, lying on a bed covered with leopard skins.

His large eyes fixed themselves upon Jane. "So you thought you could escape?" he asked, a crooked smile

twisting his weak lips. "You were going to run off with Ogdli and be his mate, were you? Where is Ogdli?" he demanded suddenly, as he realized that the man was not with the others.

"He escaped—through the tunnel," reported a warrior.

"He must have thought Kavandavanda a fool," sneered the high priest. "I knew what was in his mind. There are only six men beside myself who know about the tunnel. Ogdli was one of them; the other five are here." He was addressing Jane. "I sent these five to wait at the entrance to the tunnel until Ogdli came, for I knew he would come." He paused and gazed long at Jane; then he turned to the others. "Take this other one back to the room of

the three snakes," he ordered, "and see that she does not escape again." He indicated Annette with a gesture. "This one I will keep here to question further; there may have been others concerned in the plot. Go!"

Annette cast a despairing look at Jane as she was led from the room, but the other could give her no reassurance nor encouragement. Their position seemed utterly without hope now.

"Good-bye, Annette." That was all.

"May the good God be with us both, madame," whispered the French girl as the door was closing behind her.

"So," said Kavandavanda when the others had left, "you were going to run off into the jungle with Ogdli and be his

mate? He was going to break his vow because of you!"

The shadow of a sneer curled the girl's lip. "Perhaps Ogdli thought so," she said.

"But you were going with him," Kavandavanda insisted.

"As far as the jungle," replied Jane; "then I should have found some means to escape him; or, failing that, I should have killed him."

"Why?" demanded the high priest. "Have you, too, taken a vow?"

"Yes—a vow of fidelity."

He leaned toward her eagerly. "But you could break it—for love; or, if not for love, for a price."

She shook her head. "Not for anything."

"I could break mine. I had thought that I never could, but since I have seen you —" He paused; and then, peremptorily, "if I, Kavandavanda, am willing to break mine, you can break yours. The price you will receive is one for which any woman might be willing to sell her soul —eternal youth, eternal beauty." Again he paused as though to permit the magnitude of his offer to impress itself upon her.

But again she shook her head. "No, it is out of the question."

"You spurn Kavandavanda?" His cruel mouth imparted some of its cruelty to his eyes. "Remember that I have the

power to destroy you, or to take you without giving anything in return; but I am generous. And do you know why?"

"I cannot imagine."

"Because I love you. I have never known love before. No living creature has ever affected me as do you. I will keep you here forever; I will make you high priestess; I will keep you young through the ages; I will keep you beautiful. You and I will live forever. We will reach out. With my power to rejuvenate mankind, we shall have the world at our feet. We shall be deities — I, a god; you, a goddess. Look." He turned to a cabinet built into the wall of the apartment. It was grotesquely carved and painted— human figures, mostly of

women; grinning skulls, leopards, snakes, and weird symbolic designs composed the decorations. From his loin- cloth he took a great key, hand wrought, and unlocked the cabinet.

"Look," he said again. "Come here and look."

Jane crossed the room and stood beside 'him at the cabinet. Within it were a number of boxes and jars. One large box, carved and painted similarly to the outside of the cabinet, Kavandavanda took in his hands.

"You see this?" he asked. "Look inside." He raised the lid revealing a quantity of black pellets about the size of peas. "Do you know what these are?" he demanded.

"I have no idea."

"These will give eternal youth and beauty to a thousand people. You are free to use them if you say the word. One taken each time that the moon comes full will give you what all mankind has craved since man first trod this earth." He seized her arm and tried to draw her to him.

With an exclamation of repugnance she sought to pull away, but he held her firmly; then she struck him heavily across the face. Surprised, he relaxed his grasp; and the girl tore herself away and ran from the room. Into the antechamber she ran, seeking to gain the corridor.

With a cry of rage, Kavandavanda

pursued her; and just at the doorway leading into the corridor he overtook her. He seized her roughly, tangling his fingers in her hair; and though she fought to extricate herself, he dragged her slowly back toward the inner apartment.

30. "THE DEAD MEN FLY!"

Tarzan and Brown had talked late into the night in an attempt to formulate a feasible plan whereby they might gain entrance to the village of the Kavuru, with the result that the ape-man had finally suggested a mad scheme as the only possible solution of their problem.

Brown shrugged and grinned. "We could sure get in that way, of course, though it all depends. But how we goin' to get out again?"

"Our problem now," replied Tarzan, "is to get in. We shall not have the problem of getting out until later. Perhaps we shall not come out. It really

is not necessary that you come in with me if—"

"Skip it," interrupted Brown. "Annette's in there. That's enough for me to know. When do we start?"

"We can't do much until just before dawn. You need rest. Lie down. I'll wake you in time."

Tarzan slept, too—a little way from the others on the edge of the clearing where he had a view of the village. He slept in a low crotch a few feet above the ground; and he slept well, yet he slept lightly, as was his wont. The habitual noises of the jungle did not disturb him; but as the time approached when he must awaken Brown, he himself came suddenly awake, conscious of

something unusual that disturbed the monotonous harmony of the forest.

Alert and watchful, he rose silently to his feet, listening. Every faculty, crystal sharp, was attuned to the faint note of discord that had aroused him. What was it?

Swiftly he moved through the trees, for now his sensitive nose had identified the author of the stealthy sound that his ears had detected —a Kavuru.

Presently the ape-man saw the dim figure of a man walking through the forest. He was walking rapidly, almost at a trot; and he was breathing heavily, as one who had been running. Tarzan paused above him for an instant and then dropped upon his shoulders, bearing him

to the ground.

The man was powerful; and he fought viciously to escape, but he was wax in the hands of the Lord of the Jungle. The ape-man could have killed him; but the instant that he had realized that a Kavuru might fall into his hands, he had planned upon taking him alive, feeling that he might turn him to some good account.

Presently he succeeded in binding the fellow's wrists behind him; then he stood him upon his feet. For the first time, his captive looked him in the face. It was still dark, but not so dark that the Kavuru could not recognize the fact that his captor was not one of his own kind. He breathed a sigh of relief.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "Why

did you capture me? You are not going to take me back to Kavandavanda? No, of course not—you are not a Kavuru."

Tarzan did not know why the man should object to being taken to Kavandavanda. He did not even know who Kavandavanda was, nor where; but he saw an opening, and he took advantage of it.

"If you answer my questions," he said, "I will not take you back to Kavandavanda, nor will I harm you. Who are you?"

"I am Ogdli."

"And you just came from the village?"

"Yes."

"You do not want to go back there?"

"No. Kavandavanda would kill me."

"Is Kavandavanda such a mighty warrior that you are afraid of him?"

"It is not that, but he is very powerful. He is high priest of the priests of Kavuru."

By simple questions Tarzan had learned from the answers Ogdli made enough to give him the lead that he desired to glean further information from his prisoner.

"What did Kavandavanda want of the two white girls that were taken to him?" he demanded.

"At first he would have killed them," replied Ogdli, willingly, for now he thought that he saw an opportunity to win mercy from this strange giant who was

evidently interested in the two girls; "but," he continued, "he suddenly came to desire one of them for a mate. I tried to befriend them. I was leading them out of the village by a secret passage when we were set upon by several warriors. They recaptured the girls, and I barely escaped with my life."

"So the girls are still alive?"

"Yes; they were a few minutes ago."

"Are they in any immediate danger?"

"No one can say what Kavandavanda will do. I think they are in no immediate danger, for I am sure that Kavandavanda will take one of them for a mate. Perhaps he already has."

"Where is this secret passage? Lead me to it. Wait until I get my friends." He

led Ogdli to where the others slept, and aroused them.

"I can show you where the passage is," explained Ogdli, "but you cannot enter the temple through it. The doors at either end open only in one direction, toward the forest, for those who do not know their secret; and only Kavandavanda knows that. One may easily pass out of the temple, but it is impossible to return."

Tarzan questioned Ogdli for several minutes; then he turned to Brown. "Annette and Lady Greystoke are in the temple," he explained. "The temple is in a small canyon behind the village. If we gained access to the village we would still have a battle on our hands to reach

the temple. This fellow has told me where I can expect to find the prisoners in the temple; he has also given me other valuable information that may be useful if we succeed in getting to Lady Greystoke and Annette. I believe that he has spoken the truth. He says, further, that one of the women is in grave danger at the moment—I think it is Lady Greystoke, from his description; so there is no time to be lost." Then he turned to Muviro. "Hold this man until Brown and I return. If we do not return before dark, you may know that we have failed; then you should return to your own country. Do, then, what you will with this prisoner. Give Brown and me the weapons that you took from the bodies

of the fliers. They are of no more use to you, as you have exhausted the ammunition. Brown thinks we may find more in the ship. Come, Brown."

The two men moved silently out into the clearing, the ape-man in the lead. He bent his steps toward the ship, Brown treading close upon his heels. Neither spoke; their plans had been too well formulated to require speech.

When they came to the ship, Brown immediately crawled into the forward cockpit. He was there for several minutes; then he entered the rear cockpit. While he was thus engaged, Tarzan was busy over the bodies of the slain aviators.

When Brown had completed his

examination of the interior of the cockpits, he descended to the ground and opened the baggage compartment; then he joined the ape-man.

"Plenty of ammunition," he said, and handed Tarzan a full box of cartridges. "That's about all you can manage—you ain't got no pockets. I've stuffed my pockets full—must weigh a ton."

"How about petrol?" asked Tarzan.

"Not much more'n a hatful," replied the American.

"Will it do?"

"Yep, if it don't take too long to get warmed up. Got the chutes?"

Tarzan handed Brown a parachute that he had taken from the body of one of

the fliers; the other he adjusted to his own body. They spoke no more. Tarzan climbed into the forward cockpit, Brown into the other.

"Here's hoping," prayed Brown under his breath as he opened the valve of the air starter. The answering whir of the propeller brought a satisfied smile to his lips; then the ignition caught and the engine roared.

They had waited for dawn, and dawn was breaking as Brown taxied across the rough plain down wind for the take-off. He picked his way among boulders, choosing the best lane that he could find; but he saw that it was going to be a hazardous undertaking at best.

When he reached the limit of the best

going, he brought the nose of the ship around into the wind, set the brakes, and opened the throttle wide for a moment. The motor was hitting beautifully.

"Sweet," muttered the American; then he throttled down to idling speed and shouted ahead to Tarzan, "If you know any prayers, buddy, you'd better say 'em —all of 'em. We're off!"

Tarzan glanced back, his white teeth gleaming in one of his rare smiles. There was a rush of wind as Brown gave the ship full throttle. It was a perilous take-off, swerving to miss boulders as the ship picked up speed. The tail rose. The ship bumped over the rough ground, tipped drunkenly as one wheel struck a small rock. A low boulder loomed

suddenly ahead. It would be impossible to swerve enough to miss it without cracking up. Brown pulled the stick back and held his breath. The ship rose a foot or two from the ground. Brown saw that it was not going to clear the boulder. He could see but a single hope, a slim one; but he seized it instantly. He pushed the stick forward, the wheels struck the ground with a jarring bump, the ship bounced into the air as the stick helped to pull her up just enough to clear the boulder.

She had flying speed by now and continued to rise slowly. It had been a close call; and although the morning air was chill, Brown was wet with perspiration as he climbed in a wide

spiral above the forest.

The village of the Kavuru lay below snuggled against the foot of the high escarpment that backed it, but it was not the village in which the two men were interested—it was the box canyon behind it where lay the temple of Kavandavanda of which Ogdli had told them.

Higher and higher rose the graceful plane, watched from the edge of the forest by Muviro, Balando, Tibbs, and Ogdli; and now, awakened by the drone of the motor, by Kavuru warriors congregated in the main street of the village.

"The dead men fly!" whispered a warrior in awed tones, for he thought

that the ship was being flown by the two who had brought it down and who had fallen before the attack of the villagers.

The thought, once voiced, took root in the minds of the Kavuru and terrified them.

They saw the ship turn and fly toward the village, and their fear mounted.

"They come for vengeance," said one.

"If we go into our huts they cannot see us," suggested another.

That was enough. Instantly the street was deserted, as the Kavuru hid from the vengeance of the dead.

Above the lofty escarpment and the towering cliffs Brown guided the ship. Below them lay the little valley and the

temple of Kavandavanda, plainly visible in the light of the new day.

The pilot cut his motor and shouted to Tarzan. "Not a chance to land there," he said.

Tarzan nodded. "Get more elevation, and tell me when."

Brown opened the throttle and commenced to climb in a great circle. He watched the altimeter. Before they had left the ground he had known the direction of the wind and estimated its force. At two thousand feet he levelled off and circled the rim of the canyon to a point above the cliffs on the windward side.

He cut his motor for an instant and shouted to the ape-man. "Stand by!"

Tarzan slipped the catch of his safety belt. Brown brought the ship into position again. "Jump!" he shouted as he brought the ship sharply into a momentary stall.

Tarzan swung onto the lower wing and jumped. An instant later Brown followed him.

31. THE WAGES OF SIN

Kavandavanda's soft, youthful appearance belied his strength. Jane was no match for him, and though she fought every foot of the way, fought like a young tigress, he dragged her back into his inner apartment.

"I ought to kill you, you she devil," he growled, as he threw her roughly upon the couch; "but I won't. I'll keep you; I'll tame you—and I'll start now." He came toward her, leering.

Just then a pounding sounded on the outer door of the antechamber; and a voice rose in terror, calling "Kavandavanda! Kavandavanda! Save us! Save us!"

The high priest wheeled angrily. "Who dares disturb Kavandavanda?" he demanded. "Get you gone!"

But instead of going, those at the door flung it open and pressed into the antechamber to the very door of the inner room. There were both slaves and warriors in the party. Their very presence there would have told the high priest that something was amiss even without the evidence of their frightened faces.

Now, indeed, was he impressed. "What brings you here?" he demanded.

"The dead men fly; they fly above the village and the temple. They have come seeking vengeance."

"You talk like fools and cowards,"

grumbled Kavandavanda. "Dead men do not fly."

"But they do fly," insisted a warrior. "The two that we killed yesterday are flying again this instant above the village and the temple. Come out, Kavandavanda, and cast a spell upon them, sending them away."

"I will go and look," said the high priest. "Ydeni, bring this girl along. If I leave her out of my sight, she will find some means to escape."

"She shall not escape me," said Ydeni; and, seizing Jane by the wrist, he dragged her after the high priest, the warriors, and the slaves into the courtyard of the temple.

The moment that they emerged from

the building Jane heard plainly the drone of a ship's motor far above them. Looking up, she saw a biplane circling the canyon.

With fascinated eyes the Kavuru were watching it—with fascinated, frightened eyes. Jane, too, was fascinated. She thought that the ship was searching for a landing place; and she prayed that the pilot might not attempt a landing here, for she knew that whoever was in the ship would meet instant death at the hands of the savage Kavuru.

Then she saw a figure leap from the plane. A gasp of terror rose from the Kavuru. The first figure was followed by a second.

"They come!" cried a warrior. "Save

us, Kavandavanda, from the vengeance of the dead."

The billowing white chutes opened above the falling figures, checking their speed.

"They have spread their wings," shrieked a slave. "Like the vulture, they will swoop down upon us."

Jane's eyes followed the ship. As the second man jumped, it nosed down, then levelled off by itself, shot across the little canyon, came around in a steep bank, and went into a tail spin almost directly above them.

Brown had opened the throttle wide at the instant that he jumped, for he and Tarzan had planned this very thing, hoping that the ship would crash near

enough to the temple to cause a diversion that would enable them to reach the ground before warriors could gather below to receive them on the tips of sharp spears. But they had not anticipated the reality, the fear that gripped the Kavuru at sight of them and the ship.

As they floated gently toward earth, a light wind carried them in the direction of the temple. They saw the crowd gathered in the courtyard looking up at them. They saw the ship diving with wide open throttle at terrific speed. They saw the crowd melt and vanish into the interior of the temple an instant before the plane crashed in the courtyard and burst into flame.

Tarzan touched the ground first and had thrown off the parachute harness by the time Brown was down. A moment later the two men started for the temple at a run.

There was no one to block their way. Even the guards at the outer gate had fled in terror. As they entered the courtyard, a few frightened leopards raced past them. The plane was burning fiercely against the temple wall a hundred feet away.

Tarzan, followed closely by Brown, ran for the main entrance to the building. Even here there was none to dispute their right to enter the sacred precincts.

At a distance they heard the sound of a babel of voices; and, guided by his

keen ears, the ape-man hastened along corridors in the direction of these sounds.

In the great throne room of Kavandavanda all the warriors and slaves of the temple were gathered. The high priest, trembling on his throne, was a picture of terror. The girls of the temple, those poor creatures who were awaiting death to give eternal life and youth to the Kavuru, were crouched at one side of the dais, wide-eyed and terrified.

A warrior pushed forward toward the throne. An angry scowl darkened his painted face, made doubly hideous by the ivory skewer that passed through the septum of his nose. Many human teeth

lay upon his breast, marks of his prowess as a hunter of girls. He pointed a finger at Kavandavanda.

"Your sins are being visited upon us," he bellowed. "You would have broken your vow. We who prevented Ogdli from taking the white girl last night know this. She bewitched him. She bewitched you. It is she who has brought the dead men upon us. Destroy her. Destroy her now with your own hands that we may be saved."

"Kill her! Kill her!" shrieked a hundred hoarse voices.

"Kill her! Kill her!" shrilled the fat, oily black slaves in their high falsettos.

A couple of warriors seized Jane where she stood among the cowering

girls and dragged her to the dais. They raised her roughly and threw her upon it.

Still trembling, Kavandavanda seized her by the hair and dragged her to her knees. From his loin-cloth he drew a long, crude dagger. As he raised it above the heart of the girl a pistol barked from the doorway of the throne room; and Kavandavanda, high priest of the Kavura, seized his chest and, with a piercing scream, collapsed beside the girl he would have killed.

Jane's eyes shot toward the doorway. "Tarzan!" she cried. "Tarzan of the Apes."

A hundred pairs of other eyes saw him, too—saw him and Brown advancing fearlessly into the room. A

warrior raised his spear against them; and this time Brown's gun spoke, and the fellow dropped in his tracks.

Then Tarzan spoke, spoke to them in their own tongue. "We have come for our women," he said. "Let them come away with us in peace, or many will die. You saw how we came. You know we are not as other men. Do not make us angry."

As he spoke, he continued to advance. The Kavuru, hesitating to attack, fearful of these strange creatures that flew down from the sky, that had been dead and were alive again, f ell back.

Suddenly Brown saw Annette among the other girls beside the dais. He leaped forward, and the warriors fell aside and

let him pass. A great emotion choked the words from his throat as he took the girl in his arms.

The ape-man leaped to the side of his mate. "Come," he said. "We must get out of here before they have time to gather their wits." Then he turned to the girls huddled below. "Is Buira, the daughter of Muviro, here?" he asked.

A young black girl ran forward. "The Big Bwana!" she cried. "At last I am saved."

"Come quickly," commanded the ape-man, "and bring any of the other girls with you who wish to escape."

There was not one who did not wish to leave, and Tarzan and Brown herded them from the throne room and toward

the temple entrance; but they had not gone far when they were met by rolling clouds of smoke and heard the crackling of flames ahead.

"The temple is afire!" cried Annette.

"I guess we're in for it," growled Brown. "It caught from the ship. Looks like we're trapped. Does anyone else know a way out?"

"Yes," said Jane. "There is a secret passage leading from the temple to the forest. I know where the entrance is. Come this way." She turned back and they retraced their steps toward the throne room.

Soon they commenced to meet warriors and slaves. These slunk away into side corridors and apartments.

Presently they reached the apartments of Kavandavanda. Jane was struck by a sudden thought.

She turned to Brown. "We all risked our lives," she said, "and two of us died in a mad search for the secret of eternal youth. It is in this room. Do you care to take the few seconds it will require to get it?"

"Do I?" exclaimed Brown. "And how! Lead me to it."

In the inner room of the high priest's apartments, Jane pointed out the cabinet. "There is a box in there that contains what you wish, but the key is on the body of Kavandavanda," she explained.

"I got a key right here," said Brown; and, drawing his pistol, be fired a shot

into the lock that shattered it; then he opened the cabinet.

"There," said Jane, pointing out the box that contained the pellets.

Brown seized it, and they continued on in search of the tunnel's entrance. But presently Jane paused, hesitant. "I am afraid we have come too far," she said. "I thought I knew just where the tunnel was, but now I am all confused."

"We must find some way out of the temple," said Tarzan. "The fire is spreading rapidly, following closely behind us."

Smoke was already rolling down upon them in stifling volume. They could hear the ominous roaring of the flames, the crash of falling timbers as portions

of the roof fell in, the shouts and screams of the inmates of the temple.

A warrior, choking and half blinded, stumbled into view from the dense smoke that filled the corridor along which they had come. Before the man could gather his faculties, Tarzan seized him.

"Lead us out of here," he commanded. "That is the price of your life."

When the fellow was able to open his eyes he looked at his captor. "Tarzan of the Apes!" he exclaimed.

"Ydeni," said the ape-man. "I did not recognize you at first."

"And you wish me to lead you out of the temple? You who have slain Kavandavanda, our high priest?"

"Yes," replied Tarzan.

"If I show you the way through the village you will all be killed. The warriors of Kavuru are recovering from their first fright. They will never let you pass. I could lead you that way and let you be killed; but once you saved my life. Now, I shall give you yours. Follow me."

He led the party a short distance down a side corridor and turned into a gloomy apartment. Crossing it, he pushed open a door beyond which was utter darkness.

"This tunnel leads out into the forest," he said. "Go your way, Tarzan of the Apes, nor return again to the village of the Kavuru."

Three weeks later a party of six was gathered before a roaring fire in the living room of Tarzan's bungalow far from the savage village of the Kavuru. The Lord of the Jungle was there, and his mate; Brown and Annette sat upon a lion's skin before the hearth, holding hands; Tibbs sat decorously on the edge of a chair in the background. He had not yet become accustomed to sitting on terms of equality with titled personages. Little Nkima, with far greater poise, perched upon the shoulder of a viscount.

"What are we goin' to do with this box of pills?" demanded Brown.

"Whatever you wish," said Jane. "You were willing to risk your life to get them. If I recall correctly, I think you

said something to the effect that if you had them back in civilization they would make you 'lousy' with money. Keep them."

"No," replied the American. "We all risked our lives, and anyway you were the one that really got them. The more I think of it, the less I like my scheme. Most everybody lives too long anyway for the good of the world —most of 'em ought to have died young. Suppose Congress got hold of 'em?—just think of that! Not on your life.

"I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll divide them. There will be five of us that will live forever."

"And be beautiful always," added Annette.

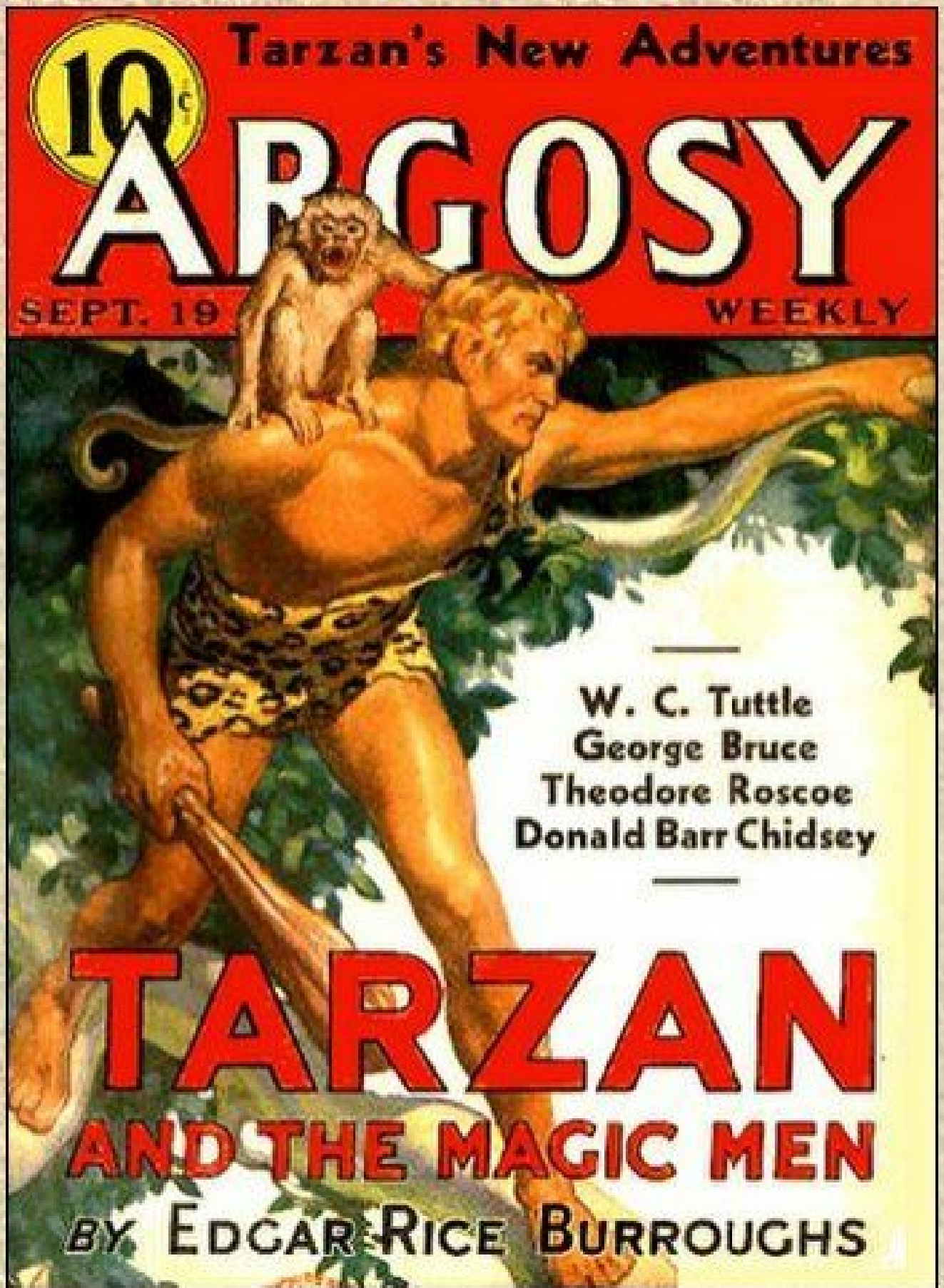
"If you will pardon my saying so, Miss," observed Tibbs with an apologetic cough, "I should rawther dislike thinking of pressing trousers for so many years; and as for being beautiful —my word! I'd never get a job. Who ever heard of a beautiful valet?"

"Well, we'll divide 'em anyway," insisted Brown. "You don't have to take 'em, but be sure you don't sell none of 'em to no cab driver princes. Here, I'll divide 'em into five equal parts."

"Aren't you forgetting Nkima?" asked Jane, smiling.

"That's right," said Brown. "We'll make it six parts. He's sure a lot more use in the world than most people."

THE END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TARZAN THE MAGNIFICENT

BOOK 20 IN THE TARZAN SERIES

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1. OUT OF THE PAST

Truth is stranger than fiction.

If this tale should seem in part incredible, please bear this axiom in mind. It had its beginning more than twenty years ago, unless one wishes to go further back to the first amoeba or even beyond that to the cosmos shattering clash of two forgotten suns; but we shall confine our story, other than by occasional reference, to the stage, the actors, and the business of the present time.

The searing sun rays scorch down upon a shriveled plain a scant five degrees north of the equator. A man, clothed in torn shirt and trousers upon which dried blood has caked and turned

a rusty brown, staggers and falls to lie inert.

A great lion looks down upon the scene from the summit of a distant rocky ledge where a few tenacious bushes cling to give shade to the lair of the king; for this is Africa.

Ska, the vulture, wheels and circles in the blue, sky-writing anticipation far above the body of the fallen man.

Not far to the south, at the edge of the dry plain, another man swings easily toward the north. No sign of fatigue or exhaustion here. The bronze skin glows with health, full muscles glide beneath it. The free gait, the noiseless tread might be those of Sheeta, the panther; but there is no slinking here. It is the carriage of

one who knows neither doubt nor fear, of a lord in his own domain.

He is encumbered by but a single garment, a loincloth of doe- skin. A coil of grass rope is looped over one shoulder, behind the other hangs a quiver of arrows; a scabbarded knife swings at his hip; a bow and a short spear complete his equipment. A shock of black hair falls in disorder above serene, grey eyes, eyes that can reflect the light of a summer sea or the flashing steel of a rapier.

The Lord of the Jungle is abroad.

He is far to the north of his ancient haunts, yet this is no unfamiliar terrain. He has been here many times before. He knows where water may be had for the

digging. He knows where the nearest water hole lies where he can make a kill and fill his belly.

He has come north at the behest of an emperor to investigate a rumor that a European power is attempting to cause the defection of a native chief by means of bribery. War and rumors of war are in the air, but of this tale such things are not a part—we hope. However, we are no prophet. We are merely a chronicler of events as they transpire. We follow the activities of our characters to the bitter end, even to war; but we hope for the best. However, only time can tell.

As Tarzan swung with easy strides out across the plain, no sound escaped his keen ears; no moving thing, his eyes;

no scent, borne upon the soft bosom of Usha the wind, went unidentified. Far in the distance he saw Numa the lion standing upon his rocky ledge; he saw Ska the vulture circling above something that Tarzan could not see. In all that he saw or heard or smelled he read a story; for to him this savage world was an open book, sometimes a thrilling, always an interesting narrative of love, of hate, of life, of death.

Where you or I might occasionally pick out a letter or a word, Tarzan of the Apes grasped the entire text and countless implications that we might never guess.

Presently, ahead of him, he saw something white shining in the sunlight -

a human skull; and as he came closer his eyes picked out the skeleton of a man, the bones only slightly disarranged. From among them grew a low desert shrub proclaiming that the skeleton had lain there for a long time.

Tarzan paused to investigate, for to him in his world nothing is too trivial to pass by without question. He saw that the skeleton was that of a Negro and that it had lain, there for a long time, years probably; which was entirely possible in this hot, dry plain. He could not tell how the man had come to his death, but he guessed that it might have been from thirst.

Then he saw something lying by the bones of a hand, something half buried

by shifting soil; and he stopped and picked it up, drawing it carefully out of the earth. It was a split stick of hardwood in the split end of which was wedged a thin parcel of oiled silk.

The silk was stained and brittle and dry. It seemed that it might crumble to his touch, but that was only the outer layer. As he carefully unwrapped it, he found the inner layers better preserved. Inside the silk wrapper he found what he had expected—a letter.

It was written in English in a small, extremely legible hand. Tarzan read it with interest, interest that was perhaps stimulated by the date at the top of the sheet. Twenty years had elapsed since that letter had been written. For twenty

years it had lain here beside the skeleton of its bearer in mute testimony to the loneliness of this barren plain.

Tarzan read it:

To Whom This May Come: I am dispatching this without much hope that it will even get out of this damnable country, still less that it will reach any white man; but if it does, please contact the nearest Resident Commissioner or any other authority that can get help to us quickly.

My wife and I were exploring north of Lake Rudolph. We came too far. It was the old story. Our boys became frightened by rumors of a fierce tribe inhabiting the country in which we were. They deserted us.

Where the Mafa River empties into the Neubari we turned up the gorge of the former as though drawn by some supernatural power, and were captured by the wild women of Kaji, when we reached the plateau. A year later our daughter was born and my wife died—the she- devils of Kaji killed her because she did not bear a son. They want white men. That is why they have not killed me and a dozen other white men captives.

The Kaji country lies on a high plateau above the falls of the Mafa. It is almost inaccessible, but can be reached by following the gorge of the Mafa from the Neubari.

It will require a strong expedition of

white men to rescue me and my little daughter, as I doubt that blacks can be induced to enter the country. These Kaji women fight like devils, and they have strange, occult powers of some nature. I have seen things here that—well, things that just can't be but are.

No native tribes will live near this mysterious, ill-omened country; so, little is known of the Kaji; but rumors of their terrifying practices have become part of the folklore of their nearest neighbors, and it is the hushed recital of these that frightens the bearers of any safari that comes within the sphere of their baneful influence.

The white men may never know the cause of it, for the blacks fear to tell

them, thinking that the black magic of the Kaji will reach out and destroy them; but the result is always the same—if the safari approaches too close to Kaji, the blacks all desert.

Then that happens which happened to my wife and me—the whites are lured by some mysterious means to the plateau and made prisoners.

Perhaps even a large force might be overcome, for the whites would not be contending against natural forces; but if they succeeded, the reward might be very great. It is the hope of this reward that I hold out against the dangers involved.

The Kaji own an enormous diamond. Where it came from, where it was

mined, I have been unable to ascertain; but I suspect that it came from the soil of their own country.

I have seen and handled the Cullinan diamond, which weighed over three thousand carats; and I am certain that the diamond of Kaji weighs fully six thousand. Just what its value may be I do not know, but using the value of the Brazilian stone, Star of the South, as a measure, it must be worth close to £2,000,000—a reward well worth some risk.

It is impossible for me to know whether I shall ever get this letter out of Kaji, but I have hopes of doing so by bribing one of their black slaves who occasionally leave the plateau to spy in

the lowlands.

God grant this be delivered in time.

Mountford.

Tarzan of the Apes read the letter through twice. Mountford! Almost ever since he could remember, it seemed, the mysterious disappearance of Lord and Lady Mountford had been recalled to the minds of men by rumors that they still lived, until they had become a legend of the wilderness.

No one really believed that they lived, yet at intervals some wanderer from the interior would revive the rumor with more or less circumstantial evidence. He had had the story from the chieftain of a remote tribe, or perhaps from the lips of a dying white man; but

there never came any definite clue as to the exact whereabouts of the Mountfords—they had been reported from a score of places all the way from the Sudan to Rhodesia.

And now at last the truth had come, but too late. Lady Mountford had been dead for twenty years, and it was quite improbable that her husband still lived. The child must, of course, have died or been killed by the Kaji. It could scarcely have survived among those savage people through infancy.

To the jungle bred ape-man death was a commonplace phenomenon of existence and far less remarkable than many other manifestations of nature, for it came eventually to all living things; so

the possibility of the death of the man and the child induced no reaction of sorrow or regret. It simply meant nothing to him whatsoever. He would deliver the letter to the English authorities at the first opportunity, and that would be all that there would be to it. Or so Tarzan thought. He continued his way, putting the matter from his mind. He was more interested in the maneuvers of Ska the vulture, for they indicated that Ska was circling about some creature not yet dead and which, because of its size or nature, he hesitated to attack.

As Tarzan approached the spot above which Ska wheeled on static wings he saw Numa the lion drop from the ledge upon which he had been standing and

move cautiously toward the thing that had aroused the man's curiosity. Though the latter was in plain sight, Numa seemingly ignored his presence; nor did Tarzan alter his course because of the lion. If neither changed his pace or his direction they would meet close to the thing above which Ska hovered.

As the ape-man came nearer the object of his interest he saw the body of a man lying in a little natural depression of the ground—the body of a white man.

To the right of it, a hundred yards away, was Numa. Presently the man stirred. He was not dead. He raised his head and saw the lion; then he struggled to rise, but he was very weak and could only manage to raise himself to one

knee. Behind him was Tarzan, whom he did not see.

As the man half rose, the lion growled. It was only a warning in which there was no immediate menace. Tarzan recognized it as such. He knew that Numa had been attracted by curiosity and not by hunger. His belly was full.

But the man did not know these things. He thought it was the end, for he was unarmed and helpless; and the great carnivore, the king of beasts, was almost upon him.

Then he heard another low growl behind him and, turning his eyes quickly in that direction, saw an almost naked man coming toward him. For an instant he did not understand, for he saw no

other beast; then he heard the growl again and saw that it came from the throat of the bronzed giant approaching him.

Numa heard the growl too and paused. He shook his head and snarled. Tarzan did not pause; he continued on toward the man. There was no sanctuary should the lion attack no tree to offer the safety of its branches; there were only Tarzan's weapons and his great strength and his skill; but greatest of all was his conviction that Numa would not attack.

The Lord of the Jungle well knew the art of bluff and its value. Suddenly he raised his head and voiced the hideous warning-cry of the bull ape. The man shuddered as he heard the bestial cry

issue from the lips of a human being. Numa, with a parting growl, turned and stalked away.

Tarzan came and stood over the man. "Are you hurt?" he demanded, "or weak from hunger and thirst?"

The voice of a beast coming from the lips of this strange white giant had been no more disconcerting to the man than now to hear him speak in English. He did not know whether to be afraid or not. He glanced hurriedly in the direction of the lion and saw it moving off in the direction from which it had come, and he was filled with a new awe of this creature who could frighten the king of beasts from its prey.

"Well," demanded the ape-man, "do

you understand English?"

"Yes," replied the other; "I am an American. I am not hurt. I have been without food for several days. I have had no water today."

Tarzan stooped and lifted the man to a shoulder. "We will find water and food," he said, "and then you may tell me what you are doing alone in this country."

2. A STRANGE TALE

As Tarzan carried the man toward safety, the limp, dead weight of his burden told him that his charge had lost consciousness. Occasionally he mumbled incoherently, but for the greater part of the journey he was as one dead.

When they came at last to water, Tarzan laid the man in the shade of a small tree; and, raising his head and shoulders, forced a few drops of the liquid between his lips. Presently he could take more, and with its revivifying effects he commenced to speak—broken, disjointed, sometimes incoherent snatches of sentences; as one speaks in delirium or when emerging from an

anesthetic.

"She-devil," he mumbled. "—beautiful—God! how beautiful." Then he was silent for a while as Tarzan bathed his face and wrists with the cool water.

Presently he opened his eyes and looked at the ape-man, his brows wrinkled in questioning and puzzlement. "The diamond!" he demanded. "Did you get the diamond? Huge—she must have been sired by Satan—beautiful —enormous - big as—what? It can't be—but I saw it —with my own eyes—eyes! eyes! - what eyes!—but a fiend —ten million dollars—all of that—big—big as a woman's head."

"Be quiet," said the ape-man, "and rest. I will get food."

When he returned, the man was sleeping peacefully and night was falling. Tarzan built a fire and prepared a brace of quail and a hare that he had brought down with arrows from his bow. The quail he wrapped in wet clay and laid in the embers; the hare he jointed and grilled on sharpened sticks.

When he had done, he glanced at the man and saw that his eyes were open and upon him. The gaze was quite normal, but the expression was one of puzzlement.

"Who are you?" asked the man. "What happened? I do not seem to be able to recall."

"I found you out on the plain—exhausted," explained Tarzan.

"O-oh!" exclaimed the other. "You are the—the man the lion ran away from. Now I remember. And you brought me here and got food?—and there is water, too?"

"Yes; you have had some. You can have more now. There is a spring behind you. Are you strong enough to reach it?"

The man turned and saw the water; then he crawled to it. Some of his strength had returned.

"Don't drink too much at once," cautioned the ape-man.

After the man had drunk he turned again toward Tarzan. "Who are you?" he asked. "Why did you save me?"

"You will answer the questions," said the Lord of the Jungle. "Who are you?

And what are you doing in this country alone? What are you doing here at all?"

The voice was low and deep. It questioned, but it also commanded. The stranger felt that. It was the well modulated, assured voice of a man who was always obeyed. He wondered who this almost naked white giant could be. A regular Tarzan, he thought. When he looked at the man he could almost believe that such a creature existed outside of story and legend and that this was, indeed, he.

"Perhaps you had better eat first," said the ape-man; "then you may answer my questions." He took a ball of hard baked clay from the fire, scraping it out with a stick; then with the hilt of his

knife he broke it open, and the baked clay fell away from the body of the quail, taking the feathers with it. He impaled the bird on the stick and handed it to the man. "It is hot," he said.

It was, but the half-famished stranger risked burning for an initial morsel. Without seasoning, as it was, no food had ever tasted better. Only its high temperature restrained him from wolfing it. He ate one quail and half the rabbit before he lay back, at least partially satisfied.

"To answer your questions," he said, "my name is Wood. I am a writer - travel stuff. Thus I capitalize my natural worthlessness, which often finds its expression and its excuse in wanderlust.

It has afforded me more than a competence; so that I am now able to undertake expeditions requiring more financing than a steamer ticket and a pair of stout boots.

"Because of this relative affluence you found me alone and on the point of death in an untracked wilderness; but though you found me deserted and destitute without even a crust of bread, I have here in my head material for such a travel book as has never been written by modern man. I have seen things of which civilization does not dream and will not believe; and I have seen, too, the largest diamond in the world. I have held it in my hands. I even had the temerity to believe that I could bring it away with

me.

"I have seen the most beautiful woman in the world—and the cruelest; and I even had the temerity to believe that I could bring her away with me, too; for I loved her. I still love her, though I curse her in my sleep, so nearly one are love and hate, the two most powerful and devastating emotions that control man, nations, life—so nearly one that they are separated only by a glance, a gesture, a syllable. I hate her with my mind; I love her with my body and my soul.

"Bear with me if I anticipate. For me she is the beginning and the end - the beginning and the end of everything; but I'll try to be more coherent and more

chronological.

"To begin with: have you ever heard of the mysterious disappearance of Lord and Lady Mountford?"

Tarzan nodded. "Who has not?"

"And the persistent rumors of their survival even now, twenty years after they dropped from the sight and knowledge of civilized man?

"Well, their story held for me such a glamour of romance and mystery that for years I toyed with the idea of organizing an expedition that would track down every rumor until it had been proved false or true. I would find Lord and Lady Mountford or I would learn their fate.

"I had a very good friend, a young man of considerable inherited means,

who had backed some of my earlier adventures—Robert van Eyk, of the old New York van Eyks. But of course that means nothing to you."

Tarzan did not comment. He merely listened—no shadow of interest or emotion crossed his face. He was not an easy man in whom to confide, but Stanley Wood was so full of pent emotion that he would have welcomed the insensate ears of a stone Buddha had there been no other ear to listen.

"Well, I gabbled so much about my plans to Bob van Eyk that he got all hepped up himself; and insisted on going along and sharing the expenses; which meant, of course, that we could equip much more elaborately than I had

planned to and therefore more certainly ensure the success of our undertaking.

"We spent a whole year in research, both in England and Africa, with the result that we were pretty thoroughly convinced that Lord and Lady Mountford had disappeared from a point on the Neubari River somewhere northwest of Lake Rudolph. Everything seemed to point to that, although practically everything was based on rumor.

"We got together a peach of a safari and picked up a couple of white hunters who were pretty well familiar with everything African, although they had never been to this particular part of the country.

"Everything went well until we got a

little way up the Neubari. The country was sparsely inhabited, and the farther we pushed in the fewer natives we saw. These were wild and fearful. We couldn't get a thing out of them about what lay ahead, but they talked to our boys. They put the fear o' God into 'em.

"Pretty soon we commenced to have desertions. We tried to get a line on the trouble from those who remained, but they wouldn't tell us a thing. They just froze up—scared stiff—didn't even admit that they were scared at first; but they kept on deserting.

"It got mighty serious. There we were in a country we didn't know the first thing about—a potentially hostile country—with a lot of equipment and

provisions and scarcely enough men to carry on with.

"Finally one of the headmen told me what they were scared of. The natives they had talked with had told them that there was a tribe farther up the Neubari that killed or enslaved every black that came into their territory, a tribe with some mysterious kind of magic that held you—wouldn't let you escape, or, if you did escape, the magic followed you and killed you before you got back to your own country—maybe many marches away. They said you couldn't kill these people because they were not human—they were demons that had taken the form of women.

"Well, when I told Spike and Troll,

the white hunters, what the trouble was, they pooh-poohed the whole business, of course. Said it was just an excuse to make us turn back because our carriers didn't like the idea of being so far from their own country and were getting homesick.

"So they got tough with the boys. Whaled hell out of 'em, and drove 'em on like slaves. As Spike said, 'Put the fear o' God into 'em', and the next night all the rest of 'em deserted—every last mother's son of 'em.

"When we woke up in the morning there were the four of us, Bob van Eyk, Spike, Troll, and myself, four white men all alone with loads for fifty porters; our personal boys, our gun bearers, our

askaris all gone.

"Spike and Troll back-tracked to try to pick up some of the boys to take us out, for we knew we were licked; but they never found a one of them, though they were gone for two days.

"Bob and I were just about to pull out on our own when they got back; for, believe me, if we'd had plenty of it before they left we'd had a double dose while they were away.

"I can't tell you what it was, for we never saw anyone. Maybe we were just plain scared, but I don't think that could have been it. Van Eyk has plenty of nerve, and I have been in lots of tough places—lost and alone among the head-hunters of Ecuador, captured in the

interior of New Guinea by cannibals, stood up in front of a firing squad during a Central American revolution - the kind of things, you know, that a travel writer gets mixed up in if he's really looking for thrills to write about and hasn't very good sense.

"No, this was different. It was just a feeling—a haunting sense of being watched by invisible eyes, day and night. And there were noises, too. I can't describe them—they weren't human noises, nor animal either. They were just noises that made your flesh creep and your scalp tingle.

"We had a council of war the night Spike and Troll got back. At first they laughed at us, but pretty soon they

commenced to feel and hear things. After that they agreed with us that the best thing to do would be to beat it back.

"We decided to carry nothing but a revolver and rifle apiece, ammunition, and food, abandoning everything else. We were going to start early the following morning.

"When morning came we ate our breakfasts in silence, shouldered our packs, and without a word started out up the Neubari. We didn't even look at one another. I don't know about the rest of them, but I was ashamed to.

"There we were, doing just the opposite of the thing we had decided on - going deeper and deeper into trouble—and not knowing why we were doing it. I

tried to exercise my will and force my feet in the opposite direction, but it was no go. A power far greater than my own will directed me. It was terrifying.

"We hadn't gone more than five miles before we came across a man lying in the trail—a white man. His hair and beard were white, but he didn't look so very old—well under fifty, I should have said. He seemed pretty well done in, notwithstanding the fact that he appeared in good physical condition—no indication of starvation; and he couldn't very well have been suffering from thirst, for the Neubari river was less than fifty yards from where he lay.

"When we stopped beside him, he opened his eyes and looked up at us.

" 'Go back!' he whispered. He seemed very weak, and it was obviously an effort for him to speak.

"I had a little flask of brandy that I carried for emergencies, and I made him drink a little. It seemed to revive him some.

" 'For God's sake turn back,' he said. 'There are not enough of you. They'll get you as they got me more than twenty years ago, and you can't get away—you can't escape. After all these years I thought I saw my chance; and I tried it. But you see! They've got me. I'm dying. His power! He sends it after you, and it gets you. Go back and get a big force of white men —blacks won't come into this country. Get a big force and get into the

country of the Kaji. If you can kill him you'll be all right. He is the power, he alone.'

" 'Whom do you mean by "he"?' I asked.

" 'Mafka,' he replied.

" 'He's the chief?' I asked.

" 'No; I wouldn't know what to call him. He's not a chief, and yet he's all-powerful. He's more like a witch-doctor. In the dark ages he'd have been a magician. He does things that no ordinary witch- doctor ever dreamed of doing. He's a devil. Sometimes I have thought that he is the Devil. And he is training her—teaching her his hellish powers.'

" 'Who are you?'

" 'I'm Mountford,' he replied.

" 'Lord Mountford?' I exclaimed.

"He nodded."

"Did he tell you about the diamond?" asked Tarzan.

Wood looked at the ape-man in surprise. "How did you know about that?"

"You rambled a little while you were delirious, but I knew about it before. Is it really twice the size of the Cullinan?"

"I never saw the Cullinan, but the Kaji diamond is enormous. It must be worth ten million dollars at least, possibly more. Troll used to work at Kimerly. He said somewhere between ten and fifteen million. Yes, Mountford

told us about it; and after that Troll and Spike were keen on getting into this Kaji country, hoping to steal the diamond. Nothing Mountford said could deter them. But after all it made no difference. We couldn't have turned back if we'd wanted to."

"And Mountford?" asked Tarzan. "What became of him?"

"He was trying to tell us something about a girl. He rambled a little, and we couldn't quite make out what he was driving at. His last words were, 'Save her—kill Mafka.' Then he died.

"We never did find out whom he meant even after we got into the Kaji country. We never saw any woman captive. If they had one they kept her

hidden. But then, we never saw Mafka either. He lives in a regular castle that must have been built centuries ago, possibly by the Portuguese, though it may have antedated their excursion into Abyssinia. Van Eyk thought it may have been built during the Crusades, though what the Crusaders were doing in this neck of the woods he couldn't explain. At any rate, the Kaji never built it; though they had done considerable toward restoring and preserving it.

"The diamond is kept in this castle and is guarded along with Mafka and the queen by Kaji warriors who are constantly on guard at the only entrance.

"The Kaji attribute all their powers and the power of Mafka to the diamond;

so naturally they guard it very carefully. For the stone itself they show no particular reverence. They handle it and allow others to handle it as though it were quite an ordinary stone. It is for the queen that they reserve their reverence.

"I am not certain that I correctly fathomed the connection between the queen and the diamond; but I think that they consider her the personification of the stone, into whose body has entered the spirit and the flame of the brilliant.

"She is a gorgeous creature, quite the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I do not hesitate to say that she is the most beautiful woman in the world; but a creature of such radical contradictions as to cast a doubt upon her sanity. One

moment she is all womanly compassion and sweetness, the next she is a she-devil. They call her Gonfala, and the diamond Gonfal.

"It was during a moment of her femininity that she helped me to escape; but she must have repented it, for it could have been only Mafka's power that reached out and dragged me down. Only she knew that I had gone; so she must have told him."

"What became of the other three men?" asked Tarzan.

"They are still prisoners of the Kaji. When Gonfala helped me to escape, I planned to come back with a force of whites large enough to rescue them," Wood explained.

"Will they be alive?"

"Yes; the Kaji will protect them and marry them. The Kaji are all women. Originally they were blacks who wished to turn white; so they married only white men. It became a part of their religion. That is why they lure white men to Kaji —and frighten away the blacks.

"This must have been going on for generations, as there is not an unmixed black among them. They range in color all the way from brown to white. Gonfala is a blond. Apparently there is not a trace of Negro blood in her veins.

"If a baby is born black it is destroyed, and all male babies are destroyed. They believe that the color of the skin is inherited from the father."

"If they kill all the males, where do they get their warriors?"

"The women are the warriors. I have never seen them fight; but from what I heard I imagine they are mighty ferocious. You see, we walked right into their country like long-lost friends, for we didn't want to fight 'em. All two of us wanted was their diamond, Bob van Eyk wanted adventure, and I wanted material for another book. If we could make friends, so much the better.

"That was six months ago. Bob has had adventure and I have material for a book, though much good it will ever do me. Spike and Troll haven't the diamond, but they each have seven Kaji wives—all properly married, too, by Gonfala in

the presence of the great diamond.

"You see, Gonfala, as queen, selects the wives for all captured whites; but she herself is not allowed to marry.

"This allotting of the whites is more or less of a racket. The women make offerings to Gonfala, and the ones who make the most valuable offerings get the husbands.

"Well, we saw a lot of Gonfala. She seemed to take a liking to Bob and me, and I sure took a liking to her. In fact, I fell in love with her, and even after I guessed the truth I didn't care.

"She liked to hear about the outside world, and she'd listen to us by the hour. You know how people are. Seeing so much of her and being near her broke

down my revulsion for her cruelties; so that I was always mentally making excuses for her. And all the time I kept on loving her more and more, until finally I told her.

"She looked at me for a long time without saying a word. I didn't know whether she was sore or not. If you knew what a big shot the queen of the Kaji is, you'd realize how presumptuous I was in declaring my love. She's more than a queen; she's a sort of deity that they worship—all mixed up with their worship of the diamond.

" 'Love,' she said in a little, low voice. 'Love! So that is what it is!'

"Then she straightened up and became suddenly very regal. 'Do you know what

you have done?' she demanded.

" 'I have fallen in love with you,' I said. 'That is about all I know or care.'

"She stamped her foot. 'Don't say it,' she commanded. 'Don't ever say it again. I should have you killed; that is the penalty for daring to aspire to the love of Gonfala. She may not love; she may never marry. Do you not understand that I am a goddess as well as a queen?'

"I can't help that,' I replied. 'And I can't help loving you any more than you can help loving me!'

"She gave a little gasp of astonishment and horror. There was a new expression in her eyes; it was not anger; it was fear. I had voiced a suspicion that I had had for some time,

and I had hit the nail on the head - Gonfala was in love with me. She hadn't realized it herself until that very moment —she hadn't known what was the matter with her. But, now she did, and she was afraid.

"She didn't deny it; but she told me that we would both be killed, and killed horribly, if Mafka suspected the truth. And what she was afraid of was that Mafka would know because of his uncanny powers of magic.

"It was then that she decided to help me escape. To her it seemed the only way to insure our safety; to me it presented an opportunity to effect the rescue of my friends with the possibility of persuading Gonfala to come away

with me if I were successful.

"With her help, I got away. The rest you know."

3. THE POWER OF MAFKA

The ape-man had listened patiently to Stanley Wood's recital. How much he could believe of it, he did not know; for he did not know the man, and he had learned to suspect that every civilized man was a liar and a cheat until he had proved himself otherwise.

Yet he was favorably impressed by the man's personality, and he had something of the wild beast's instinctive knowledge of basic character —if it may be called that. Perhaps it is more an intuitive feeling of trust for some and distrust of others. That it is not infallible, Tarzan well knew; so he was

cautious, always. And in that again the beast showed in him.

"And what do you propose doing now?" he asked.

Wood scratched his head in perplexity. "To be perfectly frank, I don't know. I am confident that Mafka found out that I had escaped and that it was his magic that followed and brought me down. Perhaps Gonfala told him. She is a Jekyll and Hyde sort of person. In one personality she is all sweetness and tenderness, in another she is a fiend.

"As far as my future actions are concerned, I have a very definite premonition that I am not a free agent."

"What do you mean?" demanded the ape-man.

"Since it commenced to get dark haven't you felt an invisible presence near us, haven't you sensed unseen eyes upon us, and heard things, and almost seen things? These are the manifestations of Mafka. We are in his power. Where he wills us to go, we'll go; and you can lay to that."

A shadow of a smile moved the lips of the Lord of the Jungle. "I have seen and heard and sensed many things since we stopped here, but none of them was Mafka. I have identified them all either through my ears or my nose. There is nothing to fear."

"You do not know Mafka," said Wood.

"I know Africa, and I know myself,"

replied the ape-man, simply. There was no bravado in his tone, but absolute assurance. It impressed the American.

"You are a regular Tarzan," he said.

The other shot a quick glance at him, appraising. He saw that the man spoke without knowledge of his identity, and he was satisfied. His mission required that he remain unknown, if possible. Otherwise, he might never gain the information he sought. He had felt safe from recognition, for he was unknown in this district.

"By the way," continued Wood. "You have not told me your name. I have seen so many unbelievable things since I came into this country that not even the sight of an evidently highly civilized

man wandering almost naked and alone in a wilderness surprised me as much as it otherwise might have. Of course, I don't want to pry into your affairs, but naturally my curiosity is aroused. I wonder who you are and what you are doing here." He stopped suddenly and looked intently at Tarzan. His eyes registered suspicion and a shadow of fear. "Say!" he exclaimed. "Did Mafka send you? Are you one of his— his creatures?"

The ape-man shook his head. "You are in a most unfortunate situation," he said. "If I were not one of Mafka's creatures, or if I were, my answer, quite conceivably, might be the same—I should deny it; so why answer you? You

will have to find out for yourself, and in the meantime you will have to trust me or distrust me as seems wisest to you."

Wood grinned. "I am up against it, ain't I?" He shrugged. "Well, we're both in the same boat. At least you don't know any more about me than I do about you. I may have been giving you a cock-and-bull story. I admit it must sound fishy. But at least I told you my name. You haven't told me that much about yourself yet. I don't know what to call you."

"My name is Clayton," said the ape-man. He might also have said, John Clayton Lord Greystoke—Tarzan of the Apes; but he didn't.

"I suppose you want to get out of this country," said Tarzan, "and get help for

your friends."

"Yes, of course, but there isn't a chance now."

"Why not?"

"Mafka—Mafka and Gonfala."

"I can't take you out at present," said the ape-man, ignoring the implied obstacle. "You may come along to the Lake Tana country with me if you wish to. You'll get a story there—a story that you must never write. You'll have to give me your word as to that. My only alternative is to leave you here. You will have to decide."

"I'll come with you," said Wood, "but neither of us will ever reach Lake Tana." He paused and strained his eyes into the lowering dusk of the brief twilight.

"There!" he said in a whisper. "It's back; it's watching us. Don't you hear it? Can't you feel it?" His voice was tense, his eyes slightly dilated.

"There is nothing," said Tarzan. "Your nerves are upset."

"You mean to tell me you don't hear it —the moaning, the sighing?"

"I hear the wind, and I hear Sheeta the panther a long way off," replied the ape-man.

"Yes, I hear those, too; but I hear something else. You must be deaf."

Tarzan smiled. "Perhaps," he said. "But go to sleep; you need rest. Tomorrow you will not hear things."

"I tell you I hear it. I almost see it.

Look! There, among those trees - just a shadow of something that has no substance."

Tarzan shook his head. "Try to sleep," he said. "I will watch."

Wood closed his eyes. The presence of this quiet stranger gave him a feeling of security despite his conviction that something weird and horrible hovered there in the darkness—watching, always watching. With the dismal keening still ringing in his ears, he fell asleep.

For a long time Tarzan sat in thought. He heard nothing other than the usual night noises of the wilderness, yet he was sufficiently conversant with the mystery and the magic of black Africa to realize that Wood had heard something

that he could not hear. The American was intelligent, sane, experienced. He did not seem the type to be carried away by imaginings or hysteria. It was just possible that he was under the spell of hypnotic suggestion—that Mafka could project his powers to great distances. This was rather borne out by the evidence that Tarzan had had presented to him within the past few hours: the death of Mountford's messenger twenty years before, the striking down of Wood within a short distance of the same spot, the death of Mountford for no apparent good reason upon the very threshold of escape.

Mafka's was indeed a sinister power, but it was a power that the ape-man did

not fear. All too often had he been the object of the malign necromancy of potent witch-doctors to fear their magic. Like the beasts of the jungle, he was immune. For what reason he did not know. Perhaps it was because he was without fear; perhaps his psychology was more that of the beast than of man.

Dismissing the matter from his mind, he stretched and fell asleep.

The sun was half a hand-breadth above the horizon when Wood awoke. He was alone. The strange white man had disappeared.

Wood was not greatly surprised. There was no reason why this stranger should wait and be burdened by a man he did not know, but he felt that he might

at least have waited until he was awake before deserting him and leaving him prey for the first lion or leopard that might chance to pick up his scent.

And then there was Mafka. The thought aroused questions in the mind of the American. Might not this fellow who called himself Clayton be a tool of the magician of the Kaji? The very fact that he denied that he had heard any strange sounds or sensed any unusual presence lent color to this suspicion. He must have heard; he must have sensed. Then why did he deny it?

But perhaps he was not Mafka's spy. Perhaps he had fallen a victim to the sorcery of the old Devil. How easy it would have been for Mafka to lure him

away. Everything seemed easy for Mafka. He could have lured him away to captivity or destruction, leaving Wood to die as Mafka intended—alone by starvation.

Wood had never seen Mafka. To him he should have been no more than a name; yet he was very real. The man even conjured an image of him that was as real and tangible as flesh and blood. He saw him as a very old and hideous black man, bent and wrinkled. He had filed, yellow teeth, and his eyes were close- set and blood-shot.

There! What was that? A noise in the trees! The thing was coming again!

Wood was a brave man, but things like these can get on the nerves of the

bravest. It is one thing to face a known danger, another to be constantly haunted by an unseen thing—a horrible, invisible menace that one can't grapple with.

The American leaped to his feet, facing the direction of the rustling among the foliage. "Come down!" he cried, "Come down, damn you, and fight like a man!"

From the concealing foliage a figure swung lightly to the ground. It was Tarzan. Across one shoulder he carried the carcass of a small buck.

He looked quickly about. "What's the matter?" he demanded. "I don't see anyone"; then a faint smile touched his lips. "Hearing things again?" he asked.

Wood grinned foolishly. "I guess it's

sort of got me," he said.

"Well, forget it for a while," counseled the ape-man. "We'll eat presently; then you'll feel better."

"You killed that buck?" demanded Wood.

Tarzan looked surprised. "Why, yes."

"You must have killed it with an arrow. That would take an ordinary man hours—stalk an antelope and get close enough to kill it with an arrow."

"I didn't use an arrow," replied the ape-man.

"Then how did you kill him?"

"I killed him with my knife—less danger of losing an arrow."

"And you brought him back through

the trees on your shoulder! Say, that bird Tarzan has nothing on you. How did you ever come to live this way, Clayton? How did you learn to do these things?"

"That is a long story," said Tarzan. "Our business now is to grill some of this meat and get on our way."

After they had eaten, Tarzan told the other to carry some of the meat in his pockets. "You may need food before I can make another kill," he said. "We'll leave the rest for Dango and Ungo."

"Dango and Ungo? Who are they?"

"The hyena and the jackal."

"What language is that? I never heard them called that before, and I am a little bit familiar with a number of native dialects."

"No natives speak that language," replied the ape-man. "It is not spoken by men."

"Who does speak it, then?" demanded Wood; but he got no reply, and he did not insist. There was something mysterious about him, and that in his mien and his manner of speech that discouraged inquisitiveness. Wood wondered if the man were not a little mad. He had heard of white men going primitive, living solitary lives like wild animals; and they were always a little bit demented. Yet his companion seemed sane enough. No, it was not that; yet undeniably the man was different from other men. He reminded Wood of a lion. Yes, that was it—he was the

personification of the strength and majesty and the ferocity of the lion. It was controlled ferocity; but it was there —Wood felt it. And that, perhaps, was why he was a little afraid of him.

He followed in silence behind the bronzed white savage back up the valley of the Neubari, and as they drew closer to the country of the Kaji he felt the power of Mafka increasing, drawing him back into the coils of intrigue and sorcery that made life hideous in the land of the women who would be white. He wondered if Clayton felt it too.

They came at length to the junction of the Mafa and the Neubari. It was here, where the smaller stream emptied into the larger, that the trail to the Kaji

country followed up the gorge of the Mafa. It was here that they would have to turn up the Mafa.

Tarzan was a few yards in advance of Wood. The latter watched him intently as he came to the well-marked forking of the trail to the right leading to the crossing of the Neubari and up the Mafa. Here, regardless of his previous intentions, he would have to turn toward Kaji. The power of Mafka would bend his will to that of the malign magician; but Tarzan did not turn -he continued upon his way, unperturbed, up the Neubari.

Could it be that Mafka was ignorant of their coming? Wood felt a sudden sense of elation. If one of them could

pass, they could both pass. There was an excellent chance that they might elude Mafka entirely. If he could only get by—if he could get away somewhere and organize a large expedition, he might return and rescue Van Eyk, Spike, and Troll.

But could he get by? He thought of the invisible presence that seemed to have him under constant surveillance. Had that been only the fruit of an overwrought imagination, as Clayton had suggested?

He came then to the forking of the trails. He focused all his power of will upon his determination to follow Clayton up the Neubari—and his feet turned to the right toward the crossing that led up

the Mafa.

He called to Clayton, a note of hopelessness in his voice. "It's no go, old man," he said. "I've got to go up the Mafa—Mafka's got me. You go on - if you can."

Tarzan turned back. "You really want to go with me?" he asked.

"Of course, but I can't. I tried to pass this damnable trail, but I couldn't. My feet just followed it."

"Mafka makes strong medicine," said the ape-man, "but I think we can beat him."

"No," said Wood, "you can't beat him. No one can."

"We'll see," said Tarzan, and lifting

Wood from the ground he threw him across a broad shoulder and turned back to the Neubari trail.

"You don't feel it?" demanded Wood. "You don't feel any urge to go up the Mafa?"

"Only a strong curiosity to see these people—especially Mafka," replied the ape-man.

"You'd never see him—no one does. They're afraid someone will kill him, and so is he. He's pretty well guarded all the time. If one of us could have killed him, most of the Kaji's power would be gone. We'd all have had a chance to escape. There are about fifty white prisoners there. Some of them have been there a long time. We could have fought

our way out, if it hadn't been for Mafka; and some of us would have come through alive."

But Tarzan did not yield to his curiosity. He moved on toward the North with an easy grace that belied the weight of the burden across his shoulder. He went in silence, his mind occupied by the strange story that the American had told him. How much of it he might believe, he did not know; but he was inclined to credit the American with believing it, thus admitting his own belief in the mysterious force that enslaved the other mentally as well as physically; for the man seemed straightforward and honest, impressing Tarzan with his dependability.

There was one phase of the story that seemed to lack any confirmation - the vaunted fighting ability of the Amazonian Kaji. Wood admitted that he had never seen them fight and that they captured their prisoners by the wiles of Mafka's malign power. How, then, did he know that they were such redoubtable warriors? He put the question to the American.

Whom did they fight?

"There is another tribe farther to the East," explained Wood, "across the divide beyond the headwaters of the Mafa. They are called Zuli. Once the Kaji and the Zuli were one tribe with two medicine- men, or witch-doctors, or whatever you might call them. One was

Mafka, the other was a chap called Woora.

"Jealousy arose between the two, causing a schism. Members of the tribe took sides, and there was a battle. During the fracas, Woora swiped one of the holy fetishes and beat it, telling some of his followers where he was going and to join him when the fight was over. You see, like the people who cause civilized wars, he was not taking part in it personally.

"Well, it seems that this other fetish that he lifts is the complement of the great diamond, the Gonfal, of the Kaji. United, their power is supreme; but separated, that of each is greatly reduced. So the Kaji and the Zuli are

often battling, each seeking to obtain possession of the fetish of the other.

"It was the stories of the raids and skirmishes and battles for these prizes, as told me by Gonfala and others of the Kaji, that gave me the hunch that these ladies are pretty mean warriors. Some of the yarns I've heard were sure tall; but the scars of old wounds on most of them sort of bear them out, as do the grisly trophies that hang from the outer walls of Gonfala's palace —the shriveled heads of women, suspended by their long hair.

"An interesting feature of the story is the description of the fetish of the Zuli—a green stone as large as the Gonfal and as brilliant. It glistens like an emerald; but, holy cats! Think of an emerald

weighing six thousand carats! That would be something worth battling for, and they don't know the value of it."

"Do you?" asked Tarzan

"Well, no, not exactly—perhaps twenty million dollars at a rough guess."

"What would that mean to you—luxuries and power? The Kaji probably know little of luxuries; but, from what you have told me, power is everything to them; and they believe that this other fetish would give them unlimited power, just as you think that twenty million dollars would give you happiness.

"Probably you are both wrong; but the fact remains that they know quite as well the value of it as you, and at least it does less harm here than it would out in the

world among men who would steal the pennies from the eyes of the dead!"

Wood smiled. This was the longest speech that his strange companion had vouchsafed. It suggested a philosophy of life that might make an uninhabited wilderness preferable to contacts of civilization in the eyes of this man.

For an hour Tarzan carried the American; then he lowered him to his feet. "Perhaps you can go it on your own now," he said.

"I'll try. Come on!"

Tarzan started again along the trail toward the North. Wood hesitated. In his eyes and the strained expression of his face was reflected the stupendous effort of his will. With a groan of anguish he

turned and started briskly toward the South.

The ape-man wheeled and hastened after him. Wood glanced back and broke into a run. For an instant Tarzan hesitated. The fellow meant nothing to him; he was a burden. Why not let him go and be relieved of him? Then he recalled the terror in the man's face and realized, also, the challenge that Mafka was hurling at the Lord of the Jungle.

Perhaps it was the latter that motivated him more strongly than aught else when he started in pursuit of the fleeing American.

Mafka's power might be unquestionably great, but it could not lend sufficient speed to the feet of

Stanley Wood to permit him to outdistance the ape-man. In a few moments Tarzan overhauled and seized him. Wood struggled weakly to escape at the same time that he was thanking Tarzan for saving him.

"It's awful," he groaned. "Don't you suppose I can ever escape from the will of that old devil?"

Tarzan shrugged. "Perhaps not," he said. "I have known ordinary witch-doctors to kill men after a period of many years at distances of hundreds of miles, and this Mafka is evidently no ordinary witch- doctor."

That night they camped beside the Neubari, and in the morning when the ape-man awoke Stanley Wood had

disappeared.

4. SENTENCED TO DEATH

With the realization That the American had gone there came to Tarzan a fuller realization of the potency of Mafka's necromancy; for he did not for a moment doubt that it was the influence of the Kaji magician that had forced the desertion of the unwilling Wood.

The ape-man conceded admiration to the cunning and the power that had stolen the man from him, for he had taken particular pains to circumvent just such a possibility. When they had lain down to sleep, Tarzan had fastened one end of his grass rope securely to an ankle of the man he had taken under his protection

and the other end to one of his own wrists; but that upon which he had depended most was his own preternatural keenness of sense which ordinarily functioned only a little less actively when he slept than when he was awake.

That Wood had been able to free himself and escape could have been due to no powers of his own; but must have been attributable solely to the supernatural machinations of Mafka, constituting in the eyes of the ape-man a direct challenge to his own prowess.

Perhaps this motivated him in part, but it was also a desire to save the young American from an unknown fate that prompted him to turn back in pursuit.

He did not follow the back trail to the Mafa River, but struck out in a south-easterly direction into the mountainous country that forms an almost impregnable protection for the stronghold of the Kaji.

Deep gorges and precipitous cliffs retarded the progress of the ape-man; so that it was over three days before he reached his objective: a point near the headwaters of the Mafa a full day's march to the east of the City of Kaji.

He had foreseen that Mafka might expect him to follow Wood, which would offer the magician an opportunity to have Tarzan waylaid and destroyed at some point upon the trail where he would be helpless against the onslaught

of a well-placed detachment of Kaji warrior- women; and so he had elected to come upon Kaji from an unexpected direction and depend upon his animal cunning and his great strength and agility to carry him into the very presence of the malign power the destruction of which appeared to be the only means whereby Wood and his companions might be set at liberty permanently.

But above all, his success depended upon the verity of his conviction that he was immune to the supernatural powers of Mafka; though upon this point there was one thing that troubled him; it seemed to him that Mafka must have known of his befriending of Wood. The very fact that he had taken Wood from

him suggested that. Yet this might have been accomplished by means of spies, which the American had specifically stated were employed by the Kaji. There was also the possibility that Mafka's power over his victims was so great that he could read their minds even at great distances and thus see through their eyes the things that they saw; so that while Tarzan had been in the company of the American, Mafka had been as well aware of him and his activities as though he had been present in person; but when Wood was no longer with him, the magician could not exercise his telepathic surveillance over him. This was the premise upon which the ape-man based his strategy.

It was late in the afternoon of the third day after Wood's disappearance that Tarzan paused upon a lofty mountain ridge and surveyed the country about him. In a canyon below and to the south of him raced a turbulent mountain stream. With his eyes he followed its meanderings toward the west where, in the dim and hazy distance, he saw a cleft in the serried range that he knew must be the gorge of the Mafa leading down to its confluence with the Neubari.

He stood, then, near the headwaters of the former stream between the countries of the Kaji and the Zuli.

A west wind blew gently from the lower country toward the summit of the range, carrying to the nostrils of the

apeman evidence of things unseen —of Tongani the baboon, Sheeta the leopard, of the red wolf, and the buffalo; but of the east he had no knowledge except that which his eyes and his ears furnished; and so, facing the west, he was unaware of the eyes that watched him from behind the summit of the ridge above him, eyes that disappeared when the ape-man turned in their direction.

There were a dozen pairs of them, and their owners formed a motley crew of unkempt, savage warriors. Of them, seven were bearded white men and five were blacks. All were similarly garbed in well worn loin-cloths of the skins of wild beasts. They carried bows and arrows and short, heavy spears; and all

the blacks and some of the whites wore barbaric ornaments—necklaces of the teeth of animals and armlets and anklets. Upon their backs were small shields of the hide of the buffalo.

They watched Tarzan as he descended into the gorge of the Mafa and slaked his thirst. They saw him take a piece of meat from his quiver and eat, and every move that he made they watched. Sometimes they spoke together in low whispers that could not carry against the wind to the ears of the apeman.

One, who seemed to be the leader, spoke most often. He was a white man whose brown hair had grayed at the temples and whose beard was streaked

with grey. He was well built, with the hard leanness of the athlete. His forehead and his eyes denoted intelligence. His companions called him Lord.

Tarzan was tired. For three days he had scaled cliffs and crags, descended into abysses, and clambered to lofty summits; and the previous night his rest had been broken by hunting leopards that had caught his scent and stalked him. He had killed one that had attacked him; but others had kept him constantly on the alert, precluding the possibility of continued rest.

The sun was still an hour high when he lay down to sleep behind a bush on the slope above the Mafa. That he was

dog-tired must account for that which followed, for ordinarily nothing could have approached without arousing him.

When he did awaken, it was still daylight; and a dozen warriors formed a close circle about him, the points of their spears directed at his unprotected body. He looked up into the savage, unfriendly eyes of a black man; then he glanced quickly around the circle and noted the composition of the group. He did not speak. He saw that he was outnumbered and a captive. Under the circumstances there was nothing that he could say that would serve him any purpose.

His silence and his composure set his captors aback. They had expected him to show fear and excitement. He did

neither. He just lay there and appraised them through steady, grey eyes.

"Well, Kaji," said Lord at last, "we've got you."

The truth of the statement was too obvious to require comment; so Tarzan remained silent. He was interested less in what the man said than in the language in which he said it. The fellow appeared definitely Anglo-Saxon, yet he spoke a bastard tongue the base of which was Galla but so intermixed with other tongues that it would have been unintelligible to one less versed in African dialect and European languages than Tarzan. In his brief speech, that could be translated into six English words, he had used as many tongues.

Lord shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "Well, Kaji," he said after a brief silence, "what have you got to say?"

"Nothing," replied the ape-man.

"Get up!" directed Lord.

Tarzan arose and stretched with the easy indifference of a lion in its own lair.

"Take his weapons," snapped Lord; and then, half to himself and in English: "By Jove, but he's a rum 'un."

Then, indeed, was Tarzan interested. Here was an Englishman. There might be some reason to speak now—to ask questions.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What

makes you think that I'm a Kaji?"

"For the same reason that you know that we are Zuli," replied Lord. "Because there are no other people in these mountains." Then he turned to one of his fellows. "Tie his hands behind his back."

They led him then across the ridge and down the other side of the divide; but it was dark now, and Tarzan saw nothing of the country through which they passed. He knew that they followed a well worn trail that often dropped precipitously down the side of a rocky gorge until it reached a gentler descent and wound tortuously as though following the meanderings of the stream that splashed or purled or gurgled at

their right.

It was very dark in the gorge; but at length they came out into open, level country; and there it was lighter; though still no landmarks were visible to give the ape-man a suggestion of the terrain of this unfamiliar land.

A dim, flickering light showed far ahead. For half an hour they approached it before its closer aspect explained it. Then Tarzan saw that it was from an open fire burning behind the stockade of a village.

As they approached the gates, Lord hallooed; and when he had identified himself they were admitted, and Tarzan found himself in a village of stone huts thatched with grass. The light from the

fire burning in the center of the main street revealed only a portion of the village, which evidently was of considerable size; the rest was lost in the shadows beyond the limit of the firelight.

Before him, built directly across the principal avenue, loomed a large two-storied stone building. At the village gate were several women garbed and armed similarly to his captors. In the none-too- brilliant light of the fire they appeared to be white women; and there were others, like them, lounging in the doorways of huts or about the fire. Among them were a number of white men; and all of them, but especially the women, evinced considerable interest in

Tarzan as Lord led him through the village.

"Ai, Kaji!" they yelled at him. "You will soon be dead, Kaji."

"It is too bad he is a Kaji," shouted one woman. "He would make a fine husband."

"Perhaps Woora will give him to you," bantered another, "when he gets through with him."

"He will be no good for a husband then. I do not want lion meat for a husband."

"I hope Woora feeds him to the lions alive. We have had no good sport since before the last rains."

"He will not turn this one to the lions.

The fellow has too good a head. He looks as though he might have brains, and Woora never wastes good brains on the lions."

Through this barrage of comment, Lord led his captive to the entrance to the big building that dominated the village. At its portals were a dozen warrior-women, barring entrance. One of them advanced to meet Lord, the point of her spear dropped to the level of the man's abdomen.

Lord halted. "Tell Woora that we bring a Kaji prisoner," he said.

The woman turned to one of her warriors. "Tell Woora that Lord brings a Kaji prisoner," she directed; then her eyes travelled over the ape-man

appraisingly.

"A good specimen, eh?" said Lord. "What a fine mate he'd make for you, Lorro."

The woman spat reflectively. "M-m-m, yes," she agreed; "he has good conformation, but he is a little too dark. Now, if one were sure he had nothing but white blood, he'd be well worth fighting for. Do you suppose he's all white? But what's the difference? He's a Kaji, and that's the end of him."

Since his capture Tarzan had spoken only a few words, and these in the Gallic dialect. He had not denied that he was a Kaji for the same reason that he had made no effort to escape: curiosity prompted him to learn more of the Zuli

—curiosity and the hope that he might learn something of advantage from these enemies of the Kaji that would aid him in freeing the two Americans and their companions from captivity and releasing them permanently from the malign power of Mafka.

As he waited before the entrance to the palace of Woora he decided that he was rather enjoying the adventure. The frank appraisal of Lorro amused him. The idea of a woman fighting for possession of him appealed to his sense of humor. At the time he did not know exactly what the woman's words connoted, but he made a shrewd guess based on what Wood had told him of the customs of the Kaji.

Indifferently he appraised the woman. She might have been an octoroon, or she might have been a white woman with a coat of tan. Her features were not Negroid. Except for her dark hair she might have passed easily for a Scandinavian. She was a well-formed woman of about thirty, clean limbed and with the muscular contours of an athlete rendered graceful by femininity. Her features were good, and by any civilized standards she would have been accounted a handsome woman.

The ape-man's reflections upon the subject were interrupted by the return of the warrior Lorro had sent to advise Woora of Lord's return with a prisoner.

"Lord is to take the Kaji to Woora,"

she announced. "See that the prisoner bears no weapons, that his hands are tied behind him, and that a strong guard accompanies him and Lord—a guard of women."

With six of her warriors, Lorro escorted Lord and his prisoner into the palace, a palace only by virtue of its being occupied by a ruler—a palace by courtesy, one might say.

They entered a gloomy hall lighted dimly by a burning wick in a shallow pottery dish, a primitive cresset that gave forth more soot than light. Upon either side of the corridor were doorways, across most of which were drawn hangings fashioned from the pelts of animals, mostly buffaloes.

One uncovered doorway revealed a chamber in which a number of warrior-women were congregated. Some lay on low, skin-covered cots; others squatted in a circle upon the floor intent upon some game they were playing. The walls of the room were hung with spears and shields and bows and arrows. It was evidently a guard-room. Just beyond it, the corridor ended before a massive door guarded by two warriors.

It was evident that the guards were expecting the party and had received their instructions, for as they approached the doors were swung open for them to enter.

Tarzan saw before him a large room at the far end of which a figure was

seated upon a dais. Two score or more of smoking cressets lighted the interior, revealing walls hung with a strange array of skins, weapons, rugs, silks, calicoes—a veritable museum, Tarzan conjectured, of the loot of many a safari; but by far the most outstanding and impressive feature of the decorations was the frieze of human heads that encircled the chamber —the mummified heads of women, hanging by their long hair, while from the smoke-darkened beams of the ceiling depended a hundred more.

These things the eyes of the ape-man took in in a sweeping glance; then they returned to the dais and the figure upon it. A score of women warriors flanked

the dais where the lone figure sat upon a huge throne chair.

At first glance Tarzan saw only an enormous head thatched with scraggly grey hair; and then, below the head, a shrivelled body that was mostly abdomen—a hideously repulsive figure, naked but for a loin cloth. The skin of the face and head were drawn like yellow parchment over the bones of the skull—a living death's head in which were set two deep, glowing eyes that smoldered and burned as twin pits of Hell. And Tarzan knew that he was in the presence of Woora.

On a table directly in front of the magician rested an enormous emerald that reflected the lights from the nearer

cressets and shot them back in scintillant rays that filled the apartment with their uncanny light.

But it was the man rather than the emerald that interested Tarzan. Woora was no black man, yet it was difficult to determine to what race he might belong. His skin was yellow, yet his features were not those of a Chinese. He might have been almost anything.

For several minutes he sat staring at Tarzan after the latter was halted before the dais. Gradually an expression of puzzlement and frustration overspread his face; then he spoke.

"How is my brother?" he demanded, the words squeaking like a rusty hinge.

The expression on Tarzan's face

revealed no emotion, though inwardly he was greatly puzzled by the question.

"I do not know your brother," he replied.

"What?" demanded Woora. "You mean to tell me, Kaji, that you do not know that prince of liars, that thief, that murderer, that ingrate, my brother?"

The ape-man shook his head. "I do not know him," he repeated, "and I am no Kaji."

"What!" screamed Woora, glaring at Lord. "This is no Kaji? Didn't you tell me you were bringing a Kaji?"

"We captured him near the headwaters of the Mafa, O Woora; and what other kind of man would be there but a Kaji?"

"He is no Kaji, fool," said Woora. "I guessed as much the moment I looked into his eyes. He is not as other men. My putrid brother could have no power over this one. You are a fool, Lord; and I have no wish to breed more fools among the Zuli—there are enough already. You will be destroyed. Take his weapons from him, Lorro. He is a prisoner."

Then he turned to the ape-man. "What were you doing in the country of the Zuli?" he demanded.

"Searching for one of my people who is lost."

"You expected to find him here?"

"No, I was not coming here. I was going into the country of the Kaji."

"You are lying," snapped Woora.

"You could not come to the headwaters of the Mafa without coming through the country of the Kaji; there is no other way."

"I came another way," replied Tarzan.

"No man could cross the mountains and gorges that surround Kaji and Zuli; there is no trail except that up the Mafa River," insisted Woora.

"I crossed the mountains and the gorges," said Tarzan.

"I see it all!" exclaimed Woora. "You are no Kaji; but you are in the service of my loathsome brother, Mafka. He has sent you here to murder me."

"Well," he laughed mockingly, "we shall see who is more powerful, Mafka or I. We shall see if he can save his

servant from the wrath of Woora. And we'll give him time." He turned to Lorro. "Take him away with the other prisoner," he directed, "and see that neither of them escapes—especially this one; he is a dangerous man. But he will die even as Lord will."

5. THE BLACK PANTHER

Tarzan and Lord were confined in a room on the second floor of the palace of Woora. It was a small room with a single window heavily barred with wooden bars. The door was thick and solid, and secured upon the outside with heavy bars.

When the guard had closed and bolted the door and departed, Tarzan walked to the window and looked out. The moon had risen and the light clouds that had overcast the sky earlier in the night had disappeared.

In the soft glow of the night light, the ape-man saw a walled compound directly beneath the window; and in the shadow of the wall something that was

unrecognizable by sight, yet Tarzan knew what it was from the scent that rose to his nostrils. He took hold of the bars and tested them; then he turned back and faced Lord.

"If you had asked me," he said, "I should have told you that I was not a Kaji; then you wouldn't have been in this mess."

Lord shook his head. "It was only an excuse to kill me," he said. "Woora has been waiting for one. He is afraid of me. The men are more important here than they are in the Kaji country. We are allowed to bear arms and be warriors. That is because Woora knows that we cannot escape, as the only route to the outer world lies through the country of

the Kaji. They would make slaves of us or kill us.

"Woora has heard that some of the men have banded together for the purpose of escaping. The plan included assassinating Woora and stealing the great emerald, which is supposed to be the source of his magic power. With this emerald, which Mafka craves more than anything in the world, we hoped to bribe our way through and out of the Kaji country.

"Woora believes that I am the instigator of the plot, and so he wants to destroy me. Of course, he could do that at any time he wishes, but he is a wily old devil and is trying to hide the fact that he has any suspicions. In this way he

hopes to trap all of the plotters eventually, killing them one by one on one pretext or another."

"How can you know so much of his plans?" demanded the ape- man.

"Even in this land of horror and iniquity there is sometimes love," replied Lord, "and there is always lust. A woman close to Woora is honestly in love with one of us. Woora has talked too much to her—that is all. He is supposed to be above temptations of the flesh, but he is not.

"But now everything is spoiled. The others will be afraid. They will stay on until they die."

"You are an Englishman, aren't you?" asked Tarzan.

Lord nodded. "Yes," he said; "I was an Englishman, but God only knows what I am now. I've been here twenty years—here and in Kaji. The Kaji caught me originally; then the Zuli got me in one of their raids."

"I thought Woora killed the Kaji he caught," said the apeman. "He was going to have me killed because he thought I was a Kaji, or at least I assumed he was from what I heard after we reached the city."

"Yes, he kills them all now because we have all the men we need; but in those days there were not enough men. We can only support a limited number of people. There's plenty of meat, for game is plentiful; but fruits and vegetables are

scarce. As it is, we breed more than enough to keep up the population—in fact, too many. Most of the babies are killed. Then, too, the women are pretty white. That is what they have been breeding for for God knows how many generations; so there isn't much need for new white blood. It's very rare now that a baby is born with Negroid characteristics, but of course occasionally there is a throwback."

"Why do they want to be white?" asked Tarzan.

"The Lord only knows. They never see anyone but themselves and never will. The original reason is lost in the past—dead with those who conceived it. Unless, perhaps, Woora and Mafka

know. It is said they have been here forever—that they are deathless; but of course that is not true.

"I have a theory about them that is based upon various snatches of information that I have picked up during the past twenty years. They are identical twins who came from Columbia many years ago bringing with them the great emerald, which they probably stole. How they came into possession of the Gonfal of the Kaji, I don't know. Doubtless they murdered someone who was trying to get out of the country with it.

"That they have uncanny occult powers there is no doubt, and the very fact that they believe these dependent

upon the great diamond of the Kaji and the emerald of the Zuli may very probably have caused this to be true; so if either Mafka or Woora were deprived of his stone his power would be lost. But killing them would make it surer. We were taking no chances; we were going to kill Woora. But now, as far as I am concerned, the dream is over. I'll go to the lions; you'll be tortured to death."

"Why the difference?" asked Tarzan.

"I'll furnish sport for Woora in the lion yard, but he won't risk you. They might tear you to pieces, head and all; and Woora wants your brain. I'm sure of that."

"Why does he want it?"

"You had him guessing; I could see

that, and he figures that any one who can do that must have a pretty good brain; so he wants it."

"But why?" insisted the ape-man.

"To eat."

"Oh, I see," said Tarzan. "He believes that if one eats the part in which another excels one acquires a measure of this excellence. I have seen it before, often. A warrior eats the heart of a brave enemy to increase his own courage, or the soles of the feet of a swift runner to accelerate his own speed, or the palms of the hands of a clever artisan."

"It is all rot," said Lord.

"I do not know," admitted Tarzan. "I have lived in Africa all my life, and there are many things that I have learned

not to deny simply because I do not understand them. But there is one thing that I guess."

"What is that?"

"That Woora will not eat my brain; nor will you go to the lions if you care to escape."

"Escape!" scoffed Lord. "There is no escape."

"Perhaps not," admitted the ape-man. "I said only that I guessed; I did not say that I knew."

"How can we escape?" demanded Lord. "Look at that door; see the bars on that window, and below the window

"The panther," Tarzan concluded for him.

"How did you know a panther was there?" Lord's tone bespoke incredulity.

"The scent of Sheeta is strong," replied the ape-man. "I noticed it the instant I came into this room, and when I went to the window I knew that he was in the compound beneath—a male panther."

Lord shook his head. "Well, I don't know how you did it; but you're right."

Tarzan walked to the window and examined the bars and the casing in which they were set.

"Stupid," he said.

"What is stupid?" asked Lord.

"Whoever designed this. Look." He seized two of the bars close to the sill

and surged backward with all his strength and all his weight. There was a rending of wood as the entire window frame was torn from its seat; then he laid the frame with all its bars upon the floor of the room.

Lord whistled. "Man!" he exclaimed. "You're strong as a bull; but don't forget the panther, and the noise'll probably bring the guard."

"We'll be ready for them," Tarzan assured him. He had seized the window frame again, and a moment later he had torn it apart. The bars fell from their sockets. Tarzan picked up two of them and handed one to Lord. "These will make fair weapons," he said.

They waited in silence for a while,

but no guard came. Apparently only the panther had been disturbed. He was growling now; and when they went to the window, they saw him standing in the center of the compound looking up at them. He was a large beast and coal black.

Tarzan turned to his companion. "Could you get away if we got outside the city?" he asked. "Or has Woora the same power to direct the movements of his victims at a distance that Mafka has?"

"There's the rub," admitted Lord. "That's the reason we'd planned on killing him."

"How does he stand with the Zuli? Are they loyal to him?"

"The only hold he has upon them is based on terror. They fear and hate him."

"The women, too?"

"Yes, every one."

"What would happen here if he were dead?" asked Tarzan.

"The blacks and whites who are prisoners and slaves would combine with the women in an attempt to fight our way out into the outer world. The blacks and whites (they are all men) want to get back to their own homes. The women, the true Zuli, have heard so much about the world they have never seen that they want to get out, too. They know from what the whites have told them that they would be rich from the proceeds of the sale of the great emerald; and while they

have no first-hand knowledge of money, they have learned enough from the white men here to understand that it will get them everything their hearts desire—especially more white men. Here, each of the whites is married to anywhere from seven to a dozen Zuli women because there are so few of us; so the height of the ambition of every Zuli is to have a husband of her own."

"Why don't they kill Woora themselves, then?"

"Fear of his supernatural powers. Not only would they not kill him themselves, they would protect his life from others; but when he was once dead, then it would be different."

"Where is he?" asked Tarzan. "Where

does he sleep?"

"In a room directly behind his throne," replied Lord. "But why? Why do you ask? You're not -?"

"I am going to kill him. There is no other way."

Lord shook his head. "It can't be done. Man, he is almost as powerful as God and almost as omniscient. But anyway, why are you doing it?"

"One of my countrymen is a prisoner among the Kaji. With the help of the Zuli, I can set him free with all the rest of the Kaji prisoners. I am not so sure that I could do it alone. It would be difficult to get into Mafka's presence. He is more afraid and more careful than Woora."

"You haven't got into Woora's presence yet, except with your hands tied behind you," Lord reminded him.

"Is there any way to get into his room except from the throne- room?"

"There is a way, but you can't get in. Woora's room has a window looking onto this compound below us. The panther is there to guard Woora as well as to keep prisoners from escaping. You would have to pass through the compound to get to the window."

"That is not so good," mused the ape-man. "I'd have to make too much noise. I'd certainly arouse Woora by breaking the bars at his window."

"There are no bars there."

"But the panther! What's to keep him

from entering and killing Woora?"

"Woora has even greater power over the panther than he has over us humans. He can control the beast's every act."

"You are sure there are no bars at the window?" demanded Tarzan.

"Absolutely sure, and the window is always open so that Woora can call the panther to him if he is ever in danger of attack."

"Excellent! I'll go in by the window."

"You insist on forgetting the panther."

"I have not forgotten him. Tell me something of Woora's habits. Who is with him? When does he arise? Where does he eat? When does he first go into the throne-room?"

"No one is with him in his sleeping room, ever. No one, as far as we know, has ever been in it, other than himself. His breakfast is handed in to him through a small opening near the floor on the side of the room opposite the throne-room. He gets up shortly after sunrise and eats immediately thereafter. He has a suite of three rooms. What he does there, only the Devil knows. Sometimes he has one of the women warriors come into one of his rooms. They never tell what they see there, or what happens. They are too terrified. What would be perhaps an hour after his breakfast, he comes into the throne-room. By this time many of the Zuli have congregated there. Charges are heard, punishments are

meted out, the business of the day is attended to. That is, hunting parties and raiding parties are sent out; directions are given for the planting, cultivation, or harvesting of crops. Reports and complaints are listened to by Woora. Then he goes back to his apartments and remains there until the evening meal which he takes in the throne-room. That is his day, unless something unforeseen occurs such as the examination of a captive brought in unexpectedly, as you were."

"Good!" exclaimed the ape-man. "Everything can be made to conform to my plan."

"Except the panther," said Lord.

"Perhaps you are right," conceded

Tarzan; "we'll see." He stepped to the window. The panther had quieted down and was lying once more in the shade of the compound wall. Tarzan listened. Presently he turned to his companion. "He is asleep," he said; then he threw a leg over the sill.

"You are not going down there!" Lord exclaimed.

"Why not? It is the only avenue to Woora, and the panther sleeps."

"He will not be asleep for long."

"I do not expect him to be. I only ask him to stay asleep until I am squarely on my feet below there."

"It is suicide," said Lord, "and nothing to be gained by it."

"Maybe, but let's wait and see." He threw the other leg over the sill; then he turned upon his belly. In his right hand was one of the heavy bars he had taken from the window. Cautiously, silently, he slipped down until he hung from the sill by one hand.

Lord watched him, breathless. He saw the fingers slip gradually from their hold on the sill; then he looked out. The man had alighted erect and then turned like lightning to face the panther, but the beast had not moved. It still slept.

Tarzan crept toward it, silent as the shadow of Usha the wind. The ape-man had covered half the distance to the panther when the beast awoke; then, before it could gather its wits the man

leaped toward it.

In the window above, Lord held his breath. He could not but admire the courage of his fellow prisoner, but he thought him foolhardy. Just then the panther charged.

6. TRAPPED

Of all the cats none bears so evil a reputation as the panther. His ferocity is proverbial, his wiliness uncanny, the force and fury of his attack demoniacal. But all these things the ape-man knew and was prepared for. He had weighed his chances with the panther against his chances with Woora, and he had chosen the lesser of two evils first in the belief that thus he might rid himself of both. And now in a few seconds his judgment would be vindicated, or he would be dead.

The black beast charged with all the fury of its kind, and it charged in silence. No growls disturbed the deathly stillness of the night. A serene moon looked down

upon the village of the Zuli, and beyond the confines of the compound there was no warning of death.

Lord looked down upon the swift tragedy with something of contempt for the stupidity that would permit a man to throw his life away uselessly, and from another window two deep-set, glowing eyes watched above snarling lips - watched from the window of the room that was Woora's.

Grasping the hardwood rod in both hands, Tarzan swung it above his head in a great circle that started low at his right side, timing it to the fraction of a second so that it met the panther with its full momentum, backed by the strength of the ape-man's giant thews, at the height of

the beast's speed.

Full upon the fierce, flat skull it fell before the protracted talons or bared fangs could reach the flesh of the panther's intended prey. There was the sound of splintering wood and bone, the thud of the heavy body upon the hard ground, then silence.

Lord drew in his breath in a quick gasp. Although he had seen the thing with his own eyes, he could scarcely believe. The eyes at Woora's window were filled with a sudden fear—with fear and cunning. They watched intently to see what the next move of the strange prisoner would be.

Tarzan placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and raised his face to Goro the

Moon. Just for an instant he stood thus, but no victory cry of the bull ape shocked the silence of the night to warn his enemies that he was abroad. Then he moved in the direction of the window that opened into the room of Woora, the magician; and as he did so, the eyes receded into the darkness of the interior.

The ape-man paused at the open window while his ears and his nostrils searched the dark chamber. His ears heard a faint rustling sound as of the scuffing of sandaled feet upon a floor and the almost silent closing of a door. His nostrils caught clearly the scent of Woora.

Placing a hand upon the sill, Tarzan vaulted silently into the room. He stood

in silence, listening, in one hand the splintered remains of the hardwood rod. He heard no sound, not even the faintest sound of breathing that his ears would have detected had there been another in the room. He concluded, then, that Woora had seen him coming and that the slight noises he had heard had been caused by the magician's departure. Now he must be doubly on his guard.

Lord had told him that there were three rooms in Woora's suite. There was also the throne-room adjoining. To which room had the man fled? Had he gone to summon help? This was probable, yet Tarzan heard no sound to indicate that anyone was coming.

The faint moonlight dissipated but

slightly the darkness of the room, yet it was enough for the keen eyes of the ape-man as they became accustomed to the gloom. He advanced noiselessly into the apartment, and presently he saw a door in the wall before him and another at his right. The latter, he judged, must lead into the throne-room. He approached the other and found the latch.

Noiselessly he pulled the door toward him, keeping partially behind it to shield himself from a surprise blow or a missile. The room was dark as a pocket. He listened intently but heard nothing. His nostrils told him that Woora had been there recently, but his ears assured him that he had gone - probably into the farthest apartment.

He stepped into the room, bent upon searching the next and last. He knew that Woora had come this way and that he would find him beyond the next door. He felt something beneath his feet that felt like cords laid upon the floor. Instantly he was suspicious—the suspicion of the wild animal that senses a trap.

He started to retreat to the room he had just quitted—but too late. Cords sprang up around him. They pulled at him and tripped him, so that he fell. Then he felt them closing and tightening about him. He struggled to escape them, but they were everywhere. He was entangled in a mesh of cords.

The door of the third room opened letting in light. In the doorway stood

Woora, a cresset in his hand. His death's head face was contorted in a snarling grin. Behind the magician, Tarzan caught a glimpse of a room that might have been the laboratory of a medieval alchemist but for the grisly array of human heads that depended from the beams of the ceiling.

The apartment was lighted by several cressets, and upon a table in the center lay the great emerald of the Zuli, radiating its weird and baleful light, so that the entire chamber was filled with a seemingly palpable essence that was, in some way, mysteriously malign.

"You court an earlier and more horrible death than we had planned for you," squeaked Woora.

The ape-man made no reply. He was examining the trap that had caught him. It was a heavy net of rawhide the mouth of which could be pulled from the floor and closed by a cord that ran through a block depending from a ceiling beam and thence through a hole near the ceiling into the room where Woora had waited to snare his prey. It was plain to Tarzan that this room was devoted solely to the purposes of the net, forming the magician's final protection against an assassin who sought his life.

In this he was only partially right, as previously all of its victims had been invited to his innermost sanctum by the magician and, rendered helpless in the net, easily murdered. Tonight it served a

new purpose.

Satisfied with the success of his strategy in luring the stranger to this room, Woora was in a pleasant frame of mind. The fear and the anger had left his eyes. He surveyed the ape-man with interest.

"You intrigue me," he said. "I shall keep you here for a while to examine you. Perhaps you will get hungry and thirsty, but one who is shortly to die has no need of food or drink. But you shall watch me eat and drink, and you shall meditate upon the various slow and torturing deaths that man may die. I promise you that I shall select something novel and protracted for you, if only to avenge the killing of my pet—the one

creature in all the world that I really loved. You shall die many deaths for that and not a few for seeking to destroy me or steal the great emerald. I do not know which you planned doing, nor do I care. Either warrants the direst punishment of which I can conceive.

"In the meantime, I shall show you that Woora can be kind even to an enemy. It is well for you that I am neither cruel nor vindictive. I would save you from unnecessary suffering, from mental anguish induced by the sight of horrible or suggestive objects. Watch me closely."

As he ceased speaking he stepped into the adjoining room where he busied himself lighting the charcoal in a brazier.

It took some time to produce a hot fire; but when this was accomplished, he fetched a long metal rod with a sharpened point and a wooden handle. The point he inserted among the hot coals; then he turned his attention once more to the apeman.

"The human heads upon the walls of my apartment, the paraphernalia of my profession, the preparations that I must make for your torture and death; the sight of these things would prove most depressing to you and add unnecessarily to your suffering; therefore I am going to burn out your eyes so that you cannot see them!"

And yet the ape-man did not speak. His level gaze remained fixed upon the

repulsive figure of the old magician and the weird setting in which he wrought his villainies, all bathed in the unholy green light of the great emerald. What his thoughts were only he knew, but it is safe to assume that they were not of death—not of his own death. Probably they were of escape. He tested the strength of the rawhide net. It gave, but it did not break.

Woora saw him and laughed. "A bull elephant could not break that," he said. With his grotesque head cocked upon one side he stared intently at his victim. The laugh died on his lips, leaving a snarl. He was angry because the ape-man showed no fear. He looked to the iron, muttering and mumbling to himself.

It had grown hot; the point glowed.

"Take a last look, my guest," cackled Woora, "for after a moment you will never again see anything." He withdrew the iron from the coals and approached his prisoner.

The strands of the net closed snugly about the ape-man, confining his arms; so that though he could move them, he could move them neither quickly nor far. He would have difficulty in defending himself against the glowing point of the iron rod.

Woora came close and raised the red-hot iron to the level of Tarzan's eyes; then he jabbed suddenly at one of them. The victim warded off the searing point from its intended target. Only his hand

was burned. Again and again Woora jabbed; but always Tarzan succeeded in saving his eyes, yet at the expense of his hands and forearms.

At his repeated failures to blind his victim, Woora became convulsed with rage. He screamed and cursed as he danced about, foaming at the mouth; then, quite suddenly, he gained control of himself. He carried the iron back to the brazier and inserted it among the coals; then he stepped to another part of the room that was not in line with the doorway, and therefore outside the range of Tarzan's vision. He was gone for but a moment, and when he returned he carried a rope in his hand.

He was chuckling again as he

approached Tarzan. "The iron will be hotter this time," he said, "and this time it will reach your eyes."

He passed the rope around the net and Tarzan and made a slip noose and drew it tight; then he walked around and around the ape- man, binding his hands and his arms with many coils of rope until Tarzan had no use of them for protection.

Now he went to the brazier and withdrew the iron. It glowed strangely red in the weird green light of the chamber. With it, Woora crept slowly toward his victim as though he were trying to prolong the agony of suspense; but Tarzan gave no evidence of fear. He knew that he was helpless, and he

awaited the inevitable with stoic indifference.

Suddenly Woora was seized by another spasm of fury. "You pretend that you are not afraid," he screamed, "but I'll make you shriek for mercy yet. First the right eye!" And he came forward again, holding the red point on a level with the ape-man's eyes.

Tarzan heard the door behind him open. He saw Woora shrink back, a new expression of fury writ upon his face; then a man leaped past him carrying a stout wooden bar in his hand. It was Lord.

Woora turned to flee into the next apartment, but Lord overtook him, striking him a glancing blow on the head

with the rod. The magician turned then and sought to defend himself with the hot iron. He screamed for mercy and for help; but there was no mercy in Lord's attack, and no help came.

Wielding the rod in both hands, the Englishman struck the iron from Woora's hand, breaking the arm at the wrist; then he swung it again furiously, crashing full on the grotesque skull; and with a splintering and crushing of bone Woora sank to the floor, dead.

Lord turned to Tarzan. "A close call," be said.

"Yes, a very close call. I shall not forget it."

"I saw you kill the panther," continued Lord. "My word! I'd never have thought

it possible. Then I waited. I didn't know just what to do. Presently I commenced to worry; I knew what a wily old devil Woora was; so I followed you, and it was a good thing that I did."

While he talked, the Englishman found a knife and cut the bonds and the net that held the ape-man; then the two men examined the contents of the inner room. There was a small furnace in one corner, several retorts and test tubes on a long table, shelves with bottles and vials stored upon them, a small library of occultism, black magic, voodooism. In a little niche, before which stood a chair, there was a crystal sphere. But, dominating all, the center of everything, was the great emerald.

Lord looked at it, spellbound, fascinated. "It is worth over two million pounds sterling," he said, "and it is ours for the taking! There are still several hours of darkness; and it may be hours more, perhaps days, before anyone discovers that Woora is dead and the emerald gone. They could never overtake us."

"You forget your friends here," Tarzan reminded him.

"Any one of them would do the same if he had the chance," argued Lord. "They will have their freedom. We have given them that. The emerald should be ours."

"You have also forgotten the Kaji. How will you pass through their

country?"

Lord gestured his disgust. "There is always something; but you're right - we can't escape except with a large force."

"There is a question whether you can escape Mafka even then," said Tarzan. "I've seen some evidence of his power. By comparison, Woora's didn't amount to much."

"Well, then, what?"

"I'll go ahead and try to dispose of Mafka," said Tarzan.

"Good! I'll go with you."

The ape-man shook his head. "I must go alone. Mafka's occult powers are such that he can control the actions of his victims even at great distances, but for

some reason he has no power over me. He might have over you. That is the reason I must go alone; he might sense the presence of another with me and through him learn my plans—his powers are most uncanny."

As he ceased speaking, Tarzan picked up the great emerald, and wrapped it in a bit of cloth he had torn from a banging on the wall.

Lord's eyes narrowed. "What are you doing that for?" he demanded.

"I'm taking the emerald with me. It will insure my getting an audience with Mafka."

Lord gave a short, ugly laugh. "And you think you can get away with that?" he demanded. "What do you take me for

—a fool?"

Tarzan knew the greed of men. That was one of the reasons he liked beasts so well. "If you try to interfere," he said, "I'll know that you are a fool - you saw what I did to the panther and how easily."

"What do you want with two million pounds? Maybe three million—God alone knows what it's worth. There's plenty for both of us."

"I don't want any of it," replied the ape-man. "I have all the wealth I need. I'm going to use it to get some of my people away from Mafka. When that is done, I won't care what becomes of it."

He tied two cords to the package holding the emerald. One he looped over

his head, the other he tied around his waist holding the package close to his body. He picked up the knife that Lord had laid on the table and stuck it in his own scabbard; then he found a long piece of rope which he coiled and slung across a shoulder.

Lord watched him sullenly. He remembered the panther and knew that he was helpless to prevent the stranger taking the emerald.

"I'm going now," said Tarzan. "Wait a day, and then follow with all those who want to get out. No matter whether I'm successful or not you may have to fight your way through the Kaji, but with Mafka out of the way you'll stand a much better chance. If I get through, I'll cache

the emerald on the Neubari near the mouth of the Mafa and go on about my business. In about three weeks I shall be back again; then I'll turn the emerald over to the Zuli."

"To the Zuli!" exclaimed Lord. "Where do I come in? The emerald belongs to me, and you're trying to cheat me out of it. Is this what I get for saving your life?"

Tarzan shrugged. "It is none of my business," he said. "I do not care who gets the emerald. You told me there was a plan afoot to take it and with the proceeds finance all the Zuli in their desire to go and live in civilization. I did not know that you planned to betray your comrades."

Lord's eyes could not meet those of the ape-man, and he flushed as he replied. "I'll see that they get theirs," he said, "but I want to control it. What do they know about business? They'd be cheated out of everything in a month."

"On the Neubari in three weeks, then," said the ape-man, as he turned and quit the apartment.

As Tarzan vaulted the sill of the window in the outer room and started across the compound where lay the dead body of the black panther, Lord opened the door leading to the throne-room and hastened at a run to the guard-room, his mind busy with a plan based on the belief that the stranger intended to make off with the great emerald and keep it for

himself.

7. GREEN MAGIC

The guards in the corridor outside the throne-room were so surprised to see anyone coming from the throneroom at that time in the night that Lord was past them before they recovered their wits. They pursued him, shouting commands to halt, to the doorway of the guard-room where, by this time, all the women warriors were aroused and leaping to arms.

Lorro was the first to recognize the Englishman. "What is it, Lord?" she demanded. "What are you doing here? How did you get out of the cell? What has happened?"

"The great emerald!" cried Lord. "The Kaji has killed Woora and stolen

the great emerald."

"Killed Woora!" exclaimed half a dozen of the women in unison. "You mean that Woora is dead?"

"Yes, yes," replied Lord impatiently. "But the emerald's stolen. Can't you understand that?"

"Woora is dead!" screamed the women; as with one accord they rushed for the village street to spread the happy tidings.

Out in the night, a short distance beyond the village, Tarzan heard the commotion, followed by the hoarse notes of a primitive trumpet. He recognized the call to arms to which now was added the throbbing of the war drums, and guessed that Lord had spread

the alarm and was organizing a pursuit.

The ape-man increased his speed, moving unerringly along the trail that he had passed over but once before, and that at night; and behind him came the entire tribe of Zuli warrior women with their white men and their black slaves.

Lord had at last succeeded in impressing on the minds of the Zuli that the death of Woora was an empty beneficence without possession of the emerald that was to have given them wealth and independence in the outer world; so that it was an angry, blood-thirsty mob that pursued the Lord of the Jungle through the soft African night.

Plain to the ears of the ape-man came the sounds of the pursuit, and he guessed

the temper of the pursuers. If they overtook him, he could hope for neither victory nor quarter. There were too many of them for the one, and they were too angry and too savage to accord the other. Only the cunning of the wild beast that environment and training had implanted within him could avail him against such odds.

As he trotted along the winding trail that led up the course of the rivulet toward the divide he became acutely aware of a presence that he could not see. His acute senses told him that he was alone, yet the feeling persisted that he was not alone. Something moved with him, clinging as closely as his shadow. He stopped to listen. The thing seemed

so near that he should have heard it breathe, but there was no sound. His keen nostrils sought a clue—there was none.

As he trotted on he sought to reason out the mystery. He even tried to convince himself that he was the victim of a delusion; but Tarzan had never had a delusion—he had only heard that others sometimes had them. And always the presence was with him, haunting him like a ghost.

He smiled. Perhaps that was it—the ghost of Woora. And then, quite suddenly the truth dawned upon him. It was the great emerald!

It seemed impossible, yet it could be nothing else. The mysterious stone had

some quality in common with life—an aura that was, perhaps, mesmeric. It was conceivable that it was this very thing that had imparted to Woora the occult powers that had made him so feared, so powerful. This would account in part for the care with which the stone had been guarded.

If this were true, then the same conditions might obtain with the Gonfal, the great diamond of the Kaji. Without it, the power of Mafka would be gone. The ape-man wondered. He also wondered if Mafka's power would be doubled if he possessed both the diamond and the emerald.

How would these stones affect the power of others? Did the mere

possession of one of them impart to any mortal such powers as those wielded by Woora and Mafka? The idea intrigued Tarzan. He let his mind play with it for a while as he trotted up toward the divide; then he reached a decision.

Turning abruptly to the right, he left the trail and sought a place of concealment. Presently he found a great boulder at the foot of the canyon wall. Behind it he would be hidden from the view of anyone passing along the trail. Always cautious, he looked about for an avenue of retreat, if one became necessary and saw that he could scale the canyon side easily; then he placed himself behind the boulder and waited.

He heard the Zuli coming up the trail.

They were making no effort to conceal their presence. It was evident that they were quite sure that the fugitive could not escape them.

Now the head of the column came into view. It was led by Lord. There were over fifty men, mostly white, and three or four hundred warrior-women. Tarzan concentrated his efforts on the latter.

"Turn back! Turn back!" he willed. "Go back to the village and stay there."

The women kept on along the trail, apparently unaffected; yet Tarzan felt the presence of the emerald more strongly than ever. He raised it from his side and tore away the skin in which he had wrapped it. Its polished surface, reflecting the moonlight, gave forth rays

that enveloped the ape-man in an unearthly glow.

As his bare hands touched the stone he felt a tingling in his arms, his body, as though a mild electric current were passing through him. He felt a surge of new power—a strange, uncanny power that had never before been his. Again he willed the women to turn back, and now he knew that they would turn, now he knew his own power without question, without a doubt.

The women stopped and turned about.

"What's the matter?" demanded one of the men.

"I am going back," replied a woman.

"Why?"

"I don't know. I only know that I have to go back. I do not believe that Woora is dead. He is calling me back. He is calling us all back."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Lord. "Woora is dead. I saw him killed. His skull was crushed to a pulp."

"Nevertheless he is calling us back."

The women were already starting back along the trail. The men stood undecided.

Presently Lord said in a low tone, "Let them go," and they all stood watching until after the women had disappeared beyond a turn in the trail.

"There are over fifty of us," said Lord then, "and we do not need the women. There will be fewer to divide with when

we get out with the emerald."

"We haven't got it yet," another reminded him.

"It is as good as ours if we overtake the Kaji before he gets back to his own village. He's a tough customer, but fifty of us can kill him."

Tarzan, behind the boulder, heard and smiled—just the shadow of a smile; a grim shadow.

"Come on!" said Lord. "Let's be going," but he did not move. No one moved.

"Well, why don't you start?" demanded one of the others.

Lord paled. He looked frightened. "Why don't you?" he asked.

"I can't," said the man, "and neither can you. You know it. It's the power of Woora. The woman was right—he is not dead. God! How we'll be punished!"

"I tell you he is dead," growled Lord, "dead as a doornail."

"Then it's his ghost," suggested a man. His voice trembled.

"Look!" cried one and pointed.

With one accord they all looked in the direction their companion indicated. One who had been a Catholic crossed himself. Another prayed beneath his breath. Lord cursed.

From behind a large boulder set well back from the trail spread a greenish luminosity, faint, shimmering, sending out tenuous rays of emerald light,

challenging the soft brilliance of the moon.

The men stood spellbound, their eyes fixed upon the miracle. Then a man stepped from behind the boulder—a bronzed giant clothed only in a loin-cloth.

"The Kaji!" exclaimed Lord.

"And the great emerald," said another. "Now is our chance." But no one drew a weapon; no one advanced upon the stranger. They could only wish; their wills could not command disobedience to him who possessed the mysterious power of the emerald.

Tarzan came down to them. He stopped and looked them over appraisingly. "There are over fifty of

you," he said. "You will come with me to the village of the Kaji. Some of my people are prisoners there. We will free them; then we will all go out of the Kaji country and go our ways."

He did not ask them; he told them; for he and they both knew that while he possessed the great emerald he did not have to ask.

"But the emerald," said Lord; "you promised to divide that with me."

"When, a few minutes ago, you planned to kill me," replied the ape-man, "you forfeited your right to hold me to that promise. Also, since then, I have discovered the power of the emerald. The stone is dangerous. In the hands of a man such as you, it could do untold

harm. When I am through with it, it will go into the Neubari where no man shall ever find it."

Lord gasped. "God, man!" he cried. "You wouldn't do that! You couldn't throw away a fortune of two or three million pounds! No, you're just saying that. You don't want to divide it—that's it. You want to keep it all for yourself."

Tarzan shrugged. "Think what you please," he said; "it makes no difference. Now you will follow me," and thus they started once more along the trail that led across the divide and down into the country of the Kaji.

It was dusk of the following day when, from a slight eminence, Tarzan saw for the first time the city of Kaji and

the stronghold of Mafka. It was built at the side of a valley close to the face of a perpendicular limestone cliff. It appeared to be a place considerably larger than the Zuli village from which he had just escaped. He stood gazing at it for a few moments; then he turned to the men grouped behind him.

"We have travelled far and eaten little," he said. "Many of you are tired. It will not be well to approach the city until well after dark; therefore we will rest." He took a spear from one of the men and drew a long line upon the ground with the sharp point. "You cannot cross this line," he said, "not one of you"; then he handed the spear back to its owner, walked a short distance away

from the line that he had drawn between them, and lay down. One hand rested upon the gleaming surface of the emerald; thus he slept.

The others glad of an opportunity to rest, lay down immediately; and soon all were asleep. No, not all. Lord remained awake, his fascinated eyes held by the faint radiance of the jewel that conjured in his mind the fleshpots of civilization its wealth might purchase.

Dusk passed quickly, and night came. The moon had not yet risen, and it was very dark. Only the green luminosity surrounding the ape-man relieved the Stygian blackness. In its weird radiance Lord could see the man he called the Kaji. He watched the hand resting upon

the emerald—watched and waited; for Lord knew much of the power of the great stone and the manner in which it was conferred upon its possessor.

He made plans; some he discarded. He waited. Tarzan moved in his sleep; his hand slipped from the face of the emerald; then Lord arose. He gripped his spear firmly and crept cautiously toward the sleeping man. Tarzan had not slept for two days, and he was sunk in the slumber of exhaustion.

At the line Tarzan had drawn upon the ground Lord hesitated a moment; then he stepped across and knew that the power of the emerald had passed from the stranger as his hand had slipped from the stone. For many years Lord had watched

Woora, and he knew that always when he would force his will upon another some part of his body was in contact with the emerald; but he breathed a sigh of relief with the confirmation of his hope.

Now he approached the sleeping ape-man, his spear ready in his hand. He came close and stood silently for an instant above the unconscious sleeper; then he stooped and gathered up the emerald.

The plan to kill Tarzan was one of those he had discarded. He feared the man might make an outcry before he died and arouse the others; and this did not fit in with Lord's plan, which was to possess the emerald for himself alone.

Creeping stealthily away, Lord disappeared in the night.

8. THE LEOPARD PIT

The ape-man awoke with a start. The moon was shining full upon his face. Instantly he knew that he had slept too long. He sensed that something was amiss. He felt for the emerald; and when he did not feel it, he looked for it. It was gone. He leaped to his feet and approached the sleeping men. A quick glance confirmed his first suspicion—Lord was gone!

He considered the men. There were fifty of them. Without the emerald he had no power over them; he could not control them. They would be enemies. He turned away and circled the camp until he picked up the scent-spoor of the thief. It was where he had expected to

find it—leading down the valley of the Mafa toward the valley of the Neubari.

He did not know how much start Lord had. It might be as much as two hours; but had it been two weeks, it would have been the same. No man could escape the Lord of the Jungle.

Through the night he followed, the scent-spoor strong in his nostrils. The trail gave the city of the Kaji a wide berth. The terrain was open and sloped gently, the moon was bright. Tarzan moved swiftly, far more swiftly than Lord.

He had been following the Englishman for perhaps an hour when he discerned far ahead a faint, greenish light. It was moving a little to the right of

a direct line; and Tarzan knew that, having passed the city of the Kaji, Lord was swinging back onto the direct trail. By cutting straight across, the ape-man would gain considerable distance. As he did so, he increased his speed, moving swiftly, with long, easy strides.

He was gaining rapidly when suddenly the ground gave way beneath his feet and he was precipitated into a black hole. He fell on loose earth and slender branches that formed a cushion, breaking the fall; so that he was not injured.

When he regained his feet he found that it was difficult to move about among the branches that gave when he stepped on them or entangled his feet if he

endeavored to avoid them. Looking up, he saw the mouth of the pit out of reach above him. He guessed its purpose. It was probably a leopard pit, used by the Kaji to capture the fierce cats alive. And he realized, too, the purpose of the loose earth and branches that had broken his fall; they gave no firm footing from which a leopard could spring to freedom. He looked up again at the pit's rim. It was far above his head. He doubted that a cat could have leaped out of it if there had been no branches on the floor; he was sure that he could not.

There was nothing to do but wait. If this were a new pit, and it looked new, the Kaji would be along within a day or so; then he would be killed or captured.

This was about all he had to expect. No leopard would fall in upon him now that the mouth of the pit was no longer concealed by the covering he had broken through.

He thought of Lord and of the harm he could do were he to reach the outside world in possession of the great emerald of the Zuli, but he did not concern himself greatly on account of his failure to overtake the Englishman. What was, was. He had done his best. He never repined; he never worried. He merely awaited the next event in life, composed in the knowledge that whatever it was he would meet it with natural resources beyond those of ordinary men. He was not egotistical; he was merely quite sure

of himself.

The night wore on, and he took advantage of it to add to his sleep. His nerves, uncontaminated by dissipation, were not even slightly unstrung by his predicament or by the imminence of capture or death. He slept.

The sun was high in the heavens when he awoke. He listened intently for the sound that had awakened him. It was the sound of footfalls carried to him from a distance through the medium of the earth. They came closer. He heard voices. So, they were coming! They would be surprised when they saw the leopard they had trapped.

They came closer, and he heard them exclaim with satisfaction when they

discovered that the covering of the pit had been broken through; then they were at the pit's edge looking down at him. He saw the faces of several warrior women and some men. They were filled with astonishment.

"A fine leopard!" exclaimed one.

"Mafka will be glad to have another recruit."

"But how did he get here? How could he pass the guards at the entrance to the valley?"

"Let's get him up here. Hey, you! Catch this rope and tie it around under your arms." A rope was tossed down to him.

"Hold it," said the ape-man, "and I'll climb out." He had long since decided to

go into captivity without a struggle for two reasons. One was that resistance would doubtless mean certain death; the other, that captivity would bring him closer to Mafka, possibly simplify the rescue of Wood and his friends. It did not occur to Tarzan to take into consideration the fact that he might not be able to affect his own escape. He was not wont to consider any proposition from a premise of failure. Perhaps this in itself accounted to some extent for the fact that he seldom failed in what he attempted.

Those above held the rope while the ape-man swarmed up it with the agility of a monkey. When he stood upon solid ground, he was faced with several

spear-points. There were eight women and four men. All were white. The women were armed; the men carried a heavy net.

The women appraised him boldly. "Who are you?" demanded one of them.

"A hunter," replied Tarzan.

"What are you doing here?"

"I was on my way down in search of the Neubari when I fell into your pit."

"You were going out?"

"Yes."

"But how did you get in? There is only one entrance to the country of the Kaji, and that is guarded. How did you get past our warriors?"

Tarzan shrugged. "Evidently I did not

come in that way," he said.

"There is no other way, I tell you," insisted the warrior.

"But I came in another way. I entered the mountains several marches from here to hunt; that is the reason I came down from the east. I hunted in the back country, coming down from the north. The going was rough. I was looking for an easier way to the Neubari. Now that I am out of the pit, I'll go on my way."

"Not so fast," said the woman who had first addressed him and who had done most of the talking since. "You are coming with us. You are a prisoner."

"All right," conceded the ape-man. "Have it your own way—you are eight spears, and I am only one knife."

Presently, Tarzan was not even a knife; for they took it away from him. They did not bind his hands behind him, evidencing their contempt for the prowess of men. Some of them marched ahead, some behind Tarzan and the four other men, as they started back toward the city that could be seen in the near distance. At any time the ape-man could have made a break for escape had he wished to, and with the chances greatly in his favor because of his great speed; but it pleased him to go to the city of the Kaji.

His captors talked incessantly among themselves. They discussed other women who were not with them, always disparagingly; they complained of the

difficulties they experienced in the dressing of their hair; they compared the cut and fit and quality of the pelts that formed their loincloths; and each of them expatiated upon the merits of some exceptionally rare skin she hoped to acquire in the future.

The four men marching with Tarzan sought to engage him in conversation. One was a Swede, one a Pole, one a German, and one an Englishman. All spoke the strange tongue of the Kaji—a mixture of many tongues. Tarzan could understand them, but he had difficulty in making them understand him unless he spoke in the native tongue of the one he chanced to be talking to or spoke in French, which he had learned from

d'Arnot before he acquired a knowledge of English. The Swede alone understood no French, but he spoke broken English, a language the German understood but not the Pole. Thus a general conversation was rendered difficult. He found it easier to talk to the Englishman, whose French was sketchy, in their common language.

He heard this man addressed as Troll, and recalled that Stanley Wood had told him that this was the name of one of their white hunters. The man was short and stalky, with heavy, stooped shoulders and long arms that gave him a gorillaesque appearance. He was powerfully muscled. Tarzan moved closer to him.

"You were with Wood and van Eyk?" he asked.

The man looked up at Tarzan in surprise. "You know them?" he asked.

"I know Wood. They recaptured him?"

Troll nodded. "You can't get away from this damned place. Mafka always drags you back, if he doesn't kill you. Wood nearly got away. A fellow —" He paused. "Say, are you Clayton?"

"Yes."

"Wood told me about you. I ought to have known you right away from his description of you."

"Is he still alive?"

"Yes. Mafka hasn't killed him yet, but

he's mighty sore. No one ever came so near escaping before. I guess it made the old duffer shake in his pants - only he don't wear pants. A big expedition of whites could make it hot for him—say a battalion of Tommies. God-almighty! How I'd like to see 'em come marchin' in."

"How about the Gonfal?" inquired Tarzan. "Couldn't he stop them, just as he does others, with the power of the great diamond?"

"No one knows, but we think not. Because if he could, why is he so scared of one of us escaping?"

"Do you think Mafka intends to kill Wood?"

"We're pretty sure of it. He's not only

sore about his almost getting away, but he's sorer still because Wood has a crush on Gonfala, the Queen; and it looks like Gonfala was sort of soft on Wood. That'd be too bad, too; because she's a Negress."

"Wood told me she was white."

"She's whiter than you, but look at these dames here. Ain't they white? They look white, but they all got Negro blood in 'em. But don't never remind 'em of it. You remember Kipling's, 'She knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was white'? Well that's it; that's the answer. They want to be white. God only knows why; nobody ever sees 'em but us; and we don't care what color they are. They could be green as far as I'm concerned.

I'm married to six of 'em. They make me do all the work while they sit around an' gabble about hair and loincloths. God almighty! I hate the sight of hair an' loincloths. When they ain't doin' that they're knockin' hell out o' some dame that ain't there.

"I got an old woman back in England. I thought she was bad. I run away from her, an' look what I go into! Six of em."

Troll kept up a running fire of conversation all the way to the city. He had more troubles than the exchange desk in a department store.

The city of Kaji was walled with blocks of limestone quarried from the cliff against which it was built. The buildings within the enclosure were of

limestone also. They were of one and two stories, except the palace of Mafka, which rose against the cliff to a height of four stories.

The palace and the city gave evidence of having been long in the building, some parts of the palace and some of the buildings below it being far more weather-worn than others. There were black men and white and warrior women in the streets. A few children, all girls, played in the sunshine; milch goats were everywhere under foot. These things and many others the ape-man observed as he was conducted along the main street toward the palace of Mafka.

He heard the women discussing him and appraising him as farmers might

discuss a prize bull. One of them remarked that he should bring a good price. But he moved on, apparently totally oblivious of them all.

The interior of the palace reminded him of that of Woora, except that there was more and richer stuff here. Mafka was nearer the source of supply. Here was the loot of many safaris. Tarzan wondered how Woora had obtained anything.

The four men had been dismissed within the city; only the eight women accompanied Tarzan into the palace. They had been halted at the heavily guarded entrance and had waited there while word was carried into the interior; then with a number of the guard as

escort, they had been led into the palace.

Down a long corridor to another guarded doorway they proceeded; then they were ushered into a large chamber. At the far end, a figure crouched upon a throne. At sight of him, Tarzan was almost surprised into a show of emotion - it was Woora!

Beside him, on another throne-chair, sat a beautiful girl. Tarzan assumed that this must be Gonfala, the Queen. But Woora! He had seen the man killed before his own eyes. Did magic go as far as this, that it could resurrect the dead?

As he was led forward and halted before the thrones he waited for Woora to recognize him, to show the resentment he must feel because he had been

thwarted and the great emerald stolen from him; but the man gave no indication that he ever had seen Tarzan before.

He listened to the report of the leader of the party that had captured the ape-man, but all the time his eyes were upon the prisoner. They seemed to be boring through him, yet there was no sign of recognition. When the report had been completed, the magician shook his head impatiently. He appeared baffled and troubled.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am an Englishman. I was hunting."

"For what?"

"Food."

While the magician questioned Tarzan

he kept a hand upon an immense diamond that rested on a stand beside him. It was the Gonfal, the great diamond of the Kaji, that endowed its possessor with the same mysterious powers that were inherent in the great emerald of the Zuli.

The girl upon the second throne-chair sat silent and sullen, her eyes always on the ape-man. She wore breastplates of virgin gold and a stomacher covered with gold sequins. Her skirt was of the skins of unborn leopards, soft and clinging. Dainty sandals shod her, and upon her upper arms and her wrists and her ankles were many bands of copper and gold. A light crown rested upon her blond head. She was the symbol of

power; but Tarzan knew that the real power lay in the grotesque and hideous figure at her side, clothed only in an old and dirty loincloth.

Finally the man motioned impatiently. "Take him away," he commanded.

"Am I not to choose wives for him?" demanded Gonfala. "The women would pay well for this one."

"Not yet," replied her companion. "There are reasons why I should observe him for a while. It will probably be better to destroy him than give him to the women. Take him away!"

The guard took the ape-man to an upper floor and put him in a large chamber. There they left him alone, bolting the door behind them as they

departed. The apartment was absolutely bare except for two benches. Several small windows in the wall overlooking the city gave light and ventilation. In the opposite wall was an enormous fireplace in which, apparently, no fire had ever been built.

Tarzan investigated his prison. He found the windows too high above the ground to offer an avenue of escape without the aid of a rope, and he had no rope. The fireplace was the only other feature of the apartment that might arouse any interest whatsoever. It was unusually large, so deep that it resembled a cave; and when he stepped into it he did not have to stoop. He wondered why such an enormous fireplace should be built and

then never used.

Entering it, he looked up the flue, thinking that here he might find a way out if the flue were built in size proportionate to the fire chamber. However, he was doomed to disappointment; not the faintest glimmer of light shone down to indicate an opening that led to the outside.

Could it be possible that the fireplace had been built merely as an architectural adornment to the chamber—that it was false? This seemed highly improbable, since the room had no other embellishment; nor was the fireplace itself of any architectural beauty, being nothing more than an opening in the wall.

What then could its purpose have

been? The question intrigued the active imagination of the Lord of the Jungle. It was, of course, possible that there was a flue but that it had been closed; and this would have been the obvious explanation had the fireplace shown any indication of ever having been used. However, it did not; there was not the slightest discoloration of the interior—no fire had ever burned within it.

Tarzan reached upward as far as he could but felt no ceiling; then he ran his fingers up the rear wall of the fire chamber. Just at his finger tips he felt a ledge. Raising himself on his toes, he gripped the ledge firmly with the fingers of both hands; then he raised himself slowly upward. Even when his arms

were straight and he had raised himself as far as he could his head touched no ceiling. He inclined his body slowly forward until at length he lay prone upon the ledge. The recess, then, was at least several feet deep.

He drew his legs up and then rose slowly to his feet. He raised a hand above his head, and a foot above he felt the stone of a ceiling—there was plenty of headroom. Laterally, the opening was about three feet wide.

He reached ahead to discover its depth, but his hand touched nothing; then he moved forward slowly a few steps—still nothing. Moving cautiously, he groped his way forward. Soon he was convinced of what he had suspected —

he was in a corridor, and the secret of the "fireplace" was partially revealed. But where did the corridor lead?

It was very dark. He might be on the verge of a pitfall without suspecting it. If there were branching corridors he might become hopelessly lost in a minute or two; so he kept his left hand constantly in contact with the wall on that side; he moved slowly, feeling forward with each foot before he threw his weight upon it, and his right hand was always extended before him.

Thus he moved along for a considerable distance, the corridor turning gradually to the left until he was moving at right angles to his original course. Presently he saw a faint light

ahead, coming apparently from the floor of the corridor. When he approached it more closely, he saw that it came from an opening in the floor. He stopped at the brink of the opening and looked down. Some seven feet below he saw stone flagging—it was the floor of a fireplace. Evidently this secret passage led from one false fireplace to another.

He listened intently but could hear nothing other than what might have been very soft breathing—almost too faint a sound to register even upon the keen ears of the ape-man; but his nostrils caught the faint aroma of a woman.

For a moment Tarzan hesitated; then he dropped softly to the floor of the fireplace. He made no sound. Before

him lay a chamber of barbarous luxury. At a window in the opposite wall, looking down upon the city, stood a golden-haired girl, her back toward the fireplace.

Tarzan did not have to see her face to know that it was Gonfala.

9. THE END OF THE CORRIDOR

Noiselessly he stepped into the chamber and moved toward the end of the room, nearer to the doorway. He sought to reach the door before she discovered him. He would rather that she did not know how he gained entrance to the room. A heavy wooden bolt fastened the door from the inside. He reached the door without attracting the girl's attention and laid a hand upon the bolt.

He slipped it back quietly; then he moved away from the door toward the window where the girl still stood absorbed in her daydream. He could see her profile. She no longer looked sullen

but, rather, ineffably sad.

The man was quite close to her before she became aware of his presence. She had not heard him. She was just conscious, suddenly, that she was not alone; and she turned slowly from the window. Only a slight widening of the eyes and a little intake of her breath revealed her surprise. She did not scream; she did not exclaim.

"Don't be afraid," he said; "I'm not here to harm you."

"I am not afraid," she replied; "I have many warriors within call. But how did you get here?" She glanced at the door and saw that the bolt was not shot. "I must have forgotten to bolt the door, but I can't understand how you got by the

guard. It is still there, isn't it?"

Tarzan did not answer. He stood looking at her, marvelling at the subtle change that had taken place in her since he had seen her in the throne room just a short time before. She was no longer the queen, but a girl, soft and sweet, appealing.

"Where is Stanley Wood?" he asked.

"What do you know of Stanley Wood?" she demanded.

"I am his friend. Where is he? What are they going to do with him?"

"You are his friend?" she asked, wonderingly, her eyes wide. "But no, it can make no difference—no matter how many friends he has, nothing can save him."

"You would like to see him saved?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you help me? You have the power."

"No, I can't. You don't understand. I am queen. It is I who must sentence him to death."

"You helped him escape once," Tarzan reminded her.

"Hush! Not so loud," she cautioned. "Mafka suspects that already. If he knew, I don't know what he would do to him and to me. But I know he suspects. That is the reason I am kept in this room with a heavy guard. He says it is for my protection, but I know better."

"Where is this Mafka? I'd like to see

him."

"You have seen him. You were just brought before him in the throne room."

"That was Woora," objected Tarzan.

She shook her bead. "No. What put that idea in your head? Woora is with the Zuli."

"So that was Mafka!" said the ape-man, and then he recalled Lord's theory that Mafka and Woora were identical twins. "But I thought no one was allowed to see Mafka."

"Stanley Wood told you that," she said. "That is what he thought; that is what he was told. Mafka was very ill for a long time. He dared not let it be known. He was afraid some one would take advantage of it to kill him. But he

wanted to see you. He wished to see a man who could get into our country and so close to the city as you did without his knowing it. I do not understand it myself, and I could see that he was disturbed when he talked with you. Who are you? What are you? How did you get into my apartment? Have you such powers as Mafka has?"

"Perhaps," he said. It would do no harm if she thought he possessed such powers. He spoke in a low tone now and watched her closely. "You'd like to see Stanley Wood escape; you'd like to go with him. Why don't you help me?"

She looked at him eagerly. He could read the longing in her eyes. "How can I help you?" she asked.

"Help me to see Mafka—alone. Tell me where I can find him."

She trembled, and the fear that was in her was reflected in her expression.

"Yes," she said, "I can tell you. If you—" She paused. Her expression changed; her body stiffened. Her eyes became hard and cold— cruel. Her mouth sagged into the sullen expression it had worn when he had first seen her in the throne room. He recalled Wood's statement that she was sometimes an angel, sometimes a she- devil. The metamorphosis had occurred before his eyes. But what caused it? It was possible, of course, that she suffered from some form of insanity; yet he doubted it. He believed there was some

other explanation.

"Well?" he queried. "You were saying—"

"The guard! The guard!" she cried. "Help!"

Tarzan sprang to the door and shot the bolt. Gonfala whipped a dagger from her girdle and leaped toward him. Before she could strike, the ape-man seized her wrist and wrenched the weapon from her.

The guard were pounding upon the door and shouting for admittance. The ape-man seized Gonfala by the arm; he held her dagger ready to strike. "Tell them you are all right," he whispered. "Tell them to go away."

She snarled and tried to bite his hand.

Then she screamed louder than ever for help.

On the opposite side of the room from the door where the guard sought entrance was a second door, bolted upon the inside like the other. Toward this the ape-man dragged the screaming Gonfala. Slipping the bolt, he pushed the door open. Beyond it was another chamber upon the opposite side of which he saw a third door. Here was a series of chambers that it might be well to remember.

He pushed Gonfala into the first chamber and closed and bolted the door. The warriors of the guard were battering now in earnest. It was evident that they would soon have the door down and

gain entrance to the apartment.

Tarzan crossed to the fireplace and leaped to the mouth of the secret passage just as the door crashed in and the warriors of the guard entered the room. He waited where he was—listening. He could hear Gonfala screaming in the adjoining room and pounding on the door, which was now quickly opened.

"Where is he?" she demanded. "Have you got him?"

"Who? There is no one here," replied a member of the guard.

"The man—the prisoner that was brought today."

"There was no one here," insisted a warrior.

"Go at once and notify Mafka that he has escaped," she commanded. "Some of you go to the room in which he was imprisoned and find out how he got out. Hurry! Don't stand there like idiots. Don't you suppose I know what I saw? I tell you he was here. He took my dagger from me and shoved me into that room. Now go! But some of you stay here. He may come back."

Tarzan waited to hear no more, but retraced his steps through the passage to the room in which he had been imprisoned. He left Gonfala's dagger on the high ledge inside the fireplace, and had barely seated himself on one of the benches in the room when he heard footsteps in the corridor outside; then the

door was swung open and half a dozen warrior women pushed their way in.

They showed their surprise when they saw him sitting quietly in his cell.

"Where have you been?" demanded one.

"Where could I go?" countered the ape-man.

"You were in the apartment of Gonfala, the Queen."

"But how could I have been?" demanded Tarzan.

"That is what we want to know."

Tarzan shrugged. "Some one is crazy," he said, "but it is not I. If you think I was there why don't you go ask the queen."

The warriors shook their heads. "What is the use?" demanded one. "He is here; that is all we have to know. Let Mafka solve the riddle." Then they left the room.

An hour passed during which Tarzan heard nothing; then the door was opened and a warrior woman ordered him to come out. Escorted by a dozen warriors, he was taken through a long corridor to an apartment on the same floor of the palace. His sense of direction told him that the room was one of the suite which adjoined the Queen's.

Mafka was there. He stood behind a table on which rested something covered with a cloth. Also on the table was the great diamond of Kaji, the Gonfal.

Mafka's left hand rested upon it.

The ape-man's keen nostrils scented blood, and his eyes saw that the cloth that covered the object on the table was stained with blood. Whose blood? Something told him that whatever was beneath the blood-stained cloth he had been brought to see.

He stood before the magician, his arms folded across his deep chest, his level, unwavering gaze fixed upon the grotesque figure facing him. For minutes the two stood there in silence, waging a strange battle of minds. Mafka was attempting to plumb that of his prisoner; and Tarzan knew it, but his defense was passive. He was sure that the other could not control him.

Mafka was annoyed. To be frustrated was a new experience. The mind of the man before him was a sealed book. He felt a little bit afraid of him, but curiosity compelled him to see him. It kept him from ordering his destruction. He wished to fathom him; he wished to break the seal. Inside that book was something strange and new. Mafka was determined to learn what it was.

"How did you get to the apartment of the queen?" he demanded suddenly.

"If I were in the apartment of the queen, who should know it better than Mafka?" demanded Tarzan. "If I were there, who should know better than Mafka how I got there?"

The magician appeared discomfited.

He shook his head angrily. "How did you get there?" he demanded.

"How do you know I was there?" countered the ape-man.

"Gonfala saw you."

"Was she sure that it was I in person, or only a figment of her imagination? Would it not have been possible for the great Mafka to make her think that I was there when I was not?"

"But I didn't," growled the magician.

"Perhaps some one else did," suggested Tarzan. He was positive now that Mafka was ignorant of the existence of the secret passage through which he had gained entrance to the apartment of Gonfala. Possibly this part of the palace belonged to a period that antedated

Mafka, but why had no one investigated the fireplaces that were obviously not intended to hold fires? There was one in this very room where Mafka was and doubtless had been many times before. Tarzan wondered if it, too, opened into a corridor and where the corridor led; but he had little time for conjecture, as Mafka shot another question at him.

"Who has that power but Mafka?" demanded the magician superciliously, but there was a suggestion of incertitude in his manner. It was more a challenge to uncertainty than a declaration of fact.

Tarzan did not reply; and Mafka seemed to have forgotten that he had put a question, as he continued to study the apeman intently. The latter, indifferent,

swept the interior of the room with a leisurely glance that missed nothing. Through open doors leading to other apartments he saw a bedchamber and a workshop. The latter was similar to that which he had seen in the palace of Woora. It was obvious that this was the private suite of Mafka.

Suddenly the magician shot another question. "How did you get to Zuli without my sentries seeing you?"

"Who said I had been in Zuli?" demanded Tarzan.

"You killed my brother. You stole the great emerald of the Zuli. You were coming here to kill me. You ask who said you had been in Zuli. The same man who told me these other things. This

man!" And he snatched the cloth from the thing upon the table.

Glaring at the ape-man with staring eyes was the bloody head of the Englishman, Lord; and beside it was the great emerald of the Zuli.

Mafka watched his prisoner intently to note the reaction to this startling and dramatic climax to the interview, but he reaped scant satisfaction. The expression on Tarzan's face underwent no change.

For a moment there was silence; then Mafka spoke. "Thus die the enemies of Mafka," he said. "Thus will you die and the others who have brought intrigue and discontent to Kaji." He turned to the captain of the guard. "Take him away.

Place him again in the south chamber with the other troublemakers who are to die with him. It was an evil day that brought them to Kaji."

Heavily guarded, Tarzan was returned to the room in which he had been confined. From Mafka's instructions to the captain of the guard, he had expected to find other prisoners here on his return; but he was alone. He wondered idly who his future companions were to be, and then he crossed to one of the windows and looked out across the city and the broad valley of the Kaji.

He stood there for a long time trying to formulate some plan by which he might contact Wood and discuss means

by which the escape of the American could be assured. He had a plan of his own, but he needed the greater knowledge that Wood possessed of certain matters connected with Mafka and the Kaji before he could feel reasonably certain of its Success.

As he stood there pondering the advisability of returning to Gonfala's apartment and seeking again the cooperation that he knew she had been on the point of according him when the sudden Jekyll and Hyde transformation had wrought the amazing change in her, he heard footsteps outside the door of his prison; then the bolt was drawn and the door swung open, and four men were pushed roughly in. Behind them, the door

was slammed and bolted.

One of the four men was Stanley Wood. At sight of Tarzan he voiced an exclamation of astonishment. "Clayton!" he cried. "Where did you come from? What in the world are you doing here?"

"The same thing that you are—waiting to be killed."

"How did he get you? I thought you were immune—that he couldn't control you."

Tarzan explained about the misadventure of the leopard pit; then Wood introduced the other three to him. They were Robert van Eyk, Wood's associate, and Troll and Spike, the two white hunters who had accompanied their safari. Troll he had already met.

"I ain't had a chance to tell Wood about seeing you," explained Troll. "This is the first time I've seen him. He was in the cooler, and I was just arrested. I don't even know what for, or what they're goin' to do to me."

"I can tell you what they plan on doing to you," said Tarzan. "We're all to be killed. Mafka just told me. He says you are all troublemakers."

"He wouldn't have to be a psychoanalyst to figure that out," remarked van Eyk. "If we'd had half a break we'd've shown him something in the trouble line, but what you going to do up against a bird like that? He knows what you're thinking before you think it."

"We wouldn't have been in this mess

if it hadn't been for Wood messin' around with that Gonfala dame," growled Spike. "I never knew it to fail that you didn't get into trouble with any bunch of heathen if you started mixin' up with their women folk—especially niggers. But a guy's got it comin' to him that plays around with a nigger wench."

"Shut that dirty trap of yours," snapped Wood, "or I'll shut it for you." He took a quick step toward Spike and swung a vicious right for the other man's jaw. Spike stepped back and van Eyk jumped between them.

"Cut it!" he ordered. "We got enough grief without fighting among ourselves."

"You're dead right," agreed Troll. "We'll punch the head of the next guy that

starts anything like that again."

"That's all right, too," said Wood; "but Spike's got to apologize or I'll kill him for that the first chance I get. He's got to take it back."

"You'd better apologize, Spike," advised van Eyk.

The hunter looked sullenly from beneath lowering brows. Troll went over and whispered to him. "All right," said Spike, finally; "I take it back. I didn't mean nothin'."

Wood nodded. "Very well," he said, "I accept your apology," and turned and joined Tarzan, who had been standing by a window a silent spectator of what had transpired.

He stood for a time in silence; then he

shook his head dejectedly. "The trouble is," he said in low tones, "I know Spike is right. She must have Negro blood in her—they all have; but it doesn't seem to make any difference to me—I'm just plain crazy about her, and that's all there is to it. If you could only see her, you'd understand."

"I have seen her," said the ape-man.

"What!" exclaimed Wood. "You've seen her? When?"

"Shortly after I was brought here," said Tarzan.

"You mean she came here to see you?"

"She was on the throne with Mafka when I was taken before him," explained Tarzan.

"Oh, yes; I see. I thought maybe you'd talked with her."

"I did—afterward, in her apartment. I found a way to get there."

"What did she say? How was she? I haven't seen her since I got back. I was afraid something had happened to her."

"Mafka suspects her of helping you to escape. He keeps her locked up under guard."

"Did she say anything about me?" demanded Wood, eagerly.

"Yes; she wants to help you. At first she was eager and friendly; then, quite abruptly and seemingly with no reason, she became sullen and dangerous, screaming for her guard."

"Yes, she was like that—sweet and lovely one moment; and the next, a regular she-devil. I never could understand it. Do you suppose she's — well, not quite right mentally?"

The ape-man shook his head. "No," he said, "I don't think that. I believe there is another explanation. But that is neither here nor there now. There is just one matter that should concern us—getting out of here. We don't know when Mafka plans on putting us out of the way nor how. Whatever we are going to do we should do immediately—take him by surprise."

"How are we going to surprise him—locked up here in a room, under guard?" demanded Wood.

"You'd be surprised," replied Tarzan, smiling faintly; "so will Mafka. Tell me, can we count on any help beyond what we can do ourselves—the five of us? How about the other prisoners? Will they join with us?"

"Yes, practically all of them—if they can. But what can any of us do against Mafka? We're beaten before we start. If we could only get hold of the Gonfal! I think that's the source of all his power over us."

"We might do that, too," said Tarzan.

"Impossible," said Wood. "What do you think, Bob?" he asked van Eyk, who had just joined them.

"Not a chance in a million," replied van Eyk. "He keeps the old rock in his

own apartment at night, or in fact wherever he is the Gonfal is with him. His apartment is always locked and guarded—warriors at the door all the time. No, we never could get it."

Tarzan turned to Wood. "I thought you told me once that they seemed very careless of the Gonfal—that you had handled it."

Wood grinned. "I thought I had, but since I came back I learned differently. One of the women told me. It seems that Mafka is something of a chemist. He has a regular lab and plays around in it a lot—ordinary chemistry as well as his main line of black magic. Well, he learned how to make phony diamonds; so he makes an imitation of the Gonfal,

and that's what I handled. They say he leaves the phony out where it can be seen and hides the real Gonfal at night when he goes to bed; so that if, by any chance, some one was able to get into his room to steal it they'd get the wrong stone. But he has to keep the Gonfal near him just the same, or he'd be more or less helpless against an enemy."

"The only chance to get it would be to get into Mafka's apartment at night," said van Eyk, "and that just can't be done."

"Do his apartments connect with Gonfala's?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes, but the old boy keeps the door between them locked at night. He isn't taking any chances—not even with Gonfala."

"I think we can get into Mafka's apartment," said the apeman. "I'm going now to find out."

"Going!" exclaimed Wood. "I'd like to know how."

"Don't let anyone follow me," cautioned the ape-man. "I'll be back."

The two Americans shook their heads skeptically as Tarzan turned away and crossed the room; then they saw him enter the fireplace and disappear.

"Well I'll be damned!" exclaimed van Eyk. "Who is that guy, anyway?"

"An Englishman named Clayton," replied Wood. "At least that's all I know about him, and that came direct from him."

"If there were such a bird as Tarzan of the Apes, I'd say this was he," said van Eyk.

"That's what I thought when I first met him. Say, he flits through the trees like a regular Tarzan, kills his meat with a bow and arrow, and packs it back to camp on his shoulder through the trees."

"And now look what he's done! Up the flue like a-a-well, like something, whatever it is goes up a flue."

"Smoke," suggested Wood; "only he's coming back, and smoke doesn't - except occasionally."

Tarzan followed the corridor as he had before until he came to the opening into Gonfala's chamber; then he retraced his steps a short distance and felt his

way back again with his right hand touching the side of the passageway instead of his left as before; nor was he surprised to discover that the tunnel ran on past the apartment of Gonfala. It was what he had expected - what he had been banking his hopes upon.

Now, past the opening that led to Gonfala's room, he touched the left-hand wall again and, pacing off the distance roughly, came to another opening that he judged would be about opposite the center of the next apartment, which was one of Mafka's suite. He did not stop here, but went on until he had located three more openings. Here the corridor ended.

He stepped to the edge of the flue and

looked down into the fireplace. It was night now, but a faint illumination came from the opening below him. It was a greenish glow, now all too familiar.

He listened. He heard the snores of a heavy sleeper. Was there another in the apartment below, or was the sleeper alone? His sensitive nostrils sought an answer.

With the dagger of Gonfala in one hand, Tarzan dropped lightly to the floor of the fireplace that opened into the room where the sleeper lay.

10. TOWARD FREEDOM

Before him WAS a large chamber with a single door, heavily bolted upon the inside. He who slept there quite evidently slept in fear. It was Mafka. He lay upon a narrow cot. Upon a table at one side rested the Gonfal and the great emerald of the Zuli and beside them a cutlass and a dagger. Similar weapons lay on a table at the other side of the cot. All were within easy reach of the sleeper. A single cresset burned upon one of the tables.

Tarzan crossed noiselessly to the side of the cot and removed the weapons; first upon one side; then the other. Next, he carried the great emerald and the Gonfal to the fireplace and put them

upon the ledge at the mouth of the corridor; then he returned to the side of the cot. Mafka slept on, for the ape-man moved as silently as a ghost in the night.

He laid a hand upon the shoulder of the magician and shook him lightly. Mafka awoke with a start.

"Keep still and you will not be harmed." Tarzan's voice was low, but it was the voice of authority that knew its power.

Mafka looked wildly about the apartment as though searching for help, but there was none.

"What do you want?" His voice trembled. "Tell me what you want and it is yours, if you will not kill me."

"I do not kill old men or women or

children unless they force me to. As long as my life is safe, yours is."

"Then why have you come here? What do you want?"

"Nothing that you can give me. What I want, I take."

He turned Mafka over on his stomach and bound his wrists, his ankles, and his knees with strips torn from the bedding; then he gagged him so that he could not raise an alarm. He also blindfolded him that he might not see how entrance had been gained to his apartment.

These things done, he returned to the corridor and groped his way back to Gonfala's apartment, leaving the two great gems where he had first placed them. He was confident they would

never be found by another than himself, so sure was he that these corridors were entirely unknown to the present occupants of the palace.

At the entrance to Gonfala's apartment he listened again, but his senses detected no presence in the room below. As he entered it, a quick glance assured him that it was vacant. A single small cresset lighted it dimly. A door at the far end of the room was ajar. He went to it and pushed it open.

As he did so, Gonfala sat up in her couch near the center of the room and faced him. "You have come back! I hoped you would. You have chosen a good time."

"I thought so—he sleeps."

"Then you know?"

"I guessed."

"But why have you come back?"

"Wood and his three friends are prisoners. They are all to be killed."

"Yes, I know. It is by my orders." A qualm of pain and self- disgust was registered in her expression.

"You can help them to escape. Will you?"

"It would do no good. He would only drag them back, and their punishment would be even worse than they can expect now. It is hopeless."

"If Mafka did not interfere would the women obey you?"

"Yes."

"And if you had the opportunity you would like to escape from Kaji?"

"Yes."

"Where would you go?"

"To England."

"Why to England?"

"One who was always good to me, but who is dead now, told me to go to England if ever I escaped. He gave me a letter to take with me."

"Well, get your letter and get ready. You are going to escape. We will be back for you in a little while—Wood and his friends and I. But you will have to help. You will have to give the necessary orders to the women to let us all pass."

She shook her head emphatically. "It will do no good, I tell you. He will get us all."

"Don't worry about that. Just give me your promise that you will do as I ask."

"I'll promise, but it will mean death for me as well as for you."

"Get ready, then; I'll be back with the others in a few minutes."

He left her room, closing the door after him, and went at once to the corridor. A moment later he dropped into the room where Wood and his companions were imprisoned. It was very dark. He spoke to them in low tones, directing them to follow him. Soon they were all in the corridor.

Tarzan led the way to Mafka's room,

the glow from the great gems lighting their way as they approached the end of the corridor.

Spike drew in his breath in astonishment. "Gripes! The big rock!" he exclaimed.

Troll halted before the radiant stones and gazed at them in fascinated silence for a moment. "This other—it must be the great emerald of the Zuli. Both of 'em! Lord! They must be worth millions." He started to touch them, but drew back in terror. He knew the power that lay in them, and feared it.

Tarzan dropped over the ledge into the fireplace then, and the others followed him. As they gathered around Mafka's couch, Wood and his

companions were speechless with astonishment when they saw the old magician lying bound and helpless.

"How did you do it?" exclaimed Wood.

"I took the gems away from him first. I think all his power lies in them. If I am right, we can get away from here. If I'm wrong—" The ape-man shrugged.

Van Eyk nodded. "I think you're right. What are we going to do with this old devil?"

Troll seized one of the cutlasses that lay beside the cot. "I'll show you what we're going to do with him!"

Tarzan grasped the man's wrist. "Not so fast. You are taking orders from me."

"'Who said so?"

Tarzan wrenched the weapon from Troll's hand and slapped the man across the side of the face with an open palm. The blow sent him reeling across the room to fall in a heap against the wall.

Troll staggered to his feet, feeling his jaw. "I'll get you for this." His voice trembled with rage.

"Shut up and do as you're told." The ape-man's voice showed no emotion. It was, however, a voice that commanded obedience. Then he turned to Wood. "You and van Eyk get the gems. Troll and Spike will carry Mafka."

"Where are we going?" Van Eyk put the question apprehensively. He knew that there was a guard of warrior-women

in the corridor outside Mafka's suite.

"We are going first to Gonfala's apartments. They adjoin Mafka's."

"She'll give the alarm, and we'll have the whole bloomin' bunch of 'em on us," objected Spike.

"Don't worry about Gonfala; just do as I say. However, you may as well take these weapons. Something might happen of course."

Wood and van Eyk got the great emerald and the Gonfal from the ledge in the fireplace; then Troll and Spike picked up Mafka, who was trembling in terror; and all followed Tarzan to the door of the apartment. They passed through the adjoining room and the next, coming then to the door leading into

Gonfala's suite. Like the other doors, it was barred on the inside. Slipping the bars, the ape-man pushed the door open.

Gonfala was standing in the center of the room as the party entered. She was clothed as for a journey, with a long robe of leopard skins and heavy sandals. A narrow fillet of beaded doeskin bound her golden hair. At sight of Mafka, bound, gagged, and blindfolded, she gasped and shrank away. Then she saw Wood and ran to him.

He put an arm about her. "Don't be afraid, Gonfala. We're going to take you away. That is, if you want to come with us."

"Yes; anywhere—with you. But him! What are you going to do with him?" She

pointed at Mafka. "He'll drag us all back, no matter where we go, and kill us; or he'll kill us there. He kills them all, who escape."

Spike spat venomously. "We'd ought to kill him now."

Van Eyk looked at Tarzan. "I agree with Spike. Why shouldn't we, when it's his life or ours?"

The ape-man shook his head. "We don't know the temper of the Kaji women. This man must be something of a deity to them. He represents their power—he is their power. Without him, they would be just a tribe of women upon which any other tribe could prey. He means most to us alive, as a hostage."

Wood nodded. "I think Clayton's

right."

The discussion was interrupted by a commotion in the outer corridor upon which the apartments of Mafka and Gonfala opened. There was pounding upon the door of Mafka's apartment and loud cries for the magician.

Tarzan turned to Gonfala. "Call some warrior in authority and see what they want. We'll wait in the next room. Come!" He motioned the others to follow him, and led the way into the adjoining apartment.

Gonfala crossed the room and struck a drum that stood upon the floor near the doorway leading into the corridor. Three times she struck it; then she drew the bolt that secured the door upon the

inside. A moment later the door was swung open, and a warrior-woman entered the apartment. She bent to one knee before the queen.

"What is the meaning of the noise in the corridor? Why are they calling Mafka at this hour of the morning?"

"The Zuli are coming, Gonfala. They are coming to make war upon us. They sent a slave to demand the return of their great emerald. There are many of them. We invoke the power of Mafka to make the Zuli weak so that we can kill many of them and drive them away."

"They have no power. Woora is dead, and we have the great emerald. Tell the warriors that I, Gonfala the Queen, command them to go out and slay the

Zuli."

"The Zuli are already at the gates of the city. Our warriors are afraid, for they have no power from Mafka. Where is Mafka? Why does he not answer the prayers of the Kaji?"

Gonfala stamped her foot. "Do as I command. You are not here to ask questions. Go to the gate and defend the city. I, Gonfala, will give my warriors power to defeat the Zuli."

"Let us see Mafka," insisted the woman sullenly.

Gonfala reached a quick decision. "Very well. See that my orders for the defense of the city are obeyed; then come to the throne room, and you shall see Mafka. Bring the captains with you."

The woman withdrew, and the door was closed. Immediately, Tarzan stepped into the room. "I overheard. What is your plan?"

"Merely to gain time."

"Then you didn't intend to have Mafka in the throne room to meet them?"

"No. That would be fatal. If we took him in bound, gagged, and blindfolded they might kill us all. If we gave him his freedom, he would kill us."

"Nevertheless, I think it a good plan. We'll do it." A grim smile touched the lips of the ape-man.

"You are mad."

"Perhaps; but if we try to leave now, we can't get out of Kaji without a fight;

and I do not relish fighting women. I think there is another way. Do you know where the imitation Gonfal is kept?"

"Yes."

"Get it, and bring it here at once. Wrap a skin around it so that no one can see it. Tell no one. Only you and I must know."

"What are you going to do?"

"Wait and see. Do as I tell you."

"You forget that I am queen." She drew herself up proudly.

"I know only that you are a woman who would like to escape from Kaji with the man she loves."

Gonfala flushed, but she made no reply. Instead, she quit the room at once,

going into the apartments of Mafka.

She was gone but a few moments. When she returned she carried a bundle wrapped in a skin.

Tarzan took it from her. "We are ready now. Lead the way to the throne room." He summoned the others from the adjoining apartment; then he turned again to the queen. "Is there a private way to the throne room?"

Gonfala nodded. "This way. Follow me."

She led them into Mafka's apartments where she opened a small door revealing a flight of steps, and they followed her down these to another door that opened upon the dais where the throne chairs stood.

The throne room was empty. The captains had not yet arrived. At Tarzan's direction, Wood placed the Gonfal on the stand beside the throne; Troll and Spike seated Mafka, still bound, gagged, and blindfolded, in his chair; Gonfala seated herself in the other. Tarzan stood beside the table bearing the Gonfal. The others stood behind the chairs. Van Eyk concealed the great emerald of the Zuli beneath a skin he took from the floor of the dais.

In silence they waited. All but Tarzan were tense with nervousness. Presently they heard approaching footfalls in the corridor leading to the throne room. The doors were swung open, and the captains of the Kaji filed in.

They came with heads bent in reverence for their queen and the great power of their magician. When they looked up they were close to the dais. At sight of Mafka they gave vent to cries of astonishment and anger. They looked at the strangers on the dais; then their eyes centered upon the queen.

One of them stepped forward. "What is the meaning of this, Gonfala?" Her tones were menacing.

It was Tarzan who answered. "It means that the power of Mafka is gone. All your lives he has held you in the hollow of his hand. He has made you fight for him. He has taken the best fruits of your conquests. He has held you prisoners here. You feared and hated

him, but most of all you feared him."

"He has given us power," answered the warrior. "If that power is gone, we are lost."

"It is not gone, but Mafka no longer wields it."

"Kill them!" cried one of the captains.

The cry arose from many throats. "Kill them! Kill them!" With savage yells they pushed forward toward the dais.

Tarzan laid a hand upon the Gonfal. "Stop! Kneel before your queen!" His voice was low. In the din of their shouting it probably reached the ears of few if any of the warriors, but as one they stopped and knelt.

Again the ape-man spoke. "Stand up! Go to the gates and bring in the captains of the Zuli. They will come. The fighting will stop." The warriors turned and filed out of the chamber.

Tarzan turned toward his companions. "It worked. I thought it would. Whatever this strange power is, it is inherent in the Gonfal. The great emerald has the same mystic power. In the hands of vicious men it is bad. Perhaps, though, it may be used for good."

Gonfala was listening intently. The sounds of the battle ceased; then came echoing footfalls in the long corridor leading to the palace entrance. "They come!" she whispered.

Fifty warrior women entered the

throne room of the queen of the Kaji. Half of them were Kaji and half Zuli. They were a savage company. Many of them were bleeding from wounds. They looked sullenly at one another and at the little company upon the dais.

Tarzan faced them. "You are free now from the rule of Woora and Mafka. Woora is dead. I shall turn Mafka over to you presently to do with as you wish. His power is gone if you keep the Gonfal from him. We are leaving your country. Gonfala is going with us. As many prisoners and slaves as wish to accompany us may come. When we are safely out we will hand the Gonfal back to one of your warriors, who may accompany us with three companions—

no more. It is dawn. We leave at once. Here is Mafka." He lifted the old magician in his arms and handed him down to the warrior women.

Amidst deathly silence the little company of white men filed out of the throne room with Gonfala the queen of the Kaji. Tarzan carried the Gonfal so that all might see it. Van Eyk bore the great emerald of the Zuli concealed beneath a wrapping of skin.

In the main street of the city a little group of black men and white awaited them, summoned by Tarzan through the necromancy of the Gonfal. They were the slaves and prisoners of the Kaji.

"We are leaving this country," he told them; "any who wish to may accompany

us."

"Mafka will kill us," objected one.

Shrill screams issued from the interior of the palace only to be drowned by savage yells of rage and hatred.

"Mafka will never kill again," said the ape-man.

11. TREACHERY

In peace they marched through the country of the Kaji under the protection of Tarzan and the Gonfal. Those who had been prisoners and slaves for years were filled with nervous apprehension. They could not believe this miracle that had seemingly snatched them from the clutches of the old magician who had dominated and terrorized them for so long. Momentarily they expected to be killed or dragged back to certain torture and death; but nothing happened, and they came at last to the valley of the Neubari.

"I'll leave you here," said Tarzan. "You will be going south. I go north." He handed the Gonfal to van Eyk. "Keep it

until morning; then give it to one of these women." He indicated the three warrior women who had accompanied them from Kaji; then he turned to them. "Take the stone back; and if any among you can use it, use it for good and not for evil.

"Wood, take the great emerald of the Zuli in trust for Gonfala. I hope it will bring her happiness, but the chances are that it will not. At least, however, she need never want."

"Where do we come in?" demanded Spike.

The ape-man shook his head. "You don't; you go out—you go out with your lives. That's a lot more than you could have hoped for a few days ago."

"You mean to say you're goin' to give

the big rock back to the niggers and we don't get no split? It ain't fair. Look what we been through. You can't do it."

"It's already done."

Spike turned toward the others. "Are you fellows goin' to stand for this?" he shouted angrily. "Them two rocks belongs to all of us. We ought to take 'em back to London and sell 'em and divide up equal."

"I'm glad enough to get out with my life," said van Eyk. "I think Gonfala has a right to one of the stones; the other will be plenty for both the Kaji and the Zuli to carry out their plans to go out into the world. They'll be cheated out of most of it anyway, but they'll get their wish."

"I think they ought to be divided,"

said Troll. "We ought to get something out of this."

Some of the white men who had been liberated agreed with him. Others said they only wanted to get home alive and the sooner they saw the last of the two stones the better they'd be satisfied.

"They're evil," said one of the men. "They'll bring no good to anyone."

"I'd take the chance," growled Spike.

Tarzan regarded him coldly. "You won't get it. I've told you all what to do; see that you do it. I'll be travelling south again before you get out of the country. I'll know if you've pulled anything crooked. See that you don't."

Night had fallen. The little band of fugitives, perhaps a hundred strong,

were making camp, such as it was, and preparing the food they had brought from Kaji. The blacks, who had been slaves, fell naturally into positions of porters and personal servants to the whites. There had been some slight attempt toward organization, Wood and van Eyk acting as lieutenants to the man they knew only as Clayton, who had assumed the leadership as naturally as the others had accepted the arrangement.

He stood among them now noting the preparations for the night; then he turned to Wood. "You and van Eyk will take charge. You will have no trouble unless it be from Spike. Watch him. Three marches to the south you will find friendly villages. After that it will be

easy."

That was all. He turned and was gone into the night. There were no farewells, long-drawn and useless.

"Well," said van Eyk, "that was casual enough."

Wood shrugged. "He is like that."

Gonfala strained her eyes out into the darkness. "He has gone? You think he will not come back?"

"When he finishes whatever business he is on, perhaps. By that time we may be out of the country."

"I felt so safe when he was with us." The girl came and stood close to Wood. "I feel safe with you, too, Stanlee; but him—he seemed a part of Africa."

The man nodded and put an arm about her. "We'll take care of you, dear; but I know how you feel. I felt the same way when he was around. I had no sense of responsibility at all, not even for my own welfare. I just took it for granted that he'd look after everything."

"I often wonder about him," said van Eyk musingly—"who he is, where he comes from, what he is doing in Africa. I wonder—I wonder if there could be—if —"

"If what?"

"If there could be a Tarzan."

Wood laughed. "You know, the same thought came to me. Of course, there is no such person; but this fellow, Clayton, sure would fill the bill."

The black boy who was cooking for them called them then to the evening meal. It was not much, and they decided that Spike and Troll would have to do some hunting the following day.

Suddenly Wood laughed—a bit ruefully. "What with?" he demanded. "We've got spears and knives. What could any of us kill with those?"

Van Eyk nodded. "You're right. What are we going to do? We've got to have meat. All the way to those first friendly villages we've got to depend on game. There won't be anything else."

"If we raise any game, we'll have to send out beaters and chase it toward the spears. We ought to get something that way."

Van Eyk grinned. "If we're lucky enough to raise something with angina pectoris, the excitement might kill it."

"Well, they do kill big game with spears," insisted Wood.

Van Eyk's face brightened. He snapped his fingers. "I've got it! Bows and arrows! Some of our blacks must be good at making them and using them. Hey, Kamudi! Come here!"

One of the black boys arose from the two calloused black heels he had been squatting upon and approached. "Yes, Bwana—you call?"

"Say, can any of you boys kill game with a bow and arrow?"

Kamudi grinned. "Yes, Bwana."

"How about making them? Can any of you make bows and arrows?"

"Yes, Bwana—all can make."

"Fine! Any of the stuff you use grow around here?" Van Eyk's tones were both eager and apprehensive.

"Down by the river—plenty."

"Gee! That's bully. When the boys have finished supper take 'em down there and get enough stuff to make bows for every one and lots of arrows. Make a few tonight. If we don't have 'em, we don't eat tomorrow. Sabe?"

"Yes, Bwana—after supper."

The night was velvet soft. A full moon shone down upon the camp, paling the embers of dying fires where the men

had cooked their simple meal. The blacks were busy fashioning crude bows and arrows, roughly hewn but adequate.

The whites were gathered in little groups. A shelter had been fashioned for Gonfala; and before this she and Wood and van Eyk lay upon skins that had been brought from Kaji and talked of the future. Gonfala of the wonders that awaited her in unknown civilization, for she was going to London. The men spoke of America, of their families, and old friends, who must long ago have given them up as dead.

"With the proceeds from the great emerald of the Zuli you will be a very rich woman, Gonfala." Wood spoke a little regretfully. "You will have a

beautiful home, wonderful gowns and furs, automobiles, and many servants; and there will be men—oh, lots of men."

"Why should I have men? I do not want but just one."

"But they will want you, for yourself and for your money." The thought seemed to sadden Wood.

"You will have to be very careful," said van Eyk. "Some of those chaps will be very fascinating."

The girl shrugged. "I am not afraid. Stanlee will take care of me. Won't you, Stanlee?"

"If you'll let me, but—"

" 'But' what?"

"Well, you see you have never known

men such as you are going to meet. You may find someone who—" Wood hesitated.

" 'Someone who' what?" she demanded.

"Whom you'll like better than you do me."

Gonfala laughed. "I am not worrying."

"But I am."

"You needn't." The girl's eyes swam with the moisture of adulation.

"You are so young and naive and inexperienced. You haven't the slightest idea what you are going to be up against or the types of men there are in the world—especially in the civilized world."

"Are they as bad as Mafka?"

"In a different way they are worse."

Van Eyk stood up and stretched. "I'm going to get some sleep," he said. "You two'd better do the same thing. Good night."

They said good night to him and watched him go; then the girl turned to Wood. "I am not afraid," she said, "and you must not be. We shall have each other, and as far as I am concerned, no one else in the world counts."

He took her hand and stroked it. "I hope you will always feel that way, dear. It is the way I feel—it is the way I always shall."

"Nothing will ever come between us then." She turned her palm beneath his

and pressed his fingers.

For a little time longer they talked and planned as lovers have from time immemorial; and then he went to lie down at a little distance, and Gonfala to her shelter; but she could not sleep. She was too happy. It seemed to her that she could not waste a moment of that happiness in sleep, lose minutes of rapture that she could not ever recall.

After a moment she got up and went into the night. The camp slept. The moon had dropped into the west, and the girl walked in the dense shadow of the ancient trees against which the camp had been made. She moved slowly and silently in the state of beatific rapture that was engendered not alone by her

love but by the hitherto unknown sense of freedom that had come to her with release from the domination of Mafka.

No longer was she subject to the hated seizures of cruelty and vindictiveness that she now realized were no true characteristics of her own but states that had been imposed upon her by the hypnotic powers of the old magician.

She shuddered as she recalled him. Perhaps he was her father, but what of it? What of a father's love and tenderness had he ever given her? She tried to forgive him; she tried to think a kindly thought of him; but no, she could not. She had hated him in life; in death she still hated his memory.

With an effort she shook these depressing recollections from her and sought to center her thoughts on the happiness that was now hers and that would be through a long future.

Suddenly she became aware of voices near her. "The bloke's balmy. The nerve of him, givin' the Gonfal back to them niggers. We ort to have it an' the emerald, too. Think of it, Troll—nearly five million pounds! That's wot them two together would have brought in London or Paris."

"An he gives the emerald to that damn nigger wench. Wot'll she do with it? The American'll get it. She thinks he's soft on her, thinks he's goin' to marry her; but whoever heard of an American marryin'

a nigger. You're right, Spike; it's all wrong. Why—"

The girl did not wait to hear more. She turned and fled silently through the darkness—her dream shattered, her happiness blasted.

* * * * *

Wood awakened early and called Kamudi. "Wake the boys," he directed; "we're making an early start." Then he called van Eyk, and the two busied themselves directing the preparations for the day's march. "We'll let Gonfala sleep as long as we can," he said; "this may be a hard day."

Van Eyk was groping around in the dim light of early dawn, feeling through the grasses on which he had made his

bed. Suddenly he ripped out an oath.

"What's the matter?" demanded Wood.

"Stan, the Gonfal is gone! It was right under the edge of these skins last night."

Wood made a hurried search about his own bed; then another, more carefully. When he spoke he seemed stunned, shocked. "The emerald's gone, too, Bob. Who could have—"

"The Kaji!" Van Eyk's voice rang with conviction.

Together the two men hurried to the part of the camp where the warrior-women had bedded down for the night; and there, just rising from the skins upon which they had slept, were the three.

Without preliminaries, explanation, or apology the two men searched the beds where the women had lain.

"What are you looking for?" demanded one of them.

"The Gonfal," replied van Eyk.

"You have it," said the woman, "not we."

The brief equatorial dawn had given way to the full light of day as Wood and van Eyk completed a search of the camp and realized that Spike and Troll were missing.

Wood looked crestfallen and hopeless. "We might have guessed it right off," he said. "Those two were sore as pups when Clayton gave the Gonfal back to the Kaji and the emerald to

Gonfala."

"What'll we do?" asked van Eyk.

"We'll have to follow them, of course; but that's not what's worrying me right now—it's telling Gonfala. She'd been banking a lot on the sale of the emerald ever since we kept harping on the wonderful things she could buy and what she could do with so much money. Poor kid! Of course, I've got enough for us to live on, and she can have every cent of it. But it won't be quite the same to her, because she wanted so much to be independent and not be a burden to me—as though she ever could be a burden."

"Well, you've got to tell her; and you might as well get it off your chest now as any time. If we're going after those birds,

we want to get started pronto."

"O.K." He walked to Gonfala's shelter and called her. There was no response. He called again louder; and then again and again, but with no results. Then he entered. Gonfala was not there.

He came out, white and shaken. "They must have taken her, too, Bob."

The other shook his head. "That would have been impossible without disturbing us—if she had tried to arouse us."

Wood bridled angrily. "You mean -?"

Van Eyk interrupted and put a hand on the other's shoulder. "I don't know any more about it than you, Stan. I'm just stating a self- evident fact. You know it as well as I."

"But the inference."

"I can't help the inference either. They couldn't have taken Gonfala by force without waking us; therefore either she went with them willingly, or she didn't go with them at all."

"The latter's out of the question. Gonfala would never run away from me. Why only last night we were planning on the future, after we got married."

Van Eyk shook his head. "Have you ever really stopped to think about what that would mean, Stan? What it would mean to you both in the future— in America? I'm thinking just as much of her happiness as yours, old man. I'm thinking of the Hell on earth that would be your lot—hers and yours. You know

as well as I what one drop of colored blood does for a man or woman in the great democracy of the U.S.A. You'd both be ostracized by the blacks as well as the whites. I'm not speaking from any personal prejudice; I'm just stating a fact. It's hard and cruel and terrible, but it still remains a fact."

Wood nodded in sad acquiescence. There was no anger in his voice as he replied. "I know it as well as you, but I'd go through Hell for her. I'd live in Hell for her, and thank God for the opportunity. I love her that much."

"Then there's nothing more to be said. If you feel that way about it, I'm for you. I'll never mention it again, and if you ever do marry it'll never change me

toward either of you."

"Thanks, old man; I'm sure of it. And now let's get busy and start after them."

"You still think they took her?"

"I have a theory. They have both the Gonfal and the great emerald of the Zuli. You saw how Clayton used that mysterious power to bend the Kaji and Zuli to his will. They used it to compel Gonfala to accompany them without making any disturbance. You know the experience I had. Mafka dragged me away from Clayton in the same way."

"I guess you're right. I hadn't thought of that, but why did they want Gonfala?"

Van Eyk looked uncomfortable, and the other noticed it. "You don't mean -?" he exclaimed.

Van Eyk shrugged helplessly. "They are men," he said, "and not very high types."

"We've got to find her—we've got to hurry!" Wood was almost frantic.

Some of the blacks picked up the trail of the two men, leading toward the south; and the manhunt was on.

12. REUNION

Two weeks rolled by. Tarzan was returning from the north with the information he sought. Sometimes he thought of the two Americans and Gonfala and the prisoners he had released from the Kaji and wondered how they fared. There had been enough of them to make their way in safety to the friendly tribes, and after that it would have been very simple to reach the outposts of civilization. He imagined that they were well on their way by this time with a good safari of trained bearers and ample provisions. He knew that the Americans were amply able to bear the expense even if they were unable to finance themselves on the

security of the great emerald of the Zuli.

It was late afternoon as the Lord of the Jungle swung along a game trail at the edge of a forest. A light wind was blowing in his face, waving his black hair. It brought to his nostrils evidence of things unseen that lay ahead. Presently it brought the acrid scent of Numa the lion. It was an old lion, for the odor was stronger than that of a cub or a young lion in its prime.

To Tarzan it was just another lion. He gave it little thought until the wind brought faintly to his nostrils another scent—the scent spoor of a Tarmangani, a she—a white woman. This scent came from the same direction as that of Numa. The two, in conjunction, spelled tragedy.

Tarzan took to the trees. Game trails are winding. Through the trees he could move in a straight line, shortening the distance to his destination; and through the trees he could move with incredible swiftness. They had been his natural element since infancy when he had been borne swiftly from danger by his foster mother, Kala the she- ape.

The woman, haggard, unkempt, starving, exhausted, moved slowly and hopelessly along the trail. Her senses were dulled by fatigue and suffering. She heard nothing, yet some inner sense prompted her to turn a backward glance along the trail; then she saw the lion. He was moving softly and slowly after her. When he saw that he was discovered, he

bared his fangs and growled.

The woman stopped and faced him. She had not the strength to climb a tree to safety. She knew that flight was useless. She just stood there, wide-eyed and hopeless, waiting for the end. She did not care. She had nothing to live for. She only prayed that death might come with merciful quickness.

When she had stopped, the lion had stopped. He stood glaring at her, his eyes blazing. Suddenly he started toward her at a trot. A few steps and he would charge—that swift, merciless charge of the king of beasts that is the culmination of ferocity.

He seemed to crouch lower, almost flattening himself against the ground; and

now a horrid roar burst from his savage throat as he sprang forward!

The woman's eyes went wide, first in horror and then in surprise; for as the lion charged, an almost naked man dropped from an overhanging limb full upon the beast's back. She heard the roars and growls of the man mingling with those of the beast, and she shuddered. She saw a knife flash in the air, once, twice again. Then, with a final hideous roar, the lion slumped to the ground, dead.

The man leaped to his feet. It was then that she recognized him, and a feeling of relief and a sense of security possessed her. They endured for but a moment to be blasted by the hideous

victory cry of the bull ape as Tarzan placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and voiced the weird scream that had echoed so many times through other forests and jungles, deserts and plains.

Then his eyes dropped to the woman. "Gonfala! What has happened? What are you doing here alone?"

She told him a little—just that she felt that she would bring unhappiness into Wood's life and so had run away. She had come north because she knew that he was going south. She had hoped to find some village where they would take her in; but she had found nothing; and so she had turned back intending to return to Kaji and the only people that she knew as her own.

"You can't go back there," Tarzan told her. "Without Mafka's protection, they would kill you."

"Yes, I suppose they would; but where else may I go?"

"You are coming with me. Wood will save the emerald for you. You will have all the money you will ever need. You can live then where you wish in safety and comfort."

It was weeks before the ape-man brought the girl to his home—to the commodious bungalow where his wife welcomed and comforted her. All that time they had sought for word of Wood and van Eyk and their party but had had none. Their total disappearance seemed a mystery to Tarzan, and he planned to

set out presently to solve it. Time, however, means little to the ape-man. There were other things to be done, and days passed. Yet time itself was bringing the solution nearer.

Two white men with a small safari trekked through a grim forest— damp, dark, depressing. It seemed endless.

"If ever two people were thoroughly and completely lost, we are they." Wood had stopped and removed his sun helmet to wipe the perspiration from his forehead.

"We're no more lost than our guides," van Eyk reminded him.

"If we keep on going east we ought to strike some village where we can get guides."

"All right, let's get going."

Within half a mile they emerged from the forest at the edge of a wide, rolling plain.

"What a relief!" exclaimed van Eyk. "A little more of that forest and I'd have gone nuts."

"Look!" Wood seized his companion by the arm and pointed. "Men!"

"Looks like a war party. See those plumes? Maybe we'd better lay low."

"Well, the responsibility is no longer ours. They've seen us. Here they come."

The two men stood watching a party of a dozen warriors approaching them.

"Gee, they're a good-looking bunch," commented Wood.

"I hope they're also good."

The blacks halted a dozen paces from the white men; then one who was evidently their leader approached closer.

"What are the bwanas doing in this country?" he asked in good English. "Are they hunting?"

"We're lost," explained Wood. "We want to get guides to get us out of here."

"Come," said the black. "I take you to the Big Bwana."

"What's his name?" asked van Eyk. "Perhaps we know him."

"He is Tarzan."

The two whites looked at one another in astonishment.

"You don't mean to tell me there really is a Tarzan?" demanded Wood.

"Who ever tells you there isn't does not speak true words. In an hour you shall see him."

"What is your name?"

"Muviro, bwana."

"Well, lead on, Muviro; we're ready."

An hour later the two men stood on the broad veranda of a sprawling bungalow waiting the coming of their host.

"Tarzan!" muttered van Eyk. "It doesn't seem possible. This must be he coming. They heard footsteps approaching from the interior of the house, and a moment later a man stepped

onto the veranda and faced them.

"Clayton!" they both exclaimed in unison.

"I am glad to see you," said Tarzan. "I hadn't been able to get any word of you, and I was worried. Where have you been?"

"The night you left, Spike and Troll stole the Gonfal and the great emerald and beat it. They took Gonfala with them. We have been hunting for them. The very first day we lost their trail in some rocky country. We never found it again. Some of our blacks thought they had gone to the south and west. We searched in that direction and got lost ourselves."

"The Gonfal and the great emerald are

both gone? Well, perhaps it is just as well. They would have brought more unhappiness than anything else. Riches usually do."

"Hang the stones!" exclaimed Wood. "It is Gonfala I want to find. I don't give a tinker's damn for either of the rocks."

"I think we shall find her. It is not difficult for me to find anyone in Africa. But now I will have you shown to your rooms. You will find a bath and clean clothes; among them something that will fit you, I'm sure. When you are ready, come to the patio; you will find us there."

Van Eyk was the first to enter the patio, a flowering paradise around which the house was built. A golden

haired girl lay on a reed chaise lounge, a copy of the Illustrated London News in her hand. Hearing him, she turned. Her eyes went wide in astonishment.

"Bob!" she gasped as she sprang to her feet.

"Gonfala!"

"Where is he? Is he all right?"

"Yes; he is here. How did you escape from Spike and Troll?"

"Escape from Spike and Troll? I was never with them."

"You went away alone? Why did you go?"

She told him then what she had overheard Spike and Troll say. "I knew then that I would spoil Stanlee's life. I

knew that he loved me. I never thought that he wanted me just for the emerald. And I loved him. I loved him too much to let him marry me. Perhaps, when he had time to think it over, he was glad that I went away."

Van Eyk shook his head. "No, you are very wrong. I spoke to him of the matter; and here is what he said, as nearly as I can recall his words: 'I'd go through Hell for her. I'd live in Hell for her, and thank God for the opportunity. That is how much I love her.' I think those were about his very words."

Tears came to the girl's eyes. "May I see him soon?"

"He'll be out in a minute. Here he comes now. I'll go."

She looked her thanks.

When Wood came into the patio and saw her, he just stood and looked at her for a moment, devouring her with his eyes. He never said a word or asked a question—just crossed to her and took her in his arms. Their voices were too full of tears of happiness for words.

After a while, when they could speak, each had the other's story. After that they knew that nothing could ever come between them.

In the evening, with the others, they were discussing their plans for the future. Wood said they would be married and go at once to America.

"I must go to London first," said Gonfala. "I have a letter to take to the

Colonial Office there. You know, I told you about it. Let me get it. I cannot read it. I was never taught to read."

She went to her room and presently returned with the letter. It was yellow with age. She handed it to Tarzan. "Please read it aloud," she said. Tarzan opened the single sheet and read:

"To Whom it May Concern:

"I am giving this letter to my daughter to take to London to identify her if she is ever fortunate enough to escape from the Kaji. They killed her mother shortly after she was born and raised her to be queen of the Kaji. They call her Gonfala. I have never dared to tell her that she is my daughter, as Mafka has threatened to kill her if she ever learns that he is not

her father.

"Mountford."

13. CANNIBALS

A low sun pointed long shadows toward the east; the tired day was preparing to lay aside its burdens. Far away, a lion roared. It was the prelude to another African night, majestic as the king of beasts and as savage.

A party of eight men laid down their few belongings and made camp beside a water hole. Two of the men were white. Like their black companions they were armed with bows and arrows and short spears; there was not a firearm among them all.

Some of the men carried meat from the last kill, and there were two packages wrapped in skins. Beside their weapons, that was all. It was a poorly

equipped safari, if it could be said to have been equipped at all.

The blacks were quiet, speaking in whispers as they cooked the meat for their evening meal. The white men were glum and scowling.

One of them nodded toward the blacks. "The beggars are scairt stiff."

The other nodded. "Cannibal country, and they know it."

His companion sat scowling down at the two skin wrapped packages for a long period of silence. "I'm a-scairt myself, Troll," he said finally. "Scairt o' these things. I think they's a curse on 'em."

Troll shrugged. "I could take a lot o' cursin' for six million pun."

"Yeh; if we get out alive."

"I ain't worrit about that. What I'm worrit about is runnin' into that bloke, Clayton. He'll take the rocks away from us."

"He went north."

"But he said he was comin' back, an' he said he'd know if we'd pulled anything crooked. I don't like that bloke."

They lapsed into silence, chewing on the half cooked meat of a tough old boar the blacks had killed the day before. From the forest, a spur of which ran down almost to the water hole, eyes watched them. Again the lion roared.

"The beggar's gettin' closer," remarked Spike. "I hopes he ain't no man- eater."

Troll fidgeted. "Shut up!" he growled. "Can't you think of somethin' pleasant for a change?"

"Bein' way out here without no gun'd make any bloke nervous. Look at them damn things!" He kicked his bow and bundle of arrows that lay at his feet. "I might kill a rabbit with 'em—if I could hit 'im; but I couldn't hit a elephant if he stood still at ten paces—and you know wot kind of a target a lion makes when he charges."

"Oh, fer cripe's sake, shut up!"

Again they lapsed into silence. The shadow of the forest covered them and stretched out across the plain, for the sun had all but set. Suddenly there was a frightened cry of, "Bwana! Look!" One

of the blacks was pointing toward the forest.

The white men wheeled as they rose to their feet. Coming toward them were a dozen black warriors. Spike stooped to pick up his bow and arrows.

"Lay off!" warned Troll. "They ain't enough of us—an' anyways they may be friendly." Spike stood erect again with empty hands. One by one the blacks of their party rose slowly to their feet.

The strangers were approaching cautiously, their weapons ready. They halted a dozen paces from the camp, their grim visaged leader in advance of the others. He surveyed the two white men and their six bearers arrogantly, contemptuously. Troll made the sign of

peace.

The leader strode forward followed by his warriors. "What you do here in the country of the Bantango?" he demanded.

"We look for guides," replied Troll in the same dialect. "Big safari behind us—many guns—they come soon; then we go. We wait here they come."

"You lie," said the chief. "My man one he follow you two days; then he come me. No big safari. No guns. You lie."

"Wot did I tell you?" demanded Spike. "They's a curse on us—an' look at them filed teeth. You know what them filed teeth mean."

"I told you it was cannibal country,"

observed Troll, lamely.

"Gawdamighty, I'd give both them rocks for a gun," moaned Spike.

"The rocks!" exclaimed Troll. "That's it! Why didn't we think o' that before?"

"Think o' what?"

"The Gonfal. We can use it like old Mafka did, just put a hand on it an' make any bloke do wotever you wants him to do."

"Slime! That's a idea. Make 'em get out o' here." He stopped and started to unwrap the Gonfal, the great diamond of the Kaji.

The chief took a step forward. "What you got?" he demanded.

"Big medicine," said Troll. "You like

see?"

The chief nodded. "Me like, me take."

The swift equatorial night had fallen. Only the cooking fires of the little camp illuminated the tense scene. From the deep shadows a great lion watched.

Spike undid the thongs that bound the wrappings to the Gonfal, and with trembling hands threw back the skin revealing the great stone shimmering and scintillating in the dancing lights of the cooking fires. The chief recoiled with a short gasp of astonishment. He did not know what the stone was, but its brilliance awed him.

Troll dropped to one knee beside the Gonfal and laid a hand on it. "Go away!" he said to the chief. "Lay down your

weapons, all of you; and go away!"

The chief and his warriors stood looking at the Gonfal and at Troll. They did not lay down their weapons and they did not go away. As nothing happened, they regained confidence.

"No lay down weapons; no go away," said the chief. "We stay. Me take." He pointed at Gonfal. "You come our village. You b'long me."

"You better go away," insisted Troll. He tried to make his voice sound commanding, but it did not.

"Wot's wrong with the Gonfal?" demanded Spike.

"It won't work."

"Le'me try it." Spike stooped and

placed a palm on the stone. "You blokes drop your weapons an' beat it before our big medicine kills you," he shouted threateningly.

The chief stepped forward and kicked Spike in the face, bowling him over on his back. His warriors rushed in with loud war cries, brandishing their weapons. And then from the outer darkness came a thunderous roar that shook the earth, and a great lion charged into the savage melee.

He leaped over the prostrate Spike and brushed past Troll, falling upon the terrified chief and his warriors.

Troll was quick to grasp the opportunity for escape. He gathered up the great diamond, and shouted to Spike

and the bearers to follow him and bring the other stone; then he ran for the forest.

A few screams, mingled with savage growls, rang in their ears for brief moments; then silence.

All night they followed close to the edge of the forest, nor did they stop until they came upon a small stream shortly after daylight. Then they threw themselves upon the ground, exhausted.

As they chewed once more upon the flesh of the old boar their spirits revived, and they spoke for the first time for hours.

"I guess we don't know how to work the rock," ventured Troll.

"Who says 'we'?" demanded Spike. "I worked it."

"You?"

"Sure. Didn't I tell 'em they'd get killed if they didn't beat it? And wot happens? The Gonfal calls the old maneater. You remember that lamp that bloke used to rub—I forget his name—but this works just the same for me. I rubs it and wishes—and there you are!"

"Rats!"

"A'right; didn't I do it?"

"No. That lion was comin' long before you touched the rock. He smelled meat—that was wot brought him, not you and your bloody rock."

"I'll show you. Here, give it to me."

Spike took the diamond from Troll, uncovered it, and placed a palm on its

gleaming surface. He glowered fixedly at his companion.

"Sit down!" he commanded.

Troll grinned derisively and advised Spike to "Go to 'ell." The latter scratched his head in momentary confusion; then he brightened. "'Ere," he exclaimed; "I got a better idea." He scratched a line on the ground with a bit of stick. "I says now that you can't cross that line—and you can't."

"Who says I can't?" demanded Troll, stepping across the line.

"I guess maybe there's something I don't understand about this," admitted Spike. "That Clayton bloke worked it on the Kaji and the Zuli. You seen him yourself."

"Gonfala was there," reminded Troll. "Maybe that's the answer. Maybe it won't work without her."

"Maybe," admitted Spike; "but the Zuli medicine man done the same work with the emerald, an' he didn't have no Gonfala."

"Well, try the emerald, then."

"Le'me have it."

"I ain't got it."

"One of the boys must have it."

"I told you to bring it."

"One of the boys always carries it," insisted Spike turning to the bearers sprawled on the ground. "Hey, you! W'ich one o' you 's got the green rock?" They looked at him blankly; then they

looked at one another.

"No got," said one. "No bring."

"Hell!" ejaculated Troll. "You're a rare un, you are, aleavin' maybe a three million pun stone back there in the cannibal country!"

14. KIDNAPPED

"Tired?" asked Wood. Gonfala shook her head. "Not a bit."

"You're doing pretty well for a girl who never had to do anything more strenuous than sit on a throne," laughed van Eyk.

"You'd be surprised. I can probably out-run and out-last either of you. You see I used to hunt with the Kaji. Mafka insisted on it—lots of exercise. He was a great believer in exercise for every one but Mafka."

"I'm glad," said Wood, "for we've got two long marches between this camp and railhead. I'll be glad when it's over. To tell you the truth, I'm fed up on Africa. I

hope I never see it again."

"I don't blame you, Stanlee; you came near staying here a long time."

"Yes; eternity is rather a long time." Wood grimaced. "It's hard to realize, even now, that we escaped."

"It's incredible," agreed Gonfala. "We're the first persons ever to escape from Mafka; and he'd been there, oh, no one knows how long—the Kaji said always. They believed that he created the world."

The three were camped at the end of a day's march on their way out toward civilization. They had a dependable, well equipped safari furnished by Tarzan. The men planned on devoting one day to hunting, as they were in

excellent game country; then they would cover the two long marches to railhead. The delay for hunting was Wood's concession to van Eyk, an indefatigable Nimrod, who had obtained permission from the Lord of the Jungle to take out a few trophies for his collection.

As night fell, the light of their beast fire cast dancing shadows through the camp and shone far out into the night, both attracting and repelling the great carnivores upon whose domain they trespassed; for this was lion country. It attracted also other eyes a mile or more to the north.

"I wonder what that might be," said Spike.

"A fire," growled Troll; "what you

think it was—a iceberg?"

"Funny, ain't you?"

"Not as funny as a bloke what runs off an leaves three million puns worth o' emerald with a bunch of cannibals."

"Fer cripe's sake quit chewin' about that; I didn't leave it any more 'n you did. What I mean is, there must be men over by that fire; I wonders who they might be."

"Natives, perhaps."

"Or white hunters."

"What difference does it make?" asked Troll.

"They might put us on the right trail."

"An' tell that Clayton bloke where we are? You're balmy."

"How do you know he's around here? Maybe they never even heard of him."

"He's everywhere. Everybody's heard of him. He said he'd know it if we double-crossed Stanley. After I seen what he done in the Kaji country, I wouldn't put nothin' past him—he's omnivorous."

"Whatever that means."

"You're ignorant."

"Well, just the same, I think we'd ourghter find out who made that fire. If they're one thing, we'd better light out of here; if they're the other, we can ask 'em to set us on the right trail."

"Maybe you said something intelligent at last. It wouldn't do no harm to go have a look-see."

"That fire may be a long ways off, and __"

"And what?"

"This is lion country."

"You scared?"

"Sure I'm scared. So are you, unless you're a bigger fool than I think. Nobody but a fool wouldn't be scared in lion country at night without a gun."

"We'll take a couple of the smokes with us. They say lions like dark meat."

"All right; let's get goin'."

Guided by the fire, the four men approached the Wood van Eyk camp; and after reconnoitering made their way to the concealment of a clump of bushes where they could see and not be seen.

"Cripes!" whispered Spike. "Look who's there!"

"Gonfala!" breathed Troll.

"An' Wood an' van Eyk."

"T'ell with them! If we only had the girl!"

"Wot do we want of her?"

"You get less brains every minute. Wot do we want of 'er! If we had her we could make the diamond do its stuff just like Mafka did—just like Clayton did. We'd be safe; nothin' nor nobody couldn't hurt us."

"Well, we ain't got her."

"Shut up! Listen to wot they're sayin'."

The voices of the three whites by the campfire came clearly to Troll and

Spike. Van Eyk was making plans for the morrow's hunt.

"I really think Gonfala ought to stay in camp and rest; but as long as she insists on coming along, you and she can go together. If there were three men, now, we could spread out farther and cover more ground."

"I can do whatever a man can do," insisted Gonfala. "You can assume that you have three men."

"But, Gonfala—"

"Don't be foolish, Stanlee. I am not as the women you have known in your civilized countries. From what you have told me, I shall be as helpless and afraid there as they would be here; but here I am not afraid. So I hunt tomorrow as the

third man, and now I am going to bed. Good night, Stanlee. Good night, Bob."

"Well, I guess that settles it," remarked Wood, with a wry smile; "but when I get you back in God's country you'll have to mind me. Good night."

"Perhaps," said Gonfala.

* * * * *

The chill of night still hung like a vapor below the new sun as the three hunters set out from their camp for the day's sport, and although the hunt had been van Eyk's idea primarily, each of the others was keen to bag a lion. Over their breakfast coffee they had laid wagers as to which would be the lucky one to bring down the first trophy, with the result that not a little friendly rivalry

had been engendered. That each might, seemed entirely possible; as the night had been filled with the continual roaring of the great carnivores.

Shortly after leaving camp the three separated, van Eyk keeping straight ahead toward the east, Wood diverging toward the south, and Gonfala to the north; each was accompanied by a gunbearer; and some of the members of the safari followed along after van Eyk and Wood, either believing that one of the men would be more likely to get a lion than would the girl, or, perhaps, feeling safer behind the guns of the men.

From behind an outcropping of rock at the summit of a low hill northwest of the Wood—van Eyk camp Spike and

Troll watched their departure; while below them, concealed from sight, the six men of their safari waited. The two whites watched Gonfala and her gunbearer approaching across the open plain. The direction that she was taking suggested that she would pass a little to the east of them, but that she would then still be in sight of van Eyk and possibly Wood also.

The latter was not at all happy about the arrangements for the day; he did not like the idea of Gonfala going out on her own after lion with only a gunbearer, but the girl had overridden his every objection. He had insisted, however, upon sending as gunbearer a man of known courage who was also a good

shot; and him he had instructed to be always ready with the second rifle in the event that Gonfala got into a tight place and, regardless of custom, to shoot a charging lion himself.

While Gonfala had had little previous experience of firearms prior to a few weeks ago, it gave him some consolation to reflect that she had, even in that short time, developed into an excellent shot; and insofar as her nerve was concerned he had no cause for anxiety. What he could not have known, of course, was the far greater menace of the two men who watched her from their rocky concealment upon the hilltop.

Gonfala passed the hill beneath the eyes of Spike and Troll and then crossed

a low rise that was a continuation of the hill running down into the plain, and from then on she was hidden from the sight of either van Eyk or Wood. The country she now entered was broken by gullies and outcroppings of rock, by low bushes and occasional trees; so that it was comparatively easy for Spike and Troll to follow her without danger of being discovered; and this they did, keeping well to the rear of her and catching only an occasional glimpse of her during the ensuing hour.

Quite unsuspecting the fact that eight men followed upon her trail, Gonfala continued her seemingly fruitless search for lion, bearing constantly a little to the west because of a range of low hills that

lay to the right of her and thus constantly increasing the distance between herself and her two companions. She had about come to the conclusion that the lions had all left the country when she heard, faint and far toward the east, the report of two rifle shots.

"Some one else had the luck," she said to her gunbearer; "I guess we came in the wrong direction."

"No, Memsahib," he whispered, pointing; "look! Simba!"

She looked quickly in the direction he indicated; and there among the grasses beneath a tree she saw the head of a lion, the yellow-green eyes gazing unblinkingly at her. The beast was about a hundred yards distant; he was lying

down, and as only his head was visible he offered a poor target. A frontal shot, she knew, would only tend to infuriate him and precipitate a charge.

"Pay no attention to him," she whispered; "we'll try to get closer and to one side."

She moved forward then, not directly toward the lion but as though to pass a little to the right of him; and always his eyes followed them, but neither she nor the gunbearer gave any indication that they were aware of his presence. When she had approached to within about fifty yards she stopped and faced him, but he only lay quietly regarding her. But when she took a few steps straight toward him, he bared his great fangs and growled.

Topping a rise behind her, Spike took in the situation at a glance. He motioned to his men to halt, and beckoned Troll to his side. Together they watched the tense scene below them.

"I wish he'd get up," said Gonfala.

The gunbearer picked up a stone and hurled it at the lion. The result was immediate and electrical. With an angry roar the lion leaped to its feet and charged.

"Shoot, Memsahib!"

Gonfala dropped to one knee and fired. The lion leaped high into the air, its angry roars shattering the silence. It was hit, but it was not stopped; for although it rolled over on its back it was up again in an instant and bearing down

on them at terrific speed. Gonfala fired again and missed. Then the gunbearer took aim and pressed the trigger of his gun. There was only a futile click. The cartridge misfired. The lion was almost upon Gonfala when the gunbearer, unnerved by the failure of his gun, turned and fled. Unwittingly he had saved Gonfala's life, for at sight of the man in flight the lion, already rising over Gonfala, followed a natural instinct that has saved the life of many a hunter and pursued the fleeing man. Gonfala fired again, and again scored a hit; but it did not stop the infuriated beast as it rose upon its hind feet and seized the gunbearer, the great fangs closing upon his head until they met in the center of

his brain.

The girl was aghast as she stood helplessly by while the huge cat mauled its victim for a moment; then it sagged upon the body of the man and died.

"That," said Troll, "is wot I call a bit o' luck. We not only gets the girl, but we gets two guns."

"And no witness," added Spike. "Come on!" He motioned the others to follow him, and started down the declivity toward Gonfala.

She saw them almost immediately and for a moment thought her companions were coming, but presently she recognized them. She knew that they were bad men who had stolen the great diamond and the emerald, but she had no

reason to believe that she was in any danger from them.

They came up to her smiling and friendly. "You sure had a narrow squeak," said Spike. "We seen it from the top of that rise, but we couldn't have done nothing to help you even if we'd had guns—we was too far away."

"What are you doing here?" she asked.

"We was tryin' to find our way to railhead," explained Spike. "We been lost fer weeks."

Troll was recovering the gun and ammunition from the dead gunbearer, and Spike was eyeing the splendid rifle that Gonfala carried.

"We're on our way to railhead," she

explained. "You can come back to camp with me and go on to railhead with us."

"Won't that be nice!" exclaimed Spike. "Say, that's a fine gun you got there. Lemme see it a minute." Thoughtlessly, she handed the weapon over to him; then she stepped over to the body of the dead gunbearer.

"He's quite dead," she said. "It's too bad. Your men can carry him back to camp."

"We ain't goin' back to your camp," said Spike.

"Oh," she exclaimed. "Well, what am I to do? I can't take him back alone."

"You ain't goin' back neither."

"What do you mean?"

"Just wot I says: You ain't goin' back to your camp. You're comin' with us."

"Oh, no I'm not."

"Listen, Gonfala," said Spike. "We don't want no trouble with you. We don't want to hurt you none; so you might as well come along peaceful like. We need you."

"What for?" Her voice was brave, but her heart sank within her.

"We got the Gonfal, but we can't make it work without you."

"Work?"

"Yes, work. We're goin' to set ourselves up like Mafka did and be kings - just as soon as we find a piece o' country we like. We'll live like kings,

too, off the fat of the land. You can be queen—have everything you want. Maybe, even, I'll marry you." He grinned.

"The hell you will," snapped Troll. "She belongs to me as much as she does to you."

Gonfala cringed. "I belong to neither of you. You are both fools. If you take me away, you will be followed and killed; or, at the least, both I and the Gonfal will be taken from you. If you have any sense you will let me go; then you can take the Gonfal to Europe. They tell me that there the money that it would bring would buy you anything that you wanted all the rest of your lives."

"A fat chance we'd have gettin' rid o'

that rock in Europe," said Troll. "No, sister, we got it all figgered out. You're comin' with us, an' that's that."

15. CLUES

Van Eyk dropped his lion with the second shot, and a few minutes later he heard the three shots fired by Gonfala. Wood, having had no luck and attracted by the report of van Eyk's gun, joined him. He was still apprehensive concerning Gonfala's safety; and now that van Eyk had his trophy, he suggested that they send the carcass back to camp while they joined Gonfala. Van Eyk agreed, and they set out in the direction from which they had heard the shots.

They searched for two hours without result, often calling her name and occasionally discharging their rifles; then, more by chance than design, they stumbled upon the little swale where

Gonfala had come upon her lion. There it lay upon the body of the dead gunbearer, but Gonfala was nowhere to be seen.

The ground was hard and stony, giving no indication to the untrained eyes of the white men that others beside Gonfala and her gunbearer had been there; so they assumed that, having no one to cut off or carry the head of the lion back to camp, the girl had returned there herself alone; and that, having come from another direction, they had missed her. They were, therefore, not unduly apprehensive until after they reached the camp and discovered that she had not returned.

By that time it was late in the

afternoon; but Wood insisted upon taking up the search at once, and van Eyk seconded the suggestion. They divided the safari into three sections. Van Eyk and Wood each heading one set out on slightly diverging trails in the general direction that Gonfala had taken in the morning, while the third, under a headman, was ordered to remain in camp, keeping a large fire burning and occasionally discharging a rifle to guide Gonfala if she should return toward camp without meeting either Wood or van Eyk. And all during the night Gonfala and her captors heard the faint report of rifles far to the south.

It was around noon of the following day that, exhausted and disheartened,

Wood and van Eyk returned to camp.

"I'm afraid it's no use, old man," said the latter, sympathetically; "if she'd been alive she'd have heard our rifles and replied."

"I can't believe that she's dead," said Wood; "I won't believe it!"

Van Eyk shook his head. "I know it's tough, but you've got to face facts and reason. She couldn't be alive in this lion country now."

"But she had two guns," insisted Wood. "You saw that she took the gun and ammunition from the gunbearer after he was killed. If she'd been attacked by a lion, she'd have fired at least once; and we never heard a shot."

"She might have been taken unaware

—stalked after dark and struck down before she knew a lion was near. You've seen 'em charge; you know it's all over in a second if you aren't ready for 'em."

Wood nodded. "Yes, I know. I suppose you're right, but I won't give up - not yet."

"Well, Stan, I've got to get back home. If I thought there was the slightest chance I'd stay, but I know there's not. You'd better come along and try to forget it as soon as you can. You might never, here; but back home it'll be different."

"There's no use, Van; you go along. I'm going to stay."

"But what can you do alone?"

"I won't try to do anything alone. I'm going back and find Tarzan; he'll help

me. If any one can find her or where she was killed it's he."

Ten days later Wood plodded wearily into the camp that he had not left except in daily fruitless searches for his Gonfala. He had not gone back to enlist Tarzan's aid; but had, instead, sent a long letter to the ape-man by a runner. Every day for ten days he had combed the country for miles around, and each day he had become more convinced that Gonfala was not dead. He had found no trace of a human kill by lions, no shred of clothing, no sign of the two guns or the ammunition that Gonfala had had with her; though he had found plenty of lion kills—zebra, antelope, wildebeest. But he had found something else that

gave support to his belief that Gonfala might be alive - the camp of Spike and Troll. It lay only a short distance north from his own camp. Gonfala must have pressed close to it the morning that she started out to hunt. What type of men had camped there, he could not know; but he assumed that they were natives; for there were no signs of white men—no empty tins, no discarded scrap of clothing, no indications that a tent had been pitched.

Perhaps, then, Gonfala's fate had been worse than the merciful death the king of beasts would have accorded her. That thought goaded him to desperation, and filled his mind with red imaginings of vengeance. Such were his thoughts as he threw himself upon his cot in hopeless

bafflement to reproach himself as he had a thousand thousand times for having permitted Gonfala to hunt alone that day —how long ago it seemed, how many ages of bitter suffering!

A figure darkened the doorway of the tent, and Wood turned to look. Wood sprang to his feet. "Tarzan! God, I thought you'd never come."

"I came as soon as I got your letter. You have been searching, of course; what have you found?"

Wood told him of his failure to find any evidence that Gonfala had fallen prey to lions but that he had found a camp in which there had been men recently.

"That is interesting," commented

Tarzan. "It is too late now to investigate that today; tomorrow I'll have a look at it."

Early the next morning Wood and the ape-man were at the camp from which Spike and Troll had been attracted by the campfire that had led them to the discovery of the presence of Gonfala. Tarzan examined the ground and the surroundings minutely. His lifetime of experience, his trained powers of observation, his sensitive nostrils revealed facts that were a sealed book to the American. The charred wood in the dead fires, the crushed grass, the refuse each told him something.

"It was a poor camp," he said finally. "Perhaps ten or a dozen men camped

here. They had very little food and their packs were few. They did have packs, and that indicates that there were white men—perhaps one, perhaps two; the rest were natives. Their food was poor. That would suggest that they had no firearms, for this is a good game country; so perhaps there were no white men at all. Yet I am sure there were. They had only the meat of an old boar to eat. Some of the bones were split and the marrow extracted. That suggests natives. Other bones were not split, and that suggests white men."

"How do you know they had packs?" asked Wood, who could see no evidence to suggest anything more than that some one had been there and built fires and

eaten food. He could see the discarded bones of their repast.

"If you look carefully you will see where they lay on the ground. It has been ten days at least; and the signs are faint, but they are there. The grasses are pressed down and the marks of the cords that bound the packs are still visible."

"I see nothing," admitted Wood after close scrutiny.

Tarzan smiled one of his rare smiles. "Now we shall see which way they went," he said. "The spoor of so many men should be plain."

They followed toward the north the freshest spoor that led from the camp, only to lose it where a great herd of grazing game had obliterated it; then

Tarzan picked it up again beyond. Eventually it led to the spot where the bodies of the gunbearer and the lion had lain.

"Your theory seems to have been correct," said the apeman. "Gonfala, apparently, was captured by this party."

"That was eleven days ago," mused Wood despairingly. "There is no telling where they are now, or what they have done to her. We must lose no time in following."

"Not we," replied Tarzan. "You will return to your camp and start tomorrow for my place. When I have definitely located Gonfala, if I cannot rescue her without help" (Again he smiled) "I'll send word by a runner, and you can

come with an escort of Waziri."

"But can't I go along with you?" demanded Wood.

"I can travel much faster alone. You will do as I say. That is all."

And that was all. Wood stood watching the magnificent figure of the ape-man until it disappeared beyond a rise in the rolling plain; then he turned dejectedly back toward camp. He knew that Tarzan was right, that a man whose senses were dulled by generations of non-use would prove only a drag on the alert ape-man.

For two days Tarzan followed the trail in a northerly direction; then an unseasonable rain obliterated it forever. He was now in the country of the

Bantangos, a warlike tribe of cannibals and hereditary enemies of his Waziri. He knew that if the captors of Gonfala had come this way it might be because they were themselves Bantangos, and so he determined to investigate thoroughly before searching farther. If they had not been Bantangos, it was very possible that they had been captured by this tribe; for he knew that they were a small and poorly equipped company.

In any event it seemed best to have a look into the village of the chief, to which, unquestionably, important captives would have been taken; but where the village lay, the apeman did not know. To the east of him a range of low hills stretched way into the north,

and to these he made his way. As he ascended them he commenced to glimpse villages to the west and north, and finally from the summit of one of the higher hills he obtained a view of a considerable extent of country containing many villages. The majority of these were mean and small—just a handful of huts surrounded by flimsy palisades of poles.

The valley in which the villages lay was dotted with trees, and on the west abutted upon a forest. It was a scene of peace and loveliness that lent a certain picturesqueness to even the squalid kraals of the Bantangos and belied the savagery and bestiality of the inhabitants. The beauty of the aspect was

not lost upon the ape-man, whose appreciation of the loveliness or grandeur of nature, undulled by familiarity, was one of the chief sources of his joy of living. In contemplating the death that he knew must come to him as to all living things his keenest regret lay in the fact that he would never again be able to look upon the hills and valleys and forests of his beloved Africa; and so today, as he lay like a great lion low upon the summit of a hill, stalking his prey, he was still sensible of the natural beauties that lay spread before him. Nor was he unmindful of a large village that lay toward the center of the valley, the largest, by far, of any of the villages. This, he knew, must be the village of the

chief of the Bantangos.

The moonless night descended, a black shroud that enveloped the forest, the trees, and the villages, concealing them from the eyes of the watcher; then the Lord of the Jungle arose, stretching himself. So like a lion's were all his movements that one might have expected the roar of the hunting beast to rumble from his great chest. Silently he moved down toward the village of the chief. Little lights shone now about the valley, marking the various villages by their cooking fires. Toward the fires of the largest strode an English lord, naked but for a G string.

From the hills he was quitting a lion roared. He too was coming down to the

villages where the natives had gathered their little flocks within the flimsy enclosures of their kraals. The ape-man stopped and raised his face toward the heavens. From his deep chest rose the savage, answering challenge of the bull-ape. The savages in the villages fell silent, looking questioningly at one another, wide eyed in terror. The warriors seized their weapons, the women huddled their children closer.

"A demon," whispered one.

"Once before I heard that cry," said the chief of the Bantangos. "It is the cry of the devil-god of the Waziri."

"Why would he come here?" demanded a warrior. "The rains have come many times since we raided in the

country of the Waziri."

"If it is not he," said the chief, "then it is another devil- god."

"When I was a boy," said an old man, "I went once with a raiding party far toward the place where the sun sleeps, to a great forest where the hairy tree-men live. They make a loud cry like that, a cry that stops the heart and turns the skin cold. Perhaps it is one of the hairy tree-men. We were gone a long time. The rains were just over when we left our village; they came again before we returned. I was a great warrior. I killed many warriors on that raid. I ate their hearts; that is what makes me so brave." No one paid any attention to him, but he rambled on. The others were listening

intently for a repetition of the weird cry or for any sound that might presage the approach of an enemy.

Tarzan approached the palisade that surrounded the village of the chief. A tree within the enclosure spread its branches across the top. The ape-man came close and investigated. Through the interstices between the poles that formed the palisade he watched the natives. Gradually their tense nerves relaxed as there was no repetition of the cry that had alarmed them; and they returned to their normal pursuits, the women to their cooking, the men to the immemorial custom of the lords of creation—to doing nothing.

Tarzan wished to scale the palisade

and gain the branches of the tree that spread above him; but he wished to do it without attracting the attention of the Bantangos, and because of the frail construction of the palisade, he knew that that would be impossible during the quiet that prevailed within the village at the supper hour. He must wait. Perhaps the opportunity he sought would present itself later. With the patience of the wild beast that stalks its prey, the apeman waited. He could, if necessary, wait an hour, a day, a week. Time meant as little to him as it had to the apes that raised him, his contacts with civilization not having as yet enslaved him to the fetish of time.

Nothing that he could see within the

restricted limits of his vision, a section of the village visible between two huts just within the palisade, indicated that the Bantangos held white prisoners; but he knew that if such were the case they might be confined within a hut; and it was this, among other things, that he must know before continuing his search elsewhere.

The evening meal concluded, the blacks lapsed into somnolence. The quiet of the African night was broken only by the occasional roars of the hunting lion, coming closer and closer, a sound so familiar that it aroused the interest of neither the blacks within the village nor the watcher without.

An hour passed. The lion ceased his

roaring, evidence that he was now approaching his prey and stalking. The blacks stirred with awakening interest with the passing of the phenomenon of digestion and became motivated by the same primitive urge that fills El Morocco and other late spots with dancers after the theater. A dusky maestro gathered his players with their primitive instruments, and the dancing began. It was the moment for which Tarzan had been awaiting. Amidst the din of the drums and the shouts of the dancers he swarmed to the top of the palisade and swung into the tree above.

From a convenient limb he surveyed the scene below. He could see the chief's hut now and the chief himself.

The old fellow sat upon a stool watching the dancers, but in neither the chief nor the dancers did the ape-man discover a focus for his interest—that was riveted upon something that lay at the chief's feet—the Great Emerald of the Zuli.

There could be no mistake. There could be but one such stone, and its presence here induced a train of deductive reasoning in the alert mind of the ape-man that led to definite conclusions—that Spike and Troll had been in the vicinity and that it was logical to assume that it must have been they who abducted Gonfala. Were they here now, in this village of the Bantangos? Tarzan doubted it; there was nothing to indicate that there were any

prisoners in the village, but he must know definitely; so he waited on with the infinite patience that was one of the heritages of his upbringing.

The night wore on; and at last the dancers tired, and the village street was deserted. Sounds of slumber arose from the dark huts, unlovely sounds, fitting bed-fellows of unlovely odors. Here and there a child fretted or an infant wailed. Beyond the palisade a lion coughed.

The ape-man dropped silently into the empty street. Like a shadow he passed from hut to hut, his keen nostrils searching out the scents that would tell him, as surely as might his eyes could he have seen within, whether a white lay prisoner there. No one heard him; not

even a sleeping cur was disturbed. When he had made the rounds he knew that those he sought were not there, but he must know more. He returned to the chief's hut. On the ground before it, like worthless trash, lay the Great Emerald of the Zuli. Its weird green light cast a soft radiance over the bronzed body of the jungle lord, tinged the chief's but palely green, accentuated the blackness of the low entrance way.

The ape-man paused a moment, listening; then he stooped and entered the hut. He listened to the breathing of the inmates. By their breathing he located the women and the children and the one man—that one would be the chief. To his side he stepped and kneeled,

stooping low. Steel thewed fingers closed lightly upon the throat of the sleeper. The touch awakened him.

"Make no sound," whispered the ape-man, "if you would live."

"Who are you?" demanded the chief in a whisper. "What do you want?"

"I am the devil-god," replied Tarzan. "Where are the two white men and the white woman?"

"I have seen no white woman," replied the chief.

"Do not speak lies—I have seen the green stone."

"The two white men left it behind them when they ran away," insisted the chief, "but there was no white woman

with them. The sun has risen from his bed as many times as I have fingers on my two hands and toes on one foot since the white men were here."

"Why did they run away?" demanded the ape-man.

"We were at their camp. A lion came and attacked us; the white men ran away, leaving the green stone behind."

A woman awoke and sat up. "Who speaks?" she demanded.

"Tell her to be quiet," cautioned Tarzan.

"Shut up," snapped the chief at the woman, "if you do not wish to die —it is the devil-god!"

The woman stifled a scream and lay

down, burying her face in the dirty reeds that formed her bed.

"Which way did the white men go?" asked the ape-man.

"They came from the north. When they ran away they went into the forest to the west. We did not follow them. The lion had killed two of my warriors and mauled others."

"Were there many in the safari of the white men?"

"Only six, beside themselves. It was a poor safari. They had little food and no guns. They were very poor." His tone was contemptuous. "I have told you all I know. I did not harm the white men or their men. Now go away. I know no more."

"You stole the green stone from them," accused Tarzan.

"No. They were frightened and ran away, forgetting it; but they took the white stone with them."

"The white stone?"

"Yes, the white stone. One of them held it in his hands and told us to put down our weapons and go away. He said it was big medicine and that it would kill us if we did not go away; but we stayed, and it did not kill us."

In the darkness the ape-man smiled. "Has a white woman passed through your country lately? If you lie to me I shall come back and kill you."

"I have never seen a white woman," replied the chief. "If one had passed

through my country I should know it."

Tarzan slipped from the hut as silently as he had come. As he went, he gathered up the Great Emerald and swung into the tree that overhung the palisade. The chief breathed a choking sigh of relief and broke into a cold sweat.

Strong in the nostrils of the ape-man was the scent of Numa the lion. He knew that the great cat was stalking close to the palisade. He had no quarrel with Numa this night and no wish to tempt a hungry hunting lion; so he made himself comfortable in the tree above the cannibal village to wait until Numa had taken himself elsewhere.

16. TANTOR

Weary day after weary day Gonfala had trudged north with Spike and Troll. They had made a wide detour to avoid the country of the Bantangos, for although they had both the Gonfal and Gonfala they lacked the courage of their convictions relative to this combination that previously had seemed all-powerful to them.

Gonfala's safety, so far, had lain in the men's jealousy of one another. Neither would leave her alone with the other. Because of her, they had ceased to speak except when absolutely necessary; and each was constantly afraid that the other would murder him. To assure her own safety, the girl watched over the

safety of each of the others as though she loved them both.

One of the blacks carried the great diamond, nor did either of the white men attempt to touch it without arousing the savage objections of the other; for now that Gonfala was with them each feared that the other might use the magical power of the stone to destroy him.

Spike was in search of a district which he had passed through on safari several years before.

"It's a regular garden, Miss," he explained to Gonfala; "and game! S'elp me, it's lousy with game; and that gentle, from not bein' hunted none, that you can walk right up to 'em an' bat 'em over the head, if you'd a mind to. We could live

like kings and with plenty of servants, too; for the natives is peaceablelike, and not many of 'em. I mean not too many. We could rule 'em easy what with our havin' the Gonfal and you."

"I don't know that the Gonfal would do you much good," said the girl.

"Wy not?" demanded Troll.

"You don't know how to use it. One must have certain mental powers to succeed with the Gonfal."

"Have you got 'em?" asked Spike.

"I could use it unless Mafka desired to prevent me. He could do that, for his mind could control mine. I have never tried to use these powers since Mafka died."

"But you think you can?" Spike's voice reflected the fear that was in him. He had banked heavily on the power of the Gonfal. All his future plans were dependent upon his being able to control the acts of others through the mysterious powers of the great diamond, and now there was doubt. It haunted him day and night.

"I think so," replied Gonfala, "but I shall not use it to help either of you unless I am absolutely assured that neither one of you will harm me."

"I wouldn't think of hurtin' you, Miss," Spike assured her.

"Me neither, but you better not trust him," said Troll.

Spike took a step toward Troll, his

fist clenched. "You dirty crook," he shouted, "you're the one needs watchin', but you won't need it much longer. I'm goin' to break your neck for you right now."

Troll jumped back and picked up his rifle. "Come any closer and I'll let you have it," he threatened, holding the muzzle of the weapon aimed at Spike's belly.

"You'd better not," Spike admonished him. "You may need another gun in some of the country we got to go through. You'd never get through alone with just six niggers."

"That goes for you, too," growled Troll.

"Then let's call it quits, and quit our

rowin'—it ain't gettin' us nothin'."

"It won't ever get either one of you me," said Gonfala, "and that's what's been the trouble between you. You stole me from my friends, and some day they're going to catch up with you. When they do, it'll be better for you if you haven't harmed me. Stanlee Wood will never give up until he finds me; and when he tells Tarzan I have been stolen, you can rest assured I'll be found and you will be punished."

"Tarzan!" exclaimed Spike. "What's Tarzan got to do with it?"

"You know who he is?" demanded Gonfala.

"Sure—everybody's heard of him; but I ain't never seen him. I always thought

maybe he was just somethin' somebody made up. What do you know about him? Have you ever seen him?"

"Yes, and so have you."

"Not us," said Troll.

"You remember Clayton?" asked the girl.

"Sure, I remember Clayton. That bloke was as good as two—Say! You don't mean -?"

"Yes, I do. Clayton is Tarzan."

Troll looked worried. Spike scowled; then he shrugged. "Wot if he is?" he demanded. "He couldn't never find us—not where we're goin'; and even if he did, wot could he do against the Gonfal? We could do what we pleased with

him."

"Sure," agreed Troll; "we could snuff him out like that." He snapped his fingers.

"Oh, no you couldn't," said Gonfala.

"An' wy couldn't we?"

"Because I wouldn't let you. You can't use the Gonfal without my help, and when Tarzan and Stanlee come I shall help them. You see, with the Gonfal, I can snuff you out."

The two men looked at one another. Presently Spike walked away and called to Troll to accompany him. When he was out of earshot of Gonfala be stopped. "Listen," he said; "that dame's got us to rights. If she ever gets her paws on that rock our lives won't be worth nothin."

"Looks like the Gonfal ain't goin' to do us much good," said Troll. "We can't make it work without her; and if we let her get her hands on it, she'll kill us. Wot are we goin' to do?"

"In the first place we got to see that she doesn't get to touch it. One of us has got to carry it—she might get the nigger to let her touch it some time when we weren't around. You can carry it if you want to."

"That's wot I been sayin' for a long time," Troll reminded him.

"Well, it's different now," Spike explained. "Neither one of us can get it to work, an' neither one of us dares let her touch it; so we're safe as long as one of us has it."

"But wot good is the stone goin' to do us, then?"

"Wait 'til we get up in that country I been tellin' you about. We can make the dame be good then. All we got to do is tell her to work the stone the way we say or we'll croak her. She'll have to do it, too; for where I'm takin' her she couldn't never find her way out after she'd killed us; so it wouldn't do her no good."

Troll shook his head. "Maybe she'd kill us any way, just to get even with us."

"Well, there ain't nothin' we can do about it now, anyway," said Spike; "so let's get goin'. Come on, you niggers! Come on, Gonfala! we're trekkin' - the sun's been up an hour."

As they broke camp far to the north of

him, Tarzan stopped at the edge of the forest that bordered the valley of the Bantangos on the west. He looked about him, carefully taking his bearings; then with the tip of his spear he loosened the earth in the center of a triangle formed by three trees and with his hands scooped out the earth until he had a hole about a foot deep. Into this he dropped the Great Emerald of the Zuli. When he had refilled the hole and covered it with the fallen leaves and twigs that he had carefully scraped away, no human eye could have detected the hiding place. With his knife he blazed a tree fifteen paces from one of the three trees that formed the triangle. Only Tarzan could ever find the place again. Should he

never return, the ransom of a dozen kings would lie there to the end of time, undiscovered.

Unable to find the trail that the storm had obliterated, the ape-man attempted to deduce from his knowledge of the two men he was now positive were the abductors of Gonfala and from his knowledge of events leading up to the present moment the logical destination for which they were headed.

He knew that they were familiar with the miraculous powers of the Gonfal and that they had been unable to call these powers into being themselves. The chief of the Bantangos had told him of their failure to demonstrate the value of their big medicine. Either by accident or

intent they had found Gonfala, and what more natural than that they would assume that with her aid they could command the wonders of the Gonfal? And where would be the best place to utilize these powers? Why, the country of the Kaji, naturally; for there they would be safer from detection than almost anywhere on earth, and there they would find a tribe accustomed to the domination of the stone. There they would find women; and Tarzan felt that if he were any judge of men, that circumstance would have considerable bearing with Troll and Spike. So Tarzan travelled toward the north on a trail parallel to that taken by Spike and Troll but some distance to the west of it.

For two days Tarzan moved toward the north, and still there was no sign of those whom he sought. He made his kills and ate and slept, and swung on tirelessly through forest or across plains.

As he was passing through a strip of forest along the shoulder of a range of hills thick with bamboo he heard a sound that brought him to halt, listening. It was repeated—the weak trumpeting of an elephant in distress. The ape-man turned aside from the direction he had been travelling and moved cautiously through the bamboo thicket. He was moving down wind; so he made a wide circuit in order to pick up the scent spoor of what lay ahead. There might be something beside an elephant. The caution of the

beast aided and abetted the reasoning powers of the man.

Presently the scent of Tantor the elephant told him that he had circled his quarry, and even stronger was the rank odor of Dango the hyena; then, harsh and raucous, came the hideous laughing cry of the unclean beast followed by the plaintive help-cry of the elephant. Tantor was in trouble, and the ape-man pushed forward to learn the cause.

Almost as old as Tarzan was the friendship of Tarzan and Tantor. Perhaps he had never seen this elephant before; but still, to Tarzan, he would be Tantor —the name and the friendship belonged to all elephants.

As he came closer, he moved more

cautiously—beastlike, always scenting a trap. For those of the jungle, eternal vigilance is the price of life. At last he came close enough so that by parting the bamboo he could see that for which he had been searching. The top of Tantor's back was just visible in an elephant pit. Snapping and growling at the edge of the pit were a pair of hyenas, circling above was Ska the vulture; and from these omens the ape-man knew that Tantor was near death.

Parting the bamboo, Tarzan stepped into the little clearing that the builders of the pit had made, an enlargement of a wide elephant trail. Instantly the hyenas transferred their attention from the elephant to the ape-man, and with bared

fangs faced him. But as the man advanced, they retreated snarling. He paid no attention to them; for he knew that ordinarily Dango would not attack any but a helpless man.

As he approached the pit Tantor saw him and trumpeted a feeble warning. The elephant's skin hung loosely on its great frame, evidencing that it had been long without food or water. It had fallen into a pit that must have been dug and then abandoned, either because the tribe that dug it had moved away or because no elephant having fallen into it, they had ceased to visit it.

Tarzan spoke to Tantor in the strange language that he used with the beasts of the jungle. Perhaps Tantor did not

understand the words—who may know?—but something, the tone perhaps, carried the idea that the ape-man wished to convey, that he was a friend; but Tantor needed something beside kind words, and so Tarzan set about cutting the bamboo that bore the tenderest shoots and carrying them to the imprisoned beast.

Tantor ate with avidity, the water content of the shoots furnishing at least some of the moisture that his great frame required even more than it required food; then Tarzan set to work with spear and knife and hands upon the seemingly Herculean task of excavating a ramp up which Tantor could walk to liberty. It was the work not of an hour but of many

hours, and it was not completed until the following day; then, weak and staggering, the great pachyderm climbed slowly from the pit. He was a huge beast, one of the largest old bulls Tarzan had ever seen. One tusk, by some peculiar freak of nature, was much darker than the other; and this, with his great size, must have marked him among his fellows as a bull of distinction.

As he came out of the pit, his sensitive trunk passed over the body of the ape-man in what was almost a caress; then, as Tarzan took his way once more toward the north, Tantor turned and moved slowly along the elephant trail toward the east and the nearest water.

Days passed. Stanley Wood, waiting at Tarzan's estate, grew more and more frantic as no news came of the whereabouts of Tarzan. He plead with Muviro, headman of the Waziri, to furnish him with an escort and let him set out in search of Gonfala; and at last Muviro yielded to his importunities and sent him away with half a dozen warriors as an escort.

Wood took up the search at the point at which Tarzan had left him, where the clean picked bones of the lion Gonfala had killed lay bleaching in the sun. He knew only that those he sought had started north at that spot. It was a blind and seemingly hopeless search; but it meant action; and anything was

preferable to sitting idly, his mind torn by fears and doubts as to the fate of Gonfala.

As they approached the Bantango country, the Waziri, knowing the nature and temper of the inhabitants, counseled making a detour to avoid them; and entirely by chance they selected an easterly route—the route that Spike and Troll had chosen for the same reason. Thus it happened that a week later they received definite proof that they were on the right trail. At a village of friendly blacks they were told that a safari of nine that included two white men and a white girl had stopped overnight with the tribe. The chief had furnished them with guides to the next friendly village to

the north.

Wood talked to these men and learned that the chief of the village to which they had guided the safari had also furnished them guides for the next stage of their journey, and for the first time in weeks the young American found hope rekindled in his bosom. He had learned that up to this point Gonfala had been alive and well; and that, from what the villagers had seen, there was no indication that she was being ill-treated.

All the marvelous tracking skill of the Lord of the Jungle had been nullified by a heavy rain, and then chance had set in and sent him upon the wrong trail and Stanley Wood upon the right one.

Through such a trivial vagary of fate

lives were jeopardized and men died.

17. STRANGERS

Spike and Troll were holding palaver with the chief of a northern tribe. They had come far, guided from village to village by friendly natives. Luck had been with them, but now this good fortune seemed to be at an end. They were trying to persuade the old chief to furnish them with guides to the next village.

"No more villages," he said. He did not like these white men. He held them in contempt because their safari was small and poor, too poor even to rob. They had nothing but two rifles—and the girl. He had been thinking about her. He was also thinking of a black sultan to the east to whom she might be sold, but he

put this thought from him. He did not wish any trouble with the white men. Native soldiers had come to his village once under white officers and punished him for ill-treating the safari of some white hunters. They had come from a great distance just to do that, and the incident had given him vast respect for the power and the long arm of the white man.

"What is north?" asked Spike.

"Mountains," replied the chief.

"That," said Spike to Troll, "is like the country where my valley is. It is surrounded by mountains." He tried to explain to the chief the valley for which they were searching and the tribe that inhabited it.

A cunning look came into the eyes of the chief. He wished to be rid of these men, and he saw how he might do it. "I know the valley," he said. "Tomorrow I will give you guides."

"I guess maybe we ain't lucky," gloated Spike, as he and Troll came from their palaver with the chief and sat down beside Gonfala. The girl did not inquire why; but Spike explained, nevertheless. "It won't be long now," he said, "before we're safe and sound in my valley."

"You won't be safe," said Gonfala. "Tarzan and Stanlee Wood will come soon —very soon now."

"They won't never find us where we're goin'."

"The natives will guide them from village to village just as they have guided you," she reminded him. "It will be very easy to follow you."

"Yes," admitted Spike, "they can follow us up to where these people will guide us."

"But there we will stop. They will find you there."

"We don't stop there," said Spike. "I guess I ain't nobody's fool. The valley these people are takin' us to, ain't my valley; but once I get in this here first valley, I can find the other. I passed through it comin' out of my valley. It's about two marches east of where we want to go. When we get to this first valley, we won't need no guides the rest

of the way; so, when we leave this here first valley, we'll tell 'em we're goin' to the coast, an' start off to the east; then we'll swing around back way to the north of 'em an' go west to my valley. And there won't nobody never find us."

"Tarzan and Stanlee Wood will find you."

"I wisht you'd shut up about this here Tarzan and Stanlee Wood. I'm sick of hearin' of 'em. It's gettin' on my nerves."

Troll sat staring at Gonfala through half closed lids. He had not spoken much all day, but he had looked much at Gonfala. Always when she caught his glance he turned his eyes away.

They had been able to sustain themselves this far by killing game and

trading the meat to natives for other articles of food, principally vegetables and corn. Tonight they feasted royally and went to their beds early. Gonfala occupied a hut by herself; the two men had another near by. They had had a hard day's trek, and tired muscles combined with a heavy meal to induce early slumber. Gonfala and Spike were asleep almost as soon as they had stretched themselves on their sleeping mats.

Not so Troll. He remained very much awake—thinking. He listened to the heavy breathing of Spike that denoted that he slept soundly. He listened to the sounds in the village. Gradually they died out—the village slept. Troll thought how easy it would be to kill Spike, but

he was afraid of Spike. Even when the man slept, he was afraid of him. That made Troll hate him all the more, but it was not hate alone that made him wish to kill him. Troll had been daydreaming—very pleasant dreams. Spike stood in the way of their fulfillment, yet he could not muster the courage to kill the sleeping man - not yet. "Later," he thought.

He crawled to the doorway of the hut and looked out. There was no sign of waking life in the village. The silence was almost oppressive; it extended out into the black void of night beyond the village. As Troll rose to his feet outside the hut he stumbled over a cooking pot; the noise, against the background of silence, seemed terrific. Cursing under

his breath, the man stood motionless, listening.

Spike, disturbed but not fully awakened, moved in his sleep and turned over; the first dead slumber of early night was broken. Thereafter he would be more restless and more easily awakened. Troll did not hear him move, and after a moment of listening he tip-toed away. Stealthily he approached the hut in which Gonfala slept.

The girl, restless and wakeful, lay wide-eyed staring out into the lesser darkness framed by the doorway of her hut. She heard footsteps approaching. Would they pass, or were they coming here for her? Weeks of danger, weeks of suspicion, weeks of being constantly on

guard had wrought upon her until she sensed menace in the most ordinary occurrences; so now she felt, intuitively, she believed, that someone was coming to her hut. And for what purpose, other than evil, should one come thus stealthily by night?

Raising herself upon her hands, she crouched, waiting. Every muscle tense, she scarcely breathed. Whatever it was, it was coming closer, closer. Suddenly a darker blotch loomed in the low opening that was the doorway. An animal or a man on all fours was creeping in!

"Who are you? What do you want?" It was a muffled scream of terror.

"Shut up! It's me. Don't make no noise. I want to talk to you."

She recognized the voice, but it did not allay her fears. The man crept closer to her. He was by her side now. She could hear his labored breathing.

"Go away," she said. "We can talk tomorrow."

"Listen!" he said. "You don't want to go to that there valley and spend the rest of your life with Spike an' a bunch o' niggers, do you? When he gets us there, he'll kill me an' have you all to himself. I knows him—he's that kind of a rat. Be good to me an' I'll take you away. Me an' you'll beat it with the diamond. We'll go to Europe, to Paris."

"I don't want to go anywhere with you. Go away! Get out of here, before I call Spike."

"One squawk out of you, an' I'll wring your neck. You're goin' to be good to me whether you want to or not." He reached out in the darkness and seized her, feeling for her throat.

Before he found it she had time to voice a single scream and cry out once, "Spike!" Then Troll closed choking fingers upon her throat and bore her down beneath his weight. She struggled and fought, striking him in the face, tearing at the fingers at her throat.

Awakened by the scream, Spike raised upon an elbow. "Troll!" he called. "Did you hear anything?" There was no response. "Troll!" He reached out to the mat where Troll should have been. He was not there. Instantly his

suspicions were aroused and, because of his own evil mind, they centered unquestioningly upon the truth.

In a dozen strides he was at Gonfalas hut; and as he scrambled through the doorway, Troll met him with an oath and a snarl. Clinching, the two men rolled upon the floor, biting, gouging, striking, kicking; occasionally a lurid oath or a scream of pain punctuated their heavy breathing. Gonfala crouched at the back of the hut, terrified for fear that one of them would kill the other, removing the only factor of safety she possessed.

They rolled closer to her; and she edged to one side, out of their way. Her new position was nearer the doorway. It suggested the possibility of temporary

escape, of which she was quick to take advantage. In the open, she commenced to worry again for fear that one of the men would be killed.

She saw that some of the natives, aroused by the commotion within her hut, had come from theirs. She ran to them, begging them to stop the fight. The chief was there, and he was very angry because he had been disturbed. He ordered several warriors to go and separate the men. They hesitated, but finally approached the hut. As they did so, the sounds of conflict ended; and a moment later Spike crawled into the open and staggered to his feet.

Gonfala feared that the worst had happened. Of the two men, she had

feared Spike the more; for while both were equally brutal and devoid of decency, Troll was not as courageous as his fellow. Him she might have circumvented through his cowardice. At least, that she had thought until tonight; now she was not so sure. But she was sure that Spike was always the more dangerous. Her one thought now was to escape him, if only temporarily. Inflamed by his fight, secure in the knowledge that Troll was dead, what might he not do? To a far corner of the village she ran and hid herself between a hut and the palisade. Each moment she expected to hear Spike hunting for her, but he did not come. He did not even know that she had left her hut where he

thought he had left her with the dead Troll, and he had gone to his own hut to nurse his wounds.

But Troll was not dead. In the morning Spike found him bloody and dazed squatting in the village street staring at the ground. Much to the former's disgust, Troll was not even badly injured. He looked up as Spike approached.

"Wot happened?" he asked.

Spike looked at him suspiciously for a moment; then his expression turned to puzzlement. "A bloomin' lorry ran over you," he said.

" 'A bloomin' lorry,'" Troll repeated. "I never even seen it.

Gonfala, looking around a corner of

the hut behind which she had been hiding, saw the two men and breathed a sigh of relief. Troll was not dead; she was not to be left alone with Spike. She came toward them. Troll glanced up at her.

"'Ose the dame?" he asked.

Gonfala and Spike looked at one another, and the latter tapped his forehead. "A bit balmy," he explained.

"She don't look balmy," said Troll. "She looks like my sister—my sister—sister." He continued to stare at her, dully.

"We better get some grub an' be on our way," interrupted Spike. He seemed nervous and ill at ease in the presence of Troll. It is one thing to kill a man, quite

another to have done this thing to him.

It was a silent, preoccupied trio that moved off behind two guides in a northeasterly direction after the morning meal had been eaten. Spike walked ahead, Troll kept close to Gonfala. He was often looking at her, a puzzled expression in his eyes.

"Wot's your name?" he asked.

Gonfala had a sudden inspiration. Perhaps it was madness to hope that it might succeed, but her straits were desperate. "Don't tell me you don't remember your sister's name," she exclaimed.

Troll stared at her, his face expressionless. "Wot is your name?" he asked. "Everything is sort o' blurrylike

in my memory."

"Gonfala," she said. "You remember, don't you—your sister?"

"Gonfala; oh, yes—my sister."

"I'm glad you're here," she said; "for now you won't let anyone harm me, will you?"

"Harm you? They better not try it," he exclaimed belligerently.

The safari had halted, and they caught up with Spike who was talking with the two guides.

"The beggars won't go no farther," he explained. "We ain't made more'n five miles an' they quits us, quits us cold."

"Why?" asked Gonfala.

"They say the country ahead is taboo.

They say they's white men up ahead that'll catch 'em an' make slaves out of 'em an' feed 'em to lions. They've went an' put the fear o' God into our boys, too."

"Let's turn back," suggested the girl. "What's the use anyway, Spike? If you get killed the Gonfal won't do you any good. If you turn around and take me back safely to my friends, I'll do my best to get them to give you the Gonfal and let you go. I give you my word that I will, and I know that Stanlee Wood will do anything that I ask."

Spike shook his head. "Nothin' doin'! I'm goin' where I'm goin', an' you're goin' with me." He bent close and stared boldly into her eyes. "If I had to give up

one or t'other, I'd give up the Gonfal before I would you - but I'm not 'goin' to give up neither."

The girl shrugged. "I've given you your chance," she said. "You are a fool not to take it."

So they pushed on without guides farther and farther into the uncharted wilderness; and each new day Spike was confident that this day he would stumble upon the enchanted valley of his dreams, and each night he prophesied for the morrow.

Troll's mental condition remained unchanged. He thought that Gonfala was his sister, and he showed her what little consideration there was in his gross philosophy of life to accord any one.

The protective instinct of the brutal male was stimulated in her behalf; and for this she was grateful, not to Troll but to fate. Where he had been, where he was going he appeared not to know or to care. He trudged on day after day in dumb silence, asking no question, showing no interest in anything or anyone other than Gonfala. He was obsessed by a belief that she was in danger, and so he constantly carried one of the rifles the better to protect her.

For many days they had been in mountainous country searching for the elusive valley, and at the end of a hard trek they made camp on the shoulder of a mountain beside a little spring of clear water. As night fell the western sky was

tinged with the golden red of a dying sunset. Long after the natural phenomenon should have faded into the blackness of the night the red glow persisted.

Gonfala sat gazing at it, dreamily fascinated. Spike watched it, too, with growing excitement. The blacks watched it with fear. Troll sat crosslegged, staring at the ground.

Spike sat down beside Gonfala. "You know wot that is, girlie?" he asked. "You know it ain't no sunset, don't you?"

"It looks like a fire—a forest fire," she said.

"It's a fire all right. I ain't never been there, but I've seen that light before. I figure it's from the inside of one of them

volcanoes, but I'll tell you wot it means to us—it means we found our valley. When I was in that valley I seen that light to the south at night. All we got to do now is trek along a little west o' north, an' in maybe four or five marches we orter be there; then, girlie, you an' me's goin' to settle down to housekeepin'."

The girl made no reply. She was no longer afraid; for she knew that Troll would kill Spike if she asked him to; and now she had no reason to fear being alone with Troll, other than the waning possibility that he might regain his memory.

The new day found Spike almost jovial, so jubilant was he at the prospect

of soon finding his valley; but his joviality disappeared when he discovered that two of his six men had deserted during the night. He was in a cold sweat until he found that they had not taken the Gonfal with them. After that, he determined, he would sleep with the great stone at his side, taking no more chances. He could do this now without arousing the suspicions of Troll, for Troll had no suspicions. He paid no attention to the Gonfal nor ever mentioned it.

Toward noon a great valley opened before them, the length of which ran in the direction Spike wished to travel; and so they dropped down into it to easy travelling after their long days in the

mountains.

The valley was partially forested, the trees growing more profusely along the course of a river that wound down from the upper end of the valley, crossed it diagonally, and disappeared in a cleft in the hills to the west; but considerable areas were open and covered with lush grasses, while on the east side of the valley was a veritable forest of bamboo.

Spike, not knowing if the valley were inhabited; nor, if it were, the nature or temper of its inhabitants, chose to follow the wooded strip that bordered the river, taking advantage of the cover it afforded. Along the river he found a wide elephant trail, and here they were making excellent speed when one of the blacks

stopped suddenly, listened intently, and pointed ahead.

"What's the matter?" demanded Spike.

"Men, Bwana—coming," replied the black.

"I don't hear nothin'," said Spike. "Do you?" he turned to Gonfala.

She nodded. "Yes, I hear voices."

"Then we better get off the trail and hide—at least until we see who they are. Here, all of you! Here's a little trail leadin' off here."

Spike herded the party off to the left of the main trail along a little winding path through rather heavy underbrush, but they had covered little more than a hundred yards when they came out onto

the open plain. Here they stopped at the edge of the wood, waiting and listening. Presently the voices of men came plainly to their ears, constantly closer and closer, until suddenly it dawned on them all that the men they heard were approaching along the little trail through which they had sought to escape.

Spike looked for a place of concealment, but there was none. The thick underbrush was almost impenetrable behind them, while on the other hand the plain stretched away across the valley to the hills upon the west. As a last resort he turned north along the edge of the wood, urging the others to haste until all were running.

Glancing back, Gonfala saw the party

that had alarmed them debouching onto the plain. First came a dozen huge Negroes, each pair of whom held a lion in leash. Following these were six white men strangely garbed. Even at a distance she could see that their trappings were gorgeous. Behind them followed a score or more of other white men. They were similarly dressed but in quieter raiment. They carried spears as well as swords. One of the warriors carried something dangling at his side which, even at a distance, could not have been mistaken for other than it was—a bloody human head.

"They're white men," Gonfala called to Spike. "Maybe they'd be friendly."

"They don't look like it to me," he

replied. "I ain't takin' no chances after wot I been through gettin' you an' the Gonfal this far."

"Anyone would be better than you," said the girl, and stopped.

"Come on, you fool!" he cried; and, coming back, seized her and sought to drag her with him.

"Troll!" she cried. "Help!"

Troll was ahead of them, but now he turned; and, seeing Spike and the girl scuffling, he ran back. His face was white and distorted with rage. "Le' go her," he bellowed. "Le' go my sister!" Then he was upon Spike; and the two went down, striking kicking and biting.

For an instant Gonfala hesitated, undecided. She looked at the two beasts

upon the ground, and then she turned in the direction of the strange warriors. No one, she reasoned, could be more of a menace to her than Spike; but she soon saw that the decision had already been made for her—the entire party was moving in their direction. She stood and waited as they approached.

They had covered about half the distance when a warrior in the lead halted and pointed up the valley. For an instant they hesitated; then they turned and started off across the valley at a run, the lions tugging at their leashes and dragging their keepers after them, the warriors keeping in formation behind them.

The girl, wondering at their sudden

flight, looked up the valley in the direction in which the warrior had pointed. The sight that met her eyes filled her with amazement. A herd of perhaps a hundred elephants carrying warriors on their backs was moving rapidly down upon them. On the ground at her feet Spike and Troll still bit and gouged and kicked.

18. INGRATITUDE

Stanley Wood had no difficulty following the trail of Gonfala's abductors to the point at which their guides had deserted them, and from there the trained Waziri trackers carried on until the trail was lost at the edge of a wood where it had been obliterated by the shuffling pads of a herd of elephants. Search as they would they could not pick up the trail again. To Wood, the mystery was complete; he was baffled, disheartened.

Wearily he pushed on up the valley. If only Tarzan were here! He, of all men, could find an answer to the riddle.

"Look, Bwana!" cried one of the Waziri. "A city!"

Wood looked ahead, amazed; for there lay a city indeed. No native village of thatched huts was this, but a walled city of white, its domes of gold and azure rising above its gleaming wall.

"What city is it?" he asked.

The Waziri shook their heads and looked at one another.

"I do not know, Bwana," said one. "I have never been in this country before."

"Perhaps the memsahib is there," suggested a warrior.

"Perhaps," agreed Wood. "If the people here are unfriendly they will take us all prisoners," he mused, half aloud; "and then no one will know where we are, where Gonfala probably is. We must not all be taken prisoners."

"No," agreed Waranji, "we must not all be taken prisoners."

"That is a big city," said Wood; "there must be many warriors there. If they are unfriendly they could easily take us all or kill us all. Is that not so?"

"We are Waziri," said Waranji, proudly.

"Yes, I know; and you're great fighters. I know that too; but, holy mackerel! seven of us can't lick an army, even though six of us are Waziri."

Waranji shook his head. "We could try," he said. "We are not afraid."

Wood laid a hand on the ebony shoulder. "You're great guys, Waranji; and I know you'd walk right plumb into Hell for any friend of the Big Bwana, but

I'm not goin' to sacrifice you. If those people are friendly, one man will be as safe as seven; if they're not, seven men won't be any better off than one; so I'm goin' to send you boys home. Tell Muviro we couldn't find Tarzan. Tell him we think we've found where the memsahib is. We don't know for sure, but it seems reasonable. If you meet Tarzan, or he's back home, he'll know what to do. If you don't see him, Muviro will have to use his own judgment. Now, go along; and good luck to you!"

Waranji shook his head. "We cannot leave the bwana alone," he said. "Let me send one warrior back with a message; the rest of us will stay with you."

"No, Waranji. You've heard my

orders. Go on back."

Reluctantly they left him. He watched them until they passed out of sight in the wood; then he turned his steps toward the mysterious city in the distance.

Once again Tarzan of the Apes stood upon the edge of the high plateau at the western rim of the valley of Onthar and looked down upon Cathne, the city of gold. The white houses, the golden domes, the splendid Bridge of Gold that spanned the river before the city's gates gleamed and sparkled in the sunlight. The first time he had looked upon it the day had been dark and gloomy; and he had seen the city as a city of enemies; because then his companion had been Valthor of Athne, the City of Ivory,

whose people were hereditary enemies of the Cathneans. But today, ablaze in the sunshine, the city offered him only friendship.

Nemone, the queen who would have killed him, was dead. Alextar, her brother, had been taken from the dungeon in which she had kept him and been made king by the men who were Tarzan's fast friends—Thudos, Phordos, Gemnon, and the others of the loyal band whom Tarzan knew would welcome him back to Cathne. Tomos, who had ruled under Nemone as her chief advisor, must have been either killed or imprisoned. He would be no longer a menace to the apeman.

With pleasant anticipation, Tarzan

clambered down the steep gully to the floor of the valley and swung off across the Field of the Lions toward the city of gold. Field of the Lions! What memories it conjured! The trip to Xarator, the holy volcano, into whose fiery pit the kings and queens of Cathne had cast their enemies since time immemorial; the games in the arena; the wild lions which roved the valley of Onthar, giving it its other name - Field of the Lions. Such were the memories that the name inspired.

Boldly the ape-man crossed the valley until he stood before the Bridge of Gold and the two heroic golden lions that flanked its approach. The guard had been watching his progress across the

valley for some time.

"It is Tarzan," one of them had said while the ape-man was still half a mile away; and when he stopped before the gates they all came and welcomed him.

The captain of the guard, a noble whom Tarzan knew well, escorted him to the palace. "Alextar will be glad to know that you have returned," he said. "Had it not been for you, he might not now be king—or alive. Wait here in this anteroom until I get word to Alextar."

The room and its furnishings were of a type common in the palaces of the king and nobles of Cathne. The low ceiling was supported by a series of engaged columns, carved doors inlaid in mosaics of gold and ivory gave to the corridor

and an adjoining apartment, on the stone floor lay some Lion skins and several heavy woolen rugs of simple design, mural decorations depicted battle scenes between the lion men of Cathne and the elephant men of Athne, and above the murals was a frieze of mounted heads—lions, leopards, one huge elephant's head, and several human heads—the heads of warriors, beautifully cured and wearing the ivory head ornaments of nobles of Athne - trophies of the chase and of war.

It was a long time before the captain of the guard returned; and when he did, his face was flushed and troubled and twenty warriors accompanied him. "I am sorry, Tarzan," he said; "but I have

orders to arrest you."

The ape-man looked at the twenty spears surrounding him and shrugged. If he were either surprised or hurt, he did not show it. Once again he was the wild beast trapped by his hereditary enemy, man; and he would not give man the satisfaction of even being asked to explain. They took his weapons from him and led him to a room on the second floor of the palace directly above the guardroom. It was a better cell than that he had first occupied in Cathne when he had been incarcerated in a dark hole with Phobeg, the temple guard who had stepped on god's tail and thus merited death; for this room was large and well lighted by two barred windows.

When they had left him and bolted the door, Tarzan walked to one of the windows and looked down upon one of the palace courtyards for a moment; then he went to the bench that stood against one wall and lay down. Seemingly unconscious of danger, or perhaps contemptuous of it, he slept.

It was dark when he was awakened by the opening of the door of his cell. A man bearing a lighted torch stood in the doorway. The ape- man arose as the other entered, closing the door behind him.

"Tarzan!" he exclaimed; and, crossing the room, he placed a hand on the other's shoulder—the Cathnean gesture of greeting, of friendship, and loyalty.

"I am glad to see you, Gemnon," said the ape-man; "tell me, are Doria and her father and mother well? and your father, Phordos?"

"They are well, but none too happy. Things here are bad again, as you must have conjectured from the treatment accorded you."

"I knew that something must be wrong," admitted the apeman; "but what it was, I didn't know—and don't."

"You soon shall," said Gemnon. "Ours is indeed an unhappy country."

"All countries are unhappy where there are men," observed the ape-man. "Men are the stupidest of beasts. But what has happened here? I thought that with the death of Nemone all your

troubles were over."

"So did we, but we were wrong. Alextar has proved to be weak, cowardly, ungrateful. Almost immediately after ascending the throne he fell under the influence of Tomos and his clique; and you know what that means. We are all in disfavor. Tomos is virtually ruler of Cathne, but as yet he has not dared to destroy us. The warriors and the people hate him, and he knows it. If he goes too far they will rise, and that will be the end of Tomos.

"But tell me about yourself. What brings you again to Cathne?"

"It is a very long story," replied Tarzan. "In the end a young woman was stolen by two white men. She and the

man whom she was to marry were under my protection. I am searching for her. Several days ago I came upon two blacks who had been with the safari of the men who abducted the girl. They described the country in which the safari had been when they deserted. It lay to the southeast of Xarator. That is why I am here. I am going into the country southeast of Xarator in an effort to pick up the trail."

"I think you will not have to search long," said Gemnon. "I believe that I know where your young woman is—not that it will do you or her much good now that you are a prisoner of Tomos. As you must know, he has no love for you."

"What makes you think that you know

where she is?" asked the ape-man.

"Alextar sends me often to the valley of Thenar to raid the Athneans. It is, of course, the work of Tomos, who hopes that I shall be killed. Very recently I was there. The raid was not very successful, as we were too few. Tomos always sends too few, and they are always nobles he fears and would be rid of. We took only one head. On the way out we saw a small party of people who were not Athneans. There were four or five slaves, two white men, and a white woman. The white men were fighting. The woman ran toward us, which made us think she wished to escape the two men she was with. We were going to meet her and take the entire party

prisoners when we saw a large body of Athneans coming down the valley on their war elephants. We were too few to engage them; so we ran for the Pass of the Warriors and escaped. I naturally assume that the Athneans captured the young woman and those with her and that she is now in the City of Ivory; but, as I said before, the knowledge won't help you much now—Tomos has you."

"And what do you think he will do with me? Has he another Phobeg?"

Gemnon laughed. "I shall never forget how you tossed 'the strongest man in Cathne' about and finally threw him bodily into the laps of the audience. Tomos lost his last obol on that fight—another good reason why he has no love

for you. No, I don't think he'll pit you against a man this time - probably a lion. It may even be poison or a dagger—they are surer. But what I am here for tonight is to try to save you. The only trouble is, I have no plan. A friend of mine is captain of the guard tonight. That is how I was able to reach you, but if I were to leave your door unbarred and you escaped his life would not be worth an obol. Perhaps you can think of a plan."

Tarzan shook his head. "I shall have to know Tomos' plan first. Right now the only plan I have is for you to leave before you get caught in here."

"Isn't there anything that I can do, after all that you did for me? There must be something."

"You might leave your dagger with me. It might come in handy. I can hide it under my loin cloth."

They talked for a short time then before Gemnon left, and within a few minutes thereafter Tarzan was asleep. He did not pace his cell, fretting and worrying. His was more the temperament of the wild animal than the man.

19. RETRIBUTION

The sun is an impartial old devil. He shines with equal brilliance upon the just and the banker, upon the day of a man's wedding or upon the day of his death. The great African sun, which, after all, is the same sun that shines on Medicine Hat, shone brilliantly on this new day upon which Tarzan was to die. He was to die because Alextar had decreed it—the suggestion had been Tomos'. The sun even shone upon Tomos; but then the sun is ninety- three million miles away, and that is a long way to see what one is shining on.

They came about eleven o'clock in the morning and took Tarzan from his cell. They did not even bother to bring him

food or water. What need has a man who is about to die for food or drink? He was very thirsty; and perhaps, if he had asked, the guards would have given him water; for after all they were common soldiers and not a king's favorites, and therefore more inclined to be generous and humane. The ape-man, however, asked for nothing. It was not because he was consciously too proud; his pride was something instinctive —it inhibited even a suggestion that he might ask a favor of an enemy.

When he was brought out of the palace grounds onto the avenue, the sight that met his eyes apprised him of the fate that had been decreed for him. There was the procession of nobles and

warriors, the lion drawn chariot of the king, and a single great lion held in leash by eight stalwart blacks. Tarzan had seen all this before, that time that he had been the quarry in the Queen's Hunt. Today he was to be the quarry in the King's Hunt, but today he could expect no such miracle as had saved him from the mighty jaws of Belthar upon that other occasion.

The same crowds of citizens lined the sides of the avenue; and when the procession moved toward the Bridge of Gold and out toward the Field of the Lions, the crowds moved with it. It was a good natured crowd, such as one might see milling toward the gates at a Cub-Giant game or the Army-Navy "classic."

It was no more bloody minded than those who throng to see Man Mountain Dean and the Honorable Mr. Detton or a professional ice hockey game at Madison Square Garden, and who would be so unkind as to suggest that these are looking for trouble and blood? Perish the thought!

They had taken no chances when they brought Tarzan from his cell. Twenty spearmen betokened the respect in which they held him. Now they chained him to Alextar's chariot, and the triumph was under way.

Out upon the Field of the Lions the procession halted and the long gauntlet of warriors was formed down which the quarry was to be pursued by the lion.

The ape-man was unchained, the wagers were being laid as to the point in the gauntlet at which the lion would overtake and drag down its victim, and the hunting lion was being brought up to scent the quarry. Tomos was gloating. Alextar appeared nervous—he was afraid of lions. He would never have gone on a hunt of his own volition. Tarzan watched him. He saw a young man in his late twenties with nervous, roving eyes, a weak chin and a cruel mouth. There was nothing about him to remind one that he was the brother of the gorgeous Nemone. He looked at Tarzan, but his eyes fell before the steady gaze of the ape-man.

"Hurry!" he snapped querulously.

"We are bored."

They did hurry, and in their haste it happened. In a fraction of a second the comparatively peaceful scene was transformed to one of panic and chaos.

By accident one of the blacks that held the hunting lion in leash slipped the beast's collar, and with an angry roar the trained killer struck down those nearest him and charged the line of spearmen standing between him and the crowd of spectators. He was met by a dozen spears while the unarmed citizenry fled in panic, trampling the weaker beneath their feet.

The nobles screamed commands. Alextar stood in his chariot, his knees shaking, and begged some one to save

him. "A hundred thousand drachmas to the man who kills the beast!" he cried. "More! Anything he may ask shall be granted!"

No one seemed to pay any attention to him. All who could were looking after their own safety. As a matter of fact, he was in no danger at the time; for the lion was engaged elsewhere.

The jabbing spears further enraged the maddened carnivore, yet for some reason he did not follow up his attack upon the warriors; instead, he wheeled suddenly and then charged straight for the chariot of the king. Now, indeed, did Alextar have reason to be terrified. He would have run, but his knees gave beneath him so that he sat down upon the

seat of his golden vehicle. He looked about helplessly. He was practically alone. Some of his noble guard had run to join in the attack upon the lion. Tomos had fled in the opposite direction. Only the quarry remained.

Alextar saw the man whip a dagger from his loin cloth and crouch in the path of the charging lion. He heard savage growls roll from human lips. The lion was upon him. Alextar screamed; but, fascinated, his terror-filled eyes clung to the savage scene before him. He saw the lion rise to make the kill, and then what happened happened so quickly that he could scarcely follow it.

Tarzan stooped and dodged beneath the great forepaws outstretched to seize

him; then he closed in and swung to the lion's back, one great arm encircling the shaggy throat. Mingled with the beast's horrid growls were the growls of the man-beast upon his back. Alextar went cold with terror. He tried to run, but he could not. Whether he would or not, he must sit and watch that awful spectacle—he must watch the lion kill the man and then leap upon him. Yet the thing that terrified him most was the growls of the man.

They were rolling upon the ground now in the dust of the Field of the Lions, sometimes the man on top, sometimes the lion; and now and again the dagger of Gemnon flashed in the sunlight, flashed as the blade drove into the side of the

frantic beast. The two were ringed now by eager spearmen ready to thrust a point into the heart of the lion, but no chance presented that did not endanger the life of the man. But at last the end came. With a final supreme effort to escape the clutches of the ape-man, the lion collapsed upon the ground. The duel was over.

Tarzan leaped to his feet. For a moment he surveyed the surrounding warriors with the blazing eyes of a beast of prey at bay upon its kill; then he placed a foot upon the carcass of the bunting lion, raised his face to the heavens, and from his great chest rose the challenge of the bull ape.

The warriors shrank away as that

weird and hideous cry shattered the brief new silence of the Field of the Lions. Alextar trembled anew. He had feared the lion, but he feared the man more. Had he not had him brought here to be killed by the very lion he had himself dispatched? And he was only a beast. His growls and his terrible cry proved that. What mercy could he expect from a beast? The man would kill him!

"Take him away!" he ordered feebly. "Take him away!"

"What shall we do with him?" asked a noble.

"Kill him! Kill him! Take him away!" Alextar was almost screaming now.

"But he saved your life," the noble reminded.

"Huh? What? Oh, well; take him back to his cell. Later I shall know what to do with him. Can't you see I am tired and don't wish to be bothered?" he demanded querulously.

The noble hung his head in shame as he ordered the guard to escort Tarzan back to his cell; and he walked at Tarzan's side, where a noble does not walk except with one of his own caste.

"What you did," he remarked on the way back to the city, "deserves better reward than this."

"I seem to recall hearing him offer anything he wished to the man who killed the lion," said the ape-man. "That and a hundred thousand drachmas."

"Yes, I heard him."

"He seems to have a short memory."

"What would you have asked him."

"Nothing."

The noble looked at him in surprise. "You would ask for nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Is there nothing that you want?"

"Yes; but I wouldn't ask anything of an enemy."

"I am not your enemy."

Tarzan looked at the man, and a shadow of a smile lit his grim visage. "I have had no water since yesterday, nor any food."

"Well," remarked the noble, laughing, "you'll have them both—and without asking for them."

On their return to the city Tarzan was placed in another cell; this one was on the second floor of a wing of the palace that overlooked the avenue. It was not long before the door was unbolted and a warrior entered with food and water. As he placed them on the end of the bench he looked at Tarzan admiringly.

"I was there and saw you kill the king's hunting lion," he said. "It was such a thing as one may see only once in a lifetime. I saw you fight with Phobeg before Nemone, the queen. That, too, was something to have seen. You spared Phobeg's life when you might have killed him, when all were screaming for the kill. After that he would have died for you."

"Yes, I know," replied the ape-man. "Is Phobeg still alive?"

"Oh, very much; and he is still a temple guard."

"If you see him, tell him that I wish him well."

"That I will," promised the warrior. "I shall see him soon. Now I must be going." He came close to Tarzan then, and spoke in a whisper. "Drink no wine, and whoever comes keep your back to the wall and be prepared to fight." Then he was gone.

" 'Drink no wine,'" mused Tarzan. Wine, he knew, was the medium in which poison was customarily administered in Cathne; and if he kept his back to the wall no one could stab

him from behind. Good advice! The advice of a friend who might have overheard something that prompted it. Tarzan knew that he had many friends among the warriors of the City of Gold.

He walked to one of the windows and looked out upon the avenue. He saw a lion striding majestically toward the center of the city, paying no attention to the pedestrians or being noticed by them. It was one of the many tame lions that roam the streets of Cathne by day. Sometimes they fed upon the corpses thrown out to them, but rarely did they attack a living man.

He saw a small gathering of people upon the opposite side of the avenue. They were talking together earnestly,

often glancing toward the palace. Pedestrians stopped to listen and joined the crowd. A warrior came from the palace and stopped and spoke to them; then they looked up at the window where Tarzan stood. The warrior was he who had brought food to Tarzan.

When the crowd recognized the ape-man it commenced to cheer. People were coming from both directions, some of them running. There were many warriors among them. The crowd and the tumult grew. When darkness came torches were brought. A detachment of warriors came from the palace. It was commanded by a noble who sought to disperse the gathering.

Some one yelled, "Free Tarzan!" and

the whole crowd took it up, like a chant. A huge man came, bearing a torch. In its light Tarzan recognized the man as Phobeg, the temple guard. He waved his torch at Tarzan, and cried, "Shame, Alextar! Shame!" and the crowd took that cry up and chanted it in unison.

The noble and the guardsmen sought to quiet and disperse them, and then a fight ensued in which heads were broken and men were slashed with swords and run through with spears. By this time the mob had grown until it filled the avenue. Its temper was nasty, and when once blood was spilled it went berserk. Before it the palace guard was helpless, and those who survived were glad to retreat to the safety of the palace.

Now some one shouted, "Down with Tomos! Death to Tomos!" and the hoarse voice of the mob seized upon this new slogan. It seemed to stir the men to new action, for now in a body they moved down upon the palace gates.

As they hammered and shoved upon the sturdy portals, a man at the outer fringe of the mob shouted, "The hunting lions! Alextar has turned his hunting lions upon us! Death to Alextar!"

Tarzan looked down the avenue toward the royal stables; and there, indeed, came fully fifty lions, held in leash by their keepers. Excited by the vast crowd, irritated by the noise, they tugged at their chains, while the night trembled to their thunderous roars; but

the crowd, aroused now to demonical madness, was undaunted. Yet what could it do against this show of savage force? It started to fall back, slowly, cursing and growling, shouting defiance, calling for Tarzan's release.

Involuntarily, a low growl came from the chest of the apeman, a growl of protest that he was helpless to aid those who would befriend him. He tested the bars in the window at which he stood. To his strength and his weight they bent inward a little; then he threw all that he had of both upon a single bar. It bent inward and pulled from its sockets in the frame, the soft iron giving to his giant strength. That was enough! One by one in quick succession the remaining bars

were dragged out and thrown upon the floor.

Tarzan leaned from the window and looked down. Below him was an enclosed courtyard. It was empty. A wall screened it from the avenue beyond. He glanced into the avenue and saw that the crowd was still falling back, the lions advancing. So intent were all upon the lions that no one saw the ape-man slip through the window and drop into the courtyard. Opposite him was a postern gate, barred upon the inside. Through it he stepped into the avenue just in front of the retreating crowd, between it and the lions.

A dozen saw and recognized him at once; and a great shout went up, a shout

of defiance with a new note in it—a note of renewed confidence and elation.

Tarzan seized a torch from one of the citizens. "Bring your torches!" he commanded. "Torches and spears in the front line!" Then he advanced to meet the lions, and the men with the torches and the spears rushed forward to the front line. All that they had needed was a leader.

All wild animals fear fire. The king of beasts is no exception. The hunting lions of Alextar, king of Cathne, shrank back when blazing torches were pushed into their faces. Their keepers, shouting encouragement, cursing, were helpless. One of the lions, his mane ablaze, turned suddenly to one side, fouling another

lion, causing him to wheel in terror and confusion and bolt back toward the stables. In doing so, they crossed the leashes of other lions, became entangled in them, and tore them from the hands of the keepers. The freed lions hesitated only long enough to maul the keepers that chanced to be in their way, and then they too galloped back along the avenue toward the stables.

Emboldened by this success, the torch bearers fell upon the remaining lions, beating them with fire until the beasts were mad with terror; and Tarzan, in the forefront, urged them on. Pandemonium reigned. The hoarse shouts of the mob mingled with the roars of the carnivores and the screams of stricken men. By now

the lions were frantic with terror. With leashes entangled, keepers down, manes afire, they could stand no more. Those that had not already broken and run, did so now. The mob was for pursuing, but Tarzan stopped them. With raised hand he quieted them after a moment.

"Let the lions go," he counselled. "There is bigger game. I am going after Alextar and Tomos."

"And I am going with you," a big voice boomed beside him.

Tarzan turned and looked at the speaker. It was Phobeg, the temple guard.

"Good!" said the ape-man.

"We are going after Alextar and Tomos!" cried Phobeg.

A roar of approval rose from the crowd. "The gates!" some cried. "To the gates! To the gates!"

"There is an easier way," said Tarzan. "Come!"

They followed him to the postern gate that he knew was unbarred and through it into the palace grounds. Here, Tarzan knew his way well; for he had been here both as a prisoner and a guest of Nemone, the queen.

Alextar and a few of his nobles were dining. The king was frightened; for not only could he hear the shouts of the mob, but he was kept constantly informed of all that was occurring outside the palace, and knew that the hunting lions he had been certain would disperse the rioters

had been turned back and were in flight. He had sent every available fighting man in the palace to the gates when the shouts of the crowd indicated that it was about to storm them, and though assured by his nobles that the mob could not hope to overcome his warriors, even if the gates failed to hold against them, he was still terrified.

"It is your fault, Tomos," he whined. "You said to lock the wild-man up, and now look what has happened! The people want to dethrone me. They may even kill me. What shall I do? What can I do?"

Tomos was in no better state of nerves than the king, for he had heard the people calling for his death. He cast

about for some plan that might save him, and presently he thought of one.

"Send for the wild-man," he said, "and set him free. Give him money and honors. Send word at once to the gates that you have done this."

"Yes, yes," assented Alextar; and, turning to one of his nobles, "Go at once and fetch the wild-man; and you, go to the gates and tell the people what has been done."

"Later," said Tomos " we can offer him a cup of wine."

The first noble crossed the room hurriedly and threw open a door leading into a corridor from which he could ascend to the second floor where Tarzan had been imprisoned, but he did not

cross the threshold. In dismay he stepped back into the room.

"Here is Tarzan now!" he cried.

Alextar and Tomos and the others sprang to their feet as the opened door let in the murmurings of the crowd that followed the ape- man; then Tarzan stepped into the room, and crowding behind him came Phobeg and the others.

Alextar arose to flee, as did Tomos also; but with a bound Tarzan crossed the room and seized them. No noble drew a sword in defense of the king; like rats fleeing a sinking ship they were ready to desert Alextar. So great was his terror, the man was in a state of collapse. He went to his knees and begged for his life.

"You do not understand," he cried. "I had just given orders to release you. I was going to give you money—I will give you money—I will make you a lion-man—I will give you a palace, slaves, everything."

"You should have thought of all this on the Field of the Lions today, now it is too late. Not that I would have what you offer," the ape-man added, "but it might have saved your life temporarily and your throne, too, because then your people would not have grown so angry and disgusted."

"What are you going to do to me?" demanded the king.

"I am going to do nothing to you," replied Tarzan. "What your people do to

you is none of my concern, but if they don't make Thudos king they are fools."

Now Thudos was the first of the nobles, as Tarzan knew; and in his veins flowed better blood from an older line than the king of Cathne could claim. He was a famous old warrior, loved and respected by the people; and when the crowd in the room heard Tarzan they shouted for Thudos; and those in the corridor carried it back out into the avenue, and the word spread through the city.

Alextar heard, and his face went ashen white. He must have gone quite mad, as his sister before him. He came slowly to his feet and faced Tomos. "You have done this to me," he said.

"For years you kept me in prison. You ruined my sister's life—you and M'duze. You have ruined my life, and now you have lost me my throne. But you shall never ruin another life," and with that he drew his sword so quickly that none could stay him and brought the blade down with all his strength on Tomos's skull, cleaving it to the nose.

As the body slumped to his feet he broke into maniacal laughter, while those in the room stood stunned and silent; then, as quickly as he had done before, he placed the point of his sword at his heart and threw himself forward upon it.

Thus died Alextar, the last of the mad rulers of Cathne.

20. ATHNE

The main gate of Athne, the City of Ivory, looks toward the south; for in that direction runs the trail that leads to Cathne the City of Gold, the stronghold of the hereditary enemies of the Athneans. In that direction ride the warriors and the nobles of Athne seeking women and heads and other loot; from that direction come the raiding parties from Cathne, also seeking women and heads and other loot; so the main gate of Athne is strong and well guarded. It is surmounted by two squat towers in which warriors watch by day and by night.

Before the gate is a great level plain where the elephants are trained and the

warriors of Athne drill upon their mighty mounts. It is dusty, and nothing grows there but a sturdy Cynodon; and even that survives the trampling pads of the pachyderms only in scattered patches. The fields of the Athneans lie north of the city, and there the slaves labor; so one might approach the city from the south without glimpsing a sign of human life.

It was mid afternoon. The hot sun beat down upon the watchtowers. The warriors, languid with the heat, gamed at dice—those who were not on watch. Presently one of the latter spoke.

"A man comes from the south," he said.

"How many?" asked one of the

players.

"I said a man. I see but one."

"Then we do not have to give the alarm. But who could come alone to Athne? Is it a man from Cathne?"

"There have been deserters come to us before. Perhaps this is one."

"He is yet too far off to see plainly," said the warrior who had discovered the stranger, "but he does not look like a Cathnean. His dress seems strange to me."

He went to the inner side of the tower then and, leaning over the edge of the parapet, called the captain of the guard. An officer came from the interior of the tower and looked up.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Some one is coming from the south," explained the warrior.

The officer nodded and mounted the ladder leading to the tower's top. The warriors stopped their game then, and all went to the southern parapet to have a look at the stranger. He was nearer now, and they could see that he wore garments strange to them.

"He is no Cathnean," said the officer, "but he is either a fool or a brave man to come thus alone to Athne."

As Stanley Wood neared the gates of Athne he saw the warriors in the watchtowers observing him, and when he came quite close they challenged him but in a language he could not

understand.

"Friend," he said, and raised his hand in the peace sign.

Presently the gate opened and an officer and several warriors came out. They tried to talk with him, and when they found that neither could understand the other they formed about him and escorted him through the gateway.

He found himself at the end of an avenue lined with low buildings occupied by shops. The warriors who had brought him into the city were white as were most of the people on the avenue, although there were some Negroes. Everyone appeared much interested in him; and he was soon surrounded by a large crowd, all talking

at once, pointing, feeling of his clothes and weapons. The latter were soon taken from him by his guard, the officer shouted some commands, and the warriors pushed the people out of the way and started up the avenue with Wood.

He felt very uncomfortable and helpless because of his inability to converse with those about him. There were so many questions he wished to ask. Gonfala might be in this city and yet he might never know it if he could not ask anyone about her who could understand him. He determined that the first thing he must do was to learn the language of these people. He wondered if they would be friendly. The fact that

they were white gave him hope.

Who could they be? Their garb, so different from anything modern, gave him no clue. They might have stepped from the pages of ancient history, so archaic were their weapons and their raiment; but he could not place them exactly. Where did they originate, these strange, rather handsome men and women? How and when did they reach this unknown valley in Africa? Could they be descendants of some Atlantean colonists stranded here after the submergence of their continent?

Vain speculations. No matter who they were, they were here; and he was either their prisoner or their guest—the former, he was inclined to believe. One

did not usually surround a guest by armed warriors.

As they proceeded along the avenue Wood observed more closely the raiment of his escort and of the people whom they passed. The officer in charge was a handsome, black haired fellow who strode along apparently oblivious of those they passed, yet there was nothing offensive about his manner. If there were social castes here, Wood hazarded a safe guess that this man was of the nobility. The headband that confined his hair supported a carved ivory ornament at the center of his forehead, an ornament that was shaped like a concave, curved trowel, the point of which projected above the top of the

man's head and curved forward. He wore wristlets and anklets of long, flat strips of ivory laid close together and fastened around his limbs by leather thongs that were laced through holes piercing the strips near their tops and bottoms. Sandals of elephant hide encasing his feet were supported by leather thongs fastened to the bottoms of his anklets. On each arm, below the shoulder, was an ivory disc upon which was a carved device; about his neck was a band of smaller ivory discs elaborately carved, and from the lowest of these a strap ran down to a leather habergeon, which was also supported by shoulder straps. Depending from each side of his headband was another ivory

disc of large size, above which was a smaller disc, the former covering his ears. Heavy, curved, wedge-shaped pieces of ivory were held, one upon each shoulder, by the same straps that supported his habergeon. He was armed with a dagger and a short sword.

The warriors who accompanied him were similarly garbed, but less elaborately in the matter of carved ivory; and their habergeons and sandals were of coarser leather more roughly fabricated. Upon the back of each was a small shield. The common warriors carried short, heavy spears as well as swords and daggers. From their arms, Wood concluded that what he had first supposed to be ivory ornaments were

definitely protective armour.

The American was conducted to a large, walled enclosure in the center of the city. Here stood the most elaborate buildings he had seen. There was a large central structure and many smaller buildings, the whole set in a parklike garden of considerable beauty which covered an area of several acres.

Just inside the gate was a small building before which lolled a score of warriors. Within, an officer sat at a table; and to him Wood was taken, and here the officer who had brought him evidently made his report. What passed between them Wood could not, of course, understand; but when the first officer left he realized that he had been

delivered into the custody of the other.

While similarly garbed, this second officer did not give the impression of birth or breeding that had been so noticeable in the first. He was a burly, uncouth appearing fellow with much less in his appearance to recommend him than many of the common warriors Wood had seen. When left alone with his prisoner he commenced to shout questions at him; and when he found that Wood could not understand him, or he Wood, he pounded on the table angrily.

Finally he summoned warriors to whom he issued instructions, and once again Wood was taken under escort. This time he was led to an enclosure toward the rear of the grounds not far

from a quite large one-storied building with the interior of which he was destined to become well acquainted.

He was thrust into an enclosure along the north side of which was an open shed in which were some fifty men. A high fence or stockade formed the remaining three sides of the quadrangle, the outside of which was patrolled by warriors; and Wood realized now that he was definitely a prisoner and far from being either an important or favored one, as the other inmates of the stockade were for the most part filthy, unkempt fellows, both white and black.

As Wood approached the enclosure every eye was upon him; and he knew that they were commenting upon him;

and, from the tone of an occasional laugh, judged that he was the butt of many a rough quip. He sensed antagonism and felt more alone than he would have in solitary confinement; and then he heard his name called by some one in the midst of the assemblage in the shed.

Immediately two men separated themselves from the others and came to meet him. They were Spike and Troll. A wave of anger swept through the American as the implication of their presence here pointed them out as the abductors of Gonfala.

His face must have betrayed his emotions as he advanced toward them; for Spike raised his hand in a gesture of

warning.

"Hold on, now," he cried. "Gettin' hostile ain't goin' to get us no place. We're in a Hell of a fix here, an' gettin' hostile ain't goin' to help matters none. It'll be better for all of us if we work together."

"Where's Gonfala?" demanded Wood. "What have you done with her?"

"They took her away from us the day they captured us," said Troll. "We ain't seen her since."

"We understand she's in the palace," said Spike. "They say the big guy here has fell for her. He's got her an' the Gonfal, the dirty bounder."

"What did you steal her for?" Wood demanded. "If either one of you harmed

her—"

"Harm her!" exclaimed Troll. "You don't think I'd never let nobody harm my sister, do you?"

Spike winked behind Troll's back and tapped his forehead. "They ain't nobody harmed her," he assured Wood, "unless it was done after they took her away from us. And for why did we bring 'er along with us? We had to 'ave 'er. We couldn't work the Gonfal without 'er."

"That damned stone!" muttered Wood.

"I think they's a curse on it myself," agreed Spike. "It ain't never brought nobody nothin' but bad luck. Look at me and Troll. Wot we got for our pains? We lost the emerald; now we lost the Gonfal, an' all we do is shovel dirt out o'

the elephant barns all day an' wait to see w'ich way they's goin' to croak us."

As they talked they were surrounded by other prisoners prompted by curiosity to inspect the latest recruit. They questioned Wood; but, as he could not understand them nor they he, they directed their questions upon Spike who replied in a strange jargon of African dialects, signs, and the few words of the Athnean language he had picked up. It was a wholly remarkable means of conveying thoughts, but it apparently served its purpose admirably.

As Wood stood there, the object of their interest, he was rapidly considering the attitude he should assume toward Spike and Troll. The men were

scoundrels of the first water, and could command only his bitterest enmity. For the wrong that they had done Gonfala it seemed to Wood that they deserved death; yet they were the only men here with whom he could talk, the only ones with whom he had any interests in common. His judgment told him that Spike had been right when he said that they should work together. For the time being, then, he would put aside his just anger against them and throw his lot in with them in the hope that in some way they might be of service to Gonfala.

"They wants to know who you are an' where you comes from," said Spike; "an' I told 'em you come from a country a thousand times bigger than Athne an' that

you was a juke or somethin', like their officers. They's one of 'em in here with us. See that big bloke over there standin' with his arms folded?" He pointed to a tall, fine looking fellow who had not come forward with the others. "He's a toff, or I never seen one. He don't never have no truck with these scrubs; but he took a shine to Troll and me, an' is learnin' us his language."

"I'd like to meet him," said Wood, for his first interest now was to learn the language of these people into whose hands fate had thrown him.

"Awright, come on over. Ire ain't a bad bloke. He's wot they calls an elephant man. That's somethin' like bein' a juke at home. They had some sort of a

revolution here a few months ago, an' killed off a lot of these here elephant men, wot didn't escape or join the revolutionists. But this bloke wasn't killed. They say it was because he was a good guy an' everybody liked him, even the revolutionists. He wouldn't join 'em; so they stuck him in here to do chamber work for the elephants. These here revolutionists is like the gangsters in your country. Anyway, they's a bad lot, always makin' trouble for decent people an' stealin' wot they ain't got brains enough to make for themselves. Well, here we are. Valthor, shake hands with my old friend Stanley Wood."

Valthor looked puzzled, but he took Wood's outstretched hand.

"Cripes!" exclaimed Spike. "I'm always forgettin' you don't know no English." Then he couched the introduction in the bastard language he had picked up.

Valthor smiled and acknowledged the introduction.

"He says he's glad to meetcha," translated Spike.

"Tell him it's fifty-fifty," said the American, "and ask him if he'll help me learn his language."

When Spike had translated this speech Valthor smiled and nodded, and there immediately began an association that not only developed into a genuine friendship during the ensuing weeks but gave Wood a sufficient knowledge of the

Athnean language to permit free intercourse with all with whom he came in contact.

During this time he worked with the other slaves in the great elephant stables of Phoros, the dictator who had usurped the crown of Athne after the revolution. The food was poor and insufficient, the work arduous, and the treatment he received harsh; for the officers who were put in charge of the slaves had been men of the lowest class prior to the revolution and found a vent for many an inhibition when they were given a little authority.

During all this time he heard nothing of the fate of Gonfala, for naturally little news of the palace reached the slaves in

the stables. Whether she lived or not, he could not know; and this state of constant uncertainty and anxiety told even more heavily upon him than did the hardships he was forced to undergo.

"If she is beautiful," Valthor had told him, "I think you need have no fear for her life. We do not take the lives of beautiful women—even the Erythra would not do that."

"Who are the Erythra?" asked Wood.

"The men who overthrew the government and placed Phoros on the throne of Zygo, king of Athne."

"She is very beautiful," said Wood. "I wish to God she were not so beautiful."

"Perhaps it will do her no harm. If I know Menofra, and I think I do, your

friend will be safe from the attentions of Phoros at least; and if I know Phoros, he will not let any one else have her if she is very beautiful. He will always wait and hope—hope that something will happen to Menofra."

"And who might Menofra be?"

"Above all else she is a she-devil for jealousy, and she is the wife of Phoros."

This was slight comfort, but it was the best that was vouchsafed Wood. He could only wait and hope. There was little upon which to base a plan of action. Valthor had told him that there might be a counterrevolution to unseat Phoros and return Zygo to the throne; but in the slaves' compound there was little information upon which to base even a

conjecture as to when, if ever, this might take place; as there was no means of communication between those confined there and Zygo's sympathizers in the city, while Zygo and most of his loyal nobles and retainers were hiding in the mountains to which they had escaped when revolution overwhelmed the city.

Among other duties that had fallen to the lot of Wood was the exercising of the elephant that was his particular charge. He had been chosen for this work, along with Valthor, Spike, and Troll, because of his greater intelligence than the ordinary run of slaves in the compound. He had learned quickly, and rode almost daily on the plain south of the city under a heavy escort of warriors.

They had returned to the stables one day from the field after the exercise period, which was always early in the morning, and were brushing and washing their huge mounts, when they were ordered to remount and ride out.

On the way to the plain they learned from the accompanying warriors that they were being sent out to capture a wild elephant that had been damaging the fields.

"They say he's a big brute and ugly," offered one of the warriors, "and if he's as bad as all that we won't all of us come back."

"Under Zygo, the nobles rode out to capture wild elephants, not slaves," said Valthor.

The warrior rode his mount closer to the Athnean noble. "They are all too drunk to ride," he said, lowering his voice. "If they were just a little drunk they might ride. If they were not drunk at all they would not have the nerve. We warriors are sick of them. Most of us would like to ride again under real elephant men like your nobleness."

"Perhaps you will," said Valthor, "—if you have the nerve."

"Hi-yah!" shouted a warrior ahead of them.

"They've sighted him," Valthor explained to Wood, who was riding at his side.

Presently they too saw the quarry emerging from a bamboo forest at the

edge of the plain.

Valthor whistled. "He's a big brute, and if he's as ugly as they say we should have some real sport. But it's murder to send inexperienced slaves against him. Watch out for yourself, Wood. Just keep out of his way, no matter what the guards tell you to do. Make believe you can't control your elephant. Look at him! He's coming right for us. He's a bad one all right - not a bit afraid of us either, by Dyaus."

"I never saw a larger one," said Wood.

"Nor I," admitted Valthor, "though I've seen many an elephant in my time. He's got a blemish though -look at that tusk. It's much darker than the other. If it

weren't for that he'd make a king's elephant all right."

"What are we supposed to do?" asked Wood. "I don't see how we could ever capture that fellow if he didn't want us to."

"They'll have some females ridden close to him, and try to work him gently toward the city and into the big corral just inside the gate. Look at that, now!"

Up went the big elephant's trunk, and he trumpeted angrily. It was evident that he was about to charge. The officer in command shouted orders to the slaves to ride the females toward him, but the officer did not advance. Like the other three with him, he was an Erythros and not of the noble class. Not having their

pride or their code of honor, he could order others into danger while he remained in comparative safety.

Some of the slaves moved forward, but with no great show of enthusiasm; then the great beast charged. He barged right through the line of advancing females, scattering them to right and left, and charged for the bull ridden by the officer in command.

Screaming commands, the officer sought to turn his mount and escape; but the bull he rode was a trained fighting elephant which knew little about running away; besides, his harem of cows was there; and he was not going to relinquish that to any strange bull without a battle; so, torn between his natural inclinations

and his habit of obedience to the commands of his rider, he neither faced the oncoming bull nor turned tail toward him; but swung half way around, broadside, in his indecision. And in this position the great stranger struck him with almost the momentum of a locomotive run amok.

Down he went, pitching the officer heavily to the ground; but the fellow was up instantly and running—by far the stupidest thing he could have done; for almost any animal will pursue a thing that flees.

Hoarse screams for help mingled with the trumpeting of the wild bull as the latter bore down upon his fleeing victim. Valthor urged the female he rode into a

trot in an effort to head off the charge and distract the bull's attention, and Wood followed behind him; just why, he could not have explained.

Valthor was too late. The bull overtook the terrified man, tossed him three times, and then trampled him into the dust of the plain until he was only a darker spot on the barren ground.

It was then that Valthor and Wood arrived. Wood expected nothing less than a repetition of the scene he had just witnessed with either himself or Valthor as the victim, but nothing of the kind happened.

The Athnean rode his cow quietly close to the great bull, which stood complacently switching its tail, all the

madness having apparently passed out of him with the killing of his victim; and Wood, following the example of Valthor, closed in gently on the other side.

All this time Valthor was chanting in a low, sing-song monotone a wordless song used by the elephant men of Athne to soothe the great beasts in moods of nervousness or irritation; and now to the cadence of his chant he added words of instruction to Wood so that the two might work in harmony to bring the wild bull to the city and into the corral.

Between the two cows, which knew their parts well, the bull was guided to captivity; while the officers, the warriors, and the slaves trailed behind,

happy and relieved that they had not been called upon to risk their lives.

Valthor already held the respect of his fellow prisoners as well as of the warriors who guarded them, and now Wood took his place as a person of importance among them.

That word of the manner of the capture of the wild elephant had reached the palace Wood had proof the following day when an officer and a detail of warriors came to take him into the presence of Phoros.

"He wishes to see the fellow who helped Valthor capture the rogue," said the officer.

Valthor leaned close and whispered, "He has some other reason. He would

not send for you just for that."

21. PHOROS

Night was creeping stealthily out of its lair in the east, bringing its following of mystery and dark deeds and strange beasts that are not seen by day. Though the sun still colored the western sky with a fading tinge of red it was already dark and gloomy in The Pass of the Warriors that leads from the valley of Onthar to the valley of Thenar.

In Onthar is Cathne, the City of Gold; in Thenar is Athne, the City of Ivory; in The Pass of the Warriors was Tarzan of the Apes. Alone, he was going to Athne seeking a clue to the whereabouts of Gonfala.

Gemnon had tried to dissuade him from going without an escort; and so had

Thudos, whom he had helped to seat upon the throne of Cathne.

"If you are not back within a reasonable time," Thudos told him, "I shall send an army to Athne to bring you back."

"If I am not back in a reasonable time," suggested the ape-man, "it may be because I shall be dead."

"Perhaps," agreed Thudos, "but they will not kill you unless they have to. They are always hard pressed to find enough slaves to carry on the work of the city, and they'd never destroy such a fine specimen as you. Like us, they also need men to fight in the arena."

"You would like that better than scrubbing elephants," said Gemnon,

smiling.

Tarzan shook his head. "I do not like to fight or to kill, and there are worse things than scrubbing elephants."

And so he had gone, choosing to travel so that he would not have to cross the valley of Thenar by day, as he wished to approach and reconnoiter Athne unseen. That both valleys, especially Onthar, harbored many wild lions was a hazard he had to accept; but, except for the actual crossing of Thenar, he could take advantage of the protection of forests practically all of the way.

The hazard was great, for the lions of Thenar were not all ordinary lions. Many of them were escaped hunting lions of Cathne which had been often fed

with human flesh and trained to hunt men. For generations they had been bred for speed and endurance; so that in all the world there were no such formidable beasts of prey as these.

As night fell, Tarzan heard the roars of the great cats in the valley he had quitted. With every sense alert he passed through The Pass of the Warriors and entered the valley of Thenar. As yet he had heard no lion roar coming from that direction. The wind was in his face. It brought no scent spoor of Numa, but he knew that it was carrying his scent back in the direction of the hunting lions of Cathne.

He increased his speed, for though he had killed many a lion he knew that no

living creature could hope to survive an attack by these beasts that often hunted in packs.

He was out now upon the open plain of Thenar. He could still hear the roaring of the lions in Onthar. Suddenly they took on a new note. He knew it well. It told him that they had picked up the trail of some creature and marked it as their quarry. Was it his trail?

A full moon rose above the mountains ahead of him, lighting the floor of the valley, revealing the dark strip of forest far ahead. The savage voices of the lions grew louder, reverberating in the canyon called The Pass of the Warriors, through which he had just come; then Tarzan knew that the hunting lions of Cathne

were on his trail.

You or I could not have counted the lions by their voices; but to Tarzan the distinctive quality or character of each voice was discernible, and thus he knew that five lions were loping relentlessly to the kill. Once more he quickened his pace.

He judged that the lions were about a mile in the rear of him, the forest about three miles ahead. If no obstacle intervened he could reach the forest ahead of the lions; but he was crossing an unfamiliar terrain known to him only by the descriptions given him by Gemnon and Thudos, and he knew that there might easily be some peculiarity of the topography of the floor of the valley

that would delay him—a deep dry wash with overhanging banks of soft dirt would do it.

On he trotted, his great chest rising and falling regularly, his heartbeats scarcely accelerated by the exertion; but the lions came even more swiftly. He knew from the sound of their voices that they were gaining on him. Knowing them, even as he did, he marvelled at their endurance, so unusual in lions; and was amazed at the results that could be attained by careful breeding. Now, for the first time, he broke into a run; for he knew that the moment they sighted him they would come on much faster than he could run for any great distance. It then would be just a question as to which

could maintain the greatest speed for the longest distance.

No washes intervened nor other obstacle, and he came at last to within half a mile of the forest with sufficient distance and time to spare to assure him a reasonable margin of safety; then the unforeseen occurred. From the shadows of the forest a great lion stepped into view before him.

Those who would live long in the jungle must think quickly. Tarzan weighed the entire situation without losing a stride. The forest was his goal; one lion was less of a menace than five, and the one lion was all that stood between him and the forest. With a savage growl he charged the lion.

The beast had started to trot toward him; but now he stopped hesitant. Would he hold his ground or would he break? Much depended upon whether he was an ordinary wild lion or a trained hunting lion. From the fact that he hesitated instead of carrying through his charge Tarzan guessed that he was the former.

The five lions from Onthar were gaining rapidly now. In the bright moonlight they must have caught sight of their quarry. Their voices proclaimed that. Now they were charging. Had they been wild lions they would have hunted in silence once their prey was marked, but the earth fairly trembled to their roars. Tarzan thought that they wasted too much energy thus, but he knew that

they were trained to it so that the huntsmen could follow them even when they were out of sight.

Tarzan saw that the lion facing him was wavering. He was probably surprised at the tactics of the man-thing, at a quarry that charged him; and the roars of the five lions doubtless added to his nervousness. Only fifty yards separated them, and the lion had not made up his mind, when from the chest of the ape-man burst the savage challenge of the bull ape. It was the last straw—the lion wheeled and bounded back into the forest. A moment later Tarzan swarmed up a friendly tree as five angry lions leaped to seize him.

Finding a comfortable resting place

the ape-man broke off dead branches and threw them at the lions, calling them Dango, Ungo, Horta, and other insulting names, ascribing vile tastes and habits to themselves and their ancestors. A quiet, almost taciturn, man, he was as adept in the use of the jungle billingsgate he had acquired from the great apes among which he had been raised. Perhaps the lions understood him; perhaps they did not. Who knows? Anyhow, they were very angry; and leaped high in air in vain efforts to reach him, which only made them angrier. But Tarzan had no time to waste upon them; and, keeping to the trees, he swung away toward the north and Athne.

He had timed himself to reach the city

while it slept, and knew how to approach it from information given him by Gemnon and Thudos who had often visited Athne during the yearly truces when the two cities traded with one another. He passed half way around the city to the north side, which was less well guarded than the south.

Here he faced the greatest danger of discovery, for he must scale the wall in the light of a full moon. He chose a place far from the north gate, and crept toward the city on his belly through the garden stuff growing in the cultivated fields. He stopped often to look and listen, but he saw no sign of life on the city wall.

When he had come to within about a hundred feet of the wall, he arose and

ran toward it at top speed, scaling it like a cat until his fingers closed upon the coping; then he drew himself up; and, lying flat, looked down upon the other side. A shedlike building abutted against the wall, and beyond this was a narrow street. Tarzan slipped to the roof of the shed, and a moment later dropped into the street.

Instantly a head was thrust from an open window and a man's voice demanded, "What are you doing there? Who are you?"

"I am Daimon," replied Tarzan in a husky whisper. Instantly the head was withdrawn and the window slammed shut. Tarzan, quick witted, had profited by something that Gemnon had told him

—that the Athneans believed in a bad spirit that was abroad at night seeking whom it might kill. To Daimon they attributed all unexplained deaths, especially those that occurred at night.

Following the directions he had received, Tarzan moved through the narrow, shadowed streets toward the center of the city, coming at last to the walled enclosure where the palace stood. He had been told that here he would find guards only at the north and south gates. Other gates, if there were any, were securely fastened and seldom used.

As Tarzan approached the enclosure from the west, he encountered no gate and no guards. The wall was low

compared with that which surrounded the city, and so proved no obstacle to the ape- man. Once over the wall he found himself in a garden of trees, shrubs, and flowers, a lovely place of soft, sweet fragrances; but for these he had no senses at the moment—he was searching for other scents than those of flowers.

Winding among small buildings and other gardens he came to a large building that he knew must be the palace; and here, to his surprise, he saw several rooms brilliantly lighted. He had thought that all would be asleep with the exception of the guards.

A number of old trees grew in the garden court that flanked this side of the palace, and in the security of their

shadows Tarzan crossed to the building and looked in at one of the windows. Here he saw a large banquet hall down the length of which ran a long table at which a hundred or more men were seated, most of them in various stages of drunkenness.

There was much loud talk and laughter, and a couple of fights were in progress in which no one took any interest except the contestants. The men were, for the most part, coarse, common appearing fellows, not at all like the nobles of Cathne. The man at the head of the table was quite bestial in appearance. He pounded on the table with a great ham of a fist, and bellowed more like a bull than a man.

Slaves were coming and going, bringing more drink and removing empty goblets and dishes. Some of the guests were still eating, but most of them concentrated their energies and their talents upon the principal business of the evening—drinking.

"Didn't I tell you to fetch her?" shouted the large man at the head of the table, addressing the assemblage in general.

"Told who to bring what?" inquired another seated farther toward the foot of the table.

"The girl," shouted the large man.

"What girl, Photos?"

"THE girl," replied Phoros drunkenly.

"Oh THE girl," said some one.

"Well, why don't you bring her?"

"Bring who?"

"Bring THE girl," repeated Phoros.

"Who bring her?" asked another.

"You bring her," ordered Phoros.

The fellow addressed shook his head. "Not me," he said. "Menofra'd have the hide off me."

"She won't know. She's gone to bed," Phoros assured him.

"I ain't takin' any chances. Send a slave."

"You'd better not send anyone," counselled a man sitting next to Phoros, one who did not seem as drunk as the others. "Menofra would cut her heart out

and yours too."

"Who's king?" demanded Phoros.

"Ask Menofra," suggested the other.

"I'm king," asserted Phoros. He turned to a slave. The fellow happened to be looking in another direction. Phoros threw a heavy goblet at him, which barely missed his head. "Here, you! Go fetch the girl."

"What girl, master?" asked the trembling slave.

"There's only one girl in Athne, you son of a wart hog! Go get her!"

The slave hurried from the room. Then there ensued a discussion as to what Menofra would do if she found out. Phoros announced that he was tired of

Menofra, and that if she didn't mind her own business he'd take her apart and forget to put her together again. He thought this such a good joke that he laughed immoderately and fell off his bench, but some of the others seemed nervous and looked apprehensively toward the doorway.

Tarzan watched and listened. He felt disgust and shame—shame, because he belonged to the same species as these creatures. Since infancy he had been fellow of the beasts of the forest and the plain, the lower orders; yet he had never seen them sink to the level of man. Most of them had courage and dignity of a sort; seldom did they stoop to buffoonery, with the possible exception

of the lesser monkeys, who were most closely allied to man. Had he been impelled to theorize he would doubtless have reversed Darwin's theory of evolution. But his mind was occupied with another thought—who was "THE girl"? He wondered if she might not be Gonfala, but further speculation was discouraged by the coming of a large, masculine looking woman who strode into the room followed by the slave who had just been dispatched to bring the girl. So this was the girl! Tarzan looked at her in mild astonishment. She had large, red hands, a whiskered mole on her chin, and quite a noticeable mustache. In other respects she was quite as unlovely.

"What's the meaning of this?" she demanded, glaring at Phoros. "Why did you send for me at this time in the morning, you drunken lout?"

Phoros' jaw dropped; he looked wildly about at his companions as though seeking help; but he got none. Each of those who had not passed out completely was engaged in trying to appear dignified and sober.

"My dear," explained Phoros ingratiatingly, "we wanted you to join us and help celebrate."

" 'My dear' nothing!" snapped the woman; then her eyes narrowed. "Celebrate what?" she demanded.

Phoros looked about him helplessly. Bleary eyed and belching, he looked

foolishly at the man sitting next him. "What were we celebrating, Kandos?"

Kandos fidgeted, and moistened his dry lips with his tongue.

"Don't lie to me!" screamed the woman. "The truth is that you never intended to send for me."

"Now, Menofra!" exclaimed Phoros in what was intended to be a soothing tone.

The woman wheeled on the frightened slave behind her. "Were you told to fetch me?" she demanded.

"Oh, great queen! I thought he meant you," whimpered the slave, dropping to his knees.

"What did he say to you?" Menofra's

voice was raised almost to a shriek.

"He said 'Go fetch the girl!' and when I asked him what girl, he said, 'There's only one girl in Athne, you son of a wart hog!'"

Menofra's eyes narrowed menacingly. "The only girl in Athne, eh? I know who you sent for—it's that yellow haired hussy that was brought in with the two men. You think you been fooling me, don't you? Well, you haven't. You just been waiting for your chance, and tonight you got drunk enough to muster up a little courage. Well, I'll attend to you; and when I get through with you, I'll fix the only girl in Athne. I'll send her to you, if there's anything left of you—I'll send her to you in pieces." She wheeled

on the subdued and frightened company. "Get out of here, you swine —all of you!" Then she strode to the head of the table and seized Phoros by an ear. "And you come with me—king!" The title bristled with contumely.

22. MENOFRA

Tarzan left the window and walked along the side of the building, looking up at the second floor. There, he surmised, would be the sleeping chambers. In some room above, doubtless, Gonfala was confined. Several vines clambered up the wall. He tested them, trying to find one that might bear his weight; and at last he came to some old ivy that had a stem that was as large around as his arm, a gnarled old plant that clung to the rough wall with a million aerial roots. He tried it with his weight; then, satisfied that it would bear him, he started to ascend toward a window directly above.

Close beside the open window he

paused and listened, his sensitive nostrils classifying the odors that came from the chamber. A man slept within. Heavy breathing told him the man was asleep. Its stertorousness and odor told him that the fellow was drunk. Tarzan threw a leg across the sill and stepped into the room. He moved noiselessly, feeling his way through the darkness. He took his time, and gradually his eyes became accustomed to the blackness of the interior. He had the gift, that some men have in common with nocturnal animals, of being able to see in the dark better than other men. Perhaps it had been developed to a higher state of efficiency by necessity. One who can see by night in the jungle has a better chance

of survival.

Soon he identified a darker mass on the floor near a side wall as the sleeper. That, however, was not difficult; the man's snores screamed his location. Tarzan crossed to the opposite end of the room and found a door. His fingers searched for lock or bolt and found the latter. It squeaked a little as he drew it back; but he had no fear that it would arouse the man, nor did it. The door opened into a dimly lighted corridor—an arched corridor along which were other doors and the arched openings into other corridors.

Tarzan heard voices. They were raised in angry altercation, and there were sounds of scuffling. The voices

were those of Menofra and Phoros. Presently there was a loud scream followed by a thud as of a body falling; then silence. Tarzan waited, listening. He heard a door open farther up the corridor in the direction from which the voices had come; then he stepped back into the room behind him, leaving the door slightly ajar so that he could look out into the corridor. He saw a man step from a doorway and approach along the corridor. It was Phoros. He was staggering a little, and in his right hand he carried a bloody short-sword. His expression was bleary-eyed and vacuous. He passed the door from which Tarzan watched and turned into another corridor; then the ape-man stepped into

the passageway and followed him.

When he reached the head of the corridor into which Phoros had turned, Tarzan saw the Athnean fumbling with a key at the lock of a door only a short distance ahead; and he waited until Phoros had unlocked the door and entered the room beyond; then the ape-man followed at a run. He wished to reach the door before Phoros could lock it from within, if such were his intention; but it was not. In fact, in his drunken carelessness, he did not even close the door tightly; and he had little more than entered the room when Tarzan pushed the door open and followed him.

The ape-man had moved with utter silence; so that though he stood just

behind Phoros the latter was unaware of his presence. The room was lighted by a single cresset—a wick burning in a shallow vessel half filled with fat. Lying in one corner of the room, bound hand and foot, was Gonfala; in another corner, similarly trussed, was Stanley Wood. They both saw and recognized Tarzan simultaneously, but he raised a finger to his lips to caution them to silence. Phoros stood leering at his two prisoners, his gross body swaying unsteadily.

"So the lovers are still here," he taunted. "But why do they stay so far apart? Here, you stupid fool, watch me; I'll show you how to make love to the girl. She's mine now. Menofra, the old

Hellcat, is dead. Look at this sword! See the blood? That's Menofra's blood. I just killed her." He pointed the sword at Wood. "And just as soon as I've shown you how a lover should behave I'm going to kill you."

He took a step toward Gonfala, and as he did so steel thewed fingers gripped his sword wrist, the weapon was torn from his hand, and he was thrown heavily to the floor.

"Quiet, or I kill," a low voice whispered.

Phoros looked into the cold grey eyes of an almost naked giant who stood above him with his own sword pointed at his breast. "Who are you?" he quavered. "Don't kill me. Tell me what

you want. You can have anything if you'll not kill me."

"I'll take what I want. Don't move." Tarzan crossed to Wood and cut the bonds that held him. "Release Gonfala," he said, "and when you have done that bind this man and gag him."

Wood worked quickly. "How did you get here?" Tarzan asked him.

"I was searching for Gonfala. I followed her trail to this city; then they took me prisoner. Today Phoros sent for me. In some way, probably through some of his people overhearing Spike and Troll, he got the idea that I knew how to work the Gonfal. Spike had been bragging about its powers, but neither he nor Troll had been able to do anything

with it. They had also told some one that Gonfala was the goddess of the big stone, and so he brought us together and told us to show him some magic. Our meeting was so sudden and unexpected that we gave ourselves away—it must have been apparent to any one that we were in love. Anyway, Phoros got it; maybe because he was jealous. He has been trying to make love to Gonfala ever since she was captured, but he was too scared of his wife to go very far with it."

When Gonfala was liberated Wood trussed up Phoros, and as he was completing the work they heard the sound of shuffling footsteps in the corridor. They all stood, tense and silent, waiting. Would the footsteps pass

the door, or was some one coming to this room? Nearer and nearer they came; then they paused outside, as though he who walked was listening. The door was pushed open, revealing a horrible apparition. Gonfala muffled a scream; Wood recoiled; only Tarzan showed no emotion. It was Menofra. A horrible wound gashed her head and one shoulder. She was covered with blood; and reeled with weakness from the loss of it, but she still retained her wits.

Stepping quickly back into the corridor, she closed the door and turned the key that the drunken Phoros had left in the lock; then they heard her crying loudly for the guard.

"We seem to be nicely trapped,"

commented Wood.

"But we have a hostage," Tarzan reminded him.

"What a horrible sight," said Gonfala, shuddering and nodding in the direction of the corridor. "How do you suppose it happened?"

The ape-man jerked a thumb in the direction of Phoros. "He could tell you. I imagine that he's rather glad that we were here with him."

"What a sweet couple," said Wood, "but I imagine there are a lot of married couples who would like to do that to one another if they thought they could get away with it."

"What a terrible thing to say, Stanlee," cried Gonfala. "Do you think

that we would be like that?"

"Oh, we're different," Wood assured her; "these people are beasts."

"Not beasts," Tarzan corrected. "They are human beings, and they act like human beings."

"Here comes the guard," said Wood.

They could hear men approaching at a run along the corridor; they heard their exclamations when they saw Menofra and their excited questioning.

"There is a wild man in there," Menofra told them. "He has set the two prisoners free, and they have bound and gagged the king. They may kill him. I don't want them to; I want him for myself. Go in and capture the strangers and bring the king to me."

Tarzan stood close to the door. "If you come in without my permission," he shouted, "I will kill the king."

"It looks like you were on a spot, Phoros," said Wood, "no matter what happens. If Menofra gets you she'll hand you plenty." Phoros could make no reply because of the gag.

The warriors and the queen were arguing in the corridor. They could come to no decision as to what to do. The three prisoners in the room were no better off. Tarzan was puzzled. He told Wood as much.

"I knew an Athnean noble well," be said, "and through him I was led to believe that these people were rather noble and chivalrous, not at all like

those I have seen here. There was a rumor in Cathne that there had been some change in government here, but the natural assumption was that another faction of the nobility had come into power. If these people are of the nobility, our friend Spike must be at least an archbishop."

"They are not of the nobility," said Wood. "They are from the lowest dregs of society. They overthrew the king and the nobility a few months ago. I guess they are pretty well ruining the country."

"That accounts for it," said Tarzan. "Well, I guess my friend, Valthor, can't help me much."

"Valthor?" exclaimed Wood. "Do you know him? Why say, he's the only friend

I have here."

"Where is he? He'll help us," said Tarzan.

"Not where he is, he won't. He and I were fellow slaves at the elephant stables."

"Valthor a slave!"

"Yes, and lucky to be that," Wood assured him. "They killed off all the other members of the nobility they caught —except a few that joined 'em. The rest escaped into the mountains. Every one liked Valthor so much that they didn't kill him."

"It is a good thing that I didn't take any chances when I came here," remarked the ape-man. "They'd heard these rumors in Cathne; so I came in after dark to

investigate before I tried to find Valthor or made myself known."

There was a rap on the door. "What do you want?" asked Tarzan.

"Turn the king over to the queen and we won't harm you," said a voice.

Phoros commenced to wriggle and squirm on the floor, shaking his head vigorously. Tarzan grinned.

"Wait until we talk it over," he said; then, to Wood, "Take the gag out of his mouth."

As soon as the gag was removed Phoros choked and spluttered before he could articulate an understandable word, so frightened and excited was he. "Don't let her have me," he finally managed to say. "She'll kill me."

"I think you have it coming to you," said Wood.

"Maybe we can reach a bargain," suggested Tarzan.

"Anything, anything you want," cried Phoros.

"Our freedom and a safe escort to The Pass of the Warriors," demanded the ape-man.

"It is yours," promised Phoros.

"And the big diamond," added Wood.

"And the big diamond," agreed Phoros.

"How do we know you'll do as you agree?" asked Tarzan.

"You have my word for it," Phoros assured him.

"I don't think it's worth much. I'd have to have something more."

"Well, what?"

"We'd want to take you with us and keep you close to me where I could kill you if the bargain were not kept."

"That too. I agree to everything, only don't let her get her hands on me."

"There is one more thing," added Tarzan. "Valthor's freedom."

"Granted."

"And now that you've got all that arranged," said Wood, "how in Hell are we going to get out of here with that old virago holding the fort with the guard out there? Have you ever been to a coronation, Tarzan?"

The ape-man shook his head.

"Well, take Phorsie out there, my friend, and you'll see a king crowned."

"I don't know what you're talking about, but I don't intend taking him out of here until I have some assurance that his promises will be carried out." He turned to Phoros. "What can you suggest? Will the guard obey you?"

"I don't know. They're afraid of her. Everybody's afraid of her, and Dyaus knows they have reason."

"We seem to be getting nowhere with great facility," commented Wood.

Tarzan crossed to Phoros and removed his bonds. "Come to the door," he directed, "and explain my proposition to your wife."

Phoros approached the door. "Listen, dear," he said ingratiatingly.

"Listen nothing, you beast, you murderer," she screamed back at him. "Just let me get my hands on you—that's all I ask."

"But darling, I was drunk. I didn't mean to do it. Listen to reason. Let me take these people out of the country with an escort of warriors and they won't kill me."

"Don't 'darling' me, you, you—"

"But, my own little Menofra, listen to reason. Send for Kandos, and let us all talk it over."

"Go in there, you cowards, and drag them out," Menofra shouted to the guardsmen.

"Stay out there!" screamed Phoros. "I am king. Those are the king's commands."

"I'm queen," yelled Menofra. "I tell you to go in and rescue the king."

"I'm all right," shouted Phoros. "I don't want to be rescued."

"I think," said the officer of the guard, "that the best thing to do is summon Kandos. This is no matter for a simple officer of the guard to decide."

"That's right," encouraged the king; "send for Kandos"

They heard the officer dispatch a warrior to summon Kandos, and they heard the queen grumbling and scolding and threatening.

Wood stepped to the door. "Menofra!" he called. "I have an idea that perhaps you hadn't thought of. Let Phoros accompany us to the border; then when he comes back you'll have him. That will save a lot of trouble for all concerned."

Phoros looked troubled. He hadn't thought of that either. Menofra did not answer immediately; then she said, "He might trick me in some way."

"How can he trick you?" demanded Wood.

"I don't know, but he'd find a way. He has been tricking people all his life."

"He couldn't. You'd have the army. What could he do?"

"Well, perhaps it's worth thinking

about," admitted the queen; "but I don't know that I could wait. I'd like to get my hands on him right now. Did you see what he did to me?"

"Yes. It was terrible," sympathized Wood.

It was not long before the warrior returned with Kandos. Menofra greeted him with a volley of vituperation as soon as he came in sight, and it was some time before he could quiet her and get the story. Then he led her away where none could overhear, and they whispered together for sometime. When they had finished, Kandos approached the door.

"It is all arranged," he announced. "The queen has given her permission.

The party will start shortly after sunrise. It is still dark, and the trail is not safe by night. Just as soon as you and the escort have had your breakfasts you may go in peace. Have we your promise that you will not harm the king."

"You have," said Tarzan.

"Very well," said Kandos. "I am going now to arrange for the escort."

"And don't forget our breakfasts!" called Wood.

"I most certainly will not," promised Kandos.

23. SENTENCED

Stanley Wood was in high spirits. "It commences to look as though our troubles were about over," he said. He laid a hand on Gonfala's tenderly. "You've been through a lot, but I can promise you that when we get to civilization you'll be able to understand for the first time in your life what perfect peace and security mean."

"Yes," said Tarzan, "the perfect peace and security of automobile accidents, railroad wrecks, aeroplane crashes, robbers, kidnapers, war, and pestilence."

Wood laughed. "But no lions, leopards, buffaloes, wild elephants, snakes, nor tsetse flies, not to mention

shiftas and cannibals."

"I think," said Gonfala, "that neither one of you paints a very pretty picture. You make one almost afraid of life. But after all it is not so much peace and security that I want as freedom. You know, all my life I have been a prisoner except for the few short weeks after you took me away from the Kaji and before Spike and Troll got me. Perhaps you can imagine then how much I want freedom, no matter how many dangers I have to take along with it. It seems the most wonderful thing in the world."

"It is," said Tarzan.

"Well, love has its points, too," suggested Wood.

"Yes," agreed Gonfala, "but not

without freedom."

"You're going to have them both," Wood promised.

"With limitations, you'll find, Gonfala," warned Tarzan with a smile.

"Just now I'm interested in food," said Gonfala.

"And I think it's coming." Wood nodded toward the door. Some one was fumbling with the key. Presently the door opened far enough to permit two pots to be shoved inside the room; then it was closed with a bang.

"They are taking no chances," commented Wood as he crossed the room and carried the two vessels back to his companions. One contained a thick stew; the other, water.

"What, no hardware?" inquired Wood.

"Hardware? What is that?" asked Gonfala; "something to eat?"

"Something to eat with—forks, spoons. No forks, no spoons, no Emily Post—how embarrassing!"

"Here," said Tarzan, and handed his hunting knife to Gonfala. They took turns spearing morsels of meat with it and drinking the juice and the water directly from the pots, sharing the food with Phoros.

"Not half bad," commented Wood. "What is it, Phoros?"

"Young wether. There is nothing tastier. I am surprised that Menofra did not send us old elephant hide to chew

on. Perhaps she is relenting." Then he shook his head. "No, Menofra never relents—at least not where I am concerned. That woman is so ornery she thinks indigestion is an indulgence."

"My!" said Gonfala, drowsily. "I am so sleepy I can't keep my eyes open."

"Same here," said Wood.

Phoros looked at the others and yawned. Tarzan stood up and shook himself.

"You, too?" asked Phoros.

The ape-man nodded. Phoros' lids drooped. "The old she-devil," he muttered. "We've all been drugged—maybe poisoned."

Tarzan watched his companions fall

into a stupor one by one. He tried to fight off the effects of the drug. He wondered if any of them would awaken again; then he sagged to one knee and rolled over on the floor, unconscious.

* * * * *

The room was decorated with barbaric splendor. Mounted heads of animals and men adorned the walls. There were crude murals done in colors that had faded into softness, refined by age. Skins of animals and rugs of wool covered the floor, the benches, and a couch on which Menofra lay, her body raised on one elbow, her bandaged head supported by one huge palm. Four warriors stood by the only door; at Menofra's feet lay Gonfala and Wood,

still unconscious; at her side stood Kandos; at the foot of the couch, bound and unconscious, lay Phoros.

"You sent the wild-man to the slave pen as I directed?" asked Menofra.

Kandos nodded. "Yes, queen; and because he seemed so strong I had him chained to a stanchion."

"That is well," said Menofra. "Even a fool does the right thing occasionally."

"Thank you, queen," said Kandos.

"Don't thank me; you make me sick. You are a liar and a cheat and a traitor. Phoros befriended you, yet you turned against him. How much more quickly would you turn against me who has never befriended you and whom you hate! But you won't, because you are a

coward; and don't even think of it. If I ever get the idea for a moment that you might be thinking of turning against me I'll have your head hanging on this wall in no time. The man is coming to."

They looked down at Wood whose eyes were opening slowly and whose arms and legs were moving a little as though experimenting with the possibilities of self-control. He was the first to regain consciousness. He opened his eyes and looked about him. He saw Gonfala lying beside him. Her rising and falling bosom assured him that she lived. He looked up at Kandos and the queen.

"So this is the way you keep your word?" he accused; then he looked about for Tarzan. "Where is the other?"

"He is quite safe," said Kandos. "The queen in her mercy has not killed any of you."

"What are you going to do with us?" demanded Wood.

"The wild-man goes to the arena," replied Menofra. "You and the girl will not be killed immediately—not until you have served my purpose."

"And what is that?"

"You shall know presently. Kandos, send for a priest; Phoros will soon awaken."

Gonfala opened her eyes and sat up. "What has happened?" she asked. "Where are we?"

"We are still prisoners," Wood told

her. "These people have double-crossed us."

"Civilization seems very far away," she said and tears came to her eyes.

He took her hand. "You must be brave, dear."

"I am tired of being brave; I have been brave for so long. I should like so much to cry, Stanlee."

Now Phoros regained consciousness, and looked first at one and then at another. When his eyes fell on Menofra he winced.

"Ah, the rat has awakened," said the queen.

"You have rescued me, my dear!" said Phoros.

"You may call it that, if you wish," said Menofra coldly; "but I should call it by another name, as you will later."

"Now, my darling, let us forget the past—let bygones be bygones. Kandos, remove my bonds. How does it look to see the king trussed up like this?"

"It looks all right to me," Menofra assured him, "but how would you like to be trussed up? It could be done with red hot chains, you know. In fact, it has been done. It's not a bad idea; I am glad you suggested it."

"But, Menofra, my dear wife, you wouldn't do that to me?"

"Oh, you think not? But you would try to kill me with your sword so that you could take this wench here to wife.

Well, I'm not going to have you trussed up with red hot chains—not yet. First I am going to remove temptation from your path without removing the object of your temptation. I am going to let you see what you might have enjoyed."

There was a rap on the door, and one of the warriors said, "The priest is here."

"Let him in," ordered Menofra.

Wood had helped Gonfala to her feet, and the two were seated on a bench, mystified listeners to Menofra's cryptic speech. When the priest had entered the room and bowed before the queen she pointed to them.

"Marry these two," she commanded.

Wood and Gonfala looked at one

another in astonishment. "There's a catch in this somewhere," said the former. "The old termagant's not doing this because she loves us, but I'm not looking any gift horse in the mouth."

"It's what we've been waiting and hoping for," said Gonfala, "but I wish it could have happened under different conditions. There is something sinister in this. I don't believe that any good thought could come out of that woman's mind."

The marriage ceremony was extremely simple, but very impressive. It laid upon the couple the strictest obligations of fidelity and condemned to death and damned through eternity whomever might cause either to be

unfaithful to the other.

During the ceremony Menofra wore a sardonic smile, while Phoros had difficulty in hiding his chagrin and anger. When it was concluded, the queen turned to her mate. "You know the laws of our people," she said. "King or commoner, whoever comes between these two must die. You know that don't you, Phoros? You know you've lost her, don't you—forever? You would try to kill me, would you? Well, I'm going to let you live—I'm going to let you live with this wench; but watch your step, Phoros; for I'll be watching you." She turned to the guard. "Now take them away. Take this man to the slave pen, and see that nothing happens to him, and take Phoros

and the wench to the room next to mine; and lock them in."

* * * * *

When Tarzan regained consciousness he found himself chained to a stanchion in a stockaded compound, an iron collar around his neck. He was quite alone; but pallets of musty grass, odd bits of dirty clothing, cooking utensils, and the remains of cooking fires, still smoldering, disclosed the fact that the shed and the yard was the abode of others; and he conjectured correctly that he had been imprisoned in a slave pen.

The position of the sun told him that he had been under the influence of the drug for about an hour. The effects were passing off rapidly leaving only a dull

headache and a feeling of chagrin that he had been so easily duped. He was concerned about the fate of Wood and Gonfala, and was at a loss to understand why he had been separated from them. His active mind was occupied with this problem and that of escape when the gate of the compound opened and Wood was brought in by an escort of warriors who merely shoved the American through the gateway and departed after relocking the gate.

Wood crossed the compound to Tarzan. "I wondered what they had done with you," he said. "I was afraid they might have killed you." Then he told the ape-man what Menofra had decreed for Gonfala. "It is monstrous, Tarzan; the

woman is a beast. What are we to do?"

Tarzan tapped the iron collar that encircled his neck. "There is not much that I can do," he said ruefully.

"Why do you suppose they've chained you up and not me?" asked Wood.

"They must have some special form of entertainment in view for me," suggested the ape-man with a faint smile.

The remainder of the day passed in desultory conversation, principally a monologue; as Tarzan was not given to garrulity. Wood talked to keep from thinking about Gonfala's situation, but he was not very successful. Late in the afternoon the slaves were returned to the compound, and immediately crowded around Tarzan. One of them pushed his

way to the front when he caught a glimpse of the prisoner.

"Tarzan!" he exclaimed. "It is really you?"

"I am afraid it is, Valthor," replied the ape-man.

"And you are back, I see," said Valthor to Wood. "I did not expect to see you again. What happened?"

Wood told him the whole story of their misadventure, and Valthor looked grave. "Your friend, Gonfala, may be safe as long as Menofra lives; but she may not live long. Kandos will see to that if he is not too big a coward; then, with Menofra out of the way, Phoros will again come to power. When he does, he will destroy you. After that

there would not be much hope for Gonfala. The situation is serious, and I can see no way out unless the king and his party were to return and recapture the city. I believe they could do it now, for practically all of the citizens and most of the warriors are sick of Phoros and the rest of the Erythra."

A tall black came close to Tarzan. "You do not remember me, master?" he asked.

"Why, yes; of course I do," replied the ape-man. "You're Gemba. You were a slave in the house of Thudos at Cathne. How long have you been here?"

"Many moons, master. I was taken in a raid. The work is hard, and often these new masters are cruel. I wish that I were

back in Cathne."

"You would fare well there now, Gemba. Your old master is king of Cathne. I think that if he knew Tarzan was a prisoner here, he would come and make war on Athne."

"And I think that if he did," said Valthor, "an army from Cathne would be welcome here for the first time in history; but there is no chance that he will come, for there is no way in which he may learn that Tarzan is here."

"If I could get this collar off my neck," said the apeman, "I could soon get out of this slave pen and the city and bring Thudos with his army. He would come for me to save my friends."

"But you can't get it off," said Wood.

"You are right," agreed Tarzan; "it is idle talk."

For several days nothing occurred to break the monotony of existence in the slave pen of the king of Athne. No word reached them from the palace of what was transpiring there; no inkling came of the fate that was in store for them. Valthor had told Tarzan that the latter was probably being saved for the arena on account of his appearance of great strength, but when there would be games again he did not know. The new masters of Athne had changed everything, deriding all that had been sacred to custom and the old regime. There was even talk of changing the name of Athne to The City of Phoros. All that prevented

was the insistence of the queen that it be renamed The City of Menofra.

Every morning the slaves were taken to work, and all day long Tarzan remained alone, chained like a wild animal. Imprisonment of any nature galled The Lord of the Jungle; to be chained was torture. Yet he gave no sign of the mental suffering he was enduring. To watch him, one might have thought that he was content. Seething beneath that calm exterior was a raging sea of anger.

One afternoon the slaves were returned to the pen earlier than usual. The guards that herded them in were unusually rough with them, and there were several officers not ordinarily

present. They followed the slaves into the pen and counted them, checking off their names on a scroll carried by one of the officers; then they questioned them; and from the questions Tarzan gathered that there had been a concerted attempt on the part of a number of slaves to escape, during which a guard had been killed. During the excitement of the melee several slaves had escaped into the bamboo forest that grew close upon the eastern boundary of the cultivated fields of Athne. The check revealed that three were missing. Were they ever recaptured, they would be tortured and killed.

The officers and warriors were extremely brutal in their handling of the

slaves as they questioned them, trying to force confessions from them that they might ascertain just how far-reaching the plot had been and which slaves were the ring-leaders. After they left the pen the slaves were in a turmoil of restlessness and discontent. The air was surcharged with the static electricity of repressed rebellion that the slightest spark would have ignited, but Valthor counselled them to patience.

"You will only subject yourselves to torture and death," he told them. "We are only a handful of unarmed slaves. What can we do against the armed warriors of the Erythra? Wait. As sure as Dyaus is in heaven some change must come. There is as much discontent outside the slave pen

as within it; and one day Zygo, our king, will come out of the mountains where he is hiding and set us free."

"But some of us are slaves no matter who is king," said one. "I am. It would make no difference whether Zygo or Phoros were king—I should still be a slave."

"No," said Valthor. "I can promise you all that when Zygo comes into power again you will all be set free. I give you my word that it will be done."

"Well," said one, "I might not believe another, but all know that what the noble Valthor says he will do, he will do."

It was almost dark now, and the cooking fires were alight, and the slaves were cooking their poor meals in little

pots. Jerked elephant meat constituted the larger part of their diet; to this was added a very coarse variety of turnip. From the two the men made a stew. Sometimes those who worked in the fields varied this diet with other vegetables they had been able to steal from the fields and smuggle into the pen.

"This stew," remarked Wood, "should be full of vitamins; it has everything else including elephant hair and pebbles. The elephant hair and the pebbles might be forgiven, but turnips! In the economy of mundane happiness there is no place for the turnip."

"I take it that you don't like turnips," said Valthor.

Since Tarzan had been brought to the

slave pen, Troll and Spike had kept to themselves. Spike was very much afraid of the ape-man; and he had managed to impart this fear to Troll, although the latter had forgotten that there was any reason to fear him. Spike was worried for fear that, in the event they were liberated, Tarzan would find some way to keep the great diamond from him. This did not trouble Troll who had forgotten all about the diamond. The only thing that Troll remembered clearly was that Gonfala was his sister and that he had lost her. This worried him a great deal, and he talked about it continually. Spike encouraged him in the delusion and never referred to the diamond, although it was constantly the subject of his

thoughts and plannings. His principal hope of retrieving it lay in the possibility that the rightful king of Athne would regain his throne, treat him as a guest instead of a prisoner, and return the Gonfal to him; and he knew from conversations he had had with other prisoners that the return of Zygo was just between a possibility and a probability.

As the slaves were eating their evening meal and discussing the escape of their three fellows an officer entered the compound with a detail of warriors, one of whom carried an iron collar and chain. Approaching the shed, the officer called Valthor.

"I am here," said the noble, rising.

"I have a present for you, aristocrat,"

announced the officer, who until the revolution had been a groom in the elephant stables of Zygo.

"So I see," replied Valthor, glancing at the collar and chain, "and one which it must give a stable-boy much pleasure to bring me."

The officer flushed angrily. "Be careful, or I'll teach you some manners," he growled. "You are the stable-boy now, and I am the aristocrat."

Valthor shook his head. "No, stable-boy, you are wrong. You will always be a stable-boy at heart, and way down deep inside you you know it. That is what makes you angry. That is what makes you hate me, or think that you hate me; you really hate yourself, because

you know that you will always be a stable-boy no matter what Phoros tells you you are. He has done many strange things since he drove out the king, but he cannot make a lion out of a jackal's tail."

"Enough of this," snapped the officer. "Here you, snap the collar about his neck and chain him to the stanchion beside the wild- man."

"Why has Phoros thus honored me?" inquired Valthor.

"It was not Phoros; it was Menofra. She is ruling now."

"Ah, I see," said the noble. "Her psychology of hate for my class is more deeply rooted than yours, for it springs from filthy soil. Your vocation was at least honorable. Menofra was a woman

of the street before Phoros married her."

"Well, have your say while you can, aristocrat," said the officer, tauntingly, "for tomorrow you and the wild-man die in the arena, trampled and gored by a rogue elephant."

24. DEATH

The other slaves were furious because of the sentence imposed upon Valthor, who was to die, the officer had told him before he left, in punishment for the outbreak that had resulted in the death of an Erythros warrior and the escape of three slaves and as a warning to the others. Valthor had been chosen ostensibly not because he had been charged with fomenting rebellion among the slaves, but really because he was popular among them and an aristocrat.

Wood was horrified by the knowledge that Tarzan was to die, Tarzan and Valthor, both of whom were his friends. It seemed to him absolutely inconceivable that the mighty heart of the

Lord of the Jungle should be stilled forever, that that perfect body should be broken and trampled in the dust of an arena to satisfy the blood lust of ignorant barbarians.

"There must be something that we can do," he said; "there's got to be. Couldn't we break those chains?"

Tarzan shook his head. "I have examined mine carefully," he said, "and tested it. If it were cast iron, we might break a link; but it is malleable and would only bend. If we had a chisel—but we haven't. No, there is nothing to do but wait."

"But they are going to kill you, Tarzan! Don't you understand? They are going to kill you."

The ape-man permitted himself the shadow of a smile. "There is nothing unique in that," he said. "Many people have died; many people are dying; many people will die—even you, my friend."

"Tarzan is right," said Valthor. "We must all die; what matters is how we die. If we meet death courageously, as befits warriors, there will be no regrets. For myself, I am glad that an elephant is going to kill me; for I am an elephantman. You know what that means, Tarzan; for you have been to Cathne where the lion-men are the nobles; and you know with what pride they bear the title. It is the same here, except that the nobles are the elephant-men. As they breed lions, we breed

elephants; their god, Thoos, is a lion; our Dyaus is an elephant. The nobles who escaped the Erythros revolution took him into the mountains with them, for the Erythra, who have no god, would have killed him."

"If I were to have my choice of the manner in which I were to die," said Tarzan, "I should prefer the lion to the elephant. For one thing, the lion kills quickly; but my real reason is that the elephant has always been my friend; my very best friend, perhaps; and I do not like to think that a friend must kill me."

"This one will not be your friend, Tarzan," Valthor reminded him.

"No, I know it; but I was not thinking of him as an individual," explained

Tarzan. "And now, as, with all our talk, we have arrived nowhere, I am going to sleep."

The morning of their death dawned like any other morning. Neither spoke of what was impending. With Wood they cooked their breakfasts, and they talked, and Valthor laughed, and occasionally Tarzan smiled one of his rare smiles. Wood was the most nervous. When the time came for the slaves to be taken to their work he came to say goodbye to the ape-man.

Tarzan laid a hand upon his shoulder. "I do not like to say good-bye, my friend," he said.

If Wood had known how rare was the use by Tarzan of that term "my friend" he

would have been honored. He thought of many animals as friends, but few men. He liked Wood, his intelligence, his courage, his cleanness.

"Have you no message you would like to send to—to—" Wood hesitated.

Tarzan shook his head. "Thank you, no," he said. "She will know, as she always has."

Wood turned and walked away, following the other slaves out of the stockade. He stumbled over the threshold, and swore under his breath as he drew a palm across his eyes.

It was afternoon before they came for Tarzan and Valthor, half a hundred warriors and several officers, all in their best trappings, their freshly burnished

arms shining in the sun.

In front of the palace a procession was forming. There were many elephants richly caparisoned and bearing howdahs in which rode the new-made nobility of Athne. All the howdahs were open except one elaborate pavilion. In this sat Menofra alone. When Valthor saw her he laughed aloud. Tarzan turned and looked at him questioningly.

"Look at her!" exclaimed the noble. "She could not be more self- conscious if she were naked. In fact that would not bother her so much. The poor thing is trying to look the queen. Note the haughty mien, and the crown! Dyaus! she is wearing the crown to the arena—and wearing it backwards. It is worth dying

to see."

Valthor had not attempted to lower his voice. In fact it seemed that he raised it a little. His laughter had attracted attention to him, so that many listened and heard his words. They even reached the ears of Menofra. That was apparent to all who could see her, for her face turned fiery red; and she took the crown off and placed it on the seat beside her. She was so furious that she trembled; and when she gave the command to march, as she immediately did, her voice shook with rage.

With the hundred elephants in single file, the many warriors on foot, the banners and pennons, the procession was colorful; but it lacked that

something that would have made its magnificence impressive. There was nothing real about its assumed majesty, and the entire pageant was colored by the spuriousnesss of its principal actors. This was the impression that it made upon the Lord of the Jungle walking in chains behind the elephant of Menofra.

The procession followed the main avenue to the south gate through lines of silent citizens. There was no cheering, no applause. There were whispered comments as Valthor and Tarzan passed; and it was plain to see that the sympathies of the people were with Valthor, though they dared not express them openly. Tarzan was a stranger to them; their only interest in him lay in the

fact that he might serve to give them a few minutes of thrills and entertainment in the arena.

Passing through the gate, the column turned toward the east, coming at last to the arena, which lay directly east of the city. Just outside the main gate, through which the procession entered the arena, Tarzan and Valthor were led from the line of march and taken to a smaller gate which led through a high palisade of small logs into a paddock between two sections of a grandstand. The inner end of the paddock was formed by a palisade of small logs; and was similar to the outer end, having a small gate opening onto the arena. The ape- man could not but notice the flimsy

construction of the two palisades, and idly wondered if the entire arena were as poorly built.

In the compound there were a number of armed guards; and presently other prisoners were brought, men whom Tarzan had not before seen. They had been brought from the city behind the elephants of lesser dignitaries who had ridden in the rear of Menofra. Several of these prisoners, who spoke to Valthor, were evidently men of distinction.

"We are about the last of the aristocracy who did not escape or go over to the Erythra," Valthor explained to Tarzan. "Phoros and Menofra think that by killing off all their enemies they will have no opposition and nothing

more to fear; but as a matter of fact they are only making more enemies, for the middle classes were naturally more in sympathy with the aristocracy than with the scum which constitutes the Erythra."

About four feet from the top of the inner palisade was a horizontal beam supporting the ends of braces that held the palisade upright, and upon this beam the prisoners were allowed to stand and witness what took place in the arena until it was their turn to enter. When Tarzan and Valthor took their places on the beam the royal pageant had just completed a circuit of the arena, and Menofra was clumsily descending from the howdah of her elephant to enter the royal loge. The grandstands were about

half filled, and crowds were still pouring through the tunnels. There was little noise other than the shuffling of sandaled feet and the occasional trumpeting of an elephant. It did not seem to Tarzan a happy, carefree throng out to enjoy a holiday; but rather a sullen mob suppressed by fear. A laugh would have been as startling as a scream.

The first encounter was between two men; one a huge Erythros warrior armed with sword and spear; the other a former noble whose only weapon was a dagger. It was an execution, not a duel—an execution preceded by torture. The audience watched it, for the most part, in silence. There were a few shouts of encouragement from the loges of the

officials and the new nobility.

Valthor and Tarzan watched with disgust. "I think he could have killed that big fellow," said the ape-man. "I saw how he might be easily handled. It is too bad that the other did not think of it."

"You think you could kill Hyark?" demanded a guard standing next to Tarzan.

"Why not?" asked the ape-man. "He is clumsy and stupid; most of all he is a coward."

"Hyark a coward? That is a good one. There are few braver among the Erythra."

"I can believe that," said Tarzan, and Valthor laughed.

Hyark was strutting to and fro before the royal box receiving the applause of Menofra and her entourage, slaves were dragging out the mutilated corpse of his victim, and an officer was approaching the paddock to summon forth the next combatants.

The guard called to him, "Here is one who thinks he can kill Hyark."

The officer looked up. "Which one thinks that?" he demanded.

The guard jerked a thumb toward Tarzan. "This wild-man here. Perhaps Menofra would like to see such an encounter. It should prove amusing."

"Yes," said the officer, "I should like to see it myself. Maybe after the next combat. I'll ask her."

The next prisoner to be taken into the arena was an old man. He was given a dagger to defend himself; then a lion was loosed upon him.

"That is a very old lion," said Tarzan to Valthor. "Most of his teeth are gone. He is weak from mange and hunger."

"But he will kill the man," said Valthor.

"Yes, he will kill the man; he is still a powerful brute."

"I suppose you think you could kill him, too," jeered the guard.

"Probably," assented the ape-man.

The guard thought this very funny, and laughed uproariously.

The lion made short work of the old

man, giving him, at least, a merciful death; then the officer came, after they had driven the lion back into his cage with many spears, and said that Menofra had given assent to the fight between Hyark and the wild-man.

"She has promised to make Hyark a captain for killing two men in one afternoon," said the officer.

"This one says he can kill the lion, too," screamed the guard, rocking with laughter.

"But Hyark is going to kill your wild-man now; so we will never know if he could kill the lion," said the officer, pretending to be deeply grieved.

"I will fight them both at once," said Tarzan; "that is if Hyark is not afraid to

go into the arena with a lion."

"That would be something to see," said the officer. "I will go at once and speak to Menofra."

"Why did you say that Tarzan?" asked Valthor.

"Didn't I tell you that I'd rather be killed by a lion than an elephant?"

Valthor shook his head. "Perhaps you are right. At least it will be over sooner. This waiting is getting on my nerves."

Very soon the officer returned. "It is arranged," he said.

"What did Hyark think of it?" asked Valthor.

"I think he did not like the idea at all. He said he just recalled that his wife

was very ill, and asked Menofra to give some one else the honor of killing the wild-man."

"And what did Menofra say?"

"She said that if Hyark didn't get into the arena and kill the wild-man she would kill Hyark."

"Menofra has a grand sense of humor," remarked Valthor.

Tarzan dropped to the ground and was taken into the arena, where the iron collar was removed from about his neck and he was handed a dagger. He walked toward the royal box below which Hyark was standing. Hyark came running to meet him, hoping to dispatch him quickly and get out of the arena before the lion could be loosed. The men at the

lion's cage were having some difficulty in raising the door. The lion, nervous and excited from his last encounter, was roaring and growling as he struck at the bars trying to reach the men working about him.

Hyark held his spear in front of him. He hoped to thrust it through Tarzan the moment that he came within reach of him. There would be no playing with his victim in this encounter, his sole idea being to get it over and get out of the arena.

Tarzan advanced slightly crouched. He had stuck the dagger into the cord that supported his loin cloth. The fact that he came on with bare hands puzzled the crowd and confused Hyark, who had

long since regretted that he had accepted the challenge so boastfully. He was not afraid of the man, of course; but the two of them! What if the man avoided being killed until the lion was upon them? The lion might as readily leap upon Hyark as upon the other. It was this that added to Hyark's confusion.

They were close now. With an oath, Hyark lunged his spear point at the naked breast of his antagonist; then Tarzan did just what he had planned to do knowing as he did his own agility and strength. He seized the haft of the spear and wrenched the weapon from Hyark's grasp, hurling it to the ground behind him; then Hyark reached for his sword; but he was too slow. The ape-man was

upon him; steel thewed fingers seized him and swung him around.

A great shout went up from the crowd —the lion was loosed!

Grasping Hyark by the collar of his jerkin and his sword belt, the ape-man held him helpless despite his struggles. For the first time the crowd became really vocal. They laughed, jeering at Hyark; they screamed warnings at the wild-man, shouting that the lion was coming; but Tarzan knew that already. From the corner of an eye he was watching the carnivore as it came down the length of the arena at a trot. He could get a better estimate of the beast now as it came closer. It was a small lion, old and pitifully emaciated. Evidently it had

been starved a long time to make it ravenous. Tarzan's anger rose against those who had been responsible for this cruelty, and because of it there was born in his mind a plan to avenge the lion.

As the lion approached, Tarzan went to meet it, pushing the frantic Hyark ahead of him; and just before the beast launched its lethal charge, the ape- man gave Hyark a tremendous shove directly toward the great cat; and then Hyark did precisely what Tarzan had anticipated he would do—he turned quickly to one side and broke into a run. Tarzan stood still —not a muscle moved. He was directly in the path of the lion, but the latter did not hesitate even an instant; it turned and pursued the fleeing Hyark, the

screaming, terrified Hyark.

"The brave Hyark will have to run much faster if he hopes to get his captaincy," said Valthor to the guard. "He would have been better off had he stood still; the lion was sure to pursue him if he ran. Had he stepped to one side and stood still, the lion might have continued his charge straight for Tarzan. At least he would have had a chance then, but he certainly cannot outrun a lion."

Just in front of the loge of Menofra the lion overtook Hyark, and the screaming man went down beneath the mangy body to a mercifully quick end. Before his final struggles had ended the starving beast commenced to devour him.

Tarzan came up the arena toward the royal loge and the feeding lion. On the way he picked up Hyark's discarded spear and crept silently onto the lion from the rear; nor did the lion, occupied with his greedy feeding, see the approaching man. The crowd sat tense and silent, marvelling, perhaps, at the courage of this naked wild-man. Closer and closer to the lion crept Tarzan; and still the lion fed upon the carcass of Hyark, unconscious of the ape-man's presence. Directly behind the carnivore Tarzan laid the spear upon the ground. He had brought it only as a measure of safety in the event his plan miscarried. Then, with the swiftness and agility of Sheeta the panther, he leaped astride the

feeding cat and grasped it by the mane and the loose hide upon its back, lifting it bodily from its kill and at the same time swinging around and whirling the beast with him, roaring and striking, but futilely. It was the lightning quickness of his act that made it possible - that and his great strength—as, with one superhuman effort, he flung the beast into the royal loge; then, without a single backward glance, he turned and walked back toward the prisoners' paddock.

The lion's body struck Menofra and knocked her from her chair; but the lion, frightened now and bewildered, thought for the moment only of escape; and leaped to an adjoining loge. Here he lashed out with his taloned paws to right

and left among the screaming nobility. From one loge to another he leaped, leaving a trail of screaming victims, until he chanced upon a tunnel, into which he darted and galloped to freedom beyond the amphitheater.

The stands were in an uproar as the populace cheered Tarzan as he entered the paddock and took his place again beside Valthor on the cross-beam. The guard who had ridiculed him looked at him now in awe, while the other prisoners praised and congratulated him.

"Menofra should give you a wreath and a title," said Valthor, "for you have given her and the people such entertainment as they have never seen before in this arena."

Tarzan looked across at the royal loge and saw Menofra standing in it apparently unhurt. "The lion missed a golden opportunity," he said; "and as for the wreath and the title, I do not deserve them; for it was the lion, not Menofra or the people, that I was trying to entertain."

When the stands had quieted down and the wounded been removed, the officer in charge returned to the paddock. "You were a fool," he said to Tarzan, "to throw the lion into Menofra's loge. If you hadn't done that, I believe she would have given you your liberty; but now she has ordered that you be destroyed at once. You and Valthor go in next. You will take your places in the

center of the arena immediately."

"I wish," said Valthor, "that you might have had a better reception in The City of Ivory. I wish that you might have known my own people and they you. That you should have come here to die is tragic, but the fates were against you."

"Well, my friend," said Tarzan, "at least we have seen one another again; and—we are not dead yet."

"We shall be presently."

"I think that perhaps you are right," agreed the ape-man.

"Well, here we are. Have you any plan?"

"None," replied Tarzan. "I know that I cannot throw an elephant into Menofra's

loge."

"Not this one," said Valthor. "I know him. I helped capture him. He is a devil and huge. He hates men. They have been saving him for this, and they will probably kill him afterward—he is too dangerous. "

"They are opening the elephant paddock," said Tarzan. "Here he comes -!"

A great elephant charged, trumpeting, through the opened gates. At first he did not appear to notice the two men in the center of the arena, and trotted around close to the stands as though searching for an avenue of escape; then quite suddenly he wheeled toward the center and trotted toward the two men.

Tarzan had noted his great size and the one tusk darker than the other, and on the screen of memory was pictured another scene and another day - hyenas at the edge of a pit, snapping at a huge elephant with one dark tusk, while above circled Ska the vulture.

The elephant's trunk was raised, he was trumpeting as he came toward them; and then Tarzan stepped quickly forward and raised a hand with the palm toward the beast.

"Dan-do, Tantor!" he commanded. "Tarzan yo."

The great beast hesitated; then he stopped. Tarzan walked toward him, motioning Valthor to follow directly behind him, and stopped with one hand

upon the trunk that was now lowered and feeling exploratorily over the ape-man's body.

"Nala Tarzan!" commanded the ape-man. "Nala tarmangani!" and he pulled Valthor to his side.

The elephant raised his trunk and trumpeted loudly; then he gathered first one and then the other in its folds and lifted them to his head. For a moment he stood swaying to and fro as Tarzan spoke to him in low tones; then, trumpeting again, he started off at a trot around the arena while the spectators sat in stunned amazement. The great beast had completed half the oval and was opposite the prisoners' paddock when Tarzan gave a quick command. The

elephant wheeled sharply to the left and crossed the arena while Tarzan urged him on with words of encouragement in that strange mother of languages that the great apes use and the lesser apes and the little monkeys and that is understood in proportion to their intelligence by many another beast of the forest and the plain.

With lowered head the mighty bull crashed into the flimsy palisade at the inner end of the paddock, flattening it to the ground; then the outer palisade fell before him; and he carried Tarzan and Valthor out onto the plain toward freedom.

As they passed the main gate of the amphitheater and headed south they saw

the first contingent of their pursuers issuing from the arena and clambering to the howdahs of the waiting elephants, and before they had covered half a mile the pursuit was in full cry behind them.

While their own mount was making good time some of the pursuing elephants were gaining on him.

"Racing elephants," commented Valthor.

"They are carrying heavy loads," observed the ape-man: "five and six warriors beside a heavy howdah."

Valthor nodded. "If we can keep ahead of them for half an hour we've a good chance to get away." Then he turned from the pursuers and looked ahead. "Mother of Dyaus!" he

exclaimed. "We're caught between a wild bull and a hungry lion—the Cathneans are coming, and they're coming for war. This is no ordinary raid. Look at them!"

Tarzan turned and saw a body of men that approximated an army coming across the plain toward them, and in the van were the fierce war lions of Cathne. He looked back. Closing in rapidly upon them were the war elephants of Athne.

25. BATTLE

"I think we yet have a chance to escape them both," said Valthor. "Turn him toward the east. Zygo and his loyal followers are there in the mountains."

"We do not have to run away from our friends," replied Tarzan.

"I hope they recognize you as a friend before they loose their war lions. They are trained to leap to the backs of elephants and kill the men riding there."

"Then we'll approach them on foot," said the ape-man.

"And be caught by the Erythra," added Valthor.

"We shall have to take a chance but wait! Let's try something." He spoke to

the bull, and the animal came to a stop and wheeled about; then Tarzan leaped to the ground, motioning Valthor to follow him. He spoke a few words into the ear of the elephant, and stepped aside. Up went the great trunk, forward the huge ears; as the mighty beast started back to meet the oncoming elephants.

"I think he'll hold them up long enough for us to reach the Cathnean line before they can overtake us," said Tarzan.

The two men turned then and started toward the advancing horde of warriors —toward ranks of gleaming spears and golden helmets and the lions of war on golden chains. Suddenly a warrior left the ranks and ran forward to meet them; and when he was closer, Tarzan saw that

he was an officer. It was Gemnon.

"I recognized you at once," he cried to the ape-man. "We were coming to rescue you."

"How did you know that I was in trouble?" demanded Tarzan.

"Gemba told us. He was a prisoner with you in the slave pen; but he escaped, and came straight to Thudos with word that you were to be killed."

"Two of my friends are still prisoners in Athne," said Tarzan, "and now that you have caught many of the warriors of Phoros out here on the plain in a disorganized condition—"

"Yes," said Gemnon; "Thudos realized his advantage, and we shall attack at once as soon as we get back to

the lines."

Valthor and Gemnon had met before, when Valthor was a prisoner in Cathne. Thudos the king welcomed them both, for Gemba had told him of the Erythra; and naturally his sympathies were with the aristocracy of Athne.

"If Thoos is with us today," he said, "we shall put Zygo back upon his throne." Then, to an aide, "Loose the lions of war!"

The great bull with the dark tusk had met the first of the war elephants of Athne head on with such a terrific impact that all the warriors were hurled from the howdah and the war elephant thrown to the ground; then he charged the next and overthrew it, whereat the others

scattered to avoid him; and a moment later the war lions of Cathne were among them. They did not attack the elephants, but leaped to the howdahs and mauled the warriors. Two or three lions would attack a single elephant at a time, and at least two of them succeeded ordinarily in reaching the howdah.

The commander of the Erythros forces sought to rally his men and form a line to repel the advance of the Cathneans; and while he was seeking to accomplish this, the Cathnean foot warriors were upon them, adding to the rout that the great bull had started and the lions almost completed.

The Erythros warriors hurled spears at their foes and sought to trample them

beneath the feet of their mounts. The Cathneans' first aim was to kill the mahouts and stampede the elephants and while some warriors were attempting this, others pressed close to the elephants in an endeavor to cut the girths with their sharp daggers, precipitating the howdahs and their occupants to the ground.

The shouts of the warriors, the trumpeting of the elephants, the roars of the lions, and the screams of the wounded produced an indescribable bedlam that added to the confusion of the scene and seemed to raise the blood lust of the participants to demonic proportions.

While a portion of his forces was

engaging the Erythra on the plain before the city, Thudos maneuvered the remainder to a position between the battle and the city, cutting off the Erythra retreat; and with this and the killing of their commander the Athneans lost heart and scattered in all directions, leaving the city to the mercy of the enemy.

Thudos led his victorious troops into Athne, and with him marched Tarzan and Valthor. They liberated Wood and the other prisoners in the slave pen, including Spike and Troll; and then, at Wood's urgent pleading, marched to the palace in search of Gonfala. They met with slight resistance, the palace guard soon fleeing from the superior numbers that confronted them.

Tarzan and Wood, led by a palace slave, hurried to the apartment where Gonfala was confined. The door, fastened by a bolt on the outside, was quickly opened; and the two men entered to see Gonfala standing above the body of Phoros, a dagger in her hand.

At sight of Wood, she rushed forward and threw herself into his arms. "Word just reached him that Menofra is dead," she said, "and I had to kill him."

Wood pressed her to him. "Poor child," he whispered, "what you must have suffered! But your troubles are over now. The Erythra have fallen, and we are among friends."

After the fall of Athne, events moved rapidly. Zygo was summoned from the

mountains and restored to his throne by his hereditary enemies, the Cathneans.

"Now you can live in peace," said Tarzan.

"Peace!" shouted Thudos and Zygo almost simultaneously. "Who would care to live always in peace?"

"I replace Zygo on the throne," explained Thudos; "so that we Cathneans may continue to have foes worthy of our arms. No peace for us, eh, Zygo?"

"Never, my friend!" replied the king of Athne.

For a week Tarzan and the other Europeans remained in Athne; then they set off toward the south, taking Spike and Troll and the great diamond with them. A short march from Athne they met

Muviro with a hundred warriors coming to search for their beloved Bwana, and thus escorted they returned to the ape-man's own country.

Here Tarzan let Spike and Troll leave for the coast on the promise that neither would return to Africa.

As they were leaving, Spike cast sorrowful glances at the great diamond. "We'd orter get somethin' out o' that," he said. "After all, we went through a lot o' hell on account of it."

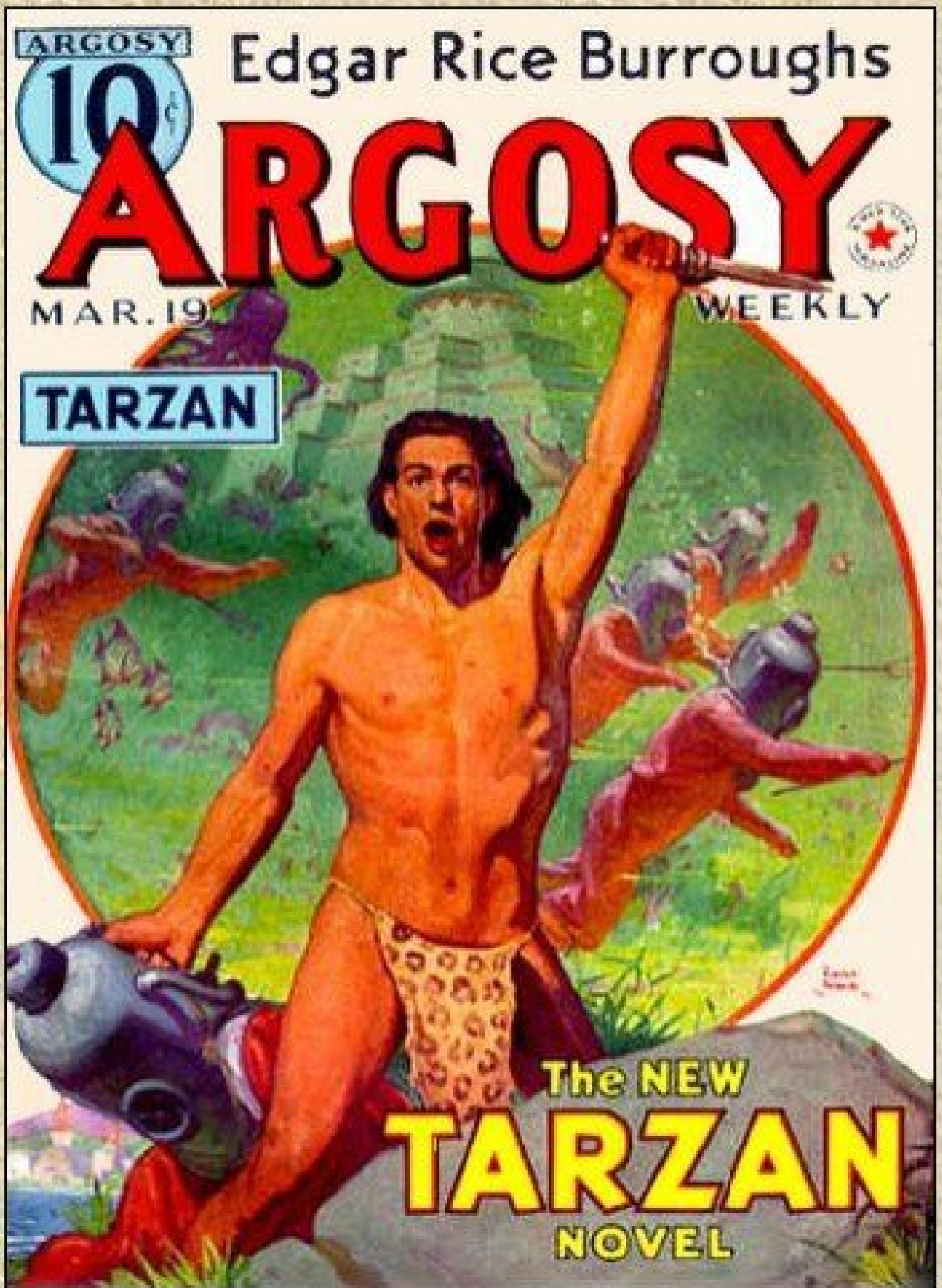
"Very well," said Tarzan, "take it with you."

Wood and Gonfala looked at the ape-man in astonishment, but said nothing until after Troll and Spike had departed; then they asked why he had given the

great diamond to two such villains.

A slow smile touched the ape-man's lips. "It was not the Gonfal," he said. "I have that at home. It was the imitation that Mafka kept to show and to protect the real Gonfal. And something else that may interest you. I found the great emerald of the Zuli and buried it in the Bantango country. Some day we'll go and get that, too. You and Gonfala should be well equipped with wealth when you return to civilization—you should have enough to get you into a great deal of trouble and keep you there all the rest of your lives."

THE END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BOOK 21 IN THE TARZAN

SERIES

ERB adaptation of a 1934 radio serial "Tarzan And The Diamond Of Asher" by Rob Thompson

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CHAPTER 1

The rainy season was over; and forest and jungle were a riot of lush green starred with myriad tropical blooms, alive with the gorgeous coloring and raucous voices of countless birds, scolding, loving, hunting, escaping; alive with chattering monkeys and buzzing insects which all seemed to be busily engaged in doing things in circles and getting nowhere, much after the fashion of their unhappy cousins who dwell in unlovely jungles of brick and marble and cement.

As much a part of the primitive scene as the trees themselves was the Lord of the Jungle, lolling at his ease on the back of Tantor, the elephant, lazing in the

mottled sunlight of the noonday jungle. Apparently oblivious to all his surroundings was the ape-man, yet his every sense was alert to all that passed about him; and his hearing and his sense of smell reached out far beyond the visible scene. It was to the latter that Usha, the wind, bore a warning, to his sensitive nostrils—the scent spoor of an approaching Gomangani. Instantly Tarzan was galvanized into alert watchfulness. He did not seek to conceal himself nor escape, for he knew that only one native was approaching. Had there been more, he would have taken to the trees and watched their approach from the concealment of the foliage of some mighty patriarch of the forest, for it is

only by eternal vigilance that a denizen of the jungle survives the constant threat of the greatest of all killers —man.

Tarzan seldom thought of himself as a man. From infancy he had been raised by beasts among beasts, and he had been almost full grown before he had seen a man.

Subconsciously, he classed them with Numa, the lion, and Sheeta, the panther; with Bolgani, the gorilla, and Histah, the snake, and such other blood enemies as his environment afforded.

Crouching upon the great back of Tantor, ready for any eventuality, Tarzan watched the trail along which the man was approaching. Already Tantor was becoming restless, for he, too, had

caught the scent spoor of the man; but Tarzan quieted him with a word; and the huge bull, obedient, stood motionless. Presently the man appeared at a turn in the trail, and Tarzan relaxed. The native discovered the ape-man almost simultaneously, and stopped; then he ran forward and dropped to his knees in front of the Lord of the Jungle.

"Greetings, Big Bwana!" he cried.

"Greetings, Ogabi!" replied the ape-man. "Why is Ogabi here? Why is he not in his own country tending his cattle?"

"Ogabi looks for the Big Bwana." answered the black.

"Why?" demanded Tarzan.

"Ogabi has joined white bwana's safari. Ogabi, askari. White bwana

Gregory send Ogabi find Tarzan."

"I don't know any white bwana, Gregory," objected the ape-man. "Why did he send you to find me?"

"White bwana send Ogabi bring Tarzan. Must see Tarzan."

"Where?" asked Tarzan.

"Big village, Loango," explained Ogabi.

Tarzan shook his head. "No," he said; "Tarzan no go."

"Bwana Gregory say Tarzan must," insisted Ogabi. "Some bwana lost; Tarzan find."

"No," repeated the ape-man. "Tarzan does not like big village. It is full of bad smells and sickness and men and other

evils. Tarzan no go."

"Bwana d'Arnot say Tarzan come," added Ogabi, as though by second thought.

"D'Arnot in Loango?" demanded the ape-man. "Why didn't you say so in the first place? For bwana d'Arnot, Tarzan come."

And so, with a parting word to Tantor, Tarzan swung off along the trail in the direction of Loango, while Ogabi trotted peacefully at his heels.

It was hot in Loango; but that was nothing unusual, as it is always hot in Loango. However, heat in the tropics has its recompenses, one of which is a tall glass filled with shaved ice, rum, sugar, and lime juice. A group on the terrace of

a small colonial hotel in Loango was enjoying several recompenses.

Captain Paul d'Arnot of the French navy stretched his long legs comfortably beneath the table and permitted his eyes to enjoy the profile of Helen Gregory as he slowly sipped his drink. Helen's profile was well worth anyone's scrutiny, and not her profile alone. Blonde, nineteen, vivacious, with a carriage and a figure charming in chic sport clothes, she was as cool and inviting as the frosted glass before her.

"Do you think this Tarzan you have sent for can find Brian, Captain d'Arnot?" she asked, turning her face toward him after a brief reverie.

"Your full face is even more beautiful

than your profile," thought d'Arnot, "but I like your profile better because I can stare at it without being noticed." Aloud, he said, "There is none knows Africa better than Tarzan, Mam'selle; but you must remember that your brother has been missing two years. Perhaps?"

"Yes, Captain," interrupted the third member of the party, "I realize that my son may be dead; but we shan't give up hope until we know."

"Brian is not dead, Papa," insisted Helen. "I know it. Everyone else was accounted for. Four of the expedition were killed—the rest got out. Brian simply disappeared—vanished. The others brought back stories —weird, almost unbelievable stories. Anything

might have happened to Brian, but he is not dead!"

"This delay is most disheartening," said Gregory. "Ogabi has been gone a week, and no Tarzan yet. He may never find him. I really think I should plan on getting started immediately. I have a good man in Wolff. He knows his Africa like a book."

"Perhaps you are right," agreed d'Arnot. "I do not wish to influence you in any way against your better judgment. If it were possible to find Tarzan, and he would accompany you, you would be much better off; but of course there is no assurance that Tarzan would agree to go with you even were Ogabi to find him."

"Oh, I think there would be no doubt

on that score," replied Gregory; "I should pay him handsomely."

D'Arnot lifted a deprecating palm. "Non! Non! mon ami!" he exclaimed. "Never, never think of offering money to Tarzan. He would give you one look from those gray eyes of his—a look that would make you feel like an insect—and then he would fade away into the jungle, and you would never see him again. He is not as other men, Monsieur Gregory."

"Well, what can I offer him? Why should he go otherwise than for recompense?"

"For me, perhaps," said d'Arnot; "for a whim—who knows? If he chanced to take a liking for you; if he sensed adventure—oh, there are many reasons

why Tarzan might take you through his forests and his jungles; but none of them is money."

At another table, at the far end of the terrace, a dark girl leaned toward her companion, a tall, thin East Indian with a short, black chin beard. "In some way one of us must get acquainted with the Gregorys, Lal Taask," she said. "Atan Thome expects us to do something besides sit on the terrace and consume Planter's Punches."

"It should be easy, Magra, for you to strike up an acquaintance with the girl," suggested Lal Taask. Suddenly his eyes went wide as he looked out across the compound toward the entrance to the hotel grounds. "Siva!" he exclaimed.

"See who comes!"

The girl gasped in astonishment. "It cannot be!" she exclaimed. "And yet it is. What luck! What wonderful luck!" Her eyes shone with something more than the light of excitement.

The Gregory party, immersed in conversation, were oblivious to the approach of Tarzan and Ogabi until the latter stood beside their table. Then d'Arnot looked up and leaped to his feet. "Greetings, mon ami!" he cried.

As Helen Gregory looked up into the ape-man's face, her eyes went wide in astonishment and incredulity. Gregory looked stunned.

"You sent for me, Paul?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes, but first let me introduce—why, Miss Gregory! What is wrong?"

"It is Brian," said the girl in a tense whisper, "and yet it is not Brian."

"No," d'Arnot assured her, "it is not your brother. This is Tarzan of the Apes."

"A most remarkable resemblance," said Gregory, as he rose and offered his hand to the ape-man.

"Lal Taask," said Magra, "it is he. That is Brian Gregory."

"You are right," agreed Lal Taask. "After all these months that we have been planning, he walks right into our arms. We must get him to Atan Thome at once—but how?"

"Leave it to me," said the girl. "I have a plan. Fortunately, he has not seen us yet. He would never come if he had, for he has no reason to trust us. Come! We'll go inside; then call a boy, and I'll send him a note."

As Tarzan, d'Arnot, and the Gregorys conversed, a boy approached and handed a note to the ape-man. The latter glanced through it. "There must be some mistake," he said; "this must be meant for someone else."

"No, bwana," said the boy. "She say give it big bwana in loin cloth. No other bwana in loin cloth."

"Says she wants to see me in little salon next to the entrance," said Tarzan to d'Arnot. "Says it's very urgent. It's

signed, 'An old friend'; but of course it must be a mistake. I'll go and explain."

"Be careful, Tarzan," laughed d'Arnot; "you're used only to the wilds of Africa, not to the wiles of women."

"Which are supposed to be far more dangerous," said Helen, smiling.

A slow smile lighted the face of the Lord of the Jungle as he looked down into the beautiful eyes of the girl. "That is easy to believe," he said. "I think I should warn d'Arnot."

"Oh, what Frenchman needs schooling in the ways of women?" demanded Helen. "It is the women who should be protected."

"He is very nice," she said to d'Arnot, after Tarzan had left; "but I think that one

might be always a little afraid of him. There is something quite grim about him, even when he smiles."

"Which is not often," said d'Arnot, "and I have never heard him laugh. But no one who is honorable need ever be afraid of Tarzan."

As Tarzan entered the small salon he saw a tall, svelte brunette standing by a table at one side of the room. What he did not see was the eye of Lal Taask at the crack of a door in the opposite wall.

"A boy brought me this note," said Tarzan. "There is some mistake. I don't know you, and you don't know me."

"There is no mistake, Brian Gregory," said Magra. "You cannot fool such an old friend as I."

Unsmiling, the ape-man's steady gaze took the girl in from head to foot; then he turned to leave the room. Another might have paused to discuss the matter, for Magra was beautiful; but not Tarzan—he had said all that there was to say, as far as he was concerned.

"Wait, Brian Gregory!" snapped Magra. "You are too impetuous. You are not going now."

Tarzan turned back, sensing a threat in her tone. "And why not?" he asked.

"Because it would be dangerous. Lal Taask is directly behind you. His pistol is almost touching your back. You are coming upstairs with me like an old friend, arm in arm; and Lal Taask will be at your back. A false move, and —

poof! you are dead."

Tarzan shrugged. "Why not?" he thought. In some way these two were concerning themselves with the affairs of the Gregorys, and the Gregorys were d'Arnot's friends. Immediately the ape-man's sympathies were enlisted upon the side of the Gregorys. He took Magra's arm. "Where are we going?" he asked.

"To see another old friend, Brian Gregory," smiled Magra.

They had to cross the terrace to reach the stairway leading to the second floor of another wing of the hotel, Magra smiling and chatting gaily, Lal Taask walking close behind; but now his pistol was in his pocket. D'Arnot looked up at them in surprise as they passed.

"Ah, so it was an old friend," remarked Helen.

D'Arnot shook his head. "I do not like the looks of it," he said.

"You have changed, Brian Gregory," said Magra, smiling up at him, as they ascended the stairway. "And I think I like you better."

"What is this all about?" demanded Tarzan.

"Your memory shall soon be refreshed, my friend," replied the girl. "Down this hall is a door, behind the door is a man."

At the door they halted, and Magra knocked.

"Who is it?" inquired a voice from the

interior of the room.

"It is I, Magra, with Lal Taask and a friend," replied the girl.

The voice bade them enter, and as the door swung open, Tarzan saw a plump, greasy, suave appearing Eurasian sitting at a table at one side of an ordinary hotel room. The man's eyes were mere slits, his lips thin. Tarzan's eyes took in the entire room with a single glance. There was a window at the opposite end; at the left, across the room from the man, was a dresser; beside it a closed door, which probably opened into an adjoining room to form a suite.

"I have found him at last, Atan Thome," said Magra.

"Ah, Brian Gregory!" exclaimed

Thome. "I am glad to see you again—shall I say 'my friend'?"

"I am not Brian Gregory," said Tarzan, "and of course you know it. Tell me what you want."

"You are Brian Gregory, and I can understand that you would wish to deny it to me," sneered Thome; "and, being Brian Gregory, you know what I want. I want directions to the city of Ashair—the Forbidden City. You wrote those directions down; you made a map; I saw you. It is worth ten thousand pounds to me—that is my offer."

"I have no map. I never heard of Ashair," replied Tarzan.

Atan Thome's face registered an almost maniacal rage as he spoke

rapidly to Lal Taask in a tongue that neither Tarzan nor Magra understood. The East Indian, standing behind Tarzan, whipped a long knife from beneath his coat.

"Not that, Atan Thome!" cried Magra.

"Why not?" demanded the man. "The gun would make too much noise. Lal Taask's knife will do the work quietly. If Gregory will not help us, he must not live to hinder us. Strike, Lal Taask!"

CHAPTER 2

"I cannot understand," said d'Arnot, "why Tarzan went with those two. It is not like him. If ever a man were wary of strangers, it is he."

"Perhaps they were not strangers," suggested Helen. "He seemed on the best of terms with the woman. Didn't you notice how gay and friendly she appeared?"

"Yes," replied d'Arnot, "I did; but I also noticed Tarzan. Something strange is going on. I do not like it."

Even as d'Arnot was speaking, Tarzan, swift as Ara, the lightning, wheeled upon Lal Taask before the knife hand struck; and, seizing the man, lifted

him above his head, while Atan Thome and Magra shrank back against the wall in stark amazement. They gasped in horror, as Tarzan hurled Lal Taask heavily to the floor.

Tarzan fixed his level gaze upon Atan Thome. "You are next," he said.

"Wait, Brian Gregory," begged Thome, backing away from the ape- man and dragging Magra with him. "Let us reason."

"I do not reason with murderers," replied Tarzan. "I kill."

"I only wish to frighten you, not to kill you," explained Atan Thome, as he continued to edge his way along the wall around the room, holding tightly to Magra's hand.

"Why?" demanded Tarzan.

"Because you have something I want—a route map to Ashair," replied Thome.

"I have no map," said Tarzan, "and once again I tell you that I never heard of Ashair. What is at Ashair that you want?"

"Why quibble, Brian Gregory?" snapped Atan Thome. "You know as well as I do that what we both want in Ashair is The Father of Diamonds. Will you work with me, or shall you continue to lie?"

Tarzan shrugged. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

"All right, you fool," growled Thome. "If you won't work with me, you'll not

live to work against me." He whipped a pistol from a shoulder holster and levelled it at the ape-man. "Take this!"

"You shan't!" cried Magra, striking the weapon up as Thome pressed the trigger; "you shall not kill Brian Gregory!"

Tarzan could not conceive what impelled this strange woman to intercede in his behalf, nor could Atan Thome, as he cursed her bitterly and dragged her through the doorway into the adjoining room before Tarzan could prevent him.

At the sound of the shot, d'Arnot, on the terrace below, leaped to his feet. "I knew it," he cried. "I knew there was something wrong."

Gregory and Helen rose to follow him. "Stay here, Helen," Gregory commanded; "we don't know what's going on up there."

"Don't be silly, Dad," replied the girl; "I'm coming with you."

Long experience had taught Gregory that the easiest way to control his daughter was to let her have her own way, inasmuch as she would have it anyway.

D'Arnot was in the upper hall calling Tarzan's name aloud by the time the Gregorys caught up with him, "I can't tell which room," he said.

"We'll have to try them all," suggested Helen.

Again d'Arnot called out to Tarzan,

and this tune the ape-man replied. A moment later the three stepped into the room from which his voice had come to see him trying to open a door in the left hand wall.

"What happened?" demanded d'Arnot, excitedly.

"A fellow tried to shoot me," explained Tarzan. "The woman who sent me the note struck up his gun; then he dragged her into that room and locked the door."

"What are you going to do?" asked Gregory.

"I am going to break down the door and go in after him," replied the ape-man.

"Isn't that rather dangerous?" asked

Gregory. "You say the fellow is armed."

For answer Tarzan hurled his weight against the door and sent it crashing into the next room. The ape-man leaped across the threshold. The room was vacant. "They've gone," he said.

"Stairs lead from that verandah to the service court in the rear of the hotel," said d'Arnot. "If we hurry, we might overtake them."

"No," said Tarzan; "let them go. We have Lal Taask. We can learn about the others from him." They turned back to re-enter the room they had just quitted. "We'll question him, and he'll answer." There was a grimness about his tone that, for some reason, made Helen think of a lion.

"If you didn't kill him," qualified d'Arnot.

"Evidently I didn't," replied the ape-man; "he's gone!"

"How terribly mysterious!" exclaimed Helen Gregory.

The four returned to their table on the terrace, all but Tarzan a little nervous and excited. Helen Gregory was thrilled. Here were mystery and adventure. She had hoped to find them in Africa, but not quite so far from the interior. Romance was there, too, at her elbow, sipping a cool drink; but she did not know it. Over the rim of his glass d'Arnot inspected her profile for the thousandth time.

"What did the woman look like?" Helen asked Tarzan.

"Taller than you, very black hair, slender, quite handsome," replied the ape-man.

Helen nodded. "She was sitting at that table at the end of the terrace before you came," she said. "A very foreign looking man was with her."

"That must have been Lal Taask," said Tarzan.

"She was a very striking looking girl," continued Helen. "Why in the world do you suppose she lured you to that room and then ended up by saving your life?"

Tarzan shrugged. "I know why she lured me to the room, but I don't understand why she struck up Atan Thome's hand to save me."

"What did they want of you?" asked d'Arnot.

"They think I am Brian Gregory, and they want a map of the route to Ashair—The Forbidden City. According to them The Father of Diamonds is there. They say your brother made such a map. Do you know anything about it? Is this safari of yours just for the purpose of finding The Father of Diamonds?" His last query was addressed to Gregory.

"I know nothing about any Father of Diamonds," replied Gregory. "My only interest is in finding my son."

"And you have no map?"

"Yes," said Helen, "we have a very rough map that Brian drew and enclosed in the last letter we received from him.

He never suspected that we'd have any use for it, and it was more by way of giving us an idea of where he was than anything else. It may not even be accurate, and it is certainly most sketchy. I kept it, however; and I still have it in my room."

"When the boy brought you the note," said d'Arnot, "you had just asked me why I had sent for you."

"Yes," said Tarzan.

"I was here in Loango on a special mission and met Monsieur and Mam'selle Gregory," explained d'Arnot. "I became very much interested in their problem; and when they asked me if I knew of any one who might help them find Ashair, I thought immediately of

you. I do not mean that I should venture to ask you to accompany them, but I know of no one in Africa better fitted to recommend a suitable man to take charge of their safari."

That half smile that d'Arnot knew so well, and which was more of the eyes than of the lips, lighted Tarzan's face momentarily. "I understand, Paul," he said. "I will take charge of their safari."

"But that is such an imposition," exclaimed Helen. "We could never ask you to do that."

"I think it will be interesting," said Tarzan—"since I have met Magra and Lal Taask and Atan Thome. I should like to meet them again. I think if I remain with you our paths shall cross."

"I have no doubt of it," said Gregory.

"Have you made any preparations?" asked Tarzan.

"Our safari is being gathered in Bonga," replied Gregory; "and I had tentatively employed a white hunter named Wolff to take charge of it, but of course now—"

"If he will come along as a hunter, we can use him," said Tarzan.

"He is coming to the hotel in the morning. We can talk with him then. I know nothing about him, other than that he had some rather good references."

Behind Wong Feng's shop is a heavily curtained room. A red lacquer Buddha rests in a little shrine. There are some excellent bronzes, a couple of priceless

screens, a few good vases; the rest is a hodge podge of papier-mâché, cheap cloisonné, and soapstone. The furniture is of teak, falling apart after the manner of Chinese furniture. Heavy hangings cover the only window, and the air is thick with incense —sticky, cloying. Atan Thome is there and Magra. The man is coldly, quietly furious.

"Why did you do it?" he demanded. "Why did you strike up my gun?"

"Because," commenced Magra; then she stopped.

"'Because!' 'Because!'" he mimicked. "The eternal feminine. But you know what I do to traitors!" He wheeled on her suddenly. "Do you love Gregory?"

"Perhaps," she replied, "but that is my

own affair. What concerns us now is getting to Ashair and getting The Father of Diamonds. The Gregorys are going there. That means they haven't the diamond, and that they do have a map. You know that Brian made a map. You saw him. We must get it, and I have a plan. Listen!" She came and leaned close to Thome and whispered rapidly.

The man listened intently, his face lighting with approval. "Splendid, my dear," he exclaimed. "Lal Taask shall do it tomorrow, if he has recovered sufficiently. Wong Feng's working on him now. But if that fails, we still have Wolff."

"If he lands the job," said Magra. "Let's have a look at Lal Taask."

They stepped into a small bedroom adjoining the room in which they had been talking. A Chinese was brewing something in a kettle over an oil lamp. Lal Taask lay on a narrow cot. He looked up as the two entered.

"How are you feeling?" asked Atan Thome.

"Better, Master," replied the man.

"Him all light mollow," assured Wong Feng.

"How in the world did you escape?" asked Magra.

"I just pretended to be unconscious," replied Lal Taask, "and when they went into the next room, I crawled into a closet and hid. After dark I managed to get down into the back court and come

here. I thought I was going to die though. I can almost believe that man when he says he's not Brian Gregory, unless he's developed an awful lot of strength since we saw him last."

"He's Brian Gregory all right," said Thome.

Wong poured a cupful of the concoction he had brewed and handed it to Lal Taask. "Dlink!" he said.

Lal Taask took a sip, made a wry face, and spat it out. "I can't drink that nasty stuff," he said. "What's in it?—dead cats?"

"Only li'l bit dead cat," said Wong. "You dlink!"

"No," said Lal Taask; "I'd just as soon die."

"Drink it," said Atan Thome.

Like a whipped cur, Lal Taask raised the cup to his lips and, gagging and choking, drained it.

CHAPTER 3

The Gregorys, with Tarzan and d'Arnot, were breakfasting on the terrace the next morning, when Wolff arrived. Gregory introduced him to Tarzan. "One o' them wildmen," observed Wolff, noting Tarzan's loin cloth and primitive weapons. "I seen another one once, but he ran around on all fours and barked like a dog. You taking it with us, Mr. Gregory?"

"Tarzan will be in full charge of the safari," said Gregory.

"What?" exclaimed Wolff. "That's my job."

"It was," said Tarzan. "If you want to come along as a hunter, there's a job

open for you."

Wolff thought for a moment. "I'll come," he said. "Mr. Gregory's goin' to need me plenty."

"We're leaving for Bonga on the boat tomorrow," said Tarzan. "Be there. Until then we shan't need you."

Wolff walked off grumbling to himself.

"I'm afraid you've made an enemy of him," said Gregory.

Tarzan shrugged. "I did nothing to him," he said, "but give him a job. He'll bear watching, though."

"I do not care for that fellow's looks," said d'Arnot.

"He has good recommendations,"

insisted Gregory.

"But he is, obviously, no gentleman," said Helen.

Her father laughed good-naturedly. "But we are hiring a hunter," he said. "Whom did you expect me to sign on, the Duke of Windsor?"

"I could have stood it," laughed Helen.

"Wolff has only to obey orders and shoot straight," said Tarzan.

"He's coming back," announced d'Arnot, and the others looked up to see Wolff approaching.

"I got to thinking," he said to Gregory, "that I ought to know just where we're goin'; so I could help lay out the route.

You see, we gotta be careful we don't get out o' good game country. You got a map?"

"Yes," replied Gregory. "Helen, you had it. Where is it?"

"In the top drawer of my dresser."

"Come on up, Wolff; and we'll have a look at it," said Gregory.

Gregory went directly to his daughter's room; and Wolff accompanied him, while the others remained on the terrace, chatting. The older man searched through the upper drawer of Helen's dresser for a moment, running through several papers, from among which he finally selected one.

"Here it is," he said, and spread it on a table before Wolff.

The hunter studied it for several minutes; then he shook his head. "I know the country part way," he said, "but I ain't never heard of none of these places up here—Tuen-Baka, Ashair." He pointed them out with a stubby forefinger. "Lemme take the map," he said, "and study it. I'll bring it back tomorrow."

Gregory shook his head. "You'll have plenty of time to study it with Tarzan and the rest of us on the boat to Bonga," he said; "and it's too precious—it means too much to me—to let out of my hands. Something might happen to it." He walked back to the dresser and replaced the map in the upper drawer.

"O.K.," said Wolff. "It don't make no

difference, I guess. I just wanted to help all I could."

"Thanks," said Gregory; "I appreciate it."

"Well then," said Wolff, "I'll be running along. See you at the boat tomorrow."

Captain Paul d'Arnot, being of an inventive turn of mind, discovered various reasons why he should remain in the vicinity of Helen Gregory the remainder of the morning. Luncheon was easy—he simply invited the Gregorys and Tarzan to be his guests; but when the meal was over, he lost her.

"If we're leaving for Bonga tomorrow," she said, "I'm going to do some shopping right now."

"Not alone?" asked d'Arnot.

"Alone," she replied, smiling.

"Do you think it quite safe? a white woman alone," he asked. "I'll be more than glad to go with you."

Helen laughed. "No man around while I'm shopping—unless he wants to pay the bills. Goodbye!"

Loango's bazaar lay along a narrow, winding street, crowded with Negroes, Chinese, East Indians, and thick with dust. It was an unsavory place of many odors—all strange to occidental nostrils and generally unpleasant. There were many jutting corners and dark doorways; and as Helen indulged the feminine predilection for shopping for something to shop for, Lal Taask, slithering from

corner to doorway, followed relentlessly upon her trail.

As she neared the shop of Wong Feng, she stopped before another stall to examine some trinkets that had attracted her eye; and while she was thus engaged, Lal Taask slipped past behind her and entered the shop of Wong Feng.

Helen dawdled a few moments before the stall; and then, unconscious of impending danger, approached the shop of Wong Feng; while, from the interior, Lal Taask watched her as a cat might watch a mouse. The girl was entirely off her guard, her mind occupied with thoughts of her shopping and anticipation of the adventurous expedition in search of her missing brother; so that she was

stunned into momentary inaction and helplessness as Lal Taask seized her as she was passing the shop of Wong Feng and dragged her through the doorway into the dark interior—but only for a moment. When she realized her danger, she struggled and struck at her assailant. She tried to scream for help; but the man clapped a palm roughly over her mouth, stifling her cries, even though they would have brought no help in this vicious neighborhood.

Lal Taask was a why, powerful man; and Helen soon realized the futility of struggling against him, as he dragged her toward the rear of the shop.

"Come quietly," he said, "and you will not be harmed."

"What do you want of me?" she asked, as he removed his palm from across her mouth.

"There is one here who would question you," replied Lal Taask. "It is not for me to explain—the master will do that. Whatever he advises will be for your own good—obey him in all things."

At the far end of the shop Lal Taask opened a door and ushered Helen into the dimly lighted room that we have seen before. Magra was standing at one side; and Helen recognized her as the woman who had lured Tarzan to the hotel room where, but for her, he would have been killed. The plump Eurasian sitting at the desk and facing her, she had never before seen; and now, for the first time,

she saw the face of the man who had seized her, and recognized him as the hotel companion of the woman.

"You are Helen Gregory?" asked the man at the desk.

"Yes. Who are you, and what do you want of me?"

"In the first place," said Atan Thome suavely, "let me assure you that I deeply regret the necessity for this seeming discourtesy. Your brother has something that I want. He would not listen to reason; so there was no other alternative than force."

"My brother? You have not talked with him. He is lost somewhere in the interior."

"Don't lie to me," snapped Thome. "I

know your brother well. I was with him on the first expedition. He reached Ashair and made a map of the vicinity, but he would not let me have a copy. He wanted The Father of Diamonds all for himself. It is the route map to Ashair that I want, and I shall hold you until I get it."

Helen laughed in his face. "Your intrigue and melodrama have been quite unnecessary," she said. "All that you would have had to do would have been to ask my father for the map. He would have let you make a copy of it. If this man will come back to the hotel with me, he can copy the map now." She indicated Lal Taask with a nod.

Atan Thome sneered. "You think you can trap me as easily as that?" he

demanded.

Helen made a gesture of resignation. "Go on with your play acting if you must," she said, "but it will only waste time and get everyone in trouble. What do you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to write and sign the note I shall dictate to your father," replied Thome. "If that doesn't bring the map, he'll never see you again. I'm leaving for the interior immediately, and I shall take you with me. There are sultans there who will pay a good price for you."

"You must be quite insane to think that you can frighten me with any such wild threats. Those things are not done today, you know, outside of story books. Hurry up and dictate your note; and I'll promise

you'll have the map back as quickly as your messenger can bring it, but what assurance have I that you'll keep your end of the bargain and release me?"

"You have only my word," replied Atan Thome, "but I can assure you that I have no wish to harm you. The map is all I wish. Come and sit here while I dictate."

As the sun sank into the west behind tall trees and the shadows lengthened to impart to Loango the semblance of a softened beauty the which the squalid little village did not possess in its own right, the three men discussing the details of the forthcoming safari became suddenly aware of the lateness of the hour.

"I wonder what can be keeping Helen," said Gregory; "it's almost dark. I don't like to have her out so late in a place like this. She should have been back long ago."

"She should never have gone alone," said d'Arnot. "It is not safe here for a woman."

"It is not," agreed Tarzan. "It is never safe where there is civilization."

"I think we should go and look for her," suggested d'Arnot.

"Yes," said Tarzan, "you and I. Mr. Gregory should remain here in case she returns."

"Don't worry, Monsieur Gregory," said d'Arnot, as he and Tarzan left the room; "I'm sure we'll find her safe and

sound in some curio shop," but his words were only to reassure Gregory. In his heart was only fear.

As he waited, Gregory tried to convince himself that there was nothing to worry about. He tried to read, but could not fix his mind upon the book. After he had reread one sentence half a dozen times without grasping its sense, he gave up; then he commenced to pace the floor, smoking one cigar after another. He was on the point of starting out himself to search when d'Arnot returned. Gregory looked at him eagerly.

D'Arnot shook his head. "No luck," he said. "I found a number of shop keepers who recalled seeing her, but none who knew when she left the bazaar."

"Where is Tarzan?" asked Gregory.

"He is investigating in the village. If the natives have any knowledge of her, Tarzan will get it out of them. He speaks their language in every sense of the term."

"Here he is now," said Gregory as the ape-man entered the room.

Both men looked up at him questioningly. "You didn't find any trace of her?" asked d'Arnot.

Tarzan shook his head. "None. In the jungle, I could have found her; but here —here, in civilization, a man cannot even find himself."

As he ceased speaking, a window pane crashed behind them; and a missile fell to the floor.

"Mon Dieu!" cried d'Arnot. "What is that?"

"Look out!" cried Gregory. "It may be a bomb."

"No," said Tarzan, "it is just a note tied to a stone. Here, let's have a look at it."

"It must be about Helen," said Gregory, taking the note from Tarzan's hand. "Yes, it is. It's from her. Listen! 'Dear Dad: The people who are holding me want Brian's road map to Ashair. They threaten to take me into the interior and sell me if they don't get it. I believe they mean it. Tie the map to stone and throw it out window. Do not follow their messenger, or they will kill me. They promise to return me unharmed as soon

as they get the map. Yes, it's from Helen all right, it's her handwriting. But the fools! They could have had the map for the asking. I only want to find Brian. I'll get the map."

He rose and went into Helen's room, which adjoined his. They heard him strike a match to light a lamp, and then give vent to an exclamation of astonishment that brought the other two men into the room. Gregory was standing before the open upper drawer of the dresser, his face white.

"It's gone," he said. "Some one has stolen the map!"

CHAPTER 4

In a squalid room, Wolff sat at a table laboriously wielding a pencil by the light of a kerosene lamp—evidently an unaccustomed task. Every time he made a mark, he wet the tip of the pencil on his tongue, which, in the interims, he chewed. At last his work was completed; and as he eyed it, not without pride, he heaved a sigh and rose.

"I guess this ain't a pretty night's work or anything!" he soliloquized complacently. "Now they'll both pay -- and how!"

Atan Thome sat alone in the back room of Wong Feng's shop. If he were nervous, the only outward indication of it was the innumerable cigarettes that he

smoked. Magra was guarding Helen in the little bedroom adjoining. All three were waiting for the return of Lal Taask with the route map to Ashair. Helen, alone, was positive that it would be forthcoming. The others only hoped.

"Will he let me go when the map comes?" asked Helen.

"He may have to keep you until he can get safely away," replied Magra, "but I'm sure he will let you go then."

"Poor Dad," said the girl. "He'll be worrying terribly. If there's going to be any delay about my release, I'd like to write him another note."

"I'll try and arrange it," said Magra. "I'm very sorry about all this, Miss Gregory," she added after a short

silence. "I am really quite as helpless in the matter as you, for reasons which I may not explain; but I may tell you that Atan Thome is obsessed by this desire to possess The Father of Diamonds. At heart he is not a bad man, but I know that he will stop at nothing to realize this one desire; so I hope your father sends the map."

"You really think that he would sell me in the interior if he didn't get it?" demanded the American girl.

"Absolutely," replied Magra. "If he were pressed, he might kill you."

Helen shuddered. "I am glad that he is going to get the map," she said.

Lal Taask opened the door to the back room of Wong Feng's shop, and entered.

Atan Thome looked up. "Well?" he inquired.

"They threw it out all right," said Taask; "here it is." He handed the paper to Thome. It was still wrapped around the stone. Thome opened it and read. His face turned dark.

"Is it the map?" asked Lal Taask.

"No," growled Thome. "They say the map has been stolen. They lie! They can't fool Atan Thome, though. They'll never see the girl again, and I'll find Ashair without their map. Listen! There is someone at the door. See who it is."

Lal Taask opened the door a crack and looked out. "It is Wolff," he said.

"Bring him in."

"Nice evening," said Wolff, as he entered the room.

"You didn't come here to tell me that," said Thome. "What is it?"

"What would you give for the route map to Ashair?" asked Wolff.

"Five hundred pounds," replied Thome.

"Not enough. Make it a thousand and a half interest in the diamond, and I'll get the map for you."

"How?"

"I already have it. I stole it from the girl's room."

"Have you got it here?" inquired Thome.

"Yes," replied Wolff, "but don't try

any funny business. I left a note with the old woman I'm stopping with. If I'm not back in an hour, she'll take it to the police."

"Let's see the map," said Thome.

Wolff took it from his pocket and held it up in front of the other man, but not near enough for him to snatch it. "Fork over the money, and the map's yours," he said.

Atan Thome drew a thick wallet from an inner pocket and counted out five hundred pounds in Bank of England notes.

"If I had that roll of yours I wouldn't be riskin' my neck lookin' for no Father of Diamonds," said Wolff, as he took the notes and stuffed them in his pocket.

"Are you still going along with the Gregory safari?" asked Thome.

"Sure," replied Wolff; "a poor man's got to work; but I'm goin' to be right with you when you get that diamond. I'm goin' to have my half."

"You can do something more to help me," said Thome, "that will also make the diamond safer for us."

"What's that?" asked Wolff, suspiciously.

"I'm going to have Magra try to go along with the Gregorys. You may be able to help in that. I want her to make friends with them—and make love to Brian Gregory; then if anything goes wrong she'll have some influence with them. I don't want to hang, and neither do

you."

"Where do I come in?" asked Wolff.

"You go along and lead them off onto a wrong trail. When they're good and lost, bring Magra up toward Ashair. You've seen the map; so you'll know about where to go. You'll find one of my old camps and wait there for me. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"And you'll do it?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"All right. Now go along. I'll be seeing you up around Ashair in a couple of months."

After Wolff had left, Thome turned to Lal Taask. "We've got to get out of here

tonight," he said. "Go down to the river and bribe the captain of that boat to get up steam and leave for Bonga tonight."

"You are very clever, Master," said Lal Taask. "You will let the young lady go, now that you have the map?"

"No. They didn't give me the map. They may catch up with us; and if they do, it will be just as well to have a hostage."

"Again, Master—you are clever."

It was past midnight when Atan Thome went aboard the river steamer with Lal Taask and Helen. At the gangplank he bid Magra goodbye. "Join the Gregory safari by any ruse," he directed. "They may reach Ashair, and I want some one with them I can trust. I

must be prepared for any eventuality. If they should beat me to it and get the diamond, you must find some way to communicate with me. You may even get an opportunity to steal the diamond. Watch Wolff. I don't trust him. He has agreed to lead them astray and then bring you up toward Ashair to meet me when I come out. It's a good thing you're in love with Brian Gregory. That will help. Work it for all its worth. I didn't like the idea at first; but when I got to thinking about it, I saw where we could make use of it. Now, goodbye; and remember all I have told you."

Taask and Helen had boarded the steamer, the man walking very close to the girl, his pistol pressed against her

side, lest she make an outcry.

"I think you are very foolish not to set her free," said Magra.

"I can't now," replied Thome—"not until after you have left the Gregory party. Can't you see?"

"Well, see that no harm comes to her—remember the arm of English law is long." Then Magra turned and walked back into the village.

After a sleepless night of searching for Helen, Gregory, Tarzan, and d'Arnot were gathered in Gregory's room to formulate their plans.

"I'm afraid there's nothing left to do but notify the authorities," said d'Arnot.

"I suppose you're right," agreed

Gregory. "I was so afraid they'd kill her if we notified the police, but now there seems to be nothing else to do."

There was a knock at the door, and the three men looked up. "Come in!" said Gregory.

The door swung slowly open, and Magra stepped into the room.

"You!" exclaimed d'Arnot.

She paid no attention to him, but looked straight at Tarzan. "Brian Gregory," she said, "I have come to help you find your sister."

"What do you know about her? Where is she?" demanded Gregory.

"Atan Thome is taking her into the interior. He left for Bonga on the river

boat last night."

"But the boat doesn't sail until today," interrupted d'Arnot.

"Atan Thome bribed the captain to sail last night," Magra explained. "I was to have gone, but—well, why I didn't is immaterial."

"This woman is not to be trusted," said Tarzan.

"You can trust me—always, Brian Gregory." She turned to Gregory. "If you doubt me, keep me with you—as a hostage, perhaps. It is possible that I may be able to help you."

Gregory appeared not to hear her. He seemed stunned. "Both my children," be said. "First Brian, now Helen, sacrificed—and for what?"

"Do not despair, Monsieur Gregory," said d'Arnot. "There must be a way."

"But how?" demanded the older man. "In four days Thome will be in Bonga. The boat will lie there at least one day. Coming back with the current, she will make the return trip in two and a half days, perhaps. Even if we can persuade the captain to return to Bonga immediately Thome will have had six or seven days start of us. He will be far into the interior. He probably has the map that was stolen from Helen's room. We have none. We will not know where to look for him."

"Do not worry on that score," urged d'Arnot. "If Thome is in Africa, Tarzan of the Apes will find him."

"Yes," agreed Gregory, dully, "but what will have happened to my poor girl in the mean time?"

"Wait!" exclaimed d'Arnot. "I have it! There is yet a way. We have a naval seaplane here. I'm sure the authorities will fly us to Bonga. We shall be there when Monsieur Thome lands. What a surprise for Monsieur Thome, eh?"

"Wonderful!" cried Gregory. "How can I ever thank you, Captain?"

Whatever her reaction, Magra's face showed no emotion.

CHAPTER 5

At D'Arnot's request, the authorities were glad to co-operate; and with a delay of only a couple of hours the party was boarding a seaplane anchored in the river. Magra's expression suggested utmost self-satisfaction, as d'Arnot helped her aboard from the native canoe that had brought the party from shore. Wolff, who had never flown, swaggered a bit to hide his inward perturbation. Ogabi's eyes rolled fearfully.

"You see how easily everything was arranged?" exclaimed d'Arnot.

"Thanks to you," replied Gregory.

"How long will it take you to fly to Bonga, Lieutenant?" Tarzan asked the

pilot.

"Between two and three hours," replied Lavac.

"It will take the steamer four days, against the current," said d'Arnot. "Atan Thome will find a reception committee waiting at the dock."

As the plane raced up the river into the wind for the take-off, Ogabi closed his eyes and clutched the seat with both hands. When he opened his eyes again, he looked down upon the top of a forest. His face was no longer dark—it was a sickly ashen color.

"This is no place for man, Bwana, in belly of bird," he said to Tarzan.

"But you are a man, Ogabi," replied the ape-man; "therefore you are not

afraid. Remember that when the storm strikes us."

"What storm?" asked Gregory.

"A storm is coming," replied Tarzan.

"How do you know?" demanded Gregory. "There is not a cloud in the sky."

"Tarzan always knows," said d'Arnot.

How Tarzan had known that a storm was approaching, not even he could have explained. Perhaps he shared with the wild things, by which and among which he had been raised, a peculiar sensitivity beyond the appreciation of men. However that may be, a half hour after he had foretold it, the ship raced into the heart of a tropical storm.

Lavac, who was accustomed to sudden tropical storms, assumed that it covered but a small area and would soon be astern of them. An experienced flier, with a ship equipped with all the instruments necessary for blind flying, he merely increased his elevation and flew into it. The ship rolled and tossed, and Ogabi became a few shades lighter. Wolff clenched his fists until his knuckles were white.

After an hour of it, Lavac turned and motioned d'Arnot to come forward. "It's worse than I'd anticipated, Captain," he said. "Had I better turn back?"

"Got plenty of petrol?" asked d'Arnot.

Lavac nodded. "Yes, sir," he replied.

"Everything else all right?"

"I'm not so sure about the compass."

"Then we wouldn't be any better off flying back than going on," said d'Arnot. "Let's keep on. We're bound to be out of it sooner or later."

For two long hours more Lavac bucked the storm; then the engine spluttered. D'Arnot went forward hurriedly; but before he reached Lavac's side, the engine caught itself again and was purring sweetly. It had been a tense moment for these two. D'Arnot breathed a deep sigh of relief— and then the engine spluttered again and stopped. Lavac worked furiously with a hand pump. D'Arnot turned back toward the cabin.

"Fasten your life belts," he said. "We

may have to come down."

"The line's clogged," said Lavac, "and I can't clear it."

D'Arnot glanced at the altimeter. "You've got about three thousand meters," he said. "The average elevation in the vicinity of Bonga is around two hundred. Glide as far as you can, looking for a hole."

"And if I don't find one?" asked Lavac.

D'Arnot shrugged and grimaced. "You're the pilot," he said, "and I understand you're a very good one."

"Thanks," said Lavac. "It will take a very good pilot to fly this ship through a forest. I am not that good. Are you going to tell them?"

"What's the use?" asked d'Arnot.

"They might wish to take up some matters with God—matters they have been neglecting to discuss with Hun."

"What's wrong?" demanded Wolff. "The engine isn't running."

"You have answered your own question," said d'Arnot, walking back to his seat.

"We're coming down," said Wolff. "He can't see to land. We'll crash."

"Be calm," admonished d'Arnot; "we have not crashed yet."

The passengers sat in tense expectancy as the ship nosed down through storm racked clouds.

"What altitude now, Lavac?" asked

d'Arnot.

"Three hundred meters."

"That means we can't be more than three hundred feet from ground at the best," said Gregory. "I remember looking at a map the other day. Nearly all this country back here runs about six hundred feet elevation."

Suddenly Wolff leaped to his feet. "I can't stand it," he cried. "I'm going to jump!"

Tarzan seized him and threw him back into his seat. "Sit still," he said.

"Yes, sit still!" snapped d'Arnot. "Is it not bad enough without that?"

Lavac voiced an exclamation of relief. "We're out of it!" he cried, "and

there's water just below us."

A moment later the ship glided to an easy landing on the bosom of a little lake. Only the forest and the jungle were there to welcome it. If there were eyes to see, they remained hidden; and the voices of the jungle were momentarily stilled. The rain beat upon the water, and the wind moaned in the forest. Of these things and of their miraculous escape from death Ogabi was unconscious—he had fainted.

"Do you know where we are, Lieutenant?" asked d'Arnot.

"I haven't the least idea," replied Lavac, "—never saw this lake before."

"Then we are lost?" asked Gregory.

Lavac nodded. "I'm afraid so, sir. My

compass wasn't behaving very well; and then, naturally, we must have been blown way off our course."

"How lonely and depressing it looks," said Magra.

"It is the jungle," breathed Tarzan, almost as one might say, "It is home!"

"How discouraging," said Gregory. "Just when it seemed certain that we had overcome every obstacle and found a way to circumvent Thome and rescue Helen, this had to happen. Now we are absolutely helpless. We shall never reach her now, poor child."

"Non! Non! my dear Monsieur Gregory, you must not give up," said d'Arnot. "This is only a temporary delay. Lieutenant Lavac will have that fuel line

cleared in no time, and as soon as the weather lifts we'll take off again. We have plenty of time. Thome will not reach Bonga for three days yet. As soon as the weather clears, the lieutenant can find Bonga even with no compass at all."

Lavac worked on the fuel line for half an hour; then he called d'Arnot. "The line was not clogged, sir," he said. He looked worried.

"Then what was the trouble?" demanded d'Arnot.

"We are out of fuel. The tank must have been leaking badly, as we had a full load when we left."

"But the reserve tank—what of that?" demanded d'Arnot.

"It was the reserve tank that leaked,

and we have emptied the other."

D'Arnot shook his head. "That poor little girl!" he said.

CHAPTER 6

Ogabi was singing as he grilled antelope steaks over a fire beside which lay the carcass of the animal. Ogabi's spirits had been rising for four days, for now he was four marches away from that horrible bird thing, in the belly of which he had almost ridden to his death. He had been very fearful that the white men would decide to return to it and fly again. If they had, however, he should have run away into the jungle and hidden. Five white men sat around the fire watching him. "Pretty well convinced you know where we are now, Tarzan?" asked d'Arnot.

"Yes. I'm quite certain that we are east of Bonga and a little south. That

buck I killed ranges in that district."

"Thome probably left Bonga today," said Gregory.

"By the time we reach Bonga he'll be many marches ahead of us. We'll never overtake him."

"We don't have to go to Bonga," said Tarzan. "We can strike out directly northeast and cut his trail; then we can follow! on faster than he can travel — boys with packs will slow him down. We're not handicapped by anything like that."

"You mean we can travel without porters or provisions?" demanded Gregory.

"We have been for the last four days," Tarzan reminded him. He looked quickly

about the camp. "Where's Magra?" he asked. "I told her not to leave camp. This is lion country; and, if I'm right about the location, it's also cannibal country."

Magra had not meant to go far from the camp; but the forest was intriguing, and it seemed so quiet and peaceful. She walked slowly, enjoying the blooms, watching the birds. She stopped before a lovely orchid, which, like some beautiful woman, sucked the Me blood from the giant that supported it. Presently she recalled Tarzan's injunction, and turned to retrace her steps to camp. She did not see the great lion behind her which had caught her scent and was stalking her on silent, padded feet.

The men in the camp saw Tarzan rise to his feet, his head up, his nostrils quivering; then, to their amazement, they saw him run a few steps, swing into a tree, and disappear. They did not know that Usha, the wind, had brought the acrid scent spoor of Numa, the lion, to the sensitive nostrils of the ape-man, and that mingled with it was the delicate scent of the perfume that Magra loved, revealing to him an impending tragedy and sending him into the trees in the hope that he would reach the scene in time.

As Magra walked toward camp, an angry snarl from the king of beasts brought her suddenly about to awareness of the danger that confronted her.

Instantly she realized the hopelessness of her situation and the futility of calling for help that could not reach her in time to prevent the inevitable. With her accustomed courage, she resigned herself to death; but even with death staring her in the face, she could scarcely restrain an involuntary exclamation of admiration for the magnificence of the great beast facing her. His size, his majestic bearing, the sheer ferocity of his snarling mien thrilled every fiber of her being. She did not want to die, but she felt that there could be no more noble death than beneath the mighty fangs and talons of the king of beasts.

Now the lion was creeping toward

her, belly to ground, the end of his tail twitching nervously. Just for a yard or so he came thus; then he rose, but still crouching a little as he advanced. Suddenly, with a mighty roar, he charged; and at the same instant a man leaped from a tree above full upon his back.

"Brian!" she cried, with a gasp of astonishment.

The man clung to the back of the carnivore, his growls mingling with those of the great cat, as he drove his hunting knife again and again into the tawny side of the leaping, striking beast. Thrilled and horrified, Magra watched, fascinated, until the pierced heart ceased forever, and the great beast died. Then

Magra had reason to shudder in real horror, as the Lord of the Jungle placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and voiced the victory cry of the bull ape. Every fiber of the girl's body vibrated to a new thrill as she watched the man she now knew was not Brian Gregory.

As the uncanny cry broke the stillness of the jungle, Wolff, Gregory, and Lavac sprang to their feet. Wolff seized his rifle. "My God!" he cried. "What was that?"

"Tarzan has a made a kill," said d'Arnot.

"The Big Bwana has killed Simba," said Ogabi. "Are the white men deaf that they did not hear Simba roar?"

"Sure I heard it," said Wolff; "but that

wild man never killed no lion —he had nothin' but a knife. I'd better go out there an' look after him." Carrying his rifle, he started in the direction of the sound that had startled them, Gregory and Lavac following. "That yell was when the lion got him," said Wolff. "He's deader'n a smelt right now."

"He doesn't look very dead to me," said Lavac, as Tarzan and Magra came into view.

"I'm afraid I was so out of breath that I didn't—well, thank is a most inadequate word under the circumstance; but I can't think of another —thank you for saving my life. How silly and banal that sounds, but you know what I'm trying to say. You were wonderful, and a

little terrifying, too; but I know now that you are not Brian Gregory. He could not have killed the lion as you did. No other man in the world could have done it."

She paused. "Until a few minutes ago, I thought that I loved Brian."

The implication of Magra's words and tone was quite apparent, yet Tarzan elected to ignore it. "We shall do our best to find him," he said, "not only on Mr. Gregory's account but on yours."

Magra shrugged. She was rebuffed, but she could bide her time. "And the diamond?" she asked.

"I'm not interested in that," said Tarzan.

A well equipped safari moved toward the northeast ten marches out of

Bonga. A girl and two men were the only whites, but the porters seemed to be carrying enough equipment and provisions for two or three times that number.

"Rather clever of me," said one of the men to the girl, "taking your father's safari. It will take him a week or longer to get another one together and equip it. By that tune we'll be so far ahead that he'll never overtake us. I should like to see his face when he reaches Bonga and learns the truth."

"You are about as clever as the late Mr. Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson," replied Helen, "and you'll end up the same way."

"Who were they?" demanded Thome.

"They were kidnapers and murderers who were also addicted to grand larceny. If you were not a fool, you'd turn me loose and send me back to Bonga. You have the map. I can be of no further use to you. Until I am returned safely to him, my father will never give up until he finds you. I can't see why you want to hold me any longer."

"Perhaps I have taken a liking to you, my dear," replied Thome.

The girl shuddered at the implication of the man's words. All the rest of the day she plodded on in silence waiting always for a chance to escape, but either Atan Thome or Lal Taask was always at her side. She was spent and weary when they finally made camp, but much of her

weariness was from nervous exhaustion—all day long the words of Atan Thome had preyed upon her mind.

After the evening meal, she went to her tent, which had been pitched across the camp from that occupied by Thome, for the man knew that while she might attempt to escape by day, she would not dare to venture the dangers of the forest by night.

Thome and Taask stood talking before the former's tent, Thorne's eyes upon the girl entering hers. The two men had been talking, and Lal Taask was watching the other intently.

"You are my master, Atan Thome," he said; "but out of loyalty, your servant must warn you. The girl is white, and the

arm of the white man's power is long. Into the depth of the jungle or to the frozen wastes of the poles it would reach and drag you back to an accounting."

"Mind your own affairs," snapped Thome. "I mean the girl no harm."

"I am glad to hear you say that. I do not want the white man's anger upon me. If you are wise you will do as the girl suggested. Send her back to Bonga tomorrow."

Atan Thome thought a moment; then he nodded. "Perhaps you are right," he said. "She shall go back to Bonga tomorrow, if she wishes."

The two men separated, each going to his own tent; and silence fell upon the

sleeping camp, a single askari, nodding beside the beast fire, the only suggestion of life within the rude boma that had been thrown up against the intrusion of predatory beasts.

Presently Atan Thome emerged from his tent. His eyes swept the camp. Only the askari was in evidence. At sight of Thome, he simulated an alertness which was, considering the hour and his inclinations, anachronistic; but he was sufficiently aroused to watch the white man creep silently across the camp; and when he understood Atan Thome's evident goal, he grinned. In the distance, a lion roared. This and the love note of the cicada alone broke the silence of the night.

Sleepless from nervous apprehension, Helen's mind was filled with dread and misgiving. The altered attitude of Atan Thome worried her. Every slightest sound bore a menace to her expectant ears. Finally she rose from her couch and looked out through the flap of her tent. Her heart sank as she saw Atan Thome creeping toward her.

Again a lion roared out of the mysterious void of blackness that was the jungle night, but a far greater menace lay in the oily man who parted the flaps at the front of the girl's tent. An aura of repulsiveness surrounded Thome. The girl had always sensed it, feeling in his presence as one might in the presence of a cobra.

Atan Thome pushed the curtains aside and stepped into the tent. The ingratiating, oily smile upon his lips vanished as he discovered that it was vacant. He did not know that the girl had crawled beneath the back wall but a moment before he had entered. For all he knew she might have been gone an hour or more; but he was sure that she must be somewhere about the camp, for he could not imagine that she would have dared the dangers of the jungle night to escape him. Yet this was what she had done.

Frightened, she groped through the darkness which was only partly moderated by the newly risen moon. Again the roar of a hunting lion reverberated through the forest, nearer

now; and her heart sank. Yet she steeled herself and stumbled on, more terrified by thoughts of the man behind her than of the lion ahead. She hoped the beast would continue to roar, for in this way she could always locate its position. It it stopped roaring, that might mean that it had caught her scent and was stalking her.

By accident she had stumbled upon a game trail, and this she followed. She thought that it was the back trail toward Bonga, but it was not. It ran in a more southerly direction, which was, perhaps, just as well for her, as the lion was on the Bonga trail; and the sound of its roars receded as she stumbled on through the forest.

After a night of terror, the girl came to an open plain during the early morning. When she saw it, she knew that she had missed the trail to Bonga, for the safari had crossed no plain like this on its trek from the river town. She realized that she was lost, and now she had no plan other than to escape from Thome. Her future, her life lay in the palm of a capricious Fate. How, in this savage land, it could be other than a cruel Fate, she could not imagine; yet she must carry on—and hope.

She was so glad to be out of the forest that she struck out across the plain toward a range of low hills, ignoring the fact that while the forest might be gloomy and depressing, it offered her

concealment and escape from many dangers among the branches of its trees. Behind her lay Thome and the memory of the hunting lion. It was well for her peace of mind that she did not know what lay just ahead.

CHAPTER 7

Chemungo, son of Mpingu, Chief of the Buiroos, was hunting with three other warriors for a man-eater which had been terrorizing the villages of his people. They had tracked him through the hills to the edge of a plain beyond which lay a forest; but when they reached a low elevation from which they could survey the plain, they discovered other quarry than that for which they were hunting.

"A white woman," said Chemungo; "we shall take her to my father."

"Wait," counselled a companion; "there will be white men with guns."

"We can wait and see," agreed Chemungo, "for she comes this way.

Perhaps there are no white men."

"White women do not come here without white men," insisted the other warrior.

"She may have wandered away from camp and become lost," argued Chemungo; "these white women are very helpless and very stupid. See, she has no weapons; so she is not hunting; therefore she must be lost."

"Perhaps Chemungo is right," admitted the other.

They waited until Helen was well out into the plain; then Chemungo, leaping to his feet, signalled the others to follow him; and the three ran toward the white girl, shouting and waving their spears.

So sudden and so unexpected was the

appearance of this new menace that, for a moment, Helen stood paralyzed by terror, almost regretting that she had left either Thome or the lion; then she turned and fled back toward the forest.

Lithe, athletic, the girl seemed in a fair way to outdistance her pursuers. She felt that if she could reach the forest before they overtook her, she might elude them entirely. Behind her, the cries of Chemungo and his fellows were angry cries now, threatening cries, as they redoubled their efforts to overtake their quarry. Terror lent wings to the girl's flying feet; and the warriors, burdened by their spears and shields, were falling behind. Helen, glancing over her shoulder, felt that escape was almost

assured, when her retreat was suddenly cut off by the appearance of a great lion which was emerging from the forest directly in front of her. It was the man-eater.

The pursuing warriors redoubled their shouting; and the lion, confused, paused momentarily. Now, indeed was the girl faced by a major dilemma, either horn of which would prove fatal. In an attempt to escape both, she turned to the right—a brave but futile gesture of self-preservation. The moving quarry attracted the lion, which started in pursuit, while the warriors, apparently unafraid, raced to intercept him. They might have succeeded had not Helen tripped and fallen.

As the girl fell, the lion charged and sprang upon her prostrate form; but the shouts of the warriors and their proximity attracted his snarling attention before he had mauled her; and as the four closed in upon him, Chemungo cast his spear. It seemed an act of temerity rather than of courage; but these were warriors of a famous lion-hunting clan, well versed in the technique of their dangerous sport.

Chemungo's spear drove deep into the body of the lion; and, simultaneously, those of two of his companions; the fourth warrior held his weapon in reverse. Roaring horribly, the lion abandoned the girl and charged Chemungo, who threw himself backward

upon the ground, his entire body covered by his great shield, while the other warriors danced around them, yelling at the top of their lungs, irritating and confusing the lion; and the fourth warrior awaited his opportunity to drive home the lethal thrust. It came presently, and the lion fell with the spear through his savage heart.

Then Chemungo leaped up and dragged the hapless girl to her feet. She was too stunned by the frightful ordeal through which she had passed to feel either fear or relief. She was alive! Later she was to wonder if it would not have been better had she died.

For hours they dragged her roughly across the plain and through hills to

another valley and a village of thatched huts surrounded by a palisade; and as they dragged her through the village street, angry women surrounded them, striking at the girl and spitting upon her. She showed no fear, but half smiled as she likened them to a roomful of envious old women in some civilized city, who might have done likewise but for their inhibitions.

Chemungo took her before his father, Mpingu, the chief. "She was alone," said Chemungo. "No white man can ever know what we do with her. The women wish her killed at once."

"I am chief," snapped Mpingu. "We shall kill her tonight," he added hastily, as he caught the eye of one of his wives.

"Tonight we shall dance —and feast."

The Gregory safari debouched from a forest at the edge of a plain which stretched before them, tree dotted, to the foot of a cone- shaped hill. "I know where we are now," said Tarzan, pointing at the hill. "We'll have to travel north and west to reach Bonga."

"If we had grub and porters we wouldn't have to go back," volunteered Wolff.

"We've got to go back to Bonga to get on Thorne's trail and find Helen," said Gregory. "If we only had the map, we'd be all right on that score."

"We don't need no map," said Wolff. "I know the way to Ashair."

"That's odd," commented Tarzan.

"Back in Loango you said you didn't know the way."

"Well, I know it now," growled Wolff, "and if Gregory wants to pay me a thousand pounds and cut me in on the diamond, fifty-fifty, I'll take him to Ashair."

"I think you are a crook," said the ape-man, "but if Gregory wants to pay you, I'll take him through without porters."

Catching Tarzan entirely off his guard, and without warning, Wolff knocked the ape-man down. "There can't no damn monkey-man call me a crook," he cried, whipping his pistol from its holster; but before he could fire, Magra seized his arm.

"If I were you, Monsieur Wolff," said d'Arnot, "I should run. I should run very fast—before Tarzan gets up."

But Tarzan was already up; and before Wolff could escape, he seized him by the throat and belt and lifted him high above his head, as though to hurl him to the ground.

"Don't kill him, Tarzan!" cried Gregory, stepping forward. "He is the only man who can lead us to Ashair. I will pay him what he asks. He can have the diamond, if there is one. All I want is to find my daughter and my son. Thome is on his way to Ashair. If Helen is with him, Wolff offers our only hope of rescuing her."

"As you wish," said the ape-man,

dropping Wolff upon the ground.

The safari crossed the plain and, skirting the foot of the cone- shaped hill, entered a forest, where camp was made beside a small stream. It was a most primitive camp, as they had no equipment—just rude shelters, a makeshift boma, and a fire. Magra, being the only woman, fared best. Hers was the largest and best constructed shelter, the shelters of the men encircling it for protection. As she stood before it, Wolff passed; and she stopped him. It was the first opportunity she had had to speak to him alone since his altercation with Tarzan.

"Wolff, you are a scoundrel," she said. "You promised Atan Thome you'd

lead Gregory off the trail. Now you've sold out to him and promised to lead him to Ashair. When I tell Atan Thome that —" She shrugged. "But you do not know Atan Thome as well as I."

"Perhaps you will not tell Atan Thome anything," replied Wolff, meaningly.

"Don't threaten me," warned the girl. "I'm not afraid of you. Either of two men would kill you if I said the word. Tarzan would wring your neck openly. Thome would have some one stick a knife in your back."

"He might do the same to you, if I told him you were in love with the monkey-man," shot back Wolff; and Magra flushed.

"Don't be a fool," she said. "I have to keep on the good side of these people; and if you had even a semblance of good sense, you'd do the same."

"I don't want to have nothing to do with that monkey-man," growled Wolff. "Me and him ain't in the same class."

"That's obvious," said Magra.

"But with me and you it's different," continued Wolff, ignoring the implication. "We ought to be more friendly. Don't you know we could have a swell time if you'd loosen up a bit? I ain't such a bad fellow when you gets to know me."

"I'm glad to hear that. I was afraid you were."

Wolff knitted his brows. He was

trying to digest this when his attention was attracted to Tarzan. "There goes the monkey-man," he said. "Look at him swingin' through the trees. You can't tell me he ain't half monkey."

Magra, tiring of Wolff, walked toward d'Arnot just as Gregory came up. "Where's Tarzan going?" asked the latter.

"To reconnoiter for a native village," replied the Frenchman, "on the chance we can get some supplies and a few 'boys'—askaris and porters, and, perhaps, a cook. That would give Tarzan a chance to go on ahead and search for your daughter."

As the Lord of the Jungle swung through the trees in search of some

indication of the presence of native habitation his active mind reviewed the events of the past several weeks. He knew that three scoundrels were pitted against him—Thome, Taask, and Wolff. He could cope with them, but could he cope with Magra? He could not understand the girl. Twice she had saved him from the bullets of would-be assassins, yet he knew that she was an associate, perhaps an accomplice, of Thome. The first time it might have been because she had thought him to be Brian Gregory, but now she knew better. It was all quite beyond him. With a shrug, he dismissed the whole matter from his mind, content to know that he was forewarned and, consequently, on guard.

The day was coming to a close as Tarzan gave up the search for a native village and decided to return to camp. Suddenly he stood erect upon a branch of a great tree, head up, statuesque, alert, listening. A vagrant breeze had brought to his nostrils the scent of Wappi, the antelope, suggesting that he take meat back to camp; but as he prepared to stalk his prey, the booming of distant native drums came faintly to his ears.

CHAPTER 8

As night fell, Helen, lying bound in a filthy hut, heard the booming of drums in the village street outside. Eerie and menacing they sounded, mysterious, threatening. She felt that they were beating for her—a savage, insistent dirge, foretelling death. She wondered what form it would take, when it would come to her. She felt that she might almost welcome it as an escape from the terror that engulfed her. Presently, warriors came and jerked her roughly to her feet after removing the bonds that confined her ankles; then they dragged her out into the village street before the hut of Mpingu, the chief, and tied her to a stake, while around her milled

screaming women and shouting warriors. In the glare of the cooking fires the whole scene seemed to the doomed girl the horrible phantasmagoria of some hideous nightmare from which she must awaken. It was all too fantastic to be real, but when a spear point pierced her flesh and warm blood flowed she knew she did not dream.

A well equipped safari lay in an ordered camp. Porters and askaris squatted around tiny cook fires; and before the central beast fire, two men who were not natives talked with Mbuli, the headman, while faintly from afar came the sullen sound of native drums.

"They are at it," said Atan Thome. "Mbuli tells me this is cannibal country

and that we had better get out quickly. Tomorrow we'll make a long trek toward Ashair. The girl is lost. The drums may be for her."

"Her blood is on your head, master," said Lal Taask.

"Shut up," snapped Thome. "She is a fool. She might have lived happily and enjoyed the fruits of The Father of Diamonds."

Lal Taask shook his head. "The ways of women are beyond the comprehension of even thou, master. She was very young and very beautiful; she loved life; and you took it from her. I warned you, but you would not heed. Her blood is on your head."

Atan Thome turned irritably away, but

the drums followed him to his tent and would give him no rest.

"The drums!" said d'Arnot. "I do not like them; so often they spell death for some poor devil. The first time I heard them, I was tied to a stake; and a lot of painted devils were dancing around me pricking me with spears. They don't quite kill you at first, they just torture you and let you live as long as possible so that you may suffer more, for your suffering is their pleasure."

"But how did you escape?" asked Lavac.

"Tarzan came," said d'Arnot.

"He has not returned," said Magra. "I am afraid for him. Perhaps the drums are for him."

"Do you suppose they could have gotten him?" asked Gregory.

"No such luck," snarled Wolff. "The damn monkey has as many lives as a cat."

D'Arnot turned angrily away; and Gregory, Lavac, and Magra followed him, leaving Wolff alone, listening to the beating of the distant drums.

The drums had carried their message to Tarzan. They told him of impending torture and sacrifice and death. The lives of strangers meant nothing to the ape-man, who, all his life, had lived with death. It was something that came to all creatures. He had no fear of it, he who feared nothing. To avoid it was a game that added zest to life. To pit his

courage, his strength, his agility, his cunning against Death, and win—there was the satisfaction. Some day Death would win, but to that day Tarzan gave no thought. He could fight or he could run away; and in either event preserve his self- respect, for only, a fool throws his life away uselessly; and Tarzan had no respect for fools; but if the stake warranted it, he could lightly accept the gravest risks.

As he heard the drums against the new night, he thought less of their sinister portent than of the fact that they would guide him to a native village where, perhaps, he might obtain porters later. First, however, he must reconnoiter and investigate to learn the temper of the

natives. If they were fierce and warlike, he must avoid their country, leading his little party around it; and the message of the drums suggested that this would be the case.

As the radio beam guides the flyer, the drums of the Buiroos guided Tarzan as he swung through the trees toward their village. He moved swiftly, anticipating a sport he had enjoyed many times in the course of his savage existence—that of frustrating the Gomangani in the exercise of weird rites of torture and death. The drums told him that a victim was to die, but that death had not as yet been meted out. Who the victim was, was of no importance to the ape-man. All that mattered was the sport

of cheating the torturers of the final accomplishment of their aims. Perhaps he would arrive in time, perhaps not. Also, if he did arrive in time, he might fail to accomplish his design. It was these factors that lent interest to the savage game that Tarzan loved to play.

As Tarzan neared the village of Mpingu, the chief, Atan Thome and Lal Taask sat smoking beside the fire that burned brightly in their camp as a discourager of predatory felines.

"Curse those drums!" snapped Lal Taask. "They give me the creeps; they have my nerves on edge."

"Tomorrow night we shall not hear them," said Atan Thome, "for then we shall be a long way on the trail to Ashair

—to Ashair and The Father of Diamonds."

"Wolff will have difficulty catching up with us," said Lal Taask, "and if we come back from Ashair by another route, he will never catch up with us."

"You forget Magra," said Thome.

"No," replied Taask; "I do not forget Magra. She will find her way to Paris as the homing pigeon finds its cote. We shall see her there."

"You underestimate Wolff's cupidity," said Thome. "He will come through for his half of the diamond. Never fear."

"And get this!" Lal Taask touched his knife.

"You are psychic," laughed Thome.

"Those drums!" growled Lal Taask.

"Those drums!" exclaimed Magra. "Did you ever hear anything so horribly insistent?"

"A radio fan's nightmare," said Gregory; "a boring broadcast that one can't dial out."

"I am so worried about Tarzan," said Magra, "out there all alone in that awful forest."

"I wouldn't worry too much about him," d'Arnot reassured her; "he has spent his life in awful forests, and has a way of taking care of himself."

Wolff grunted. "We don't need him nohow. I can take you to Ashair. We'd be well rid of the monkey-man."

"I've heard about all of that that I care to, Wolff," said d'Arnot. "Tarzan is our only hope either of reaching Ashair or getting out of this country alive. You stick to your hunting job. Even at that you haven't been doing so well. Tarzan has brought in all the meat we've had so far."

"Listen!" exclaimed Lava. "The drums! They've stopped."

The howling pack circled the helpless girl. Now and then a spear point touched her lightly, and involuntarily her flesh recoiled. Later the torture might be more excruciating, or some maddened savage, driven to frenzy by the excitement of the dance, might plunge his spear through her heart and with unintentional mercy

deliver her from further suffering.

As Tarzan reached the edge of the clearing where lay the village of Mpingu, the chief, he dropped to the ground and ran swiftly toward the palisade. This side of the village was in darkness, and he knew that all the tribesmen would be gathered around the great fire that lighted the foliage of the trees that grew within the village. He would not be seen, and what slight noise he might make would be drowned by the throbbing of the drums.

With the agility of Sheeta, the panther, he scaled the palisade and dropped down into the shadow of the huts beyond; then he crept silently toward a great tree which overhung the hut of the

chief and commanded a view of the main street of the village, where the fire burned and the dancers leaped and howled. Swinging up among the branches, he crossed to the other side of the tree and looked down upon the scene of savagery below. It was almost with a sense of shock that he recognized the victim at the stake. He saw the horde of armed warriors incited to frenzy by the drums, the dancing, the lust for human flesh. He fitted an arrow to his bow.

As one of the dancing savages, carried away by the excitement of the moment, paused before the girl and raised his short spear above his head to drive it through her heart a sudden hush fell upon the expectant assemblage; and

Helen closed her eyes. The end had come! She breathed a silent prayer. The ominous hush was broken only by the increased madness of the drums; then came a scream of mortal agony.

The assurance of the savages vanished, as an arrow, mysteriously sped, pierced the heart of the executioner. It was then that the drums stopped.

At the scream of the stricken warrior, Helen opened her eyes. A man lay dead at her feet, and consternation was written on the faces of the savage Buiroos. She saw one, braver than the rest, creeping toward her with a long knife ready in his hand; then a weird and uncanny cry rang out from somewhere

above her, as Tarzan of the Apes rose to his full height; and, raising his face to Goto, the Moon, voiced the hideous victory cry of the bull ape that had made a kill. Louder than the drums had been, it carried far out into the night.

"Yes," said d'Arnot, "the drums have stopped—they have probably made the kill. Some poor thing has found relief from torture."

"Oh, what if it were Tarzan!" cried Magra; and as she spoke an eerie scream and wafted faintly across the still African night.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Lavac.

"It is Tarzan who has made a kill," said d'Arnot.

"By the beard of the prophet!"

exclaimed Lal Taask. "What a hideous sound!"

"It is Africa, Lal Taask," said Atan Thome, "and that was the victory cry of a bull ape. I have heard it before, on the Congo."

"It was far away," said Lal Taask.

"Still, it was too close for comfort," replied Atan Thome. "We shall break camp very early in the morning."

"But why should we fear apes?" demanded Lal Taask.

"It is not the apes I fear," explained Atan Thome. "I said that that noise was the victory cry of a bull ape, but I am not so sure. I have been talking with Mbuli. Perhaps the man we thought was Brian Gregory was not Brian Gregory at all. I

asked Mbuli if he ever heard of a white man called Tarzan. He said that he had; that some thought that he was a demon, and that all who did wrong, feared him. When he kills, Mbuli says, he gives the kill cry of the bull ape. If what we heard was not a bull ape, it was Tarzan; and that means that he is looking for us and is far too close for comfort."

"I do not wish to see that man again," said Lal Taask.

As the bloodcurdling cry crashed through the silence of the night, the warrior who had been creeping up on Helen straightened up and stepped back, frightened. The others, terror stricken, shrank from the menace of the fearsome sound; then Tarzan spoke.

"The demon of the forest comes for the white mem-sahib," he said. "Beware!" And as he spoke he dropped to the ground near the stake, trusting, by the very boldness of his move, to overawe the savages for the few moments it would take to free Helen and escape; but he had reckoned without knowing of the courage of Chemungo, son of Mpingu, standing ready with his knife.

"Chemungo, son of Mpingu, is not afraid of the demon of the forest," he shouted, as he sprang forward with upraised knife; and as the last of Helen's bonds fell away, Tarzan slipped his own knife back into its sheath and turned to meet the chief's son, the challenging

"Kre-e-gah!" on his lips. With bare hands he faced the infuriated warrior.

As Chemungo closed with upraised knife hand ready to strike, Tarzan seized him by the right wrist and at the belly and swung him high above his head as lightly as though he had been a child. The knife dropped from Chemungo's hand as the steel thews of the ape-man closed with viselike grip upon his wrist.

Helen Gregory, almost unable to believe her own senses, looked with astonishment upon this amazing man who dared face a whole cannibal village alone; and could see no hope but that two lives instead of one must now be sacrificed. It was a brave, a glorious gesture that Tarzan had made; but how

pathetically futile!

"Open the gates!" he commanded the astounded throng, "or Chemungo, son of Mpingu, dies."

The villagers hesitated. Some of the warriors grumbled. Would they obey, or would they charge?

CHAPTER 9

"Come!" said Tarzan to Helen, and without waiting for any reply from the savages, he started toward the gate, still carrying Chemungo above his head; and Helen walked at his side.

Some of the warriors started to close upon them. It was a tense moment, fraught with danger. Then Mpingu spoke. "Wait!" he commanded his warriors, and then to Tarzan, "If I open the gates will you set Chemungo free, unharmed?"

"When I have gone a spear throw beyond the gates, I will free him," replied the ape man.

"How do I know that you will do that?" demanded Mpingu. "How do I

know that you will not take him into the forest and kill him?"

"You know only what I tell you, Gomangani," replied Tarzan. "I tell you that if you open the gates and let us go out in safety, I shall free him. If you do not open the gates, I shall kill him now."

"Open the gates!" commanded Mpingu.

And so Tarzan and Helen passed in safety out of the village of the cannibals and into the black African night; and beyond the gates Tarzan liberated Chemungo.

"How did you happen to fall into the hands of those people?" Tarzan asked Helen, as they set their faces toward the Gregory camp.

"I escaped from Atan Thome's camp last night and tried to make my way back to Bonga; but I got lost, and then they got me. There was a lion, too. He had me down, but they killed him. I have had a horrible time. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw you. How in the world did you happen to be here?"

He told her of the events that had led up to his discovery of her in the cannibal village.

"It will be good to see Dad again," she said; "I can scarcely believe it even now. And Captain d'Arnot came, too—how wonderful!"

"Yes," he said, "he is with us, and Lavac, the pilot who flew us out of Loango, and Wolff, and Magra."

She shook her head. "I don't know about Magra," she said. "I can't understand her. She seemed very sorry for me in Loango after I was kidnaped, but she couldn't do anything for me. I think she was afraid of Atan Thome. Yet she is linked with him in some way. She is a very mysterious woman."

"She will bear watching," said Tarzan; "both she and Wolff."

The sun was an hour high as Magra came from her shelter and joined the others around the fire where Ogabi was grilling the remainder of the antelope. Her eyes were heavy, and she appeared unrested. They bade her good morning, but their faces suggested that it seemed anything but a good morning. She looked

quickly about, as though searching for some one.

"Tarzan did not return?" she asked.

"No," said Gregory.

"This suspense is unbearable," she said. "I scarcely closed my eyes all night, worrying about him."

"And think of Monsieur Gregory and me, Mam'selle," d'Arnot reminded her. "Not only have we to worry about Tarzan, but Helen—Miss Gregory —as well." Gregory shot a quick glance at the Frenchman.

A few minutes later, the others walked away, leaving Magra and d'Arnot alone.

"You are very fond of Miss Gregory,

are you not?" asked Magra.

"Oui," admitted d'Arnot. "Who would not be?"

"She is very nice," agreed Magra. "I wish that I might have helped her."

"Helped her? What do you mean?"

"I can't explain; but believe me, no matter what appearances may be or what you may all think of me, I have been helpless. I am bound by the oath of another—an oath I must in honor respect. I am not a free agent. I cannot always do as I wish."

"I shall try to believe," said d'Arnot, "even though I do not understand."

"Look!" cried Magra, suddenly. "Here they are now—both of them! How can it

be possible?"

D'Arnot looked up to see Tarzan and Helen approaching the camp; and, with Gregory, he ran forward to meet them. Gregory's eyes filled with tears as he took Helen in his arms, and d'Arnot could not speak. Lavac joined them and was introduced to Helen, after which his eyes never left her when he could look at her unobserved. Only Wolff held back. Sullen and scowling, he remained seated where he had been.

The greetings over, Tarzan and Helen finished what was left of the antelope; and while they ate, Helen recounted her adventures.

"Thome shall pay for this," said Gregory.

"He should die for it," exclaimed d'Arnot.

"I should like to be the one to kill him," muttered Lavac.

Day after day the little party trudged on through forests, across plains, over hills; but never did they strike a sign of Atan Thome's trail. Either Lavac or d'Arnot was constantly at the side of Helen Gregory in a growing rivalry of which only Helen seemed to be unaware, but then one cannot always know of just how much a woman is unaware. She laughed and joked or talked seriously with either of them impartially. D'Arnot was always affable and in high spirits, but Lavac was often moody. Tarzan hunted for the party, as

Wolff seemed never to be able to find game. The latter occasionally went off by himself and studied the route map to Ashair. He was the guide.

Early one morning Tarzan told Gregory that he might be away from the safari all that day and possibly the next.

"But why?" asked the latter.

"I'll tell you when I get back," replied the ape-man.

"Shall we wait here for you?"

"As you wish. I'll find you in any event." Then he was gone at the swinging, easy trot with which he covered so much distance on foot.

"Where's Tarzan gone?" asked d'Arnot as he joined Gregory.

The older man shrugged. "I don't know. He wouldn't tell me. Said he might be away a couple of days. I can't imagine why he went."

Wolff joined them then.

"Where's the monkey-man gone now?" he asked. "We've got enough meat for two days—all we can carry."

Gregory told him all he knew, and Wolff sneered. "He's ditching you," he said. "Any one could see that. There's no reason for him goin' except that. You won't never see him again."

D'Arnot, usually slow to anger, struck Wolff heavily across the cheek. "I've heard all of that from you I intend to," he said.

Wolff reached for his gun, but d'Arnot

had him covered before he could draw. Gregory stepped between them.

"We can't have anything like this," he said. "We've enough troubles without fighting among ourselves."

"I'm sorry, Monsieur Gregory," said d'Arnot, bolstering his weapon.

Wolff turned and walked away, muttering to himself.

"What had we better do, Captain?" asked Gregory. "Wait here for Tarzan? or go on?"

"We might as well go on," said d'Arnot. "We might just lose a day or two by staying here."

"But if we go on, Tarzan might not be able to find us," objected Gregory.

D'Arnot laughed. "Even yet, you do not know Tarzan," he said. "You might as well fear to lose yourself on the main street of your native city as think that Tarzan could lose us in two days, anywhere in Africa."

"Very well," said Gregory, "let's go on."

As they moved on behind Wolff, Lavac was walking beside Helen.

"What a deadly experience this would be," he said, "if it were not for —" He hesitated.

"Not for what?" said the girl.

"You," he said.

"Me? I don't understand what you mean."

"That is because you've never been in love," he replied, huskily.

Helen laughed. "Oh," she cried, "are you trying to tell me you're in love with me? It must be the altitude."

"You laugh at my love?" he demanded.

"No," she said, "at you. Magra and I are the only women you have seen for weeks. You were bound to have fallen in love with one of us, being a Frenchman; and Magra is so obviously in love with Tarzan that it would have been a waste of time to have fallen in love with her. Please forget it."

"I shall never forget it," said Lavac, "and I shall never give up. I am mad about you, Helen. Please give me

something to hope for. I tell you I'm desperate. I won't be responsible for what I may do, if you don't tell me that there may be a little hope for me."

"I'm sorry," she said, seriously, "but I just don't love you. If you are going to act like this, you will make everything even more disagreeable than it already is."

"You are cruel," grumbled Lavac; and for the rest of the day walked moodily alone, nursing his jealousy of d'Arnot.

And there was another who was imbued with thoughts of love that clamored for expression. It was Wolff, and just to be charitable let us call the sentiment that moved him love. He had been leading the safari, but the game

trail he was following was too plain to be missed; so he dropped back beside Magra.

"Listen, beautiful," he said. "I'm sorry for what I said the other day. I wouldn't hurt you for nothin'. I know we ain't always hit it off so good, but I'm for you. There ain't nothin' I wouldn't do for you. Why can't we be friends? We could go a long way, if we worked together."

"Meaning what?" asked Magra.

"Meaning I got what it takes to make a woman happy—two strings on that big diamond and £.2000 in real money. Think what me and you could do in God's country with all that!"

"With you?" she sneered.

"Yes, with me. Ain't I good enough

for you?" he demanded.

Magra looked at him, and laughed.

Wolff flushed. "Look here," he said, angrily; "if you think you can treat me like dirt and get away with it, you're all wrong. I just been offerin' to marry you, but I ain't good enough. Well, let me tell you this—I always get what I go after. I'll get you; and I won't have to marry you, neither. You're stuck on that monkey-man; but he can't even see you, and anyway he hasn't got tuppence to rub together."

"A guide belongs at the head of the safari," said Magra; "good- bye."

Late in the afternoon Tarzan dropped from the branches of a tree into the midst of the trekking safari, if the six whites

and Ogabi could be called a safari. The seven stopped and gathered around him.

"I'm glad you're back," said Gregory. "I'm always worried when you are away."

"I went to look for Thorne's trail," said Tarzan, "and I found it."

"Good!" exclaimed Gregory.

"He's a long way ahead of us," continued the ape-man, "thanks to you, Wolff."

"Anyone can make a mistake," growled Wolff.

"You made no mistake," snapped Tarzan. "You have tried, deliberately, to lead us off the trail. We'd be better off without this man, Gregory. You should

dismiss him."

"You can't turn me out alone in this country," said Wolff.

"You'd be surprised what Tarzan can do," remarked d'Arnot.

"I think it would be a little too drastic," said Gregory.

Tarzan shrugged. "Very well," he said; "as you will, but we'll dispense with his services as guide from now on."

CHAPTER 10

Atan Thome and Lal Taask stood at the head of their safari, which had just emerged from a dense forest. At their right ran a quiet river; and before them stretched rough, open country. In the distance, visible above low hills, rose the summit of what appeared to be a huge extinct volcano.

"Look, Lal Taask!" exclaimed Thome. "It is Tuen-Baka. Inside its crater lies Ashair, The Forbidden City."

"And The Father of Diamonds, Master," added Lal Taask.

"Yes, The Father of Diamonds. I wish that Magra were here to see. I wonder where they are. Wolff must be on his

way here with her by now. Perhaps we shall meet them when we come out; they could scarcely have overtaken us —we have moved too swiftly."

"If we do not meet them, there will be fewer with whom to divide," suggested Lal Taask.

"I promised her mother," said Thome.

"That was a long time ago; and her mother is dead, and Magra never knew of the promise."

"The memory of her mother never dies," said Thome. "You have been a faithful servitor, Lal Taask. Perhaps I should tell you the story; then you will understand."

"Your servant listens."

"Magra's mother was the only woman I ever loved. The inexorable laws of caste rendered her unobtainable by me. I am a mongrel. She was the daughter of a maharaja. I was trusted in the service of her father; and when the princess married an Englishman, I was sent to England with her in her entourage. While her husband was hunting big game in Africa, he stumbled upon Ashair. For three years he was a prisoner there, undergoing cruelties and torture. At last he managed to escape, and returned home only to die as a result of his experiences. But he brought the story of The Father of Diamonds, and exacted from his wife a promise that she would organize an expedition to return to

Ashair and punish those who had treated him so cruelly. The Father of Diamonds was to be the incentive to obtain volunteers; but the map he made became lost, and nothing was ever done. Then the princess died, leaving Magra, who was then ten years old, in my care; for the old maharaja was dead, and his successor would have nothing to do with the daughter of the Englishman. I have always had it in my mind to look for Ashair, and two years ago I made the first attempt. It was then that I learned that Brian Gregory was on a similar quest. He reached Ashair and made a map, though he never actually entered the city. On his second venture, I followed him; but got lost. I met the

remnants of his safari coming out. He had disappeared. They refused to give me the map; so I swore to obtain it, and here I am with the map."

"How did you know he made a map?" asked Lal Taask.

"Our safaris met for one night, after his first trip in. I just happened to see him making the map. It is the one I have, or, rather, a copy of it that he sent home in a letter.

"Because Magra's father died because of The Father of Diamonds, a share of it belongs to her; and there is another reason. I am not yet an old man. I see in Magra the reincarnation of the woman I loved. Do you understand, Lal Taask?"

"Yes, master."

Atan Thome sighed. "Perhaps I dream foolish dreams. We shall see, but now we must move on. Come, Mbuli, get the boys going!"

The natives had been whispering among themselves while Thome and Taask talked, now Mbuli came to Atan Thome.

"My people will go no farther, bwana," he said.

"What!" exclaimed Thome. "You must be crazy. I hired you to go to Ashair."

"In Bonga, Ashair was a long way off; and the spirits of my people were brave. Now Bonga is a long way off and Ashair is near. Now they remember that Tuen-Baka is taboo, and they are afraid."

"You are headman," snapped Thome.

"You make them come."

"No can do," insisted Mbuli.

"We'll camp here by the river tonight," said Thome. "I'll talk with them. They may feel braver tomorrow. They certainly can't quit on me now."

"Very well, bwana; tomorrow they may feel braver. It would be well to camp here tonight."

Atan Thome and Lal Taask slept well that night, lulled by the soothing murmuring of the river; and Atan Thome dreamed of The Father of Diamonds and Magra. Lal Taask thought that he dreamed when the silence of the night was broken by a sepulchral voice speaking in a strange tongue, but it was no dream.

The sun was high when Atan Thome awoke. He called his boy, but there was no response; then he called again, loudly, peremptorily. He listened. The camp was strangely silent. Rising, he went to the front of the tent and parted the flaps. Except for his tent and Lal Taask's, the camp was deserted. He crossed to Taask's tent and awakened him.

"What is the matter, master?" asked Lal Taask.

"The dogs have deserted us," exclaimed Thome.

Taask leaped to his feet and came out of his tent. "By Allah! They have taken all our provisions and equipment with them. They have left us to die. We must

hurry after them. They can't be very far away."

"We shall do nothing of the sort," said Thome. "We're going on!" There was a strange light hi his eyes that Lal Taask had never seen there before. "Do you think I have gone through what I have gone through to turn back now because a few cowardly natives are afraid?"

"But, master, we cannot go on alone, just we two," begged Lal Taask.

"Silence!" commanded Thome. "We go on to Ashair—to the Forbidden City and The Father of Diamonds. The Father of Diamonds!" He broke into wild laughter. "Magra shall wear the finest diamonds in the world. We shall be rich, rich beyond the wildest dreams of

avarice—she and I—the richest people in the world! I, Atan Thome, the mongrel, shall put the maharajas of India to shame. I shall strew the streets of Paris with gold. I —" He stopped suddenly and pressed a palm to his forehead. "Come!" he said presently in his normal tone. "We'll follow the river up to Ashair."

In silence, Lal Taask followed his master along a narrow trail that paralleled the river. The ground was rough and broken by gullies and ravines, the trail was fault across rocky, barren ground. Near noon they reached the mouth of a narrow gorge with precipitous cliffs on either side, cliffs that towered high above them, dwarfing

the two men to Lilliputian proportions. Through the gorge flowed the river, placidly.

"Siva! What a place!" exclaimed Lal Taask. "We can go no farther."

"It is the trail to Ashair," said Thorne, pointing. "See it winding along the face of the cliff?"

"That, a trail!" exclaimed Taask. "It is only a scratch that a mountain goat couldn't find footing on."

"Nevertheless, it is the trail that we follow," said Thorne.

"Master, it is madness!" cried Lal Taask. "Let us turn back. All the diamonds in the world are not worth the risk. Before we have gone a hundred yards we shall have fallen into the river

and drowned."

"Shut up!" snapped Thorne, "and follow me."

Clinging precariously to a narrow foot path scratched in the face of the towering cliff, the two men inched their way along the rocky wall. Below them flowed the silent river that rose somewhere in the mystery that lay ahead. A single mis-step would cast them into it. Lal Taask dared not look down. Facing the wall, with arms outspread searching for handholds that were not there, trembling so that he feared his knees would give beneath him and hurl him to death, he followed his master, sweat gushing from every pore.

"We'll never make it," he panted.

"Shut up and come along!" snapped Thorne. "If I fall, you may turn back."

"Oh, master, I couldn't even do that. No one could turn around on this hideous trail."

"Then keep coming and quit making such a fuss. You make me nervous."

"And to think you take such risks for a diamond! If it were as big as a house and I had it now, I'd give it to be back in Lahore."

"You are a coward, Lal Taask," snapped Thorne.

"I am, master; but it is better to be a live coward than a dead fool."

For two hours the men moved slowly along the narrow foot path until both

were on the verge of exhaustion, and even Thorne was beginning to regret his temerity; then, as he turned a jutting shoulder in the cliff, he saw a little wooded canyon that broke the face of the mighty escarpment and ran gently down to the river. Down into this canyon the trail led. When they reached it, they threw themselves upon the ground in total exhaustion; and lay there until almost dark.

Finally they aroused themselves and built a fire, for with the coming of night a chill settled upon the canyon. All day they had been without food; and they were famished, but there was nothing for them to eat, and they had to content themselves by filling their bellies with

water at the river. For warmth, they huddled close to their little fire.

"Master, this is an evil place," said Lal Taask. "I have a feeling that we are being watched."

"It is the evil within you speaking, fool," growled Thorne.

"Allah! Master, look!" faltered Taask. "What is it?" He pointed into the blackness among the trees; and then a sepulchral voice spoke in a strange tongue, and Lal Taask faulted.

CHAPTER 11

Ungo, the king ape, was hunting with his tribe. They were nervous and irritable, for it was the period of the Dum-Dum; and as yet they had found no victim for the sacrificial dance. Suddenly the shaggy king raised his head and sniffed the air. He growled his disapproval of the evidence that Usha, the wind, brought to his nostrils. The other apes looked at him questioningly.

"Gomangani, tarmangani," he said. "They come," then he led his people into the underbrush and hid close to the trail.

The little band of men and women who formed the Gregory "safari" followed the plain trail left by Atan Thome's safari, while Tarzan hunted for

meat far afield.

"Tarzan must have had difficulty in locating game," said d'Arnot. "I haven't heard his kill-call yet."

"He's marvelous," said Magra. "We'd have starved to death if it hadn't been for him—even with a hunter along."

"Well, you can't shoot game where there ain't none," growled Wolff.

"Tarzan never comes back empty handed," said Magra; "and he hasn't any gun, either."

"The other monkeys find food, too," sneered Wolff; "but who wants to be a monkey?"

Ungo was watching them now, as they came in sight along the trail. His close-

set, bloodshot eyes blazed with anger; and then suddenly and without warning he charged, and his whole tribe followed him. The little band fell back in dismay. D'Arnot whipped out his pistol and fired; and an ape fell, screaming; then the others were among them, and he could not fire again without endangering his companions. Wolff ran. Lavac and Gregory were both knocked down and bitten. For a few moments all was confusion, so that afterward no one could recall just what happened. The apes were among them and gone again; and when they went, Ungo carried Magra off under one great hairy arm.

Magra struggled to escape until she was exhausted, but the powerful beast

that carried her paid little attention to her struggles. Once, annoyed, he cuffed her, almost knocking her insensible; then she ceased, waiting and hoping for some opportunity to escape. She wondered to what awful fate she was being dragged. So man-like was the huge creature, she shuddered as she contemplated what might befall her.

Half carrying her, half dragging her through the woods, with his huge fellows lumbering behind, Ungo, the king ape, bore the girl to a small, natural clearing, a primitive arena where, from time immemorial, the great apes had held their sacrificial dance. There he threw her roughly to the ground, and two females squatted beside her to see that

she did not escape.

Back on the trail, the little party, overwhelmed by the tragedy of this misadventure, stood debating what they had best do.

"We could follow them," said d'Arnot; "but we haven't a chance of overtaking them, and if we did, what could we do against them, even though we are armed?"

"But we can't just stand here and do nothing," cried Helen.

"I'll tell you," said d'Arnot. "I'll take Wolff's rifle and follow them. I may be able to pick off enough of them to frighten the others away if I come up with them after they halt; then, when Tarzan returns, send him after me."

"Here's Tarzan now," said Helen, as the ape-man came trotting along the trail with the carcass of his kill across his shoulder.

Tarzan found a very disorganized party as he joined them. They were all excited and trying to talk at the same time.

"We never saw them 'til they jumped us," said Lavac.

"They were as big as gorillas," added Helen.

"They were gorillas," put in Wolff.

"They were not gorillas," contradicted d'Arnot; "and anyway, you didn't wait to see what they were."

"The biggest one carried Magra off

under his arm," said Gregory.

"They took Magra?" Tarzan looked concerned. "Why didn't you say so in the first place? Which way did they go?"

D'Arnot pointed in the direction in which the apes had made off.

"Keep on this trail until you find a good place to camp," said Tarzan; then he was gone.

As the moon rose slowly over the arena where Magra lay beside a primitive earthen drum upon which three old apes beat with sticks, several of the great shaggy bulls commenced to dance around her. Menacing her with heavy sticks, the bulls leaped and whirled as they circled the frightened girl. Magra had no knowledge of the significance of

these rites. She only guessed that she was to die.

The Lord of the Jungle followed the trail of the great apes through the darkness of the forest as unerringly as though he were following a well marked spoor by daylight, followed it by the scent of the anthropoids that clung to the grasses and the foliage of the underbrush, tainting the air with the effluvia of the great bodies. He knew that he should come upon them eventually, but would he be in time?

As the moon rose, the throbbing of the earthen drum directed him toward the arena of the Dum-Dum; so that he could take to the trees and move more swiftly in a direct line. It told him, too, the

nature of the danger that threatened Magra. He knew that she still lived, for the drum would be stilled only after her death, when the apes would be fighting over her body and tearing it to pieces. He knew, because he had leaped and danced in the moonlight at many a Dum-Dum when Sheeta, the panther, or Wappi, the antelope, was the sacrificial victim.

The moon was almost at zenith as he neared the arena. When it hung at zenith would be the moment of the kill; and in the arena, the shaggy bulls danced in simulation of the hunt. Magra lay as they had thrown her, exhausted, hopeless, resigned to death, knowing that nothing could save her now.

Goro, the moon, hung upon the verge of the fateful moment, when a tarmangani, naked but for a G string, dropped from an overhanging tree into the arena. With growls and mutterings of rage, the bulls turned upon the intruder who dared thus sacrilegiously to invade the sanctity of their holy of holies. The king ape, crouching, led them.

"I am Ungo," he said. "I kill!"

Tarzan, too, crouched and growled as he advanced to meet the king ape. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he said in the language of the first-men, the only language he had known for the first twenty years of his life. "I am Tarzan of the Apes, mighty hunter, mighty fighter. I kill!"

One word of the ape-man's challenge Magra had understood—"Tarzan." Astounded, she opened her eyes to see the king ape and Tarzan circling one another, each looking for an opening. What a brave but what a futile gesture the man was making in her defense! He was giving his life for her, and uselessly. What chance had he against the huge, primordial beast?

Suddenly, Tarzan reached out and seized the ape's wrist; then, turning quickly, he hurled the great creature over his shoulder heavily to the ground; but instantly Ungo was on his feet again. Growling and roaring horribly, he charged. This time he would overwhelm the puny man-thing with his great weight,

crush him in those mighty arms.

Magra trembled for the man, and she blanched as she saw him meet the charge with growls equally as bestial as those of the ape. Could this growling, snarling beast be the quiet, resourceful man she had come to love? Was he, after all, but a primitive Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Spellbound and horrified, she watched.

Swift as Ara, the lightning, is Tarzan; as agile as Sheeta, the panther. Dodging, and ducking beneath Ungo's great flailing arms, he leaped upon the hairy back and locked a full Nelson on the raging ape. As he applied the pressure of his mighty thews, the ape screamed in agony.

"Kreegah!" shouted Tarzan, bearing down a little harder. "Surrender!"

The members of the Gregory party sat around their camp fire listening to the throbbing of the distant drum and waiting in nervous expectancy, for what, they did not know.

"It is the Dum-Dum of the great apes, I think," said d'Arnot. "Tarzan has told me about them. When the full moon hangs at zenith, the bulls kill a victim. It is, perhaps, a rite older than the human race, the tiny germ from which all religious observances have sprung."

"And Tarzan has seen this rite performed?" asked Helen.

"He was raised by the great apes," explained d'Arnot, "and he has danced the dance of death in many a Dum-Dum."

"He has helped to kill men and

women and tear them to pieces?" demanded Helen.

"No, no!" cried d'Arnot. "The apes rarely secure a human victim. They did so only once while Tarzan ranged with them, and he saved that one. The victim they prefer is their greatest enemy, the panther."

"And you think the drums are for Magra?" asked Lavac.

"Yes," said d'Arnot, "I fear so."

"I wish I'd gone after her myself," said Wolff. "That guy didn't have no gun."

"He may not have had a gun," said d'Arnot, "but at least he went in the right direction." Wolff lapsed into moody silence. "We all had a chance to do

something when the ape first took her," continued d'Arnot; "but, frankly, I was too stunned to think."

"It all happened so quickly," said Gregory. "It was over before I really knew what had happened."

"Listen!" exclaimed d'Arnot. "The drums have stopped."

He looked up at the moon. "The moon is at zenith," he said. "Tarzan must have been too late."

"Them gorillas would pull him apart," said Wolff. "If it wasn't for Magra, I'd say good riddance."

"Shut up!" snapped Gregory. "Without Tarzan, we're lost."

As they talked, Tarzan and Ungo

battled in the arena; and Magra watched in fearful astonishment. She could scarcely believe her eyes as she saw the great ape helpless in the hands of the man. Ungo was screaming in pain. Slowly, relentlessly, his neck was being broken. At last he could stand it no longer, and bellowed, "Kreegah!" which means "I surrender;" and Tarzan released him and sprang to his feet.

"Tarzan is king!" he cried, facing the other bulls.

He stood there, waiting; but no young bull came forward to dispute the right of kingship with him. They had seen what he had done to Ungo, and they were afraid. Thus, by grace of a custom ages old, Tarzan became king of the tribe.

Magra did not understand. She was still terrified. Springing to her feet, she ran to Tarzan and threw her arms about him, pressing close. "I am afraid," she said. "Now they will kill us both."

Tarzan shook his head. "No," he said; "they will not kill us. They will do whatever I tell them to do, for now I am their king."

CHAPTER 12

In the light of early morning, after a night of terror, Atan Thome and Lal Taask started to retrace their steps along the precarious pathway they had so laboriously risked the day before.

"I am glad, master, that you decided to turn back," said Lal Taask.

"Without porters and askaris, it would be madness to attempt to force our way into The Forbidden City," growled Thorne. "We'll return to Bonga and enlist a strong force of men who fear no taboos."

"If we live to get to Bonga," said Lal Taask.

"Cowards invite death," snapped

Thorne.

"After last night, who would not be a coward in this damnable country?" demanded Taask. "You saw it, didn't you? You heard that voice?"

"Yes," admitted Thorne. "What was it?"

"I don't know."

"It was evil," said Taask. "It breathed of the grave and of Hell. Men cannot prevail against the forces of another world."

"Rot!" ejaculated Thorne. "It has some rational and mundane explanation, if we only knew."

"But we don't know. I do not care to know. I shall never return here, if Allah

permits me to escape alive."

"Then you will get no share of the diamond," threatened Atan Thome.

"I shall be content with my life," replied Lal Taask.

The two men succeeded in negotiating the return trip in safety, and stood again at last upon level ground near the mouth of the gorge. Lal Taask breathed a sigh of relief, and his spirits rose; but Atan Thome was moody and irritable. He had built his hopes so high that to be turned back at what he believed to be the threshold of success plunged him into despondency. With bowed head, he led the way back over the rough terrain toward their last camp at the edge of the forest.

As they were passing through one of the numerous ravines, they were suddenly confronted by a dozen white warriors who leaped from behind great lava boulders and barred their way. They were stalwart men, wearing white plumes and short tunics on the breasts and backs of which were woven a conventionalized bird. They were armed with spears and knives which hung in scabbards at their hips.

The leader spoke to Thorne in a strange tongue; but when he discovered that neither could understand the other, he gave an order to his men who herded Thorne and Taask down the ravine to the river, where lay such a craft as may have floated on the Nile in the days of the

Pharaohs. It was an open galley, manned by twenty slaves chained to the thwarts.

At the points of spears, Thorne and Taask were herded aboard; and when file last of the warriors had stepped across the gunwale, the boat put off and started up stream.

Atan Thome broke into laughter; and Lal Taask looked at him in surprise, as did the warriors near him.

"Why do you laugh, master?" asked Lal Taask, fearfully.

"I laugh," cried Thorne, "because after all I shall reach The Forbidden City."

As Helen came from her shelter early in the morning, she saw d'Arnot sitting beside the embers of the dying beast fire;

and she joined him.

"Sentry duty?" she asked.

He nodded. "Yes," he said; "I have been doing sentry duty and a lot of thinking."

"About what, for instance?" she asked.

"About you—us; and what we are going to do," he replied.

"I talked with Father last night, just before I went to bed," she said; "and he has decided to return to Bonga and organize a safari. He doesn't dare go on without Tarzan."

"He is wise," said d'Arnot. "Your life is too precious to risk further." He hesitated, embarrassed. "You don't know

what it means to me, Helen. I know that this is no time to speak of love; but you must have seen—haven't you?"

"Et tu, Brute!" exclaimed the girl.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Lieutenant Lavac also thinks he is in love with me. Can't you see, Paul, that it is just because I am practically the only girl available—poor Magra was so much in love with Tarzan."

"That is not true with me," he said. "I do not believe it is the explanation as far as Lavac is concerned. He is a fine fellow. I can't blame him for falling in love with you. No, Helen, I'm quite sure of myself. You see, I have taken to losing my appetite and looking at the moon." He laughed. "Those are certain

symptoms, you know. Pretty soon I shall take to writing poetry."

"You're a dear," she said. "I'm glad you have a sense of humor. I'm afraid the poor lieutenant hasn't, but then maybe he hasn't had as much experience as you."

"There should be an S.P.C.L.," he said.

"What's that?"

"Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Lovers."

"Idiot. Wait until you get back where there are lots of girls; then —" She stopped as she glanced across his shoulder. Her face went white, and her eyes were wide with terror.

"Helen! What is it?" he demanded.

"Oh, Paul—the apes have come back!"

D'Arnot turned to see the great beasts lumbering along the trail; then he shouted for Gregory and Lavac. "Name of a name!" he cried an instant later. "Tarzan and Magra are with them!"

"They are prisoners!" exclaimed Helen.

"Non," said d'Arnot; "Tarzan is leading the apes! Was there ever such a man?"

"I'm fault with relief," said Helen. "I never expected to see them again. I'd given them up for lost, especially Magra. It is like seeing a ghost. Why, we even knew the minute that she died last night—when the drumming stopped."

Tarzan and Magra were greeted enthusiastically, and Magra had to tell her story of adventure and rescue. "I know it seems incredible," she added; "but here we are, and here are the apes. If you don't believe me, ask them."

"What are them beggars hangin' 'round for?" demanded Wolff. "We ought to give 'em a few rounds for luck. They got it comin' to 'em for stealin' Magra."

"They are my people," said Tarzan; "they are obeying orders. You shall not harm them."

"They may be your people," grumbled Wolff; "but they ain't mine, me not bein' no monkey."

"They are going along with us," said Tarzan to Gregory. "If you'll all keep

away from them and do not touch them, they won't harm you; and they may be helpful to us in many ways. You see, this species of anthropoid ape is highly intelligent. They have developed at least the rudiments of co-operation, the lack of which among the lower orders has permitted man to reign supreme over other animals which might Easily have exterminated him. They are ferocious fighters, when aroused; and, most important of all, they will obey me. They will be a protection against both beasts and men. I'll send them away now to hunt in the vicinity; but when I call, they'll come."

"Why, he talks to them!" exclaimed Helen, as Tarzan walked over and spoke

to Ungo.

"Of course he does," said d'Arnot. "Their language was the first he ever learned."

"You should have seen him fight with that great bull," said Magra. "I was almost afraid of him afterward."

That night, after they had made camp, Lavac came and sat on a log beside Helen. "There is a full moon," he said.

"Yes," she replied; "I'd noticed it. I shall never see a full moon again without hearing the throbbing of that awful drum and thinking of what Magra went through."

"It should bring happier thoughts to you," he said, "as it does to me — thoughts of love. The full moon is for

love."

"It is also for lunacy," she suggested.

"I wish you could love me," he said. "Why don't you? Is it because of d'Arnot? Be careful with him. He is notorious for his conquests."

The girl was disgusted. How different this from d'Arnot's praise of his rival. "Please don't speak of it again," she said. "I don't love you, and that's that." Then she got up and walked away, joining d'Arnot near the fire. Lavac remained where he was, brooding and furious.

Lavac was not the only member of the party to whom the full moon suggested love. It found Wolff recipient, also. His colossal egotism did not permit him to

doubt that eventually he would break down Magra's resistance, and that she would fall into his arms. Being an egotist, he always seized upon the wrong thing to say to her, as he did when he caught her alone that evening.

"What do you see in that damn monkey-man?" was his opening sally in the game of love. "He ain't got nothin' but a G string to his name. Look at me! I got £.2000 and a half interest in the biggest diamond in the world."

"I am looking at you," replied Magra. "Perhaps that's one of the reasons I don't like you. You know, Wolff, there must be a lot of different words to describe a person like you; but I don't know any of them that are bad enough to fit you. I

wouldn't have you if you owned the father and mother of diamonds, both, and were the last man on Earth into the bargain. Now, don't ever mention this subject to me again, or I'll tell the 'monkey-man' on you; and he'll probably break you in two and forget to put you back together again. You know, he isn't in love with you either."

"You think you're too good for me, do you?" growled Wolff. "Well, I'll show you. I'll get you; and I'll get your dirty monkey- man, too."

"Don't let him see you doing it," laughed Magra.

"I ain't afraid of him," boasted Wolff.

"Say, you wouldn't even dare stab Tarzan in the back. You know, I saw you

running away when that ape grabbed me. No, Wolff, you don't scare me worth a cent. Everybody in this camp has your number, and I know just what sort of a yellow double-crosser you are."

CHAPTER 13

As the barge in which Thorne and Taask were prisoners was being rowed up the river, the former heard one of the warriors speak to a black galley slave in Swahili.

"Why did you take us prisoners?" he asked the warrior in command, speaking in Swahili; "and what are you going to do with us?"

"I took you prisoners because you were too near The Forbidden City," replied the warrior. "No one may approach Ashair and return to the outer world. I am taking you there now. What will become of you rests in the hands of Queen Atka, but you may rest assured that you will never leave Ashair."

Just ahead of the galley, Thorne saw the mighty wall of Tuen- Baka rising high into the blue African sky; and from a great, black opening in the wall the river flowed. Into this mighty natural tunnel the galley was steered. A torch was lighted and held in the bow, as the craft was rowed into the Stygian darkness ahead; but at last it emerged into the sunlight and onto the bosom of a lake that lay at the bottom of the great crater of Tuen-Baka.

Ahead and to the left, Thorne saw the domes of a small, walled city. To right and left, beyond the lake, were forest and plain; and in the far distance, at the upper end of the lake, another city was dimly visible.

"Which is Ashair?" he asked a warrior.

The man jerked a thumb in the direction of the nearer city at the left. "There is Ashair," he said. "Take a good look at it, for, unless Atka sentences you to the galleys, you'll never see the outside of it again."

"And the other city?" asked Thorne. "What is that?"

"That's Thobos," replied the man. "If you happen to be sentenced to a war galley, you may see more of Thobos, when we go there to fight."

As the galley approached Ashair, Atan Thome turned to Lal Taask, who sat beside him in the stern. Thorne had been looking at the city, but Lal Taask

had been gazing down into the clear depths of the lake.

"Look!" exclaimed Thorne. "My dream come true! There is The Forbidden City; there, somewhere, lies The Father of Diamonds. I am coming closer and closer to it. It is Fate! I know now that it is written that I shall possess it."

Lal Taask shook his head. "These warriors have sharp spears," he said. "There are probably more warriors in Ashair. I do not think they will let you take The Father of Diamonds away with you. I even heard one say that we should never leave, ourselves. Do not get your hopes too high. Look down into this lake instead. The water is so clear, you can

see the bottom. I have seen many fish and strange creatures such as I have never seen before. It is far more interesting than the city, and it may be the only time we shall ever look at it. By the beard of the prophet, Atan Thome! Look! There is a marvel, indeed, master."

Thorne looked over the side of the galley; and the sight that met his eyes wrung an exclamation of surprise and incredulity from him, for, clearly discernible at the bottom of the lake, there was a splendid temple. He could see lights shining from its windows, and as he watched it, spellbound, he saw a grotesque, man-like figure emerge from it and walk on the bottom of the lake.

The creature carried a trident, but what it was doing and where it was going Atan Thome was doomed not to discover, for the rapidly propelled barge passed over the creature and the temple; and they were lost to view, as the craft approached the quay of The Forbidden City.

"Come!" commanded the warrior in charge of the party, and Thorne and Taask were herded off the galley onto the quay. They entered the city through a small gateway, and were led through narrow, winding streets to a large building near the center of the city. Before the gate stood armed warriors who, after a brief parley, admitted the captives and their guard; then Atan

Thome and Lal Taask were escorted into the building and into the presence of an official, who listened to the report of their captors and then spoke to them in Swahili.

The man listened to Thorne's explanation of their presence near Ashair; then he shrugged. "You may be telling the truth, or you may be lying," he said. "Probably you are lying, but it makes no difference. Ashair is a forbidden city. No stranger who enters Tuen- Baka may leave alive. What becomes of him here—whether he be destroyed immediately or permitted to live for what ever useful purpose he may serve—rests wholly with the discretion of the Queen. Your capture will be

reported to her; when it suits her convenience, your fate will be decided."

"If I might have audience with her," said Thorne, "I am sure that I can convince her that my motives are honorable and that I can give Ashair valuable service. I have information of the greatest importance to her and to Ashair."

"You may tell me," said the official. "I will communicate the information to her."

"I must give it to the Queen in person," replied Atan Thome.

"The Queen of Ashair is not in the habit of granting audiences to prisoners," said the man, haughtily. "It will be well for you if you give this information to me

—if you have any."

Atan Thome shrugged. "I have it," he said, "but I shall give it to no one but the Queen. If disaster befalls Ashair, the responsibility will rest with you. Don't say that I didn't warn you."

"Enough of this impudence!" exclaimed the official. "Take them away and lock them up—and don't overfeed them."

"Master, you should not have antagonized him," said Lal Taask, as the two men lay on cold stone, chained to the wall of a gloomy dungeon. "If you had information to impart to the Queen—and Allah alone knows what it might be—why did you not tell the man what it was? Thus it would have reached the

Queen."

"You are a good servant, Lal Taask," said Thorne; "and you wield a knife with rare finesse. These are accomplishments worthy of highest encomiums, but you lack versatility. It is evident that Allah felt he had given you sufficient gifts when he gave you these powers; so he gave you nothing with which to think."

"My master is all-wise," replied Lal Taask. "I pray that he may think me out of this dungeon."

"That's what I am trying to do. Don't you realize that it would be useless to appeal to underlings? This Queen is all-powerful. If we can reach her, personally, we place our case directly before the highest tribunal; and I can

plead our case much better than it could be pled second hand by one who had no interest in us."

"Again I bow to your superior wisdom," said Lal Taask, "but I am still wondering what important information you have to give the Queen of Ashair."

"Lal Taask, you are hopeless," sighed Thorne. "The information I have to give to the Queen should be as obvious to you as a fly on the end of your nose."

For days, Atan Thome and Lal Taask lay on the cold stone of their dungeon floor, receiving just enough food to keep them alive; and having all Atan Thome's pleas for an audience with the Queen ignored by the silent warrior who brought their food.

"They are starving us to death," wailed Lal Taask.

"On the contrary," observed Atan Thome, "they appear to have an uncanny sense of the calorific properties of food. They know just how much will keep us from starving to death. And look at my waist line, Lal Taask! I have often had it in mind to embark upon a rigid diet for the purpose of reducing. The kind Asharians have anticipated that ambition. Presently, I shall be almost sylph-like."

"For you, perhaps, that may be excellent, master; but for me, who never had an ounce of surplus fat beneath his hide, it spells disaster. Already, my backbone is chafing my navel."

"Ah," exclaimed Atan Thome, as footfalls announced the approach of some one along the corridor leading to their cell, "here comes Old Garrulity again."

"I did not know that you knew his name, master," remarked Taask; "but some one accompanies him this time—I hear voices."

"Perhaps he brings an extra calorie, and needs help," suggested Thorne. "If he does, it is yours. I hope it is celery."

"You like celery, master?"

"No. It shall be for you. Celery is reputed to be a brain food."

The door to the cell was unlocked, and three warriors entered. One of them removed the chains from the prisoners'

ankles.

"What now?" asked Atan Thome.

"The Queen has sent for you," replied the warrior.

The two men were led through the palace to a great room, at the far end of which, upon a dais, a woman sat upon a throne hewn from a single block of lava. Warriors flanked her on either side, and slaves stood behind her throne ready to do her every bidding.

As the two men were led forward and halted before the dais, they saw a handsome woman, apparently in her early thirties. Her hair was so dressed that it stood out straight from her head in all directions to a length of eight or ten inches and had woven into it an ornate

headdress of white plumes. Her mien was haughty and arrogant as she eyed the prisoners coldly, and Atan Thome read cruelty in the lines of her mouth and the latent fires of a quick temper in the glint of her eyes. Here was a women to be feared, a ruthless killer, a human tigress. The equanimity of the smug Eurasian faltered before a woman for the first time.

"Why came you to Ashair?" demanded the Queen.

"By accident, majesty; we were lost. When we found our way blocked, we turned back. We were leaving the country when your warriors took us prisoner."

"You have said that you have

valuable information to give me. What is it? If you have imposed upon me and wasted my tune, it shall not be well for you."

"I have powerful enemies," said Atan Thome. "It was while trying to escape from them that I became lost. They are coming to Ashair to attempt to steal a great diamond which they believe you to possess. I only wished to befriend you and help you trap them."

"Are they coming in force?" asked Atka.

"That, I do not know," replied Thorne; "but I presume they are. They have ample means."

Queen Atka turned to one of her nobles. "If this man has spoken the truth,

he shall not fare ill at our hands. Akamen, I place the prisoners in your charge. Permit them reasonable liberties. Take them away." Then she spoke to another. "See that the approaches to Ashair are watched."

Akamen, the noble, conducted Atan Thome and Lal Taask to pleasant quarters in a far wing of the palace. "You are free to go where you will inside the palace walls, except to the royal wing. Nor may you go beneath the palace. There lie the secrets of Ashair and death for strangers."

"The Queen has been most magnanimous," said Thorne. "We shall do nothing to forfeit her good will. Ashair is most interesting. I am only

sorry that we may not go out into the city or upon the lake."

"It would not be safe," said Akamen. "You might be captured by a galley from Thobos. They would not treat you as well as Atka has."

"I should like to look down again at the beautiful building at the bottom of the lake," said Thorne. "That was my reason for wishing to go upon the lake. What is the building? and what the strange creature I saw coming from it?"

"Curiosity is often a fatal poison," said Akamen.

CHAPTER 14

The trail of Atan Thome's safari was not difficult to follow, and the Gregory party made good time along it without encountering any obstacles to delay them. The general mistrust of Wolff, the doubts concerning Magra's position among them, and the moody jealousy of Lavac added to the nervous strain of their dangerous existence; and the hardships they had undergone had told upon their nerves; so that it was not always a happy company that trudged the day's trails. Only Tarzan remained serene and unruffled.

It was midday, and they had halted for a brief rest, when Tarzan suddenly became alert. "Natives are coming," he

said. "There are a number of them, and they are very close. The wind just changed and brought their scent to me."

"There they are now," said Gregory. "Why, it's another safari. There are porters with packs, but I see no white men."

"It is your safari, bwana," said Ogabi. "It is the safari that was to have met you at Bonga."

"Then is must be the one that Thorne stole," said d'Arnot, "but I don't see Thorne."

"Another mystery of darkest Africa, perhaps," suggested Helen.

Mbuli, leading his people back toward Bonga, halted in surprise as he saw the little party of whites, then,

seeing that his men greatly outnumbered them, he came forward, swaggering a little.

"Who are you?" demanded Tarzan.

"I am Mbuli," replied the chief.

"Where are your bwanas? You have deserted them."

"Who are you, white man, to question Mbuli?" demanded the native, arrogantly, the advantage of numbers giving him courage.

"I am Tarzan," replied the ape-man.

Mbuli wilted. All the arrogance went out of him. "Forgive, bwana," he begged. "I did not know you, for I have never seen you before."

"You know the law of the safari,"

said Tarzan. "Those who desert their white masters are punished."

"But my people would not go on," explained Mbuli. "When we came to Tuen-Baka, they would go no farther. They were afraid, for Tuen- Baka is taboo."

"You took all their equipment," continued the ape-man, glancing over the loads that the porters had thrown to the ground. "Why, you even took their food."

"Yes, bwana; but they needed no food —they were about to die —Tuen-Baka is taboo. Also, Bwana Thorne lied to us. We had agreed to serve Bwana Gregory, but he told us Bwana Gregory wished us to accompany him instead."

"Nevertheless, you did wrong to

abandon him. To escape punishment, you will accompany us to Tuen-Baka—we need porters and askaris."

"But my people are afraid," remonstrated Mbuli.

"Where Tarzan goes, your people may go," replied the ape-man. "I shall not lead them into danger needlessly."

"But, bwana—"

"But nothing," snapped Tarzan; then he turned to the porters. "Up packs! You are going back to Tuen-Baka."

The porters grumbled; but they picked up their packs and turned back along the trail they had just traveled, for the will of the white man was supreme; and, too, the word had spread among them that this was the fabulous Tarzan who was

half man and half demon.

For three days they trekked back along the trail toward Ashair, and at noon on the seventh day the safari broke from the forest beside a quiet river. The terrain ahead was rocky and barren. Above low hills rose the truncated cone of an extinct volcano, a black, forbidding mass.

"So that is Tuen-Baka," said d'Arnot. "It is just an old volcano, after all."

"Nevertheless, the boys are afraid," said Tarzan. "We shall have to watch them at night or they'll desert again. I'm going on now to see what lies ahead."

"Be careful," cautioned d'Arnot. "The place has a bad reputation, you know."

"I am always careful," replied

Tarzan.

D'Arnot grinned. "Sometimes you are about as careful of yourself as a Paris taxi driver is of pedestrians."

Tarzan followed a dim trail that roughly paralleled the river, the same trail that Lal Taask and Atan Thome had followed. As was his custom, he moved silently with every sense alert. He saw signs of strange animals and realized that he was in a country that might hold dangers beyond his experience. In a small patch of earth among the boulders and rough lava rocks, he saw the imprint of a great foot and caught faintly the odor of a reptile that had passed that way recently. He knew, from the size of the footprint, that the creature was large; and

when he heard ahead of him an ominous hissing and roaring, he guessed that the maker of the footprint was not far off. Increasing his speed, but not lessening his caution, he moved forward in the direction of the sound; and coming to the edge of a gully, looked down to see a strangely garbed white warrior facing such a creature as Tarzan had never seen on earth. Perhaps he did not know it, but he was looking at a small edition of the terrible Tyrannosaurus Rex, that mighty king of carnivorous reptiles which ruled the earth eons ago. Perhaps the one below him was tiny compared with his gigantic progenitor; but he was still a formidable creature, as large as a full grown bull.

Tarzan saw in the warrior either a hostage or a means of securing information concerning this strange country and its inhabitants. If the dinosaur killed the man, he would be quite valueless; so, acting as quickly as he thought, he leaped from the cliff just as the brute charged. Only a man who did not know the meaning of fear would have taken such a risk.

The warrior facing the great reptile with his puny spear was stunned to momentary inaction when he saw an almost naked bronzed giant drop, apparently from the blue, onto the back of the monster he had been facing without hope. He saw the stranger's knife striking futilely at the armored

back, as the man clung with one arm about the creature's neck. He could have escaped; but he did not, and as Tarzan found a vulnerable spot in the dinosaur's throat and drove his knife home again and again, he rushed in to the ape-man's aid.

The huge reptile, seriously hurt, screamed and hissed as it threw itself about in vain effort to dislodge the man-thing from its back; but, hurt though it was, like all the reptilia it was tenacious of life and far from overcome.

As Tarzan's knife found and severed the creature's jugular vein, the warrior drove his spear through the savage heart, and with a last convulsive shudder it crashed to the ground, dead; then the two

men faced one another across the great carcass.

Neither knew the temper or intentions of the other; and both were on guard as they sought to find a medium of communication more satisfactory than an improvised sign language. At last the warrior hit upon a tongue that both could speak and understand, a language he and his people had learned from the Negroes they had captured and forced into slavery—Swahili.

"I am Thetan of Thobos," he said. "I owe you my life, but why did you come to my aid? Are we to be friends or foes?"

"I am Tarzan," said the ape-man. "Let us be friends."

"Let us be friends," agreed Thetan. "Now tell me how I may repay you for what you have done for me."

"I wish to go to Ashair," said Tarzan.

The warrior shook his head. "You have asked me one thing that I cannot do for you," he said. "The Asharians are our enemies. If I took you there, we'd both be imprisoned and destroyed; but perhaps I can persuade my king to let you come to Thobos; then, when the day comes that we conquer Ashair, you may enter the city with us. But why do you wish to go to Ashair?"

"I am not alone," said Tarzan, "and in my party are the father and sister of a man we believe to be a prisoner in Ashair. It is to obtain his release that we

are here."

"Perhaps my King will let you all come to Thobos," said Thetan, rather dubiously. "Such a thing would be without precedent; but because you have saved the life of his nephew and because you are enemies of Ashair, he may grant permission. At least it will do no harm to ask him."

"How may I know his answer?" asked Tarzan.

"I can bring it to you, but it will be some time before I can do so," replied Thetan. "I am down here on a mission for the King. I came by way of the only land trail out of Tuen-Baka, a trail known only to my people. I shall sleep tonight in a cave I know of, and

tomorrow start back for Thobos. In three days I shall return if Herat will permit you to enter Thobos. If I do not come back, you will know that he has refused. Wait then no more than one day; then leave the country as quickly as you can. It is death for strangers to remain in the vicinity of Tuen-Baka."

"Come back to my camp," said Tarzan, "and spend the night there. We can discuss the matter with my companions."

Thetan hesitated. "They are all strangers to me," he said, "and all strangers are enemies."

"My friends will not be," the ape-man assured him. "I give you my word that they will have no desire to harm you. In

the world from which they come no strangers are considered enemies until they prove themselves to be such."

"What a strange world that must be," remarked Thetan. "But I'll accept your word and go with you."

As the two men started back toward the Gregory camp, a party of warriors embarked in a galley at the quay of Ashair, dispatched by Queen Atka to intercept and harass the Gregory expedition, against which Atan Thome had warned her in order that he might win the favor of the Queen and prevent Tarzan and Gregory from reaching Ashair. The wily Eurasian had hopes of so ingratiating himself with the Queen that he might remain in Ashair until he

could formulate a plan for stealing The Father of Diamonds and making his escape. So obsessed was he by his desire to possess the diamond, that he was totally unable to appreciate the futility of his scheme.

The members of the Gregory party were astonished to see Tarzan walk into camp with this strangely appareled warrior. Thetan wore the black plumes of Thobos, and upon the breast and back of his tunic there was embroidered the figure of a bull. Their friendly greetings put him at his ease, and though the Swahili of Gregory, Helen and Lavac was a little lame, they all managed fairly well in the conversation that ensued. He told them much of Tuen-Baka, of Thobos

and Ashair; but when the subject of The Father of Diamonds was broached, he was evasive; and, out of courtesy, they did not press him. But his reticence only served to whet their curiosity, as they sensed the mystery that surrounded the fabulous stone.

Late that night the silence of the sleeping camp was broken by sepulchral voices keening out of the mystery of the surrounding darkness. Instantly the camp was awake and in confusion, as the terrified natives milled in panic. So terrified were they that they might have bolted for the forest had it not been that glowing death's- heads suddenly appeared floating in the air around the camp, as the voices warned, "Turn back!

Turn back! Death awaits you in forbidden Ashair."

"The Asharians!" cried Thetan.

Tarzan, seeking to solve the mystery of the weird apparitions, sprang into the night in the direction of the nearest death's-head. D'Arnot sought to rally the askaris; but they were as terrified as the porters, many of whom crouched with their foreheads pressed to the ground, while others covered their ears or their eyes with trembling hands.

Into the midst of this confusion burst half a dozen Asharian warriors. The whites met them with drawn pistols. Wolff fired and missed; then the intruders were gone as suddenly as they had come. Above the turmoil of the

camp rose a woman's terrified scream.

Pursuing the grinning skull into the darkness, the ape-man seized a flesh-and-blood man, as he had expected. The fellow put up a fight; but he was no match for the steel thewed man of the jungles, who quickly disarmed him and dragged him back into camp.

"Look!" said Tarzan to the natives, pointing to the phosphorescent mask of his prisoner. "It is only a trick; you need be afraid no more. He is a man, even as you and I." Then he turned to his prisoner. "You may go," he said. "Tell your people that we do not come as enemies, and that if they will send Brian Gregory out to us, we will go away."

"I will tell them," said the warrior;

but when he was safely out of the camp, he called back, "You will never see Brian Gregory, for no stranger who enters The Forbidden City ever comes out alive."

"We are well out of that," said Gregory, with a sigh. "I don't take much stock in what that fellow just said. He was just trying to frighten us. That was what the voices and the death's-heads and the raid were for, but for a while I thought that we were in for a lot of trouble."

"Who screamed?" asked Tarzan.

"It sounded like one of the girls," said Lavac, "but it may have been a porter. They were scared nearly to death."

It was then that Magra came running

toward them. "Helen is gone!" she cried. "I think they got her," and at that very moment Asharian warriors were dragging Helen into a galley at the edge of the river only a short distance from the camp. During the confusion they had deliberately caused in the Gregory camp, a warrior had seized Helen; and then they had all made off for the river where the galley lay. A palm over her mouth had silenced the girl; and she was helpless against their strength, as they hurried her aboard the craft.

"Come!" cried Thetan. "Their galley must be close by in the river. We may be able to overtake them before they can put off," and, followed by the others, he ran from the camp; but when they reached

the river, they saw the galley already out of their reach and moving steadily up stream beneath the steady strokes of its long oars.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed d'Arnot. "We must do something. We cannot let them take her away without doing something."

"What can we do?" asked Gregory in a broken voice.

"I am afraid you will never see her again," said Thetan. "She is beautiful; so they will probably take her to the temple of The Father of Diamonds to be handmaiden to the priests. No alien who enters there ever comes out alive. Tomorrow, she will be as dead to the outer world as though she had never existed."

"Is there no way to overtake them?" asked Tarzan.

"Wait!" exclaimed Thetan. "There is a bare possibility. If they camp tonight this side of the tunnel that leads into Lake Horus we might be able to do so; but it is a hard trail, and only strong men could travel it."

"Will you guide me?" asked Tarzan.

"Yes," replied Thetan, "but what can we two alone expect against a galley load of Asharian warriors?"

For answer, Tarzan raised his face toward the heavens and voiced a weird cry; then he turned to d'Arnot. "Come," he said, "you will go with us."

"I'll go, too," said Lavac. "You'll need all the men you can get."

"You'll stay here," said Tarzan. "We must have protection for the camp."

Lavac grumbled; but he knew that when Tarzan gave an order it was to be obeyed; and, scowling at d'Arnot, he watched the three men disappear into the darkness.

As Thetan led them by the way he knew, his mind was occupied by thoughts of this strange, white giant who had come into his life. His great strength and his fearlessness impressed the Thobotian, but the man seemed eccentric. That strange cry he had given just as they were leaving camp! Now, what could have been his reason for that? He was still pondering this, when he heard grumblings and growlings

coming out of the night behind them and growing louder. Something was following them. He glanced back and saw a blur of great black forms on the trail behind the two men who followed them.

"Something is behind you!" he warned them.

"Yes," replied Tarzan. "My apes are coming with us. I called them before we left camp."

"Your apes!" exclaimed Thetan.

"Yes; they will make good allies, and they can go where even strong men cannot. The Asharians will be surprised to see them."

"Yes," agreed Thetan, who was very much surprised himself; and his awe

increased, not for the apes, but for the man who could control them.

The way grew steeper, as Thetan led them up into the hills to reach the head of the ravine where the Asharians would camp if they camped at all.

"How much farther is it?" asked Tarzan.

"We should get there just about dawn," replied Thetan.

"If they are camped there, we should take them by surprise, for they could not imagine that any one could reach them; and consequently they may not have any one on watch."

"Poor Helen!" said d'Arnot. "What will become of her if they went on to Ashair without stopping?"

"You will never see her again," replied Thetan. "For generations my people have been trying to conquer Ashair and reach the temple and The Father of Diamonds, yet we have never succeeded. How can you hope to accomplish what we have never been able to?"

"She must be there," said d'Arnot. "She must!"

"There is a possibility," explained Thetan, "but it is only a possibility."

CHAPTER 15

Wolff was genuinely terrified. The weird occurrences, the raid on the camp, the show of force by the Asharians had all contributed to impress him with the grave dangers and the futility of the venture. His desire to live outweighed his avarice, and The Father of Diamonds was forgotten in his anxiety to escape what he believed to be the certain fate of the party if it sought to enter The Forbidden City of Ashair.

When, at last, the camp slept, he awoke Mbuli. "Are you and your people going to stay here and be killed or forced into slavery?" he demanded.

"My people are afraid," replied the headman, "but what are we to do? We

are afraid to stay here, and we are afraid to run away from the great Bwana Tarzan."

"You will never see that monkey-man again," Wolff assured the black. "He and the frog eater will be killed by the Asharians, who will then come back and either kill all of us or take us with them as slaves. How would you like to be chained to a galley all the rest of your life?"

"I would not like it, bwana," replied Mbuli.

"Then listen to me. The girl here is in danger. I got to save her; so I orders you and your boys to take us back to Bonga. How many do you think will come with you?"

"All, bwana."

"Good! Now get busy. Have 'em get their packs together, but see that they don't make no noise. When everything's ready, you take a couple of boys and get the girl. Don't let her make no noise."

After a night of sleeplessness and terrified apprehension for the future, Helen's attention was attracted by a slight noise in the forest behind the camp where her captors had halted for the night. Dawn was breaking, its ghastly light relieving the darkness that had enveloped the little ravine and revealing to the girl's astonished eyes the figures of great apes and men stealing stealthily upon the camp.

At first she was terrified by this new

menace; then she recognized Tarzan and almost simultaneously saw d'Arnot behind him; and hope, that she had thought dead, welled strong within her, so that she could scarcely restrain a cry of relief as she realized that rescue was at hand; then an Asharian awoke and saw the danger. With a shout that aroused the others, he leaped to his feet; and, guessing that an attempt was being made to rescue the captive, he seized her and dragged her, struggling, toward the galley.

With a shout of encouragement to her, d'Arnot sprang forward in pursuit while two warriors engaged Tarzan, and Thetan and the apes fell upon the others. The warrior who was carrying Helen off

was almost at the galley. He shouted to the slaves to make ready to put off the moment he was aboard, but d'Arnot was pressing him so closely he was compelled to turn and defend himself. D'Arnot faced him with drawn pistol as the man raised his spear. Behind d'Arnot, another warrior, who had escaped the apes, was running to the aid of his fellow.

The Frenchman could not fire at the warrior facing him without endangering Helen, and he did not know that another was approaching from behind.

What takes so long to tell occupied but a few seconds of time, for as the warrior was about to cast his spear, Helen, realizing d'Arnot's predicament,

threw herself to one side, exposing her captor; and d'Arnot fired.

Tarzan, Thetan, and the apes had disposed of the remainder of the Asharians, with the exception of the one who was threatening d'Arnot from behind. The ape-man saw his friend's danger, but he was too far away to reach the warrior who was threatening him, before the man should drive his spear into d'Arnot's back. Helen realized the danger, and cried a warning to the Frenchman. D'Arnot swung about, his pistol ready; and pressed the trigger, but the hammer fell futilely upon an imperfect cap; then Tarzan launched his spear. His target was far beyond the range of any spear but that of the Lord of

the Jungle. With all of his great strength, backed by the weight of his body, he cast the weapon; and, as the Asharian was lunging at d'Arnot, it passed through his body, piercing his heart. As the man fell dead at d'Arnot's feet, Helen went suddenly weak. She would have fallen had not d'Arnot taken her in his arms.

"Whew!" exclaimed Thetan. "That was a close call, but what a cast! In all my life I have never seen one that could compare with it."

"In all your life," said d'Arnot, "you have never seen such a man as Tarzan of the Apes."

Tarzan had passed them and reached the galley, where the slaves sat bewildered, not knowing what to do;

then he called the apes and ordered them into the galley among the terrified slaves.

"They won't harm you," Tarzan assured them, and when Helen, d'Arnot and Thetan were aboard, he directed the slaves to row them down river to the Gregory camp.

D'Arnot sat in the stern with his arm around Helen, who evinced no inclination to resent the familiarity. On the contrary, she seemed quite content.

"I thought I had lost you, darling," he whispered.

She made no reply, other than to snuggle closer and sigh happily, which, to d'Arnot, was at least an acceptance of his love, if not an avowal of her own.

He was content to leave the matter as it stood.

Gregory, Lavac, and Ogabi were standing by the river when the galley rounded a bend and came within sight.

"The Asharians are returning!" cried Gregory. "We'd better get into the forest and hide. We three haven't a chance against them."

"Wait!" said Lavac. "That boat's full of apes."

"By George! So it is," exclaimed Gregory.

"And there is Bwana Tarzan," exclaimed Ogabi.

A few moments later the boat touched shore; and as the apes poured out,

Gregory took his daughter in his arms. "Thank God, you've found her," he said to Tarzan; "but now we have some bad news for you."

"What now?" demanded d'Arnot.

"Magra and Wolff deserted with all the men and equipment last night," said Gregory.

"Oh, I can't believe that Magra would have done a thing like that," exclaimed Helen.

Gregory shook his head. "Don't forget," he reminded her, "that she was in cahoots with Thorne."

"Any way," said Lavac, "she's gone."

"What are we to do now?" demanded Gregory. "It looks like the end of the

trail to me."

"On the way down," said Tarzan, "I questioned some of the galley slaves. They tell me that a white man is held prisoner in the temple of The Father of Diamonds at Ashair. It may be your son. I have talked with Thetan; and he believes it may be possible that the King of Thobos will receive us kindly and even help in the rescue of your son, if there is any possibility that it may be accomplished. Under the circumstances, it may be well to go to Thobos. We have a galley, and by entering the lake after dark we should be able to pass Ashair safely."

"I should like to do that," said Gregory, "but I can't ask the rest of you

to risk your lives further for me. Had I had any idea that we were to encounter such dangers, I should never have started out without a strong force of white men."

"I'll go with you," said d'Arnot.

"And I," said Lavac.

"Where Bwana Tarzan goes, I go," said Ogabi.

"Then we all go," said the ape-man.

An exhausted warrior stumbled into the presence of Atka, Queen of Ashair. "We were camped for the night in the ravine below the tunnel," he reported. "We had with us a girl whom we had captured in the camp of the strangers. At dawn we were attacked by three men and a band of apes. One of the men was a Thobotian. The leader was a naked

white warrior. In the beginning of the fight, I was knocked senseless. I knew nothing more until I regained consciousness and found myself alone with the dead. The galley was gone. I think they must have thought me dead."

"Which way did they go?" demanded Atka.

"That I do not know," replied the warrior, "but it is probable that they went back down stream to their camp."

The Queen turned to a noble standing near the throne. "Man six galleys," she ordered, "and bring me those people, dead or alive! They shall taste the anger of Brulor!"

CHAPTER 16

Wolff had stumbled along the back trail all night, and his disposition had not been improved by the fact that he had had to drag a resisting Magra most of the way. He had stopped now for a brief rest. The boys had dropped their packs and thrown themselves to the ground. Wolff was wiping the sweat from his forehead and glaring at the girl.

"You might as well come along peaceable," said the man. "It'll be easier for both of us. I got you, and I'm goin' to keep you. You might as well make up your mind to that."

"You're wasting your time," replied Magra. "You can lead a horse to water, you know—"

"And I can make it drink, too," growled Wolff. "Come here, you!" He seized her and drew her to him.

With her right hand, Magra attempted to push him away, while her left hand sought the pistol at his hip. "Stop!" she cried, "or, before God, I'll kill you!" but Wolff only laughed at her and drew her closer.

He died with the ugly grin upon his face, as Magra wrested his weapon from its holster and shot him through the chest. As Wolff fell, Mbuli leaped to his feet, followed by his boys. The white girl was alone now, in their power; and Mbuli knew where she would bring a good price. Also, there were two thousand English pounds on the dead

man.

Magra swung around and faced Mbuli. "Pick up your loads and get going back to camp!" she ordered. Mbuli hesitated and came toward her. His attitude was insubordinate and threatening. "Do as I tell you, Mbuli," snapped the girl, "or you'll get what Wolff got."

"We are tired," said Mbuli, seeking tune. "Let us rest."

"You can rest in camp. Get going!"

Urging the men on, Magra drove them back along the trail toward camp. They grumbled; but they obeyed, for they had seen her kill Wolff. She walked behind them, with Mbuli just in front of her; and she never let him forget that a pistol was

aimed at the small of his back. She would have driven them faster had she known that her companions were about to abandon the camp along a route she could not follow, but she did not know.

As the others in the Gregory camp discussed their plans, Lavac stood aside moodily, eyeing d'Arnot and Helen who stood hand in hand; and as the others went to their tents to gather a few of the personal belongings the deserting porters had left behind, he accosted d'Arnot.

"You are very familiar with Mam'selle Helen," he said; "and I resent it, but I suppose she prefers you because you are a captain and have more money than I."

D'Arnot, ordinarily slow to anger, flushed and then went white. "And I resent that, you pig!" he snapped, slapping Lavac across the face.

"You can't do that to me!" growled Lavac, whipping his gun from its holster.

Fortunately, Tarzan chanced to be passing close to Lavac. He leaped between the two men and seized the lieutenant's gun hand. "None of that!" he snapped. "We've enough troubles without fighting among ourselves. I'll keep your gun until you cool off and get a little sense. Now, into the barge, all of you. We're leaving for Thobos at once."

"We can't have any of this," said Gregory. "If Lieutenant Lavac feels as he does, I think he had better wait here for

us."

"How about it, Lavac?" asked Tarzan.

"It will not occur again," said the man. "I lost my head. If Captain d'Arnot will accept my apology, I offer it."

"Certainly," said d'Arnot. "I regret the whole affair, and I am sorry that I struck you." Then the two men shook hands quite perfunctorily, and separated coldly. It was obvious that from now on nothing but bad blood would exist between them.

"What about the apes?" asked Gregory, more to bridge the awkward silence than because he was interested.

"I have told them to stay around here for a moon and hunt," replied Tarzan. "If they don't forget it, they'll stay; unless the

hunting is very poor."

As Tarzan was about to board the galley, his keen ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps from the direction of the forest. "Some one is coming," he said. "We'll wait and see who it is. Be ready to push off—they may not be friends."

Presently the head of a safari came into view, debouching from the forest. "Why, those are our men!" exclaimed Helen.

"Yes," said Tarzan, "and there's Magra bringing up the rear. You were quite right about her."

"I was sure she'd never desert us like that," said Helen. "I wonder where Wolff is."

"She's got a gun on Mbuli," said d'Arnot. "There is a woman!"

Magra herded them down to the river, where she told briefly of how Wolff had persuaded Mbuli and his men to abduct her and desert, and of Wolff's death. "I found these on him," she said, "The £2000 of which he defrauded Mr. Gregory and Thorne and the map he stole from Helen's room."

"We are well rid of him," said Gregory.

Tarzan ordered the natives to load all of the supplies and equipment on board the galley, and when they had done so he dismissed them.

"You may wait here for us if you wish," he said, "or you may go back to

your own country. Eventually you will be punished for what you have done."

Bending to their oars, the slaves drove the galley up stream, as the members of the party momentarily relaxed from the nervous strain of the past hours. Lavac sat in the bow, looking forward, so that he would not see d'Arnot and Helen sitting close to one another. Magra sat beside Tarzan. All were quiet, grateful for the peace and restfulness of the river. For a tune, at least, their way seemed assured as far as Thobos, for they would pass Ashair by night. What their reception in Thobos would be was uncertain. Even Thetan could assure them of nothing more than that he would intercede with his uncle,

the King, in their behalf; but he thought that the fact that Tarzan had saved his life and that they were all enemies of the Asharians would go a long way toward insuring them a friendly attitude on the part of King Herat.

Magra sighed and turned to Tarzan. "You have all been so splendid to me," she said, "although you knew that I was an accomplice of Thorne. I want you to know that I am loyal to you now."

Tarzan made no reply. His attention was centered on another matter. The galley was too heavily laden. Its gunwales were almost awash as it moved slowly up the narrow gorge.

"Well have to put some of this stuff ashore in that ravine where we found

Helen," he said. "If we ran into swift water in the river or any sort of a blow on the lake, we'd founder."

"Look!" cried Lavac. "Here comes a galley."

"An Asharian!" exclaimed Thetan, "and there are others right behind it."

"Six of 'em," said Lavac.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Gregory. "We'd better turn back."

"They'd overtake us in no time," said Thetan. "We're in for it."

Tarzan smiled. "There is nothing to do, then, but fight," he said.

"We haven't a chance, have we?" asked Magra.

"It doesn't look like it," replied

d'Arnot.

"If there is such a thing as a jinx," said Helen, "we certainly have one camping on our trail."

The narrow gorge echoed to the war cries of the Asharians, as their galleys bore down on their hapless victims. Gregory's party met them with gunfire and arrows, while the short Asharian spears hurtled about them. As the men had leaped to their feet to fire over the heads of the slaves, the galley tipped dangerously, shipping water and spoiling their aim. A spear struck one of the oarsmen; and as he lurched forward, dead, his oar fouled that of another slave; and a moment later the galley swung broadside across the river as the

leading Asharian galley, sped down stream by forty oars, bore down upon it. There was a crash of splintering wood as the prow of the enemy rammed the Gregory galley amidships. Already listing crazily, she careened to the impact; and as the water poured over her port gunwale, she began to sink, leaving her passengers floundering in the river and her slaves screaming in their chains; then the other galleys moved in to pick up the survivors.

D'Arnot and Helen were dragged into the galley farthest up stream, which immediately set out for Ashair. The other members of the party had drifted down stream before they were finally picked up by a second galley. Tarzan

had swum beside Magra, encouraging and supporting her, while Gregory, Lavac, and Ogabi remained nearby. Night was falling, and it would soon be dark in the narrow gorge. When they were in the craft, they saw that Thetan was already there, having been picked up before they were; but Helen and d'Arnot were not there; and the boat in which they were prisoners was out of sight around a bend in the river.

"Did you see anything of Helen?" asked Gregory, but no one had.

"I could almost wish that she drowned," he added. "God! Why did I ever undertake this stupid venture?"

"It would have been better had we all drowned," said Thetan. "There is no

hope for those who fall into the hands of the Asharians."

"All that has happened to us so far," said Tarzan, "is that we have gotten wet. Wait until something really bad happens before you give up hope."

"But look at what lies ahead of us!" exclaimed Lavac.

"I do not know what lies ahead of us, and neither do you," the ape-man reminded him; "therefore we might as well anticipate the best as the worst."

"A most excellent philosophy," commented Gregory, "but a strain on one's credulity."

"I think it is good," said Magra.

In the leading galley, Helen and

d'Arnot sat huddled together, shivering with cold.

"I wonder what became of the others," said the girl.

"I don't know, dear," replied d'Arnot; "but thank God that you and I were not separated."

"Yes," she whispered, and then, "I suppose this is the end; but we shall go together."

"Keep a stiff upper lip, darling. Don't give up hope; they haven't harmed us yet."

"Poor Dad," said Helen. "Do you suppose he and all the others drowned?"

"They may have been picked up, too," encouraged d'Arnot.

"Little good it will do any of us," continued the girl. "No wonder poor Brian never returned from Ashair. What was that?"

An eerie scream shattered the silence of the night, reverberating weirdly in the narrow gorge.

CHAPTER 17

Atan Thome and Lal Taask were taking their ease on the terrace of Atka's palace, overlooking the lake. They were treated like guests, but they knew that they were prisoners. Lal Taask would have given his soul to be well out of the country; but Atan Thome still harbored dreams of The Father of Diamonds, which he pictured as a stone as large as a football. He often amused himself by trying to compute its value; then he translated it into pounds sterling and bought yachts and castles and great country estates. He gave the most marvelous dinners that Paris had ever known, and was fawned upon by the world's most beautiful women, whom he

covered with furs and jewels. But the walls of Ashair still rose about him; and, towering above those, the walls of Tuen-Baka.

As they sat there, the noble Akamen joined them. "Your enemies have probably been captured by this time," he said.

"What will happen to them?" asked Lal Taask. He was thinking of what might be going to happen to him sooner or later.

"They shall know the wrath of Brulor," replied Akamen.

"Who is Brulor?" asked Thorne.

"Brulor is our god, The Father of Diamonds," explained the Asharian. "His temple lies at the bottom of Lake

Horus, guarded by the priests of Brulor and the waters of sacred Horus."

"But I thought that The Father of Diamonds was a diamond," exclaimed Atan Thome, terrified by the suggestion that it was a man.

"What do you know of The Father of Diamonds?" demanded Akamen.

"Nothing," said Thorne, hastily. "I have just heard the term."

"Well," said Akamen, "it's something we are not supposed to discuss with barbarians; but I don't mind telling you that The Father of Diamonds is the name given both to Brulor and The Father of Diamonds that reposes in the casket on the altar before his throne in the temple."

Atan Thome breathed a sigh of relief.

So there was a Father of Diamonds after all. Suddenly there came faintly to their ears a weird scream from far down the lake toward the tunnel that leads to the outside world and carries the waters of Horus down to the sea thousands of miles away.

"I wonder what that was," said Akamen. "It sounded almost human."

"Are there any apes around here?" asked Thorne.

"No," replied Akamen; "why?"

"That sounded a little like an ape," said Atan Thome.

"It will be very dark inside there," said Tarzan, as the galley in which he and his fellow prisoners were being taken to Ashair approached the mouth of

the tunnel leading to Lake Horus. He spoke in English. "Each of you pick a couple of men; and when I say 'Kreegah,' throw them overboard. If we act very quickly, taking them off their guard, we can do it; and as soon as you have two overboard, go after more. I can't tell either Thetan or Ogabi now, as the Asharians understand Swahili; but as soon as I give you the signal, I shall tell them."

"And then what?" asked Lavac.

"Why, we'll take the boat, of course," said Gregory.

"We're likely to be killed," said Lavac, "but that's all right with me."

As the galley neared the tunnel, a warrior in the bow lighted a torch, for

within the tunnel there would not be even the sky to guide the helmsman. Tarzan regretted the torch, but he did not give up his plan. Perhaps it might be more difficult now, but he felt that it still had an excellent chance to succeed.

Suddenly the ape-man sprang to his feet, and as he hurled a warrior into the water his "Kre-e-gah!" rang through the tunnel.

"Overboard with them!" he shouted, and Thetan and Ogabi grasped the intent of his plan instantly.

Chaos and confusion reigned aboard the galley, as the five desperate and determined men fell upon the Asharian warriors, throwing or pushing them overboard. The astonished Asharians

were so taken by surprise that they at first fell easy victims to the plan, but later those who had escaped the first sudden rush of the prisoners, rallied and put up a defense that threatened the success of the ape-man's bold plan.

Magra, seated amidships, was in the center of the melee. Crouched between two galley slaves, she watched the savage scene with fascinated, fearless eyes. The flaring torch in the bow of the galley painted the scene in dancing high lights and deep shadows against a background of Stygian gloom, a moving picture of embattled souls upon the brink of Hell; and through it moved, with the strength, the agility, and the majesty of a great lion, the godlike figure of the Lord

of the Jungle. She saw, too, the threat of defeat that she was helpless to avert; and then she heard Thetan shout, "Help us, slaves, and win your freedom!"

Almost as one man the slaves rose in their chains and lashed out at their former masters with oars or fists. Screaming, cursing men were hurled into the black waters. A warrior lunged at Tarzan's back with his sword; but Magra caught his ankle and tripped him, and he fell between two slaves, who pitched him overboard.

As the yells and screams echoed through the tunnel, Helen pressed closer to d'Arnot. "They are fighting back there," she said.

"Yes," replied the Frenchman. "The

first scream was Tarzan's warning 'kreegah,' so you may rest assured that they are fighting."

"At least we know that they were not all drowned," said the girl. "Perhaps Dad is still alive, but what chance have they against all those warriors?"

"There is always a chance for the side upon which Tarzan fights," replied d'Arnot. "I'd feel much better on your account if you were back there in the galley that he's in."

"If you were there, too," she said; "otherwise I'd rather be here."

He pressed her closer to him. "What an ironical fate that we could only have met and loved under circumstances such as these. For me, it is worth the price, no

matter what that price may be. But for you—well, I wish you had never come to Africa."

"Is that the gallant Frenchman?" she teased.

"You know what I mean."

"Yes; but you are still glad that I came to Africa, and so am I—no matter what happens."

Back in the rearmost galley, the last of their adversaries disposed of, the little company took stock of their losses. "Where is Ogabi?" asked Tarzan.

"An Asharian dragged him overboard," said Magra, "poor fellow."

"He was well avenged," said Lavac.

"Only Helen and d'Arnot are missing

now," said Gregory. "If they weren't drowned, they must be in one of the galleys ahead of us. Is there no way in which we might rescue them?"

"There are five galleys ahead of us," said Thetan. "We are only four men. We would stand no chance against five galleys of Asharian warriors. The only possible hope that we may entertain of saving them is in enlisting my King's aid, but I have already told you that the Thobotians have never been able to enter Ashair. About the best we may hope to do is to save ourselves, and that may not be so easy if any of the galleys ahead of us are lying in wait for us. We'll have to put out our torch and take a chance in the darkness."

When the galley finally reached the end of the tunnel and the lake spread before them, a seemingly vast expanse of water beneath the dim light of the stars, they saw the glimmering torches of five galleys far to their left and just beyond them the lights of Ashair. No galley had lain in wait for them, and the way to Thobos lay open to them.

It was shortly after dawn that they approached the quay at Thobos. A company of warriors stood ready to receive them, and even though Thetan stood in full view of them in the bow of the galley, their attitude was no less belligerent.

"They don't seem very friendly," remarked Magra. "Perhaps we ate

jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

"Who comes?" demanded one of the warriors.

"Thetan, nephew of King Herat," replied Thetan.

"We recognize Thetan, but the others are strangers," said the warrior.

"They are friends," explained Thetan.

"They are strangers, and strangers may only enter Thobos as prisoners," insisted the warrior. "If they would land without battle, let them throw down their arms."

Under these conditions, the party was allowed to land; but they were immediately surrounded by scowling

warriors. "You know, Thetan," said the leader, "that it is against the law to bring strangers to Thobos; and therefore, even though you be nephew to him, I must arrest you with the others and take you all before King Herat."

CHAPTER 18

Helen and d'Arnot were imprisoned briefly in a dungeon of the palace at Ashair; then they were summoned to appear before the Queen. As they were led into the throne room, Helen exclaimed in amazement.

"Why, there are Thorne and Taask!" she whispered to d'Arnot, "there, at the side of the dais."

"So that is Thorne," said d'Arnot. "I'd like to get my hands on him. They don't seem to be prisoners. I wonder what it means."

"Silence!" ordered one of their guard. As they were led to the foot of the dais, Atka eyed them sternly. "Why came you

to The Forbidden City?" she demanded.

"To find my brother, Brian Gregory," replied Helen.

"You lie!" snapped Atka. "You came to steal The Father of Diamonds."

"The girl is innocent, O Queen," said Thorne. "It was the man and his companions who sought The Father of Diamonds. If you will give the girl into my keeping, I will be responsible for her."

"The girl speaks the truth," cried d'Arnot. "She came solely to find her brother, but that man lies. It was he who came to steal The Father of Diamonds. Why else should he have come? He has no brother here. There is no other reason why he should have undertaken the

expensive and dangerous journey to Ashair."

"You all lie," snapped Atka. "Send the girl to the temple as handmaiden to the priests. Imprison the men."

Suddenly, before they could prevent him, d'Arnot tore away from his guards and leaped upon Atan Thome, his strong fingers closing upon the Eurasian's throat to kill him.

"If it's the last thing in life I do!" he cried, but warriors leaped in and dragged him away before he could consummate his design.

"To the cages with him!" ordered Atka. "He shall spend the rest of his life looking at The Father of Diamonds he would have profaned."

"Good-bye, Helen!" he called back as warriors dragged him from the throne room.

"Good-bye, Paul!" That was all; but tears welled in her eyes as they strained after the man she loved, whom she believed she was looking upon for the last time.

As warriors seized Atan Thome and Lal Taask, Akamen stepped close to the Queen and whispered a few words to her. She nodded, and ordered the warriors to release the two men.

"I give these men into the keeping of Akamen," she said. "He shall be responsible for them. Take the girl away. Let the women purify her before she is taken to the priests."

Two warriors led d'Arnot down a long ramp to a crude elevator operated by slaves at a windlass on the floor above. They entered the cage with him, and the descent began down a dark shaft.

"I hope you took a good look at the world before you were brought into the palace," remarked one of the warriors, "for it's the last you'll ever see of it."

"Why?" asked d'Arnot. "Where are you taking me?"

"To the temple of Brulor," replied the warrior. "It lies at the bottom of Lake Horus, the sacred. You will spend the rest of your life there. It may be a short life, or it may be a long one. After you've spent a few weeks in the temple, you'll pray that it will be short."

D'Arnot could not judge the depth of the long shaft down which he was being lowered to what fate he could not guess. He might have descended two hundred feet or it might have been more. Whatever it was, he was convinced that there could be neither escape nor rescue. At the foot of the shaft, the warriors turned him over to two priests, who conducted him along a corridor that extended far out beneath the lake. At the end of the corridor, he was led into a large, oblong room, at the far end of which an old man sat upon an ornate throne. Surrounding him were priests and handmaidens, and before him an altar on which rested a large, jeweled casket.

Along both sides of the room were several cages, which reminded d'Arnot of the cages in the lion house of a zoo; but here there were no lions, only a few emaciated, almost naked men with unkempt hair and beards.

The priests led d'Arnot to the foot of the throne. "Here is a would-be profaner of The Father of Diamonds that Queen Atka has sent as an offering to Brulor," said one of the priests.

"We already have too many to feed," grumbled the old man. "Zytheb, put him in a cage."

A tall priest, carrying a great ring of keys at his belt, came forward and led the way to one of the cages, which he unlocked and motioned d'Arnot to enter.

As the door clanged behind him, a sudden chill ran through the Frenchman's body as though he were entering his own tomb.

A half starved, bearded man in the next cage looked at d'Arnot curiously. "Poor devil!" he said. "Did you, too, come in search of The Father of Diamonds?"

"No," said d'Arnot. "I came looking for a man."

"What man?" asked the other.

"A man named Gregory, who is supposed to be a prisoner here," replied d'Arnot.

"Most interesting," said the man. "But I cannot but wonder what interest you would have had in looking for Brian

Gregory, for, you see, I am he; and I do not recall having known you."

"So you are Brian Gregory!" exclaimed d'Arnot. "I have found you at last, but much good it will do either of us. But may I introduce myself? I am Captain d'Arnot, of the French navy."

"That makes it all the more puzzling," said Gregory. "Why should the French navy be looking for me?"

"It is not," replied d'Arnot. "I just chanced to be in Loango when your father was arranging his expedition to come in search of you, and I joined it."

"Oh, so Dad was coming after me? I hope he didn't."

"He did; and your sister, also."

"Helen? She didn't come here!"

D'Arnot nodded. "I regret to say that she did."

"Where is she? Where is Dad?"

"I don't know where your father is, but your sister was taken prisoner with me. She is here in Ashair."

"God!" exclaimed Gregory. "And I brought them to this! I and that damned thing out there in the casket."

"It is The Father of Diamonds?" asked d'Arnot.

"Yes; and that is what Brulor is called, too—The Father of Diamonds. The big diamond is in the casket, and Brulor is the god who guards it; so they call him The Father of Diamonds, too."

"The old man on the throne is Brulor?" asked d'Arnot.

Brian nodded. "The old devil!"

D'Arnot's gaze wandered about the cages and the other prisoners. "Are these all men from the outside world?" he asked.

"No," replied Brian. "Some are Asharians who have aroused the wrath of Atka, some are from Thobos, and the one in the next cage is Herkuf. He was a priest; but somehow he got in dutch with the old man, and here he is."

"And there is no escape?" asked the Frenchman.

"None," said Brian.

As the two men talked, Asharian

women had completed anointing the body of Helen with aromatic oils in a chamber in the palace; and were clothing her in the scant garments of a handmaiden.

"It is fortunate for you that you are beautiful," said one of the women, "for because of that you will go to the priests instead of to the warriors or the slaves. Of course you may be chosen for sacrifice; but if not, you will not go to the warriors or slaves until you are old and ugly."

The toilet completed, Helen was taken down the long shaft and along the corridor to the throne room of Brulor; and as she entered, two men saw her and their hearts went cold. One of them

called her by name as she was being led past his cage. She turned in astonishment.

"Brian!" she cried. "Oh, Brian, what have they done to you?" Then she recognized the man in the next cage. "Paul! You are both here!"

"Silence, woman!" commanded one of the priests escorting her; then she was led before Brulor.

As the old man examined her, Zytheb, the priest who carried the keys at his belt, whispered in Brulor's ear.

"What is your name, girl?" demanded Brulor.

"Helen," she replied.

"From what country do you come?"

"America."

Brulor scratched his head. "There is no such country," he said. "There is a prisoner here who said he was from that country, but I knew he was lying. You must not lie. You will get along better here if you always tell the truth. Zytheb, you will take your place beside the girl. Helen," he continued, "you shall serve Zytheb, Keeper of the Keys; and see, girl, that you serve him well. Learn the holy rites of the temple and obey Zytheb." He made some mystic passes above the jeweled casket and mumbled in a strange jargon. When he ceased, he looked up at the two standing before him. "Zytheb and Helen are now man and wife!" he announced.

"What's happening?" demanded d'Arnot.

"The old devil's married Helen to that beast, Zytheb," replied Brian with an oath; "and here we are caged up like wild beasts, unable to help her. You can't know what it means to me, her brother!"

"And you don't know what it means to me, Brian," said d'Arnot; "I love her."

CHAPTER 19

Thetan, with Tarzan, Gregory, Magra, and Lavac, was taken before Herat as a prisoner. Surrounding the throne of the King were black plumed warriors; and at his side sat his queen, Mentheb. Herat was a large man with a black spade beard and a smooth upper lip. His face was hard, arrogant, and cruel. He scowled, as he looked at Thetan.

"You know the laws of Thobos," he said, "and yet you dared bring strangers here. Even my nephew may not thus break the laws of Thobos with impunity. What have you to say for yourself?"

"I was being attacked by one of the great reptiles of the outer slopes of Tuen-Baka," explained Thetan. "I should

have been killed, had not this man, Tarzan, at the risk of his own life, killed the beast and saved mine. When I found that he and his companions were enemies of the Asharians, I tried to help them, for I owed Tarzan a great debt. I thought, my King, that you would feel even as I. They may be strangers, but they are not enemies—they are my friends, and they should be accepted as friends by my people and my king."

Herat's scowl relaxed a little, and he sat in thought for several minutes. "What you tell me," he said, "lessens your guilt; and I forgive you, but the fact remains that they are strangers and should be destroyed. However, because of the extraordinary circumstances, I shall be

lenient and give them a chance to live. Their lives shall depend upon the fulfillment of three conditions; that, in the arena, one of them kills an Asharian warrior. That is the first. The second is that one of them kills a wild lion in the arena, and the third that they bring me The Father of Diamonds from the temple at Ashair."

Thetan turned to Tarzan. "I am sorry, my friend," he said, "that I have brought you all here to die. You deserve a better fate."

"We are not dead yet," said the ape-man.

"Turn the girl over to the women. They will see that no harm befalls her," said Herat. "Imprison the men until I

send for one of them to meet the Asharian. Take them away."

Warriors conducted Tarzan, Gregory, and Lavac to a cell in a dungeon and chained them to a wall. The place was damp and cold, and there was not even straw for them to lie upon.

"Hospitable country," remarked Lavac.

"At least, the King has a sense of humor," said Tarzan.

"It is reflected in his benign countenance," said Gregory.

"One of us might kill the Asharian," reflected Lavac, "but scarcely a wild lion. Well, there are three of us left. I wonder which will be the next to go."

"And I wonder what will become of Magra," said Gregory.

"Old Herat couldn't keep his eyes off her," said Lavac. "I'll bet he knows where she is."

"They turned her over to the women," said Tarzan. "I hope Thetan will be able to help her."

"She's going to need help," remarked Lavac, "and there will be none."

In Ashair, Atan Thome and Lal Taask sat in a pleasant room with the noble Akamen. If the wages of sin are death, it must have been that the paymaster was napping, for Atan Thome and Lal Taask seemed launched upon a life of ease and luxury.

"It is fortunate for you," said Akamen,

"that I have influence with the Queen; otherwise, you would both be languishing in the cages of the temple of Brulor; and I can assure you that that is not a pleasant place to be."

"We owe you a great debt of gratitude, my friend," replied Atan Thome.

"One which you will be able to repay, perhaps," said Akamen. "You will recall what I told you."

Atan Thome nodded. "Yes," he said; "that you are cousin of the Queen and that when she dies, you will be King."

"Quite right," said Akamen; "but the most important to you is that if I were King, your lives would no longer be in danger; and, if you so desired, it might

be arranged that you leave Ashair and return to your own country."

"With your guidance and advice, most noble Akamen," Atan Thome assured him, "I am sure that it can be accomplished most expeditiously."

Gregory and Lavac were stiff and lame when they awoke the following morning after a night of fitful slumber. Tarzan, inured to hardships, had fared better.

"Lord, what a night!" groaned Gregory. "If the builders of this place had searched every geological formation of the earth's crust they couldn't have found any stone harder than these lava slabs."

"Nor colder," added Lavac. "Don't

you suppose there is any way in which we could escape? I'd rather take any risk than stay here. Couldn't we overpower whomever brings our food?"

"Quiet!" cautioned Tarzan. "Some one is coming."

The others had heard nothing. It was the keen ears of the ape- man which had caught the faint sound of sandals on the stone floor of the corridor leading to the cell. A moment later a key was turned in the lock, and three warriors entered.

"One of you is to fight an Asharian," said one. "He is a giant, a famous killer of men. If he wins, and he will, he gets his freedom. Which one of you wishes to be killed first?"

"Let me go," said Lavac. "I would as

soon be dead as here."

"No," said Gregory. "Let me go. I am old."

"I shall go," said Tarzan, "and I shall not be killed."

The warriors laughed. "Boast while you may," said one.

They led Tarzan to a small arena, a courtyard enclosed by the palace buildings that surrounded it. At one end was a gallery for spectators, and here sat King Herat and Queen Mentheb with their court. Tarzan glanced up at them, and saw that Thetan was there, too. A guard of plumed warriors stood behind the King and Queen, and at either end of the gallery a trumpeter was posted. As Tarzan stood waiting in the center of the

arena, the trumpeters raised their instruments to their lips and sounded a fanfare; and through a small doorway beneath the royal box a huge man entered the arena.

"Good luck, Tarzan!" shouted Thetan.

"He'll need it," said Herat. "A thousand to one he dies."

"Taken!" said Thetan.

The Asharian approached Tarzan and commenced to circle about him, looking for an opening. "I have killed such men as Memet," he boasted. "I shall take great pleasure in killing you."

Tarzan only growled, as early training and environment had taught him to do; but that growl brought a startled look to the face of the Asharian, for it was the

growl of a lion. It shook his nerves a little, and he decided to get the thing over as quickly as possible; so he charged at close quarters with the intention of crushing his adversary in his mighty embrace. Thus he had crushed Memet, caving in his chest until his splintered ribs punctured his heart; and Tarzan let him get his hold. It was the hold he wished the other to have. The Asharian applied all the pressure of his great strength, but that mighty chest did not give an inch. He was amazed. It was unbelievable. Then Tarzan, growling, sought his foe's jugular with his teeth; and the Asharian was frankly terrified. Quickly he broke away and stepped back.

"What are you?" he cried, "man or beast?"

"I am Tarzan of the Apes. I kill!" growled the ape-man.

Like a cornered rat fearing death but forced to fight for self- preservation, the Asharian charged with lowered head; and as Tarzan sought to side step, he slipped; and the other caught him full in the chest with his head, knocking him to the ground; then the Asharian turned and leaped high in air to land upon his fallen foe and crush him. A shout arose from the royal box. "I win!" cried Herat.

"Perhaps," admitted Thetan; "but not yet—look!"

While the Asharian was in mid-air, Tarzan rolled quickly to one side; and

the other landed heavily on the flagging. Both men sprang to their feet instantly; and the Asharian, whipping a dagger from his sash, sprang at the ape-man. He had broken the rules of the contest, but he was too terrified to care about that. His only thought was to kill the beast-man.

As his foe charged with raised dagger, Tarzan leaped to one side, wheeled quickly and seized him from behind; then he swung him high above his head and hurled him to the flagging. He could have killed him then, but he preferred to play with him as a cat plays with a mouse. It was the Asharian's punishment for attempting to use a dagger; and, too, it was the humor of the

jungle, which is grim and terrible.

The man scrambled to his feet; and as Tarzan slunk slowly toward him he turned and fled, begging for mercy. The ape-man pursued him; and, though he could have caught him easily, he remained just a few paces behind him, voicing an occasional growl to add to the terror of his quarry.

"Did you invite us here to watch a foot race?" asked Thetan, laughing.

King Herat smiled. "Something seems to have gone wrong with the famous killer of men," he said.

Driven to desperation by terror, the Asharian turned at bay. Tarzan stopped and commenced to circle his adversary, low growls rumbling in his throat.

Suddenly the terrified man raised his dagger and plunged it into his own heart.

"You lose, Herat," laughed Thetan.

"But your Tarzan didn't kill him," objected the king.

"He frightened him to death," said Thetan.

Herat laughed. "You win," he admitted. "Send for the man. I have something to say to him."

"Never have I seen such a man," said Queen Mentheb. "Such a one should not be destroyed."

Tarzan, brought to the royal box, stood before the King and Queen.

"You have won your freedom fairly," said Herat, "and I am going to change the

conditions. You shall be free regardless of the fulfillment of the other two conditions. The others each may win his freedom in turn."

"And the girl?" asked Tarzan. "How about her?"

Herat looked a bit uncomfortable, shooting a quick glance at his Queen, as he answered. "The girl shall not be harmed," he said, "and if all the conditions be fulfilled, she shall have her liberty. You shall remain as a guest of Thetan until your companions have either succeeded or failed; then you may leave the country. Decide among yourselves tonight which of the other two is to fight the lion tomorrow."

"I shall kill the lion, myself," said

Tarzan.

"But you have won your freedom!" exclaimed Queen Mentheb. "You do not have to throw away your life."

"I shall kill the lion," reiterated Tarzan.

Herat looked questioningly at the Queen. "If he wishes to be killed, he shall," he snapped.

CHAPTER 20

The throne room of the temple of Brulor was vacant except for the poor prisoners in their cages. "They have all gone, and taken Helen," said d'Arnot. "What will they do with her?"

"I don't know," replied Brian, dejectedly. "One knows nothing here. One just lives and suffers. If lucky, he may be chosen for sacrifice, and die. Sometimes they choose one of us prisoners, sometimes one of the handmaidens. It is a cruel and bloody spectacle."

As he ceased speaking, a grotesque figure entered the throne room through a doorway on the opposite side. It appeared to be a man in a skin tight suit

with a strange helmet covering his entire head and an odd looking contraption strapped to his back between his shoulders. He carried a trident on the end of which a large fish wriggled. Water dripped from his helmet and his suit.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed d'Arnot. "What is that?"

"It is a ptome with our dinner," replied Brian. "The ptomes are lesser priests and greater fishermen. They go out onto the bottom of Lake Horus through watertight compartments and spear the fish with which we are fed. That affair on his back furnishes oxygen that it extracts from the water, which enters it in small quantities. They say

that with one of those helmets, a man could live under water almost indefinitely, as far as his air supply was concerned. You will notice the heavy metal soles of his shoes, that prevent him from turning over and floating to the surface, feet up."

"The whole thing is quite astonishing," commented d'Arnot, "and so is that fish, for that matter. I never saw one like it before."

"You will see plenty of them from now on," replied Brian, "and I hope you like raw fish. If you don't, you'd better cultivate a taste for it— it's about all you'll get to eat here; but you'll be able to watch the priests and the handmaidens dine sumptuously. They throw a banquet

in here every once in a while just to add to our misery."

Zytheb led Helen to one of the upper floors of the temple where his apartments were situated. At the end of a corridor, he threw open a door. "This is your new home," he said; "is it not beautiful?"

The room was a jumble of strange appearing furniture, with odd lamps and heavy vases. A frieze of skulls and bones encircled the walls just below the ceiling. Through a window at the far end of the room, the girl could see fishes swimming in the lake. She entered, like one in a trance, and passed through the room to stand beside a table at the window. A heavy vase of strange

workmanship stood on the table, and hazily she thought how interesting it might be were her mind not in such a turmoil of hopelessness and terror. Zytheb had followed her, and now he laid a hand upon her shoulder.

"You are very beautiful," he said.

She shrank away from him, backing against the table. "Don't touch me!" she whispered.

"Come!" he said. "Remember what Brulor told you. You are my wife, and you must obey me."

"I am not your wife. I shall never be. I should rather die. Keep away from me, I tell you. Keep away!"

"You shall learn to obey and be a good wife—and like it," snapped

Zytheb. "Come, now, and kiss me!"

He attempted to take her in his arms; and as he did so, she seized the vase from the table and struck him heavily over the head. Without a sound, he slumped to the floor; and she knew that she had killed him. Her first reaction was solely of relief. She had no regrets, but what was she to do now? What possibility of escape was there from this frightful place beneath the waters of Horus?

For a time she stood looking down at the dead body of the man she had killed, fascinated by the very horror of it; then slowly came the realization that she must do something. At least she could gain time by hiding the body. She looked

about the room for some place where she might conceal it, shuddering at the thought of the gruesome ordeal; but she steeled herself, and dragged the body to a closet across the room. The body was heavy; but terror gave her strength, and at last she succeeded in getting it into the closet. Before she closed the door, she took the keys and his dagger. If there was any avenue of escape, she might need the keys; and she was sure that she would need the dagger.

Her first thought now was to find the throne room again and see d'Arnot and her brother. If escape were possible, she could take them with her. At least she might see them once more. Creeping along deserted corridors, she found her

way down the winding stairways up which Zytheb had led her, as she searched for the throne room where the cages were. In constant fear of discovery, she came at last to a door she thought she recognized. But was this the room? If it were, would she find priests or guards within? For a moment she hesitated; then she opened the door. Yes, it was the throne room; and, except for the prisoners in their cages, it was vacant. So far fortune had favored her; and she had achieved the impossible, but how much longer might she depend upon the fickle goddess? As she crossed the room to d'Arnot's cage, she saw that the prisoners were all asleep. This fact and the quietness of the temple gave her new

assurance, for if escape were possible it might be best accomplished while the temple slept. That the Asharians were confident that there could be no escape was suggested by the fact that no guards watched the prisoners, an inference that was not encouraging.

Helen leaned against the bars of d'Arnot's cage and whispered his name. The few seconds it took to awaken him seemed an eternity to the frightened girl, but at last he opened his eyes.

"Helen!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "What has happened? How did you get here?"

"Quiet!" she cautioned. "Let me get you and Brian out of those cages; then we can plan." She was trying different

keys in the lock of the cage door as she talked to him, and at last she found the one that fitted.

As the door swung open he sprang out and took her in his arms. "Darling!" he whispered. "You have risked your life for this; but you shouldn't have, for what good will it do? There is no escape from this place."

"Perhaps not," she agreed, "but at least we can have these few minutes together—they can never take those away from us—and as far as risking my life is concerned will make no difference. I have already forfeited it."

"What do you mean?"

"I have killed Zytheb," she replied, "and when they find his body, I imagine

they'll make short work of me;" then she told him what had happened in the apartment above.

"How brave you are," he said. "You deserve life and freedom for what you have undergone."

D'Arnot took the keys from her and unlocked Brian's cage, and as the latter opened his eyes and saw Helen and d'Arnot standing outside he thought that he was dreaming. He had to come out and touch them before he could believe his eyes. Briefly they explained what had happened.

"And now that we are out, what?" demanded d'Arnot. "There can be no escape from this place."

"I'm not so sure of that," replied

Brian. "The priests have a secret passage that can be used if the windlass fails or if the temple should be in danger of flooding."

"Little good that will do us," said d'Arnot, "unless you know where the entrance to this secret passage is."

"I don't know, but there is one here who does. One of these prisoners, the one in the cage next to mine, is a former priest. If we liberate him, he might lead us out. I know he is anxious to escape. I'll wake him."

"Let's liberate all the poor creatures," suggested Helen. "We certainly shall," said Brian; then he awoke Herkuf, the former priest, and explained what he had in mind, while d'Arnot released the other

prisoners, cautioning them to silence, as they gathered around Brian and Herkuf.

"It will mean death by torture if we are caught," explained the latter, "and a life of danger if we escape, for we shall have no place to go in Tuen-Baka and must live in caves and hide for the remainder of our lives."

"I shall have a place to go," said a Thobotian. "I can go back to Thobos, and I can show the rest of you a secret foot trail out of Tuen-Baka, that only we of Thobos know."

"Anything, even death," said Brian, "would be better than these filthy cages and the treatment we receive here."

"Well," exclaimed the man from Thobos, "why do we stand here talking?

Will you lead us out, Herkuf?"

"Yes," said the former priest; "come with me."

He led them along the corridor that ran beneath the lake to the bottom of the elevator shaft. For a moment he fumbled at a great slab of lava that formed a part of one of the walls of the corridor beside the shaft. Presently it swung toward him, revealing the mouth of an opening as dark as Erebus.

"You'll have to feel your way along this corridor," he said. "There are many stairways, some of them winding; but there are no pitfalls and no side corridors. I shall go slowly."

After all were inside the mouth of the corridor, Herkuf pulled the slab back in

place; then he took the lead; and the long, slow climb commenced.

"It commences to look as though the impossible were about to be achieved," said d'Arnot.

"And a few minutes ago it appeared so very impossible," replied Helen.

"And we owe it all to you, darling."

"We owe it to Zytheb," she corrected, "or to Brulor for selecting the Keeper of the Keys as my husband."

"Well, whatever it was, we sure got a break at last," said Brian, "and the Lord knows we had one coming to us."

It was still dark when the nine fugitives emerged into the open air at the end of the secret passage.

"Where are we?" asked Brian.

"We are on the hillside above Ashair," replied Herkuf, "and we shall breathe pure air and know freedom for a few hours at least."

"And which way do we go now?"

"We should head toward the upper end of the lake," said the Thobotian. "It is there that the trail begins that leads out of Tuen- Baka."

"Very well," said Herkuf, "come on! I know a canyon we can hide in if we don't want to travel by day. We can just about reach it by sunrise. As soon as they find we have escaped, they will search for us; so the farther away we can get and the more secluded the hiding place, the better off we shall be."

CHAPTER 21

In no dungeon had Magra been incarcerated, but in well appointed apartments with slave women to attend her. She wondered why she had been accorded these luxuries, until the door opened and King Herat entered; then she guessed the reason for her preferment. He wore an ingratiating smile and the self-satisfied look of a cat that has cornered a canary.

"You are being well treated and well served?" asked Herat.

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Magra.

"I am glad; I wish you to be happy. You are my guest, you know," he explained.

"That is very kind of you. I hope you are treating my companions as generously."

"Scarcely," he replied, "though I have been very fair and lenient with them; but do you know why I am treating you so well?"

"Because the Thobotians are a kindly people, I suppose," she replied, "and their King a kindly king."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Herat. "It is because you are beautiful, my dear; and because you please me. Those who please a king may fair very well indeed." He came toward her. "I shall see that you live like a queen," he said, suddenly taking her into his arms.

"I shall not please you for long," she

snapped, "nor will you ever be pleased by anything again if you don't get out of here and leave me alone," and as she spoke, she snatched his dagger from its sheath and pressed the point of it against his side.

"You she-devil!" he cried, as he jumped away. "You'll pay for this."

"I think not," said Magra, "but you shall, if you annoy me or try to punish me."

"You dare threaten me, slave!"

"I certainly do," Magra assured him; "and it is no idle threat, either."

"Huh!" sneered Herat. "What can you do, other than threaten?"

"I can see that the Queen learns of

this. My slaves have told me that she has a high temper."

"You win," said Herat, "but let us be friends."

While King Herat visited Magra, Queen Mentheb lay on a couch in one of her apartments while slave women enameled her toenails and arranged her hair.

"That story is so old it smells," said the Queen, peevishly.

"I am sorry, Majesty," said the woman who had just sought to amuse Mentheb with a story; "but have you heard the one about the farmer's wife?"

"About a hundred times," snapped the Queen. "Every time Herat drinks too much wine he tells it. I am the only one

who doesn't have to laugh at it every time he tells it. That is one of the advantages of being a queen."

"Oh, I know one, Your Majesty," exclaimed another of the women. "It seems there were two Romans—"

"Shut up!" commanded Mentheb. "You all bore me."

"Perhaps we could send for an entertainer to amuse Your Majesty," suggested another.

Mentheb thought for a moment before she replied. "Now, there is one whom it would amuse me to talk with," she said. "That man who killed the Asharian in the arena. He is a man, indeed. Mesnek, suppose you go fetch him!"

"But, Majesty, what of the King?

Other men are not supposed to come to these apartments. Suppose the King should come while he was here?"

"Herat won't come here tonight," said the Queen. "He is gaming with his nobles. He told me so, and that he would not be here tonight. Go fetch this superman, Mesnek; and hurry."

As Tarzan and Thetan talked in Thetan's apartments, a dark- skinned slave entered. "Most noble Thetan," he said, "Her Majesty, Queen Mentheb, commands the presence of him who slew the Asharian in the arena."

"Where?" asked Thetan.

"In Her Majesty's apartments."

"Wait outside the door to guide him to Her Majesty," Thetan directed the slave;

and when the fellow had gone, he turned to Tarzan. "You'll have to go," he said, "but be very careful. Get away as quickly as you can, and while you are there be as discreet as you know how to be. Mentheb fancies that she is something of a siren, and Herat is insanely jealous. I think he is more fearful of being made a fool of than anything else."

"Thanks," said Tarzan; "I shall be discreet."

As Tarzan was ushered into the presence of Mentheb, she greeted him with a winning smile. "So you are the man who killed the famous killer of men," she said. "That was very amusing. I do not know when I have seen anything

so amusing or so entertaining."

"It is amusing to see men die?" asked the ape-man.

"Oh, well, he was only an Asharian," said the Queen, with a shrug. "What are you called?"

"Tarzan."

"'Tarzan'! It is a nice name; I like it. Come and sit down beside me and tell me that you will not fight the lion. I wish you to live and remain here."

"I shall fight the lion," said Tarzan.

"But the lion will kill you; and I do not wish you to die, Tarzan." Her tone was almost a caress.

"The lion will not kill me," replied the ape-man. "If I kill him, will you

intercede with the King in behalf of my friends?"

"It would be useless," she said. "The law is the law, and Herat is just. They will die anyway, but you must live and remain in Thobos." Suddenly she started up. "Isis!" she cried. "Here comes the King! Hide!"

Tarzan remained standing where he was with arms folded, making no move to hide; and there the King found him when he entered the apartment.

Herat's face clouded with an angry scowl as he saw the ape-man. "What means this?" he demanded.

"I came in search of you, but found the Queen instead," replied Tarzan; "and I was just asking her to intercede in behalf

of my friends."

"I think you lie," said Herat, "for, while I don't know you, I know my queen. I think I shall let you fight two lions."

"Her Majesty is blameless," said the ape-man. "She was very angry because I came."

"She looked more frightened at my sudden appearance than angry," observed Herat.

"You are most unfair to me, Herat," accused Mentheb. "And you are also unfair to this man, who speaks the truth."

"How am I unfair to him?" demanded the King.

"Because you have already promised

that it should be one lion," she explained.

"I can change my mind," grumbled the King; "and, anyway, I do not see why you should be so concerned in the matter. You but substantiate my suspicions, and cause me to recall the young warrior whom I had to send to the arena last year. I had hoped that you would permit me to forget him."

Mentheb subsided into a pout, and Herat ordered Tarzan back to his quarters. "The lions have been starved," he said. "They will be quite hungry tomorrow."

"You should not starve your fighting lions, Herat," said Tarzan. "Starvation weakens them."

"They will still be able to give a good account of themselves," replied the King, "for starvation will make them more ravenous and ferocious. Now, go!"

It was near noon the next day that two warriors came to conduct Tarzan to the arena. Thetan had already gone to join the King and Queen in the royal box, after having assured the condemned man of his chagrin at the unfortunate outcome of the whole adventure into Thobos.

As Tarzan walked to the center of the arena and stopped, Herat turned to his Queen. "Your taste is excellent, Mentheb," he said; "the man is indeed a magnificent specimen. It is too bad that he must die."

"And I must compliment you on your

good taste," replied the Queen, "for the woman also is a splendid specimen. It is too bad that she must die," and thus Herat learned that Mentheb had heard about his visit to Magra. The King looked most uncomfortable, for Mentheb had taken no pains to lower her voice; and the nobles about them overheard; so he was very glad as he saw the two lions slink into the arena.

Tarzan saw them, too. They were big lions, and he realized that his visit to Mentheb might cost him his life. One lion he might have conquered, but how could any man withstand the attack of two such mighty beasts? He realized that this was not intended to be a contest, but an execution; yet, as the lions

approached, he showed no fear. One lion came directly toward him, while the other stood for a few moments looking about the arena; and when the latter started to follow his companion he was quite some distance behind him. It was this that suggested to Tarzan the only plan that he thought might prove successful against them. Had they charged simultaneously, he felt that there would have been no hope for him.

Suddenly, the leading lion made a rush and reared above the ape- man. Herat leaned forward, his lips parted, his eyes dilated. Above all things he loved a good kill; he liked to see blood spilled and bodies mauled. Mentheb stifled a scream.

Tarzan sprang to one side and leaped behind the lion; then he seized it and swung it above his head, wheeling about again as the second lion charged.

"What strength!" marvelled Thetan.

"I am almost sorry that I pitted him against two lions," exclaimed Herat. "He really deserved a better fate."

"What?" sneered Mentheb. "Three lions?"

"I don't mean that," said Herat, irritably. "I mean that such a man deserves better than death."

"Name of Isis!" exclaimed Thetan. "Look at him now!"

Tarzan had hurled the first lion into the face of the one that was charging, and

both were down on the stone flagging of the arena.

"Incredible!" exclaimed Mentheb. "If he survives, the girl may live."

"And if he survives, I swear that he shall have his freedom," cried Herat, "but I'm afraid there's no hope for him. They'll both be at him in a moment."

In her excitement, Mentheb had risen and was leaning over the parapet. "Look! They are fighting one another!"

It was as Tarzan had believed that it would be. One lion, thinking that the other had attacked him, tore into his fellow; and with hideous roars and growls, the two fell upon one another, rending with powerful talons and giant fangs.

"The man has not only marvelous strength but great cunning," said Herat.

"He is superb," exclaimed the Queen.

As the two lions fought, they moved nearer and nearer to the royal box, until its occupants had to lean far over the parapet to watch them. Tarzan, too, had moved back; and was standing just below the box. In her excitement, Mentheb lost her balance and toppled over the parapet. At her frightened scream, the ape-man looked up just in time to catch her in his arms as she dropped toward him. Realizing the woman's danger in the event that one of the lions dispatched the other or the two should cease fighting and turn their savage attention upon their natural

enemies, Tarzan started toward the doorway through which he had entered the arena, shouting to Herat to order it opened.

All was confusion and chaos in the royal box. Herat was shouting commands and warriors were rushing down toward the entrance to the arena, but they were to be too late. With a final shake of the dead body of his weaker antagonist, the victorious lion turned with a savage roar and charged after Tarzan and the Queen. There was no time now in which to reach the doorway; and the ape-man, lowering Mentheb to her feet, turned with drawn knife to meet the oncoming carnivore. Growling, he crouched; and Mentheb felt her flesh turn

cold in horror.

"That lion will kill them both!" cried Herat—"he is a devil."

"So is the man," said Thetan.

Mentheb stood paralyzed by the bestial ferocity of the scene; and before the warriors had reached the doorway to rescue her, the lion was upon Tarzan. Eluding the flailing talons, the ape-man seized the black mane and swung to the beast's back, driving his knife into the tawny side. Roaring horribly, the lion threw itself about in an endeavor to dislodge the man-thing from its back; and the growls of the ape-man mingled with those of the carnivore, until Mentheb scarcely knew which one to fear the most.

At last the knife found the savage heart, the beast rolled over upon its side, and with a final convulsive shudder, died; then Tarzan placed a foot upon the body of his kill; and, raising his face to the sky, voiced the weird victory cry of the bull ape; and Mentheb, the Queen, stood in helpless fascination as her warrior nobles rushed to her rescue.

"He is a demon," exclaimed Herat, "—or a god!"

Mentheb commanded Tarzan to accompany her before Herat. She was still too shaken to do more than thank him feebly; and when she reached the box, she sank into a chair.

"You have saved my Queen," said the King, "and thus won your freedom

doubly. You may remain in Thobos or you may go, as you wish."

"There is still another condition to be fulfilled," Tarzan reminded the King.

"What is that?" asked Herat.

"I must go to Ashair and bring you Brulor and his casket," replied Tarzan.

"You have done enough," said Herat; "let your friends do that."

"No," replied Tarzan. "I shall have to go. Neither of the others could accomplish anything. Perhaps I cannot; but I shall have a better chance, and Gregory's daughter and my best friend are there."

"Very well," assented Herat, "but we'll give you any assistance you wish.

It's a task that one man cannot accomplish alone."

"Nor a hundred," said Mentheb. "We should know, who have tried it so often."

"I shall go alone," said Tarzan. "If I need help, I'll come back for it."

CHAPTER 22

Self-satisfied, contented, Atan Thome lounged at his ease in an apartment in the palace of Queen Atka at Ashair, while Lal Taask paced the floor nervously.

"I do not like it," grumbled the latter. "We shall all die for it."

"It is perfectly safe," Atan Thome assured him. "Everything is arranged, and when it is over we shall be safe, favorites of the ruler of Ashair —and that much nearer The Father of Diamonds."

"I have a presentiment," said Lal Taask, "that we shall not be safe."

"Put your trust in Akamen," urged Thorne. "He will lead you to the Queen's

bedroom; then you will know what to do."

"Why not you?" demanded Lal Taask. "It is you who wants The Father of Diamonds so badly, not I."

"I do not do it, because you are more experienced with a dagger," replied Thorne, smiling. "Come! Have you lost your nerve?"

"I do not wish to do it," said Lal Taask, emphatically.

"You will do as I command!" snapped Thorne.

Lal Taask's eyes fell before those of his master. "Just this once," he said. "Promise that you will not ask such a thing of me again."

"I promise that after tonight I shall ask nothing more of you," agreed Thorne. "S-s-h! Some one is coming!"

As he ceased speaking, the door opened and Akamen entered the room. He was pale and nervous. He looked at Atan Thome questioningly. The latter nodded.

"It is all understood," he said. "Lal Taask will do his duty."

"Very well," said Akamen. "I have arranged everything. The Queen has retired. There are no guards before her door. It will be over in five minutes. Suspicion will be directed against the noble in command of the guard. The Queen disciplined him severely a short time ago, and it is known that he was

very bitter. Come with me, Lal Taask."

Akamen led the way through silent corridors to the Queen's bedroom. Without noise, he opened the door; and as the assassin, dagger in hand, slunk stealthily toward his victim, Akamen, flattened against the wall of the corridor, awaited the blow that would make him King of Ashair. Seconds seemed as hours to him as he waited for Lal Taask to reach the side of the Queen's bed and strike.

He was almost there! The dagger hand was rising! And then there was sudden commotion in the room as warriors leaped from behind hangings and fell upon the would-be assassin and his accomplice; and Queen Atka sat up

in bed, a bitter smile of triumph on her lips.

"Summon my nobles to the throne room," she directed, "and take these two and the man Thorne there, also, that justice may be done."

When a warrior came to Atan Thome's apartments and summoned him to the throne room in the Queen's name, the Eurasian could scarcely restrain an expression of exultation, though he simulated surprise that Atka should wish to see him at so late an hour.

"Akamen," said the Queen, as the three men were lined up before the throne, "you conspired with these two strangers to assassinate me, that you might be king. One of your accomplices,

hoping to curry favor with me, informed upon you. To my mind, he is even more vile than you, if that be possible; and his punishment shall be the same as yours. I sentence all three of you to the cages of the temple for life—a far greater punishment than a quick and merciful death. As added punishment, you shall all be half starved all of the time and tortured periodically, at each full moon. At the first, you shall each have one eye burned out; at the next, another; after that, you shall lose, first your right hands; then your left hands; your feet shall follow, one by one; and after that I am sure that I can devise other means whereby you may be reminded that treachery is a dangerous avocation." She

turned to one of her nobles. "Take them away!"

Atan Thome, Lal Taask, and Akamen in adjoining cages were the only prisoners now in the Temple of Brulor, Father of Diamonds. Lal Taask and Akamen glared at Atan Thome, cursing him; but he seemed oblivious to everything except the casket on the altar before the throne.

"Lowest of the low!" growled Akamen. "You betrayed us. But for you, I should be King of Ashair."

"There is The Father of Diamonds!" whispered Atan Thome.

"Dog!" cried Taask. "For years I have served you faithfully, and now you have sacrificed me!"

"There lies The Father of Diamonds," droned Thorne. "For that, I would betray my mother or my god."

A ptome approached, bearing a wriggling fish upon a trident. "Here is your dinner, damned ones!" he cried.

"It is not cooked!" exclaimed Atan Thome. "Take it away!"

"Sure, I'll take it away," said the ptome; "but then you'll go hungry. We do not cook the fish for such as you."

"Give me the fish!" screamed Lal Taask; "and let him starve, but not too much—he must be saved for my dagger."

"It is I who should have the right to kill him," growled Akamen— "he who kept me from being a king."

"You are both fools," cried Atan Thome. "Nothing matters but The Father of Diamonds. Help me get that, and I shall make us all rich. Think, Taask, what it would buy in the capitals of Europe! I would give my soul for it."

"You have no soul, you beast!" screamed Taask. "Only let me get my dagger into you!"

Tarzan and Thetan came with a warrior to the cell where Gregory and Lavac were chained. "Herat has reprieved you," explained Tarzan, while the warrior removed their chains. "You are to have freedom within the city until I return from Ashair."

"Why are you going to Ashair?" asked Gregory.

"I want to find out if your daughter and d'Arnot are there, and ascertain if there is any way in which they may be rescued, if they are there; then there is the matter of Brulor and The Father of Diamonds. To win freedom for all of us, they must be brought to Herat."

"The other conditions have been fulfilled?" asked Lavac. "You have killed the lions?"

"They are both dead," replied Tarzan.

"I shall go to Ashair with you." said Lavac.

"And I," said Gregory.

"It is better that I go alone," said Tarzan.

"But I must go," insisted Lavac. "I

must do something to atone for my beastliness to d'Arnot. Please let me go with you."

"I must go, too," insisted Gregory.

"I can take one of you," replied Tarzan. "Herat insists that one of us remain here as a hostage. You may come, Lavac."

The morning was still young as Thetan bid Tarzan and Lavac farewell as they were setting out for Ashair. "I have told you all that I know of Ashair and the Temple of Brulor at the bottom of Lake Horus," said the Thobotian. "May the gods be with you!"

"I need no gods," said Tarzan.

"Tarzan is enough," added Lavac.

All night the nine fugitives had tramped from their last hiding place, and they were foot sore and weary. There had been no indication of pursuit, but Herkuf knew his own people well enough to know that they would not be allowed to escape so easily.

"Now that it is light," he said, "it is time that we found another hiding place."

"We are only a few hours from Thobos," said the Thobotian, "and before that I can show you the trail out of Tuen-Baka."

"Nevertheless, I think it better that we hide through the day," insisted Herkuf. "I have no wish to be caught and taken back to the cages."

"What is another day, if by hiding we

can escape?" asked Brian.

"I think Herkuf is right," said d'Arnot. "We should not take a single risk, however small it may seem."

"Listen!" whispered Helen. "I hear voices. Some one is coming behind us."

"It can be no one but the Asharians who are looking for us," said Herkuf. "Quick! We'll turn off the trail here, and hide. Make no noise—just follow me. I know this place."

They moved silently along a narrow trail for a quarter of a mile, coming at last to a little clearing. "This is the place," said Herkuf. "I do not think they will look here for us. They will think that we kept on straight up the valley."

"I don't hear them any more," said

Helen.

"The trouble with this," said d'Arnot, "is that now they'll be between us and where we want to go."

"I don't think so," replied Herkuf. "They won't dare go too near Thobos; so, if they don't find us, they'll have to turn around and come back. They'll pass us again later in the day, and tonight we can go on in safety."

"I hope you're right," said Brian.

Six Asharian warriors, following the trail of the fugitives, came to the place at which they had turned off. "Their tracks are plain here," said the leader. "Here's where they turned off the main trail, and not so long ago. We should soon have them—remember to take the woman and

the strange men alive."

Half crouching, the six crept along the trail of their quarry—a trail as plain as a board walk. They did not speak now, for they felt that the fugitives were not far ahead; but moved with the utmost quiet and stealth. Each was thinking of what Atka would do to them if they failed.

As Tarzan and Lavac followed a forest trail toward Ashair, the ape-man suddenly stopped and tested the air with his keen nostrils. "There are men ahead," he said. "You stay here; I'll take to the trees and investigate."

"They must be men from Ashair," said Lavac, and Tarzan nodded and was off into the trees.

Lavac watched him until he

disappeared among the foliage, marvelling at his strength and agility. Though he had seen him take to the trees many times, it never ceased to thrill him; but when Tarzan was gone, he felt strangely alone and helpless.

As the ape-man swung through the trees, the scent spoor became plainer; and among that of many men he detected the delicate aroma of a white woman. It was faintly familiar but still too tenuous to identify—just a suggestion of familiarity, but it spurred him to greater speed; and while he swung silently through the lower terrace of the forest, the six Asharian warriors broke into the clearing upon the fugitives with shouts of triumph. Some of the nine started to run,

bringing a shower of spears upon them; but d'Arnot, Helen, Brian, and Herkuf stood still, knowing that there could be no escape now. A spear drove through one of the fleeing men; and, as he fell, screaming, the others gave up hope and stopped.

Tarzan heard the shouts of the Asharians as they broke into the clearing and the scream of him who had received the spear. The sounds were close, now. In another moment he would be on the scene.

The Asharians, having recovered their spears, rounded up the fugitives and commenced to belabor them with the hafts of their weapons. They struck indiscriminately, venting their hatred on

all; but when one of them threatened Helen, d'Arnot knocked him down; and instantly another raised his spear to drive it through the Frenchman's back. It was this scene upon which Tarzan looked as he reached the edge of the clearing.

As Helen screamed in horror and warning, an arrow pierced the warrior's heart; and, shrieking, he fell dead. Instantly the other Asharians looked about, but they saw no one who could have sped the missile. They knew that it could not have come from any of the unarmed prisoners, and they were frightened and mystified. Only d'Arnot could even hazard a guess as to the identity of the bowman.

"It seems incredible," he whispered to Helen, "but who in the world but Tarzan could have shot that arrow?"

"Oh, if it only were!" she exclaimed.

None knew better than Tarzan of the Apes how to harass and mystify an enemy. He had seen the surprise that the mysterious messenger of death had caused in the clearing below. A grim half- smile touched his lips as he drew his bow again and selected another victim; then he sped the arrow.

Once again the mysterious killer had struck, and as another Asharian screamed and fell the others looked about in consternation.

"Who is it?" cried one. "I see nobody."

"Where is he?" demanded another. "Why doesn't he show himself?"

"It is the god of us outside people," said d'Arnot. "He will kill you all."

"If he doesn't kill us, Atka will," said a warrior, "if we don't bring you back to Ashair;" then the four remaining warriors sought to herd their prisoners onto the back trail toward the city.

"Let's make a break for it," suggested Brian. "They're confused and frightened."

"No," counselled d'Arnot; "they'd get some of us with their spears. We can't take the chance now."

Suddenly there burst upon the surprised ears of the Asharians a deep voice that spoke the Swahili they all

understood. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," it boomed. "Go, and leave my friends!"

"We might as well die here as in Ashair," a warrior shouted back, "for the Queen will have us killed if we come back empty handed; so we are going to take our prisoners with us, or kill them here."

"Kill them now!" cried another, and turned upon Brian, who was closest to him; but as he raised his spear an arrow passed through his heart; and then, with the rapidity of machine gun fire, three more arrows brought down the remaining Asharians, while the surviving fugitives looked on in amazement.

"There is only one man in the world

who could have done that," said d'Arnot, "and we are very fortunate that he is our friend."

As Tarzan dropped to the ground among them, they surrounded him, voicing their thanks; but he silenced them with a gesture. "What are your plans?" he asked.

"There is a Thobotian with us who is going to show us a secret trail out of Tuen-Baka," explained d'Arnot. "We didn't know that anyone but us was left alive."

"Have you seen anything of Dad?" interrupted Helen. "Was he drowned?"

"No," replied Tarzan; "he and Magra are in Thobos and safe for the moment. Lavac is back there on the trail waiting

for me. He and I were on our way to Ashair to look for you."

"Then we can all turn back to Thobos," said Brian.

"It is not as simple as that," replied Tarzan. "I shall have to go to Ashair and bring back a god and a diamond to Herat before he will release your father and Magra."

"It looks like a man-size job," commented d'Arnot, with a rueful smile. "I shall go with you."

"And I," said Helen.

Tarzan shrugged. "You'd be little better off in Thobos," he said, "and I doubt very much that you could ever make it back to Bonga if you succeeded in getting out of Tuen-Baka alive."

"I think we should all stick together," said Brian. "I'm going along with you."

"My duty lies near Ashair," said Herkuf. "I shall go with you. Perhaps, of all of us, I can be of the most help in getting what you want."

"Very well," agreed the ape-man. "I'll go back and bring Lavac."

A half hour later the little party was on its way back to Ashair, the Forbidden City of Tuen-Baka.

CHAPTER 23

As Magra sat in her apartment in the palace of Herat musing over the strange series of adventures that had brought her to this half civilized, half barbaric city, and dreaming of the godlike man she had come to love, the door opened; and the King entered.

Magra rose and faced him. "You should not come here," she said. "It will do you no good and only endanger my life. The Queen knew of the other time. She will know of this, and she will have me killed."

"Have no fear," said Herat, "for I am king."

"You only think you are," snapped

Magra contemptuously.

"I am Herat, the King!" cried the monarch. "No one speaks to me like that, woman."

"Oh, they don't, don't they?" demanded an angry voice behind him; and, turning, he saw the Queen standing in the doorway. "So I have caught you at last!" she cried. "So no one speaks to you like that, eh? You haven't heard anything yet; wait 'til I get you alone!" She turned her blazing eyes on Magra. "And as for you, trollop; you die tomorrow!"

"But, my dear," expostulated Herat. "'But' me nothing!" snapped Mentheb. "Get out of here!"

"I thought that you said you were

king," taunted Magra; then they were both gone, and the girl was left alone. Never in her life had she felt so much alone, so helpless and so hopeless. She threw herself upon a couch; and, had she been another woman, she would have burst into tears; but Magra had never cried for herself. Self-pity was not for her. She had said once that it was like cheating at solitaire, for nobody else knew about it and nobody cared and no one was hurt but herself. How she wished that Tarzan were here! He would have helped her—not with useless commiseration, but with action. He would have found a way to save her. She wondered if he would grieve for her; and then she smiled, for she knew that

the philosophy of the wild beast had little place for grief. It was too accustomed to death, held life in such low esteem. But she must do something. She struck a gong that summoned a slave girl.

"Do you know where the prisoners, Gregory and Lavac, are quartered?" she asked.

"Yes, my mistress."

"Take me to them!"

When she entered Gregory's apartment, she found Thetan with him. At first she hesitated to talk before the Thobotian, but she recalled that he had befriended them; so she told them all that had just happened.

"I must escape tonight," she said.

"Will you help me?"

"Mentheb is rather a decent sort," said Thetan. "She may come to realize that the fault is not yours, and of course she knows that it is not, and alter her decision to have you killed; but it would be dangerous to depend on that. I know you are guiltless, and I know that you are a friend of Tarzan; so I am going to help you to escape."

"Will you help me to go with her?" asked Gregory.

"Yes," said Thetan. "I got you into this, and I should get you out of it. I shall help you because you are Tarzan's friends, and Tarzan saved my life. But never return to Thobos, for if you escape her now, Mentheb will never forget.

Follow the trail on the west side of the lake south; it will bring you to Ashair and probably to death there—it is the law of Tuen-Baka."

A half hour later Thetan led Magra and Gregory to a small gate in the city wall and wished them luck as they went out into the night and set their faces toward The Forbidden City.

"Well," said d'Arnot, "here we are right back where we started from," as the party of six reached the entrance to the secret passage to the Temple of Brulor on the rocky hillside above Ashair.

"I spent two years trying to get out of that hole," said Brian, "and now here I am trying to get back in again. That

Herat certainly gave you a tough job, Tarzan."

"It was merely the old boy's way of condemning us all to death," said Lavac, "—an example of Thobotian humor. At least it was at first; but after Tarzan disposed of the bad man from Ashair and the two lions, I really believe that Herat came to the conclusion that he might actually bring back Brulor and The Father of Diamonds."

"Why does he want them so badly?" asked Helen.

"The Father of Diamonds belongs in Thobos," explained Herkuf, "where the temple of the true god, Chon, is located. It was stolen by Atka's warriors years ago when they attacked and sank Chon's

galley in which it was being carried during a solemn religious rite. Brulor is a false god. Herat wishes to destroy him."

"Do you think that there is any possibility that we may be able to recover The Father of Diamonds and kidnap Brulor?" asked d'Arnot.

"Yes," replied Herkuf, "I do. We have the temple keys that Helen took from Zytheb; and I know where Brulor sleeps and the hours of the day that are supposedly set apart for meditation; but which, in reality, Brulor devotes to sleeping off the effects of the strong drink to which he is addicted. During these periods the throne room is deserted, and all the inmates of the

temple are compelled to remain in their own quarters. We can go directly to the throne room and get the casket, and then to Brulor's room. If we threaten him with death, he will come with us without making any outcry."

"It all sounds very easy," said Brian, "—almost too easy."

"I shall keep my fingers crossed all the time," said Helen.

"When can we make the attempt?" asked d'Arnot.

Herkuf looked up at the sun. "Now," he said, "would be a good time."

"Well, how about getting started, Tarzan?" asked Brian.

"Herkuf and I shall go in," said the

ape-man. "The rest of you hide near here and wait for us. If we are not out within an hour, you will know that we have failed; then you must try to save yourselves. Find the trail over the rim. It lies somewhere near Thobos. Get out of Tuen-Baka. It will be useless for you to try to do anything for Herkuf or me or to rescue Magra and Gregory."

"Am I not to go in with you, Tarzan?" asked d'Arnot.

"No. Too many of us might result in confusion and discovery; and, anyway, your place is with Helen. Come, Herkuf, let's get started."

As the two entered the secret passage, a sentinel priest who had been crouching behind a boulder watching the party,

turned and ran as fast as he could toward the nearest city gate; while, miles away, the objects of all this now useless risk and sacrifice trudged doggedly along the trail to Ashair in an effort to avert it.

Ignorant of anything that has transpired in Ashair, not knowing that his son and daughter lived and were free, Gregory accompanied Magra rather hopelessly, his only inspiration loyalty to Tarzan and Lavac, whom he knew to be risking their lives in an effort to save his and Magra's. Magra was inspired by this same loyalty and by love—a love that had done much to change and ennoble her.

"It all seems so utterly hopeless," said Gregory. "Only four of us left, pitting our

puny efforts against two cities filled with enemies. If one of them doesn't get us, the other will."

"I suppose you are right," agreed Magra. "Even the forces of nature are against us. Look up at that towering escarpment of lava, always frowning down upon us, threatening, challenging; and yet how different it would all seem if Tarzan were with us."

"Yes, I know," said Gregory. "He inspires confidence. Even the walls of Tuen-Baka would seem less insurmountable if he were here. I think he has spoiled us all. We have come to depend upon him to such an extent that we are really quite helpless without him."

"And he is going to almost certain death for us," said Magra. "Thetan told me that it would be impossible for him to escape alive from Ashair, if he succeeded in getting in; and, knowing Tarzan, we know that he will get in. Oh, if we could only reach him before he does!"

"Look!" exclaimed Gregory. "Here come some men!"

"They have seen us," said Magra. "We can't escape them."

"They look very old and weak," said Gregory.

"But they carry spears."

The three surviving fugitives from the cages of the Temple of Brulor who had chosen to go on in search of freedom

rather than return to Ashair with Tarzan's party halted in the trail.

"Who are you?" they demanded.

"Strangers looking for a way out of Tuen-Baka," replied Gregory.

The three whispered among themselves for a moment; then one of them said, "We, too, are looking for a way out of Tuen-Baka. Perhaps we should go together, for in numbers there is strength."

"We can't go until we find our friends," replied Magra. "They were on their way to Ashair."

"Perhaps we saw them. Was one of them called Tarzan?"

"Yes. Have you seen him?" demanded

Gregory.

"We saw him yesterday. He and his friends went back to Ashair."

"His friends? There was but one with him," said Magra.

"There were five with him. Four men and a girl went back to Ashair with him."

"Whom could they have been, do you suppose?" Gregory asked Magra.

"Do you know who they were?" she inquired of the fugitive who had been acting as spokesman.

"Yes. One was called Herkuf, and one Lavac, and there was d'Arnot, and Brian Gregory was with him and a girl called Helen."

Gregory turned very pale. Magra caught his arm, for she thought he was going to fall. "I'm stunned," he said "I can't believe that they're all alive. It's just like having people come back from the grave—I was so sure that they were dead. Think of it, Magra! My son and my daughter both alive—and on their way back to that terrible city. We must hurry on. Maybe we can overtake them. Tell us," he said to the fugitive, "where we may find them if they have not already been captured by the Asharians."

The man gave them explicit directions for locating the hidden entrance to the secret passage to the temple. "That is where you will find them," he said, "if they have not already entered the city;

but do not enter. As you value your lives, do not enter the passage. If they have done so, they are lost. You might as well give them up, for you will never see them again."

"They weren't very encouraging," said Magra, as she and Gregory continued on their way; "but perhaps they overestimate the dangers—let's hope so."

Gregory shook his head. "I'm afraid they didn't," he said. "I doubt if the dangers that lurk in The Forbidden City of Ashair can be overestimated."

"It is a strange place, this Tuen-Baka," said Magra. "No wonder that it is taboo."

CHAPTER 24

Tarzan and Herkuf followed the dark passageway and the winding stairs down to the lava slab that closed the secret doorway leading to the corridor they must follow beneath the lake to reach the temple.

"Here we are," said Herkuf. "If the gods are with us, we shall soon be in Brulor's room behind the throne. I'll attend to him, you get the casket. I have waited years for such an opportunity to avenge Chon, the true god, and make Brulor pay for the indignities and torture he imposed upon me. I see now how I have lived through all that I have lived through. It was for this hour. If we fail, it will mean death; but if we fail I shall

welcome death."

Beyond the lava slab a group of Asharian warriors, their short spears ready, awaited them, for the sentinel priest had done his duty well.

"They must be close," said the leader of the warriors. "Be ready! but do not forget that it is the Queen's command that we take them alive for torture before death."

"I should hate to be Herkuf when Brulor gets him back in his cage," said a warrior.

"And that wild man," said another. "It was he who killed so many of our warriors that night in the tunnel. I should hate to be the wild man when Atka gets him."

The lava slab was thick, and it was skillfully fitted in the aperture; so the voices of the whispering warriors did not reach the ears of the two upon the other side of it. Ignorant of the trap into which they were walking, they paused for a moment while Herkuf groped for the knob which would open the door.

And while they paused upon the brink of disaster, another detail of warriors crept up upon the unsuspecting four who were waiting at the entrance to the secret passageway, ignorant of the imminent peril that hovered just above them among the boulders of the hillside.

"At last, darling," said d'Arnot, "I can see a ray of hope. Herkuf knows the customs of the temple, and before the

inmates leave their apartments again he and Tarzan will be back with Brulor and the accursed Father of Diamonds."

"I have grown to hate the very name of the thing," said the girl. "There surely must be a curse upon it and everything connected with it. I feel that so strongly that I can't believe it possible that it is going to be the means of releasing Dad and Magra. Something will happen to turn success into failure."

"I don't wonder you're pessimistic and skeptical, but this time I'm sure you're wrong."

"I certainly hope so. I don't know when I've ever so wanted to be wrong."

Lavac and Brian were sitting on the ground a few paces from Helen and

d'Arnot, the former with his back toward them that he might not see the little intimacies that still hurt him so sorely notwithstanding his honest intention to give up all hope of winning the girl. He was facing up the slope of the rocky hillside above which towered the stupendous rampart of Tuen-Baka, and so it was he who first saw the Asharian warriors as they broke cover and started down toward their quarry. As he leaped to his feet with a cry of warning, the others turned; and in the instant their hopes came rumbling about their heads like a house of match wood. The Asharians were yelling triumphantly now, as they charged down the hill, brandishing their short spears. The three

men might have put up a battle even against these terrific odds, futile as it would have been, had they not feared for the safety of the girl should they invite the Asharians to hurl their spears; so they stood in silence while the warriors surrounded them, and a moment later they were being herded down toward the nearest city gate.

"You were right, after all," said d'Arnot.

"Yes," she replied, dejectedly; "the curse of the diamond is still on us. Oh, Paul, I'd rather die than go back to that awful place! This time there will be no hope for us, and what I dread most is that they will not kill me."

As the four prisoners were being

marched down to the city, Herkuf pulled the lava slab toward him; and the two men stepped into the trap that had been laid for them. They hadn't a chance, not even the mighty ape-man, for the Asharians had planned well. As they stepped from the mouth of the passageway, two warriors, crouching low, seized them around their ankles and tripped them; and, as they fell, a dozen others swarmed upon them, slipping nooses about their ankles and wrists.

"You knew we were coming?" Herkuf asked one of the warriors, as they were being led along the corridor toward the temple.

"Certainly," replied the man. "A sentry has been watching above the city,

for Atka thought that you might come back to Ashair to steal a galley. It was the only way that the strangers could escape from Tuen-Baka. It would have been better had you stayed in your cage, Herkuf, for now Brulor will have you tortured; and you know what that means."

The throne room of the temple was silent and vacant, except for the three prisoners in the cages, as Tarzan and Herkuf were led in, for it was still the period of meditation, during which the inmates of the temple were compelled to remain in their quarters; and so there was a delay while a warrior sought permission from Brulor to summon the Keeper of the Keys that the cages might

be unlocked to receive the new prisoners.

Presently, Herkuf touched Tarzan on the arm. "Look!" he said. "The others have been taken, also."

Tarzan turned to see Helen, d'Arnot, Brian, and Lavac being herded into the chamber; and greeted them with one of his rare smiles. Even in the face of death he could see the humor of the situation, that they who had come so confidently to conquer should have been so ignominiously conquered themselves without the striking of a blow. D'Arnot saw the smile and returned it.

"We meet again, mon ami," he said; "but not where we expected to meet."

"And for the last time," added Lavac.

"There will be no more meetings after this one for any of us, at least not in this life. As for me, I shall be glad. I have nothing to live for." He did not look at Helen, but they all knew what he meant.

"And you all die because of me," said Brian, "because of my stupid avarice; and I shall die without being able to atone."

"Let's not talk abut it," urged Helen. "It's bad enough as it is without constantly reminding ourselves of it."

"When one is about to die by slow torture, one does not have to be reminded of it," said Herkuf. "It occupies one's mind to the exclusion of all else. Sometimes it is a relief to talk of it."

Atan Thome looked out between the bars of his cage at the six prisoners. "So we are reunited at last!" he cackled, "we who sought The Father of Diamonds. There it is, in that casket there; but do not touch it—it is mine. It is for me alone;" then he broke into loud, maniacal laughter.

"Silence! you crazy pig," growled Lal Taask.

It was then that the Keeper of the Keys came and opened the cages. "Into their dens with them," snapped an officer, "all but this fellow here." He nodded at Tarzan. "The Queen wants to see him."

Atka sat upon her lava throne surrounded by her white plumed nobles,

as the Lord of the Jungle, his hands still bound behind him, was brought before her. For a long time she sat studying him with half-closed, appraising eyes; and with neither deference nor boldness Tarzan returned her scrutiny, much as a captive lion might regard a spectator outside his cage.

"So you are the man who killed so many of my warriors," she said at last, "and captured one of my galleys."

Tarzan stood silent before her. Finally she tapped her toe upon the floor of the dais, "Why do you not reply?" she demanded.

"You asked me nothing," he said. "You simply told me something I already knew."

"When Atka speaks, the person who is thus honored makes some reply."

Tarzan shrugged. "I do not like useless talk," he said; "but if you like to hear it, I admit that I killed some of your warriors. I should have killed more that night on the river had there been more in the galley. Yesterday, I killed six in the forest."

"So that is why they did not return!" exclaimed Atka.

"I think that must be the reason," Tarzan admitted.

"Why did you come to Ashair?" the Queen demanded.

"To free my friends who were prisoners here."

"Why are you my enemy?" asked Atka.

"I am not your enemy. I wish only the freedom of my friends," the ape-man assured her.

"And The Father of Diamonds," added Atka.

"I care nothing for that," replied Tarzan.

"But you are an accomplice of Atan Thome," she accused, "and he came to steal The Father of Diamonds."

"He is my enemy," said Tarzan.

She looked at him again for some time in silence, apparently playing with a new idea. At last she spoke.

"I think," she said, "that you are not

the type that lies. I believe what you have told me, and so I would befriend you. They have told me how you fought with your ape allies at the camp below the tunnel and also of the fight in the galley, for all of the warriors did not drown: two of them swam out of the tunnel to safety. Such a man as you would be valuable to me, if loyal. Swear loyalty to me, and you shall be free."

"And my friends?" asked Tarzan. "They will be freed too?"

"Of course not. They are no good to me. Why should I free them? The man, Brian Gregory, came here solely for the purpose of stealing The Father of Diamonds. I think the others came to help him. No, they shall die in good

time."

"I told you that I came here to free them," said Tarzan. "The granting of their freedom is the only condition under which I will remain."

"Slaves do not impose conditions upon Atka," snapped the Queen, imperiously. She turned to a noble. "Take him away!"

They returned Tarzan to the throne room of the temple then, but they did not free his hands until they had him locked safely in a cage. It was evident that the fighting men of Ashair held him in deep respect.

"What luck?" asked d'Arnot.

"I am here in a cage," replied Tarzan. "That is answer enough. The Queen

wishes us all dead."

"I imagine her wish will come true," said d'Arnot ruefully.

"Queens have but to wish."

It was a dejected and disheartened company that awaited the next eventuality of their disastrous adventure. There were only two of them who appeared to be not entirely without hope —the ape- man, whose countenance seldom revealed his inward feelings, and Atan Thome, who continually cackled and prated of The Father of Diamonds.

When life began to stir in the throne room with the ending of the period of meditation, priests and handmaidens appeared; and finally Brulor entered and

took his place upon the throne, while all knelt and beat their heads upon the floor. After a brief religious ceremony, some of the handmaidens commenced to dance before Brulor, a suggestive, lascivious dance in which some of the priests soon joined, in the midst of which a plumed warrior entered from the long corridor and announced the coming of the Queen. Instantly the music and the dancing stopped, and the dancers took their places in sanctimonious attitudes about the throne of Brulor. A loud fanfare of trumpets billowed from the mouth of the corridor, and a moment later the head of a procession appeared and marched down the center of the room toward the dais where Brulor sat. Surrounded by

warriors, the Queen moved majestically to the dais, where she took her place in a second throne chair that stood beside Brulor's.

A long and tedious ceremony ensued, after which the Queen pronounced sentence upon the new prisoners, a privilege she occasionally usurped to the chagrin of Brulor, who was a god only on sufferance of the Queen.

"Let all but the woman," ordered Atka, "be offered in sacrifice, each in his turn, and with slow torture, that their spirits may go out into the world of barbarians to warn others never to seek entry to The Forbidden City of Ashair."

She spoke in a loud voice that could be heard throughout the chamber; and her

words brought a ray of hope to d'Arnot, for Helen had not been sentenced to torture and death, but his hopes were dashed by the Queen's next words.

"The woman shall be taken to the little chamber to die slowly as a sacrifice to Holy Horus. This shall be her punishment for the killing of Zytheb, the priest. Let her be taken away at once. The sentences of the others shall be carried out at the discretion of Brulor."

A priest scurried from the throne room to return presently with three ptomes, one of which carried an extra water suit and helmet. The Keeper of the Keys led them to Helen's cage, which he unlocked, after which the ptomes entered, removed the girl's outer clothing

and dressed her in the water suit. Before they placed the helmet over her head she turned toward d'Arnot, who stood with ashen face pressed against the partition bars that separated their cages.

"Once more, good-bye," she said. "It will not be for long now."

Emotion stifled the man's reply; and tears blinded him, as the ptomes fitted the helmet over Helen's head; then they led her away. He watched until she passed from sight through a doorway on the opposite side of the temple; then he sank to the floor of his cage and buried his head in his arms. Brian Gregory cursed aloud. He cursed Atka and Brulor and The Father of Diamonds, but most of all he cursed himself.

The Queen and her entourage left the temple, and presently Brulor and the priests and the handmaidens were gone, leaving the doomed men to their own unhappy company. Atan Thome jabbered incessantly about The Father of Diamonds, while Lal Taask and Akamen threatened and reviled him. Lavac sat on his haunches staring at the doorway through which Helen had disappeared to pass out of his life forever, but he knew that she was no more lost to him than she had been before. Brian paced the length of his cage, mumbling to himself. Tarzan and Herkuf spoke together in low tones. D'Arnot was almost ill from desperation and hopelessness. He heard Tarzan asking many questions of Herkuf, but

they made no impression on him. Helen was gone now forever. What difference did anything else make? Why did Tarzan ask so many questions? It was not like him; and anyway he, too, would soon be dead.

Silhouetted against the blue African sky, Ungo and his fellow apes stood at the rim of the crater of Tuen-Baka and looked down into the valley. They saw the green of the plains and the forests; and they looked good to them after the barren outer slopes of the mountain.

"We go down," grunted Ungo.

"Perhaps Tarzan there," suggested another.

"Food there," said Ungo. "Tarzan not there, we go back old hunting grounds.

This bad country for mangani."

CHAPTER 25

Helen Gregory was, despite her flair for adventure and her not inconsiderable fortitude, essentially feminine. She was the type that stirred the deepest protective instincts of men; and, perhaps because of that very characteristic, she subconsciously craved protection, though she would have been the last to realize it. Fortified by the knowledge that masculine aid was within call, she might have dared anything; while the realization that she was alone among enemies, hopelessly cut off from all natural protectors, left her a frightened little girl upon the verge of panic. That she did not break under the strain speaks well for her strength of character.

Her steps did not falter as the three ptomes led her from the throne room and down a short corridor, through a room where many ptomes were gathered lying upon narrow cots or playing at games, their water suits and helmets hung upon pegs against the wall, their tridents standing in racks, and along another corridor to a massive door secured by huge bolts and flanked by valve hand-wheels and levers. Here one of the ptomes turned wheels and pulled on levers, and they all waited while he watched a gauge beside the door.

This, she thought, must be the door to the torture chamber; and she wondered what lay behind and how long death would be in coming to her rescue.

Death! Man's last refuge when hope is gone, his last friend, his life's ultimate goal. She thought of her father and of Brian and of Paul d'Arnot. They would be following her soon. She wished that she and d'Arnot might have gone together. It would have been easier for both had it been that way.

At last the door swung open and the ptomes pushed her into a cylindrical chamber, following her in and closing and bolting the door. Here were other hand-wheels and levers and gauges; and there was an identical door on the opposite side of the chamber flanked by similar gadgets. She saw no signs of instruments of torture, and she wondered how they were going to kill her and why

they had brought her here to do it and why they all wore the strange helmets. She watched while a ptome turned a hand-wheel, and caught her breath as she saw water rushing into the chamber. They couldn't be going to drown her, for if she drowned, they would drown too. The chamber filled rapidly; and when it was full, one of them manipulated the wheels and levers beside the second door; and when it swung open, they led her out into the diffused light of the lake bottom.

Under other circumstances she would have been entranced by the beauty of the scene upon which the sun filtered down through the clear waters of Horus. She found herself being led along a gravel

path between neat gardens of marine plants which other ptomes were tending to serve as delicacies for the courts of Atka and Brulor. Strange and beautiful fishes swam about them; and great turtles paddled clumsily away as they approached, while crabs of many colors scurried from their path. Here and there were marine trees towering high, their foliage undulating gracefully to the movement of the water, while bright colored fishes played among it like gay birds among the branches of terrestrial trees. All was beauty and movement and —silence. To the girl, the silence spoke more loudly than the beauty or the movement— it bespoke the silence of the tomb.

Inside the temple she had found walking arduous and slow, impeded by the heavy metal soles of the shoes they had put on her; but here she moved as though walking on air, lightly as a feather, effortless as the passing of a shadow. She felt that she might leap high above the trees if one of the ptomes were not holding her by the arm; but these were only flashes of thought breaking occasionally the dense gloom of the horror that engulfed her.

Presently she saw ahead of them a small circular building topped by a single dome, and realized that it was toward this the ptomes were leading her. When they reached the building, which seemed to have neither doors nor

windows, two ptomes seized Helen's arms, one on either side, and leaped lightly upward, carrying her with them, the third ptome following. A few swimming strokes carried them to the top of the dome, where the girl saw a circular door, which she recognized now, from the gadgets flanking it, as the entrance to an air chamber such as that through which she had passed from the temple to the lake bottom.

The chamber below was filled with water when they entered it, and it was several minutes before it emptied; then the ptomes removed her helmet and suit, lifted a trap door in the floor, pointed to a ladder, and motioned her to descend. As in the upper chamber, there was a

window in the wall on the side opposite to that from which they had approached the dome, which she had previously thought windowless; and through this window the diffused light of the lake bottom dimly illuminated the interior of the circular room in which she was imprisoned. It was entirely bare—the walls, the window, and the ladder constituted her world. The ptomes had closed the trap door above her, and presently she heard water gushing into the chamber above; then it commenced to trickle down one wall of her prison, and presently the trickle became a little stream. As water covered the floor of her cell, she understood the nature of the torture and death that confronted her.

The chamber would fill slowly. She might prolong life and agony by climbing the ladder, but the end was inevitably the same.

She realized what exquisite mental torture the minds of these people had conceived, that one should be condemned to die alone, drowned like a rat in a trap. She wondered if she would have the courage to end it quickly when the water was deep enough, or if she would drag out the torture to the topmost rung of the ladder.

And as the water rose slowly in Helen's death cell, Herkuf whispered to Tarzan through the bars of his cage, "It will soon be time. Do you think you can do it?"

"I can do my part," the ape-man assured him. "When the time comes, let me know."

When night came and darkness settled above Horus a faint light still filtered down through the waters to the death cell where Helen waited for the end. It was the light of heavenly stars, but it brought no hope of the doomed girl. The water was at her knees now; and she stood with one hand on the ladder, still wondering what she should do. She turned wearily; and, with both arms resting on a rung of the ladder, buried her face in them. She thought of d'Arnot and the happiness that might have been theirs had they met under different circumstances; and, even with hope

gone, that thought made her want to cling to life as long as she could, for at least there was a certain sad happiness in envisioning the happiness she had been denied. She thought of Brian; and, without bitterness toward him, she execrated the avarice that had lured him to this awful place and cost the lives of so many people, people who loved him. And she prayed.

Again Herkuf whispered to Tarzan. "It is time," he said. "They will all be asleep. But the bars are very strong."

"Not so strong as Tarzan," replied the ape-man. "I have tried them— watch!"

As he spoke, he seized two bars. The muscles stood out upon his shoulders as he exerted his strength upon the insensate

metal. Herkuf watched, breathless, and filled with doubt; then he saw the bars spreading apart, and a moment later saw Tarzan squeeze between them and push them back into place. Similarly the ape-man liberated Herkuf.

"You are as strong as a bull elephant," gasped the priest.

"Come!" said Tarzan. "We have no time to waste. Lead the way."

"No," replied Herkuf, "we have no time to waste. Even if we get through without delay, we may still be too late."

Silently, stealthily, Herkuf and Tarzan crossed the temple toward a closed door. The other prisoners slept. No one had seen Tarzan escape and release Herkuf. Even the bars, bent back almost

to normal position, gave little evidence of the manner of their liberation; and few would have believed the truth, for many have been the prisoners who had sought to bend them; but never before had it been done.

Herkuf led Tarzan down a short corridor to the room of the ptomes; and as the priest opened the door, Tarzan saw the lesser priests sleeping on their hard benches. He saw their water suits hanging on their pegs and their tridents in the racks. The ptomes slept thus without sentries and the temple went unguarded because it was considered impregnable.

Cautiously the two men took three water suits and helmets from their pegs,

gathered up three tridents, and crossed the room to the doorway on the opposite side without awakening a ptome. Once past the door, each donned a suit.

"The gods have been with us so far," whispered Herkuf, "and if we can pass through the air chamber without being discovered, we stand a good chance to succeed—if we are in time."

As the water rose to Helen's shoulders she finally gave up all thought of suicide. She would cling to life to the last moment. They might rob her of that; but they could not rob her of her courage, and as the water rose still higher she stepped to the lowest rung of the ladder.

Reminiscences rioted through her

mind as she waited for death, and pleasant thoughts and bitter. She pondered the futility of man's quest for sudden wealth and of the evil and suffering it entailed. Of what avail would success be now to either Brian or Thorne if, by some chance, it should come to one of them? for one had lost his sister and, perhaps, his father; and the other had lost his mind. Now the water forced her up to a higher rung of the ladder. Step by step, she was climbing to her rendezvous with Death.

Herkuf and Tarzan passed safely through the air chamber out into the water of the lake. Through the garden of the ptomes they made their way toward the watery cell where Death was

creeping relentlessly upon Helen Gregory, and dark shapes glided sinuously about them in this mysterious world of silence.

At last they reached the air chamber above Helen's cell; and Herkuf started the pump that would eject the water, but it seemed to both men that it would never empty the chamber. They knew that the water had been rising for hours in the death cell beneath them and that death might come to the girl before they reached her, if she were not already dead.

Just below them, clinging to the last few precious moments of life, Helen had ascended the ladder as far as she could go; but the water pursued her

relentlessly. Already her head was touching the ceiling. She could climb no farther. The cold hand of Death caressed her cheek. Suddenly she became alert, listening. She heard noises in the chamber above. What might they signify? Not rescue, certainly; perhaps some new torture.

At last the air chamber was emptied. Tarzan and Herkuf attempted to raise the trap door leading into Helen's cell; but it defied their every effort, even the Herculean strength of the Lord of the Jungle. And what was happening, or had happened, in the cell below?—cell or tomb?

And while Tarzan and Herkuf labored with the trap door a ptome awoke and

sat up upon his hard bench, rubbing his eyes. He had had a strange, disquieting dream in which enemies had passed through the room of the ptomes. He looked about to see if anyone was there who should not be. Mechanically, he looked for his water suit and helmet. They were gone, and two other pegs were empty. Instantly he awoke his fellows and disclosed his discovery, telling them of his dream. They were all much perturbed, for such things had never happened before in the memory of man. They started to investigate immediately, going first to the throne room, where they soon discovered that two of the prisoners were missing.

"Herkuf is gone and the man called

Tarzan," said one.

"But three suits and tridents were taken," pointed out another.

By this time the prisoners were awake; and they questioned them, with many threats; but they learned nothing for the prisoners knew nothing, and were quite as surprised as the ptomes.

"I have it!" cried a ptome at last. "It is quite plain that they have gone to the little chamber in the lake to release the girl, that is why they took the extra suit. Quick! Into your helmets! In the name of Atka, hurry!"

"We must not all go, or the rest of the prisoners may escape as the others did," suggested one; so only six of them donned their suits and hurried into the

waters of Horus in pursuit of the two missing prisoners. Armed as they were, with tridents and knives, they had no thought but that they could easily overcome and recapture their quarry.

For many precious minutes the trap door refused to yield to the efforts of Tarzan and Herkuf; but at last it gave way, and they threw it open. Looking down into the darkness, they at first saw nothing; then Tarzan espied, dimly, a wan face apparently floating on the surface of the water. Were they, after all, too late? Was this the face of a dead girl?

Holding to the ladder and floating with her nose just above the water, Helen heard increasing sounds of

activity just above her; then the trap door was lifted, and she saw two ptomes looking down at her. As they dragged her into the air chamber, she guessed that they had come to inflict some new torture.

They helped her to don the extra water suit, and led her out of the air chamber into the lake. In their suits and helmets, she did not recognize them; and as there was no means of communication, she went on with them, ignorant of their identity, wondering what next Fate had in store for her.

As Herkuf led them away from the vicinity of the temple, the pursuing ptomes discovered them and hurried to overtake them. In the silence of the

watery depths, no sound reached the ears of the fugitives; and they were ignorant of the danger approaching from behind; until, finally, Tarzan, always the wary jungle beast, looked back and saw the ptomes approaching. He touched Herkuf and Helen, and pointed; then he gathered them together, so that they all stood back to back to await the assault of the enemy he well knew they could not outdistance in flight. What the outcome of such a battle would be, he could not even guess. He knew that they were all unused to fighting in such a medium and with such weapons. A single rent in a suit might mean death by drowning, and doubtless their antagonists were adepts in the use of tridents. What he did not

know was that the ptomes were as unused to underwater fighting as was he. Sometimes they had to defend themselves from the more dangerous denizens of the deep, but never had they been called upon to face human antagonists and weapons identical to their own.

So it was that Tarzan and Herkuf drew first blood; and now, for the first time, Helen realized that she might be in the hands of friends; yet that seemed entirely implausible, for how could she have friends among the ptomes?

With two of their number dead in the first encounter with the enemy, the four remaining ptomes became more wary. They circled cautiously, waiting for an

opening; but there seemed no opening in the impregnable defense of the three, who could not be lured from the compact formation that presented a trident on every front. Suddenly one of the ptomes leaped above the heads of the quarry to attack them from a new angle; and as he did so, his fellows rushed in. But they rushed too close, and two of them went to their deaths on the tridents of Herkuf and Tarzan; then the one above them floated down and struck at the ape-man. As he did so, Helen jabbed suddenly upward with her trident, catching the fellow squarely in the chest. He wriggled horribly, like a speared fish, and then sank limply at her feet. The girl had to steel herself to keep from fainting.

With his fellows dead, the remaining ptome turned and fled toward the temple; but Tarzan dared not let him escape to bring reinforcements; so he pursued him, feeling like one in a bad dream, who makes strenuous efforts but accomplishes little or nothing. However, the ptome had the same watery medium to contend with; but not the giant muscles to overcome it that his pursuer possessed; so gradually Tarzan gained on him, while Herkuf and Helen followed in his wake.

When the ptome realized that he could not make good his escape, he turned at bay and prepared to fight; and Tarzan found him the most dangerous antagonist of all, for he was fighting with the

desperation of a cornered rat. It was the strangest duel the ape-man had ever fought. The weird, mysterious silence of the depths; the grotesque medium that retarded his every movement; all baffled him. He was accustomed to fighting on one plane and not having antagonists leap above his head and thrust down at him, as the ptome suddenly did; but he fended the thrust, and seized his foe by the ankle. The ptome struggled to free himself, thrusting savagely with his trident; but at last Tarzan was sure of himself, as he dragged the lesser priest toward him.

At close quarters, the tridents were useless; and both men discarded them, each drawing his knife, the ptome

slashing viciously but awkwardly at Tarzan, while the ape-man sought to seize the other's knife wrist; and while they fought, a large fish, swimming low, approached them; and Helen and Herkuf hurried up, like two hideous robots held back by an invisible hand.

Tarzan's fingers were touching the wrist of the ptome, he had almost succeeded in seizing the hand that held the dagger, when the great fish, frightened by the approach of Helen and Herkuf, darted past in an effort to escape, struck Tarzan's legs a heavy blow and upset him. As the ape-man fell backward, the ptome saw and seized his opportunity. He lunged forward upon the falling Tarzan, his knife ready to plunge

into his foe's heart.

But once again Tarzan fended the weapon aside; and as he parried the blow, Helen and Herkuf reached him and plunged their tridents into the body of the ptome. As Tarzan floated to his feet, Helen wondered whose life it was she had helped to save and what his intentions toward her might be.

CHAPTER 26

In the temple of Brulor all was confusion and excitement. Priests and warriors filled the throne room, investigating the mysterious disappearance of two prisoners. The locks of their cages were intact, and only d'Arnot guessed the truth as he noted a slight bend in two of the bars of Tarzan's cage.

"Once again there is hope," he whispered to Brian.

An excited ptome ran into the throne room; and, tearing off his helmet, hurried to the foot of Brulor's throne. "O Father of Diamonds," he cried, "I went to the little chamber in the lake. The woman is gone!"

"Gone? Where?" demanded Brulor.

"Who knows?" replied the ptome. "All that I know is that she is not there and that scattered over the bottom of Horus are the bodies of six ptomes, their water suits stripped from three. A demon is in our midst, O Father!"

Brulor leaped to his feet, trembling with rage. "They are not demons," he cried, "but mortal men who may die. One is that renegade, Herkuf; the other is the man called Tarzan. Whoever brings them to me, dead or alive, may name his own reward; but bring them alive if you can. Whoever profanes the temple of Brulor must die. So it is written."

And while Brulor raged, the objects of his wrath, led by Herkuf, were far out

on the bottom of Horus. Having stripped the water suits from three of the dead ptomes, they had followed Herkuf, who was bent on leading them across the lake in accordance with the plan that he and Tarzan had decided upon before their escape from the temple. Good fortune had given them possession of three extra water suits, which would fit in nicely with the plan they had in mind, a mad plan; but the only one that seemed at all likely to succeed.

As they approached deeper water, they descended into a valley of huge marine plants; and here they encountered the larger denizens of the deep; so that they were constantly compelled to fight off attacks, as monstrous, shadowy

shapes glided about them. Mighty, grotesque plants waved their fronds above them in the dim light of the fading stars.

Helen was frankly terrified. She had no idea who these men were, nor where they were taking her, nor what their intentions toward her; and in addition to these, she did not see how they could escape the terrifying dangers that surrounded them, made doubly terrifying by the darkness and the strangeness of the scene. She felt that she could endure no more, and then a huge sea serpent swam from among the giant trees and rushed to attack them.

The men faced its horrible jaws with their puny tridents, while its long,

sinuous tail wreathed in spirals above them, like a sentient Damoclean sword that might destroy them at any moment. Its protruding eyes glaring, its forked tongue darting from its fanged jaws, the serpent suddenly wrapped its tail about Helen and swam off. Instantly Tarzan dropped the extra water suit and helmet he had been carrying and sprang up in an effort to reach them, as Herkuf stood helpless on the lake bottom below.

Just by chance, the ape-man succeeded in seizing one of Helen's ankles; but he could not wrest her from the grip of that powerful tail. Slowly he drew himself up over the body of the girl in an effort to reach the body of the serpent. At the same time he tried to

wrest her free; but the coils only tightened about her; and as the angry saurian turned and twisted, he had difficulty in holding on at all. It was only his great strength and agility that, despite his encumbering water suit, permitted him, finally, to climb to the monster's back. Again and again he drove his knife into the cold body, while Helen marvelled at the courage and strength of her unknown paladin.

Painfully, but not seriously wounded, the saurian dropped the girl and turned upon the man-thing that dared thus to question its supremacy. Bleeding, hurt, infuriated, a creature of demoniacal fury, its one thought now was to destroy this rash thing that threatened its right to self-

preservation. Fending off the jaws with his sharp knife that inflicted hurts which caused the serpent to recoil, Tarzan climbed steadily toward the great throat. Numa, the lion; Sheeta, the leopard; Wappi, the antelope; and man he had killed by severing the jugular. Why not this creature, too, in which blood flowed?

At last he reached his goal; and here, beneath the great throat, he found the tenderest skin his blade had yet pierced; and with a single stroke he severed the vein he had been seeking. There was a gush of blood, the creature writhed convulsively for a few moments; and then, as Tarzan slipped from its back, it turned belly up and floated away; while

the ape-man sank gently toward the floor of the lake, where Helen stood, wide-eyed and wondering, looking up at him.

Dawn was breaking; and the increasing light made it possible for them to see to greater distances than before, and as Tarzan looked about for Herkuf, he saw him approaching, bringing along the water suit and helmet that Tarzan had discarded.

From this point on, the lake bottom rose steeply, taxing Helen's energies to such an extent that Tarzan had to help her for the remainder of the way to shore. Herkuf was not much better off than Helen, but he managed to stagger out of the water to fall exhausted on the bank. Only Tarzan seemed fresh and untired.

They lost no time in removing the uncomfortable helmets, and when Helen saw Tarzan's face she cried out in astonishment. "Tarzan!" she exclaimed. "But I might have known that it was you, for who else could have done for me what you have?"

"Paul," he said, with a smile.

"You're sweet," she said. "Oh, what a relief to feel safe once more. How wonderful to be alive after all that we have gone through, after that terrible chamber where they would have drowned me. I can't believe yet that I have escaped."

Close to shore, Herkuf had speared a fish; and now he led them to a cave he knew of; and while Helen and Tarzan

lay on the ground, he built a fire and broiled his catch.

"What are your plans?" Helen asked Tarzan.

"Herkuf knows where a boat is hidden on this side of the lake. We thought it safer to come here rather than to attempt to steal one from the quay at Ashair, knowing that after our escape was discovered there would be sentries everywhere. Tonight, we shall row across the lake; and Herkuf and I will go down in water suits and try to get past the ptomes again and bring out d'Arnot, Brian, and Lavac. That is why we took the three suits from the ptomes we killed. We were going to try to steal them from the ptomes' room. Now we

won't have to go through that room, as we did before to steal suits, as Herkuf says there is a way around it."

"After we have eaten and rested," said Herkuf, "I'll go and see if the boat is still where I hid it. That was many years ago; but it was well hidden, and it is seldom that anyone comes to this part of the valley. I sank it in a tiny inlet beneath bushes that overhung the water."

"It has probably rotted away by this time," suggested Helen.

"No, I think not," replied Herkuf. "It would only rot if exposed to the air."

As they ate the broiled fish, they discussed their plans and recalled the adventures through which they had passed; and Helen asked Herkuf how it

had been possible to construct the temple at the bottom of the lake. "That seems to me," she said, "an engineering feat far beyond the capabilities of the Asharians, for nothing else that they have accomplished, as far as I have seen, suggests more than a primitive knowledge of engineering. With the exception of these diving helmets, I have seen nothing that indicates great inventive genius, either."

"It was the invention of the diving helmet, coupled with a natural phenomenon, that made it possible to build the temple," explained Herkuf. "We are a very ancient race. We have occupied the valley of Tuen-Baka for perhaps three thousand years. Our origin

is legendary, but it is believed that our early ancestors came down from the north, bringing with them a well developed civilization and considerable engineering knowledge. There were two factions or tribes. One settled at what is now Thobos, the other at Ashair. It was an Asharian who invented the diving helmet. He was always puttering around with metals and chemicals, trying to make gold from common substances; and during his experiments, he accidentally discovered a combination of chemicals that, when water was poured on them, generated air that could be breathed; but he had a sad end just as he was about to transmute a black powder he had compounded into gold. All that was

necessary, he believed, was to apply great pressure suddenly; so he placed a little of it on a piece of lava and struck it with a hammer. There was a terrific noise and much smoke; and the roof blew off the inventor's house, and he went with it. One of his assistants, who miraculously escaped death, saw it all. But, though he did not succeed in making gold, he left behind him a great invention in the form of the diving helmet, which was thoroughly perfected and in common use, though more for sport than for any practical purpose."

"But what had that to do with the building of the temple?" asked Helen.

"I am coming to that. Off shore from Ashair, at the point above where the

temple now stands, the water was always in constant turmoil, a jet of it often flying into the air fifty or a hundred feet with a great hissing sound. The origin of this phenomenon was a mystery which the Asharians would have liked to solve; so, one day, a venturesome youth donned a water suit and helmet and set forth on the bottom of the lake to investigate. He was gone about half an hour, when watchers on the shore saw him shoot up, above the surface of the water at the spot where the phenomenon occurred. By a miracle, he was not killed; and when he finally came back to shore, he reported that a great geyser of air was shooting up from a hole in the bottom of the lake.

"It was many years later that some one conceived the idea of building a temple around the air geyser to house the priesthood and holy of holies. Thousands of slaves were captured and set to cutting the lava blocks that were to form the temple walls. Innumerable water suits and helmets were made. The most difficult part of the work was the capping of the air geyser, but this was finally accomplished; then the building of the temple commenced. It took a thousand years and cost twice that many lives. When it was completed and tightly sealed, it was, of course, entirely filled with water; but when the valve that had been installed in the geyser cap was opened, the water was forced out of the

temple through a one-way valve. Today, the geyser furnishes pure air for the temple and actuates the doors of the air chambers."

"How wonderful!" commented Helen. "But where does this air supply come from?"

"It is, of course, mere conjecture," replied Herkuf; "but the theory is that during a great eruption, when Tuen-Baka was an active volcano, the entire top of the mountain was blown off and that when a great portion of it fell back into the crater it imprisoned a vast quantity of air, under great pressure, in a subterranean reservoir."

"And when that supply is exhausted?" inquired the girl.

Herkuf shrugged. "Horus will reclaim the temple. But there is yet a second theory. It is possible that there exists beneath the temple an immense deposit of the very chemicals that we use in our helmets, and that the trickling of water from the lake into this deposit is constantly generating fresh air."

"What a world of thought and labor and lives must have gone into the building of that structure!" exclaimed Helen, "and to what purpose? Why do men so waste their energies?"

"Does your race build no temples to its gods?" asked Herkuf.

CHAPTER 27

Magra and Gregory halted on a rocky hillside above Ashair. The hot sun beat down upon them from a cloudless sky, the frowning walls of Tuen-Baka towered above them, below them stretched the calm waters of sacred Horas; and in the distance the entrance to the tunnel leading to the outer world beckoned to them and mocked them.

"Well, here we are," said Gregory. "This must be the secret entrance to the tunnel."

"Yes," said Magra, "we are here; but what now?"

"After what those poor devils told us," replied Gregory, "I think it would

be foolish to throw our lives away uselessly by entering such a trap."

"I quite agree with you," said Magra. "We could accomplish nothing if we succeeded in getting into the temple. We'd only be captured and upset all of Tarzan's plans if he is successful in what he is attempting."

"What I can't understand," said Gregory, "is what has become of Helen, Brian, d'Arnot, and Lavac. Do you suppose they all went into the temple to help Tarzan?"

"They may have, or they may all have been recaptured. About all we can do is wait."

"Suppose we go on below Ashair and look for a hiding place. If we are

between Ashair and the entrance to the tunnel, they will have to pass us to get out of the valley, for there is no other way out, so far as I know."

"I think you are right," agreed Gregory, "but I wonder if it will be safe to try to pass Ashair in the day time."

"Just as safe as it is to remain here at the mouth of this secret passage to their temple. Some of the Asharians may stumble upon us here at any time."

"All right," said Gregory, "let's try it. There are quantities of enormous lava blocks farther up at the foot of the escarpment. We may be able to make our way past the city and be entirely screened from it by them."

"Let's go," said Magra.

They made the laborious ascent to the jumbled pile of lava that had fallen from above; and though the going was rough, they found that they were entirely hidden from the city; and eventually came down again close to the lake well beyond Ashair.

Between them and the lake a low, limestone ridge shut off their view of the water. It paralleled the shore line, and extended for about a quarter of a mile, falling gradually to the level of the surrounding land. Upon its summit shrubs grew sparsely and a few gnarled trees. A rise of land hid it from Ashair.

"Look!" said Magra, pointing. "Isn't that a cave?"

"It looks like one," replied Gregory.

"We'll have a look at it. If it's habitable, we're in luck, for we can hide there and keep a lookout for the others from the summit of the ridge."

"How about food?" asked Magra.

"I imagine we can find fruit and nuts in some of those larger trees just below the ridge," replied Gregory, "and if I have any luck at all I should be able to get a fish now and then."

As they talked, they approached the entrance to the cave, which, from the outside, appeared to be perfectly adapted to their needs; but they entered it cautiously. For a short distance only was the interior visible in the dun light that came through the entrance; beyond that they could see nothing.

"I think I'll explore a little before we settle down to light housekeeping," said Gregory.

"I'll go with you."

The cave narrowed into a dark corridor, which they followed, gropingly, in almost total darkness; but at a sharp turn it became lighter, and presently they came into a large cavern into which the sun poured through an opening in the roof. The cavern was large and grotesquely beautiful. Stalactites of various hues depended from ceiling and walls, while strangely shaped stalagmites covered much of the floor. Erosion had wrought strange limestone figures which rose like the creations of some mad sculptor among

the tinted stalagmites.

"What a gorgeous spectacle!" exclaimed Magra.

"It is marvelous, and the coloring is beautiful," agreed Gregory, "but I think we should explore a little farther to make certain that it is a safe place for us to hide."

"Yes," said Magra, "you're quite right. There's an opening there at the far end of the cavern that may lead to something else. Let's have a look at it."

They found that the opening led into another corridor, dark and tortuous; and as they felt their way along it, Magra shuddered.

"There is something uncanny about this place," she whispered.

"Nonsense," said Gregory. "That's just because it's dark in here. Women don't like the dark."

"Do you?" she asked.

"Well, no; but just because a place is dark doesn't mean that it's dangerous."

"But," she insisted, "I have a feeling that we are being watched by unseen eyes."

"Oh, that's just your imagination, my dear child," laughed Gregory. "Your nerves are unstrung; and I don't wonder, after all that you have gone through. It's surprising that we're not all nervous wrecks."

"I don't believe that it's imagination," replied Magra. "I tell you I can feel that we are not alone. Something is near us.

Something is watching us. Let's go back and get out of this terrible place. It's evil. I know it."

"Try and calm yourself, my dear," soothed Gregory; "there's no one near us; and anyway, if the place is evil, we want to know it."

"I hope you're right," said Magra; "but I'm still terrified; and, as you know, I'm not easily frightened. Here's an opening in the wall. It may be another corridor. Which one had we better take?"

"I think we'll keep right on in this one," replied Gregory. "It seems to be the main corridor. If we start turning off, we may become lost. I've heard of people being lost down in caves in Kentucky or Virginia or somewhere, and

never being found again."

Just then a hand seized Magra from behind and whisked her through the opening they had just passed. Gregory heard a single piercing scream behind him, and wheeled about. To his horror, he found that he was alone. Magra had disappeared. He called her name aloud, but there was no reply; then he turned to go back and search for her. As he did so, another hand reached out from an opening on the opposite side of the corridor and seized him. He struggled and fought; but all his efforts were futile, and he was dragged into the darkness of a side corridor.

Magra, too, had fought for her liberty; but uselessly. The powerful creature that

had seized her, dragged her along the dark corridor in silence. She did not know whether she were in the clutches of a man or a beast. After her experience with Ungo, it was only natural that she might have been in doubt.

The corridor was not long, and presently it ended in a second large cavern. It was then that she saw that her captor was a white robed figure with hooded face. She saw the bare hands; and knew that it was no ape that had seized her, but a man. There were a number of others like him in the cavern, in the center of which was a pool of water.

At the far end of the cavern a throne stood upon a dais; and before the throne

was an altar, while directly behind it was an opening, roughly arched, looking out upon the lake, which was almost on a level with the floor of the cavern. The cavern was beautiful; but the whole scene was given a weird aspect by the presence of the sinister, silent, white robed figures that stood staring at her through dimly seen eyes that shown through slits in their hoods.

Magra had scarcely more than taken in the scene before her when she saw Gregory being dragged in as she had been. They looked at one another resignedly, and Gregory shook his head. "Guess we're in for it," he said. "Looks like the Klu Klux Klan. You were right. Some of them must have been watching

us."

"I wonder what they are," she said, "and what they want of us. God! Haven't we been through enough, without this?"

"I don't wonder Tuen-Baka is taboo and Ashair forbidden. If I ever get out of it, k will be taboo as far as I am concerned."

"If we ever get out," she said rather wistfully.

"We got out of Thobos," he reminded her.

"Yes, I know; but we have no Tarzan nor any Thetan here. Now we are on our own, and we are helpless."

"Maybe they don't intend us any harm," he suggested. "If I only knew

their language, I'd ask 'em. They have a language. They've been whispering together ever since they brought us in."

"Try Swahili," she suggested. "Every one else we've seen in this accursed country speaks it."

"My Swahili is a little lame," he said, "but if they understand Swahili maybe they can make it out." He turned toward the nearest white robed figure, and cleared his throat. "Why did you bring us here?" he asked. "What are you going to do with us? We haven't done anything to you."

"You dared enter the temple of the true god," replied the man. "Who are you to dare enter the sacred temple of Chon?"

"They are minions of Atka," said another.

"Or spies of the false Brulor," suggested a third.

"We are nothing of the kind," said Magra. "We are just strangers who became lost. All we want to do is find our way out of Tuen-Baka."

"Then why did you come here?"

"We were looking for a place to hide until we could get out," replied the girl.

"You are probably lying. We shall keep you here until the true god returns; then you shall learn your fate and the manner of your death."

CHAPTER 28

After they had rested, Herkuf, Helen, and Tarzan went to look for the boat that Herkuf had hidden, in which they were to return to the temple of Brulor in an attempt to rescue d'Arnot, Brian, and Lavac. The inlet in which he had sunk it was not a great distance from the cave they had chosen; and as almost the entire distance was through wooded country, they had no fear of being detected by the occupants of any of the Asharian galleys which occasionally passed within eyesight of the shore, as they patrolled the lower end of Horus in eternal quest of their hereditary enemies from Thobos.

When they reached the inlet, Herkuf parted the overhanging bushes and

looked down into the shallow water. "This is the place," he muttered to himself. "I know it is the place. I cannot be mistaken."

"What's wrong?" asked Tarzan. "Can't you find it?"

"This is the place," repeated Herkuf, "but the boat is not here. Though I hid it carefully, some one found it. Now all our plans are wrecked. What are we to do?"

"Can't we walk around the end of the lake and enter the water near the temple from the Asharian shore?" asked Helen.

"The escarpment at the lower end of the lake is unscalable," replied Herkuf. "If we went by way of Thobos, we should most certainly be captured; and

although I was once a priest of Chon at Thobos, no one would know me now; and we should all be imprisoned."

"Maybe we could build a raft," suggested the girl.

Herkuf shook his head. "We have no tools," he said; "and even if we had, we'd never dare attempt it, as the Asharians would be sure to discover us."

"Must we give up, then?" demanded Helen. "Oh, we can't do that and leave Paul and Brian and Lavac to die."

"There is a way," said Tarzan.

"What is it?" demanded Herkuf.

"When it is dark, I'll swim to Ashair and steal a boat from the quay there."

"That is impossible," said Herkuf. "You saw with what we had to contend when we crossed last night. You wouldn't get half way across, swimming at the surface. We'd better walk back."

"It was only by the best of luck that we got across last night," Tarzan reminded him. "We might not be so lucky another time; and, if we did succeed, we should still be without a boat to return to Thobos or escape through the tunnel. You know that the success of our whole plan rested upon our having a boat. I shall swim the lake tonight."

"Don't do it, Tarzan; please don't," begged Helen. "You would just be throwing your life away uselessly."

"I do not intend to throw my life away at all," he replied. "I have my knife."

They returned to the cave to await darkness; and, finding it impossible to dissuade Tarzan from his plan, Herkuf and Helen finally gave up in despair; and, when darkness fell, they stood at the shore line and watched him wade into the dark waters of Horus. With straining eyes they watched his progress until he disappeared from their view in the darkness, and even then they remained where they were, staring out into the black void across the blacker waters.

Tarzan had completed about half the distance to the Asharian shore without encountering any dangers, when he saw a torch flare suddenly in the bow of a

galley only a short distance from him. He watched it; and when it altered its course and came toward him, he realized that he had been discovered. To be taken now by an Asharian galley would doubtless mean death not only for him but for the men he was risking his life to save, and so he grasped at the only chance he had to elude them. Diving, he swam away, trying to escape the circle of their torch's light; and, glancing back, he felt that he might succeed, for the light appeared to be receding; but as he rose toward the surface for air before diving again, he saw a shadowy form approaching him; and knew that at last the thing that Helen and Herkuf had so feared had happened. He recalled his

words of assurance to them, "I have my knife," and half smiled as he drew it.

On Ashair's distant wall, a sentry saw the flare of the torch out upon the lake and summoned an officer. "A galley from Thobos," he said, "for there are no Asharian galleys out tonight."

The officer nodded. "I wonder why they risked a light," he said. "They always sneak by in the night without torches. Well, it is our good luck, and because of it we shall have a prize tonight and some more victims for Atka and Brulor."

As the great shark turned on its back to seize Tarzan, he plunged his knife into its belly and ripped it open for a distance of several feet. Mortally hurt,

the great fish thrashed about in its agony, dyeing the water crimson with its blood and creating a great commotion upon the surface of the lake, a commotion that attracted the attention of those in the galley.

The ape-man, avoiding the lashing tail and angry jaws of the shark, now saw other great forms converging upon them, silent, sinister tigers of the deep attracted at first, like their fellow, by the light of the torch in the bow of the galley; but now by the blood of the wounded shark. Terrible creatures, they were coming for the kill.

His lungs bursting, Tarzan swam toward the surface for air, confident that the wounded shark would occupy the

attention of the others. He knew, from the radiance of the water, that he would come up close to the galley; but he had to choose between that and death from drowning; there was no other alternative.

As he broke the surface of the water, he was close beside the galley; and warriors seized him and drew him over the gunwale. Here now was an end to all the fine plans he and Herkuf had concocted, for to fall into the hands of the Asharians must be equivalent to the signing of his death warrant; but as he looked at his captors he saw the black plumes of Thobos and heard a familiar voice call him by name. It was Thetan's.

"We were sneaking past Ashair

without lights," he said, "on our way down river to capture a few slaves; but what in the world were you doing out here in the middle of Horus?"

"I was swimming to Ashair to steal a boat," replied the ape- man.

"Are you crazy?" demanded Thetan. "No man could hope to live in these waters. Why, they are alive with flesh eaters."

"So I discovered, but I think I should have gotten through. I must have been half way across. It was not my life that was at stake, Thetan, but those of my friends who are prisoners in Ashair. I must reach Ashair and get a boat."

Thetan thought for a moment; then he said, "I'll take you. I can land you on the

shore below the city, but I advise you to give up all thought of it. You cannot enter Ashair without being discovered, and that will be the end of you."

"I don't want to go ashore," replied Tarzan. "I have two companions across the lake from the city. If you will take the three of us to a point above the temple of Brulor, I won't have to go ashore and steal a boat."

"What good will that do you?" demanded Thetan.

"We have water suits and helmets. We are going into the temple to get our friends, and I've got to take Brulor and The Father of Diamonds to Herat to get him to release Magra and Gregory."

"They've already escaped," said

Thetan, "and Herat is furious." He did not say that he had helped them, as other Thobotian warriors were listening.

"That really doesn't make much difference," said Tarzan. "We can't escape from Tuen-Baka without Herat's aid. We'll need a galley and provisions. If I bring Brulor and The Father of Diamonds to him, he'll give us what we need, I'm sure."

"Yes," agreed Thetan, "but you won't ever bring Brulor and The Father of Diamonds to Herat. What chance have you, practically unaided, to do what we have been trying to do for years?"

Tarzan shrugged. "I still must try," he said. "Will you help me?"

"If I can't dissuade you, I'll help you.

Where are your friends?"

Tarzan pointed in the general direction of the cave where he had left Helen and Herkuf, the torch was extinguished, and the galley's nose turned toward the shore.

From the quay at Ashair, six galleys put out without lights into the darkness of the night to search for the quarry, which they could no longer see since the torch had been extinguished; and as they rowed from shore, they fanned out, some up river, some down, to cover the most territory in their search.

The shore line ahead of the galley bearing Tarzan was a long, black silhouette against the night sky. No landmarks were visible; and the shore

was a straight, black line without breaks or indentations. Only the merest chance might bring them to the spot where Helen and Herkuf waited. When they were quite close to shore, Tarzan called Herkuf's name in a low voice; and immediately there came an answering hail from their right. A few minutes later the keel of the galley touched gravel a few yards from shore, and Tarzan leaped out and waded to where Helen and Herkuf stood. They were amazed that he had returned so soon, amazed that he had returned at all, for they had seen the torchlit galley and believed that he had been captured by Asharians.

Briefly he explained what had occurred; and, telling Herkuf to follow

with the water suits and helmets and weapons, he tossed Helen to a shoulder and waded back to the galley, which turned its nose toward Ashair as soon as Herkuf was aboard. Tarzan, Helen, and Herkuf immediately donned their water suits, leaving their helmets off, temporarily, so that they could talk.

Silently, the galley glided out into the lake, the oars dipping without noise as they were plied by thirty well trained slaves, who had learned by long experience the necessity for stealth in passing through the lower waters of Horus where Asharian galleys might be lying in wait for them— Asharian galleys and Asharian warriors who might send them to the bottom chained to

their thwarts. About mid- lake a torch suddenly burst into flame to the right of them; then another to the left, and in quick succession four more between them, forming a semi-circle toward the center of which they were moving. With the lighting of the torches, a loud Asharian war cry broke the deathly stillness of the night; and the Asharian galleys moved to encircle that of Thetan.

Nothing but immediate flight might save the Thobotians; and as the prow of the galley turned quickly toward the lower end of the lake in an effort to elude the jaws of the closing circle of enemy galleys, Tarzan called to Helen and Herkuf to don their helmets as he adjusted his own; then, seizing Helen's

hand and signalling Herkuf to follow, he leaped overboard with the girl, while Thetan urged his slaves to greater speed.

CHAPTER 29

Hand in hand, Tarzan and Helen sank gently down to the darkness of the lake's bottom. If Herkuf were near them, they could see nothing of him; and so Tarzan waited for the coming of the new day that would lift the black veil from the mysteries of Horus's depths, as to proceed without Herkuf might easily foredoom the entire venture to failure. That they might never find him, Tarzan was aware; but he could only wait and hope.

It was an eerie experience for Helen Gregory that was rendered doubly trying by the recollection of her previous experiences in this silent world of horrors. Dimly seen, great forms glided

through the forest of grotesque treelike plants that waved their dark foliage on every hand. Momentarily, the girl expected some hideous monster to attack; but the night passed and dawn broke without their having once been threatened. It seemed a miracle to her, but the explanation probably lay in the fact that they had remained quietly sitting on the gravelly bottom. Had they been moving, it might have been different.

As the light of the new day filtered down to them, Tarzan looked about for Herkuf; but he was nowhere to be seen. Reluctantly, the ape-man started off across the lake toward the temple of Brulor. What he could accomplish alone, he did not know, as part of the plan was

to enter the temple during a period of meditation and release the prisoners; but of the three, only Herkuf was familiar with the mechanism that operated the doors to the air chamber and emptied and refilled it; only Herkuf knew the exact time of the periods of meditation.

Unable to communicate with Tarzan, Helen followed where he led, ignorant of his new plans but more secure in her faith in him than he was of himself in this particular venture, where every condition varied so from all that he had been accustomed to meet in the familiar jungles that he knew so well.

They had gone but a short distance in the direction in which Tarzan thought the temple lay, when they came upon

Herkuf. He, too, had been waiting for daylight, feeling certain that Tarzan would have done the same and that, having leaped overboard almost simultaneously, they could not be far separated. It was with feelings of the greatest relief that they found themselves reunited.

Herkuf took the lead now, and with Tarzan and Helen following, commenced the tiresome and dangerous journey toward Ashair, all of them now greatly encouraged after the long hours of doubt and uncertainty.

They had not gone far when they came upon the wreck of a large galley partly embedded in the sand. That it had been there for years was attested by the size

of the marine growth which had sprouted through its ribs, entwining the skeletons of its slaves still lying in their rusted chains.

Herkuf evinced considerable excitement; and, motioning them to wait, clambered into the interior of the craft, from which he presently emerged carrying a splendid jeweled casket. That he was overcome by excitement was obvious, but hampered by his helmet he could only express it by waving the casket before their faces and dancing jubilantly. What it was he had recovered, they could not guess, unless it were that the casket contained treasure of fabulous worth.

At last, and without further adventure,

they approached the temple of Brulor; and here they went cautiously, seeking the shelter of the trees and plants that grew in the gardens of the ptomes, moving stealthily from one to another, each time assuring themselves that no ptome was in sight, knowing that at any moment one might emerge from the air chamber that they could now see. Approaching the temple, they found a place where they could hide concealed from the gardens and the air chamber door. Here they must wait until Herkuf signalled that the time had arrived when it might be safe to enter the temple. How long that would be only he could guess with any degree of accuracy. Near them was a window through which they could

have looked into the temple had they dared; but as long as it was light outside they could not take the risk; and so they waited, tired, hungry, and thirsty; waited for night to fall.

Inside the temple the caged prisoners were gnawing on their evening meal of raw fish. Atan Thome enlarged in glowing terms upon his plans when he should come into possession of The Father of Diamonds and dazzle the world with his wealth. Lal Taask, scowling, cursed him. Akamen brooded in silence upon his lost liberty and his vanished dream of power. Brian and d'Arnot spoke together in low tones. Lavac paced his cage like a captive polar bear.

"I think your friend, Tarzan, has run off and left us," remarked Brian.

"You think that because you don't know him as well as I do," replied d'Arnot. "As long as he and we live he will try to rescue us."

"He will have to be a super-man to do it," said Brian.

"He is—that and all of that. He may fail, of course, but he will come nearer succeeding than any man who lives."

"Well, anyway, he got Helen out of that torture chamber they'd put her in," said Brian. "Wasn't old Brulor sore, though! Of course he really hasn't had time to get her to a place of safety and come back for us; but every minute is an hour in here, and so it seems like a very

long time since he went away. Did you know he was going?"

"Yes; he told me; but I didn't know when he and Herkuf left. I was asleep. I am sure he must have gotten her out; otherwise he'd have been back after us."

"Unless he was killed," suggested Brian. "Anyway we know he took her out. That was what old Brulor was raving about."

"I mean out of the lake—to some place of safety. Sometimes I think I'll go crazy if I don't know."

"We've got one nut here now," said Brian, nodding toward Atan Thome. "We couldn't stand another. Anyway, wait until you've been here as long as I have; then you'll really have an excuse to

go cuckoo."

"They're all clearing out of the throne room now," said d'Arnot. "The period of meditation has come. I wonder what they meditate about."

"Meditate, hell!" exclaimed Brian. "Ask the handmaidens."

Outside the temple the weary trio waited. Since the evening before they had had neither food nor water, nor spoken a single word; but now Herkuf cautiously moved to a spot opposite the window but not too close to it. It was dark now, and there was little danger that he would be seen from the inside. The throne room was deserted except for the prisoners. He came back to Tarzan and Helen and nodded that all was right;

then he left the casket at Helen's feet' and motioned that she was to remain where she was. She was very lonely after Tarzan and Herkuf left her.

This was the moment for which the two men had been waiting. What did it hold for them? Carrying out the plan they had carefully laid out in every detail, the two men each speared a fish; then, with their quarry wriggling on their tridents, they went to the air chamber. It was only a matter of a few moments before they had passed through it and stood in the corridor leading to the ptomes' room.

Beside them was another door opening into a passageway that led to the throne room, avoiding the ptomes' room. Herkuf tried to open it, but could not. He

shrugged. There was nothing to do now but make the attempt to pass through the room where the ptomes should be sleeping. They prayed that they were sleeping. Cautiously, Herkuf opened the door to that room and looked in; then he beckoned Tarzan to follow him.

The entire success of their venture depended upon their reaching the throne room unchallenged. They had almost succeeded, when a ptome, awakening, sat up and looked at them. With their fish upon their tridents, the two men continued on unconcernedly across the room. The sleepy ptome, scarce awake, thought them two of his own kind, and lay down to sleep again. Thus they came in safety to the throne room, while

outside, Helen waited in the loneliness of the black water. She was almost happy, so certain was she that Tarzan and Herkuf would succeed in liberating d'Arnot, Brian, and Lavac; but then she was not aware of the figure in a white water suit that was swimming down toward her from above and behind. Whatever it was, it was evident that it had discovered her and was swimming directly toward her.

Tarzan and Herkuf hurried directly to the cages, tossing their fish to the floor. The excited prisoners watched them, for they had never seen ptomes behave like this. Only d'Arnot really guessed who they were. Seizing the bars in his powerful grasp, Tarzan released them

one after the other, cautioning them to silence with a gesture; then he removed his helmet and told d'Arnot, Brian, and Lavac to put on the three water suits that Herkuf carried.

"The rest of you," he said, "may be able to escape by the secret passage at the end of the long corridor. Does any of you know where to find it and open it?"

"I do," replied Akamen.

"So do I," said Atan Thome. "I learned from Akamen." As he spoke he darted toward the altar and seized the casket containing The Father of Diamonds, the accursed casket that had wrought such havoc.

As Helen felt a hand seize her from behind, she turned to see the strange

figure in white confronting her; and her vision of a successful termination of their venture faded. Once again she was plunged into the depths of despair. She tried to wrench herself free from the restraining hand, but she was helpless to escape. She realized that she must not be taken now, for it might jeopardize the lives and liberty of all her companions; she knew that they would search for her and that the delay might prove fatal to them. A sudden rage seized her; and, wheeling, she tried to drive her trident into the heart of her captor. But the creature that held her was alert and powerful. It wrenched the trident from her hands and cast it aside; then it seized her by a wrist and swam up with her

toward the surface of the lake. The girl still struggled, but she was helpless. To what new and unpredictable fate was she being dragged? Who, now, might find or save her?

In the throne room of the temple, Tarzan and Herkuf saw all their efforts, their risks, and their plans being brought to nothing by the stupid avarice of three men, for as Atan Thome had seized the casket, Lal Taask and Brian Gregory had leaped upon him; and the three were fighting for the vast treasure for which they had risked their lives. At sight of the casket in the hands of another, Brian had forgotten all his fine resolutions; and cupidity dominated him to the exclusion of all else.

Tarzan ran forward to quiet them, but they thought that he too wanted the casket; so they fought down the throne room in an effort to evade him; and then that happened which Tarzan had feared —a door burst open and a horde of ptomes poured into the throne room. They wore no encumbering water suits or helmets, but they carried tridents and knives. Tarzan, Herkuf, and the liberated prisoners waited to receive them. Brian and Lal Taask, realizing that here was a matter of life and death, abandoned the casket temporarily to assist in the attempt to repulse the ptomes; but Atan Thome clung desperately to his treasure, and sneaking stealthily behind the others he made for the corridor at the far end of

which was the entrance to the secret passageway that led to the rocky hillside above Ashair.

It devolved upon Tarzan to bear the brunt of the battle with the ptomes. Beside him, only Herkuf was armed; and the others fought with their bare hands but with such desperation that the ptomes fell back, while Tarzan speared them on his trident and tossed them among their fellows.

It was upon this scene that Brulor burst, red of face and trembling with rage; then above the yells and curses of the battling men there rose his screaming voice as he stood behind the empty altar.

"Curses!" he cried. "Curses upon the profaners of the temple! Death to them!

Death to him who hath raped the casket of The Father of Diamonds! Summon the warriors of Ashair to avenge the sacrilege!"

Herkuf saw his Nemesis standing defenseless before him, and he saw red with the pent up hatred of many years. He leaped to the dais, and Brulor backed away, screaming for help; but the ptomes who remained alive were too busily engaged now, for all the prisoners who remained had armed themselves with the tridents and knives of the ptomes who had fallen.

"Die, imposter!" screamed Herkuf. "For years I have lived in the hope of this moment. Let the warriors of Ashair come, for now I may die happy. The true

god shall be avenged and the wrong you did me wiped out in your blood."

Brulor dropped to his knees and begged for mercy; but there was no mercy in the heart of Herkuf, as he raised his trident and drove it with both hands deep into the heart of the terrified man groveling before him. Thus died Brulor, the false god.

A breathless ptome had staggered into the presence of Atka, who sat among her nobles at a great banquet. "What is the meaning of this?" demanded the Queen.

"Oh, Atka," cried the lesser priest. "The prisoners have been liberated and they are killing the ptomes. Send many warriors at once or they will all be slain."

Atka could not conceive of such a thing transpiring in the throne room of the temple of Brulor, yet she realized that the man was in earnest; so she gave orders that warriors were to be sent at once to quell the disturbance.

"They will soon bring order," she said, and returned to her feasting.

When the last ptome had fallen, Tarzan saw that Akamen was dead and that Taask and Thorne had disappeared with the casket. "Let them go," he said. "The Father of Diamonds is bad luck."

"Not I," said Brian. "I shan't let them go. Why do you suppose I have suffered in this hell-hole? Now I have a chance to reap my reward; and when others steal it, you say, 'let them go.'"

Tarzan shrugged. "Do as you please," he said; then he turned to the others. "Come, we must get out of here before they get a chance to send a lot of warriors down on top of us."

All four were now in their water suits, and were adjusting their helmets as they made their way toward the corridor that led to the water chamber. Brian had reached the end of the throne room. He was the first to realize that the warriors of Ashair were already upon them. Throwing himself to the floor, he feigned death as the warriors rushed past him into the throne room.

When the others saw them, they thought that they were lost; but Herkuf motioned them to follow him, as he

hurried on toward the air chamber. Tarzan had no idea what Herkuf planned to do. He only knew that there would not be time to pass through the air chamber before the warriors reached it and reversed the valves; then they would be caught like rats in a trap. He had no intention of inviting any such situation. He would turn his back to the wall and fight. Maybe he could delay the warriors long enough for the others to escape. That was what he thought; so he turned at the doorway leading from the throne room, and took his stand. The others, glancing back, saw what he was doing. D'Arnot took his place beside him, ignoring the ape- man's attempt to motion him on. Herkuf ran rapidly toward the

air chamber. Lavac could have followed him to safety, but instead he took his stand beside d'Arnot in the face of certain death.

While Herkuf hastened on toward the air chamber, the warriors hesitated in the throne room, appalled by the bloody shambles that met their astonished view and confused by the fact that the three who faced them appeared to be ptomes of the temple; but at last, seeing no other enemy, the officer in charge of Atka's warriors ordered them forward; while out of sight, Herkuf worked feverishly with the controls of the air chamber, spinning valve handles and pulling levers.

Shouting now, the warriors came

steadily down the length of the throne room toward the forlorn hope making a last stand before overwhelming odds; and the warriors looked for an easy victory. Nor were they alone in this belief, which was shared by the three who opposed them.

As the warriors closed upon the three, Tarzan met the leader in a duel between spear and trident, while d'Arnot and Lavac stood upon either side of him, determined, as was the ape-man, to sell their lives dearly; and as they fought thus, there was a sudden rush of water through the doorway behind them.

Herkuf had thought and acted quickly in the emergency that had confronted them, taking advantage of the only means

whereby he and his companions could be saved from the vengeance of the warriors. Throwing open both doors of the air chamber, he had let the waters of Horus pour in to fill the temple.

Safe in their water suits, Tarzan, d'Arnot, and Lavac watched the gushing torrent drive back their foes, as, cursing and yelling, the warriors of Ashair sought to climb over one another in their mad panic to escape the watery death Herkuf had loosed upon them out of sacred Horus; but not one escaped as the water filled the throne room and rose through the upper chambers of the temple. It was a gruesome sight from which the three turned gladly at a signal from Tarzan and followed him toward

the air chamber, beyond which he had left Helen waiting in the garden of the ptomes.

CHAPTER 30

Up and up through the waters of Horus, Helen was dragged by the ghostly figure until, at last, they reached the precipitous cliff, the summit of which forms the coast line near Ashair. Here the creature dragged his captive into the mouth of a dark cavern, a den of horror to the frightened girl.

Magra and Gregory had been held captives in the cavern for a night and a day waiting for the return of the true god, Chon, who was to decide their fate. They had not been ill treated; and they had been given food, but always there was the feeling of menace. It was in the air, in the strange garmenture of their captors, in their whisperings and in their

silences. It affected both Magra and Gregory similarly, leaving them blue and despondent.

They were sitting beside the pool in the center of the cavern almost exactly twenty-four hours after their capture, the white robed figures crouching around them, when there was a sudden breaking of the still surface of the water and two grotesque diving helmets appeared, one white, the other dark.

"The true god has returned," cried one of the priests.

"Now the strangers shall be judged, and punishment meted out to them."

As the two figures emerged from the pool and removed their helmets, Magra and Gregory gasped in astonishment.

"Helen!" cried the latter. "Thank God that you still live. I had given you up for dead."

"Father!" exclaimed the girl. "What are you doing here? Tarzan told us that you and Magra were prisoners in Thobos."

"We escaped," said Magra, "but perhaps we would have been better off there. God only knows what we face here."

The figure in white that had emerged with Helen proved, when he removed his helmet, to be an old man with a bushy white beard. He looked at Helen in astonishment.

"A girl!" he cried. "Since when has false Brulor made ptomes of girls?"

"I am not a ptome," replied Helen. "I was a prisoner of Brulor, and adopted this method to escape."

"Perhaps she lies," said a priest.

"If these be enemies," said the old man, "I shall know when I consult the oracle in the entrails of the man. If they be not enemies, the girls shall become my handmaidens; but if they be, they shall die as the man dies, on the altar of the true god Chon and lost Father of Diamonds."

"And if you find that we are not enemies," demanded Magra, "what good will that do this man, whom you will have already killed? We tell you that we are friends, meaning you no harm. Who are you to say that we are not? Who are

you to kill this good man?" Her voice was vibrant with just anger.

"Silence, woman!" commanded a priest. "You are speaking to Chon, the true god."

"If he were any sort of a god at all," snapped Magra, "he would know that we are not enemies. He would not have cut up an innocent man and ask questions of his entrails."

"You do not understand," said Chon, indulgently. "If the man is innocent and has told the truth, he will not die when I remove his entrails. If he dies, that will prove his guilt."

Magra stamped her foot. "You are no god at all," she cried. "You are just a wicked old sadist."

Several priests sprang forward threateningly, but Chon stopped them with a gesture. "Do not harm her," he said; "she knows not what she says. When we have taught her to know the truth, she will be contrite. I am sure that she will become a worthy handmaiden, for she has loyalty and great courage. Treat them all well while they are among us waiting for the hour of inquisition."

Atan Thome fled upward along the secret passageway from the temple of Brulor, hugging the precious casket to his breast; and behind him came Lal Taask, his mind aflame with what was now the one obsession of his life —the killing of his erstwhile master.

Secondary to that was his desire to possess the great diamond which reposed in the jeweled casket. Ahead of him he could hear the screams and jibberings of the madman, which served to inflame his rage still further. And behind them both came Brian Gregory, all his fine resolutions forgotten now that The Father of Diamonds seemed almost within his grasp. He knew that he might have to commit murder to obtain it; but that did not deter him in the least, for his avarice, like that of many men, bordered almost upon madness.

Out into the open and along the rocky hillside fled Atan Thome. When Lal Taask reached the open, he saw his quarry scarce a hundred yards ahead of

him. Other eyes saw them both, the eyes of Ungo the great bull ape, which, with his fellows, hunted for lizards among the great rocks farther up the hillside. The sight of the two men, the screaming of Atan Thome, excited him. He recalled that Tarzan had told him that they must not attack men unless he were attacked; but there had been no interdiction against joining in their play, and this looked like play to Ungo. It was thus that playful apes chased one another. Of course, Ungo was a little old for play, being a sullen, surly old bull; but he was still imitative, and what the tarmangani did, he desired to do. His fellows were imbued with the same urge toward emulation.

As Brian Gregory came out into the open from the mouth of the secret passageway, he saw the great apes, jabbering with excitement, bounding down the hillside toward Atan Thome and the pursuing Lal Taask. He saw the men stop and then turn and flee in terror from the mighty beast-men charging down upon them.

For the moment Lal Taask discarded all thoughts of vengeance, as the first law of Nature dominated and directed him; but Atan Thome clung tenaciously to his precious casket. Ungo was delighted with this new game, as he came bounding after the fleeing, screaming Thorne, whom he easily overtook. The man, thinking that death

was upon him, tried to beat off the ape with one hand while he clung tightly to the casket with the other; that, he would not give up, even in death. Killing, however, was not in the mind of the anthropoid. It was the game in which he was interested; so he snatched the casket from the screaming man as easily as one man takes another's wife in Hollywood, and went bounding off, hoping that some one would pursue him that the game might continue.

Lal Taask, running away, glanced back over his shoulder to see his dream of riches irremediably shattered, leaving nothing now in life for him but his hatred of Atan Thome and his desire for vengeance. Furious with hate and

thwarted avarice, he ran back to Thorne to wreak his final revenge, barehanded, upon the screaming maniac. Lal Taask was choking and beating Atan Thome when Brian Gregory reached them and dragged the infuriated Indian from his victim. "What are you fools thinking of?" he demanded. "You're making enough noise to attract every warrior in Ashair. I ought to kill both of you; but right now we've got to forget all of that and work together to escape, for we'll never see that casket again."

Lal Taask knew that Gregory was right, but Atan Thome knew nothing. He could only think of The Father of Diamonds which he had lost, and impelled by a new maniacal impulse he

suddenly broke away from Brian and ran screaming in the direction in which Ungo had disappeared with the casket. Lal Taask started after him, a curse upon his lips; but Brian laid a detaining hand on the man's arm.

"Let him go," he said; "he'll never get the casket from Ungo—he'll probably get himself killed instead. That accursed casket! So many have suffered and died because of it, and that poor fool has gone mad."

"Perhaps he is the most fortunate of all," said Lal Taask.

"I wish that I had never heard of it," continued Brian. "I have lost my father and sister, and probably all of their friends are dead because of my greed. A

moment ago I would still have risked my life for it, but the sight of that jibbering idiot has brought me to my senses. I wouldn't have the thing now; I am not superstitious, but I believe there is a curse on it."

"Perhaps you are right," said Lal Taask. "I do not care so much about the casket as I did about killing that mad devil, but the gods have willed it otherwise. I shall have to be content."

Apelike, Ungo soon tired of his new bauble; and tossed the casket carelessly to the ground, his thoughts reverting to the matter of lizards and other dainty articles of food. He was about to lead his tribe in search of sustenance when they were attracted by loud screams.

Instantly on guard, they stood watching the approach of the mad Thorne. Nervous, irritable beasts, it was a question whether they would run away or attack, as the man dashed among them and threw himself on the ground, clutching the casket to his breast. For a moment they stood there, apparently undecided, their little, red rimmed eyes blazing; then they moved slowly away, their menacing growls lost upon the poor maniac.

"It is mine! It is mine!" he shrieked. "I am rich! In all the world there is none so rich as I!"

The great apes lumbered down the hillside, their short tempers upset by the screaming and jabbering of Thorne, until

Ungo was about to return and silence him forever. Just then he espied Brian and Lal Taask and transferred his anger from Thorne to them. They were tarmangani, and suddenly Ungo wanted to kill all tarmangani.

Attracted by the growls of the anthropoids, the two men looked up and saw the herd charging down the hill toward them. "Those beasts mean business," cried Brian. "It's time we got out of here."

"There's a cave," said Lal Taask, pointing toward the cliff. "If we can reach it ahead of them, we may be able to hide from them. There's just a chance that they may be afraid to go into a dark hole like that."

Running at top speed, the men reached the cave long before the apes could overtake them. The interior was not entirely dark, and they could see that the cave extended beyond the range of their vision.

"We'd better go as far as we can," said Brian. "We'll be in a devil of a fix if they do come in and follow us; but perhaps if they can't see us at first, they may give up the chase."

"It may be a cul-de-sac," admitted Lal Taask, "but it was the only chance we had; they'd have had us sure if we'd stayed in the open."

They followed a dark corridor that ended suddenly in a magnificent grotto, the splendor of which fairly took their

breath away.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Brian. "Did you ever see anything so gorgeous?"

"It's magnificent," agreed Taask; "but, right now, quite incidental —the apes are coming! I hear them growling."

"There's another cave in the other side of this cavern," said Brian. "Let's try that."

"There is nothing else to try," returned Lal Taask.

As the two men disappeared into the dark opening in the rear of the cavern, Ungo and his fellows streamed into the chamber they had just quitted, unimpressed by its magnificence; and still holding to the idea that dominated them for the moment—the chase. A bug,

a beetle, or a bat might distract their attention and launch them upon a new adventure, for they could not hold long to a single objective; but there were none of these, and so they searched the grotto for their quarry. They circled the place, looking behind stalagmites, sniffing here and there, wasting much tune while the two men followed a new corridor deeper into the heart of the cliff.

CHAPTER 31

Tarzan, d'Arnot, Herkuf, and Lavac hastened through the air chamber out onto the bottom of the lake to the spot where Helen had been left to await their return; but she was not there, though the casket lay undisturbed where Herkuf had hidden it. There was no clue to her whereabouts; and the men were at a loss as to the direction in which they should search. They dared not separate, and so they followed Tarzan as he wandered here and there about the garden of the ptomes looking for some trace of the missing girl. While they were thus engaged, the ape-man's attention was attracted by the approach of several large marine animals the upper portions

of which closely resembled the head and neck of a horse. There were six of them, and it was soon evident that they meant to attack. That they were extremely dangerous, Herkuf knew and the others soon realized, for they were as large as a man; and each was armed with a long, sharp horn which grew upward from the lower ends of their snouts.

Two of them attacked Tarzan, and one each the other three men, while the sixth circled about as though awaiting an opening through which it might take an antagonist unaware. Tarzan succeeded in dispatching one of those attacking him; and d'Arnot seemed to be experiencing no great difficulty with his. Lavac was hard pressed; but when he saw the sixth

sea horse gliding up behind d'Arnot to impale him on its horn he turned to the rescue of his companion; as he did so, exposing himself to the attack of the sea horse with which he had been engaged.

It was an act of heroism on the part of the man who had wronged d'Arnot, an act that made full amends but cost a brave life, for the sea horse he had abandoned to come to d'Arnot's rescue plunged its powerful horn between his shoulders. Thus died Lieutenant Jacques Lavac.

As Tarzan thrust his trident into the heart of a second antagonist, the remaining beasts swam away in defeat. D'Arnot dropped to one knee beside Lavac and examined him as best he

could; then he stood up and shook his head. The others understood; and sadly the three turned away and resumed their fruitless search, wondering, possibly, which would be the next to die in this land of danger and sudden death.

At last, by signs, they agreed to abandon the search, for even d'Arnot now felt certain that Helen must be dead; and, following Herkuf, who had brought the casket with him, they scaled the steep ascent to the lake shore, emerging at last a short distance below Ashair.

D'Arnot was heart broken; Herkuf was filled with renewed hope, for he knew what the casket contained and what it meant to him; only Tarzan of the Apes was unmoved. "Brulor is dead," he

said, "and The Father of Diamonds stolen. I must return to Thobos as I promised Herat."

"It will not be necessary, if you wish to remain here and search for your other friends," said Herkuf. "I shall explain everything to Herat, and for what you have done to restore this to him, he will grant you any favor." He tapped the lid of the casket.

"What is it?" asked d'Arnot.

"In this is the true Father of Diamonds," replied Herkuf. "Many years ago, Chon, the true god, was making his annual tour of Holy Horus in a great galley. As was the custom, he carried The Father of Diamonds with him. Queen Atka, jealous of Herat, attacked

and sank the galley; and Chon was drowned, while I was taken prisoner. As you, Tarzan, will recall, when we found the wrecked galley at the bottom of Horus, I recognized it and retrieved the casket that had lain there so many years. Now I am sure that if we restore The Father of Diamonds to Thobos, Herat will grant any request we may make, for without The Father of Diamonds, Thobos has been without a god all these years."

"You and Herkuf take the casket to Herat," said d'Arnot to Tarzan. "I cannot leave here. Helen may live and may come ashore. Somehow, I can't believe that she is dead."

"Take the casket to Herat, Herkuf,"

directed Tarzan. "I shall remain here with d'Arnot. Tell Herat I'll come back to Thobos if he wishes me to. I may come any way. We'll have to have a galley to get out of Tuen-Baka."

Herkuf made good time to Thobos, nor was there any delay on the part of Herat in granting him an audience when the king learned that he claimed to be the long lost priest, Herkuf, and that he had The Father of Diamonds in his possession; and it was not long after his arrival at the city gate before Herkuf stood before the king.

"Here, O Herat, is the sacred casket with The Father of Diamonds. Had it not been for the man, Tarzan, it would never have been recovered. I know that he and

his friends are in grave peril, for they are close to Ashair. Will you not send galleys and warriors to rescue them?"

"With this," cried Herat, touching the casket, "our forces cannot lose, for we shall again have the god upon our side." He turned to one of his aides. "Let all the war galleys be prepared and manned. We shall attack Ashair at once; and at last the followers of the true god, Chon, shall prevail; and the traitors and the wicked shall be destroyed. All that is lacking to our complete triumph is the presence in the flesh of the holy Chon."

"He will be with us in spirit," Herkuf reminded him.

So King Herat put out from Thobos with many war galleys, to avenge the

wrong that Atka had done his god and to succor the strangers who had been instrumental in recovering the true Father of Diamonds from the bottom of Holy Horus; and Queen Mentheb and her ladies waved to them from the quay and wished them Godspeed.

The true god, Chon, and his priests were gathered in the cavern temple on the shore of Horus. The three prisoners stood below the altar before the throne. At a word from Chon, several priests seized Gregory, stripped his clothing from him, and threw him to his back across the altar. Chon rose from his throne and stood above him.

"From the entrails of this man let the oracle speak!" he cried. He paused, and

the priests intoned a weird chant, while Helen and Magra looked on, horrified and helpless.

"No! No!" cried Helen. "You must not! My father has done nothing to wrong you."

"Then why is he here in forbidden Tuen-Baka?" demanded Chon.

"I have told you time and again that we came here only in search of my brother, who is lost."

"Why was your brother here?"

"He came with a scientific expedition of exploration," explained the girl.

Chon shook his head. "It is death to all who enter forbidden Tuen-Baka from the outer world," he replied. "But we

know why they really came. They came only for The Father of Diamonds. To us it is the emblem of godhood; to them it is a priceless object of incalculable value. There is nothing that they would not do to possess it. They would defile our temples; they would murder us. The fact that they could never succeed in obtaining it, does not lessen their guilt."

"My father would not have done these things. He only wanted his son back. He cares nothing for your diamond."

"There is no diamond where anyone can steal it," said Chon, "for The Father of Diamonds lies at the bottom of Horus, lost forever. If I am wrong in thinking that you came solely to steal it, you shall go free. I am a just god."

"But you are wrong," urged Helen. "Won't you please take my word for it? If you kill my father—oh, what good will it do you to find out later that you are wrong?"

"You may speak the truth," replied Chon, "but you may lie. The oracle will not lie. From the entrails of this man the oracle shall speak. Priests of the true god, prepare the sacrifice!"

As the priests stretched Gregory across the altar and sprinkled a liquid over him, the others commenced a solemn chant; and Helen stretched her arms toward Chon.

"Oh, please!" she begged. "If you must have a sacrifice, take me, not my father."

"Silence!" commanded Chon. "If you have lied, your time will come. Soon we shall know."

After Herkuf left them, Tarzan and d'Arnot started back toward Ashair. They had no plan, nor much hope. If Helen lived, she might be in Ashair. If she were dead, d'Arnot did not care what fate befell him. As for Tarzan, he was seldom concerned beyond the present moment. Suddenly he was alert. He pointed toward a cliff ahead of them.

"One of Ungo's apes just went into that cave," he said. "Let's take a look. The mangani are not ordinarily interested in caves. Something unusual may have impelled that one to enter; we'll see what."

"Oh, why bother?" queried d'Arnot. "We are not interested in apes."

"I am interested in everything," replied the ape-man.

Brian and Taask stumbled through the dark corridor to burst suddenly into the cavern temple upon the scene of Gregory's impending sacrifice. At sight of them, Chon, the true god, recoiled, dropping his knife hand at his side.

"In the name of Isis!" he shouted. "Who dares interrupt?"

"Brian!" cried Helen.

"Helen!" The man started across the room toward his sister; but half a dozen priests sprang forward and seized him, and others intercepted Helen as she tried to run to meet him.

"Who are these men?" demanded Chon.

"One is my brother," replied Helen. "Oh, Brian, tell him we don't want their diamond."

"Save your breath, man," snapped Chon. "Only the oracle speaks the truth! On with the sacrifice to truth!"

"Marvelous! Stupendous!" exclaimed d'Arnot, as he and Tarzan entered the outer cavern of Chon's temple.

"Yes," admitted the ape-man, "but where is the mangani we saw coming in here. I smell many of them. They have just been in this cave. I wonder why?"

"Have you no soul?" demanded d'Arnot.

"I don't know about that," smiled Tarzan, "but I have a brain. Come on, let's get after those apes. I detect the scent spoor of men, too. The stink of the apes is so strong that it almost hides the other."

"I smell nothing," said d'Arnot, as he followed Tarzan toward the opening at the far end of the cavern.

Chon was furious. "Let there be no more interruptions!" he cried. "There are many questions to be asked of the oracle. Let there be silence, too; if the oracle is to be heard, the man must be opened in silence." Three times he raised and lowered the sacrificial knife above the prostrate Gregory. "Speak, oracle, that the truth may be known!"

As he placed the point of the knife at the lower extremity of the victim's abdomen, the great apes, led by Ungo, streamed into the cavern; and once again the rite of human sacrifice was interrupted, as Chon and his priests looked, probably for the first time, at these hairy beast-men.

The sight of so many tarmangani and the strange garments of the priests confused and irritated the apes, with the result that they attacked without provocation, forgetting the injunction of Tarzan.

The surprised priests, who had been holding Gregory, released him; and he slipped from the altar to stand leaning against it in a state bordering on

collapse. Chon raised his voice in impotent curses and commands, while all the others tried to fight off the attacking apes.

Zu-tho and Ga-un saw the two girls, and Zu-tho recalled that Ungo had run off with a she tarmangani; so, impelled by imitative desire, he seized Magra; and Ga-un, following the lead of his fellow, gathered up Helen; then the two apes sought to escape from the cavern with their prizes. Being confused, they chanced upon a different corridor from that by which they had entered the cavern, a corridor that rose steeply to a higher level.

Before anyone had been seriously injured by the apes, a commanding voice

rang out from the rear of the cavern. "Dan-do, mangani!" it ordered in a tongue no other human knew, and the great apes wheeled about to see Tarzan standing in the entrance to the cavern. Even Chon ceased his cursing.

Tarzan surveyed the gathering in the temple. "We are all here but Helen, Magra, and Lavac," he said, "and Lavac is dead."

"The girls were here a minute ago," said Gregory, as he hastily donned his clothes without interruption by Chon or the priests.

"They must have hidden somewhere when the apes came," suggested Brian.

"Helen was here!" gasped d'Arnot. "She is not dead?"

"She was here," Gregory assured him.

Brian was calling the girls loudly by name, but there was no reply. Chon was trying to gather his wits together.

Zu-tho and Ga-un dragged their captives through a steep, short corridor that ended in a third cavern with an arched opening that looked out over Horus far below. Zu-tho held Magra by the hair, while Ga-un dragged Helen along by one ankle. The apes stopped in the middle of the cavern and looked about. They didn't know what to do with their prizes now that they had them. They released their holds upon the girls and jabbered at one another, and as they jabbered, Helen and Magra backed slowly away from them toward the

opening overlooking the lake.

"These are Tarzan's shes," said Zu-tho. "Ungo and Tarzan will kill us."

"Look at their hairless skins and little mouths," said Ga-un. "They are hideous and no good. If we kill them and throw them into the water, Tarzan and Ungo will never know that we took them."

Zu-tho thought that this was a good idea; so he advanced toward the girls, and Ga-un followed him.

"I kill!" growled Zu-tho, in the language of the great apes.

"I kill!" snarled Ga-un.

"I believe the beasts are going to kill us," said Magra.

"I can almost hope so," replied Helen.

"We'll choose our own death," cried Magra. "Follow me!"

As Magra spoke, she turned and ran toward the opening overlooking the lake; and Helen followed her. Zu-tho and Ga-un charged to seize them; but they were too late; and the girls leaped out into space over the waters of sacred Horus, far below; while Asharian warriors in a passing galley watched.

CHAPTER 32

In the cavern temple, Chon had finally regained control of his shattered nerves. He could curse again, and he did. "Curses on all who defile the temple of Chon, the true god," he cried.

"Chon!" exclaimed Tarzan. "But Chon is dead."

"Chon is not dead," replied the god. "I am Chon!"

"Chon was drowned when his galley was sunk, many years ago," insisted the ape-man.

"What do you know of all this?" demanded Chon.

"I know what Herkuf told me," replied Tarzan, "and he was a priest of

Chon."

"Herkuf!" exclaimed Chon. "Does he live?"

"Yes, Chon; he is on his way now to Thobos with the casket of The Father of Diamonds which we found in the wreck of your galley at the bottom of Horus."

"Thanks be to Isis!" exclaimed Chon. "When Atka's galleys attacked us," he went on to explain, "I donned my water suit and helmet and leaped overboard. Thus I escaped, and eventually I found this cavern. Here I have lived for many years, watching my chance to capture ptomes from the temple of the false Brulor—ptomes who were still at heart faithful to the true god. If you have spoken the truth you shall all go free

with my blessing."

"First of all," said Tarzan, "we must find the girls. D'Arnot, you come with me. Ungo, bring the mangani. The rest of you search the main corridor," and so the survivors set out in search of the missing girls, while Chon and his priests chanted a prayer for the safe return of The Father of Diamonds.

As the Asharians saw the girls leap into the water, the officer in charge of the galley directed that its course be changed; and it was rowed rapidly in their direction. Helen and Magra saw it coming and tried to find a place where they could gain the shore and escape, for they knew that there would be only enemies in the galley; but the precipitous

cliff that fronted the lake at this point made escape impossible. The galley overtook them, and they were soon dragged into the craft.

"By Brulor!" exclaimed one of the Asharians. "This is the woman who murdered Zytheb, keeper of the keys of the temple. Atka will reward us well for this, for it was, doubtless, this woman who also contrived the flooding of the temple and the drowning of all within it."

Magra looked at Helen. "What more can happen to us?" she asked wearily.

"This must be the absolute end," replied Helen, "and I hope it is. I am very tired."

When they finally reached the city and

were taken into Atka's presence, the Queen scowled horribly at them and pointed at Helen. "It was because of you," she cried, "that the temple was flooded and all the priests and handmaidens drowned. I cannot think of any punishment adequate to your crime, but I shall. Take them away!"

In the dungeon in which they were chained, they sat looking at one another, rather hopelessly. "I wonder how long it will take her to think up a punishment to fit the crime," said Helen. "Too bad she can't call in Gilbert and Sullivan."

Magra smiled. "I am glad you can joke," she said. "It makes it much easier to endure."

"Why not joke while we can?" asked

Helen. "We shall soon be dead, and death is no joke."

The mad Thorne wandered aimlessly near the banks of Horus, jabbering constantly of the things his great wealth would purchase from the fleshpots of Europe. He had no idea where Europe was nor how to reach it. He only recalled that it was a place where one might satisfy the cravings of every appetite. He was so engrossed in his mad dreaming that he did not see Taask approaching.

The Indian had been searching for Helen; and had become separated from Gregory and Brian, when suddenly he came upon Atan Thome and saw the casket in his hands. Instantly he sloughed

every thought but one—to get possession of the accursed thing that held the priceless diamond. Sneaking up on Thorne, he leaped upon him. They rolled upon the ground, biting, kicking, and clawing. Taask was a younger, stronger man; and he soon wrenched the casket from Atan Thome; and, leaping to his feet, started to run away with it.

Screaming at the top of his voice, the madman picked up a rock and pursued him. There was murder in the eyes and heart of Atan Thome as he chased his erstwhile servant across the rocky ground above Ashair. Seeing that he could not overtake Lal Taask, Atan Thome hurled the rock at him; and by chance it struck the fleeing man full on

the head, knocking him to the ground; and his mad pursuer was soon upon him. Recovering the rock, Thorne pounded with all his strength upon the skull of Lal Taask until it was but a mass of splintered bone and brains; then, clutching the casket to his breast and screaming a challenge to the world, he fled.

Following the scent spoor of the two girls, Tarzan and d'Arnot found themselves in a third cavern of the temple, facing two bull apes.

"Where are the shes?" demanded Tarzan.

Zu-tho pointed toward the lake. "They jump," he said, "in water."

Tarzan looked out to see the Asharian

galley rowing in the direction of the city; then he and d'Arnot returned to the throne room and related what they had seen. "I am going to take the apes to Ashair," he said. "With their help, I may be able to bring the girls out."

"My priests shall go with you," said Chon, and the party soon set out from the temple, the men armed with tridents and knives, the apes with their terrible fangs and their mighty muscles.

An excited warrior rushed into the throne room of Atka and knelt before her. "O Queen!" he cried, "a great fleet of war galleys is approaching from Thobos."

Atka turned to one of her aides. "Order out the entire fleet," she directed.

"This day we shall destroy the power of Thobos forever."

As the Asharian horde embarked at the quay, Tarzan of the Apes looked down from the hillside above the city and watched them; and in the distance, approaching Ashair, he saw the war fleet of Herat approaching.

"Now is the time," he said to his motley followers, "we shall have fewer warriors to oppose us."

"We cannot fail," said a priest, "for Chon has blessed us."

A few minutes later the Lord of the Jungle led his little band over the wall into The Forbidden City. It was a bold, rash venture—at best a forlorn hope that thus they might succeed in saving Helen

and Magra from death or an even more horrible fate. Success or failure—which would it be?

As the two fleets met amid the war cries of the opposing warriors, quarter was neither asked nor given, for each side felt that this was to be a battle to the death that would determine for all time which city was to rule the valley of Tuen-Baka. And while this bloody battle was being waged on sacred Horus, another battle was taking place before the gates of Atka's palace, as Tarzan sought to lead his little band into the presence of the Queen. It was Atka he sought, for he knew that with Atka in his power he could force the Asharians to give up their prisoners—if they still

lived.

Finally they overcame the resistance at the gates, and Tarzan forced his way at the head of his company into the throne room of the Queen.

"I have come for the two women," he said. "Release them to me, and we will go away; refuse, and we shall go away; but we shall take you with us."

Atka sat in silence for a few minutes, her eyes fixed upon Tarzan. She was trembling slightly and appeared to be making an effort to gain control over her emotions. At last she spoke. "You have won," she said. "The women shall be fetched at once."

As Tarzan and his triumphant band led the girls from Ashair, Magra clung to

his arm. "Oh, Tarzan," she whispered, "I knew that you would come. My love told me that you would."

The ape-man shook his head impatiently. "I do not like such talk," he said; "it is not for us. Leave that to Helen and Paul."

Herat, victorious, entered Ashair, the first king of Thobos to set foot within The Forbidden City. From the opening in the cavern of Chon, that looked out over the lake, Chon had seen the Asharian fleet demolished and the victorious Thobotian fleet steer toward Ashair; and when Tarzan and his party returned and the ape-man learned of the successful outcome of Herat's expedition, he had Chon send a messenger to Ashair to

summon Herat, in the true god's name, to the temple.

When the greetings between Herat and Chon were concluded, the true god blessed the entire party, giving credit to the strangers for their part in the restoration of The Father of Diamonds to the temple of Chon and the successful reuniting of the King and the true god; then Herat, to demonstrate his own appreciation, offered to outfit the Gregory party and furnish them with galleys to take them out of Tuen-Baka. At last, their troubles seemed over.

"We are reunited and safe," said Gregory, "and, above all others, we owe it to you, Tarzan. How can we ever repay you?"

Gregory was interrupted by maniacal screams, as two of Herat's warriors who had been among the guard left at the outer entrance to the caverns, entered the temple, dragging Atan Thome between them.

"This man has a casket," reported one of the warriors, "which he says contains The Father of Diamonds."

"The true Father of Diamonds, which Herkuf just brought with him from Thobos," said Chon, "rests here in its casket on the altar before me. There cannot be two. Let us have a look at what the man has in his casket."

"No!" shrieked Atan Thome. "Don't open it! It is mine, and I have been waiting to open it in Paris. I shall buy all

of Paris with it and be king of France!"

"Silence, mortal!" commanded Chon; then, very deliberately, he opened the casket, while the trembling Thorne stared with mad eyes at the contents —a small lump of coal.

At sight of it, realizing what it was, Atan Thome screamed, clutched his heart, and fell dead at the foot of the altar of the true god.

"For this false and accursed thing," exclaimed Brian Gregory, "we have all suffered, and many have died; yet the irony of it is that it is, in truth, The Father of Diamonds."

"Men are strange beasts," said Tarzan.

THE END

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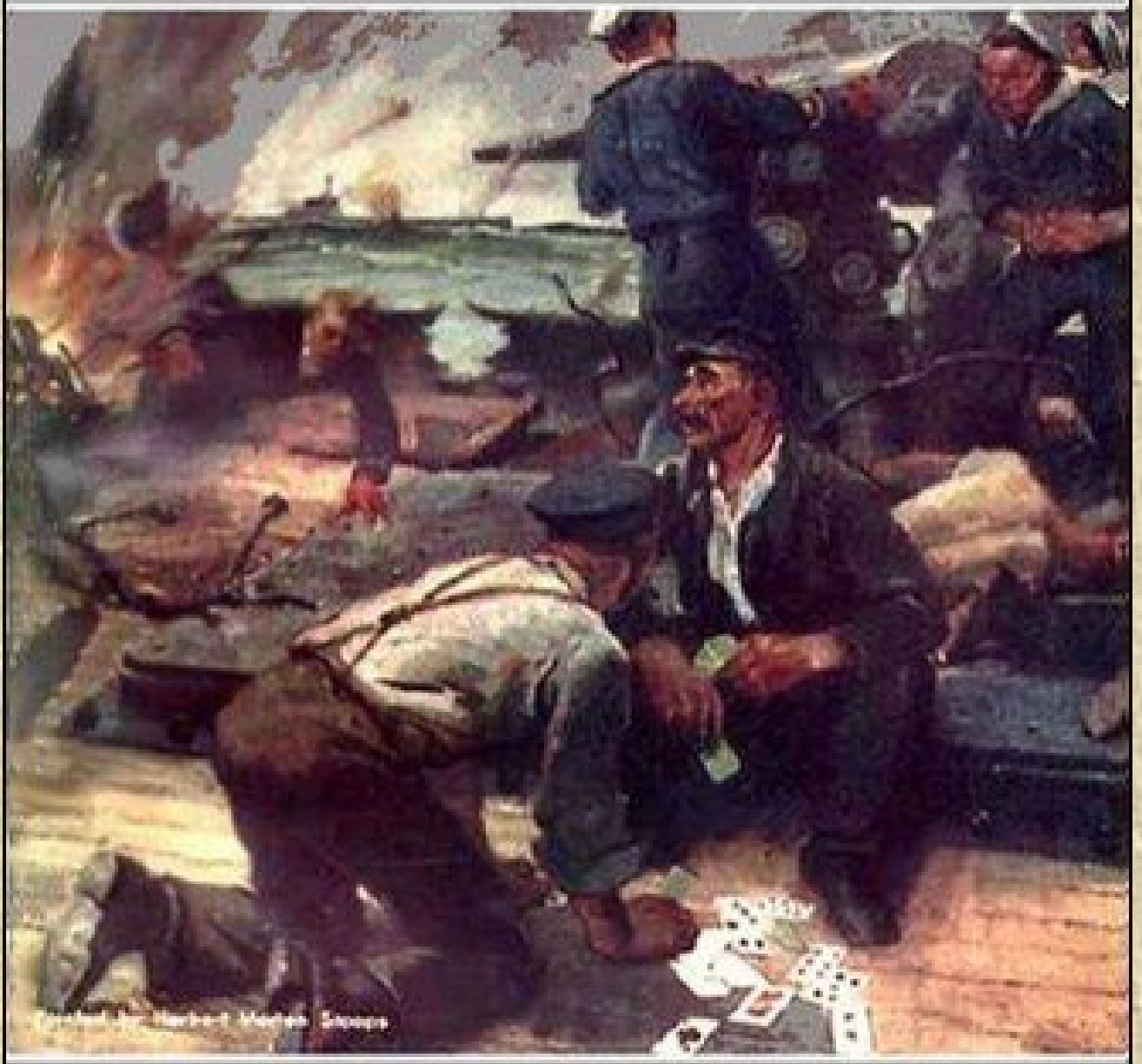

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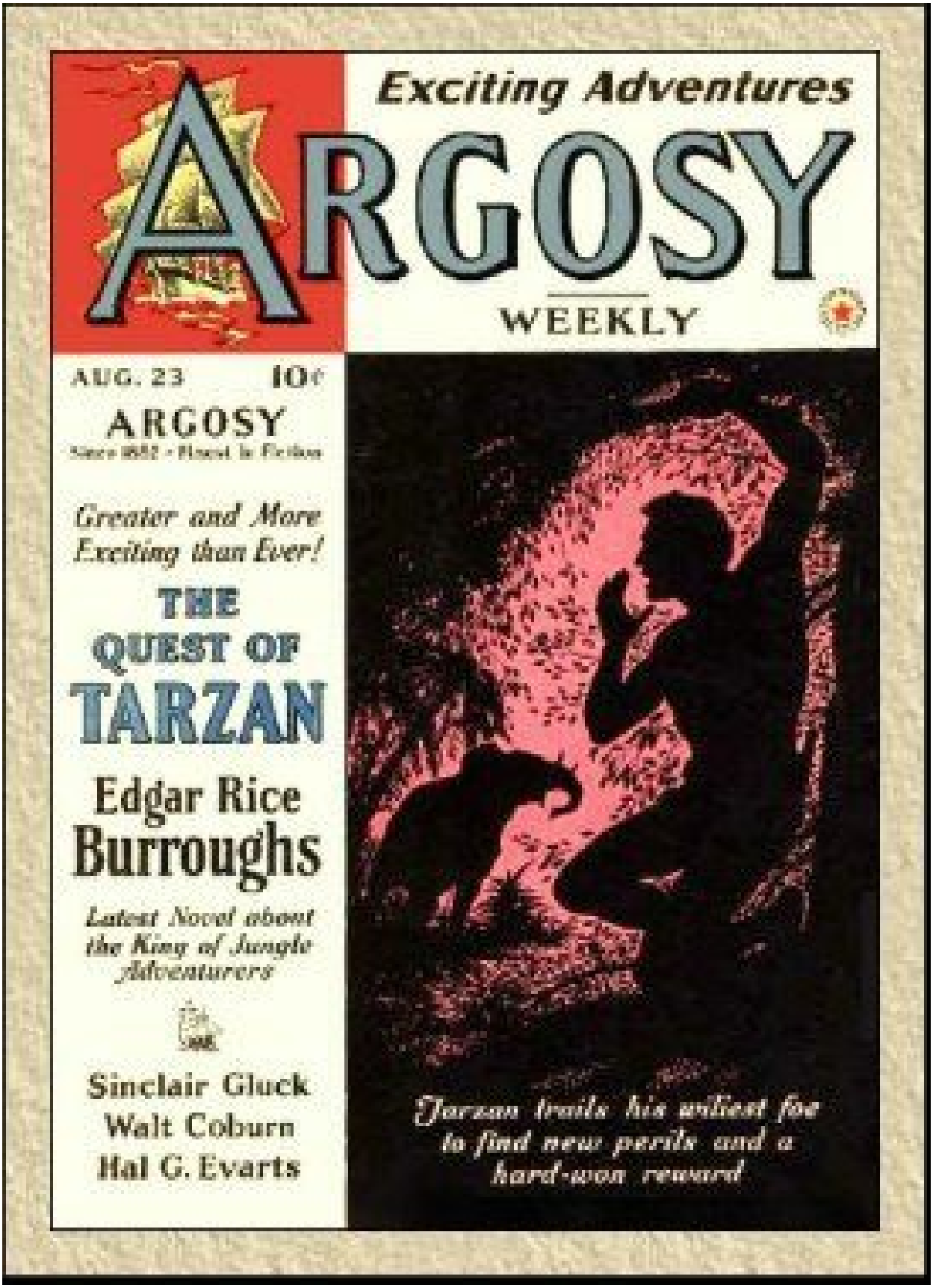
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CHAPTER 1

It is sometimes difficult to know just where to begin a story. I recall an acquaintance of mine who, in telling of an accident wherein a neighbor had fallen down the cellar stairs and broken her leg, would recount all the marriages and deaths in the family for a generation or two back before getting to the point of the story.

In the present instance, I might go back to Ah Cuitok Tutul Xiu, the Mayan, who founded Uxmal in Yucatan in 1004 A.D.; and from him on to Chab Xib Chac, the Red Man, who destroyed Mayapan in 1451 and murdered the entire Cocom family of tyrants; but I shall not. I shall simply mention that

Chac Tutul Xiu, a descendant of Ah Cuitok Tutul Xiu, motivated by that strange migratory urge of the Maya and by the advice of the Ah Kin Mai, or chief priest, left Uxmal with many of his followers, nobles, warriors, women, and slaves, and went to the coast where he constructed several large double dugout canoes and embarked therein upon the broad Pacific, never again to be heard of in his homeland.

That was in 1452 or 1453. From there I might make a broad calendric jump of some four hundred eighty-five or six years to modern times and to the island of Uxmal in the South Pacific, where Cit Coh Xiu is king; but I shall not do that either, since it would be anticipating my

story.

Instead, I take you to the deck of the Saigon, a battered old tramp steamer awaiting at Mombasa to load wild animals for shipment to the United States. From below and from cages on deck come the plaints and threats of captured beasts; the deep-throated rumblings of lions, the trumpeting of elephants, the obscene "laugh" of hyenas, the chattering of monkeys.

At the rail two men are deep in argument: "But I tell you, Abdullah," one was saying, "we are practically ready to sail; the last consignment should be here within the week, and every day my expenses are mounting. It might take you a month to bring him in; you might not

get him at all."

"I cannot fail, Sahib Krause," replied Abdullah Abu Nejm. "He has received an injury; that I know from Ndalo, in whose country he now is; and so he may be taken easily. Think of it, Sahib! A real wild-man, raised by apes from infancy, the play fellow of elephants, the killer of lions. Wellah? he would be worth more than all your shipload of wild beasts in the land of the Nasara; he would make you a rich man, Sahib Krause."

"As I understand it, the fellow speaks English as well as the damned British themselves; I have heard of him for years. How long do you suppose I could exhibit in a cage in the United States a

white man who can speak English? Abdullah, you are always saying that we Nasara are mad; I think it is you who are mad."

"You do not understand," replied the Arab. "This injury which he has suffered had deprived him of speech and the knowledge of speech; in that respect, he would be as your other beasts. They cannot complain, so that anyone can understand them; neither could he."

"Aphasia," muttered Krause.

"What did you say, Sahib?"

"That is the name of the affliction which has resulted in your man's loss of speech," explained Krause; "It is caused by a brain lesion. It puts a different aspect on the matter; the thing might be

done—and very profitably; but yet—" , He hesitated.

"You do not like the English, Sahib?" inquired Abdullah.

"I do not," snapped Krause. "Why do you ask?"

"This man is an Englishman," replied the Arab in his oiliest tones.

"What would you want for bringing him in?"

"The expenses of my safari, which would be very little, and the price of one lion."

"You do not ask much for so great a catch," commented Krause; "why is that? I expected you to rob me—as usual."

The Arab's eyes narrowed, and his

sinister face seemed a mask of hate. "He is my enemy," he said.

"How long will it take?"

"Less than a month," replied Abdullah.

"I shall wait thirty days," said Krause; "then I shall sail, whether you are back or not."

* * * * *

"I am bored," said the girl. "Mombasa! I hate it."

"You are always complaining," growled Krause; "I don't know why the devil I brought you along; anyway, we sail in three days, whether that Arab dog is back or not; then I suppose you'll find something else to grouse about."

"It must be a very valuable specimen Abdullah is bringing you," said the girl.

"It is."

"What is it, Fritz—a pink elephant or a crimson lion?"

"It is a wild man, but keep it to yourself—the English pigs would never let me take him aboard, if they knew."

"A wild man! One of those whose heads come up to a little point on top, like a cone? He should have a little tuft of hair right on the tip top of the cone, and his nose should spread all across his face, and he shouldn't have any chin. Is he like that, Fritz?"

"I have never seen him, but I suppose he is just like that—that has been orthodox ever since Barnum's What-is-

it."

"Look, Fritz! Here comes Abdullah now."

The swart Arab came over the side and approached them; his face betokened nothing of either the success or failure of his mission.

"Marhaba!" Krause greeted him. "Ey khabar."

"The best of tidings, Sahib," replied Abdullah. "I have him, just outside of town, in a wooden cage covered with matting, so that none may see what is within; but billah! what a time we had in capturing him! We took him in a net, but he killed three of Ndalo's warriors before they could tie his hands behind him. He is strong as a lion. We have had

to keep his hands tied ever since we got him: he would have torn that wooden cage to pieces in an instant, had we not."

"I have an iron cage that he cannot tear to pieces," said Krause.

"I would not be too sure of that," cautioned the Arab. "If your cage could not withstand the strength of a lion, you had still better keep his hands tied."

"My cage would not hold an elephant," said Krause, "but if it could, it would be strong enough."

"I would still keep his hands tied," persisted Abdullah.

"Has he spoken?" asked Krause.

"No; not a word—he just sits and looks. There is neither hate nor fear in

his eyes—he reminds me of el adrea; I am always expecting to hear him roar. We have to feed him by hand, and when he eats his meat, he growls like el adrea."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Krause. "He will be a sensation. I can just see those fool Americans begging to pay good money to see him. Now listen— I shall clear this afternoon and stand up the coast, returning after dark. Load the cage on a dhow below the town and stand straight out until you pick up my signal—I'll blink my running light three times in rapid succession at intervals; then you show a light. Do you understand?"

"It is already done," said Abdullah Abu Nejm.

* * * * *

The wind had risen and a sea was running when Abdullah picked up the Saigon's signal. Maneuvering the dhow into position along the lee side of the steamer was finally accomplished. Tackle was lowered and made fast to the cage containing the wild man. Abdullah was guiding the cage as it was hoisted from the dhow, when suddenly the Saigon rolled over away from the smaller craft; the cage was jerked suddenly upward; and Abdullah, fearing that he would be hurled into the sea, clung to it. The cage crashed against the side of the steamer; the men above continued to hoist; then the Saigon rolled back and crashed down upon the dhow,

swamping it.

All of the crew of the dhow were lost, and Abdullah was aboard the steamer bound for America. He filled the air with "billahs!" and "Wullah-bullahs!" and called upon Allah to preserve him.

"You're damn lucky to be alive," Krause told him. "You'll make a lot of money in America. I'll exhibit you, too, as the sheik who captured the wild man; they'll pay plenty to see a real sheik straight from the desert. I'll buy a camel for you, and you can ride through the streets with a banner advertising the show."

"I, Abdullah Abu Nejm, exhibited like a wild beast!" screamed the Arab.

"Never!"

Krause shrugged. "Have it your own way," he said; "but don't forget, you got to eat, and you won't find many free date trees in America. I'll feed you until we get there, but after that you're on your own."

"Dog of a Nasrany!" muttered the Arab.

CHAPTER 2

The following morning was fair, with a brisk wind, as the Saigon steamed northeastward across the Indian Ocean. The animals on deck were quiet. A wooden cage, entirely covered with matting, was lashed down amidships. No sound came from it, either.

Janette Laon followed Krause on deck; her black hair was blowing in the wind, which pressed her light dress against her, revealing a figure of exceptional allure. Wilhelm Schmidt, the 2nd mate of the Saigon, leaning with his back against the rail, watched her through half-closed eyes.

"Now may I see your wild man, Fritz?" asked the girl.

"I hope he's still alive," said the man; "he must have got an awful beating when we hauled him aboard last night."

"Haven't you tried to find out?" she demanded.

"Couldn't have done anything for him, anyway," replied Krause. "From what Abdullah told me, he'd be a mean customer to handle. Come on; we'll have a look at him. Hey, you!" he called to a Lascar sailor; "take the matting off that cage."

As they watched the man at work, Schmidt came over and joined them. "What you got in there, Mr. Krause?" he asked.

"A wild man; ever see one?"

"I saw a Frenchie once, whose wife

had run off with the chauffeur," said Schmidt; "he sure was a wild man."

The sailor had removed the lashings, and now he dragged away the matting. Inside the cage, a giant figure squatted on his haunches, appraising them with level gaze.

"Why, he's a white man!" exclaimed the girl.

"So he is," said Krause.

"You going to keep a man penned up in a cage like a beast?" asked Schmidt.

"He's only white on the outside," said Krause—"he's an Englishman."

Schmidt spat into the cage. The girl stamped her foot angrily. "Don't ever do that again," she said.

"What's he to you?" demanded Krause. "Didn't you hear me say he's nothing but a dirty English pig."

"He's a human being and a white man," replied the girl.

"He's a dummy," retorted Krause; "can't speak a word nor understand one. It's an honor for him to be spit on by a German."

"Nevertheless, don't let Schmidt do it again."

The ship's bell sounded, and Schmidt went to relieve the 1st mate on the bridge.

"He's the pig," said the girl, looking after Schmidt.

The two stood looking at the wild

man as Hans de Groote came down from the bridge and joined them. The Dutchman was a good looking young fellow in his early twenties; he had been signed on as 1st mate at Batavia on the trip out, after his predecessor had mysteriously "fallen overboard." Schmidt, who thought that he should have had the assignment, hated him and made no effort to conceal the fact. That there was bad blood between them was nothing to cause comment aboard the Saigon, for bad blood was the rule rather than the exception.

Larsen, the captain, who was now confined to his cabin with a bad attack of fever, was not on speaking terms with Krause, who had chartered the ship;

while the crew, made up principally of Lascars and Chinese, were always on the verge of knifing one another. On the whole, the captive beasts were the most admirable creatures aboard.

De Groote stood looking at the man in the cage for several seconds before he spoke. His reaction was almost identical with that of the girl and Schmidt. "He's a white man!" he exclaimed. "You're certainly not going to keep him in a cage like a wild beast!"

"That's exactly what I'm going to do," snapped Krause, "and it's none of your damned business, nor anyone else's," and he shot a scowling glance at the girl.

"He's your wild man," said de Groote, "but at least free his hands; it's

unnecessary cruelty to keep him tied up like that."

"I'm going to free his hands," said Krause, grudgingly, "as soon as I can get an iron cage up from below; it would be too much of a job feeding him this way."

"He's had nothing to eat or drink since yesterday," said the girl. "I don't care what he is, Fritz; I wouldn't treat a dog the way you're treating this poor man."

"Neither would I," retorted Krause.

"He is less than a dog," said a voice behind them. It was the voice of Abdullah Abu Nejm. He came close to the cage and spat on the man within, and the girl slapped Abdullah Abu Nejm across the face with all her strength. The Arab's hand flew to his dagger, but de

Groote stepped between the two and seized the man's wrist.

"You shouldn't have done that, Janette," said Krause.

The girl's eyes were flashing fire, and the blood had left her face. "I'll not stand by and see him insult that man," she said; "and that goes for the rest of you, too," and she looked straight into Krause's eyes.

"And I'll back her up," said de Groote. "Maybe it's none of my business if you keep him in a cage, but I'll make it some of my business if you don't treat him decently. Have you ordered the iron cage up yet?"

"I'll treat him as I please," said Krause; "and what are you going to do

about it?"

"I'll beat hell out of you," replied de Groote, "and then , turn you in to the authorities at the first port of call."

"Here comes the iron cage now," said Janette. "Get him into it and take those cords off his wrists."

Krause was frightened at de Groote's threat to notify the authorities; that made him squirm. "Oh, come," he said in mollifying tones, "I'm going to treat him all right. I got a lot of money tied up in him and I expect to make a lot out of him; I'd be a fool not to treat him well."

"See that you do," said de Groote.

A big iron cage was swung up from below and placed close to the wooden cage, the two doors close together.

Krause drew a revolver; then both doors were raised. The man in the wooden cage did not move.

"Get in there, you dumb idiot!" yelled Krause, pointing the revolver at the man. He did not even look at Krause. "Get a capstan bar, one of you men," directed Krause, "and poke him from behind."

"Wait," said the girl; "let me try." She walked to the opposite side of the iron cage and beckoned to the captive. He just looked at her. "Come here a minute," she said to de Groote; "let me take your knife; now place your wrists together, as though they were bound; yes, that's it." She took the knife and pretended to sever imaginary cords about de Groote's wrists; then she beckoned again to the

man in the wooden cage. He arose, but still stooped, as he could not stand erect in the small wooden cage, and walked into the larger cage.

The girl was standing close to the bars, the knife in her hand; a sailor dropped the door of the iron cage; the captive approached the girl and, turning his back toward her, pressed his wrists against the bars.

"You said he was stupid," Janette said to Krause; "he's not stupid; I could tell that by just looking at him." She cut the bonds from his wrists, which were discolored and swollen. The man turned and looked at her. He said nothing, but his eyes seemed to thank her.

De Groote was standing beside

Janette. "He's a fine-looking specimen, isn't he?" he said.

"And handsome," said the girl. She turned to Krause. "Have some water and food brought," she directed.

"You going to be his nurse maid?" inquired Krause with a sneer.

"I'm going to see that he's treated decently," she replied. "What does he eat?"

"I don't know," replied Krause. "What does he eat, Abdullah?"

"The dog has not eaten for two days," replied the Arab; "so I guess he will eat almost anything. In the jungle he eats raw meat from his kills, like a beast."

"We'll try him on some," said Krause;

"it will be a good way of getting rid of any of the animals that die." He sent a sailor to the galley for meat and water.

The man in the iron cage looked long at Abdullah Abu Nejm; so long that the Arab spat on the deck and turned away.

"I wouldn't want to be in your shoes if he ever got out of that cage," said Krause.

"You should not have freed his hands," said Abdullah; "he is more dangerous than the lion."

When the sailor returned with the meat and water, Janette took them from him and passed them in to the wild man. He took a small swallow of water; then he went into a far corner of his cage, squatted on his haunches, and tore at the

meat with his strong, white teeth; and as he ate, he growled.

The girl shuddered, and the men moved about uneasily. "El adrea of the broad head eats thus," said Abdullah.

"He sounds like a lion," said Krause. "By what name do the natives know him, Abdullah?"

"He is called Tarzan of the Apes," replied the Arab.

CHAPTER 3

The Saigon crossed the Indian Ocean to Sumatra, where Krause took on two elephants, a rhinoceros, three orangutans, two tigers, a panther, and a tapir. Fearing that de Groote would make good his threat to report the human captive to the authorities at Batavia, Krause did not put in there as he had intended; but continued on to Singapore for monkeys, another tiger, and several boa constrictors; then the Saigon steamed across the South China Sea toward Manila, its last port of call on the long drag to the Panama Canal.

Krause was delighted; so far all his plans had worked out splendidly; and if he got his cargo to New York, he stood

to clean up an excellent profit. Perhaps he would not have been so delighted had he known of all that went on aboard the Saigon. Larsen was still confined to his cabin, and while de Groote was a good officer, he was young, and new aboard the ship. Like Krause, he did not know all that was talked of in the forecastle and on deck at night when it was Schmidt's watch. At such times, the 2nd mate spoke long and earnestly with Jabu Singh, the Lascar; and he spoke in whispers. Afterward, Jabu Singh spoke long and earnestly with the other Lascars in the forecastle.

"But the wild beasts?" asked Chand of his fellow Lascar, Jabu Singh; "what of them?"

"Schmidt says we throw them overboard along with de Groote, Krause, and the others."

"They are worth much money," objected Chand; "we should keep them and sell them."

"We should be caught and hanged," said another Lascar.

"No," Jabu Singh contradicted. "While we were in Singapore, Schmidt learned that Germany and England have gone to war. This is an English ship; Schmidt says that a German has a right to capture it. He says we would get prize money; but he thinks the animals would be valueless, and they are a nuisance."

"I know a man on the island of Illili who would buy them," said Chand. "We

will not let Schmidt throw them overboard."

The men spoke in their native dialect, confident that the Chinese sailors would not understand them; but in that they were wrong; Lum Kip had once sailed the China Sea aboard a felucca that had been captained and manned by Lascars, and he had learned their language. He had also learned to hate Lascars, as he had been treated very badly aboard the felucca and had been given no share of the spoils of their nefarious operations. But Lum Kip's face gave no indication that he understood what he overheard; it wore its usual expression of profound detachment, as he puffed on his long pipe with its little brass bowl.

The man in the large iron cage on deck often paced back and forth for hours at a time. Often he leaped and seized the bars at the top of the cage and swung to and fro from one end of the cage to the other, hand over hand. When anyone approached his cage, he would stop; for he was not doing these things for his amusement, nor for the amusement of others, but to keep his magnificent physique from deteriorating during his confinement.

Janette Laon came often to his cage; she saw that he was fed regularly and that he always had water; and she tried to teach him her native language, French; but in this she made no headway. Tarzan knew what was the matter with him; and

while he could neither speak nor understand speech, his thoughts were as coherent and intelligent as ever. He wondered if he would ever recover; but he was not greatly troubled because he could not converse with human beings; the thing that annoyed him most was that he could no longer communicate with manu, the monkey, or the mangani, the great apes, with which he classed the orangutans that were aboard and confined in cages near his. Seeing the cargo that the Saigon carried, he knew the life that lay in store for him; but he also knew that sooner or later he would escape. He thought of that most often when he saw Abdullah Abu Nejm on deck.

He had tested the bars of his cage at night when nobody was near; and he was confident that he could spread them sufficiently to allow his body to pass between them; but he guessed that were he to do so, while at sea, he would only be shot down; for he knew that they feared him. With the patience of a wild beast he bided his time.

When Abdullah Abu Nejm or Schmidt were on deck, his eyes followed them; for these two had spat at him. Abdullah Abu Nejm had reason to hate him, for Tarzan had ended his lucrative career as a slave trader and ivory poacher; but the 2nd mate had been motivated only by the natural reactions of a bully and a coward who discovers one whom he considers

his racial enemy powerless to retaliate.

Abdullah Abu Nejm, hating Krause and the girl and ignored by de Groote, consorted much with Schmidt, until the two men, finding much in common, became boon companions. Abdullah, glad of any opportunity to wreak vengeance on Krause, willingly agreed to aid Schmidt in the venture the 2nd mate was planning.

"The Lascars are with me to a man," Schmidt told Abdullah, "but we haven't approached the chinks; there's bad blood between them and the Lascars on this ship, and Jabu Singh says his men won't play if the chinks are to be in on it and get a cut."

"There are not many," said Abdullah,

"If they make trouble, they, too, can go overboard."

"The trouble is, we need 'em to man the ship," explained Schmidt; "and about throwing 'em overboard; I've changed my mind; there ain't anybody going overboard. They're all going to be prisoners of war; then, if anything goes wrong, there's no murder charge against us."

"You can run the ship without Larsen and de Groote?" asked the Arab.

"Sure I can," replied Schmidt. "I've got Oubanovitch on my side. Being a Red Russian, he hates Krause; he hates everybody who has a pfennig more than he. I'm making him 1st mate, but he'll have to keep on running the engine room

too. Jabu Singh will be 2nd mate. Oh, I've got everything worked out."

"And you are to be captain?" inquired the Arab.

"Certainly."

"And what am I to be?"

"You? Oh, hell, you can be admiral."

That afternoon Lum Kip approached de Groote. "Maybe—so you make dead tonight," said Lum Kip in a low whisper.

"What you driving at, Lum?" demanded de Groote.

"You savvy Schmidt?"

"Of course; what about him?"

"Tonight he takee ship; Lascars, they takee ship; 'banovitchee, he takee ship; man in long, white dless, he takee ship.

They killee Larsen; killee you; killee Klause; killee evlybody. Chinee boy no takee ship; no killee. You savvy?"

"You having a pipe dream, Lum?" demanded de Groote. "No pipe dleam; you waitee see."

"How about Chinee boys?" asked de Groote, who was now thoroughly worried.

"They no killee you."

"Will they fight Lascar boys?"

"You betee; you give 'em gun."

"No have gun," said de Groote; "tell 'em get capstan bars, belaying pins; knives. You savvy?"

"Me savvy."

"And when the trouble starts, you

boys light into the Lascars."

"You betee."

"And thank you, Lum; I'll not forget this."

De Groote went at once to Larsen; but found him rolling on his bunk, delirious with fever; then he went to Krause's cabin, where he found Krause and Janette Laon and explained the situation to them.

"Do you believe the Chink?" asked Krause.

"There's no reason for him to have made up such a cock-and-bull story," replied de Groote; "yes, I believe him; he's one of the best hands on the ship—a quiet little fellow who always does his work and minds his own business."

"What had we better do?" asked Krause.

"I'd put Schmidt under arrest immediately," said de Groote.

The cabin door swung open; and Schmidt stood in the doorway, an automatic in his hand. "Like hell, you'll put me under arrest, you damned Dutchman," he said. "We saw that dirty little Chink talking to you, and we had a pretty good idea what he saying."

Half a dozen Lascars pressed behind Schmidt, outside the doorway. "Tie 'em up," he said to them.

The sailors brushed past Schmidt into the cabin; de Groote stepped in front of the girl. "Keep your dirty hands off her," he said to the Lascars. One of them tried

to push him aside and reach Janette, and de Groote knocked him down. Instantly there was a free- for-all; but only de Groote and Janette took part in it on their side; Krause cowered in a corner and submitted fearfully to having his hands tied behind his back. Janette picked up a pair of heavy binoculars and felled one of the Lascars while de Groote sent two more to the floor, but the odds were against them. When the fight was over, they were both trussed up and de Groote was unconscious from a blow on the head.

"This is mutiny, Schmidt," said Krause; "you'll hang for this if you don't let me go."

"This is not mutiny," replied Schmidt.

"This is an English ship, and I'm taking it in the name of our Führer."

"But I'm a German," Krause objected; "I chartered this ship—it is a German Ship."

"Oh, no," said Schmidt; "it is registered in England, and you sail it under English colors. If you're a German, then you're a traitor, and in Germany we know what to do with traitors."

CHAPTER 4

Tarzan knew that something had happened aboard the ship, but he did not know what. He saw a Chinese sailor strung up by the thumbs and lashed. For two days he saw nothing of the girl or the young 1st mate, and now he was not fed regularly or kept supplied with water. He saw that the 2nd mate, who had spit on him, was in command of the ship; and so, while he did not know, he surmised what had happened. Abdullah Abu Nejm occasionally passed his cage, but without molesting him; and Tarzan knew why—the Arab was afraid of him, even though he were penned up in an iron cage. He would not always be in a cage: Tarzan knew this and Abdullah

Abu Nejm feared it.

Now, Lascars swaggered about the ship and the Chinese did most of the work. These, Schmidt cuffed and kicked on the slightest provocation or on none at all. Tarzan had seen the man who had been strung up by his thumbs and lashed cut down after an hour and carried to the forecastle. The cruelty of the punishment disgusted him, but of course he did not know but that the man deserved it.

The 2nd mate never passed Tarzan's cage without stopping to curse him. The very sight of Tarzan seemed to throw him into a fit of uncontrollable rage, as did anything that stimulated his inferiority complex. Tarzan could not understand why the man hated him so; he

did not know that Schmidt, being a psychopath, did not have to have a reason for anything that he did.

Once he came to the cage with a harpoon in his hands and jabbed it through the bars at the ape-man while Abdullah Abu Nejm looked on approvingly. Tarzan seized the haft and jerked the thing from Schmidt's hands as effortlessly as he might have taken it from a baby. Now that the wild man was armed, Schmidt no longer came close to the cage.

On the third day from that on which he had last seen the girl, Tarzan saw his wooden cage and a larger iron cage hoisted to the deck and lashed down near his; and a little later he saw the girl

led on deck by a couple of Lascar sailors and put into the wooden cage; then de Groote and Krause were brought up and locked in the iron cage, and presently Schmidt came from the bridge and stopped in front of them.

"What is the meaning of this, Schmidt?" demanded de Groote.

"You complained about being locked up below, didn't you? You should thank me for having you brought on deck instead of finding fault. You'll get plenty of fresh air up here and a good tan; I want you all to look your best when I exhibit you with the other specimens of the lower orders in Berlin," and Schmidt laughed.

"If you want to amuse yourself by

keeping Krause and me penned up here like wild beasts, go ahead; but you can't mean that you're going to keep Miss Laon here, a white woman exhibited before a lot of Lascar sailors." It had been with difficulty that de Groote had kept his anger and contempt from being reflected in his voice, but he had long since come to the conclusion that they were in the hands of a madman and that to antagonize him further would be but to add to the indignities he had already heaped upon them.

"If Miss Laon wishes to, she may share the captain's cabin with me," replied Schmidt; "I have had Larsen taken elsewhere."

"Miss Laon prefers the cage of a wild

animal," said the girl.

Schmidt shrugged. "That is a good idea," he said; "I shall see about putting you into the cage of one of Herr Krause's lions, or perhaps you would prefer a tiger."

"Either one, to you," replied the girl.

"Or maybe into the cage with the wild man you have been so fond of," suggested Schmidt; "that might afford a spectacle all would enjoy. From what Abdullah tells me, the man is probably a cannibal. I shall not feed him after I put you in with him."

Schmidt was laughing to himself as he walked away.

"The man is absolutely crazy," said de Groote. "I have known right along

that he was a little bit off, but I never expected that he was an out-and-out madman."

"Do you suppose that he will do what he has threatened?" asked Janette.

Neither de Groote nor Krause replied, and their silence answered her questions and confirmed her own fears. It had been all right to feed the wild man and see that he had water, but she had always been ready to spring away from his cage if he attempted to seize her. She had really been very much afraid of him, but her natural kindness had prompted her to befriend him. Furthermore, she had known that it annoyed Krause, whom she secretly detested.

Stranded in Batavia, Janette had

seized upon Krause's offer so that she might get away, anywhere; and the prospect of New York had also greatly intrigued her. She had heard much of the great American metropolis and fabulous stories of the ease with which a beautiful girl might acquire minks and sables and jewels there, and Janette Laon knew that she would be beautiful in any country.

Although neither de Groote nor Krause had answered Janette's question, it was soon answered. Schmidt returned with several sailors; he and two of the Lascars were armed with pistols, and the others carried prod poles such as were used in handling the wild animals.

The sailors unlashed Janette's cage and pushed it against that in which

Tarzan was confined, the two doors in contact; then they raised both doors.

"Get in there with your wild man," ordered Schmidt.

"You can't do that, Schmidt," cried de Groote. "For God's sake man, don't do a thing like that!"

"Shut up!" snapped Schmidt. "Get in there wench! Poke her up with those prods, you!"

One of the Lascars prodded Janette, and Tarzan growled and started forward. Three pistols instantly covered him, and sharp pointed prods barred his way. The growl terrified the girl; but, realizing that they could force her into the cage, she suddenly walked in boldly, her chin up. The iron gate of the cage dropped

behind her, the final seal upon her doom.

De Groote, Krause, Schmidt, and the Lascars awaited in breathless silence for the tragedy they anticipated with varying emotions: Schmidt pleasurably, the Lascars indifferently, Krause nervously, and de Groote with such emotions as his phlegmatic Dutch psyche had never before experienced: Had he been a Frenchman or an Italian, he would probably have screamed and torn his hair: but, being a Dutchman, he held his emotions in leash within him.

Janette Laon stood just within the doorway of the cage, waiting; she looked at Tarzan and Tarzan looked at her. He knew that she was afraid. and he wished that he might speak to her and

reassure her; then he did the only thing that he could; he smiled at her. It was the first time that she had seen him smile. She wanted to believe that it was a reassuring smile, a friendly smile; but she had been told such terrible stories of his ferocity that she was uncertain; it might be a smile of anticipation. To be on the safe side, she forced an answering smile.

Tarzan picked up the harpoon he had taken from Schmidt and crossed the cage toward her. "Shoot him, Schmidt!" shouted de Groote; "he is going to kill her."

"You think I am crazy?—to kill a valuable exhibit like that!" replied Schmidt. "Now we see some fun."

Tarzan handed the harpoon to the girl, and went back and sat down at the far end of the cage. The implication of the gesture was unmistakable. Janette felt her knees giving from beneath her; and sat down quickly, lest she fall. Sudden relief from terrific nervous strain often induces such a reaction. De Groote broke into a violent sweat.

Schmidt fairly jumped up and down in rage and disappointment. "Wild man!" he shrieked. "I thought you said that thing was a wild man, Abdullah. You are a cheat! You are a liar!"

"If you don't think he's a wild man, Nasrany," replied the Arab, "go yourself into his cage."

CHAPTER 5

Tarzan sat with his eyes fixed on Schmidt. He had understood nothing that the man had said; but from his facial expressions, his gestures, his actions, and by all that had occurred, he had judged the man; another score was chalked up against Herr Schmidt; another nail had been driven into his coffin.

The next morning the two captives in the big iron cage I were very happy. Janette was happy because she found herself safe and unharmed after a night spent with a creature who ate his meat raw and growled while he ate, a wild man who had killed three African warriors with his bare hands before they

could overpower him, and whom Abdullah accused of being a cannibal. She was so happy that she sang a snatch of a French song that had been popular when she left Paris. And Tarzan was happy because he understood the words; I while he had slept his affliction had left him as suddenly as it had struck.

"Good morning," he said in French, the first human language he had ever learned, taught to him by the French lieutenant he had saved from death on a far gone day.

The girl looked at him in surprise. "I—good morning!" she stammered. "I—I—they told me you could not speak."

"I suffered an accident," he explained; "I am all right now."

"I am glad," she said; "I—" she hesitated.

"I know," interrupted Tarzan; "you were afraid of me. You need not be."

"They said terrible things about you; but you must have I heard them."

"I not only could not speak," Tarzan explained, "but I could not understand. What did they say?"

"They said that you were very ferocious and that you—you— ate people."

Again one of Tarzan's rare smiles. "And so they put you in here hoping that I would eat you? Who did that?"

"Schmidt, the man who led the mutiny and took over the ship."

"The man who spit on me," said Tarzan, and the girl thought that she detected the shadow of a growl in his voice. Abdullah had been right; the man did remind one of a lion. But now she was not afraid.

"You disappointed Schmidt," she said. "He was furious when you handed me the harpoon and went to the other end of the cage and sat down. In no spoken language could one have assured him of my safety more definitely."

"Why does he hate you?"

"I don't know that he does hate me; he is a sadistic maniac. You must have seen what he did to poor Lum Kip and how he kicks and strikes others of the Chinese sailors."

"I wish you would tell me what has gone on aboard the ship that I have not been able to understand and just what they intend doing with me, if you know."

"Krause was taking you to America to exhibit as a wild man along with his other—I mean along with his wild animals."

Again Tarzan smiled. "Krause is the man in the cage with the 1st mate?"

"Yes."

"Now tell me about the mutiny and what you know of Schmidt's plans."

When she had finished, Tarzan had every principal in the drama of the Saigon definitely placed; and it seemed to him that only the girl, de Groote, and the Chinese sailors were worthy of any

consideration—they and the caged beasts.

De Groote awoke, and the first thing that he did was to call to Janette from his cage. "You are all right?" he asked. "He didn't offer to harm you?"

"Not in any way," she assured him.

"I'm going to have a talk with Schmidt today and see if I can't persuade him to take you out of that cage. I think that if Krause and I agree never to prefer charges against him, if he lets you out, he may do it."

"This is the safest place on the ship for me; I don't want to get out as long as Schmidt is in control."

De Groote looked at her in astonishment. "But that fellow is half

beast," he exclaimed. "He may not have harmed you yet; but you never can tell what he might do, especially if Schmidt starves him as he has threatened."

Janette laughed. "You'd better be careful what you say about him if you think he is such a ferocious wild man; he might get out of this cage some time."

"Oh, he can't understand me," said de Groote; "and he can't get out of the cage."

Krause had been awakened by the conversation, and now he came and stood beside de Groote. "I'll say he can't get out of that cage," he said, "and Schmidt will see that he never gets the chance; Schmidt knows what he would get, and you needn't worry about his

understanding anything we say; he's as dumb as they make 'em."

Janette turned to look at Tarzan to note the effect of de Groote's and Krause's words, wondering if he would let them know that he did understand and was thoroughly enjoying the situation. To her surprise she saw that the man had lain down close to the bars and was apparently asleep; then she saw Schmidt approaching and curbed her desire to acquaint de Groote and Krause with the fact that their wild man could have understood everything they said, if he had heard them.

Schmidt came up to the cage. "So you are still alive," he said. "I hope you enjoyed your night with the monkey man.

If you will teach him some tricks, I'll exhibit you as his trainer." He moved close to the cage and looked down at Tarzan. "Is he asleep, or did you have to kill him?"

Suddenly Tarzan's hand shot between the bars and seized one of Schmidt's ankles; then the ape man jerked the leg into the cage its full length, throwing Schmidt upon his back. Schmidt screamed, and Tarzan's other band shot and plucked the man's pistol from its holster.

"Help!" screamed Schmidt. "Abdullah! Jabu Singh! Chand! Help!"

Tarzan twisted the leg until the man screamed again from pain. Abdullah, Jabu Singh, and Chand came running in

answer to Schmidt's cries; but when they saw that the wild man was pointing a pistol in their direction, they stopped.

"Have food and water brought, or I'll twist your leg off," said Tarzan.

"The dog of an English speaks!" muttered Abdullah. De Groote and Krause looked in amazement.

"If he speaks, he must have understood us," said Krause. "Maybe he has understood all along," Krause tried to recall what he might have said that some day he might regret, for he knew that the man could not be kept in a cage forever—unless. But the fellow had a gun now; it would not be so easy to kill him. He would speak to Schmidt about it; it was as much to Schmidt's interests

as his now to have the man put out of the way.

Schmidt was screaming for food and water. Suddenly de Groote cried, "Look out, man! Look out! Behind you!" But it was too late; a pistol spoke, and Tarzan collapsed upon the floor of the cage, Jabu Singh had crept up behind the cage, unnoticed until the thing had been done.

Schmidt scrambled out of the way, but Janette recovered the pistol; and, turning, shot Jabu Singh as he was about to fire another shot into the prostrate man. Her shot struck the Lascar in the right arm, causing him to drop his weapon; then, keeping him covered, the girl crossed the cage, reached through the bars, and retrieved Jabu Singh's

pistol. Now, she crossed back to Tarzan, knelt above him, and placed her ear over his heart.

As Schmidt stood trembling and cursing in impotent fury, a ship was sighted from the bridge; and he limped away to have a look at it. The Saigon was running without colors, ready to assume any nationality that Schmidt might choose when an emergency arose.

The stranger proved to be an English yacht; so Schmidt ran up the English flag; then he radioed, asking if they had a doctor on board, as he had two men suffering from injuries, which was quite true; at least Jabu Singh was suffering, with vocal accompaniment; Tarzan still lay where he had fallen.

The yacht had a doctor aboard, and Schmidt said that he would send a boat for him. He, himself, went with the boat, which was filled with Lascars armed with whatever they could find, a weird assortment of pistols, rifles, boat hooks, knives, and animal prods, all well hidden from sight.

Coming alongside the yacht, they swarmed up the Jacob's ladder and onto the deck before the astonished yachtsmen realized that they were being boarded with sinister intent. At the same time, the Saigon struck the English flag and ran up the German.

Twenty-five or thirty men and a girl on the deck of the yacht looked with amazement on the savage, piratical-

appearing company confronting them with armed force.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the yacht's captain.

Schmidt pointed at the German flag flying above the Saigon. "It means that I am seizing you in the name of the German Government," replied Schmidt; "I am taking you over as a prize, and shall put a prize crew aboard. Your engineer and navigating officer will remain aboard. My first mate, Jabu Singh, will be in command. He has suffered a slight accident; your doctor will dress the wound, and the rest of you will return to my ship with me. You are to consider yourselves prisoners of war, and conduct yourselves accordingly."

"But, man," expostulated the Captain, "this vessel is not armed, it is not a warship, it is not even a merchant vessel; it is a private yacht on a scientific expedition. You, a merchantman, can't possibly contemplate taking us over."

"But I say, old thing!" said a tall young man in flannels; "you can't —"

"Shut up!" snapped Schmidt. "You are English, and that is enough reason for taking you over. Come now! Where's that doctor? Get busy."

While the doctor was dressing Jabu Singh's wound, Schmidt had his men search the ship for arms and ammunition. They' found several pistols and sporting rifles; and, the doctor having finished

with Jabu Singh, Schmidt detailed some of his men and left a few of the yacht's sailors to man the craft; then he herded the remainder into the Saigon's boat and returned with them to the steamer.

"I say," exclaimed the young man in white flannels, "this is a beastly outrage."

"It might have been worse, Algy," said the girl; "maybe you won't have to marry me now."

"Oh, I say, old thing," expostulated the young man; "this might even be worse."

CHAPTER 6

The bullet that had dropped Tarzan had merely grazed his head, inflicting a superficial flesh wound and stunning him for a few minutes; but he had soon recovered and now he and Janette Laon watched the prisoners as they came over the side of the Saigon. "Schmidt has turned pirate," remarked the girl. "I wonder what he is going to do with all those people! There must be fifteen of them."

She did not have long to wait for an answer to her inquiry. Schmidt sent the eight crew members forward when they agreed to help man the Saigon; then he had two more iron cages hoisted to the deck and lined up with the two already

there. "Now," he said, "I know I shouldn't do it, but I am going to let you choose your own cage mates."

"I say!" cried Algernon Wright-Smith; "you're not going to put the ladies in one of those things!"

"What's good enough for an English pig is good enough for an English sow," growled Schmidt; "hurry up and decide what you want to do."

An elderly man with a white walrus mustache, harrumphed angrily, his red face becoming purple. "You damned bounder!" he snorted; "you can't do a thing like that to English women."

"Don't excite yourself, Uncle," said the girl; "We'll have to do as the fellow says."

"I shall not step a foot into one of those things, William," said the second woman in the party, a lady who carried her fifty odd years rather heavily around her waist. "Nor shall Patricia," she added.

"Come come," expostulated the girl; "we're absolutely helpless, you know," and with that she entered the smaller of the two cages; and presently her uncle and her aunt, finally realizing the futility of resistance, joined her. Captain Bolton, Tibbet, the second mate of the yacht, Dr. Crouch, and Algy, were herded into the second cage.

Schmidt walked up and down in front of the cages, gloating. " A fine menagerie I am getting," he said; "A

French girl, a German traitor, a Dutch dog, and seven English pigs: with my apes, monkeys, lions, tigers, and elephants we shall be a sensation in Berlin."

The cage in which the Leigh's and their niece were confined was next to that occupied by Tarzan and Janette Laon; and beyond the Leigh's cage was that in which the other four Englishmen were imprisoned.

Penelope Leigh eyed Tarzan askance and with aversion. "Shocking!" she whispered to her niece, Patricia; "the fellow is practically naked."

"He's rather nice looking, Aunty," suggested Patricia Leigh- Burdon.

"Don't look at him," snapped

Penelope Leigh; "and that woman—do you suppose that is his wife?"

"She doesn't look like a wild woman," said Patricia.

"Then what is she doing alone in that cage with that man?" demanded Mrs. Leigh.

"Perhaps she was put there just the way we were put here."

"Well!" snorted Penelope Leigh; "she looks like a loose woman to me."

"Now," shouted Schmidt, "we are about the feed the animals; everyone who is not on duty may come and watch."

Lascars, and Chinese, and several of the yacht's crew, gathered in front of the

cages as food and water were brought; the former an unpalatable, nondescript mess, the contents of which it would have been difficult to determine, either by sight or taste. Tarzan was given a hunk of raw meat.

"Disgusting," snorting Penelope Leigh, as she pushed the unsavory mess from her. A moment later her attention was attracted by growls coming from the adjoining cage; and when she looked, she gasped, horror-stricken. "Look!" she whispered in a trembling voice; "that creature is growling, and he is eating his meat raw; how horrible!"

"I find him fascinating," said Patricia.

"Hurrumph!" growled Colonel William Cecil Hugh Percival Leigh;

"filthy blighter."

"Canaille!" snapped Mrs. Leigh.

Tarzan looked up at Janette Laon, that shadowy smile just touching his lips, and winked.

"You understand English too?" she asked. Tarzan nodded. "Do you mind if I have some fun with them?" she continued.

"No," replied Tarzan; "go as far as you wish. "They had both spoken in French and in whispers.

"Do you find the captain palatable," she asked in English loudly enough to be heard in the adjoining cage.

"He is not as good as the Swede they gave me last week, " replied Tarzan.

Mrs. Leigh paled and became violently nauseated; she sat down suddenly and heavily. The colonel, inclined to be a little pop-eyed, was even more so as he gazed incredulously into the adjoining cage. His niece came close to him and whispered, "I think they are spoofing us, Uncle; I saw him wink at that girl."

"My smelling salts!" gasped Mrs. Leigh.

"What's the matter, colonel?" asked Algernon Wright-Smith, from the adjoining cage.

"That devil is eating the captain," replied the colonel in a whisper that could have been heard half a block away. De Groote grinned.

"My word!" exclaimed Algy. Janette Laon turned her head away to hide her laughter, and Tarzan continued to tear at the meat with his strong, white teeth.

"I tell you they are making fools of us," said Patricia Leigh- Burden. "You can't make me believe that civilized human beings would permit that man to eat human flesh, even if he wished to, which I doubt. When that girl turned away, I could see her shoulders shaking —she was laughing."

"What's that, William?" cried Mrs. Leigh, as the roar of a lion rose from the hold.

The animals had been unnaturally quiet for some time; but now they were getting hungry, and the complaint of the

lion started them off, with the result that in a few moments of blood-curdling diapason of savagery billowed up from below: the rumbling roars of lions, the coughing growls of tigers, the hideous laughter of hyenas, the trumpeting of elephants mingled with the medley of sounds from the lesser beasts.

"Oh-h-h!" screamed Mrs. Leigh. "How hideous! Make them stop that noise at once, William."

"Harrumph!" said the colonel, but without his usual vigor. Presently, however, as the Chinese and Indian keepers fed the animals, the noise subsided and quiet was again restored.

As night approached, the sky became overcast and the wind increased, and

with the rolling of the ship the animals again became restless. A Lascar came and passed buckets of water into all of the cages except that in which Tarzan was confined. To do this, he had to unlock the cage doors and raise them sufficiently to pass the pails through; then he passed in a broom, with which the inmates were supposed to clean their cages. Although he was accompanied by two other sailors armed with rifles, he did not unlock the door of Tarzan's cage, for Schmidt was afraid to take a chance on the wild man's escaping.

Tarzan had watched this procedure which had occurred daily ever since he had been brought aboard the Saigon. He knew that the same Lascar always

brought the water and that he came again at about four bells of the first night watch to make a final inspection of the captives. On this tour of duty he came alone, as he did not have to unlock the cages; but Schmidt, in order to be on the safe side, had armed him with a pistol.

This afternoon, as he was passing the water into the cage occupied by the Leighs, the colonel questioned him. "Steward," he said, "fetch us four steamer chairs and rugs," and he handed the Lascar a five pound note.

The sailor took the note, looked at it, and stuffed it into his dirty loin cloth. "No chairs; no rugs," he said and started on toward the next cage.

"Hi, fellow!" shouted the colonel;

"come back here! Who is captain of this ship? I want to see the captain."

"Sahib Schmidt captain now," replied the Lascar. "Captain Larsen sick; no see three, four days; maybe dead;" then he moved on and the colonel made no effort to detain him.

Mrs. Leigh shuddered. "It was the captain," she breathed in a horrified whisper, her terrified gaze riveted on a bone in Tarzan's cage.

CHAPTER 7

Rain fell in torrents and the wind whistled through the cages, driving it in myriad needle points against the unprotected inmates. The sea rose and the Saigon rolled and pitched heavily; lightning flashes illuminated the ship momentarily and heralded the deep booming of the following thunder which momentarily drowned out the roars and growls and trumpeting of terrified beasts.

Tarzan stood erect in his cage enjoying the lashing of the rain, the thunder, and the lightning. Each vivid flash revealed the occupants of adjoining cages, and during one of them he saw that the Englishman had placed his coat

around the shoulders of his wife and was trying to shield her body from the storm with his own. The English girl stood erect, as did Tarzan, seeming to enjoy this battle with the elements. It was then that the ape man decided that he liked these two.

Tarzan was waiting; he was waiting for the Lascar to make his nightly inspection; but that night the Lascar did not come. The Lord of the Jungle could wait with that patience he had learned from the wild creatures among whom he had been reared; some night the Lascar would return.

The storm increased in fury; the Saigon was running before it now with great following seas always threatening

to break over her stern. The wind howled in throaty anguish and hurled spume to join with the rain in deluging the miserable prisoners in their cages. Janette Laon lay down and tried to sleep. The English girl paced back and forth in the narrow confines of her cage. Tarzan watched her; he knew her type; an outdoor girl; the free swing of her walk proclaimed it. She would be efficient in anything she undertook, and she could endure hardship without complaining. Tarzan was sure of that, for he had watched her ever since she had been brought aboard the Saigon, had heard her speak, and had noticed her acceptance of the inevitable in a spirit similar to his own. He imagined that she would wait

patiently until her opportunity came and that then she would act with courage and intelligence.

As he watched her now, taking the rain and the wind and the pitching of the ship as though they were quite the usual thing, she stopped at the side of her cage that adjoined his and looked at him.

"Did you enjoy the captain?" she asked with a quick smile.

"He was a little too salty," replied Tarzan.

"Perhaps the Swede was better," she suggested.

"Much; especially the dark meat."

"Why did you try to frighten us?" she asked.

"Your uncle and aunt were not very complimentary in their remarks about us."

"I know," she said. "I'm sorry, but they were very much upset. This has been a shocking experience for them. I am very much worried about them; they are old and cannot put up with much more of this. What do you think this man Schmidt intends doing with us?"

"There is no telling; the man is mad. His plan to exhibit us in Berlin is, of course, ridiculous. If he gets us to Berlin, we English will, of course, be interned."

"You are an Englishman?"

"My father and mother were English."

"My name is Burden—Patricia Leigh-

Burden," said the girl; "may I ask yours?"

"Tarzan," replied the ape man.

"Just Tarzan?"

"That is all. "

"Do you mind telling me how you happen to be in that cage, Mr. Tarzan?"

"Just Tarzan," he corrected her; "no mister. I happen to be in this cage because Abdullah Abu Nejm wished to be revenged; so he had me captured by an African chief who also had reason to wish to get rid of me. Abdullah sold me to a man by the name of Krause who was collecting animals to sell in America. Krause is in the cage next to mine on the other side. Schmidt, who was 2nd mate, has Krause's ship, his wild man, and all

his animals. He also has Krause."

"He won't have any of us long if this storm gets much worse," said the girl. She was clinging to the bars of the cage now, as the ship dove into the trough of a sea, rolling and wallowing as it was lifted to the crest of the next.

"The Saigon doesn't look like much," said Janette Laon, who had come to stand beside Tarzan, "but I think she will weather this storm all right. We ran into a worse one coming out. Of course we had Captain Larsen in command then, and Mr. de Groote was 1st mate; it may be a different story with Schmidt in command."

The ship swung suddenly, quartering to the sea, and slithered down into the

trough, heeling over on her beam-ends. There was a frightened scream as a flash of lightning revealed the colonel and his wife being thrown heavily against the bars of their cage.

"Poor Aunt Penelope!" cried the English girl; "she can't stand much more of this." She worked her way around the side of the cage to her aunt. " Are you hurt, Auntie?" she asked.

"Every bone in my body is broken," said Mrs. Leigh. "I never did approve of that silly expedition. Who cares what lives at the bottom of the ocean, anyway —you'd never meet any of them in London. Now we have lost the Naiad and are about to lose our lives in the bargain. I hope your uncle is satisfied."

Patricia breathed a sigh of relief, for she knew now that her aunt was all right. The Colonel maintained a discreet silence: twenty-five years experience had taught him when to keep still.

The long night passed, but the storm did not abate in fury. The Saigon still ran before it, slowed down to about five knots and taking it on her quarter. An occasional wave broke over the stern, flooding the decks, and almost submerging the inmates of the cages, who could only cling to the bars and hope for the best.

By her own testimony, Mrs. Leigh was drowned three times. "Hereafter, William," she said, "you should stick to The Times, Napoleon's campaigns, and

Gibbon's Rome; the moment you read anything else you go quite off your head. If you hadn't read that Arcturus Adventure by that Beebe person, we would undoubtedly be safe at home in England this minute. Just because he fished up a lot of hideous creatures equipped with electric lights, you had to come out and try it; I simply cannot understand it, William."

"Don't be too hard on Uncle," said Patricia; "he might have found some with hot and cold running water and become famous."

"Humph!" snorted Mrs. Leigh.

That day no one approached the cages, and neither food nor water was brought to the captives. The animals

below deck fared similarly, and their plaints rose above the howling of the storm. It was not until late in the afternoon of the third day that two of the Chinese sailors brought food, and by this time the captives were so famished that they wolfed it ravenously, notwithstanding the fact that it was only a cold and soggy mess of ship's biscuit.

Mrs. Leigh had lapsed into total silence; and both her niece and her husband were worried, for they knew that when Penelope Leigh failed to complain there must be something radically wrong with her.

At about nine o'clock that night, the wind suddenly died down; the calm that ensued was ominous. "We have reached

the center of it," said Janette Laon.

"Soon it will be bad again," said Tarzan.

"The fool should have run out of it, not into it," said Janette.

Tarzan was waiting patiently, like a lion at a waterhole—waiting for his prey to come. "It is better thus," he said to the girl.

"I do not understand," she replied, "I do not see how it could be worse."

"Wait," he said, "and I think you will see presently."

While the seas were still high, the Saigon seemed to be taking them better now, and presently Schmidt appeared on deck and came down to the cages.

"How's the livestock?" he demanded.

"These women will die if you keep them in here, Schmidt," said de Groote. "Why can't you take them out and give them a cabin, or at least put them below decks where they will be protected from the storm?"

"If I hear any more complaints," said Schmidt, "I'll dump the whole lot of you overboard, cages and all. What do you want anyway? You're getting free transportation, free food, and private rooms. You've been getting free shower baths, too, for the last three days."

"But, man, my wife will die if she is exposed much longer," said Colonel Leigh.

"Let her die," said Schmidt, "I need

some fresh meat for the wild man and the other animals," with which parting pleasantry, Schmidt returned to the bridge.

Mrs. Leigh was sobbing, and the Colonel was cursing luridly. Tarzan was waiting, and presently that for which he was waiting came to pass; Asoka, the Lascar, was coming to make his belated inspection. He swaggered a little, feeling the importance of being keeper of English sahibs and their ladies.

The ship's lights relieved the darkness sufficiently so that objects were discernible at some distance, and Tarzan, whose eyes were trained by habit to see at night, had recognized Asoka immediately he came on deck.

The ape-man stood grasping two adjacent bars of his cage as Asoka passed, keeping well out of arm's reach of the wild man. Janette Laon stood beside Tarzan; she intuitively sensed that something important was impending.

Her eyes were on her cage mate; she saw the muscles of his shoulders and his arms tense as he exerted all their tremendous power upon the bars of his cage. And then she saw those bars slowly spread and Tarzan of the Apes step through to freedom.

CHAPTER 8

Asoka, the Lascar, swaggered on past the cage of the Leigh's, and when he was opposite that in which the four Englishmen were confined, steel-thewed fingers closed upon his throat from behind, and his gun was snatched from its holster.

Janette Laon had watched with amazement the seeming ease with which those Herculean muscles had separated the bars. She had seen Tarzan overtake the Lascar and disarm him; and now she stepped through the opening after him, carrying the pistols they had taken from Schmidt and Jabu Singh.

Asoka struggled and tried to cry out until a grim voice whispered in his ear,

"Quiet, or I kill;" then he subsided.

Tarzan glanced back and saw Janette Laon behind him. Then he took the key to the cages which hung about Asoka's neck on a piece of cord and handed it to the girl. "Come with me and unlock them," he said, and passed around the end of the last cage to the doors, which were on the opposite side.

"You men will come with me," said Tarzan in a whisper; "the Colonel and the women will remain here."

As Tarzan came opposite the cage of the Leigh's, Mrs. Leigh, who had been dozing during the lull in the storm, awoke and saw him. She voiced a little scream and cried, "The wild man has escaped!"

"Shut up, Penelope," growled the Colonel; "he is going to let us out of this damn cage."

"Don't you dare curse me, William Cecil Hugh Percival Leigh," cried Penelope.

"Quiet," growled Tarzan, and Penelope Leigh subsided into terrified silence.

"You may come out," said Tarzan, "but remain close to the cages until we return." Then he followed Janette to the cage in which de Groote and Krause were imprisoned and waited until she had removed the padlock.

"De Groote may come out," he said; "Krause will remain. Asoka, you get in there." He turned to Janette. "Lock them

in," he said. "Give me one of the pistols and keep the other yourself; if either of these two tries to raise an alarm, shoot him. Do you think you could do that?"

"I shot Jabu Singh," she reminded him.

Tarzan nodded and then turned to the men behind him; he handed Asoka's pistol to de Groote. He had appraised the other men since they had come aboard, and now he told Janette to give her second pistol to Tibbet, the second mate of the Naiad.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Tibbet," replied the mate.

"You will come with me. We will take over on the bridge. De Groote knows the ship. He and the others will

look for arms. In the meantime, pick up anything you can to fight with, for there may be fighting."

The ship had passed beyond the center of the storm, and the wind was howling with renewed violence. The Saigon was pitching and rolling violently as Tarzan and Tibbet ascended the ladder to the bridge, where the Lascar, Chand, was at the wheel and Schmidt on watch. By chance, Schmidt, happened to turn just as Tarzan entered, and seeing him, reached for his gun, at the same time shouting a warning to Chand. Tarzan sprang forward, swift as Ara, the lightning, and struck up Schmidt's hand just as he squeezed the trigger. The bullet lodged in the ceiling,

and an instant later, Schmidt was disarmed. In the meantime, Tibbet had covered Chand and disarmed him.

"Take the wheel," said Tarzan, "and give me the other gun. Keep a look-out behind you and shoot anyone who tries to take over. You two get down to the cages," he said to Schmidt and Chand. He followed them down the ladder to the deck and herded them to the cage where Krause and Asoka were confined.

"Open that up, Janette," he said; "I have two more animals for our menagerie."

"This is mutiny," blustered Schmidt, "and when I get you to Berlin, you'll be beheaded for it."

"Get in there," said Tarzan, and

pushed Schmidt so violently, that when he collided with Krause, both men went down.

Above the din of the storm they heard a shot from below, and Tarzan hurried in the direction from which the sound had come. As he descended the ladder, he heard two more shots and the voices of men cursing and screams of pain.

As he came upon the scene of the fight, he saw that his men had been taken from the rear by armed Lascars, but there seemed to have been more noise than damage. One of the Lascars had been wounded. It was he who was screaming. But aside from the single casualty, no damage seemed to have been done on either side. Three of the

four Lascars remained on their feet, and they were firing wildly and indiscriminately, as Tarzan came up behind them carrying a gun in each hand.

"Drop your pistols," he said, "or I kill."

The three men swung around then, almost simultaneously. Looking into the muzzles of Tarzan's two pistols, two of the Lascars dropped theirs, but the third took deliberate aim and fired. Tarzan fired at the same instant, and the Lascar clutched at his chest and lurched forward upon his face.

The rest was easy. De Groote found the pistols, rifles, and ammunition taken from the Naiad in Schmidt's cabin, and with all the rest of the party disarmed,

Oubanovitch and the remaining Lascars put up no resistance. The Chinese and the impressed members of the Naiad's crew had never offered any, being more than glad to be relieved of service under a madman.

The ship safely in his hands, Tarzan gathered his party into the ship's little saloon. Penelope Leigh still regarded him with disgust not unmixed with terror; to her he was still a wild man, a cannibal who had eaten the Captain and the Swede and would doubtless, sooner or later, eat all of them. The others, however, were appreciative of the strength and courage and intelligence which had released them from a dangerous situation.

"Bolton," said Tarzan to the captain of the Naiad, "you will take command of the ship; de Groote will be your first mate, Tibbet your second. De Groote tells me there are only two cabins on the Saigon. Colonel and Mrs. Leigh will take the Captain's cabin, the two girls will take that which was occupied by the mates."

"He is actually giving orders to us," Penelope Leigh whispered to her husband; "you should do something about it, William; you should be in command."

"Don't be silly, Auntie," snapped Patricia Leigh-Burden, in a whisper; "we owe everything to this man. He was magnificent. If you had seen him spread

those bars as though they were made of lead!"

"I can't help it," said Mrs. Leigh; "I am not accustomed to being ordered about by naked wild men; why doesn't somebody loan him some trousers?"

"Come, come, Penelope," said the Colonel, "if you feel that way about it I'll loan him mine—haw!!—then I won't have any—haw! haw!"

"Don't be vulgar, William," snapped Mrs. Leigh.

Tarzan went to the bridge and explained to de Groote the arrangements that he had made. "I'm glad you didn't put me in command," said the Dutchman; "I haven't had enough experience. Bolton should be a good man. He used to be in

the Royal Navy. How about Oubanovitch?"

"I have sent for him," replied Tarzan, "he should be here in a moment."

"He's against everybody," said de Groote, "a died-in-the-wool Communist. Here he comes now."

Oubanovitch slouched in, sullen and suspicious. "What are you two doing up here?" he demanded; "where's Schmidt?"

"He is where you are going if you don't want to carry on with us," replied Tarzan.

"Where's that?" asked Oubanovitch.

"In a cage with Krause and a couple of Lascars," replied the ape-man. "I

don't know whether you had anything to do with the mutiny or not, Oubanovitch, but if you care to continue on as engineer, nobody is going to ask any questions."

The scowling Russian nodded. " All right," he said; "you can't be no worse than that crazy Schmidt."

"Captain Bolton is in command. Report to him and tell him that you are the engineer. Do you know what has become of the Arab? I haven't seen him for several days."

"He's always in the engine room keeping warm."

"Tell him to report to me here on the bridge and ask Captain Bolton to send us a couple of men."

The two men strained their eyes out into the darkness ahead. They saw the ship's nose plow into a great sea from which she staggered sluggishly. "It's getting worse," remarked de Groote.

"Can she weather much more?" asked Tarzan.

"I think so," said de Groote, "as long as I can keep it on her quarter, we can keep enough speed to give her steerageway."

A shot sounded from behind them, and the glass in the window in front of them shattered. Both men wheeled about to see Abdullah Abu Nejm standing at the top of the ladder with a smoking pistol in his hand.

CHAPTER 9

The Arab fired again, but the plunging and the pitching of the Saigon spoiled his aim and he missed just as Tarzan sprang for him.

The impact of the ape-man's body carried Abdullah backward from the ladder, and both men crashed heavily to the deck below, the Arab beneath —a stunned, inert mass.

The two sailors, whom Captain Bolton was sending to the bridge, came on deck just in time to see what had happened; and they both ran forward, thinking to find a couple of broken, unconscious men, but there was only one in that condition.

Tarzan sprang to his feet, but

Abdullah Abu Nejm lay where he had fallen. "One of you men go below and ask Miss Laon for the keys to the cages," Tarzan directed; then he seized the Arab by the arms and dragged him back to the cage in which Krause and Schmidt were confined, and when the key was brought, he opened the door and tossed the Arab in. Whether the man were alive or dead, Tarzan did not know or care.

The storm increased in fury, and shortly before daylight the steamer fell into the trough of the sea, rolling on its beam-ends and hanging there for an instant, as though about to capsize; then it would roll back the other way and for another harrowing moment the end seemed inevitable. The change in the

motion of the ship awakened Tarzan instantly, and he made his way to the bridge—a feat that was not too difficult for a man who had been raised in a forest by apes and swung through the trees for the greater part of his life, for he climbed to the bridge more often than he walked. He found the two sailors clinging to the wheel, and the Captain to a stanchion.

"What's happened?" he asked.

"The rudder's carried away," said Bolton. "If we could rig a sea anchor, we might have a chance of riding it out; but that is impossible in this sea. How the devil did you get up here, with the ship standing on her beam-ends as fast as she can roll from one side to the

other?"

"I climbed," said Tarzan.

Bolton grumbled something that sounded like, "most extraordinary;" then he said, "I think it's letting up; if she can take this, we ought to be able to pull through, though even then we're going to be in a pretty bad fix, as I understand from one of these men, that that fellow, Schmidt, destroyed the radio."

As though to prove what she could do or couldn't do, the Saigon rolled over until her decks were vertical—and hung there. "My God!" cried one of the sailors; "she's going over!"

But she didn't go over; she rolled back, but not so far this time. The wind was coming in fitful gusts now; the storm

was very definitely dying out.

Just before dawn, the Captain said, "Listen, do you hear that?"

"Yes," said Tarzan, "I have been hearing it for sometime."

"Do you know what it is?" asked Bolton.

"I do," replied the ape-man.

"Breakers," said Bolton; "that's all we need to finish us up completely."

Slowly and grudgingly dawn came, as though held back by the same malign genie that had directed the entire cruise of the ill- fated Saigon. And, to leeward, the men on the bridge saw a volcanic island, its mountains clothed in tropical foliage, their summits hidden in low-

hanging clouds. The seas were breaking on a coral reef a quarter-mile off shore, and toward this reef the Saigon was drifting.

"There is an opening in that reef to the right there," said Bolton. "I think we could lower boats now and get most of the people ashore."

"You're the Captain," said Tarzan.

Bolton ordered all hands on deck, and the men to their boat stations, but a number of Lascars seized the first boat and started lowering it away. De Groote rushed forward with drawn pistol in an effort to stop them; but he was too late, as they had already lowered away. His first inclination was to fire into them as an example to the others, but instead he

turned and held off the remaining Lascars, who were about to seize a second boat. Bolton and Tibbet joined him with drawn pistols, and the Lascars fell back.

"Shoot the first man who disobeys an order," directed Bolton. "Now," he continued, "we'll wait to see how that boat fares before we lower another."

The Saigon was drifting helplessly toward the reef, as passengers and crew lined the rail watching the crew of the life-boat battling the great seas in an effort to make the opening in the reef.

"If they make it at all, it's going to be close," said Dr. Crouch.

"And the closer in the Saigon drifts, the more difficult it is going to be for

following boats," said Colonel Leigh.

"The bounders will never make it," said Algy, "and serves them jolly well right."

"I believe they are going to make it," said Patricia. "What do you think, Tarzan?"

"I doubt it," replied the ape-man, "and if they can't make it with every oar manned and no passengers, the other boats wouldn't have a ghost of a show."

"But isn't it worth trying?" asked the girl. "If the Saigon goes on that reef, we are all lost; in the boat we would at least, have a fighting chance."

"The wind and the sea are both going down," said Tarzan; "there is quiet water just beyond the reef, and as the

Saigon wouldn't break up immediately, I think we would have a better chance that way than in the boats, which would be stove in and sunk the moment they struck the reef."

"I think you are right there," said Bolton; "but in an emergency like this, were all our lives are at stake, I can speak only for myself; I shall remain with the ship, but if there are enough who wish to take to a boat to man it properly, I will have number four boat lowered;" he looked around at the ship's company, but every eye was upon the boat driving toward the reef and no one seemed inclined to take the risk.

"They're not going to make it," said Tibbet.

"Not by a long way," agreed Dr. Crouch.

"Look!" exclaimed Janette Laon, "they're running straight for it now."

"The bounders have got more sense than I thought they had," growled Colonel Leigh; "they see they can't make the opening and now they are going to try to ride a wave over the reef."

"With luck they may make it," said Dolton.

"They'll need the luck of the Irish," said Crouch.

"There they go!" cried Algy. "Look at the bloody blighters row."

"They took that wave just right," said Tibbet; "they're riding it fast."

"There they go!" cried Janette.

The lifeboat was rushing toward the reef just below the crest of a great sea, the Lascars pulling furiously to hold their position. "They're over!" cried Patricia. But they were not; the prow struck a projecting piece of coral, and the on rushing breaker upended the boat, hurling the Lascars into the lagoon.

"Well, the men got across if the boat didn't," remarked Crouch.

"I hope they can swim," said Janette.

"I hope they can't," growled the Colonel.

They watched the men floundering in the water for a minute or two as they started to swim toward shore, and then Janette exclaimed, "Why, they're

standing up; they're walking!"

"That not surprising," said Bolton; "many of these coral lagoons are shallow."

Both the wind and the sea were dying down rapidly and the Saigon was drifting, but slowly, toward the reef; however, it would not be long before she struck. The Saigon, illy equipped, afforded only a few life belts. Three of these were given to the women, and the others to members of the crew who said they could not swim.

"What do you think our chances are, Captain?" ask Colonel Leigh.

"If we are lifted on the reef, we may have a chance, if she hangs there for even a few minutes," replied Bolton,

"but if she's stove in before she lodges, she'll sink in deep water on this side of the reef, and—well —you're guess is as good as mine, sir; I'm going to have the rafts unshipped, the boats lowered on deck and out loose—get as much stuff loose as will float and carry people," and he gave orders to the crew to carry out this work.

While the men were engaged in this work, there came a shout from amidships: "Hi there, de Groote!" called Krause; "are you going to leave us here to drown like rats in a trap?"

De Groote looked at Tarzan questioningly, and the ape-man turned to Janette. "Let me have the key to the cages," he said, and when she had

handed it to him, he went to the cage in which Krause and the others were confined. "I'm going to let you out," he said, "but see that you behave yourselves; I have plenty of reason to kill any of you white men, and I won't need much more of an excuse."

Abdullah was a sick-looking Arab, and all three of the white men were sullen and scowling as they came out of the cage.

As they approached the rail, Bolton shouted, "Stand by the boats and rafts; she's going to strike!"

CHAPTER 10

The ship's company stood in tense expectancy as a wave lifted the Saigon above a maelstrom of water surging over the reef.

As the sea dropped them with terrific impact upon the jagged coral rocks, the grinding and splintering of wood sounded her death knell. She reeled drunkenly toward the deep water outside the reef. More than one heart stood still in that tense moment; if she slipped back into the sea many would be lost, and there was no doubt now but that she was slipping.

"Percy," said Mrs. Leigh to the Colonel—she always called him Percy in her softer moods—"Percy, if I have

been trying at times, I hope that you will forgive me now that we face our Maker."

"Harrumph!" grunted the Colonel. "It is all my fault; I should never have read that Beebe yarn."

As the Saigon slipped back into deep water, a following wave, larger than that which had preceded it, lifted the ship again and dropped her heavily upon the reef. This time she lodged firmly, and as the wave receded, she was left resting with her decks almost level.

"I say," said Algy, "this is a little bit of all right, what? Just like Noah's Ark—a bally old tub full of wild animals sitting high and dry on top of Mount Ararat."

A succession of smaller waves beat against the Saigon while the men worked to get the boats and the rafts over into the lagoon; and then another large wave broke entirely over the ship, but she did not budge from her position.

Lines leading to the ship held the boats and the rafts from drifting away, but now the question arose as to how to get the women down to them. The reef was narrow, and the Saigon rested only a few feet from its shoreward side. An athletic man might leap from the rail, clear the reef, and land in the lagoon; but Mrs. Leigh was not an athletic man, and she was the real problem.

She looked down over the rail of the ship at the waters still surging across the

reef. "I can never get down there, William," she said; "you go on. Pay no attention to me; perhaps we shall meet in a happier world."

"Bosh and nonsense" exclaimed the Colonel. "We'll get you down some way."

"I'll go down there," said Tarzan, "and you lower her from one of the ship's davits; I'll see that she's gotten on one of the rafts safely. "

"Never," said Mrs. Leigh emphatically.

Tarzan turned to Captain Bolton. "I shall expect you to lower her immediately," he said, "and there will be no nonsense about it. I'm going down now to see how deep the water is inside

the reef. Those who can't swim can jump in, and I will help them into one of the boats or onto a raft." He climbed to the top of the rail, poised there a moment, and then leaped far out, and dove towards the lagoon.

All hands started towards the rail to watch him. They saw him make a shallow dive and then turn over and disappear beneath the surface. Presently his head broke the water, and he looked up. "It is plenty deep right here," he said.

Patricia Leigh-Burden stripped off her life belt, climbed to the rail, and dove. When she came up, Tarzan was beside her. "I don't need to ask if you can swim," he said.

She smiled. "I'll stay here and help

you with the others," she said. Janette Laon was the next to jump. She did not dive, and she just cleared the reef.

Tarzan had hold of her before she reached the surface. He still supported her when their heads were above water.

"Can you swim?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

"You are a very brave girl," he said, as he swam towards one of the boats with her and helped her aboard.

By this time, they had rigged a boatswain's chair and were lowering a highly irate and protesting Mrs. Leigh over the ship's side. As she reached the surface of the lagoon, Tarzan was awaiting her.

"Young man," she snapped, "If anything happens to me, it will be your fault."

"Be quiet," said Tarzan, "and get out of that chair."

Probably in all her life, Penelope Leigh had never before been spoken to in the voice of real authority; it not only took her breath away, but it cowed her; and she slipped meekly out of the boatswain's chair and into Tarzan's arms. He swam with her to one of the rafts and helped her on, for they were easier to board than the lifeboats.

Tarzan swam back to the ship. The boatswain's chair was still swinging close above the water. He seized it and climbed hand over hand to the deck. One

by one, men were jumping or diving from the rail when he stopped them.

"I want ten or fifteen volunteers for some very dangerous work," he said; "they have got to have what the Americans call 'guts'."

"What do you intend doing," asked Bolton.

"Now that everybody else is safely on shore, I am going to set the animals free," said the ape man, "and make them take to the water."

"But, man," cried Colonel Leigh, "many of them are dangerous beasts of prey."

"Their lives are as important to them as ours are to us," replied Tarzan, "and I am not going to leave them here to die of

starvation."

"Quite right, quite right," said the Colonel, "but why not destroy them. That would be the humane way."

"I did not suggest destroying your wife or your friends," said Tarzan, "and nobody is going to destroy my friends."

"Your friends?" ejaculated the Colonel.

"Yes, my friends," replied the Lord of the Jungle, "or perhaps it would be better to say, my people. I was born and raised among them; I never saw a human being until I was almost grown, nor did I see a white man 'til I was fully twenty years old. Will anyone volunteer to help me save them?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Colonel;

"that is certainly a sporting proposition; I'm with you, young man."

De Groote, Bolton, Tibbet, Crouch, a number of the Naiad crew and several Chinese volunteered to help him, as well as the three Indian keepers, who had been signed on by Krause to look after the animals.

While those who had not volunteered to remain with him were leaving the ship, Tarzan released the orangutans. He spoke to them in their own language, and they clung to him like frightened children; then he led his men below to the animal deck and opened the great double doors in the side of the ship, through which all of the larger animals had been loaded.

There were three Indian elephants, and these he liberated first, as they were docile and well trained. He had one of the Indian mahouts mount the best of these and told him to ride this one into the lagoon the moment that a wave covered the reef. There was a brief battle with the animal before it could be forced to take the plunge; but once he was swimming, it was comparatively easy to get the other two elephants to follow him, and then the African elephants were released. These were wild beasts and far more dangerous and difficult, but once their leader saw the Indian elephants swimming away he lumbered into the lagoon and followed, and his fellows trailed after him.

The cages of the lions and tigers were dragged one by one to the door, the doors of the cages opened, and the cages tilted until the beasts were spilled out. The lesser animals were disembarked in the same way.

It was a long and arduous job, but at last it was over, and only the snakes remained.

"What are you going to do about them?" asked Bolton.

"Histah, the snake, has always been my enemy," replied Tarzan; "him, we shall destroy."

They stood in the doorway of the ship watching the beasts making their way toward shore, from which the empty boats and rafts were already being

returned to the ship in accordance with Bolton's orders.

Along the shore line was a narrow beach, and beyond that dense jungle broke gradually upward to the foot of the green-clad, volcanic mountains which formed a fitting backdrop for the wild and desolate scene.

The landing party huddled on the beach as the wild creatures swam or waded to shore. But the animals bolted into the jungle as fast as they came out of the water. A single elephant turned and trumpeted, and a lion roared, whether in challenge or thanksgiving, who may know? And then the jungle closed about them, and they took up their new lives in a strange world.

Most of the sailors had returned to the ship with the rafts and boats, and the remainder of the day was spent in transporting the ship's stores to the beach.

For two days they worked, stripping the ship of everything that might add to their comfort or convenience, and while half of the men worked at this, the other half cut a clearing in the jungle, for a permanent camp. They had chosen this site because a little stream of fresh water ran through it.

In the afternoon of the third day when the work was almost completed, a little party of a dozen men looked down upon the camp from the summit of the cliff that hemmed the beach upon the south.

Concealed by the verdure there, they watched the first strangers who had come to their island for many a long year.

CHAPTER 11

The men who watched the castaways of the Saigon were warriors. They wore waist girdles which passed between their legs; the ends which hung down from the back, were elaborately embroidered with colored threads or feather mosaic work; over their shoulders was draped a square mantle, and they wore sandals made of hide. Their heads were adorned with feather headdresses, and one among them wore one of feather mosaic; his dress ornaments were of jade, and his belt and sandals were studded with jade and gold, as were his armlets and leglets; in his nose was a carved ornament, which passed through a hole in the septum; his

lip and earplugs were likewise of jade. All the trappings of this man were more gorgeous than those of his companions, for Xatl Din was a noble.

The brown faces of all were tattooed, but the tattooing on Xatl Din was by far the most elaborate. They were armed with bows and arrows, and each carried two quivers; each also carried a spear, and a sling to hurl stones. In addition to these weapons, each of the warriors carried a long sword made of hard wood, into the sides of which were set at intervals blades of obsidian. For protection, they carried wooden shields covered with the skins of animals. They watched the strangers for some time and then melted away into the jungle behind

them.

The ship's charts and instruments had been brought ashore, and that noon Captain Bolton had sought to establish their position; but when he had done so and had consulted the chart, he discovered that there was no land within hundreds of miles in any direction.

"There must have been something wrong with my calculations," he said to de Groote; so they checked and double-checked, but the result was always the same—they were somewhere in the middle of the South Pacific, hundreds of miles from land.

"It can't be possible," said Bolton, "that there is an undiscovered and uncharted island anywhere in the

world."

"I should have said as much," agreed de Groote, "until now; your figures are absolutely correct, sir, and we are on an uncharted island."

"With about as much chance of ever being picked up," said Bolton, "as we would be if we were on the moon. If no ship has touched here since the days of da Gama, it is safe to assume that no ship will touch here during the rest of our lifetime."

"If no ship has touched here in four hundred years," said de Groote, "our chances are really excellent, for there has got to be a first time you know; and the law of chance, that this island will remain undiscovered, is just about run

out."

"You mean the statutes of limitations will operate in our favor," laughed Bolton. "Well, I hope you're right."

Tarzan had worked with the others. Comfortable shelters had been erected for the Colonel and his wife and for the two girls.

Now Tarzan summoned the entire company. "I have called you together," he said, "to say that we will form two camps. I will not have Abdullah, Krause, Schmidt, Oubanovitch, or the Lascars in this camp. They have caused all the trouble. Because of them we are castaways on an uncharted island, where, according to Captain Bolton, we may have to spend the rest of our lives.

If we permit them to remain in our camp, they will again make trouble; I know the kind of men they are," then he turned to Krause. "You will take your party north, at least two long marches, and don't any of you come within ten miles of this camp. If you do, I kill. That is all. Go."

"We'll go, all right," said Oubanovitch, "but we'll take our share of the provisions, firearms, and ammunition."

"You will take your lives, and that is all," said Tarzan.

"You don't mean that you're going to send them away into this strange jungle without food or weapons," demanded the Colonel.

"That is exactly what I mean," said

Tarzan, "and they are lucky that it is no worse."

"You can't do that to us," shouted Oubanovitch, "you can't keep a lot of dirty Capitalists in affluence and grind down the poor working man. I know your type, a fawning sycophant, hoping to curry favor with the rich and powerful."

"My word!" exclaimed Algy, "the blighter's making a speech."

"Just like Hyde Park," said Patricia.

"That's right," screamed Oubanovitch; "the smart bourgeoisie ridiculing the honest laboring man."

"Get out," growled Tarzan.

Abdullah pulled at Oubanovitch's

sleeve. "You'd better come," he whispered; "I know that fellow; he is a devil; he would rather kill us than not."

The others started moving away towards the north, and they dragged Oubanovitch along with them; but he turned and shouted back, "I'll go, but I'll be back, when the poor slaves that are working for you now realize that they should be the masters, not you."

"Well!" exclaimed Penelope Leigh, "I'm glad that they are gone; that is something, at least, " and she cast a meaningful glance at Tarzan.

Coconut palms and bananas grew in profusion in the jungle around the camp, and there were breadfruit and edible tubers and a few papaya trees, while the

lagoon abounded in fish; so there was little likelihood of their starving, but Tarzan craved flesh.

After the camp was completed, he set to work to make the : weapons of the chase which he liked best to use. His bow, arrows, and quiver, he had to make himself; but among the ships stores, he found a suitable knife and a rope and from a gaff, he fashioned a spear. This last was a tacit acknowledgment of the presence of the great carnivores he had turned loose upon the island. And then, one morning, Tarzan disappeared from camp before the others had awakened. He followed the course of the little stream that ran down from the verdure-clad hills, but, to avoid the tangle of

underbrush, he swung through the trees.

I said that he had left camp before the others were awake; and this was what Tarzan thought, but presently he sensed that he was being followed and looking back, saw the two orangutans swinging through the trees in his wake.

"Tarzan hunts," he said in the language of the great apes, when they had come up to him; "make no noise."

"Tarzan hunts, mangani make no noise," one of them assured him. And so the three of them swung silently through the trees of the silent forest.

On the lower slopes of the mountains, Tarzan came upon the elephants eating on tender shoots. He spoke to them, and they rumbled a greeting in their throats.

They were not afraid, and they did not move away. Tarzan thought he would learn how friendly they might be, and so he dropped down close beside a great African bull and spoke to him in the language that he had used all his life when conversing with his beloved Tantor.

It is not really a language, and I do not know what name to call it by, but through it Tarzan could convey his feelings more than his wishes to the great beasts that had been his play-fellows since his childhood.

"Tantor," he said, and laid his hand upon the great beast's shoulder. The huge bull swayed to and fro and reached back and touched the ape-man with his trunk,

an inquisitive, questioning touch; and, as Tarzan spoke soothingly, the touch became a caress. And then the ape-man moved around in front of the great beast and laid his hand upon his trunk and said, "Nala!" The trunk moved smoothly over his body, and Tarzan repeated, "Nala! Tantor, Nala!;" and then the trunk wound around him and lifted him in air.

"B'yat, Tantor," commanded Tarzan, "tand b'yat!" and the bull lowered Tarzan to his head.

"Vando!" said Tarzan, and scratched the great beast behind his ears.

The other elephants went on with their feeding, paying no further attention to the ape-man, but the orang-utans sat in a nearby tree and scolded, for they were

afraid of Tantor.

Now, Tarzan thought that he would try an experiment, and he swung from the bull's back into a nearby tree and went off a little distance into the jungle; then he called back, "Yud, Tantor, yud b'yat."

Through the forest and the undergrowth came an answering rumble from the throat of the bull. Tarzan listened; he heard the cracking of twigs and the crashing of underbrush, and presently the great bulk of Tantor loomed above him.

"Vando, Tantor," he said, and swung away through the trees, much to the relief of the orang-utans, who had looked with disfavor upon this whole procedure.

The mountain rose steeply before

them now, and there were often places where only Tarzan or his simian friends might go. At last the three came to a ledge that ran towards the south. It led away from the stream, however, from which Tarzan had departed at the foot of a waterfall which tumbled over a cliff the precipitous and slippery sides of which might have been negotiated by a fly or a lizard but by little else.

They followed the ledge around a shoulder of the mountain and came out upon a large level mesa dense with forest. It looked to Tarzan like a good hunting ground, and here he again took to the trees.

Presently, Usha, the wind, brought to his nostrils a familiar scent —the scent

of Horta, the boar. Here was meat, and instantly Tarzan was the wild beast stalking its prey.

He had not gone far, however, before two other scents impinged upon his sensitive nostrils—the scent spoor of Numa, the lion, and mingled with it, that of man.

These two scent spoors could be mingled for but one of two reasons; either the man was bunting the lion, or the lion was bunting the man. And as Tarzan detected the scent of only a single man, he assumed that the lion was the hunter, and so he swung off through the trees, in the direction from which the scent came.

CHAPTER 12

Thak Chan was hunting no lion. It was impossible that he could have been hunting a lion, for he had never seen or heard of one in all his life; neither had any of his progenitors through all recorded time. A long time ago, before Chac Tutul Xiu had migrated from Yucatan, Thak Chan's people had known the jaguar, and the memory of it had been carried across the great water to this distant island and preserved in enduring stone in the temples and upon the stelae that had been built here. Thak Chan was a hunter from the city of Chichen Itza, that Chac Tutul Xiu had founded upon this island which he had found and had named Uxal for the city of his birth.

Thak Chan was hunting the wild boar, which, if aroused, may be quite as formidable as Numa, the lion; but, up to now, Thak Chan had had no luck.

Thak Chan entered a small natural clearing in the forest, and as be did so, his startled attention was attracted to the opposite side by an ominous growl. Confronting him was the snarling face of the most terrifying beast he had ever seen.

The great lion slunk slowly out into the clearing, and Thak Chan turned and fled. The thunderous roar that followed him almost paralyzed him with terror as he raced for his life through the familiar mazes of the forest, while close behind the hungry lion loped after its prey.

There could have been no hope for Thak Chan in that unequal race even if he had remained upon his feet; but when he tripped and fell, he knew that it was the end. He turned to face this fearsome, unknown creature; but he did not arise, and, still sitting on the ground, he awaited the attack with poised spear.

The lion appeared then from around a curve in the jungle trail. His yellow-green eyes were round and staring. To Thak Chan, they seemed burning with fires of fury. The beast's great yellow fangs were bared in a snarl so malignant, that Thak Chan quailed anew. The lion did not charge; he merely trotted towards his prey, for here was only a puny man-thing—no worthy antagonist

for the King of Beasts.

Thak Chan prayed to strange gods as he saw death approaching; and then, as though in answer to his prayers, an amazing thing happened; a naked man, a giant to Thak Chan, dove from a tree above the trail full upon the back of that savage beast for which Thak Chan did not even have a name. A mighty arm went around the beast's neck, and powerful legs wrapped around the small of its body. It rose upon its hind legs roaring hideously, and sought to reach the thing upon its back with fang or talon. It leaped into the air, twisting and turning; it threw itself upon the ground and rolled over in frantic effort to free itself: but the silent creature clung to it

tenaciously, and with its free hand, drove a long knife again and again into its tawny side, until, with a final thunderous roar, the beast rolled over upon its side, quivered convulsively for a moment and lay still.

Thak Chan had watched this amazing battle with feelings of mixed terror and hope, half convinced that this was indeed a god come to save him, but almost as fearful of the god as of the beast.

As the great beast died, Thak Chan saw the man, or god, or whatever it was, rise to his feet and place one of them upon the body of his kill and then raise his face to the heavens and voice a long drawn out scream so terrifying that Thak

Chan shuddered and covered his ears with his palms.

For the first time since it had risen from the floor of the ocean the island of Uxmal heard the victory cry of a bull ape that had made its kill.

CHAPTER 13

Thak Chan knew of many gods, and he tried to place this one. He knew them as the mighty ones, the captains that go before, and the old ones. There was Huitz-Hok, Lord Hills and Valleys; Che, Lord Forest; and innumerable earth gods; then of course there was Itzamna, ruler of the sky, son of Hunab Kuh, the first god and Hun Ahau, god of the underworld, Metnal, a cold, dank, gloomy place beneath the earth, where the rank and file and those who led evil lives went after death; and there was also Aychuykak, god of war, who was always carried into battle by four captains on a special litter.

Perhaps this one was Che, Lord

Forest; and so Thak Chan addressed him thus, and being polite, thanked him for saving him from the strange beast. However, when Che replied, it was in a language that Thak Chan had never heard before, and which he thought perhaps was the language of the gods.

Tarzan looked at the strange little brown man who spoke this amazing language which he could not understand; then he said, "Dako- zan," which in the language of the great apes means "meat;" but Thak Chan only shook his head and apologized for being so stupid.

Seeing that he was getting nowhere this way, Tarzan took an arrow from his quiver and with its point drew a picture of Horta, the boar, in the well-packed

earth of the trail; then he fitted the arrow to his bow and drove the shaft into the picture behind the left shoulder.

Thak Chan grinned and nodded excitedly; then he motioned Tarzan to follow him. As he started away along the trail, he chanced to look up and see the two orang-utans perched above him and looking down at him. This was too much for the simple mind of Thak Chan; first the strange and horrible beast, then a god, and now these two hideous creatures. Trembling, Thak Chan fitted an arrow to his bow; but when he aimed it at the apes, Tarzan snatched the weapon from him, and called to the orang-utans, which came down and stood beside him.

Thak Chan was now convinced that these also were gods, and he was quite overcome by the thought that he was consorting with three of them. He wanted to hurry right back to Chichen Itza and tell everybody he knew of the miraculous happenings of this day, but then it occurred to him that nobody would believe him and that the priests might become angry. He recalled, too, that men had been chosen as victims of the sacrificial rites at the temple for much less than this.

There must be some way. Thak Chan thought and thought as he led Tarzan of the Apes through the forest in search of wild boar; and at last he hit upon a magnificent scheme; he would lead the

three gods back to Chichen Itza that all men might see for themselves that Thak Chan spoke the truth.

Tarzan thought that he was being led in search of Horta, the boar; and when a turn in the trail brought them to the edge of the jungle, and he saw an amazing city, he was quite as surprised as Thak Chan had been when he had come to the realization that his three companions were gods. Tarzan could see that the central part of the city was built upon a knoll on the summit of which rose a pyramid surmounted by what appeared to be a temple. The pyramid was built of blocks of lava which formed steep steps leading to the summit. Around the pyramid were other buildings which hid

its base from Tarzan's view; and around all this central portion of the city was a wall, pierced occasionally by gates. Outside the wall were flimsy dwellings of thatch, doubtless the quarters of the poorer inhabitants of the city.

"Chichen Itza," said Thak Chan, pointing and beckoning Tarzan to follow him.

With the natural suspicion of the wild beast which was almost inherent with him, the ape man hesitated. He did not like cities, and he was always suspicious of strangers, but presently curiosity got the better of his judgment, and he followed Thak Chan toward the city. They passed men and women working in fields where maize, and

beans, and tubers were being cultivated —a monument to the perspicacity of Chac Tutul Xiu, who over four hundred years before, had had the foresight to bring seeds and bulbs with him from Yucatan.

The men and women in the fields looked up in amazement as they saw Thak Chan's companions, but they were still more amazed when Thak Chan announced proudly that they were Che, Lord Forest, and two of the earth gods.

By this time, however, the nerves of the two earth gods had endured all that they could; and these deities turned and scampered off toward the jungle, lumbering along in the half stooping posture of the great apes. Thak Chan

called after them pleadingly, but to no avail, and a moment later he watched them swing into the trees and disappear.

By this time, the warriors guarding the gates they were approaching had become very much interested and not a little excited. They had summoned an officer, and he was awaiting Thak Chan and his companion when they arrived before the gate. The officer was Xatl Din, who had commanded the party of warriors that had discovered the castaways upon the beach.

"Who are you," he demanded, "and whom do you bring to Chichen Itza?"

"I am Thak Chan, the hunter," replied Tarzan's companion, "and this is Che, Lord Forest, who saved me from a

terrible beast that was about to devour me. The two who ran away were earth gods. The people of Chichen Itza must have offended them or they would have come into the city."

Xatl Din had never seen a god, but he realized that there was something impressive about this almost naked stranger who towered high above him and his fellows, for Tarzan's height was accentuated by the fact that the Maya are a small people; and compared with them, he looked every inch a god. However, Xatl Din was not wholly convinced, for he had seen strangers on the beach, and he guessed that this might be one of them.

"Who are you who comes to Chichen

Itza?" he demanded of Tarzan. "If you are indeed Che, Lord Forest, give me some proof of it, that Cit Coh Xiu, the king, and Chal Yip Xiu, the Ah Kin Mai, may prepare to welcome you befittingly."

"Che, Lord Forest, does not understand our language, most noble one," interposed Thak Chan; "he understands only the language of the gods."

"The gods can understand all languages," said Xatl Din.

"I should have said that he would not debase himself by speaking it," Thak Chan corrected himself. "Undoubtedly he understands all that we say, but it would not be meet for a god to speak the

language of mortals."

"You know a great deal for a simple hunter," said Xatl Din superciliously.

"Those whom the gods make friends with must be very wise," said Thak Chan loftily.

Thak Chan had been feeling more and more important all along. Never before had he had such a protracted conversation with a noble, in fact he had seldom ever said more than, "Yes, most noble one," or "No, most noble one." Thak Chan's assurance and the impressive appearance of the stranger were, at last, too much for Xatl Din, and he admitted them into the city, accompanying them himself toward the temple which was a part of the king's

palace.

Here were warriors and priests and nobles resplendant in feathers and jade; and to one of the nobles who was also a priest, Xatl Din repeated the story that Thak Chan had told him.

Tarzan, finding himself surrounded by armed men, again became suspicious, questioning the wisdom of his entry into this city which might prove a trap from which he might find it difficult to escape.

A noble had gone to inform Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest, that one who claimed to be Che, Lord Forest, had come to visit him in his temple.

Like most high priests, Chal Yip Xiu was a trifle skeptical about the existence of gods; they were all right for the

common people, but a high priest had no need for them. As a matter of fact, he considered himself as a personification of all the gods, and his power in Chichen Itza lent color to this belief.

"Go fetch the hunter and his companion," he said to the noble who had brought the message.

Shortly thereafter, Tarzan of the Apes strode into the presence of Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest of Chichen Itza, and with him were Thak Chan, the hunter, and Xatl Din, the noble, with several of his fellows, and a score of warriors and lesser priests.

When Chal Yip Xiu saw the stranger, he was impressed; and, to be on the safe side, he addressed him respectfully; but

when Xatl Din told him that the god refused to speak the language of mortals, the high priest became suspicious.

"You reported the presence of strangers on the beach," he said to Xatl Din; "could not this be one of them?"

"It could, holy one," replied the noble.

"If this one is a god," said Chal Yip Xiu, "then the others must all be gods. But you told me that their ship was wrecked and that they were cast ashore."

"That is right, holy one," replied Xatl Din.

"Then they are only mortals," said the high priest, "for gods would have controlled the winds and the waves, and their ship would not have been

wrecked."

"That, too, is true, most wise one," agreed Xatl Din.

"Then this man is no god," stated Chal Yip Xiu, "but he will make an excellent sacrifice to the true gods. Take him away."

CHAPTER 14

At this unlooked for turn of affairs, Thak Chan was so shocked and astounded that, although he was only a poor hunter, he dared raise his voice in protest to Chal Yip Xiu, the Ah Kin Mai. "But, most holy one," he cried, "you should have seen the things that he did. You should have seen the great beast which was about to devour me, and how he leaped upon its back and killed it; none but a god could have done such a thing. Had you seen all this and the two earth gods that accompanied him, you would know that he must indeed be Che, Lord Forest."

"Who are you?" demanded Chal Yip Xiu in a terrible voice.

"I am Thak Chan, the hunter," replied the now frightened man meekly.

"Then stick to your hunting, Thak Chan," warned Chal Yip Xiu, "or you will end upon the sacrificial block or in the waters of the sacred well. Get you gone." Thak Chan went; he sneaked out like a dog with its tail between its legs.

But when warriors laid hands upon Tarzan, that was a different story. Although he had not understood Chal Yip Xiu's words, he had known by the man's tone and demeanor that all was not well, and when he had seen Thak Chan sneak away, he was doubly convinced of it; and then warriors closed in and laid hands upon him.

The high priest had received him in a

colonnade upon one side of a peristyle, and Tarzan's keen eyes had quickly taken in the entire scene immediately after he was ushered into the presence of the high priest. He had seen the garden behind the row of columns and the low buildings beyond the peristyle. What lay immediately beyond these buildings he did not know, but he did know that the city wall was not far away, and beyond the wall and the fields there was the forest.

He shook off the detaining hands of the warriors and leaped to the low platform where Chal Yip Xiu sat; and, hurling the high priest aside, he leaped into the garden, crossed the peristyle at a run and swarmed up the wall of the

building beyond.

Warriors pursued him across the peristyle with imprecations and arrows and stones from the slings they carried; but only the imprecations reached him, and they were harmless.

He crossed the roof of the building and dropped into a street beyond. There were people in the street, but they fell back in terror as this bronze giant brushed them aside and trotted on toward the city wall. At the end of this street was a gate, but it was not the gate through which he had entered the city, and the warriors stationed here knew nothing of him; to them he was only an almost naked stranger, evidently a man of an alien race, and thus an enemy who

had no business within the walls of Chichen Itza; so they tried to bar his way and arrest him, but Tarzan seized one of them and holding him by the ankles used him as a club to force his way through the other warriors and out of the gate.

He was free at last, but then he had never had any doubt but what he would be free, for he looked with contempt upon these little men, primitively armed. How could they hope to hold Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle. Just then a stone from one of their slings struck him on the back of the head; and he fell forward upon his face, unconscious.

When Tarzan regained consciousness, he found himself in a wooden cage in a room dimly lit by a single window. The

walls of the room were of beautifully dressed and fitted blocks of lava. The window was about two feet square and was near the ceiling; there was also a doorway in the room, closed by a heavy wooden door, which Tarzan guessed was bolted upon the outside. He did not know what fate lay in store for him, but he imagined that it would be most unpleasant, for the face of Chal Yip Xiu had been cruel indeed, as had the faces of many of the priests and nobles.

Tarzan tested the bars of his wooden cage and smiled. He knew that he could walk out of that whenever he pleased but getting out of the room might be another question; the window would have been large enough had there not been two

stone bars set in the opening; the door looked very substantial.

The back wall of the cage was about two feet from the back wall of the room. Upon this side, Tarzan ripped off two of the bars and stepped out of the cage. He went at once to the door but could neither open it nor force it; however, he waited patiently before it with one of the broken bars of his cage in his hand—he knew that someone would open that door eventually.

He did not know that he had been unconscious a long time and that night had passed and that it was day again. Presently he heard voices outside his cell; they grew in numbers and volume until he knew that there was a great

concourse of people there, and now he heard the booming of drums and the throaty blasts of trumpets and the sound of chanting.

As he was wondering what was going on outside in the city, he heard the scraping of the bolt outside his door. He waited, the broken bar held firmly in one hand; and then the door opened and a warrior entered—a warrior to whom death came quickly and painlessly.

Tarzan stepped into the doorway and looked out. Almost directly in front of him, a priest stood in front of an altar across which a girl was stretched upon her back; four men in long embroidered robes and feather headdresses held her there, one at each leg and one at each

arm. The priest stood above her with knife of obsidian raised above her breast.

Tarzan took in the whole picture at a glance. The girl meant nothing to him; the death of a human being did not mean much to him, he who had seen so many creatures die, and knew that death was the natural consequence of life; but the cruelty and heartlessness of the ceremony angered him, and he was imbued with a sudden desire to thwart the authors of it, rather than with any humanitarian urge to rescue the girl. The priest's back was toward him as he leaped from his cell and snatched the knife from the upraised hand; then he lifted the priest and hurled him against

two of the lesser priests who held the girl, breaking their holds and sending them crashing to the temple floor. The other two priests he struck down with his wooden club. The astounding performance left the onlookers stunned and breathless, and no hand was raised to stop him as he lifted the girl from the altar, slung her across one shoulder, and leaped through the temple doorway.

Tarzan recalled the route by which he had been brought to the palace temple, and he followed it back now out into the city, past two astounded guards at the palace gate. They saw him disappear into a side street; but they dared not desert their posts to follow him, but almost immediately a howling mob

surged past them in pursuit of the stranger who had defiled their temple and snatched a sacrifice from the altar of their god.

The city was practically deserted, for all the inhabitants had gathered in the temple square to witness the sacrifice, and so Tarzan ran unmolested and unobserved through the narrow, winding side street of Chichen Itza. He ran swiftly, for he could hear the howls of the pursuing mob, and he had no wish to be overtaken by it.

The girl across his shoulder did not struggle to escape; she was far too terrified. Snatched from death by this strange almost naked giant, she could only apprehend what a terrible fate

awaited her. She had heard the story that Thak Chan had told, for it had spread throughout the city; and she thought that perhaps this was indeed Che, Lord Forest. The vaguest hint of such a possibility would have so terrified little Itzl Cha that she could not have moved had she wished to, for gods are very terrifying creatures and not to be antagonized. If Che, Lord Forest, wished to carry her away, it would be certain death to oppose him; that she knew, and so Itzl Cha lay very quietly on the broad shoulder of her rescuer.

Tarzan could tell by the diminishing volume of the sounds of pursuit that he had thrown the mob off his trail. He soon reached the city wall at some distance

from any gate. Alone he could have gained the top; but burdened with the girl, he could not; so he looked about him quickly for some means of scaling it.

Just inside the wall was a narrow street, about fifteen feet wide, which was lined with buildings and sheds of different heights, and here Tarzan saw his way. To reach the roof of a low shed with the girl was no feat for the ape man, and from this shed he went to the roof of a higher structure, and then to another which was on a level with the top of the city wall.

Itzl Cha, who had kept her eyes tightly closed most of the time now opened them again. She saw that Che, Lord Forest, had carried her to the roof of a

building. Now he was running swiftly across the roof toward the narrow street which lay just within the wall. He did not slacken his speed as he approached the edge of the roof; and that made Itzl Cha close her eyes again very tightly, for she knew that they both were going to be dashed to death on the pavement in the street below.

At the edge of the roof, Tarzan leaped up and outward, alighting on the top of the wall on the opposite side of the street. Below him was the thatched roof of a laborer's hut, and to this he leaped, and from there to the ground. A moment later, with Itzl Cha gasping for breath, he was trotting across the cultivated fields toward the forest.

CHAPTER 15

Life in the camp of the castaways was well ordered and run along military lines, for Colonel Leigh had taken full command. Lacking bugles, he had set up the ship's bell, which rang at six o'clock each morning, a clanging imitation of reveille; it summoned the company to mess three times a day, and announced tattoo at nine, and taps at ten each night. Sentries guarded the camp twenty-four hours each day, arid working parties policed it, or chopped wood, or gathered such natural foods as the jungle afforded. It was indeed a model camp, from which fishing parties rowed out upon the lagoon daily, and hunting parties went into the forest in search of

game, wherewith to vary the monotony of their fruit and vegetable diet. It was the duty of the women to keep their own quarters in order and do such mending as might be required.

Tarzan's mysterious disappearance and protracted absence was the subject of considerable conversation. "It is good riddance," said Penelope Leigh. "Never, since I first saw that terrible creature, have I felt safe until now."

"I don't see how you can say such a thing," said her niece; "I should feel very much safer were he here."

"One never knew when he might take it into his head to eat one," insisted Mrs. Leigh.

"I was shut up with him for days in

that cage," said Janette Laon; "and he never showed me even the slightest incivility, let alone threatening to harm me."

"Hmph!" snorted Penelope, who had never as yet condescended to recognize the existence of Janette, let alone speak to her. She had made up her mind on first sight that Janette was a loose woman; and when Penelope Leigh made up her mind, not even an act of Parliament might change it ordinarily.

"Before he went away, he had been making weapons," recalled Patricia, "and I suppose he went into the forest to hunt; perhaps a lion or a tiger got him."

"Serve him right," snapped Mrs. Leigh. "The very idea of turning all those

wild beasts loose on this island with us. It will be a miracle if we are not all devoured."

"He went out into the jungle without any firearms," mused Janette Laon, half to herself; "I heard Colonel Leigh say that not even a pistol was missing. Just think of going into that jungle where he knew all those ferocious beasts were, and with only a gaff and some homemade arrows and a bow."

Mrs. Leigh hated to acknowledge any interest in Janette Laon's conversation, but she couldn't resist the temptation of saying, "He's probably a half-wit; most of these wild men are."

"I wouldn't know," said Janette Laon sweetly, "never having had an occasion

to associate with any."

Mrs. Leigh sniffed, and Patricia turned her back to hide a smile.

Algernon Wright-Smith, Captain Bolton, and Dr. Crouch were hunting. They had gone northward into the jungle hoping to bring fresh meat back to the camp. They were following a dim trail in the damp earth of which the footprints of pig could occasionally be identified, and these gave them hope and lured them on.

"Nasty place to meet a tusker," remarked Crouch.

"Rather," agreed Algy.

"Look here!" exclaimed Bolton, who was in advance.

"What is it?" asked Crouch.

"The pug of a tiger or a lion," replied Bolton; "fresh too—the blighter must just have crossed the trail."

Crouch and Algy examined the imprint of the beast's pug in the soft earth. "Tiger," said Crouch; "no doubt about it—I've seen too many of them to be mistaken."

"Rotten place to meet old stripes," said Algy; "I—," a coughing grunt interrupted him. "I say!" he exclaimed, "there's the beggar now."

"Where?" demanded Bolton.

"Off there to the left," said Crouch.

"Can't see a bloody thing," said Algy.

"I think we should go back," said

Bolton; "we wouldn't have a chance if that fellow charged; one of us would be sure to be killed—maybe more."

"I think you're right," said Crouch; "I don't like the idea of having that fellow between us and camp." There was a sudden crashing in the underbrush a short distance from them.

"My God!" exclaimed Algy, "here he comes!" as he threw down his gun and clambered into a tree.

The other men followed Algy's example and none too soon, for they were scarcely out of harm's way when a great Bengal tiger broke from cover and leaped into the trail. He stood looking around for a moment, and then he caught sight of the treed men and growled. His

terrible yellow-green eyes and his snarling face were turned up toward them.

Crouch commenced to laugh, and the other two men looked at him in surprise. "I'm glad there was no one here to see that," he said; "it would have been a terrible blow to British prestige."

"What the devil else could we do?" demanded Bolton. "You know as well as I do that we didn't have a ghost of a show against him, even with three guns."

"Of course not," said Algy; "couldn't have got a sight of him to fire at until he was upon us. Certainly was lucky for us there were some trees we could climb in a hurry; good old trees; I always did like trees."

The tiger came forward growling, and when he was beneath the tree in which Algy was perched, he crouched and sprang.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Algy, climbing higher; "the beggar almost got me."

Twice more the tiger sprang for one of them, and then he walked back along the trail a short distance and lay down patiently.

"The beggar's got us to rights," said Bolton. "He won't stay there forever," said Crouch.

Bolton shook his head. "I hope not," he said, "but they have an amazing amount of patience; I know a chap who was treed by one all night in Bengal."

"Oh, I say, he couldn't do that, you

know," objected Algy. "What does he take us for—a lot of bally asses? Does he think we're coming down there to be eaten up?"

"He probably thinks that when we are ripe, we'll fall off, like apples and things."

"This is deucedly uncomfortable," said Algy after a while; "I'm pretty well fed up with it. I wish I had my gun."

"It's right down there at the foot of your tree," said Crouch; "why don't you go down and get it?"

"I say, old thing!" exclaimed Algy; "I just had a brainstorm. Watch." He took off his shirt, commenced tearing it into strips which he tied together, and when he had a long string of this he made a

slip noose at one end; then he came down to a lower branch and dropped the noose down close to the muzzle of his gun, which, because of the way in which the weapon had fallen, was raised a couple of inches from the ground.

"Clever?" demanded Algy.

"Very," said Bolton. "The tiger is admiring your ingenuity; see him watching you?"

"If that noose catches behind the sight, I can draw the bally thing up here, and then I'll let old stripes have what for."

"You should have been an engineer, Algy," said Crouch.

"My mother wanted me to study for the Church," said Algy, "and my father wanted me to go into the diplomatic

corps—both make me bored; so I just played tennis instead."

"And you're rotten at that," said Crouch, laughing.

"Righto, old thing!" agreed Algy. "Look! I have it."

After much fishing, the noose had slipped over the muzzle of the gun, and as Algy pulled gently, it tightened below the sight; then he started drawing the weapon up towards him.

He had it within a foot of his hand when the tiger leaped to his feet with a roar and charged. As the beast sprang into the air towards Algy, the man dropped everything and scrambled towards safety, as the raking talons swept within an inch of his foot.

"Whe-e-ew!" exclaimed Algy, as he reached a higher branch.

"Now you've even lost your shirt," said Crouch.

The tiger stood looking up for a moment, growling and lashing his tail, and then he went back and lay down again.

"I believe the beggar is going to keep us here all night," said Algy.

CHAPTER 16

Krause and his fellows had not gone two days march from the camp of the castaways, as Tarzan had ordered them to do. They had gone only about four miles up the coast, where they had camped by another stream where it emptied into the ocean. They were a bitter and angry company as they squatted disconsolately upon the beach and ate the fruit that they had made the Lascars gather. They sweated and fumed for a couple of days and made plans and quarreled. Both Krause and Schmidt wished to command, and Schmidt won out because Krause was the bigger coward and was afraid of the madman. Abdullah Abu Nejm sat apart and hated

them all. Oubanovitch talked a great deal in a loud tone of voice and argued that they should all be comrades and that nobody should command. By a single thread of common interest were they held together—their hatred of Tarzan, because he had sent them away without arms or ammunition.

"We could go back at night and steal what we need," suggested Oubanovitch.

"I have been thinking that same thing, myself," said Schmidt. "You go back now, Oubanovitch, and reconnoiter. You can hide in the jungle just outside their camp and get a good lay of the land, so that we shall know just where the rifles are kept."

"You go yourself," said Oubanovitch,

"you can't order me around."

"I'm in command," screamed Schmidt, springing to his feet.

Oubanovitch stood up too. He was a big hulking brute, much larger than Schmidt. "So what!" he demanded.

"There's no sense in fighting among ourselves," said Krause. "Why don't you send a Lascar?"

"If I had a gun this dirty Communist would obey me," Schmidt grumbled, and then he called to one of the Lascar sailors. "Come here, Chuldrup," he ordered.

The Lascar slouched forward, sullen and scowling. He hated Schmidt; but all his life he had taken orders from white men, and the habit was strong upon him.

"You go other camp," Schmidt directed; "hide in jungle; see where guns, bullets kept."

"No go," said Chuldrup; "tiger in jungle."

"The hell you won't got," exclaimed Schmidt, and knocked the sailor down. "I'll teach you." The sailor came to his feet, a boiling cauldron of hate. He wanted to kill the white man, but he was still afraid. "Now get out of here, you heathen dog," Schmidt yelled at him; "and see that you don't come back until you find out what you want to know." Chuldrup turned and walked away, and a moment later the jungle closed behind him.

"I say!" exclaimed Algy. "What's the

blighter doing now?" The tiger had arisen and was standing, ears forward, looking back along the trail. He cocked his head on one side, listening.

"He hears something coming," said Bolton.

"There he goes," said Crouch, as the tiger slunk into the underbrush beside the trail.

"Now's our chance," said Algy.

"He didn't go far," said Bolton; "he's right there; I can see him."

"Trying to fool us," said Crouch.

Chuldrup was very much afraid; he was afraid of the jungle, but he was more afraid to return to Schmidt without the information the man wanted. He

stopped for a moment to think the matter over; should he go back and hide in the jungle for a while close to Schmidt's camp and then when there had been time for him to fulfill his mission go to Schmidt and make up a story about the location of the guns and bullets?

Chuldrup scratched his head, and then the light of a great idea broke upon him; he would go to the camp of the Englishmen, tell them what Schmidt was planning, and ask them to let him remain with them. That, he knew, was one of the best ideas that he had ever had in his life; and so he turned and trotted happily along the trail.

"Something is coming," whispered Crouch; "I can hear it," and a moment

later Chuldrup came trotting into view.

All three men shouted warnings simultaneously, but too late. As the Lascar stopped amazed and looked up at them, momentarily uncomprehending, a great tiger leaped from the underbrush and rearing up above the terrified man seized him by the shoulder.

Chuldrup screamed; the great beast shook him and then turned and dragged him off into the underbrush, while the three Englishmen, horrified, looked on helplessly.

For a few moments they could hear the screams of the man mingling with the growls of the tiger and then the screams ceased.

"My God!" exclaimed Algy, "that was

awful."

"Yes," said Dolton, "but it's our chance; he won't bother anything now that doesn't go near his kill."

Gingerly and quietly they descended to the ground, picked up their rifles, and started back toward camp; but all three were shaken by the tragedy they had witnessed.

In the camp the day's work was done; even Colonel Leigh Could find nothing more to keep the men busy.

"I must be getting old," he said to his wife.

"Getting?" she asked. " Are you just discovering it?"

The Colonel smiled indulgently; he

was always glad when Penelope was herself. Whenever she said anything pleasant or kindly he was worried. "Yes," he continued, "I must be slipping; I can't think of a damn thing for these men to do."

"It seems to me there should be plenty to do around here," said Penelope; "I am always busy."

"I think the men deserve a little leisure," said Patricia; "they've been working steadily ever since we've gotten here."

"There's nothing that breeds discontent more surely than idleness," said the Colonel; "but I'm going to let them knock off for the rest of the day."

Hans de Groote and Janette Laon

were sitting together on the beach talking.

"Life is funny," said the man. "Just a few weeks ago, I was looking forward to seeing New York City for the first time—young, fancy-free, and with three months pay in my pocket; what a time I was planning there! And now here I am somewhere in the Pacific Ocean on an island that no one ever heard of—and that's not the worst of it."

"And what is the worst of it?" asked Janette.

"That I like it, " replied de Groote.

"Like it!" she exclaimed. "But why do you like it?"

"Because you are here," he said.

The girl looked at him in surprise. "I don't understand," she said; "you certainly can't mean that the way it sounds."

"But I do, Janette," he said; "I—," his tanned face flushed. "Why is it that those three words are so hard to say when you mean them?"

She reached out and placed her hand on his. "You mustn't say them," she said; "you mustn't ever say them—to me."

"Why?" he demanded.

"You know what I have been—kicking around Singapore, Saigon, Batavia."

"I love you," said Hans de Groote, and then Janette Laon burst into tears; it had been long since she had cried except

in anger or disappointment.

"I won't let you," she said; "I won't let you."

"Don't you—love me a little, Janette?" he asked.

"I won't tell you," she said; "I won't ever tell you."

De Groote pressed her hand and smiled. "You have told me," he said.

And then they were interrupted by Patricia's voice crying, "Why, Algy, where is your shirt?"

The hunters had returned, and the Europeans gathered around to hear their story. When they had finished the Colonel harrumphed. "That settles it," he said; "there will be no more hunting in

the jungle; no one would have a chance against a tiger or a lion in that tangle of undergrowth."

"It's all your fault, William," snapped Mrs. Leigh; "you should have taken complete command; you should not have permitted that wildman to turn those beasts loose on us."

"I still think that it was quite the sporting thing to do," said the Colonel, "and don't forget that it was quite as dangerous for him as for us. As far as we know the poor devil may have been killed by one of them already."

"And serve him quite right," said Mrs. Leigh; "anyone who will run around the way he does in the presence of ladies has no business to live—at least not

among decent people."

"I think the fellow was just a little bit of all right," said the Colonel, "and don't forget, Penelope, if it had not been for him, we would probably be a great deal worse off than we are now."

"Don't forget, Aunt Penelope, that he rescued you from the Saigon."

"I am doing my best to forget it," said Mrs. Leigh.

CHAPTER 17

When Itzl Cha realized that she was being carried off toward the forest, she was not quite sure what her feelings were. Back in Chichen Itza was certain death, for the gods could not be lightly robbed of their victims; and, were she ever to return, she knew that she would be again offered up in sacrifice. What lay ahead she could not even guess; but Itzl Cha was young and life was sweet; and perhaps Che, Lord Forest, would not kill her.

When they reached the forest Che did an amazing thing: he leaped to the low branch of a tree and then swung upward, carrying her swiftly high above the ground. Now indeed was Itzl Cha

terrified.

Presently Che stopped and voiced a long drawn-out call—an eerie cry that echoed through the forest; then he went on.

The girl had summoned sufficient courage to keep her eyes open, but presently she saw something that made her wish to close them again; however, fascinated, she continued to look at two grotesque creatures swinging through the trees to meet them, jabbering as they came.

Che replied in the same strange jargon, and Itzl Cha knew that she was listening to the language of the gods, for these two must indeed be the two earth gods of whom Thak Chan had spoken.

When these two reached Che, all three stopped and spoke to each other in that language she could not understand. It was then that Itzl Cha chanced to glance down at the ground into a little clearing upon the edge of which they were, and there she saw the body of a terrible beast; and she knew that it was the same one from which Che had rescued Thak Chan, the hunter.

She wished that the skeptics in Chichen Itza could see all that she had seen, for then they would know that these were indeed gods; and they would be sorry and frightened because they had treated Lord Forest as they had.

Her divine rescuer carried her to a mountain trail. And there he set her

down upon the ground and let her walk. Now she had a good look at him; how beautiful he was! Indeed a god. The two earth gods waddled along with them, and from being afraid Itzl Cha commenced to be very proud when she thought of the company in which she was. What other girl in Chichen Itza had ever walked abroad with three gods?

Presently they came to a place where the trail seemed to end, disappearing over the brink of a terrifying precipice; but Che, Lord Forest, did not hesitate; he merely took Itzl Cha across that broad shoulder again and clambered down the declivity with as great ease as did the two earth gods.

However, Itzl Cha could not help but

be terrified when she looked down; and so she closed her eyes tightly and held her breath and pressed her little body very close to that of Che, Lord Forest, who had become to her something akin to a haven of refuge.

But at last they reached the bottom and once again Lord Forest raised his voice. What he said sounded to Itzl Cha like "Yud, Tantor, yud!" And that was exactly what it was: "Come, Tantor, Come!"

Very shortly, Itzl Cha heard a sound such as she had never heard before —a sound that no other Mayan had ever heard; the trumpeting of an elephant.

By this time, Itzl Cha thought that she had seen all the miracles that there were

to be seen in the world, but when a great bull elephant broke through the forest, toppling the trees that were in his path, little Itzl Cha screamed and fainted.

When Itzl Cha regained consciousness, she did not immediately open her eyes. She was conscious of an arm about her, and that her back was resting against a human body; but what caused that strange motion, and what was that rough surface that she straddled with her bare legs?

Fearfully, Itzl Cha opened her eyes; but she immediately screamed and closed them again. She was sitting on the head of that terrible beast she had seen!

Lord Forest was sitting behind her, and it was his arm that was around her,

preventing her from falling to the ground. The earth gods were swinging along in the trees beside them; they seemed to be scolding. It was all too much for little Itzl Cha; in a brief hour or two, she had experienced a lifetime of thrills and adventure.

The afternoon was drawing to a close. Lum Kip was preparing dinner for the Europeans. This was not a difficult procedure; there was fish to fry, and some tubers to boil. Fruit made up the balance of the menu. Lum Kip was cheerful and happy; he liked to work for the foreign devils; they treated him well, and the work was not nearly as arduous as chopping wood.

The two girls in the party and most of

the men were sitting on the ground, talking over the events of the day, especially the hunting trip which had ended in tragedy. Patricia wondered if they would ever see Tarzan again, and that started them talking about the wildman and his probable fate. The Colonel was in his hut shaving, and his wife was sitting out in front of it with her mending, when something attracted her attention, and, looking toward the forest she voiced a single ear-piercing shriek and fainted. Instantly everyone was on his feet; the Colonel, his face half lathered, rushed from the hut.

Patricia Leigh-Burden cried, "Oh, my God, look!"

Coming out of the forest was a great

bull elephant, and on its neck sat Tarzan holding an almost naked girl in front of him; two orang-utans waddled along at a safe distance on one side. No wonder Penelope Leigh had fainted. The elephant stopped a few paces outside the forest; the sight of all these people was too much for him, and he would come no farther. Tarzan, with the girl in his arms, slipped to the ground, and, holding her by the band, led her toward the camp.

Itzl Cha felt that these must all be gods, but much of her fear was gone now, for Lord Forest bad offered her no harm, nor had the earth gods, nor had that strange enormous beast on which she had ridden through the forest.

Patricia Leigh-Burden looked

questioningly and a little suspiciously at the girl walking at Tarzan's side. One of the sailors working nearby said to another, "That fellow is a fast worker." Patricia beard it, and her lips tightened.

Tarzan was greeted by silence, but it was the silence of surprise. The Colonel was working over his wife, and presently she opened her eyes. "Where is he?" she whispered. "That creature! You must get him out of camp immediately, William, he and that wanton girl with him. Both of them together didn't have on enough clothes to cover a baby decently. I suppose he went off somewhere and stole a woman, an Indian woman at that."

"Oh, quiet, Penelope," said the

Colonel, a little irritably; "you don't know anything about it and neither do I."

"Well, you'd better make it your business to find out," snapped Mrs. Leigh. "I don't intend to permit Patricia to remain in the same camp with such people, nor shall I remain."

Tarzan walked directly to Patricia Leigh-Burden. "I want you to look after this girl," he said.

"I?" demanded Patricia haughtily.

"Yes, you," he replied.

"Come, come," said the Colonel, still half lathered, "what is the meaning of all this, sir?"

"There's a city to the south of us," said Tarzan, "a good-sized city, and they

have some heathen rites in which they sacrifice human beings; this girl was about to be sacrificed, when I was lucky enough to be able to take her away. She can't go back there because of course they would kill her; so we'll have to look after her. If your niece won't do it, I'm sure that Janette will."

"Of course I'll look after her," said Patricia; "who said that I wouldn't?"

"Put some clothes on the thing," said Mrs. Leigh; "this is absolutely disgraceful."

Tarzan looked at her with disgust. "It is your evil mind that needs clothes," he said.

Penelope Leigh's jaws dropped. She stood there open-mouthed and

speechless for a moment; then she wheeled about and stamped into her hut.

"I say, old thing," said Algy, "how the deuce did you get that elephant to let you ride on his head; that was one of the wild African bulls?"

"How do you get your friends to do you favors?" asked Tarzan.

"But, I say, you know, old thing, I haven't any friends like that."

"That is too bad," said the ape man. Then he turned to the Colonel, "We must take every precaution against attack;" he said; "there were many warriors in that city, and I have no doubts but that a search will be made for this girl; eventually they will find our camp. Of course they are not accustomed to

firearms, and if we are always on the alert, we have little to fear; but I suggest that only very strong parties be allowed to go into the jungle."

"I have just issued orders that no one is to go into the jungle," replied the Colonel. "Captain Bolton, Dr. Crouch, and Mr. Wright-Smith were attacked by one of your tigers today."

CHAPTER 18

For six weeks the life in the camp dragged on monotonously and without incident; and during that time, Patricia Leigh-Burden taught Itzl Cha to speak and understand enough English so that the little Mayan girl could carry on at least a sketchy conversation with the others, while Tarzan devoted much of his time to learning the Maya tongue from her. Tarzan, alone of the company, ventured occasionally into the jungle; and, from these excursions, he often returned with a wild pig.

His absence from camp always aroused Penelope Leigh's ire. "He is impudent and insubordinate," she complained to her husband. "You gave

strict orders that no one was to go into the jungle, and he deliberately disobeys you. You should make an example of him."

"What do you suggest that I do with him, my dear?" asked the Colonel. "Should he be drawn and quartered, or merely shot at sunrise?"

"Don't try to be facetious, William; it does not become you. You should simply insist that he obey the regulations that you have laid down."

"And go without fresh pork?" asked the Colonel.

"I do not like pork," snapped Mrs. Leigh. "Furthermore, I do not like the goings-on around this camp; Mr. de Groote is far too intimate with that

French woman, and the wildman is always around that Indian girl. Look at them now—always talking together; I can imagine what he is saying to her."

"He is trying to learn her language," explained the Colonel; "something that may prove very valuable to us later on, if we ever have any dealings with her people."

"Hmph!" snorted Mrs. Leigh; "a fine excuse. And the way they dress! If I can find some goods in the ship's stores, I shall make her a Mother Hubbard; and as for him—you should do something about that. And now look; there goes Patricia over to talk to them. William, you must put a stop to all this nonsense—it is indecent."

Colonel William Cecil Hugh Percival Leigh sighed; his was not an entirely happy existence. Many of the men were becoming restless, and there were some who had commenced to question his right to command them. He rather questioned it himself, but he knew that conditions would become unbearable if there were no one in authority. Of course Algy, Bolton, Tibbet, and Crouch backed him up, as did de Groote and Tarzan. It was upon Tarzan that he depended most, for he realized that here was a man who would brook no foolishness in the event of mutiny. And now his wife wanted him to insist that this half- savage man wear trousers. The Colonel sighed again.

Patricia sat down beside Tarzan and Itzl Cha. "How goes the class in Mayan?" she asked.

"Itzl Cha says that I am doing splendidly," replied Tarzan.

"And Itzl Cha is mastering English, after a fashion," said Patricia; "she and I can almost carry on an intelligent conversation. She has told me some very interesting things. Do you know why they were going to sacrifice her?"

"To some god, I suppose," replied Tarzan.

"Yes, to a god called Che, Lord Forest, to appease him for the affront done him by a man that claimed you were Che, Lord Forest.

"Itzl Cha is, of course, positive that

she was rescued by no one less than Che, Lord Forest; and she says that many of her people will believe that too. She says that it is the first time in the history of her people that a god has come and taken alive the sacrifice being offered to him. It has made a deep impression on her and no one can ever convince her that you are not Che.

"Her own father offered her as a sacrifice in order to win favor with the gods," continued Patricia. "It is simply horrible, but it is their way; Itzl Cha says that parents often do this; although slaves and prisoners of war are usually the victims."

"She has told me a number of interesting things about her people and

about the island," said Tarzan. "The island is called Uxmal, after a city in Yucatan from which her people migrated hundreds of years ago."

"They must be Mayans then," said Patricia.

"That is very interesting," said Dr. Crouch, who had joined them. "From what you have told us of your experiences in their city, and from what Itzl Cha has told us, it is evident that they have preserved their religion and their culture almost intact throughout the centuries since the migration. What a field this would be for the anthropologist and the archaeologist. If you could establish friendly relations with them, we might be able to solve the riddles of

the hieroglyphs an their stelae and temples in Central America and South America."

"As the chances are that we shall be here all the rest of our lives," Patricia reminded him, "our knowledge would do the world very little good."

"I cannot believe that we shall never be rescued," said Dr. Crouch. "By the way, Tarzan, is this village that you visited the only one on the island?"

"I don't know as to that," replied the ape man, "but these Mayans are not the only people here. At the northern end of the island, there is a settlement of what Itzl Cha calls 'very bad people.' The history of the island, handed down largely by word of mouth, indicates that

survivors of a shipwreck intermarried with the aborigines of the island, and it is their descendents who live in this settlement; but they do not fraternize with the aborigines who live in the central part of the island."

"You mean that there is a native population here?" asked Dr. Crouch.

"Yes, and we are camped right on the south-western edge of their domain. I have never gone far enough into their country to see any of them, but Itzl Cha says that they are very savage cannibals."

"What a lovely place fate selected for us to be marooned," remarked Patricia, "and then to make it all the cozier, you had to turn a lot of lions and tigers loose

in it." Tarzan smiled.

"At least we shall not perish from ennui," remarked Janette Laon.

Colonel Leigh, Algy, and Bolton sauntered up, and then de Groote joined the party. "Some of the men just came to me," said the Dutchman, "and wanted me to ask you, Colonel, if they could try to break up the Saigon and build a boat to get away from here. They said they would rather take a chance of dying at sea than spending the rest of their lives here."

"I don't know that I can blame them," said the Colonel. "What do you think of it, Bolton?"

"It might be done," replied the Captain.

"Anyway, it will keep them busy," said the Colonel; "and if they were doing something they wanted to do, they wouldn't be complaining all the time."

"I don't know where they would build it," said Bolton. "They certainly can't build it on the reef; and it wouldn't do any good to build it on shore, for the water in the lagoon would be too shallow to float it."

"There is deep water in a cove about a mile north of here," said Tarzan, "and no reef."

"By the time the blighters have taken the Saigon apart, " said Algy , "and carried it a mile along the coast, they'll be too exhausted to build a boat."

"Or too old," suggested Patricia.

"Who's going to design the boat?" asked the Colonel.

"The men have asked me to," replied de Groote; "my father is a shipbuilder, and I worked in his yard before I went to sea."

"It's not a bad idea," said Crouch; "do you think you can build a boat large enough to take us all?"

"It depends upon how much of the Saigon we can salvage," replied de Groote. "If we should have another bad storm soon, the whole ship might break up."

Algernon Wright-Smith made a sweeping gesture toward the forest. "We have plenty of lumber there," he said, "if the Saigon fails us."

"That would be some job," said Bolton.

"Well, we've got all our lives to do it in, old thing," Algy reminded him.

CHAPTER 19

When two days had passed and Chuldrup had not returned, Schmidt drove another Lascar into the forest with orders to go to Tarzan's camp and get information about the guns and ammunition.

The Lascars had made a separate camp, a short distance from that occupied by Schmidt, Krause, Oubanovitch, and the Arab. They had been very busy, but none of the four men in the smaller camp had paid any attention to them, merely summoning one of them when they wanted to give any orders.

The second man whom Schmidt had sent in the forest never returned. Schmidt

was furious, and on the third day he ordered two men to go. They stood sullenly before him, listening. When he had finished they turned and walked back to their own camp. Schmidt watched them; he saw them sit down with their fellows. He waited a moment to see if they would start, but they did not. Then he started toward their camp, white with rage.

"I'll teach them," he muttered; "I'll show them who's boss here— the brown devils;" but when he approached them, fifteen Lascars stood up to face him, and he saw that they were armed with bows and arrows and wooden spears. This was the work that had kept them so busy for several days.

Schmidt and the Lascars stood facing one another for several moments; then one of the latter said, "What do you want here?"

There were fifteen of them, fifteen sullen, scowling men, all well armed.

"Aren't you two men going to find out about the guns and ammunition so that we can get them?" he asked.

"No," said one of the two. "You want to know, you go. We no take orders any more. Get out. Go back to your own camp."

"This is mutiny," blustered Schmidt.

"Get out," said a big Lascar, and fitted an arrow to his bow.

Schmidt turned and slunk away.

"What's the matter?" asked Krause, when Schmidt reached his own camp.

"The devils have mutinied," replied Schmidt, "and they are all armed — made bows and arrows and spears for themselves."

"The uprising of the proletariat!" exclaimed Oubanovitch. "I shall join them and lead them. It is glorious, glorious; the world revolution has reached even here!"

"Shut up!" said Schmidt; "you give me a pain."

"Wait until I organize my glorious revolutionaries," cried Oubanovitch; "then you will sing a different song; then it will be 'Comrade Oubanovitch, this,' and 'Comrade Oubanovitch, that.' Now I

go to my comrades who have risen in their might and cast the yoke of Capitalism from their necks."

He crossed jubilantly to the camp of the Lascars. "Comrades!" he cried. "Congratulations on your glorious achievement. I have come to lead you on to greater victories. We will march on the camp of the Capitalists who threw us out. We will liquidate them, and we will take all their guns and ammunition and all their supplies."

Fifteen scowling men looked at him in silence for a moment; then one of them said, "Get out."

"But!" exclaimed Oubanovitch, "I have come to join you; together we will go on to glorious—"

"Get out," repeated the Lascar.

Oubanovitch hesitated until several of them started toward him; then he turned and went back to the other camp. "Well, Comrade," said Schmidt, with a sneer, "is the revolution over?"

"They are stupid fools," said Oubanovitch.

That night the four men had to attend to their own fire, which the Lascars had kept burning for them in the past as a safeguard against wild beasts; and they had had to gather the wood for it, too. Now it devolved upon them to take turns standing guard.

"Well, Comrade," said Schmidt to Oubanovitch, "how do you like revolutions now that you are on the other

side of one?"

The Lascars, having no white man to command them, all went to sleep and let their fire die out. Abdullah Abu Nejm was on guard in the smaller camp when he heard a series of ferocious growls from the direction of the Lascar's camp, and then a scream of pain and terror. The other three men awoke and sprang to their feet.

"What is it?" demanded Schmidt

"El adrea, Lord of the Broad Head," replied the Arab.

"What's that?" asked Oubanovitch.

"A lion," said Krause; "he got one of them."

The screams of the unfortunate victim

was still blasting the silence of the night, but they were farther from the camp of the Lascars now, as the lion dragged his prey farther away from the presence of the other men. Presently the screams ceased, and then came an even more grisly and horrifying sound—the tearing and rending of flesh and bones mingled with the growls of the carnivore.

Krause piled more wood upon the fire. "That damn wildman," he said—"turning those beasts loose here."

"Serves you right," said Schmidt; "you had no business catching a white man and putting him in a cage."

"It was Abdullah's idea," whined Krause; "I never would have thought of it if he hadn't put it into my head."

There was no more sleep in the camp that night. They could hear the lion feeding until daylight, and then in the lesser darkness of dawn, they saw him rise from his kill and go to the river to drink; then he disappeared into the jungle.

"He will lie up for the day," said Abdullah, "but he will come out again and feed."

As Abdullah ceased speaking, a foul sound came from the edge of the jungle, and two forms slunk out; the hyenas had scented the lion's kill, and presently they were tearing at what was left of the Lascar.

The next night, the Lascars built no fire at all; and another was taken. "The

fools!" exclaimed Krause; "that lion has got the habit by now, and none of us will ever be safe again here."

"They are fatalists." said Schmidt; "they believe that whatever is foreordained to happen must happen, and that nothing they can do about it can prevent it."

"Well, I'm no fatalist," said Krause. "I'm going to sleep in a tree after this," and he spent the next day building a platform in a tree at the edge of the forest, setting an example which the other three men were quick to follow. Even the Lascars were impressed, and that night the lion came and roared through empty camps.

"I've stood all of this that I can," said

Krause; "I'm going back and see that fellow, Tarzan. I'll promise anything if he'll let us stay in his camp."

"How are you going to get there?" asked Schmidt. "I wouldn't walk through that jungle again for twenty million marks."

"I don't intend to walk through the jungle," said Krause. "I'm going to follow the beach. I could always run out into the ocean if I met anything."

"I think El adrea would be kinder to us than Tarzan of the Apes," said the Arab.

"I never did anything to him," said Oubanovitch; "he ought to let me come back."

"He's probably afraid you'd start a

revolution," said Schmidt. But they finally decided to try it; and early the next morning, they set out along the beach toward the other camp.

CHAPTER 20

Chand, the Lascar, watched Krause and his three companions start along the beach in the direction of Camp Saigon. "They are going to the other camp," he said to his fellows. "Come, we will go too;" and a moment later they were trailing along the beach in the wake of the others.

In Camp Saigon, Tarzan was eating his breakfast alone. He had arisen early, for he had planned a full day's work. Only Lum Kip was astir, going about his work quietly preparing breakfast. Presently Patricia Leigh-Burden came from her hut and joined Tarzan, sitting down beside him.

"You are up early this morning," she

said.

"I am always earlier than the others," he replied, "but today I had a special reason; I want to get an early start. "

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going exploring," he replied, "I want to see what is on the other side of the island."

Patricia leaned forward eagerly, placing a hand upon his knee. "Oh, may I go with you?" she asked. "I'd love it."

From the little shelter that had been built especially for her, Itzl Cha watched them. Her black eyes narrowed and snapped, and she clenched her little hands tightly.

"You couldn't make it, Patricia," said

Tarzan, "not the way I travel."

"I've hiked through jungles in India," she said.

"No;" he said, quite definitely; "traveling on the ground in there is too dangerous. I suppose you've heard it mentioned that there are wild animals there."

"Then if it's dangerous you shouldn't go," she said, "carrying nothing but a silly bow and some arrows. Let me go along with a rifle; I'm a good shot, and I've hunted tigers in India."

Tarzan rose, and Patricia jumped to her feet, placing her bands on his shoulders. "Please don't go," she begged, "I'm afraid for you," but he only laughed and turned and trotted off toward the

jungle.

Patricia watched him until he swung into a tree and disappeared; then she swished around angrily and went to her hut. "I'll show him," she muttered under her breath.

Presently she emerged with a rifle and ammunition. Itzl Cha watched her as she entered the jungle at the same place that Tarzan had, right at the edge of the little stream. The little Mayan girl bit her lips, and the tears came to her eyes—tears of frustration and anger. Lum Kip, working around the cook fire, commenced to hum to himself.

Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest, was still furious about the theft of Itzl Cha from beneath the sacred sacrificial knife.

"The temple has been defiled," he growled, "and the gods will be furious."

"Perhaps not," said Cit Coh Xiu, the king; "perhaps after all that was indeed Che, Lord Forest."

Chal Yip Xiu looked at the king, disgustedly. "He was only one of the strangers that Xatl Din saw on the beach. If you would not arouse the anger of the gods, you should send a force of warriors to the camp of the strangers, to bring Itzl Cha back, for that is where she will be found."

"Perhaps you are right," said the king; "at least it will do no harm," and he sent for Xatl Din and ordered him to take a hundred warriors and go to the camp of the strangers and get Itzl Cha. "With a

hundred warriors, you should be able to kill many of them and bring back prisoners to Chichen Itza."

Tibbett, with a boatload of sailors, was rowing out to the reef to continue the work of salvaging lumber from the Saigon, as the other members of the party came out for their breakfast. Itzl Cha sat silent and sullen, eating very little, for she had lost her appetite. Janette Laon came and sat beside de Groote, and Penelope Leigh looked at them down her nose.

"Is Patricia up yet, Janette?" asked the Colonel

Janette looked around the company. "Why, yes," she said, "isn't she here? She was gone when I woke up."

"Where in the world can that girl be?" demanded Penelope Leigh.

"Oh, she must be nearby," said the Colonel, but, as he called her name aloud, it was evident that he was perturbed.

"And that creature is gone too!" exclaimed Mrs. Leigh. "I knew that something terrible like this was going to happen sooner or later, William, if you permitted that man to remain in camp."

"Now, just what has happened, Penelope?" asked the Colonel.

"Why he's abducted her, that's what's happened."

Lum Kip, who was putting a platter of rice on the table, overheard the conversation and volunteered, "Tarzan,

she, go that way," pointing toward the northeast; "Plateecie, him go that way," and pointed in the same direction.

"Maybe Pat abducted him," suggested Algy.

"Don't be ridiculous, Algernon," snapped Mrs. Leigh. "It is quite obvious what happened—the creature enticed her into the jungle."

"They talked long," said Itzl Cha, sullenly. "They go different times; they meet in jungle."

"How can you sit there, William, and permit that Indian girl to intimate that your niece arranged an assignation in the jungle with that impossible creature."

"Well," said the Colonel, "if Pat's in the jungle, I pray to high heaven that

Tarzan is with her."

Pat followed a stream that ran for a short distance in a northeasterly direction, and when it turned southeast, she continued to follow it, not knowing that Tarzan had taken to the trees and was swinging rapidly through them almost due east toward the other side of the island. The ground rose rapidly now, and the little stream tumbled excitedly down toward the ocean. Pat realized that she was being a stubborn fool, but, being stubborn, she decided to climb the mountain a short distance to get a view of the island. It was a hard climb, and the trees constantly shut out any view, but the girl kept on until she came to a level ledge which ran around a shoulder

of the mountain. As she was pretty well winded by this time, she sat down to rest.

"I should think some of you men would go out and look for Patricia," said Mrs. Leigh.

"I'll go," said Algy, "but I don't know where to look for the old girl."

"Who's that coming along the beach?" said Dr. Crouch.

"Why it's Krause and Schmidt," said Dolton. "Yes, and Oubanovitch and the Arab are with him." Almost automatically the men loosened their pistols in their holsters and waited in silence as the four approached.

The men about the breakfast table had all risen and were waiting expectantly.

Krause came to the point immediately. "We've come to ask you to let us come back and camp near you," he said. "We have no firearms and no protection where we are. Two of our men have gone into the jungle and never returned, and two have been taken right out of camp by lions at night. You certainly must have a heart, Colonel; you certainly won't subject fellow men to such dangers needlessly. If you will take us back, we promise to obey you and not cause any trouble."

"I'm afraid it will cause a lot of trouble when Tarzan returns and finds you here," said the Colonel.

"You should let them remain, William," said Mrs. Leigh. "You are in

command here, not that Tarzan creature."

"I really think it would be inhuman to send them away," said Dr. Crouch.

"They were inhuman to us," said Janette Laon bitterly.

"Young woman," exploded Penelope, "you should be taught your place; you have nothing to say about this. The Colonel will decide."

Janette Laon shook her head hopelessly and winked at de Groote. Penelope saw the wink and exploded again. "You are an insolent baggage," she said; "you and the Indian girl and that Tarzan creature should never have been permitted in the same camp with gentlefolk."

"If you will permit me, Penelope,"

said the Colonel stiffly, "I think that I can handle this matter without assistance or at least without recrimination."

"Well, all that I have to say," said Penelope, "is that you must let them remain."

"Suppose," suggested Crouch, "that we let them remain anyway until Tarzan returns; then we can discuss the matter with him—they are more his enemies than ours."

"They are enemies to all of us," said Janette.

"You may remain, Krause," said the Colonel, "at least, until Tarzan returns; and see that you behave yourselves."

"We certainly shall, Colonel," replied Krause, "and thank you for letting us

stay."

Patricia got a view of the ocean from the ledge where she was sitting, but she could see nothing of the island; and so, after resting, she went on a little farther. It was far more open here and very beautiful, orchids clung in gorgeous sprays to many a tree, and ginger and hibiscus grew in profusion; birds with yellow plumage and birds with scarlet winged from tree to tree. It was an idyllic, peaceful scene which soothed her nerves and obliterated the last vestige of her anger.

She was glad that she had found this quiet spot and was congratulating herself, and planning that she would come to it often, when a great tiger

walked out of the underbrush and faced her. The tip of his tail was twitching nervously, and his snarling muscles had drawn his lips back from his great yellow fangs.

Patricia Leigh-Burden breathed a silent prayer as she threw her rifle to her shoulder and fired twice in rapid succession.

CHAPTER 21

"I certainly do not like the idea of having those men around here all the time," said Janette; "I am afraid of them, especially Krause."

"I'll look after him," said de Groote. "Let me know if he ever makes any advances."

"And now look!" exclaimed Janette, pointing along the beach. "Here come all those Lascars back, too. Those fellows give me the creeps."

As she ceased speaking, the report of two rifle shots came faintly but distinctly to their ears. "That must be Patricia!" exclaimed the Colonel. "She must be in trouble."

"She has probably had to shoot that

creature," said Penelope hopefully.

The Colonel had run to his hut and gotten his rifle; and when he started in the direction from which the sound of the shot had come, he was followed by de Groote, Algy, Crouch, and Bolton.

As the foliage of the jungle closed about Bolton's back, Schmidt turned to Krause and grinned. "What's funny?" demanded the latter.

"Let's see what we can find in the way of rifles and ammunition," said Schmidt to the other three men. "This looks like our day."

"What are you men doing?" demanded Penelope Leigh. "Don't you dare go into those huts."

Janette started to run toward her hut to

get her rifle, but Schmidt overtook her and hurled her aside. "No funny business," he warned.

The four men collected all the remaining firearms in the camp and then, at pistol points forced the Lascars to load up with such stores as Schmidt desired.

"Pretty good haul," he said to Krause. "I think we've got about everything we want now."

"Maybe you have, but I haven't," replied the animal collector; then he walked over to Janette. "Come along, sweetheart," he said; "we're going to start all over again right where we left off."

"Not I," said Janette, backing away.

Krause seized one of her arms. "Yes, you; and if you know what's good for you, you'd better not make any trouble."

The girl tried to pull away, and Krause struck her. "For heaven's sake, go along with him," cried Penelope Leigh. "Don't make a scene; I hate scenes. Anyway, you belong with him; you certainly have never belonged in my camp."

Half-stunned by the blow, Janette was dragged away; and the Colonel's wife watched them start back along the beach in the direction from which they had come.

"The Colonel shall hear about your stealing our stores, you scoundrels," she called after them.

Xatl Din and his hundred warriors came through the forest spread out in open order, that they might leave no well-marked trail; and as they came, they heard two sharp, loud sounds which seemed to come from but a short distance ahead of them. None of these men had ever heard the report of a firearm before, and so they had no idea of what it was. They crept cautiously forward, their eyes and ears constantly alert. Xatl Din was in the lead, and as he came to a more open place in the forest, he stopped suddenly, for a strange and unaccustomed sight met his eye. On the ground lay a huge, striped beast, such as he had never seen before. It was evidently dead, and above it stood a

figure strangely garbed, who held a long black shiny thing that was neither bow, arrow, nor spear.

Presently Xatl Din realized that the creature was a woman; and, being an intelligent man, he surmised that the noise he had heard had come from that strange thing she held, and that with it, she had doubtless killed the huge beast which lay at her feet. Xatl Din further reasoned that if she could have killed so large and evidently ferocious an animal, she could even more easily kill men; and, therefore, he did not come out into the open, but withdrew and gave whispered instructions to his men.

Now the Mayans slipped silently around through the jungle until they had

encircled Patricia, and then while Xatl Din beat on a tree with his sword to make a noise that would attract the girl's attention in his direction, two of his men slipped out of the jungle behind her, and crept noiselessly toward her.

As Patricia stood looking in the direction from which the sound had come, listening intently, arms were thrown around her from behind and her rifle was snatched from her hands; then a hundred strangely garbed warriors, resplendent in feathered headdresses and embroidered loin-cloths came running from the jungle to surround her.

Patricia recognized these men immediately, not only from the descriptions she had had from Itzl Cha

and Tarzan, but also because she had read a great deal concerning the civilization of the ancient Mayans. She was as familiar with their civilization, their religion, and their culture as the extensive research of many archaeological expeditions had been able to bring to light. It seemed to her that she had been suddenly carried back centuries to a long dead past, to which these little brown men belonged. She knew what her capture meant to her, for she knew the fate of Mayan prisoners. Her only hope lay in the possibility that the men of her party might be able to rescue her, and that hope was strong because of her faith in Tarzan.

"What are you going to do with me?"

she said in the broken Mayan she had learned from Itzl Cha.

"That is for Cit Coh Xiu to decide," he said. "I shall send you back to Chichen Itza, back to the palace of the king;" then he instructed four of his warriors to take the prisoner to Cit Coh Xiu.

As Patricia was led away, Xatl Din and his remaining warriors continued on in the direction of Camp Saigon. The noble was quite pleased with himself. Even if he were not successful in bringing Itzl Cha back to Chichen Itza, he had at least furnished another sacrifice in her stead, and he would doubtless be praised by both the king and the high priest.

I Colonel Leigh and his companions followed, quite by accident, the same trail by which Patricia had come. They climbed the ledge which ran around the shoulder of the mountain; and, although badly winded, kept on almost at a run. Their advance was noisy and without caution, for their one thought was to find Patricia as quickly as possible; and when they were suddenly met by a band of plumed warriors, they were taken wholly by surprise. With savage war cries, the Mayans charged, hurling stones from their slings.

"Fire over their heads!" commanded the Colonel.

The terrifying noise momentarily stopped the Mayans, but when Xatl Din

realized that it was only noise and that it had not injured any of his men, he ordered them to charge again; and once more their hideous war cries sounded in the ears of the whites.

"Shoot to kill!" snapped the Colonel; "we've got to stop those beggars before they reach us with their swords."

The rifles barked again, and four warriors fell. The others wavered, but Xatl Din urged them on.

These things that killed with a loud noise at a distance terrified the Mayans; and although some of them almost came to grips with the whites, they finally turned and fled, taking their wounded with them. Following their strategy, they scattered through the jungle so as to

leave no well-marked trail to their city; and the whites, going in the wrong direction, became lost, for it is difficult to orient one's self in a dense jungle; and when they came to a steep declivity down a mountain side, they thought that they had crossed the mountain and were descending the opposite slope.

After stumbling about in dense shrubbery for an hour, they came suddenly to the end of the jungle, only to stand looking at one another in amazement, for before them lay the beach and their own camp.

"Well, I'll be damned!" ejaculated the Colonel.

As they approached the camp, Tibbett came to meet them, a troubled look on

his face.

"Something wrong, Tibbet?" demanded the Colonel.

"I'll say there's something wrong, sir. I just came back from the Saigon with a load of planks to find that Schmidt and his outfit have stolen all the firearms and ammunition that were left in camp, as well as a considerable part of our stores."

"The scoundrels!" ejaculated the Colonel.

"But that's not the worst of it," continued Tibbet; "they took Miss Laon away with them."

De Groote went white. "Which way did they go, Tibbet?" he asked.

"Back up the beach," replied the second mate; "probably to their old camp."

De Groote, heartbroken and furious, started away. "Wait," said the Colonel; "where are you going?"

"I'm going after them," he said.

"They are all heavily armed," said the Colonel; "you couldn't do anything alone, and we can't spare men to go with you now—that is, we couldn't all go and leave Mrs. Leigh alone here again, with the chance that those painted devils may attack the camp at any time."

"I'm going anyway," said de Groote doggedly.

"I'll go with you," said Tibbet, and then two of the sailors from the Naiad

also volunteered.

"I wish you luck," said the Colonel, "but for heaven's sake be careful. You'd better sneak up on the camp from the jungle side and snipe them from the concealment of the underbrush."

"Yes, sir," replied de Groote, as he and the three who had volunteered to accompany him started up the beach at a dog- trot.

CHAPTER 22

From a distance, Tarzan heard the firing during the encounter between the whites and the Mayans, and immediately turned and started back in the direction from which he thought the sounds came; but because of the echoes and reverberations caused by the mountains, he failed to locate it correctly, and went in the wrong direction. Also, he was misled by his assumption that any fighting there might be, would naturally be around Camp Saigon or Schmidt's camp.

Knowing that he was nearer Schmidt's camp then Camp Saigon, he decided to go there first and follow along the beach to Camp Saigon, if the fight were not at

the former place.

As he approached the end of the forest opposite Schmidt's camp, he went more slowly and carefully, and it was well that he did for as he came in view of the camp, he saw the men returning and that the four whites were heavily armed. He saw Janette Laon being dragged along by Krause, and the Lascars bearing loads. He knew what had happened; but how it had happened, he could not guess. He naturally assumed that the shooting he had heard had marked an engagement between these men and those at Camp Saigon, and the inference was that Schmidt's party had been victorious. Perhaps all the other whites had been killed, but where was

Patricia? Where was little Itzl Cha? He was not concerned over the fate of Penelope Leigh.

The Colonel was on the horns of a dilemma. The camp could boast of only four armed men now, scarcely enough to defend it; and he couldn't go out to search for Patricia and leave Penelope unguarded, nor could he divide his little force, for even four men would scarcely be enough to repel another attack by Schmidt or by the Mayans if they came in force, nor could four men hope successfully to storm the city of Chichen Itza to which he was convinced Patricia had been taken. And as the Colonel sought in vain for a solution of his problem, Patricia Leigh-Burden was led

into the throne room of Cit Coh Xiu, King of Uxmal Island, and the leader of her escort addressed the king.

"The noble Xatl Din ordered us to bring this prisoner to his King and Master, as Xatl Din and his warriors continued on to attack the camp of the strangers. There was a battle, for we heard the strange noises with which these white men kill, but how the battle went we do not know."

The king nodded. "Xatl Din has done well," he said.

"He has done excellently," said Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest; "this woman will make a fitting offering to our gods."

Cit Coh Xiu's eyes appraised the white girl and found her beautiful. She

was the first white woman that he had ever seen, and it suddenly occurred to him that it would be a shame to give her to some god that might not want her. He didn't dare say so aloud, but he thought that the girl was far too beautiful for any god; and, as a matter of fact, by the standards of any race, Patricia Leigh-Burden was beautiful.

"I think," said the king, "that I shall keep her as one of my handmaidens for a while."

Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest, looked at the king in well- simulated surprise. As a matter of fact, he was not surprised at all, for he knew his king, who had already robbed the gods of several pulchritudinous offerings. "If she is

chosen for the gods," he said, "the gods will be angry with Cit Coh Xiu if he keeps her for himself."

"Perhaps it would be well," said the king, "if you were to see that she is not chosen—at least immediately. I don't think the gods want her anyway," he added.

Patricia, listening intently, had been able to understand at least the gist of this conversation. "A god has already chosen me," she said, "and he will be angry if you harm me."

Cit Coh Xiu looked at her in surprise. "She speaks the language of the Maya," he said to the high priest.

"But not very well," commented Chal Yip Xiu.

"The gods speak their own language," said Patricia; "they have little use for the language of mortals."

"Can it be that she is a goddess?" demanded the king.

"I am the mate of Che, Lord Forest," said Patricia. "He is already very angry with you for the way you treated him when he came to Chichen Itza. If you are wise, you will send me back to him. If you don't, he will certainly destroy you."

The king scratched his head and looked at his high priest questioningly. "Well," he said, "you should know all about gods, Chal Yip Xiu; was it indeed Che, Lord Forest, who came to Chichen Itza? Was it a god that you put in a wooden cage? Was it a god who stole

the offering from the sacrificial altar?"

"It was not," snapped the high priest; "he was only a mortal."

"Nevertheless, we must not act hastily," said the king. "You may keep the girl temporarily; have her taken to the Temple of the Virgins, and see that she is well treated;" so Chal Yip Xiu summoned two lesser priests and told them to conduct the prisoner to The Temple of the Virgins.

Patricia felt that while she had not made much of an impression on the high priest, she had upon the king, and that at least she had won a reprieve which might give Tarzan and the others time in which to rescue her; and as she was lead from the Palace, her mind was

sufficiently at ease to permit her to note the wonders of Chichen Itza.

Before her loomed a mighty pyramid of lava blocks, and up the steep stairs on one side of this, she was led to an ornately carved temple at the summit — The Temple of the Virgins. Here she was turned over to the high priestess who was in charge of the temple, in which were housed some fifty girls, mostly of noble families; for it was considered an honor to volunteer for this service. They kept the sacred fires alight and swept the temple floors. When they wished to, they might resign and marry; and they were always sought after by warriors and nobles.

Patricia stood in the temple

colonnade and looked out over the city of Chichen Itza. She could see its palaces and temples clustered about the foot of the pyramid and the thatched huts of the common people beyond the wall, and beyond these the fields which extended to the edge of the jungle; and she fancied that she had been carried back many centuries to ancient Yucatan.

As Tarzan watched through the concealing verdure of the forest, he realized the futility of attempting to come out in the open and face four heavily armed men, while he was armed with only a bow. But Tarzan had ways of his own, and he was quite secure in the belief that he could take Janette away from these men without unnecessarily

risking his own life.

He waited until they had come closer and the Lascars had thrown down their loads; then he fitted an arrow to his bow, and bending the latter until the point of the arrow rested against his left thumb, he took careful aim. The bow string twanged; and, an instant later, Krause screamed and pitched forward upon his face, an arrow through his heart.

The others looked about in consternation. "What happened" demanded Oubanovitch; "what's the matter with Krause?"

"He's dead!" said Schmidt. "someone shot him with an arrow."

"The ape man," said Abdullah Abu Nejm; "who else could have done it?"

"Where is he?" demanded Schmidt.

"Here I am," said Tarzan, "and I have plenty more arrows. Come straight toward my voice, Janette, and into the forest; and if anyone tries to stop you, he'll get what Krause got."

Janette walked quickly toward the forest, and no hand was raised to detain her.

"That damn wildman!" ejaculated Schmidt, and then he broke into a volley of lurid profanity. "I'll get him!" I'll get him!" he screamed, and, raising his rifle, fired into the forest in the direction from which Tarzan's voice had come.

Again the bow-string twanged; and Schmidt, clutching at an arrow in his chest, dropped to his knees and then

rolled over on his side, just as Janette entered the forest, and Tarzan dropped to the ground beside her.

"What happened at the camp?" he asked, and she told him briefly.

"So they let Schmidt and his gang come back," said Tarzan. "I am surprised at the Colonel."

"It was mostly the fault of that horrid old woman," said Janette.

"Come," said Tarzan, "we'll get back there as quickly as we can," and swinging Janette to his shoulder, he took to the trees. As he and Janette approached Camp Saigon, de Groote, Tibbet, and the two sailors came into sight of Schmidt's camp.

A quick glance around the camp did

not reveal Janette, but de Groote saw two men lying on the ground, and the Lascars huddled to one side, apparently terrified.

Abdullah was the first to see de Groote and his party, and knowing that they had come for revenge and would show no quarter, he swung his rifle to his shoulder and fired. He missed, and de Groote and Tibbet ran forward, firing, the two sailors, armed only with gaffs, at their heels.

Several shots were exchanged without any casualties, and then de Groote dropped to one knee and took careful aim, and Tibbet followed his example. "Take Oubanovitch," said de Groote; "I'll get the Arab."

The two rifles spoke almost simultaneously, and Oubanovitch and Abdullah Abu Nejm dropped in their tracks.

De Groote and Tibbet ran forward, followed by the sailors, ready to finish off any of the men who still showed fight; but the Russian, the Arab, and Krause were dead, and Schmidt was writhing and screaming in agony, helpless to harm them.

De Groote bent over him. "Where is Miss Laon?" he demanded.

Screaming and cursing, his words almost unintelligible, Schmidt mumbled, "The wildman, damn him, he took her;" and then he died.

"Thank God!" ejaculated de Groote;

"she's safe now."

The four took the arms and ammunition from the bodies of the dead men, and with the authority which they gave them, forced the Lascars to pick up their packs and start, back toward Camp Saigon.

CHAPTER 23

As Tarzan and Janette stepped from the jungle and approached the camp, they were greeted by a disheartened and hopeless company, only one of whom found anything to be thankful for. It was Penelope Leigh. When she saw them, she said to Algy, "At least Patricia was not with that creature."

"Oh, come now, Aunt Pen," said Algy impatiently; "I suppose you will say now that Tarzan and Janette arranged all this so that they could meet in the jungle."

"I should not have been at all surprised," replied Mrs. Leigh. " A man who would carry on with an Indian girl might do anything."

Tarzan was disgusted with all that

had been happening during his absence, largely because his orders had been disobeyed, but he only said, "They should never have been permitted within pistol shot of this camp."

"It was my fault," said Colonel Leigh; "I did it against my better judgment, because it did seem inhuman to send them back there unarmed, with a man-eater hanging around their camp."

"It was not the Colonel's fault," said Janette, furiously; "he was nagged into it. That hateful old woman is most to blame. She insisted; and now, because of her, Hans may be killed." Even as she ceased speaking, they heard the distant reports of firearms, coming faintly from the direction of Schmidt's camp.

"There!" cried Janette; then she turned on Mrs. Leigh: "If anything happens to Hans, his blood is on your head!" she cried.

"What has been done has been done," said Tarzan; "the important thing now, is to find Patricia. Are you positive that she was captured by the Maya?"

"We heard two shots," explained the Colonel, "and when we went to investigate, we were met by fully a hundred Maya warriors. We dispersed them, but were unable to follow their trail; and although we saw nothing of Patricia, it seems most probable that she had been captured by them before we met them."

"And now, William, I hope you are

satisfied," said Mrs. Leigh; "it is all your fault, for coming on that silly expedition in the first place."

"Yes, Penelope," said the Colonel resignedly, "I suppose that it is all my fault, but telling me that over and over again doesn't help matters any."

Tarzan took Itzl Cha aside to talk to her away from the interruptions of the others. "Tell me, Itzl Cha," he said, "what your people would probably do with Patricia."

"Nothing, two, three days, maybe month," replied the girl; "then they offer her to a god."

"Look at that creature now," said Penelope Leigh, "taking that little Indian girl off and whispering to her. I can well

imagine what he is saying."

"Would they put Patricia in the cage where they had me?" Tarzan asked.

"I think in The Temple of the Virgins at the top of the sacred pyramid; Temple of the Virgins very sacred place and well guarded."

"I can reach it," said Tarzan.

"You are not going there?" demanded Itzl Cha.

"Tonight," said Tarzan.

The girl threw her arms about him. "Please don't go," she begged; "you cannot save her, and they will kill you."

"Look!" exclaimed Penelope Leigh; "of all the brazen things I've ever seen in my life! William, you must put a stop to

it. I cannot stand it; I have never before had to associate with loose people," and she cast a venomous glance at Janette.

Tarzan disengaged the girl's arms. "Come, come, Itzl Cha," he said; "I shall not be killed."

"Don't go," she pleaded. "Oh, Che, Lord Forest, I love you. Take Me away into the forest with you. I do not like these people."

"They have been very kind to you," Tarzan reminded her. "I know," said Itzl Cha sullenly, "but I do not want their kindness; I want only you, and you must not go to Chichen Itza tonight nor ever."

Tarzan smiled and patted her shoulder. "I go tonight," he said.

"You love her," cried Itzl Cha; "that is

the reason you are going. You are leaving me for her."

"That will be all," said Tarzan firmly; "say no more;" then he left her and joined the others, and Cha, furious with jealously, went into her hut and threw herself upon the ground, kicking it with her sandaled feet and beating it with her little fists. Presently she arose and looked out through the doorway, just in time to see de Groote and his party returning, and while the attention of all the others was centered upon them, little Itzl Cha crept from her hut and ran into the jungle.

Janette ran forward and threw her arms about de Groote, tears of joy running down her cheeks. "I thought that

you had been killed, Hans," she sobbed; "I thought that you had been killed."

"I am very much alive," he said, "and you have nothing more to fear from Schmidt and his gang; they are all dead."

"I am glad," said Tarzan; "they were bad men."

Little Itzl Cha ran through the jungle. She was terrified, for it was growing dark, and there are demons and the spirits of the dead in the forest at night; but she ran on, spurred by jealousy and hate and desire for revenge.

She reached Chichen Itza after dark, and the guard at the gate was not going to admit her until she told him who she was, and that she had important word for Chal Yip Xiu, the high priest. She was

taken to him then, and she fell on her knees before him.

"Who are you?" he demanded, and then he recognized her. "So you have come back," he said. "Why?"

"I came to tell you that the man who stole me from the sacrificial altar is coming tonight to take the white girl from the temple."

"For this you deserve much from the gods," said Chal Yip Xiu, "and again you shall be honored by being offered to them," and little Itzl Cha was placed in a wooden cage to await sacrifice.

Tarzan came slowly through the forest on his way to Chichen Itza. He did not wish to arrive before midnight, when he thought that the city would have quieted

down and most of its inmates would be asleep. A gentle wind was blowing in his face, and it brought to his nostrils a familiar scent spoor —Tantor, the elephant, was abroad. He had found an easier trail to the plateau than the shorter one which Tarzan used, and he had also found on the plateau a plenteous supply of the tender shoots he loved best.

Tarzan did not call him until he had come quite close, and then he spoke in a low voice; and Tantor, recognizing his voice, came and verified his judgment by passing his trunk over the ape man's body.

At a word of command, he lifted Tarzan to his withers, and the Lord of the Jungle rode to the edge of the forest

just outside of the city of Chichen Itza.

Slipping from Tantor's head, Tarzan crossed the fields to the city wall. Before he reached it, he broke into a run, and when it loomed before him, he scaled it much as a cat would have done. The city was quiet and the streets were deserted; so that Tarzan reached the foot of the pyramid without encountering anyone.

Just inside the entrance to The Temple of the Virgins, a dozen warriors hid in the shadows as Tarzan climbed the steps to the summit. Outside the temple he stopped and listened; then he walked around to the lee side, so that the breeze that was blowing would carry to his sensitive nostrils the information that

he wished.

He stood there for a moment; and then, satisfied, he crept stealthily around to the entrance. At the threshold he stopped again and listened; then he stepped inside, and as he did so a net was thrown over him and drawn tight, and a dozen warriors fell upon him and so entangled him in the meshes that he was helpless.

A priest stepped from the temple and raising a trumpet to his lips, blew three long blasts. As by magic, the city awoke, lights appeared, and people came streaming towards the temple pyramid.

Tarzan was carried down the long flight of steps, and at the bottom, he was surrounded by priests in long

embroidered cloaks and gorgeous headdresses. Then they brought Patricia. With trumpets and drums preceding them, Cit Coh Xiu, the king, and Chat Yip Xiu, the high priest, headed a procession that wound through the city and out of the east gate.

Tarzan had been placed on a litter that was carried by four priests; behind him walked Patricia, under guard; and behind her little Itzl Cha was carried in her wooden cage. A full moon cast its soft light on the barbaric procession, which was further illuminated by hundreds of torches carried by the marchers.

The procession wound through the forest to the foot of a mountain, up which

it zig-zagged back and forth until it reached the rim of the crater of an extinct volcano at the summit. It was almost dawn as the procession made its way down a narrow trail to the bottom of the crater and stopped there at the edge of a yawning hole. Priests intoned a chant to the accompaniment of flutes, drums, and trumpets; and, just at dawn, the bag was cut away from Tarzan and he was hurled into the chasm, notwithstanding the pleas of Itzl Cha, who had repented and warned the priests that the man was really Che, Lord Forest. She had begged them not to kill him, but Chat Yip Xiu had silenced her and spoken the word that sent Tarzan to his doom.

CHAPTER 24

Patricia Leigh-Burden was not the type of girl easily moved to tears, but she stood now on the brink of that terrible abyss, her body racked by sobs; and then as the sun topped the rim and shed its light down into the crater, she saw Tarzan swimming slowly about in a pond some seventy feet below her. Instantly her mind leaped to the stories she had read of the sacred dzonot of ancient Chichen Itza in Yucatan, and hope burned again in her breast.

"Tarzan," she called, and the man turned over on his back and looked up at her. "Listen, " she continued. "I know this form of sacrifice well; it was practiced by the Maya in Central

America hundreds and hundreds of years ago. The victim was thrown into the sacred well at Chichen Itza at dawn, and if he still lived at noon, he was taken out and raised to highest rank; he became practically a living god on earth. You must keep afloat until noon, Tarzan; you must! you must!"

Tarzan smiled up at her and waved. The priests eyed her suspiciously, though they had no idea what she had said to their victim.

"Do you think that you can, Tarzan?" she said. "You must, because I love you."

Tarzan did not reply, as he turned over and commenced to swim slowly around the pool, which was about a

hundred feet in diameter with perpendicular sides of smooth volcanic glass.

The water was chilly but not cold, and Tarzan swam just strongly enough to keep from becoming chilled.

The people had brought food and drink; and as they watched through the long dragging hours, they made a fiesta of the occasion.

As the sun climbed toward zenith, Chal Yip Xiu commenced to show signs of strain and nervousness, for if the victim lived until noon, he might prove indeed to be Che, Lord Forest, which would be most embarrassing for the Ah Kin Mai. Every eye that could see it was upon a crude sundial that stood beside

the rim of the dzonot; and when it marked noon, a great shout arose, for the victim was still alive.

The high priest was furious as the people acclaimed Tarzan as Che, Lord Forest, and demanded that he be taken from the water. A long rope was thrown down to him, with a noose in the end of it by means of which he could be drawn out of the dzonot; but Tarzan ignored the noose and clambered up the rope, hand over hand. When he stepped out upon the rim, the people fell to their knees before him and supplicated him for forgiveness and for favors.

The king and the high priest looked most uncomfortable as Tarzan faced them. "I came to earth in the form of a

mortal," he said, "to see how you ruled my people of Chichen Itza. I am not pleased. I shall come again some day to see if you have improved. Now I go, and I take this woman with me," and he placed a hand upon Patricia's arm. "I command you to release Itzl Cha, and to see that neither she nor any others are sacrificed before I return."

He took Patricia by the hand, and together they climbed the steep trail to the rim of the crater and then down the side of the volcano, the people following them, in a long procession, singing as they marched. As they reached the city, Tarzan turned and held up a hand. "Come no farther," he said to the people, and then to Patricia, "Now I'll

give them something to tell their grandchildren about."

She looked up at him questioningly and smiled. "What are you going to do?" she asked.

For answer, he voiced a long weird cry, and then, in the language of the great apes, shouted, "Come, Tantor, come!" and as he and Patricia crossed the field and approached the forest, a great bull elephant came out of it to meet them, and a cry of astonishment and fear rose from the people behind them.

"Won't he gore us or something?" asked Patricia, as they approached the bull.

"He is my friend," said Tarzan, laying his hand upon the trunk of the great

beast. "Don't be frightened," he said to Patricia; "he is going to lift you to his withers," and at a word of command, Tantor swung the girl up and then lifted Tarzan.

As he wheeled to go into the forest, Tarzan and Patricia looked back to see the people of Chichen Itza all kneeling, their faces pressed against the ground.

"Their great-great-grandchildren will hear of this," said Patricia.

In Camp Saigon, the discouraged company waited hopelessly for Tarzan's return. There had been little sleep the previous night for many of them, and the long hours of the morning had dragged heavily. Tea time came and Tarzan had not returned; but, as a matter of habit,

they had tea served; and as they sat around the table, sipping it listlessly, the same thought must have been in the minds of all; they would never see Patricia or Tarzan again.

"You should never have let that creature go out after Patricia alone," said Mrs., Leigh; "he probably found her all right, and there is no telling what has happened to her by this time."

"Oh, Penelope!" cried the Colonel hopelessly. "Why are you so bitter against that man? He has done nothing but befriend us."

"Hmph!" exclaimed Penelope, "You are very dense, William; I could see through him from the first—he is a climber; he wants to get into our good

graces and then he will probably try to marry Patricia for the money she will inherit."

"Madam," said de Groote very icily, "'that creature,' as you call him, is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, an English viscount."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Mrs., Leigh.

"It is not bosh," said de Groote; "Krause told me who he was while we were locked up together in that cage. He got it from the Arab, who has known the man for years."

Mrs. Leigh's chin dropped, and she seemed to suddenly deflate, but she rallied quickly. "I rather expected it," she said after a moment. "All that I ever criticized in him was his predilection for

nudity. Why didn't you ever tell us this before, young man?"

"I don't know why I told you now," replied de Groote; "it is none of my business; if he had wanted us to know, he would have told us."

"Here he comes now!" exclaimed Janette, "and Patricia is with him!"

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Penelope. "What a fine looking couple my niece and Lord Greystoke make."

From the withers of the elephant, Patricia could see far out beyond the reef; and when she and Tarzan slipped to the ground, she ran toward the group awaiting them, pointing and crying, "Look! A ship! A ship!"

It was a ship far out; and the men

hastened to build a fire on the beach, and when it was burning, to throw on green leaves and kerosene until a great black smoke rose high into the sky.

De Groote and some of the sailors put out in one of the boats in a frantic, if potentially futile, effort to further attract the ship's attention.

"They don't see us," said Janette.

"And there may not be another ship in a hundred years," remarked Dr. Crouch.

"Jolly long time to wait for anything, what?" said Algy.

"They've changed their course," said Bolton; "they're heading in."

The Colonel had gone to his hut and now he came out with binoculars in his

hand. He took a long look through them; and when he took the glasses down, there were tears in his eyes; and it was a moment before he could speak.

"It's the Naiad," he said, "and she is heading inshore."

That night, under a full tropic moon, two couples lounged in comfortable chairs on the deck of the Naiad. Tarzan laid a hand on one of Patricia's. "In your nervous excitement today at the Dzonot, you said something, Patricia, that we must both forget."

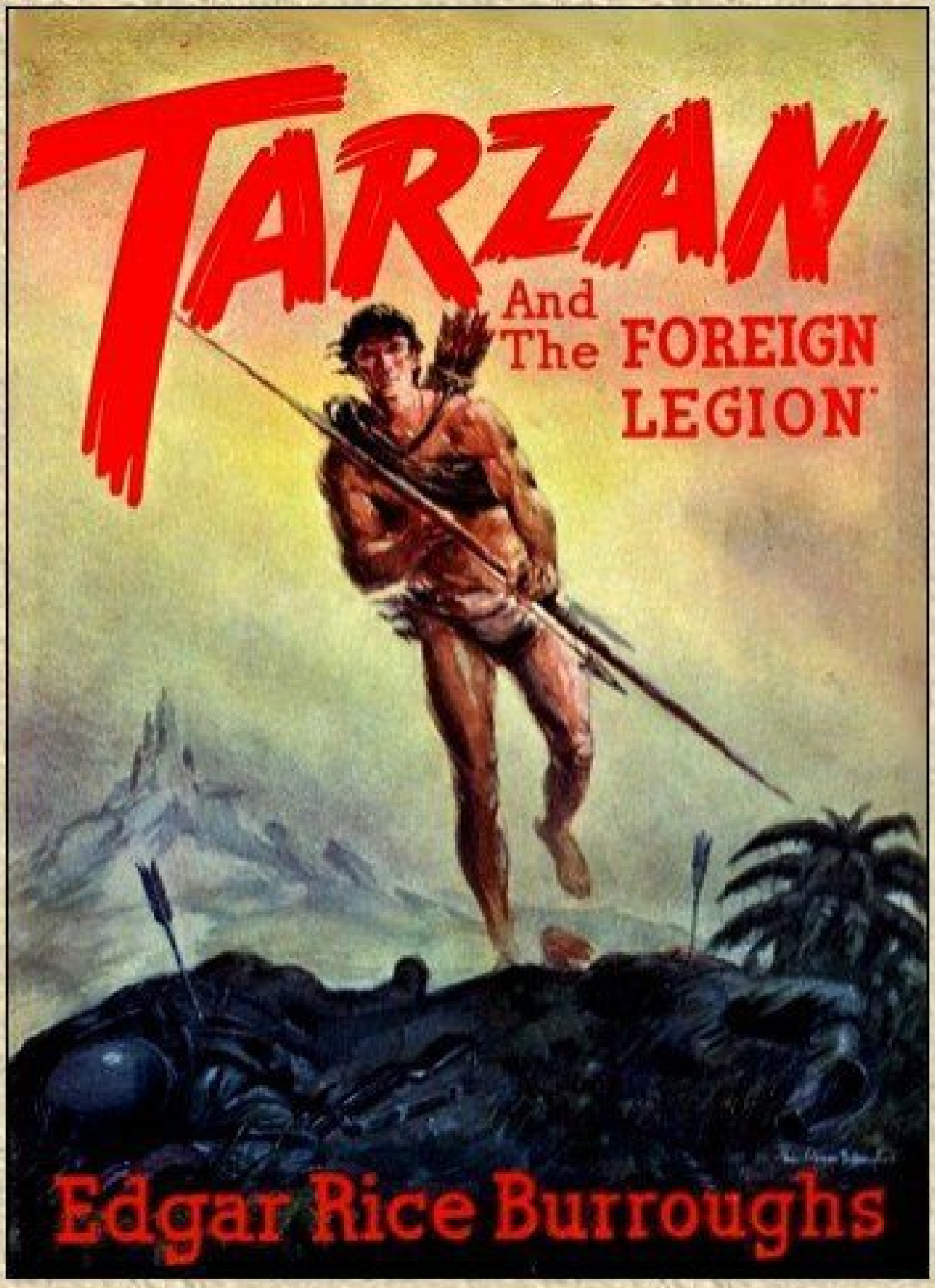
"I know what you mean," she replied. "You see, I didn't know then that it was impossible—but I meant it then, and I shall always mean it."

"Tarzan!" called de Groote from the

other side of the yacht. "Janette is trying to convince me that the Captain can't marry us. She's wrong, isn't she?"

"I am quite sure that she is wrong," replied the ape man.

THE END


TARZAN
And The FOREIGN LEGION
Edgar Rice Burroughs

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN AND "THE FOREIGN LEGION"

BOOK 23 IN THE TARZAN

SERIES

DEDICATED TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL TRUMAN H. LANDON

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

My knowledge of Sumatra at the time that I chose it as the scene of a Tarzan story was pathetically inadequate; and as there was not a book on Sumatra in the Honolulu Public Library, nor in any of the book stores, it bade fair to remain inadequate.

I wish therefore to acknowledge my indebtedness to those whose kindness furnished me with the information I sought. If this volume happens to fall into the hands of any of them, I hope they will not feel that I abused that kindness.

And so, my sincere thanks to Messrs. K. van der Eynden, S. J. Rikkers, and Willem Folkers of the Netherlands India Government; to Mr. C. A. Mackintosh,

Netherlands Consul in Honolulu; to Messrs. N. A. C. Slotemaker de Brume, Director, B. Landheer, and Leonard de Greve of The Netherlands Information Bureau, New York, and to my good friend Capt. John Philip Bird, A.A.C. of S., G-2, USAFPOA, who arranged my first meeting with the Netherlanders.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, Honolulu, 11 Sep. 1944

CHAPTER 1

Probably not all Dutchmen are stubborn, notwithstanding the fact that stubbornness is accounted one of their national characteristics along with many virtues. But if some Dutchmen lacked stubbornness, the general average of that intangible was maintained in the person of Hendrik van der Meer. As practiced by him, stubbornness became a fine art. It also became his chief avocation. His vocation was that of rubber planter in Sumatra. In that, he was successful; but it was his stubbornness that his friends boasted of to strangers.

So, even after the Philippines were invaded and Hong Kong and Singapore fell, he would not admit that the

Japanese could take Netherland East India. And he would not evacuate his wife and daughter. He may be accused of stupidity, but in that he was not alone. There were millions in Great Britain and the United States who underestimated the strength and resources of Japan —some in high places.

Furthermore, Hendrik van der Meer hated the Japanese, if one can hate what one looks upon contemptuously as vermin. "Wait," he said. "It will not be long before we chase them back up their trees." His prophecy erred solely in the matter of chronology. Which was his undoing.

And the Japs came, and Hendrik van der Meer took to the hills. With him

went his wife, who had been Elsje Verschoor, whom he had brought from Holland eighteen years before, and their daughter, Corrie. Two Chinese servants accompanied them—Lum Kam and Sing Tai. These were motivated by two very compelling urges. The first was fear of the Japanese, from whom they knew only too well what to expect. The other was their real affection for the van der Meer family. The Javanese plantation workers remained behind. They knew that the invaders would continue to work the plantation and that they would have jobs.

Also, this Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity appealed to them. It would be nice to have the tables turned and be rich and have white men and women to wait

on them.

So the Japs came, and Hendrik van der Meer took to the hills. But not soon enough. The Japs were always right behind him. They were methodically tracking down all Netherlanders. The natives of the kampongs where the van der Meers stopped to rest kept them informed. By what natural or uncanny powers the natives knew while the Japs were still miles away is beside the question. They knew, as primitive people always know such things as quickly as more civilized peoples might learn them by telegraph or radio. They even knew how many soldiers composed the patrol—a sergeant, a corporal, and nine privates.

"Very bad," said Sing Tai, who had fought against the Japs in China. "Maybe one time an officer is a little human, but enlisted men never. We must not let them catch," he nodded toward the two women.

As they went higher into the hills, the going became bitter. It rained every day, and the trails were quagmires. Van der Meer was past his prime, but he was still strong and always stubborn. Even had his strength given out, his stubbornness would have carried him on.

Corrie was sixteen then, a slender blonde girl. But she had health, strength, and endurance. She could always have kept up with the men in the party. But

with Elsje van der Meer it was different. She had the will but not the strength. And there was no rest. They would scarcely reach a kampong and throw themselves down on the floor of a hut, wet, muddy, exhausted, before the natives would warn them away. Sometimes it was because the Jap patrol was gaining on them. But often it was because the natives feared to let the enemy find them harboring whites.

Even the horses gave out at last, and they were compelled to walk. They were high in the mountains now. Kampongs were far apart. The natives were fearful and none too friendly. Only a few years ago they had been cannibals.

For three weeks they stumbled on,

searching for a friendly kampong where they might hide. By now it was obvious that Elsje van der Meer could go but little farther. For two days they had come upon no kampong. Their food Was only what the forest and the jungle offered. And they were always wet and cold.

Then late in the afternoon they came upon a wretched village. The natives were surly and unfriendly, but still they did not deny them such poor hospitality as they could offer. The chief listened to their story. Then he told them that while they could not remain in his village, he would have them guided to another far off the beaten track, where the Japs would never find them.

Where, a few weeks before, he might have commanded, van der Meer now swallowed his pride and begged the chief to permit them at least to remain overnight that his wife might gain strength for the journey that lay ahead. But Hoesin refused. "Go now," he said, "and I will furnish guides. Remain, and I will make you prisoners and turn you over to the Japanese when they come." Like the headmen of other villages through which they had passed, he feared the wrath of the invaders should they discover that he was harboring whites.

And so the nightmare journey was resumed through terrain cut by a frightful chasm, river eroded in tuff strata laid down through the ages by nearby

volcanoes. And this river cut their trail, not once, but many times. Sometimes they could ford it. Again it could be crossed only on frail, swaying rope bridges. And this long after dark on a moonless night.

Elsje van der Meer, now too weak to walk, was carried by Lum Kam in an improvised sling strapped to his back. The guides, anxious to reach the safety of a kampong, urged them constantly to greater speed, for twice they had heard the coughing of tigers—that coughing grunt that chills the blood.

Van der Meer walked close to Lum Kam to steady him should he slip upon the muddy trail. Corrie followed behind her father, and Sing Tai brought up the

rear. The two guides were at the head of the little column.

"You tired, missy?" asked Sing Tai. "Maybe so better I carry you."

"We all are tired," replied the girl; "but I can carry on as long as any of you. I wonder how much farther it is."

They had started to ascend a trail steeply. "Pretty soon there," said Sing Tai. "Guide say kampong top of cliff."

But they were not pretty soon there, for this was the most arduous part of the journey. They had to stop often and rest. Lum Kam's heart was pounding. But it was this loyal heart and an iron will that kept him from sinking down exhausted.

At long last they reached the top, and presently the barking of dogs told them

that they were approaching a kampong. The natives, aroused, challenged them. The guides explained their presence, and they were admitted. Taku Muda, the chief, greeted them with friendly words.

"You are safe here," he said. "You are among friends."

"'My wife is exhausted," explained van der Meer. "She must have rest before we can go on. But I do not wish to expose you to the anger of the Japanese should they discover that you had helped us. Let us rest here tonight; and tomorrow, if my wife can be moved, find us a hiding place deeper in the mountains. Perhaps there is a cave in some isolated gorge."

"There are caves," replied Taku

Muda, "but you will remain here. Here you are safe. No enemy will find my village."

They were given food and a dry house in which to sleep. But Elsje van der Meer could eat nothing. She was burning with fever, but there was nothing they could do for her. Hendrik van der Meer and Corrie sat beside her the remainder of the night. What must have been the thoughts of this man whose stubbornness had brought this suffering upon the woman he loved? Before noon Elsje van der Meer died.

There is such a thing as a grief too poignant for tears. Father and daughter sat for hours, dry eyed, beside their dead, stunned by the catastrophe that had

overwhelmed them. They were only dully conscious of sudden turmoil and shouting in the compound. Then Sing Tai burst in upon them.

"Quick!" he cried. "Japs come. One man guide last night bring 'um. Hoesin bad man. He send 'um."

Van der Meer rose. "I will go and talk with them," he said. "We have done nothing. Maybe they will not harm us."

"You no know monkey-men," said Sing Tai.

Van der Meer shrugged. "There is nothing else I can do. If I fail, Sing Tai, try to get missy away. Do not let her fall into their hands."

He went to the door of the hut and descended the ladder to the ground. Lum

Kam joined him. The Japs were on the far side of the compound. Van der Meer walked boldly toward them, Lum Kam at his side. Neither man was armed. Corrie and Sing Tai watched from the dark interior of the hut. They could see, but they could not be seen.

They saw the Japs surround the two men. They heard the voice of the white man and the monkey jabber of the Japs, but they could not make out what was said. Suddenly they saw a rifle butt rise above the heads of the men. It was thrust as suddenly downward. They knew that on the other end of the rifle was a bayonet. They heard a scream. Then more rifle butts were raised and lunged downward. The screams ceased. Only

the laughter of the sub-men was to be heard.

Sing Tai seized the girl's arm. "Come!" he said, and drew her to the rear of the hut. There was an opening there and, below, the hard ground. "I drop," said Sing Tai. "Then missy drop. I catch 'um. Savvy?"

She nodded. After the Chinese had dropped safely, the girl leaned from the opening to reconnoiter. She saw that she could climb most of the way down. To drop into Sing Tai's arms might easily have injured him. So she came safely down to within a few feet of the ground, and Sing Tai lowered her the rest of the way. Then he led her into the jungle that grew close to the kampong.

Before dark they found a cave in a limestone cliff and hid there for two days. Then Sing Tai returned to the kampong to investigate and to get food if the Japs had left.

Late in the afternoon he returned to the cave empty handed. "All gone," he said. "All dead. Houses burned."

"Poor Taku Muda," sighed Corrie. "This was his reward for an act of humanity."

Two years passed. Corrie and Sing Tai had found asylum in a remote mountain kampong with Chief Tiang Umar. Only occasionally did news from the outside world reach them. The only news that would be good news to them would have been that the Japs had been

driven from the island. But that news did not come. Sometimes a villager, trading far afield, would return with stories of great Japanese victories, of the American Navy sunk, of German victories in Africa, Europe, or Russia. To Corrie the future seemed hopeless.

One day a native came who did not belong to the village of Tiang Umar. He looked long at Corrie and Sing Tai, but he said nothing. After he had gone away, the Chinese told the girl. "That man bad news," he said. "Him from kampong Chief Hoesin. Now he go tell and monkey-men come. Maybeso you better be boy. Then we go away and hide some more."

Sing Tai cut Corrie's golden hair to

the proper length and dyed it black. He painted her eyebrows, too. She was already deeply tanned by the equatorial sun, and with the blue trousers and the loose blouse he fashioned for her, she could pass as a native boy anything but the closest scrutiny. Then they went away again, taking up their interminable flight. Tiang Umar sent men to guide them to a new sanctuary. It was not far from the village—a cave close to a tiny mountain stream. There there were to be found many varieties of the edible things that grow in a Sumatran forest jungle, and in the stream there were fish. Occasionally, Tiang Umar sent some eggs and a chicken. Once in a while pork or dog meat. Corrie could not eat the

latter, so Sing Tai got it all. A youth named Alam always brought the food. The three became fast friends.

Captain Tokujo Matsuo and Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe led a detachment of soldiers deep into the mountains to locate strategic positions for heavy coastal guns and survey practical roads leading to them.

They came to the kampong of Hoesin, the chief who had betrayed the van der Meers. They knew of him by report as one who would collaborate with the Japanese. Still it was necessary to impress him with their superiority; so, when he failed to bow from the waist when they approached him, they slapped his face. One of the enlisted men ran a

bayonet through a native who refused to bow to him. Another dragged a screaming girl into the jungle. Captain Matsuo and Lieutenant Sokabe smiled toothy smiles. Then they demanded food.

Hoesin would rather have cut their throats, but he had food brought to them and to their men. The officers said that they would honor him by making his village their headquarters while they remained in the vicinity. Hoesin saw ruin staring him in the face. Frantically he searched his mind for some artifice by which he could rid himself of his unwelcome guests. Then he recalled the story that one of his people had brought him a few days before from another village. It did not seem to him very

likely to be of value in ridding himself of these monkeys, but it would do no harm to try. He thought about it during a sleepless night.

The following morning he asked them if they were interested in finding enemies who had taken refuge in the mountains. They said that they were. "Two years ago three whites and two Chinese came to my village, I sent them on to another village, because I would not harbor enemies of Greater East Asia. The white man's name was van der Meer."

"We have heard of him," said the Japs. "He was killed."

"Yes. I sent guides to show your soldiers where they were hiding. But the

daughter and one of the Chinese escaped. The daughter is very beautiful."

"So we have heard. But what of it?"

"I know where she is."

"And you have not reported it?"

"I only just, discovered her biding place. I can give you a guide who will lead you to it."

Captain Matsuo shrugged. "Bring us food," he ordered.

Hoesin was crushed. He had food sent them, and then he went to his hut and prayed to Allah or Buddha or whatever god he prayed to, asking him to strike the monkey-men dead, or at least cause them to depart.

Matsuo and Sokabe discussed the

matter over their meal. "Perhaps we should look into the matter," said the former. "It is not well to have enemies in our rear."

"And they say that she is beautiful," added Sokabe.

"But we cannot both go," said Matsuo. Being both lazy and the commanding officer, he decided to send Lieutenant Sokabe with a detachment to find the girl and bring her back. "You will kill the Chinese," he ordered, "and you will bring the girl back—unharmed. You understand? Unharmed."

Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe came a few days later to the kampong of Tiang Umar the Chief. Being a very superior person, Lieutenant Sokabe slapped the old chief

so hard that he fell down. Then Lieutenant Sokabe kicked him in the belly and face. "Where are the white girl and the Chinese?" he demanded.

"There is no white girl here, nor any Chinese."

"Where are they?"

"I do not know what you are talking about."

"You lie. Soon you will tell the truth." He ordered a sergeant to get him some bamboo splinters, and when they were brought, he drove one beneath one of Tiang Umar's finger nails. The old man screamed in agony.

"Where is the white girl?" demanded the Jap.

"I know of no white girl," insisted Tiang Umar.

The Jap drove another splinter beneath another nail, but still the old man insisted that he knew nothing of any white girl.

As Sokabe was preparing to continue the torture, one of the chief's wives came and threw herself upon her knees before him. She was an old woman —Tiang Umar's oldest wife. "If you will hurt him no more, I will tell you how you may find the white girl and the Chinese," she said.

"This is better," said Sokabe.

"How?"

"Alam knows where they hide," said the old woman, pointing to a youth.

Corrie and Sing Tai sat at the mouth of their cave. It had been a week since Alam had brought them food, and they were expecting him soon with eggs perhaps, and pork or a piece of dog meat. Corrie hoped that it would be eggs and a chicken.

"Pretty soon some one come," said Sing Tai, listening. "Too many. Come back into the cave."

Alam pointed out the cave to Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe. Tears welled from the youth's eyes. Had his life alone been forfeit, he would have died before he would have led these hated monkey-men to the hiding place of this girl whom he fairly worshipped. But the lieutenant had threatened to destroy everyone in the

village if he failed to do so, and Alam knew that he would keep his word.

Hideo Sokabe and his men entered the cave, Sokabe with drawn sword, the men with fixed bayonets. In the dim light, Sokabe saw a Chinese and a young native boy. He had them dragged out. "Where is the girl?" he demanded of Alam. "You shall die for this, and all your people. Kill them," he said to his men.

"No!" screamed Alam. "That is the girl. She only wears the clothes of a boy."

Sokabe tore open Corrie's blouse. Then he grinned. A soldier ran a bayonet through Sing Tai, and the detachment marched away with their prisoner.

CHAPTER 2

S/Sgt. Joe "Datbum" Bubonovitch of Brooklyn, assistant engineer and waist gunner, stood in the shade of the wing of Lovely Lady with the other members of the combat crew of the big Liberator.

"I've found them pretty swell guys," he said in evident disagreement with a remark made by ball turret gunner S/Sgt. Tony "Shrimp" Rosetti of Chicago.

"Yeah? So I suppose dat George Toid was a swell guy. Say, we got a mayor in Chicago oncet wot dared dat guy to come on over. He said he'd punch him in de snoot."

"You got your dates mixed, Shrimp."

"Yeah? Well, I don't like cartin' no

bloody Britisher around in de Lovely Lady. An' I hear he's a dook, or sumpn."

"I guess here comes your duke now," said Bubonovitch.

A jeep pulled up beneath the wing of the B-24, disgorging three officers —an RAF colonel, an AAF colonel, and an AAF major. Capt. Jerry Lucas of Oklahoma City, pilot of the Lovely Lady, stepped forward; and the AAF colonel introduced him to Col. Clayton.

"All set, Jerry?" asked the American colonel.

"All set, sir."

Electricians and armorers, having given the final, loving check- up to their gadgets and guns, dropped through the bomb bay doors; and the combat crew

climbed aboard.

Col. John Clayton was flying as an observer on a reconnaissance and photographic mission over Jap held Sumatra in Netherland East Indies, from an air field in (censored). Going forward to the flight deck when he came aboard, he stood behind the pilots during the take- off. Later, on the long flight, he took the co-pilot's place, sometimes the pilot's. He talked with the navigator and the radio engineer. He edged his way aft along the catwalk through the bomb bay between auxiliary gas tanks necessitated by the long flight. The plane carried no bombs. Shrimp and Bubonovitch and the tail gunner and the other waist gunner were sprawled on the deck against life

rafts and parachutes. Shrimp was the first to see Clayton open the little door forward of the ball turret.

"Hst!" he warned. "Here comes the dook."

Clayton edged around the ball turret, stepped over Shrimp and Bubonovitch, and stopped beside the photographer, who was fiddling with his camera. None of the enlisted men stood up. When a fighting plane takes to the air, military formality is left grounded. The photographer, a Signal Corps sergeant, looked up and smiled. Clayton smiled back and sat down beside him.

Cold wind was swirling up around the ball turret and hurtling out the tail gunner's open window. The noise of the

motors was deafening. By placing his mouth within an inch of the photographer's ear and shouting, Clayton asked some questions about the camera. The photographer screamed his replies. A B-24 in flight discourages conversation, but Clayton got the information he wished.

Then he sat down on the edge of a life raft between Shrimp and Bubonovitch. He passed around a package of cigarettes. Only Shrimp refused. Bubonovitch offered Clayton a light. Shrimp looked disgusted. He remembered George III, but he couldn't remember what he had done. All he knew what that he didn't like Britishers.

Shouting, Clayton asked Bubonovitch

his name and where he came from. When Bubonovitch said Brooklyn, Clayton nodded. "I've heard a lot about Brooklyn," he said.

"Probably about dem bums," said Bubonovitch. Clayton smiled and nodded.

"They call me 'Dat Bum,'" said Bubonovitch, grinning. Pretty soon he was showing the English colonel pictures of his wife and baby. Then they signed each other's Short Snorter bills. That brought the other waist gunner, the tail gunner, and the photographer into the picture. Shrimp remained aloof and superior.

After Clayton had gone forward, Shrimp allowed that he'd just as soon

have Tojo or Hitler sign his Short Snorter bill as a "dirty Britisher." "Look wot they done at the Alamo," he challenged.

"You mean Thermopylae," said Bubonovitch.

"Well, wot's the difference?"

"He's a good guy," said the tail gunner.

"Like our officers," said the other waist gunner. "No side."

It was dawn when they sighted the northwesterly tip of Sumatra, and a perfect day for a photographic mission. There were clouds above the mountains that form the backbone of the eleven hundred miles long island that sprawls across the equator south and west of the

Malay Peninsula; but the coast line, as far as they could see it, was cloudless. And it was the coast line they were primarily interested in.

The Japs must have been taken wholly by surprise, for they had been photographing for almost half an hour before they encountered any flak. And this was most ineffective. But as they flew down the coast, it increased in volume and accuracy. The plane got some shrapnel from near misses, but luck held with them for a long time.

Near Padang, three Zeros roared down on them out of the sun. Bubonovitch got the leader. They could see the plane burst into flame and plummet earthward. The other two

peeled off, and kept at a respectful distance for a while. Then they turned back. But the ack- ack increased in volume and accuracy. The inboard starboard engine got a direct hit, and shrapnel sprayed the cockpit. Lucas's flak vest saved him, but the co-pilot got a direct hit in the face. The navigator slipped the co-pilot's safety belt and dragged him from the cockpit to administer first aid. He was already dead.

So thick and so close was the flak by now, that the great ship seemed to be bucking like a bronco. To attempt to avoid it, Lucas turned inshore away from the coast where he knew that most of the anti-aircraft batteries would be located.

In shore, too, were clouds above the mountains in which they could hide as they turned back toward home.

Home! Liberators had made great flights in the past on three engines. The twenty-three-year-old captain had to think quickly. It was a snap judgment, but he knew it was sound. He ordered everything thrown overboard except their parachutes—guns, ammunition, life rafts, everything. It was the only chance they had of making their base. Zeros didn't worry Lucas. Zeros usually kept their distance from heavy bombers. Except for one stretch of water, the crossing of Malacca Strait, he could keep near land all the way, skirting the coast of Malaya northwest. If they had to

bail out over water, they would be near shore; and their Mae Wests would have to answer. That was why he felt that he could jettison the life rafts.

As they turned in toward the mountains and the clouds, the flak came thicker and thicker. The Japs must have guessed the pilot's plan. Lucas knew that some of the mountain peaks rose to twelve thousand feet. He was flying at twenty thousand now, but slowly losing altitude. But he was leaving the shore batteries behind.

They were well above the mountains when a mountain battery opened up on them. Lucas heard a terrific burst, and the plane careened like a wounded thing. He fought the controls. He spoke into the

intercom, asking reports. There was no reply. The intercom was dead. He sent the radio man back to check the damage. Clayton, in the co-pilot's seat, helped with the controls. It required the combined strength of both men to keep the plane from nosing over. Lucas called to the navigator. "Check and see that everybody jumps," he said. "Then you jump."

The navigator poked his head into the nose to tell the nose gunner to jump. The nose gunner was dead. The radio man came back to the flight deck. "The whole goddam tail's shot off," he said. "Butch and that photographer went with it."

"Okay," said Lucas. "Jump, and make it snappy." Then he turned to Clayton.

"Better bail out, sir."

"I'll wait for you, if you don't mind, Captain," said Clayton. "Jump!" snapped Lucas. Clayton smiled. "Right-o!" he said.

"I've opened the bomb bay doors," said Lucas. "It's easier out that way. Make it snappy!"

Clayton reached the catwalk in the bomb bay. The ship was falling off on one wing. It was evidently going into a spin. One man could not hold it. He wanted to hang on until Lucas jumped—until the last minute. It was the last minute. The ship careened, throwing Clayton from the catwalk. His body struck the side of the bomb bay and then rolled out into thin air.

Unconscious, he hurtled toward death. Through heavy, enveloping clouds his body fell. Lovely Lady, her three motors still roaring, raced past him. Now, when she crashed she was sure to burn, leaving nothing for the enemy to learn or salvage.

But momentarily stunned, Clayton soon regained consciousness. But it took several seconds before he realized his situation. It was like awakening in a strange room. He had passed through the cloud bank, and was now in a torrential tropical rain below it. Perhaps it was to the cold rain that he owed his salvation. It may have revived him just in time to pull the rip cord while there was still a margin of seconds.

His chute billowed above him, and his body snapped grotesquely at the sudden retardation of his fall. Directly beneath him a sea of foliage billowed to the pounding of hurtling masses of rain. In a matter of seconds his body crashed through leaves and branches until his chute caught and held him suspended a couple of hundred feet above the ground. This close had he come to death.

Simultaneously, he heard a rending and crashing a few hundred yards away —a dull explosion followed by a burst of flame. Lovely Lady's funeral pyre lit up the dismal, dripping forest.

Clayton seized a small branch and pulled himself to a larger one that would support him. Then he slipped off the

chute harness and his Mae West. His uniform and his underclothes, to the skin, were soaked and soggy. He had lost his cap during his fall. Now he removed his shoes and threw them away. His pistol and ammunition belt followed. Then his socks, tunic, trousers, and underclothes. He retained only a web belt and his knife in its scabbard.

He next climbed upward until he could release the snagged chute. He cut away all the lines, wrapped the silk in a small bundle; and, together with the lines, tied it to his back. Then he commenced the descent toward the ground. He swung down easily from branch to branch. From the lowest branches, giant creepers depended to the

ground undergrowth below. Down these he clambered with the agility of a monkey.

From the silk of his chute, he fashioned a loin cloth. A sense of well being, of happiness surged through him. Now, that which he had lost he had regained. That which he loved most. Freedom. The habiliments of civilization, even the uniform of his country's armed forces, were to him but emblems of bondage. They had held him as his chains hold the galley slave, though he had worn his uniform with pride. But to be honorably free of it was better. And something told him that Fate may have ordained that he was to serve his country quite as well naked as

uniformed. Else why had Fate plunged him thus into an enemy stronghold?

The poring rain sluiced down his bronzed body. It tousled his black hair. He raised his face to it. A cry of exaltation trembled on his lips but was not voiced. He was in the country of the enemy.

His first thought now was of his companions. Those who had alighted within sound of the crashing plane would naturally attempt to reach it. He made his way toward it. As he went, he searched the ground. He was looking for a certain plant. He did not entertain much hope of finding it in this strange, far away land. But he did. He found it growing luxuriantly. He gathered some

and macerated the great leaves between his palms. Then he spread the juice over his entire body, face, limbs, and head.

After that he took to the trees where traveling was easier than through the lush and tangled undergrowth. Presently he overtook a man stumbling toward the wrecked plane. It was Jerry Lucas. He stopped above him and called him by name. The pilot looked in all directions, except up, and saw no one. But he had recognized the voice.

"Where the heck are you, colonel?"

"If I jumped, I'd land on your head."

Lucas looked up, and his mouth dropped open. An almost naked giant was perched above him. He thought quickly: The guy's gone off his bean.

Maybe he hit his head when he landed. Maybe it was just shock. He decided to pay no attention to the nudity. "Are you all right?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Clayton. "And you?"

"Fit as a fiddle."

They were but a short distance from the Lovely Lady. The flames were rising high above her, and some of the trees were blazing. When they got as close to her as the heat would permit they saw Bubonovitch. Bubonovitch saw Lucas and greeted him happily. But he did not see Clayton until the latter dropped from a tree and alighted in front of him. Bubonovitch reached for his .45. Then he recognized the Englishman.

"Migawd!" he exclaimed. "What

happened to your clothes?"

"I threw them away."

"Threw them away!"

Clayton nodded. "They were wet and uncomfortable. They weighed too much."

Bubonovitch shook his head. His eyes wandered over the Englishman. He saw the knife. "Where's your gun?" he asked.

"I threw that away, too."

"You must be crazy," said Staff Sergeant Bubonovitch.

Lucas, standing behind Clayton, shook his head vigorously at his crewman. But the remark didn't seem to excite Clayton, as the pilot had feared it might. He just said, "No, not so crazy. You'll be throwing yours away pretty soon. Inside

of twenty-four hours it will be rusty and useless. But don't throw your knife away. And keep it clean and sharp. It will kill and not make as much noise as a .45."

Lucas was watching the flames licking through the openings in his beloved plane. "Did they all get out?" he asked Bubonovitch.

"Yes. Lieut. Burnham and I jumped together. He should be close around here somewhere. All those who were alive got out."

Lucas raised his head and shouted: "Lucas calling! Lucas calling!"

Faintly an answer came: "Rosetti to Lucas! Rosetti to Lucas! For Pete's sake come an' get me down outta dis."

"Roger!" shouted Lucas, and the three men started in the direction from which Shrimp's voice had come.

They found him—dangling in the harness of his chute a good hundred feet above the ground. Lucas and Bubonovitch looked up and scratched their heads—at least figuratively.

"How you goin' to get me down?" demanded Shrimp.

"Damifino," said Lucas.

"After a while you'll ripen and drop," said Bubonovitch.

"Funny, ain'tcha, wise guy? Where'd you pick up dat dope widout no clothes?"

"This is Colonel Clayton, half-wit,"

replied Bubonovitch.

"Oh." It is amazing how much contempt can be crowded into a two letter word. And S/Sgt. Tony Rosetti got it all in. It couldn't be missed. Lucas flushed.

Clayton smiled. "Is the young man allergic to Englishmen?"

"Excuse him, colonel; he doesn't know any better. He's from a suburb of Chicago known as Cicero."

"How you goin' to get me down?" demanded Shrimp again.

"That's just what I don't know," said Lucas.

"Maybe we'll think of some way by tomorrow," said Bubonovitch.

"You ain't a-goin' to leaf me up here all night!" wailed the ball turret gunner.

"I'll get him down," said Clayton.

There were no vines depending from the tree in which Shrimp hung that came close enough to the ground to be within reach of Clayton. He went to another tree and swarmed up the vines like a monkey. Then he found a loose liana some fifty feet above the ground. Testing it and finding it secure, he swung out on it, pushing himself away from the bole of the tree with his feet. Twice he tried to reach a liana that hung from the tree in which Shrimp was isolated. His outstretched fingers only touched it. But the third time they closed around it.

The strength of this liana he tested as

he had the other; then, keeping the first one looped around an arm, he climbed toward Shrimp. When he came opposite him, he still could not quite reach him. The gunner was hanging just a little too far from the bole of the tree.

Clayton tossed him the free end of the liana he had brought over with him from an adjoining tree. "Grab this," he said, "and hang on."

Rosetti grabbed, and Clayton pulled him toward him until he could seize one of the chute's shrouds. Clayton was seated on a stout limb. He drew Rosetti up beside him.

"Get out of your chute harness and Mae West," he directed.

When Shrimp had done so, Clayton

threw him across a shoulder, seized the liana he had brought from the nearby tree, and slipped from the limb.

"Geeze!" screamed Rosetti as they swung through space.

Holding by one hand, Clayton seized a waving branch and brought them to a stop. Then he clambered down the liana to the ground. When he swung Rosetti from his shoulder, the boy collapsed. He could not stand. And he was shaking like a leaf.

Lucas and Bubonovitch were speechless for a moment. "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I never would have believed it," said the pilot.

"I still don't believe it," said Bubonovitch.

"Shall we look for the others?" asked Clayton. "I think we should try to find them and then get away from the plane. That smoke can be seen for miles, and the Japs will know exactly what it is."

They searched and called for several hours without success. And just before dark they came upon the body of Lieut. Burnham, the navigator. His chute had failed to open. With their knives they dug a shallow grave. Then they wrapped him in his chute and buried him. Jerry Lucas said a short prayer. Then they went away.

In silence they followed Clayton. His eyes were scanning the trees as they passed them, and it was evident that he was searching for something. Quite

spontaneously, they all seemed to have acquired unlimited confidence in the big Englishman. Shrimp's eyes seldom left him. Who may say what the little Cicero mucker was thinking? He had not spoken since his rescue from the tree. He had not even thanked Clayton.

It had stopped raining and the mosquitoes swarmed about them. "I don't see how you stand it, colonel," said Lucas, slapping at mosquitoes on his face and hands.

"Sorry!" exclaimed Clayton. "I meant to show you." He searched about and found some of the plants he had discovered earlier in the afternoon. "Mash these leaves," he said, "and rub the juice on all the exposed parts of your

body. The mosquitoes won't bother you after that."

Presently, Clayton found that for which he had been looking—trees with interlacing branches some twenty feet above the ground. He swung up easily and commenced to build a platform. "If any of you men can get up here, you can help me. We ought to get this thing done before dark."

"What is it?" asked Bubonovitch.

"It's where we're going to sleep tonight. Maybe for many nights."

The three men climbed slowly and awkwardly up. They cut branches and laid them across the limbs that Clayton had selected, forming a solid platform about ten by seven feet.

"Wouldn't it have been easier to have built a shelter on the ground?" asked Lucas.

"Very much," agreed Clayton, "but if we had, one of us might be dead before morning."

"Why?" demanded Bubonovitch.

"Because this is tiger country."

"What makes you think so?"

"I have smelled them off and on all afternoon."

S/Sgt. Rosetti shot a quick glance at Clayton from the corners of his eyes and then looked as quickly away.

CHAPTER 3

The Englishman knotted several lengths of chute shrouds together until he had a rope that would reach the ground. He handed the end of the rope to Bubonovitch. "Haul in when I give you the word, Sergeant," he said. Then he dropped quickly to the ground.

"Smelled 'em!" said S/Sgt. Rosetti, exuding skepticism.

Clayton gathered a great bundle of giant elephant ears, made the end of the rope fast to it, and told Bubonovitch to haul away. Three such bundles he sent up before he returned to the platform. With the help of the others, he spread some on the floor of the platform and with the remainder built an overhead

shelter.

"We'll get meat tomorrow," said Clayton. "I'm not familiar with the fruits and vegetables here except a few. We'll have to watch what the monkeys eat."

There were plenty of monkeys around them. There had been all afternoon — chattering, scolding, criticizing the newcomers.

"I recognize one edible fruit," said Bubonovitch. "See? In that next tree, Durio zibethinus, called durian. That siamang is eating one now—Symphalangus syndactylus—the black gibbon of Sumatra, largest of the gibbons."

"He's off again," said Shrimp. "He can't even call a ant a ant."

Lucas and Clayton smiled. "I'll get some of the fruit of the Durio zibeth-whatever-you-call-it," said the latter. He swung agilely into the adjoining tree and gathered four of the large, prickly skinned durians, tossing them one by one to his companions. Then he swung back.

Rosetti was the first to cut his open. "It stinks," he said. "I ain't that hungry." He started to toss it away. "It's spoiled."

"Wait," cautioned Bubonovitch. "I've read about the durian. It does stink, but it tastes good. The natives roast the seeds like chestnuts."

Clayton had listened to Bubonovitch attentively. As they ate the fruit, he thought; What a country! What an army!

A sergeant who talks like a college

professor—and comes from Brooklyn at that! He thought, too, how little the rest of the world really knew America—the Nazis least of all. Jitterbugs, playboys, a decadent race! He thought of how gallantly these boys had fought their guns, of how Lucas had made sure that his crew and his passenger were out before he jumped. Of how the boy had fought hopelessly to save his ship.

Night had fallen. The jungle sounds and the jungle voices were different now. There was movement everywhere around them—unseen, stealthy. A hollow, grunting cough rose from the foot of their tree.

"Wot was dat?" asked Shrimp.

"Stripes," said Clayton.

Shrimp wanted to ask what stripes was, but so far he had addressed no word to the Britisher. However, curiosity at last got the best of pride. "Stripes?" he asked.

"Tiger."

"Geeze! You mean they's a tiger loose down there?"

"Yes. Two of them."

"Geeze! I seen 'em oncet at the zoo in Chicago. I guess it wouldn't be so healthy down there. I heard they ate people."

"We've got to thank you, Colonel, that we're not down there," said Jerry Lucas.

"I guess we'd be a lot of babes in the woods without him," said Bubonovitch.

"I learned a hell of a lot in Colonel Saffarrans' jungle training outfit," said Shrimp, "but nothin' about wot to do about tigers."

"They hunt mostly at night," Clayton explained. "That's when you have to be on your guard." After a while he said to Bubonovitch, "From what little I have read about Brooklyn I was lead to believe that Brooklynites had a special pronunciation of English all their own. You talk like any one else."

"So do you," said Bubonovitch. Clayton laughed. "I was not educated at Oxford."

"Bum had a higher Brooklyn education," explained Lucas. "He went through sixth grade."

Bubonovitch and Rosetti dropped off to sleep. Clayton and Lucas sat at the edge of the platform, their legs dangling, planning for the future. They agreed that their best chance lay in getting a boat from friendly natives (if they could find any) on the southwest coast of the island and then trying to make Australia. They spoke of this and many other things. Lucas talked about his crew. He spoke of them with pride. Those who were unaccounted for, he worried about. Those who were dead were dead. There was nothing to be done about that now. But Clayton could tell by the tenseness in his voice when he spoke of them how he felt about them.

He spoke of Rosetti. "He's really a

good kid," he said, "and a top ball turret gunner. Nature molded him for the job. There isn't much room in a ball turret. Bum says the War Department should breed 'em, crossing midgets with pygmies. Shrimp has the DFC and Air Medal with three clusters. He's a good kid all right."

"He certainly hasn't much use for Britishers," laughed Clayton.

"What with all the Irish and Italians in Chicago, it's not surprising. And then Shrimp never had much of a chance to learn anything. His father was killed in Cicero in a gang war when he was a kid, and I guess his mother was just a gangland moll. She never had any use for Shrimp, nor he for her. But with a

background like that, you've got to hand it to the kid. He didn't get much schooling, but he kept straight."

"Bubonovitch interests me," said the Englishman. "He's an unusually intelligent man."

"Yes. He's not only intelligent, but he's extremely well educated. The former is not necessarily a corollary of the latter. Bubonovitch is a graduate of Columbia. His father, a school teacher, saw to that. Bum got interested in the exhibits in The American Museum of Natural History in New York when he was in high school. So he specialized in zoology, botany, anthropology, and all the other ologies that a fellow has to know to be valuable to the museum. And

when he graduated, he landed a job there. He likes to pull scientific names of things on Shrimp just to annoy him."

"Then it's probably a good thing for Sgt. Rosetti's blood pressure that I haven't an Oxford accent," said Clayton.

* * * * *

As Corrie van der Meer trudged along with her captors her mind was occupied with but two problems: How to escape and how to destroy herself if she could not escape. Alam, walking beside her, spoke to her in his own language, which she understood but which the Japs did not.

"Forgive me," he begged, "for leading them to you. They tortured Tiang Umar, but he would not tell. Then his old wife

could stand it no longer, and she told them that I knew where you were hiding. They said that they would kill everyone in the village if I did not lead them to your hiding place. What could I do?"

"You did right, Alam. Sing Tai and I were only two. It is better that two die than all the people of a village."

"I do not want you to die," said Alam. "I would rather die myself."

The girl shook her head. "What I fear," she said, "is that I may not find the means to die—in time."

Lieut. Sokabe spent the night in the kampong of Tiang Umar. The villagers were sullen and glowering; so Sokabe posted two sentries before the door of the house where he and his captive slept.

To further preclude the possibility that she might escape, he bound her wrists and her ankles. Otherwise, he did not molest her. He had a healthy fear of Capt. Tokujo Matsuo, whose temper was notoriously vile; and he had a plan.

When he set out the next morning, he took Alam along to act as interpreter should he require one. Corrie was glad of the company of this friendly youth. They talked together as they had the previous day. Corrie asked Alam if he had seen any of the guerrilla bands that she had heard rumors of from time to time, bands made up of Dutchmen who had escaped to the hills— planters, clerks, soldiers.

"No, I have not seen them; but I have

heard of them. I have heard that they have killed many Japanese. They are desperate men. The Japanese are always searching for them. They offer the native people rich rewards for pointing out their hiding places; so these men are suspicious of all natives they do not know, thinking they may be spies. It is said that a native who falls into their hands never returns to his village unless they know that they can trust him. And who can blame them? I have also heard that many natives have joined them. Now that we have learned that Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity is for the Japanese alone, we hate them." They passed the spot where the village of Taku Muda had stood. There was no evidence that man

had ever set foot there, so completely had the jungle reclaimed it.

"This is the prosperity that the Japanese bring us," said Alam.

The morning wore on. They marched beneath sullen clouds in a tropical downpour. The gloomy forest stunk of rotting vegetation. It exhaled the vapors of death. Death! The girl knew that every step she took was bringing her closer to it. Unless—hope does not die easily in the breast of youth. But unless what?

She heard the roar of motors overhead. But she was used to that sound. The Japs were always flying over the island. Then, from a distance, there came to her ears a crashing and rending followed by a dull explosion. She did

not hear the motors again. She thought, of course, that it was an enemy plane; and it filled her with satisfaction. The Japs jabbered about it excitedly. Lt. Sokabe considered investigating. He talked with a sergeant. At last they decided that they could never find the plane in this tangle of jungle and forest. It was too far away.

It was almost dark when they reached the kampong that Capt. Tokujo Matsuo had commandeered for the use of his detachment. Standing in the doorway of the house that two officers had taken for their quarters, Matsuo watched the party approach.

He called to Sokabe. "Where are the prisoners?"

The lieutenant seized Corrie roughly

by the arm and pulled her out of line and toward the captain. "Here," he said.

"I sent you for a Chinaman and a yellow haired Dutch girl, and you bring back a black haired native boy. Explain."

"We killed the Chinaman," said Sokabe. "This is the Dutch girl."

"I do not feel like joking, you fool," snarled Matsuo.

Sokabe prodded the girl up the ladder that led to the doorway. "I do not joke," he said. "This is the girl. She has disguised herself by dyeing her hair black and wearing the clothing of a native boy. Look!" Roughly he parted Corrie's hair with his dirty fingers, revealing the blonde color close to the

scalp.

Matsuo scrutinized the girl's features closely. Then he nodded. "She suits me," he said. "I shall keep her."

"She belongs to me," said Sokabe. "I found her and brought her here. She is mine."

Matsuo spat. His face turned red. But he managed to restrain himself. "You forget yourself, Lieutenant Sokabe," he said. "And take your orders from me. I am commanding officer here. You will find yourself other quarters at once and leave the girl here."

"You may be a captain," said Sokabe; "but now, because of the great size of the imperial army and the many casualties, many officers are low born. My

honorable ancestors were samurai. My honorable uncle is General Hideki Tojo. Your father and all your uncles are peasants. If I write a letter to my honorable uncle, you will not be a captain any more. Do I get the girl?"

There was murder in Matsuo's heart. But he chose to dissemble his wrath until such time as Sokabe might meet an accidental death. "I thought you were my friend," he said, "and now you turn against me. Let us do nothing rash. The girl is nothing. Descendants of the gods should not quarrel over such a low born creature. Let us leave the matter to the decision of our colonel. He will be here to inspect us soon." And before he gets here, thought Matsuo, an accident will

befall you.

"That is fair enough," agreed Sokabe. It will be most unfortunate, he thought, should my captain die before the colonel arrives.

The girl understood nothing that they said. She did not know that for the time being she was safe.

Early the next morning Alam left the kampong to return to his village.

CHAPTER 4

Jerry Lucas was awakened by the violent shaking of the platform. It awakened Bubonovitch and Rosetti, also. "Wot fell!" exclaimed the latter.

Bubonovitch looked around. "I don't see anything."

Jerry leaned far out and looked up. He saw a huge black form a few feet above him, violently shaking the tree.

"Gripes!" he exclaimed. "Do you guys see what I see?"

The other two looked up. "Geeze!" said Rosetti. "Wot a mug! I never knew monkeys came dat big."

"That is not a monkey, you dope," said Bubonovitch. "It is known as Pongo

pygmaeus, but why the pygmaeus I have not pursued my studies far enough to ascertain. It should be Pongo giganteum."

"Talk United States," growled Shrimp.

"It's an orangutan, Shrimp," said Lucas.

"From the Malay 'oran-utan,' meaning wild man," added Bubonovitch.

"What does it want?" inquired Shrimp. "Wot in 'ell 's it shakin' the tree like dat for? Tryin' to shake us out? Geeze! wot a mug. Is he a man eater, Perfesser Bubonovitch?"

"He is chiefly herbivorous," replied Bubonovitch. Rosetti turned to Lucas.

"Do monks eat people, Cap?"

"No," replied Lucas. "Just leave 'em alone, and they'll leave you alone. But don't get fresh with that baby. He could take you apart like nobody's business."

Shrimp was examining his .45. "He ain't a-goin' to take me apart, not while I got Big Bertha here."

The orangutan, having satisfied his curiosity, moved slowly off. Shrimp started stripping his .45. "Geeze! It's started to rust already, just like —" He looked around. "Say! Where's the dook?"

"Gripes! He's gone," said Lucas. "I never noticed."

"Maybe he fell off," suggested Rosetti, peering over the edge. "He

wasn't a bad guy fer a Britisher."

"That's sure some concession, coming from you," said Bubonovitch. "Do you know, Cap'n, Shrimp wouldn't play billiards even for fear he might have to put English on the cue ball."

Shrimp sat up suddenly and looked at the others. "I just happened to think," he said. "Did either of youse hear dat scream last night?"

"I did," said Lucas. "What of it?"

"It sounded like some one bein' kilt. Didn't it?"

"Well, it did sound sort of human."

"Sure. Dat's it. The dook fell off an' a tiger got 'im. That was him screamin'."

Bubonovitch pointed. "Here comes

his ghost."

The others looked. "Per Pete's sake!" said Rosetti. "Wot a guy!"

Swinging through the trees toward them, the carcass of a deer slung over one shoulder, was the Englishman. He swung onto the platform. "Here's breakfast," he said. "Go to it."

Dropping the carcass, he drew his knife and hacked out a generous portion. Tearing the skin from the flesh with powerful fingers, he squatted in a far corner of the platform and sank his strong teeth into the raw flesh. Shrimp's jaw dropped and his eyes went wide. "Ain't you goin' to cook it?" he asked.

"What with?" inquired Clayton. "There's nothing around here dry enough

to burn. If you want meat, you'll have to learn to eat it raw until we can find a permanent camp and get something that will burn."

"Well," said Shrimp, "I guess I'm hungry enough—"

"I'll try anything once," said Bubonovitch.

Jerry Lucas hacked off a small piece and started to chew it. Clayton watched the three men chewing on bits of the warm raw meat. "That's not the way to eat it," he said. "Tear off pieces you can swallow, and then swallow them whole. Don't chew."

"How did youse learn all dis?" inquired Rosetti.

"From the lions."

Rosetti glanced at the others, shook his head, and then tried to swallow to large a piece of venison. He gagged and choked. "Geeze!" he said, after he had disgorged the morsel, "I never went to school to no lions." But after that he did better.

"It's not so bad when you swallow it whole," admitted Lucas.

"And it fills your belly and gives you strength," said Clayton.

He swung into the next tree and got more durian fruit. They ate it now with relish. "After dis," said Shrimp, "there ain't nuthin' I can't eat."

"I passed a stream near here," said Clayton. "We can drink there. I think we'd better get started. We've got to do

some reconnoitering before we can make any definite plans. You might take some of this meat along in your pockets if you think you'll be hungry again soon. But there's plenty of game everywhere. We won't go hungry."

No one wanted to take any of the meat; so Clayton tossed the carcass to the ground. "For Stripes," he said.

The sun was shining, and the forest teemed with life. Bubonovitch was in his element. Here were animals and birds he had studied about in books, or whose dead and mounted frames he had seen in museums. And there were many that he had neither seen nor heard of. "A regular museum of natural history on the hoof," he said.

Clayton had led them to the stream, and after they had quenched their thirsts he guided them to a well marked game trail he had discovered while hunting for their breakfast. It wound downward in the direction he and Lucas had decided they would take—toward the west coast, many, many long marches away.

"There have been no men along this trail recently," said Clayton, "but there have been many other animals—elephant, rhinos, tigers, deer. It was on this trail that I found our breakfast."

Shrimp wanted to ask how he had caught the deer, but realized that he had recently been altogether too familiar with a Britisher. Probably a friend of George Toid, he thought, and winced. It

curled his hair to think what the mob would say could they know of it. Still, he had to admit that the guy wasn't a bad guy, even though he hated to admit it.

They were moving up wind, and Clayton paused and and raised a warning hand. "There is a man ahead of us," he said in a low tone.

"I don't see no one," said Rosetti.

"Neither do I," said Clayton, "but he's there." He stood still for a few minutes. "He's going the same way we are," he said. "I'll go ahead and have a look at him. The rest of you come along slowly." He swung into a tree and disappeared ahead.

"You can't see no one, you can't hear no one; and this guy tells us there's a guy

ahead of us—and w'ich way he's goin'!" Rosetti looked appealingly at Lucas.

"He hasn't been wrong yet," said Jerry.

Sing Tai did not die. The Jap bayonet inflicted a cruel wound, but pierced no vital organ. For two days Sing Tai lay in a welter of blood, deep hidden in his cave. Then he crawled out. Suffering from shock, weak from loss of blood and lack of food and water, often on the verge of fainting from pain, he staggered slowly along the trail toward the village of Tiang Umar. Orientals are more easily resigned to death than are Occidentals, so greatly do their philosophies differ. But Sing Tai would not die. While there was hope that his

beloved mistress might live and need him, he, too, must live.

In the village of Tiang Umar he might get word of her. Then he might be able to determine whether to live or die. So Sing Tai's loyal heart beat on, however weakly. Yet there were moments when he wondered if he would have the strength to carry on to the village. Such thoughts were depressing him when he was startled to see an almost naked giant appear suddenly in the trail before him —a bronzed giant with black hair and gray eyes. This, perhaps, is the end, thought Sing Tai.

Clayton had dropped into the trail from an overhanging tree. He spoke to Sing Tai in English, and Sing Tai replied

in English which had just a trace of pidgin. In Hong Kong, Sing Tai had lived for years in the homes of Englishmen.

Clayton saw the blood soaked garments and noted the outward signs of weakness that seemed to verge on collapse. "How you get hurt?" he asked.

"Jap monkey-man run bayonet through me—here." He indicated the spot in his side.

"Why?" asked Clayton, and Sing Tai told his story.

"Are there Japs near here?"

"Me no think so."

"How far is this village you are trying to reach?"

"Not very far now—maybe so one kilometer."

"Are the people of that village friendly to the Japanese?"

"No. Very much hate Japs."

Clayton's companions appeared now from around a curve in the trail. "You see," said Lucas. "Right again."

"That guy is always right," muttered Shrimp, "but I don't see how he done it—not with no glass ball nor nuthin'."

"Not even with the aid of mirrors," said Bubonovitch.

Sing Tai looked at them apprehensively as they approached. "They are my friends," said Clayton—"American aviators."

"Melicans!" breathed Sing Tai with a sigh of relief. "Now I know we save missie."

Clayton repeated Sing Tai's story to the others, and it was decided that they should go on to Tiang Umar's village. Clayton gathered the Chinese gently into his arms and carried him along the trail. When Sing Tai said that they were near the village, the Englishman put him down, and told them all to wait while he went ahead to investigate. The Jap detachment might still be there. It was not, and he soon returned.

Tiang Umar received them well when Sing Tai had explained who they were. With Sing Tai acting as interpreter, Tiang Umar told them that the Japs had

left the previous morning, taking the Dutch girl and one of his young men with them. What was their destination, he did not know. He knew that there was a Jap camp one day's march to the southwest. Perhaps they had gone to that camp. If they would wait in his kampong, he was sure that the youth, Alam, would return, as the Japs had taken him along only to act as interpreter in the villages they might pass through.

They decided to wait Clayton was especially anxious to; and when it was decided, he went off into the forest alone. "He'll probably come back wit one of them there water buffalo under his arm," predicted Shrimp. But when he came back he had only some tough and

slender branches and some bamboo. With these and some chicken feathers and fiber cord given him by Tiang Umar, he fashioned a bow, some arrows and a spear. The tips of his weapons he fire hardened. With parachute silk, he made a quiver.

His companions watched with interest. Rosetti was not greatly impressed when Clayton explained that his armament would serve not only to ensure them plenty of game but as weapons of defense and offense against men. "Do we hold de game w'ile he shoots at it?" he asked Bubonovitch. "Say, an' if any guy ever pricked me wid one of dem t'ings, an' I found it out—"

"Don't be corny," said Bubonovitch.

But weapons, to Rosetti, meant .45s, tommy guns, machine guns, not slivers of bamboo with chicken feathers at one end.

Late in the afternoon, Alam returned. He was immediately surrounded by a crowd of jabbering natives. Sing Tai finally got his story and retold it to Clayton. Alam knew that the two Jap officers had quarreled over the girl and that she was still safe at the time he had left the village that morning.

Sing Tai, with tears in his eyes, begged Clayton to rescue Corrie from the Japs. Clayton and the Americans discussed the matter. All were in favor of the attempt, but not all for the same reasons. Clayton and Bubonovitch

wished to save the girl. Lucas and Rosetti wished to discomfit the Japs.

They were little interested in the girl, both being misogynists. Lucas was a woman hater because the girl he had left behind in Oklahoma City had married a 4-F two months after Jerry had gone overseas. Rosetti's hatred of them stemmed from his lifelong hatred of his mother. Early the following morning they set out, guided by Alam.

CHAPTER 5

They moved slowly and cautiously, Clayton reconnoitering ahead of the others. Shrimp didn't see why they had brought Alam, and was sure that they would become lost. In a weird sign language of his own invention, he was constantly asking Alam if they were on the right trail. The native, not having the slightest idea what Shrimp's wild gesticulating meant, nodded and smiled as soon as Rosetti started to point and grimace.

Lucas and Bubonovitch were not as much concerned as Shrimp. They had more confidence in the Englishman than he. However, they could not know that Clayton needed no guide to show him the

trail of a detachment of soldiers accompanied by a white girl and a native youth. Everywhere along the trail the signs of their recent passage were obvious to his trained senses.

It was dark when they approached the village. Clayton had the others wait while he went ahead to investigate. He found the village poorly guarded and entered it with ease. The night was moonless and clouds hid the stars. There were dim lights in a few of the houses. Conditions were ideal for the furtherance of the plan Clayton had worked out.

Close to the point at which he had entered his keen sense of smell located the white girl. He heard the angry

jabbering of two Japs in the house with her. They would be the two officers still quarreling over her.

He left the village at the same point at which he had entered it and passed around it to its lower end. There was a sentry here. Clayton did not wish any sentry at this point. The fellow patrolled back and forth. Clayton crouched behind a tree, waiting. The sentry approached. Something leaped upon him from behind; and before he could voice a cry of warning, a keen blade bit deep into his throat.

Clayton dragged the corpse out of the village, and returned to his companions. He whispered instructions; then he led them to the lower end of the village.

"Your .45s," he had said, "will probably fire the cartridges that are in the chambers. The chances are that the mechanisms are so rusted by this time that they will not eject the shell nor reload, but fire as long as they will fire. When they jam, throw rocks into the village to keep attention attracted in this direction. And all the while, yell like hell. Start this in three minutes. In four minutes, get out of there and get out quick. We'll rendezvous on the back trail above the village. Keep your watch dial hidden from the village, Captain." Then he was gone.

He returned to the upper end of the village and hid beneath the house in which were the two officers and the girl.

A minute later, shots rang out at the lower end of the village and loud yells shattered the silence of the night. Clayton grinned. It sounded as though a strong force were attacking the village.

A second later the two officers ran from the house, screaming orders, demanding explanations. Soldiers swarmed from other houses and all ran in the direction of the disturbance. Then Clayton ran up the ladder that led to the doorway of the house and entered. The girl lay on sleeping mats at the rear of the single room. Her wrists and ankles were bound.

She saw this almost naked man cross the floor toward her at a run. He stooped down and gathered her in his arms,

carried her from the house and out into the jungle. She was terrified. What new horror awaited her?

In the dim light within the room, she had only seen that the man was tall and that his skin was brown. Out along a jungle trail he bore her for a short distance. Then he halted and put her down. She felt something cold press against her wrists—and her hands were free. Then the cords around her ankles were cut.

"Who are you?" she demanded in Dutch.

"Quiet!" he cautioned.

Presently, four others joined them; and they all moved in silence with her along the dark trail. Who were they?

What did they want of her? The one word, quiet, spoken in English had partially reassured her. At least they were not Japs.

For an hour they moved on in unbroken silence, Clayton constantly alert for sounds of pursuit. But none developed. At last he spoke. "I think we confused them," he said. "If they are searching, it is probably in the other direction."

"Who are you?" asked Corrie, this time in English.

"Friends," replied Clayton. "Sing Tai told us about you. So we came and got you."

"Sing Tai is not dead?"

"No, but badly wounded."

Alam spoke to her then and reassured her. "You are safe now," he said. "I have heard that Americans can do anything. Now I believe it."

"These are Americans?" she asked incredulously. "Have they landed at last?"

"Only these few. Their plane was shot down."

"That was a pretty cute trick, Colonel," said Bubonovitch. "It certainly fooled them."

"It came near doing worse than that to me, because I forgot to caution you as to the direction of your fire. Two bullets came rather too close to me for comfort." He turned to the girl. "Do you feel strong enough to walk the rest of the

night?" he asked.

"Yes, quite," she replied. "You see I am used to walking. I have been doing a lot of it for the past two years, keeping out of the way of the Japs."

"For two years?"

"Yes, ever since the invasion. I have been hiding in the mountains all this time, Sing Tai and I." Clayton drew her out, and she told her story —the flight from the plantation, the death of her mother, the murder of her father and Lum Kam, the treachery of some natives, the loyalty of others.

They reached the village of Tiang Umar at dawn, but they remained there only long enough to get food; then they moved on, all but Alam. A plan had been

worked out during the night. It was based on the belief that the Japs would eventually return to this village to look for the girl. Furthermore Corrie wished to have nothing done that would jeopardize the safety of these people who had befriended her.

Corrie and Sing Tai knew of many hiding places in the remote fastnesses of the mountains. They had been forced to move closer to Tiang Umar's village because of their inability to get proper or sufficient food for themselves in these safer locations. But now it would be different. The Americans could do anything.

They had been forced to leave Sing Tai behind, as he was in no condition to

travel. Tiang Umar assured them that he could hide the Chinese where the Japs could not find him if they should return to the village.

"If I can, I shall let you know where I am, Tiang Umar," said Corrie; "then, perhaps, you will send Sing Tai to me when he is strong enough to travel."

Corrie led the party deep into the wilds of the mountain hinterland. Here there were rugged gorges and leaping streams, forests of teak, huge stands of bamboo, open mountain meadows man deep with tough grasses.

Lucas and Clayton had decided to go thus deeper into the mountains and then cut to the southeast before turning toward the coast. In this way they would

avoid the area in which the plane had crashed, where the Japs had probably already instituted a thorough search. They would also encounter few if any villages whose inhabitants might put Japs upon their trail.

Clayton often foraged ahead for food, always returning with something. It might be partridge or pheasant, sometimes deer. And now at their camps he made fire, so that the Americans could cook their food.

On the trail, Clayton and Corrie always led the way, then came Bubonovitch, with Lucas and Shrimp bringing up the rear, keeping as far away from the Dutch girl as possible. They were unreconciled to the presence of a

woman. It was not so much that Corrie might jeopardize their chances to escape. It was just that they objected to women on general principles.

"But I suppose we gotta put up wit de dame," said Rosetti. "We can't leaf the Japs get her."

Jerry Lucas agreed. "If she were a man, or even a monkey, it wouldn't be so bad. But I just plain don't have any time for women."

"Some dame double-cross you?" asked Shrimp.

"I could have forgiven her throwing me over for a 4-F as soon as I was out of sight," said Jerry, "but the so-and-so was a Republican into the bargain."

"She ain't hard to look at," conceded

Shrimp, grudgingly.

"They're the worst," said Jerry. "Utterly selfish and greedy. Always gouging some one. Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! That's all they think of. If you ever decide to marry, Shrimp," advised Jerry, pedantically, "marry an old bag who'd be grateful to any one for marrying her."

"Who wants to marry an old bag?" demanded Shrimp.

"You wouldn't have to worry about wolves."

"Whoever marries dis little Dutch number'll have plenty to worry about. All de wolves in de woods'll be howlin' round his back door. Ever notice dem lamps w'en she smiles?"

"You falling for her, Shrimp?"

"Hell, no; but I got eyes, ain't I?"

"I never look at her," lied Jerry.

Just then a covey of partridges broke cover. Clayton already had an arrow fitted to his bow. Instantly the string twanged and a partridge fell. The man's movements were as swift and sure and smooth as the passage of light.

"Geeze!" exclaimed Rosetti. "I give. The guy's not human. Howinell did he know them boids was goin' to bust out? How could he hit 'em with dat t'ing?"

Jerry shook his head. "Search me. He probably smelled 'em, or heard 'em. Lots of the things he does are just plain uncanny."

"I'm goin' to learn to shoot one of dem t'ings," said Shrimp.

Presently, Rosetti overcame his Anglophobia sufficiently to permit him to ask Clayton to show him how to make a bow and arrows. Lucas and Bubonovitch expressed a similar desire. The next day Clayton gathered the necessary materials, and they all set to work under his guidance to fashion weapons, even Corrie.

The Dutch girl braided the bow strings from fibers from the long tough grasses they found in open spaces in the mountains. Clayton shot birds for the feathers, and taught the others how properly to fletch their arrows. The fashioning of the weapons was a

pleasant interlude to long days of scaling cliffs, battling through jungle undergrowth, marching down one declivity only to climb up once more to descend another. It was the first time that the five had had any protracted social intercourse, for after each hard day's march their greatest need had been sleep.

The Dutch girl sat near Jerry Lucas. He watched her nimble fingers braiding the fibers, and thought that she had pretty hands—small and well shaped. He noticed, too, that notwithstanding two years of bitter hardships she still gave attention to her nails. He glanced at his own, ruefully. Somehow, she always looked trim and neat. How she

accomplished it was beyond him.

"It will be fun to hunt with these," she said to him in her precise, almost Oxford English.

"If we can hit anything," he replied. She speaks better English than I, he thought.

"We must practice a great deal," she said. "It is not right that we four grown-up people should be dependent upon Colonel Clayton for everything, as though we were little children."

"No," he said.

"Is he not wonderful?"

Jerry mumbled a "Yes," and went on with his work. With awkward, unaccustomed fingers he was trying to

fletch an arrow. He wished the girl would keep still. He wished she were in Halifax. Why did there have to be girls around to spoil a man's world?

Carrie glanced up at him, puzzled. Her eyes reflected it. Then she noticed his awkward attempts to hold a feather in place and fasten it there with a bit of fiber. "Here," she said. "Let me help you. You hold the feather and I'll bind the fiber around the shaft. Hold it close in the groove. There, that's right." Her hands, passing the fiber around the arrow, often touched his. He found the contact pleasant; and because he found it so, it made him angry.

"Here," he said, almost rudely, "I can do this myself. You need not bother."

She looked up at him, surprised. Then she went back to braiding the bow strings. She did not say anything, but in that brief glance when their eyes had met he had seen surprise and hurt in hers. He had seen the same once in a deer he had shot, and he had never again shot a deer.

You're a damned heel, he thought of himself. Then, with a great effort of will power, he said, "I am sorry. I did not mean to be rude."

"You do not like me," she said. "Why? Have I done something to offend you?"

"Of course not. And what makes you think I don't like you?"

"It has been quite obvious. The little sergeant does not like me, either.

Sometimes I catch him looking at me as though he would like to bite off my head.

"Some men are shy around women," he said.

The girl smiled. "Not you," she said.

They were silent for a moment. Then he said, "Would you mind helping me again? I am terribly awkward at this."

Corrie thought, He is a gentleman, after all.

Again she bound the feathers fast while he held them in place. And their hands touched. Chagrined, Jerry found himself moving his so that they would touch oftener.

CHAPTER 6

Much time was devoted to archery even on the march. Corrie shamed the men. She was very quick and very accurate, and she drew a strong bow—the full length of a two foot, eight inch arrow until the feathers touched her right ear.

Clayton complimented her. Shrimp told Bubonovitch that it was a sissy sport anyway. Jerry secretly admired her prowess and was ashamed of himself for admiring it. He tried to concentrate on the girl in Oklahoma City and the Republican 4-F.

Corrie explained that she had belonged to an archery club for two years in Holland while there at school,

and that she had kept up the practice after she returned to her father's plantation. "If I were not good at it by this time, I should think myself very stupid."

Eventually, even Shrimp commenced to brag about his marksmanship. They were all pretty good, and woe betide any game bird or animal that crossed their path. They had found a couple of dry caves in a limestone cliff, and Clayton had decided that they should remain there until some new clothing and footwear could be fashioned, for their shoes were practically gone and their clothing in shreds.

The Englishman had roughly cured a deer skin, and had fashioned an awl and

needles from bamboo. With the same tough fiber used for their bows and arrows, Corrie was making crude sandals for them with these materials and tools.

She worked alone one morning while the men went out to hunt. Her thoughts ranged over the two years that had passed—years of sorrow, hardship, and danger. Years of pain and unshed tears and hate. She thought of her present situation—alone in the vastness of a mountain wilderness with four strange men, four foreigners. And she realized that she had never felt safer and that for the first time in two years she was happy.

She smiled when she thought of how

terrified she had been when that almost naked brown man had carried her off into the forest. And how surprised she had been when she learned that he was a Royal Air Force colonel. She had liked him and Sergeant Bubonovitch from the very beginning. Her heart had warmed to the sergeant from the moment that he had shown her the pictures of his wife and baby. She had not liked "the little sergeant" nor Captain Lucas. They are both boors, she had thought; but the captain is the worse because he is an educated man and should know better than to behave toward me as he has.

That was what she had thought until lately, but since the day that she had helped him fletch his arrows he had been

different. He still did not seek her company, but he did not avoid her as he had in the past. Bubonovitch had told her what a fine pilot he was and how his crew worshiped him. He cited several examples of Lucas' courage, and they lost nothing in the telling. Crew members are that way if they like an officer.

So Corrie concluded that Lucas was a man's man and possibly a woman hater. And she found the latter idea intriguing. It was also amusing. She smiled as she thought of how a woman hater must feel in such a situation—forced into close companionship with a woman day after day. And a young and pretty woman, she added mentally. For Corrie was

eighteen, and she knew that she was even more than pretty—even in rags and with that horrid head of hair, mostly a rusty black, but blonde at the roots. She had no mirror, but she had seen her reflection in still pools of water. That always made her laugh. She laughed easily and often these days, for she was strangely happy.

She wondered if Captain Lucas would have disliked her if they had met under normal conditions—she with lovely gowns and her beautiful, golden hair becomingly arranged. Had she been given to self analysis, she would probably have wondered also why he was so much in her thoughts. Of course he was goodlooking in an extremely

masculine way.

She thought of him as old, and would have been surprised to have learned that he was only twenty-three. Responsibility and many hours of intense nervous strain had matured him rapidly. To hurl thirty tons of aluminum and steel and high explosives into the air and into battle, to feel that upon you alone depends the safety of a beautiful, half million dollars worth of plane and the lives of nine of your best friends is sufficient responsibility to bring lines of maturity to any face. They had left their mark on Jerry Lucas's. Her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of voices. At first she assumed that the hunters were returning. Then, as the sounds came

nearer, she recognized the intonation of native speech; and a moment later several Sumatrans appeared in the mouth of the cave. They were ugly, vicious looking men. There were ten of them. They took her away with them. From their conversation she soon learned why: The Japs had offered a reward for the capture of her and Sing Tai.

The sun was setting when the hunters returned to the cave. The brief equatorial twilight would soon be followed by darkness. The men missed the girl immediately and commenced to speculate on the explanation.

"She probably run out on us," said Shrimp. "You can't trust no dame."

"Don't be a damn fool," snapped

Lucas. Shrimp's jaw dropped in surprise. He had been sure that the captain would agree with him. "Why should she run out on us?" demanded Lucas. "We offer her the only chance she has to escape the Japs. She probably went hunting."

"What makes you think she has run away from us, Rosetti?" asked Clayton, who was examining the ground just outside of the cave entrance.

"I know skoits," said Shrimp.

"I'd want better evidence than that," said the Englishman.

"Well, she didn't go hunting," said Bubonovitch from the back of the cave.

"How do you know?" asked Lucas.

"Her bow and arrows are here."

"No, she didn't go hunting and she didn't run away," said Clayton. "She was taken away by force by a band of natives. There were about ten men in the band. They went that way." He pointed.

"You got a crystal ball, Colonel?" asked Bubonovitch skeptically.

"I have something more dependable—two eyes and a nose. So have you men, but yours are no good. They have been dulled by generations of soft living, of having laws and police and soldiers to surround you with safeguards."

"And how about you, Colonel?" asked Lucas banteringly.

"I have survived simply because my senses are as acute as those of my

enemies—usually far more acute—and are combined with experience and intelligence to safeguard me where there are no laws, no police, no soldiers."

"Like in London," observed Bubonovitch. Clayton only smiled.

"What makes you sure she didn't go with the natives willingly?" asked Jerry Lucas. "She might have had some good reason that we, of course, can't know anything about. But I certainly don't believe that she deserted us."

"She was taken by force after a very brief struggle. The signs are plain on the ground. You can see here where she held back and was dragged along a few feet. Then her tracks disappear. They picked her up and carried her. The stink of

natives clings to the grasses."

"Well, what are we waiting for then?" demanded Lucas. "Let's get going."

"Sure," said Shrimp. "Let's get after the dirty so-and-sos. They can't take—" He stopped suddenly, surprised by the strange reaction the abduction of the hated "dame" had wrought.

It had started to rain—a sudden tropical deluge. Clayton stepped into the shelter of the cave. "There is no use in starting now," he said. "This rain will obliterate the scent spoor, and we couldn't follow the visible spoor in the dark. They will have to lie up somewhere for the night. Natives don't like to travel after dark on account of the big cats. So they won't gain on us. We

can leave immediately it is light enough in the morning for me to see the trail."

"The poor kid," said Jerry Lucas.

The moment that it was light enough to see, they were off to track down Corrie's abductors. The Americans saw no sign of any spoor, but to the habituated eyes of the Englishman it ran clear and true. He saw where they had put Corrie down a short distance from the cave and made her walk.

It was midmorning when Clayton stopped and sniffed the breeze that blew gently from the direction from which they had come. "You'd better take to the trees," he said to the others. "There's a tiger coming down the trail behind us. He's not very far away."

Corrie's abductors had camped at the edge of a mountain meadow as darkness approached. They built a fire to keep the great cats away, and huddled close to it, leaving one man on guard to tend it.

Tired, the girl slept for several hours. When she awoke, she saw that the fire was out and knew that the guard must have fallen asleep. She realized that now she might escape. She looked toward the dark, forbidding forest —just a solid blank of blackness. But in it lurked possible death. In the other direction, the direction in which these men were taking her, lay something worse than death. She balanced the certainty against the possibility and reached her decision quickly.

Silently she arose. The guard lay stretched beside the ashes of the dead fire. She passed around him and the others. A moment later she entered the forest. Though the trail was worn deep it was difficult to follow it in the darkness; and she made slow progress, often stumbling. But she went on, that she might put as much distance between herself and her captors as possible before daylight, being certain that they would follow her.

She was frightened. The forest was full of sound—stealthy, menacing sound. And any one of them might be the footsteps or the wings of Death. Yet she felt her way on, deeper and deeper into the impenetrable gloom until she heard a

sound that turned her blood cold—the cough of a tiger. And then she heard it crashing through the undergrowth as though it had caught her scent or heard her.

She groped to the side of the trail, her hands outstretched. She prayed that she might find a tree she could scale. A hanging vine struck her in the face as she blundered into it. She seized it and started to climb. The crashing of the beast's body through the tangle of shrubbery sounded closer. Corrie clawed her way upward. From below came a series of hideous growls as the tiger sprang. The impact of his body nearly tore the vine from her grasp, but terror and desperation lent her strength.

Once more the vine swayed violently as the beast sprang again, but now the girl knew that it could not reach her if the vine held. There lay the danger. Twice more the tiger sprang, but at last Corrie reached one of the lower branches—a leafy sanctuary at least from the great cats. But there were other menaces in the jungle that could range far above the ground. The most fearsome of these was the python.

The carnivore remained beneath the tree for some time. Occasionally it growled. At last the girl heard it move away. She considered descending and continuing her flight. She was sure that Clayton at least would search for her, but he could do nothing until daylight.

She thought of Jerry Lucas. Even if he did not like her, he would probably help in the search for her— not because she was Corrie van der Meer, but because she was a woman. And of course Bubonovitch would come, and the little sergeant might be shamed into it.

She decided to wait until daylight. Sometimes Stripes hunted in the daytime, but most usually at night. And this was what the Malays called tiger weather—a dark, starless, misty night.

Eventually the long night ended, and Corrie clambered down into the trail and continued her interrupted flight. She moved swiftly now.

CHAPTER 7

From the branches of a tree that overhung the trail, the survivors of Lovely Lady waited for the tiger to pass and permit them to descend. They had no intention of interfering with his passage. The Americans assured one another that they had not lost a tiger, and grinned as though the remark was original.

They had accompanied Clayton into trees so many times that Shrimp said he expected to sprout a tail most any time. "That's all you need," Bubonovitch assured him.

Around them were the ordinary daylight sounds of the forest, to which they were now so accustomed—the raucous cries of birds, the terrific

booming of siamang gibbons, the chattering of the lesser simians—but no sound came from the tiger. Shrimp decided that it was a false alarm.

Below them, not more than a hundred feet of the trail was visible between two turnings—about fifty feet in each direction. Suddenly the tiger appeared, slouching along loose-jointed and slab-sided, noiseless on his cushioned pads. Simultaneously a slender figure came into view around the opposite turning. It was Corrie. Both the tiger and the girl stopped, facing one another less than a hundred feet apart. The tiger voiced a low growl and started forward at a trot. Corrie seemed frozen with horror. For an instant she did not move. And in that

instant she saw an almost naked man drop from above onto the back of the carnivore. And following him instantly, three other men dropped to the trail, jerking knives from their sheaths as they ran toward the man battling with the great cat. And first among them was S/Sgt. Rosetti, the British hater.

A steel thewed arm encircled the tiger's neck, mightily muscled legs were locked around its groin, and the man's free arm was driving a keen blade deep into the beast's left side. Growls of fury rumbled from the savage throat of the great cat as it threw itself about in agony and rage. And, to Corrie's horror, mingled with them were equally savage growls that rumbled from the throat of

the man. Incredulous, the three Americans watched the brief battle between the two—two jungle beasts—powerless to strike a blow for the man because of the wild leapings and turnings of the stricken tiger.

But what seemed a long time to them was a matter of seconds only. The tiger's great frame went limp and sank to the ground. And the man rose and put a foot upon it and, raising his face to the heavens, voiced a horrid cry —the victory cry of the bull ape. Corrie was suddenly terrified of this man who had always seemed so civilized and cultured. Even the men were shocked.

Suddenly recognition lighted the eyes of Jerry Lucas. "John Clayton," he said,

"Lord Greystoke—Tarzan of the Apes!"

Shrimp's jaw dropped. "Is dat Johnny Weissmuller?" he demanded.

Tarzan shook his head as though to clear his brain of an obsession. His thin veneer of civilization had been consumed by the fires of battle. For the moment he had reverted to the savage primordial beasts that he had been raised. But he was almost instantly his second self again.

He welcomed Corrie with a smile. "So you got away from them," he said.

Corrie nodded. She was still shaken and trembling, and almost on the verge of tears—tears of relief and thanksgiving. "Yes, I got away from them last night; but if it hadn't been for you, it

wouldn't have done me much good, would it?"

"It is fortunate that we happened to be at the right place at the right time. You had better sit down for a while. You look all in."

"I am." She sat down at the edge of the trail, and the four men gathered around her. Jerry Lucas beamed with pleasure and relief. Even Shrimp was happy about it all.

"I'm sure glad you're back, Miss," he said. Then, when he realized what he had said, he turned red. Shrimp's psyche had recently received terrific jolts. A couple of lifelong phobias were being knocked into a cocked hat. He had come to admire an Englishman and to like a

dame.

Corrie told them of her capture and escape, and she and the Americans discussed the killing of the tiger. "Weren't you afraid?" she asked Tarzan.

Tarzan, who had never been afraid in his life, only cautious, was always at a loss to answer this question, which had been put to him many times before. He simply did not know what fear was.

"I knew I could kill the beast," he said.

"I thought you were crazy when I saw you drop on it," said Bubonovitch. "I was sure scared."

"But you came down just the same to help me, all of you. If you thought you might be killed doing it, that was true

bravery."

"Why haven't you told us you were Tarzan?" asked Jerry.

"What difference could it have made?"

"We were sure dumb not to have recognized you long ago," said Bubonovitch.

Corrie said that she could go on. The men gathered the bows they had flung aside when they dropped to the ground, and they started back toward their camp. "Funny none of us thought to shoot it wit arrows," said Shrimp.

"They would only have infuriated it," said Tarzan. "Of course, if you got one through his heart that would kill a tiger; but he would live long enough to do a

terrible lot of damage. Many a hunter has been mauled by lions after sending a large caliber bullet through its heart. These great cats are amazingly tenacious of life."

"To be mauled by a lion or tiger must be a terrible way to die," said Corrie, shuddering.

"On the contrary, it would seem to be a rather nice way to die—if one had to die," said Tarzan. "A number of men who had been mauled by lions and lived have recorded their sensations. They were unanimous in declaring that they felt neither pain nor fear."

"Dey can have it," said Shrimp. "I'll take a tommy gun for mine."

Tarzan brought up the rear of the little

column on the way back to camp, that Usha the Wind might bring to his nostrils warning of the approach of the Sumatrans, if they were pursuing Corrie, before they came too close.

Shrimp walked beside him, watching his every move with admiring eyes. To think, he said to himself, that I'd ever be runnin' around in a jungle wit Tarzan of de Apes. Bubonovitch had convinced him that it was not Johnny Weissmuller. Jerry and Corrie led the way. He walked just behind one of her shoulders. He could watch her profile from that position. He found it a very nice profile to watch. So nice that, though he tried, he couldn't conjure up the likeness of the girl in Oklahoma City for any length of

time. His thoughts kept coming back to the profile.

"You must be very tired," he said. He was thinking that she had walked this trail all the day before and all this day, with practically no sleep.

"A little," she replied. "But I am used to walking. I am very tough."

"We were frightened when we found you gone and Tarzan discovered that you had been abducted."

She threw him a quick, quizzical glance. "And you a misogynist!" she chided.

"Who said I was a misogynist?"

"Both you and the little sergeant."

"I didn't tell you that, and Shrimp

doesn't know what a misogynist is."

"I didn't mean that. I meant that you are both misogynists. No one told me. It was quite obvious."

"Maybe I thought I was," he said. Then he told her about the girl in Oklahoma City.

"And you love her so much?"

"I do not. I guess my pride was hurt. A man hates to be brushed off."

"Brushed off? What is that?"

"Jilted—and for a Republican 4-F."

"Is that such a terrible person? I never heard of one before."

Jerry laughed. "Really, no. But when you're mad you like to call names, and I couldn't think of anything else. The

fellow is really all right. As a matter of fact I am commencing to love him."

"You mean that it is better to discover, before marriage, that she is fickle rather than after?"

"We'll settle for that—for the time being. I just know that I would not want her to be in love with me now."

Corrie thought that over. Whatever she deduced from it, she kept to herself. When they reached camp a few minutes later, she was humming a gay little tune.

After she had gone into the cave, Bubonovitch said to Jerry, "How's the misogynist this afternoon?"

"Shut your trap," said Jerry.

Tarzan, in questioning Corrie about

her abductors, had ascertained that there had been ten of them and that they were armed with kris and parang. They carried no firearms, the Japs having confiscated all such weapons as they could find.

The five were gathered at the mouth of the cave discussing plans for the future, which included tactics in the event the tribesmen returned and proved belligerent. Those who wished always had an equal voice in these discussions; but since they had left the ship, where Jerry's authority had been supreme, there had been a tacit acknowledgment of Tarzan's position as leader. Jerry realized the fitness of this. There had never been any question in his mind, nor

in the minds of the others, that the Englishman was better equipped by knowledge and experience of the jungle, acute sense perceptivity, and physical prowess to guide and protect them than were any of the others. Even Shrimp had had to acknowledge this, and at first that had been hard. Now he would have been one of the Britisher's most ardent supporters had there been any dissidents.

"Corrie tells me," said Tarzan, "that there are ten men in the party that took her. Most of them, she says, are armed with a long straight kris, not the wavy bladed type with which most of us are familiar. They all carry parangs, a heavy knife designed more for use as a tool than a weapon. They have no firearms."

"If they come, we shall have to stop them before they get to close quarters. Corrie will act as interpreter. While they outnumber us more than two to one, we should have no difficulty in holding our own. We are four bows —"

"Five," corrected Corrie.

Tarzan smiled. "We are five bows, and we are all good shots. We shall try to convince them that they had better go away and leave us alone. We shall not shoot until it is absolutely necessary."

"Nuts," said Shrimp. "We'd ought to let 'em have it for stealin' de kid." Corrie gave him a look of surprise and incredulity. Jerry and Bubonovitch grinned. Shrimp turned red.

"There goes another misogynist,"

Bubonovitch whispered to Jerry.

"I know how you feel, Rosetti," said Tarzan. "I think we all feel the same way. But years ago I learned to kill only for food and defense. I learned it from what you call the beasts. I think it is a good rule. Those who kill for any other reason, such as for pleasure or revenge, debase themselves. They make savages of themselves. I will tell you when to fire."

"Perhaps they won't come after all," said Corrie.

Tarzan shook his head. "They will come. They are almost here."

CHAPTER 8

When Iskandar awoke the sun was shining full in his face. He raised himself on an elbow. His eyes took in the scene before him. His nine companions slept. The sentry slept beside a dead fire. The captive was not there.

His cruel face distorted in rage, Iskandar seized his kris and leaped to his feet. The shrieks of the sentry awakened the other sleepers. "Pig!" screamed Iskandar, hacking at the head and body of his victim as the man tried to crawl away from him on hands and knees. "The tigers could have come and killed us all. And because of you, the woman has escaped."

A final blow at the base of the brain, which severed the spinal column, ended the torture. Iskandar wiped his bloody kris on the garments of the dead man and turned his scowling face upon his men. "Come!" he ordered. "She cannot have gotten far. Hurry!"

They soon picked up Corrie's footprints in the trail and hurried in pursuit. Half way along the trail to the cave where they had captured her, they came upon the body of a tiger. Iskandar examined it closely. He saw the knife wounds behind its left shoulder. He saw many footprints in the muddy trail. There were those of the girl and others made by the same crude type of sandal that she had worn, but larger—the footprints of

men. And there were prints of the bare feet of a man. Iskandar was puzzled. There seemed ample evidence that someone had stabbed the tiger to death. But that was impossible. No one could have come within reach of those terrible talons and jaws and lived.

They pushed on, and in the afternoon they came within sight of the cave.

"Here they come," said Jerry Lucas.

"There are but four men," said Iskandar. "Kill the men, but do not harm the woman." The nine tribesmen advanced confidently with bared kris. Tarzan permitted them to approach within a hundred feet; then he had Corrie address them. "Stop!" she said. "Do not come any closer."

Each of the five had fitted an arrow to his bow. The left hand of each held additional arrows. Iskandar laughed and gave the word to charge. "Let them have it," said Tarzan, sending an arrow through Iskandar's leg, dropping him. Four others were hit by that first flight of arrows. Two of the others stopped, but two came on yelling like demons. Tarzan drove an arrow through the heart of each. They were too close to be spared as he had spared Iskandar. So close that one of them fell almost touching Tarzan's feet.

He turned to Corrie. "Tell them that if they throw down their weapons and put their hands up, we will not kill them."

After the girl had translated the

instructions, the Sumatrans grumbled sullenly; but they did not throw down their weapons nor raise their hands.

"Fit arrows to your bows and advance slowly," ordered Tarzan. "At the first threatening move, shoot to kill."

"You wait here, Corrie," said Jerry. "There may be a fight."

She smiled at him but ignored his directions; so he put himself in front of her as they advanced. It was a long arrow that Tarzan had fitted to his bow, a heavy bow that only Tarzan could draw. He aimed the arrow at Iskandar's heart, and whispered to Corrie.

"He will count to ten," the girl explained to the Sumatran. "If you have not all thrown down your weapons and

raised your hands before he finishes counting he will kill you. Then we will kill the others."

Tarzan commenced to count, Corrie translating. At five, Iskandar gave in. He had looked into the gray eyes of the giant standing above him and he was afraid. The others followed the example of their leader.

"Rosetti," said Tarzan, "gather up their weapons and retrieve our arrows. We will keep them covered."

Rosetti gathered the weapons first; then he yanked the arrows from the limbs and bodies of the five who had been hit but not killed. With the dead he was more gentle.

"Tell them to take their dead and get

out of here, Corrie. And that if they ever annoy us again we will kill them all."

Corrie translated, adding a punch line of her own devising: "This man who speaks to you through me is no ordinary man. Armed only with a knife, he leaped upon the back of a tiger and killed it. If you are wise, you will obey him."

"Just a minute, Corrie," said Jerry. "Ask them if they have seen any American fliers recently who had bailed out of a damaged plane, or heard of any."

Corrie put the question to Iskandar and received a sullen negative. The chief got to his feet and gave orders to his men, none of whom was seriously wounded. They picked up their dead and

started away, but Iskandar stopped them. Then he turned to Tarzan. "You will let us take our weapons?" he asked. Corrie translated.

"No." This seemed to need no translation or admit of argument. The chief had looked again into the gray eyes of the giant who had killed the tiger he had seen upon the trail, and what he had seen there had frightened him. They are not the eyes of a man, he thought. They are the eyes of a tiger.

Snarling a Malayan oath beneath his breath, he ordered his men to march, and followed them.

"We'd orter have killed 'em all," said Shrimp. "They'll tell the foist yellow-bellies they see where to find us."

"If we followed that plan to its logical conclusion," said Tarzan, "we'd have to kill every human being we meet. Any of them might tell the Japs."

"You don't believe much in killin' people." Tarzan shook his head in negation.

"Not even Japs?"

"That is different. We are at war with them. Neither in hatred nor revenge and with no particular pleasure I shall kill every Jap I can until the war is over. That is my duty."

"Don't you even hate 'em?"

"What good would it do if I did? If all the many millions of people of the allied nations devoted an entire year exclusively to hating the Japs it wouldn't

kill one Jap nor shorten the war one day."

Bubonovitch laughed. "And it might give 'em all stomach ulcers."

Tarzan smiled. "I can recall having felt hatred but once in my life or killing for revenge but once—Kulonga, the son of Mbonga. He killed Kala, my foster mother. Not only was I very young then, but Kala was the only creature in the world that loved me or that I loved. And I thought then that she was my own mother. I have never regretted the killing."

While they talked, Corrie was cooking their supper. Jerry was helping her —not that she needed any help. They were grilling pheasants and venison

over a fire just inside the mouth of the cave. Bubonovitch was examining the weapons left by the Sumatrans. He selected a kris for himself. Jerry and Shrimp followed his example, and Jerry brought Corrie a parang.

"Why did you ask that bandit if he had heard of any American fliers who had bailed out recently?" Corrie asked Lucas.

"Two of my crew, who are known to have bailed out, are unaccounted for — Douglas, my radioman, and Davis, a waist gunner. We hunted for them, but could find no trace of them. We found the body of Lieutenant Burnham whose chute had failed to open. So we figured that if either of the other chutes had

failed to open we should have found the body nearby. We all jumped within a matter of a few seconds."

"How many were you?"

"Eleven—nine in the crew, Colonel Clayton, and a photographer. My bombardier was left behind because he was sick. Anyway, we weren't carrying any bombs. It was just a reconnaissance and photographic mission."

"Let's see," said Corrie. "There are four of you here, Lieutenant Burnham makes five, and the two unaccounted for make seven. What became of the other four?"

"Killed in action."

"Poor boys," said Corrie.

"It is not those who are killed who suffer," said Jerry. "It is those who are left behind—their buddies and their folks back home. Maybe they're better off. After all, this is a hell of a world," he added bitterly, "and those who get out of it are the lucky ones."

She laid her hand on his. "You mustn't feel that way. There may be a lot of happiness in the world for you yet—for all of us."

"They were my friends," he said, "and they were very young. They hadn't had a chance to get much out of life. It just doesn't seem right. Tarzan says that it does no good to hate, and I know he's right. But I do hate— not the poor dumb things who shoot at us and whom we

shoot at, but those who are responsible for making wars."

"I know," she said. "I hate them, too. But I hate all Japs. I hate the 'poor dumb things who shoot at us and whom we shoot at.' I am not as philosophical as you and Tarzan. I want to hate them. I often reproach myself because I think I am not hating bitterly enough." Jerry could see that hate reflected in her eyes, and he thought what a horrible thing it was that such an emotion could have been aroused in the breast of one so innately sweet and kind. He said to her what she had said to him: "You mustn't feel that way," and he added, "You were never made for hate."

"You never saw your mother hounded

to death and your father bayoneted by those yellow beasts. If you had and didn't hate them you wouldn't be fit to call yourself a man."

"I suppose you are right," he said. He pressed her hand. "Poor little girl."

"Don't sympathize with me," she said almost angrily. "I didn't cry then. I haven't cried since. But if you sympathize with me, I shall."

Had she emphasized you? He thought that she had—just a little. Why, he asked himself, should that send a little thrill through him? I must be going ga-ga, he thought.

Now the little band gathered around the cooking fire for supper. They had broad leaves for plates, sharpened

bamboo splinters for forks, and of course they had their knives. They drank from gourds.

Besides pheasant and venison, they had fruit and the roasted seeds of the durian. They lived well in this land of plenty. "T'ink of de poor dogfaces back at base," said Shrimp, "eatin' canned hash an' spam."

"And drinking that goddam G-I coffee," said Bubonovitch. "It always made me think of one of Alexander Woolcott's first lines in 'The Man Who Came to Dinner.'"

"I'll trade places with any dogface right now," said Jerry.

"What's a dogface?" asked Corrie.

"Well, I guess originally it was

supposed to mean a doughboy; but now it sort of means any enlisted man, more specifically a private."

"Any G-I Joe," said Shrimp.

"What a strange language!" said Corrie. "And I thought I understood English."

"It isn't English," said Tarzan. "It's American. It's a young and virile language. I like it."

"But what is a doughboy? And a G-I Joe?"

"A doughboy is an infantryman. A G-I Joe is an American soldier—Government Issue. Stick with us, Corrie, and we'll improve your American and ruin your English," concluded Jerry.

"If you will pay special attention to Sergeant Rosetti's conversation they will both be ruined," said Bubonovitch.

"Wot's wrong wit my American, wise guy?" demanded Shrimp.

"I think Sergeant Shrimp is cute," said Corrie.

Rosetti flushed violently. "Take a bow, cutie," said Bubonovitch.

Shrimp grinned. He was used to being ribbed, and he never got mad, although sometimes he pretended to be. "I ain't heard no one callin' you cute, you big cow," he said, and he felt that with that come-back his honor had been satisfied.

CHAPTER 9

Before supper, Tarzan had cut two large slabs of bark from a huge tree in the forest. The slabs were fully an inch thick, tough and strong. From them he cut two disks, as nearly sixteen and a half inches in diameter as he could calculate. In about one half of the periphery of each disk he cut six deep notches, leaving five protuberances between them.

After supper, Jerry and the others, sitting around the fire, watched him. "Now what the heck are those for?" asked the pilot. "They looked like round, flat feet with five toes."

"Thank you," said Tarzan. "I didn't realize that I was such a good sculptor. These are to deceive the enemy. I have

no doubt but that that old villain will return with Japs just as quickly as he can. Now those natives must be good trackers, and they must be very familiar with our spoor, for they followed it here. Our homemade sandals would identify our spoor to even the stupidest tracker. So we must obliterate it.

"First we will go into the forest in a direction different from the one we intend taking, and we will leave spoor that will immediately identify our party. Then we will cut back to camp through the undergrowth where we can walk without leaving footprints, and start out on the trail we intend taking. Three of us will walk in single file, each stepping exactly in the footprints of the man ahead

of him. I will carry Corrie. It would tire her to take a man's stride. Bubonovitch will bring up the rear, wearing one of these strapped to each foot. With one of them he will step on each and every footprint that we have made. He will have to do a considerable split to walk with these on, but he is a big man with long legs. These will make the footprints of an elephant and obliterate ours."

"Geeze!" exclaimed Rosetti. "A elephant's feet ain't that big!"

"I'm not so sure myself about these Indian elephants," admitted Tarzan. "But the circumference of an African elephant's front foot is half the animal's height at the shoulder. So these will indicate an elephant approximately nine

feet in height. Unfortunately, Bubonovitch doesn't weigh as much as an elephant; so the spoor won't be as lifelike as I'd like. But I'm banking on the likelihood that they won't pay much attention to elephant spoor while they are looking for ours. If they do, they are going to be terribly surprised to discover the trail of a two-legged elephant.

"Had we been in Africa the problem would have been complicated by the fact that the African elephant has five toes in front and three behind. That would have necessitated another set of these, and Jerry would have had to be the hind legs."

"De sout' end of a elephant goin' nort',

Cap," said Shrimp.

"I'm not selfish," said Jerry. "Bubonovitch can be the whole elephant."

"You'd better put Shrimp at the head of the column," said Bubonovitch, "I might step on him."

"I think we'd better turn in now," said Tarzan. "What time have you, Jerry?"

"Eight o'clock."

"You have the first watch tonight—two and a half hours on. That will bring it just right. Shrimp draws the last—3:30 to 6:00. Good night!"

They started early the following morning after a cold breakfast. First they made the false trail. Then they started off

in the direction they intended taking, Bubonovitch bringing up the rear, stamping down hard on the footprints of those who preceded him. At the end of a mile, which was as far as Tarzan thought necessary to camouflage their trail, he was a pretty tired elephant. He sat down beside the trail and took off his cumbersome feet. "Migawd!" he said. "I'm just about split to the chin. Whoever wants to play elephas maximus of the order Proboscidea can have these goddam things." He tossed them into the trail.

Tarzan picked them up and threw them out into the underbrush. "It was a tough assignment, Sergeant; but you were the best man for it."

"I could have carried Corrie."

"An' you wit a wife an' kid!" chided Shrimp.

"I think the colonel pulled rank on you," said Jerry.

"Oh, no," said Tarzan; "it was just that I couldn't think of throwing Corrie to the wolves."

"I guess dat will hold you," observed Shrimp.

Corrie was laughing, her eyes shining. She liked these Americans with their strange humor, their disregard for conventions. And the Englishman, though a little more restrained, was much like them. Jerry had told her that he was a viscount, but his personality impressed her more than his title.

Suddenly Tarzan raised his head and tested the air with his nostrils. "Take to the trees," he said.

"Is something coming?" asked Corrie.

"Yes. One of the sergeant's relatives —with both ends. It is a lone bull, and sometimes they are mean."

He swung Corrie to an overhanging branch, as the others scrambled up the nearest trees. Tarzan smiled. They were becoming proficient. He remained standing in the trail.

"You're not going to stay there?" demanded Jerry.

"For a while. I like elephants. They are my friends. Most of them like me. I shall know in plenty of time if he is going to charge."

"But this is not an African elephant," insisted Jerry.

"Maybe he never heard of Tarzan," suggested Shrimp.

"The Indian elephant is not so savage as the African, and I want to try an experiment. I have a theory. If it proves incorrect, I shall take to the trees. He will warn me, for if he is going to charge, he will raise his ears, curl up his trunk, and trumpet. Now, please don't talk or make any noise. He is getting close."

The four in the trees waited expectantly. Corrie was frightened—frightened for Tarzan. Jerry thought it foolish for the man to take such chances. Shrimp wished that he had a tommy gun

—just in case. Every eye was glued on the turn in the trail, at the point where the elephant would first appear.

Suddenly the great bulk of the beast came into view. It dwarfed Tarzan. When the little eyes saw Tarzan, the animal stopped. Instantly the ears were spread and the trunk curled up. It is going to charge was the thought of those in the trees.

Corrie's lips moved. Silently they formed the plea, "Quick, Tarzan! Quick!"

And then Tarzan spoke. He spoke to the elephant in the language that he believed was common to most beasts—the mother tongue of the great apes. Few could speak it, but he knew that many

understood it. "Yo, Tantor, yo!" he said.

The elephant was weaving from side to side. It did not trumpet. Slowly the ears dropped and the trunk uncurled. "Yud!" said Tarzan.

The great beast hesitated a moment, and then came slowly toward the man. It stopped in front of him and the trunk reached out and moved over his body. Corrie clutched the tree branch to keep from falling. She could understand how, involuntarily, some women scream or faint in moments of high excitement.

Tarzan stroked the trunk for a moment, whispering quietly to the huge mass towering above him. "Abu tand-nala!" he said presently. Slowly, the elephant knelt. Tarzan wrapped the trunk

about his body and said, "Nala b'yat!" and Tantor lifted him and placed him upon his head.

"Unk!" commanded Tarzan. The elephant moved off down the trail, passing beneath the trees where the astonished four sat, scarcely breathing.

Shrimp was the first to break the long silence. "I've saw everyt'ing now. Geeze! wot a guy!"

"Are you forgetting Goige de Toid?" demanded Bubonovitch.

Shrimp muttered something under his breath that was not fit for Corrie's ears.

Presently Tarzan returned on foot and alone. "We'd better be moving along," he said, and the others dropped down from the trees.

Jerry was not a little irritated by what he thought had been an egotistical display of courage and prowess, and his voice revealed his irritation when he asked, "What was the use of taking such a risk, Colonel?"

"In the haunts of wild beasts one must know many things if one is to survive," Tarzan explained. "This is strange country to me. In my country the elephants are my friends. On more than one occasion they have saved my life. I wanted to know the temper of the elephants here and if I could impose my will on them as I do at home. It is possible that some day you may be glad that I did so. The chances are that I shall never see that bull again; but if we

should meet, he will know me and I shall know him. Tantor and I have long memories both for friends and enemies."

"Sorry I spoke as I did," said Jerry; "but we were all frightened to see you take such a risk."

"I took no risk," said Tarzan; "but don't you do it."

"What would he have done to one of us?" asked Bubonovitch.

"Gored you probably, knelt on you, and then tossed the pulp that had been you high into the forest."

Corrie shuddered. Shrimp shook his head. "An' I uset to feed 'em peanuts at de coicus."

"The wild beasts I've seen here in the

open look larger and more menacing than those I used to see in menageries and zoos," said Bubonovitch.

"Or in a museum, stuffed," said Jerry.

"Mounted," corrected Bubonovitch.

"Purist," said Jerry.

Presently they entered a forest of enormous straight trunked trees, enveloped by giant creepers, vines, and huge air plants that formed a thick canopy overhead. The dim light, the cathedral vistas, the sounds of unseen things depressed the spirits of all but Tarzan. They plodded on in silence, longing for the light of the sun. And then, at a turning in the trail, they came suddenly into its full glare as the forest ended abruptly at the edge of a gorge.

Below them lay a narrow valley cut through the ages into the tuff and limestone formation of the terrain by the little river that raced riotously along its bottom. It was a pleasant valley, green and tree dotted.

Tarzan scrutinized its face carefully. There was no sign of human life; but some deer fed there, and his keen eyes recognized a black blob, almost indistinguishable in the dense shade of a tree. He pointed it out to the others. "Beware of him," he cautioned. "He is infinitely more dangerous than Tantor, and sometimes even than Stripes."

"What is it, a water buffalo?" asked Jerry.

"No. It is Buto the rhinoceros. His

sight is very poor, but his hearing and scent are extremely acute. He has an ugly and unpredictable disposition. Ordinarily, he will run away from you. But you can never tell. Without any provocation he may come thundering down on you as fast as a good horse; and if he gets you, he'll gore and toss you."

"Not ours," said Corrie. "They have lower tusks, and they use those instead of their horns."

"I remember now," said Tarzan, "hearing that. I was thinking of the African rhino."

The trail turned abruptly to the right at the edge of the escarpment and hurled itself over the rim, angling steeply downward, narrow and precarious. They

were all glad when they reached the bottom.

"Stay here," said Tarzan, "and don't make any noise. I am going to try to get one of those deer. Buto won't get your scent from here; and if you don't make any noise, he won't hear you. I'll circle around to the left. Those bushes there will hide me until I get within range of the deer. If I get one, I'll go right on down to the river where the trail crosses it. You can come on then and meet me there. The trail passes Buto at about a hundred yards. If he gets your scent, or hears you, and stands up, don't move unless he starts toward you; then find a tree."

Tarzan crouched and moved silently

among the tall grasses. The wind, blowing from the direction of the deer toward the rhinoceros, carried no scent of the intruders to either. It would to the latter when Tarzan reached the deer and when the others crossed the wind to reach the river.

Tarzan disappeared from the sight of those who waited at the foot of the cliff. They wondered how he could find cover where there seemed to be none. Everything seemed to be moving according to plan when there was a sudden interruption. They saw a deer suddenly raise its head and look back; then it and the little herd of which it was a part were oft like a flash, coming almost directly toward them.

They saw Tarzan rise from the grasses and leap upon a young buck. 'His knife flashed in the sun, and both fell, disappearing in the grass. The four watchers were engrossed by this primitive drama—the primordial hunter stalking and killing his quarry. Thus it must have been ages and ages ago.

Finally Jerry said, "Well, let's get going."

"Geeze!" Shrimp exclaimed, pointing. "Lookit!"

They looked. Buto had arisen and was peering this way and that with his dull little eyes. But he was listening and scenting the wind, too.

"Don't move," whispered Jerry.

"An' they ain't no trees," breathed

Shrimp. He was right. In their immediate vicinity there were no trees.

"Don't move," cautioned Jerry again. "If he's going to charge, he'll charge anything that moves."

"Here he comes," said Bubonovitch. The rhino was walking toward them. He seemed more puzzled than angry. His dim vision had, perhaps, discovered something foreign to the scene. Something he could neither hear nor smell. And curiosity prompted him to investigate.

The three men, by one accord, moved cautiously between Corrie and the slowly oncoming beast. It was a tense moment. If Buto charged, someone would be hurt, probably killed. They

watched the creature with straining eyes. They saw the little tail go up and the head down as the rhino broke into a trot. He had seen them and was coming straight for them. Suddenly he was galloping. "This is it," said Jerry.

At the same instant, Shrimp leaped away from them and ran diagonally across the path of the charging brute. And the rhino swerved and went for him. Shrimp ran as he had never run before; but he couldn't run as fast as a horse, and the rhino could.

Horror-stricken, the others watched. Horror-stricken and helpless. Then they saw Tarzan. He was running to meet the man and the beast, who were headed directly toward him. But what could he

do? the watchers asked themselves. What could two relatively puny men do against those tons of savage flesh and bone?

The beast was close behind Shrimp now and Tarzan was only a few yards away. Then Shrimp stumbled and fell. Corrie covered her eyes with her hands. Jerry and Bubonovitch, released as though from a momentary paralysis, started running toward the scene of certain tragedy.

Corrie, impelled against her will, removed her hands from her eyes. She saw the rhino's head go down as though to gore the prostrate man now practically beneath its front feet.

Then Tarzan leaped, turning in air,

and alighted astride the beast's shoulders. The diversion was enough to distract the animal's attention from Shrimp. It galloped over him, bucking to dislodge the man-thing on its back.

Tarzan held his seat long enough to plunge his knife through the thick hide directly behind the head and sever the brute's spinal cord. Paralyzed, it stumbled to the ground. A moment later it was dead.

Soon the entire party was gathered around the kill. A relieved and, perhaps, a slightly trembling party. Tarzan turned to Shrimp. "That was one of the bravest things I ever saw done, sergeant," he said.

"Shrimp didn't rate medals for

nothing, Colonel," said Bubonovitch.

CHAPTER 10

They were now well supplied with meat—too well. A deer and a rhinoceros for five people seemed more than ample. Tarzan had taken some choice cuts from the young buck and cut the hump from the rhino. Now, beside the river, he had built a fire in a hole that he had dug. Over another fire, the others were grilling bits of venison.

"You ain't goin' to eat that are you?" asked Shrimp, pointing at the big hunk of rhino meat with the skin still attached. "In a couple of hours you'll eat it," said Tarzan. "You'll like it."

When he had a bed of hot coals in the bottom of the hole he had dug, he laid the hump in with the skin side down,

covered it with leaves and then with the dirt he had excavated.

Taking a piece of venison, he withdrew a little from the others, squatted down on his haunches and tore off pieces of the raw flesh with his strong teeth. The others had long since ceased to pay attention to this seeming idiosyncrasy. They had, on occasion, eaten their meat raw; but they still preferred it cooked—usually charred on the outside, raw on the inside, and covered with dirt. They were no longer fastidious.

"What was on your mind, Shrimp, while you were legging it in front of Rhinoceros Dicerorhinus sumatrensis?" asked Bubonovitch. "You sure hit

nothing but the high spots. I'll bet you did the hundred yards in under eight seconds."

"I'll tell you wot I was thinkin'. I'd started on Ave Maria w'en I seen it was nothin' less 'n Whirlaway on my tail. I was thinkin' if I could just finish that one Ave Maria before it caught up with me, I might have a chance. Then I stumbled. But the Blessed Mary heard me and saved me."

"I thought it was Tarzan," said Bubonovitch.

"Of course it was Tarzan; but whoinell do you suppose got him there in time, you dope?"

"There are no atheists at the business end of a rhinoceros," said Jerry.

"I prayed, too," said Corrie. "I prayed that God would not let anything happen to you who were risking you life to save ours. You are a very brave man, sergeant, for you must have known that you didn't have one chance in a million."

Rosetti was very unhappy. He wished that they would talk about something else. "You got me all wrong," he said. "I just ain't got no sense. If I had, I'd a run the other way; but I didn't think of it in time. The guy who had the guts was the colonel. Think of killin' a deer an' dat rhino wit nothin' but a knife." This gave him an idea for changing the subject. "An' think of all dat meat lyin' out there an' the poor suckers back home got to have ration coupons an' then they can't

get enough."

"Think of the starving Armenians," said Bubonovitch.

"All the Armenians I ever seen could starve as far as I'm concerned," said Shrimp. He took another piece of venison and lapsed into silence.

Jerry had been watching Corrie when he could snatch a quick look without actually staring at her. He saw her tearing at the meat with her fine, white teeth. He recalled what she had said about hating the Japs: "I want to hate them. I often reproach myself because I think I am not hating bitterly enough." He thought, what kind of a woman will she be after the war— after all that she has gone through?

He looked at Tarzan tearing at raw meat. He looked at the others, their hands and faces smeared with the juices of the venison, dirty with the char of the burned portions.

"I wonder what sort of a world this will be after peace comes," he said. "What kind of people will we be? Most of us are so young that we will be able to remember little else than war—killing, hate, blood. I wonder if we can ever settle down to the humdrum existence of civilian life."

"Say! If I ever get my feet under a desk again," said Bubonovitch, "I hope God strikes me dead if I ever take them out again."

"That's what you think now, Bum.

And I hope you're right. For myself, I don't know. Sometimes I hate flying, but it's in my blood by now. Maybe it isn't just the flying—it's the thrill and excitement, possibly. And if that is true, then it's the fighting and the killing that I like. I don't know. I hope not. It will be a hell of a world if a great many young fellows feel that way.

"And take Corrie. She has learned to hate. She was never made for that. That is what war and the Japs have done to her. I wonder if hate twists a person's soul out of shape, so that he's never the same as he was before —if, like an incipient cancer, it eats at the roots of character without one's being aware that one has a cancer."

"I think you need not worry," said Tarzan. "Man readily adapts himself to changed conditions. The young, especially, react quickly to changes of environment and circumstance. You will take your proper places in life when peace comes. Only the weak and the warped will be changed for the worse."

"Wit all de different ways of killin' and maimin' wot we've learnt, like sneakin' up behind a guy an' cuttin' his throat or garrotin' him an' a lot of worse t'ings than dat even, they's goin' to be a lot of bozos startin' Murder Incorporateds all over de U.S., take it from me," said Shrimp. "I knows dem guys. I didn't live all my life in Chi fer nuttin'."

"I think it will change us very much," said Corrie. "We will not be the same people we would have been had we not gone through this. It has matured us rapidly, and that means that we have lost a great deal of our youth. Jerry told me the other day that he is only twenty-three. I thought that he was well along in his thirties. He has lost ten years of his youth. Can he be the same man he would have been had he lived those ten years in peace and security? No. I believe he will be a better man.

"I believe that I shall be a better woman for the very emotion which he and Tarzan deplore—hate. I do not mean petty hatreds. I mean a just hate—a grand hate that exalts. And for the

compensations it entails, such as loyalty to one's country and one's comrades, the strong friendships and affections which are engendered by a common, holy hatred for a common enemy."

For a while no one spoke. They seemed to be considering this unique eulogy of hate. It was Jerry who broke the silence. "That is a new angle," he said. "I never thought of hate in that way before. As a matter of fact, fighting men don't do a lot of hating. That seems to be the prerogative of non-combatants."

"Bosh," said Corrie. "That is just a heroic pose on the part of fighting men. When a Jap atrocity hits close to home, I'll bet they hate—when a buddy is tortured, when they learn that Allied

prisoners of war have been beheaded. That has happened here, and I'll warrant that our Dutch fighting men learned then to hate, if they had not hated before. And furthermore," said Corrie acidly, "I do not consider myself a noncombatant."

Jerry smiled. "Forgive me. I didn't mean that remark derogatorily. And anyway it wasn't aimed at you. You are one of us, and we are all combatants."

Corrie, mollified, smiled back at him. She may have been a good two-fisted hater, but that was not hate that shone from her eyes at the moment.

Shrimp interrupted the discussion. "Geeze!" he exclaimed. "Get a load of dis. It smells like heaven."

They looked, to see Tarzan removing

the roast from the improvised oven. "Come an' get it!" called Shrimp.

To their surprise, they found the rhino hump juicy, tender, and delicious. And as they ate, a pair of eyes watched them from the concealment of bushes that grew at the edge of the cliff beyond the river—watched them for a few minutes; then the owner of the eyes turned back into the forest.

That night, the wild dogs fought over the carcasses of Tarzan's kills until, near dawn, a tiger came and drove them from their feast to stand in a dismal, growling circle until the lord of the jungle should depart.

Wars make words. World War II is no exception. Probably the most

notorious word for which it is responsible is quisling. Wars also unmake words. Collaborationist formerly had a fair and honorable connotation, but I doubt that it ever will live down World War II. No one will ever again wish to be known as a collaborationist.

They are to be found in every country where the enemy is to be found. There are collaborationists in Sumatra. Such was Amat. He was a miserable creature who bowed low to every Jap soldier and sought to curry favor with them. He was a human jackal that fed off the leavings of the arrogant invaders who slapped his face when he got underfoot.

So, when he saw the five white

people camped by the river in the little valley, he licked his full lips as though in anticipation of a feast, and hurried back along the trail toward the village of his people where a detachment of Jap soldiers was temporarily billeted.

He had two reasons for hurrying. He was anxious to impart his information to the enemy. That was one reason. The other was terror. He had not realized how late it was. Darkness would fall before he could reach the village. It is then that my lord the tiger walks abroad in the forest.

He was still a couple of kilometers from home, and dusk was heralding the short equatorial twilight when Amat's worst fear was realized. The hideous

face of the lord of the jungle loomed directly in his path. The terrifying eyes, the wrinkled, snarling face of a tiger, between which and its intended victim there are no iron bars and only a few yards of lonely jungle trail, are probably as horrifying a sight as the eyes of man have ever envisaged.

The tiger did not for long leave Amat in any doubt as to its intentions. It charged. Amat shrieked, and leaped for a tree. Still shrieking, he clawed his way upward. The tiger sprang for him; and, unfortunately, missed. Amat scrambled higher, sweating and panting. He clung there, trembling; and there we may leave him until morning.

CHAPTER 11

"Geeze! Wot a country," growled Shrimp, as they toiled up the steep trail out of the valley in the light of a new day. "If you ain't crawlin' down into a hole, you're crawlin' up outta one. God must a-been practicin' when He made this."

"And when he got through practicing, I suppose, He made Chicago," suggested Bubonovitch.

"Now you're shoutin', wise guy. God sure made Chi. Wen He wasn't lookin', somebody else made Brooklyn. Geeze! I wisht I was in dear ol' Chi right now. Why, de steepest hill dere is de approach to de Madison Street bridge."

"Look at the view, man. Have you no eye for beauty?"

"Sure, I got an eye for beauty; but my feet ain't. They joined up for de air force, an' now they ain't nuttin' but goddam doughboys."

But all things must end, and eventually they reached the top of the escarpment. Tarzan examined the trail. "There was a native here recently," he said. "Probably late yesterday afternoon. He may have seen us. He stood right here for several minutes, where he could look down on our camp."

As the little party continued along the trail into the forest, Amat rushed breathlessly into his village, bursting with the information that had been

seething within him during a night of terror. So excited was he that he failed to bow to a Jap private and got slapped and almost bayoneted. But at last he stood before Lt. Kumajiro Tada, this time not forgetting to bow very low.

Excitedly he rattled off an account of what he had seen. Tada, not understanding a word of the native dialect and being particularly godlike thus early in the morning, kicked Amat in the groin. Amat screamed, grabbed his hurt, and sank to the ground. Tada drew his sword. It had been a long time since he had lopped off a head, and he felt like lopping off a head before breakfast.

A sergeant who had overheard Amat's report and who understood the dialect,

saluted and bowed. Sucking wind through his teeth, he informed the honorable lieutenant that Amat had seen a party of whites and that that was what he had been trying to tell the honorable lieutenant. Reluctantly, Tada scabbarded his sword and listened as the sergeant interpreted.

A couple of miles from the point at which they had entered the forest, Tarzan stopped and examined the trail minutely. "Here," he said, "our native friend was treed by a tiger. He remained in this tree all night, coming down only a short time ago, probably as soon as it was light. You can see where the pugs of the beast obliterated the spoor the fellow made last night. Here is where he jumped

down this morning and continued on his way."

They continued on and presently came to a fork in the trail. Again Tarzan stopped. He showed them which way the native had gone. In the other fork he pointed out evidence that a number of men had gone that way perhaps several days before. "These were not natives," he said, "nor do I think they were Japs. These are the footprints of very large men. Jerry, suppose you folks follow along the trail the native took, while I investigate the other one. These chaps may be Dutch guerrillas. If they are, they might prove mighty helpful to us. Don't travel too fast, and I may catch up with you."

"We'll probably come to a native village," said Jerry. "If we do, perhaps we'd better hole up in the jungle until you come along; so that we can all approach it together. In the meantime, I'll look the place over."

Tarzan nodded assent and swung into the trees, following the left hand fork of the trail. They watched him until he was out of sight. "That guy likes to travel de hard way?" said Shrimp.

"It doesn't look so hard when you watch him," said Bubonovitch. "It's only when you try to do it yourself."

"It's an ideal way to travel, under the circumstances," Jerry said. "It leaves no trail, and it gives him every advantage over any enemy he might meet."

"It is beautiful," said Corrie. "He is so graceful, and he moves so quietly." She sighed. "If we could all do it, how much safer we should be!"

"I t'ink I'll practice up," said Shrimp. "An' w'en I gets home I goes out to Garfield Park and swings t'rough de trees some Sunday w'en dey's a gang dere."

"And get pinched," said Bubonovitch.

"Sure I'd get pinched, but I'd make de front pages wit pitchurs. Maybe I'd get a job wit Sol Lesser out in Hollywood."

"Where'd you get the reefers, Shrimp?" inquired Bubonovitch.

Shrimp grinned. "Me? I don't use 'em. I don't work fer Petrillo. I just get dat way from associatin' wit you."

They were moving leisurely along the trail toward Amat's village, Bubonovitch in the lead, Rosetti behind him. Jerry and Corrie followed several yards in the rear. Then Corrie stopped to re- tie the laces of one of her moccasins, and Jerry waited for her. The others passed out of sight beyond a turn in the winding trail.

"Don't you feel a little lost without Tarzan?" Corrie asked as she straightened up. Then she voiced a little exclamation of dismay. "Oh, I don't mean that I haven't every confidence in you and Bubonovitch and Rosetti, but —"

Jerry smiled. "Don't apologize. I feel the same way you do. We're all out of our natural environment. He's not. He's right at home here. I don't know what we

should have done without him."

"We should have been just a lot of babes in the—"

"Listen!" cautioned Jerry, suddenly alert. He heard voices ahead. Hoarse shouts in a strange tongue. "Japs!" he exclaimed. He started to run toward the sounds. Then he stopped and turned back. His was a cruel decision any way he looked at it. He must desert either his two sergeants or the girl. But he was accustomed to making hair trigger decisions.

He seized Corrie by an arm and dragged her into the tangle of undergrowth beside the trail. They wormed their way in farther and farther as long as the sound of the voices came

no nearer. When they did, indicating that the Japs were investigating the trail in their direction, they lay flat on the ground beneath a riot of equatorial verdure. A searcher might have passed within a foot of them without seeing them.

A dozen soldiers surprised and captured Bubonovitch and Rosetti. They didn't have a chance. The Japs slapped them around and threatened them with bayonets until Lt. Tada called them off. Tada spoke English. He had worked as a dishwasher in a hotel in Eugene while attending the University of Oregon, and he had sized up the prisoners immediately as Americans. He questioned them, and each gave his

name, rank, and serial number.

"You were from that bomber that was shot down?" demanded Tada.

"We have given you all the information we are required or permitted to give."

Tada spoke to a soldier in Japanese. The man advanced and pushed the point of his bayonet against Bubonovitch's belly. "Now will you answer my question?" growled Tada.

"You know the rules governing the treatment of prisoners of war," said Bubonovitch, "but I don't suppose that makes any difference to you. It does to me, though. I won't answer any more questions."

"You are a damn fool," said Tada. He

turned to Rosetti. "How about you?" he demanded. "Will you answer?"

"Nuttin' doin'," said Rosetti.

"There were five in your party—four men and a girl. Where are the other three?—where is the girl?" the Jap persisted.

"You seen how many was in our party. Do we look like five? Or can't you count? Does eider of us look like a dame? Somebody's been stringin' you, Tojo."

"O.K., wise guy," snapped Tada. "I'm goin' to give you until tomorrow morning to think it over. You answer all my questions tomorrow morning, or you both get beheaded." He tapped the long officer's sword at his side.

"Anday I-ay essgay e-hay ain'tay oolin-fay," said Rosetti to Bubonovitch.

"You bet your sweet life I ain't foolin', Yank," said Tada.

Shrimp was crestfallen. "Geeze! Who'd a-thought a Nip would savvy hog Latin!" he moaned to Bubonovitch.

Tada sent two of his men along the trail to search for the other members of the party. He and the remainder turned back toward Amat's village with the two prisoners.

Jerry and Corrie had overheard all that had been said. They heard the main party move off in the direction from which they had come, but they did not know of the two who had been sent in search of them. Believing that they were

now safe from detection, they crawled from their concealment and returned to the trail.

Tarzan, swinging easily through the middle terrace of the forest, had covered perhaps two miles when his attention was arrested by a commotion ahead. He heard the familiar grunts and growls and chattering of the great apes, and guessed that they were attacking or being attacked by an enemy. As the sounds lay directly in his path, he continued on.

Presently he came within sight of four adult orangutans swinging excitedly among the branches of a great tree. They darted in and out, striking and screaming. And then he saw the object of their anger—a python holding in its coils

a young orangutan.

Tarzan took in the whole scene at a glance. The python had not as yet constricted. It merely held the struggling victim while it sought to fight off the attacking apes. The screams of the young one were definite proof that it was still very much alive.

Tarzan thrilled to the savage call to battle, to the challenge of his ancient enemy, Histah the snake, to the peril of his friends, the Mangani —the great apes. If he wondered if they would recognize him as friend, or attack him as foe, the thought did not deter him. He swung quickly into the tree in which the tragedy was being enacted, but to a branch above the python and its victim.

So intent were the actors in this primitive drama upon the main issue that none were aware of his presence until he spoke, wondering if, like Tantor, the great apes would understand him.

"Kreeg-ah!" he shouted. "Tarzan bundolo Histah!"

The apes froze and looked up. They saw an almost naked man- thing poised above the python, in the man-thing's hand a gleaming blade.

"Bundolo! Bundolo!" they shouted—Kill! Kill! And Tarzan knew that they understood. Then he dropped full upon the python and its victim. Steel thewed fingers gripped the snake behind its head, as Tarzan clung to the coils and the young ape with powerful legs. His keen

blade cut deep into the writhing body just back of the hand that held its neck in a viselike grasp. The whipping coils, convulsed in agony, released the young orangutan and sought to enmesh the body of the creature clinging to them. Its frantic struggles released the python's hold upon the branches of the tree, and it fell to earth, carrying Tarzan with it. Other branches broke their fall, and the man was not injured. But the snake was far from dead. Its maddened writhings had made it impossible for Tarzan to wield his blade effectively. The snake was badly wounded, but still a most formidable foe. Should it succeed in enmeshing Tarzan in its mighty coils, his body would be crushed long before he

could kill it.

And now the apes dropped to the ground beside the contestants in this grim battle of life and death. Growling, chattering, screaming, the four mighty adults leaped upon the beating coils of the python, tearing them from the body of the man-thing. And Tarzan's knife found its mark again.

As the severed head rolled to the ground, Tarzan leaped aside. So did the apes, for the death struggles of the giant snake might prove as lethal as though guided by the tiny brain.

Tarzan turned and faced the apes; then he placed a foot on the dead head and, raising his face to the heavens, voiced the victory cry of the bull ape. It rang

wild and weird and terrifying through the primeval forest, and for a moment the voices of the jungle were stilled.

The apes looked at the man-thing. All their lives his kind had been their natural enemies. Was he friend or foe?

Tarzan struck his breast, and said, "Tarzan."

The apes nodded, and said, "Tarzan," for 'tar-zan' means white- skin in the language of the great apes.

"Tarzan yo," said the man. "Mangani yo?"

"Mangani yo," said the oldest and largest of the apes—great apes friend.

There was a noise in the trees, like the coming of a big wind—the violent

rustling and swishing of leaves and branches. Apes and man looked expectantly in the direction from which the sound came. All of them knew what created the sound. The man alone did not know what it portended.

Presently he saw ten or twelve huge black forms swinging toward them through the trees. The apes dropped to the ground around them. They had heard Tarzan's piercing call, and had hastened to investigate. It might be the victory cry of an enemy that had overcome one of the tribe. It might have been a challenge to battle.

They eyed Tarzan suspiciously, some of them with bared fangs. He was a man-thing, a natural enemy. They looked from

Tarzan to Uglo, the oldest and largest of the apes. Uglo pointed at the man and said, "Tarzan. Yo." Then, in the simple language of the first-men and with signs and gestures, he told what Tarzan had done. The newcomers nodded their understanding—all but one. Oju, a full grown, powerful young orangutan, bared his fangs menacingly.

"Oju bundolo!" he growled—Oju kill!

Vanda, mother of the little ape rescued from the python, pressed close to Tarzan, stroking him with a rough and horny palm. She placed herself between Tarzan and Oju, but the former pushed her gently aside.

Oju had issued a challenge which Tarzan could not ignore and retain the

respect of the tribe. This he knew, and though he did not want to fight, he drew his knife and advanced toward the growling Oju.

Standing nearly six feet in height and weighing fully three hundred pounds, Oju was indeed a formidable opponent. His enormously long arms, his Herculean muscles, his mighty fangs and powerful jaws dwarfed the offensive equipment of even the mighty Tarzan.

Oju lumbered forward, his calloused knuckles resting on the ground. Uglo would have interfered. He made a halfhearted gesture of stepping between them. But Uglo was really afraid. He was king, but he was getting old. He knew that Oju was minded to challenge

his kingship. Should he antagonize him now, he might only hasten the moment of his dethronement. He did not interfere. But Vanda scolded, and so did the other apes which had witnessed Tarzan's rescue of Vanda's balu.

Oju was not deterred. He waddled confidently to close quarters, contemptuous of this puny man-thing. Could he lay one powerful hand upon him, the fight would be as good as over. He extended a long arm toward his intended victim. It was a tactical error.

Tarzan noted the slow, stupid advance, the outstretched hand; and altered his own plan of battle. Carrying the knife to his mouth and seizing the blade between his teeth, he freed both

hands. Then he sprang forward, grasped Oju's extended wrist with ten powerful fingers, wheeled quickly, bent forward, and threw the ape over his head—threw him so that he would fall heavily upon his back.

Badly shaken, roaring with rage, Oju scrambled awkwardly to his feet. Tarzan leaped quickly behind him while he was still off balance, leaped upon his back, locked powerful legs about his middle, and wrapped his left arm about his neck.

Then he pressed the point of his knife against the beast's side— pressed it in until it brought a scream of pain from Oju.

"Kagoda!" demanded Tarzan. That is ape for surrender. It is also ape for I

surrender. The difference is merely a matter of inflection.

Oju reached a long arm back to seize his opponent. The knife dug in again. This time deeper. Again Tarzan demanded, "Kagoda!" The more Oju sought to dislodge the man-thing from his back, the deeper the knife was pressed. Tarzan could have killed the ape, but he did not wish to. Strong young bulls are the strength of a tribe, and this tribe was mostly friendly to him.

Oju was standing still now. Blood was streaming down his side. Tarzan moved the point of the knife to the base of Oju's brain and jabbed it in just enough to draw blood and inflict pain.

"Kagoda!" screamed Oju.

Tarzan released his hold and stepped aside. Oju lumbered off and squatted down to nurse his wounds. Tarzan knew that he had made an enemy, but an enemy that would always be afraid of him. He also knew that he had established himself as an equal in the tribe. He would always have friends among them.

He called Uglo's attention to the spoor of men in the trail. "Tarmangani?" he asked. Tar is white, mangani means great apes; so tarmangani, white great apes, means white men.

"Sord tarmangani," said Uglo—bad white men.

Tarzan knew that to the great apes, all white men were bad. He knew that he could not judge these men by the opinion

of an ape. He would have to investigate them himself. These men might prove valuable allies.

He asked Uglo if the white men were traveling or camped. Uglo said that they were camped. Tarzan asked how far away. Uglo extended his arms at full length toward the sun and held his palms facing one another and about a foot apart. That is as far as the sun would appear to travel in an hour. That, Tarzan interpreted as meaning that the camp of the white men was about three miles distant—as far as the apes would ordinarily move through the trees in an hour.

He swung into a tree and was gone in the direction of the camp of the

tarmangani. There are no "Goodbyes" nor "Au revoirs" in the language of the apes. The members of the tribe had returned to their normal activities. Oju nursed his wounds and his rage. He bared his fangs at any who came near him.

CHAPTER 12

Jerry was smarting under self-censure. "I feel like a heel," he said, "letting those two fellows take it while I hid. But I couldn't leave you here alone, Corrie, or risk your capture."

"Even if I hadn't been here," said Corrie, "the thing for you to do was just what you did. If you had been captured with them, you could not have done anything more for them than they can do for themselves. Now, perhaps, you and Tarzan and I can do something for them."

"Thanks for putting it that way. Nevertheless, I—" He stopped, listening. "Someone is coming," he said, and drew the girl back into the concealment of the underbrush.

From where they were hidden, they had a clear view back along the trail for a good fifty yards before it curved away from their line of sight. Presently they heard voices more distinctly. "Japs," whispered Corrie. She took a handful of arrows from the quiver at her back and fitted one to her bow. Jerry grinned and followed her example.

A moment later, two Jap soldiers strolled carelessly into view. Their rifles were slung across their backs. They had nothing to fear in this direction —they thought. They had made a token gesture of obeying their officer's instructions to search back along the trail for the three missing whites, whom they had been none too anxious to discover

waiting in ambush for them. They would loaf slowly back to camp and report that they had made a thorough search.

Corrie leaned closer to Jerry and whispered, "You take the one on the left. I'll take the other." Jerry nodded and raised his bow.

"Let 'em come to within twenty feet," he said. "When I say now, we'll fire together."

They waited. The Japs were approaching very slowly, jabbering as though they had something worthwhile to say.

"Monkey talk," said Jerry.

"S-sh!" cautioned the girl. She stood with her bow drawn, the feathers of the arrow at her right ear. Jerry glanced at

her from the corners of his eyes. Joan of Sumatra, he thought. The Japs were approaching the dead line.

"Now!" said Jerry. Two bow strings twanged simultaneously. Corrie's target pitched forward with an arrow through the heart. Jerry's aim had not been so true. His victim clutched at the shaft sunk deep in his throat.

Jerry jumped into the trail, and the wounded Jap tried to unsling his rifle. He had almost succeeded when Jerry struck him a terrific blow on the chin. He went down, and the pilot leaped upon him with drawn knife. Twice he drove the blade into the man's heart. The fellow twitched convulsively and lay still.

Jerry looked up to see Corrie disentangling the slung rifle from the body of the other Jap. He saw her stand above her victim like an avenging goddess. Three times she drove the bayonet into the breast of the soldier. The American watched the girl's face. It was not distorted by rage or hate or vengeance. It was illumined by a divine light of exaltation.

She turned toward Jerry. "That is what I saw them do to my father. I feel happier now. I only wish that he had been alive."

"You are magnificent," said Jerry.

They took possession of the other rifle and the belts and ammunition of the dead men. Then Jerry dragged the bodies

into the underbrush. Corrie helped him.

"You can cut a notch in your shootin' iron, woman," said Jerry, grinning. "You have killed your man."

"I have not killed a man," contradicted the girl. "I have killed a Jap."

"'Haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,'" quoted Jerry.

"You think a woman should not hate," said Corrie. "You could never like a woman who hated."

"I like you," said Jerry gently, solemnly.

"And I like you, Jerry. You have been so very fine, all of you. You haven't made me feel like a girl, but like a man

among men."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Jerry, and they both laughed.

"For you, Jerry, I shall stop hating—as soon as I have killed all the Japs in the world."

Jerry smiled back at her. "A regular Avenging Angel," he said. "Let's see — who were The Avenging Angels?"

"I don't know," said Corrie. "I've never met any angels."

"Now I remember," said Jerry. "A long while ago there was an association of Mormons, the Danite Band. They were known as The Avenging Angels."

"The Mormons are the people who have a lot of wives, aren't they? Are you

a Mormon?"

"Perish the thought. I'm not that courageous. Neither are the present day Mormons. Just imagine being married to a WAC sergeant, a welder, and a steamfitter!"

"And an Avenging Angel?" laughed Corrie.

He didn't answer. He just looked at her, and Corrie wished that she had not said it. Or did she wish that she had not said it?

Tarzan, swinging through the trees overlooking the trail, stopped suddenly and froze into immobility. Ahead of him he saw a man squatting on a platform built in a tree that gave a view of the trail for some distance in the direction

from which Tarzan had come. The man was heavily bearded and heavily armed. He was a white man. Evidently he was a sentry watching a trail along which an enemy might approach.

Tarzan moved cautiously away from the trail. Had he not been fully aware of the insensibility of civilized man he would have marvelled that the fellow had not noted his approach. The stupidest of the beasts would have heard him or smelled him or seen him.

Making a detour, he circled the sentry; and a minute or two later came to the edge of a small mountain meadow and looked down upon a rude and untidy camp. A score or so of men were lying around in the shade of trees. A bottle

passed from hand to hand among them, or from mouth to mouth. Drinking with them were a number of women. Most of these appeared to be Eurasians. With a single exception, the men were heavily bearded. This was a young man who sat with them, taking an occasional pull at the bottle. The men carried pistols and knives, and each had a rifle close at hand. It was not a nice looking company.

Tarzan decided that the less he had to do with these people the better. And then the branch on which he sat snapped suddenly, and he fell to the ground within a hundred feet of them. His head struck something hard, and he lost consciousness.

When he came to he was lying

beneath a tree, his wrists and ankles bound. Men and women were squatting or standing around him. When they saw that he had regained consciousness, one of the men spoke to him in Dutch. Tarzan understood him, but he shook his head as though he did not.

The fellow had asked him who he was and what he had been doing spying on them. Another tried French, which was the first spoken language of civilized man that he had learned; but he still shook his head. The young man tried English. Tarzan pretended that he did not understand; and addressed them in Swahili, the language of a Mohammedan Bantu people of Zanzibar and the East coast of Africa, knowing that they would

not understand it.

"Sounds like Japanese," said one of the men.

"It ain't though," said one who understood that language.

"Maybe it's Chinese," suggested another.

"He looks about as much like a Chink as you do," said the first speaker.

"Maybe he's a wild man. No clothes, bow and arrows. Fell out of a tree like a monkey."

"He's a damned spy."

"What good's a spy who can't talk any civilized language?"

They thought this over, and it seemed to remove their suspicion that their

prisoner might be a spy, at least for the moment. They had more important business to attend to, as was soon demonstrated.

"Oh, to hell with him," said a bleary-eyed giant. "I'm getting dry."

He walked back in the direction of the trees beneath which they had been lolling—in the direction of the trees and the bottle—and the others followed. All but the young man with the smooth face. He still squatted near Tarzan, his back toward his retreating companions. When they were at a safer distance and their attention held by the bottle, he spoke. He spoke in a low whisper and in English.

"I am sure that you are either an American or an Englishman," he said.

"Possibly one of the Americans from the bomber that was shot down some time ago. If you are, you can trust me. I am practically a prisoner here myself. But don't let them see you talking to me. If you decide that you can trust me, you can make some sign that you understand me.

"You have fallen into the hands of a band of cutthroats. With few exceptions they are criminals who were released from jail and armed when the Japs invaded the island. Most of the women are also criminals who were serving jail sentences. The others are also from the bottom of the social barrel—the ultimate dregs.

"These people escaped to the hills as the Japs took over. They made no

attempt to aid our armed forces. They thought only of their own skins. After my regiment surrendered, I managed to escape. I ran across this outfit; and supposing it to be a loyal guerrilla band, I joined it. Learning my background, they would have killed me had it not been that a couple of them are men I had befriended in times past. But they don't trust me.

"You see, there are loyal guerrillas hiding in the hills who would kill these traitors as gladly as they'd kill Japs. And these fellows are afraid I'd get in touch with them and reveal the location of this camp.

"About the worst these people have done so far is to trade with the enemy,

but they are going to turn you over to the Japs. They decided on that before you regained consciousness. They also thought that you were one of the American fliers. The Japs would pay a good price for you.

"These fellows distill a vile spirit which they call schnapps. What they don't drink themselves they use to barter with the Japs and natives. They get juniper berries, ammunition, and rice, among other things, from the Japs. That the Japs let them have ammunition indicates that they consider them friendly. However, it is little more than an armed truce; as neither trusts the other to any great extent. Natives are the go-betweens who deliver the schnapps and

bring the payment."

Tarzan, knowing now that his fate had already been decided, realized that nothing would be gained by further attempts to deceive the young man. Also, he had gained a good impression of the man; and was inclined to believe that he was trustworthy. He glanced in the direction of the others. They were all intent upon a loudmouthed quarrel between two of their fellows, and were paying no attention to him and his companion.

"I am English," he said.

The young man grinned.

"Thanks for trusting me," he said. "My name is Tak van der Bos. I am a reserve officer."

"My name is Clayton. Would you like to get away from these people?"

"Yes. But what good would it do? Where could I go? I'd certainly fall into the hands of the Japs eventually, if a tiger didn't get me instead. If I knew where one of our guerrilla outfits was located, I'd sure take the chance. But I don't."

"There are five in my party," said Tarzan. "We are trying to reach the southern end of the island. If we are lucky, we hope to commandeer a boat and try to reach Australia."

"A rather ambitious plan," said van der Bos. "It's more than twelve hundred miles to the nearest point on the Australian continent. And it's five

hundred miles to the southern end of this island."

"Yes," said Tarzan. "We know, but we are going to take the chances. We all feel that it would be better to die trying it than to hide in the woods like a lot of hunted rabbits for the duration."

Van der Bos was silent for a few moments, thinking. Presently he looked up. "It is the right thing to do," he said. "I'd like to come with you. I think I can help you. I can find a boat much nearer than you plan on traveling. I know where there are friendly natives who will help us. But first we've got to get away from these fellows, and that will not be easy. There is only one trail into this little valley, and that is guarded day and

night."

"Yes, I saw him. In fact I passed close to him. I can pass him again as easily. But you are different. I do not think that you could though. If you can get me a knife tonight, I will get you past the sentry."

"I'll try. If they get drunk enough, it should be easy. Then I'll cut your bonds, and we can have a go at it."

"I can break these bonds whenever I wish," said Tarzan.

Van der Bos did not comment on this statement.

This fellow, he thought, is very sure of himself. Maybe a little too sure. And the Dutchman began to wonder if he had been wise in saying that he would go

with him. He knew, of course, that no man could break those bonds. Maybe the fellow couldn't make good on his boast that he could pass the sentry, either.

"Do they watch you very carefully at night?" asked Tarzan.

"They don't watch me at all. This is tiger country. Had you thought of that yourself?"

"Oh, yes. But we shall have to take that chance."

CHAPTER 13

Slapped around, prodded in the backsides with bayonets, spit on, Rosetti and Bubonovitch were two rage filled and unhappy men long before they reached the native village. Here they were taken into a native house, trussed up, and thrown to the floor in a corner of the room. There they were left to their own devices, which consisted almost wholly of profanity. After describing the progenitors of all Japs from Hirohito down, and especially those of Lt. Kumajiro Tada, in the picturesque and unprintable patois of Cicero, Brooklyn, and the Army, they worked back up to Hirohito again.

"What's the use?" demanded

Bubonovitch. "We're just working up blood pressure."

"I'm workin' up my hate," said Rosetti. "I know just how dat Corrie dame feels, now. I sure love to hate 'em."

"Make the most of it while you can," advised Bubonovitch. "That ocher looie's going to lop your hater off in the morning."

"Geeze," said Rosetti. "I don't wanna die, Bum."

"Neither do I, Shrimp."

"Geeze! I'm scairt."

"So am I."

"Let's pray, Bum."

"Okay. The last time you prayed to

Her, She sent Tarzan."

"I'm just leavin' it to Her. I don't care how She works it."

There was not much sleep for them that night. Their bonds cut into wrists and ankles. Their throats were dry and parched. They were given neither food nor water. The night was an eternity. But at last it ended.

"Geeze! I wisht they'd come an' get it over wit. Thinkin' about it is the worst part."

"Thinking about my wife and baby is the hardest part for me. My wife and I had such great plans. She'll never know what happened to me, and I'm glad for that. All she'll ever know is that my plane took off from somewhere for

somewhere and never came back. Did you pray a lot, Shrimp?"

"Most all night."

"So did I."

"Who did you pray to, Bum?"

"To God."

"One of 'em must have heard us."

The sound of scuffing feet ascending the ladder to the house reached their ears.

"I guess this is it," said Bubonovitch. "Can you take it, Shrimp?"

"Sure."

"Well, so long, fellow."

"So long, Bum."

A couple of soldiers entered the room. They cut away the bonds, and

dragged the two men to their feet. But they couldn't stand. Both of them staggered and fell to the floor. The soldiers kicked them in head and stomach, laughing and jabbering. Finally they dragged them to the doorway and slid them down the ladder one by one, letting them fall most of the way to the ground.

Tada came over and examined them. "Are you ready to answer my questions?" he demanded.

"No," said Bubonovitch.

"Get up!" snapped the Jap.

Circulation was returning to their numbed feet. They tried to rise, and finally succeeded. But they staggered like drunken men when they walked.

They were taken to the center of the village. The soldiers and the natives formed a circle around them. Tada stood beside them with drawn sword. He made them kneel and bend their heads forward. Bubonovitch was to be first.

"I guess They didn't hear us, Shrimp," he said.

"Who didn't hear you?" demanded Tada.

"None of your goddam business, Jap," snapped Bubonovitch. Tada swung his sword.

* * * * *

When the camp quieted down and most of the men and women slept in a drunken stupor, van der Bos crept to Tarzan's side. "I've got a knife," he said.

"I'll cut your bonds."

"They've been off a long while," said Tarzan.

"You broke them?" demanded the Dutchman in amazement.

"Yes. Now come along and come quietly. Give me the knife."

A short distance inside the forest, Tarzan halted. "Wait here," he whispered. Then he was gone. He swung quietly into the trees, advancing slowly, stopping often to listen and to search the air with his nostrils. Finally he located the sentry and climbed into the same tree in which had been built the platform on which the man was squatting. He was poised directly over the fellow's head. His eyes bored down through the

darkness. They picked out the form and position of the doomed man. Then Tarzan dove for him head-first, the knife in his hand. The only sound was the thud of the two bodies on the platform. The sentry died in silence, his throat cut from ear to ear.

Tarzan pitched the body to the trail and followed it down with the man's rifle. He walked back until he came to van der Bos. "Come on," he said. "You can get past the sentry now."

When they came to the body, van der Bos stumbled over it. "You certainly made a neat job of it," he said.

"Not so neat," said Tarzan. "He spurted blood all over me. I'll be walking bait for stripes until we reach

some water. Take his pistol belt and ammunition. Here's his rifle. Now let's get going."

They moved rapidly along the trail, Tarzan in the lead. Presently they came to a small stream, and both washed the blood from them, for the Dutchman had acquired some while removing the belt from the corpse.

No tiger delayed them, and they soon came to the fork at which Tarzan had last seen his companions. There was no scent of them, and the two men followed along the trail the others were to have taken. It was daylight when they heard a shot close and in front of them.

* * * * *

Jerry and Corrie decided to remain

where they were, waiting for Tarzan. They thought that he would soon return. It was well for their peace of mind that they did not know the misadventure that had befallen him. For greater safety they had climbed into a tree where they perched precariously and uncomfortably some twenty feet above the ground. Jerry worried about the fate of Bubonovitch and Rosetti, and finally decided to do something about it. The night had dragged on interminably, and still Tarzan had not returned.

"I don't think he's coming," said Jerry. "Something must have happened to him. Anyway, I'm not going to wait any longer. I'm going on to see if I can locate Bubonovitch and Rosetti. Then if Tarzan

does come, we'll at least know where they are; and maybe together we can work out a plan to free them. You stay here until I come back. You're safer here than you would be down on the ground."

"And suppose you don't come back?"

"I don't know, Corrie. This is the toughest decision I've ever had to make —to decide between you and those two boys. But I have made the decision, and I hope you'll understand. They are prisoners of the Japs, and we all know how Japs treat their prisoners. You are free and well armed."

"There was only one decision you could make. I knew that you would go after them, and I am going with you."

"Nothing doing," said Jerry. "You

stay right where you are."

"Is that an order?"

"Yes."

He heard a faint suggestion of a laugh. "When you give an order on your ship, Captain, even a general would have to obey you. But you are not captain of this tree. Here we go!" and Corrie slipped from the branch on which she had been sitting and climbed to the ground.

Jerry followed her. "You win," he said. "I might have known better than to try to boss a woman."

"Two guns are better than one," said Corrie, "and I'm a good shot. Anyway, I'd sat on that darned limb until I was about ready to scream."

They trudged along the trail side by side. Often their arms touched; and once Corrie slipped on a muddy stretch, and Jerry put an arm around her to keep her from falling. He thought, I used to paw that girl back in Oklahoma City, but it never gave me a thrill like this. I think you have fallen for this little rascal, Jerry. I think you have it bad.

It was very dark, and sometimes they bumped into trees where the trail curved; so their progress was slow. They could only grope their way along, praying that dawn would soon break.

"What a day we've had," said Jerry. "All we need now, to make it perfect, is to run into a tiger."

"I don't think we need worry about

that," said Corrie. "I've never heard of a tiger attacking a white man with a rifle. They seem to know. If we leave them alone, they'll leave us alone."

"I guess that's right. They probably know when a man is armed. When I was riding after cattle back home, I'd see plenty of coyotes when I didn't have a gun. But if I was packing a gun, I'd never see one."

"'Back home,'" repeated Corrie. "You poor boys are so very, very far from back home. It makes me very sad to think of it. Bubonovitch with that pretty wife and baby way on the other side of the world. Missing the best years of their life."

"War is rotten," said Jerry. "If we

ever get home, I'll bet we'll do something about the damned Nips and Krauts that'll keep 'em from starting wars for a heck of a long time. There'll be ten or twelve millions of us who are good and fed up on war. We're going to elect an artillery captain friend of mine governor of Oklahoma and then send him to the senate. He hates war. I don't know a soldier who doesn't, and if all America will send enough soldiers to Congress we'll get some place."

"Is Oklahoma nice?" asked Corrie.

"It's the finest state in the Union," admitted Jerry.

The new day was kicking off the covers and crawling out of bed. It would soon be wide awake, for close to the

equator the transition from night to day takes place quickly. There is no long drawn out dawning.

"What a relief," said Corrie. "I was very tired of night."

"Gripes!" exclaimed Jerry. "Look!" He cocked his rifle and stood still. Standing in the trail directly in front of them was a tiger.

"Don't shoot!" warned Corrie.

"I don't intend to if he'll just mind his own business. This dinky little .25 caliber Jap rifle wouldn't do anything more than irritate him, and I never did like to irritate tigers so early in the morning."

"I wish he'd go away," said Corrie. "He looks hungry."

"Maybe he hasn't heard of that theory of yours."

The tiger, a large male, stood perfectly still for several seconds, watching them; then it turned and leaped into the underbrush.

"Whee-oo!" exclaimed Jerry with a long sigh of relief. "My heart and my stomach were both trying to get into my mouth at the same time. Was I scared!"

"My knees feel weak," said Corrie. "I think I'll sit down."

"Wait!" cautioned Jerry. "Listen! Aren't those voices?"

"Yes. Just a little way ahead."

They moved forward very cautiously. The forest ended at the edge of a

shallow valley, and the two looked down upon a little kampong scarcely a hundred yards from them. They saw natives and Jap soldiers.

"This must be where the boys are," said Jerry.

"There they are!" whispered Corrie. "Oh, God! He's going to kill them!"

Tada swung his sword. Jerry's rifle spit, and Lt. Kumajiro Tada lunged forward, sprawling in front of the men he had been about to kill. Then Corrie fired, and a Jap soldier who was rushing toward the two prisoners died. The two kept up a fusillade that knocked over soldier after soldier and put the village into panic.

Tarzan, hurrying forward at the first

shot, was soon at their side; and van der Bos joined them a moment later, adding another rifle and a pistol. Tarzan took the latter.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti, taking advantage of the confusion in the kampong, seized rifles and ammunition from two of the dead soldiers and backed toward the forest, firing as they went. Rosetti had also acquired a couple of hand grenades, which he stuffed into his pockets.

A Jap sergeant was trying to collect his men, forming them up behind a house. Suddenly they charged, screaming. Rosetti threw his grenades in quick succession among them; then he and Bubonovitch turned and ran for the

forest.

The firing had ceased before the two sergeants reached the little group just within the forest. Rosetti's grenades had put an end to this part of World War II, at least temporarily. The Japs were definitely demoralized or dead.

"Geeze!" said Rosetti. "They did hear us."

"They sure did," agreed Bubonovitch.

"Who heard you?" asked Jerry.

"God and the Blessed Mary," explained Rosetti. The little party had been so intent upon the battle that they had scarcely looked at one another while it was progressing. Now they relaxed a little and looked around. When Corrie and Tak van der Bos faced one another

they were speechless for a moment. Then they both exclaimed simultaneously: "Corrie!"

"Tak!"

"Darling!" cried Corrie, throwing her arms around the young Dutchman. Jerry was not amused.

Then followed introductions and brief resumes of their various adventures. While the others talked, Tarzan watched the kampong. The Japs seemed utterly confused. They had lost their officer and their ranking non-commissioned officers. Without them, the ordinary private soldier was too stupid to think or plan for himself.

Tarzan turned to Jerry. "I think we can take that village and wipe out the rest of

the Japs if we rush them now while they are demoralized and without a leader. We have five rifles, and there aren't more than a dozen Japs left who are in any shape to fight."

Jerry turned to the others. "How about it?" he asked.

"Come on!" said Bubonovitch. "What are we waiting for?"

CHAPTER 14

The fight was short and sweet, and some of the Japs were helpful— they blew themselves up with their own grenades. Corrie had been left behind in the forest. But she hadn't stayed there. Jerry had no more than reached the center of the kampong when he saw her fighting at his side.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti went berserk, and their bayonets were dripping Jap blood when the fight was over. They had learned to hate.

The natives cowered in their houses. They had collaborated with the Japs and they expected the worst, but they were not molested. They were, however, required to furnish food and prepare it.

Tarzan and Jerry questioned several of them, Corrie and Tak acting as interpreters. They learned that this had been an advance post of a much larger force that was stationed about twenty-five kilometers down in the direction of the southwest coast. It had expected to be relieved in a day or two.

They also learned that there was a group of guerrillas farther along in the mountains toward the southeast. But none of the natives knew just where or how far. They seemed terribly afraid of the guerrillas.

Amat tried to curry favor with the newcomers. He was a confirmed opportunist, a natural born politician. He was wondering if it would advantage

him to hurry to the main camp of the Japs and report the presence of these men and the havoc they had wreaked. But he abandoned the idea, as he would have had to travel through bad tiger country. It was well for Amat that neither Bubonovitch nor Rosetti knew the part he had played leading up to their capture.

But perhaps the two sergeants would have been inclined toward leniency, for they were very happy. Their prayers had wrought a miracle and they had been saved by the little margin of a split second. That was something to be happy about. In addition to this, they had indulged in a very successful orgy of revenge. In the blood of their enemies

they had washed away the blows and insults and humiliation that had been heaped upon them.

"Geeze! Bum, we sure had a close shave."

"I couldn't see; because I was looking at the ground," said Bubonovitch, "but Corrie said that Jap looie was swinging his sword when Jerry nicked him. It was that close. But we sure evened things up, eh, Shrimp?"

"How many did you get?"

"I don't know. Maybe three or four. I was just shooting at everything in sight. But you certainly hit the jack pot with those two grenades. Boy! was that something?"

"Say, did you see dat dame get right

into the fightin'? She's keen."

"Migawd! Shrimp, are you falling for a skirt?"

"I ain't fallin' for no skoit, but she's all to the good. I ain't never see a dame like her before. I didn't know they come like dat. I'll go to bat for her any old time."

"The last of the misogynists," said Bubonovitch. "Jerry took the count a long while ago, and has he fallen hard!"

"But did you see her fall on dat Dutchman's neck? You should have saw Jerry's face. Dat's de trouble wit dames —even dis one. Dey just can't help causin' wot dem Hawaiians back on De Rock calls pilikia. We was just one happy family until her old boy friend blew into the pitcher."

"Maybe he is just an old friend," suggested Bubonovitch. "I noticed that when the fight was on, she fought right at Jerry's side."

Rosetti shook his head. He had already made a great concession, but his prejudice was too deep rooted to permit him to go all out for the ladies. He was for Corrie, but with mental reservations. "Do you throw your arms around an old friend's neck and yell, 'Darling!'? I ask."

"That all depends. You are an old friend of mine, Shrimp; but I can't imagine throwing my arms around your neck and calling you darling."

"You'd get a poke in de snoot."

"But if you were Ginger Rogers!"

"Geeze! What gams! I never seen

gams before until I see Lady in de Dark. Boy!"

Tarzan and Jerry were holding a consultation of war. Corrie and Tak were recounting to each other their adventures of the past two years.

"I'd like to do a little reconnoitering before we move on," said Tarzan. "I'd like to do it alone, because I can move so much faster than the rest of you. But if you remain here, that Jap relief may show up before I come back. There will probably be about twenty of them, as there were in this detail. That's pretty heavy odds against you."

"I'll chance it," said Jerry, "if the others are willing. We're five guns. We've got enough Jap ammunition to

fight a war—lots of grenades. We know the trail they'll come in on. All we have to do is keep a sentry far enough out on it to give us plenty of warning. Then we can plaster them with grenades from ambush. Let's see what the others think." He called them over and explained the situation.

"Geeze!" said Shrimp. "On'y four to one? It's a cinch. We done it before. We can do it again!"

"Atta boy!" said Jerry.

"The main camp is fifteen or sixteen miles from here," said Bubonovitch.

"They'll probably take most of the day to make the march, for they won't be in any hurry. But we'd better start being on the lookout for them this afternoon. They

might come today."

"You're right," said Jerry. "Suppose you go on out along the trail for about a mile. You'll hear them coming before they get in sight of you; then you can beat it back here, and we'll be ready for them."

"Here's an idea," said Corrie. "Suppose we load up with hand grenades and all go out and take positions in trees along both sides of the trail. If we're spread out enough, we can get the whole detachment in range before we open up. We should be able to get them all that way."

"Great!" said Jerry.

"What a bloodthirsty person you've become, Corrie!" exclaimed Tak,

grinning.

"You don't know the half of it," said Jerry.

"It's a good idea," said Tarzan. "We know the enemy is coming. We don't know just when; so we should always be prepared for him. You can come in as soon as it is dark, as I'm sure they won't march at night. There is no reason why they should. But I think you should post a guard all night."

"Definitely," agreed Jerry.

Tarzan, the matter settled, walked away and disappeared into the forest.

* * * * *

Hooft awoke bleary eyed and with a terrific headache. His mouth tasted like

the bottom of a mouse cage. He was never in a very good humor at best. Now his disposition was vile to murderous. He bellowed to awaken the others, and soon the camp was astir. The slovenly, slatternly women began to prepare breakfast for the men.

Hooft stood up and stretched. Then he looked over the camp. "Where's the prisoner?" he shouted.

Everyone else looked around. There was no prisoner. "The other one's gone, too," said a man.

Hooft roared out lurid profanities and horrid obscenities. "Who's on guard?" he demanded.

"Hugo was to wake me up at midnight to relieve him," said another. "He

didn't."

"Go out and see what's become of him," ordered Hooft. "I'll skin him alive for this. I'll cut his heart out—falling asleep and letting both those men escape!"

The man was gone but a few minutes. When he returned, he was grinning. "Somebody beat you to it, Chief," he said to Hooft. "Hugo's a mess. His throat's been cut from ear to ear."

"It must have been that wild man," said Sarina.

"Van der Bos must have cut his bonds," said Hooft. "Wait 'til I get hold of him."

"If you ever do," said Sarina. "He'll go right to the nearest guerrillas, and

pretty soon we'll have them down on us."

One of the men had walked over to the spot where Tarzan had lain. He returned with the bonds and handed them to Hooft. "These weren't cut," he said. "They were broken."

"No man could have broken them," said Hooft.

"The wild man did," said Sarina.

"I'll wild man him," growled Hooft. "Let's eat and get going. We're going after them. You women stay here." No one demurred. No one ever argued with Hooft when he was in a bad humor, with the exception of Sarina. She was the only one of the murderous crew whom Hooft feared, but Sarina did not argue

now. She had no desire to go tramping through the forest.

The outlaws were good trackers, and Tarzan and van der Bos had made no effort to obliterate their spoor. It was plain going for Hooft and his gang of cutthroats.

* * * * *

Jerry and his little company gathered all the grenades they could carry and went out into the forest in the direction from which the Jap relief would have to come. Through van der Bos, Jerry warned the natives not to remove any of the rifles and ammunition which they left behind. "Tell 'em we'll burn the village if we find anything gone when we return."

Van der Bos embellished this threat by assuring the chief that in addition to burning the village they would cut off the heads of all the villagers. The chief was impressed.

So was Amat. He had intended following the strangers out into the forest to spy on them. When he discovered how bloodthirsty they were, he changed his mind. They might catch him at his spying. Instead, he went out on another trail to gather durian fruit.

And so it was that while he was thus engaged among the branches of a durian tree, and negligent, Hooft discovered him. Hooft ordered him down. Amat was terrified. Hooft and his party were as villainous looking a gang as ever Amat

had laid eyes on.

Hooft questioned him, asking if he had seen the two fugitives and describing them. Amat was relieved. He could give these men a great deal of information and thus win safety. They would reward him at least with his life.

"I have seen them," he said. "They came to our village with two others this morning. One was a woman. They rescued two men that the Japanese had taken prisoners; then the six killed all the Japanese."

"Where are they now?"

"They went out into the forest on another trail. I do not know why. But they are returning this evening. They said so. Now may I go?"

"And warn those people? I'll say not."

"Better kill him," said one of the men. He spoke Amat's dialect, and Amat trembled so that he nearly fell down. He did drop to his knees and beg for his life.

"You do what we say, and we won't kill you," said Hooft

"Amat will do anything you want," said the frightened man. "I can tell you something more. The Japanese would pay well for the girl that was in our village today. The Japanese who were stationed there talked about her. The Japanese have been hunting for her for two years. Maybe I can help you get her. I will do anything for you."

Amat did not know how he could help

them get Corrie, but he was willing to promise anything. If he couldn't get her, maybe he could run off into the forest until these terrible men had gone away. They were more terrifying even than the Japanese who had cuffed and kicked him.

Further discussion was interrupted by the sound of explosions beyond the village, somewhere off in the forest; but not far. "Hand grenades," said one of the men.

"Sounds like a regular battle," said Hooft.

The louder detonations were punctuated by the ping of rifle shots. "Those are Jap .25's," said Grotius.

Rising above the detonations were the

piercing screams of men in agony. The whole thing lasted but a few minutes. There were a few scattered rifle shots at the end; then silence. One could almost reconstruct the scene from the sounds. There had been a sharp engagement. Between whom? wondered the outlaws. One side had been annihilated. Which one? The final rifle shots had liquidated the wounded.

The victors would certainly come to the village. Hooft and his followers approached the edge of the forest and lay in concealment. The little valley and the kampong were in plain sight below them.

They had not long to wait. Four white men and a white girl emerged from the

forest trail. They were heavily laden with all the weapons and ammunition they could carry. They were talking excitedly. The men went to one of the native houses, the girl to another.

Hooft thought quickly. He must find a way to get the girl without risking a brush with her companions. Hooft, like all bullies, was yellow. He could stab or shoot a man in the back, but he couldn't face an armed opponent. He preferred to accomplish his ends by intrigue and cunning.

He turned to Amat. "Take this message to the girl. Tell her an old friend of hers is waiting at the edge of the forest. He doesn't want to come into the village until he is sure her

companions are loyal to the Dutch. Tell her to come alone to the edge of the forest and talk with him. He is an old friend of her father. And, Amat, don't tell anyone else we are here. If anyone but the girls comes, we won't be here; but we'll come back some day and kill you. You can tell the girl, too, that if she does not come alone, I won't be here. Repeat the message to me."

Amat repeated it, and Hooft motioned him on his way. Amat felt like a condemned man who has just received a pardon, or at least a reprieve. He slipped quietly into the village, and went to the foot of the ladder leading to the door of the house where Corrie was quartered. He called to her, and a native

girl came to the doorway. When she saw Amat, her lip curled in contempt. "Go away pig!" she said.

"I have a message for the white woman," said Amat.

Corrie overheard and came to the doorway. "What message have you for me?" she asked.

"It is a very private message," said Amat. "I cannot shout it."

"Come up here, then."

Lara, the native girl, turned up her nose as Amat passed into the house. She knew him for a liar and a sneak, but she did not warn Corrie. What business was it of hers?

Amat delivered his message. Corrie

pondered. "What was the man like?" she asked.

"He is a white man with a beard," said Amat. "That is all I know."

"Is he alone?"

Amat thought quickly, if she knows there are twenty of them, she will not go; then some day the man will come and kill me. "He is alone," said Amat.

Corrie picked up her rifle and descended the ladder to the ground. The men of her party were still in the house they had taken over. They were cleaning and oiling the rifles they had acquired. There were no natives about. Only Amat and Lara saw the white girl leave the kampong and enter the forest.

CHAPTER 15

Tarzan had not been able to gather much information about the guerrillas from the natives. They had heard it rumored that there was one band near a certain volcano about sixty-five kilometers to the southeast. They were able to describe the appearance of this volcano and various landmarks that might help to guide Tarzan to it, and with this meager information he had set out.

He traveled until night fell, and then lay up until morning in a tree. His only weapons were his bow and arrows and his knife. He had not wished to be burdened with the Jap rifle and ammunition. In the morning he gathered some fruit and shot a hare for his

breakfast.

The country through which he passed was extremely wild and destitute of any signs of man. Nothing could have suited Tarzan better. He liked the companions whom he had left behind; but notwithstanding all his contacts with men, he had never become wholly gregarious. His people were the wild things of the forest and jungle and plain. With them, he was always at home. He liked to watch them and study them. He often knew them better than they knew themselves.

He passed many monkeys. They scolded him until he spoke to them in their own language. They knew their world, and through them he kept upon the

right route to the volcano. They told him in what direction to go to reach the next landmark of which the natives had spoken—a little lake, a mountain meadow, the crater of an extinct volcano.

When he thought that he should be approaching his destination, he asked some monkeys if there were white men near a volcano. He called it 'argo ved' —fire mountain. They said there were, and told him how to reach their camp. One old monkey said, "Kreeg-ah! Tarmangani sord. Tarmangani bundolo," and he mimicked the aiming of a rifle, and said, "Boo! Boo!" Beware! White men bad. White men kill.

He found the camp in a little gorge,

but before he came to it he saw a sentry guarding the only approach. Tarzan came out into the open and walked toward the man, a bearded Dutchman. The fellow cocked his rifle and waited until Tarzan came to within twenty-five or thirty yards of him; then he halted him.

"Who are you and what are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I am an Englishman. I should like to talk with your chief."

The man had been appraising Tarzan with some show of astonishment. "Stay where you are," he ordered. "Don't come any closer;" then he called down into the gorge: "de Lettenhove! There's a wild man up here wants to talk to you."

Tarzan repressed a smile. He had

heard this description of himself many times before, but never with quite such blatant disregard of his feelings. Then he recalled that he had spoken to the man in English and said that he was an Englishman, while the fellow had called to de Lettenhove in Dutch, doubtless believing that the "wild man" did not understand that language. He would continue to let them believe so.

Presently, three men came up out of the valley. All were heavily armed. They were bearded, tough looking men. They wore patched, tattered, nondescript clothing, partly civilian', partly military, partly crudely fashioned from the skins of animals. One of them wore a disreputable tunic with the two stars of a

first lieutenant on the shoulder tabs. This was de Lettenhove. He spoke to the sentry in Dutch.

"What was this man doing?"

"He just walked up to me. He made no effort to avoid me or hide from me. He is probably a harmless half-wit, but what the devil he's doing here gets me. He says he is English. He spoke to me in that language."

De Lettenhove turned to Tarzan. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" he asked in English.

"My name is Clayton. I am a colonel in the RAF. I understood that a company of Dutch guerrillas was camped here. I wanted to talk with their commanding officer. Are you he? I know that there

are also bands of outlaws in the mountains, but the only way I could find out which you are was to come and talk with you. I had to take that chance."

"I am not the commanding officer," said de Lettenhove. "Capt. van Prins is in command, but he is not here today. We expect him back tomorrow. Just what do you want to see him about? I can assure you," he added with a smile, "that we are outlaws only in the eyes of the Japs and the native collaborationists."

"I came because I wanted to make contact with people I could trust, who could give me information as to the location of Jap outposts and native villages whose people are friendly to the

Dutch. I wish to avoid the former and, perhaps, obtain help from the latter. I am trying to reach the coast, where I shall try to obtain a boat and escape from the island."

De Lettenhove turned to one of the men who had accompanied him from the camp in the valley. "I was commencing to believe him," he said in Dutch, "until he sprung that one about getting a boat and escaping from the island. He must think we're damn fools to fall from any such silly explanation of his presence here. He's probably a damn German spy. We'll just hang onto him until van Prins gets back." Then, to Tarzan, in English: "You say you are an English officer. Of course you have some means of

identification?"

"None," replied Tarzan.

"May I ask why an English officer is running around in the mountains of Sumatra naked and armed with bow and arrows and a knife?" His tone was ironical. "My friend, you certainly can't expect us to believe you. You will remain here until Capt. van Prins returns."

"As a prisoner?" asked Tarzan.

"As a prisoner. Come, we will take you down to camp."

The camp was neat and well policed. There were no women. There was a row of thatched huts laid out with military precision. The red, white, and blue flag of the Netherlands flew from a staff in

front of one of the huts. Twenty or thirty men were variously occupied about the camp, most of them cleaning rifles or pistols. Tattered and torn and shabby were their clothes, but their weapons were immaculate. That this was a well disciplined military camp Tarzan was now convinced. These were no outlaws. He knew that he could trust these men.

His entrance into the camp caused a mild sensation. The men stopped their work to stare at him. Some came and questioned those who accompanied him.

"What you got there?" asked one. "The Wild Man of Borneo?"

"He says he's an RAF colonel, but I've got two guesses. He's either a harmless half-wit or a German spy. I'm

inclined to believe the latter. He doesn't talk like a half-wit."

"Does he speak German?"

"Don't know."

"I'll try him." He spoke to Tarzan in German; and the latter, impelled by the ridiculousness of the situation, rattled off a reply in impeccable German.

"I told you so," said the two-guesser.

Then Tarzan turned to de Lettenhove. "I told you that I had no means of identification," he said. "I haven't any with me, but I have friends who can identify me—three Americans and two Dutch. You may know the latter."

"Who are they?"

"Corrie van der Meer and Tak van

der Bos. Do you know them?"

"I knew them very well, but they have both been reported dead."

"They were not dead yesterday," said Tarzan.

"Tell me," said de Lettenhove. "How do you happen to be in Sumatra anyway? How could an English colonel get to Sumatra in wartime? And what are Americans doing here?"

"An American bomber was supposed to have crashed here some time ago," one of the men reminded de Lettenhove in Dutch. "This fellow, if he is working with the Japs, would have known this. He would also have been able to get the names of Miss van der Meer and Tak. Let the damn fool go on. He's digging his

own grave."

"Ask him how he knew our camp was here," suggested another.

"How did you know where to find us?" demanded de Lettenhove.

"I'll answer all your questions," said Tarzan. "I was aboard the bomber that was shot down. That's how I happen to be here. The three Americans I have mentioned were also survivors from that plane. I learned in a native village yesterday about the general location of your camp. These villagers have been collaborating with the Japs. There was a Jap outpost garrisoned there. We had an engagement with them yesterday, and wiped out the entire garrison."

"You speak excellent German," said

one of the men accusingly.

"I speak several languages," said Tarzan, "including Dutch." He smiled.

De Lettenhove flushed. "Why didn't you tell me all these things in the first place?" he demanded.

"I wished first to assure myself that I was among potential friends. You might have been collaborationists. I just had an experience with a band of armed Dutchmen who work with the Japs."

"What decided you that we were all right?"

"The appearance of this camp. It is not the camp of a band of undisciplined outlaws. Then, too, I understood all that you said in Dutch. You would not have feared that I might be a spy had you been

on friendly terms with the Japs. I am convinced that I can trust you. I am sorry that you do not trust me. You probably could have been of great assistance to me and my friends."

"I should like to believe you," said de Lettenhove. "We'll let the matter rest until Capt. van Prins returns."

"If he can describe Corrie van der Meer and Tak van der Bos, I'll believe him," said one of the men. "If they're dead, as we've heard, he can't ever have seen them, for Corrie was killed with her father and mother over two years ago way up in the mountains, and Tak was captured and killed by the Japs after he escaped from the concentration camp. They couldn't possibly have been seen

by this man unless they are still alive and together."

Tarzan described them both minutely, and told much of what had befallen them during the past two years.

De Lettenhove offered Tarzan his hand. "I believe you now," he said, "but you must understand that we have to be suspicious of everyone."

"So am I," replied the Englishman.

"Forgive me if I appear to be rude," said the Dutchman, "but I'd really like to know why you go about nearly naked like a regular Tarzan."

"Because I am Tarzan." He saw incredulity and returning suspicion in de Lettenhove's face. "Possibly some of you may recall that Tarzan is an Englishman

and that his name is Clayton. That is the name I gave you, you will recall."

"That's right," exclaimed one of the men. "John Clayton, Lord Greystoke."

"And there's the scar on his forehead that he got in his fight with the gorilla when he was a boy," exclaimed another.

"I guess that settles it," said de Lettenhove.

The men crowded around, asking Tarzan innumerable questions. They were more than friendly now, trying to make amends for their former suspicions.

"Am I still a prisoner?" he asked de Lettenhove.

"No, but I wish you would remain

until the captain gets back. I know that he'll be more than anxious to be of assistance to you."

CHAPTER 16

As Corrie entered the forest she saw a man standing in the trail about a hundred feet from her. It was Hooft. He removed his hat and bowed, smiling. "Thank you for coming," he said. "I was afraid to go down into the village until I was sure the people there were friendly."

Corrie advanced toward him. She did not recognize him. Even though smiling, his appearance was most unprepossessing; so she kept her rifle at ready. "If you are a loyal Dutchman," she said, "you will find the white men in this village friendly. What do you want of them?"

She had advanced about fifty feet

when suddenly men leaped from the underbrush on both sides of the trail. The muzzle of her rifle was struck up and the weapon seized and wrenched from her grasp.

"Don't make no noise and you won't be hurt," said one of the men.

Pistols were levelled at her as a warning of what would happen to her if she cried out for help. She saw that the men surrounding her were Dutchmen, and realized that they were probably of the same band of outlaws from which Tak and Tarzan had escaped. She reproached herself for having stupidly put herself in their power.

"What do you want of me?" she demanded.

"We ain't goin' to hurt you," said Hooft. "Just come along quietly, and we won't keep you long." They were already moving along the trail, men in front of her and behind her. She realized that escape now was impossible.

"But what are you going to do with me?" she insisted.

"You'll find that out in a couple of days."

"My friends will follow, and when they catch up with you you'll wish that you never had seen me."

"They won't never catch up," said Hooft. "Even if they should, there are only four of them. We'd wipe 'em out in no time."

"You don't know them," said Corrie.

"They have killed forty Japs today, and they'll find you no matter where you hide. You had better let me go back; because you will certainly pay if you don't."

"Shut up," said Hooft.

They hurried on. Night fell, but they did not stop. Corrie thought of Jerry and the others. Most of all, she thought of Jerry. She wondered if they had missed her yet. She didn't wonder what they would do when they did miss her. She knew. She knew that the search for her would start immediately. Probably it already had started. She lagged, pretending to be tired. She wanted to delay her captors; but they pushed her roughly on, swearing at her.

Back in the village, Jerry was the first to wonder why Corrie hadn't joined them as the natives prepared their evening meal. He saw Amat, and asked van der Bos to send him after Corrie. The native went to the house Corrie had occupied and pretended to look for her. Presently he returned to say that she was not there. "I saw her go into the forest a little while ago," he said. "I supposed that she had returned, but she is not in her house."

"Where into the forest?" asked van der Bos. Amat pointed to a different trail from that which Corrie had taken.

When van der Bos had interpreted what Amat had said, Jerry picked up his rifle and started for the forest. The

others followed him.

"What in the world could have possessed her to go wandering off into the forest alone?" demanded Jerry.

"Maybe she didn't," said Rosetti. "Maybe dat little stinker was lyin'. I don't like dat puss o' his. He looks like a rat."

"I don't believe the little so-and-so, either," said Bubonovitch. "It just isn't like Corrie to do a thing like that."

"I know," said Jerry, "but we'll have to make a search anyway. We can't pass up any chance of finding her however slim."

"If that little yellow runt was lyin', if he knows wot become of Corrie, I'm goin' to poke a bayonet clean through his

gizzard," growled Rosetti.

They went into the forest, calling Corrie aloud by name. Presently they realized the futility of it. In the pitch darkness of the forest night they could have seen no spoor, had there been one to see.

"If only Tarzan were here," said Jerry. "God! but I feel helpless."

"Somethin' dirty's been pulled," said Rosetti. "I t'ink we should orter go back an' give de whole village de toid degree."

"You're right, Shrimp," said Jerry. "Let's go back."

They routed the natives out and herded them into the center of the village. Then van der Bos questioned

them. Those first questioned denied any knowledge even of Corrie's departure. They disclaimed having any idea of where she might be. As Lara's turn came, Amat started to sneak away. Shrimp saw him, for he had been keeping an eye on him, grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, wheeled him around, and pushed him into the center of the stage, at the same time giving him a swift kick in the pants.

"This louse was tryin' to beat it," he announced. "I told you he was a wrong guy." He held the business end of his bayonet in the small of Amat's back.

Van der Bos questioned Lara at length and then interpreted her replies to the others. "This girl says that Amat came

and told Corrie that a friend of her father was waiting at the edge of the forest and wanted to see her, but for her to come alone, as he didn't know whether or not the rest of us were friendly to the Dutch. She went into the forest on that trail there." He pointed. It was not the trail which Amat said she had taken.

"I told you so!" shouted Rosetti. "Tell this skunk to say his prayers, for I'm goin' to kill him."

"No, Rosetti," said Jerry. "He's the only one who knows the truth. We can't get it out of him if he's dead."

"I can wait," said Rosetti.

Tak van der Bos questioned Amat at length, while Rosetti kept the point of a bayonet pressed against the frightened

native's left kidney.

"According to this man's story," said Tak, "he went into the forest to gather durians. He was almost immediately captured by a band of white men. He says there were about twenty of them. One of them forced him to take that message to Corrie, threatening to come back and kill him if Corrie didn't come out alone. He says he was very much frightened. Also, he thought the man merely wished to talk with Corrie. Says he didn't know that they would keep her."

"Is dat all?" demanded Shrimp.

"That's his whole story."

"May I kill him now, Cap?"

"No," said Jerry.

"Aw, hell! Why not? You know de bum's lyin'."

"We're not Japs, Rosetti. And we've got other things to do right now." He turned to van der Bos. "Isn't it likely that those fellows were the same ones that you and Tarzan got away from?"

"I think there's no doubt of it."

"Then you can lead us to their camp?"

"Yes."

"At night?"

"We can start now," said van der Bos.

"Good!" exclaimed Jerry. "Let's get going."

Rosetti gave Amat a quick poke with his bayonet that brought a frightened scream from the Sumatran. Jerry

wheeled toward the sergeant.

"I didn't kill him, Cap. You didn't tell me not to jab him once for luck."

"I'd like to kill him myself, Shrimp," said Jerry. "But we can't do things that way."

"I can," said Rosetti, "if you'll just look de udder way a second." But Jerry shook his head and started off toward the mouth of the trail. The others followed, Shrimp shaking his head and grumbling. "T'ink of dat poor kid out dere wit dem bums!" he said. "An' if dis little stinker had a-told us, we'd a-had her back before now. Just for a couple seconds I wish we was Japs."

Bubonovitch made no wisecrack about misogynists. He was in no

wisecracking mood, but he couldn't but recall how violently upset Shrimp had been when they had had to add a "dame" to their company.

Finding that her delaying tactics won her nothing but abuse, Corrie swung along at an easy stride with her captors. Presently, she heard three sharp knocks ahead, as though some one had struck the bole of a tree three times with a heavy implement. The men halted, and Hooft struck the bole of a tree three times with the butt of his rifle—two knocks close together and then a third at a slightly longer interval.

A woman's voice demanded, "Who is it?" and the outlaw chief replied, "Hooft."

"Come on in," said the woman. "I'd know that schnapps bass if I heard it in Hell."

The party advanced, and presently the woman spoke again from directly above them. "I'm coming down," she said. "Post one of your men up here, Hooft. This is no job for a lady."

"What give you the idea you was a lady?" demanded Hooft, as the woman descended from the platform from which she had been guarding the trail to the camp. She was Hooft's woman, Sarina.

"Not you, sweetheart," said the woman.

"We won't need no guard here no more," said Hooft. "We're pullin' out quick."

"Why? Some cripple with a slingshot chasm' you?"

"Shut up!" snapped Hooft. "You're goin' to shoot off your gab just once too often one of these days."

"Don't make me laugh," said Sarina.

"I'm gettin' damn sick of you," said Hooft.

"I've been damn sick of you for a long while, sweetheart. I'd trade you for an orangutan any day."

"Oh, shut up," grumbled one of the men. "We're all gettin' good an' goddam sick of hearin' you two bellyache."

"Who said that?" demanded Hooft. No one replied.

Presently they entered the camp and

aroused the women, whereupon considerable acrimonious haggling ensued when the women learned that they were to break camp and take the trail thus late at night.

Some torches were lighted, and in their dim and flickering illumination the band gathered up its meager belongings. The light also served to reveal Corrie to the women.

"Who's the kid?" demanded one of them. "This ain't no place for a nice boy."

"That ain't no boy," said a man. "She's a girl."

"What you want of her?" asked a woman suspiciously.

"The Japs want her," explained

Grotius, the second in command.

"Maybe they won't get her?" said Hooft. "Why not?" demanded Grotius.

"Because maybe I've taken a fancy to her myself. I'm goin' to give Sarina to an ape." Everybody laughed, Sarina louder than the others.

"You ain't much to look at, you ain't much to listen to, and you ain't much to live with," she announced; "but until I find me another man, you don't go foolin' around with any other woman. And see that you don't forget it," she added. Sarina was a well built woman of thirty-five, lithe and muscular. An automatic pistol always swung at her hip and her carbine was always within reach. Nor did she consider herself fully clothed if

her parang were not dangling in its sheath from her belt. But these were only outward symbols of Sarina's formidableness. It was her innate ferocity when aroused that made her feared by the cutthroats and degenerates of Hooft's precious band. And she had come by this ferocity quite as a matter of course. Her maternal grandfather had been a Borneo headhunter and her maternal grandmother a Batak and a cannibal. Her father was a Dutchman who had lived adventurously in and about the South Seas, indulging in barratry and piracy, and dying at last on the gibbet for murder. Sarina, herself, carrying on the traditions of her family, though not expiating them so irrevocably

as had her sire, had been serving a life sentence for murder when released from jail at the time of the Japanese invasion.

It is true that the man she had murdered should have been murdered long before; so one should not judge Sarina too harshly. It is also true that, as is often the case with characters like Sarina, she possessed many commendable characteristics. She was generous and loyal and honest. At the drop of a hat she would fight for what she knew to be right. In fact, it was not necessary even to drop a hat. Hooft feared her.

Corrie had listened with increasing perturbation to the exchange of pleasantries between Hooft and Sarina.

She did not know which to fear more. She might be given over to the Japs, taken by Hooft, or killed by Sarina. It was not a pleasant outlook. She could but pray that Jerry and the others would come in time.

The outlaws had left the camp by a trail other than that along which Corrie had been brought. Hooft had issued orders for the march that would ensure that their spoor would completely deceive anyone attempting to track them, and when Corrie heard them the last ray of hope seemed to have been extinguished. Only prayer was left.

On the march, Sarina walked always close to her. Corrie hoped that this would keep Hooft away. Of the two, she

feared him more than she did the woman.

CHAPTER 17

Tak van der Bos led Jerry, Bubonovitch, and Rosetti through the Cimmerian darkness of the equatorial forest toward the camp of the outlaws. The night noises of the jungle were all about them; but they saw nothing, not even one another. They were guided solely by the slight sounds given off by the accouterments of the man directly ahead. If van der Bos slowed down or stopped as he felt for the trail they bumped into one another. Often they collided with trees or stumbled over obstacles, cursing softly. Otherwise they moved in silence. They did not talk.

Strange sounds came out of the jungle —unaccountable crashings, occasionally

a scream of terror or agony. Life and death were all about them. And sometimes there were strange silences, more ominous than the noises. Then, Bubonovitch would think: Death is abroad. The jungle is waiting to see where he will strike, each creature fearing to call attention to itself.

Rosetti felt as a man walking in a dream. He walked and walked and walked, and never got anywhere. It was as though he had walked forever and would keep on walking in darkness throughout eternity.

Jerry thought only of what might be happening to Corrie, and chafed at the slowness of their progress. He was wondering for the thousandth time how

much longer it would be before they would reach the camp, when he bumped into van der Bos. Then Rosetti and Bubonovitch bumped into him. Van der Bos got them into a huddle, and whispered: "Get your guns ready. We are approaching their sentry. We may be able to sneak, by in the darkness. If he challenges, Jerry and I will let him have it; then we'll charge the camp, yelling like hell. But we can't shoot there until we have located Corrie. When we do, we can commence shooting; then keep right on through the camp. There is a trail on the other side. And keep together."

"I think we should go in shooting, but in the air," suggested Jerry.

"That's better," agreed van der Bos. "Come on!"

There was no sentry, and so they crept silently into the deserted camp to reconnoiter. It was not so dark here in the open, and they soon discovered that their quarry had flown. Their reactions to this disappointment were expressed variously and profanely.

"Where do we go from here?" demanded Rosetti.

"We'll have to wait for daylight before we can pick up their trail," said Jerry. "The rest of you get some sleep. I'll stand guard for an hour. Then one of you can relieve me for an hour. By that time it should be light."

"Lemme stand guard, Cap," said

Rosetti. "I can take it better'n you."

"What makes you think that?" demanded Jerry.

"Well—well, you see you're pretty old. You'd orter get your rest."

Jerry grinned. "Ever hear of a general named Stilwell?" he asked. "Thanks just the same, Shrimp; but I'll take the first trick, then I'll call you."

As soon as it was light, they searched for the tracks of the outlaws; but they found none leading out of the camp. It seemed baffling until Bubonovitch suggested that they had gone out by the same trail along which they themselves had come in, and thus the spoor of the outlaws had been obliterated by their own.

"They must have kept right ahead at the fork," said van der Bos. "I guess we'll have to go back there and start all over again." But when they reached the forks, there was no sign of fresh spoor continuing on the main trail.

"Wotinell become of 'em?" demanded Rosetti. "They's somethin' phoney about it—people vanishin' like dat."

"They probably used vanishing cream," said Bubonovitch.

"We must have got some of it on our brains," said Jerry, disgustedly.

"Or up our noses and in our eyes and ears," said Bubonovitch. "Tarzan was right. Civilization has robbed us of most of our physical sensibilities. I suppose that he would have found that spoor just

like that." He snapped his fingers.

"He's pretty slick," said Rosetti, "but even Tarzan can't find no trail when they ain't none."

"About all we can do," said Jerry, "is go back to the village and wait for him. A bunch of dummies like us couldn't ever find her, and if we try it we might miss Tarzan entirely when he gets back."

It was a dejected party that returned to the village. When Amat saw Rosetti entering the village he disappeared into the forest and climbed a tree. There he remained until after dark, a terrified and unhappy collaborator.

Tarzan waited in the camp of the guerrillas until Capt. Kervyn van Prins returned. Van Prins, de Lettenhove, and

Tarzan conferred at length. Tarzan told them of the destruction of the Jap detachment in the village and of the extra rifles and ammunition, which he thought the guerrillas might use to advantage.

"When I left yesterday," he said, "my friends were going out to ambush the Jap relief party that was expected at almost any time. If it has arrived I haven't much doubt as to the outcome of that engagement; so there should be quite a little additional equipment for you if you care to come and get it. I think that village needs a lesson, too. Those people are undoubtedly working with the Japs."

"You say you believe the Jap relief party would consist of some twenty

men," said van Prins, "and your party had only five people, and one of them a girl. Aren't you rather overconfident in thinking that an engagement would result in a victory for your people?"

Tarzan smiled. "You don't know my people," he said. "Too, they had a tremendous advantage over the Japs. They knew that the Japs were coming; but the Japs didn't know we were there and waiting for them in trees on both sides of the trail, armed with rifles and hand grenades. And don't discount the fighting ability of the girl, Captain. She is a crack shot, and she already has several Japs to her credit. She is imbued with a hatred of Japs that amounts almost to religious exaltation."

"Little Corrie van der Meer!" exclaimed van Prins. "It is almost unbelievable."

"And two of our Americans," continued Tarzan. "They were captured and abused by the Japs, and were about to be beheaded when the American captain and Corrie arrived in time to save them. I think they are good for at least five Japs apiece, if not more. They have become two fisted haters. No, I don't think we need worry about the outcome of the fight, if there was one. As the Americans would say, 'we did it before; we can do it again.'"

"Very well," said van Prins; "we'll go with you. We can certainly use more rifles and ammunition. Possibly we

should join forces. We can discuss that when we all get together. When do you want to start back?"

"I am going now," replied Tarzan. "We'll wait in the village for you."

"We can go along with you," said van Prins.

Tarzan shook his head. "Not the way I travel, I'm afraid. By forced marches, you may make it by sometime tomorrow. I'll be back there tonight."

The Dutchman gave a skeptical shrug; but he smiled and said, "Very good. We'll see you some time tomorrow."

Day was breaking as the outlaws emerged from the forest into a narrow valley. They had brought their supply of schnapps along with them, and most of

them were drunk. More than anything else, they wanted to lie down and sleep. They made camp under some trees beside the little river that wound down the valley toward the sea.

Hooft said that the women could stand guard, as they had had some sleep the night before. As Sarina was the only woman who had not drunk during the night, she volunteered to stand the first trick. Soon the others were sprawled out and snoring. But Corrie could not sleep. Plans for escape raced through her mind, banishing thoughts of slumber. She saw that all but Sarina were dead to the world. Perhaps Sarina might succumb to fatigue, too. Then she could get away. She knew exactly where she was and

where to find the trail, that led back to the village. Farther down the valley she would probably find the bones of the rhinoceros and the deer that Tarzan had killed. Just beyond, she would come to the trail that led up out of the valley and into the forest.

She eyed the weapons of the sleeping men and women. If she could but steal a parang without Sarina seeing her. She would only have to get close to the woman then. In time, her attention would be distracted. She would turn her head away. Then one terrific blow with the heavy knife, and Corrie, armed with rifle, pistol, and parang, would be far on her way to the village before these drunken sots awakened.

Corrie did not even wonder that she entertained such thoughts. Her once sheltered life had become a battle for mere existence. If enemies could not be eluded, they must be destroyed. And this woman was an enemy. Corrie feared her fully as much as she feared the men. She thought of her as a terrible creature, steeped in vice.

Sarina was still a comparatively young woman. She had the sultry beauty that so many Eurasian women have and the erect, graceful carriage that marks the women of Java and Sumatra, and the slimness and physical perfection. But Corrie saw her through eyes of hate and loathing.

Sarina was staring at Corrie, her

brows puckered in concentration. Would the woman never look away. "What is your name?" asked Sarina.

"Van der Meer," replied the girl.

"Corrie van der Meer?" Sarina smiled. "I thought so. You look like your mother."

"You knew my mother?" demanded Corrie. "You couldn't have." Her tone suggested that the woman had insulted her mother's memory just by claiming to have known her.

"But I did," said Sarina. "I knew your father, too. I worked for them while you were in school in Holland. They were very good to me. I loved them both. When I got in trouble, your father hired a fine attorney to defend me. But it did no

good. Justice is not for Eurasians, or perhaps I should say mercy is not for Eurasians. I was guilty, but there were circumstances that would have counted in my favor had I been white. That is all past. Because your father and mother were kind to me and helped me, I shall help you."

"What is your name?" asked Corrie.

"Sarina."

"I have heard both my father and mother speak of you. They were very fond of you. But how can you help me?"

Sarina walked over to one of the sleeping men and took his rifle and some ammunition from him. She brought them back to Corrie. "Do you know how to get back to the village where they found

you?"

"Yes."

"Then get started. These drunken beasts will sleep a long time."

"How can I thank you, Sarina?" she said. She thought, and I was going to kill her!

"Don't thank me. Thank your father and mother for being kind to an Eurasian. Do you know how to use a rifle?"

"Yes."

"Then, goodbye and good luck!"

Impulsively, Corrie threw her arms about the woman she would have killed, and kissed her. "God bless you, Sarina," she said. Then she swung oil down the

valley. Sarina watched her go, and there were tears in her eyes. She touched the spot on her cheek where Corrie had kissed her, touched it almost reverently.

Corrie took advantage of the cover afforded by the trees that grew along the left bank of the river. It was much farther to the trail leading up out of the valley than she had imagined, and it was late afternoon before she saw it winding across the valley from the opposite side. She saw something else, too. Something that made her heart sink. Some natives were making camp for the night directly in her path, and there were two Jap soldiers with them. Now she would have to wait for darkness, and then try to sneak past them.

She climbed into a tree, and tried to make herself comfortable. She was very tired and very sleepy. But she did not dare sleep for fear she would fall out of the tree. At last she found a combination of branches into which she could wedge her body and from which she could not fall. She was very uncomfortable; but nevertheless she fell asleep, utterly exhausted.

When she awoke, she knew that she had slept for some time, as the moon was high in the heavens. She could see the fire burning in the camp of the natives. Now she could slip past them and reach the trail to the village. She was preparing to descend when she heard the coughing grunt of a tiger. It

sounded very close. From a little distance there arose the barking and growling of wild dogs. Corrie decided to remain where she was.

CHAPTER 18

It was late when Tarzan reached the village. Bubonovitch, who was on guard, challenged him.

"Colonel Clayton," responded Tarzan.

Advance to be recognized, Colonel; but I know your voice anyway. And thank the Lord you're back."

Tarzan approached. "Something wrong, Sergeant?" he asked.

"I'll say there's something wrong. Corrie's been abducted," then he told Tarzan all that he knew about the matter.

"And you couldn't find their trail?"

"There wasn't any."

"There has to be," said Tarzan.

"I sure hope you're right, Sir."

"We can't do anything until morning. We'll start as soon as it's light."

Jerry was on guard when Tarzan awoke at daylight. The American, anxious to get the search under way, had already routed out the others. They called Lara from her house. She was the only one of the natives they felt they could trust. Van der Bos talked to her. He told her that a band of guerrillas would arrive in the village sometime during the day, and instructed her to tell them what had happened and ask them to remain until the searchers returned.

When Corrie was safely out of sight of the camp of the outlaws, Sarina awoke the woman whom she thought had been most overcome by drink and told

her to relieve her as guard. She said nothing about the escape of the prisoner, assuming that the woman's brain would be so befuddled that she would not notice. Sarina was right.

The guard was changed twice more before Hooft awoke. When he discovered that Corrie was missing, he was furious. He questioned all the women who had been on guard. Sarina insisted that Corrie had been there when she relinquished the post to another. The others insisted that the prisoner had not left while they were on duty. Hooft got nowhere. He had slept all day. It was now getting dark and too late to start a search. All he could do about it was to curse the women roundly and try to find

solace in a schnapps bottle.

At about the same time that Tarzan and the others were starting out from the village to search for her the following morning, Corrie was impatiently watching the camp of the natives and the two Japs. She dared not descend until they had left. She watched them prepare and eat their breakfast leisurely, thinking that they would never finish. But at long last they did.

They came in her direction, and Corrie hid in the tree where the foliage was densest. At last they filed by, quite close; and Corrie recognized Iskandar, the leader of the natives who had once abducted her, and several of his band. When they were at a safe distance,

Corrie descended to the ground and followed the trail up the cliff and into the forest. At last she was safe, for all her known enemies were behind her and she was on a familiar trail that led directly back to her friends.

Iskandar continued on with his party until they came within sight of the outlaws; then the two Japs hid, and the natives approached Hooft and his people. There was a brief parley between Iskandar and Hooft; then the native sent one of his men back to tell the Japs that the white men were friendly.

After the two Japs joined them, the schnapps bottles were passed around as the men discussed plans. The Japs were

non- commissioned officers from the detachment of Capt. Tokujo Matsuo, and so were naturally anxious to recapture Corrie. So were Iskandar and Hooft, each of whom visualized some form of reward if they returned the girl to the Japanese officer.

Unfortunately for their plans they drank too much schnapps; and though they started out in the right direction, they never picked up Corrie's spoor. When they reached the trail leading up into the forest, the trail that Corrie had taken, Sarina claimed to have discovered the spoor and led them on down the valley. Thus again the kindness of her dead father and mother intervened to save the girl.

Tarzan, Jerry, and the others marched rapidly to the abandoned camp of the outlaws. Tarzan examined the spoor that had confused and deceived his companions; then he led them out along the trail that the outlaws had taken. The others were dubious, but they followed.

"Them tracks is all pointin' toward the camp," said Rosetti. "We're goin' the wrong way, an' just wastin' time."

"They tell me you're a great ball turret gunner, Shrimp," said Tarzan; "but you're a mighty poor tracker. The people we're after passed along this trail last night in the same direction that we're going."

"Then they must o' came back again, Colonel. All these footprints is pointin'

the other way."

"The majority of them went in advance," explained Tarzan; "then three men and a woman walked backward behind them, obliterating the spoor of those who had gone ahead. About every hundred yards, three other men and a woman relieved the spoor-obliterators; because it is tiresome walking backward."

"I don't see how you tell that," persisted Rosetti.

"When you walk forward your heels strike the ground first; then you push yourself forward with the balls of your feet, at the same time pushing the dirt back in the opposite direction. When you walk backward, the balls of your feet

strike the ground first and you push yourself forward with your heels, still pushing the dirt in the direction opposite from that in which you are going. Examine the ground carefully, and you will see for yourself. If you follow the trail long enough, and are sufficiently observing, you will see that about every hundred yards there is a change in the sizes of the footprints, showing that new people took up the job."

Not only Rosetti, but the others, fell to examining the spoor. "Cripes, but we're dumb," said Jerry.

"I should have knowed enough to keep my fool trap shut," said Rosetti. "The colonel ain't never wrong."

"Don't get that idea," said Tarzan. "I

don't want to try to live up to anything like that. But remember, about this tracking, that I've been doing it all my life, ever since I was a child, and that innumerable times my life has depended upon my knowing what I was doing. Now I am going on ahead. We don't want to run into that outfit without warning."

An hour later the rest of the party emerged from the forest into the open valley and found Tarzan waiting for them. "Your outlaws passed down the valley a short time ago," he told them. "I have also found Corrie's trail. She was hours ahead of them and alone. Evidently she managed to escape from them. I am pretty sure that they did not

discover her spoor, as theirs is often yards to the right of hers and never touches it.

"There were a number of men and women in the party, several natives, and two Jap soldiers. At least two of the men were short legged and wore working tabi; so I assume they were Japs. I am going on ahead, following Corrie's trail. If she took the trail leading up into the forest, I'll cut a single blaze on a tree near the trail. If she kept on down the valley, I'll cut two blazes. If there are three, you will know that the outlaws took the same trail that Corrie took; otherwise, they took a different trail." Tarzan turned then, and was off at the even trot that he could maintain for hours

when he chose to keep to the ground, the gait for which Apache Indians are famous.

"I don't know what good we are," said Bubonovitch. "That guy doesn't need us."

"He lets us come along for the ride," said Jerry.

"I think we are just in his way," remarked van der Bos; "but he's mighty patient about it."

"I'm goin' to practice swingin' t'rough de trees," said Shrimp.

"And jumping down on tigers?" asked Bubonovitch.

As Corrie followed what was to her now the homeward trail, she was happy

and lighthearted. She was returning to Tak and Jerry and Tarzan and Bubonovitch and the little sergeant, of whom she had finally become very fond. In fact, she was very fond of all of them. Of course, she had known Tak all her life; but it was as though she had known the others always, also. She decided that she loved them all. She could scarcely wait to see them all again and tell them of her adventures. She had a little score to settle, too —a little score to settle with Amat. But she quickly put that out of her mind. She wished to think only of pleasant things.

So she was thinking of pleasant things, one of which was Jerry, when she suddenly became conscious of something

moving through the underbrush parallel with the trail. It was something large. Corrie had her rifle ready, her finger on the trigger, as she peered into the tangle of foliage. What she saw drove every pleasant thought from her mind—just a little glimpse of black and yellow stripes. A tiger was stalking her. How utterly inadequate was the .25 caliber Jap rifle she was carrying! When she stopped, the tiger stopped. Now she could see his eyes—terrifying eyes—as he stood with lowered head returning her gaze. Would he attack? Why else would he be stalking her?

Corrie glanced about. Close beside her was a durian tree from which a stout liana depended. If the tiger charged, he

would reach her before she could clamber out of danger. If she moved too quickly, he would charge. Any sudden movement on her part would doubtless mean as sudden death.

Very carefully, she leaned her rifle against the bole of the tree; then she grasped the liana. She watched the tiger. He had not moved. He still stood there watching her. Corrie drew herself up very slowly. Always she watched the tiger. The beast seemed fascinated. As she climbed, she saw his eyes following her. Suddenly he moved forward toward her.

Then Corrie scrambled upward as fast as she could go, and the tiger charged. But he was in an awkward

position. He had to run half way around the tree and out into the trail before he could gather himself to spring up to seize her. He did spring, but he missed. And Corrie clawed her way upward to safety.

She sat there astride a limb, trembling, her heart pounding. And the tiger lay down in the trail at the foot of the tree. He was old and mangy. Because he was old, he had probably been unable to overhaul a meal for so long that he was reduced to hunting by day for anything that he might find. And having found something, he had evidently determined to wait right where he was until his prey either came down or fell out of the tree. Every once in a while he

looked up at Corrie, bared his yellow fangs, and growled.

Corrie, though not given to any but the mildest of epithets, nevertheless swore at him. The creature had shattered her dream of getting back to her boys quickly. He just lay there, growling at her occasionally. An hour passed. Corrie was becoming frantic. Another hour, and still the stupid beast held tenaciously to his post. Corrie wondered which one of them would starve to death first.

Presently she was joined by some monkeys. They, too, scolded the tiger and probably swore at him in monkey language. Then Corrie had an idea. She knew that monkeys were imitative. She

picked a durian fruit and threw it at the tiger. It struck him, much to Corrie's surprise, and elicited a savage growl. She threw another, and missed. Then the monkeys got the idea. Here was sport. They and Corrie bombarded the great cat with durian fruit. It rose, growling, and tried to leap into the tree; but it only fell back, lost its balance, and rolled over on its back. A durian struck it full on the nose. Durians rained upon it. Finally it gave up and went crashing off into the jungle. But for a long while Corrie did not dare leave her sanctuary. And she was a wary and frightened girl when she finally slipped down and retrieved her rifle.

Every little sound startled her now as

she hurried along the trail toward the village, but finally she became convinced that she had seen the last of Stripes.

A huge creature bulked large and black in a tree beneath which Corrie passed. She did not see it. It moved silently above and behind her, watching her. It was Oju, the young orangutan which Tarzan had fought. Corrie's rifle kept him at a distance. Oju was afraid of the black sticks that made a loud noise. But he was patient. He could wait.

Presently other monstrous shapes appeared in the trees and in the trail in front of Corrie. She stopped. She had never seen so many orangutans together before. Corrie did not believe that they

would harm her, but she was not certain. They grimaced at her, and some of them made threatening gestures, stamping on the ground and making little short rushes toward her. She kept her finger on the trigger of her rifle and backed away. She backed directly beneath Oju, who was now perched on a limb but a few feet above her head.

Ordinarily, the great apes avoid humans, going away when one appears. Corrie wondered why these did not go away. She thought that they would presently; so she waited, not daring to advance along the trail which some of them occupied. She thought that probably their numbers gave them courage to remain in the presence of a human being.

It was not that, however. It was curiosity. They wanted to see what Oju was going to do. They did not have long to wait.

Oju looked down with bloodshot eyes, weighing the situation. He saw that this she tarmangani's whole attention was held by the other apes. He dropped upon Corrie, hurling her to the ground; and at the same time he wrenched the rifle from her grasp. The girl's finger being on the trigger at the time, the weapon was discharged. That terrified Oju, and he swung into a tree and off into the forest. But, having a one track mind, he neglected to loosen his grasp about Corrie's body; so he took her with him.

The shot also frightened the other apes; and they, too, swung off into the forest, but not in the same direction that Oju had taken. Now, the trail was quiet and deserted; but Corrie was not there to take advantage of it. She was beating futilely with clenched fists on the monstrous, hairy body of her abductor. Eventually, this annoyed Oju; and he cuffed her on the side of the head. It was fortunate for Corrie that this was merely a gentle reminder that Oju objected to being beaten, even though the beating did not hurt him in the least; for it only rendered her unconscious, whereas, had Oju really exerted himself she would doubtless have been killed.

When Corrie regained consciousness,

which she did very quickly, she thought at first that she was experiencing a horrible nightmare; but that was only for a moment before the complete return of reason. Now she was indeed horrified. The great, hairy beast was hurrying through the trees, constantly looking back over its shoulder as though something were pursuing it.

Corrie was armed with both a pistol and a parang, but the orangutan held her so that one of his great arms was clamped over both of the weapons in such a way that she could withdraw neither of them. And the creature was carrying her deeper and deeper into the forest, and toward what horrible fate?

CHAPTER 19

Jerry, Bubonovitch, Rosetti, and van der Bos followed the river down the valley until they came to the trail leading to the left out of the valley and into the forest at the summit of the cliff. Here they found a single blaze upon the bole of a tree and knew that Corrie had taken the trail back toward the village and that her erstwhile captors had not followed her.

When they reached the top of the cliff they heard, very faintly, a shot far ahead of them. Tarzan had carried no firearm, and they could not know that Corrie had been armed. The natural assumption was that she had not. The outlaws had not come this way, so none of them could

have fired the shot. The natives had been warned not to touch the Jap weapons that the whites had hidden in their village, nor would they have dared so to arm themselves against the proscription of the Japs, of whom they stood in mortal terror.

The four men discussed these various conclusions as they pushed on along the trail. "A Jap must have fired that shot," said van der Bos. "And where there is one Jap there are doubtless others."

"Bring 'em on," said Rosetti. "I ain't killed no Jap for two days."

"We'll have to be careful," said Jerry. "I'll go on ahead about a hundred yards. I'll fire at the first Jap I see, and then fall back. You fellows get into the

underbrush on one side of the trail when you hear my shot and let 'em have it when you can't miss. Let 'em get close."

"Geeze, Cap, you hadn't orter do that. Lemme do it," said Rosetti.

"Or me," said Bubonovitch. "That's not your job, Captain."

"Okay," said Jerry. "You go ahead, Shrimp, and keep your ears unbuttoned."

"Why don't you swing through the trees?" inquired Bubonovitch. Shrimp grinned and ran ahead.

Tarzan had followed Corrie's trail for no great distance when he came to the spot at which she had been treed by the tiger. He read the whole story as clearly as he might have from a printed page. Even the scattered durians told him how

the tiger had finally been driven off. He smiled and followed the now fresh trail that indicated that the girl had resumed her journey but a short time before. Then he heard a shot ahead.

He took to the trees now, and moved swiftly above the trail. Like the men following behind him, he thought that a Jap had fired the shot. He also thought that Corrie had doubtless fallen into the hands of a detail of Jap soldiers. And then he saw a rifle lying in the trail.

Tarzan was puzzled. The Japs would not have gone away and left a rifle behind them. Too, there was no odor of Japs; but the scent spoor of great apes was strong. He dropped into the trail. He saw that Corrie's spoor ended where the

rifle lay. He saw what appeared to indicate that the girl had fallen or been thrown to the ground. He also saw the manlike imprints of the feet of a large orangutan superimposed upon those made by Corrie, but these imprints were only directly beneath the tree where Tarzan stood.

The implication was clear: An orangutan had dropped from the tree, seized Corrie, and carried her off. Tarzan swung into the tree and was off on the trail of Oju. The arboreal spoor was plain to his trained senses. A crushed beetle or caterpillar, the bark on a limb scuffed by a horny hand or foot, a bit of reddish brown hair caught by a twig, the scent spoor of both the ape and

the girl which still hung, even though faintly, in the quiet air of the forest.

In a little natural clearing in the forest Tarzan overtook his quarry. Oju had been aware that he was being followed, and now he elected to stand and fight, if fighting were to be necessary, in this open space. He still clung to his prize, and it happened that he was holding Corrie in such a position that she could not see Tarzan.

She knew that Oju was facing an enemy, for he was growling savagely. And she heard his opponent growl in reply, but this sounded more like the growl of a lion. Of course there were no lions in Sumatra, but the voice was not the voice of a tiger. She wondered what

manner of beast it might be.

The voice was coming closer. Suddenly the orangutan dropped her and lumbered forward. Corrie raised herself on her hands and looked back. And at that instant Tarzan closed with Oju. Corrie leaped to her feet and drew her pistol. But she dared not fire for fear of hitting Tarzan. The two were locked in an embrace of death. Oju was attempting to close his powerful jaws on the man's throat, and the man held the yellow fangs away with one mighty arm. Both were growling, but lower now. Corrie was suddenly conscious of the feeling that she was watching two beasts fighting to the death—and for her.

Tarzan was holding Oju's jaws from

his throat with his right arm. His left was pinned to his side by one of the ape's. Tarzan was straining to release himself from this hold. Inch by inch he was dragging his left arm free. Inch by inch Oju was forcing his fangs closer and closer to the man's throat.

Corrie was horrified. She circled the struggling combatants, trying to get a shot at the orangutan; but they were moving too rapidly. She might as easily have hit Tarzan as his opponent.

The two were still on their feet, pulling and straining. Suddenly Tarzan locked one leg around those of the ape and surged heavily against him. Oju fell backward, Tarzan on top of him. In trying to save himself, the ape had

released his hold on the man's left arm. Then Corrie saw a knife flash, saw it driven into the ape's breast, heard his screams of pain and rage. Again and again the knife was driven home. The screaming waned, the great body quivered and lay still. Oju was dead.

Tarzan rose and placed a foot upon the body of his foe. He raised his face toward the heavens—and then, suddenly, he smiled. The victory cry of the bull ape died in his throat. Why he did not voice it, he himself did not know.

Corrie felt very limp. Her legs refused to hold her, and she sat down. She just looked at Tarzan and shook her head. "All in?" he asked. Corrie nodded. "Well, your troubles are over for today

at least, I hope. Jerry, van der Bos, and the sergeants are coming along the trail. We'd better get over there and meet them." He swung her across his shoulder and swung back along the leafy way that the ape had brought her, but how different were her feelings now!

When they reached the trail, Tarzan examined it and found that the others had not yet passed; so they sat down beside it and waited. They did not talk. The man realized that the girl had undergone terrific shock, and so he left her alone and did not question her. He wanted her to rest.

But finally Corrie broke the silence herself. "I am an awful fool," she said. "I have had to exert all the will power I

possess to keep from crying. I thought death was so near, and then you came. It was just as though you had materialized out of thin air. I suppose that it was the reaction that nearly broke me down. But how in the world did you know where I was? How could you have known what had happened to me?"

"Stories are not written in books alone," he said. "It was not difficult." Then he told her just how he had trailed her. "I had an encounter with that same ape a few days ago. I got the better of him then, but I refrained from killing him. I wish now that I had not. His name was Oju."

"You never said anything about that," she said.

"It was of no importance."

"You are a very strange man."

"I am more beast than man, Corrie."

She knitted her brows and shook her head. "You are very far from being a beast."

"You mean that for a compliment. That is because you don't know the beasts very well. They have many fine qualities that men would do well to emulate. They have no vices. It was left for man to have those as well as many disagreeable and criminal characteristics that the beasts do not have. When I said that I was more beast than man, I didn't mean that I possessed all their noble qualities. I simply meant that I thought and reacted more like a

beast than a man. I have the psychology of a wild beast."

"Well, you may be right; but if I were going out to dinner, I'd rather go with a man than a tiger."

Tarzan smiled. "That is one of the nice things about being a beast. You don't have to go to dinners and listen to speeches and be bored to death."

Corrie laughed. "But one of your fellow beasts may leap on you and take you for his dinner."

"Or a nice man may come along and shoot you, just for fun."

"You win," said Corrie.

"The others are coming," said Tarzan.

"How do you know?"

"Usha tells me."

"Usha? Who is Usha?"

"The wind. It carries to both my ears and my nostrils evidence that men are coming along the trail. Each race has its distinctive body odor; so I know these are white men."

A moment later, Rosetti came into view around a curve in the trail. When he saw Tarzan and Corrie he voiced a whoop of pleasure and shouted the word back to those behind him. Soon the others joined them. It was a happy reunion.

"Just like old home week," observed Bubonovitch.

"It seems as though you had been gone for weeks, Corrie," said Jerry.

"I went a long way into the Valley of the Shadow," said Corrie. "I thought that I should never see any of you again in this world. Then Tarzan came."

Tak van der Bos came and kissed her. "If my hair hasn't turned white since you disappeared, then worry doesn't turn hair white. Don't you ever get out of our sight again, darling."

Jerry wished that he didn't like van der Bos. He would greatly have enjoyed hating him. Then he thought: You are an idiot, Lucas. You haven't a ghost of a show anyway, and those two were made for each other. They are both swell. So Jerry lagged along behind and left them together as they resumed the march toward the village.

Tarzan had gone ahead to act as point. The others listened as Corrie recounted her adventures, telling of Amat's treachery, of Sarina's unexpected help, of her horrifying experience with Oju, and of her rescue by Tarzan.

"He is magnificent," she said. "In battle he is terrifying. He seems to become a wild beast, with the strength and agility of a tiger guided by the intelligence of a man. He growls like a beast. I was almost afraid of him. But when the fight was over and he smiled he was all human again."

"He has added one more debt which we owe him and can never repay," said Jerry.

"Dat guy's sure some guy," said

Rosetti, "even if he is a Britisher. I bet he didn't have nuttin' to do wit dat Geo'ge Toid."

"That's a safe bet, Shrimp," said Bubonovitch. "You can also lay 100 to 1 that he didn't run around with Caligula either."

Tak van der Bos found these Americans amusing. He liked them, but often he could not make head nor tail of what they were talking about.

"Who was Geo'ge Toid?" he asked.

"He is dat king of England wot Mayor Thompson said he would poke in de snoot if he ever came to Chicago," explained Rosetti.

"You mean George Third?"

"Dat's who I said—Geo'ge Toid."

"Oh," said van der Bos. Bubonovitch was watching him, and noticed that he did not smile. He liked him for that. Bubonovitch could rib Shrimp, but he wouldn't stand for any foreigner ribbing him.

"This lame brain," he said, jerking a thumb in Rosetti's direction, "doesn't know that the War of the Revolution is over."

"You disliked Englishmen because of what George Third did?" Tak asked Shrimp.

"You said it."

"Maybe you won't think so badly of Englishmen if you'll just remember that George Third was not an Englishman."

"Wot?"

"He was a German."

"No kiddin'?"

"No kidding. Many of the Englishmen of his day didn't like him any more than you do."

"So de guy was a Heinie! Dat explains everyt'ing." Shrimp was satisfied now. He could like Tarzan and not be ashamed of it.

Presently they caught up with Tarzan. He was talking to two bearded white men. They were sentries posted by the guerrillas who had occupied the village. The two other trails were similarly guarded.

Within a few minutes the returning

party had entered the kampong; and as they did so, Amat departed into the forest on the opposite side of the village. He had caught a glimpse of Rosetti.

CHAPTER 20

Capt. van Prins and Lieut. de Lettenhove, as well as several others of the guerrilla force, knew both Corrie and Tak, whom they had believed to be dead. They gathered around them, laughing and talking, congratulating them and exchanging snatches of their various experiences during the more than two years since they had seen one another. Corrie and Tak asked of news of old friends. Some were known to be dead, others had been prisoners of the Japs when last heard of. They spoke in their own tongue.

Jerry, feeling very much an outsider, sought Bubonovitch and Rosetti. They sat together beneath a tree and cleaned

their rifles and pistols, for since they had captured the equipment of the Japs they had all that was necessary to keep their weapons cleaned and oiled, an endless procedure in the humid equatorial atmosphere of the Sumatran mountains.

Presently van Prins and de Lettenhove joined them to discuss plans for the future. Corrie and Tak were sitting together in the shade of another tree at a little distance. Corrie had noticed that Jerry had been avoiding her of late; so she did not suggest joining the conference. She wondered if she had done anything to offend him, or if he were just tired of her company. She was piqued, and so she redoubled her attentions to Tak van der Bos. Jerry was

keenly aware of this and was miserable. He took no part in the discussion that was going on. Both Bubonovitch and Rosetti noticed this and wondered at the change that had come over him.

The conference resulted in a decision that the two parties would join forces for the time being at least, but it was not thought wise to remain where they were. When the detail that was to have been relieved did not return to the base, there would be an investigation, unquestionably in force; and the Dutchmen did not wish to risk a major engagement. They had other plans for harassing the enemy.

It was therefore decided to move to an easily defended position of which

they knew. This would mean backtracking for Tarzan and the Americans, but van Prins assured them that in the end it would improve their chances of reaching the southwest coast.

"From where I plan on making camp," he explained, "there is a comparatively easy route over the summit. You can then move down the east side of the mountains where, I am informed, there are comparatively few Japs in the higher reaches, while on this side there are many. I will furnish you with a map and mark out a route that will bring you back to the west side at a point where I think you will find it much easier to reach the coast, if you decide to persist in what I believe a very foolhardy venture."

"What do you think about it, Jerry?" asked Tarzan.

Jerry, awakened from a day dream, looked up blankly. "Think about what?" he demanded.

Tarzan looked at him in surprise. Then he repeated the plan. "Whatever suits the rest of you suits me," said Jerry indifferently.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti looked at one another. "Wot the hell's happened to the 'old man'?" whispered the latter.

Bubonovitch shrugged and looked in the direction of Corrie and van der Bos. "Cherchez la femme," he said.

"Talk American," said Rosetti.

"I think the captain is going to be a

misogynist again pretty soon," said Bubonovitch.

"I getcha. I guess maybe as how I'll be one of dem t'ings again myself. Trouble is a dame's middle name—trouble, trouble, nuttin' but trouble."

"When do you plan on leaving?" Tarzan asked van Prins.

"I think we can remain here safely today and tomorrow. The Japs won't really commence to worry about that detail for several days, and then it will take them another day to reach this village. We can leave here day after tomorrow, early in the morning. That will give my men time to fix up their foot gear. I can't call the things we are wearing shoes. The chief here has plenty

of material, and some of the women are helping us make sandals. We were just about barefoot when we got here. Even if the Japs do come, we shall be ready for them. Some of my men are cutting a trail from the village paralleling the main trail toward the Jap base. I'm having them run it out about five hundred yards. If the Japs come, we'll have a surprise for them."

The conference broke up. Van Prins went out into the forest to see how his men were getting ahead with the trail. The other Dutchmen went to work on their sandals or cleaned their weapons. Corrie had been surreptitiously watching Jerry. She noticed how glum he looked and that he only spoke when directly

addressed, and then curtly. Suddenly she thought that he might be ill. She had been angry with him, but that thought destroyed her anger and filled her with compassion. She walked over to where he was now sitting alone, reassembling the Jap pistol that he had stripped and cleaned. She sat down beside him.

"What's the matter, Jerry?" she asked. "You're not ill, are you?"

"No," he said. He had worked himself into such a state of utter misery that he couldn't even be civil.

Corrie looked at him in surprise and hurt. He did not see the expression on her face; because he pretended to be engrossed with the pistol. He knew that he was being sophomoric and he hated

himself. What the hell is the matter with me? he thought. Corrie arose slowly and walked away. Jerry thought about committing suicide. He was being an ass, and he knew it. But Jerry was very young and very much in love. He slammed the last piece of the pistol into place viciously and stood up.

Corrie was walking toward the little house she occupied with the native girl, Lara. Jerry walked quickly after her. He wanted to tell her how sorry he was. As she reached the foot of the ladder leading up into the house, he called to her: "Corrie!" She did not pause nor look back. She climbed the ladder and disappeared through the doorway.

He knew that she had heard him. He

also knew that Tarzan and Bubonovitch and Rosetti had witnessed the whole thing. But worst of all, so had Tak van der Bos. Jerry could feel his face burning. He stood there for a moment, not knowing what to do. The hell with all women, he thought. He had faced death many times, but to face his friends now was worse. It required all his will power to turn around and walk back to them.

No one said anything as he sat down among them. They appeared wholly occupied by whatever they were doing. Tarzan broke the silence. "I am going out to see if I can bring in some fresh meat," he said. "Anyone want to come with me?" It was the first time he had ever

asked anyone to hunt with him. They all knew that he meant Jerry; so no one spoke, waiting for Jerry.

"Yes, I'd like to, if no one else wants to," he said.

"Come along," said Tarzan. They picked up rifles and went out into the forest.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti were sitting a little apart from the Dutchmen. "That was swell of Tarzan," said the former. "I sure felt sorry for Jerry. I wonder what's got into Corrie."

"Oh, hell; they're all alike," said Rosetti.

Bubonovitch shook his head. "It wasn't like Corrie—she's different. Jerry must have said something. He's been as

grouchy as a bear with a sore head."

"It's dat Dutchman," said Rosetti. "He and Corrie are just like dat." He crossed a middle finger over an index finger. "An' I fought all de time she was fallin' for de Cap'n. I told you w'en we foist picked up dat dame dat it meant trouble."

"You sort of fell for her yourself, Shrimp."

"I liked her all right. Maybe she ain't done nuttin'. Maybe de Cap'n's de wrong guy. Dey don't have to do nuttin'. Just bein' a dame spells trouble. Geeze! I t'ink w'en I gets back to Chi I'll join a convent."

Bubonovitch grinned. "That would be just the place for you, Shrimp— a nice convent without any women. If you can't

find one in Chicago, you might try Hollywood. Anything that's screwy, Hollywood's got."

Shrimp knew that Bubonovitch was ribbing him, but he didn't know just how. "Yes, sir! I t'ink I'll be a monk."

"The correlative wisecrack is too obvious."

"Talk American, Perfessor."

Tarzan and Jerry were gone a little more than an hour. They returned to the village with the carcass of a deer. Tarzan had shot it. Jerry was glad that he had not had to. Of course it was all right to kill for food, but still he didn't like to kill deer. He didn't mind killing Japs. That was different. The way he felt this afternoon, he would have enjoyed killing

almost anything. But he was still glad that he hadn't killed the deer.

That evening, Corrie ate apart with the Dutchmen. She shouldn't have done it, and she knew that she shouldn't. She should have carried on just as though nothing had happened. Afterward she wished that she had, for she realized that now she had definitely acknowledged the rift. It would be difficult to close it again. It would probably widen. She was most unhappy; because she loved those men with whom she had been through so much—to whom she owed so much. She was sorry now that she hadn't waited when Jerry had called to her.

She made up her mind to swallow her pride and go over to them; but when she

did so, Jerry got up and walked away. So she passed them and went to her house. There she threw herself down on her sleeping mats and cried. For the first time in years, she cried.

The day was drawing to a close and Amat was very tired when he reached the Jap base. He bowed low to the sentry who halted him, and in the few Japanese words he had learned he tried to explain that he had important news for the commanding officer.

The sentry called a non-commissioned officer of the guard who happened to have learned a smattering of the native dialect; and to him Amat repeated what he had told the sentry, almost forgetting to bow. So he bowed

twice.

The sergeant took him to the adjutant, to whom Amat bowed three times. When the sergeant had reported, the adjutant questioned Amat, and what Amat told him excited him greatly. He lost no time in conducting Amat to the commanding officer, a Col. Kanji Tajiri, to whom Amat bowed four times.

When the colonel learned that some forty of his men had been killed, he was furious. Amat also told him just how many white men there were in the party in his village. He told about the sentries out on the trails. He told about the white girl. He told everything.

Tajiri gave orders that Amat should be fed and given a place to sleep. He

also directed that two full companies should march at dawn to attack the village and destroy the white men. He himself would go in command, and they would take Amat along. If Amat had known this, he would not have slept so easily as he did.

CHAPTER 21

At breakfast the following morning, the cleavage was again definitely apparent. The Dutch prepared and ate their breakfast a little apart from the Americans and Tarzan. The Englishman knew that it was all very wrong and very stupid and that if the condition persisted it would affect the morale of the entire company. At the same time, however, he could not but be amused; for it was so obvious that the two principals who were responsible were very much in love with each other. They were probably the only ones who did not realize this. He knew that they must be in love; because it is only people who are very much in love who treat each other

so damnably.

After they had eaten, Tarzan and the Americans went into the forest to inspect the trail the Dutchmen had cut. They found that it gave excellent concealment from the main trail, but Tarzan thought that the sentry post was not far enough in advance of the trail's outer end.

Capt. van Prins had posted four men on this post with orders to hold up the Japs as long as possible should they come, falling back slowly to give the main force of the guerrillas time to come from the village and prepare the ambush.

"I think he should have had one man very much farther in advance," Tarzan said to Jerry, "and at least half his force posted constantly in this paralleling trail.

He is not prepared for a surprise, and he is not giving the Japs credit for the cunning they possess."

"They'll have a man way out in front," said Jerry. "He'll be well camouflaged, and he'll sneak through the jungle like a snake. He'll see the guys on this post and then go back and report. Pretty soon some more will sneak up and toss a few grenades. That'll be the end of the sentries, and the Japs will rush the village before van Prins can get his men out here to ambush them."

"Let's go back and talk with him," suggested Tarzan.

Shortly after breakfast, Lara had sought out Corrie. "I have just discovered," she said, "that Amat did not

return to the village last night. He left yesterday. I know him. He is a bad man. I am sure that he went to the big Japanese camp and reported everything that has happened here."

Corrie was repeating this to van Prins when Tarzan and Jerry returned. The Dutchman called them over; and as they came, Corrie walked away. Van Prins told them of Lara's warning, and Tarzan suggested the plan that he and Jerry had discussed.

"I think I'll put most of my force out there," said van Prins. "I'll just leave a welcoming committee here in case some of them break through to the village."

"It might be a good idea to withdraw your sentries entirely," suggested Jerry.

"Then the Japs will walk right into the ambush without any warning."

"I don't know about that," said van Prins. "I'd like a little advance information myself, or we might be the ones who would be surprised."

Tarzan didn't agree with him, but he said, "I'll get advance information to you much sooner than your sentries could. I'll go out four or five miles, and when the Japs show up I'll be back with the word long before they reach your ambush."

"But suppose they see you?"

"They won't."

"You seem pretty sure of yourself, Sir," said the Dutchman, smiling.

"I am."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said van Prins. "Just to make assurance doubly sure, I'll leave my sentries out. I'll tell them that when you come back, you'll order them in. How's that?"

"Fine," said Tarzan. "I'll go along out now, and you can get your men camouflaged and posted for the ambush. O.K.?"

"O.K.," said van Prins.

Tarzan swung into a tree and was gone. The Dutchman shook his head. "If I had a battalion like him, I could pretty near chase the Japs off this island."

Jerry, Bubonovitch, and Rosetti, loaded down with ammunition and hand grenades, preceded the guerrillas into the ambush. They went to the far end of

the paralleling trail and prepared to make themselves comfortable and also inconspicuous. With leaves and vines they camouflaged their heads and shoulders until they became a part of the surrounding jungle. Even had there not been several feet of shrubbery intervening between them and the main trail, an enemy would have had to be right on top of them before he could have discovered them.

The guerrillas were soon stationed and busy camouflaging themselves. Capt. van Prins walked back and forth along the main trail checking on the effectiveness of each man's camouflage. Finally he gave his orders.

"Don't fire until I fire, unless you are

discovered; then start firing. A couple of men at the head of the line can use grenades if they can throw them far enough so as not to endanger our own people. The same goes for a couple at the opposite end, in case some of the Japs get past us. Try to get the Japs directly in front of you. If everything works out as I hope, each one of you will have Japs in front of him when I give the signal to commence firing. Any questions?"

"If they retreat, shall we follow them?" asked one of the men.

"No. We might run into an ambush ourselves. All I want to do is give them a little punishment and put the fear of God in them for Dutchmen." He came

and took up a position about the center of the line.

Jerry presently discovered that van der Bos was next to him in line. Tak had had a little talk with Corrie shortly before. "What's the matter between you and Jerry?" he had asked.

"I didn't know there was anything the matter."

"Oh, yes you do. What's wrong with him?"

"I'm not interested in what's wrong with him. I'm not interested in him at all. He's a boor, and I'm not interested in boors."

But Tak knew that she was interested, and he suddenly conceived an idea of what the trouble was. It came to him in a

flash and made him voice a little whistle of amazement.

"What are you whistling about?" Corrie had asked.

"I whistle in amazement that there are so many damn fools in the world."

"Meaning me?"

"Meaning you and Jerry and myself."

"Whistle if you like, but mind your own business."

Tak chucked her under the chin and grinned; then he went out with van Prins into the forest.

Jerry was not particularly pleased to have van der Bos next to him. Of all the people he could think of van der Bos was the one he was least desirous of

being chummy with. He hoped the fellow wouldn't try to start a conversation.

"Well, I guess we're in for a long wait," said van der Bos. Jerry grunted.

"And no smoking," added van der Bos. Jerry grunted again.

As Jerry was not looking at him, van der Bos allowed himself the luxury of a grin. "Corrie wanted to come out and get into the fight," he said; "but van Prins and I turned thumbs down on that idea."

"Quite right," said Jerry.

"Corrie's a great little girl," continued van der Bos. "We've known each other all our lives. She and my wife have been chums ever since either of them can remember. Corrie's exactly like a sister to us."

There was a silence. Van der Bos was enjoying himself greatly. Jerry was not. Finally he said, "I didn't know you were married."

"That only just occurred to me a few minutes ago," said van der Bos.

Jerry held out his hand. "Thanks," he said. "I am a goddam fool."

"Quite right," said van der Bos.

"Did your wife get away?"

"Yes. We tried to get old van der Meer to send Corrie and her mother out, too; but the stubborn old fool wouldn't. God! and what a price he paid. That man's stubbornness was notorious all over the island. He gloried in it. Aside from that, he was a very fine person."

"Do you suppose that Corrie has inherited any of her father's stubbornness?" asked Jerry, fearfully.

"I shouldn't be surprised." Van der Bos was having the time of his life. He liked this American, but he felt that he had a little punishment coming to him.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti noticed with growing wonder the cordiality that existed between Jerry and van der Bos. As the day wore on, they also noticed that "the old man" was becoming more and more like his former self.

They commented on this. "He's gettin' almost human again," whispered Rosetti. "Whatever was eatin' him must o' quit."

"Probably died of indigestion," said Bubonovitch. "We've known 'the old

man' a long while, but we've never seen him like he's been the last day or so."

"We never seen him wit a dame around. I'm tellin' you—"

"You needn't tell me. I know it all by heart. Dames are bad medicine. They spell nothing but trouble. You give me a pain in the neck. The trouble with you is that you never knew a decent girl. At least not till you met Corrie. And you haven't met my wife. You'd sing a different tune if you fell in love with some girl. And when you do, I'll bet you fall heavy. Your kind always does."

"Not a chance. I wouldn't have Dorothy Lamour if she got down on her knees and asked me."

"She won't," said Bubonovitch.

This edifying conversation was interrupted by the return of Tarzan. He sought out van Prins. "Your little brown cousins are coming," he said. "They are about two miles away. There are two full companies, I should judge. They have light machine guns and those dinky little mortars they use. A colonel is in command. They have a point of three men out only about a hundred yards. Your sentries are coming in."

"You have certainly done a swell job, Sir," said van Prins. "I can't thank you enough." He turned to the men nearest him. "Pass the word along that there is to be no more talking. The enemy will be along in thirty-five or forty minutes."

He turned back to Tarzan. "Pardon

me, Sir," he said; "but they are not brown. The bastards are yellow."

Groen de Lettenhove had been left in command of the guerrillas who had been ordered to remain in the village. He was trying to persuade Corrie to find a place of safety against the possibility that some of the enemy might break through into the village.

"You may need every rifle you can get," she countered; "and furthermore, I haven't settled my account with the Japs."

"But you might get killed or wounded, Corrie."

"So might you and your men. Maybe we'd all better go and hide."

"You're hopeless," he said. "I might

have known better than argue with a woman."

"Don't think of me as a woman. I'm another rifle, and I'm a veteran. I'm also a darned good shot."

Their conversation was interrupted by a burst of rifle fire from the forest.

CHAPTER 22

Jerry was the first to see the approaching Japs, as he happened to be in a position that gave him a view of about a hundred feet of the trail just where it curved to the right toward the village directly in front of him. It was the three man point. They were advancing cautiously, watching the trail ahead of them. They were evidently so sure that their attack would be a surprise that they did not even consider the possibility of an ambush. They paid no attention to the jungle on either side of the trail. They passed the men lying in wait for the main body and stopped at the edge of the forest. The village lay below them. It appeared deserted. The

guerrillas, concealed in and behind houses, saw them and waited.

Presently, Jerry saw the main body approaching. The colonel marched at the head of the column with drawn samurai sword. Behind him slogged Amat, and behind Amat a soldier walked with the tip of his bayonet aimed at a Sumatran kidney. Evidently, Amat had attempted to desert somewhere along the route. He did not appear happy. Shrimp saw him pass, and mentally cautioned his trigger finger to behave.

The trail was crowded with the men of the first company. They had closed up into a compact mass when the head of the column was halted behind the point at the edge of the forest. Then van Prins

fired, and instantly a withering volley was poured into the ranks of the surprised enemy. Jerry hurled three grenades in quick succession down the back trail into the second company.

The Japs fired wildly into the jungle; then some who had not been hit turned and broke in retreat. A few leaped into the undergrowth with fixed bayonets in an effort to get into close quarters with the white men. Shrimp was enjoying a field day. He picked off Japs as fast as he could fire, until his rifle got so hot that it jammed.

Among those in the mad rush to escape were the colonel and Amat. Miraculously they had so far escaped unscathed. The colonel was shrieking in

Japanese, which Amat could not understand; but he had glanced behind him, and was aware that the colonel had lethal designs upon him. As he fled, Amat screamed. He would have been deeply hurt had he known that the colonel was accusing him of having traitorously led them into ambush, and that it was for this reason that he wished to kill Amat.

Rosetti saw them just before they came abreast of him. "Nothing doing, yellow belly," he yelled. "That guy is my meat. They don't nobody else kill him if I can help it." Then he shot the colonel with his pistol. He took another shot at Amat and missed. "Doggone!" said Rosetti, as the terrified native dove into

the underbrush farther along the trail.

Wholly disorganized, the remainder of the Jap force fled back into the forest, leaving their dead and wounded. Van Prins detailed a number of men to act as rear guard, others to collect the enemy's weapons and ammunition, and the remainder to carry the Jap wounded and their own into the village.

A moment later, a wounded Jap shot the Dutchman who was trying to help him. Shortly thereafter there were no wounded Japs.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti, who had jumped out into the trail to fire on the fleeing enemy, were helping gather up the abandoned Jap weapons and ammunition. Suddenly, Rosetti stopped

and looked around. "Where's the Cap'n?" he asked.

Jerry was nowhere in sight. The two men forced their way back into the underbrush where they had last seen him. They found him there, lying on his back, his shirt, over his left breast, blood soaked. Both men dropped to their knees beside him.

"He ain't dead," said Rosetti. "He's breathing."

"He mustn't die," said Bubonovitch.

"You said a mouthful, soldier," said Rosetti.

Very tenderly, they picked him up and started back toward the village. The Dutchmen were carrying in three of their own dead and five wounded.

Tarzan saw the two sergeants carrying Jerry. He came and looked at the unconscious man. "Bad?" he asked.

"I'm afraid so, Sir," said Bubonovitch. They passed on, leaving Tarzan behind.

As the men entered the village with their pathetic burdens, those who had been left behind came to meet them. The dead were laid in a row and covered with sleeping mats. The wounded were placed in the shade of trees. Among the guerrillas was a doctor. He had no medicines, no sulfanilamide, no anesthetics. He just did the best he could, and Corrie helped him. At the edge of the jungle, men were already digging the graves for the three dead.

Native women were boiling water in which to sterilize bandages.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti were sitting beside Jerry when the doctor and Corrie finally reached him. When Corrie saw who it was, she went white and caught her breath in a sudden gasp. Both Bubonovitch and Rosetti were watching her. Her reaction told them more than any words could have; because words are sometimes spoken to deceive.

With the help of the two sergeants and Corrie, each trying to do something for the man they all loved, the doctor removed Jerry's shirt and examined the wound carefully.

"Is it very bad?" asked Corrie.

"I don't think so," replied the doctor.

"It certainly missed his heart, and I'm sure it missed his lungs, also. He hasn't brought up any blood, has he, sergeant?"

"No," said Bubonovitch.

"He's suffering mostly from shock and partly from loss of blood. I think he's going to be all right. Help me turn him over—very gently, now."

There was a small round hole in Jerry's back just to the right of his left shoulder blade. It had not bled much.

"He must have been born under a lucky star," said the doctor. "We won't have to probe, and that's a good thing; because I have no instruments. The bullet bored straight through, clean as a whistle." He washed the wounds with sterile water, and bandaged them

loosely. "That's all I can do," he said. "One of you stay with him. When he comes to, keep him quiet."

"I'll stay," said Corrie.

"You men can help me over here, if you will," said the doctor.

"If you need us, Miss, just holler," said Rosetti.

Corrie sat beside the wounded man and bathed his face with cool water. She didn't know what else to do, but she knew she wanted to do something for him. Whatever mild rancor she had thought that she felt toward him had been expunged by the sight of his blood and his helplessness.

Presently he sighed and opened his eyes. He blinked them a few times, an

expression of incredulity in them, as he saw the girl's face close above his. Then he smiled; and reaching up, he pressed her hand.

"You're going to be all right, Jerry," she said.

"I am all right—now," he said.

He had held her hand for but a second. Now she took his and stroked it. They just smiled at each other. All was right with the world.

Capt. van Prins was having litters built for the wounded. He came over to see Jerry. "How you feeling?" he asked.

"Fine."

"Good. I've decided to move out of here just as soon as possible. The Japs

are almost sure to sneak back on us tonight, and this is no place to defend successfully. I know a place that is. We can make it in two marches. As soon as the litters are finished and our dead buried, we'll move out of here. I'm going to burn the village as a lesson to the natives. These people have been collaborating with the enemy. They must be punished."

"Oh, no!" cried Corrie. "That would be most unfair. You would be punishing the innocent with the guilty. Take Lara, for instance. She has helped us twice. She has told me that there are only two people here who wanted to help the Japs —the chief and Amat. It would be cruel to burn down the homes of those who are

loyal. Remember—if it had not been for Lara, the Japs might have taken us by surprise."

"I guess that you are right, Corrie," said van Prins. "Anyway, you've given me a better idea."

He walked away, and ten minutes later the chief was taken to one side of the village and shot by a firing squad.

The guerrillas gathered around the graves of their dead. The doctor said a short prayer, three volleys were fired, and the graves were filled. The wounded were lifted onto the litters, the rear guard marched into the village, the little company was ready to move.

Jerry objected to being carried, insisting that he could walk.

Bubonovitch, Rosetti, and Corrie were trying to dissuade him when the doctor walked up. "What's going on here?" he asked. They told him, "You stay on that litter young man," he said to Jerry, and to Bubonovitch and Rosetti, "If he tries to get off of it, tie him down."

Jerry grinned. "I'll be good, Doc," he said, "but I hate to have four men carrying me when I can walk just as well as not."

Following the shooting of the chief, the natives were afraid. They did not know how many more might be shot. Lara came to Corrie just as van Prins came along. He recognized the girl.

"You can tell your people," he said, "that largely because of you and the help

you gave us we did not burn the village as we intended. We punished only the chief. He had been helping our enemies. When we come back, if Amat is here we will punish him also. The rest of you need never fear us if you do not help the enemy. We know that you have to treat them well, or be mistreated. We understand that, but do not help them any more than is absolutely necessary." He took a quick look around the kampong. "Where is Tarzan?" he asked.

"That's right," said Bubonovitch. "Where is he?"

"Geeze," said Rosetti. "He never come back to the village after the scrap. But he wasn't wounded. He was all right when we seen him last, just before we

brung the Cap'n out."

"Don't worry about him," said Bubonovitch. "He can take care of himself and all the rest of us into the bargain."

"I can leave some men here to tell him where we are going to camp," said van Prins.

"You don't even have to do that," said Bubonovitch. "He'll find us. Lara can tell him which way we went out. He'll track us better than a bloodhound."

"All right," said van Prins, "let's get going."

When Tarzan had looked at the wounded American, the latter had seemed in a very bad way. Tarzan was sure the wound was fatal. His anger

against the Japs flared, for he liked this young flier. Unnoticed by the others, he swung into the trees and was off on the trail of the enemy.

He caught up with them at a point where a captain and two lieutenants had rallied them—the only surviving officers of the two companies. High in the trees above them, a grim figure looked down upon them. It fitted an arrow to its bow. The twang of the bow string was drowned by the jabbering of the monkey-men, the shouted commands of their officers. The captain lurched forward upon his face, a bamboo shaft through his heart. As he fell upon it, the arrow was driven through his body, so that it protruded from his back.

For a moment the Japs were stunned to silence; then the shouting commenced again, as they fired into the jungle in all directions with rifles and machine guns. Seventy-five feet above their bullets, Tarzan watched them, another bolt already to be shot.

This time he picked out one of the lieutenants. As he loosed the missile, he moved quietly to another position several hundred feet away. As their second officer fell, struck down mysteriously, the Japs commenced to show signs of panic. Now they fired wildly into the underbrush and into the trees.

When the last officer went down the Japs began to run along the trail in the

direction of their main camp. They had had enough. But Tarzan had not. He followed them until all his arrows were gone, each one embedded in the body of a Jap. The screaming wounded were tearing arrows from backs and bellies. The silent dead were left behind for the tigers and the wild dogs.

Tarzan unslung the rifle from across his back and emptied a clip into the broken ranks of the fleeing enemy; then he turned and swung back in the direction of the village. His American friend had been avenged.

He did not follow the trail. He did not even travel in the direction of the village for long. He ranged deep into the primeval forest, viewing ancient things

that perhaps no other human eye had ever looked upon— patriarchs of the forest, moss covered and hoary with age, clothed in giant creepers, vines, and huge air plants, garlanded with orchids.

As the wind changed and a vagrant breeze blew into his face, he caught the scent of man. And presently he saw a little trail, such as men make. Dropping lower, he saw a snare, such as primitive hunters set for small game. He had come into the forest to be alone and get away from men. He was not antisocial; but occasionally he longed for solitude, or the restful companionship of beasts. Even the jabbering, scolding monkeys were often a welcome relief, for they were amusing. Few men were.

There were many monkeys here. They ran away from him at first, but when he spoke to them in their own language, they took courage and came closer. He even coaxed one little fellow to come and perch on his hand. It reminded him of little Nkima, boastful, belligerent, diminutive, arrant little coward, which loved Tarzan and which Tarzan loved. Africa! How far, far away it seemed.

He talked to the little monkey as he had talked to Nkima, and presently the little fellow's courage increased, and he leaped to Tarzan's shoulder. Like Nkima, he seemed to sense safety there; and there he rode as Tarzan swung through the trees.

The man's curiosity had been aroused

by the strange scent spoor, and so he followed it. It led him to a small lake in the waters of which, along the shore, were a number of rude shelters built of branches and leaves upon platforms that were supported a few feet above the water by crude piling that had been driven into the mud of the lake's bottom.

The shelters were open on all sides. Their occupants were a people below average height, their skins a rich olive brown, their hair jet black. They were naked savages whom civilization had never touched. Fortunate people, thought Tarzan. Several men and women were in the water fishing with nets. The men carried bows and arrows.

The little monkey said that they were

bad gomangani. "So manu," he said — eat monkey. Then he commenced to scream at them and scold, feeling secure in doing so by virtue of distance and the presence of his big new friend. Tarzan smiled, it reminded him so much of Nkima.

The monkey made so much noise that some of the natives looked up. Tarzan made the universal sign of peace that has been debauched and befouled by a schizophrenic in a greasy raincoat, but the natives threatened him with their arrows. They jabbered and gesticulated at him, doubtless warning him away. The Lord of the Jungle was in full sympathy with them and admired their good judgment. Were they always successful

in keeping white men at a distance they would continue to enjoy the peace and security of their idyllic existence.

He watched them for a few minutes, and then turned back into the forest to wander aimlessly, enjoying this brief interlude in the grim business of war. Keta, the little monkey, rode sometimes on the man's shoulder. Sometimes he swung through the trees with him. He seemed to have attached himself permanently to the big tarmangani.

CHAPTER 23

S/Sgt. Tony Rosetti squatted on the sentry platform on the trail outside the former camp of the outlaws where the guerrillas were now bivouacked for a day to let their wounded rest.

His tour of duty was about completed, and he was waiting for his relief when he saw a figure approaching him along the trail. It was a slender, boyish figure; but even in the dim, cathedral light of the forest afternoon the sergeant realized that, notwithstanding the trousers, the rifle, the pistol, the parang, and the ammunition belt, it was no boy. When the woman caught sight of Rosetti, she stopped.

"Halt!" commanded Rosetti, bringing

his rifle to the ready.

"I am already halted," said the woman in good English.

"Who are you and where do you think you're goin' wit all dat armor?"

"You must be the cute little sergeant Corrie van der Meer told me about —the one who hates women and speaks funny English."

"I don't speak English. I speak American. And wot's funny about it? And who are you?"

"I am Sarina. I am looking for Corrie van der Meer."

"Advance," said Rosetti. Then he dropped down off the platform into the trail. He stood there with a finger on the

trigger of his rifle and the point of his bayonet belly high. The woman came and stopped a few feet from him.

"I wish that you would aim that thing some other way," she said.

"Nuttin' doin', sister. You belong to dat outlaw gang. How do I know you ain't just a front an' de rest of dem is trailin' behind you? If dey are, youse is goin' to get shot, sister."

"I'm alone," said Sarina.

"Maybe you are, an' maybe you ain't. Drop dat gun an' stick up your mitts. I'm goin' to frisk you."

"Speak English, if you can," said Sarina. "I don't understand American. What are mitts, and what is frisk?"

"Put up your hands, an' I'll show you what friskin' is. An' make it snappy, sister." Sarina hesitated. "I ain't goin' to bite you," said Rosetti; "but I ain't goin' to take no chances, neither. Wen you've sloughed dat arsenal, I'll take you into camp as soon as my relief shows up."

Sarina laid her rifle down and raised her hands. Shrimp made her face the other way; then, from behind, he took her pistol and parang. "Okay," he said. "You can put 'em down now." He put her weapons in a pile behind him. "Now you know wot frisk means," he said.

Sarina sat down beside the trail. "You are a good soldier," she said. "I like good soldiers. And you are cute."

Rosetti grinned. "You ain't so bad

yourself, sister." Even a misogynist may have an eye for beauty. "How come you're wanderin' around in de woods alone?—if you are alone."

"I am alone. I quit those people. I want to be with Corrie van der Meer. She should have a woman with her. A woman gets very tired of seeing only men all the time. I shall look after her. She is here, isn't she?"

"Yep, she's in camp; but she don't need no dame to look after her. She's got four men dat have made a pretty good job of it so far."

"I know," said Sarina. "She has told me, but she will be glad to have a woman with her." After a silence, she said, "Do you suppose that they will let

me stay?"

"If Corrie says so, dey will. If you are really de dame dat broke her outta dat camp, we'll all be strong for you."

"American is a strange language, but I think I know what you were trying to say: If I am really the woman who helped Corrie escape from Hooft, you will like me. Is that it?"

"Ain't dat wot I said?"

A man coming along the trail from the direction of the camp interrupted their conversation. He was a Dutchman coming to relieve Rosetti. He did not speak English. His expression showed his surprise when he saw Sarina, and he questioned Rosetti in Dutch.

"No soap, Dutchie," said the

American.

"He did not ask for soap," explained Sarina. "He asked about me."

"You savvy his lingo?" asked Shrimp.

Sarina shook her head. "Please try to speak English," she said. "I cannot understand you. What is 'savvy his lingo'?"

"Do you talk Dutch?"

"Oh, yes."

"Den wot did he say?"

"He asked about me."

"Well tell him, and also tell him to bring in your armor w'en he comes off. I can't pack dat mess an' guard a prisoner all at de same time."

Sarina smiled and translated. The man

answered her in Dutch and nodded to Rosetti. "Get goin'," said the sergeant to Sarina. He followed her along the trail into camp, and took her to Jerry, who was lying on a litter beneath a tree.

"Sergeant Rosetti reportin' wit a prisoner, sir," he said.

Corrie, who was sitting beside Jerry, looked up; and when she recognized Sarina, she sprang to her feet. "Sarina!" she cried. "What in the world are you doing here?"

"I came to be with you. Tell them to let me stay." She spoke in Dutch, and Corrie translated to Jerry.

"As far as I am concerned she can stay if you want her to," said Jerry; "but I suppose that Capt. van Prins will have to

decide. Take your prisoner and report to Capt. van Prins, sergeant."

Rosetti, who recognized no higher authority than that of Jerry, showed his disgust; but he obeyed. "Come along, sister," he said to Sarina.

"All right, brother," she replied; "but you don't have to keep that bayonet in my back all the time. I know you are a good soldier, but you don't have to overdo it." Corrie looked at her in surprise. This was the first intimation she had had that Sarina spoke English. And good English, too, she thought. She wondered where Sarina had learned it.

"Okay, sweetheart," said Rosetti. "I guess you won't try to make no break now."

"I'll come along," said Corrie. "If I vouch for you, I am sure Capt. van Prins will let you remain with us."

They found the captain, and he listened intently to all that Sarina and Corrie had to say. Then he asked, "Why did you choose to join that outlaw band and stay with it?"

"It was either them or the Japs," said Sarina. "I have always intended to leave them and join a guerrilla company when I could find one. This is the first opportunity I have had."

"If Miss van der Meer vouches for you and Capt. Lucas has no objection, you may remain."

"Then that settles it," said Corrie. "Thanks, Kervyn."

Rosetti no longer had a prisoner, but he walked back with Corrie and Sarina to where Jerry lay. He pretended that he came to inquire about Jerry's wound, but he sat down and remained after Jerry had assured him that he was all right.

At a little distance from them, Bubonovitch was cleaning his rifle. He thought that Rosetti would soon join him, and then he could ask about the woman Shrimp had brought in. But Shrimp did not join him. He remained with Jerry and the two women. It was most unlike Shrimp, to choose the society of ladies when he could avoid it. Bubonovitch was puzzled; so he went over and joined the party.

Sarina was telling about her

encounter with Rosetti. "He told me to stick up my mitts, and said he was going to frisk me. American is a very funny language."

Jerry was laughing. "Rosetti doesn't speak American—just Chicagoese."

"Where in the world did you learn to speak English, Sarina?" asked Corrie.

"In a Catholic missionary school in the Gilberts. My father always took my mother and me on all his cruises. Except for the two years I spent at the mission at Tarawa, I lived my entire life on board his schooner until I was twenty-nine. My mother died when I was still a little girl, but my father kept me with him. He was a very wicked man, but he was always kind to us. We cruised all over the South

Seas, and about every two years we made the Gilberts, trading at different islands along the way, with piracy and murder as a side line.

"Father wanted me to have an education; so, when I was twelve, he left me at that mission school until his next trip two years later. I learned a great deal there. From my father, I learned Dutch. I think he was a well educated man. He had a library of very good books on his ship. He never told me anything about his past—not even his true name. Everybody called him Big Jon. He taught me navigation. From the time I was fourteen I was his first mate. It was not a nice job for a girl, as father's crews were usually made up of

the lowest types of criminals. No one else would sail with him. I got a smattering of Japanese and Chinese from various crew members. We shipped all nationalities. Oftentimes father shanghaied them. When father was drunk, I captained the ship. It was a tough job, and I had to be tough. I carried on with the help of a couple of pistols. I was never without them."

Rosetti never took his eyes from Sarina. He seemed hypnotized by her. Bubonovitch watched him with something akin to amazement. However, he had to admit that Sarina was not hard on the eyes.

"Where is your father now?" asked Jerry.

"Probably in Hell. One of his murders finally caught up with him, and he was hanged. It was after he was arrested that Mr. and Mrs. van der Meer were so kind to me."

The gathering broke up a moment later, when the doctor came to check on Jerry. Corrie and Sarina went to the shelter occupied by the former, and Bubonovitch and Rosetti went and sat down in front of theirs.

"Wot a dame!" exclaimed Rosetti.

"Who? Corrie?"

Shrimp shot a quick glance at Bubonovitch and caught the tail end of a fleeting smile. He guessed he was being ribbed.

"No;" he said. "I was referrin' to

Eleanor."

"Did you by any chance notice that pistol packin' mamma with Corrie?" asked Bubonovitch. "Now there is a cute little piece of femininity after my own heart. I sure fell for her."

"You got a wife an' a kid," Shrimp reminded him.

"My affection is merely platonic. I shouldn't care to have a lady pirate take me too seriously. I suppose that if any of her gentlemen friends annoyed her, she made them walk the plank."

"Just think of dat little kid alone on a ship wit a lot of pirates an' her ol' man drunk!"

"I sort of got the impression that the little lady can take care of herself. Just

take a slant at her background. You remember Corrie told us one of her grandfathers was a head hunter and the other was a cannibal, and now it develops that her father was a pirate and a murderer. And just to make the whole picture perfect Sarina was doing life in the clink for a little murder of her own."

"Just the same she's awful pretty," said Rosetti.

"Migawd!" exclaimed Bubonovitch. "Et tu, Brute!"

"I don't know wot you're talkin' about; but if you're crackin' wise about dat little dame—don't."

"I was not cracking wise. I wouldn't think of offending your sensibilities for the world, Shrimp. I was merely

recalling a statement you made quite recently. Let's see—how did it go? 'I wouldn't have Dorothy Lamour if she got down on her knees and asked me!'"

"Well, I wouldn't. I wouldn't have none of 'em. But can't a guy say a dame's pretty widout you soundin' off?"

"Shrimpy, I saw you looking at her—goggle-eyed. I know the symptoms. You've gone plain ga-ga."

"You're nuts."

CHAPTER 24

They broke camp the following morning and moved slowly, the wounded men still litter-borne. Where the trail was wide enough, Corrie walked beside Jerry's litter. Sarina was behind her, and Rosetti walked with Sarina. Bubonovitch and several Dutchmen formed a rear guard. As none of the latter spoke English and Bubonovitch spoke no Dutch, the American had opportunity for meditation. Among other things, he meditated on the remarkable effect that some women had on some men. Reefers or snow made men goofy. Corrie and Sarina seemed to have a similar effect on Jerry and Rosetti. In Jerry's case it

was not so remarkable. But Shrimp! Shrimp was a confirmed woman hater, yet all of a sudden he had gone overboard for a brown-skinned Eurasian murderess old enough to be his mother.

Bubonovitch had to admit that Sarina was plenty good-looking. That was the hell of it. He was mighty fond of Rosetti, and so he hoped that the little sergeant didn't go too far. He didn't know much about women, and Sarina didn't seem exactly the safe type to learn from. Bubonovitch recalled a verse from Kipling;

She knifed me one night
'cause I wished she was white,
An' I learned about women from 'er.

Bubonovitch sighed. After all, he

thought, maybe Shrimp wasn't altogether wrong when he said, "Dey don't have to do nuttin'. Just bein' a dame spells trouble."

He abandoned this line of thought as unprofitable, and commenced to wonder about Tarzan. Jerry was wondering about him, too; and he voiced his misgivings to Corrie. "I'm commencing to worry about Tarzan," he said. "He's been gone two days now, and shortly after he disappeared some of the men thought they heard firing far off in the forest from the direction in which the Japs retreated."

"But what in he world would he be doing back there?" objected Corrie.

"He is not like other men; so it would

be useless for one of us to try to imagine what might impel him to the commission of any act. At times, as you well know, he acts like a wild beast. So there must be stimuli which cause him to think and react like a wild beast. You know how he feels about taking life, yet you heard him say that it was his duty to kill Japs."

"And you think he may have followed them in order to kill some more of them?" suggested Corrie.

"Yes, and maybe got killed himself."

"Oh, no! That is too terrible, even to think."

"I know, but it is possible. And if he doesn't show up, we'll have to carry on without him. Cripes! I haven't half realized how dependent we have been

on him. We'd certainly have been on short rations most of the time if he hadn't been along to hunt for us."

"I should long since have quit needing rations but for him," said Corrie. "I still see that tiger sometimes in my dreams. And Oju—ugh!"

They were silent for a while. Jerry lay with his eyes half closed. He was rolling his head slightly from side to side. "Feeling all right?" Corrie asked.

"Yes—fine. I wonder how much farther it is to camp."

"I think Kervyn plans on camping for the night about where the outlaws were camping when I escaped," said Corrie. "That is not far." She noticed that Jerry's face was very red, and placed a hand on

his forehead. She dropped back and whispered to Sarina, and word was passed down the line for the doctor. Then she returned to the side of Jerry's litter.

The American was muttering incoherently. She spoke to him, but he did not reply. He was turning restlessly, and she had to restrain him to prevent his rolling off the litter. She was terribly frightened.

She did not speak when Dr. Reyd came up to the other side of the litter. Jerry's condition was too obvious to require explanation. Practically the only tool of his profession that Dr. Reyd had salvaged was a clinical thermometer. When he read it two minutes later, he

shook his head.

"Bad?" asked Corrie.

"Not too good. But I don't understand it. I expected him to run a little fever the night he was wounded, but he didn't. I thought he was pretty safe by now."

"Will he—? Will he—?"

The doctor looked across the litter at her and smiled. "Let's not worry until we have to," he said. "Millions of people have survived much worse wounds and higher temperatures."

"But can't you do something for him?"

Reyd shrugged. "I have nothing with which to do. Perhaps it is just as well. He is young, strong, in good condition, and physically as near perfect as a man

can be. Nature is a damn good doctor, Corrie."

"But you'll stay here with him, won't you, Doctor?"

"Certainly. And don't you worry."

Jerry mumbled, "Three Zeros at two o'clock," and sat up.

Corrie and the doctor forced him back gently. Jerry opened his eyes and looked at Corrie. He smiled and said, "Mabel." After that he lay quietly for a while. Rosetti had come up and was walking beside the litter. He had seen that perhaps Corrie and the doctor might need help. His eyes reflected worry and fear. Jerry said, "Lucas to Melrose! Lucas to Melrose!"

Rosetti choked back a sob. Melrose

had been the tail gunner who had been killed—and Jerry was talking to him! The implication terrified Rosetti, but he kept his head. "Melrose to Lucas," he said. "All quiet on de western front, Cap'n."

Jerry relaxed, and said, "Roger."

Corrie patted Rosetti's shoulder. "You're sweet," she said. Shrimp flushed. "Who is Melrose?" Corrie asked.

"Our tail gunner. He was killed before the Lovely Lady crashed. An' he was talkin' to him! Geeze!"

Jerry turned and twisted. It was all that three of them could do to keep him on the litter. "I guess we'll have to tie him down," said the doctor.

Rosetti shook his head. "Get Bubonovitch up here, an' me and him'll take care of him. The Cap'n wouldn't want to be tied down."

Word was passed back down the column for Bubonovitch. Jerry was trying to get off the litter when he arrived. It took the combined strength of four to force him back. Bubonovitch was swearing softly under his breath. "The goddam Japs. The yellow bastards." He turned on Rosetti. "Why in hell didn't you send for me before?" he demanded. "Why didn't somebody tell me he was like this?"

"Keep your shirt on, Bum," said Rosetti. "I sends for you as soon as he needs you."

"He hasn't been this way long," Corrie told Bubonovitch.

"I'm sorry," said the latter. "I was frightened when I saw him this way. You see, we're sort of fond of the guy."

Tears almost came to Corrie's eyes. "I guess we all are," she said.

"Is he very bad, Doctor?" asked Bubonovitch.

"He is running quite a fever," replied Reyd; "but it isn't high enough to be dangerous—yet."

They had come out of the forest into the valley where they were to camp. Now, out of the narrow trail, Sarina had come up beside the litter. When Jerry yelled, "Cripes! I can't get her nose up. You fellows jump! Make it snappy!" and

tried to jump off the litter, she helped hold him down.

Corrie stroked his forehead and said, soothingly, "Everything's all right, Jerry. Just lie still and try to rest."

He reached up and took her hand. "Mabel," he said and sighed. Then he fell asleep. Rosetti and Bubonovitch tried not to look at Corrie.

Reyd sighed, too. "That's the best medicine he could have," he said.

A half hour later, van Prins called a halt; and they made camp beneath some trees beside the little stream that ran through the valley.

Jerry slept through the remainder of the afternoon and all the following night. Corrie and Sarina slept on one side of

the litter, Bubonovitch and Rosetti on the other. They took turns remaining awake to watch over their patient.

When it was Corrie's turn to remain awake, she kept thinking of Mabel. She had never heard the name of that girl in Oklahoma City who had married the 4-F, but she knew now that her name was Mabel. So he still loved her! Corrie tried not to care. Wasn't Mabel lost to him? She was married. Then she thought that maybe it was some other girl named Mabel, and maybe this other girl wasn't married. She wanted to ask Bubonovitch what the name of the girl in Oklahoma City was, but her pride wouldn't let her.

When Jerry awoke he lay for several seconds looking up at the leafy canopy

above him, trying to coax his memory to reveal its secrets. Slowly he recalled that the last thing he had been conscious of was being very uncomfortable on a litter that was being borne along a narrow forest trail. Now the litter had come to rest and he was very comfortable. Quite near him he heard the purling laughter of the little river rippling among the boulders as it hurried gaily on to keep its assignation with the sea.

Jerry looked toward it and saw Bubonovitch and Rosetti kneeling on its grassy bank washing their hands and faces. He smiled happily as he thought how fortunate he had been in the comrades the war had given him. He

fought away the sadness for those he would never see again. A fellow mustn't brood about things like that, those inescapable concomitants of war.

Turning his head away from the river, he looked for Corrie. She was sitting close beside his litter, cross-legged, elbows on knees, her face buried in her opened palms. Her hair was gold again; but she still wore it bobbed, being, as she was, a very practical little person. That, too, was why she continued to wear pants.

Jerry looked at her fondly, thinking what a cute boy she looked. And also thinking, thank God she's not. He knew she wasn't; because he wouldn't have wanted to take a boy in his arms and kiss

him. And that was exactly what he wanted to do with Corrie that very moment, but he didn't have the nerve. Coward! he thought.

"Corrie," he said, very softly. She opened her eyes and raised her head. "Oh, Jerry!"

He reached over and took one of her hands. She placed her other hand on his forehead. "Oh, Jerry! Jerry! Your fever is all gone. How do you feel?"

"As though I could eat a cow, hoofs, horns, and hide."

Corrie choked back a sob. This sudden relief from fear and strain broke down the barriers of emotional restraint that had been her spiritual shield and buckler for so long. Corrie scrambled to

her feet and ran away. She took refuge behind a tree and leaned against it and cried. She couldn't recall when she had been so happy.

"Wot," Rosetti asked Bubonovitch, "was de name of dat dame in Oklahoma City wot gave de Cap'n de brush-off?"

"I don't know," said Bubonovitch.

"I wonder was it Mabel," wondered Rosetti.

"Could be."

Jerry looked after Corrie, with knitted brows. Now what the hell? he thought. Sarina, having attached herself to Corrie and the Americans, was preparing their breakfast nearby. Dr. Reyd, making the round of his patients, came to Jerry. "How goes it this morning?"

"Feeling great," Jerry told him. "Won't have to be carried any longer."

"Maybe that's what you think," said Reyd, grinning. "But you're wrong."

Captain van Prins and Tak van der Bos came over. "Think you can stand another day of it?" the former asked Jerry.

"Sure I can."

"Good! I want to start as soon as possible. This place is too exposed."

"You had us worrying yesterday, Jerry," said van der Bos.

"I had a good doctor," said Jerry.

"If I'd had you back in civilian life," said Reyd, "I'd have given you a pill yesterday; and this morning I'd have told

you how near death's door you were yesterday."

Corrie came out from behind her tree and joined them. Jerry saw that her eyes were red, and knew why she had run away. "Just getting up, lazy?" Tak asked her.

"I've been out looking for a cow," said Corrie.

"A cow! Why?"

"Jerry wanted one for breakfast."

"So he'll eat rice," said van Prins, grinning.

"When I get off your lovely island," said Jerry, "and anyone says rice to me, he'd better smile."

The others went on about their duties,

leaving Corrie alone with Jerry. "I must have passed out cold yesterday," he said. "Can't remember a thing after about a couple of hours on the trail."

"You were a very sick man—just burning up with fever. You kept trying to jump off the litter. It took four of us to hold you down. The doctor wanted to tie you to the litter, but that sweet little sergeant wouldn't hear of it. He said, 'De Cap'n wouldn't want to be tied down'; so he and Bubonovitch and the doctor and Sarina and I walked beside the litter."

"Shrimp's a good little guy," said Jerry.

"Those boys are very fond of you, Jerry."

"That works both ways," said Jerry.

"Members of a combat crew have to like one another. You don't trust a guy you don't like, and we got enough worries when we're flying a mission without having to worry about some fellow we can't trust. I'm sorry I was such a nuisance yesterday."

"You weren't a nuisance. We were just frightened; because we thought you were so terribly sick. And your being delirious made it seem much worse than it really was." She paused a moment, and then she said, "Who is Mabel?"

"Mabel? What do you know about Mabel?"

"Nothing. But you kept asking for her."

Jerry laughed. "That's what Dad

called Mother. It isn't her name, but he started calling her Mabel even before they were married. He got the name from a series of 'Dere Mabel' letters that were popular during World War I; and we kids thought it was funny to call her Mabel, too."

"We were all wondering who Mabel was," said Corrie, lamely.

"I suppose it had Shrimp and Bubonovitch and Sarina and the doctor terribly worried," said Jerry.

"That is not funny, and you are not nice," said Corrie.

CHAPTER 25

At the head of the valley, where the stream was born in a little spring that gurgled from beneath a limestone cliff, there were many caves, easily defendable. Here van Prins decided to make a more or less permanent camp and await the coming of Allied forces under MacArthur, for since the Americans had come he had learned for the first time that MacArthur was really drawing nearer week by week. When the Allies established a beachhead, he and other guerrilla leaders would come down out of the mountains and harass the enemy's rear and communications. In the meantime about all that they could accomplish was an occasional sally

against a Jap outpost.

From this camp the Americans planned to cross over to the other side of the mountains, as soon as Jerry was fully recovered, and follow a trail along the eastern side of the range to the point where they would recross to the west and try to make their way to the coast. Tak van der Bos was going with them; because it was thought that his knowledge of Sumatra and the location of Jap positions might prove of value to the Allied forces. "In the very doubtful eventuality that you ever reach them," said van Prins.

He had little hope for the success of what he considered a mad venture, and he tried to persuade Corrie not to take

the risk. "We can hide you here in the mountains indefinitely," he told her, "and you will be safe among your own people."

Jerry wasn't so sure that she would be safe. If the Japs ever made a serious effort to liquidate the guerrillas, using both infantry and planes, Corrie would be anything but safe. Yet he did not urge her to come with him. He would have felt much more assured of the chances for the success of their venture if Tarzan had not been lost to them.

Tak van der Bos agreed with van Prins. "I really think you'd be safer here, Corrie," he told her. "And I think that we four men would stand a better chance of getting away if—if—"

"If you weren't burdened with a couple of women. Why don't you say it, Tak?"

"I didn't know just how to say it inoffensively, Corrie; but that's what I meant."

"Sarina and I will not be a burden. We'll be two more rifles. We have proved that we can hold our own on the trail with any of you men. I think you will admit that Sarina would prove an even more ferocious fighter than any of you, and I have already shown that I won't scream and faint when the shooting starts. Besides all that, Sarina believes that she knows exactly where she can locate a boat for us and get it provisioned by friendly natives. And

another thing to consider: Sarina has sailed these seas all her life. She not only knows them, but she is an experienced navigator. I think that we can be a lot of help to you. As far as the danger is concerned, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. The Japs may get us if we try to get away, or they may get us if we stay. Sarina and I want to go with you men; but if Jerry says no, that will settle it."

Bubonovitch and Rosetti were interested listeners to the discussion. Jerry turned to them. "What do you fellows think?" he asked. "Would you want Corrie and Sarina to come with us, or would you rather they didn't?"

"Well, it's like this," said

Bubonovitch. "If we had two men who were as good soldiers as they are, there wouldn't be any question. It's just that a man hesitates to place a woman in danger if he can avoid it."

"That's the hell of it," said Jerry. He looked at Rosetti, questioningly, Rosetti the confirmed woman hater.

"I say let's all go, or all stay. Let's stick togedder."

"Corrie and Sarina know what dangers and hardships may be involved," said Bubonovitch. "Let them decide. I can't see that any of us has any right to do their thinking for them."

"Good for you, sergeant," said Corrie. "Sarina and I have already decided."

Captain van Prins shrugged. "I think

you are crazy," he said; "but I admire your courage, and I wish you luck."

"Look!" exclaimed Rosetti, pointing. "Everyt'ing's goin' to be hotsy-totsy now."

Everyone looked in the direction that Rosetti was pointing. Coming toward them was the familiar, bronzed figure that the Americans and Corrie had so grown to lean upon; and upon one of its shoulders squatted a little monkey; across the other was the carcass of a deer.

Tarzan dropped the deer at the edge of camp and walked toward the group gathered around Jerry's litter. Keta encircled Tarzan's neck with both arms, screaming at the strange tarmangani,

hurling jungle invective at them. Little Keta was terrified.

"They are friends, Keta," said Tarzan in their common language. "Do not be afraid."

"Keta not afraid," shrilled the monkey. "Keta bite tarmangani."

Tarzan was welcomed with enthusiasm. He went at once to Jerry and stood looking down at him, smiling. "So they didn't get you," he said.

"Just nicked me," said Jerry.

"The last time I saw you, I thought you were dead."

"We have been afraid that you were dead. Did you get into some trouble?"

"Yes," replied Tarzan, "but it wasn't

my trouble; it was the Japs'. I followed them. No matter what they may do to you in the future, you are already avenged."

Jerry grinned. "I wish I had been there to see."

"It was not pretty," said Tarzan: "Soulless creatures in a panic of terror—living robots helpless without their masters. I was careful to pick those off first." He smiled at the recollection.

"You must have followed them a long way," suggested van Prins.

"No; but after I finished with them I wandered deep into the forest. I am always curious about a country with which I am not familiar. However, I did not learn much of value. Late yesterday afternoon I located an enemy battery of

big guns; and this morning, another. If you have a map, I can mark their positions fairly closely.

"The first day, I found an isolated village of natives. It was built in the shallow waters near the shore of a lake in a great primeval forest which appeared to me impenetrable. The people were fishing with nets. They threatened me with bows and arrows after I gave them the peace sign."

"I think I know the village," said van Prins. "Fliers have seen it; but as far as is known, no other civilized men have seen it and lived. One or two have tried to reach it. Maybe they did, but they never came back. The inhabitants of that village are thought to be the remnants of

an aboriginal people from whom the Battaks descended—true savages and cannibals. Until recently the modern Battaks were cannibals—what one might call beneficent cannibals. They ate their old people in the belief that thus they would confer immortality upon them, for they would continue to live in the persons of those who devoured them. Also, the devourer would acquire the strengths and virtues of the devoured. For this latter reason, they also ate their enemies—partly cooked and with a dash of lemon."

"These lake dwellers," said van der Bos, "are also supposed to have discovered the secret of perpetual youth."

"That, of course, is all tommy-rot," said Dr. Reyd.

"Perhaps not," said Tarzan.

Reyd looked at him in surprise. "You don't mean to tell me that you believe any such silly nonsense as that, do you?" he demanded.

Tarzan smiled and nodded. "Naturally, I believe in those things which I have myself seen or experienced; and I have twice seen absolute proof that perpetual youth can be achieved. Also, I learned long ago not to deny the possibility of anything emanating from the superstitions of religions of primitive peoples. I have seen strange things in the depths of Darkest Africa." He ceased speaking,

evidently having no intention to elaborate. His eyes, wandering over the faces of his listeners, fixed on Sarina. "What is that woman doing here?" he asked. "She belongs to Hooft and his gang of outlaws."

Corrie and Rosetti both tried to explain simultaneously, the latter fairly leaping to Sarina's defense. When he had heard the story, Tarzan was satisfied. "If Sergeant Rosetti is satisfied to have any woman around, she must be beyond criticism."

Rosetti flushed uncomfortably, but he said, "Sarina's okay, Colonel."

Dr. Reyd cleared his throat. "What you said about the verity of the superstitions and religions of primitive

peoples and that perpetual youth might be achieved, interests me. Would you mind being more explicit?"

Tarzan sat down cross-legged beside Jerry. "On numerous occasions, I have known witch doctors to kill people at great distances from them; and some times after a lapse of years. I do not know how they do it. I merely know that they do do it Perhaps they plant the idea in the mind of their victim and he induces death by autosuggestion. Most of their mumbo-jumbo is pure charlatanism. Occasionally it appears as an exact science."

"We are easily fooled, though," said Jerry. 'Take some of these fellows who have made a hobby of so-called parlor

magic. They admit that they are tricking you; but if you were an ignorant savage and they told you it was true magic, you'd believe them. I had a friend in Honolulu when I was stationed at Hickam, who was as good as any professional I have ever seen. Paint Colonel Kendall J. Fielder black, dress him up in a breech-clout and a feather headdress, give him some odds and ends of bones and pieces of wood and a zebra's tail, and turn him loose in Africa; and he'd have all the other witch doctors green with envy.

"And what he could do with cards! I used to play bridge against him, and he always won. Of course his game was on the level, but he had two strikes on you

before you started—just like Tarzan's witch doctors had on their victims. You just autosuggested yourself to defeat. It was humiliating, too," added Jerry, "because I am a very much better bridge player than he."

"Of course anyone can learn that kind of magic," said Reyd, "but how about perpetual youth? You have really seen instances of this, Colonel?"

"When I was a young man," said Tarzan, "I saved a black from a man-eating lion. He was very grateful, and wished to repay me in some way. He offered me perpetual youth. I told him that I didn't think such a thing was possible. He asked me how old I thought he was, and I said that he appeared to be

in his twenties. He told me that he was a witch doctor. All the witch doctors I had ever seen were much older men than he; so I rather discounted that statement as well as his claim to being able to confer perpetual youth on me.

"He took me to his village, where I met his chief. He asked the chief how long he had known him. 'All my life,' replied the chief, who was a very old man. The chief told me that no one knew how old the witch doctor was; but that he must be very old, as he had known Tippoo Tib's grandfather. Tippoo Tib was born, probably, in the 1840's, or, possibly, the 1830's; so his grandfather may have been born as long ago as the eighteenth century.

"I was quite young and, like most young men, adventurous. I would try anything; so I let the witch doctor go to work on me. Before he was through with me, I understood why he was not conferring perpetual youth wholesale. It required a full month of concocting vile brews, observing solemn rituals, and the transfusion of a couple of quarts of the witch doctor's blood into my veins. Long before it was over, I regretted that I had let myself in for it; because I didn't take any stock in his claims." Tarzan ceased speaking as though he had finished his story.

"And you were quite right," said Dr. Reyd.

"You think I will age, then?"

"Most certainly," said the doctor.

"How old do you think I am now?" asked Tarzan.

"In your twenties."

Tarzan smiled. "That which I have told you of occurred many years ago."

Dr. Reyd shook his head. "It is very strange," he said. It was evident that he was not convinced.

"I never gave a thought to your age, Colonel," said Jerry; "but I remember now that my father said that he read about you when he was a boy. And I was brought up on you. You influenced my life more than anyone else."

"I give up," said Dr. Reyd. "But you said that you had known of two instances

in which perpetual youth was achieved. What was the other one. You've certainly aroused my interest."

"A tribe of white fanatics in a remote part of Africa compounded a hellish thing that achieved perpetual youth. I mean the way that they obtained one of the principal ingredients was hellish. They kidnaped young girls, killed them, and removed certain glands.

"In the course of tracing a couple of girls they had stolen, I found their village. To make a long story short, my companions and I succeeded in rescuing the girls and obtaining a supply of their compound.* Those who have taken it, including a little monkey, have shown no signs of aging since."

[* See Tarzan's Quest]

"Amazing!" said Dr. Reyd. "Do you expect to live forever?"

"I don't know what to expect."

"Maybe," suggested Bubonovitch, "you'll just fall to pieces all at once, like the One Hoss Shay."

"Would you want to live forever?" asked van der Bos.

"Of course—if I never had to suffer the infirmities of old age."

"But all your friends would be gone."

"One misses the old friends, but one constantly makes new ones. But really my chances of living forever are very slight. Any day, I may stop a bullet; or a tiger may get me, or a python. If I live to

get back to my Africa, I may find a lion waiting for me, or a buffalo. Death has many tricks up his sleeve beside old age. One may outplay him for a while, but he always wins in the end."

CHAPTER 26

The little band that was to make the attempt to reach Australia, comprising, as it did, Americans, Dutch, an Englishman, and an Eurasian, had been dubbed The Foreign Legion by the guerrillas. Jerry amplified the basis for this designation by calling attention to the fact that Bubonovitch was Russian, Rosetti Italian, and he himself part Cherokee Indian.

"If poor old Sing Tai were with us," said Corrie, "the four principal Allied Nations would be represented."

"If Italy hadn't surrendered," said Bubonovitch, "we'd have had to liquidate Shrimp. He's the only Axis partner in our midst."

"I ain't a Eye-talian," said Rosetti, "but I'd rather be a Eye- talian than a lousy Russian Communist." Bubonovitch grinned, and winked at Corrie.

Captain van Prins, who was sitting a little apart with Tarzan, said in a low tone, "It's too bad that there's hard feelings between those two. It may cause a lot of trouble before you're through."

Tarzan looked at him in surprise. "I guess you don't know Americans very well, Captain. Either one of those boys would willingly risk his life for the other."

"Then why do they try to insult each other?" demanded van Prins. "This is not the first time I have heard them."

Tarzan shrugged. "If I were an

American, perhaps I could tell you."

Where the guerrillas had made their camp, the valley narrowed and ended in a box canyon the limestone walls of which were pitted with several large caves on each side. Rifles and machine guns firing from the mouths of these caves could develop a deadly cross-fire that might render the position impregnable. Another advantage lay in the ability to conceal all evidence of the presence of men which the caves offered. Occasionally, a Jap plane flew over. At the first sound of its motors, the company vanished into the caves.

A sentry, posted on a cliff above the camp, had a full view down the valley as far as binoculars would reach. Should

he discover even a single human being approaching, his signal would similarly empty the floor of the canyon.

In this camp, for the first time, The Foreign Legion felt reasonably secure. It was a relief from the constant nervous strain they had been undergoing, and they relaxed and rested while waiting for Jerry's wound to heal and for him to regain his strength.

Tarzan was often away on reconnaissance missions or hunting. It was he who kept the camp supplied with fresh meat, as he could kill quietly, which was most desirable. A rifle shot might attract the attention of an enemy patrol.

Occasionally, Tarzan was away for

several days at a time. On one such mission he found the camp of the outlaws far down the valley. It was located not far from the kampong where Captain Tokujo Matsuo and Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe still held forth, and it was evident that the outlaws were openly collaborating with the Japs.

The outlaws had set up a still and were making schnapps, with which they carried on a brisk trade with the enemy. Tarzan saw much drunkenness in both camps. One observable result of this was a relaxation of discipline and alertness in the enemy camp. There were no sentries out on the trails leading to the village. A single soldier was on guard beside a small barbed wire enclosure.

Inside this, beneath a flimsy shelter, Tarzan could see two figures, but he could not make out who nor what they were. They were evidently prisoners, but whether natives or Japs he could not tell. They did not interest him.

As Tarzan turned to leave the village and return to the camp of the guerrillas, a radio blared from one of the houses. He paused a moment to listen; but the voice spoke in Japanese, which he could not understand, and he continued on his way.

However, Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe understood it, and he did not like what he heard. Captain Tokujo Matsuo understood it and was pleased. He was not a little drunk on schnapps, as was Sokabe also. The schnapps heightened

the acclaim with which Matsuo received the broadcast from Tokyo. He was quite noisy about it.

"So your honorable uncle has been kicked out," he exulted. "You may now write to your honorable uncle, General Hideki Tojo, every day; but I shall remain a captain—until I am promoted. Now the situation is reversed. The 'Singing Frog' is now Premier. He is not my uncle, but he is my friend. I served under him in the Kwantung army in Manchuria."

"So did a million other peasants," said Sokabe.

Thus was the bad blood between the two officers made worse, which was not well for the morale and discipline of

their command.

Corrie had often expressed concern over the fate of Sing Tai whom they had left in hiding in the village of Tiang Umar; so Tarzan decided to visit this village before returning to the camp of the guerrillas. This necessitated a considerable detour, but only rarely did either time or distance cause the Lord of the Jungle any concern. One of the features of civilization to which he could never accustom himself was the slavish subservience of civilized man to the demands of time. Sometimes his lack of conformity with established custom proved embarrassing to others, but never to Tarzan. He ate when he was hungry, slept when he was sleepy. He started on

journeys when the spirit or necessity moved him, without concerning himself about the time which might be involved.

He moved leisurely now. He made a kill, and after eating, laid up for the night. It was midmorning when he approached the kampong of Tiang Umar. Motivated by the inherent caution and suspicion of the wild beast, Tarzan moved silently through the trees which encircled the kampong, to assure himself that no enemy lurked there. He saw the natives carrying on their normal, peaceful activities. Presently he recognized Alam, and a moment later he dropped to the ground and walked into the village.

As soon as the natives recognized

him, they greeted him cordially and gathered around him, asking questions in a language he could not understand. He asked if anyone in the village spoke Dutch; and an old man replied in that language, saying that he did.

Through the interpreter Alam inquired about Corrie, and showed his pleasure when told that she was safe. Then Tarzan asked what had become of Sing Tai, and was told that he was still in the village but never ventured out in the daytime, which was well, as twice Jap scouting parties had come to the kampong without warning.

Tarzan was taken to the Chinese. He found him entirely recovered from his wound and in good physical condition.

His first question was of Corrie, and when he was assured that she was all right and among friends he beamed with pleasure.

"Do you want to stay here, Sing Tai," Tarzan asked, "or do you want to come with us? We are going to try to escape from the island."

"I come with you," replied Sing Tai.

"Very well," said Tarzan. "We'll start now."

The Foreign Legion was becoming restless. Jerry had entirely recovered, had regained his strength, and was anxious to move on. He only awaited the return of Tarzan, who had been away for several days.

"Wish he would show up," he said to

Corrie. "I know he can take care of himself, but something could happen to him." Several of the party were gathered beneath the concealing branches of a tree. They had been stripping, oiling, and reassembling their weapons. The stripping and reassembling they did with their eyes closed. It was a game that relieved the monotony of this ceaseless attention to weapons in the humid atmosphere of these equatorial mountains. Occasionally they timed one another; and, much to the chagrin of the men, it was discovered that Corrie and Sarina were the most adept.

Sarina replaced the bolt in her rifle, aimed at the sky, and squeezed the trigger. She leaned the piece against the

tree, and looked long and searchingly down the valley. "Tony has been gone a long time," she said. "If he does not come soon, I shall go and look for him."

"Where did he go?" asked Jerry.

"Hunting."

"The orders are no hunting," said Jerry. "Rosetti knows that. We can't take the chance of attracting the attention of the Japs with rifle fire."

"Tony took his bow and arrows for hunting," Sarina explained. "He will not fire his rifle except in self defense."

"He couldn't hit anything smaller than an elephant with that archery set of his," said Bubonovitch.

"How long has he been gone?" asked

Jerry.

"Too long," said Sarina; "three or four hours at least."

"I'll go look for him," said Bubonovitch. He picked up his rifle and stood up.

Just then the sentry on the cliff called down: "A man coming. Looks like Sergeant Rosetti. Yes, it is Sergeant Rosetti."

"Is he carrying an elephant?" Bubonovitch shouted.

The sentry laughed. "He is carrying something, but I do not think it is an elephant."

They all looked down the valley, and presently they could see a man

approaching. He was still a long way off. Only the sentry with binoculars could have recognized him. After a while Rosetti walked into camp. He was carrying a hare.

"Here's your supper," he said, tossing the hare to the ground. "I missed three deer, and then I gets this little squirt."

"Was he asleep at the time, or did somebody hold him for you?" asked Bubonovitch.

"He was runnin' like a bat outta hell," said Rosetti, grinning. "He runs into a tree an' knocks hisself cold."

"Nice work, Hiawatha," said Bubonovitch.

"Anyway, I tried," said Rosetti. "I didn't sit around on my big, fat fanny

waitin' for some udder guy to bring home de bacon."

"That is right, Sergeant Bum," said Sarina.

"Always the perfect little gentleman, I will not contradict a lady," said Bubonovitch. "Now the question is, who is going to prepare the feast? There are only fifty of us to eat it. What is left, we can send to the starving Armenians."

"De starvin' Armenians don't get none of dis rabbit. Neither do you. It's all for Sarina and Corrie."

"Two people coming up the valley!" called down the sentry. "Can't make them out yet. Something peculiar about them." Every eye was strained down the valley, every ear waiting to hear the next

report from the sentry. After a few moments it came: "Each of them is carrying some sort of load. One of them is naked."

"Must be Tarzan," said Jerry.

It was Tarzan. With him was Sing Tai. When they reached camp, each of them dropped the carcass of a deer to the ground. Corrie was delighted to see Sing Tai and to learn that he had completely recovered from his wound. And Jerry was relieved and delighted to see Tarzan.

"I'm sure glad you're back," he said. "We're all ready to shove off, and have only been waiting for you."

"I think we have another job to do before we can start," said Tarzan. "I

located Hooft's gang far down the valley, not far from the village where we got Corrie away from the Japs. The Japs are still there, and while I was scouting the place I saw two prisoners behind barbed wire. I couldn't make out what they were, but on the way back here from Tiang Umar's kampong Sing Tai told me that some Japs had passed through the kampong a few days ago with two American prisoners. The Japs told the natives that they were fliers whose plane had been shot down some time ago."

"Douglas and Davis!" exclaimed Bubonovitch.

"Must be," agreed Jerry. "They are the only two unaccounted for."

Bubonovitch buckled on his ammunition belt and picked up his rifle. "Let's go, Captain," he said.

Tarzan glanced at the sun. "If we travel fast," he said, "we can make it while it is still dark; but we should take only men who can travel fast."

"How many?" asked van Prins.

"Twenty should be enough. If everything goes all right, I can do it alone. If everything doesn't go all right, twenty men plus the element of surprise should make everything all right."

"I'll come along with enough of my men to make the twenty," said van Prins.

All the members of The Foreign Legion were preparing to go, but Tarzan said no to Corrie and Sarina. They

started to argue the matter, but Tarzan was adamant. "You'd be an added responsibility for us," he said. "We'd have to be thinking of your safety when our minds should be on nothing but our mission."

"The Colonel is right," said Jerry.

"I suppose he is," admitted Corrie.

"That's the good soldier," said Tak.

"There is another who should not go," said Doctor Reyd. Everybody looked at Jerry. "Captain Lucas has been a very ill man. If he goes on a long forced march now, he'll be in no condition to undertake the trying marches to the south which you are contemplating."

Jerry glanced questioningly at Tarzan. "I wish you wouldn't insist, Jerry," said

the Englishman.

Jerry unbuckled his ammunition belt and laid it at the foot of the tree. He grinned ruefully. "If Corrie and Sarina can be good soldiers, I guess I can, too; but I sure hate to miss out on this."

Ten minutes later twenty men started down the valley at a brisk pace that was almost a dogtrot. Tarzan, at the head of the column with van Prins, explained his plan to the Dutchman.

Captain Tokujo Matsuo and Lieutenant Hideo Sokabe had been drinking all night—drinking and quarreling. There had been much drinking among their men, too. The native men of the kampong had taken their women into the forest to escape the

brutal advances of the drunken soldiers. But now, shortly before dawn, the camp had quieted, except for the quarreling of the two officers; for the others lay for the most part in a drunken stupor.

The single guard before the prison pen had just come on duty. He had slept off some of the effects of the schnapps he had drunk, but he was still far from sober. He resented having been awakened; so he vented some of his anger on the two prisoners, awakening them to revile and threaten them. Having been born and educated in Honolulu, he spoke English. He was an adept in invective in two languages. He loosed a flow of profanity and obscenity upon the two men within the barbed wire

enclosure.

Staff Sergeant Carter Douglas of Van Nuys, California, stirred on his filthy sleeping mat, and raised himself on one elbow. "Aroha, sweetheart!" he called to the guard. This plunged the Jap into inarticulate rage.

"What's eatin' the guy?" demanded Staff Sergeant Bill Davis of Waco, Texas.

"I think he doesn't like us," said Douglas. "Before you woke up he said he would kill us right now except that his honorable captain wanted to lop our beans off himself in the morning."

"Maybe he's just handin' us a line to scare us," suggested Davis.

"Could be," said Douglas. "The guy's

spifflicated. That stuff they drink must be potent as hell. It sounded like everybody in camp was drunk."

"Remember that butterfly brandy they tried to sell us in Noumea at eighty-five smackers a bottle? Three drinks, and a private would spit in a captain's face. Maybe that's what they're drinking."

"If this guy had got a little drunker," said Douglas, "we could have made our get-away tonight."

"If we could get out of here, we could rush him."

"But we can't get out of here."

"Hell's bells! I don't want to have my head lopped off. What a hell of a birthday present."

"What do you mean, birthday present?"

"If I haven't lost track, tomorrow should be my birthday," said Davis. "I'll be twenty-five tomorrow."

"You didn't expect to live forever, did you? I don't know what you old guys expect."

"How old are you, Doug?"

"Twenty."

"Gawd! They dragged you right out of the cradle. Oh, hell!" he said after a moment's pause. "We're just tryin' to kid ourselves that we ain't scared. I'm good and goddam scared."

"I'm scairt as hell," admitted Davis.

"What you talk about in there?"

demanded the guard. "Shut up!"

"Shut up yourself, Tojo," said Douglas; "you're drunk."

"Now, for that, I kill you," yelled the Jap. "I tell the captain you try to escape." He raised his rifle and aimed into the darkness of the shelter that housed the two prisoners.

Silently, in the shadows of the native houses, a figure moved toward him. It approached from behind him.

Matsuo and Sokabe were screaming insults at one another in their quarters at the far end of the kampong. Suddenly, the former drew his pistol and fired at Sokabe. He missed, and the lieutenant returned the fire. They were too drunk to hit one another except by accident, but

they kept blazing away.

Almost simultaneously with Matsuo's first shot, the guard fired into the shelter that housed the two Americans. Before he could fire a second shot, an arm encircled his head and drew it back, and a knife almost severed it from his body.

"Were you hit, Bill?" ask Douglas.

"No. He missed us a mile. What's going on out there? Somebody jumped him."

Aroused by the firing in their officers' quarters, dopey, drunken soldiers were staggering toward the far end of the village, thinking the camp had been attacked. Some of them ran so close past Tarzan that he could almost have reached out and touched them. He

crouched beside the dead guard, waiting. He was as ignorant of the cause of the fusillade as the Japs. Van Prins and his party were at the opposite end of the kampong; so he knew that it could not be they firing.

When he thought the last Jap had passed him, he called to the prisoners in a low tone. "Are you Douglas and Davis?"

"We sure are."

"Where's the gate?"

"Right in front of you, but it's padlocked." Van Prins, hearing the firing, thought that it was directed at Tarzan; so he brought his men into the village at a run. They spread out, dodging from house to house.

Tarzan stepped to the gate. Its posts were the trunks of small saplings. Douglas and Davis had come from the shelter and were standing close inside the gate.

Tarzan took hold of the posts, one with each hand. "Each of you fellows push on a post," he said, "and I'll pull." As he spoke, he surged back with all his weight and strength; and the posts snapped off before the prisoners could lend a hand. The wire was pulled down to the ground with the posts, and Douglas and Davis walked out to freedom over it.

Tarzan had heard the men coming in from van Prins's position, and guessed it was they. He called to van Prins, and the

latter answered. "The prisoners are with me," said Tarzan. "You'd better assemble your men so that we can get out of here." Then he took the rifle and ammunition from the dead Jap and handed them to Davis.

As the party moved out of the village, they could hear the Japs jabbering and shouting at the far end. They did not know the cause of the diversion that had aided them so materially in the rescue of the two men without having suffered any casualties, and many of them regretted leaving without having fired a shot.

Bubonovitch and Rosetti fairly swarmed over their two buddies, asking and answering innumerable questions. One of Davis's first questions was about

Tarzan. "Who was that naked guy that got us out?" he asked.

"Don't you remember the English dook that come aboard just before we shoved off?" asked Rosetti. "Well, that's him; and he's one swell guy. An' who do you t'ink he is?"

"You just told us—the RAF colonel."

"He's Tarzan of the Apes."

"Who you think you're kiddin'?"

"On the level," said Bubonovitch. "He's Tarzan all right."

"The old man ain't here," said Douglas. "He wasn't—?"

"No. He's O.K. He got wounded, and they wouldn't let him come along; but he's all right."

The four talked almost constantly all the way back to the guerrilla camp. They had fought together on many missions. They were linked by ties more binding than blood. There existed between them something that cannot be expressed in words, nor would they have thought of trying to. Perhaps Rosetti came nearest it when he slapped Davis on the back and said, "You old sonofabitch!"

CHAPTER 27

Two days later, The Foreign Legion, now numbering ten, said goodbye to the guerrillas and started on their long march toward a hazy destination. Douglas and Davis took their places in the little company with the easy adaptability of the American soldier. Douglas called it the League of Nations.

At first the two newcomers had been skeptical of the ability of the two women to endure the hardships and the dangers of the almost trackless mountain wilderness that the necessity of avoiding contact with the enemy forced them to traverse. But they soon discovered that they were doing pretty well themselves if they kept up with Corrie and Sarina.

There were other surprises, too.

"What's happened to Shrimp?" Davis asked Bubonovitch. "I thought he didn't have time for any fem, but he's always hangin' around that brown gal. Not that I blame him any. She could park her shoes in my locker any time."

"I fear," said Bubonovitch, "that Staff Sergeant Rosetti has fallen with a dull and sickening thud. At first he was coy about it, but now he is absolutely without shame. He drools."

"And the old man," said Davis. "He used to be what you called a misnogomist."

"That isn't exactly what I called it," said Bubonovitch, "but you have the general idea. Maybe he used to be, but

he isn't any more."

"Sort of silly," remarked Carter Douglas. "What do old men know about love?"

"You'd be surprised, little one," said Bubonovitch.

The going was cruel. With parangs, they hacked their way through virgin jungle. Deep gorges and mountain torrents blocked their advance with discouraging frequency. Often, the walls of the former dropped sheer for hundreds of feet, offering no hand nor toe hold, necessitating long detours. Scarcely a day passed without rain, blinding, torrential downpours. They marched and slept in wet, soggy clothing. Their shoes and sandals rotted.

Tarzan hunted for them, and those who had not already done so learned to eat their meat raw. He scouted ahead, picking the best routes, alert for enemy outposts or patrols. By night, they slept very close together, a guard constantly posted against the sudden, stealthy attack of tigers. Sometimes muscles sagged, but morale never.

Little Keta did all the scolding and complaining. When Tarzan had gone to the rescue of Davis and Douglas, Keta had been left behind tied to a tree. He had been very indignant about this and had bitten three Dutchmen who had tried to make friends with him. Since then he had usually been left severely alone, consorting only with Tarzan. The only

exception was Rosetti. He voluntarily made friends with the little sergeant, often curling up in his arms when the company was not on the march.

"He probably recognizes Shrimp as a kindred spirit," said Bubonovitch, "if not a near relative."

"He t'inks you're one of dem big apes we seen dat he's a-scairt of."

"You refer, I presume, to Pongo pygmaeus," said Bubonovitch.

Shrimp registered disgust. "I wisht I was a poet. I'd write a pome."

"About me, darling?"

"You said a mouthful. I got a word wot you rhyme with."

They had stopped for the night earlier

than usual because Tarzan had found a large dry cave that would accommodate them all. It had probably been occupied many times before, as there were charred pieces of wood near the entrance and a supply of dry wood stored within it. They had a fire, and they were sitting close to it, absorbing its welcome warmth and drying as much of their clothing as the presence of mixed company permitted them to remove. Which was considerable, as the silly interdictions of false modesty had largely been scrapped long since. They were a company of "fighting men."

Jerry, Bubonovitch, and Rosetti were looking at the rough map that van Prins had drawn for them. "Here's where we

crossed over to the east side of the range," said Jerry, pointing, "—just below Alahanpandjang."

"Geeze, wot a moniker fer a burg! Or is it a burg?"

"It's just a dot on a map to me," admitted Jerry.

"Lookit," continued Rosetti. "Here it says dat to where we cross back again to de udder side it is 170 kilometers. Wot's dat in United States?"

"Oh-h, about one hundred and five or six miles. That's in an air line."

"What do you think we're averaging, Jerry?" asked Bubonovitch.

"I doubt if we're making five miles a day in an air line."

"Today," said Bubonovitch, "I doubt that we made five miles on any kind of a line—unless it was up and down."

"Geeze!" said Rosetti. "De Lovely Lady would have got us dere in maybe twenty-twenty-five minutes. Sloggin' along like dog-faces it probably take us a mont'."

"Maybe more," said Jerry.

"Wotin'ell!" said Rosetti. "We're lucky to be alive."

"And the scenery is magnificent," said Bubonovitch. "When we can see it through this soup, it looks mighty nice and peaceful down there."

"It sure does," agreed Rosetti. "It doesn't seem like dere could be a war in pretty country like dat. I don't suppose

dey ever had no wars here before."

"That's about all they ever did have until within the last hundred years," said Tak van der Bos. "During all historic times, and probably during all pre-historic times back to the days of Pithecanthropus erectus and Homo modjokertensis, all the islands of the East Indies have been almost constantly overrun by warring men—the tribal chiefs, the petty princes, the little kings, the sultans. The Hindus came from India, the Chinese came, the Portuguese, the Spaniards from the Philippines, the English, the Dutch, and now the Japs. They all brought fleets and soldiers and war. In the thirteenth century, Kubla Khan sent a fleet of a thousand ships

bearing 200,000 soldiers to punish a king of Java who had arrested the ambassadors of the Great Khan and sent them back to China with mutilated faces.

"We Dutch were often guilty of perpetrating cruelties and atrocities upon the Indonesians; but neither we, nor all the others who came before us, devastated the land and enslaved and massacred its people with the cruel ruthlessness of their own sultans. These drunken, rapacious, licentious creatures massacred their own subjects if it satisfied some capricious whim. They took to themselves the loveliest women, the fairest virgins. One of them had fourteen thousand women in his harem."

"Geeze!" exclaimed Rosetti.

Tak grinned and continued. "And if they were still in power, they would still be doing the same things. Under us Dutch, the Indonesians have known the first freedom from slavery, the first peace, the first prosperity that they have ever known. Give them independence after the Japs are thrown out and in another generation they'll be back where we found them."

"Haven't all peoples a right to independence?" asked Bubonovitch.

"Get a soap box, communist," jeered Rosetti.

"Only those people who have won the right to independence deserve it," said van der Bos. "The first recorded contact with Sumatra was during the reign of

Wang Mang, a Chinese emperor of the Han dynasty, just prior to A.D. 23. Indonesian civilization was ancient then. If, with all that background of ancient culture plus the nearly two thousand years before the Dutch completed the conquest of the islands, the people were still held in slavery by tyrant rulers; then they do not deserve what you call independence. Under the Dutch they have every liberty. What more can they ask?"

"Just to keep the record straight," said Bubonovitch, with a grin, "I'd like to state that I am not a Communist. I am a good anti- New Deal Republican. But here is my point: I thought that freedom was one of the things we were fighting

for."

"Hell," said Jerry. "I don't think any of us know what we are fighting for except to kill Japs, get the war over, and get home. After we have done that, the goddam politicians will mess things all up again."

"And the saber rattlers will start preparing for World War III," said van der Bos.

"I don't think they will rattle their sabers very loudly for a while," said Corrie.

"Just about in time to catch our children in the next war," said Jerry.

There was an embarrassed silence. Jerry suddenly realized the interpretation that might be placed on his innocent

remark, and flushed. So did Corrie. Everybody was looking at them, which made it worse.

Finally, van der Bos could no longer restrain his laughter; and they all joined him—even Corrie and Jerry. Sing Tai, who had been busy over a cooking fire, further relieved the tension by repeating a time honored phrase that he had been taught by Rosetti: "Come and get it!"

Wild pig, grouse, fruits, and nuts formed the menu for the meal.

"We sure live high," said Davis.

"De Drake Hotel ain't got nuttin' on us," agreed Rosetti.

"We have the choice of an enormous market, and without ration coupons," said Tarzan.

"And no coin on de line," said Rosetti. "Geeze! dis is de life."

"You gone batty?" inquired Bubonovitch.

"Come back here after the war, sergeant," said van der Bos, "and I'll show you a very different Sumatra."

Bubonovitch shook his head. "If I ever get back to Brooklyn," he said, "I'm going to stay there."

"And me for Texas," said Davis.

"Is Texas a nice state?" asked Corrie.

"Finest state in the Union," Davis assured her.

"But Jerry told me that Oklahoma was the finest state."

"That little Indian reservation?"

demanded Davis. "Say! Texas is almost four times as big. She grows more cotton then any other state in the Union. She's first in cattle, sheep, mules. She's got the biggest ranch in the world."

"And the biggest liars," said Douglas. "Now if you really want to know which is the finest state in the Union, I'll tell you. It's California. You just come to the good old San Fernando Valley after the war and you'll never want to live anywhere else."

"We haven't heard from New York State," said Jerry, grinning.

"New Yorkers don't have to boast," said Bubonovitch. "They are not plagued by any inferiority feeling."

"That's going to be a hard one to top,"

said van der Bos.

"How about your state, Tony?" asked Sarina.

Rosetti thought for a moment. "Well," he said, "Illinois had Public Enemy Number One."

"Every American," said Tarzan, "lives in the finest town in the finest county in the finest state in the finest country in the world—and each one of them believes it. And that is what makes America a great country and is going to keep her so."

"You can say that again," said Davis.

"I have noticed the same thing in your Army," continued the Englishman. "Every soldier is serving in 'the best damned outfit in this man's Army,' and

he's willing to fight you about it. That feeling makes for a great Army."

"Well," said Jerry, "we haven't done so bad for a nation of jitterbugging playboys. I guess we surprised the world."

"You certainly have surprised Hitler and Tojo. If you hadn't come in, first with materiel and then with men, the war would be over by now, and Hitler and Tojo would have won it. The World owes you an enormous debt."

"I wonder if it will pay it," said Jerry.

"Probably not," said Tarzan.

CHAPTER 28

Corrie was sitting with her back against the wall of the cave. Jerry came and sat down beside her. Sarina and Rosetti had wandered out of the cave together, arm in arm.

"Shrimp has become absolutely shameless," said Jerry. "Do you know, he really hated women. I think you are the first one he ever tolerated. He is very fond of you now."

"You weren't particularly keen about us yourself," Corrie reminded him.

"Well, you see, I'd never known a Dutch girl."

"That was nice. You're improving. But don't tell me that the finest State in

the Union hasn't the finest girls in the world."

"There is only one 'finest girl in the world,' and she is not from Oklahoma."

Corrie laughed. "I know what you're doing?"

"What?"

"You're handing me a line. Isn't that what you Americans call it?"

"I'm not handing you a line, Corrie. You know how I feel about you."

"I'm not a mind reader."

"You're the most wonderful thing that has ever come into my life."

"Now don't tell me that you're making love to me!"

"That is the general idea that I have in

mind," said Jerry, "but I guess I'm not so hot at it." He was looking into her eyes. Their misty depths reflected the firelight, but deep below the surface there burned another light, such a light as he had never seen in a woman's eyes before. "God! but you're wonderful," he said.

Corrie smiled. "That's what you said before, but that time you called me a thing. They tell me you're a great pilot, Captain."

He knew she was making fun of him; but he didn't care—he could still see that light in her eyes. "I'm not a great pilot. I'm a great coward. I'm so scared of you that I can't say three little words." Corrie laughed, and she didn't try to help him. "Listen!" he blurted. "How do you think

you'll like living in Oklahoma?"

"I shall like it very much," she said.

"Darling!" said Jerry. "I've got to kiss you. I've got to kiss you right now—if it weren't for all these people in here."

"We could go outside," said Corrie.

Sergeant Rosetti held Sarina in his arms. His mouth covered hers. Her arms about his neck pressed him to her fiercely. Corrie and Jerry, coming from the firelight into the night, nearly bumped into them. Then they walked on to a distance.

"I suppose sergeants aren't supposed to be able to teach their captains anything," said Corrie; "but then Sergeant Rosetti is a most unusual sergeant." She was panting a little a

moment later when she gently pushed him away. "You misogynists!" she gasped.

Sergeant Bubonovitch was sitting by the fire just inside the mouth of the cave. He had seen Shrimp and Sarina go out arm in arm; then Corrie and Jerry had gone out into the darkness. "I gotta have love," said Bubonovitch, trying to make friends with little Keta. Little Keta bit him. "Nobody loves me," said the sergeant, sorrowfully.

Day after day The Foreign Legion fought with nature for every hard won mile. Often some of them were so exhausted by the time they made camp at the end of a day that they fell asleep without eating. They were too tired even

to talk much. But there was no complaining. Corrie and Sarina held their own with the men, who were very proud of them.

"They're lucky they haven't much to carry," remarked Bubonovitch. "Add them together and they wouldn't weigh any more than I do. Maybe they could throw in Shrimp, too. After the war I think I'll hire the three of them and start a flea circus."

"Yeah? Wot you ought to have did," said Shrimp, "is went in de Navy. Den you'd a had a battlewagon to haul you around, you big cow."

"What you should have done; not 'Wot you ought to have did,'" corrected Sarina, who had been laboring to bring

Shrimp's English more into line with that which the Catholic sisters had taught her, to the secret amusement of the rest of the company.

Bubonovitch had once said to Jerry: "The granddaughter of a Borneo head hunter teaching an American English! I have seen everything now."

Sarina made no effort to spare Shrimp's feelings. She corrected him in front of everybody, and often in the middle of a sentence. And Shrimp never objected. He just grinned and started over. And he was improving. He had almost stopped saying dis and dat, but did and done still troubled him. Douglas said: "Ain't love wonderful!"

They were nearing Mt. Masoerai,

slightly short of which they were to recross the range and start down toward the sea. It had already been a month since they had left the camp of the guerrillas, and they had had only hardships with which to contend. Never had any of them been in great danger, nor had they seen a human being other than themselves. And then, out of a clear sky, disaster struck. Tarzan was captured by the Japs.

They were following a well marked game trail, Tarzan moving through the trees a short distance ahead of them, as usual. Suddenly he came upon a patrol of Japs. They had stopped in the trail to rest. Tarzan moved closer to determine the strength of the detachment. He still

had ample time to return and warn his companions and dispose them for whatever might eventuate. Little Keta rode upon his shoulder. Tarzan cautioned him to silence.

The man's attention was riveted upon the Japs. He was unaware of the menace hanging just above him. But Keta saw it and commenced to scream. The Japs looked up. The coils of a huge python encircled the body of the man, galvanizing him to action. His knife flashed. The wounded snake writhed frantically in pain and rage, loosing its hold upon the branch that had supported it, and the two fell into the trail at the feet of the Japs. Keta fled.

The Japs fell upon the snake with

bayonets and swords, killing it quickly. And Tarzan was at their mercy. There were too many of them. A dozen bayonets were hovering but inches above his body as he lay in the trail upon his back, helpless.

They took his bow and arrows and knife from him. An officer stepped close and kicked him in the side. "Get up!" he said, in English. He had been a truck gardener in Culver City. He was short and bandy legged. He had buck teeth, and he wore horn rimmed glasses. He might have stepped out of a Lichty cartoon. His men had nicknamed him "Whale" on account of his size. He stood a full five feet six in his sandals.

"Who are you?" demanded the officer.

"Col. John Clayton, Royal Air Force."

"You're an American," said the Jap. Tarzan did not reply. "What are you doing here?" was the next question.

"I have told you all that I am required to tell you, and all that I intend telling you."

"We'll see about that." He turned to a sergeant and gave instructions in Japanese. The sergeant formed the detachment, half in front of and half behind the prisoner, then they started along the trail in the same direction that the Foreign Legion was traveling. Tarzan saw from indications along the trail that they were retracing their steps from the point at which they had halted.

He assumed that whatever their mission had been, they had completed it and were returning to camp.

Little Keta fled through the trees until he sighted the Foreign Legion; then he dropped down and leaped to Shrimp's shoulder. He threw both arms about the man's neck and screamed and jabbered in his ear.

"Something must have happened to Tarzan," said Jerry. "Keta is trying to tell us. He wouldn't leave Tarzan if things were all right with him."

"May I go along the trail and take a look, Cap?" asked Rosetti. "I can travel faster'n the rest of you."

"Yes. Get going. We'll follow."

Shrimp moved at an easy trot. Keta

seemed satisfied now; so the man was sure that Jerry had been right. Tarzan was in trouble. Soon Shrimp heard voices ahead and the clank of accouterments. The Japs, apprehending no danger, marched carelessly. Shrimp came closer; and presently, towering above the little pseudo men, he saw the head and shoulders of Tarzan. Tarzan a prisoner of the Japs! It was incredible. Shrimp's heart sank—the heart which, not so long ago, had been filled with hatred of Englishmen.

The news that Rosetti brought back to the others appalled them all. The loss of the Lord of the Jungle would be a sore blow to the little company, but they thought first of Tarzan's safety rather

than then: own. He had inspired within the breasts of all not only respect and admiration, but real affection as well. That was because, as Shrimp had once confided to Bubonovitch, "De guy's regular."

"How many Japs were there, Rosetti?" asked Jerry.

"About twenty. They's nine of us, Cap'n, which is more than enough."

"You can say that again," said Bubonovitch. "Let's go get him."

"We can't attack them from the rear on this narrow trail without endangering Tarzan. We'll have to trail them until we find a better place to attack," said Jerry.

The trail broke from the forest at the rim of a narrow canyon. Below him,

Tarzan saw what was evidently a temporary camp. Half a dozen Jap soldiers guarded some equipment and a few pack animals. The equipment was scattered about in a disorderly manner. Some of it, probably perishable provisions, was covered with tarpaulin. There were no shelters. From the appearance of the camp, Tarzan concluded that the officer was inefficient. The less efficient, the easier he would be to escape from.

2nd Lieut. Kenzo Kaneko snapped instructions at a sergeant, and the sergeant bound the prisoner's wrists behind his back. Though the lieutenant may have been inefficient, the sergeant was not. He bound Tarzan's wrists so

securely and with so many strands that not even the muscles of the Lord of the Jungle could have freed him.

The sergeant similarly bound the captive's ankles. This done, he pushed and tripped him; so that Tarzan fell to the ground heavily. A horse was brought and the packsaddle adjusted. A line was made fast to the saddle, the other end was then attached to Tarzan's feet. Lieut. Kaneko came and stood over him. He smiled benignly.

"I should hate to have the horse whipped into a run," he said. "It would hurt me, but it would hurt you more."

The horse had been bridled, and a soldier carrying a whip had mounted it. The other soldiers stood about, grinning.

They were about to witness an exhibition that would appeal to their sadistic natures.

"If you will answer my questions," continued Kaneko, "the horse will not be whipped, the line will be detached. How many are in your party and where are they?"

Tarzan remained silent. Kaneko no longer smiled. His features became convulsed with rage, or maybe he was only simulating rage in order to frighten his victim. He stepped closer and kicked Tarzan in the side.

"You refuse to answer?" he demanded.

Tarzan returned the Jap's stare. His face registered no emotion, not even the

contempt he felt for this grotesque caricature of man. Kaneko's eyes fell beneath those of his prisoner. Something in those eyes frightened him, and that really filled him with genuine rage.

He snapped a command at the man on the horse. The fellow leaned forward and raised his whip. A rifle cracked. The horse reared and toppled backward. Another shot. 2nd Lieut. Kenzo Kaneko screamed and sprawled upon his face. Then came a fusillade of shots. Soldiers fell in rapid succession. Those who could, fled down the valley in utter demoralization as nine riflemen leaped down the steep trail into the camp.

A wounded Jap rose on an elbow and fired at them. Corrie shot him. Then

Rosetti and Sarina were among them with bayonet and parang, and there were no more wounded Japs.

Jerry cut Tarzan's bonds. "You arrived just about on time," said Tarzan.

"Just like the cavalry in a horse opera," said Bubonovitch.

"What do you think we'd better do now?" Jerry asked Tarzan.

"We must try to finish off the rest of them. This is evidently just a detachment from a larger force. If any of these fellows get back to that force, we'll be hunted down."

"Have you any idea how many there were?"

"About twenty-five or twenty-six.

How many have we killed?"

"Sixteen," said Rosetti. "I just counted 'em."

Tarzan picked up a rifle and took a belt of ammunition from one of the dead Japs. "We'll go back up to the rim of the valley. I'll go ahead through the trees and try to head them off. The rest of you work down along the rim until you can fire down on them."

A half mile below the camp Tarzan overhauled the survivors. There were ten of them. A sergeant had gathered them together, and was evidently exhorting them to return to the fight. As they turned back, none too enthusiastically, Tarzan fired and brought down the sergeant. A private

started to run down the valley. Tarzan fired again, and the man dropped. Now, the others realized that the shots had come from farther down the valley. They sought cover from that direction. Tarzan held his fire so as not to reveal his position.

The Foreign Legion, hearing the two shots, knew that Tarzan had contacted the enemy. They pushed forward through the trees at the rim of the valley. Jerry was in the lead. Presently he saw a Jap who had taken cover behind a fallen tree. Then he saw another and another. He pointed them out, and the firing commenced. Tarzan also started firing again.

The Japs, cut off in both directions in

the narrow valley, without a leader, lacking sufficient intelligence or initiative to act otherwise, blew themselves up with their own grenades.

"They're damned accommodating," said Douglas.

"Nice little guys," said Davis; "trying to save us ammunition."

"I'm goin' down to help 'em out," said Rosetti, "if any of 'em are left alive." He slid and rolled down the steep cliff-side, and Sarina was right behind him.

"There," said Bubonovitch, "is the ideal helpmeet."

CHAPTER 29

Six weeks later the Foreign Legion came down to the coast below Moekemoeko. It had been a strenuous six weeks beset by many hazards. Jap positions in increasing numbers had necessitated many long detours. Only the keen sensibility of the Lord of the Jungle, ranging well ahead of the little company, had saved them from disaster on numerous occasions.

There was a Jap anti-aircraft battery about a kilometer up the coast from where they lay concealed. Between them and the battery was a native village. It was in this village that Sarina expected to find friends who could furnish them a boat and provisions.

"If I had a sarong," she said, "I could walk right into the village in daytime, even if Japs were there; but this outfit might arouse suspicion. I'll have to take a chance, and sneak in after dark."

"Perhaps I can get you a sarong," said Tarzan.

"You will go into the village?" asked Sarina.

"Tonight," replied Tarzan.

"You will probably find sarongs that were washed today and hung out to dry."

After dark Tarzan left them. He moved silently through the stagnant air of the humid, equatorial night. In the camp that he had left that was not a camp but a hiding place, the others spoke in whispers. They were oppressed by the

heat and the humidity and the constant sense of lurking danger. When they had been in the mountains they had thought their lot rather miserable. Now they recalled with regret the relative coolness of the higher altitudes.

"I have been in the hills for so long," said Corrie, "that I had almost forgotten how frightful the coast climate can be."

"It is rather rotten," agreed van der Bos.

"Dutchmen must be gluttons for punishment," said Bubonovitch, "to colonize a Turkish bath."

"No," said van der Bos; "we are gluttons for profit. This is a very rich part of the world."

"You can have it," said Rosetti. "I

don't want no part of it."

"We wish that the rest of the world felt the same way," said van der Bos.

Tarzan swung into a tree that overlooked the village. A full moon lighted the open spaces. The ornate, native houses cast dense shadows. Natives squatted in the moonlight, smoking and gossiping. Three sarongs hung limp in the dead air from a pole across which they had been thrown to dry. Tarzan settled himself to wait until the people had gone into their houses for the night.

After a while a man entered the kampong from the west. In the bright moonlight, Tarzan could see him plainly. He was a Jap officer, the commanding

officer of the anti-aircraft battery a short distance away. When the natives saw him they arose and bowed. He approached them with an arrogant swagger, speaking a few words to a young woman. She arose meekly and followed him into the house that he had commandeered for his own use.

When his back was turned the natives made faces at him, and obscene gestures. Tarzan was content. What he had seen assured him that the natives would be friendly to any enemy of the Japs. After a while the natives went into their houses and silence descended upon the kampong.

Tarzan dropped to the ground and moved into the shadow of a building. He

stole silently to a point as near to the sarongs as he could get without coming out into the moonlight. He stood there for a moment listening; then he stepped quickly across the moon drenched space and seized a sarong.

Returning, he had almost reached the shadow when a woman stepped from behind the corner of a building. They met face to face in the moonlight. The woman, startled, opened her mouth to scream. Tarzan seized her and clapped a hand over her parted lips. Then he dragged her into the shadow.

"Quiet!" he commanded in Dutch, "and I will not harm you." He hoped that she understood Dutch. She did.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"A friend," he replied.

"Friends do not steal from us," she said.

"I am only borrowing this sarong. It will be returned. You will not tell the Jap about this? He is my enemy, too."

"I will not tell him. We tell them nothing."

"Good," said Tarzan. "The sarong will be returned tomorrow."

He wheeled and was lost in the shadows. The woman shook her head, and climbed the ladder that gave entrance to her house. She told her family of the adventure that had befallen her.

"You will never see the sarong

again," said one.

"For the sarong, I do not care," she replied. "It did not belong to me. But I should like to see the wild man again. He was very beautiful."

The following morning, Sarina entered the village. The first woman she met recognized her, and soon she was surrounded by old friends. She warned them away for fear that there might be Japs in the village who would recognize from their greetings that she must be a newcomer and therefore some one to be investigated. Sarina did not wish to be investigated by any Japs. The villagers understood, and returned to their normal activities. Then Sarina sought out Alauddin Shah, the village chief. He

seemed glad to see her, and asked her many questions, most of which she avoided answering until she could determine what his relations were with the Japs.

She soon learned that he hated them. Alauddin Shah was a proud old man, a hereditary chief. The Japs had slapped and kicked him and forced him to bow low even to their enlisted men. Satisfied, Sarina told her story, explained what she and her companions needed, and solicited his aid.

"It will be a hazardous journey," he said. "There are many enemy ships in these waters, and it is a long way to Australia. But if you and your friends wish to risk it, I will help you. There is

a large proa hidden in the river a few kilometers down the coast from the village. We will provision it for you, but it will take time. We are not regularly watched; because we have given the Japs no trouble, but they are in and out of the kampong almost every day. One officer sleeps here every night. Everything that we do must be done with the utmost caution."

"If you will leave provisions every day in a house near the edge of the kampong, we will come at night and take them to the proa," Sarina told him. "Thus you can escape blame if we are discovered. You can be very much surprised when you discover that some one has come into the village at night

and stolen food."

Alauddin Shah smiled. "You are a true daughter of Big Jon," he said.

A month passed, a month of narrow escapes from detection, a month of harrowed nerves; but at last the proa was provisioned. And now they waited for a moonless night and a favorable wind. Barbed wire and obstructions at the mouth of the stream had been left in place until the proa was ready. Now they had to be removed—a dangerous job in waters infested with crocodiles. But at last even that was accomplished.

At last it came—N-Night they called it. The tide was right. There was no moon. There was a brisk off-shore wind. Slowly they poled the proa down to the

sea. The great lateen sail was hoisted. Close in the lee of the shore it caught little wind, but farther out it bellied to a strong breeze, and the proa gained speed.

While moonless, the night was clear. They set a course due south, the Southern Cross their lodestar. They had fashioned a crude log and log line, and while the knots were running they tried to estimate their speed. Sarina guessed twelve knots. She was not far off.

"If this wind holds," she said, "we'll be well off the southern tip of Nassau Island before 2:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. Then we'll take a southwesterly course. I want to get out of the coastal waters of Sumatra and Java before we

swing to the southeast toward Australia. This way we'll give Engano a wide berth. Then there'll be only the Cocos Islands to worry about, as far as land is concerned. I don't know if the Japs have anything on Cocos."

"Are they the same as the Keeling Islands?" asked Jerry.

"Yes, but my father always called them the Cocos Islands because he said Keeling was 'a damned Englishman.'" She laughed, and so did Tarzan.

"Nobody loves an Englishman," he said. "But I'm not so sure that Keeling was an Englishman."

"There's a light at 2:00 o'clock," said Davis.

"Probably on Nassau," said Sarina.

"Let's hope so, for if it isn't, it's a ship's light; and we don't want any business with ships."

"I don't think their ships would be showing any lights," said Jerry. "There are too many Allied subs in these waters."

Morning found them in an empty ocean—just a vast, round cauldron of tumbling gray water. The wind had freshened, and great seas were running. S/Sgt. Rosetti was sick. Between spasms he remarked, "I got a half-wit cousin. He joined the Navy." After a while he said, "It won't be long now. This crate won't stand much more, and it can't come too soon to suit me. This is the first time in my life I ever wanted to die." Then he

leaned over the rail and heaved again.

"Cheer up, Shrimp," said Bubonovitch. "It won't be long now before we go ashore on Australia—maybe only a month or so."

"Geeze!" groaned Rosetti.

"You will get over being sick pretty soon, Tony," said Sarina.

"Some admirals always get sick when they first go to sea after shore duty," said Tarzan.

"I don't want to be an admiral. I joins up for air, 'and what do I get? For couple or three months I been a doughboy; now I'm a gob. Geeze!" He leaned over the rail again.

"Poor Tony," said Sarina.

The long days passed. The wind veered into the southeast. The southeast trade wind that would blow for ten months had started. Sarina took long tacks, first to starboard and then to port. It was slow going, but their luck had held. They were well past the Keeling Islands now, and no sign of enemy shipping.

Douglas, who had been standing his trick as lookout, had come aft. "It's an awful lot of water," he said. "Flying it, it seems terrible big— the Pacific, I mean; but down here on the surface it seems like there isn't anything in the world but water; and this is only the Indian Ocean, which ain't a drop in the bucket alongside the Pacific. It makes you feel

pretty small and insignificant."

"There's sure a lot of water in the world," agreed van der Bos.

"Three quarters of the whole surface of the Earth is water," said Corrie.

"And the Pacific has a greater area than all the land surfaces of the Earth combined," said Jerry.

"If I owned it," said Rosetti, "I'd trade the whole damn works for any old street corner in Chi."

"What I don't like about it," said Douglas, "is the total absence of scenery. Now, in California—"

"He's off again," said Bubonovitch.

"But he's got something just the same," said Davis. "Gawd! how I'd like

to see a cow—just one measly little cow deep in the heart of Texas."

"I'll settle for land, any old land, right now," said Rosetti. "Even Brooklyn would look good. I might even settle down there. I'm fed up on travelin'."

"Travel is broadening, Shrimp," said Bubonovitch. "Just look what it's done for you. You like a Britisher, you love a dame, and you have learned to speak fairly intelligible English, thanks to Sarina."

"I ain't getting broadened much lately," objected Rosetti. "We ain't seen nothing but water for weeks. I'd like to see something else."

"Smoke at eleven o'clock!" called Jerry, who had gone forward as lookout.

Sarina smiled. The airmen's method of indicating direction always amused her, but she had to admit that it was practical.

Everybody looked in the direction indicated where a black smudge was showing just above the horizon.

"Maybe you're going to see something beside water now, Shrimp," said Davis. "Your wish was granted in a hurry."

"That must be a ship," called Jerry, "and I think we'd better hightail it out of here."

"Toward five o'clock?" asked Sarina.

"Keerect," said Jerry, "and pronto."

They came about and sailed before the wind in a northwesterly direction, every eye on that ominous black smudge.

"It might be British," said Corrie, hopefully.

"It might be," agreed Tak, "but we can't take any chances. It might just as well be Jap."

For what seemed a long time there was no noticeable change in the appearance of the thing they watched so fearfully; then Tarzan's keen eyes discerned the superstructure of a ship rising above the horizon. He watched closely for a few minutes. "It is going to cut right across our course," he said. "It will pass astern, but they're bound to sight us."

"If it's Jap," said Sarina, "it's bound for Sumatra or Java. Our only chance is to hold this course and pray—pray for

wind and more wind. If it's one of those little Jap merchant ships, we can outrun it if the wind picks up. Or if we can just hold our lead until after dark, we can get away."

The proa seemed never to have moved more slowly. Straining eyes watched the menace grow larger, as the hull of a ship climbed over the rim of the world. "It's like a bad dream," said Corrie, "where something horrible is chasing you, and you can't move. And the wind is dying."

"You guys ain't prayin' hard enough," said Rosetti.

"All I can remember," said Davis, "is 'now I lay me down to sleep,' and I can't remember all of that."

A sudden gust of wind bellied the great sail, and the speed of the proa increased noticeably. "Somebody hit the jack pot," said Douglas.

But the strange ship continued to gain on them. "She's changed course," said Tarzan. "She's heading for us." A moment later he said, "I can see her colors now. She's a Jap all right."

"I should have gone to church like Mom always wanted me to," said Davis. "I might have learned some good prayers. But if I can't pray so good," he said a moment later, "I sure can shoot good." He picked up his rifle and slipped a clip into the magazine.

"We can all shoot good," said Jerry, "but we can't sink a ship with what we

got to shoot with."

"That's a small, armed merchantman," said Tarzan. "She probably carries 20-mm anti-aircraft guns and .30 caliber machine guns."

"I guess we're out gunned," said Bubonovitch, with a wry grin.

"The effective range of the 20s is only about 1200 yards," said Jerry. "These pop guns will do better than that. We ought to be able to get a few Nips before they finish us off—that is if you folks want to fight." He looked around at them. "We can surrender, or we can fight. What do you say?"

"I say fight," said Rosetti.

"Think it over carefully," admonished Jerry. "If we put up a fight, we shall all

be killed."

"I don't intend to let those yellow sonsabitches knock me around again," said Bubonovitch. "If the rest of you don't want to fight, I won't either; but I won't be taken alive."

"Neither shall I," said Corrie. "How do you feel about it, Jerry?"

"Fight, of course." He looked at Tarzan. "And you, Colonel?" Tarzan smiled at him. "What do you think, Captain?"

"Does anyone object to fighting rather than surrendering?" No one did. "Then we'd better check our rifles and load 'em. And may I say in conclusion, it's been nice knowing you."

"That sounds terribly final," said

Corrie, "even if you did mean it for a joke."

"I'm afraid it is—final and no joke."

The merchantman was closing up on them rapidly now, for after that one fitful gust the wind had slackened to a breeze that didn't even fill the great triangular sail of the proa.

"We've been mighty lucky for a long time," said Tak. "According to the law of chance, it should be about time for our luck to run out."

There was a red flash aboard the Jap, followed by a puff of smoke. A moment later a shell burst far short of them.

"Lady Luck is getting ready to hit the breeze," said Rosetti.

CHAPTER 30

"Beautiful gunnery!" said Bubonovitch. "The poor sap doesn't even know the range of his gun."

"Itchy fingers probably," said Douglas.

"I doubt that the little admirals put their top gunnery officers aboard little merchantmen," said Jerry; "so maybe our luck is holding."

The proa was barely making headway now, as it rose and fell on long swells. The forefoot of the oncoming ship plowed through the deep blue of the ocean, turning up white water, as the mold board of a plow turns up the rich loam of a field.

Again the Jap fired. This shell fell wide, but not so short. Jerry and Corrie were sitting close together, one of his hands covering one of hers. "I guess van Prins was right," said Jerry. "He said we were crazy. I shouldn't have brought you along, darling."

"I wouldn't have it otherwise," said Corrie. "We've had this much time together, that we wouldn't have had if I hadn't come with you. I've never had a chance to say 'for better or for worse,' but it has been in my heart always."

He leaned closer to her. "Do you, Corrie, take this man to be your wedded husband?"

"I do," said Corrie, very softly. "Do you, Jerry, take this woman to be your

wedded wife, to cherish and protect until death do you part?"

"I do," said Jerry, a little huskily. He slipped the class ring from his finger and on to Corrie's ring finger. "With this ring I do thee wed, and with all my worldly goods endow." Then he kissed her.

"I think," said Corrie, "that as far as the service is concerned our memories were a little lame; but we had the general idea at least. And I feel very much married, sweetheart."

A near miss deluged them with water. They did not seem to notice it.

"My wife," said Jerry. "So young, so beautiful."

"'Wife!'," repeated Corrie.

"The guy's gettin' closer," said Rosetti.

The fin of a shark cut the water between the proa and the Jap. Little Keta watched it, fortunately unaware of what it might portend. Tarzan raised the sights on his rifle and fired at the figures lining the rail of the Jap. The others followed his example, and presently ten rifles were blazing away. If they accomplished nothing else, they emptied the rail of sightseers and caused much confusion aboard the merchantman. Yes, they accomplished one more thing: They spurred the anti-aircraft gunners into frenzied activity. Shell bursts dotted the ocean.

"If their ammo holds out," said

Rosetti, "they got to hit us just accidentally. Geeze! what lousy shootin'!"

At last it came, as they knew it must—a direct hit. Jerry saw half of Sing Tai's body hurled fifty feet into the air. Tak van der Bos's right leg was torn off. The entire company was thrown into the ocean; then the Jap moved in and commenced to machine gun them as they swam about or clung to pieces of the wreckage. The aim of the gunners was execrable, but again they knew that this was the end of the Foreign Legion—that eventually some of those hundreds of whining bullets would find them all.

Bubonovitch and Douglas were holding up van der Bos, who had

fainted. Jerry was trying to keep between Corrie and the machine guns. Suddenly something commenced to drag van der Bos down. One of Bubonovitch's feet struck a solid body moving beneath. "Migawd!" he yelled. "A shark's got Tak." Bullets were ricocheting off the water all around them.

Tarzan, who had been thrown some distance by the shell burst, was swimming toward Bubonovitch and Douglas when he heard the former's warning. Diving quickly beneath the surface, he drew his knife. A few swift, strong strokes brought him close to the shark. A mighty surge of his knife arm ripped open the belly of the huge fish,

disembowling it. It released its hold on van der Bos and turned on Tarzan, but the man eluded its jaws and struck again and again with his knife.

The water was red with blood as another shark darted in and attacked its fellow. The first shark swam sluggishly away while the other bit and tore at it. For the moment the survivors were freed from one menace, but the bullets still pinged close.

With Tarzan's help, Bubonovitch and Douglas got van der Bos to a large piece of wreckage—one of the outrigger floats. Tarzan tore a strip from what remained of van der Bos's trousers, and while he and Douglas held the man on the float, Bubonovitch applied a

tourniquet. Tak still breathed, but fortunately he was unconscious.

Bubonovitch shook his head. "He ain't got a chance," he said. "But then, neither have we."

"The sharks are going to have plenty good feeding today," said Douglas. They were all looking at the Jap ship. Again the rail was lined with bandy legged little men. Some of them were firing pistols at the people in the water. Keta, perched on a piece of wreckage, scolded and threatened.

There was a terrific detonation. A great fan shaped burst of flame shot hundreds of feet into the air from amidships of the merchantman, and a pillar of smoke rose hundreds of feet

higher. A second explosion followed and the ship broke in two, the bow hurled almost clear of the water. The two halves sunk almost immediately, leaving a few scorched and screaming creatures struggling in burning oil.

For a few moments the survivors of the proa looked on in stunned silence, which was broken by Rosetti. "I knew She'd hear me," he said. "She ain't ever failed me yet."

"She'll have to pull a real miracle yet to get us out of the middle of the Indian Ocean before we drown or the sharks get us," said Jerry.

"Pray like hell, Shrimp," said Bubonovitch.

"Don't think I ain't, brother," said

Rosetti.

"Look! Look!" shouted Corrie, pointing.

Three hundred yards beyond the burning oil a submarine was surfacing. The Union Jack was painted on the side of its conning tower.

"There's your miracle, Cap'n," said Rosetti. "She ain't ever failed me yet. I mean in a real pinch."

"What do you think of the British now, sergeant?" asked Tarzan, smiling.

"I love 'em," said Rosetti.

The sub circled to windward of the burning oil and drew alongside the wreckage of the proa. The hatch spewed men to haul the castaways aboard.

Tarzan and Bubonovitch passed van der Bos up first. He died as they laid him gently on the deck.

Corrie and Sarina followed, and then the men. Lt. Cmdr. Bolton, skipper of the sub, was full of amazement and questions. Corrie knelt beside van der Bos's body, trying to hold back the tears. Jerry joined her.

"Poor Tak," she said.

They did not take him below. He was buried at sea, Bolton reading the burial service. Then they all went below for dry clothing and hot coffee, and presently the sorrow and depression seemed less, for they were all young and they had all seen much of death.

When Bolton heard their story, he

said, "Well, you have certainly played in luck from the start; but my happening to be right where I was when you needed me is little short of a miracle."

"It hasn't been luck, sir," said Rosetti. "It's been Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus from start to finish, including the miracle."

"I can well believe it," said Bolton, "for none of you has any business being alive now, by all the laws of chance. Nothing but divine intervention could have preserved you. It even arranged that I saved my last two fish for that Jap. You really should all be dead."

"Mary certainly helped in a pinch," said Jerry, "but if Tarzan hadn't been on the job all the time, pinch hitting for her,

we'd have been sunk months ago."

"Well," said Bolton, "I think you won't have to call on either Mary or Tarzan from now on. I'm ordered to Sydney, and it won't be so long now before you can sit down in Ushers Hotel with a steak and kidney pie in front of you."

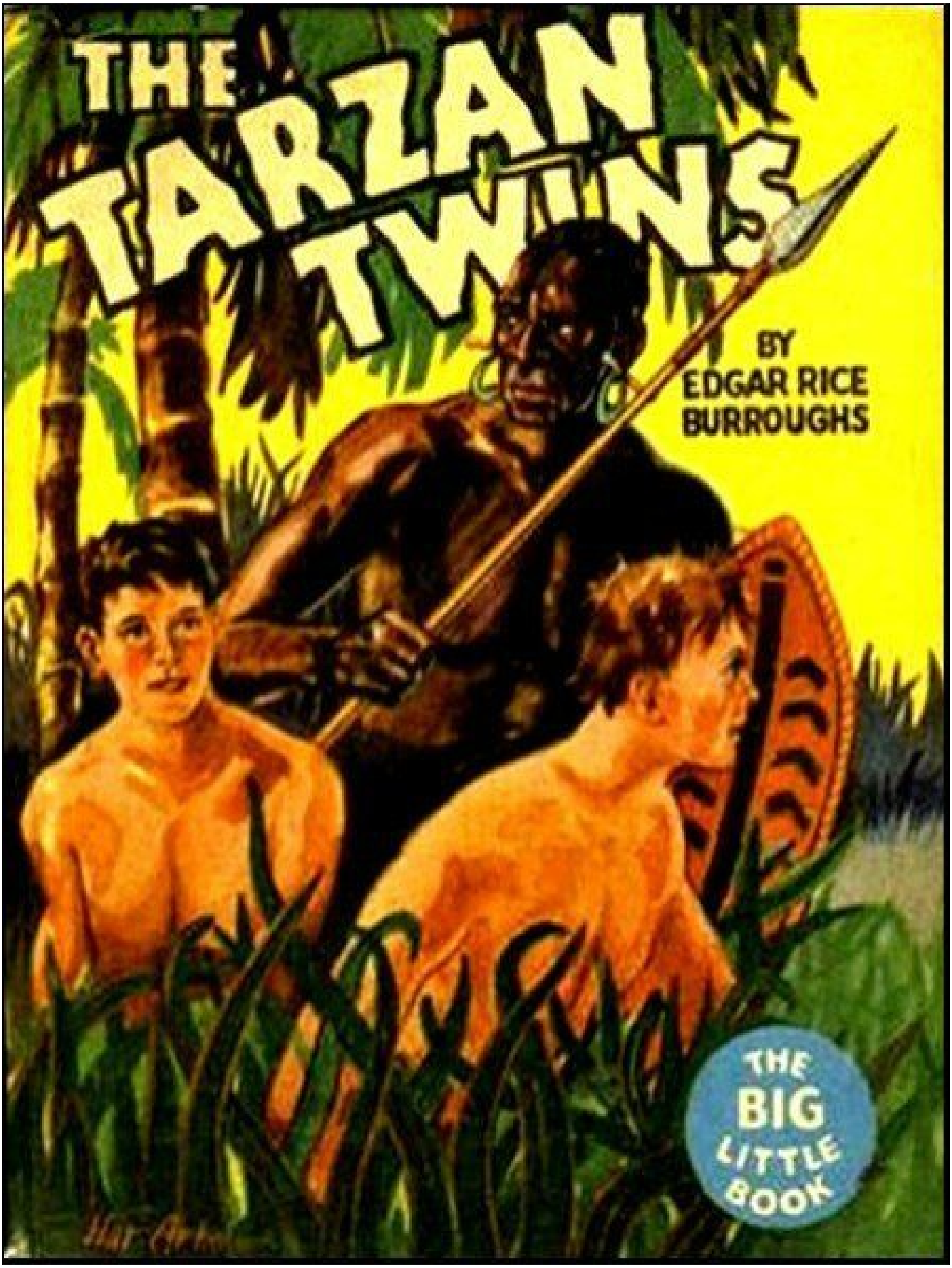
"And drink warm beer," said Bubonovitch.

Later that evening Jerry and Rosetti approached Bolton. "Captain," said the former, "are you authorized to perform marriage ceremonies at sea?"

"I certainly am."

"Then you got two jobs right now, skipper," said Rosetti.

THE END


THE
TARZAN
TWINS
BY
EDGAR RICE
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THE
BIG
LITTLE
BOOK

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

THE TARZAN TWINS

A TARZAN BOOK FOR YOUNG READERS

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INTRODUCING THE TARZAN TWINS

The Tarzan Twins, like all well-behaved twins, were born on the same day and, although they were not as "alike as two peas," still they resembled one another quite closely enough to fulfill that particular requirement of twinship; but even there they commenced breaking the rules that have been governing twins during the past several millions of years, for Dick had a shock of the blackest sort of black hair, while Doc's hair was the sunny hue of molasses candy. Their noses were alike, their blue eyes were alike; alike were their chins and their mouths. Perhaps Doc's eyes twinkled

more and his mouth smiled more than Dick's for Dick did much of his twinkling and smiling inside and inside the boys were very much alike, indeed. But in one respect they shattered every rule that has been laid down for twins from the very beginning of time, for Dick had been born in England and Doc in America; a fact which upsets everything right at the beginning of the story and proves, without any shadow of a doubt, that they were not twins at all.

Why then did they look so much alike and why did everyone call them the Tarzan Twins? One could almost start a guessing contest with a conundrum like this, but the trouble is that no one would guess the correct solution, though the

answer is quite simple. Dick's mother and Doc's mother were sisters —twin sisters—and they looked so much alike that they looked more alike than two peas, and as each boy resembled his mother—the result was—they resembled each other. Their mothers were American girls. One of them married an American and stayed at home—that was Doc's mother; and the other married an Englishman and sailed away to live on another continent in another hemisphere —and she was Dick's mother. When the boys were old enough to go away to school their parents had a brilliant idea, which was that the boys should receive half of their education in America and half in England. And this story will

prove that the best laid plans of mice and mothers sometimes go wrong, for no one planned that the boys should get any of their education in Africa, whereas, as a matter of fact, Fate was arranging that they should learn more in the jungles of the Dark Continent than was ever between the covers of any school book.

When they were fourteen years old, Dick and Doc were attending an excellent English school where there were a great many future dukes and earls and archbishops and lord mayors, who, when they saw how much Dick and Doc resembled one another, called them "The Twins." Later, when they learned that Dick's father was distantly related to Lord Greystoke, who is famous all over

the world as Tarzan of the Apes, the boys commenced to call Dick and Doc, "The Tarzan Twins"—so that is how the nickname grew and became attached to them.

As everyone knows tar means white in the language of the great apes, and go means black, so Doc, with his light hair, was known as Tarzan-tar and Dick, whose hair was black, was called Tarzan-go. It was all right to be called Tarzan-tar and Tarzan-go, until the other boys began to make fun of them because they could climb trees no better than many another boy and, while they were fair in athletic sports, they did not excel. It was right there and then that Dick and Doc decided that they would live up to

their new names, for they did not enjoy being laughed at and made fun of, any more than any other normal, red-blooded boy does. It is simply staggering to discover what a boy can accomplish if he makes up his mind to it and so it was not long before Dick and Doc did excel in nearly all athletic sports and when it came to climbing trees—well, Tarzan himself would have had no reason to be ashamed of them. Though their scholastic standing may have suffered a little in the following months of athletic effort, their muscles did not, and as vacation time approached, Dick and Doc had become as hard as nails and as active as a couple of manus, which you will know, if your education has not

been neglected, is the ape-word for monkeys.

Then it was that the big surprise came in a letter that Dick received from his mother. Tarzan of the Apes had invited them all to visit him and spend two months on his great African estate! The boys were so excited that they talked until three o'clock the next morning and flunked in all their classes that day. The disappointment that followed later when it was learned that Dick's father, who was an army officer, could not get leave of absence and Dick's mother would not go without him; the letters and cablegrams that were exchanged between England and America, and England and Africa; the frantic appeals

of the boys to their parents are interesting only in the result they effected; which was that the boys were to go by themselves, Tarzan of the Apes having promised to meet them at the end of the railway with fifty of his own Waziri warriors, thus assuring their safe passage through savage Africa to the faraway home of the ape-man. And this brings us to the beginning of our story.

CHAPTER 1

A train wound slowly through mountains whose rugged slopes were green with verdure and out across a rolling, grassy veldt, tree dotted. From a carriage window, two boys, eager-eyed, excited, kept constant vigil. If there was anything to be seen they were determined not to miss it, and they knew that there should be many things to see.

"I'd like to know where all the animals are," said Dick, wearily. "I haven't seen a blamed thing since we started."

"Africa's just like all the one horse circuses," replied Doc. "They advertise the greatest collection of wild animals in captivity and when you get there all they

have is a mangy lion and a couple of motheaten elephants."

"Golly! Wouldn't you like to see a real lion, or an elephant, or something?" sighed Dick.

"Look! Look!" exclaimed Doc suddenly. "There! There! See 'em?"

In the distance a small herd of springbok ran swiftly and gracefully across the veldt, the dainty little animals occasionally leaping high into the air. As the animals disappeared the boys again relapsed into attitudes of watchful waiting.

"I wish they'd been lions," said Dick.

The train, deserting the open country, entered a great forest, dark, gloomy, mysterious. Mighty trees, festooned with

vines, rose from a tangle of riotous undergrowth along the right-of-way, hiding everything that lay beyond that impenetrable wall of flower-starred green,—a wall that added to the mystery of all that imagination could picture of the savage life moving silently behind it. There was no sign of life. The forest seemed like a dead thing. The monotony of it, as the hours passed, weighed heavily upon the boys.

"Say," said Doc, "I'm getting tired of looking at trees. I'm going to practice some of my magic tricks. Look at this one, Dick."

He drew a silver coin from his pocket, a shilling, and held it upon his open palm. "Ladies and gentlemen!" he

declaimed. "We have here an ordinary silver shilling, worth twelve pence. Step right up and examine it, feel of it, bite it! You see that it is gen-u-ine. You will note that I have no accomplices. Now, ladies and gentlemen, watch me closely!"

He placed his other palm over the coin, hiding it, clasped his hands, blew upon them, raised them above his head.

"Abracadabra! Allo, presto, change ears and be gone! Now you see it, now you don't!" He opened his hands and held them palms up. The coin had vanished.

"Hurray!" shouted Dick, clapping his hands, as he had done a hundred times before, for Dick was always the

audience.

Doc bowed very low, reached out and took the coin from Dick's ear, or so he made it appear. Then into one clenched fist, between the thumb and first finger, he inserted the stub of a lead pencil, shoving it down until it was out of sight. "Abracadabra! Allo! Presto! Change cars and be gone! Now you see it, now you don't!" Doc opened his hand and the pencil was gone.

"Hurray!" shouted Dick, clapping his hands, and both boys broke into laughter.

For an hour Doc practiced the several sleight of hand tricks he had mastered and Dick pretended to be an enthusiastic audience; anything was better than looking out of the windows at the

endless row of silent trees.

Then, quite suddenly and without the slightest warning, the monotony was broken. Something happened. Something startling happened. There was a grinding of brakes. The railway carriage in which they rode seemed to leap into the air; it lurched and rocked and bumped, throwing both boys to the floor, and then, just as they were sure it was going to overturn, it came to a sudden stop, quite as though it had run into one of those great, silent trees.

The boys scrambled to their feet and looked out of the windows; then they hastened to get out of the car and when they reached the ground outside they saw excited passengers pouring from the

train, asking excited questions, getting in everyone's way. It did not take Dick and Doc long to learn that the train, striking a defective rail, had run off the track and that it would be many hours before the journey could be resumed. For a while they stood about with the other passengers idly looking at the derailed carriages but this diversion soon palled and they turned their attention toward the jungle. Standing quietly upon the ground and looking at it was quite different from viewing it through the windows of a moving train. It became at once more interesting and more mysterious.

"I wonder what it is like in there," remarked Dick.

"It looks spooky," said Doc.

"I'd like to go in and see," said Dick.

"So would I," said Doc.

"There isn't any danger—we haven't seen a thing that could hurt a flea since we landed in Africa."

"And we wouldn't go in very far."

"Come on," said Dick.

"Hi, there!" called a man's voice. "Where you boys goin'?"

They turned to see one of the train guards who chanced to be passing.

"Nowhere," said Doc.

"Well whatever you do, don't go into the jungle," cautioned the man, moving on toward the head of the train.

"You'd be lost in no time."

"Lost!" scoffed Dick. "He must think

we're a couple of zanies."

Now that someone had told them that they must not go into the jungle, they wanted to go much more than they had before, but as there were many people upon this side of the train, they were quite sure that someone else would stop them, should they attempt to enter the jungle in plain view of passengers and train crew.

Slowly they sauntered to the rear end of the train and passed around it onto the opposite side. There was no one here and right in front of them was what appeared to be an opening through the tangled vegetation that elsewhere seemed to block the way into that mysterious hinterland that lay beyond the

solid ranks of guardian trees. Dick glanced quickly up and down the train. There was no one in sight.

"Come on," he said, "let's just take a little peek."

It was only a step to the opening, which proved to be a narrow path that turned abruptly to the right after they had followed it a few paces. The boys stopped and looked back. The right-of-way, the train, the passengers— all were as completely hidden from view as though they had been miles and miles away, but they could still hear the hum of voices. Ahead the little path turned toward the left and the boys advanced, just to look around the turn; but beyond the turn was another. The path was a

very winding one, turning and twisting its way among the boles of huge trees; it was quiet and dark and gloomy.

"Perhaps we'd better not go in too far," suggested Doc.

"Oil, let's go a little way farther," urged Dick. "We can always turn around and follow the path back to the train. Maybe we'll come to a native village. Gee! wouldn't that be great?"

"Suppose they were cannibals?"

"Oh, shucks! There aren't any cannibals any more. You afraid?"

"Who me? Of course I'm not afraid," said Doc, valiantly. "All right then, come ahead," and Dick led the way along the little path that bored into the depths of the mighty, frowning jungle. A

bird with brilliant plumage flew just above them, giving them a little start, so silent and deserted the forest had seemed, and a moment later the little path led them into a wide, well-beaten trail. "Golly!" exclaimed Doc, "this is more like it. Say, I could scarcely breathe in that little path."

"Sst! Look!" whispered Dick, pointing.

Doc looked and saw a little monkey solemnly surveying them from the branch of a nearby tree. Presently it began to chatter and a moment later it was joined by a second and then a third little monkey. As the boys approached the monkeys retreated, still chattering and scolding. They were cute little fellows

and Dick and Doc followed in an effort to get closer, and, all the time, more and more monkeys appeared. They ran through the trees, jumping from branch to branch; skipping about, jabbering excitedly.

"If my cousin, Tarzan of the Apes, were here, he'd know just what they were saying," said Dick.

"Let's get him to teach us," suggested Doc. "Wouldn't it be fun to be able to talk to the animals, the way he does? Gee! I wish they'd let us get a little closer."

On and on the boys went, their whole attention absorbed by the antics of the little monkeys; forgetting time and distance, trains, passengers; forgetting

all the world in this wonderful experience of seeing hundreds of real, live monkeys living their own natural life in the jungle, just as their forefathers had lived for ages and ages. How tame and uninteresting and pathetic seemed the poor little monkeys that they had seen in zoos. The boys passed several little trails running into the bigger one, but so wholly was their attention held by the antics of their new friends that they did not notice these, nor did they note a branch of the big trail that came in behind them from their left while they were watching some of the monkeys in the trees at their right.

Perhaps they were not very far from the train. They did not think about it at

once, for their minds were occupied with more interesting things than trains. Presently, however, as they followed the winding of the broad game trail, laughing at the antics of the monkeys and trying to make friends with them, a still, small voice seemed to whisper something into the ear of Dick. It was that old spoilsport, Conscience, and what it said was: "Better start back! Better start back!" Dick glanced at his watch.

"Gee!" he exclaimed. "Look what time it is! We'd better start back."

And then Doc looked at his watch. "Golly!" he cried; "I'll say we ought to start back, it's almost dinner time. How far do you suppose we've come?"

"Oh, not very far," replied Dick, but his tone was not very positive.

"Say, I'll bet it would be great in here at night," cried Doc.

Just at that instant, from the heart of the jungle, a sound broke the peace of the forest—a terrible sound that started with a coughing noise and grew in volume until it became a terrific roar that made the ground tremble. Instantly the little monkeys disappeared as though by magic and a silence, more fearful than the awful voice, settled upon the dark and gloomy wood. Instinctively the boys drew close together, looking fearfully in the direction from which that fearsome sound had come. They were brave boys; but brave men tremble when that voice

breaks the silence of an African night.

Little wonder, then, that they turned and fled into the direction from which they had come, away from the author of that rumbling roar.

And, still running, they came to the fork in the trail, the fork that they had passed, careless and unheeding, a short time before. Here they were bewildered and here they hesitated. But only for a moment. They were young and possessed all the assurance of youth, so off they went again running swiftly along the wrong trail.

CHAPTER 2

Numa, the lion, hunted through the jungle primeval. He was not ravenously hungry, as only the night before he had finished devouring the kill he had made two days ago. However, it would do no harm to rove the jungle for a few hours and mark down a new prey even before the pangs of hunger became sharp. As he moved majestically along the familiar game trail, he made no effort to hide his presence, for was he not the king of beasts? Who was there to dispute his supreme power? Of whom need he be afraid?

Perhaps these very thoughts were in the mind of Numa, when, borne upon the air that moved down the tunnel-like trail,

a scent filled his nostrils that brought him to a sudden stop. It was the scent that ever aroused hatred in the heart of Numa—it was the scent of man! Perhaps it aroused hatred because of the fact that it engendered a little fear as well, though fear was something that the king could not admit. But there was something strange, something a little different in this scent than in anything he had ever noticed in the scent spoor of the gomangani. It differed from the scent spoor of the negro quite as much as their scent differed from that of the mangani, or great apes. He was sure then that it was neither gomangani, the black man or (great black ape), or mangani, whose odor was wafted down to him; but of

one thing Numa was certain, the odor was that of man, and so he moved along the trail, but more carefully now, his great, padded feet making no sound. Once, in the freshness of his first anger, he had roared forth his challenge; now he was silent. When he came to the spot where the boys had stopped before they turned back, he paused and sniffed the air, his tail moving nervously from side to side; then he started at a trot along their trail, head flattened and every sense alert. The great muscles moving in supple waves beneath his tawny hide, his tufted tail held just above the ground, his black mane rippling in the gentle breeze, Numa, the lion, followed the scent spoor of his prey. Dick and Doc

were used to long cross-country runs, for many were the paper chases in which they had taken part, and now they were glad that they had developed their muscles and their lungs in clean, outdoor exercise, for though they had run now for a long distance, they were neither tired nor out of breath. However, they slowed down to a walk as each was already troubled with the same doubt. It was Doc who first voiced it.

"I didn't think we'd come this far," he said. "Do you suppose we passed the little path leading to the railway, without seeing it?"

"I don't know," replied Dick, "but it certainly seems as though we had come back a whole lot further than we went in.

But then, of course, you said it would be great to spend the night in here," he added.

"Well, it would," insisted Doc; "but it wouldn't be very nice to have the train go off and leave us here, forever, and that's just what it may do, if we don't get back to it pretty soon. Let's go on a little way, then if we don't find the path, we'll turn around and go back and try the other fork of the trail."

"What do you suppose made that noise?" asked Dick, presently, as they walked along, peering anxiously into the dense wall of jungle for the opening that they hoped would lead them back to the train. It was the first time that either of them had mentioned the cause of their

fright; partly because they had been too busy running and partly because each of them was a little ashamed of his headlong flight.

"Sounded like a lion," said Doc.

"That's what I thought," said Dick.

"Why didn't you wait and see then?" demanded his cousin. "On the train this morning, you said you'd like to see a real lion."

"I didn't see you waiting," Dick shot back. "I guess you were afraid, all right. I never saw anyone run so fast in my life."

"I had to, to keep up with you," replied Doc. "Anyhow, I hadn't lost a lion. Who wants an old lion, anyway?"

"I guess yon don't, fraidy-cat."

"Fraidy-cat nothing," replied Doc. "I'm not afraid of any old lion. All you got to do is look 'em right in the eye, an'—"

"And what?"

"An' they put their tail between their legs and beat it."

"An umbrella's a good thing to frighten a lion with," offered Dick.

"Say, look at that big rock!" exclaimed Doc, pointing to a vine covered, rocky outcropping, around which the rail disappeared just ahead.

"We didn't pass anything like that when we came in."

"No," admitted Dick, "we didn't. That

means that we are sure enough on the wrong trail. Let's turn around and go back to the other fork."

Together they turned to retrace their steps. Before them the trail ran quite straight for almost a hundred yards, and there, just at the end of it, a great black-maned lion emerged into full view. Dick and Doc stood frozen in their tracks and the lion stopped, too, and surveyed them. It seemed a very long time to the boys that they stood there, but it really could have been only a moment. Then the lion opened his mouth in the most terrific roar those boys had ever heard in all their lives, and, still roaring, moved toward them.

"Quick! the trees!" whispered Dick,

as though fearful that the lion would overhear him.

As the boys sprang for the nearest tree Numa broke into a trot. It was then that Doc caught his toe beneath a root and fell headlong to the ground. The lion seemed very near, yet Dick turned back and seizing Doc helped him to his feet. All instant later, as the lion charged in real earnest, at a terrific speed, the boys were clambering swiftly into the lower branches of a great tree that overspread the trail. Roaring angrily, Numa sprang into the air, his mighty talons unsheathed to seize and drag them down. He missed them, but by a margin so narrow that one of his claws touched the heel of Dick's shoe. With an agility far beyond their

own dreams Dick and Doc climbed high above the menace of the angry beast of prey, finally seating themselves upon a limb that projected above the trail. Beneath them the lion stood glaring up, with round, yellow-green, blazing eyes. He was growling angrily, exposing yellow fangs that made them shudder.

"Why didn't you look him in the eye?" demanded Dick.

"I was goin' to, but he wouldn't stand still," replied Doc. "Why didn't you bring an umbrella?"

Numa, nervous, irritable, did not relish the idea of losing his supper now that he had discovered a quarry of two young and tender tarmangani, for if there is anything that Numa relishes, even

before old age has reduced him to a diet of human flesh, it is the young of the man-tribe. Therefore, as long as they were in sight he did not give up hope. Seldom did Numa, the lion, have reason to envy his cousin Sheeta, the panther; but this was most certainly such an occasion, for could he have climbed with the agility of Sheeta, the prey would soon have been his. Not being able to climb into the tree after his supper he did the next best thing, which was to lie down and wait for it to descend.

Of course if Numa had had the brains of a man he would have known that the boys would not come down while he lay there waiting for them. Perhaps he hoped

that they would fall asleep and tumble out of the tree. And it may be that after a while he really did reason the thing out almost as a man would have reasoned it, for after half an hour of waiting he arose and strode majestically back along the trail in the direction from which he had come; but just around the first turn he halted, wheeled about and lay down just out of sight of his intended victims.

"I believe he's gone," whispered Dick. "Let's wait a few minutes and then climb down and see if we can find the path. It can't be so very far from here."

"If we wait very long it will be dark," said Doc.

"Do you suppose they could hear us if we yelled?" asked Dick.

"If they did hear us and came in, the lion might get them."

"I never thought of that—no, we mustn't yell." Dick scratched his head in thought. "There must be some way out of this," he continued. "We can't stay here forever—even if you do think it would be nice to spend the night in the jungle."

"If we climb down we may run right into that old lion and we haven't got an umbrella, or anything," said Doc, grinning.

"I've got it!" cried Dick. "I've got it! Why didn't we think of it before?"

"Think of what?"

"Why, swinging through the trees like Tarzan! He didn't come down to the ground when a lion was after him, if he

didn't want to—he just swung through the trees. Why can't we swing through the trees right back to the train?"

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc. "That's a great idea. I'll bet they'll be surprised when we come swinging through the trees and drop right down in front of them."

"And I guess their eyes won't stick out like two peeled onions or anything when we tell 'em we were chased by a lion," added Dick.

"Come on then! Which way is the train?"

"This way," and Dick led off at right angles to the trail, working his way carefully along the limb of the tree, seeking carefully foothold below and handhold above.

"I don't call that swinging," said Doc.

"Well, smarty, let's see you swing."

"You're Tarzan's cousin—if you can't do it how do you expect me to?"

"Well," explained Dick, "I've got to practice a little bit, haven't I? You don't expect a fellow to do it the first thing off without a little practice, do you?"

But at the moment Doc was too busy worming his way gingerly after Dick to think up a suitable reply. From one tree to another they made their way and as they progressed they soon became more sure of themselves and their pace increased accordingly. By chance Dick had started in the right direction. The train lay directly ahead of them, though further away than either would have

imagined; but following a straight line through the trees of a dense forest where there are no land marks to guide one and where the sun is not visible as a beacon of safety is a thing not easily done. It was not at all strange, therefore, that within the first hundred yards Dick had so altered his original course that the boys were moving at a right angle to the proper direction and within the next hundred had turned almost completely back and were "swinging" directly away from the railway. A few minutes later they crossed the wide game trail they had so recently left, but so thick was the foliage beneath them that they did not see the trail at all, and they were still bravely traveling their perilous path

when the sudden tropical night shut down upon the jungle, engulfing them in its black folds.

Below them a lion roared. Out of the black void rose the weird scream of a panther. Something moved in the trees above them. The night life of the jungle was awakening with its sounds of stealthily moving bodies, with its terrifying noises, with its awful silences.

CHAPTER 3

A new day burst gorgeously into life. A brilliant sun shone down upon the leafy canopy of green that roofed the great forest; but far beneath all was dark and gloomy still. A sleek, black warrior moved silently along a jungle trail. On his back he carried a small, oval shield, his bow and his quiver filled with arrows. Bracelets of iron and of copper encircled his arms. Through the septum of his nose, which had been pierced to receive it, was a cylindrical piece of wood, six or eight inches in length; from the lobes of his ears depended heavy ornaments; necklaces encircled his ebon throat and there were many metal bands and anklets upon his legs; his hair was

plastered thick with mud into which he had stuck several gaudy feathers. His teeth were filed to sharp points. In one hand he bore a light hunting spear. He was Zopinga, a Mugalla of the Bagalla tribe that was all-powerful in Ugalla, the dismal forest country they claimed as theirs. Thus early in the morning Zopinga was making the round of the snares he had set the previous day.

In the crotch of a mighty jungle giant, two boys, chilled, miserable, awoke from a fitful slumber. All night they had huddled close together for such warmth as they might lend each other; but they had been very cold. They had slept little. The mysterious voices of the jungle night, the consciousness of the nearby

presence of creatures they could not see had driven sleep from their eyes until, finally, overcome by utter exhaustion, they had sunk into all unconsciousness that could scarcely be called sleep, and even from this, the cold and discomfort aroused them, shortly after daybreak.

"Golly," said Dick, "I sure am cold!"

"You haven't got anything on me," replied Doc.

"It must be great in the jungle at night," said Dick, with a sickly grin.

"It wasn't so bad," insisted Doc, bravely.

"So bad as what?" asked Dick.

"I'll bet you none of the other boys ever stayed out in a tree all night, with

lions and panthers and tigers prowling all around in the jungle below. Just wait till we get home and tell them. Gee, I'll bet they'll be sore to think they weren't along."

"There aren't any tigers in Africa," corrected Dick, "and anyone who wants to stay out in the jungle all night can have my place. I wish I were home in my own bed—that's what I wish."

"Cry-baby!"

"I am not. I just have some sense, that's all. It's cold here and I'm hungry."

"So am I," admitted Doc. "Let's build a fire and get warm and cook breakfast."

"How you going to build a fire and what you going to cook for breakfast? You going to say 'Abracadabra, Allo,

Presto, change cars!' and then pick a gas range out of my ear? And if you could, what would you cook on it? Ham and eggs and waffles? That wouldn't do, because we haven't any of the maple syrup you are always talking about and cook forgot the marmalade."

"You think you're funny!" snapped Doc. "But I'll show you—I'll build a fire all right."

"Where are your matches?"

"I don't need any matches."

"How you going to build a fire without matches?"

"That's easy. All you got to do is rub two sticks together."

Dick was interested. "That's right," he

said. "Come on, let's go down and get a fire started. Golly, but wouldn't it be great to be warm again?"

"I wouldn't care if I got on fire," said Doc, "only I'm so cold I don't think I'd burn."

"We could melt—that's better than staying frozen."

"Do you suppose it's safe to go down?" inquired Doc. "Do you suppose that old lion has gone home?"

"We could stay close to a tree and one of us could watch all the time," suggested Dick.

"All right, here goes! Gee, but I'm stiff. Whew! My joints need oiling."

Once at the bottom of the tree Doc

collected a little pile of twigs and taking two of the larger ones he commenced rubbing them together vigorously, while Dick watched and listened, ready to sound the alarm at the first sign of danger. Doc rubbed and rubbed and rubbed.

"What's the matter with your old fire?" demanded Dick.

"I don't know," said Doc. "All the books I've ever read about savages and desert islands and people like that, tell how they build their fires by rubbing two sticks together."

"Maybe you aren't rubbing fast enough," suggested Dick.

"I'm rubbing as fast as I can. Maybe you think this is fun. Well, it isn't. It's

hard work." He kept on rubbing and rubbing for several minutes. Finally he stopped, exhausted.

"What you stopping for?" demanded Dick.

"The old sticks won't burn," replied Doc, disgustedly, "and anyway I've rubbed so fast that I've got warm."

Satisfied that there was something wrong with their fire- making, they decided to warm themselves by exercise, knowing that a good, brisk run would set the blood to tingling in their veins; but then the question arose as to the direction in which they should run, as well as a place where they might find room in which to run. The tangled undergrowth grew close around them.

Nothing could run in that. They had no idea where the trail was. There was nothing left, therefore, but the trees, and so they clambered back to the lower branches and with stiff fingers and numb joints started once more in the direction they thought would lead them to the railway.

As they moved forward, they commenced to feel the reviving influence of renewed warmth and life. But as they forgot the cold, they became more conscious of their hunger and now thirst was adding to their discomfort. They heard the sounds of the smaller life of the jungle, and occasionally caught fleeting glimpses of beautifully colored birds. A small monkey came and ran

along above their heads and his chattering attracted others, until soon there were many monkeys around them. They did not seem very much afraid of the boys, nor were they unfriendly. They were merely curious. And they were always eating; a fact which drove the boys nearly crazy with hunger.

They watched carefully to discover what the monkeys ate, for they knew that what the monkeys ate with safety, they might eat; but when they discovered that the bill-of-fare appeared to consist quite largely of caterpillars they changed their minds. After a while they saw one of the monkeys gather fruit from a tree and eat it with great relish and they lost no time in clambering up into the branches of

that same tree and searching for more of the fruit. It did not taste very good, but it was food and stopped the gnawing pangs of hunger, and its juices helped to satisfy their thirst.

When they had eaten they continued their search for the railway and found it easier to travel through the trees though they were, as yet, far from perfect at it. The food had given them renewed hope and they were quite sure now that they would soon reach the twin bands of steel that would mean rescue, for even if their train had left, there would be other trains along, which would surely stop at sight of two white boys. They might not have felt so much confidence had they dreamed that they were traveling deeper

and deeper into the forest, directly away from the railway. Dick, who was in the lead, suddenly voiced an exclamation of satisfaction and relief.

"Here's the old trail!" he cried. "Now we can make some time."

"Gee, but it's good to get your old feet on the ground again," said Doc as the two boys stood again on solid footing. "Come on! Now let's beat it."

With brisk steps they set off along the game trail that ran in the same general direction they had been traveling, positive now that they were on the right road. Doc, his spirits rising to the occasion, broke into a gay whistle.

Ahead of them Zopinga came to an abrupt halt. For an instant he stood,

listening intently, then he dropped to his hands and knees and placed his ear against the ground and remained there for a moment, motionless. When he arose, he still remained in a listening attitude, straining every faculty to interpret the sounds that were approaching him along the trail. Just before the boys came into sight the savage warrior stepped into the green wall of the jungle trail. The leaves and branches dropped back, forming an impenetrable screen behind which Zopinga waited.

The boys came confidently on, while Zopinga adjusted his shield upon his left forearm and took a new grip upon his light hunting spear.

The warrior did not see the boys until they were almost opposite him but when he did, the grasp of his spear hand released and a look of relief and satisfaction overspread his black and evil countenance, for he saw that he had nothing to fear from two unarmed white boys. He waited until a turn in the trail took them from his view, then he stepped out into the trail and followed them.

Zopinga was greatly elated. What matter now that his snares had failed to entrap a single victim? Had they all been filled, the reward would not have equaled this windfall that had come to him without the slightest effort upon his part. The victims of his snares he would have had to carry home; but this new

quarry walked upon their own legs and, most accommodatingly, were headed directly for the village of the Bagalla.

CHAPTER 4

"We must be pretty near the train by this time," said Dick; "unless —"

"Unless what?" demanded Doc.

"We might not be on the right trail," suggested the other. "We might be lost after all."

"Gee, don't say that, Dick. If we're lost now, we'll never find our way out. We'll have to stay in this jungle until we —"

"Until we what?"

"I don't like to say it."

"You mean until we die?"

Doc nodded his head and the boys moved on in silence, each intent upon his own gloomy thoughts. Behind them, just

out of sight, came the black warrior, Zopinga. Presently Doc stopped.

"Dick!" he cried. "Do you smell something?"

Dick sniffed the air. "Smells like smoke," he said.

"It is smoke," exclaimed Doc, "and I can smell food cooking, too.

"We're saved, Dick! We're saved! It's the train! Come on!" and both boys broke into a run.

A hundred yards of brisk running brought them to a sudden stop. Before them lay a clearing in the forest at the trail's end. In the center of the clearing was a palisade of poles surrounding an enclosure. Above the top of the palisade they could see the cone- shaped roofs of

grass-thatched huts and, through the open gates that faced them, they could see the huts themselves and half-naked black people moving about. Outside the palisade some women were hoeing in a little patch of cultivated ground.

Dick and Doc took one look at the scene before them before they faced one another in silent consternation. So different from what they had expected had been this outcome of their hopes that both boys were shocked into utter speechlessness for a moment. It was Doc, as usual, who first regained control of his tongue.

"We're lost, after all," he said. "What are we going to do?"

"Maybe they're friendly natives,"

suggested Dick.

"Maybe they're cannibals," suggested Doc.

"I don't believe there are any cannibals any more," said Dick.

"I don't intend to take any chances on that. There may be."

"Let's sneak back the way we came then," whispered Dick. "They haven't seen us yet."

Simultaneously the two boys turned to retrace their steps and there, blocking the trail they had just trod, stood a huge, black warrior scowling savagely at them. In his hand was a sharp spear.

"Golly!" exclaimed Dick.

"Gee!" ejaculated Doc. "What shall

we do?"

"We ought to be nice to him," said Dick.

"Good morning!" said Doc, politely, with a smile that was nothing if not strained. "Nice morning, isn't it?"

Zopinga, who had stood silent thus far, now broke into a torrent of words, not one of which the boys understood. When he had ceased, he again stood immovable.

"Well," remarked Dick, casually, "I guess we'd better be getting along back to the train. Come on, Doc," and he started to move along the trail past Zopinga. Instantly the sharp point of the spear was at the pit of his stomach.

Dick stopped. Zopinga pointed

toward the village with his left hand and prodded Dick with his spear.

"I guess he's inviting us to lunch," suggested Doc.

"Whatever he's inviting us to do, I guess we'd better do it," said Dick.

Reluctantly the two boys turned toward the village; behind them walked Zopinga, proudly herding his captives in the direction of the gates. At sight of them the women and children working in the fields clustered about, jabbering excitedly. The women were hideous creatures whose ears and lower lips were horribly disfigured, the lobes of the former having evidently been pierced during their youth to receive heavy ornaments which had stretched the flesh

until the lower part of the ear touched the shoulder, while their teeth, like those of Zopinga, were filed to sharp points, though fortunately for the peace of mind of Dick and Doc, neither boy understood the significance of this.

Some of the children threw stones and sticks at the boys and each time a hit was scored, Zopinga and the women and all the children laughed uproariously. Encouraged and emboldened by this applause one of the older children, a particularly hideous boy, rushed at Doc from the rear and swung a blow at his head with a heavy stick. Dick, while attempting to ward off the missiles that were rained upon him, had fallen a few steps behind Doc, which proved a very

fortunate circumstance for his cousin as the black boy would have cracked Doc's skull if the blow had landed squarely upon its target.

Even as the little fiend was in the act of swinging the cudgel Dick leaped in front of him and seizing his wrist with his left hand dealt the youth a blow in the face with his right fist that sent him sprawling upon his back.

Doc turned just in time to witness Dick's act, though he did not fully realize how close and how grave had been his peril, and the two boys instinctively drew together, back to back, for mutual protection, as each was confident that Dick's attack upon the black youth would bring down the wrath of all the others

upon them.

"Good old Dick!" whispered Doc.

"I suppose we're in for it now," said Dick, gloomily; "but I had to do it! He'd have killed you."

"We couldn't be in for anything worse than we were getting before,"

Doc reminded him. "Look at 'em now! I think it did 'em good."

For an instant the blacks were so surprised that they forgot to throw anything at the boys; then they commenced to laugh and jeer at the discomfited youth sitting on the ground nursing a bloody nose and while they were occupied by this new diversion, Zopinga herded the boys into the village and hurried them into the presence of a

very fat negro who sat in conversation with several other warriors beneath the shade of a large tree.

"This guy must be the chief," said Doc.

"I wish we could talk to him," said Dick. "Maybe he'd send us back to the railroad, if we could explain that that was where we want to go."

"I'll try," said Doc. "P'r'aps he may understand English. Say, Big Boy!" he cried, addressing the fat negro. "Do you savvy English?" The black looked up at Doc and addressed him in one of the innumerable Bantu dialects, but the American boy only shook his head. "Nothing doing along that line, Uncle Tom," said Doc, with a sigh, and then,

brightening: "Hey, Parley voo zong glaze?"

Notwithstanding the bumps and bruises that he was nursing Dick was unable to restrain his laughter. "What's the matter?" demanded Doc. "What's so funny?"

"Your French."

Doc grinned. "I must be improving," he said. "No one ever recognized my French as French before."

"Your friend there doesn't recognize it even as speech. Why don't you try making signs?"

"I never thought of that. Good old Dick! Every once in a while he shows a gleam of intelligence. Here goes! Watch me, Rain Cloud." He waved his hand at

the negro to attract attention; then he pointed off in the general direction that he thought the railroad lay, after which he said: "Choo! Choo!" several times. Then he pointed first at Dick and then at himself; walked around in a small circle looking bewilderedly from one direction to another.

Stopping in front of the black he pointed at him, then at Dick, then at himself and finally out through the forest toward an imaginary railway and again said: "Choo! Choo! Choo! Choo!"

The negro considered him a moment through red-rimmed, bleary eyes; then he turned toward his fellows, jerked a grimy thumb in the direction of Doc, tapped his forehead significantly with a

forefinger and issued a few curt instructions to Zopinga, who stepped forward and pushed the boys roughly along the village street toward its far end.

"I guess he understood your sign language all right," said Dick.

"What makes you think so?" demanded Doc.

"Why, he thinks you're crazy—and he's not far off."

"Is that so?"

Zopinga halted before a grass hut shaped like a beehive, with a single opening about two and a half or three feet high, upon either side of which squatted a warrior aimed as was their captor. Zopinga motioned for the boys to

enter and as they dropped upon their hands and knees to crawl into the dark interior, he accelerated their speed with the sole of a calloused foot and sent them, one by one, into darkness that was only a bit less thick than the foul stench which pervaded the noisome den.

CHAPTER 5

Crouching close together, Dick and Doc sat in silence upon the filthy floor of the hut. They could hear Zopinga talking to the guards at the entrance, and after he had gone away, they could still hear the guards conversing. It was most aggravating to be unable to understand a word of what was said; nor to gain a single clue to the nature of the people into whose power an unkind Fate had delivered them; nor any hint of the intentions of their captors toward them, for they were both now convinced that they were indeed captives. Presently Doc put his lips close to Dick's ear. "Do you hear anything?" he whispered.

Dick nodded. "It sounds like

something breathing over there," he said.

"It is," Doc's voice trembled just a little. "I can see something over against that wall."

Their eyes were becoming accustomed to the gloom of the interior and slowly things were taking form within. Dick strained his eyes in the direction of the sound. "I see it—there are two of them. Do you suppose they're men, or—"

"Or what?" asked Doc.

"Lions, or something," suggested Dick, weakly.

Doc felt in his pants' pocket and brought out a knife, but his fingers were trembling so that he had difficulty in opening the blade. "It's getting up!" he

whispered.

They sat with their eyes riveted upon the dark bulk that moved against the back wall of the hut. It seemed very large and entirely ominous, though as yet it had taken on no definite form that they might recognize.

"It—it's comin' toward us," chattered Doc. "I wish it was a lion! I wouldn't be as scairt if I knew it was a lion as I am not knowing what it is."

"Gosh, it might be anything!"

"Here comes the other one," announced Dick. "Say, I believe they're men. I'm getting so I can see better in this old hole. Yes, they are men."

"Then they must be prisoners, too," said Doc.

"Just the same you better get your knife out, too," said Dick. "I've had mine out—I was just going to tell you to get yours out." They sat very still as the two forms crept toward them on all fours and presently they saw that one was a very large negro and the other either a very small one, or a child. "Tell 'em to keep away, or we'll stick 'em with our knives," said Doc. "They wouldn't understand if we did tell 'em," replied Dick, and then, in pidgin English that they could barely understand, one of the blacks announced that he spoke excellent English.

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc, with a sigh of relief, "I could almost kiss him."

The boys asked questions that the

black understood only with the greatest difficulty and equally arduous were their efforts to translate his replies; but, at least, they had found a medium of communication, however weak and uncertain, and they were slowly coming to a realization of the predicament in which their foolhardy venture into the jungle had placed them.

"What they going to do with us in here?" asked Dick.

"Make us fat," explained the black.

"Make us fat? What for?" demanded Doc. "Gee, I'm too fat already."

"Make us fat to eat," explained the negro.

"Golly!" cried Dick. "They're cannibals! Is that what he means?"

"Yes. Bad men. Cannibals." The black shook his head.

The boys were silent for a long time. Their thoughts were far away— far across continents and oceans to distant homes, to mothers—to all the loving and beloved friends they were never to see again.

"And to think that no one will ever know what became of us," said Dick, solemnly. "Golly! it's awful, Doc."

"It hasn't happened yet, Dick," replied his cousin; "and it's up to us to see that it doesn't happen. There must be some way to escape. Anyway we mustn't give up— not until they begin to ask which is preferred, dark meat, or light."

Dick grinned. "You bet we won't give

up, Doc, old boy. We'll learn all we can from this fellow so that when the time comes we'll have a better chance of making our getaway. The first thing to do is to try to learn the language. If we only knew what they were talking about, that might help us. And anyway, if we do escape, we'll be better off if we know how to inquire our way."

"Yes, we might meet a traffic cop."

"Don't be an idiot."

Dick turned to the black squatting beside them. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Bulala," replied the black, and then he explained that he had been a cook, or safari, for a white man who was hunting big game; but that something had gone

wrong and he had run away to go back to his home, and had been captured by these people whom he described as the Bagalla tribe.

"Do you speak the same language as these Bagalla?" demanded Doc.

"We understand each other," replied Bulala.

"Will you teach us your language?"

Bulala was greatly pleased with the idea, and set out at once upon the role of tutor and never in the world had a tutor such eager pupils, and never had Dick and Doc applied themselves so diligently to the acquisition of useful knowledge.

"Say," said Doc, "this language is a cinch."

"If you learn it as well as you did French," said Dick, "you ought to be able to understand yourself in about a hundred years, even if nobody else can understand you."

"Is that so?" demanded Doc. "Well, you're not so good, yourself."

As the boys' eyes had become more and more accustomed to the dim light of the interior of the hut they had discovered the scant furnishings, the filth, and their fellow prisoners. Bulala was evidently a densely ignorant, but happy-natured, West Coast black, while the other, whom Bulala referred to as Ukundo, was a pygmy and, though a full grown man, came barely to the shoulders of the twins.

When Ukundo discovered that Bulala was attempting to teach the boys his language, he developed a great interest in the experiment and as he was much brighter than Bulala, it was more often his own dialect that the boys learned than that of the tribe to which Bulala had belonged.

As for the furnishings of the hut, they consisted of several filthy sleeping mats that must have been discarded by their original owners as absolutely impossible for human use, and when anything becomes too filthy for a native African, its condition must be beyond words.

Ukundo generously dragged two of them into place for the boys, but when

they examined them, they both drew away. "If it weren't for the guards outside, I'd lead mine out and tie it to a tree," said Doc.

"Afraid it would run away?" asked Dick.

"No; I'd be afraid it would crawl back in here with us."

At dusk some food was brought them —hideously repulsive, malodorous stuff that neither of the boys could touch to their lips, half starved though they were. But Bulala and Ukundo were not so particular, and gobbled down their own portions and the boys' as well to the accompaniment of sounds that reminded Doc of feeding time at the hog house on his grandfather's farm.

With the coming of night there came also the night noises of the village and the jungle. Through the aperture in the base of the hut, that served both as door and window, the boys saw fires twinkling in the village; snatches of conversation came to them and the sound of laughter. They saw figures moving about the fires, and caught glimpses of savage dancers, and heard the sound of tom-toms; but the heat from the blazing fires did not enter the cold, damp hut, nor did the laughter warm their hearts.

They crept close together for warmth and at last, fell asleep, hungry, cold and exhausted.

CHAPTER 6

When they awoke, it was still dark and much colder. The village fires had died away, or had been banked for the night. All was silence. Yet the boys were conscious that they had been awakened by a noise, as though the echo still lingered in their ears. Presently they were sure of it—a thunderous sound that rolled in mighty volume out of the dark jungle and made the earth tremble.

"Are you awake?" whispered Doc.

"Yes."

"Did you hear that?"

"It's a lion."

"Do you suppose he's in the village?"

"He sounds awful close."

Numa was not in the village; he roared with his nose close to the palisade, voicing his anger at the stout barrier that kept him from the tender flesh within.

"Golly," said Dick; "it wouldn't do us much good if we did escape. It would be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire."

"Do you mean you'd rather stay here and be eaten by cannibals than try to escape?" demanded Doc.

"No, I don't mean anything of the kind—I just think we haven't much chance of getting out of this mess, one way or the other—but I sure would rather try to get out of it than just sit still and wait to be eaten, like Bulala and Ukundo are doing.

Have you any scheme, Doc, for getting away?"

"Not yet. From what I could understand of Bulala's gibberish I guess they won't eat us for a while. He seems to think that they will wait until we are fattened up a bit; but from something else he said, it is just possible that they are saving us for a big feast that they have invited a lot of other villages to attend. Anyway, if we can have a few days to get a line on the habits and customs of the village, we will be in a better position to pick out the best plan and the best time for making our getaway. Gee, but it's cold!"

"I didn't know anyone could be so cold and hungry, and live," said Dick.

"Neither did I. It's no use trying to get to sleep again. I'm going to get up and move around. Maybe that will make us warm."

But all it did was to awaken Bulala and Ukundo, who were not angry at all at being awakened and only laughed when the boys told them how cold they were. Bulala assured them that one was always cold at night and as he and Ukundo were practically naked the twins felt a bit ashamed of their grumbling.

Daylight came at last and with the rising sun came warmth and renewed vitality. The boys felt almost cheerful and now they were so hungry that they knew they would eat whatever their captors set before them, however vile it

might appear. But nothing was brought them. In fact it was almost noon before any attention was paid them and then a warrior came and ordered all four of them out of the hut. With their guards they were herded toward the chief's hut in the center of the village.

Here they found many warriors lined up before the blear-eyed old cannibal. The chief looked them all over; then addressed the twins.

"He wants to know what you were doing in his country," interpreted Bulala.

"Tell him we were passing through on the train and that we wandered into the jungle and got lost," said Dick. "Tell him we want to go back to the railway and that if he will take us, our fathers will

pay him a big reward."

Bulala explained all this to the chief and there followed a lengthy discussion between the chief and his warriors, at the end of which Bulala again interpreted.

"Chief Galla Galla says he will take you back after a while. He wants you to stay here a few days. Then he will take you back. Also he wants all your clothes. He says you must take them off and give them to him as presents, if you want him to take you back to your people."

"But we'll freeze," expostulated Doc.

"You had better give them to him, for he will take them anyway," advised Bulala.

Doc turned and looked at Dick. "What are we going to do about it?" he asked.

"Tell him we'll freeze at night without our clothes, Bulala," cried Dick.

Bulala and Galla Galla held a lengthy discourse at the end of which the former announced that the chief insisted upon having their clothes, but would furnish them with other apparel to take its place.

"Well, tell him to trot it out," snapped Doc.

Again there was much haggling, but finally the chief sent one of his warriors to bring a handful of filthy calico rags, which he threw at the feet of the two boys. Doc started to argue the question, but Bulala's council, combined with the menacing attitude of Galla Galla,

convinced the twins that they could do nothing but comply with the commands of their captor.

"I'm going to take the things out of my pockets," said Doc

"They'll probably swipe everything we've got, but if possible we ought to try to save our knives," suggested Dick.

And sure enough, the first thing that came out of Dick's pocket, which happened to be a fountain pen, Galla Galla held out his hand to receive.

"A lot of good it'll do the old robber," growled Dick.

"He wants to know what it is," said Bulala.

"Tell him it's a bottle with something

good to drink in it," snapped Doc. "Here, I'll show him how to get it out—looky, old tar-baby," and Doc stepped forward and removed the cap from the pen point. "Tell him," he explained to Bulala, "to put the shiny end in his mouth and then pull this little lever here—that'll squirt the nice drink into his tummy."

Galla Galla did as Bulala directed. A peculiar expression overspread his evil face and then he commenced to spit, to the great astonishment not only of himself but of the assembled warriors, for Galla Galla was undeniably spitting blue. The effect upon him was astonishing and rather terrifying. He leaped about like a mad man, emitting

strange noises which were interspersed with remarks that the boys were positive were not at all nice; but the remarkable part of the performance was that he vented all his rage upon Bulala, striking and kicking the poor fellow unmercifully.

"Tell him it won't hurt him," yelled Dick, fearful now of the results of Doc's joke. "Tell him white men drink it to make them strong," and when Bulala had succeeded in transmitting this information to Galla Galla the chief immediately calmed down but for a long time thereafter, he continued to spit blue.

The boys had now emptied their pockets, but each clung to his knife, attempting to hide it from the eyes of the

greedy Galla Galla. The attempt was vain; a filthy, pinkish palm was extended toward Doc who needed no one to interpret the cannibal's demands into gimme, gimme, gimme! It was then that an idea came to Doc that was little short of inspiration. His eyes snapped and sparkled.

"Why not?" he demanded aloud.

"Why not what?" asked Dick.

"Watch me!" cried Doc.

Galla Galla was becoming insistent—he was demanding in peremptory tones that Doc deliver the knife forthwith. But Doc did nothing of the kind. Instead, he held up his left palm outstretched for silence, then he opened his right hand, exposing to the view of all the coveted

knife.

"Tell them," he said to Bulala, "to watch me closely and I will show them a trick they never saw before."

"Big medicine?" asked Bulala.

Doc seized upon the words. "Big medicine!" he cried. "That's the idea, Bulala! Tell 'em I'm going to make some big medicine with a capital B."

Even Galla Galla seemed impressed as the white boy covered the knife with his left palm. Doc clasped his hands and blew upon them. Then he raised them above his head. "Abracadabra!" he shouted. "Allo, presto, change cars and begone! Now you see it, now you don't." He opened his hands and held them palms up. The knife had vanished! The

chief was greatly puzzled. He looked all about for the knife and when he came close to Doc the latter reached suddenly toward him and apparently extracted the missing article from Galla Galla's left ear. This was evidently too much for the savage old cannibal. He leaped backward so quickly that he stumbled and fell sprawling over the stool upon which he had been sitting. The blow to his dignity had a bad effect upon his temper,—none too good at best. He came to his feet fairly bubbling with rage and angrily demanded that the boys remove their clothing and don the rags that had been brought them.

"Hang on to your knife as long as you can," admonished Doc. "I think I can

save 'em both when I get my new minus-fours wrapped around me. How do you put this stuff on, anyway?"

"Ask Bulala," advised Dick. And that worthy showed the boys how to wrap the cloth about their hips and carry the end between their legs so that a little apron fell down in front and another behind.

All this time the two boys had managed to conceal their knives, but, at last, Galla Calla again demanded them. Doc was desperate. "We mustn't give them up, Dick," he said, "they're the only useful things we have. By Jiminy crickets! I won't give 'em up!" He turned to Bulala. "Tell that fat boy that if anyone takes this medicine away from

us, it will kill him; but that if he doesn't want us to keep them, we will send them away. Watch!" He exposed his own knife and repeated the mystic signs and words that he had used before —and the knife was gone. Then he took Dick's knife and did the same things. Galla Galla shook his head.

"He wants to know where they are," said Bulala.

Doc looked about in an effort to gain time, while he conjured some reply that would put an end to Galla Galla's search for the knives. His eyes fell upon the same youth who had attempted to brain him the previous day, while Zopinga had been escorting them into the village. Doc never could account for the idea that

popped into his head as he beheld again the hideous features of the young imp who had come so near killing him, but he always admitted that it was a good idea—for him and Dick, if not for the black youth. He stepped suddenly close to the youth and pointed into his ear.

"Tell Galla Galla," he said to Bulala, "that our big medicine has hidden itself inside this fellow's head and that it won't come out until we are with our own people."

CHAPTER 7

The hot days and the cold nights dragged on. The food, poor and distasteful as it was, the boys learned to eat; they could not understand why it did not kill them, for they were sure that it contained all the germs that had ever been discovered with several millions that had not. The hideous nights, made unbearable by cold and vermin, seemed eternities of suffering. Yet the boys lived on—lived and learned. They learned the language of Ukundo; learned to speak in a dialect that all could understand; learned to understand that of their captors, the Bagalla.

Many other things they came to understand during the days of their

captivity, not the least of which was a new conception of the Negro. To Doc, whose experience with colored people had been limited to a few worthless specimens of the Northern States, it came as a revelation. Even among the warriors of the cannibal Bagalla, he encountered individuals who possessed great natural dignity, poise and evident strength of character.

Bulala, a West Coast black, densely ignorant and superstitious, had, nevertheless, a heart of gold, that revealed itself in his loyalty and generosity; while little Ukundo, the pygmy, perhaps among the lowest in the social scale of all African peoples, proved a staunch friend and a good

comrade. To his natural shrewdness was added an almost uncanny knowledge of the jungle and the jungle people, both beast and human; the tales he told the boys shortened many a weary hour.

After the first week of their captivity, the boys had managed to get a message to chief Galla Galla through Bulala and Zopinga, explaining to him that being unaccustomed to breathing the close air of a hut and living always without sunshine, they would surely die. They asked to be given more freedom and exercise, pointing out that there was little likelihood of their being able to escape, since they were unfamiliar with the jungle and would not know in what direction to go should they be able to

leave the village. But upon one point they were very careful not to commit themselves—they did not promise not to try to escape.

And as a result of their plea, Galla Galla gave all the prisoners the freedom of the village during the day time, placing the guards at the village gates instead of at the doorway of the hut in which they had been confined. And at night there were no guards at all, since the village gates were then closed and locked and the dangers of the jungle were sufficient to keep any one from attempting to escape. The boys had really had little hope that their request would be granted, and there is little likelihood that it would have been, but

for the shrewdness of Ukundo, who had accurately gauged the impression Doc's wizardry had made upon Galla Galla, measuring it, doubtless, by the awe that it had created in his own superstitious mind. It was due to Ukundo, therefore, that Bulala did not transmit the message in the form of a request. Instead, Zopinga had carried a demand to his chief, backed by a threat that the white boy witch- doctor would loose some very much more terrible medicine upon him, if he refused to permit them the freedom of the village; and Ukundo had been careful to insure that the demand included both Bulala and himself.

Influenced by their fear of Doc's magic, the villagers treated the boys

with more respect than they would ordinarily have been accorded and there was one youth in particular who gave them a very wide berth, keeping as far from them as possible. This was Paabu, the youth within whose thick skull it was popularly believed reposed the big medicine of the white boy witch-doctor.

Since the moment that Doc had made the two knives disappear within Paabu's left ear that unhappy individual had been the object of much suspicious observation upon the part of all the villagers. At first he had enjoyed this unusual celebrity and had strutted about with great pompousness, but when it had been whispered that Galla Galla was becoming consumed with curiosity to

learn if the big medicine was indeed inside Paabu's head, the youth had filled with a great terror that kept him almost continuously in the seclusion and dirt of his father's hut; for he knew of but one way in which Galla Galla could definitely learn if the big medicine was actually within his skull, and Paabu knew Galla Galla well enough to know that, whenever the spirit chanced to move him, he would not hesitate to make a thorough investigation, no matter how painful, or how fatal to Paabu.

One day, as the boys were lying in the shade beside their hut, Galla Galla approached them. With him was an evil-faced individual whom the boys recognized as Intamo, the witch-doctor

of the Bagalla, a Mugalla of great power whose influence over Galla Galla made him in many ways virtually chief of the Bagalla. His wrinkled face was seamed and lined by age and vicious thoughts, and clouded by a perpetual scowl—a fit setting for his blood-shot eyes and his sharp, filed, cannibal teeth. As the two approached the boys, Intamo excitedly urged something upon the chief, but he ceased speaking as they came within earshot of Dick and Doc, as though fearful that they might overhear and understand.

However, Galla Galla, stopping in front of his two young captives, let the cat out of the bag. "Intamo say your medicine no good," he announced.

"Let him make better medicine," retorted Doc in halting and faulty Bagalla.

"Intamo say your medicine not in Paabu's head," continued Galla Galla.

"I say it is. Didn't you see me put it there?"

"We find out," announced the chief. "How you find out?" demanded Dick, and then, as a sudden thought popped into his mind: "Golly! You don't mean __"

"How you find out what's in a nut?" retorted Galla Galla. "You crack it!"

"But you'd kill him," cried Doc, horror stricken.

"And if we do not find the big

medicine there, we kill you," said Intamo, who would have liked nothing better than to get rid of the white boy whose big medicine had had a bad effect upon Intamo's reputation as a witch-doctor, since he had been unable to duplicate Doc's exhibition of wizardry.

"You come now," he continued. "We find out!"

And accompanied by Galla Galla and the boys, Intamo led the way toward the center of the village where, in an open space before the chief's hut, all the ceremonies of the tribe were conducted.

While Paabu was being searched out and dragged, resisting and screaming, to be sacrificed upon the altar of ignorance and superstition, word ran rapidly

through the village that a bit of delicious entertainment was about to be staged, and there resulted a rush for grand stand seats. A ring of savage warriors kept a circular place cleared; in the center of this clearing stood Galla Galla and Intamo. To them Paabu was dragged.

Dick and Doc stood shoulder to shoulder in the front rank of spectators, their tanned faces blanched with horror. Two warriors held the half fainting Paabu while Intamo, armed with a knobkerrie, made mystical passes in the air and mumbled a weird incantation that was supposed to weaken the strength of the white boy's big medicine, in the event that it should actually be found within the unfortunate Paabu's head.

"Golly!" whispered Dick, "can't we do something to stop them before Intamo breaks that boy's head open with his club?"

"Makes me feel like a murderer," groaned Doc.

"You will be a murderer—almost—if they go through with this thing," said Dick. "But if you tell 'em the truth, they'll kill us."

"When they don't find the knives inside his coco, they'll kill us anyway," replied Doc.

"Then you better tell 'em," advised Dick. "There's no use lettin' 'em kill that poor kid."

"I've got it!" cried Doc. "For the love of Mike! Quick! Slip me your knife!

Don't let anyone see it. Here! That's it! Now watch my smoke?"

Slipping Dick's knife inside his loin cloth beside his own, Doc stepped forward into the circle. "Wait!" he commanded, advancing toward Intamo, but addressing Galla Galla. "You need not kill Paabu. I can prove that the big medicine that belongs to my friend and the big medicine that belongs to me are both inside Paabu's head. I am great witch-doctor and do not have to crack Paabu's skull open to get the medicine out, the way Intamo does. See!"

And before Intamo could prevent, Doc stepped close to the unfortunate victim of Intamo's jealousy and Galla Galla's curiosity, and with two swift

movements of his right hand appeared to withdraw the knives from Paabu's ear. Turning, he exhibited them upon the palm of his open hand to Galla Galla and the assembled Bagalla.

Perhaps Doc's Bagalla had been lame and halting, but there was no one there who did not perfectly understand the wondrous powers of his great magic, nor fail to see that his medicine was much stronger than that of Intamo, for it is very true that we are all convinced by what we think we see, quite as surely as by what we actually do see.

Galla Galla was nonplussed. Intamo was furious. Being an unscrupulous old fakir, himself, he was convinced that Doc had done no more than play a clever

trick upon them all—a trick by which he, for one, did not intend to be fooled. But now he knew that Doc had beaten him at his own game and perhaps in the bottom of his ignorant, savage brain there was enough natural superstition to half convince him that perhaps, after all, here was a real, genuine witch- doctor who commanded demons and controlled their supernatural powers. His fear and hatred of Doc were increased a hundred fold by the happenings of the past few minutes and within his evil heart there crystalized the determination to rid himself as quickly as possible of this dangerous competitor.

Had he known what was coming, he would have used his knobkerrie to that

end upon the instant, for Doc had been smitten by another of those brilliant ideas that had made him famous and feared at school as a practical joker — though it is only fair to record that his jokes had always been harmless and good-natured ones until he had met Intamo. He wheeled suddenly toward that portion of the ring where the greatest throng was gathering, and held the two knives out upon his open palm.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" he cried. "We have here two ordinary pocket knives." The fact that he spoke English and that none of his auditors understood him, but added to the impressiveness of his words, since all the tribe was quite convinced that he was about to make big

medicine.

"Step right up and examine them! Feel them! Bite them!"

Some of his hearers began to show evidences of growing nervousness.

"You see that they are gen-u-ine. You will note that I have no accomplices. Now, ladies and gentlemen, watch me closely!"

As upon the other occasions, he placed his left palm over the knives, clasped his hands, blew upon them, raised them above his head.

"Abracadabra!" he screamed with such sudden shrillness that his audience fell back in terror. "Allo, presto, change cars and be gone!" He turned slowly about until he had located the exact

position of Intamo and then before the unsuspecting witch-doctor could guess his purpose Doc sprang quickly to his side and placed both palms over the old villain's ear. "Now you see 'em! Now you don't!" he concluded, and turned with outspread, empty palms toward Galla Galla.

He stood thus in impressive silence for several seconds, while the true meaning of what he had done sank into the muddy brains of his audience.

Then he addressed Galla Galla.

"You saw me take the big medicine from the head of Paabu and place it on the head of Intamo," he said in the language of the chief. "If you want to make sure that it is in Intamo's head, it

may be that he will loan you his war club."

CHAPTER 8

Later that same afternoon, while Dick and Doc were chatting beside their hut with Bulala and Ukundo, they heard a great racket at the village gates. Thither from all directions were running men, women and children and presently the prisoners saw a great company of strange natives surging into the compound. They were greeted with laughter and shouting that proclaimed them to be friends of the villagers.

"The guests are coming to the feast," said Ukundo, grimly, and thereafter the four sat in moody silence, each wrapped in his own thoughts. The actuality of their fate had never seemed more than a bad dream to the boys, but now, at last,

it was borne in to them as something very real, and very terrible, and very close. They could see the hideous, painted faces of the newcomers and the grinning mouths that exposed the yellow teeth, filed to sharp points. They saw some of the villagers point them out and scores of greedy eyes directed upon them.

"I remember," said Dick, "how I used to stand outside the confectioner's shop looking at the goodies in the window. Those bounders reminded me of it."

"I suppose we look like the original candy kids," sighed Doc.

Presently four or five warriors came and seized Bulala. They dragged him to a small hut near the chief's and there they

bound him hand and foot and threw him inside.

"Poor Bulala," whispered Doc.

"He was a good friend," said Dick. "Oh, isn't there anything we can do?"

Doc shook his head and looked inquiringly at Ukundo, but Ukundo only sat staring at the ground.

"Ukundo!" snapped Dick. The pygmy looked up.

"What?" he asked.

"Can't we escape, Ukundo?"

"He make big medicine," said Ukundo, jerking a thumb at Doc. "If he cannot escape, how can poor Ukundo, who cannot make any medicine?"

"My medicine is white man's

medicine," said Doc. "It cannot show me my way through the jungle. If I got out of the village, I should be lost and the lions would get me."

"If you can get out of the village and take Ukundo with you, he will take you through the jungle to his own people. Ukundo knows the jungle, but he is afraid at night. At night the jungle is full of demons. If you can get out in the daytime, Ukundo will go with you and show you the way. But you can not get out while it is light, for the Bagalla will see you. At night we should be killed and eaten by the demons. It cannot be done." Thus spoke Ukundo, the pygmy, who knew the jungle better than any man.

It was several minutes before Doc

replied, for he was thinking very hard, indeed. Presently he looked quickly up at Ukundo.

"Ukundo," he cried, "if it is only the demons you fear, there is nothing to prevent our trying to escape at night, for I can make medicine that will protect us from them."

Ukundo shook his head. "I do not know," he said, doubtingly.

"You have seen me make stronger medicine than Intamo can make," urged Doc. "Do you not believe me, when I say that I can make medicine that will keep every demon of the jungle from harming us?"

"Are you sure?" demanded Ukundo.

"Didn't we spend a night in the jungle

before we reached this village?" asked Dick. "Not one single little bit of a demon bothered us. You ought to have seen 'em run, the minute they laid their eyes on Doc."

Ukundo's eyes grew very wide as he looked with awe at Doc. "The medicine of the white boy witch-doctor must be very strong," he said.

"It is," admitted Doc. "I'll give you my word that not a demon will hurt you while I am along; but if we stay here, Galla Galla will eat you. Will you come with us?"

Ukundo glanced at the hut in which lay the unhappy Bulala. "Yes," he said, "Ukundo will go with you."

"Good old Ukundo!" cried Dick, and

then, in a whisper, "We'll have to go tonight because tomorrow it may be too late for poor Bulala."

"Bulala?" questioned Ukundo. "Bulala is already as good as dead."

"You think they will kill him tonight?" demanded Dick. Ukundo shrugged his shoulders, "Perhaps."

"But we must save him if we can," insisted Dick.

"We cannot," said Ukundo.

"We can try," said Doc.

"Yes, we can try," agreed Ukundo, without enthusiasm, for Ukundo was a fatalist, believing, as many primitive people do, that whatever is about to happen must happen and that it is useless

to struggle against it. Perhaps that is why neither he nor Bulala had given any serious thought to the matter of escape, being content to assume that if Fate had ordained that they were to be eaten by the Bagalla, they would be eaten by the Bagalla, and that was all that there was to it.

But Dick and Doc were not fatalists. They knew that their own wit and ability and courage had a great deal more to do with guiding their destinies than did any legendary lady called Fate. To them Fate was just a silly bogy, like the demons of Ukundo, and so they planned and schemed against the time when conditions might be right for them to attempt to make a break for liberty.

Their difficulties were greatly increased because of Bulala, but not once did either of them think of abandoning this good friend without making an attempt to rescue him, even though failure to do so might almost certainly result in preventing their own escape.

As night fell, the boys could see the villagers and their guests assembling for the evening meal. Pots were being brought forth and filled with water that was set to boil over numerous fires. There was a great deal of loud talk and laughter. The captives wondered if the pots of boiling water were waiting to receive Bulala and how soon it would be before their turn would come, and as they sat there, watching the fierce and

terrible savages, their minds could not but be filled with gloomy thoughts and dire forebodings, try though they would to cast them out. For some time they had sat in silence, when their attention was attracted by a rustling sound as of a body crushing against the side of their grass-walled hut. They were sitting just outside the entrance; someone, or some thing, was approaching from behind the hut, keeping close to the outside wall, which was in dense shadow. Dick and Doc drew their knives and waited. Who or what could it be? Whoever, or whatever it was it was quite evident that it did not wish anyone to know that it was there; the stealthiness of its approach made that quite plain.

Slowly Dick rose to his feet, his knife ready in his hand, and Doc placed himself at Dick's side. Ukundo, unarmed, stood at Dick's left. Thus the three waited in tense silence while the stealthy sounds approached along the side of the hut, through the inky darkness of the shadows cast by the glaring camp fires of the village.

"Demon!" whispered Ukundo.

"Leave him to me then," said Doc. "But if it's a lion you can have it."

"Not a lion," said Ukundo. "Demon—or man!"

Presently a low "S-s-t!" sounded from the shadows.

"Who are you?" demanded Dick.

"What do you want?" asked Doc.

"I am Paabu," whispered a voice, very low. "I come to warn you."

"Come closer," said Doc. "We are alone."

A part of the shadow resolved itself into the youth, as he came nearer and crouched low against the side of the hut.

"You saved my life today," he said, addressing Doc, "so I come to warn you. Intamo has put poison in food for you. I saw him. Paabu hates Intamo. That is all! I go!"

"Wait!" urged Doc. "What are they going to do with Bulala?"

Paabu grinned. "Eat him, of course," he said.

"When?"

"Tomorrow night. Next night they eat Ukundo. I think they are afraid of your medicine. They may not eat you, unless Intamo is able to kill you with poison."

"They couldn't eat us then," said Dick, "because the poison would kill them."

"No!" contradicted Paabu. "Intamo take care of that. Intamo make good poison, and as soon as you die, he cut out all your insides. There will be no poison in your flesh. If he thinks you eat the poison food, and then you do not die, he will be afraid. But he will find another way to kill you unless your medicine is very strong. That is why Paabu come to warn you—so that you may make strong medicine."

He started away.

"Wait!" said Dick again. "Have they killed Bulala yet?"

"No!"

"When will they kill him?"

"Tomorrow."

"Will you do something for me?" asked Doc.

"What?" demanded Paabu.

"Bring us some weapons—four knives, four spears, four bows and some arrows. Will you do that for me, Paabu?"

"I am afraid. Galla Calla would kill me. Intamo would kill me, if he knew I come here and speak with you."

"They will never know," insisted

Doc.

"I am afraid," said Paabu. "Now I go."

"Look!" whispered Doc. He drew his pocket knife from his loin cloth.

"See this?" and he held the big medicine close to Paabu's face.

The youth drew back in terror. "Do not put it in my head!" he whimpered.

"I will not put it in your head, Paabu," Doc assured him, "because I am your friend, but I will give it to you, if you will bring us the weapons. How would you like to own this big medicine that is stronger than any medicine that Intamo can make? You could be a great witch-doctor if you owned this, Paabu. What do you say?"

"It will not hurt me?" asked Paabu, fearfully.

"It will not hurt you, if I tell it not to," replied Doc. "If I give it to you, then it will be yours and so cannot hurt you unless you make it."

"Very well," said Paabu. "I will bring you the weapons."

"When?" demanded Doc.

"Very soon."

"Good! If you are not back very soon the big medicine will be angry and then I don't know what it might do to you. Hurry!"

Paabu vanished among the shadows and the three sat down to wait and plan. At least they had taken the first step, but

they were still inside the village, surrounded by cruel and savage captors.

While they waited, a man came, bringing them food. He was not one who had brought them food before and they guessed that he had been sent by Intamo. As soon as he had gone, they dug a hole in the ground and buried all the food, then they relapsed into silent, anxious waiting.

CHAPTER 9

Far away, at the edge of the jungle, fifty ebon warriors were camped in a grassy clearing. They were fine, stalwart men with regular features and strong, white teeth. One of them was strumming upon a crude stringed instrument, while two of his fellows were dancing in the firelight that gleamed back from the glossy velvet of their skin. Their weapons, laid aside, were within easy reach and many of them still wore the plumed headdress of their tribe. Their stern faces were lighted by smiles, for this was their hour of relaxation, following a hard day of fruitless search.

A giant white man, swinging through the trees, approached the camp of the

fifty warriors. He was naked but for a leopard skin, and armed only with a long rope and a hunting knife. Through the darkness of the jungle, he moved with perfect sureness and in utter silence. Numa, the hunting lion, down wind from him, caught his scent and growled. It was a scent that Numa knew well, and feared. It was not alone the scent of man—it was the scent of The Man.

Presently he dropped lightly to the ground beside the camp. Instantly the warriors were upon their feet, their weapons ready in their hands.

"It is I, my children," said the man. "It is I, Tarzan of the Apes!"

The warriors tossed aside their weapons. "Welcome Big Bwana!"

"Welcome, Tarzan!" they called.

"What luck, Muviro?" demanded the ape man.

"None, master," replied a mighty black. "We have searched in all directions, but we have seen no spoor of the white boys."

"Nor I," said Tarzan. "I am half convinced that the Mugalla whom we questioned a week ago lied to us, when he said that they had come to his village and that Galla Galla, their chief, had sent them on toward my country with some friendly Karendo traders. Tomorrow we shall set out for the village of Galla Galla."

CHAPTER 10

The twins and Ukundo had not long to wait before Paabu returned, as he had promised, bringing weapons to them. His terror was quite real when he received Doc's pocket knife in payment of his services, but his ambition to become a great witch-doctor overcame his fears and it was a proud, though frightened Paabu, who sneaked away in the darkness, clutching the big medicine tightly in one grimy paw.

About the village fires the boys could see the natives eating and drinking, while Intamo, clothed in all the hideous and grotesque finery of his profession, danced weirdly in the firelight, sprinkling powder into the various

cooking pots and making strange passes above them with a stick to which was fastened the brush from the tail of a buffalo. Ukundo told them that Intamo was making medicine to frighten the demons away from the pots in which Bulala would be cooked on the morrow and that the real festivities would not commence until the following night. There was little dancing in the village, that night, and after Intamo had completed his ceremony, the blacks commenced to retire to their huts and soon the village street was deserted. All the fires were banked with the exception of one. The village was quite dark.

The moment was approaching when the boys could make their long deferred

attempt to escape. In low whispers they had been discussing their plans with Ukundo, all the evening. Now it was only a matter of waiting until they felt sure that the entire village was asleep.

They had distributed the weapons brought them by Paabu, and the feel of them in their hands seemed to impart a new courage and almost to insure the success of their venture.

"Golly!" said Dick, presently. "Don't you suppose they're asleep yet?"

"Better wait a little longer," counselled Doc. "This is our only chance and we just can't fail."

At that moment they saw a figure emerge from one of the huts and come toward them.

"There!" said Doc. "What did I tell you?"

The figure approached at a brisk walk and the three hid their weapons as best they could, putting them on the ground and squatting in front of them, but keeping them within reach; for there was something sinister about this silent figure, advancing through the sleeping village. The sickly light of a single dying camp fire dimly outlined the approaching figure, which the waiting captives could see was that of a large warrior in whose right hand swung a short, heavy knobkerrie.

Who could it be? What was his mission in the dead of night?

He was almost upon them before he

perceived them, huddled just outside the entrance of their hut; his surprise at seeing them there was evident, for he stopped suddenly with an angry grunt.

"Why are you not in your hut?" he demanded in a hoarse whisper.

"Which is the white boy witch-doctor? I would speak with him."

It was Intamo. The three recognized him simultaneously and knew why he had come and why he carried the knobkerrie.

"I am he," replied Doc. "What do you want of me?"

The only answer that Intamo made was to leap forward with raised bludgeon. With a cry of horror, Dick jumped to his feet and sprang between

Intamo and his intended victim. With his short spear grasped in both hands and held horizontally before him and above his head he sought to break the force of Itamo's wicked blow. The knobkerrie crashed upon the stout wood of the spear haft and glanced to one side. But Intamo with the sweep of a mighty arm brushed the lad aside and swung his club again.

It was at this instant that a small, pantherlike figure, springing with the agility and ferocity of one of the great jungle eats, launched itself full upon the breast of Intamo, hurling the witch-doctor to the ground. Twice a muscular arm rose and fell; twice a dull blade gleamed for an instant in the fitful firelight, then Ukundo arose from the

prostrate form, but Intamo lay very still where he had fallen.

"Good old Ukundo!" whispered Dick in a broken voice that choked with a sob, for he knew that Doc had been very near to death.

"Each of you has saved my life," said Doc, "and—O, gee!—I don't know what to say!"

"Don't say anything," advised Dick. "Anyway, we aren't out of this mess yet."

"Now we better go," said Ukundo. "Have you made strong medicine against the jungle demons?"

"Very strong," replied Doc. "You have seen that my medicine is stronger than Intamo's, for he came here to kill me and instead it was he who was killed."

"Yes," admitted Ukundo, "I saw!"

As they had previously planned, the three crept stealthily along the rear of the village huts, keeping dose to the palisade. Dick led, Ukundo followed, and then Doc. They had to move very silently lest they awaken some of the numerous village curs, whose yapping might easily arouse the entire village. And so they moved forward very slowly, often just a few yards at a time, when they would lie quietly for several minutes. It was slow, nerve-wracking work. The hut in which Bulala was confined seemed miles away, though in fact it was but a few hundred feet. At last, however, after what seemed an eternity, they reached it and while the

boys waited behind the hut, Ukundo crept to the front and crawled inside.

Again there was a long, long wait. The interminable minutes dragged slowly by. Not a sound came to their ears from the interior of the hut for what seemed ages, and then, at last, they heard a faint rustling within. A few minutes later Ukundo and Bulala crept to their sides. Bulala was almost overcome by emotion, so certain had he been that nothing could save him from the horrible fate that awaited him on the morrow; but his words of gratitude were silenced and a moment later the four were creeping toward the village gates.

Here they met their serious obstacle. The gates were secured by chains

through which was fastened an old time padlock, such as slavers once used to secure the chains to the necks of their poor victims. For a moment it seemed that they were doomed to failure at the very outset of their attempted break for liberty, but as the boys were examining the fastenings, Doc almost gave vent to a cry of relief; he had discovered that, with true native shiftlessness, the Bagalla had fastened the end of one of the stout chains to a post of the palisade with a bit of grass rope and as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, this proved a very weak chain indeed. A single stroke of Doc's knife severed the rope and the chain clattered to the ground— an occurrence that almost

proved their undoing for the noise startled a nearby cur into a frenzy of barking that was quickly taken up by every other dog in the village until it seemed that a thousand dogs were yapping at the top of their lungs.

And then the gates stuck as the four put their combined weight against them in an effort to swing them open. Dick glanced over his shoulder and saw a warrior emerging from a hut. The fellow, voicing a loud cry of warning, came running toward them, and in an instant the village was swarming with fierce blacks, all running with brandished spears. In a frenzy of hopelessness the four prisoners hurled themselves upon the sagging barrier, and

this time the gates gave way and the quartet plunged into the outer darkness.

To cover the distance across the clearing into the black shadows of the jungle required but a few seconds, for their feet were winged by terror of the hideous death clutching so close behind to drag them back into its awful embrace.

A few feet beyond the village gates the Bagalla halted; they had no medicine to safeguard them against the malign influences of the demons of the darkness and the jungle.

There they stood, shouting threats and insults at the four fugitives who stumbled along the crooked jungle trail. But words could neither harm them, nor bring them

back, and presently Galla Galla led his people back into the village and closed the gates.

"Tomorrow," he said, "when the light first comes faintly through the forest, we will go forth and bring them back, for they will not go far tonight where the lions hunt, and the panthers lie in wait above the trail."

CHAPTER 11

Ukundo, master of jungle craft, led the little party by ways that no other might have found. He did not always follow the well- beaten trails, but seemed to know by instinct where short cuts might be taken and where one, by crawling upon all fours, might find a way through what seemed all impenetrable mass of tangled vegetation. For half an hour they moved along in silence; then Ukundo stopped.

"Lion!" he whispered. "He is coming! Take to the trees!"

Dick and Doc could see nothing, could hear nothing. They had been following each other by the not always simple expedient of actually touching the

one ahead. If they lost touch, they were as good as lost until they again made contact. Now they saw no trees. They knew there were trees all about them, but they could see none. The blackness was everywhere—darkness absolute. They stood up and groped about.

"Hurry!" warned Ukundo. "He comes!"

They heard a crashing in the underbrush. Doc's fingers came in contact with the bole of a great tree. "Here, Dick!" he whispered. "Here's a tree! This way!" He felt Dick touch him. The noise in the underbrush seemed very close.

"Climb!" said Dick. "I've found the tree. Hurry up!"

Doc attempted to scramble up the giant trunk, but he could not span it with his arms, nor could Dick. They reached through the darkness searching for a branch, but found none. A horrid growl sounded almost in their ears. Dick realized that the beast was upon him and in the instant he obeyed the first impulse that seized him. He wheeled about facing the animal he could not see and, holding his spear in both hands, thrust it violently outward in the direction of that blood curdling growl. At the same instant he felt a heavy body strike the weapon. He was hurled to the ground and a great weight hurtled against him, a thunderous, deafening roar shook the earth, as the lion lunged into the thicket

just beyond him, where there followed such a tumult as might have been made by a dozen lions fighting over their kill.

"Dick!" called Doc. "Are you all right?"

"Yes. Are you?"

"You bet! Hurry! I've found a way up this tree. Here! Over here!"

Dick groped his way to Doc, who had discovered a smaller tree growing near the huge one they had been unable to climb, and soon the two boys were perched high above the angry lion thrashing about in the underbrush and emitting terrific roars and growls. By shouting, they soon located Ukundo and Bulala in nearby trees; but they could not see them, and after a short discussion it

was decided that they remain where they were until morning, when they could get an early start and hasten on towards the country of Ukundo, who promised that all of them would receive a warm and hospitable welcome.

Presently the lion ceased its noise and the boys tried to settle themselves with some degree of safety and comfort that they might snatch a brief sleep, for they knew that they had a day ahead of them that would tax to the utmost their weakened bodies unfitted by weeks of captivity and the vile food. Dick was concerned about his spear, which had been knocked from his grasp when the lion sprang against him.

And at last morning came, and with

the first peep of dawn, Ukundo urged them to descend and continue their flight, assuring them that the Bagalla would be certain to trail them at least to the limits of Ugalla.

Dick and Doc scrambled down to search for Dick's spear. The first thing their eyes fell upon was the dead body of a great black- maned lion, from the chest of which protruded the missing weapon.

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc. "You killed him, Dick! You killed a lion!"

Ukundo and Bulala joined them and many were the congratulations heaped upon the astonished Dick. A hasty examination revealed what seemed the only explanation of the surprising event.

In leaping for Dick, the lion must have misjudged the distance in the darkness and jumped too high. Dick's spear, thrust outward by chance, had been held at precisely the right angle and the lion had impaled itself upon the point, which had first entered its lungs, after which, the lion, in its mad efforts to dislodge the weapon had turned the point into its own heart.

"Golly!" exclaimed Dick, "I'd like to take it along, just the head, even."

"Cut off its tail," suggested Doc. "That's about all of it you'll feel like carrying after an hour or so."

And so Dick took the tail as the trophy of his first big game and the four resumed their flight, already tired and

hungry before the day fully dawned.

Their progress was slow because the boys could not travel fast. Their bare feet were sore and bleeding and the naked flesh of their bodies was torn and scratched by the cruel thorns that seemed to reach out to seize them.

At noon they reached an open stretch of country where traveling was easier and their spirits were refreshed, for the dismal jungle had exercised a depressing effect upon them for many days—an effect which they had not actually realized until they had come out into the comparative open of the clearing.

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc. "It's just like the beginning of a long vacation."

"I know we're going to be all right now," said Dick, and at that very instant three-score painted Bagalla warriors leapt from ambush all about them.

The four looked about in consternation. They were completely surrounded. There was no escape.

"Shall we fight?" cried Doc.

"Yes!" replied Dick. "Bulala! Ukundo! will you fight with us? They will only kill us if they capture us."

"We had better die fighting," replied Ukundo.

Doc fitted an arrow to his bow and shot it at the oncoming warriors, but, sped by an unaccustomed hand, the arrow only described a graceful curve and stuck upright in the ground a few

yards from Doc's feet. The Bagalla shouted in derision and rushed forward. Then Dick shot, but the string slipped from the notch in the end of the arrow and when he released the missile, it fell at his feet. But Ukundo was more adept. He drew the shaft far back, and when he let it fly, it embedded itself deeply in the breast of a shouting Bagalla. Then the Bagalla halted. They danced fiercely and shouted insults at the four.

"Why don't they shoot at us?" asked Dick.

"They want to take us alive," said Bulala.

"In a moment they will all charge from different directions," prophesied Ukundo. "We shall kill some, but they

will take us alive."

Dick had thrown down his bow and stood ready with his spear. Doc followed his example. "I never did like an old bow and arrow, anyway," he said.

"Here they come!" warned Dick. "Good bye, Doc!"

"Good bye, Dick!" replied his cousin.

"Don't let 'em take you alive!"

"Poor Mother!"

"Golly! Here come a million more of the beggars!" exclaimed Dick.

And sure enough, with waving plumes there came what seemed a veritable horde of mighty warriors, grim and savage, pouring out of the nearby forest.

"They are not Bagalla," said Ukundo.

"Look!" cried Doc. "There's a white man leading them."

"It is Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle, and his mighty Waziri!" exclaimed Ukundo.

"Tarzan?" shouted Dick. "Yes, it is Tarzan. We are saved!"

The Bagalla, warned now by the savage war cry of the Waziri, turned in their direction. At sight of Tarzan and his warriors the ranks of the Bagalla were thrown into confusion.

They forgot their prey and thought only of escape, for well they knew the power and the wrath of Tarzan of the Apes. Like frightened rabbits they scurried for the jungle, pursued by the Waziri warriors, who showered arrows

and spears among them. As they disappeared from the clearing, Tarzan approached the boys.

"I thank God that I have found you," he said.

"I did not think you could survive the dangers of the jungle. But when I saw you make your stand against the Bagalla, I knew why you had survived. You are brave lads! In the jungle only the brave may live. I am very proud of you."

Ukundo and Bulala had gone down on their hands and knees before the Lord of the Jungle and now Tarzan noticed them. "Who are these?" he demanded.

"They are our very good friends," said Doc. "Without them we should never have escaped."

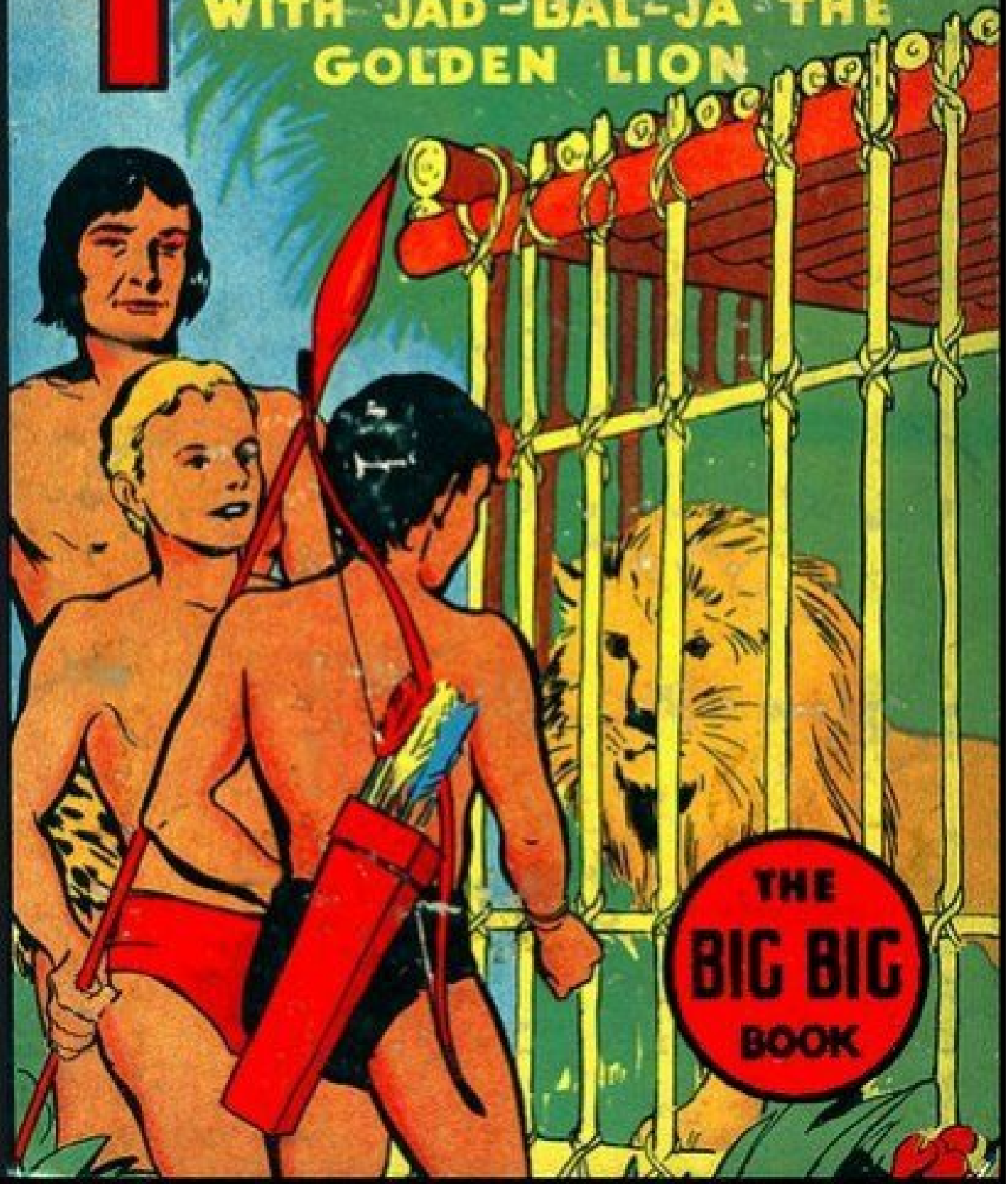
"They shall be rewarded," said Tarzan, "when we reach home tomorrow. And so shall you boys. What in all the world would you like most?"

"A whole apple pie," said Doc.

THE END

TARZAN

AND THE TARZAN TWINS WITH JAD-BAL-JA THE GOLDEN LION



THE BIG BIG BOOK

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

TARZAN AND THE TARZAN TWINS WITH JAD-BAL-

JA THE GOLDEN LION

A TARZAN BOOK FOR YOUNG READERS

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CHAPTER ONE—BACK TO THE JUNGLE

"Golly, but he's a whopper, isn't he?" exclaimed Dick.

"Gee, isn't he a beaut?" cried Doc. "I'll bet he could kill an elephant, almost."

"What's his name?" asked Dick.

"This is Jad-bal-ja," replied Tarzan of the Apes.

"The Golden Lion!" shouted Doc. "Not really—is he?"

"Yes, the Golden Lion," Tarzan assured them.

The three stood before a stout cage that stood in the rear of Tarzan's bungalow on his African estate the day

following the arrival there of the Tarzan Twins after their rescue from the fierce Bagalla cannibals, who had captured Dick and Doc after they had wandered away from the derailed train that had been carrying them on a visit to Tarzan of the Apes, who was distantly related to Dick's father.

It had been this relationship, coupled with a remarkable resemblance between the two boys, that had won for them the name of Tarzan Twins from their fellows at the English school they attended. Perhaps their resemblance to one another was not so strange after all, if we consider the fact that the boys' mothers were twin sisters.

And not only that.

One of them had married an American and remained in her native country—this was Doc's mother—and the other had married an Englishman and sailed away across the Atlantic to live in England, where Dick was born on the very same day that Doc was born in America.

And now, after passing through such adventures as come to very few boys in this world, Dick and Doc were safe under the protection of the famous ape-man and while they were looking forward to many interesting experiences, they were sure that from now on they would be perfectly safe and that never again would they be in such distressing danger as that from which they had just escaped.

Nor were they sorry, for while they were normal boys and, like all normal boys, loved adventure, they had discovered that there was a limit beyond which adventure was no longer enjoyable, and that limit lay well upon the safe side of cannibal flesh pots.

It was well for Dick and Doc, as it is, perhaps, for all of us, that they could not look into the future.

"Gee, you're not going to let him out, are you?" demanded Doc, as Tarzan of the Apes slipped the bolt that secured the door of Jad-bal-ja's cage.

"Why, yes," replied the ape-man. "He is seldom confined when I am at home, other than at night. It would scarcely be necessary even then were it not for the

fact that some of my people, filled with an instinctive fear of lions, would not dare venture from their huts at night were Jad-bal-ja abroad. And then, too," he added, "there is something that they will always remember, that I am prone to forget—that, after all, a lion is always a lion. To me Jad-bal-ja is friend and companion, so much so that sometimes I forget that he is not a man, or that I am not a lion."

"He looks fierce," said Doc.

"Won't he bite us?" asked Dick.

"When I am with him he will harm no one unless I tell him to," replied Tarzan, as he swung the cage door wide.

Dick and Doc stood as rigid as pewter soldiers as the great, tawny beast

stepped majestically from his cage. The round yellow eyes, the terrifying eyes, surveyed them, and Tarzan spoke in a language that the boys did not understand as Jad-bal-ja advanced and sniffed their clothing and their hands.

"I am telling him that you are my friends," explained Tarzan of the Apes, "and that he must never harm you in the least."

"I hope he understands you," said Doc, and Tarzan smiled.

"We will take a walk," he said, "and presently the lion will become accustomed to you. Pay no attention to him. Do not touch him, unless he comes and rubs his head against you, which he will not. It is his way of showing

affection for me and my family—a mark which he has not bestowed upon others."

"Don't worry," said Dick. "I'll not touch him if I can help it!"

"What does 'Jad-bal-ja' mean?" asked Doc, as the four passed through the gate and out onto the rolling veldt that stretched away to the hills on one side and to the forest and the jungle on the other.

"It is taken from the language of the tailed people of Pal-ul-don," explained Tarzan. "Jad means the; bal is their word for either gold or golden, and ja is lion. I found him, a tiny cub, beside his dead mother, after I had escaped from Pal-ul-don, and was returning home. Even then, he had an unusually golden hue and the

language of Pal-ul-don, being fresh in my mind, I named him Jad-bal-ja, The Golden Lion."

As they walked the boys asked a thousand questions which Tarzan answered good-naturedly and to the best of his ability, which was excellent, inasmuch as the boys confined their questions rather closely to Tarzan's life in the jungle, which seemed to them quite the most interesting subject in the world.

"What do you boys want to do?" asked Tarzan. "We have the whole day before us."

"I should like to go into the jungle," said Dick, rather wistfully.

"Me too," said Doc.

"I should think that you boys had had enough of the jungle for a while," laughed the ape-man.

"There is a fascination about it that I cannot explain," replied Dick. "I am afraid of the jungle and yet I want to go back into it."

"I sure like to be in it with you," said Doc, looking adoringly at Tarzan. "How long would it take us to walk over there?"

"About two hours. Could you stand it and the return journey?"

"Could we? I'll say we could," cried Dick.

"How about you, Doc?" demanded Tarzan.

"Sure!"

"All right," said the ape-man, "and if we don't want to come back tonight we don't have to. The jungle gives food and shelter to its people—and freedom. That is why I love it."

"Let's go," said the Tarzan Twins, speaking together almost in the same breath.

Tarzan nodded and led the way.

In high spirits they crossed the veldt, the great lion pacing at the side of its savage master, the two lads drinking in every word of jungle lore that fell from the lips of the ape-man.

Tarzan and the twins wore loin cloths and head bands and carried the simplest and most primitive of weapons—each

had a bow and arrows, a spear and a knife. Tarzan, in addition, carried the grass rope that long habit had made almost a part of him.

As the cannibals had stolen the clothing that Dick and Doc had worn when they were captured and as their trunks were still at the rail head, there had really been nothing else for the boys to wear other than the primitive apparel in which they were garbed; but, if the truth were known, they were more than satisfied and would have scorned such symbols of effete civilization as pants and shirts.

Their life with the cannibals and their flight through the jungle had accustomed them to scant attire and had already

somewhat hardened their youthful bodies against the rigors of the primeval world that beckoned to them from beyond the borders of the veldt.

With light hearts and eager faces they left the veldt behind and entered the gloomy corridors of the African jungle.

Safe in the companionship of the giant man and the great lion that accompanied them, they were troubled by no fears whatever.

CHAPTER TWO—THE STORM

Deep into the jungle the ape-man led them, while overhead Manu the monkey chattered and scolded, reproaching Tarzan for bringing Numa the lion to disturb his peace; but neither Tarzan nor Jad-bal-ja paid any attention to the little monkey, and now the two boys noticed that Tarzan had grown suddenly silent. He answered their questions shortly or not at all and there was a serious expression upon his face. Often he watched Jad-bal-ja attentively and often he paused to sniff the air or to listen.

Presently he turned to the boys.

"Something is wrong in the jungle," he

said. "Jad-bal-ja has sensed it. I do not yet know what it is. Have you noticed that he has become nervous? He has sensed something that even I cannot as yet sense. I think it lies up wind from us and that would be natural since the scent of Jad-bal-ja, the flesh eater, is keen indeed. Remain here with Jad-bal-ja while I go and investigate. It may be nothing. A storm is coming—that I have sensed for the past hour—and it may be only the coming storm that has affected the nerves of the Golden Lion. In the jungle, however, he who would live must know—he may not guess."

The two boys watched the giant ape-man swing away through the lower branches of the jungle trees and a

moment later they were alone with the great cat that paced nervously to and fro, occasionally eyeing them through those cruel, round, yellow eyes that looked anything but friendly and reassuring to the twins.

"Gee," said Doc, "I wish Tarzan had taken him along with him."

"He left him here to guard us, you poor ninny," snapped Dick, his tone of voice plainly evidencing his own nervousness.

"All right, but I can't help but remember what he said about him."

"What did he say about him, except that he wouldn't hurt anyone unless Tarzan told him to?" demanded Dick.

"Yes, smarty, but he also said, 'When

Tarzan is with him,' but that isn't what I remember most," retorted Doc.

"Well, then, what is it you remember so fine?"

"Tarzan said: 'After all a lion is always a lion!'"

"You would remember something like that!" growled Dick.

"I believe," said Doc, "that I'll just climb this tree for the fun of it."

"Fraidy-cat!"

"Fraidy-cat nothing! I'm not afraid. I just want to practice climbing. You can't ever tell when it will come in handy, especially in the jungle."

"Suppose he doesn't want us to climb?" Dick nodded in the direction of

Jad-bal-ja.

"Why shouldn't he want us to climb?" demanded Doc.

"Well, if he's thinking of being a lion, and is hungry, I guess that would be a pretty good reason for him not to want us to climb."

"Who said I could think of things? I never would have thought of anything like that. It took you to do it."

"Oh, any time you weren't thinking of the same thing yourself," scoffed Dick.

"Well, I wasn't thinking it out loud, anyway," retorted Doc.

Dick said no more.

Jad-bal-ja was moving about restlessly. It was quite obvious that he

was nervous. His great head erect, his ears up-pricked, he looked off into the jungle in the direction that Tarzan had gone; then he turned and strode a small circle, whining.

Then suddenly the lion's yellow-green eyes fell upon the two boys and he opened his mouth, exposing huge fangs, and voiced a low roar.

"W-what do you suppose he did that for?" whispered Doc.

"Maybe he's just trying to talk to us," suggested Dick.

"I wish I knew whether it was a threat or a promise," said Doc, beginning to feel more and more uncomfortable and painfully uncertain of the future.

"Maybe we had better climb the tree

after all," whispered Dick. "Perhaps we could see Tarzan if we climbed high enough."

"You go first," said Doc.

"No," expostulated Dick. "You go first—it was your idea."

"But if he saw me escaping he might go for you," suggested Doc.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Dick. "Here are two trees just about the same size. You stroll sort of nonchalant-like over to one of them and I'll say 'climb,' and then we'll both climb as fast as we can. What do you say, shall we do it?"

"I say hop to it and the sooner the quicker," was Doc's answer.

"There! He's looking the other way now. Now's the time!"

The two boys, glancing fearfully over their shoulders, walked slowly toward their respective trees. If they were nervous, who may blame them? A forest lion at large in his grim jungle is a terrifying creature; so terrifying, in fact, that some persons, meeting one in the jungle, have been known to kneel in a paralysis of fear, waiting for the great beast to come and devour them, offering now defense and no resistance.

Jad-bal-ja, hearing the boy's footfalls, turned his fierce eyes upon them. Doc gasped. Dick tried to swallow, but failed. His throat was suddenly dry and parched. They were but a few steps from

the trees they had selected and they did not stop. Their greatest difficulty was to restrain a desire to run.

Jad-bal-ja eyed them questioningly, then he started slowly toward them. Now the boys were at the foot of their respective trees.

"Climb!" gasped Dick, and in the instant both were scrambling up the boles of the trees as fast as they could go.

Jad-bal-ja halted in his tracks and watched them. Upon his wrinkled face was an expression that might have been pained surprise, and when the boys reached the safety of branches that swung high above the ground and looked down they saw the lion squatting upon

his haunches staring steadily upward at them.

"There!" cried Dick. "I knew he wouldn't hurt us. He never tried to stop us at all. Golly, but you're sure a fraidy-cat. I'd hate to have Tarzan come back and find us up here."

"All right, if you're so brave, go on down. I don't care who finds me here. I'd rather be up here all in one piece than scattered around down there on the ground," was Doc's reply.

"Aw, shucks, he wouldn't hurt a flea," insisted Dick. "Look at him."

"Maybe he wouldn't, but I am not so unappetizing as a flea."

"You haven't the nerve of one anyway," Dick scoffed tauntingly.

"All right, instead of talking so much, why don't you go on down and play with him?"

"I guess I will."

Doc laughed raucously.

"All right, watch me!" cried Dick, making ostentatious preparations to descend.

Doc watched him intently. Dick slid from the branch upon which he had been sitting, grasped the bole of the tree with both arms and prepared to slide down to the ground.

"Aw, don't, Dick," cried Doc. "Please don't. Better not take any chances."

"All right," said Dick, "if you don't want me to, I won't," and he climbed

back onto his branch again, to perch there safely.

"Gee, but it's getting dark," exclaimed Doc. "Do you suppose it's as late as that?"

"It must be the storm that Tarzan said was coming. Yes, look up there!"

Through a break in the dense foliage overhead, black, angry clouds could be seen billowing low above the forest. The gloom of the jungle deepened. The air became very quiet—breathless—as though the heart of Nature had momentarily ceased to beat. Presently the tree tops bent as though pressed down by a mighty palm. Then they whipped back. The wind shrieked, the trees waved wildly against the racing

clouds, the lightning flashed—jagged, blinding lightning—and then the thunder crashed and roared and with it came the rain, not in drops, but in great sheets and gusts, borne on the frothing teeth of the hurricane.

The two boys were separated by a distance of scarce twenty feet, yet they could neither see nor hear one another, though each shouted at the top of his lungs in an effort to assure himself that the other was still safe and sound.

Branches, torn from great trees, hurtled through the air. Patriarchs of the jungle crashed to the earth, carrying lesser trees with them and adding to the horrid pandemonium that reigned supreme.

Dick and Doc clung with difficulty to their perilous perches, each sure that the other was dead and that he would soon join him. It seemed beyond the remotest possibility that any living thing could escape the fury of that titanic Saturnalia.

For an hour the storm raged, and then gradually it abated, but the rain still beat down, the wind still whined and moaned through the stricken jungle and the intense darkness persisted in only a slightly lessened degree.

Shivering with cold, the boys sat with bowed heads, the rain beating upon their naked backs, and waited. What they waited for they scarcely knew or dared to think.

Each boy thought that he was alone.

Each was sure that Tarzan had been killed or injured in the terrific storm. Each wondered how he was to find his way alone back to the bungalow.

Dick raised his head and looked hopelessly about. Through the gloom and the rain he looked sorrowfully in the direction of the branch upon which Doc had been sitting when the storm broke. Dimly he discerned a figure hunched up miserably in an endeavor to avoid buffeting from the storm.

"Doc!" he cried.

The figure was electrified to life. It straightened and wheeled about.

"Dick!"

"Gee!" exclaimed Dick. "I thought you were surely gone."

"And I thought you were gone. I yelled my head off at you for an hour."

"I never heard you. Didn't you hear me?" Dick said in amazement.

"No. I guess nobody could hear anything in that awful racket. Say, did you ever hear anything like it?" demanded Doc.

"I should say not, and I don't want to ever again, either."

"What had we better do?" asked Doc. "Do you suppose Tarzan could find us now?"

"He could if—"

"If what?"

"If he is alive."

"Gee, you don't suppose—?" Doc

hesitated.

"I don't see how we ever lived through it," said Dick. "Why the whole forest was tumbling down all around us."

"I'm cold," said Doc.

"I'm nearly frozen," said Dick.

The two boys shivered, their teeth chattering.

"We can't stay here, Dick. We'd die of exposure."

"What'll we do?"

"We've got to keep moving. We've got to keep our blood circulating."

"Do you suppose we could find the way back to the bungalow?" demanded Dick.

"I didn't pay much attention to directions when we came in here," admitted Doc. "I just depended on Tarzan; but we've got to do something. We can't sit here until we die of pneumonia. Let's beat it."

Simultaneously the two boys looked searchingly at the ground beneath them. Then they looked back questioningly at one another.

"Do you see him?" asked Dick.

"No," replied Doc. "Do you suppose he's gone? If not, where is he?"

"He might be hiding in the brush."

"Oh, well," said Doc, "you're not afraid so we might as well go on down."

"I think I'll practice swinging through

the trees," said Dick.

Doc grinned. Cold and miserable as he was, he could not help it.

"All right," he agreed, "I'll practice with you. Which way do we go?"

CHAPTER THREE—THE SUN WORSHIPPERS

Cowering from the storm, twenty frightful men huddled close for warmth, crouching beneath the scant protection of a rude shelter, hastily thrown together at the first warning of the impending deluge.

Matted hair covered their heads and faces, almost concealing their close-set, wicked eyes, and black hair grew no less profusely upon their shapeless bodies, their long, gorilla-like arms and their short, crooked, stubby legs.

They were bent and crooked men with low brows and beast-like faces. Like gnomes or hobgoblins they seemed; but

they were not. They were men of a sort, men of a low and degraded type, bearing down through countless ages more of the attributes of the ape-like men from whom we are all supposed to be descended than are apparent in normal men.

These twenty were outcasts from the golden city of Opar, where La, the High Priestess of The Flaming God, reigns supreme, since Cadj, the wicked High Priest, is dead.

They had been the followers of Cadj and traitors all to La, and now, with Cadj dead, they had fled Opar and were wandering the trackless jungle in search of some secluded spot where they might build themselves a new temple.

All night they crouched in the cold and wet, but with the first faint gleam of dawn they stirred, one by one, and looked about them.

Gulm was the first to rise to his feet. In one hand he carried a knotted cudgel. A leather cord about his thick waist supported a crude knife. From beneath beetling brows he glowered about him through the darkness. He turned his face toward the east. The rain ceased. The sky was cloudless.

Gulm kicked those nearest him. "Up," he commanded. "Up and make ready to greet the coming of the Flaming God who brings a new day."

His fellows stirred. One by one they arose, sluggishly, beast-like. Some of

them growled almost like animals. The sky in the east grew rapidly lighter. The Equatorial day was rolling out of the black heavens with all its wonted suddenness. It revealed the hideous twenty—uncouth, filthy. But what is this? It is no gnarled and awful man that lies huddled in the mud at the center of the fetid pack. Its body and its limbs are symmetrical; it's skin is white, even through the mud that is caked upon it. Matted hair covers its shapely head, but it is not coarse, black hair—it is fine and silky and blond.

Prodded by some of the creatures near it, it arose, stiffly, painfully—a girl, a little white girl with golden hair.

"Hurry!" commanded Gulm.

Two of the frightful men seized the girl and dragged her from the shelter out into the open. Gulm pointed toward the east, and mechanically, dully, the girl faced the rising sun and stood motionless, almost automatically.

Behind her the twenty sun worshippers knelt in the mud, facing the east, and Gulm led them in a weird, savage chant as the great, red orb of day rose slowly above the unseen horizon.

From the heart of the dense forest they could not actually witness the rising sun, but Gulm timed the matutinal exercise so that it might coincide as closely as possible with the event.

The brief ceremony concluded, the men turned their attention to breakfast.

Everything was too water-soaked from the recent rain to permit of fire making and so from dirty loin cloths, bits of raw or half-cooked meat were produced and squatting in the mud, the brutes ate a meager and a cold breakfast.

Gulm, swallowing, turned to one of his fellows to speak.

"How much further, Blk," he demanded, "to the place you found where we may build a new temple to carry on our worship?"

"One march, maybe two," replied the low-browed Blk indifferently.

"It must not be long," said Gulm. "If we do not soon construct a temple to the Flaming God and offer Him a sacrifice, in His anger He will destroy us all—

every one of us!"

"Have we not found Him a new high priestess?" demanded another.

"Aye," assented Gulm, "but He must have His sacrifice. The Flaming God must eat and He looks to Gulm, His High Priest, to furnish Him His food, and Gulm looks to you, the lesser priests of the Flaming God, to find and fetch it. With Cadj dead and La turned against the ancient sacrificial customs of the ages, the Flaming God has only us to serve Him. He is very angry. All the hardships that we have endured since we were driven from Opar were but evidences of His displeasure. The storm of yesterday was, I feared, a sign of the termination of His mercy. Gulm believed

that we were to be destroyed with all the world; but He has permitted us to live yet a while longer. He has given us another chance. But it was a sign—a sign that we must no longer ignore. The Flaming God must have a sacrifice. If no other can be found it must be one of us!"

His eyes roved savagely about among his fellows—eyes lit with the flaming maniacal fire of religious insanity.

Ulp glanced toward the little girl and jerked his head in her direction.

"Why not she?" he demanded, for he knew that, not being overly popular with Gulm, he might as readily be chosen by the high priest as another if it became necessary to choose a sacrifice from among their own ranks.

"No!" screamed Gulm and leaping upon Ulp he struck him down. "Who dares think harm to the High Priestess of The Flaming God should die."

Ulp scrambled to his feet and ran quickly out of Gulm's reach.

"I did not think harm," Ulp cried; "I but asked a question."

"Ask no more questions," warned Gulm. "No more questions at all."

"No," promised Ulp.

"I shall see that you do not have the opportunity," Gulm assured him, "for if we do not soon find a more suitable sacrifice you will be chosen."

Gulm growled and was silent.

Ulp squatted on his heels in the mud

and devoured the remainder of his breakfast. So slightly removed from the lower orders was he that the threat of imminent death did not affect his appetite. However, he did not wish to die and so his cunning, brutal brain was occupied with muddy schemings for diverting Gulm's dislike from him to some other unfortunate member of the band.

While the brute-men ate so also did the little girl. From a pocket of her torn and dishevelled clothing she took a bit of cooked meat that she had saved from the last meal.

Ravenous, overpowering hunger had long since broken down the last barrier of fastidiousness and lake any other

starving animal she ate to live, little though her palate relished the cold, tough, unseasoned meat that formed the bulk of her diet.

Even through the dirt and the evidences of hardship and hunger that were written so plainly upon her face and figure it was quite apparent that the little golden-haired girl had been very pretty. Indeed, she was still very pretty, but in a wan, thin, hopeless way that yet suggested the rounding contours, the rosy cheeks, the happy, smiling countenance of another day.

No one, to look at her, could have thought it possible that she had always lived among these hideous men or that she was in any slightest way related to

them.

Nor had she always lived among them, nor was she related to them.

For two months they had held her in captivity and, according to their standards, they had treated her well. In no way had they harmed her and they had protected her from the dangers and hardships of the jungle to the best of their abilities and to the extent of their limited knowledge.

They had let no savage beasts attack her, they served her with the choicest of their rough, scant food, they built a shelter for her at night, and during the storm they gathered thick about her that the warmth of their bodies might save her from the harmful results of her

exposure to the cold rain.

They did not do these things because of any sentiments of kindness or humanity, since they were not endowed with such; but selfishly for the furtherance of their own ends because they believed that it pleased The Flaming God to be represented on earth by a high priestess and because they had been taught that this cruel God of theirs would accept no sacrifice except at the hands of a woman, or rather that he preferred to be thus served by a priestess rather than by a priest. Why, they did not know.

During the two months of her captivity they had taught the girl their crude and simple language, which is

also the language of the great apes, though the vocabulary of the sun worshippers contains many words that are not in the vocabulary of the great apes.

They had taught her many of the simple duties of her office, leaving the more elaborate temple rites to the time that they should have located a new temple site and built their first altar.

They called her Kla, which is a contraction of the two words meaning New La, and already they worshipped her quite as fanatically as they had worshipped La herself.

The child, for Kla was only that, was no longer actually afraid of these terrible men, for she had learned that they would

not harm her, but none the less was she unhappy and miserable among them, pining for her own home and her parents, longing for clean clothing, for the luxury of a bath, for good food and a warm bed; but most of all for the love and companionship and understanding of a people of her own kind—whom she was afraid she would never see again.

She did not hate Gulm or the others, for there had never been any hate in the heart of this little twelve-year-old girl, who was all sweetness and beauty and purity.

If they had searched the world over Gulm and his fellows could scarce have discovered another more fit to be a high priestess than was little Kla, had they

been looking for a high priestess of love and charity and humanity; but the devotees of the Flaming God cared nothing for these attributes in their High Priestess and so after all Kla was not at all suited to their purpose, as they must surely discover when the time came that she must take part in some of the more terrible of their religious rites, and it was well for the little girl that she could not foresee all that was to be demanded of her in the days to come.

Breakfast concluded, the party set forth once more in the direction of the new temple site that Blk had discovered and toward which he had been guiding them for several days.

They had proceeded for perhaps an

hour or possibly two when Blk, who was in the lead, suddenly halted, giving a signal that sent the entire twenty silently out of sight into the concealing verdure of the surrounding jungle.

Silence reigned. The soaking jungle steamed beneath the Equatorial sun. Faintly, from afar, came the sound of footfalls, but long before he could hear these Blk had known that something was approaching them along the great game trail they chanced to be following at the moment.

Some sense, unknown to the dim faculties of civilized men, had warned the jungle creature.

What was it that came down the game trail toward the twenty frightful men?

CHAPTER FOUR—DANGER AHEAD

Dick and Doc, moving through the great branches of the lower terrace, soon felt the warm blood stirring in their veins and with it a new sense of well being and hopefulness, which, naturally, was soon followed by hunger.

"I feel like some tea and toast and marmalade," said Dick.

They looked at each other and licked their lips.

"And I feel like a stack of buckwheat cakes and maple syrup," said Doc.

"Let's eat, then," said Dick. "Here is some of that stuff that Ukundo gathered for us the morning after we escaped from

Galla Galla's village. What was it he called it?"

"I can't remember its name, but it tasted like a mixture of quinine, sugar and castor oil," replied Doc, making a wry face.

"Who cares what it tastes like as long as it's food?" demanded Dick. "We got to eat and that's all there is to it."

"I suppose we have, but, gee, I hate that stuff. I'd rather shoot a harmless little bird or something," demurred Doc.

"You'll have to eat it raw if you do," Dick reminded him. "We could never make a fire in this soggy old jungle."

"No, I suppose not," admitted Doc; "but after what we ate in Galla Galla's prison hut even raw bird would taste

good, as long as it was fresh."

Doc's rueful spirits showed in his face.

Dick had climbed to a loftier terrace and was cutting some of the fruit from a swaying branch while Doc, braced in the crotch of two branches below, watched and waited.

When Dick descended the two boys proceeded to eat the rather ill-tasting heart of two of the large fruits that Dick had brought down with him.

"I'll say this doesn't remind me of anything that 'mother used to make'," said Doc.

"It smells like a linseed poultice," laughed Dick. "Or worse!"

"I wish we knew more about the stuff that grows here," said Doc. "There must be lots of things we could eat if we only knew that they were safe."

"If there were some monkeys around we could watch them," said Dick.

"I wonder where they all are." Doc looked about in all directions. "Well, I don't see any and if I did it wouldn't make any difference because I couldn't eat anything more now after eating that nasty stuff. It's taken my appetite away."

"It sure is filling," admitted Dick. "If we could take some of it back to civilization we could make our fortunes.

"How?" asked Doc.

"We could sell it to women who want to reduce. There are about a hundred

million fat ladies who want to get thinner and nobody could even commence to guess how much they spend every year trying to reduce. Why, just think of all the customers we would have."

"But how do you know it would reduce them?" demanded Doc.

"That's easy. What makes 'em fat?"

"Eating too much, of course," said Doc.

"Then if they didn't eat they'd get thin, wouldn't they?"

"Sure, but—"

"All they'd have to do would be to eat some of this the first thing in the morning and then they wouldn't want to eat

anything more all day," explained Dick; "at least not if they felt the way I feel right now."

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc. "That's a pretty good idea. Let's start a company."

"We've got to get out of here first, though," Dick reminded him.

"Yes, that is the first thing for us to think about," agreed Doc. "What do you say we go down on the ground? We could make better time. After all, we are more used to walking on the ground."

Dick scratched his head. "We're getting so we are pretty good at travelling through the trees," he reminded his cousin, "and it sure is a lot safer up here. It looks pretty rough going down below. I don't see any trail."

"I guess you're right," agreed Doc, "but when we do find a trail running in the right direction I think we'd better go down for a while anyway. We can always take to the trees again if we hear anything."

"The trouble is it might be too late, especially if the thing we heard was a lion springing out of the underbrush onto us."

"Well, let's stick to the trees for a while, then," said Doc, "but it sure makes a fellow tired."

The two boys continued on through the lower terraces of the forest in the direction in which they believed lay the open veldt that stretched away to Tarzan's bungalow. Once they came to a

wide game trail leading in the direction they wished to go and as they had seen or heard no sign of dangerous beasts they decided to rest their tired muscles and at the same time increase their speed by following the trail upon the ground for a while at least.

They had been walking along in silence for some time when Doc stopped.

"Dick," he said, "I'm scared. I don't know why, but I just have a hunch that some very grave danger is hanging over our heads."

"What makes you think so?" asked Dick, looking quickly about them in all directions. "Did you see or hear anything?"

"No, I just feel as though something was going to happen—as though something was watching us, and yet it isn't exactly that feeling either. It's sort of a premonition or something. I can't explain it, but I wish we weren't all alone like this."

"Perhaps we'd better take to the trees again," said Dick. "I'll tell the world I feel a lot safer up there than I do down here."

"All right," assented Doc, "I'm willing; and say, let's see how quietly we can go. Maybe we've been making too much noise. Have you ever noticed how silently Tarzan of the Apes moves through the jungle either on the ground or in the trees?"

"Have I? Say he doesn't make any more noise than a butterfly's shadow," said Dick. "Come on!"

With far greater caution now the boys swung to the lower branches and continued their journey. Their eyes and ears were ever alert and they sniffed the air, too, as they had seen Tarzan do, but they were rewarded with no other odors than those of the steaming jungle that had filled their nostrils ever since the rain.

Intermittently they would pause and listen, and satisfied that nothing was amiss, they moved forward.

The leafy foliage beneath them often hid the trail from their eyes and as often hid them from the sight of any animal that might have been on the trail. A wind,

stirring among the trees, helped to conceal them, since it gave motion to the foliage and the branches, hiding the motion that the boys imparted as they moved cautiously and silently through the verdure.

Dick, who was in the lead, suddenly halted, raising his finger in a cautionary gesture and laying it upon his lips to enjoin silence. Doc saw him crouch back behind the bole of the great tree through which they had chanced to be passing; he saw the gaze of his cousin directed downward toward the ground.

Doc froze to immobility immediately that he received Dick's warning. He peered downward, but he could see nothing.

What could it be that had quickly aroused Dick's fearful attention? He watched his cousin intently and presently the latter beckoned him to his side, cautioning him to silence with a warning forefinger placed against his lips.

Doc crept forward. Not even Tarzan himself could have moved through the foliage more quietly and skillfully.

Presently Doc was crouching just behind Dick's shoulder.

Without a word Dick pointed downward through the leafy branches. At first Doc saw nothing to arouse excitement—just a tangled mass of undergrowth bordering a wide game trail. Then something moved, ever so slightly, and Doc's attention was riveted

upon the thing that had moved. At first it was only something black amidst the greens and browns and yellows of the brush, but presently it resolved itself into a head of hair, tangled, unkempt. Then Doc saw another and another and another as his eyes accustomed to tracing their now familiar lines. They were human heads and beneath the edges of the tangled hair Doc saw an occasional ear, or the tip of a nose.

Once Doc saw a hand—a hand that firmly grasped a sturdy cudgel.

He saw them now upon both sides of the trail and saw that all the heads were turned in the same direction—the direction from which the boys had been coming. There was but one deduction

that could be drawn—these creatures, whoever they were, had either heard or seen the boys and were lying in ambush, waiting for them.

Dick and Doc made no sound. They did not even whisper their thoughts or fears to one another. As though by common agreement they remained crouching there in silence, waiting to see what those mysterious watchers would do next.

Each realized that they had been fortunate in not having attracted the attention of a single member of that sinister party to themselves and they were wise enough to know that they might not be so fortunate were they to try to escape from their present position

undetected and so they remained quietly where they were.

Not once did a single member of the band beneath them cast a glance upward. Whatever they awaited they expected along the game trail and with the patience of beasts of prey they remained in silent ambush, in no hurry to act.

Doc, always talkative, had never in his life been so anxious to talk. There were a thousand questions and surmises racing through his brain that he wanted to impart to Dick. He wanted so badly to talk, that, as he said afterward, it hurt; but he controlled himself. Perhaps their enforced silence would have been less difficult to bear had they been able to obtain a better view of some of those

twenty frightful men, for had they, they would certainly have shrunk from calling attention to their presence.

It seemed a very long time that they waited there, watching the silent men beneath them, but at last there was a change. A slight rustling of the foliage was apparent and their ears caught hoarse whisperings, though they could distinguish no words.

Then there crawled out into the trail a knotted, crooked man. The mere sight of him almost caused the boys to gasp.

It was Blk. Gulm had sent him off to reconnoiter. Cautiously, slowly, stopping often to listen and sniff the air, Blk moved down the trail until presently he disappeared beyond a turn.

The minutes passed by slowly. The boys waited. Below them the priests of The Flaming God waited. After what seemed a very long time Blk reappeared. He stopped in the trail opposite his ambushed fellows and spoke in low tones whereupon there was much rustling among the foliage as the balance of the twenty stepped out into the trail.

With the twenty frightful men was another creature the sight of which gave the boys such a start of surprise as they did not recall ever having had before in all their lives.

The twenty hideous men were surprising enough in themselves, but the figure of a slender, golden-haired girl among these awesome, brute-like

creatures took away the boys' breath and left them stunned.

Who could she be?

CHAPTER FIVE—TO THE RESCUE!

Preceded by Blk, the company of sun worshippers moved off cautiously down the trail and with them went the golden-haired girl, walking between two grotesque, low-browed beasts, and a moment later disappeared from the sight of Dick and Doc beyond the same turn in the trail that had first hidden the reconnoitering Blk from their view.

Doc and Dick stood like two statues.

For several minutes neither of the boys spoke. One of the causes of their silence was undoubtedly the result of caution lest they attract the attention of the party to themselves, but the other

was amazement induced by the sight of this dainty white girl in such gruesome-looking company.

Dick was the first to break the silence after it seemed quite safe to assume that the men were out of hearing.

"What do you suppose that pretty girl is doing with those awful men?" he whispered.

"She can't possibly be the daughter of one of them," said Doc; "why, they scarcely look like human beings. Did you ever see such terrible-looking creatures? They look more like gorillas than they do like anything human!"

"They were not gorillas, though," said Dick. "They are men all right, but such men! Golly, I'm glad they didn't catch

us."

"But they caught her," said Doc.

"Do you suppose she is a prisoner?" asked Dick in alarm.

"She must be. Did you see how one of them walked on either side of her, as though they were afraid she might try to escape."

"What do you suppose they are going to do to her?"

"Maybe they're cannibals."

"They look uglier than Galla Galla's tribe. They might be anything," said Dick with a shudder.

For a few moments the boys were silent, each absorbed in his own thoughts. An entirely new and, to them,

unheard of problem confronted them and each was wrestling with it in his own way. What were they to do? That question kept revolving in the mind of each.

"Listen," said Dick finally, "that girl doesn't belong with such a gang of half-brutes as those fellows are. Maybe they're going to kill her. They certainly aren't taking her along with them for any good. I'll bet they kidnapped her. They may be holding her for ransom or they may be just wild cannibals and are going to eat her. We've got to do something."

"That is just what I've been thinking," said Doc, "but what can we do?"

"I don't know, but we've got do do something," said Dick, scratching his

head in perplexity.

"We might follow them," suggested Doc. "Perhaps we could find a chance to rescue her."

"We ought to follow them anyway," agreed Dick, "to see where they take her, and then if we do get a chance to rescue her we'll be there to do it."

"Good old Dick!" exclaimed Doc. "I knew you'd agree."

The question then arose as to whether they should follow along the ground or in the trees and they finally decided that it would be safer to keep to the latter, even though they might have to exert themselves more to keep up with the party.

As they moved back into the forest

above the trail taken by the frightful twenty they put behind them all thought of their own safety and welfare, sacrificing their own chances for rescue in the interest of a total stranger; but that was because, being what they were, they could not have done otherwise.

Many generations of brave men lay behind them, men to whom duty meant more than comfort of safety or even life. These two boys did not think of the thing that they were doing as a brave, self-sacrificing, courageous thing to do. They only thought of it as something that they must do, as each had been reared among people in whom it is almost a hereditary conviction that a man is the natural protector of women and the weak. In

their veins coursed the sort of blood that sent the women and the children to the life boats of the Titanic while the men remained on the deck until the great ship took its final dive into the icy waters of the Atlantic.

More rapidly now, but still with utmost caution the two boys followed the spoor of their quarry, their nerves tingling with the thrill of the hung. They were moving through the trees now with far greater ease and confidence and this resulted in greater speed with less effort, so that it was not long before they came within hearing of the twenty men and their fair captive and shortly thereafter they caught a glimpse of the rearmost member of the party.

For hours they followed them, keeping safely out of sight and ever careful to move as quietly as possible. It was hard, gruelling work, not only because of the physical effort involved but because of the nervous tension that never relaxed even for a moment, and, too, they were hungry. The fruit they had eaten early in the day had been far from sufficient to meet the demands made upon their bodies and by noon they were ravenous, but they never once thought of abandoning their self-imposed mission of chivalry.

About mid-afternoon the twenty frightful men halted in a small natural clearing at the edge of a little brook.

The two boys, hiding amidst the

foliage of a nearby tree watched intently. They saw three of the men depart into the jungle in different directions, while some of the others gathered branches and foliage with which they constructed a crude shelter.

The girl, apparently very tired, had sunk listlessly to the ground, where she sat with bowed head, her chin resting in her cupped hands—a picture of forlorn and hopeless misery. The picture that she presented filled the hearts of the boys with compassion and imbued them with a stern resolve to let nothing interfere with their determination to save her.

"Gee," whispered Doc, "it makes me sick just to look at her sitting there

among all those awful men. I never saw anyone look so terribly unhappy. We'll just have to do something."

"Perhaps we'll get a chance to save her tonight," suggested Dick.

"What'll we do with her," demanded Doc.

"I don't know," replied Dick. "I never thought of that."

"She's nothing but a girl," Doc reminded him. "She couldn't swing through the trees or anything. If we got her away from them they'd catch us all again in no time."

"Maybe if we got her early in the evening we could get far enough away before morning so that they couldn't find us."

"I suppose if we kept to the trees with her, even if she couldn't go very fast, they wouldn't have any way of following our trail," said Doc. "Well, anyway," he added with a sigh, "we got to do it whether we get caught or not. We can't leave her with them and that's all there is to it."

"I'll tell you another thing, Doc," said his cousin; "we've got to eat. If we don't we'll be so weak we shan't be able to get out of here ourselves, let alone carrying the girl along with us. That's something to think about, too!"

"Maybe we can find some more of that nice breakfast fruit we had this morning," said Doc, making a wry face.

"What we need is meat," stated Dick,

emphatically. "Being a vegetarian may be all right for some folks but it doesn't go for an Englishman."

"Nor for an American either," said Doc. "Ham or bacon for breakfast—that's me."

"Don't talk about such things," begged Dick. "Golly! I can feel my mouth water."

"We had a nurse once that wanted us to live on raw carrots and turnips," said Doc; "but Dad said it would be cheaper to order a bale of alfalfa and put mangers in the dining room. She got sore, then, and quit. But I agreed with Dad."

"Say," exclaimed Dick, "I've got an idea. They are evidently going to camp

here until morning. What do you say we go and hunt for food and then come back? It doesn't look as though they were going to kill her right away, because if they were they wouldn't be building that shelter for her."

"How do you know it's for her?" asked Doc doubtfully.

"It must be. It's only large enough for one," was Dick's logical explanation.

"That's right," admitted Doc. "Let's start. It may not be so easy to find the sort of food we want."

"And it may not be so easy to kill it after we do find it."

"I can do better with my bow and arrows than I could a few days ago," Doc reminded him, "and you are pretty

keen with your spear."

"All right, come on!"

The boys started off at right angles to the trail directly into the forest. Doc drew his hunting knife and cut pieces of bark from the trees through which they passed. He did it as silently as he could.

"What are you doing?" demanded Dick, who was in the lead and had chanced to turn to see what was delaying his cousin.

"I'm blazing our trail so that we can find our way back again," explained Doc.

"Good old Doc!" exclaimed Dick. "I'll say you use your old bean for something besides a hair farm, and how!"

They had proceeded for about half an hour without discovering the slightest sign of game when Dick came to a sudden halt and simultaneously gestured warningly to Doc.

When Dick then pointed ahead, Doc crept cautiously forward and peered across Dick's shoulder.

Just ahead of them they saw the small brook upon which the twenty had made their camp. Further down its course and in a little opening upon the bank stood a small antelope, drinking.

"It's too far for my spear," whispered Dick, "and anyway there is too much foliage around me. I could not get room for a good throw. You'd better try to get it with your bow and arrow."

"It's an awful long shot," said Doc, dubiously, "and, gee, how I should hate to miss."

"Do you suppose we can get any closer?"

Doc thought a moment

"Let's try."

"You go ahead then," said Dick. "I'll wait here. Two of us will make more noise than one."

"Pray for me," whispered Doc, as he started carefully forward.

Leaving his spear behind with Dick, Doc moved cautiously toward the antelope, his bow and an arrow ready for instant use. A gentle breeze that stirred the foliage of the forest blew

toward him from the direction of the quarry, carrying his scent spoor away from the sensitive nostrils of the nervous, timid animal.

Closer and closer he crept—a moment more and he would be within easy range. He strove to keep his nerves under control, so much depended upon the accuracy of his aim, upon his stealth, upon his cunning. He knew now how primitive man must have felt as he stalked his food through the primeval forests of a young world while hunger gnawed at his vitals, for Doc stood face to face with one of Nature's first laws—self- preservation.

Now he was ready! He braced himself against the bole of a great tree,

his feet firmly planted upon to adjacent branches. Through an opening in the foliage he could see the antelope below him, only a few yards away. He fitted the arrow and at the same instant the antelope leaped into the air in a sudden, swift bound of fright.

Simultaneously the cause of terror burst from a clump of nearby bushes—a frightful, gnarled man swinging a great cudgel about his head. And in the instant that he appeared, in the same instant that the antelope took its first leap for safety, the man-thing hurled the cudgel.

Straight to its mark flew the heavy missile, striking the fleeing animal a terrific blow that felled it, half stunned. Before it could regain its feet the hunter

was upon it, his crude knife finishing the work the cudgel had commenced.

At first Doc and Dick were too surprised to do more than stand and stare at the creature who had robbed them of their meat, but presently anger and resentment made themselves apparent. Just as the primitive hunter would have felt under like circumstance, so these two boys felt—that they had been robbed of what rightfully belonged to them.

Perhaps under different conditions they would have realized that the antelope was as much the property of the beast-man as it was their property—even more so since he had slain it—but as it was they reasoned as the primitive

man might have reasoned and they reacted quite in the same way that he might have reacted; that is that they wanted to take the kill away from the killer nor were they deterred by any fine ethical considerations from doing so by any means that lay in their power. The thing that deterred them was fear—fear that the beast-man would kill them in defense of his meat.

Thus easily did the veneer of civilization fall away from these two boys the moment they were faced by the necessity of sustaining life in competition with the savage creatures of primitive Nature. Doc, standing there with his arrow trained upon the priest of the Flaming God, his heart filled with

rage and disappointment and hate, had suddenly reverted a hundred thousand years and lived again an instant in the life of some long dead, primordial ancestor.

Aiming at the man's back, just below his left shoulder, Doc bent his bow and at the same instant Dick, who had followed him, laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Don't!" whispered Dick. "I know how you feel, but—we mustn't do that; not until we are forced to it."

Doc lowered the point of his arrow, standing silent for a moment. "I suppose you are right," he said; "but, gee! you don't know how mad that made me—just as I was going to shoot, too."

"Listen," whispered Dick, "I've got a scheme."

CHAPTER SIX—THE TWINS' PLAN

Bending closer to Doc's ear Dick whispered his plan, and as Doc listened his face brightened, his lips stretching into a broad grin.

"Gee!" he said. "That's a great idea, but—do you suppose it will work?"

"Sure it will," Dick assured him; "but we got to hurry. Three of 'em went out to hunt for food—that's plain enough now—and we don't want one of the others to happen along before we get through. You sneak around into that big tree over there and I'll take the one just beyond. We've got to be on the other side of him so that he'll beat it toward his camp."

"If he doesn't beat it toward us," added Doc.

"He won't—you watch. Come on now, get busy," and as he spoke Dick turned and made his way quietly through the trees, skirting the clearing and keeping well out of sight of the enemy, as they now thought of the crooked man, until he had come to the tree he had selected for himself, while Doc took a position in another tree, both of which were on the far side of the sun worshipper in relation to the camp for which he was headed.

Immediately both were in position they fitted arrows to their bows and taking careful aim let the missiles fly. The astonished Oparian, who was about

to lift the small antelope to his shoulders, saw an arrow suddenly bury itself in the carcass of his kill, while another passed near him and struck the ground a few feet beyond, quivering erect in the earth.

With a sudden snarl he turned quickly, his eyes searching in the direction from which the shafts had come.

Another arrow passed close to his side, making him move uneasily, and when he turned his eyes in the direction from which he thought it had come, from another direction came another arrow. He saw no enemies, he heard none—only the arrows—and then he did what Dick had been quite certain that he would do.

He ran toward his camp, leaving the antelope where it had fallen.

Dick and Doc waited until he was out of sight, assured themselves as best they might that no others were about and then swung to the ground and hastened to the body of the kill. Quickly they cut off as much of the meat as they could easily carry, gathered up their arrows and took to the trees again.

Following back along the trail that Doc had blazed they stopped at last in a huge tree that lifted its mighty top far above the surrounding jungle. Here Doc suggested that they eat, and climbing far above the floor of the jungle where they were hidden from chance eyes by the foliage beneath them they found a great

crotch that would accommodate them both comfortably.

"Golly," exclaimed Dick, "that was easy enough, but—"

"But what?" asked Dick.

"I am terribly hungry and I feel right now as though I could eat anything, but at that I wish we could build a fire."

Dick laughed. "I thought you were the fellow who had wanted to tear the meat from his kill with his strong, white teeth," he reminded Doc.

"That reads all right in a book," said Doc with a sickly grin, "but somehow it is different now."

"Well," said Dick with a sigh, "If we want to live we must eat and we learned

from Ukundo and Bulala that it does not pay to be too finicky, so here goes. Better follow my example!"

For a while the boys occupied themselves in silence, satisfying the cravings of ravenous hunger. All about them were the noises of the jungle; the raucous cries of birds of brilliant plumage, the chattering of monkeys, the buzzing and humming of insects. Faintly and from a distance, occasionally, there were borne to them other sounds as of larger animals moving through the underbrush, but from their aerie, screened by gently waving foliage, they saw little or nothing of the authors of these myriad noises, nor were they seen by other than an occasional monkey or

bird.

"Gee," said Doc, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, "that wasn't so bad after all—it was just the idea of it."

"I sure feel stronger already," said Dick. "There is nothing like good old meat."

"It's going to get dark pretty soon," said Doc, "and if we are going to back trail to the camp of those gorilla-men, we had better get started."

Following the trail that Doc had blazed through the trees, the two boys moved cautiously and silently in the direction of the camp of the sun worshippers and their little prisoner.

The shadows of night were rapidly claiming the jungle as Dick and Doc

halted, at last, in a tree that stood upon the edge of the clearing where Gulm had pitched his camp.

The twenty frightful men had succeeded in making a fire and the boys looked down with feelings of envy upon the grotesque creatures huddling about the friendly blaze. They saw the little girl seated upon the trunk of a fallen tree, watching the preparation of the meat that one of the hunters had brought into camp. She looked so much like a personification of hopelessness, misery and despair that the sight of her brought lumps into the throats of the two lads while it fortified their determination to rescue her, if it lay within their power to do so.

With the coming of night, there came also the chill of the damp jungle and then, indeed, did the boys envy the crooked men their warm fire, but they could only sit there, cold and miserable, watching and waiting endlessly.

A meal of the sun worshippers was in no sense a ceremonious function and for that the boys were grateful, since it was not lengthened unnecessarily by any formalities.

The raw flesh of the kill hacked off in strips or hunks by each individual in accordance with his own appetite or preference, was impaled upon sticks and held over the fire, which oft times leaped up and seized upon a cooking morsel so that the culinary result was,

more often than not, an unappetizing-looking hunk of meat, raw in the center and in places burnt to a crisp on the outside. The portions thus prepared were torn apart by strong teeth and bolted without mastication.

The little girl was more dainty, using a knife that one of the men loaned her for this purpose. She cut strips of the meat into uniform sizes, which she grilled with far greater care than did her companions, and in the eating of her food, as well as in the cooking, she manifested a daintiness that alone would have differentiated her from her companions.

The boys dared not move around for the purpose of stimulating their

circulation for fear of arousing the suspicion of the creatures below them, thus putting them upon their guard, and for the same reason they did not converse more than was absolutely necessary and then only in the lowest of whispers. But as all things must end, so eventually the sun worshippers had appeased their hunger, the little girl had crept into the crude shelter they had built for her and the other members of the party had lain down about the fire to sleep, with the exception of one, who sat upon the fallen log tending the fire that it evidently was their intention to keep burning brightly during the night for the purpose of discouraging the too close advances of the great man eaters of the

jungle.

"Do you suppose that bozo is going to sit up all night?" Doc asked in a low whisper. "We didn't bargain for that!"

"If he does," replied Dick, "I can't see how in the world we are going to get into their camp and get the girl."

"We might go around on the other side and crawl up to the rear of her shelter," suggested Doc. "Maybe we could get her out that way."

"But suppose she thought we were some animal trying to get her," suggested Dick. "She would be frightened and raise an alarm."

"We could whisper very low to her," said Doc, "and tell her that we are her friends."

"What if she is not an English girl?"

"I never thought of that," said Doc.

"I can't imagine where she came from," mused Dick, "but, of course, among the few whites in this part of Africa there are Belgians, Germans, and French as well as other nationalities besides English, so she might be most anything."

"She doesn't look like an English girl," said Doc. "She might be German though."

"Yes," said Dick, "I thought of that."

"Well," said Doc, "I can talk a little German."

"Sure you can. You can say 'yes' and 'no' and 'good morning'."

"I know the word for 'friend'," said Doc.

"Then, we will have to wait for daylight," said Dick, "so that you can say, 'Good morning, friend!'"

"You think you are funny, don't you?" said Doc.

"I don't feel funny. I only feel cold. I wish that fellow would fall asleep. He sort of looks sleepy."

"I don't think you'd fall asleep if you thought a lion would walk in and grab you if you did," said Doc, "and so I am pretty sure that we can't bank on that fellow sleeping. Whatever we do has got to be done right under his nose while he is awake and if we cannot make the girl understand us in time to head her off

from screaming for help, I don't see how we are going to accomplish much."

"The best chance we have," said Dick, after a moment of thoughtful silence, "is to speak to her in French. We each know enough French to get by fairly well and nearly all Europeans, who have had any education at all, have at least a smattering of French."

"I guess you are right at that," agreed Doc, "and now that we have settled that matter, why not get busy. It will not be any easier an hour from now, or two hours from now, or any other time than it is right this minute."

"That suits me," said Dick, "but let's plan the thing out carefully before we start," and for a few minutes the boys

crouched in earnest, whispered conversation.

CHAPTER SEVEN—IN THE NICK OF TIME

Ulp sat upon the fallen tree gazing into the fire which had lighted the surrounding jungle with its leaping, fitful flames. His black shadow, huge and grotesque, danced weirdly against the shelter in which Kla, the little unwilling high priestess of the sun worshippers, lay wide-eyed and miserable. She could not accustom herself to the terrors of the jungle nights. She knew that great hunting beasts prowled through the black shadows.

The spine-chilling scream of the leopard and the roar of the lion were as terrifying tonight as they had been the

first night that she had heard them, nor could she ever entirely allay her fear of the frightful men into whose clutches she had fallen.

Over and over in her mind she revolved the same futile, hopeless plans for escape that she had conjured a thousand times and a thousand times abandoned, and yet, again, they were in the forefront of her thoughts as she lay watching the shadow of Ulp leaping and dancing against the frail wall of her shelter, and Ulp gazed into the fire, letting his own thoughts revolve in his muddy brain. For the most part they were thoughts of fear and hate, and the object of both was Gulm, for Ulp knew that Gulm did not like him and that if a

suitable sacrifice was not soon found, it might more likely be Ulp who would be permanently extinguished by the sacrificial knife than any other of the company.

Ulp was hideous, grotesque, sullen, taciturn, ignorant, vindictive, usually half-starved, always entirely uncomfortable from heat or cold or vermin. Life did not seem to offer much to Ulp and yet he clung as tenaciously to it and loved it and nursed it with a fervor quite equal to that of humanity's most favored creature.

In other words, Ulp did not wish to die, and as he sat there upon the log with the firelight playing upon his crooked, hairy body and his ugly, hairy face, he

was groping through his turbid brain for some plan to thwart Gulm's bloody intentions toward him.

If he could only find some other sacrifice that would be acceptable to The Flaming God, he knew that Gulm would be satisfied, since naturally the high priest did not wish to weaken the numerical strength of his party by offering its members to The Flaming God unless there was no alternative, but it seemed to Ulp, not even remotely possible that he might discover a substitute, since Gulm avoided the haunts of the natives, knowing full well that his small party of twenty, illy armed as they were, would stand no chance against the black warriors of the interior.

But there was another possibility that loomed large in Ulp's mind and this was based upon his belief that The Flaming God found no sacrifice acceptable unless it was offered to Him through the medium of a sacrificial knife, wielded by the high priestess. Therefore, he reasoned, if there was no high priestess, there would be less likelihood that a sacrifice would be offered to his hungry deity. But how to dispose of the little high priestess without bringing suspicion and punishment upon himself—that was the question. He turned and glared at the shelter, beneath which lay the new La. In the distance, a lion roared. How fortunate it would be, thought Ulp—at least how fortunate for him—if Numa the

lion, hungry and searching for food, should accidentally be led to the rear of the shelter of the high priestess.

He thought this matter over seriously and he thought of a wonderful story that he could tell to Gulm in the morning after Numa had come and carried little Kla away.

While he was thinking these thoughts and hoping this hope, two figures descended from a tree at the edge of the clearing and crept stealthily through the brush toward a point upon the opposite side of the camp from where Ulp sat ruminating.

Again from the black jungle roared the thunderous voice of the lion. It was nearer now and Ulp almost thrilled at the

suggestion it bore to him of the possible fulfillment of his prayer.

Ulp was not the only one who heard the voice of the king; little Kla heard it and lay stark and trembling on her bed of grasses. The two figures creeping through the brush heard it and came to a sudden halt, huddling close together beside the reassuringly thick trunk of a great tree.

"Golly," whispered Dick, "that last roar sounded pretty close."

"It sounds too darn close to suit me," replied Doc, his voice trembling the least little-bit from the excitement and the nervous tension of the moment. "He must be headed this way."

"Let's shin up this tree for a few

minutes," suggested Dick, "until that fellow has gone on about his business."

"You're on," whispered Doc, and the two clambered with the agility of young monkeys in the lower branches of the tree beneath which they had momentarily stopped.

Ulp arose slowly from the log upon which he had been sitting and turned until he faced the direction from which the voice of Numa had come. Between it and him lay the shelter of little Kla, the high priestess of The Flaming God, and upon this shelter his plotting eyes fell.

Ulp's brain was not developed for purposes of rapidity of thought, but he had been thinking of this possibility which now confronted him for some time

and the decision that he reached now was not a sudden one, but rather the natural outcome of the slow processes of his brain.

If he was not equipped to think quickly, he could at least act quickly and now he did so. Stooping, he crept into the shelter beside the girl. Kla sat up, a scream of terror trembling upon her lips, but she did not utter it as Ulp's words reassured her.

"Do not be afraid, Kla," he said, "I have come to help you."

"What do you want?" asked the girl. "How can you help me?"

"You do not want to remain with us; you would like to escape and go back to your own people. Is that not true?" asked

the man.

"Yes," admitted the girl.

"Then Ulp will help you. Ulp hates Gulm, who would kill him. Ulp will take you away. He will not harm you. He will take you back to your people. He will do it this very night."

"Oh, Ulp, if you only will!" whispered the girl fervently.

"Come!" said Ulp, and he commenced to tear a hole in the rear of the shelter.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Kla.

"I shall take you out this way and hide you in the jungle," replied the man, "and then I shall come back and tell Gulm that a lion broke into the shelter and got you and Gulm will be very angry, and I shall

take my cudgel and say to him that I am going out into the jungle to get you away from the lion, but instead I shall join you and we will go away and Gulm will think that the lion has devoured us both. If he thinks this, he will not follow us and so we shall be safe."

Little Kla believed that Ulp was sincere in all that he said to her and so she accompanied him willingly through the opening that he had made in the rear of the shelter, and together they walked to the edge of the clearing, stopping beneath a great tree.

"Wait here," said Ulp, "I shall be gone but a short time."

"I heard a lion roar," said the girl. "I am terribly afraid."

"Do not be afraid," said Ulp. "The lion that roars is lying upon his kill. He will not hunt again until that is devoured. It may be one day; it may be two days before he will be hungry."

"How do you know?" asked Kla.

"I know the language of Numa," replied Ulp. "That lion was eating. He was warning the other beasts of the jungle to keep away from his kill."

"Do not be gone long," begged the little girl pitifully.

"Whatever you do," Ulp admonished her, "do not move; not even if you think a lion is coming near. Stand very still so that he may not hear you."

"I shall try to," replied the girl, but her voice shook with fear.

Ulp returned quickly to the camp and sat upon the log again. He did not wake Gulm as he had promised. He only waited until he should hear certain noises from back there under the great tree that stood at the edge of the clearing. There would be screams and growls and then he would wake Gulm and tell him what had happened.

Once more the voice of Numa stilled the other voices of the jungle. Ulp knew that it was nearer—very near, indeed. Kla heard it and went cold with terror, for to her it sounded almost at her side and yet the lion was not quite so near to her as that, but he was coming nearer. Already he had caught the scent of the flesh of men and now he moved silently,

stealthily through the jungle, nor did he raise his voice in warning again.

The dancing beast fire of the twenty frightful men cast a glow even to the furthest extremities of the clearing, invoking many grotesque, shadowy figures so that at first Dick and Doc were not positive that what they saw was really two figures coming from the camp toward the tree in which they had taken temporary refuge. It might only be more of the shadows that moved constantly and fitfully as the flames rose and fell.

At length these shadows took on forms too definite to permit of further doubt and the boys saw that one was a crooked man and that the other was the

little captive girl.

They grasped their spears more tightly and both were ready for any eventuality as Ulp and Kla stopped directly beneath them.

Ulp was very near death that moment for two spears were poised above him and had he offered any harm to little Kla, both would have been buried deep in his hairy body.

The boys heard the conversation that passed between Ulp and Kla, but could understand no word of it and they were mystified when they saw the man return to camp, leaving the girl standing beneath the tree.

A moment later the lion roared and it seemed to both boys that he must be very

close to them and to the unprotected girl standing in a huddle on the ground beneath them.

"Gee," whispered Doc, "we have got to get her or that lion will."

Kla heard a movement in the tree above her. What could it be? She knew that leopards often sprang upon their prey from the lower branches of the trees, and her little heart stood still.

There was a rustling and a scraping and two bodies alighted upon the ground beside her. The girl shrieked as they seized her.

"We are friends," whispered Dick in French; and then to Doc. "Quick, get her up. I believe the lion is coming."

Doc sprang back into the tree,

clinging to a lower limb, and as Dick handed the girl up toward him, he seized her by the arm and dragged her upward. Then Dick clambered to his side and helped him, but it seemed to the two boys that they would never get the frightened, screaming girl pulled high enough from the ground to be safe.

They heard a sudden crashing in the underbrush close by and an instant later a great lion leaped into the clearing beneath them. He looked upward and then he sprang, his mighty talons seeking to seize one of them and drag him down, but by this time the boys had succeeded in dragging the little girl out of reach and Numa fell back baffled and angry.

Once again his thunderous roars

shattered the silence of the jungle, and this time it was a roar of baffled rage.

Ulp, seated upon his log, hearing the girl scream and the angry roaring of the lion, smiled to himself. Then he rose and ran hurriedly to Gulm, shaking the high priest by the shoulder.

"Awaken, Gulm!" he cried.

Gulm sat up, startled.

"What is happening Ulp?" he growled.

"The Flaming God came to the camp of Gulm and took Kla away with Him," cried Ulp excitedly.

"What words are these?" demanded Gulm, leaping to his feet and running with frantic speed toward the shelter.

"They are true words," insisted Ulp. "The Flaming God came himself and the light was so strong that it blinded the eyes of Ulp. With one hand, He tore away the rear of Kla's shelter, and with the other He gathered her from the ground and bore her off into the jungle. Kla screamed and a lion roared and the light of The Flaming God went out, and all was quickly silent."

Gulm looked skeptically at Ulp.

"You saw The Flaming God with your own eyes?" he demanded.

"Yes," admitted Ulp.

"What did He look like?" demanded Gulm in abrupt skepticism.

"I saw only the light. It was so blinding that I covered my eyes with my

palm."

"Then, how do you know that it was The Flaming God?" asked Gulm.

"I heard Him speak," replied Ulp.

"And what did he say?"

"He said, 'I am The Flaming God. I have come for Kla, my high priestess, to take her to my temple in the skies. There I have many offerings. There upon my altar, shall Kla give them up to me.'"

Gulm grunted.

"Was that all he said?" he asked.

Ulp had never before enjoyed the thrill of unleashed imagination. He was thoroughly enjoying his interview with God and he felt, as doubtless have many prophets, that revelations might just as

well suit one's personal needs as the contrary.

"Oh, yes," he said, "the Flaming God spoke directly to Ulp. He gave him a message for Gulm."

"And what was that message?"

"He said that Gulm was to build a new temple, but that he was to offer no sacrifices until The Flaming God should come in person and demand them."

During this conversation Gulm had crawled into the shelter that had been erected for Kla and found that she was gone and that there was, indeed, a large hole in the rear wall. When he came out, he stood erect and scratched his head.

"I thought, Ulp, that you had lied to me, but I see now that you have told me

the truth for, indeed, there is the hole that The Flaming God made when he stole the high priestess."

CHAPTER EIGHT—THE TARZAN TRIO

Crouching in the tree above the angry lion, the boys sought to allay the fears of the terrified girl, who was now sobbing hysterically.

"Do not be afraid," said Doc, soothingly. "We do not intend to harm you."

He had forgotten about his intention to speak to her in French, but Dick had not and he repeated Doc's assurances in that language.

The girl appeared to be attempting to stifle her sobs that she might speak to them. Her lips formed inarticulate words, but her gasping sobs cut short

what she was about to say.

"Now, now," said Dick, patting her shoulder, "try to stop crying. You are safe with us." He spoke very slowly and deliberately, searching for the right words and phrases in French.

"I guess," said Doc, "that even if she is French, she might not be able to understand that you are trying to speak her language."

"Well, suppose you try it then, smarty," snapped Dick, "although I never saw you carrying away any medals for French at school."

"I couldn't do any worse than you have," said Doc. "If we hadn't agreed to talk French to her, I might have thought you were speaking Chinese."

"That is because you do not know good French when you hear it," replied Dick.

The girl was slowly mastering her emotions, her sobs were becoming less frequent and presently she was able to speak.

"Who are you?" she asked in English.

The boys were dumbfounded.

"Do you speak English?" asked Dick.

"Yes," replied the girl, "but who are you and what are you going to do with me?" She spoke in the precise English that educated foreigners use.

"I am glad you are English," said Dick. "I was afraid you could not understand us."

"I am not English," said the girl, "but I speak English. Who are you?"

"I am an English boy," said Dick, "and my cousin is an American. You need not be afraid of us. We saw you with those men this morning and we were sure that they had kidnapped you."

"Yes," said Doc, "and we have been following all day hoping to get a chance to be of some assistance to you—and save you if possible."

The girl commenced to cry again—softly now, for her hysteria had passed.

"Please don't cry," said Dick. "I tell you that we will not hurt you."

"I am crying because I am happy," said the girl. "I thought that there was no hope for me and now you have come—

how can I ever thank you?"

"You do not have to thank us," Doc assured her, "and anyway you may be as badly off with us as you were with those men, for we have not been in the jungle very long."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Doc means, I guess," said Dick, "that sometimes we have trouble getting food, as we are not exactly sure what is safe to eat and we have not lived this kind of a life long enough to be very good at hunting, but we will do our best to feed you and protect you while we are finding our way home."

"Where is your home?" she asked.

"We are visiting Tarzan of the Apes," replied Dick with a touch of pride in his

voice.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, "everyone knows about Tarzan of the Apes. I never have seen him, but my father has told me that he is a good man."

"What is your name?" asked Doc.

"Gretchen," replied the girl.

"How did those fellows get hold of you, Gretchen?" asked Doc.

"I went out for a walk in the forest one day," she replied, "and I must have gone to far from the mission for when I tried to find my way back, I became confused and, I suppose, I wandered in the wrong direction. I was out all night alone and I was terribly frightened, and the next day these men found me and took me with them. No one can ever

know how terribly afraid I was, but they did not harm me, and after a while I became a little bit used to them so that I did not mind them so much, but still I think I should always have been afraid of them. They are such frightful men."

"What were they going to do with you?" asked Dick. "Were they holding you for ransom? They look like kidnappers, or something low like that."

"No, they are sun worshippers and they made me their high priestess. They told me that their own high priestess, who is a white girl, had turned against their religion and driven them from the temple. They were searching for a place to build a new temple when they found me and they thought that The Flaming

God had sent me to them."

"Golly," said Dick, "won't they be sore when they find you are gone and learn that we have stolen you away from them?"

"I guess they wouldn't do much to us if they caught us," said Doc.

"You must be sure that they never catch you," said the girl. "They make human sacrifices to their god and for a long time they have been hoping to find someone to sacrifice."

"Gee," said Doc, "I guess we had better get out of here."

"We'll have to wait until that old lion goes away because now that we have Gretchen with us we cannot travel through the trees. We shall have to go

upon the ground."

"Maybe she could go in the trees. Could you, Gretchen?" asked Doc.

"I guess I could with a little help," she said. "I was always climbing trees around the mission and Papa was always scolding me for being a tomboy."

"Fine!" exclaimed Dick. "We think it's a lot safer in the trees than it is upon the ground and we can go pretty fast now."

"I'll try it all right," said Gretchen. "I wouldn't want to be a nuisance."

"Then I believe we better try to get away now," said Doc. "That fellow that brought you out here awakened someone else in the camp. See them? One of them is crawling into your shelter. If they

come out here to look for you they might find us."

"Ulp said that he would come back for me. He was going to take me home to my people," said the girl in explanation.

"Then why did he leave you alone out here under the tree?" demanded Dick.

"He said he was going back to tell Gulm a story that would throw him off the track so that we would have time to get away."

"Would you rather wait and go with him, then?" asked Doc.

"No, I am afraid of him. He is a terrible man, but I was willing to risk anything for the chance to escape."

"I watched him when he went back to

camp," said Dick, "and he did not go then and wake anyone up. He went to a log and sat by the fire until a lion roared and then when I looked again, after we had pulled you up in the tree, I saw that he had gone to awaken someone else."

"It was an awful dangerous thing," said Doc, "to leave you out here alone on the ground with that lion roaring around."

"He said that the lion would not harm me," said the girl, "that it was lying on its kill, feeding, and would not be interested in me."

"Lying nothing," snapped Dick. "I do not know much about lions, but I'll bet my shirt that lion was hunting. We could hear his voice coming nearer every time

he roared."

"Maybe he wanted the lion to get you," suggested Doc. "Those fellows look mean enough to do just about anything."

"And they are terribly mean," said the girl. "They are worse than beasts."

"Well, I'll bet he wanted you killed for some reason," said Dick, "because he didn't do a thing about coming back and he must have heard the lion roar when he sprang for you, and he must have heard your scream."

"What we ought to do is to get out of here right away," said Doc. "We can do our talking later—when we're in a safe place."

"Come on, then," said Dick, and

slowly the three made their way through the trees, the two boys helping and supporting the girl.

It was very slow work in the dark, but because of the lion they did not dare come to the ground, and because of their proximity to the camp of the sun worshippers they dared not remain until morning. They knew that if they could get even a short distance away they might be safe and so they crept slowly through the night until, finally, the first ray of dawn tinged the eastern sky.

When the daylight finally came the boys saw the girl scrutinizing them very closely and she seemed pleased with the result of her examination of them. They had stopped again to rest as they had

frequently during the night; this time in a great old patriarch of a bower in the jungle, festooned with moss and hung with great creepers.

It was here that full daylight came upon them and the girl looked into the faces of the boys and smiled with gladness.

"I am happy," she said. "I thought that I should never be happy again. You cannot imagine how terrible it was to be with those frightful men and how good it is to be with people of my own kind, where I feel secure."

"Well," said Doc, "we are glad that you are happy, though I am afraid you will have to stretch your imagination a lot if you intend to keep on thinking

you're happy."

"Why?" asked the girl.

"Because, in the first place, you may get awfully hungry with us, and, in the second place, there is no telling how long we shall be obliged to roam around the jungle."

"Why may we have to stay in the jungle a long time?" she asked.

"Because we are lost," admitted Doc.

Gretchen laughed aloud then.

"What makes you laugh?" asked Dick.

"Oh, because it struck me as being very amusing that my rescuers are now in need of help, being lost themselves," she replied.

"Well, it isn't our fault," said Dick,

"and if you would rather go back with those other men—"

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "You know I wouldn't want to do that. I did not mean to make fun of you, but it is funny, isn't it?"

"Well, I guess it is," admitted Doc ruefully, "but, after all, being lost isn't the worst of it."

"Why, is there something you haven't told me?" she asked.

"No," Doc assured her. "We told you all right. It is the question of food."

"Do not let that worry you," said the girl. "I have lived in the jungle nearly all my life. My father is a missionary and a great lover of nature. He taught me ever so many things about the flora of the

jungle. I know what is safe to eat and what is not safe, so we shall not have to worry a great deal about food. We shall get enough to keep us alive at least, even if it is not fit for a king."

"Do you see anything around here that we could eat?" demanded Dick. "We are both about starved to death."

"Yes, there are fruits and vegetables and eggs within fifty feet of us; at least I see birds' nests."

Following Gretchen's directions the boys brought the fruits and roots that she indicated and from several nests they gathered enough eggs to make out a fairly satisfactory breakfast.

CHAPTER NINE—THE AMBUSH

As the new day broke, Gulm and the lesser priests finished their meager breakfast and set forth again upon the march to the new temple site that Blk had discovered and toward which he had been guiding them.

With the passing of the hours since the disappearance of Kla, Gulm had had time to consider Ulp's story more carefully and he found that with sober reflection, certain vague suspicions insisted upon obtruding themselves upon his thoughts. Perhaps this may partially have been due to his dislike of Ulp as well as to the fact that the occurrence

had upset all his plans for perpetuation in a new location the age-old rituals and ceremonials of his cult, which depended primarily upon the existence of a ruling high priestess whose word would be law to the lesser priests—and a white priestess would awe them.

In emulation of Cadj, the dead high priest, who had ruled Opar through La, he had proposed ruling the new city that he was about to found through the new La.

The Flaming God or, perhaps, and this he was more inclined to believe, a lying Ulp had set all his plans at naught. The more he gave thought to the matter the less probable it seemed that The Flaming God would appear in person to

a lesser priest rather than to Gulm himself, and so it was a surly, suspicious Gulm that led his followers upon the trail set by Blk.

The Tarzan twins, tired though they were, did not dare to stop for a long rest until they had put more distance between themselves and the sun worshippers and so, their hunger satisfied, they set out again in the direction toward which, they believed, lay the open veldt and the home of Tarzan.

Gretchen, though very tired, fought bravely to keep pace with the boys that she might not prove a burden to them, but it was necessary for one of both of them to steady and help her through the trees with the result that their progress was

slow—so slow that both Dick and Doc soon realized that if the sun worshippers were pursuing them, their chances for escape were hopeless.

"Gee," said Doc, "this old jungle must be as large as the whole state of New York. It seems to me as though we ought to be coming to the end of it pretty soon."

"Are you sure you are going in the right direction?" asked Gretchen.

Doc shook his head.

"That is just the trouble," he admitted. "We think we are going in the right direction, but we do not know for sure."

"You see," explained Dick, "we came into the jungle with Tarzan and neither of us paid any attention to direction. Then

Tarzan went away and that terrible storm came and the first thing we knew we were all turned around and were not very sure of any directions, except up and down."

"And then," said Doc, "I am pretty sure that when we are going through the trees it is impossible for us to go in a straight line, and as more than half of the time we never see the sun, even when it is shining, there is nothing to guide us."

"You could probably get out all right if it were not for me," said Gretchen.

"Don't say that," said Dick, gallantly. "On the contrary, we might starve to death before we found the way out if it were not for you."

"I am glad that I can be of some help,"

said Gretchen, "but I know what boys think of girls—I have two brothers."

"Well," said Doc, candidly, "I never did think a girl was much good for anything like this, but I sure have changed my mind now. Why, you are just like a boy the way you climb and everything."

"And you know so much about the jungle, too," said Dick. "I am awfully glad we found you."

"You are not half as glad as I am," said Gretchen. "It makes me frightened all over every time I think of Gulm and the others and the terrible things they talked of and the horrible plans they were making against the time that their new temple could be built."

"What were they going to make you do then?" asked Doc.

The girl shuddered.

"I know that those creatures offer human beings in sacrifices to their god," she said, "and I, as their high priestess, was to have made the offering—"

"They were going to make you kill people?" demanded Doc in an awestruck voice.

The girl nodded.

"What horrible creatures!" exclaimed Doc.

For a time now they moved on in silence and always it became more and more apparent to the boys that the girl had almost reached the limit of her

endurance. She could not stand the ordeal much longer.

"Here is another game trail," said Dick, who was in the lead. "It is running in the same general direction that we are going. I think that we should go down to the ground and take it easy for a while."

"We can make much better time on the ground," said Doc.

"And just as soon as we think it's safe, we can find a good place to hide and get some rest," added Dick, in approval.

"Whatever you say," said Gretchen, wearily as they made their way downward.

The boys assisted her to the ground and the three moved off along the broad,

well-marked trail which wound among the jungle growth ahead.

All three of them found that the change was restful and with their increased speed their spirits rose—they were quite as happy as though they were going in the right direction, which they were not, for Doc had been right when he said that they could not move through the trees in a straight line. They had made a great circle and when they came down into the game trail, they moved off into the direction from which they had come.

But such is the confidence of youth that they even laughed occasionally as they plodded, chatting, through the leafy aisles of the forest.

Blk, a few paces in advance of Gulm and the lesser priests, stopped abruptly, raising a warning hand. Gulm listened, straining his ears until they appeared almost to prick up like those of a beast. Plainly to his ears, though faintly, came the sound of voices and a few notes of laughter.

Turning quickly, Gulm gave a signal to the others and as if by magic, the twenty frightful men melted into the surrounding brush.

Dick stopped and looked back at Doc, who had fallen behind.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Gathering some of this grass to fasten my spear head tighter," replied Doc. "It has come loose. Go ahead, I'll

catch up."

"Don't get too far behind," said Dick.

Without looking back again, being absorbed in making their way, Dick and Gretchen started off again along the trail, while Doc followed behind winding the tough, fibrous jungle grass securely about the split end of his spear shaft into which the spear was fitted.

Occupied with his work, he walked more slowly than he realized, falling farther and farther behind his companions.

Dick and Gretchen plodded steadily onward. Perhaps they were encouraged and elated because the easy going seemed to presage an early release from the forbidding gloom of the jungle.

Dick recalled that Tarzan and Doc had entered the jungle with the golden lion upon just such a trail, and because he hoped so much he was willing to believe that this was, indeed, the same trail that they had traversed once before with the ape man and Jad-bal-ja.

"Do you know," he said to Gretchen, "that this is about the first time since we were lost that I have felt really certain that we are on the right trail and that our troubles are about over?"

"I hope you are right," said Gretchen, and then she voice a little cry of terror and turned and seized his arm.

"Oh, Dick, look!" she cried, and at the same moment the twenty terrible men rose from the underbrush all about them.

Blk seized Dick and disarmed him, while another grasped Gretchen and tore her away from her companion.

Down the trail behind them, Doc heard Gretchen's cry and the guttural voices of the gorilla-men. "Dick!" he cried, "Oh, Dick!" and started at a run along the trail in pursuit of them.

Dick thought quickly. He realized that they were helpless prisoners and that if Doc was permitted to run into the ambush no good could be accomplished by it, since he, too, would be immediately taken prisoner and disarmed.

"Go back, Doc! Go back! The sun worshippers have got us. You can help us better if they do not catch you, too.

Take to the trees."

"Quick," cried Gulm to his fellows. "There are more of them. Go and catch them."

Instantly a half dozen of the lesser priests started at a run along the trail in the direction from which Doc's voice had come. One of them, fleeter than his fellows, caught a glimpse of Doc as he swung into the lower branches of an overhanging tree, and ape-like the priest followed.

Doc, already close to physical exhaustion, fled as rapidly as he could, but at each backward glance he realized that the powerful gorilla-man was overhauling him.

It would soon all be over. In another

moment the creature would be upon him, either to strike him down with his heavy cudgel or to take him back a prisoner and a prospective sacrifice.

Like a cornered beast, Doc turned at bay. He stood in the branches of a great tree, his feet firmly planted upon the rough bark of two mighty limbs, his back against the huge hole.

The gnarled man was swinging toward him. The little, red-rimmed, close-set eyes were glaring through the matted hair that covered the bestial face. The thick lips were parted, revealing fighting fangs, only a trifle less formidable than those of a gorilla, and from the creature's throat rumbled low, growling sounds meant to intimidate his

victim.

Doc whipped an arrow from his quiver and fitted it to his bow. The gorilla-man, sensing his intentions, voiced a challenging roar and swung his cudgel as though to hurl it at his foe, but his gesture of defense came too late.

The bow string twanged and the shaft sped straight to its mark.

With a loud blood-curdling scream, the lesser priest grasped the feathered tip of the arrow where it protruded from his breast, and toppled a moment upon the great bough to which he had leaped and then, slumping into sudden collapse, lunged head foremost to the ground below.

CHAPTER TEN—FILLED WITH DESPAIR

A haggard white man, accompanied by a score of blacks, plodded doggedly along a jungle trail. His clothing was torn and soiled; his flesh scored by many a relentless thorn. Great dark circles were beneath his eyes—eyes that were filled with the anguish of spiritual torture and hopelessness.

Two blacks, who moved in advance of the balance of the party, halted for a momentary rest, and the others, closing up, joined them.

"Are there no signs, Natando?" asked the white man of one of the blacks who had been in the lead of the long

procession.

"No, Bwana," replied Natando, "since the great rain we have seen no tracks."

"Up until then we followed them easily," said the white man. "During the rain they must have turned in a new direction. Perhaps we had better retrace our steps until we come upon the tracks again. We cannot go through this jungle aimlessly."

"Look!" whispered one of the Negroes in a low, affrighted voice.

He was pointing his arm ahead of them along the trail.

All eyes turned in the direction indicated by the trembling forefinger of the black.

Just ahead of them, majestically conspicuous in a frame of leafy verdure, where the trail turned from view, they saw a great black-maned forest lion surveying them.

The white man and four or five of the others who were armed with rifles cocked them. In the jungle, one has to be always prepared.

"Do not shoot," said the white, "unless he comes toward us. If we wound him, he will charge, but if we do not fire, he may go away."

They stood thus for a moment, the lion watching them intently, and then, to the amazement of the little party, an almost naked white man appeared from beyond the turn in the trail and stopped at the

lion's shoulder.

The man, too, eyed them in silence for a moment, and then he raised his hand with its palm toward them and addressed them in one of the more common Bantu dialects.

"Put down your rifles," he said, "I am Tarzan of the Apes."

With a sigh of relief, the white man and his followers lowered their weapons as Tarzan, with Jad-bal-ja at heel, approached them.

"Who are you?" he asked, stopping in front of the white man.

"I am Doctor Karl von Harben, a missionary from the Urambi country," replied the white man. "I am a man of peace."

"I have heard of you, Doctor," said Tarzan, "and of the good work you are doing among your people. What brings you to my country?"

"A great misfortune," replied von Harben. "Two months ago my daughter was abducted. At first we thought that she had wandered into the forest and been killed by some wild beasts, but after days of searching we found her trail and saw that she was in the company of a band of men, or at least I assume that they are men, though their footprints slightly resemble those of gorillas. However, we know that they made fires and cooked their food, and so I assume that they are members of some race lower in the scale of evolution than

are true men. You can imagine my fears."

Tarzan nodded and listened silently as the man went on with his story.

"It was some time after the abduction that we found their trail and as they moved quite as rapidly as we were able to, we could not overtake them, and then a great storm obliterated all signs of their spoor, nor have we been able to pick it up since," the missionary concluded.

"We are on similar missions then," said Tarzan, "for I am searching for two boys who are lost in the jungle. Two days ago I left them, to investigate a scent spoor that had aroused the suspicions of my lion, leaving him to

guard the boys. Before I discovered the cause of his nervousness, the storm broke and when I returned to the spot at which I had left the boys, they had disappeared, nor have we been able to pick up their spoor since, as they mist have moved off through the trees while it was still raining. It is very possible that the scent spoor that disturbed Jad-bal-ja came from the party that abducted your daughter, since it was obvious to me that he scented some creature whose spoor was entirely unfamiliar, or else that of an enemy. He would not have reacted as he did to the scent spoor of any creature native to this part of the jungle."

"Perhaps it was us whose scent he caught," suggested von Harben.

"That is possible," replied Tarzan; "yet I rather doubt it, since we have been cognizant of your presence for some time and have been coming up wind along your spoor, yet at no time has he shown the nervous excitability that he did two days ago when he first caught the scent that aroused him."

"Let us join forces," said von Harben, "and search together for the two boys and my little girl."

"If Jad-bal-ja and I cannot find them," replied Tarzan, "They cannot be found. I can see from your appearance that you are upon the verge of exhaustion. A mile from here there is an open grove in the forest through which runs a small stream. Go there then with your people and make

camp and rest while Jad-bal-ja and Tarzan search for your daughter."

"But can we not help?" insisted von Harben.

Tarzan shook his head.

"All that you might do is to follow the trails and you do not know which trail to follow to find your daughter. If the scent spoor was strong in your nostrils, you could not recognize it, and then when Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja had found her they would have to search again for you. No, make camp as I have told you and remain there until you hear further from me. As Jad-bal-ja makes his way upon the ground through the underbrush where there are no trails, Tarzan of the Apes travels through the branches of the trees.

No scent spoor, however faint, may escape them. We shall make a great circle, Jad-bal-ja going in one direction, Tarzan of the Apes in the other, and all that lies within that circle shall be known to one or the other. Thus in a day we shall cover a territory that you could not search carefully in weeks."

"Perhaps you are right," said von Harben. "I shall do as you say, but at least my prayers for your success shall accompany you."

The ape man turned to the great lion and spoke a few words that neither black men nor the white could understand. The great cat turned and with lowered head entered the underbrush, while Tarzan sprang to an overhanging limb and in an

instant the two had vanished from the sight of von Harben's party quite as though they had dissolved into thin air.

Gulm wasted no time in further effort to capture Doc, but leaving the dead priest where he had fallen, pressed forward toward the new temple site which Blk, who was guiding them, assured him was now near at hand.

Gretchen and Dick, closely guarded, marched hopelessly with their captors.

"Golly," said Dick, presently, "we seem to have all the bad luck in the world."

"Nothing worse could have happened to you, Dick," said Gretchen.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "It is just as bad for you."

"Oh, Dick, you must escape. You must! You must!" she cried frantically.

"How about you?" he demanded.

"They will not kill me," she answered.

"You mean—!"

"I mean that you must escape before we reach the site of the new temple. No matter what happens, nor what risks you must run, you must not let them take you there."

"I think I understand," said Dick, "but if I get away from them you are coming with me."

"No," she said, "you will be fortunate if you can get away alone. You cannot do it at all if you have to think of me. Do

not consider me. I am positive that they will not kill me and some day my father will find me. I know that he will never stop searching until he finds me. If you see the slightest chance, you must take advantage of it and get away."

Dick shook his head.

"What sort of a fellow do you think I am? What kind of man would I be," he asked, "if I ran away and left you with them? No, I could not do that."

The girl shook her head and sighed.

"Please understand what I am saying. I do not want to be left alone with them," she said, "but whether you run away or whether you let them take you to the temple site, it will be all the same for I shall be alone with them in either event

and I would rather know that you are alive than to feel always that I was the cause of—of the thing that I know must follow if you are with us when we reach the spot where the new temple is built."

Moving cautiously through the trees behind them, Doc followed the frightful men and their captives. In his mind he was revolving many plans of rescue, but in the face of the superior numbers that opposed him, each plan seemed futile and absolutely foredoomed to failure.

He counted his arrows. There were sixteen of them and he knew that there were nineteen sun worshippers to be accounted for. The plan that this calculation suggested appeared to offer as reasonable a chance for success as

any that had occurred to him after racking his brains to the utmost.

He had been moving very cautiously, keeping just out of sight of the rear-most member of Gulm's party, but now he moved forward more rapidly, risking detection that he might get closer to his quarry. There was nothing like trying!

Doc was becoming very proficient in the use of his bow and he moved through the trees now with so much greater ease than he did when he first attempted it that it was not difficult for him to fit an arrow as he moved through the branches of a particularly large tree that gave him excellent foothold. Below him, and but a few yards distant, walked the priest that brought up the rear of the procession.

Doc halted and bent his bow.

The priest screamed and lunged forward upon his face, and in the same instant Doc sprang quickly back behind the foliage of the tree and moved swiftly off into the jungle for a hundred yards.

Gulm and the lesser priests turned back as the scream of their fellow startled them into a realization of their own danger.

They looked in horror at the arrow protruding between the shoulders of the fallen man.

"It is the other, the one who escaped," said Gulm angrily.

He turned to Ulp.

"The Flaming God came in the night,

did he, and took Kla from us, did he?" he shouted. "You lied to me, Ulp, and you shall die for it."

"I did not lie, Gulm," said Ulp, sullenly. "I told you the truth. The Flaming God came and spoke to me and I have told you what He said. That He was pleased with us is proven by the fact that He not only gave us back our high priestess, but offered us two sacrifices in addition. Is it His fault that we captured but one of them? Is it my fault? If you had captured them both, Gulm, this would not have happened. The Flaming God is punishing us, not for what I did, but for what you did not to."

"Very well," said Gulm, "you shall walk behind the rest of us so that you

may capture the other sacrifice, if he returns," and with a sudden growl, Gulm resumed the march.

CHAPTER ELEVEN—STRIKING FROM THE REAR

Ulp did not like the idea of marching in the rear with his back continually exposed to the arrows of an unseen foe. He turned hes head about so often to look behind him that his neck pained him, and then he turned around and walked backward for awhile until the others got so far away from him that he became frightened and turned and ran rapidly to overtake them.

Meanwhile through the trees behind him came an American boy and now there were only eighteen enemies ahead of him and there were sixteen arrows in

his quiver, for he had descended to the trail after the sun worshippers had moved on and wrenched the arrow from the body of his second victim.

It was grim and terrible work for Doc, who never in all his life had really wanted to kill anyone, nor did he wish to now. It was only stern necessity, induced by the danger that threatened Dick and Gretchen, that impelled him to undertake the grizzly work that he hated with all his heart and soul.

The forest was less dense now as the party advanced, and the undergrowth less thick. The trail led constantly into higher ground, and presently Dick and Gretchen saw hills looming before them.

Blk led them into the mouth of a

ravine, which rose steeply upward into the hills. The great trees of the jungle disappeared and, in places, the undergrowth gave way entirely to rock formations that supported no vegetation.

Doc, coming to the edge of the jungle, surveyed the landscape ahead.

In a glance he saw that the trees were too scattered to offer him a continuous trail above the ground, and there were many places where the underbrush was so scant as to afford no sufficient shelter for him. But to the left of the ravine, a gently sloping hogback, strewn with great boulders, seemed to offer him the best chance of concealment and the easiest trail from which he might keep the quarry in view.

Ulp had caught up with his fellows and followed close behind them, as Doc clambered upward among the rocks to the summit of the hogback. Here he found a well marked game trail along which he could move with ease and, presently, he looked down into the ravine upon the little party.

Here was another opportunity. Again his bow twanged and as he dropped behind the concealing shelter of a great boulder, Ulp voiced a horrid shriek and crumpled to the ground.

Gulm was furious, not because Ulp had died, but partially because he had been robbed of an intended sacrifice for The Flaming God and partially because he realized the menace to all of them of

this unseen foe, who clung so tenaciously to the rear from where he might pick them off one by one at his leisure—while they were helpless.

"It is the anger of The Flaming God!" he cried. "How much further to the temple site, Blk?"

"We are almost there," replied the guide.

"It is well," growled Gulm. "We must offer a sacrifice to appease the wrath of The Flaming God," and his eyes rested upon Dick.

Gretchen heard and understood. She turned imploringly to her companion.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried, her voice almost a sob. "You must escape at once. There is no time to spare. If ever we

reach the temple site, you will be lost."

An arrow, speeding silently, buried itself in Gulm's leg, eliciting a cry of pain and anger. He wrenched the missile from his flesh, his eyes searching the direction from which it had come.

Then, quite unexpectedly, for a moment he glimpsed Doc upon the summit of the ridge, and then the lad stood up, clearly revealed to all of them.

"Don't give up hope, Dick," he shouted, "but look for me tonight. I will try to find a way to get you and Gretchen after dark. Be ready."

"It will be too late then, Doc," cried Gretchen. "If Dick is not saved in the next few minutes, he never will be."

"I will do the best I can," said Doc.

Without saying more, Doc immediately fitted another arrow to his bow. He drove it swiftly in the direction of the Oparians and another priest collapsed, clutching at his pierced throat.

In a voice that sounded like the growling of a beast, Gulm issued orders to six of his followers, spurring them to action.

"Don't let that boy get the best of us! Go after him," he cried. "Bring him back to me alive if you can, but bring him back—dead or alive."

Doc was fitting another arrow when he saw the six start swiftly up the steep ravine side. They were close together and offered an excellent target, but suddenly an inspiration seized him. All

about him were boulders of different shapes and sizes and in them he saw potential engines of destruction that might be used to accomplish his purpose while conserving his few remaining arrows.

Getting behind a fair sized, rounded boulder, he heaved against it with his shoulder until it gave, and then he guided it over the edge of the ridge directly above the six Oparians, who were ascending to capture or kill him. He did not wait for the boulder to strike them, but immediately seized smaller stones and hurled them down at his foe.

The priests attempted to scramble from the path of the descending boulder, but it had gained such momentum and

was falling so rapidly that it was upon them before they could elude it. It struck one of them full in the breast, toppling him backward, crushing him, and then continued to bound down to the bottom of the ravine while the body of its victim, rolling and tumbling, leaped grotesquely in its wake.

"Good boy, Doc!" shouted Dick. "Give them another like that."

The five remaining priests hesitated, warding off the smaller stones that Doc hurled down upon them with their cudgels and their forearms.

They were starting to give back, slowly descending, when Gulm's voice rose up in a mighty bellow.

"Go on! Go on!" he cried. "If you

come back without him, you shall be the first to be sacrificed to The Flaming God. Obey your high priest or die."

Knowing that Gulm's command was no idle threat, the five scrambled upward in the face of Doc's barrage until the lad was forced to the realization that some of them, at least, must reach the top, when his capture would be assured.

He sent them a parting arrow and then fled even before he saw its effect, while another priest rolled backward toward the bottom of the ravine. Doc leaped rapidly down the hogback toward the jungle where he knew he might better hope to elude his pursuers among the branches of the great trees.

The four lesser priests followed Doc

until the foliage of the forest cut him from their view, and then they halted, grumbling.

"If we go in there after him," said one, "we shall not return alive. He will pick us off with his arrows."

"And if we go back to Gulm, we shall be sacrificed to The Flaming God," said another.

"There are four of us," said a third. "Why should we let Gulm offer us in sacrifice? Who made him high priest? In Opar he was only a lesser priest like us. There are four of us. Let us go back and tell Gulm that the creature escaped, and that before we will permit him to sacrifice any of us, we will kill him."

"Good," said the fourth. "Who is

Gulm to be high priest or to take our lives if we do not wish it?"

Thus agreed, the four turned back up the ravine and Doc, relieved, watched them depart.

After they had passed out of sight he descended to the ground and followed them. By following along the bottom of the ravine he hoped to retrieve some of the arrows he had expended, for these were precious indeed, and then he hoped to make is way to the ridge on the right hand side of the ravine, which he had discovered from the summit of the opposite side was better suited to his purposes, since it dropped to the ravine bottom so precipitously that it would be difficult for the sun worshippers to scale

it in pursuit of him, thus giving him a better opportunity to attack them in safety.

As the four priests who had succeeded in gaining the summit disappeared in pursuit of Doc, Gulm resumed the march up the steep and rocky gorge.

"Are you going to try to escape, Dick?" asked Gretchen.

The boy shook his head.

"Oh, please to for my sake," she urged.

"No," he persisted. "I could not do it. In the first place there has been no opportunity and if there is we will take it together."

Gretchen shook her head sadly. "I shall never forgive myself," she said.

"It is not your fault, Gretchen, and whatever happens, not one of us is to blame. We have all done our best and if they don't get good old Doc, he may save us both yet."

"I am afraid they will get him," said Gretchen. "These creatures can climb and run like monkeys. I think nothing could escape them."

"Well, good old Doc made them sit up and take notice," said Dick proudly. "If I have to die, at least I shall have that memory to console me."

The gorge had narrowed until there was room for but a single man to pass between its rocky walls and at this point

it was necessary to climb steeply upward for twenty-five feet over a water-worn formation of stratified limestone, down one side of which splashed a miniature waterfall.

The smooth moist surface of the rocks offered only precarious foot and hand holds. Dick climbed directly behind Gretchen, steadying her as best he could, and helping her.

Finally they reached the top in safety, and as they stood erect again upon level ground, they saw that they were in the mouth of a rudely circular, natural, rockbound amphitheater.

Gulm looked slowly about him. His eyes gleamed with the fires of mad fanaticism. He looked up at the sun and

stretched forth his arms.

"Here, O Great and Mighty God of our ancestors," he cried, "we shall dedicate to you the new temple and the new city that shall be raised in your honor, and here, before you hide your face again from the eyes of your people, we shall consecrate this ground as befits the holy purpose to which it shall be dedicated. Have patience with us, God of our fathers. You have waited long, but the time has almost come—you have not long to wait!"

He turned quickly to the lesser priests, who had knelt behind him.

"Quickly," he said, "go and gather stones and raise an altar."

Gretchen grasped Dick's hands and

commenced to sob, softly

CHAPTER TWELVE—THE SACRIFICE

Doc, following cautiously up the bottom of the ravine, watching and listening ahead, lest he run into an ambush, gave no thought to any possible danger that might lurk behind him, and so he neither heard nor saw the silent thing that moved stealthily in his tracks.

With growing horror, Gretchen watched the construction of the altar that the lesser priests were hastily throwing together.

Strewn about the amphitheater were many fragments of flat limestone rock and these the priests were building into an oblong structure, about three feet

high, with a more or less level top, four or five feet long and a couple of feet wide, its greater dimension lying due east and west.

During the building of the altar, two priests stood close upon either side of Dick, and now that it was finished, Gulm signaled to bring him forward and he also commanded the girl to approach. The lesser priests arranged themselves in a circle around the altar, at the foot of which stood Gulm.

"Take your place at the head of the altar, Kla," he said to the girl.

When the girl had done as he told her, Gulm nodded to the two priests, who held Dick, whereupon they lifted him to the altar, laying him there upon his back

with his head toward the east end, where stood the new La.

One of the two priests who had placed Dick upon the altar stood at his feet to hold him, while the other stood close to Kla and held his arms. At a word from Gulm this one handed Kla his knife.

"It is your first sacrifice," said Gulm, addressing the girl. "A high priestess comes into full power only after her first sacrifice. The moment that the knife had drunk the blood of this creature you become in reality what you have been in name, high priestess of The Flaming God and ruler of the temple and the city that we shall build here. I shall repeat the prayer that later you will learn to repeat

and the instant that I raise my hand above my head, you must strike."

"I cannot," said the girl.

"You cannot?" screamed Gulm. "But you will when you know that the fate of a high priestess, who refuses to make an offering to The Flaming God, is far more terrible than the death from which you would save this creature—a futile sacrifice on your part since, if you refuse, both of you shall die."

"What is he saying?" asked Dick in a whisper.

"He wants me to kill you with this knife," said Gretchen.

Dick closed his eyes. "What else did he say?" he asked.

"He said that if I do not kill you, they will kill you and they will kill me also."

Gulm was slowly chanting a long, monotonous prayer.

The priests were kneeling, their foreheads upon the ground.

"Do as he tells you," said Dick. "Doc is risking his life to save us. If we are both killed, it will be in vain. There is no chance for me, and I would rather feel that I am giving my life to save you than that I must die uselessly to gratify their lust for blood."

Gretchen closed her eyes and raised the knife high above her head.

Doc climbed cautiously upward and when he came to the body of Ulp, he stopped and withdrew his arrow from

the lesser priest. As he did so, he became conscious, as we sometimes do, of a feeling that he was being watched—that unseen eyes were looking at him. He glanced quickly up the ravine in the direction the four sun worshippers had gone, but he saw no one. Then, he turned around, drawn by a horrid feeling that something was very close behind him.

With difficulty the boy smothered a horror-stricken scream. His knees weakened so that it was with an effort that he remained erect. He seemed to be held in a paralysis of fear that gripped every muscle in his body. He felt the goose flesh rise upon his cold skin, a sickening tremor ran up his spine and it seemed that his hair rose upon end.

Not five feet from him stood a great lion, its round, yellow green eyes peering straight into his.

Doc tried to think of a prayer, but the only one he could remember was "Now I lay me down to sleep," and this he could only think, since his lips were stiff and his throat parched.

The time seemed to stretch to an eternity that the lion stood there glaring at him with those unblinking eyes, yet it was only a moment. Then the beast moved slowly toward him, but even then Doc could not break the spell of terror that held him paralyzed. Nearer and nearer came the dread carnivore. He could feel its hot breath upon his naked body. It rubbed its head against his side

and then he felt its hot, rough tongue upon his hand.

Like a title flashed upon a screen, a sentence burned suddenly bright in Doc's memory: _"Do not touch him unless he comes and rubs his head against you."_

It was Jad-bal-ja!

Doc's knees gave way entirely and he sat down suddenly upon the hard ground. The golden lion looked at him questioningly and Doc laid his hand upon the beast's mane and buried his face in the great black collar, sobbing.

It was just for a moment that the reaction of the nervous strain he had undergone held him in its grip. Then he gained control of himself and sprang to his feet. Not far away Dick and Gretchen

were in danger. The girl had told him that if he were going to save Dick he must do it at once. Perhaps even now it was too late.

"Quick, Jad-bal-ja," he cried, and he turned and started up the ravine at a run.

The golden lion, knowing that he was on the right trail, did not wait for the boy, but leaped swiftly on ahead.

Gulm, chanting his monotonous prayer, approached its end.

Kla was looking at him now, her blue eyes wide in terror, but held by some horrid fascination upon the face of the gnarled high priest.

Suddenly Gulm stopped his monotonous chanting, and raised his hand above his head.

"Strike!" he cried.

"I cannot," wailed Kla.

"Strike, or you die!" thundered Gulm.

"Strike," whispered Dick. "It is the only way."

Suddenly a priest shrieked and pointed, and the others looked and saw a great lion scrambling over the narrow ledge that gave entrance to the amphitheater.

Instantly all was pandemonium.

Only Gulm remembered. "Strike!" he cried. "Strike and appease the wrath of The Flaming God."

The knife fell from the girl's hand as she sank in a swoon beside the altar. The lion bounded forward and the priests

scattered, all but the fanatical Gulm. Snatching his own knife from its scabbard, he sprang forward, the blade raised high above his head, its point aimed at the heart of the courageous lad stretched upon the altar.

With a mighty bound, Jad-bal-ja cleared the altar and sacrifice and bore Gulm back to earth. Once, just once, those awful jaws closed upon the face of the high priest and then Jad-bal-ja stood above his kill and looked about him.

At the same instant a voice rang out from the summit of the rocky escarpment surrounding the amphitheater and the lion looked in the direction of the speaker and then lay down upon the body of the high priest.

With the agility of an ape Tarzan dropped quickly down the rocky precipice to the bottom of the amphitheater. The lesser priests recognized him and sought to flee, but he called them back in their own tongue, threatening to send Jad-bal-ja among them if they disobeyed. Sullenly they returned and clustered together at one side of the altar—the side opposite that upon which Jad-bal-ja still lay upon the dead body of their leader.

At the sound of Tarzan's voice, Dick had opened his eyes and then sat up. In an instant he saw what had transpired and knew that he was saved. Never in all his life had he seen a more welcome sight than that of the great lion lying at

the foot of the altar and the half naked ape-man moving quickly across the amphitheater toward him.

Tarzan's eyes had taken in the entire scene. "Where is Doc?" he demanded.

"Here I am," called a voice, and as Tarzan and Dick looked in the direction from which it had come, they saw Doc crawling over the edge of the rocky threshold of the amphitheater.

"Gee," he cried, "we are all saved, aren't we?"

"Oh, Doc," cried Dick, "I was afraid those fellows who went after you had gotten you."

"I'll say they didn't," said Doc, "You ought to have seen them just now. Jad-bal-ja and I came upon them from behind

as they were coming back here after I got away from them, and say you ought to have seen them shin up the sides of that old ravine. They went so fast you could have played checkers on their coat tails, if they had any coat tails."

Tarzan had stopped and raised Gretchen in his arms. She opened her eyes and looked up into his face.

"Who are you?" she cried.

"Do not be afraid," he said, "I am Tarzan of the Apes."

With a little sigh, she closed her eyes and commenced to weep very softly—tears of relief and happiness.

Tarzan turned to the sun worshippers. "This is Tarzan's country," he said. "You may not remain here. If you would live,

go back to Opar."

"If we go back to Opar, La will have us killed," said one of the priests sullenly.

"You will surely be killed if you do not go back as I tell you," said Tarzan, "but if you do go back and agree to serve La loyally, I believe that she will let you live. Which do you choose to do?"

The priests whispered among themselves for a few moments. "We will go back to Opar," said one of them, finally.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN—THE END

A haggard white man paced nervously back and forth before a campfire that two blacks kept burning while their fellows slept. To and fro, back and forth, the man paced as he had done for hours and then suddenly he halted and the blacks beside the fire seized their rifles and leaped to their feet, and the three stood listening.

"Something is coming," whispered one of the blacks.

"Yes, I hear it," replied the white man.

"Perhaps it is the Big Bwana, Tarzan," suggested the other black.

"Then we had better awaken the others," said the white man, and a moment later the entire party had been aroused and men with rifles, or spears, or bows and arrows stood ready and waiting for whatever it was that was coming toward them along the jungle trail.

They did not have long to wait and as the party came in sight at the edge of the clearing, von Harben cried aloud in his joy and ran forward to grasp his little daughter in his arms.

"How can I ever repay you? How can I ever thank you brave lads?" said von Harben, when he heard from Gretchen's lips the entire story of her rescue.

"Don't thank us," said Dick. "Thank

Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, for after all it was he who really saved Gretchen."

THE END